

ROYAL ASIATIC SOCIETY

HONG KONG BRANCH

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NEWSLETTER

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20th NOVEMBER 2007

FUTURE ACTIVITIES

Friday 30 th November	Lecture	Hong Kong 1945 – Future Indefinite
Friday 7 th December	Lecture	Sir Catchick Paul Chater's Art Collections
Friday 11 th January	Lecture	Observations of a "Streetwalker": Heritage in Hong Kong since 1997 – Issues and Themes
Saturday 12 th January	Local Walk	Walkabout and Lunch in Northern Kowloon
Saturday 19 th January	Local Visit	Visit to the Fireboat <i>Alexander Grantham</i> and the Museum of Coastal Defence
Friday 25 th January	Lecture	A Century of Travel in China
Saturday 2 nd and 16 th February	Local Visit	HSBC Headquarters, Queen's Road
Saturday 1 st March	Local Visit	Visit to the Closed Border Area

Lecture at Central Library

Friday 30th November

Hong Kong 1945 – Future Indefinite

At the beginning of 1945, the Japanese administration in Hong Kong was facing an increasingly critical military and economic situation. A diplomatic tussle was also taking place between China and Britain for occupation of Hong Kong once the Japanese were defeated. Following the Emperor's speech on 14th August, an interesting and fluid situation ensued. Mention will also be made in the lecture of the unsuccessful proposals for constitutional reform made by the Governor, Sir Mark Young, reflecting on where these might have led had they been adopted.

The speaker, Stuart Braga, was born in Hong Kong. He moved to Australia in 1951 and taught history for some forty years before retiring in 1998 as Senior Master of Trinity Grammar School, Sydney. He has written several books and numerous articles on educational, church and military history, his latest book, *Kokoda Commander*, having been published by Oxford University Press in 2004. It is a life of Major-General 'Tubby' Allen, the commander of the Australian troops who defeated the Japanese on the Kokoda Trail in October 1942. In 2007 he was requested by the National Library of Australia to reorganise the research papers of his uncle, the late, well-known J.M. Braga of Macau, whose extensive library on the Portuguese in the Far East was acquired by the Library in 1966. Stuart's forebears resided for some 200 years in Macau, and he and his wife will be attending the 2007 Encontro in Macau from 24th November to 4th December, a reunion of former Macau and Hong Kong residents with Portuguese ties.

Speaker: Dr Stuart Braga
Time/Date: 6:30pm, Friday 30th November
Venue: Activities Room 1, G/F, Hong Kong Central Library, Causeway Bay
Cost: This event is free and open to the public with no booking required

Lecture at the Helena May

Friday 7th December

Sir Catchick Paul Chater's Art Collections

In June this year, Council Member Geoffrey Bonsall gave a public lecture at the Hong Kong Museum of Art in connection with the Museum's exhibition of about 40 items from Chater's collection of pictures, to mark the Museum's 45th Anniversary. Geoffrey is an Honorary Adviser on Historical Pictures for the Hong Kong Museum of Art.

Geoffrey will give us an expanded version of that talk. After an introduction to Chater's life and achievements, the talk will identify his four collections: pictures relating to China, Hong Kong and Macau, 1655-1860; Chinese porcelain; Japanese Bizen ware, and books. Geoffrey will discuss how, by using the catalogues to two of the collections, and modern techniques and copies, much of the lost collections can be reconstructed in a new form.

Speaker: Geoffrey Bonsall
Time/Date: 6:30pm, Friday 7th December
Venue: The Garden Room, The Helena May, 35 Garden Road, Central
Cost: Members \$50, non-members \$70
Booking: Please send your cheque with the booking form on page 16 to Geoffrey Emerson

Overseas Visit

16th-25th December

Study Tour to Central Bhutan

With regret, the Society had to cancel the proposed visit to a festival at Trongsa (central Bhutan) from mid-December, as the timing was evidently not convenient to most members who might otherwise have been interested. The concerned members have already been notified. However, there may be another opportunity to see a little-visited local festival in late 2008 or early 2009, although it is too soon to offer firm dates for your calendar. For example, the Trongsa festival will be from 5th to 7th January 2009, in which case a suitable study visit could be made from Saturday 3rd January to Sunday 11th January. Also, it may be possible by late 2008 to enter Bhutan from Guwahati (groups can already exit in that way) and see something of eastern Bhutan before flying home from Paro. Those interested can contact Dr Brian Shaw, directly, at bcjshaw@hkucc.hku.hk.

Lecture at Central Library

Friday 11^h January

Observations of a "Streetwalker": Heritage in Hong Kong since 1997 – Issues and Themes

In this extensively illustrated talk local historian and writer Jason Wordie will detail some of the more interesting, lesser-known aspects of Hong Kong and Kowloon's history, culture and heritage that can be found on almost every street corner. The lecture will be enlivened with extensive anecdotes and asides, and leavened with a healthy dose of opinion.

Along the way, he will share his personal observations and experiences of Hong Kong heritage issues and themes over the last decade which have been informed, enlivened – and perhaps enlightened – by the numerous historical walks he has led for various local cultural and community groups in Hong Kong, Macao and Canton over that period.

In 2007 Hong Kong University Press published his latest book, *Streets: Exploring Kowloon*, a companion volume to his earlier, best-selling *Streets: Exploring Hong Kong Island* (HKUP, 2002). This talk will draw extensively from the experiences of both books.

Jason Wordie graduated in history from Hong Kong University in 1997. He has written several books on local history subjects in Hong Kong and Macao, including an unpublished biography of the late Hutchison

International taipan Sir Douglas Clague. He is currently finishing an extensive work on Macao history and street life, to be jointly published in 2008 by Hong Kong University Press and the Instituto Cultural de Macau.

In addition to his writing and research, in the cooler weather he leads historical walks in Hong Kong and Macao for various local cultural and community organizations. Jason lives at Shek Kong in the north-west New Territories, where he has made his home since the late 1980s.

