

Our new exhibition is now open!

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Tower Hamlets Local History Library & Archives



UNITE AND RESIST!

PROTESTS IN

THE EAST END

1970 - 2000

EXHIBITION



Unite & Resist! Protests in the East End 1970-2000

A new exhibition at Tower Hamlets Local History Library & Archives, now on show until Saturday 15 February 2020

Our new exhibition showcases original archives from our collections which illustrate the prolific activism of the people of Tower Hamlets in the latter decades of the twentieth century. From the Stepney School Strike to the Battle of Brick Lane, the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament and Stop Clause 28, the exhibition shines a light on these and other important moments in the borough's recent history including several lesser known struggles.

This period of rapid change saw Tower Hamlets residents forming independent collectives and rising up in protest in response to a variety of emerging threats. Despite the constant flux in the local area during these three decades, East Enders' persistent resistance to racism and fascism recurs throughout the exhibition.

The display features banners, badges, garments, posters, photographs, pamphlets and other archives which provide important evidence of these sometimes short-lived campaigns. Most of the items on display have been newly acquired or newly catalogued and have never before been on public display.

As usual we have programmed an extensive range of free talks and events which is still being added to - see below for the first few dates for your diary.

Unite and Resist! Private View

Thursday 5 September, 6.00-7.45

Join us for a free drinks reception to formally launch this new exhibition and hear from the staff involved about the process of curating it.

In the Education Room during the launch we are delighted to announce that Celeste Bell, writer and daughter of punk icon Poly Styrene, will lead a drop-in zine making session. Use copies of archival items and cut and paste techniques to create a mini pamphlet exploring your own experiences of protest!

To RSVP please email: localhistory@towerhamlets.gov.uk

Upcoming Events: Unite and Resist Programme



East End History Club: Protest and Activism special

Saturday 17 August, 2.00-4.00pm

An informal drop-in browsing session looking at images, pamphlets and archives relating to protests, 'troublemakers' and activists selected from our collections. To reflect on the centenary of the 1919 anti-Black riots in port cities (see below for a special event on this), we will look at reports in local newspapers and how they described these events at the time.

Walking tour: History of Bengali protest

Sunday 15 September, 11.00am-1.00pm

Join activist Ansar Ahmed Ullah of the Swadhinata Trust on this free walking tour exploring the history of Bengali protest in and around the East End. The walk will last for two hours and is suitable for all abilities but please note, it will be going through busy streets. Details of where to meet will be sent to those who have signed up. To sign up, please email localhistory@towerhamlets.gov.uk

Women East present 'The Next 100'

Thursday 19 September, 6.00-9.00pm

In 2018, the UK celebrated 100 years of female suffrage. 'The Next 100', a new project by Women East, looks forward to the next century of female change makers in East London in an evening of discussion, reflection and anticipation. Panellists include economist and activist Faiza Shaheen, Tower Hamlets councillor Rachel Blake and other speakers who will be confirmed closer to the date.

The evening will include an opportunity to see historical material reflecting the work of the East London Federation of Suffragettes, including the photography of Norah Smyth recently exhibited to wild acclaim at Four Corners gallery. Please book your tickets [here](#).

This event is programmed by Women East, a new project looking to empower women and girls in East London through arts and politics. This collaboration with THLHLA and the George Lansbury Memorial Trust provides a unique historical context to explore women's struggles for justice, equality and democracy.

