

Manchester Chinese archive wins national award

24/08/2011

At an award ceremony today at MOSI (Museum of Science and Industry, Manchester) the volunteers who gave their time, enthusiasm and skills were praised for their outstanding commitment to a genuinely innovative and important community project. Tribute was also paid to the role of the Manchester institutions involved: Manchester Chinese Centre, Manchester Archives & Local Studies (MALS) and MOSI.

The Manchester Chinese Archive project tells the story of the Chinese community in Greater Manchester. Over more than a year, a diverse group of volunteers conducted over 55 oral history interviews and undertook their own research. They photographed and filmed community events and catalogued photographs and documents which were donated or loaned by the community. An exhibition was developed – which is on show, free of charge, at MOSI until 16 January 2012 – as well as a [website](#) and digital photograph archive, a publication and a series of learning events.

At the end of the project in early summer 2011 the Manchester Chinese Archive was deposited with MALS, from where the volunteers will continue to work on the project. The judges of the annual award marked the project very highly on all areas but particularly praised the sustainability of both the partnerships that had been forged and the ongoing work on the archive in its new permanent home.

Katy Goodrum, Chair of the Archives and Records Association (UK & Ireland), said: "This project is a shining example of what volunteers, working in partnership with archivists and record keepers, can achieve for their community. Thanks to them, memories are captured, and unique documents and photographs are safe. And the project does not end here: in its new home volunteers continue to add to it, learn from it and share it widely."

The UK archive sector is significantly enhanced by the work of volunteers and it is committed to a partnership between volunteers and professional archive workers in which archives gain much-needed extra resource and volunteers use their existing skills in a rewarding environment and gain new ones. More than a quarter of a million volunteer hours are given to the UK's archives each year.

Councillor Mike Amesbury, Manchester City Council's Executive Member for Culture and Leisure, said: "What a terrific opportunity this project has been for those volunteers to be part of something as significant to the Chinese community and Manchester as the archive project. Every one of them should be proud to receive this award as their work has opened up the little known, but incredibly rich history of the Chinese community in Manchester. I hope this was a rewarding experience for all of them."

The Manchester Chinese Archive project was made possible by an award of £48,900 from the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF).

Sara Hilton, Head of Heritage Lottery Fund North West, said "At HLF, we are delighted that this important and innovative project has been named Volunteering Project of the year. The dedication of local volunteers is vital in preserving our heritage for future generations. By getting involved, people of all ages and from all walks of life are learning new skills and being given a voice in deciding what is important about our past, and how we can take this forward."

Notes to editors

The National Archive Volunteering Project Award

The annual awards are led by the [Archives and Records Association](#) (UK & Ireland) in partnership with the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council, the Scottish Council on Archives, The National Archives, and the Welsh Government.

The award celebrates volunteering in the archive sector; recognises good practice in welcoming volunteers into the archive sector; shows how volunteering can help contribute to building stronger communities at a local level, and support community cohesion.

Manchester Chinese Centre

The Manchester Chinese Centre is a non-profit making, non-political and non-religious, charitable organization. It is committed to providing the community service for Chinese speakers and people who are interested in Chinese Culture in Greater Manchester, including an Education and Drop-in service. Manchester Chinese Centre runs a Supplementary School, a Sports Club, an Art society, an information service centre and the Manchester Chinese Archive.

Manchester Archives & Local Studies (MALS)

Manchester Archives and Local Studies holds a wide range of material relating to the history of the Manchester area, its people and communities. It is part of Manchester Library and Information Service, Manchester City Council. It is currently based at the Greater Manchester County Record Office and the Manchester Room @ City Library whilst Manchester Central Library undergoes a major programme of renovation and refurbishment. When Manchester Central Library re-opens in December 2013 it will include a wonderful, purpose-built showcase and repository for the region's archive and family history.

MOSI (Museum of Science and Industry, Manchester)

MOSI is one of Manchester's foremost attractions and is based in the buildings of the world's oldest surviving passenger railway station. MOSI works with community groups throughout Greater Manchester and hosts a changing community exhibition programme in the Community Exhibition Gallery. The Manchester Chinese Archive project documents the first known records of Chinese people in Manchester, through to cultural information and Chinese cuisine.

Josie Sykes, Community Development Officer at MOSI comments: "Throughout the project the volunteers showed such enthusiasm and dedication. They were involved with all aspects of the exhibition development. The majority of what visitors see is a direct result of their creativity and research."

Further information

MOSI and the Chinese Archive exhibition please contact Sarah Roe on 0161 606 0176 or s.roe@mosi.org.uk.

National Archive Volunteering Project Award, or the work of the Archives and Records Association, please contact Marie Owens, Head of Public Affairs, ARA on 01727 838 957 or marie.owens@archives.org.uk.

Manchester Chinese Archive project – and other submissions for the 2011 award - please go to www.archives.org.uk.

Manchester Chinese Centre please contact Jenny Wong on 0161 275 9885 or info@mchinesecentre.org.uk.