



The last picture show

By Sheila Armstrong

In top hat, white tie and tails, and accompanied by Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers, Paul Homer, chief executive of the Phoenix Cinema, introduced the final film at the Phoenix on 6 June. The cinema is now closed for renovation until September 2010. Paul brought the audience up to date with the building project and the cinema's centenary plans due to take off in the autumn.



Paul Homer says a temporary farewell in style. Photo courtesy the Phoenix cinema

The final film was the quintessential 1930's classic *Top Hat White Tie and Tails* with the incomparable Fred and Ginger, featuring such Irving Berlin classics as *Dancing Queen* and *Isn't It a Lovely Day to be Caught in the Rain*. It was much enjoyed by the last night audience, though some were disappointed that Paul Homer did not show off his tap dancing skills.

In September the Phoenix has great plans for its centenary celebrations: a new Saturday Kids' Club, tours of the building every other Sunday, free archive showings, vintage double bills on Sundays and *The Phoenix Cinema - the book*. Then there is the new café, which will overlook the High Road. There will also be an event to mark Phoenix projectionist Peter Bayley's 50 years working in cinemas, many in the Phoenix itself.

How will we all manage until September? Keep up to date with the building works and on-going projects on the website www.phoenixcinema.co.uk

Phoenix transforming

By the Phoenix Cinema's Paul Homer

Since we closed our doors for the summer, the builders have stepped up their work, especially inside the building, where it's now a mass of electrical cables, steel, scaffold and timber. I'm delighted to report that, as I write, the work is not only on time but also on budget. That's a phrase that has become a mantra to me over the last few months and I expect it to stay with me at least until the project is over.

Of course things can change and maybe the story will be different tomorrow, but we're doing all we can to manage the project well. After all, we know this isn't our money: it's yours; just as this is your cinema. We want to look after it on your behalf and give it back to you all shiny and new.

The new café space is now created and it's looking great. It's going to be a really nice, cosy space to hunker down in for a few hours. We'll have free wi-fi so you can bring your laptop and surf away, we'll have great coffee,

great views and a super menu too. We really can't wait to show you the space in September.

We're planning a range of exciting events for you when we re-open, including free archive screenings, guided tours and of course our classic mix of the latest and the greatest films.

We were delighted to see so many of you at the East Finchley Festival recently; thanks for your support and thanks for sticking by us while we're closed. We know you wouldn't go off cheating with another cinema. And we miss you too.

Senior services unite

Age Concern and Help the Aged have joined forces to become Age UK. They say the move will give older people one influential nationwide voice. Age UK aims to improve later life for everyone through information and advice, campaigns, products, training and research.

They can be contacted on 0800 1692939 or at www.ageuk.org.uk. On a local level, Age Concern Barnet and East Finchley Neighbourhood Contact are now working together to strengthen the service for all older people in the area and put both organisations in a better position to weather the expected cuts in public funding.

Their aim is to maintain all their services until next year, when the position regarding available funding will be clearer. There is already some overlap in the services they both provide, such as befriending, and information and advice.

The two Contact lunch clubs will continue, one open to all local people and one for Muslim women.

Age Concern Barnet have stated they would like to welcome all Contact's clients, volunteers and supporters. They hope that Contact's clients will use their many services, which include welfare benefits advice, a handy person service, and exercise classes throughout the borough. Clients are also welcome to drop in to the Ann Owens Centre in Oak Lane (tel. 020 8346 8736) for bingo, art classes, bridge, computer access and much more.



Danielle Sparks shows what she's made of in the Muay Thai boxing ring.

Girl power

By Helen Drake

Readers with a good memory may recall a front page story we ran in June 2008 on young Muay Thai boxing champion Anthony Sparks. Well, the remarkable Sparks family are back.

This time younger sister, eight-year-old Danielle, is in the ring after taking part in her first Muay Thai boxing match in May, and proving that when it comes to kick boxing prowess, girls are just as good as boys.

Proud mum Stevie Sampson told *THE ARCHER*: "Danielle was matched up to fight in an inter-club competition against a little girl from another gym. Unfortunately the children from the other gym didn't turn up, so they re-matched the competitors. When Danielle was re-matched with a boy, it was a bit of a surprise"

'Very controlled'

Although the boy was two years older than Danielle, he was roughly the same weight, and so an ideal competitor. As it was only an inter-club match, no one won or lost, but it was an opportunity to show how hard each child had been training and the level of technique they had learnt from their respective gyms.

"Every fight at this level is very controlled and full protection has to be worn. Danielle did incredibly well, especially as it was her first fight and she was competing with a boy," said Stevie.

Danielle said: "I train twice a week and love it. It helps me to keep fit and stay healthy and you learn discipline and how to defend yourself. But I wish more girls did it. Muay Thai is not just

for boys and I want more girls to join me."

If any girls (and, of course, boys) are interested in taking up Muay Thai as a sport, then get in touch with the Nomads Gym in Edgware, where Danielle trains under the guidance of senior Muay Thai instructor Steve Mills, and assistant instructor Chris Shepperd. For more information go to www.nomadsgym.com



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