



# Tower Hamlets Local History Library & Archives



January 2017

## Happy New Year!



Gilbert & George at the *Brick Lane Born* exhibition launch, October 2016

We have a particularly exciting January coming up with the launch of our next exhibition **Stages of Half Moon**. Read on for further details, plus news of our events programme about the **East End's theatre history** and our **Holocaust Memorial Day** film screening.

On Saturday 7 January there's another **book sale** of duplicate stock withdrawn from our collection - an entirely new selection, coinciding with the final day of **Brick Lane Born**, the amazing photographs of Spitalfields in the 1980s taken by Raju Vaidyanathan. So a good day to drop by...

We look forward to seeing you soon!

## Stages of Half Moon

Celebrating the rich heritage of Half Moon Theatre Exhibition  
and events: 12 January - 3 April 2017



From its inception in 1972, [Half Moon Theatre](#) has played a key role in the development of the theatre sector and in its early years was responsible for radical, politically charged productions including Steven Berkoff's *Sink the Belgrano* and Frances de la Tour as a female Hamlet. Though the parent company closed in 1990, the young people's section continues to thrive in Limehouse as an independent charity and the UK's leading professional, small-scale young people's venue and touring company.

An award from the Heritage Lottery Fund 'Young Roots' programme in 2015 enabled the company to work with young people to explore the theatre's history from 1972 to 2016. The resulting [Stages of Half Moon](#) exhibition will now be hosted by Tower Hamlets Local History Library and Archives and features previously unseen original photographs, programmes and other documents celebrating the theatre's rich past across the three Tower Hamlets buildings it has occupied - 27 Alie Street in Whitechapel, 213 Mile End Road (now the Half Moon pub) and its current base at 43 White Horse Road. The exhibition was researched extensively in the collections here at Tower Hamlets Local History Library & Archives, where we hold a large number of original programmes.

You can also check out the exhibition online via its dedicated website - [www.stagesofhalfmoon.org.uk](http://www.stagesofhalfmoon.org.uk) - which includes interviews with over 100 people who have been involved with the company in various capacities over the years: artistic, backstage and administrative; as an audience member or youth participant.

Stages of Half Moon is a continuing project and anyone who has a connection to the company is welcome to get in touch. Anyone keen to contribute personal stories, photographs, reviews, design sketches and programmes should email [history@halfmoon.org.uk](mailto:history@halfmoon.org.uk).

### **Exhibition Launch**

**Thursday 12 January, 6.00pm-7.30pm**

All are welcome to attend the launch which will feature an introduction to the exhibition and the company from the present theatre's Director, Chris Elwell. Michael Irving, co-founder of the Half Moon Theatre, will speak about the theatre's early days, how and why it was formed, and will present an informal performance of the opening scene of the play *In the Jungle of the Cities* with which the theatre began its life in 1972.

To tie in with this exhibition, Tower Hamlets Local History Library & Archives is programming a series of free talks during the first three months of 2017, highlighting the rich and varied history of theatre in the East End. Check out the events confirmed so far below and keep an eye on our next newsletter for further details.

### **Theatre Heritage Day**

**Saturday 4 February, 2.00-4.30pm**

**Tower Hamlets Local History Library and Archives**

Join us for a packed afternoon of talks on different aspects of theatre history in the East End. Our distinguished speakers are:

- Dr Janice Norwood on nineteenth century theatre in the East End

- Carole Zeidman on the history of Wilton's Music Hall
- Erin Lee on the [Black Plays Archive](#), including *Elmina's Kitchen* by Kwame Kwei-Armah, set in Clapton
- Isabelle Seddon on the Jewish East End's contribution to twentieth century political theatre
- Ashraf Neswar on the history of Tower Hamlets Council's annual Season of Bangla Drama

More events for Women's History Month in March are in the pipeline - look out for our next newsletter.



Joi Bangla Krew dancers at the Half Moon Theatre, Mile End Road, 1986

## Last chance to see! Brick Lane Born exhibition

Our current exhibition of photographs of Brick Lane and the surrounding area, taken during the 1980s by local resident Raju Vaidyanathan, has received glowing reports and feedback from the public (though zero reviews or press coverage, despite our best efforts.)

Described as "fascinating", "absorbing", "fantastic" and "brilliant" many times over in our visitors' book, Raju's photographs show a Spitalfields populated by Bangladeshi children, elderly Jews, homeless men, pub drinkers, snooker players, traveller children, Cockney mums, shopkeepers, the incoming 'trendies', housing protestors and local politicians, all of whom call a derelict and filthy Brick Lane their home. It's now in its final week, and your last chance to see it is on **Saturday 7 January**.

To see further photographs from the exhibition, check out our [Facebook page](#) or search the hashtag [#BrickLaneBorn](#) on Twitter.

**Exhibition: Bombs, Bullets and Bandages  
Until 7 January 2017**

Tower Hamlets Local History Library and Archives

Your last chance to see the *Bombs, Bullets and Bandages* exhibition at the archives will also be on Saturday 7 January 2017. This free, community-curated exhibition, organised by the Fusilier Museum, explores the experiences of wounded soldiers during WW1.

## Holocaust Memorial Day 2017

Tower Hamlets Council is marking the annual commemoration with a range of events on Sunday 29 January organised by Jewish Care. As part of this programme, we have curated an evening of short films and are also hosting an exhibition - details below. All events are free and no booking is required.

