

Tower Hamlets Local History Library & Archives



living in fear of quicksand
Maria Amidu

living in fear of quicksand

A new exhibition by Maria Amidu | 3 March - 20 May | Free entry

Tower Hamlets Local History Library & Archives (THLHLA) in partnership with the **Nunnery Gallery** is delighted to announce *living in fear of quicksand* by artist [Maria Amidu](#) – an exhibition of new work and existing archive material taking place across two venues. Opening on Friday 3 March, *living in fear of quicksand* will be Maria's first UK solo exhibition and explores the fragmentary nature of memory in relation to a fragile experience of home.

At THLHLA the focus is placed on the architectural and social history of the Lincoln Estate in Tower Hamlets, and the artist's brief place within it. Designed in the 1950s, the Estate includes Sleaford House – a 19-storey block of 90 maisonettes where the artist lived in the 1970s.

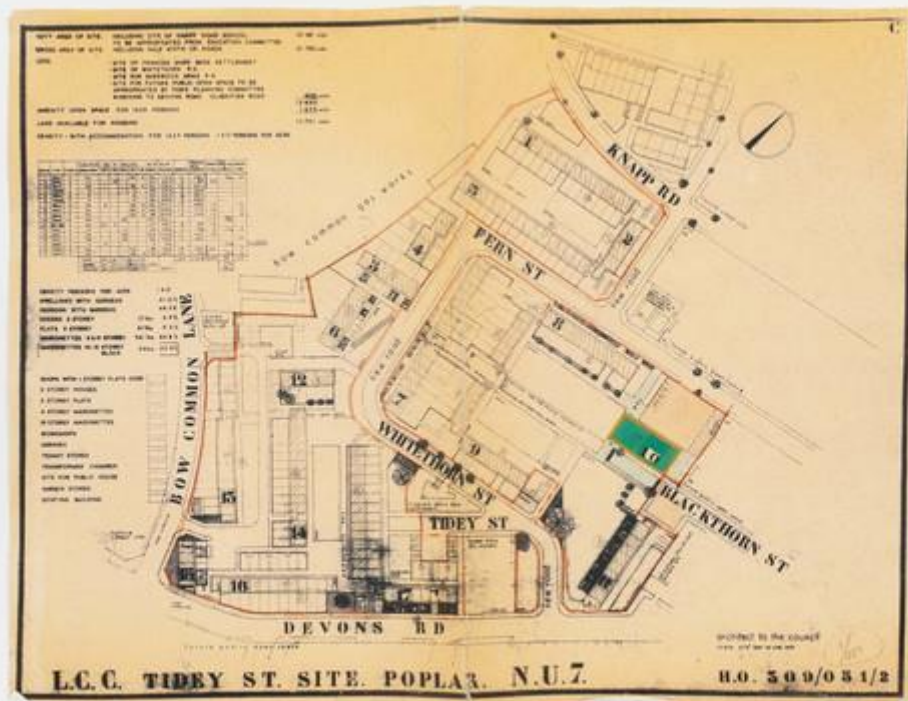
From among the extensive collections held here at the Archives Maria has unearthed council correspondence, plans, drawings and newspaper cuttings about the Estate – material that has played an integral role in the development of the resulting artworks. A selection of these historic records is displayed alongside items from Maria's personal archive and accompanied by a timeline documenting the development of the Estate.

The exhibition continues a short bus ride away at the [Nunnery Gallery](#) in Bow with five new artworks including a print work, a text-based installation, a film piece, a sound work, and a bespoke paint colour.

Read on for details of the events we have programmed here at the archives, which explore some of the exhibition's historical themes.

[Click here](#) for the events taking place at the Nunnery Gallery, which include holistic and creative workshops.

living in fear of quicksand is supported by Arts Council England, Dulux and supporters who wish to remain anonymous.



Lincoln Estate archive material, c. 1950s. Photo: Jonathan Bassett

Events programme

All events listed here are free and take place at [Tower Hamlets Local History Library & Archives](#) unless otherwise stated.

***living in fear of quicksand*: Exhibition launch**

- **Saturday 4 March | 2:00-4:00pm | Free, no booking needed**

Celebrate the opening of Maria Amidu's exhibition exploring the archival history of the Lincoln Estate at our public launch event, including a documentary film screening (*The Flat*, BBC) at 2.30pm.

East End Women in Print: Graphic arts & self-publishing

- **Saturday 18 March | 11am-4pm | [Book your free place here](#)**

Come and browse collections from THLHLA and MayDay Rooms documenting print materials created and published by women as a means of radical protest. There will be a talk by writer and curator **Susan Croft** on women and activist theatre in East London from the suffrage era to the 1980s and a zine making workshop with artist **Lydia Julien**.

