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**Day breaks**

Dawn surfers at Hong Kong's  
Big Wave Bay

**破曉時分**

黎明時在香港大浪灣的  
滑浪客



# FITTER TOUGHER EARLIER

## 早起的鳥兒更健壯

What are you doing at 5.34am? Try meeting Hong Kong's hardy breed of dawn surfers, runners and paddlers. By CAMERON DUECK

早上5點34分，你正在做什麼？Cameron Dueck與香港一群破曉時分已在海上或山間晨運的人一起強身健體

PHOTOGRAPHY MIKE PICKLES

## “WILDLIFE SIGHTINGS ARE FREQUENT – MOSTLY WILD BOARS, SNAKES AND SPIDERS

經常會見到野生動物的蹤影，多數是  
野豬、蛇和蜘蛛

**B**ig Wave Bay is dark, each breaking wave a white slash across the sea. There's an occasional drop of rain. A surfer in black neoprene kneels on the beach to wax his board. He is just beyond the yellow glow of the big clock. It blinks, back and forth: 18°C – 6:04 – 18°C – 6:05 – 18°C.

Antony Dickson runs into the water just as the sky becomes tinged with grey. He paddles out to sea to catch the next wave and join the thousands of Hong Kongers who rise before the sun to explore, exercise and steal a quiet moment of natural beauty before plunging into the city's chaos.

'This is vitally important to what Hong Kong is. It's a magical place,' says Dickson. He lives on Big Wave Bay on the south side of Hong Kong Island, where he surfs as often as possible. 'I'm 25 minutes from the city, but I'm surrounded by nature.'

'Early in the morning there's less wind and fewer crowds, and often the swell will be a bit better. But the main thing is finding time away when you have a family. Before the kids are up there's that time, at 5:30am you get that magic hour, when most of the world is still asleep.'

Dickson, a newspaper photo editor who has called Hong Kong home for 27 years, has only an hour or so before the crowds begin to show up.

'When there's a really good swell you'll have 30 people on that wave at 8am, and then it's not so different from trying to fight your way down the pavement in Mong Kok. There's been an explosion of interest in watersports in Hong Kong, the same thing that happened with hiking and trail running a few years ago. It used to be that people didn't want to get a tan, that they'd cover up outside to stay pale. Now there's huge growth in beach culture. It's suddenly seen as very cool.'

In the past decade Hong Kong has also become internationally known as an urban hub for outdoor enthusiasts. Vast parkland, easy public transport access and a varied landscape combined with a jet-fuelled city have attracted Type A personalities.

On Hong Kong Island alone it's possible to surf, bike, hike, run, swim, paddle and paraglide before dawn. At the top of High West, a 494-metre-high mountain on Hong Kong Island's west side, James Park has a hard sweat on by 5:50am, like he does three mornings a week. He has just run up the long, winding Morning Trail, past seniors who steadily work their way up the mountain, swinging their arms, slapping their shoulders.

'*Jo san,*' – good morning – they call out, smiles bright in the darkness.

'Seeing them is inspiring,' says Park. 'It's great to see that they're still active. Many of them have been doing this for years.'

The wind sweeps clouds of cool mist over the mountain. The dark sea around us is dotted with ships. There are rustles in the undergrowth, flitting shadows.

'Here on High West we're just five minutes from the main Peak loop, but we have it all to ourselves. It's like no one else knows about it. There are so many small trails to explore; you see a coloured ribbon marking a narrow trail and you can check it out and see where it takes you.'

He runs on Old Peak Road and Bowen Road and sometimes up nearby Mount Butler. 'It just depends on where you live, but on Hong Kong Island there's always a trail near you.'

Wildlife sightings are frequent – mostly wild boars, snakes and spiders. 'You run into a lot of spider webs because you're normally the first down the trail that day, so that wakes you up,' he says.

Park became interested in trail running after arriving in Hong Kong from New Zealand via London. As with many new residents, he was surprised at the active outdoor scene.

'Self-motivation is a big part of it,' says Park. 'A lot of the foreigners who moved here did so for adventure, travel and careers. There's a high concentration of Type A personalities, and many also like running, so you find them out on the trails at dawn because it's hard to know when work will end in the evening.'

