



Built in 1916 on the site of Newcastle's former Borough Markets, the **Strand Theatre** opened on the 27th April, 1916 with the film *The Secret Orchard*. The theatre was designed by architects, John Reid and L. Kaybury. Whilst the exterior façade was distinctly Spanish in style, the foyer and auditorium were decorated with lavish, scenic panels - reminiscent of the Louis XVI style. In 1919, the Strand was leased to Union Theatres. Approval was given in 1929 by then owner, Newcastle Council, to enlarge the Strand's projection room prior to the introduction of 'talkies' for Paramount Pictures film. Its first 'talkie' was *The Carnation Kid*, which opened on the 24th June, 1929. The Strand Theatre underwent numerous renovations during its life. The most dramatic took place in 1937 - when the theatre was given an extensive Art Deco/Modern makeover. In 1942 the Strand Theatre was leased to Fuller Theatres and in 1953, Greater Union regained control of the theatre. A new screen with adjustable top and side masking for VistaVision and CinemaScope presentations was installed within the confines of the existing proscenium the following year. The Strand reopened with *White Christmas* on the 24th December 1954. However, the resultant CinemaScope image was smaller in area than that of the VistaVision image. Consequently, Newcastle Council approved a new screen frame to be built (around 1957) four feet in front of the original proscenium. The new frame supported a wider CinemaScope screen. The alterations included a new, gold main curtain and valance. [These alterations have been confirmed with a surviving Strand projectionist, Mr. Max Donnan]. Then, in 1970, the Strand was equipped with Victoria 8 projectors for the 70mm opening of *Airport* on the 1st October 1970. Toward the end of the Roadshow Engagement era [1958 to 1974], the Strand presented six, first-time 70mm films, including: *Airport*, *Anne of the Thousand Days*, *Darling Lili*, *The Great Waltz*, *Jesus Christ Superstar* and *Paint Your Wagon* – the latter of which enjoyed a house record season of twelve weeks in 1971. After the opening of the

Greater Union Tower Cinemas (1976), the Strand closed in 1979 and was demolished a year later. Currently the site is occupied by the Market Square shopping centre. An interesting footnote on the Strand: the two Victoria 8 70/35 projectors were removed by Newcastle Council and installed in their Newcastle Civic theatre. Unfortunately, no 70mm feature films were programmed into the Civic after installation.

Please Note - It has not been possible to confirm whether *Le Mans* screened in 70mm at the Strand. Our research for *Australia in 70mm* has not found any tabloid advertising or sessions directory of the film in 70mm. Accordingly, the film title will remain highlighted in BLUE cells until confirmed either way.

The three screen Greater Union Tower Cinemas opened on the 29th April 1976 with *Jaws* [Cinema 1 seated 732], *Barry Lyndon* [Cinema 2 seated 436] and *Picnic at Hanging Rock* [Cinema 3 seated 408]. The complex was equipped with 35mm only Victoria 8 projectors. The cinema complex, the last operational venue in the Newcastle CBD, closed on the 5th December 2018. There is no operational cinema in the CBD currently.

70MM OPENINGS	OPENED	CLOSED	WKS
Airport	01/10/70	18/11/70	7
Paint Your Wagon	26/12/70	10/03/71	12
Anne of the Thousand Days	08/04/71	19/05/71	6
Darling Lili	26/08/71	08/09/71	2
Le Mans	14/10/71	03/11/71	3
The Great Waltz	05/07/73	11/07/73	1
Jesus Christ Superstar	09/05/74	26/06/74	7

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS – Tabloid adverts for *White Christmas*, *Airport* and *Paint Your Wagon* sourced from Newcastle Morning Herald microfiche held at the New South Wales state library.



**NEWCASTLE STRAND
PREMIERED VISTAVISION
WHITE CHRISTMAS
24th December 1954**



**PREMIERED 70MM
AIRPORT
1st October 1970**



STRAND NEWCASTLE
129 Hunter Street, Newcastle

OPENED
27th April 1916