

修頓遊樂場 和 榮譽扶輪社員修頓爵士

Southern Playground and  
Honourary Rotarian--Sir Wilfrid Thomas Southorn

By Herbert K. Lau (劉敬恒) (Rotary China Historian)

15 December 2015



Southern Playground (修頓遊樂場), initially a Hong Kong Rotary Club's (香港扶輪社) service project during the Club's first year in 1931, is now a sports and recreational ground in Wan Chai District, Hong Kong (香港灣仔區). Spanning approximately 96,000 square feet (8,900 square metres) and serving as a vital open space amid the city's dense urban landscape, opened on 11 July 1934 as Wan Chai Children's Playground, it was renamed in honour of Sir Wilfrid Thomas Southorn (修頓爵士), Hong Kong's Colonial Secretary (輔政司) from 1925 to 1936. His vision---inspired by rural landscapes in Ceylon (now Sri Lanka)---emphasized children welfare and community recreation in response to growing urban needs following child labour restrictions.

Dr. the Honourable Sir Wilfrid Thomas Southorn, KCMG, KBE, CMG, *HonLLD (HKU)*, MA (*Oxon*), BA (*Oxon*) (4 August 1879 – 15 March 1957) (Chinese name given as: 修頓, formerly given as: 蕭敦), affectionately known as “Tom”, was a British colonial administrator whose career spanned Ceylon and Hong Kong, where he served as Colonial Secretary from 1925 to 1936. Born in England and educated at Warwick School and Corpus Christi College, Oxford, Southorn entered the Ceylon Civil Service in 1903, rising through roles such as Additional Assistant Colonial Secretary (1909), Principal Assistant Colonial Secretary (1920), and Principal Collector of Customs (1923). In Hong Kong, he acted as Administrator of the Colony (護理香港總督) multiple times, including from February to March 1930 and from May to September 1931, administering the Government effectively amid interwar challenges.

Southorn's tenure emphasized public welfare, including initiatives to enhance health conditions, establish playgrounds for underprivileged children---such as the eponymous Southorn Playground---and foster cultural ties through branches of organizations like the English Association. Appointed Knight Commander of the Most Distinguished Order of Saint Michael and Saint George (KCMG) and Knight Commander of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire (KBE), he transitioned to Governor of the Gambia in 1936, serving until 1942 and overseeing colonial administration during the early World War II period. Retiring in 1946 after liaison duties, Southorn's legacy reflects pragmatic governance in British overseas territories, prioritizing administrative stability and social improvements without notable controversies.

Sir Wilfrid Thomas Southorn was Honourary Member of the Rotary Club of Hong Kong during his service in the Colony.



## Hong Kong Rotary Club and Southorn Playground

Southorn Playground is a historic public recreational facility in the Wan Chai District of Hong Kong. The playground features key sports amenities managed today by the Leisure and Cultural Services Department, Hong Kong SAR Government (香港特別行政區政府康樂及文化事務署), including children's playground, four outdoor basketball courts and one 7-a-side soccer pitch, open daily from 7 a.m. to 11 p.m., which support a range of activities from amateur athletics to casual play. Originally designed with children's equipment like swings and see-saws alongside a large paved open area, it quickly became a multifunctional venue for sports, relaxation, and social gatherings, reflecting its role as a microcosm of Hong Kong society. Over time, it evolved into a broader community hub where seniors practice chess and *tai chi* (太極拳), students engage in basketball and football, domestic workers share meals on weekends, and diverse groups---from office workers to outreach social services---converge for leisure and interaction throughout the day.

Historically, the site holds significance beyond recreation: in 1940, the British colonial government constructed air raid shelters there for protection during World War II, though it suffered damage from Japanese air strikes and was later rebuilt. It also hosted a 1953 celebration for Queen Elizabeth II's coronation, offering free festivities for children. In more recent decades, it has functioned as a site for public assembly, including protests against government policies. The playground remains an enduring symbol of colonial-era urban planning while adapting to contemporary social needs in one of Hong Kong's most vibrant neighborhoods.

Southorn Playground is bounded by Hennessy Road (軒尼詩道) to the north, Luard Road (盧押道) to the west, Johnston Road (莊士敦道) to the south, and buildings to the east. The land on which the Southorn Playground sits was reclaimed from Victoria Harbour as part of the Praya East Reclamation Scheme during the 1920s. In 1929, the Government set up the Playing Fields Committee to study the provision of children's playgrounds. The Committee recommended setting aside areas for children, and Southorn suggested preserving the land between Johnston Road and Hennessy Road as a playground.

