

British Club Seniors Section

Lunch Presentation:

“ANCIENT AYUTTHAYA: THE 14TH TO 18TH CENTURY CULTURAL & TRADING CENTRE OF S.E. ASIA”

Introduction of the Speaker Dr Chris Baker

Chris Baker was born in the UK, has a PhD from Cambridge University, where he also taught Asian history and politics. He moved to Thailand in 1979, and worked at director level in a number of leading companies. Now he works independently as a writer and historian. He is honorary editor of the *Journal of the Siam Society*, and has edited four volumes of the Thailand Human Development Report for UNDP. With his wife the outstanding economist Prof Dr Pasuk they have extensively researched and written a large, **and I do mean large**, number of acclaimed publications.

To name just a relevant few:

- In 2005, the bestselling *A History of Thailand*, with the 3rd edition published 2014;
- In 2016, the first academic translations of The Ayutthaya Palace Law and the Thammasat : concerning *Law and Kingship during the Ayutthaya Period*;
- And In 2017, *A History of Ayutthaya: Siam in the Early Modern World*.

In recognition of their academic and writing achievements, in 2017 they jointly won the prestigious Fukuoka Grand Prize for their outstanding work on Thai society, literature and social transformation.

Now, to set the scene:

Many of our Senior Section Members will remember our trips last year to the fabulous Golden Treasure Exhibition in Ayutthaya, and the Arts of the Kingdom and All About Khon Exhibitions nearby. We were captivated by these world-class sites and the rich cultural, trading, and historical significance of Ayutthaya before its sacking by the Burmese in 1767.

Additionally, on March 6th this year, Chris amazed us with his presentation and stunning slides on the topic of “Looking at Old Thai Wat Murals,” which, under his guidance, proved to be fascinating and insightful for all attendees. Given not just his expertise and engaging style, it became clear that Chris would be the perfect person to enlighten us on the history of Ayutthaya.

We promised to invite him back, and here he is today. Will you please welcome the eminent Historian Chris Baker!