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## A dog's life can be fun

Milly McNaughton, The Archer's canine correspondent, reports on the pleasures of dog training.

Hello. My name is Milly and I am a five-month old cocker spaniel. My humans recently took me to an excellent dog training club at the Sea Cadets Hall in Long Lane, East Finchley. Apparently if I am properly trained we will all get along well and enjoy life much better than if I can just do as I like.



Milly the irresistible. Photo by Tina McNaughton

The trainers, Kevin, Shirley and Annette, said they were teaching us dogs to be obedient, but they were really training the owners how to deal with us. I worked that out straight away. I had great fun for six weeks, every Tuesday evening, especially as much of the training involved me getting special treats.

If my memory serves me well, they taught me to come when my name was called (I was top of the class in that), sit when required (I am also good at that), sit or stand still, lie down to order (I'm afraid that was my worst routine), walk to heel, let myself be groomed (didn't go for that much) and go to my bed when asked.

Sometimes my humans didn't get the hang of it, but Kevin and the other two trainers always seemed to be able to make me do what they wanted. Firm but gentle is what I would call them.

### More please

This was just a basic course, but I can go on to the next stage if the humans will let me. That

Apparently they are called Barnet and District Training Club and humans can email them at [admin@trainingdogs.co.uk](mailto:admin@trainingdogs.co.uk) or visit their website at [www.trainingdogs.co.uk](http://www.trainingdogs.co.uk). They can also phone them on 020 8449 7539 or 020 8959 0055. They also come to your house for special one-to-one training. Woof, woof.

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## April at the Phoenix

By the Phoenix Cinema's Paul Homer

Sunday 5 April sees the screening of the best films of 2008 as voted by our audience. They have wisely chosen *I've Loved You So Long* and *The Diving Bell and The Butterfly*.

On Friday 17 April, *Fifty Dead Men Walking* comes to The Phoenix, a film that is unfortunately prescient. Taking the point of view of an IRA informant, it captures Northern Ireland and the Troubles in the late 1980s with sensitivity.

We have two festivals in April. First, we're delighted to be screening two films from the Viva Spanish Film Festival on tour from their base in Manchester. *Corazon del Tiempo* and *Flores de Luna* offer a glimpse of the best in contemporary Spanish film on Sunday 12 April. Then on two consecutive weekends, 19 and 26 April, the Phoenix is taking part in the Italian Film Festival, a London-wide celebration of Italian Cinema. On the first Sunday you can see *A Perfect Day* and *The Past is a Foreign Land* whilst on the second weekend we're playing *Flying Lessons* and *One Hundred Nails*.

The final main feature of the month opens on Friday 24 April. Werner Herzog's *Encounters At The End Of The World* is a brilliant documentary taking a wry look at the life of people stationed in Antarctica. Our box office is on 020 8444 6789 or visit [www.phoenixcinema.co.uk](http://www.phoenixcinema.co.uk)

## All shook up

By Sheila Armstrong  
The Theatre Upstairs at the Gatehouse in Highgate has two Elvis impersonators alternating performances in its latest production *Cooking with Elvis*. Written by Lee Hall, who wrote the screenplay for *Billy Elliot*, it was originally staged at the Edinburgh Festival in 1999 before transferring to the West End.

The comedy is about a family where the father is wheelchair bound, the mother becomes sex obsessed and the teenage daughter food obsessed, while the father's obsession is Elvis. So there is plenty of sex, drugs and rock and roll.

Despite being played for humour, the play touches on more serious issues like disability and addiction. In addition, the Elvis impersonator I saw, the convincing lookalike Mario Kombou, jumps out of his wheelchair and sings Elvis ballads most convincingly. The opening night audience loved him. On until 19 April, contact the theatre on 020 8340 3488 or [www.upstairsthegatehouse.com](http://www.upstairsthegatehouse.com) for tickets.



Julia Lawrence, left, and Victoria Davenport in training in Cherry Tree Wood.

## Four tired feet, two good causes

When Victoria Davenport ran her first marathon, she swore she'd never do it again. She's now on her fourth. For Julia Lawrence, it's her first time but will it be her last?

The pair are running the London Marathon later this month to raise much-needed funds for two children's charities and they'd welcome any support, however small, from Archer readers.

Victoria, of Durham Road, is running for Kids Company, which provides practical and emotional support to children who have no caring parent in their lives. You can support Victoria at [www.justgiving.com/filmvictoria](http://www.justgiving.com/filmvictoria)

Julia, of Richmond Road, is running for the Noah's Ark Children's Hospice, which provides care and support to life-limited children and their families in north London. You can support Julia at [www.justgiving.com/julialawrence](http://www.justgiving.com/julialawrence)

Victoria said: "Once you've done the Marathon, you want to sign up again." Julia added: "I'd like to do the Paris Marathon next."

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