

# 100th Anniversary of Numbered Typhoon Signals

Editorial Board

Typhoon signals, originally devised for the marine community, have been widely adopted for general use. In 1917, numbered typhoon signals indicating the wind direction and wind strength associated with tropical cyclones first came into use in Hong Kong for the purpose of warning the public. The system has been modified several times over the years. The current version of numbered signal system was adopted in 1973. The year 2017 marks the 100th anniversary of the introduction of numbered typhoon signals in Hong Kong. The Hong Kong Observatory has arranged exhibits at the Cheung Chau Meteorological Station, the last signal station hoisting tropical cyclone signals. Exhibits include physical objects of the tropical cyclone warning signals, as well as introduction to the evolution of the numbered typhoon signal system, the history of the Cheung Chau Signal Station and Cheung Chau's typhoon history.

On 7 June, the Observatory introduced the exhibits on the history of typhoon signals to the media. The Director, Mr Shun Chi-ming, said that the numbered typhoon signal system in Hong Kong is simple and easy, and has helped to safeguard people's lives and property from typhoon hazards over the past century. Through presenting a review of the evolution of the signal system and typhoon history, it was hoped to increase public awareness on prevention against typhoon-related hazards.



Mr Shun Chi-ming, the Director of the Hong Kong Observatory (fourth from right), with the guests at the Cheung Chau Meteorological Station.



Also marking the anniversary, on 13 June, Hongkong Post issued a set of commemorative stamps on numbered typhoon signals.

The Observatory will organize guided tours for registered members of public to visit the Cheung Chau Meteorological Station, so as to enhance public understanding of the evolution of the numbered typhoon warning signal system. For details, please see page 6.



Former Chief Scientific Assistant Mr Wat Kam-sing and exhibits in the Cheung Chau Meteorological Station.

Mr Wat Kam-sing, former Chief Scientific Assistant who worked at the Observatory for nearly 40 years, also shared his experience of hoisting the physical typhoon signals. He pointed out that at the time, if there was a need to change from Signal No. 1 to Signal No. 3, he had to lower the No. 1 signal (shaped like a "T"), turned it upside down to represent Signal No. 3, and hang it on the pole again, and then changed the light signals. During severe weather, two or three people were required to do the work together.

"100 Years of Numbered Typhoon Signals" commemorative stamps, and the sales arrangement.



Cool Met Stuff - Evolution of numbered typhoon signals over the past 100 years

