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- * Notes: This transcription has rendered the original text as written, including some spelling and grammatical errors. In response to call for cinema memories published in the *Yarmouth Mercury*.

Eric Williams
[redacted]
BRADWELL,
GT YARMOUTH, [redacted].
14th September 1995.

Phone [redacted].

Dear Mr Peart,

I was interested to note your letter in the Yarmouth Mercury of last week, I hope you have a lot of success with the research of 'cinemagoing', I was born 1925 and lived in Yarmouth my early years though not born here. At times I lived with my grandmother in the rows off Middlegate St, my grandfather worked on the quay loading and unloading ships that arrived from many other ports especially Russia (timber boats), at times things were hard and there was no work at 'lumping' as his work was called, he being a 'lumper of the quay', on one of these occasions he took me to the pictures, I had not started school so was probably four or five years old, we went to the EMPIRE on the sea front, I recall it vividly (but not the film) because he fell asleep and I had to wake him up to go home. At this time I recall there was the GEM, now the Windmill, the Regent (posh place) in Regent Rd, the AQUARIUM now the Royalty on sea front, and best of all for us as kids 'The Bug House or PLAZA' in the market place where Woolworths now stand, there was another later called the REGAL at the top of Regent Rd now a shopping area.

The PLAZA stands out best because every saturday afternoon crowds of us kids managed to procure a penny to go in, sometimes an egg was the entrance fee, the eggs were then given to the Gt

Yarmouth hospital. It was great queuing up to go in, everyone was excited to see the trailer featuring TOM MIX the cowboy, it was a serial, every week the film ended with Tom's horse flying over the mountain edge or about to be scalped by Indians --- he always survived, there was much shouting during the film especially if some baddy was creeping up behind Tom, the roar was always 'look behind you' with groans of utmost concern. There were no lady usherettes, only an old chap (he could have been in his twenties but to us kids he was old) if things got out of hand (as often they did) he would get hold of the one he considered causing trouble, by the scruff on the neck and out, no messing about with him. My mother once took me to the Plaza, upstairs and costing fourpence, I felt like a king for ages after that but do not recall the film.

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I went to the PLAZA more than anywhere else almost up to the war years, when the family moved to Southtown there was a grocer shop run by a couple of old ladies, about 1936-37, these ladies displayed adverts for the cinemas and they had a card issued by the cinemas allowing free admittance, well, I had three other brothers and it was a scramble to get hold of this card, we used it a lot, about this time there was a series of films called (I believe) 'What would you do chums', in any event this is exactly how the film ended with those words, the star in the film was a SID WALKER, of course there were films I could not see for some reason or other, either lack of money or showing too late in the evening, however my older brothers would tell me all about them the next day. Just as the war broke out I moved to Bradwell so went to Gorleston, there were two cinemas, THE PALACE and THE COLISEUM both in the high street, the PALACE is now a bingo hall, it is exactly the same in structure outside as original, it still has an asbestos sheet roof, the COLISEUM is now a shopping area.

At times there was tea available during the showing at the COLLY as we called it, I did not spend a lot of time going to the pictures during the early war years though expected to do so twice a week, there was a bomb that went through the roof of the REGAL but did not explode and no-one was hurt.

As amusing end to my picture going was when I returned from Burma as the war ended, I took my girl friend to the PALACE in Gorleston, I was dressed in my jungle kit with a mack [jacket] and a very big hat, as we walked in the manager came over, after almost kissing my feet he took my hat and coat (something that had never happened to me before), naturally I expected he would be looking for a tip when I came out because I felt sure he thought I was a general (or something), anyway, I only had enough money for the seats so worried about it a little, fortunately he met us coming out

and again addressing me as SIR, I put my hand in my empty pocket but he waved me away with a 'I hope you enjoyed the film sir'.

AH, those were the days.

Trusting you find this as amusing as I my self,

yours sincerely,