

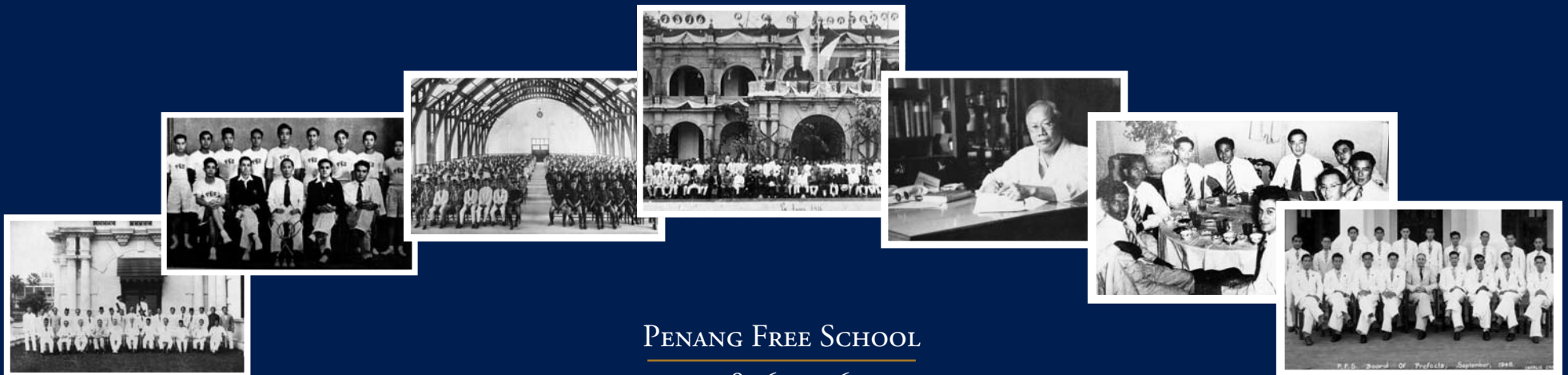
THE OLD FREES' ASSOCIATION, SINGAPORE



Registered 1962

Live Free

IN THE SPIRIT OF SERVING



PENANG FREE SCHOOL

1816-2016



Penang Free School in August 2015.

THE OLD FREES' ASSOCIATION, SINGAPORE



Registered 1962

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Live Free

IN THE SPIRIT OF SERVING

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CONTENTS

| | |
|-----|--|
| 4 | Foreword |
| 6 | Introduction |
| 8 | CHAPTER 1 On the Road to 200 Years |
| 18 | CHAPTER 2 Chalking Up Significant Milestones |
| 24 | CHAPTER 3 Portrait of an Old Free |
| 40 | CHAPTER 4 Steering the School in the Right Direction |
| 52 | CHAPTER 5 Founding of The Old Frees' Association, Singapore |
| 62 | CHAPTER 6 Reminiscences and Recollections |
| 84 | CHAPTER 7 From George Town to Dittisham, Window into the Past |
| 92 | CHAPTER 8 Wu Lien-Teh, Plague Fighter Extraordinaire |
| 102 | CHAPTER 9 Old Frees' Profiles |
| | • Judiciary • Medicine • Architecture |
| | • The Arts • Business • Education |
| | • Public service • Sports • Others |
| 162 | EPILOGUE Preserving the Past and Looking Ahead |
| 164 | ANNEXES |
| | • Head Boys (Head Prefects) |
| | • Queen's Scholars |
| | • OFAS Presidents |
| | • OFAS Life Members |

Foreword

By **Alex KH Ooi**

President, The Old Frees' Association, Singapore



With limited resources, fading memories and chasm in time where many are gone, we have surmised that comprehensiveness will be somewhat wanting. However, with a good editor, we dug into our resources and put in our best efforts. I thank all parties, Gabriel CT Teh, Cheah Hock Leong and the Adjudication Panel in particular, for making this coffee-table book a reality.

The Penang Free School is the oldest English medium school in this part of the world. Founded in 1816, she celebrates her bicentenary in 2016. Hence this book, mooted by some seniors in 2007, to document what would otherwise become even far too late to ever do.

Most Old Frees in Singapore, if not all, consider themselves blessed alongside the miraculous transformation of Singapore. We have become part of its fabric and call the Republic our home. As the school that educated us turns 200, it is befitting that

we look at our roots and celebrate with the Grand Old Dame. Individually, and as part of The Old Frees' Association, Singapore (OFAS), we have sponsored students here for academia and sports and extended fellowship to those seeking a life here.

Fellowship is the mainstay of our activities when we indulge in some nostalgia and promote educational excellence for our alma mater. At the very least, we definitely meet annually on 21 October (School Founder's Day).

OFAS has come a long way going by the following reports in *The Straits Times*:

28 Oct 1929: *A group of the Old Boys of the Penang Free School, gathered at Raffles College during the weekend at a tea party to celebrate the anniversary of their Alma Mater. A proposal was carried to form a Singapore branch of the OFA and a committee was elected consisting of Messrs AA Sandosham (chairman), Khoo*

Kim Cheng, Hooi Yip Seng and Abbas (hon sec).

22 Oct 1952: *"Old Frees" in Singapore: Mr. A W Frisby, chairman of the Public Services Commission, Singapore, was elected the first patron of the Old Frees Association at an inaugural dinner of old boys of the Penang Free School held in Singapore last night. Others elected were: Mr Tan Ah Tah, president; Prof AA Sandosham, vice-president; Mr Chan Kok Chin, secretary; Mr Khoo Sian Wah, treasurer, Messrs Ibrahim Basha, Chee Swee Leng, Lim Ewe Hin, Leong Yin Choo and Dr Yeoh Bock Choon, committee; Messrs Lim Keng Hor and Chin Bok, auditors.*

28 Oct 1966: *Judges head Old Frees: Two high court judges here, Mr Justice Tan Ah Tah and Mr Justice A V Winslow, have been elected President*

and Vice-President of the Singapore Old Frees Association. They are old boys of the Penang Free School, which recently celebrated its sesquicentenary. Other officials of the association were: Secretary Mr T Q Lim; treasurer Mr E A Clarke and committee members: Messrs Tan Boon Teik, Dr G K Lim, Heah Hock Meng, Chan U Seek and Yong Yoon Fook.

Among the highlights of this book is the story of one of the earliest Old Frees linked with Singapore. His legacy, inadvertently forgotten, struck me when I attended the inauguration of a museum dedicated to him - the Dr Wu Lien-Teh Memorial Museum in Harbin, Heilongjiang on 8 September 2008.

The drive to bring his legacy to light was a rocky but rewarding journey. His bust, unveiled by Penang's Chief Minister Lim Guan Eng, now stands at the Penang Medical College and his autobiography has been re-printed. In Singapore, the Nanyang

University Institute of Advanced Studies held a memorial public seminar and exhibition in his honour in April 2014 (graced by Health Minister Gan Kim Yong) and the Lee Kong Chian School of Medicine has named a house after him. His verve in fighting pneumonic plague and instilling hygiene as a lifestyle epitomises the quintessence of life.

Fortis Atque Fidelis (strong and faithful)
as you go to serve in the community.

Introduction

By **Tan Chung Lee**

When I first started my research on Penang Free School and doing interviews with several distinguished Old Frees living and working in Singapore, it seemed as if Old Frees stood out mostly in the fields of law, medicine and the public service.

In the 1940s to 1960s, the Chief Justice, the Attorney-General and seven out of eight High Court judges were Old Frees. The Justices who served as president of The Old Frees' Association, Singapore were luminaries such as Tan Ah Tah and AV Winslow.

Among the judicial/Legal Service officers who were Old Frees were JWD Ambrose, Attorney-General Tan Boon Teik, Judicial Commissioner TQ Lim and Registrar Eu Cheow Chye.

In medicine, outstanding Old Frees include Professor Lee Seng Teik, dubbed the father of plastic surgery in Singapore, Professor Lee Eng Hin, who helped develop Singapore as the regional centre for paediatric orthopaedics and Dr Wu

Lien-Teh who although he did not practise in Singapore was one of the best known Old Frees internationally who helped to eradicate the plague in China in the 1930s and went on to modernise its medical services.

Then there was the Speaker of Parliament, Dr Yeoh Ghim Seng, an Old Free who was also the professor of surgery in the University of Malaya in Singapore.

Among the Old Frees who served in Singapore's public service with distinction and at the highest level as Cabinet ministers were Dr Wong Lin Ken as Minister for Home Affairs and Ahmad Ibrahim as Minister for Health and also for Labour.

I would find out in the course of my research and interviews that Old Frees are actually a very diversified lot thanks to their all-round education system and strong background of pastoral care invested by their teachers.

Many of them stood out in other professions as well. Among them were P Ramlee who was perhaps the most

popular Malay actor on both sides of the Causeway. He starred in many films produced by the Shaw-owned MFP (Malay Film Productions), was a producer of movies himself as well as a singer and composer.

Chan Soo Khian, who runs the SCDA architectural firm, is known for his unique designs which he likes to call neo-tropical architecture. He won an international award for Lincoln Modern in 2003 and is now much sought after globally.

Heah Hock Heng also excelled in architecture. He had a hand in designing some of Singapore's earliest iconic structures such as the Shangri-La Hotel, the Futura and Draycott Towers and today is concentrating on redeveloping the historic Crag Hotel on Penang Hill into an Aman resort.

Then there is Lim Chong Keat who has two buildings designed by him – Singapore Conference Hall and Jurong Town Hall – recognised as national monuments in Singapore.

Catherine Lim needs no introduction

having made a name for herself as a novelist. One of her novels was used as a Literature textbook for the Cambridge 'O' Levels in the West Indies.

Lim Thean Soo who served as Comptroller of Customs and Excise was also a writer.

Then there is Dennis Lee – the world renowned pianist living in London.

Old Frees have also made a name for themselves in the field of religion. There is Reverend Chiu Ban It – who was a Hutchings' scholar of Penang Free School in the 1930s and served as an Anglican bishop from 1966 to 1982, the first Malayan-born bishop to serve in the diocese of Malaya and Singapore.

Antiques collector and Chinese scholar, CM Wong, stood out as a recognised authority on Chinese culture.

There is also Tan Poh Seng, a national tennis coach and Malaysia's number 2 Davis Cup player, who played a big role in grooming young Singapore tennis talents.

The Old Frees also showed that they

were not all a boring bunch. Professor Lee Eng Hin for instance, was known to have rocked in school as he was part of a six-piece band called the Fenders. He has a cool picture of himself playing on the bass guitar with fellow schoolmates.

Then there is Steve Foong, a young Old Free who is so passionate about his alma mater that he went on a two-month expedition that ultimately led him to the home of the school's founder, Robert Sparke Hutchings. What inspired him was why would a young man like Hutchings sail to Penang to set up a school?

Apart from successfully finding Hutchings' birthplace of Dittisham, Steve discovered the 1000 year old St George's Church there where Hutchings served as rector. He also discovered that the Penang Free school badge was actually the family crest of the Hutchings!

With nuggets of history such as these, it is little wonder that Penang was able to earn a World Heritage Site status for its capital

George Town from UNESCO in 2008.

This commemorative book, *Live Free, In the Spirit of Serving*, celebrates the bicentenary of the Penang Free School. It also honours the Old Frees – past students – who have gone through its hallowed portals as well as the dedicated headmasters and teachers who have shaped and moulded them to become leaders, men – and women – of integrity as well as people of compassion.

It is no mean feat for an institution to reach the milestone of 200 years. An even greater achievement is how Penang Free School has churned out distinguished Old Frees who have made a mark in their chosen professions in both Malaysia and Singapore.

Whether in the judiciary, medicine, the public service, education, sports, architecture or the arts, Old Frees have contributed greatly to the communities in which they live.

This book highlights the achievements of Old Frees in Singapore and their influence. These are their stories...

CHAPTER

1

On the Road to 200 Years

HOW IT ALL BEGAN



Original PFS school crest

The year was 1786. Until then, the island of Penang or *Pulo* (later changed to *Pulau Pinang*, a name attributed to its native *areca catechu* palm known as pinang in Malay, was part of the Sultanate of Kedah.

However, faced with the threats of invasion from then Siam and Burma, Sultan Abdullah Mukarram Shah of Kedah ceded the island in July to the British in return for military protection.

Thus on 11 August, Captain Francis Light on behalf of the East India Company raised the Union Jack in Penang to take possession of the island, which he renamed Prince of Wales, after the heir to the British throne.

That date was to mark the pivotal point for Penang and Penang Free School.

ARRIVAL OF HUTCHINGS

The British had long recognised the strategic importance of Penang not just as

an anchorage for their trading ships thanks to its natural harbour but also as a base to counter increasing French influence in Indochina in the north and as a means of checking Dutch expansion in Sumatra in the south.

For the first 19 years, Penang was administered as a “Residency” under the control of the Governor of Bengal.

In 1805, it became an independent Presidency which essentially meant that it was an administrative subdivision in its own right and subject to control from the higher authority of the Governor-General of India. A governor, Philip Dundas, was appointed to head the administration.

In 1813, Penang received a new chaplain of the presidency. He was Reverend Robert Sparke Hutchings, who was previously based in Bengal.

He had been sent to replace Reverend Atwill Lake, who was the first resident chaplain appointed in 1804.



Reverend Hutchings arrived at a time when Penang was enjoying a boom. It was prospering thanks to increasing trade and economic development and there was a spike in population as immigration was encouraged.



Penang Free School today: The main gate and arch.

SOWING THE SEEDS OF EDUCATION

Reverend Hutchings arrived at a time when Penang was enjoying a boom. It was prospering thanks to increasing trade and economic development and there was a spike in population as immigration was encouraged.

Education was available to the children of Europeans and government officials but not to the growing number of children of mainly migrant Asians and Hutchings was concerned.

In 1815, he submitted a proposal to the then governor William Petrie to establish a “free school” with suggestions on how it should be managed.

In response, the governor convened a seven-member committee, headed by Reverend Hutchings to study in detail the specifics of establishing such a school.

PRINCE OF WALES ISLAND FREE SCHOOL IS BORN

In its submission on 6 February 1816, the committee declared as part of its vision:

That it will be the first object of the institution to provide for the education of such children as would be otherwise, brought up in idleness and consequent vice, and without any means of obtaining instruction either in useful learning or in any manual employment, and to implant in them the early habits of industry, order and a good conduct.”

—THE ORIGINAL PLAN OF THE ESTABLISHMENT OF PRINCE OF WALES ISLAND FREE SCHOOL 1816.

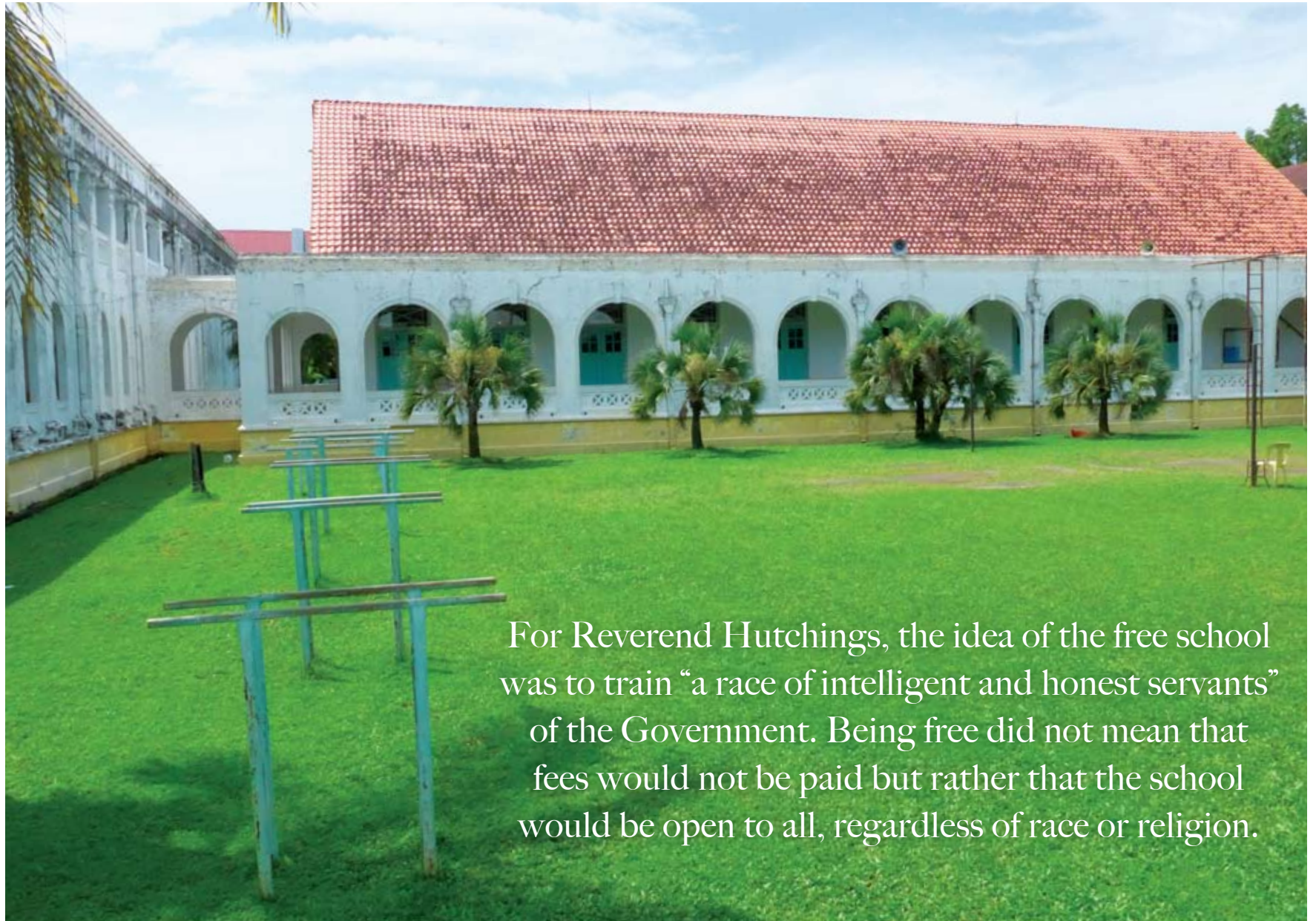
The proposal was to have two schools – one for boys and another for girls – and that there would be boarders as well as day pupils. Fees would be paid by parents who could afford them while the children of



Love Lane, the location of the first Penang Free School.



Penang Free School building in Farquhar Street.



For Reverend Hutchings, the idea of the free school was to train “a race of intelligent and honest servants” of the Government. Being free did not mean that fees would not be paid but rather that the school would be open to all, regardless of race or religion.

One of two quadrangles in Penang Free School once used for gymnastics.

parents without means and orphans would be exempt. In addition, children living far from the school could be admitted as boarders. It was also stated that children should be taught in their own languages if they did not wish to learn English.

For Reverend Hutchings, the idea of the free school was to train “a race of intelligent and honest servants” of the Government. Being free did not mean that fees would not be paid but rather that the school would be open to all, regardless of race or religion.

Thus, the Prince of Wales Island Free School for boys was opened on 21 October 1816, in a rented house in Love Lane with an enrolment of 25 boys. Because of the problem of finding a suitable teacher, the school intended for girls could not be opened at the same time. Nor could the boarding school be launched due to the arduous task of finding a suitable location and the problem of providing regular meals.



Hutchings also laid the foundation stone of the Anglican Church of St George the Martyr in Penang in 1817, naming it after the church in his hometown of Dittisham in Devon, England where he had served as rector.

Hutchings' role in founding Singapore's pre-eminent school

PENANG FREE SCHOOLS' founder was to play a significant role in the founding of another prestigious school in Southeast Asia – Raffles Institution in Singapore.

It all started when Stamford Raffles, who founded Singapore in 1819, was in Penang to work as the Deputy Secretary to the Governor of Penang, Philip Dundas from 1805 to 1810.

In April 1823, Raffles invited Hutchings to Singapore for a meeting with Dr Robert Morrison, an educationist and missionary from Malacca together with the Sultan and Temenggong of Johor, previously the ruler of Singapore, and other leading members of the local community. During this meeting Raffles shared his vision and plans for setting up the Singapore Institution.

This was to “educate the sons of the higher order of natives and others; to afford means of instruction in the native languages to the Company’s servants and others as may desire it; to collect the scattered literature and traditions of the country with whatever may illustrate their [sic] laws and customs, and to publish and circulate in a correct form the most important of these, with such other works as may be calculated to raise the character of the institution and to be useful and instructive to the people”.

On 10 April, three patrons including Raffles were appointed as well as an 18-member board of trustees for the school. Hutchings was among them. He also was present at the school’s ground-breaking ceremony.

The Singapore Institution is today’s Raffles Institution, Singapore’s oldest school.

A girls' school was opened a year later in 1817. It closed from 1821 to 1828 before re-opening and operating until 1851.

In 1821, the school moved to a new building erected in Church Square on a plot of land granted by the East India Company. With this relocation to premises of its own, it was able to cater to students wishing to be schooled in their own languages. The Tamil School ran for two years while the Malay School operated till 1826 after which a branch was opened in Glugor and functioned until 1863. In 1867, when the Prince of Wales Island reverted to its original name of Pinang, the school was renamed Pinang Free School.

However, the school in its present form did not take shape until 1928. In 1827, it had moved from Church Square to occupy half of a parcel of land adjacent to St George's Church on Farquhar Street. In 1897, the school underwent reconstruction. In 1907, another building occupying the

other half of land was added to cater to an expanding student population.

FOUNDING OF ST GEORGE'S CHURCH

Apart from his role in founding the school, Reverend Hutchings also laid the foundation stone of the Anglican Church of St George the Martyr in Penang in 1817, naming it after the church in his hometown of Dittisham in Devon, England where he had served as rector and his father before him.

Located at the corner of Farquhar Street (now Lebuhr Farquhar) and Pitt Street (renamed Jalan Masjid Kapitan Keling), the church was completed in 1818 and consecrated a year later in May 1819 by the Bishop of Calcutta, Thomas Fanshawe Middleton. Today, it is the oldest Anglican church in Southeast Asia and like Penang Free School has become a major landmark in George Town. Facing the church is the Francis Light Memorial commemorating



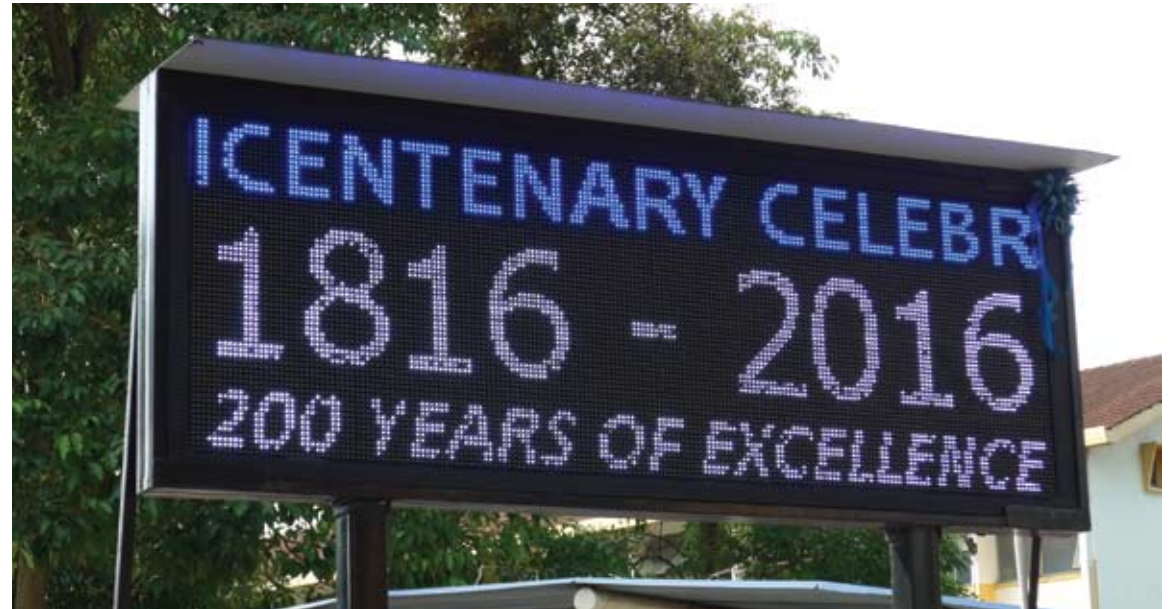
The clock tower (back view) of Penang Free School.

the founding of Penang in 1786 by Francis Light. Hutchings served as its chaplain for seven years from 1820 to 1827.

A PERMANENT HOME

There would be another move for Penang Free School, this time a permanent one, to Green Lane (renamed Jalan Masjid Negeri) on 31 December 1927 where the school stands today. The move was imperative as it was becoming overcrowded by 1919. In 1924, the government provided a site of 30 acres on Green Lane for the construction of new buildings, including staff quarters. A year later, the new premises of Penang Free School were inaugurated.

The vacant buildings left behind by the school at its Farquhar Street premises were retained and renamed Hutchings School to cater to primary school children in honour of its founder. It was to become one of the most important feeder institutions to Penang Free School.



Digital countdown calendar to 200th anniversary

In 1826, Penang became part of the Straits Settlements together with two other British colonies – Malacca and Singapore. A year later, Reverend Hutchings succumbed to malaria and died on 20 April 1827 in Penang. He was buried at the Northam Road (now Jalan Sultan Ahmad Shah) Protestant Cemetery in Penang.

So great was Reverend Hutchings' legacy and the respect held for him that every year, on Founder's Day (21 October), school prefects and teachers from the Free School that he founded would visit his tomb for prayers presided over by an



Northam Protestant Cemetery, resting place of Reverend Hutchings.

Anglican priest from St George's Church at 7 am. The thanksgiving memorial service is also attended by representatives from Hutchings Primary School and Hutchings Secondary School. ■

CHAPTER

2

Chalking Up Significant Milestones

TIMELINE

1816 – Proposal to set up a school on Prince of Wales Island is submitted to the Government by a committee headed by Reverend Robert Sparke Hutchings in February. Proposal is accepted and on 21 October the Prince of Wales Island Free School opens in a rented house in Love Lane. Its administration is in the hands of a Board of Directors

1821 – Moves to new buildings on Church Square

1891 – Board of Directors decides to appoint British-trained university graduates to be the school's headmaster. The first to be appointed is William Hargreaves who laid the proper foundations of the school, sealing its reputation as a top educational institution

1897 – Reconstruction of school on Farquhar Street in two stages. First half of school is built in 1897. Second half of school opens in 1907

1905 – Introduction of games, sports and extra-curricular activities to supplement the academic programme

1909 – First school magazine is published



1821

The Free School's first proper building on Church Square

1911 – Organises its first Athletics Meet

1915 – Launch of scouting movement

1916 – Celebrates its 100th anniversary

1919 – School gets overcrowded and search for new site begins

- 1920** – Government takes over management of Penang Free School
- 1923** – Science is added to the curriculum
- 1924** – Construction of new school on 30-acre site in Green Lane (renamed Jalan Masjid Negara)
- 1927** – Introduction of the House system for sports and activities
- 1928** – Official opening of Penang Free School as it moves into Green Lane and is converted into a secondary school. Former school becomes primary school and is renamed Hutchings' School. Expansion of programme of sports, games and extra-curricular activities
- 1931** – Launch of school prize awards. More sports and extra-curricular activities are added
- 1932** – New emphasis given to Science studies with the opening of a new Science Block



1897

First half of school building on Farquhar Street

- 1936** – Special Science Class is set up to prepare students for the London Matriculation and Queen's Scholarship Examinations. Preparatory classes are also introduced for students keen to take up medical studies in tertiary institutions
- 1941** – Outbreak of World War II and Japanese Occupation disrupts school life. Penang Free School is occupied by the Indian National Liberation Army
- 1945** – Begins rehabilitation to replace furniture and equipment destroyed during the war. School reopens with an enrolment of 603 students

- 1947** – Restored to former glory. Sports and extra-curricular activities are revived
- 1950** – Formation of School Band
- 1951** – Sixth Form education is introduced. School also admits girls for the first time to Sixth Form classes
- 1955** – Opening of Pinhorn Memorial Library for Sixth Form students
- 1957** – Penang Free School loses Government status and becomes a national-type fully assisted secondary school run by a Board of Governors. Malaysian Secondary Schools Examination is launched as a basis for selecting the cream of primary school leaving students
- 1958** – Opening of a Sixth Form block and hostel on 21 October to provide accommodation for out-of-state students. School becomes a hub of Sixth Form education in northern Malaya. Formation of Chess Club and Stamp Club



Prince of Wales Island Free School celebrates its 100th anniversary

- 1959** – Automatic promotions system is introduced, doing away with the previous system of retaining students for another year if they failed their examinations

1962 – Formation of Electronics Club

1963 – Appoints its first Asian headmaster Tan Boon Lin.
Launch of Penang Free School Development Fund to raise money needed for building new facilities

1966 – School holds Sesquicentenary Celebrations

1969 – Opening of new Khutub Khanah Tunku Library named after Tunku Abdul Rahman Putra Al-Haj, an Old Free and first prime minister of Malaysia who contributed \$100,000 to the project. He officiates at its opening on 29 December

1972 – Three new buildings are added — Nuffield Science Block, Industrial Arts Block and a new Hostel Block.
The previous hostel is converted into classrooms

1975 – Chalks up enrolment milestone of 2000 and a teaching staff of 87

1978 – Main gate and school arch donated by Old Free Ch'ng Eng Hye is erected adding a distinctive feature to an already impressive set of buildings

1988 – Form One students are introduced to a new KBSM (Kurikulum Bersepadu Sekolah Menengah) or Integrated Curriculum for Secondary Schools

1989 – The teaching of a new subject “Kemahiran Hidup” (Living Skills) is added to the Form One curriculum

1990 – New two-semester system is introduced. School also adds to its facilities with the opening of two new blocks of classrooms, science laboratories, a basketball court and parking area for staff

1991 – Celebrates the 175th anniversary of its founding

1992 – Embarks on a single session school system with the construction of two new blocks

- 1994** – Side gate at Free School Road is added, paid for by C.A.Goh, an Old Free and troop leader of the 7th Georgetown Scout Troop
- 1995** – Introduction of a compulsory IT (Information Technology) education programme for all Form 1 students till Form 3 in line with the national education policy to produce computer literates
- 1996** – Launch of Penang Free School Foundation to help the school achieve greater heights in education and preserve its rich traditions
- 1999** – Upgrading continues with two new blocks added
- 2006** – Introduces the teaching of French and Arabic to its curriculum and establishes wireless connection
- 2007** – Wins prestigious ‘Cluster School of Excellence Award’, one of only 30 given to schools in Malaysia
- 2016** – School holds Bicentenary Celebrations



2016

Penang Free School celebrates
its 200th anniversary

CHAPTER

3

Portrait of an Old Free

FORTIS ATQUE FIDELIS
(Strength with Fidelity)

“The angšana trees are located around the edge of the all-purpose school field and when they were in bloom, the flowers were a golden yellow and had a beautiful scent.”

Soo Khee Chee

Founding director
National Cancer Centre



Speak to Old Frees about their time in school and chances are you will be moved by their unbridled passion for their alma mater. And they all agree on one thing — that it was a privilege to have been educated in Penang Free School (PFS) and to have imbibed the school spirit and traditions.

All reminisce fondly about their time in school, the life-long relationships built up with fellow students that have endured to this day and of the headmasters and teachers who have helped to mould them and instil the right values.

Right from the start, being selected for admission into the school alone was tantamount to fulfilling a dream. The aura of the school, its academic reputation and its strong traditions were a beacon for primary school students preparing to enter secondary school. As it was the top choice, students in feeder schools scoring the sufficient amount of marks in their primary school

leaving examinations to enter PFS knew that they would be the “cream of the crop”, thus spurring them even further to do well during their time there.

Professor and emeritus consultant at the Division of Orthopaedic Surgery at the National University Hospital (NUH) **Lee Eng Hin** recalls, “As a 12-year-old, setting foot for the first time in PFS was a daunting experience. I was awed by the sheer size of the school, its sprawling grounds and the prospect of studying in the best school in then Malaya.”

Echoing his feelings, senior consultant and former founding head of the Department of Rehabilitation Medicine, Singapore General Hospital (SGH) **Peter Lim Ai Chi** said, “When we all first entered school, we were young and looking for direction. The school gave us that as well as a sense of belonging.

“It was a school steeped in traditions which we grew to appreciate. The fact that



“As a 12-year-old, setting foot for the first time in PFS was a daunting experience. I was awed by the sheer size of the school, its sprawling grounds and the prospect of studying in the best school in then Malaya.”

Lee Eng Hin

Professor and emeritus consultant
Division of Orthopaedic Surgery
National University Hospital



One of many get-togethers of Frees.

you belonged to an institution which is so august was something to be proud of and became part of you — its many principles helped to shape us and hold us in good stead later on in life.

“It was inevitable that as we all grew up bearing the school’s name and reputation, we have remained very loyal to the school long after we left it and the bond among Old Frees whenever they get together is very strong.”

Even for the girls who studied only two years (in the Lower and Upper Sixth Forms) from the age of 16, the school’s ideals and what it stood for rubbed off on them. Retired deputy director, Schools West, Ministry of Education, **Betty Ooi Poh Gek** said, “There was a culture of diligence in the school and the motivation to do well. It seemed as if there was an internal engine inside us revving and wanting to do well. We were aware that Frees were illustrious

and so it was internalised in us to be the best that we could be.”

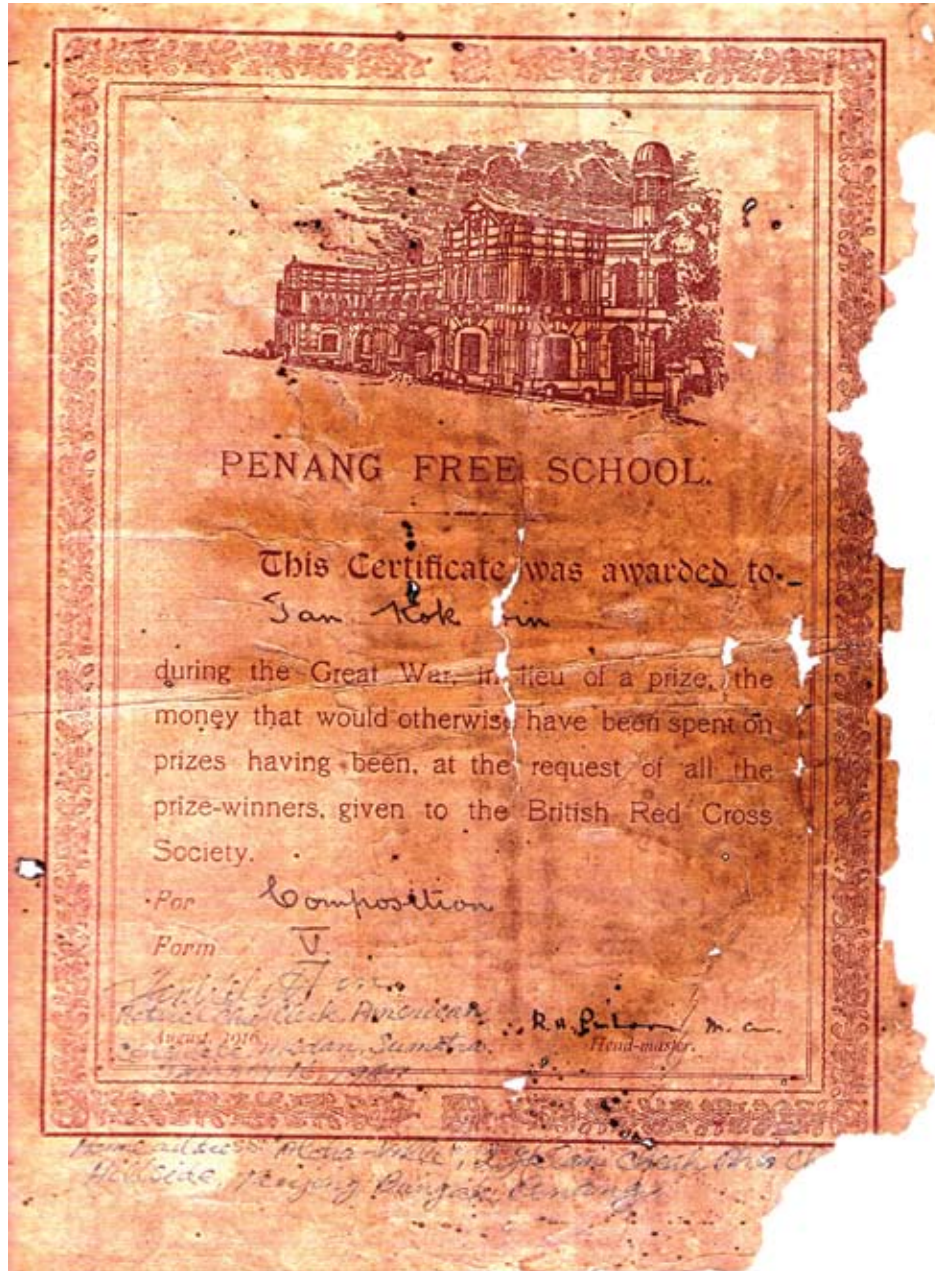
EMPHASIS ON ALL-ROUND EDUCATION

What impressed Old Frees was the wholesome approach to life that was imparted.

Marine consultant **Steve Foong** said, “The school was not only about formal education. It taught us how to be gentlemen and all-rounders. It taught us survival skills. The beauty of the school was that it taught us how to balance our time between study and play.”

Agreeing, co-founder of design firm Architects 61 **Tay Lee Soon** said, “It’s something that I have practised with my children. Even with my grandchildren today, I tell them there is a time to study and a time to play.

“To me, studying has to be tempered by sports. Thanks to the school, we learnt to play a variety of sports throughout the



Certificate of a prize awarded in 1916 for composition.

year. Every afternoon, in the first term, for instance, we would play cricket; in the second term it would be hockey and in the third term it was swimming. We were encouraged to be all-rounders. The school implanted in us the idea that study is not everything. It was also reinforced by my parents. My father, who was also from the school, was an all-China water polo player for whom sports was just as important as studies.

“Growing up like that, I brought up my children in a similar fashion.

“These extra-curricular activities (ECA) also helped to build character as well as bonds among the students.”

Added consultant medical oncologist and hematologist with Singapore Oncology Consultants at Farrer Park Medical Centre and Mt Alvernia Hospital **Tan Yew Oo**, “It was wonderful how the school made extra-curricular activities compulsory. After school, we all had to take part in some activity or other, whether it was athletics, a sport or joining an association like the Scouts. Even if you were not good at any of the games, at least you had a taste of it and could appreciate it when watching tournaments in any sport in later years.

“It also gave us an opportunity to get

For many, the same school field evoked a powerful sense of nostalgia. The size of four football fields, it was the hub of all sports and activities and the place where they played and bonded.



Football, one of the many sports offered in PFS (inset), being played in the magnificent school field (above) which is used for other sports as well.

to know one another and for juniors to get to know their seniors. By playing together we all bonded as one. I did scouting and enjoyed it — in fact that was where I made life-long friends.”

BUILDING LEADERSHIP THROUGH MENTORING

Most were of the opinion that the system of seniors mentoring juniors was perfect for nurturing leadership qualities.

Founder of Singapore’s first department of plastic surgery at SGH and now its senior consultant **Lee Seng Teik** elaborated, “The teachers led by example. They excelled in the classroom and led us in the sports field. They were competent in whatever activity they led.

“The range of activities offered was tremendous — there was art, music, painting, scouting, sports. We were given the opportunity to excel just by taking part.



Scout troop - scouting was one of many ECA activities of PFS.



“It was wonderful how the school made extra-curricular activities compulsory. After school, we all had to take part in some activity or other, whether it was athletics, a sport or joining an association like the Scouts.”

Tan Yew Oo

Consultant medical oncologist and hematologist
Singapore Oncology Consultants at Farrer Park Medical Centre
and Mt Alvernia Hospital

“We were grouped into separate Houses. And in each House juniors and seniors were grouped together with the seniors assuming the position of leadership. There was a spirit of friendly competition with different Houses competing with one another. In the process, there was the nurturing of leadership qualities and characteristics that would mould the man — competing fairly and helping others.

“We were encouraged to go for excellence in whatever we did in studies and in sports and in doing so we were inculcated with the qualities of tolerance and sportsmanship for all — irrespective of our backgrounds or ethnicity.”

All these qualities invariably prepared Old Frees for the outside world after leaving school and guided them in their careers.

Adding to the nurturing of leadership qualities through the seniors-mentoring-juniors structure was the school’s unique board of prefects system.

Established as far back as 1865, the Board of Prefects (BOP) was set up to confer on selected students the highest position of trust and responsibility. Eighteen students were appointed as prefects each year, based on their personality, leadership quality, contributions to the school and academic prowess.

Headed by a School Captain and a deputy, the prefects had complete autonomy, without any teacher’s supervision, to carry out their duties to ensure that discipline in the school was maintained, that events such as the weekly School Assembly were properly conducted, and to liaise between the school administration and the student body.

INSPIRING TEACHERS

Many Old Frees interviewed also spoke warmly of their teachers, how they



Former headmaster’s house adjacent to the school’s sports field.

influenced their lives, their sense of dedication, even their quirks and the pranks played on them — stories they would recall to gales of hearty laughter at their annual reunions.

As **Professor Lee Seng Teik** put it, “What shaped us? Our educators. We realised how wonderful our headmaster was when he came back long after he had retired to visit us. This was Hughes. He even brought with him the notes he had kept as headmaster — it was a diary and he would refer to it as we reminisced over events in the school. He would now and again say, ‘Ah, so that was you...’

“We also had very close bonding with our teachers.

“I remember **Ong Teong Guan**, our maths teacher, arriving in school daily on his faithful Vespa. There was **Tan Ah Fee**, the brother of Singapore’s first Asian judge **Tan Ah Tah**. Tan Ah Fee was a rugby coach and a great tennis player.

“Whenever we went back to Penang, long after we had left school, we would often pay our teachers a visit.”

Added **Dr Tan Yew Oo**, “We had some inspiring teachers, both locals and expatriates, who taught us in various disciplines from history and geography to science and literature. And because they were passionate in what they taught, they were able to motivate us.”

Elaborating **Dr Lee Eng Hin** said, “PFS had a great structure and processes that not only increased the students’ IQ (Intelligence Quotient) but also cultivated their EQ (Emotional Intelligence) as well. Through the structure of class monitor, traffic warden, prefect system and the ECA

mentoring system, students were given authority which helped in developing leadership qualities.”

As **Tay Lee Soon**, who represented not only the school in water polo but also played for Penang and Malaysia in international meets said, “I remember the time when we played water polo for our school and we had beaten our rivals, Chung Ling High School, by two goals. This was on a Sunday. On Monday, our headmaster Roper introduced us to the school as water polo champions. It made us feel very great to be recognised as sportsmen of the school.”

Old Frees also view PFS as truly special in other ways.

