



Tower Hamlets Local History Library & Archives



May-June 2016

New exhibition and events programme

Radical Housing in Tower Hamlets

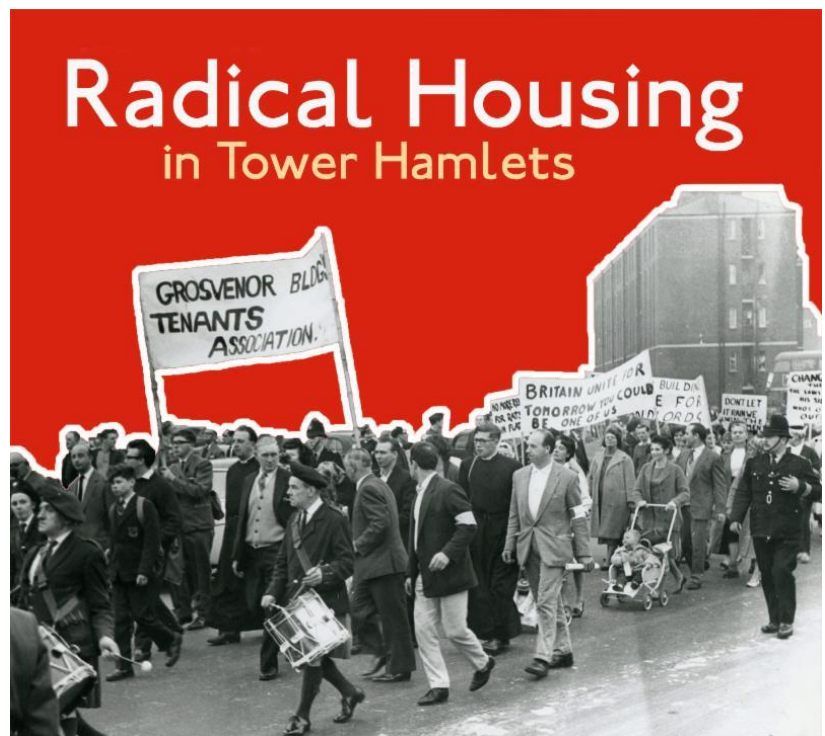
20 June-22 September 2016

We are pleased to announce our next local history exhibition and events programme which will run for three months over the summer: **Radical Housing in Tower Hamlets**. From the rent strikes of the 1930s to the squatting movement of the 1970s and the formation of the first housing co-operatives, the fight for decent and affordable housing has a long history in London's East End. Drawn exclusively from our archive and local history library collections and curated by our Learning & Participation Officer Perdita Jones, the upcoming exhibition will provide an overview of tenant action in Tower Hamlets, highlighting some of the key events and movements which have taken place over the last 100 years.

The exhibition has been programmed to tie in with the forthcoming conference [Radical Histories: Histories of Radicalism](#) organised by the Raphael Samuel History Centre, taking place next door to us at Queen Mary, University of London, from 30 June - 3 July.

We have so far confirmed the events below to accompany the exhibition, with more being added to the programme over the next few weeks. All activities in the programme are free

and take place here at THLHLA, with the exception of the guided walk. Further events will appear on our [website](#) in due course. To book, please call or email using the contact details at the bottom of this newsletter.



Exhibition Launch

Thursday 7 July 2016, 6-7.30pm

Join us for the formal launch of the exhibition with guest speakers to be announced. Free, no booking required.

Workshop: Printmaking

Saturday 2 July 2016, 1-4pm

Due to popular request we have invited back [Rudy Loewe](#) to lead another free printmaking workshop. Design and print a poster inspired by housing activism in the East End. Limited space, advance booking essential.

Walk: Housing in Bethnal Green

Saturday 20 August 2016, 2-4pm

A guided walk exploring the housing heritage of Bethnal Green. Free, booking essential.

Film screening: *Goodbye Longfellow Road*

Saturday 17 September 2016, 2-3.30pm

A free screening of rarely seen *Goodbye Longfellow Road* (1977, 78 mins), a documentary originally broadcast on ITV, telling the story of the residents of a Stepney street. Declared a slum in the 1930s, earmarked for demolition in 1943 but still inhabited in the 1970s: what happened when the bulldozers finally moved in? No booking required.

Temporary Reading Room service

Almost all our collections are now accessible again!

