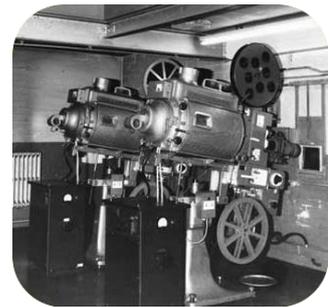


# Sources for the Study of Sheffield's Cinemas



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Front cover illustrations from left to right:

Doorman, Ritz Picture House, 1943  
(*Sheffield Local Studies Library: Picture Sheffield s08068*)

Auditorium of Gaumont Cinema, Barker's Pool, formerly The Regent, c.1950  
(*Sheffield Local Studies Library: Picture Sheffield s02725*)

Projection Room, Rex Cinema, Mansfield Road, 1980  
(*Sheffield Local Studies Library: Picture Sheffield u07623*)

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With thanks to Ben Partridge.

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## Introduction

This booklet lists sources available within Sheffield Libraries Archives and Information for the study of the history of Sheffield's cinemas. It is not a detailed history of cinema rather it points the reader who wishes to carry out their own research to what is available within Sheffield Libraries and Archives.

The first true motion pictures were produced by the Lumière Brothers in the 1890s. Although preceded by Thomas Edison's *kinetoscope*, which was viewed by an individual through a peephole viewer, their portable *Cinematograph* was capable of both recording and projecting film. Initially shown as travelling shows and part of variety acts, the popularity of cinema grew rapidly in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. In Sheffield, this was pioneered by the Sheffield Photo Co., run by the Mottershaw family, which, travelling in a horse drawn cart, displayed films in local halls. The Mottershaws were also innovators in producing films of the popular 'chase' genre, beginning with '*A Daring Daylight Burglary*' in 1903, and proving influential in the developing British film industry.

Following the introduction of fire safety legislation controlling the use of highly flammable Nitrate film stock, travelling shows were largely replaced by purpose built cinema halls, which rapidly proliferated. While the Central Hall, Norfolk Street had been Sheffield's first Cinema when it opened on the 10<sup>th</sup> July 1905, all films were accompanied by variety acts. The city's first purpose built cinema was the Sheffield Picture Palace in Union Street, opening in August 1910, and the following years saw a proliferation of small theatres. From the late 1920s, the addition of sound to film spurred another new wave of theatres in the 1930s, with the Paragon becoming Sheffield's first cinema designed in the sound era.

This expansion was halted by the outbreak of the Second World War, though cinemas continued to operate. Over the 12<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> of December 1940, the city was bombed in the 'Sheffield Blitz', killing over 660 people and causing severe damage to the city. Several cinemas were badly hit during the bombing, and did not re-open.

By the 1950s and 60s, audience numbers were beginning to decline and cinemas began to close, finding it difficult to compete with the rising popularity of television. Despite the advent of new innovations such as stereophonic sound and bigger screens, and the normalisation of colour film, many of the original theatres closed, and the buildings were either re-purposed as supermarkets and bingo-halls, or demolished.

The 1980s and 90s saw the emergence and success of a new kind of cinema - the multiplex. Often linked to the development of large retail areas and with multiple screens, they established the dominance of a few, far larger corporate cinemas catering to audiences from across a much wider area. Sheffield's first multiplex was the AMC Crystal Peaks, opening in 1988. However, the opening of the Showroom in 1995 has maintained the presence of independent and arthouse cinema in the city.

