

Letter from the Chairman

Exciting times at the Hong Kong Society! We are delighted to confirm the attendance of the Lord Patten of Barnes and Sir David Tang as Guest Speakers at the Hong Kong Society Annual Dinner which will be held in The Grand Ballroom of The Langham, London on the 19th November. While both of them have addressed the Society individually in the past, this will be the first time that they have appeared together. Sir David will be in conversation with Lord Patten on his challenging and at times controversial tenure of office as the Last Governor of Hong Kong and will examine the residual benefits of the British legacy.

Another 'first' is the staging of an event in Hong Kong for members of the Society still based there. Mabel Au Yeung, the Society's efficient Director in HK, will co-host with Caroline Wilson, the British Consul General, an evening with Jason Wordie at her residence on the 26th November. Jason (www.jasonwordie.com) has lived in Hong Kong for over 20 years and has written several fascinating books on the city's recent past and currently conducts historical lectures and walks around key areas of Hong Kong and Macau. It promises to be an enlightening evening and we are grateful to him and Ms Wilson for their enthusiastic support.

Of course there are many other interesting events lined up for the rest of the year including our next Women's Group luncheon featuring a talk by Sharon Fitzsimmons, a professional expert on Chinese antique furniture; a visit to the extraordinary Chinese / medicinal gardens at Kew; a visit with Brian McElney to the Museum of East Asian Art in Bath; the very popular annual 'Jobs in Hong Kong Seminar' for our young professionals, and more events organized by and for our ever-increasing number of Younger Members. For details of these events, do check out the HK Society pages on the HK Association website: www.hkas.org.uk

The website is progressively more worthy of your close attention with a comprehensive new 'Library' of HK-related books and authors, a new restaurant section with 'Tried and Tested' recommendations by other Society members; more members offers and promotions, and other useful news and links – such as that of www.qwulo.com where images of old Hong Kong can be reviewed, bought and sold.

We have also been delighted to facilitate the smooth relocation to both London and Hong Kong of several new arrival residents through the Society's Volunteer Mentor Scheme – special thanks for our participating lady mentors! Do spread the word about this free service for new professional arrivals in either city – all the details are on the website. And do forward the link to any other like-minded chums who might be interested to join the Society – there's never been a better time or reason to join.

If you are in Hong Kong in the near future as I was recently (well, frankly any excuse to head back there)! do make a point to visit the impressive new Hong Kong Maritime Museum relocated to Pier 8 of the Central Pier complex near the IFC building. It is absolutely fascinating and a credit to the city.

Finally, I would like to take this opportunity to express our heartfelt thanks to the 'new' Director General of the HKETO, Erica Ng, for her on-going and proactive encouragement and support for the aims and activities of the Hong Kong Society.

Karen Penlington Luard
Chairman

With thanks to sponsors:



MAYER • BROWN

Letter from Hong Kong

Earlier this year I found myself unexpectedly admitted to hospital in Hong Kong when I had intended to fly to England. The circumstances of the admission were not entirely pleasurable – a long misdiagnosed condition suddenly flared up, requiring emergency surgery – but the consequences were entirely satisfactory and the days spent in hospital allowed observation of Hong Kong's health care system from an eye opening angle. One can read statistics in reports and stories in newspapers but it takes personal experience to bring these to life.

The overwhelming impression was of how busy, complex and efficient the major public teaching hospital in which I found myself is. Results from blood tests in the A&E department came with astonishing rapidity and I was found a place in a ward and connected to a surgeon to deal with me with all the smooth precision of a container being loaded into the right place on the right ship at Kwai Chung. My sense was that this was mainly done through the personal knowledge of nursing and administrative staff rather than through the kind of computer aids that the container terminals deploy. I was wheeled into a ward moments after a vacancy was created by another patient being wheeled out.

The variety of different staff encountered, from cleaners to phlebotomists, was initially bewildering, but soon their patterns of appearance and activity began to make sense and convey assurance - much more so than the student doctors who kept popping up to ask questions and then departing with words like "We hope something can be done for you". Even the porter who wheeled me down to the operating theatre at near to midnight, grumbling to friends as he passed that he didn't know why he was having to look after a gweilo like me who should be put against the wall when the revolution came, could not have done his job better. I doubt he would have changed his tone much if he had known I understood Cantonese, but he treated the gurney and its grateful contents like porcelain, bringing them to the right place without a bump.

