

# Tower Hamlets Local History Library & Archives



## Poplar's 'Female Husband'

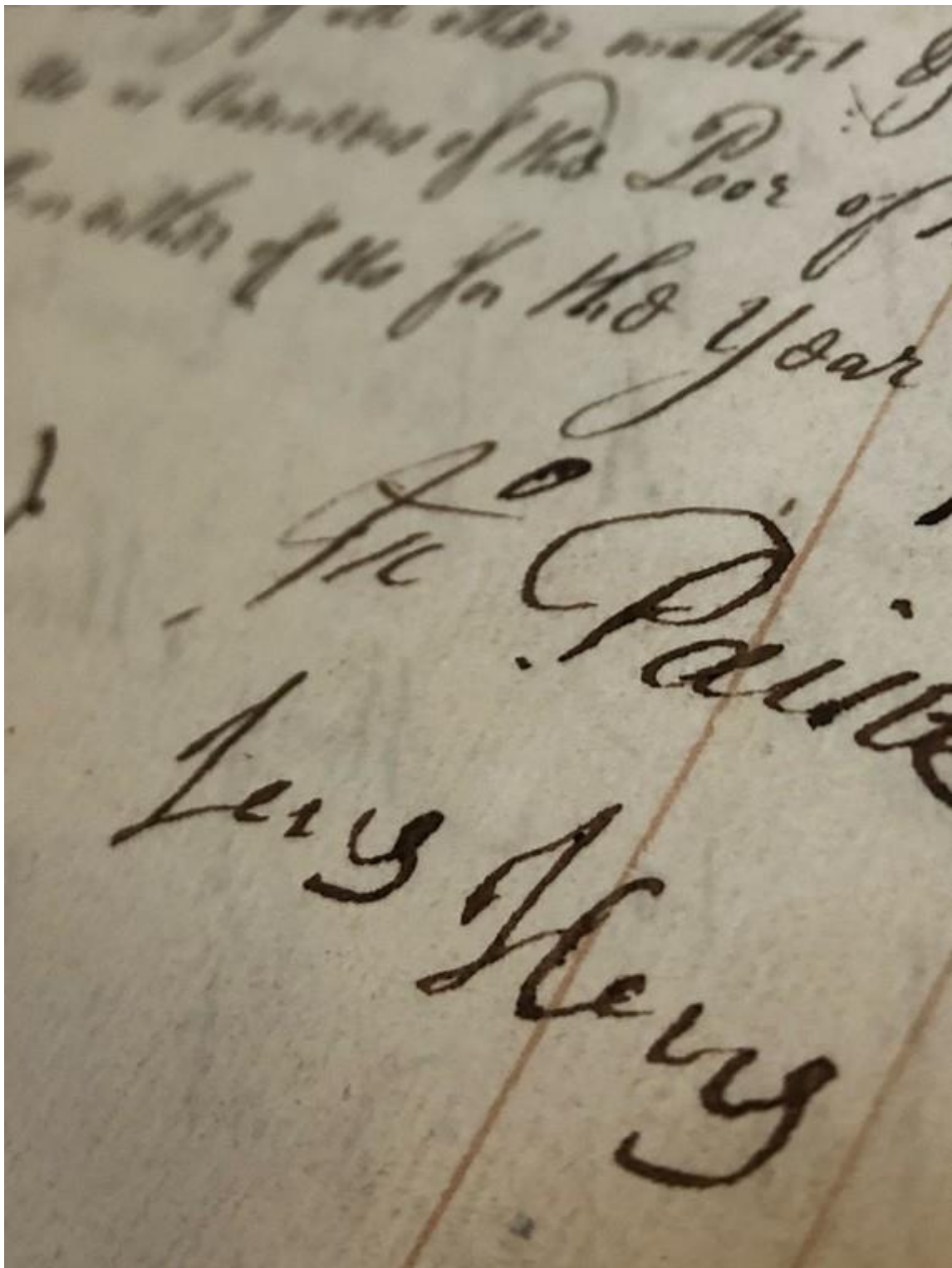
Wednesday 23 February, 5.30-7.00pm

### Online via Zoom

A scandal in 18th century Poplar has become world famous in LGBTQ+ history. But did you know that Tower Hamlets Local History Library & Archives holds unique records which provide tangible evidence of the East End's oldest queer pioneer?

