

The Royal Palace Theatre - formerly Sanger's Amphitheatre



"Lord" George Sanger built his Amphitheatre on the corner of High Street and George Street in 1883. Initially it was a circus building but was also used for opera and drama from its early days. The building was converted to a theatre in 1908 by Frank Matcham, a well known and prolific builder of theatres, and was renamed the Royal Palace Theatre. Films were also shown and in 1929 the theatre was equipped to facilitate talking movies. Films, variety and theatre continued until early 1961 when the last pint was pulled in Sangers Bar and the theatre was demolished along with the adjoining Sanger's Hotel.



This view is of Sanger's Hotel on the corner of George Street, but the striking façade continued down High Street and was complemented with eight female figures standing on pedestals holding ornamented gas lamps. Their number was later reduced (apparently due to prudish reaction) when six were removed to Sanger's Hall by the Sea in Margate. As compensation to Lord George Sanger a subscription was raised as a result of which a portrait was painted of the man which hung in the Theatre for many years. The two remaining statues which were outside the main entrance were removed in 1939.



The façade continued as far as the present day Post Office building which now also accommodates shops at the front with the Post Office being relegated to the rear. Part of the façade still exists above the parade of shops next to the Post Office building.



This view shows the last of the eight statues and marks the extent of the Sanger's building in relation to the current Post Office building.

Lez, an ancient Ramsgateonian wrote:

Before the second world war, my youngest sister, myself and our parents, attended a number of pantomimes at his theatre as a Christmas treat. We went to Saturday night performances in early February and I had bought the necessary tickets for the Dress Circle, -two at one shilling and sixpence and two at half price, nine pence, - on my way home from St Georges School. One year, because of this outing, we had two Christmas dinners. We had to pass by Jane's fish and poultry shop while walking into town and dad and mum stopped to talk to Mr and Mrs Janes as we passed by. They always had a wonderful display of Turkeys, Geese, Ducks and tame rabbits hanging outside the shop before Christmas and our parents always bought a large turkey each year. We were a family of seven and in addition there was always an aunt and an uncle plus two family friends from London with at least two of my sister's boy friends at the table, how mum coped with the cooking, we will never know. However, to get back to my story, Mr Janes had one Turkey left over from his show and he offered it to dad saying that as we had had the best, we might like to buy the worst, It didn't have a lot of meat on the breast apparently and they finally settled on a price of five shillings. We went off and enjoyed the pantomime, (dad always reckoned that they weren't as good as when he was younger) and collected the bird on our way home. We had our second family Christmas dinner the next day and the bird had far more meat on it than had been expected, once it was carved. After that I went many times to see film shows and remember that from our seats in the upper circle, -The Gods-, we could leave by a series of stone steps down to pavement level and exit through a plain door/doors into George street where there was often a barrow selling hot chestnuts. There were other Saturday night shows held there, Hughie Green was one of them, I never went but one of my friends did with his father.