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'Covered Promenades for Wet Weather': London's Winter Gardens and People's Palaces, 1870-1900

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Abstract

This essay explores the interior spaces of three nineteenth-century, London-based, large-scale, multi-functional, public leisure centres – the Alexandra Palace, the Royal Aquarium and Summer and Winter Gardens, and the People's Palace. Thanks to the possibilities of iron and glass, and the model provided by the Crystal Palace, the new buildings were constructed from the 1870s onwards, offering a new building type and providing London's working-class population with the recreation that the earlier open-air Pleasure Gardens had offered the aristocracy and the middles classes, albeit indoors. A mixture of entrepreneurialism and social reform drove the development of the new venues. This article seeks to unpack the complex interior spaces of these new buildings, focusing on the components they had in common, among them winter gardens, great halls and ice-skating rinks. The tensions that arose from the attempts, made in all three centres, to combine high cultural educational offerings with more popular passive entertainment are explored, as are the experiences of the visitors. The conclusion briefly considers the legacy of nineteenth-century winter gardens and people's palaces in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries.

Keywords: winter gardens, peoples palaces, interiors, multi-functional, leisure, entertainment,

The three multi-functional, London-based buildings that form the focus of this essay – the Alexandra Place in Muswell Hill (opened in 1873 but destroyed by a fire and re-opened in 1875), the Royal Aquarium and Summer and Winter Gardens in Westminster (1876-1903), and the People's Palace in the Mile End Road (1886-1931) – were all centres of education

and entertainment, constructed between 1870 and 1890 to meet the needs of an expanding market for urban leisure.[1] Increasingly, that market embraced members of the lower middle and working-class populations.

Historian, Peter Bailey, has explained, that leisure became at that time, 'more visible…and more controversial.'[2] Urban leisure and pleasure had been dramatically transformed in the middle years of the nineteenth century, the period when, according to art historian, Lynda Nead, 'London became part of a highly concentrated discourse on the modern'.[3] The most noticeable contribution of these new buildings, and, arguably, one aspect of that modernising process, was the shift from experiencing complex leisure (being in a space in which multiple forms of leisure were available simultaneously) outside, to engaging with it inside. This was made possible by the advent of the new building materials, iron and glass.

While experiencing single-offer leisure spaces, such as theatres and music venues, had usually taken, and continued to take place indoors[4] engaging with multiple leisure offerings in a single environment had been an outdoor experience. From the late seventeenth century onwards, the London-based aristocracy had passed their summer-time leisure hours in open-air Pleasure Gardens, which, by the eighteenth century, had numbered sixty-four in total. In them visitors could stroll freely, listen to music, take refreshments, watch firework displays, view panoramas, battle enactments and hot air balloons, and look at each other.[5] Ranelagh Pleasure Gardens, the most exclusive and expensive, which opened in 1689, charged two shillings and sixpence for entry, so determined was it, 'to keep out the middle and working classes'.[6] Vauxhall Gardens, which had opened a couple of decades earlier, became one of the most fashionable places to be seen in the eighteenth century and, with an entry price of between one and two shillings, was a little more accessible. By 1859 it had closed, however,

and its place was taken by Cremorne Gardens in Chelsea, which, opened to the public from 1846 and managed from 1861 by the entrepreneur, Edward Tyrell Smith, remained open until 1877, overlapping the Royal Aquarium by a year. The entry price of one shilling made Cremorne accessible to both the middle classes and the new clerical classes and, by the late 1870s, the gardens had a reputation for drunkenness and disorderliness. As Lynda Nead has explained, 'Cremorne Pleasure Gardens reconfigured conventional assumptions concerning public behaviour, taste and morality'.[7]

Although the Pleasure Gardens were essentially open-air spaces, covered spaces were dotted around their grounds to provide visitors with protection from bad weather. Cremorne featured 'kiosks, [covered] dance floors, and refreshment rooms', in addition to a pagoda, an American bowling saloon and a theatre, while its Ashburnham pavilion housed horticultural shows.[8]

When the open-air Pleasure Gardens ceased to be patronised by their fashionable clientèle and they were forced to close, a group of totally enclosed buildings came into being from the 1870s onwards. Like the gardens before them, they brought together a range of functions. For the first time, however, facilitated by the emergence, a few decades earlier, of a new building type which was defined by its iron and glass structure (the tax on the latter material was removed in 1845), they embraced those functions under a single roof. While earlier iron and glass buildings - among them Hove's (failed) giant conservatory, the Anthaeum,[9] on which work had commenced in 1832, and Kew Garden's Palm House, completed in 1848 – had primarily focused on horticulture, the later winter gardens were enclosed sites of entertainment and education first and foremost.

Such structures were not limited to London, however, as, in the same decades, several other winter gardens were built in a number of English seaside towns – among them Blackpool,

Southport, Bournemouth, Great Yarmouth, Torquay and Tynemouth - which had become popular locations for working-class holidays.[10] Links existed between the London-based projects and those a the seaside. Lynn Pearson has explained that, 'Thomas Adair Masey was not only director of the Royal Aquarium, which opened in 1876, but chairman of the company promoting the Great Yarmouth Aquarium and on the board of the Tynemouth Aquarium and Winter Garden Company at its inception in November 1875'.[11] Several of those towns also hosted 'pleasure beaches' which were hugely influential, half a century later, on the formation of the American 'theme park'.[12]

Several drivers played a part in the development of the new London-based leisure centres. By the last decades of the nineteenth century, industrialisation and urbanisation had resulted in the threat of mass disorder manifested in a combination of alcohol abuse, an increase in criminal activity, and social and political unrest. As Matthew K. McKean has observed, 'the state struggled after mid-century to maintain public order in the open spaces of the city'.[13] Writing in New York's *The Century Illustrated Monthly Magazine* in 1890 Albert Shaw explained that a determined effort was being made to bring about social reform. 'Underneath ….the controversies growing out of class distinctions and privileges', he wrote, 'there is apparent…. a growing sense of justice and human rights.' [14] As well as a clear desire for financial gain, that reforming spirit drove the development of the new indoor spaces, one of the purposes of which was to provide a form of 'rational recreation' which would help to keep people out of the pubs and off the streets.[15]

The 1870s saw the formulation of several important regulations relating to mass leisure. The Bank Holiday Act, which granted working people several extra days of free time in the year during which they could visit the capital and engage in leisure activities, was passed in 1871, while, in the same decade, some clerks and skilled workers were granted a week's paid annual holiday. Whereas, in the early century, everyone had had Sunday off, by the 1870s

some skilled workers began to enjoy their freedom on Saturday afternoon as well. By the 1890s most workers had gained a half day holiday on Saturday and the concept of the weekend had come into being.

Both the Alexandra Palace and the People's Palace were explicitly directed at the working-class population which had not experienced the pleasure gardens and were unused to promenading in public. Ron Carrington has explained that the former was 'a Building devoted to the Instruction and Amusement of the masses,'[16] adding that, 'The working man required relaxation'. The People's Palace was directed at the working-class population of London's East End, which numbered around two million people who, in the words of novelist, Walter Besant, 'have no institutions of their own to speak of, no public buildings of any importance, no municipality, no gentry, no carriages, no soldiers, no picture galleries, no theatres, no opera – they have nothing'.[17] The Palace offered them an eclectic mix of education and entertainment.

