

Hessel Street

Noel Gibson exhibition

Heritage Assistant Anna Haward has been busy organising an exhibition of the work of artist Noel Gibson, which will run throughout January 2012, drawn from our own collections.

Noel Gibson was born in Glasgow in 1928. Having trained as an opera singer, he appeared in variety performances with the “Vic Oliver” show and subsequently was House Manager at the London Opera Centre in Stepney for many years. His varied career also included a post as Keeper at Morley College and in 1977 he was appointed Provost’s Verger at Southwark Cathedral.

It was around the time that Gibson moved to Tower Hamlets that he started to paint. A self-taught artist, Noel Gibson lived in Tower Hamlets for 12 years between 1962 and 1974. Having started painting abstract paintings, he went on to produce a great many paintings of local street scenes, 24 of which were acquired by Tower Hamlets Local History Library and Archives between the period 1970 and 2001.

Gibson’s paintings of the 1960s and 70s capture a changing borough, often depicting rows of old houses on the brink of demolition. In a telephone interview conducted by a previous librarian in this Library in 1985, Gibson was quoted as saying that he “regards Tower Hamlets as the area of inspiration for his artwork and will always return to it for inspiration”.



Jaroslav Zapletal, *Going Home From School*

Capture Tower Hamlets

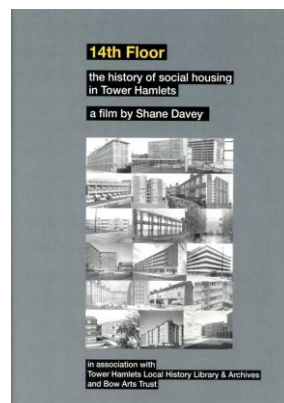
Our photography competition was a roaring success, with over 250 entries from 74 photographers. *Capture Tower Hamlets* invited residents to submit an image which they felt represented the essence of the contemporary borough. The winning photographs were chosen by a panel including social historian Alan Dein, Borough Archivist Malcolm Barr-Hamilton and photographers Wasma Mansour and Toby Smith. The winner was Jaroslav Zapletal for his photograph of a family going home from school in a dramatic, dusk-lit Poplar street. The judges felt it was 'a clear winner due to the complex layers of narrative' and that it 'beautifully captured the remarkable contrasts of everyday life in the borough'.

The *Capture Tower Hamlets* exhibition of the 20 finalists is now on show throughout December at the Local History Library & Archives, and will tour other venues in 2012 including Idea Stores and Canary Wharf Shopping Centre. An exhibition launch was held in November where the four winners prizes were awarded by Cllr Rania Khan.

The project was funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund and organised by Hackney Museum. Most of the photographs submitted will be incorporated into our archive for future generations to savour.

Social Housing Film now available

DVDs are now available of *14th Floor: the history of social housing in Tower Hamlets*, a film made by Shane Davey in association with Tower Hamlets Local History Library and Archives and Bow Arts Trust. Price is £5.00 plus P&P or visit us in the library to buy a copy. A free screening of the film will be arranged in the new year.



DIG OUT DEM ROOTS

During Black History Month last October, we held a very successful Caribbean family history workshop with expert genealogist Sharon Tomlin. Participants were able to learn more about the challenges faced when researching ancestors from the Caribbean and how to interpret the records available.

School Visits

Bethnal Green Tube disaster

Students from Mowlem Primary school were encouraged by staff at IntoUniversity to discover more about the Bethnal Green tube disaster as part of their school curriculum. This charity works with young people from disadvantaged backgrounds in environments where they are inspired to achieve. Students visited the Local History Library and Archives, accessing newspaper articles, photographs and maps to see how the disaster was reported and where the bombs dropped during World War Two. They then interpreted the articles, reporting on why the accident happened and what viewpoints they had discovered through the media and through newspaper interviews with people who were involved.

Old school/New school

Pupils from Ben Jonson Primary School visited the Local History Library and Archives to find out more about their school's history and the places that surround it. Looking at maps from the 1890s through to the 1960s, pupils were able to trace the development of the school and the rebuilding of the surrounding houses after World War Two. Resources also included census material which uncovered more information about the lives and jobs of the people living in the area during the late 1800s.

