

Queen Spark NEWSLETTER

QueenSpark is a non-profit community publishing and writing organisation. We publish books about local people's lives, run creative writing groups and courses and facilitate oral history projects. For the last thirty years, QueenSpark has helped people in Brighton and Hove tell their stories.

Welcome to the February 2006 QueenSpark newsletter.

Once again we are pleased to offer you the chance to catch up on all of the news about our projects, and also to offer you many opportunities to get involved. This newsletter is distributed to all interested individuals and organisations concerned with the work of QueenSpark, and we hope that you enjoy the contents.

New Titles



Look out for three new QueenSpark books available soon and to be launched officially on 1st March 2006. See page 3 of this newsletter for more details.

NEWS

The launch of the QueenSpark Archive takes place at the Brighthelm Centre, Brighton, at 7.30pm on 1st March. Supported by the Heritage Lottery Fund, this project has enabled QueenSpark to catalogue and store all of our 81 (and counting!) books, scan them, and make them available online in a fully-searchable database. This unique collection will serve as a major historical resource for local people, schools, researchers and ex-Brightonians from all over the world. Many thanks are due to Desktop Display, who have co-ordinated the sourcing and digitisation of the collection, and the many volunteers who have scanned, read, proof-read, and summarised all of the books. Many other exciting projects are coming to fruition, or being launched, on 1st March (see inside); if you would like to attend, or would like further information, e-mail

rosemary@queensparkbooks.org.uk

Also, see inside for details of our brand new website, www.thedeckchair.org.uk

Contact details

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Join our yahoo discussion group by visiting www.queensparkbooks.org.uk/contact.html and following the instructions.



Supported by the
Heritage Lottery Fund



2005 – A Great Year for My Brighton and Hove



The photograph shows the winners of the various categories in the Brighton and Hove Virtual Festival Web Awards. Jennifer Drury, who represented My Brighton and Hove is in the centre in black.

My Brighton and Hove enjoyed an absolutely bumper year in 2005. There were some really interesting and exciting additions to the site during the year and their popularity can be judged by our ever increasing visitor numbers. New sections included 'The Peoples' War' containing WW2 memories and photographs; 'Scene and Heard', an exciting new look into the contemporary music scene in Brighton; and 'Green Havens' an exploration of the very popular 'allotment culture' in the city.

In the autumn we had a recruitment drive for volunteers and now have new members of our group who are 'learning the ropes'. Also, along with our established team, they are working hard to help construct the newly designed MyBH site which will be launched early next year. Perhaps visitors do not always realise how much work is involved maintaining such a very large site as MyBH; our volunteers are its life blood and without them we would not be able to cope. So if you are interested in finding out about opportunities for volunteering with My Brighton and Hove please email for details

jennifer@mybrightonandhove.org.uk

But of course the most exciting event in 2005 was being awarded 'Best Community Site' in the Brighton and Hove Virtual Festival Awards.

This was the third time we have gained this prestigious award having won previously in 2002 and 2004, and been runners up in 2001 and 2003.

This year's win was especially significant because, in addition to the award, we were presented with a very valuable piece of equipment from the sponsors of the 'Best Community Site' category. Geeks on Wheels, a local computer business - presented us with a brand new laptop computer which will be an enormously useful resource for our volunteer group.

As we operate without outside funding, and rely on the goodwill of our volunteers, winning this wonderful piece of equipment has given the group a well deserved boost.

With a very successful year behind us, we look forward to an even more exciting 2006 and the launch of the new My Brighton and Hove website. We hope that its new streamlined design will make visiting MyBH an even more pleasurable experience. Please remember that anyone can contribute their memories or experiences to MyBH – uploading your material to the website is very easy with our 'Pagemaker' facility. And if you need any assistance, just mail

info@mybrightonandhove.org.uk

– we are always very pleased to help.

Education Pack

Work on the Queenspark Archive Education Pack continues apace, with the first stage viewable on line from the beginning of March. The Pack has used the Archive as the source for 10 educational themes, and multiple sub-themes, which link to extracts from Queenspark books and suggested learning tasks for Keystage 2 and 3 learners and teachers. An Introduction Pack will be sent to all Brighton and Hove schools in March, and will be piloted in selected classrooms, before going fully online at the end of the month. Follow the link on www.thedeckchair.org.uk to view the Pack.

Write for Life

We are pleased to announce that Brighton & Hove Council's Global Grants Programme has supported our 'Write for Life' programme, due to begin in May. The project will target homeless and ex-homeless individuals in a process of reading and dissecting first-person life stories from the QueenSpark Archive, in advance of developing their own writing and editing skills. This will lead to a publication later this year.



