



Phoenix nights

By Sheila Armstrong
Alongside the restoration of the Phoenix Cinema itself, work on its oral history project *The Phoenix Storybook* has begun.

Supported by the Heritage Lottery Fund, the project will record memories of Phoenix fans over the years. There are now enough volunteer interviewers and film-makers to get the project going.

A great start has been made with an interview with Kitty Cooper, owner of the Phoenix in the 1970s, already in the can. It was the Coopers who renamed the cinema the Phoenix in 1975.

Heritage Officer Eleanor Sief is not only looking for comments about usherettes, newsreels, the National Anthem, Saturday kids' films and 'B' movies, but also for more recent memories of the cinema too.

Feel free to contact her on heritage@phoenixcinema.co.uk if you would like to contribute, whatever your age, location or recollection. The interviews will be shown at the cinema and some will find their way on to YouTube. A book about the history of the Phoenix written by one of the trustees is to be published to coincide with its reopening in September.

Concert bliss

North London Chorus' forthcoming concert is titled *A Little Night Music*. It will start with *Eine Kleine Nachtmusik*, Mozart's much loved occasional piece composed (according to the critic Wolfgang Hildesheimer) with a "light but happy pen". We will then perform his joyous, exuberant, and anything but, *Solemn Vespers*, which includes the well-known soprano aria *Laudate Dominum*.

From there we turn to Britten's *Serenade for Tenor, Horn and Strings*: a song cycle on the subject of night, including its more sinister aspects. And the final piece is *Pastoral* by Arthur Bliss, his beautiful setting of a diverse anthology of poems that depict an Arcadian scene, with Pan as the central figure, taking us from dawn to dusk. Do come and enjoy an evening of sheer bliss.

The concert is on Saturday 3 July at 7.30pm at St James' Church, Muswell Hill, N10. The ticketline is 020 8455 9840, with prices at £18, £13, £8 and concessions £2 reduction. Tickets are also available from St. James' Church Bookshop and Les Aldrich Music Shop, 98 Fortis Green Road, Muswell Hill N10.

Phoenix closes ahead of a new lease of life

By Paul Homer, of the Phoenix Cinema
By the time you read this, The Phoenix will be closed. Fear not, for we shall reopen, reborn, restored and re-invigorated in early September. As I write, we are almost a third of the way through the building works and so far all is progressing well. The new café space has been created and the new mezzanine floor will be built in the next few weeks. External work is nearing completion as the tired-looking wall in Fairlawn Avenue is completely repaired and the façade has a new terrace created for the bar.

We started serious planning for this project four years ago and serious fundraising for it over two years ago. It's wonderful now to be able to see the fruition of all that work. We've raised over £1,080,000 and now have less than £30,000 to raise to meet our target. We're incredibly grateful to everyone who has supported us, and if you've not yet done so, then now's the time to make a real difference to your community.

We also have a really exciting project of collecting people's stories of The Phoenix on film. You can see the first few of these on YouTube.

We'll be keeping you

informed of the project as it progresses over the next three months and we'll welcome you back through the doors in September to the restored cinema. Our programme of films for the autumn is already starting to look exciting. We'll release more details of those as we have them.

Finally, whilst we are closed we will be taking bookings for the 2010-11 New York Met Opera season. Details are on our website. So we'll be bringing you films you can't miss in a cinema you just have to see. Our box office is on 020 8444 6789 or visit www.phoenixcinema.co.uk

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By Ricky Savage, the voice of social irresponsibility

Interesting times

This is not the Age of Aquarius, it is the age of Posh Boy and Fag, of slash and burn, of Osborne the attack dog, the age that Brown Gordon, fast as a speeding milk float, could not prevent. These are interesting times.

Admittedly, there have been more interesting times. The Black Death made things spectacularly interesting as it wiped out about half the population. Same for the age of cholera and the potato blight that ripped across 19th century Europe. And that's before we look at last century's unique record of death and destruction when humanity proved that inhumanity was second nature. Nice.

Living in interesting times doesn't always have to be a curse, not when we have a World Cup to look forward to. And this one could be the best since 1966 and we might even win! Who says? A bunch of hedge funders and worn-out bankers, that's who. The problem is that anything that comes out of a bank or hedge or any other garden feature is not to be trusted, especially when they reckon that England will beat the Dutch on penalties. That said, they do admit that scores can go up as well as down. Just like banks, but unlike bankers' bonuses.

In today's dog eat dog world there is more to the World Cup than England delighting every Scotsman by losing to some unfancied bunch of Americans, because North Korea are there. As anyone with a discerning taste in haute cuisine knows, it's not just dogs that eat dogs in Korea. And they don't need Heston Sevicestation to tell them how to cook it either.

Then again, we may need his recipe for canine soufflé, especially if Posh Boy and Fag make life so interesting that the best place to meet your friends is when you're all down the dole office. These will then be interesting times and no self-respecting dog will expect anything less than an entire chapter in Jamie Oliver's Guide to Korean cookery.



Chefs and staff in the new bar area at the redesigned Cochin restaurant. Photo by John Lawrence

Restaurant is reborn

Five years after first opening its doors, big changes have taken place at Cochin. The High Road restaurant specialising in southern Indian cuisine has reopened with its dining and cooking spaces entirely transformed.

The popular lower eating area is still there but the upstairs floor is unrecognisable from before. A larger kitchen now occupies a rear extension, creating room for 20 more seats in the upper half of the restaurant.

A new bar area has been installed containing a seafood display and grill, where diners can watch squid, prawns, scallops and other speciality dishes being cooked in front of their eyes.

Owner Tejas Somaiya said: "The restaurant has been

totally redecorated and we are presenting our food in a new way too. A leading chef from the Grosvenor Park Hotel, Hyde Park, came to train our chefs, so a lot of the old favourites are there but they look exciting and different."

Seating capacity has risen from 36 to 56 and the refit means there is now room to accommodate parties of 20 at one table. Organic food was already a tradition at Cochin and this is now complemented by an all-organic wine and beer list.



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