

Terminal Dilemma: Hong Kong's Waterfront, 1841-1891

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Terminal delights

The Victorian railway terminus is almost a visual and narrative cliché. It appears in literature from the popular – Conan Doyle's Sherlock Holmes¹ – to the received classic – Emile Zola,² Leo Tolstoy,³ Thomas Hardy.⁴ It was the subject of paintings galore.⁵ It and the railways it served have been, and no doubt will continue to be, a focus for understanding and explaining aspects of Victorian culture in western countries, from growing secularisation to the routinisation and acceleration of life, and from the mixing of people and cultures to the rise of urbanisation and the celebration of industrial might (see Freeman and Carter).

The architecture of the great railway termini tends to the grandiose. When one thinks of the great termini of London, Paris, Moscow and Bombay (Mumbai) amongst others, one has an immediate image of a place of almost overbearing grandeur. As John Kellett reminds us (2), "By 1890 the principal railway companies (of Britain) had expended ... more than one eighth of all railway capital, on the provision of terminals."

Part of the explanation for this is, of course, the extraordinary rise of railway travel during the Victorian period (see Revill). Christopher Keep notes that between 1830 and 1850 100 miles (161 km) of track in Britain had become 6,600 (10,621 km) and by 1900 over 22,000 miles (35,400 km). From the same start date a single railway company had, by 1846, become 272 companies licensed by act of parliament.⁶ More staggering, the 33,000,000 passengers carried in 1843 had ballooned to 587,230,641 by 1880, and to over 1.25 billion by 1900 (Keep, 139). To help the last figure make sense, with Britain's 1900 population of 38 million, 1.25 billion passenger journeys works out at everyone in the country taking an average of 33 rail journeys a year. Extend the statistics to cover the world, and the numbers are the same: In India the rail network went from 21 miles (33.8 km) in 1852 through 2,333 miles (3,755 km) ten years later, to 24,670 miles (39,704 km) in 1902 (Hurd and Kerr, 3). In the USA there were 30 miles (48 km) of track in 1830; by 1890 that had become 163,562 miles (263,239 km). The ten leading European countries had 3,897 km (2,421 miles) of track in 1840 and 257,743 km (160,147 miles) in 1900.⁷ It is not surprising, then, that the railway terminus achieved iconic architectural and cultural status.

What is curious however, when one ponders this particular manifestation of one of the great triumphs of the steam age, is how it was not mirrored in the evolution of the other great transport network that steam revolutionised: shipping. From the start of Victoria's reign through the emergence, growth and final triumph of steam at sea, as sea transport was revolutionised in volume, speed and reliability, the waterfront – the departure and arrival point for voyages to and from near and far – remained a place at the margins of social life. The shore was what the rambunctious seafarer was cast up on to become the prey of the crimp, the gull of the tavern keeper, the victim of the whorehouse doxy and the debtor of the doss house. It was a place on the wrong side of the tracks at the wrong end of town.

Where railways take over the centre of Victorian cities, their opulent termini dominating the inner city landscape and, in the process, remaking it, the world of the port took almost the opposite trajectory (see Kellett). Gradually, the hearts of ports began the first steps in a movement that has, accelerating all the time, continued to the present day. As a city grew

more prosperous, so the grubby, smelly, noisy, low-life world of shipping – not of course its safely sanitised and de-marinated head offices, brokers, banks, insurers and lawyers – began to move away. A look at any map of a major port around 1837 and one from around 1900 will show this movement; a movement that accelerated as ships got larger and the port facilities needed to service them grew with them. There are notable exceptions, but the tendency was to ensure that the actual wharves where ships berthed for loading and unloading were not, as were major railway termini, a focus of the downtown cityscape.

Ports feature in literature and the visual arts, but the overtones of splendour and bustle, of achievement and progress one can detect in treatments of the railway seem to be replaced in the world of ports and ships by something else; something neatly captured by George Landow's book title *Images of Crisis* and his suggestion that shipwreck – the ever present risk of any Victorian sea voyage and hence the looming menace of a port's waterfront – is one of the most powerful of these images in the Victorian imagination, possibly *the* paradigmatic image. Ships and the sea – along with the vulgar crassness of naked commerce and its myriad commodities, stripped of glamour once bagged, baled, barrelled, boxed or bulked and sitting in piles on a dirty dockside or stacked in the gloom of huge warehouses – represented low life and the seamy waterfront.⁸ The commercial maritime world is not just on the wrong side of the tracks, as it were, it is also indelibly associated with departure, discomfort, danger and death, without the leaven of the gallant naval warrior's glory.

If the as yet untamed menace of the sea and the immorality and fecklessness of the waterfront are one explanation for the absence of palaces to paddles and propellers and temples to triple expansion engines, there are other, complex and largely technology-driven explanations too. These had a number of facets. Before the steam and steel revolution picked up pace, two major and important differences between the railways and shipping had already made it unlikely that there would be sea termini to rival the cathedrals of the connecting rod and the temples to the train.

First of all, once the nineteenth-century transport revolution was on a roll, what I will call the freight:passenger ratio developed quite differently in the two transport modes and hence had significant effects on how the respective infrastructure developed. Since statistically we are dealing with apples and oranges, making useful comparisons is very difficult. The fundamental measures – tons/mile (tonnes/km) and passenger/mile (passenger/km)⁹ – reveal this strict non-comparability. But if we are prepared to wave our hands in the air a bit and manipulate some smoke and mirrors, some broad comparisons can emerge.

The results suggest that during the Victorian era a significant difference between sea transport and rail transport had a major effect on the development of their infrastructures. As far as shipping was concerned, freight was almost always the overwhelming business of any port, the freight:passenger ratio in terms of the quantity of shipping devoted to each category fell somewhere between 5:1 and 10:1 – that is, more ships carry cargo than carry people. Railway ratios are harder to gauge. Bogart and Chaudhary give an average annual figure for Indian Railways of 7.8 million ton/miles of freight and 8.7 million passenger/miles between 1874 and 1912.¹⁰ This suggests that, during the nineteenth century, railways rapidly evolved into as much, or more, people carriers as freight carriers, with a ratio possibly as much as 2:1 and probably 1:1 – that is, railways carried people as much as, or more, than they carried freight.¹¹ It would be tendentious to claim these to be solid numbers, but they do suggest that we should expect there to be marked differences in terms of how the two different forms of transport's infrastructures developed in the nineteenth century's growing urban centres.

