

Letter from the Chairman

I am delighted to introduce several new committee members, illustrious all of them, who have swelled our ranks in the last year, and with whose help we are forging ahead with the on-going membership drive. Andrew Seaton (former British Consul-General in Hong Kong), Carrie Waley (CEO of her own highly successful Mandarin Consulting business) and Harvey Catlin, who has taken over from Stuart Tait as the HSBC representative: all three bring a wealth of relevant experience and, perhaps, more importantly, a keen enthusiasm to the task. Mark Gray of Standard Chartered Bank (SCB) is our new Treasurer who has gamely taken over the reins from Mark Patterson, who has remained on the Committee. Regina Lui (an associate with Reed Smith) is the new chairman of the 'Young Professionals' Group and she and fellow new-comer to the committee, Camilla Patterson (corporate communications division of the SCB), are planning several appealing events to attract younger members. Our thanks to Stuart Tait, Andrew Jaques and Caroline Emery who have stepped down from the Committee.

It is clear that, if the HK Society is to continue to prosper, we need to reach out and embrace a younger audience, as well as to maintain the interest and loyalty of current members. This month the popular 'Jobs in HK Seminar' will be held again and next month, another networking dim sum lunch will be held at the Ping Pong Restaurant. The LSE HKPASS Entrepreneurship Competition is another very useful event for young professionals, which is strongly supported by the Society and which introduces business opportunities in Hong Kong to the next generation of business leaders. An exciting new idea is a 'Meet the Mentor' evening in November when graduates and trainees will have an opportunity to interact with experts experienced in a variety of professions.

The next event is a HK Society Supper at the beginning of October with former Chief Secretary Anson Chan as guest speaker – this promises to be a highly stimulating evening. And for the ladies, (and fashion-minded gents of course) we have lined up a glamorous evening with chic shoe couturier, (and Jimmy Choo's niece), Lucy Choi, at the influential Hua Gallery. In December, a private lecture by the Curator of the Ming Exhibition at the British Museum is sure to be over-subscribed so it's another event for which you will need to book early. Plans for the annual HK Dinner in November or December are being finalised and will be announced as soon as possible.

The Society's regional chapters continue to organise annual get-togethers and for members unable to get to London for the bigger occasions, this is a great way to stay in touch. Adding to the locations already active, Clinton Leeks (our redoubtable former Chairman) and Chris Fraser are establishing a new chapter in the North East and will in due course, be announcing details of a dinner in Newcastle. If you have access to the internet, visit www.hkas.org.uk/hks-ne-region and/or email the co-coordinator Alvin Cheung, at alvincheunghy@gmail.com, to register your interest. We are also planning in December to stage another event in Hong Kong, our most far-flung regional chapter, and will advise further on that front.

For web savvy members, do check out the Society's 'Membership Offers' pages which lists over 20 great deals from service providers (wellness coaching or piano tuition or dentist anyone?) and associations (including incentive offers from the Chopsticks Club, The Fox Club, the prestigious London Capital Club, and the cool Kee Club in Hong Kong). Retail offerings include Patinova Chinese character cufflinks, Ede and Ravenscroft gentlemen's tailors, and fresh truffles and other specialty vegetables by L'Aguila. There's even a gemologist based in HK who can source new jewellery and carvings for you, and glorious HK paintings by Brian Tilbrook and Roger Draper. Knight Frank offer members a free rental home search service in London and the Home Counties and the Mira Hotel in HK and Dunnanelly Country House in County Down are giving members discounts on rooms. All great value!

We are thrilled to let you know that the HK Society is the new home to a fantastic archive of Hong Kong Yearbooks from 1950 to 2000 and beyond – kindly donated by Ron Rakusen. So anyone planning memoirs and looking for additional source material is more than welcome to access these invaluable records. Ron has also just donated a valuable collection of 'Colonial Reports on HK' dating from 1898 to 1931 which we will make available once they have been preserved and protected for general use.

Finally, my thanks to the tireless efforts of Robert Guy and Fiona Duong who seem to manage the myriad events and activities for both the HK Society and the HK Association with grace and equanimity, and to the other fellow committee members, listed on page 7.

Karen Penlington Luard
Chairman

Hong Kong is like a Chinese fan that can be unfolded to show surprising new scenes, even in places that are so familiar that novelty seems unlikely.

