

Xaverian Yarns

Where are they today?

Contributions invited

This section of the ebook aims to record the “boys” and Scouters from SXI who were members of The Movement through the past eight decades.

This section is obviously incomplete and inadequate in its coverage given the challenge of chronicling so many people over such a very long period of time.

Please email us at

XaverianScouts@gmail.com

if you wish to contribute articles and photographs of yourself as a Scout or Scouter and of people whom you know was a Scout or Scouter at SXI.

Your contributions will help us complete preparations of this book for publication in 2031 to mark The Centenary of Scouting at St Xavier’s Institution.

Your efforts will help chronicle your moment in history or permanently record the memories of your loved ones among Xaverian Scouts for posterity.



Two former Troop Leaders and a Patrol Leader – *where are they today?*

This chapter is a work in progress. It aims to get caught up with the thousands of Xaverian Scouts and Scouters after they left School and dispersed across the World building their careers and, in some cases, leading other Scouting Groups.

Please help us answer the question: *Where are they today?* You can do this by contributing your short life-stories and historic photographs or those of past Xaverian Scouts whom you may know – your grandfather, father, uncle, brother, cousin, neighbour and friend.

You should definitely write us a note if you are a former Xaverian Scout. Your Promise “To do my best” includes this effort to complete this logbook of the Scouting Movement at SXI. We are aiming to complete and finalize this book for publication on paper by 2031 when the Scouts at St Xavier’s Institution will celebrate our Centenary of Scouting at our Alma Mater.

Be a part of these upcoming celebrations!

Thomas Chee Khay Huat

Thomas was a Cub 1954–55; Boy Scout 1956–57; Troop Leader of the Venture Unit 1958–60 and attained the King Scout Award in 1960. He was the Assistant General Manager of Overseas Assurance Corporations Ltd (Northern Region); President of Asian-Regional Training and Development Organization (ARTDO); Chairman of Malaysian Institute of Training and Development (MITD); Chairman of ARTDO Asia-Pacific Human Resources Development Centre; Executive Director of International Training and Development Organizations; Member of Penang State Human Resources Council and Chairman of its Service Sector Sub-Committee; Vice-President of Lions Club of George Town; Chairman of Lions International District 308 (Malaysia, Singapore and Brunei); Director and Trustee of YMCA; Member of the National Ring Scouts Association of Malaysia and Life Member of PEMADAM.

“ Scouting is an ideal activity for boys. Active participation in The Movement gives youth a solid foundation in character building. It cultivates skills, resourcefulness, resilience and leadership, and especially situational leadership.

The Scout Law and Promise are an important essence to a successful life. Although I am no longer a Boy Scout, the Law and Promise have remained as my guiding principles in life. I am particularly inspired by the opening of the Scout Promise: “On my honour, I promise to do my best...” No matter how much we do, there is always still room for improvement. The best is ever yet to come when you do your best!!!

The 7th George Town (North) has a long heritage of excellence. It has always been and will always continue to be a first-rank Group – in a class of its own. In fact, I would attribute my success today to the 7th George Town (North) Scout Group of St. Xavier’s Institution. When I was the Troop Leader of the Venture Unit, I had a wonderful experience leading hundreds of Scouts and Guides in campfires and gatherings. Today, as a “Scout Master” of my company, I am leading hundreds of “Scouts” in the same Scouting system I learnt 35 years ago.

Scouting is for boys and we should therefore give the youth much more than a chance to prove themselves. Young people are really very resourceful – full of ideas and enthusiasm – so never look down on these youths who will be the leaders of tomorrow.

Chin Saik Yoon

Saik Yoon enjoyed his studies at three Lasallian Schools: Assumption School, Butterworth; St Xavier’s Branch School, Pulau Tikus (SXBS) and St Xavier’s Institution (SXI.) He was a Cub and then later a Boy Scout of 9GT(N) at SXBS. While at SXI he was a Boy Scout with 7GT(N) from 1964–66 and a Rover with the same Troop in 1967–68.

“ Scouting brought me some of my happiest and most miserable moments in School. Happiest were the chats around the Troop’s notice board with my brother Scouts during recess. The most miserable was a stormy weekend spent camping on Miami Beach. It came to be fondly remembered as the “Starvation Camp” as we were not able to light rain-drenched firewood to cook any of our meals. Some life-long friendships grew out of being hungry together.

Another firm friendship came out of scrubbing cooking-pots along the stream flowing past Coronation Camp late at night. It wasn’t very nice squatting on the riverbank being eaten alive by mosquitoes while trying desperately to restore the shine to a pot blackened by smoke from kerosene smoke and damp fuel wood. My fellow pot-scrubber, who never abandoned me to the mosquitoes and even more bloodthirsty *pontianaks* lurking in the forest, has proven to be a most reliable friend in life.

