

Jan-Feb 2024

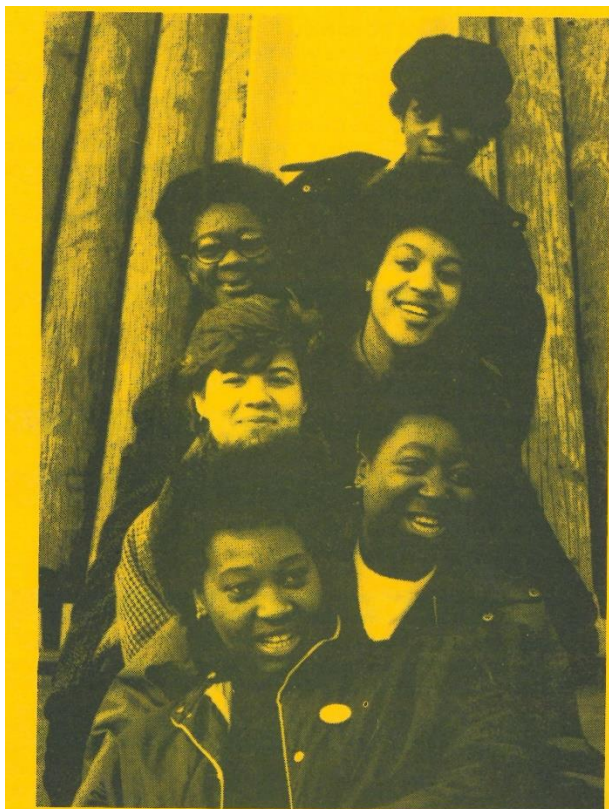
Tower Hamlets Local History Library & Archives



Coming soon... Cockney Revels

Roll up, roll up! Announcing the last event of the Cockney Rebels season....

Thursday 20 February | 6.30-8.30pm | Free, [booking required](#)
Venue: Tower Hamlets Local History Library & Archives



*The fabulous Mint Juleps –
who will be appearing in the East End Festival '84.*

Guest host **Alan Gilbey** (*East End Backpassages*) is your host for the closing finale - a special evening opening and your last chance to rock around the smash-hit exhibition [Cockney Rebels: Popular Music in Tower Hamlets, 1624-2003](#). As well as over one hundred rare items from our collection on display, there will be...

- THE VINYL LOUNGE!

Hear informal chats with some of the voices behind East End music, hosted by social historian and BBC broadcaster **Alan Dein**.

- A POPTASTIC POP QUIZ!

Can you find the answers in pictures at our exhibition, or win a 'Name That Tune' spot prize?

- And - THE [MINT JULEPS](#)!

For one night only, these local legends reform to send you singing acapella into the night. Tickets are for this unique event are **free**, but strictly limited, so please [book in advance](#) and arrive by 6.45pm to ensure entry.

Secrets from the Cockney Yiddish Music Hall

Thursday 13 February | 6.00-7.30pm | Free, [booking required](#)

Venue: Tower Hamlets Local History Library & Archives

Songs performed on the London Yiddish stage at the turn of the twentieth century tell of the experiences of immigration from a grassroots perspective. Funny and satirical, edgy, and surprising, the lyrics speak of a community in transition, battling with religious, emotional and ideological hurdles as women and men integrated into British life. **Vivi Lachs** will spill the secrets of the Yiddish halls in an entertaining talk with song. Expect a laugh, a tear, and an all-join-in. No Yiddish knowledge necessary.

Vivi Lachs is a historian of the Jewish East End, a research fellow at Queen Mary, University of London, and Yiddish performer. Her books include *Whitechapel Noise* and *London Yiddishtown*. She founded the Great Yiddish Parade, is the vice chair of the Yiddish Café Trust and leads tours of the Yiddish East End. She sings, records and composes with the bands Klezmer Klub and Katsha'nes.

We are delighted to welcome Vivi back to Bancroft Road for this special event as part of the *Cockney Rebels* programme. [Book your ticket here!](#)

Last chance to see

From 'The Blind Beggar of Bethnal Green' to 'Bonkers', the people of London's East End have always appreciated a good tune. Our unique history, shaped by its connection to the river as a source of inspiration, work and migration has produced an extraordinary musical legacy, spanning everything from folk songs and sea shanties to music hall, jazz, punk, the Asian underground and grime. Featuring over a hundred rare items selected by staff from the collections of Tower Hamlets Local History Library & Archives, **Cockney Rebels: Popular Music in Tower Hamlets, 1624-2003** is a major new exhibition exploring how our borough and its people have inspired and shaped popular music, both locally and globally, over four centuries.

The Cockney Rebels book is now available - online sales coming soon but meanwhile you can pick up a copy for £12 from your local Idea Store or library.

Visiting Cockney Rebels? Head upstairs to check out [Wh'appen: Black Music in the East End](#) on our first floor landing.

