

Tower Hamlets Local History Library & Archives



Everything is different, nothing has changed

Exhibition | 15 August - 23 November 2023

We are thrilled to announce our first ever exhibition of sound art inspired by the amazing collections of oral history and archival audio held at Tower Hamlets Local History Library & Archives.

Dating back to 1962 and held on fragile cassettes and open reel audiotape, these recordings offer us tantalising fragments of the sonic past. For historians, they are especially valuable as intimate first-person accounts of daily lives. In this installation, the audio collections held at Tower Hamlets Local History Library and Archives are revisited by three sound artists - **Alastair Levy**, **Emily Peasgood** and **Syma Tariq**.

Produced in collaboration with researchers at Queen Mary, University of London and Birkbeck, University of London, who have been exploring what the East End meant to generations of migrants, *Everything is different, nothing has changed* uses archival audio to offer new interpretations of Tower Hamlets' past, focussing particularly on the experiences of Jewish and Bengali/Bangladeshi migrants living here during the twentieth century.

Each artist in this show takes a different approach to the archive, but recurring themes of home, memory, dislocation and protest resonate across their work. Surprising, playful and reflective, they make magic with recorded sound, bringing the past and the present up close to one other.

15 August –
23 November
2023

EVERYTHING IS DIFFERENT,
NOTHING HAS CHANGED

Three installations
responding to
archival sounds
of the East End

by Alastair Levy,
Emily Peasgood
and Syma Tariq

Tower Hamlets
Local History
Library & Archives

Events programme

To tie in with the exhibition we have a programme of exciting, free events lined up, which you can book now online. Details below! All events take place in person here at the archives unless otherwise mentioned, and you can book your free place on [our Eventbrite](#).

Exhibition opening reception

Thursday 24 August, 5.30-7.00pm

All are welcome at this public launch event for the exhibition.

Produced in collaboration with researchers at Queen Mary, University of London and Birkbeck, University of London, who have been exploring what the East End meant to generations of migrants, ***Everything is different, nothing has changed*** uses archival audio to offer new interpretations of Tower Hamlets' past.

Refreshments provided, speeches at 6.15pm.

[Book your place here - Opening Reception](#)

Listening to the Jewish East End: A guided walk

Sunday 27 August, 11am-2.00pm

Explore London's Jewish East End with Professor Nadia Valman and Dr Vivi Lachs of Queen Mary, University of London, who present a free guided walk through East London's Jewish past based on their Arts and Humanities Research Council project on English and Yiddish literature and song of the East End from the 1880s to the 1950s.

[Book your place here - Guided Walk](#)

East End History Club: Voices in the archive!

Saturday 2 September, 2-4pm

Join our librarian Robert Jones in exploring materials related to our sound collection. There will be a talk about the types of sound recordings held at Tower Hamlets Local History Library & Archives and an opportunity join us for a selected listening session.

[Book your place here - East End History Club](#)

Un/making narrative: a conversation on grassroots organising with Nijjor Manush

Thursday 7 September, 5-7pm

The making and unmaking of narrative has been key to the anti-racist, social and housing justice battles won and lost around the East End over the last century. This informal conversation with Dr Fatima Rajina and Tasnima Uddin, founding members of the Bangladeshi/Bengali-led campaigning and solidarity group Nijjor Manush since 2017, connects the historical themes of Syma Tariq's audio artwork *Delay lines* with a focus on the narrative challenges, complexities and tactics involved in the group's ongoing activism. They will speak particularly about grassroots organising within the Save Brick Lane campaign.

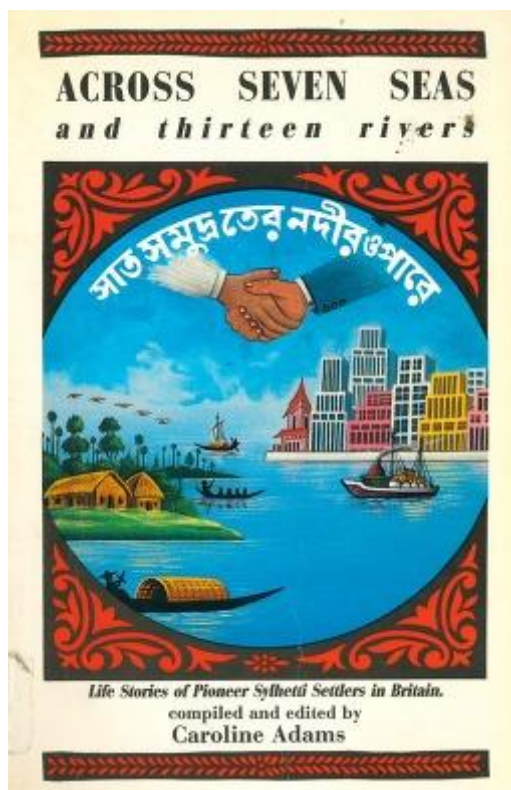
[Book your place here - Un/making narrative](#)

How Writers Remembered the Jewish East End with Nadia Valman

Thursday 28 September, 6-7.30pm

After World War II many East Enders permanently left the neighbourhoods where they had grown up. For Jews whose parents and grandparents had arrived in the East End in the Victorian period this also signified the end of the vibrant Jewish community life that had developed here in the first part of the twentieth century. In this **online talk** Professor Nadia Valman (QMUL) discusses how Jewish writers remembered their childhood in the East End of the 1930s.

