



Medal-holders: Fundraisers at last year's Big Fun Walk

Choose your route for Big Fun Walk

By David Melsome

The annual sponsored walk from East Finchley to Westminster is North London Hospice's biggest fundraiser of the year, but due to the pandemic, organisers are once again asking supporters to make the event their own in June 2021.

My Big Fun Walk gives everyone the opportunity to walk their own chosen route in their local neighbourhood or, if restrictions allow, follow the traditional 8.5 mile route into the centre of town.

Walkers can take part over the weekend of 19-20 June with family, friends or alone and walk in memory of a loved one or just to support the hospice. Covid-19 continues to have a dramatic impact on the hospice's ability to provide its essential services so fundraising is more important than ever.

"We were bowled over by the generosity of our supporters who took part in My Big Fun Walk 2020," said Robin Langrishe, the hospice's fundraising director. "More than 800 walked for us and raised over £85,000, which gave an enormous boost to our funds. We look forward to many taking part and supporting us again in 2021."

Sign up soon and take advantage of the event's Early Bird Offer. For more information and to register visit www.bigfunwalk.co.uk



New single: Model Society

Model release

North London indie rock band Model Society have released their new single on Kitchen Disco Records. Called I Spy, it's a thunderous mix of six-string guitars and drums. Model Society had been hoping to play at the East Finchley Festival until it was cancelled... but they will be back playing live soon. In the meantime find their new single on YouTube.

A writer's labour of love

By Daphne Chamberlain

"A labour of love" is how local author Iqbal Ahmed describes his new book. *The Art of Hospitality* is dedicated to "all those who work in the hospitality industry and whose lives have been impacted by the pandemic". Iqbal himself was employed for 20 years by a London hotel, but that had to come to an end last October.

He tells us that there are over 700 big hotels in London, but with few staff who were born and brought up in the UK. Employees who worked long hours for low wages now realise that their lives were built on quicksand.

Loss of work and contacts

Readers of Iqbal's previous widely acclaimed travel books know that he has a large circle of friends and acquaintances around the world, ready with information for his trips abroad. These contacts include people met through his job as a concierge. So his work gave him both source material and money to write.

The pandemic stopped both these benefits. He also lost his usual coffee shop writing



Former hotel worker: Iqbal Ahmed and son

space. The background buzz stimulated him, while family distractions were just too distracting. It's partly thanks to Rachel, a kind East Finchley neighbour who gave him the freedom of her spare room, that we can read this book.

Good company

It reminds me of a journal or an informal letter. He tells us about places he visits as though we were chatting. In the words of a Booker Prize judge, "I can't think of a modern travel writer who is better company".

This time he writes about Geneva, Zurich, Milan, Venice, Barcelona, Grenada and Paris, but it is also a journey through the author's mind. There are

always memories and comparisons, particularly of his native Kashmir. If you want to know why Kashmir resembles Switzerland, read this book!

He reflects that with more free time he could have been less "touristy" in his travels, but that is the other side of the full-time employment coin.

The Pandemic, Brexit and climate change cast inevitable shadows, but Iqbal always has an apt quotation. As Seneca said, "There are more things likely to frighten us than there are to crush us".

The Art of Hospitality, by Iqbal Ahmed, is available from <https://coldstreampublishers.com>

Proms go marching

Organisers of the annual music and arts festival Proms at St Jude's in Hampstead Garden Suburb have vowed to run the event this summer whatever the ongoing pandemic restrictions might be.

They say the week-long programme of performances from Saturday 26 June to Sunday 4 July will lift spirits and provide much-needed support for their target charities, Toynbee Hall and North London Hospice, as well as work for performers who have been badly affected by lockdown. What form the festival will take is uncertain but, at present, organisers are working on the basis of having seats widely spaced at all venues, and thorough cleaning between each performance. There would be possible online access to events for those who can't or would prefer not to attend in person. The popular Proms walks are expected to go ahead with smaller group numbers to enable social distancing.

As a result of needing to space out the audiences, there will be fewer tickets than usual available for each event but in a few cases there may be more than one performance of the same concert, one in the late afternoon and one in the evening.

Tickets will go on sale in May. Friends' membership schemes give priority access to the limited number of tickets and memberships will be on sale from March.

Be our eyes and ears

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**All Saints' Church, Durham Road,
East Finchley
Church of England**

You are welcome to join us for:

**Sunday mass at 10.00 a.m. and
Weekday masses as advertised on the website.
Face masks must be worn for the time being.**

Or join our live-streamed services on our Facebook page:

<https://www.facebook.com/allsaintsef/>

The church is also open for private prayer as advertised on the website.

Prayer requests are gladly accepted.

For more information, contact the Vicar, Fr Ian Chandler, on 020 8883 9315

Email: vicar.saintsabounding@gmail.com or check out our website:

<http://www.allsaints-eastfinchley.org.uk>