

RASHK AGM Friday 19 April 2024

RASHK Honorary Activities Coordinator's Report 2023/24.

I am about to complete my eighth year in this role. I again include a record of events in the calendar year of 2023 as well as YTD in 2024 and enclose a full list of events in the Appendix of this report.

I take this opportunity to thank all relevant RAS Council members and Activities Committee members for their support in providing suggestions and ideas for events of interest to our members and then helping these proposals to become realised. Thanks to all those who contributed their networks, commitment and organizational skills to a long list of talks and visits whenever possible, during the past year. Covid-19 is now considered endemic, and with good vaccination programmes, effective antiviral treatment, sensible testing and infection control procedures, Hong Kong life is approaching normality.

Over the past year our members continued to embrace the use of Zoom link ups for meetings, along with the solid support/IT skills of our part time Administrators, Sally Lui and Vonnie Fung. Jace Au, our former P/T Administrator, is now a welcome member of our Activities Committee. Local speakers often prefer a face to face experience and such events were arranged using on site facilities that have again become available for group activities, but many of our speakers have relished this chance to talk to a wider audience. Zoom technology strengthened our contacts in RAS Beijing, RAS Shanghai, FRASHK, overseas based RASHK members and speakers, who have logged in to enjoy and speak on a wide range of presentation topics. We have also been able to capture details and access some zoom talks 'Of General Interest' organized by other Societies, both local and overseas, welcomed by many of our members.

Our attendance numbers vary depending on the topic, but overall these remain sound, along with significant broadening of our audience and speakers, and some occasional sell out events. Many activities during the year required us to cap numbers of attendees, depending on local on-site rules at that time. We have also continued to experiment with hosting hybrid zoom /on site events, but sound quality remains an issue. Up until the end of 2023, local and international zoom link ups have come at no cost for our members and guests, but facing a budget deficit, we have aligned with similar local societies and from the beginning of 2024 there is now a small charge for our zoom talks, paid via bank e-transfer/ Stripe technology, as well as a small increase in charges for some in-person events. Cash or cheque payments remain acceptable for in person events. In our bimonthly RASHK Newsletter, we continue to provide reports with photographs as a record of our local on-site visits and I thank all those who have contributed in this way. For zoom talks we retain a digital audio records on request for a limited period, for those interested members.

In 2023 we arranged the following:

- 19 Lectures (+ 6YTD 2024)
- 14 Local visits (+ 4YTD 2024)
- 1 Easter weekend trip in 2024 to PRC
- 2 Social/ AGM events

Talks and visits

Our activities remain a significant component of our Society's profile - in order to inform entertain, challenge perceptions, and they are also a great opportunity to meet up with other society members.

Please take a look at the enclosed appendix for more details of our wide ranging events over the past year. Reports of visits and more information on all our activities are readily available in our bimonthly RASHK Newsletters on our website. Future plans are also highlighted there. We hope to reactivate and arrange planned overseas trips if conditions allow. Our lectures, talks and visits in the past year have drawn on local and international experts over a wide and interesting range of topics. Many lectures were linked to book publications. It is a pleasure to note that many of the books which formed the basis for our recent talks have been kindly donated to the RASHK Library. Some of our regular speakers continue to delight and entertain us with their talks linked to recent publications, such as David Bellis, Mark O'Neill, Patricia O'Sullivan to name a few. An especially poignant event was a celebration of the life of Valery Garrett, who was such an active RASHK Activities member and chair, some time ago.

The start of this Year of the Dragon was highlighted by a visit to the recently opened Tai Hang Fire Dragon Heritage Centre situated in a heritage building, followed by a delicious Hakka style lunch in the same building. For those who climbed many steps up the hillside, a tour of the recently rediscovered Bishop's Hill Reservoir site was well worth the effort, as was attendance on a very rainy day at the newly refurbished Pokfulam Farm site. In fact the Reservoir visit in 2023 was so well supported that we recently arranged a well-attended second visit earlier this year. There were also generous hostings by directors of exhibitions in our local museums. The recently opened, small but extensive Biodiversity Museum in HKU was a special treat. It is clear they will need more space for their expanding collection.