I am now a publisher of scholarly books. I must thank Group Scout Master Mr Khoo Heng San for starting me on my career by requiring that we all kept well-illustrated logbooks. They had to contain succinct reports and illustrative graphics. I graduated under his watchful eyes from Patrol logbooks, to Camp logbooks, then Troop logbooks, and now to scholarly monographs. Mr Khoo’s always-timely publications were great inspirations. He had

bought a spirit-duplicating machine with his own money and on it printed his neatly typed Troop bulletins and campfire song sheets. I thought it was always a great privilege to be invited by Mr Khoo to cycle to his high-ceiling study in a large mansion along Macalister Road to help him turn the handle on his boy-powered duplicating machine.

Finally, I must thank Assistant Scout Master Mr John Chin Nyet Fook for leaving us to starve at the Starvation Camp instead of rushing off to buy us roti canai at the Tanjong Bungah kopitiam. He had serenely assured us then that “You will all miss this one day.” He has been proven right!

Chye Onn Teck

He was the Penang State Scout Commissioner from 2 June 2003 to 31 December 2005. The following are his milestones in Scouting after enjoying a great start with the Cub Pack at St Xavier’s Branch School:

“ **1948:** Joined the Wolf Cub Pack at St Xavier’s Branch School, Pulau Tikus. Mr Ng Moon Lean was Akela and the Cub Den at that time was Master Willie’s classroom in “The Noah’s Ark” (a timber building once located on the present grounds of the Convent Primary School at College Square but which had been demolished long ago). Master Moon Lean’s passion was to meticulously plan and secretly set a treasure-hunt trail around the leafy compound of the nearby Church of the Immaculate Conception. His happy hour was spent seeing the Cubs excitedly pick up the trail. He was a great Akela.

1962: Warranted as Scout Master of the Senior Scout Troop of Sultan Abdul Hamid College, the 38th Alor Setar Group. Led cycling cum camping trips to Pulau Langkawi, during a time when nearly all the roads in Pulau Langkawi were laterite tracks and the Seven Wells could only be accessed by boat. I was known as the “Happy Wanderer” during those days.

1965: Completed Woodbadge Courses at Castle Camp and Semangat Camp.



Woodbadge with a pair of beads

1966: Attended the First Malaysian National Jamboree at Jubilee Camp, Teluk Bahang.

1993: Appointed Commissioner, Sri Pinang Teachers' College. Climbed Gunung Kinabalu with 23 Scouts, and visited Sarawak Cultural Village and the legendary Santubung. Later befriended the native people at Sepilok, Sabah.

1997: Joined Penang State Scouts Association

2002: Penang State Contingent Leader to the 10th Malaysian National Scout Jamboree at Sik, Kedah.

2003: Appointed Penang State Commissioner

2005: Accompanied the Penang Contingent to the 25th Asia-Pacific Regional Scout Jamboree at Sattahip, Thailand.

2006: Appointed National Headquarters Commissioner

Foo Keong Tatt



Dr Foo graduated from Singapore University in 1965 and obtained his FRCS ED in 1971. He is currently Emeritus Consultant, Department of Urology at the Singapore General Hospital and a Clinical Professor, at the National University of Singapore. He is the Founder President of the Singapore Urological Association (President 1986–88,) former Secretary-General to the Urological Association of Asia (1998–2006,) Director of Asian School of Urology (2006–10) and currently Honorary Executive Director of UAA .

“ **How the Scout Movement benefited me as a medical doctor**

I joined the Scout Movement in Primary Class at St George's School, Balik Pulau, Penang, way back in 1952. I was born in Bayan Lepas, Penang , to a big family of two sisters and six brothers. Five of my brothers were active Scouts like me. The Scout Troop at the School in Balik Pulau was very active, with the late Mr Gan Ewe Beng as the Group Scout Master. We had regular weekly meetings



5th Bayan Lepas Troop at Coronation Camp in 1956.



Picture taken at in 1956. I was the Assistant Scout Master with the hat and holding the staff (standing left.) The other two Scouts squatting were my younger brothers, Kong Tatt and Yaw Tatt.

and campings during the school holidays. In 1957, my brother Hong Tatt and I were transferred to Form 5 in St Xavier's Institution as there was no Fifth Form then at St Georges' School in Balik Pulau. We joined the Troop at SXI and continued to be active in The Movement. My brother and I also helped to run the 5th Bayan Lepas Scout Troop as Assistant Scout Masters in our Village Chinese Chong Sun Primary School, where we had our early education.

We were in the Arts stream in Form 5 at SXI and I was all set to pursue Engineering as a career, but it was Scouting which helped to make up my mind to do Medicine instead. I was idealistic and wanted to help other people at all times, as in our Scout Promise, and I figured that a medical career would fit that in. Whether in times of peace or war; in times of economic setback or prosperity – a medical doctor's service is always needed. I shifted over to the Science stream in the 6th Form and was fortunate subsequently to get admitted to the then University of Singapore Medical School in 1960.

During the undergraduate days, I joined the University Rover Crew. We helped to run Scout Troop at the School for the Blind where we held regular meetings over the weekends. We also organized trips for the Scouts to Malaya during the long vacations I underwent Scout Master training in Singapore, and obtained my Woodbadge for Scout Masters in the same year that I graduated as a medical doctor in 1965.