The Reading Room at Tower Hamlets Local History Library & Archives remains closed to the public after a partial collapse of its ornate plaster ceiling. Repair works have begun and are scheduled to conclude at the end of July. In the meantime we are pleased to announce that we now have access to the majority of our collections and are extending the appointment-only sessions to view material in our ground floor Education Room to three days per week, including one evening slot, and some additional Saturdays.

3-hour appointments are now available in which you will be able to view pre-booked items from any of our collections except maps which, unfortunately, remain inaccessible. You must provide references of the material you wish to view when booking your appointment. There will be a limit to the quantity of material that can be consulted in each session - please discuss this with staff when booking your appointment. Bookings can be taken up until midday the previous day.

We are now taking bookings for sessions as follows until the end of July:

Tuesdays and Wednesdays: 1000-1300 and 1330-1630

Thursdays: 1330-1630 and 1700-1930

In addition we are taking appointments for the following Saturdays (1000-1300 and 1330-1630):

June 4 and 18

July 16

To book your appointment please contact us (email localhistory@towerhamlets.gov.uk or call 020 7364 1290) stating your preferred time and date, and the references of material you would like to view.

When booking an appointment, readers can book up to six individual items from across the following categories:

- Books
- Pamphlets (individual, or all at a given classmark)
- Archive file or item
- Photographs (individual, or all at a given classmark or street name)
- Folder of press cuttings (classmark)
- Bound newspapers/periodicals
- Periodicals on microfilm

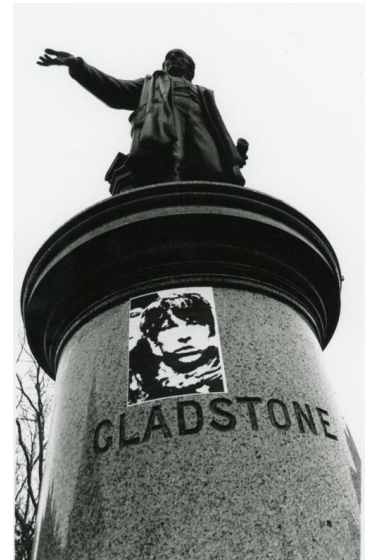
Please refer to the [online catalogue](#) to obtain references and search the collections, and the subject guide or classification scheme (available under the [What's in the Catalogue](#) tab) for a list of all available classmarks, and see below for some new guidance on how to

identify the correct reference number for archive material.

Last chance to see our current exhibition: **The Match Women's Strike 1988:** **Alison Marchant's *Wall Paper History* Revisited**

It's your last chance to visit our current exhibition, **The Match Women's Strike 1988: Alison Marchant's *Wall Paper History* revisited**, which will be on display until 5pm on Saturday 21 May. We worked with local artist, Alison Marchant, to re-stage her 1988 exhibition, which was inspired by the women and girls employed at the Bryant & May match factory in Bow who successfully went on strike in 1888 to improve their working conditions. This pivotal moment in feminist and labour history is commemorated in Alison's artwork, which includes original prints, etchings and collages inspired by archival imagery.

The last days of public opening are **tonight** til 8pm, tomorrow Friday 20 May and Saturday 21 May, 9am-5pm.



Statue at Bow Church, photo by Patsy Mullan, c1988

This Saturday! **Paper theatre performance**

The Tale of Jack Sheppard
a new production by Otherstory
Saturday 21 May at 3pm
in the ground floor Education Room
at Tower Hamlets Local History Library & Archives

See how an ordinary apprentice carpenter from East London became the legendary jail breaker and hero of the people, whose fame spread across oceans. Witness his daring and miraculous escapes! Watch him outwit judges, jailers and the Thieftaker General - until the hangman's noose beckons and it's now or never, neck or nothing...

18th century London, its raucous mobs, rapacious merchants and well-fed judges, are brought to vivid life on a table. The use of



The Tale of Jack Sheppard

simple cut-out puppets and zigzagging set lead the audience through unexpected turns among the characters, institutions, and dodgy deals of a time of upheaval. Jumps in scale, audience participation and the textured use of sound and song add drama and depth to the story. A playful, political, visually stunning tale of daring and resistance.

The performance is free and is suitable for adults and older children. Supported by the Arts Council and Tower Hamlets Council.

