

September-October 2014



Dan Jones speaking at the launch of his exhibition at THLHLA, July 2014

Getting Creative with Dan Jones

Tower Hamlets Local History Library & Archives is delighted to be hosting a retrospective of paintings and prints by prolific Stepney-based artist Dan Jones featuring over 80 works. Through print-making and painting Dan has captured the heart and soul of Tower Hamlets over more than forty years as a local resident, youth worker and activist. In addition to depictions of contemporary life in the East End primarily focussed on the 1970s, the artist also honours inspirational scenes from local history including the Battle of Cable Street and the Poplar Rates Rebellion.

A series of creative workshops, inspired by Dan's work, have been programmed by THLHLA to run alongside the exhibition. Unleash your inner poet with the help of Dan's writer friends at our **poetry workshop**, taking place at Idea Store Whitechapel on Wednesday 17 September. Or join Dan on Saturday 6 September to **create a campaign poster** inspired by a local issue past or present using a variety of printmaking techniques. If you missed our **drawing street life workshop**, it's not too late to create your own collaborative street scenes at either Idea Store Watney Market on Thursday 18 September, here at THLHLA on Tuesday 14 October, or Idea Store Bow on Thursday 23 October. Art materials - and an abundance of inspiration from Dan himself - are included.

There is also a chance to catch three rare films produced from Dan's creative political milieu of 1970s Stepney which comes across so vibrantly in the exhibition. Artist Chris Dorley-Brown will introduce the BAFTA-winning documentary **Vince, Paul, Lawrence and Richard** on Thursday 11 September and the short film he made in response. We are also delighted to welcome those involved in making **Tunde's Film** in 1973 on Thursday 18 October who will be in conversation with Dan after the screening; as will Jenny Barraclough, whose film about the community-organised E1 Festival, **Alright, We'll Do It Ourselves**, will be screened on Thursday 23 September.

These events are all free and no booking is required. For further details, please visit www.ideastore.co.uk/local-history or pick up a programme at the library. The last day of the exhibition is Saturday 15 November. Please check our esoteric opening times before visiting!

Our Exhibitions on Tour

Empty Streets: Noel Gibson's East London (1967-75)
Until Sunday 21 September 2014
Nunnery Gallery, 181 Bow Road, E3 2SJ

We are very pleased to have our extensive collection of Noel Gibson paintings again on public display. Noel was a prolific painter of Tower Hamlets street scenes during the 1970s and this is a rare chance to see our collection of his paintings, which we believe to be the biggest in existence. This free exhibition is on show six days a week at the Nunnery Gallery in Bow until Sunday 21 September.



Hessell Street by Noel Gibson, 1970

The Nunnery Gallery has organised some events to tie in with the exhibition. Its curator Gary Haines will be in conversation with Noel's niece Carolynda MacDonald, also an artist based in Scotland, at 7pm on Tuesday 16 September at the gallery. You can also join Sarah Ainslie for a photography walk around some of the sites that Noel painted on Saturday 13 September at 11am. To book tickets for these events and for more information and opening times, please visit the Bow Arts website—<http://www.bowarts.org/nunnery/exhibitions>

The Bengali East End
Until Sunday 28 September 2014
The Gallery, 4th Floor, Idea Store Whitechapel, 321 Whitechapel Road, E1 1BU

Produced by us in 2012 as part of the 'Opening Up Archives' traineeship scheme which was funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund and managed by The National Archives, this exhibition uses our collections to trace the migration of people from the Bay of Bengal and what is now Bangladesh to the East End and what is now Tower Hamlets over the past four centuries. Visit www.ideastore.co.uk for more information about The Gallery @ Idea Store Whitechapel.

Upcoming Events at THLHLA

Open House London
Saturday 20 September 2014

Tower Hamlets Local History Library and Archives will once again be taking part in **Open House London**. Free behind the scenes tours of our Grade 2 listed building will take place at 10.30am and 3pm on Saturday 20 September. There is a maximum of 15 places on each tour. To book your place, please email localhistory@towerhamlets.gov.uk or telephone 020 7364 1290. We currently have free Open House brochures in stock so come and pick one up!

Here We Are: Black History in Tower Hamlets Creative Workshops
Saturday 4 October, 11-4pm

Our main event for this year's **Black History Month** is an all-day creative workshop facilitated by two local black artists - Rudy Loewe and Evan Ifekoya. In the sessions, you will be invited to use the THLHLA collections to make artwork inspired by the lives of black people in the borough. The creative outputs from both sessions will be contributed to the archives. The first workshop, 11am-1pm, will focus on drawing and zine-making, and the second, 2pm-4pm, will use photography and portraiture. Visit www.ideastore.co.uk/local-history for more information! The event is free and no booking is required.