The designated playground, the Wanchai Grounds (today's Southorn Playground), was allotted by the Government to the Rotary Club of Hong Kong which financed the construction. On 1 July 1933, the new Children's Playground Association (兒童遊樂場協會) (today the Hong Kong Playground Association 香港遊樂場協會) took over responsibility of the playground. A public toilet and bathhouse opened on 12 February 1934 at the junction of Hennessy Road and O'Brien Road (柯布連道).

A formal opening ceremony was held for the then-Wanchai Children's Playground, officiated by both Sir Wilfrid Thomas Southorn and Hong Kong Rotary Club Past President Dr. The Honourable Ts'o Seen Wan (議員曹善允博士), on 11 July 1934. The playground was actually open in some capacity prior to the commemorative opening ceremony---an April 1934 news article stated that the facility already had an average daily attendance of some 275 children. It was the community service project of the Rotary Club's first year.

Following the Japanese Occupation of Hong Kong (1941-1945), the Government endeavoured to rehabilitate the derelict playgrounds of the territory. The 《Government Gazette》 announced on 11 October 1947 that the Southorn Playground would be re-allocated to the Children's Playground Association---unlike other playgrounds, which remained in Government hands in anticipation that the Urban Council would ultimately take over their management.

The Children's Playground Association constructed the War Memorial Centre (紀念殉戰烈士福利會大廈), a welfare and sports centre, in the eastern portion of Southorn Playground. It was completed in 1950 and offered children recreational opportunities as well as a library. A new covered basketball court opened at the centre on 5 June 1951. This eastern portion of the playground also housed the Family Planning Association (香港家庭計劃指導會) and the Violet Peel Clinic (貝夫人健康院). (see photo on Page 16)



## The story of Sir Wilfrid Thomas Southorn

### Early Life and Education

Wilfrid Thomas Southorn was born on 4 August 1879 in Warwick, Warwickshire, England. He was the son of Josiah Southorn and Elizabeth Lucy Bissell, reflecting a family structure common in provincial England during the late Victorian era.

Southorn's early years were spent in Warwick, where familial stability and the prevailing British societal emphasis on duty and empire provided a foundational environment conducive to public service careers, as evidenced by the era's expansion of colonial opportunities accessible via competitive examinations to those from modest yet aspiring backgrounds. Specific details on parental occupations or direct family ties to administration remain sparse in records, but the regional context of Warwickshire---home to administrative and mercantile influences---likely reinforced an imperial worldview through local norms and institutions.

Southorn attended Warwick School, an English public school founded in 914 AD and renowned for its classical curriculum, which instilled foundational knowledge in Latin, Greek, history, and mathematics essential for aspiring administrators. He proceeded to Corpus Christi College, Oxford, matriculating around 1898 and completing his studies by the early 1900s.

At Oxford, Southorn earned a Master of Arts degree, benefiting from the College's rigorous emphasis on humanities and jurisprudence, disciplines that honed the intellectual discipline and historical acumen demanded by competitive imperial examinations.

### Colonial Administrative Career

#### Service in Ceylon in South Asia

Southorn joined the Ceylon Civil Service in 1903, beginning a two-decade tenure that established his expertise in colonial administration. In this capacity, he handled routine governance tasks amid the broader framework of British rule, which centralized authority following the 1815 annexation of the Kandyan Kingdom and prioritized revenue collection and public order over the decentralized feudal structures of prior Sinhalese and Tamil polities.

By 1909, he advanced to Additional Assistant Colonial Secretary, assisting in drafting policies and coordinating executive functions under the Governor. This role positioned him within the Colonial Secretary's office, the nerve center for implementing reforms that streamlined trade, fostering an environment where plantation exports---particularly tea and rubber---expanded rapidly due to enforced property rights and legal predictability.

Promoted to Principal Assistant Colonial Secretary in 1920, Southorn contributed to administrative oversight during a period of infrastructural consolidation, including road networks that integrated rural plantations with ports, directly supporting export volumes that grew through consistent customs enforcement. In 1923, he assumed duties as Principal

Collector of Customs and Chairman of the Post Commission, managing tariff collections that formed a core revenue stream---accounting for over half of colonial budgets---and enhancing postal efficiency to bolster commercial correspondence and internal connectivity. These efforts supported economic facilitation through bureaucratic mechanisms.

### Tenure in Hong Kong

Southorn assumed the position of Colonial Secretary of Hong Kong on 1 May 1925, succeeding Claud Severn (施勳), and held the role until his departure on 23 March 1936. In this capacity, he managed key administrative functions, including policy implementation, legislative coordination, and fiscal oversight, during a phase of infrastructural and economic maturation for the British colony.

