

THE-REX

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APRIL...

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APRIL 2010 Issue 61
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The Rex

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FILM OF THE MONTH 2



Hard hitting, brilliant thriller. France 2010

A Prophet Tues 13 7.30

FILMS OF THE MONTH



An Oscar winning Jeff Bridges. USA 2009

Crazy Heart Tue 6/Wed 7/Thu 8 7.30



A war-crimes legal thriller. Germany 2009

Storm Mon 19 7.30



'Bourne' takes Baghdad.

France/USA/Spain/UK 2010

Green Zone Thu 29/Fri 30 7.30

THE PASSING OF TRADITION



It is very sad to see Traditional Interiors closing after 26 years. Mrs Wright's presence in the shop has been a constant source of comfort to passers by. As has the shop front itself with its neat fireplaces on display inside an otherwise bare shop. It is traditional in every old fashioned sense. It has never had garish window dressing. There seems to have been no need to change anything, so they haven't. There are no gadgets, nothing to draw attention to itself. Yet everybody knows and talks about it. There is no computer. There's a typewriter. It has everything it needs. It has been open and successful all these years, while countless good-ideas have come and gone all around it.

Mrs Wright is closing the shop to be at home more. Her son (who makes all the fireplaces by hand) will continue the business from his workshop. So you'll have to find him or look out for his van. Not finished. It is time to leave the shop. I will miss passing Mrs Wright's window. Lower Kings Rd will not be the same.



Mrs Kathleen Wright at her familiar desk on Lower Kings Rd

AND THE 2010 WINNERS ARE...



Sandra Bullock - The Blind Side



Mo'Nique - Precious



Jeff Bridges - Crazy Heart



Christopher Waltz - Inglourious Basterds



The Hurt Locker



Kathryn Bigelow - The Hurt Locker



Up



AVATAR



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

The Hurt Locker

Thu 1 7.30

Director: Kathryn Bigelow
Starring: Jeremy Renner, Anthony Mackie, Brian Geraghty, Guy Pearce
Certificate: 15
Duration: 131 mins
Origin: USA 2009
By: Optimum Releasing

Back because it might win something? Was last month's tagline. Now it is back because it won everything!

An intense portrait of soldiers (mostly boys) who have one of the most dangerous jobs in the world. When new Sgt James (Renner), takes over a highly trained bomb disposal team in an unsettling conflict, he surprises his two subordinates by recklessly plunging them into a deadly game of urban combat. As they struggle to control their wild new leader, the city explodes into chaos and James' true character reveals itself in a way that will change each of them forever. Based on first-hand observation by journalist Mark Boal, with a special bomb unit in Iraq, the film couples realistic action with intimate human dilemma to portray soldier psychology where men volunteer to face deadly odds. "War is a drug says the film and every addict has a different reason to feel guilty and alone." (*Filmstar*) Bigelow deliberately uses Renner, an unknown face to take the lead. By discarding the baggage of the Star (indeed 'wasting' the big names early on), we can see the human being. She plants the viewer directly in to the dizzying heart of the action. She is brilliant.

Likely to be one the most moving films of the year (2009/10). Sold out immediately (every month from Sept 09 to April 10) before it was noticed.



A Single Man

Fri 2 7.30, **Sat 3** 7.00,
Sun 4 6.00

Marking ex-Gucci peddler Tom Ford's directorial debut, "A Single Man" is one unhappy day in one unhappy life. Colin Firth is George Falconer, a gay British ex-pat college professor living in suburban Los Angeles. It is 1962 and the seeds of social upheaval are beginning to take root. This is meaningless for George; Jim (Goode), his partner of 15 years, has been killed in a car accident. Grief-stricken, George decides to take his own life. However the attention of a beautiful and mysterious student (Hoult), and the sympathy of his fragile friend Charley (Moore) may yet cause George to pause for thought...

It is everything you expect. Colin Firth inhabits the repressed Falconer brilliantly, Goode and Hoult more than adequately provide counterpoint, and Moore is again a semi-alcoholic gay-centric caricature. "For Ford, image, advertising and a certain kind of good taste are important. That's fine if you're a sartorialist who thinks style and substance are indistinguishable, but it's a problem if you're making the transition to movies. Especially a movie that stands or falls by its ability not only to make you care about its main character, but to cry your eyes out at his desperate situation..." (*Telegraph*)

But it doesn't. Looking so gorgeously airbrushed however, it is worth seeing on the big screen. Though might be better with the sound down.

(research Simon Messenger)

Director: Tom Ford
Starring: Julianne Moore, Colin Firth, Matthew Goode
Certificate: 12A
Duration: 99 mins
Origin: USA 2010
By: Icon Film Distribution Ltd



Chocolat

Mon 5 7.30



A gorgeous little addition to Easter. A red-hooded woman (Binoche) and child boldly set about converting the old bakery into a chocolate shop which offers delights so tempting that hyper-conservative mayor Reynaud (Molina), fearing for the moral and religious health of the villagers, determines to eject her from the community.

Based on the novel by Joanne Harris, the film is faithful to the book's themes of restraint versus self-indulgence and conformity versus individuality.

"As a subject, food has proved a real winner for the movies. From the ribald scoffing scene in *Tom Jones*, through to the sexy sushi romp in *Tampopo* and the fabulous spontaneously erotic feast from *The Diving Bell and The Butterfly*, eating on film often spells sex, seduction and a lip-smackingly good yarn."

"Yet sadly this is more Joe's Cafe than Michelin Star, falling well short of being the sum of its ingredients." "Coily suggesting that chocolate is the new sex, or maybe that sex is the new chocolate." (*mixed reviews*)

It's got all the taste and style of "erotic" chocolate body-paint kits on sale at British Home Stores. (*Guardian*)

"From the start, Hallström's soft adaptation of Joanne Harris's popular novel smoothly proceeds to construct a 'feminist' parable about the role of courage, support and pleasure." (*Time Out*) Beware, players of all nationalities speak English with slight French accents throughout.

Director:	Lasse Hallstrom
Starring:	Lena Olin, Judi Dench, Juliette Binoche, Johnny Depp
Certificate:	12A
Duration:	121 mins
Origin:	USA 2000
By:	Park Circus Films



Director: Scott Cooper
Starring: Jeff Bridges, Robert Duvall, Maggie Gyllenhaal, Colin Farrell,
Certificate: 15
Duration: 111 mins
Origin: USA 2009
By: Twentieth Century Fox



Crazy Heart

**Tue 6 7.30, Wed 7 7.30,
 Thu 8 7.30**

"It's impossible to overstate how much his honest, unabashed performance – part Dude, part Kris Kristofferson – grounds the film." (Time Out)

Now four-time nominee, Jeff Bridges finally walks off slowly with his Oscar following a super cool, witty, slow, Dude speech. "His phenomenal, heart-breaking performance powers this simple but affecting redemption story." (*Empire*)

Crazy Heart is a straightforward coming of (old) age story, played with a strength that more than compensates the familiar nature of the material.

Based on the novel by Thomas Cobb, Crazy Heart tells of a boozy, broke and burnt-out country-music star. A man all messed up with nowhere to go.

You can almost expect him to turn up at Berkhamsted's fabulously, infamous Goat any Friday night soon.

Battling 'bills n' booze n' one night stands', he trespasses the mid-southwest in a beat-up car, on an endless tour of dead-end towns. Playing his old hits in any bar, alley or honky tonk toilet that will have him.

"His acting is so authentic, so raw and revealing, you can almost smell his breath" (*Times*)

It's no 'Tender Mercies' (1983, with Oscars) starring Robert Duval, now in cameo here, but it has its own brilliance. Even Colin Farrell shines. It might inspire middle aged musicians to leave home just to stub cigarettes out in whisky glasses. Let's hope so.



Sherlock Holmes

Fri 9 7.30

Director: Guy Ritchie
Starring: Robert Downey Jr, Jude Law, Rachel McAdams, Mark Strong
Certificate: 12A
Duration: 128 mins
Origin: Australia, UK, USA 2009
By: Warner Brothers

Back because it is fun, unnecessary but great fun.

Robert Downey Jr is perfect as a spoof of all spoof Holmes. He is as straight-faced as Basil Rathbone, without a hint of send-up. His fabulous timing, sheer presence and face, renders the screen empty when he's not there.

Arthur Conan Doyle's super-sleuth gets a fresh and edgy update with this dynamic adaptation of Lionel Wigram's comic book series by writer/director Guy Ritchie. Robert Downey Jr stars as the razor-sharp, dry, knuckle-fighting Sherlock Holmes alongside an okay Jude Law as his formidable ally Dr Watson. In this action adventure mystery set in Victorian London, Holmes must battle as never before to bring down a new adversary, Lord Blackwood (Strong), and thwart a deadly plot that could ruin the country. Rachel McAdams plays Irene Alder, the only woman ever to out-smart him? Then there's the small matter of the tempestuous relationship...

