

Handlist 52 Sources for the study of Cinema



Publicity Material found within Police Licensing Files (Ref: PLA/Acc8958)

## Introduction

Central Hall in Colne is regarded by many as the first purpose built cinema in Britain. Originally intended as a warehouse and workshop, amended plans were submitted in 1905 including the addition of an orchestra pit and projection room. The plan clearly indicates that at least part of the Hall was intended to be for public use, but it does not specify the projection of films. The first evidence of this taking place appears in newspaper adverts from 1907.

We hold two key documents related to the Central Hall. MBCO/27/1581 is the revised building plan incorporating the orchestra pit and projection room. DDX/752/8/3 is an account book belonging to Joshua Duckworth, the owner of the Hall, with pages of expenses for the management of the cinema, detailing costs which include film hire, poster production and chocolate sales for the years 1915-16.

*Central Hall Analysis*

BUSINESS.												
Additions to Plant.	Advertising.	Bank Commission.	Bill Posting.	Book-binding.	Carriage.	Fire Insurance.	Gas.	Law Expenses.	Lithography.	Paper and Cards.	Postages.	Rent Rates and Taxes.
<i>Film Hire</i>	<i>Printing</i>	<i>Retorial Posters &amp;c</i>	<i>Carriage</i>	<i>Gas Fuel and Electricity</i>	<i>Wages</i>	<i>Walt Ins</i>	<i>Fire &amp; Wks Cont. Ins.</i>	<i>Main-tenance</i>	<i>Repairs</i>	<i>Rates &amp; Taxes</i>	<i>Licenses Cleaning &amp; Sundries</i>	<i>Depreciation</i>
3 0 0	1 7 0		13 4	4 0	4 17 4		6 1 17 6					
5 9 3	1 7 0		16 0	3 0	5 1 0		6				1 6	

Central Hall Account Book detailing cinema expenses (Ref: DDX/752/8/3)

'The First Purpose Built Cinema: The Case Against Colne' by Jon Burrows is a detailed analysis of the case for and against Central Hall's claim to be the first purpose built cinema in England. It appears in *Picture House*, No 30, 2005, available on the oversized shelves in the searchroom library under reference D 66 PIC.

Regardless of these claims, cinema would flourish in Lancashire as with the rest of the country. Information about cinemas can be found in a variety of collections, and includes records as diverse as building plans, wage books, censorship files and diaries.

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## 1. Building History

The movies were born in 1895, when on 28 December the Lumiere brothers attracted a paying public to watch their films in Paris. Moving pictures were shown publicly in London in the following March, and the first recorded "house" in Lancashire saw films at the St James Theatre, Oxford Street, Manchester in May 1896.

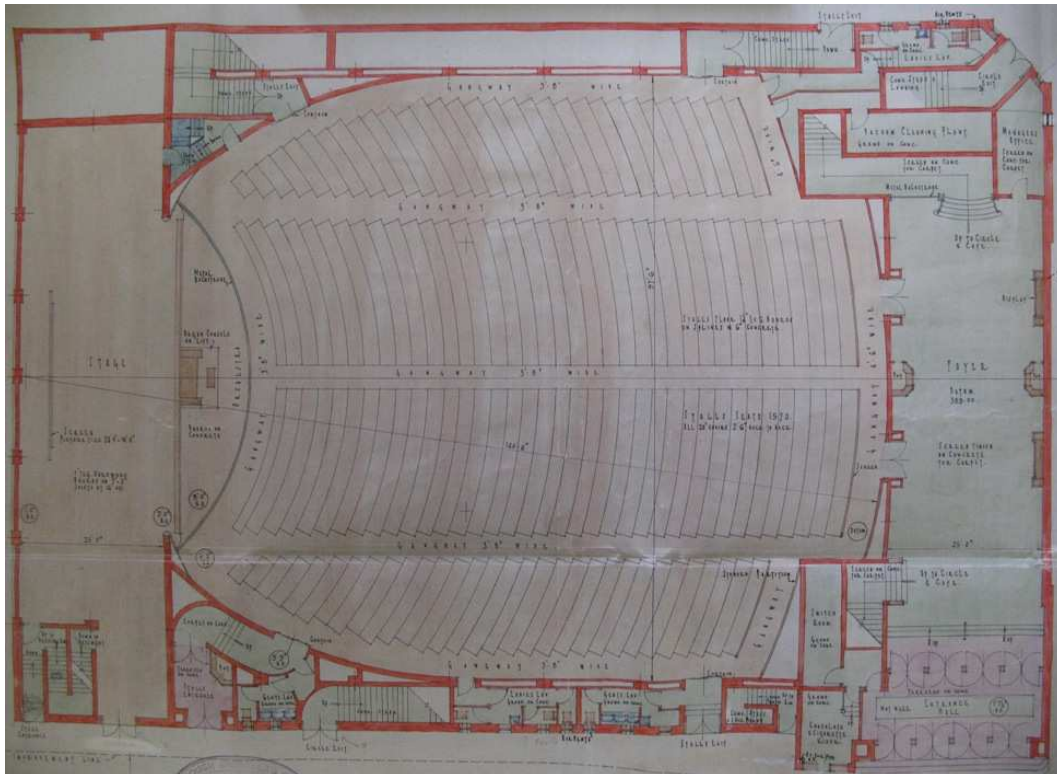
Films were shown in converted theatres and public halls until the first buildings designed as cinemas began to be erected around 1905. Early cinemas such as those at Rawtenstall and Blackpool progressed to the luxurious "Picture Palaces" of the 1930s. Declining audiences led to the closure and conversion of many town and city centre cinemas throughout the 1970s and 1980s; multiple-screen complexes on out-of-town industrial estates are now seeing a revival in film attendance.