For the founding director of the National Cancer Centre Singapore (NCCS), **Soo Khee Chee**, it was the “friendships forged among diverse races and development of intense loyalty to friends and school” that was PFS’ best trait. He elaborated, “This intense sense of belonging



“We were encouraged to go for excellence in whatever we did in studies and in sports and in doing so we were inculcated with the qualities of tolerance and sportsmanship for all - irrespective of our backgrounds or ethnicity.”

Lee Seng Teik

Professor of plastic surgery
Singapore General Hospital



Bonding in class.

came from a total immersion in our school culture not only in lessons but also in extra-curricular activities.”

He also recalls the school’s magical atmosphere enhanced by the beauty of the angkana trees whenever they blossomed. “They are located around the edge of the all-purpose school field and when they were in bloom, the flowers were a golden yellow and had a beautiful scent.”

For many, the same school field evoked a powerful sense of nostalgia. The size of four football fields, it was the hub of all sports and activities and the place where they played and bonded. So unsurprisingly it retains a special spot in the hearts of most Old Frees.

EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING

Founder of the Centre for Hand and Reconstructive MicroSurgery (CHARMS) and hand surgery specialist

Lim Beng Hai attributes his choice of profession to his science teachers who encouraged creativity and adopted a trusting ‘laissez-faire’ attitude that helped him and his classmates to blossom independently.

“I was in the school for only two years but I remember that when I first entered the Lower Sixth Form I was entrusted to conduct an experiment on the effects of MSG (monosodium glutamate) in the diets of chickens. We got to rear the chickens in bio-labs and fed them enormous amounts of MSG which ended up in them getting uric deposits. We won the Lim Chong Eu medal in the Penang State Maths and

Science Exhibition in 1976.

“In our Upper Sixth year, we were told to study the effects of Bernoulli’s principle on slow flowing rivers and how this could be converted to energy. This got us airtime on Radio Television Malaysia and second prize in a national science exhibition on renewable energy for the school in 1977.

“These projects stimulated an interest in research for me and the experiments we did made me realise that I was good at tinkering with my hands. That led to my interest in pursuing hand surgery.

“I have very good memories of my time in school as we had very stimulating teachers. The most influential teacher for me was **SH Tan**, who taught physics. He left a deep impression on not only me but also my older brother, who was also in Penang Free. Mr Tan always associated life with physics and was fond of saying ‘Life is a Sinusoidal curve; everything has its ups and downs.’

“Looking at our huge school field where we played rugby, he would say, ‘It looks green from afar but when you look closely it is not so green - life is like that. Friends are the same. Sometimes, when you get too close, you see their weaknesses so you have to step back just like when you step back to look at the field, you can appreciate the lush green again.’”

Agreeing **Steve Foong** said, “Our teachers taught us independence, they made us think by not holding our hand; they wanted us to take responsibility and made us work for something rather than forced us to do it.

“At one of our Scout car events we were tasked to build a car using junkyard materials. We were 13 years old then but learnt to use a welding rod and with our imagination fashion a car. We made it in a couple of months and even raced it in Scout grand prix events.

“We were also grateful for innovative



Frees in a celebratory mood.

teachers like **Mr Chng** our additional maths teacher. In the 1990s, when school textbooks were translated into Malay, in line with national policy, he taught us in English so that we would have a good grasp of the language as he knew this would serve us well in future.”

For many an Old Free, one name among teachers stood out for his love of poetry, which in turn inspired them to

develop an interest in poetry too. Said **Dr Lee Eng Hin**, “**Tan Boon Soon**, who taught us English, got me excited with poetry with his own love for the subject. He often recited verses from the *Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam* by heart in class.”

Said radiologist at Mount Elizabeth Hospital **Chin Wah Seng**, “For me, my physical education teacher **Teh Kheng Chooi** stood out. He was a great

badminton player and coach. It was because of him that I got heavily involved in badminton.”

Many badminton players under his charge were to go on to win the Thomas Cup for many years.

When it came to painting a portrait of an Old Free, all agree that it is encapsulated in the motto of the school: *Fortis Atque Fidelis* (Strength with Fidelity).

SENSE OF INTEGRITY AND FORTITUDE

Said **Dr Tan Yew Oo**, “We learnt to be diligent and be a person of integrity and that through hard work you can get to where you want. There are no short cuts in life. So the school helped to shape our character. Everything from discipline, honesty and the need to be strong as reflected in our school motto is imbibed in you.”

Elaborated **Betty Ooi Poh Gek**, “Our motto — to be strong and faithful —



“An Old Free is someone who is courageous, prepared to speak out against what is unfair and to stand up for the underdog. One has to strive for excellence and be strong and faithful as epitomised by the school motto.”

Yeoh Keat Chuan

Managing Director
Economic Development Board

best describes an Old Free. It means being strong in leadership, to have the courage to take on risks and seize opportunities. It is to be faithful to yourself, your beliefs, your family, school and community.”

Managing Director of Economic Development Board **Yeoh Keat Chuan** added, “An Old Free is someone who is courageous, prepared to speak out against what is unfair and to stand up for the underdog. One has to strive for excellence and be strong and faithful as epitomised by the school motto.”

“We were taught the importance of trust and integrity, qualities that have carried most of us through life,” added **Tay Lee Soon**.

The spirit of excellence in the face of competition was also encouraged. More important, say Old Frees, was the school’s emphasis on an all-round education and excellence in sports and games - not just in studies - and its fostering of camaraderie,

esprit de corps and sportsmanship.

Dr Peter Lim Ai Chi explained, “The school ingrained in us loyalty, camaraderie and self confidence. It laid the foundations of being resolute and the ability to be strong so that whatever comes, you can handle it.”

EQUALITY FOR ALL

The lack of discrimination was another trait of the school.

As architect **Heah Hock Heng** said, “All the various races got on well together.”

“We were multi-cultural, multi-racial and multi-religious, that was why the school was called ‘free’,” said The Old Frees’ Association, Singapore Vice-President **Cheah Hock Leong**.

This reflected one of the original precepts of the school as spelt out in its charter: “That the School be opened to the reception of all children on the Island, of every description...”



“We were multi-cultural, multi-racial and multi-religious, that was why the school was called ‘free’.”

Cheah Hock Leong

Vice-President
The Old Frees’ Association, Singapore

Former director of the Technical Education Department at the Ministry of Education **Lim Ho Hup** said, “Because of its free thinking spirit, the school attracted top teachers. We had top English teachers, for instance, and that stood us in good stead career-wise. Many Free School boys were able to get into the professions.

“In fact, I think we had no competition from the other schools. Even

St Xavier’s Institution, our arch-rival, was no match for our school.”

Added **Heah Hock Heng**, “Our headmasters came from either Cambridge or Oxford and imparted in us the same kind of heritage these universities enjoyed. The school was under the colonial administration so it was run like the civil service.

“We were given a good grounding in education and in the use of English. We

School Rally Song

Music and lyrics written by GS Reutens, 1966

Chorus

Let us march unto fame
Let the aisles proclaim
Till our anthem will dare us to do
Let us onward to win and new laurels gain
Free School for the brave and the true!

Verses

It matter neither how strait the gate
Nor how charged with dangers the goal
Let the tempest rage and fell odds inflate
We'll do it with our heart and soul.

When duty calls be it school or state
We'll do it with God by our side
For the sons of Free School don't hesitate
Nor let cool their zeal and pride.

Let us all then join in this Jubilee
All with one loud voice to proclaim
Our true loyalty and our constancy
To our mater still remain.

were considered 'la crème de la crème'.

"But at the same time, we knew how to carry ourselves, to stand tall and were also taught to be gentlemanly."

With such nurturing traditions and the quality of education, it is little wonder that the school has produced men (and women) of distinction who have done well in their chosen professions.

The absence of bias also extended to other areas. All were treated equally, whatever their backgrounds. There were students who were chauffeur-driven to school while others took the bus, cycled or walked. Said **Tan Yew Oo**, "We all came from different backgrounds but we were able to gel and become friends all because of the way the school was run."

The late **Dr Lee Kum Tatt**, former chairman of the Singapore Institute of Standards and Industrial Research (SISIR) once wrote, "The School is great not because it is the oldest but that it is also the

“Once a Free, Always a Free.”

best and is Free — free from many of the social, economic, religious and racial issues which have bogged down many institutions and even governments throughout the world.

“The school instilled the right spirit in the students through its motto. Years after I left, the school’s rally song composed by a former PFS teacher (*see box in previous page*) which students sang every year on Founder’s Day and at special functions also helped to inspire and fire up the young minds to do many things which they might not have done otherwise.”

Since the 1920s when the Singapore judiciary was dominated, nay, run even, by men who were mostly Old Frees, so too Old Frees today are continuing the tradition of contributing to their adopted home through their varied professions — as doctors, educators, sports coaches...

Many have served in the public service and done Singapore and their alma

mater proud. Others have contributed to Singapore’s physical landscape through designing buildings that have become part of the Republic’s architectural scene.


Thanks to their PFS experience, they have been inspired to do good to others and to channel their talents and skills to try to better the lives of those around them.

They are also keen to give back to not only Singapore society but also to their hometowns as evidenced in the many collaborations in the field of medicine between Singapore hospitals and hospitals in Penang and other states in Malaysia.

As the Old Frees are fond of quoting, “Once a Free, Always a Free.” ■



School field with sports pavilion.

An aerial night view of Singapore, showing the city skyline with numerous illuminated skyscrapers and the Marina Bay Sands complex in the foreground. The water of the bay is dark, reflecting the city lights. The Marina Bay Sands building is prominent in the lower right, with its distinctive lotus-like structure. The overall scene is a vibrant display of modern urban architecture and infrastructure.

Since the 1920s when the Singapore judiciary was dominated, nay, run even, by men who were mostly Old Frees, so too Old Frees today are continuing the tradition of contributing to their adopted home through their varied professions ... Many have served in the public service and done Singapore and their alma mater proud.

CHAPTER

4

Steering the School in the Right Direction

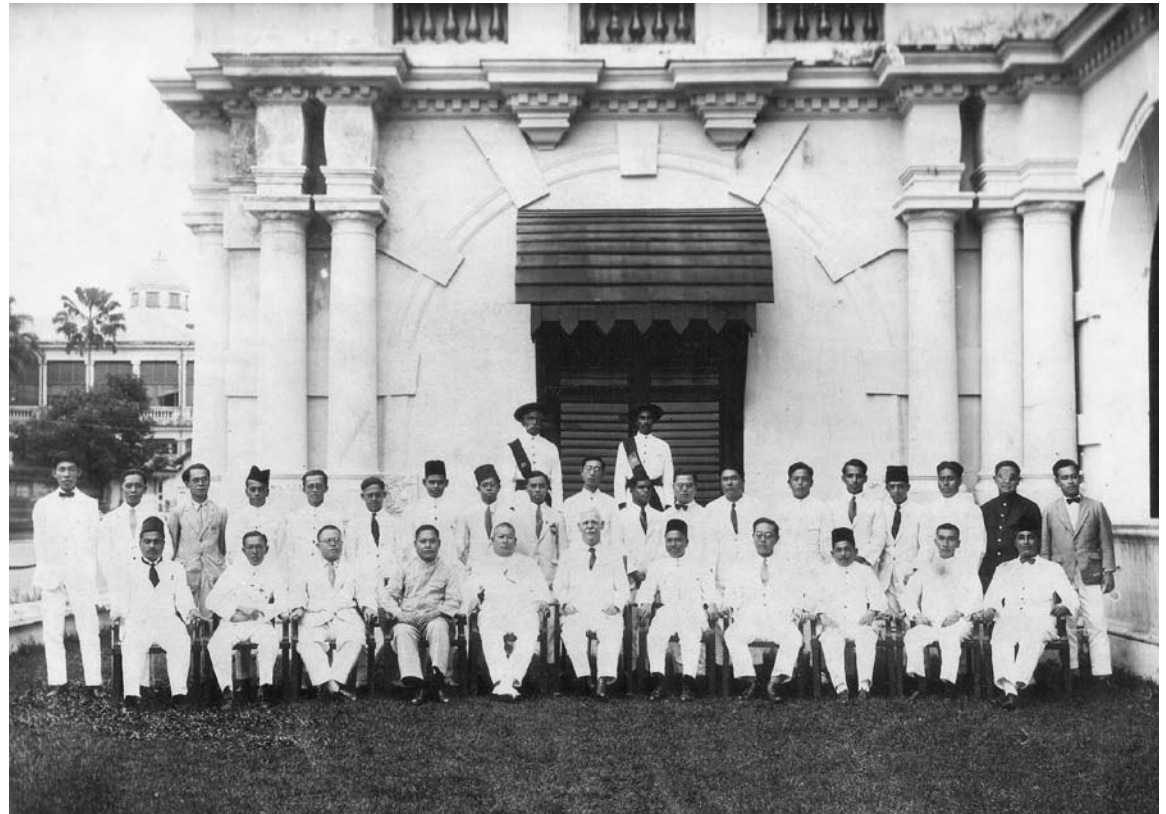
HEADMASTER AS HEAD HONCHO

Without a doubt, a school and its reputation hinges on the way it is run. That role is largely the responsibility of its headmaster or headmistress, more popularly referred to nowadays as principal.

Much like a chief executive of a company, the headmaster's task is to create a conducive environment that brings out the best of his charges and seal the school's name.

In other words, he has to set the tone for the school, inspiring its teaching staff to carry out their duties well while inspiring students to do their best.

According to records, the headmasters of Penang Free School's early years were a rather motley bunch without the proper training or experience to run a school. For instance, its first headmaster, **J Cox** was the owner of a printing press. Yet, despite the mismatches, the school operated well enough – there was discipline and English classes were conducted.



Headmaster William Hamilton (1925–1926) (centre) and his staff.

In 1853, the first step towards appointing more suitable candidates as headmaster was made when an elementary schoolmaster from England **J Clarke** was brought in to head the school. Further progress was later made when the school's board of directors decided the best means of raising its level of education was getting a university graduate to be headmaster.

CHALKING UP ACHIEVEMENTS

The first headmaster of this calibre was **William Hargreaves** who took on the position in 1891.

Under his guidance, the school started to make its mark. Enrolment went up, pupils were grouped into classes according to age and educational standards were improved. During his 13-year term of

office, 10 students from the school won the coveted Queen's Scholarships. The school soon began to establish a reputation for being tops in education unrivalled by any other institution in the province and even in all of Malaya.

Taking over from Hargreaves was **Ralph H Pinhorn** from 1905 to 1925. He proved to be just as dedicated and conscientious. With the help of his able assistant, HR Cheeseman, Pinhorn put into place a system of organisation still practised today. This was the introduction of sports and extra-curricular activities to supplement academic learning. Student participation was actively encouraged as the goal was to instil in the boys qualities of leadership, resourcefulness and responsibility.

So a School Games Club for football and the 1st School Cadet Corps were set up. Cricket, badminton and hockey were introduced along with gardening, singing and basketry. A Debating Society was

formed and scouting was started, both under the charge of Cheeseman.

More things were in store for the school. One was expansion as the school was getting overcrowded by 1919. A year later, the running of the school was taken over by the Government – a significant step that would enable greater development since Government funding would be made available.

Towards the end of Pinhorn's tenure, the school was operating at full capacity so plans were made to move to bigger grounds at a new 30-acre site in Green Lane provided by the Government.

In 1925, **William Hamilton** took over as headmaster until his retirement a year later. Although his term of office was short, Hamilton actually wielded a great deal of influence in the school as he had been a teacher for 35 years before rising to take over as headmaster. He was known as Second Master Lieutenant Hamilton and was a mathematician. He introduced the

cadet corps in 1906 and was an inspiration for his students. So respected was he that upon his retirement, the members of The Old Frees' Association (OFA) of Penang wrote him a letter honouring him for his work and dedication. They pointed out how he had overseen the completion of the new school buildings at Green Lane and how he would be sorely missed. The letter, written on 29 December 1926 was signed by then president of OFA Penang Khoo Sian Ewe and its honorary secretary Ong Hock Chye.

On 1 January 1928, Penang Free School as it stands today was inaugurated. With its move to new premises, it became a secondary school while its former building continued to take in primary students. It was renamed Hutchings' School and served as a feeder school for the new secondary school.

INSTILLING ESPRIT DE CORPS

The headmaster then was **DR Swaine** who had taken over a year earlier in 1927. He

launched a new House system for sports and extra-curricular activities. Students were grouped into five Houses – brown, yellow, blue, green and red, all named after prominent figures associated with the school. They were Hargreaves (brown), Hamilton (yellow), Pinhorn (blue), Wu Lien-Teh (green) and Cheeseman (red). Today, the system has expanded to include three more Houses – Tunku Putra (orange), Tuanku Syed Sirajuddin (purple) and P Ramlee (grey).

With this system, a student would be attached to a particular House from the time he joined the school to the time he left. All the Houses would compete with one another in games, sports and other extra-curricular activities. In cheering for their House, it was hoped that students would develop team camaraderie, loyalty and a sense of fair play.

Under the charge of **MR Holgate** from 1931 to 1933, the school saw the establishment of yet another tradition –



He was headmaster when I was doing my School Certificate. He was a very upright person and although he was feared he was also looked up to. Through him, we got to learn about the principles of fairness and fair play.

Heah Hock Heng

Hotel developer and architect on JE Tod, headmaster from 1951-1957

the awarding of school prizes for scholastic achievements. Holgate also expanded the range of sports that could be played, introducing students to rugby, basketball, swimming and volleyball. The school held the firm belief that it was not just academic studies that maketh a man but that participation in games and sports helped in

character building. Hence the introduction of “Additional Sports” which comprised a list of activities that required compulsory participation from all students — a practice that is still adhered to today.

School life proceeded smoothly before it was rudely interrupted by the outbreak of World War II and the occupation of Penang — and much of Malaya — by the Japanese from 1941 to 1945. The school buildings, which were taken over by the Indian National Liberation Army, were left in a shambles when they moved out. Furniture and equipment went missing. Worse were the loss of precious school records and other documentation. In 1945, **Koay Khye Teong** was appointed acting headmaster with the task of rehabilitating the school with an enrolment of 603 students.

Two years later, when **D Roper** was appointed headmaster, the school’s restoration was complete and it resumed its mantle of Malaya’s foremost educational

institution when its students scored 78.5 per cent of passes in the Cambridge School Leaving Examination results of 1946.

INTRODUCTION OF SIXTH FORM CLASSES

In the 1950s, Penang Free School entered a new phase in its educational offerings when Sixth Form classes (Lower and Upper) were introduced for Arts and Science to prepare students for entry into universities. As part of the two-year programme, the school went co-educational when it admitted girls (from St George's Girls' School) for the first time. These changes were made during the time of **JE Tod** who was headmaster from 1951 to 1957. Despite cutting a stern figure, he had the interests of the school population at heart as he increased the type of games and sports available and formed more clubs and societies to create more opportunities to get all students involved.

Hotel developer and architect Heah

Hock Heng remembers Tod well. "He was headmaster when I was doing my School Certificate. He was a very upright person and although he was feared he was also looked up to. Through him, we got to learn about the principles of fairness and fair play."

OF NURTURING AND CREATING BONDS

Taking over from Tod was **JMB Hughes** in 1957, the year when Malaya became independent. He proved to be a very popular headmaster who touched the lives of many of his students with his caring nature and friendly disposition.

Many Old Frees speak fondly of him describing him as "sociable and frank". As Senior Consultant of the Department of Plastic Surgery at Singapore General Hospital (SGH) Lee Seng Teik put it, "We had a special relationship with headmaster Hughes. We were close to him as he got to know us well. He came to all our activities

as he was interested in all of them. When I was in the Scouts movement and we had a jamboree he would come outfitted in our scouts' uniform. The headmaster's house was next to the sports pavilion facing the school field which was used for playing cricket and other activities. His home became like an open house as we could go in after games.

"He was an exceptional headmaster. I was a senior prefect at the time he was appointed and I found I could discuss any subject with him, even my personal aspirations."

"He was very nurturing as a headmaster. His life was dedicated to the school. Even when we played cricket on Saturdays and Sundays, Hughes would come around to the sports pavilion to watch. His wife, who was part of the teaching staff, was equally supportive," observed tennis coach Tan Poh Seng.

Retired military captain Neo Kim San adds, "He had a personal interest in me and took me under his wing, perhaps because



Hughes was a stickler for punctuality though. He used to say, 'To be late is rude.' This must have rubbed off me as I am on time for all my appointments! He took great pride in the school too and made sure that all the grounds were well-maintained, including even the grass in the quadrangle, which was cut with razor blades.

Neo Kim San

Retired military captain on
JMB Hughes, headmaster from 1957-1963

of my miscreant ways, and helped me to differentiate right from wrong. He was like a father to me and introduced me to poets like William Wordsworth whose poems like *Imitations of Life* I would read often as they had passages that helped me through life. He called me a wee bairn (the Scottish word for child).

"Hughes was a stickler for punctuality though. He used to say, 'To be late is rude.' This must have rubbed off on me as I am on time for all my appointments!

"He took great pride in the school too and made sure that all the grounds were well-maintained, including even the grass in the quadrangle, which was cut with razor blades."

Hughes was so popular that after

his retirement in 1963 and his return to England, Old Frees invited him back to Penang and Singapore to catch up with his former students on at least three occasions, with all chipping in to foot the bill. On another occasion, Old Free Ng Kong Yeam, owner of travel agency Sino-America Tours, organised and partly sponsored a trip of several Old Frees to the UK to visit Hughes.

FIRST ASIAN HEADMASTER

In 1963, the year when Malaysia came into being, **Tan Boon Lin** made history by becoming the school's first Asian headmaster. It was an appropriate choice as he himself went through the portals of the school as a student in 1939 and later as a teacher in 1951.

He kept true to the spirit of the school in maintaining its traditions and standards of excellence just as those who came before him did.

"I remember well the 'click clock' sounds of his steps as he walked along the corridors inspecting the school, the staff and students," said obstetrician and gynaecologist Wong Peng Cheang.

Recalls part-time school counsellor Huang Mei Sin, an Old Free from 1966-1967, "Dato' Tan Boon Lin was a headmaster who showed leadership. The leadership of a headmaster is important in any school and it had a critical role to play in Penang Free School.

"Going from a convent school to the Free School, I found out how things were different between them when it came to how extra-curricular activities were run. In the convent, there was a lot of hand-holding whereas in PFS, we were given a sense of leadership and responsibility to do

most of the things ourselves.

“When I was a teacher, I myself put this into practice at the various schools where I taught.

“I am still in touch with Dato’ Tan and when I shared with him about how I learnt responsibility and leadership during my two years in PFS, he said he got this himself from the British headmasters.”

Since then, of the 14 Asian headmasters that have steered the school, six others have been Old Frees:

Goon Fatt Chee, R Visvanathan, G Krishna Iyer, Goh Hooi Beng and Jalil bin Saad who was appointed in 2012 after a 20-year gap, and the current headmaster **Omar bin Rashid**.

The prominence of the school in Penang is reflected in the streets around it bearing the names of its best known headmasters: Jalan Hargreaves, Jalan Hamilton, Jalan Pinhorn and Jalan Cheeseman. ■

The Headmasters

1816-1821: Mr J Cox

1821-1822: Mr Churcher

1822-1826: Mr Porter

1826-1828: Mr Anchant

1828-1843: Mr JC Smith

1843-1846: Mr Bruton

1846-1853: Mr Fitzgerald

1853-1871: Mr J Clark

1871-1891: Mr George Griffin

1891-1904: Mr William Hargreaves

1904-1925: Mr Ralph H. Pinhorn

1925-1926: Mr William Hamilton

1927-1928: Mr DR Swaine

1929-1931: Mr DW McLeod

1931-1933: Mr MR Holgate

1934-1939: Mr LW Arnold

1941-1945: **WORLD WAR II**

1947-1950: Mr D Roper

1950-1951: Mr PF Howitt

1951-1957: Mr JE Tod

1957-1963: Mr JMB Hughes

1963-1969: Dato’ Tan Boon Lin

1969-1971: Mr Poon Poh Kong

1972-1974: Mr KG Yogam

1974-1979: Dr. Goon Fatt Chee

1979-1983: Mr R Visvanathan, P.J.K.

1983-1988: Mr G Krishna Iyer

1988-1993: Mr Goh Hooi Beng

1993-2000: Mr Hj Ismail bin Ibramsa

2000-2001: Mr Hj Abdul Rahman bin Salim

2001-2004: Mr Arabi bin Sulaiman, PKT

2005-2006: Mr Hj Mohd Yusof bin Omar

2006-2011: Mr Hj Ramli bin Din

2012-2016: Mr Jalil bin Saad

2016-present: Mr Omar bin Rashid

Headmasters of Penang Free School



W Hargreaves
1891–1904



RH Pinhorn
1904–1925



W Hamilton
1925–1926



DR Swaine
1927–1928



DW McLeod
1929–1931



MR Holgate
1931–1933



LW Arnold
1934–1939



D Roper
1947–1950



PF Howitt
1950–1951



JE Tod
1951–1957



JMB Hughes
1957–1963



Tan Boon Lim
1963–1969



Poon Poh Kong
1969–1971



KG Yogam
1972–1974



Goon Fatt Chee
1974–1979



R Visvanathan
1979–1983



G Krishna Iyer
1983–1988



Goh Hooi Beng
1988–1993



**Haji Mohd Ismail
bin Ibramsa**
1993–2000



**Haji Abdul Rahman
bin Salim**
2000–2001



Arabi bin Sulaiman
2001–2004



**Haji Muhammad Yusof
bin Omar**
2005



Haji Ramli bin Din
2006–2011



Jalil bin Saad
2012–2016



Omar bin Rashid
2016–present

Steeped in Traditions

■ School Speech Day

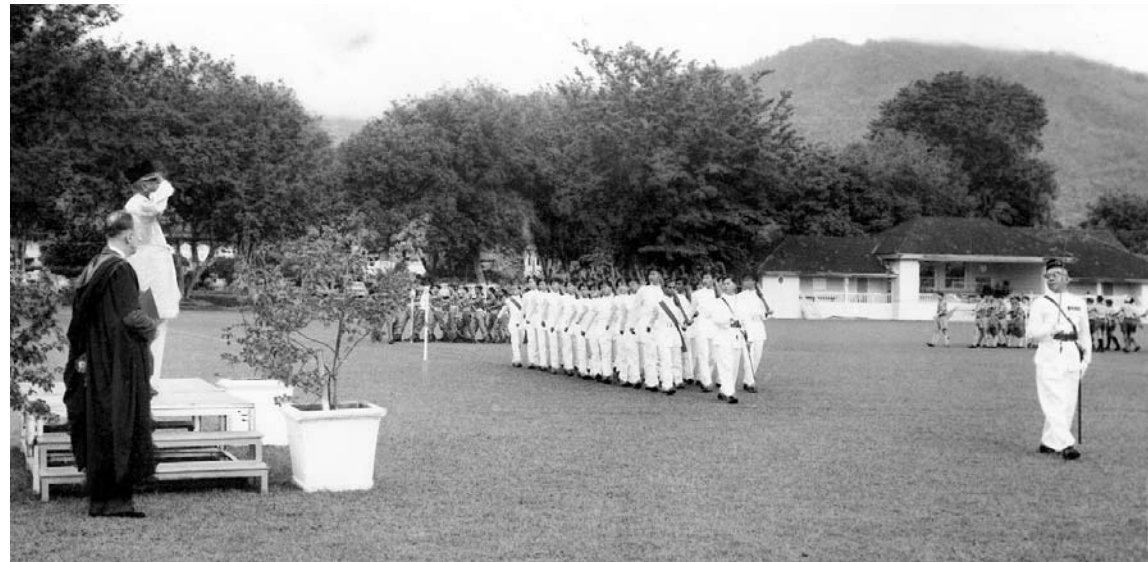
It is celebrated every year on 21 October, the anniversary of the school's founding. It begins early in the morning with a dedication ceremony conducted at Reverend Sparke Hutchings' tomb at Jalan Sultan Ahmad Shah, led by the school headmaster and a non-Muslim prefect, presided over by an Anglican pastor.

The memorial service is followed by a day of parades by the school's uniformed groups and performances by the school band.

"It is a very grand affair," recalls Lee Eng Hin. "It begins with the Governor of Penang inspecting the Guard-of-Honour formed by the Army Cadet Corps.

"The uniformed groups led by the Army Cadet Corps then perform a march-past before the Governor and the VIPs. We were all in ceremonial white. As the Company Sargeant Major, I led the platoon with Captain Tan Boon Soon in command."

When the march-past is over, the



School Speech Day was a grand affair with the Governor of Penang inspecting the Guard-of-Honour.

governor and guests are escorted into a room to sign the visitors' book. They then enter the School Hall with everyone standing at attention and take to the stage to hear the National and State anthems being played.

At the conclusion of the formal ceremony, the highlight of which is the

prize-giving to all the top students, other activities follow, including making a beeline to acquire the school's annual magazine, a much sought after souvenir and collector's item.

■ School Assembly

The school assembly is a weekly tradition that is held every Monday morning. It starts with the ringing of the first bell at 7.25am – a call for all students to gather in the School Hall according to their forms and attired in their complete school uniform including tie.

The second bell rings to announce the entrance of the headmaster while the School Captain calls the school to attention. There is a hushed silence as the headmaster walks in; when he reaches the stage, the teachers stand to attention, followed by the headmaster.

The National and State anthems are sung after which the teachers take turns to address the school to talk about activities in the coming week and of any achievements accomplished. The headmaster then delivers his speech keeping the audience informed on school developments.

At the end of the speeches, the School

Rally is played after which the school population is called to attention again until the headmaster leaves the hall, followed by the teachers. The School Captain then dismisses the students.

Describing the school assembly as a dignified occasion, consultant radiologist Chin Wah Seng remembers how proceedings would be livened up if there was a visitor. He recalls, “In my last year at school in 1961, I was elected head prefect or school captain and my job was to call the school to attention.

“Sometimes when we would have a visitor, there would be a lot of excitement all around. Once we had the Yang di-Pertuan Agong (King) visiting us. I remember escorting him through the school. It made my day.”



Sometimes when we
would have a visitor,
there would be a lot of
excitement all around.
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Yang di-Pertuan Agong
(King) visiting us.
I remember escorting
him through the school.
It made my day.

Chin Wah Seng
Consultant radiologist

■ The Cheeseman Elocution Contest

Named after Scoutmaster Cheeseman who helped form the Debating Society, this keenly participated competition, open only to Upper Form students, is held at the end of the first semester. Each class has at least one speaker as representative and participants have the liberty to choose their own topic for debate. Marks are awarded for the contents of speech, fluency of presentation, use of expressions and poise.

Organised by the English Language Department, this annual event provides a grooming stage for students wishing to try their debating skills in the more challenging national “Youth Speaks for The Nation” elocution contest.

■ The Annual School Sports

The annual school sports take place in the last week of the first semester. It kicks off with a parade followed by the School Athletics Captain reciting the School’s Sport Oath. Then the fun starts with a slew of events of which the hotly contested inter-School invitational relays, the Old Boys’ race and the tug-of-war finals are the highlights.

Competition on the field among the athletes representing their various Houses extends off the field as well as each House tries to make their House shed — the focal point of activity — more colourful and better decorated than that of their rivals.

After the completion of activities and before the prize presentation ceremony, an interval ensues during which another important event takes place.

With the school’s scouts forming a Guard-of-Honour stretching from the Sports Pavilion to the School Hall, guests including the Governor of Penang, other



The School Band is one of the best in the land as it is always invited to lead other school bands on National Day.

VIPs and proud parents file to the hall for “High Tea” after which they return to the Pavilion for the presentation of trophies, shields and plaques.

Then the School Band strikes up to conclude Sports Day by playing the National and State anthems. It is a befitting finale as the band is one of the best in the land as it is always invited to lead other school bands on National Day.



The PFS badminton team, 1952.



The PFS rugby team, 1951.



Celebrating achievements on the field.



Membership in the PFS soccer team is coveted among students.

CHAPTER

5

Founding of The Old Frees' Association, Singapore

HOW IT ALL BEGAN



An Old Frees' dinner in Singapore, 1950.



Old Frees in Singapore, 1950s.

The Old Frees' Association, Singapore (OFAS) has a long history. According to a report on 22 October 1952 of *The Straits Times*, an inaugural dinner of the Old Frees' Association was held on 21 October.

AW Frisby, chairman of the Public Services Commission and a former teacher at Penang Free School was elected as its first patron. Voting was also held for office bearers. Tan Ah Tah was elected president, Arthur A Sandosham vice-president, Chan Kok Chin secretary and Khoo Sian Wah treasurer. Committee members voted in included Ibrahim Basham, Chee Swee Leng, Lim Ewe Hin, Leng Yin Choo and Yeoh Bock Choon.

Three years later, in 1955, Tan Ah Tah was to become the first Asian to be appointed to the High Court in Singapore. He had won a Queen's Scholarship in 1924 at Penang Free School to study law at Cambridge University.

Vice-president Arthur Sandosham was then chairman of the Department of Parasitology at the King Edward VII College of Medicine, the forerunner of the medical faculty of the University of Singapore and later the National University of Singapore.

OFFICIAL REGISTRATION TAKES PLACE

Although OFAS was first launched in 1952, certified records show that it was actually registered as a society only some 10 years later on 9 May 1962.

It is interesting to note that Tan Ah Tah who was serving as president then was re-elected at the annual dinner held on 21 October 1962 to mark the OFAS's formal presentation.

Recalling the occasion,

lawyer Kok Weng On said, "The president, Justice Tan Ah Tah, called the formal gathering to order and separated the Old Frees from their spouses and guests. He then addressed the Old Frees and thus began the annual general meeting of The Old Frees' Association, Singapore. The AGM was over in less than an hour with the new committee voted in."



The Straits Times, 22 October 1952 (left) and 28 October 1966.

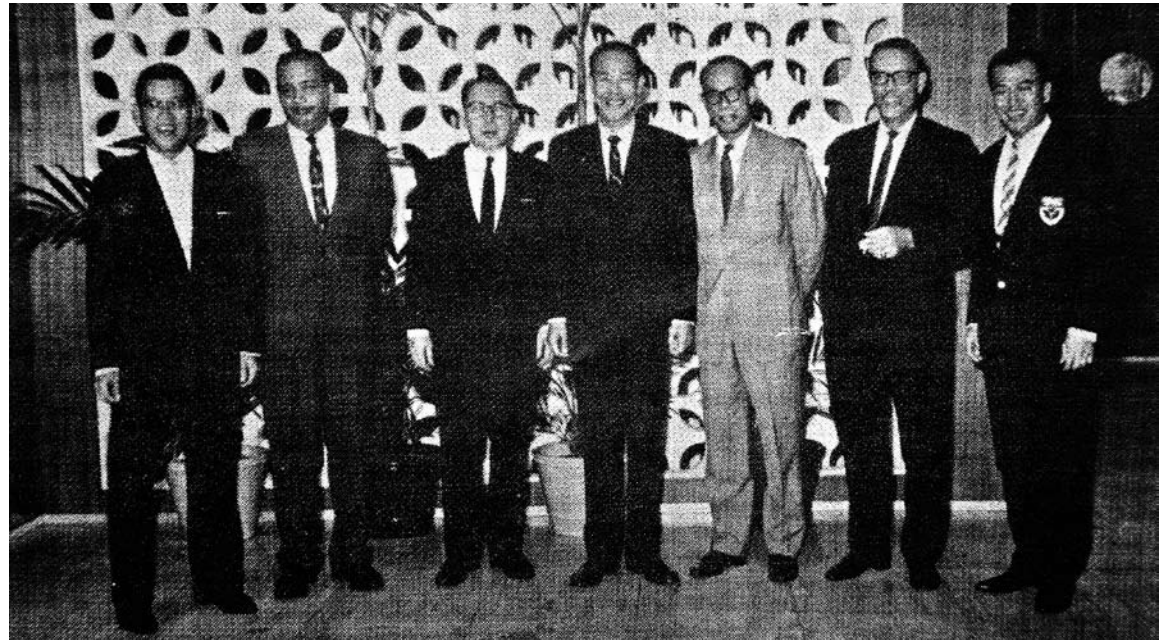
Source: The Straits Times © Singapore Press Holdings Limited. Permission required for reproduction

Thus, it is likely that in the interim decade between 1952 and 1962, OFAS had been informally holding their annual general meetings and having get-togethers.

Members of OFAS in its early days comprised many prominent members of the Judiciary. They included High Court Judge JWD Ambrose, a Queen's Scholar in 1928 and AV Winslow, then Solicitor-General and Queen's Scholar in 1934.

There was also Wee Chong Jin who became the first Asian to be appointed Chief Justice in Singapore in 1963, which was a break from the tradition of appointing British Chief Justices. He continued to serve as Chief Justice when Singapore became independent in 1965 until his retirement in 1990, making him the longest serving Chief Justice in the Commonwealth.

Weng On and Neo Kim San have shared memories of the early days of OFAS in vividly written essays which are reproduced in the next chapter.



The 1966 Committee, The Old Frees' Association, Singapore. From left: Heah Hock Meng, Justice AV Winslow, Justice Tan Ah Tah, Dr GK Lim, TQ Lim, Ernest Clark and Kok Weng On.

BEACH OUTINGS AND FORMAL CEREMONIES

Another Old Free who also treasures his ties with other Old Frees through OFAS is pioneer optometrist Lim Eam Khoo, better known as EK.

“Almost every year from the time I came to Singapore in 1971, I have attended the OFAS reunion,” he remembers.

“At our first gathering, Tan Boon Teik (Attorney-General since 1965) was there. I remember the beach gathering we had at

a government bungalow by the sea. This would take place once a year with 50 to 60 Old Frees attending, some with their families. We did not bring our children as they were still very young.

“It was a whole day affair and people would swim apart from catching up with one another. It was a pot-luck occasion and my wife would make Penang laksa, which was very popular among all present!”

Through OFAS, EK met Tan Ah Tah who was the brother of his science teacher Tan Ah Fee when he was a Standard 8 student.



I remember the beach gathering we had at a government bungalow by the sea. This would take place once a year with 50 to 60 Old Frees attending, some with their families ... It was a whole day affair and people would swim apart from catching up with one another. It was a pot-luck occasion and my wife would make Penang laksa, which was very popular among all present!

Lim Eam Khoon, "EK"

Retired optometrist

Another Old Free who recalls the gatherings well is architect Tay Lee Soon. He said, "Attending the first Free School dinner was like attending a Cambridge dinner. It was like harking back also to my college days in Melbourne when students had to wear gowns at formal dinners presided over by the principal.

"At our Old Free dinner, we had Ambrose, Tan Ah Tah and Wee Chong Jin occupying pride of place. Many were Queen's Scholars."

For him, the pomp and ceremony accompanying these formal Old Free dinners was befitting of the elite reputation and image of prestige so long associated with Penang Free School.

OFAS GOES CASUAL

Over the years as society became more casual, the proceedings at OFAS's annual general meetings adopted a similarly relaxed tone. Gone were the ties, for instance, that

all Old Frees had to wear previously and members were only required to turn up in smart dress.

Alas, a long-standing tradition of OFAS – the get-together by the seaside – also bit the dust when the bungalows in Changi were demolished to make way for reclamation and the building of a new international airport.

After that, apart from the annual general meeting cum dinner, lunch meetings were held on the last Friday of each month at the now defunct Hotel Phoenix on Orchard Road right into the 1990s.

Annual general meetings were usually held at various function rooms of hotels. In 1988, the introduction of a Penang

food buffet spread at King's Hotel signalled the start of another tradition that is still ongoing today.

Except for one occasion, every annual general meeting has since been held on 21 October at King's Hotel on Havelock Road without fail. It is well attended by Old Frees for whom the lure of tasting true-blue Penang cuisine is too good to miss.

On 21 October 1991, OFAS commemorated the 175th anniversary of Penang Free School with a special dinner at the Concorde Hotel, preceded by its annual general meeting. It was presided by Dr Oh Siew Leong, the then president. The guest of honour was then Chief Justice Wee Chong Jin who was accompanied by

his wife. Speaker of the evening was Dato Haji Zainal Alam bin Haji Zainal Abidin. A commemorative souvenir programme was also produced to celebrate the occasion.

OFAS DEEPENS ITS PENANG CONNECTION

Since the 1990s, OFAS has reached out to its members and also to its alma mater in other ways, such as organising sporting tournaments like hockey and golf with other alumni associations in Penang like Chung Ling Alumni and St Xavier's Alumni, holding joint talks and activities with these alumni groups in Singapore, sponsoring book prizes to be awarded to its best students, hosting Penang Free School (PFS) students arriving in Singapore to take part in various activities and holding talks/seminars by prominent Old Frees.

In June 2014, OFAS sponsored a PFS team of six boys accompanied by Abdul Said, Co-Curriculum Head to Singapore



OFAS sponsored the PFS team to the Singapore Mathematics Olympiad in 2014.

to take part in the Singapore Mathematics Olympiad (SMO) 2014. The Olympiad is an annual event that brings together talented students in Mathematics from Singapore and the region to compete.

The PFS team, which entered in the Open Category, was awarded a SMO Certificate for their participation. A welcome dinner at the Singapore Island Country Club was held for the boys on 4 June giving them an occasion to mingle with OFAS members. OFAS also hosted the PFS Olympiad team to a day of sightseeing on Sentosa island as

part of its four-day trip.

In a nod to the Internet age, under the leadership of Dr Alex Ooi as president, OFAS launched a website in 2010 with the help of Jeff Yeo Nai Kwang and Yeoh Kheng Hock and overseen by then Vice-President Jeevendra Kanagalingam as part of its efforts to extend its reach to Old Frees and expand its database.

A quarterly Penang Dialogue was introduced after its first successful launch on 3 June 2010 featuring then Penang Chief Minister Lim Chong Eu.

COMMEMORATING 50 YEARS OF ITS FOUNDING

2012 was a particularly active year. To fete the 50th year of its formal founding, OFAS organised an anniversary gathering on 21 October that was attended by more than 70 Old Frees. The occasion was worth celebrating for another reason – the speaker at the function was Jalil bin Saad, an Old

Free who had been appointed as headmaster of the school after many years of its administration in the hands of non-Old Frees.

Earlier in the year, on 19 May, OFAS took the initiative to organise a lecture on Wu Lien-Teh at Wawasan Open University in Penang. As one of Penang Free School's most illustrious Old Frees, Wu Lien-Teh is recognised world-wide as the doctor who helped to wipe out the plague in China in the 1930s when he was based in Harbin.

The purpose of the lecture was to lay the groundwork for an international gathering in Harbin in January 2013 co-organised by OFAS in honour of Dr Wu and for Penang to map out a possible Heritage Trail in memory of the good doctor's days in Penang. The talk was also attended by Professor Ye Tian of Harbin Medical University where Dr Wu was attached.

The event, which attracted a crowd of 200, was inaugurated by Penang's Chief Minister Lim Guan Eng.



JMB Hughes addressing a gathering of Old Frees on one of his visits to Singapore.

The OFAS' 50th anniversary commemorative calendar ended on a high note with the Harbin trip of 18 to 20 January 2013 to learn more about Dr Wu Lien-Teh's life and work in China and its relevance in coping with modern diseases.

