

# Tower Hamlets Local History Library & Archives



## Getting in Touch during Lockdown

### Temporary building closure

Due to new government [national lockdown restrictions](#), from 5 November all confirmed appointments for visits at the Tower Hamlets Local History Library & Archives are suspended until further notice. **Our building is therefore now closed to public access.** Before our closure, we were delighted to welcome **21 readers** onsite from 29 September and 3 November during our period of re-opening.

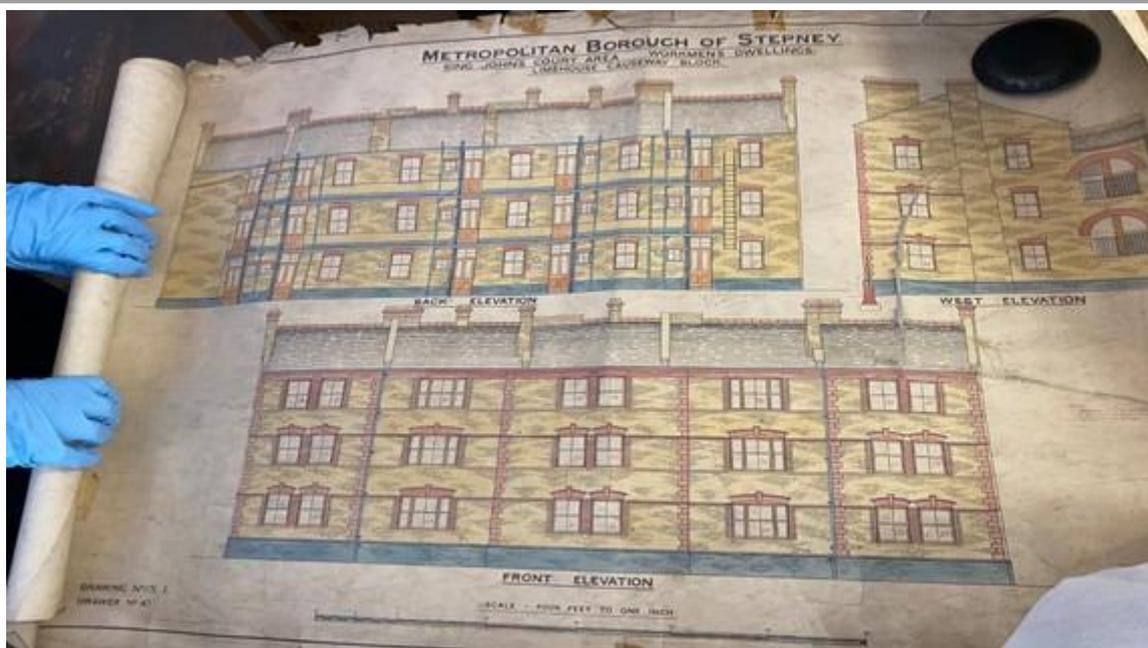
Researchers are welcome to book a provisional appointment to use our Reading Room in December. To do so:

- Please email us to let us know up to three preferences for slots on **Tuesdays** or **Fridays** at the following times: **Morning:** 11am - 1.30pm **Afternoon:** 2pm - 4.30pm

- We are taking bookings for the period: Friday 4 December – Friday 18 December.
- You may book two slots in the same day but no more than two per month.
- Please note that appointments in December are provisional, subject to change according to further local and national government announcements.
- We will keep you updated if your rescheduled appointment is affected.
- You will need to [pre-order](#) items from the collection that you would like to look at.
- Not sure what we've got? Have a look at our [online catalogue](#).

Our service continues [online](#). This includes access to digital items, events and updates on social media.

If you have any queries please email us at [localhistory@towerhamlets.gov.uk](mailto:localhistory@towerhamlets.gov.uk) and we'd be happy to help. We look forward to welcoming you back to Tower Hamlets Local History Library & Archives soon.



## Explore Your Archive 2020

### Explore your Archive: Unravelling Building Plans

Thursday 3 December 2020 5.00-6.30pm

**ONLINE | Zoom**

Join us and explore rarely seen building plans and building control files from the Tower Hamlets Local History Library and Archives. Staff will show highlights which illustrate the research possibilities these records offer local historians, planners and developers. The talk will also outline how this unique collection came to us and the conservation challenges it presents.

