

Friends of the Royal Asiatic Society Hong Kong Branch, London

Chairman's Annual report 2022

Fraternal greetings to the Society in Hong Kong.

The Friends in the UK have maintained a membership of around 65. Our activities in the past year have been largely online for obvious reasons and have had good audiences from the UK and Hong Kong.

Sinologist Martin Palmer talked to us about the Chinese classic works in June.

Fashion expert Iris Yau gave us a talk in August related to her work on a modern silk road exhibition at the Brunei Gallery in London.

In September, we had lovely talk from Edinburgh by researcher Andrew Yu on reappraising the reputation of former governor Sir Murray Macle hose.

In October we resumed live meetings with Steve Vines, recently relocated to the UK, about his views of recent developments in Hong Kong and China, which attracted a good audience.

In early November our treasurer, Florence Cattle, had the great idea of organising a lunch in Chinatown to mark the fact that we could resume such activities and we had two tables at Joy King Lau restaurant.

As the pandemic surged again, we ended 2021 with a talk on Zoom in November by Peter Stuckey of Hong Kong about his and Rocky Dang's inspiring work on the Tangkou project in southern China .

We regretfully cancelled our lunch to mark the Year of the Tiger in view of the pandemic numbers. We at least had November's extra meal to look back on.

Most recently in March we had a fascinating talk by Freya Aitken-Turff about the work of China Exchange, of which she is CEO, and the history of London's Chinatown. China Exchange, founded by the late Sir David Tang, is based in a former telephone exchange building in Gerrard Street in Chinatown and it promotes the area and arranges China-related activities. The talk had been due to be in person but we shifted it to Zoom

At the time of writing we are resuming meeting in real life with our AGM on 14 May at the RAS near Euston Station and a talk on "Jade: The Immortal Stone of China" by Dr James Cheng-Sheng Lin, assistant curator of fine arts at the Fitzwilliam Museum in Cambridge.

We hope there will be more such meetings in person and look forward to another FRASHK lecture year full of interest. Whether we can maintain a full programme of talks in person remains to be seen and we may still do some by Zoom, not least as it allows us to approach speakers who would not be able to come to London in person, and to maintain links with friends from around the world.

In our organisation, I am ably assisted by Florence Cattle, treasurer, Mary Painter, who produces our newsletter, and Eric Coskry, secretary. Kirsty Norman, David Gilkes and Jill Trew complete the committee.

As ever, Hong Kong members are welcome at our events.

Paul Bolding, April 2022