Later in the year, aspiring doctors in Singapore were introduced to Dr Wu's work. They comprised the Lee Kong Chian (LKC) School of Medicine's inaugural cohort of 54 undergraduates at its campus on Mandalay Road. The presentation on 27 September 2013 was presided by Old Free Dr Jeevendra Kanagalingam, Senior



President of OFAS Alex Ooi (centre) with John Hughes (left), son of JMB Hughes at the launch of the book "The White Crocodile's Tale; My Memoirs" by JMB Hughes, with Jeyaraj Jayarao on 21 October 2014.



First meeting of members of the Adjudication Panel to decide on the contents of The Old Frees' Association, Singapore coffee-table book, Live Free.



OFAS committee members at a dinner held to welcome Old Free and former tennis coach Tan Poh Seng at the Singapore Island Country Club.



OFAS' 50th anniversary ended on a high note with a trip to Harbin to learn about Dr Wu Lien-Teh's life and work in China.

House Tutor of the Wu Lien-Teh House, one of five Houses on the campus named after key medical figures.

LKC School of Medicine was also presented with a copy of the documentary on *Wu Lien-Teh Plague Fighter* produced by MediaCorp and a copy of his book, *Memories of Wu Lien-Teh* presented by the Wu Lien-Teh Society.

Greater awareness of Dr Wu's work continued with an international conference and exhibition held a year later at the Singapore Chui Huay Lim Club on 5 April

2014. Organised by the Singapore China Friendship Association (SCFA), Wu Lien-Teh Society and LKC School of Medicine together with OFAS, conference speakers included various doctors. Among the guests were Singapore's Minister for Health Gan Kim Yong, Duan Jielong then Ambassador of China to Singapore and Professor KK Phua, President SCFA.

FETING THE 200TH YEAR OF PFS

At its annual general meeting in 2013, OFAS announced its intention to publish



Dr Jeevendra Kanagalingam addressing a conference on the life and work of Dr Wu at Chui Huay Lim Club.

a coffee-table book to commemorate the 200th anniversary of Penang Free School's founding and the 54th anniversary of the formation of the association. The launch of the book in August 2016 will coincide with the introduction of several celebratory events that will culminate with a grand dinner on 21 October 2016 to be held in the school field of Penang Free School to be attended by Old Free alumni groups from around the world. ■



Management Committee 2014/15

President: Dr Alex Ooi Koon Hean
 Vice-President: Mr Cheah Hock Leong
 Hon. Secretary: Mr Gabriel Teh Choo Thok
 Hon. Treasurer: Mr Khaw Teik Kooi

Members: Dr Jeevendra Kanagalingam
 Mr Jeff Yeo Nai Kwang
 Mr Ooi Oon Tat
 Mr Steve Foong Ther Hoei
 Mr Thanneermalai Lakshmanan
 Mr Yeoh Kheng Hock

Hon. Auditor: Dr Tan Yew Oo

Management Committee 2015/16

President: Dr Alex Ooi Koon Hean
 Vice-President: Mr Cheah Hock Leong
 Hon. Secretary: Mr Gabriel Teh Choo Thok
 Hon. Treasurer: Mr Khaw Teik Kooi

Members: Dr Jeevendra Kanagalingam
 Mr Jeff Yeo Nai Kwang
 Dr Lee Eng Hin
 Mr Steve Foong Ther Hoei
 Dr Tan Yew Oo
 Mr Yeoh Kheng Hock
 Mr Alfred Foo Keat Jeng
 Mr Lim Chong Hoo

Hon. Auditor: Mr Philip Ling Soon Hwa



Old Fries and guests at a Chinese New Year gathering in February 2016.



At the event were Old Fries Khaw Teik Kooi, OFAS Honorary Treasurer, Simon J Pragasam and Lee Eng Hin.



Doing the traditional Prosperity Toss or *lo hei*.



OFA Singapore Management Committee 2014/15. From left: Yeoh Kheng Hock, Jeff Yeo Nai Kwang, Ooi Oon Tat, Cheah Hock Leong, Alex Ooi Koon Hean, Gabriel Teh Choo Thok, Khaw Teik Kooi, Thanneermalai Lakshmanan and Steve Foong Ther Hoei. Not in picture: Jeevendra Kanagalingam and Tan Yew Oo.

CHAPTER

6

Reminiscences & Recollections

THE WAY WE WERE



The Board of Prefects, 1970. Khoo Hoon Eng (left, seated), the sole Girl Prefect in PFS in 1970 recalls the spirit of sharing and giving on page 70.

Of Beach Parties And Formal Dinners

By **Kok Weng On**

Year left school: 1961

In 1962, I had just entered the Law Faculty of the University of Malaya in Singapore. The student representative was Dr Oh Siew Suah who stayed in the same hostel as I did on Bukit Timah Road. He told me that there was an Old Frees' Association in Singapore which gathered every 21 October to celebrate Founder's Day and many well-known Old Frees would be present for the reunion. He added that as I was one of the latest Old Frees to come to Singapore, I was to brief the association on the latest performance of our alma mater.

You can imagine how terrified I was, having never participated in school debates, to address such an august body made up of legal, medical, education, business and civil service personalities. To console myself, I thought that as I was reading Law and would eventually have to speak in the courtroom later in practice, I might as well get 'inducted' before the old boys as a starter!

I remember telling the gathering how

well the school had done scholastically with a few winning the Colombo Plan Scholarships, the Head Prefect being a natural recipient. I also reported how well we fared in sports and in particular our cricket team which knocked out St Xavier's Institution for only four runs. More important was the fact that PFS became the first holder of the inaugural King's Cup for badminton. All the schools in Malaya participated in the tournament on a knock-out basis and the two best teams would meet in the final at the Han Chiang High School Hall. We were in the final; the other was St Michael's Institution (SMI) with Thomas Cuppers Tan Yee Khan and Ng Boon Bee in their team. On the other hand, our players were Lee Chong Hoe, Chin Wah Seng, Mohd Anis and Khor Cheng Chye.

On paper we would be trounced by SMI with such an impressive and formidable line-up. Our headmaster, JMB Hughes, was present with the boys who turned up in full

force to cheer the team. Chong Hoe 'saw no ball' in the first set. He was completely outplayed. However he clawed back to take the second set. With the entire Free School spirit now behind him, he went all out with sheer guts and determination, and eventually defeated Tan Yee Khan who had run out of stamina. The Frees were in a frenzy and PFS went on to become the eventual winner. What a night it was and we were promptly given a school holiday. Such was the might of the alma mater!

Shortly after my maiden speech Justice Tan Ah Tah came over to thank me. I was over-awed by the learned judge's humility and humbleness. His younger brother was Tan Ah Fee, our science teacher-cum-tennis and rugby coach. The judge was the new president. Other committee members in the 1960s included AV Winslow, Chan U Seek, Heah Hock Meng, Dr GK Lim, Ernest Clark, TQ Lim, Tan Boon Teik and Hwang Tiaw Sooi.

(Other judicial officers who were

“The AGMs were usually short and would not extend beyond an hour.”

Old Frees included AV Winslow, JWD Ambrose, Wee Chong Jin, Tan Boon Teik and Eu Cheow Chye.)

The committee met monthly in the 1960s and 1970s at an executive room in the Cathay Building through the kind courtesy of Heah Hock Meng who was a right-hand man of Loke Wan Tho, the owner and cinema magnate. The meetings included dinner and generally lasted three to four hours and were always full of laughter. Important items, usually very few, were quickly disposed off and the rest of the evening was spent on updating each other as members came from different professions.

Since Raffles College and King Edward VII School of Medicine were already in existence and many Old Frees had gone to these institutions, they would have formed a loose association to celebrate the anniversary of their alma mater every year. There was even a newspaper report saying that OFA Singapore started way back in 1952.

There were two main activities that the committee undertook every year: the

annual picnic and the anniversary dinner-cum-annual general meeting (AGM).

Before Changi International Airport came into being, there were very beautiful government bungalows along Telok Paku Road which were meant for top government servants. One of the judges would reserve a bungalow for our annual picnic. However, before making the reservation, the committee would want to ensure that the weather on that day would be sunny. Fortunately we had an Old Free, Hwang Tiaw Sooi, who worked in the meteorological office. He was our weatherman. However, the committee would opt for the ‘rainy’ day as the ‘sunny’ day given by Tiaw Sooi sometimes turned out to be wrong!

The picnic would be held in June or July. The most important fare was Penang Laksa as without it there would be no picnic. This would be followed by satay, nyonya kueh and a free flow of soft drinks and beer. The late Mrs Yapp Thean Chye would tell me that for the occasion she would wake up at 4am just to prepare the

laksa noodles and gravy. What a committed lady she was to the Old Frees.

Ernest Clark, the export marketing manager of Fraser & Neave Singapore would bring in his lorry filled to the brim with Tiger Beer and F&N soft drinks for our unlimited consumption; TQ Lim would have arranged a special package with the satay man barbecuing hot tasty satay. Other foods would include nyonya kueh. One could see Old Frees and their kiddies at the beach and in the compound of the bungalow.

Over time, the annual picnics became distant memories when the colonial bungalows were demolished to make way for development at Changi. We did try to hold the annual picnics elsewhere, in places such as Jurong and Kallang but alas, the ambience was no longer the same. Thus ended an OFA tradition.

As for the annual dinner, I cannot recall it being held on dates other than 21 October. Even when I took over the Presidency many years later, I kept to this tradition no matter whether it was

“In the ‘60s and ‘70s the dinners were quite formal. Everyone turned up in coat and tie. We had an Old Free tie and God forbid if one turned up without a tie. He would have to purchase another tie on the spot.”

Monday or Tuesday or any other day of the week. Spouses were always invited and a reasonable fee would be charged with a smaller sum for undergraduate members. If there was a shortfall, it would be taken care of by the committee of the day.

In the ‘60s and ‘70s the dinners were quite formal. Everyone turned up in coat and tie. We had an Old Free tie and God forbid if one turned up without a tie. He would have to purchase another tie on the spot. That was the penalty for not having the right tie for the occasion. There are many members who owned quite a few ties as a consequence! The annual dinner is always preceded by the AGM and this practice continues right up till today.

Somewhere in the early part of the dinner, the president would rise and drink a toast to the alma mater. Right up to the ‘80s we did not sing the school song. This was only introduced to the OFA Singapore in the ‘90s.

After the toast the president would then give his State of the Union address which is a report of the affairs of the association. That is then followed by announcing the name of the school’s best O-level student in the preceding year. A sum of S\$120 contributed by the committee members would be awarded as the book prize which would be given to him through the school.

At the end of the dinner, the president would introduce the guest speaker. Generally, he would be an Old Free. Through the years, they included Justice Tan Ah Tah, Justice AV Winslow, Dr GK Lim, Heah Hock Meng, Dr Yeoh Bok Choon with his pantuns, Ernest Clark, former judicial commissioner TQ Lim, broadcaster Zainal Alam, singer Ahmad Daud, Dr Lee Kum Tatt, Lim Ho Hup, Dr Catherine Lim, Lim Chong Keat, Robert Teng Lye Hock, John Lim Kok Min, former Malaysian High Commissioners Emam

Haniff and Hamidon, Ng Kong Yeam, former headmasters Goon Fatt Chee, Tan Boon Lin, VKG Iyer and JMB Hughes who came to visit twice, and Dr Wu Yu-Lin, the daughter of our world-renowned Old Free, Dr Wu Lien-Teh.

The AGMs were usually short and would not extend beyond an hour. In the earlier years the presidency went on a rotation basis and we could have the same people being president again, but not consecutively. The out-going president would request another committee member to take over the following year and usually this was accepted – and also, the whole committee would be returned en bloc – such was the Old Frees’ spirit.

Past presidents included Tan Ah Tah, AV Winslow, Dr GK Lim, Heah Hock Meng, TQ Lim, Lim Ho Hup, Dr Chan Kong Thoe, Dr Lee Seng Teik, Ng Kong Yeam, Dr Oh Siew Leong, Chong Soon Khean and Captain Neo Kim San. I took

“During the colonial days there were already many Old Frees in Singapore, some working and some studying. Some who had finished their studies stayed back to work. Many joined the government service in the medical service, judiciary and teaching.”

over from Siew Leong and held it for three years after which I passed it over to Soon Khean. The present one is Dr Alex KH Ooi who is serving his sixth year as president.

When I joined the OFA, TQ Lim was already the honorary secretary. He held it for several years and I took over from him. After a few more years I passed it over to Woo Kam Seng. The baton was then handed over to Captain Neo Kim San who held it for many more years. Others who had a stint included Von Kok Leong, Mary Cheah Eok Lin, Dr Chong Tian Hoo and Malcolm BH Tan. Gabriel Teh is the latest.

During the colonial days there were already many Old Frees in Singapore, some working and some studying. Some who had finished their studies stayed back to work. Many joined the government service in the medical service, judiciary and teaching. Tan Ah Tah was the first Asian and an Old Free to be appointed a puisne judge. He later became a judge of the Federal Court.

Wee Chong Jin became the first Asian and an Old Free to be appointed Chief Justice. Other judges included AV Winslow and JWD Ambrose. Tan Boon Teik was promoted to Attorney-General and held that position until retirement. Eu Cheow Chye was the Chief Registrar, TQ Lim had also served as Judicial Commissioner and Malcolm Tan had served as a district judge and state coroner.

Old Free Professor Yeoh Ghim Seng, a surgeon, was the Speaker of Parliament and Professor Wong Lin Ken served as Minister of Home Affairs. Gordon Seow Li Meng had a stint as Singapore’s Commissioner to Hong Kong.

We have many medical Old Frees both in the government and private sectors and they include Chan Kong Thoe, Cheah Jin Seng, Tan Kim Leong, Teoh Eng Soon, Ong Eng San, Chin Wah Seng and Tan Yew Oo.

The Head of the Singapore Cancer Centre is Professor Soo Khee Chee.

Professor Lee Eng Hin, an orthopaedic, is heading stem cell research. Dr Lee Seng Teik goes around the ASEAN region helping to stitch up people with cleft lips.

We also have educationists in our midst and these include Chin Pak Kim, Hwang Tiaw Hoe, Moey Sek Pan, Yeoh Boon Hai, Toh Kok Aun, Chong Tian Hoo, Mary Lim, Diana Ooi, Catherine Lim and Yeap Lay Leng.

We hope that Old Frees who arrive in Singapore will get in touch with any committee member or an Old Free and join the association as the main objective of OFA Singapore is to keep the old boys and girls in touch with one another. ■



Kok Weng On, a lawyer practising on both sides of the Causeway, was for many years the Honorary Secretary, Honorary Treasurer and President of The Old Frees’ Association, Singapore.

Stress on independence and self-reliance

By **Chandran Arul**

Year left school: 1953

I arrived at Penang Free School where my two eldest brothers were studying, via Wellesley Primary School and Westlands School. One elder brother was still in PFS when I went in and that was some comfort to me.

PFS was quite a new experience to me with boys much older than me in the higher classes and with a stern looking English headmaster. To me, the school was very large and imposing and the playing field was enormous; it even had its own sports pavilion on one side — all very impressive.

The main difference from my feeder school in the teaching was the emphasis on independence in the learning process. Unlike other secondary schools, there was no spoon feeding in PFS. The library was open to all students, even the junior boys, and the book collection was very liberal. It even had two copies of James Joyce's *Ulysses*, which was much in demand by the pupils who had just arrived at PFS, word having gone round

among the new arrivals that the book even had four-letter words in it! What a discovery!

Emphasis was not just in the lessons in class; sports was an important aspect of education as was explained to us. And sports was not just for the talented athletes — all pupils had to engage in it, whether sporty types or not.

This was achieved by the introduction of “additional sports”, by which every pupil had to take part. Most sports were included such as 100 metres, high jump, long jump and hurdles. Every sport had a predetermined qualifying mark, which was the average of what a non-sporting type could achieve, and beating that mark would give the boy one point, which would go to his House. These points would be added to the points that the athletes achieved in the annual sports day events, with the total points deciding which would be the champion House.

This resulted in every pupil training very hard to beat the qualifying mark,

egged on by the seniors of the House. The champion House depended on every pupil doing his best to earn as many points as he could. It was quite a sight to see some obese boys being chased round the very large field by the seniors to try and beat the mark!

Geography was not restricted to the classroom, venturing outdoors was a given, especially so with a geography master like Mr JMB Hughes, who later became the Headmaster. Field trips were great events we all looked forward to.

How did the school mould me? To be independent, self-reliant and broad-minded. I left PFS in 1953 when I finished my Senior Cambridge exam. Having qualified in law in England, I did not return to Penang but went to Singapore in 1960 to work there. On arrival, I found quite a few PFS alumni working here, especially in law. Nearly all of the High Court Judges were from PFS!

I think all of them were Queen's

“Geography was not restricted to the classroom, venturing outdoors was a given, especially so with a geography master like Mr JMB Hughes, who later became the Headmaster. Field trips were great events we all looked forward to.”

Scholars. In fact PFS at that time won more Queen’s Scholarships than all the other English schools in Malaya combined.

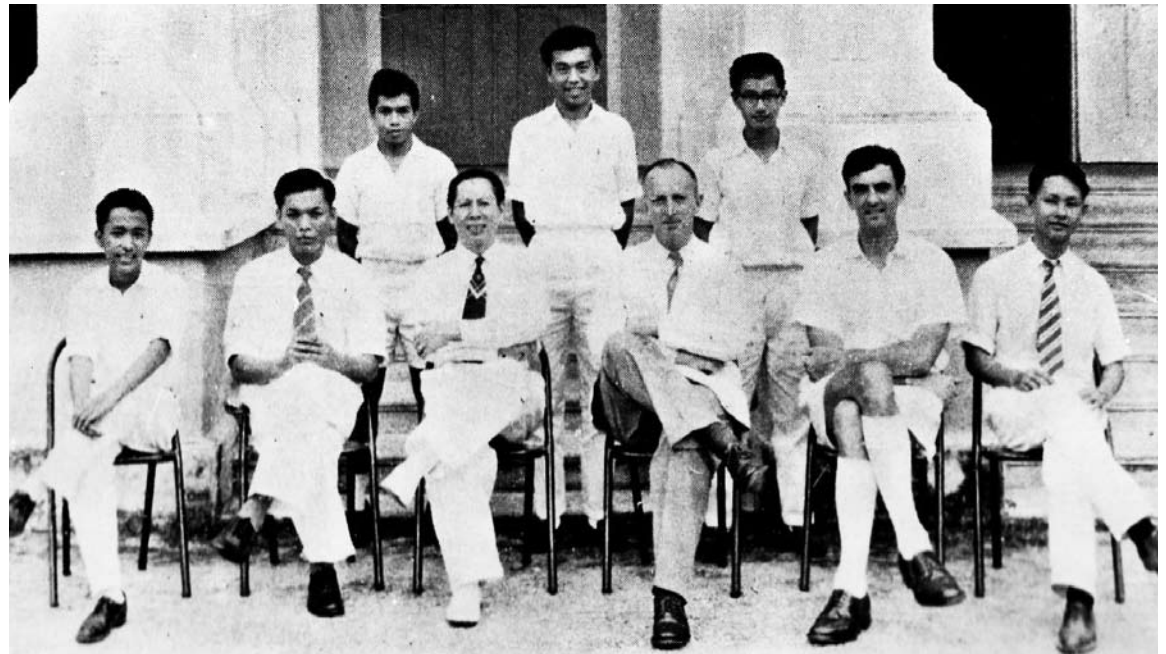
The Old Frees’ Association was active when I arrived in Singapore, and was a close-knit society.

At that time we had annual picnics in the Government bungalows in Changi where Penang specialities were prepared by the wives of the members as these were not available then in the local restaurants, unlike today. The OFA in Singapore is active and thriving.

Long may it remain that way. ■



Chandran Arul is founder and president of the Singapore Maritime Arbitrators Association. He is an advocate and solicitor of C Arul & Partners.



Committee members of the Geographical Society in 1959. Seated third from right is JMB Hughes.

Spirit of sharing and giving

By **Khoo Hoon Eng**

Year left school: 1970

I entered Penang Free School at the age of 6. Actually, that was when my family moved into the government teachers' quarters at the eastern corner of the school grounds. So for the next 12 years, I was an observer of PFS life before becoming a legitimate Free by entering Sixth Form in 1969 and joining my grandfather, father and brother as an Old Free in 1970.

As a child, I enjoyed catching guppies in the storm drain in the school grounds, flying kites in the big field and playing hide-and-seek in the school building with the neighbourhood children. Many afternoons were spent watching the PFS Scouts learn their camping skills in the empty space near my house. This space later became the site of the school library. During the early evenings, I would marvel at the marching skills of the Cadet Corps perfectly coordinated to "Kiri Kanan, Kiri Kanan" as they went around the field.

My family enjoyed the scent of the

lovely frangipani flowers that would permeate the air along the internal school lane leading to our house. I particularly loved observing beautiful sunbirds getting nectar out of the hibiscus flowers blooming in the hedge around the field and the annual yellow carpet of the angsana petals courtesy of the big old trees lining Green Lane. There were also many trees such as guava and rambutan to climb and fruits to harvest.

The combination of the Scouts' and Cadet Corps' focus on coordination and collaboration and the school's maintenance of a green environment encouraged my awareness that one needs all those attributes to be a successful institution that educates well-rounded students.

In Sixth Form, my Science teachers, Mrs. Oh, Miss Lim (now Mrs. Lau), Mr. Toh and Mr. Khor imparted their love of Chemistry, Biology, Physics and Mathematics to me. They encouraged me to pursue a teaching and research career in

Science that culminated in my getting a PhD in Biochemistry before joining UKM (Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia) medical school and later NUS (National University of Singapore) medical school as a lecturer.

Beyond the strong academics, the emphasis on sports and service groups at PFS has also had a lasting impact on me. My being part of the PFS girls' volleyball team meant I spent many afternoons practising on the courts to build on individual basic skills as well as playing as a team. These were invaluable lessons for life because no one succeeds based on one's skills alone.

Joining the Rangers and Rotaract Club allowed us to participate in community service and inculcated a sense of giving back to society. This has stayed with me as I continue to contribute towards the activities of civil society groups in Malaysia and Singapore. These include AWAM - an independent feminist organisation in Malaysia committed to ending gender-based violence



“My classmates at PFS are literally scattered throughout the world but we have had the good fortune of having a ‘Tai Kor’ in the person of Teoh Hock Eng. He set up a Yahoo group that now has many members where we discuss all manner of topics and organise reunions.”

Hoon Eng (centre, in pink) with other Old Frees on a recent reunion hike to Penang Hill.

and upholding equality and rights for all; AWARE — a women’s advocacy group; and SAFE — an organisation of parents, families and friends of LGBTQ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Questioning) persons, who believe in a society that accepts, affirms and empowers everyone to participate fully in it, regardless of gender identity or sexual orientation, in Singapore.

Before joining PFS, I studied for 11 years at the Green Lane Convent and so the influence of my teachers there shaped my life quite strongly. Moreover, as the only Girl Prefect in PFS in 1970, I also learnt many leadership skills. In addition, my experience as a student at a leading all-women university (Smith College) in the US imparted a strong sense of women’s empowerment to me. These have enabled me to contribute in my varied roles in academia. For three years, I was Acting Vice-Chancellor and Provost of a new university, the Asian University for Women

in Bangladesh. I have also been a Vice-Dean at the medical faculty (now the Yong Loo Lin School of Medicine) in NUS, Deputy Director at the NUS International Relations Officer and currently the Associate Dean of Faculty at Yale-NUS College in Singapore.

The sense of camaraderie among PFS students is legendary. My classmates at PFS are literally scattered throughout the world but we have had the good fortune of having a “Tai Kor” in the person of Teoh Hock Eng. He set up a Yahoo group that now has many members where we discuss all manner of topics and organise reunions.

In 2014, we had a reunion dinner in the school hall followed by a durian feast the next day in the school canteen. A donation was also made to the school fund. The previous year, an original Penang ferry was hired for us to enjoy an evening trip from the piers to the second bridge with good food, karaoke and durians on board.

I cannot even keep track of the number of dinners, drinking sessions and get-togethers organised to welcome old classmates from outside Penang as well as to celebrate anniversaries and children’s weddings. For the more active among us, we have also had several hikes and runs in Penang.

The sum total of my PFS experiences has shaped me in ways that, perhaps, I may not even be aware of. However, what I do know is that, while I may officially have been a Free for only two years, PFS will always have a special place in my heart with a large pool of fond memories of the school — as a child, as a student and now as an “old girl”.

May PFS continue to educate students who will contribute in many fields to make our world a better one for all. ■

Associate Professor Khoo Hoon Eng is Associate Dean of Faculty, Yale-NUS College.

It's been one big gallop

By **Tan Thean Loon**

Year left school: 1974

When I went to Penang Free School in 1970, I had no inkling that I was continuing my secondary school education in an iconic institution that is steeped in history. I only knew I was one of 24 from Jelutong Primary School chosen to go to PFS. My Primary 1 and 2 years were spent at St George's School in my birthplace Balik Pulau.

During my primary school years, I was never out of the first three in class. But, at PFS, I realised that I was only a small fish in a big pond. I was just an average student. There was nothing I could be proud of, except wearing that PFS badge with the powerful Latin motto, *Fortis Atque Fidelis*.

Like most Old Frees, I'm proud and passionate of my alma mater. Southeast Asia's oldest English school gave each and every one of us a rock-solid foundation and shaped us into what we are today. The teachers — be they stern, jovial, funny or even weird — were dedicated. The school's impeccable



Celebrating 40 years of the Class of '74 in February 2014 at Penang Free School. Thean Loon is sixth from the right.

passing rate — at least until up to my time — spoke for itself. Go Frees Go.

While many of my cohorts excelled in studies and/or sports, I was a mundane (but attentive) student. I was also inactive

in sports or extra-curricular activities. I fell with that virgin kick of the ball during PE. My legs were like *tau hu* on the second tier of the human tower, so gymnastics was out. My best time for 100 metres was 16

“I have often been asked by my curious Class of ‘74 mates how I ended up in the glamorous world of horse-racing. Well, you study law to be a lawyer, medicine to be a doctor, finance to be a banker but whatever I studied went down the longkang.”

seconds that even a girl could run faster.

Hockey was PFS’ forte and the well-known annual rivalry with St Xavier’s Institution was always a boisterous affair. However, my association with the “dangerous” sport fizzled out before I could say “Hi”. Reason: I developed a phobia when it made a one-eyed panda out of one of my Form 1D classmates in my first week in PFS.

Talking about hockey, Ooi Boo Chuan, our star player who went on to represent Malaysia in the SEA Games, left the most impression on me. He was the live wire throughout my five years at PFS.

A fun and loud character with an infectious laughter, he was greatly admired -- both as a friend and a sportsman who brought many glories to the school.

Another of my favourite anecdotes was when then-headmaster KG Yogam introduced the new and pretty Biology teacher, C Song, during assembly.

Boy, how those testosterone-charged

teenagers literally drooled like dogs with two tongues.

“This is...”, and before Yogam could finish speaking, everyone yelled in unison “WOO!” When Yogam added “Mrs Song”, the response was a deflated “Ooo...” Mrs Song blushed. The no-nonsense Yogam bared his pearly whites. All the teachers seated on stage also broke into laughter. Now, who threw that chalk at Mrs Song? Until today, it’s a whodunit mystery discussed during Class of ‘74 gatherings.

Knowing our wild and happy-go-lucky batch from 1970 to 1974, Yogam made no bones that he was worried we would bring disgrace to the school in academic excellence for the MCE (Malaysian Certificate of Examination). But the Class of ‘74 confounded him. We delivered. We maintained the impeccable record PFS always enjoyed.

After PFS, I have often been asked by my curious Class of ‘74 mates how

I ended up in the glamorous world of horse-racing. Well, you study law to be a lawyer, medicine to be a doctor, finance to be a banker but whatever I studied went down the *longkang*. Never in my wildest imagination did I envision myself carving a career as a horse-racing journalist.

Life, to me, is predestined. In my case, everything happened for a reason. Every path I took after PFS inevitably led me to the Sport of Kings. I became an equine writer by chance, not by choice. How I ended up working in Singapore is another fascinating tale by itself. It’s neither by choice nor chance, but by the Jedi force of yet another benefactor.

At PFS, I did harbour the ambition to be an accountant since I was the only one in school to score an A1 for Commercial Studies and Book-Keeping during the LCE (Lower Certificate Examination) in Form 3. But, as my MCE aggregate did not qualify me for admission to Lower Six, I dropped

“One day, management sent me a letter. It read: ‘We are pleased to promote you to Racing Assistant. Your salary will be revised to RM240.’ Wow!”

out of school. I did almost nothing for nearly two years while most of my peers continued their academic path in Malaysia’s most prestigious school or went abroad to further their studies.

It was while waiting for my MCE results that I first stepped onto a racecourse. The uncle who brought me up took me to the Batu Gantong racetrack to be the “Hokkien race commentator” to his circle of Chinese-educated horsey friends. There was no live TV coverage of the races then, only live English broadcast from the four racing centres in Penang, Ipoh, Kuala Lumpur and Singapore. This went on until late 1976, a time when my PFS peers were already preparing for their Higher School Certificate exams.

In September 1976, thanks to another uncle, I secured a job as a paste-up artist at The Straits Echo Press at Jalan Dato Koyah. The starting pay was a mere RM100, with RM20 cost of living allowance. Although

my job was to cut and paste the edited stories on dummy pages designed by the sub-editors, I was a great help to the racing team. One day, management sent me a letter. It read: “We are pleased to promote you to Racing Assistant. Your salary will be revised to RM240.” Wow!

The secondment to the Racing Desk was my next unexpected step into racing. As a Racing Assistant, my job was mainly clerical, such as updating the turf statistics, typing out the horses taking part, the track gallops and, of course, as the desk’s scanner.

In early 1980, *The Straits Echo* (later renamed *The National Echo*, now defunct) moved its headquarters to Kuala Lumpur. I left Penang with a heavy heart. Although the pay was double again, life wasn’t easy.

The turning point came in early 1981. The pretty Features Editor handed me an advertisement on the vacancy for a racing reporter to be based in Singapore. I showed no interest but the well-meaning colleague

insisted that I sought greener pasture for my own good. I applied, reluctantly. The interview letter came. But, on looking at the date, the interview at the *New Straits Times*’ office in Bangsar, Kuala Lumpur, had lapsed by two weeks. Egged on by Miss Benefactor, I wrote in and was granted another interview to be conducted in Singapore, with travel reimbursement. I was very lucky indeed to have been given the second chance. Otherwise, I would have been stranded in Malaysia.

I aced the interview and got the job straightaway. However, I had to wait for five months before I got the go-ahead to start work as a racing reporter with the afternoon tabloid *New Nation* on 16 November 1981. My job was to cover the racing scene in Singapore and Malaysia. When *New Nation* ceased publication the following year, I was seconded to the company’s flagship *The Straits Times*. In 1999, I moved on to *The New Paper*, where I am currently

“In the words of Malaysia’s first Prime Minister and PFS alumnus Tunku Abdul Rahman, who co-owned two-time Melbourne Cup winner Think Big, nothing makes a fool of a man better than a horse. How true.”

attached as Racing Correspondent.

My first few months in Singapore were tough. I was both home-sick and love-sick. My girlfriend (now my wife of 32 years) remained working in Kuala Lumpur. Being a true-blue Penangite who enjoys his *char kway teow*, *laksa*, curry and *Hokkien mee*, I could not adapt to the Singapore food. How could one eat *tok-tok mee* with tomato ketchup instead of black soya sauce? Or *char kway teow* fried with sweet black sauce and swimming in lard? But I eventually got over it.

Although living alone in a foreign land was a struggle, I persevered. After all, perseverance and hard work are the prerequisites for success. My life’s journey has been rewarded with the inaugural Racing Media Award for my contributions to the racing industry. I have also won the Champion Tipster’s title.

It has been four decades but I am still passionate with my love affair with horses. Yes, horse-racing can be fun, but addiction

can be disastrous. In the words of Malaysia’s first Prime Minister and PFS alumnus Tunku Abdul Rahman, who co-owned two-time Melbourne Cup winner Think Big, nothing makes a fool of a man better than a horse. How true.

Like any form of gambling, there must be a line drawn between greed and discipline. There’s no such thing as a certainty in horse-racing. For me, I am enjoying every minute of it. Racing has been good to me. It has made my job and life interesting. After all, it’s like being paid to go to a party. Giddy’up! ■



Tan Thean Loon is a racing journalist with The New Paper.

Learning to progress together

By **Yeoh Herr-Ling**

Year left school: 1987

If memory serves me correctly, schooling was so much simpler then. I remember telling my parents that I wanted to follow in Dad's footsteps by enrolling in schools that he went to. At seven, I was enrolled in Wellesley Primary School, a stone's throw from Grandma's house at 44 Nagore Road.

When I was 11, I knew had to do well for Standard Five Assessment if I were to make it into Penang Free School. It was after all my maternal great-great grandfather Toh Lip Koo (Head Boy circa 1885), maternal great-grandfather Lim Cheng Keat, paternal grandfather Yeoh Swee Teong, father Yeoh Keng Hock, my uncles Yeoh Keng Lock and Dr. Lee Kheng Hin's alma mater. I have heard many a story about the great times they had riding through the coconut and other plantations from town to school, the great rivalry in sports with St Xavier's Institution, and of how prestigious this Penang Free School (PFS) was. It was

the oldest and finest English boy's school in the region, one which was founded almost three years before Sir Stamford Raffles founded Singapore!

On my first day at PFS, I learnt the words "Fortis Atque Fidelis". It was the first three Latin words that I learnt and to this day, a motto which I have lived by. Always trying to be in a position of strength to help, to be faithful and true to those around me is what it means to be an "Old Free".

Secondary school was to many, a mere bridge to a tertiary education but to me it was much more than that. It was a time where boys became men, where we struggled with the awkwardness of puberty (guys tearing out and burning the last chapter of their Form 1 Science Book), the constant juggling of studies and co-curricular activities

Extracurricular activities were such fun that it was not always easy to find the equilibrium between the two. I was very

involved in sports primarily in representing PFS in swimming and tennis. Scouting (and we all know why we joined this uniform group other than the night camps) and House activities were a big part of my schooling life. In upper secondary, I was the captain of Wu Lien-Teh House and that was when I learned the word: Delegation (trusting the people that I have empowered to not only complete a task but do it well).

With the benefit of hindsight not being in the top Industrial Arts class (the top class in school) but in Commerce class (supposedly the second top class) was a blessing in disguise. In not so many words, we were in a class where I first learned the word "specialisation". It's knowing your strengths and using it to help your other classmates and they would do likewise to help you with your weaker subjects.

Perversely, it shaped my life and how I think today. It is better to have friends in the corporate world who are in a position

“PFS was the oldest and finest English boy’s school in the region, one which was founded almost three years before Sir Stamford Raffles founded Singapore!”

to help us than being all alone with no one around. It was very important to move together and leave no one behind. In essence, we were in an inner circle albeit a huge one (the whole class of 36). It was never about pushing someone within below us so that we can rise up and be superior. It was more about the collective output being higher than the sum of the individual parts.

This became my philosophy in life and in business. I tend to draw parallels with a football team. We need specialisation, where we have the goalie, the defenders, the midfielders and the strikers. Currently, I oversee the Local Markets Foreign Exchange business of an international bank here in Singapore. I look for professionals who look at different things, with different skillsets and qualifications. Some people are visual, others are audio and some others just “feel” the market. In hiring, I look for people who are able to bring something different to the table.

For example, we need a stable source of income. We employ day traders (aka scalpers) who on a daily basis will trade intraday and make their money. These people are the builders, they keep their hands on the pulse of the market and trade intraday to slowly build the base of the business.

We also have traders who are solution providers to the clients of the firm. They write and advise well and tend to work with a longer time horizon. We have traders who depend on technical analysis with varying degrees of time frames as well as fundamental and economics experts who analyse the economic data posted.

It’s likewise with life and family. It is to give my children the leeway and responsibility for them to grow up as young individuals. PFS has shaped me and has impacted my life and those around me in so many ways.

Happy 200th Birthday and may you have many more to come! ■



Yeoh Herr-Ling (right, pictured on a family holiday in Japan) is Global Head - Foreign Exchange Local Markets at ANZ Bank.

Growing up in an awesome environment

By **Yeoh Kheng Hock**

Year left school: 1972

“After completing Primary 6 in Francis Light Primary School in 1966, I joined PFS where I was a member of Pinhorn House. Entering the school was a god-send.

“The dedicated teachers during my time there imparted to us a genteel ethos and equipped us with many life skills. They were all par excellence. The man that impressed me most was our headmaster Dato’ Tan Boon Lin for the pomp and dignity of his conduct at every school assembly. You could hear his march from his office to the stage. There was a good five minutes of silence in the hall while we witnessed his steady gait in his shoes that went ‘clikkerty-kok’.

“How proud it was at every assembly for those of us who marched on stage to receive the accolades won the previous week in front of a packed hall with all the teachers seated in an arc on stage shaped like a semi-circle.

“I remember our very loyal jaga (watchman) Hashim who would protect us from harm after every hockey match in case some hoods from elsewhere were there to create trouble.

The clock tower, four playing fields joined as one and the sports pavilion still bring up goose bumps in me whenever I reflect upon them. What a conducive environment it was to grow up in. Awesome is how I would describe it.

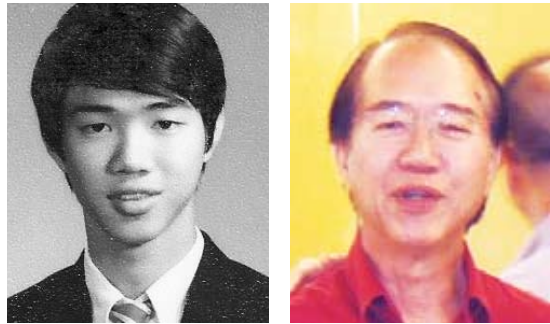
“There were other memorable moments that I can recall even to this day. There was Ebenezer Billings, an Indian teacher who taught us not to call others names when he cornered us after hearing us call him “OR BEH”. We became good friends after our profuse apologies. He was so integrated that he could speak the Penang Hokkien dialect.

“Then there was a teacher, Lim Fong Juan, who offered us chalk whenever we yawned and saying, ‘You must be lacking in calcium.’

“The school had other unique characteristics such as PERA (Physical, Exercise, Recreational Activities) which was performed by all students together on an afternoon every week with students as leaders.

“Our environment was also something to remember. The road around the perimeter of the school field with its Angsana trees was something to behold in April when their yellow flowers would fall like gold-flakes. But it also meant that it made the road wet as April was a rainy month and many of us would skid and fall from our motor-bikes. So we had to learn to be careful.

“Also special was the Head Prefects Board’s list hanging behind the School Assembly Hall containing so many distinguished names that have done Singapore proud – Tan Ah Tah, Wee Chong Jin, AV Winslow, JWD Ambrose, Tneh Say Koo, just to name a few.”



Top: Kheng Hock in 1972 and 2016. Above: Kheng Hock receiving confirmation of his appointment as a prefect in 1969.

After leaving school, Kheng Hock joined Singapore Airlines as a Cadet Flight Engineer based in Singapore in 1973.

He enjoyed a literally high-flying career that took him far and wide. In 1998 after the planes he flew (B747-300) were phased out, he was content to become a stay-at-home father and husband to his daughter and wife to “make up for my frequent absences during my flying years,” he said.

For some time he became a head-hunter and today is working on a part-time



Reciting the Prefects' Pledge.

basis in a family business, apart from being a doting grand-dad.

On how PFS helped shape him, he said, “The school motto and high ethos are very sound guides. Even the lyrics of the school song hold dear to me. The extensive background of students and the first time I tasted power as a traffic warden and three years as a prefect reminded me that power comes with utmost responsibility and understanding. The autonomous Prefects’ Board helped many of us to grow up fast

in the real world. Negotiations became our strength, excuses we heard aplenty and being conned was not so easy.

“We were always willing to help each other.

“I would like to take this opportunity to thank the so many who have given me a spot in their lives to experience such a wholesome journey.”

FORTIS ATQUE FIDELIS.

Yeoh Kheng Hock is a retired flight engineer.

Blessed by the ties that bind

By **Neo Kim San**

Year left school: 1963

In 1963 while I was in Form 6, and got into a bit of trouble with the law, my father, realising that any prospects I had had were greatly curtailed, decided to send me to Singapore. Through the intervention and recommendation of my pastor, David Nilsson, I had been slated to attend Trinity Theological College.

Sending me to the ferry point, my father gave me RM 50 and a TITONI watch, saying sheepishly that that was all he could afford. He admonished me not to get into trouble again, gave me a pat on my back and sent me on the way to the Prai railway station.

Reaching Singapore, I walked from Tanjong Pagar Railway station to Chin Chew Street where my mother had arranged for me to stay with my uncle.

The next day I went to call on Pastor John Nelson at the Dukes' Road Lutheran Church. He took me to Trinity College on Mount Sophia and enrolled me. However, a few months later, when the semester

started, I did not report as I felt I did not have the calling and it would not be fair to the Lord to take up the place and deprive the Lord of a more committed servant. I thus did not commence my studies.

After a few weeks of interaction, Pastor Nelson, impressed with my command of the English language, offered me a position as supervisor of the Lutheran church kindergarten at Queenstown at \$60 a month plus the servants' quarters to stay in.

IN THE BEGINNING

There being no classes on Saturdays, I had a lot of free time and started missing school life, especially detention class where I was a constant attendee. I had brought a copy of the 1962 School Annual with me and glancing through it, I saw a letter from Mr. Lim Thean Soo addressed to the school, under the auspices of The Old Frees' Association, Singapore. The address given was No.13 Jalan Belangkas. I decided to

pay him a visit to see if he could connect me to the other Old Frees.

Reaching No.13 Jalan Belangkas, I rang the gate bell and instantly a boy came to the gate and asked me what I wanted. He replied in the positive when I asked if Mr. Lim Thean Soo lived here. I continued by telling him I was from Penang Free School and was looking for the Secretary of the Old Frees Association. He said he understood and asked me to wait. Returning to the house, he came back with a sheet of paper. It was a cyclostyled list of members of The Old Frees' Association, Singapore. Thanking him profusely, I took my leave.

On the way back, I studied the list. It had names like Ernest Clark, Kok Weng On, both of Fraser and Neave, Dr. GK Lim, TQ Lim, Dr Chan Kong Thoe and Woo Kam Seng of Shell. I had a hankering to better my station in life and thought that the Old Frees would be able to help me and might have an opening where I could fit in.

RIGHT PLACE, WRONG NAME

That Saturday morning I reserved the office telephone for my use. At about 10 am I rang Woo Kam Seng. The reply was “Tadak, tadak, tadak Woo Kam Seng.” Thinking that I might have dialled a wrong number, I asked if this was Shell’s office. The reply was “Ya, ini Shell, betul.” I reiterated “Mr Woo Kam Seng, Sales Director please” to which the reply was “Tadak Woo Kam Seng, Ada Makam Singh.” I then realised that Shell worked five days a week and the phone must have been transferred to the watchman or jaga whose name must have been Makam Singh!

