



Devon and Cornwall Chinese Association was established on the 1st May 1975, and it was the only Chinese organisation in the South West of England. Preparation work began in winter 1974, when a few eager colleagues gathered together during the Christmas holiday to discuss the proposal for a Chinese Association. These few enthusiastic individuals were; the late Mr Kenny Kuet, the late Mr Michael Lee, the late Mr Ming Ying Wong, Mr Tom Wong and Mr See Lam Wong. During the preparation period, Mr Tom Wong was selected to draft the rules and regulations and also for the naming of the organisation. The intake of members to the proposed Association had also begun at this stage.

In February 1975, there were over sixty members. In March of the same year, a committee meeting, attending by sixty-seven members, was held at the Peking Place Restaurant in Mayflower Street. All draft rules and regulations were passed in the meeting, and the name was chosen: Devon and Cornwall Chinese Association. Mr Tom Wong was appointed as the first Chairman and activities started almost immediately. At first we selected a working committee, such as Chairman, Secretary, Treasurer and Education Secretary etc. The decision was also made for the formation date of the Association. Social activities such as organising the Chinese Language School, arranging tours to China and the Chinese New Year celebration party were well under way. The Association's inauguration ceremony was held at the Chopsticks Restaurant in North Hill, which was attended by over one hundred people including guests and members.

In 1976, a new team was elected, Mr Tom Wong was re-elected as Chairman. He continued to initiate all the activities for the Association. During this year the Chinese Language School was formed. The late Mr Ming Ying Wong was the Education secretary, who managed the school together with some female volunteers in providing lessons to sixty Chinese youths.

In 1977, the late Mr Terry Ho was elected as the third Chairman. In the following years Mr Kang Hi Ho was appointed as Chairman for both 1978 and 1979. From then on each elected Chairman would serve for two years before re-election. The sixth Chairman was Mr Bing Sang Lee. In 1983 Tom Wong was re-elected again. During this administration, he set up the Chinese Language School in Cornwall. He also sought financial support from relevant organisations in order to create a welfare office for the Chinese community. At this time the number of members had increased to 160 and the Chinese population in the area also increased to over four thousands.

In 1986, after the relentless pursuit for financial support, the Commission for Racial Equality agreed to subsidise our expenses for three years, so that we could set up a culture centre. At the same time the Man-Power Organisation would provide the office site and four members of staff. Therefore, in March 1986, an advice and welfare centre, situated in the Barbican was opened to provide the necessary help and assistance for the Chinese Community. Mr Tom Wong was the chief clerk. The centre offered an enquiry service for; Housing, Social Benefits, Health, Immigration, Neutralisation and general advice. After three months the office moved to Ebrington Street and it moved again in 1988 to Armada Way. Finally, in 1990 the office moved to Addison Road. The centre continued to provide services to the Chinese community, including activities like fashion shows, concerts, home



visits, seminars and Tai Chi classes. It also produced monthly magazines and sent out correspondence to the community when required. The culture centre also participated with Plymouth city library to create a Chinese books section within the library. In the same year, we secured a grant from Devon County Council to replace financial assistance from Commission for Racial Equality, with a restriction that we could only employ two full time staff. Under the circumstances we had to abandon many projects. The major problem was the absence of a permanent office. The Chairman at the time was Mr Barry Wong who listed the purchase of a permanent office as his first priority. With the help of the members he was engaged in a door to door fund raising exercise. Eventually, in 1991, we were able to purchase a property in Headland Park and turned it into an office. The culture centre also moved into the building and was able to have a more permanent base.

The tenth Chairman was Mr Koon Ping Wong, who had bought the Association into a much closer relationship with the government and various organisations. Mr Barry Wong was re-elected again as the 11th Chairman at the time when the members had increased to 206. He adhered to the main goals of the society and worked tirelessly with the Association. Their efforts were well recognised by the Chinese community. Our 12th Chairman was the late Mr Peter C. K. Wong, who was the youngest Chairman the Association ever had. During his administration, he fervently pursued different activities by providing financial support and assistance. His remarkable achievements were highly regarded within the whole community. It is with great sadness that we lost such a wonderful young man in the prime of his life.

The 13th Chairman was Mr Paul A. W. Li, who was elected for two consecutive terms. Unfortunately, he resigned during his second term in office due to personal circumstances. The position was filled by Mr. Wan Sau Chan, who went on to build a strong connection between community members to those living in China. He led the Association to raise funds to help re-build a school in Chongqing, China which provided much needed education for children of impoverished families. In order to express their appreciation for the generosity shown by the Chinese community in the South West of England, one of the buildings within the school complex was named as The Devon and Cornwall Chinese Association Building. Mr Wan Sau Chan remained as Chair for two consecutive terms until Mr Martin Lai took over as the Association's 15th Chairman.

Having had the opportunity to be raised under both western and Chinese cultures, Mr Martin Lai was able to appreciate the benefits both cultures offered. He set his goal to develop strong integrations between all communities. Along with his committee, he organised a wide range of social activities and events including the successful Chinese New Year Open Event which attracted over 3,000 participants from across the Southwest. This enabled the Association to open new doors to work in partnership with key agencies across the board. During Mr Martin Lai's term as Chairman, he also changed the title of Chairman to President when the Association's Constituency was reviewed.

The most current President (formerly known as Chairman) is Mr Ting Loi Yau. He was elected in June 2014. At present, Mr Ting Loi Yau is committed to sustaining and strengthening the ethos of the Association, to develop further support for our growing elderly members.