

As we go to press the terrible events of 11 September, 2001 in New York City and at the Pentagon are still fresh in the mind. As many of you will know, a considerable number of officers who studied as FAOs at MODCLS now work at the Pentagon. Our information is that none of them were killed or injured in the terrorist attack on the building, and we are relieved and pleased to be able to report this. Our sympathy goes out not only to those whose lives were directly touched by the attacks, but to all the people of America, who need our support at this time.

With this edition of the newsletter we welcome Lieutenant Colonel Frank MILLER, currently the Defense and Army Attaché at the US Embassy in Hanoi, Vietnam. We have also received news from a number of members who have not been in contact for a while. It's good to know that this newsletter still features in their lives.

Alan Robertson has been a regular contributor to these pages over the years and this edition features an article based on a recent visit he made to Cuba. This interesting feature concentrates on the Chinese community in Havana and comes complete with photograph. Don't miss it. We also include an amusing article on the battle being fought by the authorities to keep Putonghua free of foreign influence, particularly among young people, which was supplied by Dave Kitching and held over from the last edition (see centre spread).

PLEASE LET US KNOW IF YOU CHANGE YOUR ADDRESS

NEWS OF MEMBERS FROM AROUND THE WORLD

Frances ADAMSON [FCO mid 80s] has been working at the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade in Canberra for the past four years. She is moving to Taipei this month to take up an assignment as Head of the Australian Commerce and Industry Office. Frances is now studying Chinese again in preparation for her new job, and we congratulate her and Rod on the birth of a baby girl (Sophie) in May, the latest addition to their family.

Scott BOWEN [FAO early 80s] now lives in Flagstaff, Arizona but travelled to Idaho in the Spring to visit family. While there he met Mrs. CHENG Ya Lan (Mrs. Zhong) and enjoyed lunch with her, talking about old times. Scott is pictured with Mrs. Zhong in Rexburg during his visit.



Mrs. CHENG Ya Lan [Mrs. Zhong] [Staff] visited friends in Vancouver B.C. and Seattle, Washington during the summer and very much enjoyed her lunch with Scott BOWEN in May. She has been involved again with the Idaho International Folk Dance Festival; this year the Chinese team was from Inner Mongolia and Mrs. Zhong was on hand to resolve language problems. Below is a photograph of Mrs. Zhong taken in June, subtitled 'Seafood in Seattle'.



Jim CHILTON [FAO mid 80s] has been in contact twice in recent weeks and has kept your unworthy editor informed of local and national reaction to the atrocities of 11 September. He has a son-in-law working with American Airlines so there is always concern for his safety. His son Joshua leads a band who played a concert in Jim's home town in early October to benefit World Trade Center families.

Andy DAVIS [Mandarin early 70s] continues to work as Head of Security for the UK Atomic Energy Authority. A keen rower, Andy was obliged to give up the sport two years ago after a double hip replacement. He now enjoys open (Canadian) canoeing and in September 2000 participated in an expedition in Canada which took the party through 130 miles of wilderness down the Missinaibi River in Northern Ontario. Portaging the bigger rapids was hard work but the trip was thoroughly worthwhile. Andy's e-mail address is andrew.davis@aeat.co.uk if you wish to contact him.

Leonora DUNN [O'Reardon] [Mandarin mid 80s] has written from Sydney, Australia with news that husband Steve has been selected as Military Attaché to UK and Europe and they will be moving to London at the end of this year for a three year assignment. Lea's e-mail address is dunns4@bigpond.com.au if you want to communicate in this way.

John flGGINBOTHAM [FCO early 70s] is no longer working as the Minister (Political) in the Canadian Embassy in Washington D.C. and is now back in Canada as Assistant Deputy Minister (Communications, Culture and Policy Planning) at the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade in Ottawa. His e-mail address is unchanged.

Bill HOUSE [Mandarin late 80s] has moved but is still living in the southeast of England, working as a civilian with the Kent Constabulary (your unworthy editor's daughter is a police officer in the same force). Bill has been in receipt of commendations on two recent occasions. He enjoys the newsletter and can be contacted by e-mail at billhouse@tesco.net if you want to get in touch with him.

