

ROYAL ASIATIC SOCIETY

HONG KONG BRANCH

皇家亞洲學會香港分會
G.P.O. Box 3864, Hong Kong



NEWSLETTER

Telephone/fax : 2813 7500
e-mail address : membership@royalasiaticsociety.org.hk
web address : www.royalasiaticsociety.org.hk

20th JANUARY 2008

FUTURE ACTIVITIES

Saturday 2 nd and 16 th February	Local Visit	HSBC, One Queen's Road
Friday 29 th February	Lecture	Unmasked Mandarins: The Private Performance of Hong Kong's Financial Secretaries, 1937-87
Saturday 1 st March	Local Visit	Visit to the Closed Border Area
Friday 7 th March	Lecture	Madame Chiang Kai-shek: Dragon Lady or China's Joan of Arc?
Saturday 8 th March	Lecture	The Chinese Railway Timetable: Translating and Reorganizing it as a Labour of Love
Friday 14 th March	Lecture	Faces in Jade
Friday 11 th April	Lecture	The 'Hidden' Shenzhen – Its Historical Side
Saturday 12 th April	Cross-border Visit	The 'Hidden' Shenzhen – Its Historical Side
Friday 25 th April	RAS Event	Annual General Meeting
19 th -24 th June	Overseas Visit	Trip to Northern China

Local Visit

Saturday 2nd and 16th February

HSBC – One Queen's Road

We are pleased that permission has been received for members of the RAS to visit HSBC, where we will visit areas usually not open to the public. In addition, we will be shown some items from the Bank's extensive Chinnery and China Trade collection. Our guides will include the Bank archivist and an expert on the design and construction of the building as well as RAS member Andrew Primrose, Business Development Manager of HSBC Bank International Limited. Andrew will speak to us about the Bank's offshore services.

The visits will be held on two Saturday mornings because the size of each group has to be very limited. This will be a members only visit, and Hong Kong ID cards must be shown. It may be possible to arrange further visits later in the year if demand warrants. Reservations will only be accepted by booking form and a waiting list will be made. The visit will last approximately two hours.

Venue: HSBC, One Queen's Road Central
Time/Date: 2nd and 16th February - meet at 9:50am at the Reception Area on the ground floor
Cost: \$50 (members only)
Bookings: Return the booking form on page 13 to Geoffrey Emerson. All respondents will be notified which group they are in or whether they are on the waiting list
Enquiries: Email Geoffrey at: emerson@netvigator.com or phone 2550 4374

Lecture at the Helena May

Friday 29th February

**Mandarins Unmasked:
The Private Performance of Hong Kong's Financial Secretaries, 1937-87**

Financial Secretaries exercised enormous power under British rule and acquired legendary reputations, both locally and overseas. Sir John Cowperthwaite and Sir Philip Haddon-Cave, in particular, have taken much of the credit for Hong Kong's astonishing economic performance in the last century. However, the public reputations of colonial financial secretaries are rarely matched by the official record of their policies and decisions. Confidential government files show them to have been frequently ill-informed about financial matters, usually ignorant of the community's needs and mostly paranoid about releasing data that would allow informed discussion of their policies. Leo Goodstadt will offer a reassessment of their performances based principally on the evidence from the Hong Kong Public Records Office.

Leo F. Goodstadt, CBE, JP, is the author of *Profits, Politics and Panics: Hong Kong's Banks and the Making of a Miracle Economy, 1935-1985* (Hong Kong University Press, 2007), which details the financial mismanagement and malpractices of both government and business. His earlier book, *Uneasy Partners: The Conflict between Public Interest and Private Profit in Hong Kong* (Hong Kong University Press, 2005), has become the classic study of government-business relations in Hong Kong. As Head of the Central Policy Unit (1989-97), he was involved in policy-making at the highest levels. He is currently an adjunct professor in the School of Business Studies, Trinity College Dublin. He is also an honorary Fellow of the University of Hong Kong, where he was formerly a lecturer in economics.

Speaker: Leo Goodstadt
Time/Date: 6.30pm, Friday 29th February
Venue: The Garden Room, G/F, The Helena May, 35 Garden Road, Central
Cost: Members \$50, non-members \$70
Booking: Please send your cheque with the booking form on page 13 to Jenny Day

Local Visit

Saturday 1st March

Visit to the Closed Border Area

Please Note: This trip is now fully subscribed. This notice is being repeated as a details reminder for those lucky enough to be included in the group.

