The year 2013 marked the 200th anniversary of Dr David Livingstone’s remarkable life as not only one of the greatest European explorers of Africa, but also as a missionary and a respected medical doctor. For the Victorians, Livingstone was a national hero whose popularity reflected the central trends and ideals of the era regarding abolition, evangelism, colonisation and natural science. He also personified the tenacious spirit of Victorian exploration, discovering many previously unknown parts of Africa and opening up the continent to “commerce, Christianity and civilisation.” Additionally, Livingstone devoted his life to the eradication of slavery and believed that human suffering could only be alleviated by introducing genuine and legitimate commerce, as well as good government guided by Christian principles. Notably, though he preached a Christian message, he did not force it upon unwilling ears.

Livingstone’s political influence extends to the modern day. Because of him, there remains a deep and special friendship between Britain and Malawi. In March of 2013, Dr Joyce Banda, during her presidency of Malawi, paid a special tribute at a Livingstone bicentenary event, saying: “Livingstone will be remembered for his campaign against slavery in East Africa, which marks him out as a humanitarian. In our language, he was a fundamental believer in human equality; he believed that Africans were the same as Europeans, and in that respect he was really ahead of his time.”
In his quest to reduce human suffering, Livingstone also permeated the realm of medical research. He achieved a breakthrough in the development of tropical medicine, discovering how to implement quinine in the treatment of malaria. His medical expertise enabled him to overcome malaria, the disease that had kept most Europeans out of Africa, on many occasions.

One of the Greatest European Explorers of Africa

Dr David Livingstone was born south of Glasgow in Blantyre in 1813. He rose from humble beginnings to pursue an education in medicine and theology, during which he came into contact with some of the foremost scientific, economic and theological minds of his day. In 1841, he was posted to the edge of the Kalahari Desert in southern Africa as a missionary. In 1845, he married Mary Moffat, the daughter of a fellow missionary, and together they had six children. Livingstone was awarded the prestigious Founder’s Medal of the Royal Geographical Society in 1855.

Livingstone was an explorer in the true sense of the word, courageously journeying more than 30,000 miles across Africa and conquering linguistic, tribal and quasi-political frontiers, as well as encountering Arabic raiders, slavery, theft and petty mutiny. He was also charged by rhino, mauled by a lion, constantly struck down with fever, and had to deal with ulcers, Tsetse flies, chronic thirst, hunger and many bouts of malaria. During his first missionary journey, Livingstone reported: “I’ve drunk water swarming with insects, thick with mud, putrid with rhinoceros urine and buffalo dung.” Despite the inherent dangers of his ventures, Livingstone usually travelled light, with only a small number of servants and porters armed with a few guns, as he was renowned for his unique ability to reassure African chiefs that he was not a threat.

In 1849, Livingstone became the first European to cross the Kalahari Desert to Lake Ngami and in 1851 he reached the upper Zambezi River. He also famously discovered the Victoria Falls, which he named after Queen Victoria in May 1856. Though the infamous Atlantic slave trade had already been abolished by Britain, the demand for slaves continued. Livingstone encountered Africans trading slaves to the Portuguese, who sold them to Swahili and Arab traders in Mozambique who in turn sent them to markets throughout the Arab world.

Victoria Falls, also known as Mosi-oa-tunya (translates to: the smoke that thunders): “It has never been seen before by European eyes, but scenes so wonderful must have been gazed on by angels in their flight.” – Livingstone

In 1849, Livingstone became the first European to cross the Kalahari Desert to Lake Ngami and in 1851 he reached the upper Zambezi River. He also famously discovered the Victoria Falls, which he named after Queen Victoria in May 1856. Though the infamous Atlantic slave trade had already been abolished by Britain, the demand for slaves continued. Livingstone encountered Africans trading slaves to the Portuguese, who sold them to Swahili and Arab traders in Mozambique who in turn sent them to markets throughout the Arab world.
After returning to Britain in late 1856, where he was now a national hero, Livingstone was awarded the Royal Geographical Society’s Gold Medal and was given an audience with Queen Victoria. He also published his best-selling Missionary Travels and Researches in South Africa and spoke of the horrors of the slave trade. Influenced by Adam Smith and the Scottish Enlightenment, he advocated that simply making the slave trade illegal would not solve the problem. Africans needed a different economy, one based on legitimate African products and supported by infrastructure. What he probably did not foresee, however, were the historical and political implications of the mercantile-imperialists’ “Scramble for Africa” that ensued.