Free entry! Cockney Rebels is on display until Friday 21 February and Wh'appen until the end of March. Please check our opening times - below - before travelling.

[Visit the exhibitions](#)

Annual closure of the Reading Room

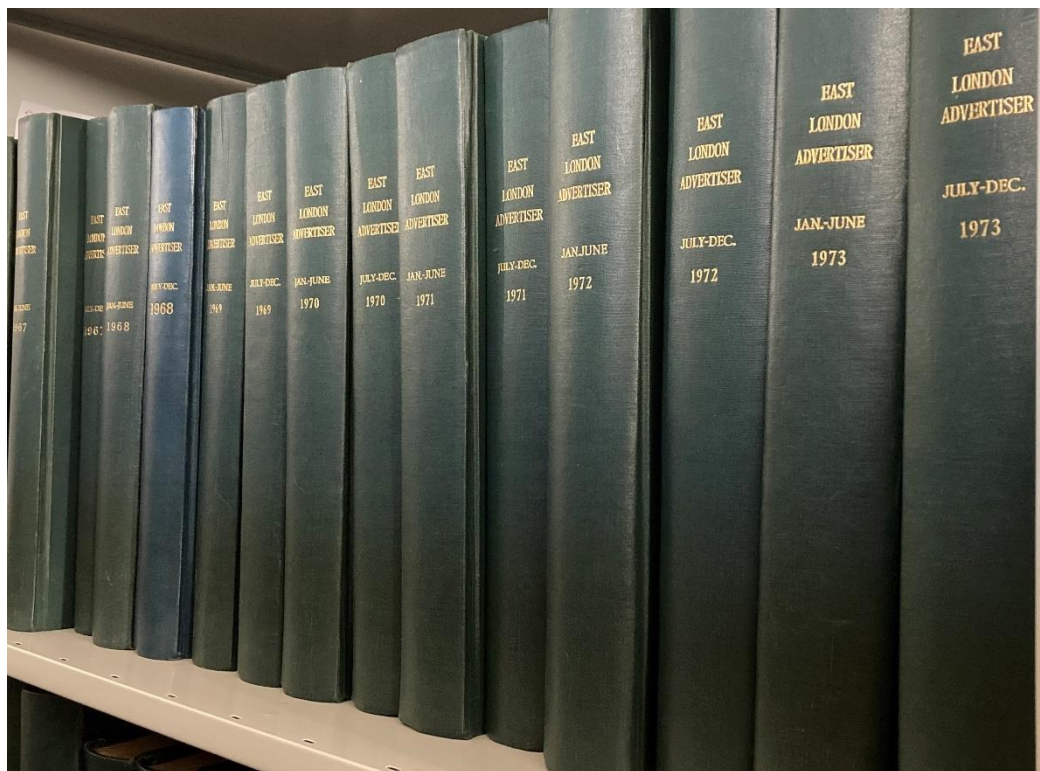
We will be closed to visitors between **Monday 24 February and Friday 7 March**. Staff will be carrying out vital annual stocktaking and work on our collections including:

- Re-housing our smaller museum collections in acid free tissue paper - this will ensure items are protected in the long term
- Surveying the size and condition of boxed and bound collections with a view to their packaging requirements - important preparation for a planned renewal of our strongrooms
- Stocktaking the boxes and volumes on strongroom shelves - for location control

We will also be taking down our current exhibition and installing the new exhibition, launching in mid-March!

The Reading Room will close to the public on Thursday 20 February and reopen on Tuesday 11 March.

News from the Reading Room



We are excited to announce that the first phase of our **newspaper digitisation project** is now complete. All issues of the *East London Advertiser* published between 1960 and 2003 are now available as fully searchable PDFs in our Reading Room thanks to our new digital microfilm scanner—with a small gap between 1996 and 1999 when it appears no microfilming took place.

The *East London Advertiser* is one of most heavily used resources, containing a wealth of information on everything from births, marriages and deaths to local politics, crime, sports and cultural events. Now, instead of searching page by page for that one name or reference you are trying to track down, you can search through up to ten years of newspapers with the click of a single button.

In addition to providing readers with an immeasurably faster way of conducting research, this project ensures the long-term preservation of our original newspapers and their microfilm copies by minimising the need for repeated handling.

Find out more about the over 1,800 newspaper and periodical titles we hold in our comprehensive [research guide](#).

Many readers will now be aware that the **1921 Census is now available on Ancestry**. Previously it had only been available on Findmypast. This means you can now get free access here and at all Idea Store sites through Ancestry Library Edition.

But did you also know we hold census data from 100 years earlier!?

The earliest census where detailed records are available nationally for individual households is 1841. Before that, local parishes had the role of collecting data. The first censuses of 1801, 1811, 1821 and 1831 were less detailed than later returns, as lists of individuals were not collected by government. Parishes were responsible for collecting and submitting only summary census statistics to the government.

