

THE-REX

M A G A Z I N E

INVICTUS
MARCH...

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

MARCH 2010 Issue 60
www.therexberkhamsted.com

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

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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:

Rosie Abbott	Malcolm More
Julia Childs	Liam Parker
Nicola Darvell	Hannah Pedder
Lindsey Davies	Izzi Robinson
Holly Gilbert	Amberly Rose
Katie Golder	Georgia Rose
Beth Hannaway	Diya Sagar
Natalie Jones	Alice Spooner
Amelia Kellett	Liam Stephenson
Abbie Knight	Tina Thorpe
Bethany McKay	Jack Whiting
Simon Messenger	Olivia Wilson
Helen Miller	Keymea Yazdanian

Ushers:

Abigail K, Ally, Billie, Charlotte, Ellie, Emma, James, Kitty, Lucy, Luisa, Lydia K, Romy, Roz, Sid

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
Becca Ross	Best Girl
Jemma Gask	Key Grip
Michael Glasheen	Gaffer
Jane Clucas & Lynn Hendry	PR/Marketing/FoH

Andrew Dixon	Resident Artist
Darren Flindall	Maintenance
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

FILM OF THE MONTH



Hard hitting, brilliant thriller. France 2010
A Prophet Mon 8/Tues 9/Wed 10 7.30

COMEDIES OF THE MONTH



Return of a priceless favourite. France 2008
Welcome to The Sticks Wed 3 7.30



Families: Who'd live with them? France 2008
The First Day Of The Rest Of Your Life
Wed 17 7.30



Sumtn in da wharter, be jaysus. Ireland 2009
Holy Water Tue 23 7.30

And don't forget **'It's Complicated'**
24/25 7.30

TELLY, TIARAS AND BABIES...



This was January



This is March... welcome to Spring

At last: Tiaras in the 'Royal Box'





Between them, this small film crew made the Rex look stunning. They came for two hours and stayed all day. It went out on the One Show (BBC 1) on Friday 5th Feb. The same week we made the Gazette!

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.



M A R C H E V E N I N G S

Sex & Drugs & Rock & Roll **Mon 1** 7.30

Director: Mat Whitecross
Starring: Olivia Williams, Ray Winstone, Andy Serkis
Certificate: 15
Duration: 115 mins
Origin: UK 2010
By: Entertainment Film Distribution

“The spectre of Ian Dury comes kicking back to miraculous life thanks to a galvanic performance from Andy Serkis in this propulsive musical biopic.” (Times)

Dumping the traditional storylines of Ray and Walk the Line, Whitecross punctuates a Blockheads gig with Dury's story, depicting his childhood polio, his relationship with his father and romantic bouts and battles. It plays like a fantasy music hall. Dury felt more a part of the old London music hall tradition than that of pop. Young Bill Milner (first seen in Son of Rambow at The Rex) is magnificent as Dury's son Baxter.

It is London in the late 1970s. Amidst the sprawling tenement blocks and dingy back-street pubs, an anarchic music scene stirs. Its high priest turns out to be an unlikely provocateur and polio-stricken lead singer of Kilburn and the High Roads and the most inspired lyricist of his generation. More than a standard biopic, this is an involving and emotionally charged family drama. A career-best from Andy Serkis, inspired staging from Mat Whitecross and Peter Blake's pop-art styling, make this a clever and powerful film.

“Dury, all rage and redemption, is a tricky central character, but here he is humanised without being tamed.” (Times)
 “Dury had a good heart somewhere, but it's hard to find... He's very difficult to be around” (Andy Serkis)



An Education **Tue 2** 7.30



Up for awards and may have won or lost some as we go to print. Who cares?

It is a good story, well told, well acted, obvious and dull. Everyone loved it earlier. It is a charming, touching, provocative coming-of-age film reflecting a grey post-war Britain on the uncertain brink of a cultural revolution. I didn't like it much. The mannered acting and carefully manicured script got in the way of believing it.

Nevertheless, in the hands of Danish director Lone Scherfig and Nick Hornby it is Lynn Barber's memoir about her suburban coming-of-age. That is all. A big teenage 'crush' engulfs that most awkward rite of passage.

The Sixties is just beginning. The 'swinging' part hadn't quite begun, but there are hints. Barber's schoolgirl alter ego, Jenny (Carey Mulligan, actually 24, so it's okay) falls for the glamorous older man, who easily charms her parents. He offers her clubs, champagne, drives in the country and... sex.

It is the age-old story of a girl's of love/crush for/on the older man.

It is driven by smiles and ends in tears.

What else is there?

Director: Lone Scherfig
Starring: Peter Sarsgard, Emma Thompson, Alfred Molina, Carey Mulligan
Certificate: 12A
Duration: 100 mins
Origin: UK 2009
By: E1 Films

Bienvenue chez les Ch'tis (Welcome to the Sticks) **Wed 3 7.30**

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!



Sex & Drugs & Rock & Roll **Thu 4 7.30**



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"Dury, all rage and redemption, is a tricky central character, but here he is humanised without being tamed." (Times)
 "Dury had a good heart somewhere, but it's hard to find... He's very difficult to be around" (Andy Serkis)

Director: Mat Whitecross
Starring: Olivia Williams, Ray Winstone, Andy Serkis
Certificate: 15
Duration: 115 mins
Origin: UK 2010
By: Entertainment Film Distribution



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

Up In The Air

**Fri 5 7.30, Sun 7 6.00,
 Thu 11 7.30**

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)



Girl With The Dragon Tattoo

CHARITY EVENT SPECIAL PREVIEW

Sat 6 7.00

momentum

PICTURES

Thank you to Momentum for letting us screen this a week before the film's release in the UK. Thanks to Hat Trick Productions for arranging it.

Based on Stieg Larsson's phenomenally popular novels (ranked only behind Kite Runner's Khaled Hosseini in 2008 with more than a hint of Dan Brown in the easy reading dept), This first of the trilogy has been seen in its native Sweden, to much acclaim (haven't all three have been shown there already?!).

Four years earlier, sixteen-year old Harriet Vanger disappeared from her family's estate on a remote island. Her uncle, wealthy CEO of the Vanger Dynasty's group of companies, is convinced the killer can be traced through the family line. He hires disgraced financial journalist Mikael Blomkvist (Nyqvist) and the tattooed computer hacker Lisbeth Salander (Noomi Rapace) to investigate. Together they uncover all kinds of nasty things... As this special screening is early and The Rex Mag/prog goes to press long before, we are unable to provide you with the usual comment. Previews are positive and by the time it is in our programme in May, everyone will be chattering about it. Come (pay through the nose for Breakthrough Breast cancer) and judge for yourself... Whatever it's like, any film made outside the US/UK with unrecognisable faces is worth seeing.