The managers of the Royal Aquarium envisaged a more socially diverse group of visitors. At least in the early years, it was anticipated that members of both Houses of Parliament would patronise the venue.'[18] A writer in an 1883 edition of the *Era* magazine confirmed that the Aquarium hosted members of the upper classes when he explained that, 'a very large and even aristocratic audience, including the Earl of Dudley and other titled personages filled the Royal Aquarium on Thursday afternoon'.[19] At the same time anxieties were expressed about prostitutes entering the site and the precautionary decision was taken that, 'No lady unaccompanied by a gentleman would be admitted after dusk'.[20] The precaution was clearly ineffective, however, as Erroll Sherson, the author of *London's Lost Theatres of the Nineteenth Century,* made clear in 1925 when he noted that, 'Ladies promenaded there up and down without the escort of any gentleman friend (till, maybe, they found one)'.[21] The intention in Westminster was to offer forms of recreation that crossed class boundaries, which

was reflected in the variety of leisure activities on offer. 'Seemingly', a writer in the *New York Times* explained in February 1876, 'the idea was to combine uplifting educational facilities and exhibitions, as provided by the Crystal Palace, with the popular entertainment values of places such as Cremorne Gardens'.[22]

The new mass leisure businesses

The lack of significant leisure time on the part of those sectors of the population who, it had been hoped, would want to engage in the new leisure activities, combined with the large economic investments required to establish these centres, ultimately proved financially challenging for the developers of the three buildings in question. As a result, the Royal Aquarium closed in 1903; the Alexandra Palace went into public ownership in 1900 as its only route to survival; and, without new investment by the Drapers' Company, the People's Palace would have suffered severe financial difficulties at around the same time.

However, back in the 1870s that was not yet obvious and a number of Victorian entrepreneurs set out to exploit what they saw as a potential new market for leisure. Between the mid-1870s and 1880s, in addition to a couple of other centres that were built in the western part of the city, the three large educational and entertainment structures described in this essay appeared in different parts of London.[23] A different economic model was used for them than the one that would have been the case in 1800. Rather than depending on small, low-cost investment, aimed at a small number of wealthy people paying annual or seasonal subscriptions, the new, large entertainment venues required investment provided by large numbers of customers paying small sum.

All three projects were inspired by the financial success of the Crystal Palace of 1851, built

for the Great Exhibition of the Works of Industry of all Nations, which had begun its life in Hyde Park but which, by 1854, had been transferred to Sydenham in South-East London.[24] [FIG 1] Like the new venues the Crystal Palace had combined entertainment and education, which had been aimed at a large portion of society. Also, as had been the case in 1851, many of the visitors to the new buildings came from outside London, using trains to access the city. While the Royal Aquarium was visited by leisure seekers from outside London who travelled to Charing Cross, the nearest station for visitors to the Alexandra Palace was Muswell Hill, while there was also a direct rail service from Broad Street[25]. Because of its local agenda the visitors to the People's Palace travelled much shorter distances, however.

Fig. 1. An engraving, by W. Lacey from a daguerreotype by Mayall, of the transept of the Great Exhibition, 1851, from the collection of the author (out of copyright and reproduced by permission of the author)

Financial opportunism, mixed with social idealism, underpinned all three ventures, although to varying degrees. The Alexandra Palace had a complicated business profile. A building on the Muswell Hill site had originally been conceived by Owen Jones in 1858 to rival the Crystal Palace.[26] Although that building was never realised, the idea remained in people's imaginations and the Alexandra Park Company was formed in 1863.[27] Eventually sufficient investment was procured for the erection of the first Palace in 1873, which was intended to provide the public with 'exhibitions, lectures, concerts, theatrical performances and refreshment', and which was made from materials that had been used for the International Exhibition of 1862, held in South Kensington.[28] Over a hundred and twenty thousand people came to visit in the first two weeks.[29] The second Palace of 1875, constructed after the disastrous fire that destroyed the first Palace sixteen days after its opening, had a chequered

financial existence. As an article in the *Municipal Journal* of March 1900 explained, 'Various attempts have been made from time to time to revive the drooping fortunes of the Palace but owing to lack of capital and want of proper management these efforts have proved unavailing, and the place allowed to fall into disuse.'[30] Ken Gay has explained that, 'In the period 1875-1900 there were eight managements, five of which went into liquidation, [and the Palace] closed completely from Sep 1889 to March 1898'.[31] In fact the Palace experienced several temporary closures over that period.[32] In 1900 the Alexandra Palace and Park Trust was formed which 'required the trustees to maintain the Palace and make it available for the free use and recreation of the public forever.'[33] The fact that the world's first regular high definition public television service was inaugurated there on 2nd November 1936 helped the Palace remain in existence through the twentieth century. The building experienced another near-disastrous fire in 1980, although, once again, phoenix-like, it was successfully re-built.[34]

In January 1876 a writer for the *Era* magazine reported that the Royal Aquarium was the result of 'the fertile brain of Mr Wybrow Robertson, and an association being formed to carry out the project, Mr Bruce Phillips being the Secretary.'[35] The board of directors included the financier and journalist, Henry Labouchère, the retailer, William Whiteley, Arthur Sullivan the composer, and Bassano, the photographer. In February 1876 a writer in *The New York Times* claimed that the project was flawed from the outset, reporting that, 'there was a screw loose somewhere about the project. The tanks contain neither water nor fishes, and the general emptiness of the place was weakly disguised with colored calico and shrubs.'[36] Three years after the opening Charles Dickens Jr. observed that there had been financial pressures from the outset and that the Aquarium had opened before it was ready. 'Unfortunately', he explained, 'the desire of the directors to obtain an immediate return for the large sums invested in the undertaking unduly precipitated the beginning of the campaign.'[37] He added

that, ‘The price of admission is 1s, but the management would have done wisely to take the advice of the astute Mr. Barnum, and to have eschewed the practice of charging so many sixpences and shillings for extra shows, as is now the case.’[38] That sense of financial anxiety was to remain in place through the life of the project.

The People’s Palace was more of a social experiment than the Alexandra Palace and the Royal Aquarium and was therefore less overtly financially driven.[39] Nonetheless it still had to function as a business. It came about as a result of three coinciding forces: a proposal made by Walter Besant in his novel *All Sorts and Conditions of Men* of 1882 for a ‘Palace of Delights’ for the working-class population of London’s East End; the work of Sir Edmund Hay Currie, a business man and distiller, who was winding up the Beaumont Fund – the legacy of Barber Beaumont, a miniaturist and insurance magnate - and who wanted to create a People’s Palace in the East End; and the generosity of the Draper’s Company, which made major donations to the project over its life-time. The Palace was hugely popular in its early years. On a single Bank Holiday in 1888, for example, it was visited by twenty-six thousand people. Visitors were able to access most of the facilities at the People’s Palace at no cost to themselves. That soon led to financial difficulties, however, which were only offset by the Draper’s Company committing an extra seven thousand pounds a year for ten years in the mid-1890s. The project was ultimately saved by its educational arm coming to the fore.

