

SWIRE NEWS



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The Swire group is a multi-national, multi-disciplined commercial group, with its principal areas of operations in the Asia Pacific region, and centred on the Greater China area. Hong Kong is home to publicly quoted Swire Pacific, whose core businesses are grouped under five operating divisions: property, aviation, beverages, marine services, and trading & industrial. John Swire & Sons Ltd., headquartered in the UK, is the parent company and corporate co-ordinator of the group. In addition to its controlling shareholding in Swire Pacific, John Swire & Sons Ltd. operates a range of wholly-owned businesses, including deep-sea shipping, cold storage, off-shore and road transport logistics services and agricultural activities with main areas of operation in Australia, Papua New Guinea, East Africa, Sri Lanka, the USA and the UK.

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newswire

USCS expands again

United States Cold Storage is continuing to expand its nationwide network with the opening of a new storage and distribution centre for frozen and refrigerated foods at Hazleton, Pennsylvania, and the announcement that it is on track to complete a new storage facility at Wilmington, Illinois, by April 2009. Hazleton features an innovative energy-efficient CO₂ cascade refrigeration system that can maintain temperatures between minus 20°F and plus 55°F while reducing environmental impact. The facility has a total capacity of just over 20,000 pallets in a fully racked storage system and is strategically located within a half-day's drive of Boston, Richmond and Cleveland. The Wilmington facility is meanwhile being built in response to steady growth in customer demand in the strategically important Midwest region. Phase 1 of the development consists of a 5.7 million cubic foot

facility with 16,700 pallet positions. It will be equipped with a state-of-the-art refrigeration system that incorporates variable speed drives, evaporators and condensers to enable energy efficiencies while generating refrigeration capacity as required. By the end of 2009, USCS will be able to offer approximately 190 million cubic feet of temperature-controlled warehouse and distribution space at 34 facilities in 11 states.

Laverton opens

Meanwhile in Australia, Swire Cold Storage hosted the official opening of its new flagship cold store at Laverton, Victoria, in August. The new facility has a capacity to store around 25,000 pallets of frozen food products at minus 22°C. In keeping with the Swire philosophy on sustainability, Laverton showcases the latest in energy management and refrigeration technology and sets a new benchmark for the Australian cold chain industry

by achieving a 15% reduction in energy consumption and a 30% improvement in water efficiency over more traditional stores. Laverton will be quickly followed by a number of other new facilities currently under construction in major capital cities around Australia, as part of the group's national expansion strategy begun in 2007.

New recycling centre

After more than eight years in the planning, leading waste management and resource recovery operator The Alex Fraser Group has received the go-ahead from Government for the establishment of a multi-million dollar, state-of-the-art recycling facility at Clayton in Melbourne's southeast. The announcement coincides with the release of an RMIT University study of Alex Fraser recycled concrete, which concludes that the reuse of crushed stone aggregates made from recycled concrete enables a saving in CO₂



The Laverton facility.

emissions of around 65% on the use of quarried stone. Since first pioneering construction and demolition materials recycling in Australia over 21 years ago, The Alex Fraser Group has recycled over 20 million tonnes of construction and demolition materials. This represents enough energy saved to power a city the size of Bendigo (population 60,000) for one year and enough steel recovered to build almost four Sydney Harbour Bridges. The Group has won a number of national environmental awards, including the Gold Banksia Award in 1995 and the Prime Minister's "Australian Business Award for Environmental Leadership" in 2000.

Cloverdale – a new acquisition

In September, Clyde Agriculture acquired "Cloverdale", a 935-hectare property in the Walcha region, adjoining Clyde's existing "Lakeside" property. Fully developed, Cloverdale will be capable of turning off nearly 2,000 grass-fed steers annually and running 1,000 first cross ewes. The property consists of three main

sections: river flats bordering the St. Leonard's Creek that are ideal for hay or silage production; a steep section of country running off the river flats which has been aerially sown and is suited for growing out cattle or breeding stock, and an area of higher country that will eventually be sown to Zone 3-type pastures of perennial rye, quantum or advance fescue grasses, and will form part of the farm's fattening area. Since the purchase, the

laneway system on Lakeside has been extended to join up with the existing laneway system on Cloverdale and the track between the two properties has been upgraded.

