



Sylvia and Ian (standing) with the rest of the Team Buzz riders make it to Milan.

Two-wheel tour of Italy

Sylvia Ross and Ian Jackson saw Italy from the saddle when they took part in a 1,000-mile ride up its west coast from Sicily to Milan, taking in Naples, Rome and Pisa on the way.

They were part of Team Buzz, a group who are raising money for the charity Cardiac Risk in the Young (CRY). Two of the team unexpectedly lost siblings to Sudden Adult Death Syndrome at very young ages.

With the help of Bike and Run in East Finchley, Sylvia and Ian got their bikes ready for the 12-day ride. A support vehicle of volunteers drove each leg with them and pitched tents ready for the evening.

Sylvia said the most spectacular section of the ride was

the Amalfi coast, the hardest part was riding through Milan across 10 miles of wet cobbles after a thunderstorm and the sorest part was her bottom for the whole of the second week.

CRY also help to raise awareness of heart defects, which claim the lives of 12 fit and healthy young people each week in the UK alone. To find out more about the ride and other fundraising events, visit www.teambuzz.co.uk. To support the team with a donation, go to www.justgiving.com/teambuzzitaly.

Surge of support for saving Fortis Green Allotments

By Sheila Armstrong

In September, *THE ARCHER* reported on Thames Water's plans to sell off the site occupied by the Fortis Green Allotments to create space for two blocks of flats and 18 houses on the land.

As planned, the company did auction quite a few of its properties on 7 October, mostly to developers, but not the Fortis Green Allotments. Thanks to swift and determined action by the allotment holders, the Muswell Hill site was not put up for grabs on that day.

Trust formed

Amid a lot of local support and messages from celebrities, TV presenters Monty Don, formerly of *Gardener's World*, and Kate Humble of *Autumnwatch*, among them, the Fortis Green allotment holders have formed a trust to help them buy the land from Thames Water.

Two members of the Trust, Sarah Martin and Ruth Grif-fiths, have finally met with the company to ascertain how the sale will be conducted and have had some initial discussions on price. Importantly, Thames Water has agreed to reply.

Fighting fund

Meanwhile, the Fortis Green Community Allotments Trust is fundraising, initially to cover legal fees. Donations are always welcome. The Trust has

first refusal and, once a price for the land is known, fund-raising will begin in earnest. A first-stage lottery bid has been put forward as part of the Big Lottery Fund's Local Food

Programme.

For an update on the campaign go to www.savefortisgreenallotments.com where you can sign up for a newsletter or sign the e-petition.

KALASHNIKOV KULTUR

By Ricky Savage, the voice of social irresponsibility

Not just for Christmas

It's that time of year again, time for overspending and overeating and overdrafts. Time for wall to wall tinsel, CDs of carols you've come to loathe, mince pies, turkey and stupid stickers announcing that a dog is not just for Christmas. Problem is, a dog is just not a good idea any time of year.

As our leader and superhero Brown Gordon flies at the speed of light to Copenhagen to turn the world green it's time to ask ourselves what we can do to help create a green Christmas. And it's not just us; our pets can help, starting with man's best friend.

The reality is that your average pooch is not eco-friendly. The paw print of a medium-sized pooch is more than twice that of a gas-guzzling 4x4. Just think of the damage a whole pack of fox hounds can do to the planet, never mind what they can do to a fox.

Don't feel too smug about your cat, because it's a double whammy. One cat does as much damage as a Ford Focus. Keep several of the little monsters and you may as well drive a Porsche. A cat is a full-on killing machine and the average mog terminates an average of 25 small birds, mice or frogs a year.

Hamsters? Keep two of them and you damage the environment as much as a 46-inch plasma screen TV does and that's before they die inconveniently and have to be given a full requiem mass.

So, what pets can you keep? What makes for a good, green Christmas pet? The best bet is to get one you can eat. You can't go wrong with rabbits. Get a matching pair, let them do what rabbits do and then eat the offspring. Or how about chickens? You get eggs as well and little chickens and Sunday lunch. Or follow in the footsteps of Gerard de Nerval who used to take his pet lobster for walks round Paris. Probably a great way to work up an appetite, for lobster perhaps?

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Obituary: Frederick Racklyeft

Tutor Frederick Racklyeft died peacefully in his sleep aged 58 at the Royal Free Hospital, Hampstead, on 14 November after a short illness. He will be fondly remembered by the many students he taught in the years he lived in London.

Mr Racklyeft, of Ossulton Way, was the much-loved son of Madge and the late Frederick, husband of Sharon, cherished brother of Gill and Paula, and devoted uncle of Kester, Justin, Alex and Adam.

The funeral service has already taken place. Donations can be made to The British Heart Foundation, c/o F J Luxton & Son, Funeral Directors, Ottery St Mary, Devon, EX11 1BE.

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