

New Secretary-General of WMO Visits the Observatory

Editorial Board

The new Secretary-General of the World Meteorological Organization (WMO), Professor Petteri Taalas, visited the Hong Kong Observatory on 19 December 2015. Mr SHUN Chi-ming, Director of the Hong Kong Observatory, introduced to him the Observatory's history and new developments, and exchanged views on the challenges and opportunities for weather services around the world and on the future development of WMO. Apart from the Observatory Headquarters, Professor Taalas also visited the Airport Meteorological Office and Cathay Pacific Airways to find out more about the aviation meteorological services provided by the Observatory.

Professor Petteri Taalas (third from left), new Secretary-General of WMO, is pictured with Mr SHUN Chi-ming (third from right), Director of the Hong Kong Observatory and colleagues.

HKO Staff Wins Four Civil Servant Awards

Editorial Board

Four devoted staff members of the Observatory won civil service awards for their dedicated efforts and excellent services, including the Chief Executive's Commendation for Government/Public Service, the Secretary for Civil Service's Commendation and the Ten Outstanding Drivers Award. The accolades commended them for their outstanding performance and devotion in serving the public over the years.

I really appreciate the support of my colleagues!

I feel pleased and proud to be able to contribute to our effort in ensuring public safety!

This award, presented to me before retirement, is the perfect testimony of my whole career.

I would like to thank my colleagues for their trust!

Senior Draughtsman
Mrs Ng Chan Kam-eh
Chief Executive's Commendation for Government/Public Service

Senior Radar Specialist Mechanic
Mr Ip Wing-sing
Secretary for Civil Service's Commendation

Clerical Officer
Mr Lam Chi-hou
Secretary for Civil Service's Commendation

Motor Driver
Leung Wai-yeung
10th Ten Outstanding Drivers Award

Lunch with the Media

Editorial Board

On 26 November 2015, Mr SHUN Chi-ming, Director of the Hong Kong Observatory, invited media representatives to a lunch reception at the Observatory. At the event attended by some 30 journalists, the Director pointed out that in recent years Hong Kong's temperatures had registered record-high figures. As a result of global warming and the El Niño phenomenon, many records were broken in 2015 (for details, please refer to the article "2015 – A Year of New Records" on Page 4).



Partnership

Meteorological Chiefs Visit the Observatory

Editorial Board

Mr Rob Varley, Chief Executive of United Kingdom Meteorological Office (UKMO), Dr Shin Tzay-chyn, Director-General of Taiwan's weather service, and Dr Ko Yunhwa, Administrator of Korea Meteorological Administration (KMA), visited the Observatory on 26 October, 12 November and 8 December 2015 respectively. The Director of the Hong Kong Observatory introduced the latest developments of the Observatory in public weather services, climatological services, climate change research and other areas to the visitors and explored co-operation opportunities in various fields. During the visit by the KMA Administrator, the Korean version of the World Weather Information Service (WWIS) website was launched (see article below for details).



Mr SHUN Chi-ming (right), Director of the Observatory, presents a souvenir to Mr Rob Varley, Chief Executive of UKMO.



Dr Shin Tzay-chyn (fourth from left), Director-General of Taiwan's weather service, visits the Central Forecasting Office of the Observatory.

Korean Version of WWIS Launched

TONG Yu-fai

The Observatory and KMA have jointly launched the Korean version of the WWIS website to offer Korean-speaking communities the latest weather information in their native language. At present, the website is available in 11 languages and provides the updated official weather forecasts of over 1,800 cities in the world.



Mr SHUN Chi-ming, Director of the Hong Kong Observatory (left), and Dr Ko Yunhwa, Administrator of KMA, preside at the launching ceremony of the Korean version of WWIS.

MOU Signed with PAGASA

HUI Tai-wai

The Hong Kong Observatory has signed a Memorandum Of Understanding (MOU) with the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (PAGASA) to enhance co-operation. Over the years, the Observatory and PAGASA have joined hands in various areas, and the signing of the MOU will see the two sides expand the scope of partnership in the development of global and regional meteorological services, including aviation weather services, remote sensing application, numerical weather prediction product development, climate simulation and forecast, high-impact weather research, as well as the sharing of meteorological data and observation technology.