Building Plan Ritz Cinema Burnley 1937 (Ref: CBBU/127/12308)

## 1.1 Plans

There are numerous building regulation plans for cinemas within local authority records, particularly around the 1920s and 1930s when there was an explosion in the popularity of cinema-going. Some of these have been catalogued and can be found by conducting a search on LANCAT, available at <http://archivecat.lancashire.gov.uk/calmview/> but building plan registers and street indexes will have to be used to identify others. Please contact us for advice. Contact information can be found on our website.



Building Plan Ritz Cinema Burnley 1937 (Ref: CBBU/127/12308)

Below is a sample of plans held within our collections.

MBCO/27/1581 Central Hall, Colne, 1905 Originally planned as a warehouse, this revised plan was submitted on 19<sup>th</sup> April 1905 incorporating an orchestra pit and projection room. Although its status as the first purpose built cinema in the country has been disputed, this is still a very early example.

CBBU/127/8751 Cinema at Manchester Road / Red Lion St, Burnley, 1920  
CBP/2/16715 New Victoria cinema, Church Street, Preston, 1927

Two gorgeous examples of the picture palaces of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century built to meet the growing demand from cinema audiences. The New Victoria in Preston is still standing and there is currently a campaign to have it restored to its former glory.

- CBBU/127/10720 Alterations to the Savoy Cinema in Burnley, including the installation of 'talkie picture apparatus', 1929. The most obvious example in our collections of the move from silent movies to sound.
- LAU/6/4/88/676 Multi Screen Cinema, Portway / Navigation Way, Preston, 1988. A rare example from our collections of the modern trend for multi-screen, out of town cinemas. The original plans for the Odeon cinema on the docks at Preston.

## 1.2 Surveys

- DDX/2204/1 Historic building survey of the former Hippodrome Cinema, Chorley, 1998
- DDX/2719/9 Archeological Building Examination of the former ABC cinema, King St, Lancaster 2010

## 1.3 Photographs

- CBBL/22/25 Blackpool Fire Brigade Photographic Negative Oxford Cinema 1956
- CBBL/22/50 Blackpool Fire Brigade Photographic Negative Tivoli Cinema 1964
- DDX/2815 Approximately 110 colour slide (5x4) images of various bingo halls and cinemas (internal and external views) in the north west of England and midlands apparently owned by Hutchinson Group (otherwise known as Surewin Bingo)

## 1.4 Deeds and Leases

- DDX/685/1-30 Deeds of the Palladium Cinema, Church Street, Preston, 1679-1826
- CBP/3/599 Deeds of the Palladium Cinema, Church Street, Preston, 1877-1938
- DDX/1101/20/2 Documents concerning transfer of lease of the Church Institute Assembly Room from Nehemiah Tomlinson to St Andrews Cinema (Burnley) Ltd 1918-23
- DDX/1356 Palace Theatre Varieties and Cinematograph Hall, and Empire Picture Hall, Haslingden, deeds and leases, 1916-35

MBLA ACC10927 Box 2 Bundle 14  
Lower Church Street/Victoria Hall/The Picturedrome/Rex  
Cinema, Lancaster, 1906 – 1961

### 1.5 Sales Particulars

DDPC/3/215/E75 Sales particulars of the Queen's Cinema, New Queen St,  
Morecambe, 1924

DDPC/3/2/15/E87 Sales particulars of The Salford Cinema, Salford, 1925

DDX/289/3 Sales particulars of the Grand Cinema, Failsworth, and La Scala  
Cinema, Hollinwood, 1958

## 2. Cinema Management



Publicity Material found within Police Licensing Files (Ref: PLA/Acc8958)

