

Chair's Report

As I come to the end of my three years as Chair, I would like to look back on what has been another very busy year for QPARA. Queen's Park Day this year had the largest attendance ever of nearly 20,000 and we established that the day had been run for over 35 years. Thanks to the Queen's Park team of Helen Durnford, Andrea Szalanczi, Lesley Bailey, Carin Von Drehle, Louise Wilkins and Simone Baggie.

Thanks too to the many volunteers who help over the weekend of Queen's Park Day, setting up and taking down the tents and stands, running the stands and making announcements: Jamie Newall, John Blandy, David Hodge, Mark Nobury, Alison Moulding, Janis Denselow, Judy Lee and Marika Szalanczi amongst many others. And of course, thanks go too to Richard Gentry and the wonderful Park staff without whom QPD could not take place.

Our other big event of 2019 was the Queen's Park Book Festival, the second year in its current format. We were lucky to have the perfect weather for the day and a truly spectacular range of authors including Bernadine Evaristo, this year's joint-winner of the Booker Prize, as well as Howard Jacobson, a former Booker winner. Some of the other writers who joined us were John Lanchester, Misha Glenny (of McMafia fame) and Katherine Heaney talking with Martin Rosenbaum about a new family selection of 100 poems by her father Seamus. From the world of comedy, we had Jon Plowman with Reece Shearsmith from the League of Gentlemen. In the free Community Tent, we had a unscheduled visit from Jason Isaacs who compared The Refugee Comedians. The Book Festival Committee wanted to thank the many volunteers from QPARA members, the Park and QPCS.

Next year, of course, our third big event will take place in June: the wonderful Queen's Park Open Gardens and Studios.

It is essential to say that QPARA is not only about events but also about the amazing hard work of our action groups. Please see the attached for all of the action group members

who work so hard and relentlessly. In addition to those listed, I would like to thank, Julie and Rob Aspinall for guest-editing the QPARA Newsletter. Judy Lee was back for the recently published autumn newsletter which had included a photo of Robert Budwig who is the plantsman for all of the QPARA pots on Salusbury Road, outside the Library, Police Station and Queen's Park station where they are such a welcome to the Queen's Park Conservation Area.

Thanks too go to the Street Representatives, to minute takers Gabrielle Crockatt and Ruth Kitching, to David Hodge for arranging the printing and distribution of the minutes, to Mark Norbury for support behind the scenes and helping me prepare for the AGM, to Andrea for the refreshments and to John Blandy for opening up every month.

Planning is a subject that has been top the agenda this year with anti-social behaviour on Keslake Road and Planning in Lonsdale Road being recent hot topics which have actively engaged our members. Health is also an area of concern and we are lucky to have Robin Sharp and Deborah Unger working hard representing local residents' interests in the matter of the merger of the three GP practices.

To end on a positive note, how wonderful that we have succeeded in getting Brent to plant 90 trees in the streets covered by QPARA. Please don't forget to water them in the summer months!

Virginia Brand

14th November 2019