Mr SHUN Chi-ming (first from left), Director of the Hong Kong Observatory, is pictured with PAGASA staff.

GAR15 Seminar at Hong Kong Polytechnic University

Editorial Board



Mr SHUN Chi-ming (centre, front row) and Mr Edwin LAI (fourth from left, back row) are pictured with fellow participants.

On 2 December 2015, Mr SHUN Chi-ming, Director of the Hong Kong Observatory and Mr Edwin LAI, Assistant Director of the Hong Kong Observatory, attended the Global Assessment Report 2015 (GAR15) launch ceremony and seminar jointly organised by the Hong Kong Polytechnic University and the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNISDR). At the event, participants exchanged insights and views on resilience to climate change and how to enhance public awareness on disaster prevention.

Caring for the Community

The Observatory and SCHSA Deliver Winter Reminders

LEE Fung-ying

掌握天氣 關顧長者
WEATHER INFORMATION FOR ELDERLY CARE
15. 12. 2015



Dr CHENG Cho-ming (first from left), Assistant Director of the Hong Kong Observatory, and Ms Irene LEUNG (first from right), the Chief Executive Officer of SCHSA, together with two senior citizens, officiate at the launching ceremony of the "Sky of Silver Age" weather photo-taking competition.

On 15 December 2015, the Observatory and the Senior Citizen Home Safety Association (SCHSA) held a joint press conference to remind members of the public to be prepared for cold weather and to launch the "Sky of Silver Age" weather photo-taking competition for the elderly to encourage senior citizens to participate in outdoor activities and to be more aware of weather changes.



Details of the competition

Ethnic minority children visited the TV studio at the Observatory



Connecting with Ethnic Minorities

Daniel YEUNG

On 20 December, the Observatory and Urdu Neighbour Centre jointly organised a visit to the Observatory for ethnic minority children and their parents. The participants were able to get a better understanding of the Observatory's work, while the children showed a keen interest in the production of TV weather programmes.

To ensure Hong Kong's ethnic minority groups have access to information on tropical cyclone and rainstorm warnings, the Observatory has produced leaflets in Hindi, Bahasa Indonesia, Nepalese, Urdu, Filipino and Thai to enhance disaster prevention awareness and preparedness during inclement weather.

Weather and Health — Winter

Daniel YEUNG



Weather and Health
- Winter

In winter, Hong Kong is occasionally affected by cold air from the north. In the "Weather and Health – Winter", an episode of "Cool Met Stuff", Professor Emily CHAN, Director of the Collaborating Centre for Oxford University and the Chinese University of Hong Kong for Disaster and Medical Humanitarian Response (CCOUC), reminded viewers to keep warm, drink plenty of water and ensure proper ventilation in times of Cold Weather Warning. When having hotpot, it would be important to cook the food thoroughly and to avoid drinking too much alcohol. Viewers were reminded to take special care in winter, as respiratory and cardiovascular diseases were more likely to occur in cold weather.



Professor Emily CHAN, Director of CCOUC, talks about staying healthy in winter.



Insights from the Past

Blackhead Point Signal Tower in Tsim Sha Tsui

LUI Wing-hong

Blackhead Point in Tsim Sha Tsui (present-day Signal Hill Garden) played an important role in the history of the Hong Kong Observatory. Since 1885, the Observatory had used the time ball at the Marine Police Station (present-day 1881 Heritage) to provide time checks to ships in the Victoria Harbour. In 1908, the time ball signal service was moved to the second-generation tower at Blackhead Point. At the same time, tropical cyclone signals were hoisted next to the time ball tower to provide warnings to marine vessels. The two services continued until 1933 and 1961 respectively. In 2015, the Blackhead Point Signal Tower was declared a monument by the HKSAR Government. On 21 November 2015, Mr SHUN Chi-ming, the Director of the Hong Kong Observatory, gave a talk on the history of the signal tower at the Hong Kong Heritage Discovery Centre. The event was attended by more than 100 participants.



