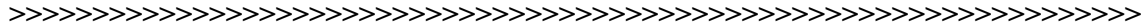


World Wildlife Fund for Nature Hong Kong (WWFHK), she spent 10 years studying marine mammals in Asia and the Atlantic Ocean.

Last November, Dr Porter was the guide for some 50 enthusiastic members and guests of the Society who boarded a launch to visit the areas off Lantau Island and Castle Peak frequented by the dolphins. At three different places dolphins were sighted, including at least one mother and her calf. Now Dr Porter has agreed to speak to the Society about her work, illustrating her talk with slides and recordings made of the dolphins.



City Hall Lecture

Friday, 14th June

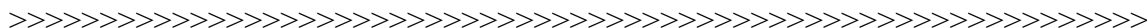
“Streets: Exploring Hong Kong Island”

- Speaker:** Jason Wordie
- Time:** 6:15 p.m.
- Venue:** Extension Activities Room, 8th 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.



Local Visit

Saturday, 10th August

**Da Qin – an Imperial Christian site of the Tang Dynasty
Talk by Martin Palmer at Fung Ping Shan Museum, Hong Kong University**

For some four hundred years we have known that there was a Church in China during the Tang dynasty. However it was assumed that this was an expatriate church, primarily serving the needs of foreigners who were Christians, such as the Persians, Sogdians and Tibetans. In 1998 a discovery of an extant Tang dynasty Christian building and site radically changed this concept, challenging traditional assumptions about Christianity, and about China.

Vietnam Air at 1530 on September 30th to Saigon, arriving 1650. Departure from Saigon on October 2nd by Vietnam Air departing 1015, arrival Hong Kong 1400. **Please note:** departure from Hong Kong will require persons coming on the tour to be at Chek Lap Kok **by quarter to six in the morning**. Those for whom this is a problem should consider spending the night at the Airport Hotel.

In Cambodia the tour will visit Angkor Wat, the Bayon, Ta Prohm, and Banteay Sreay Temples, as well as the Elephant Terrace, and the walls, gatehouses, and bridges of the ancient city. In addition, the tour will take a boat-ride on the Tonle Sap Lake, and visit a fishing village. For those who wish to, the opportunity to see the sun rise over Angkor Wat will be provided. There will be plenty of spare time for "doing your own thing"! A tour dinner of Khmer food and music will be included. At Siem Reap the tour will stay at the Angkor Hotel, which is an excellent 4 Star hotel with all facilities, including a swimming pool.

In Saigon the tour will take an evening river cruise down the Saigon River, combined with a second tour dinner of Vietnamese food and music. A visit to the Grand Temple of Cao Dai, to see the daily Grand Ritual, and visits to the Cathedral and the Museum of History, and other sights of interest will be included. At Saigon the tour will stay at the Rex Hotel, which is, again, an excellent 4 Star hotel with all facilities, in the very centre of the city.

Cost: \$8,300 + \$1,250 Single Supplement for Members, \$8,800 + \$1,250 Single Supplement for Non-Members. (Price includes all airfares, hotels, transport, guides, drivers, visas, departure tax at Saigon and Siem Reap, entry to monuments, all breakfasts, three lunches, three dinners). Children: same price as adults. **Note:** This tour is unsuitable for children aged below 12.

Payment and Refunds: Initial booking by 1st July, with a non-refundable deposit of \$1,250. The full payment to be made by 1st September latest. No refund of the full payment after 1st September. Refunds will only be countenanced in exceptional and extreme cases.

New Policy

Payments for Overseas Tours run by the Royal Asiatic Society, Hong Kong Branch

The Royal Asiatic Society, Hong Kong Branch, in organising overseas tours for its Members, often has to make the arrangements for these tours well in advance. At the moment of booking, the Society has to pay a non-refundable deposit to the airline and hotel, in order to gain the benefits of group fares and discounted rates. A month before the tour departure date - sometimes more - normal practice dictates that the Society has to pay in full for guides, and to pay the remaining sum due to the airline and hotel. At that date, too, the Society has to provide name-lists, details of passports, etc, of all those traveling.

In several recent overseas tours, the Society has faced problems caused by Members withdrawing from the tour at a very late date, and seeking reimbursement of the money they have paid. In some cases, the number of late withdrawals of this sort even reduced the numbers traveling to the point where group fares became at risk, and to the point where the Society was in danger of losing significantly on the tour.

The Council of the Society has decided that a new policy on payment and refunds for overseas tours is required. After considering the practice of other similar societies and groups in Hong Kong, Council has decided that the following policy shall be adopted, which is in line with policies adopted by other local societies:-

1. Where time permits, bookings for overseas tours will be done in three phases: (a) an expression of interest, involving no cash payment, and with no commitment on the part of the Member, requested about 6 months before the tour departs; (b) initial booking, including payment of a deposit, required about 3-4 months before the tour departs; and (c) payment of the full tour cost, required about 1 month before the tour departs: full payment can be made earlier, i.e. at the time of initial booking, if wished.

2. Initial booking to be accompanied by the payment of a deposit of \$1,000 per person (if the total tour price is to be above \$7,000, then the deposit will be \$1,250). This deposit to be non-refundable (see 4-7 below).

3. The full tour price to be paid by a date to be stipulated in the Newsletter, usually about four weeks before the date of departure. After the stipulated date, this payment will be non-refundable (see 4-7 below).

4. The deposit paid will be non-refundable except in the most exceptional of circumstances. Members paying the entire sum early may withdraw up to the date when final payment must be made as stipulated in the Newsletter, but will only then be reimbursed that part of the sum less the deposit figure.

5. The Society will consider sympathetically the case of Members who wish to withdraw from the tour after payment, but who are able to get some other person to take their place: in these circumstances, the organiser of the tour may allow the new name to be substituted for the withdrawing Member, and for the new name to take over the sum paid to the Society for the tour. The Society cannot, however, guarantee that this can be done in every case. It is, however, unlikely that substitution of names would be possible in the last 10 days before a tour departs.

6. If there is a waiting-list of Members wishing to go on the tour, the organiser of the tour may allow withdrawal and reimbursement (other than the deposit) even after the deadline set in the Newsletter. The Society cannot, however, guarantee that this can be done in every case. It is, however, unlikely that this would be possible in the last 10 days before a tour departs.

7. Members claiming to be unable to travel through ill-health, and seeking to withdraw and to be reimbursed at a late stage may be required to provide the Society with a Medical Certificate certifying that they were fit to travel on the day they made the payment, but are no longer fit to travel. In such circumstances, the organiser of the tour may reimburse the sums paid less the deposit.

8. If Members wish to raise questions on this new policy, please contact Dr Patrick H. Hase at 2658-6529.

The new policy set out above will be used from the date of this Newsletter onwards. The tour advertised in this Newsletter for the trip to Cambodia and Saigon will be the first to follow the new policy.