Historical Photographs of China

The redesigned *Historical Photographs of China* web site (www.hpcbristol.net) was formally launched in January 2017, showcasing over 10,500 images, including 1,400 recently added images from nine new collections.

Robert Bickers and Jamie Carstairs

Above: Children grinding grain, at a farm. Wr-s112. © 2014 Alison Brooke.

Far left: Portrait of a careworn, elderly woman, near Shanghai. Ep01-771. © 2013 Adrienne Livesey, Elaine Ryder and Irene Brien.

Left inset: Gas mask information poster, Shanghai. Ro-n0271. © 2012 Mei-Fei Elrick and Tess Johnston.

Below: Two Red Swastika Society nurses, Shanghai. Ro-n0204. © 2012 Mei-Fei Elrick and Tess Johnston.
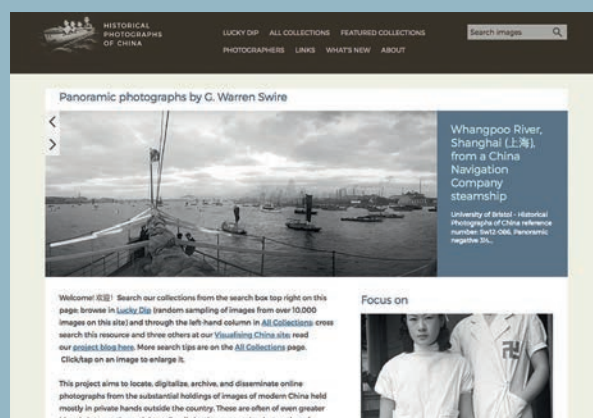
THESE INCLUDE a large and diverse selection of photographs from Shanghai-based news photographer Malcolm Rosholt, the family photographs of Sikh life and work in Shanghai in the Ranjit Singh Sangha collection (see also p.22 of this issue), and some of Felice Beato's photographs of the bloody 1860 North China Campaign. Joining the cast of personalities are Rabindranath Tagore, Mao Zedong, the Tenth Panchen Lama, Felix the Cat, General Sir Robert Napier, Father Jacquinot, and sometime *North-China Daily News* editor R.W. Little.

The new images range from 1860 (with some earlier ones on their way soon), to 1949 (with some later ones on their way in the not too distant future). Images can be downloaded and used under a Creative Commons licence.

On the relaunched HPC web site, we have tried to enhance discoverability and alleviate dependency on keyword/tag searching, by offering several ways to find images, such as a 'Lucky Dip' (a random sampling of images; www.hpcbristol.net/explore), via collection names, via names of photographers (www.hpcbristol.net/photographers) and via some themed collections (www.hpcbristol.net/featured-collections), as well as an advanced search facility. 'Lucky Dip', in which you find yourself with unexpected people in unexpected places, is proving to be an enlightening way to pass the time, procrastinating other work.

Another new feature is a 'Related Photographs' link to other photographs linked in some way to the one displayed. We cannot say that coverage through this is comprehensive, but we are linking photographs where we can (where, for example, they might be split across albums or collections).

Since 2006, the HPC project has located, digitised, archived, and disseminated online photographs from the substantial holdings of images of modern China held in private hands outside the country, as well as in public collections. These photographs are often of even greater historic interest than might ordinarily be the case, as the destruction of materials in China through war and revolution in the twentieth century, and especially during the 1966-69 Cultural Revolution, means that there is a relative dearth today of accessible photographic records in China itself.

We'd be very happy for any general feedback and especially notification of factual/name/location/date errors, typos, glaring omissions, etc. Also, we are always interested to hear how you use the site. Developing the new HPC platform has been supported by awards from the AHRC, British Academy, the Chiang Ching-Kuo Foundation, and Swire Trust, and with vital support from the University of Bristol's IT Services.

More information

Picturing China: An AHRC 10th Anniversary film
The film highlights the rich variety of our photographs, and gives you a glimpse of how we work, and why we are doing this. Enjoy. www.ahrc.ac.uk/research/readwatchlisten/filmsandpodcasts/picturingchina

Visualising China blog.
We – and Guest bloggers – post on digitisation issues, new collections, discoveries and all things 'old China photo'. visualisingchina.net/blog

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