

THE EARLY DAYS OF HONG KONG SCOUTING—PART 11

ARCHIVES OF THE PAST - Part 5C

This is the third part of the (4 parts) letter from Rev. G. T. Waldegrave, Commissioner of the Boy Scouts Association, Hong Kong Branch dated 31st May 1926 to Mr. Butterworth of the Imperial Headquarters of London which gives a vivid account of scouting in Hong Kong in its infancy.

(continued from the last issue of "Hong Kong Scouting #241")



HMS Durban, built 29 May 1919, a 4,830 tons Light Cruiser of the Royal Navy with six 6" single-mounted guns (picture from Jane's Fighting Ships)



Sir Reginald STUBBS, GCMG, Hong Kong Chief Scout from 1919 to 1925.



Sir Cecil CLEMENTI, GCMG, Hong Kong Chief Scout from 1925 to 1930

..... "This letter is being, is no doubt you have guessed, being produced at odd times, hence any occasional lack of cohesion you may notice. To continue with my Sea Scouts, the new British recruit I mentioned has duly turned up and has been elected. I am afraid these kids are getting spoiled. A week or two ago, the Whit week, on the Monday they were taken by one of the British parents over some very interesting waterworks tunneling getting there by lorry, with glorious freshwater bathing in a 25 feet deep pool with 15 feet or more sheer dives from rocks. On the Tuesday a Lieut R.N. took about six of them for the day in his ship's wardrooms yacht, while on the Wednesday the troop were given tea and a look round the ship by the wardroom officers of H.M.S. "Durban". Now to cap it all the Commander of the Durban has invited a party of ten of them to go in a few days time for a 7 hours steam trial trip in her on leaving dockyard after a refit. I do not bother about the British members of the Troop, but I fear that the Chinese members will need a sharp pull-up as soon as we can settle down to the normal run again. However it is hard to conceive of any troop having such a uniformly good time as these youngsters. Of course they do behave themselves, & leave a good impression, so it is all to the good, and people will help in that sort of way, but it is the permanent help that we need so badly.

I have just now got a letter from Braga telling me that one of his old scouts is willing to start a new troop of Chinese boys, (the old boy himself a Chinese, one of the two we had at Wembley), in Old Kowloon City, the original Chinese town from which modern Kowloon takes its name. This will be an excellent thing, as there are lots of boys there, and Braga's troop will probably sort of sponsor it. Also I think I may have got hold of someone capable of taking on the College Troop I have mentioned above. Forster the Education Professor is, he tells me, pushing Scouting in his department at the University more than ever, and is prepared to help us in getting some of his people along to a training camp during their next vacation. He tells me that the difficulty with most of them is the promise of "duty to the King". You will remember my talking that over with you and the Chief etc. Clementi is fully in favour of our using in Chinese the words "the Head of the Nation" for "King", as he feels as we do the great importance of the movement in combating Bolshevism which is making another attack on the schools here, and I have been instructed to pass the word quietly to the Chinese S.Ms to allow that form of promise to be taken. Nothing on the matter is being put in writing. Stubbs did not understand the Chinese at all, at any rate not in comparison with Clementi who is a Chinese scholar and white right through. So you may now see a very big increase in our numbers very soon. I am of course trying to keep the standard high, but again and again I find evidence that even the British S. Ms do not realize the importance of thoroughness in the elementary work as well as in the more advanced work in spite of frequent exhalations and visits, and in fact recently through boys who have joined my troops from others, I have been amazed at the evidence of Slackness, even over teaching the Laws. One transfer was a Chinese 1st Class Scout, and an ex-P.L., and he could not pass one single item of the T. F. test, and another kid a British one, who has just passed his T.F. in another troop, was quite surprised when my Rover Mate tested him. "We only had to do one or two knots, and it did not matter how we said the law!"

Our Peak Pack of Cubs grows apace. The Cubmaster, Mrs. Melville Smith, whose husband is at present acting O. C. of the Volunteer Defence Corps is as keen as nuts and equally capable. She now has kids coming from over four miles away. Clementi's kid belongs as well. Mrs. M.S. is a great reader of Scouting books, and the other day told me she was tremendously struck with "The Patrol System" and "Letters to a Patrol Leader", and she can't think why she did not take it all up before.

The Kowloon Pack likewise flourishes, on the right lines as well. In both cases the "Cubbers" are ladies.
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To be continued