

*Welcome to this edition of the newsletter, which is something of a bumper issue. In fact, we have so much material for inclusion that we have broken with tradition and have not included a full list of those who are receiving the newsletter, nor have we included a Where Are They Now? Section.*

*The generosity and kindness of several of you deserves mention. Mr. Kim Chan Kwok Kin [Ah Gin] has provided a special "Year of the Rabbit" postage stamp issued in Canada for every one of our members. We thank him for this generous gift.*

*Thanks also to Alan Robertson, who escorted Mrs. Thong to and from airports during her travels between Cape Town, London, the Channel Islands and the United States in April this year. Alan even found himself at Heathrow Airport before daybreak one morning, meeting an incoming flight. This demonstration of the CLS spirit is much appreciated.*

*This issue also includes another article by Dave Ellis [Cantonese early 70s]. This time he brings us up to date with the advances made in computerized interpreting/translation systems. We thank him for this fascinating piece, which has certainly opened my mind and will no doubt open yours too.*

*As ever, we thank those of you who have written in with contributions; without you we would not have a newsletter. Photographs, particularly those of former staff and students together, are always welcome. Please don't think that we haven't acted on the names and addresses you have provided if there appears to be no response. We follow up all leads to former students, but quite simply receive no reply at all in many cases.*

## NEWS OF MEMBERS FROM AROUND THE WORLD

**Geoff BABB** [FAO mid 80s] is still enjoying his job as an instructor at the US Army's Command and Staff College at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas. He is hoping to get to China this autumn on a reciprocal visit to the equivalent Staff College in China. In the meantime he is still working at his doctoral programme in East Asian history at Kansas University.

**Brian BUNKER** [Mandarin late 80s] is still living and working in Hong Kong. Last year he and the family enjoyed a holiday in Jakarta, Indonesia, but left before the rioting became really spectacular, according to Brian.

**Mr. Kim CHAN Kwok Kin [Ah Gin]** [Staff] took a 14 day trip to China during the Christmas holidays, visiting Guangdong and Sichuan Provinces and Hong Kong. This was the family's first long holiday since 1991; he is normally extremely busy in his job with a TV Centre in Edmonton, Alberta, Canada [see inside front cover].

**Mrs. CHEN Shu Fong** [Staff] writes regularly from Australia; recently she sent this photo of a visit to Hong Kong during March 1998, where she is pictured [centre] with Mrs. Alice CHANG [Mrs. ZHANG] [left] and Mrs. Lorraine POON [right].



**Mrs. CHENG Ya Lan [Mrs. ZHONG]** [Staff] has spent much of 1999 travelling away from her home in Rexburg, Idaho. During March and April she visited her son in Cape Town, South Africa, passing through London and Guernsey on her return. Her visit to Guernsey coincided with the wedding of your unworthy editor's niece. Our picture shows Mrs. Zhong [centre stage, of course] between the bridesmaids, with your unworthy editor [rear]. Incidentally, the bridesmaid on the left is my daughter, Alison.



**Jim CHILTON** [FAO mid 80s] continues to enter painting competitions and made a national exhibition last autumn, with another in New Orleans in March this year. Unfortunately, the marketing aspects are not good, so Jim hasn't given up his day job with the Missouri Division of Child Support Enforcement. Daughter Sarah was married last October.

**Miss Vicky CHU Wai Chin**, who was a part-time member of staff at CLS during the 1980s, has joined us from the North of England where she works as a lecturer in Chinese in the Department of East Asian Studies at the University of Durham. During last winter Vicky visited Brazil on a repeat trip, this time viewing much wild life on the Amazon River.

**Sheena CONNELLY** [Mandarin late 80s] is still living in Melbourne, Australia and has just completed her university course in Linguistics and Chinese. She has applied to do an Advanced Diploma in Translating and Interpreting and ultimately plans to join the Foreign Affairs Department, working in Chinese. Our picture shows Sheena with daughter Sara, who has one and a half years of study to complete at high school.



**Ian CORSIE** [Mandarin late 60s] has written with his new address. He has moved from the South of England to the extreme North, on the border with Scotland.

