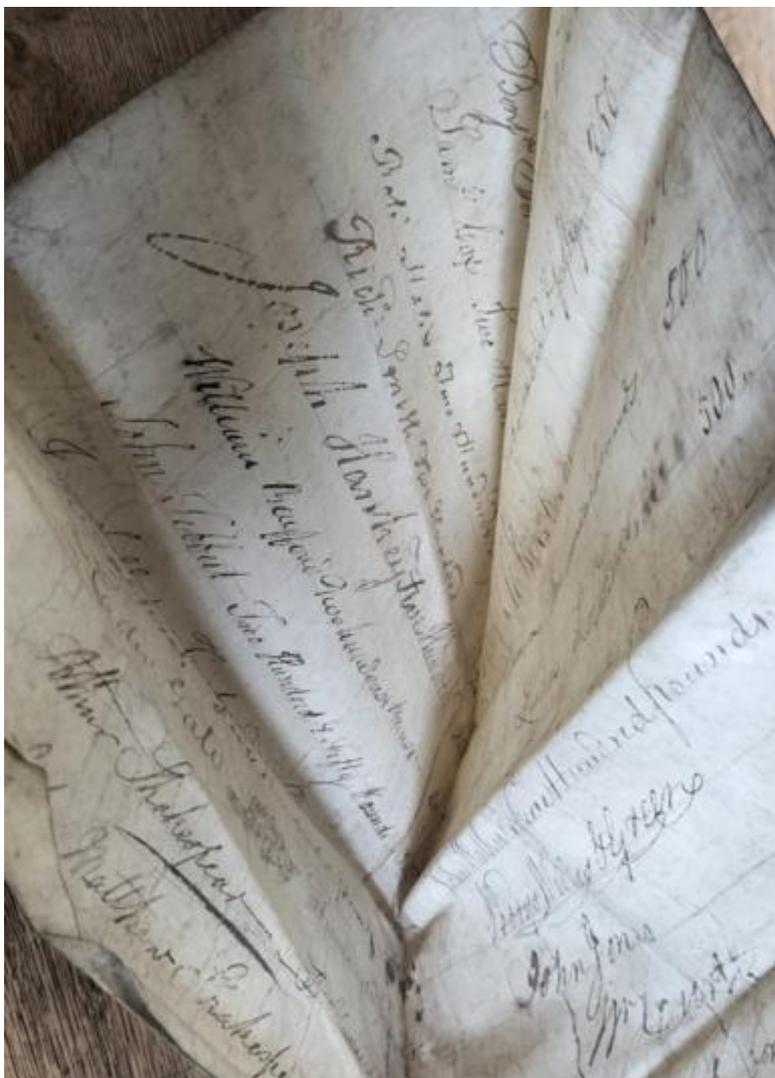


# Tower Hamlets Local History Library & Archives



## Our new exhibition launches tomorrow



## What we have become

Archival breaks, gaps and  
silences

## A visual arts exhibition

28 March - 1 June 2024

### Featuring

Holly Graham  
Rudy Loewe  
Basil Olton  
Diensen Pamben  
Kelly Wu

Launch event | Thursday 28 March 6.00-7.30pm

[Book your free place here](#)

Join us TOMORROW at 6pm for the launch of our new exhibition. The curator and artists will be present to discuss their work and the themes of the exhibition.

[What We Have Become](#) is a group exhibition including painting and drawing, photography, collage, film and sculpture, responding to Stuart Hall's idea of cultural identity being formed from "points of deep significant difference".

The artists' work explores the impacts of silence and erasure in archival records created and kept by the British state about people of colour – for example, the destruction of Home Office immigration records which caused the Windrush Scandal – and how the violence implicit in the destruction of archival records may be reproduced as a rupture in the sense of self, identity and belonging.

Casting the exhibition as a space of healing and reconciliation, the artists evoke new narratives emphasising the contributions, resilience and rich cultural heritage of communities of colour, with the histories of Black and Asian Britons retold on their own terms.

The exhibiting artists are Holly Graham, Rudy Loewe, Diensen Pamben, Kelly Wu and Basil Olton.

