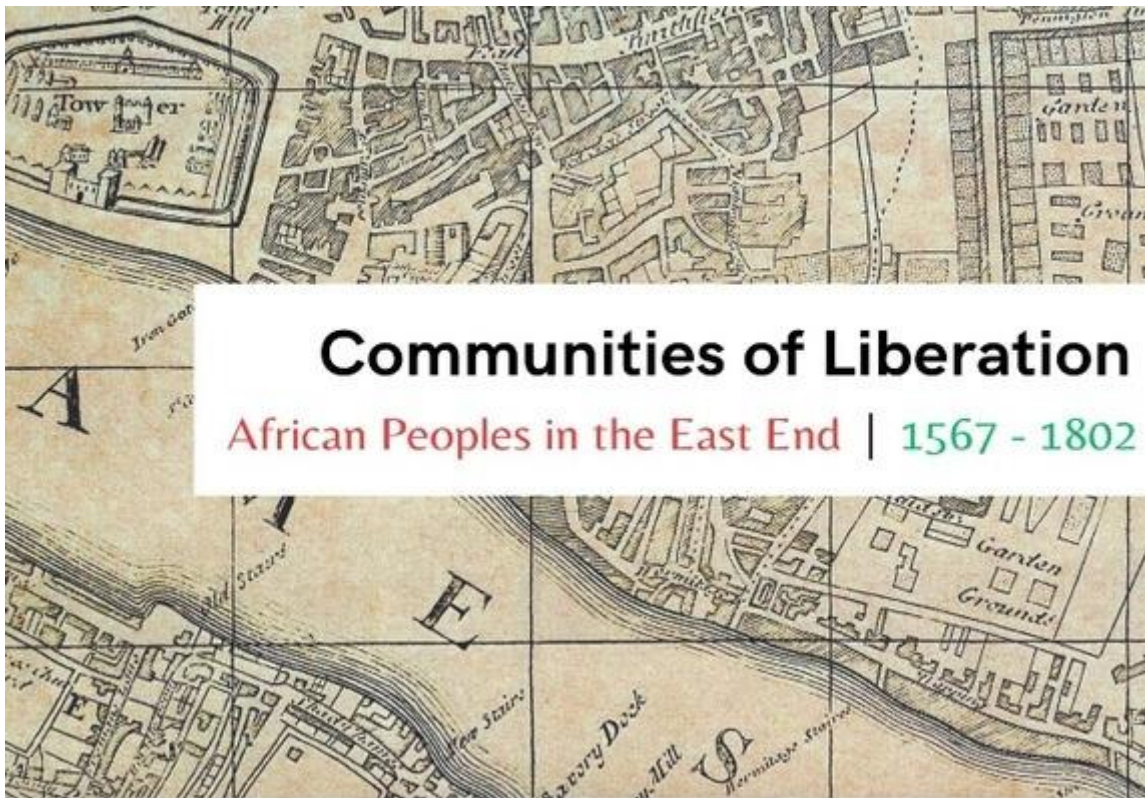


# Tower Hamlets Local History Library & Archives



## Communities of Liberation

African Peoples in the East End | 1567 - 1802

### Communities of Liberation

#### African Peoples in the East End | 1567 - 1802

Launch event | Thursday 22 February, 6:30-8.00pm

There is no public recognition of the many Africans who lived in the East End 300 years ago. We're launching a groundbreaking project researching in the archives and producing new creative work which gives life to these neglected people and stories.

The aim of the project is to identify the places, spaces and networks in which African people lived, worked or socialised during the period of operation of the Transatlantic Slave Trade, and build awareness of this important yet overlooked strand of East End history.

All are welcome to join **Mayor Lutfur Rahman** and the [Communities of Liberation](#) team and steering group as we formally launch this amazing project. Book your place below to find out more about the year ahead, and how you can get involved...

