



Tower Hamlets Local History Library & Archives



Wednesday 13 April 2016

The Match Women's Strike 1988

Alison Marchant's *Wall Paper History* revisited

Exhibition extended til Saturday 21 May!



'Exhausted home worker' by Alison Marchant
Outside installation, 1988. Photo by Patsy Mullan

Our current exhibition and events programme has received brilliant reviews so far. This coming Saturday 16 April, we welcome **Louise Raw**, author of *'Striking A Light: The Bryant & May Matchwomen and their place in history'*, for a talk at 2pm discussing her research on the women and girls behind the landmark events of 1888. Just drop in, no need to book.

We regret that the exhibition tour and artist talk with Alison Marchant planned for tomorrow, Thursday 14 April, is **cancelled** due to ill health.

About the exhibition

In 1888 over a thousand women and girls employed at the Bryant & May match factory in Bow successfully went on strike to improve their working conditions. In 1988, East End artist Alison Marchant marked the centenary of this pivotal moment in feminist and labour history with an exhibition and a range of public installations across the local area. In 2016, to mark Women's History Month, Alison Marchant and Tower Hamlets Local History Library & Archives have restaged her 1988 exhibition, which includes original prints, photographs, etchings and collages inspired by archival imagery. Produced originally for Rochdale Art Gallery, the work has never before been exhibited in Tower Hamlets.

During our temporary closure (see below), the exhibition's opening times are different to normal: it is open every Monday-Friday 9am-5pm and on Saturdays 16 April and 21 May, 9am-5pm.

The last day of the exhibition will be Saturday 21 May. Pick up a free A5 poster zine here, or at an Idea Store, which features images from the exhibition.

Upcoming events at Tower Hamlets Local History Library Archives

Talk: The Irish East End
Thursday 28 April - POSTPONED

Unfortunately Prof. Bronwen Walter has had to postpone her trip to London to talk to us about Irish history in Tower Hamlets due to hospital treatment. This event will be rescheduled for later in the year.

Event: History Hoppers
Wednesday 20 April, 2.30-4.30pm

Our regular local history gathering takes place on the third Wednesday afternoon of every month. Peruse at your leisure a range of material specially selected from our collections for you to browse through, ranging from newspapers to archives to photographs to maps... the selection changes every month. It's also a social

occasion, so bring a friend and have a cup of tea. Next dates:
Wednesday 18 May & Wednesday 15 June

Exhibition: World War One in Tower Hamlets

Check out our new pop-up exhibition 'World War One in Tower Hamlets', which explores the impact of war on the borough using sources from the collections of Tower Hamlets Local History Library and Archives. The exhibition will be on display at the following locations around the borough - more dates will be added soon!

Idea Store Chrisp Street: Monday 18 April - Sunday 15 May
Brady Arts and Community Centre: Monday 23 May - Sunday 19 June
Idea Store Whitechapel: Monday 27 June - Sunday 24 July
Idea Store Bow: Monday 5 September - Sunday 2 October
Idea Store Watney Market: Monday 10 October - Sunday 6 November

Update on temporary closure of Reading Room

Repair works

A programme for the repair of the reading room ceiling has now been confirmed and will start on site next week, with completion due at the end of July.

The works comprise the repair, strengthening and redecoration of the whole ceiling of the first floor reading room in our Grade 2 listed building. A number of specialist companies were invited to quote from a list of suppliers approved by Historic England, and G. Cook of Cambridge have been appointed by the council after a competitive tendering process.

A scaffold is now being erected in the reading room above the top of the shelving and will be fully boarded out to provide a safe platform to work from. Staff are presently decanting the collections stored in the reading room into other rooms within the building so that they are not at risk of dust damage during the project. During the building works, our collection of c.6500 books will receive specialist cleaning as they sustained some dust damage from the original ceiling collapse.

Public access to collections

We are currently offering an appointment-only research service to consult the archive collections one day per week (see below for details). This service will be expanded from early May to include most of the library collections, ie the images, books, cuttings, pamphlets, microfilms, trade directories and electoral registers. The opening times will also be extended to three days per week, plus occasional Saturdays and Thursday evenings, although a prior appointment will be necessary. Further details and dates of the expanded public service will be circulated as soon as possible. It is anticipated that the service will be fully open again in the restored and redecorated reading room in early August 2016.

Archives consultation service

We are currently open one day per week for archives consultation by appointment. You will be able to book a 3 hour slot to view items in the archives collection in our ground floor Education Room. You must provide references of the material you wish to view when booking your appointment. When searching our [online catalogue](#) to identify references, please ensure you limit your search to the 'Archives' repository, as *all other collections are not accessible*. Unavailable material includes the image collection, pamphlets, press cuttings, books, maps and newspapers on microfilm. There will be a limit to the quantity of material that can be consulted in each session - please discuss this with staff when booking your appointment.

We are open for bookings on the following dates:

Thursday 14 April, 10am-1pm or 1.30pm-4.30pm

Tuesday 19 April, 10am-1pm or 1.30pm-4.30pm

Thursday 28 April, 10am-1pm or 1.30pm-4.30pm

Bookings for May onwards will open shortly.

Email localhistory@towerhamlets.gov.uk or call 020 7364 1290 during office hours to book an appointment.

We apologise for the ongoing inconvenience to our users. Updates will follow as the project progresses. Our exhibition and events programme continues as normal during this period, as the ground floor remains fully accessible.

Contact Us

Send us your enquiry via email, phone or letter at

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