

# Tower Hamlets Local History Library & Archives



*Chris Braithwaite, aka Chris Jones (1885-1944). Born in Barbados, Braithwaite travelled the world in the merchant navy before settling in Stepney in 1929 where he worked for the Shipping Federation. Active in his trade union but frustrated at the endemic racism he witnessed in the employment of 'colonial' seamen, he became a leading figure in the emerging Pan-Africanist and anti-imperialist movement in 1930s London, addressing rallies and organising marches. Photo courtesy Dorothy Rose Du Boulay.*

## Black lives matter

There is a collective duty on all of us to challenge the inequalities still very apparent within many aspects of our society. It is for us to come together and support Black communities by means of institutional change and re-education to address racial intolerance. It is for us to support, sympathise and advocate this message in collaboration with the Black Community, and come together against racial injustice locally, nationally and globally. Black Lives Matter

is a message that champions freedom of speech and the rights of those who suffer the injustice that is racism.

Local history has a role to play in highlighting experiences of historical oppression and exposing absences in the archival record. We at THLHLA are committed to engaging with these realities and developing our understanding of the ways in which systemic racism plays out in heritage institutions and in our practice. We are committed to identifying and tackling these problems in order to provide Black people and other People of Colour with the best possible experience of engaging with the histories of Tower Hamlets. We are open to challenge and suggestions from members of these communities. We are keen to listen, learn, collaborate and gain feedback on our recent and ongoing work in this area. If you have thoughts to share, please get in touch via email: [localhistory@towerhamlets.gov.uk](mailto:localhistory@towerhamlets.gov.uk)

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## Help us make coronavirus history



*Installation by artist Peter Liversidge*

We are excited to introduce you to our new project website launching today: **Making History: documenting coronavirus in the East End.**

Tower Hamlets Local History Library and Archives wants to create a lasting collective memory of our community's response to the COVID-19 crisis. As an archive it is our responsibility to not only preserve historic records from the past, but collect and preserve the history of today to inform many generations to come.

What is life like for you during lockdown? How are you dealing with the situation? How are you passing your days? Many will now be working or studying from home – how have these changes to regular routines affected you? What was Ramadan like for you this year? Key workers, how has your role changed? Are there positives to take away from this crisis?

By collecting records of your experiences we can create an archive that will help future generations understand our lives and the environment we are currently living in and help them meet challenges they may face.

To find out more, and submit your materials through our new digital platform, please head over to <https://talk.towerhamlets.gov.uk/coronavirus-collection>

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## Our first virtual film screening!



Gardiners Corner, 1963 (P02347)

### 'From the Troxy to Aldgate Pump' (55 mins, 1989)

**Thursday 18 June 5.00-6.30pm**

Join Tower Hamlets Local History Library & Archives for our first ever virtual film screening! We have selected this recently digitised film from our collections for a free public screening as part of [Refugee Week 2020](#).

*From the Troxy to Aldgate Pump* is a documentary by Aumie Shapiro who in the late 1980s set about tracing what was left of the historic Jewish East End. His film features familiar institutions such as the Troxy Cinema, the Yiddish People's Theatre and several synagogues. The images are enhanced with the recollections of residents including Phil Hyams, Jack Walkind, Aaron Frumkins, Chaim Lipshitz, Lily Rose, Morris Box, Issy Gold, Anna Zelniker, Victor Lucas and Jack Miller. As well as sharing their memories of the places and buildings featured, some of the interviewees speak about political events such as the Battle of Cable Street.

To book a space and receive instructions on how to join the screening please email: [localhistory@towerhamlets.gov.uk](mailto:localhistory@towerhamlets.gov.uk) OR book via Eventbrite on our Facebook page [www.facebook.com/THLHA](http://www.facebook.com/THLHA)

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## Bethnal Green Tube Disaster: talk & exhibition


### 'The Women's Perspective' - now online!

Staff have been working with our brilliant partners at Stairway to Heaven Memorial Trust to gradually put online the exhibition and events we'd planned to host together prior to lockdown.

If you didn't get a chance to see the exhibition in person on our first floor landing at the beginning of March we are pleased to announce that it is now available online, and a talk to coincide with the exhibition is now being held via Zoom later in the month - read on for more

details.

The Bethnal Green Tube Disaster was the UK's largest single loss of civilian life during the Second World War. One evening in March 1943 the air-raid warning sounded and residents flocked to their local air-raid shelter, Bethnal Green underground station. Tragically the entrance to it became blocked and in the crush, 173 people died. This new exhibition focusses on the perspectives of women and girls who were involved, including survivor Babs Clark. Curated by Stairway to Heaven Memorial Trust as part of Tower Hamlets Women's History Month, it is now available online at: [www.ideastore.co.uk/local-history-online-exhibitions](http://www.ideastore.co.uk/local-history-online-exhibitions)



**A century of life in Bethnal Green**

A virtual talk  
by Joyce  
Hampton

**Women and two World Wars**

### **A Century of Life in Bethnal Green: Women and Two World Wars**

**Thursday 25 June, 5.00-6.30pm**

We are hosting another live talk online before the month is out, with the wonderful Joyce Hampton (author of *Looking Back* and *The Story of the Huguenots*). Joyce will take us on a journey through the twentieth century, exploring the impact on Bethnal Green of two World Wars and how social changes affected local families and women in particular.

This event will be taking place live via Zoom. You must download Zoom on your computer or other device to take part. The event is free but advance booking is required - attendees will receive the meeting ID and reminder a few days prior to the event.

To book places please email: [localhistory@towerhamlets.gov.uk](mailto:localhistory@towerhamlets.gov.uk) OR book via Eventbrite on our Facebook page [www.facebook.com/THLHA](https://www.facebook.com/THLHA)

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## **Contact us!**

Even though we're closed, you can still talk to us and access some of our collections. There's a lot on our website, <http://www.ideastore.co.uk/local-history>, and our social media channels too:

Facebook: [Tower Hamlets Local History Library and Archives](https://www.facebook.com/TowerHamletsLocalHistoryLibraryandArchives)

Twitter: [@LBTHArchives](https://twitter.com/LBTHArchives)

Instagram: [@towerhamletsarchives](https://www.instagram.com/towerhamletsarchives)

And we're waiting for your emails, with our inbox monitored during normal working hours  
Monday-Friday: [localhistory@towerhamlets.gov.uk](mailto:localhistory@towerhamlets.gov.uk)



## Coronavirus updates and advice for residents

Tower Hamlets Council is supporting the nation's efforts to stop the spread of coronavirus, while running our most critical services and supporting our residents, including those that are vulnerable.

**We are regularly publishing advice for residents, local businesses and more at [www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/coronavirus](http://www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/coronavirus)**

We are also sharing updates with our subscribers in regular emails, and publishing stories on social media using **#TowerHamletsTogether**.

Sign up to our 'health and wellbeing - coronavirus' newsletter to get regular updates delivered to your inbox.

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