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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**Reconnecting with the harbour, vessels, and our collective memories
*Across Victoria Harbour***

**A new exhibition at the Hong Kong Maritime Museum opening on 1 March 2024,
delves into the rich history of cross-harbour vessels and unveils their cultural significance.**



Hong Kong, 5 February 2024 – The Hong Kong Maritime Museum (HKMM) announces the opening of “Across Victoria Harbour”, running from 1 March to 15 May 2024. This special exhibition tells the unique story of Victoria Harbour through the history of vessels that plied its waters, including passenger vessels such as sampans, ferries, motorboats, as well as working vessels like lighters, tugboats, and barges. The exhibition features a captivating collection of vintage Hong Kong photos, paintings, historical documents, and ship models, offering its audience a glimpse into the past. Interactive elements will also enhance visitors’ experience of the exhibition. A life-size reconstruction of the old motorboat ticket booth will enable visitors to take a sentimental photo with Victoria Harbour as its backdrop, while the multimedia game “Travel by Walla-Walla” will allow the audience to step back in time and relive the nostalgia of chartering a motorboat in the bygone era.

“The exhibition will enhance visitors’ understanding of the role of cross-harbour vessels in the context of economic and other influences in Hong Kong’s development,” Richard Kendall, Chief Executive of Hong Kong Maritime Museum remarked. “We invite audiences to come and be informed and entertained about Victoria Harbour, its vessels and our collective memories.”

Organised and curated by the Hong Kong Maritime Museum, the exhibition explores the rich history of cross-harbour vessels, unveils their cultural significance and invites audiences to reconnect with the harbour, vessels, and the community’s collective memory. This exhibition centres around the familiar

香港海事博物館 HONG KONG MARITIME MUSEUM

香港中環八號碼頭 Central Pier No. 8, Hong Kong

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sight of Victoria Harbour. Through historical photographs and vessel models, the exhibition illustrates maritime trade activities from Hong Kong's early years to the present. Of particular interest to maritime enthusiasts will be the once-ubiquitous "Walla-Walla" that recalls the glory days of the motorboat industry.

The exhibition is presented in four sections: "The Harbour, the City and the People", "Crossing the Harbour", "Freight Transport" and "Changes in Harbour Voyages". The exhibition will take the audience on a journey through time and illustrate the past and present of cross-harbour vessels with the range of exhibits on display.

The exhibition follows the development of Hong Kong from 1842 to the present day, examining how various vessels change alongside Hong Kong society. The increase in commercial activity and population saw the rise of cross-harbour transportation vessels such as ferries and motorboats, catering to the demand for crossing the Victoria Harbour from the late 19th century. Meanwhile, vessels ferrying cargo since before the opening of the port also experienced changes in size, build and function, adapting to the ever-changing needs of Hong Kong's freight industry.



Lithographs
Murdoch Bruce

On loan from Mr.
Gordian Gaeta
HKMM2017L0101.0559-
561, 563, 566-567



From left to right:

Model of sampan
HKMM2013.0023.0001

Model of "Walla-Walla"
Model of tugboat
On loan from Mr Kwok
Wai Hung

The exhibition also focuses on the communities behind the vessels. Photographs and historic documents paint a picture of their way of life on and with Victoria Harbour. Interviews with people who worked on "Walla-Wallas", lighters, tugboats and barges will be featured in the exhibition, allowing the audience to have a deeper understanding and insight into the lives of these communities.

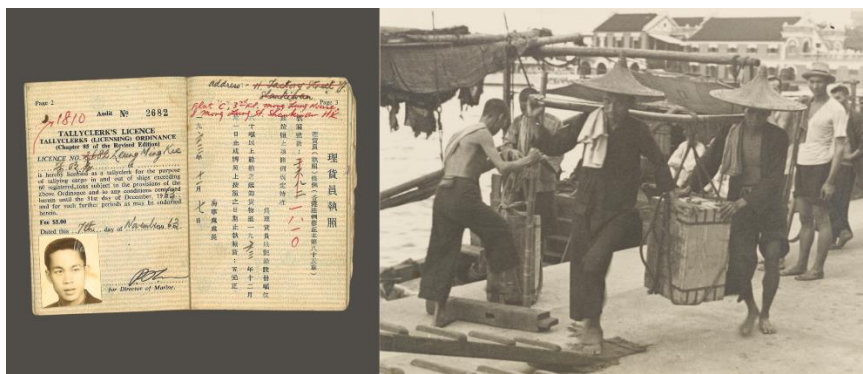
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Left:
Tallyclerk's licence
1963
Gift of Hong Kong &
Kowloon Motor Boats
& Tug Boats Association
Ltd
HKMM2011.0227.0001

Right:
Stevedores at the wharf
c. 1900s
Gift of Mr Dennis
George Crow
HKMM2005.0021.0001

One of the highlights of the exhibition is a slideshow of images of Victoria Harbour. Courtesy of Mr Ko Tim Keung, 100 slides capturing different views of Victoria Harbour, dated between 1953 and 1989, have been digitalised and edited into a video for the audience to enjoy.



