

New exhibition, new staff... and a temporary week's closure

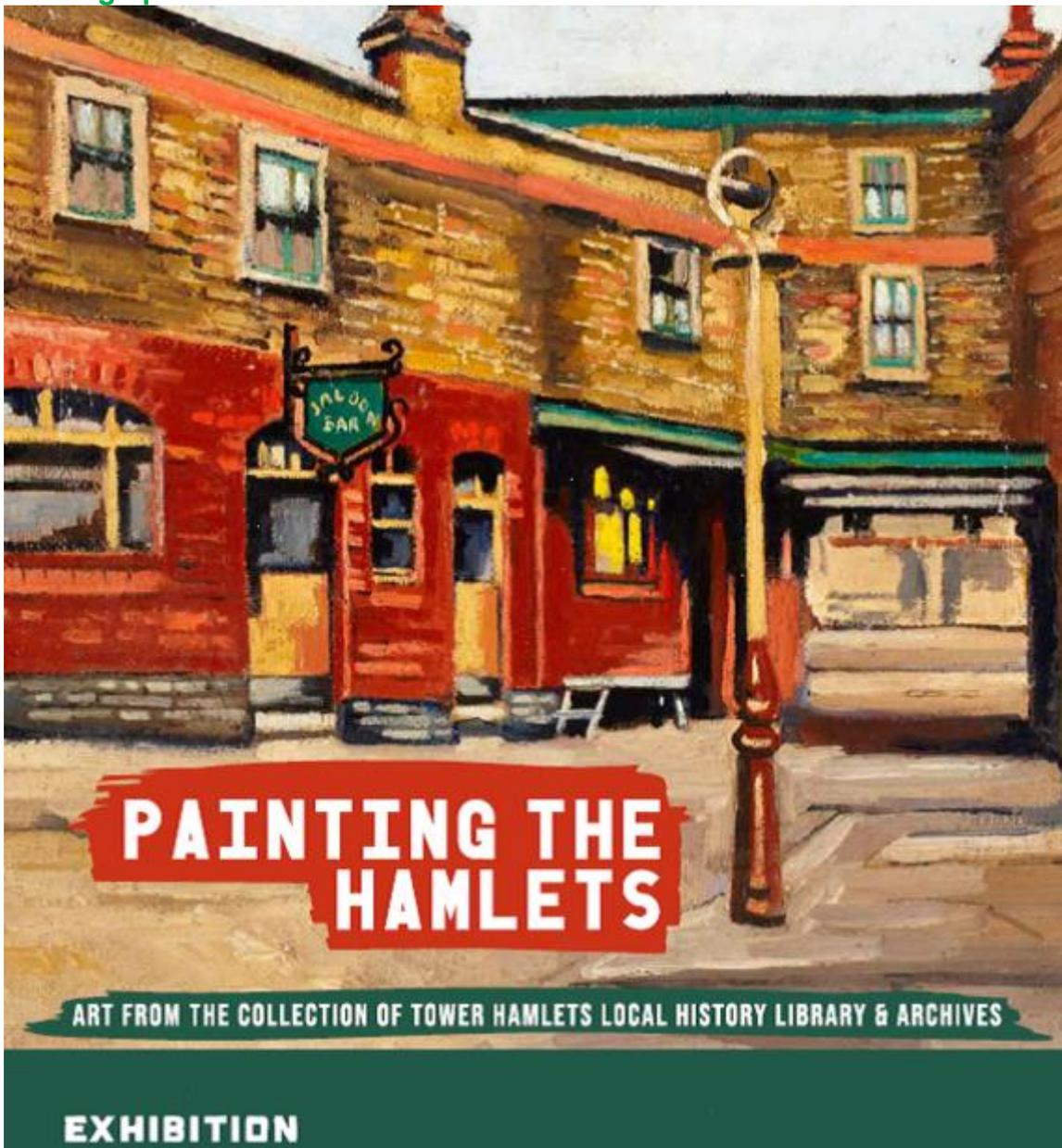
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Tower Hamlets Local History Library & Archives



Coming up...



Our next exhibition is a display of paintings from our collections which depict landscapes, river views and street scenes in Tower Hamlets. Most of the work featured is from the twentieth century and the artists featured include the former Mayor of Bethnal Green and member of the East London Group of artists, Albert Turpin, whose image of the Jolly Butcher pub in Cabbage Court off Brick Lane is used in the flyer above. Works by Ray Walker, Doreen Fletcher, Ronald Morgan, Noel Gibson, Rose Henriques, and Geoffrey Scowcroft Fletcher also feature.