HHH’s DOUBLE

Still thinking of a higher pay than \$60, I looked again at the list but by this time I had met one of my classmates, Lim Weng Yoke, who was working in Singapore. I invited him to join me to visit Heah Hock Heng since he was in our class. The address

was at Cluny Road. Dropping off from the bus at the junction of Farrer Road and Bukit Timah Road, we made our way to Cluny Road which was long and winding.

After 30 minutes we came to the house. We rang the doorbell and a stout gentleman of about 30 opened the door and we asked whether Heah Hock Heng lived here. He replied that he was Heah Hock Heng. Weng Yoke and I were stunned as he was not the Heah Hock Heng of our year.

We apologised profusely and explained that we thought he was Heah Hock Heng, one of our classmates from Penang Free School. He said he was an Old Free. We were only too happy to meet him and we chatted for an hour about the school. He asked us for our contact numbers and promised that the OFA Singapore would contact us. With that, we took our leave and left for lunch.

MAIDEN ATTENDANCE AT OFA PICNIC

Hock Heng kept his word and at the end of March 1967, I received an invitation and application form to join the OFA Singapore. Accompanying the form was an invitation to attend a picnic in one of the colonial bungalows. When Weng Yoke and I reached the venue, a good number of members were already there. We were welcomed by Heah Hock Heng who introduced us around, especially to a Mr. Wee Chong Jin who was Chief Justice then.

Both of us were in awe of him but also proud to be Old Frees. Mr. Wee sat in an armchair on the porch and watched the members and their families frolicking in the sea and on the shore. A repast had been prepared and everybody had a good time.

In early October 1967, I received a notice to attend an Annual General Meeting (AGM) at the Kelong Restaurant, Cathay Building. Payment was to be \$30.

I sent back my returns declining since attendance would have meant 50 per cent of my pay.

MAIDEN ATTENDANCE AT AGM

For the rest of 1967 and half of 1968, I worked at various odd jobs on top of my supervisory job and managed to accumulate \$100, so when I received the notice of OFA's AGM towards the end of September, I was prepared this time, again to be held at the Kelong Restaurant at Cathay Building.

When I reached it, I found it to be a small cosy restaurant. I felt at home immediately with the crowd using Penang patois which could be distinguished amidst the babble. When the AGM was called to order, I found myself seated next to member Kok Weng On who introduced himself.

He told me his father was also a customs officer when he heard I was staying in the customs village, Bukit Glugor; a friendship developed between us which has

been cemented with time. I immediately had a feeling of euphoria.

When the meeting concluded, I made a promise to attend every meeting which I did without fail until 1975 when someone made a serious mistake and proposed me for the post of secretary. Oh, well. Remembering the first picnic I attended, I hankered for another. So the first function I organised was a picnic, not at the seaside but at Mitsukoshi gardens in Jurong. My wife had learnt to cook Penang laksa so she provided the laksa for the picnic. No doubt the venue had no salt-tainted air but all in all we had a good time.

OLD FREES ARE COMPASSIONATE

The title of this caption has been chosen with care and after much thought for it encaptures the heart and soul of the Old Frees. I say this with conviction because of two incidents where the Old Frees truly and unstintingly demonstrated their compassion.

One evening, I received a call from Mrs. Yip Mun Kong imploring help from plastic surgeon Lee Seng Teik to attend to her son, who had just suffered from a deep cut on his cheek. She was frantic, afraid that her son would be saddled with an ugly scar on his face for the rest of his life. I called Lee Seng Teik who was at dinner; when he heard my request on behalf of another Old Free, he left his dinner there and then, and rushed to the Singapore General Hospital. The last I heard, Mun Kong's son has a scar but a very faint one.

WAH SENG'S MAGNANIMITY

Another incident, which strengthened my passion for the OFA Singapore occurred in 1996. I needed an X-ray report for my employer and my thoughts turned to Chin Wah Seng, who was working as a radiologist.

Proceeding to his clinic, I registered myself and waited for my turn. When it came, I was pleasantly surprised when

Wah Seng himself walked up to me and guided me to his laboratory. Strapping me to a large machine, he switched it on. The machine rotated for a few minutes and stopped. Wah Seng told me to put on my shirt and I dressed up.

Stopping at the registration counter to make payment, I was taken aback when the receptionist told me that Dr. Chin had taken care of it. I did not leave but waited at the receptionist area to thank Wah Seng personally but the number of patients waiting made me leave after an hour so as not to disrupt Wah Seng's schedule.

DIALYSIS MACHINE

I was diagnosed as diabetic in 1998 and was weak when I visited Yam Mow Lam. A few days later, I received a call to lunch with Ooi Teng San. Over lunch, he enquired about my diabetic condition. After hearing the details, he told me that should I have to be treated by dialysis, he would willingly

sponsor a dialysis machine so that I could self-treat and have dialysis at home as treatment at dialysis centres was expensive.

After these acts of kindness, I made it known that anyone who bad-mouthed an Old Free would have me to contend with!

I cannot recall when we started holding our AGM at Kings Hotel - perhaps when they launched the Penang Food Promotion but I remember that we changed our venue once in 1999 and held it at the Concorde Hotel.

At the registration desk, three young men approached me and their spokesman told me they were from Free School and wanted to be members. Handing me their name cards, one name stuck out - Malcolm Tan Ban Hoe. He then asked how they could help out. Having matters under control, I thanked him and told him I would let him know later.

When the AGM started, the president thanked me for the years of accepting and discharging the duties of honorary secretary

through the years and since I was leaving to take up a post in China, he said the OFA wanted to present me with a gift in appreciation. He then gave me a Samsonite briefcase by courtesy of Gary Yeang who was the Samsonite representative for Southeast Asia.

As the office bearers had not been elected yet that evening, I announced to the meeting that we were fortunate to have three young Old Frees who had volunteered to help and I suggested that such enthusiasm should be rewarded by electing them to the committee. They stood up and graciously accepted to be elected. Thus Malcolm Tan, Khoo Boo Aik and one other (the name which I am unable to recall) were elected. ■



The late Captain Neo Kim San, also known as Neo Ah San was Honorary Secretary and President of OFA Singapore for several years

CHAPTER

7

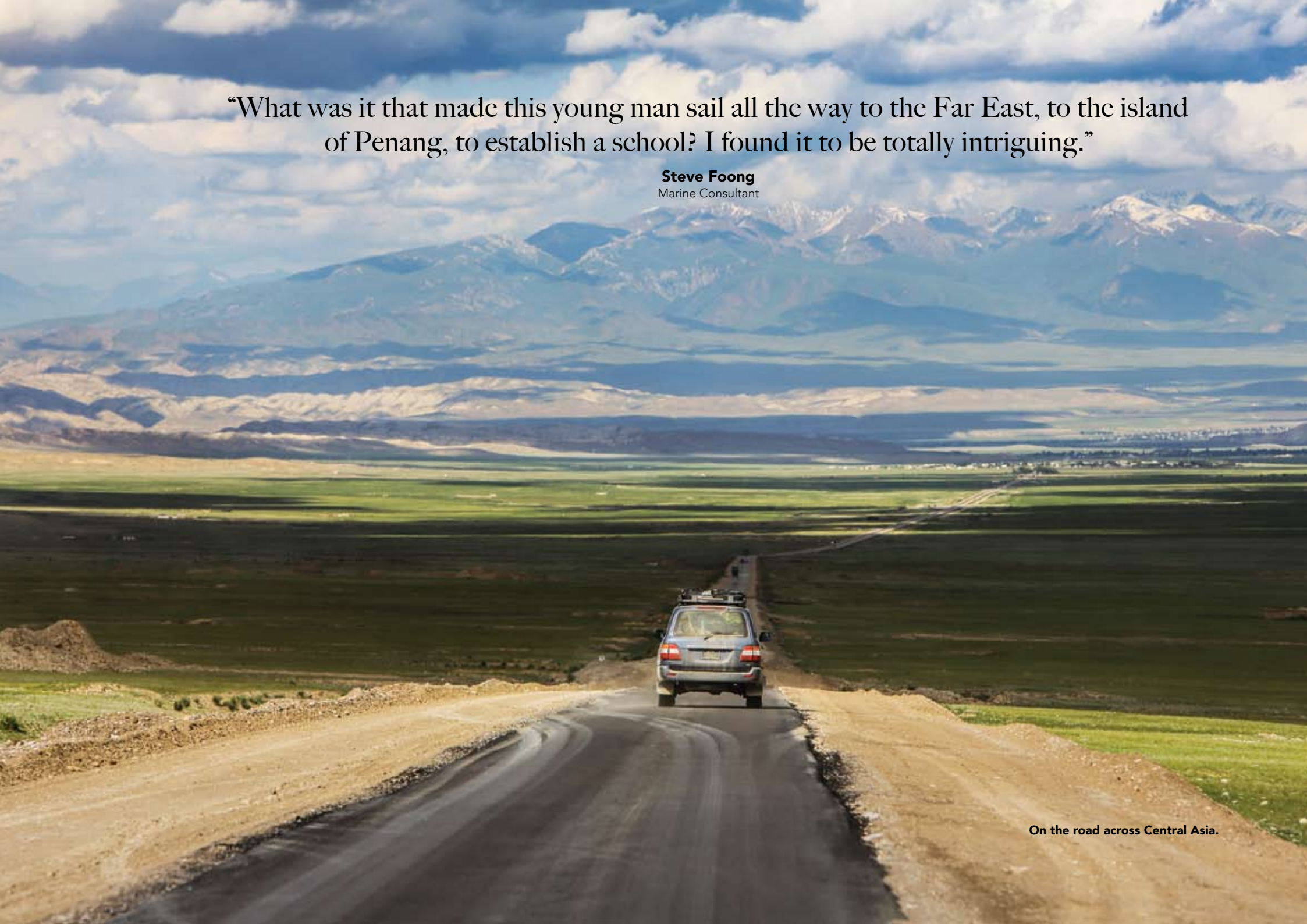
From George Town to Dittisham

WINDOW INTO THE PAST

“What was it that made this young man sail all the way to the Far East, to the island of Penang, to establish a school? I found it to be totally intriguing.”

Steve Foong
Marine Consultant

On the road across Central Asia.



Of all the inspirational people associated with Penang Free School, one name stood out: Robert Sparke Hutchings, its founder.

It was this name that drove a passionate Old Free, marine consultant Steve Foong, to travel 22,000 kilometres on a two-month journey across half the world to uncover the school's past.

As Steve puts it, "What was it that made this young man sail all the way to the Far East, to the island of Penang, to establish a school? I found it to be totally intriguing."

STRUGGLE IN EARLY YEARS

One of the younger members of The Old Frees' Association, Singapore, Steve was in Penang Free School from 1994 to 1998, which he entered after leaving Jelutong Barat Primary School, a feeder school.

"There were 10 of us and we were initially quite fearful as to how we could cope as we were literally moving from a kampong

school to an educational institution that was tops not only in Penang but also in Malaysia," he said.

Indeed, in the first year, he found himself struggling to cope. Yet, even though he fared badly, ending up in the bottom 10 of the class, he was elected to become a prefect.

He said, "I then realised that the school looked at students differently and gave us opportunities to excel in other ways. I also represented the school in karate, rugby, swimming, scouting and canoeing. In fact, I was doing more sports than attending classes!

"All of us representing the school in national and state events were all very proud. We were very strong as one and we would go all out just for the sake of the school. We were taught to keep up the good name of the school. It trained us to be champions from the start.

"All this served to mould our characters. As one of our teachers used to say, education

and intelligence can only bring you so far but character is important.

"But our teachers tried to help academically too. In fact, one of my teachers, Goh Teng Kiang, my physics and class teacher warned me that if I did not buck up in my studies, I might end up selling Hokkien mee!"

And so he bucked up; for his 'O' levels, he dropped all his games to study and did well in his final year examinations.

So well that he was able to clinch a job in Singapore in 1999 with Neptune Orient Lines (NOL) that came with a three-year scholarship to do nautical studies at Singapore Polytechnic. After graduating in 2003, he worked for two years on NOL's container ships to serve his bond.

Today, Steve is a manager in a private company in the offshore gas industry overseeing marine operations of offshore vessels to ensure they comply with industry standards.



Expedition members in Dittisham.

FUND-RAISING CHARITY RIDE

While carving out his career, Steve still entertained the idea of researching the roots of Penang Free School's founder and indirectly that of the school. In 2010, a visit that he and his wife, Suchin Koay, made to a children's home in Penang provided the unexpected catalyst. Their decision to do a world tour to raise funds for disadvantaged children while travelling from Penang to Europe ended up giving them the opportunity to research Hutchings' origins.

Thus was born the "From Malaysia with Love World Tour for Children"

transcontinental journey, which took over a year to organise. Essentially, it would raise funds, through donations from supporters and sponsors, for the Borneo Child Aid Society, a non-governmental organisation based in Sabah, Malaysia, on the island of Borneo.

The society operates over 128 plantation schools for more than 12,000 children of poor plantation workers who would not otherwise have access to education.

The plan was to drive north from Penang through Thailand, Laos and China, then across the Central Asian countries of Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan to

board a ferry for Baku in Azerbaijan and to continue the journey through Armenia, Georgia, Turkey and Western Europe, ending at Dunkirk in France. From here it turned out to be a short ferry crossing and drive to Dittisham, the hometown of Hutchings where the key to Penang Free School's heritage lay.

It was to be an Old Free event, supported by the Old Frees Association in Penang and in Singapore. Seven members (mostly Old Frees from different cohorts then aged between 32 and 59) comprised the expedition team. Because of the rugged conditions in especially Central Asia, only four-wheel drive vehicles — a Toyota Hilux and a Toyota Land Cruiser — could be used.

The other participating Old Frees were Hoe Kek Fei, Cheah Chuan Lok, Neoh Soon Heng, Saw Sek Lam, Saw Saik Mun and Adrian King. Two non-Old Frees who went along were Lee Huat Hin better known as Haha Lee, a professional



“We chose this route because it was the Old Silk Road. This was where the world’s three main religions interacted and we saw some very precious religious artefacts ... We certainly learnt a lot of history on our tour than in our 11 years in school.”

cameraman tasked with recording the expedition in pictures and Hoe Cher Hoe, the wife of Kek Fei.

Saw Saik Mun and Neoh Soon Heng joined the team mid-way on two different segments — Soon Heng from Chiangrai, Thailand to Jiuzhaigou, China and Saik Mun from Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan to Beyneu, Uzbekistan.

The cost of the expedition, covering 20 countries in 63 days, was between RM150, 000 and RM200, 000. Apart from sponsorship from motor oil company Kendall, Papago which supplied the navigational system, Toyota Prima Pearl Auto, which provided the vehicles and Penang Global Tourism, the rest was paid for by the seven participants themselves.

WORLD TOUR FLAGS OFF

The intrepid travellers were flagged off on 31 May, 2012 from the Penang Town Hall by Old Frees’ Association president MS



(Above and top) Interacting with the locals in Central Asia.

Rajendran in the presence of Penang Global Tourism’s then managing director Ooi Geok Ling and chairman of the Penang Free School’s board of directors Dato’ Haji Abdul Rafique bin Abdul Karim.

If there is one word that best describes the experience the expedition team went through on their gruelling transcontinental driving trip, it is “extreme”.

They had to contend with many rough and pot-holed roads in parts of Central Asia, abrupt changes in weather conditions which sometimes saw them going through four seasons in one day and primitive accommodation facilities. They battled foggy mists, muddy roads and sometimes had to struggle to find diesel, which was in short supply in some places.

But there were ample compensations: Spectacular mountain scenery, beautiful lakes and the chance to interact with people along the way especially in the rural villages where they stayed. The opportunity to learn



St George's Church towering above the thatched roof cottages of Dittisham.

about other cultures and especially the rich history and heritage of countries such as Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan was priceless.

As Steve explains, “We chose this route because it was the Old Silk Road. This was where the world’s three main religions interacted and we saw some very precious religious artefacts such as the mantle of Christ in Georgia as well as some of the

earliest Holy Koran scripts written on buckskins that are kept in the Tashkent Library in Uzbekistan. In Samarkand, we saw a book of the Koran that was as big as a table. We certainly learnt a lot of history on our tour than in our 11 years in school.”

What’s more, they were also able to fulfil another of their goals — raising awareness of underprivileged children in China and Central Asia through their visits to

orphanages where they donated educational books and supplies from Penang sponsors.

JOURNEY'S END

After 63 days on the road, the World Tour for Children team was nearing journey’s end — Dittisham — a name that Steve remembered from his schooldays as the village where Hutchings’ family came from.

Ironically, the team had not planned to visit Dittisham until they were in France when they realised they were two days ahead of schedule. It was Kek Fei who came up with the idea of travelling to Dittisham from Dunkirk to learn more about their school’s revered founder.

So on 1 August, the team sailed from Dunkirk in France to Dover in the south of England. After exploring Stonehenge, they drove to the county of Devon, where Dittisham is located.

Situated beside the river Dart in idyllic surrounds, Dittisham is a small but

attractive village of stone-built and thatched cottages. Brightly coloured boats huddle on the river front. It is interesting to note that modern Dittisham has perhaps not changed much from the past at least in terms of its population. In 2011, it was listed as having 424 residents, fewer than the 639 inhabitants living there in 1801 during the time of Hutchings, who was then 19 years old. In 1901, it had a population of 549.

SCHOOL HISTORY COMES ALIVE

As in any English village, the pub in Dittisham is at the heart of the community and it was here that Steve and his team-mates dropped in for they knew this was the place to ask where they could find the person who knew St George's Church well.

The person turned out to be Helen, considered the village historian.

Traditionally, English village life revolved largely around churches and this was no exception in Dittisham where St George's



Hutchings' family crest in a window panel of St George's Church.

Church played a central role in society.

St George's Church, dedicated to the patron saint of England, in its present form dates back from 1333 when it was rebuilt on the site of a Norman church which had replaced an even earlier Saxon Church that had been established after the Saxon conquest of Devon in 755.

Despite its long and illustrious history,



The village of Dittisham in Devon county.



Village historian Helen briefing the OFA expedition team in St George's Church. Expedition leader Steve Foong is on the right.

St. George's is now no longer able to have a rector of its own and in 1982 became part of the Benefice of Dartmouth and Dittisham.

But things were different in Robert Sparke Hutchings' time. His father, Reverend John Hutchings was the rector of St. George's Church Dittisham from 1768 to 1802. His mother was Sarah Sparke from Dartmouth and he was the youngest of 16 children.



“Even the fort in a Dittisham banner was the same fort that was later reproduced in our school crest. Our visit revealed how passionate the English were of their heritage as they borrowed many symbols and names from their birthplace for use in their adopted countries. Now I know why St George’s Church in Penang got its name as it was the same name of Hutchings’ parish in Dittisham.”

The young Hutchings, who was born in 1782, followed the same path trodden by his father, matriculating at Christ Church College in Oxford University in 1798 and taking over as rector of St George’s Church in 1805 after obtaining his MA degree.

As rector, Robert Hutchings was credited with building a new magnificent rectory house that still stands today and for constructing the first road for carriages going from Dartmouth to Dittisham.

In 1814, apparently due to financial difficulties, Hutchings gave up his position at St George’s Church to travel to India to take up a Chaplaincy in Bengal. It was from here that he was posted to Prince of Wales Island (as Penang was then called) in 1816 to succeed Rev Altwill Lake, who was the first Resident Chaplain appointed in 1804. It was common then for the British East India Company to appoint Anglican chaplains to serve as part of its overseas military service.

Hutchings thrived in his new environment and became adept in the Malay language. He produced one of the first books and dictionaries on Malay grammar and was responsible for translating the Old and New Testaments of the Bible into Malay.

On the tour of St George’s Church, Steve saw the beautiful memorial window dedicated to Hutchings and his father. He also noticed that one of the church panels had a Hutchings family crest that he recognised was similar to the crest etched on the side and front of Penang Free School when it moved to Farquhar Street and was later converted into the Hutchings Primary School.

Today, it houses the Penang State Museum. The letters in both crests were written in a similar cursive style.

“Even the fort in a Dittisham banner we saw during our visit was the same fort that was later reproduced in our school crest,” observed Steve. “Our visit revealed how passionate the English were of their heritage as they borrowed many symbols and names from their birthplace for use in their adopted countries. Now I know why St George’s Church in Penang got its name as it was the same name of Hutchings’ parish in Dittisham.”

For Steve and his team-mates, the answers they found in Dittisham made for a satisfying conclusion to an epic journey. ■

CHAPTER

8

Wu Lien-Teh

PLAGUE FIGHTER EXTRAORDINAIRE




By **Alison Chong**

My great-grand uncle Dr Wu Lien-Teh was a doctor very much ahead of his time.

He was a doctor whom Malaysians and Singaporeans forgot until SARS (Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome) surfaced in Asia in 2003. The world owed him a debt for the research work and papers he had written during his illustrious medical career of 63 years in medicine, on pneumonic plague and public health. He invented the “Wu mask”, started the trend for the cremation of dead bodies and probably initiated the largest cremation in history in 1911 and introduced quarantine measures in plague eradication protocol.

For his work on pneumonic plague he was nominated for the Nobel Prize for Medicine in 1935 and I believe he still holds the record for being the only medical doctor from the Straits Settlements and the first to be so nominated.

MediaCorp Singapore produced a



For his work on
pneumonic plague he
was nominated for
the Nobel Prize for
Medicine in 1935.

three-hour documentary titled *Plague Fighter Dr Wu Lien-Teh*, which was screened on Channel NewsAsia in April 2008. This was to commemorate the fifth anniversary of SARS, to remember those who lost their lives in the frontline when SARS broke out in Asia.

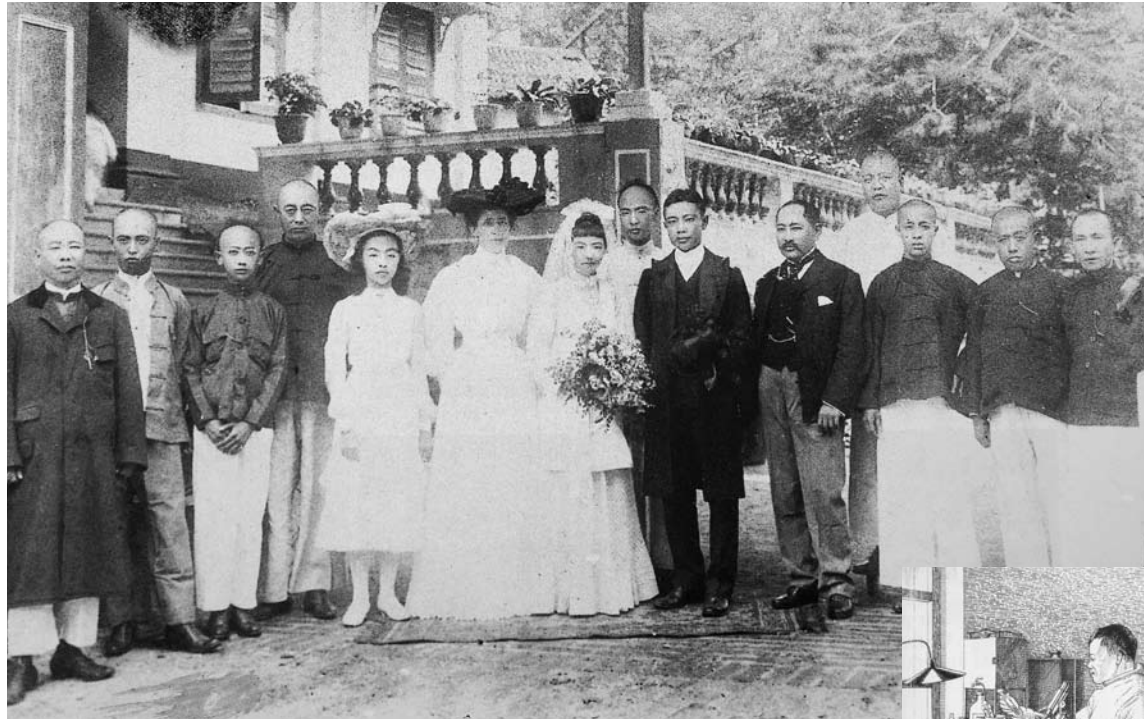
The film was based on Dr Wu’s plague work in Manchuria on whom medical professionals in both Singapore and China, who were combatting SARs fell back on, using his papers to guide them in tackling SARS.

The documentary rediscovered Dr Wu’s work in tackling the Manchurian Plague of 1910, which was far worse than SARS, where in four months 60,000 people lost their lives in this terrifying pneumonic plague which had then threatened the world.

EARLY LIFE

Dr Wu was a Penang Free School student from primary through secondary levels, beginning in 1886 till 1896 when he left for Emmanuel College, Cambridge University. He was also School Captain (Head Prefect). He was then known as Gnoh Lean Tuck, his dialect name.

Dr Wu won the Queen’s Scholarship twice but was considered too young at the age of 16 to go to England on his first success in 1895. He tried again in 1896 and was the only successful candidate. His parents were reluctant to permit him to go to England. However, on the persuasion of my great grandfather Ng Lean Heng, his

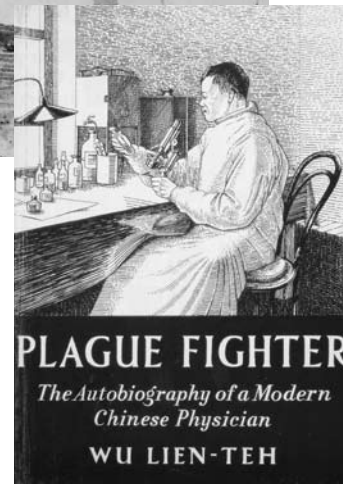


**Dr Wu marries Ms Huang Shu-chiung on 9 July 1905 in Singapore.
Right: Dr Wu's autobiography.**

second elder brother, he was able to take up the scholarship at 17 years of age and to sail for England in August 1896 to be the first Straits Chinese to enter Cambridge University.

He had to travel from Penang to Singapore to sit for the Queen's Scholarship exams and he stayed at Telok Ayer Street while he was preparing for the exams over seven to 10 days.

On his way back from his studies in England, France and Germany, his ship docked in Singapore in 1903. He stayed with Dr Lim Boon Keng, another Queen's Scholar (1887). It was during this visit that he met his future wife Ruth Huang, who was the younger sister of Dr Lim's wife.



Dr Wu faced competition in the romance stakes from lawyer Sir Song Ong-Siang, a Queen's Scholar 10 years his senior and Tan Boo Liat, a descendant of Tan Tock Seng, but Ruth decided to share her life with Dr Wu and they eventually married on 9 July 1905 at the American Methodist Church, Singapore. Ruth Huang was an accomplished writer and she was the first Chinese woman to publish in English.

MAKING SOCIAL SERVICE HIS CALLING

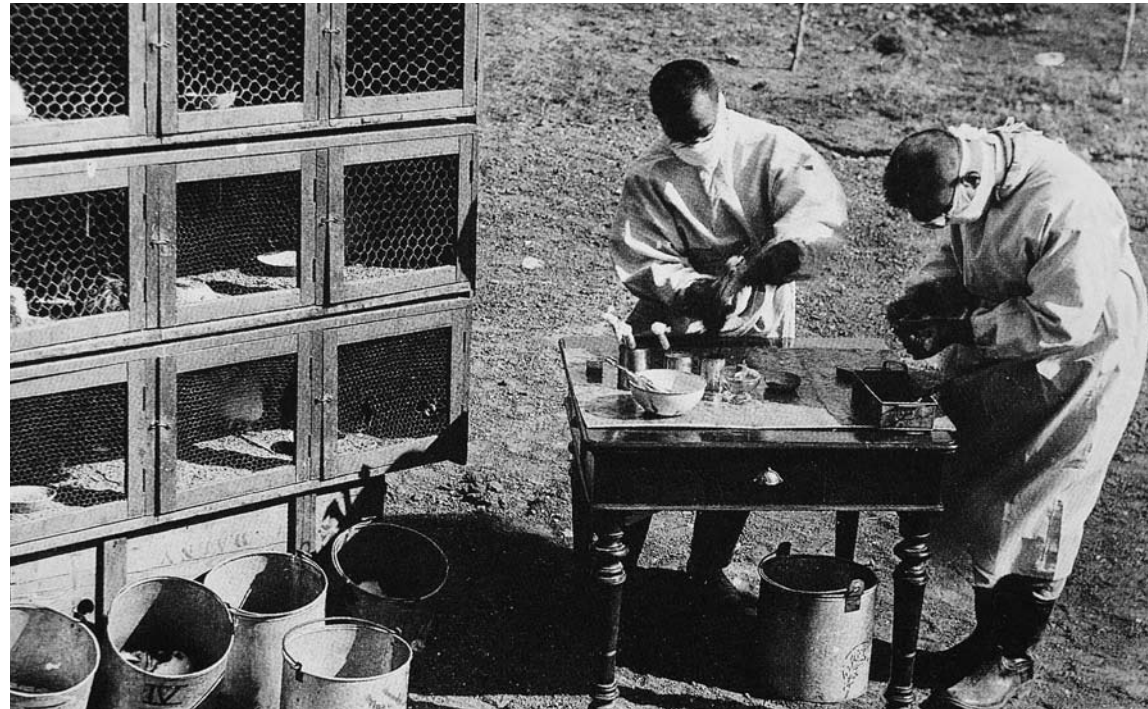
Dr Lim was also attributed to have initiated Dr Wu into devoting time to social service, a passion he held deep throughout his life. According to Ong Lay Hong, who researched extensively to produce the MediaCorp 3-part series *The Plague Fighter*, Dr Wu used to give free treatment and medication to the poor and hawkers during the period 1937 to 1960,

when he was practising in Ipoh, Perak.

Wu Yu-lin (1926-2012, who later became Mrs Betty Tai after marriage) the eldest daughter of Dr Wu as the author of the book *Memories of Dr Wu Lien-Teh – Plague Fighter*, records her father's work most vividly. This photographic book is a valuable supplement to Dr Wu's own autobiography *The Plague Fighter*, from his private collection showing the medical scenes and his anti-plague work in China during the period 1908-1937.

Dr Wu had initially returned to Malaya, after completing his medical studies, to work at the Institute of Medical Research in Kuala Lumpur. Following that, he spent three years as a doctor in Penang. Distressed with a problem of opium addiction at that time, he put his own money into efforts to rehabilitate addicts.

In 1905, at the age of 25, Dr Wu became the President and Physician-in-Chief of the Penang Anti-Opium Association



Dr Wu (left) constructing a plague experiment with a colleague in an open field, 1921.

which he founded. Subsequently, conferences were held in Penang, Federated Malay States and Singapore.

Dr Wu was also known in Singapore and Malaya as one of the three editors of the *Straits Chinese Magazine*, (1903-1907) with Sir Song Ong-Siang and Dr Lim Boon Keng, a journal produced by the Chinese diaspora in Southeast Asia in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

In 1908, he received an invitation from Yuan Shih-Kai, then Grand Councillor of

Tianjin, China to be the vice-director of the Imperial Army Medical College, which he accepted.

Two years later, he was sent to Manchuria in the depths of winter to deal with the horrific pneumonic plague that was threatening to engulf the world. In four months with a death toll that reached 60,000, he managed to bring the disease under control. His work was to bring him international fame.



Dr Wu (in the foreground) was the Hospital Director of Harbin Hospital, completed in 1925.

HIS WORK IN CHINA

What he did was recognised as the start of 30 years of unfailing service to China and humanity. For one, he invented the “Wu mask” still used widely by healthcare workers.

Dr Wu also initiated the largest and first mass cremation in China history’s in 1911 and introduced quarantine measures in plague eradication protocol which helped to bring the disease under control.

During his three decades in China, Dr Wu helped to build some 20 modern hospitals and medical institutions. One of these was the Central Hospital in

Nanking which was completed in 1933, with \$300,000 funds raised from the developer of Tiger Balm, Hu Wen-hu, one of Singapore’s philanthropists.

He set up the China Medical Association and its first national quarantine service. He also began work for the League of Nations (now United Nations) as a recognised authority on plague prevention and eradication.

In 1937, Japan invaded China and Dr Wu, whose villa had been bombed, decided to bring his family back to Malaya. He set up a clinic in Ipoh, Perak. After

hostilities ended, he renewed his contacts in China and began compiling works of art, philosophy, science, culture and history that form part of the Wu Lien-Teh Collection and are now kept in the Central and Medical Libraries of the National University of Singapore.

Dr Wu frequently visited Yu-lin at her home in Bukit Timah. Whenever he drove down from Ipoh to Singapore, he would drop by Kuala Lumpur to visit my grandmother, his niece and then in Seremban to see my mother. My mother related to me that Dr Wu carried me as a baby during one of these stopovers in Singapore.

Some of his children settled in Singapore and some in Australia. Yu-lin, the founding director of the Regional Language Centre, Singapore, and eldest son Fred Wu Chang Sheng were the ones who settled in Singapore. Fred was the first Asian senior partner of Donaldson & Burkinshaw, with a distinguished career at the Singapore Bar.



“by his death, the world of medicine has lost a heroic and almost legendary figure”

The Times of London

27 January 1960

In 1950, Dr Wu wrote his autobiography, an effort that took more than seven years. Published in 1959, it was titled *Plague Fighter: The Autobiography of a Modern Chinese Physician*.

He continued to practise medicine until the age of 80, when he bought a new house on Chor Sin Kheng Road, Ayer Itam, Penang for his retirement. He collapsed from a stroke and died on 21 January 1960, aged 81, barely one week after moving into his new home. Scouts of Penang Free School escorted his hearse for cremation at Batu Gantung, his final resting place.

The Times of London on 27 January 1960 wrote that “by his death, the world of medicine has lost a heroic and almost legendary figure”. ■

KEEPING HIS MEMORY ALIVE

On 14 October 1983, Yu-Lin presented to the National University of Singapore’s Faculty of Medicine a special album of 400 photographs from Dr Wu’s private collection. Dr Wu also donated most of his collection of books to Nanyang University (renamed Nanyang Technological University).

When he was alive, researchers from all over the world regularly consulted Dr Wu on his plague work and after he passed on they used to call on Yu-lin who had inherited all her father’s personal papers and books.

She donated all of Dr Wu’s papers and some books to the National Library of Singapore in November 2011, which has plans to digitalise them for medical researchers’ ease of reference.

Early on, the Art Museum, University of Malaya in Singapore, received part of Dr Wu’s collection of priceless ancient Chinese paintings by old masters and an official imperial seal of Emperor Chia Ching.



Dr Wu and family.

Uncovering the work of a great Old Free

By **Alex K H Ooi**

My first contact with the legacy of Dr Wu Lien-Teh was in August 2008 when I visited Harbin for the opening of a museum dedicated to his life's work – the Dr Wu Lien-Teh Museum – led by Dato' Ng Kong Yeam, along with Mrs Ng, Lim Ho Hup, Larry Lai, Chia Lin Sien and Kitson Ng. It was truly an eye-opener.

Though from Penang Free School and aware of a Sports House named after Dr Wu, that was about all I knew of him. On this trip, the man came “alive”. I also met Prof Fu Shiyong who worked with Mrs Betty Tai (Wu Yu-lin, eldest daughter of Dr Wu) to materialise the museum, Marie Wu, Wong Ai Luen and Ong Lay Hong. These personalities were to be later involved in a commemorative symposium that I decided at the spur of the moment to organise in Harbin. This ultimately took place from January 18 to 20, 2013.

I also developed a strong desire to promote the lessons that his work and life

could contribute to modern-day society and spent much time and effort researching and gelling this concept.

SECOND VISIT

Then, in January 2011, I accompanied Ong Lay Hong to the 100th anniversary of Dr Wu's Mukden (Shenyang) Conference on the Plague in Beijing. The Old Frees' Association, Singapore (OFAS), of which I am President, gave support. I roped in Loke Gim Tay, an old Penang Chung Ling High School boy.

From Beijing, we proceeded to meet Prof Fu Shiyong in Harbin – only to confirm his unrelenting strong desire to see Dr Wu's principles of medical service and public health placed on a better footing and to extend their reach. We checked out the city's conference facilities, the hotels and the local sights. I got to dine a second time at the “Old Chef”! This was the Lao Chu Jia restaurant (translated as ‘Home of

an Old Chef’) which had a menu of spicy dishes and food reminiscent of Penang's, influenced apparently by Dr Wu who dined there frequently and was a close friend of its chef cum owner.

THE JOURNEY

There were many hurdles in putting together the symposium and I recall the many moments of doubt and the need to doggedly persist.

Timing-wise, January appeared best – being Ice Festival time (and when Dr Wu had first arrived in Harbin) – though the extreme cold could be daunting for many.

However, holding it in 2012, the year first chosen, was not to be, as the stimulus could not be applied in time. Prof Fu then sent Prof Ye Tian of Harbin Medical University and Dr George Liu in May 2012 to meet me to lay the groundwork. They managed to visit Mrs Betty Tai (who was born in Harbin) while in Singapore.



Welcome ceremony at the opening of the Harbin Conference.



Alex Ooi (third from left) and members of Dr Wu Lien-Teh's family posing next to the bust of Dr Wu in Harbin.

That was also when Penang Heritage Trust put on Think City's Penang Story with Ong Lay Hong speaking on her 3-part documentary on "The Plague Fighter" aired on Channel News Asia and also shown in 2008 at the Dr Wu Lien-Teh Museum opening. Loke Gim Tay and I sponsored the Chinese visitors to Penang.

That proved to be the pivotal point to turn feasibility into reality. Chief Minister Lim Guan Eng officiated the Penang Story. Prof Tian issued the invitation to

the January 2013 symposium and I was to undertake the logistical necessities outside of Harbin and to act as go-between.

The logistics and linkages went smoothly (along with the usual hassle of getting registration details and participation fees!) – with language concerns eventually sorting itself out when more effectively bilingual people came on board.

MOVING FORWARD

Penang's officials moved fast. A pro-tem

committee meeting for the Dr Wu Lien-Teh Society was held on 14 October 2012. The society was later registered on 2 January 2013 with Dato' Anwar as inaugural President and myself as Secretary-General.

Dato' Anwar was invited to be our OFAS AGM guest speaker on 21 October 2012 and to be introduced to Mrs Betty Tai and Wong Ai Luen.

We take cognisance of InvestPenang's strong support for the Harbin Symposium – with Dato' Lee Kah Choon representing



At the signing ceremony of the Memorandum of Understanding between Penang Medical College and Harbin Medical University.



Members of the Singapore delegation at the opening of the Wu Lien-Teh Museum, (from left) Lim Ho Hup, Larry Lai, Mrs and Dato' Ng Kong Yeam, Kitson Ng, Alex Ooi and Chia Lin Sien.



Singapore delegation members presenting a picture of Dr Wu Lien-Teh and his wife to Prof Fu Shi Ying.



OFAS president Alex Ooi, Dr Lucy Ooi, Chief Minister Lim Guan Eng and John Wu, son of Dr Wu Lien-Teh in front of the bust of Dr Wu at the Penang Medical College.

Chief Minister Lim Guan Eng who was unable to leave Penang due to exigencies. He led the Penang team, comprising also representatives of Penang Institute, Penang Heritage Trust, Penang Global Tourism and Penang Medical College.

The large delegation from Island Hospital, led by Dato' Dr Chong Keat Foong, two top officials of Penang Tourist Guides' Association and many others lent colour and enthusiasm to the gravity of the objective.

Consequent to the strong interest of Penang officials to forge corresponding links in Harbin, many were initiated including the conclusion of a Memorandum of Understanding between Penang Medical College and Harbin Medical University.

I thank the Dr Wu Lien-Teh Society and all parties involved for helping to complete the journey – now fulfilled. The fruition of a sound scientific programme, linkages and friendships is now history for all to judge and to build upon for further collaborations and for global public health. ■

PRIDE OF PENANG UNVEILED

In March 2014, Chief Minister Lim Guan Eng officiated at the inaugural Symposium and Installation of the bust of Dr Wu, donated by Harbin Medical University, at the Penang Medical College. A large contingent of Dr Wu's family was present to witness the event.

CHAPTER

9

Old Frees

PROFILES

Old Frees' Contribution To Singapore's Success Story

The Judiciary

It is a well-known fact that Old Frees have dominated some of the top positions in Singapore's public service - a tribute indeed to the calibre of students who have gone through the portals of the venerable Penang Free School (PFS).

This is most apparent in the case of Singapore's Judiciary. This was acknowledged no less by the late Singapore's first prime minister Lee Kuan Yew himself in a speech given at a mass rally at the Penang Esplanade as far back as 24 March 1964 when he said "... (our) Chief Justice and three judges — all these people were Penang's contribution to the success story of Singapore."

What is astonishing too is that the three judges mentioned – Tan Ah Tah, AV Winslow and JWD Ambrose were all Queen's Scholars.

And it is not just the judiciary that Old Frees have dominated. They have also occupied some of the highest levels of other areas of Singapore's public service as well as in private enterprise.

Singapore's first Speaker of Parliament, Yeoh Ghim Seng, a prominent surgeon, was an Old Free. So was Lim Ho Hup, described by former PM Lee as the "lieutenant" of then chairman of the Economic Development Board, Hon Sui Sen (himself a Penangite, though not an Old Free) who was responsible for mapping out Singapore's industrial expansion. Then there was the chairman of the Singapore Institute of Standards and Industrial Research (SISIR) Lee Kum Tatt.

Indeed, one of Penang's chief ministers once remarked that there were so many

Penangites in Singapore's administration and the professions that if all were to return home, Singapore would not be able to function!

Lawyer and Old Free Kok Weng On pointed out, "At one time in the history of Singapore, the judiciary was almost completely 'run' by Old Frees — from the Chief Justice and the judges, the Chief Registrar, the Attorney-General and the Solicitor-General. The legal might of Penang Free School!"

HOW IT CAME ABOUT

How, you might ask, did all this come about – that is, the prominence of Old Frees in Singapore?

The answer lies in the historical links which date back to 1826 when Singapore, Penang and Malacca were combined as the Straits Settlements and were an outlying residency of the British East India Company headquartered in Calcutta, (now Kolkatta) India. In 1867, the Straits Settlements were

made a Crown Colony and came under direct British control until 1946.

There was a gap during the Second World War years of 1942 to 1945 when the three territories were subjugated under the Japanese during the Japanese Occupation of then Malaya and Singapore. The British returned in 1945 but a year later, the Straits Settlements were dissolved and Singapore was made a British Crown Colony while Penang and Malacca became part of the Malayan Union.

In 1959, Singapore achieved self-governing status. In 1963, it became part of the newly independent Federation of Malaysia, together with Malaya, Sabah (the former British North Borneo) and Sarawak, both former British territories. In 1965, Singapore left the Federation to become an independent republic.

Under self-government in 1959, Singapore created a separate Legal Service Commission comprising the Chief Justice,

the Chairman of the Public Services Commission (PSC), a Judge of the Supreme Court appointed by the Chief Justice, the State Advocate-General and two other PSC members.