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.

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)
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

Lecture at the Helena May

Friday 7th March

Madame Chiang Kai-shek: Dragon Lady or China's Joan of Arc?

Madame Chiang Kai-shek's life (1898-2003) spanned the 20th Century, much of it lived at the epicentre of events not only in the turbulent history of modern China, but also in epic struggles – World War II and the Cold War – that engulfed the world. Even as the Chiang family legacy has fallen under attack in Taiwan, in China Madame Chiang's historical role and contributions are now being viewed in a more favourable light – an ironic twist.

Laura Tyson Li is the author of the book, *Madame Chiang Kai-shek: China's Eternal First Lady*, the first English-language biography of one of the most influential, colourful and controversial women of the last century. Laura Tyson Li spent a decade living in China, Hong Kong and Taiwan, during which she was variously a student, business reporter for the South China Morning Post and Taiwan correspondent for the Financial Times. She has also written articles for The Economist. Growing up in Connecticut, she graduated from Dartmouth College, where she majored in East Asian Studies. She now lives in New York City with her husband and two daughters. She will be in Hong Kong for the HK Literary Festival, with whom this event is being jointly organised.

Speaker: Laura Tyson Li
Venue: The Helena May, Garden Room, G/F, 35 Garden Road, Central, Hong Kong
Time/Date: 6:00 for 6:30 pm, Friday 7th March
Cost: \$50 for RAS members, \$70 for guests (There will be a cash bar)
Booking: Please return the booking form on page 14 to Geoffrey Emerson
Enquiries: Email Geoffrey at emerson@netvigator.com or phone 2550 4374

Note: Applications will be accepted on a 'first come, first served' basis and there will be a waiting list if necessary. There can be no substitutions or additions other than by the waiting list.

Lecture at Central Library

Saturday 8th March

The Chinese Railway Timetable: Translating & Reorganizing it as a Labour of Love

Duncan Peattie is a Railway Signalling Testing Engineer with a life-long interest in railways. Born in Kingston-upon-Thames, he worked for British Rail for nearly 20 years before coming to Hong Kong to work from 1997 to 2000 on the KCR Automatic Train Protection project, with particular responsibility for ensuring that the change to the new signalling system did not disrupt normal train operation. During that time he travelled into China and was baffled by the difficulty of obtaining timetable information for the Chinese railways.

In the absence of suitable English language timetable information, and frustrated by the layout of the official Chinese language timetable, he set about 'filling the gap'. More a piece of detective work than a linguistic exercise, Duncan's resultant timetable, conceived for his own use and basically a labour of love, is now published and sells around the world. In this talk Duncan will explain the background to the compilation of the timetable, the creation of tables (in the absence of such in the official timetable) and summarise the evolution of the timetable from initial concept to published work.

Duncan left school at age 16 and continued his education (City & Guilds and Higher National Certificate in Electronic Engineering) whilst working by means of day release and evening classes. Working now in Sydney, Duncan's family are mainly in the UK with some in Australia and New Zealand. Apart from railways, his other big interest is in travel of all forms, from walking in Hong Kong to discovery of new places. *Please note the unusual time and day for this lecture.*

Speaker: Duncan Peattie
Time/Date: 4.00pm, Saturday 8th March
Venue: Activities Room 1, G/F, Central Library, Causeway Bay
Cost: This talk is free and open to the public with no booking required

Lecture at the Helena May

Friday 14th March

Faces in Jade

The material of nephrite jade has a matted crystalline structure with no planes of cleavage, a hardness of 6.5 on the Mohs scale, and it cannot be carved. It has been worked in China for 6000 years. Over that period representations of the human face have been made at all times. Neolithic man had only the most primitive working tools to work upon nephrite but the development of civilization in China through the introduction of bronze, iron and, latterly, carborundum as an abrasive, greatly facilitated the working of nephrite and enabled increasingly sophisticated portraiture to appear in nephrite working. By reference to illustrated examples the talk will illustrate this development from approximately 4000 B.C. to the 18th Century A.D.

Angus Forsyth, a life member of our Society since 1972, is a long time resident of Hong Kong and student of all aspects of Chinese jade working from Neolithic Times to the Qing Dynasty. He has published books and articles on Neolithic and Archaic Jades.

