

20th Century Sparks!

Community

QueenSpark Books

QueenSpark Books have helped local writers publish their life stories for over 30 years. Here some of the writers explain their motivations and what it means to be part of the writing community. For further information on QueenSpark Books visit [Our History](#).

When I was in my early twenties my grandmother gave me two pieces of jewellery that she had bought from the pawnbrokers whilst she had worked there.

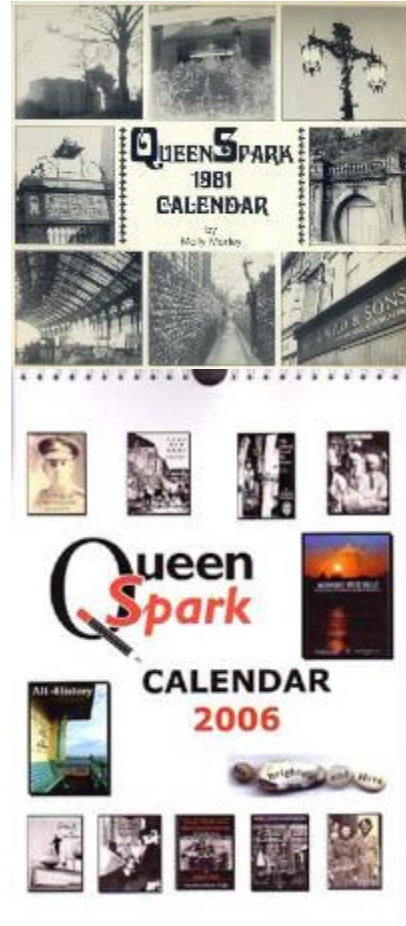
Years later whilst reading the QueenSpark Book *Backyard Brighton*, I came across a short description of "Uncles", a pawn shop in Edward Street and thought that this could possibly have been the same shop where my grandmother had worked.

I gave her the book to read and this brought forth many more recollections of that period, which I found both sad and amusing, yet very fascinating. I felt that these memories of life in the pawnbrokers from "the other side of the counter" should be recorded, as many people have no idea of just how hard life was for the poor in Brighton during the first World War and how terrible the economic and housing conditions were for many of the families with their men away at the War.

Over a few visits to my grandmother, I took notes while she recounted her years at "Uncles" and then compiled the notes in order but kept them as much as possible in her own words, so that it is her story and not my interpretation that I have presented. I then sent the script to QueenSpark in the hope that they might find it interesting enough to publish or at least keep as an archive as reference to the social history of Brighton. *Jane Russell in the introduction to [At the Pawnbrokers](#) by Lillie Morgan*

When I wrote "Everything Seems Smaller" in my early retirement years, it was with no knowledge or hope that it would ever be published as a book.

After sending a copy to each of my brothers and sisters, the original manuscript was confined to a drawer at home in a bundle of typewritten sheets which might never have seen the light of day again - until I had ceased to - except for the fact that that my sister Sylvia knew of a Brighton community writing and publishing group called QueenSpark Books.





Community

QueenSpark Books - continued

Sylvia had read every one of the books published by QS. They were all written by people of humble origin about life in and around a Brighton of long ago. Wonderful stories that could never have reached a reading public except for the existence of QS Books and its hard working and dedicated workers.

Sylvia sent my work to QS who read it, approved it, divided it into chapters, put it through all the necessary procedures and produced - a book! A kid of the 1920's Brighton streets, who left school at the age of 14, had the joy of seeing his work in print - an impossibility but for the existence of QueenSpark Books.

Sid Manville - Our Small Corner

Both Jeremy Gavron and the people of QueenSpark Books tell me that the copyright will still belong to me, and in the future I could still send it to 'mainstream publishers' in the hope that they may publish it too.

To that I would say that QueenSpark Books are more mainstream than the mainstream, as they are at least giving me the opportunity to get into print. So I would thank them, and in particular Lorna (Jonesy) for keeping in touch, and myself informed of the book's progress.

Ron Piper - Take Him Away

I would like to thank Mr. Stephen Yeo who upon reading my manuscript was the instigator of its being published by QueenSpark Publications. To the four charming ladies, Ursula Rohde, Mary Boakes, Mary Mason and Pauline Jones, who through their hard word on the typewriter and the arrangements, made the book possible. And to any other members of QueenSpark, or otherwise, who were anyway connected with its publication. Thank you,

Bert Healey - Hard Times and Easy Terms

Although there are obviously certain things against QueenSpark, there are more things for it, and for these kinds of books and publications. Therefore it does seem to me to be progressive. It should carry on in such a way.

It is also very important for someone like me to be working through an organisation, otherwise nobody listens if you're on your own. From a position of self-interest alone it is very important to me. If you try and do a thing on your own of this kind, when you're dealing with governments, you stand absolutely no chance at all. To write the book about my affairs may help me more than anything else. And that's not the only outlook. It also gives me something to do.

Otherwise retired life has been made very dull. All I can do is to drive myself to a pre-destined seat somewhere, sit for a time, try to walk a short distance for exercise and return home. All my planning for a much more exciting retirement has disappeared. With better medical care it need never have happened this way.



Community

QueenSpark Books - continued

Perhaps QueenSpark could go a bit further. Perhaps I've gone a bit further than others with what I've recorded in this book. Those like me who are a bit more politically-minded than others, I suppose, would put what I would call a better case.

Les Moss - Live and Learn

I have often thought about writing my memories especially those of my childhood. My son-in-law having just completed his course in English encouraged me to put pen to paper. I was then given some books to read which had been produced by QueenSpark, from one of these I found an address where I could contact someone to give me information about getting my work into book form. The original idea was to make a book for my children, as I wanted them to know me in my childhood and I dedicate this book to them.

After having completed a third of it, a writing group for women was started by QueenSpark and I was invited to join. It started a new phase of my life. I suddenly realized how much I had always enjoyed writing. I had always been a great letter writer. I was given encouragement to complete this book and thoroughly enjoyed helping to produce it. I have made many new friends and enjoy listening to their work.

Oliver Masterson - The Circle of Life

"I joined this group so I could watch other people write stories. I never meant to do it myself, but somehow they tricked me into it"

Mary Stephenson in Are you sitting comfortably?