All Proceeds
going to
Breakthrough
for Breast
Cancer



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



SPECIAL SEAT PRICES FOR THIS EVENT

Table seats £20 and £30

Box seats £35 each

£200 for whole box (6 seats)

Circle seats £18 Row I in the circle £10

Champagne by

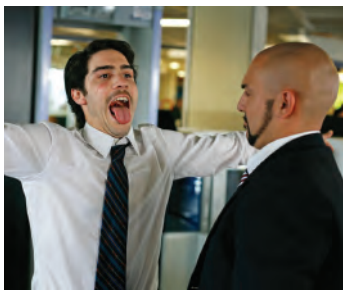


Canapes by



15 Lower Kings Road,
Berkhamsted





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



A Prophet

**Mon 8 7.30, Tue 9 7.30,
Wed 10 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.

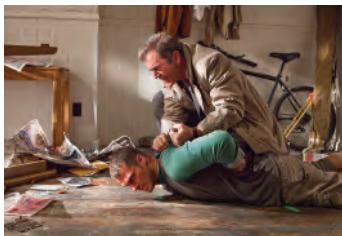
“This is the work of the rarest kind of film-maker, the kind who knows precisely what he is doing and where he is going.” (*Guardian*)

“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 of his period in prison; however he will haunt you long after the credits role. (*research Simon Messenger*)

Edge of Darkness

Fri 12 7.30, Sat 13 7.00



Martin Campbell (Casino Royale) directs Mel Gibson and Ray Winstone in this tense thriller based on the 1980s BBC series of the same name.

Gibson plays homicide detective Thomas Craven. When his daughter, a political activist, is murdered on the doorstep of their house, Craven begins to investigate, unravelling a dark and dubious world of corporate intrigue and government sanctioned assassinations. Going head-on with a government operative, Darius Jedburgh (Winstone), Gibson must uncover the truth about his daughter before he too is eliminated.

"So far-fetched that it almost works... [but] plagued by the same narrative issues as other adaptations that attempted to cram 300-plus minutes of tightly plotted thriller into a third of the original running time." (*Times*)

"The film takes the revelations and twists at a hectic gallop, though it omits the spiritual, Gaia-is-angry mysticism of the original. It's not too bad, though it lacks the style of the recent film version of *State of Play*, and Gibson is pretty flat." (*Guardian*)

Ignore the critics; after all, if it worked in 1980s why shouldn't it work now? Simple, the series was a groundbreaking revelation. It electrified audiences for weeks and you believed every inch of Bob Peck's brilliant unstarry copper and grieving Dad. Sorry Mel, wrong horse. (research Simon Messenger)

Director: Martin Campbell
Starring: Ray Winstone, Mel Gibson, Danny Huston
Certificate: 15
Duration: 117 mins
Origin: UK, USA 2010
By: Icon Film Distribution Ltd

The Last Station

Sun 14 6.00, Mon 15 7.30,
 Tue 16 7.30

Director: Michael Hoffman
Starring: Helen Mirren, Christopher Plummer, Paul Giamatti, James McAvoy
Certificate: 15
Duration: 113 mins
Origin: UK 2010
By: Optimum Releasing

The Last Station is a love story set during the last year in the life and turbulent marriage of the great Russian writer Leo Tolstoy and his wife the Countess Sofya. Having rejected his title and embraced an ascetic life style, he finds himself increasingly at odds with Sofya. As his devoted disciple Vladimir Chertkov (Giamatti) urges him to sign a new will leaving the rights to his work to the Russian people rather than his family, the conflict between husband and wife grows to breaking point. The whole affair is witnessed by Tolstoy's new secretary, Valentin Bulgakov, whose burgeoning love for the beautiful and feisty Masha is set against the waning love of Tolstoy and Sofya.

"The main focus of the story seems to be on the relationship with his wife, an emotionally-fraught Helen Mirren. Here she is, emoting, reliably. And, of course, the whole thing shall be seen through the eyes of a naive, star struck young man, brought in from outside. The kind of man that is usually played by James McAvoy! This time he is an over excitable, sneezing chap" (*Guardian*)

Somewhere in the main plot, *The Last Station* is simply about the difficulty of living with love and the impossibility of living without it.



First Day Of The Rest Of Your Life

Wed 17 7.30



"It is a sort of intimate, episodic saga, following the ups and downs of Robert, a taxi driver played by Jacques Gamblin, his wife Marie-Jeanne (Zabou Breitman) and their three children as they develop from teens into grownups." (Guardian)

Bezançon's intimate drama examines the fractures and foibles of an ordinary bourgeois French family over the last 12 years of the 20th century.

This, his second feature, centres on the shambolic but close Duval family, and how five key days change the lives not only of each individual member, but the family as a whole. Bereavement, sibling rivalry, infidelity, loss of virginity and giving up smoking are all focal points in this energetic and kaleidoscopic chronicle of a 'normal' family.

Each of the five important dates - spanning twelve years from 1988 to the climactic 2000 - sees one of the five members of the family take the lead, each providing a unique look at the group from different angles. Bezançon uses masterful camera techniques and special effects to amplify the personalities of each character.

A funny, insightful and moving portrait of family life.

A terrible title but a great little film which the audience loved in January. Not to be missed in March.

Director: Remi Bezançon
Starring: Jacques Gamblin, Zabou Breitman, Remi Bezançon, Deborah François
Certificate: 15
Duration: 114 mins
Origin: France 2008
By: Metrodome Distributors

The Boys Are Back

Thu 18 7.30

Director: Scott Hicks
Starring: Clive Owen, Laura Fraser, George MacKay
Certificate: 12A
Duration: 110 mins
Origin: Australia 2009
By: Walt Disney Studio INTL

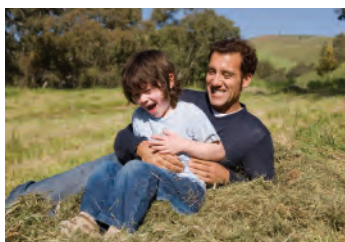
"Golden sunlight bathes scenes set in Australia, while episodes in England (where Joe's first wife lives) are grey and rain-sodden. Oversimplification? You bet. But the film's sheer dumb gusto and Clive Owen's appealingly vulnerable performance might just persuade you otherwise." (Total Film)

Still grieving, top sportswriter Joe Warr (the alter ego of The Independent's Simon Carr, the original author) takes a questionable and at times worrying laissez-faire approach to parenting (he calls it 'just say yes'). He tries to juggle work with child-rearing and at the same time maintain relations with a difficult mother-in-law. Then there's the repairing of his bond with Harry (George MacKay), a teenage son from a previous marriage who breaks off his public-school education in Britain to come and stay with his father. 'The moment you think you're... sorted is the moment it all starts falling apart,' says Owen's downbeat voiceover.

