

60 Eastgate The Pavilion Cinema

The following are documents relating to the property when a cinema:

The article 'Pavilion Cinema' was probably written by Marion Eveleigh, curator at the time of writing of Cowbridge Museum.

The plan of the building was loaned for copy to Jeff Alden by Enfys Brown (of Browns the printers).

The letter from Mrs Joyce Tonkin about her memories of the cinema was loaned for copy by Mrs Kath Thomas, wife of Jeff Thomas who restored the building in the 1990s.

The 'History Points' document is the account which can be heard on the QR point at the building.

Written and typed by B Alden 2016

PAVILION CINEMA

From at least 1850 to 1880 the site of the cinema was a Tennis Court. This was the original tennis played with a hard ball and the bare hand. The court was owned by the adjacent Tennis Court inn. On Whit Monday 1866 the Eisteddfod was held at the Tennis Court. 2000 people were catered for but hundreds more turned up. There were long queues and many people fainted.

When the present form of tennis was introduced the court fell into disuse.

It was purchased by Mr. Aubrey C.1880 and became his Wheelwright's workshop and yard. Both he and his son who followed him in the business are now mainly remembered for manufacturing the Glamorganshire Wagons. An handsome example of which can be seen at the Welsh Folk Museum. They were also both licensees of the Inn which was renamed The Wheelwright's Arms. Mr. Richard Aubrey run the business till the early 1920's.

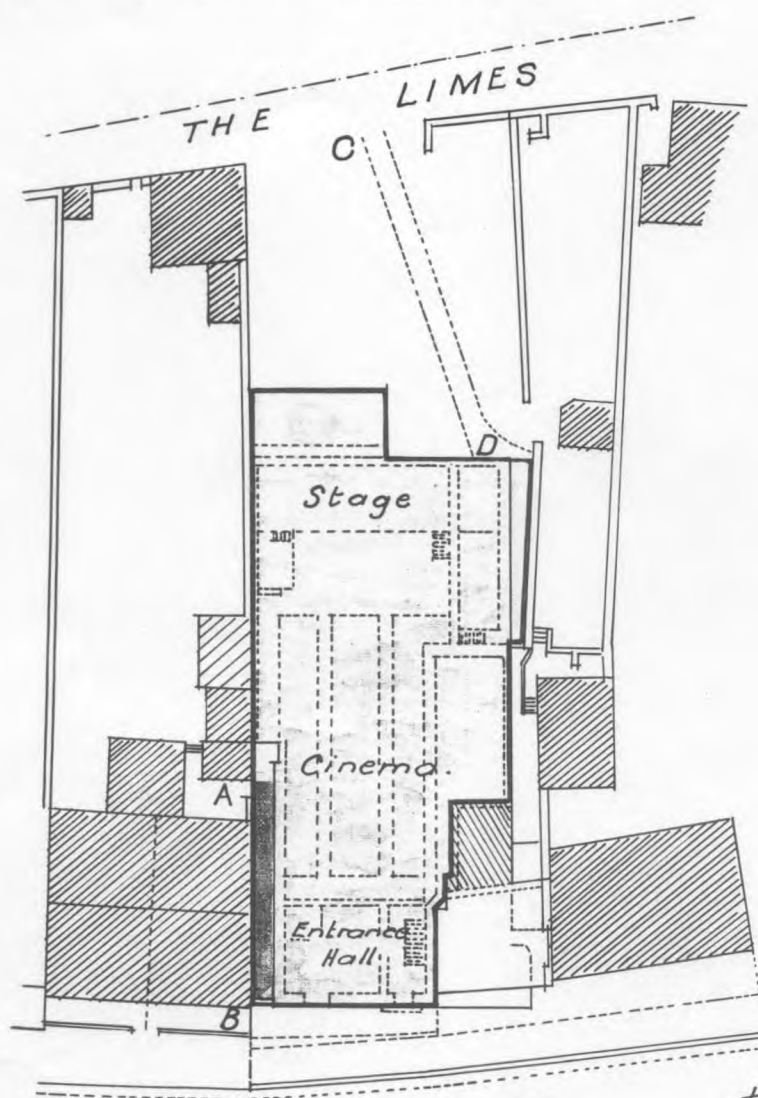
In 1924 Alderman A.T.Mills designed and built the Pavilion Cinema. Mr. Mills originally experimented with the revolutionary technique of steel girder construction but his first attempt was not successful and he had to compromise with a more conventional structure. On the first floor of the cinema was a ballroom considered by many to have the best dance floor in the Vale, some said in South Wales. The Hunt Ball, which was THE social event of the year was held there as well as many other functions. In 1930 after he was made a Freeman of the Borough of Cowbridge, The Right Honourable David Lloyd George was guest of honour at a Luncheon held in the Ballroom. Sadly in 1942 the ballroom was burnt out, it is said the cause was the spontaneous combustion of old film which was stored there during the war.

The cinema continued until the late 1950's but the ballroom was never restored.

