



# Tower Hamlets Local History Library & Archives



December 2016

## It's Christmas!



Seasons greetings to all our readers! We bring good tidings for the Christmas shoppers among you - having recently discovered a larger-than-expected stash of vintage local history booklets, greetings cards and postcards in our attic (most of them published by us or with our help in the 1980s or 1990s) - we've put them on sale to the public, many with a price tag of £1. In addition, we've slashed the prices of a lot of relatively new books, and most of our reproduction historic maps are still the East End's best bargain at £1.95 each. Come on down to grab your stocking fillers - our Christmas opening hours are noted at the end of this email.

Selected highlights include:

+ 2017 Island History Trust calendar, £6

+ Phil Maxwell postcard set, £5 or 75p each

+ 'London's East End Survivors: Voices of the Blitz Generation' large coffee table hardback by Andrew Blissell, half price at £10

And our new tote bags (pictured left) are now £5 too! We hope to see you over the next few weeks and if not, we hope you'll enjoy the events we are planning for the new year!

Wishing you all the best for the festive period.

- Tamsin, Malcolm, Melanie, Perdita, Emma, Debbie, Keith, Terry and Tim

## Stages of Half Moon

# Celebrating the rich heritage of Half Moon Theatre

Exhibition and events: 12 January - 3 April 2017



From its inception in 1972, [Half Moon Theatre](#) has played a key role in the development of the theatre sector and in its early years was responsible for radical, politically charged productions including Steven Berkoff's *Sink the Belgrano* and Frances de la Tour as a female Hamlet. Though the parent company closed in 1990, the young people's section continues to thrive in Limehouse as an independent charity and the UK's leading professional, small-scale young people's venue and touring company.

An award from the Heritage Lottery Fund 'Young Roots' programme in 2015 enabled the company to work with young people to explore the theatre's history from 1972 to 2016. The resulting [Stages of Half Moon](#) exhibition will now be hosted by Tower Hamlets Local History Library and Archives and features previously unseen original photographs, programmes and other documents celebrating the theatre's rich past across the three Tower Hamlets buildings it has occupied - 27 Alie Street in Whitechapel, 213 Mile End Road (now the Half Moon pub) and its current base at 43 White Horse Road. The exhibition was researched extensively in the collections here at Tower Hamlets Local History Library & Archives, where we hold a large number of original programmes.

You can also check out the exhibition online via its dedicated website - [www.stagesofhalfmoon.org.uk](http://www.stagesofhalfmoon.org.uk) - which includes interviews with over 100 people who have been involved with the company in various capacities over the years: artistic, backstage and administrative; as an audience member or youth participant.

Stages of Half Moon is a continuing project and anyone who has a connection to the company is welcome to get in touch. Anyone keen to contribute personal stories, photographs, reviews, design sketches and programmes should email [history@halfmoon.org.uk](mailto:history@halfmoon.org.uk).

## Exhibition Launch

**Thursday 12 January, 6pm-7.30pm**

All are welcome to attend the launch which will feature an introduction to the exhibition and the company from the present theatre's Director, Chris Elwell. Michael Irving, co-founder of the Half Moon Theatre, will speak about the theatre's early days, how and why it was formed, and will present an informal performance of the opening scene of the opening play from 1972, *In the Jungle of the Cities*.

To tie in with this exhibition, Tower Hamlets Local History Library & Archives is programming a series of free talks during the first three months of 2017, highlighting the rich and varied history of theatre in the East End. Check out the events confirmed so far below and keep an eye on our next newsletter early in the new year for further details.



Joi Bangla Krew dancers at the Half Moon Theatre, Mile End Road, 1986

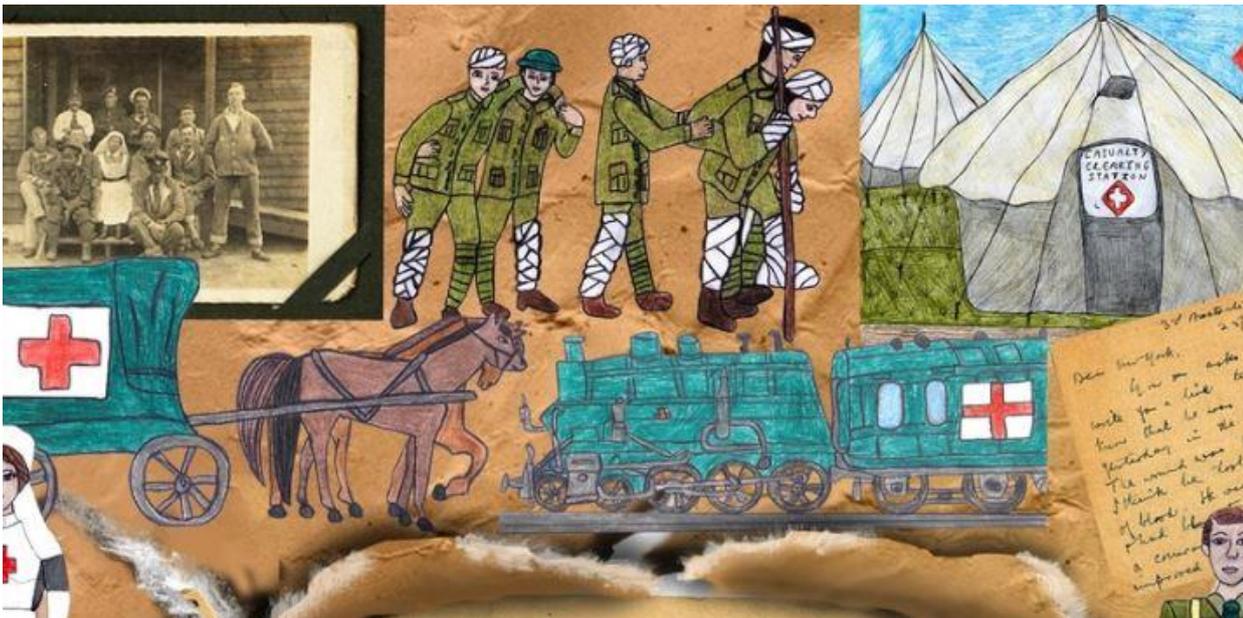
## Last chance to see! Brick Lane Born exhibition

