

Chapter 19

Recreation, Sport and the Arts

Hong Kong is noted for its hard-working people who have made the city an economic dynamo. But it is not all work and no play. People here also spend time in a wide variety of recreational, sports and cultural activities. From tai chi to yoga, from football to rugby, from international arts festivals to home-grown performances—Hong Kong is rich with leisure opportunities.

Recreation, sport and the arts provide an opportunity for people in Hong Kong to improve their quality of life. The Government helps to nurture an environment in which creative freedom, a pluralist approach to the development of the arts, sporting excellence and recreation can thrive.

Government policies on matters concerning sport, recreation, culture and heritage are coordinated by the Home Affairs Bureau. Organisations that help to draw up these policies include the Hong Kong Sports Commission, the Hong Kong Sports Institute, the former Culture and Heritage Commission, the Hong Kong Arts Development Council and the Antiquities Advisory Board.

The Hong Kong Sports Institute Limited was set up as a delivery agent to help develop sports in Hong Kong with special emphasis on training athletes for high-performance sports. In January 2005, the Government established the Sports Commission to advise on all matters related to sports development. The commission, in turn, is advised by the Elite Sports Committee, the Major Sports Events Committee and the Community Sports Committee which it oversees. The new administrative arm is a milestone for sports development in Hong Kong.

The Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD), an executive branch of the Home Affairs Bureau, helps to provide leisure and cultural services to the community, preserves its cultural heritage, beautifies its physical environment, and to foster synergy with sports, cultural and community organisations.

The department continued to play a role in enhancing Hong Kong's image as Asia's world city, developing the performing arts, cultivating creativity and sustaining lifelong interest in the arts.

It is responsible for promoting and developing recreation and sport at the community level. It coordinates the provision of quality recreational and sports facilities and supports and organises training programmes and activities to promote community sports, identify sporting talent and raise sporting standards.

The department also works closely with the District Councils, the national sports associations (NSAs) under the auspices of the Sports Federation and Olympic Committee of Hong Kong, China, district sports associations and schools to promote the concept of 'Sport for All' and to encourage people of all ages and from all walks of life to participate in sports and recreational activities.

The LCSD supported the Government's greening policy during the year by carrying out an extensive programme involving the planting of trees in parks, playgrounds and roadsides. In addition, various educational and community greening activities were organised to strengthen public awareness of the importance of an environmentally friendly Hong Kong.

The Arts

It is the Government's policy to provide an environment that is conducive to freedom of expression and artistic creation and one that encourages free participation in all aspects of cultural life. The policy comprises four major elements: respect for creative freedom and expression; provision of opportunities for participation; encouragement for diversified and balanced development and provision of the necessary environment and conditions for the arts and culture to grow in Hong Kong.

Committees

Four committees were established in 2004 to advise the Secretary for Home Affairs on policies and strategies for the development of arts and culture. These are the Committee on Performing Arts, the Committee on Museums, the Committee on Libraries and the Advisory Committee on Cantonese Opera. The performing arts, museums and libraries committees base their plans for the development of cultural facilities and services on the Culture and Heritage Commission policy recommendations.

Apart from fostering community support and partnership with different sectors, the committees also seek to enhance public interest and understanding in the performing, visual and literary arts.

The Advisory Committee on Cantonese Opera advises the Secretary for Home Affairs on the promotion, preservation, study and further development of Cantonese opera in Hong Kong.

Hong Kong Arts Development Council

The Hong Kong Arts Development Council (HKADC) was established by ordinance in 1995 to plan, promote and support the broad development of the arts

which include performing, literary, visual, film and media, arts education, arts criticism and arts administration in Hong Kong.

Arts funding is one of the HKADC's major responsibilities. To meet the different needs of the arts community, different types of grant schemes which include three-year, one-year, devolved and project grants, are introduced to support the broad development of local artists and arts organisations. The HKADC also helps nurture fledging artists and arts groups through proactive projects. The Fresh Wave Short Film Competition, organised in collaboration with the Hong Kong International Film Festival Society, is one example of this kind of aid designed to help aspiring and promising young people to become film makers. Another is the Pilot Partnership Scheme on Xiqu Venue, formed to take xiqu performances to a larger audience and to nurture new talents.

To raise local arts standards, the HKADC has been promoting cultural exchanges between local artists and their counterparts on the Mainland and other countries. In May 2006, the HKADC made arrangements for a delegation of about 30 local arts groups to take part in the Second China (Shenzhen) International Cultural Industry Fair. By participating in the event, the Hong Kong group was able to show the diversity and vibrancy of the arts scene in Hong Kong as well as secure a foothold on the Mainland. A HKADC delegation which included representatives of local arts groups visited cities in the Pearl River Delta Region in November to further strengthen ties with their Mainland counterparts and to study their cultural facilities and needs.

In addition to supporting local artists and arts organisations, the HKADC continues to work with different government departments, and private and public bodies to take the arts closer to the general public.

During the year, the HKADC took part in organising a series of events which included 'The Reading Write-up Competition for Students' and the 'Critics' Recommendation and Cultural Forum' at the annual Hong Kong Book Fair to enhance the joy of reading. The Hong Kong Literature Festival, presented jointly with the LCSD increases people's appreciation of literature through symposiums, interflow activities and artistic performances. The eight-episode television series — *Art Odyssey*, co-produced with Radio Television Hong Kong, features different arts and cultural facilities around the world and explains how these infrastructures contribute to a city's development.

In September, the HKADC teamed up with the Hong Kong Institute of Architects to participate in the 10th International Architecture Exhibition at the Venice Biennale for the first time under the 'Hong Kong, China' banner. As a result of its success in Venice, the show was repeated in Hong Kong.

Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts

Established by ordinance in 1984 with an autonomous governing council, the Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts (the Academy) offers professional training in dance, drama, music, film and television, theatre and entertainment arts, and Chinese traditional theatre.

One landmark event in the Academy's development was the opening of the Béthanie House in November 2006 as a co-campus of the Academy, primarily to house its School of Film and Television.

During this year, the Academy successfully launched two academic programmes at master's degree level: Master of Fine Arts (Dance) and Master of Music. Altogether, 15 full-time and five part-time students joined these two practice-based academic programmes. At the same time, in furtherance of the Academy's strategy to sustain and to advance institutional maturity and progress, preparation was under way in offering Master of Fine Arts (Drama) and Master of Fine Arts (Theatre and Entertainment Arts). It was envisaged that the first group of students would be at the Academy in the 2007-08 academic year. In September 2007, the Academy will establish a Performing Arts Teaching Unit, which will focus on teacher-training of performing arts educators for Hong Kong's junior and secondary schools.

In 2006, the Academy's Extension and Continuing Education for Life (EXCEL) programme enrolled nearly 7 400 participants in 404 courses on the arts spectrum.

Hong Kong Arts Centre

Hong Kong Arts Centre is a creative hub in the local community, providing all the essentials and backing for the development of arts and creative industries. In 2006, it continued to promote contemporary arts and provide quality arts education to the whole community.

The centre collaborated with many different arts group and organisations in 2006 to stage events in its premises. A territory-wide animation project, 'i-city', commissioned more than 10 local budding animators to make use of their creativities to find out more about their bonding with Hong Kong and about their identities. As a result of its success over the past decade, the 12th ifva Festival continued to receive wide support from the community. It also continued cultivating and recognising young talents in film and video arts. 'The Art of Commercial 2006' brought awarded advertisements from all over the world to Hong Kong audiences, while activities on the sidelines created opportunities for fruitful exchanges among new media artists, advertising professionals and people engaged in creative industries. High profile exhibitions like 'Comix Magneto', 'TaoHo 70/30 Exhibition', 'Memories of the Future', 'Jimmy's Secret Garden' and 'Ho Siu Kee: Body Gesture' aroused keen public interest in the arts and helped expand the audience base. The public arts programmes, 'Body Movies in Hong Kong' and 'My Soil, My Land: Community Art Project' brought brand-new arts experiences to the students and to the public. Furthermore, PIP, a collaboration between the Hong Kong Arts Centre and Theatre Ensemble, which espouses a revolutionary philosophy of 'Pleasure-In-Play', organised a series of remarkable activities, including performances and educational programmes that reached a wide spectrum of audience. The Hong Kong Arts Centre also took part in setting up the Jockey Club Creative Art Centre. Being a strategic partner in this innovative project, the centre joined hands with Hong Kong Baptist University and Hong Kong Arts Development Council to turn an abandoned factory into a creative arts centre marking the first renovation project of its kind in Hong Kong history.

As for the Hong Kong Art School (HKAS), the centre's educational arm, 2006 was a year of consolidation. HKAS offered a series of high-quality award-bearing programmes with a comprehensive academic progression pathway from foundation diploma to master degree levels. The number of applications for the 10 award-bearing programmes was approximately 1 000, and the enrolment rate was 43 per cent. The school also worked vigorously to launch other award-bearing programmes such as the Professional Certificate of Exhibition Studies and Art Curatorship programme in response to the community's aspiration to diversified arts education.

The Fringe Club

The Fringe Club is housed in a cold storage warehouse built in 1890, that is acknowledged as a historical building. The building underwent many major renovations to make it a vibrant place for contemporary arts after the Fringe Club moved into the warehouse in 1983. In 2001, the building won the Government's Heritage Award for its innovative adaptive use of the historical building.

The Fringe Club has two studio theatres, three exhibition areas (including a photography gallery), a pottery workshop and showroom, a rehearsal studio, a restaurant, two bars, a roof garden and offices. It runs a diverse programme of theatre, dance, music and exhibitions. It is committed to an open access policy and to the nurturing of budding artists by providing venue, publicity support, as well as opportunities to go on tours overseas. In 2006, the club was used as the base for six art festivals. From time to time, the Fringe Club produces its own theatrical performances, art exhibitions and site-specific works with a Hong Kong heritage theme. During the past two decades, more than 500 arts groups from Asia, Australia, Europe, North and South America have used the premises for cultural exchange activities.

In 2006, the club presented the City Festival putting the spotlight on Singapore to promote cultural exchange advocated in the Memorandum of Understanding signed between the governments of Singapore and Hong Kong.

Performing Arts Groups

Chung Ying Theatre

Established in 1979, the Chung Ying Theatre Company is a non-profit-making leading professional theatre company in Hong Kong.

The company is committed to staging quality and lively shows to promote theatrical arts, explore cultural exchanges and to enrich cultural life. In 2006, Chung Ying introduced a number of works to the audience, including an adaptation from a famous Chinese novel, *Modern Journey to the West*, an original farce, *The Last Bet of My Dead Aunt*, a family show, *Music Factory*, a true story about a village school, *The School & I*, and Victor Hugo's masterpiece *Les Misérables*. During the year, the company organised an innovative language-enhancing programme, called *Chung Ying Educational Theatre Cruise*, which offered training in different languages on board a ferry. The company also organised two school touring projects which carried the Centennial Celebration of Chinese Drama and environmental protection theme.

City Contemporary Dance Company

The City Contemporary Dance Company (CCDC) was established in 1979. It is a professional modern dance company that nurtures the best talent to create dance in the context of modern China. In 2006, the company produced two mixed bills — *Iron and Silk* and *Feng Shui*, as well as two new full lengths, *Nijinsky* and *Testimony*. Besides taking part in the annual Guangdong Modern Dance Festival, the company was invited to perform in the Novel Hall in Taipei. The CCDC Dance Centre offered a great variety of dance courses to the public and developed new audiences through its outreach programmes.

