

# **ROYAL ASIATIC SOCIETY – HONG KONG BRANCH**

## **APRIL NEWSLETTER**

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**20th April, 2002**

### **Council members**

Dr. Patrick Hase, President	Mr. Robert Nield, Hon. Treasurer & Vice President
Dr. Elizabeth Sinn, Vice President	Rev. Carl Smith, Hon. Vice President
Mr. Peter Stuckey, Hon. Secretary	Miss Julia Chan, Hon. Librarian
Mrs. Valery Garrett, Hon. Activities Co-ordinator	Dr. Peter Halliday, Hon. Editor of Journals
Mrs. May Holdsworth, Member	Mr. Timothy Ko, Member
Dr. Janet Lee Scott, Member	Dr. Joseph Ting, Member
Mr. Jason Wordie, Member	Mr. Robert Horsnell, Co-opted Member
Dr. Dan Waters, Immediate Past President	

Over sixty members attended our AGM and dinner on 22<sup>nd</sup> March at the Hong Kong Club. Members of Council, as of last year, were re-elected, there being no new nominations. Subsequent to the AGM, Council re-elected Mr. Robert Horsnell as a Co-opted Member, but Dr. Michael Lau expressed a wish to retire from Council. The President and Council would like to take this opportunity to express their thanks and appreciation to Dr. Lau for his many years of service to the Council and the Society. During the AGM, our President Dr. Patrick Hase gave his annual report on the work of the branch for the past year, and we also received reports from our Hon. Treasurer and Hon. Librarian. A copy of the President's Report and the Hon. Librarian's Report are enclosed with this newsletter, as well as a report from the Chairman of the Friends of the RASHKB in the U.K. The AGM was followed by an excellent buffet dinner.

During the Easter holidays, a group of 43 members paid a visit to Xi'an, the capital of Shaanxi Province, well known for its rich historical heritage and cultural relics. Members were granted special access to storages of the Provincial Museum and the Archaeological Institute and were fascinated by the beautiful Tang dynasty murals and recently discovered items, inter alia, a 5<sup>th</sup> century stone bed with painted scenes of Zoroastrians engaged in religious activities. The new discoveries at the terra-cotta warriors site including the acrobat figurines and the huge amount of stone armour cut into shape and tied together with painstaking efforts were equally stunning and represented Shihuandi, the first emperor of the Qin Empire at the height of his power. The naked figurines and the lovely pottery animals unearthed at Yangling, near the Tomb of the fourth







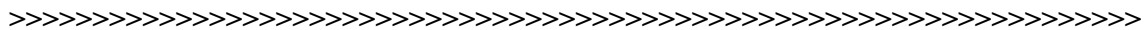
**“Streets : Exploring Hong Kong Island”**

**Speaker:** Jason Wordie  
**Time:** 6:15 p.m.  
**Venue:** Extension Activities Room, 8<sup>th</sup> Floor, City Hall High Block, Central.  
**Cost:** The lecture is free and open to the public.  
**Booking:** No booking is required.

Local historian and RAS Council member Jason Wordie will discuss the writing of his recent book “Streets : Exploring Hong Kong Island”, published by Hong Kong University Press. He will also detail some of the varied pleasures and challenges involved in hands-on local history research and, perhaps, give a new and unusual take on some well-known Hong Kong Island landmarks and localities.

In his book, Jason takes the reader on fifty tours through the urban and historic places of Hong Kong Island. Each place is introduced with an essay that describes the area and the way it has changed, then the reader is taken on a walk around the area’s streets with the important, interesting, curious and historically illuminating sites described and illustrated.

Jason Wordie is a historian and writer with a particular interest in lesser-known aspects of Hong Kong. A long-time local resident and graduate of the University of Hong Kong, he lives in the New Territories.



***RAS BUSINESS***

Keith Stevens, a long-time Member of the RAS (HK Branch), is researching into the small British unit which taught guerilla sabotage techniques to Chinese troops in Zhejiang Province in 1943. He would like to get in touch with anyone who was part of this unit, or who has any information on it. Any member who believes they can help should contact Keith via his E-Mail <keith.stevens@chgods.freemove.co.uk>, or by mail to him, c/o RAS (HK Branch) at Box 3864, GPO Hong Kong.

