



# Tower Hamlets Local History Library & Archives



November/December 2015

## Upcoming events

### Launch of our online catalogue!

Thursday 17 December, 6.00-7.00pm  
Tower Hamlets Local History Library and Archives

Join us to celebrate the launch of our new online catalogue!

[www.THcatalogue.org.uk](http://www.THcatalogue.org.uk)

Our archive and local studies library catalogue - the result of many years of toil spent cataloguing our collections, including hours upon hours from numerous volunteers - is now available for remote searching online, wherever you are in the world. So we thought we'd have a festive get-together to celebrate, and demonstrate to users how to get the most out of it.

At 6pm Borough Archivist Malcolm Barr-Hamilton and Heritage Officer (Library) Melanie Strong will demonstrate **how to search the catalogue** for items including books, periodicals, pamphlets, images and archive material. Expect some pro tips! This will be followed by the chance to view a selection of our **rare books**, which will be on show to coincide with the release of a new user guide to exploring this rarely accessed collection.

Visitors will also be able to browse our book stall for last minute Christmas gifts! Including a soon-to-be-released postcard set of twelve William Whiffin photographs, highlights from our current exhibition. And there may or may not be mulled wine. No booking necessary - just drop in. Hope to see you there!

## Online Catalogue



## The Stepney School Strike and Basement Writers

Thursday 12 November 2015, 6.00-7.30pm  
Tower Hamlets Local History Library and Archives

In 1971, the pupils of a Tower Hamlets school walked out to show support for Chris Searle, a student teacher who had been sacked by the governors for publishing a collection of their poetry. They refused to go to classes, marched to Trafalgar Square and made national headlines. Tonight Chris returns to the East End.

Join BBC Radio Four journalist Alan Dein as he chats to Chris, followed by readings by former members of the Basement Writers, the pioneering community arts group later formed by some of his pupils. Free, fully booked already but if you don't mind standing, come and we will squeeze you in!



National press coverage for the Stepney school strike of 1971

## Writeidea Festival

Friday 13 - Sunday 15 November 2015  
Idea Store Whitechapel

The Writeidea Festival is part of Idea Store, Tower Hamlets Council's innovative library, learning and information service. The festival has been running since 2009 and is part of the Idea Store programme of free book-based activities for adults and children which are aimed at getting more people to read.

This year, Tower Hamlets Local History Library and Archives has curated a day of talks relating to East End heritage on Saturday 14 November. Come along and listen to acclaimed biographer Jean Moorcroft Wilson discuss Isaac Rosenberg in a reading chaired by one of the war poet's biggest fans, former Stepney teacher Chris Searle; Sarah Glynn will be in conversation with Ansar Ahmed Ullah of Swadhinata Trust on the subject of British Bengalis; Derek Morris will be challenging the stereotypes of East End history combining the unique research published in his various books on 17th and 18th century Whitechapel, Mile End, Wapping, Shadwell and Ratcliffe; and we're delighted too that David Rosenberg is back with more of his popular tales of London radicals.



All events are FREE. There will be a local history book stall (Friday night and Saturday only) and a number of our pop-up exhibitions on display in the Dance Studio where most of our talks will be held. Further details and the full festival programme can be found on the Writeidea [website](#).

## Explore Your Archive: Photographic collections

**Saturday 21 November 2015, 2.00-4.30pm**  
**Tower Hamlets Local History Library & Archives**

Join Borough Archivist, Malcolm Barr-Hamilton, for an introductory talk on our photographic collections at 2pm, followed by a drop-in session, where you'll have the chance to explore the range of photographs stored in our archives. These will include further examples from early 20th century photographer William Whiffin, street scenes showing African seamen lodging on Cable Street in the 1950s, faded Jewish shop fronts photographed by Alan Dein in the late 1980s and contemporary images of the borough taken during the Olympic year.

This event is timed to coincide with the last day of our Whiffin's East End exhibition.

Explore Your Archive is a national campaign which takes place every November to publicise access to archives. Check out other events taking place near [you](#)!



*The Ideal Hairdressers, 739 Commercial Road, 1988, by Alan Dein*

## **Exhibition: Whiffin's East End**

**Last day: Saturday 21 November 2015**  
**Tower Hamlets Local History Library and Archives**

Our extremely popular current exhibition featuring selected photographs by William Whiffin is due to close in a few weeks, so if you've yet to see it, this is your last chance!

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.

We currently have in production a postcard set of 12 favourite images from this exhibition which will be on sale shortly. £1 from each pack sold will go towards conserving the original Whiffin collections recently deposited here by his grand-daughter Hellen Martin. Please contact us or drop in to purchase a set (£5 + p&p). We can take card payments in person or over the phone.



*East India Dock Road, 1937 by William Whiffin*

## **EFourteen: Revisiting Whiffin's East End**

### **Exhibition:**

**Monday 9 - Sunday 29 November 2015**  
**Idea Store Whitechapel, 3rd Floor**

### **Talks:**

**Thursday 5 November, 6-7:30pm**  
**Tower Hamlets Local History Library & Archives**

**Saturday 14 November, 3-3.30pm**  
**Idea Store Whitechapel (4th floor)**

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.

As part of the *Whiffin's East End* exhibition, Tower Hamlets Local History Library & Archives invited Chris to revisit Whiffin's work, exploring sites and subjects depicted in the exhibition and using his own contemporary photographic approach to capture and create a new archive of Whiffin's East End. The resulting work will be on display at Idea Store Whitechapel in November and Chris will discuss and present the results of his project at two artist talks.



