



Belly dancing can be for all body types

By Gail Norcliffe

A new addition to the activities list for East Finchley residents to consider is belly dancing. Newcomer to our community, professional belly dancer Stefania Kroo, is offering women and girls classes, performances and an array of fun ways to try this type of dance.

Of mixed Polish and Czech heritage, Stefania is a great advocate for belly dancing and how empowering it can be. She started learning in her early teens having previously tried and disliked the rigidity of ballet.

What particularly appealed to Stefania, who had been a victim of bullying as a child, was that belly dancing celebrated women as they are. From the outset, Stefania could see that this dance form meant women didn't have to worry about their body type or weight or C-section scars or anything not fitting with a cultural stereotype of female beauty.

Stefania went on to spend over 25 years studying, performing and teaching Middle Eastern dance, including attending festivals and competitions, meeting many other dancers.

As well as teaching belly dance classes, Stefania organises performances at women's dance evenings, weddings, parties and hen dos. On truly special occasions these can include an LED costume complete with



Empowering for women: Belly dancer Stefania Kroo

fire and candles. For more participative events such as girls' birthday parties to try belly dancing, veils and costumes are provided.

Stefania is enthusiastic about what she can offer. "I'm really excited to bring belly dance classes, performances and activities to East Finchley and create a warm, welcoming

space for local women, girls and families to build confidence, joy and self-expression through this dance form. For me, belly dance is really about bringing people together, female empowerment and most importantly having fun."

Stefania's Instagram page through which she can be contacted is [bellydance_london](https://www.instagram.com/bellydance_london).

Emergency in the mountains

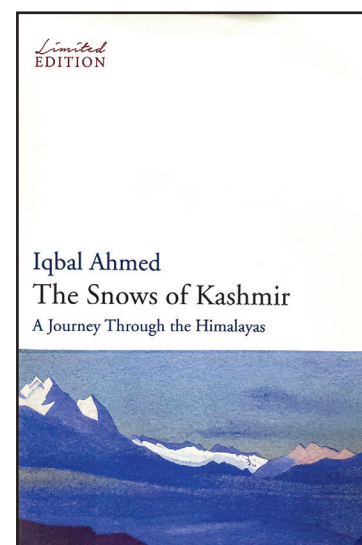
By Gail Norcliffe

This summer's horrendous flash floods in Nepal and Tibet make Iqbal Ahmed's new book *The Snows of Kashmir* especially topical. Former East Finchley resident Iqbal was inspired by climate change concerns to write about its effect on the glaciated regions of Kashmir from where he originates.

At the heart of the work are stories of Iqbal's regular travels to Kashmir and the Himalayan region. Summer holidays are spent visiting family, friends and childhood haunts in the Kashmir valley and Iqbal's book is a gentle meander through his memories of growing up and how previous trips compare with the present day.

As the roof of the world, the effects of climate change in the vicinity are alarmingly apparent. A melting glacier splintering and crashing caused August's devastation. The Hindu Kush-Himalayan's 50,000 glaciers are receding faster than before. The region was severely flooded in 2014 resulting in disastrous consequences; and now this year the region is experiencing appalling suffering again.

Inhabitants rely on the glaciers and the associated fragile environment in multiple ways. As is happening across the globe, poorer countries and their peoples are bearing the brunt of the increasing difficulties of life in a warming world. *The Snows of Kashmir*, which has also been reviewed in the Times Literary Supplement, describes the extreme pollution in modern India from Delhi to new satellite cities like Gurgaon. Notorious for its poor air quality, Iqbal talks about Delhi's resulting fog, which



Timely warning: The cover of Iqbal's book

restricts visibility to 30-40 metres.

In the 30 years since he's been in London, Iqbal has noticed a worrying change in the weather. He says: "When I first arrived here, most people didn't even have fans in their houses but now there are more and more home air conditioning units. The climate emergency is frighteningly apparent in what happened in Nepal and Tibet and made worse by a lack of support to reducing carbon emissions from key players and climate change deniers, including the American government. My book illustrates some of the global effects of the crisis."

RICKY SAVAGE... THE VOICE OF IRRESPONSIBILITY

1066 and all that

Well, it's here after about 900 years, the oldest piece of art as propaganda in Europe, a glorious justification for invasion - and you can see it in London. As long as you don't mind paying £33 for 40 minutes and queuing in the rain, it's all yours. And they say it's where 'history' starts.

If you were at school before about 1970 you might have learned a bit about the Romans, the druids and Stonehenge before skipping most of the next 600 years until you got to 1066. Why? Because no event changed England as much or as permanently. New year, new language, new rulers. King Charles III can trace his line back to William the Conqueror, and the last descendants of the Norman nobility are only now getting their sticky little fingers prised from the levers of power. So what really happened?

When old King Edward the Confessor died childless in January 1066 there was a power vacuum. The English nobility settled on the most powerful earl, Harold Godwinson, and made him king. Fine. Except that William, Duke of Normandy claimed he'd been offered it and that Harold had promised to support him. Not fine, especially when William decided to invade.

We all know about the Battle of Hastings, Harold getting an arrow in the eye and William becoming king. What we forget is that the Normans changed the rules. The English fought behind a shield wall with two-handed axes, the Normans used archers and armed men on horses. Enter the cavalry, the enduring shock troops of all warfare until the tank arrived in 1916.

Once the battle was over, William set about securing his new realm. Castles were built to control the people and cathedrals to control their minds. When there was a rebellion in the north in 1069, William launched a campaign of starvation, slaughter and destruction that killed over 100,000 people. Even the Domesday Book in 1087 described the north as 75% wasteland.

It didn't end there. By 1075 more than 95% of the country had Norman lords who ate different food, drank wine instead of ale and spoke a different language. This was an occupation and a subjugation that outdid any efforts by 19th-century colonial powers.

And the Bayeux Tapestry? It was commissioned by William's half-brother Odo, the Archbishop of Canterbury, and embroidered by women in convents and priories in and around London. These women had seen their country occupied and now had to produce something to justify and glorify the invasion.

Go and see it, admire the art, remember 1066 and read the history. Like I said: great art, but art as propaganda.

Puzzle time: Re-Griddable

Re-Griddable is a twist on the free daily online game griddable.co.uk created by two East Finchley residents, Stuart Miller and Matt Robinson.

There may be more than one solution to each Re-Griddable but there is definitely at least one, which comes from a maximum scoring game of Griddable.

If you get stuck the official Griddable word-checker may help (griddable.co.uk/word-checker). If you like playing Griddable online, why not join the East Finchley Leaderboard? Go to Groups on the site and use code BUJRM4.

Re-Griddable No.8

Place the letters to create eight four-letter words — four left-to-right and four downwards.

A A N S T T V

		O	W
E			E
	P	E	
L	E		

Turn to page 11 for this month's solution

Looking for volunteers?

Are you looking for volunteers to help in your community group or organisation? Our Be Part of It column is published on page 2 every month and gets results. Submissions are free and are included subject to available space.

Please submit your listing up to a maximum of 80 words to news@the-archer.co.uk, marking your email 'Be Part of It'.