Dave KITCHING [Cantonese late 60s and Mandarin late 80s] has been a frequent correspondent from Hong Kong and has reported on the retirement and death of Ralph Pixton, the Radio Hong Kong broadcaster, the opening of the new Hong Kong Central Library; the decline in popularity of reading English literature amongst Hong Kong's young residents and the efforts being made to prevent the National Language taking on foreign words and phrases. We reproduce this latter item elsewhere. Dave and Joanne have recently purchased a property in Spain and are likely to leave Hong Kong in 2002.

Frank MILLER [FAO early 90s] has joined us from Hanoi, Vietnam where he is the Defense and Army Attaché at the US Embassy. Promoted to Lieutenant Colonel, Frank's previous assignment was on the staff of USCINCPAC where he often made use of his Mandarin skills. He now sees Colonel Gary HOGAN [Mandarin early 90s] frequently; Gary is the Australian Defence Attaché in Hanoi. If you wish to contact Frank by e-mail, his address is millerfl@state.gov and we are pleased to welcome him as a member of our 'club'.

Mick ROBERTS (Cantonese mid 70s] and wife Kay will be in Australia over the New Year period 2002 for the wedding of son Joseph, who now lives near Sydney. A visit to Mrs. CHEN Shu Fong has been arranged and a report of this visit will be in the Spring 2002 edition.

The name of **Sir Jack CATER** will be familiar to many of our former staff and students; for many years Chief Secretary in Hong Kong (Sri j&£_ \$Q) Sir Jack later became Head of the Independent Commission Against Corruption (ICAC). He and Lady Peggy now live in retirement in Guernsey only a few hundred yards from our home. Pictured recently after lunch at a local hotel are (left to right) Sir Jack, Kay, Lady Peggy and your unworthy editor.

Need original photo – was not with galleys – Xeroxed image was with galleys and is barely viewable (mainly black)

Alan ROBERTSON [Mandarin late 60s and Cantonese mid 70s] has travelled widely during the past year, visiting Cuba and Sarawak, Malaysia. Elsewhere in this issue we reproduce his article on the Cuba visit. Because of space limitation, we shall hold over his report on the Sarawak visit until the Spring 2002 edition. Alan now has alanusrob@yahoo.co.uk as his e-mail address.

Don STEVENS [Mandarin early 80s] is still working at the Ministry of the Interior in Bahrain, Arabian Gulf. He has recently become a grandfather and sends greetings to all our readers, particularly members of N16 (1982-84).