The other major impression was of the impact of a rapidly ageing population on the health care system. It is not simply a matter of numbers of elderly people in the beds. The increase in longevity over the last fifty years – giving Hong Kong people among the highest life expectancies in the world - has been accompanied by a decline in family size and family cohesion, by emigration of children and increased pressures on those in employment. The effects of these trends became apparent in the number of fellow patients who did not have family or friends visiting and the realization that networks of support that individuals and the health services were once able to assume would be there are becoming thinner and more stretched, putting ever more stress upon the publicly provided support service.

Several years ago I attended a seminar at which a comparative study of health care for the elderly in Hong Kong, Paris, London and New York was presented. It is possible to make very good comparisons of the incidence of medical conditions and the outcomes of treatment in these cities as they all use the same standard of classification. By almost every clinical measure of health, Hong Kong residents come out significantly ahead of residents in the other three cities. But the researchers did not stop there. They also asked people how they felt about their health. In London, New York and Paris, about 25% of people over the age of 65 rated their health as good, about 50% said it was OK, and the remaining 25% or so said they had problems. In Hong Kong, only about 2% said their health was good, 20% rated themselves as OK and the vast majority said they had problems! Others that I have talked to about these findings say they are not surprised and that any such survey, however well designed, would not reveal what Hong Kong people really think : a canny strategy of grumbling in the hope that the system may be prodded into producing something better will always be adopted. There may be some truth in that, but I'm not convinced that it is a sufficient explanation. Looking at older people in Hong Kong, not just in hospital but on the streets and in the places they can find for themselves away from the jostle of business, there is often an appearance of stress and anxiety that is sad to see. Is this the proper end of all that striving in years past?

This is a question that has been driving much thought and much investment in recent years to improve how the city works for those who no longer work. The design of parks, pavements and post offices is being adapted to their needs. Many experiments to bring the miracles of modern technology to bear in helping them are underway. Medical services are moving out of the big institutions and into the housing estates to support people in their communities and homes. Perhaps most interesting is to see Hong Kong's traditional strengths in entrepreneurship being called into play to create services that help this city adapt to the huge social change that is taking place. Social enterprises are creating services and social networks that give diverse opportunity to older people and help to keep the different generations connected and communicating with each other. The scale of the need is great, but hearts and minds are ready to rise to the challenge.

Kim Salkeld
July 2013

Society Forthcoming Events

- 26 Sep** - Women's Group Autumn Lunch
03 Oct - Regional Lunch in West Sussex
15 Oct - Visit to Kew Gardens and tour of its Chinese Medicinal Plants
30 Oct - Jobs in Hong Kong Seminar and Reception
13 Nov - AGM and Chinese Gourmet Supper
19 Nov - Hong Kong Society Annual Dinner
26 Nov - Reception for our members in Hong Kong at the Residence of Consul-General

(Further details on some of these events, see centre page)

Other Events currently planned for Autumn/Winter

- Autumn/Winter** - Scottish Regional Event
Dec - Younger members Christmas gathering
Dec - Women's Group Christmas Gathering

Members Offers

The website carries details of a number of discounts or other offers made to bona fide members. Amongst the following are good discounts on:

Private Piano lessons from The Piano Practice, Room Bookings at The Mira Hotel in Hong Kong, B&B accommodation at Dunnanelly Country House, Fresh Truffles from L'Aquila London, Service charges at KP Communications etc.

Visit hkas.org.uk/membership-offers for more details

HK/UK Mentoring Scheme - *Did you know about this?*

The Hong Kong Society now has representation in Hong Kong and has launched a Mentor scheme with the support of a group of volunteers so as to facilitate the arrival of first-time residents to both cities. New residents (professional or otherwise) to either London or Hong Kong can be assigned a long-term resident to assist with assimilation into that city. There are currently 7 volunteer mentors in each location.

Each volunteer has committed to meet, advise and guide one (or more) new arrival and to offer assistance with general information about Hong Kong or London and provide relevant contacts and introductions; and to be generally accessible (by mobile phone) for one year.

Anyone who has ever arrived for the first time to live and/or work in an international world city, such as London or Hong Kong, without knowing anyone, will understand how intimidating an experience this can be. A team of welcoming and knowledgeable volunteers are now standing by to offer a friendly face and informed introduction to both cities, completely free of charge.