Isaac Julien by Evan Ifekoya, 2014

World War One in Tower Hamlets

Our programme of commemorative events supported by the Heritage Lottery Fund continues apace at venues across the borough. For a selection of upcoming highlights, see below:

Chrisp Street Remembers

Sunday 7 September, 11am-4pm
Idea Store Chrisp Street, 1 Vesey Path,
East India Dock Road, E14 6BT

To mark the WW1 centenary, Idea Store Chrisp Street will host a day of film, reminiscence, arts and crafts, and live music, focusing on Poplar's World War One heritage. This event is part of the Chrisp Street Festival organised by Poplar HARCA, taking place across Chrisp Street Market. The day includes screenings of the short film 'Whose Remembrance?' Communities and the Experiences of the Peoples of Britain's Former Empire During the Two World Wars'.

From Cubitt Town to Aldgate East: One Woman's Journey through the First World War

Wednesday 10 September, 6.30pm - 8pm
Idea Store Watney Market, 260 Commercial Road, E1 2FB

Author Juliet West talks about her novel *Before the Fall*, inspired by a tragic true story, for which she researched the experiences of women in the East End during the First World War using the THLHLA collections among others.

WW1 in Tower Hamlets talk series: The Wounded Soldier and the East End of London

Thursday 18 September, 6.30-7.30pm
Tower Hamlets Local History Library & Archives

Currently researching the cultural and visual representation of the blinded British soldier of the First World War for his doctoral thesis, in this talk Gary Haines will look at what it meant to be wounded in war and living in the East End.

All events are free and no booking is required. For the full programme of over 20 events, visit our website and for news of exciting WW1 finds in our collections, check out WW1 Co-ordinator Gary Haines' blog.

<http://ideastore.co.uk/local-history-world-war-one-cultural-events-programme>

<http://garyhaines.wordpress.com/>

Also coming up at THLHLA...

The East India Company: Commodities, Conquest and Corruption?

Saturday 18 October, 2-5pm
Tower Hamlets Local History Library & Archives

As part of Bengal History Week and Black History Month, we are also hosting a free afternoon event about the East India Company curated by local Bengali heritage group Brick Lane Circle. Nick Robins, author of *The Corporation that Changed the World*, will present an illustrated lecture on the Company's rise and fall, its social and economic impacts and the lessons for international relations today. Visit www.bricklanecircle.org for more information on this and other events taking place for Bengal History Week.

Through the Door

Thursday 23 October, 6:30 - 8pm
Tower Hamlets Local History Library & Archives

Join poet Fiona Sampson and staff at THLHLA for an evening celebrating the forging of new connections between archives and the arts. Part of the 'Through the Door' project, which has seen poets including ex-Laureate Andrew Motion visit archives across the metropolis for inspiration, this event will include poetry readings and an opportunity to delve into our archive and get the creative juices flowing!

Idea Store Secondment

We are pleased to have recently begun a secondment scheme with our colleagues in Idea Stores and are now hosting a placement for an Idea Store Co-ordinator here at THLHLA for six months at a time, one day a week. Our first secondee is Rudy Lorentz from Idea Store Watney Market who is with us for the rest of this year. Rudy is a talented artist and is facilitating several arts workshops using our collections over the coming months, including the one taking place here for Black History Month on Saturday 4 October. They are also facilitating the Dan Jones exhibition workshops taking place both here and at Idea Store Watney Market. Rudy says, "I am really enjoying my time at THLHLA - it has been a privilege to explore the collections and to learn more about local history as I work." Next year we are looking forward to welcoming secondees from Idea Store Bow.



Rudy Lorentz, Idea Store Co-ordinator

News from our Friends

Black Chronicles II Exhibition

12 September - 29 November 2014

Autograph ABP, a photography charity based in Shoreditch, presents Black Chronicles II, a new exhibition exploring black presences in 19th and early 20th century Britain, through the prism of photography, particularly studio portraiture. Drawing on the metaphor of the chronicle, the exhibition presents over 200 photographs, the majority of which have never been exhibited or published before. Further information, including location and opening times, can be found here: <http://autograph-abp.co.uk/exhibitions/black-chronicles-ii>.