Speaker: Angus Forsyth
Venue: The Helena May, The Garden Room, G/F, 35 Garden Road, Hong Kong
Time/Date: 6:00 for 6:30 pm, Friday 14th March
Cost: \$50 for members, \$70 for guests (there will be a cash bar)
Booking: Please return the booking form on page 14 to Jenny Day

Lecture at the Helena May

Friday 11th April

The 'Hidden' Shenzhen – Its Historical Side

When we hear the word 'Shenzhen', we usually think of shopping malls. But there is another side – a historical one. RAS members Ted Rule and his wife, Karen, are going to show us this historical side. They now live in Shenzhen, having lived in Hong Kong and China for many years. Ted has been involved with investment projects in Shenzhen since 1987.

Shenzhen and Hong Kong have closely related histories but with subtle differences. Ted Rule will explore some of these. He will speak about the tomb of the last emperor of the southern Song Dynasty and the role of the eunuch Admiral Zheng He in establishing China's biggest Tin Hau temple at Chiwan. He will explore the contribution of the Southern Song statesman, general and poet, Wen Tianxiang, to the area, the astonishing number of Wen's descendents in the area and the composition of his poem, 'On the Lingding Ocean'. He will ask whether the Japanese pirates responsible for the early Qing depopulation of the area were really Japanese, and the role of Koxinga in this episode. Also, he will discuss the Dapeng Fort and its hereditary leading family, the Lai family, in the Opium War as well as the position of Li Hongzhang's China Merchants' Steamship Navigation Company in the history of the city. Finally, he will deal with some little-known aspects of Deng Xiaoping's relationship with Shenzhen with particular reference to the SS Minghua, which is now a floating hotel at Shekou.

The talk will be followed up the next day, Saturday 12th April, with an all-day bus tour to Shenzhen, taking in as many of the following as possible: Dapeng Fort, the tomb of the last Emperor of the Southern Song Dynasty, the largest and grandest Tin Hau temple in China, and Xia Sha Hakka Village. (See the separate notice.)

Ted Rule has an honours degree in Chinese from the University of Melbourne and an M.A. from the Australian National University in Chinese language and literature. He has lived in China since 1970, in Taipei, Beijing, Hong Kong and Shenzhen. One of the founders of the Chinese equity markets, he has written widely on Chinese economics, finance and history. Karen Rule studied at the Australian National University and the University of Sydney. Her career in I.T. included five years with Hewlett-Packard regional headquarters in Hong Kong. From 1994, when living in Sydney, she was active in the Australian Liberal Party with several leadership roles, including a term as an elected local Councillor. She speaks Mandarin and is now writing a travel guide.

Speaker: Ted Rule
Time/date: 6:30pm, Friday 11th April
Venue: The Central Library, Activities Room 1, G/F, Causeway Bay
Cost: This event is free and open to the public with no booking required

Cross-border Visit

Saturday 12th April

The 'Hidden Shenzhen' – Its Historical Side

Karen and Ted Rule will be our guides for this all-day visit across the border. Our historical tour of Shenzhen will take in as many of the following sites as time permits: Dapeng Fort, the best preserved Ming Dynasty building group in the Hong Kong-Shenzhen area, including a Qing Dynasty general's mansion, the tomb of the last Emperor of the Southern Song Dynasty, the largest and grandest Tin Hau Temple in China, which was built under the aegis of the eunuch Admiral, Zheng He, and which still maintains interesting aspects of Ming Dynasty architecture, and Xia Sha Village, an urban Hakka village settled at the end of the Southern Song Dynasty by the Huang clan, descendants of the Southern Song official Huang Motang.

Our bus will depart from beside the Peninsula Hotel, Tsimshatsui, at 9.00am and return there about 7.00pm. A dim sum lunch at the Laurel Restaurant will be included in the cost and 'afternoon tea', self-paying, will be at Starbuck's at Seaworld Square. We will cross the border at Sha Tau Kok and return via the new crossing and bridge over Shenzhen Bay.

Visas must be obtained by individuals before the day so there will be no delays at the border. Participants should carry both their passports and Hong Kong ID Cards. Also, participants are strongly urged to buy one-day travel insurance policies if they are not already covered by travel insurance. Members may bring only one guest.

Cost: Members \$700, Guests \$900 (one guest per member only). This cost includes the bus trip, lunch, admission to sites, and tips. Cheques must be made out to the '**Royal Asiatic Society, Hong Kong Branch**' - please do not abbreviate, and do not combine this cheque with any other RAS event.