Young Cultural Creators

Langdon Park School were involved with a project called Young Cultural Creators. The class worked with famous children's author Bali Rai. Bali asked the pupils to research what happened during the Poplar Rates dispute of 1921 and then develop creative writing around the event. The reading room was full of students writing and researching their stories using original documents, photos and newspaper articles.

Who Do You Think You Are?

In October Borough Archivist Malcolm Barr-Hamilton had a starring role in Tracey Emin's episode of the popular BBC family history series. Malcolm helped Tracey identify details about her grandfather from Bow by using a Boolean search on Ancestry! This was a great episode that emphasised the Spitalfields resident's strong East End roots.



Cataloguing report

Since our last newsletter Heritage Officer Melanie Strong has been busy cataloguing the pamphlet collection, creating catalogue records for over 500 pamphlets. There have also been new additions to the books in the library. A new book display area has been added in the reading room where visitors may browse newly catalogued materials. Melanie has been working to increase the diversity of material in the library collection to reflect the present-day population of the borough.

Women in transition: a study of the experiences of Bangladeshi women living in Tower Hamlets by Chris Phillipson, Nilufar Ahmed, Joanna Latimer. Published by Policy Press, 2003.

A study of the lives of Bangladeshi women living in Tower Hamlets includes the methodology of the study and the impact of migration on the women. Local community and financial resources are also considered and the conclusion gives policy recommendations. It is a good resource for those who are studying migration, women's issues and the population of Tower Hamlets today.

Family photographs and how to date them by Jayne Shrimpton, Published by Countryside Books, 2008.

This book is an excellent resource for family historians who have old photographs they are trying to identify. Recommended by the British Library's photography conservation course, it covers each decade from the 1850s to the 1940s. It includes many black and white reproductions of historic photographs.

Queer London: perils and pleasures in the sexual metropolis, 1918-1957 by Matt Houlbrook. Published by University of Chicago Press, 2005.

This detailed academic study of twentieth century male homosexuality in London includes a chapter on working class culture in the East End.

Whitechapel 1600-1800: a social history of an early modern London inner suburb by Derek Morris. Published by the East London History Society, 2011.

Derek Morris' latest book focuses on the early history of Whitechapel, in particular the many industries within the area as well as all aspects of social life and entertainment, including theatre, education, religion, crime and medical services. The book includes indexes to people, places and subjects.

Photos from the Footpath; Around and About High Street 2012; From Mile End to the Olympics; Exploring Bow's Parks and Waterways. Published by Walk East, 2011.

These four new photo books were compiled from images taken by participants in a series of photography-led group walking tours for local residents around the Bow area during summer 2011.



PICTURE TALK

In October members of the East London History Society enjoyed a talk by Borough Archivist Malcolm Barr-Hamilton, entitled "Images of the East End – the photographic collection of Tower Hamlets Local History and Archives" illustrated with over 200 examples.

WALKS

Shahera Begum, heritage skills trainee, concluded our series of summer Local History Walks in September with a fascinating guided walk around the Bengali East End, starting at Altab Ali Park and concluding at the northern end of Brick Lane.

BEST TEAM?

The Local History Library & Archives staff are thrilled to have been nominated as Best Team in the council. The winners of the council-wide Staff Awards will be announced at a gala evening in early December. Here some of us are in the reading room posing for a photo to mark our nomination!



Coming soon: Bengali History Month

In March 2012, Tower Hamlets Local History Library and Archives will be celebrating the rich culture of the Bengali community that live and work in the borough. Working in partnership with organisations, charities and residents, the month will be a chance to find out more about the history of the Bengali community in the East End and to celebrate Bengali culture through an exciting programme of events.

