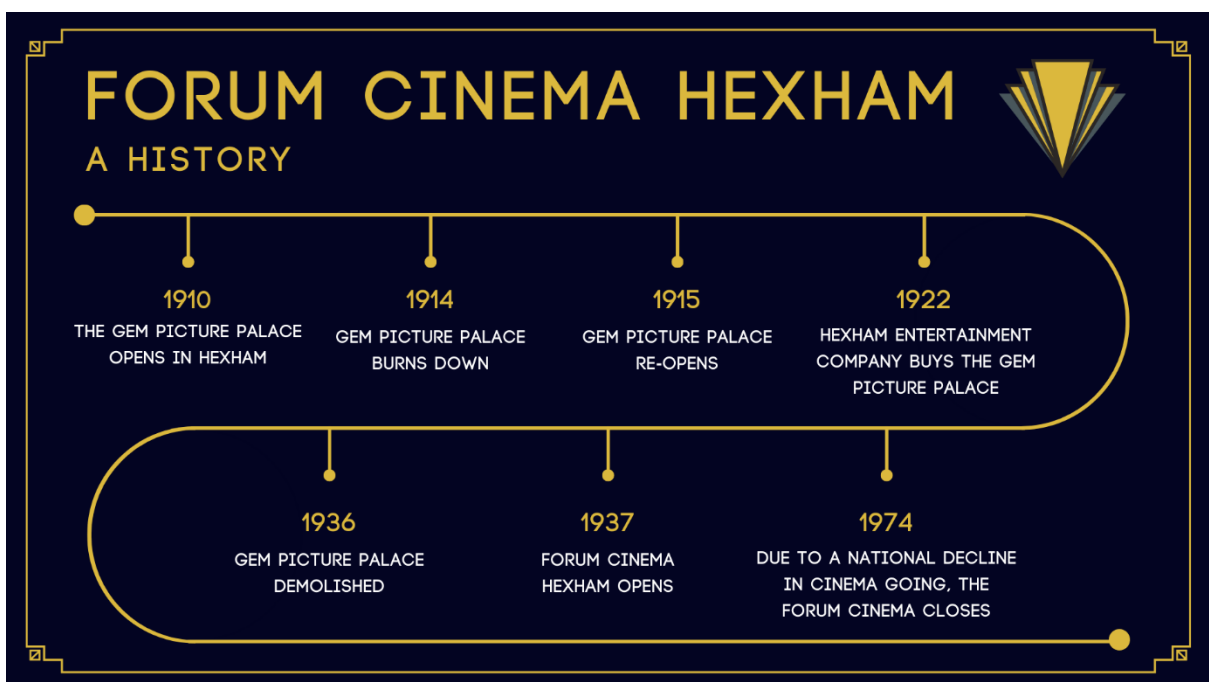




The first indoor cinema to arrive in Hexham, The Gem Picture Palace, opened in 1910 and originally showed silent features as well as live performances from comedians and musicians. Due to the popularity of the newer ‘talking pictures’, The Gem expanded to improve its facilities, including a brand-new glass-fronted façade. Unfortunately, The Gem Palace burned down in 1914 as the result of a fire started in the adjoining Black Bull Inn. During the cinema’s closure, films were temporarily shown at The Abbey Institute (now Hexham Community Centre).

The Gem Picture Palace re-opened in August 1915 and was later sold to The Hexham Entertainment Company owned by Tom Scott. Hexham Entertainment Company also owned The Queen’s Hall Theatre, which is still situated in the town today. Under the guidance of Tom, The Gem was demolished, and The Forum Cinema was built in its place opening on 23rd August 1937. Due to the rise in popularity of television and increasing costs, The Forum Cinema closed in 1974. During this time the building was used as a bank and a bingo hall. However, the closure was relatively short lived and cinema screenings resumed in 1982.