During 1858 – 1864, Livingstone returned to Africa to head up the Zambesi Expedition, funded by the British Foreign Office, to catalogue the natural resources of the Zambezi River area, identify raw materials for British industry and open up the Zambezi River to commercial markets. Unfortunately, the formidable Kebrabasa rapids made it impossible to proceed with the expedition.

**The Last Expedition, 1866-1873**

What is known of Livingstone is largely based on his letters, journals and the books he wrote, including Missionary Travels and Researches in South Africa, Expedition to the Zambesi and its Tributaries, and The Last Journals of David Livingstone.

After securing private funding support, including monies from the Royal Geographical Society, Livingstone again went back to Africa in January 1866, to search for the Nile’s source and report further on slavery. During this expedition, many of his assistants deserted him and he lost contact with the outside world for six years.

In 1871, Livingstone spent several months in Nyangwe, an Arab trading settlement on the eastern bank of the Lualaba River. His expedition had taken longer than expected due to illness, poor terrain, and the continuing resistance of the “Banian Slaves”, liberated Zanzibari slaves hired to assist him. Running out of provisions, he spent almost four months in Nyangwe. There, on 15 and 16 July, Livingstone witnessed a horrifying massacre of people who were slaughtered by armed slave and ivory traders. Reports about the 1871 massacre helped transform British public opinion and bring about an end to the East African slave trade. However, recent scientific analysis of Livingstone’s 1871 Nyangwe Diary revealed a different account of the event. After using spectral imaging to decipher Livingstone’s own account of the
massacre, Dr Adrian Wisnicki, assistant honorary research fellow at Birkbeck, University of London said: “Evidence in the diary suggests that members of Livingstone’s party might have been involved in the massacre. Livingstone seems to have considered this possibility and this, together with his inability to intervene, appears to have left him with a profound sense of remorse.”

Following the massacre, Livingstone aborted his travel plans and returned to his base at Ujiji, near Lake Tanganyika, where he famously met Sir Henry Morton Stanley. Sent by the New York Herald to look for Livingstone, Stanley greeted him with the famous words, “Dr Livingstone, I presume?”, perhaps the most famous greeting of the 19th century.

Livingstone is unrivalled as Africa’s greatest explorer. As the first European to discover Lake Ngami, Lake Malawi, Lake Bangweulu and Victoria Falls, he also mapped details of Lake Tanganyika, Lake Mweru and the courses of many rivers, including the upper Zambezi. Most significantly, his respect for African culture and his advocacy against slavery played a lasting role in restricting the slave trade in East Africa. For his many varied achievements, he is also today widely remembered as one of the world’s great humanitarians.

“And if my disclosures regarding the terrible Ujijian slavery should lead to the suppression of the East Coast slave trade, I shall regard that as a greater matter by far than the discovery of all the Nile sources together” - Livingstone in a letter to the editor of the New York Herald.
RECENT EVENTS

3 April 2012
Professor David Petley
The Hazards of Geography: Earthquakes, Floods and Landslides

This lecture featured world expert on geographical hazards Professor David Petley, who drew upon his experience in countries recovering from natural disaster to explain why such events continue to inflict a high toll on society despite political and scientific advances. He also addressed global climate change, arguing that mankind can reduce the costs of natural disasters on society with improved application of existing capabilities combined with targeted research.

18 April 2012
Hongkong Electric Lamma Power Station Field Trip

Members enjoyed an exclusive RGS-HK guided visit to Lamma Island Power Station, the largest power station in Hong Kong.

22 April 2012
Andy Leung
Visit to Mai Po Field Trip

RGS-HK arranged a guided tour to the Mai Po Marshes, a wetland that supports an internationally significant number of migratory birds. Members were exposed to the rare and fascinating wildlife in the surrounding area.

30 April 2012
Dr Ian McFeat-Smith
Epicentre: Hong Kong

Dr Ian McFeat-Smith, an engineering geologist specialising in Hong Kong infrastructure, discussed the risks of earthquakes and other natural disasters to Hong Kong. With a high population density, more than 60,000 high-rise buildings and geological features that make Hong Kong particularly susceptible to natural disaster, Dr McFeat-Smith argued that the risks of such incidents are substantially higher than acknowledged by the professional community and the HKSAR Government.