The Hong Kong Society, London, is directed in Hong Kong by Mabel Au-Yeung, a cosmopolitan local with extensive experience of the city. The team of volunteers in Hong Kong are all long-time residents hailing from various professional backgrounds including business and academia. Together they offer a wealth of experience and expertise that will facilitate the assimilation of new comers in this vibrant city.

For more information about this programme in the UK and to offer support, please contact Fiona Duong, communications@hkas.org.uk or telephone the society office on 020 7963 9447 (in the UK); and in Hong Kong Tel: 9038 8939 and email mabelay@gmail.com

Hong Kong Society Committee 2013

Karen Luard (Chairman)

Linora Bennet
Caroline Emery
Emily Fan
Andrew Jaques
Mark Patterson (Hon Treasurer)
Christopher Rampton
Stuart Tait
Sue Thistlethwaite
Betty Yao
Winston Yap

Committee members serve for three years. The committee meets every three months to discuss matters related to the Society. The committee is keen to hear your views on the running of the society. You can reach its members through the office:

Executive Director - Robert Guy
Communications & Marketing Manager - Fiona Duong

email communications@hkas.org.uk or telephone 020 7963 9447.

Deaths

We have been told of the deaths of the following members.

Mr Charles Addis
Mr Rupert Beaumont
Mrs Shirley Bedford
Mr Clive Evans
Mr John Holmes
Ms Zena Huggan
Mr Maurice Lane
Sir Denys Roberts
Mr Gilbert Rodway
Ms M Smith

Letter from the convenor of the Hong Kong Society in Hong Kong

Greetings from Hong Kong! We are enjoying fine, hot summery days after a long stretch of dreary weather but fortunately the thunder storms that besieged us for weeks did not put a damper on the biggest show in town earlier this summer – the Hong Kong debut of the influential Art Basel fair. Hong Kong became the epicentre of the contemporary art world for a week at the end of May when more than 60,000 people descended on the Convention and Exhibition Centre to view the works of over 3,000 artists. The much-hyped event inspired a full battery of gallery shows, exhibitions, lectures and parties held all over the city simultaneously turning it into a city-wide spectacle. The PR frenzy drew a raft of celebrities to Hong Kong, including Kate Moss, Stella McCartney, Paris Hilton and Roman Abramovich, to name but a few.

The galleries in Pedder Building were jampacked on their opening night, with a long queue of partygoers thronging outside the building waiting for the elevators. In addition to those in Western and Central, Chai Wan and To Kwa Wan, galleries in Wong Chuk Hang (an up-and-coming art area with cheaper rents) held their Art Night and even the Hong Kong government got in on the act with the opening of Oil! This is an art space located on Oil Street in North Point in a grade two historic building which was originally home to the Royal Hong Kong Yacht Club.

But no high-brow art at any of these venues could compare with the six-storey-high rubber duck floating on Victoria Harbour outside Ocean Terminal in Harbour City during the month of May. The giant yellow duckie transfixed young and old alike in Hong Kong and became the unofficial mascot of the art fair. Tens of thousands flocked to the Tsim Sha Tsui waterfront to gawk at the enormous bathtub toy created by Dutch conceptual artist Florentijn Hofman and aptly named "Spreading Joy around the World."

The next extravaganza to look forward to is a festival organised by the Very HK Festival Foundation to be held in Kowloon East, Island East, Central/Admiralty, and the island harbourfront. According to Margaret Brooke, one of the organisers and a long-time Hong Kong resident, the idea behind the festival is to generate positive energy in Hong Kong and encourage people to work together on a range of events which can entertain both residents and visitors. The headline events include a music festival in Kowloon East, Antony Gormley public sculpture installations in Central, a street equestrian event along Hoi Bun Road, local and international cinema on the Island East waterfront, and a water sports regatta in Kwun Tong typhoon shelter. This has the makings of a much larger and more diverse festival than HarbourFest in 2003 which was held after SARS. If all goes according to plan, this nine-day festival should showcase Hong Kong's unique culture and urban environment. And a fun time for all.

