



Ambitious plans for the Phoenix

By Helen Drake

If East Finchley were a country, the Phoenix Cinema would be a national treasure. Nearly 100 years old and still standing, its exterior may be in need of a facelift, but its reputation for showing the best that arthouse cinema has to offer remains intact. With its centenary celebration imminent, the Trustees have ambitious plans to restore the outside of the building to the structure it had in its early golden days and to develop the site to include a café and exhibition space.

Survival story

At a "Meet the Phoenix" event in May, aficionados stepped back in time with Gerry Turvey, retired film historian and Vice Chair of the Phoenix Cinema Trust, to discover that the Phoenix (or Coliseum as it was known then) was one of only two new-build cinemas in the area when it first opened in 1909, with a screen originally positioned in the opposite direction to where it appears now.

The auditorium was built to accommodate an orchestra as local cinemas at this time competed to produce the best live music. When talking pictures arrived the Phoenix, always at the cutting edge of contemporary culture, emerged triumphant as the first local cinema to install sound.

After an Art Deco refurbishment in the 1930s (and another incarnation as The Rex), the Phoenix survived the drop in cinema attendance, which began in the 1950s, to rise from the ashes when the Phoenix Cinema Trust was

formed in 1985. The charitable trust has three aims: to offer the best in independent cinema; to serve the local community; and to sustain and make accessible an historic building.

Responsive programming

Fast forward to 2008. The Phoenix has the latest digital technology and knows its audience. If a film hasn't proved its worth after three days it will be taken off and replaced. Similarly, said Jason Wood, the film programmer, if you missed a particular film and think it should come back, let him know via the comments book in the foyer and he'll see what he can do.

Manager Paul Homer revealed that a first application to the English Heritage Lottery Fund for restoration funding has already been made, with a second stage planned if the first application is successful. Work would then start in autumn 2009.

For more information call the box office on 020 8444 6789 or go to www.phoenixcinema.co.uk.



Kim Rooney, John Hegley, and the winner of the first prize Tony Flynn. Photograph courtesy of Kim Rooney

National prize for Northern line poet

East Finchley resident Kim Rooney has won second prize in the English Association's 2007 Fellows' Poetry competition. The award was presented by poet John Hegley, one of the judges, at the Association's AGM on 21 May at the British Academy in London.

The winning poem, 'At the end', was described by Hegley as 'sparse' and reminiscent of the work of artist Giacometti, famous for his surreal sculptures.

"I think that sums up my poetry well," says Kim. "I'm minimalist and like to keep my poems short."

"I've been writing poetry for a long time, but have only recently started to enter competitions. I

think it might be something to do with living in East Finchley. I moved here just over a year ago with my husband Mark, a painter, and it's got such a creative vibe.

"I do find myself writing poems on the Northern line, when I

can get a seat! The morning commute can be eerily meditative."

A graduate of the University of East Anglia's MA in Life-Writing, Kim is a former BBC online journalist. See her winning poem below left:

Vanishing plates

By John Dearing

For those of you lucky enough to have the luxury of a car and to have negotiated favourable loan rates with your bank to fill the thing up with petrol, this may be of interest to you.

Manufacturers of number plates now need to be registered and there is much stricter control. As a consequence of this, there has been an explosion in the theft of number plates from motor vehicles, particularly of the "stick-on" variety.

These are not actually

affixed to the vehicle, using screws, they are just glued on, and it doesn't take much to lever them off. If your car has stick on number plates, you might want to consider fixing them correctly using screws. Better still, use tamper-proof screws if you can obtain them.



Alarming Crack Photograph by John Dearing

Cracking news

By David Tupman

In recent months, passers by noticed a large crack in the tube bridge over East Finchley High Road that carries underground trains out of the station. Speculation was rife that the infamous earthquake of spring 2008, felt in some parts of N2, had caused a fissure to the brickwork.

Engineers were baffled but repairs have now been carried out following concerns raised by THE ARCHER. Fans of the Art Deco statue Archie, approaching his 70th birthday, can rest assured that he will not be toppling down from his monumental plinth. Nor, as one local wag put it, is Archie cracking up.

At the end

*At the end
they brought lipstick
for mouths empty
of everything
lips pursed
in the last bone-break
shit-pit fall
smudged red*

*a girl
not yet my mother
waited for her lipstick ration
the grief from Daddy*

*it came with gas
and pills
it came and stayed*

*my mother lingers
on to get her lipstick ration
she waits
for Daddy
till bone-break
her mouth empty
of everything
lips pursed
for the final
shit-pit fall*

no lipstick comes.

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