'I feel so relaxed when I walk into the

**大**浪灣漆黑一片，一波一波的海浪在水面劃開一道又一道白痕，天空偶爾下著點點細雨。有個身穿黑色保溫潛水衣的滑浪者，跪在沙灘上，為滑浪板打蠟。他就在那個發出黃光的大鐘下面，鐘上不斷的閃現：18°C – 6:04 – 18°C – 6:05 – 18°C。

天際開始露出一抹灰色，Antony Dickson拿著滑浪板跑到水裡，俯臥在板上划出大海，好趕上下一波大浪。香港有數以千計的人，黎明未到即已起床晨運，除了鍛鍊身體之外，更想在投入煩囂的城市生活之前，親近大自然，偷得片刻寧靜。Dickson就是這些晨運客其中的一分子。

Dickson住在港島南區的大浪灣，只要一有空就會到附近的海灘滑浪，他說：「大自然是香港極其重要的一部分。香港是個神奇的地方，我的住所被大自然環抱，離市區卻僅25分鐘車程。」

「清晨時分通常風勢較弱，人也沒有那麼多，海上的湧浪通常也都較好。如果你已有家室的話，這也是一段屬於自己的時間。5時半是一個奇妙的時刻，這時孩子還未起床，全世界大部分人亦仍然酣睡未醒。」

Dickson是報紙的圖片編輯，在香港定居27年。在人潮開始出現前，他只有一個小時左右可以好好享受。

「如果那天海面湧起合適的海浪，早上8時可能已有30個人在滑浪，這就跟在旺角人頭湧湧的街上行走一樣。香港近日掀起水上運動熱潮，情況跟幾年前盛行遠足和長跑一樣。以前人們不想曬黑，在戶外都會小心遮住外露的皮膚，努力保持白皙的膚色。現在愈來愈多人推崇沙灘文化，曬成古銅色的皮膚突然變得時尚有型起來。」

香港有大量的郊野公園，風景變化多端，加上交通方便，市區則繁華熱鬧，吸引不少活潑好動的人慕名而來。因此過去10年來，外地不少熱愛戶外活動的人都將香港視為集各種運動之大成的國際都會。

單單在香港島，日出前可以做的運動就有滑浪、踏單車、行山、跑步、游泳、划艇和滑翔傘等。位於港島西面的西高山高494米，早上5時50分，James Park正在山上蜿蜒的晨運徑向上跑，揮汗



**Early birds**

Clockwise from top left: surfer Antony Dickson, trail runner James Park and outrigger Erin Juhl

**早鳥健兒**

左上圖起順時針：滑浪客Antony Dickson；晨跑客James Park與划艇手Erin Juhl





Different strokes

Surfers at Big Wave Bay (top), trail runners on High West (above) and outriggers at Middle Island (below)

上山下海

大浪灣的滑浪客(最上圖); 西高山上的跑手(上圖)與熨波洲的划艇手(下圖)

## “THERE'S A LOT OF TYPE A PERSONALITIES ON THE TRAILS AT DAWN, BECAUSE IT'S HARD TO KNOW WHEN WORK WILL END IN THE EVENING

清晨時分的跑步徑上有不少精力充沛的跑手，因為他們不確定晚上什麼時候才下班

office, with a spring in my step, not half asleep like I would be otherwise. I don't need coffee: this is what gets me started in the mornings.'

Dawn warriors go out on their own, with friends or as part of teams training for Hong Kong's next big adventure or endurance race. The paddlers preparing in the glow of the Royal Hong Kong Yacht Club boathouse at Middle Island are lighthearted. They have just completed two of their biggest open water races of the year, so this morning's practice is just for fun. Erin Juhl paddles in one of the six-person outrigger canoes, having taken up the sport after an injury prevented her from trail running.

'It's a very calming activity, the ultimate moving meditation,' says Juhl, an interior designer originally from San Francisco. 'There's a lot of focus on timing and being connected to the other paddlers. It's a lot harder than it looks, and you have to be mentally present and focused on the now.'

The hollow thump of the boats being pulled from racks echoes across the water, measured by the clatter of paddles and murmured greetings as more paddlers arrive. All is quiet on the water and on the darkened shore opposite, beyond which the yellow glow of the city lights the sky.

'Sometimes it can cramp your social life, because you always have to leave the party early, but it's an awesome way to start your day. You feel you have this whole other life that takes place before you even arrive at your office,' says Juhl.

'It allows me to see a different side of the city. I live in Sheung Wan, in the thick of it, and this is so peaceful – plus it's just a 15-minute taxi ride from my home.'

Juhl and her team paddle out into the sea, the synchronised plunge of their paddles matched by the smooth acceleration of the boat. Every few strokes their captain calls out, and the paddles flip, trailing little streams of water, then plunge back into the sea, from left to right, right to left.