Given the salience of passenger traffic for railways, almost from the outset freight traffic could be, and was, separated from it. Passenger trains had their own dedicated rolling stock – the passenger carriage – with, perhaps, one carriage dedicated to heavy baggage. They went to and from their dedicated stations, which soon became the grand passenger termini. Goods trains were separately operated using their own dedicated and very different rolling stock. They went to goods and marshalling yards which in the Victorian era, where port cities were concerned, were ‘down at the docks’. The grubby business of goods transport could be kept out of sight and out of mind.

However, where shipping was concerned – reflecting an age-old pattern – cargo far exceeded passengers even during the period of the ascendancy of the passenger liner. If we take 1897 as an indicative year of that last point, in Hong Kong – then as now one of the world’s top five ports by tonnage throughput – 77,293 port calls carried 15.94 million tons of cargo and 1,652,016 passengers, including in junks and river ferries (Report Harbour Master 1897, 370-1). Local river ferry and junk trades represented 59.8% and 14.7% of passenger figures, but just 10.1% of cargo; ocean-going shipping represented 25.5% of passengers but 90% of cargo. Again with some hand-waving we can estimate the ocean-going shipping cargo:passenger ratio to fall within the bounds of our ratios above.¹² So even in an intensely busy passenger port, cargo was what sea transport was about. For Hong Kong’s ocean shipping, as had been the case for centuries, passengers were an extra: running the numbers as above gives us 1.594 billion cu ft of freight and 165.2 million cu ft of passengers to give a 9.6:1 freight to passenger ratio even in a busy passenger port like Hong Kong.

One can add here that size-for-size a further difference for ships is that they allow the passenger:cargo separation to be achieved within the confines of the vessel itself: the distinction between cabin and hold. This, in turn, links with another difference, namely that between the long-haul and short-haul journey and their respective frequencies. Put simply, far fewer people take journeys of several thousand miles than take journeys of tens of miles. It follows that in our period, the relative numbers of people crossing the sea’s vast expanse were inevitably smaller than those travelling by ferry or coaster within or between urban areas. So a long-haul ship can make space for a large amount of cargo whilst being simultaneously able to carry the comparatively small number of passengers. In ferries, however, it is the inverse. Only with the rise in European emigration in the latter half of the nineteenth century, and the increased travel caused by the administrative and business demands of rapidly growing overseas empires, did passenger flows begin to reach levels that gave an impetus to the design and building of the large, dedicated passenger-liner with a comparatively small cargo hold, that was beginning to boom in the closing decades of Victoria’s reign.¹³

At the beginning of our period an ocean-going vessel that was exclusively a passenger ship was more or less unknown. Almost all ships carried cargo as their main purpose, with some accommodation for passengers. During the course of the nineteenth century this changed, but even by the end of the century when the large, dedicated passenger liner had arrived, it never carried only passengers. Even the large P&O and Canadian Pacific liners calling in Hong Kong in the last decade of Victoria’s reign, which could carry 800-1,000 passengers, could and did carry 1,000 or more tons of cargo. It follows that for almost all of the nineteenth century, any port infrastructure built to service shipping was always going to have to handle both passengers and cargo, even when the ships became in principle mainly for passengers. And this is not a recipe for grandiose termini.

Another contributing factor to this huge difference between the focal role of the Victorian railway terminus in the urban landscape and the less manifest presence of equivalent shipping termini was the increase in the size of ships; a technological development largely closed to railways. With the increase of tractive power of locomotives during the nineteenth century, evidently the size of goods trains (that is, their length and therefore number of wagons) greatly increased. But for obvious reasons to do with track gauge, tunnel diameter, bridge and trackbed load capacity, marshalling yard size, etc., no size increment could match the growth in load capacity of ships. The average western-designed ship at the beginning of the Victorian era was a sailing vessel of 350-400 tons burthen drawing 4-5m.¹⁴ By the end of the century, 80% of shipping (exclusive of the traditional junk trade) was steam powered. The largest commercial ships in eastern service by 1900 were 8,000 to 10,000 register tons, drawing >9m. The average was around 1,800 tons and drew 6-7m (see Harbour Master reports 1855, 1875, 1885, 1895, 1905 in *Hong Kong Government Gazette* 1856, 1876, 1886, 1896, 1906). A five to twenty-eight times growth in the size of ships meant there was a need for deeper water to float them, and larger basins and wharves to accommodate and work them. Those developments did not significantly accelerate until the 1870s, but the trends were evident within a decade of Victoria's accession. A key consequence of this was that ports were in a constant state of evolution; what served for the ships of the 1850s was going to struggle to handle ships of a generation later, and the infrastructure of 1875 would struggle to handle the ships of 1900.

Perhaps the most important thing to note before we move on to the development of Hong Kong as a maritime terminus is the singular pattern of the development of its maritime traffic. Almost from the outset Hong Kong became a major passenger transit port for Chinese emigrants and intercontinental travellers, for local passengers between the main Pearl River delta settlements (mainly Hong Kong and Guangzhou), and for passengers via coastal vessels to other treaty ports.¹⁵ Earlier Hong Kong government records detail only Chinese passenger traffic, with the first comprehensive – as opposed to purely emigrant – figures in 1870. In that year, 674,001 Chinese passengers are recorded either arriving or departing. By 1880, this had almost doubled and by 1890 nearly trebled. In 1900, the statistics for the first time give all passenger traffic with a total passenger throughput of 2,031,079. To help those numbers make sense, that means going from at least 1,800 people moving from ship to shore or shore to ship *per day* – call that over 150 every daylight hour – in 1870, to over 5,500 per day, or >460 per hour, in 1900 (see data from the Harbour Master reports 1870, 1880, 1890, 1900 in *Hong Kong Government Gazette* 1871, 1881, 1891, 1901).

There was a clear division in Hong Kong's prolific passenger traffic between long-haul and short-haul ships and voyages. The first primarily carried emigrants to the Americas, Australia and New Zealand and to Southeast Asia with the addition of a smaller, but important quantum of government, military, mission and business travellers. These were split into those travelling 1st and 2nd class, and those travelling steerage or, on some routes, the even more cramped quarters known as Asiatic steerage. The short-haul traffic had a similar split between cabin class and steerage, the latter being almost entirely Chinese passengers, because for most of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries Europeans were not permitted to travel steerage. The short-haul traffic was overwhelmingly dominated by local river traffic between Hong Kong, Guangzhou and other Pearl River Delta ports, with the important addition of traffic to other ports on the coast between Hong Kong and Shanghai.