"The film has a situation but no drama, cutting between Joe's sublimated grief and a slightly nauseating sentimentality about kids and the "crazy" things they say." (*Independent*)

"Owen reveals a rarely glimpsed warmth and the father and son dynamic has charm, but sappiness keeps the film nice, rather than as good as it might have been." (*Empire*)

They're saying Clive's performance is good. "Appealing, sincere, heartfelt, award-caliber?" Hmmm.



Sherlock Holmes

Fri 19 7.30

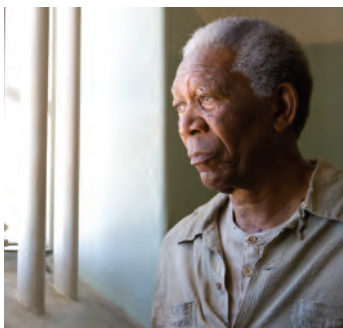
Director: Guy Ritchie
Starring: Robert Downey Jr, Jude Law, Rachel McAdams, Mark Strong
Certificate: 12A
Duration: 128 mins
Origin: Australia, UK, USA 2009
By: Warner Brothers

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 .





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

Invictus

**Sat 20 7.00, Sun 21 6.00,
 Mon 22 7.30**

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 with mending a divided country, the new President Mandela fixes upon the idea of South Africa winning the 1995 Rugby World Cup to unite white with black. 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 Springboks' lone black player and sets out to woo its foursquare captain, François Pienaar. (*Damon*)

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



Holy Water

Tue 23 7.30



Four rural Irish blokes decide to lift themselves out of a financial rut by hijacking a lorry full of Viagra and reselling it to the sexually needy.

Their plans go wrong of course: they hide several barrels of the little blue pills down a well and the arousing chemical starts to leak into the village's water supply. Inevitably this causes something to stir in the trousers, thus leading to all sorts of jolly rumpy-pumpy and sexiness among the stereotypical locals. You can see what's coming.

Every word in the script is up for innuendo grabs. Cue randy old villagers and endless double entendres involving "make mine a stiff one darlin'" etc.

I guess somebody had to do it.

"The scriptwriters don't understand that the sight of lots of people feeling a little horny isn't in itself amusing – yet we have to bear umpteen nods, winks and naughty smiles (although, oddly, not a hint of an erection, presumably for certification reasons, which undermines the whole idea)." (*Time Out*)

"Carry On Viagra is perhaps the only shorthand for describing this depressing, unfunny and embarrassing comedy" (*Guardian*)

"It has the pace and jauntiness of an audience movie, and once collars get hot and bedsprings start to twang there's a silly sort of fun about it." (*Independent*) You decide.

Director: Tom Reeve
Starring: John Lynch, Cian Barry, Cornelius Clarke, Lochlainn O'Mearain
Certificate: 15
Duration: 93 mins
Origin: UK 2009
By: Kaleidoscope Films

It's Complicated

Wed 24 7.30, Thu 25 7.30

Director: Nancy Meyers
Starring: Meryl Streep, Steve Martin, Alec Baldwin
Certificate: 15
Duration: 120 mins
Origin: USA 2010
By: Universal Pictures (UK) Ltd

There's nothing complicated about this. However to indulge the conceit, the complication is that Jane (Streep) was married to Jake (Baldwin) – but he left her and the kids ten years earlier for the younger high-maintenance, Agnes (Bell) and her monster-kid Pedro.

By the coincidence of same time-same place, we have to witness him sickly sweet-talking his way back into his independent ex-wife's bed.

"It explores female insecurities and doesn't shy away from middle-aged sex: Jake proudly displays his hairy belly on several occasions." (nice)

"Streep is as ever, and if laughs count for anything, this is one of the better romantic comedies of the season." (*Time Out*)

"Baldwin and Streep do have that most over-analysed thing, "chemistry", and their marriage and sudden Indian summer of forbidden sex is weirdly believable." (*Guardian*)

OR "You can't imagine why she would touch him in the first place, never mind go back for second helpings ten years later!" (*Rachel Cook, Front Row R4*) AND "Writer-director Nancy Meyers has surely established herself as the world's foremost purveyor of gastro-lifestyle fantasy porn to the menopausal classes." (*Guardian*)

That aside, it is very funny. The February audiences were in fits, making them more entertaining than the film!



The Wolfman

Fri 26 7.30, Sat 27 7.00



In the second *Twilight* film, *New Moon*, the audience is explicitly introduced to the idea of dangerous physical intimacy with a werewolf, yet this new *Wolfman* keeps it relatively clean.

Del Toro looks longingly at Emily Blunt's exquisitely sculpted collarbone, a decent distance north of undisclosed cleavage. There's even a kiss. But we have to wait for a chaste full moon before all that hair-sprouting, finger-lengthening and cranio-facial distortion can kick off. So, no sex then.

Returning to his estranged father in 1891 – to investigate his brother's disappearance, Lawrence Talbot (Benicio) falls for his dead sibling's mourning fiancée, Gwen (Emily Blunt). But before this spark of love can ignite, Lawrence is bitten by the lunatic creature running wild in the moonlight. So must confront the beast buried within himself!

Cue: piano discord, howling wind, swirling fog, a squeaking inn sign swings, and in the bar a sudden eerie silence as the door creaks open to a stranger's footstep. "ere young sir, you be not from round these parts?"

"An authentic yet strangely paced creature feature; *The Wolfman* is a film at odds with its Hammer roots. A mess of campy performances and sometimes schlock effects keep this from being a modern horror classic." (*Jack Whiting*)

Director: Joe Johnston
Starring: Benicio Del Toro, Anthony Hopkins, Hugo Weaving, Emily Blunt
Certificate: 15
Duration: 100 mins
Origin: UK, USA 2010
By: Universal Pictures (UK) Ltd

Seraphine

Sun 28 6.00

Director: Martin Provost
Starring: Anne Bennent, Yolande Moreau, Ulrich Tukur
Certificate: PG
Duration: 125 mins
Origin: Belgium, France 2008
By: Metrodome Distributors

Provost's biopic of *Seraphine Louis* (later: *Seraphine of Senlis*) is a simple tale of a cleaning woman from provincial France. Her gift for painting vivid, so called, primitive pictures was discovered by (German) art patron Wilhelm Uhde in 1912.

"Plodding in its story telling, but sensitive to its subject." (*Times*)

Winner of seven César awards, including Best Actress (Moreau) and Best Film, *Seraphine* tells the remarkably true story of this mysterious painter. Uhde (Tukur) accidentally discovers her paintings while poverty stricken *Seraphine* cleans for him. She is secretly resourceful, gifted and very tough. Her unrelenting drudgery is brightened only by solitary moments in the countryside, and when we see her making her own colours from foraged and 'stolen' raw materials including butcher's blood, holy candle wax and river weeds. Uhde attempts to inspire her confidence. But she is not easy, and he has his own problems. Tracing the long-lasting friendship between them, it delves into *Seraphine's* struggle with her deteriorating mental strength, alongside the casual horrors in the occupied French countryside on the edges of the First World war.

