

# Tower Hamlets Local History Library & Archives



## Announcing our next exhibition



Exhibition: **Unite & Resist: Protests in the East End 1970-2000**  
Saturday 3 August 2019 - Saturday 15 February 2020

## Tower Hamlets Local History Library and Archives

Our next exhibition will showcase original archives from our collections which illustrate the prolific activism of the people of Tower Hamlets in the latter decades of the twentieth century. From the Stepney School Strike to the Battle of Brick Lane, the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament and Stop Clause 28, the exhibition shines a light on these and other important moments in the borough's recent history including several lesser known struggles.

This period of rapid change in the East End saw Tower Hamlets residents forming independent collectives and rising up in protest at various different emerging threats. The display features banners, badges, garments, posters, photographs, pamphlets and other archives which provide important evidence of these sometimes short-lived campaigns. Most of the items on display have been newly acquired or newly catalogued and have never before been on public display.

Keep an eye out for the full programme of events which we are organising to tie in with it, coming in the next newsletter! If you are a teacher, lecturer or you convene a group that would like a workshop or tour of this exhibition during its run, please email us on [localhistory@towerhamlets.gov.uk](mailto:localhistory@towerhamlets.gov.uk).

## Numbi Festival 2019



Thursday 27 June - Thursday 11 July

Tower Hamlets Local History Library & Archives

Before our next major exhibition launches in August, we are delighted to be hosting the first two weeks of the annual Numbi Arts summer festival, this year called **Feed the Light and Breathe!**

Numbi Arts is a Somali-led, Tower Hamlets based collective bringing people together from across the African diaspora and beyond. This year the Numbi festival explores the ways in which art can be a tool for environmental sustainability, ecology, social justice, well-being, nonviolence and grassroots democracy.

Numbi's research and open archive is an exploration of how to engage, create and collapse the notion of Somali stories and self-representation. A collection of studies navigating how decades of war and migration have forged the future for Somali artists who are reconnecting with this complex history by placing ourselves in the ecology of contemporary British culture. This research also serves as a curriculum; a space for learning and cultivating socially engaged arts practice.

Numbi have created a display in our entrance hall showcasing their work in the context of the history of the Somali East End. This will be on show for the duration of the Numbi residency here, with free events in our Education Room taking place as follows:

- **NUMBI Studio Family Workshop, with XR Tower Hamlets and Women's Environmental Network**
- **Thursday 4 July, 4:00 - 6:00pm**

This fun family workshop that will explore the potential of our local open green space and brownfield sites, and the role they play in our lives. Through design exercises we will explore the nature and future of public spaces including how we deal with pollution, supply of healthy food sources, and climate change within our communities.

We will study and draw inspiration from vernacular architecture and then complete hands-on designs that are fun for the whole family.

This is part of the first stage of our garden Aqal design. Facilitated by Abiel Hagos.

- **Zine Making Workshop**
- **Saturday 6 July 12:00 - 3:00 pm**

Zines are self-published publications with a history rooted in DIY cultures. Join Numbi Arts for a zine making session...The theme we wish to reflect on is radical protest through the medium of music and environmental activism. Facilitated by Celeste Bell, Singer/Writer.

- **Short Film Screenings: Cinema, Art, and the Environment**
- **Thursday 11 July, 6:00 - 8:00pm**

These films highlight the engagement of African filmmakers with issues of the environment; and its relationship to and impact on the quality of life. The films will be introduced and discussed by June Givanni and Imruh Bakari.

- *Pumzi* (2009, Kenya, 21 mins) – An Afrofuturistic film set thirty-five years after the water war, World War III.

- *A Long Dry Season* (2009, Ghana, Creative Storm, 13 mins) - Explores the impact of climate change, charting the impact of rising temperatures and decreasing rainfall on women and communities.

- *Ghana's Plastic Waste Menace* (2009, Ghana, Creative Storm, 13 mins) - A roving journalist investigates the menace of plastic waste in Ghana.

- *Environmental Patrol Strikes Again!* (2008, Ghana, Young Film Makers Workshop, 6 mins) The no-nonsense patrol team responds to another environmental crisis in Accra, this time the dumping of refuse and waste at the Korle Lagoon, one of Accra's most polluted sites.

## Suffragette history in Victoria Park

# THE WOMEN'S HALL GARDEN PARTY

 Celebrating the East London  
Federation of Suffragettes 



with live music, dancing, singing, stalls,  
exhibitions & workshops

**Sunday 14 July, 2pm-5pm**

**Victoria Park Bandstand**

Alternative Arts have organised this fantastic free event in order to ensure the achievements of the East London suffragettes are honoured in the same park where over a hundred years ago they held their rallies and drills. There will be live music and singing, stalls, activities and much more. Free - just turn up and bring a picnic!

