

Ms. Lucinda Wong (1999, 2000)

On the happy occasion of the 50th anniversary of the Hong Kong Library Association, I am pleased and honoured to reminisce of my involvement with the Association which started with my joining HKLA as a member in the mid 1980's and then as council member from the late 1990's. Throughout my 7 years as a council member in various posts, I was grateful for the chance to serve individuals and institutions of our profession and pleased to witness the expansion of activities to members.

As one of the objectives of the HKLA is to provide a focal point as well as a network of formal and informal communication within Hong Kong and with China and other countries, HKLA has been organizing library visits, mainly local ones, for many years. In 1999, encouraged by the popularity of those visits, the council decided to organize study trips to Mainland Chinese and overseas libraries to satisfy the fervent interest in visiting and learning from the success of other libraries. Those overseas study trips have almost become an HKLA institution and were only skipped once in 2003 when SARS was rampant. From our timid half-day trip across the border to visit the Shenzhen Library in 1999, we have spread our footsteps far and wide to libraries, and also museums and national archives, in Shanghai (2000), Taipei (2001), Macau (2002), Singapore (2002), Guangzhou (2004), Zhejiang (2004), Beijing (2005), Seoul (2006), Wuyishan (2007), Nanjing and Suzhou (2008), Zhuhai and Macau (2008). Eye-opening library visits, fruitful professional sharing, fun-filled sightseeing and delectable food have become the trademark of HKLA study trips. From those study trips, networking and communication have been fostered among local and overseas counterparts. It is one of the most enjoyable and informal learning experiences we offer to members.

Another type of programme which the HKLA has expanded over the past few years is the seminars and conferences we have organized with other professional bodies or institutions. While the Association has held many talks in the past, the council in 2000 felt that members would benefit more from seminars and conferences with presentations focused on an interesting theme. In 2000, we co-organized a half-day seminar "Libraries and Lifelong Learning" with the British Council and the University of Sunderland. In 2003, together with Lingnan University Library, we organized a one-day "International Seminar on Cooperative Cataloguing & Authority Control". In 2005, a one-day "Symposium on "Knowledge Management – Towards Organizational Excellence" was jointly organized with the Management Section of The IEE Hong Kong. In 2007, a joint 4-day "Conference on Innovation, Transformation and Development in Libraries" was held together with the Library Society of Guangdong Province and the Library Society of Fujian Province. This year, to commemorate its 50th anniversary, HKLA will hold a 2-day international conference "Looking Back, Moving Forward: Asian Libraries in the World of Information", focusing on the key issues and challenges which face libraries in Asia today.

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All the programmes were highly successful as evidenced by the fast over-subscription and positive feedback from participants. Where do we go from here? Please let us know and we will continue to do our best to serve the needs and interests of members.