



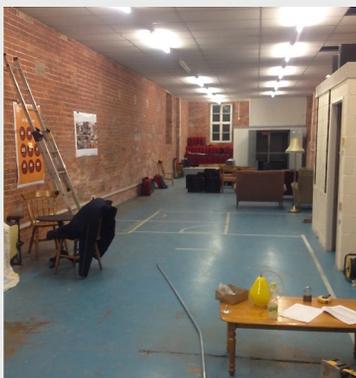
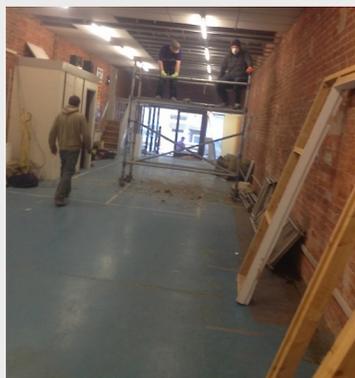
# THE NORTHERN LIGHT CINEMA





Wirksworth was without a cinema from 1967, when the original town cinema (now Stone's Builders Merchants) closed its doors for the last time. Paul & Esther and most of the town (more of that later) thought that was long enough.

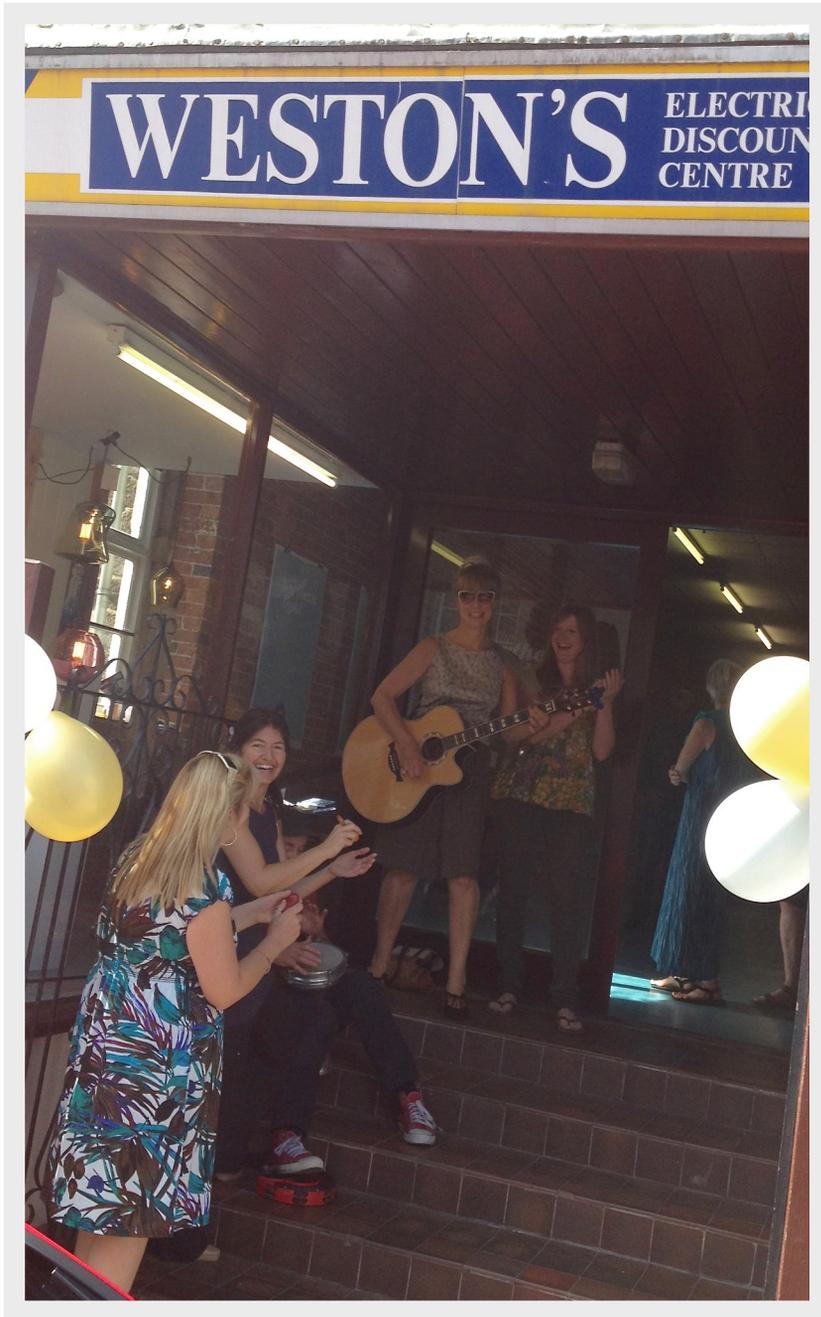
This is the story of how the The Northern Light Cinema brought back the glamour of the big screen to this small Derbyshire town, providing a cinema fit for Wirksworth - charming, quaint, quirky, friendly, sometimes challenging but always good fun.