**Kevin DOYLE** [Mandarin late 70s] is now working for a financial services company in Nottingham, England, having completed three interesting and exciting years based in Prague, Czech Republic, but working throughout Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union for Honeywell Systems.

**John GRIEVE** [Mandarin early 90s] is still in the Army and although based in the South of England, has spent much time in the Balkans with NATO forces.

**John GROVES** [Cantonese early 70s] is still with the Directorate of Civil Nuclear Security in the United Kingdom, and has recently visited Hungary, Austria, France and the United States on business.

**Bill GUEST** [Cantonese early 70s and Mandarin mid 70s] is now working for a business firm in London which has a branch office in Guernsey. Just before Christmas last year Bill visited the island and our picture shows him with your unworthy editor enjoying a glass of port.



**John HARKEY** [FAO late 80s] has sent greetings from Beijing where he says he has contact with Mike Byrnes and Kevin Rice [both FAOs mid 80s]. We understand that Mike Byrnes has now retired from the Army and is working in Beijing as a civilian.



**Charles HOOPER** [FAO late 80s] has left Beijing, where he worked in the US Embassy, and is now the Battalion Commander of the US Army Phoenix Recruiting Battalion based in Phoenix, Arizona. He sends regards from the land of six-guns and coyotes to all friends from CLS.

**Mr. HO Pui Kei** [Staff] is still teaching Cantonese in Hong Kong. He recently enjoyed a get-together with several former members of staff [see centre pages].

**Bill HOUSE** [Mandarin late 80s] has left the Army and is living in the South of England, where he now works as an Intelligence Analyst with the Kent County Constabulary Special Branch. Bill has made some use of German in his job, but has had only a limited requirement for Chinese. He has just become a grandfather and you can contact him at [bill@house33.freemove.co.uk](mailto:bill@house33.freemove.co.uk) if you want to congratulate him by E-mail.

**Mrs. JIANG Lin Lin** [Staff] hosted a tea party at her home in Hong Kong during the visit of Mrs. Sara LEE [Sara SIU] last summer. Our picture shows [left to right] Mr. NG Sam Yuen [Mr. WU], Mrs. Lorraine POON, Mrs. JIANG and Sara.



**Dave KITCHING** [Cantonese late 60s and Mandarin late 80s] is in regularly contact from Hong Kong, where he is still living and working. Look out for his book 'The Ultimate Challenge Trivia Collection', published under the pen-name David Roy Walker by Minerva Press. Dave has sent us this further example of not quite getting it right with advertising:



**Miss Marie LAM Fuk Kuen** [Staff] has provided much news of former colleagues in Hong Kong; we have decided that this merits a special section, so see centre pages.

**Mr. Kevin [Bob] LAU [Cpl LAU]** [Staff] has moved house but is still living near London, England. Bob visited Hong Kong at the end of last year where he enjoyed a reunion with several former members of staff [see centre pages].

**Bob LAWSON** [Cantonese Early 80s] visited Guernsey on a golfing holiday last year; this was reported in the last newsletter. We now have the photograph of the event, which shows Bob [left] with your unworthy editor at his hotel.



**Mr. LEE Mein Ven** [Staff] is still living in Hong Kong but visits Canton frequently. We congratulate Mr. Lee on reaching his 70th birthday this year, and we thank Mr. Tse Hau Loong for providing this piece of news.

**Mrs. Sara LEE [Sara SIU]** [Staff] visited UK with husband Jimmy in May/June 1998 and they followed this with a 2-month visit to Asia in October. Among other places, they stayed in Beijing, Xian, Kunming, several locations in Guangdong Province, Hong Kong, Korea and Thailand. While in Hong Kong Sara enjoyed tea at the home of Mrs. **JIANG** Lin Lin [see photo elsewhere in this issue].

**Mr. Derek [Willy] LUI [Cpl Lui]** [Staff] is still running a fast-food business in the South of England; this year he sent us some beautiful calendars showing scenes of Hong Kong.





