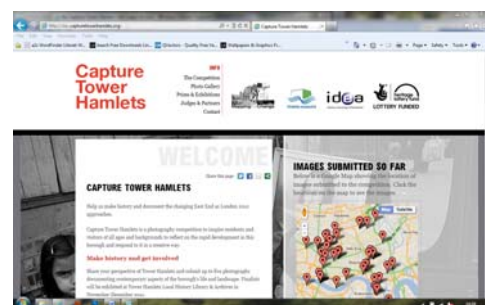




## Capture Tower Hamlets!

Our new project aims to source new photographs for our collections which represent the borough as it is today, in the midst of great change brought about by the development for the Olympics in 2012. *Capture Tower Hamlets* is part of Hackney Museum's *Mapping The Change* project, funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund. The competition aims to inspire residents and visitors to the borough to pick up a camera and take a photo which they feel captures something of the spirit and essence of Tower Hamlets and how life and landscape is experienced in the borough today.

For us at the Local History Library, *Capture Tower Hamlets* is an exercise in 'contemporary collecting', building on our extensive image collections to ensure that photographic records of the borough at the turn of this decade find their way into our collections for permanent preservation as part of the borough's archive. A panel of judges, which comprises local photographers Toby Smith and Wasma Mansour, the borough archivist Malcolm Barr-Hamilton and historian Alan Dein, will meet in late October to review the entries. An exhibition of the winning photographs will be displayed here in November and December, and prizes awarded to the successful entrants.



The closing date for entries is October 17<sup>th</sup>. To enter, and see the photographs submitted so far, visit [www.capturetowerhamlets.org](http://www.capturetowerhamlets.org)



Shahera Begum introduces the Freedom exhibition watched by Cllr Rania Khan and others

## Freedom exhibition launch

Tower Hamlets Local History Library and Archives unveiled its latest exhibition, *Freedom*, launched by Cllr Rania Khan on Thursday 18 August. The Freedom exhibition comprises images of the Bangladesh Liberation War of 1971 by photographers Anwar Hossain and Abul Lais Shyamal, and was curated by Swadhinata Trust, a Bengali heritage organisation based in Tower Hamlets in celebration of Bangladesh's 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of independence in March.

Cllr Rania Khan in her opening speech stressed the importance of the Freedom exhibition: "This is a landmark exhibition tracing the birth of Bangladesh. I would urge residents to come and have a look at the thought provoking images which portray the hardships suffered by many to have secured independence and freedom that we take for granted."

Borough Archivist Malcolm Barr-Hamilton introduced speakers Maher Anjum of Swadhinata Trust and our heritage skills trainee Shahera Begum. Shahera spoke of her development work with the local Bengali community so far and her contribution to the *Freedom* exhibition. For its transfer here, Shahera incorporated new materials which illustrated the reaction and activities of Tower Hamlets' Bengali community at the time of the war. Attendees were intrigued by these latest additions which included photographs by Yousuf Chowdhury and archival newspaper cuttings from the East London Advertiser. Many attendees spoke of their surprise at how the local residents here in Tower Hamlets came together and proactively supported Bangladesh's claim for independence in 1971.

The launch event generated a lot of interest from the media and in attendance were prominent British Bangladeshi TV stations Channel S and NTV who conducted interviews with the speakers during the event. Other guests included: Enamul Karim Chowdhury, Consular Attache at the Bangladesh High Commission, Her Majesty's Representative Deputy Lieutenant for Tower Hamlets, Commander John Ludgate, Ahmed Nurul Tipu and Babul Husain of Projonmo71, freedom fighter Syed Mabud, journalist Syed Neaz Ahmed, activist Rena Mosharaf and Rahela Sheikh, Desh TV director.

The *Freedom* exhibition also features objects on display including the diary of a community activist during the war in Bangladesh, the first collection of Bangladesh's stamps designed by Biman Mullick and a tie and badge used to raise money to support the war.

The *Freedom* exhibition is available to view during normal opening hours until the end of September.

**“This is a landmark exhibition tracing the birth of Bangladesh”**

## CROSSING THE RIVER

Members of the Rotherhithe and Bermondsey Local History Society enjoyed an evening across the water on 27th July when Borough Archivist Malcolm Barr-Hamilton led a large group of them on a guided tour of Wapping on an unusually sunny evening.

## New faces

We welcomed three new professional staff to the team during the summer: Melanie Strong, Natasha O'Neill and Katherine Weston. As Heritage Officers, Melanie, Natasha and Katherine will have a shared remit to support the operations of Tower Hamlets Local History Library & Archives including acquisition, preservation and the provision of access to the Borough's local history library and archival collections. In addition to this they will each have distinct roles to look after the following specific areas: Library, Archives and Learning & Participation. Along with the rest of the team they will assist with the development of a new heritage centre for the borough, which will provide residents and visitors alike with enhanced access to our extensive collections and opportunities to engage with Tower Hamlets' history.