8 May 2012
Simon Cockerell
North Korea: the Reality

To describe the realities of North Korea, Mr Simon Cockerell drew from the experiences he gained during his 112 trips to the country over the last decade. In particular, he highlighted the disconnect between the various political views of the North Korean public and the actions and statements of their government.
14 May 2012

Simon Wheatley
The Crisis of London’s Youth

Referencing his own experiences, stunning photography, and book Don’t Call me Urban! The Time of Grime, acclaimed photographer and writer on social geography Mr Simon Wheatley lectured on the growing Western crisis of youth unemployment and crime. He captured the sentiment of a generation of alienated youth and charted the development of the crisis of inner-city youth over the decade preceding the London Riots.

16 May 2012

Chandran Nair
Consumptionomics: Asia’s Role in Reshaping Capitalism and Saving the Planet

Renowned international speaker and leading expert on Asian globalization Mr Chandran Nair challenged the ideas of business, political, and academic leaders, arguing that a Western model of consumption-led economic growth could not be replicated in Asia. To benefit global leaders as well as the public, he advocated for an overhaul of the conventional supply and demand frameworks, the consideration of an Asian perspective and the inclusion of the true cost of externalities.

19 May 2012

David Brian
Tung Ping Chau Field Trip

Mr David Brian, a well-known expert on Tung Ping Chau, led a field trip to this geologically unique island. Tung Ping Chau is Hong Kong’s remotest island, lying only three kilometres from Guangdong Province, and is the only area of Hong Kong formed entirely from sedimentary rock.

22 May 2012

Paul McKenzie
Wild Encounters

Mr Paul McKenzie is an award-winning photographer whose photographs are on display in the Smithsonian Museum and have been widely published by such corporations as Microsoft, Patagonia, Viacom, Discovery Channel and the World Wildlife Fund. In this lecture, he touched upon natural history and conservation as he shared the stories behind his photographs, giving special attention to the images he captured in the Midway Atoll, the Great Rift Valley, the seas around French Polynesia and the Serengeti.
Recent Events

23 May 2012
Dr Martin Jacques
When China Rules the World

Chinese historian and author Dr Martin Jacques discarded conventional thinking when he spoke about China’s ascent and the shift in power between China and the West, asserting that its new identity can only be understood through a study of its history and culture in Chinese terms, rather than in Western ones. Dr Jacques also put forward his belief that China’s global impact is severely underestimated and that it is going to change the world politically and economically, perhaps sooner than expected.

5 June 2012
Royal Societies of Hong Kong
Diamond Jubilee Celebration

Attendees joined a large and lavish event jointly held by the Royal Societies of Hong Kong to celebrate the Diamond Jubilee of HM Queen Elizabeth II.

4 June 2012
Tim Jarvis
To the Edge of Endurance

This lecture featured Mr Tim Jarvis, AM, an acclaimed explorer and advocate for climate change and biodiversity loss awareness. Drawing on his undertaking of numerous unsupported expeditions, including the longest Antarctic expedition in history and the crossing of the Great Victoria Desert, Mr Jarvis recounted some of his many experiences in an effort to promote environmental activism.

7 June 2012
Wong How Man and Dr William Bleisch
Exploring Burma’s Geography and Nature

Burma has historically yielded a great deal of scientific discovery, yet due to decades of turmoil, the exploration and study of its environmental features and unique wildlife have been severely limited during the last half century. Mr Wong How Man, often hailed as China’s most accomplished explorer, and Dr William Bleisch, one of Asia’s best-known conservationists, presented on the past and future state of exploration in Burma using the unique findings of their combined expertise and study of the country.
12 June 2012
Peter Allison
Whatever You Do, Don’t Run: Adventures as a Safari Guide in Southern Africa

With photographic accompaniment, celebrity safari guide and author Mr Peter Allison demonstrated his trademark humour as he told the story of a lioness who mated with the wrong male, consequently changing the lives of thousands of animals. Mr Allison’s extensive safari experience and expertise allowed him to observe and record in depth the intricacies of the wildlife he encountered.