**[From left] Mr. Bob Lau [Cpl Lau], Mr. Ho Pui Kei, Mr. Huang Yao Ping, Mrs. Wong Leung Ling Hsiao, Mrs. Kot Mei Yuk [Ah Mei], Miss Marie Lam Fuk Kuen and Mrs. Hau Mei Ling [Ah Ling].**

During December 1998 Bob [Kevin] Lau made a return visit to Kong Kong from his home just outside London, England. He has written describing the trip and Marie Lam has also given a comprehensive report on the get-together of former staff which took place.

Marie reports that in spite of the recession in Hong Kong, all those pictured are still working. Bob Lau is now working near London, and the others shown are all in employment in Hong Kong. Mr. Ho is still teaching Cantonese and Mr. Huang is still a translator with a legal firm. Mrs. Wong teaches Cantonese at Hong Kong University; she recently became a grandmother. Ah Mei is working at a public hospital; the job involves shift work so is very tiring.



**This picture shows [left to right] Bob Lau, Ah Ling, Ah Mei and Mrs. Wong Leung Ling Hsiao carrying out some “游乾水”**

Marie completes her teaching course at Caritas [a Catholic charitable organisation] this year and is looking forward to the challenge of the job. Ah Ling is working at the Hong Kong Marine Department.

In the last newsletter Anne WEER asked if anyone could help with a four-character phrase which had the meaning 'your last daughter tears your heart out'. Several people have written to say that although it seems familiar, they are unable to place the phrase. Marie believes that it is not a four-character phrase at all, and I am sure that she is right. Marie suggests that this is a Cantonese expression which reads:-

孺女拉心肝

Barnett-Chao: lhaay nreoe lhaay shamm ghonn  
 Sidney Lau: iaai<sup>1</sup> nuiMaai'sam<sup>1</sup> gon<sup>1</sup>

**John MATTHEWS** [Mandarin early 70s] spent two and a half weeks in Beijing last September, accompanying a party of language students from the Australian Defence Forces School of Languages at RAAF Williams, Point Cook. He was amazed by the changes which have taken place since he lived and worked there. John is still working for the government, but is building a second career as a massage therapist specialising in remedial/sports massage and completes his qualification courses this year.

**Alan NASH** [Mandarin early 70s] has moved house but is still living in the East of England. He and Janet have spent time in Germany, visiting their children, and have also completed walking and writing up a long-distance walk in Lincolnshire [120 miles]; the book was published in April. They are now working on similar 'walking' books.

**Mr. NG Sam Yuen [Mr. WU]** [Staff] is still living in Hong Kong, where he works as the Chief Translator with an American law firm. Mr. Ng can be seen in the photograph elsewhere in this issue enjoying a tea party at Mrs. JIANG's home last autumn.

**Terry PARR** [Cantonese late 70s] has retired from his job with Norfolk County Council in England and hopes to move to France [not too far from Toulouse] in the near future. Terry says that all ex-CLS members will be very welcome to visit.

**Ken PICKLES** [Mandarin late 80s] is still serving in the Army in Germany where he has a few months left of his current assignment. This will be followed by what is likely to be his final tour of duty in the Army.

**Mick ROBERTS** [Cantonese Mid 70s] and Kay travelled to Durban, South Africa in February to visit Kay's younger son Niall who plays clarinet in the KwaZulu-Natal Philharmonic Orchestra. The principal clarinet in the Orchestra moved to Durban from Hong Kong where she had spent three years playing in the Hong Kong Philharmonic Orchestra.

**Alan ROBERTSON** [Mandarin late 60s, Cantonese mid 70s] once again generously gave of his time to look after Mrs. CHENG Ya Lan [Mrs. ZHONG] during her visit to London in April this year, at both ends of her trip to Guernsey following her visit to Cape Town. Alan will soon be moving to Scotland.

**Simon RODWELL** [Mandarin early 70s] is now working with the UK Government Department of Trade and Industry as an export promoter, which takes him to China regularly. He is also lecturing on doing business in China.

**Neal SEALOCK** [FAO mid 80s] is coming to the end of his tour of duty at Fort Rucker, Alabama, where he commands a Brigade. It is likely that he will be assigned as US Defense Attache in Canberra, Australia, replacing Richard Welker [Mandarin early 80s].