The new buildings

In spite of being rather vulnerable businesses, the three projects under review generated huge buildings which transformed the areas of London in which they were located. Arguably, a new typology was developed that combined complex, multi-functional interiors with architectural facades that contributed to and melded into the existing urban landscape. A stylistic compromise was reached that depended on the new construction materials – glass

and iron – which had been pioneered by the Crystal Palace. However, unlike that 1851 structure, which had openly vaunted its materials, these three buildings' iron and glass structures were all concealed behind facades that reflected the era's taste for architectural historicism.

The iron and glass structure of the 1875 Alexandra Palace building, which (like the 1873 construction before it) was designed by John Johnson and Alfred Meeson, was hidden behind 'walls of white Huntingdon and yellow stock brick embellished with patterned red brickwork in the Italianate style. Its classical mouldings and ornaments were made of Portland cement.'[40] **[FIG 2]** With its main entrance in Tothill Street, Westminster, the Royal Aquarium and Summer and Winter Gardens was built on a two-and-a-half acre-site. Its iron and glass structure was concealed by a stone and masonry façade in the Classical style. **[FIG 3]** The architect was Mr A. Bedborough and Messrs. Lucas were the contractors. It was constructed in eleven months. An article in the *Era* magazine contrasted the historicism of its façade with the originality of its internal structure. 'The front is divided into compartments by columns', explained the writer, 'thus avoiding monotony, and the bays are ornamented with groups of sculptures, adding greatly to the artistic effect… the first grand effect upon the mind of the visitor will be made by the great hall….. This fine promenade is covered with a roof of glass and iron.'[41] E. R. Robson, architect to the London School Board, was responsible for the People's Palace, which was completed in 1886 on the Mile End Road on five acres of land.[42] A combination of a Beaux Arts building and the Crystal Palace, its iron and glass structure was also concealed behind a historicist facade. **[FIGS 4 & 5]**

Fig. 2. A period postcard depicting a photograph of the Alexandra Palace, 1907, from the collection of the author (out of copyright and reproduced by permission of the author)

Fig. 3. A print of the exterior of The Royal Aquarium, Westminster, from a photograph by York & Son, Notting Hill, from the collection of the author (out of copyright and reproduced by permission of the author)

Fig. 4. A lithographic print by of the proposed front of the People's Palace, Mile End Road, published in *The Century Illustrated Monthly Magazine* Vol Xl, no. 2, 1890, p. 177, from the collection of the author (out of copyright and reproduced by permission of the author)

Fig. 5. An antique postcard depicting a photograph of the façade of the People's Palace, Mile End Road, c.1900-1910, from the collection of the author (out of copyright and reproduced by the permission of the author)

The new interiors

The development of these totally enclosed centres, which facilitated a variety of leisure-related activities and functions under a single roof, required their architects to design complex, multi-functional interiors that contained spaces within spaces. While, seen from the outside, these structures looked like large, traditionally-styled buildings, viewed from the inside they were made up of many smaller, interconnecting, contained and semi-contained spaces which functioned as theatres, concert halls, libraries, restaurants, museums, art galleries, billiard halls, swimming pools, and ice-skating rinks etc., each of which would have hitherto existed in its own independent, single-purpose building. **[FIGS 6,7 & 8]**

Fig.6. A ground floor plan of the Alexandra Palace, Muswell Hill, 1974, created by J. Johnson architects, published in *The Building News,* Feb. 6. 1874, from the collection of the author (out of copyright and reproduced by permission of the author)

Fig. 7. The ground floor plan of the Royal Aquarium and Summer and Winter Gardens, 1891 (collection reference number: GLC/AR/BR/22/03310, copyright of the London Metropolitan Archives and reproduced by kind permission of the London Metropolitan Archives, courtesy Chris Kearl)

Fig. 8. A Ground floor plan of the People's Palace, Mile End Road, 1900 (collection reference number: AIMG-0870, copyright of Queen Mary University of London and reproduced by kind permission of Queen Mary University of London)

Several of these interior spaces were common to all three buildings. They all contained iron and glass winter gardens filled with exotic plants, for example. As, by that time, indoor plants had become familiar appendages of the middle-class parlour and arguably, therefore, had the capacity to transfer a sense of domesticity into these new spaces, the winter gardens were important symbolically. In that respect they all looked back, yet again, to the Crystal Palace, which, in turn, had owed much to the horticultural glasshouse. Originally keen for the Hyde Park building to be a giant conservatory, or winter garden, its designer, Joseph Paxton, had based it on his designs for the greenhouses that he had created for the sixth Duke of Devonshire in the grounds of his home, Chatsworth, between 1836 and 1840. However, Prince Albert and Henry Cole had decided to make the Great Exhibition a display of manufactured products, rather than a show of nature. When, in 1854, with the help of Owen Jones, the Sydenham Crystal Palace was created, using some of the components of the Hyde Park building, the new iron and glass construction returned to its origins as a glasshouse, however, housing, among other plants, the vast collection of exotics that Paxton bought from the Loddiges brothers when they closed their Hackney nursery.

When, in 1875, Bruce Phillips was applying for a music and dancing licence for the Aquarium, he confirmed that it would contain a winter garden. 'It has been found that visitors to other aquariums liked to have other amusements as well as observing the fish', he wrote. 'The directors have therefore determined to have a botanical display and there would be a Summer and Winter Garden.'[43] Another early promoter of the building, Phillips went on to explain, had pointed out that, 'The grace and freshness of a winter garden will be a great attraction, the hall surrounded by palms and exotic trees and shrubs, the whole having the general aspect of a vast conservatory filled with splendid sculpture.'[44] **[FIG 9]** The winter garden, which doubled as a Great Hall, opened to the public in 1876 and lay at the very core of the building. The Alexandra Palace also contained a winter garden, later referred to as a palm court, which was situated on the west side of the building. It housed palms and an aviary.[45] The People's Palace's equivalent was located to the rear of the Queen's Hall. Filled with palms, flowers and tropical fruit, the building of the space began in 1890 and it was completed in 1892. It was used for concerts and refreshments. **FIGS 10, 11 & 12]**

Fig. 9. A lithographic print of the Great Hall, The Royal Aquarium and Summer and Winter Garden, Westminster, published in *L'Univers Illustré* no. 1080, 18th Décembre, 1876, p. 805 (out of copyright and reproduced by the permission of the author)

Fig. 10. An illustration of the conservatory, Alexandra Palace, published in *The Graphic* June 12th, 1875, p. 564, from the collection of the author (out of copyright and published by permission of the author)

Fig. 11. An antique postcard, depicting a photo of the palm court at the Alexandra Palace during the First World War from the collection of the G.L.C./Alexandra Palace Arts Society, from the collection of the author (from the collection of the author and reproduced by permission of the author)

Fig. 12. The winter garden in the People's Palace, Mile End Road (collection reference number: AIMG-0871, copyright of Queen Mary University of London and reproduced by kind permission of Queen Mary University of London)

It has been suggested that the concept of the winter garden communicated a utopian message that was rooted in that of its immediate predecessor, the horticultural glasshouse.[46] From the seventeenth century glasshouses containing tropical plants had been looked upon as Gardens of Eden, or as examples of Paradise on earth, and as buildings that united man with exotic nature. Arguably the legacy of that vision remained attached to the nineteenth-century public winter garden, even though, in the three instances in question, it had become integrated into much larger and more complex social spaces that were no longer exclusively dedicated to the cultivation and display of plants. The architectural historian, Mark Pimlott, has claimed that the fact that the inhabitants of nineteenth-century 'glasshouses, winter gardens, exhibition buildings, department stores, grand hotels, offices, shopping malls and people's palaces' were inspired and consoled by the links with Paradise, constituted a form of compensation for the dystopian face of consumer culture.[47]

As well as having winter gardens in common, all three complexes also housed great halls, located centrally in all cases. The Great Hall in the Royal Aquarium also functioned as a winter garden. Evoking memories of the market hall, the medieval domestic great hall and the sixteenth-century baronial hall, and made possible, by the mid nineteenth century, by the availability of large expanses of glass and iron, these vast open areas dominated the interior spaces of all three structures. Given that they all had organs strategically placed in them, the halls also had an ecclesiastical feel to them.