'In My Footsteps' Project

9 September—11 November 2014

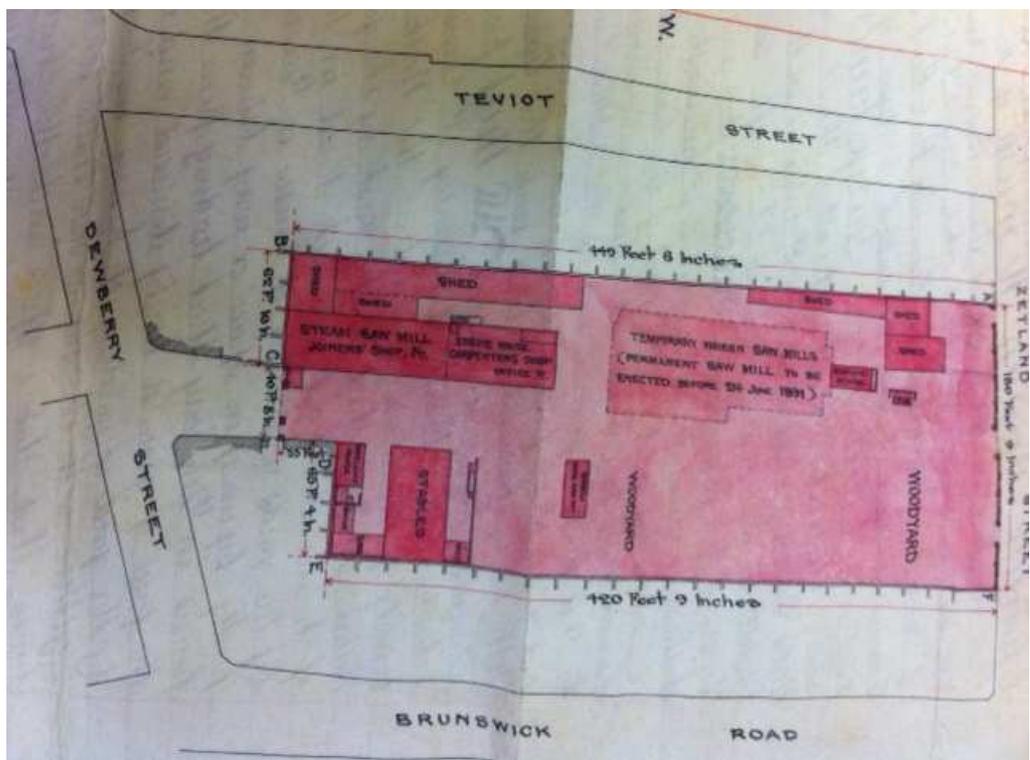
'In My Footsteps' is a chance to discover the hidden stories, local landmarks and cultural heritage of Poplar and Limehouse. Participants will get the opportunity to learn creative new skills, such as photography, film-making and scriptwriting and will produce their very own mobile 'app' trail around the neighbourhood. 'In My Footsteps' is a free project open to anyone, young and old, living in Poplar or Limehouse. You don't need to be knowledgeable about history, heritage, film-making or photography. Just bring your enthusiasm and curiosity. The sessions run on ten consecutive Tuesdays from 10am – 2pm, starting on 9 September and finishing on 11 November 2014. To book your place or for more information, please contact Marion on 07733 151 271 or email marion@manifesta.org.uk.

Magic Me is an arts charity based in Bethnal Green that bring the generations together to build a stronger, safer community. Their projects often link unlikely partners. Young people aged 8+ and adults aged 60+ team up through shared, creative activity. Intergenerational groups meet on a weekly basis in schools, museums, older peoples clubs, care homes, community and cultural organisations.

They are currently fundraising for a project called 'Rooms with a View', which will explore the layered heritage of Tower Hamlets as a place of shelter over the past century, drawing on memories, oral histories, photographs, diaries and lived stories linked to the shelter it has offered to so many - whether seeking work, fleeing persecution, or moving due to marriage, separation or family needs. If successful, they will be partnering with us Tower Hamlets Local History Library & Archives early next year, and will be looking for local residents to join the project and share their memories and stories. Please contact Magic Me on 020 3222 6064 or at info@magicme.co.uk if you would like to receive more information.

‘Land and Lives’: an update on our deeds cataloguing project

This project, outlined in the January-February newsletter and funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund has largely concentrated so far on the records in the "deeds collection" for land in the former London boroughs of Bethnal Green and Poplar which eventually came into local authority ownership, either as a result of war damage or planned redevelopment. Many are deeds for residential areas, built on for the first time around 1810 in Bethnal Green and forty or fifty years later in Bow and Bromley. Interestingly, we have found the Glossop family, theatrical managers and inventors of pantomime, owning property in Armagh Road, Bow. There are also deeds for pubs, now sadly disappeared, like the Rising Sun on the corner of Globe Lane and Green Street (ie what is now the corner of Globe Road and Roman Road); and industrial sites such as Bligh's steam engine works at Limehouse, the Phoenix Saw Mills at Bromley, and the starch works of Colman's, the mustard manufacturers, at Old Ford Road. Sometimes the deeds contain plans which indicate the former usage of the sites in detail.