**John SHANNON** [Cantonese late 60s] has recently moved house but he is still living in Hong Kong.

**Willy ST. MAUR SHEIL** [Cantonese mid 80s] has enjoyed much travelling during the past year, visiting France and South Africa. Maggie travelled even further, to Australia and Hong Kong; she reports that she was saddened to see that Royden Court, home to many CLS students, had been demolished. Willy is hoping to visit Hong Kong and Australia during 1999; without doubt the highlight of 1998 was the wedding of daughter Miranda.

**Alan SYKES** [Cantonese Late 60s] is one of a small group who made contact with Mrs. Zhong during her stay in London in April. Alan is steadily recovering from the stroke he suffered two years ago and is still involved with SSAFA [Soldiers', Sailors' and Airmen's Families Association] casework. Mei travels frequently to the Far East [mainly Taiwan] and the United States [mainly San Francisco].

**David SYME** [Mandarin Late 70s] has completed a tour of duty in Bosnia with the Specialist Linguist Unit of the Territorial Army and is now safely home in Edinburgh, Scotland.

**Mr. TANG Pong** [Staff] is living in San Jose, California, where he was recently visited by Mr. James WONG Kwok Wei. Our picture shows [left to right] Mr. Tang, son Steven, Mrs. Tang and Mr. Wong.



**Mr. TSANG Chi Fan** [Staff] has written to say how much he enjoys the CLS newsletter. He is still living and working in Hong Kong at the City University in Kowloon.

**Mr. TSE Hau Loong** [Staff], has been in contact from Vancouver, Canada, where he now lives. He says that he was impressed by Dave Ellis' article in the last edition of the newsletter. [See elsewhere in this issue for a further contribution from Dave]. All former Cantonese students will remember Mr. Tse with great affection and respect and will be pleased to learn that he reaches his 80th birthday this year.

**Richard WELKER** [FAO early 80s] is coming to the end of his service in the Army and his tour as US Defense Attaché in Canberra, Australia. He is not yet certain which direction his future will take.



**Steve WHITE** [Mandarin late 80s] has been promoted to Commander in the Royal Navy and is currently working as the Personal Staff Officer to the Flag Officer Surface Flotilla who controls all the Navy's assets at sea- This year Steve is doing a refresher course in Chinese at the University of Portsmouth, with the prospect of a posting as Naval Attaché in Beijing at some time in the future.

**Mr. James WONG Kwok Wei** [Staff] has written frequently from Los Angeles, where he now lives, with much news. He is still doing voluntary work and is enjoying good health. Those of you with E-mail facilities will be delighted to know that he is now on line at [kwong5435@earthlink.net](mailto:kwong5435@earthlink.net) and will be delighted to communicate with you. Our picture shows Mr. WONG with computer at his home. During the past year he has visited Mr. TANG Pong at his home in San Jose, California [see picture elsewhere in this issue].



**Chris WOOD** [FCO mid 80s] is still working as a Civil Servant in London and is now in the Economic and Domestic Secretariat of the Cabinet Office, on secondment from the Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions for 2-3 years. The Cabinet Office co-ordinates government policy from the centre so Chris believes that his new job will prove interesting and rewarding; he has already attended meetings at 10 Downing Street, including one where he sat two places down from the Prime Minister.

## VIRTUALLY REAL

by David Ellis

Fast forward to the year 2010. You're back in Hong Kong and you don't have a visa. Is that a problem? Not when it's a virtual Hong Kong, a three-dimensional photorealistic replica of the real thing. You've arranged to meet the Cantonese 'Gang of Four'; - Messrs. Tse, Li, Wu and Ho - at sunset on the CLS balcony at Lyemun realistically simulated from records and plans archived on the Internet. You are all wearing skin tight data suits made of synthetic cloth and eyeglass-like HMDs [Head-Mounted Displays that give you the illusion of being inside the 3-D scene]. But you don't see these paraphernalia. You see yourself and the others wearing whatever apparel you and they told the computer [which is integrated into your data suits] to dress you in.