All three centres also contained rinks for ice-skating, a highly fashionable pastime in those years,[48] as well as libraries and reading rooms to accommodate their visitors' requirements for quiet time. Both the Alexandra Palace and the Royal Aquarium contained a theatre and a concert hall while the People's Palace's Queen's Hall featured a stage at one end and also hosted concerts. Among the other specialised spaces they shared, various kinds of refreshment rooms were also present in all three buildings. At the Aquarium for example, after a game of billiards, 'three courses and a dessert' could be enjoyed.[49]

The Alexandra Palace

The 1875 Alexandra Palace was the only symmetrical structure of the three buildings in question. Its enormous central, three-hundred and eighty-six-foot long Great Hall, the roof of which was supported by rows of ornamental iron pillars, filled the north/south axis of the building, occupying the same space as the central transept of the original building, which had boasted a two-hundred-and twenty-foot high dome. **[FIG 13]** It was built to seat fourteen thousand people and the orchestra used it as a performance space. Its north end housed the great Henry Willis Organ. Performances were given daily by the organist under the direction of the general musical director and the acoustic properties of the hall were described as 'in every way satisfactory.'[50] Equipped to the highest modern standards, with a stage about the size of that of Drury Lane, the Hall facilitated many different kinds of dramatic and spectacular performances. A theatre/auditorium, which could seat three and a half thousand people, lay to the right of the Great Hall at its northern end.[51]

Fig. 13. An antique postcard of the Great Hall in the Alexandra Palace, from the collection of the author, c. 1900 (out of copyright and reproduced by permission of the author)

In the centre of the building, to the left of the Hall, was an open courtyard which contained an Italian garden, while to the right of the Hall the corresponding courtyard was enclosed to form a concert hall that also functioned as an exhibition space. A reading-room, the winter garden, refreshment spaces, corridors and a number of other smaller, multi-purpose rooms made up the rest of the floor plan.[52] A sense of free flow through the entire interior space of the Alexandra Palace was made possible by the fact that, with the exception of the concert hall, the theatre, the picture galleries, and a natural history museum, which were contained spaces, 'the partition walls of the Great Hall, conservatories and corridors had glass folding doors so that the entire centre of the building could be free from end to end.'[53] Creating a strong sense of openness and spatial continuity that strategy served to unify the otherwise rather disparate spaces. As one commentator remarked at the time, 'By an ingenious arrangement of doors and arches, the whole building, from end to end, can be converted into one long gallery.'[54]

The fact that, like the corridors, the Hall was lit from the roof and featured a stained-glass window at one end undoubtedly made it a light, bright space to inhabit, while a sense of grandeur and pomp was provided by a series of coloured terracotta statues of royal and historical personages from William I to Queen Victoria, including Oliver Cromwell, which were arranged around the periphery of the Great Hall. The Picture Galleries, on the north side of the building, were described as being 'thoroughly well worth visiting' and were said to 'contain a goodly show of modern art; the pictures and drawings being labelled with particulars of the subject, artist's name, and price, thus avoiding the necessity for the purchase of a catalogue', while the Refreshment Department, situated on the ground floor in the south-west and south wings, consisted of 'a series of dining-rooms and buffets, with billiard and

smoking rooms adjoining, looking out upon the grounds, from which they are approached by broad flights of steps.'[55]

The Royal Aquarium

With its high barrel-vaulted iron and glass roof, the huge, three-hundred-and-forty-foot-long by a hundred-and-sixty-foot-wide Great Hall/winter garden of the Royal Aquarium, which occupied the space at the centre of the building, contained palm trees, fountains, pieces of sculpture, thirteen large tanks and an orchestra which was situated on the first-floor gallery. The dining buffets could also be found on that upper level. Visitors undoubtedly experienced a sense of awe when they entered the building. Rather than there being a separate, self-contained winter garden in the building as was the case in the other two buildings, the Aquarium's central hall took on that role itself. In one sense, therefore, the building could be read as a winter garden with additions. Not only were plants placed on the floor of the hall, they were also suspended from the curved iron structure and the balconies on the gallery level and woven in and out of the slender barley-sugar supporting iron columns. Seating around the sides of the hall enabled visitors to take in the sight of people engaging with nature inside as they promenaded about. Around the hall on the ground floor level were located many smaller rooms for eating, smoking, reading and playing chess; the art gallery; the skating rink; and the theatre. In the year of its opening the *Era* magazine reported on the spaces in the Aquarium, 'Around the hall are the tanks for the reception of the marine and fresh water creatures……Towards the north-west corner of the building is a large reading room, ..There is a telegraph office for the despatch and reception for messages….The craze of the present-day the [roller]-skating rink is not overlooked……The Fine Art exhibition will, it is expected, be one of the features of the Aquarium.'[56] Erroll Sherson described the Aquarium as 'a covered in promenade for the wet weather, with the glasses of live fish thrown in',

suggesting that visitors to that vast space spent their time strolling around at their leisure, indulging in the variety of experiences that were on offer.'[57]

The People's Palace

The East End's People Palace was also built around a large interior space, named the Queen's Hall after Victoria who opened it in 1887. **[FIGS 14 & 15]** Although the hall, which measured a hundred and thirty feet long and seventy-five feet wide, was smaller than its equivalents in the other two buildings, with its sixty-foot high vaulted ceiling, its stained glass, its rows of statues, its elaborate decorations and its first-floor boxes for members of the audience, it must have still been very imposing. It could accommodate four thousand people and was used for a wide variety of activities and events, from concerts to shows of flowers and animals to art exhibitions. The floors were inlaid and polished smooth for dancing. At one end stood a rostrum, behind which was a great organ on which a recital took place each Sunday. The orchestra and chorus were positioned in front of the organ. The music was sacred, Handel's Messiah being a favourite, and the venue invited its audience inside as an alternative to waiting for the pubs to open.[58]

Fig. 14. A drawing of the Queen's Hall in the People's Palace, Mile End Road, published in *The Century Illustrated Monthly Magazine* Vol Xl, no. 2, 1890, p. 173, from the collection of the author (out of copyright and reproduced by permission of the author)

Fig. 15. A drawing of a Sunday concert in the Queen's Hall in the People's Palace, Mile End Road, published in *The Century Illustrated Monthly Magazine* Vol Xl, no. 2, 1890, p. 180, from the collection of the author (out of copyright and published by permission of the author)

The other spaces of the People's Palace were added in subsequent years. The library and reading room, opened in 1888, were positioned immediately behind the Hall and had a separate entrance. **[FIG 16]** The library was a huge octagonal domed room containing two hundred and fifty thousand books donated by authors and publishers and featuring cast iron galleries and sculptured busts in a series of niches.[59] Its architectural style was reminiscent of that of the British Museum reading room. To the east side of the Hall were the technical schools, or People's Palace Institute, opened in October 1888, which offered day and evening classes in a range of technical and practical skills including tailor's cutting, carpentry, photography, and needlework.[60] The schools had their own separate entrance and were not, therefore, spatially linked to the Queens Hall. That separation was reinforced when, in 1907, they became part of London University. From 1909 they were run completely independently and, eventually, they were the only surviving part of the complex.