Time/Date: 9.00am, Saturday 12th April

Meeting Place: Between the YMCA and the Peninsula Hotel, Tsim Sha Tsui, Kowloon

Booking Form: Please return the Booking Form on page 15 to Geoffrey Emerson by 1st March

Enquiries: Enquiries to Geoffrey at 2550 4374 or email emerson@netvigator.com

Note: Applications will be accepted on a 'first come, first served' basis, and there will be a waiting list if necessary. All applicants will be notified whether they are successful or on the waiting list. There can be no substitutions or additions other than by the waiting list.

Annual Event

Friday 25th April

Annual General Meeting

This year's annual General Meeting will take place in the Harcourt Room, the Hong Kong Club, on 25th April and this year we have again managed to line up a special speaker. We are very fortunate that Richard Engelhardt has agreed to give a talk, 'Asian Values in Heritage Conservation'. Richard is Regional Advisor in Culture in Asia and the Pacific at UNESCO. Further details and the booking form will be in the March newsletter.

Overseas Visit

19th-24th June

Trip to Northern China

The Society is planning to organise a visit to Chengde, the Mulan Hunting Ground and Beijing, tentatively 19th-24th June 2008. You might like to note these dates in your diaries. The leader of the group will be Dr Joseph Ting, recently retired from Government and now Senior Research Fellow in the History Department of the Chinese University. More details will be given in the March newsletter.

RECENT ACTIVITIES

Chinese Restaurants: Exploring the Chinese Diaspora

On November 16th an overflow audience heard Judy Maxwell talk at the Helena May about overseas Chinese. This was the third time Judy had spoken to the Society. This time the subject of her talk was the Chinese diaspora – the migration of Chinese throughout the world in the late 19th and 20th centuries. Explaining that in Latin America the Chinese immigrants integrated more than did the Chinese in Canada or America, to the extent of men growing moustaches so they would look more local, Judy said that there were no Chinese women there and so the men took local wives. In Latin America, Cuba has the largest Chinese population. In Peru the two labour-intensive industries the Chinese first worked in were the sugar and guano businesses, being treated no better than slaves in the 19th Century. Today, of course, the Chinese in Latin America are professionals and running their own businesses.

Judy concluded her talk by showing a 25-minute film entitled *Latin Passions*, from an award-winning documentary series on the diaspora. Introducing the episode, highlighting two Chinese-run restaurants in Lima and which she had helped research, she said that we would laugh and want to cry and above all be fascinated. We were. A lively question and answer session followed the film.

Hong Kong 1945 – Future Indefinite

Hong Kong-born Stuart Braga, retired history teacher and author from Sydney, gave an excellently presented PowerPoint talk, entitled ‘Hong Kong 1945 – Future Indefinite’, to a large and appreciative audience at the Central Library on 30th November.

During the occupation Stuart’s uncle, the well-known Jack Braga, was in Macau, where the family’s roots go back to 1712. Stuart summarized the worsening conditions in Hong Kong during the Japanese occupation, with increasing shortages of water, electricity, food and firewood. He also mentioned sumo wrestling on Murray Parade Ground, Nathan Road renamed as ‘Capturing Hong Kong Avenue’, Japanese lessons in the newspapers, and the sacred sword buried under the War Heroes Memorial.

The sudden ending of the war in August 1945, the death of President Roosevelt in April 1945 and the change of policy under President Truman all influenced Hong Kong’s future. The Colonial Secretary, Franklin Gimson, restored British authority in a temporary administration. Of great interest were photographs taken of the Japanese surrender in Kowloon at the Peninsula Hotel on 5th September 1945, which took place before the well-known surrender at Government House on 12th September. Hong Kong was the responsibility of the China British Fleet under Lord Mountbatten and Admiral Harcourt was authorized to set up a Military Administration until Governor Mark Young returned in May 1946. The ‘Young Plan’ for constitutional reform was never implemented as people were more interested in stability, and China’s change of regime raised further uncertainty about Hong Kong’s future.

Several of Stuart’s former pupils who are now living in Hong Kong attended the talk. They also joined Stuart, his wife and RAS members after the talk for dinner at the Police Officers’ Club.