It was April 2012. Perhaps a Monday night? We were in the Royal Oak, perhaps 10pm. Frances Rostron joined us at our table for what we thought would be a normal, start of the week chat...

Esther was explaining how she was outgrowing our rented premises for her glass lighting company, Curiousa Ltd. "Why don't you but Weston's across the road?" she suggested. We knew Tony had just put his shop on the market that weekend. "It'll be too expensive, I bet." replied Esther. "I'm not sure about that..." and then she told us the asking price. The next morning we arranged a viewing with Tony and shook hands on the deal the following day. The upstairs would be ideal for Esther's office and workshop and downstairs, well downstairs could be... what? It was long, narrow and as it was below ground level it was rather dark. Who actually sparked the idea is still a source of debate. What's not open to argument is that within a few hours of the idea we were hooked and The Northern Light Cinema was born.





The photos are a bit misleading as before we started any building work we opened the space up to the neighbours and invited them in to give us their feedback. We laid out the framework of the cinema using masking tape on the floor and had a series of posters and plans printed to get the concept across.

We even opened up during the Wirksworth Festival with a set of seats.

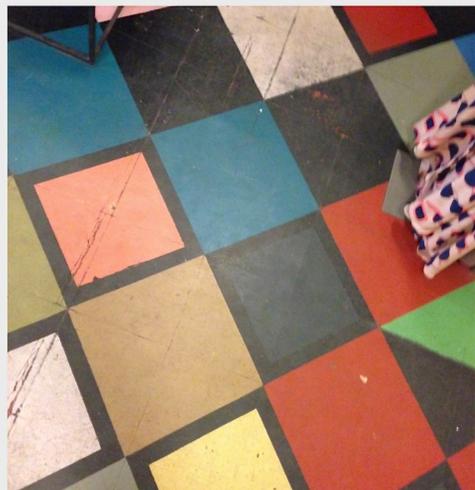
Most of the feedback was positive but at this time there formed a small group of local residents who decided a cinema on their street was not for them. Not content with voicing their concerns in a reasonable debate they decided to spread fear and anxieties about noise, parking and pedestrian safety in a very deliberate and organised manner - a campaign they continued all the way through planning and after. But we're still here and have proved their campaign baseless. But enough of the neighbours... back to the build.

Before we started to draw up our plans we needed to do some research. So we hopped on a plane a flew to NYC. OK, so Esther had to go there anyway to exhibit her lights, but we made the most of our time and visited speak-easy bars, jazz clubs and restaurants to fill our minds with Brooklyn designs and our bellies with the best food and cocktails we could find.











Now before we screened indoors we had had some practice in screening outdoors. Back in 2012 we thought it would be a good idea to screen the opening of the Olympic Ceremony in the Market Place. We drew over 200 people to celebrate with the nation.



And then after we'd bought Weston's we held a screening of the 3:10 to Yuma with a pre-film trip on the Ecclesbourne Valley Railway.

We simply asked everyone to dress up as cowboys and indians and the 110 people who came duly obliged...

The train ride was complete with on train rag time blues, Mexican bandits and the town mayor getting shot before we headed back to town to be guided to the film by a horse bound cow-girl. Of and we even had a rifle range beforehand. Yeehaw!