Mabel Au-Yeung
July 2013

Through the Lens of John Thomson: HONG KONG and COASTAL CHINA

**At the Hong Kong Maritime Museum's stunning new venue at Central Pier 8.
From 23 November 2013 to 16 February 2014.**

Legendary Scottish photographer and travel writer John Thomson (1837-1921) arrived to Hong Kong in 1868. In the next four years he undertook numerous journeys photographing regions of China from the Pearl River, the Min River to the Yangtze River and from Fuzhou, Shanghai to Beijing. The photographs taken on these journeys form one of the most extensive records of any region taken in the 19th century. The range, depth and aesthetic quality of John Thomson's photographic vision mark him out as one of the most important travel photographers.



The method of taking photographs at that time was the wet collodion process, so called because the image needed to be exposed onto a glass plate. This had to be done in complete darkness, on location, in a portable darkroom tent. Thomson therefore had to travel with large number of crates, glass plates and bottles of highly flammable chemicals. Given that his journeys took him through difficult terrains, sometimes to regions where the Chinese had never seen a white man before, it is all the more remarkable that Thomson was able to make photographs of such beauty and sensitivity. He captured images of the land, people and their daily lives in very a natural way, achieving what we call today a 'photo-journalistic' style.

Unlike most photographers working in the Far East at that time, Thomson was not a government official, nor a missionary. He was a professional photographer who was fascinated by China. Thomson possessed an open mind and was sensitive to the lives and surroundings of his subjects. His photographs form a unique archive documenting 19th century China's landscapes, architecture, people and customs. This collection of nearly 700 glass plates travelled back with him to Britain in 1872 and today it is housed in the Wellcome Library, London. They will be seen back in Hong Kong for the first time in nearly 150 years.



Queens' College, Cambridge

The Society was honoured in early May by an invitation from the President of Queens' College, Lord Eatwell and Lady Eatwell (known to most as Suzi Digby) to have dinner in the Lodge. About 20 members attended, were hugely impressed by the building, greatly touched by the kindness of their host and hostess and much enjoyed hearing about the Cambridge University Hong Kong Society and Suzi Digby's own charity "Vocal Futures".

Gloucestershire

July's a busy time in Cheltenham, what with the Music Festival and the Cricket Festival and sitting in the sun, but a date was found for the first meeting of members of the Hong Kong Society based in Gloucestershire (and neighbouring counties), together, of course, with those of their friends with some HK connection. The lunch was held at The Royal Oak in Prestbury, just down the road from the Racecourse – a favourite with more than one of the 21 attendees

We were fortunate to have Robert Guy, the Society's Executive Director and his wife, Bidy; together with Noel Pun, the Deputy Director-General of the HK Economic and Trade Office, at the lunch. Robert told the assembled company a little about the current state of the Society and its plans for the future, while Noel provided an update on the situation in HK - and answered some tricky questions!

Name cards were exchanged, promises to gather again were made and – eventually – we left the pub's staff to get ready for their next function. Same time next year?

Alastair Scott

Scotland

The Scottish Region continues to flourish and we are very grateful to our regular attendees at the Scottish Functions. Our last luncheon was held in May 2013 at The Royal Overseas League in Edinburgh and was attended by 42 people. We were entertained by our Speaker, Elizabeth Grubb, who gave an excellent and amusing talk on her time as Lady Provost of Edinburgh when her Husband, George, served as Lord Provost for 5 years. Elizabeth was educated in Hong Kong and regaled the audience with several witty and informative anecdotes about her time in Hong Kong as well as her official duties as Lady Provost. Overall the lunch was a great success.

Our next event will be in early December, date to be finalised, and will be our Annual Chinese Lunch at Saigon, Saigon in Edinburgh. This is always a popular event and we look forward to a good attendance.

We have had a couple of new members recently but if anyone knows of potential new members out there, please let me know. In the meantime enjoy the rest of this year.

Roy Dewar
Convener of the Scottish Region

Hampshire

On 3rd June, 22 members gathered at the King's Head in Hursley for a lunch. Robert Guy gave a short speech about the work of the Society and all agreed that the meeting had been a very enjoyable one which should be repeated. The food was very good and full and delay had been reduced by pre-ordering. The sun shone, the wine and beer flowed and it was a good chance to catch up with old friends. A surprising number of members live in that area of Winchester and we hope that the next time we have such an event, more will attend.