I picture Mr. Tse in full Imperial regalia, flowing gold silk gown with the CLS dragon embroidered in red; Mr. Li in the sober robes of the Confucian scholar; Mr. Wu, calligraphy brushes in hand, as an artist; and Mr. Ho in snappy business suit and bright tie. You, needless to say, are in baggy shorts, vomit-streaked T-shirt and down-at-heel flipflops. But that's irrelevant. What's relevant is that the technology to do all I've just described is already here, though it's not yet very well developed. But wait, as they say in the commercials; there's more! As you all shake hands [feeling their individual strength and warmth through the haptic sensors - microscopic transducers woven into your data suits at a density of thousands per square centimetre], you hear their greetings enunciated in perfect English. Even more amazing, they hear *your* greetings in perfect Cantonese, except for Mr. Tse, who, having adopted the Mandarin befitting his virtual station in life, hears you speaking perfect 國語.

*That* technology is here, too, I've tried it. It doesn't work very well yet but it's only a matter of time before it does, and the year 2010 is a very safe bet for it all to come together.

The technology is currently in two separate parts. First, there is the technology of *automatic speech recognition* [ASR]. Second, there is the technology of *machine translation* [MT]. Eventually, these technologies will be merged into one. [There is a third technology, voice synthesis, that has already been incorporated into ASR programs.]

ASR is software that lets you dictate through a microphone into the computer, which *recognises* what you say and types the words out on screen. ASR does not *understand* your words, yet, but that doesn't matter for our purposes. The voice synthesis technology in ASR programs enables the computer to read aloud, through its loudspeakers, the words on the screen.

There are currently three inexpensive and competing ASR programs: Dragon Software's 'NaturallySpeaking', Lernout & Hauspie's 'VoiceXpress' and IBM's 'ViaVoice'. I've reviewed the first two of these products on the Web [see the links at the end of this essay for more information].

MT software takes text that's already in the computer and translates it into another language. One such program available for 'Windows' machines is Systran, which can handle several European languages plus Chinese and Japanese. I've reviewed that, too, at <http://nnnn>. A version of Systran software now running on the AltaVista search engine will give you near-instant and free translations of Web pages and documents in French, German, Spanish and Portuguese, with more languages planned. It does not take much vision to see that ASR and MT can, and will, be merged to give us the equivalent of Douglas Adams' [Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy] 'Babelfish' - an alien fish which, placed in the ear, translates between the 'wearer' and beings of all races in the universe. Given the exponential rate of increase in the power of computers, and the concurrent exponential decrease in their size, it will not be long before programs are woven into 'wearable computers'. The world-renowned Media Lab at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology held a wearable computer fashion show in October 1997 that included a tunic which translated the wearer's speech into a foreign language.

Those of you who have managed to keep your Chinese characters alive may be forgiven for wondering if, in the face of such technology, it was worth the effort. Of course it was, and it will always remain so.

Despite my own loss of the characters, the experience of having had even a smattering for a short time opened a priceless window onto the Chinese mind and soul that no interpreter, human or machine, could emulate or substitute for. I am deeply honoured to have been afforded a view through that window through the teaching of Mr. Tse and his colleagues.

No indeed, I may have forgotten the characters, but my teachers' time was not wasted. They imprinted - at least in this gwaile's memory, and I suspect in all of us privileged to be their students - something far more precious and enduring than mere words: an indelible impression of the greatness of China, her civilisation, her wisdom, her humour, her poetry, her patience and her humanity.

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Web Links:

Review of *Naturally Speaking*: <http://ai.miningco.com/library/weekly/aa082497.htm>

Review of *VoiceXpress*: <http://ai.miningco.com/library/weekly/aa051798.htm>

Review of *SystranPro* [English-Japanese-English]:  
<http://ai.miningco.com/library/weekly/aa011898.htm>

Review of *Systran* service on AltaVista [English-French-English]:  
<http://ai.miningco.com/library/weekly/aa010498.htm>

David would be glad to receive readers' comments or reminiscences via e-mail to [ai.guide@miningco.com](mailto:ai.guide@miningco.com)