As for the rest of the cast: Eddie Marsan is a gift as the ever hapless, all knowing, Inspector Lestrade and Kelly Reilly, who can't do a thing wrong from head to toe. The Victorian London CGI is effortlessly detailed and the action breathtaking. Never thought much of the cocky, unnecessary Mr Ritchie. But apart from being overlong and getting on your nerves here and there, it's a fabulous romp .



Up In The Air

Sat 10 7.00



George Clooney plays smooth talking Ryan Bingham in this timely darkish comedy directed by Jason Reitman (Juno, Thank Your For Smoking – two gems).

Ryan is part motivational speaker, part 'outplacement counsellor'. He is hired to fire employees when bosses are too cowardly to do it themselves.

Consequently he spends over 300 days a year flying from city to city, doing what he does best. He loves his lifestyle, but when he encounters both young, dynamic new employee Natalie (Anna Kendrick) who has pioneered a way of firing people via webcam, and a similarly minded exec Alex (Vera Farmiga), whose compelling face he gets to lick, Ryan's air jet set lifestyle is placed in jeopardy.

It's the perfect role for gorgeous George who spends much of the film playing well, George Clooney; amiable, charming, and ever so slightly insubstantial.

"The film's final announcement that even the most frequent flights of imagination have to touch down at some point is conventional and a little disappointing. But the journey is a riot while it lasts."

(Time Out)

"There's nothing too profound here, and yet it works well as a smart, light cosmopolitan comedy: it's a snack, rather than a meal, but expertly made."

(Guardian)

(research Simon Messenger)

Director: Jason Reitman
Starring: George Clooney, Vera Farmiga, Anna Kendrick
Certificate: 15
Duration: 109 mins
Origin: USA 2009
By: Paramount International Pictures

The Lovely Bones

Sun 11 6.00

Director: Peter Jackson
Starring: Mark Wahlberg, Rachel Weisz, Saoirse Ronan
Certificate: 12A
Duration: 136 mins
Origin: NZ, UK, USA 2009
By: Paramount International Pictures

The drama ushers us through the afterlife of Susie Salmon (Atonement's fab Saoirse Ronan), a small-town kid in 1970s Pennsylvania who is killed by the local pervert (Stanley Tucci) and looks down on her scattered, shattered family from her place in limbo. She sees her mum (Rachel Weisz) dad (Mark Wahlberg) come apart at the seams. From this celestial vantage, she starts to fear for the safety of her little sister... "Its treatment of bereavement and familial grief is crazier than anything Lars Von Trier came up with in *Antichrist*." (*Telegraph*) "It is always disappointing when a talented director fails for the first time and the Lovely Bones, Peter Jackson has failed pretty horribly." (*Guardian*) "The story is part thriller, part coming of age memoir, part detective story not an easy combo and the jump cuts from gruesome to fey sometimes had the preview audience snorting with inappropriate giggles." (*Guardian*) Critics would do that wouldn't they? "If there is an Oscar for computer-generated hokey Jackson's so in the running, with electric-green leaves that fly off trees and become yellow birds, cardboard full moons, full-sized ships in bottles smashing on rocks and cornfields romping with girls in Laura Ashley dresses." (*Times*) Sounds fantastic for the big screen. Come for this or to say you've read it, now you've seen it.



Still Walking

Mon 12 7.30



A typically graceful turn from acclaimed Japanese director Koreeda (*After Life*, *Nobody Knows*), **STILL WALKING** weaves together with great subtlety an intricate and nuanced family drama, inviting comparison with the work of none less than the master of the genre, Yasujiro Ozu.

Taking place over one summer's day, the film follows a Yokohama family as they reunite to celebrate the life of their eldest son, whose tragic death 15 years ago left a painful mark not yet healed. It is during this poignant remembrance, however, that the gaps and tensions between family members become achingly apparent. Scooping a host of awards across Asia since 2008, *Still Walking* arrives in the West as an emotionally charged tale of family, striking in its immediate familiarity across cultures.

"Koreeda locates ideas in mundane imagery, such as a drawer left slightly open, a butterfly entering the house, or cherry blossom blooming in the garden." (*Time Out*)

"Unlike family sagas in British, American and European drama, there are no crockery-smashing rows. Resentments and anger are contained within the conventions of politeness and respect. Impossible to watch without a lump in the throat." (*Guardian*)

"Still Walking is an acutely observed and tenderly rendered portrait of family, mortality and remembering." (*Telegraph*) Don't miss.

Director: Hirokazu Koreeda
Starring: Yui Natsukawa, Kazuya Takahashi, Hiroshi Abe, Shohei Tanaka
Certificate: U
Duration: 114 mins
Origin: Japan 2008
By: New Wave

A Prophet

Tue 13 7.30



From Jacques Audiard, director of the blistering “The Beat That My Heart Skipped” comes another exceptional thriller.

Sentenced to six years in prison, Malik El Djebena (the frighteningly brilliant Tahar Rahim), is immediately initiated into the kill or be killed world of the incarcerated. Faced with an impossible choice posed by Corsican gangster César (a brilliant Niels Arestrup), Malik learns early on who is calling the shots, and begins to climb his increasingly ruthless way through the ranks of prison society...

It's an unbelievably tense, occasionally gruesome, study of prison life; more grounded than Audiard's previous work. There's a great deal to examine here. Audiard poses numerous questions concerning Franco-Arab relations, and beautifully intimates an intense psychological, near spiritual, battle ranging within Malik.

“This is the work of the rarest kind of film-maker, the kind who knows precisely what he is doing and where he is going.” (*Guardian*)

“This is staggeringly impressive film-making, a picture which instantly takes its place among the greats of the prison and crime genres... could give Scorsese a run for his money.” (*Times*)

We follow Malik from beginning to end. He and the film will haunt you long after the credits role. This is the best film of the year so far. It should have cleaned up at the Oscars, but it's French. Don't miss. (research Simon Messenger)

Director: Jacques Audiard
Starring: Tahar Rahim, Niels Arestrup
Certificate: 18
Duration: 155 mins
Origin: France, Italy 2010
By: Optimum Releasing

MicMacs

Wed 14 7.30, Thu 15 7.30

Director: Jean-Pierre Jeunet
Starring: Yolande Moreau, Dominique Pinon, Dany Boon, André Dussolier
Certificate: 18
Duration: 105 mins
Origin: France 2010
By: E1 Films

It's hard to believe Jean-Pierre Jeunet's last film was “A Very Long Engagement” back in 2004! Jeunet's

output – six films in almost twenty years – has, for him, ensured high-quality, original output. Can “Micmacs” match the bar set by “Delicatessen” and “Amélie”? Danny Boon is Bazil, a mild-mannered video store clerk who, whilst miming along to “The Big Sleep”, is inadvertently caught in a gangland shootout; a stray bullet lodging in his brain. Bazil survives, and ends up living with a band of eccentrics (contortionist, human cannonball, ethnographer etc) in a fantastically rendered Parisian rubbish dump, and collectively they set out to take revenge on the arms dealers who caused his predicament...

“Micmacs” means “carry-on”, and that's how the film plays out. Its droll, off-kilter charm is not for all, but makes it worthwhile; Jeunet's adoration of the little guy has not subsided. Though “the juxtaposition of whimsy and satire is sometimes awkward” (*Front Row*)

“Micmacs” links Keaton, Chaplin and Tati to the surreal, stylised worlds of Lynch, Burton and Gilliam ... one constantly smiles with appreciation and chuckles at Jeunet's invention.” (*Guardian*)

“It's a strange mix... Everything I love I put into the film” (*Jeunet*) (research Simon Messenger)





Director: Martin Scorsese
Starring: Emily Mortimer, Max Sydow, Mark Ruffalo, Leonardo DiCaprio
Certificate: 15
Duration: 138 mins
Origin: USA 2009
By: Paramount International Pictures



Shutter Island

**Fri 16 7.30, Sat 17 7.00,
 Sun 18 6.00**

Based on a Dennis Lehane novel. Recent adaptations of his work include “Mystic River” and “Gone Baby Gone”. This one’s by Scorsese.

It’s 1954; charged with investigating the disappearance of the remorseless Rachel Solando, a triple infanticide, DiCaprio and Ruffalo are US marshals Teddy and Chuck sent to Shutter Island, a remote offshore maximum-security facility for the criminally insane. The amiable, and suitably sinister, guardians of the island, Drs. Cawley and Nahring (Kingsley and von Sydow) have the authority to do with the inmates as they please. It’s not pleasant or humane, and Teddy suspects a dark figure from his past lurks within the rat infested corridors...