Hong Kong Trees

Autumn in Hong Kong means fresh colour along our roadsides as shorter days trigger the onset of a change of flowers or leaves. Recent years have seen the successful introduction of many species that are well-suited to our climate and they stand up reasonably well to pollution and the tight spaces within which they are expected to grow. *Lagerstroemia speciosa* has superb purple flowers throughout the summer replaced by long lasting rich russet coloured leaves in the autumn. Various types of *Cassia* bloom at different seasons and their bright yellow flowers brighten many journeys. *Schefflera actinophylla* (Umbrella tree) has bright red flowering spikes that reach over one metre in length, adding a dramatic note to an increasing number of streets and other locations, most notably outside Admiralty MTR station. *Bauhinia purpurea* starts to put out its beautiful scented flowers in Autumn, followed by somewhat similar although even more beautiful *Bauhinia blakeana* through the Winter and early Spring.

Unfortunately it is not all good news on the Hong Kong tree front. In late August the largest banyan tree in Kowloon Park lost its long-fought battle for survival. In its prime it soared to a height of 22 metres with a crown spread of almost 30 metres. The official cause of death was described as *Phellinus noxius* (Brown root rot) disease. But careless construction work and inadequate care certainly hastened its demise. For optimum health a tree needs open soil around its trunk to the full extent of its drip-line. But in space-starved Hong Kong, trees are all too often confined to small circles of soil within concrete or similar surfaces. With luck trees will survive for quite a few years in such conditions, but they are unlikely to reach their full size or last for their full lifespan. And they will not be as healthy as they should be, leaving them vulnerable to infection.

The deceased Kowloon Park banyan was popularly referred to as 400 years old. I have my doubts about this claim for many reasons, although it had certainly reached a ripe old age. It might have been planted when Whitfield Barracks (now Kowloon Park) opened in the early 1860s, or perhaps it was of a similar vintage to the iconic banyans along Nathan Road adjacent to the Park. The latter were planted around the time that the road was completed in the early 20th century. Sadly, these trees are no longer the healthy, generously proportioned shade givers that they once were. They withstood a century of typhoons, two wars, drought and floods, but in recent decades every year has seen more lost limbs or the demise of an entire tree. In another generation they will probably all be gone.



Brown root rot is not confined to Hong Kong: trees in wet tropical climates like Queensland in Australia and the US are similarly afflicted. Scientists are working on a tree vaccination and the possible development of a fungus that can kill *Phellinus noxius*. In the meantime, however, the disease has already been identified in 12 districts of Hong Kong including two country parks: presumably it is only a matter of time before it is found throughout the SAR and we will see more untimely tree deaths.

Hong Kong spends large sums of public money on tree planting, but very little goes into assessing let alone conserving what we already have. Money does not grow on trees, even in Hong Kong. And more to the point in this context, as the South China Morning Post wittily pointed out, trees do not grow on money, or perhaps more accurately, they do not grow on money alone.

Jane Ram

Hong Kong-based journalist Jane Ram writes on a wide range of topics, although the plant kingdom remains her enduring passion.

The Friends of the Royal Asiatic Society, Hong Kong Branch

We are a group of mostly ex-members of the Royal Asiatic Society in Hong Kong, now living in the U.K., who meet together for regular lectures in London as well as an annual Chinese New Year lunch in Chinatown and a weekend away during the summer, always with a Chinese theme.

For further details about the RASHKB, please contact Bernadette Mackenzie Ross at mbmross2@yahoo.co.uk or telephone 01494 874604. Further details can be found on their website: www.royalasiaticsociety.org.hk

Young Professionals Group

A group has been formed to bring together younger people that have lived, are living, or have some connection with Hong Kong. Some events in the HK Society's programme are specifically aimed at 'Young Professionals'. The Younger Members Committee provides guidance and ideas for events in the HK Society programme aimed at Socialising and Networking, Professional Development and Promoting Cultural Diversity. Caroline Emery is Chairman of this group. Other members of the committee are: Emily Fan, Frederick Good, Alastair Yap and Winston Yap.

Here are some photos from our recent Younger Members focussed event at Ping Pong Restaurant on Sunday 21st July, which was a huge success!



One of the next events aimed at younger members is a 'Hong Kong Entrepreneurship Competition'.

Hosted by the students at London School of Economics HKPASS (the LSE HK Public Affairs and Social Services Society), sponsored by HSBC and supported by the Hong Kong Association and Society, HKETO and others, the Hong Kong Entrepreneurship Competition aims to foster, within the University community, an awareness of entrepreneurship and of business opportunities in Hong Kong.