A range of public events are being programmed to tie in with the exhibition.



*Section from 'We Been Here' by Rudy Loewe*

## **What We Have Become events programme**

**Saturday 20 April | 11am-1pm | Creative workshop**

Using memory and examples of archival textiles from the Tower Hamlets Local History Library & Archives collection, costume and set designer **Veronika Seifert** will lead a collage workshop with text, texture, sculpture and imagination.

All ages welcome (children to be accompanied by adults). Limited capacity of 15 participants - [book here to reserve your place!](#)

More events to follow in a few weeks.



*An embroidered needlecase, part of the textile collection at Tower Hamlets Local History Library & Archives*

## Communities of Liberation

### Deadline for Co-Producers closing soon!

There is no public recognition of African people who lived in the East End 300 years ago.

Now, thanks to funding from Historic England, Tower Hamlets Local History Library & Archives is seeking **6** local people of African heritage to research in the archives and produce new creative work – visual, text and sound – which imagines and gives life to these neglected stories.

[Find out more here.](#) The closing date for applications is Tuesday 2 April.

## New collection!

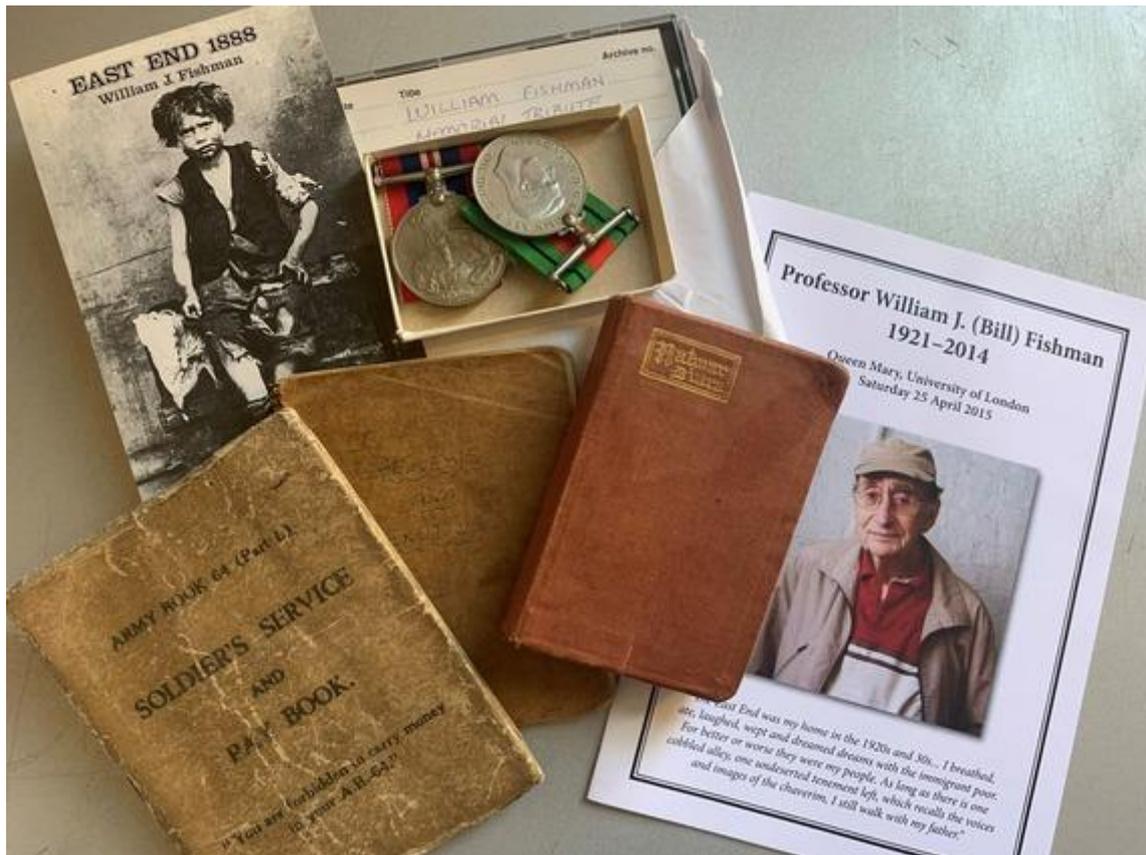
We're delighted to receive the archives of **William (Bill) Fishman**, pioneering historian of the East End and academic at Queen Mary, University of London.