Unfortunately after graduation, life was too busy for me to take an active part in the Scout Movement. However, I have never forgotten what I had learnt and continue to benefit from it as a medical doctor during the past 46 years.

The Idealism of the Scout Movement

The promise to do one's Best, and to help other people at all times, has continued to help me maintain professionalism in my medical practice. I not only did my Best but also tried to give each patient the Best, by referring him or her to the appropriate specialist if I feel that his or her problem is beyond my capability. My core purpose as a medical professional is to improve on the care of my patients. I do not just treat but also care. To treat I



Foo Heong Tatt the King Scout.



Cub Master training course at Coronation Camp, 1957.

need to be competent, but to care I need to be compassionate. The Scout Movement taught me to be compassionate, courteous and kind; to be cheerful and friendly to all, regardless of class, race or creed.

To Be Observant

I practiced this as Boy Scout when we went out for hikes and earned our Rambler's Badge; with maps and sketches of plants and animals, and keeping a logbook. In medical practice, observation is one of the keys in diagnosis and also in clinical research. This had helped me to treat patients better and to discover new concepts in clinical practice, to improve on current management. For example, in my field of urological practice, I observed that not only the size, but what is more important, is the shape of the prostate gland which is related to the degree of blockage at the bladder outflow. This can now be easily assessed with abdominal ultrasound and help to manage our patients with prostate problems more cost effectively.

The Love of Nature

Scouting instilled in me the love of Nature, the clear blue skies, the brilliant stars, the soaring mountains and the roaring seas. We learnt to appreciate the wonderful balance of nature with the watercycle, animal and plant lives. This helped me to appreciate the wonderful balance in the human body. That diseases are but imbalances in our immune system, and not just the germs and the cancer cells causing the diseases. Fundamentally, to help a patient to heal, it is not sufficient to get rid of the germs and every cancer cell, which may not be possible. However, it is more important to improve the body immune system to restore the balance, and improve the health of the patients. Increasing high-tech procedures and more expensive and toxic medications may not be the answer to treat our patients sometimes. Returning to Nature; improving the immune system through relaxation and exercise; proper food with more fruits and vegetables may be more important to help our patients to heal.

To Be Prepared

To be prepared is the Scout Motto, and in medical practice this is good advice. Clinical medicine is often unpredictable, and we always should have a "Plan B" and be prepared to deal with the changing situations. For that we need to be competent and keep up with advances in Medicine and learn from our senior colleagues and from our patients.

I have benefitted much from the Scout Movement. The experiences from Scouting has helped me be a better doctor and lead a more fulfilling life. For that I have Lord Baden Powell to thank for founding The Movement and for its introduction to Penang 100 years ago. I am also indebted to the many Scout Masters who had nurtured me to be a good Scout: trying not just being good, but to do Good.

May the Scout Movement continue to flourish to benefit future generations of young in the country.



A photograph from the album of a picnic on Strawberry Hill during the author's membership of 9GT(N) while enrolled at St Xavier's Branch School.

Hang Phee Hoe

Joined 7GT(N) in 1965 as a Boy Scout after completing his Primary School education with St Xavier's Branch School. Phee Hoe recalls in his contribution below taking his Venturer Part I as a Senior Scout over two unforgettable days from 18–19 May 1968

“ It was a fine day that saw the four of us – Tan Ban Seng, Lim Siong Hee, Ng Joon Chee and myself– gathered somewhere in Gelugor to make our way to the base station of the Penang Hill Railways. It was supposed to be the beginning of the first part of the road to King Scout-hood. We were all in Form Four in St Xavier's with three of us in the same Science Class and Joon Chee in the Arts Class. We were full of enthusiasm. Rain clouds hid from our sight.

Our examiner was Mr Paul Kandasamy. An External Examiner who was very experienced in this first part of the four-part tests leading to the top award of Scouting.

The instructions we received were as follows:

Day 1: From here – Proceed to Ayer Itam and hike up to Penang Hill and camp the night at Tiger Hill Reservoir.

Day 2: From there – Proceed to Sungei Pinang, Balik Pulau and hike back to Ayer Itam. On the way, collect signatures from any Police Station you may pass and the signature of the caretaker of Tiger Hill Reservoir.

Important note: We didn't have an inkling of where we were supposed to be going on that day. Least of all, if Tiger Hill even existed! We had received the instructions on the day of the journey. It was a journey for adventurous teenagers to nowhere we knew!

As we had been trained to be prepared always in Scouting, each of us came ready with a long list of items packed for the days of our Venturer Badge tests. The strategy of carrying only one rucksack each on our back proved helpful while hiking up the steps of Penang Hill. Even though we had numerous prior meetings after School to plan the list of things to bring, the heavy load on our back dictated our rest after every ten steps up the steep Penang Hill track.

At that time, Joon Chee's home was in Balik Pulau, so we knew his local knowledge would become very handy when we journeyed through his hometown. That gave us some comfort to look forward to even if we didn't have a clue on how to get to Tiger Hill prior to that. Our route up to Tiger Hill would eventually take us down to Sungei Pinang and then Balik Pulau before returning to George Town. In my imagination, I thought of tigers swimming across the channel from Kedah to Penang in the olden days to give our destination hill its name.