During the two years of merger from September 1963, there was a common Federal Judicial and Legal Service, with a separate branch in Singapore. The Legal Service Commission was superseded by the Singapore Branch Commission under the Federal Constitution. The High Court of Malaysia and the Federal Court of Malaysia replaced the Supreme Court of the Colony of Singapore and the Court of Appeal respectively.

After Singapore's separation from Malaysia, the Federal Judicial and Legal Service Commission was replaced by the Legal Service Commission.

FLUIDITY OF MOVEMENT

With such a long intertwined history, and with Singapore and Penang belonging to the

same administrative entity for over 120 years, first as part of the Straits Settlements and later as part of Malaysia, it is little wonder that the movements of people in the two territories would be fluid especially that of public servants who would serve in wherever their posting would take them.

That is not the only reason. As former PM Lee put it so well, "It was not chance that brought so many able and outstanding persons to Singapore. For decades before the war, Singapore was the centre of education. Before and after the war, many able students came to Singapore for their education - to secondary schools, several of which had hostels run by missionaries to (the KE) Medical College (established 1905), to Raffles College (established 1928), and later, to the University of Malaya, sited in Singapore, when these two Colleges combined in 1950 (sic). It was only in 1962 that the University of Malaya moved to Kuala Lumpur."

PREPONDERANCE OF OLD FREES IN LAW AND MEDICINE

This brings us to another point: Why the preponderance of Old Frees in law and especially now in medicine? As an Old Free put it, “The aspiration for top students in PFS was to become a lawyer or a doctor, as these were considered prestigious professions.”

Those awarded Queen’s Scholarships, which were discontinued in 1957, were invariably sent to the University of Cambridge to study law or medicine. Those who aspired to become doctors and were paying their own way came to Singapore because of the excellent reputation of the KE (King Edward VII) Medical College. That PFS had special classes to prepare these aspiring students for the medical entrance exams contributed to the pull factor.

Justice Tan Ah Tah

Justice Tan Ah Tah was a Queen’s Scholar in 1924. Born in 1906, he was originally from Kuala Lumpur where he studied at Victoria Institution before enrolling in PFS in 1918. His scholarship took him to Cambridge University to read law. He was called to the Bar in 1930 before returning to Penang where he worked in a legal firm for a decade.

In 1941, he moved to Singapore when he joined the Straits Settlements Legal Service. In 1946, he was made Commissioner of Estate Duties and Stamps – the first Asian to be appointed.

He made news again a year later when he was the first of two locals to gain promotion to the Colonial Legal Service. The following year saw him being appointed as first magistrate, civil district judge and district judge in quick succession.

In July 1954, he was made acting puisne judge and confirmed as a judge in October 1955. In 1958, he rose to the position of acting Chief Justice of Singapore. In 1964, after Malaysia was formed, he was made a judge of the Federal Court, which saw him presiding over cases in Malaysia and Singapore.

Slated for retirement in November 1971, Justice Tan had his term of office extended after an amendment was made to the Singapore Constitution to allow judges to prolong their careers.

Alas, he was not able to enjoy his

retirement when he finally called it a day four years later in November 1975, as he died nine months after in August 1976.

During his entire career he was very active in the Old Frees’ Association of Singapore serving as its president for several terms.

Justice James Walter Davy Ambrose

Born in Penang in 1909, JWD Ambrose was a star student at PFS where he topped the Senior Cambridge examinations of 1925. He was awarded the Queen’s Scholarship in 1928 to study law in Keble College at Oxford University. Apart from his scholastic abilities, Ambrose displayed prowess in sports, thanks, no doubt, to his PFS’ grounding. He was Oxford’s first foreign student to be awarded varsity colours for badminton and was made captain of the badminton team.

After graduating from Oxford, Ambrose enrolled in the Inner Temple and was called to the Bar in 1935.

Shortly after, he returned to Penang where he served an apprenticeship with the law firm, Wreford and Thornton. In 1936, he joined the courts of the Straits Settlements as an advocate and solicitor. He was made assistant official assignee, assistant registrar of companies and assistant official receiver. In 1939, he was posted to Malacca to serve as assistant public trustee of a newly formed



Chief Justice Wee Chong Jin.



Justice Tan Ah Tah.



Justice Alfred Victor Winslow.



Justice James Walter Davy Ambrose.

Public Trustee Office of Malacca.

In 1940, he joined the Straits Settlements Legal Service and in 1953 was promoted to the Colonial Legal Service. He served as the magistrate of Penang in 1954 before his transfer to Singapore as the new registrar in the Singapore High Court. He went on to become magistrate and district judge. In 1957, he was appointed official assignee and public trustee before being appointed high court judge a year later serving in the position for 10 years before his retirement in February 1968. He was the fourth Asian in Malaya to become a high court judge and the first judge of Indian ethnic origin to be made a puisne judge. He died on 28 October 1992 at the age of 82. He is remembered for his patience and composure as a judge and praised for his extensive knowledge of the law.

Justice Alfred Victor Winslow

Born in 1916 in Perak, AV Winslow was a brilliant student who passed his Senior Cambridge examinations at the tender age of 13. As he was too young to enter university and thus could not sit for the Queen's Scholarship examination, he spent his time doing other examinations including the London matriculation.

In 1934, he was finally considered old enough for university and sat for the Queen's Scholarship examinations. He aced it and was awarded a Queen's Scholarship to study

mathematics in Cambridge University. He was a gifted mathematician and indulged in his passion for Part 1 of his "Tripos" before switching to studying law as he wanted to join "a profession of high integrity" and which also served the common good.

He was called to the English Bar in 1940 after graduating and worked for a while in Britain before returning to Malaya. He joined the Straits Settlements Legal Service, serving as assistant official assignee, deputy registrar and sheriff, magistrate and district judge. In Chambers, he was known to be welcoming to newcomers and the inexperienced, often dishing out friendly advice.

In 1948, he was made crown counsel and deputy public prosecutor. In 1949, he was promoted to the Colonial Legal Service and was acting senior crown counsel until 1957 when he was appointed solicitor-general. In 1962, he was elevated to the Bench of the Supreme Court of Singapore where he remained before retiring in 1977 because of health reasons. He died in 1984 at the age of 68.

Winslow was active in OFAS serving as its president for several terms. At his passing, his colleagues lamented on "having lost a legal luminary and one of the most distinguished and learned judges."

Chief Justice Wee Chong Jin

Similarly lauded was Justice Wee Chong Jin who served as the Chief Justice of

Singapore from 1963 till his retirement in 1990, a post he held for over 27 years. The first Asian to be appointed, he was also the longest-serving Chief Justice in the Commonwealth.

Known to be strict in court because of his desire to uphold the highest standards of the law, he has been praised by many lawyers - including those who had been ticked off by him - for his professional talents especially a photographic memory that allowed him to recall the facts of each case in precise detail.

Well-respected and admired, Justice Wee was also known to be fair and impartial.

Born in Penang in 1917, he attended PFS before leaving in 1935 to study law at Cambridge University where he was awarded the MacMahon Law Studentship, considered to be one of the most prestigious scholarships. He was also named the university's outstanding cricketer in 1937.

In an interview with *The Straits Times* in 1991 when he was guest-of-honour at a dinner organised by OFAS to celebrate the 175th anniversary of PFS' founding, he spoke fondly of his student days. He said, "School then was a whole-day thing, with the afternoons devoted to sports. For me, that was the best part of the day when I didn't have to go home and I could play cricket, basketball and football."

He recalled that many of the school's teachers were expatriates with many

coming from Oxford and Cambridge but his favourite was local geography teacher Zainal Abidin.

After he was called to the English Bar, Wee returned to Penang in 1940 where he was admitted as an advocate and solicitor of the Straits Settlements.

He then went into private practice in Singapore until 1957, working first with renowned criminal lawyer DK Walters and later with Wee Swee Teow and Co. which had offices in Singapore and Malaya.

In August 1957, he was appointed a judge at the Supreme Court of Singapore, the first Asian to achieve this honour. He went on to become the Chief Justice in 1963, breaking the century-old tradition of appointing British Chief Justices. Aged just 45 then, he was also the youngest to be appointed.

After his term of office as Chief Justice expired when he turned 65 in 1982, he had his term extended thrice, in 1982, 1985 and in 1988.

Justice Wee also served as first chairman of the Presidential Council of Minority Rights for 18 years from 1973.

He had also stood in as Singapore's head-of-state on several occasions, as acting Yang di-Pertuan Negara and as acting President.

Acknowledged for his love of sports especially cricket and badminton, thanks to his PFS days, the Chief Justice kept

up his interest throughout his career. He was captain of two cricket teams and was president of the Singapore Golf Association for 40 years from 1962 to 2002. He died in 2005.

Tan Boon Teik



Apart from sitting on the Bench, there were also other Old Frees serving in Singapore's judicial system.

One of them was Tan Boon Teik who was Singapore's longest-serving Attorney-General (A-G), a position he held from 1969 until his retirement in 1992.

Born in 1929, Tan left PFS to study law at University College London (UCL) where he graduated with an honours degree in law in 1951. He was called to the Bar the following year and in 1953, received his Master of Laws degree from UCL. On his return to Penang, he worked as an advocate and solicitor in Malaya and Singapore.

In 1955, he joined the Singapore Legal Service, serving first as magistrate and later deputy registrar of the High Court. He was appointed director of the Legal Aid Bureau in 1959 and senior crown counsel in 1963 before being appointed solicitor-general.

In February 1967, he was appointed acting A-G when the incumbent Ahmad

Mohamed Ibrahim was made ambassador to the United Arab Republic (now Egypt). He was confirmed in his post in January 1969.

As A-G, he was the government's chief legal adviser and public prosecutor and so played an important role in moulding Singapore's legal environment. Under his guidance, the Attorney-General's Chambers produced revised editions of Singapore's legislation in 1970 and 1985 and the first reprint of the Constitution in 1980.

One of his major contributions to Singapore's legal system was the establishment of the Singapore International Arbitration Centre of which he was the founding chairman. He realised the growing importance of arbitration as a means of dispute resolution and advocated Singapore's accession to the New York Convention and promoted arbitration extensively in Singapore and abroad.

Despite his heavy legal workload, the A-G, who was a skilled pianist, devoted much time to developing Singapore's arts scene. He was the founding chairman of the Singapore Symphony Orchestra and gave it direction for many years. He died in 2012. He is remembered for his exacting professional standards but would give due praise to good work done.

Eu Cheow Chye



Eu Cheow Chye as a member of the Penang Chinese Cricket XI in 1935.

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Another Old Free who served in Singapore's Legal System was Eu Cheow Chye who won a scholarship to study law in Raffles College after leaving PFS in 1936.

After graduating in 1939, he worked as a barrister and as a member of

the Colony Administrative Service attached to the Colonial Secretary's Office.

In 1952, he became the First District Judge and in 1963 was made the First Magistrate for three years before his appointment as Registrar in the High Court in 1966.

Apart from his legal work, Cheow Chye was also well known as a state cricketer. He played for Singapore in the early post-war years. In fact, before joining Raffles College, he was actively playing for Penang and was part of the Penang Chinese Cricket XI team.

He died prematurely in 1970.

Medicine

Lee Seng Teik

Professor of Plastic Surgery

Year left school: 1959



Dubbed the father of plastic surgery in Singapore, Lee Seng Teik is a doyen in the field of medicine.

He attributes his achievements to the solid foundations laid

down by PFS for which he is grateful.

"We were so very fortunate because PFS was at the pinnacle during the era of colonial English schools and English government schools. While Penang had Chinese, Malay and other vernacular schools and mission schools as well, in terms of public schools, the Free School was right on top.

"The school excelled in sports and other activities and out of this milieu you find the best people."

What impressed him was the range of activities and unusual societies the school

had, which helped to stimulate young minds. There was an Art Society which he could belong to as he was interested in art and painting. He was also a member of the Aristotelian Society, which was about maths and science while a Debating Society helped to sharpen one's oratorical skills.

He joined PFS from Bukit Mertajam High School where former Malaysian prime minister Abdullah Badawi was a classmate. Enrolling in Form 3, he remembers being interviewed by the outgoing headmaster JE Tod. He studied in PFS from 1954 to 1959 when the new headmaster JMB Hughes took over.

He said, "The spirit of the school was to go for excellence in study, sports and other activities which served to inculcate qualities of tolerance, leadership and sportsmanship for all irrespective of background.

"The pride for our school was something that grew in us and we just cannot help it."

On how he came to specialise in medicine, he said, "In school, there was a natural gravitation towards medicine as we excelled in the sciences especially in biology. Maybe I was also influenced by Albert Schweitzer's writings. The Colombo Plan Scholarships then (which replaced the Queen's Scholarships) given out to developing countries were awarded more for medicine and science than for law and other disciplines."

He and six of his cohort were selected for the scholarships for which three were for medicine and the rest for science and engineering.

He studied in the University of Adelaide and after obtaining his MBBS returned to Penang where he said he had a wonderful working experience at the Penang General Hospital.

"Then came Confrontation with Indonesia and doctors were needed to serve in the armed forces. We were asked to volunteer especially those who wished to go overseas for post-graduate training. I was one of them.

"We trained for three months as medical officers in the army and were then posted to various military units.

"I was with the Third Malay Regiment, an active fighting unit in Alor Star where I served 18 months. That was in 1966. Later, I was sent to Taiping to serve in the artillery unit for six months.

"In 1968, after finishing my scholarship bond, I went to the UK for post-graduate training, which was long and tedious, taking six and a half years. Training in the UK at that time was very tough and highly competitive. The country was flooded with doctors from the sub-continent – India and Pakistan – so qualifying for training positions in institutions was very tough.

"I enrolled in the Royal College of Surgeons to do the basic fellowship exam so

that I could compete for the better training posts. I was in rotational posts for two years after which I could choose any discipline. Before completing it I presented myself for the Edinburgh fellowship exams. I went to see my supervisor and said I wanted to learn something I had seen in the course of training – burns.

“There was a nasty accident when an oil truck had gone through a tunnel after someone threw a cigarette. It caught fire and I saw patients with burns but did not know how such patients could be treated. My supervisor Dick Heslop said he would put me in the burns unit in a hospital in Birmingham, which was a leading centre then, to learn. So I went there as a registrar and learned all about burns in a very research-oriented and academic unit. It was the best trauma unit at Birmingham Accident Hospital (BAH).

“I did six months’ training in burns and from there gravitated into plastic surgery because of reconstruction work and for the next four years I trained in plastic surgery in the UK. I was lucky to end up in various hospitals that were top plastic surgical centres. And this end part of training was very gratifying because I worked with the best people.

“Returning to Malaysia in 1975, I went directly to Kuala Lumpur to look for a job but they could not offer a suitable position for what I was trained for. So I decided to

come to Singapore where I had a meeting with the then permanent secretary of health, Andrew Chew, a trained doctor himself, who offered me a job on the spot. I have been here since.”

Professor Lee has held various posts in SGH such as Head of Plastic Surgery and Burns. He is the founding director of the SGH-Postgraduate Medical Institute and the founder director and advisor of the SGH Museum. He also founded the skin culture lab in the National Burns Centre in SGH in 1990.

Today, he is an emeritus consultant at the Department of Plastic, Reconstructive and Aesthetic Surgery in SGH and holds a faculty position in Duke-NUS graduate medical school.

In 2015, he and a close family friend, Lee Hoo Leng, contributed \$2.5 million to set up a new Professorship in Plastic Surgery and Regenerative Medicine to encourage research into the regeneration of body parts.

He said that while laboratories in the Burns Unit have been growing skin for transplant onto patients for several years now, it is hoped that the same thing could be done for other damaged or ageing organs and tissues.

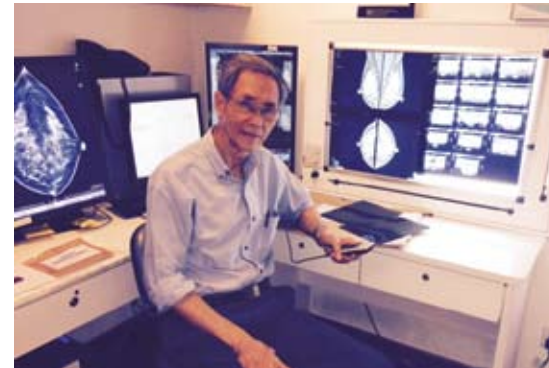
He said, “In an ageing population, regeneration of body parts is crucial. Tissue and organ regeneration is possible but we have a long way to go before we can achieve it. I believe that if researchers are given the

time and resources for further study, such regeneration is possible.”

Chin Wah Seng

Radiologist

Year left school: 1961



For Chin Wah Seng, PFS was a school like no other. He counts his fondness for his alma mater in many ways.

He said, “It starts with the physical surroundings. It has fantastic grounds. There is this huge field surrounded by architecturally beautiful old-style buildings. Then there is the culture of closeness that binds the students. I can’t quite pin it down but I think it stems from the leadership shown by our headmasters and senior teachers. It also stems from our curriculum and the wide range of activities that catered for the sporty boys and the less sporty types.

“I was taken by the number of societies we had, including even an Aristotelian Society.

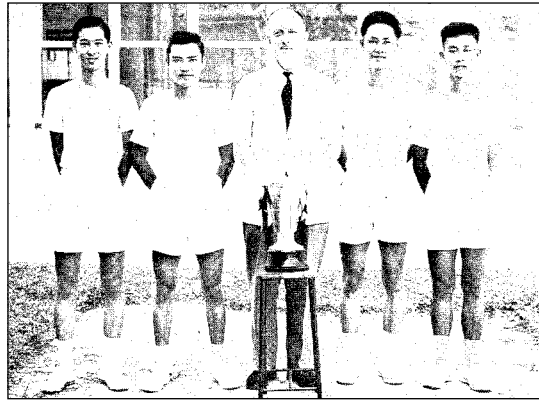
"In my mind, we clicked not because we were looking for something like in some schools where students are there because they want to build up a network for the future. We were more altruistic and valued more the spirit of comradeship.

"Another binding thread was the school magazine given free (until 1962) to each student at the end of the year. It was a kind of year book encapsulating what had gone on in the school for the whole year. It made for good reading and helped to strengthen the sense of belonging."

One of his favourite recollections was the school assembly on Monday morning when every student would gather in the school hall to listen to the headmaster's speech and teachers' announcements of activities for the week. The occasion was a poignant one for him when he was elected head prefect (school captain) and it became his duty to call the school to attention to await the arrival of the headmaster.

"The prefect system was well organised. Prefects had their own room and well-defined roles of helping to keep discipline in the school. As part of the system, senior prefects had to mentor junior prefects so that they could step up, thus adding to the grooming of leadership."

The way Wah Seng sees it, PFS did not do things by half. He talked about how he was inspired by his physical education teacher Teh Kheng Chooi to take up



Winners of the Yang Di-Pertuan Agong's Cup 1961; from left, Khor Cheng Chye, Lee Chong Hoe (Captain), JMB Hughes (Headmaster), Chin Wah Seng and Phoon Chek Hoong.

badminton and went on to win the inaugural Agong's Cup for the school in 1960. Thanks to him, other boys represented the school at the state level in rugby and other sports.

"All this has contributed to the feeling of pride among Old Frees that holds them together," he said.

The school was tops not only in sports but also on the scholastic side, sweeping many Queen's Scholarships in the past and in later years the Colombo Plan Scholarships. He himself was a beneficiary having clinched a Colombo Plan Scholarship to study medicine in Canada where he graduated with a MD degree in 1967.

On his return to Malaysia, he served two years as a medical officer in the General Hospital in Kuala Lumpur and Johor Bahru, district hospital in Batu Pahat and Kota

Tinggi and also two years of compulsory National Service as a doctor (Captain) in the Malaysian Armed Forces. This was during the communist insurgency period when there was combative activity in North Malaysia, Sarawak and Sabah.

He subsequently joined Singapore's Ministry of Health where he specialised in diagnostic radiology in the Singapore General Hospital. He obtained a second Colombo Plan Scholarship to do postgraduate studies in London and subsequently sub-specialised in Interventional Radiology where radiological techniques are used in treating diseases in the internal organs.

In 1979 he was head-hunted to join the newly formed private Mount Elizabeth Hospital as consultant radiologist.

His greatest pride, he says, was in setting up the first diagnostic interventional radiology and cardiovascular laboratory, the first of its kind in a private hospital in Southeast Asia. This was with the help of a specialised supporting team consisting of an angiographic radiographer, nursing sister, cardiac cath technician and dark room technician.

After five years with Mount Elizabeth Hospital, he decided to open his own practice in the then Promenade. He ran it for 17 years before The Promenade was re-developed in 2000. When the hospital made an offer then to buy over his practice, he

accepted and he has been with the renamed practice, Parkway Health Services, Singapore ever since.

Tan Yew Oo

Oncologist

Year left school: 1964



A chat with Yew Oo reveals his passion for his work - oncology or the treatment of cancers.

Yet if he were to pursue his original dream to become

an agronomist, he would not have been an oncologist and Singapore would have lost an important mentor and trainer in medical oncology.

He said, "Forty years ago, there were hardly any drugs for cancer treatment, perhaps just four or five drugs. No one had heard of oncologists until 1978 and the rate of cure for patients then was very low.

"Today over 100 drugs can be used for treating cancer. So there has been an explosion in the knowledge of cancer biology and cancer treatment. Now people can be cured and the rate of survival has gone up by about 20 per cent.

"Before, in the 1990s, drugs were available mainly for treating leukemia and

lymphoma. Since 2000, more new drugs are available for treating other cancers."

Fascinated by the changes in the world of oncology, he says, "Now you can offer patients hope that they can be cured. For those who cannot be cured, they can live longer. The pace of change has been tremendous and I am very excited by how the changes can give hope to people and how these have changed people's perceptions that cancer is not all doom and gloom.

"What I find satisfying too is in how these changes have inspired bright young doctors to go into medical oncology."

Yew Oo's journey in medicine had its beginnings in PFS.

"I was in a cluster of students for whom floating into medicine seemed to be a natural thing to do. But it was very competitive trying to get into medicine."

Then again, the school prepared its students well because of its "culture of diligence in which you are ingrained to work hard but also play hard. So while we were expected to do well academically we were also expected to enjoy sports and other activities.

"Our school system may not have been like a pressure cooker but it was still competitive because of the practice of streaming.

"Before we could get into secondary four, we had to pass our streaming exams in

secondary three and if we wanted to get into the science stream which took the *crème de la crème* of students, we had to do well. There was more streaming to get into Lower Sixth Form.

"All this helped to keep you focused, competitive and achievement-oriented."

All of which came in useful when it came to deciding on a medical career. Opting for the more established medical school in Singapore over Kuala Lumpur's newly opened medical school of two years, Yew Oo graduated with a MBBS degree then went to Canada, the US, Scotland and Australia for specialist training in internal medicine, haematology and oncology.

His plans to return to Penang to practise were scuttled when he was offered a position that did not allow him to make use of what he had been trained for so he decided to join the University of Singapore's Faculty of Medicine where he was a tenured faculty staff for 20 years from 1973 to 1993. During this period, he helped to establish the Department of Medical Oncology in the Singapore General Hospital (SGH) and later in the National University Hospital (NUH). He became a mentor and teacher to doctors among whom are several well-known medical oncologists today.

Despite being in private practice, Yew Oo is still active in teaching and postgraduate medical training. He continues to be involved in clinical cancer research and

clinical trials on novel anti-cancer agents.

"Singapore is an active centre for trials. For new drugs to be licensed, they have to go through trials and if data can be shown that the drugs are good, safe and useful for patient use, drug companies are allowed to sell them. We get experts to evaluate the drugs and submit their reports.

"The government here approves new drugs quite quickly so in neighbouring countries, if doctors cannot get access to these drugs, they can at least send their patients here.

"This helps make Singapore an attractive place to come to for treatment.

"After all, the government wants to promote Singapore as a medical hub and centre for this part of the world."

To this end, doctors in oncology are given training here and elsewhere to equip them with special skills, thus "adding to the talent pool", he says. "It also helps to publicise Singapore's expertise in the treatment of certain cancers and enhances its reputation as a medical hub."

Today, Singapore has 96 oncologists, the highest number in this part of the world.

Yew Oo does his bit to contribute by providing training and mentoring, something he has been doing for the past 15 years.

As he was head of department in the Faculty of Medicine, he was able to institute changes. Thanks to his American

training where hospitals and developments in oncology treatment are considered more modern and structured, he was able to gear teaching methods towards those practised in the US, a turn-around of 180 degrees from the former British-based system.

The change was justified as major discoveries in medicine have recently been done more in the US, he said.

Lee Eng Hin

Pediatric Orthopaedic Surgeon

Year left school: 1966



For Lee Eng Hin, life in school was not all work and no play, thanks to The Fenders, a band that he formed "modelled after the Shadows."

He said, "The lead guitarist was Khoo Soo Teik, (he's teaching in Kuala Lumpur) while Yong Leong Chong, who trains pilots in Singapore Airlines was our rhythm guitarist. Lawyer Chan Ban Eng was our drummer while I played the bass guitar and accordion.

"We also had two buddies, Koh Kim Eow and Fong Chek Hong who sang with us, singing hits from the Everly Brothers and The Blue Diamonds.

"We played at school concerts,



Examining a disabled child.



Eng Hin (second from left) with fellow residents during orthopaedic training in Hospital for Sick Children in Toronto.

appeared at talentime shows and played state-wide in Penang as guest artistes and even did two recordings.

"I come from a musical family. My father played the violin, my mother the piano while I played the guitar and ukulele. We started the band when we were 14 years old and

stopped playing to study when we were 17.

“Our school mates enjoyed our music and found us entertaining.”

Despite a musical background, when it came to a career, he decided to follow a different path. With a Colombo Plan Scholarship, he left to study medicine at the University of Western Ontario in Canada where he graduated with a MD in 1973.

“I had to decide on whether to be a general practitioner or a specialist, and I chose orthopaedics as it was a happy specialty where most of the conditions were not life-threatening and patients would usually get better,” he explained.

He trained in Orthopaedic Surgery at the University of Toronto Residency Training Program, obtaining his FRCS(C) in Orthopaedic Surgery in 1982. He continued, “When I did residency training I enjoyed my stint in paediatric orthopaedics and decided to do a fellowship at the Hospital for Sick Children in Toronto. I was attracted to paediatrics because it is very challenging to treat children as the treatment has to take into account that they are still growing.

“In 1983, the head of orthopaedics in Singapore heard of me and went to Toronto to recruit me while I turned down a job offer at the same time at the Chinese University of Hong Kong.”

He was appointed as a senior lecturer at the National University of Singapore (NUS) and National University

Hospital (NUH). In 1997, he was made a full professor of orthopaedic surgery. He then went on to head the Department of Orthopaedic Surgery at NUS and NUH and eventually became the Dean of the Faculty of Medicine at NUS. As Director of the Division of Graduate Medical Studies at NUS he was responsible for ensuring that all postgraduate trainees were properly trained and rigorously assessed for competence before becoming specialists in their respective fields.

He recalled, “Nobody had been formally trained in paediatric orthopaedics here and as one of the first to have special training, I was asked to start and develop it as a sub-speciality in NUH. When KK Women’s and Children’s Hospital (KKH) was established in 1997, I was asked to start the Orthopaedic department.

“As part of my university work, I teach undergraduates and train post-graduate students to become orthopaedic surgeons. I have been doing this for over 30 years since 1983. I am glad to have played a part in nurturing our young doctors and increasing the pool of paediatric and general orthopaedic surgeons; I find it very satisfying and fulfilling.”

He also started Multidisciplinary Clinics for disabled children in both NUH and KKH, including a Seating Clinic which builds special seats to help severely disabled cerebral palsied children to sit up so that

they can see their environment instead of just looking at the ceiling, and to learn to use their hands. He was inspired to do this because of his training in Toronto.

One of his other contributions is the setting up of two special schools under the Rainbow Centre to provide early intervention, as well as programmes for autistic children and physically disabled children. One of the aims, he said, was to help integrate these children into normal schools.

For his efforts, he has won the President’s Social Service Award, Public Administration (Silver) Medal, Public Service Medal and the Clinician Mentor Award for mentoring students and trainees.

His contributions go beyond medical education, specialist training and social service. He has also contributed in research by setting up the NUS Tissue Engineering Programme, in which he and his team are working on stem cells to regenerate cartilage. “Instead of replacing worn out joints with metal and plastic prostheses, we try to heal them with the patient’s own cells.”

In addition, he was involved with Singapore’s biomedical initiative from the start in 2000 and he was the Executive Director of the Biomedical Research Council of the Agency for Science, Research and Technology (A*STAR) between 2008 and 2012.

Eng Hin reflects, “From a lowly background in Penang, I have helped

Singapore in medicine, education, social service and research. I probably would not be able to do all this if I had remained in Penang." He attributes much of his success to the early formative years in the PFS.

He is currently still actively practising as a paediatric orthopaedic surgeon at both NUH and KKH. He is a Senior Consultant to the Ministry of Health, Senior Advisor to the Division of Graduate Medical Studies at NUS and is also helping Nanyang Technological University (NTU) and Imperial College London with the development of the new Lee Kong Chian School of Medicine as member of their Governing Board and Chairman of the Academic Affairs Committee.

Soo Khee Chee

Head of National Cancer Centre

Year left school: 1969



Khee Chee examining a patient.

For Soo Khee Chee, what stood out for him in PFS was the "intense sense of belonging that comes from a total immersion in an old school culture that emphasised not just achievements in academic studies but also in extra-curricular activities, especially sports."

He credits the school's British headmasters for having set the traditions and tone, running it like an English public school. But the teachers were "rather stern" and he remembers being punched by one of them in the face when he was in Form 2 as a means of instilling discipline – "all part of the growing up experience," he said.

What he treasures most are the friendships forged among students of diverse races and the "intense loyalty all of us have to our friends and school." As proof, he has kept in touch with his classmates over the years, especially those who had enrolled in the University of Singapore's Medical School.

"There were six of us and we are all still here," he said. "I think the school provided us with a vision of a broader world. It taught us good written and spoken English. It provided us with friends for networking and gave us a sense of belonging and pride in the achievements of our old boys."

After graduating in 1975, Khee Chee went to New South Wales, Australia where he worked as a Resident and Registrar at the Prince of Wales-Prince Henry Hospitals. In 1982, he obtained his Fellowship of the

Royal Australasian College of Surgeons.

After deciding to specialise in head and neck surgery and surgical oncology, he moved to London to work in the Royal Marsden Hospital and later in the US at the Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Centre's Department of Surgery in New York.

In 1988, he returned to Singapore to work at the Department of Surgery at the Singapore General Hospital (SGH). In 1993, he was appointed head of the department and also senior consultant surgeon until 2004. In 1995, he obtained his Doctor of Medicine from the National University of Singapore (NUS).

Today, Khee Chee is the director of the National Cancer Centre, providing strategic leadership to more than 500 staff engaged in clinical care and research. He is also Vice-Dean of Clinical and Faculty Affairs at the Duke-NUS Graduate Medical School. He is also Professor of Surgery at NUS.

He has helped to introduce a speciality of head and neck surgery and surgical oncology in Singapore. He is also involved in mentoring and nurturing a group of clinical scientists. "These are positions actively involved in medical science and serve as a bridge between basic scientists and clinicians," he said. "It is about bringing discoveries from the bench to the bedside and from the bedside to the bench."

He has wide-ranging research interests in conducting clinical trials for new

cancer treatments as well as in the field of biophotonics and its role as a new imaging modality for the early detection of cancer.

He has also trained international surgeons and has been Visiting Professor in the University of Toronto, Canada, the Jaslok Hospital and Research Centre in Mumbai, India, as well as Stanford University Medical Center (USA).

For his work, he was recognised with the Outstanding Teacher's Award in 1995 and Best Teacher (Undergraduate) Award in 2001. In 2003, he was awarded the National Day Award, Public Administration Medal (Gold) for all his contributions.

In 2008, he was given the National Outstanding Clinician Mentor Award from the Ministry of Health. In 2011, he was awarded the President's Science and Technology Medal in recognition for his contributions to Singapore's clinical service and healthcare landscape. He is currently the Benjamin Sheares Professor of Academic Medicine in Duke-NUS Graduate Medical School.

He is now involved in establishing collaborations between Singapore and Malaysia to bring the latest in cancer treatment to those who need it.

"This is a cancer centre that we are helping to set up in Penang. It started five years ago and we are partnering with the Adventist hospital to set up the Adventist Oncology Centre. It is a not-for-profit venture – the hospital provides the land to

build the cancer centre while we provide the expertise. We also host training sessions for their doctors and nurses here."

It is a project that resonates with him for as he says, "Penang is close to my heart".

Peter Lim Ai Chi

Senior Consultant

Singapore General Hospital

Year left school: 1972



Peter teaching in Qingdao, China.

Peter Lim was in PFS for three years from 1970 to 1972 studying from Form 1 to Form 3 before moving with his family to Kuala Lumpur, where he completed his secondary education.

Yet, despite the short stint in PFS, his time there made the greatest impressions on him.

He explained, "The school instilled in us loyalty, camaraderie, an ethos of working

hard and striving for your goals. These qualities are what older schools effectively put in you as they have been developed over the years.

"These traditions are very important as you know you are part of a distinguished school where very notable people came from – high court judges, kings and our first prime minister. The implication was that you should similarly distinguish yourself because this is your bloodline and roots. It gave us a sense of belonging and continuity that goes back two hundred years and a sense of fellowship with people who are highly accomplished in other fields.

"Oxford, Cambridge or Harvard are successful and create successful graduates in part because belonging to such august institutions imbues in the students a sense that they are in a special place. They tend to be self-motivated and self-confident.

"So too in PFS where we were expected to do well in education while also focusing on outdoor activities and developing other qualities. Being in the Boy Scouts, for instance, taught us character, resilience, and cheerfulness. We went on tough hiking trips, camped in the pouring rain, but also had fun campfire sessions where girls from St George's and from the Convent Green Lane also took part. I used to be sickly as a kid but when I joined the Boy Scouts, I rarely got sick again."

He was referring to a time when as

a young boy he was often in and out of hospitals and clinics. He found hospitals and their smell of antiseptic fascinating. "I saw things such as needles and syringes being boiled for reuse, as well as sick people getting well. That was the start of my interest in medicine," he said. It was also the school spirit and ethos of serving which explains why "there are so many doctors among Old Frees."

He took a less well travelled path when he went to medical school in India after completing his A-levels. He went on to do postgraduate medical training in the US where he specialised in rehabilitation medicine. Peter's interest in this field stemmed from his orthopaedic surgery postings in India which included rehabilitation, and when he received an offer from the Rehabilitation Institute of Chicago (RIC) at Northwestern University Medical School to further this interest, he took it up immediately.

After the residency programme, he stayed at the RIC as an attending fellow to do a subspecialty in arthritis-orthopaedic rehabilitation, working with patients with arthritis, fractures and joint replacements.

When he arrived in Singapore in 1992, he joined the only other rehabilitation physician in the public sector then and together they went on to train new specialists in rehabilitation in Tan Tock Seng Hospital.

Speaking of his work, he said, "We take care of people with disabilities – patients with strokes, spinal injuries, multiple fractures, joint replacements or cancer.

"We are doctors that can cross boundaries as our training is medical; we understand surgery, know what therapists do, and know what support systems exist in the hospitals and community. In other words, it is holistic medicine.

"Immediately after an accident or stroke, after the neurologist or surgeon finishes his job we take over. We have three main jobs. We take care of medical issues such as high blood pressure, blood sugar or electrolyte control, manage infections, and help to set medical parameters for therapists to work with. We also deal with complications resulting from these types of illnesses such as neurogenic bowel and bladder, autonomic dysfunction, neuropathic or musculoskeletal pain. And we lead the rehabilitation team which includes therapists, prosthetists and social workers.

"Our job is to help people get back on their feet or regain mobility and function so that they can return home and into society."

He returned to the US in 1993, where he established a fellowship programme for Singapore rehabilitation doctors to train at Baylor College of Medicine in Houston, Texas. He was persuaded to come back to Singapore in 2000 by Professor N Balachandran, the doyen

of orthopaedic surgeons to lead the development of Rehabilitation Medicine as a medical specialty in the Singapore General Hospital (SGH). Today, there are 10 consultant physicians and three senior resident specialists in training with the SGH Department of Rehabilitation Medicine.

Setting up the programme was in a sense fulfilling his duty. He continues to be actively involved in the teaching and development of medical rehabilitation not only in Singapore but also in Malaysia and around the region.

He is President of the Rehabilitation Medicine Society in Singapore, Chair of the Rehabilitation Physicians Chapter, College of Physicians Singapore, and was President of the ASEAN Rehabilitation Medicine Association. He is an associate editor of the American Journal of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation, and is peer reviewer for various journals.

A senior consultant of SGH and Group Chief Risk Officer, SingHealth, he holds four faculty positions: Clinical Professor, Baylor College of Medicine, Houston; Adjunct Professor, Medical Faculty, University of Malaya; Clinical Senior Lecturer, NUS (National University of Singapore) Yong Loo Lin School of Medicine and Adjunct Associate Professor, Duke-NUS Medical School.

Lim Beng Hai

Hand surgeon

Year left school: 1976



For Lim Beng Hai, PSF provided the platform for what he is doing now – microsurgery.

He explained, “Our teachers encouraged us to be

creative and to think out of the box. Because of the many experiments we were tasked to do, I realised I was good at tinkering with many hands and that is how I ended up in microsurgery as it is the only thing in medicine that allows me to do that.

“What’s good about it too is that I can recreate nice things so it is very satisfying.”

Microsurgery is surgery that requires a microscope as the structures being operated on are very small such as blood vessels, nerves and capillaries, so it is “very challenging,” he said.

Beng Hai is also involved in research. He was part of the team that developed the six-strand loop suture tendon repair technique used for flexor tendon repair known as the Lim-Tsai technique. He had developed it with his boss Dr Tsu-Min Tsai when he was studying in the US where he was doing his fellowship in Hand and Reconstructive Microsurgery at the Christine Kleinert Institute

for Hand and Microsurgery in 1994.

He now wants to improve on it. He said, “I am developing a tendon development device, provisionally called a teno button. I have been working on this since 1997/98. It is a long road and we are now almost in the first stage.

“I want to do a stronger technique after tendon repair. This is a paradigm shift since the patient does not have to wear a splint, usually for six weeks, for the hand to heal. He can go back to work much earlier. In other words, I am aiming to go towards a splint-free repair which will be pioneering in the world.”

Of his time in PFS, he said, “I have very good memories. They were very stimulating times.”

Yet for him, life was about meeting targets rather than studying hard. He said, “I was in Wellesley School and knew that if I did well enough I would end up in Free School. Every year, the quota was the first best performing 50 students. But in one year, it took only 45 and since I was 46th on the list, I did not get in. I finally entered the school only in the Lower Sixth Form.”

Despite spending two years there, he said he benefitted from the school. He also has a strong attachment to it as evidenced by his donation to build a new basketball court to replace the old court and his efforts to host students from PFS coming to Singapore to play games with Singapore

schools such as a recent team which had arrived to play in a rugby tournament with Raffles Institution.

Of his donation, he said it was prompted by a suggestion of his former classmate, Jalil, the school’s past principal who said that help was needed to replace some ageing equipment, among them the basketball court, to maintain the school’s standards.

“Since I benefitted from the school, I thought I should give back and so made the donation,” he said.

“Some Old Frees among us went back to PFS last year to visit the place and some old boys relived their experience there by sitting in the chairs in the classrooms!”

Beng Hai’s journey as a hand surgeon began after he graduated from the National University of Singapore (NUS) with a medical degree in 1985, following which he obtained his Master of Medicine and joined the Fellow Royal College of Surgeons (Edinburgh) in 1990. In the same year, he did an Advanced Hand Surgery Traineeship.

After completing his training in the Christine Kleinert Institute, he was awarded the Senior Fellowship in Hand Surgery by the University of Louisville Hospitals in 1995 to 1996. He was later appointed Adjunct Assistant Professor to the Department of Surgery, University of Louisville.

He returned to Singapore and in 1998, was accredited as a Specialist in Hand Surgery.

He was appointed consultant Hand Surgeon at the Singapore General Hospital (SGH) and in 2000 became Chief of the Department of Hand and Reconstructive Microsurgery at the National University Hospital (NUH).

He revels in teaching undergraduate and postgraduate students. Among his accomplishments as chief of the Department of Hand and Reconstructive Surgery was setting up the Department's annual cadaveric symposium and workshop for General Practitioners in 2000 and in 2001, the Foundations in Musculoskeletal Surgery for advanced trainees in Hand, Plastics and Orthopaedic surgery.

He also established the Microsurgical Training Laboratory in NUH in 2001. As its Programme Director, he set up a joint training programme in microsurgery with Germany's Aesculap Academy in 2003. The success of the training laboratory prompted him to set up the STAR (Skills, Training And Research) Laboratory two years later, in NUH. This has since expanded to include the Digital Medicine Laboratory.

Today, Beng Hai is the director and senior consultant hand surgeon at the Centre for Hand And Reconstructive MicroSurgery (CHARMS) located at Mount Elizabeth Medical Centre. He is also a visiting senior consultant hand surgeon at the Department of Hand and Reconstructive Microsurgery, NUH.

Wong Peng Cheang

Obstetrician and gynaecologist
Year left school: 1970



“I studied four years in PFS before leaving after Upper Six in 1970 for the University of Malaya to study medicine. I had been in the Science stream all along.

“For me, the school was probably the best school in Penang and perhaps in all of Malaysia. It was very old with a long history with many illustrious alumni. Looking at the long list of successful alumni and what they achieved only motivated us to excel.

“A few things stood out during my time there.

“One was the ‘click-clock’ sound of my Headmaster’s (Tan Boon Lin) shoes as he walked around along the corridors inspecting the school, staff and students. Another was a rather painful witnessing of a boy receiving public caning during school assembly in front of all the teachers and students.

“Lower Six was a year of reckoning because my class became co-ed and we had five girls joining us. They were very popular among the boys. We welcomed them.

“After graduation, I came to Singapore in 1977 because I wanted to be trained to be an obstetrician and gynaecologist. I heard



Wong Peng Cheang (standing, extreme left, in the group photo on the front page of *The Straits Times*, 21 May 1983) was a member of the original team which pioneered IVF (in-vitro fertilisation) in Singapore.

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of the famous Kandang Kerbau Hospital and of its doctors like Dr Lean Tye Hin and Professor SS Ratnam.

“After obtaining my MRCOG, I became interested in the study and treatment of fertility problems and was a member of the

original team which pioneered IVF (in-vitro fertilisation) in Singapore.

“Next I went to the US on a fellowship and on my return to Singapore started to get even more involved. By then the thought of returning to Malaysia did not arise because at that time IVF treatment was not carried out in Malaysia. It was obvious that if I wanted to progress in this field, I should remain in Singapore and pursue my career further here.

“The school’s motto ‘Strong and faithful’ struck a chord with me. The school helped us to learn how to be independent. In extracurricular activities or in the various societies that we joined, the teacher-in-charge was more of a guide and we were largely left to pursue our projects. So we developed a lot of leadership, drive and team building. We grew into the role.