It is undeniable that Hong Kong is going through difficult times in its wrenching debate over the form of the promised universal suffrage. Respected local historian Jason Wordie is perhaps not wrong when he talks about an "emerging political disaster" and draws comparisons with "the general situation that resulted in the 1967 Leftist riots". All the same, there are, right under our noses, areas where positive changes are taking place and peace, harmony and innocent enjoyment prevail. There is, of course, little that says "Hong Kong" more clearly than its famous harbour and shoreline. Thanks to Winston Chu and his Society for the Protection of the Harbour, reclamation is now strictly limited and the fears of some years ago, that it would be reduced to no more than a big puddle have receded. Instead, with the formation of the Harbourfront Commission, the intention is that if its role as a working harbour may decrease then that will be more than offset as a community asset, especially for leisure and recreation. One of the areas in which this emerging change is becoming apparent is down on the waterfront of Hong Kong Island, close to the International Finance Centre where the escalator from the Mid-Levels terminates and where, among other occupants, the Hong Kong Monetary Authority sits. It keeps its eye on our financial reserves and reminds us every now and again that there are no plans to dislodge the peg between the US and Hong Kong dollars. Before the Cross Harbour Tunnels firmly established their ascendancy, this used to be where the vehicular ferries berthed; ferries to those outlying islands and the created commuter communities of Discovery Bay and Ma Wan still do. The Hong Kong pier for the Star Ferry moved here in 2006, further west than it had ever been in the more than a hundred years since the service commenced. It has taken a while but I suppose that we have now re-adjusted our internal maps and consigned to the past the broad sweep down from Statue Square to City Hall and the sea. It hurt to give it up and heritage activists protested strenuously. Their efforts were to no avail but it did make the Government think again about the demolition of the adjacent Queen's Pier, which had been a public pier and been used for the ceremonial arrivals of Colonial governors and visiting British Royalty. Consequently, it is now in bits and storage, awaiting re-erection in a new location on the fine new waterfront.

Taxi drivers are not yet entirely familiar with the layout and recently I had to assure one that there really was a Pier Number Eight at which he could drop me. "There's a museum there" I told him helpfully. Before venturing into the Maritime Museum, though, I sat down and contemplated the view. It is a paradox that there are few activities more peaceful than watching the activities of a busy harbour. Perhaps it is a result of the phenomenon noted by boating enthusiast Jerome K Jerome: "I like work: it fascinates me. I can sit and look at it for hours." There were certainly some people around who were working hard; a dozen or so runners struggled past in the searing heat. They were members of the People's Liberation Army, stationed in the former Prince of Wales barracks, and who regularly use this route to keep up their fitness. Hong Kong, in its currently fervid state of mind, is awash with rumours and one of the

favourites is that the PLA will be deployed to deal with street protests. These men didn't look threatening, though, only hot and tired!

Soon, this corner of Hong Kong will not be so quiet and, undoubtedly, more firmly on the cabbies' radar. A notice posted by a large adjoining area of flat ground reads informatively if prosaically "Central Harbourfront Event Space" and Nick Brooke, Chairman of the Harbourfront Commission, says that good use will be made of it every weekend from the end of the summer. It will host, for example, the Philharmonic's Symphony Under the Stars and the Christmas period's Winter Wonderland. A notice advertises another forthcoming attraction: the HK Observation Wheel - yes, a ferris ride to be operated by a Swiss company, even if not as big as the London Eye. Still, while comparative tranquillity prevails there is an elderly lady making use of a bit of shade in time honoured Hong Kong fashion to practise her tai chi though even this has a modern twist as she is following instructions on a video downloaded onto the Smartphone that she has propped against a pillar. Anyway, on to the object of today's excursion.....the Hong Kong Maritime Museum. Perhaps there has never been a museum, certainly not in Hong Kong, so blessed in its location. It began in Murray House, our oldest Colonial building, re-constructed on the Stanley seafront where the evocative architecture drew in tourists and locals who had finished with shopping in the nearby market. It could always have done with more space, however, and at just the right moment the changes in travel habits which had made a ferry route between Central and Hung Hom non-viable, freed this perfect pier with lofty light-filled spaces to accommodate the museum's galleries. It faces the Cultural Centre across the water in Kowloon. That building has been understandably criticized for not offering any harbour views but the same cannot be said of the museum with its big windows, its telescopes and the video display of the scurrying dots marking ships' movements.

