



Tower Hamlets Local History Library & Archives

August 2015

Opening Times

Tues: 10am-5pm
Wed: 9am-5pm
Thu: 9am-8pm
Fri: closed
Sat: (1st & 3rd of the month): 9am-5pm
Sun, Mon: closed

Contact Us

Send us your enquiry via email, phone or letter at

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

Phone: 020 7364 1290

Email:
localhistory@towerhamlets.gov.uk

Visit our website at
www.ideastore.co.uk

Whiffin's East End Exhibition and events programme

20 August - 19 November 2015



Manchester Road, c1918

Exhibition Launch Thursday 10 September, 6-7.30pm Tower Hamlets Local History Library & Archives

All are welcome to attend the launch of our next exhibition which showcases a fantastic array of early-mid twentieth century photography, showing the East End as you have never seen it before.

William Whiffin (1878-1957) lived and worked in Poplar through two world wars. Pre-eminent in what today might be known as street photography, he captured daily life in the East End in the early- to mid-twentieth century, and his powerful, evocative, and sometimes playful images are among the finest photographic documentation of London's East End ever produced.

One of the earliest photographs on display in this exhibition depicts an airship looming over Cotton Street during the First World War; one of the latest depicts the Lansbury

Estate, newly opened for the Festival of Britain in 1953. Elsewhere in Whiffin's work you will come across the Chinese community of Limehouse, dock workers on strike, people thronging in local markets and at leisure in the art deco Poplar Baths, as well as shops, pubs and bomb sites, each image characterised by the photographer's expert eye for balance of composition.

We are delighted to be joined for the launch by Whiffin's grand-daughter, Hellen Martin, who has loaned memorabilia for display alongside the 40 photographs selected, and will give a brief talk sharing family memories and reflections.

A fantastic range of photography-related events accompanies the exhibition, which runs for four months from 20 August to 19 November - details of these are below. Pick up a leaflet in your local Idea Store or [click here for the listing on our website](#).

Introduction to Street Photography
Saturday 19 September, 1.00-4.30pm
Tower Hamlets Local History Library & Archives and local area

Join [Michael Wayne Plant](#) for an introduction to street photography inspired by William Whiffin's work nearly one hundred years ago. Michael is a Sony Global Imaging Ambassador, a professional photographer and the Lead Photography Lecturer for Idea Store Learning. During the afternoon Michael will explain the basic principles of street photography - the art of capturing everyday life on the streets. He will give an introductory workshop followed by a photography walk in the local Stepney area, to practise some of the ideas explored in the workshop. Returning to the library for a group discussion afterwards to explore what you have learnt and to discuss the art of street photography.

The afternoon will be suitable for beginners, and will also give someone with more experience a chance to learn something as well. Bring your own camera. The walk will last approximately 90 minutes with stops. Please advise of any access needs when booking. Places are free but you must book your place in advance via localhistory@towerhamlets.gov.uk or 020 7364 1290.

Find out more about Idea Store Learning's photography courses [here](#).

Thursday 24 September, 6.00 - 7.30pm
Talk: The Life of William Whiffin
Tower Hamlets Local History Library & Archives
Join historian David Webb for this fascinating talk on the life of William Whiffin, exploring early influences on his photography, in addition to his work for a number of commercial organisations, publications and Poplar Borough Council.

**East London Street Photography Photo Forum
Panel discussion**

Thursday 1 October, 6.30-8.30pm

Four Corners

[Four Corners](#) presents a Photo Forum discussion at their gallery space on Roman Road, Bethnal Green. Sarah Ainslie, Susan Andrews, David Hoffman and Ed Thompson discuss their differing approaches to street photography in East London, past and present. Free entry, refreshments provided.

Walk: Whiffin's Poplar

Saturday 3 October, 1.00-3.00pm

Meet outside All Saints DLR Station

Join Heritage Officer Perdita Jones on a guided walk around Poplar, the area depicted in many of William Whiffin's photographs. Focussing on East India Dock Road and the surrounding area, we will explore how Whiffin captured both extraordinary and everyday scenes through his work. Free, but booking required. Email: localhistory@towerhamlets.gov.uk / Telephone: 0207 364 1290. You may also be interested in Idea Store Learning's upcoming course [Walkie Talkie: Introduction to Guiding in Tower Hamlets](#).

Saturday 17 October, 2.00-3.30pm

Talk: Early Photography Techniques

Tower Hamlets Local History Library & Archives

[Four Corners](#) presents a talk on the early photography techniques used by Whiffin and his contemporaries and their reuse by contemporary photographers. Antony Cairns will give an overview of Whiffin's glass plate techniques, and Almudena Romero discusses tintype, albumen and other early photographic processes, with reference to their own contemporary approaches.

Thursday 29 October, 6.-7.30pm

Talk: Photographers of the East End

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Join [Mike Seaborne](#), former Curator of Photography at the Museum of London, for a fascinating talk on the work of Whiffin and his contemporaries, photographers who worked in the East End between 1900 and 1939. Included will be John Galt, Norah Smyth and Cyril Arapoff.

Thursday 5 November, 6-7.30pm

Talk: Chris Dorley-Brown: Revisiting Whiffin's East End

Tower Hamlets Local History Library & Archives

[Chris Dorley-Brown](#) works in collaboration with artists, filmmakers, curators, groups and individuals in a variety of cultural contexts, primarily outside the art gallery. He has been building up a photographic archive of life in his home borough of Hackney for over ten years.

Tower Hamlets Local History Library & Archives has invited Chris to revisit Whiffin's work, exploring sites and subjects depicted in our current exhibition, and to use his own

contemporary photographic approach to capture and create a new archive of Whiffin's East End. In this talk, Chris will discuss and present the results of this project, which will be exhibited at Idea Store Whitechapel in mid-November. Watch this space for further details.

Shhhhhh.....

Our catalogue is now online!

Mailing list subscribers are invited to take the first peek at Tower Hamlets Local History Library & Archives online catalogue, which contains thousands upon thousands of descriptions of the library, archive and image collections we hold here!

Online Catalogue



We will be holding a launch party with live demonstrations on how to use it during the autumn. This is a 'soft launch' to help us identify and iron out any issues with the catalogue, hosted for us by Axiell using their CALMVIEW software, before we start promoting the resource in earnest.

So please do start trying it out, refer to the FAQ and help pages as needed, and contact us with any issues, questions or feedback!

[Visit our website and click on 'Online Catalogue' to get searching!](#)

Oxford House in Bethnal Green wants to hear from you!

In 1884 [Oxford House](#) was the first Settlement to open as a new model of philanthropy where university graduates sought to uplift the lives of the urban poor through social action. 130 years later, the House is still at the heart of an East End neighbourhood shaped by a strong community

identity, diversity, deprivation and change.

Oxford House is now embarking on a major restoration project, *From Victorian 'Gap Year' to Community Hub*, with planned funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund to reveal and interpret its architectural and social history fused with a sense of community and place.

As someone interested in the history of the area, please take a few minutes to complete the survey here:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/ZB32XPJ>

so the project can reflect what you would like to know, see and do. You can also visit the mini exhibition at Oxford House from 7 to 19 September to share your thoughts.



Tube strike update

If the tube strike planned for 26 - 28 August goes ahead, we expect to be open as normal on Wednesday 26 August but will close at 5pm on Thursday 27 August.