

## Movie Theatres & Cinemas - Upper Hutt

On 28<sup>th</sup> October 1896 an Australian showman presented the first public screening of motion pictures in Wellington at the Exchange Hall in Lambton quay.

*(Reference The New Zealand Book of Events consultant Editors Gordon McLachlan, Michael King, Hamish Keith, Ranginui Walker, Laurie Barber page 46)*

### Time Line

1910	Atlas Picture Company
1912	People Pictures
1914	Records Hall Theatre
1928	Cosy Theatre
1928	Majestic Theatre
1930c	Trentham Military Camp Theatre
1935	Mayfair Theatre
1976	TV Movie Set
1980	Maidstone Cinema
2001	Lighthouse Theatre
2000s	Ascot Cinema
2015	Miro Cinema
2015	Monterey Cinema

## A – Z Movie Theatres

### Atlas Picture Company - opened 1910 – closed 1910

The Atlas Picture Company was a business that travelled around New Zealand showing movies. There was only one newspaper article recording the Atlas Picture Company in Upper Hutt. I believe the Atlas Picture Company only made the one visit to Upper Hutt.

New Zealand Times newspaper 10 September 1910

The Atlas Picture Company date and place unknown. "The Atlas Picture Company will appear at the Upper Hutt Town Hall tonight when a new programme will be shown. The films are well chosen and embrace all subjects of the moving picture art.

*(Reference papers past website New Zealand Times newspaper 10 September 1910 page 6)*

### Ascot Cinema – 68 Queen Street - opened 2000s – closed 2013

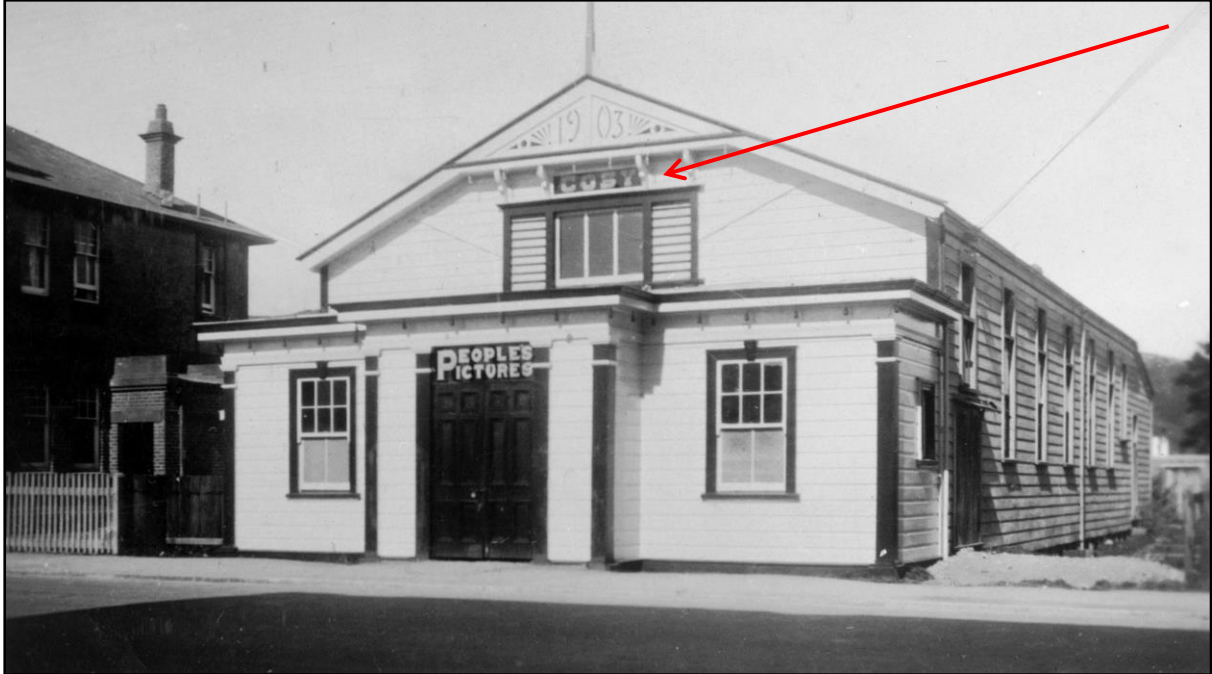


*(Reference website image Ascot Cinemas Upper Hutt)*

Ascot Cinema was opened in the 2000s and was situated at 68 Queen Street. The Cinema closed in 2013 and re-opened as part of the Rialto chain in the late 2015. The manager was formerly Lesley Grant. The complex later became the Monterey Cinema.

