



Folkestone
Museum

**‘A Good Reputation Endures Forever’
A History of the Chinese Labour Corps in World War I
31st January – 17th March, 2018**

The story of the Chinese Labour Corps, or CLC, has until recently been greatly overlooked in the context of WWI history. Folkestone Museum in partnership with Durham University Oriental Museum and The Meridian Society present an exhibition revealing the immense contribution these men made to the war effort: building roads and docks; assembling equipment; digging trenches; and clearing mines.

After war broke out in France and Belgium, the Allies found themselves having to replenish their troops with men from munitions factories and strategic ports. To replace them, the British came up with the idea of enlisting labourers from China, known to be resilient, hardworking and in need of money. China was at the point of being carved up between various empires and was determined to gain a place for itself at the diplomatic table and regain control of its territories. 140,000 men were recruited, approximately 96,000 by the British alone. After intense military training in China they made the gruelling journey over sea and land, mainly via Canada and the U.K. Exposed to new diseases, understandably not all of the men survived and six of the CLC now have their final resting places at Shorncliffe Cemetery.

This exhibition will bring together artefacts and documentary photographs from the W.J. Hawkings Collection, courtesy of his grandson John de Lucy, to explore the history of the CLC and reveal more about the men buried at Shorncliffe Cemetery. In addition to the material from Durham University, some of the artefacts for the Folkestone exhibition have been donated by direct descendants of the CLC and their commanding officers and have never been on show before, including a rare CLC service medal and an original CLC ID booklet from a recruit who died on route through Canada.

As part of their project on the CLC funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund, the Meridian Society, in partnership with Folkestone Museum, will offer a series of adult and family friendly workshops, together with a screening of their film of oral histories: *Forgotten Faces of the First World War*. We also hope to provide an exciting insight into the activities the CLC would have indulged in at Chinese New Year on February 17th. Please check our website and social media for updates on associated events.

The exhibition will travel to Plymouth and Liverpool where the other CLC members who died on British soil are buried. Dates of exhibitions are to be confirmed. Please check the relevant institution’s website for further details.

The Meridian Society: www.themeridiansociety.org.uk
Durham University Oriental Museum: www.dur.ac.uk/oriental.museum
W.J. Hawkings Collection: www.ensuringweremember.org.uk

Visitor Information:

Admission: FREE
Opening Times: Mon – Sat, 10am – 4pm
Address: Folkestone Museum
Town Hall
1-2 Guildhall Street
Folkestone CT20 1DY
Email: museum@folkestone-tc.gov.uk
Phone: (01303) 257946
Website: www.folkestonemuseum.co.uk

