



Tower Hamlets Local History Library & Archives



June 2018

A bumper issue follows this announcement!

The UK Data Protection law is changing tomorrow and here at Tower Hamlets Local History Library & Archives we want to keep you updated with the steps we are taking to comply. On 25 May 2018, the General Data Protection Regulation, also known as GDPR, will come into effect. GDPR imposes additional obligations on organisations and gives you extra rights around how your data is being used.

We want you to know that we respect the information we hold about you and that we take the security of your information very seriously. We have recently updated our Data Privacy Notices to give you more information on the data we hold on you, what we do with that data, who we share your data with and your rights under the GDPR. Our Data Privacy Notices can be found here:

<https://www.ideastore.co.uk/local-history-operational-policies>

Tower Hamlets Council is asking all of its mailing list subscribers to opt-in again, and you will have received two emails from Idea Store and/or Tower Hamlets Council asking you to click a link to stay subscribed already. Please do this if you still want to receive our newsletters, or you will be taken off this list next week and never hear from us again! You can also sign up again on the [council website](#), or failing that, email us directly and we will manually add you. Please accept our apologies for the inconvenience.



The Women's Hall exhibition

Opening next week!

The Women's Hall at Tower Hamlets Local History Library & Archives is the first major exhibition about the East London Federation of the Suffragettes (ELFS). It explores the work of the ELFS during the period 1913-1918 and the involvement of their leader, Sylvia Pankhurst. To complement the exhibition there is a jam-packed programme of free events, talks, creative workshops, guided walks and film screenings taking place throughout the run, from the main public launch event on **Saturday 2 June** to the last day on 20 October.

Alongside their campaign for the vote, the ELFS carried out relief work in the local community, such as distributing free milk for babies and serving free or cheap food to the deprived residents of the East End who faced stark increases in poverty following the outbreak of the First World War. Exhibition visitors will learn about little-known working class suffragettes like Melvina Walker and Elsie Lagsding, and the venues in Bow and Poplar which were taken over by the ELFS for use in their outreach work - such as the pub which they turned into a crèche and called *The Mother's Arms*.

The exhibition hall at Tower Hamlets Local History Library & Archives has been transformed into an immersive space evoking the headquarters of the ELFS, a former Baptist mission hall on Old Ford Road in Bow which they took over and renamed **The Women's Hall**. As part of the exhibition, the suffragettes' *Cost Price Restaurant* will be recreated, serving refreshments on a 'pay-what-you-can' basis using redistributed supermarket food, and will also house a donation point for the local food bank. The Cost Price Restaurant will be in operation every Wednesday-Friday, Thursday evenings and the Saturdays we are open to the public (1st and 3rd of every month). Contact us for more details.

Historic items on display include a rare 'Ealontoys' teddy bear made in the toy factory started by the ELFS just off the Roman Road; and the handwritten diary of suffragette Gertrude Setchfield which describes her trips from north London to Bow to witness the ELFS in action in 1914, on loan from the LSE Women's Library.

Local Somali cultural organisation [Numbi Arts](#) will stage a takeover of the Women's Hall in August, presenting *Repair and Rebellion* - a strand of free events linked to Numbi's new mobile museum exploring histories of women of the East African diaspora, their links with London's East End, and anti-imperialism - a cause to which Sylvia Pankhurst was dedicated.

The exhibition and events are free. For online listings and visitor information, visit www.womenshall.org.uk and see below! The Women's Hall project is funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund, and also includes an exhibition of photographs by ELFS member Norah Smyth taking place at Four Corners later this year.

The Women's Hall Exhibition launch event Saturday 2 June 11am - 4pm

11:00-13:00 All ages creative workshop

Inspired by the suffragettes' East London Toy Factory, make your own toys with artist Judith Hope. No experience needed and materials provided! Suitable for all ages. Drop in - no booking required.

13:00 – 13:30 Guided Tour of the Women's Hall exhibition

Tower Hamlets Local History Library & Archives volunteer Anne Connaughton will show you around our brand new exhibition about the East London suffragettes.

12:30 – 14:30 Lunch at the Cost Price Restaurant

Following the East London suffragettes' example we've teamed up with Fare Share to provide salads, sandwiches, and treats from redistributed supermarket produce. Pay what you can, otherwise free.

