

THE-REX

M A G A Z I N E

THE YOUNG VICTORIA
APRIL...

"possibly Britain's most beautiful cinema..." (BBC)

APRIL 2009 Issue 49
www.therexberkhamsted.com

01442 877759
Mon-Sat 10.30-6pm Sun 4.30-6.30pm

Gallery	4-5
April Evenings	7
Coming Soon	22
April Films at a glance	22
April Matinees	23
Dear Mrs Trellis	38-41

SEAT PRICES:

Circle	£8.00
Concessions	£6.50
At Table	£10.00
Concessions	£8.50
Royal Box (seats 6)	£12.00
or for the Box	£66.00
All matinees £5, £6.50, £10 (box)	

BOX OFFICE:

	01442 877759
Mon to Sat	10.30 – 6.00
Sun	4.30 – 6.30

Disabled and flat access: through the gate on High Street (right of apartments)

Some of the girls and boys you see at the Box Office and Bar: Ushers:

Rosie Abbott	Malcolm More
Julia Childs	Izzi Robinson
Nicola Darvell	Amberly Rose
Lindsey Davies	Georgia Rose
Holly Gilbert	Becca Ross
Beth Hannaway	Diya Sagar
Amelia Kellett	Alice Spooner
Charly Marchant	Liam Stephenson
Bethany McKay	Tina Thorpe
Simon Messenger	Olivia Wilson
Helen Miller	Keymea Yazdanian

Abigail, Abi F, Alexandra, Billie, Charlotte, James, Lydia, Meg, Romy, Sid, Taylor

Sally Thorpe In charge

Alun Rees Chief projectionist (Original)

Jon Waugh 1st assistant projectionist

Martin Coffill Part-time assistant projectionist

Jacquie Rose Chief Box Office & Bar

Oliver Hicks Best Boy

Jemma Gask Key Grip

Michael Glasheen Gaffer

Jane Clucas & Lynn Hendry PR/Marketing/FoH

Ian Muirhead Accountant

Darren Flindall, Michael Glasheen

Resident creative builders

Andrew Dixon, Paul Rowbottom

Artists

Paul Fullagar, Alan Clooney

Advisors and Investors

Ed Mauger Genius

Demiurge Design Designers 01296 632366

Lynn Hendry Advertising 01442 877999

James Hannaway CEO 01442 877999

Betty Patterson Company Secretary and THE ORIGINAL VISIONARY of The Rex.

The Rex

High Street (Three Close Lane)

Berkhamsted HP4 2FG

www.therexberkhamsted.com



First daffodils on the balcony. Early Spring 2009

TITLES TO WATCH OUT FOR



from Spain

In the City of Sylvia Mon 6th April 7.30



from Turkey

Three Monkeys Sun 19 April 6.00



American Independent

Two Lovers Sun 26 April 6.00

AUSTRALIA, NEW ZEALAND, COOMBE HILL AND BUTLERS CROSS...



Two glorious views from and of Coombe Hill. February 2009.
(illustration courtesy of Colin Tuffrey)



Out walking the Sunday before the snow closed down schools and gave everybody the week off (1st Feb I think). It was a perfect day. Breathtakingly clear and bitterly cold. There were walkers with proper clothes stopping to stare into the far distance and share flasks of something piping hot, and forestry volunteers clearing some brush. The smell of wood smoke was blown on the wind. You could see for forty miles. Driving back down the narrow winding lane, I'd lost my bearings at a crossroads in a part the countryside I used to know so well.

It had been a long time since I'd walked on the top of that beautiful Chiltern hill. Only half remembering where I was, we stopped at a pub near a cross roads – The Russell Arms at Butlers Cross. In time for lunch, we parked on the road (the car park was busy). As we got out I smiled and nodded to a woman walking her dog across the road, acknowledging that I was a stranger parking a van in

her quiet village. As we approached the pub door, I noticed she was closing in from the side and just behind me.

Before I could turn she called out: "Do you know I couldn't get tickets for 'Australia'..."

I thought the wind was playing tricks. She may have missed an important flight and like the Ancient Mariner had to confess it to strangers. This was the middle of nowhere!

It turned out she was very sweet and went on to ask if 'The Changeling' was coming back. Not having a clue what was coming back, I gingerly patted the dog, made polite conversation then said good day. She's been to a matinee since. I introduced her to the box office to prove I wasn't dreaming. The moral of this non-event tale; from Coombe Hill, Butlers Cross to New Zealand with 'Australia' getting in the way, The Rex has travelled further than its little side-street in Three Close Lane. But you can still get in on the raffle, on the door, on the night, however far you've come.

Two of our best 'children' met on a glacier in New Zealand in May last year.

Actually it was more like this: Rebecca Ross had gone travelling through Thailand etc and ended up in New Zealand. Oliver Hicks took his holiday pay and went half way around the world to find her. He took April's Rex programme as essential ID. This is Becca's story from the Fox Glacier...

"We were climbing to the top of Fox Glacier. At the top we asked one of the group to take our picture holding the Rex Magazine. Just after, a couple came and asked if that was the latest Rex programme. They were from Rickmansworth! There were only ten people in our group and we had been trekking up the glacier for over two hours!"



Ollie and Becca standing near the summit of Fox Glacier New Zealand, proudly holding a Rex programme. May 2008.



A P R I L E V E N I N G S

Dialogue avec mon jardinier (Conversations with my Gardener)

Wed 1 7.30

Director: Jean Becker
Starring: Daniel Auteuil, Jean-Pierre Darroussin
Certificate: 12A
Duration: 109 mins
Origin: France 2007
By: Cinefile

Not only is this a blissful tale beautifully told, it brings a French summer landscape into an English April as it did in January, Feb and March! It is one of those small films we've been lucky to find year after year. This finely observed gem depicts a poignant friendship between two men who seem to be from different walks of life but have simply taken different paths. This becomes clear and remains part of the film's magic to the end. It tells of a respected Parisian painter on the brink of divorce who returns to his childhood home and employs a gardener to tame the vegetable patch.

As the gardener nurtures and the painter daubs, a warm friendship grows between them. Sharing a love of the place, they begin to see things afresh. Naturally, it is the painter who has most to learn. It is funny, warm and glows with life as it paints a tender portrait of men coping in their own way.

"Perhaps it's their love of food and wine, but France is one of the few countries where films about the land are still made - about how it sustains and nourishes them..." (*Crits*)

It is beautiful. Don't miss. You will love it.



I've Loved You So Long Thu 2 7.30



This beautifully scripted and skilfully composed tale of two sisters, who rebuild their love after years apart, is tender and deeply moving.

Since late last year it has captivated and held audiences in silence long after the credits. Come in April and feel it too.

This is an intelligent and compassionate portrayal of the power of love and the fragility of forgiveness beautifully told as it seems only the French can.

Claudel's debut won outstanding prizes at Berlin 2008. It is easy to see why.

Kristin Scott-Thomas is extraordinary playing against type as Juliette, an introverted and fragile woman just released from 15 years in prison.

Emotionally and physically ground down by years of guilt and anguish, Juliette goes to stay with her younger sister Léa (the equally brilliant Zylberstein).

Léa has a full life as a wife and mother, and Juliette struggles to find her place in her sibling's close-knit world.

The sisters gradually rediscover one another and a way of reaching each other...

It is heartbreaking in places but takes you with it every step, word and gesture.

If you've missed it, cancel everything this time...

Director: Philippe Claudel
Starring: Kristin Scott Thomas, Elsa Zylberstein, Serge Hazanavicius
Certificate: 12A
Duration: 117 mins
Origin: France 2008
By: Lionsgate Films UK

Slumdog Millionaire

Fri 3 7.30, Sat 4 7.00

Director: Danny Boyle
Starring: Anil Kapoor, Irfan Khan, Freida Pinto, Dev Patel
Certificate: 15
Duration: 120 mins
Origin: UK, USA 2008
By: Pathe Distribution

This is an odd, seemingly small film, which turns out to be massive in every way.