We started climbing up the hill near the *Thee Kong Tuah* (Temple of the King of Heaven) with the Penang Hill Railway Station on the right as we faced the hill. My log book shows it was 0750 hours when we started our journey from Gelugor. We had to make our way through Green Lane to Batu Lancang Lane, David Chen Gardens, Ayer Itam Road, first before arriving at the foot of Penang Hill. We got sidetracked into a wrong road for 25 minutes before finally reaching the foot of Penang Hill. We got signatures at some Police Stations as we went along.

We asked for directions from the residents whom we met along the way up the hill and our destination became less mysterious and our hopes rose as we climbed higher. There were local goats feeding on the hillside while monkey-cups grew all around us.

It was already 1440 hours when we reached the top of Penang Hill. After walking along the top of the hill, we reached Tiger Hill. It was secluded from other parts of Penang Hill.

There was wild secondary jungle nearby. We camped that night at a worker's shed by the side of the Tiger Hill Reservoir. The night was real quiet. There were no other human beings in the vicinity except us. We played some harmonica music to keep our spirits up and burnt a log to keep us warm.

We did not get to see the caretaker of the Reservoir that night; we had instructions to obtain his signature, I guess to prove that we had made it up to Tiger Hill. Since he was nowhere in sight even in the morning we decided we had to do without his signature. There were big, black water beetles and twiggy water-spreaders on the surface of the Tiger Hill Reservoir.

We started at the crack of dawn the next day and followed the huge water pipeline from the Reservoir leading downhill. We had guessed correctly and eventually reached Sungei Pinang. Along the way, we passed through durian orchards and stopped to admire the beautiful Sungei Pinang Waterfall. We then promptly obtained a signature at the Sungei Pinang Police Station.

We headed towards Balik Pulau after Sungei Pinang, hiked across the hills, to Ayer Itam Dam. From the Dam we walked directly to Rifle Range where we cut across the Batu Lanchang Cemetery to reach the Penang Turf Club. We then looped back to Air Itam. It was 1900 hours by the time we got there and the street lamps had already been lit. We were delighted we had fulfilled our orders and headed home for a well-earned bath and meal.

Siong Hee went on to become a Senior Physician on the panel of Singapore Clinic, Penang. Ban Seng is also in medical private practice at his own clinic in George Town. Joon Chee became a senior banker with Ban Hin Lee Bank and eventually CIMB Bank. Your humble self, the writer of this article, just retired from some decades of teaching and now live in Kulim, Kedah.

From our batch of Scouts, three would eventually qualify as King Scouts in 1969. They were Chiu Sheng Bin, a graduate of an American College, Ong Jin Leong, a practicing accountant and owner of a large accounting firm in Penang and again your humble-self.



Photograph of myself somewhere in Seremban while hitch-hiking from Penang to Singapore in 1962.

Khoo Boo Sun

“ I was with SXI from 1952 (Primary 1) to 1961 (Form 5.) I did only five years in primary school as I had a double promotion from Primary 3 to Primary 5. I joined 7GT(N) in Primary 5 under Mr Khoo Heng San (Scout Master) and Mr James Lim Bian Tee (Assistant Scout Master.) Later Mr Ambrose Michael helped out in 7GT(N) as well. My Scouting days were very enjoyable and educational.

I missed out on my Bushman Thong because I did not get to do my Venturer Part 4 due to studies for my Senior Cambridge year (1961.) We did a lot of camping in Coronation, and Jubilee Camps. We also hiked to Taiping, Miami Beach and Muka Head – in fact all the places of interest in Penang.

I retired from teaching in Singapore five years ago. I am presently coaching sailing, and running sailing races in Singapore. Through sailing I have been to China, Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand and Qatar officiating at races.



6&7GT(N) joint Troop picture with the then Director, Bro T. Michael and Deputy Director, Bro Rupert. Mr Khoo Heng San is on the left of Bro Michael. I am standing on the last row, third from left.

Thomas Loh

A Cub and later Scout in SXI from 1955–64. Now lives in England.

“ Scouting has been a major influence in my life. Now that I have reached nearly 70, I can comment confidently on the changes it made to my life. I started as a Cub and then became a Scout in 7th



Patrol Leader Thomas Loh, standing far right at Camp Semangat for National Woodcraft Competition, August 1962.



Among the magnificent Parthenon ruins, Athens, Greece, 1963.

George Town (North.) The Troop was run by Mr Khoo Heng San, the unsung hero who gave up his time so that generations of SXI boys could experience the spirit of Scouting.

To me, Scouting was about enjoyment and self expression. In the nine years of Scouting at SXI, I learnt about survival and leadership. Above all, it instilled in me a spirit of adventure. My memories of Scouting are about my time spent in campsites at

Teluk Bahang and at Coronation camp. They are happy memories even though the rain drenched my tent at night because the trenches were not dug deep enough. And having to use the dirty old toilets at Jubilee Camp where I could never hold my breath long enough to complete the chore; not to mention dreading the ghostly “Lantern Lady” whom we believed haunted the campsite!

