



My Childhood at the Observatory

Editorial Board

Among the guests at the reunion dinner was a lady coming all the way from Dublin, Ireland. She was Ms Veronica Heywood, daughter of the first post-war Director, Mr Graham Heywood.

Veronica talked about her childhood at the Observatory. Quarter No.1, the residence of the then Director and a cosy villa with living and dining rooms downstairs and bedrooms upstairs. The open ground of the Observatory was a dream playground for her and kids of other Observatory staff.

Among the many fond memories of the Observatory, she was most impressed by the diligence of Observatory staff working tirelessly in response to the threat of approaching typhoons. As vividly shown in a sketch (Figure 1) drawn by her father, the Director was busy on the phone, while other colleagues worked feverishly to collect and analyze data, hoist warning signals and despatch the latest weather forecast to various users.

During Veronica's talk, she shared some old photos taken by her father and also demonstrated her own artistic talent by showing her paintings on the scenery and landscape of Hong Kong when she returned for a visit in the 90s. Her feelings and sentiments for Hong Kong was plain for all to see.

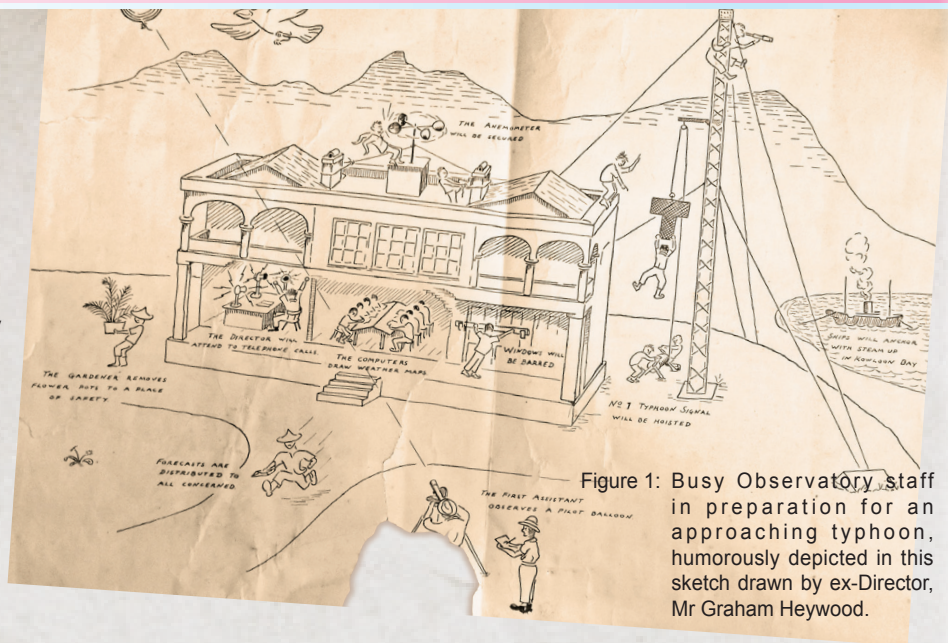


Figure 1: Busy Observatory staff in preparation for an approaching typhoon, humorously depicted in this sketch drawn by ex-Director, Mr Graham Heywood.

Somewhere in Time 60 Years Ago

Sandy SONG

On a rainy morning, I was not only busy in arranging Ms Veronica Heywood's talk at the Observatory, but also trying to get in touch with Mr LAU Tin-chi in a race against time to turn the clock back to 60 years ago.

Mr LAU Tin-chi, an experienced radio broadcaster and media expert, is the son of a former Observatory staff, Mr LAU Pak-wa (Figure 1), who started his long career of 33 years at the Observatory before World War II. LAU Tin-chi was taken to visit the Observatory grounds where Mr Graham Heywood, the then Director of the Observatory, and his family took up residence in Quarter No.1. LAU Tin-chi recalled the spacious lawn and small woods around the Observatory, a dream playground for him and Mr Heywood's younger daughter, Veronica. To him, Mr Heywood and his family were genuinely friendly and amiable people, showing none of the arrogance often associated with colonial officials towards their Chinese subordinates or colleagues.

After returning to Hong Kong from Ireland for the Observatory reunion in

Mr LAU Tin-chi wrote an article recalling his childhood memories at the Observatory for the Observatory's Blog (<http://www.hko.gov.hk/blog/en/archives/00000152.htm>). We would like to take this opportunity to say "thank you" for adding a colourful touch of warmth and nostalgia to the blog!



Figure 2: Ms Veronica Heywood and Mr LAU Tin-chi re-visiting Quarter No.1 hand-in-hand again after 60 years.

Figure 1: Group photo of the Observatory staff after World War II. Ms Veronica Heywood was the girl in braids sitting on the ground in the middle. Mr LAU Tin-chi's father, Mr LAU Pak-wa, was 4th from the right in the 2nd row.



early November, Veronica showed an interest in the whereabouts of a former staff, 'Mr LAU'. Piecing the information together, Mr SHUN Chi-ming, Director of the Hong Kong Observatory, identified the connections and with the help of ex-Director, Mr LAM Chiu-ying, LAU Tin-chi was located within the day. He immediately agreed to meet his childhood friend at the Observatory and, along with Veronica, re-visited Quarter No.1 (Figure 2) where they spent their childhood days some 60 years ago. Describing his feelings at the time, he said, "It was just like old time; nothing changed, nothing lost, and the fond affection of friendships from yesteryears still rippled through the air." It was also a perfect illustration of the theme for the 130th Anniversary of the Hong Kong Observatory, as indeed destiny had brought us together 'Under the Same Sky'.