14:00-15:00 Talk: The Struggle of East London's Suffragettes

Esther Freeman from Share UK will talk about the East London Federation of Suffragettes, highlighting the importance of intersectionality and celebrating the quiet activist.

15:15 – 16:30 Talk: Researchers Reveal!

Hear the Women's Hall project research volunteers share some of the fascinating stories and details they've discovered in the archives.

PLUS Pick up our free newspaper, *The Women's Hall Dreadnought*. If you can, don't forget to bring a donation for Bow Food Bank!

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

Events at The Women's Hall

Film: Sylvia Pankhurst, Everything is Possible - Screening followed by Q&A with Ceri Dingle (Director)
Saturday 16 June, 14.00 – 16.00

Sylvia Pankhurst: Everything is Possible is a feature length documentary which, in essay form, traces the context, campaigns and political impact of inspiring suffragette and revolutionary Sylvia Pankhurst. The film includes exclusive testimony from Sylvia's son Richard Pankhurst and his wife Rita as well as interviews with key writers, suffrage historians, archivists and academics. Rare archive footage, photographs, excerpts from security files held on her and illuminating suffrage memorabilia are interwoven to bring alive the life and times of a heroine deserving of far greater recognition.

Workshop: Sew an ELFS Posy with Sarah Richards**Thursday 28 June, 18.00 – 19.30, drop-in**

Sylvia Pankhurst and the East London Federation of Suffragettes were known to use their creativity to highlight their campaigns. Come along to our free drop-in workshop at The Women's Hall led by Sarah Richards (www.oliveroad.london) and learn how to make a posy in ELFS colours using upcycled fabrics. No sewing experience necessary and all materials provided.

Talk: From East End Suffragettes to World Revolutionaries: The Radical Lives of May O'Callaghan and the Cohen sisters, with Maurice Casey**Thursday 5 July, 18.30 – 19.30**

In 1916, a Scotland Yard detective informed his superiors that three members of the East London Federation of Suffragettes had moved into a flat together: May O'Callaghan, an Irish intellectual, Nellie Cohen, Sylvia Pankhurst's secretary and the daughter of Jewish refugees from Poland, and her sister Rose. The detective had unwittingly documented the beginning of a friendship that reflected the vibrant world of the East End, where an Irish and Jewish migrant community came together to fight for the causes of the day; votes for all, revolutionary socialism and an end to the war then raging across Europe. These three women maintained a remarkable friendship across decades and places, from the tumult of East London during the suffrage struggle, through the experimental society of revolutionary Moscow and beyond. Using documents from attics and archives in the US, UK and Russia, this talk reveals the untold story of these women and their shared journey through personal and political revolutions.

Walk: Battling Belles of Bow with Rachel Kolsky**Saturday 7 July, 14.30 – 16.30**

Led by Sylvia Pankhurst who chose east London as the starting point for her campaign for women's suffrage, East End women were key to the success of the Suffragette movement. Seeing the plight of the working women and mothers, she also established a nursery, a series of restaurants and a toy factory in Bow. Join Rachel Kolsky, prizewinning tour guide and author of *Women's London* and follow in Sylvia's footsteps.

BOOKING FOR THIS WALK IS ESSENTIAL - please email localhistory@towerhamlets.gov.uk

Poetry reading and talk: Writ on Cold Slate - Sylvia Pankhurst's Holloway Prison Poems, with Chris Searle**Thursday 12 July, 18.30 – 19.30**

Join poet and author Chris Searle to discover another side of Sylvia Pankhurst: her poems. Chris will read from *Writ on Cold Slate*, a document of life inside Holloway prison during the period of suffragette militancy, and place them within the wider struggles she was involved in.

Workshop: Suffragette Sources at Tower Hamlets Local History Library & Archives**Saturday 21 July, 11.00 – 13.00, drop-in**

Discover some of the suffragette sources from the collections at Tower Hamlets Local History Library and Archives. Read the real *Woman's Dreadnought*, see our first edition copy of *The Suffragette* signed by its author Sylvia Pankhurst, and browse our unique collection of pamphlets, news cuttings and photographs. With an introduction from Robert Jones, Heritage Officer (Library), and then a chance to explore the material.

Workshop: East End History Club Suffragette Special**Saturday 21 July, 14.00 – 16.00, drop-in**

A special edition of our regular East End History Club, exploring women's lives in Tower Hamlets throughout the twentieth century. These sessions are ideal for those who are curious about local history and want to find out more. There's no need to book, just drop in. Tea, coffee and biscuits provided.