I close this report of our activities following another fruitful year, with sincere thanks to members of the Council and particularly Activities Committee members for their support over the past year, namely Peter Stuckey, Bob Bunker, Roy Delbyck, Vicky Lee, Anna Kwong, Don Gasper, Pamela Ball, Chris Bailey and Jace Au. We look forward to input from newly appointed Committee members and say a warm farewell to Vicky Lee and Don Gasper who have departed Hong Kong and a warm welcome to newcomers. Also thanks to Vonnie Fung and Sally Lui, our part time Administrators, whose IT expertise and role in helping to arrange and publicise our activities and events have been ably managed.

As always, fellow RASHK members' ideas, suggestions and commitment to support activities in future programmes are most welcome. We will be considering a possible themed approach in future activities. Succession planning is important, so if any of our members are keen to get involved in RASHK activities planning please let me know- we'd be delighted to welcome you to support the work of our Activities Committee.

Prepared by Helen Tinsley, RASHK Honorary Activities Coordinator

April 2024

Appendix - RASHK Activities in 2023 and 2024 YTD

Talk

- 17 Jan 2023 ‘Anglo- India and the End of Empire’ -Hybrid talk at Café 8
Speaker: Uther Charlton- Stevens
Attendance: 25 in person, > 40 via Zoom
- 26 Jan Zoom book talk ‘The Last Tigers of Hong Kong’
Speaker: John Saeki
Attendance: > 35
- 9 Feb ‘80 years of Nursing in Hong Kong ‘at Café 8
Speaker: Patricia O’ Sullivan
Attendance: 26
- 23 Feb Zoom book talk ‘Grounded at Kai Tak’
Speaker: Malcolm Merry
Attendance: 20
- 1 April Zoom talk ‘Zoffany in Lucknow- artist adventurer in India 1783-89’
Speaker: Robert Baxter
Attendance: >20
- 27 April ‘A behind the scenes look at Gwulo’s historic HK photo collection’ – at VAC
Speaker: David Bellis
Attendance: 38
- 2 May ‘Out of Ireland’ book talk at Café 8
Speaker: Mark O’Neil
Attendance: 28
- 6 June ‘Maps of China’ - from book ‘Regnum Chinae’ -at Café 8
Speaker: Marco Caboara
Attendance: 30
- 20 June Zoom book talk ‘Chinese Dreams in Romantic England- life and times of Thomas Manning’
Speaker: Edward Weech
Attendance: >33

- 6 July Zoom book talk ‘Fortune’s Bazaar’
Speaker: Vaudine England
Attendance: >50
- 27 July ‘Tracing China – a 40year ethnographic journey’ book talk at café 8
Speaker: Helen Siu
Attendance: 20
- 15 Aug ‘The works of Sainte Enfance in HK – The Sisters of St Paul De Chartres’, at Café 8
Speaker: Vicky Lee
Attendance: 27
- 24 Aug ‘China and Russia: 4 centuries of conflict and concord’ zoom book talk
Speaker: Philip Snow
Attendance: > 38
- 20 Sept ‘Multiracial Britishness – global networks in HK 1910-45’ book talk at café 8
Speaker: Vivian Kong
Attendance: 30
- 12 Oct HK squatter and public housing – geopolitics and informality 1963-1985 Book talk via zoom
Speaker: Alan Smart
Attendance: >24
- 30 Oct ‘Stele inscriptions in HK Temples’ book talk at Café 8
Speaker: CT Lai, CUHK
Attendance: 13
- 16 Nov ‘A global Microhistory of A Heard & Co in 19th century’ zoom talk
Speaker: Thomas Larkin
Attendance: >40
- 22 Nov ‘Village Scholars in NT and their book collections’ at café 8
+ Tribute to James Hayes, former RASHK President.
Speaker: Pat Hase
Attendance: 27
- 5 Dec George Forrest, Scottish China Plant Collector - Zoom Talk