Scorsese’s insistence on taking the whole thing absolutely seriously undermines the film. There’s some irreverent nonsense about Dachau and government conspiracies; subjects which don’t come off well when handled badly.

“An entertainingly batshit and hysterical trainwreck [it] could have been, a vast pile-up of pop psychology, B-movie tropes, and weirdly-accented A-listers slumming it. Alas, the train doesn’t even leave the station... “Shut-eye Island” would be a better title” (*Telegraph*)
 “A fun psychological thriller ...ludicrous and entertaining.” (*Time Out*)

There are twists and turns and twists on twists. Come for the suits.
 (research Simon Messenger)



Storm

Mon 19 7.30



Centred on the fictional courtroom saga of former Bosnian Serb warlord Goran Duric, this tale of the quest for justice in the face of bureaucratic bullying and legal fog succeeds because it never loses hold of its human elements.

Hannah Maynard (Fox) is a prosecutor at the International Criminal Tribunal in The Hague. Passed over for the top job by former colleague Keith Haywood (Dillane) she is told instead, to take over the trial of Goran Duric accused of wartime atrocities.

“Tackling war crimes committed in Bosnia on the big screen in an opulent production like this might play to an audience ready to reflect on past massacres but to make it work, Storm has to manipulate the plot and the characters so much, all that’s left is a clever piece of show business.” (*Empire*)

“Not so much a conspiracy thriller as a searching study of the conflicting moral, emotional and legal considerations encountered by a lawyer at The Hague Serbian war crimes trial. Solid, intelligent, relevant fare, albeit with too many red herrings designed to create extra suspense.” (*Time Out*) Anamaria Marinca (4 Months, 3 Weeks And 2 Days) gives the film’s most convincing performance as Mira, a woman haunted by the demons of the past. Come for her.

Director: Hans-Christian Schmid
Starring: Kerry Fox, Anamaria Marinca, Stephen Dillane
Certificate: 15
Duration: 99 mins
Origin: Germany 2009
By: Soda Pictures

Ondine

Tue 20 7.30

Director: Neil Jordan
Starring: Tony Curran, Colin Farrell, Alicja Bachleda-Curus
Certificate: 12A
Duration: 99 mins
Origin: Ireland 2009
By: Paramount International Pictures

ONDINE is a mystery drama set on a wind-buffed southern Irish coast.

Recovering alcoholic (Farrell) scratches a living as a fisherman while caring for his disabled daughter (the terrific Alison Barry). His life shows little sign of taking a turn for the better until, one day he hauls up his net to find a scantily clad woman caught in it (Colin wont like that). He brings the beautiful and mysterious woman to shore. She is Ondine (Alicja) who begins to bring him good fortune, fuelling his daughter’s belief that she is a mythical selkie: part woman, part seal. But Ondine is also the harbinger of dark and unknown trouble in this atmospheric mix of folklore and thriller.

“Always an underrated actor, Farrell brings a brooding, Heathcliff-style presence to the role of Irish trawlerman. He doesn’t overwhelm the film with his star presence but just inhabits the skin of the character.” (*Screen Int*)

“Farrell’s natural accent and roguish charm make for a winning performance. Funny, whimsical and warm.” (*Empire*) It needs to beguile an audience and lull them into a receptive frame of mind, which may take more effort than most audiences are willing to make.

Despite its many charms and sweet allure, Ondine is a minor work from a major filmmaker. (*Screen Int*) You decide.



Bienvenue chez les Ch'tis (Welcome to the Sticks) Wed 21 7.30



First screened here June 2008. It didn't sell out then, but by Christmas unruly behaviour broke out and tickets changed hands for four figure sums!

Philippe runs the post office in a picturesque small town in southern France. He thinks the more glamorous surroundings of the Côte d'Azur will lift his wife's spirits. His attempts to fiddle a transfer fail. Instead, his punishment is to be sent to Bergues, a village in the 'far north'. Matters only get worse - the local dialect is a strange bouillabaisse of French, Flemish and Latin!

A heart warming film, which last year to general astonishment, stormed the box office across France, beating Titanic's twelve year record. The gags are about the local-yokel habitués of the Pas-de-Calais area, north of Lille. Thanks in no small part to miraculous sub-titles, the laughter is shared. It is written and directed by Boon, the taxi driver in My Best Friend and lovelorn postman in this. This gorgeous low-budget film is a tribute to a region apparently treated to the same casual abuse by the rest of France as our Slough is here. Come for their glorious faces and humour that swims the Channel without getting wet. Back by great demand, a rare treasure and still not available on DVD! And only one available print. It will be back.

Director: Dany Boon
Starring: Anne Marvin, Kad Merad, Dany Boon, Zoe Felix
Certificate: 12A
Duration: 106 mins
Origin: France 2008
By: Pathe Distribution

From Paris with Love Thu 22 7.30

Director: Pierre Morel
Starring: Jonathan Rhys Meyers, Richard Durden, John Travolta, Kasia Smutniak, Yin Bing
Certificate: 15
Duration: 92 mins
Origin: USA 2010
By: Warner Brothers

The temptation to précis this as another "Paris, je t'aime" was almost too great.

Aide to the US Ambassador in France, James Reese (Jonathan Rhys Meyers) has it all; the house, the car, the French girlfriend, silly facial hair; however he longs to see action as a bone fide CIA operative. His luck changes with the arrival of loudmouth, trigger-happy, Special Agent Charlie Wax (John Travolta) who has been sent from Washington to intercept and neutralise a potential terrorist attack in the French capital. Has the nervy Reese bitten off more than he can chew..? Pierre Morel (Taken) has contrived an entertaining enough shoot-'em-up, its fast pace and ludicrous body count ensuring it adheres to genre conventions.

"Travolta's agent is clearly meant to be an outrageous creation we'll remember for years to come, but he's a bit too bland and underpowered for that to work ... but trashes enough rooms and blows up enough cars to be fun while it lasts." (Times)

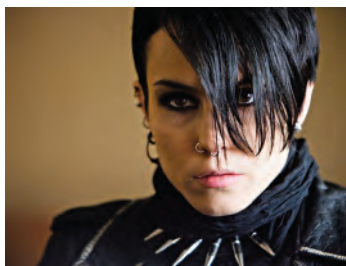
"As enlivening and gratifying as they come." (LWL)

From Paris With Love asks no big questions, bar one. Why has John Travolta started taking these hulking, daft roles? Come for Paris – as always and for ever, it is the only star on the screen.

(research Simon Messenger)



The Girl With The Dragon Tattoo



Director: Niels Oplev
Starring: Michael Nyqvist, Naomi Rapace, Sven-Bertil Taube
Certificate: 18
Duration: 152 mins
Origin: Sweden 2009
By: Momentum Pictures



**Fri 23 7.30, Sat 24 7.00,
Sun 25 6.00**

The Girl With The Dragon Tattoo, whose original and more potent title was **Men Who Hate Women**, a blunt but fitting description of this angry, intelligent Swedish thriller. It begins with Mikael Blomkvist (Michael Nyqvist), an investigative journalist dedicated to exposing corporate crime, facing jail for libelling a wealthy tycoon. Racism, patriarchal misogyny, globalization: director Niels Arden Oplev gives all these hefty themes their due in this largely faithful adaptation of the popular trilogy by Stieg Larsson (whose own death is veiled in mystery and rumour). Now down at the heel and needing to hide, Mikael accepts a job from industrialist Henrik Vanger to look into the disappearance of his beloved niece more than 30 years before.

Blomkvist is the putative hero, with lived-in face and weary dedication. He is superbly mis-matched with Salander, mesmerizing as by Rapace, the goth/punk hacker. She's a grim, spectral presence in the opening scenes, until being pushed too far, she explodes in a moment of shocking, violent revenge. Each actor all the better for being unknown faces from a cold country. "Still, wintry photography is consistently atmospheric, the sense of cultural scabs being picked at interesting, and Rapace's performance altogether more thrilling than any known star chosen for the promised Hollywood remake." (*Telegraph*) Beware: Edge of seat, with some tough scenes.

Capitalism: A Love Story **Mon 26** 7.30



On complex, broad and divisive issues it's a brave man who chooses to paint the world entirely in a black/white binary. Step up to the plate...Michael Moore!

Following his previous films, Moore equally divides his time between attempting to explain the economic crisis in hand, approaching large buildings with a loudspeaker demanding answers, and focusing individual-level attention on those wronged by broader circumstances. With its usually personal touch, Moore re-visits Michigan with his elderly father to see what has become of the General Motors factory where Moore senior worked in his youth...

Moore is a powerful and polarising filmmaker, who doesn't purport to have the answers. Although he isn't saying anything new (likening America to the Roman Empire is hardly original) he says it with such force that it's hard not to be won over.