Hong Kong Ballet

A new chapter opened for Hong Kong Ballet in July 2006 with the appointment of a new Artistic Director John Meehan, former ballet star and artistic director of American Ballet Theatre Studio Company. In the same year, the company rolled out two new productions, *Suzie Wong* which was premièred in March and restaged in November, and *Balanchine and Beyond*, premièred in October; and four revivals: *Classics and Beyond*, *The Sleeping Beauty*, *Cinderella* and *The Nutcracker*.

The company also invited internationally renowned ballerina Merrill Ashley to Hong Kong to stage Balanchine ballets. During her stay, Merrill conducted a master class and an evening presentation for the public, which was received enthusiastically. The company was also invited to take part in the 1st Asia Pacific Ballet Festival held in Seoul, Korea, in November.

Apart from mainstream productions, the company's Education and Outreach Department organised various activities including an Artist in Residence Scheme, A Multi-media Dance Education Project — *Le Spectre De La Rose*, Making Dances and Holiday Ballet courses.

Hong Kong Chinese Orchestra

Founded in 1977, the Hong Kong Chinese Orchestra (HKCO) was incorporated as a non-profit-making organisation in 2001. It is now the only professional, full-scale Chinese orchestra in Hong Kong. Under Artistic Director Yan Huichang, the 85-member orchestra has gained international recognition.

The HKCO has its roots in Chinese tradition and has thrived on its musical arts, but it is also constantly trying to combine the musical arts of the East and the West. During the year, the orchestra organised the 'Cadenza of Hong Kong' project. Two concert series, An East-West Crossover and Music from the Heart, were presented to showcase works by composers around the world.

During the year, the orchestra gave more than 150 performances. Overseas tours to Australia, New Zealand and London have strengthened the orchestra's image as a cultural ambassador for Hong Kong. Furthermore, the orchestra has continued its work in arts education through the Hong Kong Children Chinese Orchestra, the Junior Hong Kong Chinese Orchestra, instrumental classes, as well as music educational projects carried out jointly with tertiary education institutions.

Hong Kong Dance Company

The Hong Kong Dance Company was established in 1981 and formally incorporated as a charitable and non-profit-making organisation in April 2001. The company is committed to promoting Chinese dance and dance drama in a unique Hong Kong style. Over the years, the company staged more than 100 performances by Mainland, overseas and local choreographers, and in 2006, it staged a total of 21 large-scale shows.

The company's '8/F Platform' programme launched in mid-2005 was well received and its productions were honoured at the Hong Kong Dance Award 2006. In 2006, there were 22 performances in the 8/F Platform series, attracting 2 000 dance fans.

Celebrating its 25th anniversary in 2006, the company is poised to attain greater artistic goals.

Hong Kong Philharmonic Orchestra

With 90 full-time musicians, the Hong Kong Philharmonic Orchestra, under Artistic Director and Chief Conductor Edo de Waart, has secured a reputation as one of the finest orchestras in Asia. The year has seen significant growth in both artistic quality and audience numbers, thanks to the continuation of Edo de Waart's cycle of Mahler symphonies (Nos. 2, 3 and 4) which received great critical acclaim, a week-long residency programme at the Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts, performances in the Hong Kong Arts Festival and the New Vision Arts Festival, and a hugely successful free, open-air concert, *Symphony Under the Stars*, which attracted an audience of more than 16 000 people. The Robert H N Ho Family Foundation Orchestral Fellowships Scheme was launched in 2006. It offers a 10-month curriculum for up to 10 young Chinese string players to become professionals. The students will receive coaching and post-graduate training in the orchestra so that they may eventually join it as professionals.

Hong Kong Repertory Theatre

Established in 1977 and incorporated in 2001 as an independent company and a registered non-profit-making organisation, the Hong Kong Repertory Theatre is the largest professional theatre company of its kind in Hong Kong. The company stages its productions in Cantonese, with some selected productions in Putonghua. During the year, the company staged seven productions of different genres, and went on tour with *Love in a Fallen City*, performing in Toronto and New York, which was followed by a further six performances of the same production in the 'Meet in Beijing' Arts Festival held in Beijing. The company also took part in the first Tennessee Williams Festival in Provincetown, United States, with an excerpt version of *The Eccentricities of a Nightingale* in September. As part of its outreach activities, the company offered touring performances to schools in Hong Kong and Macao, a four-week summer drama camp for secondary school students and theatre workshops and talks for youths and the community.

Hong Kong Sinfonietta

Founded in 1990 and turned professional in 1999, the Hong Kong Sinfonietta is an orchestra formed by local musicians, with a mission to make orchestral music more accessible to the public. Led by Music Director Yip Wing-sie, the orchestra is known for its innovative programming, new commissions, collaboration with other art forms and interactive educational concerts. In 2006, the orchestra gave over 70 performances, including six concerts at the *La Folle Journée* festival in Tokyo. Other highlights included concerts with Pinchas Zukerman, Pascal Rogé, Benjamin Schmid, rising stars Mengla Huang, Alison Balsom and Freddy Kempf, the HKS McDull Music Project, as well as a collaboration with comedian Jim Chim at Hong Kong Coliseum.

Theatre Ensemble

Established in 1993 under the artistic direction of the co-founders and associate artistic directors Jim Chim and Olivia Yan, Theatre Ensemble has endeavoured to create physical theatre works that are creative and humorous.

In addition to the resident programme PIP Let's Play, the company organised various art educational activities which included Stage Reading Workshop, Sunday Theatre to which underprivileged children and their parents were invited to see the company's children theatre productions and Art Tour.

The company's major productions in 2006 included premières of *L'empereur du Chant*, *Faust auf dem Klosett*, Children Theatre productions *Moon 7 1/2*, *Papa Alibaba*, *Man of la Tiger* (6th run), and *You Yuan* which was invited by Taiwan to participate in the International Theatre Festival there.

Zuni Icosahedron

Zuni Icosahedron is a multimedia experimental theatre group. Since its inception in 1982, it has played an important role in opening new frontiers for Hong Kong's cultural scene. It has been active in theatre productions as well as in the areas of arts education, arts criticism and arts policy research.

In 2006, Zuni produced and presented over 50 performances. Productions included *1587, a Year of No Significance* (History Theatre), the *Three-Letter Opera* (Social Theatre series), *The Outcast General* (Experimenting China series), *Hong Kong Style* (Multimedia Architecture Music Theatre series). Zuni also continued to organise multimedia theatre workshops and joint-school performances for students.

Visual Arts Groups

1a Space

1a space, founded in 1998 by a group of Hong Kong arts workers, is an independent, non-profit-making contemporary visual arts organisation. It aims to promote the critical dissemination of contemporary visual arts practices and affiliated art forms through programmes from Hong Kong and the world. In 2006, 1a space actively assisted in the holding of exhibitions on contemporary local arts and in organising cultural activities, international arts exchange and artist-in-residence programmes.

Artist Commune

Since its establishment in July 1997, Artist Commune as a non-profit arts group, has committed itself to the development of community art. It set up its first workshop in Cheung Fat Industrial Building in Shek Tong Tsui from where it moved to Oil Street Artist Village in North Point and to 'Slaughter House' in Cheung Sha Wan, finally settling down in 'Cattle Depot Artist Village' in To Kwa Wan where it has been since 2001.

Its major projects in 2006 included: 'Contemporary Ink Series' which involved merging traditional ink painting and modern materials and concepts, activities such as 'Meditation and Narration — Contemporary Ink Exhibition'; 'Projects to Respond Social Issues' as an aesthetic angle, virtual political creation and first-hand involvement in the society, activities such as 'Art Depot — Development Research of Cattle Depot Artist Village'; 'Artist-In-Residency Programme', which invited notable international artists to exchange their experiences and ideas with local artists and audience, activities such as 'd'Asie d'Afrique' and '>1M Hong Kong, Guangzhou and Macao Modern Sculpture Exhibition'; and various arts promotion activities in association with tertiary education institutions which were organised to nurture new talents, under programmes such as 'New Trend 2006'.

Asia Art Archive

Founded in 2000, as a direct response to the increasing number of Asian contemporary arts exhibitions and events worldwide, the Asia Art Archive (AAA), a Hong Kong-registered charity, is the first public research centre of its kind dedicated to documenting and making the recent history of visual arts from the region accessible to the public. Through the AAA's website and references in AAA archives, over 18 000 items can be viewed by the public — from museums and collectors to specialists and students. In addition to a static collection of materials, the AAA is actively involved in organising workshops, symposia, talks and publications for exchanging ideas.

With a board of directors and an academic advisory board made up of noted curators and critics, and research posts in Bangkok, Beijing, Hong Kong, Mumbai, Seoul, Singapore, Taipei and Tokyo, the AAA acts not only as a valuable information centre, but as a conduit through which people in the contemporary Asian arts field may get in touch with each other. By attending and participating in important Asian-related exhibitions held worldwide, the AAA also plays an active role in recording events as they take place.

In 2006, the AAA organised lectures entitled 'Saying/Unsayng: The Emergence of the Chinese Avant-garde' and 'On top of a Skyscraper in an Earthquake Zone: the Mori Art Museum in Tokyo, its position, policy and funding', and a symposium and workshop on 'Cultural Ecologies: Communicating Contemporary Art in the 21st Century, and published 'From Reality to Fantasy: The Art of Luis Chan'.

Hong Kong Society for Education in Art

The Hong Kong Society for Education in Art was established in 1982. It promotes the development of visual arts education in schools and in the community.

During 2006, the society initiated and organised the 'Creative Student Award Scheme' to nurture students' creative thinking; and programmes entitled 'Road to Creativity in Art — Exhibition of Student Portfolios and Artworks', which showed the teaching and learning progress of visual arts teachers and students; 'West Kowloon Painting on Fabric Tour Exhibition,' which encouraged students to reflect on social issues through artistic works; and 'Service Learning — Cross-subjects Creative Teaching Training Programme in Visual Arts', which enhanced the teaching efficiency of visual arts teachers.

Para/Site Art Space

Para/Site Art Space continued to develop closer ties with its contemporaries in the Pearl River Delta Region in 2006. A number of exciting exhibitions were held, which featured a mix of international and regional artists who drew world attention, with shows such as the Guangzhou artist, Cao Fei's first solo exhibition 'COSplayers' in Hong Kong. The exhibition showcased three of her most recent video installations, using the city's everyday life and youth phenomenon such as Hip Hop and cosplaying to analyse and reflect the current social situation where traditions and new influences are constantly in conflict. A Para/Site solo presentation entitled '4th light' by Hong Kong-born artist Paul Chan in the summer of 2006 was presented in a world premiere together with his other animation installations for which he is most well known in the region.

In line with its plan to foster closer ties with the Pearl River Delta Region, Para/Site presented 'Octomania (on drawing the number eight)' with artists from Hong Kong, Guangzhou, Shenzhen and Macao, to probe the nature of gambling and the spiritual aspects of fanaticisms that are linked to it. Para/Site Art Space was also involved in various international projects, such as the Busan Biennale and in the launching of the exhibition 'Pearl River Delta' in major museums in Europe, designed to promote local and regional artists.