Join Tamsin Bookey, Heritage Manager, in conversation with Francis Ray White (University of Westminster) and Ceara Holness-Crone (QMUL) to explore the story of **James Howe**, an upstanding member of the Hamlet of Blackwall and Poplar, who was exposed by blackmailers to have been born **Mary East**.

This is a free local history event taking place on Zoom, hosted and in partnership with [Tower Hamlets LGBT+ Community Forum](#). You must [book in advance on Eventbrite](#) to be sent the Zoom link.



Signature of James How(es), 1753, in the accounts book of the Hamlet of Poplar and Blackwall Churchwardens and Overseers of the Poor, 1744-1767. Ref. L/ASP/F/2/2.  
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## Local Landscapes

Our new exhibition | by Idea Store Visual Arts Learners



The streets, waterways, parks and buildings of Tower Hamlets are the subjects depicted in our new exhibition of recent artworks by students enrolled on [Idea Store Learning's Visual Arts](#) courses.

Trained by tutor Virginia Hawke, these local artists have been inspired to draw, paint, print or collage their own personal snapshots of the borough's landscape. Scenes range from landmarks as famous as the Tower of London and One Canada Square to more modest houses, flats and street markets. The Regent's Canal, River Thames, Victoria Park and Tower Hamlets Cemetery Park are also well represented.

A small selection of historic maps and other items from the collections of Tower Hamlets Local History Library & Archives relevant to each location have been presented alongside the artworks.

The exhibition is on view from today until early May 2022. For opening hours, see below.

Artists featured (alphabetically by surname): Linda Baker, Ahmed Choudhury, Mira Connolly, Mignol Gregory, Virginia Hawke, Roy Leader, Tom Lyddon, Lynn Mardell, Cathy Phillips, Natasha Sherman, Alie Smith, Stephen Walker.

## Layers of London



*A section from a newly digitised 1703 map by Joel Gascoyne showing Poplar and Blackwall.*

We're delighted to announce that the oldest maps in our collection have now been digitised and can be viewed online for free on the [Layers of London website](#).

Joel Gascoyne's 1703 maps of Stepney, Bethnal Green, Mile End Old Town and Limehouse are among the earliest maps to show the geography of London's East End in detail and are a treasure trove of information for local and family history researchers. They include:

- Beautiful pictorial illustrations of buildings, gardens, and natural features
- Names of landowners
- Descriptions of land use
- An index of street names, many of which do not appear on later maps

To explore historic maps of Tower Hamlets:

1. Go to <https://bit.ly/3sg7XUT> and check the 'Use this overlay' box to see Gascoyne's maps on a modern map of London
2. Check the 'Hide pins' box and select which of Gascoyne's map you wish to explore from the 'Overlay tools' menu
3. Zoom in and use the cross-fade tool to compare areas of the maps with how they look today

Finally, check out [our maps user guide](#) to learn more about Gascoyne and the many interesting and unique maps in our collection.

## Contact us

**We are open and waiting to hear from you!**

- Email us: [localhistory@towerhamlets.gov.uk](mailto:localhistory@towerhamlets.gov.uk)
- Visit our website: <http://www.ideastore.co.uk/local-history>
- Phone (during opening hours only): 020 7364 1290

### Reading Room Opening hours

- Tuesday 10.30am-4pm
- Wednesday 10.30am-4pm
- Thursday 10.30am-7pm

First and third Saturdays of every month (except Easter Saturday):

- Saturday 10am-5pm

Additionally our **Exhibition Hall** is open 10am-5pm Monday-Friday, plus the Saturdays and Thursday evenings above, for anyone wanting to see the **Local Landscapes** exhibition.

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