Speaker: Jason Wordie
Time/date: 6.30pm, 11th January
Venue: Activities Room 1, G/F, Hong Kong Central Library, Causeway Bay
Cost: This event is free and open to the public with no booking required

Local visit

Saturday 12th January

Walkabout and lunch in northern Kowloon

On this historical walkabout, Jason Wordie will visit several of his favourite sites in northern Kowloon, as featured in *Streets: Exploring Kowloon*. The focus will be, as in the book, on the little-known and surprising. Come along prepared to be, well, surprised and fascinated by what this often-overlooked corner of Hong Kong has to offer - even the most jaded long-term residents will see something new and surprising.

The walk will start in the depths of Mongkok and finish near the old Kai Tak airport. It will last for about three hours – wear comfortable shoes and bring a water bottle – and end up with a delicious, authentic Thai lunch (surprisingly rare in chilli-shy Hong Kong!) in Kowloon City, Hong Kong's Thai-Chinese enclave.

Meeting Place: Meet at Exit B, inside Prince Edward MTR Station, 9.00am SHARP
Cost : \$250 for Members, \$300 for Members' Guests. This includes a Thai lunch at Kowloon City. Alcoholic drinks are at individual expense.
Enquiries: Call Jason at 2476 5057 or email him at jasonwordie@graduate.hku.hk
Booking: Please return the booking form on page 16 to Jenny Day by 5th January

Local Visit

Saturday 19th January

Visit to the Fireboat *Alexander Grantham* and the Museum of Coastal Defence

You have probably seen the posters in the MTR or advertisements in the *HK News* for the 500-tonne fireboat **Alexander Grantham**, built in 1953 and decommissioned in 2002. It is now featured in Quarry Bay Park, near Taikoo Shing on Hong Kong Island. In addition to the boat, there is a gallery with historical information about fireboats and the *Alexander Grantham*. Our guides will include Mr Chan Shing-wai, Chief Curator of the conservation section of the Leisure and Cultural Services Department, and RAS member Paul Harrison, who was involved in the restoration of the boat. The RAS will visit sections of the boat not open to the public.

Following the visit to the boat, which will last approximately one hour, we will go to the Museum of Coastal Defence located just beyond Shau Kei Wan. Participants will be on their own to explore this very interesting museum. There will be a self-paying dimsum lunch afterwards in Shau Kei Wan.

Quarry Bay Park is about a ten-minute walk from Taikoo MTR station. Take Exit E and walk through Cityplaza and then cross the footbridge over the Eastern Corridor highway to Quarry Bay Park. To reach the Museum of Coastal Defence, we will walk back to the MTR, go to Shau Kei Wan station and then walk about ten minutes to the Museum. Participants are advised to wear rubber-soled shoes.

The size of the group has to be limited and bookings must be made in advance. Successful applicants will not be notified, but those on the waiting list will be notified.

Time/date: 9:00am, 19th January
Meeting Place: Quarry Bay Park, near Taikoo MTR station
Cost: \$50 members and \$70 guests
Booking Form: Please return the booking form on page 17 to Geoffrey Emerson by 14th January
Enquiries: Call Geoffrey Emerson at 2550 4374 or email emerson@netvigator.com

Lecture at the Helena May

Friday 25th January

A Century of Travels in China

Douglas Kerr and Julia Kuehn have recently edited a collection of essays entitled *A Century of Travels in China* (Hong Kong University Press, 2007). In this illustrated talk they will discuss the changing motivations and attitudes, and some of the varied experience, of Western travellers in China in the hundred years or so between the first Opium War and the foundation of the People's Republic, and the way these travellers wrote up their adventures and observations for readers at home. The talk will focus particularly on a few intrepid women travellers, in the Victorian period and the twentieth century.

Douglas Kerr is Professor in the School of English at the University of Hong Kong. He has written books on Wilfred Owen and George Orwell, and his forthcoming *Eastern Figures: Empire and Orient in British Writing* is concerned with the history of representations of Eastern people and places, from the time of Kipling to the postcolonial period. Julia Kuehn is Assistant Professor of English at HKU. Her research interests lie in 19th and early 20th-century literature and culture, particularly popular writing. She is the author of *Glorious Vulgarity: Marie Corelli's Feminine Sublime in a Popular Context* (2004). She is also co-editor of a collection of critical essays on travel writing studies, and another entitled *China Abroad: Travels, Spaces, Subjects*.

Speakers: Professor Douglas Kerr & Dr Julia Kuehn
Venue: The Garden Room, The Helena May, 35 Garden Road, Central
Time/Date: 6:00 for 6:30pm, Friday 25th January
Cost: \$50 for members, \$70 for guests (There will be a cash bar)
Booking: Please return the booking form on page 17 to Jenny Day
Enquiries: Call Jenny Day at 2813 7500

Local Visit

Saturday 2nd and 16th February

Advance Notice – Visit to HSBC Headquarters Building

We are pleased to inform you that permission has been received for members of the RAS to visit the HSBC Headquarters Building on two Saturday mornings, 2nd and 16th February 2008. Full details and a Reply Slip will be in the January Newsletter. Some items from the Bank's extensive Chinnery collection will be shown and also we will see parts of the bank not open to the public. In addition short talks will be given by Bank staff about the design and construction of the building and the archives as well as an introduction to HSBC Bank International services. The size of the group has to be limited, so you are urged to return the booking form as soon as possible after the January newsletter is out. Reservations will only be accepted by booking form and a waiting list will, as always, be made.

Local Visit

Saturday 1st March

Visit to the Closed Border Area

In March, 2007, our Immediate Past President, Dr Pat Hase, assisted by Tim Ko, led a group of Members to visit places of interest in the Border Closed Area. Some members who were unable to go on this trip have asked for it to be repeated. As a result, a repeat trip has been arranged for Saturday 1st March 2008.

This trip will be exactly the same as the one in March 2007. The Border Closed Area is difficult of access, and this trip will be an opportunity to see a part of Hong Kong usually closed to visitors. We will visit Lo Wu, to see the old Border Bridge (now preserved in a small garden there), the Sandy Ridge Cemeteries, one of the "Makintosh Cathedrals" (the Border Observation and Defence Posts built in the 1950s), the current Police Border Control Post, and two of the villages in the closed area, Heung Yuen Wai, and Lin Ma Hang. Lunch will be a vegetarian meal at the Taoist Institute in Ta Kwu Ling. The trip will include travel along a section of the Border Road. There will be a limit on numbers, so apply early if interested, using the form on page 129 of the newsletter.