Blackhead Point Signal Tower in the past (left) and present (right)



Mr SHUN Chi-ming, the Director of the Hong Kong Observatory, gives a talk on the history of Blackhead Point Signal Tower at the Hong Kong Heritage Discovery Centre.

Huangmao Zhou Automatic Weather Station Celebrates its 30th Anniversary

CHAN Ying-wa



Staff of the Hong Kong Observatory and Guangdong Meteorological Bureau perform maintenance work at the Huangmao Zhou automatic weather station in July 2015.

In 1985, the Hong Kong Observatory and the Guangdong Meteorological Bureau jointly established an automatic weather station in Huangmao Zhou, located 50 km south of Hong Kong. The year 2015 marked the 30th anniversary of the weather station, and the Observatory dedicated an episode of "Cool Met Stuff" to celebrate the occasion. Through interviews with Mr SHUN Chi-ming, Director of the Hong Kong Observatory, and Mr LIANG Jianyin, Deputy Director of the Guangdong Meteorological Bureau, the episode covered in great detail the history and importance of the weather station. Additionally, the Observatory published a special blog article on the background and features of the Huangmao Zhou automatic weather station in its role as an outpost in monitoring inclement weather in the vicinity of the Pearl River Delta region.



Observatory's
Blog



Cool Met Stuff

2015 – A Year of New Records

LEE Tsz-cheung, LEE Sai-ming

2015 became Hong Kong's warmest year on records, with the annual mean temperature reaching 24.2 degrees Celsius. The mean temperatures hit record-high figures in June, November, summer (June to August) and autumn (September to November). On 8 August, the Observatory registered a new record-high maximum temperature of 36.3 degrees.

The record-breaking temperatures in summer and autumn were attributed to a number of causes, including higher-than-normal sea temperatures in the northern part of the South China Sea, exceptionally strong subtropical ridge of high pressure in June and less cold air from the north in November. In addition, the long-term rise of temperatures due to global warming and local urbanisation mean records for temperatures on the high end would be more easily broken. The strong El Niño over the equatorial Pacific imposed short-term influence on the atmospheric circulation, creating anomalous weather patterns on a regional scale.



Hong Kong's six warmest years since records began in 1885



Public Education

Science Input by the Observatory to Climate Change Documents

LEE Sai-ming

Prior to the Paris Climate Summit, the Observatory provided much needed scientific data and support for two local documents on climate change, namely the “Hong Kong Climate Report 2015” and the “Hong Kong Climate Resilience Roadmap for Business” released by the Environment Bureau and the Business Environment Council, respectively.

Launched in early November 2015, the “Hong Kong Climate Report 2015” consolidated the work and future plans of various government departments on climate change. Even though the launch took place just two days before Winter Commences, Mr SHUN Chi-ming, Director of the Hong Kong Observatory, attended the launch event in a short-sleeved shirt, aptly reflecting the impact of climate change on Hong Kong. According to Mr SHUN, more incidents of high temperatures, extreme weather and sea level rise would be expected as the emission of greenhouse gases continued unabated. There would be higher risks of flooding in coastal areas caused by storm surges. The “Hong Kong Climate Report 2015” was presented at the Paris Climate Summit.

Meanwhile, the “Hong Kong Climate Resilience Roadmap for Business” was launched to give the city’s commercial sector guidelines on sustainable development. The document encouraged the businesses sector to work closely with the government in response to climate change. As an officiating guest, Mr SHUN delivered a short speech at the launch event, reiterating the Observatory’s willingness to cooperate with the stakeholders of various industries to enhance Hong Kong’s resilience to climate change.



Mr SHUN Chi-ming (first from right), Director of the Hong Kong Observatory, attends the launch event of “Hong Kong Climate Report 2015”.

Daniel YEUNG

“Hong Kong Observatory Calendar 2016” on Sale

“Hong Kong Observatory Calendar 2016” features a set of breathtaking weather photos taken in Hong Kong, each with a Quick Response (QR) code for easy access to information relevant to the meteorological phenomena. Simply scan the codes in the calendar if you would like to learn more about interesting cloud types and special optical or weather phenomena, such as asperitas, anti-crepuscular rays and fallstreak holes.