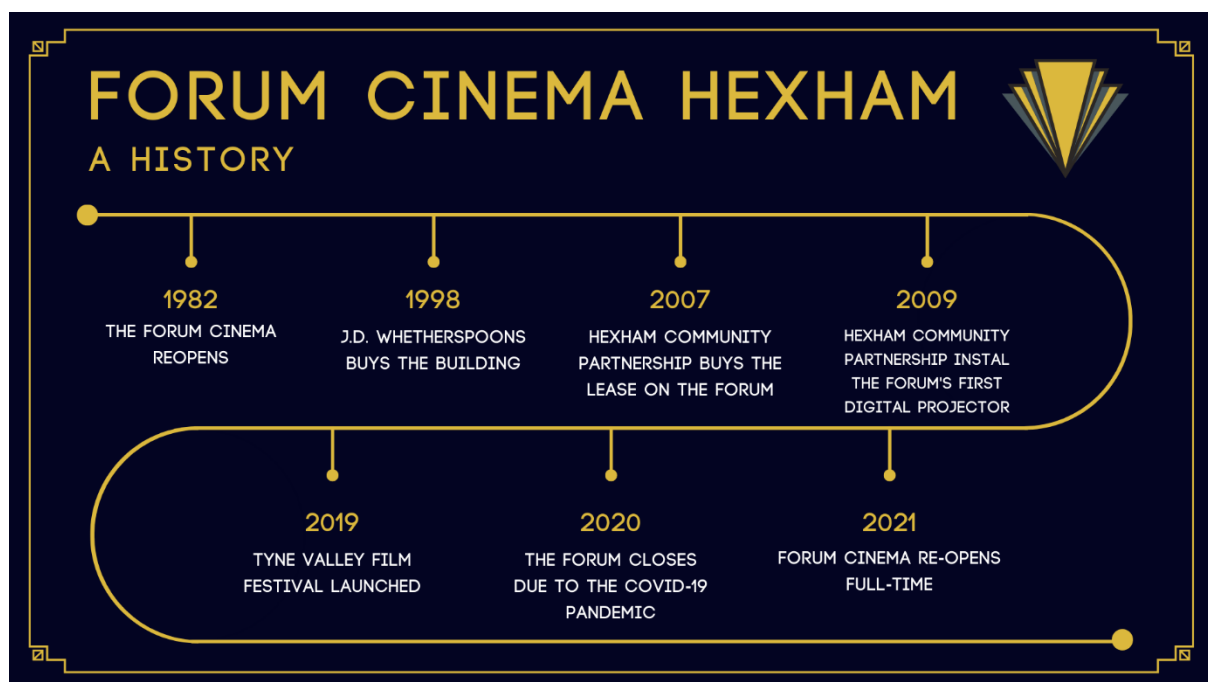


The local development trust, Hexham Community Partnership, bought the lease on the cinema in 2007 and established Forum Cinema Hexham Ltd as a community enterprise with profits from the cinema being used for the benefit of the town and surrounding areas.

Investment in the cinema in the subsequent years saw improved access to the first-floor premises, a new digital projector, upgraded sound systems and a satellite receiver to allow screenings of live productions from around the world. The café/bar has also been refurbished creating a relaxed and friendly environment for people to meet and enjoy local produce as well as some familiar cinema favourites (popcorn of course!).

In 2019, The Forum launched the Tyne Valley Film Festival, a fully community programmed film festival held annually in multiple unique venues situated across the Tyne Valley.

Like most entertainment businesses, The Forum Cinema had to close its doors in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. However, the cinema used this time to engage with its audience in new and exciting ways including outdoor screenings and launching its own online streaming platform, Forum Cinema at Home. The Forum fully re-opened in 2021 and continues to entertain the people of the Northeast with its diverse programme of films and live events!



During its time in the town, The Forum Cinema Hexham has entertained hundreds of thousands of people, provided employment for many people from all walks of life, and has worked closely with local businesses, suppliers, community groups and schools ensuring it gives as much back into the local community as possible.