Provost's poignant portrait of this, forgotten artist, is a testament to the mysteries of creativity and the resilience of spirit. It is also a portrait of people living in multi-layered danger. Don't miss.



The Headless Woman **Mon 29** 7.30



The opening sequences set up a vivid and recognizable world.

Three boys play with their dog on the side of a dirt road. Several women pack children into their cars after a picnic. Then one of the women, Verónica (Onetto), barrels down that unpaved stretch while reaching for her cell phone. There's a sickening thud. The car screeches to a halt. She's hit something. In that moment, Verónica completely loses her bearings, both physically and mentally. Yet the world around her keeps moving. What follows is an astounding portrait of a person entirely out of sync with her own existence.

Argentine politics from the 1970s and class differences of today play an important role in this, Lucrecia Martel's third film. Acclaimed at the Vancouver Film Festival, *The Headless Woman*, like Martel's earlier works, defies conventional cinematic language and can be challenging to appreciate on first viewing. Characters come and go, seemingly unrelated incidents pile up, and we hardly know who is who, but little of that ultimately matters. What is more important is that Martel has taken us effortlessly into the head of a character as persuasively as any film in recent memory.

"It's a psychological snapshot of a person forever doomed to remain a voyeur to her own life." (*Time Out*) Not easy, but worth a try.

Director: Lucrecia Martel
Starring: María Onetto, Claudia Cantero, César Bordón, Daniel Genoud
Certificate: 15
Duration: 87 mins
Origin: Argentina, France, Italy, Spain 2008
By: New Wave

Precious **Tue 30** 7.30, **Wed 31** 7.30

Director: Lee Daniels
Starring: Gabourey Sidibe, Mo'Nique, Mariah Carey, Lenny Kravitz
Certificate: 15
Duration: 110 mins
Origin: USA 2009
By: Icon Film Distribution Ltd

The main fault with *Precious* is that it pushes empathy on you through shock value and general nastiness, most of it spouting from *Precious'* rather unrealistic mother.

Too often the film, is simplistic and needlessly sentimental when it should be complex and emotionally restrained. Still, it's not all low points, the film riffs a fantastic urban flavour, and with a caring bunch of supporting classmates *Precious'* life seems less grim.

"Next time a film focuses on difficult urban American upbringings, best leave out Oprah Winfrey!" (*Jack Whiting*). As for Mariah Carey, what was that about? Here are all these fabulous unknown faces then Ms Diva-diva-diva turns up with no make-up? As for Lenny Kravitz...?

"There is no doubting the raucous, tactless energy of the film, and the brilliantly brutal performance from Mo'Nique "an ugly, seething cauldron of self-justifying bitterness." (*Total Film*) "Like Angela's Ashes set in 1980's Harlem, *Precious* is a big screen "misery memoir" so keen to trace the hellish pathology of familial abuse that it risks glorifying its own subject. It is nonetheless grounded by an accomplished debut turn from Gabourey Sidibe. She is the subtly precious heart of *Precious*." (*Times*)

It isn't the transcendent masterpiece that some admirers would have you believe: more like a black-comic nightmare. (*Guardian*)



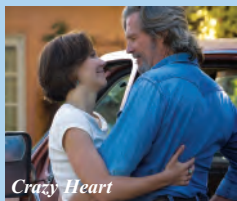
COMING SOON

New releases

Still Walking
A Single Man
The Lovely Bones
Crazy Heart
The Blind Side

Back by demand

Departures
A Prophet
Invictus
Rivers & Tides
The Last Station



Crazy Heart



The Blind Side



A Single Man



Still Walking

MARCH FILMS AT A GLANCE

Please check times carefully and watch out for early shows.

1	MON	AN EDUCATION	2.00
1	MON	SEX & DRUGS & ROCK N ROLL	7.30
2	TUE	AN EDUCATION	12.30, 7.30
3	WED	WELCOME TO THE STICKS	2.00, 7.30
4	THU	NINE	2.00
4	THU	SEX & DRUGS & ROCK N ROLL	7.30
5	FRI	UP IN THE AIR	7.30
6	SAT	PLANET 51	2.00
6	SAT	GIRL WITH THE DRAGON TATTOO	7.00
7	SUN	UP IN THE AIR	6.00
8	MON	A PROPHET	2.00, 7.30
9	TUE	UP IN THE AIR	12.30
9	TUE	A PROPHET	7.30
10	WED	UP IN THE AIR	2.00
10	WED	A PROPHET	7.30
11	THU	GLORIOUS 39	2.00
11	THU	UP IN THE AIR	7.30
12	FRI	EDGE OF DARKNESS	7.30
13	SAT	PONYO	2.00
13	SAT	EDGE OF DARKNESS	7.00
14	SUN	THE LAST STATION	6.00
15	MON	THE LAST STATION	2.00, 7.30
16	TUE	THE LAST STATION	12.30, 7.30
17	WED	FIRST DAY OF...	2.00, 7.30
18	THU	THE BOYS ARE BACK	2.00, 7.30
19	FRI	SHERLOCK HOLMES	7.30
20	SAT	PONYO	2.00
20	SAT	INVICTUS	7.00
21	SUN	INVICTUS	6.00
22	MON	INVICTUS	2.00, 7.30
23	TUE	HOLY WATER	12.30, 7.30
24	WED	IT'S COMPLICATED	2.00, 7.30
25	THU	IT'S COMPLICATED	2.00, 7.30
26	FRI	THE WOLFMAN	7.30
27	SAT	ASTRO BOY	2.00
27	SAT	THE WOLFMAN	7.00
28	SUN	SERAPHINE	6.00
29	MON	SERAPHINE	2.00
29	MON	THE HEADLESS WOMAN	7.30
30	TUE	THE WOLFMAN	12.30
30	TUE	PRECIOUS	7.30
31	WED	PRECIOUS	2.00, 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.

M A R C H 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

An Education

Mon 1 2.00, **Tue 2** 12.30



Up for awards and may have won or lost some as we go to print. Who cares?

It is a good story, well told, well acted, obvious and dull. Everyone loved it earlier. It is a charming, touching, provocative coming-of-age film reflecting a grey post-war Britain on the uncertain brink of a cultural revolution. I didn't like it much. The mannered acting and carefully manicured script got in the way of believing it.

Nevertheless, in the hands of Danish director Lone Scherfig and Nick Hornby it is Lynn Barber's memoir about her suburban coming-of-age. That is all.

A big teenage 'crush' engulfs that most awkward rite of passage.