Migrant English Project

QueenSpark is excited to be collaborating with the Migrant English Project at the Cowley Club on London Road in a new project. We will be targeting newly-arrived individuals that attend the club in a programme of creative writing and literacy development. We are pleased to have received Awards for All funding for this project, which will result in a publication in the Autumn.



WRITING GROUP DETAILS

QueenSpark is pleased to host a number of writing groups here at our base at 49 Grand Parade. If you are interested in joining any of these, please contact them direct.

Women Writers

Thursdays 10am-12 noon
Contact Claire Shelton-Jones
Tel. 505642

For women of all ages and outlooks. Small informal group reading our work: poetry, stories etc, engaging in constructive criticism and doing group writing exercises.

Club '94

Thursdays 2.30-4.30pm
Contact Simon Jenner
Tel. 01273 202876

'We're free-range writers with no pecking order'

A long established, dynamic group with a strong focus on poetry, offering detailed critique and constructive discussion. Whilst keen on publication and public readings, participation at any level is welcomed.

Novelist's Group

Thursdays 7.30-9.30pm
Contact Stephanie
Tel. 01273 727877

This enthusiastic group warmly welcomes would-be novelists at any stage. Anyone with work to share or an idea to discuss can be sure of direct and useful input.

Circus Street Writers

Having completed the CCE Creative Writing Certificate at the University of Sussex, we now meet bi-weekly on Wednesday evenings to exchange criticism and feedback and generally support one another in finishing our novels. We are not therefore looking for new members.

Please return undelivered newsletters to:
Queenspark Books, 49 Grand Parade, Brighton BN2 9QA



New Website

We're very excited to be launching

www.thedeckchair.org.uk

a new website for all aspects of Brighton & Hove literature. On the site you can read articles, reviews, and opinions, and it's very easy to make your views heard too! Also you can get involved as part of the **Editors Group** or as one of our **Feature Writers**.

Editors Group

The tremendous public response we received to our call for editors has resulted in the formation of an Editors Group. These volunteers include professionals keen to offer their services, previous QueenSpark volunteers and beginners with an interest in editing.

Their first job has been to work alongside professional editor Anita Phillips, to develop a publishing style guide. This simple, easy to use set of rules will help develop a house style for QueenSpark. As well as being involved in the production of this guide, the Editors Group will be responsible for implementing and maintaining the guidelines in all QueenSpark's future output.

The expansion of our web site will mean extra scope for new writers. The most important role of the Editors Group, therefore, will be to offer support, guidance, advice and training to members of the community who want to tell their stories.

It's not too late to get involved! If you are interested in editing, feature writing or researching local stories – we could still use your help. Contact

sarah@queensparkbooks.org.uk to find out more.

Feature Writers

This is your chance to enthuse about writers and literature relating to Brighton and Hove. We want reviews and articles about books or plays that feature the city in some way. Is the madcap style of Robert Rankin's *Brightonomicon* something you'd like to rhapsodise over or perhaps you want to tell us why you think *Brighton Rock* remains an enduring classic? We also want features on writers who have lived and worked here past or present. We're looking for those unusual stories: from the seedy side of Patrick Hamilton's obsessions to the nude bathing of Brian Behan!

Send in your articles and reviews to sarah@queensparkbooks.org.uk or get in touch if you'd like more details (01273) 571710

Please note – contributions may be edited before appearing on the site.

New Books from

Alt-Future



Alt-Future is a new collection of fiction writing looking at the future of Brighton and Hove. From text messages sent in 2046, to demonstrations by seagulls attempting to stop redevelopment, to dystopian ecological nightmares – and everything in between – Alt-Future is a fascinating collection of what-might-be. The book follows a similar format as 2005's Alt-History; entries were solicited by holding a competition open to all, with different age categories, and ran alongside a course for those in need of creative writing support, facilitated by Isanna Curwen. Designed by Peter Oakes.

Bangla Brighton



Published in collaboration with the Adult and Community Learners Unit at Brighton & Hove Council, the book tells a fascinating story of the city's Bengali community; how and why they came to be here, how they assimilated, issues around adapting to life in Brighton & Hove, and their memories of Bangladesh. The material was gathered by a group of Bengali volunteers who had been trained by Brighton & Hove Museum in oral history techniques, in order to carry out interviews with other members of their community. Following this, Peter Oakes edited the material, and Amanda Stones of Desktop Display designed the book.

The Faith Project



The Faith Project profiles three faith groups – the Sudanese Coptic, Progressive Jewish and Muslim community – who have been resident in Brighton & Hove for many years. The book uses text edited from a series of interviews carried out by members of the community, and tells how they came to be here, and how individuals practice their faith in the city. There will also be a segment of our new website devoted to the project.