



Life on the open road... those were the days!

By David Melsome

With nowhere to go over the last few months in her beloved 15-year-old Suzuki car, Tess Hadik has at least had the memories of how the faithful four-wheeler took her and her mum on a 17,000-mile round trip through some of the world's harshest terrain.



Off road: Tess Hadik gives her beloved Suzuki a wash at home in East Finchley

Tess and Astrid, of Beech Drive, N2, were the first mother-and-daughter team to complete the Mongol Rally through Europe, Turkey, Georgia, Arme-

nia, Azerbaijan, Iran, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan to the finishing line in Ulan-Ude, Siberia. And back!

Car with character

All competing cars have to be under 1200cc. Tess bought her third-hand Suzuki over the phone from an unknown dealer just a few weeks before the rally and it turned out to be a mini-marvel.

Tess, 20, said: "My mother and I have zero mechanical knowledge but this was no problem thanks to our incredibly reliable yet tiny car. It has become our pride and joy. I graffiti painted him and named him Isibindi, which means brave warrior in Zulu."

Warm welcomes

Highlights of their immense journey through 26 countries were watching horseback archery and bone throwing in the World Nomad Games in Kyrgyzstan, and experiencing the generosity of people through the whole of Iran, where they were showered with friendly waves and offers of accommodation.

"It was an unforgettable journey, exploring countries I



Change of transport: Astrid, left, and Tess on horseback in Kyrgyzstan, central Asia

did not know existed, discovering their culture and music and savouring different foods," says Tess. "It was also amazing because my mother and I got on so well and had so much fun!"

More travels to come

The pair took part in the challenge two years ago, raising £3,600 for The Macular Society and its research into eyesight

and macular degeneration. Donations to the society are still welcome.

And as for Isibindi, despite a few squeaks and rumbles, he is still going strong. Tess says: "Since the rally he has taken us on road trips across Europe. He has just passed his MOT for another year of life and many more adventures."

Where there's hope...

By Julie Taylor

In anticipation of the wider opening of the school and in order to provide a break from everyone's new routine of home learning, Martin School in Plane Tree Walk, N2, decided to dedicate the first week of June to wellbeing and creativity.

The week was called 'Hope Week'. This was a whole school project, designed to bring the school community together, providing activities that siblings could complete together and parents and carers could enjoy too.

The children designed symbols representing hope, completed activities based on stories about hope, watched videos, engaged with philosophy activities, used nature to create images of hope, wrote poetry and immersed themselves in art activities.

One Martin School pupil described the week as: "The best week I have ever celebrated," and another said: "I found it fun and exciting. I loved painting and drawing about hope because it made me feel that there is hope everywhere."

School appeals for cash support

Martin School in East Finchley is appealing for donations after the cancellation of its popular summer fair last month left it short of funds for essentials like classroom resources, online projects and outdoor equipment.

Miriam Divwalla and Erini Rodis, parents and co-chairs of the primary school's MHSA charity, say: "We understand that this is a very difficult time financially for many of our school's families, so we are extending our request for donations outside the immediate school community. Any donations made into our MHSA PayPal account will enable us to help the school." Donations can be made to: <https://paypal.me/pools/c/8qaRxv5ia2>



Wheely inventive: Bike ball in Cherry Tree Wood Photo Diana Cormack

Bike ball... a whole new sport?

An unusual sight in Cherry Tree Wood last month was the innovative way a group of young men used their bicycles by turning them upside down and lining them up to play what looked like a version of volleyball crossed with football.

Elsewhere in the wood, one family had put up a form of tightrope between two trees to practise their balancing skills. Cherry Tree Wood has been well used as the lockdown has loosened slightly, with dogs being exercised, families picnicking and children playing.



Speak for Yourself, by Else B

From Academy to Academy

Two Year 9 students from the Archer Academy in East Finchley have had their work selected for the Royal Academy's Young Artists' Summer Show. Elsie B and Amelie C's pieces were chosen from 17,000 entries to be shown online from 12 July at youngartists.royalacademy.org.uk.



Dad, by Amelie C

FUN and MUSIC for BABIES and TODDLERS in N2 on **TUESDAYS** and **THURSDAYS** at 10am



with
LIVE ACCOMPANIMENT
ON VIOLIN AND GUITAR
at EAST FINCHLEY BAPTIST CHURCH,
Creighton Avenue



<https://www.facebook.com/teddybearsclub>
<https://www.facebook.com/SteppingStonesEastFinchley>
or text 07836 284538