An index of the proportions of travellers in those class-conscious days, whether long-haul or short-haul, is the accommodation ratio as between 1st, 2nd and (Asiatic) steerage classes (see Bard/ Ueunten and Van Sant). These ranged from 3.5 steerage class passengers to one 1st or 2nd class passenger, to levels as high as 6:1 and sometimes more. For example, we see 166 1st and 2nd class passengers to 1,000 steerage class in the 1875 *Oceanic* rising to 200 1st and 2nd class passengers to 700 steerage class in the 1891 *Empress of Japan*.¹⁶

The last important point, and one that is hard to over-emphasise, is that where, in general, steamships only came to form half of the world's tonnage in around the mid to late 1880s and to outnumber sailing ships around the mid to late 1890s,¹⁷ in Hong Kong the crossover happened very much earlier. As early as 1871, steam was 63.8% of Hong Kong's ocean-going tonnage, by ten years later it was 86% and, in the year of Victoria's death, it was 90.7%. In 1875, when the steam revolution was about to take off thanks to the invention of the compound engine – and especially the triple expansion engine post-1880 – the Harbour Master said, “Large as the proportion of Steam shipping is over Sailing shipping, it is much greater in fact as the Steam-ships of the present day carry so much more weight than their registered tonnage gives them credit for; while Sailing vessels do not carry much cargo over and above their registered tonnage.” (*Hong Kong Government Gazette* 18 March 1876, 125, para.11). He put numbers to that statement the following year, noting that steamers represented 76% of western-style vessels using the port but 81.6% of the tonnage (*Hong Kong Government Gazette*, 17 March 1877, 150, para.4).

This extraordinary apparent local eclipse of sail was made possible only by the existence of the third of Hong Kong's important differences; what is known, from the first government records until its post-World War Two disappearance, as “the junk trade”. For in Hong Kong, from 1841 until 1941, a large proportion of the vessels and crew using the port were traditional Chinese sailing vessels, crassly – and now unchangeably – known as junks.¹⁸ These timeworn workhorses of Hong Kong's local, China's coastal and *Nányáng* (南洋, or Southeast Asia) trades were the sailing vessels of East and Southeast Asian waters and, when they are factored into the equation, rebalance the picture, showing that working sail in Hong Kong endured rather better than it did elsewhere (see Davies). However, to Hong Kong's colonial maritime bureaucrats, traditional Chinese sail just was not thought of as counting in the same way.

Out of 27,891 vessels entering and leaving Hong Kong in 1870, 25,491 (91.4%) were junks. The proportion of junks slowly decreased – to 89.25% in 1880, 85% in 1890 and 76.4% in 1900, when 17,732 vessel calls represented, for a ballpark guess, probably up to 4,000 traditional Chinese vessels. They had got larger, from an average of 59 tons in 1870 rising to around 90 tons in 1900, but their share of tonnage using the port had dropped dramatically – to 53.2% in 1870, 39.4% in 1880, 26.7% in 1890 and just 18.6% in 1900. And the crews of the traditional Chinese vessels using the port became a smaller component of the town's population of sailors – dropping from 78.8% in 1870 to 41.3% in 1900.¹⁹

This completes a broad overview of the world of shipping in Hong Kong – a world dramatically in development and transition between 1837 and 1901 – to which its port infrastructure had to be fitted and adapted.

The interminable shores

When we turn to Hong Kong's waterfront and how it changed during Victoria's long reign, these larger patterns of maritime change reveal the apparent powerlessness of increased sea

trade and passenger flow to stimulate port development equivalent to the world of the railways.

We can start with the moment the British bluejackets and Royal Marines formed up at Possession Point (水坑口, *Shui Hang Hau*, or Stream Gully Mouth)²⁰ on that January morning in 1841 when Britain arrived for its 156-year stay. The northern shoreline of Hong Kong Island, which some of them would promptly go on to survey under the fiery Commander Sir Edward Belcher RN, was entirely undeveloped (Belcher, 147-8). There were half a dozen small bays, none with more than a house or two by way of settlement. Otherwise it was for the most part rocky with a narrow, muddy strip that uncovered at low water, except in the larger bays to the east – today's Canal Road/Bowrington and Causeway Bay areas – where the mudflats were more extensive. There were no landings, although Hong Kong's earliest chart shows a small jetty to have been built in a bay well to the east of the original settlement, which stood at the end of the short coast road immediately built by the Royal Engineers.

For the next two decades, change was steady but uncoordinated. Early Hong Kong did not really prosper and there was no attempt by government to take charge of the harbour or supervise the shoreline. Indeed, once the dust of the First Opium War had settled the shoreline was fairly promptly either seized by the military – with the army getting the best spots to the chagrin of the Royal Navy – or parcelled up to be auctioned off to the highest bidders (see Eitel, 172-4). The result of this early commitment to *laissez-faire* was that through until the mid 1860s shoreline development was entirely haphazard. Marine lot holders – those who had bought land on the shore – extended their holdings to seaward as the whim or need took them, and to standards of construction that matched their pockets and plans. That resulted in a state of affairs in which there was little direct access to the shoreline, save where there was a government pier. Typhoons frequently wrought havoc. And because there was neither a garbage collection nor a sewage system, at low tide in hot weather the reek was the far side of noisome, getting worse as one moved westwards towards where, as a result of official segregationist sentiments on the one hand and local Chinese dislike of western ways on the other, the bulk of Hong Kong's growing migrant population from Guangdong Province was settling and government interest in regulation and order was least.

Worse, and as we shall see in more detail later, the unsupervised developments along the shoreline so impeded normal wave action and tidal scour, that siltation became a recurrent problem and was already commented on by the Harbour Master in 1845. This shoaling of the immediate access to the shore, its houses and, above all, godowns²¹ not only impeded ship-to-shore and shore-to-ship traffic and required regular rickety extensions to the piers; it also ensured a steadily increasing area of noxious, detritus littered seabed exposed at low tide.

Anyone arriving in Hong Kong by sea in the 1840s and 1850s – and of course everyone did – sailed into what has always been a stunning maritime amphitheatre. The skipper of the ship he or she was arriving in would find somewhere to anchor that was not reserved for the military or Hong Kong's early oligarchs. And then either in the ship's boats, or very soon in the unique – and very Hong Kong hybrid – Hong Kong sampan,²² passengers would get ferried ashore to whichever rickety, ramshackle jetty the ship's local agent had organised for the landing.

By 1842 an early Harbour Master's Report noted there were eight piers of one sort or another, twelve by 1844 and fifteen by 1845. By 1863, a careful count of what is shown on a

contemporary map suggests 56 piers, jetties and landing places between Western and Causeway Bay. Given that the 1863 waterfront open to public rather than military use was only around 5.5 km long, the number of landing places works out at a landing place or pier every 98m. It is no wonder that siltation around the piers was a constant headache.

