

PRESS RELEASE

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HISTORIC CINEMA OPENS TO PUBLIC

- New exhibition open daily throughout school holidays from 8 April
- Curzon Collection reopens on 16 April with new items installed
- Tony Robinson records audio tour

From Friday 8 April, the historic Curzon Cinema in Clevedon will be opening its doors on a daily basis to allow visitors to experience the full history of the Grade II listed building.

Having operated continuously as a cinema since April 1912, the story of the Curzon – originally called The Picture House, and later the Maxime – tells the story of cinema exhibition in the UK in microcosm. The new exhibition, developed with the support of the Heritage Lottery Fund, not only allows visitors to see newly-refurbished areas of the building closed to the public since the early 1970s, but to gain an insight into the design and operation of cinemas in the pre-multiplex era.

The Curzon will be open daily from 6pm prior to the main evening screening. At weekends and during school holidays it will also be open from 12 o'clock – 1.30pm, when the auditorium opens for the matinee show.

Curzon Director Gareth Negus said, “Restoring the Curzon has always been about more than repairing the building. We wanted to open up the heritage of the Curzon to our visitors; including not only the physical building but its social history, and what it has meant to the people of Clevedon over the past century.

“Even some of our regular customers have been unaware that there is more to the Curzon than the box office and the auditorium. The Curzon Collection of Heritage Cinema Technology has over 200 artefacts that tell the story of cinema projection from the silent era to the dawn of the digital age, but up until now we have only been able to show it to people on a few weekends each year. Now, everyone will be able to see at least some of the Collection on a daily basis.”

Highlights of the new exhibition areas:

The newly enlarged **foyer** features a timeline display placing key moments from the Curzon's history alongside cinema and world events. An accompanying touch screen gives more detail, and includes an audio tour of the building specially recorded by actor, *Time Team* presenter and Curzon Patron Tony Robinson.

The new **Oak Room Lounge** has displays that focus on some of the people who have worked at the Curzon over the decades. It also has a new coffee bar where visitors can enjoy hot and cold drinks.

The upper **Gallery** boasts displays a nostalgic selection of cinema memorabilia, a display of editing equipment, and a viewing panel allowing visitors to see the old balcony and magnificent ceiling of the Curzon's auditorium. There is also a fully functioning **mini cinema** with several vintage projectors installed which will be showing classic shorts, including newsreels and cartoons, on a monthly basis.

The Gallery also features selected items from the full Curzon Collection of Heritage Cinema Technology, to be rotated every few months. The first display features a range of home cinema film projectors.

Curzon Collection: Latest Additions

Over the past decade, under curator Maurice Thornton, the Curzon Collection has grown to become one of the country's most extensive collections of cinema projection technology, and certainly the largest to be housed in a working cinema. Now featuring over 250 items, it encompasses projectors for both home and cinema use, as well as toys, film cameras and editing equipment, some dating back to the silent era. Most recently, the Collection has received a 35mm Westrex projector from Pat Scott of the Ritz Cinema in Burnham, a donation which brings the Collection right up to the start of the digital era. Unlike the other large projectors in the Collection, the Westrex sees the film loaded onto a flat platter (or 'cake stand').

Maurice Thornton said, "The platter system was the last major change to projector design before the start of the digital age. The Collection now features projectors dating from 1909 to the most recent generation of film projectors."

The full collection will be reopening on Saturday 16 April at 12 noon in the former Coach House at the rear of the Curzon, and will be open to the public on alternate weekends. The mini cinema will be operating on a monthly basis, starting on Saturday 16 and Sunday 17 April with a programme of shorts before the matinee.

Ends

For further information, image etc please contact Gareth Negus on 01275 879115, 07946 291607 or gareth@curzon.org.uk

Notes for editors

The Curzon Community Cinema

The Curzon Community Cinema was first opened as The Picture House in April 1912. Now a Grade II listed building, it has been owned since 1996 by a registered charity, the Curzon Clevedon Community Centre for the Arts, formed to buy the building and run it as a community cinema.

www.curzon.org.uk

www.twitter.com/CurzonCinema

www.facebook.com/CurzonClevedon

Heritage Lottery Fund

Using money raised through the National Lottery, the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) sustains and transforms a wide range of heritage for present and future generations to take part in, learn from and enjoy. From museums, parks and historic places to archaeology, natural environment and cultural traditions, we invest in every part of our diverse heritage. HLF has supported more than 26,000 projects, allocating over £4billion across the UK, including £395million to the South West alone.

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