Thanks to Pathe and City Screen we were lucky to screen it for The Rex' fourth anniversary in December – five weeks before its UK release and before all the talk!

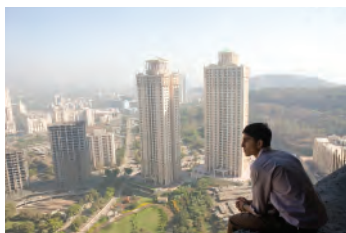
Those who had no idea what the film was about, will know what a gem it is.

By now you will have heard more than you need to know. It is a good story with a beginning, middle and end set in a country we think we know from history, spices and tea? It shows us how a country once so distant, mysterious and thought to be noble is more commercially westernised, unforgiving, divided, cheap and corrupt than anything we thought the Raj had invented or left behind.

Danny Boyle has made a gem, which regardless of prizes, will live to tell the tale long after it has been forgotten. It is a lesson in hardship, loyalty, guile, determination and ultimately survival... and oh yes – love.

Best not to know the story before you see it, but one clue: if you love the opening cricket scene as I did, you may not like the closing one, as much?

But don't miss the whole beginning, middle or end.



Cadillac Records

Sun 5 6.00



“His job is to make money out of you” says ‘Howlin’ Wolf to Muddy Waters in this biopic about the founder of Chess records.

Adrien Brody is the world's most charming shark. He plays the Polish Leonard Chess as a deranged romantic. “The cheeky barman plucks the guitarist Muddy Waters off the street, hires a studio, and within minutes both men are driving around Chicago in spanking new Cadillacs. Martin's film doesn't toil over tedious details. This is a 1950s tabloid fairytale about a philanthropic white man who runs the hottest black record label in America as though it were a charity shop. Issues about exploitation and racism are puffed into the story like so much dry ice.” (*Timesonline*)

Though Beyonce doesn't quite pull it off, the ever watchable Mos Def does a great cameo as Chuck Berry. “The film's best scenes belong to Columbus Short, who ignites his part as the hot-blooded harmonica player Little Walter in a fierce, self-destructive blaze. You can't take your eyes off him.” (*Telegraph*)

The cavalcade of melodrama and conflict is not always persuasive, and writer director Darnell Martins tends to admire rather than investigate the musical phenomenon they produced. You won't follow the plotlines so come to listen: the music is fabulous.

Director: Darnell Martin
Starring: Adrien Brody, Jeffrey Wright, Beyonce Knowles, Mos Def
Certificate: 15
Duration: 108 mins
Origin: USA 2008
By: Sony Pictures Releasing

In the City of Sylvia

Mon 6 7.30

Director: Jose Luis Guerin
Starring: Tanja Czichy, Pilar Lopez de Ayala, Laurence Cordier, Xavier Lafitte
Certificate: PG
Duration: 84 mins
Origin: Spain 2007
By: Axiom Films

This latest film by José Luis Guerin is an homage to cinema, painting, love and women, and imparts a nostalgia for days when it was possible to search for love, wander streets aimlessly and immerse oneself in a foreign place: the freedom to do as one pleases?

A young man arrives in Strasbourg and spends his days sitting at an outdoor café, sketching the figures of the women around him, patiently waiting for Sylvia, the woman that he fell in love with four years earlier, to appear. He finally thinks he sees her and gives chase, but it turns out to be someone else. He resumes his quest for his lost love and the innocence he longs to regain. Sylvia's presence lingers but...

"This is perfection. A spellbinding contemplation of contemplation itself - the act and the art of seeing. It follows a young man as he haunts a café in search of someone he let go. He gazes avidly at women. We gaze too watching him watching. Seeing what he sees... it is very simple and utterly transfixing, and it cuts to the heart of what cinema is about." (Times) That's too over excited.

Cinema is about all kinds of things. Perhaps this is one that shouldn't be missed...



Vicky Cristina Barcelona

Tue 7 7.30, Wed 8 7.30



All things considered, they are nevertheless, absorbing and totally believable. Bardem turns into the greatest seducer of all time. We are left in no doubt he could woo this off that without a second glance.

The film plays America against Europe, security against passion, dependency against whimsical desire. "The performances are vibrant. In the liberated corner, Scarlett breezes by on her unique charm, restlessness and sensuality. In the sensible corner, Allen has channelled his own persona through a female character in Vicky, who is by turns neurotic and open, panicked and longing... and trapped. Rebecca Hall says it all and more."

(Guardian)

For me, it is her film. "It is the Spanish who are the conquistadors. Bardem imbues his artist with tenderness and vulnerability, with enough charisma to nail the most resolute nun, let alone two yanks."

(Standard)

Clearly, its biggest flaw is its greatest asset - they are too beautiful! But so were Cary Grant and Ingrid Bergman. Beauty doesn't change. It is never in the eye of the beholder. It is always immediate and beyond doubt. 100 years of Hollywood, and this tale, would not have happened if they looked like us on holiday in Mevagissey.

However, it makes a fair argument that romantic love, for all its complexities and pain, is still worth the chasing? Don't miss the chase.

Director: Woody Allen
Starring: Scarlett Johansson, Penelope Cruz, Javier Bardem, Rebecca Hall, Patricia Clarkson
Certificate: 12A
Duration: 96 mins
Origin: Spain, USA 2008
By: Optimum Releasing

Anvil: The story of Anvil

Thu 9 7.30

It's a case of life imitating art in this fantastic Spinal Tap-esque paen to the human spirit, or at the very least, paen to power chords. Anvil is a Canadian heavy metal band who, despite influencing a whole host of equally big haired (now strands) kerrang stars (Metallica et al), never quite made it themselves. This documentary follows Anvil on a surreal and massively haphazard "comeback" (comeback?) 'tour of Europe'. As the inherent humour wears off, we are left with a film of intense poignancy. Having slogged away for the best part of three decades in search of a break, Steve "Lips" Kudlow, Robb Reiner and Glenn Five are perhaps no closer to the stardom they dream of than when they started.

"Kudlow, the band's indefatigable frontman, is such a chatty and emotional soul it's hard not to warm to him, and to cringe for him. His breadline job with a catering company is pure Mickey Rourke in *The Wrestler*, right down to the hygienic hairnet..." (*Telegraph*)

"Lips' is a hero in any musical language, and he deserves this heartfelt, emotive, supremely entertaining tribute." (*Time Out*) Inspiring stuff and proof that "feel-good" is not always a byword for "crap".

So come for the spirit of hope unbroken by a thousand riffs of hopelessness. Better, come for the faces and the fan, director who should have known better but did it anyway.



Director:	Sacha Gervasi
Certificate:	15
Duration:	90 mins
Origin:	USA 2008
By:	The Works UK Distribution



He's Just Not That Into You **Fri 10** 7.30



"This trite drama watches the romantic lives of undeserving /uninteresting /unspeakable urbanites and hopes we'll just love Gigi, Conor, Alex, Anna, Ben, Janine and Neil's smart-talking, loft-dwelling vibe."

(Independent)

"Ten characters in search of 'The One' flirt, cheat, bond and misinterpret each other's signals. The casting is all over the places, clichés and banalities rub up against the odd witty observation. It's not a good film, but on a cold night you could do worse" (*Times*).

"The movie is a drama, or more precisely, an empowerment fantasy for women—and not an unsatisfying one. Thus, my provocative suggestion: When women read self-help books, they want hard truths, but when they go to the movies (perhaps even on dates), they want to be lied to." (*Time Out NY*)

"The trailer that confirms what you'd always feared: that it is indeed possible to base an entire feature film on a self-help book which was in turn based on a single off-the-cuff remark in hit TV show *Sex and the City*. You may not have even thought about whether that was possible and, if it was, whether you should fear it, but it is, and you should." (*Guardian*) Nothing to say, so left it to the crits who have too much.

