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## JANUARY 2009

### IN THIS ISSUE

#### FUTURE ACTIVITIES

Wednesday 4 February	Book Launch	A Sense of Place: Hong Kong West of Pottinger Street	2
Friday 6 February	Lecture	The Origin of the Hang Seng Index and What History Books Do Not Tell You about Hong Kong!	3
Saturday 28 February	Visit	The 'Hidden Shenzhen' – Its Historical Side	4
Friday 6 March	Lecture	The Manila Galleon: Asia's First Link with America	5
Friday 13 March	Lecture	The Lure of China: Western Writers from Marco Polo to J.G. Ballard	5
Friday 20 March	Lecture	Solomon Bard Remembers	6
Friday 27 March	Lecture	'Public Success, Private Sorrow' – The Life & Times of Charles Henry Brewitt-Taylor, 1857-1938	6
Friday 24 April		Annual General Meeting	7

#### RECENT ACTIVITIES

31 October	Lecture	China Revolutions and Family History	8
7 November	Lecture/ Local Visit	Reading the Landscape: The History of Hong Kong Interpreted from the Rocks and the Scenery	8
21 November	Overseas Trip	Shanghai Weekend Cultural Experience	10
28 November	Lecture	Dr Sun Yat-sen's visions and Treatise on the International Development of China	11
12 December	Lecture	China and India – An Unpredictable History: Ups and Downs from 1947 to 2008	12

#### PERSONNEL MATTERS

13

#### LIBRARY NEWS

Hot Off the Press	The Dragon and the Crown: Hong Kong Memoirs	14
New in Paperback	Anglo-China: Chinese People and British Rule in Hong Kong, 1841-1880	15

#### CANADIAN REMEMBRANCE SERVICE

16

#### OF GENERAL INTEREST

17

#### BOOKING FORMS

18

# Future Activities

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## BOOK LAUNCH

**A Celebration of the latest RAS Publication:  
*A Sense of Place: Hong Kong West of Pottinger Street*  
Edited by Veronica Pearson and Ko Tim-keung  
Wednesday 4 February**

### YOU ARE INVITED TO

*come and celebrate the publication of the new RAS book*

### **A Sense of Place: Hong Kong West of Pottinger Street**

*This is an opportunity to meet and socialise with fellow RAS members*

*Wednesday 4 February 2009*

*Drinks and eats 6.00 to 8.00 pm*

*Joint Publishing (HK) Company Ltd.*

*Book Café, 2nd Floor, 9 Queen Victoria Street, Central, Hong Kong  
(access by lift or stairs from mezzanine floor of the bookstore)*

**A Sense of Place** will be on sale at a discounted price to RAS members attending the launch

*RSVP: Jenny Day*

*Tel: 2813 7500*

*membership@royalasiaticsociety.org.hk*

### **The Genesis of *A Sense of Place: Hong Kong to West of Pottinger Street*** *Veronica Pearson*

The Publications Committee of the Royal Asiatic Society had been pondering how best to use its archive of 2000 photographs taken between 1974-1978 by volunteers recruited from the RAS and the South China Athletic Association Camera Club. Some of the photographs were published in an earlier RAS book, *Hong Kong, Going and Gone*, but after that little was done with them, other than holding a small exhibition in the Landmark in 1998. As time went on and thirty years passed, the prescience of the RAS in creating this archive became more apparent as much of the architecture, street life and trades that would have been common in 1974 had all but disappeared by 2007. The moment was judged ripe for a book that would celebrate what was lost – sometimes deservedly, at other times with deep regret – in Hong Kong's determination to embrace its future and destroy its past.

The survey photos were obviously going to be a significant part of the book but the Publications Committee also wanted to include chapters that would 'join up the dots' to consider many of the social issues that affected people's lives. Thus the second part of the book was born; it contains nine chapters on topics that were chosen because they represent aspects of people's lives as they intersect with the social and built environment. We have an interesting story to tell as our chosen area was one of the first to be inhabited after the British arrived in 1841. Due to its proximity to the harbour and the central area it was continuously extended westwards, mostly by Hong Kong's Chinese inhabitants. A great deal of what contributed to making Hong Kong what it is today happened in that space, but it is not an area that contained 'the great and the good' and we believe that to understand Hong Kong it is important that the total ensemble is recognized, including the less significant vernacular architecture and the contributions of ordinary people.

The chapters cover how the area developed and how plans laid down 150 years ago still affect our lives. There is a fascinating chapter on housing in Sai Ying Pun that painstakingly links the changing form of the housing stock in one 300 square metre block over a period of 50 years with the impact this has had on the lives of the people who lived there. The importance of their spiritual lives to the people and the association between place and gods is highlighted in two chapters. Naturally business, and along with it the accumulation of great wealth, played an enormous role in what made Hong Kong special, and we learn more about the Chinese dominated import-export trades on which this wealth was based. The founding of that great Chinese institution, the Tung Wah Hospital, is

# Future Activities

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delineated, while details of the Western approach to public health and the plague ‘who dunnit’ are featured in a companion chapter. Sexuality makes an appearance in a chapter on brothels and their female managers. The establishment of Hong Kong University is shown to be as much, if not more, to do with Chinese practicality and common sense combined with support from the mainland as with colonial idealism.

Indeed, all of human life is here. We see how an immigrant society that was denied equal treatment and access to colonial institutions began to create its own social organizations that provided ladders of opportunity to social recognition, power and respect through institutions like the Man Mo Temple Committee, the Tung Wah Hospital Board and the District Watch Committee. We realize that despite the greater publicity given to the foreign companies, it was Chinese individuals and businesses that were by far the wealthier. And the answer to the question ‘what is Hong Kong’s wealth based on?’ is the same now as it was then – ‘land!’ The assumption that to make the poor work hard you pay them less, while to make the rich work hard you pay them more, typifies all eras in Hong Kong’s existence. And the greed and rapacity of landlords comes shining through, particularly in relation to living conditions. In other words, there is much that will be familiar. *A Sense of Place* pays homage to what was and is unique, beautiful, typical, quirky and ordinary in the area west of Pottinger Street both in terms of its built environment and its residents. Some of it is still there but much is not; these absences are recaptured in the many images we have included to re-create our own sense of place.

*A Sense of Place: Hong Kong West of Pottinger Street* will be on sale at the special price of \$300 to members attending the book launch on 4 February. For members unable to attend the launch there is an order form on the back page of this newsletter.

