

RASHK AGM Tuesday 20 April 2021

RASHK Honorary Activities Coordinator's Report 2020/21

I am about to complete my fifth year in this role. 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. I again include a record of events in the calendar year of 2020 as well as YTD in 2021, 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 the occasional local visit whenever possible, during this recent Covid-19 epidemic period of rigid local community and unprecedented international constraints to control the risk of infection. These constraints have had a major impact on our lives and lifestyles over the past year, as well as the Society's capacity to organize events which are of interest to our members.

Fortunately our members have generally embraced with gusto the use of Zoom link ups for meetings along with the solid support/IT skills of our Administrator Ieuan Harding. Some of our local speakers prefer a face to face experience and these deferred events will be rearranged once on site facilities become available again for group activities, but many speakers have relished this chance to talk to a wider audience, as familiarity with Zoom technology strengthened our contacts in FRASHK, RAS Beijing, RAS Shanghai and overseas based RASHK members have logged in to enjoy the wide range of presentations. Despite all the obvious challenges of arranging activities in 'The Year of Covid-19' our attendance numbers have increased and our audience has broadened significantly. We were also able to invite several expert speakers/ academics/authors based overseas in many different time zones to talk to our members. Reciprocal arrangements are in place for our members to enjoy Zoom events organized by these other RAS communities elsewhere and these opportunities have been welcomed and taken up with alacrity by many. We will soon be reaching out to RAS UK and RAS Korea for possible similar arrangements. Up until now local and international Zoom link ups have come at no cost for our members.

You will note that many of the events in the appendix, though well planned in advance, were regretfully deferred at the time, in compliance with local regulations – some to be rescheduled using Zoom, deferred to a later date in the year or will be reorganized so that we can look forward to them later this year when conditions allow. Covid -19 risks locally are now receding somewhat following energetic local public health measures, tough travel limitations and the easy availability of population-wide vaccination. We continue to provide reports with photographs as a record of our local on-site visits in our bimonthly Newsletter, and I thank all those who have contributed in this way. For Zoom talks we retain a digital record.

In 2020 we arranged the following:

- 25 Lectures (+ 6 YTD 2021) – with 7 deferred as a result of local Covid-19 constraints
- 9 Local visits (+ 3 YTD 2021) –with 4 deferred as a result of Covid-19 constraints
- 0 Trips to PRC/ SE Asia
- 2 Social events

We will look forward to rescheduling deferred events and reactivating planned trips when conditions allow.

Talks and lectures

Our lectures and talks in the past year have drawn on many local and international experts over a wide range of topics. Some were well known and popular speakers but we also took the opportunity to link up with academics based overseas that were writing about our locally related history, such as Roy Xavier's 'Macanese Chronicles' and Fred Lee's review of the 'The Fiction of Xu Xu'. Many lectures were linked to book publications both recent and in the past, some by authors who are members such as David Chaffetz and old friends such as Mark O'Neill. We took the opportunity to link up with University of Chicago at their campus in Pokfulam for a mastery seminar by Patrick Hase and Tim Ko on the 'History of Squatters in Hong Kong.'

Some of our talks were linked to remarkable photographic essays, Nick Kitto's 'Photographic Journey to Treaty Ports', David Bellis 'Vol 4 Photographs of Old Hong Kong and The Tales They Tell', Patrick Dransfield's 'Congruence of Art and Photography' highlighted by pictures of 1986 Beijing and Lindsay Varty's popular 'Hong Kong Sunset Survivors'. And we should not forget Marc Progin's 'Back to Nature Mongolian Exhibition' and talk at the Blue Lotus Gallery generously hosted by Sarah Greene - a glimpse into another world and way of life. Former senior marine policeman Les Bird, from his book 'Along the Southern Boundary' shared some of his experiences, with photos taken at the time, of his and his team's role in helping Hong Kong manage the huge influx of Vietnamese refugee marine arrivals in 1970's, 80's. This brought back many memories for those of us who were in Hong Kong at the time.