**Suggestion of Library Materials by Professional and Educational Organizations**

The Hong Kong Public Libraries System encourages and welcomes readers to make suggestions for the purchase of library materials for enhancement of its stock to meet the needs of the readers, and a good number of valuable library materials are acquired through this scheme every year. They have invited our Society to recommend suitable library materials of our subject interest for purchase by the Hong Kong Public Libraries on a regular basis. If any members would like to make suggestions of appropriate books for us to recommend to be purchased under this scheme, please contact our Hon. Librarian, Julia Chan, at Yu Chun Keung Medical Library, University of Hong Kong, 21 Sassoon Road, Pokfulam, Hong Kong. Tel : 2819 9286; Fax : 2855 9343; or E-mail jlychan@hkucc.hku.hk, who will co-ordinate our application.

## News of the RAS Volunteers from Bill Greaves

Thanks for everybody's efforts at the last visit, particularly getting to the Spitfire Hanger, when it was necessary to cross a frog-infested swamp to gain access. We were joined by some members of the Hong Kong Historic Aircraft Association, whose enthusiasm in measuring and clambering over the structure was much admired. Suggestions received for the future use of the hanger included:-

- moving it across to the present HK Flying Club, to form a "Kai Tak Corner"; keeping it where it is for use as a covered sports hall within the proposed housing development, and moving it to Chek Lap Kok as a basis for an Aviation Museum.

All suggestions will be forwarded to AMO. The nearby machine-gun post looks more British than Japanese and may date from the 1950's as an airfield defence – more research needed! [Incidentally, it was still occupied as a home in 1999 (ref - school timetable fixed to the domed concrete ceiling) - a rather sobering thought!].

Old Stone House - unfortunately, no access was permitted because of the recent murder there.

Peak Pavilions, scheduled for auction by HKG in December 2002 and then for residential redevelopment. This visit gave us a taste of HK in the good old days (literally, thanks to Mrs. Godfrey's tea and cakes), with its lawns, mature Banyan trees and huge rooms. This government quarters block was constructed for senior officers in about 1954 and is in a broadly Bauhaus style, with a floor plan designed as a contingency hospital for the Korean War. This must be the last example of such a block remaining in HK but, even so, due to its comparative recent age and very desirable siting, it is unlikely to be saved from redevelopment.

**Next Visit: Saturday 20 April - Haw Boon Par Mansion** (adjoins the former Tiger Balm Gardens) for a reconnaissance of the private garden, prior to firming up the arrangements for its restoration by Volunteers with Antiquities & Monuments Office support. This will be a combined visit with the Hong Kong Gardening Society, whose expertise in distinguishing weeds from rare plants will be much appreciated.

We will also take a look inside the house (designed in the Anglo-Chinese "baronial" 1930's style), which is to be restored over the next two years, to see Italian stained glass, and period decorations and fittings (includes some superb original items, donated by Mrs. Sally Au, the last owner).

As far as the garden is concerned, we will need to take approx. measurements of the garden and pond, arrange for historic research, identify existing plants and shrubs, check why the fountain does not work, peer into the pond and generally plan our site programme for the next visits in May and June, when we will hopefully do some actual "hands on" gardening. Jobs in all specialties are assured!

For those interested, a bus will leave AMO in Nathan Road at 9:00 am and then from Queen's Pier at about 9:20 to arrive at Tiger Balm at around 9:40, so members can turn up at any of these spots. Depart site for Queens Pier at 12:15 and then back to AMO in Nathan Road and disperse. If you are running late on the morning, please call Bill Greaves on 9802 8240.

If you hear of historic buildings under threat or would like to volunteer to help with this work, please contact Bill on email : [greaves@netvigator.com](mailto:greaves@netvigator.com) or telephone 9802 8240.

