

ROYAL ASIATIC SOCIETY

HONG KONG BRANCH

皇家亞洲學會香港分會
G.P.O. Box 3864, Hong Kong



NEWSLETTER

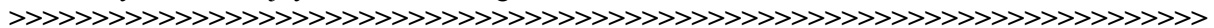
12 June 2000

As the summer holidays approach, we hope that all are looking forward to a relaxing time ahead. We will be taking a break during the summer, but we still have an interesting programme, with a visit to Bethanie, led by long-time Life Member, Mr. Phillip Bruce, and two talks at the City Hall.

Please note that this newsletter is being issued a bit early so that members will have time to sign up for the visit to Bethanie, the old French church in Pokfulam, on 24 June. Please, if you wish to join the visit, post the booking form NOW to avoid disappointment.

You will note in the **Of Interest to Members** section, that Dr. Dan Waters will be giving a talk on June 21st, to the Hong Kong Anthropological Society about some of Hong Kong's not-so-well known festivals and monuments. As always, Dan's talk promises to be interesting and informative.

We wish you all an enjoyable and relaxing summer.



Dates for Your Calendar

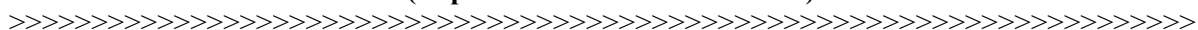
Friday 16 th June	City Hall Lecture	<i>Pre-British Kowloon, Dr. Patrick Hase</i>
Saturday 24 th June	Local Visit	Visit to a French Church, Phillip Bruce
Friday 25 th August	City Hall Lecture	Lantau Mountain Camp, Geoff Lovegrove
City Hall Lecture		Friday 16th June

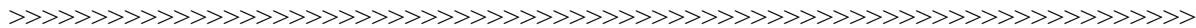
Pre-British Kowloon

- Speaker:** Dr. Patrick Hase
- Time:** 6:00pm
- Venue:** Extension Activities Room, 8th Floor, City Hall High Block, Edinburgh Place, Central
- Cost:** The lecture is free and it is open to the public.
- Booking:** No Booking is required.

Kowloon has a long history before modern urban development began there in 1876, yet almost nothing survives today to remind us of that history. RASHKB Council Member, Dr. Patrick Hase will speak about the pre-British villages of Kowloon (there were more than 50 of them), its market towns (Kowloon City and Sham Shui Po), its temples (24 of them), the inter-city alliances and politics of the area, and the traditional economy and industries (mostly stone-cutting, boat-building, and incense-pounding) of the area. The few remnants of pre-development Kowloon will be identified for anyone who wishes to search them out. The talk will be illustrated with maps and historic photographs.

(Repeated from Last Newsletter)





Local Visit

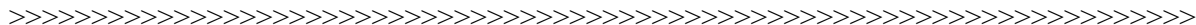
Saturday 24 June

Visit To A French Church

On Saturday, June 24, members will be able to visit the former Bethanie church of the Missions Étrangères de Paris at Pokfulam. This church was built between 1873-1875 and it was the headquarters for the French missionary effort throughout Southern China. Fathers from the mission travelled to the remotest areas and one of the greatest achievements of the MEP was the output of the printing presses of nearby Nazareth House. The Fathers laboured on then unknown languages and dialects producing a flood of dictionaries and reference works. The MEP left Bethanie in 1975 but the beautiful church has survived various development plans and other threats. Built in the early French Gothic style its cool interior is a respite from the hustle and bustle of Hong Kong. The gardens that surround the church are overgrown but a riot of colour. A MEP father found the original Bauhinia tree from which Hong Kong's national flower is derived. Phillip Bruce is currently working on the history of Bethanie and Nazareth and will be our guide. The original stained glass of the church was carefully packed and removed in 1975 but no one seems to know what happened to it and Phillip would be particularly grateful for any leads or suggestions – jade888@hotmail.com.

Meeting Time & Place: 2:30pm, at the entrance to Bethanie Church, 139 Pokfulam Road. This is on the same (seaward) side of the road as the Ebenezer School for the Blind, past High West if you are coming from Central, roughly opposite to the small road that leads to the Pokfulam Reservoir and the nearby riding stables. Someone will be standing on the pavement with the RAS sign. There is no parking at Bethanie.

Cost: Members: HKD60.00; Non-members: HKD90.00 (including non-member spouses).



City Hall Lecture

Friday, 25th August

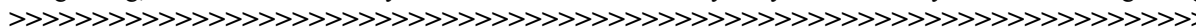
Lantau Mountain Camp

Speaker: Geoff Lovegrove
Time: 6:00pm
Venue: Extension Activities Room, 8th Floor, City Hall High Block, Edinburgh Place, Central
Cost: The lecture is free and it is open to the public.
Booking: No Booking is required.