“I think one of the school’s special traits is well reflected in our school song which we sang at assembly. One of its lines was ‘Free School for the brave and for the true’ - it was a constant reminder that we should pursue our goals with heart and soul.”

Chan Kong Thoe

Retired surgeon

Year left school: 1948



As a star surgeon he made headlines in May 1970 when he performed Singapore’s first kidney transplant. Yet, that was only one of a long list of milestones Chan Kong Thoe had been chalking up, right from the time when he enrolled in Penang Free School in December 1941 to begin Standard VI.

Alas, his education was interrupted when Penang fell to the Japanese soon after and it was not until September 1945 when World War II ended that he was able to resume schooling.

Recalling the times then, he said, “I was in PFS in December 1941 for only about a week. I was so impressed by it. The school looked immense with its long corridors. The school field was endless in my mind with a shooting range at an inner end which made the school look ‘very advanced’. But I never saw it used though.

“After the war was over when Penang was liberated in August, PFS reopened in September. Things happened pretty quickly. A brigadier in the British Army was appointed our headmaster but was soon assigned to Kuala Lumpur to be the Director of Education, Malaya. Some teachers were also from the British Army. I remember a Major Miller who taught Geography; he always wore shorts and had a very strong Midlands accent and it was difficult sometimes to make out what he was saying.

“Our Maths teacher and Form Master, Mr Ong Teong Guan was outstanding; he was patient and made maths easy. Later, it was Ooi Khay Bian, who had a BA. He was also very good but had favourites, which was quite a common weakness in those days. Targar Singh was a great Geography teacher, making the subject lively and interesting. He was a very friendly man who used to cycle to school. I had known him since my elementary school days at Westlands School. Later, he went to PFS and was an excellent Scoutmaster and became the Rover Master when I started the first Rover Crew in PFS for

Senior Scouts. I was the Senior Rover Mate, which was the equivalent to Troop Leader in Scouting. A Rover crew traditionally cannot be headed by a minor (below age 21) and we were all schoolboys. It was the first Rover Crew in a school in this part of the world so we made history.

“Competition in PFS was very keen as it had high academic and leadership standards and we were studying among the very best. The kind of environment it provided helped to shape and mature my character.”

It also propelled him to maintain high standards for himself throughout his life - winning awards in school, getting appointed as School Captain, winning the coveted Queen’s Scholarship in his final year at PFS and topping his medical school examinations for all his six years of study. In his graduation year in 1954 when he was awarded the degree of Bachelor of Medicine and Bachelor of Surgery, he scooped up all seven awards that were up for grabs by medical students.

Ironically, medicine was not his first choice. He said, “It was engineering all my life till then. I had scholarships for both the King Edward VII Medical College and Raffles College in Singapore, but my preference was Science and to obtain a BSc at Raffles which baffled all the teachers and my fellow students as medicine was the prime choice then. I changed to medicine at the last minute as I knew my parents would like it

although they never persuaded me.”

He was thrilled to be awarded the Queen’s Scholarship although by his own admission, he was “not too surprised”. He explained, “I had a very good academic record and could speak well and with confidence in interviews. By special dispensation from the Malayan Government, I was allowed to keep the title of Queen’s Scholar as I had won a better scholarship from the Singapore Government. I kept the title of Queen’s Scholar but had no emoluments. The rule then was that a person could hold only one scholarship or prize at any time. It also meant that I had to give up a Hutchings Scholarship that I had also won.”

He began his medical career in 1955 as a trainee under Benjamin Sheares (who later became Singapore’s second president) in the Obstetrics & Gynaecology department of Kandang Kerbau Hospital (KKH). Part of his two-year training had to include six months of full-time surgical training. He was attached to the “A” unit at the Singapore General Hospital (SGH). The unit was headed by Yeoh Ghim Seng who was later appointed as Singapore’s Speaker of Parliament. It was Professor Yeoh who steered him into a surgical career by declining to let him return to KKH.

In 1959, after passing the difficult FRCS (Fellowship of the Royal College of Surgeons) England examination after only

three months of preparation instead of a projected 33 months, Kong Thoe worked in two of England’s most famous hospitals – St Thomas and St James University Hospital – with top British surgeons.

After two years, he returned to work in the University of Singapore’s department of surgery as a lecturer and also as a surgeon back in the “A” unit at SGH where he did all the liver surgeries using techniques he had learnt from England.

In 1965, he took a sabbatical leave of six months after he had won a Hunterian Professorship from the Royal College of Surgeons, England to do research on liver cancer. He later went on to study kidney and liver transplantation in the United States where he performed experimental kidney transplants on dogs. In 1967, he was appointed head of the “A” unit as well as head of the university department of surgery where he introduced new and up-to-date surgical procedures. He was the first to do gastroscopy, laparoscopy (keyhole surgery) and other surgical procedures.

His preoccupation then as he puts it, “was to do liver transplants as liver cancer was one of the commonest cancers here. I was learning about liver transplants at Harvard Medical School and was on its Liver Transplant Team but no liver transplant was done during my time there. Finally, in Singapore, we did kidney transplants instead as all artificial kidneys for dialysis then at the

National Kidney Foundation were fully used.”

His historic kidney transplant in 1970 was so successful that the recipient of the transplanted kidney, who had been very ill prior to the surgery, went on to live for another 22 years.

Although Kong Thoe retired from the department of surgery before it carried out Singapore’s first liver transplant in 1990, it was his work and teaching that had set the stage for the transplant.

He observed, “There has been immense progress since I started doing surgery with many new surgical procedures and research being done now.”

Architecture

Lim Chong Keat

Year left school: 1948



Dato’ Seri Lim Chong Keat is a significant figure in Singapore’s post-independent architectural scene, having been the man behind some of

the Republic’s most noteworthy buildings built in the 1960s and 1970s. They include Singapore Conference Hall and Trade Union House (completed in 1965 under Malayan Architects Co-partnership with partners Chen Voon Fee and William Lim), Malaysia-Singapore Airlines Building (completed in 1969 under Architects Team 3) and Jurong Town Hall (completed in 1974 also with Architects Team 3).

With two of these buildings - Singapore Conference Hall and Trade Union House and Jurong Town Hall - declared national

monuments, Chong Keat has put an indelible mark on Singapore’s architectural scene.

The former, which has been recognised as a first-rate example of international style architecture in Singapore, emphasises the universality of his work even though it has also been noted for the *mengkuang* mat-inspired mosaic pattern on one of its exterior walls, a nod to the architect’s penchant for including local elements in his designs.

And thanks to his background in acoustics, Chong Keat went on to design other concert halls such as DBS Auditorium in Singapore, the Geodesic Dome (Dewan Tunku) and Shah Alam Town Council Auditorium in Kuala Lumpur and Penang’s 65-storey Komtar Tower in George Town, Malaysia’s tallest building until 1988.

Outstanding practitioner apart, Chong Keat has also been influential in moulding the earliest batches of architectural graduates when he was a lecturer at the Singapore Polytechnic where architecture was first established as a course in 1958 before it became a degree course at the University of Singapore in 1965.

Chong Keat has also played an important role on the architectural world stage in organisations such as the Commonwealth Association Architects (CAA), as the co-founding chairman of Architects Regional Council Asia (ARCASIA) and as chairman of the Commonwealth



Singapore Conference Hall and Trade Union House.

Board of Architectural Education (CBAE).

Chong Keat belongs to one of Penang's most prominent families. His brother, Lim Chong Eu, served as the state's second Chief Minister from 1969 to 1990.

Chong Keat studied architecture in the University of Manchester where he graduated with a BA Hons in architecture and at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) where he obtained his master's degree in architecture with special interest in acoustics.

Although he was born in Penang, his links with Singapore go deep as it was the birthplace of his father, Lim Chwee Leong who was sent to Penang to serve as a doctor by his father while his brother, also a doctor, remained to serve in Singapore.

Chong Keat was invited back to Singapore in April 2015 to share his memories by giving a public talk as part of the Singapore Institute of Architects'

initiative to develop a database on pioneer architects and to record the republic's architectural history as part of its SG50 efforts to celebrate Singapore's Jubilee year of its modern founding. He has served as president of the Singapore Institute of Architects and on several public boards including the Singapore Housing and Development Board.

Today, the retired architect spends his time researching on botanical species and conservation in Penang and publishes the journal *Folia malaysiana*. As an avid botanist for the past 30 years, Chong Keat is passionate about documenting the island's rich flora, particularly palms and gingers of which he has discovered some 30 new species that are endemic to Penang.

Apart from pursuing his botanical passion, Chong Keat continues to cultivate his long-standing interest in the artworks of regional artists of which he has a very large private collection. A man of eclectic tastes, Chong Keat's interests extend to design, anthropology, music and art.

He is the founder chairman of the Penang Heritage Trust and has served on the board of the Penang State Museum.

Tay Lee Soon

Year left school: 1949



“The ‘accidental architect’ label given to me may appear to be so when one looks in retrospect to the years spent in schools in Penang and in the University in

Melbourne.

“Listening to stories from family members of the greatest school in Malaya and to enrol in it in January 1950, from Francis Light School was a dream. I could not forget the concern of the class masters, the winning spirit of the sports masters and the camaraderie of the fellow students in the classes.

“I played cricket and hockey for Wu Lien-Teh's House and was swimming captain for the school. We all wanted to do well and give our best. Like when I hit the winning run in the inter-college cricket match against Malay College Kuala Kangsar or when the School beat Chung Ling High School in water polo. Announcements were made in the school assembly recognising the feats of the sportsmen of the school.

“In the early days at school, I dreamt of joining ‘General Templars 1000’ or the police force or the teaching profession since both my parents were school teachers, as some of

my buddies in the cricket, hockey and swimming teams did. However, after much thought and advice, and the family realising that I had the ability, talent and tenacity to achieve something, I decided to study

architecture. This decision did not arrive easily as I was made to sketch most of the iconic buildings in Penang such as the Municipality Buildings at the Esplanade, Buddhist Association Building at Anson Road and, of course, the Penang Free School. Finally I secured a job as an apprentice draughtsman in an architectural office in Singapore.

"I made an application to the Royal Melbourne Technical College and joined the college in January 1956. I later joined the University of Melbourne and graduated in 1961. That was how I became an architect. 'Accidental'? No, and it did not turn out too badly.

"In keeping with and true to the PFS spirit, I managed to balance studies and sports, excelling in hockey. I played premier grade hockey for the school, the Crusaders and the University of Melbourne. The work/sport spirit held on even when I was



Lee Soon on his design for the Tan Chong Motors showroom on Bukit Timah Road: "I deliberately made it slightly slanted so that the cars in the showroom did not reflect off the cars passing by thus blinding motorists."

practising as an architect. I was a member of the very successful Singapore Water Polo team at the SEAP (Southeast Asia Peninsular Games) and SEA (Southeast Asia) Games from 1965 to 1969.

"On graduating in 1961, I joined Booty Edwards Sdn Bhd and later was transferred to its Singapore office. I started Architects 61 Pte Ltd in 1974 and retired from practice in 2008. Architects 61 Pte Ltd developed into one of the major architectural firms with offices and projects completed in Kuala Lumpur, Penang, Jakarta, Manila, India, Cambodia and Vietnam. I completed many major works and won awards including the Presidential Award for Design of the Conservation of Fullerton Hotel in Singapore. The firm has also associated and collaborated with many renowned architects such as Paul Rudolph, I M Pei, Kenzo Tange and Helmut Jahn.

"On reflection of the many types of

projects I have done, I find that I enjoy the challenges imposed on the conservation of old buildings and houses, where I have to balance and appreciate the philosophy and structure of the original architect and also enhancing the buildings to meet the requirements and aspirations of the Clients. Architecture to me is to not only to conceive beautiful building structures but it has to meet the owner's functional requirements and complete it within the budget and time. Within these confines and if we can produce a masterpiece, then it is a bonus.

"The grounding of honesty, integrity instructed and learned early from family and school has been my guiding principle through the years. An 'accidental' architect? ... I don't think so. FORTIS ADQUE FIDELIS."

Heah Hock Heng

Year left school: 1953



Another architect who has put his mark on Singapore's architectural landscape is Heah Hock Heng.

He is best known for having designed the tower wing of

the Shangri-La Singapore, which opened in April 1971 as one of Singapore's first five-star

luxury hotels. Its owner, Robert Kuok, also tasked him to build the Rasa Sayang Resort in Penang, which opened in November 1973. Located at Batu Ferringhi, it earned a name as the largest beach resort in the region and till today is known for its distinctive Minangkabau roofs.

Working on hotels was a delight for Hock Heng as he had written on hospitality architecture for his thesis at Cambridge University. His first project though was not a hotel building but Singapore's Ngee Ann College (now Polytechnic) on Clementi Road.

From hotels, his architectural firm, Seah, Lee & Heah went on to design several other buildings in Singapore – many of them luxury condominiums such as Futura, Draycott Towers and Westwood that were classified as iconic then because of their unusual look.

He said, "We were experimenting with new forms then. Having studied classical architecture we did not do irregular shapes that computers can now give you. We had to draw then and that was the most satisfying part of our work."

However, he laments that after 30 years many of his projects have been torn down during the enbloc sales fever a decade ago which saw owners selling their properties to developers to re-build anew.

Today, Hock Heng works as consultant to firms such as New Space Architecture. "I bring in projects and do the initial

concept," he says.

Hailing from a prominent family in Penang, Hock Heng was the youngest of several brothers who all studied at PFS. "I thought it strange at first as our father was himself educated at St Xavier's. He was a rubber magnet and had dealings with many British brokers and I guess he could see the difference between PFS which had the cream of the crop among its teachers, many of whom, like our headmaster then (JE Tod) came from Cambridge and Oxford University while St Xavier's was run by missionaries.

"My brothers and I, however, were grateful for being in PFS as we were able to benefit from its traditions, its emphasis on good ethics and the teaching of English."

His school years were compressed as he did not start education until the age of 11. Recalling the circumstances, he said, "I was in Westlands Primary School for just three days when the Japanese bombed Penang and our family was whisked to Penang Hill for our safety. We stayed there for four years."

After the end of the war, he returned to Westlands to study for four years before he moved on to PFS in 1950. "I left in 1953 at age 17 without finishing school. My father Heah Joo Seang was heavily involved in politics as president of the Malayan Chinese Association (MCA) and Penang had a lot of thugs then. I remember having bodyguards when I was in my teens.

"Deciding that I would be safer out of Penang, he packed me off to England to do my 'A' levels. I suspect he also did not approve of my being smitten with a fellow student in PFS!"

He went on to study architecture in Cambridge.

Despite being in PFS for only three years, Hock Heng says he has fond memories of his school days.

"We had a maths teacher, Khoo Kay Beng, who gave us a good grounding in the subject. Our headmaster JE Tod who came across as very strict was actually very kind. He helped me when I was in England and got me to understand what studying in Cambridge was all about.

"We also had a voluptuous biology teacher and her classes were always well-attended and we all passed with flying colours.

"I was involved in sports - badminton, volleyball and football - which led to a lot of camaraderie among players. Through badminton, I got to know Eddy Choong, who later became a four-time champion of the All-England Open.

"There were less glorious moments though like when I was made to stand on the chair at the back of the classroom for being naughty and a girl that I liked came by and saw me – it was most embarrassing."

These days, it looks as if Hock Heng's life has come full circle. He is about to embark on another hotel project, back in Penang.

“This is to restore the former Crag Hotel on Penang Hill to AmanCrag and make it a luxury resort. It will have 20 rooms and the plan is to offer guests who stay there the same unique Aman experience of resort living,” he said.

Ken Yeang

Year left school: 1962



Recognised globally as an eco-architect, Dato' Dr. Ken Yeang's design for Singapore's National Library Board headquarters on Victoria Street

received Singapore's Building and Construction Authority (BCA) Green Mark Platinum Award when it opened in 2005. This is the highest level of rating for environment-friendly buildings.

The building, besides consuming 70 per cent less energy than the industry average, also scored in its deployment of other 'green' features such as the ecological use of vegetation and landscaping that contributed to improving the indoor thermal environment and enhancing the biodiversity of its urban locality, its multi-storey sky-courts, large light-shelves to the Reading Rooms, solar sun-shading to the facades, a

naturally-ventilated central atrium and other innovations.

Another building that Ken completed in Singapore is the Solaris at the one-north business park which has received numerous awards. The building uses a 'tree' as a metaphor for its design, with a spiralling vegetated ramp in an ecological nexus from the basement to its top-most level, which Ken calls a 'vertical linear park'. Solaris was also given a BCA Green Mark Platinum Award and was shortlisted for the Royal Institute of British Architects' Lubetkin Prize in 2012.

Eco-architecture, also known as green architecture, gained prominence in 1990 when the United Nations met to discuss the impact of climate change and what could be done to deal with it. For Ken, however, his interest in eco-architecture started long before it became an industry buzzword in 1971 when he did his PhD at Cambridge University on the topic. He started as a researcher at the university working on the "autonomous" house project as a building that operated without relying on the city's utilities of electricity, water and sewerage. His doctoral dissertation on ecological design and planning gained him a PhD in 1974, and became his life's agenda. He was made an Honorary Fellow of Wolfson College in Cambridge University in 2015.

For Ken, buildings should respect

and biointegrate with nature instead of the other way around, as has been the standard practice. To do this, his design approach is to mimic the attributes of ecosystems in nature. Besides his work on eco-architecture, he is also a pioneer in the bioclimatic design of tall buildings.

His bioclimatic designs can be seen in Malaysia and elsewhere in the world. The high-tech Menara Mesiniaga in Subang Jaya, Selangor is a 15-storey tower capped by a sun-roof over a pool. Built over a raised green mound, it has terraced gardens gracing the balconies and external louvres as sun-shades while the tower uses natural ventilation in its elevator lobbies to reduce energy consumption. It received the Aga Khan Award for Architecture in 1995 and several other industry awards.

Even Ken's residence, the Roof-Roof House completed in 1985, reflects his novel ideas on bioclimatic passive-mode low-energy architecture, having a double roof that lets in light and shades out the sun depending on the time of the day and the sun's path. His recently completed Extension to the Great Ormond Street Children's Hospital in London received the UK's BREEAM 'excellent' rating.

Ken interned for a year in Singapore from 1969-1970, working on the Mandarin Hotel extension before returning to the UK to complete his studies. He is a corporate member of Singapore's Board of Architects

and a Fellow of the Singapore Institute of Architects.

Singapore's BCA awarded him its lifetime achievement award in green architecture in 2015. He received Malaysia Government's Merdeka Award, being its equivalent of the Nobel Prize. The UK newspaper, *Guardian* named him as 'one of the fifty people who could save the planet.'

He lives between Kuala Lumpur and London.

Chan Soo Khian

Year left school: 1980



Chan Soo Khian, also known as Soo K Chan, is known for clean modern lines yet with a touch of the classical when it comes to designing buildings.

However, while aesthetics are important in architecture, he firmly believes that buildings must also be functional and serve the client's needs.

He describes his style as "neo-tropical architecture", a term that has since become part of the architectural lexicon.

Indeed, his characteristic tropical yet contemporary buildings earned him the President's Designer of the Year Award in

2006 and he is credited with pushing Asian architecture into new directions.

He has a slew of other awards to his name including the Miami Biennale 2005 International Competition for The Ladyhill and The Royal Institute of British Architects Worldwide Award 2005 for the Lincoln Modern - both condominium projects in Singapore.

Founder and principal design director of SCDA Architects, his company is engaged not only in architecture but also in interiors, landscaping and product design.

Its multi-faceted approach has led it to work in areas such as master planning, resorts and hotels, commercial buildings, high-rise luxury apartments and houses all over the world. This includes the Lonudhuhuttaa in the Maldives, the OneKL condominium in Kuala Lumpur and the Singapore High Commission in New Delhi.

Currently, he is involved in four projects in New York City, three of which are luxury condominiums while the fourth is a hotel in Lower Manhattan.

His first development, the 31-unit Soori High Line project made headlines with its "resort living in the city" theme when it was launched in 2014. Half of its units will feature a private pool while all of the interiors and furniture in every one of its units are personally designed by Soo Khian.

Soo Khian's interest in New York stems from the time he had spent there as a doctorate candidate for a master's

degree in architecture in Yale University. He moved there after completing a degree in architecture from Washington University. He then worked for two years in the well-known architectural firm of Kohn Pederson Fox. A company project in Singapore led him here in 1990.

He later joined Architects 61 before striking out on his own with SCDA (Soo Chan Design Associates) in 1995.

Soo Khian has expanded the scope of his company's work to include other aspects of lifestyle such as the design and furnishing of Alila Villas Soori, Bali, a luxury resort that he owns and Comptoir Soori, a wine bar and epicerie located in the same row of shophouses as SCDA in Singapore's Chinatown.

Apart from being a practitioner, he imparts his knowledge through teaching architectural courses in various universities such as the University of Paris and Notre Dame University, Syracuse University and the National University of Singapore, which recently conferred him as Professor in NUS (Architecture).

He has fond memories of his time in Penang Free School where he enjoyed drawing caricatures of his teachers and passing them around. This penchant for drawing and his interest in building toys such as Lego stimulated his desire to become an architect – a good choice indeed.

The Arts

Dennis Lee

Pianist

Year left school: 1962



Living the life of a nomad is par for the course for Dennis Lee, a world renowned concert pianist. His performance schedule is booked two years ahead but he can sometimes receive a call to replace someone who has fallen ill and he has to take the first flight out as a replacement with just a few hours' notice.

It may be a bit of a bohemian lifestyle, he says, but he enjoys it despite the uncertainty about where he might be going. With his regular concert schedule, however, he knows well in advance where he is heading to. The 40 concerts he does each year take him around the world but he says he tries to make sure he returns to Singapore and Penang at every available opportunity.

Both places hold a soft spot for him – Penang as it was his hometown and Singapore as it is where he has held many a concert over the past four decades.

His interest in music began when he started piano lessons in the 1950s. He remembers how he used to practise on the piano and the violin instead of joining his classmates in playing football in PFS. Although it might have created a bit of a barrier then, he managed to forge some long-lasting friendships with other Old Frees. One of them is Tan Yew Oo who always looks forward to welcoming Dennis to his home whenever he is in Singapore to perform.

Dennis says, "I left PFS after Form 5 in 1962 to take my A-levels, two diplomas and two degrees in the UK. I also hold Singapore Permanent Residence. Already when I was still studying in the UK, I came back to the East periodically and gave recitals in Singapore - usually at the Victoria Concert Hall, Conference Centre and the DBS Auditorium.

"These were presented by various organisers including Donald Moore, the then Ministry of Culture and the Singapore Music Teachers' Association.

"It was a helpful experience for a young aspiring pianist like me. I also played a concerto with the Goh Soon Tioe Orchestra, as well as charity recitals for churches and orphanages.

"Later on, there was a 'mixed' programme presented by the Economic Development Board at Suntec, and more recently, two recitals of French piano music at the National Museum when the Musée d'Orsay of Paris loaned Singapore more than 100 Impressionist paintings.

"There have also been numerous masterclasses at the Nanyang Academy of Fine Arts, and various talks about the importance of careful reading of piano repertoire and how to prepare for music exams for private music schools.

"I treasure the many occasions when I have played with the Singapore Symphony Orchestra, at the Victoria Concert Hall as well as the Esplanade Cultural Centre. Most recently, my wife (Toh Chee Hung) and I performed a recital at the newly refurbished Victoria Concert Hall for SG50.

"We continue to hold dear our links with the cultural life of Singapore, while fulfilling our commitments in Europe, the USA and Canada, and other parts of Asia."

"I was also an examiner for the (UK

Royal Schools of Music for over 30 years, and this work took me to many countries including Australia, New Zealand, Turkey, USA, Canada, Hong Kong, Switzerland and Scandinavia. Now and then I am still invited to judge festivals and competitions all over the world, as well as give masterclasses. I find this variety stimulating, and hearing how other people approach music in different countries has helped me widen my horizons."

CM Wong

Chinese Antiques Collector and Historian
Year left school: 1921

A noted antiques collector and acknowledged as an authority on Chinese arts and culture, Wong Chong Min, better known as CM Wong, received his early education in English at PFS after his family had moved to Penang from Hong Kong where he was born.

The year was 1910 and the family was to move again in 1921, this time to China. It was during his two-year stay there that he developed an interest in the Chinese language and culture.

In 1923, the family moved to Singapore where the young CM Wong's proficiency in English and Chinese landed him a job as a court interpreter, a position he held for well over 35 years.

While carrying out his duties as an interpreter, CM Wong found time to deepen his interest in Chinese arts and to share his knowledge with others.

To this end, he co-founded the China Society of Singapore with Lee Siow Mong, another renowned Chinese culture expert, in January 1949. The idea behind the society was to spread the word on the finer aspects of Chinese culture to locals and expatriates alike. He reached out to them with talks and courses in Chinese arts and literature conducted in English.

He even put together a book on the subject in a 25th anniversary journal of the China Society of Singapore 1949-1974 as part of the organisation's commemorative celebrations. The China Society with its office at the Singapore Chamber of Commerce on Hill Street still thrives today.

For years, CM Wong and Lee Siow Mong were much sought after to give talks on "all things Chinese" at luncheons organised by associations such as the Rotary Club. He was often quoted for his views on Chinese culture and had been referred to on many an occasion as a "Chinese almanac expert".

To further promote Chinese antiques and paintings, he formed the Eastern Antique and Appreciation Society in 1980 with fellow antiques collector Lieu Tien Chung.

An affable man, CM Wong was also noted as an authority on Chinese jade. He was well-respected by his peers and

appreciated for his willingness to help.

His home in Tiong Bahru was described by a journalist Hoo Yew Gee during a visit as being akin to a Chinese museum. He wrote, "The furniture in his home and the paintings on the walls were all antiques."

Despite his large collection of priceless treasures, he was quoted by his daughter Rollyne, at his passing at the age of 88 in 1991, "All of man's material possessions are transient. Only experience and knowledge in our minds can be permanent and no one can take them away from us."

P Ramlee

Actor/director

Year left school: 1947



The name P Ramlee is synonymous with the Malay film industry.

He was a man of many talents – actor, film director, singer, songwriter, music composer

and comedian. On top of this, he was an accomplished musician who played the ukulele, guitar, piano and violin. No other artiste in the Malay entertainment industry could hold a candle to him – even today, 40 years after his passing.

Born in Penang in 1929 of an Achehnese

father and Malayan mother, P Ramlee studied in PFS until the outbreak of World War II. During the Japanese Occupation that followed, he attended the Japanese Navy Academy but after the war ended, he was able to resume his studies at PFS where he was very active in sports, particularly badminton, football and sepak takraw.

In 1947, P Ramlee made a name for himself when he came in first in a song competition organised by Penang Radio. A year later, he was spotted by film director B S Rajhans when he sang in a music festival in Bukit Mertajam, Province Wellesley. Rajhans offered P Ramlee a role in Singapore as a playback singer for the lead actor in a movie titled *Cinta* (Love). It was to be produced by Malay Film Productions (MFP) which had been set up by the famed Shaw Brothers in 1947.

It was another film director, L Krishnan who gave P Ramlee his big break when he cast him in the lead role in *Bakti* (Faithfulness) in which he was required to sing five songs. It would be the first time that an actor would sing in his own voice. It was L Krishnan's first film after joining MFP in 1949. The movie was to launch both Krishnan's and P Ramlee's careers.

The movie premiered at Shaw's Rex Cinema in April 1950. It was a box office success and the film was shown in cinemas throughout Malaya as well.

Acknowledged as the pioneers of Malay



The memory of P Ramlee lives on in his old family home, which has been preserved in Penang.

cinema, the Shaw Brothers' studio located at 8 Jalan Ampas was prolific, churning out 150 Malay-language films in 20 years. P Ramlee was involved in one third of them. The 1950s and 1960s were truly the Golden Age of Malay cinema.

Hardworking and talented, P Ramlee went on to not only act but also direct movies. He acted in 65 movies, directed 34 films and sang 390 songs. He had a close relationship with Run Run Shaw, who was running the family business in Singapore. He brought Ramlee to film festivals around the globe. It was said that Run Run Shaw had such faith in P Ramlee that he would easily approve the projects that the latter wanted to work on.

Ramlee directed his first movie *Penarik Beca* in 1955. Some of his best known films were *Hang Tuah* (1956), *Musang Berjanggut* (The Bearded Fox, 1959) and *Madu Tiga* (The Three Wives, 1964). Ramlee became a

legendary figure and an icon of Malay arts and entertainment.

In 1967, MFP shut down when Kuala Lumpur became the new hub for Malay films after Shaw Organisation set up the Merdeka Film Productions studio there.

Ramlee relocated there and made several more films before it closed down in 1977. But alas, he was unable to retain the fame that he enjoyed while he was in Singapore. Still, no one has come close to matching him in his acting talents.

He died of a heart attack in May 1973, aged only 44. In 1990, he was posthumously awarded the Panglima Setia Mahkota (PSM), with the title Tan Sri. In the same year, he was accorded the title of Seniman Agong (Great Artiste).

Although MFP in Singapore was shut down after Ramlee had left, its premises at Jalan Ampas remain and there has been talk about preserving it as a film museum.

Today, Ramlee is remembered in Penang by a road named after him in 1983 – Jalan P Ramlee, formerly known as Caunter Hall Road where he was born. His family's wooden house, built by his father and uncle, has been restored and is open for visits. Next door is the Pustaka Warisan Seni Complex which houses the P Ramlee Gallery displaying various aspects of the artiste's illustrious career.

Business

Chan U Seek

Businessman

Year left school: 1946

He was one of the earliest high-flyers, holding a trusted position as director in various companies and as a government advisor.

Born in 1925 in Ipoh, Chan U Seek spent his early childhood in Medan, Sumatra, where his family had settled when he was just six months old.

In 1938, he was sent to Penang to be educated in a secondary school. He secured a place in PFS but the Japanese invasion of 1942 and subsequent occupation of Penang cut short his schooling. He returned to Medan where he worked as a clerk for Mitsubishi Shoji Kaisha. When the war ended in 1945, he went back to Penang to resume his studies but a lack of tables and chairs in PFS saw him spending the first several weeks in Chung Ling High School.

Alas, U Seek found it difficult to re-

adjust to school so he quit in 1946 to work in a trading company Chee Seng & Co that had been set up by his father and some partners. The company was an importer and exporter of goods and produce to and from Indonesia. Trade had to be conducted by barter as Indonesia, which was fighting the Dutch for independence then, did not have a lawful currency of its own.

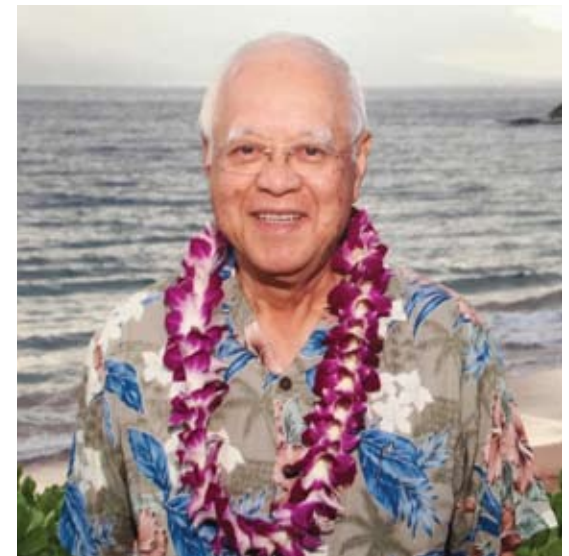
The company had to obtain permits from both Dutch and Indonesian officials to conduct its business. What's more, all cargo had to be inspected by the Dutch navy to ensure that restricted items were not entering Indonesia. Despite the trying times, the work that U Seek did provided him with valuable experience in dealing with the Indonesian business community and Indonesian officials – know-how that would come in useful later in his career.

In 1955, the Hong Kong-based Jardine Matheson Group (Jardine Group) was keen to expand their business in Southeast Asia due to trade restrictions in China. The Jardine Group conducted this expansion through an investment in Henry Waugh and Co. In the same year, U Seek was offered employment by Henry Waugh and Co (later renamed Jardine Waugh Limited) as an executive director based in Singapore.

The Jardine Group did not have business in Indonesia at the time, and U Seek was responsible for expanding its business interests there in various sectors



Chan U Seek was a well-respected figure in Singapore's business community and beyond.



U Seek at the Airbus Golf Invitational in Maui, Hawaii in June 2008.



In the early days of the Jardine Group in Singapore.

such as consumer goods, aviation and newsprint. In September 1963, U Seek and a colleague from the Jardine Group were appointed by the Deputy Colonial Secretary of Hong Kong to negotiate the terms of agreements between Hong Kong and Indonesia for the processing of raw cotton supplied to Indonesia. Hong Kong was involved as Indonesia did not have sufficient spinning capacity to turn the raw cotton into yarn. U Seek negotiated the allocation of raw cotton and yarn prices with the Indonesian government.

U Seek rose through the ranks steadily and was appointed by the Jardine Group to act as its Director of Aviation and Armaments in 1963. This was a position he

held until his resignation from the Jardine Group in 1970.

Building on the foundation laid by his exposure to businesses and government in Indonesia early on in his career, U Seek became an advisor to the Singapore government on the development of trading relations with Indonesia on numerous occasions.

The earliest known record of U Seek's public service was his participation as a member of Singapore's trade and economic mission to Indonesia on 12 February 1967 in response to an invitation from the Indonesian government. This mission was led by then permanent secretary (Economic Development) at the Ministry of Finance



U Seek was intimately involved in the aviation industry.

Sim Kee Boon. In the same year, U Seek accepted an appointment as a member of the Economic Development Board (EDB), a government agency in charge of creating business and job opportunities for Singaporeans.

Through to around 1969, U Seek continued to promote trade between Singapore and Indonesia through various official dialogues of a similar nature held in each of the two countries. One of these was a Tourism Technical Fact Finding Mission on 28 April 1968 to discuss with the Indonesian government certain proposals to develop the island of Bali for tourism.

Led by then deputy secretary of the Ministry of Finance and deputy chairman

of the Singapore Tourist Promotion Board Ngiam Tong Dow, the mission comprising 10 delegates spent 12 days in Jakarta and Bali.

With great foresight, the Singapore government believed that tourists flying to Bali would pass through Singapore if Bali were to become a tourist destination. U Seek was appointed advisor to the mission.

As a result of his business and personal reputation in Singapore, U Seek was also invited to chair the Singapore Ex-Political Detainees Aftercare Society from March 1970 to 2000 (following his role as committee member since April 1968). This was an organisation formed to reintegrate former political detainees into mainstream society and to help them live stable and productive lives in Singapore. Having served its purpose, the Society was dissolved in 2000. In recognition of his contributions, U Seek was honoured with a National Day Award in 1984.

In 1970, U Seek resigned from Jardine Waugh Limited to set up his own business, conducted through Associated Equipment Pte Ltd. Over the years, he acquired a reputation as a leader in the business community by embarking on a myriad of commercial ventures in diverse sectors ranging from aviation to retail by forming lasting partnerships with local business magnates.

He served as a director in Metro Holdings Limited for more than three decades, since its listing in 1973. As a

skilled negotiator, he was involved in Metro Holdings' acquisition of the Orchard Square Project (today's Ngee Ann City) from the British Crown Agents for Overseas Governments and Administrations in 1975. In 1973, U Seek was a founding director of Avimo Singapore Ltd, a joint venture between Sheng-Li Holdings Co Pte Ltd (predecessor of Singapore Technologies Engineering) USH International and himself. Avimo was engaged in the making of defence-related electro-optical equipment, and held a successful public offer in 1987.

A regular fixture at the Paris and Farnborough air shows for decades, U Seek had a keen interest in aviation and was the Chairman of Aerostar Leasing Ltd, a company formed in the 1990s which helped to modernise the fleet of Vietnam Airlines through the leasing of Airbus aircraft to the airline.

Despite a very successful career that saw him moving around in the highest levels of the business world and in top government circles, those who knew U Seek recall him as an amiable, warm, down-to-earth person with no airs.

Outside the corporate boardroom, he always found time for friends and treasured particularly his involvement with The Old Frees Association, Singapore (OFAS). He was proud to be an Old Free.

"He was, in fact, one of the prime movers of having a coffee-table book published to document PFS, the Old Frees

in Singapore and the activities of OFAS. He would attend meetings regularly to give his input," recollected OFAS' honorary secretary Gabriel Teh.

Sadly, he passed on in 2009 without seeing the book to fruition. He was aged 84.

With contribution from Nicholas Thio, a grandson of Chan U Seek.

John Lim Kok Min

Company Director

Year left school:1958



While many Old Frees have been known to have made an indelible mark in the fields of law and medicine in Singapore, others have made their own contributions in a totally different field – the corporate world.

John Lim Kok Min probably would not have imagined the significant inroads he would be making when he first joined Singapore's Fraser & Neave (F&N) as a trainee executive in 1962 after completing his BA Honours degree at the University of Malaya in Kuala Lumpur.

He climbed up the corporate ladder very quickly and eventually became F&N's Group Deputy Marketing Manager. He later

joined Pepsico International, an American multi-national company as its Regional Marketing Director in 1978, based first in Bangkok and then in Singapore.

He was head-hunted four years later to join Cold Storage Holdings as its Distribution Director and rose to become its first local Group CEO (Chief Executive Officer), a significant milestone as this position had until then always been held by expatriates.

He has also been Group Managing Director of JC-MPH Ltd, Pan-United Corporation and finally as President and Executive Deputy Chairman of LMA International NV, from which position he stepped down at the end of 2010.

Today, more than five decades since he started his career, and at 75, an age when many others would have long retired, John remains active in the corporate world. He continues to serve on the boards of various public listed and private companies. He is currently the Independent Chairman of Boustead Projects Ltd and of IREIT Global among other directorships.

John is also active in the public sector and GLCs (government-linked companies) as well as the non-profit sector, devoting much time and energy to serve on several statutory boards, GLCs, trade associations and professional bodies over the years. His many appointments have included being chairman of the Building & Construction

Authority, Senoko Power Ltd, Gas Supply Pte Ltd, Singapore Institute of Directors as well as deputy chairman of four institutions: Agri-Foods & Veterinary Authority, Temasek Polytechnic, NTUC Fairprice Co-operative and Singapore Institute of Management. He is also a past president of Sentosa Golf Club.

Another area of his expertise is corporate governance and he is recognised as a leading figure in this field in both Singapore and the region. Since the beginning of 2000 he has been a core member of the OECD (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development) - Asian Roundtable on Corporate Governance and is a Resource Person for Asian Development Bank and International Finance Corporation, which is part of the World Bank. He also served as Chairman of the OECD Asian Corporate Governance Network for State Owned Enterprises (SOEs) from 2006 to 2012.

For his outstanding contributions to the corporate community, John was awarded the Public Service Medal (PBM) by the President of Singapore in 2006.

John credits Penang Free School for having shaped his life and career. He says, "My alma mater prepared me well for my many leadership roles in life. It gave me self-confidence and resourcefulness to adapt to all kinds of environment and equipped me with the ability to adjust where necessary and to strive to succeed.

"In addition, the school taught me the values of honesty, integrity and humility, especially in victory, and the importance of teamwork."

He looks back with fondness on his days at PFS where he studied from 1953 to 1958. He excelled in football and hockey, representing the school in many competitions and was a school prefect as well as House Football Captain.

He said, "I have wonderful memories of PFS – my time there were some of the best years of my life. The friends I made and the camaraderie forged, especially on 'outstation' trips for inter-school football and hockey matches are memories that I always treasure. I also have fond recollections of my many expat teachers who took a genuine interest in our welfare and treated us, in many respects, as equals."

Of his past headmasters and teachers, both local and expatriate, he remembers best JE Tod, JMB Hughes, Brian Smith, G Bainbridge, WE Howe, W Williams, De Turville, Ong Poh Kee, Rajendra Nath, Lim Boon Hor, Teoh Cheng Hai, Tan Boon Soon, Tan Ah Fee, MSR Ambrose and Tan Boon Lin.

For John, one of the school's special traits was that every boy studying there - irrespective of race, language, religion, social status or wealth - was treated equally.

He said, "It was all about integrity, fairness and treating others as you would

want others to treat you. This was what the school imparted to me - the virtue of humility and the importance of racial harmony in a multi-racial society.”

Ng Kong Yeam

Retired. Formerly Group Chairman,
Sino-America Tours.

Year left school: 1961



Dato' Ng Kong Yeam demonstrated the staunch spirit of an Old Free by adopting a 'never say die' attitude in the face of adversity. And like a

true alumnus, he believes in 'giving back to society' and so had been quietly donating to his former schools to assist needy students.

Born into a wealthy family, the young Kong Yeam lived a life of luxury including even wearing a Rolex watch when he was just in Primary 1. However, when his father, who owned a chain of goldsmith shops and several properties in Penang, was cheated and saw his business collapse, Kong Yeam was steeled to rebuild his family's fortunes.

He was 15 then and to make matters worse, the young boy who had been studying in Chung Ling High School was expelled for writing about a students' demonstration in the school magazine even

though he and his fellow editors did not take part.

Luckily, upon appeal to the state authorities, he was allowed to enrol in PFS where he sat for his 'O' levels.

He started working life as a chief clerk in a village council in Perak and later became a court interpreter.

Determined to get into university, he sat for his 'A' level examinations after just six months of self-study. His results enabled him to clinch a place in the law department at the then University of Singapore.

However, he was no ordinary student, skipping classes while working as a full-time court interpreter in Johor Bahru and attending only evening tutorials.

He was 25 and had a wife and young daughter to support.

Graduating with honours after four years, Kong Yeam landed a job in a law firm. The income then was so good and costs of living so cheap that he was able to save money to invest in property.

In an interview with *The Straits Times* in 2006, Kong Yeam said that back in the 1970s, he was able to earn more than enough to buy a car (it cost just \$8,000 then) and a house in two months.

He and a few friends pooled their savings to invest in a piece of land and some shophouses on Cecil Street.

It proved to be a fortuitous move. After receiving approval from the authorities to

redevelop the land by building office blocks, he and his buddies were able to sell the plot to Far East Organisation for more than 20 times their purchase price after a short period of time.

Much of Kong Yeam's life after that would bear proof of the entrepreneur that he is.

After the windfall, he quit his career as a lawyer to become a property developer. He was only 40 then. Although most of his developments were in Singapore, Johor, Kuala Lumpur and Penang, he ventured as far afield as the United States. In the 1990s, he developed a 394-unit condominium named Opulence in Las Vegas and it quickly sold out.

He is noted for giving unusual touches to his properties such as the Tudor-styled Greenridge housing project in Singapore.

From developing properties, Kong Yeam moved into the travel business. He bought over Sino-America (SA) Tours with a partner UIC. In 2003, he decided to buy over UIC's share and became the sole owner of the agency.

He admits that it is difficult to make profits in the travel agency business but he says he is in it not for the money but for the pleasure it gives.

Not surprisingly, he has travelled extensively for business and leisure. Old Frees remember the golfing trips he often organised including one to the UK, which

included visiting JMB Hughes, the popular headmaster. He was also a prime mover in inviting Hughes to visit Old Frees in Penang, Kuala Lumpur and Singapore, contributing generously to host him.

