

A new face for the Phoenix

After months shrouded in scaffolding, the Phoenix has finally re-emerged.

The blue-neon frontage may seem more like Soho than Jericho – but it's a welcome face-lift for one of our key amenities. Why did it take so long? Just the usual building delays, it seems, including, for example, having a high-tech engineering firm make the brackets to support the smart new glass canopy.

The first sign that something was afoot at the Phoenix was the disappearance of the letters advertising the films. By that time many were missing or broken, and when one fell on a customer's head they were abandoned altogether. 'We investigated a new set of Perspex letters, but discovered this would cost about £3,000', says Assistant Manager Katrina Stokes, 'so at that point we removed them completely'.

This also caused the management to think about a more complete overhaul. The Phoenix is run by a small privately owned company, City Screen, which started its life at the Phoenix in 1990 when the lease was bought by cinema enthusiast Lyn Goleby. Since then she and three partners have built up a group of seven 'Picture House' cinemas which they own or operate, and others for which they organize programming. St. John's owns the building.



Left: the North Oxford Kinema in 1913.

Right: the Phoenix Picture House in 1998.



Photo: David Fisher

The Phoenix has a surprisingly large staff, 25 in total, full-time or casual. That's three managers or assistants, two projectionists and numerous support staff from ushers to cleaners. It also provides a popular holiday job for students, including those who live in Oxford but study elsewhere.

The new blue frontage is just the latest make-over for a building with a long and colourful history. In 1913 it opened as the 'North Oxford Kinema', since when it has passed through many hands and names, including the Scala, the New Scala, the Studios 1 and 2, Studio X (a club showing soft porn) and finally in 1977 the Phoenix.

The cinema has always been popular with students. According to cinema historian Paul Marriott, in the 1920s they were much more boisterous, frequently unscrewing the seats and running round the auditorium. When the commissioner intervened the cry would go up: 'Rescue Balliol!' or 'Rescue St John's!' and the commissioner might finish up in the gutter.

Jericho people have always enjoyed the cinema too. At one point there was an early form of karaoke – a singsong, with the words flashed up on the screen. The nearest equivalent today is the Saturday afternoon kids show, before which children take turns at a Sony Playstation with their game dramatically projected onto the screen.

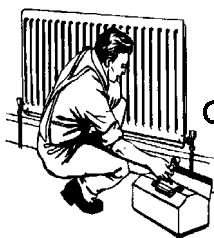
At the other end of the age scale is the Silver Screen show on Wednesday afternoons showing classic films at reduced prices – plus tea and biscuits. On the final Wednesday of the month this will take the form of a City Council-subsidized Classic

Cinema Club for senior citizens (£2 per ticket). Other events include the art shows in the bar and the annual kids Christmas party, with presents from film distributors and a projectionist playing Santa Claus.

But the main business is showing good quality first-run films, as well as some more popular ones that have already been shown at the ABC. Apart from catering to local people and students, the Phoenix is also popular with the 'North Oxford' types who go for the period dramas, and staff from OUP checking out the latest literary adaptations. After a dip in attendance a couple of years ago, business is now brisk.

In case you were wondering, yes they did have planning permission for the bright new neon frontage, and no, the neighbours across the road do not really mind being bathed in blue light, providing the illuminations are switched off at a reasonable hour – usually 9 p.m. on weekdays.

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What was that?

AN OCCASIONAL GUIDE TO
JERICO'S DISTINCTIVE BUILDINGS

No. 35 Albert Street



Jenny Barsley

This artists' studio was built in 1840 as a school for Wesleyan boys, and was connected with the nearby chapel in Cranham Street (now the Green College laboratory). The house at the corner with Cranham Street was occupied by the headmaster. The 1847 Education Act declared, however, that boys and girls had to be educated together. Since the building was too small to take more pupils it had to close as a school.

It was then taken over by a coal merchant who kept his horses in the lower part and his stock in the upper part. The building still has the hook used to hoist the bags up and down. In 1917 one wall began to collapse and the building had to be shored up with girders and railway sleepers.

The next occupant was an upholsterer, until in the 1950s Faulkners (currently in the Botley Road) bought it to use as a motorcycle workshop. But local people complained about the noise from the machines and the Council refused to let them continue using it for this purpose.

Then it was bought by the present owner, the writer and artist, Tinker Mather who lives in Allam Street and who engaged Ian Miller to redesign the interior. Mrs Mather no longer uses the building herself but lets it out to other artists, including Tom Wise and Helen Ganley.

