

## Exhibition: After You've Gone: East End Shopfronts, 1988

We are proud to introduce our latest exhibition, featuring a series of iconic photographs by oral historian and Radio 4 broadcaster, Alan Dein. The photographs were taken in 1988, at a time when many Tower Hamlets shopfronts had fallen into disrepair and dereliction. Streets that once thronged with the East End's Jewish



P. Lipman, kosher poulterer, 36 Hessel St. © Alan Dein, 1988

community had become quiet and were gradually beginning to swell again with a new wave of immigrants from Bangladesh.

The exteriors of local businesses were also gradually changing. Through his photography, Alan Dein captures the onset of age and graffiti. Crisply shot, the generally muted colours of decay are interspersed with flashes of colour from still vivid signs and the odd painted door and window frame, whose paint though peeling still retains echoes of its original glory.

The photographs are complemented by contextual material from Tower Hamlets Local History Library and Archives and contemporary images of the sites taken by photographer Ais Clafferty. Audio testimonies from one-time customers of some of the shops pictured provide a moving soundtrack, while archive material, such as a petition from the traders in Hessel Street market, sheds light on the livelihoods of the shop owners in times past. These additional sources show the changing incarnations of each property and add to the sense of nostalgia for an era now consigned to the past.

A 36-page colour booklet has been produced by the Local History Library especially for the exhibition, featuring an introduction by Alan Dein and reproductions of selected photographs, and is now available from the library while stocks last.

The exhibition runs from 17 May until 12 July 2012. A talk from Alan and the curators will be held on Saturday 9 June at 2pm, free to attend—email [localhistory@towerhamlets.gov.uk](mailto:localhistory@towerhamlets.gov.uk) or call 020 7364 1290 to book a place.

## New traineeship

### SOMALI WEEK

A celebration of Somali people and culture  
OCTOBER 16th - 20th 1990



Holland Hall, Oxford House,  
Derbyshire Street, E2  
Tel 071-739 9001



FREE

Somali Week festival programme, 1990

the Somali community. The Somali community make up the second largest ethnic minority population in Tower Hamlets. One of Simeera's roles is to help fill gaps in Tower Hamlets Local History Library & Archives' collections by acquiring materials that reflect the Somali community's presence here. She will also record the lives of Somalis living in Tower Hamlets. Her traineeship will culminate in an exhibition in March 2013 showcasing the new collections and recordings.

In April, we welcomed Simeera Hassan to the team. As part of the unique training programme Opening up Archives, co-ordinated by The National Archives and funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund, she is one of thirteen trainees based in archives and record offices across England in the second year of this programme. The year-long full-time traineeship is designed to equip Simeera with specialist skills, knowledge and on-the-job experience to go forward into a career in archives and heritage.

Working in partnership with Somali arts and cultural organisation KAYD, based at Oxford House in Bethnal Green, Simeera's main activities focus on engagement with

## VOICES OF FISH ISLAND AND OLD FORD

Our summer exhibition, which will run from 17 July – 6 September 2012, will showcase the reminiscences of long-time residents and workers in this area of Bow, which has been most closely affected by the redevelopment of the Olympic site.

These oral histories were gathered in 2011 for our collections as part Hackney Museum's **Mapping The Change** project, funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund.

Stay tuned for more details!

## Temporary closure for building works

Listed Building Consent has now been received for the planned Phase 2 roof replacement works on our 151-year old Bancroft Library building. All of the building's extensive and complex roofs, including those directly above the reading room and former lending library, will be restored and/or replaced with materials in keeping with the listed building. Gutters and downpipes will also be repaired, ensuring the building is free from leaks which pose a risk to our valuable collections. At the same time, our ageing lift will also be

replaced with a new, wheelchair accessible model.

As a result of these works, the library will be **closed** for the public from the w/c **Monday 10 September 2012**, after the Olympics. We expect to re-open soon after Christmas 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.

## New additions to the library collection

**The Sephardic Jewish cemeteries at Queen Mary, University of London by Dr Caron Lipman. Published by Queen Mary, University of London 2012.**

This lavishly illustrated book goes into great detail about the two Sephardic Jewish cemeteries located in Tower Hamlets, the Velho Beth Chaim Cemetery and the Novo/ Nuevo Beth Chaim Cemetery. The book gives brief history of Jews in England and a history of the cemeteries including biographical information about many of the people buried there.

**Tracing your Huguenot ancestors by Kathy Chater. Published by Pen and Sword Books Ltd, 2012**

This newly published book is a great resource for people who want to start research their Huguenot ancestors. It includes a history of the Huguenots and their settlement in Britain as well how to formulate a research plan and general and specific sources for research. THLHLA already has a lot of material on Huguenots living within the borough and this makes a nice addition to that collection.

**Tracing your West Indian ancestors by Guy Grannum. Published by Public Record Office 2002.**

Following on from the success of our regular Caribbean family history workshop, this book will further help people researching their family history. The book covers records of the Colonial Office, migration, military records, slavery, and British West Indies resources. While most of the material covered in the book is outside the borough this book will be of interest to many people living here today.

