



A good read anywhere in the world!. Photo Ian Cormack

Is this *THE ARCHER*'S longest trip?

Diana and Ian Cormack recently made a 5,000km road trip in Western Australia. They spent a month in the country's largest state, on a round trip from Perth down to Augusta and back up to Exmouth in the north-west (the furthest point permitted in their hire car).

Here, having stopped off at remote coastal resorts en route for some scuba diving, Ian accomplished his long-held ambition to swim with whale sharks.

The only glitch on the journey was that Ian lost his *ARCHER* diary. A search ensued and an expensive mobile call traced it

to a motel in Jurien Bay over 1,000km south. So the drive back from Exmouth to Perth had to be via that motel, though in all honesty there weren't many other routes to choose from!

Of course, a copy of *THE ARCHER* accompanied them and was given an airing at the Tropic of Capricorn.

The art of success

Former Institute teacher Henry Hagger has reached the finals of the Sunday Times/Smith and Williamson watercolour competition for the second year running. His entry will be exhibited in the Mall Galleries, near Trafalgar Square, from Monday 14 to Saturday 19 September.

A Muswell Hill resident, he taught painting and drawing at The Institute for 20 years, until it was relocated out of this area. From this

month he will be taking private classes. For further information, please contact 020 8888 5133 or henryhagger@yahoo.co.uk.

From the basement of Avenue House

By Daphne Chamberlain

Who doesn't love the idea of a house with an underground passage? You have until the end of September to see a tunnel that still leads from Avenue House into the surrounding grounds. You can't go through it, but you can enter the house down the cellar steps and through a reconstructed shelter, avoiding sandbags and plastic spiders.

The tunnel was an escape route in case of enemy action. Avenue House was used as a military hospital during and after the First World War, and as Finchley's Air Raid Precautions HQ in the Second World War.

Free exhibition

The current free exhibition contains a lot of material from The Finchley Society Archives, but there are also some interesting contributions from the public. I looked in during August, and I can now testify that a warden's tin helmet is heavy!

Fascinating, too, to see sets of cigarette cards: one showing the roles of the ARP, and another illustrating how to give first aid.

I was intrigued to see that the weekly ration of sardines per person was 16. Was there an estimated average of how many of these nutritious little fish could be packed into a tin?

Among new exhibits were two women's VAD uniforms; a reminder of the crucial role played by women in both world wars.

The exhibition continues

through September on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays, 2pm to 4.30pm, and Saturdays and Sundays, 12 noon to 4.30pm. Group visits may be booked by appointment for other times. Avenue House is part of Stephens House and Gardens, 17 East End Road, N3 3QE. Tel. 020 8346 7812. Website: www.stephenshouseandgardens.com.

Ofsted to a good start

The Archer Academy has received its first Ofsted report after an inspection in June. The school was given a grading of 'good', with the behaviour and safety of students rated as 'outstanding'.

The inspectors praised the richness of the academy's curriculum and said high-quality teaching was providing firm academic foundations for students.

An Academy spokesperson said: "September will be the start of a new chapter at the Archer Academy, with an enhanced senior leadership team, a brand new campus and a full lower school for the first time. We are looking forward to building on the successes and the areas for development highlighted by this report, and to continuing our drive to be recognised as a truly outstanding school."

You can read the full report on the school's website at: www.thearcheracademy.org.uk/our-first-ofsted-report.

Sox appeal

An appeal has been launched as a novel way of helping more than 6,500 people who sleep out on the streets every year in London. A group called the 999 Club wants to unite your odd socks with people who need them.

Organisers of the Sox Appeal say they've realised there are 13,000 feet in the capital that probably don't mind if the clean, dry socks they are given aren't quite the same colour or matching pattern.

Andrew Mitchell, head of fundraising, says: "We have a podiatrist who comes to treat our homeless, who have all sorts of ailments, in extreme cases trenchfoot. Clean socks will prevent this and that would be an amazing feat!"

The club is looking for all spares and pairs in adult sizes of all styles and any colour. All they need to be is clean and hole-free. Drop them off or post them to the 999 Club, 21 Deptford Broadway, SE8 4PA.



Joy of singing: Jennie Ensor

Open your mind to singing

Anyone interested in joining a local singing group can pop along to an open evening being held by Singing in London at the Archer Academy building in Beaumont Place, off The Bishops Avenue, on Monday 14 September.

The group meets weekly on Monday nights and specialises in boosting the confidence of its singers, teaching technique and encouraging everyone to work together as a choir.

Member Jennie Ensor didn't take up singing until the age of 35 and has been with Singing in London for just over a year.

She says: "One of the best things about our Monday night singing sessions is how you can arrive weary and stressed from the working day and emerge two hours later, energised and blissed out."

"Our musical director Kieran is fantastic at drawing out the best in our individual voices as well as helping us work together as a choir. We're encouraged to aim for a high standard but there's no pressure."

"Lately I've begun to enjoy the challenge of learning more difficult pieces and have sung solo in the last two Singing in London concerts: scary but a real buzz!"

Find out more at www.singinginlondon.com.

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