Although there has been a Government grant towards capital costs and a subvention to cover roughly a third of running costs, this is essentially a private museum. Fortunately, the maritime industry has been generous as well as enthusiastic and the galleries' sponsorships acknowledge many famous shipping names including Chao, Pao, Swire and Tung as well as Anthony Hardy who co-founded the Museum and whose gifts and loans are visible throughout. The result is a historic panorama with objects ranging from Han Dynasty models of boatmen to interactive displays of present day pirate attacks. There is also room for historical sidelights, such as that on the American Philo McGiffin, who was born in 1860 and who found himself as Head of the Chinese Naval College at the age of 32, fighting against the Japanese, and subsequently escaping back to the US to avoid being scapegoated for its defeat, eventually committing suicide in 1897 because of the pain of his war wounds. Temporary exhibitions feature too. Just finished is one focused on the seventeenth century Selden Map of China, loaned from Oxford University's Bodleian

Library, where it is one of the most treasured holdings. The day that I visited fell within "Le French May", the admirably Franglais title for an annual period of Franco-Hong Kong cultural co-operation which now seems to escape far beyond the confines of a mere thirty-one days. "Palaces on the Seas", for example stretches through three summer months and takes visitors back to the luxury of the passengers' experience on the great French ocean liners in the 1930s. Coming up next year will be "Made in Hong Kong", celebrating our city's trade and commerce and the people whose sweat and ingenuity built it.

Nowadays, no one can visit a museum or gallery without pangs of hunger and thirst. It began with the V & A, of course, and its advertising slogan: "an ace caff with quite a nice museum attached." At the Maritime Museum it's Café 8 that fulfils that role, and does so in a very special way. It was decided from the beginning that this would be run by a social enterprise and the choice fell upon the Nesbitt Centre. This organisation helps English speaking adults with learning disabilities who, perhaps surprisingly, are among the more deprived groups in Hong Kong. The numbers are small but the needs are great and somehow the government doesn't have a clear idea on how to address them. Consequently, the staff and board are constantly looking for innovative ideas and this restaurant has provided an

ideal opportunity for their members who work with coaches to produce a tip top service. Go before lunch and you will find Sean meticulously wrapping cutlery in napkins. Stay and sample the delicious food and Josh or Curtis will courteously hope that you have enjoyed your meal.

So we come to the end of a great little excursion. About to turn away from the sea, there is one last sight to remember. The Silver Star has started to chug her way across to Kowloon. Nick Brooke has talked about the possibilities of water taxis, running along the coastline to serve commuters and tourists also about the need to commercialize the Star Ferry piers to provide more revenue. What won't change though is the existence of the ferries themselves. Here, among our visions of the past and of what is shortly to come, this sturdy boat and the rest of the fleet are pieces of living history that binds it all together in a thoroughly satisfying way.

Rachel Cartland

August 2014

Pam Williams's Hong Kong Book

Pam Williams sketched events leading up to and during the handover; a collection of over 60 pieces ... They will become part of a book capturing classic moments of the once British colony and the transformation into the Hong Kong of today.

Pam is now accepting articles, comments and stories contributed from those who have lived or worked in Hong Kong before and during 1997 and up to today...All are welcomed.

Sketches will enhance the diversity of articles to reflect special moments in Hong Kong's history.

Potential contributors may contact Pam direct and will be sent her newsletter which will follow progress...

You can see current information at: www.pamwilliams.co.uk/hongkongbook

Email: pwill8888@aol.com

Hong Kong Society Committee 2014

Karen Luard (Chairman)

Linora Bennet
Harvey Catlin
Emily Fan
Mark Gray (Treasurer)
Regina Lui
Camilla Patterson
Mark Patterson
Christopher Rampton
Andrew Seaton
Sue Thistlethwaite
Carrie Waley
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 John Chambers CBE
Mrs Liz Foxon
Mr Hugh Stubbs
Mr Reginaldo Rodrigues
Mr John Black
Mr Doug Morton

In the News

Of late, London has been much in the news over airport development plans. The dogfighting over Gatwick, Heathrow and the Isle of Grain brings back memories of debates here in Hong Kong over plans for replacement of Kai Tak in the 1980s. But, we cannot enjoy the luxury of sitting back in complacent commiseration over the hard choices London has to make, secure in our own past choices. A big item on the local agenda here is the airport, now at Chek Lap Kok. Less than two decades after it began operating, plans to expand and create a third runway to service the seemingly inexorable demands of 'growth' are pitted against the voice of the environment and the broader, more difficult and less discussed questions of what the right role for Hong Kong's airport should be in relation to local, national and international needs, and what is an equitable way of paying for any development, taking account of the interests that will be served by it.