He temporarily acted as Officer Administering the Government on multiple occasions amid gubernatorial absences or transitions, specifically from February to March 1930 under Governor Sir William Peel (香港總督貝璐爵士), from May to September 1935, and in November 1935. These interim roles underscored his seniority in the colonial hierarchy, where he ensured continuity in governance amid growing regional pressures from instability in the Chinese mainland.

Under Southorn's tenure, Hong Kong advanced several modernization projects, including the deepening of Victoria Harbour to accommodate larger vessels, which enhanced the Colony's entrepôt capabilities, and electric supply extensions across both sides of the harbour to support industrial and residential expansion. Urban developments progressed with initiatives such as the construction of Queen Mary Hospital (瑪麗醫院), the extension of a 75-foot road from Causeway Bay (銅鑼灣) to Ming Yuen (明園) (later King's Road 英皇道), and planning for sewerage in Yaumati (油蔴地), reflecting deliberate efforts to address overcrowding and sanitation in densely populated areas.

The Colony maintained legal stability and public order despite external threats, including Japanese encroachments in Manchuria after 1931, with Southorn's administration prioritizing efficient resource allocation over expansive welfare schemes. Trade volumes expanded significantly, with total external trade rising from approximately HK\$1,219 million in imports and related values in the mid-1920s to sustained growth through the early 1930s, bolstering Hong Kong's position as a regional hub amid global economic fluctuations. These outcomes were evidenced in legislative records emphasizing private enterprise contributions alongside government facilitation, rather than coercive measures.

The Southorn couple in Hong Kong often devoted themselves with community services. Lady Bella Sidney Woolf Southorn had served The Girl Guides Association (Hong Kong Branch) as the Colonial Commissioner (香港女童軍總會總監) from 1926 to 1936. In recognition to her remarkable service to the community, Lady Southorn was appointed Officer of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire (OBE) in 1935 by George V, King of the United Kingdom and the British Dominions, and Emperor of India.

## Governorship of The Gambia

Sir Wilfrid Thomas Southorn assumed the governorship of the Gambia, West Africa, on 22 October 1936, following his role as Colonial Secretary of Hong Kong, and held the position until his departure on 23 March 1942. His tenure occurred under the brief reign of Edward VIII and then George VI, amid lingering effects of the global economic depression and escalating tensions leading to World War II in 1939. The Gambia, comprising a narrow 10-to-30-mile-wide strip along the Gambia River extending 300 miles inland and surrounded by French Senegal, generated revenue primarily from groundnut exports (averaging 40,000-50,000 tons annually in the late 1930s) and customs duties on imports, with budgets balanced at around £200,000-£250,000 yearly but offering scant surplus for expansion.

Southorn candidly evaluated the Colony's viability in official assessments, terming it a "geographical and economic absurdity" due to its fragmented territory, isolation from other British holdings, and reliance on a single cash crop vulnerable to price fluctuations---groundnuts fetched as low as £10 per ton in 1930s slumps---coupled with a population of approximately 200,000 subsisting on subsistence agriculture and fishing. This realism underscored causal limitations: the enclave's design, a legacy of 19th-century treaties, precluded economies of scale in infrastructure or defense, with transport confined to riverboats and minimal roads totaling under 100 miles of motorable tracks. Administrative realism dictated prioritizing essentials like quarantine enforcement and basic sanitation over ambitious projects, as fiscal data showed recurrent deficits averted only by imperial grants-in-aid averaging £20,000 annually.

As war demands intensified from 1939, Southorn adapted policies to sustain minimal governance, including rationing imports (e.g., rice supplies cut by 20-30% via convoy risks) and mobilizing limited local resources for Allied needs, such as minor contributions of groundnuts and labourers without forming combat units. He pursued incremental reforms, favouring limited franchise extension to Bathurst residents to foster responsibility amid Protectorate chiefs' influence, but wartime administrative burdens---exacerbated by staff shortages and communication disruptions---prevented implementation. Outcomes reflected constrained efficacy: health metrics improved marginally with anti-malarial efforts reducing reported cases by 10-15% in urban areas, yet overall development stalled, affirming the Colony's structural improbability for self-sustained progress under prevailing conditions.

## Personal Life and Family

Wilfrid Thomas Southorn met Bella Sidney Woolf during her visits to Ceylon, where he served alongside her brother Leonard Woolf in the civil service. Leonard, later a prominent member of the Bloomsbury Group through his marriage to Virginia Woolf, arrived in Ceylon in 1905. Bella, an author who drew on her time in Ceylon for her 1914 guidebook 《How to See Ceylon》, had been widowed from her first husband, Robert Heath Lock, since 1915. The couple married in Ceylon in 1921, when Southorn was 42 and Bella 45.