Other upcoming events

Treasure Island: The Isle of Dogs' Hidden Gems

Sunday 5 June 2016, 4.30pm

Join guides William Sharp, Leigh Stanford and Andrew Parnell for their walking tour around the Isle of Dogs, revealing some of the area's lesser known architectural gems, mostly outside of the banking area at Canary Wharf. The face of the Island was transformed by wholesale regeneration and bombing in the 20th century. This walk looks at some of the buildings that were produced, from housing - social, private and charitable - to glittering offices and ornate buildings with important practical functions. It also reveals some natural features and green spaces which may surprise a first-time visitor. Above all, the walk seeks to convey a sense of the special character of the area, surrounded as it is by water, with its long association with the sea and maritime trades and its track record of adapting to massive economic change.

Tickets cost £5. The walk starts at South Quay DLR station (eastern exit, Harbour Exchange side). To buy tickets and obtain more information go to:

<http://tinyurl.com/TreasureIsland5June>

History Hoppers

Wednesday 15 June 2016, 2.30-4.30pm

Tower Hamlets Local History Library and Archives

Come along to our monthly drop-in History Hoppers group, where participants will have the chance to explore a variety items from our archive collection relating to the history of the local area, including photographs, old newspapers, letters and diaries. Refreshments provided. Free, no booking required.

Upcoming History Hoppers dates:

Wednesday 20 July, 2.30-4.30pm

Wednesday 17 August, 2.30-4.30pm

The Immigrants of Spitalfields Festival

Sunday 19 June - Tuesday 21 June 2016

Various venues

The history of Spitalfields as a place of refuge for immigrants over many centuries surely needs no introduction to our readers. A festival of related events takes place annually and this year's is a partnership between Huguenots of Spitalfields, the Swadhinata Trust and Sandy's Row Synagogue. Visit <http://immigrantsofspitalfields.org.uk/> for information.

East End Canal Festival

Sunday 26 June 2016, 11am-5pm

Art Pavilion, Mile End Park, Clinton Rd, London E3 4QY



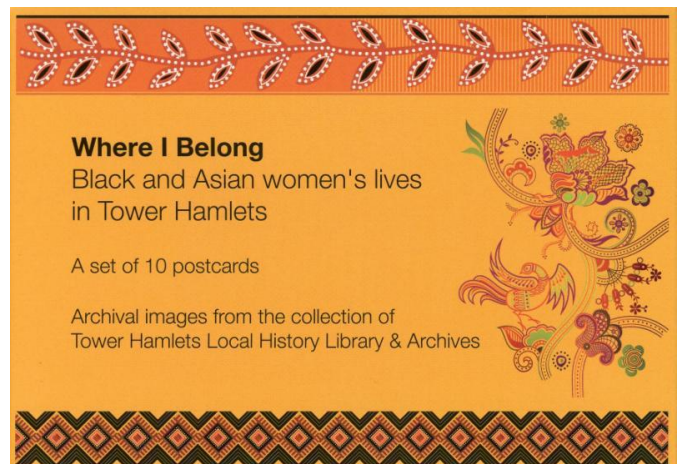
The East End Canal Festival will build upon the work of the East End Canal Heritage Project, run by Laburnum Boat Club and supported by funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund. The Festival will showcase the project's work uncovering the stories and images of the Regent's Canal and the Hertford Union Canal over the last 200 years. A host of other activities include boat trips, guided walks, storytelling, face painting, an art exhibition and a variety of stalls, including one from THLHLA.

Archives news

Collections update

Thanks to recent work undertaken by our UCL archives cataloguing placement student, Cara Wallace, cataloguing is now complete of the 'Where I Belong' oral histories which were recorded in 2013-2014 by Majeda Begum, with assistance from Hamda Sheikh and Hyacinth Maynard.

These consist of 13 recordings of interviews with Black and Asian women who lived in Tower Hamlets, in which they narrate their experiences as immigrants and their first impressions of England. The themes running throughout the interviews are education, faith, home life and belonging. These histories also address the main difficulties faced by these women, including leaving family behind, learning a new language and holding on to their cultural traditions. These testimonies highlight the struggle and successes of these women in setting up a new life abroad, as well as providing an account of life in Tower Hamlets and the East End of London. Please see our online catalogue for further information about the project and the oral history recordings (collection reference: O/WIB).



These testimonies highlight the struggle and successes of these women in setting up a new life abroad, as well as providing an account of life in Tower Hamlets and the East End of London. Please see our online catalogue for further information about the project and the oral history recordings (collection reference: O/WIB).