[Book your free place here!](#)

## Brick Lane 1978: The Turning Point

# BRICK LANE 1978 THE TURNING POINT



02/DECEMBER/2023  
TO 16/MARCH/2024

*Photograph (c) Paul Trevor of an anti-racist protest in Brick Lane, 1978.*

### Exhibition and events | until 16 March

The new exhibition at Tower Hamlets Local History Library & Archives reveals the dramatic events in 1978 which were sparked by the racist murder of Altab Ali, a 24-year-old Bengali leather garments worker, and pays tribute to the activists who mobilised around the rallying cry of justice that followed.

Local photographer **Paul Trevor** documented how members of the local Bengali community endured racial abuse as a constant factor of everyday life, and the moment at which they mobilised against racist violence and institutional police racism. The exhibition – **Brick Lane 1978: The Turning Point** - brings together seventy of Trevor's photographs as well as original archival materials and first person testimony.

The display was originally created in 2022 as part of a major heritage project led by Four Corners and [Swadhinata Trust](#), in partnership with [Paul Trevor](#) and supported by the National Lottery Heritage Fund. With the help of volunteers and original activists, the project created a record of this watershed moment as told by local people.

The exhibition is now on show until Saturday 16 March 2024. Please see below for the final few events in the programme...





## Workshop | Resistance in the archive

Saturday 17 February | 2.00-4.00pm

Venue: Tower Hamlets Local History Library & Archives

In this workshop with Fatima Rajina and Hajera Begum from [Nijjor Manush](#), we will investigate anti-racist resistance and advocacy from local communities through archival material from [MayDay Rooms](#) and Tower Hamlets Local History Library & Archives. What social and political hardships have communities faced in Tower Hamlets since the 1970s? What lessons can be learnt from their radical histories? And how do we apply these teachings to contemporary struggles? Join us in exploring grassroots activism and strategies of resistance.

**MayDay Rooms** is an archive, resource and safe haven for social movements, experimental and marginal cultures and their histories.

**Nijjor Manush** is an independent campaigning group that aims to educate, empower and organise Bengalis and Bangladeshis in the UK.

[Free to attend - book your place here.](#)



## Workshop | Bengali radical housing movement

Thursday 29 February | 6.00-7.30pm

Venue: Tower Hamlets Local History Library & Archives

1970s Britain witnessed housing struggles for many working-class communities across the country. Racialised groups, like the growing Bengali community in Tower Hamlets, faced additional hardships owing to structural racism and the rise of far-right racist attacks by the National Front. In her book 'From Sylhet to Spitalfields', Shabna Begum explores how the longstanding Bengali community resisted the housing crisis amidst the violence and discrimination, by squatting.

In this workshop with Shabna, we will be revisiting her archival research for the book, examining how records are used to uncover hidden narratives, and discussing the radical history of the Bengali squatters' movement.

**Shabna Begum** is interim CEO at the Runnymede Trust, the UK's leading race equality think tank. In her work she has worked on numerous projects including on income inequality, housing and problem debt. She is also Honorary Research Fellow at Queen Mary University London in the School of Geography, where she conducted her doctoral research. Prior to this, Shabna was a teacher for over two decades in London secondary schools.

[Free to attend - book your place here.](#)





THE FIRST "COST PRICE RESTAURANT" IN THE WOMEN'S HALL, 400 OLD FORD ROW, BOW  
From left: third, the Author; fourth, Mrs. Payne; fifth, Mrs. Farrel; sixth, Mrs. Watkins.

*Addressing food poverty on the Home Front - a cost-price restaurant for local people established by the East London Federation of the Suffragettes in Old Ford Road, 1915. Photograph by Norah Smyth.*

## East End History Club: Women's Revolt!

**Workshop | Saturday 16 March, 11am-1pm**

**Venue: Tower Hamlets Local History Library & Archives**

In partnership with The Women's Library at LSE, we will be exploring how women in the East End resisted and fought for their liberation. Whether it was for voting rights, better living and working conditions, equal pay or better health and family care, you will have the opportunity to look through material from the collections of both archives. There will also be a badge-making activity for those who feel inspired to mark their own mini protest!

[Book your free place here!](#)

## Contact us

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

### Reading Room opening hours

- 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 2 March
- Saturday 16 March
- Saturday 6 April

- Saturday 20 April

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.