Jenny Barsley, *Grantham House*

Standing up to bullies

Bullying can happen to anyone. I took my 5 year-old granddaughter to the swings at St. Barnabas School on August Bank Holiday Monday. There were three boys playing with a basketball. I was so enjoying my time with my granddaughter that when the ball hit me on the back of the head, I was very good-natured and assumed it was an accident. Then it hit me in the back and the chest. When it was thrown in my face, I put my hand up and it cracked my wrist back instead. When they positioned themselves so that my granddaughter was in the line of fire, I put my foot down and confiscated the ball. By this time, it was obvious it was deliberate.

The smallest boy, whom I now know to be eleven, then punched the basketball out of my grasp, hitting me in the chest in the process. We left and went to the playing

fields but they followed. I told them that bullies were cowards who only picked on people smaller than themselves. They said confidently that they weren't aiming at my granddaughter they were aiming at me. I thought about the possible comeback if I went to the police, St. Frideswide's School, or the Council. In fact, I did all of these things and the eldest boy has since threatened me.

But if I as an adult can be bullied, how many children must also be on the receiving end? In fact, I discovered that these same children have bullied others at school. If I hold back out of fear, I am still being bullied, and what example does a frightened adult set a bullied child? So I am taking every action I can, as far as I can, no matter what. The buck stops here.

Patti Dale, *Cranham Terrace*

Street Fair success

The Jericho Street Fair on June 27 was very successful despite the disappointing weather. This year the street was filled with many more stalls and tables. The raffle, with prizes generously donated by local businesses, raised over £200. The whole event raised nearly £1,100, which was used to buy new chairs for the café, a new noticeboard for the playgroup and some decorating supplies.

Thanks are due to many people, particularly Carolyn Dutton for organizing the event; Ann Luke and Denise Townsend for slaving away in the kitchen and café all day; Neil Townsend for similar heroics at the grill; Gay Jamieson of the playgroup for selling all those raffle tickets; Jason Carbon and Keith Sutton of the City Council Sports Development Department for supervising games; and to the Over-60s Club for giving us half their proceeds.

The next *Jericho Echo* will announce the date of the 1999 Fair. Anyone who wants to participate or donate prizes can call Carolyn Dutton on 557902 or come to the café on a Saturday morning for a chat.

Russian visit

The 129th anniversary of St. Barnabas Church was celebrated on October 18 with a visit from Neva Russicum, a choir from St. Petersburg who brought an exotic flavour of Eastern worship into the service. They also sang at a lunch for the Friends of St. Barnabas at Worcester College.

In Memoriam

We have lost some friends in recent months.

Gladys Clarke – Gladys was a Jericho resident of long standing who lived in Nelson Street. She had worked in the theatre and had an excellent singing voice. Our sympathies to Brian, her son.

Peter Driver – The Church was full for Peter's funeral on October 7. Peter who in recent years lived in Abingdon was 44 and died in a tragic accident. He was a kind and compassionate man and a devoted son. Our sympathy to George and Anneliese Driver and their family.

Christine Kosh – Christine was buried at the beginning of June. She was full of fun and a very popular local person. She had immensely enjoyed visiting her son in the USA. Christine is much missed by her many Jericho friends.

Vera Rush – Vera lived for many years in the Institute (now the Community Centre) and worked tirelessly for local events. She had lived for some years in Kidlington, but is missed by her old friends in Jericho.

Neville Schwartz – Neville was well known in Jericho, and was especially loved at the Jericho Cafe. The sight of him whizzing down Cranham Street in his wheelchair at high speed will be sadly missed.

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Canal plans back in dry dock

British Waterways have changed their minds.

Planning consent for the building at the former Orchard Cruisers site expires on February 10, but British Waterways have yet to find a suitable developer. Just as well. These plans offer little public access and few public moorings. In 1993 the Community Association criticized them for allowing 'the monopolization of the canal frontage by private housing'. When British Waterways started their Consultative Forum in April 1996 the Jericho section seemed already doomed – they appeared committed to maximizing income and to closing the boatyards.

However, at a meeting on September 29 with Jan Needle, Chair of the Community Association, and others, Simon Ainley, Manager of the Oxford and Grand Union Canals, and Stuart Mills, Commercial Manager for British Waterways Southern Region, said that all aspects of the development are again open to discussion.

They now want to consider the future of all the land – including the College Cruisers site – and reconsider the location of the new pedestrian and cycle bridge, which, we were last informed, 'for technical reasons' could only be located opposite the bottom of Cardigan Street, rather than of Great Clarendon Street. Reversing pre-

vious policy, they now say that they plan to keep boatyard and mooring facilities.

Why has this come about? Partly due to the difficulty in reaching agreement with developers, but also because British Waterways seem to have undergone a change of heart and now see the importance of maintaining facilities that allow boating visitors to reach the centre of the city.

