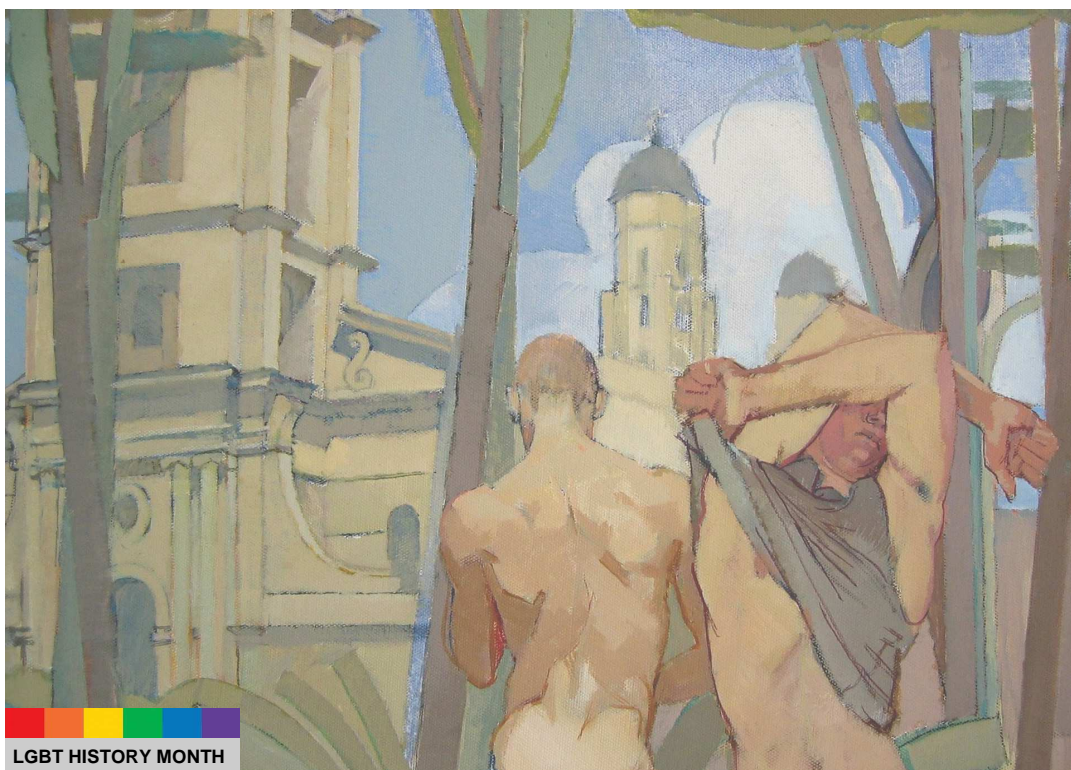


February-March 2015



LGBT HISTORY MONTH

*The Great Façade, Cornelius McCarthy, 2008*

## New exhibition: 'Radiant Affinities' Artworks by Cornelius McCarthy

Our next exhibition is a retrospective of paintings and drawings by the artist Cornelius McCarthy (1935-2009) from Stepney, whose vivid landscapes of the post-war East End provide the backdrop for explorations of ideological struggle and sexual identity. We received a donation of the artist's sketchbooks for our collections two years ago, and this exhibition features examples of these, as well as more than thirty paintings and drawings kindly loaned from private collectors. Also on view will be a catalogue and photographic pamphlet recording an exhibition of Cornelius's artwork which was held at Bancroft Library in 1961, in what was then the lecture theatre, now the archive strongroom.

We are pleased to host and launch this exhibition during **LGBT History Month**. Please join us for a public reception and talk with the exhibition's curator Peter Dobson on **Thursday 12 February at 6pm** at which a small display of LGBT material from our collections will also be on show. Peter's talk, *Cornelius McCarthy: Art & Eros* will feature additional images not included in the exhibition, and will be introduced with a live reading of a Socratic dialogue! There will also be an event held here for the launch of the official biography of Cornelius McCarthy by Peter Dobson on **Saturday 18 April at 2.30pm**. The exhibition runs until Thursday 7 May.

# Upcoming Events

## Holocaust Memorial Day

The events below are part of the *Keeping the Memory Alive* programme organised by Jewish Care and the Jewish East End Celebration Society, supported by Tower Hamlets Council.