In fact, Kong Yeap revealed that he has been contributing to his two alma maters – Chung Ling and PFS - regularly.

"I support education. It enhances the human race," he has been quoted as saying, and this is reflected in his children's education and careers. His eldest daughter Irene is a Professor at Warwick University and a senior member of Wolfson College, Cambridge University. His second daughter Iris graduated from Pepperdine University in California and is in the Film/TV production business in New York, while his son Gabriel completed his undergraduate and Master's degrees from the London School of Economics and Political Science, and has now taken over the family businesses.

Today, at 76, Dato' Ng is retired to Johor Bahru and lives with his wife Datin Ling Chooi Sieng, who was also a lawyer and his partner in his legal firm. He leaves the overseeing of his travel agency and other businesses to his son.

Education

Catherine Lim

Educator/Author

Year left school: 1958



As an author, Catherine Lim needs no introduction having published, to date, nine collections of short stories, five novels, two collections of poetry and several political commentaries.

Although she traces her love for literature back to her childhood days in Kulim, Kedah where she was born and in Province Wellesley where she first studied, devouring books by Enid Blyton and Richmal Crompton, she acknowledges that her time in PFS helped to deepen her interest in the written word.

She said, "We had good English teachers, one of whom was Mrs Hughes, the wife of the headmaster JMB Hughes. She was not a regular teacher but she

was excellent and I enjoyed her classes tremendously.

"Mrs Hughes was approachable and had a talent for story-telling. She and the other English teachers would begin each lesson by getting the students to laugh to make them at ease and win them over. That must have rubbed off on me as I tend to do that with my audiences whenever I give a talk. But as our teachers used to say, being sincere was important as well.

"Mr Hughes himself was extremely popular. He was very fair, kind and honest and was greatly missed when he retired. Over the years, ex-students invited him back to Penang – that was a measure of his popularity.

"I was very diffident and shy as a student but I spent many happy moments there. I played netball and enjoyed the school's scout outings. When I was in the Bukit Mertajam Convent prior to PFS, I related only to the nuns. But in PFS, suddenly we had to learn to relate to boys and to teachers from overseas. We also had to do projects that I never did before in the convent such as giving speeches. I wouldn't be surprised that my confidence to speak in front of others today stemmed from there.

"We also had social gatherings which was nice as I had never been to dances or parties before."

Catherine credits the exposure to a new environment and a different culture in PFS for instilling in her certain skills that have

since stood her in good stead such as social skills and public speaking.

"Our literature texts were more demanding than what I had been exposed to before and this pushed us up to a higher level of thinking," she explained.

Catherine began her teaching career at St Andrew's School soon after graduating from the University of Malaya in Kuala Lumpur and moving to Singapore in 1967. Determined to make sure her own students would enjoy literature as much as she did, she found ways and means to inject interest and inspire creativity.

"I made sure my students would not be bored. I would encourage them to write of local superstitions for instance. Sometimes I got them to prepare three stories beforehand - one happy, one sad and one of a personal experience. I taught them how to fit their story to a title thus preparing them for composition.

"I wanted to make a good job of my work and help the students to build up on their vocabulary.

"I was excellent in preparing them for exams, I think. I would scour exam papers for the past ten years, observe trends and advised the students to go for topics that were easy to write.

"I taught them to use dialogue and write local stories as examiners tended to be taken by these. I loved interacting with young people so it was a gorgeous job."

In 1980, she went into administrative work as a project director with the Curriculum Development Institute of Singapore.

In 1988, after completing her PhD in applied linguistics from the National University of Singapore, Catherine was appointed a specialist lecturer with the Regional English Language Centre teaching sociolinguistics and literature. In 1992, she left her educational career to become a full-time writer.

It was not a difficult decision as Catherine had been published much earlier, starting with her first short story collection called *Little Ironies: Stories of Singapore* in 1978.

"I was lucky as I was publishing at a time when it was a novelty. I also used names like Ah Bah, which resonated with the local environment. I had these 18 stories and I showed them to Heinemann and they decided to publish them. I think there is an element of luck when it comes to publishing."

Catherine has not looked back since. She continues to write focusing on Singapore society and themes of traditional Chinese culture.

"My stories always have an underlay of humanity, courage, compassion and trust, which are the most important human attributes that I got from my parents," she concludes.

Betty Ooi Poh Gek

Teacher/Principal/Deputy Director Schools (West)
Year left school: 1964



An alumna of St George's Girls' School, Poh Gek recalls having to sit for an entrance examination to get into the Sixth Form of PFS.

"St George's had no sixth form classes then," she said, "and we all aspired to get into PFS because of its reputation as a premier school.

"When I first entered, I was in awe because of my impression of it producing top scholars. The school took in top students of diverse backgrounds. We mixed well together but there was always the pressure to do well and to excel.

"The culture of diligence in school was strong, the teachers were caring and we were all motivated to do well.

"Girls were in a minority and thank goodness, the boys treated us sensitively. They were quite mischievous though. I was in the science class and often when we did dissection classes, I remember a few of the boys were fond of putting in things like rats' tails in the pockets of our skirts!

"But there was a lot of collaboration among us even if we were in competition.

We helped each other with schoolwork and shared notes.

"In PFS, we were also encouraged to be well-rounded, so I took up badminton. The annual sports day was a big affair and the House fever was very great as those belonging to the various Houses would cheer vociferously for their team-mates to win the championship shield.

"Apart from sports day, the other memorable occasion for me was the weekly school assembly. It was a formal and dignified affair. The school captain would go on stage to announce the arrival of the headmaster. He was Tan Boon Lin then and he would stride into the hall amid a hushed silence. Only his shoes could be heard – clip clop, clip clop..."

After PFS, Poh Gek studied science at the University of Malaya in Kuala Lumpur. She taught for one and a half years in Penang and Kuala Lumpur before moving to Singapore in 1970.

She began her teaching career as a biology teacher in Beatty Secondary School before moving on to Anderson Junior College and Cedar Girls' Secondary School. She was later appointed principal of Yuan Ching Secondary School and of Temasek Junior College. She also took up a series of appointments at the Ministry of Education as senior inspector of schools, assistant director of schools, deputy director of school placement and scholarships and finally,

deputy director schools (west). In all, she spent 34 years in the education service.

Her time in PFS helped her to deal with her 'difficult' task of disciplining the students of Yuan Ching Secondary School. She said, "Most of them were latch key children who did not know how to spend their time after school; they were not very disciplined. I tried to inculcate a sense of discipline among them and raise their self-esteem and to get them to take pride in their work, just like the students in PFS.

"I focused on pastoral care programmes and after three years could derive satisfaction from the programmes as they had a positive effect on the students. The students were involved in community projects including dancing and singing. They learnt to gel together and were extremely proud that they could even beat some of the better schools in a whole-school effort national community singing/dancing competition.

"I guess it all stemmed from my PFS experience where our teachers were caring and so I tried to do the same to the students at Yuan Ching.

"At Temasek Junior College which is one of the top five junior colleges, the students there were already very motivated, so my role was different. My mission was to build a caring and achievement-oriented college. My focus was to stretch the potential of the students further, to learn not

by rote but to explore and go beyond their textbooks and to have a joy and passion for learning and – like in PFS - help develop the students' leadership potential.

"It worked well with the students taking part in project work, leadership programmes, a diverse range of co-curricular activities and community service."

In her last posting from 2002 to 2003, Poh Gek was still involved in developing leadership, this time among principals and vice-principals.

"As deputy director of schools, I led a group of cluster superintendents in the west zone with over 90 primary and secondary schools and junior colleges," she explained. "Our main role was to supervise the principals and vice-principals in these schools and evaluate and develop them to make sure there was quality leadership in schools. We worked closely with them to ensure that schools were effectively managed and quality staff and quality programmes were in place with students the ultimate beneficiary."

Chong Tian Hoo

Teacher/Educator

Year left school: 1961



“I was born in Perak in a small rubber estate known as Banir Estate, 12 days after Japanese troops landed in Kota Baru, Kelantan. I don’t think the estate exists

anymore.

“I came to Singapore in 1947 and enrolled in the Chinese Commercial and Industrial School (renamed Gong Shan Primary School now located in Tampines) in Tiong Bahru. After my primary education in the Chinese stream, I went to St Patrick’s School for Standard III and IV from 1953 to 1954.

“I moved to Penang and continued Elementary 6 in Westland School. I was selected for Form 1 in PFS in 1955, sat for the Lower Certificate of Education at Form 3, completed Form 5 and obtained the School Certificate. I continued with Lower and Upper Form Six classes in PFS after which I sat for the Higher School Certificate examinations in 1961.

“My results got me admitted into the 2nd year of a science course in the University of Malaya in Kuala Lumpur. I graduated with a BSc in 1963 and Diploma in Education in 1964.

“In 1965, I was recruited as a mathematics and physics teacher in PFS by the then headmaster Tan Boon Lin.

“In 1970, I left for the United States to do a master’s degree in education at Eastern Illinois University. After graduating in 1971, I taught in the university for a year before coming to Singapore in 1973 as I had been offered a teaching job by the Ministry of Education. I was posted to the Teachers’ Training College (TTC) as lecturer. I was offered sabbatical leave to do a masters’ degree in Computer Science in Western Michigan University in 1980 and later in 1984 was awarded study leave to do my PhD at the University of Pittsburgh.

“I went on to become senior lecturer and principal lecturer in TTC and at the Institute of Education (IE). Later, when IE became part of the Nanyang Technological University and was renamed National Institute of Education (NIE) I was elevated to associate professor and made an associate dean in 2000. As a maths specialist, I headed a project to train selected groups of experienced maths teachers so that they could go back to their respective schools to conduct refresher courses for their teachers – it was a kind of train-the-trainers programme.

Fond Memories of PFS

“I have fond memories of my time in PFS. I can even remember to this day, our

headmasters’ and teachers’ names, events such as Additional Sports in which everyone had to take part and School Sports, and the school’s special milestones.

“Mr Tod (when I was admitted into PFS in 1955) and the ever popular JMB Hughes were our headmasters when I was a student. After Malayanisation, Tan Boon Lin was the headmaster, the first Asian to be appointed after colonial rule. Poon Poh Kong was headmaster just before I left for my further studies in USA.

“I also remember my teachers very well. Among those who taught me were Ong Teong Guan and Lye Tong Weng (Maths), Tan Ah Fee (Chemistry), Lim Boon Hock and Lim Boon Hor (Geography), Teh Kheng Chooi (History), Tan Boon Soon (PE), JMB Hughes (English Literature), Mrs Hughes (General Paper), Eddy Chung (Applied Maths), Lee Eng Leong and Khoo Tiang Lim (Biology), Beh Teik Chooi and Lim San Hoe (English Language), Capt Mohd Noor and Iskandar (Bahasa Kebangsaan), Teoh Cheng Hai and GS Reutens (Art) and C Ganasalingam (Physics).

“The school in my time had a spirit of excellence and focused on character development so that we might grow up to be well-behaved and refined “gentlemen”. Besides excellence in studies, good values, integrity, trustworthiness and kindness were some virtues constantly being emphasised, encouraged and inculcated. To achieve

these goals, all of us had to perform chores including the daily cleaning of our classrooms and painting of classroom walls once a year.

"As an elite school, it accepted some 200 students each year from various feeder schools (Westland School, Hutchings School and Francis Light School) who had to sit for an entrance exam.

"We had many school traditions. School assembly was held once a week in the school hall; male teachers had to wear a tie and coat (as the oldest school in Malaya, we were following the British grammar school model). The whole assembly was called to attention by the head prefect – in my Upper Sixth Form year it was Chin Wah Seng – after which the school bell would ring announcing the arrival of the headmaster who would walk from one end of the hall through the middle aisle to get to the stage at the other end.

During the assembly, teachers would make announcements and the headmaster would give his message touching on various topics such as academic excellence, values, integrity, good attitude and behaviour, and filial piety. We would finish by singing "God Save the Queen" before independence and "Negara Ku" after Merdeka; this would be followed by the School Song composed and written by GS Reutens.

"Then there were the Sports days. We had two kinds of sports, namely

additional sports & school sports, to be competed among the five Houses named after headmasters and a well-known Old Free: Cheeseman, Hamilton, Hargreaves, Pinhorn and Wu Lien-Teh. Tunku Putra House (named after the founding Prime Minister of Malaya who was also an Old Free) was later added. I was the Housemaster of the last two mentioned Houses for a number of years. We also had an annual cross country run (from school through Batu Lanchang cemetery), and an annual hike up Penang Hill from Moongate near the Waterfall Gardens.

"Another valuable feature of the school was the extra-curricular activities held every Monday and Thursday afternoons. I was in charge of the Sixth Form Recreational Activities (SFRA) and Alex Ooi Koon Hean was the inaugural chairman before he left for Singapore to do his medical course at the university. It was an enjoyable time for me as the student leaders were very enthusiastic and hard-working involved in not only planning physical activities but also writing and designing newsletters for distribution as well as organising other activities such as movie shows.

"Other cherished memories were our school hall which had a uniquely designed cement semi-dome above the stage at one end of the school hall. It was a bit echoey and was demolished and replaced with what it has today.

"There was also our school clock which

still graces the tower of our main building. It was our own 'Big Ben'. I remember on one occasion when the clock needed massive repairs, Old Frees in Singapore were asked to donate money. We all contributed willingly.

"Another tradition was that every 21st October, which was Founder's Day, the headmaster and prefects at PFS would go, in the early morning before school began, to the tomb of Reverend Hutchings, our founder, to attend a memorial service. I was a Hutchings scholar and was given the honour to lay a wreath. The tomb in the Christian cemetery in Farquhar Street is incidentally the resting place of Francis Light, Penang's founder."

Lily Yeap Lay Leng

Teacher/Educator

Year left school: 1962



"I was in St George's Girls' School and sat for the entrance exams for PFS as I wanted to get into Form Six to learn among boys! Apart from the school's image of excellence I also liked the way in which Penang Frees carried themselves; they were gentlemanly and not stuck up.

"I remember JMB Hughes teaching me Geography, Mrs Hughes General Paper, and Mr Bennet and Mr Baird English Literature. What I recall vividly was our English Language teachers insisting that we should always speak properly.

"Tian Hoo and I met in PFS. Our 'love affair' only started when we were in the University of Malaya. My career more or less paralleled that of Tian Hoo's as I also became a teacher and served in the Penang Chinese Girls' School after graduation with a BA degree and Diploma in Education. I also studied in USA at Eastern Illinois University (MS in Ed), Western Michigan University (MS in Librarianship) and University of Pittsburgh (Doctor in Education), specialising in pedagogy. I also joined TTC and IE as Lecturer and Senior Lecturer and NIE as Associate Professor before retiring.

"What I found amazing about PFS was how great its reputation was when for its 150th anniversary or sesquicentenary a special postage stamp was issued by the Malaysian Government."

Tian Hoo and Lay Leng are still contributing to society today. They helped train in-service teachers in Indonesia and the United Arab Emirates and are doing consultancy work in schools.

Public service

Yeoh Ghim Seng

Speaker of Parliament/Surgeon

Year left school: 1940



He was Singapore's Speaker of Parliament for 19 years — from 1970 to 1989 — one of the longest-serving of any parliament in the world.

Born in Ipoh, Perak, in 1918, he studied in St Michael's Institution in his hometown before entering PFS.

He then went to Cambridge University to study medicine in the 1940s. After graduating, he worked on attachments with various hospitals before becoming a Fellow of the Royal College of Surgeons of England (FRCS) in 1950. A year later, he returned to Malaya and was appointed consultant surgeon to the Singapore General Hospital (SGH).

In 1956, he was made Professor of Surgery at the University of Malaya in Singapore, the first Asian to hold the chair. He left in 1962 to go into private practice although he continued to train medical graduates from the university. Six feet tall and lanky, he was dubbed "the biggest but fastest Asian surgeon".

The Old Frees' Association, Singapore President Alex Ooi, himself a doctor, said that he was reputed even among surgeons to have the "stadiest pair of hands".

Professor Low Cheng Hock, emeritus consultant at Tan Tock Seng Hospital and Past Associate Dean and Chairman, Medical Board said, "Professor Yeoh Ghim Seng symbolises the great Asian surgeon of the early days. I admired his confident hands

that moved with beautiful dexterity. I could never get more than being a third assistant or a note-writer.”

In 1962, Dr Yeoh entered politics after accepting an invitation to join the People’s Action Party. He stood in a by-election in the constituency of Joo Chiat, which he won by a walkover. He was to serve as its Member of Parliament for 22 years.

In 1968, he was made Deputy Speaker of Parliament and in 1970, he was elected Speaker of Parliament, which was a departure from the norm as those before him came from a legal background.

If not for his dedication to medicine, he would have become a minister – a fact alluded to by then Minister of Law, Environment, Science and Technology, E W Barker, who said if not for his commitment to surgery, Dr Yeoh “could with ease and distinction occupy one of the front benches on this side of the House.”

In 1977, Dr Yeoh was appointed the ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Organisation’s (AIPO) first president. A Public Service Star (B.B.M.) recipient, an active Rotarian and Justice of the Peace, Dr Yeoh sat on various boards as chairman including the Detainees’ Aftercare Association and the University of Singapore Council. In 2005, the National University of Singapore created the Yeoh Ghim Seng Professorship in Surgery in his honour.

He died in 1993 aged 74.

Ahmad Ibrahim

Minister for Health/Minister for Labour
Year left school: 1947

Ahmad Ibrahim was born in 1927. After completing his education in Penang Free School, he made his way to Singapore, where he already had an older brother working and where he believed he would secure a better job with his fluency in the English language.

He was able to clinch a job, soon after his arrival, as a telephone operator at the Singapore Naval Base in Sembawang. It proved to be the turning point in his life resulting in him eventually carving a name for himself as one of the early Malay pioneers of Singapore, including being an active unionist and a political leader.

Working at the Naval Base was an eye-opener for Ahmad as he learnt about the poor working conditions of his fellow workers such as the long hours they put in, the late payment of their wages and how badly treated they were. It was to provide the platform for his leap into the world of politics.

He quickly gained the respect of his colleagues who elected him as the Vice-President of the Naval Base Labour Union. He later also became the first branch secretary of the All-Singapore Fire Brigade Employees Union.

In 1955, he was persuaded by his trade union in the Naval Base to contest

in the Legislative Assembly elections as an independent candidate for Sembawang.

He won and later was co-opted into the People’s Action Party (PAP) central Executive Committee in 1956.

In 1959, contesting under the PAP banner, he again won the Sembawang seat as a member of the Legislative Assembly. In the same year, when the PAP government formed its first Cabinet, Ahmad was appointed the Minister for Health and was also made Assistant Secretary-General of the PAP’s central Executive Committee.

In September 1961, in a Cabinet reshuffle, he was appointed the Minister for Labour.

He died prematurely at the age of 35 in 1962 while still in office because of a liver ailment.

Despite his short stint in public office, he made an impression on those around him.

He was given a state funeral, which was attended by Singapore’s then Head-of-State Yusof Ishak, then Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew, other Cabinet Ministers, and thousands of people from all walks of life.

Then Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew in a tribute said, “He made friends easily, and there are many in Singapore who cannot help liking him as a man, his modesty and straight-forwardness.”

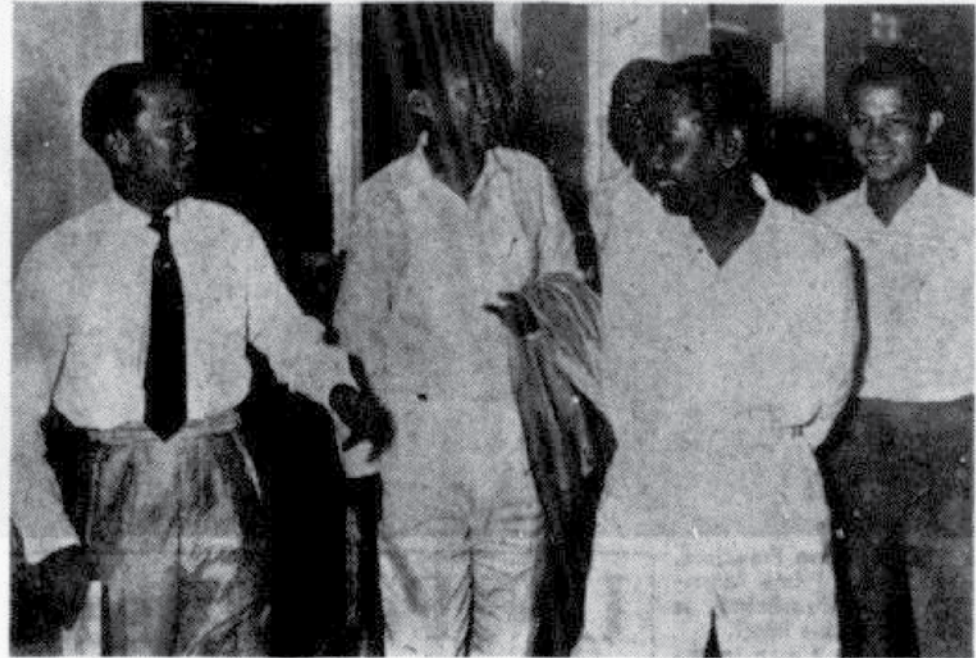
Today, he is remembered in Singapore in many ways - by a road called Jalan Ahmad Ibrahim in Jurong, two schools (Ahmad Ibrahim Primary School and Ahmad Ibrahim

The personal touch —by a Minister



THE Minister for Health, Inche Ahmad Ibrahim, personally attends to a patient in the children's ward of the General Hospital during his tour yesterday.—Straits Times picture.

PREMIER ON FAMILIARISATION TOUR OF HEALTH MINISTRY



SINGAPORE, Wed. — The Prime Minister, Mr. Lee Kuan Yew, today visited the Health Ministry to familiarise himself with its work.

Mr. Lee had a short discussion with the Health Minister, Inche Ahmad bin Ibrahim, before touring the Outpatients Department dispensary and the Blood Transfusion Centre at the General Hospital.

He showed particular interest in the Blood Transfu-

sion Centre where he inquired about various aspects of the service.

The Prime Minister will complete his tour of the Ministry on Friday.

Straits Times picture shows Mr. Lee at the Ministry with the Health Minister, Inche Ahmad bin Ibrahim (right) behind whom is Dr. Sheng Nam Chin, Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry, and Dr. Ho Yuen (left), Deputy Permanent Secretary.

A Cardinal
flies in
today for
one day

Secondary School) both in Yishun (a district next to Sembawang) and a mosque, Masjid Ahmad Ibrahim, also in Yishun, named after him.

Wong Lin Ken

Historian/Minister of Home Affairs

Year left school: 1951

Born in Penang in 1931, Wong Lin Ken, who was known to be a bookworm since his early days was a respected name in academia. He was a brilliant student in Penang Free School after which he entered the University of Malaya in Singapore where after graduating with an MA in 1955, he was awarded a Queen's Scholarship to do his PhD in Britain.

At the age of only 24, a thesis which he had submitted for his Master's degree was published in 1961 and was acknowledged as a work of classic. Entitled *Trade of Singapore 1819-1869*, it was praised for its meticulous research and has long been recognised as having made an invaluable contribution to the economic history of Southeast Asia.

After graduating, he went to the School of Oriental & African Studies of the University of London where he obtained his doctorate with his thesis, *The Malayan Tin Industry up to 1914*. Upon his return, he was appointed a lecturer to head a new course, *Economic History of Southeast and*

East Asia, in the Department of History in the newly formed University of Singapore in 1959, later renamed National University of Singapore (NUS) in 1980. He rose to eventually head the department. In 1966, he was made Raffles Professor of History (the first time a local had been appointed), a chair he held until his demise in 1983.

He left academia for about a decade to make forays into the world of diplomacy and politics. He was appointed as Singapore's first Ambassador to the United States, serving with distinction from May 1967 to December 1968. While serving as ambassador, he entered politics to contest the General Elections of April 1968 as a candidate for the People's Action Party. He was elected as Member of Parliament for the Alexandra constituency, a position he held from 1968-1976.

In September 1970, he was appointed Minister for Home Affairs but left two years later in September 1972 to return to the academic fold.

He was active in other realms - as a member of the Cinematograph Films Appeal Committee (1963); Chairman of the Singapore Adult Education Board (1964-1967); and Patron of the Junior Chamber of Singapore. He was conferred the Public Service Star in 1966.

He died in 1983 at the age of 51. In the same year, a Wong Lin Ken Memorial Medal and Book Prize was set up in his name by his

former colleagues, students and friends. To this day, the gold medal and book prize are awarded each year to the top student from the NUS' Department of History.

Professor Wong is also remembered through two books and several articles that he has authored. One of them is on Penang, entitled *The Revenue Farms of Prince of Wales Island 1805-1830* first published in 1964 in the *Journal of the South Seas Society* and reprinted by the National University of Singapore in 1985. Another article, first published in 1978, in the *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies* was

The Straits Times **5 July 1959**

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HE HEADS ECONOMIC HISTORY

DR. WONG LIN KEN, 27, who returned from Britain recently, will head a new course of study at the University of Malaya's Singapore Division.

The new subject is the Economic History of South-East and East Asia, including India.

It will form an optional part of the History Honours Degree course.

Dr. Wong, a former student of the Penang



Dr. Wong Lin Ken

Free School and the University of Malaya, graduated with an M.A. degree in 1955.

In that year he was awarded a Queen's Scholarship and proceeded to Britain where he studied for three and a half years at the School of Oriental and African Studies of the University of London.

In London, he obtained his Ph.D. degree in History for his thesis on "The Malayan Tin Industry up to 1914."

Dr. Wong told the Sunday Times that he hoped the new course at the university would begin in the next academic year.



The Straits Times 5 September 1970

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Singapore: Its Growth as an Entrepot Port 1819-1941.

So acclaimed are his scholarly contributions that a tribute was made to him at a meeting of historians of Southeast Asia in Singapore in October 2002. There

was a clamour among them to have his first work *Trade of Singapore 1819-1869*, which had been long out of print, republished.

In the reprint, eminent historian Professor Wang Gungwu wrote a special preface about Professor Wong whom he had known when they were both undergraduates and graduate students at the University of Malaya in Singapore in the 1950s.

According to another renowned historian Kwa Chong Guan who knew Professor Wong and worked with him in the University of Singapore and later in NUS, Professor Wang also noted in his obituary of

Professor Wong published in the *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies* vol. 14, no. 2, Sept 1983, that "in the first half of his academic career, from his MA thesis to his PhD thesis, Prof Wong was working towards becoming the first economic historian in Southeast

Asia. But after he returned to academia from politics, he widened his scope of research to the recent political history of Singapore, and Singapore's place in the history of Southeast Asia."

Mr Kwa elaborated, "He started researching into Singapore's strategic and military history, on which topic he asked deep questions about Singapore's strategic location and was working towards an answer terminated by his premature death.

"His talk to the Singapore Command and Staff College on 'The Fall of Singapore [in 1941] A Wider Historical Perspective' provided an insight into the line of questioning he was developing on Singapore's military history.

"I republished the text of Professor Wong's talk in a small volume I edited on Singapore's military history, *Defending Singapore, 1819-1965* in the Singapore Armed Forces publication *Pointer* in 1996. His essay on 'The Strategic Significance of Singapore in Modern History' was one of his last articles published in 1981 and republished in *A History of Singapore*, edited by Ernest C T Chew and Edwin Lee, outlining the deep questions Professor Wong was asking about Singapore history."

As Professor Wang Gungwu observed, "Wong Lin Ken was intense in his enquiry, rigorous in his thinking and extremely demanding of himself as he was of his colleagues and students."

Lee Kum Tatt

Chairman of SISIR

Year left school: 1947



Born in Penang in 1927, he had to disrupt his studies at Penang Free School to move to Medan, Sumatra with his family due to the impending war. He was only able

to return in 1947 to resume his studies.

In 1948, he won a scholarship to study science in Raffles College. After graduating in 1954, he joined the Government Department of Chemistry as a chemist, toxicologist and biochemist.

Two years later, he went to Canada and the United States on a United Nations (UN) fellowship to study the international opium trade and represented Canada in the UN Narcotic Commission.

Returning in 1958, he was appointed head of the forensic laboratory in the Department of Chemistry. A year later, he was appointed to the Board of Governors of the Singapore Polytechnic.

In 1960, Dr Lee was appointed biochemist in the Department of Pathology in the Ministry of Health. In 1965, he was made Chairman of the Science Council with the task of creating activities to promote science to the public. He also travelled



Lee Kum Tatt at Raffles College.



Dr & Mrs Lee Kum Tatt: Courting days at the Botanic Gardens (1956).

to London and California seeking expert advice on the notion of establishing a science centre. It took seven years before his efforts bore fruit with the opening of the \$14 million Singapore Science Centre in 1977.

In 1969, Dr Lee was also appointed chairman of the newly formed Singapore Institute of Standards and Industrial Research (SISIR) which was responsible for the promotion of scientific research and development.

In the 1970s, he spearheaded efforts to develop a tourism souvenir that could be identified as unique to Singapore. The result was RISIS – SISIR spelt backwards - a gold-plated orchid that became a success,



Dr & Mrs Lee Kum Tatt (1976).

beyond even his expectations.

Describing how RISIS came about at its launch in 1976, Dr Lee said in an oral history interview:

“RISIS was a fluke. It was a fluke. It was never planned. Everyone comes and asks me: ‘Dr Lee, how did you think of the orchid?’ It was never planned. So we said, ‘Okay, we just try and do the orchids and preserve it.’ Can we do it? Well, we’ll try. We’ll get the technology. Orchid is something native to us. The technology is ours. How do we overcome time? So we put some gold on it because gold is time-honoured. After that, it caught.”

Looking back at his long civil service career, Dr Lee had this to say, “I always

seem to be on the fringe of grey areas that nobody wants to touch. And I enjoyed doing that. You see, you trace my life, it’s like that. Science, I never do Science. Bio-chemistry, I never do bio-chemistry. Quality control, I know nothing about quality control. Business, I never trained to do business. Standards Council, I never know anything about standards. There must be something basic that we can use in some of us...So creativity means you see things like other people are staring at you and other people cannot see or dare not see. And I seem to enjoy doing that kind of thing.”

When Dr Lee retired as Chairman of SISIR in 1985, it had a staff of 360. He died in 2008 at the age of 81.

Recalling his spirit of adventure

I first came to know Dr. Lee Kum Tatt when he was in his Honours year (B.Sc) at the University of Malaya, now the National University of Singapore (NUS) in 1952. I was one of his lecturers.

I supervised his PhD in Chemistry which he was awarded with in 1955, becoming the first recipient of a Chemistry doctorate from the University. During the period he was preparing his thesis (1952-1954), he became very close to me and my family. He treated me as his "surrogate" family as he had no relatives in Singapore, being from Penang. These were important years that forged the bond between us which lasted a lifetime.

We chose different career paths – I continued in academia and he ventured into the "open" untested waters. He started off as a Forensic Chemist with the Government Chemistry Department but made the first side-step in 1960, when he assumed the post of Senior Biochemist in the Department of Pathology, Ministry of Health. He subsequently became Chief Biochemist serving for seven years before his second side-step, when he was seconded to lead the Industrial Research Unit. He transformed it into the well-respected Singapore Institute of Standards

and Industrial Research (SISIR). He was the Founder Chairman, a post he held until retirement in 1985. The "SISIR Mark" became a hallmark of quality and reliability and was much sought after by both local and foreign manufacturers.

Always passionate about Science, he founded the Singapore Science Council and was instrumental in initiating the Singapore Professional Centre and the Science Park. He also helped to initiate the Singapore Quality and Reliability Association (now the Singapore Quality Institute). To inculcate the love for science in the young, he created the Science Quiz, a popular TV programme where children from various schools competed to answer questions about science. This programme sparked interest not only in the school children, but also in their parents and grandparents, who, whilst supporting their children by watching the programme, were also learning science. Thereafter he initiated the Science Centre, today a well-visited attraction for school children, the public and tourists.

Another example of the innovative side of Kum Tatt is the creation of the RISIS orchid in 1976. This is probably an example

of "applied science" in the true sense. He was able to take an orchid, which is organic in nature, and find a way to gold-plate it, without contaminating and destroying the gold bath. It may seem simple, but it took a lot of research to perfect the technique, and he was awarded many patents for the technique. To this day, the RISIS orchid remains an iconic and unique gift from Singapore.

Kum Tatt received many awards for his achievements, but perhaps the award he treasured most was the Distinguished Alumni Award presented to him by the Faculty of Science of NUS in 2005. Kum Tatt always regarded himself as a Scientist, and Chemistry held a special place in his heart. He felt therefore, like the prodigal son, highly honoured that the Faculty of Science recognised him for his scientific achievements.

Professor Rayson Huang taught chemistry at the University of Malaya in Singapore and later the University of Malaya in Kuala Lumpur. In 1969, he was appointed Vice-Chancellor of Nanyang University, Singapore and in 1972, he became the first Chinese Vice-Chancellor of the University of Hong Kong. The article is part of a foreword he wrote for Lee Kum Tatt's published blog, *A Fabulous Journey*.

Lim Ho Hup

Director, Economic Development Board
Year left school: 1949



Entering PFS for Lim Ho Hup was for one reason: Acquiring a qualification in English to enable him to get a 'proper' job.

He said, "I needed an English

education, otherwise I would starve. Coming from a poor family, I needed to ensure I could get a job. A Chinese education was not good enough; one needed grounding in English so I moved from Chung Ling High School to PFS in mid-1947. It would be a lifelong handicap if one were not able to speak English. I had actually spent two years in an English primary school before the war disrupted everything.

"Being in Free School helped because of its ambiance; everybody spoke English so I was forced to speak English too. It also had top English teachers; as a school that was free of religion, race and promoting free thinking, it attracted the top teachers.

"The Free School culture must have influenced me as I went from junior middle in Chung Ling to completing Standard Eight; before the war, I managed to only finish Standard One in English.

"After one and a half years, I sat for my

Higher School Certificate and got the credit in English language that I wanted. With this and some luck in getting a scholarship, I was able to get into the University of Malaya in Singapore, studying science."

Describing himself as a 'Johnny come lately' he said, "I was not a typical 'Old Free' who would have studied four to six years."

After graduating, he worked at the university as a graduate assistant, demonstrating laboratory sessions, which enabled him to study for his master's in Chemistry. "I then got a job in the Government Chemistry Department as a document examiner. My job was to identify handwriting in criminal cases and for the Special Branch, to identify people involved in communist activities."

In 1961, when the Economic Development Board (EDB) was formed, Ho Hup was made the first local director, taking over from an appointee of the United Nations. He was to occupy the post for nine years.

Citing it as his most important career move, he was the right-hand man of then chairman, Hon Sui Sen, a Penangite himself (alumnus of St Xavier's Institution).

"EDB in those days did nearly everything. Our role was to promote industrial development and provide facilities for industries. We had to create the right climate and overcome difficulties of land supply, water and infrastructure. So we developed Jurong Industrial Estate to house the industries.

"After seven years, Jurong Town Corporation (JTC) was set up as our task was to promote investment and create new industries and jobs and not be a real estate operator running the industrial estate, a role handed down to JTC. Later, we started the Industrial Research Unit (IRU) which morphed into the Singapore Institute of Standards and Industrial Research (SISIR). I knew Lee Kum Tatt, another Old Free, who was a chemist in the General Hospital and asked him to look after the IRU as its first director. He made a good job of it."

In 1970, he was seconded to the Ministry of Education as director of technical education.

His role was to develop and promote technical education. "In those days, if a student's primary school results were not good enough for mainstream schools, he would be posted to a technical school, which was considered inferior.

"My task was to change this thinking. The first thing I did was to induce confidence in technical teachers by increasing their pay and to instil pride in them so that good students would not shy away from the technical stream.

"After all, a school is good only if it can attract good students and the quality of the school is determined by the student intake."

He must have done a sterling job as after his two-year secondment was over, the post of director of technical education was scrapped.

He then returned to EDB, leaving in the

early 1980s to start a plastics company.

Declaring that no other school came close to PFS, he said, "There has been no true competition, even from our rival, St Xavier's. We had illustrious Old Frees. When Yeoh Ghim Seng was appointed as the first Asian professor in the university, we were all very proud. Then there was Lim Chong Keat who designed some of Singapore's best known buildings. There was also Wong Lin Ken, a history professor and later Minister for Home Affairs. He was the patrol leader of boy scouts in PFS while Chong Keat was the tenderfoot.

"The school had a well-deserved reputation."

Yeoh Keat Chuan

Managing Director

Economic Development Board

Year left school: 1988



He is the second Old Free to head the Economic Development Board (EDB) following in the footsteps of Lim Ho Hup, who was the first director.

For Yeoh Keat Chuan, it all began thanks to a solid foundation gained at PFS.

"It was the school's drive for excellence

that was instilled in us. It prepared us well when the time came for my classmates and me to think of how we could establish the best route to get into university. There were not many international schools in Malaysia then so we had to look outwards. We found out about the prestigious ASEAN scholarships that were being offered by Singapore to students wanting to pursue their 'A' levels so quite a few of the students in my batch applied for them.

"Eight of us from PFS were awarded the scholarships. I went to Temasek Junior College and stayed in Anglican High School Hostel. I learnt to be independent, living on my own for the first time. My time in PFS helped me adjust as we were taught to study on our own. Coming from a top school with an exceptional reputation, even in Singapore, we knew we had to represent it well and not let it down while studying for our 'A' levels."

Keat Chuan has other fond memories of his schooldays. "There was this tradition of throwing first-year newcomers into the school pond if they happened to be nearby. I enjoyed being part of the scouts movement. We had a wonderful scoutmaster, Mr Khoo Poh Kheng, who guided us well. We went camping, learnt to cut bamboo to build things and cook. We did other outdoor activities in the beach, park or botanic gardens which all helped to get the scouts to know each other.

"We bonded in other ways through sports and going on excursions. I was honorary secretary of a UNESCO club which organised trips to various places in Malaysia to visit historic institutions such as the Parliament in Kuala Lumpur. These were very popular."

After his 'A' Levels, Keat Chuan applied for, and was awarded, a Glaxo-EDB scholarship that enabled him to study chemical engineering at the Imperial College of Science, Technology & Medicine at the University of London

He was part of the first batch of scholarship holders of Glaxo, which had donated S\$60 m to the Singapore government to start a scholarship fund to help students kick off an EDB career.

"Three hundred people have benefitted from this programme to date," he said.

When he returned, he joined the EDB as senior officer in the Industry Development Division (Chemicals) in 1994.

In 1997, he was posted to Washington DC as EDB's centre director. Then he was based in New York in 2000 as regional director for Eastern Americas for the next three years.

His role was to travel around the US to meet with companies to persuade them to invest in Singapore.

He went on to enrol in Stanford University's Graduate School of Business Masters in Management Science

programme graduating in 2004.

He returned in 2005 to head the Biomedical Sciences Cluster in EDB. In 2008, he was posted to San Francisco as international director overseeing the Americas region, which included the EDB's seven offices. He returned to Singapore in 2010 as Assistant Managing Director overseeing the engineering industries. In July 2012 he was appointed Managing Director of EDB.

Conscious of how he has benefitted from scholarships, Keat Chuan says one of the reasons why his work is perfect for helping him "give back" is because of the EDB's role to create a better economic future for Singaporeans.

He said, "We are proud of our role to bring in and develop industries in Singapore.

"EDB is responsible for securing multi-million dollar investments leading to good jobs and exciting careers for Singaporeans. I am privileged to have had the opportunity to work with companies such as Shell, ExxonMobil, GlaxoSmithkline, Novartis, Rolls-Royce, and ST Engineering.

"Our role is to look at which industries are competitive and in which area and try to bring in the leading companies in these sectors.

"EDB's industry clusters contribute 35 to 40 per cent of Singapore's GDP."

Sports

Tan Poh Seng

Tennis coach/teacher

Year left school: 1964

Although Tan Poh Seng taught biology in New Town Secondary School, he was also well known outside the classroom for another activity — tennis.

Indeed, several old boys of New Town have fond memories of the man who taught them to wield a tennis racket, play the sport well and help pave their paths to a lucrative future career — as a tennis coach — when they found studies were not their forte. A few like Wong Chee Leong and Yang Siang played Davis Cup for Singapore.

When reminded of this, Poh Seng modestly brushes aside his role, remarking that he did not consciously get his students to choose coaching as a career, but it did dawn on him that for those not too academically inclined, tennis coaching could become an alternative career.

Apart from mentoring his young charges, Poh Seng also played a major



role in training and grooming promising Singapore tennis talents who went on to become national players when he served not only as the Republic's national coach, Davis Cup non-playing captain but also as the Head Coach of Singapore Sports Council Junior Scheme in the late 1980s and early '90s.

He also served as Vice-President of the Singapore Lawn Tennis Association in charge of technical development for several years. By wearing many tennis hats, he could set up a nation-wide scheme to groom young tennis talents as well as run age-group tournaments to give aspiring juniors exposure to competitive tennis. By being involved with the Singapore Lawn Tennis Association and the Singapore Sports Council, he could also coordinate coaching clinics and tennis courses run by noted foreign coaches to elevate the coaching standard of Singapore coaches.

He was also tasked by the International Tennis Federation to run tennis clinics in Guam and Mongolia. He holds a United States Professional Tennis Association Pro 1 certification and is an International Master Professional in the United States Professional Tennis Registry.

Contributing to the popularity of tennis in Singapore is nothing new to Poh Seng as he was instrumental in improving the sport of tennis in Penang in the 1970s before emigrating to Singapore in 1980.

While in Penang as a Biology teacher at Methodist Boys' School, a number of his tennis students like Kuldip Singh and Francis Su became national players and represented Malaysia in Davis Cup.

At the Chinese Recreation Club where he was the Captain and Head Coach of the Tennis Section, the club produced many national champions like Toh Seok Har and Albert Cheah. Poh Seng himself was the Malaysian National Champion in 1974-75. He represented Malaysia in the Davis Cup tournament in 1970, 1974 and 1975 and the SEAP (Southeast Asian Peninsular) Games in 1973 and 1975.

Like most Old Frees, Poh Seng is very passionate when it comes to sports. When he was in PFS, he represented the school in tennis, hockey, cricket, athletics (javelin) and the occasional rugby matches. He also played soccer and badminton. He represented Penang Combined Schools in tennis, hockey and cricket and University of Malaya and Penang in tennis and hockey. He was appointed Head Prefect in 1964.

He described his time at Penang Free School as one that was fun-filled as there were so many games that he could participate in. Although he admitted he did not study too much, he praised the school for instilling in its students a sense of responsibility.

He said, "We learned how to organise and lead. We had teachers who not only

taught in the classroom but were actively engaged after school activities. In games, the older students - many of them school team players - would teach the younger ones and pass on their skills. As such, every student had the opportunity to participate and appreciate the varied activities offered. Our headmaster whose house is situated within the school grounds would be around most afternoons at inter-school matches mingling with the students and lending his support."