We will have a stall featuring further information and you will also be able to get your hands on a free, full colour booklet version of our panels from **The Women's Hall** exhibition last year which told their story. It has been printed especially for this occasion in response to the many requests we had to do so! Four Corners will also be selling a booklet they have produced featuring Norah Smyth's photographs of East London Suffragettes published to coincide with their exhibition of her work earlier this year.

## Archive collection update

**By Natasha Luck, Heritage Officer (Archives)**

### **Peter Dobson's research records relating to Cornelius McCarthy (P/MCC/3)**

For a fortnight in April-May postgraduate student Zach Schieferstein joined the team for the annual archives cataloguing placement which we host in conjunction with UCL. During his placement Zach catalogued material deposited over the past year by Stan Lloyd on behalf of his late partner, the author Peter Dobson (1940-2017). These records relate to Mr. Dobson's research about his friend, Stepney born artist Cornelius McCarthy (1935-2009), including material for his biography *'Radiant affinities: the life and work of Cornelius McCarthy'* (2015) and relating to an exhibition he curated at THLHLA in 2015: *'Radiant Affinities: Artworks by Cornelius McCarthy'*.

The material also includes some artwork by Cornelius, significantly two large portfolios which contain a range of work dating back to the early 1950s, and an important set of indexes to McCarthy's artwork. Four of the six indexes were created by the artist himself and two, a 'Thematic Index' and a 'Supplementary catalogue', were compiled by Peter Dobson.

The records have now been added to the existing archive we hold of Cornelius McCarthy's artwork (P/MCC), 62 sketchbooks deposited in 2013 by the artist's partner, Alec Ayres (1929-2015). They make a valuable addition to an important collection and no doubt they will be of great benefit to those interested in studying Cornelius' life and career and but also to anyone with an interest in art, particularly those studying artists, such as Cornelius, specialising in the male form. We are grateful to Zach for his help in cataloguing Peter Dobson's records and would also like to say a special note of thanks to Stan Lloyd for his assistance throughout the deposit and cataloguing process and to Cornelius' friend and fellow artist, Terry Cowley, for helping us to identify and date artwork contained within the portfolios.



*UCL student Zach Schieferstein repackaging P/MCC/3*

**Some other archive items recently catalogued - visit us to consult these!**

**P/MIS/482:**

This beautifully crafted album contains a real wealth of information (captioned photographs, some documents, press cuttings) relating to Harry Gosling Infants School, Henriques Street, E.1., from the 1970s-1990s. The album concludes in 1997, in 1998 the Infant School and

the Junior School were amalgamated to become Harry Gosling Primary School. The album was compiled in 1997 by the late Myrtle Hurrell, a former headteacher at Harry Gosling Infants School (1972-1997).

