

WHEN IS A BOOKSHOP MORE THAN JUST A BOOKSHOP?

Explore what local people have to say about Newham Bookshop.

Find their photo biographies to learn more about them.

'When [my book] was coming up to publication, I saw Vivian, and she was being really excited about stocking the book. She didn't even really know what it was about or anything, she was just like, 'You're local, we're going to push your book.' And then she said to me about having the launch there. And, I had never even thought about it. Because I thought I'm going to have the launch in Daunt Books in Marylebone, because that's what you do, you're a debut, you want to make a big splash. And she sort of said to me, 'But you're an East London writer, and, this is where you're from. Why are you having it all the way in west London, Marylebone, in a bookshop where you never really go?' And then, I thought about it, of course, she's right, I've got to do it in Newham, so all my friends in my community could come. And that was lovely, and I'm so glad I did that. [People come up to me and say] 'I just bought your book off Vivian.' It's really nice. I just feel so well supported by her, and by everyone in the bookshop. And you feel like they're quite proud of you for doing it.'

LUAN GOLDIE

'We'd say, 'Oh we just went to look at the books,' look at the books. And then sometimes I would ask, 'Oh Mum, can I have £5 to buy a book?' And she was like, 'No, I haven't got enough.' So, a lot of the time when I was younger, we wasn't buying the books, but we were coming in to look at them. And Vivian knew that, because she'd ask us, 'Do you need any help?' And obviously she'd see us coming in often, you know, they're not buying. But that's what I liked about Vivian, she never told us not to come back. She encouraged us, she just let us sit and read the books. And, and you know, she never bothered us.'

KAY ZAHMOUL

'I've written quite a bit about my childhood growing up, going to football matches, and that District Line journey from Upminster to Upton Park. There's a whole sort of mythology attached to that train line for me, and it's strangely romantic for a kid from Brentwood in Essex, coming to slightly edgy East London, back in the days of skinheads and hippies and everything else in the 1970s.

I write about my life of supporting West Ham United. My last book was on the final season at Upton Park, so for that, I did an interview with Vivian and a whole chapter on the Newham Bookshop. And I did an interview with Ken and Carol from Ken's Cafe. So there was a whole chapter on them and there was a chapter on the pubs around Upton Park.

So yeah, it was very much a souvenir of the area and how it was going to change. It's sad to see the ground gone and that rather ugly sort of grey monolith building going up where once there was a great football ground.'

PETE MAY

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'The bookselling is not the major theme of it. The major theme is to inspire children to believe that they can read and they write and enjoy it, and maybe become writers themselves, or illustrators.

I do see my role as being a reader first and foremost. Because you can't sell books unless you read. If you really want your children to progress, encourage them to read. Go and join the library and encourage them to read. The more they read the better they will be at coping with their schoolwork.

Michael Rosen says 'There is a book for every child, you just have to find it.'

JOHN NEWMAN

I made friends and met people via the bookshop. People who are still famous like Michael Rosen came to the bookshop a few times. And his book *We're Going On A Bear Hunt* was very popular. And Benjamin Zephaniah, the Rastafarian poet, he came in.

It was very friendly. They had two cats at one time, which were popular with the children.

It was a very friendly place. And parents came in and were interested in what the children were reading. John Newman who worked at the children's side was very good at advising parents on what their children should be reading.

I more or less gave up volunteering when I was ninety. [laughs]

I thought that was a reasonable age to give up. [laughs]

It's a very community-based shop. Very community-minded.

ADA VARLEY

Newham Bookshop means everything. For people like us, who like reading, it means everything. It's our oasis. It's our place to be, to keep our sanity. You meet like-minded people. Whatever goes on, the community is aware of it., whether it be politics - we obviously sell a lot of political books - we get involved with local authors, we get children to come in and I love to read to them. When it's Book Week we have about a thousand!

Another thing about the bookshop is again ... there's a war on poor people. If you close education for them and so on it's [sighs] ... I can't even say it because it hurts. It's such a dreadful, dreadful thing to happen.

KARIMA TURAY DAVIS