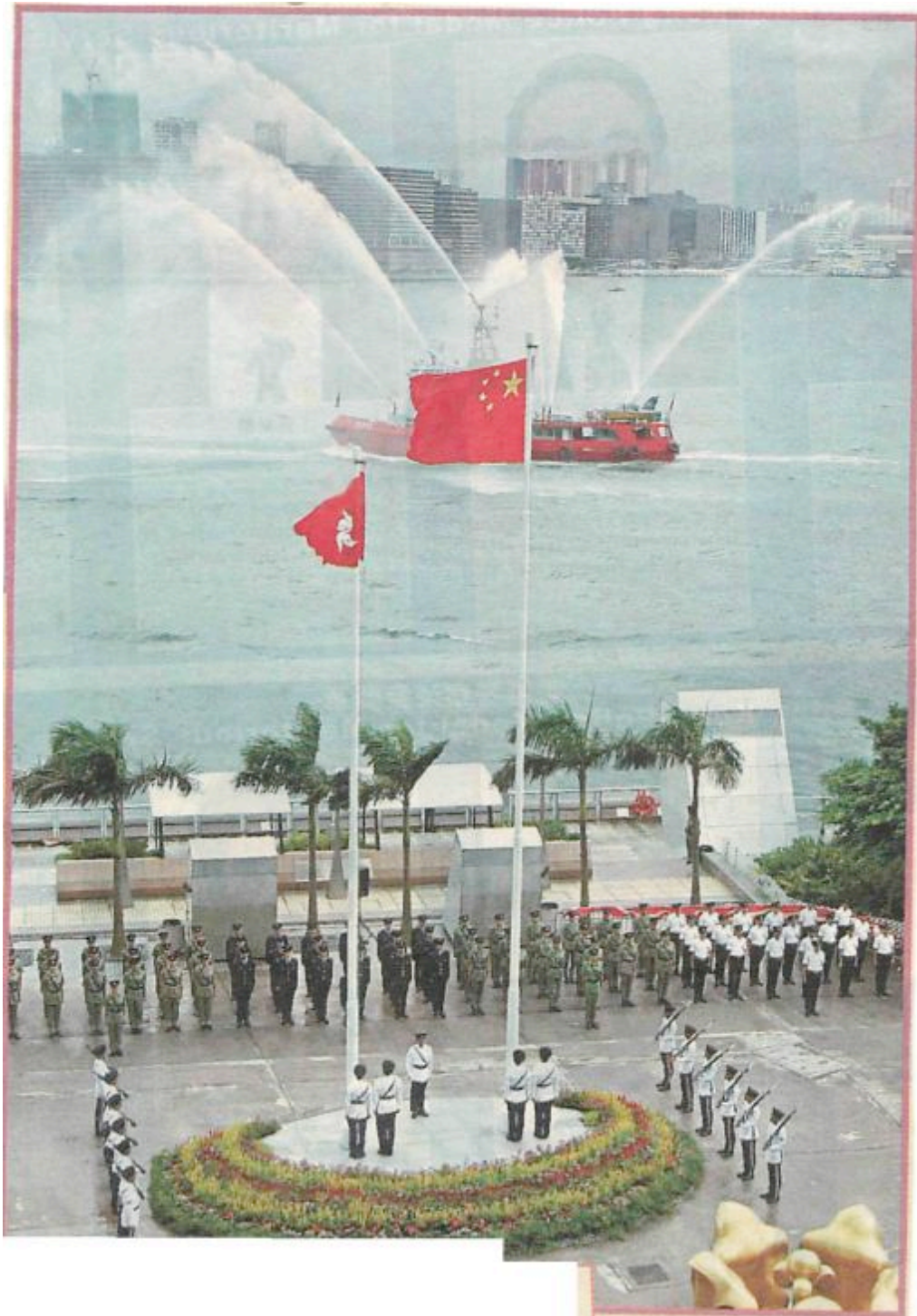
David SYME [Mandarin late 70s] has led groups of young people on expeditions to Ecuador and to Kenya during the past year. He was to have carried out a similar exercise to Peru in 2000, but an injury prevented him from doing so. No injury prevented him from taking part (with his two children, Andrew and Fiona) in the New York Marathon in early November; this was followed by a week's recuperation in Florida. David has sent in a copy of the Spring 2001 Bulletin of the Hong Kong Society (based in London); unfortunately lack of space precludes reproduction, but it is very interesting and if you would like more information the Society can be contacted at phamer@jssldn.co.uk by e-mail. Inside the back cover of this newsletter is an English translation of a poem by Po Chu I which sums up David's outlook and, we suspect, the outlook of many of his contemporaries. Unfortunately my volume of Tang Dynasty poems, although containing several by Po Chu I, does not have this one in the original. Perhaps somebody could provide it.

Kim WEN FIELD [Cantonese late 70s] is now a Brigadier and since November 1999 has been the Defence Attaché at the British Embassy in Ankara, Turkey. In April 2001 he and Elaine visited Hong Kong, where he met by chance Brian BUNKER (Mandarin late 80s). Kim is likely to remain in Ankara until the summer of 2002.

Mr. James WONG Kwok Wei [Staff] was unwell during the summer but after a spell in hospital and several tests no cause could be found. However, his condition has now improved and he was looking to visit Hong Kong and Shanghai during the autumn. James still undertakes voluntary work a couple of times a week near his home in Los Angeles and enjoys playing mahjong from time to time.



行政長官董建華與觀禮的市民打招呼。
CE Tung Chee Hwa meets the throng of spectators



JThe glorious Victoria Harbour backdrop during the ceremony

Law takes on to save

■ Agence France-Presse

Older generations are baffled when they hear words such as "I Titanicked" or "Wasai!" sprinkled in the conversations of Chinese teenagers.