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## ORDER FORM

### ***A Sense of Place: Hong Kong West of Pottinger Street***

I would like to order \_\_\_\_\_ copies of *A Sense of Place: Hong Kong West of Pottinger Street* at the discounted price of \$300 to RAS members plus \$20 for each copy within Hong Kong. For overseas members the book price would be £23 or US\$40. Postage would be £3 or US\$10 by surface mail and £20 or US\$40 by airmail.

Name: ..... Membership No.: .....

Address: .....

Telephone: ..... (day) ..... (evening) Mobile: ..... Email: .....

My cheque for \_\_\_\_\_ is enclosed, made out to “**Royal Asiatic Society, Hong Kong Branch**”.

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

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## LECTURE

### **The Origin of the Hang Seng Index and What History Books Do Not Tell You about Hong Kong! The Helena May • Friday 6 February**

2009 is the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the launch of the Hang Seng Index. Stanley Kwan – the creator of the Index – and his niece, Nicole Kwan, will talk about how the Index started and the initial difficulties in its compilation. They will also share little-known facts about Hong Kong that their book, *The Dragon and the Crown: Hong Kong Memoirs*, revealed, including the important function of *yinhao* (traditional Chinese banks) in the pre-war economy, the role of Hong Kong wartime interpreters working with American forces in China, and the presence of the Chinese Communist Party in post-war Hong Kong.

# Future Activities

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Stanley Kwan, who would have graduated from King's College in 1942 but for the Japanese invasion in December 1941, headed the Research Department in Hang Seng Bank from 1962 until he retired in 1984. He launched the Hang Seng Index in 1969 and served on the government's Statistics Advisory Board from 1976 to 1984. He was awarded the MBE in 1985 and now lives in Toronto, Canada. Nicole Kwan studied at the International School of Sacred Heart in Tokyo and the American School in Japan. She studied Government at Smith College in Massachusetts and at the University of Toronto. She has an MA in International Relations from Yale and a Master of Journalism from HKU. She has worked for international banks in Hong Kong, including Citigroup and Standard Chartered, for over 20 years and currently lives in California.

*The Dragon and the Crown* was published in November 2008 by Hong Kong University Press as part of the RAS Hong Kong Studies Series.

**Speakers:** Stanley Kwan and Nicole Kwan  
**Date/Time:** Friday 6 February, 6.30 pm (6.00 pm cash bar)  
**Venue:** The Garden Room, The Helena May, 35 Garden Road, Central  
**Cost:** Members \$50; Guests \$70  
**Booking:** Please send cheque and booking form on page 18 to Katherine Fenton

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## **VISIT TO SHENZHEN** **The 'Hidden Shenzhen' – Its Historical Side** **Saturday 28 February**

Karen and Ted Rule will be our guides again 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, Tsim Sha Tsui, at 9.00am and return 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 Seaworld Square. We will cross the border 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.

**Time/Date:** 9.00 am on Saturday 28 February  
**Meeting Place:** Beside the Peninsula Hotel, Tsim Sha Tsui, Kowloon  
**Cost:** Members \$700, Guests \$900 (one guest per member only). This cost includes the bus, 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  
**Booking:** Please return the booking form on page 18 to Jenny Day  
**Enquires:** Enquiries to Jenny Day at 2813 7500 or [membership@royalasiaticsociety.org.hk](mailto:membership@royalasiaticsociety.org.hk)

*NOTE: As always, 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*

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# Future Activities

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## LECTURE

### **The Manila Galleon: Asia's First Link with America** **City Hall • Friday 6 March**

Dr Benito J. Legarda, Jr, economist and historian, will talk about the trans-Pacific Manila Galleon trade (1565-1815), Asia's first commercial link with America. Initially a China trade, exchanging silks for silver, Indian textiles came in later. As a lone voyager over great distances it was subject to attacks by the Dutch and the British.

Dr Legarda did his early schooling at the Ateneo de Manila, and he earned a BS in Social Science (magna cum laude) at Georgetown University (1948) and an MA and a PhD in economics from Harvard (1950 and 1955). His doctoral dissertation was the basis for his first book, *After the Galleons*, published by the University of Wisconsin with the Ateneo de Manila Press in 1999 and now in its second printing.

Dr Legarda made his career at the Central Bank of the Philippines and then served on the Board of the International Monetary Fund and as consultant to the Fund and the World Bank, closing his public career as economic counselor at the Philippine Embassy in Washington. He is now in private property management. He was a trustee of the National Museum, is now a board member of the National Historical Institute and is also on the board of advisers of a private museum. He has published three other books - one on the Philippine-American War of 1899 and two on the Japanese occupation.

**Speaker:** Dr Benito J. Legarda, Jr  
**Date/Time:** Friday 6 March, 6.30pm  
**Venue:** 8<sup>th</sup> Floor, City Hall High Block, Central  
**Booking:** This lecture is free and open to the public, with no booking required.

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## LECTURE

Joint Presentation by the Royal Asiatic Society  
and

The Man Hong Kong International  
Literary Festival 2009

### **The Lure of China: Western Writers from Marco Polo to J.G. Ballard** **Hong Kong Club • Friday 13 March**

For over 2,000 years, the West has been fascinated by China. From vague Roman tales of silent silk merchants to eyewitness accounts of war by Martha Gellhorn and Christopher Isherwood, stories of China have attracted readers. Medieval travellers like Marco Polo combined fact and fiction, creating a romantic picture of an exotic land by interspersing brief descriptions of Chinese cities with lurid accounts of islands peopled by monsters. Jesuit observers and European diplomatic missions sought to correct the more fantastic ideas of China with first-hand descriptions.

Explorers like Sven Hedin and Sir Aurel Stein were drawn to the Silk Road and its buried treasures, while French writers like Paul Claudel and André Malraux filtered China through their own preoccupations. Romantic novelists like Ann Bridge and Vicki Baum achieved fame with fiction set in Peking and Shanghai. Somerset Maugham's more cynical views were reflected in a series of Chinese vignettes, while hardened journalists like Peter Fleming flocked to China, where aesthetes like Harold Acton, Osbert Sitwell and Denton Welch listened to the whistling of flocks of pigeons and collected curios.

So many visitors wrote accounts of what they saw that 'it was as if China made writers of them all,' observes Frances Wood. In a new book, *The Lure of China: Western Writers from Marco Polo to J.G. Ballard*, Frances Wood shows how the people, cities, food, language, flora, art, architecture and wars of China have appeared to Western writers and appealed to their imaginations across eight centuries. *The Lure of China* is being launched at the Literary Festivals of Shanghai and Hong Kong in March 2009: this lecture will be a preview of Frances Wood's remarkably extensive selections from the vast library of fiction, memoirs and travelogues left by those writers, and of photographs and printed images from collections in Europe, America and China.