The Hong Kong Jockey Club Music and Dance Fund

The Hong Kong Jockey Club Music and Dance Fund was set up in 1980 with a donation of \$10 million from the Hong Kong Jockey Club for the promotion and development of music and dance. It is a non-statutory trust fund, administered by a board of trustees. In 1994, the Jockey Club injected a further \$22 million into the fund to meet the increasing demand for support.

The fund awards scholarships to enable young people to pursue an integrated programme of post-diploma/post-graduate studies or professional training in music or dance at leading institutions or undertake less formal studies, projects or creative work outside Hong Kong.

During the year, the fund awarded six scholarships worth about \$3 million.

Music Office

The main aims of the Music Office are to promote general music education in Hong Kong, especially among young people, develop public interest in music and to

foster sharing of music among local young musicians and their counterparts across the world. The Music Office runs 18 youth orchestras, bands and choirs with 1 380 members. In 2006, it organised an instrumental music training scheme for 4 800 trainees, short-term music interest courses for 2 000 participants, and 390 music activities to entertain a total of 170 000 people. Other major events included a music camp, youth music 'interflows', and music exchange programmes for local, Mainland and overseas young musicians.

Cultural Venues

Hong Kong Cultural Centre

Since its inauguration in 1989, the Hong Kong Cultural Centre has established itself as Hong Kong's premier performing arts venue, attracting leading artists from around the world. It has three main performing venues: Concert Hall, with a seating capacity of 2 019, Grand Theatre, seating capacity of 1 734, and Studio Theatre which seats 303 to 496 people. In 2006, a total of 831 000 people attended 866 performances in these venues.

Hong Kong City Hall

The Hong Kong City Hall, the first cultural venue of its kind built in Hong Kong in 1962, commands a special place in Hong Kong's cultural development. It is a major multi-purpose complex comprising the Concert Hall, Theatre, Recital Hall, Exhibition Hall and Exhibition Gallery. A total of 724 events were held there during the year, attracting 436 000 people.

Regional and District Civic Centres

The LCSD runs 11 regional and district civic centres: the Sheung Wan Civic Centre and Sai Wan Ho Civic Centre on Hong Kong Island; the Ngau Chi Wan Civic Centre and Ko Shan Theatre in Kowloon; and the Sha Tin Town Hall, Tsuen Wan Town Hall, Tuen Mun Town Hall, Kwai Tsing Theatre, Yuen Long Theatre, North District Town Hall and Tai Po Civic Centre in the New Territories.

In 2006, the Programme Partnership Scheme was relaunched at Yuen Long Theatre, Tuen Mun Town Hall, North District Town Hall, Tsuen Wan Town Hall, Sheung Wan Civic Centre and Ngau Chi Wan Civic Centre. Under this scheme, facilities and resources were provided to selected arts groups to organise audience-building programmes and create new works.

Indoor Stadia

The Hong Kong Coliseum and the Queen Elizabeth Stadium are two of the largest multi-purpose indoor stadia in Hong Kong. The 12 500-seat coliseum is a leading venue for pop concerts, musicals, entertainment spectaculars, international sporting events, cultural programmes and large-scale celebrations. The 3 600-seat stadium is suitable for holding sports events, cultural and entertainment performances, school ceremonies, conferences and variety shows.

During the year, 159 performances were staged in the coliseum and 289 in the stadium attracting over 2 006 400 people.

West Kowloon Cultural District

In October 2005, the Government introduced additional development parameters and conditions, based on public views gauged at the consultation exercise, for the three screened-in proponents in respect of their proposals to develop the 40-hectare prime waterfront site of the West Kowloon Reclamation into an integrated arts, culture, commercial and entertainment district.

As all three proponents did not give a positive response by February 2006, the Government subsequently decided to take the plan forward under a new development approach. The Government established in April 2006 the Consultative Committee on the Core Arts and Cultural Facilities of the West Kowloon Cultural District and its three advisory groups to re-examine, with a view to re-confirming as appropriate the need for the core arts and cultural facilities and other types of arts and cultural facilities to be provided at the West Kowloon Cultural District and the financial implications for developing and operating these facilities. The consultative committee has made substantial headway in its study and it is expected to submit its report to the Government around mid-2007.

URBTIX

URBTIX (Urban Ticketing System) commenced operation in 1984 and has become the most popular computerised ticketing system in Hong Kong. The LCSD launched a brand new and advanced system in October 2006 which enables the public to buy tickets of cultural and entertainment events at any of the 33 outlets as well as through its Internet and telephone ticketing services. During the year, over \$620 million was paid through URBTIX for some 4.14 million tickets for 7 440 performances.

Cultural Presentations

LCSD Cultural Presentations

The Cultural Presentations Section provides quality cultural programmes on a year-round basis. In 2006, 971 performances were presented, featuring local and visiting artists in a variety of shows that appealed to audiences of all ages. More than 520 900 people attended those shows.

Year 2006 was known as the 'Mozart Year'. A string of excellent musical performances was held throughout the year to celebrate the 250th anniversary of the birth of Mozart. They included concerts by Vienna Philharmonic, Camerata Salzburg, London Winds, Vienna Boys' Choir, and Anne-Sophie Mutter, and others. A live relay of the Vienna Philharmonic concerts at the Hong Kong Cultural Centre Concert Hall to the outdoor piazza also drew large audiences. The finale of the Mozart Series *Everlasting Mozart — Piano Marathon* was a resounding success.

Highlights of dance programmes presented during the year included the Eifman Ballet of St Petersburg from Russia and Teatro alla Scala Ballet Company from Italy. Quality performances by local dance companies were also staged to enhance the local dance scene.

To commemorate the centenary of the death of playwright Ibsen, his masterpiece *Doll House* performed by Mabou Mines Company (United States) and *The Wild Duck* produced by the Hong Kong Federation of Drama Societies were presented by the department.

Creating greater appreciation of Chinese opera is a key objective of the department. In line with this aim, it organised the fourth Cantonese Opera Day which was held on the last Sunday in November. The event was part of the 'Bravo! A Cantonese Opera Fiesta!' series. Newly commissioned works included *Recollection of Dreams, Nine Heroines of the Tang Dynasty, the Ravaged Plum Blossoms Bloom Again* and a special programme to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the death of veteran artist Sit Kok-sin.

Chinese opera highlights from other regions included the Peking Opera Gala and a re-run of the young cast Kunqu Opera *The Peony Pavilion* produced by Pai Hsien-yung.

The LCSD also presents a diverse range of thematic film programmes and cooperates with consulates in Hong Kong, and cultural and film institutions to present film and video shows. Major programmes in 2006 included *The Glorious Modernity of Kong Ngee*, the International Children's Film Carnival, A Retrospective of Mainland-Hong Kong Co-productions of the 80s and 90s, the Microwave International New Media Arts Festival and the 35th French Cinepanorama.

The LCSD also assisted in the holding of major local film events by providing venues for them to be staged. These events included the annual Hong Kong International Film Festival and Hong Kong Film Awards Presentation Ceremony. The LCSD provides funds to the Hong Kong Arts Centre to hold its annual Hong Kong Independent Short Film and Video Awards ceremony.

The department continued to cooperate with consulates-general and cultural institutions to promote cultural exchanges and to sponsor cultural events such as the Le French May, the Year of Italy in China and the Year of Russia in China.

Entertainment Programmes

During the year, a total of 651 carnivals and entertainment programmes were organised by the LCSD. More than 1 million people turned up to these events.

Outdoor extravaganzas included the Lunar New Year Lantern Carnival, Mid-Autumn Lantern Carnival and the New Year's Eve Countdown Carnival. A new Youth Band Marathon was introduced during the year, featuring local youth bands that performed in different styles and catered to different tastes. The summer highlight, 'O₂ Recharge Station', was staged in Stanley and Sai Kung. This year's Asian Ethnic Cultural Programmes featured Korean artists performing both traditional and modern dance and rendered a similar mix of music.

Arts Education and Audience-building Projects

The LCSD promotes appreciation of the performing arts at community and school levels with the help of audience-building schemes and educational programmes, and by working with local arts groups and educational organisations.

During the year, the department held a total of 904 arts education and audience-building activities. Under the School Culture Day Scheme, schools take their students to the department's performing venues, museums and libraries during school hours. The School Arts Animateur Scheme was another programme that brought local groups together to provide training in the performing arts for school children.

Community audience building programmes during the year included the Community Cultural Ambassador Scheme and the District Cantonese Opera Parade. A Cultural Services Volunteers Scheme was also organised to get members of the public to serve as volunteers in their leisure time to promote arts and culture.

Major Cultural Events

Hong Kong Arts Festival

Held annually in February and March, the Hong Kong Arts Festival is one of the most important international festivals in Asia, and has become highly regarded worldwide since it began in 1973. With an array of notable performers taking part, the 2006 Festival attracted over 103 000 people to its 108 performances, representing an average attendance rate of over 92.6 per cent per performance. The fare offered in the 2006 Festival programme included Semper Opera Dresden and Opera Nuremberg — *Don Giovanni*; San Francisco Symphony; Birmingham Royal Ballet — *Beauty and the Beast*; Cloud Gate Dance Theatre of Taiwan — *Cursive: A Trilogy*; Rosas; National Theatre of Britain — *The History Boys*; U-Theatre and The Shaolin Temple Wushu Training Centre — *A Touch of Zen*; Salif Keita; as well as local dramas *The Unexpected Man*; *Ending the World* and Actors' Family — *The Legend of the White Snake*.

International Arts Carnival

The six-week International Arts Carnival is the largest annual summer arts festival presented by the LCSD. Held in July and August, it provides healthy, educational and enjoyable entertainment for the whole family. In addition to the shows, the festival offered an opportunity for schoolchildren to tour the carnival ground before the fair opened, to join a fun party, take part in workshops, exhibitions, a graphic design competition and other activities. Some 156 000 people attended 427 shows, featuring 42 local and 10 overseas artist groups during the festival which ran from July 7 to August 13.

New Vision Arts Festival

The New Vision Arts Festival continued its avant-garde programming to showcase innovative music, dance and theatre focusing on contemporary Asian arts. The festival opened with the mesmerising performance by the Shen Wei Dance Arts in *Rite of Spring* and *Near the Terrace* and wound up the show with the cross-cultural

theatre production of *Geisha* by Ong Keng Sen. Asian premieres of the commissioned works — *Eclectic Tales from Mongolia* and *city:zen* were highly acclaimed. A total of 28 visiting and 20 local artist groups performed 84 events during the four-week festival which ran from October 20 to November 19, 2006. More than 71 000 people attended the performances.

Hong Kong International Film Festival

Presented by the Hong Kong International Film Festival Society Limited, the 30th Hong Kong International Film Festival offered a wide range of programmes. The 16-day festival included outdoor film shows screened at the Inflatable Games Carnival held at Tamar Site, 30th Anniversary Programme — HBO Theatre, Chinese Renaissance, *[si]@hkiff*, *Master of Genres: Nakagawa Nobuo*, *James Benning: Stilled Emotions* and a retrospective on Kong Ngee Studio contributed by the Hong Kong Film Archive. Awards presented during the event included the Sony HDV Asian Digital Competition, the Humanitarian Awards for Documentaries, the FIPRESCI Prize, the SIGNIS Award and the new Fresh Wave Joint-U Short Film Competition Award. Under the classifications of Global Vision, Indie Power, Gala Presentation and Master Class, more than 250 films from over 40 countries were shown during the festival.