14 & 15 June 2012
Carl Robinson and the National Orchestra of Mongolia
Mongolia: Concert and Nomad Empire of Eternal Blue Sky

Following a performance in which the National Orchestra of Mongolia showcased a variety of traditional instrumental and vocal music, Mr Carl Robinson provided an insightful lecture, revealing to his audience the rich culture and history of “The Land of Eternal Blue Sky.” He drew upon his 20,000 km of travels to highlight the coexistence of traditional culture with the development of a new Mongolia that seeks to embrace a free-market economy and shake loose from Soviet-era influence.

18 June 2012
Dr Francoise Pommaret
Adventures in Bhutan

Tucked away in the eastern Himalayas, Bhutan is one of the most isolated, yet charming, nations in the world. Complemented by many beautiful photographs and literary excerpts, world expert on Bhutan Dr Francoise Pommaret gave a practical and academic introduction to the nation, while exploring its colourful history, culture, ecology and geography.

9 July 2012
Charlotte Harris Rees
How the Chinese Sailed to America

In this lecture, Ms Charlotte Harris Rees discussed her extensive research of the ancient exploration of North America from Asia. She used ancient Asian and European maps of the world, early Chinese writings and recent DNA and geological studies to prove that the Chinese sailed to North America in the pre-Columbian era.

13 July 2012
Member’s Event
Annual RGS Quiz

Members put their geographical knowledge to the test at RGS-HK’s ever popular annual quiz evening.
Recent Events

16 July 2012
Tim Emmett
Extreme Climb to Extreme Jump

Three-time ice climbing world champion, author and award winning film presenter Mr Tim Emmett has carried out innumerable famous exploits that range from achieving the biggest BASE jump in the Himalayas to completing the most difficult rock climbs of Cuba, Mongolia and Wales. He impressed his audience with his charismatic speaking, stunning slides and captivating film footage.

3 August 2012
Professor Darin Toohey
Saving the Ozone Layer

Government sanctioned images of happy and increasingly prosperous workers seemingly indicate a bright future for 21st century China, but these images may not capture reality. In his lecture, Global Chairman of the British Council and leading expert in international social policy Mr Gerard Lemos managed to weave together his vast experience with the individuals and communities of China to reveal a detailed and compelling picture of the many concerns that beleaguer the ordinary Chinese individual.

29 August 2012
Gerard Lemos
The End of Chinese Dream

Government sanctioned images of happy and increasingly prosperous workers seemingly indicate a bright future for 21st century China, but these images may not capture reality.

4 September 2012
Father Nadim Nassar
The Arab Spring: Religious Winter

This lecture featured a rare opportunity to hear from a Syrian Christian about the battle for Syria and the Middle East. Father Nadim Nassar spoke about the Arab Spring and focused specifically on the causes and effects of the rise of religious fundamentalism in the Middle East, citing the role of religion as being very significant in the sudden shift of power.
5 September 2012

**Dr Nigel Winser**

**Earthwatching**

To promote preservation and sustainability efforts and awareness, Earthwatch provides individuals from all walks of life with the opportunity to engage in scientific field research. Current Vice President of Earthwatch Dr Nigel Winser, who happens to be a past Deputy Director of the Royal Geographical Society, informed members about this unique opportunity and described his own expeditions and research.

11 September 2012

**Sir Chris Bonington**

**Boundless Horizons**

Sir Chris Bonington, one of the greatest mountaineers in history, described accomplishing some of the most difficult climbs in the world. One such journey was the narrowly successful descent of Baintha Brakk in Pakistan, where Sir Bonington travelled with broken ribs and his partner with two broken legs as they endured a savage storm and went without food for five days.

13 September 2012

**Dr Mark Chandler**

**Protecting the Great Cats – from Africa to Brazil**

The International Director for Earthwatch, Dr Mark Chandler, discussed the development of large-scale strategies to protect big cats. Drawing from over 20 years of field research experience in the Americas and East Africa, Dr Chandler explained how traditionally opposing parties have started collaborating to foster a more accommodating environment for these animals.

19 September 2012

**Lewis Pugh**

**Swimming Across the North Pole**

Globally recognised environmental advocate and famed endurance swimmer Mr Lewis Pugh provided a riveting account of his pioneering long distance swim across the North Pole’s icy waters, as well as stories behind many of his other endurance swimming firsts.