### **Melanie – Heritage Officer (Library)**

Melanie is a qualified librarian with an MA in African and Asian History. She has a keen interest in social history and a personal interest in the history of East London. Melanie has been working in libraries for the past six years. She joins us from City University and has also worked at King's College, London in the Foyle Special Collections Library and the National Art Library at the V&A. Melanie will be responsible for cataloguing, acquisitions and preservation of the library stock - this includes books, pamphlets, periodicals as well as cuttings, maps and photographs.

### **Natasha – Heritage Officer (Archives)**

Natasha holds a postgraduate qualification in Information Management & Preservation. She has been working in archives and records management for the past four years, in various roles based within London and Glasgow. Her most recent post prior to coming to work for Tower Hamlets Council was a position within the University of Glasgow's Data Protection & Freedom of Information Office, working as an Information Compliance and Records Management Officer. The focus of her role within the Tower Hamlets Local History Library & Archives will be to support the Borough Archivist, Malcolm Barr-Hamilton, in all aspects of the acquisition, preservation and provision of access to Tower Hamlets Council's archival collections.



### **Katherine – Heritage Officer (Learning & Participation)**

Katherine has been working in the heritage sector for over 6 years. A graduate in Archaeology, she has worked in museums, archives and historic buildings within the field of heritage interpretation and outreach. Prior to her appointment at Tower Hamlets Local History Library and Archives, she worked as a Heritage Outreach Officer at the Devon Record Office in Exeter. In her current role she will be building links with local communities and developing an exciting and inclusive outreach service at the library.

## Picture of the month:

St Andrew's Hospital, Devons Road, Bromley-by-Bow, c1934



Originally known as the Poplar and Stepney Sick Asylum, this building was opened in 1871 and served the districts of Poplar, Bromley, Bow, Limehouse, Wapping, Shadwell and Ratcliff. It was one of the first and largest workhouse infirmaries built under the Metropolitan Poor Act of 1867. It was renamed St Andrew's Hospital in 1925. The hospital has now been demolished and is being replaced by a large housing scheme called St Andrews.

## They shall not pass

October 4 sees the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Battle of Cable Street, when in 1936 thousands of residents of the East End turned out in force to prevent Oswald Mosley's British fascists marching through the mostly Jewish area. There are a range of fascinating opportunities to celebrate this anniversary including the hosting of the *Protest And Survive* exhibition by the Cable Street Group here at the Local History Library & Archives from 7<sup>th</sup> October until the end of the month. Other events

include a seminar at St George's Town Hall on Sunday 25 September put on by the Jewish East End Celebration Society and a day of celebration organised by the Cable Street Group at Wilton's Music Hall on Sunday 2<sup>nd</sup> October. The mural on the side of St George's Town Hall completed in 1983 marking the battle has been recently restored and a new plaque will be unveiled by the council in the same week. For more information, visit [www.battleofcablestreet.org.uk](http://www.battleofcablestreet.org.uk)

## OPEN HOUSE

The library will be opening its doors on Saturday 17 September as part of London Open House weekend. Visitors will receive a guided tour of the building's feature rooms, including the archive strongroom. Tours will be offered at 10am, 11am, 3pm and 4pm. Places are free but must be booked in advance via [londonopenhouse.org](http://londonopenhouse.org)

## New additions to the catalogue



Frontispiece engraving of 1825  
Saint Katherine's Church auction catalogue

## SAFETY NETTING

Earlier this summer, chunks of sandstone from the cornicing of the older, 1861 frontage of the Grade 2 listed Bancroft Library building were noticed to have fallen to the ground close to the entrance. This 150-year old part of the façade is particularly vulnerable to disintegration during bad weather. In response, the affected bands of cornicing has been enclosed in debris netting to prevent any pieces of stone falling on people entering and leaving the building. This is a temporary measure until funds can be raised for the full conservation and restoration of the building's frontage.

In the past month over two hundred items have been added to the library catalogue by our Heritage Officer Melanie Strong. A few of the highlights can be found below.

***A catalogue of the materials of Saint Katherine's church, near the tower, dwelling houses, warehouse, &c. to be sold by auction, by Paulin, Son and Herne, on Tuesday December 13th, 1825, and following two days at eleven o'clock each day on the premises by order of the directors of the St Katherine Dock Company, all the valuable materials of the church, dwelling-houses, warehouse, &c. in lots, to be taken down by the purchasers. Printed by Carpenter and Sons, 1825***

This pamphlet is a sale catalogue produced in 1825 upon the destruction of St Katherine's Church. There are manuscript inscriptions at end of text including a bibliography of books written about the demolition from 1824-1825 as well as press cuttings on St Katherine's Church's demolition dated Feb 6 1826.

