



# Tower Hamlets Local History Library & Archives



March 2017

## Women's History Month

As part of [Women's History Month in East London](#) we're delighted to be hosting two free events this March.

**The First Woman Mayor of Bethnal Green**  
**Saturday 18 March, 2:30 - 3:45pm**  
**Tower Hamlets Local History Library and Archives**

[Facebook event page](#)

Delve into the archives at this fascinating talk about the life and career of L. Dorothea Benoly, the first woman Mayor of Bethnal Green, who served from 1933-1934. Tower Hamlets Local History Library & Archives holds personal diaries of her time in office, as well as her scrapbook of photos, invitations, and newspaper clippings, which you will have a chance to browse first-hand. Free, no booking required.

**Women in East End Yiddish Theatre**  
**Thursday 23 March, 6.30-7.30pm**  
**Tower Hamlets Local History Library & Archives**

[Facebook event page](#)

Join David Mazower for this talk exploring the role immigrant women played in the development of Yiddish theatre in the East End. Women were a key part of the Yiddish theatre's appeal, whether as chorus girls, music hall singers, dramatic actresses, or running their own theatre companies. Talented, independent and unconventional, their personal lives and relationships were followed as closely as their stage careers. David is a BBC journalist, author of *Yiddish Theatre in London* and curated a major exhibition on the subject for The Jewish Museum. Free, no booking required.



L. Dorothea Benoly

## Make History Now!

In partnership with East London charity [ELOP](#), we are inviting any members of the public to send us your photographs of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender + 'queer' (LGBT+) people's experiences of the borough of Tower Hamlets. Can you help us capture a rich visual record of LGBT+ life in the East End?

The photographs you submit will be added to the collections of Tower Hamlets Local History Library & Archives, meaning your image will be preserved permanently as a contemporary historical document. The best photographs will be displayed in a major exhibition at Tower Hamlets Local History Library & Archives between July and September 2017, forming part of London's annual Pride celebrations.



For further details and how to enter, please visit:  
<https://www.ideastore.co.uk/local-history-lgbt-photography-competition-2017->

## Announcing our next exhibition...

# Mapping the Hamlets

15 April - 23 June 2017



Section of map showing locations of places of worship, schools and licensed premises in Stepney, 1899-1900.  
Issued with the final part of Charles Booth's survey *Life and Labour of the People of London*.

For the first time ever, we are exhibiting a large selection of our rare or unique historic maps of the Tower Hamlets area. Beginning in 1610 with Norden's map of the County of Middlesex (of which present-day Tower Hamlets formed a part), the display illustrates how maps and plans have been used to record almost everything - streets and landmarks still recognisable today, as well as aspects of East End life that have now disappeared from the contemporary landscape, whether ancient administrative boundaries, tram routes or air-raid shelters.

Also included are maps devised for sociological purposes, including the Booth 'poverty' maps and others which attempted to record the presence of diasporic communities. Some maps are printed but many are beautifully hand-drawn and coloured.

The exhibition will be complemented by Andrew Byrne's remarkable 3D model of London in 1840 and is curated by Borough Archivist Malcolm Barr-Hamilton and volunteer Anusha Mistry. As always, a free programme of public events will be organised to tie in with the exhibition. Please await further details, and save the following dates (more to follow):

Launch event with talks: Thursday 27 April (evening)

Walking tour: Saturday 17 June (daytime)

## Stages of Half Moon

Celebrating the rich heritage of Half Moon Theatre Our current exhibition, on show until 1 April



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).

## Now on tour! *Brick Lane Born* exhibition

We're delighted to announce that our exhibition of photos by Raju Vaidyanathan is touring Idea Stores - the innovative library and lifelong learning service in Tower Hamlets. The exhibition is now on show with its contents split between the following locations until 27 March:

[Idea Store Watney Market](#), Floors 1 and 2  
- Photos of young people, football, and leisure

[Idea Store Whitechapel](#), Floor 4 Gallery  
- Photos of markets, shops and streetscapes

After this, the exhibition will tour in reduced form to:

[Idea Store Bow](#), 4 - 26 April  
[Idea Store Canary Wharf](#), 2 - 30 May

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

Brick Lane Born was recently featured in an article by the Guardian [here](#) which also contains an online gallery of Raju's photos which can be seen [here](#).

## Writeldea Festival planning

We're starting to plan our strand at this year's Writeldea Festival of reading which takes place at Idea Store Whitechapel every November. Who would you like to see give a talk about local history? We are interested in showcasing themes that do not already dominate the grand narratives of East End history. Please email suggestions to [localhistory@towerhamlets.gov.uk](mailto:localhistory@towerhamlets.gov.uk)

## Volunteer opportunity: Thames Festival Trust



Thames and General Lighterage Co. repair yard at Brentford (photograph by Brian Liddle), 1970s

The Thames Festival Trust and the Museum of London are recruiting volunteers for an exciting history of London's boatyards, running from April to September 2017. The project will involve recording oral histories, and the production of a short documentary film. Volunteers will also be involved in researching the history of boatbuilding on the tidal Thames, which will form the backbone of a publication and series of exhibitions in September 2017.

If you're interested in getting involved, email [bmoyes@thamesfestival.org](mailto:bmoyes@thamesfestival.org), or call 0207 928 8998 for more

information. Deadline for applications is March 31st.

Find out more about the project [here](#).

## Saturday opening

We are open 9am-5pm on the first and third Saturdays of every month. That's the following Saturdays coming up:

- 18 March - Women's History Month talk
- 1 April - last day of Half Moon Theatre exhibition
- 15 April - Easter Saturday

## Other dates for your diary...

### Saturday 20 May

- Book sale
- Launch of [Chris Searle's](#) autobiography

### Saturday 17 June

- Family History Festival

## 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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