East End History Club: Social housing

- **Saturday 1 April | 2.00-4.00pm | [Book your free place here](#)**

Browse a wide range of archive and library collections related to the borough's rich history of social housing and hear a talk from friend of the archives **John Boughton**, author of *Municipal Dreams: the Rise and Fall of Council Housing* (Verso).

Talk and film screening: Artists on the Lincoln Estate

- **Thursday 13 April | 6.00-7.00pm | Online (Zoom) | Free, no booking required**

Local filmmaker **William Raban** lived on the Lincoln Estate during the 1970s along with other artists. We are delighted to welcome him as he shares his recollections and screens some of his films. No booking required, just visit our website for the Zoom link nearer the time.

Walking tour: Histories of Bow Common

- **Saturday 6 May | 1.00-3.00pm | [Booking link to follow](#)**

Join Heritage Officers Sanjida Alam and Genova Messiah for a walking tour of the Lincoln Estate and surrounding area of Bow Common - a long-standing East End community whose heritage is often overlooked. The meeting point and booking link will be emailed out nearer the time.

There are many other fantastic events as part of this programme which have been organised by Bow Arts - [check them out here](#).

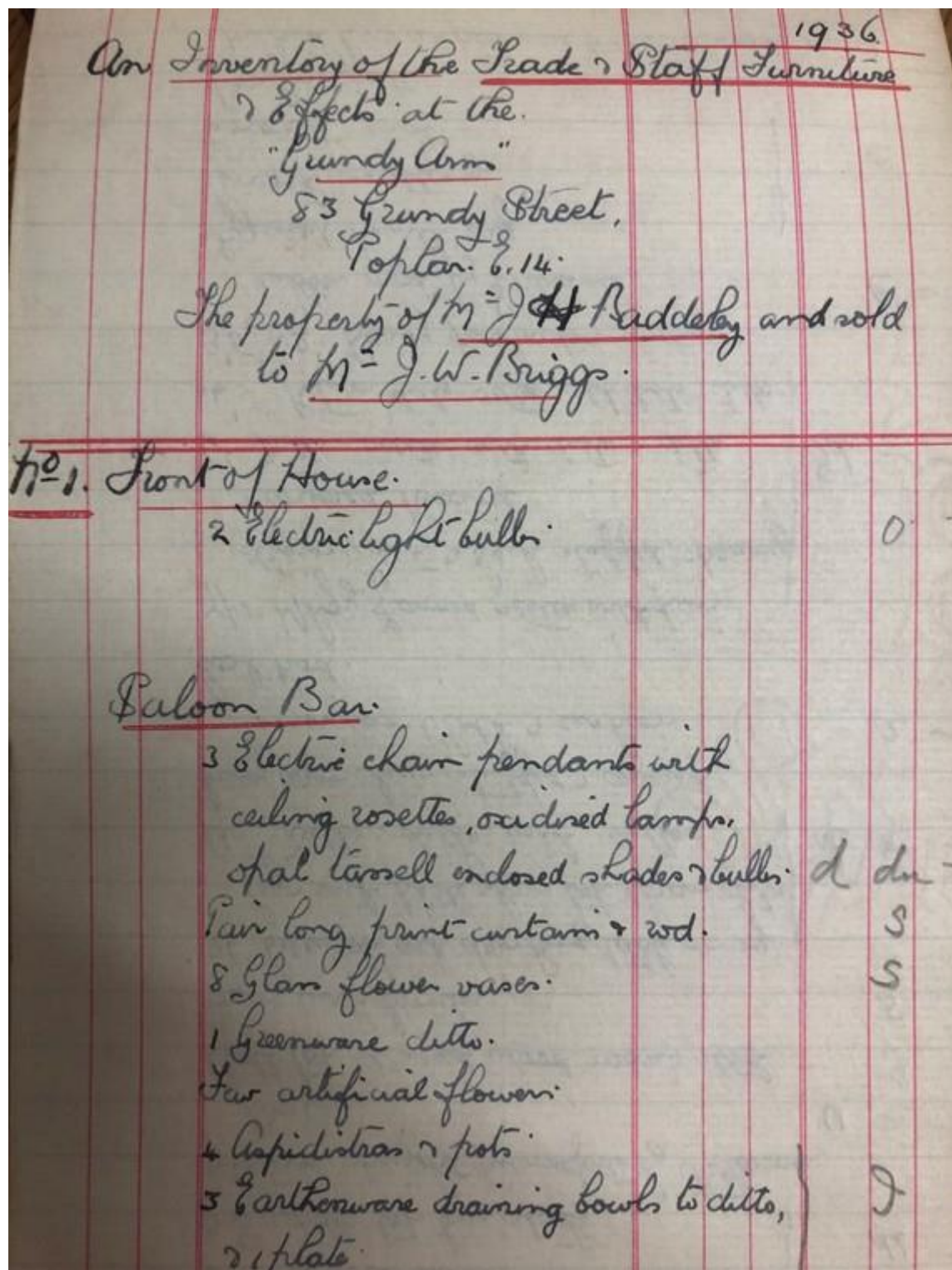
New archive catalogue released

Jones, Son and Day: a great source for public houses in the East End

We have just released catalogue descriptions to the records of **Jones, Son and Day**, estate agents, of Commercial Road, Limehouse ([B/JSD](#)). Dating from 1912-1990s, the collection reflects their specialism as licensed property valuers. The firm was the main Agents to Taylor Walker and Company whose brewery in Limehouse closed in 1958.