Note: This visit is for members, who may bring a maximum of one guest each.

Organizer: Dr Patrick H. Hase
Time: 8.30am to approximately 6.00pm
Meeting Place: Behind the Peninsula Hotel (return to behind the Peninsula Hotel)
Cost: \$225 for members, \$275 for guests (includes lunch and transport)
Booking: Please complete and return the booking form on page 18 with your cheque and a photocopy of your Identity Card (or Passport) to Dr Hase before 24th January. Please take note of the notes on the booking form.
Enquiries: Tel Dr Hase at 2658 6529 (evenings) before 14th December or after 24th January, or email him at pphase@hkusua.hku.hk at any time

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Next year's AGM will again be held in the Harcourt Suite at the Hong Kong Club. There will be more on this popular event in the January newsletter but in the meantime be sure to make a note in your diaries to attend – Friday 25th April.

RECENT ACTIVITIES

Visit to Dragon Garden

Recycling and restoration were recurring themes when a group of RAS members visited Dragon Garden on Castle Peak Road on the morning of Saturday 15th September. Cynthia Lee, granddaughter of the founder of the garden had kindly invited us, but unfortunately on the day she was ill and unable to lead the group. At literally the eleventh hour, Dr Ken Nicolson from the Department of Architecture at Hong Kong University stepped in and gave us a fascinating tour.

Dr Lee Iu Cheung was born in 1896, and when he acquired the land in 1948 it was a barren slope. He developed the garden over 20 years to the late 1960s, making it a private retreat for the family. Winding narrow paths lead past palm trees, flowering shrubs, fruit trees, ponds, lotus flowers and water lilies. A grotto made from traditional Chinese weathered limestone, a miniature version of a Chinese landscape with its pavilions and pagodas, was one of the first in Hong Kong and has been copied many times since.

Being in the construction business Dr Lee used materials then not so common in Hong Kong, like concrete and ceramic tiles. He also had a passion for recycling materials, far ahead of his time, using stone ginger beer bottles as edging for the paths, and large Watson's glass bottles upended as stools. The dragon is a focal point of the landscape, its body covered with over 10,000 glass bottle fragments. Dragonflies keep away mosquitoes, and no chemicals are used.

After Dr Lee died in 1976 the garden was maintained by the family and for a while in the 1980s it was open to the public. More recently the family was split over the sale of the garden but Cynthia persuaded her uncle, Dr Lee's son, to find \$120m to buy the other family members out so that Hong Kong people can benefit.

Cynthia has formed a trust to save Dragon Garden and appointed Ken Nicolson, along with others, to restore it so it can be opened to the public in a few years time.



Photo courtesy of Jennifer Day

Chungking Mansions: A World Centre of "Low-End Globalization"

On 21st September we used a different venue, the Heritage Discovery Centre in Kowloon Park, for Dr Gordon Mathews' talk based on his research on Chungking Mansions. The attractive lecture hall accommodates over 130 people and every seat was full.

With rapid-fire delivery, Dr Mathews recounted with great enthusiasm the results of his research and fieldwork - he has stayed 1-3 nights a week in Chungking Mansions over the past two years. Originally built in 1962 as high-end apartments, multi-ownership from the beginning meant that the building began to 'lose its lustre' quickly in the 60s. There are currently over 900 owners of units within the building, with 90 guesthouses, 380 business, and 4,000-5,000 people staying in 17 storeys of cramped accommodation costing as little as \$60 a night. Businesses comprise money exchanges, shops selling garments, watches, food, AV and electronics and, in by far the greatest number, mobile phones.

A Japanese tourist once described Chungking Mansions as "ethnic chaos". Approximately half of the people there are traders and entrepreneurs, the rest being owners, managers, employees, sex workers, asylum seekers and tourists. Some employees are Hong Kong residents but most are illegal workers on tourist visas; and Chungking Mansions could not survive without these tourist-visa employees. Traders, who stay only a few days and the majority of whom are African, deal in phones, watches, building materials, gems, used car parts, clothing and diamonds, and are, in their own countries, middle- and upper-class and usually well-connected.

Since the installation of CCTV cameras in 2005 the crime rate has dropped markedly. Triads have never been able to penetrate Chungking Mansions – local Chinese would be far too obvious! There is not much ethnic tension, strife often being between geographical neighbours; for example, Indians and Pakistanis, and East and West Africans. The speaker stressed the friendliness and camaraderie of the inhabitants and shopkeepers and demonstrated that Chungking Mansions is a fine example of globalization in a small place. Indeed, it has been said it is a place that the United Nations could learn much from.

Following his fact-filled talk and many questions from the audience, Dr Mathews led a large group down to Chungking Mansions for dinner where the party had to be split between several different restaurants. As it was not possible to encapsulate all the fascinating results of his research into one evening's lecture, let alone into this newsletter report, we will look forward to the book, which is in the writing, that will give a full report of Dr Mathews' research.

Field Trip to Bronze Age Rock Carvings on Hong Kong Island

Following on from the lecture by archaeologist William Meacham to the Society in August, on 13th October 25 RAS members and guests were led by Bill on a very enjoyable visit by coach to the rock carvings on Hong Kong Island.

Rock carving tradition dates back to the Bronze Age, (ca 1200-200BC in South China) and then died out. There are more than a million in China as a whole, many in the north and not near the coastline but south China is the sparsest area for rock carvings. The only ones discovered are a cluster here in Hong Kong, one in Macau, and one in Zhuhai in Guangdong province, with two or three in Fujian.



The first rock carving in Hong Kong was found by a villager at Tung Lung, and mentioned in the Gazette of 1819. Bill told us workers using bronze tools took 2-3 days to complete one large carving which was made for rituals and worshipping deities.