## Recent publications by RAS members

We are delighted to announce the forthcoming publication of our Hon. Activities Co-ordinator Valery Garrett's latest book, *Heaven is High, the Emperor Far Away : Merchants and Mandarins in Old Canton*. Published by Oxford University Press, April 2002, HK\$280, 210 pages, 100 B/W illustrations, 43 colour plates. ISBN 0195927443

Since her first visit nearly three decades ago, Valery Garrett has been captivated by the city now called Guangzhou, returning numerous times from her home in Hong Kong. In *Heaven is High, the Emperor Far Away*, she draws on a wide range of historical materials, from guidebooks, maps and memoirs of earlier travellers, to trace its long and engrossing history. For more than two thousand years, as the capital of the powerful Nan Yue kingdom, to its present position as the largest city in southern China, Canton has been one of Asia's most important commercial, political, and cultural centres. Arab merchants first arrived in the Tang dynasty, exchanging spices, amber, and ivory for silk, ceramics, and precious stones. During the eighteenth century, for almost a hundred years, it was the only port in China where the emperor allowed merchants from the West to trade.

With trade came the interchange of ideas. Missionaries, educators, political leaders, and modernizers, Chinese and non-Chinese alike, all tapped Canton's energy in their efforts to direct the course of China's cultural and political development. A seat of provincial government since the fourteenth century, its distance from China's capital allowed Canton an independence that is at the heart of its special character.

*Heaven is High, the Emperor Far Away* recounts how Canton became, in its heyday, the centre of the China Trade and the wonder of the Far East. The only Chinese city accessible to Western travellers for several centuries, Canton formed the West's perception of China. Here were the gardens that inspired the fashion of Chinoiserie. Here the China Trade paintings, carvings and fans produced that made their way into art collections around the world. Site of the discovery of ancient Chinese treasures, and the setting for many dramatic developments in China's modern history, Canton is now one of China's most important economic centres.

In Valery Garrett's unequalled portrait of the city, illustrated with more than 140 contemporary photos, maps and colour plates, many never previously published, the full glory of Canton's many faces is revealed.

Valery has written widely on Chinese dress and culture. She is the author of nine books, including *Chinese Clothing: an Illustrated Guide* and *Chinese Dragon Robes*, both published by Oxford University Press, and *Hong Kong, Life and Times*, published by Times Editions. She is an Honorary Research Fellow at the Centre of Asian Studies, University of Hong Kong, and Hon. Activities Coordinator of the Royal Asiatic Society.

In the February newsletter we mentioned the publication of *Hong Kong, British Crown Colony, Revisited*, edited by our Vice President Dr. Elizabeth Sinn. As well as our current President Dr. Patrick Hase, three other RAS members contributed chapters to this book, namely Dr. James Hayes, Sir David Akers-Jones and Mr. Denis Bray. This book is available in most Hong Kong bookstores or direct from the Centre of Asian Studies - E-mail: [casgen@hku.hk](mailto:casgen@hku.hk) or [hrahssy@hku.hk](mailto:hrahssy@hku.hk).

Many members will remember the talk and dinner last November to celebrate the publication of Dr. James Hayes' book *South China Village Culture* which is published in OUP's "Images of Asia" series. The book is Dr. Hayes' latest work and is based on long and close acquaintance with the land and people of the Hong Kong region and their traditional society. The true essence of China is rooted in its villages. The traditional culture of South China, as elsewhere in the country, is a microcosm of the nation's greater society and philosophy, both ancient and modern. *South China Village Culture* focuses on Hong Kong and Shenzhen - originally part of the same county - and explores the rich heritage of shared doctrines and beliefs, social and economic practices, and well-ordered local organization that have helped make this region the success it is today.

Dr. Hayes comments that one of his reasons for writing *South China Village Culture* is that there are very few books providing an overall view of Chinese society within a small compass, such as is made possible through OUP's "Images of Asia" series. A tall order - it was, he says, an enjoyable, if fairly exacting, challenge to take up.

Dr. Hayes was for many years a District Officer in the rural areas of Hong Kong and is author of numerous books and articles on the history and society of the region. He has been a member of the Society almost from its beginning, was editor of the RASHKB Journal from 1966-1980 and President of the Society between 1983 and 1990. He is an honorary research fellow at the Centre of Asian Studies, University of Hong Kong. His book is available in most Hong Kong bookshops or from Oxford University Press.