Cara also catalogued the papers of **Peter Aylmer** (ref. P/AYL) who was an elected representative for Tower Hamlets on the Inner London Education Committee between 1982 and 1990. These were turbulent times and included are papers relating to racist attacks at Morpeth School in 1986, a British National Party meeting held at John Scurr House in the same year, and a file relating to the pressure group Bangladeshis' Educational Needs in Tower Hamlets, 1984-1989.

FROM THE BISHOP OF STEPNEY
The Rt. Rev. Trevor Huddleston, C.R.E.
Saturday June 5th 1971

400 COMMERCIAL ROAD,
LONDON, E.1
Telephone: 01-790 4183

Dear Mr. Dalton,

I thank you for your letter of 2nd June (C.R.C./ESD/VCL) and I regret that my letter to you of 30th May, posted at 10.30 am on that date at Cable Street E.1, had not reached you.

I fully appreciate that it was not possible to convene a valid meeting of the Governing Body at such short notice and I should have made it clear that I was in fact requesting an informal meeting in order to make use of the school holiday period and, if possible, to clear up misunderstandings before the school re-assembled.

Because, for good reasons, this meeting has proved impossible to arrange I must ask you to read this letter to the Governors on my behalf and I would be grateful for your confirmation that this has been done.

First I wish to remind the Governors of the fact that no Bishop of Stepney I have possessed responsibility for staff and pupils in any form of jurisdiction and that I am therefore directly interested in and concerned with all decisions affecting them. This responsibility is now vested in the case of Church of England schools in an 'Oversight' body. I feel that in this, although I am not a member of the governing body, I am fully entitled to be heard by that body on occasions when

Letter in support of Chris Searle from Trevor Huddleston, Bishop of Stepney, June 1971

New archive collection added

We are very pleased that **Chris Searle** has deposited his papers with us. Chris, though now living in Sheffield, is rooted in Stepney. Chris is an educationalist, poet, anti-racist activist and socialist. In 1971 he was involved in the Stepney School Strike when, as a teacher at Sir John Cass School in Stepney and having published a book of his pupils' poems he was dismissed, but was eventually reinstated after school pupils went on strike. Many of the papers relate to this but the great breadth of his interests is well represented, including education, poetry, jazz and cricket.

Improvements to our Archives catalogue

functionality

Following feedback from users of our online catalogue THLHLA archivists have been working on making improvements to the catalogue entries relating to the archive collections so it is easier for those interested in archive material to understand the catalogue entries and how to order material.

Archives catalogues are traditionally structured in a hierarchy, with information layered (like a tree) reflecting the provenance of the material which the entries relate to and how the records were kept and used by the individuals, organisations and institutions who created them. In practice this means that information is provided within different levels of catalogue entries. In addition to those entries which relate specifically to the material which readers can actually order up to look at during a visit there are many catalogue entries/layers of information which provide context and therefore are descriptive only.

This can, and has, led to some confusion as to which entries those using the catalogue should concentrate on for ordering archive material to look at during a visit to us. To help make this process easier we have introduced a new field to all of our catalogue records relating to archive material, this field is called Request. Now when you search the Archives repository section of our online catalogue (or come across records from the archives collections through a more general search) you will see the Request field at the bottom of each catalogue record as follows:

- Entries for material at orderable level (with no access restrictions) will contain the text: YES - MATERIAL ORDERABLE
- Entries for material where the information is descriptive only will contain the text: NO - DESCRIPTIVE LEVEL ONLY

New online exhibition

We are pleased to report that a new online exhibition is now available on our website.

From Town Hall to Local History Library & Archives: a short history of our service and premises, 1861-2015 is based on research undertaken for last year's 50th anniversary celebrations of the borough.



If you've ever wondered about the history of our Grade 2 listed building here on Bancroft Road, these web pages will reveal all.

Job vacancy Heritage Officer (Archives)

We are currently recruiting for an archivist (13 months fixed term) as our colleague Natasha Luck is shortly to depart on maternity leave. For more information and to apply, [see the Tower Hamlets Council vacancies page](#). The closing date is Monday 30 May. Please note that this post requires professional experience and/or the appropriate postgraduate qualification in archives management.

Contact Us

Send us your enquiry via email, phone or letter at

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

Search our online catalogue
www.THcatalogue.org.uk

Follow us on Twitter [@LBTHarchives](https://twitter.com/LBTHarchives)