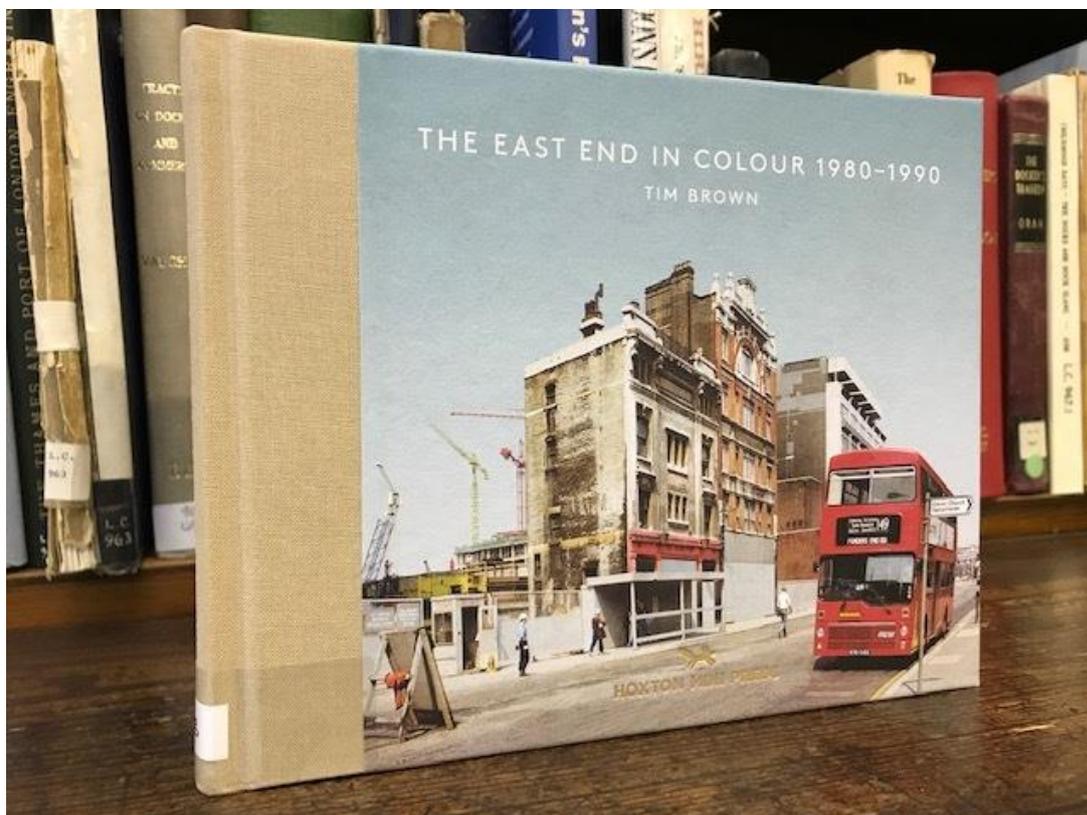
**S/SRN:**

The Stepney Relief in Need Charity was set up by a Charity Commissioners' Order dated 25th July 1977 which amalgamated a number of smaller charities that held the same aims. Its remit is to make grants to individuals in need who are resident within the area of the former London Metropolitan Borough of Stepney. This collection consists of minutes from meetings of the Trustees of Stepney Relief in Need Charity and its predecessors dating from 1885-1994.

**P/MIS/483**

Robert Golden's records relating to his friend Cornelius McCarthy dating from the 1970s-1980s, including fourteen handwritten letters from Cornelius and two artworks given to him by the artist.

## New book for sale



***The East End in Colour 1980-1990* by Tim Brown**

Welcome to the first instalment of our new regular feature in which we highlight a book from our local history library. This issue we're looking at Tim Brown's *The East End in Colour 1980-1990* which was published earlier this year by Hoxton Mini Press.

This book is the much-anticipated follow-up to last year's *The East End in Colour 1960-1980*, a co-production with Tower Hamlets Local History Library and Archives which reproduced a selection of images from our slides collection by local photographer David Granick. Like its predecessor, this collection was edited by Chris Dorley-Brown and provides a unique full-colour glimpse of East London during a time of change which is all too often depicted in grainy monochrome.

Brown's photographs cover a wider geographic area than Granick's, taking in Silvertown, Leyton, and Stratford as well as parts of Tower Hamlets, but it is his images of London's Docklands during the construction of Canary Wharf and the DLR which provide the greatest interest. The book can be consulted in our reading room, and if you like what you see you

can take home a copy for the reduced price of £15.00.

## Launch event: Bangladeshi squatters

**Wednesday, 3 July 2019, 6.30pm-8.30pm**

**Kobi Nazrul Primary School**

**Settles Street, London E1 1JP**

We are pleased to be supporting this independent project by East End Connection, funded by the National Lottery Heritage Fund. Local volunteers are being sought to join the project which will reveal the struggles for decent housing by Bangladeshi squatters living in Myrdle Street and Parfett Street during the 1970s - 1990s. Project volunteers will attend a research workshop here and also carry out oral history interviews which will eventually be added to our collections.

Join us at the launch to find out more where there will be presentations from Soyful Alom (housing campaigner and a founder member of Sylhet Housing Co-op), Jon Hems (a founder member of Sylhet Housing Co-op), Terry Fitzpatrick (squattening organiser) and many more.

## Stocktake closure

We will be closed for a week from Monday 22 - Friday 27 July 2019 for stocktaking. We will not be answering enquiries received via phone or email during this time.

## Changes to Reading Room procedures

Firstly, we would like to inform readers that archive items must be ordered 45 minutes prior to closing time. This is to allow you enough time to look at the material and staff enough time to reshelve it before the building closes.

If you would like to access the current electoral register, you are now required to complete a form. This is to comply with Data Protection legislation.

Finally, we have introduced an ordering slip for Library items. They can be found at the Help Desk and at the catalogue PC. We hope this will make the process for ordering materials easier and simpler.

Thank you for your patience and co-operation as we continue to improve our service.

## Opening hours and contact details

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:

- [localhistory@towerhamlets.gov.uk](mailto:localhistory@towerhamlets.gov.uk)
- 020 7364 1290
- [ideastore.co.uk/local-history](http://ideastore.co.uk/local-history)