



THE CURRACH PICTURE HOUSE

Memories By: Michael Kelly

The Curragh Picture House provided a great source of entertainment to the Curragh Community and surrounding districts for the best party of 60 years. It was a great social outlet for us all, and we would all have very fond memories of it down-through-the-years. All were saddened by it's closure, and a short while afterwards, it been destroyed by Fire on 18th Oct 1984. (A Photograph of the Building ablaze has been uploaded on Facebook by Cathal Malone . The following is a short History of the Picture House;-

The Memorandum of Agreement between The Secretary of State for the War Department, and a Mr. David Frame, 5 Talbot Place, Dublin, for the Letting of the Building (Letting No.2474), was drawn-up on the 23rd March, 1920 . (Copy Attached). It was to be known as the The Cinematograph Theatre. And on a current topical note, before the Building could be opened for Public use, he had to apply for permission to connect to the Water Main . He also had to agree to pay all the Costs associated with same, and also to provide a **Water Meter**, and also to agree to **Pay** the Sum of One Shilling and 3 Pence for each Thousand Gallons of Water received and

Registered by the Water Meter. The Payments for same to be made on a 3 Monthly basis. The Water Main and the location of the Meter are outlined on the Site Map. (The promise of things to come) ??

The Original Site Map (Copy attached), Shows O'Boyles Shop, which is on the Site of the present O'Donnell's Centra. The House on the left of the Picture House, is referred to as the Master Baker's House, and the Bakery is beside that. Both of these Buildings have long since been demolished. Dobbys's Hill is referred to as Tower Hill, and the Bottom Road is referred to as Ordnance Road West.

The Lease in respect of the new Owner's the Silvester-Carr Family, was drawn-up on 21st July, 1934. The Cinema was to be known as The Curragh Picture Co. Ltd. It lists the following as Directors:- Christopher Silvester-Carr, Cecil Silvester-Carr, and the Company Secretary was Christopher-Silvester Carr. And a Mrs. W. Morris, McGowan Terrace, Brownstown, Curragh is listed as the Manageress. (Copy Attached) . Also attached is a copy of an Indenture, dated 5th March 1958, which appears to show that the Lease was renewed on that date . I understand that the Silvester-Carr Family were Actors and were members of a Travelling Variety Roadshow.

I myself have very fond memories of attending the Cinema over the years . My earliest recollection is of both myself and my Sister Kathleen, being brought to the Sunday Matinee in the early 1950's by Joe Whyte and Peter Dignam. R.I.P. The Matinee was always very well attended. And we would first go to either Dobbys or McAteers to buy our penny toffees. And among the Staff working in the Picture House around this time were Josie Brogan, Mrs. Owens, R.I.P. , Des Garrett, Mrs. W. Morris, and Frank Poole R.I.P. who married Ena Conway , who lived in McDonagh Terrace. The Projectionist was Mr. Black, R.I.P. who lived in Brownstown. He was related to the Weller Family who also lived in Brownstown. Frank always kept us in line in an orderly fashion before the Doors would open for the Matinee . I remember O'Donnells Shop being burned-down on a Sunday afternoon in the Mid 50's, and which resulted in the

Matinee being cancelled, and resulting in there being great disappointment all round.

The Cinema had a change of Programme every second night during the Week, and a separate show on Sunday nights. The listings for the following week were always published on Page 2 of the Leinster Leader, and the Posters which were about A3 in size would be displayed in Reggie's and McAteers Barber Shops. The admission to the Matinee was 4 Old Pence (about 2 Cents today). It was Full-House every Sunday. The first 4 Rows of Seats were like long Garden benches. And they were affectionately known as "The Hard Seats". They were a little bit less expensive than the rest of the seats.

And there was also a Balcony, which I can recall only sitting there on only a few occasions.

There were 2 Entrances to the Cinema, and both would be open if there was a good film on show. There was also Sweets, Ice Pops and Ice Cream on sale at the Ticket office .

