

August—September 2013

## Cockney Heritage Festival 2013



After months in the planning, Tower Hamlets' first borough-wide festival celebrating Cockney language and culture kicked off with a bang in July! The programme of over 50 events and exhibitions, coordinated by Tower Hamlets Local History Library & Archives in partnership with the Cockney Heritage Trust, was enhanced by the contributions of many local community groups and financial sponsorship from Canary Wharf Group and Poplar HARCA.

The extraordinary programme of events launched on 18 July with a proper knees-up at THLHL&A featuring local history stalls, seafood and pie and mash, brown ale and port and lemon, several performances and screenings of some rarely-seen archive films. During the following nine days, over 4,000 festival-goers enjoyed talks, workshops, street parties, sing-alongs, exhibitions and family activities. Highlights included well-attended walking tours of Limehouse, Shadwell and Wapping, afternoon tea with the Pearlies at St. John on Bethnal Green in aid of the Stairway to Heaven Memorial Trust, an evening of talks on the borough's hidden LGBT histories, a rare screening of 1974 documentary *Fly A Flag For Poplar* and a tribute sing-along in memory of Cockney singer Wayne Adams at Idea Store Chrisp Street.

Feedback from attendees has been overwhelmingly positive, with festival-goers saying events made them feel "proud to be Cockney" and that this is "local history at its best". Public enthusiasm has been such that the Cockney Heritage Trust is already planning for next year's festival! For more information or to take part, visit [www.cockneyheritagetrust.com](http://www.cockneyheritagetrust.com), or visit [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/cockneyht) and Twitter (@cockneyht).

## **30 Years of the Island History Trust**

Launched as part of the Cockney Heritage Festival, our current exhibition **30 Years of the Island History Trust** showcases six exhibitions that this pioneering community archive has produced since the 1980s. Due to the recent closure of its home at Dockland Settlement, the photographic collections and exhibitions, including four wonderful handmade tapestries, have been deposited at Tower Hamlets Local History Library & Archives for safekeeping. This exhibition is a must-see if you're interested in the history of the Isle of Dogs, or the labours of community volunteers to preserve their cultural heritage and collective memory. Check our opening times for visiting hours.

## **Film Club**

Inspired by the recent success of Cockney Heritage Festival archive film day, whose high public attendance indicated significant appetite for more regular screenings, we have decided to initiate monthly opportunities to view films relating to the history of the borough both drawn from and sourced by Tower Hamlets Local History Library & Archives. Email [localhistory@towerhamlets.gov.uk](mailto:localhistory@towerhamlets.gov.uk) with your film suggestions and watch this space for more details!

## **Black History Month**

We've got some great events coming up in October including a talk about our current oral history project which aims to capture the experiences of Black and Asian women residents of Tower Hamlets. Project worker Majeda Begum will be in conversation with Dr Suzanne Scafe, co-author of seminal text *The Heart of the Race* on Thursday 10th October. The library will also host a Caribbean family history day on Saturday 5th October, and a poetry showcase with readings from local young people on Thursday 3rd October. Keep an eye out for the Tower Hamlets Black History Month brochure which will be available mid-September and check our website for updates nearer the time.

## ***Fly A Flag For Poplar***

We have recently digitised our 16mm print of this rare documentary produced in 1973 by Liberation Films, focussing on residents who organised the Teviot Estate community festival in the early 1970s. The film includes personal reflections on life in Poplar at the time and on its history as a site of 'people power'. The film was screened to an appreciative audience at Idea Store Chrisp Street as part of the Cockney Heritage Festival, and will be screened again by East London History Society at their next meeting on **Thursday 12 September**. For more information visit [www.eolfhs.org.uk](http://www.eolfhs.org.uk).

## Open House London 2013

We are again participating in Open House this September. Book in for a behind the scenes tour of the Bancroft Library building on Saturday 21 September at either 10.30am or 3.00pm by emailing [localhistory@towerhamlets.gov.uk](mailto:localhistory@towerhamlets.gov.uk) or call 0207 364 1290 during opening hours. Built in 1860 as the Vestry Hall of Mile End Old Town, one of the original "Tower Hamlets", the building later became the central lending library for the borough. During the second world war it also served as a first aid post.

## Oxford & St George's Club centenary

A special event at the Troxy, Commercial Road, is being held in

March 2014 to celebrate the centenary of the Jewish Youth Clubs founded by Basil and Rose Henriques. Based from 1929 in Berner Street, Stepney, the club provided social, leisure and welfare facilities for local children. Its memory continues today in the form of a charitable trust and an Old Boys' network. Over 1000 former members are expected at this reunion event from across the world. Registration is open now and tickets are available from September at their <http://ostg100.co.uk>.



## Jobs at Wilton's Music Hall

As a result of funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund, there are currently two fixed-term posts being advertised to manage Wilton's archive and develop a public programme around the heritage of this amazing building. We are advising on this project in partnership with Wilton's. Visit [www.wiltons.org.uk](http://www.wiltons.org.uk) for more information. Closing date: 6th September.

