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CARRY ON SCREENING Film fan spends £300,000 bringing derelict cinema back to life – 52 years after it closed its doors

The Regal in Hampshire once seated 290 movie-goers before it became a pottery firm's HQ

By Carl Stroud
3rd July 2017, 11:44 am | Updated: 3rd July 2017, 12:02 pm



3 COMMENTS

A MOVIE fan has spent £300,000 restoring a cinema that closed its doors over 50 years ago.

The 290-seat Regal in Fordingbridge, Hampshire, entertained film fans from 1933 to 1965, before it became the HQ of a pottery firm.

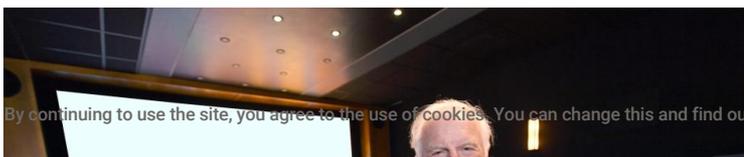


Brian Currie has spent £300,000 breathing new life into The Regal in Fordingbridge, Hampshire

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Brian has told how the reaction of locals to the transformation has been 'overwhelming'



The screening room now has a capacity of 30 people who can enjoy frequent shows

And when that closed four years ago Brian Currie snapped it up.

The transformation has seen the 71-year-old install a 20ft by 13ft screen and a state of the art sound system.

— ADVERTISEMENT —



Film fans can also enjoy a drink from an authentic 1930s cocktail bar and munch on popcorn and ice-cream while watching films.

Brian, who runs an electronics business, said: "I've done mad things before but I've never restored a cinema.

"This was a completely new one on me but I'm over the moon with how it's turned out.

"I think it is a real asset to the town and the reaction I've had from residents has been quite overwhelming."

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Alongside the cinema space, which now seats 30, the development includes seven flats which Brian intends to rent out to young engineers and graduates at a reduced rate.

The plans were approved by New Forest District Council without a single objection.

Brian said: "I was amazed. Everyone right down to the next door neighbours have been beyond supportive.

"The nearest cinema is almost 30 minutes drive away and I think people miss going to see films.



The building previously played host to a pottery firm, before developer Brian snapped it up



The development also includes seven flats which Brian intends to rent out to young engineers and graduates at a reduced rate



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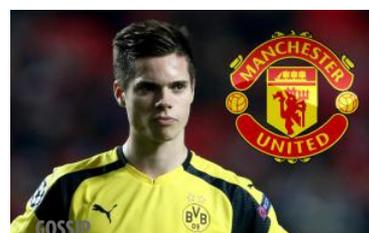
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Brian told how he was 'over the moon' at his transformation of the stylish art deco building

"I only ever watch them at home these days, so this will be a real treat for people."

Brian has formed the Fordingbridge Regal Cinema Club, which has a core 35 people offering to help run it for free.

The cinema will be not-for-profit basis with any earnings from the £10 ticket price going towards upkeep.

This weekend Brian opened the doors to locals and their children for the day and showed The Lego Batman Movie for free.



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Brian has said all profits from the cinema will go towards its upkeep



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Brian has installed a state-of-the-art sound system as well as a 20ft by 13ft screen

He now intends to run a wide selection of classic, modern and recent films on a Friday and Saturday evenings, with a kids' screening on a Saturday morning.

Brian said: "Almost 500 people came to the open day and I did joke that I'll be banning popcorn going forwards, as I had to do the hoovering!"



Cinema goers can enjoy a drink from an authentic 1930s cocktail bar and munch on popcorn and ice-cream while watching films



Brian has formed the Fordingbridge Regal Cinema Club, which has a core 35 people offering to help run it for free

"But jokes aside, it is a really fabulous experience and it means so much to be able to give

something back to the community when they've supported my business for years."

We told last year how a film buff spent his entire life savings building a 34-seat cinema in his back garden.

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The place is a credit to him

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 **Charles Barker** 3 days ago

Lovely story. Well done to Brian. I hope the locals give him the support it deserves.

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nice story for a change.

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