



Margaret Crockett, Gail Norcliffe, Diana Cormack, Chris Fuller, Rebecca Hawkes, Sue Love and Linda Sansom know a good read when they see one! Photo by Ian Cormack

Book club travels to Tuscany for 10th birthday

By Diana Cormack

Ten years ago my Cherry Tree Road neighbour Rebecca Hawkes set up a reading group of some women friends. Every summer since we have marked the occasion with a barbecue, a special event as it was the only one to which husbands were invited.

With the approach of our 10th birthday came thoughts of an even more special celebration. During this decade Rebecca and her husband John had acquired a property in Italy and someone suggested it should be the place for us to meet. Our reactions to this varied from silence to laughter then eventually to serious discussion, culminating with us arriving in the Tuscan hilltop town of Massa Marittima on Friday 6 September.

Amazingly we all made it for lunch within about an hour of each other, despite some having flown from Stansted to Pisa that morning, continuing by train or hire car, whilst one couple had driven from the South of France and my husband and I had driven from London!

Medieval Massa

Once we had settled in to our hotel with its fabulous view over the countryside, cars were abandoned and we became familiar with the steep climb

through the medieval streets to the town square. We learned a lot about Massa in a fascinating guided tour by local retired teacher Anna Rita Tiezzi, who had been to one of our meetings in London years before and had even read the book!

Husbands too

And for this particular group meeting our husbands had read the book (they usually do anyway) and were allowed to participate. This made an interesting difference – it couldn't just have been the setting and the wine! They also helped solve a literary quiz carefully prepared by Margaret Crockett which covered, amongst others, some of the 97 books we had read so far.

As well as getting to know each other better, we all shared some wonderful experiences which none of us will ever forget; so wonderful that we still can't quite believe we did it.

Tomato surprise

By Diana Cormack

The "guerrilla garden" which lies behind the High Road bus stop and the approach to Cherry Tree Wood entrance gives pleasure to people all the year round.

This is usually provided by a variety of flowers but in late summer a surprise visitor arrived in the form of three tomato plants. One of the gardeners told *THE ARCHER* that their seeds must have come in a batch of compost. At the time of writing the lovely little fruits were struggling to ripen as the warmth of the summer died away.

Choir is Berlin-bound

North London Chorus is going to Berlin. In November members are joining with a German choir, Cantus Domus, to perform Benjamin Britten's *War Requiem* at the Berlin Konzert Haus.

This work was first performed in 1962 at the rebuilt Coventry Cathedral. The Latin Mass is interspersed with the war poems of Wilfred Owen, and it needs huge forces: a large orchestra, a chamber orchestra, four soloists and three choirs (mixed, semi and children). And, of course, two conductors. With long-distance artistic decisions made between London and Berlin, this is making for an interesting rehearsal period.

The choir is arranging a return performance with Cantus Domus next year in or near London, but in the meantime it has a definite summer date with them for a programme of Brahms and Vaughan Williams at Milton Court at the Barbican. These concerts celebrate the centenaries of Benjamin Britten (1913) and the outbreak of World War 1 (1914) in a spirit of commemoration and reconciliation.

Open days at Academy

Around 1,200 parents and children attended the Archer Academy's first open evening on 9 October, some queuing for over an hour for their first chance to see the school in action.

Headteacher Mick Quigley thanked visitors for waiting patiently and said he was proud of the current Year 7 students whose enthusiasm for the school made them excellent advocates.

The school in Beaumont Close hosted two extra coffee mornings for Year 6 parents on

24 and 25 October, giving them a chance to chat to senior staff.

Support and personal care required some mornings/evenings for elderly lady with some dementia in East Finchley.
Contact 07956 552865 / 07791 883030 for further information.

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AUTUMN FAIR

Holy Trinity Church, Church Lane, N2

Saturday 9th November
12 noon to 3pm

Come and grab a bargain at one of the many stalls

There's plenty to keep the kids entertained with face painting and art activities!

Lunch and refreshments are available
Free Entry
Please support your local church and community

KALASHNIKOV KULTUR

By Ricky Savage, the voice of social irresponsibility

Pole-axed

Well, that's it, the last ball has been kicked, the last expletive deleted and the parrots are celebrating because England beat Poland and have postponed the inevitable ritual humiliation until next summer. It's not that I want humiliation, I'm not into some kind of 50 shades of failure, I'm just being realistic.

When the World Cup started in 1930, England was not a member of FIFA and even though Uruguay asked us specially to come, the FA said no. They said no in 1934 and 1938, when Italy won, and only finally got round to entering in 1950. What everyone remembers about that one was England losing to the USA and going home early. What everyone forgets is that Scotland qualified as second in their group behind England and then went off in a sulk and refused to go, thus starting that great tradition of Scottish underachievement.

High hopes and abject failure is the story of England's attempts at footballing success. We usually get no further than the quarter finals and sometimes don't even manage that. Just to make the point, every couple of tournaments we go one worse and don't even qualify. Forty years ago we gave all of Scotland a laugh by not going when they did and added to their joy four years later when we made a mess of it again. We even used up our stock of excuses when we failed to get to the USA in 1994 while the Irish got to the quarter finals.

And what of our 'glorious' success in 1966? Let's start with home advantage and end with the Russian linesman. Let's not mention the mindless clowns who celebrated the win by beating up German tourists. Not much to be proud of there. The only other time we got anywhere close to getting our clammy little hands on the trophy was in 1990 when we got to the semi finals and promptly lost on penalties to the Germans. Nice one, boys.

So when the whistle blows and England's finest lumber out into the Brazilian sun I will be watching in hope and expectation: hope that they don't cock it up and expectation that they will. They are England after all and they've made a habit of it.