The Sixties is just beginning. The 'swinging' part hadn't quite begun, but there are hints. Barber's schoolgirl alter ego, Jenny (Carey Mulligan, actually 24, so its okay) falls for the glamorous older man, who easily charms her parents. He offers her clubs, champagne, drives in the country and... sex.

It is the age-old story of a girl's of love/crush for/on the older man.

It is driven by smiles and ends in tears. What else is there?

Director: Lone Scherfig
Starring: Peter Sarsgard, Emma Thompson, Alfred Molina, Carey Mulligan
Certificate: 12A
Duration: 100 mins
Origin: UK 2009
By: E1 Films

Bienvenue chez les Ch'tis (Welcome to the Sticks) **Wed 3** 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!



Nine

Thu 4 2.00



Come for the Italian coastline, mohair suits, average women, gorgeous music & dance and his hair. The main 'Italia' theme song will haunt you for weeks. It is tedious and beautiful all at once.

Inspired by Federico Fellini's 1963 (Emperor's New Clothes vacuous pap 'Eight and a half'). D-Lewis is Guido Contini, a stylish film maestro in the throws of a mid-life crisis; both personal and creative. His inability to balance the many women in his life (wife, mistress, leading lady, dead mother, Judi Dench et al) combines with the imminent shooting of his latest picture. Contini has yet to write the script, resulting in a protracted nervous breakdown of sorts, albeit in musical form.

"Clearly no one in the entire production has asked, if a paying audience would actually care about the woes of a millionaire film-maker who is having trouble with a film that doesn't need to be made." (*Times*)

"Plenty of dubious pseudo-celebrations of women, which masks a tacky and fastidious condescension. As for Day-Lewis himself, how could he do this to us or himself...?" (*Guardian*)

"There will be..." no Oscars, only tiny pants!

It polarised every audience in February. On the way out they loved or hated it. I wanted to hate it too, but instead loved every minute. (JH) (*research Simon Messenger*)

Director: Rob Marshall

Starring: Nicole Kidman, Judi Dench, Danielle Day-Lewis, aMarion Cotillard, Penelope Cruz

Certificate: 12A

Duration: 119 mins

Origin: USA 2009

By: Entertainment Film Distribution

Planet 51

Sat 6 2.00

Directors: Javier Abad, Jorge Blanco

Starring: Jessica Biel, Dwayne Johnson

Certificate: U

Duration: 91 mins

Origin: Spain, UK 2009

By: Entertainment Film Distribution

A world away from Avatar, this enjoyable sci-fi spoof again reprises the idea of humans as invaders, but a lot more fun.

Written by Joe Stillman (Shrek I), the story chronicles the sleepy town of Glipfong, on Planet 51, which bears a striking resemblance to 1950s America. These little green men are subject to an invasion of their own when NASA astronaut Captain "Chuck" Baker (suitably voiced by Dwane "The Rock" Johnson) lands in someone's back garden. The locals all want him exterminated, except kindly planetarium worker Lem. Can he and Chuck avoid the military and send him packing back to Earth before it's too late...?

John Cleese, Gary Oldman and Alan Marriott all lend their considerable vocal talents to this pleasing, if perhaps slightly trite, animation; full of nudging references to a million sci-fi films past. "A charming spoof of cold-war alien paranoia, this is visually inventive and full of action, but could do with more humour." (*Times*)

"...no threat to the similarly themed and infinitely superior 'Battle for Terra' (at The Rex in March), but there's enough of a storyline here to keep younger space cadets moderately settled." (*Time Out*) Sounds like a gentle lesson in role-reversal for children. The Americans as cute, accidental aliens!?

(*research Simon Messenger*)



A Prophet

Mon 8 2.00



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 of his period in prison; however he will haunt you long after the credits role.

(research Simon Messenger)

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

Up In The Air

Tue 9 12.30, Wed 10 2.00

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

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)



Glorious 39

Thu 11 2.00



As so many missed it in the snow, it is worth repeating.

They say this is a political yarn – sometimes creepy, sometimes daft – in the style of Hitchcock. However it is a good, edge of the seat, claustrophobic drama relating to appeasement (with Hitler) and the aristocracy's place therein.

Filmed in beautiful countryside, largely in Norfolk, it is a thriller set on the eve of the Second World War. The story is pivoted on the upper-class Keyes family, who are determined to preserve their way of life in the midst of all hell breaking loose around them. Head of the family, Alexander (Nighy) is an influential Conservative MP, and son Ralph (Redmayne) works at the Foreign Office. Adopted eldest daughter Anne (Garai) is a budding actress, whose charmed life is disrupted when she stumbles upon secret recordings hidden in the outbuildings of the family home.

Trying to work out the source and significance of her discovery, she is drawn into a confusion of secrets and betrayal, the full horror of which is shocking... Yet Poliakoff manages to leave us guessing, perhaps too much.

A good solid tale not to be missed, beautifully shot with a starry Brit cast. Romola Garai is both beautiful and easily watchable. She leads with no false moves.

Director: Stephen Poliakoff
Starring: Romola Garai, Julie Christie, Bill Nighy
Certificate: 12A
Duration: 129 mins
Origin: UK 2009
By: Momentum Pictures

Ponyo

Sat 13 2.00, Sat 20 2.00

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

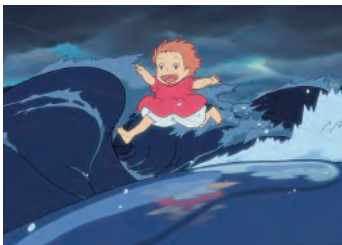
Directed by Hayao Miyazaki (Spirited Away, Howl's Moving Castle), produced by John Lasseter (Toy Story, Cars), this beautifully rendered animation loosely based on Hans Christian Andersen's "The Little Mermaid" certainly comes from excellent stock.

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*)



The Last Station

Mon 15 2.00, Tue 16 12.30

The Last Station is a love story set during the last year in the life and turbulent marriage of the great Russian writer Leo Tolstoy and his wife the Countess Sofya. Having rejected his title and embraced an ascetic life style, he finds himself increasingly at odds with Sofya. As his devoted disciple Vladimir Chertkov (Giamatti) urges him to sign a new will leaving the rights to his work to the Russian people rather than his family, the conflict between husband and wife grows to breaking point. The whole affair is witnessed by Tolstoy's new secretary, Valentin Bulgakov, whose burgeoning love for the beautiful and feisty Masha is set against the waning love of Tolstoy and Sofya.

"The main focus of the story seems to be on the relationship with his wife, an emotionally-fraught Helen Mirren. Here she is, emoting, reliably. And, of course, the whole thing shall be seen through the eyes of a naive, star struck young man, brought in from outside. The kind of man that is usually played by James McAvoy! This time he is an over excitable, sneezing chap"

(*Guardian*)

Somewhere in the main plot, *The Last Station* is simply about the difficulty of living with love and the impossibility of living without it.



