

THE EARLY DAYS OF HONG KONG SCOUTING—PART 13

ARCHIVES OF THE PAST – Part 6A

The following is the first part of a letter from the Headquarters of The Boy Scouts Association, Hong Kong Branch to the Imperial Headquarters of The Boy Scouts Association in London dated 30th June 1930 reporting Rover Scouting in Hong Kong:

The Boy Scouts Association.

HEADQUARTERS,
LOWER ALBERT ROAD,

HONG KONG. 30th June 1930



TEL. C.4825

ROVERING IN HONG KONG.

The Difficulty has been to find anyone of sufficient experience of young men and their difficulties and with a good knowledge of the Aims of Scouting and of Rover Scouting to undertake the work of organising the Hong Kong Rovers. The Association is comparatively young as at present constituted, being formed in 1920, though Scouts were actually started in the Colony in 1912, yet even in 1922 there was one Troop with Rovers attached. These Rovers gradually drifted away, left the Colony or lost interest, mainly probably owing to the fact that the S.M. who founded the Troop and carried it on splendidly left Hong Kong himself. When Rovering began to come to the fore at Home, various Troops tried to organise Rover Patrols, but no one had the proper idea, and they were little more than Senior Scouts while the commissioner was far too busy with Scout Troops which were being formed in schools and with Cubs which had got going to be able to give Rovering the attention it needed. Finally a young Scouter got some friends together, mostly service men, and started a Rover Patrol. After various vicissitudes, not all of them creditable, which finally resulted in the founder of the crew having to resign, the crew in question which had been given a den at Association H.Q. was used as a depot so to speak for servicemen of both services who wished to take up scouting in the Colony or who already scouts wished to carry on in Hong Kong. By this means we were able to find out what Rovers could be used as Scouters, Examiners, Instructors etc., and though this method had been in vogue for some time, owing to Rover Instructors in some cases unconsciously and through mere keenness usurping the powers of Scoutmasters in the Troops

to which they were attached, it had to be used very cautiously, and other ways of utilising the Rovers had to be found, not an easy job owing to local conditions, language difficulties etc.

During the troubles of 1927 the 3rd Destroyer Flotilla provided two large patrols for the Central crew, working very keenly in the Association and after they left Hong Kong providing representatives for Hong Kong at Arrowe Park by special permission. After they left the Central Crew had a slump, but finally an Assistant Commissioner of the right type was found and the Rovers are now doing the following jobs in addition to the ordinary work of Instruction, Examination etc etc. They keep the Association Camp Gear in condition, are helping to decorate and keep clean a Church, are giving demonstrations of Life Saving at the Public Bathing Places, in conjunction with the Police assisting in building important outhouses etc at the Association's Training Camp, exploring the Colony with a view to finding good camp sites, and are collecting reports on transport, supplies, water, mosquitoes etc. etc."

To be continued



Rover Scouts of the 8th and 14th Troops (South China Athletic Association) at Shek O in Dec. 1928 (from the album of Rev.G.T. Waldegrave MBE Colony Commissioner of Hong Kong 1921-1934)