

## Letter from the Director

At the time of writing, we are working hard on the programme for 2014, trying to find a balance between the needs of the younger element, on the one hand, and, on the other, of those many who remain in the Society after long and distinguished service in Hong Kong and whose aims are to maintain old friendships and to follow what is going on in Hong Kong. There will be more this year for the young business-inclined. The Society has quietly given a lot of support to the LSE Students' Entrepreneurship Competition, including identifying, from amongst the membership, 30 mentors for the competing teams. The final will be in mid March and I can say that I have found the competition inspiring to witness: a good organisation, clear set of rules, generous sponsorship from HSBC and a distinguished set of judges led by Lord Wei (see separate article).

Caroline Emery has passed the leadership of the Young Professionals Committee to Regina Lui – great thanks to both. Caroline is remaining on the committee; it is just that she is too busy to provide the extra effort required of the Chairmanship. She, Regina and the others will undoubtedly be providing well for the growing number of young Hong Kong members who are joining.

Whilst on the subject of thanks, we should all express immense thanks for the wonderful articles over many years written by a few dedicated, kind and clever people who have worked hard to keep the Society informed and entertained. Brian Tilbrook has contributed over very many years and we all salute him and hope that we will continue to see occasional guest articles from him. As you will see from the pages which follow, we are also very fortunate in our current columnists.

One thing which we have not got right is the mode of address on envelopes and letters. I apologise for what might be termed the 'Readers Digest Syndrome'; the addressing of letters in ways which come straight from the database. Perhaps we should award a compensation, in the form of a free ticket to the Annual Dinner, to the recipients of the worst forms of address – please do not hesitate to let us know if you receive one which makes you irritated!

We are planning to continue the series of 'Regional Lunches' during the spring and summer. Please do join them if you can. We are also planning to have a 'Hong Kong Reunion' in September; a relatively low cost supper at a pleasant location (if possible Chinese cooking) with a large car park in the South West fringes of London.

**Robert Guy**  
Director

### Society Forthcoming Events

- 9 Mar** - YM Sunday Social
- 20 Mar** - LSE HKPASS Entrepreneurship Competition Presentation of prize and Closing Ceremony
- 23 Mar** - Afternoon Tea and Special Talk at BADA
- 31 May** - Trooping the Colour - Special seats at Major General's Review

(Further details see inside page)

### Other Events currently planned for Spring/Summer

- Late Apr** - Women's Spring Lunch with Howard Webster, author of 'Canton Elegy'
- May/June** - Visit to Kew Gardens and Tour of Chinese Medicinal Plants
- May-Sep** - Regional Lunches in pubs in various chosen locations
- June/July** - A Polo day at Ham Polo Club
- June/July** - Dragon Boat Festival
- Early Sep** - Women's Group Autumn Supper
- Mid Sep** - A Hong Kong Reunion Supper in the outskirts of SW London
- Sep** - The Ceremony of the Keys at the Tower of London

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MAYER • BROWN

On 7 January 2014 in Hong Kong Sir Run Run Shaw passed away. "Well, he had a good innings", the common platitude goes. That, however, seems grossly inadequate for someone who had reached the age of 107, founded the two major players in two major industries: Asian cinema and Hong Kong television, which also served the Chinese diaspora throughout the world and was one of the most prolific philanthropists of the modern age. He had many distinctions, including being the oldest known diner at the Michelin starred Bo Innovation, the home of "X-treme Chinese cuisine", where he ate three years ago.

Sir Run Run was himself a legendary host and an invitation to his stronghold in Clearwater Bay was among the most coveted. He was one of those business successes who had a genuine passion for what he did and so, perhaps, it was hardly surprising that a small but palatial cinema was the centerpiece of his entertaining. Long before such things were commonplace in commercial cinemas there was a cupholder at every seat although rather than a cold Coke the glass would more likely contain a gin and tonic or a vintage wine. And after the guests had enjoyed the film they would move to the dining room for the finest buffet dinner imaginable, presided over by the silver haired and courtly Chan Baak who continued to do this even after his retirement from his position at Sir Run Run's beloved Peninsula Hotel.

