



# Tower Hamlets Local History Library & Archives



February 2016

## **The Match Women's Strike 1988**

Alison Marchant's *Wall Paper History* revisited

23 February - 7 May 2016



In 1888 over one thousand women and girls employed at the Bryant & May match factory in Bow successfully went on strike to improve their working conditions. In 1988, East End artist **Alison Marchant** marked the centenary of this pivotal moment in feminist and labour history with an exhibition and a range of public installations across the local area, which she had researched here at Tower Hamlets Local History Library & Archives and at the Museum of Labour History, then at Limehouse.

In 2016, to mark Women's History Month, Alison Marchant and Tower Hamlets Local History Library & Archives are re-staging her 1988 exhibition, which includes original prints, photographs, etchings and collages inspired by archival imagery. Produced originally for Rochdale Art Gallery, the work has never before been exhibited in Tower Hamlets. A programme of free talks, workshops and a guided history walk - detailed below - will explore women's history in the Victorian East End, and provide a platform to explore and discuss feminist cultural activism in the 1980s and today.

The exhibition will be open to the public at Tower Hamlets Local History Library & Archives, Monday-Friday 9am-5pm, and on Saturdays and late evenings only when events are taking place - see below for upcoming dates and times.

### **Exhibition Launch**

**Saturday 5 March, 2.00-3.15pm**

We are delighted that Sarah Edge (Professor of Photography and Cultural Studies at the University of Ulster, and member of its Centre for Media Research) will give a presentation to formally launch this exhibition.

While Curator of Rochdale Art Gallery in 1988, Sarah commissioned Alison Marchant to produce the original *Wall Paper History* exhibition along with new work by other feminist artists. She will

give an illustrated talk about Alison's work and feminist cultural practice then and now. There will be a Q&A and an opportunity to discuss the exhibition and issues raised. All welcome, no need to book. Tea and coffee provided.

### **Rebellious Women of the East End**

**Saturday 19 March, 2.00-4.00pm**

This double bill of talks focusses on some of the most important women of the Victorian East End:

>> East London Suffragettes with Sarah Jackson

>> Minnie Lansbury with Janine Booth

Just drop in, no need to book.

### **Feminist Printmaking Workshop**

**Saturday 2 April, 1.00-4.00pm**

A free creative printmaking workshop with [Rudy Loewe](#) - design and print a poster inspired by iconic and inspirational women. Booking essential.

### **Women's Labour in the Home**

**Thursday 7 April 6.00-7.00pm**

Dr Frances Holliss, Emeritus Reader in Architecture at London Metropolitan University will talk about women's work in the home from the medieval era to the present day, with special reference to the East End. Just drop in, no need to book.

### **The Match Women's Strike, 1888**

**Saturday 16 April, 2.00-3.00pm**

We welcome Louise Raw, author of *Striking A Light: The Bryant & May Matchwomen and their place in history*, to discuss her research on the women and girls behind the famous strike. Just drop in, no need to book.

### **Bow History Walk**

**Saturday 7 May, 2.00-4.00pm**

A guided history walk around Bow with Tower Hamlets Borough Archivist Malcolm Barr-Hamilton. Booking essential.

## **Other upcoming events**

### **History Hoppers**

**Wednesday 17 February, 2.30-4.30pm - THIS WEEK!**

Come along to our monthly drop-in get-together, where participants will have the chance to explore a variety of archival material relating to the history of the local area. Topics change every

month and have included music halls, war, housing and protest. Refreshments provided. Free, no booking required.

*Future History Hoppers dates:*  
Wednesday 16 March, 2.30-4.30pm  
Wednesday 20 April, 2.30-4.30pm

## LGBT History in Tower Hamlets Saturday 20 February, 2.00-4.00pm - **THIS WEEK!**

Come along to our FREE LGBT history workshop, where you'll be able to view a variety of material from our collections illustrating the history of LGBT people in the borough, including books, newspaper cuttings, pamphlets and original archive material. Find out about the Pride Festival held in Victoria Park during 1995, pioneering LGBT organisations and local campaigns against Section 28. There's no need to book, just drop in! Refreshments will be provided.

## World War One Exhibition Launch Thursday 3 March, 6.00-7.30pm

Join us for the launch of the 1916-1918 Poplar Military Service Tribunal Register - which records details of appeals against conscription from men living or working in the former borough of Poplar. There will be a demonstration of how to search this newly available online resource, digitised with the help of many volunteers and support from the Heritage Lottery Fund. Gary Haines, will give a talk on the impact of conscription on the home front and you can be the first to check out our new pop-up exhibition *World War One in Tower Hamlets* before it goes on tour throughout the borough and pick up a copy of a detailed guide to the WW1 sources in our collections. Free - no booking required.

## Important notice

Our first floor reading room is closed to the public temporarily due to a partial ceiling collapse. This means that the local history library collections - books, maps, photographs, cuttings, pamphlets and newspapers on microfilm - are inaccessible to both staff and public.

Please contact us if you have an enquiry and check our e-newsletter, website or social media for updates on when we expect to be able to reopen. We are offering an appointment-only service one day per week for those wishing to access the **archives** collection which is unaffected by the ceiling issue - see our website for details of upcoming dates and how to make an appointment.

The Local History exhibition and events programme is going ahead as normal in the ground floor hall and education room.

## Contact Us

### LIBRARY DEFIANT IN GAY BOOKS BAN



Picture: receiving the books to Chief Librarian Anne Cunningham (centre) with Campaign members, from left: Paul Barlow, Sebastian Sandy, and Patsy Blue.

A GLOBE Town library is defying the controversial Section 28 of the new Local Government Act by displaying Cuban and gay literature on its shelves.

Five books were presented to the Bancroft Road Library, Mile End on Friday, by members of Tower Hamlets' Lesbian and Gay Campaign Group.

The Section seeks to prevent local councils actively promoting homosexuality.

The books were: *The Estuary* by David Essex, *Martin* by Tom Wakefield, *The Wall of Loneliness* by Wakefield, *Martin* by Tom Wakefield, *Martin* by Tom Wakefield, *Martin* by Tom Wakefield.

Local people will, and are, rejecting the implications of Section 28.

The move is supported by members of Globe Town Neighbourhood Committee. Said

Maunier by E. M. Foster. The latter two have been made into major films.

Said a Campaign spokesperson: "This action is to show the urgency and danger of the Act and to show local people are willing to break the law when faced with Government censorship."

"Local people will, and are, rejecting the implications of Section 28."

The move is supported by members of Globe Town Neighbourhood Committee. Said

"It is something we are actively encouraging."

"This is just the beginning. We shall run an exhibition at Globe Town First Stop Shop later this month to coincide with Gay Pride week."

Local trade unions NALGO, NUT, NATFHE, and the TGWU also agreed to defy the Section following a meeting last week.

And Eugene Doberry, a teacher at Marybeth School, Marpleth Street, Bethnal Green, along with colleagues, will be wearing badges opposing Section 28 during the coming week to support the campaign.

Bancroft Library makes the local press in the late 1980s

Send us your enquiry via email, phone or letter at

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