## Timeline showing key dates

1894	The Lumière Brothers produce 'Sortie de l'usine Lumière de Lyon', considered the first true Motion-Picture
1905	The first theatre to show only films – the Nickelodeon – opens in Pittsburgh, USA. Central Hall in Norfolk Street, Sheffield opens as Sheffield's first cinema on 10 <sup>th</sup> July, showing films accompanied by variety acts.
1907	The Theatre Royal opens as a cinema
1908	The Grand Theatre opens as a cinema
1909	The Attercliffe Palace, Hillsborough Palace of Varieties and Uppertorpe Picture Palace open.
1910	The Roscoe Palace and Sheffield Picture Palace open, the latter of which was the first purpose built cinema in the city.
1911	The Electra Palace, Electric Theatre, Heeley Electric Palace, Phoenix Theatre, Walkley Electric Theatre and Woodseats Palace open. The Hillsborough Palace of Varieties closes. The Olympia Electric Palace shows films at an ice rink for a brief period.
1912	The Albert Hall, Chapeltown Picture Palace, Crookes Picture Palace, Don Picture Palace, Hillsborough Kinema House, Picturedrome and Tinsley Picture Palace open.
1913	The Central Hall (Beighton), Cinema House, Coliseum, Darnall Cinema, Darnall Picture Palace, Globe Picture Hall, Heeley Coliseum, Oxford Picture Palace, Park Picture Palace and Unity Picture Palace open
1914	Greystones Picture Palace, High Green Picture Palace, Lansdowne Picture Palace, Norfolk Picture Palace, Walkley Palladium, Weston Picture Palace, Wincobank Picture Palace and Woodhouse Picture Palace open. The Central Hall, Norfolk Street, renamed the New Tivoli.
1915	The Pavillion, Rutland Picture House and Star Picture House open. Uppertorpe Picture Palace closes.
1916	Walkley Electric Theatre closes.
1920	The Abbeydale Picture House, Adelphi Picture Theatre, Chantrey Picture House, Heeley Green Picture House, Lyric Picture House, Page Hall Cinema and Wicker Picture House open. The Grand Theatre closes.
1921	The Ecclesfield Cinema House, Hillsborough Park Cinema, Scala, Stocksbridge Palace and Victory Palace open.
1922	The Central Picture House and Sunbeam Pictures open. The Electric Theatre closes. The Roscoe palace re-opens as the New Roscoe.
1927	The Regent opens. The New Tivoli damaged by a fire.
1931	The Hippodrome opens as a cinema.

1933	The Theatre Royal closes.
1934	The Paragon opens.
1935	The Regal opens.
1937	The Plaza and Ritz open. The Albert Hall and Attercliffe Palace close.
1938	The Carlton and Forum open.
1939	The Capitol and Rex open.
1940	The Picturedrome closes in June.  The 'Sheffield Blitz' occurs over the 12 <sup>th</sup> and 15 <sup>th</sup> of December. Several cinemas are among the thousands of buildings destroyed or damaged, including the New Tivoli, Central Picture House, Lansdowne Picture Palace and Rutland Picture House.
1945	The Electra Palace re-opens as the News Theatre.
1952	The Scala closes.
1954	Norfolk Picture Palace closes.
1956	The Odeon, Flat Street opens.
1957	Darnall Cinema, High Green Picture Palace, Victory Palace, Weston Picture Palace and Woodhouse Picture Palace close.
1958	Darnall Picture Palace, Don Picture Palace and Tinsley Picture Palace close.
1959	The Carlton, Chantrey Picture House, Ecclesfield Cinema House, Globe Picture Hall, Page Hall Cinema, Unity Picture Palace and Wincobank Picture Palace close.
1960	The Phoenix Theatre closes.
1961	ABC Angel Street opens. The Cinema House, Crookes Picture Palace, Heeley Coliseum, Regal, Sunbeam Pictures and Woodseats Palace close. Heeley Green Picture Palace re-opens as the Tudor.
1962	The Tudor, Lyric Picture House, Paragon, New Roscoe, Star Picture House and Walkley Palladium close. The News Theatre re-opens as the Classic. Wicker Picture House re-opens as Studio 7
1963	The Central Hall (Beighton), Chapelton Picture Palace, Coliseum, Hippodrome, Plaza and Stocksbridge Palace close.
1964	The Oxford Picture Palace and Sheffield Picture Palace close.
1965	The Cinerama Touring Theatre visits Sheffield. Heeley Electric Palace closes.