DDBD/Acc3019/5/102

Business papers relating to the Palace and Empire Picture  
Theatres, Haslingden 1914-17

DDTR/Box 432

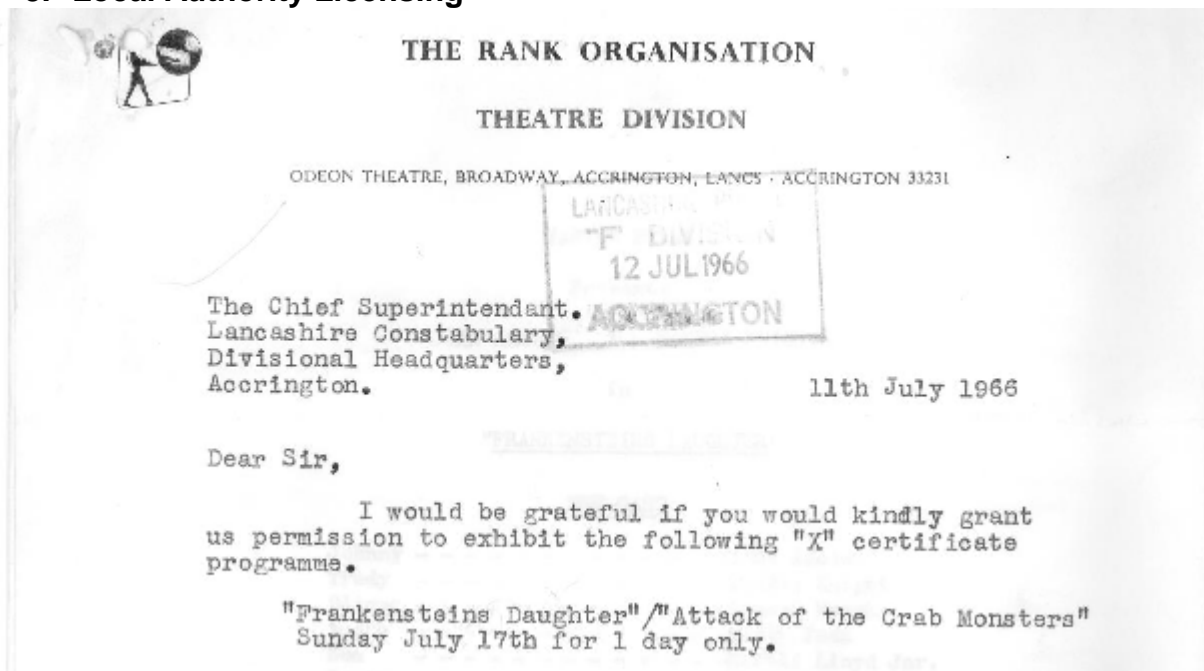
Accounts with index including valuation of the Palace Picture  
House, Barrow in Furness 1914-33

DDX/752/8/3

Account book of Joshua Duckworth, owner of cinema at Central  
Hall in Colne, including film hire, poster production, chocolate  
sales, 1915-1916

- DDX/1425/1 Wages account book of the Savoy Cinema, Darwen, 1921-27. This Cinema, in Gillibrand Street, survived until at least the 1950s. In 1925 it was owned by W Lloyd, the manager being William C Robinson, heading the list of wages paid.
- DDX/1101/Acc9480 Empire Cinema, Burnley correspondence file, 1940s-50s
- DDWk/Acc10016/box1/bundle1 Papers re estate of Watkins family incl. Accrington cinema.
- DDX/1348/3 Correspondence, receipted bills and related papers of the Regent Cinema (Leyland) Limited reflecting the legal formation of the company, the building of the theatre, installation of services, including projection and sound equipment, distribution of films, supplies of consumables, and taxation.

### 3. Local Authority Licensing



Lancashire Police Cinema Licensing Files (Ref: PLA/Acc8958)

- PLA/Acc5650 Plans and licenses, Palladium cinema, Morecambe, 1919-36
- CC/CCC/4/Acc7203/Box13  
G177A Annual Returns of Cinemas and Theatres 1948  
G177/1 Cinema censorship 1923-48
- PSRD 12/3 Register of cinema licence certificates (Bacup, Haslingden and Rawtenstall), 1929-53