The late Mrs. Owens R.I.P. was the Usherette, She used to put the Tickets into a box which was in a recess in the Wall, along with her Torch. There was also special Matinees Midweek, when the latest Walt Disney Films were released . And among those which I remember are:- Snow White and the 7 Dwarfs, The Lady and the Tramp, Pinocchio, and Davy Crockett . They were always very well received and thoroughly enjoyed by all in attendance. I myself have very fond memories of some the Films which I would have seen there and I can recollect the following:- Westerns- Shane, Annie Get Your Gun, High Noon, The Man from Laramie, The Magnificent 7, The Horse Soldiers, The Left Handed Gun, The 3.10 to Yuma, Fort Bravo, Sergeants 3, The Alamo, The Searchers, The Comancheros, Cat Ballou, Custer of the West, My Darling Clementine (One of the best Films to portray Wyatt Earp), The Gunfight at the O.K. Corral, Jesse James , (Starring Henry Fonda and Tyrone Power - one of the best versions). And also lots of John Wayne, Roy Rogers, Audie Murphy and Gene Autry Films .

The War Films were also very popular , and among those that I remember were The Longest Day, To Hell and Back (The Life Story of Audie Murphy, who was the most-decorated American Soldier in World War II), From Here to Eternity, The Dirty Dozen, The Sands of Iwo Jima, 633 Squadron, P.T. 109 (About the late President John Kennedy's heroics during his time in the American Navy in WW II), The Fighting Sullivans (Which was about 5 brothers from the same Family , who were all killed on the same day when their Ship was torpedoed in WW II. It was since used as the basis for the Film - Saving Private Ryan).

The Biblical Film's were also very popular. And among the best were - The Ten Commandments, BenHur, The Robe (Which I think was the first ever Picture to be shown in Cinemascope), Quo Vadis, and Samson and Delilah. And the Tarzan Films with Johnny Weismuller, Lex Barker and Buster Crabbe. And Circus Films such as The Greatest Show on Earth, and The Big Circus .

The "Sword Fighting Films" as they were called, were also very popular, and among the ones that I remember are The 3 Musketeers The Sword of Monte Cristo, The Man in the Iron Mask, and also the Robin Hood Films. Also in the late 50's, there was a film made called "Shake Hands with the Devil" . It was about the Trouble's in Ireland in the early 1920's . And one of the scenes featured a Curragh Resident - the late Peter Dignam R.I.P. , who was driving an Armoured Car. The Cinema was full to capacity, and a great cheer went up when that scene was shown. It was always and still is a great topic of conversation when Curragh residents meet up. I remember the early Elvis Films , the first of which was Love Me Tender, and followed by Loving You, Jailhouse Rock, King Creole, and possible the best of them all - G.I. Blues, which was about Elvis serving with the U.S. Army in Germany . And the early Cliff Richard Films - the first of which was The Young Ones, and followed by Summer Holiday . However, he had a small part in an earlier Film called "Serious Charge", in which he sang his first really big Hit - Living Doll.

I also remember the Comedy films with Charlie Chaplin, Harold Lloyd, Laurel and Hardy, Abbot and Costelloe, The Keystone Cops, The Bowery Boys, The 3 Stooges, Joe

McDoakes. And also the early Carry On Films, the first of which was- Carry on Sergeant, and followed by Carry on Nurse and Carry on Teacher. And I think that there was over 30 of these Films made in total. And the Films with an Irish Connection - Darby O'Gill and the Little People, Finians Rainbow and a Film called "Rooney ", Starring John Gregson in the title role, and Noel Purcell. It was a Film about a Dublin Dustman . "Rooney" was depicted as being a great Hurler, and he featured in the pre-match Parade for Kilkenny in the All-Ireland Hurling Final of 1957 against Waterford. And I think that Kilkenny may have had a very narrow victory.

And I remember the James Bond Films - the first of which was Dr. No, and followed by From Russia with Love, and Goldfinger , and all starring Sean Connery. However in the late 60's he was replaced by an Actor called George Lazenby in the Film - On her Majesty's Secret Service. But he made just the one James Bond film .

