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\* Notes: This transcription has rendered the original text as written, including some spelling and grammatical errors. Sent in response to 1995 call for cinemagoing memories.

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I know its long but try to read it all

Zonia Ives  
[redacted]  
[redacted]  
Gt Yarmouth  
Norfolk

Dear Mr Peart

You don't know the good you did for me when I opened my 'Mercury', first seeing the dear "Old Regal" and then when I read your letter, you made me remember so very much, so I must start by saying a very big thank you!

I was born in 1926 – [date redacted]. My Dad owned and managed the Plaza Cinema (known as the local flea pit) in the 1930s it was open daily 3d for the unemployed, you saw 2 films, newsreel (R. E. Jeffries *Pathetone* or *Pathe Gazette*) and amateur turns with Mr Ernest Sheffield's orchestra in the Pit. Nightly.

Sat mornings it used to be a 1d and a potato, for children only, as it was the Minors, we would see usually a cowboy, Tarzan, Mickey Mouse, or Popeye, and a serial, and then some of the kiddies would do a turn, there was no N.H.S. then so Dad would send all potatoes to the Hospital.

"The Regent Cinema" was managed by Mr Alf Brown, that is still standing. Not a cinema now though.

The Regal was the newest and sadly no longer stands, it was not built until the 1930s and they started the Sunday shows twice daily, by then Dad had the Carlton Hotel in King St and as both Mum and Dad were old music hall artists they stayed overnight with us.

The manager of the Regal was Bernard Wooley, I heard he later became a theatrical agent.

The manager at the Aquarium was Cliff Diamond his wife was a Lupino, aunt of the famous Ida Lupino and Lupino Lane of "My Girl Sal Days" which later became "Me and My Girl".

Then we had the Gem (now the Windmill) and the Empire is still. The Empire and Gem was managed by Mr Ernest Bowles.

The Hippodrome still is here but the days of the lovely Water Ballets are no longer. (Indeed the days of entertainment are no longer) was owned and managed by Mr O'Brien.

I was very fortunate I never paid to do in anywhere Dad said he worked the halls all over the world and he was entitled as he was in the Showmen's Guild, and so all the while we were little I was very lucky. But what I saw I'd pay for today but you can't enjoy films today only the old ones. Sorry I hope I have not bored you I have done myself a lot of good. Thanks again you see I'm housebound and it does me good to think.

Z.M. Ives

Please read on.

P.T.O.

P.S.

I hope you don't mind me writing so much, but memories of these wonderful days are all we have now and as I sit here they come flooding back, the programmes changed twice weekly, Mon, Tues, and Weds. And Thurs, Fri, and Sat, Dad used to give two Woodbines to the smokers and home made coconut ice (pink and white oh for a piece now) to non smokers.

Joan Blondell and Dick Powell, Myrna Loy, and William Powell, John Bowles and Evelyn Laye, Paul Whiteman and the King o Jazz. And believe it or not Cavalcade of Varieties, and Stepping Stones with Hazel Ascot my own brother was in, he was then with a band called "Teddy Joice" Kiltie Juniors never realising his next performance would be for nearly six years booking with the Japs with the Royal Norfolks.

But getting back to the cinema Mr Beldon and Mr Hogg were in the operating box, Gladys Hatch was head usherette, we had four other girls. One who was very pretty called Patsy she used to be the Eldorado ice cream girl in the interval and later left us and went to the Regal.

In the interval Mr Sheffield and 3 gentlemen played popular music, Dad would come out and point to the words of the songs for the audience to sing, and sing they did, he always had a full house got so well liked became a local councillor for 18 years which he still was when he died 1940. Hotel proprietor. 20 odd stone all heart! We were the flea pit, a really happy cinema, Sat morning the kids would first go to the market over the road get a bag of spotted fruit for a ½d and or a ½d of broken biscuits from Kay's Stores, and bring along their potato and have a 1d of magic, "Hopalong Cassidy",

The Clutching Hand serial, going home wondering how the hero would be saved next week. What we did not realise was what a wonderful era it was. When I was a girl people used to say, I wish I was your age you have a lifetime before you, I don't envy young people today, they are so very confused poor kids. "Bless em" you might say they don't know what is real or trick photography do they?

I would be very happy if my what was meant to be a note is helpful, and I feel sure I can think of a lot more about all our cinemas as I spent more time in the flicks than anywhere but I think you have suffered enough, we were a mild version of *The Smallest Show on Earth* the films sometimes "broke down the whistles" but these are all different tales. But if you are interested I have loads of very funny, and happy memories, if you would like to hear them I'd love to tell and perhaps someone may have the same memories. Dad's name was Jack Weller Snr.,