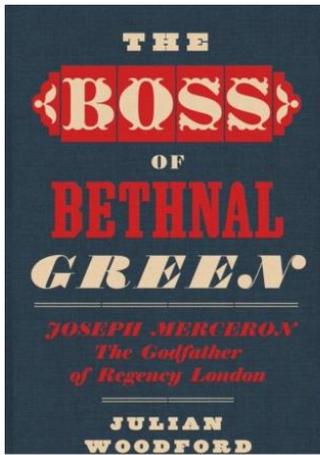
Guided tours of the exhibition, first Saturday of every month, 13.00 - 13.30.

We are also offering booked tours for community groups. If you would like to book one, please email localhistory@towerhamlets.gov.uk

Coming up at The Women's Hall Later in the summer...

We have a whole host of events planned with lots more to come! Keep an eye on [the website](#) for the full programme.

We have two more walks with Rachel Kolsky on Thursday 30 August (18.30 - 20.30) and Saturday 6 October (14.30 - 16.30), a talk on Indian Suffragettes from Dr Sumita Mukherjee on Thursday 13 September (18.30 - 19.30) and a suffragette-themed family history day on Saturday 1 September. Numbi Arts will also be hosting a takeover of the space in August.



London History Day event

'The Boss of Bethnal Green' with Julian Woodford
Thursday 31 May, 6:00 – 7:30pm

For London History Day, we have invited author Julian Woodford to reveal all about 'The Boss of Bethnal Green' - Joseph Merceron, the corrupt Huguenot magistrate who ruled the East End for half a century from 1790 to 1840, lining his own pockets while creating the conditions that led to Victorian London's worst slums. Julian conducted much of his research here using our collections, and his talk will include practical examples of how he used the archives to uncover Merceron's story.

Julian Woodford has lived in London since the early 1980s and combines a City career with a passion for London's history. Follow him at <http://www.twitter.com/historylondon> and <http://www.historylondon.org/>. 'The Boss of Bethnal Green' is his first book.

East End History Club A regular drop-in session, every other month

At these regular sessions you get to browse through old photographs, maps, newspapers and archival documents relating to a range of popular subjects, such as housing, health, immigration, work, school, leisure and much more! These sessions are ideal for those who are curious about local history and want to find out more. It's free, there's no need to book, just drop in. Tea, coffee and biscuits will be provided. Suitable for adults and children (aged 11+).

Future dates:
Saturday 21 July
Saturday 15 September

New landing exhibition in June Balfron Tower: archiving fragments

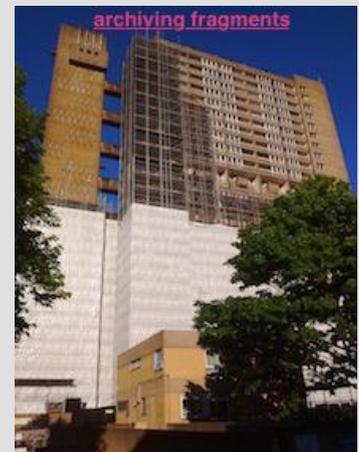
Designed by Ernő Goldfinger, Balfron Tower is one of the great Brutalist landmarks of East London. Over its 50 years of existence it has housed a diverse range of people, including from 2012 to 2016 the artist James, who during that time assembled a fragmentary archive of objects, traces and residues of people who lived there and the lives that played out in its spaces. Displaying a selection of this material with a written commentary by James, this exhibition explores the capacity of architecture to act as both a spur and container of stories - personal, social and political.

A selection of fragments from Balfron Tower will be shown together with documents held at Tower Hamlets Local History Library & Archives and consulted during James's research. Balfron Tower was one of the housing estates featured in a book James co-authored with Tamara Stoll, published in 2017. This sits with a selection of reading material, which will also include a new essay by writer and curator, Owen Hopkins. The exhibition is open on our landing space between 6 and 28 June and is part of the London Festival of Architecture.

Talk: Balfron Tower: archiving fragments
Thursday 21 June, 6:30 - 7:30pm

Make the most of late opening on Thursday 21 June. View the culmination of a six year research project, fragments from an unofficial archive for Balfron Tower, displayed in the context of Tower Hamlets Local History Library & Archives.

