



Tower Hamlets Local History Library & Archives



April 2017

Mapping the Hamlets Our new exhibition is now open!

Tower Hamlets Local History Library & Archives holds a collection of over 4000 historic maps. This exhibition features more than thirty of these, most of which have never before been displayed. Many are unique to our collection and others will only be found in a select number of libraries.

Maps represent a vital source for answering a wide variety of enquiries: for local and family history or for legal research or land redevelopment. We are fortunate in that, as a result of abutting the City of London, parts of the present-day borough are covered by large-scale mapping dating back to the sixteenth century.

The map collection is a working library collection, not a museum collection, put to continual use by scholars and researchers and stored for decades in vertical suspension chests. This has taken its toll on many items within it. Despite this, we have chosen to display only original maps in this exhibition - not digitised copies.

Maps have been made for many purposes, and we present this selection of maps in four categories:

- Estate maps - these are unique and often manuscript, depicting land and buildings owned by a particular person, family or company
- Maps showing areas as administered by (usually now defunct) local authorities which preceded the formation of the London Borough of Tower Hamlets in 1965



Gascayne, 1703

Mapping the Hamlets

Exhibition: 15 April - 23 June 2017

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- Maps plotted for a specific theme, eg sociological research, public transport, civil defence
- Printed maps - taking the example of Spitalfields to show cartographic and geographical development from 1676 to 1996

In addition to the maps from our collection on display, the exhibition also features a very large, work-in-progress scale model of London in 1840. The [1st Framework](#) website includes more details about this fascinating project, led by Andrew Byrne.

As always, a programme of free events accompanies the exhibition - please see below for details. These listings will go online very shortly. Though we will share some of the exhibited images on social media, the exhibition doesn't photograph very well due to glare from the room's lighting so we thoroughly recommend visiting in person! Please check our opening hours below and if you'd like to see more maps, visit our reading room on the first floor.

This exhibition was curated by Borough Archivist Malcolm Barr-Hamilton, with valuable assistance from volunteer Anusha Mistry. Framing and installation by Jackie Lyall.

Mapping the Hamlets Events programme

Launch event

Thursday 27 April, 6.00-7.30pm

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Join us for the exhibition launch party, featuring an introductory talk by its curator Malcolm Barr-Hamilton, the Borough Archivist. Refreshments kindly sponsored by East End Homes. All welcome, free, no booking required.

Guided walk: Mile End New Town

Tuesday 30 May, 6.00-8.00pm

Meeting point: Aldgate East tube (Whitechapel High St/north side)

Exhibition curator and Borough Archivist Malcolm leads a guided walk around the former Hamlet of Mile End New Town, an obscure administrative area adjacent to Spitalfields which ceased to exist in 1901. The walk will be illustrated using copies of historic materials from our collection. Free, advance booking required.



Section of a map from Booth's *Life & Labour...* (1899-1900) showing licensed premises, schools and places of worship

Talk: Charles Booth's Poverty Map

Thursday 1 June, 6.00-7.30pm

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We're delighted to host historian Sarah Wise to give a talk on Charles Booth's Poverty Map of 1898-99. An early example of social cartography, each street is coloured to indicate the income and social class of its inhabitants. Free, no booking required.

Family activity: Map-making

Friday 2 June, 10.00-1.00pm

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Come along to this half-term workshop where you'll get the chance to create your own map of the local area, inspired by photographs and maps from the archives. Led by artist Virginia Hawke, this workshop is for children between the ages of 5 and 10 years accompanied by a parent or carer, although younger and older siblings are welcome. Free, advance booking required.

Going digital: mapping family histories in Whitechapel with the Survey of London

Saturday 3 June, 1.00-4.00pm

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The [Survey of London](#) host an informal discussion about recording family histories in Whitechapel, followed by a workshop about how to add yours to their interactive online map. Free, no booking required.