Work has been selected to ensure that all of the borough's neighbourhoods are represented, and for this show we are showing only painting and drawing (not printmaking). The exhibition is being co-curated with us by Atalanta Kernick, an Idea Store Co-ordinator at Cubitt Town Library who is also a fine artist. The exhibition will be open from early next week until 25 April 2019 and we are currently developing a fantastic programme of free events to run alongside it inspired by the history of art and artists in the East End.

Due some unexpected delays, the main launch event has been put back to **Thursday 22 November, 6.00-8.30pm**. Refreshments are kindly being sponsored by East End Homes. At this event there will also be a film screening of 72-82 by artist William Raban - see below for more details. We will also have books of East End art on sale at the launch including the brand new monograph of Doreen Fletcher's work and East End Vernacular, both published by Spitalfields Life. Snap up a few Christmas presents and support your local archive!

The full events programme for this exhibition will be launched on 22 November and publicised in our newsletter around the same time.

Goodbye to the Women's Hall



The Women's Hall drew to an exciting close last month with theatrical historical storytelling, a pop-up suffragette costume photobooth and the wonderful Dina Begum who designed the Cost Price Restaurant menu for our final ever service.

The exhibition attracted 2200+ visitors and, in addition to this figure, through our public programme of 30 events plus additional guided tours for groups, we engaged a further 1400 people. This project would not have been possible at all without funding from Heritage Lottery Fund, the dedication of staff, and most importantly, the support of our volunteers. The Events volunteers who helped curate the programme, the Design and Research volunteers who created the beautiful Women's Hall Dreadnought newspaper, as well as the Kitchen volunteers who were the heart of Cost Price Restaurant, helping the exhibition hall become a genuine community space.



Mrs Schlette distributing milk to children. Photograph by Norah Smyth, 1914

However, that does not conclude the Women's Hall project as a whole or our #Vote100 celebrations, as the second phase now commences with our neighbours and project partners, Four Corners, hosting the first ever UK exhibition of the photographs of Norah Smyth (1874-1963). Smyth was a key member of the East London Federation of the Suffragettes (ELFS) and close confidante of Sylvia Pankhurst's who lived with her at the Women's Hall on Old Ford Road, Bow. Launched recently at Four Corners' gallery space on Roman Road is an exhibition featuring more than 100 original photographs taken by Norah Smyth and other items of ELFS ephemera. These form part of the Sylvia Pankhurst archive and have been loaned from the International Institute of Social History in Amsterdam. We have also lent our original bound volume of the Woman's Dreadnought newspaper. This is an unparalleled opportunity to see original images taken by a female photographer over 100 years ago which constitute primary evidence of the activities of the East End's own working class suffragettes, their families and children (and it's also the reason we did not include many of Norah Smyth's photos in our own exhibition!)

The exhibition [East End Suffragettes: the Photography of Norah Smyth](#) has just opened at Four Corners and runs until 9 February 2019, admission free. As with our exhibition, this display is supported by the Heritage Lottery Fund.

Somali Seafarers: Surviving the Sea



Now on show on our first floor landing is a brand new exhibition produced by Tower Hamlets Somali Senior Citizens Club with Eastside Community Heritage. It tells the story of seafarers from what was once known as the "British Protectorate" of Somaliland, who left home to join the merchant navy and eventually settled in the East End, forefathers of the bustling Somali community present in our borough today. The exhibition is on show until 1 December.

Write Idea Festival 2018

The tenth Writeidea Festival, Tower Hamlets Council's unique free reading festival, will take place at Idea Store Whitechapel over the weekend of 16 - 18 November 2018. As usual there are many events on a local history theme. Most of the events we programmed as part of our strand are already fully booked but if you're desperate to come we recommend chancing your arm on the door, as often with free events there can be a lot of no-shows.

Speakers across the festival include Michael Rosen, Viv Albertine, Chris Difford (co-founder of the band Squeeze), Suresh Singh, The Gentle Author, Muhammad Khan, Melanie McGrath, Jason Cowley, Helen Croydon, Philippa Stockley, Frances Hardinge, Edin Suljic, John Boughton, Kate Young, Diana Evans, Savita Kalhan, Storytelling with Embers, Dina Begum, Garth Cartwright, Melanie Whitman, David Stubbs, Leslie Clayden, Charlie Kiss, Neil Faulkner, C.G. Menon, Allan Jones, Simon Miller, Diane Atkinson, Simon Hannah and Eric Levene.

See the full programme of events [here](#). We will be there selling local history books, maps and booklets on the Saturday.

Basil Olton, whose exhibition **A Necessary Fiction** we hosted last year, will also be giving a talk about his art work which is on show in a different display format on the fourth floor of Idea Store Whitechapel throughout November. It concerns former Stepney resident Chris Braithwaite, a black trade unionist and communist who was

active during the 1920s-1930s, and the problematics of researching black history in redacted archives.