*Ocean Estate, Stepney, 2015, by Chris Dorley-Brown*

## **History Hoppers**

**Wednesday 18 November 2015, 2.30-4.30pm**  
**Wednesday 16 December 2015, 2.30-4.30pm**  
**Tower Hamlets Local History Library and Archives**

Come along to our monthly, drop-in History Hoppers group, where participants will have the chance to explore and discuss a variety of library and archive material relating to the history of the local area, including photographs, newspaper cuttings and maps. Refreshments provided. Free, no booking required. Additional History Hoppers dates can be found on our website [here](#).

## **New Exhibition!** **The Wapping Dispute: The Workers' Story**

**Tuesday 1 December - Thursday 11 February 2016**  
**Tower Hamlets Local History Library and Archives**

The Wapping Dispute began on 24 January 1986, when Rupert Murdoch, owner of four of Britain's leading newspapers, including The Sun and The Times, sought to move production from Fleet Street in central London to a new non-union print works in Wapping. This led to a strike by the print unions, who fought to save thousands of jobs and the basic rights of workers to organise in defence of their conditions.

In 2011 the 25th anniversary of the year-long strike and the ruthless dismissal of 5500 workers by Rupert Murdoch was marked by an exhibition which presented the workers' story of the dispute and provided a political context. This exhibition will now be at Tower Hamlets Local History Library and Archives from December until February 2016 to mark the 30th anniversary of the strike. The exhibition includes dramatic accounts and photographs of the dispute, in addition to objects and items from the time, including banners, posters, badges, and press articles, and will be accompanied by two free public events:

**Talk: The Wapping Dispute**  
**Thursday 14 January, 6-7.30pm**  
**Tower Hamlets Local History Library and Archives**

The workers who were dismissed during the Wapping Dispute, in addition to their families and their supporters, were frequently disbelieved or vilified for bringing about their own destruction. The full strength of the law was used against their trade unions and most published accounts of the dispute blamed the workers in one way or another.

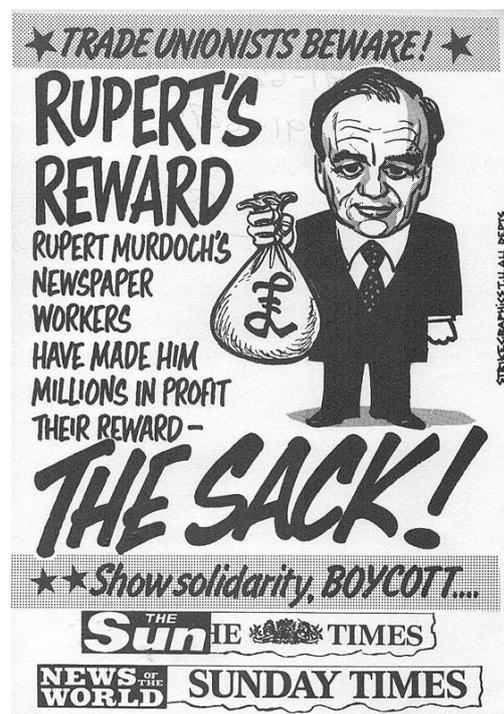
Join us for a talk by one of the strikers involved in the dispute who will put forward the worker's story. This will be followed by a Q&A session and a chance for the audience to talk about their own experiences of the dispute. Free, no booking required.

**30th Anniversary Event & Film Screening**  
**Thursday 21 January, 5.00-7.30pm**  
**Tower Hamlets Local History Library and Archives**

Join the strikers and their supporters for this informal gathering to commemorate the 30th anniversary of the Wapping Dispute. At 6pm there will be a screening of the film Banging Out: Fleet Street Remembered (52 mins), which was produced by digital:works alongside pupils from two primary schools located near Fleet Street, to chart the history of printing in the area from around 1500, when William Caxton's apprentice set up a printing shop in Shoe Lane, until the digital revolution saw presses move east to Wapping and elsewhere in the 1980s and 90s. This project put former print workers at the forefront of this history and allowed them to tell their story in their own words - further information available [here](#). Free, no booking required.

## @LBTHarchives joins Twitter

Tower Hamlets Local History Library and Archives now has a Twitter account! We've been busy posting interesting photos from our collections and providing updates about our events. We're keen to help celebrate and share information about all of the amazing histories in our borough and can also chat about research we might be able to help you with. So, please follow us at @LBTHarchives! And as our corner of the UK heritage sector gets geared up for the annual [Explore Your Archive](#) campaign (14-22 November), check out the #explorearhive hashtag for news from archives and collections you know and maybe also those you don't.....



Campaign flyer, 1986

## Opening Times

Tues: 10am-5pm

Wed: 9am-5pm

Thu: 9am-8pm

Fri: closed

Sat: (1st & 3rd of the month): 9am-5pm

Sun, Mon: closed

## Christmas opening times

Saturday 19 December: 9am-5pm

Tuesday 22 December: 10am-5pm

Wednesday 23 December: 9am-5pm

~~ then closed until ~~

Saturday 2 January: 9am-5pm

Tuesday 5 January: 10am-5pm

## 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](mailto:localhistory@towerhamlets.gov.uk)

Visit our website

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

Search our online catalogue

[www.THcatalogue.org.uk](http://www.THcatalogue.org.uk)