One Island East nears capacity

Swire Properties' landmark new development, One Island East, has secured a further leasing commitment for approximately 45,000 square



Princesse Abby, the newly launched floating crane belonging to recently established China Navigation Company joint venture Swire CTM Bulk Logistics, at work transshipping coal off Kalimantan in Indonesia, where she is on charter to local Indonesian partner, PT Mitra.



The first Swire China Conference was held in Shanghai in September. It was an opportunity for senior management on the Mainland to get to know each other and to learn more about Swire's diverse business activities on the Mainland. Hong Kong Group Chairman, Christopher Pratt, and John Swire & Sons China Chairman, Philip Chen, were in attendance.

feet of Triple Grade “A” office space, taking occupancy of the 70-storey, 1.5 million square-foot development to 94% with only a little over three floors remaining vacant. Two prestigious new tenants, Transamerica and Citrix, join a host of Fortune 500 companies spanning a broad cross-section of business sectors including financial, shipping, property, accountancy, insurance and trading as well as some of the world’s notable consumer brand names. Current One Island East tenants include DBS Bank, JPMorgan, CLSA, Fidelity International, AXA Rosenberg Investment, Citibank and Convoy Financial who are also joined by Zurich Insurance Group, Aedas, The Marketing Store, ZIM Shipping, Ernst & Young, Shiro Pacific, Tiffany & Co., AIA, Club 21, China Shipping and Christian Dior. The announcement of these two new commitments underscores Island East’s status as the premier business community hub outside Central District. With the completion of One Island East, Swire Properties’ portfolio at Island East now comprises some eight million square feet of integrated office accommodation.

Swire buys more prime land in Miami

Swire Properties has purchased a further 5.65 acres of land for development in the thriving downtown commercial and residential district of



Brickell in Miami, close to Brickell Key. Swire Properties paid US\$41.3 million for the two parcels of vacant land that straddle South Miami Avenue - a sizeable drop from a recent valuation of almost US\$60 million. “While we may not be at the bottom of the market, we felt the discounted pricing made it a good opportunity,” said Stephen Owens, President of Swire Properties Inc., who said the site was offered to him for as much as US\$115 million at the height of the property boom. “A site of this size and scale that’s strategically located in the urban area is hard to find.”

Swire first purchased land on Brickell Key (the former Claughton Island) in 1980 and since then has developed a number of prestigious properties,

ranging from the Courvoisier Centre offices and Mandarin Oriental Hotel Miami to the Tequesta and Asia condominiums. For now, Swire Properties is exploring options for development, though Stephen Owens says it is likely that it will include a mix ranging from retail to hotels. He added that it was probable the company would defer development of the site for at least three years.

Happy Arrival

Cathay Pacific has opened “The Arrival” – Hong Kong’s first airline-branded arrival lounge. The new lounge, developed in response to customers’ growing needs for arrival facilities, opened its doors on 1st October. Located in the



centre passage connecting Terminal 1 with Terminal 2 at Hong Kong International Airport, The Arrival features a buffet dining area, desktop computers with Internet access and Wi-Fi connections, and eight fully equipped shower suites. It is open to First Class passengers, Gold or above members of the Marco Polo Club and **oneworld** Emerald passengers arriving on flights operated by Cathay Pacific or Dragonair and whose final destination is Hong Kong.

New routes

Dragonair has recently launched two new routes: a new daily service to Hanoi in October, and a five-times-weekly flight to Manila in mid-December. Manila is the ninth new destination added by the airline since becoming a part of the Cathay Pacific Airways group in September 2006.

SPO gets HUD tugs

After 14 years' service with the Hongkong Salvage & Towage Company, the 4,000 BHP z-peller tugs *Mai Po* and *Shek O* have been sold by Swire associate HUD Group to Swire Pacific Offshore (SPO). The

vessels have been renamed *Pacific Tempest* and *Pacific Typhoon*. *Mai Po* and *Shek O* have been working for SPO's customers in the Middle East under the commercial management of SPO's Dubai office for several years, so it will be business as usual but with the tugs now also coming under SPO's operational and technical management. The 55-tonne bollard pull vessels were built in the 1990s to

a very high specification in Japan and are well suited to construction support work and tanker berthing at offshore terminals.

30-year partnership

In September, Taikoo Motors and Volvo Trucks and Buses celebrated 30 years of successful partnership in Taiwan. Taikoo Motors imported the first Volvo commercial vehicle into Taiwan in 1978 and since then, Taikoo Commercial Vehicles Limited's comprehensive customer and after-sales service system, which includes four direct and 15 authorised service locations, has combined with Volvo's long-standing reputation for product safety, comfort and quality, to elevate the Swedish brand to a leadership position in the commercial vehicle market.