11 October 2012

**Emily Chappell**

**Biking the World**

In this lecture, Ms Emily Chappell told tales of her three-year odyssey cycling around the world. Her stories juxtaposed the comfort and security of certain regions with the danger and conflict found in others, while reminding her audience that human decency and hospitality can be found in the least likely of places.
Dr Jane Goodall, DBE
Gala Dinner
Chimpanzees: Gombe Revisited

Dr Jane Goodall, DBE, one of the world's most distinguished naturalists, is known for her ground-breaking work that shaped understanding of human evolution, animal behaviour and the importance of environmental conservation. In her lecture during this Gala Dinner, she reflected on her work and revealed the latest findings from research that related chimpanzee communities to modern societies.

Jeremy Tredinnick
Xinjiang: China's Wild West

With its contrasting geographical characteristics, archaeological significance and the fascinating customs of the Uygur people who live there, Xinjiang is perhaps China's most exciting region. Illustrated by evocative images and keepsakes from his numerous visits to the region, widely published writer Mr Jeremy Tredinnick described the unique features of Xinjiang and provided insight into its modern-day political and economic importance to China.

Dr Jodi Rowley
Amphibians: South-East Asia’s Environmental Bellweather

In this lecture, Dr Jodi Rowley, recipient of over 30 awards for her scientific endeavours and author of some 50 scholarly papers, told of her travels through mountains, monsoons, and mosquitoes during her study of Southeast Asian amphibians, a highly threatened group of fauna. She encouraged conservation efforts and increased awareness of these mysterious and intriguing amphibians.

Professor Bernie Owen
New Territories Hike

Co-author of the authoritative guide Hong Kong Landscapes Professor Bernie Owen led a hike across the main ridge line of Wang Leng, introducing participants to spectacular coastal and mountain views while he lectured on the geology, geomorphology, zoology, botany and history of the route.
The Royal Geographical Society – Hong Kong was pleased to welcome Mr Tony Wheeler as the Guest of Honour for the Society’s Annual Dinner. Mr Wheeler, the world’s leading travel book entrepreneur, told of the journey that he and his wife embarked upon by building Lonely Planet from a single book into the world’s largest travel book company. Mr Wheeler described their business venture as well as the fascinating adventures that made it possible. He discussed how his company outgrew its humble beginnings and now employs approximately 500 people in offices across three different continents.

Mr Wheeler also told of the travels for several of his books, including Bad Lands, which described trips to Afghanistan, Albania, Cuba, Iran, Iraq, Libya, Burma, North Korea and Saudi Arabia. During the RGS-HK Annual Dinner, Mr Wheeler entertained his audience with these stories and many others to deliver a captivating lecture which contributed to a memorable evening.
RECENT EVENTS

19 November 2012
The Hon. Victoria Glendinning
Raffles and the Golden Opportunity: from Governing Java to Founding Singapore

Distinguished historian The Hon. Victoria Glendinning, CBE told the extraordinary story of Sir Stamford Raffles, the best-known colonial adventurer in Southeast Asia, who eventually became the founder of Singapore. Ms Glendinning emphasized Sir Raffles’ development from a man born with no social advantages to one who had forged a legendary name for himself.

26 November 2012
Andy Lipkis
TreePeople: Engaging Nature in Cities

Mr Andy Lipkis, founder of TreePeople in Los Angeles, has dedicated some 40 years to the preservation of the environment. The legendary environmental and social campaigner described to his audience how he spearheaded an approach to make cities more sustainable; an approach that has become a model for cities elsewhere, including Hong Kong.

28 November 2012
Dr Alexander Kumar
A Winter at the South Pole

Dr Alexander Kumar, the station doctor of the Concordia Research Station in Antarctica, spoke about his year’s stay on the forbidding continent, discussing the challenges of enduring its winter as well as the yields of his scientific research.

29 November 2012
Khoo Swee Chiow
The Ultimate Adventure: the Seven Summits, K2, Both Poles, and the World Scuba Record

In this lecture, Mr Khoo Swee Chiow described his own “Ultimate Adventure”, recounting moments from his many exploits. His stories included climbing the Seven Summits, skiing to both the North and South Poles and scaling K2, amongst many other adventures.