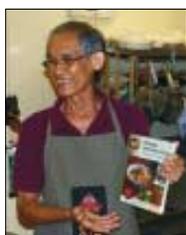
My enthusiasm for Scouting resulted in my selection as one of the lucky Scouts to represent Penang at the World Scout Jamboree in Greece in 1963. This was a big adventure in life since I had never travelled out of Malaysia until then. The Scout Jamboree was an overwhelming experience where I saw the universal Scouting Brotherhood gathered in one place. The pinnacle of my Scouting career at SXI was achieved with my appointment as Troop Leader of 7th George Town (North.)

Three years after I left school, I bought a one-way ticket to London with only enough pocket money to last me a month. That became my biggest Scouting adventure in life. I did survive and lived to tell the tale. Forty years after I arrived in the United Kingdom I am now settled into suburban life in Hertfordshire and raised my family here. After securing my career as an accountant and financial controller in various companies, I felt the urge to return what I had taken from Scouting; so I became a Scout Leader in a village called Chorleywood. This urge lasted for 10 years. In 2000 I called it a day as a Scout Leader. Like me, my three

sons have been through the Cub and Scout fraternity in the United Kingdom. They have been instilled with the same spirit of adventure because they have been backpacking across the world. Scouting has evolved over the last 50 years and it remains meaningful because of that.

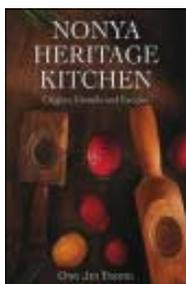
I wish the present day Scouts of SXI a happy adventure with their lives.

Ong Jin Teong



A member of 7GT(N) Boy Scout Troop from 1956–59 and Senior Scout Troop from 1960–62. He writes here about “My Scouting days at SXI – Training for Life.”

“ I started writing a book on Penang heritage food just as I was about to retire as a professor at the Nanyang Technological University, Singapore. I then realised that I cooked my first full meal on my own when I was a young Scout preparing for the test for my Cooking Proficiency Badge. I remember cooking rice and long beans in sambal, but I cannot remember what the other dish was. For dessert I made toffee apple from reading guide books that were written for Scouts in England. That was probably when I was about 11 or 12 years old – in Form 1 or 2.



Then it occurred to me that I had learned a lot from my Scouting days at St Xavier’s Institution. All the skills learned in our Scouting activities, in the camps in Coronation Camp and the efforts spent in training for the First Class and other badges, and the *Pengakap Raja* came in very useful later on in life.

We not only learned about axemanship but we had hands-on experience on the care and use of knives and axes. Cutting down or pruning trees, whatever the size, in my garden is not a problem at all.

We went to the agricultural station, located then at Ayer Itam and the Botanical Garden, where we learnt about trees and plants. They taught us how to propagate plants and how to plant and

care for trees. That is when we were told to dig a hole about two feet square and to move the top soil to the bottom of the hole. Such techniques are very relevant in today's urban houses, which has lots of rocks and rubbish such as plastics, unwanted metal and even old clothing buried in the garden. I would have been a botanist if I wasn't an engineer.



Giving a cooking demonstration as a celebrity cookbook author. The *Sunday Star* published a centre-spread about the cookbook and its author.

I worked for Cable & Wireless, an international telecommunication company for many years. I found myself in the Middle East and the Caribbean (West Indies,) doing surveys and commissioning for microwave systems. For the surveys, I had no issues with climbing mountains whether in the desert or in the tropics. I mention this because I was working with an International Telecommunications Union consultant in Oman who wouldn't climb up the ladder to reach the top of a tower and he is an ex-Navy officer! We could climb up ropes; so going up ladders is a piece of cake. However, climbing to the top of a 100-metre telecommunication tower is a memorable experience particularly when there is a strong wind blowing!

I wonder what happened to Oon Choo Huat. He was our leader – a real “*ginah thow*” who organised weekend camps at Coronation Camps for our patrol. If I am not mistaken, it cost us just over a dollar for the whole weekend camp, but we brought our own rice. That was when I was first introduced to baked beans. Occasionally the baked beans were supplemented by “*chui kay*” (toads) from the stream that flowed by the camp. We were busy doing something or other and enjoying ourselves. Some of these camps were preparations for the main Troop Camp which were organized two or three times a year. We used to chop trees so that we have dry firewood ready for future camps. We had our fair share of cuts and stings in camp activities but that was not a problem as we were well trained to administer first aid. This training also came in useful later in life.

During my Scouting days, firewood and charcoal were used for cooking at home; kerosene stoves and electric hotplates were not that prevalent then. Generally, the outside of pots and pans used at home were pretty black with soot. We used to borrow some of these pots and pans from home to take to our camps. When these returned home after the camps they were invariably clean and shiny. That is because we had daily morning camp inspections and

all the utensils had to be presented spotlessly clean. That is where we learned to wash up. I am sure many of our spouses appreciate such skills and would be thankful to the Scout Movement for that!