Wave clouds near Tai Mo Shan Radar Station (Photographer: Mr CHAN Fu-cheong)



More on
wave clouds



Ask Dr Tin



Highest **Annual** Mean Temperature: **24.2°C**

Highest Mean Temperature for **Autumn**: **26.1°C**

Highest Mean Temperature for **Summer**: **29.4°C**

18 New Records in 2015

Highest Annual Number of **Hot Nights**: **37**

Lowest Annual Number of **Cold Days**: **7**

Highest Number of **Very Hot Days** for Summer: **28**

2015 is a year of new records, with 18 temperature-related records broken or equalled.

Highest Mean Maximum Temperature for June: **32.3°C**

Highest Mean Temperature for June: **29.7°C**

Highest Mean Minimum Temperature for June: **27.7°C**

Highest Mean Minimum Temperature for Summer: **27.4°C**

Highest Mean Temperature for November: **24.0°C**

Highest Mean Minimum Temperature for November: **22.4°C**

Highest Mean Minimum Temperature for Autumn: **24.4°C**

Highest Annual Mean Minimum Temperature: **22.4°C**

Highest Number of Hot Nights for June: **13** Highest Number of Very Hot Days for June: **10**

Highest Daily Maximum Temperature: **36.3°C** (8 August)

Highest Daily Mean Temperature: **32.4°C** (8 August)

WOW!



HKO Sidelights

Observatory Staff and Friends of the Observatory Commended by the Public

Staff of the Observatory and Friends of the Observatory docents who received words of thanks and commendation from the public or organisations during October to December 2015:

(Senior Scientific Officer) Miss Olivia LEE,
Mr MA Wai-man

(Scientific Officer) Mr LEE Kwok-lun

(Senior Scientific Assistant) Mr FUNG Kwok-chu

(Clerical Assistant) Miss WONG Yip-ying

(Friends of the Observatory) Miss YAM Kwan-mei,
Mr FAN Man-hei

2015

Winners of Best TV Weather Programme and Presenter Awards

Best Presenter Award: Ms Sandy SONG, Mr TSOI Tsz-shun

Big-leap Award: Mr SHUM Chi-tai

Best Voice Over Award: Ms NG Yuk-yam

Best Programme Award: Fallstreak Hole

Innovative Award: Dual Polarisation Radar

Best Story Line Award: Legends of Clouds (I) – Lightning and Thunder

Best Script Award: Aurora Watching

The award presentation ceremony was held on 24 December 2015. Heartfelt congratulations to all the winners. The TV team will continue to make even more informative and interesting programmes for the public.



On 18 October 2015, Dr CHENG Cho-ming (fourth from left), Assistant Director of the Hong Kong Observatory, and Friends of the Observatory volunteers supported the Mountaineering Safety Promotion Day 2015.



In October 2015, the Observatory received ISO 9001 accreditation for its Ambient Gamma Radiation Level Measurement Service in recognition of its good quality management practices and standards. Staff members working on the project are pictured at the award ceremony.



On 28 October 2015, the Observatory and the Drainage Services Department (DSD) jointly organised a talk on climate change for more than 100 students of Yu Chun Keung Memorial College, delivered by Mr SHAM Fu-cheung, Chief Experimental Officer of the Hong Kong Observatory (front right), and Mr CHAN Li-ting, DSD Engineer (front left).



In November 2015, the eighth public course on weather observation was attended by more than 130 participants, the highest attendance since the programme began in 2004.



On 4 December 2015, Mrs Rita LAU (second from right, front row), Chairman of the Public Service Commission (PSC), and PSC members visited the Observatory.



On 11 December 2015, Mr SHUN Chi-ming, Director of the Hong Kong Observatory, gave a talk on climate change to students of the Institute of Active Ageing of the Hong Kong Polytechnic University.



On 3 January 2016, Friends of the Observatory volunteers took part in the 24th Hiking Festival and helped out at the Observatory's booth.



For details of the activities, please visit:
<http://www.hko.gov.hk/wisnew.htm>
<http://www.hko.gov.hk/hkonevs/indexe.htm>