

London Life

The Oldest Cinema

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Andrea

I'm inside London's - and the UK's - oldest cinema, The Electric, in the West of London. It's very grand in here with gold and cream walls and red velvet carpets. And I'm really looking forward to enjoying a night at the movies.

Jackie: Hello I'm Jackie Dalton and that was our reporter, Andrea Rose, at the Electric - the oldest cinema in London and in the UK.

More people are going to the movies in the UK than they have at any other time in the last 30 years.

Over the past few years, more and more multiplex cinemas have been built. Multiplex cinemas are big cinemas with several screens showing different movies - usually the latest blockbusters. 'Blockbusters' are films that are very popular, like *Star Wars* or *Harry Potter*.

But the Electric is a bit different. Listen to Andrea talking about why.

Andrea

I can see why this is one of the places to watch a film in London. I'm stretched out on one of their double sofas and ready to watch the film.

Jackie: Andrea is planning on spending her evening at the cinema watching a film on a double sofa. She says that this is one of the most special places to see a film in London. She does this by emphasising the word 'the'.

'This is one of the places to watch a film in London'.

Without the emphasis on the word 'the', it would sound like this.

'This is one of the places to watch a film in London.'

The stress changes the entire meaning, from being one of the most important places to being just one of many cinemas where you can watch a film. It's a funny but effective technique to make a point. Here's another example.

'It's one of the films in the world of cinema. It's one of the films in the world of cinema.'

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Andrea describes the history of the building. There are two words which might be helpful to understand here. One is 'auditorium'. That's the part of the room where people sit. The other is 'music hall', which is a type of theatre with live music and performers popular in the early 1900s.

Now here's a question for you: Why was the auditorium originally designed as a music hall auditorium?

Andrea

Apparently the Electric cinema was constructed in 1910 by architect Gerald Seymour Valentin. As there was no established cinema 'model' in the UK he designed the auditorium as a music hall.

Jackie: The architect Gerald Seymour Valentin designed the auditorium as a music hall because before this there hadn't been a cinema in the UK. There was no 'established model' – no other cinema to copy.

Sadly, the building was never finished. So what's happened since?

Andrea

It's recently been renovated to become a unique cinematic experience. It is the only place in London where you can spend a night watching a movie on a comfy leather sofa while sipping a cocktail or a glass of champagne.

Jackie: The cinema has been 'renovated' – repaired and improved – in the last few years and now it's thought of as a unique cinematic experience. That means it's a very special experience. 'Unique'.

When you watch your film, you can lie on a comfortable leather sofa and drink cocktails.

Not everyone gets to spend their night at the movies like this. Adam, who's a film school graduate, watches films in the many other cinemas around London and it's just as enjoyable. So what is his favourite British film?

Adam

One of my favourite British films is probably *Excalibur*. *Excalibur* is a fantastic film so anybody who's into Arthurian mythology, that's the film to watch.

Jackie: *Excalibur* is about the mythology of King Arthur. Adam recommends this film if you really like Arthurian mythology. He uses the term 'into', instead of 'really like'.

'Anybody who's into Arthurian mythology...'

'I'm into films about crime – I'm into comedies.'

It's now time to go back to Andrea at the electric cinema to see what's happening.

Andrea

Well although that double leather sofa in the Electric cinema was really comfortable I think the price was a bit above my budget so I'm off to find somewhere else more cheap and cheerful for a night out in London.

Jackie: Oh dear, Andrea didn't get to have that cocktail after all. It was too expensive. She uses the expression –
a bit above my budget

This is a gentler way of saying to someone that something is too expensive for you.

'I'm sorry, but unfortunately it's a bit above my budget.'

So, instead, Andrea has decided to look for something that's just as fun but is a lot less money.

She says: 'I'm going to find something else that's cheap and cheerful!'

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