What seems to be on offer now is a residential development with some business use – including a chandler's shop and a land-based restaurant for *Rosamund the Fair*, the narrowboat restaurant. Since *Rosamund's* arrival at its mooring, children and others are rarely to be found climbing into the former boatyard, and syringes are no longer found there. A few years ago a convoy of new-age travellers had to be evicted from the site by the police. Mixed use, including small businesses that will be active during the day, makes good sense for Jericho.

What's next? British Waterways will come back to Jericho before Christmas for further talks with those most directly affected and with the Community Association. And in January there will be a meeting of the Consultative Forum. So if you have any comments, please contact Jan Needle. A new planning application is expected in the spring though given all the delays so far, let's just wait and see.

George Taylor, Great Clarendon Street

Youth facilities needed

The lack of facilities for young people in Jericho continues to be a cause for concern – as highlighted in Dilwar Ali's article in our previous issue. One positive initiative has been football training sessions run by Dean Joseph, an ex-player with Oxford City and Swindon Town. Boys and girls are welcome to join in on the school field on Thursdays at 5.30 p.m. and Saturdays at 10.30 a.m. Further details from Susanna Pressel (554001).

Picking up on Dilwar's suggestion, there is also a proposal to establish a weekly 'Music Café' at the Community Centre – with music-making and discussions for young people aged 13-19. We need volunteers to help get this off the ground. Please ring Tricia Elphinstone (554194) or Beverly Barrett (432768). However, this could founder without sufficient support from the County Council who do not regard Jericho as a priority area – a subject that will be raised at the next Jericho Area Committee Meeting on Tuesday November 10. Please come along and let councillors know your views.



Another striking image from Jericho-based painter, Lulu Wong Taylor, who is holding a double exhibition from November 1 to 29. One show is at the bar of the Phoenix Cinema, while the other is at Café Something. Both show Lulu's big, bold and bright canvasses of birds and exotic landscapes.

Briefly ...

Our friendly post office

Congratulations to everyone at Walton Street Post Office which, for its friendly and efficient service, has been judged one of the top post offices in the North Thames and East Anglia area.

Off-license off

Well done also the 40 people who packed the Magistrates' Court and successfully objected to the proposal for a garish and unnecessary off-license on the corner of Walton Street and Observatory Street.

Lucy's flats get larger

Lucy's have changed their proposed building at the bottom of Juxon Street – from 33 flats to 28, and from five stories to four, though the ground area is the same. Berkeley Homes will be the building contractors but the flats will be owned and rented out by Lucy's. Demolition will start at the end of November and construction should last around 15 months.

Parking bay watch

After extensive consultations, including a display at the Community Centre, there will be minor parking changes. The plan is for parts of Walton Street and Great Clarendon Street to have some 'pay and display' parking, while bays elsewhere, including some of those in Worcester Place and Albert Street, will be dual-use, shared between residents and others. You may have noticed that since October there has been extra enforcement – subsidized by the City Council.

New Assistant Head

Welcome to the new Assistant Head at St. Barnabas School, Mrs Jane Thomas, formerly at Barton School.

Recycling and precycling

Jericho is fortunate to have been selected as a pilot area for an extensive new City Council recycling scheme that could reduce landfill costs. In November each household will get a 50-litre open-top green box to leave out on dustbin day for items like bottles, cans, newspapers, and clothing. Early risers can leave it out at 7 a.m. The rest may be tempted to leave it out the night before, which will also permit some precycling through Jericho's cats.

Echoing globally

The *Jericho Echo* Internet site has had more than 1,600 visitors – including a number of Jericho exiles in the USA. To join them, point your browser at: www.pstalker.demon.co.uk/echo

Our thanks again to Oxford University Press for printing this issue of the *Jericho Echo*.

Jericho Notice Board

Jericho Area Committee Meeting – Tuesday November 10, 7.30 p.m. at the school. An open forum that gives you the chance to grill local councillors and officials. Subjects will probably include crime, recycling, youth activities, and allotments.

Community Centre Café – Open Saturday mornings, for coffee, tea, and pastries.

Office space available – Suitable for counselling, language teaching, arts studio, or small business. Two large offices, kitchenette and two toilets. Parking available. Please ring Carolyn Dutton on 557902.

Jericho Lunch Club – Every Thursday, 11.45 a.m.-3 p.m. Good value refreshments and food. Free crèche. Everyone welcome.

Jericho Youth Group – A weekly club with a wide range of activities for 8-12 year-olds. Tuesdays, 7.00 p.m.-9.00 p.m. Contact Denise or Neil Townsend, tel. 559648.

Bingo Sessions – Wednesdays, 7 p.m.-9 p.m. Community Centre.

