

April 2020 Newsletter

www.friendsofhpph.org

Hello Everyone!

Well, it's been a rather dramatic month hasn't it?! Even though we have been working towards a period of closure for the Picture House, the circumstances in which that has come about and the speed at which things have unfolded have been a challenge for us too both logistically and emotionally.

The team have been incredible with staff all working together to ensure that the Picture House itself is safe and secure during this period whilst simultaneously trying to find solutions for how to communicate and support one another outside of the confines of our cosy cinema.

Naturally our thoughts also turned to you, our audience. Needless to say, we sure as heck miss you all. As plentiful as digital access to films is these days it's simply not a substitute for watching and sharing films with others in the physical realm. We miss hearing what films you liked and didn't like, what else you've been watching and reading, how your garden is doing...you get the picture. We also hope you are all ok despite being stuck in a situation that is not ok.

So, with this in mind we decided to put together a pretty comprehensive update from us letting you all know what we're up to at the moment but also just sign posting a few resources which are available in our community in case anyone may need some extra support right now.

Development Update

Throughout February and early March we were in the process of winding up the Picture House ready to start our building work. Those last few months at the Picture House were incredible, including a run of the Academy Award winning *Parasite* which topped all our attendance records for a single title in over 15 years! We hadn't yet hosted our final farewell screenings of *The Last Picture Show* and *The Smallest Show on Earth* but we were starting to find our stride with our off-site programme and it had been a pleasure seeing many of you join us for some of these shows.

When the industry wide closure of theatres and cinemas happened mid-March this was obviously one of the biggest moves in the UK to help fight the spread of Coronavirus and a number of other measures followed. In England there hasn't been a widespread halt to all works on construction in the same way that there has been in some other countries but of course this is an incredibly tumultuous period so in order to ensure our next steps are wise ones and safe for everyone involved we are pausing the project for three months to understand the impact of the current situation.

We at the cinema are as committed now as ever to the project as are our parent company and all our partners. Our key funder, the National Lottery Heritage Fund, are helping guide us through this experience, allowing us to learn from their wealth of expertise looking after other heritage projects so we can keep working through this process with all the care and consideration we've given to the project to date.

Inevitably this will impact on the start of building works and our re-opening date. Unfortunately, it's too early to understand exactly what that impact will be but you've all been so patient already with this ever-expanding timeline so I will simply say thank you, again, for understanding. We continue to be lucky beyond belief to have an audience who have been understanding enough to go on this incredible journey with us.

The current situation is also going to impact on some of our match funding for the project as we must use some of the reserves the company had committed to us to instead sustain the organisation through the closure of not just the Picture House but also our sister venues, the Grand Theatre and the City Varieties. This is, however, another obstacle we can and will overcome with time and the continued support of those who can see the beauty and the potential in lovely little cinema. And, of course, a pause to the project doesn't for one second mean a pause to the cinema or the team so we are using this time to try reflect, learn and plan, to work out how we can help our community as it comes out this crisis changed and with a new set of needs we must be ready to address and support.

Hyde Park Picks

With all cinemas closed and screenings on hold for the near future, it's a tough time for the UK film industry. Thankfully a growing number of top independent films are available to stream from home – often for free – allowing you to continue discovering & supporting filmmaking talent from around the world.

With this in mind we've launched Hyde Park Picks – daily recommendations capturing of some of the best films available online. With picks coming from staff & volunteers at the Picture House as well as regular partners like Pavilion and Birds Eye View, we'll sometimes include added extras alongside recommendations – from recorded introductions & live-streamed discussions, to further reading and related watching.

We're publishing these daily across our social media channels (details of which are at the bottom of this newsletter) and on our website as well. We're sorry these are by their nature very much dependent on access to the internet but for now this was the only solution we could call to mind.