# Future Activities

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Frances Wood studied Chinese at the Universities of Cambridge, Peking and London. She is Curator of the Chinese collections in the British Library. She has travelled widely in China and written extensively on many aspects of Chinese culture. Her other books include: *Chinese Illustration* (1986), *A Companion to China* (1989), *The Blue Guide to China* (1990, 2002), *Did Marco Polo Go to China?* (1996), *No Dogs and Not Many Chinese: Treaty Port Life in China 1843-1943* (1998), *Hand Grenade Practice in Peking: My Part in the Cultural Revolution* (2000), *The Silk Road* (2002), *The Forbidden City* (2005), and *The First Emperor* (2007).

**Speaker:** Frances Wood  
**Date/Time:** Friday 13 March, 6.30 pm  
**Venue:** Harcourt Suite, Hong Kong Club (Member's name David Holdsworth on signboard)  
**Cost:** \$120 members and non-members  
**Booking:** Please send your cheque with the booking form on page 19 to Geoffrey Emerson

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**LECTURE**  
**Solomon Bard Remembers**  
**City Hall • Friday 20 March**

Dr Solomon Matthew Bard, an Honorary Fellow of our Society and a noted historian and archeologist, last spoke to the Society in November 2004 about his experiences in the battle of Hong Kong in 1941 and subsequent imprisonment. Dr Bard will be coming to Hong Kong from his retirement home in Australia to conduct the Hong Kong Chinese Orchestra. He has graciously agreed to talk informally to us about his early life in Siberia, Harbin and Shanghai. He will also talk about his recently published book, *Light and Shade: Sketches from an Uncommon Life*, published by Hong Kong University Press.

Born in Russia, Dr Bard lived most of his working life in Hong Kong. A graduate in medicine from the University of Hong Kong in 1939, he served in the Hong Kong Volunteers Field Ambulance Unit and when Hong Kong fell in December 1941, he was imprisoned by the Japanese. After the war he was Director of the Student Health Service at the University, and then from 1976 to 1983, he was Executive Director of the Antiquities and Monuments Office. He occasionally conducted the Hong Kong Philharmonic Orchestra and was the full-time Assistant Music Director of the Hong Kong Chinese Orchestra from 1983 to 1987. In 1993 he moved to Australia but has maintained close links with Hong Kong. He is currently Honorary Advisor in archaeology and local history to the Hong Kong Museum of History.

**Speaker:** Dr Solomon Bard  
**Date/Time:** Friday 20 March, 6.30 pm  
**Venue:** 8<sup>th</sup> Floor, City Hall High Block, Central  
**Booking:** This lecture is free and open to the public, with no booking required

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**LECTURE**  
**'Public Success, Private Sorrow'**  
**The Life & Times of Charles Henry Brewitt-Taylor, 1857-1938**  
**The Helena May • Friday 27 March**

For most of his life Charles Henry Brewitt-Taylor worked for the Imperial Chinese Customs Service. He also achieved distinction as a Chinese scholar, with his masterly translation of *The Romance of the Three Kingdoms* being the first of the major traditional Chinese novels to be fully translated into English. He lived through a fascinating period of Chinese history – the beginnings of modernization in China, and the last years of the Qing dynasty and the early Republic. He was trapped in the British Legation during the Boxer turmoil, when the first complete draft of his translation was destroyed. He went on to occupy a number of senior positions in the Customs Service as Commissioner, Shanghai Postmaster, and first Director of the important Customs College. Nevertheless, his public success was marked by personal sorrow when his first wife died following childbirth and his second wife spent many years in mental asylums. Two of his homes in China were destroyed, and he also was to experience the loss of both his sons.

# Future Activities

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Our speaker, Dr Cyril Cannon, is the author of *Public Success, Private Sorrow: The Life and Times of Charles Henry Brewitt-Taylor, 1857-1938*, the latest in the RAS Hong Kong Studies Series to be published by HKU Press. Cyril did his undergraduate and doctorate degrees at the London School of Economics. He was founding Head of Department of Humanities and Social Studies at what is now South Bank University, London, before being appointed Deputy Director responsible for academic affairs at the forerunner to Plymouth University. He then worked in Hong Kong for nearly ten years helping to set up the precursor to City University as the member of senior management responsible for academic planning. Following retirement he was appointed Academic Consultant to Lingnan College on its path to university status.

**Speaker:** Dr Cyril Cannon  
**Date/Time:** Friday, 27 March, 6.30pm (cash bar from 6.00)  
**Venue:** The Garden Room, The Helena May, 35 Garden Road, Central  
**Cost:** Members \$50, Guests \$70  
**Booking:** Please send cheque and booking form on page 19 to Geoffrey Emerson

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## **ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING** **The Hong Kong Club • Friday 24 April**

This year's Annual General Meeting will be held on 24 April in our usual venue, the Harcourt Room at the Hong Kong Club. More information and details of the speaker, together with a booking form, will be in the March newsletter and meanwhile, make a note of the date of this always popular and overbooked event.

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# Recent Activities

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## LECTURE

### **China Revolutions and Family History**

*Reported by Valery Garrett*

*Apologies go to Valery – this report was omitted from the November newsletter in error.*

Adam Williams, head of Jardine, Matheson in Beijing, spoke to a full house on 31 October at the Helena May, and captivated the audience with tales of his family's life in China which inspired his trilogy of novels. The fourth generation of a family who have been in Beijing, Tianjin, and Manchuria since the 1890s, Adam has lived in China for 22 years and in Greater China (Hong Kong) for 55 years.

In 1895 his great-grandfather went to Manchuria to be a medical missionary. Dr Muir and his wife Annie lived in Changchun where Adam's grandmother was born in 1903. His first two novels, *The Palace of Heavenly Pleasure*, and *The Emperor's Bones*, cover that era of the Boxer Rebellion, followed by the warlord period of the 1920s. Many of the characters are based on family members, like Catherine in his first book, who has the same name and red hair as his grandmother Katy Newmarch who had lived in Tianjin. Back in Britain, she told Adam stories of China between the wars while he was on holiday from boarding school. Guy, his grandfather, was considered the Noel Coward of Tianjin. He later divorced his wife, and spent the war in Stanley Internment camp, then died in poverty in South Africa. In 1947 Adam's mother married Peter Williams ('PG', Chairman of Inchcape Far East), and Adam was born in 1953.