The competition, which starts in November 2013, is for teams of 4 to 6 students from any UK-based universities who will formulate and present to a panel of judges a business plan based on the unique business environment in Hong Kong. The four best entries will be asked to present their business proposals in the final on March 20 2014. We believe this competition, which is being opened to all universities in UK, will serve not only as a learning platform for ambitious young entrepreneurs but also allow them to get to know Hong Kong better.

Our Contribution

The HKPASS is making all the arrangements and the HK Association and Society, HKETO and HKTDC have all helped formulate the structures and rules of the competition. HSBC is very kindly sponsoring the event and providing the location for the Presentation and Closing Ceremony.

The Hong Kong Society seeks the following:

- **One or two judges to the judging panel**
- **Mentors for each team. It will be the responsibility of teams to consult their mentors, who would be asked to attend the launch ceremony on 5th December and thereafter provide, on an occasional ad hoc basis, mentoring and nurturing for their team. Mentors should if possible be experienced business people with Hong Kong backgrounds.**

Those interested in fulfilling this role are asked to send their names to the Executive Director Robert Guy at ed@hkas.org.uk who will forward more detailed briefing packs.

Important Dates

November 13, 2013	'Business in Hong Kong' info talk at LSE
November 25, 2013	Application Deadline
December 5, 2013	Launch Reception: Meeting the Mentors
March 7, 2014	Business Proposals Due
March 20, 2014	Presentations & Closing Ceremony

“Book Talks” have become a popular activity in Hong Kong. Any recently published local author will do the rounds and for a couple of weeks you can see their names everywhere delivering in a concentrated half hour the main points of their works and afterwards sitting down to sign copies for the members of the audience. It’s a mutually satisfying process since one may imagine that the characteristic Hong Kong wish for the most effective use of time may mean that that is considered good enough and, the gist having been heard, the volumes are put on one side for another day. On your behalf, though, I have read every word of two publications which I came across in this manner and which contrast and provide insights into the amazing changes in our home over the past sixty years or so.

Anna Pao Sohmen’s portrait of her father YK (Yue Kong) Pao is, strictly speaking, not new, being the first English translation of a biography that came out in Chinese in 2009, launched in his hometown of Ningbo. It has a very international flavour. Sir YK was an extreme example of those post-war refugees from Mainland China who came to Hong Kong and made good. He not only created a great business empire but also became a bridge between China and the rest of the world, probably in that era the person who was the most significant in that role. It is symbolic that the gift that he always took to the Paramount leader Deng Xiaoping was a package of croissants from Hong Kong’s Mandarin Hotel, appreciated by the premier ever since he developed a taste for these delicacies during his time as a student in France in the early twentieth century.

The Australian essayist Clive James wrote a series of pieces about his travels, brought together under the title *Flying Visits* and covering, among other things, Margaret Thatcher’s 1982 visit to China. He is a satirist and he is flippant about everyone but it seemed a bit harsh to home in on the man he described as “the omnipresent Hong Kong shipping magnate Sir Y.K. Pao, a sort of soy-sauce Onassis”. This could be construed as a little patronizing with even a tinge of racism. It also displays a fair degree of ignorance. Not only does Pao’s Ningbo home cuisine favour salt rather than soy but also by the mid-1970s he was already the biggest independent shipowner in the world with a fleet whose total tonnage was almost three times greater than that of the Greek occupant of the international gossip columns. Shipping had not been in his blood but it appealed to him when he wanted to diversify from his import/export business. Unlike many of his contemporaries he did not fancy investing in property in Hong Kong; his personal story showed him that sometimes it was more prudent not to get too wedded to one particular place in case one had to leave in haste.

The section in Mrs. Sohmen’s book that historians will presumably want to study with most care is that dealing with the tense negotiations on Hong Kong’s future. Sir YK is given a crucial role but one which seems entirely plausible in view of the people involved. An engaging picture emerges of the opinionated and legalistic Mrs. Thatcher being charmed into accepting that both sovereignty over Hong Kong and

its administration would have to be conceded. As Geoffrey Howe, presumably with a little internal smarting, told Anna “When we had a hard time persuading Margaret, your father would have a way with her. She would only listen to him”. It was perhaps all the more impressive in that, never having gone to university, his English was initially self-taught and later during his working life polished up by a tutor but always a little awkward.

