



THE ORIENTAL CERAMIC SOCIETY OF HONG KONG

Dear Members

August 2005

OCS Newsletter - Autumn 2005

This is the third in our new series of Newsletters. The aim is to keep you in touch with the Society and provide a diary of OCS events and other news at home and overseas.

The summer holiday season will soon be over and we have a full programme of activities for the autumn. We look forward to seeing you at as many of them as possible.

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The Society depends on subscriptions and the active participation of its members. To broaden the membership base and encourage members to introduce their friends, we have arranged two evenings for the Committee and members to mingle informally and discuss future events. Members will receive individual invitations with details of the venue and time and we shall ask you to let us know if you plan to attend.

For Life Members, a special gathering will be held on **September 28** at the Hong Kong Design Centre, 28 Kennedy Road (former premises of the Joint Liaison Group). Similarly, an evening for Members will be held on **October 21** at Bloomberg, 17/F Cheung Kong Centre.

I hope you will find the Newsletter of interest. There are doubtless many ways in which it could be improved. Comments and suggestions are welcomed. If we've got it wrong, please let us know.

Sincerely yours

Malcolm Barnett
President

OCS NEWSLETTER – AUTUMN 2005

1. Executive Committee

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2. Membership

We rely on membership subscriptions and healthy attendance at OCS events.

If you have any friends who share our interests and are not already members, we would encourage you to *put them in touch with the OCS* and *bring them along to our next event*.

For ease, cost-efficiency and expedition of communication, *please supply an e-address*, if you have not already done so.

3. Recent Events

May 7: “**From Eastern Han to High Tang: A Journey of Transculturation**”. An exhibition tour at the HK Heritage Museum, Shatin, led by Ms. Catherine Maudsley. (*See details in Section 9 Highlights below.*)

May 11: “**China’s Ancient Culture through Bronze Weapons**”. Lecture by Mr. Stephen Selby at 25/F Wu Chung House, 213 Queen’s Road East, Wanchai, sponsored by the IPD. (*See details in Section 9 Highlights below.*)

May 20: “**Tibet’s Ancient Religion: Survey of Cultural Relics of Bön**”. Lecture by Dr. Christoph Baumer in the HKMA Lecture Hall. (*See details in Section 9 Highlights below.*)

May 28: **Christie’s Auction Preview and Handling Session** at HK Convention & Exhibition Centre, led by Ms. Rosemary Scott.

June 15: **“Song Ceramics”**. Lecture at HKMA Lecture Hall by Professor Li Gang, Deputy Director of the Zhejiang Provincial Museum, Hangzhou, China. (*See details in Section 9 Highlights below.*)

July 23: **“Impressions of the East: The Art of George Chinnery”**. An exhibition tour at the HK Museum of History, led by Assistant Curator, Josephine L.K. Wong. (*See details in Section 9 Highlights below.*)

4. **Diary for September 2005**

September 13: **“Patterns of and Symbols in Early South Western China Ethnic Weavings”**. Lecture by Eric Boudot at the Helena May at 6.30 pm jointly presented with the Textile Society of Hong Kong.

September 27: **“Paintings of Luohan Figures”**. Lecture by Ms. Catherine Maudsley at Lecture Hall, Hong Kong Museum of Art at 6.30 pm, jointly presented with the Friends of the HKMA.

September 28: **Special Gathering for Life Members** at the Hong Kong Design Centre, 28 Kennedy Road (former premises of the Joint Liaison Group) at 6.30 pm.

5. **Diary for October 2005**

October 21: **Social Evening for Members** at Bloomberg, 17/F Cheung Kong Centre, 2 Queen’s Road, Central at 6.30 pm.

October 22: **Sotheby’s Auction Preview and Handling Session** at the Island Shangri-La Hotel, 5/F, Ballroom at 9.00 am, led by Mr. Nicolas Chow, Sotheby’s Director and Department Head of Chinese Ceramics & Works of Art.

October 29: **“Biscuit porcelain”**. Exhibition tour at the Art Museum of the Chinese University, kindly introduced and led by Mr. Tony Miller, who is one of the exhibitors.

6. **Diary for November 2005**

November 11- 20: **Thai Loy Krathong Tour**. An OCS tour of Thailand to coincide with the Loy Krathong festival in Sukhothai. (*See details in Section 9 Highlights below.*)

November 26: **Christie’s Auction Preview and Handling Session** at Convention Hall, HK Convention & Exhibition Centre, at 9.15 am led by Ms. Rosemary Scott and Ms. Pola Antebi.