## Jewish East End, World War Two and the Holocaust

**Sunday 1 February, 12pm**

Join Clive Bettington of the Jewish East End Celebration Society on this FREE guided walk on the theme of the Jewish East End, World War Two and the Holocaust. Meet at Aldgate tube station.

## Holocaust Memorial Service

**Sunday 1 February, 3pm**

A multi-faith Holocaust Memorial service will take place at East London Central Synagogue, 30-40 Nelson Street, London E1 2DE, at 3pm. FREE. Refreshments will be provided.

Also of interest:

## Hughes Mansions Commemoration

**Sunday 29 March, 1pm**

A memorial service to mark the 70th Anniversary of the Hughes Mansions disaster will take place at 1pm at Hughes Mansions, Vallance Road, London E1 3DE, and will include speeches, music and refreshments. A total of 134 people died, 120 of them Jewish, when the penultimate V-2 flying bomb attack on Britain hit Hughes Mansions on March 27 1945. FREE. Booking essential. Book by calling 07941 367 882 or email [c.bettington@jeecs.org.uk](mailto:c.bettington@jeecs.org.uk)

# Hop into Local History!

## History Hoppers

**Wednesday 11 February, 2.30-4.30pm**

**Tower Hamlets Local History Library & Archives**

Join us to explore more treasures from our archive and library collections at the next monthly History Hoppers group on Wednesday 11 February at 2.30pm. The group, which meets at THLHLA on every second Wednesday of the month, has got off to a flying start with around 25 attendees at the January session. Themes so far have included family history, theatre, hidden histories and the Jewish East End. Refreshments are provided.

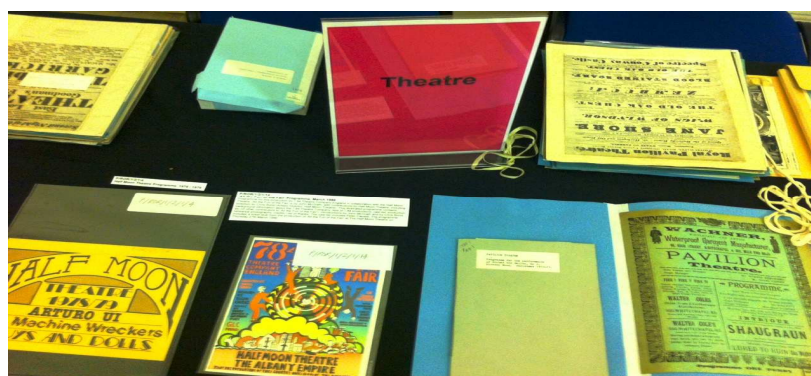
## Future History Hoppers dates:

Wednesday 11 March

Wednesday 8 April



January History Hoppers attendees enjoy a chat and a cuppa



Some of the items on display for History Hoppers

## Out of the Box

Out of the Box is a pioneering project funded by the Arts Council England, which has brought together disabled people, artists and heritage professionals to explore new ways of accessing collections. Local creative people with disabilities were invited to take THLHLA collections 'out of the box' and assert their own personal local histories when creating the artwork displayed in our current exhibition. See below for details of the exhibition tour and associated events.

### **Open Evening - TONIGHT!**

**Thursday 29 January, 6pm - 7.30pm**

**Tower Hamlets Local History Library & Archives**

Join project artists and lead artist Caglar Kimyoncu for an evening celebrating the project and exhibition on its last evening with us, with informal tours and free refreshments. The evening will include poetry readings by two of the artists whose work is exhibited.

### **Touring exhibition**

**February - August 2015**

Out of the Box, our current exhibition showcasing artwork created by local disabled artists in response to the heritage collections of THLHLA, will commence a tour of the borough's libraries and Idea Stores in February. Keep an eye out at your local Idea Store or library during the following months in 2015:

**February:** Cubitt Town and Bethnal Green libraries

**March:** Idea Store Whitechapel

**April:** Idea Store Bow

**May:** Idea Store Canary Wharf

**June:** Idea Store Chrisp Street

**July:** Idea Store Watney Market

**August:** Tower Hamlets Town Hall, Mulberry Place

## Out of the Box: accessibility case study

In October last year I gave a presentation on our Out of the Box project - then very much a work-in-progress - to an assembled group of archivists who attended the 'Discovering Collections, Discovering Communities' conference at the new Library of Birmingham (well worth a visit, by the way). The talks from this conference were videoed and you can now watch mine [here](#).