Local Support

If you need comprehensive information about how Leeds City Council is dealing with Coronavirus it is on their website here: www.leeds.gov.uk/coronavirus

In our local community Rainbow Junktion at All Hallows on Regent Terrace are continuing to be a beacon of wonderfulness. Currently open every Monday and Thursday between 12pm and 3pm for Pay As You Feel meals and donated food, all to take away. They are also open on Fridays between 12 and 3pm with some shop items to take-away.

Locally, the Cardigan Road Co-op is collecting donations for Rainbow Junktion if you happen to be near there and would like to support. You can also drop small donations into them directly or contact them if you're able to make a larger donation.

If you can get to it, the Real Junk Food Project are re-distributing lots of food and non-food items directly from their Kindness Sharehouse on Denby Dale Road, near Wakefield. Open Mon - Sun from 10am – 4pm for collection of boxes. They also do isolation packs for people who can't leave the house. Call 01924 365064 to discuss the different boxes you can get.

Help if you have to stay at home or who to contact if you want to volunteer

If you are self-isolating and you do not have friends or family who live locally who can help, you can get help from Voluntary Action Leeds. They can be reached on info@val.org.uk or if you need help phone 0113 378 1877.

Voluntary Action Leeds are also co-ordinating a lot of the volunteering efforts in the city at the moment so if you would like to help but don't know how they're a great place to start.

Remembering local cinemas

A message for you all from Laura, our creative engagement officer:

Hi everyone, I hope that you're all coping with the ongoing lockdown. As some of us may find ourselves with more time on our hands than usual, I'd like to share with you all something I've been working on and extend an invitation to you to participate in a collaborative research project!

Many of you will know me as one of the people who sold you your ticket, or tore it at the door, but I was very lucky to join the team on a more permanent basis last year, with responsibility for organising a set of learning and communication activities based around our cinema's amazing heritage. Since starting this role, I've been thinking about the ways in which we can articulate what is special about our beloved cinema to a greater number and wider range of people. One of the biggest projects I'm currently working on involves seeking out some of the histories of the many other cinemas in Leeds that appeared at the same sort of time as the Hyde Park Picture House, but to whom the passing of time has not been so kind.

I'm interested in collecting anything that relates to the pre-1920s local cinemas in Leeds, these are the ones that are most like our own little Picture House. Around us we used to have The Lyceum, The Haddon Hall Picture Palace, The Lounge, plus there were many others along Kirkstall Road.

For example, here's the Burley Picture House, built in 1913 and closed in 1959.



Photo credit: West Yorkshire Archive Service

The outbreak of war in 1914 put a stop to the boom in building small cinemas, making this early period a distinct and particularly interesting period of cinema history.

You might have a photograph, a newspaper cutting or a memory of one of these places.

I'm after something that constitutes a personal connection with an individual cinema and something that I wouldn't be able to find on the internet - as you might guess I've already been doing quite a lot of searches online! If you have any memories of these lost early cinemas, I'd love to hear them!

You can either email me: laura@hydeparkpicturehouse.co.uk or write a letter and post that, including any copies or photographs of items you may have, to me at the Picture House address:

The Hyde Park Picture House, 73 Brudenell Road, Leeds, LS6 1JD

Friends of Hyde Park AGM

We normally host the Friends of Hyde Park AGM late in May or early in June. The committee have been working hard to plan this year's AGM and with all the changes going on at the Picture House it feels like it's going to be a really important opportunity for us to get to get and look to the future while also reflecting on the past. With the cinema closed the plan is to host the AGM at HEART Headingley Enterprise and Arts Centre. Obviously, we can't commit to a date while the current situation continues but please keep an eye out for further notifications about this and we hope you can join us.

Wendy & Team

wendy@hydeparkpicturehouse.co.uk

You can find the cinema online at:

Website - Hydeparkpicturehouse.co.uk
Instagram - @HydeParkPH
Twitter - @HydeParkPH
Facebook - facebook.com/TheHydeParkPictureHouse

And you can find the Friends online at:

Website - friendsofhpph.org
Twitter - @friendsofhpph
Facebook - facebook.com/FOHPPH