

HELP CHINA'S YOUTH, HOLIDAY IN YUNNAN

GIVING GENEROUSLY CAN LEAD

to an unforgettable experience in the mountains of Greater Tibet.

The Chi Heng Foundation, which campaigns for the education and development of the children of China's AIDS victims, is raising funds this year for their projects with the help of the Banyan Tree Resorts.

From May 26 to 31, 40 socially concerned individuals will be able to stay at the chain's unique Banyan Tree Ringha and Banyan Tree Lijiang (shown above) in Yunnan Province and go trekking in one of the world most breath-taking areas. The package costs just HK\$6,200 or US\$798 (exclusive of air fare). However, to qualify for this special outing, participants must have raised HK\$50,000 (US\$6,442), which will go to benefiting needy youngsters.

Chi Heng founder and volunteer Chung To says funds for tuition go directly to the schools where the child is enrolled. It takes about HK\$1,000 (US\$128.85) to educate one each year through the Chi Heng programme. The organisation has helped (and continues to help) some 3,500 youngsters. email walkforchalk@chihengfoundation.com or call tel 852 2517 0564 for more details.

BUSINESS TRAVEL

NEW TRAVEL SOLUTION

BCD HOLDINGS HAS TAKEN OVER

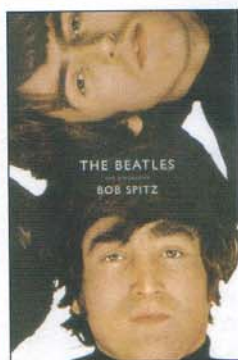
TQ3 Travel Solutions, formerly owned by travel enterprise TUI. It will merge with BCD's WorldTravel BTI forming one company with one technology and under one management.

The new executive team, headed by Mike Buckman as CEO, will be based in Amsterdam, the Netherlands.

Bookbag

The Beatles

Bob Spitz, Little, Brown and Company, US\$29



Do we really need another biography of the Fab Four?

Yeah, yeah, yeah, we love them! And Bob Spitz' journalistic masterpiece, which took eight years to complete, is a must-read, even for fans who think they know everything there is to know about the mop-tops from Liverpool.

Spitz, a former manager of Bruce Springsteen and Elton John, produced an 860-page tome (edited from the original 2,700 pages), including 86 pages of notes, the result of hundreds of fresh interviews, archival research and purchasing Lennon biographer Albert Goldman's unused notes. His hard work has paid off with a highly readable and engaging account of the band that made musical history and around whom countless myths continue to swirl.

Unlike his predecessors - like "official" chronicler Hunter Davis or the Beatles' own *Anthology* book - Spitz depicts the group's timeline in more accurate proportions, devoting a generous number of pages to significant periods such as the formative pre-Ringo days in

Hamburg's notorious Reeperbahn and the inevitable unraveling of the group, instead of rehashing old material about the development and blossoming of the studio talents.

While the spotlight for most of the book is understandably trained on John and Paul (and their prolific but often explosive relationship), George and Ringo (especially George) aren't totally neglected but given insightful handling by Spitz.

In fact, this is one of the highlights of the book - the degree these two, often "forgotten" Beatles, are fleshed out.

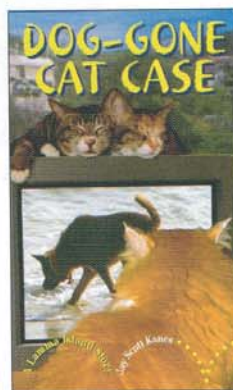
Even those connected to the Beatles received the author's scrutiny. Most notably, their manager, Brian Epstein, who, due to a hidden life as a gay man (this was the 60s remember), suffered bouts of depression and drug binges, which led to an eventual overdose. But it was this tortured individual who ushered the band to the "toppermost of the poppermost", even if it was discovered later that he was not making the most advantageous deals for his famous clients.

There are countless of us who are grateful witnesses to the Beatles' finest years. This book simply reconfirms what we already know: they and their music remain undiminished, and we will always love them. Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Margie T Logarta

Dog-Gone Cat case - A Lamma Island Story

Jay Scott Kanes, Cairns Media, HK\$78 (US\$10)



Set on Hongkong's Lamma Island, this sweet little novel takes all the eccentricities of this little island enclave and amplifies them, which anyone living in Hongkong will appreciate as Lamma is considered a world unto itself.

Lamma Island is considered a haven for expatriates in Hongkong who live there to escape the crowded city and have room for pets to roam. Unfortunately, where there are pets, there are also abandoned animals which is where this tale begins.

The story is partly written from the point of view of three kittens: Not, Dot and Pause, who are literally thrown out and rescued in the nick of time. They grow up to be extremely fat cats roaming at will over Lamma, and it is in describing their thoughts and actions that the book really takes off. Curiously, the author does not explain the strange names the cats have, nor does he bother to pun on them which is a lost

opportunity for humor. That said, the cats' adventures through the back streets of Lamma and surrounding hills are told in a lively manner with a hint of danger. And it will bring a wry smile to the lips of anyone who has seen the packs of stray dogs and cats on the streets of Lamma, and yes, they really are an organised bunch.

On top of the animal adventures are the human ones, mainly focused on capturing the notorious Lamma Poisoner who has been deliberately placing tainted meat all over the island. And with Lamma being the pet paradise that it is, cats and dogs are dying in kennel loads. Again anyone remotely familiar with Hongkong will recognise the thinly veiled reference to a real life poisoner (operating in the Mid-Levels enclave), who has been frightening pet owners for years.

However, it is in writing about humans, and especially Chinese adults, that the book fails and becomes stereotyped. The author puts absurd words in their mouths that no self respecting Chinese person would use, which makes it difficult to take them seriously. Overall, a fun easy read but limited appeal outside of Hongkong.

Timothy Wong