Director: Ken Kwapis
Starring: Drew Barrymore, Scarlet Johansson, Jennifer Aniston, Jennifer Connelly, Bradley Cooper, Kevin Connolly, Ben Affleck, Justin Long
Certificate: 12A
Duration: 129 mins
Origin: Spain, USA 2008
By: Entertainment Film Distribution

The International **Sat 11** 7.00

Director: Tom Tykwer
Starring: Naomi Watts, Clive Owen
Certificate: 15
Duration: 118 mins
Origin: Germany, UK, USA 2009
By: Entertainment Film Distribution

"It's a slick enough thriller, but you occasionally wonder whether somebody was taking the film's title a little too literally. It's a giddy whirl of locations, and while the plot (and Owen) don't bear too much scrutiny, there's some good fights." (*Times*)

They fund regime change in unstable African nations and sell weapons to mortal enemies. Their financial tendrils are everywhere because real global power is about controlling debt. They are the International Bank of Business and Credit. Yes, the money men are the new villains in this timely thriller, which sets Owen's crumpled agent, on their trail with (a wasted) Naomi Watts. Oh yes, the evil bank has a 'consultant' from its hitman dept to cover its bottom. There's a familiar parade of shady meetings, car chases, punch-ups and a truly spectacular shoot-out inside The Guggenheim. Pity the plot doesn't quite measure up to Tom Tykwer's slinky, elegant handling of it. This satisfyingly cynical dig at the world of high finance should please anyone with a taste for paranoid political thrillers or a mortgage with Northern Rock.

"Shadier and sexier than our own embattled high street outlets. Its crimes are the usual; arms deals with the highest, dodgiest bidders, supporting nasty military coups and (probably) torturing kittens" (*Time Out*).



Meet Me In St Louis

Sun 12 6.00



The plotline is typical of Hollywood during the war. Romantic escapism with some moral home-truths threaded throughout for good measure.

Vincente Minnelli's classic romantic musical is about a well-off St. Louis family at the turn of the century. As the two oldest girls fret about boys and love, their father is offered a job in New York City just as the World's Fair is coming to make St. Louis the "center of the world"! Will they have to leave the home and town they love and their new boyfriends? Spoilt brats you think? Perhaps, but certainly a very different world. The child star, Margaret O'Brien won a special Oscar for her remarkable performance, as a psychotic six year old who beats up her snowman in rage, prompting Lionel Barrymore to grumble: "Two hundred years ago, she would have been burned at the stake!"

It is the music people came for. The songs are a heady combination of period tunes and new Ralph Blane and Hugh Martin numbers, the most memorable: The Boy Next Door, The Trolley Song, and Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas.

Sorry I didn't check for seasonal tunes. I always thought Easter Bonnet was its big number. Never mind, come and escape and hope it doesn't snow.

Director: Vincente Minelli
Starring: Judy Garland, Margaret O'Brien, Mary Astor
Certificate: U
Duration: 113 mins
Origin: USA 1944
By: British Film Institute

To Kill a Mockingbird

Mon 13 7.30

Director: Robert Mulligan
Starring: Gregory Peck, Mary Badham, Philip Alford
Certificate: PG
Duration: 129 mins
Origin: USA 1962
By: Universal Pictures (UK) Ltd

This classic for Easter Monday has been on every O'level syllabus almost since it first appeared in 1962. Perhaps that's why my generation knows it so well, and unlike the chore of required reading, this was a joy. The film too. Robert Mulligan's classic adaptation of Harper Lee's Pulitzer Prize-winning novel, set in the racially charged atmosphere of Macon County, Alabama in the 1930s, To Kill A Mockingbird is a poignant coming-of-age story. Winner of four Academy Awards including Best Screenplay (Horton Foote), and Best Actor (Gregory Peck), it is a timeless film packed with beautiful scenes and meaningful life lessons. The story is told through the eyes and thoughts of a little girl nicknamed Scout (Mary Badham) whose widowed white father Atticus Finch (Peck) is a gentleman lawyer. On principle he opts to defend a black man (Brock Peters) charged with raping a poor white woman. Each scene is memorable but that fantastic scene where Atticus confronts the lynch mob on his front porch, is priceless. While he is in the throes of the trial, his inquisitive children learn a hard and unforgettable lesson in justice, morality, and prejudice, part of which requires overcoming an unfounded fear of their mysterious neighbour Boo Radley (a young Robert Duvall). Don't miss.



Gran Torino

Tue 14 7.30, Wed 15 7.30, Thu 16 7.30, Fri 17 7.30

Eastwood doesn't get any nicer as he gets older. The 78 year old director and star of this melting pot comedy-drama is a cantankerous old bastard called Walt who lives in a working class neighbourhood overrun with immigrants and gangs. Walt hates the lot of them. He hates his two fat middle aged sons and their ghastly wives and kids. He hates the young Roman Catholic priest who keeps door-stepping him since his wife died. He hates the Asian Hmong family who live next door. And he's taken to carrying a gun around the house since their son tried to steal his mint-condition 1972 Ford Gran Torino.

The film, of course, is about the softening of a hard man who hasn't forgiven the world for sending him to Korea to kill 'gooks'. He is Dirty Harry as a bitter and twisted pensioner, coughing up blood and waiting to die. "The shape of the film is a little too predictable. You cross Walt at your peril. That said, he is still a grumpy pleasure" (*Times*) and often very funny. As always Clint quietly goes against the grain. His subtle performance is as charismatic and effective as ever and as the film proceeds it becomes more complex and engaging. Cancel breathing.



Director:	Clint Eastwood
Starring:	Clint Eastwood, Christopher Carley, Bee Vang
Certificate:	15
Duration:	116 mins
Origin:	USA 2009
By:	Warner Brothers



COMEDY NIGHT

Sat 18 7.30



NATALIE HAUNES is a polymath. She is a regular on Newsnight Review, columnist for The Times, has written and presented radio 4 documentaries on Roman satire and written a children's book, The Great Escape. She is also an award winning stand up comedian. Her radio 4 appearances include Banter, Quote Unquote and Loose Ends. Her favourite film about an irradiated creature is The Toxic Avenger.

GAVIN OSBORN is first and foremost a musician, but the songs he writes are delightful, wry and very funny. He writes the music for the shows of the multi award winning Daniel Kitson and supports him on tour. He also writes the links for Animal Planet. His favourite film about animals nearly taking over the planet is The Giant Spider Invasion.

STEVE MERCHANT has won BAFTAs, Golden Globes and Emmys, but better than that, he's just finished filming a movie in Hollywood with The Rock. Best known as writer/director of The Office and also the funniest thing in Extras, he returned to stand up in 2008 and is better than ever. His favourite film starring a wrestler is Hell Comes to Frogtown starring Rowdy Roddy Piper.

ROBIN INCE takes a break from his 52 date UK tour to waffle on while trying to avoid swearing as his mum and dad are usually in the audience... And he is the best of all. Not only has he organised these events without a hitch or hint of a committee meeting, and persuades the cleverest and best to come, but he hosts the evening beautifully without a hitch and takes none of the glory. So, tonight it will all fall apart. Come and see what happens. Advance bookings only. Please be warned: There will be no raffle on the door for this event.

Three Monkeys

Sun 19 6.00



Nuri Bilge Ceylan caught the coveted Best Director ball at last year's Cannes Film Festival and ran with it. Unlike his navel gazing *Climates*, *Three Monkeys* is a dark, festering tale of corruption and intrigue within a small family. Chauffeur Eyüp (Yavuz Bingöl) is coerced by money to take the fall for a hit and run accident. Predictably such a terrible decision results in shenanigans of deceit ensnaring everybody close to him. As each refuses to hear, see or speak the truth, the family is dislocated in a riveting study of "moral relativism."