By 1855, this tendency was increasingly attracting the government's adverse comment and a plan was announced whereby the whole waterfront from roughly today's Tamar development westwards to Possession Point was to be tidied up, a new waterfront roadway built, and some order brought into how people moved from ship to shore, and vice versa. As the Colonial Surveyor put the matter, in the characteristically lumpen-prose still lovingly clung to by Hong Kong's bureaucrats:

It must be borne in mind, that the ground already reclaimed by the tenants of Marine Lots without permission from the Government, which has been put to much expense in consequence of these acts of the tenants; and also that the public generally has suffered, and is suffering great inconvenience by the obstruction of the landing-places.

The plan accordingly announced not just the construction of the road but also a system of piers,

There should be Piers, private and public – one private, say between every four houses, where house-boats could be slung on davits; and public Piers at the places already fixed upon. The private to be distinguished by (say) White Lamp-posts, the public by Black and by distinctive lights at night time. To the Public piers would resort all boats plying for hire or boats with cargo for houses not facing the sea.

The result, the proclamation declared, would bring six benefits, none of them, of course, related to the convenience of passengers seeking a comfortable terminus to their long or short sea passage. There would be “improvement of the appearance of the City.” Revenue and system would be assisted by a definitive settlement of “the Boundary seawards.” The public would get a new and useful road. The harbour would be protected from further reclamation.²³ It would facilitate “the arrangement of a more efficient Harbour system” – whatever that may have been intended to mean. And finally, those most beloved desiderata of colonial governments, it would be an excellent police measure for impeding the existing “facile mode of escape now practiced by many offenders,” as well as providing “increased means of supervision over the Chinese population” (*Hong Kong Government Gazette*, 10 November 1855, Government Notification No. 53, 1-2).

A similar move was being made further east, along the waterfront that is now Wanchai and Causeway Bay. There, as with the Praya reclamation in Central and Western, the object was to ensure that marine lot holders were prevented from monopolising “the whole benefit so far as their sea-frontage extends,” which evidently all too many of them wished to do. One aspect of this was the founding – and subsequent failure – of the Hong Kong Pier & Godown Company with its main premises and piers in Wanchai in 1871. As the Harbour Master put things in his argument in favour of Johnson's and Chater's wharf bills in 1884 described below,²⁴

It might perhaps be advanced, and with good reason, that the Pier and Godown Company authorised by Ordinance 11 of 1871 was a failure. The site at Wantsai (Wanchai) was badly chosen; as soon after the Pier was built, the silting up was so

great that steamers of large draft were unable to go alongside ... the silting up did more to render that enterprise a failure than anything else.²⁵

When the first reclamation projects for the new Praya had been completed towards 1869, the waterfront began to present the desired elegance of appearance – at least in the Central section. It had a number of piers and landing places, both public and private, though elsewhere, particularly along the western end of the shoreline, the numbers had continued to proliferate and the shoreline to silt.

The exact order of construction, location and number of piers and jetties at any one time is impossible to establish over the first 60 years or so. However, from the mid 1850s onwards one can start identifying the more established among them. In 1861, Government announced it was going to build government piers at Hawan (Wanchai), Possession Point and West Point, indicating in the same notification that the practice of placing landing steps in places along the sea wall was common (*Hong Kong Government Gazette*, 23 November 1861, Government Notification No. 130). A few years later we find more regular names being given, reflecting both public and private sector construction. Government Wharf was the main official pier in Central; Peddar's [sic] Wharf was the main public jetty. Gibb's Wharf was a typical example of a private wharf, in this case for the established trading company Gibb, Livingstone & Co (*Hong Kong Government Gazette*, 7 August 1869, Government Notification No.93, 354).

In the meantime, the Second Opium War (1856-60) had come and gone and in its aftermath the British had managed to claim more Chinese territory, though, in fairness, it was territory that at least some assumed had been granted after the First Opium War but then been denied.²⁶ As of 1860, the Tsim Sha Tsui peninsula as far north as Boundary Street was annexed to Britain, though since it was initially almost exclusively a military enclave, apart from some small landing places, the shoreline initially remained little changed and then became primarily a series of large naval and civilian coal depots for the rapidly increasing amount of coal required for the fast growing number of steamers.

A new impetus to waterfront improvement was given in 1874 by its exact opposite; the enormous destruction wrought by the terrible typhoon of 23 September. The storm destroyed over 273 buildings and wrecked 740 beyond repair, the storm surge having submerged most waterfront and low-lying buildings to a depth of five feet (1.52m). It destroyed the entire sea wall and wrecked the recently installed, rudimentary sewage outlets – that is, outlets that removed ordure from streets and gutters and deposited it on the foreshore. It killed 796 members of the Chinese population (712 by drowning, 84 crushed by collapsing buildings) and 17 Europeans (14, 3). Of the floating world, 28 junks were destroyed, 157 damaged beyond repair and a further 445 badly damaged; additionally, 33 western-style vessels from 16 to 8,000 tons were damaged. Neither shore nor roadstead had stood up to the severity of the storm, the Government Pier at the end of Murray Road, where Central meets today's Sheung Wan, having been destroyed (*Hong Kong Government Gazette*, 17 October 1874, Government Notifications Nos.168-98, 572-81).

On 22 May 1875, a government committee reported on the need to reconstruct the waterfront sea wall and harbour facilities to a better, more robust quality. Much hesitation was expressed because of the high cost of this and the evident reluctance – almost refusal – of the marine lot holders, who would benefit most from it, to pay a cent towards the repairs if they could help it and certainly not to rebuild to a higher standard than had existed before the typhoon (*Hong*

Kong Government Gazette, 22 May 1875, Government Notification No.98, Report, 219-21). Repairs were accordingly undertaken, but neither as extensively nor to as high a quality as might have been hoped. When the Government Pier was rebuilt in timber in April 1875, it was done with so much economy in mind that it already needed extensive repairs in October 1880.