17/12/12

Dear Sir,

Reference:  
 PLANNING APPLICATION NO: 12/00678/FUL

Change of use to cinema and ancillary bar facilities and associated changes to entrance frontage, 13 North End, Wirksworth, Derbyshire, DE4 4FG, applicant Mr Paul Carr

I write in connection with the above planning application. I have examined the plans and I know the site well. I wish to object strongly to the development of a cinema in this location and also on behalf of my 13-year-old twin daughters who have severe learning disabilities for whom I am a full-time carer.

I am deeply saddened that I have been put in a position where I feel I have to highlight my children's difficulties to the wider community but believe I have no choice given the impact a cinema would have on their daily lives. I would ask you most sincerely to consider their situation.

The applicant says the aim is: 'For the Northern Light to be a pleasure for all and a nuisance to none'. His highly divisive and cynical marketing ploys have already put an unacceptable level of stress on quite a few vulnerable people who live in this street.

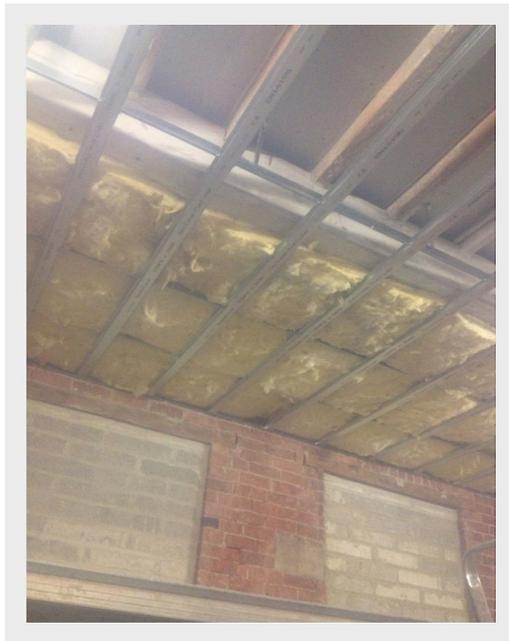
I am wholeheartedly in favour of a cinema in Wirksworth, but this location is wholly inappropriate. I hope I can simply demonstrate that the 'nuisance to none' aim cannot be achieved in this street because of the impact on our residential amenity.

Description of application

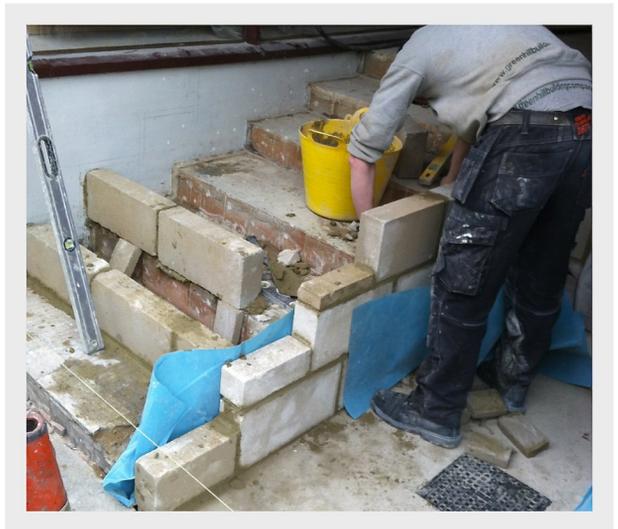
is entirely inaccurate and riddled with contradictions and misleading statements. It refers to ancillary bar facilities and on the same page states that the cinema is the main purpose of the development.