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### Cosy Theatre - Main Street opened 1928 – Closed 1935



*(Reference Upper Hutt Library Heritage collection People's Pictures circa 1912 Mayfair buildings Town Hall then Theatre)*

The Cosy Theatre opened in 1928 and was situated in the Main Street. The building was owned by the shareholders of the Upper Hutt Town Hall Company Limited. The building was later re-opened as the Mayfair Theatre.

Dominion newspaper 06 November 1928

An article covering a meeting at the Upper Hutt Cosy Theatre on Friday at 8 pm.

*(Reference Papers past website Dominion newspaper 06 November 1928 page 6)*

Hutt News 22 August 1929

Upper Hutt News – Maori Mission – A feast of music song and oratory will be provided at the Home Mission Festival in the Cost Theatre Upper Hutt tonight when the 107<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Methodists Maori Mission will be celebrated.

*(Reference Papers past website Hutt News 22 August 1929 page 6)*

Dominion newspaper 09 November 1929

Mac's Cosy Theatre Upper Hutt Matinee to-day 3 pm (movie details not transcribed)

*(Reference Papers past website Dominion newspaper 09 November 1929 page 4)*

Dominion newspaper 06 April 1935

Mayfair Upper Hutt – Presenting an outstanding programme the Mayfair Theatre Upper Hutt is staging a grand gala opening to-night with Richard Tauber in Blossom Time. Formerly the “**Cosy**” the Mayfair Theatre is under entirely new management and has been completely renovated.

*(Reference Papers past website Dominion newspaper 06 April 1935 page 4)*

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**Light House Cinema – Miro Street** opened 2001 – closed 2008



*(Reference Google Maps website images)*

The Lighthouse Cinema was opened in 2001 and situated 8a Miro Street. The former owner was Ewan Cole and manager Andrew Richardson. The Light House Cinema closed in 2008. The building was later reopened as the Miro Cinema.

Comment – For additional information please refer to the Upper Hutt Leader newspaper article dated 14 March 2001.

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**Maidstone Cinema – Maidstone Mall** opened 1980 – closed 2002



*(Reference Upper Hutt City Library Heritage collection Queen Street east end Maidstone Mall photographer Charles Fearnley)*

The Maidstone Cinema was opened in 1980 and situated in the Maidstone Mall complex with entrances from Main Street and Queen Street. The after-hours entrance to the Maidstone Cinema was from Queen Street with access via the external spiral staircase. Maidstone Mall closed in 2002.

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**Majestic Theatre – Main Street** opened 1928 – closed November 1966



*(Reference Upper Hutt City Library Heritage collection full height of Majestic Theatre Sylvia Williams collection 1947-1949)*

Majestic Theatre was opened in 1928 and situated on Main Street in the Upper Hutt Township near where the former Buttercup bakery was once situated. The theatre was built on the old Harry's stables site. The Red Robin Milk Bar was situated on the north side of the movie theatre. The Majestic Theatre closed in November 1966. The former building was renovated with a new frontage. This building is still on the same site at 147 Main Street.

Harry Edwards opened the Majestic theatre with Ralph Heald.

*(Reference the Upper Hutt History by J A Kelleher published 1991 page 92)*

Allan Kohn Thompson (Tommy 1902-1988) operated Mayfair and Majestic Theatre.

*(Reference the Upper Hutt History by J A Kelleher published 1991 page 2652)*

Projectionist Majestic Cinema end of an era. Athol Neighbours Projectionist who had assisted Fred Ching from the outset. The city's last remaining theatre which had opened in October 1928 would close on 03 December 1966 Leader article and a different picture 30 November. This print was exhibited in 1998 and 2000. The theatre may have been named the "Cosy" initially the

name was changed when the Majestic Theatre Company bought the theatre in 1935. Date taken November 1966.