Conversation flowed easily since the film that had just been seen provided an obvious topic especially since these were often the newest of new films from Hollywood. Ever thoughtful, though, Sir Run Run would tailor the programme to his guests' sensitivities. There were stories told that when China first opened up again to the outside world and its officials made their initial forays into this terra incognita their way was smoothed by endless showings of Mary Poppins. As the discussions about Hong Kong's future began, however, the characteristic impishness of "Uncle Six", as he was nicknamed after his place in the family hierarchy or otherwise "Ah Sir" after he had been knighted in 1977, emerged and they were treated, instead, to Braveheart.

His appearance was like something out of a fairytale with an air of enigmatic wisdom and as if he was always quietly amused at some glorious joke known only to him himself. And to so many people and organisations he proved himself a magician or fairy godfather, suddenly making long held wishes and dreams come true. There are literally thousands of educational institutions, primarily in China and Hong Kong, which owe their existence to him as well as the Shaw Prizes which threw a new spotlight on the sciences and on the achievements of the grateful recipients. People at the Hong Kong Red Cross still sigh with wonderment as they tell of Sir Run Run's donation of HK\$126 million (just under £10 million and by far the largest single gift they had ever received) that is allowing them to build a new headquarters.

The Red Cross had long been a favourite charity of Ah Sir's. His association with it began in 1961 and he was Chairman and President for a total of 29 years. It was by no means just funds and fundraising that he gave them but his wis-

dom and special skills as his flair for publicity persuaded the Hong Kong community to overcome traditional reluctance and become blood donors by the hundreds of thousands and his subtle diplomacy ensured a smooth transition from British to Chinese status. The Red Cross is a widely admired international organization and the Hong Kong Branch (HKRC) of the Red Cross Society of China has a lot to be proud of too. To carry out its many different missions it relies on volunteers, an incredible 22,600 of them and I was recently privileged to speak to one of the most impressive of these, whose focus is on disaster relief. There is an enormous amount and variety of work undertaken by the HKRC but this area is surely among the most dramatic.

Walter Leung is a Hospital Authority nurse by profession but, motivated by reports of the major earthquake in China he has been a member of the pool of HKRC volunteers since 2008, having passed a selection process of three interviews that many describe as being tougher than for their day-to-day job. He was not deployed to China, however, but for his first mission was sent, at two days' notice, to Pakistan following serious floods there where he joined Norwegians and Canadians to run mobile clinics in affected areas. Perhaps, though, his greatest challenge came at the end of 2013, in a one month relief mission after Typhoon Haiyan, known as Typhoon Yolanda in the Philippines where it wreaked terrible devastation.

Because of its proximity and preparedness, Hong Kong was able to send early volunteers to help the Philippines Red Cross and Walter was one of the first three to arrive in Cebu, just four days after the typhoon struck. There had been news stories beforehand that the typhoon had allowed mass prison breakouts so there were worries about safety and security. What Walter found though was not threats from this but simply no electricity, no drinking water, no mobile 'phone service, no gasoline, all the buildings along the coastline swept away and bodies lying unburied by the side of the roads. A 747 full of supplies for the Red Cross arrived from Canada and so the three volunteers, sleeping in tents pitched on waterlogged ground, spent four days unloading and re-loading thirteen tonnes of equipment. They were able to revert to the exercise of their medical skills. A Red Cross field hospital was established in Ormoc City which was one of the worst affected areas. It was set up in only two days complete with Operating Theatre, Intensive Care/ Recovery room, Delivery room, sterilization tent, two Paediatric wards, pharmacy, latrines and water supplies.