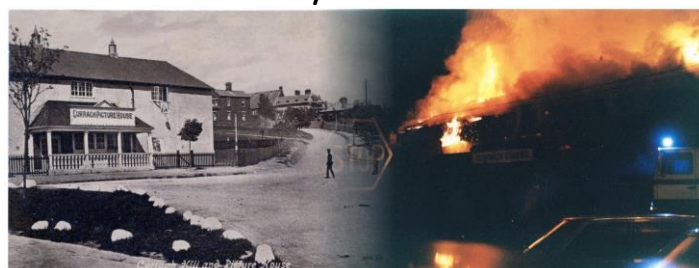
I also remember what we used to refer to as "The Haunty Films" Like Frankenstein, The Wolfman and Dracula. There was also a Horror Film released in the late 1950's called The 13 Ghosts, and you were given a special pair of Plastic Glasses, which would enable you to see the Ghosts in the Film .

The late Danny Dunne R.I.P. and Johnny Taylor R.I.P. (Who was the Barber in McAteers) were both great Cinema goers, as was I remember Larry Hunter, who lived in Brownstown . The Curragh also had a second Cinema which was in Sandes Soldiers Home. And that too had a Film on show every night . The name of the Film that would be on show that night written in Chalk on a Blackboard, just over the entrance to the Cinema . The Manageress was the late Miss Carson, R.I.P. It also had a Recreation and Reading Room and a Billiard Table , and also the "Bagatelle Table", which was situated just inside the Door on the left. The programme for the Film shows for the Month would always be on display in McAteers and Reggies Barber Shops. And there was always a Free Film Show in Sandes on Christmas night .

There was also a Film Show in Connolly Canteen every Wednesday .The Projectionist was the late Sgt. Christy Reidy R.I.P. ,who lived in Connolly Terrace . There would be a Matinee at 5.30pm, which would have a full-length Film, and also a weekly Episode of a Batman Serial, featuring J.Carroll Nash as "The Baddie". This was always eagerly looked forward to . And the Film would be shown again that evening for the Adults. There would also be a Film Show at all of the Childrens Christmas Parties which were held each year. And also on the evening of the School Sports, there would be a free film Show,featuring either a Charlie Chaplin , Laurel and Hardy or an Abbot and Costello Film.

The Cinema also featured Newsreels such as "Universal News", Movietone" and Pathe News, and also some good Documentaries like "Look at Life". And apart from showing Films, The Picture House used to also stage the "George Daniels Travelling Variety Roadshow" periodically, which would be staged for 1 week. It was always very entertaining, and the Hypnotist's "Paul Goldin" and "Edwin Heath" would also stage their Show there occasionally. And they too were always very enjoyable and entertaining, as they would Hypnotise people, and have them looking everywhere for Leprechauns, among other things.

The last Film that I remember seeing in the Curragh Picture House was "Blazing Saddles in the Mid 1970's " . The Cinema was a great social outlet for us all growing-up. And we would all have very fond memories of attending there. Everyone was saddened by it's closure , and also the Fire which engulfed it on 18th October 1984. It is very sadly missed by everyone. And all of the above are my very fond memories of The Curragh Picture House during the 1950's and 60's . It was a great education for us all . and I hope that they have brought back some fond memories to you also .



COPY.

MEMORANDUM OF AGREEMENT made the twenty-third day of March, 1920,
BETWEEN HIS MAJESTY'S PRINCIPAL SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE WAR
DEPARTMENT (hereinafter called the Secretary of State) of the one
part and David Frame, of 5 Talbot Place, Dublin, of the other part,
WHEREBY it is agreed as follows:-

1. The Secretary of State agrees to grant to the said David Frame permission to connect with and obtain a supply of water from the War Department Main at Curragh for the use of the Cinematograph Theatre (Letting No. 2474).
2. The said David Frame shall at his own expense supply all materials, labour and workmanship for connecting his premises with the Military supply aforesaid at a point to be selected by the Commanding Royal Engineer, at Curragh, or some person deputed by him and subject to his directions and shall carry out the said work to the satisfaction of the Secretary of State.
3. The said David Frame shall provide on War Department premises a proper water meter or register in connection with the supply of water hereby granted, the pattern to be approved by the aforesaid Commanding Royal Engineer or his authorized deputy, and shall pay the sum of one shilling and three pence for each thousand gallons of water received and registered by the said meter.
4. The payments in respect of said water supply hereby granted shall be made to the Command Paymaster at Lower Castle Yard, Dublin, on each 1st day of April, 1st day of July, 1st day of September, and 1st day of January, in every year during the continuance of the agreement, the first payment to be made on the 1st day of the quarter next after the said supply shall have commenced to be delivered.
5. The Commanding Royal Engineer or his duly appointed Deputy may at any time withdraw the permission hereby granted and may cut off the supply of water from said Cinematograph Theatre premises at a