Sir Catchick Paul Chater’s Art Collections

Council Member and Associate Editor, RAS Journal, Geoffrey Bonsall, gave a most interesting talk at the Helena May on 7th December about the Chater collections, illustrated with an excellent PowerPoint presentation. Geoffrey talked first about Sir Paul and then about his collections. This was an expanded and improved version of a talk he gave at the Hong Kong Museum of Art on 23rd June, in his role as an Honorary Adviser on Historical Pictures for the Museum and in conjunction with the exhibition ‘The Chater Legacy’, on display from May 2007 until January 2008. Geoffrey also pointed out that Sir Paul was himself not an art expert, relying on others to help assemble his four collections: pictures relating to China, Hong Kong and Macau, 1655-1860; Chinese porcelain; Japanese Bizen ware, and books.

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

Hong Kong’s heritage is a hot topic at the moment and Jason Wordie had everyone’s attention throughout his talk to a full house at Central Library on 11th January. He explained how he came to start his popular street walks and went on to illustrate his lecture with photos of old Hong Kong and pictures of the present day of places where, if you know where to look, there are lingering clues from the past. This write-up cannot do

justice to the very interesting, fact-filled, and rather disturbing account Jason gave of the ongoing loss of Hong Kong's heritage.

He spoke of two noted Hong Kong buildings which have been saved from the wrecker's ball in the past few years; Kom Tong Hall on Caine Road and the King Yin Lei mansion on Stubbs Road. Although their heritage merits were recognized, these buildings were not gazetted. In both cases speedy demolition by the owners was obviously planned to avoid controversy, but a public outcry saved both buildings. King Yin Lei was badly vandalized by its owners recently - no doubt to further minimize the building's heritage value - and its future remains uncertain.

Jason also gave many other examples of buildings and monuments which have been demolished or moved to other, less appropriate locations. All over Hong Kong there are other very telling historical mementoes which are neglected and overlooked. In the Shing Mun tunnels in the New Territories, the site of heavy combat in 1941, an inscription which recounts their capture by Japanese units can still be seen on the walls, completely unprotected and without any plaque to identify it.

The talk covered many other examples of how Hong Kong's past life is not being respected and recorded and after the talk the audience offered other examples of loss. One of the seven original City of Victoria boundary stones 'mysteriously disappeared' during recent construction work - no-one in Government can offer any convincing explanation - and many old trees have been trimmed so drastically that they have subsequently died.

We all thank Jason for sharing with us his wide knowledge of Hong Kong history and culture. The day following this talk he led a group through the Kowloon City area and a write-up of that visit will be in the next newsletter.

HERITAGE INTEREST GROUP

After a period of sorting themselves out, the RAS Heritage Interest Group is ready to hit the ground running. To recap, the HIG is the body of RAS members that has taken over from the former Volunteers, the group that was headed by Bob Horsnell. The HIG, under the leadership of Bill Greaves, has been given a special mission by the President, Robert Nield. Robert had undertaken to update RAS Hon Fellow Solomon Bard's highly respected but now out of date book "In Search of the Past." When it was published about 20 years ago, this book was the only authoritative summary of all of Hong Kong's then graded buildings and declared monuments. One thing led to another, and Robert decided that the Society's efforts would be best spent in contributing to the "Geographical Information System on Hong Kong Heritage" website that has been established for the same purpose by the Antiquities and Monuments Office.

The AMO established the GISH website in order to give public access to information about each of the 495 historic buildings that have been accorded graded status by the Antiquities Advisory Board. The website - <http://www.amo.gov.hk/en/main.php> - contains brief details of each of the graded buildings, including their location and some photographs. But the historical narrative is, at present, extremely limited. The job of the HIG is to extract this information from the AMO's files, and from any other sources that may be useful, and produce a succinct narrative for each of the 495 buildings. As the project is website-based, there is no specific timetable; results will be uploaded as and when they are ready.

If you would like to join this group of people (and the work will be very rewarding for anybody with an interest in research into historical buildings), please contact Jenny Day, our Administrator, at 2813 7500 or via email at membership@royalasiaticsociety.org.hk.

LIBRARY DONATIONS

In the past few weeks six books (five titles) have been donated to the RAS library. Thanks go to Anne Marden and Edwin Chow for their contributions.

From Edwin Chow:

§ The Law Society of Hong Kong. Celebrating a Centenary: The Law Society of Hong Kong 1907-2007. Hong Kong, 2007.

From Anne Marden:

§ Anne Marden. Letters to My Grandchildren (two copies). Hong Kong, 2007.