Fig. 16. A drawing of the reading room at the People's Palace, Mile End Road, published in *The Century Illustrated Monthly Magazine* Vol Xl, no. 2, 1890, p. 175, from the collection of the author (out of copyright and published by permission of the author)

Enclosed completely in glass and looking out on to a terrace, the People's Palace's winter garden was located on the west side of the Hall from which it was directly accessible. To the west of the complex was a gymnasium (with an ice-skating rink in its basement) and to the east of it were swimming baths, both of them self-contained buildings, not spatially connected to the central hall. By 1892 all those additions were in place and the Palace was complete. A billiard room also existed at some stage in the building's history.[61] The People's Palace was hugely popular in the first decade or so of its existence but, as at the Alexandra Palace, the popularity of the entertainments gradually declined and, in 1931, fire took its toll.

The building was re-constructed and the educational wing of the Palace eventually became part of Queen Mary University of London.

From recreation to amusement

Peter Bailey made a distinction between what he called 'amusement' - or, as Lynda Nead described it, 'purposeless leisure' - and 'recreation', which was, again in Nead's words, 'associated with renewal and improvement.'[62] What began as a two-headed ambition in all three projects – to both educate and entertain - quickly turned into a tension that proved hard to manage. In line with the new spirit of social reform, the complexes in question sought to please their clientèle with amusements that offered them instant gratification alongside a set of experiences that improved and educated them and, particularly where the working-class visitors were concerned, encouraged their desire for social elevation. As visitor numbers continued to be an issue in all three spaces, and the projects' financial positions became increasingly fragile, increasing numbers of low-brow amusements were introduced with the result that unacceptable behaviour became widespread. That, in turn, discouraged visitors, thus creating a vicious circle of failure.

High Culture

All three venues made a number of high cultural offerings available to their visitors. **[FIG 17]** The activities that took place in the Alexandra Palace's lecture theatre, concert hall, art gallery, theatre, library and reading room were intended to educate its audience. [63] The Royal Aquarium's theatre, library, reading room and the numerous lectures that were hosted there were also included to support that same ambition. As a writer in the *Era* explained in 1876, 'Towards the north-west corner of the building is a large reading room, wherein tired sightseers will find English and foreign newspapers, magazines, and other current literature.

It is also proposed to collect a complete library of books of reference, to provide convenience for letter writing and materials for the delectation of chess players.' The room was described as a 'refined, quiet, cosy sort of place where one can spend a leisure hour with genuine enjoyment'.[64]At the opening ceremony Prince Alfred, The Duke of Edinburgh, explained that not only did the Aquarium aim to educate people it also sought to instil good taste in its visitors;

> The extensive aquarium, which is the main object of this institution, cannot fail, if properly directed, to stimulate the love of natural history and the acquirement of scientific knowledge. The access to a useful reading-room, the daily performance of good music by a well-chosen orchestra, the periodical exhibition of such collections of paintings as we see around us – these are agencies which cannot but exercise a most beneficial influence in refining and cultivating the public taste.[65]

Fig. 17. A sketch of a picture show at the People's Palace, Mile End Road published in *The Century Illustrated Monthly Magazine* Vol Xl, no. 2, 1890, p. 180, from the collection of the author (out of copyright and published by permission of the author)

Music performances played an important part in the Aquarium's high cultural programming. Bruce Phillips explained in *The Times* that, 'The old reproach of foreigners against the English people that they did not appreciate music was no longer applicable, and we are now a musical people. To gratify this growing taste on the part of the public, the directors were organising at great expense a large band of skilful and able musicians and Mr Arthur Sullivan, the eminent composer, was to have the direction of all the musical arrangements.'[66] The fact that the music performances at the Aquarium were overseen by Sullivan was widely promoted, although, according to the *New York Times,* he only actually gave four orchestral concerts.[67]

The well-known painter, John Millais, was similarly used as a guarantor of taste for the works of art displayed at the Aquarium. An article in the *Era* explained that, 'A good selection of pictures ought to be made considering that Mr. Millais is at the head of the department. As may be expected, a great number of daubs have been rejected and Mr. Knight, the Secretary, is somewhat in doubt whether room can be found for all that has been accepted.'[68] In 1894 an exhibition of both English and French artists – including Walter Crane, Aubrey Beardsley, Frank Brangwyn, Toulouse Lautrec, and Pierre Bonnard – was mounted there.[69]

The Aquarium's theatre, which accommodated one thousand, two hundred and ninety-three people, opened in April 1876. It remained in use until its closure 1879 but it was soon re-opened under the name of the Imperial Theatre. It closed again in 1885 but was taken over by Lillie Langtry who completely refurbished it, although it soon ran into financial difficulties again. In 1908 the theatre was moved to Canning Town where it became known as the Royal Albert Music Hall.[70] Not everyone was convinced by the founders' sincerity in the provision of high culture. In 1875 a Mr. Grain of the Westminster School authorities claimed that the project was 'simply and entirely a commercial enterprise, disguised under professions of a desire to cultivate musical and artistic tastes among the people.'[71]

Education was a core ambition of the founders of the People's Palace and the library was open to the general public, as well as to students taking classes at the technical schools. The generous accessibility of that resource, as well as a sense of some of the other educational activities on offer, was made clear in an issue of *The Palace Journal* outlining the timetable for Friday 31st May 1892;

> Library. Newspapers may be seen from 7.30 am; Library open from 10 to 5
> and from 6 to 10, free.
> Lawn Tennis Club General Meeting, at 8.30.

Ladies' Gymnasium, Grand Display, in Queen's Hall, at 8.

Sketching Club General Meeting, at 8.30.

Orchestral Society Rehearsal, 8 to 10.

Literary Society Meeting, at 8.15.

Choral Society Rehearsal, at 7.30.

