



Phoenix boss moves on

By Sheila Armstrong

Paul Homer, chief executive of the Phoenix Cinema, is moving on after eight years in charge. East Finchley's loss is Hastings' gain as he goes to the new Jerwood Art Gallery there in December.

Paul will be overseeing the final phase of the new build which will house Jerwood's extensive British art collection, and open the gallery to the public in the spring of 2012, no doubt using many of the skills he has practised during the refurbishment of our own Phoenix Cinema.

Discussing the milestones of his eight-year tenure, Paul mentioned in particular the Lottery grant for the refurbishment, computerising the box office, the website (now on its fourth version) and getting digital projectors, which enable the sell-out satellite events from the National Theatre and the New York Met to take place.

Reaching out

Affectionately describing the Phoenix in 2004 as like someone talking to itself, one of his aims was to ensure the cinema included not only independent and world cinema but new mainstream films as well, attracting a new and wider audi-

ence. He said that the weekend when *Volver* came out was a turning point; takings had been generally low but this popular film injected money into the cinema at a time of great financial need.

Praising the trustees, patrons and staff - "We're a real team," he said, with typical generosity - he gave a special mention to Mark Kermode, passionate film critic and local boy, who promotes the interests of the Phoenix wherever he can. The Board of trustees, he said, were the unsung heroes of the place: all volunteers, they are very committed and their guidance has enabled the Phoenix to get where it is today.

"I've tried to do too much," he concluded. "A second screen was an ambition I was not able to realise." Most people who know and love the Phoenix would say he has done a great deal for East Finchley cinema-goers, and that he'll be a very hard act to follow. Watch this space for the name of his successor.

December at the Phoenix - and farewell, Paul

By Paul Homer

This is my last column for *THE ARCHER* as I leave the Phoenix for the last time on 2 December and ride away into the sunset. It's been an amazing, fulfilling, rewarding eight years and I'll be sad to be leaving this fantastic place and the amazing staff who I've been very proud to work with.

It's great to know that the cinema is in such good shape and I feel now, more than ever, that The Phoenix is the heart of the community. I think that's in part due to our café, a space where people can gather and meet. It makes the whole building buzz and feel vibrant.

We've lined up a great December for you to enjoy with lots of different films. We have *My Week with Marilyn* from 9 December, part of which was filmed here, so come and see The Phoenix at The Phoenix! It tells the story of when Laurence Olivier worked with Marilyn Monroe on *The Prince and The Showgirl* in the late

1950s, realising along the way that he would never be the star that Marilyn was.

We're also showing Nanni Moretti's new film *We Have A Pope* the same week: think of *The King's Speech* in Italy. The following week we have the charming French comedy *Romantics Anonymous* about two chocolate makers who don't know how to communicate. That film is playing together with road trip movie *Los Acacias* from Argentina.

Playing films from four different countries in two weeks feels appropriate. This is the sort of cinema we've tried to create here, showcasing the best films from across the world for our loyal, local audience.

I'll certainly miss the great films, the lovely customers and East Finchley. I wish you all well.

Our box office is on 020 8444 6789 or www.phoenixcinema.co.uk

Free screening at the Phoenix Cinema

Community Focus welcomes everyone to come to the preview of Future Present Past (FPP) on Saturday 10 December at 2.30pm. Taking inspiration from local places of interest and experts, the FPP panel's film documents a group of young people's questions about identity, heritage and reminiscence in Barnet. The film provides a panorama of changing experience of life in Barnet over the last 60 years.



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