Director: Michael Hoffman
Starring: Helen Mirren, Christopher Plummer, Paul Giamatti, James McAvoy
Certificate: 15
Duration: 113 mins
Origin: UK 2010
By: Optimum Releasing



First Day Of The Rest Of Your Life

Wed 17 2.00



"It is a sort of intimate, episodic saga, following the ups and downs of Robert, a taxi driver played by Jacques Gamblin, his wife Marie-Jeanne (Zabou Breitman) and their three children as they develop from teens into grownups." (Guardian)

Bezançon's intimate drama examines the fractures and foibles of an ordinary bourgeois French family over the last 12 years of the 20th century.

This, his second feature, centres on the shambolic but close Duval family, and how five key days change the lives not only of each individual member, but the family as a whole. Bereavement, sibling rivalry, infidelity, loss of virginity and giving up smoking are all focal points in this energetic and kaleidoscopic chronicle of a 'normal' family.

Each of the five important dates - spanning twelve years from 1988 to the climactic 2000 - sees one of the five members of the family take the lead, each providing a unique look at the group from different angles. Bezançon uses masterful camera techniques and special effects to amplify the personalities of each character.

A funny, insightful and moving portrait of family life.

A terrible title but a great little film which the audience loved in January. Not to be missed in March.

Director: Remi Bezançon
Starring: Jacques Gamblin, Zabou Breitman, Remi Bezançon, Deborah François
Certificate: 15
Duration: 114 mins
Origin: France 2008
By: Metrodome Distributors

The Boys Are Back

Thu 18 2.00

Director: Scott Hicks
Starring: Clive Owen, Laura Fraser, George MacKay
Certificate: 12A
Duration: 104 mins
Origin: Australia 2009
By: Walt Disney Studio INTL

"Golden sunlight bathes scenes set in Australia, while episodes in England (where Joe's first wife lives) are grey and rain-sodden. Oversimplification?

You bet. But the film's sheer dumb gusto and Clive Owen's appealingly vulnerable performance might just persuade you otherwise." (Total Film)

Still grieving, top sportswriter Joe Warr (the alter ego of The Independent's Simon Carr, the original author) takes a questionable and at times worrying laissez-faire approach to parenting (he calls it 'just say yes'). He tries to juggle work with child-rearing and at the same time maintain relations with a difficult mother-in-law. Then there's the repairing of his bond with Harry (George MacKay), a teenage son from a previous marriage who breaks off his public-school education in Britain to come and stay with his father. 'The moment you think you're... sorted is the moment it all starts falling apart,' says Owen's downbeat voiceover.

"The film has a situation but no drama, cutting between Joe's sublimated grief and a slightly nauseating sentimentality about kids and the "crazy" things they say." (Independent)

"Owen reveals a rarely glimpsed warmth and the father and son dynamic has charm, but sappiness keeps the film nice, rather than as good as it might have been." (Empire)

They're saying Clive's performance is good. "Appealing, sincere, heartfelt, award-caliber?" Hmmm.



Invictus

Mon 22 2.00



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 with mending a divided country, the new President Mandela fixes upon the idea of South Africa winning the 1995 Rugby World Cup to unite white with black. 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 Springboks’ lone black player and sets out to woo its foursquare captain, François Pienaar. (*Damon*) “Mandela’s inspired vision was to shape the national Springboks, the despised green-shirted symbol of the old racism, into figures of a new countrywide pride.” (*Time Out*)

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

Holy Water

Tue 23 12.30

Director: Tom Reeve
Starring: John Lynch, Cian Barry, Cornelius Clarke, Lochlainn O'Mearain
Certificate: 15
Duration: 93 mins
Origin: UK 2009
By: Kaleidoscope Films

Four rural Irish blokes decide to lift themselves out of a financial rut by hijacking a lorry full of Viagra and reselling it to the sexually needy. Their plans go wrong of course: they hide several barrels of the little blue pills down a well and the arousing chemical starts to leak into the village’s water supply. Inevitably this causes something to stir in the trousers, thus leading to all sorts of jolly rumpy-pumpy and sexiness among the stereotypical locals. You can see what’s coming. Every word in the script is up for innuendo grabs. Cue randy old villagers and endless double entendres involving “make mine a stiff one darlin” etc. I guess somebody had to do it. “The scriptwriters don’t understand that the sight of lots of people feeling a little horny isn’t in itself amusing – yet we have to bear umpteen nods, winks and naughty smiles (although, oddly, not a hint of an erection, presumably for certification reasons, which undermines the whole idea).” (*Time Out*) “Carry On Viagra is perhaps the only shorthand for describing this depressing, unfunny and embarrassing comedy” (*Guardian*) “It has the pace and jauntiness of an audience movie, and once collars get hot and bedsprings start to twang there’s a silly sort of fun about it.” (*Independent*) You decide.



It's Complicated

Wed 24 2.00, Thu 25 2.00



There's nothing complicated about this. However to indulge the conceit, the complication is that Jane (Streep) was married to Jake (Baldwin) – but he left her and the kids ten years earlier for the younger high-maintenance, Agnes (Bell) and her monster-kid Pedro.

By the coincidence of same time-same place, we have to witness him sickly sweet-talking his way back into his independent ex-wife's bed.

"It explores female insecurities and doesn't shy away from middle-aged sex: Jake proudly displays his hairy belly on several occasions." (nice)

"Streep is as ever, and if laughs count for anything, this is one of the better romantic comedies of the season." (*Time Out*)

"Baldwin and Streep do have that most over-analysed thing, "chemistry", and their marriage and sudden Indian summer of forbidden sex is weirdly believable." (*Guardian*)

OR "You can't imagine why she would touch him in the first place, never mind go back for second helpings ten years later!" (*Rachel Cook, Front Row R4*)

AND "Writer-director Nancy Meyers has surely established herself as the world's foremost purveyor of gastro-lifestyle fantasy porn to the menopausal classes." (*Guardian*)

That aside, it is very funny. The February audiences were in fits, making them more entertaining than the film!

Director: Nancy Meyers
Starring: Meryl Streep, Steve Martin, Alec Baldwin
Certificate: 15
Duration: 120 mins
Origin: USA 2010
By: Universal Pictures (UK) Ltd

Astro Boy

Sat 27 2.00

Director: David Bowers
Starring: Freddie Highmore, Nicolas Cage, Kristen Bell, Charlize Theron, Samuel L. Jackson
Certificate: PG
Duration: 94 mins
Origin: Hong Kong/USA/Japan 2009
By: E1 Films

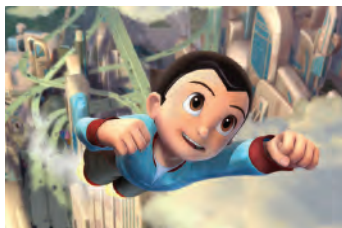
Originating from the classic Japanese manga 1950s comic-book character created by Osamu Tezuka, *Astro boy* is a star-studded production about a cute little robot with rocket boots, spiky black hair and – winningly – the ability to shoot bullets out of his backside.