7. **Forthcoming Event**

December 5: **OCS Annual General Meeting** at Hong Kong Club at 6.30 pm followed by **“House, Home, Family: The Chinese Way of Living and Being”**, a lecture by Ms. Kai-Yin Lo.

Autumn 2006: “Art and Imitation in China”.

OCS Exhibition at Hong Kong University Museum and Art Gallery. This provides a special opportunity for Members to display their treasures to the public. You will be contacted to ascertain what items you wish to have included within the theme and structure of the exhibition.

7. **News from other societies**

The University of Hong Kong Museum Society has organised a tour to discover “**The history and splendour of Portugal**” from October 1 to 10. The tour includes visits to museums, monasteries and historical buildings. (Enquiries to Mrs. Linda Chan on 9011 1032 or linchan2@netvigator.com).

8. **News from overseas**

September 2-11	Treasures of the Nanhai, Kuala Lumpur Convention Centre
September 15	Auction of Asian Art, Christie’s, S.Kensington, London
September 16-25	Le Salon du Collectionneur, Carrousel du Louvre, Paris
September 20	Auction: Fine Chinese Ceramics and W/A, Christie’s, NY
September 21	Auction: Chinese Works of Art, Sotheby’s, NY
September 22	Auction: Japanese and Korean Art, Christie’s, NY
October 2	Auction: Asian Art, Christie’s, S.Kensington, London
October 27-30	From the Silk Road to the Santa Fe Trail, Pennsylvania University Museum of Archeology & Anthropology
November 3-12	Asian Art in London – a series of exhibitions and auctions arranged by London’s leading dealers and auction houses.
November 11	Auction: Chinese Ceramics and W/A, Christie’s, S.Kensington
November 16-20	9 th Shanghai Art Fair
December 15	Auction: Asian Art, Christie’s, S.Kensington, London

9. **Highlights**

May 7: “From Eastern Han to High Tang: A Journey of Transculturation”.

A tour of the HK Heritage Museum, Shatin exhibition, led by Ms. Catherine Maudsley.

On the minibus over to Shatin, Catherine Maudsley gave to an enthusiastic group of Members a brief introduction to some of the highlights of the exhibition ahead. She also had pictures available to whet the appetite. She then led the group around the exhibition and assisted the Museum docent in explaining a number of the exhibits.

The exhibition explored artistic and cultural exchanges in China through some 300 cultural relics, many of which are important national treasures. Buddhist sculptures, pottery and wood burial figures, gold and silverware, wall paintings and textiles displayed a fascinating diversity of cultural influences and themes set against political upheavals, religious changes and the influx of various ethnic groups. These items were also exhibited last year at the Metropolitan Museum New York under the title “China: Dawn of a Golden Age, 200-750 AD.”

May 11: “China’s Ancient Culture through Bronze Weapons”. Lecture by Mr. Stephen Selby sponsored by the Intellectual Property Department at 25/F Wu Chung House, 213 Queen’s Road East, Wanchai.

Stephen Selby, author of the publication "Chinese Archery" is well-known for his research into Chinese archery and involvement in its practical skills. He is a graduate of the University of Edinburgh in Chinese language and is currently an Honorary Adviser to the Hong Kong Museum of History.

To a sizeable group of avid members, he presented his collections and explained that weapons in Chinese history have been symbols of wealth in death as well as in life and reflect ancient lifestyles and culture. Unlike in Europe where battlefield weaponry was largely handed down from generation to generation, almost all Chinese weapons were buried as part of the funerary ritual. Each piece had its own significance and was not necessarily used in battle, but instead reflected the social status of the dead.

Throughout the early dynasties, strict requirements existed for the development of weapons, and most pieces had distinct symbolic meanings. For example, by the time of the Warring States the knife came to represent money. Similarly, certain materials and animals were associated with burial, such as cinnabar and the cicada.

The talk was followed by a handling session at which Members were invited to inspect pieces from the collections which were conveniently placed on display tables around the centre of the room.

Stephen Selby will mount an exhibition of his collections at the Museum of Coastal Defence from March 2006. A special conference (likely to be conducted in Putonghua only) on Sunzi's "Art of War" and early Chinese military thinking will be held to coincide with the opening.

May 20: "Tibet's Ancient Religion: Survey of Cultural Relics of Bön". Lecture by Dr. Christoph Baumer in the HKMA Lecture Hall jointly presented with the Friends of the HKMA and also open to the Friends of the Chinese University Museum of Art and the Friends of the HKU Museum and Art Gallery, which resulted in a healthy attendance.

