

Tower Hamlets Local History Library & Archives



It's your last chance to visit The Women's Hall!

Since it opened in May, we have been delighted to welcome more than 2600 visitors to [The Women's Hall](#), our recreation of the headquarters of the East London Federation of Suffragettes in Old Ford Road, Bow. Don't miss out on your chance to view the exhibition or attend one of the final events - the last full day of opening will be Saturday 20 October.

The latest issue of The Women's Hall Dreadnought, a free newspaper produced entirely by project volunteers, is available to pick up from the library now. It contains articles about the East End suffragettes and their world by our volunteer researchers and information about [the forthcoming exhibition at Four Corners of the photography of East End suffragette Norah Smyth](#), one of Sylvia Pankhurst's closest associates.

The pay-what-you-can cafe ('Cost Price Restaurant') is doing a roaring trade, thanks to the efforts of our catering volunteers. The cafe, in the middle of the exhibition space, is open during the hours below and offers light meals on a donations/pay-what-you-can basis. All food is sourced from Fare Share, a charity which re-purposes unwanted supermarket food.

- Wednesdays: 12.30 - 2.30pm
- Thursdays: 12.30 - 2.30pm and 5.30-7.30pm

- Saturdays (1st and 3rd of the month): 12.30 - 2.30pm

See below for events which have been scheduled for the final few weeks of the exhibition. They are all FREE to attend!

Thursday 11 October, 4.30 - 5.30pm

Teen talk: Sally Nicholls

To mark the United Nations [International Day of the Girl](#) we are delighted to welcome children's and YA author Sally Nicholls for a reading and Q&A session from her book [Things a Bright Girl Can Do](#). This "utterly captivating" novel follows three courageous young women from the East End, Evelyn, May and Nell, in the fight for the vote, and is set just over a hundred years ago in and around the original Women's Hall! This event is aimed at teenagers - you can book your place [here](#). If you are part of a school group or youth club and would like to bring a group, please contact us on the details below. This event is presented in collaboration with the LSE Women's Library.

Thursday 11 October, 6pm - 7pm

Talk: Women United Against Racism - a local story

An evening with Julie Begum, chair of [Swadhinata Trust](#), who will be sharing the story of her involvement in Women Against Racism, a coalition of women from diverse backgrounds who, as part of a wider anti-racist and anti-fascist campaign, managed to get the BNP out of Tower Hamlets during the 1990s. Also part of our Black History Month programme (for more on which, see below).

Thursday 18 October, 6.15 - 7.30pm

Talk: Christine Burns on the historic struggle for trans rights

Christine Burns MBE has campaigned for trans civil rights for a quarter of a century and has involved with the trans community for more than 40 years. We are now delighted to welcome Christine to give a talk about the history of the fight for civil rights for transgender people in the UK. Christine was a leading figure in the pioneering trans rights organisation Press for Change, working on new employment legislation and the Gender Recognition Act. She will be selling and signing copies of her new book Trans Britain.

Saturday 20 October, 12.30 - 5pm

The Women's Hall Grand Finale

As the exhibition draws to an end at Tower Hamlets Local History Library & Archives we want to give it a good send off. Free to drop in at any point to these happenings all taking place on the last day of opening- no booking required.

12.30-2.30pm Our final service will be taken over by [Dina Begum](#), author of Brick Lane Cookbook, who will share her tips on cooking with what you have. Dina will lead a cooking demonstration of one of her recipes, which will be included on the day's menu.

2.00-3.00pm The wonderful team from East End Speed Histories will bring suffragette stories from the East End to life in a series of fast-paced talks

3.00-5.00pm Dip into our dressing up box and don the clothing of a suffragette, pose against our backdrop of banners and take a photo home to remember it forever! Our Suffragette Photo Booth will be fun for all the family.



Black History Month

We have been involved in programming events across the Idea Store network - [see the full list here](#). Below are the events we are hosting here at Tower Hamlets Local History Library & Archives.

Tuesday 2 October - Saturday 20 October

Exhibition: Peter James

Tower Hamlets Local History Library & Archives is honoured to present an exhibition of the extraordinary artwork of Peter James, long-time Whitechapel resident and 84 year old 'Windrush Generation' artist who has lived in London since arriving from Trinidad in 1955.

Mr James (pictured above next to his artwork) creates intense drawings, paintings, masks and sculptures responding to aspects of Black Britain and its origins. His imagery extends from scenes of enslavement and the Middle Passage to futuristic interiors, barren cities and verdant landscapes dominated by dinosaurs or spaceships. Without any formal artistic training, over many decades of compulsive practice Mr James has developed a powerful vernacular style strengthened by the repetition of key symbols and themes.

The exhibition also features photographs from Mr James's personal archive documenting his life in London, including the founding of Notting Hill Carnival in 1959 in which he was involved. It is installed on our first floor landing outside the reading room - don't miss it!