All strong performances, particularly Hatice Aslan as Eyüp's wife, inhabit Ceylan's characters brilliantly. Visually the film is harsh, bordering on the monochromatic, and combined with its marriage to the subject matter, difficult... "The film inhabits a world of implication, of meanings half-glimpsed... expressing itself in the fluctuating contours of the human face. [Ceylan is a director] who understands that, however hard we stare, we don't see the half about one another." (*Independent*)

Moody, sombre, but not as indulgent as his "*Climates*", this is a must-see for fans of emerging European cinema, and Ceylan is closing in on his 'moment'. Come and see something new, difficult and gripping - in comfort - with none of that awkward, award-winning-acting bollocks.

Director:	Nuri Ceylan
Starring:	Yavuz Bingol, Hatice Aslan, Rifat Sungar
Certificate:	15
Duration:	109 mins
Origin:	France, Italy, Turkey 2008
By:	New Wave

A Bunch of Amateurs

Mon 20 7.30

Director: Andy Cadiff
Starring: Derek Jacobi, Burt Reynolds, Imelda Staunton, Charles Durning
Certificate: 15
Duration: 97 mins
Origin: UK 2008
By: Entertainment Film Distribution

This a great little film with quaint rustic characters pitched against a once super-star.

It has real touches of the 1950's Ealing Comedies about it.

Burt Reynolds is Jefferson Steel, a pampered has-been action star desperate to make a comeback. He accepts an offer to do Shakespeare in Stratford, little knowing that it's not upon Avon, but the (fictional) village of Stratford St John in Suffolk.

Naturally, the amateur theatre group is in raptures about the arrival of their LA King Lear, but the man himself is less than enthused about acting alongside pig farmers and staying in a B&B with no ensuite. He pops his shoes outside his bedroom door only for the dog to chew! Later, the local mobile library is hurriedly transformed into a makeshift trailer.

It's a nice idea with predictable results and a script that has fun with the contrasts between LA and sleepy Suffolk. It hangs on to this one joke managing to stretch it across the whole film.

Nevertheless, it is warm hearted and a real treat to see Imelda Staunton and Derek Jacobi having such fun, and Burt Reynolds sending himself up.

Chosen to make us smile, so come and smile.



Confessions of a Shopaholic

Tue 21 7.30



Do we really want to know about shopaholics at a time where no one has any money? Isla Fisher is Rebecca a

ditzzy shopper who has run up a huge credit card debt. So when the fashion magazine she works for goes bust she gets a job on a financial weekly where her editor Luke likes her plain speaking prose.

She becomes a celebrity since the readers like it too... but the credit companies are still after her and everything looks like it's falling into the abyss. Pity it takes nearly two hours to reach it.

It's a fantasy, given that cheap gloss of unreality only Hollywood can add.

It disguises the overwhelming fact that it can't see reality inches from its nose.

If you get to the bit where she begins to fall for him because she hears him "speak Prada" and you haven't swallowed your tongue yet, you'll guess "cultural bankruptcy is imminent." (*Times*)

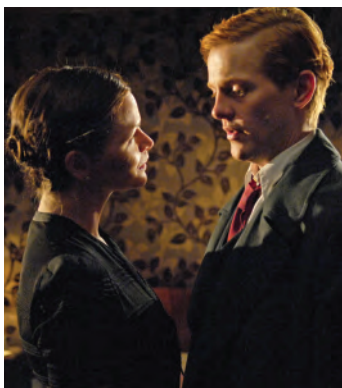
Bring a crossword and a scratchy pen.

Director: P.J Hogan
Starring: Isla Fisher, Hugh Dancy, Kristin Scott Thomas, Joan Cusack, John Goodman
Certificate: PG
Duration: 104 mins
Origin: USA 2009
By: Walt Disney Studio

Flame and Citron

Wed 22 7.30

Copenhagen 1944. Denmark is under Nazi occupation. Brothers and resistance fighters, Flame (Lindhardt) and Citron (Mikkelsen) work undercover in all manner of sabotage and execution. Unified in their hatred of the nazis, the younger, idealistic Flame dreams of openly taking up arms against the occupying power, whereas the more sensitive Citron finds himself drawn further into the politics of resistance. When Flame is given an order he doesn't trust, the pair begin to question the chilling personal sacrifices they have made. The story is based on true events, with much of the plot and dialogue developed from eyewitness accounts. "Avoiding the clichés of the genre, Madsen brings a piercing freshness of vision to it." "It's episodic and lengthy, but this is a well-sustained and surprisingly understated drama. Notable is the extent to which the director achieves a sense of psychological complexity – and a pervasive atmosphere of fear and confusion – without sacrificing the rhythm and dramatic tension necessary to a war film...the contained performances of the leads help lift this film out of the ordinary." (*Time Out*) More credible than some recent wartime films (*Female Agents?*), *Flame and Citron* is made all the more intriguing for its authenticity. Don't miss.



Director:	Ole Madsen
Starring:	Stine Stengade, Mads Mikkelsen, Thure Lindhardt
Certificate:	15
Duration:	136 mins
Origin:	Denmark, Germany 2008
By:	Metrodome Distributors



Watchmen

Thu 23 7.30, **Fri 24** 7.30,
Sat 25 7.00

It is violent, uncompromising, and a terrific spectacle, carrying a stupid 18 certificate. This is the stuff of 12 year old boys. Perhaps the custodians of censorship, now in their dotage, went straight to 35 without passing 'Go' at puberty? Apart from all the Oscar chasers, this is the next most hyped film of 2009. It arrives crashing onto screens like a pensioned-off comicstrip heroes being hurled from the 59th floor.

Directed by Zack Snyder (300, Dawn of the Dead – a big so what?) it is based on the comic ('graphic NOVEL') "Watchmen" and based on a story by non-Hollywood local small-town English boys' Alan Moore and Dave Gibbons' who 'read' too many comics. It is the dense chronicling of a generation of ex-super heroes in 1980s New York City. Nixon is still President, America has triumphed in Vietnam and the world stands upon the brink of nuclear war...

But...who is watching the Watchmen? "There is something exhilarating in the sheer madness of Watchmen: a wacky world turned upside down... it lurches from hyper-real Earth to photo-real Mars; it is dizzy, crazy and sexy...what a spectacle?" (*Guardian*)

In case you miss the profundity, someone asks: 'What has happened to us? What has happened to the American dream?' How about: "You, Zack Snyder. Man-boy directors, blessed with luck but no soul, content to peddle reverential treatments of soft porn for kidsults...?" (*Telegraph*) Big, bad and fun for 12 year olds?



Director: Zack Snyder
Starring: Billy Crudup, Malin Akerman, Earle Haley, Matthew Goode
Certificate: 18
Duration: 162 mins
Origin: USA 2008
By: Paramount International Pictures



Two Lovers

Sun 26 6.00

This made it late into April's programme and could be one of those gems we miss by missing the chance to include them while there are exciting interest on release and before they evaporate onto DVD.

Gray's fourth film takes place in the Brooklyn neighbourhoods that have characterised all of his work, but *Two Lovers* is more intimate than his crime films such as *The Yards* and *We Own The Night*. Leonard (Phoenix) has moved back in with his parents after a relationship ended in heartbreak. He is depressed and lonely, so his parents try to set him up with Sandra (Shaw). But when he meets Michelle (Paltrow), a beautiful and volatile woman who has recently moved into the block, his head is turned. As Michelle begins to expose her secrets to him and Sandra reveals hidden depths, Leonard struggles with his conflicting emotions. With this film, Gray has delivered a credible and classy romantic ménage à trois drama of certain distinction. It might be worth seeing for those who come regularly to our more chancy, non-commercial choices. And it's from the American independent stable for a change, so might be worth it for that. I'll leave it to you.