"Enough for both a good night out and the reassurance of feeling oneself politically engaged...the film confirms Moore as a provocative, skilled entertainer, but also exposes his lack of a first-class mind." (*Telegraph*)

"By turns crude and sentimental, impassioned and invigorating. It posits a simple moral universe inhabited by good little guys and evil big ones, yet the basic thrust of its argument proves hard to resist." (*Guardian*)

(research Simon Messenger)

Director: Michael Moore
Starring: Thora Birch
Certificate: 12A
Duration: 127 mins
Origin: USA 2010
By: Paramount International Pictures

Invictus **Tue 27** 7.30

Director: Clint Eastwood
Starring: Matt Damon, Morgan Freeman
Certificate: 12A
Duration: 133 mins
Origin: USA 2009
By: Warner Brothers

Legend has it that when asked who he would like to portray him on film, the great man chose Morgan Freeman.

So it came to pass. "Channeling the statesmanlike grandeur that has enabled him to play God, US President and philosopher-pugilist, Freeman takes Mandela in his stride." (*Empire*) Struggling to make headway mending a divided country, the new President Mandela fixes upon the idea of uniting black and white by winning the 1995 Rugby World Cup!

Mandela's turbulent first year as South Africa's president is never lacking in drama. *Invictus* plays out in a land scarred by apartheid and facing an uncertain future, led by an old man still regarded by large swathes of the population as an unrepentant terrorist hell-bent on settling old scores.

The Springboks (SA's national team) are not just languishing in the doldrums, they are also seen as a bastion of old white rule and therefore despised by the black majority who will cheer-on loudly any team they play. But Mandela spies an opportunity. He celebrates the team's lone black player and sets out to woo its foursquare captain, François Pienaar.

(*Damon*)

"Mandela's inspired vision was to shape the Springboks, the despised green-shirted symbol of the old racism, into figures of a new countrywide pride." (*Time Out*)

Master of his country's fate by taking charge as captain of its soul.



Chloe

Wed 28 7.30



Remade from Anne Fontaine's intense 2003 sex-fantasy thriller *Nathalie*, this film from Atom Egoyan (and produced by the guy from *Ghostbusters*) is a steamy erotic noir with the same preposterous premise (*Nathalie*, not *Ghostbusters*).

A woman in a stagnant marriage suspects her husband is cheating. She hires a high-class prostitute to attempt a seduction and report back, and becomes voyeuristically obsessed with the call girl's breathless claims and with the call girl herself.

"This teeters on the B-movie brink, but fans of psycho-sexual boundary-pushing will be happy to tolerate its more ridiculous points." (*Empire*)

There was something so French about the original (the implicit acceptance of adultery, for one) that it's not surprising the emphasis has changed making the affairs of the husband are less certain.

"Egoyan's style is strictly arthouse-accessible: soft colours and dark shadows; modern architecture; a hint of erotica and the odd nipple shot." (*TimeOut*)

Is it worth seeing if a Hollywood remake can resist the graphic, where the Europeans leave it on the brink for our imagination to pluck?

"Chloe Commits its own act of infidelity against the film that inspired it, and the result is an adulterous inbroglio that turns Chloe into a woman scorned, unhinged and duly defenestrated" (*Sight & Sound*)

"Soft-porn fantasy, a chic-flick with steamy lace and soft focus" (*Front Row*)

Director: Atom Egoyan
Starring: Julianne Moore, Liam Neeson, Amanda Seyfried
Certificate: 15
Duration: 97 mins
Origin: Canada, France, USA 2010
By: Optimum Releasing

Green Zone

Thu 29 7.30, Fri 30 7.30

Director: Paul Greengrass
Starring: Jason Isaacs, Matt Damon, Brendan Gleeson
Certificate: 15
Duration: 115 mins
Origin: France, USA, Spain, UK 2010
By: Universal Pictures (UK) Ltd

Nobody likes a big-head apart from himself. Paul Greengrass is onesuch.

Luckily his most of his films are worth watching.

Matt Damon plays Chief WO Roy Miller, posted to Iraq to justify the US invasion. He has to lead his unit into desperately dangerous locations to find those 'weapons of mass destruction' (WMDs) his superior officers smoothly assure him must be there.

But something is fishy. So Miller disobeys orders and goes "rogue" to find the secret of the missing WMDs. Increasingly, as his search proves fruitless, he starts asking tricky questions, and soon even his own side are out to get him.

"Greengrass has married politics with popcorn. It has substance, but it is, first and foremost, a breakneck action film — tense, frenetic and exciting." (*Empire*)
 "Iraq hasn't had much luck with box-office draws, even with some winning Oscars (hello *The Hurt Locker*), they've never really hit home with mainstream audiences. Enter Greengrass and Damon with their success on the stylish and hugely successful Bourne franchise. Here they take on another adaptation of non-fiction: Rajiv Chandrasekaran's *Imperial Life in the Emerald City*. What you essentially get is 'Bourne goes to Baghdad'. A dramatised and heavily action focused thriller, with Greengrass' trademark handheld camera style placing you squarely in the thick of it." (*Jack Whiting, box office*)



COMING SOON

New releases

I Am Love
City of Life and Death
Alice In Wonderland

Back by demand

After the Wedding
A Prophet
A Single Man
Girl with

New releases



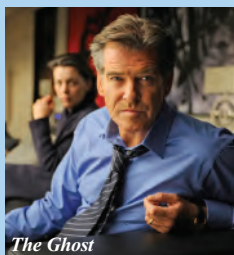
Wall Street 2



Nanny McPhee 2



Clash of the Titans

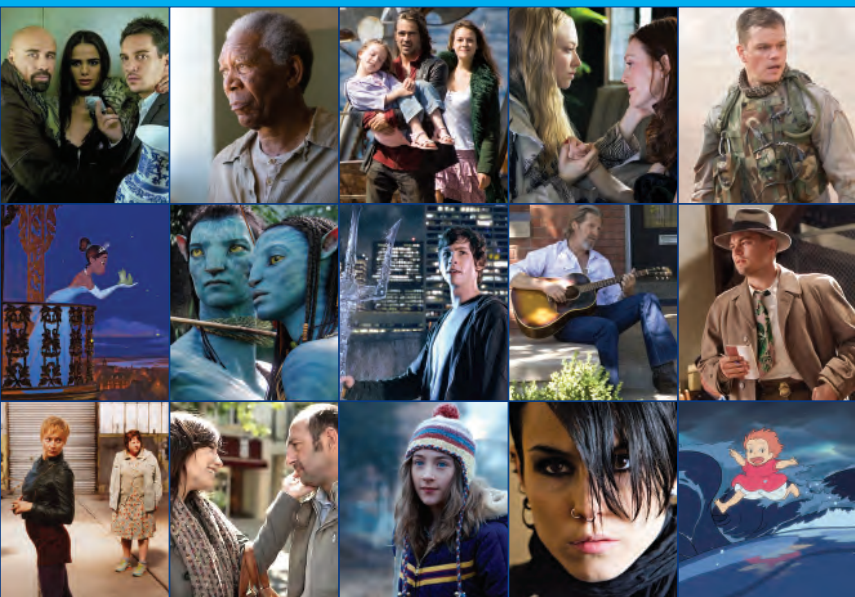


The Ghost

APRIL FILMS AT A GLANCE

Please check times carefully and watch out for early shows.

1	THU	THE HURT LOCKER	2.00, 7.30
2	FRI	A SINGLE MAN	7.30
3	SAT	PRINCESS & THE FROG	2.00
3	SAT	A SINGLE MAN	7.00
4	SUN	A SINGLE MAN	6.00
5	MON	CHOCOLAT	7.30
6	TUE	PERCY JACKSON	2.00
6	TUE	CRAZY HEART	7.30
7	WED	CRAZY HEART	2.00, 7.30
8	THU	PRINCESS & THE FROG	2.00
8	THU	CRAZY HEART	7.30
9	FRI	SHERLOCK HOLMES	7.30
10	SAT	PERCY JACKSON	2.00
10	SAT	UP IN THE AIR	7.00
11	SUN	THE LOVELY BONES	6.00
12	MON	THE LOVELY BONES	2.00
12	MON	STILL WALKING	7.30
13	TUE	PONYO	12.30
13	TUE	A PROPHET	7.30
14	WED	MICMACS	2.00, 7.30
15	THU	AVATAR 2D	2.00
15	THU	MICMACS	7.30
16	FRI	SHUTTER ISLAND	7.30
17	SAT	PONYO	2.00
17	SAT	SHUTTER ISLAND	7.00
18	SUN	SHUTTER ISLAND	6.00
19	MON	SHUTTER ISLAND	2.00
19	MON	STORM	7.30
20	TUE	ONDINE	12.30, 7.30
21	WED	WELCOME TO THE STICKS	2.00, 7.30
22	THU	FROM PARIS WITH LOVE	2.00, 7.30
23	FRI	GIRL WITH THE DRAGON TATTOO	7.30
24	SAT	PRINCESS & THE FROG	2.00
24	SAT	GIRL WITH THE DRAGON TATTOO	7.00
25	SUN	GIRL WITH THE DRAGON TATTOO	6.00
26	MON	GIRL WITH THE DRAGON TATTOO	2.00
26	MON	CAPITALISM: A LOVE STORY	7.30
27	TUE	INVICTUS	12.30, 7.30
28	WED	CHLOE	2.00, 7.30
29	THU	GREEN ZONE	2.00, 7.30
30	FRI	GREEN ZONE	7.30



BABIES...