RAS Life Member, Gillian Bickley's new book, supported by the Council of the Lord Wilson Heritage Trust, will be available, in a strictly limited edition, from 15 April 2002. *The Development of Education in Hong Kong, 1841-1897: as Revealed by the Early Education Reports of the Hong Kong Government 1848-1896*, published by Proverse Hong Kong, is distributed in Hong Kong and worldwide by the Chinese University of Hong Kong Press. ISBN 962 85570 1 7; Hbk, xviii+633pp (inc. index); 37 b/w illustrations; tables; endpapers, HK\$600.00 / US\$75.00.

The book publishes for the first time as a complete sequence the full main text of fifty Hong Kong Government Reports on Education, submitted by successive Hong Kong Governors to the Colonial Office in London as part of the official record. The Reports begin when the Government first granted public funds for Hong Kong schools, and the last in this sequence is dated April 1897.

Packed with unique material about schools, scholars, teachers, parents, educational policies and politics, the Reports (discussed and contextualised by ample notes) provide data, dialogue, vivid anecdotes, drama, emotion and ideals.

Some of the writing is highly personal, and the book includes brief select biographies of four of the writers, notable members of the Hong Kong community: George Smith, first Anglican missionary Bishop of Victoria (Hong Kong); James Legge, missionary, translator, and first Professor of Chinese at the University of Oxford, United Kingdom; Frederick Stewart — "Founder of Hong Kong Government Education" — first principal of the first Hong Kong Government Anglo-Chinese school (now Queen's College), first Head of the Government Education Department, and first Government Native English-Speaking Teacher in Hong Kong; and E. J. Eitel, German missionary, writer, lexicographer, journal editor and historian of Hong Kong.

Available in Hong Kong bookshops, the book can also be ordered from The Chinese University Press, The Chinese University of Hong Kong, Shatin, New Territories, Hong Kong SAR. Email <cup@cuhk.edu.hk>. Web site <<http://www.chineseupress.com>>. Direct link: <[http://www.chineseupress.com/asp/e\\_Book\\_card.asp?BookID=1526&Lange=E](http://www.chineseupress.com/asp/e_Book_card.asp?BookID=1526&Lange=E)> You may order online or send your cheque (please check cost of postage first), payable to, "The Chinese University of Hong Kong" to The Chinese University Press, The Chinese University of Hong Kong, Shatin, N. T., Hong Kong. <cup-bus@cuhk.edu.hk>. Fax (Int Code+852-2603-7355)

**INVITATION TO RAS MEMBERS**  
**Symposium Supported by the Council of the Lord Wilson Heritage Trust**  
**Monday 13 May 2002**  
**9.30am-12.30; 2.00-5.30pm; Registration, 8.30am-9.20am.**

An invitation is extended to interested members of the Royal Asiatic Society, at no charge, to Day One (Monday 13 May), of a Symposium, "Learning from the Past, Informing the Future: Education Then, Now and Tomorrow"; Venue: Academic Community Hall, Ho Sin Hang Campus, Hong Kong Baptist University, 224 Waterloo Road, Kowloon Tong. The symposium, supported by the Council of the Lord Wilson Heritage Trust, will be opened by Mr Edward Ho Sing-tin, S.B.S., J.P., who was appointed Chairman of the Trust in 1993. Speakers include at least the following members of the RAS: Dr Verner Bickley, Mr Geoffrey Emerson, Professor Anthony Hedley. The languages used will be English and Chinese. Subjects will include:

Educational Reform

Benchmarking  
In-Service Teacher Training  
Native English Teachers Schemes

Innovations In Teaching

Writing a School History  
Teaching Creative Writing  
The Value of Studying Literature in English

The Changing Notions Of Education

Language Policy  
Standards  
Assessment  
Secondary School / University Interface

Guest Speakers Include

University Professors, Researchers  
Archivists & Experienced  
Practitioners in Education &  
Education Related Professions

*The organizers reserve the right to substitute or change topics and speakers*

For information, please contact Dr. Gillian Bickley through e-mail address: <devedcnf@hkbu.edu.hk>. Other possible information points: Tel: 3411-7172 (English); 3411-5839 (Chinese). Please check the Web-site: <<http://www.hkbu.edu.hk/devedcnf>> for any updated information.

