

### **Visitors still flocking to Tower Hamlets Local History Library and Archives**

It is now two years since the lending library at Bancroft Library closed its doors with the staff and stock transferring to Idea Store Canary Wharf, but the number of visits to the Local History Library and Archives continues to increase. The figure for 2007-8 is 2,703 (up from 2,613 in 2006-7) making us one of the busiest local history libraries/archives in London.



Assistant Local Studies Officer Sally Jacobs advising a user. (photo Bob Stuart)

### **Edith Ramsay papers catalogued and unavailable**

Work carries on behind the scenes to tackle the backlogs of cataloguing. For several years, work has been progressing to catalogue the papers of Edith Ramsay and this task has now been completed. Edith Ramsay MBE (1895-1983), educationalist and community worker, lived in Stepney for over sixty years. She was primarily an educationalist and was appointed head of Stepney Women's Evening Institute in 1931 but she also campaigned tirelessly as a voluntary social worker. The papers reflect the full gamut of Ramsay's interests, including her concern for the conditions of colonial seamen from both Asia and Africa and most particularly the campaign

against prostitution in Stepney in the 1950s when the area of Cable Street was branded by journalists a “hot-bed of vice on gutter level” and the “dustbin of London”.



Edith Ramsay in Sander Street, part of Stepney's former red-light district, 1957

### **Web site news**

Look out for some enhancements to our website pages soon ([www.ideastore.co.uk](http://www.ideastore.co.uk)). Coming soon on the Digital Picture Gallery will be an interesting selection of images of Docks in Tower Hamlets. The Archives on line section is to include images of a register of pauper apprentices from Bow, 1802-1827.

### **Other sites of interest to our users:**

The photographic collections of the London Transport Museum are now available on line. These can be searched by London borough. Check out those for Tower Hamlets at:

<http://www.ltmcollection.org/photos/location/location.html?IXlocation=Tower+Hamlets>

Similarly, a London borough search can now be made on line in the National Monuments Record (the public archive of English Heritage) at:

<http://viewfinder.english-heritage.org.uk/>

Family historians will welcome the new website from Tower Hamlets Register Office at [www.thbmd.co.uk](http://www.thbmd.co.uk) which includes index to many of the civil registration records held there.

Map enthusiasts must take a look at [www.motco.com](http://www.motco.com) . A recent addition to this site is Horwood's magnificent London, Westminster and Southwark at a scale of 26 inches to the mile.

## Star rating

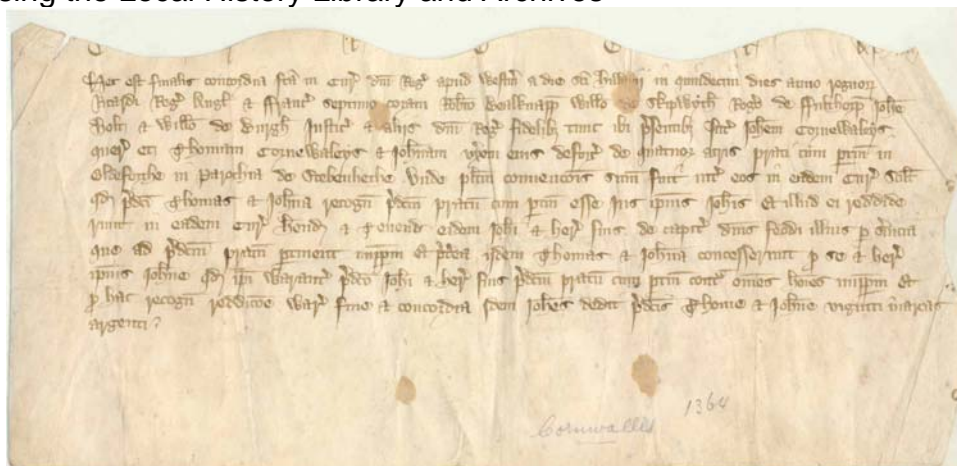
In 2006 the National Archives launched a self-assessment scheme for local authority archive services, which were rated from 0-3 stars. In the pilot scheme that year Tower Hamlets was rated as a 0 star service but in the recently published results for 2007 this has risen to 1 star following improvement to the service. Access to the full results can be gained at <http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/archives/self-assessment.htm>

## Media watch

The more eagle eyed among you may have spotted the Local History Library and Archives on the telly last autumn when local member of parliament George Galloway took on Lady Victoria Hervey in an episode of ITV's "Don't call me stupid". Mr Galloway was filmed explaining various major episodes in working class history using items from our collections. Filming has taken place subsequently for a forthcoming episode of a very popular genealogy programme. Watch this space!

## New accessions to the Archives

We have been successful in purchasing at auction a document dating from 1384, about 200 years older than any other document held there. The document is a conveyance of four acres of meadow in Old Ford (spelt *Oldefarthe* in the document) in the Parish of Stepney (*Stebenhethe*) from John Cornewaleys to Thomas Cornewaleys and his wife Joan. The exact location of the four acres cannot be ascertained but it seems the land was part of a reputed manor called *Bernes* or *Barnes*. Acquiring the document has not cost Tower Hamlets Council Tax payers a penny as the total cost was met from donations by appreciative members of the public using the Local History Library and Archives



Recently acquired 14<sup>th</sup> century conveyance

## New books

Recent additions to the stock of the Local history Library include: *Labour's Lost Leader: the life and politics of Will Crooks* by Paul Tyler and *A history of St Mary & St Michael's parish, Commercial Road, East London*.

*The East End at War* by our very own Christopher Lloyd and Rosemary Taylor has been reprinted and is available for sale at £9.99 plus £2.00 p&p. Coming soon in the *Britain in Old Photographs* series is *Bow and Bromley-by-Bow* by Gary Haines at £12.99 plus £2.00 p&p.



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Archives

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