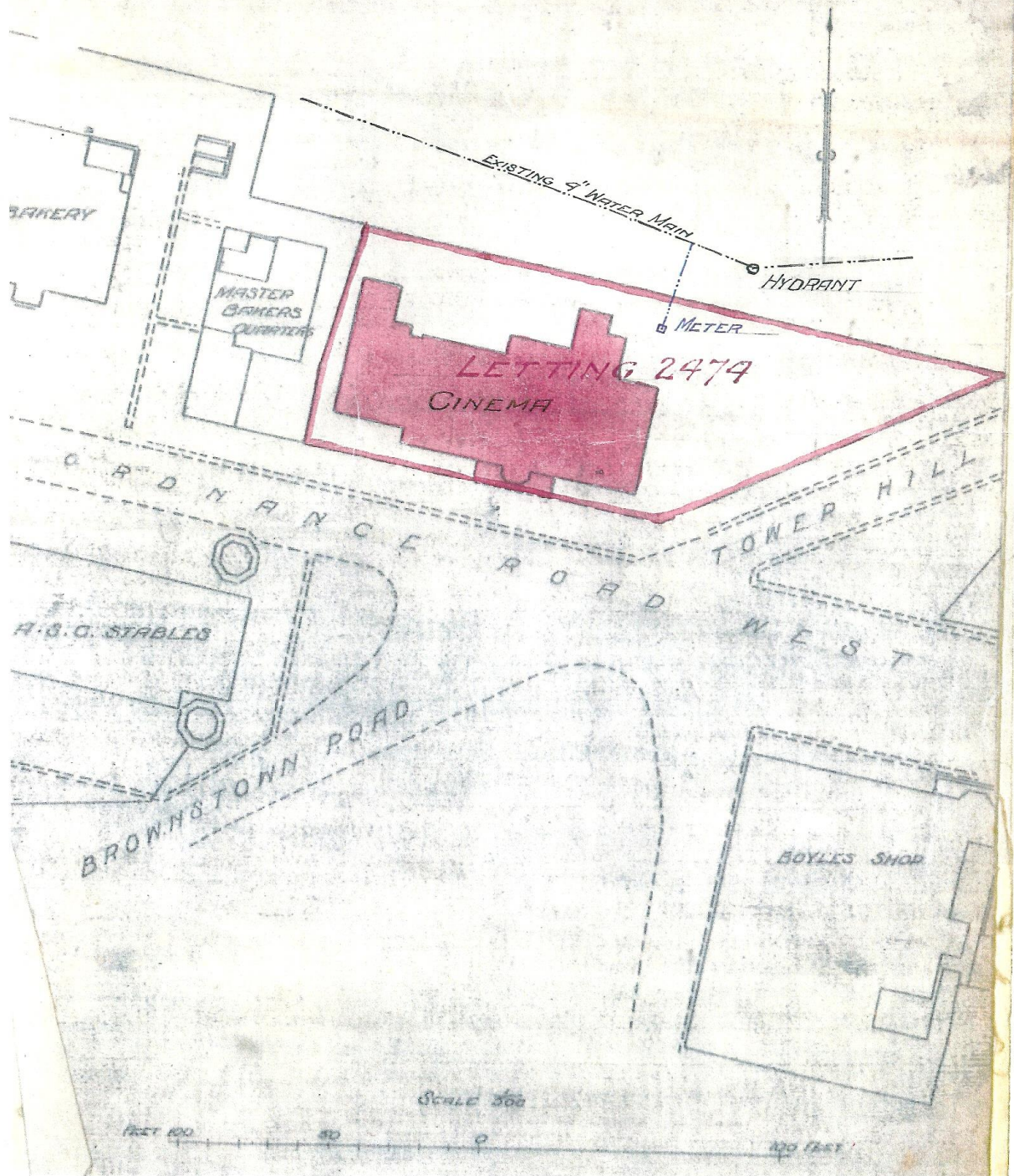
Original Agreement - 23rd March 1920

ORIGINAL SITE MAP
30th MAR 1920.