The first stop was at Big Wave Bay where the huge elaborate carving is one of Hong Kong's most impressive, with an abstract design, possibly of a mythical animal. This was discovered in 1970 by a police officer, Brian Haigh. Then the party moved on to the second stop at the group of carvings at Wong Chuk Hang, next to a school and a stream. This had been known to squatters nearby for many years, but only reported to government officials in 1980. It is unique among Hong Kong rock carvings in being away from the coast in an upland setting.

After this we adjourned to the Top Deck open air restaurant at the Jumbo floating restaurant in Aberdeen for lunch. Then many members took advantage of David McKellar's kind invitation to board his company's junk for an afternoon's visit to the rock carvings on Po Toi.

Photo courtesy of Valery Garrett

In Search of Good Governance: The Administrative Officers of Hong Kong 1852-1997

Dr Steve Tsang started his talk, on 26th November, by observing that one of the most valuable inheritances that Britain had left to Hong Kong in 1997 was a professional and efficient civil service of which the Administrative Officers were the heart. As would come clear at the end of his talk, he did not feel that inheritance had in fact been preserved, let alone built upon. But his main topic was the history to 1997 of the Administrative Officers (AOs), or Cadets as they had been known before 1960.

The first two decades of British rule had been awful – inefficient and corrupt. So Governor Bowring determined the need – an advanced thought at that time – to recruit an elite corps of civil servants selected on merit. The first three arrived in 1862 when Robinson was Governor. They fitted the requirement: well-educated, middle-class, ‘young gentlemen’. The plan was that they should spend time mastering the language, but the pressing need for administrators meant their studies were truncated and they moved rapidly into positions of considerable responsibility. Dr Tsang considered that these first Cadets developed the ethos and ability to work as a team which marked the Cadet/A class and lay at the root of their effectiveness.

When local people were, from the 1950s on, recruited as AOs, no concessions were made and they were held to the same standard as the expatriates. They took on the ethos and ‘joined the team’. Although probably no thought had been given to how high they might rise, as they proved themselves they began to break through the glass ceiling.

After this brief sketch of the history of the AOs, Dr Tsang asked the question ‘what made them tick?’ They had a strong sense from the beginning of being an elite that could deal at short notice with any job honestly and fairly guided by the principle of ‘doing right by Hong Kong’ and without abuse of the considerable power that they held. In particular, the speaker confronted the question of corruption. He allowed that there were probably a few ‘dodgy’ characters amongst the AOs, but that ethos which he had emphasized, the fact that they were well-remunerated and generally came from a background without extravagant habits, militated against corrupt behaviour. He cited the fact that there was no resistance amongst the AOs to the creation of the ICAC as indicating that it threatened no vested interests in that group.

Although his recent book on this subject, *Governing Hong Kong: Administrative Officers from the Nineteenth Century to the Handover to China, 1862-1997*, published by Hong Kong University Press, ends in 1997 Press, Dr Tsang ventured some comments on the civil service after the hand-over. Whereas the colonial government had been inhibited by what London, the UN or Beijing might do, the SAR government is master of its own house and has become much more assertive. As an example, he considered that the use of one-tenth of the reserve to ward off speculators during the Asian Financial Crisis in 1998 would not have been possible for the colonial government. But his main criticisms were for the ministerial accountability system which, he felt, had broken the sense of a team working together and, by picking out some AOs to become ministers, had broken the sense of promotion on merit and thus damaged morale. The inheritance with which he started his talk had been, if not destroyed, seriously damaged by the introduction of the ministerial accountability system.

The Chater Legacy: A Selection of the Chater Collection

Saturday morning, 27th October, found an eager group of nearly 20 members at the Museum of Art in Tsim Sha Tsui to view The Chater Legacy exhibition. Our enthusiastic and very knowledgeable guide was Assistant Curator Maria Mok.

Following an interesting introduction in which she explained the background to Sir Paul Chater and his collection, Maria led us around the gallery and explained many of the items and their historical importance. Also of great interest were her many stories of her personal experiences in putting the exhibition together. For example, only three months before the opening, she received a call about a Chater file in Deacons, the law firm which handled Sir Paul’s affairs. This resulted in her spending two quite exciting days discovering details of the collection for the first time, notably a 1927 letter from the Government to Deacons mentioning metal plates on the back of some of the works giving vital information.

Maria made it very clear that putting together an exhibition like this one requires very painstaking work and difficult decisions must be made. Following this most interesting morning, nine members enjoyed a delicious Shanghai vegetarian lunch at the famous Kung Tak Lam restaurant at 1 Peking Road, overlooking the museum and the harbour.

The New Territories? Please Remind Me! and Shanghai before 1843

An overflow crowd greeted our former President, Dr James Hayes at the Helena May on 2nd November for his double presentation, “The New Territories? Please remind me!” and “Shanghai Before 1843”. The first part about the New Territories and his experiences there as District Officer in the 1970s and 80s was illustrated

with slides showing a very different place from today. For our newer members who perhaps are familiar only with the present very highly developed area, James's talk was certainly an ear and eye-opener. His many personal recollections of his dealings with the New Territories villagers were of great interest and added much colour to the talk.

In the second part of his presentation, James described a Shanghai seldom touched upon in European accounts: the city before it became one of the five treaty ports opened to foreign trade and residence by the terms of the Treaty of Nanking in 1842. James had put together a number of interesting slides to illustrate his talk, including one showing a section of the wall surrounding the original city, and another of the many junks in port — persuasive evidence that an extensive river, coastal and Southeast Asian trade had already developed in Shanghai before 1843. He enriched his account of the sights and scenes of Shanghai by readings from the memoirs and travelogues of missionaries and military officers, some of the earliest Western visitors to the city. One such publication, *Five Years in China from 1842 to 1847, With an Account of the Occupation of the Islands of Labuan and Borneo by Her Majesty's Forces* by Lieut. Frederick Edwyn Forbes, the title page of which was the subject of James's last slide, evokes a fascinating moment in the history of Shanghai immediately after the end of the first Opium War. Forbes devoted equal attention to the Shanghai countryside, describing its people, in an extract from the book quoted by James, as being 'the most contented, good-humoured, well-fed, industrious and happy population that, in the course of sixteen years of service in the navy, and rambles in most parts of the globe, I have ever met with.'