(Reference Upper Hutt Library Heritage collection Majestic Cinema closure article P3-345-1421 Reville Jackson)

Majestic Cinema projectionist Athol Neighbours



(Reference Upper Hutt Library Heritage collection Majestic Cinema closure article P3-345-1421 Reville Jackson)



The former Majestic Theatre building is still on the same site at 147 Main Street. Although the building has a new frontage the pitch roof of the original building can be seen clearly at the top.

**Mayfair Theatre – Main Street** opened 1935 – closed date unknown  
Mayfair Theatre 1948 Main Street



*(Reference Upper Hutt City Library Heritage collection 1948 Mayfair Theatre photographer Leo Morel P3-397-1572)*

Mayfair Theatre was opened in 1935 and was situated in Main Street. The building was purchased from the Upper Hutt Town Hall Company Limited where the building was used for various meetings and events.

Dominion newspaper 06 April 1935

Mayfair Upper Hutt – Presenting an outstanding programme the Mayfair Theatre Upper Hutt is staging a grand gala opening to-night with Richard Tauber in Blossom Time. Formerly the “Cosy” the Mayfair Theatre is under entirely new management and has been completely renovated.

*(Reference Papers past website Dominion newspaper 06 April 1935 page 4)*

In 1955 G W Gillies Ltd was a tenant upstairs in the Mayfair Building.

*(Reference Upper Hutt Library Heritage collection Upper Hutt Leaders various publications)*

Upper Hutt Leader 28 November 1963

Mayfair Theatre 8 pm Saturday 30 November – For any age and time – The Big Circus.

*(Reference Upper Hutt Library Heritage collection UH Hutt Leader 28 November 1963 Volume XX Number 46)*

In 1964 the Mayfair building tenants were J S Hooper Ltd (chemists) and Jennifer Gray Salon Ltd (hairdresser).

*(Reference Upper Hutt Library Heritage collection Upper Hutt Leaders various publications)*

Allan Kohn Thompson (Tommy 1902-1988) operated Mayfair and Majestic Theatre.

*(Reference the Upper Hutt History by J A Kelleher published 1991 page 2652)*

It is not known when the Mayfair Theatre closed. Only the inside and back of the building are part of the original building which is now part of the Mayfair Café. Upstairs at the Mayfair Café are various vintage movie equipment and projectors.

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**Miro Cinema – 8a Miro Street** opened April 2015 – still in business



*(Reference Google Miro Cinema website)*

The Miro Cinema was opened April 2015 and is situated at 8a Miro Street. The building was previously the Lighthouse Cinema. The Miro Cinema is still in business.

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**Monterey Cinema – 68-70 Queen Street** opened circa 2015 – still in business



*(Reference Google website Cinema blog)*

Monterey Cinema was opened in 2015 at 68-71 Queens Street. The building was previously occupied by Ascot Cinema.

Ascot Cinema was opened in the 2000s and closed in 2013 then re-opened as part of the Rialto chain in the late 2015. The complex later became part of the Monterey Cinema.

