

ARMENIAN VOICE



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CAIA LAUNCHES NEW LIBRARY DIGITISATION PROJECT



The CAIA is pleased to announce that it has been awarded a grant from the *Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF)* for Hayashen's Library. The *Centre for Armenian Information and Advice (CAIA)* has received £48,600 from the *Heritage Lottery Fund* toward an ambitious library-digitisation project to preserve and promote Armenian history, culture and heritage.



The aim of the project is to make the centre's archives more accessible to researchers, students as well as the wider community. The project, will be implemented by volunteers trained in archive digitisation, photography and cataloguing. By putting the CAIA's resources online, the project will make Armenian historic, social and cultural issues accessible to a wider audience. The centre will also hold several exhibitions to showcase its archives during the two-year project as part of its ongoing efforts to actively promote UK's Armenian heritage to a new generation of digitally aware users. CAIA CEO Misak Ohanian welcomed the grant saying: "This will facilitate the centre's efforts to integrate technology into its goal of preserving and promoting Armenian heritage and culture as well as making

accessible the history of UK's Armenian community, something which it has helped shape over the past 25 years." Almost 100 invited guests, CAIA members and volunteers attended a major reception at *Hayashen* on Sunday 20th May 2012, for the launch of the Library digitisation project funded by *HLF*. H.E. Mrs. Karine Kazinian, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of Armenia to the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland was kindly present to support the launch and help give out certificates to CAIA's volunteers during the year and to students who had completed the "Introduction to Armenian History, Culture & Heritage" course that had taken place during February-March 2012. Other guests during the reception included representatives from the *Armenian Church & Community Council*, *Friends of Armenia* and *Ealing Cllr. Ara Iskanderian* who congratulated the CAIA and the project plans. The CAIA is very grateful to everyone who supported the event, including the volunteers who helped out with the catering and drinks throughout the 2 hour-long event. ■



INTRODUCTION TO ARMENIAN HISTORY, CULTURE & IDENTITY



Once again this year, the CAIA organised another successful course about Armenian history, culture and Identity thanks to the support of *Ealing Adult Education Department*.

A total of 50 people from all ages and background attended the course with 20 students formally enrolled completing the 6-part course at Hayashen.

The aims of the course was to address the needs of Armenian families and young Armenians born or growing up in this country as well as those connected to them such as people married to Armenians or mixed heritage to appreciate Armenian history and culture. This year several people with little or no connections to Armenians enrolled also to the course to learn and benefit from the exceptional range of speakers/workshop leaders who delivered the course over 6 Sundays during February 20 to 27 March.

The subjects covered were:

- *Armenia in Old Maps and Old Armenian Maps* by Dr Rouben Galichian (photo above)
- *Armenian Diaspora in the Global Age: Issues and Questions* by Dr Hratch Tchilingirian
- *Armenian Architecture – City of Ani* by Steven Sim
- *Armenian Folk Dances* by Shakeh Major Tchilingirian -
- *The Armenian Genocide – A complete History* by Dr Raymond Kevorkian (Paris)
- *Narratives of Belonging in the Armenian Diasporas* by Dr Susan Pattie

Throughout the course, the students learned together, enjoyed Armenian and Middle Eastern traditional lunch together, networked and contributed to some very interesting debates and discussions long into the afternoons.

Some of the positive outcomes of the course were:

- Enabled diverse groups of people (*Armenians, non-Armenians and those from mixed Armenian heritage*) across the generations to interact and learn from specialists/experts in their field as well as each other.
- Encouraged new learners in becoming interested about Armenia's long history and rich cultural heritage.
- Raised the self-esteem, confidence and pride in the identity of those who have never had the opportunity to learn about Armenian history and culture enabling them to speak with increased knowledge with others about these subjects.



Left Photo: Dr.Kevorkian alongside Ani King Underwood who kindly interpreted his talk.

Right Photo: Dr Susan Pattie speaking.

- Improved interpersonal relationships between the generations.

See below some of the feedback from the students.

+*"I am a research student interested in visiting Armenia State University, next year as part of my research. I am interested in the shared history of forced migration of the Armenian and the Kurds after 1918. I would be good if I collect some background information and contacts from Armenian Diaspora Community in London before my research trip."*



Left: Dr Hratch Tchilingirian

Right: Steven Sim

•*"I am going to Armenia. I will be part of a group from Cambridge University, which is studying international politics. Would it be ok for me to share these details with my fellow students? "*

•*"Dear Shakeh, it was nice meeting you at the Armenian Dancing Lecture and Workshop at the Armenian Centre on the 11. March. I enjoyed the dancing together with everybody else. It was amazing how very quickly everybody learnt the steps. It was*



because you were teaching them with ease and you made it fun. Everybody enjoyed the devotion and energy put in. Someone made a video of the dance workshop and when I watched it afterwards and listened to the magic rhythms again, I could easily put myself back into that atmosphere and feeling again. Because I did not have my hearing aid with me, I could appreciate only a little of your lecture about Armenian dancing and its history and place, but I will read up about it.

I am sending you, as promised, the photos I made. Because I concentrated on taking photos of you dancing solo, I missed out on the dance itself and do not know what the title was. I thank you for giving me an insight into this side of the Armenian people.

With kind regards, Alice Svojanovsky"