After an hour on the water, the crew,

soaked by spray from the bow, return. The sky is light now, there are more people arriving at the club and traffic on Repulse Bay Road has picked up to a steady hum. Juhl helps her team wash and stow the boats, and then leaves to join the morning rush hour. ■

如雨。他每星期都有三天早上會在山上跑步，沿途經過緩步走上山頂的老人家身邊，他們一邊行一邊擺動手臂、拍打肩膀。

「早晨！」他們以廣東話大聲問好，微笑的臉孔在清晨的黑暗中閃現。

Park表示：「看到他們令人十分鼓舞，他們仍然這麼活力充沛，令我感到欣慰。他們有不少已經晨運多年了。」

清風將薄霧吹送至整個山頭，仍然黑暗的海面上船隻星羅棋佈。路旁的灌木叢被風吹得沙沙作響，葉影婆娑。

「西高山離太平山頂環迴步行徑僅五分鐘，卻像是只有我們知道的秘密基地，彷彿是完全屬於我們的。山上有不少小徑可供探索，如果你看到一條以有色絲帶作標記的狹窄小徑，不妨沿著小徑走下去，看看會帶你到什麼地方。」

Park通常在舊山頂道和寶雲道之間跑步，有時候會跑到畢拉山附近。「跑步的路徑視乎你住在哪裡，但香港島總會有一條山徑在你家附近。」

他亦經常找到野生動物的蹤影，多數是野豬、蛇和蜘蛛。

他說：「我通常是當天最早在小徑上跑步的人，所以會撞上不少蜘蛛網，令我徹底醒過來。」

Park從紐西蘭倫敦移居香港，自此對野外跑步產生興趣。他跟不少剛定居香港的外國人一樣，完全沒有料到本地有這麼多愛好戶外活動的人。

「出於自發的動力是頗重要的原因。不少外國人移居香港是為了追尋刺激、旅遊或工作，因此本地聚集了很多精力充沛而好動的人，當中有不少人喜歡跑步，你會在清晨時分見到他們在跑步徑上出現，因為他們不確定晚上什麼時候才下班。」

「當我走進辦公室時，感覺整個人輕鬆舒泰，腳上就像裝了彈簧一般，不會像沒有跑步時那樣睡眼惺忪。我不需要喝咖啡，跑步就是我的『醒晨』妙方。」

這些黎明即起的戰士或獨自行動，或與朋友三五成群，或組成團隊，為參加香港快將舉行的歷險或耐力賽進行訓練。一班划艇選手在熨波洲的香港遊艇會船庫裡，正輕鬆愉快地有說有笑。他們剛完成了本年度其中兩項大型公開水域比賽，因此今天早上的訓練純屬娛樂。坐在六人浮架獨木舟中划槳的Erin Juhl曾熱衷越野跑，受傷後她改為從事划艇運動。

來自三藩市的Juhl是一位室內設計師，她說：「這項活動令人內心感到平靜，是最好的動態冥想。我們要十分專注於節奏，並與其他划手的動作一致。划艇看起來不難，但實際上並不容易，你需要全神貫注，身心都集中在當下一刻。」

水面上傳來獨木舟從船架卸下時發出的沉重聲音，隨著更多划艇手抵達，船槳碰擊的聲音和輕聲細語的打招呼此起彼落。水面一片平靜。海岸的對面一片漆黑，遠處則可見市區暈黃的燈光，將天邊照亮。

Juhl說：「有時候訓練會對你的社交生活有影響，因為你經常要提早離開派對，但以划艇來展開新的一天亦不失為一個好開始，讓你感到每天在回到辦公室前，就已享受到另一種截然不同的生活。」

「划艇讓我看見這城市的另一面。我住在城中的鬧區上環，從我家乘的士，15分鐘就來到熨波洲，這裡卻十分平靜安寧。」

Juhl和隊友將艇划出海面，他們整齊劃一的划槳動作，令小艇在水面上平穩地加速。每划幾槳，隊長便會大喊一聲，划手便一起將船槳翻到另一邊，一道道流水沿槳而下，然後划手再把槳插進海裡，從左至右，再由右至左。

經過一小時的水上訓練，整隊人回到遊艇會，各人已被海水濺得渾身濕透。天空已亮透，有更多人陸續來到遊艇會，淺水灣道上傳來一陣陣汽車駛過的聲音。Juhl跟隊友將清洗乾淨的小艇放回船庫後，離開遊艇會，投身上班的人潮中。■



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