He attributes his love of sports to his father who not only encouraged him to play different sports but also bought him all the equipment that he needed. As for tennis, his father brought him to Chinese Recreation Club to play the game.

Poh Seng now resides in San Diego, California. Retired, he is happily engaged not only in coaching his grandchildren and taking them to tennis tournaments but is also actively competing in tennis. He and his grandson won the USTA (United States Tennis Association) National Grandfather-Grandson doubles title in December 2014.

In 2016, he hopes to compete in the USTA National Super Senior Father-Daughter doubles event. This event is for fathers who must attain the age of 70. "My daughter and I are looking forward to compete in this event. What's so great about tennis is that it is a sport that one can play to a ripe old age."

Selvadurai Sooceleraj

Hockey coach/Teacher

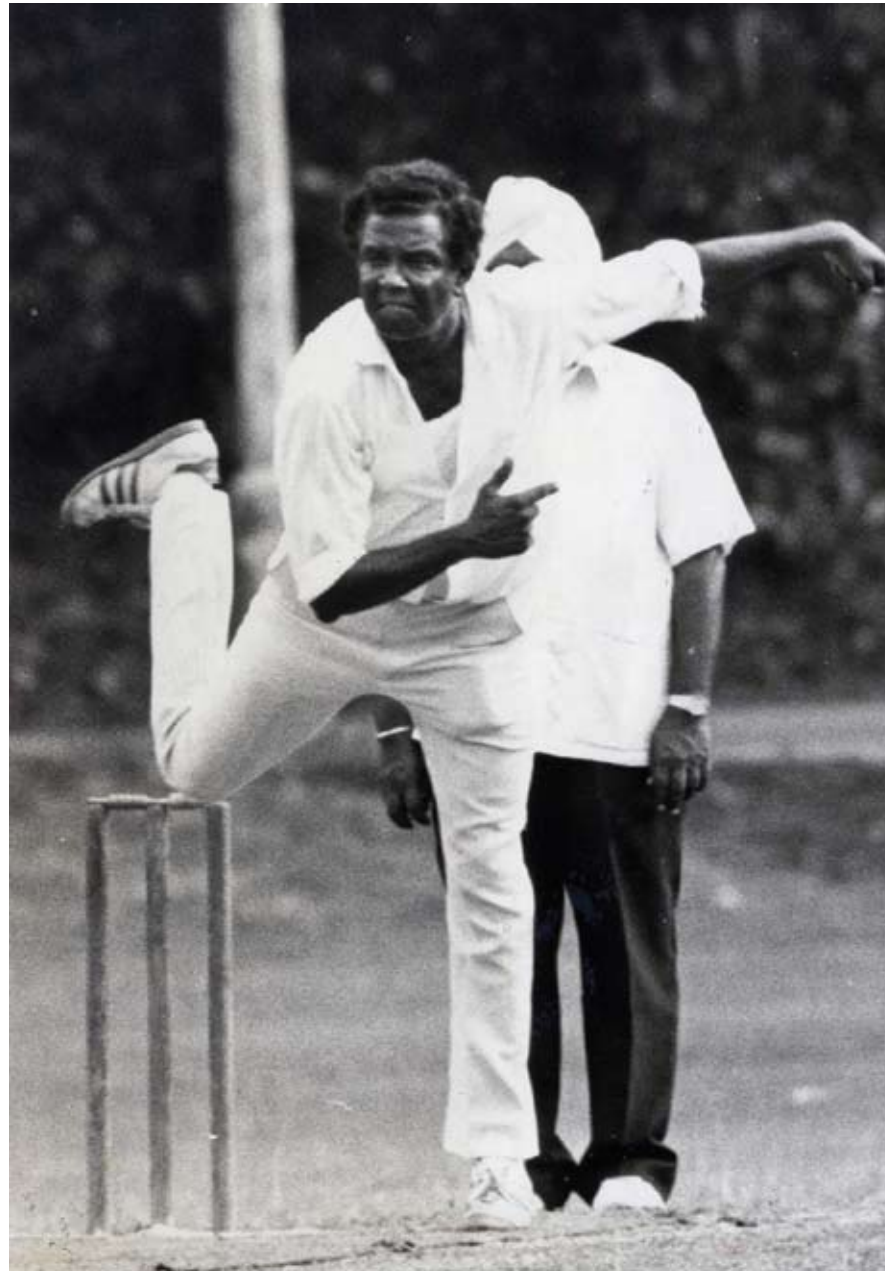
Year left school: 1953

Better known as Sooce (pronounced Soocy), Selvadurai Sooceleraj was a true-blue Old Free with his love for sports, thanks to PFS's policy of a well-rounded education system that included equal emphasis on sports development.

Sooce shone in hockey, cricket and rugby, representing not only the school and Penang nationally but also Malaya on the international stage.

He came to Singapore soon after leaving PFS and was recruited as a chemistry teacher at Victoria School (VS) where he was also a physical education teacher and hockey coach. He taught hockey not just to VS students but he also trained national hockey players. He was credited with producing some of Singapore's finest hockey players such as national hockey captains Lam Yin Koi and Kee Yaw Lin and well-known cricketers such as Hira Singh and M Neethianathan and Singapore's acknowledged best national cricketer Stacey Muruthi.

Indeed, cricket was especially dear to his heart and he himself indulged in the game till he was 60 years old. A feared leg-spinner for the Ceylon Sports Club, he was the oldest player in Division One cricket. There were memorable headlines to his winning exploits on the cricket field such as



Sooce represented not only the school and Penang nationally but also Malaya on the international stage.

Source: The Straits Times
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“Sooceleraj hero in a 2-win run” in *The Straits Times* (20 May 1963) and “Sooce, 59, still has batsmen in a spin” in *The Straits Times* (27 July 1989).

He was well known for his booming voice, his love for sports and his fervent desire in instilling in his wards a similar passion. For him, training in sports was all about getting his students into the field to toughen up and develop the right frame of mind to compete in tournaments.

Sooce served as a sports teacher and hockey coach in VS for 30 years before retiring in 1990. In 2011, he died in his sleep at the age of 81, sorely missed by his students, colleagues and the hockey and cricket fraternity. But his name lives on in a special sports award announced a year later.

In 2012, when *The New Paper's* School Sports Stars were made public, a special teacher-coach award was also given out to recognise the people behind these stars. Named the S Sooceleraj Award and presented by Soilbuild Group, the award was to acknowledge the hard work and dedication of teacher-coaches. Such coaches have a heavy load — regular class teaching followed by sports coaching in the field and the marking of papers and preparation for the next day's lessons at night.

It was an award Sooce would have been proud of.

Others

Joshua Chiu Ban It

Anglican Bishop

Year left school: 1938

Joshua Chiu Ban It was a brilliant scholar at PFS. He was active in school representing the badminton team of the Wu Lien-Teh House of which he was a member and as editor of the school magazine. In 1937, he was elected Head Boy or School Captain and in 1938, he was awarded the Hutchings Scholarship. He went on to study at King's College, University of London, graduating with a Bachelor of Laws in 1941.

He was ordained at Westcott House, a Church of England theological college in Cambridge in 1943 after a period of study. His first posting was as curate of the St Francis of Assisi Church in Bournville, near Birmingham.

He returned to Penang to practise as acting vicar for a while before becoming a full minister with the Church of England in 1950. He was assistant priest at St Andrew's Cathedral before becoming parish priest

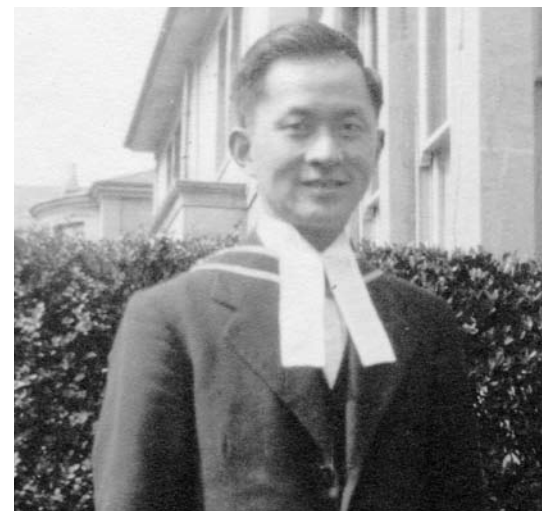
of St Hilda's Church, Singapore, from 1952 to 1955 and then served as the Vicar of Selangor (the first Asian to be appointed) and Canon of the Diocese of Singapore.

During his time in Selangor, he was elected the first vice-president of the Old Frees' Association in Kuala Lumpur and Selangor, which was formed in 1959.

He was appointed home secretary of the Australian Board of Missions from 1959 to 1962 after which he served as Secretary for Laymen Abroad in the World Council of Churches in Geneva.

From 1964 to the beginning of 1966, he was a lecturer in Ecumenics at St Augustine's Theological College Canterbury in the UK until his elevation to the Episcopate.

Upon his return to Asia in 1966, he was consecrated as the first Malayan-born Bishop



In Chambers, 1941.



Bishop Chiu and his wife Wendy after his consecration ceremony as bishop in 1966.

of the Diocese of Singapore and Malaya, a post he held until he retired in 1982. He was the sixth bishop. He was also Dean of the Anglican Diocese of Singapore from 1970 to 1982. Between 1968 and 1973 he was Vice-Chairman of the Council of Churches in East Asia and acting Chairman from 1970.

On 20 February 1972, on the last day of her first state visit to Singapore, Queen Elizabeth II and the British Royal Family attended a service at St Andrew's Cathedral. It was presided over by Bishop Chiu.

In 1982, Bishop Chiu retired and is now residing in Britain.



Bishop Chiu greeting Queen Elizabeth II at a church service in St Andrew's Cathedral during her state visit to Singapore in 1972. Source: The Straits Times © Singapore Press Holdings Limited. Permission required for reproduction

EK Lim

Optometrist

Year left school: 1953



Better known as EK, Lim Eam Khoon was hoping to be an architect but ended up in the eye-care industry instead and carving out a reputation as 'pioneer'

optometrist.

Recounting how this came about, he said, "After leaving PFS, Tay Lee Soon (my classmate) and I did sketches to be sent to Regent Polytechnic in London. He ended up studying architecture in Melbourne instead when he was there to watch the Malayan hockey team playing in the Olympics.

"I trooped off to London on my own but found out that my application did not reach Regent Polytechnic. As luck would have it, I met an Old Free, Khoo Boon Haw, who had been studying medicine in Singapore the year before but had to drop out of the course. He decided to go to London to study optometry and persuaded me to join him at the Northampton College of Advanced Technology (renamed City University).

"It seemed like an attractive alternative as it was only a three-year course versus six years for architecture.

"As it turned out, optometry was good for me as it was a course that enabled me to serve people.

"London was very advanced in the field of optometry. The course was quite exacting as apart from the course in college, I had to be attached to a spectacle-making company after which I could sit for the diploma for which I was made 'freeman of the city of London'. With this, I could practise optometry in London which I did for a year after I had qualified in 1959 before returning to Penang in 1960."

Recalling his schooldays, he said, "I was in PFS after Hutchings Primary School. I spent most of my time in sports playing football, rugby, hockey and badminton. I represented the school in football and rugby although I was better known for the latter. In fact, from 1956 to 1958 when I was in London, I was the only Asian representing my college in rugby.

"I remember some of our teachers rather well. One of the classic punishments in PFS was getting students to stand on a chair. For our history teacher, Lim Boon Hock, this would be for things like forgetting history dates. He would make you stand on a chair for the rest of the class. I did this three times.

"On one of these occasions, when our Sixth Form classes had turned co-educational and we had girls from St George's enrolled in our school, I remember standing on a chair in one part of the

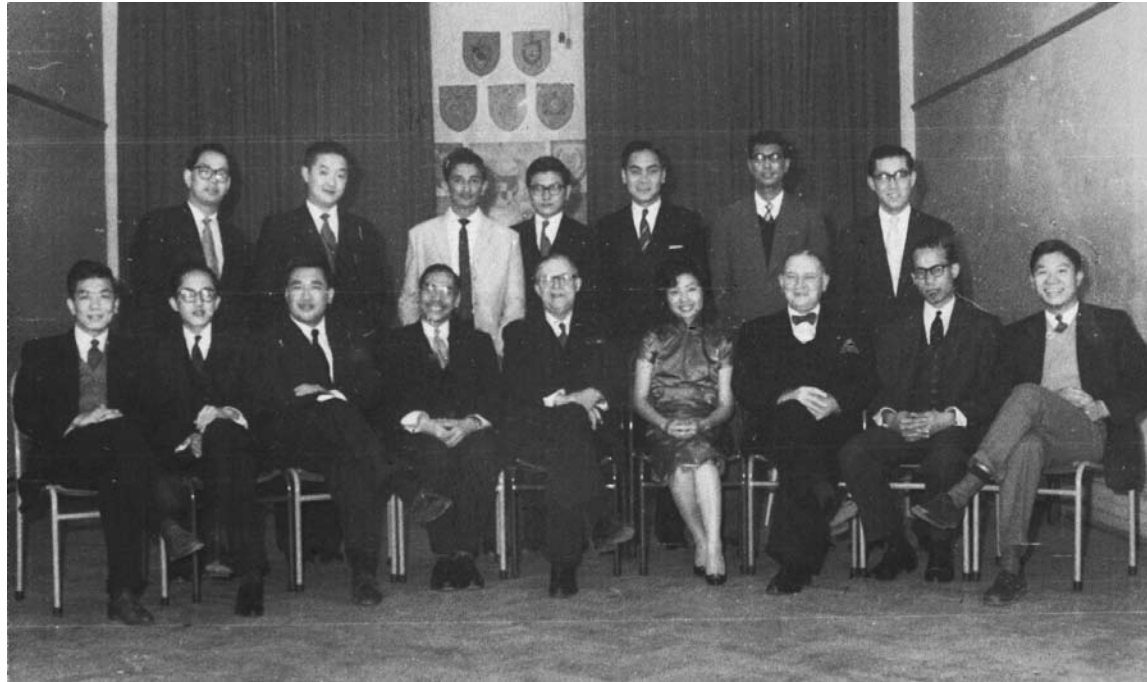
classroom with Khoo Teck Hock standing on another chair in the back while some girls were walking past. Someone told us to get down just as the girls were passing by but we could not as our history teacher was still there! No boy ever liked to have girls see him standing on chairs.

"There were also teachers with other peculiarities. We had Captain Mamat Nor, a very strict Malay teacher, who was always smartly dressed in a white suit and wore a songkok. Then there was Lee Eng Leong, who taught us biology, with his fondness for half-eye glasses, which he peered over to look at us. We also had an assistant teacher from Ireland, Penny Pettigrew, who always wore low cut tops, making her a favourite among the boys!

"Apart from these, there were other memorable occasions. In 1952, our class held a tea party to celebrate Queen Elizabeth's coronation, which was attended by headmaster Tod."

During his student days in London, EK was in touch with other Old Frees. He explained, "Penang was a British colony and for most of us, the UK was considered 'our motherland'. When it came to studying overseas, the UK and especially London would come to mind.

"I joined the Old Frees Association (OFA) there and our former headmaster Tod who was from Hove and had just retired was our patron. The association was active,



1958 UKOFA Reunion at Malayan Hall, London.

organising get-togethers from time to time. When Malaya became independent in 1957 for instance, we had a celebration in Malaya Hall.

"Among the members of OFA London were Lim Chor Pee, who was studying law and had his own private law practice in Singapore and Chandran Arul, who is still practising as a lawyer in Singapore. Chor Pee was the OFA secretary in 1955 and 1956. He handed it over to me so I became secretary in 1957. I asked Arul to take over when I had to leave London after finishing my course.

"Because of PFS and later OFA in

London, I like to organise functions. I was a prefect and that helped develop my organisational skills. Chor Pee and I enjoyed organising picnics and dance functions when we were in school. PFS encouraged us to be sociable.

"That came in useful whenever I attended functions in optometry and when people came from overseas to Singapore for optometric meetings, I would take them out. I liked doing that.

"The same applied to Old Frees. I was always encouraging Old Frees to get in touch with me whenever they visited

Singapore as I was constantly in touch with other Old Frees. We would always end up with a dinner; I would call Chor Pee and Lee Soon to join in. For me those links were, and still are, very important. I continue to keep in touch with Arul."

On his reputation as pioneer optometrist, EK said, "It all started when I had just arrived in Singapore in 1971 when soft contact lenses had just been introduced. Like everyone else, I had been working with hard contact lenses in Penang during the 10 years of my business there.

"When soft lenses were first approved for use here, nobody knew how to fit them. I decided to learn how to do it by going to London. I went to the manufacturer to see how the lenses were made. Convinced of their usefulness, I started ordering them to fit my customers. I had to do measurements for each patient's eyes and had to order the lenses specifically.

"It did not take long for the trend of wearing soft lenses to take off when people realised how comfortable they were compared to the hard lenses which were rigid and difficult to wear.

"Because I was the first to introduce the lens, I was called a pioneer in the field, making a name for my company which was EK Lim Pte Ltd. Other optometrists soon followed suit.

"Now of course, ready-made soft lenses are used in the market."

Alex KH Ooi

Obstetrician and gynaecologist

Year left school: 1969



He wears many hats but unlike the proverbial 'Jack of all trades and master of none', Alex has been on top of all the roles he has taken on during his career and

accomplished them well.

When asked why he felt compelled to take on social responsibilities despite a busy medical practice to attend to, he says, "I have always had an inclination towards service to others or to causes where I am able to contribute. This trait, I feel, is a natural extension of the desire to be a doctor. It carries with it a sense of caring, professionalism and empathy."

It is, without doubt, the result of years of nurturing in PFS where students have always been encouraged to serve the community and think of others and its spirit of discipline.

Recalling his time there, Alex said, "In my time at the school, we were made to play as many games as possible and take on at least one extra-curricular activity and yet be focused on studies as required. This, coupled with encouragement (sometimes pure designation!) to lead, was to be the catalyst to the moulding of character and

responsibility to self and others.

"I was a Sea Scout and school prefect and played games, mainly rugby, volleyball and waterpolo. I remember the grueling and character building experience of canoeing round Penang Island in our self-made canoe, carrying our own supplies for sustenance!"

His sense of social responsibility began early, starting with his days as a medical student in the University of Singapore.

He said, "The university provided many extra-academic service avenues. I had the honour of being class representative for all five years of medical school. I was President of the Medical Students' Society and the first Asian President of the International Federation of International Student Associations. I was also Vice-President of the University of Singapore Students' Union and Chairman of the Asian Students' Association.

"I have also been involved in fund-raising and activities for charity, sometimes as Chairman. I have been President of The Old Frees' Association, Singapore for some years and was instrumental in bringing the Dr Wu Lien-Teh legacy to light and setting up the Wu Lien-Teh Society in Penang.

"Other organisations where I have served as president include the Rotary Club (and twice as district-secretary), Warren Golf Club (1984-87), The Tanglin Club (2000-2003) and, presently, Singapore Island Country Club from September 2015.

These roles are often categorised as

'thankless' but Alex sees it from a different perspective. He explains, "I find them challenging. It is difficult to change human nature but it is work that needs to be done and which I feel I have the disposition for. I just face the duties, taking obstacles in my stride. Keeping up with my own professional work, which I find gratifying, keeps me sane!"

"Many people may believe otherwise but, for me, it is often not difficult to handle people in committees as I believe the greater majority of volunteers serving in these committees are people with an innate nature for observing good governance, doing due diligence and expecting only self-satisfaction."

The motivation for serving stemmed from the desire to help resolve conflicts, which were a bane in some of these clubs and to help make progress on the clubs' original objectives.

He looks back with satisfaction that the club accounts at Warren, for instance, were nursed back to health while its golf course was re-configured and its social facilities enhanced. At The Tanglin Club, the ability to help resolve the conflicts then and developing and executing the Master Plan to enhance the clubhouse and building a sports complex gave him a sense of pride.

"They were challenging yet rewarding times especially as I could leave office on a happy note."

Lim Chor Pee

Lawyer and playwright

Year left school: 1954



Although he carved out a name for himself as a successful litigator in several high-profile court cases, Lim Chor Pee was also well-known as a luminous playwright.

He was credited with sowing the seeds of local English-language theatre in Singapore and nurturing it to what it is today. When his highly acclaimed first play *Mimi Fan*, written in 1962, took to the stage, it was hailed as having set a milestone in home-grown drama production.

Yet when Chor Pee left Penang Free School in 1954 to go to Britain to read law in St John's College, Cambridge, becoming a playwright was probably not his first priority despite a widely recognised passion for the theatre during his school days.

He joined PFS in 1949 after Wellesley Primary School and Francis Light School. A member of Hargreaves House, he took part in many activities including joining the Scouts. In December 1952, he attended the Pan-Pacific Scouting Jamboree in Australia as one of the school's representatives.

In going to Cambridge, Chor Pee was following in the footsteps of his father, Lim

Kheng Kooi, an Old Free and a Queen's Scholar in 1927, who scored a double-first in law at the same college.

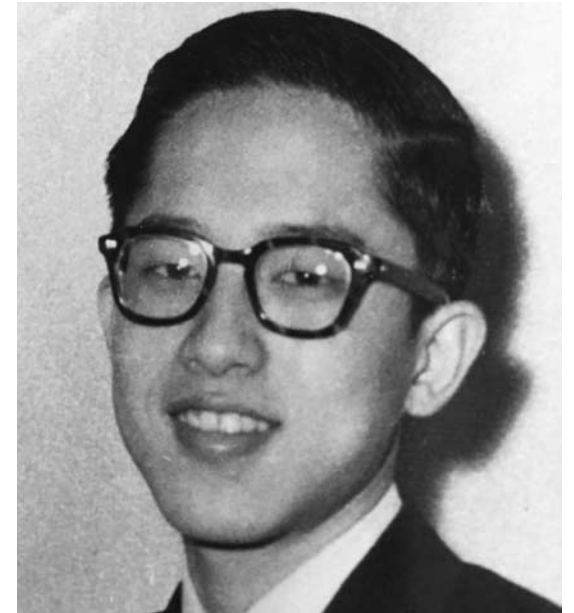
After graduating in 1958, Chor Pee was called to the English Bar in 1959 as a member of The Honourable Society of the Inner Temple.

He then joined the Singapore Legal Service serving as a Crown Counsel and Deputy Public Prosecutor in the Attorney-General's Chambers and District Judge as well as the first Legal Adviser to the Tax Department. In 1962, he was called to the Malayan Bar in Singapore.

It was while he was working in the Legal Service that he started to write *Mimi Fan* in his spare time in the evenings. It was the 1960s and Singapore was in the throes of early nationhood. It had just been granted self-governing status by the British in 1959 and in 1962 it was on its way to gaining independence by joining Malaya, Sarawak and Sabah to form the new Federation of Malaysia a year later.

All this gave rise to stirrings of a national identity and a clamour for a Singapore voice to be heard on stage amid what was then a Western-skewed presence mounted by expatriate theatre groups.

As Chor Pee put it in an article he wrote in the journal *Tumasek* in 1964, "The amateur theatre anywhere in the world is the place where the future professional theatre begins. And there can be no proper theatre unless there are playwrights."



And so with a group of like-minded individuals, he founded the Experimental Theatre Club (ETC) in 1961 to create 'Malayan theatre' and encourage local playwrights by staging their works. ETC staged *Mimi Fan* in 1962 to packed houses during its three-day run at the then Cultural Centre on Canning Rise. It was a story about an English-educated Singaporean returning home from Britain in the liberal swinging '60s and his encounter with a free-spirited good-time girl *Mimi Fan*. The core of the play centred on the theme of truth and identity.

Coincidentally, one of the actors in the critically acclaimed play was another Old Free, Lim Teong Quee, better known as

TQ Lim, retired judicial commissioner and father of Singapore actor Lim Yu-Beng.

Reflecting on its sensational success and on why he wrote the play for an English-speaking new generation, Chor Pee was quoted as saying: "It went down nicely because the audience could feel and see for themselves that is...you can identify yourself with one of them on stage because it's the way we normally would have spoken or would have reacted in a similar situation, rather than some foreign play which is of foreign values that is not totally known to us...."

Chor Pee was the first to dream the Singapore play and give it its initial shape. But he was not just a playwright. He was also a theatre company director and a theatre theoretician. He is widely credited for having kick-started the local theatre scene in Singapore and galvanising locals to follow suit.

Chor Pee took on the role of ETC's artistic director from 1962 to 1967. He wanted to set ETC apart from other theatre companies especially expatriate-run ones such as The Stage Club. He was also against patronising colonial influence in local drama, which was prevalent in the days following Singapore's independence. In one instance when a theatre critic of *The Straits Times* M. E. Constant wrote condescendingly: "Let the local theatre clubs be not too proud to learn from the expat clubs," Chor Pee retorted: "This



Lim Chor Pee's play, *Mimi Fan*, was first staged in 1962 featuring (from left) Annie Wee, Ronald Bloom and Lim Teong Quee better known as TQ Lim, an Old Free.

Right: Cover of *Mimi Fan*, recently re-published by Epigram Books. Photo: Epigram Books



sort of attitude should have gone with the plumed hat."

It was his determination to distinguish local theatre and end the domination of expatriate-produced plays that moved him to write *Mimi Fan*. He wanted to produce a realistic play with characters making punch lines that a local English-speaking audience could appreciate rather than spouting 'Queen's English', which he felt was not a true representation of Singaporeans.

Chor Pee followed up on his success by writing another play *A White Rose at Midnight* in 1964 about a romance between an English-educated university graduate and a Chinese-educated former nightclub singer, which was also staged by ETC.

Despite skilfully juggling between being a practising lawyer and a stalwart

of Singapore's English-language theatre for years, Chor Pee gave up drama to concentrate on his legal career in 1964.

He had just started his own law practice then named Chor Pee & Hin Hiong, after leaving the Legal Service. After some years the firm dissolved and he founded Chor Pee & Company. This firm became the first of a handful of foreign law firms that were given licences to operate in Vietnam, at a time when few local firms had ventured out into the region. In the late 1990s he formed Chor Pee & Partners. Several notable Singapore lawyers and former lawyers either chambered or worked at these firms. In Malaysia, Chor Pee also practised under Albar Zulkifly & Yap and later Chor Pee Anwarul & Company with offices in Kuala Lumpur and Johor.

As a lawyer with a fine reputation, he had a flair for handling extremely difficult cases and was held in high regard by his clients. Chor Pee's endurance as a lawyer can be seen in four decades of cases reported in the law reports. His talent and skill as an advocate has been etched in the memories of many Singapore and Malaysian lawyers.

Remembered for his kind and likeable disposition, he was also known to be a hardworking member of the legal community. Throughout 2006, even while battling lung cancer very bravely, he continued with his legal practice with admirable dedication until his final days. He died in December 2006, aged 70.

Alan Tan Khee Jin

Law professor

Year left school: 1986



"I was from the Class of 1986 (Form 5), and over half my class have ended up in Singapore. Says a lot, doesn't it? ... My fondest memories are of my teachers and classmates. Those were the formative years, and everything in my life I have learned from those years – leadership, hard work,

competition, politics, negotiation, nastiness, everything! I was a prefect and the Prefects' Board did crazy things like going out on motorcycles to bust smoking students – when I think back, we were downright crazy. But we were happy.

"Our form teacher, Ms Choong Lai Yong, remains in the school. She holds the distinction of being the last remaining teacher of that generation who's still teaching. We were fond of Molly Ooi (our first teacher in Form 1), Johnny Ooi (whose prime mission was to ensure the school's dominance in hockey), Lim Lay Eong (later Mrs Ooi!) and Low Boon Ewe (who drummed into us that we were the *crème de la crème*). What I remember was the entire class landing in detention (DC) one day and being lectured by the principal, GK Iyer. Someone had written something crass on the blackboard about a teacher and never owned up to it, so everyone was punished ... we still don't know who did it.

"We knew the school was special, with her incredible history, and she gave us the platform, the confidence, to excel in whatever we did. I'd like to think my friends and I live the school motto – *Fortis Atque Fidelis* – Strong and Faithful. I still wear the school tie when I do TV interviews. It gives us a kick to tell Singaporeans that we're older than their country!

"It would be too romantic to paint all Old Frees as gentlemen. There are thinkers,

doers, scientists, artists, money-spinners and yes, rogues among us, but there's one thing in common: We all love the school.

"I hated the idea of becoming a lawyer, so I do something even better: teaching and spawning them. So I'm incredibly fortunate to have a great job, mentoring young would-be lawyers and moulding them into responsible and ethical individuals. And it has to do with the Penang Free School, the institution whose teachers and environment gave me the very same drive and inspiration.

"As a Professor of Law at the National University of Singapore, I specialise in the law relating to aviation and airlines, advising airlines like AirAsia on the regulation of the airline industry. I also research into Indonesian environmental issues, particularly the haze problem that has afflicted us in recent years, as well as criminal law. I teach these areas of the law to my students at the National University of Singapore (NUS), where I've been teaching for 22 years now in what has been my first and only job."

Preserving the Past and Looking Ahead

EPILOGUE

By Lee Eng Hin *and* Steve Foong

This coffee-table book was conceived by a dedicated group of Old Frees with the desire to document the history of our beloved alma mater and celebrate the contributions of Old Frees to nation-building in Singapore. It has been a long, challenging and interesting journey to uncover the past 200 years of our Grand Old Dame. Our immense gratitude to the author and editorial consultant Tan Chung Lee who upon taking on this massive task spent many hours in researching the archives and interviewing Old Frees before finally expertly weaving the text and photographs to produce this wonderful book.

This book not only tells the story of the Penang Free School but captures the essence of what it was like as a student of this magnificent School. Through the interviews and personal recollections, the reader cannot help but be impressed by the

dedication of the headmasters and teachers, the quality of the education as well as the emphasis on character-building that has produced a diversity of highly talented students who have gone on to be leaders in their own fields far beyond the confines of Penang and Malaysia.

Two events stand out in our recent past. One is Alex Ooi's role in tracing the roots of one of our most famous Old Frees, Dr Wu Lien-Teh, the Plague Fighter which took him to Harbin in China. Dr Wu is revered by the Chinese for his dedication and contribution to saving countless lives by controlling the spread of the Pneumonic Plague.

The other is Steve Foong's road trip with a group of Old Frees from George Town to Dittisham, South Devon, England where he traced the origins of our founder Reverend Robert Sparke Hutchings. The PFS Bicentenary Committee is planning a return trip from Dittisham to George Town

in 2016 in time for the PFS Bicentenary Speech Day.

As we celebrate our bicentenary in 2016, we will no doubt look back with nostalgia on our days in the School. We will remember with fondness and appreciation at what the school has done for us, but at the same time we will also look forward to see what we can do for the School. As each generation passes, we should aim to preserve the greatness of the School and enable its current and future students to rise to greater heights.

*"Let us onward to win and new laurels gain
Free School for the brave and the true!"*

Fortis Atque Fidelis

Annexes

Head Boys (Head Prefects)

Penang Free School 1865-2015

- | | | | | | |
|----|-----------------------|----|------------------------------|----|------------------------------|
| 1 | Eng Tin 1865 | 25 | Phuah Chin Beng 1895 | 49 | Ong Chong Keng 1922 |
| 2 | Charles Nelligan 1866 | 26 | Quah Sin Keat 1896 | 50 | Lim Khye Seng 1923 |
| 3 | Low Ah Maing 1867 | 27 | Phung Chock Kong 1897 | 51 | Ch'ng Eng Hye 1923 |
| 4 | Chan Kim Keat 1868 | 28 | Saw Whee Leow 1898 | 52 | Tneh Say Koo 1924 – 1925 |
| 5 | Quah Beng Poh 1869 | 29 | Yeoh Guan Seok 1899 | 53 | M M Hashim 1925 – 1926 |
| 6 | Hobart D Caunter 1870 | 30 | Koh Kheng Seng 1900 | 54 | Yeap Choong Lyow 1926 – 1927 |
| 7 | Beng Hong 1871 | 31 | RH McClelland 1901 | 55 | Lim Peng Kok 1928 |
| 8 | John Anthony 1872 | 32 | WW Davidson 1902 | 56 | Cheah Heng Sin 1928 |
| 9 | T Cawthorne 1879 | 33 | Lim Guan Cheng 1903 | 57 | Tann Wee Chong 1928 |
| 10 | Yu Phung C 1880 | 34 | Axel Hastrup 1904 | 58 | JWD Ambrose 1929 |
| 11 | Koh Cheng Siew 1881 | 35 | Lim Keat Leong 1905 | 59 | Yeoh Bok Choon 1929 – 1931 |
| 12 | Lim Teow Chong 1882 | 36 | Kam Ching Poh 1906 | 60 | Lim Keng Eok 1931 |
| 13 | Khoo Ee Ghee 1883 | 37 | Khoo Heng Kok 1907 – 1908 | 61 | Tan Ah Ee 1932 |
| 14 | Yeoh Lean Hong 1884 | 38 | Abdul Kareem 1909 – 1910 | 62 | Khoo Phin Hong 1933 |
| 15 | PV Locke 1885 | 39 | Saw Whee Seong 1911 – 1913 | 63 | Chung Shiu Tett 1936 |
| 16 | Tan Choo Choy 1886 | 40 | Ong Huck Chuan 1913 | 64 | Chiu Ban It 1937 |
| 17 | Law Ewe Ee 1887 | 41 | Cheah Tiang Lim 1914 | 65 | Leong Mun Sen 1938 |
| 18 | Toh Lip Khoo 1888 | 42 | Lee Boon Hock 1914 – 1915 | 66 | Tan Ah Fee 1939 -1940 |
| 19 | Ung Bok Hoey 1889 | 43 | Chee Chuck Lum 1915 | 67 | Lim Teik Ee 1940 |
| 20 | Lim Chin Poh 1890 | 44 | Ng Cheong Yew 1916 | 68 | Lau Kam Phooi 1941 |
| 21 | Koh Leap Teng 1891 | 45 | Cheah Teik Hong 1917 | 69 | Joseph Isaac 1940 -1941 |
| 22 | Gun Chaik Seng 1892 | 46 | SM Zainul Abidin 1917 – 1918 | 70 | Lee Chin Thuan 1946 – 1947 |
| 23 | Koay Thean Chin 1893 | 47 | Basha Merican 1919 – 1921 | 71 | Lim Chiang Choo 1947 – 1948 |
| 24 | Gnoh Lean Tuck 1894 | 48 | Syed Omar 1921 | 72 | Chew Kim Seng 1948 |

- 73 Chan Kong Thoe 1948
- 74 Lim Ewe Hin 1948 – 1949
- 75 Goh Hock Lye 1949 – 1950
- 76 Yiap Khin Yin 1950
- 77 Lim Ah Soo 1950 – 1951
- 78 Eddy Chung 1952
- 79 Boey Khoon Loong 1952 – 1953
- 80 Mahinder Singh 1953 – 1954
- 81 NA Ogle 1954 – 1955
- 82 Lee Teng Chye 1955 – 1956
- 83 Teoh Soon Teong 1956
- 84 Kee Yong Tau 1956 – 1957
- 85 Thong Kar Cheong 1957 – 1958
- 86 Tan Teng Nam 1959
- 87 Koe Eng Ghee 1960
- 88 Chin Wah Seng 1961
- 89 Chan Hen Sam 1962
- 90 Lim Chin Kee 1963
- 91 Tan Poh Seng 1964
- 92 Teng Kok Seng 1965
- 93 Teh Ping Choon 1966
- 94 Tan Heng Soon 1967
- 95 Goh Hong Guan 1968
- 96 Tan Kheng Kooi 1969
- 97 Lim Hun Soon 1970
- 98 Yew Teik Chye 1971
- 99 Lim Siang Jin 1972
- 100 Ng Beng Lee 1973
- 101 Tan Hock Guan 1974
- 102 Yeang Hoong Kheng 1975
- 103 Lim Kew Seng 1976
- 104 Goh Kok Yew 1977
- 105 Ch'ng Geam Liang 1978
- 106 Lim Hoon Chong 1979
- 107 Soh Yew Siang 1980
- 108 Tan Poh Eng 1981
- 109 Khoo Guan Huat 1982
- 110 Ong Ewe Lee 1983
- 111 Yeoh Hock Thye 1984
- 112 R Angappan 1985
- 113 Boo Soon Yew 1986
- 114 Khor Seng Teng 1987
- 115 Y Narendran 1988
- 116 Abdul Aziz B Haji Sulaiman 1989
- 117 Eric Chang Choong Yin 1990
- 118 Lye Chien Chai 1991
- 119 R Murali 1992
- 120 Jerry Chang Shang Yu 1993
- 121 Adrian Tay Peng Kuan 1994
- 122 N Sunderaj 1995
- 123 Santosh Raj 1996
- 124 Tan Hee Seng 1997
- 125 Ding Teng Yew 1998
- 126 Jeffrey Woo 1999
- 127 Lim Teong Keat 2000
- 128 Lee Teong Ghee 2001
- 129 Kenneth Teow Kheng Leong 2002
- 130 Goh Kok Yun 2003
- 131 Teo Lee Ken 2004
- 132 Ivan Ooi Jieun Vei 2005
- 133 Yeoh Jit Wei 2006
- 134 Ritchie Lee Zhe Zin 2007
- 135 Kenneth Tan Yu Shen 2008
- 136 Jashan A/L Siva Sankar 2010
- 137 Koh Cheang Huat 2011
- 138 Por Kai Yann 2012
- 139 Ooi Jian Ming 2013
- 140 Teoh Ewe Mun 2014
- 141 Amirul B Akbar Khan 2015

Queen's Scholars

Penang Free School 1893-1957

- 1 Ung Bok Hoey 1893
- 2 Koh Leap Teng (MB B.CH) 1894
- 3 Gnoh Lean Tuck also known as Wu Lien-Teh (MA, MD, ETC) 1896
- 4 Quah Sin Keat (BA, LSA) 1898
- 5 Yeoh Guan Seok (BA, LLB) 1901
- 6 RH MacClelland (BA, LCE) 1901
- 7 Koh Kheng Seng (BA) 1902
- 8 WW Davidson (BA) 1903
- 9 Lim Guan Cheng (MB, BCH,ETC) 1904
- 10 Khoo Heng Kok (BA, LLB) 1909
- 11 Tneh Say Koo (BA, ACA) 1924
- 12 Tan Ah Tah (BA, LLB) 1924
- 13 Yeoh Cheng Hoe (LRRCR, MRCS) 1925
- 14 Oon Khye Beng (BA) 1926
- 15 Lim Kheng Kooi (BA, LLB) 1927
- 16 Cheah Heng Sin (BA) 1927
- 17 JWD Ambrose (BA,BCL) 1928
- 18 Ooi Tiang Eng (MA, BM, BCH, ETC) 1929
- 19 AV Winslow (BA, LLB) 1934
- 20 Lim Chong Eu (MB, BCH) 1937
- 21 Chung Shiu Tett (BA, LLN) 1940
- 22 Cheah Bian Kung (MSc, PHD) 1948
- 23 Lim Kee Jin (MB, BS) 1952
- 24 Chan Kong Thoe (MBBS) 1954
- 25 Wong Lin Ken (MA) 1955
- 26 Khoo Soo Hock (BA Hons) 1957

The Old Frees' Association, Singapore

Presidents

| | |
|-------------|----------------------------------|
| 1962-66 | Mr Justice Tan Ah Tah |
| 1973 – 74 | Mr Justice Alfred Victor Winslow |
| 1975 | Mr Heah Hock Meng |
| 1976 – 80 | Professor Chan Kong Thoe |
| 1981 – 83 | Mr TQ Lim |
| 1984 – 85 | Mr Ng Kong Yeam |
| 1985 – 86 | Professor Chan Kong Thoe |
| 1986 – 87 | Mr TQ Lim |
| 1987 – 88 | Professor Lee Seng Teik |
| 1988 – 89 | Mr TQ Lim |
| 1989 – 92 | Dr Oh Siew Leong |
| 1992 – 95 | Mr Kok Weng On |
| 1995 – 96 | Mr Chong Soon Khean |
| 2007 – 2010 | Mr Neo Kim San |
| 2010 – 2016 | Dr Alex Ooi Koon Hean |

Life Members *(As of 30 June 2016)*

| | | | |
|----|-----------------------------|----|-----------------------------|
| 1 | Dr Alex Ooi Koon Hean | 21 | Captain Lim Cheng Leong |
| 2 | Professor Alan Tan Khee Jin | 22 | Dr Lim Eam Khoon |
| 3 | Dr Chan Kong Thoe | 23 | Mr Malcolm Tan Ban Hoe |
| 4 | Mr Chan Soo Khian | 24 | Dato' Ng Kong Yeam |
| 5 | Dato' Cheah Cheng Hye | 25 | Ms Ong Su-Chzeng |
| 6 | Mr Cheah Hock Leong | 26 | Dr Ooi Choon Jin |
| 7 | Dr Chin Wah Seng | 27 | Professor Peter Lim Ai Chi |
| 8 | Dr Chong Tian Hoo | 28 | Mr Philip Ling Soon Hwa |
| 9 | Mr Dennis Lee Ean Hooi | 29 | Ms Poh Cheng Kin |
| 10 | Mr Gabriel Teh Choo Thok | 30 | Professor Soo Khee Chee |
| 11 | Mr Gan Khai Choon | 31 | Mr Sreenivasan Iyer |
| 12 | Mr Heah Hock Heng | 32 | Mr Steve Foong Ther Hoei |
| 13 | Dr Jeevendra Kanagalingam | 33 | Dr Tan Seang Beng |
| 14 | Mr Jeff Yeo Nai Kwang | 34 | Dr Tan Yew Oo |
| 15 | Mr John Lim Kok Min | 35 | Mr Tay Lee Soon |
| 16 | Mr Khaw Teik Kooi | 36 | Mr Thanneermalai Lakshmanan |
| 17 | Dr Khoo Hoon Eng | 37 | Professor Wong Peng Chiang |
| 18 | Professor Lee Eng Hin | 38 | Mr Yeoh Herr-Ling |
| 19 | Professor Lee Seng Teik | 39 | Mr Yeoh Keat Chuan |
| 20 | Dr Lim Beng Hai | 40 | Mr Yeoh Kheng Hock |

About the author

Singapore-based Tan Chung Lee is an independent writer, researcher and editor. She began her career in journalism when she joined the foreign desk of *The New Nation* after obtaining a political science honours degree from the University of Singapore. She moved on to do investigative reporting and writing on social issues such as housing for which she had her own column. She was the editor of two regional travel magazines and a contributor to travel and trade publications in Hong Kong, Bangkok and San Francisco before joining the public relations industry as a consultant specialising on tourism and travel.

Although best known for her travel writing for which she has won three awards, Chung Lee has a penchant for the eclectic. She has written, edited and published several specially commissioned works for various governments, corporations and institutions on a wide variety of topics, from nature, wildlife and the environment to culture, industries, finance, travel and tourism. This is her 19th book. Her commissioned works include *Cultures of the World: Finland; Bali, Isle of Light; Lending a Helping Hand* on Fullerton Financial Holdings' micro-financing activities in six countries; *Warming Hearts for Generations: 150 Years of City Gas* and *The Story of NWC* on the National Wages Council in Singapore.