Many of today's generation have to call in the plumber to change the washers in the taps. We learned all about taps, changing washers and many other do-it-yourself skills. We even sewed our own tents! We could maintain our bicycles and patch any punctures – in the process may have lost a few ball bearings here and there! Fortunately, we could find replacements at the local bicycle shops. There is one exception though that was mentioned by my brother recently. We couldn't put back the gears of our then new Sunbeam bicycle which had three gears – at that time most of our bicycles did not have gears. I still cycle around today but my bike has 18 gears. I do not need to use all 18 gears but I am amazed how we managed to cycle around Penang Island on bicycles without gears when we were Scouts.

Looking back through my Scouting years at SXI, I realised that as we became more senior we were left to run the Troop by ourselves. Scout Masters came and went but we could still carry on, giving us a good practice in leadership. With hindsight, we benefitted from good training in this way.

Mr Khoo Heng San is one Scout Master who needs special mention. I am sure many Scouts from 7GT(N) will join me in acknowledging the sterling contributions he made to the Troop.

Philip Ooi

“ Sitting back to recall my life. Starting from my Scouting days, first with the 6th George Town (North) under Scout Master Mr Ho Weng Fai. Then, one day in 1962, a few of us decided, to form a New Scout Troop – the 1st George Town (North) Senior, under the leadership of Scout Master, Mr Ambrose Michael. Pioneers of the 1st George Town (North) Senior were; Lim Kah Seang, Allan Boudville, Wong Kam Hoong, Wong Kam Fatt, Ooi Ping Hong, Chow Tak Sim, Toh Cheng Eng, Kow Chin Fah and a few others whose names are now very difficult to remember after 55 years of losing contact.

It was a challenging task, but, with the leadership of Mr Ambrose, and the boys' "strong will and never giving-up spirit," we took problems that came along as a challenge and something for us to enjoy and solve. Being a new Senior Troop, there were problems of money, membership and being new, we had to find ways to attract other boys to join us. Also, we needed to present many



Eighteen Boy Scouts of the 1GT(N) formed the nucleus of the new troop established on 1 March 1961" under the charge of SM Ambrose Michael; the Seniors formed a year later.

fresh ideas to keep them with us. We had numerous camps and day and night hikes, and camp fires to create the spirit of adventure in us. We grouped together to sit for the various Scout tests and helped each other to pass these tests, not knowing then that we had started something called "comradeship" amongst us. After four years, 1st George Town (North) Senior Troop produced four King Scouts and one Bushman Thong.



A King Scout Badge.

After leaving school, we went our own ways, a few joined the Military, a few the Government-service, teaching, banking and some continued their studies and went to university. From what I gather lately, one became a Minister in the Government, one a Colonel in the Malaysian Armed Forces, one died in the line-of-duty, one a vice-president of a bank, some successful businessmen and now happy pensioners.



A Bushman Thong.

I was one of those who went into Government-service. Being a high-spirited young man, I obtained employer-sponsorship to a stint with the Outward Bound School in Lumut, Perak. I graduated from the School in 1975. In 1982, I joined a group of former Outward Bound School graduates to form an old-boys' club named the Malaysian Outward Bound Youth Association. We then started forming other branches of the Association in various locations across Malaysia. There are now branches in Selangor, Penang, Perak, Johore and Kuala Lumpur.

After forming the Association, I returned to the Outward Bound School, Lumut as an Instructor for Holiday Courses. I spent a few years as Instructor in the School, conducting courses for children.

This was where I got the experience to organize camps for adults and children.

A few of us from the Penang Branch of the Association got together and contacted the Penang State Government. We met up with then State Assemblyman in-charge of Youth and Sports, YB Dr Sak Cheng Lam to present to him with working papers on how to conduct team-building camps for Penangites. The camps were organized for participants (both young men and women) from factories, banks and other laymen to try out for themselves a new experience. We eventually helped the Jabatan Belia dan Sukan Pulau Pinang to conduct sporting events like runs, hikes and camps for the youths. We even organized many camps for children between the ages of 8–12 years. These camps were to inculcate in the children the spirit of working together as a team; to groom future leaders and to build a sense of independence in them while enjoying healthy activities. Many camps were held until the late 1980s. The camps became so successful that the Selangor Branch also started similar camps for the State.

Beside being involved in organizing camps for people, I also help my wife, (a teacher) to organize Scout camps for her school Troop during the school holidays. We also take these Boy Scouts on outings and hikes to Monkey Beach and Teluk Kempit. Often I was called upon to officiate during school sports. When we are free during school holidays, I would take my family out for camps and caving in Perlis, Penang and Perak.

With the spirit of community service still burning in me, I decided to join a group of people of the Lions Club of Butterworth. Together, we were able to contribute to community service for the people in need and share happiness with the old and lonely during celebrations of various festivals and the New Year. Together the Lions Club of Butterworth also organized fund-raising events such as “fun runs” and fund-raising dinners in support of the Club’s activities. Our activities took us to many parts of Malaysia, where we donate to old folks homes and orphanages.

We also helped form Leo Clubs in schools. We hope the pupils will eventually become Lions when they grow up and continue the spirit of giving and sharing in the Spirit of Lionism as good outstanding citizens.