Other upcoming local history talks

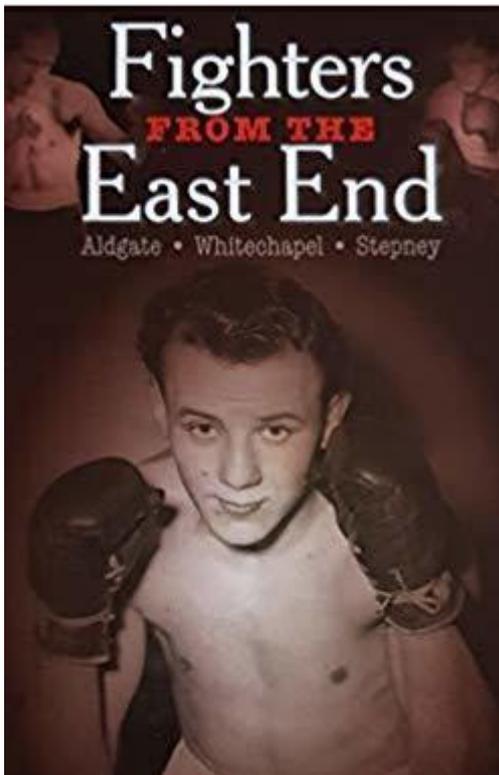
1919 Anti-Black Riots: 100 years on

Thursday 22 August, 6.30-7.45pm

In May 1919 the Strangers' Home for Asiatic Seamen in West India Dock Road was surrounded by a hostile crowd. African, Caribbean, Chinese, Arab and South Asian sailors had kept the merchant navy running during the First World War, but as peacetime began and competition for jobs increased, workers from Britain's colonies living in port cities across Britain became the targets of racist attacks by gangs of white seamen. We welcome back historian [S. I. Martin](#) for a talk marking the centenary of the 1919 riots and exploring what happened here in the East End. Drop in, no booking required.

Fighters of the East End

Saturday 7 September, 11.00-1.00pm



Join author **Bob Lonkhurst** in conversation with former amateur boxer **Howard Morris**. Bob, a long time senior member of the British Boxing Board of Control, is one of the greatest living historians of the Noble Art. The East End has been home to boxing for centuries, with the sport being practised in a many clubs and venues throughout Aldgate, Whitechapel and Stepney, producing a disproportionate number of the world's greatest champions. Bob's latest project is to trace the history of East End boxing in three volumes. In this conversation we shall give you glimpses of the rich history and incredible stories of the individual fighters.

This event is free, and booking is not required. Bob will bring along copies of his book for purchase.