Director:	James Gray
Starring:	Joaquin Phoenix, Gwyneth Paltrow, Vinessa Shaw
Certificate:	15
Duration:	110 mins
Origin:	USA 2009
By:	Lionsgate Films UK



The Young Victoria

Mon 27 7.30, Tue 28 7.30, Wed 29 7.30

“Even a palace can be a prison,” muses Britain’s most eligible princess in *The Young Victoria*, recalling her early years cooped up as a Queen-in-waiting.

Royalty is a gilded cage – we know as much, ad nauseam, from our heritage dramas – but this is a somewhat constricting way to look at history, however nice the furniture.” (*Telegraph*) Emily Blunt is steely enough to handle the part of Victoria; what’s rarer in a female-centred period piece is for the male lead to be not just dashing in his tights, but emotionally commanding, and more than her equal. Rupert Friend, as Albert, is the film’s secret weapon – ardent, subtly proud, a little shy, and a man with an intellectual philosophy he intends to preserve. The film glows as it gets to know him, and your resistance, like Victoria’s, melts away. (*Various reviews*)

After a stifling childhood, Victoria must find maturity and independence – not easy with a controlling mother, two scheming uncles and a snake-like prime minister (Paul Bettany). Supported by an instantly recognisable coterie of British acting royalty, it is in for a long run at the Rex. If you can wait, writer and great story-teller, Julian Fellowes will be here to talk about the film on Sat 2nd May.



Director: Jean-Marc Vallée
Starring: Emily Blunt, Rupert Friend, Jim Broadbent,
Certificate: PG
Duration: 105 mins
Origin: UK, USA 2008
By: Momentum Pictures



Wendy and Lucy

Thu 30 7.30

This is a performance of great tenderness from Michelle Williams (remember her from *Brokeback Mountain*?) in this subtle and delicate piece.

Wendy is a desperate young woman driving to Alaska in search of work. When her car breaks down, and with no money, Wendy and her dog Lucy begin a life dangerously close to the breadline. The choices she makes about their survival will have far-reaching repercussions for her and her travelling companion... It may be facile to call this a "credit crunch" film, but this treatment of severe economic difficulties is absolutely riveting, and timely.

Reichardt paints the Oregon landscape as something beautiful and threatening, deftly placing Wendy and her dog in an unfamiliar setting to great effect. And do watch out for the fantastic Will Oldham, who's rapidly becoming a Reichardt favourite.

"Michelle Williams' beautifully restrained and humane performance embodies the pent-up frustrations, doubts, fears and dilemmas that this lonely soul has been burdened with. Her nuanced and naturalistic delivery wrings poignant truth from the realities of Wendy's struggle for perseverance and dignity.... It's what makes this film the small miracle it is."

(Time Out)

Suddenly cinemas are awash with a slobber of dog films... Roll over "Marley and Me".



Director:	Kelly Reichardt
Starring:	Michelle Williams, Will Patton
Certificate:	15
Duration:	80 mins
Origin:	USA 2008
By:	Soda Pictures



COMING SOON

New releases

Il Divo
The Class
In The Loop
The Burning Plain

Back by demand

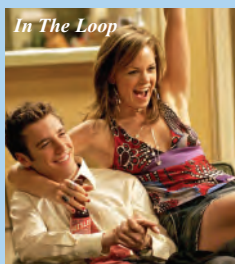
Slumdog Millionaire
Frost/Nixon
Conversations with my
Gardener
Paris 36
Welcome to the Sticks
Everything is Illuminated



The Class



In The Loop



Il Divo



APRIL FILMS AT A GLANCE

Please check times carefully and watch out for early shows.

1	WED	CONVERS. WITH MY GARDENER	2.00, 7.30
2	THU	I'VE LOVED YOU SO LONG	2.00, 7.30
3	FRI	SLUMDOG MILLIONAIRE	7.30
4	SAT	TWILIGHT	2.00
4	SAT	SLUMDOG MILLIONAIRE	7.00
5	SUN	CADILLAC RECORDS	6.00
6	MON	BOLT	2.00
6	MON	IN THE CITY OF SYLVIA	7.30
7	TUE	PINK PANTHER II	12.30
7	TUE	VICKY CRISTINA BARCELONA	7.30
8	WED	BOLT	2.00
8	WED	VICKY CRISTINA BARCELONA	7.30
9	THU	PINK PANTHER II	2.00
9	THU	ANVIL! THE STORY OF ANVIL	7.30
10	FRI	HE'S JUST NOT THAT INTO YOU	7.30
11	SAT	BOLT	2.00
11	SAT	THE INTERNATIONAL	7.00
12	SUN	MEET ME IN ST LOUIS	6.00
13	MON	TO KILL A MOCKINGBIRD	7.30
14	TUE	HOTEL FOR DOGS	12.30
14	TUE	GRAN TORINO	7.30
15	WED	CONFESSIONS OF A SHOPAHOLIC	2.00
15	WED	GRAN TORINO	7.30
16	THU	HOTEL FOR DOGS	2.00
16	THU	GRAN TORINO	7.30
17	FRI	GRAN TORINO	7.30
18	SAT	CONFESSIONS OF A SHOPAHOLIC	2.00
18	SAT	LIVE COMEDY	7.30
19	SUN	THREE MONKEYS	6.00
20	MON	CONFESSIONS OF A SHOPAHOLIC	2.00
20	MON	A BUNCH OF AMATEURS	7.30
21	TUE	AUSTRALIA	12.30
21	TUE	CONFESSIONS OF A SHOPAHOLIC	7.30
22	WED	SLUMDOG MILLIONAIRE	2.00
22	WED	FLAME AND CITRON	7.30
23	THU	A BUNCH OF AMATEURS	2.00
23	THU	WATCHMEN	7.30
24	FRI	WATCHMEN	7.30
25	SAT	WALL-E	2.00
25	SAT	WATCHMEN	7.00
26	SUN	TWO LOVERS	6.00
27	MON	THE YOUNG VICTORIA	2.00, 7.30
28	TUE	THE YOUNG VICTORIA	12.30, 7.30
29	WED	THE YOUNG VICTORIA	2.00, 7.30
30	THU	THE YOUNG VICTORIA	2.00
30	THU	WENDY & LUCY	7.30



A P R I L M A T I N E E S

ALL MATINEES: Balcony £5.00 • Table seats £6.50 • Royal Box seats £10.00

Matinee Warning: May contain babies

Dialogue avec mon jardinier (Conversations with my Gardener)

Wed 1 2.00

Director: Jean Becker
Starring: Daniel Auteuil, Jean-Pierre Darroussin
Certificate: 12A
Duration: 109 mins
Origin: France 2007
By: Cinefile

Not only is this a blissful tale beautifully told, it brings a French summer landscape into an English April as it did in January, Feb and March! It is one of those small films we've been lucky to find year after year. This finely observed gem depicts a poignant friendship between two men who seem to be from different walks of life but have simply taken different paths. This becomes clear and remains part of the film's magic to the end. It tells of a respected Parisian painter on the brink of divorce who returns to his childhood home and employs a gardener to tame the vegetable patch.

As the gardener nurtures and the painter daubs, a warm friendship grows between them. Sharing a love of the place, they begin to see things afresh. Naturally, it is the painter who has most to learn. It is funny, warm and glows with life as it paints a tender portrait of men coping in their own way.

"Perhaps it's their love of food and wine, but France is one of the few countries where films about the land are still made - about how it sustains and nourishes them..." (*Crits*)

It is beautiful. Don't miss. You will love it.



I've Loved You So Long **Thu 2 2.00**



This beautifully scripted and skilfully composed tale of two sisters, who rebuild their love after years apart, is tender and deeply moving.