Babies are welcome at Tuesdays 12:30 and Saturdays 2.00 matinees.

We have tried babies at matinees for almost three years. As a gesture it was worth it, as an experiment it almost worked. We have supported mothers and babies against louder screams from unhappy audiences.

We were encouraged early on, within the first year of opening, to run "Scream Screens". We did this for a short run for mothers and babies only. Unlike London, where the place might be packed, Berkhamsted's small baby population left us with half a dozen on a wet afternoon. So we opened the matinees to everyone, including babies and warned everyone with a lighthearted: "may contain babies". It was okay for a while, though there have been some tetchy moments

throughout. After we extended our matinees to five days a week, babies were welcome at all.

Our warning, lifted from the standard wording about nuts, wheat, breathing and life-in-general, was frowned upon. Babies reached yelling point late in 2009 when we saw audiences fall significantly.

We have lost many older people for whom the afternoon out was a special occasion.

You will know this is not about money. We've given mothers and babies more than fair crack at matinees. Now it's everyone else's turn. So babies, you are welcome on Tuesdays and Saturdays matinees alongside the everyday audience. Sorry if this sounds draconian. Think of it as taking turns at disappointment.

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

The Hurt Locker

Thu 1 2.00



Back because it might win something? Was last month's tagline. Now it is back because it won everything!

An intense portrait of soldiers (mostly boys) who have one of the most dangerous jobs in the world. When new Sgt James (Renner), takes over a highly trained bomb disposal team in an unsettling conflict, he surprises his two subordinates by recklessly plunging them into a deadly game of urban combat. As they struggle to control their wild new leader, the city explodes into chaos and James' true character reveals itself in a way that will change each of them forever. Based on first-hand observation by journalist Mark Boal, with a special bomb unit in Iraq, the film couples realistic action with intimate human dilemma to portray soldier psychology where men volunteer to face deadly odds. "War is a drug says the film and every addict has a different reason to feel guilty and alone." (*Filmstar*) Bigelow deliberately uses Renner, an unknown face to take the lead. By discarding the baggage of the Star (indeed 'wasting' the big names early on), we can see the human being. She plants the viewer directly in to the dizzying heart of the action. She is brilliant.

Likely to be one the most moving films of the year (2009/10). Sold out immediately (every month from Sept 09 to April 10) before it was noticed.

Director: Kathryn Bigelow
Starring: Jeremy Renner, Anthony Mackie, Brian Geraghty, Guy Pearce
Certificate: 15
Duration: 131 mins
Origin: USA 2009
By: Optimum Releasing

The Princess and The Frog

Sat 3 2.00, Thu 8 2.00

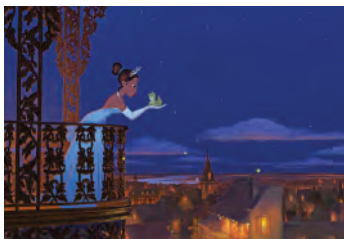
Directors: John Musker, Ron Clements
Starring: Oprah Winfrey, John Goodman, Anika Rose
Certificate: U
Duration: 97 mins
Origin: USA 2009
By: Walt Disney Studio INTL

The original Brothers Grimm story is revamped in this latest product of John Lasseter's new regime at Disney. It is a return to hand drawn Disney traditional 2-D animation, and to the classic formula of a love story featuring a plucky young woman and assorted comic-relief misfits. Disney's 49th animated feature harks back to the studio's traditional hand-drawn animation and the golden age of its fairytales, but stars a black princess for the first time. "This Broadway-style musical, set in the French Quarter of 1920s New Orleans and the bayous of Louisiana in old Disney animation, has a new heroine Tiana (Anika Noni Rose 'Dreamgirls') a princess, spirited and independent, who doesn't need rescuing by any prince." (*Times*)

Tiana faces a bigger problem than ordinary racism when, for fairy tale reasons, she is transformed into a frog! Cue adventures in the swamp with Cajun fireflies, a trumpet playing alligator and Tiana's true love a prince similarly trapped in a Froggy form.

There are some great characters, some even better jokes and a general sense of good humour (*Time Out*)

"Like Fantastic Mr.Fox; it's a welcome change to witness animation not derived solely from an army of computers" (*Jack Whiting*)



Percy Jackson and the Lightning Thief

Tue 6 12.30, **Sat 10** 2.00



This adaptation of Rick Riordan's remarkably popular fantasy book series tells the tale of accident-prone teenager Percy (Logan Lerman), who discovers he is actually a demi-God, the son of Poseidon, and is needed when Zeus's lightning is stolen.

Whereupon his mum packs him off to a kind of adventure camp for demigods. After successfully launching the Harry Potter franchise, director Chris Columbus decides to have another go. Rather than a boy wizard, this time we have a boy 'demigod' and all-round hero in Percy Jackson.

War is brewing between the gods over the theft of Zeus' lightning bolt, and Percy is chief suspect.

The crits didn't like it, but to Hades with them. All you need to know is, Percy battles Medusa avoiding her deathly gaze by craftily using the shiny back of his iPod as a mirror. Fab. If you're three weeks old or slightly over, you'll love it.

Director: Logan Lerman
Starring: Oprah Winfrey, John Goodman, Anika Rose
Certificate: PG
Duration: 119 mins
Origin: Canada, USA 2010
By: Twentieth Century Fox

Crazy Heart

Wed 7 2.00

Director: Scott Cooper
Starring: Jeff Bridges, Robert Duvall, Maggie Gyllenhaal, Colin Farrell,
Certificate: 15
Duration: 111 mins
Origin: USA 2009
By: Twentieth Century Fox

"It's impossible to overstate how much his honest, unabashed performance – part Dude, part Kris Kristofferson – grounds the film." (Time Out)

Now four-time nominee, Jeff Bridges finally walks off slowly with his Oscar following a super cool, witty, slow, Dude speech. "His phenomenal, heart-breaking performance powers this simple but affecting redemption story." (*Empire*) Crazy Heart is a straightforward coming of (old) age story, played with a strength that more than compensates the familiar nature of the material.

Based on the novel by Thomas Cobb, Crazy Heart tells of a boozy, broke and burnt-out country-music star. A man all messed up with nowhere to go.

You can almost expect him to turn up at Berkhamsted's fabulously, infamous Goat any Friday night soon.

Battling 'bills n' booze n' one night stands', he trespasses the mid-southwest in a beat-up car, on an endless tour of dead-end towns. Playing his old hits in any bar, alley or honky tonk toilet that will have him.

"His acting is so authentic, so raw and revealing, you can almost smell his breath" (*Times*)

It's no 'Tender Mercies' (1983, with Oscars) starring Robert Duval, now in cameo here, but it has its own brilliance. Even Colin Farrell shines. It might inspire middle aged musicians to leave home just to stub cigarettes out in whisky glasses. Let's hope so.



The Lovely Bones

Mon 12 2.00



The drama ushers us through the afterlife of Susie Salmon (Atonement's fab Saoirse Ronan), a small-town kid in 1970s Pennsylvania who is killed by the local pervert (Stanley Tucci) and looks down on her scattered, shattered family from her place in limbo. She sees her mum (Rachel Weisz) dad (Mark Wahlberg) come apart at the seams. From this celestial vantage, she starts to fear for the safety of her little sister...

"Its treatment of bereavement and familial grief is crazier than anything Lars Von Trier came up with in *Antichrist*." (*Telegraph*)

"It is always disappointing when a talented director fails for the first time and the *Lovely Bones*, Peter Jackson has failed pretty horribly." (*Guardian*)

"The story is part thriller, part coming of age memoir, part detective story not an easy combo and the jump cuts from gruesome to fey sometimes had the preview audience snorting with inappropriate giggles." (*Guardian*) Critics would do that wouldn't they?

"If there is an Oscar for computer-generated hokey Jackson's so in the running, with electric-green leaves that fly off trees and become yellow birds, cardboard full moons, full-sized ships in bottles smashing on rocks and cornfields romping with girls in Laura Ashley dresses." (*Times*) Sounds fantastic for the big screen. Come for this or to say you've read it, now you've seen it.