### Film screening

**Thursday 26 January, 6.30pm-7.30pm**

**Tower Hamlets Local History Library & Archives**

Our double-bill of black & white short films both feature archival footage, though only the first, depicting the horrors of fascism up close, is a documentary. The second film was shot in 1950s London in a lightly fictionalised tale of a European refugee starting to set up a new life here.

\* **Night & Fog** (30 minutes, dir. Alain Resnais, France, 1956)

This early documentary by the famed director of *Hiroshima mon amour* blends archive footage of the concentration camps alongside oral testimony. Though only half an hour long, it is often voted among the best documentaries of all time. A graphic and upsetting film, this screening is not suitable for children.

\* **Refuge England** (27 minutes, dir Robert Vas, UK, 1959)

Director Robert Vas was brought up in a Jewish ghetto, and arriving in London during the experimental *cinema verite* movement, his early films avoided the imposition of a formal narrative so as to present unfettered the images and sounds captured by his camera. This, his first film, depicts a refugee's arrival in London after Hungary's 1956 revolution.

**Exhibition: Hidden Histories**  
**Monday 16 - Tuesday 31 January 2017**  
**Tower Hamlets Local History Library and Archives**

Also as part of Holocaust Memorial Day 2017, we will be hosting a small display curated by the Holocaust Memorial Day Trust in 2011, in which survivors of the Holocaust and subsequent genocides in Rwanda, Bosnia and Cambodia reveal an object from their lives before genocide and its significance to them. Further information about Holocaust Memorial Day can be found here: [www.hmd.org.uk](http://www.hmd.org.uk).

## History Hoppers

**Tuesday 21 January, 11.30am-1.30pm**  
**Tower Hamlets Local History Library and Archives**

If you're curious about archive collections and enjoy looking through old pictures and newspapers, drop in to explore original historical library and archive sources which help to tell the story of Tower Hamlets. Tea / coffee and biscuits will be provided! Free, no booking required.

From this month onwards, History Hoppers will be moving to the new time of 11.30am-1.30pm on the last Tuesday of every month. We hope this will encourage staff and students based nearby to pop in. Next History Hoppers dates will be:

Tuesday 28 February, 11.30am - 1.30pm  
Tuesday 28 March, 11.30am - 1.30pm

## Book Sale

We're hosting another book sale this weekend - **Saturday 7 January, 10am-4pm**. It will feature a totally new selection to last time - so pop by to check out more duplicate stock withdrawn from our collections as well as some of the more recent deadstock discoveries from our attic. This sale will be particularly strong on fiction by East End authors. Also your last chance to pick up one of the last remaining 2017 Island History calendars!

Our last book sale raised £770 for the collections fund - thank you!

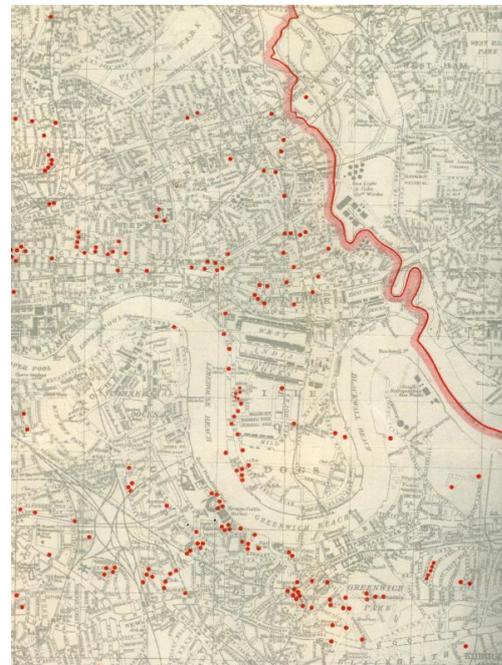
## Tower Hamlets Schools WW1 workshop offer

We recently welcomed two Year 6 classes from Stebon Primary School, Poplar, to the archives. The pupils were learning about World War One and during their visit, they explored a variety of maps, photographs and archive material which helped them to learn more about the effect that war had on the borough.

All Tower Hamlets schools are invited to take advantage of this new WW1 workshop. If you are a parent, do suggest it - all 103 schools in Tower Hamlets should have received a letter from us last month with full details. These sessions present an unmissable opportunity for pupils to view and even touch original archives dating back over one hundred years, and learn more about topics including military conscription, air raids and the role of women during World War One.

Workshops are held here at Tower Hamlets Local History Library & Archives, a Grade II listed building which features a dedicated Education Room (capacity 50) and other suitable facilities to host school trips. Sessions can be adapted to suit different age ranges and access needs, and are free of charge for the time being.

For further information, please feel free to get in touch:  
perdita.jones@towerhamlets.gov.uk or call 020 7634 1290.



WW1 bomb damage map

## Opening hours

**Monday:** 9am-5pm (exhibition only)

**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

## Contact us

Send us your enquiry via email, phone or letter at

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Email: [localhistory@towerhamlets.gov.uk](mailto:localhistory@towerhamlets.gov.uk)

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[www.ideastore.co.uk](http://www.ideastore.co.uk)

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Library Learning Information