I was hearing this account of these difficult days in a telephone conversation and I must admit that I imagined a strapping young man in his thirties at the other end of the line so I boldly asked Walter his age. "Fifty-six" was his reply. He pinpointed two factors that helped him to cope. The first was his familiarity with the Philippines. He had volunteered with another small Hong Kong NGO which organizes teams of doctors and nurses who after a

normal week's work fly out to Manila to spend their week-ends running roadside clinics for the residents of slum areas who would have no other access to medical services. The second factor, he said, was the training provided by the Red Cross and he reeled off courses in Kumamoto, Japan, on setting up a field hospital, in the Philippines on rapid deployment and in Germany on dealing with cholera and malnutrition. Now, I know that for more experienced staff, government leave allowances are not bad but even so.....Questioned on this point, Walter admitted that he uses up all his vacation leave and his children studying in Australia must come to visit him rather than the other way round. Still, he added cheerfully, since his regular job was as a departmental manager he was able to keep on top of things back in the office whenever there was a working internet connection.

Although volunteer service is crucial as far as the HKRC is concerned, full-time staff are essential to manage and monitor long-term disaster relief and recovery projects, including spending of donations. There is a lively understanding of what the volunteers go through and what is expected of them. Betty Lau, the Head of International & Relief Service in Hong Kong was herself on the ground in Indonesia after the 2004 tsunami. The volunteers from Hong Kong are, like Walter Leung, mostly of a medical background although engineers are also recruited to carry out urgent shelter, water and sanitation projects. Because of the nature of the requirements volunteers have to be willing to pack up and leave at the drop of a hat even if it means (and it has done) delaying a honeymoon. They are sent to places like Haiti and to deal with things like bullet wounds and earthquake aftershocks. Small wonder that

counselling by the HKRC in house clinical psychologist is considered a "must".

Hong Kong is sometimes criticized as a rather small minded place, suspicious of less developed countries and of ethnic minorities within its own borders, acutely sensitive to rivalries within Asia and to China's old enmities. The Red Cross is a mighty symbol of a different way of doing things and of different, more overreaching values. The strong support HKRC receives from the community belies the casual assumptions about our attitudes. Betty Lau joined the organization in 2000 and has always worked on disaster relief. She is imbued with its values and appreciates its principles of neutrality and humanity. She sums up her belief that "humanity is the world's language." It is said that back in the 1960s when he was first approached for help Sir Run Run Shaw knew little about the work of the Red Cross. Given his own magnanimity and breadth of vision it is hardly surprising that it turned out to be a cause very close to his heart!

Rachel Cartland

Jan 2014



Ormoc Field Hospital



A small patient with with Walter Leung. She was satisfactorily treated and discharged a week later



A roadside scene

### The Longest Escalator Link in the World.

At the end of 1980 I was living on Conduit Road, at the top of the area known as the mid-levels and going down every day to Cantonese training in the Wing On Centre, at the waterfront near the Macau ferry piers. In the cool winter months it was pleasant to walk down in the morning. After ambling along the relatively gentle Castle Road and crossing Caine Road by Kom Tong Hall – now the Sun Yat Sen Museum but then used as a Mormon meeting place – you found before you a precipitous descent on Aberdeen Street. Near the top were terraces of old three storey houses, pleasing to the eye but whose lath and plaster construction was showing the stress from years of typhoons and damp. Where that terrace stood is now a small park. As Assistant District Officer for the area in the mid 1980s I was involved in discussions with the owners of the buildings about the resumption that led to the park being built. From the planning perspective it seemed to be a big gain. For the old people living there – and for their wider families - it was an upending of community life and weakening of social fabric. Lower down Aberdeen Street were police married quarters. These have now been vacated and the buildings converted into a place for arts and creative industries. At the bottom of Aberdeen Street you crossed Wellington Street and headed into a warren of covered alleyways where tailors and makers of brightly coloured banners plied their trades, to emerge on Des Voeux Road and hurry across the tram lines to the Wing On Building.