The last novel in the trilogy, *The Dragon's Tail*, deals with the Cultural Revolution and includes Adam's impressions gained while growing up in Hong Kong and hearing about life in China during those turbulent times. The talk, illustrated with over 100 photographs, dating back to the early 1900s, was a fascinating look at an era long gone.

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## LECTURE

### **Reading the Landscape:**

### **The History of Hong Kong Interpreted from the Rocks and the Scenery**

*Reported by Robert Candler*

It can safely be said that no other talk given to the RAS has encompassed such a long sweep of history, 400 million years, as that given by Bernie Owen and Raynor Shaw to a packed audience at the Helena May on 7 November. Yet the rocks of Hong Kong record less than a tenth of the earth's estimated 4.5 billion years. Drs Owen and Shaw introduced the geology and geomorphology of Hong Kong, the foundation for mankind's activities and culture. A series of vignettes took the audience on a journey through the various stages of Hong Kong's history ranging from the river deltas of the Devonian period, the tropical seas of the Carboniferous and the river plains of the Jurassic to the volcanic activity of around 160 million years ago which accounts for around half of the rocks we see in Hong Kong today. On through the deserts of the Cretaceous period and the salt lakes of the Tertiary period to the last 60 million years when climate changes led to the deep weathering of older rocks, like detectives, Drs Owen and Shaw deciphered the clues to the past in today's landscape. Each period was amply illustrated with slides and comparisons were made with present-day landscapes throughout the world to help the audience imagine the Hong Kong of the past.

During the last Ice Age, the sea level fell so that around 18,000 years ago the coastline was some 120km south of Hong Kong. It rose until it reached its present level around 6,000 years ago so there must be archaeological remains below the sea, present day Hong Kong being the tops of the hills of a landscape of flooded river valleys. Over the past 2,000 years, the story has been one of gradual erosion, although there has also been deposition, particularly on the western side of the Pearl River estuary. During this period, man's influence on the landscape has been increasingly important with the deforestation of broad-leaved forests, the mining of metals such as iron and lead and the cultivation of rice and other crops. The twentieth century saw urbanisation and reclamation transform areas such as Victoria Harbour and the Shatin valley beyond recognition.

Traditional Feng Shui beliefs seem rooted in an understanding of the landscape – with the woods providing protection for settlements which were usually sited safely above river flood plains and facing south. Geology and climate were shown to be the foundation of agriculture and indeed of all economic activity and thus of human life itself.

# Recent Activities

A lively question-and-answer session followed this comprehensive and informative talk. Questions were answered with the same mixture of erudition and infectious enthusiasm that had characterised the talk. Owen and Shaw's book *Hong Kong Landscapes* can be recommended as a clear and accessible introduction for those who wish to pursue further the topics covered in the talk.

*In the questions and answers session following the lecture Raynor Shaw was asked about landslides in Hong Kong, especially those following the heavy rainstorms of June 2008. He said he would send us the link for viewing one of the more spectacular slides and here it is, together with comments.*

*<http://daveslandslideblog.blogspot.com/2008/06/debris-flow-video-from-hong-kong.html>*

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## LOCAL VISIT

### Reading the Landscape:

### The History of Hong Kong Interpreted from the Rocks and the Scenery

Reported by Robert Candler

Following the talk the previous evening, it was now time for the fieldwork! For many, the most challenging part of the day was negotiating the way between University KCR station and the Ma Liu Shui ferry pier. The ferry boarded, an intrepid group of explorers set out for the north-eastern New Territories down the drowned river valley of Tolo Harbour with Drs Bernie Owen and Raynor Shaw as our guides. In blustery conditions, we rounded Bluff Head (Wong Chuk Kok Tsui), a sedimentary formation around 400 million years old; some of the oldest rocks in Hong Kong. As we followed the coast with its bands of rock often coloured by iron deposits, the keen-eyed saw pigs among the detritus on the beach. In Double Haven, our guides pointed out interesting features



Dr Bernie Owen at Ap Chau

Photo courtesy of Peter Stuckey

such as “sombbrero islands” like Yan Chau with their characteristic wave-cut platforms and the fault line on Double Island (Wong Wan Chau), clues to the “hidden stories” which can be read from the landscape.

Our first landfall was at the deserted village of So Lun Pun, where the advance party encountered a shy snake as well as fine, though disused, village buildings with impressive lintels of local granite. Possible construction work in the area was a cause for concern. The next landing was the inhabited island of Ap Chau, composed of gently dipping layers of sedimentary breccia. From the sea arch at the north end of the island, there were good views of the recent massive container developments on the mainland coast.

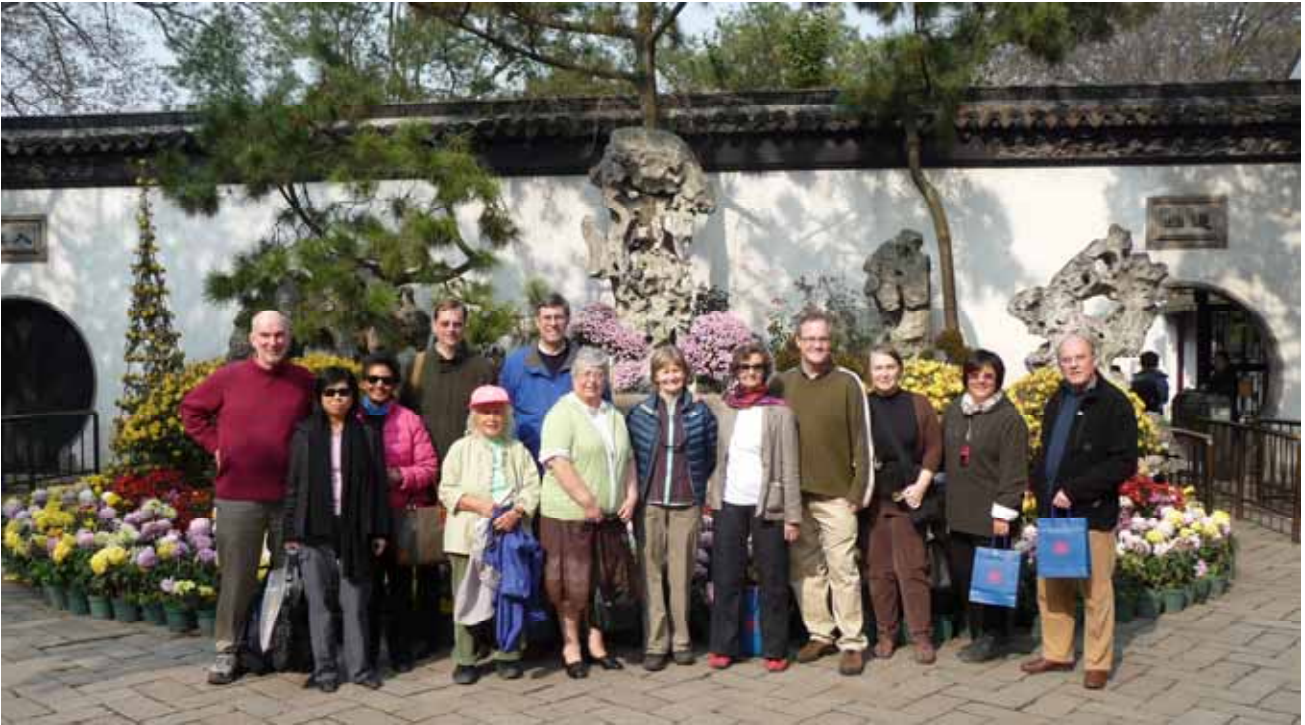
We then proceeded past the fault lines and caves of Crooked Island (Kat O) to the bay of Camp Cove (Pak Sha Tau Wan). Bernie encouraged us all to swim with tales of sharks, jelly fish and sea fleas. Some hardy souls did jump off the boat while others took a dinghy, landed at the beach and went in search of the Agriculture and Fisheries house on the hill, which some in the party had visited in former times. Back on the ferry, Governor's beach (Tung Wan) on Double Island was passed, a landing deemed to be inadvisable in such choppy conditions, and the route retraced up Tolo Harbour.

