

Tower Hamlets Local History Library & Archives



Current exhibition closing tomorrow!

15 August –
23 November
2023

**EVERYTHING IS DIFFERENT,
NOTHING HAS CHANGED**

Three installations
responding to
archival sounds
of the East End

by Alastair Levy,
Emily Peasgood
and Syma Tariq

Tower Hamlets
Local History
Library & Archives

Last day of opening: Thursday, 10am-7pm

Thursday 23 November is the last day of our current exhibition - the first ever sound art installation here at Tower Hamlets Local History Library & Archives. Inspired by the amazing

collections of oral history and archival audio held in our collections, the entrance hall hosts work by three sound artists - **Alastair Levy, Emily Peasgood and Syma Tariq.**

Produced in collaboration with researchers at Queen Mary, University of London, *Everything is different, nothing has changed* uses archival audio to offer new interpretations of Tower Hamlets' past, focussing particularly on the experiences of Jewish and Bengali/Bangladeshi migrants living here during the twentieth century.

Each artist in this show takes a different approach to the archive, but recurring themes of home, memory, dislocation and protest resonate across their work. Surprising, playful and reflective, they make magic with recorded sound, bringing the past and the present up close to one other.

Described as "fantastic" by at least two visitors on their evaluation forms, run don't walk to Bancroft Road to listen to the work of these sound artists in the space it was designed for. Thanks to the nearly 800 of you who have been to see it so far.

Local history book sale

Saturday 16 December, 10am-2pm



It's back! Tower Hamlets Local History Library and Archives is excited to announce the return of its legendary local history book sale on **Saturday 16 December**. The sale will feature duplicate books and pamphlets which have been withdrawn from the local history library collection and is a great opportunity to find affordable pre-Christmas gifts for the bookworms in your life.



The titles available for purchase include many rare and out-of-print books covering a wide range of East End topics such as social history, politics, fiction, and local biographies. All hardbacks will be priced at £5 each, and paperbacks will be just £2.

New publications including the 2024 edition of the ever-popular [Friends of Island History Trust](#) calendar - modelled here by Rob and Andy in their seasonal knitwear.

Proceeds from the book sale will be used to acquire new stock for the library.

Both cash and card payments are accepted but if paying by cash please have the exact change ready. The sale will run between 10am and 2pm. We look forward to seeing you there!

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 | 2 December - 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 exhibition will be on show from Saturday 2 December until Saturday 16 March 2024.

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.

A programme of events is being organised to tie in with the exhibition. First up is...

Saturday 2 December | 10am-2pm | Free

East End History Club: Activism & Resistance

Join us for a drop-in session exploring our collections on activism and resistance in the East End, this time with a creative twist... Using copies of material in the collections, make your very own unique statement badge!



This session is open to all ages - children and grown-ups alike. NB all children to be supervised by an adult. No booking required - just turn up.

Details to follow of future events, but please save the date for an evening discussion with contemporary Tower Hamlets photographers Rehan Jamil and Koïs Miah on **Thursday 18 January**.

Club Row sign comes to Bancroft Road



On 10-11 May 1941, Club Row and Bethnal Green Road were heavily bombed. This included damage to businesses such as Stein's Clothiers on the corner of Club Row and Bethnal Green Road. It was at this time that the Club Row street sign was dislodged and then found by a local boy, shrapnel hunting in neighbourhood bomb sites.

John Monk, now retired and living in Southend, recently rediscovered the Club Row sign in his home, and decided that it should be returned to the London borough where he grew up. John contacted GMB Union, his trade union since 1952 and asked for their help to return the sign to its rightful home.

We would like to thank John Monk for gifting the sign and Cllr Shubo Hussain and GMB London Region officers for arranging the deposit on his behalf.

BOMB DAMAGE

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Club Row
(Stein's Clothiers)

L.C. 1415



Stein's Clothiers, corner of Club Row & Bethnal Green Rd. Incident, May 10/11, 1941 glass negative no. 44

Image from THLHLA Bomb Damage files, ref no: L/BGM/F/6/1/26

Club Row is one of the borough's oldest surviving streets, assessed for rates from at least 1694 and named on the 1703 map of the Hamlet of Spitalfields. In more recent history it is famous for its animal market, which may have had its origins with birds kept by Huguenot settlers who 'were fond of cultivating flower gardens and the breeding and training of singing birds'.



Close-up of a C19th hand-painted tiled artwork entitled 'Club Row in ye Olden Time' at the nearby Well and Bucket pub. Image published by Truman, Hanbury & Buxton, 1973. (c) Heineken UK. THLHLA ref no: P21665, Class 652.31

Welcome to Tony T

We are delighted to welcome Tony T to our team. Tony was appointed in September as the part-time, fixed-term Research & Engagement Lead for our [Communities of Liberation programme](#) which explores the long history of African presence in the 17th and 18th East End.

"Hi, my name is Tony T. Huge thanks (again) to the project team and steering group for 'Communities of Liberation'. This truly feels like the sort of project that I would have created – it ticks all the boxes personally as well as professionally, and I'm proud to be working with you...

So, who is Tony T, and what do I bring to this role?



Well, with my outside hat on I'm co-founder of [Sweet Patootee Arts](#), a dynamic community focused organisation that builds on my 20 years' experience as a Creative Producer of historical documentaries, period drama, archive research, oral histories, and heritage interpretation.

I'm the son of Windrush Generation parents from Barbados and Grenada – mum was a nurse and my dad worked on London Underground. In many ways my upbringing was the typical working-class experience depicted by so many storytellers and artists: state schooling; a front room for show and special guests only; a radiogram; mandatory church; mutual support networks of extended family and friends; compulsory greeting of all Black elders you met on your travels...

I have a life-long association with the London Borough of Tower Hamlets and the Communities who live here... beginning with childhood experiences of visits to my parents' friends, and the agony of going shopping with my mum in Roman Road and Whitechapel markets – 'to pull the trolley'...

The American TV series "Roots" was my first experience of a public conversation around the Transatlantic Slave Trade and its legacies. I was in Secondary School at the time, and it was 'must-see' family viewing in our house. That series and resulting conversations with my parents fired a need to prioritise exploring neglected Black British heritage – and I've stayed on that path ever since.

I'm among those working to bring neglected Black British histories and interpretation into popular narratives (as widely as possible) – in place of using Black American characters and experiences as the default for Black history. I'm also on a mission to tell nuanced character-led (hidden) Black history stories that give their protagonists fully developed context – rather than just revealing presence alone. Where possible, I prefer to telling stories inspired by ordinary people."

Christmas opening hours

The Reading Room closes for Christmas at **7pm on Thursday 21 December**.

We re-open at 10am on **Tuesday 2 January 2024**.

The exhibition hall (but not the Reading Room) will be open for visitors on Friday 22 December, 10am-1pm and 2pm-5pm and reopen on Tuesday 2 January at 10am.

Please note that emails and phone calls will not be responded to during our Christmas closure.

Contact us

- Email us: 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 December
- Saturday 16 December
- Saturday 6 January
- Saturday 20 January

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.