

Old Ford Voices and Island Memories

17 July - 6 September 2012

Old Ford Voices and Island Memories

Our latest exhibition showcases the memories of local residents of the area of Bow known as Old Ford, including the Island (now known as Fish Island), located in the north-eastern corner of Tower Hamlets. Voices from this community were recorded in oral history interviews commissioned by the library last year and portrait photographs taken of the interviewees, all of whom have a strong connection to the area.

These oral histories were collected as part of a bigger project organised by Hackney Museum entitled 'Mapping the Change', funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund. 'Mapping The Change' aims to engage people in the heritage of neighbourhoods affected by redevelopment brought about by the 2012 Olympics. Oral histories have also been collected in Hackney Wick, Homerton and Dalston and have been exhibited at Hackney Museum.

In Old Ford, nearly twenty residents and workers shared their memories of growing up, work, play and family life during the twentieth century. This exhibition, based on their testimonies, provides a valuable and intimate look into the personal histories of Old Ford and the Island.

The last day of this free exhibition is Thursday 6 September after which the library will be closed temporarily for building works. Please check visiting times on www.ideastore.co.uk or the last page of this newsletter.

Simeera Hassan, heritage skills trainee



Somali Day Centre montage.

As reported in last month's newsletter, our new Opening up Archives trainee is Simeera Hassan who has joined us on a year-long paid placement as part of a scheme managed by The National Archives and supported by the Heritage Lottery Fund. Simeera's work involves developing our collection of archive material related to the local Somali community. Simeera is a graduate of Goldsmiths, University of London with a BA degree in social sciences, community development and youth work. She has previously worked in the deputy prime minister's office doing youth advising, and is a qualified youth worker. A resident of Poplar, Simeera is a poet and does creative

empowerment workshops in her spare time. She is learning how to collect Somali archives and oral histories from the local residents, businesses, and community organisations in Tower Hamlets. She says, "I hope to put the Somali community on the map and be a voice for the voiceless. Training in Tower Hamlets Local History Library and Archives is a wonderful opportunity to gain better experience, develop my skills and learn more about how history is collected. I love working here and feel like I'm learning something new each day." Simeera will be curating an exhibition of our new Somali collections in March 2013. She recently prepared a picture montage about some of the users of Mayfield House Somali Day Centre in Bethnal Green as part of their open day celebration which had a large turnout and overall was a big success.

Visit from Whitechapel Gallery trainees

In June six trainees from the Whitechapel Gallery visited the Local History Library and Archives for a talk and tour of the collections led by Natasha O'Neill, Heritage Officer (Archives). Funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund, each year the Whitechapel Gallery recruits six trainees on annual paid placements within six different departments at the gallery.

The visit consisted of a talk which aimed to provide the trainees with an overview of the collections and a brief history of the service and its development. This was followed by an opportunity for the visitors to

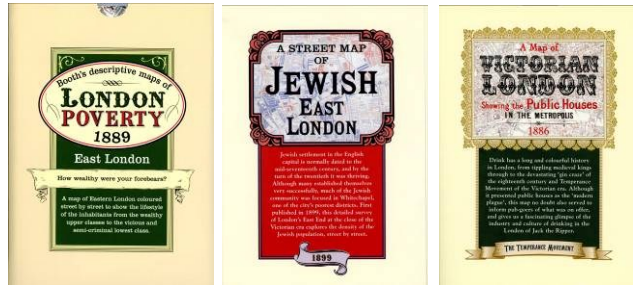
explore the collections further, with a range of material (from both the library and archive collections) on display and also demonstrations of the electronic cataloguing system and web-based resources used by the Local History Library and Archives to manage and provide access to the collections. Simeera Hassan also introduced the work she is currently undertaking for the Local History Library and Archives as part of her traineeship which is funded from the same Heritage Lottery Fund strand, Skills For The Future, established to provide on-the-job training and accreditation for a diverse heritage workforce.

CARIBBEAN FAMILY HISTORY DAY

SATURDAY 21 JULY

Join Sharon Tomlin of Carib Genealogy for our regular family history workshop for those with Caribbean roots. It takes place from 12-3pm on Saturday 21 July and this month's theme is Cemetery and Monumental Inscriptions.

New maps for sale



Booth's descriptive maps of London Poverty 1889: East London. A reproduction of Booth's famous poverty maps, "A map of Eastern London coloured by street to show the lifestyle of the inhabitants from the wealthy upper classes to

the vicious and semi-criminal lowest classes". This map shows East London both north and south of the river.

A Map of Victorian London showing the Public Houses in the Metropolis 1886. This map was produced by the Temperance Movement to show the "plague of London". It goes as far east as Bow and Old Ford and the eastern side of the Docks.

A street map of Jewish East London 1899 Similar to the Booth map this map is colour-coded to show the density of Jewish population. It covers East London from Shoreditch High Street and Bishopsgate in the west to Tower Hamlets Cemetery in the east.

These new maps are published by Old House Books for sale at the price of £9.99 each.

In this year.....250 years ago



St George's German Lutheran Church was founded in 1762

This Grade II listed building in Alie Street, Whitechapel, is the oldest surviving German church in the UK. It contains an organ designed by the German pipe-organ manufacturer, Walcker, and many other remarkable original furnishings including a complete set of ground floor and gallery pews and a magnificent, high, central double-decker pulpit and sounding board.

The church was founded by Dietrich Beckman, a wealthy sugar refiner, in what was then Little Alie Street, for the sizeable German community in Whitechapel and St George-in-the-East, many of whom also worked in the sugar-baking industry.

The building survives, continuing to be used as a Lutheran place of worship until 1996, and it is now in the care of the Historic Chapels Trust.