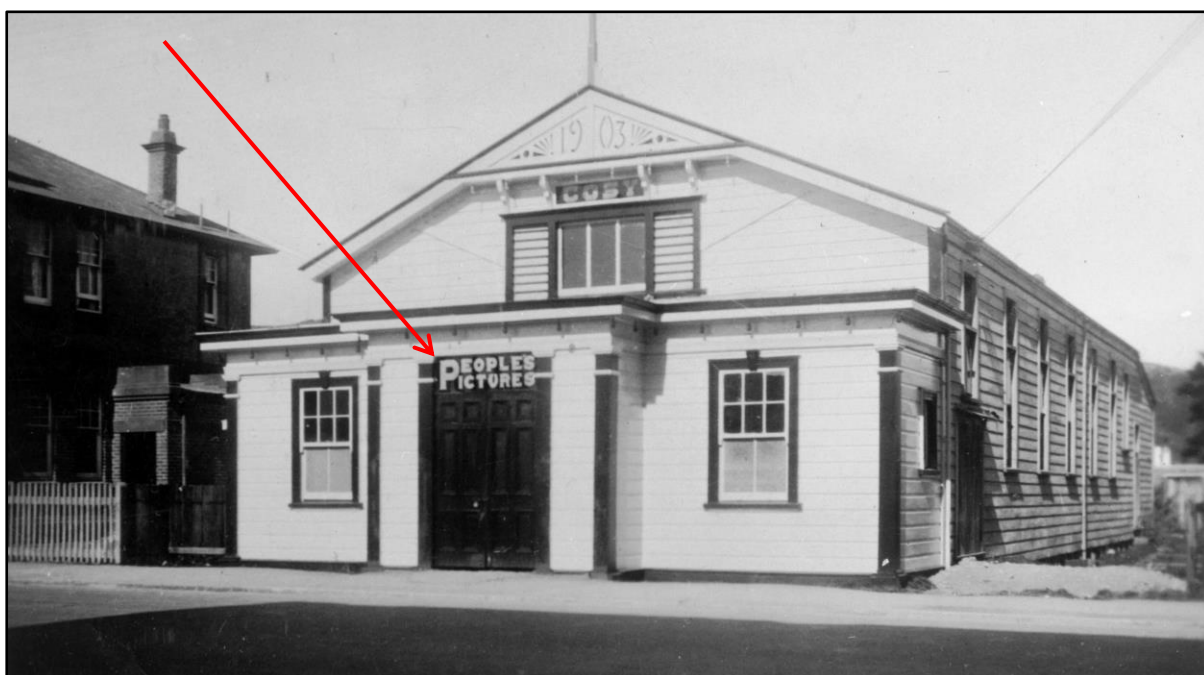
The managers of the Monterey cinema were Jason Kelman and Daniel Pickerstone. The Monterey Cinema is still operating.

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**Peoples Picture –Main Street** opened 13 July 1912 – closed 30 May 1914

Peoples Pictures was held in the Upper Hutt Town Hall and operated by Angus McCurdy. When the shareholders of the Upper Hutt Town Hall Limited did not renew McCurdy's lease he built the Record Hall.

*(Reference Upper Hutt the History by J A Kelleher published 1991)*



*(Reference Upper Hutt Library Heritage collection People's Pictures circa 1912 Mayfair buildings Town Hall then Theatre)*

Hutt Valley Independent newspaper 06 July 1912

Amusements - Town Hall Upper Hutt - Will Open 13 July – Mr T M Wilford M P has consented to perform the Opening Ceremony. To enable all residents of the Hutt Valley to avail themselves of the train services both ways the performance will start at 7.30 and end about 9.35. Train arrives Upper Hutt at 7.25 and leaves Upper Hutt at 9.40 pm - 7000 Feet off Newest Pictures Weekly. Pathe Star Series "Esmeralda" Victor Hugo's Masterpiece Dramatised Cast - Frolo M.Garry - Theatre Francais. Quasimodo Henri Krauss - Sarah Bernhardt Theatre - Capt. Phoebus - R Alexandre - Theatre Francais - Esmeralda Mlle Napierkowska - Paris Opera. Also up to date Industrial, Humourous, Travel, Sport topics. New Programme Weekly. Admission Sixpence Chairs One Shilling Children Half Price

*(Reference Papers past website Hutt Valley Independent newspaper 06 July 1912 page 1)*

Hutt Valley Independent newspaper 16 May 1914

Special Notice – Town Hall Upper Hutt Peoples Pictures Wednesday Next at 7.30 Saturday Next.