In the 1880s there is clear evidence of moves towards improved government control over the waterfront, and why it was sought. It was, indeed, to improve port facilities, since the Harbour Master was certainly aware of that need. In his report endorsing the private bills he noted,

The private Bills introduced for the consideration of the Legislative Council to legalise the construction of Piers and Wharves on the Western side of the City of Victoria, and on the West side of the Kowloon Peninsula, will, in my opinion, be of great advantage to the trade of the Colony. The facilities, which Piers alongside which Vessels can lie offer, can only be properly appreciated by studying the present cumbersome system of employing lighters. At present a vessel enters the port with sometimes as much as 3,000 tons of cargo on board, all of which has to be transferred to lighters, taken to the shore, and stored in godowns; the goods not being consumed here, the same process of transfer has to be gone through on re-shipment for the Coast of China and Japan. When the Piers are constructed, Vessels will come in from sea and at once go alongside them and discharge the cargoes into railway trucks, communicating directly with the godowns. The time saved, the safety from depredations of cargo-boatmen, and the freedom from wear and tear all tend to shew the immense advantage of the proposed system over the present one. (*Hong Kong Government Gazette*, 30 April 1884)

The first of these private bills was Johnson's Wharves and Piers Ordinance, No. 3 of 1884, passed by the Governor in Council on 12 June.²⁷ As we can see, the report by Commander Thomsett, the Harbour Master, sets out very clearly the problem they were intended to solve.²⁸ What is interesting about this from our perspective is what that problem is, and therefore what counted as a solution – specifically, nothing much for passengers. The problem is the passage of goods, not people. The attention is exclusively on “the trade of the Colony” amongst which, clearly, the tens of thousands of passengers annually are not really seen to count. Of course, most of the explanation for this is that the passengers were 95%+ Chinese emigrants. But there is also the more general attitude to sea travel, ships and the sea. Having to travel by sea remained an unfortunate necessity and not – or at least not for the major part of Victoria's long reign – a glamorous celebration of modernity. The vision was more approaching a harbour in a storm, or of a stormy sea with blazing wreck, than rain, steam and speed.²⁹

Shortly after this first private bill was passed a second, Ordinance No. 4 of 1884, known as Mr Chater's Wharves and Piers Ordinance, made its way through the Legislative Council. This was the old, siltation-challenged Wanchai-based Pier and Godown Company redivivus. The ordinance provided for the creation of the piers and wharves for Hong Kong's first successful, dedicated shipping terminal complex – the Hongkong & Kowloon Wharf and Godown Company – on four contiguous marine lots on the west side of the Tsim Sha Tsui peninsula. As the name of the company implies, the wording of the ordinance states and photographs of the complex prove, the object of building these wharves was to facilitate the handling of cargo rather than passengers.³⁰

By the time the two ordinances had been passed, significant and major passenger services were in place but, apart from the local river ferries, these were not considered as worthy candidates for some infrastructure development. The Peninsula and Oriental Steamship Co. had been operating a regular service linking Hong Kong to Suez since 1845 and, since the completion of the Suez Canal in 1869, onwards to and from Britain (see Harcourt, *Flagships*).³¹ Beginning with its huge, obsolescent, wooden paddle steamers, the Pacific Mail Steamship Co. had likewise been carrying hundreds of passengers backwards and forwards across the Pacific since 1867 (see Tate). The first auxiliary steam ships of the French Messageries Maritimes opened the company's Far East service in 1862 (see Ramona). In 1874, the Occidental and Oriental Steamship Co. began its transpacific service with the 1,400 passenger liner *Oceanic* (see Kemble). In the closing decades of the nineteenth century and the last decades of Victoria's rule, more lines added Hong Kong to their services, not least the Canadian Pacific Line service to Vancouver that began in 1891 with its elegant "Empress" liners. To the big players on the transpacific and China-India-Europe routes we can add the important connections to Australia pioneered by the Eastern & Australian Steam Navigation Co. in 1873 (initially as the Eastern and Australian Mail Steamship Co. Ltd.) and its competitors, Butterfield & Swire's China Navigation Co in 1886,³² and the Japanese Nippon Yusen Kaisha (NYK) in 1896.

But even with the completion of Mr. Catchick Paul Chater's wharves in Tsim Sha Tsui, there was nowhere for such vessels to berth. Instead they swung on dedicated moorings in the stream, their passengers reaching ship or shore in the cramped, and often not particularly sparkling confines of a Hong Kong sampan, or bumboat, as they were more universally known. For the first-class passengers, the companies sometimes provided handsome steam launches. For the steerage – and especially for the Asiatic steerage – passengers, it was a matter of "take what you can".

The problem was mainly that, by the 1880s, the transcontinental ships were too large and drew too much water to be able to use what wharves there were. That was always true for Hong Kong Island, which from first to last was never able to accommodate large ships, except naval vessels following the major reclamation and extension that began the year before Victoria died. On Hong Kong's island shore the piers and wharves that were built for passenger traffic were all for the small river steamers and coasters serving the treaty ports. The best known of these were the Hong Kong, Canton & Macao Steam Boat Co. pier in Western (more or less where the Shun Tak Centre for the Macao ferries still stands) and the Douglas Steam Ship Co. pier, right in the heart of Central next to Peddar's Wharf. Even in Kowloon there was still no pier large enough for the largest passenger vessels visiting Hong Kong by the end of the Victorian era, and that remained the case until the completion of a new, 800' (243.8m) pier by the Hongkong & Kowloon Wharf & Godown Co. in 1932.

Terminal delays

If, as far as waterfront enhancements were concerned, the ocean traveller was more or less ignored as part of the "trade of the Colony", not all seaborne passengers were left entirely in the lurch by Hong Kong's waterfront developments. Until the opening of the first cross-harbour tunnel in 1972, anyone who wished to travel to Kowloon from Hong Kong, or vice versa, had to go by boat. The same was true for those who wanted to travel upriver to Guangzhou and places beyond on the West River, or across the estuary to Macao. So from the first days of colonial Hong Kong onwards, dedicated ferry services began to appear. Connections with other treaty ports and particularly Shanghai increased steadily, especially

with the improvement in steam vessels and with the founding of locally-based shipping lines, allowing and encouraging a lively coastal trade. Equally, once the dust had settled after the Second Opium War in 1860 with a resultant expansion of both commercial and missionary activity in Guangdong Province, river steamer traffic steadily increased. Purely locally, but with added emphasis once the Tsim Sha Tsui Peninsula was annexed in 1860, and then with further impetus when the New Territories and the majority of the outlying islands were added in 1898, cross-harbour traffic began to turn from ad hoc private vessel trips to organised ferry services.

Arrangements for river steamer passengers may have resulted in the creation of dedicated piers, but there is no clear record of this until the 1870s.³³ Given the relative size of the vessels and the general chaos along the shoreline, it seems more probable that for the first two decades or so of Victoria Harbour's story, most of the river steamers will have operated from berths in the stream. However, the traffic was obviously busy and perhaps ferries operated by the more influential companies like Russell & Co. and Augustine Heard & Co had access to piers since a government notification in 1859 specifies the importance of keeping a passage clear for the ferries and designates a fairway to that effect (*Hong Kong Government Gazette* 26 November 1859, 82, Notification No.111).

