

# Tower Hamlets Local History Library & Archives



## Happy New Year!

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Here's a quick update with details of three upcoming events. A full length newsletter will follow later in the month.

In case you missed it - the **Cockney Rebels** book is out now! Available directly from the archives on Bancroft Road, and all libraries and Idea Stores in Tower Hamlets. Unfortunately online sales are not yet possible, so please visit us to snag your copy, email us for mail order, or request it through your local bookshop.

£12 | ISBN: 978-1-0369-0612-2

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## Cockney Rebels on Brick Lane

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# Reading East London

A new monthly book club

**Alan Dein**

**Tuesday 14 January | 7.00pm | £5**

Venue: Brick Lane Bookshop, 166 Brick Lane, E1 6RU

Roll up, roll up! Next week we are staging a (polite) takeover of historian and broadcaster **Alan Dein's** monthly 'Reading East London' book club at [Brick Lane Bookshop](#) to celebrate the publication of our [Cockney Rebels](#) book!

Alan is a longstanding friend of the archives, known by many for his [Radio 4 shows 'Lives in a Landscape'](#) and ['Don't Log Off'](#). An avid collector of Jewish themed jazz records, back in the summer he gave a fantastic talk at the *Cockney Rebels* exhibition launch event which has been included in the book in essay form.

Joining Alan in conversation will be **Robert Jones**, lead curator of *Cockney Rebels* and editor of the book, and **Andrew Lewis**, who wrote the fascinating chapter on the history of Tower Hamlets libraries' music lending service. Both are esteemed members of staff here at Tower Hamlets Local History Library & Archives.

*Cockney Rebels* explores the story of popular music in the borough beginning with ancient folk ballads like 'The Blind Beggar of Bethnal Green' through to the emergence of the Asian Underground sound and grime. The book collects many previously unseen and remarkable photographs, illustrations and artefacts from the exhibition that beautifully capture the heyday of the Victorian and Edwardian music halls, the dance bands and Jewish jazz in the inter-war years, as well as showcasing so many pioneering artists in genres ranging from pop, rock 'n' roll, R&B and punk.

Tickets cost £5 each. [Get them here!](#)

**NB - This event is taking place at the bookshop, not at the archives!**

## Secrets from the Cockney Yiddish Music Hall

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**Thursday 13 February | 6.00-7.30pm | Free, [booking required](#)**

Venue: Tower Hamlets Local History Library & Archives

Songs performed on the London Yiddish stage at the turn of the twentieth century tell of the experiences of immigration from a grassroots perspective. Funny and satirical, edgy, and surprising, the lyrics speak of a community in transition, battling with religious, emotional and ideological hurdles as women and men integrated into British life. **Vivi Lachs** will spill the secrets of the Yiddish halls in an entertaining talk with song. Expect a laugh, a tear, and an all-join-in. No Yiddish knowledge necessary.

Vivi Lachs is a historian of the Jewish East End, a research fellow at Queen Mary, University of London, and Yiddish performer. Her books include *Whitechapel Noise* and *London Yiddishtown*. She founded the Great Yiddish Parade, is the vice chair of the Yiddish Café Trust and leads tours of the Yiddish East End. She sings, records and composes with the bands Klezmer Klub and Katsha'nes.

We are delighted to welcome Vivi back to Bancroft Road for this special event as part of the *Cockney Rebels* programme. [Book your ticket here!](#)



## The Cockney Rebels exhibition continues

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From 'The Blind Beggar of Bethnal Green' to 'Bonkers', the people of London's East End have always appreciated a good tune. Our unique history, shaped by its connection to the river as a source of inspiration, work and migration has produced an extraordinary musical legacy, spanning everything from folk songs and sea shanties to music hall, jazz, punk, the Asian underground and grime. Featuring over a hundred rare items selected by staff from the collections of Tower Hamlets Local History Library & Archives, **Cockney Rebels: Popular Music in Tower Hamlets, 1624-2003** is a major new exhibition exploring how our borough and its people have inspired and shaped popular music, both locally and globally, over four centuries.

Free entry, on display until Friday 21 February. Please check our opening times - below - before travelling.

The feedback from attendees has been fantastic, with over 1600 visits so far. We are putting the final touches to the closing event in February - watch this space!

[Visit the exhibition](#)

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## Don't miss Wh'appen

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This small exhibition at Tower Hamlets Local History Library & Archives explores the intersection between space, place, fashion, and music in Tower Hamlets' Black music scene. Through youth clubs, bands, blues/shebeens (house parties), festivals, and people, we aim to uncover the diverse ways the community recollect Black music in the borough from 1970-1999.

With contributions and research from local residents **Keira Blasse** and **Nick Friday**, this exhibition narrates an intimate story of memory and joy through Black music culture and heritage in Tower Hamlets.

- Do you remember what you wore to house parties in the 80s?
- What record shops did you go to for the latest tunes?
- Was there a favourite sound clash you remember? Come and share your stories with us.

The exhibition has been curated especially for the first floor landing space at Tower Hamlets History Library & Archives, outside the Reading Room. Free entry.

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## East End History Club: Parent/Carer and Under 5's Edition

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Friday 10 January | 10.00-11.30am

Venue: Tower Hamlets Local History Library & Archives

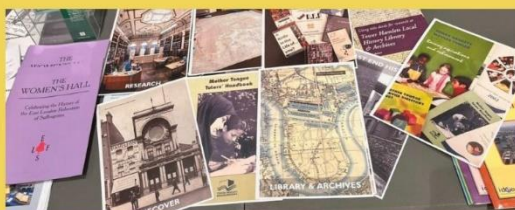
Come along to our version of East End History Club designed especially for parents and carers to attend with their under 5s. It's a chance to meet other parents, enjoy a cuppa and browse our collection of heritage materials, including maps, photographs, newspapers, which illustrate the amazing history of London's famous East End. Toys for children aged 0-5 will be provided, along with a mini kiddie brunch, tea, coffee and biscuits.

Free entry, limited places. No booking required.

## East End History Club: Parent/Carer & Under 5's



Fri. 10 Jan.  
Fri. 7 Feb.  
10am-11:30am



# News from our friends

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## Job vacancies

Our new neighbours over in Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park, **V&A East**, are advertising some roles.

- [Floor Assistants, full- and part-time. £13.15 per hour](#)
- [Creative Studio Practitioner, part-time, £28.5k-£30.5k](#)

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## Get in touch with us!

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- 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 18 January
- Saturday 1 February
- Saturday 15 February
- Saturday 15 March

**Please note: the building will be CLOSED for annual stocktake between Monday 24 February and Friday 7 March inclusive.**

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.



**TOWER HAMLETS**



Tower Hamlets Local History Library & Archives, 277 Bancroft Road,  
London E1 4DQ

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