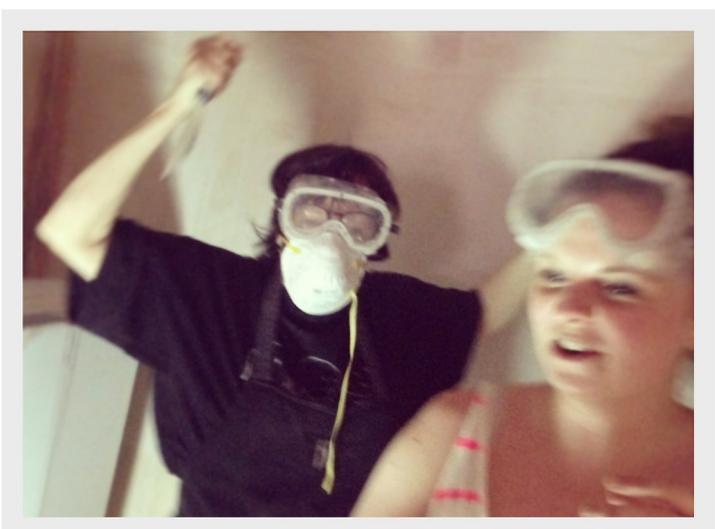
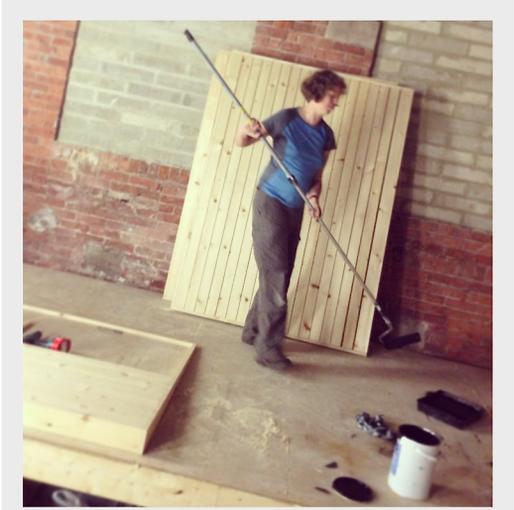
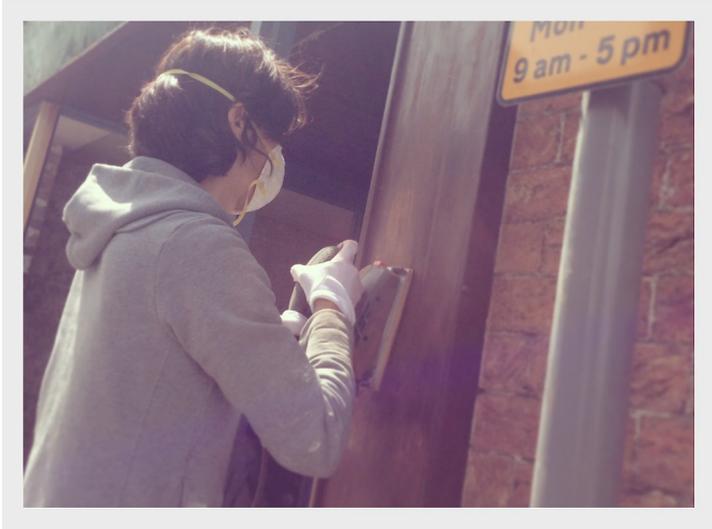


