

THE CORRESPONDENT

MAY/JUNE 2014

The Official publication of the Foreign Correspondents' Club, Hong Kong

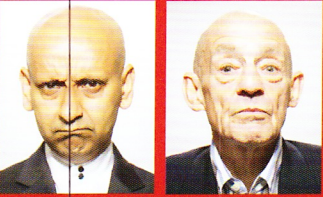


The Review reunion and the future

Human Rights Press Awards



Reporting China then and now







The Foreign Correspondents' Club

2 Lower Albert Road, Central, Hong Kong
Tel: (852) 2521 1511 Fax: (852) 2868 4092
Email: fcc@fcchk.org
Website: www.fcchk.org

The Board of Governors 2013-2014

President

Tara Anne Joseph

First Vice President

Jitendra Joshi

Second Vice President

Timothy S. Huxley

Correspondent Governors

Keith Bradsher, Florence De Changy, Jonathan Gordon Hopfner, Nan-Hie In, Angie Lau, Carsten Schael, Enid Tsui, Neil David Western

Journalist Governors

Wing Chow, Cammy Yiu

Associate Governors

Andy Chworowsky, Thomas Crampton, Kevin Egan, Timothy S. Huxley

Goodwill Ambassadors

Clare Hollingworth, Anthony Lawrence

Club Secretary

Wing Chow

Professional Committee

Co-Conveners: Tara Anne Joseph, Keith Bradsher, Enid Tsui

Finance Committee

Co-Conveners:
Timothy S. Huxley (Treasurer)
Wing Chow

Constitutional Committee

Co-Conveners:
Kevin Egan, Francis Moriarty

Membership Committee

Co-Conveners:
Neil David Western, Jitendra Joshi

House/ Food and Beverage Committee

Co-Conveners:
Andrew Chworowsky (House)
Carsten Schael (House)
Florence De Changy (F&B)
Angie Lau (F&B)

Press Freedom Committee

Co-Conveners:
Francis Moriarty, Jitendra Joshi

Publications Committee

Co-Conveners:
Carsten Schael, Jonathan Gordon Hopfner,
Angie Lau
Paul Bayfield (Editor)

Wall Committee

Co-Conveners:
Carsten Schael, Cammy Yiu

Charity Ball Committee

Co-Conveners:
Andrew Chworowsky, Thomas Crampton

General Manager

Gilbert Cheng

Produced by: Asiapix Studios

Tel: 9769 0294 Email: asiapix@netvigador.com
www.terryduckham-asiapix.com

Printing

Lautus Print
Tel: 2555 1178 Email: cs@lautus.com.hk

Advertising

Contact FCC Front Office: Tel: 2521 1511

The Correspondent ©2014

The Foreign Correspondents' Club, Hong Kong
The Correspondent is published six times a year.
Opinions expressed here are not necessarily those of the club.

THE CORRESPONDENT

THE OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE FOREIGN CORRESPONDENTS' CLUB, HONG KONG

Editorial

The *Far Eastern Economic Review's* reunion in early April was a lot of fun as well as a series of great conversations. It also brought to mind the days of legendary long lunches in the 1980s. For *Review* staff, these lunches were on Thursdays – the day after the magazine was put to bed. From time to time, usually to mark some occasion, these lunches were in Macau. The ritual became drinking *vinho verde* on the balcony of the (old) Bellavista Hotel followed by lunch at Pinocchio's restaurant on Taipa Island. In those days the restaurant was a tin shed, but the Portuguese/Macanese food was outstanding – as was the vast quantity of cheap and good wine followed by a cleansing Super Bock or white port. Memorable.

The other venue for *Review* lunches was the Ming Kee restaurant on Po Toi island. These lunches were on Sundays and revolved around the sailing activities of the late long-term editor Derek Davies. The lunch guests could include visiting correspondents, news sources, contacts and staff. Often riotous, these lunches were a defining feature of the 25 years that Derek was editor: great food and great conversations. This was brought home by the lunch on the Sunday as part of the reunion weekend. Now, some of these people hadn't been to Po Toi for many years and fondly remembered the signature deep fried squid dish. The look on their faces when they took the first mouthful of squid said it all.