Besides being a Lion, I also joined some friends as a member in the Malaysian Association for the Prevention of Tuberculosis. The Association aims to educate those suffering from Tuberculosis and also to promote the prevention of Tuberculosis amongst people. We organize exhibitions to educate people on the health-risks presented by Tuberculosis and how to prevent its spread.

During my free time some weekends, I helped organize swimming competitions on Penang Island for the various swimming clubs. My Penang Amateur Swimming Association also organizes annual swimming competitions among senior swimmers. I also helped organize swimming meets for some of the international schools in Malaysia. For my contributions to swimming, I get to be invited occasionally to officiate at national championships in Kuala Lumpur and various States of Malaysia for the Sukma Meets and international sporting events such as the Commonwealth Games, Asean Sea Games and Asian Games.

Besides being involved in swimming, I also attended courses in Diving Discipline, which prepares me for officiating in National Diving Meets and the Commonwealth Games. I also became involved in the Technical Officiating of Handicap Swimming. I attended technical classes in Handicap Swimming which were conducted by International Officials for Handicap Swimming. So now, I am also qualified to officiate at Handicap Swimming Competitions.

I am also deeply involved in International Dragon Boat Racing, which is an annual event in Penang since the late 1980s. There are some benefits from being involved in these activities; you get to learn about the Rules and Regulations of the Discipline and when to implement the Rules. Also, you get to travel with the teams to places that ordinary people do not get the chance visit. Dragon Boating has taken me to Japan, various parts of China, Hong Kong, Thailand and Singapore. Participating in these activities helped me pass my time easily and meaningfully. Although, planning and preparing for these events can be time consuming and cause lots of sleepless nights I find it all worthwhile when I see the happy, smiling faces of the winners.

A lot of commitments, sacrifices and time need to be spent to organize or participate in such events. I feel that I have done my

share of contributions to life and to the people of Penang with the help from Penang State Government, Pejabat Belia dan Sukan, fellow Committee Members of the Organizing Committees, and also the participants of the various projects.

Quah Boo Hock



A member of 7th George Town (North) from 1962–65

“When I first decided to join the Scout Movement I had three basic and simple aims:

- (1) for the glamour of wearing the smart Scout’s uniform
- (2) for the fun of going camping and
- (3) for the excitement of meeting up with Girl Guides and getting to know them better. See *peh song!*

Did I say “aims” just now? Well, maybe “ulterior motives” is the more appropriate phrase to use though it could sound a bit more sinister but at least I am being honest.

On the first day that I reported to 7th George Town (North) as a recruit I must admit that I actually felt somewhat disappointed as I quickly learnt that I was not allowed to wear the Scout’s uniform until I have passed the Tenderfoot tests. So I schemed to become a Tenderfoot in double quick time. I figured out that the most straightforward and fastest way would be to take all my six tests from SM Khoo Heng San. So together with my good friend Ng Chong Yuen (now Datuk) we went to SM’s house in Dato Kramat Road (yes the one in-front-of-which used to be located a famous *goreng pisang* stall) and successfully completed our Tenderfoot tests there.

During my lower secondary school days, Scouting was my second love after athletics. Sorry about that! However, I can say that my commitment to Scouting was always serious and I did rise up to become Patrol Leader of Heron Patrol. Scouting was indeed a fun way of learning about teamwork, loyalty and leadership. Camping be it for competition or for fun was something I always looked



Group photo shows scouts of Heron Patrol in Jubilee Camp, Teluk Bahang. Back row (standing) from left : Gregory Chang (now in Canada), myself as Patrol Leader, Andrew Wan (my Patrol Second) Squatting on the right : Johnny Ewe and on the left can't recall his name already.

forward to. We really enjoyed the fellowship, the campfire and the pranks! Remember how we used to sneak out of Coronation Camp after dark to spy on the numerous *hoay* vehicles in nearby Botanical Gardens. Naughty huh!

Despite our playfulness, when it really came to the serious business of Scoutcraft, 7th George Town (North) was second to none in Penang. Under the able guidance of SM Khoo Heng San we emerged as champions in the State-Level Scoutcraft Competition in 1964 and can proudly claim to be the best troop in the State – at least for that year! We therefore earned the right to represent Penang in the National-Level Competition. Led by ASM Michael Quah, two patrols travelled down to Kem Semangat in Kuala Lumpur to compete with the best from the other States. Although we did not win the overall champion's prize, I recall that we did do very well in the cooking competition. Fellow participants for the Kuala Lumpur competition included the Boudville brothers, Chye Hin, Ban Cheng, Foo Teen and Liang Kok Hee (among those whom I can recall.)

As for my third ulterior motive, sad to say it was not satisfactorily achieved as the opportunities to interact with Girl Guides, at least as far as I was concerned, were few and far in between. I can only vaguely recall one particular instance when we were asked to demonstrate the pitching of tents to our fairer counterparts in a school compound!

I must say that I thoroughly enjoyed my Scouting days in 7th George Town (North) by far the best troop that you can ever join.

It's good to let memories live again!