We were also fortunate to listen to talks by authors who have been filling some gaps in Hong Kong's rich history with recent publications – such as 'China Bound' the Swire History by Robert Bickers, and Patricia O'Sullivan's 'Women, Crime and the Courts in Hong Kong'. Paul French has made history come alive for us with talks linked to his recent books. Politics in Hong Kong have been stormy and much changed of late, so it was helpful to have the chance to listen to academic Prof Pierre Cabestan share his views, drawn from his recent book on 'China Tomorrow'. It is a pleasure to note that most of the books which formed the basis for our recent talks have been kindly donated to the RASHK Library.

Our Council member Roy Delbyck hosted for us 2 great conversations with USA based experts with strong Hong Kong connections – Don Cohn on his love of collecting and Nancy Yau of MOCA on 'Chinese Identity in US'. We hope that this welcome new format can be used for more shared discussions in the future.

Visits – both face to face and virtual

Our New Year treat was a virtual visit with curator tour of Museum of Vancouver's exhibition 'A Seat at the Table' -a history of Chinese migration into western Canada. The virtual curator tour of HKU's UMAG exhibition of Eileen Chang and her time there was also of particular interest, knowing that one of our members has been recently involved in the translation from Chinese to English of her book 'Little Reunions'

We arranged a couple of fascinating visits to Ceramic Studio Latitude N22, with their modern take on an ancient craft, as well as a counterbalancing visit to CUHK's Gallery and Museum exhibition of 'Amazing Clay' to see much older examples of skills in forming beautiful and more traditional ceramics.

On a very hot summer day we were treated to an expert and historical tour of the HK Botanical Gardens. Many of us have in the past visited this green oasis in the centre of our city, but understood little of its history – there was a great story, amongst many to tell, of civic pride and the fountain's formation for example. Another visit with a reason for civic pride was the Blue House Development in Wanchai, a great example of successful community activism and the preservation of an historic site whilst maintaining its current utility. It was a great pleasure to listen to the architect concerned tell us the story and guide us around. For our group the afternoon was rounded off by a visit to Janet's lovely sky garden and a bird's eye view of the cityscape.

I close this report of activities in a challenging year with 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, Kate Budge, Pamela Ball and Chris Bailey. Also thanks to Ieuan Harding, our part time Administrator, whose IT expertise and role in helping to arrange and publicise our activities and events has been ably managed.

As always, fellow RAS members' ideas, suggestions and commitment to support activities in future programmes are most welcome.

Prepared by Helen Tinsley, RASHK Honorary Activities Coordinator

April 2021

Appendix

RASHK Activities Committee Report for RASHK AGM 20 April 2020

(Jan-Dec 2020 & YTD 2021 Activities)

Lectures / Talks

10 Jan 2020, Fri	'60 Years of Archaeology in Hong Kong' with Bill Meacham At CVA with book and CD sale
19 Jan 2020, Sun	'On the Verge of Metropolis- Squatters in Hong Kong' with Tim Ko and Pat Hase at co-hosts University of Chicago
22 Jan 2020, Wed	'A Path Twice Travelled' with Paul Cohen at CVA, with book sale
8 Feb 2020, Sat	'In, On, Under and Around Hong Kong's Harbour' with David Bellis At CVA (deferred)
4 March 2020, Wed	'Along the Southern Boundary' with Les Bird at CVA (deferred)
6 March 2020, Fri	'Chinese Globalisation or the Modern Silk Road' with Jean Berlie at Café 8 (deferred)
20 March 2020, Fri	'Journeys with a Mission' with Gillian and Verner Bickley at St John's Cathedral (deferred)
9 May Sat,	China's Russian Princess : The Silent Wife of Chiang Ching-kuo with Mark O'Neill talk via Zoom, linked to book
23 May Sat	Last Journey of Admiral Zheng He, with Dr Wang Sheng-wei, linked to her book
29 May Fri	Heaven, Earth and Man in Harmony Chinese Art: Appreciation and Spirituality with Fr Joseph Tham
5 June Fri	Murders of Old China, with Paul French, linked to audiobook
10 July Fri	'3 Divas' Book talk with David Chaffetz
24 July Fri	'Photographic Journey to Treaty Ports' Book talk with Nick Kitto
8 Aug Sat	'Photographs of Old Hong Kong and the Tales They Tell' with David Bellis (hosted by FRASHK)
Sat 15 Aug	'A Stormy Petrel: The Life and Times of John Pope Hennessy' Book talk with Kevin MacKeown (deferred)