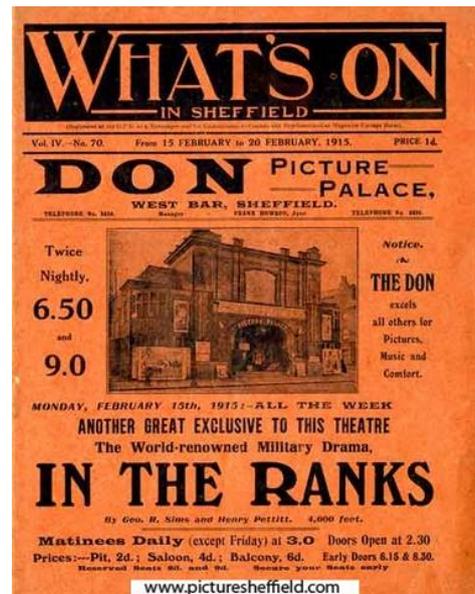
1966	Hillsborough Kinema House, Park Picture Palace and the Ritz close.
1967	The Adelphi Picture Theatre and Hillsborough Park Cinema close.
1968	Greystones Picture Palace closes.
1969	Cinecenta opens. The Forum and Manor Cinema close. The Regent re-opens as Gaumont 1 and 2
1970	The Pavillion closes
1971	The Odeon, Flat Street closes.
1972	Cineplex opens.
1974	Studio 7 re-opens as Studios 5, 6 & 7
1975	The Abbeydale Picture House and the Capitol close.
1979	Gaumont 3 opens
1982	The Classic and Rex close.
1983	The city's only independent cinema, the Cineplex closes. It is bought by the city council and re-opens as the Anvil Civic Cinema.
1985	The Gaumont closes.
1987	The Odeon, Burgess Street opens. Studios 5, 6 & 7 close
1988	AMC Crystal Peaks opens, Sheffield's first 'Multiplex' Cinema. ABC Angel Street closes
1990	Anvil closes.
1991	Cinecenta closes.
1992	The Odeon, Arundel Gate opens.
1993	Warner Cinemas Multiplex opens at Meadowhall, renamed Warner village in 1997, and re-branded as Vue in 2003.
1994	The Odeon, Burgess Street closes.
1995	The Showroom opens.
1998	Virgin Cinema Megaplex opens. It is rebranded UGC in 1999, and becomes Cineworld in 2005
2015	Curzon Cinema, George Street opens.

## A selection of Images from the Picture Sheffield Collection



Frank Mottershaw (on left), setting out from the Peacock Inn, Owlter Bar, with his portable cinema equipment aboard a four wheeler (*Picture Sheffield*, y02359)

Advert for Don Picture Palace cinema, West Bar, Sheffield, 1915 (*Picture Sheffield*, y08883)



Staff from Sheffield Park Picture Palace, South Street. Opened 2 August 1913, seating 900 (*Picture Sheffield*, s02769)

The Odeon, junction of Norfolk Street and Flat Street. Opened 16th July 1956 (*Picture Sheffield*, s21294)



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Local newspaper cuttings collection

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(*Sheffield Archives: NR623*)

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(*Sheffield Archives: CB1538*)

Approved Plans for the Sheffield Picture Palace, 1910 - 1935  
(*Sheffield Archives: AP/4/3/6*)

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(*Sheffield Archives: X616*)

### **Library and Archive collections held elsewhere**

The British Film Institute archives and the BFI Reuben Library contain 60,000 fiction films, 120,000 non-fiction films, 750,000 television titles, as well as scripts, pressbooks, posters, and other cinema ephemera. Locally relevant material ranges from the Mottershaw's early chase films to the work of the Sheffield Film Co-op in the 1970s and 80s

[www.bfi.org.uk/archive-collections](http://www.bfi.org.uk/archive-collections)

The National Media Museum in Bradford holds the National Cinematography Collection alongside similar collections on photography and television.

[www.nationalmediamuseum.org.uk/collection](http://www.nationalmediamuseum.org.uk/collection),

The Yorkshire Film Archive finds, preserves and provides public access to moving images made in or about the Yorkshire region. It also manages the collections held by the North East Film Archive.