(Left to right) Joachim Rosenberg, President of Volvo Group Asia Truck Operations, Steve Peng, General Manager of Taikoo Commercial Vehicles Limited, and Simon Bath, Managing Director of Volvo Bus Hong Kong Limited, toast 30 years of fruitful partnership at a dinner reception to mark the anniversary, attended by more than 200 guests, including guest-of-honour Baroness Lydia Dunn.



Baroness Dunn was greeted by President Ma Ying-jeou of Taiwan with a cordial welcome at a meeting between the two at the Presidential Office in Taipei on 19th September 2008. The president said that he hopes Baroness Dunn's visit will help to broaden her understanding of Taiwan and will lead to increased investment in Taiwan by the Swire group. Baroness Dunn said that she hopes Swire's investments in Taiwan will be mutually beneficial.

outstanding accomplishments in promoting the practices, principles and procedures of energy management; Swire Properties is the first Hong Kong company to receive this award. Hong Kong Aero Engine Services Limited (HAESL) has been awarded Best Asia-Pacific Independent MRO Operation 2008 by *Overhaul & Maintenance* magazine for its investment in new technologies and its commitment to reducing its environmental footprint - from decreasing electricity consumption to using a range of biodegradable packaging. Swire Coca-Cola Taiwan has been recognised as one of three Taiwanese companies to have achieved outstanding reductions in carbon emissions by Taiwan's Ministry of Economic Affairs' Green Productivity Foundation. Swire Pacific Limited's 2007 Sustainable

Environmental Excellence

A number of Swire group companies have recently received citations and awards for their environmental performance and reporting. The Swire group tries hard to instil the ethos that striving to be "Best In Class" in terms of environmental performance must be an integral part of business planning for all its companies, and as such, a key indicator of the operational excellence to which all group companies should aspire.

Australian storage and distribution specialist Kalari has won the inaugural Australian Freight

Industry Environmental Award for implementing a range of environmental initiatives, including innovative transport solutions, driver education, reduced waste and recycling. The company has reduced CO₂ emissions by 1,041,000 kg per annum, reduced mains water consumption by 4.51 million litres per annum, achieved fuel savings of approximately 20%, and reduced its carbon footprint through the use of alternative fuels. Swire Properties has won the US-based Association of Energy Engineers' Corporate Energy Management Award (Central and Southern Asia Region) for its



Development Report has been meanwhile selected as runner-up in the ACCA Hong Kong Awards for Sustainability Reporting 2008. According to the panel of judges, the report “discloses that the action plan for sustainable development policy is overseen by the Group Risk Committee – indicating a robust governance structure is in place to manage sustainability.” In the same awards, China Navigation was commended for “Addressing Sectoral Issues” in its 2007 Environmental Report. The company was cited for its efforts in providing detailed data on key issues such as fuel use, carbon dioxide, oils, refrigerants, emissions and waste.

Meanwhile, nine Swire staff from seven group companies have been nominated as Earth Champions in the inaugural Hong Kong Earth Champions Quest. Organised by the *South China Morning Post*, the Quest recognises local people and groups who are trying to sustain and improve the environment. Swire fielded the largest number of award-winners from any corporate group, underscoring the success of company and individual efforts to make care for the environment an integral part of our business planning and of our corporate culture.

This year’s Swire Earth Champions are **Stephen Fong** (*Swire Properties*) – Use of innovative computer design



Neil Glenn (left), Director & General Manager of HAESL, receives the company's award from S. Iswaran, Senior Minister of State for Singapore's Ministry of Trade and Industry.

to reduce construction waste in the development of One Island East

Victor Ho and **Henry Lam** (*Hong Kong Aircraft Engineering*) – Energy savings and waste reduction in hangar design and construction, and for air emission, waste management and climate change initiatives

Carol Cheung and **Bill Lee** (*Cathay Pacific*) – “Clean and Green” project

Barry Adcock (*Swire SITA*) – Landfill gas recovery project

C.W. Ho (*Swire Coca-Cola HK*) – Promoting an environmentally friendly lifestyle to staff

Dave Watkins (*The China Navigation Company*) – Reducing fuel burn and carbon emissions from the company’s ships through initiatives that include enhanced propeller efficiency and advanced hull paint systems

Richard Lee (*Vogue Laundry*) – Reducing water consumption through the use of advanced equipment and reducing pollution through the use of biodegradable detergents.

