

Other memories of the Regal

Bob and Ann Mason

The Regal Cinema (or 'Picture House' as we called it) was popular with courting couples in those days because of the double seats in the back row! However, the projection equipment had a reputation for breaking down during the performance.

We remember the Regal well because it was where we met for our first date. As Bob lived in Ebley and Ann lived in Cambridge (down the A38), we decided the Regal in Stonehouse would be a convenient half-way meeting point, and that we would both use our 'push bikes' for transport. The film showing was "Beau Geste" and, true to form, the projection equipment broke down halfway through the performance.

Because of the breakdown, the film ended later than expected and, when we got outside, rain was pouring down. Being the perfect gentleman, Bob accompanied Ann on her journey home. Although he was soaked to the skin, Bob persevered with his new friendship (despite Ann's mum having said 'You won't see him again!'). We were married in 1957 and sixty years on from that first date we are still together and living in Cotswold Green, just about half a mile from the site of the old Regal Cinema.

Darrell Webb

In 1958, when I was about 8 or 9, I had a school friend called Michael Stratford who lived in the red brick house next to the Regal Cinema in Gloucester Road [where the Esso garage is now located]. His father, Arthur Stratford, owned and managed the Cinema. Arthur was a very nice man, small in stature, but I do remember he was nice. My Father worked there for a time as an usher, around 1937 when he was a schoolboy, showing people to their seats with a torch.

I remember Michael persuading his father to let us climb the metal ladder on the outside of the building to the projector room and watch a film from there. That was the only way to get to the projector room if I remember correctly. We were never allowed up the few steps at the front entrance, in through the double glass doors, into the foyer to the cinema. But I remember clearly the noises coming from the building of the many action films being shown there.

Ruth Williams

The 'Picture House' was made of red brick with four stone steps across nearly the whole width of the front of the building. They led up to two glass doors that led into a grand foyer. Standing outside the glass doors was the doorman Charlie. To me he looked like a grand soldier with his blue uniform and gold braid on his shoulders.

Three times a week my Mum, my Brother, my Sister and myself would all go to the pictures. Mum would often take other children in with us. There were always two films and, after the first film, the ice cream lady would come around and, of course, my Mum always bought us an ice cream.

Colin Wood

I remember all the children from Stonehouse School going to the Regal in 1954 to see the film of the Queen's Coronation. Us kids used to call the Regal 'Arthur's bug hutch', I suppose a bit like the other popular saying about cinemas - 'flea pits'. There was always a fight to get the back seats because they were doubles and we fancied we might get a girl to sit by us if we were lucky. Towards the latter days, the projector got a bit faulty and the film was always breaking down. We used to shout 'Come on Arthur, get it going!' If we got too rowdy he would send the usherette to shine her torch on us (to try to keep us quiet). The trains used to rattle by on the line behind the cinema and often the driver would blow his whistle. Maybe it was because he was coming into the station but we thought he was doing it on purpose.