Since late last year it has captivated and held audiences in silence long after the credits. Come in April and feel it too. This is an intelligent and compassionate portrayal of the power of love and the fragility of forgiveness beautifully told as it seems only the French can.

Claudiel's debut won outstanding prizes at Berlin 2008. It is easy to see why.

Kristin Scott-Thomas is extraordinary playing against type as Juliette, an introverted and fragile woman just released from 15 years in prison.

Emotionally and physically ground down by years of guilt and anguish, Juliette goes to stay with her younger sister Léa (the equally brilliant Zylberstein).

Léa has a full life as a wife and mother, and Juliette struggles to find her place in her sibling's close-knit world.

The sisters gradually rediscover one another and a way of reaching each other...

It is heartbreaking in places but takes you with it every step, word and gesture.

If you've missed it, cancel everything this time...

Director: Stephen Daldry
Starring: Kate Winslet, Ralph Fiennes, Bruno Ganz, Alexandra Maria Lara
Certificate: 15
Duration: 123 mins
Origin: Germany, USA 2008
By: Entertainment Film Distribution

Twilight

Sat 4 2.00

Director: Catherine Hardwicke
Starring: Kristen Stewart, Billy Burke, Robert Pattinson, Peter Facinell
Certificate: 12A
Duration: 121 mins
Origin: USA 2008
By: Contender Films

This passionate, silly film equates the longings of first love with a gothic death cult.

The new girl at school Bella Swan swoons for the tall, pale and handsome Edward Cullen while he strains to suppress his desire to eat her up. When Bella (Stewart) moves to the little town of Forks, Washington, she doesn't expect much to change. Then she meets the mysterious and dazzlingly beautiful Edward (Pattinson). Edward is a vampire, but he doesn't have fangs and his family choose not to drink human blood.

Intelligent and witty, he sees straight into Bella's soul. Soon, they are swept up in a passionate, thrilling and unorthodox romance. To Edward, Bella is what he has waited 90 years for: a school girl...!

Sorry, 'soul-mate'. yuk

"There is something beautiful about how un ironic this movie is.

Relatively low budget it is cheesy and corny and pretty funny if you are of a cynical bent." (*Times Knowledge*)

It is not quite action-packed teeny stuff.

It is as fast as your mother shopping, and at 12A the scariest thing in it is his face, its single dimension expression and stay-still quiff.

To stay awake, bring younger brothers and sisters to annoy you.



Bolt

Mon 6 2.00, Wed 8 2.00, Sat 11 2.00



In 'Truman Show' fashion, Bolt (John Travolta) is the deluded super-hero star of a hit live-action children's television show, replete with a snazzy lightning logo emblazoned on his flank. As Bolt is separated by accident from 'his person', the equally innocent child-star Penny (Miley Cyrus), and joined by an alley-cat (a sassy, touching Susie Essman) and couch-potato Hamster (a cherishable star-turn by animator Mark Walton), he learns to be 'a real dog'.

"One of the pleasures of 'Bolt' is how, without taking itself too seriously, it combines adventure with ideas and how the thoughtful, sympathetic script has fun with the reality/fantasy divide in a way that makes perfect sense to small kids, while still providing engagement and amusement for older siblings and adults in tow. Visually, it's clever and stimulating: there are some excellent eye-level 3D effects, a nice pastiche of 'bullet-time' (part of a running theme throughout the film 'discussing' the relationship of live-action to CGI) and a pair of beautiful 'helicopter' shots. Borrowing a practice from Pixar, the main feature is prefaced by a short film, one of car-dealer's son Lasseter's own CGI spin-offs from 'Cars'.

(*WallyH Time Out*)

Director: Chris Williams, Byron Howard
Starring: John Travolta, Miley Cyrus, Mark Walton, Susie Essman
Certificate: PG
Duration: 103 mins
Origin: USA 2008
By: Buena Vista International

Pink Panther 2

Tue 7 12.30, Thu 9 2.00

The Magna Carta, the Shroud of Turin and the Imperial Sword in Kyoto are all missing, stolen by master thief, The Tornado.

In order to solve ze craiemz, the government of France assemble and dispatch the “Dream Team”, a group of highly skilled detectives headed by the inimitable (but now imitated by Steve Martin) Inspector Jacques Clouseau, un-ably assisted, amongst others, by Pepperidge (Alfred Molina) and Vincenzo (Andy Garcia). Clouseau must also once again track down the legendary Pink Panther Diamond, which has been permanently stolen since 1964

It's a silly heist film but director Harald Zwart (yes that's his name!) has assembled an astonishing cast; come for them. Spoof caper stalwart John Cleese appears alongside Emily Mortimer, Aishwarya Rai, the legendary French Cliff Richard - Johnny Halliday, Jean Reno and Jeremy Irons - sacrebleu! “...the producers appear to believe that farce (that most delicate of forms) is humour played with the utmost crudity.” (*Guardian*) When in doubt stick to the toilet gags.

It's not big, it's not clever. It's not even pink, but it is perfect Easter holiday fodder.



Director: Harald Zwart
Starring: Steve Martin, Emily Mortimer, Alfred Molina, Jean Reno
Certificate: PG
Duration: 92 mins
Origin: USA 2009
By: Sony Pictures Releasing



Hotel for Dogs

Tue 14 12.30, Thu 16 2.00



Why is there a sudden epidemic of more dog-films than one can shake a stick at?

Hotel for Dogs is strictly a fairy tale... Fun for the wee ones and okay for hapless grown-up dog lovers. The story plods along like a ship in a storm, bouncing here and there with little regard for rationale or plausibility. Don Cheadle does a fine job playing the only reasonable character in the mix, with Emma Roberts and Jake Austin cute (no, too cute) as our main protagonists. There is no doubt the dogs are the stars. Poop jokes take the place of plot as the pair cook up ingenious contraptions to keep the mutts entertained - fake postmen, conveyor-belt toilets. "The schmaltz is laid on thick, but kids love this sort of stuff and, refreshingly, the dog bits are done the old-fashioned way: no CGI." (*Guardian*) "The canines wipe the floor with their two-legged co-stars, which is just as it should be". (*Times*) Wasn't it WC Fields who warned about playing opposite animals and children? They should have listened.

Director: Thor Freudenthal
Starring: Don Cheadle, Lisa Kudrow, Jake Austin, Emma Roberts
Certificate: U
Duration: 100 mins
Origin: USA 2009
By: Paramount International Pictures

Confessions of a Shopaholic

Wed 15 2.00, Sat 18 2.00,
 Mon 20 2.00

Director: P.J Hogan
Starring: Isla Fisher, Hugh Dancy, Kristin Scott Thomas, Joan Cusack, John Goodman
Certificate: PG
Duration: 104 mins
Origin: USA 2009
By: Walt Disney Studio

Do we really want to know about shopaholics at a time where no one has any money? Isla Fisher is Rebecca a ditzzy shopper who has run up a huge credit card debt. So when the fashion magazine she works for goes bust she gets a job on a financial weekly where her editor Luke likes her plain speaking prose.

She becomes a celebrity since the readers like it too... but the credit companies are still after her and everything looks like it's falling into the abyss. Pity it takes nearly two hours to reach it. It's a fantasy, given that cheap gloss of unreality only Hollywood can add. It disguises the overwhelming fact that it can't see reality inches from its nose. If you get to the bit where she begins to fall for him because she hears him "speak Prada" and you haven't swallowed your tongue yet, you'll guess "cultural bankruptcy is imminent." (*Times*) Bring a crossword and a scratchy pen.



Australia

Tue 21 12.30



It is clichéd, corny, melodramatic with an old-fashioned story of true grit and romance accompanied by rickety acting, spectacular vistas and glorious cinematography.