These accolades are indicative of the increasing importance that stakeholders – including industry regulatory authorities, investors, customers and the community at large – place on the efforts individual companies make to develop their businesses along sustainable lines and on their degree of transparency when it comes to reporting. What they highlight for Swire is the professionalism and commitment on the part of staff in each of these companies to making a very real effort to mitigate the environmental impact of their day-to-day operations. Keeping focused on achieving this in small and not-so-small ways throughout our business operations is key to achieving operational excellence and to the group’s continued success.



JS&S London Director, Barnaby Swire (second from left), who oversees the group's environmental work, officiated at the launch of the WWF's Sustainable lifestyle Target Education Programme (STEP) at Taikoo Primary School on 7th November. The Swire Trust has commissioned WWF to develop STEP – a programme designed to teach primary school children about climate change, which will initially be introduced as a regular weekly class in 15 Hong Kong primary schools during the 2009 academic year. Also shown are Guest of Honour, Dr. S.K. Kwun, Acting Principal Assistant Secretary, Education Bureau of HKSAR, which has given its backing to STEP by recognising the programme as part of the official schools' curriculum, Mr. Markus Shaw, Chairman of WWF, and the programme's mascot, an alarm clock called "Ah Larm", underscoring the urgency of waking up and acting now on climate change.

Imitation is the sincerest form of flattery?



No, the Swire group has not diversified into the spa industry; however, the owners of this massage parlour in Nanjing presumably think trading on the Taikoo name and our reputation for service excellence will lend their business a little class!

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Opposite Attracts

Pat Nourse has seen the future of luxury hotels, and it's in Beijing. Opposite by name, contrary by nature, The Opposite House swims against the stream to deliver a fresh take on upmarket lodgings.

What's your hotel check-in drill? Off with the shoes, on with the tube and open with the Tanqueray? On with the 'Do Not Disturb', off with the lights? Up with the WiFi and out with the inbox? It may be outing me as a member of the Big Nerd Clan, but pretty much the first thing I want to do is plug in the computer, dock the iPod and get some music on. I'm

delighted to see that I'm not alone in this, something I learned upon checking into The Opposite House, Beijing's hottest (and indeed priciest) new address.

I whack the Mac down on a bench and start looking for somewhere to hook it up. Nothing, nada, zip. This place takes minimal to new extremes. Potential exasperation turns quickly to fully fledged joy when I yank the first drawer open. It's not a drawer at all, but a flip-out bank of universal power points and jacks to accommodate everything from connections for the hidden speakers to the HDMI hook-up for the monster plasma screen. Drawer number two reveals all the cables you need to make the most of this stuff, tied in neat bundles. If this stuff isn't your bag, of course, you could go your whole stay without even noticing it's there. Easy for those who look for it, invisible to those who don't. It's that sort of place.

Rewinding a few minutes to your arrival at the grand glass box that is The Opposite House and you're struck by another absence. You walk through the doors to be greeted by a lobby that soars the height of the building. Contemporary Asian art dots the room. Part of the floor rises into a black, burbling pond. A dividing wall many, many cubits high is constructed of drawers. (I opened one: it was full of dolls.) What there isn't is a desk stocked with gelled and brocaded receptionists and concierges. In fact, there's no desk at all, just a small army of very helpful and neatly kitted-out 'hosts'.

There seems to have been a top-down decision taken somewhere along the line to unstitch the stuffiness of the hotel experience, putting guests in touch with their own good time as directly as possible. If Hedi Slimane transformed men's tailoring for Dior by pulling out all the stuff and nonsense and reducing the suit to its elegant necessities, this is what the Swire group, the London-based transnational of



which Cathay Pacific Airways is a member, in its first purpose-built small-luxury property, has done for hotels with The Opposite House. You sit on a daybed in your suite while your details are taken promptly by a staffer equipped with a digital clipboard. Passport, zap, credit card, zap, and it's done. By the time your bags are brought up, you're free to enjoy your room at leisure, no fuss, no muss.