Our current exhibition of photographs of Brick Lane and the surrounding area, taken during the 1980s by local resident Raju Vaidyanathan, has received glowing reports and feedback from the public (though zero reviews or press coverage, despite our best efforts.)

Described as "fascinating", "absorbing", "fantastic" and "brilliant" many times over in our visitors' book, Raju's photographs show a Spitalfields populated by Bangladeshi children, elderly Jews, homeless men, pub drinkers, snooker players, traveller children, Cockney mums, shopkeepers, the incoming "trendies", housing protestors and local politicians, all of whom call a derelict and filthy Brick Lane their home. It's now in its final weeks, and your last chance to see it is on **Saturday 7 January**.

To see further photographs from the exhibition, check out our [Facebook page](#) or search the hashtag [#BrickLaneBorn](#) on Twitter.

## Upcoming events



Bombs, Bullets and Bandages: Fusilier Museum illustration

**Exhibition: Bombs, Bullets and Bandages**

**Until 7 January 2017**

**Tower Hamlets Local History Library and Archives**

Your last chance to see the B'ombs, Bullets and Bandages' exhibition at the archives will be on Saturday 7 January 2017. This free, community-curated exhibition, organised by [The Fusilier Museum](#), explores the experiences of wounded soldiers during WWI.

**Exhibition: Hidden Histories**

**Monday 16 - Tuesday 31 January 2017**

**Tower Hamlets Local History Library and Archives**

In recognition of Holocaust Memorial Day 2017, we will be hosting a small display curated by the Holocaust Memorial Day Trust in 2011, in which survivors of the Holocaust and subsequent genocides in Rwanda, Bosnia and Cambodia reveal an object from their lives before genocide and its significance to them. Further information about Holocaust Memorial Day can be found here: [www.hmd.org.uk](http://www.hmd.org.uk).

**History Hoppers**

**Wednesday 21 December 2016, 2.30-4.30pm**

**Tower Hamlets Local History Library and Archives**

Come along to our last History Hoppers session of the year. If you're curious about archive collections and enjoy looking through old pictures and newspapers, drop in any time between 2.30pm and 4.30pm on Wednesday 21 December to explore original historical library and archive sources which help to tell the story of Tower Hamlets. Tea / coffee and mince pies will be provided! Free, no booking required.

From January 2017, History Hoppers will be moving to the new time of 11.30am-1.30pm on the last Tuesday of every month. We hope this will encourage staff and students working nearby to pop in. New History Hoppers dates will be:

Tuesday 31 January, 11.30am - 1.30pm

Tuesday 28 February, 11.30am - 1.30pm

Tuesday 28 March, 11.30am - 1.30pm

**Save the Date!**

**Theatre Heritage Day**

**Saturday 4 February, 2-4.30pm**

**Tower Hamlets Local History Library and Archives**

Join us for an afternoon of talks on the East End's rich theatre history. Further details to be announced in the New Year.

## January Book Sale

We will be hosting another book sale early in the New Year on **Saturday 7 January, 10am-4pm**. This will feature a totally new selection to last time - so even if you came to the last one, pop by to check out more withdrawn, duplicate stock from our collections.

Our last book sale raised £770 for the collections fund - thank you!

## New volunteering opportunity History for Everyone (take two)

About a year ago we launched a new volunteer project, but the collapse of the reading room ceiling in January meant there were significant delays getting it off the ground. Now we are recruiting a second wave of volunteers to

join those already involved.

Do you want to get to know our collections better and help people to get the most out of them? **History For Everyone** is designed to assist people with disabilities and any members of the public who would like additional one-on-one help or support in using our collections, whether they want to learn about their own family history or the history of our amazing borough.

Key to this project will be a small number of **Collections Access Volunteers** who will receive training from our librarians and archivists in how to navigate and get the most out of our collections so that they can then support other members of the public on their research journey.

