

Press Release  
13 October 2024

## **Green Hong Kong Green Launches New Route to Retell West Town Stories**

Cafes, bistros and bars line the streets of Kennedy Town today, and few would know that it was once home to a hospital treating patients with plague and smallpox. And where else other than on Forbes Street to take a picture-perfect selfie with one of the city's largest stonewall trees?

These sites of historical and ecological interest may have slowly vanished due to urban development, but thanks to a new eco-heritage route developed by HK Electric and The Conservancy Association (CA), they will be brought back to life to retell their stories, past and present.

“West Town Story 2.0” is the latest eco-heritage route developed under the green education project, Green Hong Kong Green (GHKG). The new route revives the rich, yet fading, stories of the Western District, encouraging the public to explore and appreciate the area's rich historical and ecological resources.

Nature enthusiasts got an opportunity to tour the new route today at the first “Eco-tour Day” organised by HK Electric and CA since the pandemic. Nine, out of eleven, other routes developed under GHKG were also open for public tours today, for a total of about 200 participants.

From Victoria Road through Kennedy Town and Belcher Bay Park, the new route connects several significant historical and ecological spots, offering a fresh perspective on the unique stories of the Western District, including:

- The archway of Tung Wah Smallpox Hospital, a grim reminder of past epidemics;
- The “Farewell Pavilion”, symbolising early funeral customs;
- Ancient trees listed in the Government's Register of Old and Valuable Trees;
- The newly-declared statutory monument, Lo Pan Temple, honouring a master craftsman, and
- The once-vibrant “Seven Terraces of the Western District”

(For details of the spots, please refer to the [attached factsheet](#).)

At today's launching ceremony, HK Electric Managing Director, Mr. Francis C.Y. Cheng said HK Electric had been actively promoting environmental education.

“Through GHKG, we encourage citizens to support eco-tourism and help protect biodiversity to build a sustainable community. We are delighted to co-organise ‘Eco-tour Day’ again this year for the public to enjoy a lovely day out while learning to appreciate and safeguard our beautiful home, Hong Kong,” he said.

Mr. Cheng continued: “At HK Electric, we strive to minimise the environmental impact of our operations, one of which is power generation from Lamma Power Station. We have discovered migratory birds wintering at the power station and found traces of corals in the nearby waters. In addition, we have been working with CA to protect and enhance the biodiversity of Lamma Island through tree planting, tree caring, and regular beach clean-ups.”

Mr. Victor C. L. Kwong, Director of CA, said the goal of GHKG in 2024 is to help the public understand the significance of biodiversity in urban areas, encouraging them to cherish and conserve these valuable resources. “The new route showcases the harmony between urban development and ecosystems, such as the ‘Urban Forest’ at Cadogan Street Garden and Belcher Bay Park, which are homes to various interesting species. It also features ancient and valuable trees, like the stonewall trees on Forbes Street, which improve air quality, provide shade and reduce carbon emissions.”

Mr. Kwong further explained the rationale behind developing the “West Town Story” route: “In the old days, the Western district was an important trade and residential area and one of the first developed regions in Hong Kong. However, as the community evolves, many historical landmarks have gradually disappeared. West Town Story 2.0 aims to bring these ‘vanished stories’ back to the public eye, such as the 140-year-old Lo Pan Temple and the unique stonewall trees of Hong Kong, reminding the public to strike a balance between conservation and urban development.”

Mr. Cheng added: “HK Electric has played a crucial role in the development of the Central and Western District for more than a century. By providing stable and reliable electricity, we have powered the development of trams and cable cars, connecting different parts of Hong Kong Island and transforming the Central and Western District into a transportation hub. The new route also features several substations in the area and how they support community development.”

The successful launch of the new route is made possible with the support from relevant government departments and community leaders. Also officiating at today’s ceremony were Mr. Chan Kin-fung, Assistant Director (Nature Conservation) of the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department; Ms. Fung Miu-ling, Assistant Director (Leisure Services) of the Leisure and Cultural Services Department; Legislative Council Members Mr. Chan Hok-fung and Ms. Chan Ka-pui; Mr. Tang chi-wang, Chairman of Hong Kong Lo Pan Kwong Yuet Tong; Ms. Jin Ling, Chairman of Working Group on Concern over Development of a Historic Town District and Heritage Conservation of Central and Western District Council, Dr. Wong Sin-man and Mr. Lau Tin-ching, Members of Community Involvement, Culture and Recreation Committee of Central and Western District Council.

Following the ceremony, the organisers invited a group of Happy Green Ambassadors

and senior ambassadors from the University of the Third Age (U3A) to join the inaugural guided tour of the new route.

Public guided tours of “West Town Story 2.0” will be held in November and December this year. The final GHKG online tour of the year, themed “Biodiversity: Harmony between Urban and Nature,” will take place on 16 November. For enrolment or details, please visit the GHKG App, Facebook page, HK Electric’s YouTube channel and website, CA’s website, or call 2728 6781.

Since its inception in 2005, GHKG has developed 12 eco-heritage routes, encouraging the public to travel green and live a low-carbon lifestyle. To date, the project has attracted over 12,000 participants through its in-person and online tours.

### Public guided tours of “West Town Story 2.0”

Date	Theme
24 November (Sunday) - AM	“West Town Story 2.0: the vanishing stories of Western District”
15 December (Sunday) - AM	“West town story 2.0: the vanishing stories of Western District”

Enrolment for public tours

<https://www.cahk.org.hk/zh-hant/work/GHKG/>



### November’s online tour

Date	Theme
16 November (Saturday) – AM (via Zoom)	“Biodiversity: Harmony between Urban and Nature”

Enrolment for online tour:

<https://ghkg.onlineform.ai/registration>



## Photo Captions:

Photo 1:



Officiating guests unveil the 10 eco-heritage spots of the "West Town Story 2.0" route, reviving some of the vanishing stories of the Western District.

Photo 2:



The officiating party, guests and green ambassadors set off for the debut tours of the new route.



Photo 3 and 4:



Mr. Francis C.Y. Cheng invites guests and Happy Green Ambassadors to visit the newly-declared statutory monument, Lo Pan Temple. Its Chairman, Mr. Tang Chi-wang introduces the architectural features and history of the Temple and takes visitors onto an exclusive rooftop tour.

Photo 5:



Mr. Ken So (second from right) explains how the unique stonewall trees on Forbes Street have grown with the Western district community.

Photo 6:



HK Electric General Manager (Transmission and Distribution), Mr. Tony Yeung, illustrates how the Pok Fu Lam Zone Substation powers the development of the Central and Western District.

Photo 7:



U3A ambassadors learn a lot about the history and ecology of the Cadogan Street Temporary Garden.



Photo 8:



Nearly 200 participants join today's Green Hong Kong Green Eco-tour day and explore the nine eco-heritage routes developed on Hong Kong and Lamma Island.

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