From an unknown source:

- § The development of banks in Shanghai & Hong Kong = 從錢莊到現代銀行：滬港銀行業發展。 [Hong Kong : Leisure & Cultural Services Dept.], c2007.
- § Zhang, Wenqin (章文欽) 1951- . Wu Yushan ji jian zhu / Wu Li zhuan ; Zhang Wenqin jian zhu. 吳漁山集箋注 / 吳歷撰；章文欽箋注. Beijing Shi : Zhonghua shu ju, 2007.
- § 馬占軍. 中国内地与澳门地区商事仲裁法律制度比较研究. 广州：广东人民出版社, 2007.

ARCHIVES LEGISLATION IN HONG KONG

Your Society does not consider itself to be a pressure group. We do not take to the streets and protest about things. Instead, we go about our business and pursue our areas of study and other interests. However, every now and again something comes along that forces us to stand up and make our voice heard. One such occasion was in the mid 1990s when the government was proposing to move the Public Records Office from Central to an industrial building in Tuen Mun. This would have been a disaster and would have made access to the valuable records in the PRO extremely difficult. Thanks in large measure to the strong stand we took then as a Society, the result was a purpose-built, state of the art facility in Kwun Tong, conveniently close to the MTR.

There is now a related issue facing us. You might have seen recently letters in the South China Morning Post from Council members Dan Waters, Elizabeth Sinn and Patrick Hase all decrying the absence of archival legislation in Hong Kong. The smart new Public Records Office at Kwun Tong, the creation of which we were so proud to have influenced, is in danger of becoming an empty shell. There is no law in Hong Kong that requires government departments to deposit their records at the PRO, and therefore they are not doing so. Until 1997 there was an understanding that relevant departmental documents were deposited at the PRO, and in any event back-up copies of important items were also sent to London. In the last ten years, however, there has been no such practice. China appreciates the importance of maintaining good archives and has appropriate legislation in place. Indeed, this is in the process of being strengthened. But Hong Kong has nothing but a growing vacuum. Historians of the very near future will have precious little to work on when studying Hong Kong's 21st century history.

In addition to letters to the press, I am also writing to the Chief Secretary for Administration. The government is on record as being satisfied with the current situation. We should not be. If you feel strongly about this important limitation to our future ability to carry on some of our key activities, please write to the newspapers, the government, or anybody who you think could help bring pressure to bear. We cannot be proud to be behind most countries in the world, from Algeria, Belarus and Cuba to Taiwan, Uganda and Venezuela.

Civic Exchange produced a comprehensive paper in March 2007 entitled: "Managing Public Records for Good Governance and Preservation of Collective Memory: The Case for Archival Legislation." You can obtain a copy from their website – <http://www.civic-exchange.org/index.php?cat=101>

I hope to bring you news of any developments, but I am not holding my breath.

Robert Nield, President

THE HONG KONG ARCHIVES SOCIETY

The HKAS was established in 1999 and its aim is to improve the status, management and preservation of local archival material; to strengthen communications among archivists and archive users, and to foster public awareness in, and understanding and use of, archival heritage.

Many RAS members engaged in research will find the work of this society of interest and further information regarding their activities and so on may be viewed on their web site: www.archives.org.hk The Society consists of Institutional Members, such as the Po Leung Kuk, the Tung Wah Group of Hospitals and the Archives Section of the Baptist University. It also enrolls individual members.

If you would like to join contact details are:

Telephone (The Secretariat) (852) 2525 8021 Ex. 444

Fax: (852) 2537 5650

E-mail: info@archives.org.hk

Dr Dan Waters, Past President

THE LAYING OF THE RASHKB WREATH ON REMEMBERANCE SUNDAY

The remembrance service in 2007, as always, was memorable. It took place in glorious sunshine, in the 11th month, on the 11th day at the 11th hour. We stood with heads bowed at the cenotaph in Central as the Police Band played and various youth organizations took part. The police bugler sounded the Last Post from the tiny balcony on the façade of the Hong Kong Club. A hush prevailed for the Two Minutes' Silence.

Christian, Jewish, Muslim, Taoist, Buddhist and Confucian prayers were said in memory of all men and women, service and civilian, of every race, colour and creed, for their acts of gallantry and self-sacrifice in the defence of Hong Kong and the Allied cause.

