

OMRS Annual Report 2021

Hong Kong Branch

When the e-mail calling for Branch annual reports arrived from the OMRS Journal Editorial Team, I (no doubt together with many other Branch secretaries) immediately assumed that this would not be an onerous task due to Covid. Unfortunately I was proved correct in this assumption, but I do believe that there is light at the end of the tunnel.

Our ever popular Christmas Dinner for 2020 was cancelled due to strict restrictions on social gathering imposed by the Hong Kong Government. This was the second consecutive cancellation of this event.

Although 2021 saw only slight easing of these restrictions, the Branch did take measures to ensure that we did not slip off the radar. Our past-president, (now a U.K. resident), Angus Stevenson-Hamilton, had earlier been awarded the OMRS Distinguished Service Medal and during the year finally received his award and signed parchment!

The Branch was also active on the literary front, with the submission of a paper on the medals awarded to Colonel Evan Stewart DSO OBE ED MA, who commanded No. 3 (Eurasian) Coy of the Hong Kong Volunteer Defence Corps during the 1941 battle for Hong Kong. This paper has been approved for publication in the OMRS Journal. We also presented an exhibit entitled “Victoria Cross and George Cross Awards During the Japanese Occupation of Hong Kong 1941 – 1945” at the Society’s 2021 Online Exhibition.

A memorial service entitled a “Lodge of Sorrow” to commemorate the life of former Branch stalwart Michael Broom was held at Zetland Hall in September, organised by one of the Freemasons Lodges of which Mike was a member. Members of the Branch committee attended this event. Another Branch member who sadly passed away during the year was Alan Powrie, who died of cancer in London in March. Alan was an active participant in many Branch meetings and activities, and will be greatly missed.

I started this report with a degree of pessimism, but I am pleased to finish on a note of decided optimism! After a lengthy hiatus we resumed Branch meetings in November, with a well-attended visit to the Sai Wan Memorial and War Cemetery on Hong Kong island. December saw the

resumption of our traditional Christmas Dinner, with an excellent turnout at the United Services Recreation Club in Kowloon. We are well underway with plans for a January 2022 event and are pleased to note a recent increase in Branch membership.

Although we still have some way to go before complete normality returns to life in Hong Kong, I think it fair to say that the future of the Branch is looking decidedly healthy.

Martin Heyes

Hon. Secretary
Hong Kong Branch OMRS