

A load of old rollers

CONTRACTORS restoring York's SS Empire theatre were bowled off their feet when they found a cache of 200 roller-skates under the floorboards.

The skates date from the 1950s when the Empire was a roller skating rink and wrestling venue. They will now be put to good use for the first time in 30 years as they have been given to a local Barnardo's children's home in Tadcaster.

Contractors were well under way with the multi-million pound restoration of the old theatre – due to reopen later next year – when the skate discovery was made. More than 500 skaters packed the venue on its first night in the fifties when skates were hired out at 6p per head.