For more information or to get involved

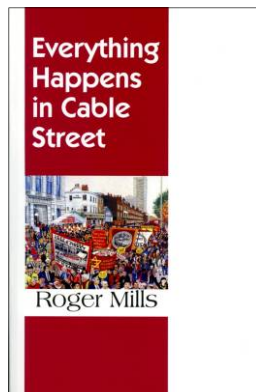
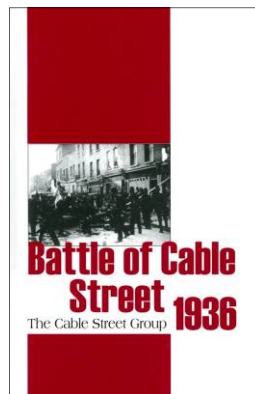
please email Shahera Begum: shahera.begum@towerhamlets.gov.uk or Tel: 020 7364 1271



New books for sale

Just in time for Christmas we have some new books now available to purchase. In commemoration of the anniversary of the Battle of Cable Street we have three books that focus on the area.

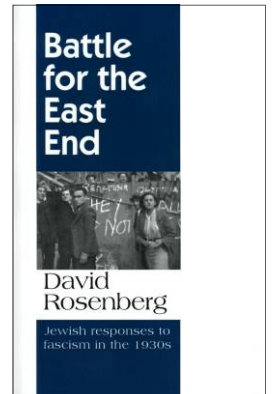
Battle of Cable Street by the Cable Street Group (£5.00) gives an excellent introduction to the Battle of Cable Street.



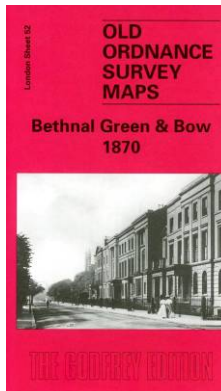
Everything happens in Cable Street by Roger Mills (£8.99) Part oral history part investigation this book covers the history of Cable Street in the 20th century.

Battle for the East End by David Rosenberg (£9.99)

As featured in the recent Write Idea festival, David Rosenberg's book looks at the history of Jewish opposition to the fascism of the 30s in the East End.



Maps for sale



Historic Ordnance Survey maps for sale

We now have for sale the complete range of 'Godfrey Edition' reproduction OS maps for the Tower Hamlets area, ranging in

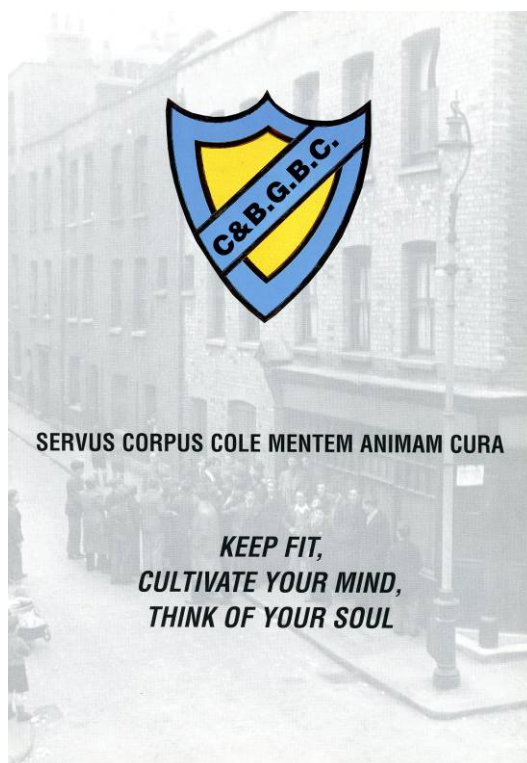
date from 1870 to 1914. At £2.50 each they make the perfect stocking filler for anyone interested in local or family history.

Archives of the New Cambridge Boys' Club and its predecessors

The cataloguing of the records of the Bethnal Green-based New Cambridge Boys' Club (reference: S/NCB) is nearing completion. This exciting collection brings together, for the first time, all the archival records which the Local History Library and Archives holds in relation to the Club, material from 9 different accessions, deposited by Mr Max Lea between 1990 and 2007. In addition to the New Cambridge Boys' Club, the collection also encompasses predecessor organisations, the Cambridge and Bethnal Green Boys' Club and the Cambridge and Bethnal Green Jewish Boys' Club.

