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June at the Phoenix

By Elizabeth Taylor-Mead, Phoenix Cinema executive director

This month your favourite community cinema is blooming with great cinematic choices for your viewing pleasure.

'Sunday Best', our monthly one-off afternoon series of films we love but couldn't otherwise fit into the schedule, offers *Girlhood* on 7 June. Director Celine Sciamma's raw, tender depiction of an all girl gang on the gritty outskirts of Paris tells it like it is, in French.

Our main features this month start off with *Danny Collins*, glowing with a terrific central performance by Al Pacino as an ageing rock musician. At the opposite end of the tonal spectrum is *Timbuktu*, set in Mali. It's a lyrical indictment of the enemies of joy; a film bound to provoke conversation.

For the week starting 12 June we stay firmly rooted in England. John Boorman's follow up to *Hope and Glory* finds our young hero embarking on basic training in 1952 to hilarious results in *Queen and Country*. Then comes *London Road*, a musical about grisly true crimes in Ipswich a decade ago, with a cast including Tom Hardy and Olivia Colman.

We're not cheating on our new patron Benedict Cumberbatch, by showing the new film *Mr. Holmes*, starring Sir Ian McKellen as an aged Sherlock: we're just crazy about those fabulous Baker Street boys!

So many good films, so little time. That's why we're giving audiences three options in the last week of the month. One of

the most atmospheric films ever made, *The Third Man*, leads the pack, with iconic performances by Orson Welles and Joseph Cotten. *Shooting for Socrates* is an endearing film set in Belfast just before the 1986 World Cup. *The Look of Silence* bears witness to 50 years of silence in Indonesia and the effect it's had on one family.

Our Saturday morning Kids' Club activities and screenings are always popular with our younger audiences, and a great bargain at only £3 for hours of fun. We're especially pleased this month to partner with the Proms at St. Jude's (www.promsatstjudes.org.uk) in a celebration of the 150th anniversary of Lewis Carroll's classic story. Bring the whole family on the 27th to watch Tim Burton's *Alice In Wonderland*.

Full details are on our website: www.phoenixcinema.co.uk. See you at the movies!

The Reader Book group

Every Friday from 10.30am to 12 noon, at The Bald Faced Stag you'll find a reading group with a difference!

Short stories, serialised novels, poetry, plays...share them together, with members reading aloud (strictly optional). No need to hunt out and read beforehand. All texts supplied on the spot by The Reader Organisation. Drop in and make new friends.

What do you mean, a funny book about brain cancer?

By John Lawrence

"I'm no crusader," says Adam Blain, who has written a book on how he is facing up to a rare and aggressive brain tumour, "but it's quite empowering to laugh in the face of cancer."

The 45-year-old lawyer, who lives in Bedford Road, says he didn't set out with a mission but the process of scribbling down his thoughts on the highs and lows of living with the disease and then turning them into a self-published book has helped him through the year since he received his dreadful diagnosis.

His short read, titled *Pear Shaped: The Funniest Book So Far This Year About Brain Cancer*, is available to download on Amazon.co.uk and on any device with the Kindle app. Judging from the mass of five-star reviews there, it's been a revelation to readers, fellow sufferers included.

"There are plenty of books out there on cancer but not much humour," Adam tells *THE*



Adam with his wife Lu.

ARCHER. "Cancer is losing its taboo status and we shouldn't be scared of making jokes. I'm laughing death in the face, not by design, but I just have a gallops sense of humour."

"It's a bit gruesome and gory in places, with the surgery and treatment I've had. But I've had so many emails of appreciation from readers."

Green bananas still ok

Adam, who is married to oncologist Lucinda Melcher and has three children Jonah, 12, Sacha, nine, and Thea, five, was told that patients like him with Glioblastoma Multiforme (GBM) could count their life expectancy

in months. About one in 20 will survive.

As he puts it in the book: "The surgeon was not so upbeat about my statistics and he advised against buying Christmas cards several years in advance although he didn't get to the stage where I was advised against buying green bananas."

He is receiving treatment and is still working full time, something he says he really enjoys and is good for him. A sequel to his book is being considered but he knows it's a lot of work and his cancer doesn't often leave him with the energy to take it on.



Still smiling: Adam during treatment

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Pear Shaped

“The funniest book so far this year about BRAIN CANCER”

ADAM BLAIN

Reviews of his publication on Amazon say: "Very moving and thought-provoking, yet screamingly funny" and "Has reminded me to try and live life as directed by Adam: one day at a time, getting as much as you can out of every single hour."

Find *Pear Shaped: The Funniest Book So Far This Year About Brain Cancer* on Amazon.co.uk for £2.99. It's highly recommended.