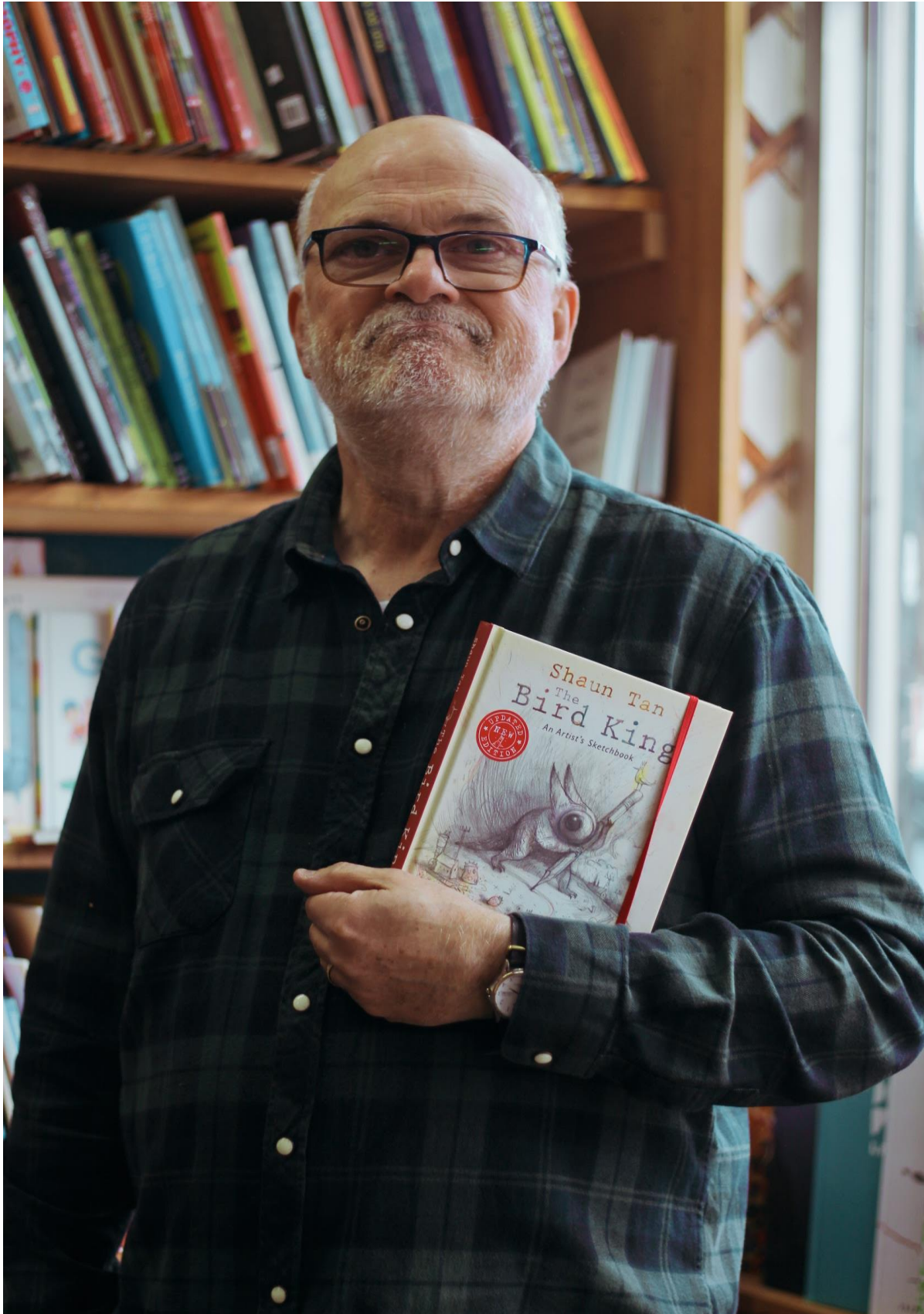


John Newman

A children's books expert at the Newham Bookshop



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John grew up in Tower Hamlets and loved reading when he was a child. He would borrow books from the libraries and save up his pocket money to buy comics at the Chrisp Street Market. He managed to buy *The Famous Five* by Enid Blyton at a little bookshop on East India Dock Road. John was a big fan of the illustrations in children's books.

As an adult, John and his wife Julie moved to Newham in 1982. They had two children, named Joe and Mathilde. After wandering around near their new flat in Newham, John and Julie found the Newham Bookshop. They began to offer their help on Saturdays for one hour to give the staff a lunch break. Back then, the bookshop was also a centre offering English classes for adults and parents. Julie, who was a teacher, taught literacy classes at the bookshop. John also worked as a social worker and took time off to look after his son Joe when he was a baby.

John sees himself as a reader first and foremost. Throughout his time working at the bookshop, he has seen the positive impact books have on people's lives. He has become an expert on children's books and often helps award prizes to the best children's writers.

John describes the bookshop as a dedicated community organisation promoting inclusivity, diversity and social mobility. He is concerned about how technology might be affecting use of the English language, writing and drawing for young people.