

Chinese seamen learning how to handle an Oerlikon gun at the Gunnery School For Inter-allied Merchant Seamen, 1942 Wikimedia Commons

The little-known history of Chinese seamen who were secretly deported from the UK after the Second World War is to be revealed, thanks to National Lottery funding.

In 1946, the Liverpool Constabulary carried out orders from the British government to deport Chinese sailors in Merseyside, many of whom had travelled to England as part of the war effort. They were forcibly repatriated to China.

> More than 1,300 Chinese sailors were put on specially assigned ships and sent to the Far East without notice.

The wives and children of the men believed they had been deserted. It wasn't until the release of declassified records 50 years later that it was revealed that more than 1,300 Chinese sailors had been put on specially assigned ships and sent to the Far East without notice.

Now Edge Hill University, working with local community group The Dragons of the Pool, will document the stories of the surviving children of the seamen for the first time.

The Dragons of the Pool

Thanks to a £10,000 HLF grant, this year-long project will record video interviews with the seamen's descendants, now in their seventies, and capture this important part of British Chinese history for future generations. The project's research will be then be archived in Birkenhead Library.

The project will culminate in an exhibition at the Williamson Art Gallery in Birkenhead, inviting the local community to share their stories of the Liverpool Eurasian community. Chinese seamen began to settle in Liverpool from the end of the 1880s and by the start of the 20th century Liverpool had the largest settlement of Chinese in the UK.

It is hoped the project will help participants to find out the stories behind their fathers' disappearance and educate the wider community about the shocking events of 1946.



Volunteers from the Happiness and Joy at Mid-Autumn Moon Festival project



s diverse heritage?

Alfred Chung

How can young people help older generations reveal the stories of our past?