The Society is indeed fortunate to have people like James, who are so willing to share with us their memories and knowledge of bygone days.

A Private View – Chinese Textiles

Valery Garrett and Chris Hall treated the fortunate members who joined the private viewing of Chinese textiles on 3rd November to a fascinating description and an exquisite display of a wide variety of choice items from their collections. Each provided an insight into how they had become involved in collecting - Chris was guided by curiosity into a Sotheby's auction showroom in 1978 and Valery from a browse around the Chinese Arts and Crafts shop in Star House to "find something to hang on the bare walls" of her flat soon after she came to Hong Kong.

From such humble beginnings Chris has built up an unparalleled eclectic collection and showed us items from the Tang through to the Ming Dynasty, with rank badges, roundels, and robes but including gift covers from Japan along the way. Such is the range of wonderful items that Chris has, and such is his feeling for this collection, that he always has parts of his collection on display in museums such as the Asian Civilization Museum in Singapore and the Pasadena Pacific Asia Museum in USA.



Although Valery provided much of her unique collection of New Territories ethnic dress of the Cantonese, Hakka, Tanka and Hoklo people to the Victoria and Albert Museum in London, she was able to show us some of her personal favourites, including a colourful baby carrier cover from Sha Tau Kok with designs from the Cultural Revolution period. She showed us several fine robes which are among the many described in her copiously illustrated and definitive book on "Chinese Dress – from the Qing Dynasty to the Present" which has recently been published. She also showed us a Qing dynasty white fur-lined red silk robe, embroidered with flowers and Lunar New Year themes, which she wore at the reception when her New Territories collection was handed over to the V&A. We give our grateful thanks to both Chris and Valery for such a splendid opportunity to share in their enthusiasm for these beautiful textiles.

Photos courtesy of Peter Stuckey

HERITAGE INTEREST GROUP

“Volunteers”

Earlier this year that gradually thinning number of surviving RAS Volunteers finally marched (limped) back to their barracks, after many years of selfless campaigning for our heritage, and were given an appropriate tearful farewell by their Commander-in-Chief, Robert Horsnell.

Their “do or die” spirit of adventure and “esprit de corps”, will hopefully live on in the new **Heritage Interest Group (HIG)** who retain the same emblem and motto “*voluntarii et volantes*” (flying volunteers), out of respect. However, in this technological age, we feel that it is more relevant to commit ourselves more “intellectually” towards the challenges, rather than through pure, although noble, physical effort.

To join this elite group, few formalities are required: (rather like the French Foreign Legion!), but you do need to be a fully paid-up RAS member; and then contact our Assistant Secretary at membership@royalasiaticsociety.org.hk - no need for any forms. But, you may be required to donate your internal organs for science, at the first sign of injury or sickness while on a HIG site visit.*

Long-term project – Researching Graded Historic Buildings

The Group are presently undertaking vetting of research material for the Antiquities & Monuments Office, involving the recently gazetted 496 “Graded” historic buildings throughout Hong Kong. After necessary revisions, this information will be posted on the public AMO website. We are concentrating on buildings in Central District and members can work on any graded building of their choice. AMO have allocated some space for us in the Library at Heritage Discovery Centre in Kowloon Park, times are flexible, but most of us try to get along there on a Saturday morning. The full list of graded historic buildings is at www.amo.gov.hk/form/historical.pdf.

Site Visits

As well as our ongoing project, it is expected that visits will be required to appraise or comment on potential historic sites, structures and buildings. Visits may be suggested by members themselves or by AMO. One possible site for appraisal is some WWII ammunition bunkers, near to the former Lei Yue Mun Barracks, which have not yet been recorded by AMO.

Central Police Station

RAS contributed their views on the redevelopment about three years ago at a specialist forum – and we will need to dust this off and review our original suggestions to submit to the Hong Kong Jockey Club. I believe one suggestion was that some space should be found for a permanent centre for the various “learned bodies” in Hong Kong, including of course RAS. Another was that the present Police Force Museum could be relocated from the Peak to CPS, to improve its accessibility – the spin-off being that the existing Museum site can then be sold off by the government as a valuable residential lot. However, since then we have many new members with fresh ideas, and there have also been a lot of heritage developments since then

A particularly controversial issue this time will be the erection of a “Hong Kong Icon” on the courtyard of the old Victoria Prison. But, do we need an “instant” icon here? Can the designer guarantee his glass structure will become an icon? Hopefully, the restored compound will eventually after restoration and public acceptance become an icon in its own right – similar to Convent Garden Market, London. For details on the CPS scheme visit www.hkjc.com/english.

Hollywood Road Police Quarters Site

Last year, Gillian Buckley made an innovative proposal for an educational heritage feature here; let’s see what happens during the six months public consultation. Incidentally, during public consultations, should every suggestion be given equal status, i.e. those from adjoining residents who do not want to lose their harbour view, from the “tree-huggers” who want open-space at all costs, or from objective and knowledgeable experts like ourselves?

UNESCO Awards 2007

Ending on a more positive note, congratulations to this year’s award winners in Hong Kong Award for Innovation – The [Hong Kong Heritage Discovery Centre](http://www.hkjc.com/english), Kowloon Park, a very well executed conversion (in contemporary style) of the former Museum of History.

Award for Building Conservation – [Victoria Wine Cellars, Shouson Hill Road](http://www.hkjc.com/english) – very sensitive restoration of the old WWII ammunition bunkers. Particularly noteworthy, as it was an almost “one-man”

effort from the Managing Director, Gregory De'eb, who conceived and supervised the project, and made the UNESCO submission (which is almost as important!). Gregory is presently in talks with the government, with a view to acquire the remaining old bunkers close to the site, in order to expand and diversify the existing facilities.

Their web page is worth checking out, as there is not only "wine stuff", but also military history, and soon, news of their acquisition of Salvador Dali bronzes, including the brilliant 'Flamenco Dancer'. www.crownwinecellars.com

Goodbye for now and please keep in touch with any ideas for research, visits, comments, etc. I'm at wdgreaves@lcsd.gov.hk.