Heritage

Antiquities Advisory Board and Antiquities and Monuments Office

The Antiquities and Monuments Office continued its task of preserving Hong Kong's heritage and promoting public awareness of it through various educational and extension projects in 2006.

The Antiquities Advisory Board has 21 appointed members and advises the Government on sites and structures that merit protection by declaring them monuments and about other matters related to antiquities and monuments.

In 2006, the office carried out restoration and repair work on a number of historical buildings, including the Tang Chung Ling Ancestral Hall and Tin Hau Temple in Lung Yeuk Tau, Fanling, Leung Ancestral Hall in Pat Heung and Tang Ancestral Hall in Ping Shan. The office also provided technical support to the privately-funded restoration work on the Liu Ying Lung Study Hall in Sheung Shui, which won Honourable Mention of the 2006 UNESCO Asia-Pacific Heritage Awards for Culture Heritage Conservation.

In 2006, rescue archaeological excavations were conducted in Lam Tei, Tuen Mun and Cheung Shue Tan, Tai Po before the sites were developed. Artefacts dating back to the prehistoric period and the Qing dynasty were recovered at these places respectively. Similar operations were carried out at Sai Kung, Tuen Mun, Cheung Chau, and Lamma Island to prevent the underground archaeological remains there from being damaged during the development of village houses at those sites.

Some of the facilities at the Hong Kong Heritage Discovery Centre in Kowloon Park, opened in October 2005, include the exhibition gallery, reference library and lecture hall. Major exhibitions held in the centre in 2006 included the 'Cartographic Survey of Historic Buildings', 'Transforming Our Community' and 'Preserving Hong

Kong's Archaeological and Built Heritage'. A permanent exhibition of Hong Kong's archaeological and built heritage is expected to open by early 2008.

Two electronic database systems are being developed to store heritage information. The Heritage Virtual Tour Programme will provide a panoramic view of 60 historic buildings and sites across Hong Kong. Building of the system is expected to be completed in 2007. The Hong Kong Traditional Chinese Architectural Information System, which maintains a database of about 200 traditional Chinese villages and buildings in Hong Kong, will be launched in late 2007.

The conversion of the Old Ping Shan Police Station, a Grade III historic building into the Ping Shan Tang Clan Gallery-cum-Heritage Trail Visitors Centre is progressing well. The centre is expected to open in April 2007.

Lord Wilson Heritage Trust

The Lord Wilson Heritage Trust was established in 1992, following the enactment of an ordinance bearing the same name. It aims to promote the preservation and conversation of Hong Kong's heritage. During the year, the trust granted around \$3.5 million to support 13 heritage-related activities and research projects. Since the launch of the Lord Wilson Scholarship Scheme in 2005, the trust has awarded scholarships to one research fellow and one post-graduate student to carry out research projects on local archaeology.

The two awardees started their researches in 2006 and the research fellow conducted three public lectures as required under the scheme.

Museums

Hong Kong Museum of Art

In 2006, the museum staged 15 exhibitions, comprising nine special and six permanent exhibitions, drawn from local and overseas sources. Types of art works exhibited included masterpieces from French and American museums, relics of ancient Etruscan civilization, Chinese paintings and calligraphy, Chinese antiquities, and works by contemporary artists in Hong Kong and the Mainland.

The highlight of the year was the exhibition 'Artists and Their Models — Masterpieces from the Centre Pompidou, Paris'. The exhibition was one of the major cultural events of the year which attracted wide press coverage and scored an attendance of over 130 000 visitors. To coincide with the 'Year of Italy in China 2006', an exhibition 'The World of the Etruscans' showcasing pre-Roman culture was presented. Twenty-seven masterpieces of Mark Rothko, one of the leading masters of Abstract Expressionism selected from the National Gallery of Art, Washington D C, were featured to explore the inner being of the artist. This exhibition also illustrated the close cultural relationship with national museums in the United States.

Other highlights included 'Likeness and Unlikeness — A Selection of Works by Qi Baishi from the Liaoning Provincial Museum', a retrospective exhibition on the artistic development of this renowned 20th century Chinese painter. A new display 'Hair Dialogue' featured a recent donation of an avant-garde art piece to dialogue with a

major installation work by a renowned local woman artist. To pay homage to senior Hong Kong masters, 'At the East-West Crossroads — The Art of Wucius Wong' was put on show to illustrate the profound accomplishments of the veteran Hong Kong master.

To enable the public to appreciate and absorb a deeper understanding of traditional Chinese art, the museum held a range of exhibitions which included 'Early 20th Century Guangdong Painting', 'Modern Chinese Paintings from the Xubaizhai Collection' and 'Gems of Chinese Ceramics from the Hong Kong Museum of Art'.

The museum also took an active part in various art educational and extension programmes such as the International Museum Day 2006, School Cultural Day and a wide range of in-house programmes. The exhibitions, together with different education and extension programmes, attracted over 462 000 visitors and participants.

Flagstaff House Museum of Tea Ware

The Museum of Tea Ware collection features various kinds of tea ware and related vessels from the collection of the late Dr K S Lo and rare Chinese ceramics and seals donated by the K S Lo Foundation. Two special and two permanent exhibitions were held in 2006. The 'Tea Ware by Hong Kong Potters 2005' featured works by 70 local potters selected from a tea ware competition and the 'Poetry and Ceramic Art: Collection of the Hong Kong Museum of Art and the K S Lo Collection of the Flagstaff House Museum of Tea Ware' featured refined ceramic tea vessels dating from the Tang dynasty to the 20th century and introduced tea poetry of different eras. During the year, it attracted more than 212 000 visitors.

Hong Kong Museum of History

Apart from 'The Hong Kong Story' permanent exhibition, the Museum of History presented various thematic exhibitions with museums and cultural institutions from the Mainland and overseas, namely 'Sailing West: Admiral Zheng He's Voyages', 'From Bones to Bytes: Chinese Script Decoded', 'Dr Sun Yat-sen in Paper-cut Silhouette' and 'Football'. These joint presentations facilitated academic and cultural interflow among Hong Kong, the Mainland and overseas institutions and historical art lovers. In addition, the museum continued collaborating with government departments, non-profit-making institutions and artists to present exhibitions, that included 'Historical Memorabilia on A Distinguishing Civil Service', 'Documentary of Child Development — Footprints of Children from the 1930s to 2006' and 'A Nostalgic Touch: Exhibition on Kong Kai Ming Collection'. Through these exhibitions, different facets of life, local history and cultural heritage were depicted. The museum attracted 581 600 visitors during the year.

To foster public interest in local history and cultural heritage, the museum also organised a rich variety of education and extension activities.

The Dr Sun Yat-sen Museum, a branch of the Museum of History, opened in December with a presentation of two permanent exhibitions, namely 'Dr Sun Yat-sen

and Modern China' and 'Hong Kong in Sun Yat-sen's time'. The museum was converted from the historic building Kom Tong Hall, which was built in 1914.

The Museum of History also manages two other branch museums — the Lei Cheng Uk Han Tomb Museum in Sham Shui Po and the Law Uk Folk Museum in Chai Wan, which attracted 58 550 and 22 000 visitors respectively.

Hong Kong Museum of Coastal Defence

The Hong Kong Museum of Coastal Defence was converted from the old Lei Yue Mun Fort in Shau Kei Wan. Its permanent exhibition, '600 Years of Hong Kong's Coastal Defence' depicts Hong Kong's history of coastal defence from the Ming and Qing dynasties, the British period, the Japanese invasion to the period after Hong Kong's reversion to Chinese sovereignty. Visitors may also see the military relics in the Redoubt and on the Historical Trail.

Four year-long thematic exhibitions were presented on the museum premises in 2006, namely 'Archery Traditions of Asia', 'The Eight-year War of Resistance', 'Ancient Chinese Weapons', and 'Fujian Arsenal: Cradle of Modern Chinese Navy'. In addition, a symposium on 'Ancient Chinese Military History and the Thoughts of Sun Zi' was held in March in which over 80 academics and experts from the Mainland, Taiwan, Hong Kong and other countries took part. Diversified educational activities such as lectures, drills and field visits to military sites were held regularly. The museum attracted 161 900 visitors during the year.

Hong Kong Heritage Museum

'Leisure and Entertainment' was the theme of the Hong Kong Heritage Museum's programmes in 2006. A series of exhibitions were held, which included 'Enlightening Trivialities — Ancient Chinese Pastimes' jointly presented with the National Museum of China; 'Hong Kong's Popular Entertainment' which traced the changes of Hong Kong's major leisure activities over the past 100 years; 'MEGartSTORE' which showcased some 300 artworks in a shopping mall environment with the participation of local artists, architects and designers; and 'The Fun of Collecting' which featured the unique collections of four local collectors.

A total of 1 214 educational and extension activities such as lectures, field trips, performances, workshops and competitions were organised during the year. Worthy of particular mention were two schemes entitled 'MuseKids' and 'MuseTeens'. The former, launched in 2003 for children from kindergarten to primary six levels, aims to provide the children with more opportunities to explore Hong Kong's history, art and culture. Some 6 800 children participated in the 'MuseKids' scheme. The other scheme, MuseTeens, is a new scheme introduced in mid-2006 for secondary school students. A series of training programmes was carried out under the 'MuseTeens' scheme which successfully stimulated an awareness of, and interest in, local heritage among its participants.

The museum's exhibition programmes, together with its educational and extension activities, attracted 514 300 visitors and participants.

The Heritage Museum also manages three branch museums — the Sam Tung Uk Museum, Hong Kong Railway Museum and Sheung Yiu Folk Museum. The Sam Tung Uk Museum in Tsuen Wan was originally a Hakka walled village built in 1786. It was declared a monument in 1981 and later converted into a museum. The Railway Museum in Tai Po consists of the old Tai Po Market Railway Station building, two historical locomotives and various coaches. The station building, was built in 1913 in a Chinese style and was declared a monument in 1984. The Sheung Yiu Folk Museum in the Sai Kung Country Park is located in a Hakka village built in the late 19th century, which comprises eight domestic units, pig pens, an open courtyard and an entrance gate-tower. The village and a nearby lime kiln were gazetted as monuments in 1981.

In 2006, the Sam Tung Uk Museum, Hong Kong Railway Museum and Sheung Yiu Folk Museum attracted 202 100, 264 800 and 51 700 visitors respectively.

Hong Kong Science Museum

Notable exhibitions of the year held in the Hong Kong Science Museum included 'Optical Illusion', 'Genomic Revolution' and 'Mission Earthling'. 'Optical Illusion' was a collection of about 100 illusions that fool the eyes and brains and challenge the perception. 'The Genomic Revolution' exhibition examined the extraordinary developments taking place in the field of genomics and explored their impact on science and on everyday life. The 'Mission Earthling' exhibition studied various body systems of the human being through the eyes of visiting aliens.

Two winning entries from the 'Weather Machines' Kinetic Sculptures Design Competition were selected for commissioning to produce and install weather-related kinetic sculptures at the piazza. The sculpture, 'Singing in the Rain' was completed and unveiled in April and the other sculpture 'Whistling Aloft' will be unveiled in 2007.

New collection items were also installed in the Life Sciences Hall. They included the skeletons of Indo-Pacific hump-back dolphin (Chinese white dolphin) and a rough-toothed dolphin 'Siu Tik' donated by the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department.