*(Reference Papers past website Hutt Valley Independent newspaper 16 May 1914 page 4)*



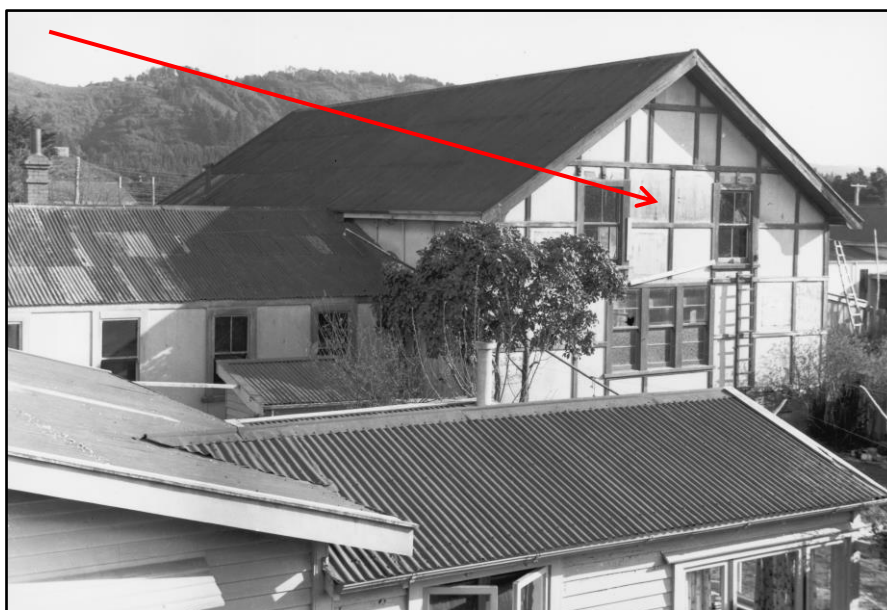
Hutt Valley Independent newspaper 30 May 1914

Town Hall Company and People's Pictures - Readers of our issue of 10 May will remember that we published therein the correspondence which passed between the People's Pictures Proprietors and the secretary and chairman of Directors of the Upper Hutt Town Hall Company Limited relative to the former's request for a renewal of the existing lease of the Town Hall for a further term of three or five years at an increased rental of £104 per annum which the Town Hall Company recently refused in a letter on May 7 only twenty-three days before tile lease expired although the application for renewal was mailed to the company on 07 January (four months previously). Some two and a half or three years ago Angus J McCurdy (who was the chairman of directors of the Town Hall Company) was directed to ascertain the cost of obtaining a picture show equipment and running it in connection with the company but when the figures were supplied to the directors the proposal was turned down. It was however subsequently decided to lease the hall to a syndicate at a rental of 15s per Saturday for the first year and 20s per Saturday for the second year with a right to the use of casual Wednesdays in the first year at 20s and in the second year at 25s each but if Wednesdays at any time permanently rented the rate was to be 10s each in the first year and 15s each in the second year. In all cases but casual Wednesdays rent was to be paid (and was paid regularly) quarterly in advance. Director W R Keys proposed a uniform rental of 10s per night payable quarterly in advance but failed to find support for his resolution. Director McCurdy did not take part in the discussion or exercise a vote. The Upper Hutt Motion Picture Syndicate was formed by friends of Angus J McCurdy and a two years lease was executed on 14 May 1912 renting the hall from 01 June 1912 to 31 May 1914 at the rentals previously mentioned but though rent was paid for the whole term the picture shows were not commenced until the middle of July owing to the plant not coming to hand. In January last Angus J McCurdy bought out all the other syndicate members interests save those of his son and the People's Pictures since 01 February of this year have been solely owned by Upper Hutt residents. It may be mentioned in passing that of the 1000 shares of the Upper Hutt Town Hull Company Limited all of which are all fully paid up the McCurdy family and friends hold 735 as against 215 held by other persons.

*(Reference Papers past website Hutt Valley Independent newspaper 30 May 1914 page 3)*

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### **Records Hall – Princess Street** opened 30 May 1914 – closed 1954 (demolished 1960)



*(Reference Upper Hutt Library Heritage collection McCurdy's Record Hall Martin Street P2-417-820)*

Records Hall built and owned by Angus J McCurdy was once situated on Main Street in Upper Hutt Township with a side entrance on Princess Street. Opened in 1914 and closed in 1954 the hall was built in (record time) 13 days and was used to show pictures other functions were also held in the hall. Before 1914 McCurdy's cinema was operated from the Upper Hutt Town Hall Company Limited until the lease ran out and he was unable to secure a new lease.

