

A bit of East End history in your Christmas stocking this year?

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Tower Hamlets Local History Library & Archives



Welcome to the last newsletter of 2018! Here at Tower Hamlets Local History Library & Archives we have many books and rare local history publications that would make an ideal Christmas gift but you need to act quick as our last day of opening before we close for the festive holidays is fast approaching!

Freshest among our new additions is the wonderful monograph by **Doreen Fletcher: Paintings**, which has been *signed* by the artist! Get your own copy of her evocative paintings of 1970s and 1980s East End street scenes from us for just £20. We also have stock of the Gentle Author's wonderful **East End Vernacular: Artists Who Painted London's East End Streets in the 20th century** on sale at a reduced price.

If your loved ones are not very arty, why not get them a **Friends of Island History Trust Calendar 2019!** This year's calendar focuses on the theme of sports and social events over the years and it is a bargain buy for £6. For the map geeks we have the **The Streets of London: the Booth Notebooks: East** presenting detailed descriptions of East London in the 1890s from the original research notebooks from Charles Booth's historic survey, for just £12!

Finally, we have copies for sale of **The East End in Colour, 1960-1980** featuring the photographs from our collections which were the subject of our blockbuster exhibition earlier this year. It's already been mentioned in the Evening Standard as one of the Books of the Year. These images by Stepney resident David Granick capture the post-war streets of Stepney, Whitechapel, Spitalfields and the riverside in the warm hues of Kodachrome film at a time when black and white photography was the norm. We are selling it at the discounted rate of £15. At the same discounted price there's also Mike Seaborne's wonderful new photography book by the same publisher, **The Isle of Dogs: Before the Big Money**.

Our bookshop gift game has never been stronger but the last day we will be open before Christmas is Saturday 15 December as we are closing for a stocktake the following week - so get down here sharpish and snap up a bargain! We are the cheapest place to buy many of these titles, even beating Amazon in some cases! There are also some lovely stocking fillers including tote bags, postcards and rare, out-of-print pamphlets you can browse on our first floor landing.

Interested? We would rather you visit if you possibly can, but mail order is possible if you ask nicely. NB all Christmas sales (including mail order) will end 5pm on Saturday 15 December, so act now!



Painting the Hamlets exhibition & events programme

Our latest exhibition of art work from our collection, *Painting the Hamlets*, launched on Thursday 22 November, and we have received a wonderful response from those who have visited so far, delighted to see paintings normally in storage on display in many cases perhaps for the first time.

We have programmed a number of events to tie in with this theme of painting and drawing East End streets. Here is a list of our upcoming events:

Creative workshops: East End Urban Sketching Club

The East End has inspired many artists. This spring, create your own artistic vision of East London street scenes using historical imagery from our collections over the course of three workshops led by Idea Store Learning tutor Ginny Hawke. You will be using watercolours and inks, experimenting with sepia, mark-making with acrylic, and in the final session, sketching live from an East End street scene.

Saturday 19 January, 1.30-4.00: *Watercolours and inks*

Saturday 2 March, 1.30-4.00: *Acrylic impressions*

Saturday 16 March, 1.30-4.00: *Oil pastels in the outdoors*

All abilities welcome. Sessions are free and materials are provided but spaces are limited and booking is essential. The first two sessions are onsite here in our Education Room, the final session is out in the wild... Please book by emailing: localhistory@towerhamlets.gov.uk. Classes can be booked individually or as a set.

Talk: Art & the East End by Danny Wells

Saturday 2 February 2.30-4.00

Come and listen to the ever-popular Danny Wells share stories from the history of the East End of London through its depiction in art, primarily paintings. These include the phenomenon of the East India Company; the effects of Empire on the area, and the significance of the Docks. Also considered are the poverty and social reformers in the 19th century, immigration and emigration, and the impacts of two world wars in the 20th century. Free, no booking required.