But question about Hong Kong's airport is not what has been putting Hong Kong into the news. Rather, it has been another upsurge in the long debate on constitutional development. 34 years ago, when I first arrived in the city, that debate had already been running for a long time. The conundrum of how to reconcile Hong Kong's singular position between Britain and China with the natural expectation of people to have a say in the decisions that affect their lives and opportunities occupied many a mind, especially as rising prosperity, stability and education levels gave more people more time to reflect and comment on their circumstances. When I arrived, the decision had just been made to turn wholly appointed advisory bodies – whose members were drawn from business and social leaders in each district – into partly directly elected District Boards. Within a couple of years I was engaged in campaigns to encourage people to register as voters, finding myself in the evenings canvassing the tower blocks of Sheung Wan and Kennedy Town. The conversations I had were fascinating. Some who I met explained to me how dangerous getting involved in politics could be and how they had come to Hong Kong to get away from it. A few lectured me on how bad any form of government founded on public opinion would be for business. Many more seemed pleased to be treated with respect and given choice in the matter. But most contacts did not lead to conversations. Instead, doors were slammed on me by people who assumed I was a Mormon missionary.

Today I doubt that anyone would mistake me for a Mormon, but the conundrum of how to reconcile Hong Kong's singular position within China with the natural expectation of people to have a say in the decisions that affect their lives and opportunities continues to occupy minds, so far not altogether fruitfully. Most media attention has picked up on the froth of clamour about 'international standards of democracy' and ideas of occupying central – but my sense is that these are seen as unconstructive distractions by a majority of the public. Of more concern is the practical question of whether the particular arrangements that have been put in place so far, intended to sustain the way of life, rule of law, freedom of expression and commerce that the Basic Law enshrines, are wholly conducive to the choice, competition, adaptation and innovation that a city like Hong Kong needs if it is to sustain economic advancement. This amid ever changing national and international conditions and in the face of the huge change in the pattern of local society entailed by the rapid increase of the elderly as a proportion of the total population.

The increasing disparity of wealth and opportunity in society over the last couple of decades has not been unique to Hong Kong but is seen and felt strongly in these crowded streets. There is a growing sense that arrangements put in place to give assurance that a 'capitalist' society would continue to flourish here have had the unintended consequence of giving advantage to particular interests, rather than the common weal. While many businesses have sought to respond to social issues with deep commitment and care, and while such actions are respected and welcomed, the feeling remains that these efforts are treating symptoms rather than causes, and that some rebalancing is needed to restore opportunity and prospects for the city. The old idea, that if things are to remain the same some things need to change, seems to resonate. Hong Kong as an open society sustained by decent laws, decently administered – the home we build together – is an important work that many feel deserves more attention than it seems to be getting at the moment from those who are supposed to be representing them.

As I write, the Mid-Autumn Festival will soon be upon us. It is, to my mind, the most lovely of the Chinese festivals, a time for family and remembrance as well as the prospect of cooler days after the heat of summer. Memories from early years here – the first going to Tai Hang to witness the fire dragon snaking through the streets, the second sailing out to Cheung Chau with the full moon astern competing for attention with the phosphorescence in the wake, more magical than any hand made lantern – remain fresh and vivid for me. As with so many festivals in Europe, the relentless pressure of commercialization is dispiriting, the commentary on the loss of cultural meaning and value is no less present and predictable. But, underneath, the reality remains like a flower that blossoms when the moon is full, giving delight and hope.

Kim Salkeld
September 2014

Hong Kong Entrepreneurship Competition 2014/15

The Hong Kong Society is playing a full part in the second LSESU Hong Kong Public Affairs and Social Service Society (HKPASS) Hong Kong Entrepreneurship competition (HKEC) which is being sponsored by HSBC.

