

Hollywood star boosts Suffragete clock plea

by MICHAEL PARKER

THE campaign to save a landmark memorial clock commemorating brave East End heroine Minnie Lansbury has gathered important celebrity support.

Actress Angela Lansbury, best known for her role as mystery writer Jessica Fletcher in the television series *Murder She Wrote*, has stumped up cash towards the estimated £12,000 needed to repair the Minnie Lansbury Memorial Clock, mounted high on Electric House in Bow Road. Minnie Lansbury, suffragette, socialist and councillor, was the first wife of Angela's father Edgar Lansbury.

Diana Beattie, director of the Heritage of London Trust which works to save and restore landmarks across London, said she was "astonished" to find that very few people had heard of Minnie, who was "an extraordinary woman."

She said: "I phoned the Museum of London, the Museum in Docklands, the London Archives—none of them had a picture of her. Only Bancroft local history library in Tower Hamlets had any details on her."

"Every time the wind blows hard I worry that it might fall off the walls. I think we would really let

London down if we let these monuments deteriorate further."

Born in Whitechapel in 1889, Minnie was one of the 30 Labour 'rebel councillors' who in 1921 staged a remarkable protest against the government in support of the desperately poor people of Poplar.

During the Poplar Rates Strike, the councillors refused to raise the borough's tax rate when the government reneged on its promise to pay for job-creating public works—and were sent to prison for making their stand.

Conditions in prison were terrible and Minnie died six weeks after her release, aged just 32. Thousands lined the streets at her funeral.

The clock, an ornate wrought iron clock with three faces, two of which still tell the correct time, is hung on Electric House, a council-owned building. But Tower Hamlets council has no cash to put towards repairs, and although the Heritage Trust has donated £2,000 more cash needs to be found.

Diana added: "Every war memorial is a memory of the sacrifices our forebears have had to make, and similarly in the East End there is a record of industrious and inventive people—often immigrants here—who have left their mark on our country."

"They are part of our history, regardless of which political party they came from."

EAST LONDON ADVERTISER

5 April 2007

TIME PIECE:
Angela Lansbury is helping to fund clock restoration (Inset) Minnie Lansbury on her way to prison.