Talk: Artists Who Painted London's East End: The Gentle Author chats to Doreen Fletcher

Thursday 28 February 6.00-7.30

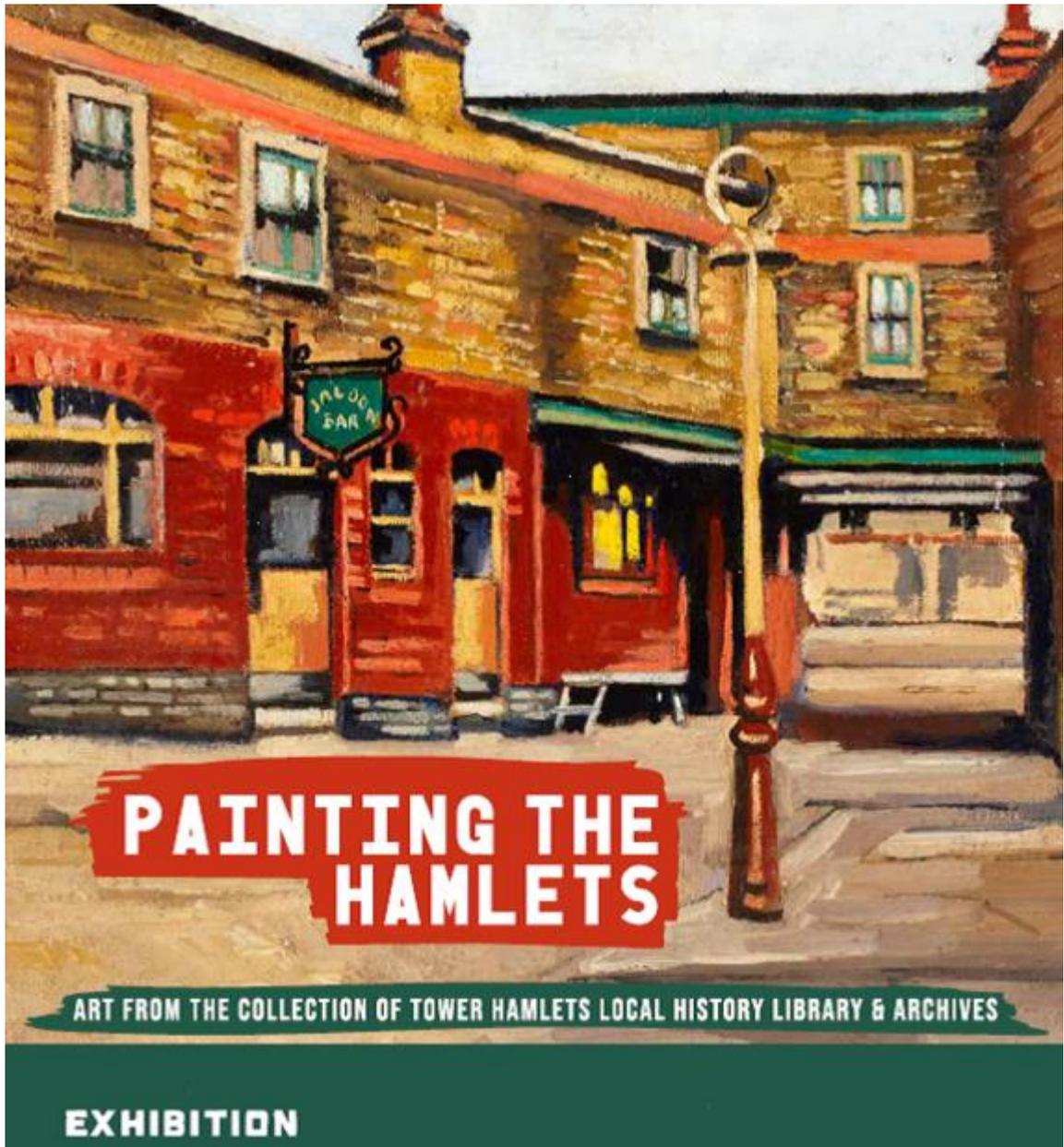
Join The Gentle Author (Spitalfields Life blog) in conversation with Doreen Fletcher whose work features in the exhibition and has been collected into a new retrospective book. Free, no booking required.

Family art workshop: East End Street Party

Saturday 16 February 11.00am-12.30pm

It's half term and what better way to get your young ones inducted into important local traditions! Children will make collages of their ideal street party, real or imagined, using images of historic East End street parties from our collection - including the one by Rose Henriques featured in *Painting the Hamlets* - and then adding details using coloured card, paint and lots of glitter!

Suitable for ages 4-12 years. Accompanying younger siblings welcome. All children must be accompanied by an adult. Free, booking essential. Please book by emailing: localhistory@towerhamlets.gov.uk



Disability History Month

Saturday 15 December, 2.30-4pm

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December is Disability History Month and all are welcome at this free talk about the fascinating hidden history of learning disabled people. Many people do not know that learning disabled residents of what is now Tower Hamlets would have been cared for at Leavesden Hospital near Watford prior to 1933, and after this date Harperbury Hospital near Radlett – run by Middlesex County Council until both were taken over by the NHS in 1948.