In 2007, for the first time, President Robert Nield, and Dan Waters, Past President (pictured with Janet Nield), laid a wreath on behalf of the Royal Asiatic Society Hong Kong Branch. Dan fought as a Desert Rat and later in Italy in places like the Salerno and the Anzio Beach-heads during the Second World War.

The Cenotaph in Central District, although a few sizes smaller, is modelled on the cenotaph *par excellence* which stands in Whitehall which was designed by the architect Sir Edwin Lutyens. It was long the practice for all male civilians to doff their hats as they passed the London Cenotaph.



Photo courtesy of Mary Painter

The Cenotaph in Central District is not of course the only war memorial in Hong Kong. There is also the Chinese War Memorial, which takes the form of a ceremonial arch at the main entrance to the Botanical Gardens. There is also the small memorial in the Hong Kong Park, not far from the Museum of Tea-ware, consisting of a World War One soldier. This memorial is in memory of Company Sergeant Osborn VC and all whose secret acts of gallantry and self-sacrifice in the defence of Hong Kong, December 1941, went unnoticed (Waters, 'The country boy who died for Hong Kong', JRASHKB, V. 25, 1985).



Photos courtesy of Dan Waters

another wreath will be laid at the Remembrance Service in Central on Armistice Day 2008.

Dr Dan Waters, Past President

CONGRATULATIONS TO RASHKB MEMBER TONY LAM

Mr Tony Lam Chung Wai, a practising architect and a director of AGG Designs Ltd, has been informed that he has been awarded the 2006 prize for 'The best research paper award' by the Hong Kong Institute of Architects.

His paper is titled, 'From British Colonization to Japanese Invasion: A 100 years of Architects in Hong Kong: 1841-1941'. A long list of architects is given together with dates. They came from several different countries although most were British. The paper contains about 60 photographs of buildings together with architects. The paper was published in the HKIA Journal, issue 45, 1st Quarter, 2006. It is the official publication of the HK Institute of Architects.

Well done, Tony!

Dr Dan Waters, Past President

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 \$200 per copy (*Reluctant Heroes*) and \$175.50 per copy (*For Gods, Ghosts and Ancestors*), 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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IMPORTANT: PLEASE NOTE PAYMENT DETAILS:

My cheque for is enclosed, made out to **Hong Kong University**

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

JOURNAL VOLUME 46

Volume 46, 2006, of the Society's *Journal* will be distributed this month and publication of Volume 47, 2007, is planned for June this year. With publication of Volume 28, 2008, late this year our *Journal* will again be on schedule. With Volume 49, in June 2009 and Volume 50, the 50th Anniversary volume, in June 2010, it can resume as the annual publication it was designed to be.

REQUEST FOR INFORMATION

Paul Harrison, life member of RAS and conservator for Phoenix Conservation has been asked if he knows anything about the history of the anchor outside the Aberdeen Boat Club in Wong Chuk Hang near the Jumbo Restaurant, as the anchor might be conserved soon. So the query is being passed on to the RAS brain's trust. Any clues leads or information are welcome. Paul can be found at paulehar@netvigator.com.

A RETURN TO CITY HALL

We have just heard that as of 1st May we will be able to return to City Hall for our Friday evening lectures. Many of you will be very glad as City Hall is a more convenient location, especially for those who have to cross the harbour, but many others have enjoyed the ambience (and the cash bar) of the Helena May. We will therefore, whenever possible, hold some of our future events there. A return to City Hall also means that there will be less need for all these booking forms and, along with them, the extra charges for activities.

...AND A FEW DO'S AND DON'TS FROM YOUR ADMINISTRATOR....

There are a number of booking forms included in this newsletter – please make out a separate cheque for each event. We appreciate that this all takes time, but it is essential for efficient book-keeping. It also makes it easier for us to give refunds when necessary. Please also write out the name Royal Asiatic Society Hong Kong Branch in full as otherwise the bank may refuse to accept the cheque.

Thirdly, it is *very important* not to just turn up at one of our events where bookings have been taken. Our activities are nearly always oversubscribed and so it is not fair to those on the waiting list who have already paid their money if someone else joins the group at the last moment. So please, if you have not booked, or have booked but want to bring along a friend, contact the organizer of the event to check on availability of spaces.

