



Why bother going to the cinema?

Teenager Noah Swer-Fox makes a passionate plea for more young people to discover the joys of watching movies as part of a cinema audience.

Ever since the rise of streaming services, I'm sure many young people have asked themselves the question "Why bother going to the cinema?" After all, Netflix and Disney+ offer hundreds of movies and it can often seem easier to lie on your sofa, eating popcorn as noisily as you want to, rather than taking public transport or walking to a movie hall, only to then be glared at when your sweet wrappers rustle a little too loudly.

But surely the stress isn't any less when deciding what movie to pick on Amazon Prime. Sometimes having too much choice isn't always a good thing as it can lead to endless swiping and then most people will probably spend the next two hours only occasionally looking at the TV between large doses of texting people.

Watching a movie without distractions is always what creates a more compelling experience.

And the younger generation of East Finchley are lucky because we have the Phoenix Cinema on our doorsteps. I cannot think of a better place to relax and watch a movie with your friends. There's no getting around the fact that most

cinemas are expensive to go to and sell snacks and drinks at stupidly high prices. The Phoenix has found a way round this problem. For cinemagoers aged 15-21, it offers a free Neon Membership card that lets you watch a movie and buy popcorn for only £5.

At a time where young people are hungry for films outside of large franchises, it is important to look out for the movies that won't necessarily be massive blockbuster hits. The Phoenix does exactly this and prioritises smaller, indie films over pictures with a large budget. It also holds screenings of theatre productions and concerts from the West End and round the world (a National Theatre production of Hamlet



Unbeatable experience: Noah enjoying a film at the Phoenix Cinema. Photo Mike Coles

was shown this January). You are probably wondering by now why I am so in awe of the Phoenix. Well, my first ever

experience of going to the cinema was the Phoenix, meaning it will always have a special place in my heart. But there is a reason why, as a young person, I have kept going back there for the past decade. Yes, the Neon membership comes in handy, and yes, it is extremely convenient, but truth be told, there is nothing better than experiencing a movie with others. Every person in that cinema hall with me leads a completely different life and holds different opinions to one another. But, for two hours, we are bonded by the experience of cinema: the terrible adverts, the booming sound design and the art we are witnessing on the screen. We laugh together, feel scared together and maybe even cry together.

These are things simply impossible to achieve when sitting by yourself in your living room.

Our local cinema has kept attracting new audiences and young people for well over a century. To carry on its legacy and discover new films for themselves, I highly advise the young people of East Finchley to stop flicking through Netflix, get off the sofa and head to the Phoenix where I'm sure many new films will be watched and many new memories will be made.

Movie magic: What are your happiest cinema memories at the Phoenix or further afield? Write to news@the-archer.co.uk and we'll publish as many as we can.

A neighbourhood friend: Anna Bell, 1922 - 2026

Anna Bell was born in Germany in 1922, one of nine siblings. By the age of 16 she had lost both of her parents and she lost three brothers, all young men, in the Second World War. She remembered vividly those difficult war years.

In 1953 Annie decided to travel to the UK where she found employment as an au pair at a house in Hampstead. It was while working there that she met her future husband, Arthur, who was employed there as a landscape gardener.

They married in 1954 and enjoyed a very long happy marriage, with their daughter Annette being born in 1955. They lived in Church Lane, East Finchley, where Annie was really well known in the neighbourhood.

She was always a kind and very generous person who would often donate funds to charities. In her later years she would stand at her doorstep and give sweets and chocolates out to passing schoolchildren.

Annie had a long and happy life and lived to the age of 103. On her 100th birthday lots of relatives came over from



Long and happy life: Anna Bell

Germany and the US to celebrate her achievement.

At the age of 99, after decades living in East Finchley, Annie went to live with her son-in-law Tony in Broadstairs, Kent. She died peacefully at home there and will be sadly missed by all the family and friends.

Looking for volunteers?

Are you looking for volunteers to help in your community group or organisation?

Our **Be Part of It** column is published on page 2 every month and gets results. Submissions are free and are included subject to available space. Please submit your listing up to a maximum of 80 words to news@the-archer.co.uk, marking your email 'Be Part of It'.

Tell us the news

Have you got a news story or an interesting photo for us?

Our readers are our eyes and ears, and we are always pleased to hear what is going on in East Finchley.

Tips, ideas and stories, large or small, are very welcome. Please email news@the-archer.co.uk or leave a message on our free phone line 0800 612 0748. Thank you

Gifted poet and sportsman: Richard Meier, 1970 – 2025

By Matteo Lanzini

On a cold January morning, family and friends gathered to pay tribute and celebrate the life of Richard Meier, who passed away prematurely the previous month after battling cancer.

Born in Surrey and a long-time resident of East Finchley's old village, Richard was a kind, thoughtful and talented man, with poetry and cricket among his many passions. He studied music, training as a pianist in his youth, and worked for most of his career in the mental health and relationship support charity sectors, before recently retraining as an English language teacher. Almost a decade ago he set-up a recreational football group for local schools' parents, which continues to this day, and in 2022 arranged a fundraising match in support of Ukraine's humanitarian needs.

A gifted poet, the first of his three published collections won the Picador Poetry Prize in 2011 and the following poem is an excerpt from his latest collection 'After the Miracle', published in October 2025:



Kind and talented: Richard Meier

Muscle Memory

A wide, blank beach in north-east Norfolk,
my young son learning frisbee-throws.
A backhand, arrowed from his checkered breast pocket.
A second like it, only one which reaches the other thrower slower, stalls, to hover right above us, thinking.
A third flicked upwards, angled, from the side, to climb and climb then carve straight down.
A fourth that, late in flight, will arc in such a way it might provide a template for all future beauty.
And, on the boy's face, as he gets it and as the world falls open slightly to show its workings, oh the joy.

Did you know?

The Archer is printed each month on paper made from 100% recycled fibre, mostly retrieved from old newspapers collected by local authorities around the country. It is made here in the UK in King's Lynn in Norfolk, some 50km from our printers Sharman and Co in Peterborough.

The Archer online

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