Wed 2 Sept	'Treasures from an East Asian Library : A Conversation with Don Cohn' via Zoom
Thurs 10 Sept	'Chinese Identity in America : Challenges and Opportunities for a Cultural Institution in 2020' with MOCA's Nancy Yao via Zoom
Wed 7 Oct	'China Tomorrow' with Prof Cabestan at Cafe 8, with book sale
Sat 17 Oct	A Chinese Romantic's Journey Through Time and Space : The Fiction of Xu Xu (1908-1980) with Fred Green via Zoom
Fri 23 Oct	'Along the Southern Boundary-Vietnamese Refugees Arrival by Sea in Hong Kong' with Les Bird at CVA (*postponed from March 2020)
Thurs 5 Nov	'Conserving the Architectural Heritage of High Asia – 25 years of the Tibet Heritage Fund' at Café 8 with Pimpim Karpo (deferred)
Sat 21 Nov	The Macanese Chronicles: A History of Luso- Asians in a Global Economy Via Zoom with Roy Xavier
Wed 2 Dec	'Sunset Survivors' with Lindsay Varty Via Zoom
Fri 11 Dec	'A Stormy Petrel : The Life and Times of John Pope Hennessy' at VA with Kevin Mac Keown (deferred)
Fri 18 Dec	'Along the Southern Boundary 'with Les Bird at VA (Combined on 19/12 with FRASHK via zoom)
Fri 15 Jan 2021	'Photos of Old Hong Kong' with David Bellis via Zoom
Fri 22 Jan	'China Bound'-Swire's History with Robert Bickers via Zoom
Wed 3 Feb	Photos of Old Beijing with Patrick Dransfield via Zoom, linked to his book 'Congruence : Towards an Understanding of Art and Photography'
Fri 19 Feb	Chinese Labour Corps in WWI with Mark O'Neill via Zoom, linked to his 2 books (France and Belgium)
and Fri 26 Feb	(Russia- The Tsar's Railway and Bolshevik Revolution)
Wed 3 Mar	'Women, Crime and the Courts in HK 1841-1941' with Patricia O'Sullivan via Zoom, linked to her book

Visits

29 Feb 2020, Sat	Latitude N22 – Ceramics Studio with Julie and Jesse, in Chai Wan
28 Mar, Sat	Island House and Garden (WWF) in Tai Po, New Territories (deferred)
8 May, Fri	Visit to CAS camp in Yuen Tun Old Village / Homi Villa (deferred)

20 June Sat	History of HK Botanical Gardens with Michel Maruca
5 July Sun,	Blue Lotus Gallery: Mongolian Photographic Exhibition 'Back to Nature' with Marc Progin
5 Sept, Sat	Latitude N 22- Ceramics Studio (revisit by popular request)
24 Sept Thurs	'The Blue House Cluster Project ' with Janet Spence and Kenneth Tse and Janet Spence's Skygarden
14 Nov, Sat	Visit to CUHK Gallery and Museum Exhibition 'Amazing Clay'
5 Dec, Sat	George Medal holders in Stanley Cemetery with Martin Heyes (deferred)
9 Jan 2021, Sat	Eileen Chang at HKU exhibition at HKU UMAG virtual visit with curator via Zoom
30 Jan, Sat	'A Seat at the Table 'Museum of Vancouver exhibition virtual visit via Zoom
21 Mar, Sun	Blue Lotus Gallery visit and talk on Photographer Fan Ho with Sarah Greene (deferred)

Social/ Others

21 April 2020	RASHK AGM Via Zoom
31 Oct 2020	HK Farewell Chiu Chow dim sum lunch with Council members and friends for VP Stephen Davies and Elaine Morgan