To introduce current local research and achievement in medical science, the museum staged two thematic exhibitions at the Science News Corner in 2006, namely the 'DNA Technologies for Chinese Herbs Authentication' and 'Grapefruit Forms Bone?'. These exhibitions were jointly developed with The Chinese University of Hong Kong and the University of Hong Kong respectively.

The museum celebrated its 15th Anniversary on April 18 with a series of special activities, including the 'Photo Collection Campaign' and the photo mosaic together with the exhibition 'From Aspiration to Achievements', 'Science Fest', 'Bubble Magic Show', 'My Favourite Scientists Election' and 'Science Talks' for students.

Jointly organised with the China Association for Science and Technology, Beijing-Hong Kong Academic Exchange Centre and the China Association (HK) for Science and Society Ltd, the 'Distinguished Chinese Scientists Lecture Series 2006' invited

renowned scholars from the Mainland and Hong Kong to deliver public lectures at the event in mid-November.

During the year, the museum worked with academic institutions and professional bodies on a number of special projects such as 'Fun Science Competition', 'Robotic Olympiads' and '39th Joint School Science Exhibition' to promote science.

In 2006, the museum's exhibitions and extension activities attracted more than 798 000 visitors and participants.

Hong Kong Space Museum

The museum produced two new Sky Shows which ran throughout the year to introduce astronomy and space science using multi-media and special effects. 'The Moon Revisited' reviewed the moon-landing feat and explored future lunar missions while the 'Hubble Space Telescope' took the audience on a journey through the universe and introduced the significant findings of the telescope.

In response to the demotion of Pluto from planetary status, the museum staged a special exhibition entitled 'The New Definition of Planets', developed a new interactive exhibit called 'Exploring the Solar System' and held a forum on the topic.

The museum also cooperated with universities and astronomical societies in organising a series of astronomical training classes for teachers and students. In 2006, the museum's activities attracted more than 703 000 visitors.

Hong Kong Film Archive

The Hong Kong Film Archive's major functions are to acquire, preserve, catalogue and document Hong Kong films and related materials. With a gross floor area of 7 200 square metres, its major facilities include a cinema, an exhibition hall, a resource centre and four temperature-controlled collection storerooms. It has already acquired more than 6 300 films and 786 000 items of related materials, mainly through donations and deposits. Major acquisitions during 2006 included donation of 199 Shaw Studio films from the Celestial Pictures Ltd.

The archive continued to make a positive contribution to film research and conducted oral history interviews with film veterans. Several publications including the 'Oral History Series (3): Director Chor Yuen', '@LOCATION', 'The Glorious Modernity of Kong Ngee' and 'Frame After Frame' were published following popular demand for them. The archive attracted more than 216 300 visitors in 2006.

Art Promotion Office

The LCSD's Art Promotion Office aims to promote local visual arts through wide-ranging activities focusing on public and community art. The office places importance on undertaking projects with different partners, which helps further enhance art appreciation and participation among members of the public.

A competition held under the Public Art Scheme 2006 was organised to embellish three LCSD venues namely the Hong Kong Heritage Discovery Centre at Kowloon Park in Tsim Sha Tsui, Ko Shan Road Park in To Kwa Wan and Po Hong Park in Tseung Kwan O. Another exhibition, the 'Mobile Art Expedition', was a partnership

project in which the Hong Kong Arts Development Council, New World First Bus Services Limited, New World First Ferry Services Limited and Citybus Limited took part. Artworks selected through an open competition were reproduced for a six-month display in bus compartments and at ferry Pier 5 in Central. The 'New Face of Heritage — Installation of Public Artworks at Yat Tung Estate, Tung Chung, Stage Two' project, jointly organised with the Housing Department, was completed with 10 outdoor artworks being commissioned and installed. Together with the works of Stage One project, a beautiful art walk paved by 26 art pieces was formed for the first time in a public estate.

A major community art scheme, 'Artists in the Neighbourhood Scheme III' was carried out through a display of the latest works of outstanding local artists in various districts. Fourteen mobile exhibitions were set up for eight selected artists at venues belonging to the department and its partners.

Hong Kong Visual Arts Centre

The Hong Kong Visual Arts Centre, with nine art studios, a lecture theatre, an exhibition hall and a multi-purpose room, focuses on training in the visual arts, promotion and providing facilities for professionals to hire. The '5th Art Specialist Course', which covered five disciplines — ceramics, printmaking, painting, sculpture and ink painting — was designed for art lovers who want to pursue structured professional art training. To support and promote the development of Hong Kong art, the centre has also organised a series of 'Artist in Residence Programme' to invite the participation of the award-winning artists of the Hong Kong Art Biennial 2005.

Central Conservation Section

The primary role of the Central Conservation Section is to conserve the collections of public museums, for the benefit of the present and future generation. To do this, the section formulated and implemented treatment plans for a total of 940 cultural objects, including paintings, documents, prints, textiles, metals, ceramics, organic materials and archaeological finds.

A conservation programme for Kom Tong Hall was completed during the year.

The historic 511-tonne Fireboat Alexander Grantham was successfully lifted on to land and installed in its permanent site at Quarry Bay Park in March 2006. A gallery is being built for the boat which will go on public display in mid-2007.

As a continuum of the series of exhibitions at the Hong Kong International Airport, the conservation section staged a new thematic display entitled 'Rhyme of White' at Gate 35 of the Departures Hall to feature a fine selection of white ceramics and marble drawn from the collections of the Hong Kong Museum of Art in March 2006.

As part of its educational and extension activities, the section organised 44 workshops, guided tours, thematic talks and seminars, which attracted a total of 1 280 visitors.

Public Libraries

The LCSD operates the Hong Kong Public Libraries system which comprises 66 static libraries and 10 mobile libraries. It also manages the Books Registration Office. The public libraries system provides free library and information services to meet community needs for information, research and recreation and to support lifelong learning and continuous education. It promotes reading and literary arts and offers library extension activities to all ages.

The libraries have a comprehensive collection of library materials which include 10.43 million books and 1.48 million multimedia materials. It has 3.4 million registered borrowers. More than 61.3 million books and other library materials were borrowed from the 76 existing public libraries during the year.

Hong Kong Central Library

Since its opening in May 2001, the Hong Kong Central Library has become a major information and cultural centre in Hong Kong. Occupying a gross floor area of 33 800 square metres with a total stock of 2.19 million items, the 12-storey building provides a wide range of facilities. Special features include a multimedia information system, a central reference library with six subject departments, an arts resource centre, a Hong Kong literature room, map library, language learning centre, young adult library and a toy library. There are also facilities for hire. These include a 1 500 square-metre exhibition gallery, a 290-seat lecture theatre, two activity rooms, a music practice room and discussion rooms. On average, the Hong Kong Central Library is visited by about 14 000 users each day.

In addition to regular cultural activities and talks, the Hong Kong Central Library continued to organise a wide range of large-scale cultural activities such as the 'New Vision in the 21st Century: Young Outstanding Persons' Discourse on Globalisation, China Fever and Technology Revolution', 'Cosmopolitan Hong Kong' and 'Translation, Language and Culture' seminars and 'Public Lectures on History and Business in China'. Two territory-wide exhibitions, entitled 'Art Publishing in Germany' and 'A Passage to Jao Tsung-I — Fusion of Art and Scholarship', were presented jointly during the year by the Goethe Institute of Hong Kong and the Jao Tsung-I Petite Ecole of the University of Hong Kong.

New Initiatives in Library Services

The Hong Kong Public Libraries system makes every effort to improve its service to the public by enhancing the library stock, the reference and information services, the use of information technology and the promotion of reading habits in the community.

Two new small libraries were added to the public library network during the year. They are the Stanley Public Library and the Tin Shui Wai North Public Library, which were opened in July and December respectively, strengthening significantly the library services provided in the Southern and Yuen Long districts.

The Education Resource Centre, a specialised reference library on education at the Kowloon Public Library, opened in late October 2005. With a collection of over

20 000 books, journals, electronic items and online databases, the centre provides information materials on education and language learning and reference services for teachers, researchers and the general public.

Libraries@neighbourhood — a community libraries partnership scheme — meets the needs of the community for reading and learning materials and information. Under the scheme, public libraries work in collaboration with non-profit-making local community organisations to provide reading materials to their user groups. By the end of the year, 614 schools 78 organisations had joined the scheme, and 25 community libraries were set up.

To promote and support lifelong learning in the community, the public libraries continued to work in collaboration with the Education and Manpower Bureau to promote the 'Library Cards for all School Children' scheme to encourage primary school students to use library services. Regular meetings were held with school librarians to foster mutual understanding and support in maximising library resources on teaching and learning as well as organising reading activities.

Course materials of the Open University of Hong Kong are available in 16 public libraries, facilitating the public's pursuit of self-learning.

Reference and Information Services

Reference and information services are provided at the Hong Kong Central Library and the five major libraries — at the City Hall, Kowloon, Sha Tin, Tsuen Wan and Tuen Mun Public Libraries. The Central Reference Library at the Hong Kong Central Library has a collection of 950 000 items, providing reference and information services through its six subject departments. It features a comprehensive collection of electronic resources including databases, electronic books, electronic journals and multimedia programmes, all of which are available online. The library also holds the permanent collection of books deposited under the Books Registration Ordinance and the depository collections of nine international organisations. Specialised reference services are also provided at the Arts Resources Centre, the Hong Kong Literature Room and the Map Library of the Hong Kong Central Library. In addition, the City Hall Public Library offers specialised reference services through its Business and Industry Library, Creativity and Innovation Resource Centre and the Basic Law Library. During the year, a total of 4.14 million enquiries were handled by the library.

Web-based reference services form an integral part of the reference and information services. The Hong Kong Central Library operates an Internet Reference Enquiry Service in collaboration with the Sun Yat-Sen Library of Guangdong Province, Shenzhen Library, and Macao Central Library, which enables readers to contact these libraries directly for information on their respective regions. A wide range of electronic resources, including online database, electronic books, web-resource guide and topical resources guides are posted on the library website for ready reference.

Information Technology Initiatives and Digital Library Initiatives

The Library Automation System of the public libraries is one of the world's largest computerised library systems with both Chinese and English capabilities. It provides 24-hour Internet library services for online catalogue searching and reservation and renewal of library materials. In 2006, more than 17.76 million items of library material were renewed through the Internet and Telephone Renewal Services. More patrons are now using the new e-mail notification service. The Hong Kong Public Libraries Homepage (www.hkpl.gov.hk) is among the 10 most visited websites in Hong Kong, reflecting the growing popularity of online public library services.

Hong Kong Public Libraries continued to expand the application of information technology to provide more convenient and efficient services to the public. New ways of providing wireless Internet service are being tested.

In 2006, the number of readers opting to use their smart ID cards as library cards continued to rise. By the end of the year, 192 computer terminals with Internet access had been installed with e-Cert compatible smart card readers to promote wider use of information technology and electronic services by the public.

Internet Express Terminals were set up in eight libraries on a trial basis, and an expansion of this pilot service is being planned. To further promote self-service by end-users, additional self-charging terminals were also installed in branch libraries.