Host: Leonie Patterson, Archivist Royal Botanic Gardens, Edinburgh

Attendance: > 40 (including guests from HK Gardening Society)

- 16 Jan 2024 ‘The man who made China a literate nation – Zhou Youguang ’- book talk at Café 8
Speaker: Mark O’ Neill
Attendance: 31
- 20 Jan Chinese Canadian Museum zoom talk
Speaker: director Melissa Karmen Lee
Attendance: 10
- 25 Jan ‘Harmony Express: Travel by train thru China ‘ – book talk at Café 8
Speaker: Thomas Bird
Attendance: 22
- 29 Feb ‘The diaries of Chaloner Alabaster 1855-56’ talk via Zoom
Speaker: Benjamin Penny
Attendance: 36
- 6 March ‘Incarcerated Women – HK women’s prison and occupants ‘ book talk
Speaker: Patricia O’Sullivan
Attendance: 20
- 14 March ‘Who in these 1880s -1950s photos called HK home?’ Vol5 book talk at VAC
Speaker: David Bellis
Attendance: 61

Visit

- 5 Jan 2023 WSD Guided Tour of Bishop’s Hill Reservoir Site
Host: WSD docent Miranda Chan
Attendance : 20 (booked 27- 4 drop out, 1 no show, 2 left early)
- 13 Jan Pokfulam Farm Project
Host: Kathy Wong
Attendance: 13
- 20 Feb HK Heritage Museum exhibition ‘Women and femininity in ancient China-

- treasures from the Nanjing Museum’
 Host: Volunteer docent Raymond Tang
 Attendance: 15
- 24 Feb Khalsa Diwan Sikh Temple in Wanchai- tour and lunch
 Host: Rajwinder Pal Singh
 Attendance: 29
- 8 April City U Museum exhibition ‘Amber Gold’
 Host: Director Isabelle Frank
 Attendance: 10
- 22 April Council member Roy Delbyck’s collection visit
 Attendance: 5
- 13 May CUHK Library exhibition ‘Bringing together China and the West’
 Host: Stuart McManus
 Attendance: 12
- 1 June M+ Museum Research Centre
 Host: Council member Yip CM
 Attendance: 20
- 16 July Kai Tak Airport 25th Anniversary photo exhibition and talk at Blue Lotus Gallery
 Host: Sarah Greene and speaker via zoom, Greg Girard
 Attendance: 12
- 22 July ‘The Colors of HK photo exhibition’ at HKU Library
 Host: Ed Stokes photographer
 Attendance: 11
- 19 Aug Archives of HK Baptist University
 Host: Archivist Wong WY
 Attendance: 9
- 19 Oct Tour of Kadoorie Farm and Garden
 Hosts- volunteer guides Lucia and Ruby
 Attendance: 21
- 2 Nov ‘North Point Tour ‘ with ‘Walk –HK’

- Host : Paul Chan
Attendance:18
- 2 Dec HKMOA exhibition' A Tale of 3 Cities'
Host: volunteer docent Mary
Attendance: 13
- 11 Jan 2024 The HK Biodiversity Museum at HKU Kadoorie Building
Host: Director Benoit Guenard
Attendance: 15
- 17 Feb Fire Dragon Heritage Centre in Tai Hang, followed by Hakka lunch
Host: Volunteer museum curator
Attendance: visit 29, lunch 15
- 2 March Heritage Tour of University of Chicago campus, preceeded by individual visit option to
the onsite ' Tram Tales : 120 years of HK Tramways ' exhibition
Host: volunteer docent Jennifer
Attendance:15
- 20 March WSD Bishop's Hill SSP Service Reservoir
Host: 2 WSD docents
Attendance: 31
- 29 March- 1 April Easter weekend trip to Tangkou
Hosts: Peter Stuckey, Rocky Tang
Attendance: 8

Social/ other

- 18 April 2023 RASHK AGM at HK Club, Chair: Pat Hase
- 16 May 'Valery Garrett- a Celebration of her Life'
Host: Richard Garrett and Chris Hall at HK Club
Attendance: 34