*(Reference Upper Hutt the History by J A Kelleher published 1991)*

Town Hall Company and People's Pictures - Readers of our issue of May 10 will remember that we published therein the correspondence which passed between the People's Pictures Proprietors and the secretary and chairman of Directors of the Upper Hutt Town Hall Company Limited relative to the former's request for a renewal of the existing lease of the Town Hall for a further term of three or five years at an increased rental of £104 per annum which the Town Hall Company recently refused in a letter on May 7 only twenty-three days before the lease expired although the application for renewal was mailed to the company on January 7 (four months previously). Some two and a half or three years ago Angus J McCurdy (who was the chairman of directors of the Town Hall Company) was directed to ascertain the cost of obtaining a picture show equipment and running it in connection with the company but when the figures were supplied to the directors the proposal was turned down. It was however subsequently decided to lease the hall to a syndicate at a rental of 15s per Saturday for the first year and 20s per Saturday for the second year with a right to the use of casual Wednesdays in the first year at 20s and in the second year at 25s each but if Wednesdays at any time permanently rented the rate was to be 10s each in the first year and 15s each in the second year. In all cases but casual Wednesdays rent was to be paid (and was paid regularly) quarterly in advance. Director W R Keys proposed a uniform rental of 10s per night payable quarterly in advance but failed to find support for his resolution. Director McCurdy did not take part in the discussion or exercise a vote. The Upper Hutt Motion Picture Syndicate was formed by friends of Angus J McCurdy and a two years lease was executed on 14 May 1912 renting the hall from 01 June 1912 to 31 May 1914 at the rentals previously mentioned but though rent was paid for the whole term the picture shows were not commenced until the middle of July owing to the plant not coming to hand. In January last Angus J McCurdy bought out all the other syndicate members interests save those of his son and the People's Pictures since 01 February of this year have been solely owned by Upper Hutt residents. It may be mentioned in passing that of the 1000 shares of the Upper Hutt Town Hall Company Limited all of which are all fully paid up the McCurdy family and friends hold 735 as against 215 held by other persons.

*(Reference Papers past website Hutt Valley Independent newspaper 30 May 1914 page 3)*

**Record Hall's History** - The Hall on the corner of Princes and Martin Streets now being demolished has probably one of the most unique background of any in the district. It was named the Record Hall as it was built in 13 days for the late John Angus McCurdy. The story of the building of the Hall is really good reading and for the benefit of our readers some of whom remember the time we quote from the Hutt Valley Independent dated September 28th 1918. On May 8<sup>th</sup> Donald McCurdy elder son of Mr and Mrs A J McCurdy commenced to finance the wages bill for a hall while Angus McCurdy drafted a plan which the builder and architect J T Mair elaborated on also arranged with various firms for the supply of materials and in less than a week all arrangements were fixed up in readiness to start the erection of the hall. On May 14th 1914 Kenneth McCurdy younger son of A J McCurdy felled the trees at the rear of the Independent Office and next day a space 35ft x 70ft for the new hall. Mr H W Shaw with Norman Butler and two others on the mixing board started to build a fire-proof two storied reinforced concrete operating box. The same time corner pegs were put in and foundations laid for the building.

Throughout the following week rain commenced to fall but the work of the building went on all available carpenters were engaged, all being paid above the then award wage. So well did these men work that timber from the sawmills could not come fast enough. Each day for a week the men went home at lunch time wet through but was back on the job after lunch in dry clothes ready to carry on with the building. In the morning and afternoon tea breaks of 20 minutes was allowed the morning to recompense "Mac" for some of the tea or smoko time. The following week the weather cleared and work went ahead in strides. On the Friday of this week seven carpenters tackled the flooring and in three hours (7 am to 10 am) 60ft x 30ft of T and G Matai flooring was cut laid and nailed into position. On Saturday May 30th 1914 the hail was completed and a packed hall saw the pictures just after 7 pm. At the Official Opening Mr A J McCurdy thanked all the men on the job stating it must be a record to build a hall that size in 13 working days. And that is how the name "Record" became attached to the hall for the speed at which it was built. The reason for the building of the hail was that Mr McCurdy had lease of the old Town Hall (**now Mayfair Theatre**) for picture showing but through some disagreement between the Town Hall Company and himself the Company would not renew the lease giving him a certain time to get out and find another building for his pictures which they the Company did not think possible but Mac and his family proved it could be done. Today as the building is being demolished it is great to see some of the timber coming out of it just as sound as the day the hall was built 4 years ago.