Before disembarking, Bernie and Raynor were given a well-deserved round of applause. As well as guiding us entertainingly, they had fielded a constant stream of questions from inquisitive RAS members and provided handouts with background information. Thanks are also due to Peter Stuckey who organised the trip and to the boatmen who so helpfully assisted us as we got on and off the boat in often difficult conditions.

# Recent Activities

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## OVERSEAS TRIP Shanghai Weekend Cultural Experience Reported by Jenny Day



RAS Group at the Humble Administrator's Garden, Suzhou

Photo Courtesy of Peter Stuckey

On 21 November a group of 26 members, and two non-members, travelled to Shanghai for an RASHKB Shanghai Cultural Weekend.

This visit was full of highlights from beginning to end, starting with dinner at M on the Bund on the first evening. The view from the terrace of the floodlit Bund, the wide variety of boats on the Huangpu River, and a blimp which passed by several times against the backdrop of the skyscrapers of Pudong, was a treat even for those Hong Kongers who may have thought they were inured to big city lights.

On the first full day the group enjoyed a whole-day tour, arranged and led by Peter Hibbard, President of the Royal Asiatic Society China in Shanghai. Peter is the author of several books and articles on Shanghai and is currently the project historian for the architects restoring the north wing of the Peace Hotel. In June this year he gave the talk to RASHKB at City Hall, "More than a Stuffed Bird Show – the RAS Legacy in Shanghai". Peter's extensive knowledge made this a very informative and entertaining tour. He led the group from the historic Astor House Hotel, where we were staying, to the former Royal Asiatic Society building where he showed us original architects' designs and recounted the history of the building. The walking tour included a visit to the former Chartered Bank of India, Australia and China at 18 The Bund to see the fully restored interior – a marble-walled, pillared and frescoed banking hall, now a very up-market shopping complex; the ultimate in opulence. Next was the equally stunning former Hongkong and Shanghai Bank Building, with its magnificent mosaic ceiling; some of us were reminded of the ceiling that used to grace the former Bank headquarters in Hong Kong. The tour continued with visits to, among others, Holy Trinity Anglican Cathedral, currently being meticulously restored, and then through a large surviving *lilong* Chinese residential area from the 1920s and 1930s. In the afternoon, the group was taken to the Shanghai Bibliotheca for a tour of the former Jesuit library and also the library of the RAS in Shanghai. This library, which for some years had been believed to have been lost, now comprises almost 40,000 books and we were privileged to have been allowed to actually walk between the stacks and touch them! Books are usually obtained by request downstairs and fetched for the borrower – a visit such as ours was very rare indeed.

Visits to St Ignatius Cathedral and 1933, the former SMC Abbattoir, now part of a commercial and artists' centre, rounded off the afternoon. At the cathedral we were met by Ms Michelle Blumenthal, the Hon Activities Coordinator of RAS China, who hosted a tour of the restoration of the stained glass windows. When completed, the cathedral will then be filled, when the sun is shining, with coloured light from the three-levels of windows,

# Recent Activities

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changing in colour and brightness on moving up towards the altar. Completed in 1910, the cathedral can hold 3000 people and is often called the greatest church in China.

That evening the group was invited by the RAS China to attend their annual soirée in the historic surroundings of the former ballroom of the Astor House Hotel, offering the opportunity for members of both societies to socialize. RAS China had recently been given a collection of private home movies, taken in the late 1930s and early 1940s. This was a gift from Pixie Gray who was a very small child at the time. These unique views of her family life in Shanghai – children playing in the garden, parties and school events, and then the arrival of the Japanese and the subsequent turmoil – were playing on a large screen throughout the evening and made for compulsive viewing.

The following day our group was led on a walking tour through Shanghai's historic French settlement, seeing the former Cercle Sportif Français (formerly a club and now the Okura Garden Hotel) and several other historical buildings nearby, followed by a walk to a neighborhood of grand villas and a visit to one of them, the former home of Sun Yat-sen.

On our third day the group took the bizarre "Tourist Tunnel" under the river and walked to the Oriental Pearl TV Tower in Pudong and, in spite of poor visibility, enjoyed the views over the city. Looking away from the river, to the south of the tower, construction sites stretched away as far as the eye could see. There was barely time to do justice to the Shanghai Historical Museum, housed in the base of the tower. Here models and dioramas demonstrated the social, economic and structural development of Shanghai from its earliest days. That afternoon some of the group left for the airport to return to Hong Kong and the rest travelled by bus to Suzhou, stopping en route at Zhou Zhuang, a water village where there are nearly 100 classic courtyard mansions and 60 curved bridges. Zhou Zhuang is a World Heritage Site.