**Booking Essential | [localhistory@towerhamlets.gov.uk](mailto:localhistory@towerhamlets.gov.uk)**

Attendees will be sent online joining instructions a few days prior to the event.

**Image:** Elevation Plan of the King John's Workmen's Dwellings, Limehouse Causeway, 1904

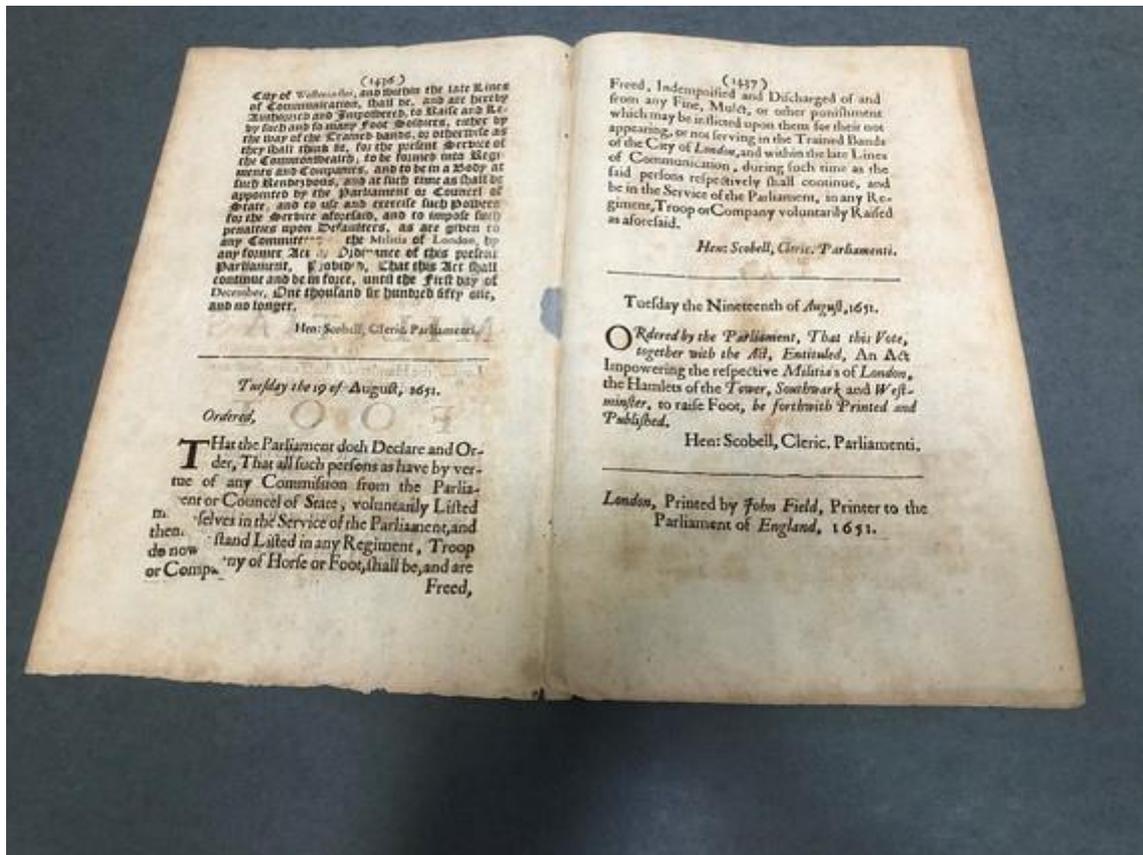


## Artists announced for Bangladesh 50 Years

We are pleased to announce the appointment of Ruhul Abdin as Lead Artist for the Bangladesh 50 Years Project. Ruhul founded participatory design and architecture studio [Paraa](#) and is based between Dhaka, Bangladesh and Bow, Tower Hamlets. Ruhul is also a portrait artist and has created works sensitively representing Bengali people and capturing events as they take place. Ruhul will be working with 15 British Bangladeshi Citizen Researchers to explore the significance of the 1971 Bangladesh Liberation War through collections held at the Tower Hamlets Local History Library & Archives. The researchers' findings will inform a public artwork produced by Ruhul to be displayed outdoors in Tower Hamlets.