A friend's wife used to hide in the bathroom until the bellboy had gone, such was her horror of having to stand around while they demonstrated how the airconditioning works. There's none of that here – unless you want it. Your host will walk you through everything, from the way the taps work (you turn them) to the thread-count of the Egyptian cotton sheets (a cool 400) on the whopper of a bed, but only if you ask. If you want maximum hand-holding, you've got it. But the rooms are quietly studded with so much cool stuff that exploring them yourself is a big part of the fun. Where scratching beneath the veneer in too many hotels punctures the illusion, opening each door here reveals another 'Aha!' moment, whether it's the Coopers Pale next to the Tsingtao in the fridge, or the fact that the stereo is wired through to the shower. (Thorough sound-proofing, I hasten to add, means that your neighbour can give their stereo all it's got and you'll be none the wiser.) Everything is plug-and-play and everything works the first time you try it.

This sort of approach only works, of course, if things are laid out in a manner that doesn't need explaining. There's help available at the press of a button if you need it, but otherwise intuition rules. And it works. Gone are the consoles bearing scores of switches but never the one you want to turn off the lights. Gone are the piles of hotel collateral, the brochures, cardboard cut-outs and sheafs of whatever you want to dump in a glossy pile of glittering generalities behind the couch. Instead, it's expanses of hardwood and acres of linen. And space. So very much space.

More than half of the 99 rooms occupy 70 square metres or more. In layman's terms, that means they're really big, with loft-like open-plan designs.



On paper, the idea of unadorned panels of concrete, wraparound glass and timber floors might come across as being cold or airless, but the effect is precisely the opposite. Walk barefoot from bed to bath and you understand the true genius of the design. It's all about texture. There's an almost-but-not-quite rough quality to the broad American white oak floorboards and, this being Beijing of the cold, cold winter, they're also heated when the need arises. The timber theme continues in the (reclaimed) red pine of the beautifully lit hallways. If you like the cultural references in your accommodation to be overt, meanwhile, this might not be the place for you. Chinoiserie does not abound. There's the odd lacquered chest, but that's pretty much it. It's a confident move.

Bathrooms, they say, are how hotel rooms are truly judged. The duckboard floors in the showers are nice, as are the huge showerheads and the dual timber basins. They're nothing, though, in the face of the bath. The oak bath – or, to give it its due, the freestanding deep-soaking tub – might not comfortably accommodate an entire Yao Ming, but by golly it would come close. Any regular-sized, non-basketball-playing human should find it more than adequate: it's long, it's deep, and there'll be no withdrawal. If it were possible to form an emotional attachment to a bathtub, this one would be a prime candidate. Beijing's an awesome town for eating out, but you'd almost be forgiven for never leaving your hotel room. David Laris is part of the problem, of

*Bright lights, big city
The Opposite House
flanks vibrant Sanlitun
Road. Its stainless-
steel swimming
pool sits below a
constellation of tiny
feature lights.*



There's been a top-down decision to unstitch the stuffiness of the usual hotel experience.

course. Best known for his restaurant at Shanghai's Three on the Bund complex, Laris consults on the food-and-bev side of the operation, which comprises Bei, a modern Asian restaurant, the more casual, Mediterranean-themed Sureño, plus the basement Punk nightclub and lobbyside Mesh wine bar. He also oversees The Village Café, a breakfast-to-supper place in the heart of the hotel. Its menu doubles as room service, and it could've been lifted from a low-key Mod Oz café anywhere in Australia – from the Thai beef salad to the meat pie to the Vietnamese rolls. There's something comforting about finding beetroot in your burger 'with the lot', while the pavlova with strawberries, passionfruit and vanilla ice-cream does Mum proud. Forget the clothed trolleys, too – all this stuff appears in the rooms in little picnic hampers replete with flasks of watermelon juice, a favoured local tippie. It's cute, but it's also functional.

Sureño, the Mediterranean restaurant, is fine, and lists an interesting watermelon Negroni among its signature drinks, but it's Bei that provides the clearest incentive to dine in the hotel. It operates as a stand-alone venture, and its offer would be compelling here or in the UK or US. Chef Max Levy is a young American who sharpened his sushi skills under traditional masters in Japan and worked with some notable names in New York. The menu at Bei is not specifically Japanese. Bei means 'north', as in Beijing, 'the northern capital', so the brief here incorporates flavours from across the same latitude, combining elements of Korean, Japanese and northern Chinese food in a series of set mod-Asian menus. But the fresh wasabi offered at the table with a sharkskin grater suggests that Japanese is Levy's preferred métier. Grilled Japanese wagyu, served with a bowl of rice and fresh bamboo, is graceful in its simplicity, and the man can do no wrong as far as eel is concerned. The sushi, perhaps unsurprisingly, is nothing short of exquisite. But there are other strings to the Bei bow: Levy's chicken dishes, such as the densely flavoursome thigh on scrambled eggs

enlivened with roast tomato kimchi, speak as much to his New Orleans heritage as they do to his adopted cuisine. The chocolate consommé, poured from a warm ceramic pot, will tempt the most committed chocophobes. There's a palpable buzz to the place, and it makes for a potent package.