Listen to an open conversation between writer and curator Owen Hopkins, artist James and others, held at a moment of reflection as Balfron Tower is refurbished and its flats, created as social housing, are transformed for private sale. The exhibition and conversation are aimed at a diverse local community as well as visitors from beyond the borough.



Collection news

We are excited to report that the catalogue of the papers of Charles Mason mainly relating to the East India Company in Poplar has now gone live on our catalogue.

Mason was the marine secretary of the colonial Indian government between 1837 and 1867. His career spanned the 1857-

59 Indian uprising as well as the subsequent decline of the East India Company and the transfer of government to the direct rule of the British government.

Most of the material was purchased by the Poplar Borough Council in 1949 (though one volume was purchased in 1917) and was catalogued as part of the Local History Library until in 1989. It was transferred to the Archives collection and catalogued by the first archivist, Jerome Farrell, as records of the East India Company. If you would like to access this collection, go to our [online catalogue](#) and search for P/MAS.

New books

The last couple of months have seen the release of a number of interesting new books on the topic of East London. Among these are *Pie and Mash Down the Roman Road* by Melanie McGrath, a 'biography' of G. Kelly's famous pie and mash shop and its customers over the past century, and *London's East End: A Guide for Family and Local Historians* by Jonathan Oates.

Some of our other recent acquisitions include:

East London Buses: 1970s-1980s by Malcolm Batten (2018)

Municipal Dreams: The Rise and Fall of Council Housing by John Boughton (2018)

London's Statues and Monuments by Peter Matthews (2018)

Socialism and the Diasporic 'Other': A Comparative History of Irish Catholic and Jewish Radical and Communal Politics in East London, 1889-1912 by Daniel Renshaw (2018)

Whitechapel Boy: A Reading of the Poetry of Isaac Rosenberg by Chris Searle (2018)

You can browse these and other new titles in our reading room during our usual opening hours.



Goodbye to *The East End in Colour* Thanks to all who visited!

Thank you to all those who visited the David Granick exhibition. We had over 5,200 visitors and over 600 in the second week alone! Reading Room visits were also up during the exhibition run and over half of exhibition visitors had never visited us before.

Here is some of your feedback:

"A beautifully executed exhibition. Groundbreaking and heartbreaking."

"Really remarkable, not just a lesson in local history but a valuable experience in thinking about cities and development."

"Loved the visitors' comments on the photos - which really added to the enjoyment. Thanks."

If you missed it, the exhibition panels - including all the insightful and interesting visitor comments - are now available to view in the Reading Room during our usual opening hours.



Mystery photo competition

Thank you to all those who entered the mystery photo competition in last month's newsletter.

The location of this photograph by David Granick is John's Place, looking north towards Clark Street. We received no correct answers.

If you would like to buy a copy of the book, we have plenty on sale in the Reading Room at the discounted price of £15.

Job vacancy

Archives Manager
Tower Hamlets Local History Library & Archives

We are now recruiting for a senior archivist in our team with advanced experience of cataloguing archives to professional standards and delivering a public-facing reading room service. The closing date has been extended to Monday 28 May. The vacancy is [live on the Tower Hamlets website](#). Two other posts - both of which are fixed term appointments (Cataloguing Archivist and Heritage Co-ordinator) are being created thanks to successful fundraising within the council, and these will be advertised soon.

Aldgate Square Festival

15 - 17 June

Aldgate Square Festival is a fun-filled community celebration of all that Aldgate has to offer. It will include a vibrant spectrum music, dance, performance, food, games and theatre from around the East End and beyond, mirroring the cultural wealth of this fantastic area. For more information [visit the website](#).

Opening hours

Monday: 9am-5pm (exhibition only, shut Bank Holidays)
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

We are open 9am-5pm on the first and third Saturdays of every month, for research in the reading room and exhibition viewing. That's the following Saturdays coming up:

Saturday 2 June
Saturday 16 June
Saturday 7 July
Saturday 21 July

Bank holiday closure

Please note that we will be closed on Monday 28 May for the bank holiday.

Contact us

Send us your enquiry via email, phone or letter:
Tower Hamlets Local History Library and Archives
277 Bancroft Road
London E1 4DQ
Phone: 020 7364 1290
Email: localhistory@towerhamlets.gov.uk

Visit our website
www.ideastore.co.uk

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