

***FRIENDS OF THE ROYAL ASIATIC SOCIETY
HONG KONG BRANCH***

NEWSLETTER NO. 28 – JANUARY 2007

Your Committee of the Friends wishes all members a very happy and prosperous New Year. This comes with apologies for the lateness of the Newsletter, due to various members of the committee having succumbed to the winter viruses.

We enjoyed two interesting lectures last Autumn. On 21st October, 2006 Committee member Keith Stevens gave a fascinating lecture on Henri Vetch, Soldier, Bookseller and Publisher, 1898-1978. Henry was a former member of the Hong Kong Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society and also, in the 20s and 30s, a member of the North China Branch of the same Society. Keith entertained us with stories and anecdotes of Henri's colourful history, together with lovely old photographs of him and his family.

On 11th November, author Greg Leck gave an interesting lecture on the subject of his recently published book: "Captives of Empire: The Japanese Internment of Allied Civilians in China and Hong Kong, 1941-1945". An insight into the internee experience, his talk was illustrated with previously unpublished Japanese photographs, internee paintings and drawings and rarely seen images and was much enjoyed by those who attended. This was our first lecture at Asia House.

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FUTURE EVENTS

Our **Chinese New Year lunch will be held on Saturday 24th February, 2007**. As usual, we have a scrumptious meal organised for you, at an all-in price of £22 per head, including tea and service charge. Please complete the form at the end of this newsletter and return it **asap** to Kirsty Norman.

The lunch will be held at 12:30 p.m. at Fung Shing Restaurant, 15 Lisle Street, London WC2H 7BE. Tel: 0871 3328817. Nearest underground station: Leicester Square. **As there is not much time before the lunch, please send in your cheque and application form to Kirsty as soon as you receive this Newsletter. Many thanks.**

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**Friends of the HKRAS Weekend in Cambridge
13th – 15th/16th April, 2007**

Please note this visit is open to Members only.

Plans are now in hand for what promises to be a very enjoyable weekend in Cambridge. We received nearly fifty Expressions of Interest but we will unfortunately have to limit numbers to 40 members, as there are restrictions on numbers allowed into the colleges on guided tours. So, please do send in your application form **asap**; they will be recorded by date of receipt.

At this stage, we are asking for a deposit of £100 per person, to confirm a place. All applications and cheques must be received by 28th February as we have to confirm the number

of rooms at Peterhouse College. The application form is at the end of this Newsletter. Brief details of the programme are outlined below and fuller details will be sent to successful participants when everything is confirmed.

Unfortunately we have had to cancel the visit to Clare on the Monday, as the Priory will be closed for the whole of that week. However, members can stay on at Peterhouse on the Sunday night if wished, and enjoy a day in Cambridge on the Monday on their own. Please note on the booking form if you wish to stay on the Sunday night as well.

Programme (subject to change, if necessary)

Friday 13th April.

7:00 p.m. Dinner at Browns Restaurant, Trumpington Road, Cambridge. Private room. Set menu – to be agreed with participants. For members' own account. Overnight at Peterhouse.
Cost: £41.50 per person per night, including VAT and breakfast.

Saturday 14th April.

10:20 a.m. 30-minute guided tour of the Asian Galleries, Fitzwilliam Museum by James Lin, Curator (free of charge.) Two groups of 20 members. Afterwards members can enjoy the museum on their own. It has a very nice café and shop in a new atrium.

2:00 – 4:00 p.m. Historical walking tour of some of the colleges and churches in Cambridge (free of charge.) Two tours of 20 members each. 2 hours with a break in the middle for tea.

7:30 p.m. Optional dinner in Upper Hall, Peterhouse College. Set menu to be agreed with participants. **Cost: £40 per head including wine.** Viewing of the collection of Chinese ceramics in the Gunn Gallery. Overnight at Peterhouse.

Sunday 15th April

10:30 – 12:00 Guided tour of the University Botanic Gardens, with a focus on Asian plants.
Cost: £5.50 per person.

3:00 p.m. Optional Evensong at Kings College Chapel.

Evening free. Overnight at Peterhouse or depart.

Monday 16th April

Optional free day to explore more of Cambridge.

Important: I have been advised that there is **very limited** parking at Peterhouse for members who are unable to come by train or coach, but only if the weather at the time is dry enough so as to allow parking without damage to the grass! We would therefore ask all those who can, to **please** come by public transport. Please note your intention on the booking form at the end of this newsletter.

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AGM and lecture**Saturday, 19th May**

The AGM will start at 2:30 p.m. followed by Dr. Archer's lecture at approximately 3:00 p.m.

The Internment of Western Civilians under the Japanese 1941-1945

Dr. Bernice Archer, will talk to us about the women and children interned by the Japanese in the Far East in WWII, including Hong Kong's Stanley Camp. Her book, "*The Internment of Western Civilians under the Japanese 1941-1945*" was published in 2004 by Routledge Curzon, London.

- Speaker:** Dr. Bernice Archer
Time: 2:30 p.m.
Venue: Room G3, Ground Floor of SOAS Main College building,
Thornhaugh Street, Russell Square, London WC1
Cost: £10 per member or guest, to include tea. Self-paying lunch
beforehand.
Lunch: Lunch will be arranged at 12:30 p.m. at China City Restaurant,
50 Woburn Place, London WC1H 0JZ (Tel: 020 7580 1188).
Please note on the booking form if you wish to join the lunch.
Booking: Please complete the booking form at the end of this newsletter
and return it by 5th May, at the latest.
Questions: Mary Painter (Tel: 01223 880869/mlpainter@btinternet.com).
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Lecture**Saturday, 21st July****Watching the Flag Come Down: An Englishwoman in Hong Kong 1987-97**

At midnight on 30th June 1997, Hong Kong reverted to Chinese sovereignty after 150 years of British rule. The moment when the British flag came down was dramatic enough but the ten years leading up to it were full of surprising incident and change.

Susanna Hoe, the author of **Watching the Flag Come Down: An Englishwoman in Hong Kong 1987-97**, arrived in Hong Kong in 1987 and started recording her impressions as an Englishwoman observing and interacting with women of all kinds. Although Hong Kong was then 98 per cent Chinese, it was also a strikingly multicultural society which included 60,000 domestic workers from the Philippines and thousands of women who had fled Vietnam by boat. Susanna will discuss what her membership of the Royal Asiatic Society in Hong Kong meant to her and how much her knowledge of Hong Kong women was enriched through the people she met in the society and the lectures and activities she enjoyed. Her soon to be published book is both an unusual historical record and a heart-warming account of women's domestic, intellectual and political activity.

Susanna Hoe, women's historian and activist, has written eleven books, including *The Private Life of Old Hong Kong*, *Chinese Footprints* and *The Taking of Hong Kong*. Hopefully, copies of her new book will be on sale at the lecture.

- Speaker:** Susanna Hoe
Time: 2:30 p.m.
Venue: Asia House, 63 New Cavendish Street, London W1G 7LP.
Cost: £10 per member or guest, to include tea.
Booking: Please complete the booking form at the end of this newsletter
and return it by 7th July, at the latest.
Questions: Mary Painter (Tel: 01223 880869/mlpainter@btinternet.com).