The founding of the Hongkong, Canton & Macau Steam Boat Co. in October 1865 was the most likely point at, or soon after, which Hong Kong acquired its first, dedicated passenger vessel pier, though to call a lockable gate at the pier end with a ticketing shack on the pier proper a "terminal" would be painting the lily. We know that by 1886-87 the company owned two large piers on the Hong Kong Island shore; in 1898, following the Praya Reclamation – which must seriously have disrupted business – they had applied successfully to build replacements (see Wharton). However, even the replacement piers had nothing much by way of a glamorous building on them to greet or farewell ferry passengers.³⁴ Again, this need not surprise us, because although the river ferries were unquestionably primarily passenger craft, they also carried higher value, more urgent cargo.³⁵

Where cross-harbour ferries were concerned, the first scheduled, if irregular, service dates from 1873 in a single vessel owned and operated by Grant Smith, though it was soon stopped following representations from the Chinese authorities. Another service was begun by a Mr Buxoo, but it too did not prosper. Regular services are thought to have begun in 1888 with the founding of the Kowloon Ferry Co. by the Parsi businessman Dorabjee Naorojee Mithaiwala, who bought both the Smith and Buxoo vessels, the latter being called *Evening* and *Morning Star*. By 1898, this was a flourishing concern and when Mr Naorojee retired in 1898 and the company was sold to the Hongkong & Kowloon Wharf and Godown Co., it became Hong Kong's famous "Star" Ferry Co (see Johnson).

As with every passenger need thus far, at first the "Star" Ferry operated from the Hong Kong Island shore from a typical, fairly rudimentary pier with a matshed structure for a ticket office and waiting room.³⁶ The pier on the Tsim Sha Tsui side was initially part of the cargo handling facilities of the HK & Kowloon Wharf and Godown companies. Neither became any sort of proper, built structure of the kind one associates with the idea of a ferry pier until the first purpose-built piers in 1912, eleven years after Victoria died.

Despite obvious efforts by the authorities in Hong Kong to try to manage the waterfront better as the years progressed, actual improvements, where passenger traffic was concerned, were few. Where piers were concerned, the final move in the long process of preparing

Victoria Harbour to being properly managed as a coherent whole, came in 1899-1900 with the troubled passage of the Piers Ordinance, opposed by the vested interests of Jardine, Matheson & Co. and the Hongkong & Kowloon Wharf & Godown Co.³⁷ The objects of the ordinance were to improve government control of pier building, tidy up the revenue stream and give pier developers twenty-five-year leases as security of tenure, by way of a reward for their investments in improvements. Over time, therefore, piers became less ramshackle. Reconstruction after the Praya Reclamation scheme allowed for rationalisation and deeper water alongside and better maintenance. The Piers Ordinance kept those improvements in place. But as had been the case throughout the nineteenth century the focus remained on freight, not on passengers, whether they were ocean-bound, heading up or down the China Coast, headed to or from destinations in the Pearl River or merely crossing the harbour.

A terminus ad quem

There is no Victorian railway terminus with which to contrast Hong Kong's neglect of its seaborne passengers. That did not come until the opening of the modestly imposing Kowloon Station in 1916, of which just its clock tower is left. However, when the railway terminus was built, it merely confirmed the broad understanding of this essay: railway passengers, even on a relatively minor branch line, were immediately given a more imposing terminus than sea passengers had been provided with at any time during the preceding sixty-nine years.

As a near perfect example of the priority of railways and land-focused activities and the less than privileged status of matters maritime, it was the arrival of the railway and the plans for a smart new terminus that finally got Victoria Harbour its first proper sea passenger terminals. The terminus of the Kowloon and Canton Railway's line was right at the tip of the Tsim Sha Tsui Peninsula. This was chosen for the obvious reason that the train would arrive and leave as close as possible to the departure and arrival point for the starting or final leg of any journey from Hong Kong Island where the overwhelming majority of Hong Kong's population lived.³⁸ Hong Kong Island was also where almost all the territory's hotels were to be found and so where most of the more affluent tourists would head until the completion of the Peninsula Hotel in 1928.

It followed that for most people the beginning or end of every rail journey was not the terminus in Tsim Sha Tsui – an unprepossessing, temporary structure from 1910-16 anyway – but a ride on the “Star” Ferry. That this was indeed the case and that it caused the creation of Hong Kong's first dedicated marine passenger terminals in 1912 is to be found in the “Special Covenants and Conditions” attached to the sale of the thirty-nine-year-and-one-month lease of Ice House Street pier site on 26 September 1910. In paragraph I (iii.) we read:

The Lessee shall . . . subject to through railway traffic to Canton being established and the Railway Pier being completed, institute and maintain services of direct ferry steamers, and will run such ferry steamers in connection with the trains on the Kowloon-Canton Railway in accordance with schedules and time-tables.

Wonderfully, we learn in paragraph VII that the pier was expected to have offices for

the Kowloon-Canton Railway Administration for the through-booking of passengers, passengers' baggage and mails from Victoria to any point on the Kowloon-Canton Railway or any Railway connecting therewith. (*Hong Kong Blue Book* 1910, 368, Public Works Department, Notice S.190)

Was it therefore possible to book a ticket in Victoria Station, London (1860 with remodelling 1898-1908) for Victoria City, Hong Kong Island, or vice versa? In principle it probably was, save that in practice, thanks to war and revolution, the through route did not become a possibility until after the fall of the Gang of Four in 1976. However, that some sort of an arrangement of the kind envisaged did happen, once the “Star” Ferry Company acquired the rights to the Ice House Street pier, is indicated by a line item in the Kowloon-Canton Railway accounts for 1914: “Deduct payment to Star Ferry on account of Ferry Service” (*Hong Kong Blue Book* 1914, Appendix R, Kowloon-Canton Railway (British Section), Annual Report for 1914, Abstract G, R18, R20 & R21).

The end result was that between 1911 and 1912, a decade after Victoria’s death, Victoria Harbour acquired its first two, purpose-designed if fairly modest, dedicated marine passenger terminals: the Hong Kong Island “Star” Ferry pier at the end of Ice House Street in Central and the “Star” Ferry pier in Tsim Sha Tsui, soon to be attached by an elegant brick and stonework arcade to the station that it would serve.³⁹ Not so much maritime terminals, more railway stations.