4 December 2012
Russell Abel, Joanna James, and Steven Ballantyne
Members’ Evening of Adventures to Ancient Lands

This event featured a series of three separate lectures, with each introducing a different part of the world. First, Russell Abel, the Vice Consul of the British Consulate General in Hong Kong, interwove tales of his travels to Afghanistan with his knowledge of its current political situation. Next, Joanna James, a professional travel guide, described her travels in the Tibetan Plateau as well as the Tibetan region and its people. Finally, Steven Ballantyne, who has led more than 15 expeditions to some of the remotest regions of the Pacific and Central Asia, concluded the evening by describing the history of resilience and current obstacles that can be found in East Timor.
**Recent Events**

6 December 2012
*Dr Satish Kumar*
**Sustainable Economics or Sustainable Ecology?**

In light of the financial difficulties the world faces, Dr Satish Kumar, who has been described as the spiritual and artistic leader of the green movement, implored his audience to embrace holistic economics. In contrast with conventional ideas, Dr Kumar argued that ecology and economy are inseparable, asserting that mankind cannot have a healthy economy without a healthy ecology.

8 December 2012
*Dr Jason Ali*
**Boat to Tolo Channel and Double Haven Field Trip**

As they travelled along the Tolo Channel by boat, Dr Jason Ali helped his audience to recognise the uncommon geological features that they saw. The excursion also went to Chek Chau to view the dipping sedimentary rocks that were originally formed in a desert setting, and then to Bluff Head to see the oldest rocks in Hong Kong.

10 December 2012
*Marc Brody*
**The Giant Panda: A Talk on the Wild Side**

Senior advisor to the Wolong Nature Reserve Mr Marc Brody lectured about his work to restore habitats for Giant Pandas in Sichuan. Through the use of stunning photographs and stories of pandas, beautiful mountain landscapes and indigenous villagers, Mr Brody explained how working to protect the Giant Panda can help restore a balance between people and nature.

10 January 2013
*Lloyd Figgins*
**Rowing the Atlantic**

Overcoming pirates, near collisions with ships, sharks, and 50-ft waves, Mr Lloyd Figgins and his rowing partner became the first pair to row the Atlantic Ocean nonstop using the notorious Morocco to Caribbean route. In his lecture, Mr Figgins described this tremendous journey as well as the scientific research he conducted along the way.

14 January 2013
*Christopher Schrader*
**Crossing the Gobi Desert on Foot**

Ten days after his 18th birthday, Hong Kong student Chris Schrader became the youngest person to walk the entire width of the Mongolian Gobi Desert. In his lecture, he recounted the trials of his expedition, including the blistering heat, biting cold, and blinding sandstorms he encountered as he walked over 1,600 km in 52 days to raise money for children’s education in Mongolia.
RECENT EVENTS

15 January 2013

Mark Roberts
Recording Sir David Attenborough’s
*The Frozen Planet*

In this lecture, wildlife sound recordist Mr Mark Roberts described his experience working around the planet with the BBC Natural History Unit. Through his explorations and work alongside the world’s leading natural history film-makers, Mr Roberts capitalised on his unique capability to give the audience a rare behind-the-scenes view of the filming process.

24 January 2013

Professor Peter Cox
Dangerous Climate Change: Tipping Points and Radical Geoengineering

Following another year of dramatic climate change, Professor Peter Cox, joint winner of the 2007 Nobel Peace Prize, warned of ‘tipping points’ beyond which the changes caused by global warming might accelerate. In this lecture, Professor Cox examined these tipping points and explained what they are, when might they be reached, and how society can work to protect civilization against them.

31 January 2013

Grant Rawlinson
Axe on Everest

Former international rugby player Mr Grant “Axe” Rawlinson is now well known as a mountaineer and an engaging public speaker. In this lecture, he introduced his mountaineering career by overviewing his climbs all over the world. He also told the exciting tale of his 2012 ascent of Mt Everest’s North Ridge and provided commentary on the present state of the mountain.

18 February 2013

John Garnaut
Bo Xilai’s Fall and Xi Jinping’s Rise: How Power Really Works in China

In this lecture, well-known author and journalist Mr John Garnaut looked at various cases of alleged mafia-state collusion across the country. He explained how Bo Xilai’s Chongqing rule is a unique case study of Chinese power dynamics and how his fall provided the background for the rise of President Xi Jinping. Mr Garnaut argued that this evidence exposes the myth of the unified one-party state.

