**Press release**

**14 June 2013**

**BRITISH CONSULATE-GENERAL EXHIBITION REVEALS UNSEEN IMAGES OF CHONGQING PAST**

A unique exhibition of historical photographs comes to Chongqing on 14 June.  The exhibition, entitled ‘Picturing China 1870-1945: Photographs from British Collections’ includes images never before seen in the city, it is thought.

The pictures came to light as a result of work by researchers at Bristol University, who brought them together from the private collections, photograph albums and attics of British families whose relatives were in China working, for example, as traders, researchers or missionaries; or as tourists. A number of the photographs were taken in Chongqing between 1920 and 1945. They provide local exhibition-goers with a new view of their hometown as it was almost a century ago. The exhibition depicts a country undergoing rapid change in its society and culture as well as snapshots of expatriate life at the end of the 19th and beginning of the 20th centuries.

Benedict Mann, Deputy Consul-General in Chongqing, said: “These wonderful images from British collections provide a unique visual record of the longstanding shared history between the UK and China. I am amazed to see how areas close to my home in central Chongqing once were: for example, Chaotianmen, crowded with wooden buildings on stilts. The exhibition causes one to reflect on the depth of the UK-China relationship.”

Mr Tagh Ka Wah, Managing Director at Chongqing Tiandi, the event’s venue sponsor, said: “The exhibition, ‘*Picturing China 1870-1950: Photographs from British Collections’*, gives us the chance to share images of Chinese culture and heritage in bygone times with our guests in Chongqing, images which we are sure will leave a lasting impression. This event is also in harmony with Tiandi’s Chinese-Western style architectures that reflect Chongqing in the 1930-1960’s.”

Professor Robert Bickers, Director of the ‘*Historical Photographs of* China’ project at the University of Bristol, said: “Our project is sustained through the generosity of British-based families whose forebears lived and worked in China, or visited it, and who come forward with wonderfully rich historical materials. Many of these have never been seen before outside their homes, and it is wonderful to be able to share them with audiences in China through this exhibition.”

Co-organised by Research Council UK (RCUK), Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC), the British Consulate-General in Chongqing and the University of Bristol, this is the first time this exhibition has been shown in Southwest China.

‘*Picturing China 1870-1950: Photographs from British Collections’* is open to public, at Chongqing Tiandi, from 14 to 30 June.

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**Notes to Editors**

1. **The ‘Historical Photographs of China’ Project:** The ‘*Historical Photographs of China’* project is based at the University of Bristol. The project seeks to locate, and digitise for preservation and dissemination, photographs of China held in private hands in the United Kingdom. The project is funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council [www.ahrc.ac.uk](http://www.ahrc.ac.uk) through the British Inter-university China Centre [www.bicc.ac.uk](http://www.bicc.ac.uk), the British Academy [www.britac.ac.uk](http://www.britac.ac.uk), and JISC [www.jisc.ac.uk](http://www.jisc.ac.uk). It is directed by Professor Robert Bickers; the Project Digitization Officer is Jamie Carstairs.
2. **Research Councils UK:** Research Councils UK (RCUK) is the strategic partnership of the UK’s seven Research Councils, which are the leading public funders of research in the UK. RCUK China was established in 2007 to enhance research funding partnerships between the UK and China. It aims to support the best researchers in the UK and China to develop high quality, high impact research partnerships. RCUK China is based in the British Embassy in Beijing. We work closely with the UK’s Science and Innovation Network-China, the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, British Council and the UK’s Department for International Development. [www.rcuk.ac.uk](http://www.rcuk.ac.uk)
3. **The British Inter-University China Centre英国跨大学中国研究中心**: Funded by the Arts & Humanities Research Council, through its Language-Based Area Studies scheme, the British Inter-university China Centre is a joint venture between Bristol, Manchester, and Oxford Universities. The Centre co-ordinates a programme of research events and networking activities between British, Chinese and other researchers working in the arts and humanities. It is also organising a series of knowledge exchange partnerships with a diverse range of UK and overseas academic, NGO, commercial and government partners, as well as Chinese language training.
4. **The Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC)** funds world-class, independent researchers in a wide range of subjects: ancient history, modern dance, archaeology, digital content, philosophy, English literature, design, the creative and performing arts, and much more. This financial year the AHRC will spend approximately £98m to fund research and postgraduate training in collaboration with a number of partners. The quality and range of research supported by this investment of public funds not only provides social and cultural benefits but also contributes to the economic success of the UK. For further information on the AHRC, please go to: [www.ahrc.ac.uk](http://www.ahrc.ac.uk).
5. More China historical photographs from British collections can be found online at <http://hpc.vcea.net/>.