PAGE 2.

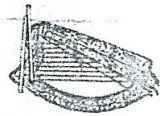
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Original Site Map - 30th March 1920

NEW LEASE DATED 21st JULY 1934

DATED



2138295

+ 2181706

+ 3128753

Minister for Finance

CARRAGH
P.K. HALL
HONOR.

382954 -
- 454/
1011162
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444444

5/3/58
Christopher Eyreman Case
(Carragh Pictura Co. Ltd.)

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NEW LEASE DATED - 21st July 1934

PRESENT when the Seal of Curragh
Picture Company Limited was
affixed hereto:-

Robert John Smith - Curragh Director
Carl Smith - Curragh Director
Robert John Smith - Curragh Secretary

WITNESS: James W. Morris

ADDRESS: Mc Connors, Tonn

Barrington, The Connell

OCCUPATION: Miner, Press

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List of Directors and Secretary
21st July 1934

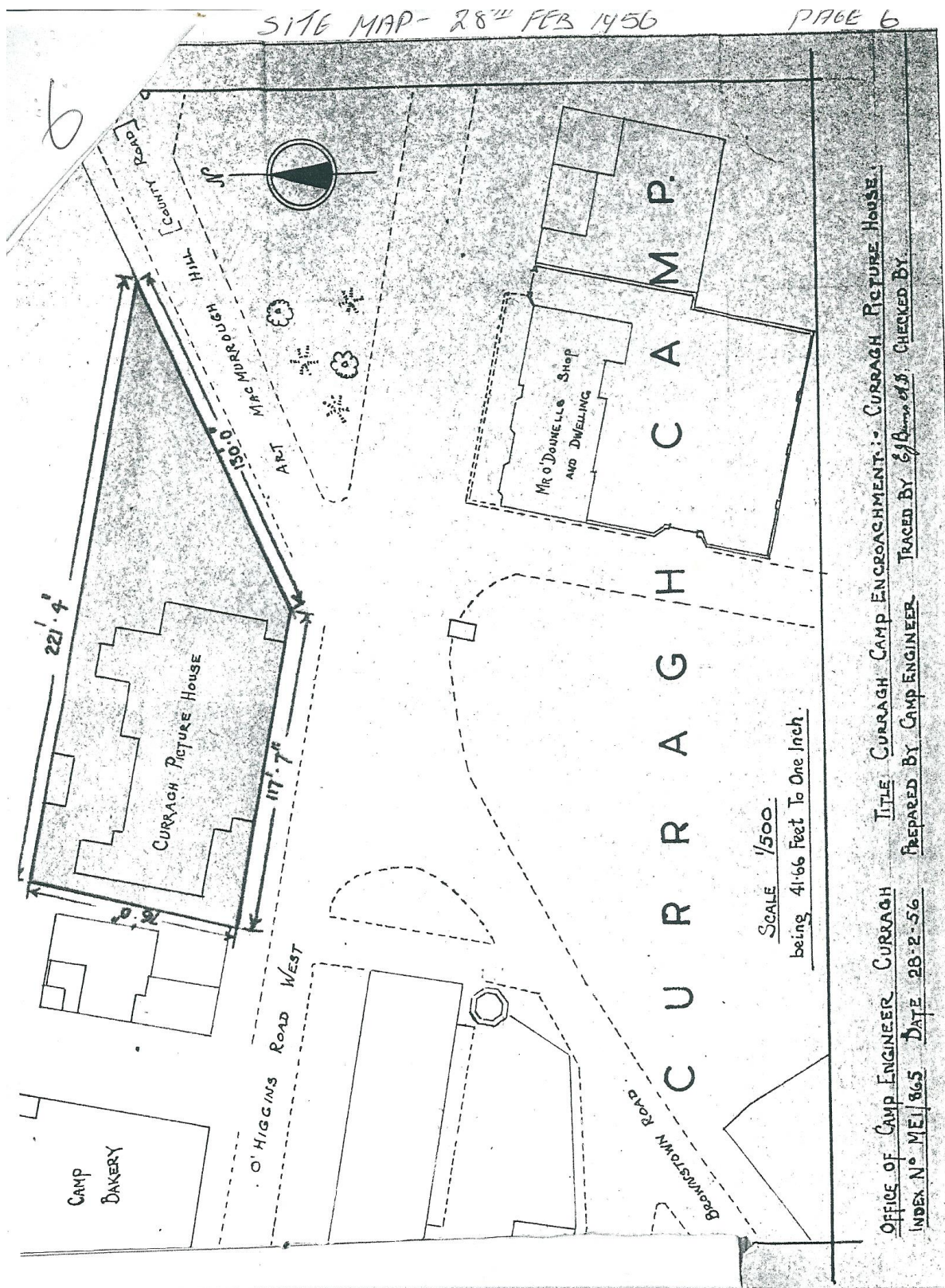
57. May 1

INDENTURE - 5th MARCH 1958
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THIS INDENTURE made the fifth day of March One thousand nine hundred and Fifty eight BETWEEN THE MINISTER FOR DEFENCE hereinafter called the Lessor which expression shall include his successors and assigns where the context so admits of the one part and CURRAGH PICTURE COMPANY LIMITED having its registered office at Picture House, Curragh Training Camp, hereinafter called the Lessee which expression shall include its Successors and Assigns where the context so admits of the other part WITNESSETH that the Lessor in consideration of the rent and covenants on the part of the Lessee and conditions hereinafter reserved and contained doth hereby demise unto the Lessee ALL THAT parcel of ground at the Curragh Training Camp being part of the lands of the Curragh in the Barony of Offaly East and County of Kildare together with the Cinematograph Theatre erected thereon which parcel of ground as to its position dimensions and boundaries is particularly shewn on the plan annexed to these presents