

Life During Lockdown

COVID-19 Collecting Volunteer Project

Tower Hamlets Local History Library & Archives

Introduction

Tower Hamlets Local History Library and Archives is currently closed to the public due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. Staff are working hard behind the scenes however and we'd like to invite you to help us document the impact of the virus and the lockdown measures in place on local residents and organisations based in the borough.

This volunteer project for Tower Hamlets residents is an opportunity to help us capture and record people's experiences of life during this extraordinary period so that they may be preserved within our archives and serve as a learning resource for future generations.

In addition, we will also be inviting members of the public to participate in a digital collecting project and online survey in the near future. This will be open to anyone who has been visiting the borough for work or due to their essential caring responsibilities, as well as LBTH residents and will be announced in a forthcoming newsletter.

How can I help?

1. Taking photographs

If you're a Tower Hamlets resident, you can help us build up a visual record of life in the borough during lockdown by taking photographs of locations close to where you live on your daily walk or trip to the shops. **Your main concern should always be your own health and safety so please only consider taking up this project if you are sure this can be done without putting yourself or others at risk.** If you are able to do this while adhering to social distancing rules, we are interested in photographs featuring any of the following subjects:

- Parks and shops
- Public spaces and landmarks
- PPE in use
- Social distancing measures
- COVID-19 signage
- Rainbow drawings and murals
- 'Clapping for carers'
- Religious observance, e.g. Ramadan activities such as iftar
- Anything else you notice which illustrates the impact of COVID-19 in your area and local people's responses to it

When you've finished taking photos, **do not send us anything via email or post just yet**. Instead, please save a copy of each photograph as a good quality JPEG (approx 2-5mb in size) or TIFF file in a specially created folder on your computer, and give each a title which clearly identifies the location in the picture and the date it was taken (e.g. '101 Mile End Road 14 May 2020'). It will also be useful for us to have other contextual information about the photos, such as the names of people in them, and we will provide you with a blank form for recording these details.

You should then let us know via email that you are ready to deposit the images, and we will arrange a method of transfer. **We may only take one deposit per volunteer**, so please only get in touch if you're certain you won't want to send us any additional photos at a later date.

If your photographs include identifiable people, please ensure that you have their permission and that they're happy for the images to be added to our collection. Please note that when we take in your photographs, we will usually require you to transfer your ownership and copyright in the images to us – if we don't have this, in say 50 years' time it may become impossible for your now historic photographs to be used in (for example) an exhibition looking back at the 2020 pandemic, as despite having kept them safe all this time, THLHLA would be unable to grant permission.

We will also ask you to permit Tower Hamlets Local History Library & Archives and our parent organisation, the London Borough of Tower Hamlets, to use your images in our publicity, outreach and educational work including, for example, social media posts.

2. Collecting other COVID-19 material

Tower Hamlets Local History Library and Archives is also interested in collecting physical items and larger digital collections that document the experiences of local residents during lockdown, including but not limited to:

- Diaries and journals
- Scrapbooks
- Materials created by local businesses, mutual aid groups, charities, places of worship, schools etc.
- Videos, eg Clap for carers
- Oral or video personal testimonies
- Rainbow drawings
- Posters and signage
- Ephemera such as leaflets, cuttings, recipes etc.

Please keep these items safe and get in touch with us at the email below to discuss details of what you may have, or if you have any queries (especially if you intend to make new digital recordings). You can also use our [General](#)

[Acquisitions Guidance](#) to help you as we also look after records of organisations, families and individuals.

Once we re-open we can arrange for and the transfer to take place and confirm the formal terms of deposit.

Contact us

If you're interested in volunteering with this project and would like to learn more, please get in touch via the email address below:

Email: localhistory@towerhamlets.gov.uk