Obituary

Dr Solomon Matthew Bard, OBE, ED, JP (1916-2014)

Dr Solomon Matthew Bard – Solly to his friends – was born in 1916 in Siberia, Russia, where he spent the first eight years of his childhood before his family moved to Harbin in China at the end of June 1924. He received his early education in the city from 1925 to 1932, enrolling in a high school and at the same time attending a music school for three years. In 1932, Solly moved to Shanghai to pursue his studies at an English school where he could prepare for entry to the University of Hong Kong. Admitted to the university’s faculty of medicine in January 1934, he graduated in 1939. During the Second World War, he enlisted in the Field Ambulance Unit of the Hong Kong Volunteer Defence Corps and was attached to the 24th Coastal Battery at Mount Davis during the Battle for Hong Kong.

When Hong Kong fell to the Japanese in late December 1941, Solly was interned in the Sham Shui Po prisoner-of-war camp. After the end of the Pacific War in 1945, Hong Kong returned to the British administration. Solly went to work as a medical doctor in Britain, returning two years later to Hong Kong, where he then spent most of the rest of his working life in the decades that followed. Serving as a general medical practitioner in the territory between September 1947 and December 1955, he subsequently took up a new appointment as Officer (redesignated Director in 1967) of the newly founded University Health
Service of the University of Hong Kong on 1 January 1956, a position he held until his retirement in June 1976.

It was in the 1950s that Solly started to develop his interest in archaeology and local history. He was one of the founding members of the University Archaeological Team, which later became the Hong Kong Archaeological Society in 1967, serving for many years as its chairman. To consolidate his knowledge of archaeology and fieldwork techniques, he spent a year at the Anthropology Department of the Australian Museum in Sydney, working under the Curator David Moore in 1966.

When the Antiquities and Monuments Ordinance came into force in 1976, Solly was appointed the first Executive Secretary of the Antiquities and Monuments Office, a position he held for seven years until 1983. Even after he retired, he maintained close connections with the Antiquities and Monuments Office and the Antiquities Advisory Board and participated in a number of significant archaeological investigations, including those at Yung Long, Tuen Mun in 1992, Ma Wan in 1993, Tai Fu Tei, San Tin in 2000 and Fat Tau Chau, Sai Kung in 2004. He also conducted several research projects, which resulted in publications such as *In Search of the Past: A Guide to the Antiquities of Hong Kong* (Hong Kong: Urban Council, 1988), *Study of Military Graves and Monuments: Hong Kong Cemetery* (Hong Kong, 1991), and *Garrison Memorials in Hong Kong: Some Graves and Monuments at Happy Valley* (Hong Kong: The Antiquities and Monuments Office, Broadcasting, Culture and Sport
Solly was appointed Honorary Curator (Archaeology) of the City Museum and Art Gallery (split into the Hong Kong Museum of History and Hong Kong Museum of Art in 1975) for two years from September 1974. From 1976 to November 2014, a total of 38 years, Solly served as a Museum Expert Advisor on the archaeology, local history and military panels of the Leisure and Cultural Services Department and its predecessor organisations, and in this role he made significant contributions to the Hong Kong Museum of History: in the early 1990s, he conducted a comprehensive study of the old Lei Yue Mun (Lyemun) Barracks as part of the preparations for the establishment of the Hong Kong Museum of Coastal Defence; in the same period, he carried out research into foreign traders in Hong, and his paper on this subject was published in 1993 under the title *Traders of Hong Kong: Some Foreign Merchant Houses, 1841-1899* (Hong Kong: Urban Council, 1993); he also worked on the photograph collection in 2003. In 2012, Solly began working with the Hong Kong Museum of History on revising and translating his research papers on local coastal defences in order to convert them into a publication. Entitled *Notes on the History of Hong Kong’s Coastal Defence during the British Administration, with Special Reference to Lei Yue Mun*, this is the last work of Dr Bard and will be published by the Hong Kong Museum of History in early 2015.
Solly devoted much of his time to pursuing his passion for music especially during his tenures at the University of Hong Kong and the Antiquities and Monuments Office. He learned how to play the Chinese flute and occasionally conducted the amateur Sino-British Orchestra, later to become the Hong Kong Philharmonic Orchestra, which he then served as its chairman for many years. After retiring from the Antiquities and Monuments Office, he became the Assistant Music Director of the Hong Kong Chinese Orchestra from 1983 to 1987.

For his long and meritorious service with the Royal Hong Kong Regiment (The Volunteers), Solly was awarded the Efficiency Decoration in 1957 and promoted to Honorary Colonel of the Regiment for the period 1982-1984. He was made an MBE (military) in 1968 and OBE (civilian) in 1976, and was appointed a Justice of the Peace in 1975, while the University of Hong Kong conferred on him the degree of Doctor of Letters *honoris causa* in 1976.

Solly passed away in Sydney, Australia on 8 November 2014 at the age of 98. His passing is a great loss for his family and friends and also to the Leisure and Cultural Services Department. We always miss him who was a friend and a teacher to us.

Leisure and Cultural Services Department
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