Going down then, following the path that many a nineteenth century merchant had taken from a mid-levels home to an office go-down, was a joy. Going back up was not. The old merchants had sedan chairs, whose carriers gave their brief lives to the comfort of the men of money. In 1980, the choice was between joining the rush-hour scramble for the buses or minibus that zig-zagged slowly up to the mid-levels through grinding gears and heavy fumes, or retracing the morning path on foot. Even on the coldest winter day, going up Aberdeen Street could produce perspiration before the half-way point was reached and Castle Road would take further toll on complaining calves. A more winding route could reduce the strain and allow exploration of places still hanging onto the feel of the nineteenth century city, such as the beautifully misnamed Rednaxela Terrace, but even with such digressions and diversions your body always knew it had been made to work hard when the heights of Conduit Road were regained. The steep lane up to the quarters still remained! In the dripping damp of spring or the high humidity of summer, the ascent was unpleasant to a degree that still causes shudders as I recollect.

In 1984, on my desk there landed the planned solution to the problem of commuting between the residential areas of the mid-levels and the business area at the foot of the mountain, a proposal for seven escalator links at intervals between Central in the east and Sai Ying Poon in the west. One of these was finally built, after much protest about damage and disruption to business and communities. Whether it has made any significant contribution to the easing of commuter problems, given the vastly increased scale of residential development in the mid-levels since I moved out to Kowloon in 1981, is an open question, but this escalator link has certainly made its mark. In the 1980s a notable feature of Hong Kong was the boasting about superlatives – most expensive real estate, most Rolls-Royces per head of population, most people per square mile. That seems to have died down, but not before 'World's longest escalator link' was added to the list, and the complex of bridges, escalators and stairways jinking around and above the narrow streets and crowded buildings is still an attraction for many tourists. It has brought business into a host of lanes and alleys above Central and it is hard now to recall what it was like before the bars and restaurants moved into the area. Just this last week, the invitations for operators for the renovated Central Police complex on Old Bailey Street have gone out. This old bastion of colonial control – a police station, magistracy and prison built as an early symbol of the benefits of the rule of law – has been preserved and renovated and will soon be opened up for use by arts, cultural and creative entrepreneurs. The escalator link swings by a corner of the site and helps to make it easily accessible, stitching it into the lively fabric of the city and, I hope, helping it to add exciting new diversity, invention and opportunity to this place for many more years to come.

Kim Salkeld  
Feb 2014

With thanks to sponsor:



## Reflection - by Kitty who was an intern in the office

The summer of 2013 was unforgettable for me because I was appointed to a 2 month internship by the Hong Kong Institute of Education to the offices of the HKA and HKS. It was a great opportunity to work abroad and I gained lots of skills and experiences during my time in UK; they all broadened my horizon. I do believe that it was a life changing experience and enabled me to be better prepared for the future.

My main responsibility was to assist the Communication Manager and give support in general office work. Lots of different generic skills and actual working experiences were encountered. I also had chances to participate in planning and organising events.

The first event I joined was the guest luncheon for the President of the Legislative Council of Hong Kong, Jasper Tsang Yok-Sing, who gave us a brief talk about the final run to full democracy of Hong Kong. Other major activities that I joined were the Polo event and the Dragon Boat Festival competition. Work in the office certainly broadened my horizon and let me gain a deeper understanding of how the business world operates and communicates. I also gained a brief understanding of the cultural differences between the cultures of the western world and of Chinese people.

Staying in London for 2 months was a fabulous experience for me. I was fascinated with the history and arts. I loved visiting different museums and relaxing in parks. I explored the city everyday and tried to get into the community. This kind of experience was brand new to me and I enjoyed it very much.

A big thank you to all members.

Cheung Sin Tung, Kitty

(Kitty was awarded 'Intern of the Year 2013' from her institute)

## Members Offers

The website carries details of a number of discounts or other offers made to bona fide members.

We are delighted to announce that members visiting Hong Kong and Shanghai from the beginning of 2014 onwards are welcome to access and use the services and facilities of the prestigious Kee Clubs for private members conveniently located in both cities, and co-founded and operated by Christian Rhomberg of Club 1997 fame.