“High up the ridge of an island, just off the South China coast, sits a unique retreat, known only slightly by the multitudes of Hong Kong, but dearly loved by a dedicated group of campers scattered around the world.” Thus begins the official history of what can only be described as one of Hong Kong's better-kept secrets. Not that it was ever intended it should be secret but, given that relatively few people take to the mountains of Lantau in summer, only those with a great love of the outdoors ever become infected by the sights and sounds of campers enjoying themselves on the main ridge of Sunset Peak. For the rest of the year, the 20 or so cabins located on the 1,500 metre long ridge stand for the most part apparently desolate, used only on occasional weekends.

The camp has its origins in the mission organisations working in South China in the early part of the last century when, for a variety of reasons, missionaries started coming down to Hong Kong for summer furloughs. Three quarters of a century and many typhoons later, the camp is still there and used, a place without air conditioners or television, where campers still drink water from a stream, where grown-ups relax and children enjoy games that only the imagination of childhood can invent. Geoff Lovegrove will tell more of the past and present of this little known corner of Hong Kong.

Geoff grew up in Ireland where hills and sea were always close at hand. He joined a firm of consulting engineers and after working on projects in Fiji, Lebanon, Australia, Falkland Islands was eventually sent to Hong Kong, and is still here 25 years later. He and his family of years after they arrived in Hong Kong.



Encounter with Hong Kong's Past: History through the Museum's Collection

The Hong Kong Museum of History has made strenuous efforts in collecting and preserving cultural objects which are closely related to the History of Hong Kong and the South China area in the past twenty-five years. The museum has built up a sizable collection exceeding 70,000 items which are basically classified into four main categories, mainly archaeology, cultural history, ethnography, and local history. The exhibition features more than 200 museum collection items, including archaeological finds, animal and rock specimens, daily necessities, industrial products, and objects on interesting topics like Chinese weddings, traditional trades and crafts, commerce and finance, etc. The exhibition will include colonial items collected from government departments prior to the handover and those relating to the 1997 handover ceremony. Council member and Hon Activities Coordinator, Valery Garrett, was responsible for collecting the traditional costume for the Museum, some of which is on display, during the period from 1988-1991.

The exhibition opens on June 17th at the Hong Kong Museum of History, 100 Chatham Road South, Tsim Sha Tsui, T 2724 9020/19.

Ming and Qing Bamboo-Ancient Chinese Bamboo Carvings from the Kwan Collection

“This exhibition is a rare opportunity to view almost 200 examples of exquisite bamboo carvings dating to the Ming and Qing periods from the private collection of Dr. Simon Kwan. Accompanying the exhibition will be a fully illustrated catalogue with an essay on bamboo carving. The exhibition is a chronological survey of the art of bamboo carving across several different media including brush pots, sculptural works as well as functional and decorative items.”

The exhibition, organised by the University Museum and Art Gallery, The University of Hong Kong in collaboration with the University of Hong Kong Museum Society, will run until 30 July at the University Museum and Art Gallery, 94 Bonham Road, Tel. 2975 5600.

Some Interesting Web Sites

Here are some web sites that were included in previous newsletters. Put them on your ‘favorites’ list for summertime browsing!

- <http://www.history.navy.mil/index.html> This historical information site is run by the U.S. Navy, and contains hundreds of on-line photographs, information on many topics, including naval archaeology, as well as many listings of related sites.
- <http://www.shanghai-ed.com/tales/tales.htm> This site contains everything one needs to know about Old Shanghai, and more. The library consists of books that can be read in their entirety, including Bland's *House Boat Days in China*, and be sure to read *The Unexpurgated Diary of a Shanghai Baby*, life in Old Shanghai through the eyes of an ex-pat baby!
- <http://www.royalasiaticsociety.co.uk> This is the address for our parent society in London, The Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland. The site includes information concerning, among other topics, upcoming events, the Journal, application information, and items for sale.
- <http://www.atarn.org> This is the address of the Asian Traditional Archery Network (ATARN), headed by RASHKB Member Stephen Selby. The beautifully produced site includes membership information and sections covering archery traditions in various Asian regions.
- <http://etext.lib.virginia.edu/modeng/modeng0.browse.html> *Two Years in the Forbidden City* (1911) by Princess Der Ling and *Court Life in China* (1909) by Isaac Taylor Headland are two of the many books available to the public and reprinted in their entirety through the University of Virginia's on line library. These two books provide fascinating first-hand insight into the everyday life of the Empress Dowager and her Court. Simply go to the site, indicate you are a non-UVA user, and search by the authors' last names.
- www.chinese-furniture.com This is a good introduction to the craftsmanship and styles of Chinese furniture through the ages. Close-up photographs and good descriptions of the various types of woods and other materials particular to Chinese furniture construction are a feature of this site.
- www.asianart.com This site includes, among other topics, a listing of current exhibitions of Asian art, in various cities throughout the world. In case you are unable to travel to see the exhibitions, there is an on-line ‘gallery’ for each one, containing photographs and descriptions of featured items.
- www.raxrlx.com Member Phillip Bruce has recently updated his lively site which features a wide variety of topics concerning history and culture in Hong Kong and China. Don't miss his article, *Watching God Eyes the River*, a description of the Temple at Lubao, one of the sites visited on our recent RASHKB trip to Guangdong Province.