



Changing Places at the Phoenix

By Sophie Leighton



Maureen Lipman tests out potential new seats in the Phoenix foyer. Photo by Erini Rodis

At 11.30 am on Sunday 13 July, a lively queue was bunching up in the sun blazing down on the Phoenix cinema. Refreshments were thoughtfully laid on for the launch of the seat sponsorship campaign by Maureen Lipman and the special screening of Caroline Link's Academy-award-winning film *Nowhere in Africa*.

This is the next phase of renovation, and the three new seat models – from luxurious dark green with brass beading to more modern-looking red – now under consideration are on display in the foyer and are there to be tested out. Although there is no official voting procedure, we are promised that any particularly strong views will be taken into account.

The best seats

The seat replacement is provisionally scheduled for December and the campaign needs to raise about £40,000 for its 250 seats. Sponsoring one brings you benefits like a plaque with your name and costs £250 for an individual or family, payable in instalments (£50 off if you are a Friend). At a higher rate for a range of

business benefits, local businesses are also already taking up the opportunity to take part in the campaign. Sponsorship forms and further details can be downloaded from the website (www.phoenixcinema.co.uk) or picked up from the foyer. Anyone regretting the disappearance of the existing seats too much will find they can buy one to install at home!

Commitment to independent film-making

Maureen Lipman, the cinema's patron, kick-started the campaign in style and Anthony

Tasgal, *Chair of Seating* for the Trust, stressed the Phoenix's continuing strong commitment to independent film-making. He outlined plans already under way for more family activities, such as the Saturday morning film club for 6–11-year-olds and screenings for parents with babies and other recent initiatives including a range of workshops and courses for young people aged 6–19 on practical film-making and animation, fostering new talent for the future as well as making the best on offer available here.

A Safe Place to Talk

For the last three months an Eating Disorders Support Group has been meeting in the elegant surroundings of Avenue House, East End Road.

User led

The group was set up by co-ordinator Fenella Lemonsky, who explained, "I set up the group when, as a recovering bulimic, very ill and in treatment, I discovered there was nowhere for me to go to talk in a safe, confidential, non-judgemental yet supportive way. I wanted good quality, highly skilled, and confidential support that was user led."

"Through my work at Barnet Voice I was aware that there were no statutory eating disorder services in the borough apart from dietetic support, and those wanting a specialised dedicated service would have to travel out of the borough."

Food for thought

"I was inspired to get Eating Disorders Association accreditation for the group after visiting two EDA groups in the UK and seeing how warm, welcoming, safe and well structured they were."

The North London Eating Disorders Support Group offers support to those whose life is dominated by food, whether through anorexia, bulimia, binge eating or any other type of food dimensioning issue and offers support to men and women aged 18+, and to 16 and 17 year olds if accompanied by a responsible adult. The group, which is accredited to the National Self Help Network of the Eating Disorders Association, meets on the first Sunday of each month 10.20–11.45am at Avenue House. There is no attendance fee,

although voluntary donations are welcomed. Meetings are open, and attendees can come and go at any time.

Self help

The group is jointly led by Ms Lemonsky and two mental health professionals. "We have all been 'vetted' by EDA and follow a strict code of ethics and policies to ensure the group has a good grounding and is safe," explained Ms Lemonsky, "We receive regular additional training and supervision (supervision from a senior psychologist who works in an internationally accredited eating disorder unit) and will be attending the annual Self Help Network Conference in Derby in September where we meet other Group Contacts and receive further training."

Award winning

The group has obtained an award from the Millennium Commission, administered and supervised by the Kings Fund, and has just gained some financial support from Barnet Primary Care NHS Trust. Funding remains an issue, however, especially for ongoing expenditure for such items as good resource materials.

Ms Lemonsky would love to hear from local businesses that may be interested in providing financial assistance in return for full acknowledgement. For further information on the group, phone 07952 549941 or contact Ms Lemonsky through the EDA Self Help Network Team 01603 619090 or by email to FLemonsky@aol.com.

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