Other discounts available to members of the Society include: discounts on stays at the Mira HK and the Mira Moon, offers on Truffles at L'Aquila, discounts on baggage shipping costs at Excess Baggage and Piano Lessons at The Piano Practice.

Visit [hkas.org.uk/membership-offers](http://hkas.org.uk/membership-offers) for more details

## Hong Kong Society Committee 2014

### Karen Luard (Chairman)

Linora Bennet  
Caroline Emery  
Emily Fan  
Regina Lui  
Camilla Patterson  
Mark Patterson (Hon Treasurer)  
Christopher Rampton  
Andrew Seaton  
Stuart Tait  
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](mailto:communications@hkas.org.uk) or telephone 020 7963 9447.

## Deaths

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

Mr Jim Cowie  
Mr Bill Lanigan  
Mr John MacKenzie  
Mr Hugh McAteer  
Mr Geoffrey Murphy  
Mr Eddie Short

*The website has started a page for reminiscences. Here is a taster:*

### **Yankee in Hong Kong by Geoffrey Emerson**

One of my very early memories is of going to Causeway Bay to shop at Asia “Supermarket” and suddenly realizing that I was the only non-Chinese on the crowded streets, which was the first time in my life that had happened. I put “supermarket” in inverted commas because it was nothing like our many supermarkets today where we push carts around and line up at a computer check-out. I would go into the crowded, seemingly unorganized Asia store and sit on a high stool with my list. A very polite clerk – “Good morning, Sir, what would you like today?” - would come and take my order. Then he would run round the shop and find the merchandise, bring it to me and list it item by item. I paid cash. The groceries would be delivered later that day. Then across the street I would go to Daimaru, the first big department store in Causeway Bay, for lunch. There was a pleasant restaurant and a counter at which I would usually sit and have delicious tempura.

I mentioned being the only non-Chinese on the streets. I also recall the very first day I went out on my own to Causeway Bay, being driven there by a private taxi, called a ‘baak pai’ (white license car). When I decided to return home, I was so inexperienced, that I thought no one would speak English, especially a taxi driver, so I walked home to MacDonnell Road at mid-levels. This was quite a hike in July heat. Later in the year, when the weather cooled, such a walk was really very pleasant especially with much less traffic in those days and after discovering such wonderful walks as Bowen Road from Happy Valley to Central (still a great walk)....

**To read the rest of this article and other reminiscences, please visit our new “Down Memory Lane” page on our website: [www.hkas.org.uk/down-memory-lane](http://www.hkas.org.uk/down-memory-lane)**



Geoffrey Emerson with his book ‘Hong Kong Internment, 1942-1945: Life in the Japanese Civilian Camp at Stanley’

### **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](http://www.pamwilliams.co.uk/hongkongbook)  
Email: [pwill8888@aol.com](mailto:pwill8888@aol.com)

## **Hong Kong Entrepreneurship Competition 2014**

The Hong Kong Society has provided a lot of support to an Entrepreneurship Competition which is being organised by the Hong Kong Public Affairs and Social Service Society (HKPASS) of the London School of Economics. The Hong Kong Entrepreneurship competition (HKEC) aims to foster entrepreneurship and promote business opportunities in Hong Kong.

Participating teams from universities all over the UK have been required to create original business plans based on the unique business environment in Hong Kong. The four best entries will be asked to present their business plans at the final on 20th March 2014. This competition will serve not only as a learning platform for ambitious young entrepreneurs but will also allow them to get to know Hong Kong better.

The Society has produced 30 wonderful volunteers who are ‘mentoring’ each of the 30 team. HSBC is supporting the competition and the Chairman of Judges, Lord Wei, and his panel will select the winning entry on the final day, which is to be held at HSBC on the 20th March.

The competition has been very well organised by the students themselves and it has drawn some interesting and imaginative business plans.