When things got particularly difficult, Sir YK was able to deploy his unparalleled circle of influence and call on President Ronald Reagan for assistance as a kind of high powered postman. He went to Honolulu to meet Reagan and gave him a scroll to pass on to his friend and ally the British Prime Minister. The calligraphy on it had the English meaning “beyond the dark willows, there is another blossoming village” but the idea to be conveyed was one of faith in an unconventional solution for the future of Hong Kong. All this international schmoozing could move in the opposite direction too. In 1979, Sir YK was able to meet the Chinese Premier Hua Guofeng in England at a State Banquet at Buckingham Palace and begin a conversation that led to his investment in China’s shipbuilding industry. As one does.

Joe Zhang, the other author who has been doing the rounds recently is very different as is his publication “Inside China’s Shadow Banking: the next Subprime Crisis?”. His book indeed has one feature that probably makes it truly unique: its 45,000 words were apparently entirely written on a BlackBerry and its subject is, as its title suggests, an analysis of questions of particular interest to those in the financial services field on the quality of loans and loan-making in non-traditional banking in China.. Like Sir YK, Joe is a global citizen who has made a home in Hong Kong and brings up his children here. While he does not bask in the international stage as Sir YK did what he tells us about his life and career offers thought-provoking insights into our world and the forces that are shaping it.

Sir YK was born in 1918 and passed away in 1991 while Joe came into the world some forty-five years later in Hubei Province far away from Ningbo. Both lives were in their early years to some extent blighted by the upheavals of the twentieth century history of China. YK had to walk the tightrope of operating as a banker in the lawless and unstable Shanghai of the 1940s while once the Communists had taken over, Joe’s family and particularly his beloved grandfather suffered greatly because they were classified as belonging to the despised class of “Rich Farmer.” His talent and industry allowed him to escape to university and then to further his education at the Graduate School of the People’s Bank of China and the Australian National University. From the mid-1990s onwards a major part of his career has been as a researcher, analyst or adviser to international banks as nowadays they all want to know what is going on in China and understand the prospects there. Some thirty years before, Anna Sohmen had been explaining to her father her view that they would probably never be able to return to China, let alone live there. Joe also ran a micro credit company in China for a while but during this time he did not

join in with the lavish wining and dining, golf games and karaoke that some seemed to find indispensable means of getting one's way with regulatory officials. Sir YK, on the other hand, had been able to enjoy golf with Denis Thatcher, British MPs and Philip Haddon-Cave, Hong Kong's Financial Secretary without fear that it would lead to some sort of embarrassment.

A trait common to these two gentlemen was concern for their children's education and a wish that it should have an international aspect. The same is true of other parents in Hong Kong. A survey released by the Bauhinia Foundation Research Centre on 4 September looked into public perceptions of what constitutes the 'middle class' in Hong Kong. Respondents suggested a range of monthly income to count as middle class, between HK\$30,000 (£2,477) and HK\$60,000 (£4,955). We discussed this report on "Back Chat", Radio Television Hong Kong's popular English language talk show and agreed that most Hong Kong Chinese will follow Confucian traditions and categorize themselves as no more than middle class. Those middle class families who have perhaps a little more than middling incomes eagerly swap information on the mechanics of Common Entrance and the possibilities of getting into the most favoured British public schools. In fact, there is no need to leave Hong Kong as there is now Harrow International School Hong Kong, the first international boarding and day school in Hong Kong. A grand new building, the design of which was apparently inspired by the Royal Crescent in Bath sits on the site of the Gurkha Engineers' old Perowne Barracks in what we used to think of as sleepy Tuen Mun with its vegetable farms and

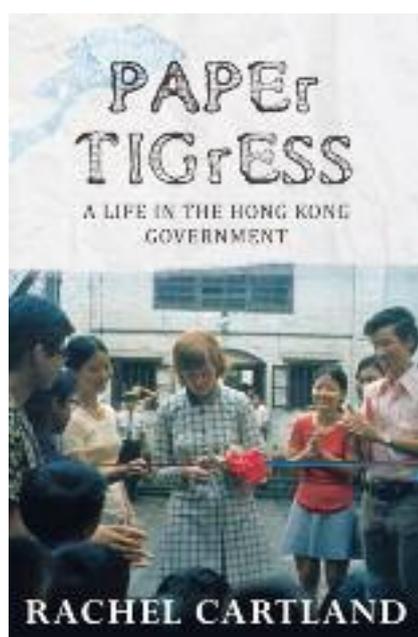
fishing boats. And there is still another option which would once have seemed even more unlikely than Harrow in the New Territories.

