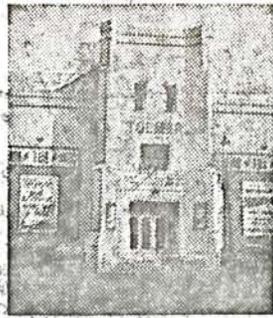


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Tolmer closes... but its spirit lives on



THE TOLMER—a 1,000-seater cinema in Euston, said to be haunted by the ghost of a priest—closed on Wednesday (writes **MIKE KILBANE**).

But the closing of the cinema, in Tolmers Square, off Hampstead Road, had nothing to do with spirits scaring off staff and patrons.

The cinema, which opened in 1914, is housed in a converted nineteenth-century Congregational Church. And for years the **Ponson** family, who own the cinema, have been fighting a losing battle against mounting bills for maintaining the building.

So at last they have sold out an undisclosed sum—to property developer, Mr. Joe Levy, who already owns several office blocks in the area.

"The chief problem has been keeping the building in good repair—our maintenance costs have been pretty high. And now it's got to the point where it is no longer economical to run the cinema," said Mr. David Ponson, 40-year-old managing-director of the Tolmer.

Because of the age of the building, we were finding repairs were not enough. We had to do major rebuilding.

The Ponson family have been in the cinema industry for 60 years and have owned several film houses in London. The Tolmer was their last.

"We feel particularly sad about the closing of the Tolmer because it was our only cinema, and we thought it was a good family cinema," said Mr. Ponson.

The Tolmer, which boasted "the lowest prices in London"—15p a stalls seat, 25p the circle—shunned "X"-certificate films, making a policy of showing only "family-type" films, said Mr. Ponson.

And the Tolmer was also known as the only cinema in

London where you could see half-a-dozen films in one week. The programme was changed three times a week—one film usually not running for more than two days.

Cinema manager, Mr. Andrew Keeshan, aged 27, agreed that the Tolmer had had a reputation for not being quite the homeliest and comfortable of cinemas.

"But that's all changed now. We've put in new toilets and altered the seats and everything," said Mr. Keeshan who has been at the Tolmer for a year.

One member of the cinema's staff who will be able

to sleep easier now that it has closed is night watchman and maintenance man, Mr. Henry Clark, from Belfast.

He kept seeing a ghost—which he called "Lord Tolmer," who owned the Congregational Church—in the early hours of the morning and got so scared he changed his times of duty.

Mr. Clark believes the ghost he saw may be connected with the fact that a priest hanged himself in the building when it was used as a Church.

And Mr. Keeshan and his staff confess that they would not spend a night in the cinema.

"It's a pity to see the cinema close," said Mr. Clark, "but I don't think I'll lose any sleep over it."

'WE'LL GO IT IF NECESSARY Council firm to rent

CAMDEN'S LABOUR group have decided to support the Government's Housing Finance Bill, "Journal."

Following this decision—taken last Tuesday—group's deputy leader, spelled out at Wednesday what course of action they will take.



On Monday, the opening day of the competition there was a never ending queue of children outside the station. In fact 450 children collected their

FIRM HANDSHAKES

DJ Tony helps the police

ALBANY Street police, Camden Town, swung with the times when they invited disc-jockey Tony Blackburn along to welcome children entering the