Regular readers will be aware that this project is the result of an Arts Council grant to facilitate creative responses to our collections by disabled people. An integral part of this pilot project is to share our experiences in the form of a case study and some events for colleagues in the archive, cultural and heritage sector. I am currently planning a free workshop to take place here on Friday 17 April to present our Out of the Box case study with lead artist Caglar Kimyoncu and hear from participants directly about their experiences of the project. The event will also serve as a forum for staff working with multi-format archives and other heritage collections (mainly documents but also oral histories, film and tangible objects) to discuss, learn and share approaches to engaging disabled audiences. It is mainly aimed at people working in archives but museum and gallery educators and freelance arts/heritage facilitators should also find it useful. Please contact [localhistory@towerhamlets.gov.uk](mailto:localhistory@towerhamlets.gov.uk) to be alerted when booking goes live.

- Tamsin Bookey, Heritage Manager

# Women's History Month 2015

We are delighted to present the following FREE events celebrating Women's History Month 2015. For the full list of events taking place across the borough, visit the website.

**Granny's Girls: Archive film screening**  
**Thursday 5 March, 6.30-7.30pm**  
**Tower Hamlets Local History Library & Archives**

Come down to the local history library on Bancroft Road for our Women's History Month archive film screening of 'Granny's Girls'. The sixties were just beginning to swing when the BBC broadcast this documentary about the lives and relationships of women from a close-knit Bethnal Green family. This 30 minute film will be followed by the opportunity to discuss the changing roles of local women. This event is family friendly.



Bethnal Green Pensioners Action Group Open Day, 1992

**Women in the Archive: Open Day & Zine Workshop**  
**Saturday 7 March, 1pm - 4pm**  
**Tower Hamlets Local History Library & Archives**

Adults and children 11+ are invited to delve into our archive to illuminate the voices, lives and achievements of the borough's women. The day, which includes complimentary refreshments, will also feature:

- Opportunities to browse through historical photographs, documents, newspaper clippings, audio recordings and much more which illustrate the variety of women's lives in the East End over the last 150 years.
- Zine workshop: This is your chance to add to our archive of women's history in Tower Hamlets. Drawing on original photographs, newspaper cuttings and archive material, create your own zine about a local woman or an aspect of women's history or experience, for permanent preservation in our collections. A zine is a home-made magazine; creative skill is welcome but not at all necessary. All materials supplied and no need to book - just drop in.

# Land and Lives: Update and Events

Project Archivist Mark Ballard writes:

An exhibition to illustrate the Land and Lives project will open at Tower Hamlets Local History Library and Archives early in March and will then tour other Idea Stores and local venues. Although the deeds being recatalogued range across the whole area of the Tower Hamlets Borough Council area, we have concentrated on one locality for which our work is nearing completion, that of Bromley-by-Bow. This enables us to feature examples of deeds for one parish, from a full range of sources (solicitors' firms, private gifts, and the Borough's Legal Department) and periods (the 1630s to the 1920s), alongside other illustrative material from our collections, and maps which will help you identify the sites today.

To accompany the exhibition, Malcolm Barr-Hamilton and Mark Ballard will give evening talks about the scope of the revised catalogue, how it can be accessed both now and in the future, and how to use title deeds to research the history of localities and families, on Thursday 12 March at 6pm. Although on first acquaintance they may seem hard to use, just a little practice helps you prise the key information out of a title deed. We hope that, even if you have been daunted by them in the past, the examples here will encourage you.