**Jew Boy by Simon Blumenfeld. Published by London Books Classics, 2012.**

This new edition of the 1935 novel features an introduction by Ken Worpole giving a biographical account of the author's life and a background to the novel. The novel itself captures the Jewish East End of the 1930s "where boxers mixed with anarchists and communists, and Yiddish actors and poets rubbed shoulders with gamblers and gangsters", as the back cover states. The library also holds a copy of the first edition.

Other new titles recently added include:

*The impact of the railways in the East End, 1835-2010 : historical archaeology from the London Overground East London Line* by Emma Dwyer. Published by Museum of London Archaeology, 2011.

*Life in the Victorian & Edwardian workhouse* by Michelle Higgs. Published by Tempus, 2007.

*London in the eighteenth century: a great and monstrous thing* by Jerry White. Published by Bodley Head, 2012

*The London square: gardens in the midst of town* by Todd Longstaffe-Gowan. Published by Yale University Press, 2012.

*The Chinese in Britain, 1800- present : economy, transnationalism, identity* by Gregor Benton and Edmund Terence Gomez. Published by Palgrave Macmillan, 2011.

*An immigration history of Britain : multicultural racism since 1800* by Panikos Panayi. Published by Longman, 2010.

## STAFF NEWS

We are pleased to report that Shahera Begum, heritage skills trainee, who left us at the end of March following a successful year-long placement developing our Bengali-related collections, has taken up a new post at London Metropolitan Archives. We wish her well in this next phase of her career.

## Archives Placement

In April Karim Hussain joined the team for a 2 week archives cataloguing placement. Karim is a Records Specialist for The National Archives and his placement formed a part of the master's course he is currently undertaking in Archives and Records Management at University College London (UCL). This is the second year in which we have taken in an archives student on placement from UCL, an arrangement which we are happy to be able to facilitate.

The placement is a reciprocal arrangement whereby the host repository provides the student with practical experience of working in archives, focusing on cataloguing records using the in-house system (and in accordance with international archival cataloguing standards). In return the student contributes to the repository by helping to catalogue a specific set of records which will then be made accessible to the public. Karim was keen to be placed with Tower Hamlets Local History Library and Archives because he grew up locally and has a personal connection to the area.

During his placement Karim assisted the team by cataloguing the Records of The Environment Trust (I/EVT). The records date from 1995-2000 and relate specifically to The Environment Trust's involvement in the development of Mile End Park.

The collection includes a range of material in a variety of formats within the following categories:

Records of Meetings and Correspondence; Photographs; Public Consultation and Promotional Materials; Architectural Drawings. The records were selected for cataloguing as the history of the Park is an important area of study which will be of interest to current and future audiences. They are of particular relevance at present as Mile End Park is being used as one of the training sites for the upcoming Olympics.

We all enjoyed meeting and working with Karim and are very grateful for his help in making the Environment Trust records available for the public to consult. We wish him every success with the rest of his course and hope to welcome him back to the Local History Library and Archives as a visitor sometime soon!

Natasha O'Neill (Heritage Officer, Archives)



Letter from children at Ben Jonson School, Stepney, giving their suggestions for the redevelopment of Mile End Park, 1995. Ref no: I/EVT/1/4.

## TALKS AND VISITS

Group visits to the Local History Library and Archives have included two from University of the Third Age family history groups in April (Waltham Forest and Rayleigh), a group from the Building Exploratory in March and Idea Store Canary Wharf's local history class in April.

Malcolm Barr-Hamilton delivered his popular "Images of the East End" talk to the Woolwich and District Family History Society and to the Golden Time over 60s group at Cubitt Town Library in early May.

The Caribbean Ancestral Research Group held another of its bi-monthly meetings at the library on 12 May, on the theme of 'Researching Your Indo-Caribbean Roots'. Contact convenor Sharon Tomlinson (sharon@tomlinso.com) for details of future free events.

## New old map for sale

Tower Hamlets Local History Library and Archives has just reprinted a fascinating old map of the Parish of Stepney. The map was originally published in Stow's 'Survey of London' in 1755 but is based on Gascoyne's map of 1703. At this time the parish of Stepney comprised nearly all the current borough of Tower Hamlets, the main exceptions being Bromley, Shadwell, Wapping and Whitechapel which were separate parishes. The beautifully reproduced map is available from the Local History Library for £4.00. It can be supplied by post for £6.50 (inc p&p) on receipt of a cheque payable to the London Borough of Tower Hamlets.



## Guided Walk



Some of the damp participants at Regents Canal Dock.

In spite of drought conditions, participants in Malcolm Barr-Hamilton's guided walk around the Isle of Dogs (part of Cubitt Town Library's Island History day) got a good soaking on 17 March. Those on his tour of Dickens's Limehouse on 20 April fared better dodging the occasional hailstorm by sheltering under railway arches.

## Tower Hamlets Local History Library & Archives

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**idea**  
Library Learning Information

## PICTURE OF THE MONTH...

... and our other regular features will return in the next edition!

## 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

14 April and 28 April  
12 May and 26 May  
9 June and 23 June  
7 and 21 July  
4 and 18 August  
1 September

**Closed from 10 September for building works, reopening early 2013**