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# THE ARCHER



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Photo by Sylvie Clarke

## Fire crew rookies

Children from Martin and Holy Trinity nurseries were shown round Finchley Fire Station on Long Lane by the crew. The children were allowed to climb on the fire engines and even had a turn at holding the hose. They all walked away proudly sporting smoke alarm stickers on their chests. Photo by Sylvie Clarke.

## Final push for Phoenix fund

The Phoenix Cinema has just £90,000 left to raise to reach the fundraising target for its Centenary Restoration project. It is hoped work can begin in the spring when the magic figure of £1.1 million is reached.

Meanwhile, excitement is building and the cinema is celebrating the start of its 100<sup>th</sup> birthday year with the launch of a new logo.

Designed by Hughes Design, the Centenary logo will be used in all communications throughout 2010, including brochures, fundraising materials and centenary souvenirs.



Paul Homer, the Phoenix's chief executive, said

the logo represents the dawn of a new era for the Phoenix as it rises again, restored to face its next century.

Before the end of the year, it is hoped the restoration project will have restored the historic auditorium to its art deco glory and added a glamorous new glass terrace bar looking out over the High Road.

The Phoenix has survived not only two world wars, but also the developer's wrecking ball in the 1980s when it was saved for the community. 2010 realises the completion of this work by launching the centenary celebrations and the publication of a new, full history of the cinema.

For full details of fundraising activities and how you can help, visit [www.phoenixcinema.co.uk](http://www.phoenixcinema.co.uk)

## Green plaque for poet's home

By Ann Bronkhorst

Coventry Patmore, Victorian poet, man of letters and friend of the Pre-Raphaelite artists, lived for a few years at Highwood Cottage, now 85 Fortis Green. In an informal ceremony on 10 December, the Mayor of Haringey Bernice Vanier unveiled a green plaque commemorating him.

The small gathering of enthusiasts heard an outline of Patmore's life from Patricia O'Connor, chairman of the Pre-Raphaelite Society, who had travelled from France for the occasion.

### A poet in Fortis Green

In the late 1850s, Patmore was a hard-up young husband and father, just becoming recognised as a poet; a striking painting by John Singer Sargent at the National Portrait Gallery shows his older, more prosperous self. Today he is significant mainly for two reasons: he persuaded John Ruskin, the influential art critic, to write to *The Times* supporting the then unfashionable Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood and he wrote an immensely popular poem, *The Angel in the House*, about married love.

Sue and Nick Vosper, the present owners of the house, had problems establishing the Patmore's exact dates of occupancy. Probably they lived at Highwood Cottage for more than the two years, 1858-1860, recorded on the plaque, but financial and other difficulties often forced them into rented lodgings elsewhere in north London.

### Broken health

Emily, Patmore's first wife and the inspiration for *The Angel in the House*, bore six children but died of consumption (TB) in 1862, when the youngest was just a toddler. Patmore said of their frequent moves: "My wife's broken health has been destructive to home." Soon after her death he converted to Roman

Catholicism, a choice she had expected and dreaded, and married twice more.

In happier times, during the 1850s, the young couple's home welcomed many artists and writers. The poet Tennyson and his wife were their friends; John Everett Millais and Holman Hunt drew and painted Emily and her children; Robert Browning wrote a poem about her (*The Face*) and the



(L to R) Patricia O'Connor, John Hajdu and Sue Vosper beneath Coventry Patmore's Green Plaque. Photo by Ann Bronkhorst

American writer Edward Emerson dined with the family.

At the unveiling, John Hajdu, Chairman of Fortis Green Residents' Association, said the plaque joins a growing number of green plaques commemorating notable Haringey residents, including artist Heath Robinson and South African political leader Oliver Tambo.

The poem below is much shorter than most of Patmore's poems. The Latin title means *The Truth is Great*, and the setting is probably St Margaret's Bay in Kent. The poet hints at some unexplained bitterness, but achieves a calm, detached mood while watching the sea.

## Magna est Veritas

By Coventry Patmore

Here, in this little Bay,  
Full of tumultuous life and great repose,  
Where, twice a day,  
The purposeless, glad ocean comes and goes,  
Under high cliffs, and far from the huge town,  
I sit me down.  
For want of me the world's course will not fail:  
When all its work is done the lie shall rot;  
The truth is great and shall prevail,  
When none cares whether it prevail or not.

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