*(Reference Papers past website Upper Hutt City Library Heritage collection UH Leader 10 November 1960)*

#Record Hall People's Picture To-Night [movie information not transcribed) 6d and 3d Note Every child under 14 who pays 3d admission charge on any Saturday night at Mac's Record Hall Pictures is given a ticket which will admit it free to Mac's Movies on the following Monday – Starts tonight and continues till further notice reference Papers Past website Hutt Valley Independent newspaper 28 September 1918 page 4

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### **Trentham Military Camp Theatre (YMCA)** opened before 1930s – closed after 1960s



*(Reference Upper Hutt City Library Heritage collection Trentham Camp building P2-1845-3596)*

The Trentham Camp Theatre was originally part of the Y.M.C.A. Theatre situated at the Trentham Military Camp. The movie theatre was still operating in the 1960s and was well attended by locals as well as the military.

Comment – I was informed that the theatre was opened during World War One but I have been unable to confirm any details.

Evening Post newspaper 19 November 1931

Where RKO Radio Pictures will be shown - Y.M.C.A. Trentham

*(Reference Papers past website Evening Post newspaper 19 November 1931 page 18)*

Upper Hutt Weekly Review newspaper 23 October 1936

Grand Picture Entertainment Trentham Camp Theatre Wednesday 28 October 1936 at 7.30 pm.

In aid of Silverstream School Funds. Adults 1/- Children 6d

*(Reference Papers past website Upper Hutt Weekly Review newspaper 23 October 1936 page 2)*

A Picture Evening was held at the Trentham Camp Theatre on Saturday 19 July 1952.

*(Reference Upper Hutt City Library Heritage collection UH Leader 17 July 1952 Volume IX Number 28)*

The Trentham Camp Theatre held a matinee session in September 1958.

*(Reference Upper Hutt Library Heritage collection UH Leader 04 September 1958 Volume XV Number 34)*

It is not known when the Trentham Camp Theatre closed.

The Trentham Camp Archives may have the answer to when the movies stopped being shown to the general public and military personnel.

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### **Television Movie Set – Whiteman's Valley** opened 1976 – closed unknown

Television movie set was once situated at Mason's Valley in Whiteman's Valley. The set was used for the 1976 series "Country GP" and 1980s series "Peppermint Twist" plus other productions.

Mason's Valley set for Country GP television series



*(Reference Upper Hutt Library Heritage collection Mason's Valley set for Country GP television series donated by Rosemary McLennan October 1983)*

This was the set used for Country G P and it was about to be converted to Jessop the town in The Fire-Raiser from Maurice Gee's novel. This grey scale image in the Leader 'on 21 January 1986 was said to have been taken some time earlier before the original set had been finally completed. It had been printed on 18 October 1983 with a close-up of the incomplete two-storey hotel and one of Mayor Rex Kirton and series producer Stephen McIlrae outside the doctor's residence. The site was used again for the Firestarter (or The Fireraiser) there are five pictures in the 11 February 1986 Leader and two in the 19 August issue. Identical articles in the 24 September 2021 Dominion Post and 29 September Leader announced that the site was for sale. Most of the buildings were sheds with false fronts a house with a wrap-around deck had been converted to a 2-bedroom house. The site had been further used for The Tribe, Peppermint Twist, Colonial Battle and Wellington Paranormal.

*(Reference Upper Hutt Library Heritage collection Mason's Valley set for Country GP television series donated by Rosemary McLennan October 1983)*

The land where the television movie set was situated is now privately owned.

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