British Chinese heritage project permanently archived in the Library of Birmingham

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The project blog, Chinese Lives in Birmingham, has been re-launched with an eight minute documentary-style video depicting the project journey.

Other project outputs include; a booklet, DVD, bilingual hardback photobooks and a visual exhibition as well as audio recordings of the interviews - all of which were archived for future generations to look back upon, in both hard and soft copy formats.

A legacy project for the city, it was created to capture the hidden histories of Birmingham's Chinese community after being awarded a grant of £35,600 from the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF).

Anna Yim, CEO of Chinese Community Centre Birmingham (CCC-B), said: "We are delighted to have created this historical project and that the library archives can now help reflect the lives of individual migrants and British Chinese, as well as the development of the Chinese community in Birmingham.

"We would like to thank everyone for their hard work, especially all the volunteers who have contributed over 1,610 hours, without whom, this project would not have been possible. We hope to build upon the success of this first project, pending funding, to take the heritage project on even further and help allow the Chinese community here to have a voice and be proud of their heritage."

More than 25 volunteers were involved in over 1,610 hours of work. One volunteer even donated nine months' worth (approximately 1,080 hours) of pro-bono time to the project.

Project participants encompassed pillars of Birmingham's Chinese community including; Mr Woon Wing Yip OBE and Professor Rayson Huang CBE – the eldest participant, who turned 95 years old this month.

The project featured the owners of Birmingham's Chinese businesses including; Wing Yip Superstores (Nechells), Chung Ying Group (Wrottesley St, Thorp St and Colmore Row), Wing Wah Group (Arcadian, Hurst St and Nechells), Cafe Soya (Arcadian and Upper Dean St) and Ian Henery & Co (Arcadian and Willenhall).

A first of its type in the West Midlands, the project was officially launched at The Cube on 15 May and culminated with a free, pop-up exhibition for the public at The Barber Institute of Fine Arts from 17 May to 8 June 2014.

To celebrate the project completion, the pop-up exhibition will be displayed at Wing Yip Superstores (Nechells) for 4 weeks between Saturday 20 September and Friday 17 October 2014. Schools and organisations are welcome to borrow the pop-up exhibition from CCC-B for educational purposes.

Reyahn King, Head of Heritage Lottery Fund West Midlands, said: "Bringing together people of all backgrounds and experiences, this project has proved a valuable opportunity for the Chinese community to explore their shared heritage and create a unique and accessible insight into their lasting cultural and economic legacy in Birmingham."

Notes to editors

About the British Chinese Heritage Project: Chinese Lives in Birmingham
The 'British Chinese Heritage Project: Chinese Lives in Birmingham' is a historical project that looks at the lives of individual migrants and British Chinese, as well as the development of the Chinese community in Birmingham. This is a Chinese Community Centre Birmingham project, a first of its type in the West Midlands.

For the purposes of the grant application, the steering group is made up of external organisations, but is operationally managed by CCC-B.

Members of the British Chinese Heritage Project Steering group include; Library of Birmingham, The Barber Institute of Fine Arts, University of Birmingham, Birmingham City Council and Southside BID.

About the Chinese Community Centre Birmingham
Based in Digbeth, the Chinese Community Centre Birmingham (CCC-B) play a vital part in supporting the well-being and social care of the community, as well as promoting cultural connections with their enrichment programme. Established in 1977, CCC-B provides a range of crucial services such as; cancer support, elderly care support, advice and advocacy support, health and well-being advice, as well as interpretation and translation services.