Bill Greaves

- *Editor's note – I am not sure whether our constitution permits this; I need to check with the President.*
- Bill is employed by the Antiquities & Monuments Office, but the above notes are entirely his own personal views.

BOOK REVIEW

***China Boy: The Story of a Childhood Spent in China During the Turbulent Years of the 1930s and Also in War-time Australia in the 1940s*, Michael Ferrier, unpublished typewritten manuscript, 134 pages, 24 illustrations, 1995. (Donated to the RAS Library October 2007)**

Michael Ferrier was born in Canton in 1927 to Olga and Vivian Ferrier and lived there until 1940. The family then relocated to Hong Kong. Michael and his two brothers were sent off to Australia in 1941. His parents were interned in separate camps during the occupation by the Japanese. His parents joined him in Australia after the war. His father subsequently took a position in Hong Kong and was killed in a car crash in 1951. Michael worked in Brunei and then in Australia. He retired in 1992 and resides with his wife, Merle, in Perth.

In 1995, the idea came to him to write an illustrated monograph of his life for his descendants to read in 2041 – 100 years after a particularly cherished family photograph had been taken in Hong Kong. This point is important; Michael has essentially written this account with his descendants in mind rather than as an autobiography for a general audience.

The account traces his life from the earliest days in Canton to the 1980s. In 1985 he and Merle visited the Mainland and Hong Kong again and were able to see the many changes that had occurred over the previous several decades. He was impressed and disappointed at the same time.

Michael's account is an easy, pleasant read which will resonate with older members, particularly those who have lived in this part of the world for a comparable period of time. The chapters dealing with Michael's life up to 1941 in the Mainland are interesting and give quite a detailed anecdotal account of life before and during the Japanese occupation.

Several chapters are devoted to the battle for and subsequent occupation of Hong Kong between 1941 and 1945. Michael's mother and father were incarcerated; his mother at Stanley and his father at Sham Shui Po (his father was scheduled to travel on the *Lisbon Maru* but was too ill to board). Michael, of course, was in Australia by this stage and is therefore using secondary sources. His account of the war years in Hong Kong is balanced and informative but should be read with an obvious degree of circumspection. There is a most interesting, indeed poignant, illustration on p.90 of a typed postcard sent to Michael by his mother in Stanley.

In much the way that *The Economist* characterised Sir Edward Heath in 2005, Michael might also be described as a "man of parts." After leaving Guildford Grammar School in 1946, he joined Shell and was with this company until 1962 both in Brunei and Australia. Following this he was a very successful insurance agent for 10 years and in 1972 was headhunted by the Liberal Party to become its director of finance in Perth. From 1983 to 1985 he did much the same job for the National Party (which suggests that his political inclinations are even handed!) and then returned to Guildford Grammar as director of development until 1992. He now describes himself as "very active."

Peter Halliday

FRIENDS OF THE RASHKB IN ENGLAND

Chairman Paul Bolding

Paul Bolding has taken over from David Gilkes as chairman of the Friends of the RASHKB in London. Paul was one of the founder members of the group in 1998 and has been on the committee since then. He is a journalist with Reuters and is currently based in London as an editor covering European equity markets. He has been in London, except for a six-month stint in India, since leaving Hong Kong in 1997. He spent four years in Hong Kong on the Reuters Asian regional editing desk, which moved to Singapore soon after the handover.

Paul has been a correspondent and a desk editor for Reuters since leaving university in 1974 with a degree in French and German. He also speaks Turkish. Besides Ankara in Turkey, he has been based in East Berlin, Brussels and also Nicosia to cover the Middle East. Paul was a joint author of the first *Insight Guide to Turkey* and has also written occasionally for the Journal of the RASHKB (see Volumes 38 and 42). His wife, Kirsty Norman, is also a member of the Friends committee.

Peter Halliday

LIBRARY DONATIONS

We are grateful to the following for their kind donations to the RAS library in the past few weeks:

From Helene H.T. Ma

§ Lau, Y W (2 copies). Yi shan xing dao : Dong hua san yuan 135 zhou nian ji nian zhuan ti wen ji. (益善行道：東華三院135周年紀念專題文集 / [作者劉潤和, 王惠玲, 高添強; 主編冼玉儀, 劉潤和].) Xianggang : San lian shu dian (Xianggang) you xian gong si, 2006.

From Instituto Cultural do governo da R.A.E. de Macao

§ Breitung, Werner. Overcoming borders living with borders: Macao and the integration with China. Macao : Instituto Cultural do governo da R.A.E. de Macao, 2007.

From Peter Stuckey & Rocky Dang

§ Stuckey, Peter and Dang, Rocky. Royal Asiatic Society Hong Kong Branch – Explorer tour of Western Mongolia, 18th August - 2nd September 2007.

RAS PUBLICATIONS SALE

The end of the year is in sight and so is the end of the Society's 70% Off Sale of journals and RAS publications. As from 1st January our books will revert to their original price and the opportunity to buy a set of RAS journals at a ridiculously low price will then be lost. How much better that our journals should be out on your bookshelves than left in storage in Kwun Tong!

Don't 'just think about it', or decide to wait until next time - this really is the last chance to buy at these low prices. So fill in the order form (attached separately) now and mail it in without further delay, and definitely before the end of December. Please don't forget to add the postage charge - unless you want to collect your order from the RAS office in Mid-Levels. Orders over \$500 will also include a free copy of William C. Hunter's *An American in Canton (1825-44)*.

If you have any questions, call Jenny Day at 2813 7500 or email info@royalasiaticsociety.org.hk

ILLUSTRATIONS IN THE NEWSLETTER

For the second time the newsletter contains photographs of some of our events. Many thanks go to the members who have given advice on how to improve the quality of the printed version and also on how to keep the content of the electronic file down to a manageable size. It isn't until the spare hard copies reach me from the printer that I shall know how everything turns out so it is still a case of trial and error. If the images still don't seem too good this time, go to the RAS website where the photos will be of much better quality, and in colour. Hard copies can be sent to anyone not able to open these files – contact me, Jenny Day, for this at 2813 7500 or membership@royalasiaticsociety.org.hk.