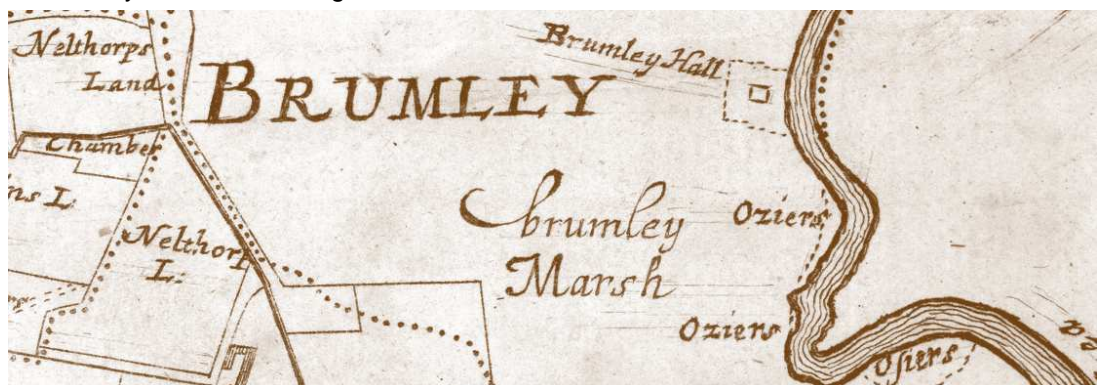
We remain indebted to our volunteer inputters who have transcribed the original card catalogue entries into the format required by the CALM database, and which, in due course, will be accessible online. They have doggedly worked all the way through the accessions of deeds from the Legal Department, and are now progressing through the cards for accessions to Stepney Library over the last hundred years. Although the present HLF-supported project ceases on 31 March, we are optimistic this is not the end of the project, and that with a new sponsor it will continue under a new name.

## Land and Lives: Schools Workshops

Teachers and students in Bromley-by-Bow are invited to travel back in time with the help of our old parchment property deeds, historical photos and maps and many other unique sources to connect with the history of Bromley-by-Bow.

We are developing a free learning resource for Tower Hamlets schoolchildren and would like to share it with you! Schools can choose between the opportunity to visit the archives for a rare chance for pupils to view original documents, or a session in the classroom using Powerpoint, photocopies and worksheets.

If you would like to book a free workshop or just want to know more, get in touch via [localhitory@towerhamlets.gov.uk](mailto:localhitory@towerhamlets.gov.uk) or 0207 364 1290.



Bromley-by-Bow in 1703

# Launch of the East London Mosque Trust and London Muslim Centre Archive

Tamsin Bookey, Heritage Manager writes:

"For some years I have been a member of the steering group advising the East London Mosque Trust and London Muslim Centre on the professional care and development of their institutional archives. The East London Mosque is one of the oldest in the UK, first established in 1910 at a terraced house on Commercial Road and in 1982 moving to its present site in Whitechapel. A successful funding bid to the National Cataloguing Grants Scheme (administered by The National Archives) led to the appointment in 2013 of Project Archivist Eilis McCarthy who has worked with the steering group, mosque staff and volunteers to catalogue the archive and make it publicly available. My colleagues Malcolm Barr-Hamilton, Anna Haward and I attended the formal launch of the archive - the first Muslim archive in the country - on Thursday 15 January where we heard speeches from the new CEO of The National Archives Jeff James, Justice Minister Simon Hughes and Sadiq Khan MP, among others. On show were some treasures from the collection including the London Mosque Fund minute book, 1910-1950, which has recently been conserved.

To find out more about this important religious archive, you can search the catalogue online ([www.archiveshub.ac.uk](http://www.archiveshub.ac.uk)). You can also visit us to read Prof. Humayun Ansari's recent book *The Making of the East London Mosque* which was based on his research in the (then uncatalogued) archive of the institution's first fifty years.

Public access to the collections is available onsite at the London Muslim Centre every Saturday by appointment. The steering group continues to meet as fundraising is now underway for the construction of an environmentally controlled strongroom in the basement of the London Muslim Centre. For more information on this project and to see pictures from the launch, visit the ELMT website.



Launch of the archive at the East London Mosque

## World War One Project Update

Our World War One exhibition and collections guide are nearly ready to go to print. Unfortunately, as previously reported, complications in indexing the Poplar Military Service Tribunal register are ongoing and we are some months off being able to launch these resources. Project Co-ordinator Gary Haines has been taken over by his many other commitments so if you have any queries about this project please contact us at [localhistory@towerhamlets.gov.uk](mailto:localhistory@towerhamlets.gov.uk).

## Recent Events at THLHLA



Attendees at the 'Jewish History in Tower Hamlets' talk at Idea Store Chrisp St

### Jewish History in Tower Hamlets Talk

Heritage Officer Anna Haward visited Idea Store Chrisp Street on Monday 26 January to deliver a talk on the Jewish East End. The talk highlighted useful historical sources held by THLHLA, such as London Trade Directories showing local Jewish businesses, photographs of East End synagogues and the records of local Jewish youth clubs. It culminated in a lively discussion of the East End's shifting communities and unforgettable traditions, including weekly family dinners of jellied eels, whelks and winkles.