A little while ago I was walking through that Mandarin Hotel where Sir YK used to get the croissants for Deng Xiaoping when I bumped into a British friend and her ten year old son. They were full of excitement and with a long list of errands to get done. The boy was about to begin an academic year at YK Pao School, which was founded in 2007 by Anna Pao Sohmen and her son Philip in memory of Sir YK Pao and in celebration of the 10th Anniversary of the Return of Hong Kong to China. Located in Shanghai, it is a non profit Chinese secondary school which delivers an all round education in Putonghua and English, an array of sports, arts, music and academic subjects. Half of the staff are from the west and half are from mainland China.

The pace of change is, indeed, dizzying and dazzling. We cannot begin to guess what the world will be like for that ten year old when he has grown up but let us hope that it is a good one, with East and West living ever more harmoniously together!

Rachel Cartland

September 2013



Paper Tigress

A Life in Hong Kong Government – by Rachel Cartland

Rachel Cartland came to Hong Kong in 1972 as one of just two female expatriates in the Hong Kong Government's elite administrative grade.

Before she retired in 2006, her life was shaped by the momentous events that rocked Hong Kong during those action-packed years: corruption and the police mutiny, the growth of the new towns, the currency crisis of 1983, Tiananmen Square, the change of sovereignty and the devastation of SARS. The backdrop to her story ranges from Kowloon's infamous Walled City to Government House to the rural New Territories.

Paper Tigress is full of humour and incident and, at the same time, an accessible account of modern Hong Kong and the forces that shaped it.

For details of where to purchase this book, please visit the new books section on our website, which also lists other books with a HK theme: <http://hkas.org.uk/the-library>

The Women's Group

The primary aim of the Women's Group of the Hong Kong Society is to provide women in the UK with a history of living or working in Hong Kong – and an ongoing interest there – with opportunities to meet or keep in touch with other former residents at seasonal lunches featuring relevant guest speakers. In addition, it aims to establish close collaboration with women living and working in Hong Kong today and provide a foundation of volunteer support for newcomers from the UK to Hong Kong and vice versa. It is intended also that the Women's Group will offer a dedicated 'marketplace' of promotional opportunities for professional women working in the UK and in Hong Kong.

Karen Luard is the convener of the group.

Women's Group Autumn Lunch - Thursday 26th September Guest Speaker: Sharon Fitzsimmons

Time: 12.00pm Drinks, 12.30pm Lunch

Venue: Dumplings' Legend Chinatown, 15-16 Gerrard Street, London, W1D 6JE

Cost: £35 per person (members), £45 per person (non-members)



The guest speaker for the Society Women's Group Autumn Lunch is going to be Sharon Fitzsimmons. She will speak about the role of the chair in the evolution of Chinese furniture and society.

Sharon is a Chinese antiques dealer and has sourced antiques in China for many years, selling to clients worldwide. Using an eye that first appreciated Chinese furniture in her family home as a child, and was then honed by her almost twenty years in Hong Kong, she now has a Chinese antique business in the Cotswolds. While working for the noted Chinese antique dealer, the late Beatrice Owen of Windsor House in Hong Kong, Sharon learned the many facets of the Chinese antique business: this included sourcing, restoration, marketing and selling to international clients. She also studied Mandarin, furthering her understanding of the furniture in its historical and cultural context.

The Fitzsimmons Collection has Chinese antique furniture, dating from the late Qing Dynasty (1644-1911), with the majority originating from Shanxi Province. Sharon is passionate in her selling of Chinese furniture: she uses an academic approach, by researching the pieces and their place in Chinese culture. She also gives lectures: the cultural history and heritage of China is profoundly fascinating, and understanding it through its furniture and how each piece evolves provides a wonderful historical viewpoint, especially as Chinese antiques are becoming increasingly rare and valuable. Her recent lectures have been at the Oxford and Cambridge Club, Cheltenham's Montpellier Gallery and a Royal British Legion 90th Anniversary Celebration.

Prior to antiques Sharon worked for Shandwick PR in Hong Kong, Bloomberg Financial Markets in New York and for President Reagan's White House, leading a major government and private sector project in Paris. Sharon spent her childhood in Europe and the US, her family being posted during her father's career in the Foreign Service. She holds an MBA from Boston College.

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