ROYAL ASIATIC SOCIETY Hong Kong Studies Series

This series was created a few years ago to make widely available important contributions on the local history, culture and society of Hong Kong and the surrounding region. A Trust Fund was established in the name of Sir Lindsay and Lady Ride, in memory of the Society's first Vice-President. In addition to a sum set aside from the Society's own funds, generous donations were received from the Clague Trust Fund and from the Friends of RASHKB in UK, enabling the series to publish high-quality works that will be of lasting appeal and value to both scholars and informed general readers. To order a book in the Royal Asiatic Society Hong Kong Studies Series, please complete the booking form below and mail to Royal Asiatic Society Hong Kong Branch, GPO Box 3864, Hong Kong.

“Reluctant Heroes: Rickshaw Pullers in Hong Kong and Canton, 1874-1954”

by Dr Fung Chi Ming

Reluctant Heroes by Fung Chi Ming reconstructs the daily lives and social environments of rickshaw pullers in Hong Kong and Canton. Subject to patron-client problems, the interventions of the police, the regulations of the state, and the British colonial and Chinese authorities, they struggled with their adversities and became a political force to be reckoned with. Fung argues that they are “reluctant heroes”, since their collective outbursts were authentic protests against encroachments on their livelihood. This book is accessible and interesting for a lay reader, while making an important contribution to interethnic relations, social movements, migrant populations, the colonial situation, and the growth of the modern state.

“For Gods, Ghosts and Ancestors: The Chinese Tradition of Paper Offerings”

by Dr Janet Lee Scott

In the second volume in the series, *For Gods, Ghosts and Ancestors*, readers are introduced to the variety of paper offerings and their uses in worship, in assisting worshippers with personal difficulties, and in rituals directed to gods, ghosts and ancestors. Using Hong Kong as a case study, ex-Council Member Dr Janet Lee Scott looks at paper offerings from every conceivable angle and considers the survival of this traditional craft, the importance of flexibility and innovation, and the role of compassion and filial piety in the use of paper offerings.

ORDER FORM

ROYAL ASIATIC SOCIETY Hong Kong Studies Series

I would like to order copies of *Reluctant Heroes: Rickshaw Pullers in Hong Kong and Canton 1874-1954*
by Dr Fung Chi Ming
and/orcopies of *For Gods, Ghosts and Ancestors: The Chinese Tradition of Paper Offerings”*
by Dr Janet Lee Scott

....at the discounted price for members of \$175.50 per copy, plus \$20 for postage within Hong Kong, \$50 for overseas postage by surface mail and \$80 for overseas postage by airmail. For more than one copy, postage rates are higher – please enquire.

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MAIL TO: Royal Asiatic Society, Hong Kong Branch, GPO Box 3864, Hong Kong.

OF INTEREST TO MEMBERS

Hong Kong International Antiquarian Book Fair

30th November to 2nd December, Pacific Place Conference Centre, 5/F One Pacific Place, 88 Queensway

Although there have been a couple of Antiquarian book fairs in Hong Kong in past years, this will be the first Western style fair with many dealers coming from all around the world. On display will be the oldest known Asian and Western printed material, including prayers printed in the eighth century in Japan, as well as money printed in China in the fourteenth century. The oldest Western printed material will be represented by a page from the Guttenburg Bible which was printed in the fifteenth century in Germany. Many of the major international antiquarian book dealers will be attending. Hours will be Friday 5.00pm to 8.00pm, Saturday 10.00am to 6.00pm and Sunday 10.00am to 4.00pm. For more information call 2376 2062 or go to www.hongkongantiquarianbookfair.com.

CONFERENCE

GUANGZHOU AND NAGASAKI COMPARED, 1730-1830: Dutch, Chinese, Japanese relations

The Cultural Affairs Bureau of the Macao SAR, the Dutch Consulate in Guangzhou, the Guangzhou Museum and Sun Yat-sen University have worked together to organize this conference, which anyone is welcome to attend. This is the first of two international conferences in which the two Asian port cities will be compared in connection to their relations with the Dutch and the rest of the outside world. This (the first) conference will take place in Guangzhou and Macao from December 3-7, 2007, and will focus on cultural aspects. The second conference will take place in Japan in the latter half of 2008 or early 2009. Although registration is recommended, walk-ins are very welcome.

Full information, registration forms and abstracts are currently posted on the website of the Macau Cultural Affairs Bureau: <http://www.icm.gov.mo/GNC/indexE.asp>

Hong Kong Audio Guide: A 21st Century Guide to Old Hong Kong

Here is an original idea - a do-it-yourself heritage walk around Hong Kong. Mobile Adventures Limited (RAS member Stefan White) have put together a brochure with a map of points of interest in Central and just beyond. Each site is designated a three digit number. You look up the place on the map, then telephone on your mobile a local telephone number (standard call charges apply). Then dial in the three digit number and you will then be given a 2-3 minute history of that site.

In future these booklets may be easily available in local bookstores. There will be a supply available for members at our future meetings so look out for them on 7th December. This is a great idea for those long-term visitors - send them off with a brochure and a mobile phone for the day!

The George Hilton Hong Kong Panorama

Around 1904, George Hilton, a military photographer stationed in Hong Kong around the turn of the century, took a panoramic photograph of Hong Kong, spanning from the Western to the Eastern Harbours. The four print panorama lay out of sight for 90 years but was discovered in 1996, by then in such bad condition that it could not be displayed in the conventional way and was impossible to restore. However, the advance of digital restoration techniques over the past few years has enabled the four panels to be scanned, after which each was carefully restored, pixel by pixel. A talented photographer has been able to merge the four photos into one panorama, removing all imperfections and making one seamless panel – resulting in a spectacular view of Hong Kong. Copies of this panorama, and also ‘slices’ of it, are available for purchase. All details can be found at www.hongkongpanorama.com.