Kidman arrives Down Under looking for her cheating husband just as the Japanese threaten to strafe Darwin. He's dead of course. So she is met by the rugged Drover (Big Hugh) who at first can't stand her airs and graces but soon begins to take a sensible interest in her jodhpurs, as does she in his clip-on pecs all greased and ready to go... Meanwhile, her husband's land is up for grabs by local cattle baron, King Carney. So she befriends a poorly treated young aborigine orphan and sets off with him, the rugged drover, an old drunk, a Chinese cook, various sweaty extras and 1500 cows across the unforgiving terrain of the Northern Territory. This is all you need to know.

And it's the best part of a film, beautifully shot against stunning, harsh terrain and surrounded by upstaging cattle making eyes at the camera. "Bringing people together brings comfort to the heart and soul in this unpredictable world," says Baz. So come and see if he's right or two and half hours of his togetherness is two hours too long...

Director: Baz Luhrmann
Starring: Nicole Kidman, David Wenham, Hugh Jackman
Certificate: 12A
Duration: 165 mins
Origin: Australia, USA 2008
By: Twentieth Century Fox

Slumdog Millionaire

Wed 22 2.00

Director: Danny Boyle
Starring: Anil Kapoor, Irfan Khan, Freida Pinto, Dev Patel
Certificate: 15
Duration: 120 mins
Origin: UK, USA 2008
By: Pathe Distribution

This is an odd, seemingly small film, which turns out to be massive in every way.

Thanks to Pathe and City Screen we were lucky to screen it for The Rex' fourth anniversary in December – five weeks before its UK release and before all the talk!

Those who had no idea what the film was about, will know what a gem it is.

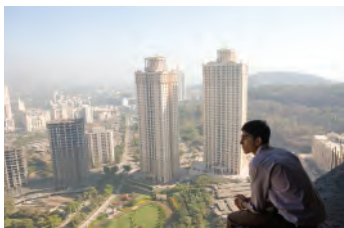
By now you will have heard more than you need to know. It is a good story with a beginning, middle and end set in a country we think we know from history, spices and tea? It shows us how a country once so distant, mysterious and thought to be noble is more commercially westernised, unforgiving, divided, cheap and corrupt than anything we thought the Raj had invented or left behind.

Danny Boyle has made a gem, which regardless of prizes, will live to tell the tale long after it has been forgotten.

It is a lesson in hardship, loyalty, guile, determination and ultimately survival... and oh yes – love.

Best not to know the story before you see it, but one clue: if you love the opening cricket scene as I did, you may not like the closing one, as much?

But don't miss the whole beginning, middle or end.



A Bunch of Amateurs

Thu 23 2.00



This a great little film with quaint rustic characters pitched against a once super-star.

It has real touches of the 1950's Ealing Comedies about it.

Burt Reynolds is Jefferson Steel, a pampered has-been action star desperate to make a comeback. He accepts an offer to do Shakespeare in Stratford, little knowing that it's not upon Avon, but the (fictional) village of Stratford St John in Suffolk.

Naturally, the amateur theatre group is in raptures about the arrival of their LA King Lear, but the man himself is less than enthused about acting alongside pig farmers and staying in a B&B with no ensuite. He pops his shoes outside his bedroom door only for the dog to chew! Later, the local mobile library is hurriedly transformed into a makeshift trailer.

It's a nice idea with predictable results and a script that has fun with the contrasts between LA and sleepy Suffolk. It hangs on to this one joke managing to stretch it across the whole film.

Nevertheless, it is warm hearted and a real treat to see Imelda Staunton and Derek Jacobi having such fun, and Burt Reynolds sending himself up.

Chosen to make us smile, so come and smile.

Director: Andy Cadiff
Starring: Derek Jacobi, Burt Reynolds, Imelda Staunton, Charles Durning
Certificate: 15
Duration: 97 mins
Origin: UK 2008
By: Entertainment Film Distribution

Wall-E

Sat 25 2.00

Director: Andrew Stanton
Starring: Kathy Najimy, Sigourney Weaver, John Ratzenberger, Fred Willard
Certificate: U
Duration: 103 mins
Origin: USA 2008
By: Buena Vista International

This is one the most brilliant animations in a long list of brilliant animations over the last ten years.

The detail is faultless and though the message is bleak, it states it clearly from the outset but never dwells upon it. Wall-e is a square box with tank treads for feet and binoculars for a face. It would seem impossible to draw character let alone emotion from such a jumble of parts, but by some miracle of genius it does.

To help, it is from the same pencils and imagination that brought embarrassed disgrace to the angle-poise lamp 'who' pounds the pixar 'i' into the ground. The year is 2700. WALL-E (Waste Allocation Load Lifter - Earth-Class) is a robot who spends every day organising the rubbish left behind by mankind. Soon he will discover his noble destiny. From Oscar winning director Andrew Stanton, WALL-E is the story of one robot's comic adventures as he chases his dream across the galaxy. "This latest animated feature from Pixar is said to be amongst its finest. It is witty, profound and beautifully realised, with a faint whiff of E.T." (*Standard*) It is a true gem. Bring your Grandparents... Famil-E Comed-E



The Young Victoria

Mon 27 2.00, **Tue 28** 12.30, **Wed 29** 2.00, **Thu 30** 2.00

“Even a palace can be a prison,” muses Britain’s most eligible princess in *The Young Victoria*, recalling her early years cooped up as a Queen-in-waiting.

Royalty is a gilded cage – we know as much, ad nauseam, from our heritage dramas – but this is a somewhat constricting way to look at history, however nice the furniture.” (*Telegraph*) Emily Blunt is steely enough to handle the part of Victoria; what’s rarer in a female-centred period piece is for the male lead to be not just dashing in his tights, but emotionally commanding, and more than her equal. Rupert Friend, as Albert, is the film’s secret weapon – ardent, subtly proud, a little shy, and a man with an intellectual philosophy he intends to preserve. The film glows as it gets to know him, and your resistance, like Victoria’s, melts away. (*Various reviews*)

After a stifling childhood, Victoria must find maturity and independence – not easy with a controlling mother, two scheming uncles and a snake-like prime minister (Paul Bettany). Supported by an instantly recognisable coterie of British acting royalty, it is in for a long run at the Rex. If you can wait, writer and great story-teller, Julian Fellowes will be here to talk about the film on Sat 2nd May.



Director: Jean-Marc Vallée
Starring: Emily Blunt, Rupert Friend, Jim Broadbent,
Certificate: PG
Duration: 105 mins
Origin: UK, USA 2008
By: Momentum Pictures



"I SAY HI, YOU SAY LOW. YOU SAY WHY AND I SAY I DON'T KNOW..."

Here is a (second) letter from a Ms H. The first complained that with three months still to run on a six month gift voucher, she might still be disappointed, so demanded a refund. In addition she was aggrieved by the tone of one of our brightest and most delightful box office staff. This second long letter follows an equally long reply from one of our elder but unequivocally charming staff. It was at this point I was reluctantly drawn in. Clearly the whole thing should have been left alone and the first letter politely disregarded. Moreover, one of our juniors (Malcolm - 19) decided to take up the cudgel and type an immediate response. This is the result. From us there will be no further correspondence on the matter. So for your eyes only "Off the record, on the QT & very Hush-Hush..."

Dear Ms...

Thank you for your letter dated 3rd March 2009. Whilst the history of the Rex was fascinating to read about, I'm afraid you failed to address the main points that I outlined to you. Indeed I do have three months left on my voucher, however I am hardly filled

with confidence at the thought of trying to book tickets and repeating the procedure that I have actually complained to you about, potentially three more times.

I am surprised that you claim to be party to my conversation with the box office, if that is true I question why you seem to have not heard her tone with me. I also question your view that she was not offensive with her comment about call centres in India.

