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Madden's celebrates decade of success

By Sue Holliday

On Sunday 27 August, Margaret and Kieran Madden celebrated the tenth anniversary of running their pub on the High Road by holding a party to thank all their regulars for their support.

In the past ten years, Madden's has played host to a long list of charity events. Margaret has supplied lovely food for the many parties that have been held there and the pub has often opened early for the rugby supporters.

The party started off with live music from Mick Connolly, including a few Irish songs to keep the boss happy. After that he had time to enjoy the party as the stage was taken over by a disco and the party got going

with a real swing. While many got up to dance, others, like me, sat wondering where the past ten years had gone.

I remember asking Kieran, then the new landlord, if *THE ARCHER* team could continue meeting in the pub; the answer was an unreserved yes. Since then Madden's has hosted our meetings every Saturday and even named their cat Archie. We hope that we shall all be there in another ten years.



Kieran & Margaret Madden: 10 years of serving smiles.



In fine voice: the members of the North London Chorus.

Friendly faces in the chorus line

THE ARCHER has featured the trials and tribulations of the North London Chorus in recent editions. Here Marian Bunzl tells us more about the people and personalities that make the choir so successful.

Founded in 1976 as the Hill Singers under the direction of Alan Hazeldine, the North London Chorus is now an amateur choir with 80-90 members ranging in age from student concession to freedom pass.

We sing a broad range of choral works from the 16th to 21st Centuries, and our concerts are warmly received and well reviewed.

Murray Hipkin, our Musical Director since 2003, works with us by kind permission of

English National Opera. His enthusiasm, skill - and patience! - as teacher and conductor have helped the choir to flourish and develop an exciting and ambitious programme

of future works.

We rehearse on Thursday evenings at Martin School, East Finchley, and we give three concerts a year at various venues in North London but our main home is St. James Church, Muswell Hill.

We are a friendly bunch. The tea break is a major social event presided over by a lovely alto called Jane. If we were to rehearse in the Gobi Desert, she would be there with her blue teapot and large biscuit tin.

Apart from rehearsals, we organise a range of related activities: study days, work-

shops, an annual residential weekend (with an unmissable cabaret) and visits to concerts and the opera.

This friendly atmosphere can have consequences. A romance sparked off at a rehearsal blossomed at the study weekend and led to a wedding. Now we have our very own North London Chorus baby.

If you would like to know more about us or would be interested in joining us, please visit www.northlondonchorus.org.uk. For those who are internet-challenged, telephone Norman Cohen on 020 8349 3022.

Three go swashbuckling

By Lucy Chamberlin

'El Sid' is local author Chris Haslam's latest offering to our bookshelves. Entertainment is unstintingly provided here by the picaresque Spanish escapades of Lenny Knowles, Nick Crick and Sidney Starman. This unlikely trio of ex-con and overgrown chav, conscientious jailbird sidekick and wily old veteran with a secret embark on an illicit journey to recover ancient hidden gold, with dubious and widely differing motivations.

Haslam combines history with his own vivid imagination to give us a tale of civil war, stolen bullion and hit-squads that is as chaotic and laughable yet touchingly poignant as Don Quixote. Elements of Hemingway are apparent too, not merely in the Hispanic connection and theme of Anglo-Americans taking on foreign wars, but also in the vignettes of Sidney's memory which intersperse the primary story, becoming increasingly important to it. Past and present unfold with parallel anarchy, as the pensioner's darkly swashbuckling youth is revealed.

Characterisations are skilfully drawn by a sardonic if ultimately sympathetic narrator, whose occasionally overt

use of metaphor and simile may seem self-conscious but suits the subject matter. 'El Sid' (the title captures the incongruous mixture of cockney jargon and Spanish adventure) is both patently ridiculous and hugely

realistic and it all depends on what we want to believe.

As readers we are endeared, disgusted, impressed, relieved and made to laugh by a writer with an instinct for what we seek in any book: a great story.

STEWART DUNCAN

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