[www.yorkshirefilmarchive.com/](http://www.yorkshirefilmarchive.com/)

The archives of British Pathé are accessible online

[www.britishpathe.com/](http://www.britishpathe.com/)

Further information on film archives and links to other organisations can be found at [filmarchives.org.uk](http://filmarchives.org.uk)

The National Archives Discovery catalogue includes information on many archives held locally in England and Wales in addition to the National Archives itself

[discovery.nationalarchives.gov.uk/](http://discovery.nationalarchives.gov.uk/)

The Archives Hub contains catalogues describing archives held in universities and colleges in the UK [www.archiveshub.ac.uk/](http://www.archiveshub.ac.uk/)

Sheffield City Archives and Local Studies services collect and preserve original records and printed material relating to Sheffield and the surrounding area.

The information dates from the 12<sup>th</sup> century to the present and relates to Sheffield, South Yorkshire and north Derbyshire.

Included are extensive collections of books • pamphlets • photographs • church registers • newspapers • census records • minutes • diaries • films • maps • deeds • records from schools • hospitals • businesses and charities • family estates • personal papers etc.

Our facilities include:

Study areas • expert staff on hand to help you make the most of your visit • a library of reference books • photocopying and photography services • free Internet access • microform machines and printers • catalogues and indexes • a range of useful publications for sale • CD-Rom library • on-line image library.

### **Adding to our collections**

Sheffield Libraries and Archives seeks to preserve information about events in our city's history. If you have photographs or personal papers that may be worth preserving please consider safeguarding them for current and future generations by placing them in the care of Sheffield Libraries and Archives. It is only through the generosity of individuals and organisations that we are able to have a complete record of important events in the history of Sheffield and the nation. We are interested in photographs, flyers and posters, minutes of meetings etc. For advice on record keeping and the facilities we offer please contact us ([archives@sheffield.gov.uk](mailto:archives@sheffield.gov.uk) or 0114 203 9395).

<p><b>Sheffield Local Studies Library</b>  1<sup>st</sup> floor  Central Library  Surrey Street  Sheffield  S1 1XZ</p> <p>Tel: 0114 273 4753  Fax: 0114 273 5009</p> <p><a href="mailto:archives@sheffield.gov.uk">archives@sheffield.gov.uk</a></p> <p><a href="http://www.sheffield.gov.uk/archives">www.sheffield.gov.uk/archives</a></p> <p>(selected) Sheffield Local Studies Library catalogue  <a href="https://www.sheffield.gov.uk/libraries/archives-and-local-studies/catalogues.html">https://www.sheffield.gov.uk/libraries/archives-and-local-studies/catalogues.html</a></p>	<p><b>Sheffield City Archives</b>  52 Shoreham Street  Sheffield  S1 4SP</p> <p>Tel: 0114 203 9395  Fax: 0114 203 9398</p> <p><a href="mailto:archives@sheffield.gov.uk">archives@sheffield.gov.uk</a></p> <p><a href="http://www.sheffield.gov.uk/archives">www.sheffield.gov.uk/archives</a></p> <p>(selected) Archives catalogues:  <a href="https://www.sheffield.gov.uk/libraries/archives-and-local-studies/catalogues.html">https://www.sheffield.gov.uk/libraries/archives-and-local-studies/catalogues.html</a>  and  <a href="http://discovery.nationalarchives.gov.uk/">http://discovery.nationalarchives.gov.uk/</a></p>
<p>For 70,000+ images of Sheffield: <a href="http://www.picturesheffield.com">www.picturesheffield.com</a></p>	
	<p><a href="http://www.sheffield.gov.uk/archives">www.sheffield.gov.uk/archives</a></p>
	<p><a href="http://www.twitter.com/shefflibraries">www.twitter.com/shefflibraries</a></p>
	<p><a href="http://shefflibraries.blogspot.co.uk/">http://shefflibraries.blogspot.co.uk/</a></p>
	<p><a href="http://www.flickr.com/photos/shefflibraries">www.flickr.com/photos/shefflibraries</a></p>
	<p><a href="http://www.youtube.com/user/SheffieldArchives1">www.youtube.com/user/SheffieldArchives1</a></p>
	<p><a href="http://www.facebook.com/shefflibraries">www.facebook.com/shefflibraries</a></p>