



## Chris Lloyd: a valediction

We are sad to announce the retirement of Chris Lloyd, Local History Librarian and our longest-serving member of staff. Chris joined the Local History team in 1981 and has been based at Bancroft Library ever since. His unceasing helpfulness and careful attention to detail have helped countless people resolve their enquiries. Chris's legendary knowledge and expertise in the local history of this area is frequently complimented by visitors from all over the world.

Chris says, "While I'm sad to leave Tower Hamlets after so many years, I'm looking forward to finally having the time to pursue my own research interests which include the Allinson's bakery formerly of Bethnal Green. I wish my colleagues the best of luck

with the redevelopment of the building and look forward to receiving my invitation to the grand opening!"

On behalf of the thousands of people he has helped, the staff at the Local History Library would like to thank Chris for his 29 years of dedicated service. If you would like to record your thanks to Chris or make a donation towards his leaving present please drop in and speak to a member of staff or email Malcolm Barr-Hamilton (Malcolm.barr-hamilton@towerhamlets.gov.uk) before we close for building works.

We will say goodbye to Chris at our Story of London festival events in early October (see p2).

## Story of London

In July we were awarded just under £10,000 from the Heritage Lottery Fund to run a project on the history of social housing in Tower Hamlets in partnership with local educational charity Bow Arts Trust. The project forms part of the Mayor's Story of London festival which runs annually in October.

This year the Story of London festival theme is 'the future', with projects having to illustrate how London has been at the forefront of innovation throughout the ages. Tower Hamlets has long borne witness to the pioneering development of social housing since its inception through the work of Victorian philanthropists and successive London governments.

The purpose of the 14th Floor project is to engage local residents to reflect, learn and share their memories of the borough's housing on their lives, using our rich archive collections as a jumping-off point. Inspired by history, participants are working with local artist Shane Davey to produce a short film about the history of social

housing and how it has impacted on participants' own lives and landscapes. Volunteers will also produce a postcard set and two guided walks of significant areas.

Four free events will be running during the Story of London festival: make a note of the dates now and RSVP to the usual address if you wish to attend.

MON 4TH OCT: talk on the history of social housing from author Lynsey Hanley and special guests 6.00pm at Local History Library & Archives, Bancroft Road, E1

THURS 7TH OCT: project launch and premiere film screening 6.30pm at Rochelle School, Arnold Circus, E2

TUES 3RD OCT at 3pm

SAT 9TH OCT at 1pm

Guided walks of selected estates tbc.

For regular updates, check out the project blog: <http://storiesofsocialhousingtowerhamlets.blogspot.com>

## Legacy of Limehouse Chinatown

We are pleased to announce our involvement in Islington Chinese Association's oral history project about the historic Chinese community in Limehouse, recently awarded a grant by the Heritage Lottery Fund. Volunteers will be sought to locate and interview original residents for an oral history project, collect new archives and produce a heritage trail map and guided walks. There will also be educational talks for schools, a conference and exhibition during this 14 month project.

To participate or for more information, contact Project Manager Dr Yat Ming Loo (020 726 5986, [looyatming@hotmail.com](mailto:looyatming@hotmail.com)). Tower Hamlets' Heritage Manager Tamsin Bookey will sit on the steering group for this project alongside Cheryl Smith from Islington Museum. Copies of the interviews and significant archives will be deposited with us so that future generations will be able to have access to them.

## BUILDING WORKS UPDATE

The building works are expected to start on site shortly following the receipt of listed building consent, and imminently we hope, full planning permission. We will therefore be finally closing the service for a temporary period for the duration of the works, starting in last week of September 2010.

**Our last day open to the public will be Saturday 25th September from 9am-5pm!**

We will re-open upon completion of the works in late November 2010. A limited remote enquiry service will operate during the closed period. Email or phone us using the contact details on the last page of the newsletter and we will do our best to help you.

## BLACK HISTORY IN THE ARCHIVES

Black people have lived in Tower Hamlets for centuries but what traces of their presence did they leave in the historical record?

To celebrate Black History Month we'll be holding an event on Wednesday 13th October, 5.30-8pm. Historians Hakim Adi and Caroline Bressey alongside staff from Black Cultural Archives and Eastside Community Heritage will introduce their research and collections relating to Black history in Tower Hamlets. A display from the borough's archive collections will be on show.