Timeless Siamese Heritage

On 10th December the Siam Society in Bangkok, together with ThaiCraft Fair Trade, will be holding an activity day, Timeless Siamese Heritage, to support the craft traditions of village artisans from all over Thailand. Taking place in the beautiful Siam Society garden in Soi Asoke, there will be performances of Thai

music and the crafts on display will include silver jewellery from several ethnic groups, baskets and shadow puppets. The Siam Society always welcomes members of RASHKB and anyone visiting Bangkok that weekend is most welcome to attend. All details can be found at www.siam-society.org.

Treasures of the World's Cultures from the British Museum

There are only a few days left in which to see this wonderful exhibit at the Hong Kong Museum of Art – the last day will be 2nd December. If you have not yet been, be sure to pay a visit before it is too late. It features about 270 items including sculptures, paintings, jewellery, porcelain and stone artefacts that have been collected from all over the world by the British Museum. The exhibition covers a span of time from two million years ago to the present day and represents many diverse cultures. Highlight items include an Egyptian wooden mummy-board from about 945BC, a 13th century Egyptian brass “Astrolabe”, a 2nd century marble Roman statue of Dionysos and a “Queen’s lyre” from about 2400BC, excavated at Ur. Opening hours at the HKMA are 10.00am to 6.00pm, Sunday to Friday and Public Holidays (closed on Thursdays), Saturday 10.00am to 8.00pm. For full information go to www.lcsd.gov.hk/CE/Museum/Arts and for enquiries call 2721 0116 or email enquiries@lcsd.gov.hk.

ADVERTISING IN THE RASHKB NEWSLETTER

In an effort to defray newsletter costs, we are accepting ads that would be of interest to RAS members and related to the objects of the Society. Would you like to advertise a business or a service you can provide, or do you know someone who might be interested? Our rates are very reasonable: Full Page \$1,150.00; 2/3 Page \$850.00; 1/2 Page \$725.00, 1/3 Page \$450.00. If you have a short ad and would like to pay according to the number of words in the ad, you may do so at the following rates - first 10 words \$70.00, each additional word \$2.50. Phone/fax 2813 7500 or email info@royalasiaticsociety.org.hk.

OTHER SOCIETIES

If you are new to Hong Kong or recently retired with more time to spare, or if you simply want to take up a new interest and meet more people, consider joining some of the following societies. You are sure to find many familiar RAS faces in these groups!

The Royal Over-Seas League

The Royal Over-Seas League has often had the pleasure of the company of RAS members at League functions in Hong Kong. RAS members are very welcome to join the ROSL’s free emailing list and to receive invitations to ROSL functions (approximately one every six weeks). The ROSL does not divulge its mailing lists to any outside organizations.

Those on ROSL’s emailing list will automatically be sent details and booking forms in the run-up to each of the functions. Contact membership@rosl.org.hk.

The Hong Kong Natural History Society

Membership of the Hong Kong Natural History Society is open to anyone with an interest in the Hong Kong countryside. The Society organises monthly outings, which consist of hikes in the winter months and boat trips to the remoter islands during the summer months. Most outings take place on a Sunday and have leaders who will guide the party and point out items of interest. Memoirs are published from time to time, which are available to members, and there is a small library of natural history books that members can access. Membership is only \$100 for a year for an individual or \$150 for a couple. For more information email Jan Campbell at hellojan@netvigator.com.

The Hong Kong Gardening Society

A friendly group that shares a love of gardening, whether it is with pots on a balcony, houseplants or a garden. They don’t all have ‘green thumbs’, but they share tips and advice from a monthly newsletter and coffee

mornings and arrange visits to gardens and places of horticultural interest. For information email membership@gardeningshongkong.com, call 2719 4870, or go to www.gardeningshongkong.com

Oriental Ceramics Society

The OCS provides a forum for the exchange of ideas and information in study sessions and travel programmes, a platform for scholarly lectures by distinguished speakers and a medium through which members may show their collections to other members and the public. For further information email ocs@orientalceramics.org.hk or leave a phone message at 2527 0696.

The Women's Corona Society welcomes ladies who are new to Hong Kong as well as those who are not. They meet each Monday morning in the Mariners' Club in TST and enjoy coffee and a chat as well as interesting speakers; they also arrange local visits and social activities. For more information call Karen Ellis on 2779 3476.

The English Speaking Union (Hong Kong) ³/₄ ESU (HK)

Members are warmly invited to join the ESU (HK), an independent, non-political, registered educational charity, founded in 1918, and active in 56 countries. The mission of the ESU (HK) is to provide opportunities for people from all walks of life to broaden their social contacts through the English language and to advance their knowledge and use of English as the language of the "global village". For further information, visit the ESU (HK) web-site: www.esuhk.org; or send enquiries by email to: esuhk@netvigator.com. Telephone enquiries may be made to the administrator at: 2186-8449 (M-F, 9.00am-12 noon).

The Mineralogy Society of Hong Kong

The Mineralogy Society of Hong Kong is a recently formed society which will be of interest to any RAS members who are interested in naturally occurring crystals, and by the details of their formation over geological ages. Members receive a monthly newsletter, often with some offers of minerals for sale, and participate in a variety of activities. For more details visit the website, www.minsochk.org, send an email to info@minsochk.org, or call Anthea Strickland at 2857 3464.

English Speaking Members Department, YWCA

The YWCA at 1 Macdonnell Road organizes hikes through the wilder side of Hong Kong and also walks through historical areas of Hong Kong Island and Kowloon. Classes are also available in Beginner's Cantonese and Mandarin. For full information about their extensive range of programmes, go to their website, www.esmdywca.org.hk, or call 3476 1340.

The Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland

The Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland, at 60 Queen's Gardens, London W2 3AF, has a busy lecture programme which may interest members visiting London. For further information email info@royalasiaticsociety.org or go to www.royalasiaticsociety.org.

The Siam Society Under Royal Patronage

The Siam Society in Bangkok has a very active programme of talks and visits and welcomes any of our members who may be visiting the city. For details of their current programme, call 02 661 6470, email info@siam-society.org or go to their website, www.siam-society.org.