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Chinese New Year 2005 - Whispers of Time



Gerrard Street, February 2005

Take a look at some fascinating pictures from London's Chinese Community..

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London's Chinese Community is one of the longest established, yet very little of its history has been charted. Two new projects aim to put that right.

The first is based around oral history. Called 'Whispers of Time', it brings together the testimony of many elderly Chinese Londoners, who were interviewed by young British-born Chinese volunteers. From Easter, a DVD with highlights of the interviews will be distributed to schools, colleges and libraries.

WHISPERS OF TIME - PHOTO GALLERIES



Take a look at some fascinating pictures from London's Chinese Community.

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The DVD covers everything from life in China before the war to how the Chinese elders feel about living in London and what advice they have for young Chinese Britons. Wai-Ching Man, a student in London volunteered to do the interviews to learn more about her heritage. "Many of them came here by themselves and they had no relatives here. They just had to start from scratch again and they didn't have any English either so that must have been really difficult."

The interviews were organised by the Chinese National Healthy Living Centre, which got funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund. Siu-Fan Lee, the project



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co-ordinator, says many of the elders have been here for longer than they spent in their homeland and they've got a kind of dual identity. "On the one hand they are proud of being Chinese and that cannot be denied, but on the other they also enjoy meeting new friends here and having a new life here."

A separate project, run by the Chinese Cultural Centre, aims to collect photographs and documents relating to London's original Chinatown. There are very few photographs to illustrate what was once the centre of Britain's Chinese Community, in Limehouse in the East End. A collection of images is currently on display at the City Hall and Susie Wong says those original Chinatown residents were mainly abandoned sailors, whose ships had sailed without them because the companies had no more work. "Most of them were abandoned and some of them were stowaways and they didn't want to go back."

For more details about the projects contact;
Chinese National Healthy Living Centre
www.cnhlc.org.uk

Chinese Cultural Centre
www.chineseculturalcentre.org.uk

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