Silver Screen – Shows for senior citizens at the Phoenix, Wednesday afternoons – £3.00 with complimentary tea and coffee.

Parents and Toddlers Group – Thursdays in the school library, 9 a.m.-10 a.m.

Jericho Playgroup – Two- to four-year olds. Monday to Friday, 9 a.m.-11.30 a.m. in the Community Centre. Places available. Call mornings 552001, evenings 311875.

Over-60s Club – Wednesdays, 2.00 p.m. Grantham House. Speakers or bingo.

Spanish teacher wanted – For beginners' conversation. Please ring: 557902.

Volunteer needed for Toy Library – The school hosts a Toy Library at 3 p.m. on Fridays, but at present there is no one to run it. If you can help, call 557178.

Contacting Councillors – West Ward Councillors' surgeries, 11.00 a.m. to 12.00 noon at the Community Centre. Labour is on the first Saturday of the month. The Lib/Dems are usually there on the second Saturday but in this case call 437000 to confirm. Alternatively call City Councillors: Will Cavendish, 271956; Susanna Pressel, 554001; Jeremy Wynne, 553606. County Councillor: Fiona Campbell, 790936.

Police contact numbers – Jericho's Community Beat Officer is PC Billy Linton, 266191 or 224568. General Enquiries, including Neighbourhood Watch, 266000.

Jericho Community Association – We meet on the second Monday of each month in the Community Centre at 7.30 p.m. All Jericho residents welcome.

Interested in setting up a credit union? – Call Lorraine Ticehurst on 777172.

Christmas Bazaar – Saturday, December 5 at the Community Centre, 11.00 a.m.-3.00 p.m. Father Christmas, crafts, cakes, raffle etc. Stalls are only £5. Call 557902.

Advent Recital – Sunday, December 13 by the Choir at St. Barnabas Church.

Christmas Carol Service – Sunday, December 20 at St. Barnabas Church.

Jericho Rejects Christmas Party for OAPs – Saturday December 5, 2.00 p.m. at St. Barnabas School.

Classes at the Community Centre

Acting – Thursdays, 8.00 p.m.-10.00 p.m. Contact Margaret Shade, tel. 552569.

Ballet – Tues. 6.30 p.m.-8.00 p.m. Contact Karen Sellick, tel. 248497. Thurs. 3.30 p.m.-6.30 p.m. Contact Jill Saint, tel.(01869) 350535.

Egyptian Dance – Wed. 6.15 p.m.-8.00 p.m. There will also be a workshop, on Sunday November 8, 2.30 p.m.-5.30 p.m. Contact: Katrina Robinson, tel. 777462.

ESOL (English) – Thurs. 10.00 a.m.-12 noon Contact Helen Adams, tel. 728689.

Guitar classes for beginners. Mondays starting in January. Classes are forming now. Enquiries: tel. 557902

Legs, Bums, and Tums – Aerobics, Fridays, 9.15 a.m.-10.15 a.m. Crèche available. Contact: tel. 557902

Italian classes – Classes forming now. Contact Chris Nirrenski, tel. 557904.

Life Dance and Alexander Technique – Wednesdays, 2.00 p.m.-4.00 p.m. Contact Deirdre, tel. 558721.

Life Drawing – Sat. 11 a.m.-1 p.m. Contact Chris Nirrenski, tel. 559004.

Line dancing – Classes forming now for January, tel. 557902.

Nifty Fifties – Gentle toning for the over-50s. Tuesdays, 10.00 a.m.-11.00 a.m. Contact: NAWOCEC, tel. 552295.

Wing Chun, – Mon. and Wed. 7 p.m.-9 p.m. Contact Ed Yuen, tel. 862518.

Yoga – Tues. 8.15 p.m.-9.15 p.m. Contact Joe Burn, tel. 715147. Wed. 9.15 a.m. Contact Mariella Di Martini, tel. 245893. Thurs. 6.00 p.m.-7.15 p.m. Contact Becky Ward, tel. 726808. Sun. 11 a.m.-12 noon Contact Joe Burn, tel. 715147.

The *Jericho Echo* is published three or four times each year by the Jericho Community Association, Jericho Community Centre, Canal Street, Oxford. Editor: Peter Stalker, 51 Cranham St., tel. 552794 or 514922. If you can help with delivery, please contact Philippa Foot, tel. 557130. This edition printed courtesy of Oxford University Press, Great Clarendon Street, from artwork supplied by the editor. Previous issues are also available on-line at www.pstalker.demon.co.uk/echo.

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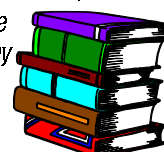
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