

Letter from the Director

The office of the Hong Kong Society and Association has developed a slight complex about the basements of hotels. First, in the Spring of 2014, an Association lunch at the Shangri-La had to be called off within an hour of start time because of a suspected fire in the Shard's basement. Secondly in the December of the same year, the Society's Annual Dinner, which was to have been at the Churchill Hotel, had to be moved 8 days before the event because of a gas explosion in its basement. Both of the hotels involved were entirely blame-free and both dealt with the incidents with great efficiency and kindness, but whether or not our next bookings will be accepted is now a matter of concern. As members will know, our old friends at the Mandarin Oriental in Hyde Park reacted to our homeless state with great generosity and we had a very good evening on 2nd December. His Royal Highness The Duke of York attended the pre-dinner reception and made an excellent speech and we were delighted to have Kelly Hoppen as our guest speaker. She gave her listeners great encouragement, spoke very clearly about Hong Kong, entrepreneurship and, through her energetic style and determined delivery, demonstrated clearly why she is so successful and popular. We remain extremely grateful to HSBC, Hutchison Whampoa, Standard Chartered Bank and Swires for supporting the dinner which was considerably enlivened also by a short choral performance by Sophie G, a Hong Kong born Mezzo-Soprano now living in UK and a member of the Society.

Sponsorship is hugely important. For the past four years one of the three long-term supporters of both the HK Society and HK Association has been Mayer Brown. Their sponsorship contract ceased at the end of 2014; they have been great friends to both organisations and we are very happy that they are continuing to be involved with Association events. Their place has been taken as long-term sponsors by fellow lawyer company Clifford Chance who join Wing Yip and Cathay Pacific. Without these companies, we would find it hard to make ends meet. Meet (just) they do, however, and I am glad also to report that the Society's membership numbers are starting to rise again. I think that I should pay great tribute to the many long standing members who have maintained their membership despite not having been able to attend any of the Society's London-located events. Without this large number of people, the Society would not be able to survive and we are truly grateful for this sign of continued commitment to HK-UK friendship. I hope that they find this newsletter useful. London events are expensive and not very convenient for many and the committee has been looking for other ways of providing for those who find attending them difficult. We have in recent years been organising an increasing number of regional lunches and suppers and also been looking at the possibility of a reception in the late supper to the South West of London. So far we have not quite found the right formula and any feedback or suggestion would be useful. More work is being done on the 'Members' Offers' page and we are in discussion with a well-known London Club for privileged membership.

Regional activities in Scotland, North-East England and Gloucestershire enjoy the benefits of kind and energetic convenors who have run extremely good events. Those nearer London have been organised centrally and have enjoyed in the last couple of years varying success. The charges have still been on the high side and we appreciate that those who attend them do so mainly to catch up with old HK friends. We aim to notify earlier the dates of such events and hope that you will try to encourage other local HK friends to attend them.

As readers will know, we are continuing to give greater emphasis to activities for the young business community. The Society should be proud of its involvement in the LSE Entrepreneurship Competition, kindly sponsored by HSBC; the 'Jobs in Hong Kong Seminar', hosted once again by Standard Chartered in 2014 and sponsored by Hays, remained extremely popular and a new series of 'Meet the Mentor' Dinners, run by committee members, Carrie Waley and Mark Patterson, have proved to be very successful. Under Regina Lui, the 'Young Professionals Group' has continued to flourish and they are currently planning a number of social and networking events for the year. Involvement of young HK-born business people has increased considerably: this could not be more welcome.

Much is well with your Society – or so we believe here – but do tell the office or members of the committee if you have any views or ideas of how we can do things better !

Robert Guy
Executive Director

With thanks to sponsors:



C L I F F O R D
C H A N C E

During the last three months of 2014, the world's spotlight turned on Hong Kong and its democracy protests. Christmas cards included the scribbled question "Are you all right?", and understandably so since the international media had done their usual sterling job in stationing reporters and photographers at the barricades and ignoring everything that was happening, or not happening, elsewhere. This is not to say that the underlying issues are not serious and complex. In our latter day version of the Wars of the Roses the choice is made between blue and yellow ribbons, those wearing the former broadly in favour of the Establishment while the latter demonstrate allegiance to the demonstrators' cause. There are stories of families who have become so divided that they have had to seek therapy and meanwhile the political crisis lumbers on, unresolved.

