

TURN BACK THE CLOCK - *by Roger Langley*

(converted from publication pdf and so not original layout)



Unfortunately turning back the clock will not restore the once famous Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer clock tower which fronted the company's Borehamwood studio complex. A quarter of a century ago, the tower was finally levelled, several years after the studio doors were closed for business. MGM ceased operations in 1970/1 and demolition of the site took place in 1973, to make way for industrial use and the acres of backlot were cleared for residential housing development. Some of the emerging new roads were given names to reflect the former cinematic history, including a few surnames of screen stars. Despite local campaigns, as the iconic roadside building and tower did not have "listed" status, demolition could not be prevented. Forty years on, there is virtually nothing remaining to be seen, except for a low brick wall on Elstree Way, which previously bordered the MGM administration building. Pulling down the large sound stages can be seen online (at weblinks below) and at the end of the British comedy movie "Holiday on the Buses" (1973), with actual footage of the demolition having been captured by the film's production unit. The last photo shows the "Prisoner" dressing rooms and the view from the other end during demolition (the small Moke is superimposed and other photos have been colourised, except for the low wall one from Google street view). More on MGM and its history is in the book "The Prisoner Located" and see also www.eafa.org.uk/catalogue/1673 and www.thestudiotour.com/mgmborehamwood.

