



Electra Picture Palace

The Electra Palace opened on 26th December 1912 at a cost of £6000.

On opening it was said to have 600 seats. The proprietor was Mr. Samuel Arthur Morley. In 1914 he was fined £10 10s for not showing Advertisements as often as in contract. *North Wilts Herald 24-04-1914*. In 1915 there was a Limerick Competition and patrons using the tram were given a discount. *North Wilts Herald 12-03-1915*. Although having been turned down twice for a musical entertainment licence he did however supply concerts for Swindon Volunteer Training Corps. *North Wilts Herald 07-05-1915*. 1916 and a collection for the NSPCC raised £1 6s 6d. *North Wilts Herald 29-09-1916*. On the 19th of February 1917, the Electra Palace cinema in Cricklade Road showed the world's first underwater film, called the 'Williamson Expedition', by Submarine Motion Pictures. It was part of a programme that also included 'Looking Backward', starring Tyrone Power. By 1918 Mr. H. Stockhad become manager. *North Wilts Herald 22-11-1918*. Charlie Chapin in 'Shoulder Arms' was shown for one week, September 1921. *North Wilts Herald 23-09-1921*. By 1922 the cost of a seat had increased to 2/4d. At start of 1923, it changed to New Management. *North Wilts Herald 05-01-1923*. And they now had a phone, Swindon 3164. 1924 and Mr Hall-Smith was now manager. On the 14th February 1925, a reward of £2 was offered for the capture of a monkey called Mikey who had escaped from the Electra Palace cinema in Gorse Hill. He should have been promoting a film called 'Hold Your Breath' when he escaped from a dressing room by opening a door and climbing through a window. The public were advised to use bananas as an aid to capture him. Part of the Albany Ward circuit, it was acquired by Provincial Cinematograph Theatres (PCT) in September 1927, then by Gaumont British in February 1929. Frederick Arthur Albert JAMES, Commissionaire was killed in an accident with a lorry while cycling home last Wednesday, he was 23. *North Wilts Herald 06-05-1938*. By the time of the takeover by Gaumont British it had 867 seats, so it must have been enlarged at some time. Presumably at that time the cinema was renamed the Palace; that name appears in the 1940 and 1953 Kinematograph Year Books. 1940 it hosted the 18th Annual Xmas treat for the poor children of Swindon on 5th Jan. *North Wilts Herald 17-11-1939*. Richard Jones was projectionist 1944-49 where he met and married usherette Hazel Jefferies. The Palace Cinema closed on 23rd May 1959 and moved over to bingo. Was used as a scooter salesroom for a while.

By 2009 it had been knocked down apart from front pillars and replaced by Thomas Edward Coard Building a collection of shops and flats.



North Wilts Herald 04 April 1913

Electra Palace, Gorse Hill, Swindon.

LEST YE FORGET!

"OUR NAVY" (by Alfred West, F.R.G.S.).
 Exclusive rights for showing this Grand Series has been secured by the Electra Palace, Gorse Hill. In addition, an ALL-STAR PROGRAMME, including the

"SIGNAL OF DISTRESS."

Also the **PALACE ORCHESTRA** IN ATTENDANCE EVERY EVENING.

Next Week: "The-Grand National."

MATINEES—WEDNESDAYS, 3 o'clock; SATURDAYS, 2.30.

CYCLES STORED FREE OF CHARGE.

Prices : 3d., 6d., 9d. Every Evening, 6.30.

Absolutely the finest and most up-to-date Theatre in the West of England.

PROPRIETOR - - S. A. MORLEY.

First Year's Advertised Entertainment

'Life in our Navy' (series of 6), 'Broncho Billy'. 'In the flat above', 'An Adventure in the Autumn Woods', 'Foolshead between Celibacy and Marriage', and 'Sammy Orpheus'. [*North Wilts Herald 04-04-1913.*](#)

'The Quality of Nobility', 'Indian Justice', 'Re-Incarnation of Karma', 'Flesh & Blood', 'The Vengeance of Durand' 'Bronco Billy's Brother'. [*North Wilts Herald 11-04-1913.*](#)

'An Actress's Romance with Sarah Bernhardt', 'The house in the Woods', 'A Broken Oath', 'Lady Clare', 'Little organ-grinder of San Juan', 'A Fairy Bottle', 'Pat's busy day', and 'Sammy goes Yachting'. [*North Wilts Herald 25-04-1913.*](#)

'Satan', 'Bobby's Holiday', 'His Father's Son'. [*North Wilts Herald 02-05-1913.*](#)

'The Spectre of the Sea', 'Cross you Heart', 'Two Men & Two Women', 'Too many Caseys', 'Bloomer very late', 'Freckles'. [*North Wilts Herald 30-05-1913.*](#)

The Miracle', 'The Maid & The Milkman' & 'Girl Sleuths'. [*North Wilts Herald 14-11-1913.*](#)

'The Last day's of Pompeii'. [*North Wilts Herald 05-12-1913.*](#)

Also showed re-runs of the Grand National every year.

Amongst other items in 1922, Edward Rankin gave a lecture on 'The Great White Throne, or After Death What'. [*North Wilts Herald 27-10-1922.*](#)