21 February 2013

Caroline Courtauld
The New Burma

Distinguished writer Mrs Caroline Courtauld drew upon her 25 years of writing and travel to Burma to tell her audience of the momentous change that has been taking place over the past few decades. Mrs Courtauld introduced the stunning heritage and beauty of Burma, related its dark political history to its political present, and explained how Buddhism carried the country through difficult times.
23 February 2013  
**Marco Foehn**  
*Lantau Hiking Field Trip*

Mr Marco Foehn, a director of WalkHK, led a hike during which participants discovered some of the most spectacular views and wildlife that Lantau Island’s Southwest Peninsula can offer. The trip featured an exclusive visit to Lung Tsai Ng Yuen, a landscaped garden that rests directly above a waterfall surrounded by hills.

25 February 2013  
**Eric Philips**  
*The Great Icetreks: Chasing the Midnight Sun*

For over two decades, Mr Eric Philips, one of the world’s great adventurers, has explored the extremes of the planet and has been well-known for his writing and as a lively raconteur. In this lecture, Mr Philips used photographs, film and anecdotes to chronicle his most famous expeditions, from his early years of pioneering kite skiing to his recent achievements as a world-class polar explorer.

28 February 2013  
**Ryan Pyle**  
*Motorbiking China: Middle Kingdom Ride*

In this lecture, Mr Ryan Pyle told the tale of how he and his brother set out from Shanghai on a 65 day, 18,000 km motorcycle journey during which they achieved the first complete circumnavigation of China while gaining insight into the country’s diverse characteristics. Mr Pyle told the riveting story of their remarkable world-record setting journey that tested the limits of his endurance.

4 March 2013  
**Matthew Traver**  
*Greenland’s Icy Mountains*

For this lecture, Mr Matthew Traver spoke about his international expedition to the coast of eastern Greenland, during which he pioneered several climbing routes and made three first ascents. In this lecture, Mr Traver told of exploring the isolated Arctic region and about the surprising twists and challenges that he and his team faced throughout the expedition.

5 March 2013  
**Caroline Courtauld**  
*The New Burma*

R G S - H K welcomed Mrs Caroline Courtauld to repeat her lecture on the momentous change Burma has seen over the past few decades.
RECENT EVENTS

7 March 2013
Dr Mark Moffett
Adventures Among Ants:
A Global Safari with a
Cast of Trillions

The National Geographic, Smithsonian, and Harvard celebrity naturalist Dr Mark Moffett presented a humorous talk where he combined his wit with the most advanced scientific research to argue that modern humans are much more like ants than like chimpanzees.

11 March 2013
Lisa Hilton
Charles de Gaulle and the Free French Movement in Wartime London

Distinguished historian and writer Ms Lisa Hilton discussed whether the highly controversial Charles de Gaulle was a fraud, a saint or the greatest political gambler of the twentieth century. In her lecture, she acknowledged Charles de Gaulle’s shortcomings, but argued that his achievements outweigh them. Ms Hilton also addressed the often neglected role of Gaston Palewski, to whom Charles de Gaulle owes much of his success.

12 March 2013
Professor David Anderson
The Riddle of Chinese Glass

In this lecture, Professor David Anderson discussed his controversial theory on the origin of Shui Jing Chinese glass, suggesting that it might have been formed by huge meteorites that impacted the earth. To explain his theory, Professor Anderson drew from his extensive field experience to describe the glass’ origin and history.

13 March 2013
Nick Danziger
From Timbuktu to Rio via the White House and Downing Street

Accompanied by his trademark humour, celebrated author and internationally famous photographer Mr Nick Danziger told the story of his unique access to the White House, Camp David, Buckingham Palace and other palaces of power, as well as tales of recent assignments, including unique expeditions to Timbuktu and Rio.

16 March 2013
Professor Bernie Owen
Boat to Nine Pin Islands and Tung Lung Pirate Fort Field Trip

Professor Bernie Owen led a boat excursion to the beautiful and inaccessible Nine Pin Islands, followed by a visit to the Ming Dynasty Tung Lung Fort which was designed to defend the coast from pirates. The trip featured attractive and historic scenery, open seas, and island hiking.