The Multimedia Information System (MMIS) developed for Hong Kong Central Library opened up new realms for information retrieval by offering the public instant access to a wide variety of digital documents as well as audio and video programmes on demand. Equipped with powerful and sophisticated search facilities, the system provides a one-stop search facility enabling users of all ages to explore the multimedia archives via the Internet at home or through some 600 workstations in the Central Library and the 26 branch libraries. Since its launch in 2001, the MMIS has been honoured with a number of awards both at home and abroad.

Outreach Programmes and Promotion of Reading and Literary Arts

Outreach programmes form an integral part of library services and the libraries continue to organise a balanced mix of activities. Regular programmes like storytelling sessions, book displays and exhibitions, and community talks were organised throughout the year. During the year, a total of 18 905 library outreach programmes were organised.

A variety of reading programmes and reading-related activities were organised to promote reading and sustain reading habits and interest. These included a programme called 'Summer Reading Month', designed to get children and the whole family to read more.

Teens' Reading Clubs were formed at 34 libraries during the year and Family Reading Clubs were set up at the five major libraries. To tie in with the 4.23 World Book Day, libraries organised a book report competition, entitled 'Into the World of

Books' and a bookmark design competition, called 'Into the World of Stories' for students.

A number of special programmes and competitions were held, aimed at promoting creative writing and appreciation and development of the literary arts. The 6th Hong Kong Literature Festival was held in collaboration with the Hong Kong Arts Development Council. In addition, the Awards for Creative Writing in Chinese in 2006 was held in collaboration with the HKADC to encourage creative writing in Chinese and to help budding writers to develop. Other major competitions included the Chinese Poetry Writing Competition and the Competition on Story Writing in Chinese for Students. The Book Donation and Sale Campaign was again held in February to promote reading and to reuse old books.

Cultural Exchange

Efforts to strengthen cultural links and cooperation with public libraries outside Hong Kong continued during the year. Hong Kong's public libraries, the Sun Yat-Sen Library of Guangdong Province, the Shenzhen Library and the Macao Central Library used hyperlinks to share library news and events with each other.

Books Registration Office

The Books Registration Office helps to preserve Hong Kong's literary heritage through the registration of local publications and monitors the use of the International Standard Book Number (ISBN) system. It publishes 'A Catalogue of Books Printed in Hong Kong' in the Government Gazette on a quarterly basis, which can be accessed through the Internet. In 2006, the office registered a total of 14 842 books and 13 924 periodicals, and 717 new publisher prefixes conforming to the ISBN.

Sport and Recreation

A growing number of Hong Kong people enjoy a varied selection of sports and recreational facilities and activities. The LCSD develops and manages facilities such as sports grounds, playgrounds, sports centres, holiday camps, water sports centres, swimming pools and beaches. It also organises training courses, sporting competitions and other activities for people of all ages and abilities, and encourages passive recreation by providing parks and landscaped open spaces for such recreation to take place.

In addition, the department administers subventions provided to 25 camps run by 12 non-governmental organisations. Some 820 000 people participated in activities organised by these camps during the year.

The department is also the authority responsible for issuing and renewing licences for places of amusement. During the year, the department processed 77 applications for billiard halls, eight for public bowling alleys and six for skating rinks.

Hong Kong Sports Institute Limited

The Hong Kong Sports Institute Limited was established on October 1, 2004 to provide an environment in which sports talent can be identified, nurtured and developed. Other than sports facilities, the support given to athletes includes elite coaching and training, sports science, sports medicine, education, applied research and sports information. Thirteen sports are covered by the elite training programme — athletics, badminton, cycling, fencing, rowing, squash, swimming, table tennis, tennis, tenpin bowling, triathlon, windsurfing and wushu. The institute also supports outstanding athletes of other sports under the Individual Athletes Support Scheme and the Disabled Sports Elite Training Programme. During the year, the institute focused on the preparation of athletes for two major games (9th Far East and South Pacific Games for the Disabled and 15th Asian Games) and planning for its reprovisioning and redevelopment due to the staging of the 2008 Olympic Equestrian Events at the institute.

Sporting Achievements

Hong Kong athletes achieved significant success in 2006, winning a total of 180 gold, 185 silver and 185 bronze medals at premier national, Asian and international sporting events.

In 2006, the Hong Kong, China delegation participated in the 15th Doha Asian Games. The Hong Kong team won a record six gold, 12 silver and 10 bronze medals.

In November 2006, Hong Kong's physically disabled athletes took part in the 2006 Far East and South Pacific Games for the Disabled in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia and brought home 25 gold, 30 silver and 24 bronze medals.

Sports Federation and Olympic Committee of Hong Kong, China

The Amateur Sports Federation and Olympic Committee (SF&OC) of Hong Kong was founded in 1949-50 and reorganised as a National Olympic Committee (NOC) in 1951. It changed its name to 'Sports Federation and Olympic Committee of Hong Kong, China' on March 8, 1999. The Federation is a member of the International Olympic Committee (IOC), the Olympic Council of Asia and the Association of National Olympic Committees and has been responsible for organising Hong Kong's participation in all major multi-sports games such as the Olympic Games, Asian Games, Asian Indoor Games and East Asian Games. With a membership of 74 national sports associations (NSAs) and sports organisations, it represents the collective voice of the Hong Kong sports community.

Members of the Federation are NSAs, which are in turn affiliated to their International Federations (IFs) and Asian federations (AFs). They are empowered to coordinate and conduct a wide range of activities related to their sports, from organising sports and recreational programmes for beginners to training elite athletes. They also organise and sanction participation in local and overseas competitions and tournaments and train coaches and referees. NSAs implement and enforce local and international rules and regulations, and they represent Hong Kong in meetings of the IFs and the AFs.

For half a century, the federation has coordinated a comprehensive four-month Festival of Sport. More than 70 of the festival's sporting activities were organised by over 60 NSAs to promote sport for all. It also organises extensive educational programmes for sports leaders, administrators, coaches and technical officials free of charge, notably through the Hong Kong Olympic Academy which offers free sports management and sport science courses and programmes.

With the support of sponsors, the federation organises the annual Hong Kong Sports Stars Awards, the 'Oscars' of local sport, to recognise the achievements of top athletes. The 2005 prize presentation was held in conjunction with the federation's annual spring dinner in February 2006. Award winners included table tennis star Ko Lai Chak and Li Ching who won the silver medal of the men's doubles at the Athens Olympic Games — a first for Hong Kong.

Since December 2004, the federation had been entrusted by the Government to manage Sports House, which was renamed Olympic House following the official visit to Hong Kong in July 2005 of International Olympic Committee President, Count Jacques Rogge. Olympic House is located next to the Hong Kong Stadium. The building now houses the President Office, Secretariat of the Federation and 46 sports organisations, including NSAs and local clubs — all under one roof, the hub of sports administration in Hong Kong.

It is also important to note that Hong Kong sports has entered a new era after being approved by the International Olympic Committee as the host of the 2008 Olympiad Equestrian Events at the 117th IOC Session held in Singapore on 8 July 2005. Hong Kong's preparation for hosting the equestrian events for the Beijing 2008 Olympic Games kicked off with the formation of a high powered Equestrian Committee (Hong Kong) of the Beijing Organising Committee for the Games of the XXIX Olympiad (Equestrian Committee), with the Honourable Timothy T T Fok, SF&OC President, as the committee vice-president, and Mr Pang Chung, SF&OC Honourable Secretary General, as a committee member and a co-chairperson of a coordination committee (on cultural activities, education and community involvement) under the Equestrian Committee which is headed by the Chief Secretary for Administration.

Furthermore, the official handover of the East Asian Games Association Secretariat to Hong Kong in February 2006 symbolised another big step forward for Hong Kong in the run up to organising the 5th East Asian Games in 2009.

Paralympic Sports Associations

The Hong Kong Paralympic Committee and Sports Association for the Physically Disabled (HKPC&SAPD) in its role as the National Paralympic Committee of Hong Kong, China, is the only sports entity recognised by the International Paralympic Committee for the selection of athletes with disabilities for major international competitions, such as world championships and the Paralympic Games. HKPC&SAPD also plays an active role in the conduct of regional functions and the establishment of close working relationships with neighbouring nations and territories with the ultimate aim of enhancing the level of sports for the disabled in Hong Kong and Asia.

2006 was an important and busy year for coaches and athletes who attended numerous world championships and qualifying competitions for the Paralympic Games. Some of the athletes have already qualified for the 2008 Beijing Paralympic Games. At the 9th FESPIC Games, athletes won a total of 58 medals comprising 17 gold, 22 silver, 19 bronze placing Hong Kong, China seventh in the list of 47 participating countries and territories in the medals tally. In the past year, HKPC&SAPD achieved impressive results in the international sporting arena by winning a total of 111 medals in international competitions, garnering 44 gold, 30 silver and 37 bronze medals.

The Hong Kong Sports Association for the Mentally Handicapped develops, promotes and organises sporting activities for people with intellectual disability in order to fully develop their potential in sports, and to cultivate positive attitudes in sportsmanship as well as to facilitate their integration into the community. The association provides sports training and competitions for more than 40 000 handicapped people, and through the years has been steadily developing a training programme to cater to all levels of ability.

Athletes took part in numerous international competitions during the year and made the most of these opportunities to sharpen their skills. Highlights included the 3rd INAS-FID Open European Table Tennis Championships in Portugal, where Hong Kong won gold medals in all of the three women's events; the tour of Hungary where the Hong Kong team won 11 gold, 7 silver and 5 bronze medals in the 3rd INAS-FID Open European Championships in Swimming; the German Open Championships in Swimming; where Hong Kong won 13 gold, 11 silver and 7 bronze medals and the 9th FESPIC Games in Malaysia where Hong Kong carried off eight gold, eight silver and five bronze medals.

Among the other competitions in which athletes competed successfully were 4th National Special Olympics Games, the 2006 Special Olympics Shanghai Invitational Games, the 2006 Special Olympics East Asia Golf Competition and the 2006 Special Olympics East Asia Bocce Competition. A total of 323 medals, with 137 gold, 113 silver and 73 bronze were won by the intellectually disabled athletes during the year.

The Hong Kong Jockey Club

Founded in 1884, The Hong Kong Jockey Club has become one of the world's largest and most respected racing organisations. It is Hong Kong's only authorised operator of horse racing, running racecourses at Happy Valley and Sha Tin as well as three public riding schools. The club also operates the Mark Six lottery and offers betting on overseas football matches.

The club is Hong Kong's largest single taxpayer, contributing \$12.41 billion to the public purse in the 2005-06 season, or about 8.6 per cent of all taxes collected by the Inland Revenue Department during the year. It is also one of the city's largest employers, with over 24 000 full- and part-time staff.

In addition, the club is a major community benefactor, operating under a unique, not-for-profit business model whereby its surplus goes to charity. In the 2005-06

season it donated \$1.03 billion to some 106 local charity and community projects through the Hong Kong Jockey Club Charities Trust.

The club works closely with the Government to promote responsible gambling policies and tackle illegal betting operators. A package of reforms to the horse race betting duty structure, endorsed by the Legislative Council in June 2006 and effective from the start of 2006-07 racing season, has given the club more flexibility to respond to changing market conditions and to combat the illegal gambling.

As well as responding to pressing social concerns, many of the club's community donations are targeted at longer-term challenges facing Hong Kong. A good example of this is CADENZA, a project launched on the club's own initiative in May 2006 to address issues arising from Hong Kong's ageing population. Aided by the Elderly Commission, government departments and leading local and international experts in social gerontology, this five-year, \$380 million project aims to revolutionise the way Hong Kong perceives and cares for its elderly.