Our other upcoming events

Thursday 22 November, 7.00 - 8.30pm

72-82, a film by William Raban

As part of the the launch event for our new exhibition *Painting the Hamlets*, we are hosting a rare screening of the documentary *72-82*, exploring the use by artists of hundreds of former industrial buildings in East London to create cheap living and studio space. The film makes use of archival material from the first decade of Acme Gallery, established in the East End in 1972. The film is being screened as part of Explore Your Archive 2018 to coincide with our current exhibition. Other archive material relating to local artists will also be on display at the screening, including original sketchbooks by Stepney painter Cornelius McCarthy.

The exhibition launch will take place in the hall from 6.00pm with speeches taking place at 6.45pm. Following the speeches, guests can continue to look at the paintings or move into the film screening, which will begin promptly in the Education Room at 7pm, to be followed by a Q&A with film maker and artist William Raban. No latecomers will be admitted to the film screening after 7pm. No booking is required for either part of the evening - just turn up.

Refreshments for the exhibition launch are generously sponsored by East End Homes and we will have a book stall for relevant titles published by Spitalfields Life including *East End Vernacular* and the new monograph of paintings by Doreen Fletcher.

Saturday 17 November 2.00-4.00pm East End History Club

Join us for our regular drop-in collections browsing session in which you can read and handle materials from our collections which we have selected for you to peruse, including photographs, newspapers, maps and pamphlets. For our final East End

History Club of 2018 the theme of the materials to be selected is 'outdoor spaces', from parks to canals to markets. Teas and coffees are provided and there is no need to book, just turn up.



New books

We've added a number of interesting new titles to our local history library collection this month, including Dina Begum's *Brick Lane Cookbook* and *Things a Bright Girl Can Do* by Sally Nicholls, a young adult novel about a group of East London suffragettes. In addition we've a new reference copy of *The Isle of Dogs: Before the Big Money*, a beautifully-presented collection of Mike Seaborne's photographs taken between 1982 and 1987. This is the second title in Hoxton Mini Press's 'Vintage Britain' series following the success of the David Granick's *The East End in Colour*, and copies are available to purchase for £15.00 via our bookshop.

Other new titles to hit the shelves this month include *A Modest Living: Memoirs of a Cockney Sikh* by Suresh Singh, *Maps of London and Beyond* by Adam Dant and The Gentle Author, and DJ Target's *Grime Kids: The Inside Story of the Global Grime Takeover*.

Welcome to new staff



Emma Harrold (pictured on the left)

"Avid readers of our newsletter may remember I was previously here at THLHLA in the role of Heritage Officer (Archives) 2016-2017, so a returning rather than entirely new member of staff!

My first job in the archives sector was at Stockport Local Heritage Library & Archives where I completed a traineeship and I later went on to qualify as an archivist at the University of Liverpool. I'm very excited to have now re-joined the gang at Tower Hamlets Library and Archives in the role of Archives Manager, following the retirement of longstanding Borough Archivist Malcolm Barr-Hamilton. After a year away at the Imperial War Museum, I am thrilled to be back in the East End and to have the opportunity to once again work with these fantastic collections, an amazing team, and all those who visit us to research, learn and engage with fascinating history of this borough."

Halima Khanom (pictured on the right)

"I have been in the post of Heritage Officer (Learning & Participation) for a little less than 3 months, but have lived in Tower Hamlets all my life. I join Tower Hamlets Local History Library & Archives after two years of working at the Royal Parks on the HLF-funded Brompton Cemetery Conservation Project, working with local community groups and delivering outreach sessions for the public outside in the 39 acre garden cemetery. My previous roles in the heritage sector include a traineeship at the Royal Geographical Society and the Museum of London Docklands. I also have an MA in Heritage Studies from UEL.

The pace of work here at the Library has a different vibe to Brompton Cemetery that's for sure, and I am happy to be working more closely with collections again, especially with one as special as this. I am excited about growing the public programme here, keen to bring out more of our film archives and expand on our work with young people."

Opening hours and temporary closure

The Reading Room and enquiry service will be closed for our annual stocktake week from Mon 17 December - Friday 21 December inclusive, though the Painting the Hamlets exhibition will be open to the public on these dates. This is our quietest week of the year so we hope disruption 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.

Our regular opening hours are:

Monday: 9am-5pm for exhibition only

Tuesday: 10am-5pm for exhibition and Reading Room

Wednesday: 9am-5pm for exhibition and Reading Room

Thursday: 9am-8pm for exhibition and Reading Room

Friday: 9am-5pm for exhibition only

First and third Saturdays of every month: 9am-5pm for exhibition and Reading Room

Feel free to contact us with any enquiries:

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- www.ideastore.co.uk/local-history