Spanning almost a century (1920s-1990s) the records provide a fascinating insight to Club life throughout the 20th century and are sure to be of personal interest to previous Club members and their relations. However, in a broader context, they will be of value to anyone with an interest in social history and life in the East End of London during this period.

The collection includes administrative records and material about the Club's events, membership and publications. One of the strengths of the collection is in the evidence it provides of the commitment and dedication of Club members. An integral part of the collection, therefore, are the records kept by Club Leader, Harry Titchener.



The image is from a 75th Anniversary Souvenir brochure produced in celebration of the Cambridge & Bethnal Green Boys' Club Reunion, London, October 1999 (Archival reference: S/NCB/2/2/6).

Mr Titchener, who was affectionately known as 'T', played a vital role in the Club throughout its various incarnations until his retirement in 1978 and was officially recognised for his efforts through the award of an MBE in January 1970. The collection contains Mr Titchener's personal series of records relating to the Club including the official MBE award documentation which he received.

Natasha O'Neill, Heritage Officer (Archives)

“The records will be of value to anyone with an interest in social history and life in the East End of London during this period.”

In this year ...125 years ago Philanthropist Miriam Moses was born



Image and text from the Jewish Chronicle, July 1965

Miriam Moses was the first woman Mayor of Stepney and the first Jewish woman Mayor in the country.

Miriam was born in Stepney in the year 1886 and developed an interest in Stepney Borough Council through her father, Mark Moses. On his death in 1921, Miriam succeeded him as Borough Councillor and Magistrate.

Working for some years as a member of the Whitechapel Board of Guardians, Miriam also served on the East London Juvenile Court at Toynbee Hall. In 1927 she founded the Brady Girls' Club and became their leader and was Chairman of the Stepney Youth Committee for many years. She was elected Mayor of Stepney in 1931 and went on to be awarded an OBE in 1945.

A commemorative plaque is erected at her birthplace, 17 Princelet Street.

“Plans are in progress to make our catalogue available online.”

Image collection – cataloguing landmark

Tower Hamlets Local History Library and Archives has a collection of over 35,000 images (mainly photographs). These are arranged either by street name or subject, but no catalogue of the collection existed. However, over the past two-and-a-half years, a team of volunteers has been steadily adding data to our catalogue database, and recently the section of the collection covering street scenes was completed - descriptions of over 7,000 images.



Volunteer Nigel Madhoo

Plans are in progress to make our catalogue available online, and the volunteers are now making inroads to the rest of the image collection.

Picture of the month/Christmas caption competition



Our picture of the month shows a children's Christmas party in full swing for children of tenants of the recently-completed Greenways Estate in Bethnal Green in 1953. Over 200 children were provided with tea which included meat sandwiches, cheese, cream trifle, jelly, biscuits and cakes.

A copy of Jack Dash's autobiography *Good Morning Brothers!* will go to the person who in the eyes of the staff produces the best caption for this picture. Entries should be posted or sent by email (see details below) by 3rd January. The winner will be announced in the next newsletter.

Catalogue of films and videos now available online

Tower Hamlets Local History Library and Archives has been collaborating with Film London on London's Screen Archives, an ambitious project to create a union catalogue of moving image collections held in a wide variety of archives, museums and libraries across the capital. Over 130 descriptions of items from our collections are included. To search the catalogue visit

www.londonsscreenarchives.org.uk

Tower Hamlets Local History Library & Archives

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Web: www.ideastore.co.uk

idea
Library Learning Information

OPENING HOURS

Monday: **Closed**
Tuesday: 10 - 5
Wednesday: 9 - 5
Thursday: 9 - 8
Friday: **Closed**
Saturday: 9 - 5
(fortnightly)
Sunday: **Closed**

UPCOMING SATURDAY OPENING DATES

10 December
24 December 2011
(9-2pm)
7 January and
21 January 2012
4 February and
18 February 2012
3 March, 17 March and
31 March 2012

CHRISTMAS OPENING

We are open as follows:

Thursday 22 Dec: 9-8
Saturday 24 Dec: 9-2
Then closed until
Tuesday 3 Jan: 10-5