Military Band Practice, at 7.45.[72]

Sport

All three spaces aimed to provide their visitors with a variety of forms of healthy recreation, which can be interpreted as activities that did not include drunkenness, disorder, crime or anything considered morally decadent. Sport, which was hugely popular at that time with mass audiences, featured in all three venues. The Alexandra Palace boasted an outside swimming pool, while a number of other pursuits were available in the Park, among them cycling, cricket and trotting. *Living London* noted that archery and croquet, which were also available there, were considered very fashionable.[73] The 1897 edition of *Routledge's Popular Guide to London* explained that, 'the grounds are devoted to various fetes, archery meetings, reviews and races, which are held in a fine racecourse with an excellent stand from which to witness the sport.' [74] Sporting activities, including ice- skating, cycling and boxing, could also be undertaken at the Aquarium, while at the People's Palace visitors could also ice-skate and swim as well as exercise in the gymnasium, play tennis and billiards and dance, all of which activities could be pursued for free. **[FIG 18]**

Fig. 18. A reproduction of a drawing, by Stewart Browne, of skating on the crystal ice rink at the Royal Aquarium and Summer and Winter Gardens, Westminster, published in *Black and White,* March 26, 1892, from the collection of the author (out of copyright and reproduced by permission of the author)

Traditional activities

A number of pastimes that had long been shared by members of rural communities were also considered to be healthy activities and were, therefore, actively encouraged. Horticultural activities were common across all classes and the National Chrysanthemum Society organised three shows annually at the Royal Aquarium. Similar events were also held at the Alexandra Palace and in the Mile End Road.[75] Children's dressing-up shows were also hosted at the latter venue, as were pigeon shows and dog shows, which were held in the grounds.[76] The Allied Terrier Club show, which became Crufts at a later date, was held at the Royal Aquarium between 1886 and 1891.[77] A collie show was also held there. **[FIG 19]** Dog shows had rural roots, originating as they had in shows of sporting breeds, setters and pointers among them, for which guns were the prizes.[78] The People's Palace added poultry shows to those of pigeons and dogs, while rabbits and cats were also shown there at two-day events.[79]

Fig. 19. A reproduction of a set of drawings of a collie dog show at the Royal Aquarium and Summer and Winter Gardens, Westminster, from the collection of the author, c. 1880 (out of copyright and reproduced by permission of the author)

Entertainment

All three venues also offered their working-class visitors a variety of traditional working classes entertainments, such as peep-shows and waxworks. It was those amusements that ultimately brought about the demise of the three projects, however, as, as was mentioned above, they encouraged less than perfect behaviour on the part of some of their passive participants. Although, at the Alexandra Palace, huge efforts were made to attract more visitors by offering them 'self-improving rational diversions', such as clay pipe making, it was the less rational of the diversions, such as 'Iros the 'marvellous Aerial Globe Walker',

who won the day. The entertainments that would, hitherto, have been offered by travelling circus performers proved the most popular.[80] Blondin, the famous tightrope walker, for example, as well as Ada Webb who performed under water, were favourite acts for visitors to the Alexandra Palace.[81] They were also enthralled by parachute descents from a hot-air balloon, which Ron Carrington later described as 'wretched sensationalism.'[82]

People and buildings from different cultures and ethnic backgrounds – the so-called 'anthropological displays' – also attracted a great deal of interest at the Alexandra Palace, as indeed they did at numerous World's Fairs in the period. A number of ethnic villages were on display, Japanese, Moorish and Egyptian among them, while an exhibition of Lapps from Norway also entranced visitors.[83]

The Royal Aquarium offered its visitors a wide range of amusements. **[FIG 20]** As a writer in the *Era* explained, 'In all cases where a corporate body provides the capital, a dividend is expected, and to pay this it has been found necessary to abandon the lofty ideals propounded in the prospectus issued to the public when the Aquarium was in an embryonic stage.'[84] Fourteen-year-old Zazel, the first female human cannonball act, was a particular favourite, [85] while a number of 'anthropological curiosities, including The Two-Headed Nightingale, apparently vocally-proficient Siamese twins (1885), a three-legged boy from Spain (1898) and (most celebrated of all), Krao 'the living missing link, daughter of a tribe of hairy men and women from Laos,' undoubtedly stopped visitors in their tracks. [86] One story from the time demonstrated the kind of unsavoury incidents that, by the 1890s, had become associated with the Aquarium:

> By the 1890s, the Aquarium was acquiring a risqué reputation, with unaccompanied Ladies promenading through the hall in search of male companionship. Emily Turner, a visitor from Montreal, worked as a salesgirl at the Aquarium between October 1891 and January 1892. She met a Major Hamilton there, who bought her supper

at Gatti's (in the Strand) and took her to entertainments on the Alhambra Theatre, promising to set her up in rooms in Lambeth. The major disappeared after providing her her with 'gelatin capsules' for a cough. The pills made her ill and she stopped taking them. Then leftover pills were passed to Scotland Yard and she was traced by Inspector Jarvis of the Metropolitan Police, who identified the missing major as the serial killer, Thomas Neill Cream.[87]

Fig. 20. A reproduction of a drawing, by P. Frenzeny, of a boxing kangaroo at the Royal Aquarium and Summer and Winter Gardens, Westminster, c. 1880, from the collection of the author (out of copyright and reproduced by permission of the author)

The People's Palace did not sink to such levels of depravity but even there a tension emerged between the educational aspect of its provision and the entertainments that went on there. Ladies were not shot from cannons but the regular animal shows began to be seen as rather lightweight compared with the classes, concerts and lectures, although it was the former that kept the books balanced.

The visitor experience

Whether visitors came to the three venues in question for amusement or education, or for a mixture of both, they undoubtedly underwent a variety of different experiences in them, from intellectual engagement to jaw-dropping shock and awe. Although visitors were protected from the weather for the duration of their stay, an undoubted luxury compared to previous experiences, there was little sense of interiority, domesticity, privacy or quietness to be had in these leisure complexes, except, perhaps, in the reading rooms, or in the winter gardens where the aim was to commune with nature. These were overtly public spaces for the most part, experienced in the company of family members and friends, and engaged with in the company of large numbers of strangers. Those strangers constituted a crowd, not one, as in

the railway station, that was mostly in a hurry to get to a destination, but one, rather, that was taking its time, strolling around, on display, and aware of those who were strolling alongside them. A high level of anonymity existed. The concept of the promenade, the term used to describe the main activity undertaken by aristocratic visitors to the earlier open-air pleasure gardens, was equally applicable to these new inside spaces and offered working-class visitors a new experience.

Images of the interior of the Royal Aquarium depicted well-dressed couples, arm in arm, admiring the spectacle before them. It would seem that women, in their capacity as wives and partners, were welcomed into these spaces, although, if, as we have seen, they entered on their own, they were treated with a level of suspicion which was not necessarily afforded single men. These were not gendered spaces but the level of respectability expected of them meant that women had to be accompanied at all times.

So varied were the activities with which visitors engaged in these indoor spaces that it must have almost felt like walking around an entire city. Indeed, the way in which visitors strolled around recalled, in certain ways, the relaxed, somewhat aimless activity undertaken by Charles Baudelaire's *flaneur.* In this particular context, though, the concept of the *flâneuse* is also relevant as both men and women took part.[88] A description of the Aquarium published in the *New York Times* in 1876 stressed the multi-functionality of the space, explaining that it included, 'not only an aquarium, but a concert hall, theatre, a picture gallery, skating rink, winter garden, drinking bars, restaurant, and hair-dresser's shop.' [89] The fact that visitors could go to a concert, have a meal, and have their hair cut under one roof must have felt like having a day out in town. A visit to London by a 'country cousin', which included a visit to the Aquarium, was described in detail in an issue of *Living London*.