Notes

¹ The railway station and the speed of access or escape it provided is a key element of many of the Holmes’ stories – Liverpool Street in “The dancing men” and “The retired colourman,” Cannon Street in “The man with the twisted lip,” Charing Cross in “Abbey Grange,” “The Empty House,” “The Golden Pinz-Nez,” “The Illustrious Client,” “A Scandal in Bohemia,” and “The Second Stain,” King’s Cross in “The missing three-quarter,” London Bridge in “The Norwood Builder,” and “The Retired Colourman,” Paddington in “The Boscombe Valley Mystery,” “The Engineer’s Thumb,” “Silver Blaze,” and *The Hound of the Baskervilles*, Victoria in “The Final Problem,” “The Greek Interpreter,” “Silver Blaze,” and “The Sussex Vampire,” Waterloo in “The Crooked Man,” “The Five Orange Pips,” “The Naval Treaty,” “The Solitary Cyclist,” “The Speckled Band,” and *The Hound of the Baskervilles*. See Clarkson and, more generally, Schivelbusch.

² *La bête humaine*, see the *mise-en-scène* in chapter 1, “La gare Saint-Lazare,” in which the centrality of the railway in modern life is established.

³ Of course *Anna Karenina*: the Nikolaevsky Station in Moscow where Count Vronsky first meets Anna and the Obiralovka station where she commits suicide.

⁴ *Jude the Obscure*, Part III.I, “I think I’d rather sit in the railway station,” (Sue Bridehead) answered, a remnant of vexation still in her voice. “That’s the centre of the town life now. The cathedral has had its day!”

⁵ Famously William Frith’s 1862 *The Railway Station*, set in Paddington and Claude Monet’s famous eleven paintings of the Gare St Lazare. But see the excellent review by Janet Whitmore of the exhibition at the 2008 Walker Art Gallery, National Museums Liverpool and 2009 Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art in Kansas City, Missouri exhibitions, and the catalogue by Kennedy and Treuherz .

⁶ A company could be licensed by parliament but remain inactive, for example because of lack of shareholder interest in its projected railway.

⁷ Austria-Hungary, Belgium, France, Germany, Great Britain, Italy, Netherlands, Russia, Spain, Sweden, data derived from Table 6 at <http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/mod/indrev6.asp> (accessed 25 June 2014).

⁸ The implicit contrast here is with the world of the Royal Navy, the gallant British tar and the well-bred officers. All twelve of Frederick Marryat's novels of the sea involve the Royal Navy one way or another, even the slightly misleadingly titled *Newton Forster or, The Merchant Service*. Like the author hailed as the originator of the American sea story, James Fenimore Cooper, Frederick Marryat was an ex-naval officer and for both of them, their naval experiences were formative and their maritime worlds reflect this. Conrad and Melville, arguably the greatest Victorian evokers of the maritime world, rise above the nice distinctions of relative maritime status because for them the ships, the seafarers and the sea are the accident, not the essence.

⁹ For the use of such measures see Bogart and Chaudhary, 339-70.

¹⁰ Calculated from the aggregated data in Bogart and Chaudhary, Table 2.

¹¹ The route to calculating this was to use the Moorsom tonnage rule's equation of 100 cu ft of freight equaling one measurement ton and to assume that one passenger occupies about the same volume, or possibly slightly less. On those assumptions the Indian figures give us 780 million cu. ft. of freight space and 870 million cu. ft. of passenger space – not far off a 1:1 ratio.

¹² For the importance of passenger carriage to the emergence and growth of Hong Kong as a major port see Sinn.

¹³ The launch of the White Star Co.'s *Oceanic* in 1870 is generally taken to be the beginning of the large, trans-ocean, dedicated passenger liner. But "take off" required the perfection of the compound marine engine, and specifically the triple-expansion engine post-1880, essential for the required fuel economy and reliability. The "golden age" of the passenger liner began in 1889 with the launch of the White Star Co's *Teutonic* and *Majestic* (9,984 tons), which triggered the "size and luxury" race that led to the huge liners of the 1920s. Interestingly the *Oceanic* and two later White Star ships, *Gaelic* and *Belgic* were chartered by the Occidental & Oriental Steamship company to provide a trans-pacific service from San Francisco to Yokohama, Shanghai & Hong Kong, 1875-1903.

¹⁴ Comparing vessel size across the mid-point of the nineteenth century is fraught with difficulty. The whole business of the measurement of ship size did not reach the modern, agreed international system of gross and net tonnage and deadweight tonnage until 1854. Between 1720 and 1854 the British system used Builders Old Measurement, which resulted in a tonnage measurement (calculated by formula from the measured beam, length of the keel and moulded depth) usually described as "tons burthen or burden" and by intention aiming at the same result as modern deadweight. That is, for fee levying purposes a ship's burthen approximated the amount of cargo it could carry but included some of what today's figures exclude. It follows that pre-1854 ships in Hong Kong – following the similar practice in contemporary Lloyds Registers – are described in terms of their tons burthen. There is no simple way of translating this into post-1855 Moorsom system gross or net register tons or to modern dwt measurement and maritime historians generally, and wisely, do not try. For a good historical guide to this matter see the various eighteenth- and nineteenth-century works excerpted at <http://www.bruzelius.info/Nautica/Tonnage/Tonnage.html> (accessed 24 June 2014).

¹⁵ This included, until the British *Chinese Passengers Act* (1855), followed with reluctance and foot-dragging in Hong Kong in the *Chinese Passengers Ships Ordinances* of 1858 and 1859, the infamous coolie trade (see Irick, Campbell and Meagher).

¹⁶ Those were the ratios of the officially registered passenger loads. However the emigrant traffic was so lucrative that skippers did overload their vessels and were occasionally punished for it “In 1873 the (Pacific Mail Steamship Co.’s) *Japan’s* captain was cited for carrying 451 passengers above the legal limit (of 1098 passengers) on a single voyage.” In short, a 41% excess. See http://amhistory.si.edu/onthewater/exhibition/5_2.html (accessed 24 June 2014).

¹⁷ Indicative figures are given in *The Commercial Year Book for 1899*, New York, The Journal of Commerce and Commercial Bulletin, 1899, p.320 and some comparative and broadly compatible data in Jeremy Lowe’s excellent comparisons of *Lloyd’s Register* and Bureau Veritas’ *Répertoire Générale* data at http://homepages.ihug.co.nz/~j_lowe/C16ComparisonBVLL.htm and http://homepages.ihug.co.nz/~j_lowe/C17Transition.htm (accessed 17 June 2014).