The club's experience in running equestrian events and its world-class facilities, especially in the areas of equine healthcare and import and export protocols, played an important part in securing approval for the equestrian events of the 2008 Beijing Olympics to be moved to Hong Kong. The club is building the major venues for the Olympic equestrian events at its own cost as a further demonstration of its commitment to the community. It will also make its equine hospital and laboratory facilities available to the organisers during the Olympics and Paralympics.

In 2006, Hong Kong continued to strengthen its reputation in the international horse racing world. In winning the Yasuda Kinen at Tokyo Racecourse in June, Hong Kong-trained Bullish Luck not only snared one of Japan's leading races, but also secured the four-leg Asian Mile Challenge Series.

The Cathay Pacific Hong Kong International Races at Sha Tin Racecourse in December saw some 30 top thoroughbreds from all over the world compete in four International Group One events on a single day for a total purse of \$62 million, a spectacular day of sport broadcast to over one billion racing fans worldwide. Two of the trophies went to Hong Kong-trained horses, with Absolute Champion winning the Hong Kong Sprint and The Duke taking the Mile.

Recreational and Sports Programmes

The LCSD ran some 29 100 recreational and sports programmes for about 1.78 million participants of all ages and abilities during the year at a total cost of \$99 million.

District Sports Teams

In order to generate more community interest in sports and to foster a stronger sense of belonging among residents, the LCSD, in collaboration with the respective NSAs, formed basketball, football, handball and volleyball teams in 18 districts. About 11 600 young people took part in more than 260 events organised in 2006.

'Healthy Exercise for All' Campaign

The LCSD and the Department of Health continued to co-organise the 'Healthy Exercise for All' campaign. A variety of promotional activities were organised to drive home the message that people of all ages should do daily exercise to stay healthy. Fitness programmes were drawn up for different target groups. The exercises included hiking, walking, dancing and rope-skipping. A series of mobile exhibitions to promote sports and healthy pursuits were held. In addition, a 30-second film about physical exercise was produced in conjunction with the Department of Health and was broadcast in early August. During the year, about 77 000 people took part in some 1 350 programmes of this kind.

Territory-wide Events

The Corporate Games, designed specially for working people, saw some 8 700 participants from 287 industrial and commercial organisations take part in 14 events organised under the programme in 2006. The Masters Games, for people aged 35 and above, saw some 4 500 people participate in 10 competitions during the year.

Young Athletes Training Scheme

In 2006, the LCSD commissioned 20 NSAs to provide intermediate level training to teenagers to become athletes under the Young Athletes Training Scheme. Some 26 700 young people joined the programme. The ones that showed promise were recommended for further training.

School Sports Programme

The School Sports Programme aims to provide more opportunities for primary, secondary and special school students to participate in sports. To raise the standard of sports in schools, progressive training is provided for students with potential. The scheme incorporates seven subsidiary programmes: the Sport Education Programme, Easy Sport Programme, Outreach Coaching Programme, Sport Captain Programme, Joint School Sport Training Programme, Badges Award Scheme and a newly introduced sportACT Award Scheme which was designed specially to encourage students to take part regularly in sporting activities. In 2006, more than 7 000 sporting events were organised for over 500 000 students.

Community Sports Club Project

The Community Sports Club (CSC) Project is organised by the LCSD in collaboration with the NSAs. In 2006, the department provided support to about 290 CSCs to organise 1 700 sports training activities for 38 000 participants. Seminars and management development programmes were organised for some 600 sports volunteers to help them run community sports clubs.

Last year, the department introduced the CSC Enhancement Programme to encourage CSCs to make use of LCSD venues during non-peak hours. A total of 137 sports training classes were held for 1 700 participants under the CSC Enhancement Programme. CSCs were also encouraged to organise more inter-club competitions to raise the standard of sports at the community level.

Sports Subvention Scheme

The LCSD is solely responsible for distributing grants to NSAs and other sporting organisations and for organising sporting activities. The subvention covers general administration, personnel expenses and spending on programmes by NSAs. Sporting organisations use the subvention mainly for arranging programmes for sports.

During the year, 57 NSAs and 28 sporting organisations were provided with funds amounting to about \$150 million by the department. Over 8 100 programmes for different sports were organised by the NSAs and other organisations, attracting over 650 000 participants. Among the most popular programmes were the Youth Football Scheme, the New Generation Table Tennis Training Courses and the Youth Windsurfing Promotion Scheme.

In 2006, the NSAs were given subsidies under the scheme to organise international events in Hong Kong. The events included the Volleyball World Grand Prix, Hong Kong International Dragon Boat Race, Tennis Champions Challenge and ITU Hong Kong International Triathlon. These international events were held also to promote Hong Kong as the 'Events Capital of Asia.'

2008 Olympic and Paralympic Equestrian Events

After the formal announcement of the relocation of the 2008 Olympic and Paralympic Equestrian Events (the Events) to Hong Kong on July 8, 2005, an organising committee — Equestrian Committee (Hong Kong) of Beijing Organising Committee for the Games of the XXIX Olympiad (Equestrian Committee) — was established. The Chief Executive is the patron and the Chief Secretary for Administration, the president of the Equestrian Committee. A steering committee supported by six coordination committees was also set up to help expedite the planning of the events and to facilitate coordination among the different bureaux, departments and non-government agencies involved in organising the events. The executive arm of the Equestrian Committee — the Equestrian Events (Hong Kong) of the Games of the XXIX Olympiad Company Limited (Equestrian Company) — registered under the Companies Ordinance, was formed in February to implement the day-to-day work involved in organising the events in accordance with the Equestrian Committee's decisions and directives. In addition, a trust fund — the 2008 Beijing Olympic Equestrian Events Hong Kong Fund — was established to raise money to support education, culture and community involvement activities to promote Olympism and the events.

A document setting out the working arrangement between the Beijing Organising Committee for the Games of the XXIX Olympiad (BOCOG) and the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) Government for preparing and organising the events was signed in Beijing on August 31. The BOCOG is responsible for providing funding for direct cost of the events, while HKSAR Government is responsible for providing the institutional framework for organising the events and for such matters as security, medical services, quarantine, immigration, and for cultivating an Olympic atmosphere in Hong Kong. The Hong Kong Jockey Club is responsible for the design and construction of the two competition venues with the

main venue being located in Sha Tin and in Beas River and to give advice on equine matters.

The import arrangement for horses participating in the events was announced in March by the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department (AFCD), and the Operation Manual on Quarantine and Biosecurity Measures was uploaded onto the AFCD website during the year. A ceremony to mark the start of the two-year countdown to the events was held on August 8, co-hosted by the Government and the Sports Federation and Olympic Committee of Hong Kong, China. An 'Equestrian Events' website, www.equestrian2008.org and a programme for enrolling volunteers for the events were launched by the Equestrian Company in November.

The Equestrian Committee has been working closely with BOCOG, the International Olympic Committee (IOC) and the Federation Équestre Internationale (FEI) to make the events a green, high-tech and a people's Olympics. Delegations from IOC, BOCOG and FEI visited Hong Kong between August 14 and 15 and were pleased with the progress made. Representatives of the National Olympic Committees of Germany, New Zealand, Brazil, Ireland and the Netherlands also visited Hong Kong during the year.

The major task ahead is to organise the Test Event in August 2007 and to implement a comprehensive educational, cultural and community involvement programme.

'M' Mark Status and Support Packages Scheme

The 'M' Mark Status and Support Packages Scheme was launched in November 2004 by the Major Sports Events Committee of the Sports Commission. The main aim of the scheme is to help the NSAs develop more sustainable major international events and to obtain greater support for them from the commercial sector and the community. In addition to logistic support from the Government, some 'M' Mark events also receive funds from the Arts and Sports Development Fund. In 2006, six events — the Hong Kong Marathon 2006, the Hong Kong Sevens 2006, the Hong Kong Open Badminton Championships 2006, the Hong Kong Squash Open 2006, the Hong Kong Beach Festival 2006 and the Hong Kong Open Championship 2006 were given 'M' Mark status and support packages.

2009 East Asian Games

An expert group, called the 5th EAG Planning Committee, was set up in June 2004 to prepare for the 5th East Asian Games (EAG), which Hong Kong will host in 2009. Its members are drawn from the Sports Federation and Olympic Committee of Hong Kong, China, the sports sector, government departments and industries such as banking, tourism and airline. The committee will plan and prepare for the event, enlist community support, develop publicity and marketing strategies, and advise on the venues and facilities for the event.

There was extensive community participation in the competitions held for creating an emblem and a slogan for the 2009 EAG. The winners were announced in

July 2005 and June 2006 respectively. A Hong Kong 2009 East Asian Games Gallery and a website were also set up to display exhibits to promote the EAG and to disseminate information on the work being done for the event. A competition was also held to come up with a thematic design for the EAG venues. The Hong Kong Institute of Architects lent a hand in organising the contest. The winning design, announced in November, captures clearly the EAG spirit and reflects at the same time Hong Kong's unique characteristics.

The 2009 East Asian Games (Hong Kong) Limited, the executive arm of the 5th EAG Planning Committee, started work in August to prepare for the staging of the event.

2006 Bun Carnival

The popular Bun Carnival which was revived in 2005, was again held in 2006 in response to public demand. New competitions, such as 'Climbing Play-in' and an invitation relay, were added to the 2006 programme and were well received. The carnival went on for more than two weeks — from April 22 to May 6. More than 6 000 people took part in the competitions and other activities which were watched by tens of thousands of local and overseas visitors. The event, particularly the Bun Scrambling Competition, was given extensive coverage by both the local and international news media.

Sports and Recreational Venues

Hong Kong Stadium

The Hong Kong Stadium is Hong Kong's largest sports venue with seating for 40 000 people. It is used mainly for football and international rugby matches, and large-scale religious gatherings and variety shows. More than 344 000 people attended 37 events at the venue in 2006.

Water Sports and Holiday Camps

The LCSD manages five water sports centers — Chong Hing, Tai Mei Tuk, The Jockey Club Wong Shek, St Stephen's Beach and Stanley Main Beach and four holiday camps — the Lady MacLehose Holiday Village, Sai Kung Outdoor Recreation Centre, Tso Kung Tam Outdoor Recreation Centre, and Lei Yue Mun Park and Holiday Village. During the year, 108 000 people participated in water sports events held at the water sports centres and 496 000 people stayed at the holiday camps.

Other Sports and Recreational Venues

The LCSD manages 87 sports centres, 37 swimming pool complexes, 271 tennis courts, 312 squash courts, 24 sports grounds, four golf driving ranges and two public riding schools.

Three new recreation and sports projects were completed in 2006. They are the Stanley Municipal Services Building, Nan Lian Garden at Diamond Hill and a 7-a-side football pitch in Area 107, Tin Shui Wai.

Work on 14 other projects is going on. These include Cherry Street Park — Phase 2 at Tai Kok Tsui, Indoor Recreation Centre in Tin Shui Wai, improvement works to Lei Yue Mun Park and Holiday Village, Hin Tin Swimming Pool — Phase 2, Sha Tin, local open space in Tin Shui Wai, district open space in Area 2, Tung Chung, district open space in Area 39, Fanling/Sheung Shui, district open space in Area 35, Tsuen Wan — Phase 2, Tseung Kwan O Sports Ground, open space at Tai Kok Tsui Temporary Market, local open space in Area 44, Tseung Kwan O, basketball courts in Area 107, Tin Shui Wai, local open space in Area 11, Sha Tin and Siu Sai Wan Garden.