PUBLICATIONS SALE

The special 30% off publications sale is now over. It has been a great success with many members buying entire sets of the journal and others filling in gaps on their bookshelves. Two of our publications are now out of stock, *The Changing Face of Hong Kong*, and *The Fauna of Hong Kong* (joining *Hong Kong, the Interaction of Traditions and Life in the Towns* which has been out of stock for some months). Anyone who has ordered these particular items recently will receive them but from now on no more orders can be accepted. At the time of writing (16th January) new stocks are being delivered of all journals and those members with outstanding orders will be told when the consignments are mailed out.

2008 MEMBERSHIP DUES

Are you enjoying our activities and do you receiving our newsletter and journal regularly? And do you pay your dues by cheque? If your answer to all these questions is yes, please show your support for your society by paying your membership dues as soon as possible. A reminder notice has gone out in the mail and on receipt of payment your 2008 membership card will be sent to you.

OF INTEREST TO MEMBERS

King Hui – The Man who Owned all the Opium in Hong Kong

RAS member Pete Spurrier (of Blacksmith Books) is offering his most recent publication, *King Hui, The Man who Owned all the Opium in Hong Kong*, by Jonathan Chamberlain, at a discount to RAS members. Pete Spurrier says, 'The value of this book is its perspective. There are, for example, no other published accounts of the Japanese occupation of Hong Kong as seen from the non-combatant Chinese point of view. And the richness of detail is remarkable. It is a warts-and-all portrayal of this city and its people; a "stinky-tofu" history of Hong Kong'. The retail price is \$140, \$120 to RAS members with free delivery. Read more about it at www.blacksmithbooks.com.

Hong Kong University Museum and Art Gallery

There are currently two exhibits of special interest. 'Virtuous Treasures: Chinese Jades for the Scholar's Table' features over 140 jade treasures, dating mostly to the Qing dynasty (1644-1911). This exhibit runs until 17th February. 'Early Hong Kong's Kowloon Peninsula', a photo exhibition featuring over 70 photographs taken around 1910 showing the history of the Kowloon Peninsula, is on show until 16th March. For more information and opening hours go to www.hku.hk/hkumag or call 2241 5500.

'Refabricating City': Hong-Kong—Shenzhen Biennale of Urbanism and Architecture

This poster exhibition is well worth a visit for anyone interested in planning and architecture. It is set up in the Old Central Police Station Compound on Hollywood Road where a large number of rooms are being used for display purposes. A reflection on the urban space and city development of Hong Kong, the exhibition is open daily 10.00-6.00pm until 15th March (closed 6th-8th February) and admission is free.

Angkor's Vast Splendours – Siam Society Study Trip to Cambodia

The Siam Society is conducting a five-day study trip to Angkor Wat, from 22nd to 25th February. This event is open to non-members but requests for bookings must be received by 1st February. A leading authority on Khmer art and archaeology will be accompanying the group, and the cost for the five days' extensive tour is Baht 34,000 for non-members of the Siam Society. For full information go to www.siam-society.org, call 02-661-6470-7, or email info@siam-society.org.

Asian Textiles

The Textile Society of Hong Kong has three interesting events in the next few weeks:

15th February: '**Woven Images – Visualising Cambodian Culture a Century Ago**'. This presentation by Gill Green will focus on an investigation into a newly revealed group of antique silk textiles from the National Museum of Cambodia. There has never been any publication or research on these unique resist-dyed textiles.

18th February: '**The World of the Shan – Court Dress, Textiles and Regalia**'. Dr Susan Conway, SOAS, will give a lecture highlighting Shan dress and textiles, with special focus on the amazing robes and regalia worn at court.

20th February: '**Textiles of Bhutan – A Unique and Unknown Art**'. Françoise Pommeret, well-known Bhutan expert, will talk about the crucial role handwoven fabrics play in social life in Bhutan.

All three events will be held at the Helena May, 35 Garden Road, Central, 6.30pm for a 7.00pm talk. The cost is \$50 to Textile Society members, \$100 to non-members and there is no need to book ahead of time. For more information go to www.textilesocietyofhk.org.

Hong Kong Heritage Museum

If you are new to Hong Kong and have not yet been to this museum, it is well worth a visit. The museum's 12 galleries are built around traditional Chinese open courtyards. In addition to changing thematic exhibitions, the permanent galleries showcase the history and culture of the New Territories, Cantonese opera and Chinese culture. A Children's Discovery Gallery offers a fun way for children to discover the mysteries of archaeology and to learn about the natural environment. For more information go to www.heritagemuseum.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.