Some 60 years ago the battle at Dien Bien Phu in Vietnam marked the end of France's colonial hold on Vietnam and was the beginning of the escalation of US involvement in a ruinous war that also ended in defeat. Gavin Greenwood looks at the role that journalists played as reporters, filmmakers and propagandists.

At a time when China is giving news organisations and journalists a hard time over work visas, Jonathan Sharp, who was Reuters Beijing bureau chief in the early 70s, writes about how tough it was to get the stories – like, for example, there was only one phone number (which he remembers) for all government departments. There were some big stories as well – the Nixon visit and the rise of the Gang of Four.

Paul Bayfield

only stringers. Only when Freddie Wadsworth, and his brilliant successor Elaine Goodwin, took over advertising in the 1970s did the *Review* hit its boom years.

The late Dick Wilson became editor in 1958 and made the important push into covering South East Asia, as well as the north. Then Derek Davies came for what many regard as the magazine's glory days.

Among the more famous names of the past stands the late David Bonavia and still-writing Ian Buruma and Lynn Pan. The oldest contributor was Gopi Gopalan, who first wrote for the *Review* in 1961. He's still in journalism, running his own new magazine *Fruit and Vegetable World*.

The first two contributors to be made staff correspondents (in 1973) were Nayan Chanda and Susumu Awanohara. Sadly Susumu and fellow US-based Margaret Scott couldn't make it to this reunion. Happily Nayan could, and provided the greatest hilarity as he talked a packed FCC Dining Room through a succession of great *Review* moments.

Another former *Review* editor, Nayan had some of the best stories to tell – when Nate Thayer offered to hire a tank to chase Pol Pot through the jungles, or Nayan's own visitor for breakfast one fraught morning (April 30 1975) in (then) Saigon. The young Viet Cong guard meant to be keeping Nayan under control was seduced by breakfast instead, laying his gun to one side of the major treat of tea and toast.

Photographs showed the gently towering form of Murray Hiebert being led off to jail in Kuala Lumpur, Adam Schwarz interviewing (the now departed) General Vo Nguyen Giap, Adrian Edwards (now of UNHCR) with South Korea's Kim Dae-jung, and Paisan Sricharatchanya with Thai King Bhumiphol.

Without doubt the favourite image was that of the

clearly tipsy – or were they dancing a two-step? – Rodney Tasker and (the late) Donald Wise. This after-lunch moment marks a high point of cult style.

Tasker couldn't make it to the reunion but many correspondents can thank this charmer for their jobs,

as noted by later editor Michael Vatikiotis. The magazine's last editor, David Plott, chose to laud the *Review*'s humility and decency – something gloriously obvious in its support to embattled correspondents, but somewhat harder to find in others' anecdotes which seemed to focus rather a lot on the female mammary gland.

Thanks for the reunion go to Lily Kan, editorial assistant at the *Review* for many years. To her goes much credit for bringing this bunch of people together after a decade of change. Thanks, too, to Hillary King and to the staff of the FCC who came in on Ching Ming to process us all.

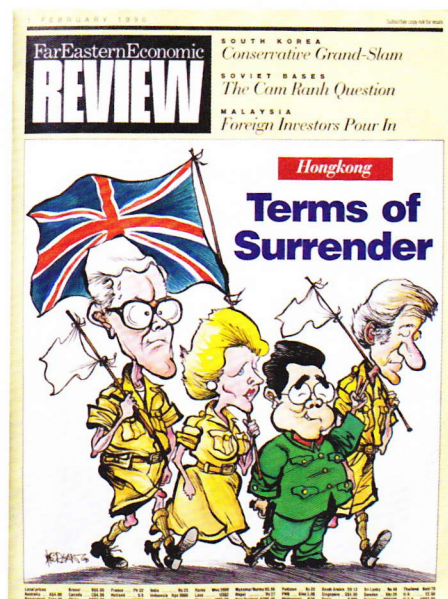
Many of us have baggage with this astounding publication, some of the highest points in a working life and some of the lowest. But this didn't seem to matter. It was simply marvelous to meet all these people again, to remember our world, to feel the cult continues.