"The sophisticated traveller is looking for more depth and reality in the way they spend their restaurant and bar dollar," says Laris. "Our target market is always real diners, not just in-house guests." Bei overlooks what might just be the edgiest-looking swimming pool of recent memory. It's inside, so don't go planning on working on your tan – this is Beijing, after all – but the stainless-steel expanse is mood-lit by walls of colour, like Rothko on an up-day, and the effect is quite magical. Above the pool hang thousands of crystalline points of light, suspended in the black of the ceiling. The staff have nicknamed this constellation The Matrix with good reason.



This, you're thinking, is what hotels should be about. This, you're thinking, sounds great. All the fun with none of the fluffy valances, ugly paintings, overbearing flunkies or pillow-minting. And you're right. The setting is perfect. Sanlitun is just north-east

of the Forbidden City – the heart of today's Beijing. It houses old embassies and new shops. Sanlitun Road used to be known as Bar Street, and indeed scores of very ordinary, rather touristy dives cluster down Workers' Stadium Road's north end. The neighbourhood is home to the horrendous Yashow clothing market, your one-stop shop for Pawl Smith, Diesel and Hugo Bose, but it's also the site of The Village at Sanlitun, with its whopping great Apple, Adidas and Puma (yes, the real ones) concept stores, brimming with wide-eyed newly minted capitalists. It's full of contrasts and seductive flux, and in the middle of it all is The Opposite House, linked but separate, discreet but standing proud. It's on the cutting edge of the new designer China and the cusp of the latest look of luxe, wising the West up to the very Eastern idea that what you leave out counts as much as what you put in. Amen. ■

Swire Papua New Guinea Rainforest Study



Swire's Australian and Papua New Guinea headquartered subsidiaries, John Swire & Sons Pty Limited and Steamships Trading Company, have together pledged Kina 700,000 (US\$250,000) to support an extensive long-term study of Papua New Guinea's rainforests. The Swire Papua New Guinea Rainforest Study (SPRS) will be coordinated by the Center for Tropical Forest Science (CTFS) of the Arnold Arboretum of Harvard University and the Smithsonian Tropical Research Institute, in partnership with the New Guinea Binatang Research Centre (BRC), the University of Minnesota, and several partner institutions in PNG. The project will involve the establishment of a permanent 50-hectare forest-monitoring plot and several one-hectare satellite plots in the Wanang area of Madang Province, in northern PNG.

SPRS has been made possible by the support of 11 local clans, who have signed a conservation deed to protect over 10,000 hectares of the forest they jointly own from logging. In an innovative effort to generate sustainable income, they approached the Binatang Research Centre and expressed interest in hosting biological research in the Wanang Conservation Area. They have since received scientific training, employment as biological field assistants, and community development opportunities in conjunction with BRC's research activities.

The next two years will see the construction of the Swire PNG Rainforest Study Centre, the classification, measurement and mapping of each tree within the 50-hectare plot, and ongoing monitoring to observe how PNG rainforests respond to climate change and

increased levels of atmospheric carbon dioxide. The CTFS also plans to develop effective management plans and techniques for reforestation and restoration of cleared and degraded land in PNG.

Swire and Steamships will also sponsor international postgraduate fellowships to help increase the scientific community's understanding of the relationship between PNG's forests and global climatic trends.

Swire and Steamships' support for SPRS is based on our belief that PNG's pristine rainforests have a crucial part to play in the global movement to address issues of climate change, by mitigating increases in atmospheric carbon. Maintaining and protecting areas of natural rainforest, having a sound understanding of their carbon content and sequestration capabilities, and exploring avenues to capture more carbon through reforestation will assist the scientific community in assigning economic values to the roles rainforests play in climate mitigation, as well as in biodiversity conservation and watershed protection.