> ….we now go to Westminster and stroll into the pleasure halls of the Royal Aquarium. We see a performance to commence with on the stage, and **are conducted** into many

> sideshows. We see a tattooed gentleman and a fasting lady, inspect a gold mine and an exhibition of pictorial posters, witness a marvellous exhibition of swimming, and see a young lady dive from the roof into a water tank, and then, hailing a taxi, we make our way to Picccadilly…..[90]

A sense of coercion emerged from the account, which suggested that, such was the need to make a profit in these venues that the idea of strolling around freely in the manner of the earlier pleasure gardens might have been more of a myth than a reality.

Conclusion

At least for the years in which they were implementing their original agendas, the life-spans of these three London-based buildings were relatively short. Their double-headed missions to both entertain and educate proved less than totally successful and managing their finances was challenging. Their multi-functionality proved especially difficult and the venues that survived probably did so by reverting to a single activity, the Alexandra Palace to broadcasting and the People's Palace to education. Circuses returned to big tents and high cultural activities, for the most part, to single-purpose buildings - theatres, concert halls, ballrooms, museums, exhibition halls and art galleries among them. Only at the English seaside did the multi-functional, entertainment-based winter garden/leisure complex survive a little longer. That is likely to be because the lower-middle class and working-class visitors that those venues attracted were a captive audience, on holiday with time and cash to spare. The experiences offered at the abundant theatres and concert halls in those locations were mostly at the popular end of the spectrum and the level of education provided by the seaside winter gardens was restricted, for the most part, to the presence of nature within them.

It is worth briefly considering the legacy of the late nineteenth-century winter gardens on the popular, and later mass, public spaces of leisure that developed through the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. The later advent of mass entertainment media, among them film and television, depended on the construction of single-purpose buildings, cinemas for instance. Television, however, brought family leisure back into the private sphere of the home. With the arrival of the American theme park in the years after the Second World War, the idea of bringing everything together in a single public space become popular once again. However, those essentially outdoor venues had more in common with the Pleasure Gardens and Pleasure Beaches than with the exclusively indoor nineteenth-century people's palaces and winter gardens. More recently, in the form of Cornwall's Eden Project, we have seen a return to the publicaly-accessible winter garden, which, like those of the botanical gardens, is first and foremost a horticultural space. The intentions behind London's Millennium Dome, however, more closely resembled those of London's winter gardens and people's palaces, that is to both educate and entertain the public. Interestingly it was as unsuccessful as its antecedents, probably for many of the same reasons.

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1 For more on the history of leisure in this period read: J. Walvin *Leisure and Society, 1830-1950* (London: Longman, 1978); J. Walton and J. Walvin (eds.) *Leisure in Britain 1780-1939* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2012; H. Cunningham *Leisure in the Industrial Revolution, c. 1780-c.1880* (New York: St Martin Press, 1980); A. Brodie *Tourism and the changing face of Britain* (Swindon: Historic England, 2019)

2 P. Bailey quoted in L. Nead *Victorian Babylon: People, Streets and iomages in Nineteenth-century London* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2000), 112.

3 Nead, *Victorian Babylon,* 5.

[4] The theatres and music venues in both the Alexandra Palace (where the theatre seated 3,000, as many as London's Drury Lane Theatre) and the Royal Aquarium (in which in 1879 the theatre came under new management and was renamed the Imperial Theatre) were directly comparable in their range of offerings, prices and their cross-class appeal as their West End equivalents which grew in number and popularity in the same years as the winter gardens and people's palaces.

[5] See map in S. J. Downing, *The English Pleasure Garden* (London: Shire Publications, 2011), 9.

[6] J. Flanders *Consuming Passions: Leisure and Pleasure in Victorian Britain* London: Harper Press 2006), 280.

[7] Nead, *Victorian Babylon,* 9.

[8] J. M. Munro *The Royal Aquarium: Failure of a Victorian Compromise* (Beirut, Lebanon: American University of Beirut Press, 1971), 6.

[9] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anthaeum_Hove, <accessed 25.06.209>.

[10] See Brodie, Allan *The Seafront* (Swindon: Historic England), 2018.

[11] L.Pearson *The People's Palaces, Britain's Seaside Pleasure Buildings 1870-1914* (London: Barracuda, 1991), 27.

[12] See Walton, John K. Riding on Rainbows: Blackpool Pleasure Beach and its Place in British Popular Culture (St Albans: Skelter Publishing, 2007); V. Toulmin *Blackpool Pleasure Beach* (Blackpool: Boco Publishing, 2011); J. Kane, *A Whirl of Wonder!' British Amusement Parks and the Architecture of Pleasure 1900-1939* (Unpublished PhD thesis, The Bartlett, UCL, University of London, 2007); J. Kane *The Architecture of Pleasure: British Amusement Parks and the Architecture of Pleasure 1900-* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2013; https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/iha-historic-amusement-parks-fairground-rides/ <accessed 25.06.2019>.

[13] M. K. McLean 'Re-thinking Late-Victorian Slum Fiction: The Crowd and Imperialism at Home' *English Literature in Transition, 1880-1920* Vol. 54, no.1, 2011 (London: ELT Press), 30.

[14] A. Shaw 'London Polytechnics and People's Palaces' *The Century Illustrated Monthly Magazine* (New York: Vol, XL, June 1890), 163.

[15] In his book, *Leisure in the Industrial Revolution, c. 1780-1880* of 1980, social historian, Hugh Cunningham, explained that 'rational recreation' was the ideal that nineteenth-century middle-class reformers hoped to impose on the urban working class of their day. They believed, he wrote, that 'leisure activities should be controlled, ordered, and improving'. (p. 90). See also P. Bailey *Leisure and Class in Victorian England: Rational Recreation and the Contest for Control* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1978).

[16] R. Carrington *Alexandra Park and Palace: A History* (London: Greater London Council, 1975), 6.

[17] W. Besant *All Sorts and Conditions of Men* (London: Harper, 1882), 28.

[18] 'Opening of the Royal Aquarium, *The Era* 30th January 1876, 4.

[19] 'The Royal Aquarium, *The Era,* 6th January 1883, 4.

[20] B. Phillips 'The Royal Aquarium and Summer and Winter Gardens,' *The Times* 9th October, 1875, 6.

[21] E. Sherson, *London's Lost Theatres of the Nineteenth Century* (London: John Lane The Bodley Head Ltd., 1925), 297.

[22] Phillips 'The Royal Aquarium and Summer and Winter Gardens', 7.

[23] In addition to the three structures being discussed here, Olympia's Grand Hall (known originally as the Royal Agricultural Hall) was opened in 1886 and what would eventually become Earls Court opened in the following year.

[24] See K. Nichols and S. V. Turner (eds.) *After 1851: The Material and Visual Cultures of the Crystal Palace at Sydenham* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2017).

[25] J. Harris *Alexandra Palace: A Hidden History* (Stroud, Gloucestershire, 2005), 17.