David O'Driscoll (a member of the Social History of Learning Disability Group at Open University) will give an overview of these institutions and share a few East End stories.

Tower Hamlets Local History Library & Archives is wheelchair accessible. Please let us know if you have access needs. Otherwise, just drop in, there's no need to book.

Image: Harperbury Hospital, late 1950s. Provided by David O'Driscoll



East End History Club 2019

Avid readers will know that the East End History club is a great opportunity to explore our collections in an informal environment. You can expect photographs, maps and pamphlets relating to the East End, exploring the landscape of the borough, social housing, migration, the docks and more.

We are pleased to announce the East End History Club dates for next year. A flyer will be available soon.

Saturday 16 February, 2.00-4.00pm

Saturday 6 April 2.00-4.00pm

Saturday 15 June 2.00-4.00pm

Saturday 17 August 2.00-4.00pm

Saturday 19 October 2.00-4.00pm

Saturday 7 December 2.00-4.00pm

Teas and coffee provided and it's free to attend. There is no need to book.



Christmas closure

The Reading Room and enquiry service will be closed for our annual stocktake week from Mon 17 December - Friday 21 December inclusive. The *Painting the Hamlets* exhibition will also be closed. This is our quietest week of the year so we hope disruption to our readers will be minimal. Our last open day before Christmas is therefore **Saturday 15 December**. The building will be fully closed from Saturday 22 December over the Christmas period. We will reopen on Wednesday 2 January.

New project: Victorian Footprints

A rare opportunity to delve deep into the history of Bethnal Green presents itself thanks to Oxford House's current renovation project and Graham Barker's [Walk East](#). Since 1884 Oxford House has been part of the fabric of local life in Bethnal Green and the new *Victorian Footprints* project will help place it in its historical and local context.

A series of 10 workshops, held here at Tower Hamlets Local History Library & Archives and on location around the borough, will be held for a group of participants to explore the Victorian history of Bethnal Green using original sources from our collection and elsewhere. The results of the research will be written up and published in a new booklet. If you've read the previous booklet produced from one of Graham's projects - Beer Barrels and Brewhouses, about the history of Tower Hamlets' brewing industry - you'll know what a fascinating story can be woven from the raw materials of local history.

Participants will get to grips with old maps, photos, census returns, newspapers and other records, take a closer look at historic buildings on guided walks and undertake your own research into landmarks and streets. You will need to be able to attend all sessions which take place on Friday mornings from 11 January - 15 March. Contact graham@walkeast.org to apply for a place.

Design competition for St Matthias, Poplar

Local organisations, schools, businesses and residents are invited to take part in a design competition to mark the 25th anniversary of the establishment of St Matthias Community Centre, Poplar. Based in a church building [originally founded in 1652 as the chapel of the East India Company](#), St Matthias Community Centre has been providing essential services for local residents for the last 25 years through its in-house charities [Neighbours in Poplar](#) and [Splash Arts](#). Services run from the centre include a nursery, a daycare centre for older people, as well as a night shelter for homeless people during winter.

To commemorate the centre's anniversary - which helped to save the Grade 2* listed church from dereliction - a competition is being held to design a new stained glass window. The design should consist of 6 circles each approximately 780mm in diameter and each circle should explore an aspect of the East India Company's impact on Poplar and the East End. There will be an exhibition of all the designs before one is selected to be fabricated and installed. This is your chance to see your design incorporated into the fabric of a listed building for all to see! Please email Sister Christine at nip65@msn.com to express an interest in participating - either as an individual or as part of a group activity (eg a school class).

New staff: meet Abigail Williams

"I'm the new Heritage Coordinator (Public Access), a new role which was created recently thanks to some additional funding from the council. I'll be working closely with the current Heritage Coordinator, Debbie, and you'll probably see a lot of both of us if you come into the Reading Room!

I've just finished a traineeship at the Britten-Pears Foundation's Archive in Suffolk, and I'm studying for a diploma in Archives Management in my free time. The reason I wanted to work here is because I'm really keen on making history accessible to everyone – which is also why I'm training to be an archivist. I think local history libraries are a great way to do

this, and THLHLA in particular has a really great programme of public engagement! I'm looking forward to learning more about the rich history of Tower Hamlets while I work here, and to getting stuck in to my duties on the Reading Room desk."



Thanks everyone who visited us in 2018. Happy holidays to all of you and hope to see you in the new year!