Freddie Highmore voices Toby, the science-loving kid and son of government scientist Dr Tenma (Nicolas Cage); when Toby is killed in an accident, Dr Tenma tries to reinstall his DNA and microsurgically reclaimed memories into a robot version of his beloved son, now called *Astro Boy*, who becomes involved in a sinister political plot to exploit a new non-destructive energy source. "It is a bold and even poignant idea and the movie certainly zips along. It's not in the *Wall-E* league, but it's well made and inventive." (*Guardian*)

The voice cast are superb with Highmore making a solid lead and colourful supporting turns from the likes of Matt Lucas (as Sparx), Bill Nighy (as Dr Elefun) and, bizarrely, Samuel L. Jackson!

"Enjoyable, well made animated adventure with likeable characters, a strong script and some decent set-pieces as well as a nice line in satire and some quietly subversive gags."

(*View London*)



Seraphine

Mon 29 2.00



Provost's biopic of **Seraphine Louis** (later: **Seraphine of Senlis**) is a simple tale of a cleaning woman from provincial France. Her gift for painting vivid, so called, primitive pictures was discovered by (German) art patron Wilhelm Uhde in 1912.

"Plodding in its story telling, but sensitive to its subject." (*Times*)

Winner of seven César awards, including Best Actress (Moreau) and Best Film, *Seraphine* tells the remarkably true story of this mysterious painter. Uhde (Tukur) accidentally discovers her paintings while poverty stricken *Seraphine* cleans for him. She is secretly resourceful, gifted and very tough. Her unrelenting drudgery is brightened only by solitary moments in the countryside, and when we see her making her own colours from foraged and 'stolen' raw materials including butcher's blood, holy candle wax and river weeds. Uhde attempts to inspire her confidence. But she is not easy, and he has his own problems. Tracing the long-lasting friendship between them, it delves into *Seraphine's* struggle with her deteriorating mental strength, alongside the casual horrors in the occupied French countryside on the edges of the First World war.

Provost's poignant portrait of this, forgotten artist, is a testament to the mysteries of creativity and the resilience of spirit. It is also a portrait of people living in multi-layered danger. Don't miss.

Director: Martin Provost
Starring: Anne Bennet, Yolande Moreau, Ulrich Tukur
Certificate: PG
Duration: 125 mins
Origin: Belgium, France 2008
By: Metrodome Distributors

The Wolfman

Tue 30 12.30

Director: Joe Johnston
Starring: Benicio Del Toro, Anthony Hopkins, Hugo Weaving, Emily Blunt
Certificate: 15
Duration: 100 mins
Origin: UK, USA 2010
By: Universal Pictures (UK) Ltd

In the second *Twilight* film, *New Moon*, the audience is explicitly introduced to the idea of dangerous physical intimacy with a werewolf, yet this new *Wolfman* keeps it relatively clean.

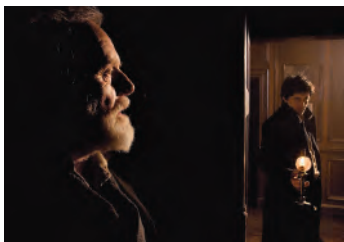
Del Toro looks longingly at Emily Blunt's exquisitely sculpted collarbone, a decent distance north of undisclosed cleavage. There's even a kiss. But we have to wait for a chaste full moon before all that hair-sprouting, finger-lengthening and cranio-facial distortion can kick off.

So, no sex then.

Returning to his estranged father in 1891 – to investigate his brother's disappearance, Lawrence Talbot (Benicio) falls for his dead sibling's mourning fiancée, Gwen (Emily Blunt). But before this spark of love can ignite, Lawrence is bitten by the lunatic creature, running wild in the moonlight. So must confront the beast buried within himself!

Cue: piano discord, howling wind, swirling fog, a squeaking inn sign swings, and in the bar a sudden eerie silence as the door creaks open to a stranger's footstep. "ere young sir, you be not from round these parts?"

"An authentic yet strangely paced creature feature; *The Wolfman* is a film at odds with its Hammer roots. A mess of campy performances and sometimes schlock effects keep this from being a modern horror classic." (*Jack Whiting*)



Precious

Wed 31 2.00

The main fault with *Precious* is that it pushes empathy on you through shock value and general nastiness, most of it spouting from *Precious*' rather unrealistic mother.

Too often the film, is simplistic and needlessly sentimental when it should be complex and emotionally restrained. Still, it's not all low points, the film riffs a fantastic urban flavour, and with a caring bunch of supporting classmates *Precious*' life seems less grim.

"Next time a film focuses on difficult urban American upbringings, best leave out Oprah Winfrey!" (*Jack Whiting*).

As for Mariah Carey, what was that about? Here are all these fabulous unknown faces then Ms Diva-diva-diva turns up with no make-up? As for Lenny Kravitz..?

"There is no doubting the raucous, tactless energy of the film, and the brilliantly brutal performance from Mo'Nique "an ugly, seething cauldron of self-justifying bitterness." (*Total Film*)

"Like Angela's Ashes set in 1980's Harlem, *Precious* is a big screen "misery memoir" so keen to trace the hellish pathology of familial abuse that it risks glorifying its own subject. It is nonetheless grounded by an accomplished debut turn from Gabourey Sidibe. She is the subtly precious heart of *Precious*." (*Times*)

It isn't the transcendent masterpiece that some admirers would have you believe: more like a black-comic nightmare. (*Guardian*)



Director: Lee Daniels
Starring: Gabourey Sidibe, Mo'Nique, Mariah Carey, Lenny Kravitz
Certificate: 15
Duration: 110 mins
Origin: USA 2009
By: Icon Film Distribution Ltd



ILLEGITIMATE, INAPPROPRIATE...?



BASTARDS...

Bastards is not a gratuitous swear word here. It is to play with the notion of 'illegitimate'.

It seems crazy now to think of being born out-of-wedlock stigmatised as being illegitimate. The word has been lost to the new illegitimates – 'inappropriate', 'issues around' and 'clarification'. The newest and ugliest of these is 'going forward'. This of course replaces Thatcher's 'at the end of the day' and the fabulous weasel of all phrases: 'all right thinking people'. "Going forward" is currently the best of all sickly jargon. It invites some sense urgency and importance. It is professional. It is future. It is progress. It is immediate. It is raring to go, ready to act, right thinking and above all; it is bullshit. No, it is prime bullshit. Where else are you going to go? There is no backwards or sideways and the future happens every second, just ahead of the Now! Going forward is all there is. Dwelling is a different matter. You can dwell in/on the past future and sideways but 'going' is forward. Unless you're

Dusty Springfield or you want to start again. Then you're not 'going back'. You're going back to/with someone/place/thought to take-on the future together. Hence going forward. Watch out for it during the party political bollocks of the next few months.