In addition, educational programmes with relevant art & culture elements, guided tours, and talks will be included, targeting groups such as students, families, and young adults respectively, while the significant collections are of interest to researchers. List of fringe activities:

*All free-of-charge available on a first-come-first-served basis. Registrations are required.

1. Public Talks – “The development of early Hong Kong” Talk

Hong Kong did not have a large population to start with as an entrepôt. Underlying its subsequent development as a port was a long history of international trade, and from this trade came the justification for its initial growth. Illustrated with maps, paintings, and early photographs, Mr. Ko Tim Keung will discuss the early port development of Hong Kong, and the foundation of the entrepot trade.

Speaker: Mr Ko Tim Keung

Language: Cantonese

Date: 17 Feb 2024

Time: 14:30 – 16:00

Registration weblink: <https://bit.ly/3HNB5Ls>

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2. Public Talks – “A Brief Discussion on Early Images of Hong Kong” Talk

This talk will be conducted in Cantonese

Speaker: Dr Lai Kin Keung Edwin

Language: Cantonese

Date: 10 Mar 2024

Time: 14:30 – 16:00

Registration weblink: <https://bit.ly/3ugbM1k>

3. Public Talks – “Motorboats at the Victoria Harbour”

Introduce the once-popular motorboats that shuttled around Victoria Harbour. These passenger boats, also known as "Walla-Walla," operated throughout the day and bore witness to Hong Kong's development.

Speaker: TBC

Language: Cantonese

Date: 6 April 2024

Time: TBC

Registration weblink: TBC

4. Curator-led Tour (Friends of HKMM Exclusive)

A guided tour of our exhibition led by the Museum's curator, and to explore the fascinating narrative behind each exhibit and discover stories during the curatorial process.

Language: Cantonese

Date: 10 Mar 2024 and 6 Apr 2024

Time: 11:30 - 12:30

Registration weblink: <https://bit.ly/3HHCgfu>

5. Tea Party – “How do the curators spend their days in a museum?”

Sharing by the curatorial team, the behind-the-scenes work of museum operations and exhibitions

Language: Cantonese

Date: 4 May 2024

Time: TBC

Registration weblink: TBC

The Hong Kong Maritime Museum would like to thank the generous supporters of the exhibition, notably the Choi Family, in honour of the late Mr Choi Kim Kwong. Heartfelt thanks are also given to esteemed partners, including Hong Kong historian Mr Ko Tim Keung, Hong Kong & Kowloon Motor Boats & Tug Boats Association (MBTA); Hong Kong Cargo-Vessel Traders' Association Ltd (CVTA), Public Records Office, Government Records Service, The “Star” Ferry Company, Limited and The University of Hong Kong Libraries, as well as prominent local collectors and the Museum collection.

We cordially invite media/press to attend the media tour on 29 February 2024 to experience the wonders of this extraordinary exhibition firsthand.

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Media Preview of the “Across Victoria Harbour” Exhibition details:

Venue: Hong Kong Maritime Museum (Central Pier 8, Hong Kong)
Date: 29 February 2024 (Thursday)
Time: 11:00am – 12:30pm (Media tour & Q&A sessions)
RSVP: forms.gle/Af5buax6QWcHVnrg9 (submit by 27 February 2024)

NOTES TO EDITOR

About Hong Kong Maritime Museum

The Hong Kong Maritime Museum (HKMM) was founded by Hong Kong’s shipowning community to help Hong Kong residents and visitors to the city explore its unique maritime heritage. HKMM is an independent, non-profit registered charity supported by the shipping industry, the business community, individuals and the Hong Kong SAR Government. The HKMM is a cultural institution that tells the stories of Hong Kong’s relationship with the sea, including the trades between Hong Kong and the Pearl River Delta and the world, and the vital roles played by so many ships in those stories.

The Museum opened its doors to the public at Murray House in Stanley in 2005 and relocated to Central Pier No. 8 in the heart of the Central Harbour Waterfront in 2013. Today the Museum displays over 1,000 objects in 15 galleries. The HKMM also houses various event spaces, a research centre and its Museum Cafe (social enterprise), which enjoys a wonderful harbour view. The HKMM engages with the community of Hong Kong by providing education and public programming to schools, adults, community groups and families.

www.hkmaritimemuseum.org

Exhibition Date

1 March – 15 May 2024

Ticketing information

Adults: HK\$30 Seniors (aged 60 or above), full-time students (with valid ID), children (under 18) and people with disabilities (accompanied by a carer): HK\$15

*Discounts are available for group visits of 10 or more.

For the latest update on ticketing, opening hours and social distancing information, please visit www.hkmaritimemuseum.org

Venue

Special Exhibitions and Events Gallery, Hong Kong Maritime Museum, Central Pier 8

Press Information

Press images are available for download at bit.ly/acrossvictoriaharbour

For more information, please kindly visit www.hkmaritimemuseum.org/acrossvictoriaharbour

Follow us on [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/hongkongmaritimemuseum) and [Instagram](https://www.instagram.com/hongkongmaritimemuseum) (@hongkongmaritimemuseum) for the latest updates on the

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exhibition.

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