Director: Peter Jackson
Starring: Mark Wahlberg, Rachel Weisz, Saoirse Ronan
Certificate: 12A
Duration: 136 mins
Origin: NZ, UK, USA 2009
By: Paramount International Pictures

Ponyo

Tue 13 12.30, **Sat 17** 2.00

Director: Hayao Miyazaki
Certificate: U
Duration: 103 mins
Origin: Japan 2008
By: Optimum Releasing

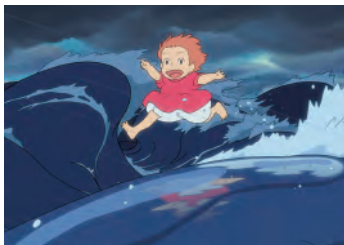
Directed by Hayao Miyazaki (Spirited Away, Howl's Moving Castle), produced by John Lasseter (Toy Story, Cars), this beautifully rendered animation loosely based on Hans Christian Andersen's "The Little Mermaid" certainly comes from excellent stock.

Ponyo is a playful goldfish princess who longs to be human. After becoming trapped in a bottle on the beach, she is rescued by Sosuke, the young son of a sailor. As the daughter of a fish-wizard, Ponyo uses her magical abilities to transform herself into a young girl, and the two quickly become friends. However the enormous amount of magic needed to effect such a transformation causes a powerful imbalance in the world, resulting in a massive storm. Can the two survive together in the face of such adversity? Will Ponyo be able to remain human, or will her secret be revealed to Sosuke...?

This co-production between animation powerhouses Disney Pixar and Studio Ghibli has been widely anticipated by many, and doesn't disappoint. A simple tale uniquely told.

"A visually and emotionally swoonsome piece of joy" (*Telegraph*)

"This film will be loved by those who admire the intricacy and power of Howl's Moving Castle and the great Spirited Away. It is an arresting work from an unmistakable film-making personality." (*Guardian*) Bring everyone. Don't miss (*research Simon Messenger*)



MicMacs

Wed 14 2.00



It's hard to believe Jean-Pierre Jeunet's last film was "A Very Long Engagement" back in 2004! Jeunet's output – six films in almost twenty years – has, for him, ensured high-quality, original output. Can "Micmacs" match the bar set by "Delicatessen" and "Amelie"? Danny Boon is Bazil, a mild-mannered video store clerk who, whilst miming along to "The Big Sleep", is inadvertently caught in a gangland shootout; a stray bullet lodging in his brain. Bazil survives, and ends up living with a band of eccentrics (contortionist, human cannonball, ethnographer etc) in a fantastically rendered Parisian rubbish dump, and collectively they set out to take revenge on the arms dealers who caused his predicament...

"Micmacs" means "carry-on", and that's how the film plays out. Its droll, off-kilter charm is not for all, but makes it worthwhile; Jeunet's adoration of the little guy has not subsided. Though "the juxtaposition of whimsy and satire is sometimes awkward" (*Front Row*) "Micmacs" links Keaton, Chaplin and Tati to the surreal, stylised worlds of Lynch, Burton and Gilliam ... one constantly smiles with appreciation and chuckles at Jeunet's invention." (*Guardian*) "It's a strange mix... Everything I love I put into the film" (*Jeunet*) (research Simon Messenger)

Director: Jean-Pierre Jeunet
Starring: Yolande Moreau, Dominique Pinon, Dany Boon, André Dussolier
Certificate: 18
Duration: 105 mins
Origin: France 2010
By: E1 Films

Avatar

Thu 15 2.00

Director: James Cameron
Starring: Giovanni Ribisi, Zoe Saldana, Sigourney Weaver, Sam Worthington
Certificate: 12A
Duration: 162 mins
Origin: USA 2009
By: Twentieth Century Fox

Avatar translates as 'incarnation'. Taken from Hindu myth that gods take on a blue skinned human form to descend in periods of darkness to neutralise evil and restore peace.

This is possibly the most obscenely expensive film in history. All that ego and no Oscar in Any-D. Shame. It is 2154, and paraplegic marine Jake Sully (Worthington) is assigned to a mining colony on the planet Pandora, inhabited by the Na'vi, an elegant, race of humanoid aliens. He joins a rabble of scientists intent on establishing 'friendly relations' with these creatures as the mining corporation seeks to drain their planet of a priceless mineral. "An unashamedly bold story with rich and vibrant characters; Avatar is epic in every sense of the word." (*Jack W*) It's an allegory for all things Native American, and to Cameron's dubious credit, it gets its point across, albeit heavily handedly. Visually, the film is a feast. CGI disneys around with live action sequences seamlessly. It is be understandable why this planet sized ego has waited until SFX was ready for Him. (*Hallelueia*) "Avatar...is bold and beautiful. It's almost too rich to take in and appreciate in one viewing..." (*Times*) Bet you won't want to see it twice? This is three (dimensional) hours too long. Isn't life already in 3D? (research Simon Messenger)





Director: Martin Scorsese
Starring: Emily Mortimer, Max Sydow, Mark Ruffalo, Leonardo DiCaprio
Certificate: 15
Duration: 138 mins
Origin: USA 2009
By: Paramount International Pictures



Shutter Island

Mon 19 2.00

Based on a Dennis Lehane novel. Recent adaptations of his work include “Mystic River” and “Gone Baby Gone”. This one’s by Scorsese.

It’s 1954; charged with investigating the disappearance of the remorseless Rachel Solando, a triple infanticide, DiCaprio and Ruffalo are US marshals Teddy and Chuck sent to Shutter Island, a remote offshore maximum-security facility for the criminally insane. The amiable, and suitably sinister, guardians of the island, Drs. Cawley and Nahring (Kingsley and von Sydow) have the authority to do with the inmates as they please. It’s not pleasant or humane, and Teddy suspects a dark figure from his past lurks within the rat infested corridors...

Scorsese’s insistence on taking the whole thing absolutely seriously undermines the film. There’s some irreverent nonsense about Dachau and government conspiracies; subjects which don’t come off well when handled badly.

“An entertainingly batshit and hysterical trainwreck [it] could have been, a vast pile-up of pop psychology, B-movie tropes, and weirdly-accented A-listers slumming it. Alas, the train doesn’t even leave the station... “Shut-eye Island” would be a better title” (*Telegraph*)

“A fun psychological thriller ...ludicrous and entertaining.” (*Time Out*)

There are twists and turns and twists on twists. Come for the suits.

(research Simon Messenger)



Ondine

Tue 20 12.30



ONDINE is a mystery drama set on a wind-buffed southern Irish coast.

Recovering alcoholic (Farrell) scratches a living as a fisherman while caring for his disabled daughter (the terrific Alison Barry). His life shows little sign of taking a turn for the better until, one day he hauls up his net to find a scantily clad woman caught in it (Colin wont like that). He brings the beautiful and mysterious woman to shore. She is Ondine (Alicja) who begins to bring him good fortune, fuelling his daughter's belief that she is a mythical selkie: part woman, part seal. But Ondine is also the harbinger of dark and unknown trouble in this atmospheric mix of folklore and thriller.

"Always an underrated actor, Farrell brings a brooding, Heathcliff-style presence to the role of Irish trawlerman. He doesn't overwhelm the film with his star presence but just inhabits the skin of the character." (*Screen Int*)

"Farrell's natural accent and roguish charm make for a winning performance. Funny, whimsical and warm." (*Empire*) It needs to beguile an audience and lull them into a receptive frame of mind, which may take more effort than most audiences are willing to make. Despite its many charms and sweet allure, Ondine is a minor work from a major filmmaker. (*Screen Int*) You decide.

Director: Neil Jordan
Starring: Tony Curran, Colin Farrell, Alicja Bachleda-Curus
Certificate: 12A
Duration: 99 mins
Origin: Ireland 2009
By: Paramount International Pictures

Bienvenue chez les Ch'tis (Welcome to the Sticks)

Wed 21 2.00

Director: Dany Boon
Starring: Anne Marvin, Kad Merad, Dany Boon, Zoe Felix
Certificate: 12A
Duration: 106 mins
Origin: France 2008
By: Pathe Distribution

First screened here June 2008. It didn't sell out then, but by Christmas unruly behaviour broke out and tickets changed hands for four figure sums!

Philippe runs the post office in a picturesque small town in southern France. He thinks the more glamorous surroundings of the Côte d'Azur will lift his wife's spirits. His attempts to fiddle a transfer fail. Instead, his punishment is to be sent to Bergues, a village in the 'far north'. Matters only get worse - the local dialect is a strange bouillabaisse of French, Flemish and Latin!