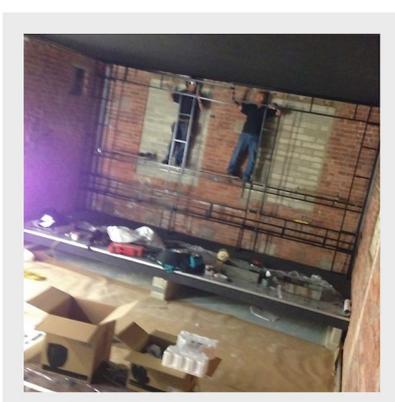




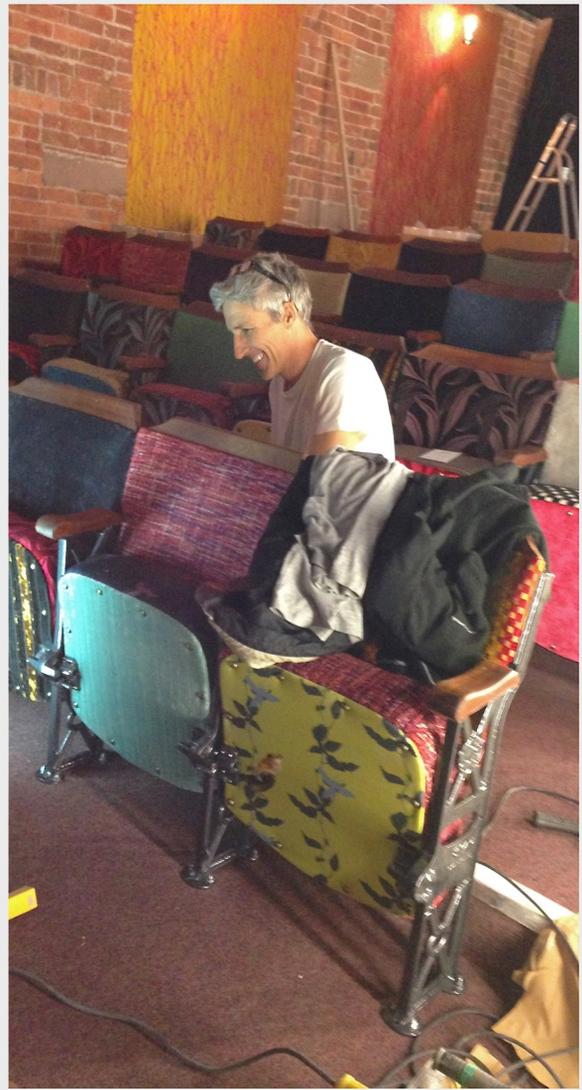


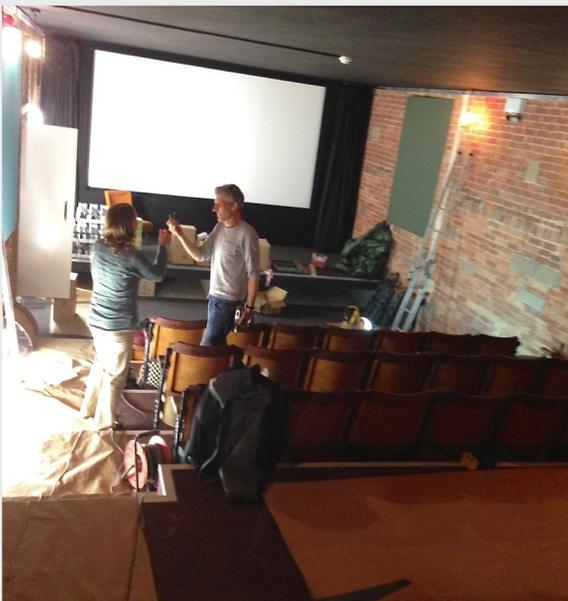
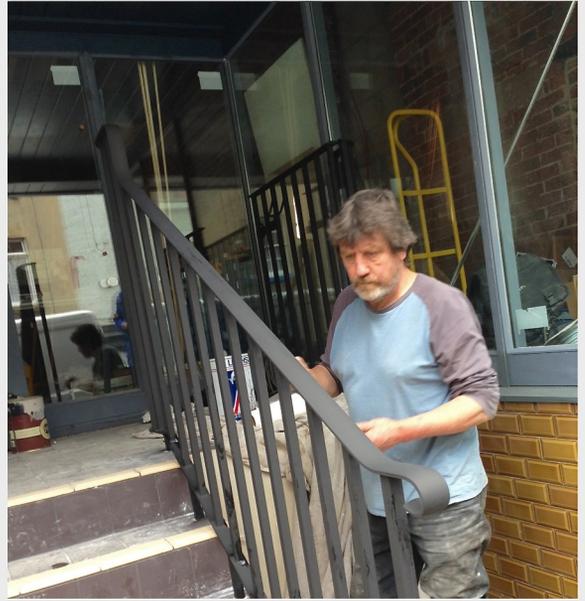








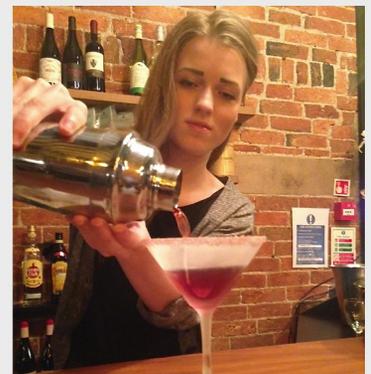


















A special thank you to everyone who gave their time, energy and enthusiasm and made the journey so worth while!