Suresh Singh: Memoirs of a Cockney Sikh

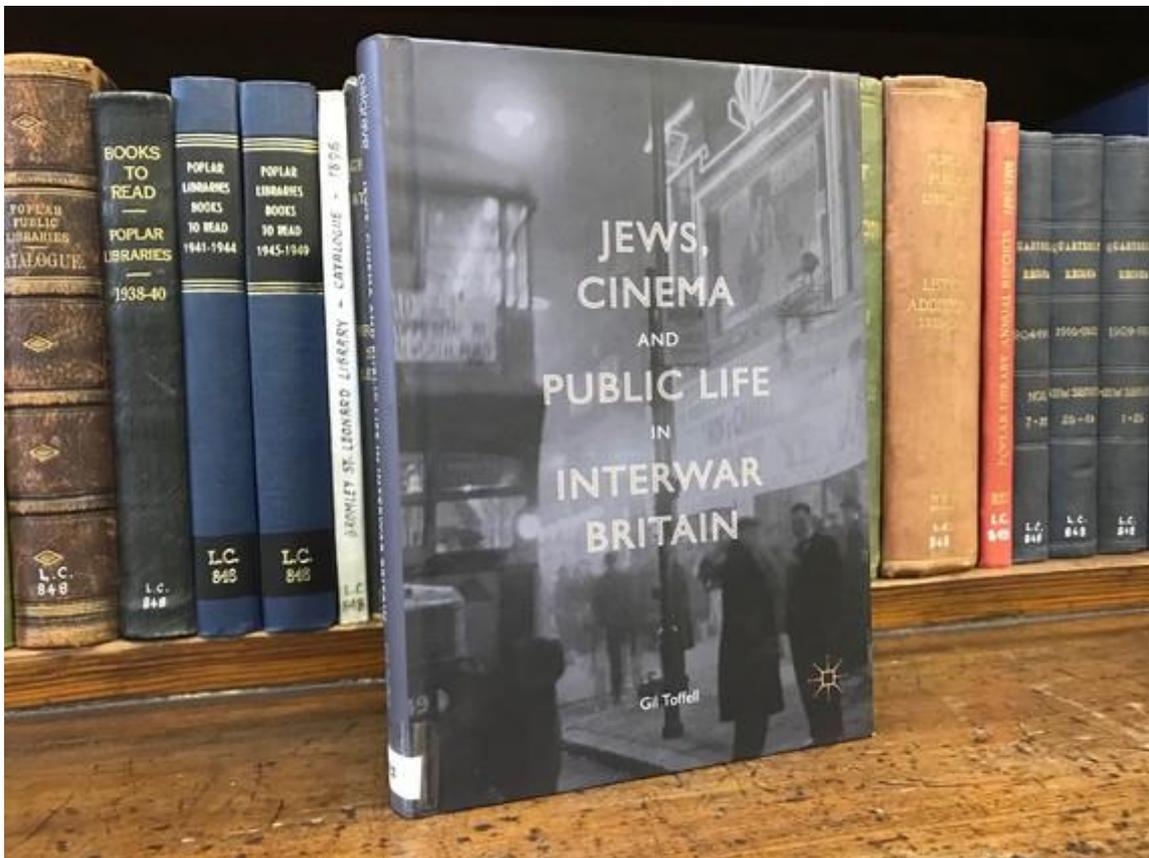
Saturday 7 September, 2.30-4.00pm

In the first London Sikh biography, Suresh Singh tells the candid and sometimes surprising story of his father Joginder, who came to Spitalfields in 1949. He sacrificed a life in the Punjab to work in England and send money home, yet found himself in his element among the mishmash of people who inhabited the streets around Brick Lane.



In the book, chapters of biography are complimented with Sikh recipes by **Jagir Kaur**. Suresh Singh will be in conversation with **Stefan Dickers** of the Bishopsgate Institute and show photographs from his family collection. This event is free, and booking is not required.

Library Spotlight



In the last newsletter we introduced a new regular feature in which we highlight a new or noteworthy book from our Local History Library collection. This issue we're focusing on Gil Toffel's 2018 work *Jews, Cinema and Public Life in Interwar Britain*, which as the title suggests "investigates a Jewish orientation to film culture" between the wars.

The book explores a large number of interrelated topics, including the cinemas of Jewish neighbourhoods Jewish film stars and filmmakers, and films of Jewish interest. It also includes a chapter on cinema's response to the rise of fascism in Britain and Europe and the role it played in defending Jewish communities.

Although the book is likely to be of use to anyone researching the history of leisure or Jewish social history, Tower Hamlets residents will no doubt also be interested in its descriptions of historic East End cinemas like the Rivoli, King's Hall, Pavillion and Troxy. And if this subject intrigues you, don't forget to check out our cuttings, ephemera and image collections for rare and unique material on our borough's cinema history.

Announcements

Tour Guiding Course

Idea Store Learning, the adult and community learning service for Tower Hamlets, has recently published the new course guide for 2019-2020. Did you know it offers three tour guiding courses? 'The Essentials', 'Going Further' and 'Workshop Techniques' are taught by David Charnick (pictured), a member of the City of London Guide Lecturers Association, and designed to appeal to both aspiring and experienced guides. Each builds on skills acquired during the previous course. With a mixture of classroom and outdoor exercises, the courses offer a chance to acquire important presentation skills and they also offer a thorough and immersive introduction to the history of the East End.



The ten-week courses are taught on consecutive Thursday evenings. They are offered through the 'Fitness, Health and Wellbeing' section of Idea Store Learning - for booking information and further details please check out the course guide [here](#).

Idea Store Staff Awards 2019

We were delighted to have been recognised at the inaugural Idea Store Staff Awards held last month (Idea Store being the name of the borough's library and lifelong learning service in which the local history department sits, for any non-Tower Hamlets-based subscribers reading this!). Managers were asked to nominate members of staff who had gone the extra mile to ensure our users have a great experience of the Idea Store service in all its breadth. There were many nominations across multiple categories, and our three winners were:

- Robert Jones, Heritage Officer (Library) for *outstanding contribution to frontline user experience*
- Halima Khanom, Heritage Officer (Learning & Participation) for her *integrated and innovative partnership* working with Idea Store Learning's ESOL team to bring our exhibitions to learners enrolled on ESOL courses (English for Speakers of Other Languages) in the borough
- Emma Harrold, Archives Manager for her *outstanding / exceptional contribution to the service* for the impact she has made in less than a year since picking up the reins from retired Borough Archivist Malcolm Barr-Hamilton

We are very grateful to our colleagues for their ongoing support and enthusiasm for what we do, and would like to say congratulations to everyone else who won an award too. :)

Opening hours and contact details

Please do check our opening hours before visiting. They are:

Monday: 9am-5pm for exhibition only

Tuesday: 10am-5pm for exhibition and Reading Room

Wednesday: 9am-5pm for exhibition and Reading Room

Thursday: 9am-8pm for exhibition and Reading Room

Friday: 9am-5pm for exhibition only

First and third Saturdays of every month: 9am-5pm for exhibition and Reading Room

Feel free to contact us with any enquiries:

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- localhistory@towerhamlets.gov.uk
 - 020 7364 1290
 - <http://www.ideastore.co.uk/local-history>
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