



# Tower Hamlets Local History Library & Archives



August 2017

## Upcoming Events

**Talk: Barnett Freedman**  
Thursday 17 August, 6:30-7:30pm

Join David Buckman, author of 'From 'Bow to Biennale' on the East London Group, for this talk focusing on the life and work of artist Barnett Freedman (1901-1958). Born in Stepney to a poor Jewish family, Freedman is chiefly remembered for his lithographs. As a commercial designer, he produced a huge output of work for clients including Ealing Films, Shell-Mex and British Petroleum, the General Post Office and London Transport. The series of forty lithographs by notable artists for Lyons' tea shops was supervised by Barnett, including his famous and beautiful auto-lithograph 'The Window Box' (pictured). Free, no booking required.



**East End History Club**  
Saturday 19 August, 2.00-4.00pm

Are you interested in the history of London's East End? If so, come along to this FREE drop-in session. You'll have the chance to browse through old photographs, maps, newspapers and archival documents relating to a range of popular subjects, such as housing, health, immigration, work, school, leisure and much more! This session is ideal for those who are curious about local history and want to find out more. There's no need to book, just drop in. Tea, coffee and biscuits will be provided. Suitable for adults and children (11+).

### Exhibition Launch: Protests of the 80s Thursday 21 September, 6.00-7.30pm

Come along to the launch event for 'Protests of the 80s', a small exhibition organised by the Isle of Dogs Living Archive project, which will be on display on our first floor landing from **Tuesday 19 September until Saturday 30 September 2017**. Using oral history interviews, the exhibition examines the impact of the closure of the docks on the local community, and explores the protests which took place during the 1980s in response to redevelopment on the Isle of Dogs. Photo: The 1985 Thames Armada protest to Westminster, by Mike Seabourne.



### African and Caribbean Family History Day Saturday 7 October, 10.30am-4.00pm

Get help researching your African and Caribbean ancestors and find out more about African and Caribbean heritage in London's East End at this free family history event, run in partnership with the [Tony Cheeseman Foundation](#). A variety of talks will take place throughout the day and visitors will have the chance to browse a number of stalls and displays. A full programme will be announced shortly – check our website for further details. No booking required, just drop in. Photo: Priscilla Dujon and her children, Bethnal Green, 1968.

## Collections News

### Progress on the Metropolitan Borough of Stepney files

A major step forward has been made in making producible a quantity of over 6000 files created by the Stepney Borough Council between 1901 and 1965. The project has been gathering momentum for some years, but in the past 12 months, volunteer Anne Connaughton has been working solidly on the project and has completed the initial stage of inputting catalogue data for every file - a very impressive performance. The next task is to arrange the files in order. Once this has been achieved and the catalogue been made available online, this collection become an important resource for many aspects of East End history.

### Morpeth School Records now online

Cataloguing of the records of Morpeth School deposited at Tower Hamlets Local History Library and Archives is now complete.

Morpeth School has provided education to local children for over a century having been established as Morpeth Street Central School in 1910, with its first intake of pupils in 1911. In 1927 Portman Place Primary School was closed and the two schools merged to form an enlarged Morpeth Street School. During the Second World War, the school relocated to Bury St. Edmunds in Hertfordshire, leaving the site to be used as a rest centre for the Air Raid Precaution (ARP) wardens and as HQ for the anti-aircraft crews who worked in Victoria Park. Following the end of the war, Morpeth resumed operation in East London and continues today as a co-educational school offering GCSE and A-Level courses for pupils aged 11-18.

The Morpeth School (Ref: I/MOR) collection is comprised of records which document the organisational and cultural history of the school; including administrative records and records of, and created by, staff and students. Due to the Data Protection Act 1998, some of the school records have been closed as they contain personal / sensitive information about children. Where applied, closure periods are clearly marked in the catalogue entries.

Date.	Name.	Award.
1912	Richards, William.	L.C.C.Trade.
1913	Terrell, Maud.	"
"	Simfield, Grace.	"
1914	Hill, George.	Parmiters.
"	Harding, Harold.	Artificer. R.N.
1915	Mason, William.	L.C.C.Trade.
"	Roper, Alfred.	"
"	Mole, Bertha.	"
1916	Ward, Thomas.	"
"	Wolf, George.	"
"	Hopkins, Richard.	"
"	Cohen, Ernest.	Coborn.
"	Coolbear, Sidney.	Parmiters.

However, much of the collection is now available to view here at Tower Hamlets Local History Library and Archives, and contains an interesting variety of material from work created by pupils on school trips in 1922, and photographs of school events from as early as the 1940s, to exhibitions held in the school library in the 1980s. For further details, please search for I/MOR on our catalogue available [online](#).

## Staff Update by Malcolm Barr-Hamilton

Melanie Strong (Heritage Officer-Library) has sadly left us to take up a job at the Guildhall Library. Melanie did sterling work for us over a period of nearly six years managing our Local History Library collections. Perhaps Melanie's most significant achievement here was to re-catalogue our collection of over 7000 pamphlets. Melanie was also a whizz in our reading room helping countless numbers of enquirers and especially was a dab hand with Ancestry.com. However she will be mostly missed for her encyclopaedic knowledge of all things Doctor Who related.

