

Here are the people who have contacted me. I'd like to introduce you to each other.

Colin Davidson has formed RAS Re-Use within the Royal Asiatic Society (HK Branch). This aims to focus on the adaptive reuse of old buildings including those of industrial origin. He organizes visits to such places.

Dr Dan Waters has lived in Hong Kong since 1954. He taught at the technical college, now Polytechnic University. He served on ITAC which had been set up in 1965. This was superseded by the HK Training Council in which he was involved.

Christine Liao is interested in the history of the colonial period especially its mercantile trading history, focusing on major macro commercial and industrial trends. She finds shipping, mining and clothing particularly interesting.

Eric Spain came to Hong Kong in 1972 and was involved in broadcasting and telecommunications engineering. He still knows some of the people in these areas including those that were involved in the manufacturing side.

Jennifer Lang is an architectural historian and building conservationist currently working at HK University. She is about to begin research into Taikoo Sugar Refinery.

David Bellis started the absorbing website gwulo.com which as he says is for everyone interested in old Hong Kong. It contains thousands of photographs and a considerable amount of information.

Jennifer Lang is interested in any information you may have about Taikoo Sugar Refinery and on the competing sugar refinery, China Sugar Company, operated by Jardine and Matheson. I know very little about the latter and would be interested to learn more.

Eric Spain has kindly arranged a meeting this week between his friend John Sze and myself. John has recently been giving a series of talks, to retired engineers, about the history of telecommunications in Hong Kong. He was involved in the manufacturing side of this area

I met David Bellis this week who provided useful advice about getting our project going and information about his website Gwulo.com. A couple of things he suggested were to write guest articles and to add comments on existing pages. These will have my name attached which will spread the word about our own group.

I have added to Gwulo's information about "Rennie's Mill" (The HK Milling Company) with a short biography of its founder and manager AH Rennie and his eventual suicide after the failure of the business. A colourful character from HK's commercial past.

I will also write a guest article with an outline of mining in HK. Four mines, namely Lin Ma Hang (Lead), Needle Hill (Tungsten), Ma On Shan (Iron) and West Brother (Graphite) are reasonably well documented. However, there have been numerous smaller mines of which there appears to be much less information including those at Tung Lo Wn (Shatin), Chek Lap Kok, Tsing Yi, Sha Lo Wan (Lantau). I would be grateful for any other names you can come up with.

Colin Davidson has invited me to visit a couple of buildings in Kowloon with him this week. One on an old public housing estate, the other a 9-story factory building built in the 1970's which used to accommodate nearly 400 individual units. I have scant information on what these produced but at least plastic flowers, wigs, shoes and watches. A great mixture!

Hong Kong's industrial heritage is disappearing fast. I hope that a deeper understanding and appreciation of it, and the hundreds of thousands of people involved will develop. I believe that the re-use of industrial buildings will expand. However, I also feel that this special part of Hong Kong's history has intrinsic value. And shouldn't Hong Kong have its own Industrial Museum? I visit the Greek island of Syros every summer. Its main town Ermoupolis was a major industrial centre in the second half of the 19th Century. And it has its own "Industrial Museum of Syros". If you have a moment have a look at it online. If a small Greek island can do this why not Hong Kong?

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

indhk@gmail.com