Amidst such difficulties the poets offer solace and the late WH Auden seems to have anticipated our situation. In *Musée Des Beaux Arts* he speaks of the contrast between momentous events and their mundane context, how they take "place/While someone else is eating or opening a window..." Ah, eating, that necessity of life which in Hong Kong has always been an authentic pleasure. So, in the spirit articulated by Auden, let us look at some recent developments in Hong Kong's opportunities for eating out.

It is obvious advice to research by consulting an expert and on food and drink who better to turn to than Fergus Fung? Charming and cosmopolitan, Fergus is no food snob, giving equal weight to fine wines and the offerings of the Tasty Congee & Noodle Wantun Shop. Ten years ago together with his business partner Samanta Pong (who moonlights as a director of the Shiu Wing Steel Company) he set up the WOM Guide to Hong Kong's restaurants (WOM= Word of Mouth, and WOM is based on independent diners' reviews). It was joined later on our bookshelves by Michelin who belatedly realised that we were the world's gourmet capital and worthy of their inspections.



Fergus recommended for me "new neighbourhoods which are populated with interesting eateries, such as the ones around Kennedy Town, Sai Ying Pun, Tai Hang, and Wong Chuk Hang. Soho has also rapidly changed, and expanded, with the newly opened PMQ." The last three letters made me prick up my ears, and pick up my mouse as I had recently been in PMQ for the launch of Operation Santa Claus (OSC), the annual charitable drive by Radio Television Hong Kong (RTHK), which is a great fundraiser for some of the smaller good causes which would otherwise be overlooked..

We have been rather cheated this year of our usual perfect winter weather, having seemed to pass seamlessly from hot and steamy to cold and humid but that evening in early November was an exception: cool, dry and clear with a stage set up in the open quadrangle and a chamber choir singing Tallis perched in one of the balconies above.

OSC, RTHK, PMQ. It's all a bit of an alphabet soup, isn't it? The first two have just been explained but, if you don't happen to know it, I don't believe that you would ever guess that PMQ, the trendy new centre of restaurants and creative arts spaces, stands for.....Police Married Quarters. These quarters were constructed in 1951 and rank and file police officers could apply for accommodation for themselves and their families. The fung shui must have been good since many of the children who were brought up there prospered and grew up to achieve high office, including two post-Handover Chief Executives, CY Leung and Donald Tsang. There was a primary school for the Police children although later on that building was converted into one of the Clubhouses for Junior Police Call, a youth organisation which was created during the 1970s, that great era of the development of Hong Kong's institutions and civil society, and which became one of the world's largest.. Earlier than all that, this had been from 1889 until the Second World War the site of the Central School, later Queen's College and whose many celebrated alumni included Sun Yat-sen and Sir Robert Ho Tung. Over the past few years, though, it has undergone the process known as "revitalisation" into something that would surely not have been dreamt of by any of its earlier occupants.

The redoubtable Fergus had supplied me not just with advice but also with a valuable introduction to Alan Lo, the youthful entrepreneur whose wife, Yenn Wong, together with Londoner Jason Atherton owns Aberdeen Street Social, perhaps the best known restaurant in PMQ.. I was to meet Alan at the restaurant but had time to look around the area first. It is accommodated in the former JPC Clubhouse and has plenty of space including outdoors and runs along PMQ's northern perimeter. At its rear are the original nineteenth century stairs. A fit of solemnity can overtake the government when it is dealing with heritage and thus there is a sign that informs us that "after revitalisation, the steps maintained its original functions to link the different platforms" or, in other words, you can still walk up and down them. There are also notices around featuring the prohibitions characteristic of Hong Kong open spaces, with an all embracing one that was new to me: "No destruction of public facilities". Somehow or other, though, these stern moralists had failed to enact a rule against walking on this grass so I could go right up to the low perspex fence and stare into Hollywood Road. Traditionally, this has been a street for selling antiques and just below me I saw "True Arts and Curios", a shop presumably named by someone with a thesaurus in hand and looking for a synonym for "genuine". Rising rents in more central locations as well as

the increasing fashionability of SoHo (south of Hollywood Road) mix in with these businesses more and more smart boutiques as well as big chains like Ralph Lauren and Marks & Spencer. The old ways had managed to persist without too much self-consciousness but simply because they had been cherished for generations by local residents. In the seventh Lunar month, for example, normally around August, along Staunton Street on PMQ's southern edge a massive Yu Lan Festival to pacify hungry ghosts would see the erection of giant boards and the burning of many offerings although, worryingly, this is apparently now threatened by nearby redevelopment.