A visit to one of Suzhou's renowned gardens, The Lingering Garden, occupied our last morning. Then, after yet one more excellent meal, it was time to climb into the coach for the return trip to the airport. As always, this trip made us feel very privileged to see so much under the guidance of experts in the field. Thank you to Peter Hibbard especially and also to Robert Nield, Peter Stuckey and Rocky Dang who worked behind the scenes to ensure everything ran smoothly. And the memories of some of our group who had either lived in Shanghai as young children, had parents married there, or who had stayed in the Astor House Hotel when it was a backpacker's hostel, all added special interest to the trip.

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## LECTURE

### **Dr Sun Yat-sen's Visions and Treatise on the International Development of China**

*Reported by Dan Waters*

The talk on 28 November commenced by the speaker showing photographs of the family, with its ties to Hawaii, and by explaining a little about the 'family tree'. The well-travelled Dr Sun Yat-sen (1866-1925) was lecturer Charles Wong's maternal great grandfather. The main theme of the talk was that Dr Sun was the author of the book, *The International Development of China* (1922), a copy of which is in the RASHKB Library. In this book Sun set out his plans for the main highways, railways and waterways of China and the construction of the Three Gorges Dam, the railway to Tibet and so on. There are chapters on the development of agriculture and irrigation, industry, mining and minerals. The development of the 'colonies', such as Mongolia and SinKiang (Xinjiang), are also included in the book.

The speaker went on to explain there was a delay in the development of China, with the Communists coming to power, the Great Leap Forward and the Cultural Revolution, before Deng Xiaoping introduced the 'Open Door Policy' in 1978. Sun recommended the three main ports, Tianjin, Shanghai and Guangzhou, be developed. Today, one has only to look at Pudong, in Shanghai, or the container port of Guangzhou, to appreciate the progress that has taken place. Many of these developments were, I would suggest, logical choices irrespective of who the planners were.

The speaker stressed Sun Yat-sen had great vision and saw the coming of the Second World War [as did many other people in the 1930s I remember]. His fear was that China would be divided up as spoils among the victors. As the lecturer explained, the Second World War did not really commence in Europe, in September 1939 with Germany invading Poland, as usually cited, but earlier when Japan invaded China.

# Recent Activities

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Another attraction of attending the above talk was that it was held in the Dr Sun Yat-sen Museum, in Castle Road, which was originally the lavish home of Ho Kom Tong. It was completed in 1914 when no expense was spared after Ho, the younger brother of the well-remembered Sir Robert Ho Tung, made his fortune. Ho Kom Tong, among many other attributes, was a generous man, and, with 12 wives, he needed to be. This number of wives could not be housed in Kom Tong Hall (the 'Big House'), consequently another house (known as the 'Small House' long since demolished) previously existed at 29 Conduit Road. 'Big' and 'Small' applied to their importance rather than to the size of the buildings, Ho Kom Tong was buried in the Eurasian, Chiu Yuen (bright and far away) Cemetery, below the Queen Mary Hospital, where the 12 graves of his wives, are lined up, side by side, in a single row. The taking of concubines was not permitted according to Hong Kong law after October 1971 but of course existing secondary wives remained, as such. They and their children had their accepted place in Chinese society and family, unlike mistresses of today.

All in all it was an interesting, well prepared lecture, in pleasant surroundings, with the speaker looking the part wearing his Sun Yat-sen style suit.

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## LECTURE

### **China and India – An Unpredictable History: Ups and Downs from 1947 to 2008**

*Reported by Robert Candler*

In the week in which *The Economist* featured 'China and India' as its cover story, Claudia Astarita spoke to over 50 members of the Society at City Hall on the relationship between what she described as "the two heavyweights of Asia". Accounting for well over 2 billion people, these two countries are both economic and military giants. They have had impressive annual economic growth rates of around 10%, are both nuclear powers and between them have over three million people in their armed forces. This timely talk explored the evolution of relations between these two powers. Claudia outlined a history of both co-operation and conflict starting with Indian independence in 1947, the declaration of the PRC in 1949 and the recognition of the People's Republic by India in 1950. The 1950s proved to be the heyday of a close relationship with the declaration of "five principles of peaceful co-existence" but by 1962 this period of 'Hindi-Chini Bhai- Bhai' ('Indians and Chinese are brothers') had given way to war and to a period of rivalry and discontent. Claudia discussed the roots of conflict including the border disputes of the Aksai Chin in the west and the McMahon line in the east and also explored the role of Tibet, the USA, Russia and particularly Pakistan in the relationship between China and India.

In 1988, Rajiv Gandhi became the first Indian leader to visit China in 34 years and this heralded a period of improving relations particularly in the new century. However, she cautioned against viewing this as evidence of a new Entente Cordiale as despite dozens of memoranda, few concrete improvements had been achieved. In particular, border issues remain unresolved. There is also an economic imbalance as, although bilateral trade has been growing and China has become India's biggest trade partner, there is a huge trade gap which is both dangerously unbalanced and unsustainable. Claudia concluded that although the relationship is improving there are still problems which persist in preventing friendship and trust: it is perhaps too early for mature co-operation. Claudia's comprehensive and informative talk was supported by a powerpoint presentation and followed by a lively discussion on a range of issues in which Claudia engaged energetically and knowledgeably with the audience.

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## OVERSEAS VISIT

### **Study Tour to Bhutan**

As this newsletter goes to press the group is returning to Hong Kong from a twelve day visit to Bhutan. There will be a report on this trip in the next newsletter.

# Personnel Matters

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## APPOINTMENT OF HONORARY ARCHIVIST

*By Robert Nield*

I am delighted to inform members that we have a new member of Council. Stacy Gould has been co-opted onto your Council in the new post of Hon Archivist. Stacy is well qualified for this position, being the Archivist at the University of Hong Kong. Her role with the RAS will be twofold. Firstly, she will advise us on what archives we as a Society should be keeping and in what form we should be keeping them. But perhaps more importantly, Stacy will be representing your Society in all matters relating to archives and public records. It has long been a major concern for us that Hong Kong has no archives legislation. In this respect we are not only behind China, but also most other countries in the world, from Austria to Zambia. There is increasing pressure to make our government listen to the compelling arguments for having a set of laws to ensure that proper records are kept of government transactions, and that these become open to the public after an appropriate period of time – and Stacy's presence on your Council will help to make sure these efforts bear fruit.