¹⁸ “Junk” is a distinctly unsatisfactory term, either Javanese or Fujianese in origin, and as inadequately related to the Chinese vocabulary of ship and boat types as is the equally unsatisfactory and etymologically errant “dhow” to the world of Arabic craft. Only its establishment in general English usage argues for it. It would be better to replace it with the English generic, “ship”. See Manguin.

¹⁹ That is only junk crew, during the same period Asian – primarily Chinese – crew of western built vessels soared to over 70%.

²⁰ Later, since the British kept the place as an open space, it got called Dai Tat Dei (大笪地, Big Plot of Land).

²¹ The word is from the Bahasa Malay *godong*, thought in turn possibly to derive from the Telugu *gid(d)angi*, or Tamil *kiṭanku* – a place where things are stored or laid down. See Yule and Burnell.

²² The Hong Kong sampan was an almost stereotypically Hong Kong denizen – based on a western ship’s launch with Chinese characteristics. The hull had been structurally adapted for local boatbuilding techniques and requirements for a poop higher than the bow...and of course provided with junk rig and a *yuloh* (Chinese single scull) for auxiliary power, see Worcester, 72-4.

²³ For those who watched Victoria Harbour subsequently lose 50% of its surface area to reclamation, with 80% of the loss occurring after 1967, which deprivations were only stopped as a result of courageous citizens taking the government to court and finally getting the Protection of the Harbour Ordinance passed on 27 June 1997, that 1855 statement is heavy with irony.

²⁴ *Hong Kong Government Gazette*, 30 April 1884, Report by the Harbour Master on the Private Bills enabling Mr Bulkeley Johnson and Mr Chater respectively, to construct Piers and Wharves, Presented to the Legislative Council by command of His Excellency the Governor.

²⁵ Contemporary photographs show this pier extending enormously – entailing the installation of Hong Kong’s first pier tramway – to cope with the siltation on which the Harbour Master comments. By the time it was demolished in the late 1870s/early 1880s, it was some 350m long.

²⁶ For the claim that the Tsim Sha Tsui peninsula had been included in the terms of the Convention of Chuenpi see Eitel 166-7, though Eitel is careful to note this was probably a muddled understanding.

²⁷ Francis Bulkeley Johnson (1828-87) was the manager of Jardine, Matheson & Co at the time, Johnson's Wharves were immediately known as Jardine, Matheson's Wharves and appear under that name on subsequent maps.

²⁸ H. G. Thomsett (1826-1892) had been the Master of the Royal Navy's receiving ship *HMS Princess Charlotte* from 1858 until appointed Acting Harbour Master in 1860. He was a substantive Royal Naval Lieutenant, though Harbour Masters were made Commanders in the Reserve on appointment and were sometimes promoted to Captain, although this was also often assumed as a courtesy title. Mr Thomsett took over as Harbour Master in 1862 and served until 1888. He was made a CMG on retirement.

²⁹ The references are to J.M.W. Turner's memorable canvases with those titles painted between 1835 and 1844. Of the 991 paintings in Turner's oeuvre listed at <http://www.william-turner.org> (accessed 24 June 2014) around 200 have a sea theme and of those more than half feature rough seas, gales, wrecks, wreckers, lifeboats, sea battles, slavers or the down market, if romanticized world of fishermen.

³⁰ The word "passenger" appears nowhere in the wording of the ordinance.

³¹ For P&O the carriage of opium was what Harcourt calls "black gold" (see *Flagships*, Ch. 3 and "Black") for which they did not need any shoreside facilities since it was stored afloat in a dedicated hulk for security.

³² For the service 1886-1912 and the elegant *Changsha*, *Taiyuan*, *Tsinan* and *Chingtu* see http://www.wikiswire.com/wiki/Changsha_I (accessed 17 June 2014).

³³ In the *China Pilot* (33) no mention is made of any alongside berths for ships. Similarly, seventeen years later Findlay (963-96) makes no mention of the possibility of berthing alongside.

³⁴ The meetings of the Piers Committee, formed to oversee the rebuilding of piers on a more rational basis after the 1890-1904 reclamation, do mention an intention to create "permanent shelters" on the most important public pier – Pedder St. Pier – though it is unclear whether this was done. *Hong Kong Blue Book* 1898, 163, Minutes of meetings of the Piers Committee, No.12 of 1898.

³⁵ Eitel (453) notes that the new company bought its steamers from Augustine Heard & Co, and in that company's papers in Harvard are records of both passenger and cargo manifests for one of the vessels, the *Kinshan*, see Sub-series B, Shipping papers 1840-1875, 1. Bound papers v.319-v.322 at <http://oasis.lib.harvard.edu/oasis/deliver/~bak00162> (accessed 23 June 2014).

³⁶ Matshed – a woven matting covering over a timber frame originally called "bankshall" in English after the Malay – possibly originally Sanskrit – word for a storehouse "bangsal" (see Yule and Burnell). They are still in use today with galvanized steel sheeting instead of woven mats. The Chinese generic is 涼棚 (*liángpéng* – Cantonese *leungpang*), though for their most common use for temporary Chinese opera structures 戲棚 (*xìpéng*) is used.

³⁷ A Port Development Department was established in 1924, but it did not survive the Pacific War. In any case, it was a subordinate unit within the Public Works Department and for most purposes invisible in that department's activities, which broke down harbour engineering planning and works by land sub-division. In 2014 there is still no single, authoritative planning body for Victoria Harbour as a whole.

³⁸ The 1911 census gave a total for the whole territory of 453,793 inhabitants. Of them 12,161 non-Chinese people were living on Hong Kong Island with just 251 living on the mainland side. Of the Chinese population 279,452 lived on Hong Kong Island. So 64.3% of all inhabitants lived on Hong Kong Island and 98% of non-Chinese inhabitants lived there. See *Hong Kong Government Gazette*, 9 June 1911, 245.

³⁹ Not that Hong Kong was entirely a global laggard. Although New York's famous Piers 88, 90 & 92 were glamourized in 1930 and Cherbourg's grand Gare Maritime opened in 1933, Southampton's famous art deco Ocean Terminal did not open until 1950. As far as Hong Kong's marine passengers were concerned an actual marine terminal had to wait until March 1966 when, one hundred and twenty-two years after the first P&O passenger liner arrived in Hong Kong, the first dedicated passenger liner terminal, Ocean Terminal, opened next to the "Star" Ferry pier. It was perfectly timed to greet the collapse of passenger liner travel as international air services took over.

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