For the rest of the Black History Month programme in Tower Hamlets, see [www.ideastore.co.uk](http://www.ideastore.co.uk)

## Winning endeavours: images to feature on 2012 website



A significant number of pictures from the Local History Library's image collection will feature on an exciting new site as part of the Winning endeavours project. The project is a partnership of The London Metropolitan Archives, Archives for London and the British Library, funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund. Winning Endeavours will digitise and share documents, newspaper articles, visual material and ephemera relating to sport in London, especially the 1908 and 1948 Olympic Games which were hosted in London, and London sportsmen and women who have participated in Olympiads over the years.

The archive material will be taken from repositories throughout London and the South East, and digital copies will be taken of all selected items. These copies will be published on a new website which will remain live until the end of 2012, when it will be archived at the British Library. The stories behind the images will be told in the website and the collection of images will be fully searchable. The website will be useful for journalists, researchers and anyone interested in London's place in Olympic History. The project's dedicated researcher has visited over 20 repositories in the London area and was particularly impressed with the richness of our collections.

## School visit

A Year 6 class at Bluegate Fields School, Shadwell were fascinated by the images, maps and documents relating to their local area in the



King Edward VII Memorial Park

Second World War when Archivist Malcolm Barr-Hamilton visited them at the end of last term. They had been studying the War in some detail

but such images as the construction of air raid shelters in King Edward VII Memorial Park and a badly damaged Ring House in which some of the pupils live, really brought it alive.



Ring House, badly damaged

## Picture of the month: the ruins of St Matthew's Church, Bethnal Green following war damage on 7th September 1940

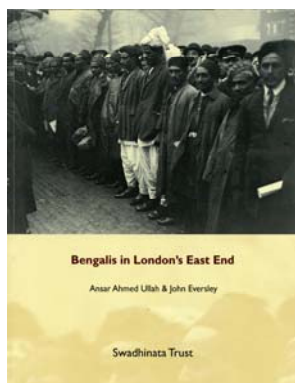
Seventy years ago on 7<sup>th</sup> September 1940 (or "Black Saturday" as it came to be known) the beginning of the Blitz on London began. Although there had been sporadic raids prior to this, it was the first time that the capital, and in particular, the East End experienced the intensity of a massed



air attack. The picture shows the damage inflicted on the church of St Matthew, Bethnal Green. The church, which was built in 1743-6, had already witnessed partial destruction in the middle of the nineteenth century following a fire in 1859. The west end of the church was repaired in 1955 and the rest reconstructed in 1958-1961.

## New additions

### ***Bengalis in London's East End* by Ansar Ahmed Ullah & John Eversley**



This book is published by the Swadhinata Trust, the Brick Lane-based educational charity which works to promote the heritage and culture of Bengalis in Britain.

Bengali presence in the UK goes back 400 years to the beginnings of British involvement in India. Brick Lane and the surrounding area is home to the largest Bengali settlement in the UK. This has achieved official recognition with the naming of the local ward as "Spitalfields and Banglatown". This book is a most interesting account of the community's rich history up to the present day.

Covering topics such as housing, food, clothing, culture, education and politics, this book is full of fascinating illustrations, many in colour and 36 of them from our collection.

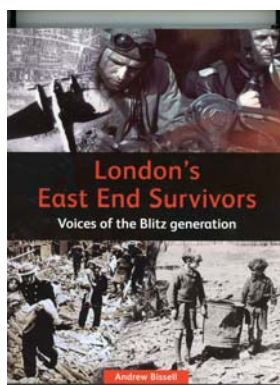
The authors Ansar Ahmed Ullah and John Eversley are regular visitors to the library, with Ansar also representing the Swadhinata Trust on the Local History Library & Archives (Bancroft Road) Steering Group.

Available for reference the library, we also hold copies of this book for sale at £14.99.

### ***London's East End Survivors: Voices of the Blitz generation* by Andrew Bissell**

This new hardback, published by Centenar, is full of detailed first-hand accounts of local residents who lived through the bombings during the Second World War. It is moving to read their stories revealing much fortitude during these fearful times.

The very interesting introduction on the historical background includes illustrations showing poverty and hardship in late 19th century East End.



The chapters are comprehensive in detail and include topics such as the Bethnal Green tube disaster and the battle of Cable Street.

Well-illustrated throughout with striking images, many from our collections, this book is an excellent addition to the current commemoration of the Blitz.

A reference copy is now available for consultation in the reading room, and further copies will be available for purchase soon.

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