Francis Tan

A member of the Cub Pack SXI Primary School and 1st George Town (North) from 1963–65.

“ **My first night under canvas** (as retold by my parents)

It was a dark and stormy night

A terrific thunderstorm broke and it was belting down buckets of rain. Son Francis, a raw Tenderfoot with SXI's IGT(N) Scout Troop, was spending his very first night at Coronation Camp.

My parents were understandably worried about how their son would cope under such duress. They finally gave in to their worries and decided to go check on his welfare for themselves. It was almost midnight when they drove up to the Camp in their small Mini car.

Dressed in shorts and wooden clogs and armed with an umbrella and torchlight, they made their way quietly into the camp under the cover of darkness, their progress lighted by the flashes of lightning accompanied by sharp claps of thunder.

Earlier that day my patrol had pitched its safari tent on a ridge at the back of the campsite. We were taught the rudiments of securing the poles and the fly-sheet and we dug trenches around the tent to prevent rainwater from flowing in. Dinner that evening was half-cooked (not intentionally so) rice with canned sardines.



Francis would go on from his first very wet and stormy camp to be part of the historic First Malaysian Jamboree held 4–10 December 1966 at Jubilee Camp.

As we settled in for the night with our candle-lit songs and yarns, the storm broke. The tent was neither strong nor water-proof enough, and the trenches we had dug were inadequate for the deluge that followed. Though we bravely put on our raincoats and attempted to weather it out for a while, the situation quickly got much worse. We finally had to abandon our self-respect (and our tent) and made a wild dash for the shelter of the Scout HQ. There

we spent the rest of the night, huddled together, but at least the floor was built out of cement, sheltered by a sturdy roof and we were relatively dry.

My parents peeked into the HQ and saw for themselves that their son, and his fellow campers, had done the sensible thing. Not to embarrass me, they retreated discreetly into the night and drove home.

It was only much later that I came to know of their participation in this learning experience of mine. I recalled this with much nostalgia especially when my own children went off to their first camps....



Francis Tan next to the tent of his Patrol F and his temporary home during the Jamboree.

Pinnacle of my Scouting career

The first Malaysian Jamboree at Teluk Bahang in December 1966 marked the pinnacle of my Scouting career.

I cannot remember too many details of the actual event 50 years ago, but it must have made a great impression on me for I kept a detailed album with newspaper clippings and black-and-white photographs taken by myself with my father's old Zeiss camera. I remember the camaraderie and good spirit of the event, the inter-mingling with Scouts from neighbouring countries, and how we

exchanged greetings and mementoes.



One of my mementoes: a First Day Cover for the Jamboree issued by the Post Office and stamped at the postal kiosk set-up as the campsite's own Post Office for the duration of the Jamboree.

Some years later I met up with a friend KKT from Singapore when we were in university together in the United Kingdom. KKT recalled his first visit to Penang in 1966 as a participant with the Singapore Contingent to the Malaysian Jamboree. "We were all very excited in coming to Penang for this Scouting event. When it was first announced and planned we were then part of the same family. In September that year ironically, Malaya and Singapore became politically separated, and we had to go our different ways."

The brotherhood and the bonds that remain between us since that day, transcend all barriers and boundaries. That is what the spirit of Scouting is about.

James Yeh Kai Shiang

A member of 13GT(S) while at La Salle School and 7GT(N) Boy Scout Troop while at SXI from 1963–67. Went overseas to New Zealand to study for an Engineering Degree after Sixth Form; and afterwards a Master’s Degree with the University of Hawaii. Worked as a software engineer in Santa Clara, California where he now resides.

“ I still remember....

The poor lighthouse keeper at Muka Head who offered to share his family meal with us after my partner and I reached the lighthouse in the late afternoon after a strenuous hike to qualify for the First Class Badge. I was taught a good lesson in generosity that afternoon which is forever remembered.

The lifelong friendships that were generated when Scouting buddies shared food with each other even though there was not enough to eat during camping trips.

Group photograph of the Scouts from 13GT(S) of La Salle School who took part in the first camp of the Troop held in the School compound. The author is standing fourth from the right, next to Group Scout Master Peter Singam.



Being homesick on my first camping trip and hoped that no one noticed.

The dread of going to the dirty, smelly toilets at Coronation and Jubilee Camps.



A New Year card from fellow 7GT(N) Senior Scout Lim Beng Huat (third from left along the middle row) with the sentiment: "Old time, fun time" to the author (fourth from the right along the back row.)

It was OK if you are a terrible singer during a campfire because no one will notice.

That if you do not dig drains around the tent when they were erected it would surely rain heavily on the first night and flood the tent.

To make sure that the dishes are squeaky clean, because during morning camp inspection the HQ Patrol Leader will test them with his fingers. I now check them the same way after my children wash the dishes.

Failing the test for the Proficiency Cook Badge twice. But like a resourceful Scout it provides a good excuse now when asked to cook at home....



Above: 7GT(N) Boy Scouts, the author is sixth from the left along the seated row.
Below: 7GT(N) Senior Scouts, author is first on the left along the middle row.