[26] https://britishlistedbuildings.co.uk/101268256-alexandra-palace-including-former-alexandra-palace-station-to-north-alexandra-ward#.XA6VdPZ2sxM, 1. <accessed 10.12.2018>.

[27] K. Gay *Palace on the Hill: A History of Alexandra Palace and Park* (London: Hornsey Historial Society, 1992, 7.

[28] https://britishlistedbuildings.co.uk/101268256-alexandra-palace-including-former-alexandra-palace-station-to-north-alexandra-ward#.XA6VdPZ2sxM, 2. <accessed 10.12.2018>.

[29] Gay *Palace on the Hill,* 11.

[30] 'The Alexandra Palace' *Municipal Journal*, March 9, 1900, 8.

[31] Gay, *Palace on the Hill,* 22.

[32] Harris, 2005, 22.

[33] https://britishlistedbuildings.co.uk/101268256-alexandra-palace-including-former-alexandra-palace-station-to-north-alexandra-ward#.XA6VdPZ2sxM, 2 <accessed 10.12.2018>.

[34] Gay, *Palace on the Hill,* 28.

[35] 'Opening of the Royal Aquarium', *The Era* 30th January 1876, 4.

[36] 'The Royal Aquarium' *New York Times,* 12th February 1876, 7.

[37] C. Dickens (Jr), *Dickens's Dictionary of London: An unconventional handbook* (London: Charles Dicken and Evans,1879), 23.

[38] Dickens (Jr.) *Dickens's Dictionary of London* 1879, 24.

[39] A place of healthy recreation and education for the poor of London, the People's Palace was built in the wake of the bread riots of 1885-6 and aimed to provide a more wholesome form of entertainment to East-Enders than that offered by the area's gin palaces and gambling dens.

[40] http://britishlistedbuildings.co.uk/101268256-alaxandra-palace-including-former-alexandra-palace-station-to-north-alexxandra-ward#.XA5-PvZ2sxM, 1. <accessed 18/12/2018>

[41] 'Opening of the Royal Aquarium, *The Era,* 30th January 1876, 4.

[42] Shaw 'London Polytechnics and People's Palaces', 174.

[43] Phillips 'The Royal Aquarium and Summer and Winter Gardens'**, 6.**

[45] Gay *Palace on the Hill,* 18.

[46] See M. Pimlott, *The Public Interior as Idea and Project* (The Netherlands: Jap Sam Books, 2016).

47 Pimlott, *The Public Interior as Idea and Project*, 37.

48 Although ice-skating had been going on for centuries, from the mid-1870s it became fashionable in London for a decade or so. The Glaciarum was opened in 1876 on the Kings Road in Chelsea and was popular with upper-class men and women. A number of other rinks were also opened in these years, among them the examples in the leisure centres under discussion. See: https://www.museumoflondon.org/discover/ice-skating-fashion-craze. <accessed 26.06.2019>.

49 'Opening of the Royal Aquarium', *The Era,* January 30th 1876, 4.

50 A. and C. Black *Black's Guide to London and its environs* (8th edition) (London: Black, Adams and Charles, 1882), 64.

51 J. Banerjee 'John Johnson and Alfred Meeson, Alexandra Palace, North London', http://www.victorianweb.org/art/architecture/johnson/2.html, 1. <accessed 18.12.2018>.

52 Black *Black's Guide to London and its environs* (8th edition), 62.

53 Carrington *Alexandra Park and Palace,* 238.

54 Black *Black's Guide to London and its environs* (8th edition), 62.

55 Black *Black's Guide to London and its environs* (8th edition), 62.

56 'Opening of the Royal Aquarium', *The Era,* 30th January 1876, 4.

57 Sherson, *London's Lost Theatres of the Nineteenth Century*, 5.

58 Shaw 'London Polytechnics and People's Palaces', 174.

59 Shaw 'London Polytechnics and People's Palaces', 175.

60 Shaw 'London Polytechnics and People's Palaces', 175.

61 'The People's Palace', Charles Dickens Jr. et al, *Dickens Dictionary of London*, 1908 edition, 25.

62 Nead, *Victorian Babylon.*113.

63 Carrington *Alexandra Park and Palace* 56.

64 'Opening of the Royal Aquarium', *The Era* 30th January 1876, 4.

65 Munro *The Royal Aquarium,* 10.

66 Phillips 'The Royal Aquarium and Summer and Winter Gardens', 6.

67 'The Royal Aquarium' *New York Times,* 12th February 1876, 7.

68 'Opening of the Royal Aquarium, *The Era,* 30th January 1896, 4.

69 Munro *The Royal Aquarium,* 14.

70 Munro, *The Royal Aquarium,* 8-9.

71 Phillips 'The Royal Aquarium and Summer and Winter Gardens'**, 6.**

[72] *The Palace Journal* (Vol, ix, no. 216, May 31st, 1892), 1.

[73] 'The Alexandra Palace' *Living London: Its Work and Its Play, its Humor and its Pathos, its Sights and its Scenes* Vol III, 1902, vol III, 201.

[74] 'The Alexandra Palace' *Routledge's Popular Guide to London and its suburbs*, (London: Routledge1897), 43.

[75] 'History of the National Chrysanthemum Society' (originally published in National Chrysanthemum Society Yearbook, 1996) on: www.nationalchrysanthemumsociety.co.uk/history-ncs/4553231108, 1. <accessed 20.12.1>.

[76] Gay *Palace on the Hill,* 19.

[77] Munro *The Royal Aquarium,* 18.

[78] N. Pemberton and M. Worboys 'The surprising history of dog shows' https://www.historyextra.com/period/Victorian/the-surprising-history-of-victorian-dog-shows, p. 1. <accessed 27.06.2019>.

[79] Shaw 'London Polytechnics and People's Palaces', 176.

[80] Circuses also offered entertainment to visitors in fixed central London sites. The first building to stand where the Alhambra Theatre stood in Leicester Square, for example, was The Royal Panopticon of Science and Art which opened in 1854 and closed in 1856. The Alhambra Palace was opened in 1856 under E. T. Smith **at first as a circus** and then a music hall in 1860. See https://wcclibraries.wordpress.com/tag/royal-aquarium-theatre/ <accessed 26.06.201>).

[81] Carrington *Alexandra Park and Palace,* 88.

[82] Carrington, *Alexandra Park and Palace,* 98.

[83] Carrington, *Alexandra Park and Palace,* 88.

[84] 'The Royal Aquarium, *The Era,* 12th September 1885, 4

[85] Phillips 'The Royal Aquarium and Summer and Winter Gardens', 6.

[86] Phillips 'The Royal Aquarium and Summer and Winter Gardens', 6.

[87] 'Royal Aquarium and Winter Gardens' on http://lostbritain.uk/site/royal-aquarium-and-winter-garden/, 3.<(accessed 11.10.2018>.

[88] See C. Baudelaire *The Painter of Modern Life* (New York: Da Capo Press, 1964 [1863]).

[89] 'The Royal Aquarium' *New York Times,* 12th February 1876, 7.

[90] G. R. Sims (ed.) 'A Country Cousin's Day in Town: A High Dive at the Royal Aquarium' *Living London: Its Work and Its Play, its Humor and its Pathos, its Sights and its Scenes* Vol II, 1902, 345.

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