Alan might be considered PMQ's godfather since he has been connected with the site since 2009, when he organised "Detour", a pop up design and creativity festival even though at that time PMQ's buildings were all abandoned and there was no water or electricity. He never gave up on his belief that projects in heritage buildings must respond to the cultural value of the setting. When it came to eating out, he was inspired by the sort of places that he and his friends enjoyed when they were working in London with top quality food served in an informal atmosphere. This has been the keynote in all twelve of his own restaurants, none of which is located in a conventional



large shopping mall. "Returnees" like Alan have injected a new sophistication into the dining scene and a virtuous circle is created as top chefs like Jason Atherton and Gordon Ramsay become more interested in working out here. The menu at Aberdeen Street Social passes one of my own acid tests which is "Could I knock up these dishes at home myself anyway?". I certainly have to eat out if I want things like "celeriac fondant, roasted baby gem lettuce, artichokes and

celeriac consommé"!

PMQ has, of course, been adapted rather than purpose built and that has its consequences. It must have the highest density of toilets of any commercial building in Hong Kong which is, ahem, convenient. Its layout demands wandering and repays it. There are art galleries and a cookery school and many small spaces where designers of clothes, jewellery, bags and other things are working away at their craft, absorbed and inventive, "sailing calmly on" like the ship that appears in the last line of Auden's poem. In the course of exploring, I discovered Bee's Nest, selling monoflora honey made from longan or lychee as well as honey shampoo and bath gel. They are all Hong Kong products, not packaged here but produced by bees buzzing away down by the Tai Tam Reservoir looked after by a Hong Kong-er in a joint venture with a French expatriate. It's not part of my normal remit to recommend commercial websites but I have to say that I found www.beesnest.hk truly enchanting.

The fare offered by Tai Lung Fung is "old Hong Kong", the favourite foods of yesteryear that are still enjoyed today, like prawn toasts, chicken wings and dragon's beard candy. I mention to the proprietor how young all those running the small businesses in PMQ seem to be. He is a cheerful middle aged gentleman and laughingly agreed. "I reckon I'm the oldest person here" he said.

At the end of last September, I was chatting to local historian, Jason Wordie.. "Hear that noise?" he asked. "It's the sound of crystal balls smashing all over town." What has certainly also been smashed has been the stereotyped image of Hong Kong's young who tended to be dismissed as complacent and complaisant, geeky and conformist, apolitical and materialistic. For good or ill, they have certainly shown themselves to be different to that. As we move into the Year of the Sheep, they seem neither sheepish nor sheep-like and it will be interesting, to say the least, to see what new things they show us and what other pre-conceptions may be turned upside down!

Rachel Cartland,
Jan 2015

Hong Kong Society Committee 2015

Karen Luard (Chairman)

Linora Bennet
Harvey Catlin
Mark Gray (Treasurer)
James Lai
Philip Li
Regina Lui
Camilla Patterson
Mark Patterson
Harry Queenborough
Christopher Rampton
Andrew Seaton
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 Harold Brown, LVO QPM
Mr Ian Imlach
Mr David Murrell
Mr John Spink
Mrs Karin Spink

From my office window I can look along the new waterfront that is emerging between the Convention Centre and the Central Ferry Piers. The view on this day of post Chinese New Year mist is not clear. The tops of even the middle sized buildings are lost in cloud. The mud on the reclamation has in places become muddy lakes, around which cranes lurk like a herd of diplodocus in a Jurassic swamp. But the shape of things to come is emerging. Immediately below me, a large sewage pumping station that used to block access to the old waterfront has disappeared – thanks to investments over the past decade in vast new tunnels deep beneath the harbour, connecting to a multistorey treatment plant at Stonecutters – and the area of the old plant has been leveled ready to extend the Academy for Performing Arts. Beyond it, the last bits of reclamation to be finished will cover the submerged highway that will take through traffic away from Central and Wanchai's congested streets and the rail tunnel for the Shatin to Central Link.