Luckily for us, the parish of All Saints Poplar retained the full census. They are pretty rare survivals covering 1821 and 1831 (Ref: L/ASP/E/9) and cover the areas of Poplar, Blackwall, and the Isle of Dogs. They are important sources for tracing individuals and communities in the late Georgian period. They usually contain:

- The parishioner's name, address (sometimes a house number has been recorded)
- The number of families occupying the premises, together with the total number of persons (including separate lists for males and females)



Richard Smith (pictured above) visited the Reading Room recently and consulted the 1821 Poplar census. He shares his experience below....

"I have been interested in our family trees for about ten years now, despite everyone telling me that being a Smith will make the task almost impossible! My dad Arthur (born 1915), my Grandfather (Arthur Douglas Smith born 1871), and Great Grandfather (George Douglas Smith born 1825) were all born/raised in Poplar.

The big challenge is finding where his father (also George) came from. He was born in 1783, but that still gives me (according to Ancestry) over one thousand to choose from! I do know that he was a stonemason, and a family story says that he was employed on the building of the West India Docks. So, that's why I have been pouring over the records in the Tower Hamlets Archives in order to find any scrap of evidence which helps solve the problem. Someday I will throw the towel in, but I have to say that the help and guidance from the Archives Team has kept me going!

If any reader has inherited the name Douglas, we may well be related! If anyone into Family History welcomes a challenge, search the 1841 Census

for Joanna Smith, born 1825, living at 8 James Street, Poplar. And then unravel the families!"

The photo below shows an example page of the 1821 census for Woolmore Street, Poplar. It shows a Thomas Smith living at number 35, and a George Smith living at number 39.

Number of House.	PARISHONERS' NAMES.	Question 1st	Question 2d.	Question 3d.	Question 4th. OCCUPATIONS.			Persons, incl. of what	
		By how many Families occupied.	Houses now Building.	Houses Uninhabited.	Families employed in Agriculture.	Families employed in Trade, &c.	All others not comprised in the two preceding classes.	Males.	Females.
31	Mr. Edwards	1							
32	Mr. Chapman	1				1		3	
33	Mr. Gregory	2				1	2/	2	
34	Henry Stairs	1				1	-	1	
35	Tho. Smith	1				1	2	1	
36	Philip Munday	2				1	1	6	
37				1					
38	Mr. Crawford	2				1		1	
39	George Smith	1				2	-	3	
40	Mrs. Gladstone	2				1	1/	1	
41	Mr. Cotton	1		1				1	
		1						5	

In the 1831 census, the occupation of the head of household is usually given as well. Occupations such as ship builders, shipwrights, mariners, ship chandler's, sawyers, coopers, carpenters, painters, ropemakers and mastmakers are reflected in the Poplar census records.

The original 1821 and 1831 Poplar census returns can be consulted in our Reading Room. Digital copies have been made and will be added to our website in due course - a volunteer project is preparing images for upload.

East End History Club: Parent + Under 5s

Friday 7 February | 10.00-11.30am

Venue: Tower Hamlets Local History Library & Archives

Come along to our version of East End History Club designed especially for parents and carers to attend with their under 5s. It's a chance to meet other parents, enjoy a cuppa and browse our collection of heritage materials, including maps, photographs, newspapers, which illustrate the amazing history of London's famous East End. Toys for children aged 0-5 will be provided, along with a mini kiddie brunch, tea, coffee and biscuits.

Free entry, limited places. No booking required.

Wanted: Suffragette descendants

Are you related to an East London suffragette? Historian **Katherine Connelly** (biographer of Sylvia Pankhurst) is writing a history of the East London suffragette movement and would like to speak with people who may have memories, photographs or family stories about anyone who was involved in the local suffragette movement. She would be very grateful for any information and can be contacted either by email: katherine.connelly@nyu.edu or phone: 07834 218 711.

Dates for your diary

24 February - 8 March

Reading Room temporary closure

Saturday 1 March, afternoon:

Launch event: Communities of Liberation exhibition at Tower Hamlets Town Hall

Thursday 13 March, evening

Launch event: private view of our next exhibition

Saturday 15 March, 2-4pm

Talk: 500 Years of Irish Women in the East End

More info on all these events and more coming in our next newsletter, landing in your inboxes in mid-February!

Get in touch with us!

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

Reading Room opening hours

- Tuesday 10.00am-4.30pm
- Wednesday 10.00am-4.30pm
- Thursday 10.00am-7.00pm

First and third Saturdays of every month:

- Saturday 10.00am-5.00pm

That's the following Saturdays coming up:

- Saturday 1 February
- Saturday 15 February
- Saturday 15 March

Please note: the building will be CLOSED for annual stocktake between Monday 24 February and Friday 7 March inclusive.

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.



Tower Hamlets Local History Library & Archives, 277 Bancroft Road,
London E1 4DQ

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