Ruhul is joined by the [Rainbow Collective](#) a documentary production and training company based in Brick Lane. Hannan Majid and Richard York, the duo behind the company will work to capture the discussions and explorations of the Citizen Researchers which will form the digital legacy of the project, hosted on the [National Portrait Gallery](#) website.

**Image:** Kamalapur Exhibition, Beckton. Courtesy of Ruhul Abdin.



## Newly Catalogued Collections

During October staff were able to return to our physical collections and prioritise cataloguing. Some highlights from recent catalogue updates include:

### Act 'impowering the respective militias of London, the Hamlets of the Tower, Southwark and Westminster to raise foot'.

This act enabled the right to recruit men from the surrounding hamlets in the East End at the very end of the Civil War. Published in 1651 the by House of Commons of Oliver Cromwell's English Commonwealth, the act is among the early printed references we hold to the phrase which gave the modern London Borough of Tower Hamlets its name. This newly acquired pamphlet (reference: [LC15107](#)) joins related militia acts already held in the Library.

### Bethnal Green Borough War Memorial Committees

After the First World War (1914-1918) the Metropolitan Borough of Bethnal Green worked with local organisations to plan a war memorial. The purpose of the memorial was to commemorate individuals from Bethnal Green who served their country and lost their lives. We hold signed minutes and fund papers relating to planning the war memorial (archive series reference: [L/BGM/A/28](#)).

In 1920 it was recommended that a War Memorial should take form of: - a Roll of Honour on vellum to record names of those who gave their lives in service to their country, to be available on public view in the library; - a stained glass window at the head of the staircase leading to the library's Reference Department and Lecture Hall; - a bronze tablet stating the particulars of the Memorial. A Bethnal Green War Memorial Fund was set up and handed to the Public Libraries Committee to provide the Memorial.

We hold a photocopy of index cards of the Bethnal Green Roll of Honour. The cards are alphabetical by surname and give address, name of unit and date of death.

(Library reference [LC6429](#) Class 082.3)

We also hold photographs of the restored stained glass window at Bethnal Green Central Library in 1950 (image references [P29187](#), [P29188](#) [P29189](#))

## Citizens Advice Bureau

This collection consists of records of Bethnal Green Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB) dating from 1942-1980s. Based at St Margaret's House, the branch like all CAB provided free advice to individuals on their rights and responsibilities and helped form policies for social change. Branches are ultimately governed by the National Association of Citizens Advice Bureau which was established in 1939.

There are minutes, reports, correspondence including papers on Bow branch and a brochure on the history of the CAB in Tower Hamlets published in circa 1989. Some records contain personal information and are therefore is subject to access restrictions under data protection. Explore more here [/CAB](#)

The Tower Hamlets Local History Library & Archives would like to acknowledge the gift of these records by the Citizens Advice Bureau.

## COVID Collecting Continues



We are still collecting submissions for our COVID Collecting project: "Making History: documenting coronavirus in the east end" and we want to hear from *you!*

Tower Hamlets Local History Library & Archives wants to create a lasting collective memory of our community's response to the COVID-19 crisis. As an archive it is our responsibility to not only preserve historic records from the past but collect and preserve the history of today to inform many generations to come.

This is an opportunity for anybody living or working in the borough to share their experiences of living through the pandemic with us.

What is life like for you during lockdown? How are you dealing with the situation? How are you passing your days?

Many will now be working or studying from home – how has this worked and how has it affected you? What are you missing; family, friends, food? If you are observing Ramadan, what does the lockdown mean for you? Key workers, how has your role changed? Are there positives to take away from this crisis?

By collecting your individual testimonies and documents, we can create an archive that will help future generations understand our lives and the environment we are currently living in and help them meet the challenges they may face.

If you want to get involved head over to our [website](#) for more information.

Image: Lockdown Dog P/COV/18/3

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## Contact us

### Contact Tower Hamlets Local History Library & Archives

- Email us on: [localhistory@towerhamlets.gov.uk](mailto:localhistory@towerhamlets.gov.uk)
- You can visit our website: <http://www.ideastore.co.uk/local-history>