Beaches and Swimming Pools

Swimming is one of Hong Kong's most popular summer pastimes. The LCSD provides 41 gazetted beaches — 12 on Hong Kong Island and 29 in the New Territories — for the public and manages 37 public swimming pool complexes. In 2006, people made 10.57 million visits to the gazetted beaches and 8.76 million visits to the public swimming pools.

Shark prevention nets have been installed for the safety of swimmers. Lifeguard services are provided during the swimming season. At the four most popular beaches, Clear Water Bay Second Beach, Golden Beach, Silverstrand Beach and Deep Water Bay Beach, lifeguards are on duty during the winter as well.

Parks Managed by LCSD

The LCSD manages about 1 400 parks and gardens of different sizes, including 22 major parks.

Hong Kong Zoological and Botanical Gardens

The Hong Kong Zoological and Botanical Gardens, the oldest public gardens in Hong Kong, occupy an area of 5.6 hectares overlooking the city's central district. The gardens were built between 1861 and 1871. Albany Road runs through the eastern garden, home to an extensive collection of birds, while the western garden, opened in 1871, is home to mammal and reptile exhibits. The botanical section is largely in the eastern garden.

Despite the urban surroundings, the gardens provide a viable conservation centre for endangered species. Seventeen endangered species of mammals, birds and reptiles lived there in 2006. The bird collection is one of the most comprehensive in Asia. It comprises about 400 birds of 140 species. Fifteen out of the 140 species have offsprings there. The mammal collection consists of 65 animals of 21 species, mainly primates. More than 750 species of trees, shrubs, creepers and foliage plants thrive in the gardens. The medicinal plant collection established in 1987 and a greenhouse, built in 1993, have generated particular public interest in the 500 or more species of herbs, orchids, ferns and indoor plants there.

Hong Kong Park

Opened in 1991, Hong Kong Park is on the site of the former military barracks in Central and occupies an area of about eight hectares. The park, which blends

modern design into the natural landscape, features flowing water as its central motif and has artificial waterfalls, streams and ponds.

Major facilities in the park include an aviary, conservatory, a vantage point for viewing that part of the city, an Olympic Square, squash centre, sports centre, children's playground and restaurant. The aviary is designed to look like a tropical rainforest in which over 600 birds of 90 different species are kept, including one African and four Australian pelicans that are a major attraction for visitors. The conservatory has three sections, named 'Display Plant House,' 'Dry Plant House' and 'Humid Plant House'. Adjustable environmental control equipment is installed in these houses to produce climatic conditions similar to those in tropical rainforests and deserts. In June and July, a lotus show was held in the Display Plant House and Lake of the Park, exhibiting more than 100 species of lotus. It attracted about 80 000 visitors. From November until January 2007, an exhibition entitled 'Herbarium Amoris — a tribute to Carl Linnaeus' brought the theme 'for the love of plants' to a climax with the poetic display of the plants' photographs at the conservatory.

The Hong Kong 2009 East Asian Games Gallery, on the second floor of the sports centre, has been opened to the public since October 19, 2005. Comprising different colour zones, the gallery tells the story of the Olympic movement from its beginning in Ancient Greece, with special emphasis on Hong Kong's participation and achievements in sports. Exhibits on display include Olympic torches and medals from past games. A special section has been dedicated to the forthcoming 2009 EAG in Hong Kong including models of the 2009 EAG Competition. Guided tours of the gallery are provided free of charge.

Outward Bound Hong Kong

Outward Bound Hong Kong is a registered charity established in 1970. It is a member of Outward Bound International, the world leader and originator of outdoor experiential education operating in around 50 schools in over 30 countries.

With a mission 'to help people discover and develop their potential to care for themselves, others and the world around them through challenging experiences in unfamiliar settings', Outward Bound provides training for people from all walks of life. The training aims to foster confidence, responsibility, leadership, teamwork, creative thinking, problem-solving skills and social responsibility. Outward Bound uses experiential education to deliver its training so that participants are able to gain insights and learn skills which can be applied to work and real-life situations. Every year, more than 6 000 people join the training courses.

The three training bases at Sai Kung Tai Mong Tsai headquarters, Wong Wan Chau island base and the new ocean-going vessel *Spirit of Outward Bound Hong Kong* have a total capacity of 180. Training facilities such as sailing boats, kayaks, ropes course, rock wall and a jetty are regularly checked and maintained up to international standard to ensure training safety.

Public courses are organised in and outside Hong Kong — in such places as Taiwan, Japan, Sabah, the Philippines, Nepal and along the Silk Road on the

Mainland — to serve people of different ages and needs. There are two courses, subsidised by the Government's Continuing Education Fund, which have the objectives of strengthening employees' capabilities and their working relationships. The courses help participants become more confident and capable of dealing with challenges at work.

In cooperation with schools, colleges, universities and various charitable organisations, Outward Bound continues to deliver school courses for students, teachers, social workers and many others. The courses aim at the all-round development of individuals into caring and competent leaders who can contribute to society.

There is also a wide variety of customised courses for corporations and government departments in Hong Kong and the Mainland. They are designed to enhance the team effectiveness, leadership and creative thinking of staff, and to build a positive corporate culture. Community courses for special groups such as the mentally and physically disabled, the socially deprived, youth at risk and former drug addicts, continue to help the physical, mental and social development of individuals.

Adventure Ship

Adventure-Ship is a registered charity that maintains the 34.5-metre sailing junk, *Jockey Club Huan*, and provides adventure-based nautical programmes for young Hong Kong people. Adventure-Ship is a member of the Hong Kong Council of Social Service and is funded mainly by the Community Chest and the Hong Kong Jockey Club Charities Trust.

Jockey Club Huan, which went into service in April 2006, can accommodate 60 people. The hull of this three-masted traditional-rig sailing junk is made of aluminum. In addition to modern navigation aids, the training vessel is equipped with a full range of amenities. Various barrier-free access and training facilities have also been installed particularly for trainees with disabilities.

Each year, more than 6 000 young people benefit from the training programmes. The journey within Hong Kong waters usually lasts for one to three days. Challenge through 'disciplined entertainment' is the main theme of the exercise. Once on board, participants are regarded as members of the ship's crew and they take part in the onboard activities. Under the guidance of experienced instructors, they are trained to face new challenges and participate in activities that build self-confidence and team spirit. The programmes have been carefully drawn up to fit the different aptitudes and backgrounds of trainees and to prepare them to face different weather conditions.

Hong Kong Youth Hostels Association

The Hong Kong Youth Hostels Association (HKYHA) runs seven youth hostels, all located in country parks and scenic rural areas across Hong Kong. These hostels offer simple, low-cost, safe accommodation and proximity to nature. The young residents

also have an opportunity to engage in outdoor activities such as hiking, cycling and other healthy pursuits.

HKYHA has been a full member of the International Youth Hostels Federation (IYHF) for over 30 years. Mainland China, Taiwan, Singapore and some East European countries joined the federation in 2006, bringing the number of youth hostels under IYHF to more than 4 200 in 83 countries around the world.

The IYHF is a not-for-profit organisation, directed by a team of dedicated board members. It continued in 2006 to offer internship training in tourism and in the leisure industry for local and overseas university students. It also continued to support various community programmes designed to promote healthy outdoor activities, environmental conservation, self-help, team spirit and cross-cultural understanding.

Country and Marine Parks

Some 38 per cent of Hong Kong's total land area has been designated as country parks and special areas for the purpose of nature conservation, outdoor recreation and nature education. The 23 country parks and 17 special areas provide extensive hiking trails, barbecue, picnic and camp sites and visitors centres which attracted over 12 million visitors in 2006.

There are four marine parks and one marine reserve for the conservation of marine life. In these marine parks, visitors may enjoy and receive educational information about the beauty and diversity of marine life in Hong Kong. The Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department manages the country parks, special areas, marine parks and marine reserve.

Green Promotion/Initiatives

Green Hong Kong Campaign

Various community and educational activities were organised in 2006 to enhance public awareness of the importance of 'greening' the environment. These activities were carried out under different names such as Green Volunteer Scheme, Community Planting Day, Greening Hong Kong Activities Subsidy Scheme, theme flower shows, Best Landscape Award for Private Property Development and promotional talks. More than 750 schools and kindergartens took part in the Greening School Subsidy Scheme formed to promote environmentally friendly initiatives. The scheme provided an opportunity for students to try their hand at gardening under the guidance of their teachers and LCSD staff. A total of 350 000 students from over 1 000 schools participated in the 'One Person, One Flower' programme. Marigold seedlings were given to students to plant at home or in their schools. The LCSD's Community Garden Programme was carried out in all of the scheme's 18 districts. The scheme provides for one community garden to be built in each district. Forty gardening courses were conducted during the year attended by 7 000 participants.

Hong Kong Flower Show

The Hong Kong Flower Show is a major event, organised by the LCSD to promote horticulture and an awareness of the need for a green environment. Every

year, it provides an opportunity for hundreds of thousands of Hong Kong people and horticulture lovers from around the world to enjoy the beauty and diversity of flowers and to share their experiences in flower cultivation. Participants in the show are from Hong Kong, Mainland and overseas horticultural associations, floral art clubs, green groups, district councils, schools and the general public.

A range of educational and recreational activities were also organised on the sidelines of the show. More than 180 horticultural organisations from 19 countries, including Hong Kong and the Mainland, took part in the 2006 show held in March at the Victoria Park which attracted more than 510 000 visitors to the fair ground.

Horticulture and Landscape Services and Projects

The LCSD is responsible for the planting of ornamental trees and shrubs in public gardens and roadside amenity areas around Hong Kong, and for looking after the trees. It also looks after the city's public parks, gardens, sports grounds, football pitches and children's playgrounds, amenity plots and the landscape plants on the sides of highways and public roads. During the year, the department planted 10 000 trees and 3.3 million shrubs and seasonal flowers and carried out landscape improvement projects for 45 hectares of park land and roadside amenity areas, including footbridges.

Beautification of Footbridges

To improve the greenery in urban areas and the environment around footbridges, the LCSD has a programme for growing flowering plants in pots placed on the sides of footbridges.

Summer Youth Programme

The Summer Youth Programme is a big community programme that provides a variety of activities for schoolchildren to enjoy during their summer holidays as well as for other young people aged six to 25. To solicit and encourage public support and participation in the programme, the slogan 'Let's build harmony' was used in more than 80 summer youth activities held in 2006. The activities were organised by the Home Affairs Department and the 18 District Offices, including parent-child activities and family camps.

The main purpose of the programme is get parents and children to take part in activities together which in turn enhances mutual understanding and harmony within the family. More than 13 000 such activities took place in 2006 in which over 1 million children and their parents took part. More than \$50 million was spent on the activities, \$15 million of which was from the Hong Kong Jockey Club Charities Trust Fund and the rest was from government and district council subventions, private donations and participation fees.

Home Pages

Home Affairs Bureau: www.hab.gov.hk

Leisure and Cultural Services Department: www.lcsd.gov.hk

Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department: www.afcd.gov.hk