### Out of the Box exhibition tours and art workshops

THLHLA has recently hosted several tours of its current exhibition, Out of the Box, which features artwork by local disabled artists created in response to our heritage collections. The tours have been designed to shed light on the different themes and materials that inspired participants - including photos of 1960s London buses, newspaper clippings reporting on the old Limehouse Chinatown and personal family photographs. They have included an art workshop where participants can explore carefully reproduced copies of parts of the collections that inspired participants - and then produce a piece of creative writing or artwork in response, mirroring the Out of Box project experience.

The Prime Time group from Bethnal Green Library and the Beyond Barriers group for people with sight impairments both enjoyed discussions on East End traditions and their own histories, creating diverse range of artwork and creative writing that reflected the very personal nature of their stories.



Bethnal Green Library regulars at 'Out of the Box'

### Rooms with a View - Heritage Project

Magic Me, the intergenerational charity based in Bethnal Green, has this year commenced an exciting new project exploring the layered histories of Tower Hamlets, culminating in the performance piece, 'Rooms with a View'. Visitors will be invited to visit the many rooms of one building, hearing and seeing contradictory and complementary narratives about Tower Hamlets.

On Saturday 21 March, local residents are invited to an Open Call day here at Tower Hamlets Local History Library and Archives, to find out more about the project and have the opportunity to share their stories. Contact Magic Me for further information.

## Idea Store secondment



Bridget

Hello from Bridget! I work at Idea Store Bow. For the first half of 2015 I'm working one day each week here at Tower Hamlets Local History Library and Archives. I hope to be able to support my colleagues here and to contribute to development of a closer working relationship with the rest of the Idea Store and Library network.

My day job as an Idea Store Co-ordinator is not only shelving books. The Idea Store can be for socialising or attending a class. Of course we offer online resources via the Idea Store website on-site and many off-site. We provide a huge range of services and aim to meet the needs of our huge range of visitors! A key focus is reading for pleasure, with people of all ages.

While I'm here I hope to learn how to use the resources here at Tower Hamlets Local History Library and Archives, with guidance from my very knowledgeable colleagues, to assist with enquiries from visitors, and to promote the events and displays which are organised throughout the year. I had a good afternoon

two weeks ago in the History Hoppers session. Next one Wednesday February 11th.

My personal family history research shows that I'm from a long line of Jacks-of-all-trades and Maids-of-all-work. I like to think that I'm versatile enough to be continuing in that tradition!

## New book available for sale

We now have available for research in our Library and also to purchase the latest volume by Derek Morris and Ken Cozens in their ground-breaking series on the districts of East London in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. With Mile End Old Town, Wapping and Whitechapel already covered, the latest volume, published by the East London History Society, is titled "London's Sailortown 1600 - 1800; a social history of Shadwell and Ratcliff, an early modern London riverside suburb". Shadwell and Ratcliff are neglected parts of Tower Hamlets as far as historical research is concerned and it is extremely gratifying to have something in print with the depth of research and level of scholarship that these two authors provide. The virtues of their books have been extolled by many academics and reviewers and the current volume includes a glowing tribute in the preface by eminent historian of London, Professor Jerry White. At over 200 pages and in A4 format, this is a must for anyone with an interest in east end history. It is also excellent value at only £12.60 plus postage.

### **LONDON'S SAILORTOWN 1600-1800**

**DEREK MORRIS and KEN COZENS**



**A SOCIAL HISTORY  
OF SHADWELL AND RATCLIFF,  
AN EARLY MODERN LONDON RIVERSIDE SUBURB**

**THE EAST LONDON HISTORY SOCIETY**





## Picture of the month



Poplar Borough Council Drawing Office, 117 Poplar High Street c. 1937. Photographer: William Whiffin (ref: WW/654)

An unusual interior photograph by William Whiffin showing staff at work in Poplar Borough Council's Drawing Office, Poplar High Street, 1937. Watch out for an exhibition of Whiffin's East End photographs coming up at THLHLA later in the year!

## Tower Hamlets Local History Library & Archives

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