It is like all those others, an illegitimate phrase. Thus, meaningless like 'erm'.

In fact it is 'erm' using two words. 'Parking fees' are two illegitimate words. Since when did we agree to pay to stop moving and get out and walk? Cool Hand Luke was given hard-labour for cutting the heads off parking meters. We never agreed. There was no vote. It is illegitimate.

Now it is extended to Sundays and bank holidays. Why? There is no extra ground maintenance, only badly dressed traffic wardens to pay for working weekends.

There is no reason, except one. The one and only dirty reason for all things – money/tax. Some quango/committee decided that, going forward, there was a way to steal even more money from ordinary people. Make the helpless bastards pay for yet another illegitimate tax! After all, at the end of the day, it would be inappropriate to discriminate against Sundays, when it might raise issues around Christian parking. Whereupon clarification will be sought, going forward, about Friday and Saturday free parking to accommodate other faiths? It is time to go backwards. Or at least stand still and do nothing. Repair what is falling apart, and leave the rest alone.

Sunday parking. Don't pay. It is illegitimate. Come on, let all right thinking people stand up and say "Don't pay the bastards!"

AND THE 2010 NOMINEES ARE...



Sandra Bullock - The Blind Side



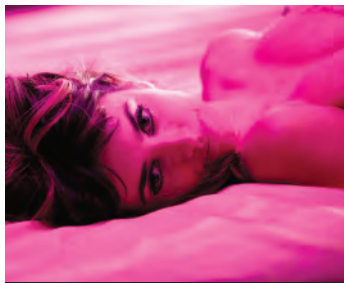
Carey Mulligan - An Education



Jeff Bridges - Crazy Heart



Christopher Waltz - Inglourious Basterds



Penelope Cruz - Nine



Vera Farmiga - Up In The Air



Jeremy Renner - The Hurt Locker



Colin Firth - A Single Man

ST ALBANS... IT LOOKS LIKE WE'LL DO IT...?

As this goes to press we will have raised over £800,000 in just over five weeks.

For the third time (on Friday 12th Feb) I saw we could do this, purely with St Albans 'real money'.

The first was a remarkable public meeting on a wet November Sunday. The second; early in January when a cheque for £25,000 came in with just two lines - "please find enclosed... Thank you" and "Please acknowledge receipt". Nothing more. No demands, business plans, facts or figures. Just "thank you" and a receipt!

Then the FSA nonsense slowed things down as deadlines were looming. However, cheques kept coming in, but now I was worried.

My small, handpicked group of legal, professional and trusted advisors were calmly working non-stop and unpaid, to smooth the way for small local investments, and time was running out. By a trick of the light or however these things happen, the deadlines have been unexpectedly stretched and the FSA business resolved. So please, go ahead - invest as small as you like. But soon. Time is still tight. It is only a short deadline reprieve.

Momentarily, I failed that trusted

'team' and was ready to fail you by withdrawing. Instead I took a deep breath and refused any hint of outside venture capital which might demand too much in return, attached to long strings of influence.

As with The Rex, this new St Albans' Alpha cinema is not about personal gain and must be run without interference.

It was pointed out to me last week by a potential investor, if The Alpha works, I stand to make a small personal fortune?

I didn't care three/four years ago, when I became marginally involved in the campaign to save it. I don't care now. Though I might get 'a dog to kick' (what film?)

Hence, was seriously considering sending all your money back and taking up knitting and drinking.

Then on Friday 12th Feb came a letter explaining how a huge investment/loan (plus ABL payment!) had been painstakingly considered, then sent spontaneously without further thought. With such commitment, the knitting will have to wait. £800,000 in five/six weeks. We will do it.



My head is back on. From being at rock bottom three weeks ago, and amid all the unbelievable, hurried donations, loans, investments and trust to beat the deadline, it has taken one spark to wake and remind me how important this is to you, and how much thought, as well as money, you have given.

The best news is: we can buy the site with £1million of real St Albans money, small and huge, and ALL extraordinary. This is a whole city putting its money where its heart is. So perhaps, in return, I owe you the will and energy to make it work.

Thank you for your individual leaps of unprecedented trust and faith. A little more... £200,000 more!!! - will settle it. Then we will have the Odeon site to rebuild The Alpha.

Banks, pro-investment, strings and outside influences might be needed for the small matter of the £2.5m to rebuild it? We'll see.

THE BEST/FASTEST WAY NOW IS... SPONSORED SEATS

The best way now to win the race to secure the site is to through sponsored chairs. There are 500 seats for 'sale' at £1000 a chair. Only 57 have gone. Sponsoring the lot will bring us £500,000.

Your name, or that of a loved one, will be printed in the foyer - AND now (thinking what a great deal of money for virtually nothing!) your chosen name embroidered (knitted!) on to the seat. With great thanks and respect to those first 57 who have leapt already.

Next week you will hear that a new 'Rex' (The Alpha) will be re-born into St Albans, or the site is no longer ours, and your money returned.

The thrill of hope with the finishing line in sight, should always carry disappointment in its back pocket. That way a little sanity is preserved to start again.

Visitor's Book

09/02/10: our first visit to the most wonderful cinema, it will not be our last...many more showings to come. So many films, so little time...ROLL EM.... Thank you, Sarah and Neil

13/02/10: Grease with the girlies! Such a fab night! Champers and laughs!

28/01/10: beautiful décor but then I am a sucker for art deco, however, to revive great cinema and architecture deserves high praise indeed. It was a crying shame that 'the rex' wasn't included in the recent review of UK independent cinemas in the guardian. Surely blinkered journalism can be their only excuse!

05/02/10: Nine! Beautiful setting other than that absolute piffle! Excruciatingly tedious! First time I've ever walked out of a movie!

(Quotes from: 'A Little bit of Brit Wit' by Tom Hay)

"When they circumcised Herbert Samuel they threw away the wrong bit."
(Lloyd George)

"There are two types of women in this world – those who like chocolate and complete bitches."
(Dawn French)

"Coffee in England always tastes like a chemistry experiment."
(Agatha Christie)

"This is one of the disadvantages of wine; it makes a man mistake words for thoughts." (Samuel Johnson)

Loss Angeles is awful – like Liverpool with palm trees." (Johnny Rotten)

"Jogging is for people who aren't intelligent enough to watch television."
(Victoria Wood)

"It's okay to let yourself go, just as long as you let yourself back..."
(Mick Jagger)