For Swire, SPRS is an opportunity to give something back. Bill Rothery, Chairman of both John Swire & Sons Pty and Steamships says: "We see SPRS as recognition and appreciation of the 90-year relationship Swire and Steamships have had with PNG. It is our way of saying thank you. We have chosen this project because of the community benefits it will bring, and because we believe that traditional landowners should be empowered to manage their forests sustainably, such that environmental integrity is maintained while economic opportunities are captured." ■



From Peking to Punk

Two contrasting exhibitions with a Swire connection have caught the attention of the Chinese public in the latter half of this year. In Beijing, an exhibition organised by the British Library for the National Library of China has showcased a number of photographs taken by skilled amateur photographer and former group Chairman, Warren Swire, in the early years of the last century; in Hong Kong, Swire Properties is currently hosting an exhibition of clothing created during the long and often controversial career of British designer, Vivienne Westwood.

“Western Eyes: Historical Photographs of China in British Collections 1860-1930”, which ran from mid-September to mid-October in the Library’s Ji Gu and You Wen Halls, included more than 500 photographs collected by the British Library, the Royal Society for Asian Affairs, the School of Oriental and African Studies, the University of London, as well as some private collections. They document historical events that have shaped modern China – from the closing phases of the Second Opium or “Arrow” War of 1860, to the Boxer Rebellion of 1900, and the birth of the Chinese Republic in the Xinhai Revolution

of 1911. They capture in stiff and carefully posed portraits the leading political and social figures of the day, and they record the landscapes and lives of everyday people in China during this turbulent three quarters of a century period. Photographed for, and largely by, Westerners, these collections bear witness to the enduring European fascination with Chinese life and culture. Most had not been seen in China before the Beijing exhibition.

Photography first began to establish itself in China when French commercial photographer Felice Beato arrived with the Anglo-French expeditionary force that occupied Beijing in late 1860. The record he created of the military campaign and of the architecture of both Beijing and Guangzhou represents the first large-scale photographic documentation undertaken on the Mainland. Following on from Beato were celebrated Western photographers such as American, Milton Miller, who produced magnificent costume and portrait studies in the 1860s. Then came Englishmen John Thomson, who travelled widely in the Chinese Empire in the early 1870s, and Thomas Child, who photographed his 200-plus series of photographs “In and Around Peking” from the 1870s to the 1880s. Local photographer, Lai Afong’s career meanwhile



spanned the whole of the second half of the nineteenth century and his unique record of Chinese life won praise for its taste and artistry. Later, as photographic equipment became more portable and the photographic process less complex, it entered the realms of the amateur.

Around 50 of Warren Swire's photographs appeared in the Beijing exhibition. They represent his own careful record of his duty travels around China and Hong Kong between 1906 and 1940. During the course of his career, Warren Swire took many thousands of photographs of the company's properties, as well as more general, scenic views (he seldom went in for portraiture). While these photographs clearly had a practical purpose as visual reminders of the company's offices, godowns and dockyards, their very functionality means they provide a rare glimpse of a China unseen in the work produced by commercial photographers of the period. They are also a reminder to later generations of the difficult and at times primitive conditions experienced by those furthering the company's business interests in the remoter parts of China.

As far away from Warren Swire's carefully documented monochrome city and river-scapes as it is possible to get is the explosion of colour and vibrancy that is "A Life in Fashion" – a retrospective of the career of 67-year-old Vivienne Westwood, doyenne of the British fashion scene, which she has dominated for almost 40 years. The retrospective includes more than 150 exhibits chosen from her personal archive and the collection of her work



on show at London's Victoria & Albert Museum (V&A). The exhibition, which has been touring the world since 2004, has been created by the V&A and is hosted in Hong Kong by Swire Properties. Its opening launches ArtisTree, a space dedicated to the arts and culture on the third floor of Swire Properties' Cornwall House in the TaiKoo Place office complex in Island East.

It is not often that the catalogue for an exhibition of clothing carries a warning about "adult" content and parental supervision and A Life In Fashion includes much that will shock the overly narrow-minded. Vivienne Westwood is perhaps best known as one of the founders of Punk Rock in the 1970s, alongside partner Malcolm McLaren, who managed the infamous British punk band, The Sex Pistols. Westwood's artistic collaboration with McLaren, which lasted until 1983, saw the two adapt and change their style many times – from the rubber-wear and bondage gear of punk, to romantic eighteenth



the “mini-crinin” – a parody on the Victorian crinoline with its skirt abbreviated to the length of a ballet tutu.

century pastiches that featured highwaymen and buccaneers, and clothes inspired by ethnic and primitive cultures. It was this talent for reinventing themselves that would keep the Vivienne Westwood label fresh and new from season to season.

