

ALWAYS FOLLOW UR DREAMS!!

HOW IMMIGRATION HAS SHAPED THE LANDSCAPE OF LONDON'S EAST END

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The migration of people is as old as the bible. The Hebrews were searching for the 'land flowing with milk and honey'. Romans, Goths and Mongols crossed geographic and territorial boundaries in search of an empire.

Over the centuries successive waves of immigrants have left their mark on London's East End. All were following their dreams.



La Neuve Eglise on the corner of Brick Lane and Church Street (now Fournier Street) was completed in 1743.

As Chapel, Church, Synagogue, Mosque it has remained the spiritual centre of Spitalfields. It has marked the passage of time and the movement of people through the place.



Rev. Mr. Covenant, a minister of the Fournier Street, French Church, was the first occupant of the house in 1759.

By 1911 three families lived there: Barnett Paradise a fur dealer from Russia and his wife; Davis Byer a china and drapery traveler from Austria; and Lazurus Carmel a furrier from Romania with his wife Roske Leah.



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In the 1800's Limehouse was the natural landfall for ships coming into London. It is here that foreign sailors would have been set down, close to the main thoroughfare of Narrow Street.

Lascars, Chinese, Moors and Africans thronged this street, their faces hidden under exotic hats and turbans. It was a place of otherness, a place to be feared. It was well known that the navy was a 'receptacle for villains, ruffians and murderers'.



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In 1836, a report on the state of the Irish in Britain claimed that whilst Irish workers had 'possession of all the lowest departments of manual labour', they were an essential part of the workforce.

John Nash was the architect of the Regents Canal and James Morgan, the engineer, Irish navvies dug the eight miles through the London clay with pick and shovel.



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In 1850 the British merchant navy took on around 10,000 lascars. Because of the restrictions of the Navigation Acts, half were dumped on arrival and left to fend for themselves. In that same year it was reported that 40 'sons of India' were found dead of cold and hunger in London alone.

In 1857 the Strangers Home for Asiatics, Africans and South Sea Islanders was built on the initiative of a number of missionary societies. It served both as a shelter for lascars and a centre for religious instruction.



Between 1880 and 1920 140,000 Jews fled Eastern Europe as refugees and settled in the Britain. Many more passed through on their way to other destinations.

With few exceptions those coming to England arrived without knowledge of the language or local customs. Their inexperience threw them on the mercy of any one they met, and all too often they fell an easy prey to 'riverside crimps and sharks'. The Jews' Temporary Shelter at 82 Leman Street offered protection.

Entrance to office now occupying site of 82 Leman Street November 2013



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In 1889, Charles Booth observed that newcomers had gradually taken over whole districts including Hanbury Street, Fashion Street and Pelham Street and that they 'introduced new trades as well as new habits and they live and crowd together'.

By 1900 the population density in Spitalfields was around 300 per acre. The figure for London was closer to 50.



In 1901 there were 15 kosher butchers on Wentworth Street.

At Purim, the market was said to have the gaiety of a Roman Carnival with hilarious crowds besieging shops crammed with stuffed monkeys and bolas.



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Chinatown is central to Sax Rohmer's Fu Manchu novels published between 1915 and 1920. An evil Chinese genius plots world domination from his lair, hidden in the dark alleys around Limehouse Causeway and Pennyfields.

It was portrayed as a dangerous place with drugs, gambling and prostitution.



Sir Oswald Mosley had declared his intention of marching through London's East End on Sunday 4th October 1936.

100,000 people of all races and religions united to block his path. Protesters clashed with the police who tried to clear a path for the march. Cable Street was barricaded and successfully defended. The battle cry was 'He shall not pass!'

Cable Street, looking East from junction with Leman Street November 2013



Lascar cooks have served on British ships for over 200 years and in 1810 Sake Dean Mahomet, a Bengali traveller, surgeon and entrepreneur, founded the first Indian restaurant in London .

Between 1971 and 2011 there was a roughly eight fold increase in the number of Indian restaurants in Britain.

In Olympic year Banglatown at the southern end of Brick Lane was declared Curry Capital 2012 by the London Games organisers.



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In 1978, Margaret Thatcher claimed to understand why English men and women might feel their country was being overrun by immigrants. Shortly afterwards, the National Front moved its central offices to the East End.

National Front Activists handed out their racist propaganda from their 'pitch' at the top end of Brick Lane close to the Bethnal Green Road.

Bethnal Green Road, at junction with Brick Lane November 2013



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In the 1990's as the civil war raged in Somalia thousands of refugees flocked to Britain. By 2011 over 100,000 had arrived and many settled in the East End.

A Tower Hamlets survey in 2009 revealed that residents who are unemployed are four times more likely to rate their English skills as poor.



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On the night of Thursday 4th May 1978, a young Bengali textile worker Altab Ali was murdered. The racially motivated attack took place on the corner of Adler Street and the Whitechapel Road.

In 2012, the Institute of Race Relations reported that there has been an average of five racist killings a year since 1993. The Ministry of Justice said that it is determined to do more.



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