Twenty years of opening up to the outside world - from Hollywood films to Japanese cartoons and Hong Kong Cantonese pop songs - is making a dent on the ancient Chinese language.

The hybrid conversations of urban youth may be mere gibberish to some, but to others the cultural inroad into the Chinese language is a cause for real concern. Some also say it is widening the generation gap.

The Government has now adopted the country's first language law to roll back a trend it fears will bastardise spoken and written Chinese. The law, which became effective on January 1, requires broadcasters to use

formal Putonghua and print media to keep to the simplified characters used on the mainland, not the complicated characters used in Hong Kong and Taiwan.

News anchors and entertainment show hosts are banned from peppering their broadcasts with Hong Kong or Taiwanese accents, which are seen in some circles as chic. And publishing houses must also translate all English and other foreign language words into standard Chinese.

Billboards, advertisements and product labels are barred from using Chinese words incorrectly. In recent years, advertising firms have taken to altering Chinese characters to grab consumers' attention.

"As China underwent economic opening, people are chaotically using foreign words," said Yang Guang, a spokesman for the Education Ministry's language application administration. "When they speak a sentence, they add a Japanese or English word. There's been a return of complicated Chinese characters, especially in the coastal areas. They think it's more sophisticated."

Mr. Yang insisted the law would not discriminate against Cantonese or any foreign language.

Titanic struggle language

"We have 56 ethnic groups who speak 100 spoken languages and have 30 written languages," he said. "Things are already complicated enough ... We're not saying there should only be one dialect in China, but everyone should be able to speak the same dialect. That's very important for national unity."

Putonghua - the national dialect - remains one of the most intact in the world, unlike Japanese, for example, which has borrowed many English words.

But the increasing impact of foreign cultures has seen English slang such as "cool" and "in" become a staple, and terms such as "WTO" and "Internet" supplant their Chinese counterparts.

Instead of saying "I failed my test," many teenagers now say "I Titanicked". And "Wasai!" - an expression of surprise adopted from Hong Kong television shows which has no meaning in Putonghua - is frequently spoken, even by adults.

The law goes as far as encouraging service workers in all public places, including civil servants and waitresses at privately owned restaurants, to speak proper Putonghua. Employers should send them to classes to be "re-educated" if they do not, it says.

But many people question whether China is fighting a losing battle.

"The suggestion is good, but in the end, language can't be

controlled by law," said Wang Wei, 22, a construction site contractor.

"Language is for communication. As long as people understand each other, what's the problem?"

However, many people back the Government's move. "English is a reality. It's important for communicating with the outside world, but we can't give up our culture," said a bookstore manager from northern Jilin province.

"When President Jiang Zemin visited [then US president Bill] Clinton and spoke English, I didn't like it. He should speak Chinese because he's Chinese."

Zhang Nan, 20, said even he found it hard keeping up. "They used to say 'This man is over' when they want to say he is dead. Now they've shortened it to 'He V'ed'," he said. "When I listen to 17 or 18-year-olds talk, I can't understand what they're saying. I feel old."

CHINESE HAVANA

by Alan Robertson

Treating myself to a week in Havana in late June, even as the minibus sped me from airport to hotel, my eye was caught by large Chinese characters on boards round a building site: their style and message indicated PRC involvement in a new hotel complex under construction on a prime site at the beginning of Malecon, the long and once elegant seaside promenade stretching seven kilometres from the eastern, northern border of central Havana westwards, and facing towards Miami, would-be destination of many Cubans.

Despite day temperatures of c. 34°C and humidity levels around 80°, I spent most days finding my way about this beautiful and fascinating city alone and on foot. While I was reasonably circumspect in where I went, it seemed a safe enough place, spoiled only by what are apparently the main product of the nation's Young Training Scheme, namely ubiquitous touts both male and female ('jineteros/jineteras') whose desire to relieve the foreigner of US\$ knows no bounds.