and therein edged red EXCEPTING AND RESERVING unto the Lessor all mines and minerals lying in or under the same with liber to the Lessor, his Agents and workmen at all times with or without horses, carts, carriages or any other vehicles to enter upon the demised parcel of ground and every part thereof and to search for work dress manufacture render merchantable and carry away the said mines and minerals and for the purpose aforesaid to do all such acts and things as he or they shall think necessary or expedient AND the free and uninterrupted passage and running of water and soil from the other building and land of the Lessor and his tenants adjoining or near to the premises hereby demised through the sewers drains and

Indenture for lease
5th March 1958



Curragh Cinema - Site Map
 28th Feb 1956

CURRAGH BULLETIN

IRIS-LEABAR CAMP AN CURRAIS

A weekly magazine devoted to sports, athletics, entertainments and the general welfare of troops in the Curragh Training Camp and for circulation to all Officers, N.C.Os and Men

Vol. XVII Num. 7

Camp an Curraí

19ú Meán Fomhar 1958

PEICTIURLANN CHURRAIGH

SUNDAY "SIEGE AT RED RIVER" -
Van Johnson & Joanne Dru

MON/TUE "CHICAGO CONFIDENTIAL" -
also - "Son of a Stranger"

WED/THUR "THE LAST OF THE FAST GUNS" -
also - "Heart of a Child"

FRI/SAT "THE LADY TAKES A FLYER" -
also - "The Diplomatic
Corpse"

PEICTIURLANN ODEON (D'NUA)

SUNDAY "RANCHO NOTORIOUS" - also -
"Behave Yourself"

MON/TUE "THE DEEP SIX" - Alan Ladd,
Dianne Foster, Wm. Bendix.

WED/THU "AN AFFAIR TO REMEMBER" -
Cary Grant, Deborah Kerr

FRI/SAT "GUN GLORY" - Stewart
Granger, Rhonda Fleming,
Chill Willis.

PEICTIURLANN SANDES

MON/TUE "SLAVE WOMAN" - also - "History
of Cinema"

WED/THUR "CROWDED PARADISE" - also "Train
to Tombstone"

FRI/SAT "TOUCH OF EVIL" - also - Shorts

MON/TUE "MOHAWK" (Scott Brady & Rita Gam)
also - Shorts.

(Printed at Camp H.Qrs. and issued by "Curragh Bulletin")

What was showing in The Curragh Cinema
From The Curragh Bulletin
19th September 1958