This includes his wartime diaries and service book and research into the history of ordinary people's lives in the 19th and early 20th centuries.

William (Bill) Jack Fishman was born 1 April 1921 into a Jewish family who settled in the East End from what is now Ukraine. He later became Professor in the Department of Politics at Queen Mary in Mile End.

He specialised in the history of the Jewish community and his many books are core to the canon of East End history. Bill was one of the first people, if not the first, to conduct walking tours around the East End. He and his students extensively used resources at Tower Hamlets Local History Library and Archives. In 1988 he ceremonially opened our first archive strongroom, and continued to support the archive up to his death in 2014.

The archive consists of 15 boxes of material. There is currently a summary paper list only so the collection is available to consult by appointment. We are very grateful to his son Mike for depositing with us.



Examples of items in the Bill Fishman archive

## Trustees wanted!



St Matthias Conservation Trust is a registered charity which looks after the Grade II\* listed [St Matthias Old Church](#) in Poplar, first founded in 1652 as the East India Company chapel.

It's the only building in Tower Hamlets serving the local community which has a direct link to the East India Company, and many important local figures, including George Green and Mary East/James Howe, are buried in its churchyard.

Deconsecrated in the 1970s, this former Anglican church has been known as St Matthias Community Centre since 1993, recently celebrating its 30th anniversary of service to the community of Poplar, Blackwall and the Isle of Dogs. The centre is home to [Neighbours In Poplar](#), [SPLASH](#) and [Little St Matthias Pre-School](#). Much important work takes place here. Since the onset of the pandemic over 45,000 meals on wheels have been provided to E14 residents by Neighbours in Poplar using the resources of the building and goodwill of its volunteers. It also runs a food bank and occasional homeless shelter.

St Matthias Conservation Trust does not benefit from any core funding and has to fundraise in order to cover the building's running costs. A small group of Trustees meet regularly with the aim of ensuring the building continues to serve effectively as both a historic landmark to be preserved, and a community space which provides essential services to the local community.

Trustees are volunteers who meet quarterly, receiving reports on the activities of the Community Centre, its financial position and coming up with ideas and opportunities for new projects and funding streams. However, the group is small and is keen to welcome new members.

If you are interested in becoming Trustee - particularly if you have experience in fundraising, finance and buildings/the construction industry - please contact Sister Christine Frost for further information. You can email Sister at [nip65@msn.com](mailto:nip65@msn.com)

## News from our friends

Our readers may be interested in the current exhibition on show at Nunnery Gallery in Bow, on show currently until Sunday 21 April.

**Mark of Cane** by **Kat Anderson** explores the impact of sugar on the African-Caribbean Diaspora, confronting the haunting legacies of the Industrial Revolution and the Transatlantic Slave trade. Find out more [on the Bow Arts website](#).



*Installation view of Mark of Cane, courtesy of Nunnery Gallery.*

## Contact us

- Email us: [localhistory@towerhamlets.gov.uk](mailto:localhistory@towerhamlets.gov.uk)
- Visit our website: <http://www.ideastore.co.uk/local-history>
- Phone (answered during Reading Room opening hours only): 020 7364 1290

### Reading Room opening hours

- Tuesday 10.00am-4.30pm
- Wednesday 10.00am-4.30pm
- Thursday 10.00am-7.00pm

First and third Saturdays of every month:

- Saturday 10.00am-5.00pm

That's the following Saturdays coming up:

- Saturday 6 April
- Saturday 20 April
- Saturday 4 May
- Saturday 18 May

Exhibition opening times are: 10am-5pm Monday-Friday, plus the Saturdays and Thursday evenings noted above. On Monday and Friday lunchtimes, the exhibition will be closed for lunch between 1 and 2pm.

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