***Huguenot wills and administrations in England and Ireland 1617-1849: abstracts of Huguenot wills and administrations compiled by Henry Wagner FSA by Henry Wagner and Dorothy North. Published by the Huguenot Society of Great Britain and Ireland, 2007***

A resource for people who are researching Huguenot ancestors, this book includes three sections English wills, Irish wills and administrations. All wills were transcribed by Henry Wagner (1840-1926), all the comments are his and his variations in spelling are extensive, obviously replicating the wording of the original wills. There is also a full index of names and places.

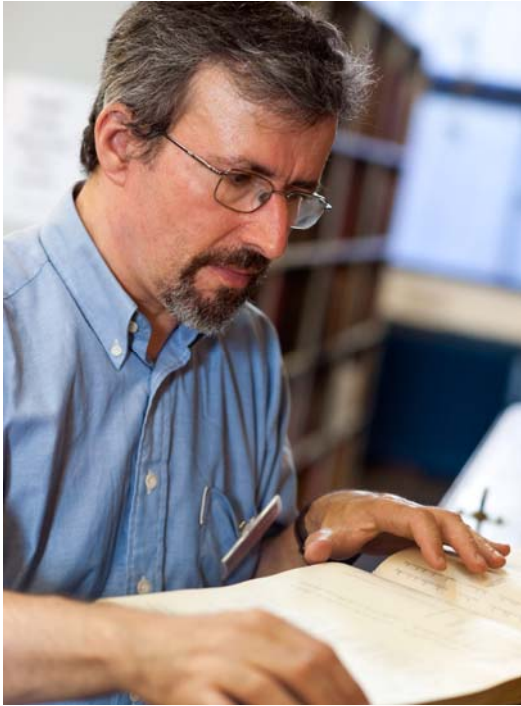
***Plassey's legacy: young Londoners explore the hidden story of the East India Company by Nasima Begum Ali, Ruhana Ali, Eklima Begum, Lothifa Choudhury, Imran Jamal, Atif Kazi, Asiya Khanom, and Samia Rahman. Published by the Brick Lane Circle, 2010.***

This book is the result of a history project involving young Tower Hamlets residents of Bangladeshi descent looking at the legacy of the East India Company. The book ties in the history of the Company with the lives of Londoners today. Not only is it a good resource for people interested in the history of the East India Company but it also is an example of how to engage young people in local history projects.

***Far from the fashionable crowd: the People's Concert Society and music in London's suburbs by Alan Bartley. Published by Whimbrel Pub, 2009.***

This book tells something of the many organisations that brought classical music to the working classes of the time. It tells of music by the great composers being given a reception by East End audiences that amazed contemporary writers and commentators. Particular emphasis is given to the activities of the People's Concert Society and its main offspring, the South Place Sunday Concerts, since they were the most enduring.

## Goodbye to Martin



We are sad to announce that Martin Goldfarb is shortly to leave us after over three years as a Heritage Assistant at the Local History Library & Archives. Martin has completed a range of important cataloguing and preservation tasks in his time with us, including the numbering of every photograph in our collection for the first time. This took over a year, since (as Martin discovered) we hold over 33,000 photographs! Another achievement has been the inputting of reader registration data - a cheer went up in the staff room when Martin

announced that his 2000th reader had been inputted onto our system. Arguably, however, Martin's greatest accomplishment has been his mastery of the daily crossword, in the shadow of which the rest of the staff must abide.

Martin's duties have also included scanning documents, shelving and helping readers with enquiries. He has also catalogued many Stepney Borough Council files from the 1930s and 1940s onto our CALM cataloguing database.

Martin says, "Overall, I have gained a wealth of experience in my time at the Local History Library and I hope to pursue a career in archives. My work at the Local History Library has provided me with a valuable grounding in Local History, and has been an important first rung on my desired career ladder."

Tamsin, Malcolm and all of the staff at the Local History Library & Archives would like to thank Martin for his invaluable contributions to the service over the last few years, during what has been an often challenging period of change, and we wish him all the very best for the future.

## BUILDING WORKS UPDATE

Listed building and planning applications have been submitted for the forthcoming £500,000 of Phase 2 works which will address the leaking roofs and install a new wheelchair-accessible lift. Work is ongoing on the capital grant application to the Heritage Lottery Fund for the transformation of the building into a heritage centre for the East End with dedicated spaces for exhibitions and learning.

## New booklet for sale

*Ship to shore: histories of Tower Hamlets through the lives of its people commemorated in Tower Hamlets Cemetery Park*, price £3.50

This fascinating and well-illustrated publication from the Friends of Tower Hamlets Cemetery Park focusing on the maritime connection of people commemorated in the cemetery; shipbuilders – shipowners – mariners – those lost at sea – and many more.