Only the alarmingly choppy junk ride to Po Toi for lunch on the final day caused some physical distress. Fittingly, as some threw up and others gave reassurance – thanks Paul (Bayfield) and Gavin (Greenwood) – elegant Shizue Davies was, once again, entirely unfazed.

Vaudine England was the *Review* stringer in Jakarta 1986-87.

[* Unnecessary footnote: The sociological definition of the word "cult" is a group having

a sacred ideology and a set of rites centering around their sacred symbols. By this standard, it would be fair to describe the late lamented *Far Eastern Economic Review*, and its former staff members, as indeed a cult.] FCC



people who had been there forever and could really show how things worked.

They thought about the big picture stuff, but broke stories too – the discovery of Pol Pot (by Nate Thayer) or the dying days of the Communist Party of Burma (Bertil Lintner) – and offered breakdowns of exactly how this old family built that conglomerate and then influenced governments.

Importantly, the Review's headquarters was in Hong Kong and, with editing decisions happening in the centre of the region it covered, it gave that much more relevance to its Asian readership. Just as vital, the Hong Kong base ensured its freedom from fear. Credit must also go to its remarkably hands-off financiers in its independent days. Once Dow Jones took control and editing was done more through New York, the distillation was different. Its death knell was sounded when the competition that the Review posed to Dow Jones' *Asian Wall Street Journal* meant something had to go.

The Review cult is not just the news. Here enters the astounding character of Derek Davies. One of the most delightful aspects of the reunion was the presence of Derek's widow, the 84-year old Shizue. She had flown out from London to be present at this ceremony and displayed her customary grace under pressure throughout.

As Derek's successor, Philip Bowring, pointed out, it was Derek and Shizue's fantastic hospitality and generosity that was the foundation of a unique Review camaraderie. For the Hong Kong-based staff and any visiting correspondent, the challenge and often the joy was to receive an invitation to their place, or on their boat, on the weekend.

Jonathan Friedland recalled his first invitation, soon after being hired by the Review. On his arrival

at the Davies' establishment, trying to say the right thing, he thanked Derek for having him. Derek, glared at him ferociously and said, "I haven't had you, yet!"

Derek Davies was editor for 25 years and his hard-drinking, hard-driving style shaped the cult. His misogyny was legendary, as was his ability to strike terror into a junior's heart, and his embrace of staffers who suffered and even went to jail for the crime of writing for him.

Another part of the cult was (mis)behaviour. Was it the times, the places or the particular people that created the stories around the expense claims for brothel time, the upstairs rooms at the Spider's Web in Manila, the back-street forays in Bangkok, the 3am closing song at Jakarta's Tanamur?

The famous names of yore all seem to have some brush with depravity on their resume, except that cult members never dealt in resumes. They had contacts and knew stuff, and that was then enough.

Fittingly, as at any reunion, the high priests – few priestesses alas – of the craft were paid tribute.

Arun Senkuttuvan tops the list for Bowring. "Nobody suffered more for the Review," he noted, as he detailed Arun's arrest and persecution by the Singapore government, which prevented him from continuing his career as a journalist. Fellow detainee Ho Kwon-ping (founder of the Banyan Tree hotel chain), also praised Arun's fortitude.

Bowring paid tribute to Eric Halpern, who founded the Review in 1946 after his arrival from Shanghai. Funding came initially from the Kadoorie family (friends of Halpern's contacts in Shanghai, the Sassoons), Jardines, HSBC and others. But the first decade was lived on a shoestring. There were no staff correspondents,