Saturday 6 October, 2pm - 4pm

Workshop: Nomad - Archiving Somali History in 3D

Do you have a family heirloom that you would like to add to an online virtual archive of Somali cultural heritage? Join Abira Hussein and Sophie Dixon ([Mnemoscene](#)) for a workshop to digitise a cultural object in 3D using a technique called photogrammetry. The workshop will start with a short demonstration of Abira and Sophie's work in progress called

'Nomad'. Nomad takes museum objects from Somali culture and reconnects them with the sounds and people to which they belonged.

Workshop participants will then have the opportunity to turn an item from your culture or family history – whether a traditional item or anything else that is personally significant to you - into a 'virtual heritage object'. The digitised version of your object will then be uploaded online to the Nomad archive, alongside an audio recording of its story told in your own words. The workshop is free but there are only 10 places available. [Book your place here.](#)

Thursday 25 October - Saturday 1 December

Exhibition: Somali Seafarers - Surviving the Sea

Produced by the Tower Hamlets Somali Senior Citizens Club with Eastside Community Heritage, this new exhibition provides the opportunity to learn about the stories and memories of Somalis who worked in the Merchant Navy after the Second World War. Following the independence of what was previously the Protectorate of British Somaliland, many former colonial subjects moved to live and work in docks around the United Kingdom, joining communities established in the late nineteenth-century. As part of the project, a film is being made of the former seafarers' testimonies - it will be premiered, along with the exhibition, at a special event here on Thursday 25 October, from 6.00-7.30pm. No need to book, just drop in.



Announcing our next exhibition...

We are delighted to announce that our next exhibition will be **Painting the Hamlets**, a display of paintings from our collection, opening in early November and running until mid April. Work is being selected to ensure that all of the borough's neighbourhoods are represented, and the artists featured will include Albert Turpin, Geoffrey Scowcroft Fletcher, Ronald Morgan, Rose Henriques, Doreen Fletcher and Noel Gibson. Pending any disasters de-installing the Women's Hall, we will hold a launch event for the exhibition on the evening

of **Thursday 15 November** - save the date! Pictured above is one of the featured works - Albert Turpin's undated painting of the Lakeview Estate on Old Ford Road, pictured from the Victoria Park boating lake.

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☒ DG - David Granick Exhibition: The East End in Colour

☒ 1 - Mounted prints of David Granick photographs

- 1 - Cable Street, 1969
- 2 - Quaker Street, 1978
- 3 - Quaker Street, 1978
- 4 - Spitalfields Market, 1973
- 5 - Still & Star Aldgate, 1974
- 6 - Three Colt Street, Limehouse, 1969
- 7 - Emmett Street, 1969
- 8 - Newell Street, Limehouse, 1964

David Granick exhibition catalogued

For those of you who didn't get the chance to visit our very popular exhibition of David Granick's slides, *The East End in Colour, 1960-1980*, we are pleased to announce that the images from the exhibition have been fully catalogued. The prints were produced from scans of David Granick's Kodachrome slides which were digitised (and retouched) in 2017 by Chris Dorley-Brown. As part of the display, we encouraged visitors to write comments underneath each image and this aspect of the presentation was very well-received.

The exhibition, including the visitor comments on each photo, is now available to view in the Reading Room at any time, without an appointment. We are grateful to THLHLA volunteer Heather Wilson who recently created individual descriptions of all of 148 mounted prints on display in the exhibition, as well as the 39 prints from a wider selection which were considered for display but were not used. Heather's efforts mean that you can now easily find the title / location of David Granick image on [our online catalogue](#). The catalogue reference number should be used if you wish to order a digital copy to purchase from us (in person or via email or phone). We also hold a reference copy of [the book](#) in our Reading Room for visitors to consult and we still have copies for sale for the discounted price of £15.



St Matthias Community Centre competition

On Open House weekend, St Matthias Community Centre on Woodstock Terrace, Poplar, celebrated 25 years of serving the local communities of Poplar. Its much-loved leader Sister Christine Frost has secured funding to mark this important anniversary by installing a new stained glass work in one of the large feature windows, with the design to be sourced from the local community.

The building in which the centre is based was, from 1654, the chapel of the East India Company and in 1866 it became the Parish Church of St. Matthias in Poplar, though it ceased to be used for worship in 1976. It was rescued from dereliction and vandalism thanks to the efforts of Sister Christine and various funders and the Grade 2* listed building was reopened in 1993, providing essential services for the people of Poplar ever since.

Sister Christine has asked us to promote the design competition for the new window. St Matthias Community Centre is inviting designs for the large circular window which will illustrate the ways in which St Matthias and the East India Company have influenced Poplar and its residents over the last four centuries. As yet we do not have a detailed specification for the window, but please get in touch with us if you are interested and we will pass you on. The closing date for designs is 23 December and Sister Christine is very keen that residents or former of Tower Hamlets, or people with an association with the church or community centre to participate.

Did you know that Tower Hamlets offers other email newsletters to keep you up to date on a variety of topics?

[See the list and sign up!](#)