The church's very extensive archives are held here at Tower Hamlets Local History Library and Archives. These include registers of baptisms (1763 – 1894) burials (1763 – 1853) and marriages (1825-1896).

Cataloguing the periodicals collection

Last month saw the completion of a volunteer project to catalogue the library's periodicals collection. This project began last September with a stock check of the periodicals held by the library. This was a large project as periodicals were stored in four different locations and some were bound and some unbound. Staff noted which issues we held and which were missing.

In February we recruited two students from City University who are studying for masters' degrees in library and information science, Nicole Shelawala and Jennifer May. They were taught cataloguing

standards and the best way to adapt library standards to the archives management system, CALM.

385 different titles were added to CALM. Some periodicals were only a few issues while others covered many decades. Many of these publications are very small press local publications by local groups. Some of this material is very rare and appears not to be held elsewhere, even at the British Library. The material covers annual reports, newsletters, magazines and newspapers from local organisations, community groups, housing associations, churches, Docklands regeneration, arts festivals etc. as well as many publications produced by the council. It includes 46 titles in Bengali or dual language Bengali and English published from 1981-2012.

Cataloguing this material has been a huge benefit to the library. When CALM becomes available online not only will people be able to search to see if we hold a periodical but also which issues are available. We are exceedingly grateful to the hard work and dedication that Nicole and Jenny have put in over the past four months. Both have enjoyed the project and volunteered to stay on for our next volunteer cataloguing project of cataloguing the oversize books.



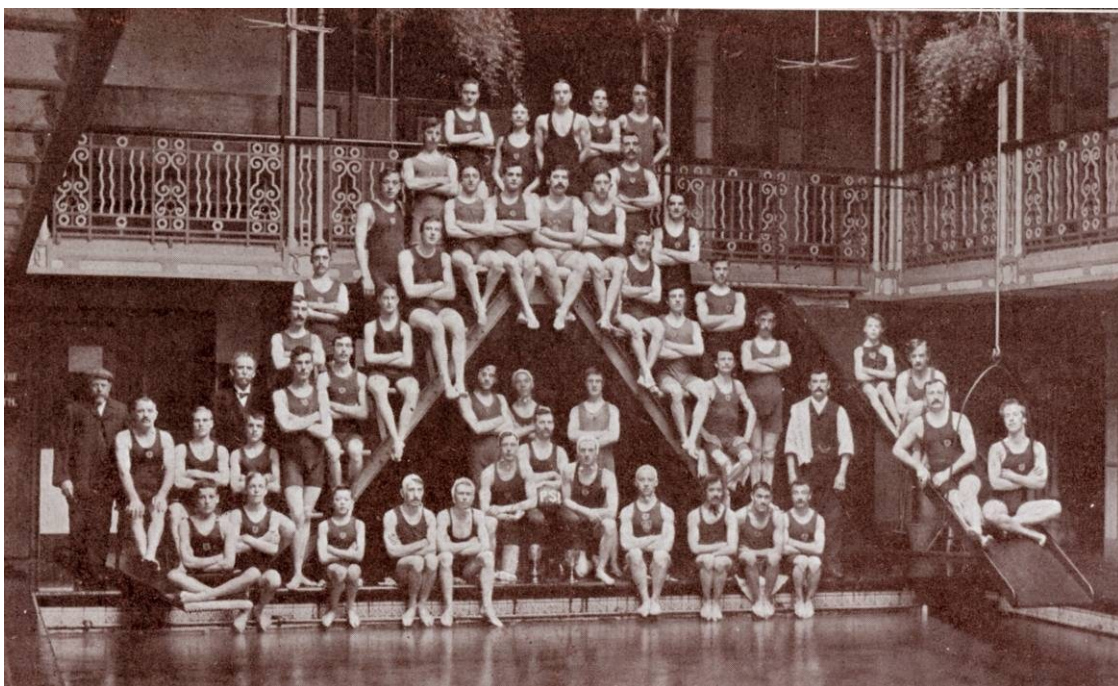
Jennifer May, volunteer.

New bags for sale

To mark its 10th anniversary, Idea Store has produced a range of promotional items for sale, including a 'bag for life'. These limited edition bags are attractive, sturdy, eco-friendly and on sale at the bargain price of £2.50! Please ask in our reading room if you are interested in purchasing one.



Picture of the month: Poplar Swimming Club, 1908



This postcard shows the members of Poplar Swimming Club posing on the diving apparatus at their headquarters, Poplar Baths in East India Dock Road (opened in 1852 and rebuilt in 1933). Though only male members feature, the club was open to both sexes. The club was ten years old at this time. The club had an annual programme of competitive races which included, along with standard races such as the 100 Yards Handicap, more unusual ones such as the Ladies' Fancy Dress Race and the Top Hat and Umbrella Race.

1908 was the first time that the Olympic Games were held in London with six swimming events being contested in a specially-constructed 100m pool at the White City Stadium. Great Britain won gold medals in four of these six events. In this year's Olympics in East London over thirty swimming races will be contested. Sadly these do not include a Top Hat and Umbrella Race.

Tower Hamlets Local History Library & Archives

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Library Learning Information

IMPORTANT NOTICE: TEMPORARY CLOSURE FOR BUILDING WORKS

As reported in the last newsletter, from the week commencing Monday 10 September 2012 Tower Hamlets Local History Library and Archives will be temporarily closing to enable the restoration/ replacement of the building's roofs and the installation of a new lift. We expect to re-open early in 2013 and will keep you updated when we have a confirmed date. We regret the inconvenience this is likely to cause to our users. We will be offering a limited remote enquiry service by phone and email during our period of closure.

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

4 and 18 August
1 September 2012