

# Tower Hamlets Local History Library & Archives



## Update on reopening

Last week we received approval to reopen our Reading Room service and start welcoming the public back to our library on Bancroft Road. We can't wait to get back to our precious collections and help you use them for your research.

The exact reopening date is currently being finalised. In order to ensure the safety of building users, new adaptations and procedures will be in place and you will need to book an appointment in advance. Look out for an email from us with all the details coming soon!

Meanwhile do check out our freshly updated [website](#) and [YouTube channel](#), and read on for details of two free local history talks we're hosting online via Zoom in September.

## Introducing our new community project ...



In March next year Bangladesh will celebrate its 50th anniversary as an independent nation. Nearly a third of contemporary Tower Hamlets residents are of Bangladeshi heritage, with the community having established itself and growing rapidly in the decades after World War Two.

To mark the significance of this anniversary in Tower Hamlets we have launched a new project, **Bangladesh 50**, in partnership with the National Portrait Gallery (NPG). Local residents will be invited to research how the independence movement was experienced here in the East End and explore the impact of the Liberation War of 1971 on local, personal and collective identity. Informed by these findings, a lead artist will work with the group to produce a commemorative artwork. Designed for outdoor public display, this new creative memorial will launch our Bangladesh 50 Festival, a programme of free events taking place in spring 2021. An online digital resource will be produced too, showcasing the historical content and reflections of participants.

Want to get involved? We are currently advertising paid freelance roles so read on for further details!

We are grateful to the Bangladesh 50 steering group members who are guiding the project's development. The steering group is made up of academics, historians and activists including Ansar Ahmed Ullah ([Swadhinata Trust/QMUL](#)) Julie Begum ([Swadhinata Trust](#)), Shabna Begum ([QMUL](#)), Fatima Rajina ([Nijjor Manush](#)), Hajera Begum ([Nijjor Manush](#)), Ruksana Kazi Begum (Brady Centre) and Georgie Wemyss ([UEL](#)).

Keep up to date via our [website](#). **Bangladesh 50** is one of four offsite projects which the NPG is delivering under its [Citizen UK](#) programme while the gallery is closed for building works. Citizen UK brings together artists and local communities for archival research and creative engagement. It is funded by the National Lottery Heritage Fund.

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## East End History Club: online events

[The Matchgirls Strike: the Perspective of Sarah Chapman, a Local Girl](#)

**Thursday 17 September, 5.00-6.30pm**

The famous Match Girls Strike of 1888 brought a group of female factory workers in Bow to national attention. The pioneering strike led to improved employment conditions but little is known about the individual women and girls who participated. We're delighted to welcome back Sam Johnson, who will discuss how she discovered the involvement of her great-grandmother **Sarah Chapman** and the role she played in the action. Join us for this inspirational tale of researching your family history and bringing an unsung heroine to light.

## **East End Housing Estates**

**Thursday 24 September, 5.00-6.30pm**

Join our outreach team Halima Khanom (Heritage Officer (Learning & Participation)) and Genova Messiah (Heritage Trainee) for an informal session discussing the borough's estates. We will explore historic images and stories from the East End's rich history of social housing, but with an added personal focus on some of the lesser known estates that we're familiar with ourselves having grown up there. Come along with your own stories and reflections of estate life in the borough!

All events are free and will take place online until further notice. To book your space please email [localhistory@towerhamlets.gov.uk](mailto:localhistory@towerhamlets.gov.uk) and we will pass on the info you'll need to join.



*Cranbrook Estate, 1969 (c) Tower Hamlets Local History Library & Archives (image ref. P13530)*

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## **Bangladesh 50: paid roles now open**

### **Lead Artist**

A freelance visual artist is sought to lead a participatory research and creative project commemorating the 50th anniversary of Bangladesh independence in Tower Hamlets. The lead artist is responsible for developing a new artwork for outdoor public display, informed by the archival research and co-produced with a group of Citizen Researchers.

- ♣ Mid-September 2020-early April 2021
- ♣ Fixed fee: £5000
- ♣ Closing date: Tuesday 1 September 2020 9am

For more info, click [here](#).

### **Digital Producer**

A new opportunity for a freelance digital producer to document and record the activities taking place as part of the Bangladesh 50 project, resulting in a final online production showcasing edited highlights of the research, creative process and participant reflections.

- ♣ Mid-September 2020-early April 2021
- ♣ Fixed fee: £3000
- ♣ Closing date: Monday 7 September 2020 9am

For more info, click [here](#).

### **Citizen Researchers**

Look out for the opportunity to join the project as a researcher (paid) in our next newsletter!

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## **Our building is closed**

### **Contact Tower Hamlets Local History Library & Archives**

- [localhistory@towerhamlets.gov.uk](mailto:localhistory@towerhamlets.gov.uk)
- <http://www.ideastore.co.uk/local-history>