

# Tower Hamlets Local History Library & Archives



## What's on in May

We are pleased to announce that live in-person events taking place here on Bancroft Road are now being scheduled again, with three very interesting activities happening in May - details below.

We have not had the capacity to host much of a public programme recently (since beloved colleague Halima Khanom moved on to pastures new last September), but we are delighted to report that Genova Messiah, recently back from maternity leave, has now taken up Halima's post of Heritage Officer (Learning & Participation) in a jobshare with our very own Heritage Co-ordinator Sanjida Alam.

Our next major exhibition and associated events programme will be launching in June but until then please check out what's on offer next month!

All events are free and take place on the ground floor of our building at 277 Bancroft Road, E1 4DQ. For opening hours and contact details, please scroll to the end.

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## Bengali Resistance in the East End

**Saturday 7 May, 11am-3pm**



*Protest against the National Front, 1978 (c) Syd Shelton*

With the rise of the National Front in the 1970s, racial attacks on minority groups led to many serious injuries and deaths across the nation. People started to organise protests and marches nationally and locally. In 1978 after the tragic murder of Altab Ali, the Bengali community in Tower Hamlets organised the largest South Asian protest march from Brick Lane to Downing Street.

Come and explore how the Bengali community in Tower Hamlets resisted organised racism and violence. Speakers on the day will include **Ansar Ahmed Ullah** (Swadhinata Trust) looking at the impact of 1971 Bangladesh Liberation war on the activism in 1978 Tower Hamlets. **MayDay Rooms** will be exploring the Housing Struggle and Bengali squatters movement. This will be followed by an inter-generational conversation between **Shuva Motin** (activist from 1978 working with Progressive Youth Organisation) and **Julie Begum** (Swadhinata Trust and activist) discussing female activism over the last five decades.

There will also be food prepared by Shuva Motin, along with teas and snack available for all!

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## Local Landscapes exhibition



### Artists' tour | Thursday 19 May, 5.00-7.00pm

The streets, waterways, parks and buildings of Tower Hamlets are the subjects depicted in our current exhibition of artworks by students enrolled on [Idea Store Learning's Visual Arts](#) courses, closing at the end of May.

**Join us for an early evening guided tour** delivered by the artists themselves, along with chance to view some of their most recent work followed by a meet and greet.

This event is free and no booking is required.

Trained by tutor **Virginia Hawke**, these local artists have been inspired to draw, paint, print or collage their own personal snapshots of the borough's landscape. Scenes range from landmarks as famous as the Tower of London and One Canada Square to more modest houses, flats and street markets. The Regent's Canal, River Thames, Victoria Park and Tower Hamlets Cemetery Park are also well represented.

A small selection of historic maps and other items from the collections of Tower Hamlets Local History Library & Archives relevant to each location have been presented alongside the artworks.

Artists featured in the exhibition (alphabetically by surname): Linda Baker, Ahmed Choudhury, Mira Connolly, Mignol Gregory, Virginia Hawke, Roy Leader, Tom Lyddon, Lynn Mardell, Cathy Phillips, Natasha Sherman, Alie Smith, Stephen Walker.

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## Celebrate! The street where you live





*Children's activities at a street party in Bow, photographed by Stan Jones.*

## **Saturday 21 May, 11am-4pm**

**11am-1pm: Family creative workshop - make your own bunting**

**2pm-3:30pm: Researching the history of your house**

In the run-up to the Platinum Jubilee in June we are hosting an event to showcase our archives illustrating historic street parties in the East End, which range from the Peace Parties of 1919 to the 2012 Olympics. If your neighbourhood is hosting a street party in early June, this event is for you...

On Saturday 21 May, bring along your little ones in the morning and get inspired by old photos to make bunting and pennants to decorate the front of your house or building. Pens, paint, card and glitter provided... This activity is suitable for children age 3+, and children must be accompanied by an adult.

Following some tea and cake, in the afternoon's talks (more suitable for an older audience) **Rob Jones**, our local history librarian will describe the key resources we hold for researching the history of your house, street and the people who lived there; and independent researcher **Rachel Sweeney** will share the deep dive she is doing to uncover the history of her house in Bow.

Another Bow resident, **Stan Jones** of Lichfield Road, took the now iconic photo below in 1953, showing his parents outside their house decorated for the Coronation. This photo made the national newspapers, and Lichfield Road has since hosted some legendary street parties, with this year set to be no exception.

We are very proud to have been able recently to provide a permanent home for Stan's extensive collection of photographs after his sad passing in December. Highlights will be on show at this event. Come along discover the history of the street where you live!

Advance booking is needed for this event: [please click here to book your free place!](#)



*Stan Jones's parents outside their house decorated for the Coronation in 1953.  
Photograph by Stan Jones*

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## Contact us

**We are open and waiting to hear from you!**

- Email us: [localhistory@towerhamlets.gov.uk](mailto:localhistory@towerhamlets.gov.uk)

- Visit our website: <http://www.ideastore.co.uk/local-history>
- Phone (during opening hours only): 020 7364 1290

#### **Reading Room Opening hours**

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

First and third Saturdays of every month:

- Saturday 10am-5pm

Additionally our **Exhibition Hall** is open 10am-5pm Monday-Friday, plus the Saturdays and Thursday evenings above, for anyone wanting to see the **Local Landscapes** exhibition.