Detail from a deed showing a plan of Phoenix Saw Mills, Bromley-by-Bow, 1888. Ref: L/THL/J/1/4/301

Our volunteer indexers, Angelika Hirsch, Judy Joseph, Robert Martin, Joyce Mose, Ash Rennie, Susan Vaughan and Isobel Watson have worked with great care and dedication to ensure that the tremendous detail in the existing card catalogue to these records is retained, with all its potential for house and family history in this part of London, when the revised catalogue goes online. They have also willingly helped out with the physical sorting and re-arrangement of the collections as is needed from time to time as cataloguing progresses. A very big vote of thanks is due to them for all the hours they have already put in to the project. Repackaging the whole of the collections in acid-free materials to ensure their permanent preservation is also planned.

For the next few months the project will shift its focus to the records surviving for an area in the west of the borough centred on Whitechapel: not only for local authority-owned land, but also all the deeds from unofficial sources. Here we have many deeds going back to the 17th century, and we think their research potential can be used in conjunction with other archives and pictorial evidence to enable us to develop stimulating projects for school use. Beyond this, the project needs its external funding extended if it is to continue as we hope, so we keep our fingers firmly crossed.

- Project Archivist, Mark Ballard

Strictly Come Researching

On Saturday 8 March Tower Hamlets Local History Library and Archives was used as one of the locations for the filming of television series 'Secrets from the Clink' which aired on ITV1 in August.



Archives staff were suitably starstruck when they learned that they were to assist none other than Strictly Come Dancing judge and entertainer Len Goodman with his family history! It was a pleasure to meet and work with Len, who is as cheerful, friendly and funny as his on-screen persona would lead you to believe. Len told us that he has a real interest in family history so we hope when he gets some free time in his busy schedule he will pay us another visit to explore our collections in more detail.

Len Goodman and Natasha Luck in THLHLA reading room
Photograph of J.J. & S.W. Chalk premises, 32

Picture of the month

This month's picture is a group photograph of staff at the Commercial Gas Company Munitions Foundry, at Stepney Gasworks in Harford Street, taken during the First World War. The photograph was amongst a set donated to us in 1985 by Mr K. C. J. Madgett whose father, Charles G Madgett was seconded to the position of Chief Clerk and Accountant to the Metropolitan Munitions Committee (Poplar and Stepney District) from his employment with the Commercial Gas Company. Notice the shoes of the seated members of the workforce which wrap around all the ankle, this design was to prevent molten metal from coming into contact with the body.



Commercial Gas Company Munitions Foundry, c. 1915-1917 [LHLA ref: P23148]

A Tribute to Hyacinth

The Local History team were shocked to receive the terrible news that our volunteer Hyacinth Maynard had died following a cycling accident in Epping Forest on 6 July.

Hyacinth was a warm, friendly, upbeat and hardworking person seeking to develop her knowledge and expertise in archives. She gave up many hours of her time to assist on a range of projects, from cataloguing the highly miscellaneous contents of some long neglected plan chests to researching Walter Tull for our World War One project. She was particularly committed to the 'Where I Belong' Black and Asian women's oral history project and her help with the oral history interviews and project's public events was particularly invaluable.

Inspired by one of the paintings from our collections that was to be showcased in the 'Where I Belong' exhibition, Hyacinth wrote her first ever poem, 'the Journey of a Woman' and it was so moving that we decided to exhibit the poem alongside the painting which had inspired it. In a bittersweet moment, Hyacinth's poem was read at her funeral by her father.

Hyacinth's passion and enthusiasm was an inspiration to us all and she is sorely missed.

We would like to take this opportunity to say a massive 'thank you' to all of our volunteers, past and present. The contribution our volunteers make to what we do is invaluable. Losing Hyacinth has made us all reflect on the contribution they make to our workplace, and how much we appreciate the time, energy and love for history which they bring and share with us.

Opening Times

Tues: 10am-5pm
Wed: 9am-5pm
Thu: 9am-8pm
Fri: closed
Sat*: 9am-5pm (*first and third Saturdays of the month only)
Sun, Mon: closed



Hyacinth Maynard, 1974-2014. Photo by Sarah Ainslie

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Library Learning Information