We are once again seeking mentors to provide guidance, encouragement and support to the teams for the 2014/15 competition.

The Competition

Teams of between 2 and 6 students from any UK-based university will be required to present to a panel of judges a business plan based on the capital requirement and the unique business environment in Hong Kong. Special credit will be given to proposals which address a social issue in HK.

The first Entrepreneurship Competition organised during the 2013/14 Academic year by the students of the London School of Economics HKPASS (LSE Hong Kong Public Affairs and Social Services Society) was a great success. The Society played a full part in its organisation; the competition was sponsored by HSBC and enjoyed strong support from CBBC, HKETO, HKTDC, Invest Hong Kong and others. Particularly valued were the 36 mentors (one per team), mostly members of the HK Society and HK Association, who provided encouragement, guidance and support to the teams. The winning team won a very generous cash prize and onlookers were genuinely inspired by the quality of the entries and of the teams.

The Mentors

The HKPASS (Hong Kong Public Affairs and Social Services Society) has asked the Hong Kong Society and Association to recruit 36 mentors (one per team).

* It will be the responsibility of teams to consult their mentors, who would provide on the telephone, by email or face to face guidance.

* Mentors should if possible be experienced businesspeople (important) with Hong Kong backgrounds (desirable).

* It will be for the teams to make all the running in making contact and not the mentors. Effort and time involved for the mentors will vary, depending on the teams and mentors. A few teams in 2014 made no contact at all; most expressed huge gratitude to their mentors and consulted them a lot.

More information is available to those interested. Please apply to the Executive Director, Robert Guy, at ed@hkas.org.uk for a briefing pack. Relevant extracts of CVs will be sought from those committing themselves.

Important Dates

December 6, 2014: Launch Reception and Meeting the Mentors

March 14, 2015: Proposal Submission Due

March 20, 2015: Final and Prize Giving Ceremony

Meet the Mentors

From early Nov we are planning to start a series of quarterly 'Meet the Mentor' Dinners. If you are interested in getting involved by becoming a mentor for these, please contact communications@hkas.org.uk for more information.

The idea is for experienced professionals to meet and talk over dinner to aspiring graduates and those at universities. Each event will be focussed on one industry. Typical sectors to be discussed will be Law, Financial Services, Accountancy and Public Relations.

The first dinner will be on 'Financial Service and Banking'. Details will follow shortly.

Tuesday 22nd July was a glorious day in London and the HKCC Men's Team put on a good show in the main ground at Lords, but lost narrowly to the MCC. Meanwhile, the two Ladies Teams were playing on the Nursery Ground in separate limited over matches. They were a Hong Kong Team and a China Team, which must have set precedents play at the Home of Cricket.

General Sir Peter Duffell, a member of the Society, presented to the visitors a gift: a picture which was very well received.

The Hong Kong Society representatives, organised by Robin de Morgan, met several of the non-playing tourists in the Tavern and had a glorious time, untroubled by any need to play cricket!



Scottish Regional Luncheon 18th June 2014

The Scottish Region organised a joint luncheon with the Hong Kong Economic and Trade Office in London on Wednesday 18th June 2014 at the Royal Overseas League in Edinburgh.

45 members and guests attended the lunch including some senior members of the business community in Scotland. We were lucky enough to be addressed by Erica Ng, Director General of the Hong Kong Economic and Trade office in London, who gave a very interesting talk on Hong Kong's importance as an International Finance Centre. The figures she quoted were very encouraging and showed that Hong Kong continues to occupy a pivotal role in the International Finance area. It was enlightening for our members to hear how quickly and efficiently major projects can be completed in Hong Kong, particularly when the Edinburgh trams project, which had been recently completed, took so long and was way over budget. I am sure the Chairman of the Edinburgh Chamber of Commerce, who was in attendance, was impressed by the Hong Kong figures.

The lunch was a great success and the Royal Overseas League looked after us very well and I would like to express my sincere thanks to Erica for taking the time out of a busy schedule to attend the event.

Our next Scottish event will be our usual Xmas Chinese lunch in early December and I will advise all our members of the details in October.

In the meantime I wish all members a pleasant Autumn and I look forward to seeing as many of you as possible in December.

Roy Dewar

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