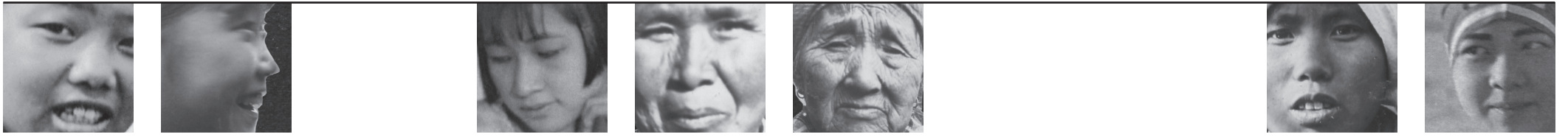




Picturing China

1870-1950



Picturing China

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COLOPHON

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About six months ago I received an email from Jamie Carstairs, a Digitisation Assistant at the University of Bristol. The subject header was 'Rare historical photos cast light on life in China'. Further enquiry revealed that the images in question are a remarkable collection of photographs of China in the late 19th and early 20th century brought together by researchers from the Department of Historical Studies at the University of Bristol, as part of their ongoing 'Historical Photographs of China' project.

The photographs were about to go on display at the Brunei Gallery at the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS) in London and I thought they would make an interesting article for *IIAS Newsletter*. I contacted Jamie and the head of the project Professor Robert Bickers, who reacted with enthusiasm and within no time I received a CD containing all the photos.

I spent a very enjoyable afternoon poring over the simply stunning photographs of life in China before 1950. Photographs in the possession of families or descendants of Chinese and British men and women who lived there. Robert Bickers describes how, "lodged away in attics and cupboards, these images include snapshots of expatriate social life, scenes of everyday Chinese life, and records of momentous political events". They form a unique virtual archive for China. I wanted to be able to share a selection of these fascinating photographs with readers, and so the idea of a supplement to the Newsletter was born.

'Picturing China 1870-1950' at the Brunei Gallery, (16 October – 15 December 2007) received almost 10,000 visitors and the exhibition has now moved to the Museum of East Asian Art in Bath, UK where it will be until the 13th April. It then moves to the Oriental Museum at Durham University, UK from 25th April to 30th August.

I hope that this supplement, which along with the current edition of *IIAS Newsletter* will be available at the exhibitions in Bath and Durham, will not only be a useful keepsake for visitors to 'Picturing China', but an opportunity for those of you unable to get to the UK this summer to see some of these wonderful photographs too.

The images cover a wide range of topics including everyday life, fashion, industrialisation, crime and punishment, foreigners in China and the Chinese abroad. They provide glimpses of the lost Chinese past and telling evidence of the complex intimacy of British relations with China before 1950. My thanks to Jamie Carstairs for sending me an email one day last summer, to Oliver Moore and Catherine Ladds for their articles and to Robert Bickers for all his efforts and working with me to make this supplement possible.

Anna Yeadell
IIAS Editor

The project team at Bristol University would be interested to hear from owners of similar photographs.
Please email: hums-chinaphotos@bristol.ac.uk

Acknowledgements

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We are grateful to the following who have given us permission to use photographs in the exhibition: Adam Scott Armstrong, Joan Cottrell, Dr John Cottrell, Hugh Currie, Dr Yee Wah Foo and Johnny Foo, Audrey Gregg, Patricia Hayward, Dr Elizabeth Hensel, Peter Lockhart-Smith, Sheila Metcalf, Colin Palmer, Charlotte Thomas, Dr Mary Tiffen, and Barbara Tilbury.

I would like to also thank in particular Catherine Ladds and Oliver Moore, for their contributions to this *IIAS Newsletter* supplement, and Jamie Carstairs, who has undertaken all the digitisation for the project and much, much else besides, and to Anna Yeadell for proposing this publication.

Robert Bickers
University of Bristol

The companion volume to the exhibition, *Picturing China 1870-1950: Photographs from British Collections* (Chinese Maritime Customs Project Occasional Papers No. 1, Bristol, 2007, ISSN: 1755-6643), is now available and order forms can be found at: <http://www.bristol.ac.uk/history/customs/papers.html>, or by contacting the project by email: hums-chinaphotos@bristol.ac.uk