A heart warming film, which last year to general astonishment, stormed the box office across France, beating Titanic's twelve year record. The gags are about the local-yokel habitués of the Pas-de-Calais area, north of Lille. Thanks in no small part to miraculous sub-titles, the laughter is shared. It is written and directed by Boon, the taxi driver in My Best Friend and lovelorn postman in this. This gorgeous low-budget film is a tribute to a region apparently treated to the same casual abuse by the rest of France as our Slough is here. Come for their glorious faces and humour that swims the Channel without getting wet. Back by great demand, a rare treasure and still not available on DVD! And only one available print. It will be back.



From Paris with Love

Thu 22 2.00



The temptation to précis this as another “Paris, je t’aime” was almost too great.

Aide to the US Ambassador in France, James Reese (Jonathan Rhys Meyers) has it all; the house, the car, the French girlfriend, silly facial hair; however he longs to see action as a bone fide CIA operative. His luck changes with the arrival of loudmouth, trigger-happy, Special Agent Charlie Wax (John Travolta) who has been sent from Washington to intercept and neutralise a potential terrorist attack in the French capital. Has the nervy Reese bitten off more than he can chew..? Pierre Morel (Taken) has contrived an entertaining enough shoot-‘em-up, its fast pace and ludicrous body count ensuring it adheres to genre conventions.

“Travolta’s agent is clearly meant to be an outrageous creation we’ll remember for years to come, but he’s a bit too bland and underpowered for that to work ... but trashes enough rooms and blows up enough cars to be fun while it lasts.” (*Times*)

“As enlivening and gratifying as they come.” (*LWL*)

From Paris With Love asks no big questions, bar one. Why has John Travolta started taking these hulking, daft roles?

Come for Paris – as always and for ever, it is the only star on the screen.

(research Simon Messenger)

Director: Pierre Morel
Starring: Jonathan Rhys Meyers, Richard Durden, John Travolta, Kasia Smutniak, Yin Bing
Certificate: 15
Duration: 92 mins
Origin: USA 2010
By: Warner Brothers

The Princess and The Frog

Sat 24 2.00

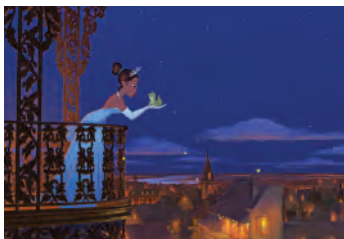
Directors: John Musker, Ron Clements
Starring: Oprah Winfrey, John Goodman, Anika Rose
Certificate: U
Duration: 97 mins
Origin: USA 2009
By: Walt Disney Studio INTL

The original Brothers Grimm story is revamped in this latest product of John Lasseter’s new regime at Disney. It is a return to hand drawn Disney traditional 2-D animation, and to the classic formula of a love story featuring a plucky young woman and assorted comic-relief misfits. Disney’s 49th animated feature harks back to the studio’s traditional hand-drawn animation and the golden age of its fairytales, but stars a black princess for the first time. “This Broadway-style musical, set in the French Quarter of 1920s New Orleans and the bayous of Louisiana in old Disney animation, has a new heroine Tiana (Anika Noni Rose ‘Dreamgirls’) a princess, spirited and independent, who doesn’t need rescuing by any prince.” (*Times*)

Tiana faces a bigger problem than ordinary racism when, for fairy tale reasons, she is transformed into a frog! Cue adventures in the swamp with Cajun fireflies, a trumpet playing alligator and Tiana’s true love a prince similarly trapped in a Froggy form.

There are some great characters, some even better jokes and a general sense of good humour (*Time Out*)

“Like Fantastic Mr.Fox; it’s a welcome change to witness animation not derived solely from an army of computers” (*Jack Whiting*)



The Girl with The Dragon Tattoo

Mon 26 2.00



The Girl With The Dragon Tattoo, whose original and more potent title was *Men Who Hate Women*, a blunt but fitting description of this angry, intelligent Swedish thriller. It begins with Mikael Blomkvist (Michael Nyqvist), an investigative journalist dedicated to exposing corporate crime, facing jail for libelling a wealthy tycoon. Racism, patriarchal misogyny, globalization: director Niels Arden Opley gives all these hefty themes their due in this largely faithful adaptation of the popular trilogy by Stieg Larsson (whose own death is veiled in mystery and rumour). Now down at the heel and needing to hide, Mikael is accepts a job from industrialist Henrik Vanger to look into the disappearance of his beloved niece more than 30 years before.

Blomkvist is the putative hero, with lived-in face and weary dedication. He is superbly mis-matched with Salander, mesmerizing as by Rapace, the goth/punk hacker. She's a grim, spectral presence in the opening scenes, until being pushed too far, she explodes in a moment of shocking, violent revenge. Each actor all the better for being unknown faces from a cold country. "Still, wintry photography is consistently atmospheric, the sense of cultural scabs being picked at interesting, and Rapace's performance altogether more thrilling than any known star chosen for the promised Hollywood remake."

(*Telegraph*) Beware: Edge of seat, with some tough scenes.

Director: Niels Opley
Starring: Michael Nyqvist, Naomi Rapace, Sven-Bertil Taube
Certificate: 18
Duration: 152 mins
Origin: Sweden 2009
By: Momentum Pictures

Invictus

Tue 27 2.00

Director: Clint Eastwood
Starring: Matt Damon, Morgan Freeman
Certificate: 12A
Duration: 133 mins
Origin: USA 2009
By: Warner Brothers

Legend has it that when asked who he would like to portray him on film, the great man chose Morgan Freeman.

So it came to pass. "Channeling the statesmanlike grandeur that has enabled him to play God, US President and philosopher-pugilist, Freeman takes Mandela in his stride." (*Empire*) Struggling to make headway mending a divided country, the new President Mandela fixes upon the idea of uniting black and white by winning the 1995 Rugby World Cup! Mandela's turbulent first year as South Africa's president is never lacking in drama. *Invictus* plays out in a land scarred by apartheid and facing an uncertain future, led by an old man still regarded by large swathes of the population as an unrepentant terrorist hell-bent on settling old scores.

The Springboks (SA's national team) are not just languishing in the doldrums, they are also seen as a bastion of old white rule and therefore despised by the black majority who will cheer-on loudly any team they play. But Mandela spies an opportunity. He celebrates the team's lone black player and sets out to woo its foursquare captain, François Pienaar. (*Damon*)

"Mandela's inspired vision was to shape the Springboks, the despised green-shirted symbol of the old racism, into figures of a new countrywide pride." (*Time Out*) Master of his country's fate by taking charge as captain of its soul.



Chloe

Wed 28 2.00



Remade from Anne Fontaine's intense 2003 sex-fantasy thriller *Nathalie*, this film from Atom Egoyan (and produced by the guy from *Ghostbusters*) is a steamy erotic noir with the same preposterous premise (*Nathalie*, not *Ghostbusters*).

A woman in a stagnant marriage suspects her husband is cheating. She hires a high-class prostitute to attempt a seduction and report back, and becomes voyeuristically obsessed with the call girl's breathless claims and with the call girl herself. "This teeters on the B-movie brink, but fans of psycho-sexual boundary-pushing will be happy to tolerate its more ridiculous points." (*Empire*)

There was something so French about the original (the implicit acceptance of adultery, for one) that it's not surprising the emphasis has changed making the affairs of the husband are less certain.

"Egoyan's style is strictly arthouse-accessible: soft colours and dark shadows; modern architecture; a hint of erotica and the odd nipple shot." (*TimeOut*)

Is it worth seeing if a Hollywood remake can resist the graphic, where the Europeans leave it on the brink for our imagination to pluck?

"Chloe Commits its own act of infidelity against the film that inspired it, and the result is an adulterous inbroglio that turns Chloe into a woman scorned, unhinged and duly defenestrated" (*Sight & Sound*)

"Soft-porn fantasy, a chic-flick with steamy lace and soft focus" (*Front Row*)

Director: Atom Egoyan
Starring: Julianne Moore, Liam Neeson, Amanda Seyfried
Certificate: 15
Duration: 97 mins
Origin: Canada, France, USA 2010
By: Optimum Releasing

Green Zone

Thu 29 2.00

Director: Paul Greengrass
Starring: Jason Isaacs, Matt Damon, Brendan Gleeson
Certificate: 15
Duration: 115 mins
Origin: France, USA, Spain, UK 2010
By: Universal Pictures (UK) Ltd

Nobody likes a big-head apart from himself. Paul Greengrass is onesuch.

Luckily his most of his films are worth watching.

Matt Damon plays Chief WO Roy Miller, posted to Iraq to justify the US invasion. He has to lead his unit into desperately dangerous locations to find those 'weapons of mass destruction' (WMDs) his superior officers smoothly assure him must be there.

But something is fishy. So Miller disobeys orders and goes "rogue" to find the secret of the missing WMDs. Increasingly, as his search proves fruitless, he starts asking tricky questions, and soon even his own side are out to get him.