Later, when Westwood struck out on her own, she became more and more absorbed in the study of sartorial history and the way that clothing has been used down the centuries to conceal, distort or exaggerate the body’s shape to convey a variety of subtle and not-so-subtle socio-political messages. At the height of her career, in the late 80s and through the 90s, she took elements of these historical fashions – the ultra-masculine slashing and pulling of Tudor costume, the tight lacing of nineteenth century women’s corsetry - and turned them on their head to convey whole new meanings. Thus, in Westwood’s hands and with modern stretch fabrics, the corset became a symbol not of constraint, but of female empowerment. It was this unique approach of “taking something from the past that has a sort of vitality that has never been exploited” that produced

Westwood’s iconoclastic approach to fashion and her contempt for the banal are, however, balanced by an absolute mastery of tailoring and a love affair with traditional British fabrics such as Harris Tweed. Alongside the more outlandish elements of her collections – the ‘Statue of Liberty’ corsets, the underwear overprinted with pornographic images from ancient Greece – are the elements that make her label so widely marketable: the classic twin sets, ‘Savile’ jackets and ‘country’ suits – but all with a twist that makes them uniquely Westwood. And her love of the romantic and theatrical – with the idea that clothes should not just be worn for practical reasons, but are also about “dressing up” – has ensured that she has become the queen of evening wear. Vivienne Westwood has come a long way from her punk days, receiving numerous awards from the establishment she set out to mock all those years ago, including the OBE in 1991; she was made a Dame in 2006.

Which brings us back to the question of what is Vivienne Westwood’s connection with Swire – beyond the obvious one of Swire Properties’ sponsorship of the V&A retrospective? Vivienne Westwood was in fact born Vivienne Isabel Swire – a very distant relation, but in all probability originally from the same Yorkshire stock that produced the founder of the group. Warren Swire, staunchly conservative, would no doubt have been appalled! ■

The Design Doctor

Name Ernest Li

Job Title Senior Graphic Designer, Hong Kong East Marketing Team, Swire Properties

"I have been with Swire for ten years – that sounds like a long time, but actually it has flown by. I think that's because there is so much variety. My team and I have worked on all kinds of

projects – a Classic Mini Exhibition, the yearly winter music festival and various shows by the theatre groups that Swire supports. We create the promotional materials and decorations, but we also get involved in other aspects of the events. I learn new things all the time and I think it's fair to say there is never a dull day!

To do this job, you have to have a genuine flair for design, a natural appreciation of aesthetics. I draw my inspiration from the world around me, from books and magazines, from TV and from my friends and family. You also have to be highly organised. The logistics of a project can be very complicated and planning is probably the most important stage. At the beginning of my career with Swire, I once worked through the night to complete a job. I'm much better organised now and that wouldn't happen!

You also have to be resourceful, particularly when working with a low budget. One year, my team was assigned the job of decorating the ballroom for the company annual dinner. We had chosen a Bond theme; it's a great theme because there are plenty of striking images to choose from. I was determined to fill the room with giant posters of some of the well-known Bond characters; however, we couldn't afford the printing costs. In the end, we printed out tiny parts of the huge images on A3 sheets and then spent days sticking them together! There were literally thousands of them and we had to figure out what went with what. I'm

happy to say, the outcome was fantastic. The guests loved the pixelated black and white images that resulted. They all posed for photos in front of our cost-saving posters!

Innovation is key. My team and I always try to deliver something a little out of the ordinary and we have created all kinds of lighting devices and mechanical displays from scratch. Unfortunately, things don't always go according to plan!

One year we designed a dinosaur sedan chair for the Matilda Sedan Chair Race, which Swire sponsors. Dissatisfied with a simple dinosaur, we wanted it to breathe smoke. So we installed a fire extinguisher and threaded the hose up to the mouth. The night before the race, we did a test run, and unfortunately the extinguisher blew a large hole in the dinosaur's head! We had to fix it up in a hurry with that indispensable design tool – sticky tape. No one noticed.

I love the variety and the steep learning curve, but the best thing about my job is the people I work with. My team are all extremely talented and we work hard to get the best possible result. We are driven by the same thing that drives all designers – a love of all things beautiful." ■



Ernest setting up the Vivienne Westwood exhibition (page 13-15).

*A regular column looking at some of the unusual tasks performed by our Swire colleagues.