

Happy New Year

I would welcome short articles on any subject dealing with an aspect of Hong Kong's industrial history. This might be a few notes on a specific manufacturing product which interests you (incense) , a brief industrial history of an area (Kwun Tong), the biography of a particular person (eg Dr Stephen Hui see below) or a particular building which you think needs mention (eg Eastern Cotton Mills see also below)...

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Members

Here are people who have expressed interest in our group since my last newsletter:

Mary Anne Le Bas is an artist who's interested in HK's very early industries such as incense-making. Also in the architecture of industrial buildings and how they can be re-used (* see below)

John Cairns is an editor and author who previously worked for the Trade Development Council.

Malcolm Morris has considerable experience of working in information technology

Flavio Padilha has worked at HK Poly University, the HK Consulate of Brazil and currently runs his own trading company. He has links with the Federation of HK Industries.

Sally Trainor has worked in several educational areas in HK. She is interested in textile manufacturing in HK.

Rebecca Welland works at HK University. She is a keen photographer and particularly enjoys using this skill in older areas of HK.

And here are those mentioned in Newsletter Two:

David Bellis, Colin Davidson, Jennifer Lang, Christine Liao, Eric Spain, Dan Waters

Royal Asiatic Society

* Mary Anne you, and others, will probably be very interested in a sub group of The Royal Asiatic Society (HK Branch) called *RAS RE-use* which focuses on the adaptive reuse of old buildings in HK including industrial ones. <http://www.royalasiaticsociety.org.hk/> look under *interest groups*. A member of our group Colin Davidson runs this.

Industrial Demolitions



On 10th December 2012 the SCMP reported on the almost complete demolition of the Eastern Cotton Mills situated in Mok Cheong Street, Ma Tau Wai, Kowloon. The article reports on the comments of a representative of the Conservancy Association and the, now lost, possibility of “development-cum-conservation” at the site.

The Mill was set up in 1954 by two prominent families from Shanghai. It closed in 1981. <http://www.scmp.com/news/hong-kong/article/1101605/lump-concrete-facade-all-remains-eastern-cotton-mills> shows the SCMP article

http://www.amo.gov.hk/form/all_new_seven_items_history.pdf provides further information about the company and factory, the factories architectural merit, “built heritage value” and the possibility of Adaptive Re-use.

HF

Kowloon Walled City



If you arrived in Hong Kong after 1994 you will not have seen the Kowloon Walled City. And even if you have lived here all your life or came to Hong Kong before the mid 90s you may not have been inside this fascinating and densely populated area.

It became an enclave after the New Territories was leased to Britain in 1898. Its demolition began in March 1993 and was completed in April 1994. Kowloon Walled City Park occupying the area shown in the photo above left opened in December 1995.

What connection does KWC have to Hong Kong's industrial past? Well it contained a large number of businesses including numerous small factories. These included a fishball factory, a noodle factory, several metalworking shops and a textile mill.

If you can provide more information about what else was manufactured there please let me know at indhk@gmail.com

HF

Gwulo.com

If you haven't come across this I strongly recommend that you have a look.

It is run by group member Davis Bellis who started this absorbing website which as he says is for everyone interested in old Hong Kong. It contains thousands of photographs and a considerable amount of information.

I have recently added a notice on the site about the formation of the HK Industrial History Group which I hope will attract others interested in the subject.

HF

Two HK Mines

Despite its small area, Hong Kong has a relatively large number of minerals. A large number of these have been prospected, a lovely term conjuring up images of the Klondike gold rush, and I estimate about 25 actually commercially exploited. I have recently posted on Gwulo.com a brief history of two of these mines neither of which, should you be in the mood, can you visit as I explain on the site (tap in *mines* in search). I summarize even further my reports below.

The West Brother Island (Tai Mo To) Graphite Mine



The mine was in the bottom left hand (SW) corner of the island (apologies for a fuzzy picture that resembles shark's fin soup)

West Brother Island lies to the north east of HK International Airport. I have read an account that the graphite was discovered in the early 1950s by fishermen who were looking for sandstone to make grinding stones. Instead they came across a black mineral which they mistook for coal. Another source says there was intensified geological interest around this time so maybe the two accounts are linked. The mine operated from 1952 to 1971.

A Geological Society of Hong Kong reports a field trip to the island in October 1992 where remains of the mine jetty and old spoil heaps were found though the mine was "largely overgrown".

The island was leveled in the mid-1990s during construction of the airport resulting in destruction of all the mine buildings and the spoil heaps.

The Lin Ma Hang Lead Mine

Lin Ma Hang lies within the Frontier Closed Area west of Shau Tau Kok and is therefore inaccessible to non-permit holders. (This may change as the border area opens up to development.) It is apparently possible to go a short distance into the underground workings where a cavern can be seen and possibly into a lower gallery. There are also the remains of the processing plant and spoil heaps.

The mine operated from 1917 to 1958 but intermittently especially during and after World War 2.

The mine now holds one of the most important bat colonies in Hong Kong and was designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) on 13 August 1994. HF

The Stephen Hui Geological Museum

As part of my research into the above mines I came across the name Stephen Hui. From 1956-1970 he was the chief mining engineer and General Manager of the Yan Hing Mining Company Ltd. As such he was involved in the exploration of the Needle Hill Wolfram Mine and Lin Fa Shan Iron Mine.

This lead me to the Stephen Hui Geological Museum at HKU which opened in January 2009. I recently visited the museum and had a long chat with the very helpful and friendly curator, Dr Petra Bach. HF

Please pass on my email address to any individuals or organisations who you think may be interested.

Looking forward to hearing from you.

Best wishes
Hugh Farmer

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