"Greengrass has married politics with popcorn. It has substance, but it is, first and foremost, a breakneck action film — tense, frenetic and exciting." (*Empire*)
 "Iraq hasn't had much luck with box-office draws, even with some winning Oscars (hello *The Hurt Locker*), they've never really hit home with mainstream audiences. Enter Greengrass and Damon with their success on the stylish and hugely successful *Bourne* franchise. Here they take on another adaptation of non-fiction: Rajiv Chandrasekaran's *Imperial Life in the Emerald City*. What you essentially get is 'Bourne goes to Baghdad'. A dramatised and heavily action focused thriller, with Greengrass' trademark handheld camera style placing you squarely in the thick of it." (*Jack Whiting, box office*)



THIS IS NOT AN ADVERT (THOUGH IT MIGHT AS WELL BE)



Don't you just love that line "Investors in People". It rings true doesn't it?

Then you read: 'Owing to the significant interest...(then filler words usually including that twat word 'that') in the aforementioned property ('property' another lovely word, as attractive as 'consumer') we have been instructed by our clients to seek

"best and final offers" from all interested parties on a subject to contract basis.'

It then goes on: 'You should be satisfied as to the details of the property before submitting an offer'. 'as to' what the bidwell does 'as to' mean.

What's wrong with 'with'? You know by their bad language they have revelled in, the otherwise detested John Prescott's mournful million homes rhetoric. It is green belt. It is sacred green belt. It is that space between one urban sprawl and another. Who cares...?



BIDWELLS

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SUBJECT TO CONTRACT

Dear Sir/Madam

Sale of land at Lovetts End, Dodds Lane, Hemel Hempstead

Owing to the significant interest that has been shown in the aforementioned property, we have been instructed by our clients to seek "best and final offers" from all interested parties, on a subject to contract basis.

Any offer you may wish to submit must be in the accordance with the following procedure:

- Your best and final offer is to be received in writing by no later than 12 noon on 26 March 2010 at Bidwells' offices, 49, High Street, Kings Langley, Hertfordshire, WD4 9HU, with the envelope clearly marked "Land at Lovetts End Offer".
- Please supply the name and address of your solicitor, together with the name of the person there who will attend to the matter, with telephone and fax number.
- The offer is to include confirmation from your Bank, Building Society, or Financial Institution as to the funds it is prepared to provide if your best offer is accepted and evidence that you are able to provide the balance of the price from your own resources. Offers without these details will not be considered.
- Please confirm your ability to exchange contracts within 28 days of your solicitor's receipt of draft contracts, having confirmed this ability with your solicitor. This information will be verified through your solicitor.
- Your offer is to be submitted Subject to Contract only. You should be satisfied as to the details of the property before submitting an offer.
- Only offers stating a specific price will be considered. Escalating bids, or offers relating to another bid will not be considered. We suggest, that in order to avoid bids being submitted for the same amounts, that offers are put forward for uneven sums.

PTD

ED Property Adviser of the Year 2005 - Easton Region.
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TRING CANAL FESTIVAL REFUSED PERMISSION



The Wendover Arm Trust regrets to announce that there will be no Tring Canal Festival this year. The event is usually held over the late May Bank Holiday every year.

The Trust has been holding the Festival for 20 years on the same site adjacent to the Wendover Arm but has been unable to obtain permission to use the field by the landowners for unexplained reasons, despite repeated requests.

The Festival is a popular local event, attracting many visitors to Tring from as far away as Yorkshire and Wales. The event produces a typical income of some £40,000 all of which goes towards restoring the canal.

The loss of the Festival will have a serious effect on long term funding for the restoration work of this important and attractive local amenity, since it has been the primary source of revenue for the Wendover Arm Trust. The cancellation is particularly disappointing since the Trust is celebrating its 21st year this year.

An active search is underway for an alternative site for 2011. The Trust is appealing for a suitable venue. Please contact us via:

www.wendoverarmtrust.co.uk or
phone Graeme Lockhart on 07801 280426.

The Wendover Arm Trust wishes to thank all the regular supporters and visitors.

We hope to see them in 2011 at a new location. For news and voluntary support please contact Bob Wheal on 01525 381614.

The successful BLOCKAID fund raising venture will now become of even greater importance. See Trust's BLOCKAID website at www.blockaid.org.uk

By Order

Wendover Arm Trust

(Bob Wheal WAT Funding Director)

Speculators have bought the green belt festival site to lie and wait for permission to build on it. When will there be legislation preventing landowners selling green belt land to speculators and developers? Never is the most likely answer to such a silly question.

ST ALBANS... WHERE TO START?

Start at the beginning and when you get to the end – stop” (*QofH – Alice...*)

I'll start at the end and find the way back to the beginning as the story unfolds in the weeks/months/years to come.

Total	Members	Seats
£1,031,850	£175,637	£104,062
Donations	Investors	Loans
£29,387	£510,180	£212,583

It is an odd feeling collecting over £1 million in just over seven weeks for a project based upon something that would “never work”. The Rex was accompanied by doom-sayers from the outset alongside a woe of what-iffers. A single screen will never work. Tables and chairs; ridiculous. No popcorn/hotdogs/coke-vats? You must be mad. Now, you have put a million where your heart is, into this once ridiculous idea. Well done! At the risk of being something I despise, they were wrong. Why is it so hard to get it wrong, when doing it right is so easy? To continue the risk; greed and ugly ideas about how to fulfil it, is the simple answer. Take what you need and swallow the rest.

The End...

On Tuesday 9th March 2010, just eight weeks since the Alpha account opened 21st January, the St Albans fund tipped casually over the million to £1,022,437. (At Sunday 14th March it stands at £1,031,850 with much more to come). If all goes well in the next few weeks, we'll own the building. Then we have to find the other two million to restore it. We've had quantity surveyors reports ranging from £2.5m to a prohibitive £3.5m. While we thank them, we will do it by ourselves, as we did the Rex. Bearing in mind we didn't know what we were doing then. Now we do. There will be no luxury fees to designers and project management. We will be in charge of our own destiny with work completed by those trusted friends who re-built the Rex. So be assured not a penny of yours will be wasted on



expensive professional fees, mark-ups or extras – with all respect.

It is an extraordinary achievement for the people of any small region to raise over a £million in eight weeks for something other than the usual ‘charitable good cause’. St Albans, Hemel, Harpenden and surrounding villages have raised the money for a long lost derelict cinema. Cinema Paradiso? Fifteen years waiting is the ‘best of all possible’ causes. This million has proven how much it means to you in the last eight short (endless) weeks.

The Beginning...

The next stages are to exchange and complete (going to press 17th March, we are very close).

In the meantime, well done to all those who have contributed, and to those who can't but wish us well. A million thanks for your faith and trust.

Be prepared for many ups and downs, not to mention some despair, over the two years it will take to restore. I will repeat this throughout.

Should anything go wrong at this stage everybody will get every penny back.

Opposition

Here is an extract from a BBC schools project submitted by Joseph Eastham, aged 14 from St Albans:

‘The St. Albans Labour party argues “...the current proposals for a single screen ‘art house’ cinema do not meet the needs of the city. They may delight the Civic Society, but will provide nothing for our young people or families.” They would argue that the cinema will be more of an exclusive film club for people who can afford higher prices than a cinema which could be beneficial to the whole community of St. Albans. None of the political parties are supporting the cinema in St. Albans, a confusing statistic since stalbansodeon.blogspot.com say that 99% of public opinion is in favour of a renovation of the derelict site; the Facebook group has around 3000 members.’

You know the answer. To avoid the word bollocks, if those political parties (or clubs who must always spout the same, if opposing, dull mantra – by order) came to the Rex they would see how inclusive it is. There is a small Advanced Booking List (ABL) which costs a fortune and is restricted to 500. They can’t buy more than half the house or more than six tickets for any one film, and they only have a week ahead of general release to do so. The rest is open to everybody. There are over thirty films a month on one screen. We hold seats back every screening for those who come on the door. The programme runs the full gamut from arthouse to big blockbusters, with much in between. It is not elitist. It is not exclusive. It will never be a club. It is open to everybody willing to queue or take a chance on the door. St Albans will be run the same. PS ask “young people and families” here - before you spout ill informed bile there.



Walk along the canal near the station. That lovely Common used to have tall horse chestnut trees all along the bank. First one, then last year a second, now four have gone. They were all healthy as you can see from the stumps, go and look. A pox on dirty insurance companies’ hold over Local Authorities. Nobody cares if a tree hits you. They care they might have to pay. What a terrible loss of beauty for such ugly thinking.

Quotes half heard...

‘One American in three weighs more than the other two’

‘War is god’s way of teaching Americans geography’