Further along, the first part of the park and pedestrian area that will cover much of the reclamation on completion has appeared, running down to the waterfront from the new Government headquarters and Legislative Council building. Beyond are more unfinished areas where parks and restaurants will soon start to emerge.

Looking back at me from the end of this space is another eye. It is not on the same scale as that in London. Whereas London's Eye looms over Downing Street with a baleful red glow when looked at from St James' Park, Hong Kong's more modest cousin is overlooked by skyscrapers and by the mountains behind them. Yet it still makes a statement, marks a new step in Hong Kong's evolution. For a first time visitor, a ride on the eye gives time to rise above the bustle of the traffic, time to absorb the sights of the city's skyline and shoreline. For those with memories or interest in past times – an interest that is well served by the excellent Maritime Museum, housed above the new Star Ferry piers close to the eye – the ride gives much more. It gives time to reflect on the changes that have taken place on the waterfront, changes that reflect the ever adapting character of the city.

In the nineteenth century the city centre was also the centre of the working harbour, wharves and godowns jostling with banks and emporia. Wanchai was just a bay, separating the city of Victoria from the schools and hospital at Morrison Hill, Happy Valley and its racecourse, and more godowns at North Point. In the early twentieth Century, reclamation first in Central, then in Wanchai, created whole new areas for business and residence while port services started to move away, across to Kowloon and further along the eastern shore of Hong Kong to Taikoo. Only the naval dockyard kept some ship works in the midst of the city. The 50's and 60's saw major changes as the naval dockyard closed and the start on the container port development at Kwai Chung sucked many shipping and supporting trades away from the old harbour. This created opportunity for redevelopment and new reclamation in Central and later in Wanchai. The soaring buildings that went up housed whole new industries of financial, legal and commercial services that diversified Hong Kong's economy away from the manufacture and trade of goods. It is the bright lights and lofty outlines of these buildings that are the iconic image of Hong Kong on so many postcards and electronic photo albums today.

In contrast, the new reclamation will not be crowded with high buildings but will be open space, linked back into the older city through low, landscaped structures. This does not reflect a lessening of demand for space to do business but rather the need for different spaces as Hong Kong diversifies as a city and community.

The huge surge of population in post war years that both demanded and made possible the vast expansion of commerce and services – and the buildings that housed them – is reaching retirement. This is a generation of people for whom Hong Kong is a home and a place to retire in, not just a place to have done business.

Flows of tourists and business visitors have increased vastly, requiring more capacity in public space and transport systems.

And the very nature of business and social interaction is changing as a consequence of the marvels of modern technology and social media, altering the way people work and engage with each other, creating demand for new patterns of urban space and also creating a ferment of new businesses as innovators and entrepreneurs respond to the opportunities that have been unleashed.

Just before Chinese New Year I saw two contrasting examples of this bubbling up of ideas and opportunities. The first was in MongKok, where an urban renewal project by the old flower market has restored an early 20th Century shop house to create space for social enterprises and social space for the surrounding community. Among the new tenants is an artists' group who are using high technology to create extraordinary work inspired by the flower market around them. The second was in Quarry Bay where a couple of enterprising young men have persuaded their bosses to let them use a soon to be demolished building to experiment with an incubator for technology start-ups. In a short time they have

created a great space that is already filled with a wonderful variety of people engaged in trying to turn an equally wonderful variety of ideas into new businesses.

I do not know how long Hong Kong's eye will continue to look across Hong Kong's new waterfront, but for as long as it does it will provide an outlook on much that has passed, much that remains and much that is to come.

Kim Salkeld
March 2015

Meet the Mentors Supper - November 2014

On 5 November, the Hong Kong Society hosted a dinner for thirty-four young professionals and students, and four mentors, within the financial services industry, at the Oriental Club, London. The evening began with a discussion chaired by Mark Patterson and Carrie Waley. The four mentors and the chairpersons, all of whom lived or studied in Hong Kong and China, and most of whom have worked or currently work within Asian markets, discussed the challenges and opportunities which led them to their current positions. David, who started his career as a chartered accountant, spoke about his experience in entering the investment management space, and his work in expanding the Blackrock business through joint ventures in the Asia Pacific region. Suwei, who is the first Chinese female partner in a "Big 4" accountancy firm, spoke about her determination to secure a job in the UK after completion of her MBA at Bristol University, and the key decisions she contemplated while choosing an employer. Mark, who first pursued a career in a chemicals company before joining the banking industry, spoke about the transferability of skills across various experiences and roles in London, Hong Kong and Singapore. Andrew, who is currently chief executive of a financial public relations company, gave valuable careers advice to the young audience of thirty four – to stand out in the interview process, one should be encouraged to gain experience through wide array of internships.