19 March 2013
Dr Paul Buzzard
Wild Yaks: Protecting the Endangered Giants of the Tibetan Plateau

Tibet-based field naturalist Dr Paul Buzzard spoke of the magnificent wild yaks of the Tibetan Plateau and the urgent measures being taken to protect this endangered species. The lecture included his research into conservation, wild yak domestication and new data on the relationship between yaks and other species.
NEPAL CONSERVATION

Bucking the unfortunate international trend, Nepal has recently celebrated a full year without poaching. On World Wildlife Day, Nepal announced that it had successfully gone 365 days without losing a single rhino, tiger or elephant to poaching, a feat that Nepal also achieved in 2011 (in 2012 Nepal suffered the loss of one rhino). While poaching is becoming more common throughout the rest of the world, and particularly in Africa, where the numbers of recorded poachings have skyrocketed, Nepal is defying the odds.

Nepal has managed to achieve this by using a combination of harsh punishment and localised incentives. This has made the community a stakeholder in the survival of neighbouring wildlife, as villagers understand the fundamental importance of nature and its significant contribution to the local economy.

JAPAN WHALING

A ruling from the United Nation’s International Court of Justice (ICJ) ordered Japan to cease its whaling operations off Antarctica. Whilst Japan has abided by the 1986 ban on commercial whaling (instituted by the International Whaling Commission), it has continued to kill whales under an exemption which allows for the taking of whales for scientific purposes.

The ICJ determined that Japan’s operation was considered to be more of a commercial activity than a scientific one. However, in a recent statement, Japan’s Prime Minister Shinzo Abe told a parliamentary committee that he would like to step up efforts to resume commercial whaling, thus throwing uncertainty over Japan’s future stance towards this long standing issue.
HONG KONG AIR POLLUTION

Hong Kong has introduced new Air Quality Objectives and a new Air Quality Health Index. This replaced the 18-year-old Air Pollution Index. Hong Kong pollution stems from 2 main sources: one is local street level pollution; the other is regional smog. Whilst this past year has seen some efforts targeted at curbing major roadside and marine emission sources, it is widely considered that the real challenge is working with the Guangdong Provincial Authorities on a joint plan to achieve good air quality for the whole region.

Under the Air Pollution Index system, an API exceeding 100 indicates a "very high" level of pollution.

SHATIN-CENTRAL LINK

Construction of the To Kwa Wan station on the Shatin-Central Link has been delayed due to archaeological finds. There are ongoing excavations at one of the construction sites and thus far a Sung dynasty well in addition to wells from more recent eras and other artefacts have been uncovered. A new survey phase is ongoing and is not due to be completed before the third quarter of 2014.

HONG KONG MARITIME MUSEUM

The Maritime Museum is now located at Central Pier No.8 with modern and well-appointed premises. The museum’s many fascinating exhibits include one on the traditions of old seafaring Chinese civilisations, as well as various galleries that display quirky historical items, interesting facts and an interactive navigation bridge, making this venue well worth a visit.
RECENT AWARDS

The Royal Geographical Society – Hong Kong gives a number of scholarships throughout the course of each year. We are delighted to announce the awards made in 2012-13:

Principal award for Doctorial research:

Miss Runing Ye
(University College, London)
“Impact of rapid urbanisation on individuals’ commuting trips and subjective well-being - Evidence from Xi’an”

Undergraduate or Masters’ degree research awards for Hong Kong universities:

Miss Chak Oi Yan:
“A critical assessment of different stakeholders in Hong Kong: the Sustainability of Nuclear Energy after the Fukushima nuclear incident”

Mr Cheng Sze Chun:
“The changing role and status of Fung Shui Woods: A comparison between Nam Fung Road, Lai Chi Woo and Shui Kan Shek Fung Shui Woods”

Mr Daniel John:
“The Role of the Middle Class in the Economic Development of Chinese Cities: A Comparative Study of Shanghai and Wuhan”

Miss Chan Pui Yin:
“From Vision to Reality: Evaluation on the success of ‘place-making’ in Tsim Sha Tsui”

Miss Jasmine Lee:
“Mega-events and their impacts: A case study of the 2008 Beijing Olympics”

PUBLICATIONS

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