**Subscription Renewal**

If you are an annual member and have not yet renewed your subscription for this year, this is your last opportunity to renew your membership. Please send us your cheque as soon as possible, to ensure that you continue to receive our newsletter and publications. If your cheque is not received by the end of June, your name will be deleted from our database and you will receive nothing further from us. Please call Mary Painter on 2813 7500 if you have any questions about your subscription or you wish to pay by autopay. If you are leaving Hong Kong in the near future please let us know, so we can remove your name from our database.

## ***OF INTEREST TO MEMBERS***

**Royal Over-Seas League** have kindly invited our members to a special lunch to be held at the China Club on Friday 10<sup>th</sup> May, at which the guest speaker will be The Hon. Donald Tsang, the Chief Secretary for Administration of the HKSAR. He will be introduced by Mr. David Tang, and will share his comments and insights on topics of the day. For information and booking, call Mr. Rajeev Shah, office tel : 2865 0601 or E-mail treasurer@rosl.org.hk.

ROSL have a younger members' group called ROSL NEXT, which organizes informal drinks evenings with members of different organizations in Hong Kong. The next gathering will be with the South African Club – the Blue Crane Club – on 16<sup>th</sup> May. For information call Ivan Yuen at ymg@rosl.org.hk.

The Gender Studies Programme & Gender Research Centre at the Chinese University of Hong Kong are presenting a talk (in English) on 24<sup>th</sup> April by Staci Ford, Lecturer in the Dept. of History at the HKU, entitled “Gendered Exceptionalisms : U.S. Women in 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century Hong Kong”. The lecture will take place in room 401 Humanities Building, New Asia College at CUHK from 12:30 – 2:00 pm. All are welcome. Bring your own lunch. Enquiries : Vicky Li 2609 7679 or email genderstudies@cuhk.edu.hk.

RAS Life member Chris Hall will give a talk to **The Hong Kong Textile Society** on Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup> May, entitled “*Collecting Chinese Buddhist Textiles*”. Chris has on several occasions shared his love of textiles and his wonderful collection with our members. The talk will be held at the Helena May in Garden Road, at 6:30 pm for 7 pm. Enquiries : Edith Cheung 2301 2215.

**The Asia Society** present a talk by the founder and President of the Kham Aid Foundation on Thursday 30<sup>th</sup> May at the China Tee Club, Central. Explorer and author Dr. Pamela Logan will discuss her new book “Tibetan Rescue” about her efforts to protect the precious ancient murals of Pekar Monastery. Enquiries : 2103 9508 or E-mail fchim@asiasoc.org.

### **University of Hong Kong Museum & Art Gallery**

An exhibition “**Gems from the South : Traditional Crafts of Guangdong Province**” will be held from 12<sup>th</sup> April to July 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2002. All the works are from the Guangdong Provincial Museum collection and will include a wide range of crafts manufactured in Guangdong province from the Ming and Qing dynasties up to the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. They will include ceramics, inkstones, cloisonné wares, embroideries, furniture as well as carvings in stone, brick, glass, shell, ivory and wood. The Museum and Art Gallery will also present a series of talks and guided tours to accompany the exhibition. Please contact the Museum on 2241-5513 for further details, and visit their website for information about their other activities: [www.hku.hk/hkumag](http://www.hku.hk/hkumag).

### **The Hong Kong Gardening Society**

You don't have to be a gardening expert to enjoy the Hong Kong Gardening Society. They welcome new members, those with a garden and those with only a balcony or window boxes! All that is required is a love of plants and gardens. The society arranges regular coffee mornings at members' homes where advice, cuttings and seeds are exchanged and friendships made. They also arrange regular visits to garden centers, shows, etc. For information call Lynn Sinclair on 2719 4870 or Email [hkgardeningociety@hotmail.com](mailto:hkgardeningociety@hotmail.com) or go to [www.gardeninghongkong.com](http://www.gardeninghongkong.com).