The floor opened for questions, after which the evening continued with conversations over a two course dinner and drinks at the Oriental Club's elegant dining rooms. We are grateful to our mentors for their valuable time and we thank them for speaking candidly to our audience. Thank you to Mark and Carrie, our chairpersons, without whom the evening would not have been a success.

Thank you to:

David Graham, Managing Director at BlackRock
Mark Gray, Managing Director, Standard Chartered Bank
Andrew Jacques, Chief Executive, MHP Financial
Suwei Jiang, Lead Partner and Senior China Advisor, PwC
China Business Group



By Regina Lui (Chairman, Hong Kong Society Young Professionals Group)

Our next Meet the Mentors Supper on the 18th March will focus on the Media, PR and Communications Industry. Further details can be found in the forward programme page of this newsletter.

Hong Kong Entrepreneurship Competition 2015

The 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 competition is being repeated in the current academic year. Its aim is to foster an awareness, within the university community, of Hong Kong business opportunities and to generate a sense of entrepreneurship among the students.

The Hong Kong Society has once again helped with this competition and has provided 18 mentors.

The Final and Prize Giving Ceremony will be on Friday 20th March.

Hong Kong Society North East Region

On the evening of Friday 7th November the Hong Kong Society North East Region held its inaugural event at the Sky Restaurant in the heart of Newcastle's Chinatown. In true Hong Kong style the 65 guests, a broad mix of sponsors, community leaders, business people, former residents and those with connections or a strong interest in Hong Kong and students, wined dined and chatted over an excellent Chinese meal. They were addressed by guest of honour Andrew Seaton CMG, former British Consul General in HK, who reviewed past and recent developments in Hong Kong and spoke with cautious optimism about the city's future. The event was generously supported by UK Trade & Investment, the Hong Kong Society in London, the Hong Kong Economic and Trade Office in the UK and Emirates Airlines.



The feedback after the event was very positive and the society is now looking forward to a successful 2015 with further regional events during the course of the year. On the 24th February we were invited to attend the NE Chinese Association's annual Chinese New Year dinner at the Lancastrian Banqueting Centre (former Fed Brewery) in Dunston, Gateshead.

Then on the 26th May, at the Sky Restaurant in Stowell St, Newcastle Upon Tyne, we will host a Chinese banquet to welcome the Hong Kong Economic & Trade Office's Director-General Ms Erica Ng, who from her office in London is responsible for Hong Kong's economic and trade relations with the UK. This is proving a momentous time for Hong Kong so we look forward to her address with great interest. More details of how to book will be available soon.

We have further plans for events in the late summer and the autumn, and will write to you again in due course.

With Best Wishes for the Coming Year of the Ram,

Clinton Leeks OBE JP (Co-Chairman)
Chris Fraser OBE (Co-Chairman)
Alvin Cheung (Regional Coordinator)



Scottish Region

We had a very pleasant and successful lunch on the 11th December 2014 at Saigon, Saigon in Edinburgh. Despite severe winter weather on the day, 40 members and guests attended and the food met the usual high standard we have become accustomed to. This event has become a favourite of the Scottish members of the Society as it allows us to get together in a fairly informal environment and to meet up with lots of old friends. In addition the value for money is excellent and the range and quality of dishes is very good. We also have an additional attraction in Edinburgh now as the vastly over budget, and much delayed tram project, is successfully running and there is a stop very close to the restaurant.

For 2015 it is my intention to have a luncheon with a speaker in May/June 2015 and as soon as details are finalised I will advise all of our members. The other event will be our December luncheon at Saigon, Saigon which as I have already said is a favourite of our members. At our December 2014 lunch we had a brief discussion regarding the number of events we hold in Scotland and it was felt very strongly by those present we should continue with our 2 events each year.

We shall be following the progress of the new North East of England branch with interest and, where possible, we may be able to help each other out. If any members from other parts of the UK wish to attend any of our events they are, of course, extremely welcome and we would love to see you.

In finishing I wish all our members a very successful and healthy 2015.

Roy Dewar