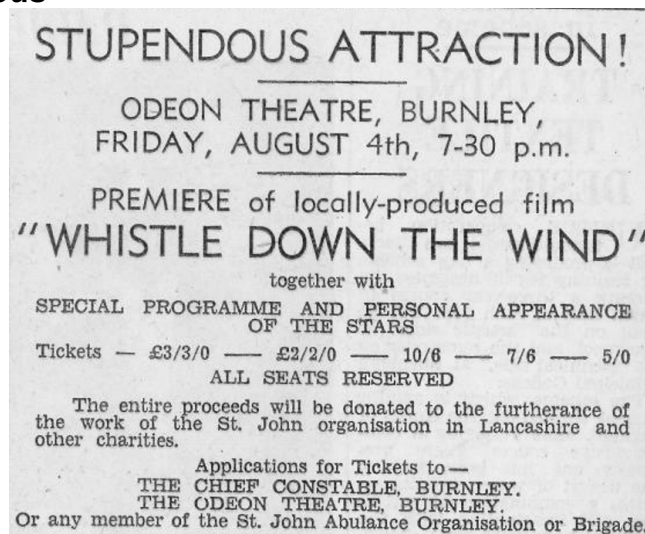


- MRO/10/15 Minutes including (at back) minutes of committee re cinema effort 1940.
- MBNE/59/365-371 License to perform plays at the Palace Hippodrome cinema 1945-1959
- PLA/Acc8958 Papers relating to Odeon Cinema, Accrington, including film license applications (with synopses and publicity material) and cinema inspection reports 1952-66
- PSBL/10 Cinema licensing files 1956-60

#### 4. Personal Experiences

- DDX/1901/1 Diary of Doris Lamb including descriptions of cinema-going 1923-26
- DDX/519/216/6 Diary of Peter Rushforth of St Anne's while a schoolboy including cinema visits 1929-30
- DDX/2768/7 Letter including mention of film about the Royal Wedding at the cinema 1947
- DDX 1899/Acc10769/box16a  
Joan Gardner film diary listing films seen in 1952. Access to this collection is restricted.
- DDX/978 Early recollections essays: Reminiscences of early cinemas in Lancashire: 1/2/1 (Ashton under Lyne), 1/8/9 (Bolton), 1/13/2 (Chorley) and 3/3/9

#### 5. Miscellaneous



Newspaper clipping for Burnley premiere of *Whistle Down the Wind* (Ref: PLBU/Acc2511)

- DDX 1100/3/17 Invitation to the opening of a new cinema (The Globe) in Mill Street, Padiham, July 1921
- DDWW/3/15/5 Papers concerning the promotion of the motion picture "Christus", 1924-28
- DDX/1101/112/11 Correspondence re cinema advertising 1945
- DDX/1683/1/3/12 Hylda Baker correspondence with respondents including Richard Whewell Ltd. theatrical and cinema printers 1947-63
- P/194 Photocopy book of photographs of Queen Mary's military hospital Whalley including cinema
- PLBU/Acc 2511 Northern Charities Premiere of the film "Whistle Down the Wind" in Burnley, 1961 including poster, committee minutes, news cuttings etc
- PR/2912/3 Christmas greetings from cinema management 1950-51.
- DDX 2832 ACC10919  
Handbills for the Plaza Cinema, Chorley, [1950s]

## 6. Secondary Sources

A number of sources related to local cinema are held within the local studies collection, both in the Record Office and throughout the library service. Material can be identified by conducting a search on the library catalogue, available at <http://lclcat.lancashire.gov.uk/TalisPrism/>.

### Secondary sources in the Searchroom Library

Jon Burrows, "The First Purpose Built Cinema: The Case Against Colne", *Picture House*, No 30, 2005

John M East, "Going to the Pictures", *Lancashire Life* 21.2 (Feb. 1973)

Maryann Gomes, *The Picture House* (1988)

Burton Grainger, "Memories of King's Hall", in R Y Douglas and A Miller (eds.), *An Accrington Miscellany* (1975)

Dick Hamilton, "Lancashire Cinema", *Lancashire Life* 19.3 (Mar. 1971)

Brian Hornsey, *Ninety Years of Cinema in...* series.

A series of short pamphlets detailing the history of cinema in specific towns. Many Lancashire relevant titles are held in the local studies library room

William Shenton, "Manchester's First Cinemas 1896-1914", *Manchester Region History Review* 4.2. (Winter 1990-91)

### Useful Websites

<http://www.archives.lancashire.gov.uk>

The website of Lancashire Record Office, including our electronic catalogue, information for planning a visit and contact details.

<http://lanternimages.lancashire.gov.uk/>

The Lancashire Lantern image archive includes many old photographs of local cinemas found within library collections.

<http://www.nwfa.mmu.ac.uk/>

The website of the North West Film Archive, based at Manchester Metropolitan University.

<http://www.cinema-theatre.org.uk/>

The website of the Cinema Theatre Association, who promote the study of old cinemas in the UK. A small number of issues of the society magazine, *Picture House*, are held within local studies collections.