



C/w from top left - Donald Sinden, Paul Merton, Bert Kwouk, Ron Moody, Barbara Windsor and Trader Faulkner.

Moviewie people at the Cinema Museum

Stars at the Museum: Sylvia Sims with fans

As a change from all the pictures of equipment and installations featured in Cinema Technology, regular contributor Mark Trompeteler sent in some photos of film-related celebrities he has taken over the past few years at The Cinema Museum, Kennington, London.





Above left: The late Michael Winner with a traditional cinema doorman - but he is NOT the Commodore Orpington, which is shown below - built in 1933, closed as a cinema in 1982! Right: The Cinema Museum, Kennington, London

Ronald Grant, Martin Humphries and the dedicated team of volunteers have organised some truly great, fascinating and very enjoyable evenings at the Cinema Museum featuring many cinema celebrities - sometimes towards the end of their careers and reflecting back on them. The two and a half hour interviews and conversations, and the relatively small size of the audience create wonderfully intimate evenings. Detailed revelations of peoples' careers and in depth insights into the British Film Industry and its development are often revealed.

Amongst these has been: an excellent evening looking at silent film comedians with Paul Merton; a fabulous evening with Barbara Windsor in which she revealed the satisfactions of coping with the demanding acting schedule and challenges of "East-Enders" after all the "Carry On" films; an insight into the long career of Burt Kwouk; a frank and entertaining account of charting a career through British musicals and film with Ron Moody; a delightful evening with Sylvia Sims; a very amusing evening of film and theatre anecdotes with Donald Sinden, and a revealing insight into the life of British film and theatre royalty - memories of Vivian Leigh, Laurence Olivier and others - through the life and reminiscences of former Peter Finch protégé - Trader Faulkner.

Cinema exhibition has always been supported by press, publicity, advertising and personal appearances by cinema celebrities.

In the "golden age of cinema" the studios, including the Rank Organisation in the UK, often required film stars to visit and make appearances in cinemas, not always showcase and first run cinemas, but smaller local cinemas on the circuit too.

In the evening with **Donald Sinden**, he shared an amusing anecdote concerned with film exhibition and celebrity appearances that was shared with him by Kay Kendall. The young actress was regularly attending functions, receptions, premieres and press events as part of her contract work. She met the Belgian ambassador who offered her a number of dinner invitations which she repeatedly declined. She said that although she was very busy, if he really wanted to accompany her somewhere he could accompany her to a personal appearance she had to make at The Commodore, Orpington - a suburb of South London. He was delighted to accept her invitation.

After a week or so, the night of her scheduled appearance at The Commodore, Orpington arrived. The limousine with chauffeur and the Belgian ambassador arrived at the appointed hour outside her central London flat. All regaled in evening wear, ceremonial sash and medals the Belgian ambassador dutifully opened the door of the car for her and they drove off through the streets of South London to Orpington.

On arrival at the cinema, the cheering crowds were all outside with the local press

and some local dignitaries and there at the entrance stood the manager of the cinema and a little behind him the doorman / commissioner. The young actress and the ambassador in his resplendent sash and medals climbed the stairs and the maroon uniform, gold braid, epaulettes and gold buttons of the doorman / commissioner contrasted against the black-tie suit of the manager. As the ambassador reached the two he ignored the outstretched hand of the manager and offered his hand to the doorman / commissioner saying - **"So pleased to meet you Commodore Orpington."**

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London's Cinema Museum is devoted to keeping alive the spirit of cinema from the days before the multiplex. Set in historic surroundings in Kennington, close to the Elephant & Castle, the Cinema Museum houses a unique collection of artefacts, memorabilia and equipment that preserves the history and grandeur of cinema from the 1890s to the present day.

The Cinema Museum, 2 Dugard Way, London SE11 4TH
www.cinemamuseum.org.uk