The highlight for researchers is a substantial series of day books, 1932-1964. These contain detailed inventories and settlement statements for Public Houses to be sold or let. There is a helpful index to the series.

An example shown here is a 1936 "inventory of the Trade and Staff Furniture and Effects" of the Grundy Arms, 83 Grundy Street, Poplar.



In 1936 "4 aspidistras in pots" and "few artificial flowers" decorated the saloon bar of the Grundy Arms, Poplar. Ref no: B/JSD/1/28

More about the firm

The company was founded by William Jones in White Horse Road, Stepney, in 1828. He purchased 586 Commercial Road (4 Brunswick Cottages) in 1863 for the sum of £600. He later took into partnership his son, Harry, who, surviving his Father, took into partnership in 1901, Mr. P. H. Day.

As well as licensed property valuers, they also carried out work under the rating and valuation acts, auctioneering, stocktaking for licensed premises, accountancy, and general estate agency. During the latter years there was considerable turmoil in the brewing industry and the firm became more and more involved in accountancy work. The office

finally closed in May 1991 having been trading in Stepney for 163 years, 128 years in the same premises.

To browse the online catalogue please search for reference B/JSD in the [Advanced Search menu](#) and to look at material in person, pop into our Reading Room during opening hours.



The Grundy Arms (left) still standing in 1950. Photo (c) THLHLA, ref no P08206

Welcome to Annette Mackin

Last month we were delighted to welcome a new member of staff to the team. Annette replaces Medha Chotai who moved on to a new role at the archives of Barts Health NHS Trust last year.

'Hello, I'm Annette Mackin and I'm the new Heritage Officer (Archives) at the Tower Hamlets Library History Library and Archives. I've been here for nearly one month, and I'm having a great time settling in with the team and exploring the amazing collections we have here.

So far, I have been assisting the Archive Manager in selecting archive material to be transferred to us as the Town Hall at Mulberry Places closes, and you will also see me on desk shifts during our opening times. One of my main roles as an archivist will be ingesting digital archives into our new digital preservation system.

I've grown up in the Tower Hamlets, and it's a privilege to be a part of ensuring the borough's rich and diverse history is preserved and remains accessible for the future.'



Annette with some of the material we are acquiring for the archives as part of the closure of Mulberry Place offices, February 2023

Archives Manager **Richard Wiltshire** writes...

We are receiving a diverse range of historic photos, minutes, displays and brochures from Mulberry Place as part of the decant and move to the new town hall (former Royal London Hospital site) in Whitechapel. This has been a long process - thanks are due to Medha Chotai for her hard work on this prior to her departure. As the council empties the building Annette has got stuck in straight away, as we intervene to make sure historically significant materials are preserved and transferred to us for safekeeping.

There are fantastic records from Town Hall Planning Team, Public Health, Educational Psychology, School Buildings, Governors Services, Democratic Services and many more teams. We will be accessioning them and adding them to our cataloguing programme so they can be made available in the future. They add to our oldest council archives which go back to 1593 and deeds to 1380s.

Idea Store planned IT and internet outage

There is a planned major service outage on Thursday 2 and Friday 3 March due to essential IT network maintenance work. The following services will not be available across all Idea Store and libraries, including Tower Hamlets Local History Library & Archives:

- Public access PCs
- Wifi network
- Printing
- Self-issuing kiosks

Contact us

We are waiting to hear from you!

- Email us: localhistory@towerhamlets.gov.uk
- Visit our website: <http://www.ideastore.co.uk/local-history>
- Phone (answered during opening hours only): 020 7364 1290

Reading Room - Regular opening hours

- Tuesday 10.30am-4pm
- Wednesday 10.30am-4pm
- Thursday 10.30am-7pm

First and third Saturdays of every month:

- Saturday 10am-5pm

That's the following Saturdays coming up:

- Saturday 4 March
- Saturday 18 March
- Saturday 1 April
- Saturday 15 April

Exhibition opening times are: 10am-5pm Monday-Friday, plus the Saturdays and Thursday evenings noted above. On Monday and Friday lunchtimes, the exhibition will be closed for lunch between 1 and 2pm.

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