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## ABOUT STACY

*By Stacy Gould*

Stacy moved to Hong Kong at the end of June in 2006 to take up the challenge of establishing the University Archives at the University of Hong Kong. She has enjoyed it so much that she has actually signed a second contract for another 3 years, beginning in July of 2009. She loves Hong Kong and the fact that she ended up living in a place that she studied as an undergraduate never ceases to amaze her.

Before coming to Hong Kong, Stacy served at the College of William and Mary in Virginia, for the first year as the Assistant University Archivist, then as Acting University Archivist for 3 years and finally as the University Archivist for the final five of her nine years there. She had worked as the University Records Archivist for Michigan State University for four-and-a-half years before that. She did her internship at Cincinnati Art Museum and a post graduate internship of 6 months at the Biltmore Estate in Asheville, North Carolina. She earned her Master's in Public History (American History and Archival and Museum Studies) from Wright State University, and her Bachelor's degree in Anthropology from Indiana University.

Stacy has always enjoyed outreach and professional service and as well as her current role as Honorary Archivist for the RAS she serves as External Secretary on the Executive Committee for the Hong Kong Association of University Women; she is working with the group pushing for Archival Legislation in Hong Kong; she is the chair of the Archives Advisory Group at HKU; the Consulting Archivist on the Witness to War Project sponsored by the HKU History Department; and is a member of the Society of American Archivists, the International Council On Archives, and the Hong Kong Archives Society. She has done consulting for the Boy Scouts of Hong Kong, the City University, the China Power and Light Archives, and the Institute of Higher Education among others.

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## A NEW ADMINISTRATOR

*By Jenny Day*

This, sadly, is my last month as the RASHKB Administrator. Colin will be retiring from HKU soon and then we will relocate to Macau for a year, or maybe two. Being nearby, we'll maintain close ties to the society and will definitely be attending RAS events in Hong Kong from time to time. It has been a wonderful four years, giving me the opportunity to meet a great many interesting people and to learn so much more about this fascinating place in which we live. I will miss the good friends I have made in the membership – those whom I only know through email, and those who I have got to know well in person.

Now it is time to hand over to my successor. Please welcome Katherine Fenton, who is one of us, an RAS member, and who will take the helm in February. I know she will do a great job and I'm sure she will come to love the work as much as I have.

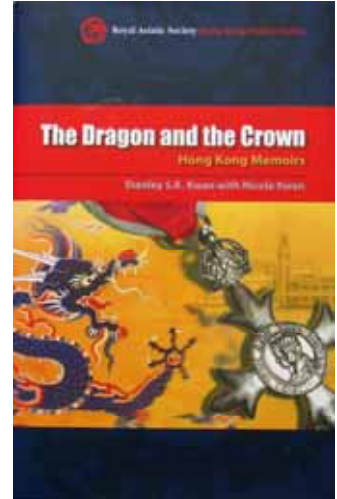
*NOTE: Please bear with us if the RAS office is out of contact for a day or two during the handover while the computer and phone are being moved and reconnected. We don't anticipate problems but these things don't always run smoothly. This will be for a brief period at some point during the first half of February.*

# Library News

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**HOT OFF THE PRESS**  
**RAS Hong Kong Studies Series**  
***The Dragon and the Crown: Hong Kong Memoirs***  
**By Stanley S.K. Kwan with Nicole Kwan**

The sixth book in our Hong Kong Studies Series, Stanley Kwan's memoirs, is now available. The bookstore price is \$250 but it is being offered to RAS members at the discounted price of \$200. Please complete the form below and mail it direct to the publisher instead of to RAS as in the past.



“The Dragon and the Crown is a fascinating account of the twentieth-century history of Hong Kong. Stanley Kwan is the master of the telling detail as he recounts the saga of his extended family, torn between capitalist, colonialist Hong Kong and the Chinese Communist revolution. Kwan’s own odyssey is gripping as a survivor of the Japanese attack on Hong Kong, wartime interpreter in mainland China for US troops, auto dealer, banker, creator of the influential Hang Seng Index and, ultimately, target of Communist China; velvet-gloved attempt to recruit sympathizers among Hong Kong’s rich and famous.” *Jan Wong, author of Red China and Beijing Confidential*

“Our lives today seem dull compared to those who lived through the war, and not only witnessed the experienced the tussle between the Nationalists and Communists in the borrowed place of British colonial Hong Kong. Political ideology has always been a divider even among family members. Old heartaches come alive through the retelling of the personal stories in the book to remind us of lost hope and the need to soldier on nevertheless.” *Christine Loh, CEO of Civic Exchange*

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**ORDER FORM**  
**RAS Hong Kong Studies Series**

I would like to order \_\_\_\_\_ copies of the *Dragon and the Crown* at the discounted price to RAS members of \$200 plus \$20 for each copy ordered within Hong Kong. For overseas members the book price would be £14 or US\$26. Postage would be £3 or US\$6 by surface mail and £6 or US\$11 by airmail.

**TOTAL including postage** \_\_\_\_\_

Name: ..... Membership No.: .....

Address: .....

Telephone: ..... (day) ..... (evening) Mobile: ..... Email: .....

**IMPORTANT: PLEASE NOTE PAYMENT DETAILS:**

My cheque for \_\_\_\_\_ is enclosed, made out to “**The University of Hong Kong**”.

MAIL TO: Hong Kong University Press, 14/F Hing Wei Centre, 7 Tin Wan Praya Road, Aberdeen, Hong Kong.

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## NEW IN PAPERBACK

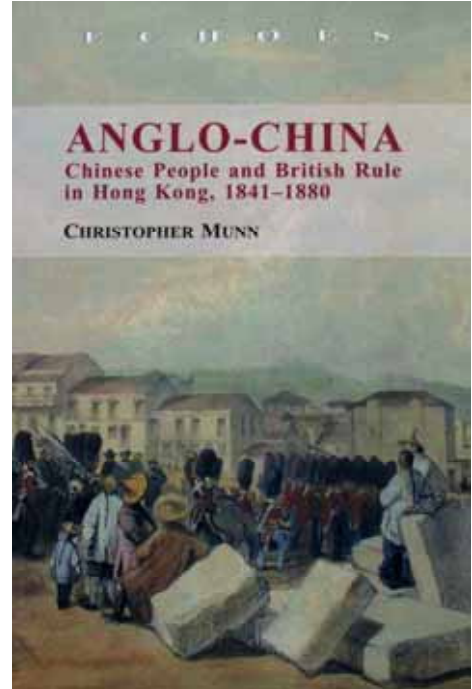
### **Anglo-China: Chinese People and British Rule in Hong Kong, 1841-1880**