In these multicultural times her statement could be deemed irresponsible and could be considered as discrimination. My point in my letter was with how your box office girl was unable to offer any empathy with the problems I had been experiencing. A point which you have not addressed in your reply.

I would like to also point out that I reported your telephone number as faulty to BT. The engineer told me that others had reported it too on the same day. Perhaps you should consider adding a few more lines to rectify the issues you are facing. You have acknowledged in your letter that your phones are inundated; surely you plan to do something about this?



Meet Laura, Millie, Fiona and Jodie but not in that order. They came to find me with a note and very sweetly told me they were sisters and it was their birthday. Wow! I had never seen quads before. It occurred to me (and Rosie) they didn't look alike but thought what do I know about quads – perhaps they all look like this? After excitedly announcing our first quads the audience, the mother of one (or two) of them, told me they are friends who share the same birthday, so call themselves sisters...! Happy 11th birthday, girls. I wonder who should be warned about your 12th?



General release Saturday 10am 21st February 2009

Can you please let me know what research you base your evidence on that claims '99% of your callers are delighted to speak to a human being'. To advertise the fact I presume you have done your market research and can prove that. Otherwise you are in breach of Trading Standards. You seem to pride yourself on the fact that you don't use call centres, but I think you may find that most people if asked would like to be able to actually have their telephone call **answered** by the Rex as appose to it going unanswered for three days like you have done with me. So really your claims are counterproductive because you are asking the wrong question. In conclusion I would like to convey to you my thoughts on your products and services. I have been unable to use your product. Your customer service is inferior. I will be letting all my friends and family know the exact experience I have encountered with you.

Yours sincerely, NH

Dear Mrs NH,
I would like to thank you for your letter dated 23rd February 2009, but are you attempting to damage our reputation and waste our time out of spite? If so this childish attitude is in

part succeeding as I am indeed replying to your letter.

As far as apologising for the fact you have been unable to book tickets I think we have already said "sorry" enough times. In short, what we should have said is "TRY HARDER". Our cinema is sold out constantly (this is not a market research proven fact but merely my observation) which proves people do actually manage to book tickets.

Addressing your conversation with the box office, if you expect us to take some sort of disciplinary action then I am afraid to disappoint you. We have not deemed any behavior rude or inappropriate; you will have to accept we do not share your view.

Moving on to faulty telephone lines we understand that we don't have the most efficient system, but whilst we are continuing to sell out most nights, we don't feel we need to update the system. As for someone quoting you that "99% of people are delighted to speak to a human being" This was obviously a figure of speech and it is obviously not backed up by market research. If you still want to contact trading standards please feel free to waste theirs and your own time. Yours faithfully, Malcolm Moore.

To add Malcolm's note to the fray is indulgent, but provides a fresh and unexpected view. For a 19yr old it is restrained and lucid. He was moved to write it in his tea break.

I don't like his use of 'childish' even though he went on to include himself. So too his observation that "we don't feel we need to update the (phone) system" is misinformed and youthfully arrogant. (patronising? Of course)

We have three telephone lines. There is neither room for more phones nor people to answer them. Our booking system is on Microsoft Excel with handwritten tickets.

In nearly four and half years of packed houses, its failings are fractional. From 5th Dec 2004 to 12th March 2009 (not counting five weekly matinees) and based on approximately 1535 nights of which four a week sell out and the other three are half full, these complaints, though some genuine, are statistically and in real terms, Rizla thin.

We deal swiftly and fairly with real complaints.

Please, don't write long, wasteful 'disgusted of...' letters citing 'customer service' or any other glib, commercial, Anglo/Euro/Americana, weasel-words.

Customer service means nothing.

They are two empty words, like putting fatwa and kebab together (actually, these are more connected as both might kill you. Pity they didn't impose a kebab on Salman Rushdie). Like 'I'm a people person', 'customer service' gifts the user with the kind of moral high-ground which to oppose is, at best heresy at worst, care free. In reality, they are hollow words expressing no sense of care, merely pedalling phoney obligation.

To be clear, I don't care about 'customer service'. I care. From clean carpets to fresh flowers on the balcony, and a hundred other things you're not meant to see. It seems old fashioned even despised, these hateful days, to care. We don't have a name or easy jargon phrase for it. If you can better 'courtesy' or 'civilised', please say. As for 'product' – guess?

Is it so difficult to see? It is not a formula or a false smile. We're not pretending. Clearly we don't always get it right. To offer a fabulous ill-researched statistic based on nothing more than Malcolm's observations: – from an audience of 300 here more than four nights a week for four years, four months and a few days, we get one of these



Malcolm (right) looking very pleased to be leaving for the Far East. 14.3.09

complaints once a week! Please, take as long as you like... Some ill researched, amateur stats are worth repeating; with all respect to Trading Standards.

The gift-voucher idea came from you, the audience. We took it on at your request.

It was never a sales ploy. It was carefully thought out and offered in good faith. We even stopped it for a time because everybody seemed to want the same films, thus it became impossible. Demand was such we reluctantly re-introduced it, but only with clear instruction to the buyer that the recipient was fully aware it wasn't a ticket but a seat for which they may have to queue (written clearly on a beautifully presented card). Always, our advice is to use gift vouchers for a film you might otherwise dismiss – use it, come and be surprised.

The programme is tight and deliberately eclectic. Blockers and big titles are only screened for short runs (maximum five days). We don't care if that wierd Danish film only sells 150 when we could have sold out James Bond for another week. This is not snotty or arty. We show things new and interesting, including some dross, eg – anything made by English television comics/producers or 'starring' Coogan, Gervais and Brand, or Hollywood teen crap, or Mamma Mia. We read and listen to everything to keep the programme alive – for you, and us. I wish we could resist rising to this occasional and disproportionate whingeing, but as J-P S's "Hell is other people" continues to prove itself, we must admit to being those 'other people' too; so react when we should respond calmly, or not at all, and talk when we should listen.

So, we'll have to put up with each other won't we? After all, as hard as it is, if we try a little harder we might even come to like each other... but let's not go that far.

PS As a result, on 15th March Malcolm fled to the Far East. When last heard of he had joined a remote border garrison near the plains of Azberkhekstan rounding up child labour for a new call-centre exclusive to The Rex – 24:7.

ELLESMERE ROAD DORMER GARDEN SHEDS...

It is all kicking off again. Permission for FIVE houses to be built in the gardens of THREE houses at 14, 15, 16 Ellesmere Rd was rejected last year. On appeal it appears to have been turned down for dormer windows, only! On resubmission, without the dormers, it is feared permission will be automatic. What cowardly, greedy, little no-marks we have become. The council stands to lose £30,000 if it is overruled on appeal. That's our money and I want to pay my share to stop them. They and the developer deserve nothing of course except their comeuppance, which they'll never get. They have gone through all the loop-holes and got it down to dormer windows, knowing full well they were the sacrificial red-herring never intended to be built in the first place. They are liars and cheats. Add this to a spineless planning dept and abracadabra: five jerry-builds with tons of hardcore buried half an inch under the topsoil in the once beautiful gardens of three undeserving opportunists who bought in a conservation area. Why? What does Conservation Area mean? "The price of everything and the value of nothing"? If George St, New Rd, Ellesmere Road, Ravens Lane, Gravel Path, Holliday Street and Ravens Wharf object, the council must throw it out, not for dormer windows, but because the people have used correct democratic means to say no. This way the council, and us, won't owe the bastards a penny. Get writing, individual letters/email; petitions are useless. Don't use my language. Stick to the Conservation Area status and don't let up. There's a foolproof trick too. Ask/read on the web what constitutes a Conservation Area. Ask English Heritage and The National Trust. You'll be surprised what power you have.

"Money ain't the key to happiness but if you got enough, you can have one made..."

(Bob Dylan quote from his unmissable 'Theme hour' radio show BBC R2 Thursdays 11.00 to midnight)