We were also sorry to lose Emma Harrold (with two "r"s), Heritage Officer - Archives, who had been with us for nearly a year as maternity cover for Natasha Luck. Among Emma's achievements was the completion of the long-standing project of cataloguing the records of the Spitalfields Project. This is a major resource for the study of the area in the 1970s-80s (see next month issue for full details- *Ed*). Emma, who comes from Cheshire, proved very popular with staff and users alike and we wish her well in her new job at the Imperial War Museum. Severe shortages of Heinz tomato soup and Rekorderlig are to be expected in Lambeth.

We are very pleased to welcome back Natasha Luck (Heritage Officer – Archives) whose lilting Ulster accent (and many other attributes) has been sorely missed. Natasha will be working three days a week and will be job-sharing with newly-appointed Shahera Begum.

During this period of staff changes we have been most fortunate in securing the services of Bridget Clay as acting Heritage Assistant for three months. Bridget, who can usually be found at Idea Store Bow is taking a lot of reading room duties where her unflappable and ever-helpful manner is going down well with our many users.

### Welcome Shahera!

"Hello! My name is Shahera and I am the new part-time Heritage Officer - Archives. I jobshare with my colleague, Natasha Luck and have a joint remit to support the operations of THLHLA, which includes managing and providing access to the local history library and archival collections. Although my post is new, I am no stranger to the library, having worked here before as a volunteer in 2010 and as a Heritage Skills Trainee during 2011-12. My traineeship was part of a Heritage Lottery Funded collaborative project led by The National Archives called 'Opening Up Archives'. As part of this, I engaged with the local Bengali community here in the borough in partnership with Swadhinata Trust, organised a series of outreach activities and acquired additional archival collections for THLHLA to better represent all communities that reside in the borough.

I have previously worked at the London Metropolitan Archives and Imperial War Museum. I have also volunteered at the Bishopsgate Institute and the East London Mosque Archives. In 2014, I took a career break and completed the Postgraduate Diploma in Archives and Records Management at UCL. Alongside my role here, I currently work as an Archivist and Records Manager for the United Reformed Church. I possess an enthusiasm for written heritage and having been Stepney born and bred (and still living here!) I have a personal interest in local heritage of Tower Hamlets. I am looking forward to exploring the different histories of the borough through my work here."





## Mapping the Hamlets

Exhibition: 15 April - 21 September 2017

Tower Hamlets Local History Library and Archives

## Current exhibitions

**Mapping the Hamlets** continues in our main exhibition space til Saturday 21 September, making this the final month of this extremely well-received display of a selection of historic maps from our collection, curated by Malcolm Barr-Hamilton, Borough Archivist.

**LGBT+ Tower Hamlets**, a small display of crowd-sourced photographs taken by members of the Tower Hamlets lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and 'queer' community, is also up in our first floor lobby for the next few weeks. This was a partnership project with ELOP we undertook to help us capture imagery of the contemporary LGBT+ community for our archives.

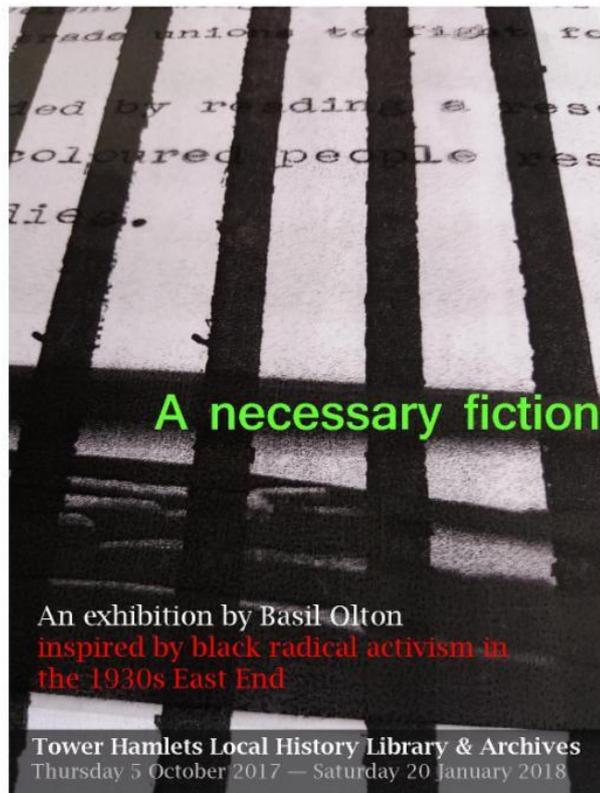
## Exhibition news

A sneak preview for newsletter subscribers of our next exhibition!

**A necessary fiction** presents new artwork by the ceramics artist Basil Olton, inspired by black radical activism in 1930s Stepney. Basil is particularly inspired by the life and work of Chris Braithwaite, co-founder of the Colonial Seamen's Association.

We are delighted to report that Basil has received an Arts Council grant for this project which will fund a deeper level of engagement with this history for Black and Asian young people in Tower Hamlets.

More details about this exhibition will follow in our next newsletter including a wide range of free tie-in events. Contact us if you would like further information before then.



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Library Learning Information

## 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

## Saturdays

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:

Saturday 19 August  
Saturday 9 September  
Saturday 21 September

## Contact Us

Send us your enquiry via email, phone or letter:  
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