**by Christopher Munn**

*Reported by May Holdsworth*

For its earliest promoters, Hong Kong was an island ‘bespread with palaces, a beautifully and well ordered city, a miracle of British enterprise and dormant power’ at the edge of a crumbling Chinese Empire. This ‘capital of Anglo-China’, as some of them called it, was a place where Chinese and Europeans could freely exchange goods and ideas under a benevolent and progressive British rule. Nineteenth-century Hong Kong was all of that. But it was also a struggling frontier settlement, troubled by crime and war, divided by race, and periodically rocked by controversy. Through a succession of experiments in government, early British officials sought ways of managing a politically complex Chinese population, who, though essential to Hong Kong’s economic success, seemed intractable to traditional colonial methods. The uneasy solutions that emerged combined heavy policing of the lower classes and shaky collaboration with a burgeoning Chinese merchant elite. *Anglo-China* traces the development of colonial rule in early British Hong Kong. Drawing on a variety of hitherto neglected sources, the book also explores how the daily practice of government affected the lives of people in the region – and how they in turn sought to shape colonial rule.

“Through meticulous research into hitherto neglected sources, Christopher Munn brings to life hundreds of individuals from all walks of life, across racial and class divides, who peopled early British Hong Kong – magistrates and murderers, compradores and crooks, lawyers and labourers, pirates and policemen – each of them playing a role in the drama that highlighted the irreconcilable gulf between the rhetoric and practice of the rule of law. While persuading us, with his elegant prose, rich data and lucid reasoning, to challenge conventional assumptions about Hong Kong history, Munn also sheds new light on the fundamental issues of justice, collaboration and resistance in the context of colonial ideology and colonial governance. He has set a new standard for the writing of Hong Kong and colonial history.” *Elizabeth Sinn*



Published in the Echoes series by Hong Kong University Press

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# Canadian Remembrance Service

## LEST WE FORGET

By Dan Waters

A large crowd, including a few RAS members, gathered on Sunday 7 December, 2008, on a lovely Hong Kong winter's day at the Little Sai Wan Military Cemetery. We assembled by the Cross of Remembrance to recall Canadians who fought bravely and fell in the Second World War.

It was a meaningful remembrance service in which seven people, in addition to the layers of wreaths, actively participated. They included military historian Tony Banham who delivered a masterful 'account in a nutshell' entitled, 'The Fall of Hong Kong: Remembering Canadian Soldiers'. Shortly afterwards Past RAS President Dan Waters recited *The Act of Remembrance*: 'They shall not grow old as we that are left grow old...'



Dr Dan Waters

Photo courtesy of Geoffrey Emerson

It was fitting that the future generation played an active part and it included members of the Canadian International School Choir and many children in the Hong Kong Canadian Scout Troop. Children placed poppies on graves and performed other duties. The police band, including pipers, was in attendance.

Company Sergeant Major John Osborn's name appears on the Roll of Honour on the wall at the entrance to the Cemetery. Osborn threw his body over a Japanese grenade, on Jardine's Lookout, to save his comrades. He has no known grave but was posthumously awarded the Victoria Cross, Britain's highest award for bravery on the field of battle (Waters, 'The Country Boy who died for Hong Kong', *RASHKBJ*, Vol. 25).

The memorial service is held every year on the nearest Sunday to 8 December, the date when the Japanese launched their attack on Hong Kong. Up until fairly recently there was a sizeable number of World War II veterans attending the Little Sai Wan Cemetery service. Many were from Hong Kong and a contingent came regularly from Canada. In 2007 and 2008, however, the only WW2 veteran attending was RAS Past President Dan Waters. Although the desire to remember the Canadians who fell in the defence of Hong Kong remains, sadly, 'old soldiers are fading away' or are not up to attending for health reasons.

There are four services held every year in Hong Kong to remember those, of all nationalities, who died in either the First or the Second World Wars. The first of these four services is held in the City Hall Memorial Garden, near the shrine, on the anniversary of VJ Day (victory against the Japanese) on the nearest Sunday to 15 August. Another memorial service is held by the Cenotaph, in Statue Square, on the nearest Sunday to 11 November. That is Armistice Sunday.

A fourth memorial service for the war dead was introduced by past Hong Kong Chief Executive, Mr Tung Chee-hwa, after the Hand Over of Hong Kong from Britain to China in 1997. This service is held on the 'Double Ninth', which is *Chung Yeung*, one of the Chinese festivals for the dead. This service is again held in the Memorial Garden, near the shrine, at the City Hall. This last service is normally attended in person by Hong Kong's Chief Executive.

We WILL remember them!

*NOTE: See also: Lo Shuk-Ying, 'Monuments to Hong Kong's World War II dead, 1945-2005', JRASHKB, V.46, 2006.*

# Of General Interest

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## **MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL REMINDER**

Have you paid your dues yet? We are now into a new year and this means that RAS memberships are due for renewal. The majority of members pay through autopay but if you still pay by cheque and have not paid already in response to our mailed reminder, PLEASE reach for your chequebook now and send us your dues, by the end of January if possible. Many members do not renew for many weeks and this is detrimental to the smooth running of the society. This year, please pay early and remember that if your dues are not received in good time your membership will cease and you will receive no more newsletters.

Also, this is a good time to consider becoming a Life Member; \$6,500 for a Single member, \$9,600 for Joint membership. Life members never have a problem with remembering to pay their dues! If you have any questions about membership details, contact the Administrator by phone at 2813 7500 or email at [membership@royalasiaticsociety.org.hk](mailto:membership@royalasiaticsociety.org.hk).

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## **Macau: Fifty Years at a Glance**

This exhibition at the Handover Museum, Macau (next to the Cultural Centre), showcases more than 200 photos taken by the members of the Photographic Society of Macau since 1958. These photos have captured how Macau has changed over the last 50 years. This exhibit is on until 8 February. For more information go to [www.handovermuseum.iacm.gov.mo](http://www.handovermuseum.iacm.gov.mo) or tel. (853) 8791 9814.

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## **Hong Kong, Gateway to China, 1938**

Here is a YouTube link to a 1938 documentary film of Hong Kong in 1938. It is somewhat dated, but that is its charm and it is nostalgic viewing for those who love the old Hong Kong:  
<http://uk.youtube.com/watch?v=hIHTrmz4hTI> Enjoy!

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## **Hong Kong, 1941-1945**

For another old documentary made during the Japanese occupation, go to:  
<http://hk.youtube.com/watch?v=E-A3jMC7UyU&feature=related>