[Book your place here - How writers remembered the Jewish East End](#)



Nawab Ali: An Extraordinary Life

Saturday 16 September, 2-4pm

This workshop will centre around a transcript from an oral history interview made by the writer Caroline Adams. The interview's subject was a Bengali immigrant to the UK called Nawab Ali who arrived here in 1939, just before the start of World War II. His story is extraordinary and reflects the richness and hardships of the lives of immigrants to this country and the East End specifically. Participants will be invited to read sections of the text and edit together their favourite parts of Ali's story for further discussion in an informal group setting. The workshop will begin with an introduction to Alastair Levy's exhibited work *My Home In Morgan Street* (2023).

[Book your place here - Nawab Ali](#)

Re-sounding the East End

Thursday 16 November, 6.30-8pm

Join us for a discussion with curators and historians Nadia Valman, Tamsin Bookey, Rehana Ahmed and Alan Dein responding to the three sound art installations that form

Everything is different, nothing has changed in the context of the East End's social and public history. This event is part of the [Being Human Festival](#).

[Book your place here - Re-sounding the East End](#)

Reading Room lighting works nearly complete



Our Reading Room has been closed to the public since early June as the outdated light fittings in the room were long overdue replacement. Scaffolding was put up so the electricians could reach the very high ceiling. While the contractors have been at work, staff have had no access to the collections.

We are pleased to report that the works are on track to complete on time and we expect to be ready to welcome you back as scheduled from Tuesday 15 August.

In the meantime please feel free to email us on localhistory@towerhamlets.gov.uk and explore our [website](#) and [online catalogue](#).

We are also delighted to announce that when we reopen our Reading Room opening times will be **extended** to give you all a longer time to consult our collections on weekdays. The new times are:

- Tuesday 10am-4.30pm
- Wednesday 10am-4.30pm
- Thursday 10am-7.00pm

First and third Saturdays of every month:

- Saturday 10am-5.00pm

New digital microfilm reader!

We're delighted to announce that a new top-of-the-range digital microfilm reader will be available in our Reading Room when we reopen, making our huge collection of historic newspapers and other microfilmed resources even more accessible to local and family history researchers.



Among the exciting new features it includes are:

- Vastly improved display features
- The ability to search a page for a specific word or name
- The option to convert a page to a PDF or JPG which can then be saved to a USB stick or emailed to yourself

It can also be used to digitise entire rolls of microfilm with automatic Optical Character Recognition (OCR), meaning the days of painstakingly scrolling through a year's worth of *East London Advertisers* looking for a single name may soon be over!

It's fair to say our current microfilm readers are beginning to show their age and are getting increasingly difficult to maintain, however they have served us well for over twenty years and will continue to be accessible for those who prefer an analogue experience.

A freshly accredited archive service

We are delighted to say that following a detailed submission of evidence in April this year, we have retained our status as a nationally accredited archive service.

[Archive Service Accreditation](#) defines good practice and agreed standards for archive services across the UK. The scheme is operated by The National Archives in conjunction with an independent panel of assessors.

In evaluating our submission, the assessment panel noted that "the premises remain a significant challenge to the award of accreditation in an otherwise outstanding archive service". The poor physical condition of the building resulted in provisionally accredited status being granted, which lasts for two years, rather than the full six year term.

Staff are very grateful to have their hard work acknowledged with this award.



Contact us

- Email us: localhistory@towerhamlets.gov.uk
- Visit our website: <http://www.ideastore.co.uk/local-history>
- Phone (answered during opening hours only): 020 7364 1290

Reading Room opening hours - reopening from Tuesday 15 August 2023

- Tuesday 10.00am-4.30pm
- Wednesday 10.00am-4.30pm
- Thursday 10.00am-7.00pm

First and third Saturdays of every month:

- Saturday 10.00am-5.00pm

That's the following Saturdays coming up:

- Saturday 19 August
- Saturday 2 September
- Saturday 16 September

Exhibition opening times are: 10am-5pm Monday-Friday, plus the Saturdays and Thursday evenings noted above. On Monday and Friday lunchtimes, the exhibition will be closed for lunch between 1 and 2pm.