Dr. Baumer took as his theme the subject of Bön, the ancient pre-Buddhist religion of Tibet, which he has been exploring since 1987. In discussing the essence and beliefs of Bön, he contrasted it with Buddhism. He also showed highlights of extant Bön art in the major Bönpo monasteries.

Dr. Baumer has recently authored a book, "Tibet's Ancient Religion: Bön" and is credited with rediscovering the oldest extant Bönpo murals from the early 15th century and Buddhist murals dating to the late 12th century. He has directed three international expeditions into China's Taklamakan desert where he excavated unknown Buddhist shrines and murals and unearthed manuscripts which contribute to the understanding of the spread of Mahayana Buddhism along the southern Silk Road and the history of the Kingdom of Shan Shan.

Dr Baumer is a Fellow of the Royal Asiatic Society, London and the Royal Geographical Society, London, the Explorer's Club, New York and President of The Society for the Exploration of EurAsia. In addition to publications about the Southern Silk Road and Eastern Tibet, his forthcoming publication is entitled "Early Christianity between the rivers Euphrates and Yangtze".

June 15: “Song Ceramics”. A lecture by Professor Li Gang at the HKMA Lecture Hall presented jointly with the Friends of the HKMA. This was delivered in Putonghua and fluently translated by Mr. Mason Wong.

Professor Li fascinated the audience with a discussion of Yue ware, using numerous fine images of valuable ceramics to illustrate his propositions on the origins, extent and ultimate decline of Yue wares. Discussing the question of the “secret colour” used in porcelains, Professor Li outlined his succinctly reasoned views on the origin and explanation of the “secret colour” and the myths surrounding this subject. Finally, Professor Li alluded to the rise and decline of Longquan ware, and the scope of Southern Song Guan ware.

Professor Li graduated from Nankai University, majoring in museum administration. He currently serves as Deputy Director of the Zhejiang Provincial Museum and is also a research fellow. His publications include “Connoisseur’s Dictionary of Ancient Chinese Ceramics”, “Compilation of Theses on Yue wares”, “The Exploration of the Profundity of Ancient porcelain”, and “The Elegance of Guan Ware”.

July 23: “Impressions of the East: The Art of George Chinnery”. Tour of an exhibition mounted by HSBC and LCSD tour at the HK Museum of History, led by Assistant Curator, Josephine L.K. Wong.

This is a delightful exhibition of Chinnery’s work, including a substantial number of examples from his oil-paintings, watercolours, pen and ink drawings and pencil sketches. It traces his early work in London and Ireland and shows how his style developed through the Indian period and mature Macau period from his arrival 180 years ago in 1825 until his death there in 1852. His intimate studies of people, architecture and social mores give an insightful glimpse of life in the Far East in the nineteenth century.

Ms. Wong gave a helpful explanation of many of the exhibits including an oil portrait of Harriet Low, who included in her Journals several references to Chinnery, his appalling table manners, disagreeable snuff-snorting, prominence in amateur theatricals and delightful personality.

November 11- 20: Thai Loy Krathong Tour.

The OCS is pleased to announce a tour to Thailand to coincide with the festival of *Loy Krathong*, which will this year be celebrated in Sukhothai on the evening of November 16, the night of the full moon.

Co-ordinating the tour will be Helen Anderson in Hong Kong together with Khun Euayporn Kerdchouay in Thailand. Both Helen and Khun Euayporn have a wealth of experience with the art history and touring in Thailand, while Barbara Park will handle all financial matters for the event.

A varied itinerary is offered, with a number of museum visits as well as viewings of private collections. Highlights in addition to the *Loy Krathong* festival include:

- ❖ a welcome dinner at Jim Thompson’s House with a lecture by Dr. William J. Klausner;
- ❖ a visit to the Southeast Asian Ceramics Museum at Bangkok University;
- ❖ a visit to the home museum in Chiang Mai of a famous collector of Southeast Asian ceramics with a lecture by the host followed by dinner;

- ❖ a tour of the Underwater Archaeology Museum in Chantaburi;
- ❖ as well as excursions to the kiln sites of Sawankaloke, and the Khmer sites of Phnom Rung, Muang Tam and Phimai;
- ❖ A farewell dinner at the Siam Society.

Shopping will not be forgotten. On the final day, Dawn Rooney will accompany the group to the Chatuchak (Weekend) Market, which is undoubtedly one of the great markets of the world.

There is much more. Helen Anderson, who lived in Thailand for several years, will provide an update on other interesting offerings on the tour at a pre-departure orientation meeting. With the immediate enthusiastic response to the trip, there is only one place remaining; please call Helen for more information (Telephone 25251972).

10. **Enquiries**

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