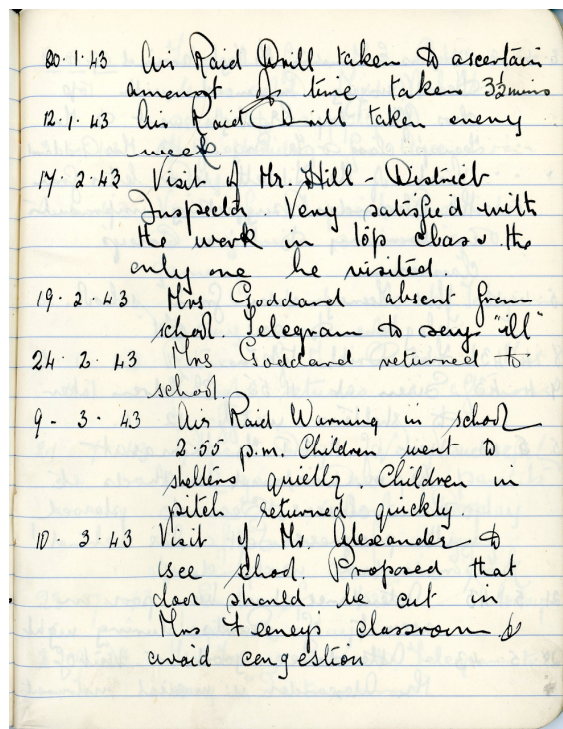
## Short volunteering opportunities

We are currently seeking volunteers to produce summaries of a small number of oral history interviews. Full training and support will be provided. You will need to have excellent typing/computer skills, good written English and attention to detail. We are seeking **one** volunteer to summarise an interview arising from the **Alan Dein Shopfronts project** (approx 5 hours time commitment) and **one** Somali-speaking volunteer to summarise in English two interviews which were conducted in Somali for our **Somali East End project** (approx 10 hour time commitment). Please contact [localhistory@towerhamlets.gov.uk](mailto:localhistory@towerhamlets.gov.uk) for further information.

## Cataloguing news:

### The Records of St. Patrick's Roman Catholic School, Wapping

Thanks to Elena Carter, an archive student at University College London, the records of St Patrick's Roman Catholic School, Wapping deposited here last year are now fully catalogued and available for research in our reading room. Of particular interest are the school log books which cover the period 1872—1982 with some gaps. The records do not include school admission registers.



Extract from school log book, 1943 with references to air raids

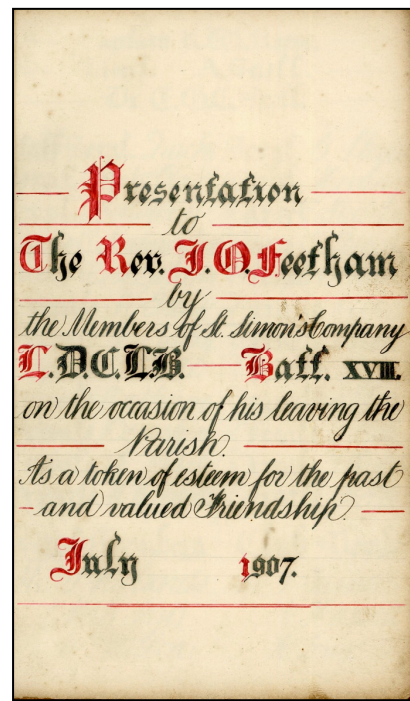
## Update on Black Women's Oral History Project

Hi everyone, just a quick update on my project. Everything is moving in the right direction and I am now ready to start the oral history interviews. It has been a great journey and I am enjoying meeting the amazing women from the different community centres, such as the BYM women's centre in Whitechapel and the Zacchaeus Project in Bethnal Green, who have all shown great support for the project. The project will be of extreme value to the archives as it will boast the accounts and voices of many of the ethnic minority women living in Tower Hamlets who have agreed to share their journeys of making the life changing decision to come to England and their decision to settle in Tower Hamlets. I have heard so many fantastic stories and we can't wait to share them with you as well, so stay tuned!

Majeda Begum, Heritage Skills Trainee

## New addition to the archives

We have been fortunate in purchasing a hand-written presentation to the Rev. J. O. Feetham on the occasion of his leaving the Parish of St. Simon Zelotes, Bethnal Green in July 1907 (ref: P/MIS/382). The volume contains two tributes to Rev. Feetham, the first from the members of St. Simon's Company Church Lads' Brigade Battalion XVII and the second from the Subscribers to the Testimonial of the Parish. The former gives a list of names from the Battalion, including Captain, Lieutenant, Doctor, Staff Sergeant, Sergeant, Corporal, Lances and Privates, and also including past members and club members. The second list gives the names of the Subscribers to the Testimonial presented to Rev. Feetham on his leaving the Parish of St. Simon Zelotes, it is 14 pages long and gives some 250 names and addresses.



## Picture of the month

### Mr Frederick William Vyse, Master Baker, 12 Tapley Street, Poplar c1910

A digital copy of this beautiful photograph was kindly deposited with us in June by Mr Vyse's great-granddaughter, Mrs Jacoba Gale. The image has now been catalogued and a hard copy print out is available to view in our reading room (image ref: P33862, class: 651.2).



## Staff news

Katherine Weston, Heritage Officer (Learning and Participation), has left the team to undertake a part-time role at the National Maritime Museum in Greenwich. We are sorry to see Katherine go and wish her all the best.

Anna Haward, former Heritage Assistant who was temporarily covering Katherine's post, has now been appointed to this role permanently. Anna is keen to develop our work with schools and young people so local teachers and youth workers are encouraged to get in touch!

In June, Natasha O'Neill (Heritage Officer, Archives) got married to fellow archivist at LMA, David Luck. The wedding took place in Glasgow; thankfully it was an uncharacteristically dry Scottish day!



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Library Learning Information