My 2001 guidebook (in the 'Time Out' series) told me that Cuba's Chinese community was once the largest, richest and most economically important in Latin America, begun by 'yellow slaves' from Guangdong who arrived in 1847 to work in the sugar industry, later joined by immigrants - traders and entrepreneurs - who came to escape discrimination in California, so that at its height, Havana's Chinese community numbered 130,000. After 1959, when private business was nationalised, many Chinese Cubans left the country as of course did many other Cubans also. However, my book continued, there were still some 400-500 native-born Chinese and their descendants in Havana, and there was a Chinatown ('El barrio chino'). This I sought out, keen mainly to find the offices of "Cuba's only remaining weekly Chinese newspaper" **Kung Wah Po**, and have a peek at the 100-year-old printing presses.

Built only in 1999, the traditional-style gate to El barrio chino gives access to a narrow street, some 50 metres long. There was a clutch of restaurants on both sides, not much to look at, but all busy enough. In vain I looked for a menu in Chinese, and indeed, I saw no Chinese faces and heard no Chinese spoken.

Outside a shop selling assorted non-food goods of PRC origin (betrayed once again by the characters on the fascia) I spotted a lengthy queue of ordinary Cubans. When I managed to get inside the shop, all was revealed: there was toilet soap on sale, a commodity which, like most daily necessities, is generally not to be had. I visited many ordinary shops and so-called Department Stores in Havana: all were bare of goods, although in markets there seemed to be an abundance of fresh fruit and vegetables and of the chicken and pork which forms the uninteresting staple diet of Cubans.

Now, although I had the address, finding the office of the **Kung Wah Po** was not easy. Finally, peering through a narrow barred gate into what looked like a dimly-lit indoor building site (Calle San Nicolas #520-522) I spotted an elderly Chinese, who came to the gate, and naturally displayed surprise when addressed in Mandarin by this foreign devil. However, he immediately let me in, and although my heart sank a little when he launched into Cantonese (alas, C8, gone, all gone!) it rose again when he switched to Mandarin and showed me the ancient printing presses (with vast trays of single 'full' characters, requiring setting by hand) all inadequately protected against clouds of sand, cement, etc. by sheets of paper and plastic during the rebuild of the premises. When I asked how long the rebuild would take, the answer was: two years, during which time (and for six months already past) the newspaper would not come out. Going through my mind was the thought that, forbye this Mr. Zhang and his equally aged colleague whom I'd seen in the office by the door, I'd seen no other Chinese faces. How many were there, I asked Mr. Zhang, who could read **Kung Wah Bo**? He hesitated before replying, men said, a little sadly, "Not above one hundred".

Having thanked Mr. Zhang and taken my leave of him, I found my way to the nearby **Sociedad Lung Kong Cun Sol**. Upstairs and through a curtained door (at Calle Dragones #364) is one of (my book said) 13 Chinese associations still existing in Cuba, this one still in premises where it was founded in 1900 to care for the Chinese elderly, but claiming descent from 4 April, 208 when eternal brotherhood was sworn between royal/noble members of the Four named families. Ostensibly a restaurant open to the public (a welcome cold Cristal lager, at rock-bottom price!), there is a stairway leading to the third floor.

Establishing my credentials by reading aloud the Chinese caption to a group photograph of a fairly recent visit by Jiang Zemin and party, I asked the silent Chinese 'laoban' if I might go upstairs, and was allowed to ascend the stairs: up there, the 'Templo San Fan Kong' contains a wonderfully carved and gilded mahogany altar made in Guangzhou more than a century ago.



On another day, after visiting a thoroughly depressing zoo (founded 1939) I gave way to underlying masochism, going on foot from there to the Chinese Cemetery (Calle 26, between streets 28 and 33) but was able to view only the gateway, which I photographed. Dating from 19th century (Qing Dynasty) the cemetery is a blend of Chinese and Western influences, with Christian symbolism and traditional Chinese tomb styles.

"... from fifty to sixty one is free from all ills;
Calm and still - the heart enjoys rest.
I have put behind me Greed and Love,
I have done with Profit and Fame:
I am still short of illness and decay,
And far from decrepit age.
Strength of limb I still possess to seek
The rivers and the hills;
Still my heart has spirit enough to
Listen to flutes and strings ..."

Po Chu I (ca. 830 AD)