

Y-TEENS

As mentioned in the main file, this was a YMCA youth club for local teenagers which I was asked to lead. People from a variety of ethnicities formed the group. There were Chinese, Eurasians, Portuguese and Europeans. We had regular weekly activities, camps, sports competitions and would conduct charity activities. I have a number of photographs of things we did, on the back of which I have written comments. I think I sent these home to New Zealand for the folks to see. The details below closely follow what I wrote at that time.

Walled City

The old Walled City, located opposite the old Kai Tak airport, was exactly that in pre-colonial times. Most of the walls were knocked down during the Japanese occupation during WWII to extend the runways at the airport. Since then, buildings replaced the walls surrounding the city and inside it became a slum and a haven for criminals, drug addicts and the very poor. It was so dangerous that the police would seldom venture inside and also because it was supposed to be Chinese (mainland) territory. A number of church groups however did go in to set up clinics and primary schools. It was to one such primary school that the Y-Teens went to distribute gifts. The city was demolished in the 1992. For more on the Walled City, go to:

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2139914/A-rare-insight-Kowloon-Walled-City.html>

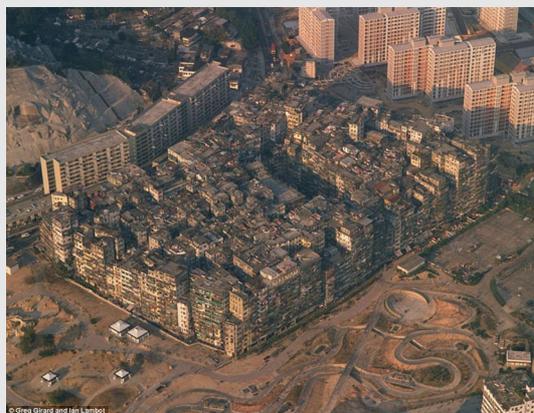
http://kakopa.com/Kowloon_walled_city/index.html

Our visit

The group repaired and wrapped used toys at Christmas time. About 200 gifts were given to the children in Mrs Donnithorne's school in the Walled City. It seemed to be a little cleaner and less smelly than when I visited it during the tour in early 1965. The first photo shows some of the group with toys as we prepared to enter. Mrs



Part of the original Walled City



An aerial view of the Walled City



Preparing to enter with the toys

Donnithorne is on the extreme right (half obscured). The girl next to her (leaning forward) is one of the youth department staff at the YMCA.

This photograph shows one of the entrances to the city. It was difficult work getting down the stairs with all the toys.

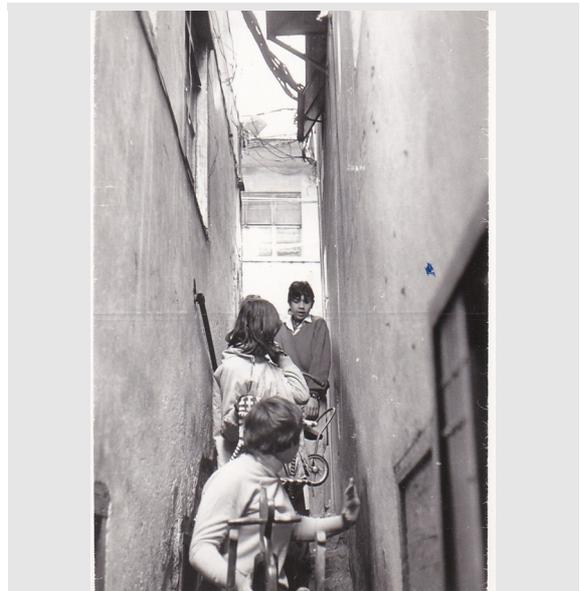
There were five classes at the school with 40 children in each (not uncommon at the time; I would have 40-42 in my classes at Ming Yin College). Classes ranged from Kindergarten to Primary 4.

The next photograph show the children receiving their gifts. They were not allowed to unwrap them but had to take them home in case the toys were snatched by people in the city. As a thank you, the class had to sing a hymn and for the higher classes, this was in English (I guess this means we distributed gifts to more than one class though I cannot remember this).

The last photograph shows some of the kindergarten children and a few of the Y-Teens. It was hard to get the children to smile but they can as another photograph shows (which I do not seem to have). Note that all the children are wearing some sort of working smock. Also note how clean the room is compared with the squalor of the Walled City in general.

Sports activities

Sports were a feature of our regular meetings. And volleyball was a particular favourite. The Y-Teens had a boys' team. This picture shows them in action during a tournament at the Chinese YMCA. Note their distinctive T-Teens singlet. Note too that two of them are not wearing shorts, much to my displeasure! All the T-Teen boys



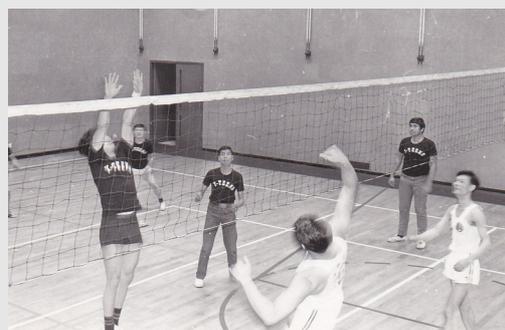
Entering the Walled City



Distributing gifts



Group photo



At a basketball tournament

shown in the are bi-lingual.

Camps

Occasionally, we would have camps. One camp site often used was in Fanling (which was just a very small village then). The first picture is from a bike ride we took. This was the first time I had ridden a bike since leaving New Zealand. We went as far as possible towards the border village of Sha Tau Kok. However, it is a closed area. About a mile from this sign is the village, the main street of which is half in Hong Kong and half in China. Some time before this, there had been a lot of trouble with people illegally coming across from China to Hong Kong.

The next shot is of a group discussion at the camp while the third shows some of the group playing inside the camp building.

Note: I note from my written comments that the last two pictures were for Keith's benefit, though I am not sure why now. Perhaps it was because he might have known some of the group from his time working at the YMCA. So, in case Keith reads this file, I will include the names of those in the photographs:

Top (with bike): Jerry Lopez

Middle: (L to R) Barbara Tjou, Jenny Mannville, ..?., Ransay See, Mary D'Almeida

Bottom: (L to R) Edwardo Marques, Gemma Cheng, Anne Mikel, and in front, Ian Day.

Temple visit

Some of the group organised an outing to a temple in Shatin one afternoon for a group of boys. These were underprivileged boys who had been coming to the YMCA in the mornings usually once or twice a week. They were a very energetic bunch and wouldn't rest for a moment. While waiting for the train at the station Shatin



Bike ride outing



Group discussion



Inside the camp building



for the return journey, we decided to play some games. It was rather difficult to organise the boys, even to get into a straight line. One of the games (lower photograph) involved each of our group having to carry a boy on our backs to the far fence and back. Hard work!

At the start of the outing, there were 14 boys but only 13 when we arrived back! The other was caught hiding in the train carriage.



Musical concert

One time, we produced the musical “Oliver” and performed it at the YMCA. I was the MC for the evening. There are no pictures of the musical but there is one of me addressing the audience; what I was saying I now have no idea.



Y-Teens dinners

From time to time, we would have a dinner – I suppose at the end of the year. Here are two photographs at one such dinner in the YMCA hall (with the stage at the back where “Oliver” was performed). Note: The girl with the glasses in Deidre Day, brother on Ian Day pictured earlier.