History for Everyone will take the form of a series of open days at which **Collections Access Volunteers** and staff will be on hand to provide members of the public with supported access to our collections. Volunteers will find out what a researcher is most interested in and assist them in locating that information.

We are looking for people with good communication skills, patience and an interest in the history of Tower Hamlets. We will prioritise people who have previous experience of working with disabled people, including people with learning disabilities.

Volunteers will receive in-depth training in searching and browsing our catalogue, printed guides, classification scheme, and hand-lists for the archives. You will also learn how to carry out genealogical research on Ancestry.com and how to use our electoral registers and trade directories, as well as the best ways to get the most out of our maps and photograph collection.

**Collections Access Volunteers** must be able to commit to several half-days for collections training, as well as the History for Everyone drop-in sessions, which will likely take place on Thursday evenings or Saturdays from spring 2017, and will be scheduled around volunteers' availability. It is our hope that History for Everyone drop-in sessions will be a regular recurring event and will reach people who may not otherwise be able to use our collections, or who would be reticent to try without support.

We welcome expressions of interest to [melanie.strong@towerhamlets.gov.uk](mailto:melanie.strong@towerhamlets.gov.uk) (Heritage Officer - Library) by Monday 8 January.

We also invite you to get in touch if you would like to arrange a research session here with a Collections Access Volunteer once they are trained.

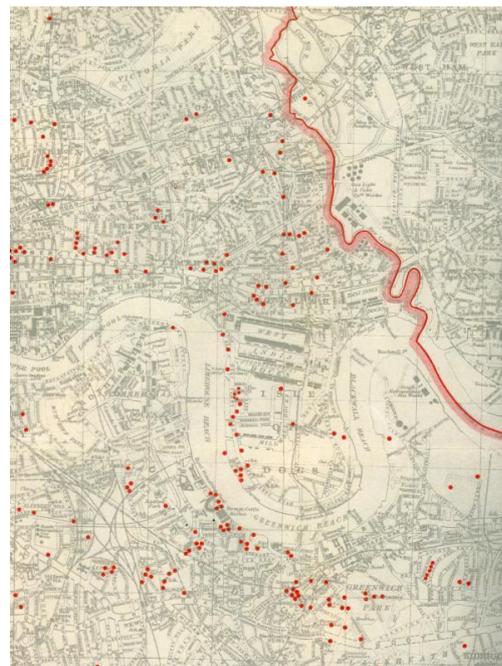
## **Tower Hamlets Schools** **WW1 workshop offer**

We recently welcomed two Year 6 classes from Stebon Primary School, Poplar, to the archives. The pupils were learning about World War One and during their visit, they explored a variety of maps, photographs and archive material which helped them to learn more about the effect that war had on the borough.

All Tower Hamlets schools are invited to take advantage of this new WW1 workshop. If you are a parent, do suggest it - all 103 schools in Tower Hamlets should have received a letter from us last month with full details. These sessions present an unmissable opportunity for pupils to view and even touch original archives dating back over one hundred years, and learn more about topics including military conscription, air raids and the role of women during World War One.

Workshops are held here at Tower Hamlets Local History Library & Archives, a Grade II listed building which features a dedicated Education Room (capacity 50) and other suitable facilities to host school trips. Sessions can be adapted to suit different age ranges and access needs, and are free of charge for the time being.

For further information, please feel free to get in touch: [perdita.jones@towerhamlets.gov.uk](mailto:perdita.jones@towerhamlets.gov.uk) or call 020 7634 1290.



WW1 bomb damage map

## Charles Booth's London New website from LSE Archives

Charles Booth was a social researcher and reformer famous for conducting the Inquiry into Life and Labour in London (1886-1903), which documented the effects of poverty, industry and religious influences on working class life in London at the end of the 19th century.

It is the only survey from this period for which the original notes and data have survived, and the Archives of the London School of Economics, where they are held, has created an [interactive website](#) featuring free download of the much of the content.

The website enables you to search the index to over 450 original notebooks from the inquiry, including the [Stepney Union casebooks](#) which recorded case histories of inmates of Bromley &

Stepney workhouses - and explore perhaps the most well-known products of Booth's survey, the [London Poverty Maps](#). Readers may also be interested in the [Jewish notebooks](#) which record details of London's Jewish community at the time.

## Opening hours

**Monday:** 9am-5pm (exhibition only)

**Tuesday:** 10am-5pm

**Wednesday:** 9am-5pm

**Thursday:** 9am-8pm

**Friday:** 9am-5pm (exhibition only)

**Saturday\*:** 9am-5pm (\*first and third Saturdays of the month only)

**Sunday:** closed

## Christmas closure

Last date of opening: **Thursday 22 December at 8pm**

New Year reopening: **Tuesday 3 January at 10am**

Closed from Friday 23 Dec - Monday 2 January inclusive.

## Contact us

Send us your enquiry via email, phone or letter at

Tower Hamlets Local History Library and Archives

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London E1 4DQ

Phone: 020 7364 1290

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

Visit our website

[www.ideastore.co.uk](http://www.ideastore.co.uk)

Search our online catalogue

[www.THcatalogue.org.uk](http://www.THcatalogue.org.uk)

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