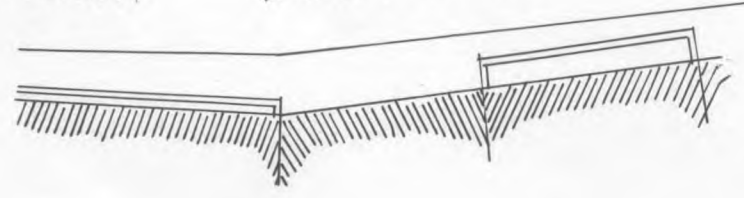
Alderman A.T.Mills was Mayor of Cowbridge in 1920, 1931 and 1932.

There is a photograph of the David Lloyd George luncheon in the Museum. If you are interested it is owned by the Town Council and is in the cell corridor nearest the Council Chamber.

Plan referred to.
Scale 41.66 feet to an inch.



from Cardiff EASTGATE to Bridgend



Telephone
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RICHMOND HOUSE,
STALLING DOWN,
COWBRIDGE, CF7 2DT

Oct 19/95

Dear Mrs Thomas

You will be surprised to hear from me but I knew your Mother very well. I am Mrs Lucharme's sister and might be able to fill you in as regards "The Pavilion". I went to work for Mr Mills in Jan 1925 and was there when he bought the old ballcourt which was eventually the Cinema. I was there from the first brick as you might say. It was completed and opened in September 1925 on the Agricultural Shows night and I was cashier. The first feature film being "This House of Vanity" but I cannot remember the Stars.

The ballroom was not completely finished and did not open until Armistice Night 1925. It is quite right that the floor was considered the best in Wales but it was not sprung as stated in the Gem. It was a maple floor, and as good as, if not better, than any sprung floor.

Mr Mills although a Garage Proprietor was a trained Architect and did all his own plans for 44 High Street + the Cinema.

These few facts may help you with the history
of the place

I have only got one snap which I am enclosing
but it will give you an idea of the style.

I was there from 1925 - 1932 when I left
to get married.

Hope your development will be
successful.

Yours faithfully

Joyce Tonkin (nee Sanders)

Transcript of a letter from Joyce Tonkin (nee Sanders) of Richmond House, Stalling Down, Cowbridge CF7 7DT to Mrs Kath Thomas, dated October 1995.

Dear Mrs Thomas

You will be surprised to hear from me but I knew you Mother very well. I am Mrs Treharne's sister and might be able to fill you in as regards "The Pavilion". I went to work for Mr Mills in Jan 1925 and was there when he bought the old ballroom, which was eventually the Cinema. I was there from the first brick as you might say. It was completed and opened in September 1925 on the Agricultural Show night and I was cashier. The first feature film being "This House of Vanity" but I cannot remember the stars.

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Hope your development will be successful.

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Former Pavilion Cinema, Cowbridge

Former Pavilion Cinema, Cowbridge

This building, with its distinctive round turret, was built in the 1920s as the Pavilion Cinema. It was designed in the Art Deco style of the period and included a ballroom.

The site had previously played an important part in Cowbridge's recreational life. A "ball court" or "tennis court" was situated here for people to play a handball game which was popular in Glamorgan in the 18th century. There were public houses here called the Three Tuns, the Tenn Court and the Wheelwright's Arms, where the publican for over 60 years was wheelwright Richa Aubrey. He invented a velocipede, a kind of flying bicycle which failed to take off.

In the 1920s, the buildings were purchased by AT Mills, garage proprietor and architect, and rebuilt as a cinema with a ballroom above. The photo shows the frontage c.1934. A fire in 1942 destroyed most of the interior and the rear of the building, but a cinema reopened here in 1948 and operated until the 1950s.

The building was subsequently used as a garage for council vehicles but with access from behind, leaving the frontage structurally intact. After decades of neglect, the building was carefully restored for use as offices. The work included a steel canopy with the word "Pavilion" to reproduce one of the building's original features.



Today the building is home to the long-established local law practice Gwyn & Gwyn, now part of the Glamorgan Law group of solicitors. Gwyn & Gwyn was established by two brothers in 1867. Later it was run by William Thomas Gwyn and Arthur William Gwyn, sons of one of the founders

Arthur was born in 1890, he served as a lieutenant in the Welsh Regiment during the First World War. During the battle of the Somme, in France, he was almost buried by soil and earth when a shell landed nearby. He was released after laborious digging by comrades and spent a long time in hospital, recovering from a shoulder injury and shell shock. He went on to be a major figure in Cowbridge's civic life. By 1923 he was a solicitor, deputy town clerk and clerk to the governors of

the grammar and girls' schools. By 1926 he was one of the trustees of the local branch of Barclays Bank and in the 1930s he was town clerk.

His son John David Gwyn also had an aptitude for law, gaining a scholarship to Cambridge University where he achieved a first class degree. He never took up his post-graduate scholarship because he was killed in the Second World War. Our page in his memory is [here](#).

With thanks to Betty Alden and Brian James, of [Cowbridge History Society](#), and Joyce Foster

Where is this HiPoint?

Postcode: CF71 7AB

[Website of Glamorgan Law](#)