Guided walk: St George In The East

Tuesday 13 June, 6.00-8.00pm

Meeting point: Shadwell Overground station

A guided walk exploring the Parish of St. George-in-the-East, led by Borough Archivist Malcolm Barr-Hamilton, using historic maps and other resources from our collections. Free, [advance booking required](#).

Talks: 18th and 19th century London, by map and model

Thursday 22 June, 6.15-7.30pm

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Borough Archivist Malcolm Barr-Hamilton discusses Gascoyne's 1703 map of Stepney, the most significant map ever produced in terms of Tower Hamlets' history; Andrew Byrne talks about his work-in-progress model of [1840 London](#) also displayed in our exhibition. Free, no booking required.

More events may be added. Please book a place for those events which require it by emailing localhistory@towerhamlets.gov.uk or call 020 7364 1290 during working hours. Let us know any access needs.

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 an 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->



Other upcoming events

Isaac and I: A Life in Poetry

Chris Searle



Isaac & I: Chris Searle and friends Saturday 20 May, 2.00-4.00pm Tower Hamlets Local History Library & Archives

We are delighted to be hosting a special event to launch the first part of Chris Searle's autobiography, to be published in May by [Five Leaves](#). Chris is a teacher, poet and activist who found himself on the front pages of the newspapers in 1971 when his pupils at Sir John Cass Redcoat School in Stepney went on strike in protest at his sacking. His crime, in the eyes of the school governors, was to have published a book of the pupils' poetry, *Stepney Words*, which spoke less than favourably about their life experiences.

Isaac and I is the story of how Chris came to teach in Stepney and the story of the school strike, which became a national news story. Having moved to North America and the Caribbean in the 1960s he was witness to the civil rights movement and the emergence of Black Power. Inspired by these experiences and his long-term muse, the Jewish war poet Isaac Rosenberg, Chris settled in Stepney determined to inspire his underprivileged pupils with poetry. Their words spoke a plaintive truth about their lives and the inequality they faced as working-class children in the early 1970s East End.

This event will be hosted by Alan Gilbey ([East End Backpassages](#)) and will feature some of the original school poets reading their work. Chris will share his passion for Isaac Rosenberg, and special guests including Alan Dein, Dan Jones and others will reminisce about this eventful moment in 1971 which affected so many local people. There will be copies of *Isaac & I* for sale. We expect this event to be popular so come early! Free - no booking required.

V&A East: Lansbury Micro Museum New Horizons 1950s-1980s Chrip Street Market

Lansbury Micro Museum, part of V&A East, is currently hosting the exhibition *New Horizons 1950s-1980s* which considers the changing nature of the Lansbury Estate over four tumultuous decades in the East End, addressing the impacts of industrial modernisation, declining docks and the strategic relocation of communities to New Towns. The eventual regeneration of the docklands and the rise of Canary Wharf also feature, along with documentation of some of the community-led artistic action taken to resist such extreme change.

To further explore the intersections between art, activism and the built environment the museum is holding a third 'Neighbourhood Number 9' panel discussion on **Saturday 29 April**. Visit the [Lansbury Micro Museum](#) website for further details.

Festival of Communities 20-21 May Queen Mary, University of London

QMUL is hosting a two day festival of activities, stalls and family-friendly fun, exploring learning and living together in Tower Hamlets, in partnership with many local organisations. It is being held across two sites: Stepney Green Park (Saturday 20 May) and the QMUL main campus in Mile End (Sunday 21 May). Visit qmul.ac.uk/festival for further details.

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 on show at the following sites:

[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](#).

Saturday opening

We are open 9am-5pm on the first and third Saturdays of every month, for research in the reading room and exhibition viewing. That's the following Saturdays coming up:

- 6 and 20 May
- 3 and 17 June

Other dates for your diary...

Saturday 17 June

- Family History Festival - details coming soon

*** Please note the book sale we had previously advertised for Saturday 20 May has been postponed and will take place later in the year. ***

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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Phone: 020 7364 1290

Email: localhistory@towerhamlets.gov.uk

Visit our website

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