Their marriage produced no children, a circumstance consistent with their late union and peripatetic colonial lifestyle. Bella supported Southorn's career by accompanying him to key postings, including Hong Kong---where he served as Colonial Secretary from 1925 to 1936 and acting Governor on multiple occasions---and the Gambia, where he was Governor from 1936 to 1942. This partnership exemplified how traditional spousal companionship facilitated sustained administrative service in demanding overseas roles, enabling Southorn's focus on governance amid frequent relocations and professional pressures without the added complexities of raising a family.

During his early service in Ceylon, Southorn was posted to Jaffna, overlapping briefly with Leonard Woolf in 1905.

In Hong Kong, as Colonial Secretary from 1925 to 1936 and occasional acting governor, Southorn utilized Mountain Lodge on Victoria Peak as the official summer residence, an elevated retreat designed to mitigate the lowland heat and humidity that exacerbated illnesses like malaria among expatriate officials. This adaptation facilitated focused governance by providing cooler air and scenic vantage points---such as views of the moon over High West, starlit skies, and distant fishing fleets---which his wife Bella described in her writings as conducive to reflective evenings, occasionally interrupted by local wildlife like barking deer venturing into the garden. The residence's role extended to administrative oversight, with servants like Ah Choy managing household affairs, enabling Southorn to maintain productivity in a climate notorious for impairing European vitality.

As Governor of the Gambia from 1936 to 1942, Southorn occupied Government House in Bathurst (now Banjul), the standard colonial vice-regal seat on the foreshore, adapted for oversight of the riverine territory's sparse infrastructure. The posting demanded resilience against the West African tropics' intense heat and disease prevalence, with routines likely emphasizing early-morning administrative work to evade peak temperatures, aligning with imperial service norms that prioritized endurance for effective rule in marginal colonies. Such environmental pressures, compounded by the Gambia's limited resources, tested officials' capacity for sustained output, as Southorn navigated wartime disruptions culminating in his 1942 departure.

### Retirement Years in England

Following the conclusion of his governorship in the Gambia on 23 March 1942, Southorn returned to England during the height of the Second World War. He took on the role of liaison officer for the Colonial Civil Service, facilitating coordination between colonial administrators and wartime imperatives in London until 1946. This position extended his administrative expertise into the metropolitan context, aiding the management of imperial personnel amid global conflict without assuming frontline duties.

In 1946, Southorn fully retired from public service, marking the end of over four decades in colonial administration spanning Ceylon, Hong Kong, and the Gambia. His post-

retirement years involved limited but supportive engagements, such as serving as a guide and liaison for colonial officers' networks in London, including advisory roles tied to club facilities for returned administrators. These activities underscored a quiet commitment to the Empire's human infrastructure, eschewing high-profile pursuits in favour of mentorship drawn from his career's pragmatic lessons in governance and resource constraints.

Sir Wilfrid Thomas Southorn died on 15 March 1957 in London, England, at the age of 77. The cause of death is not publicly documented in available records, consistent with natural causes for an individual of advanced age following retirement from colonial service.

He was cremated at Woking Crematorium, Woking, Surrey, England. His passing occurred as former territories like The Gambia, which he governed from 1936 to 1942, approached independence in the ensuing decade, though Southorn himself had retired in 1946.

## Legacy

### Administrative Achievements

Southorn's tenure as Colonial Secretary of Hong Kong from 1925 to 1936 involved overseeing key administrative functions during periods of economic volatility, including the Canton-Hong Kong General Strike (省港大罷工) of 1925–1926 and the onset of the global depression. Entrepôt trade volumes fluctuated but demonstrated resilience under continued British administrative frameworks, with total trade reaching approximately HK\$1,219 million by 1924 and recovering amid policy continuity he helped maintain. He served as Officer Administering the Government from February to March 1930 and May to September 1931, managing governance transitions and ensuring operational stability without major disruptions during Governor William Peel's absences. His direct role in annual estimates preparation for over a decade supported fiscal oversight amid these challenges.

In The Gambia, as Governor from October 1936 to 1942, Southorn intervened to enable the appointment of Edward Francis Small to the Legislative Council in 1941---the first African member---overriding prior colonial hesitations and advancing limited representative governance despite wartime constraints that blocked his preferred franchise extension. Amid World War II, he coordinated relief distributions during acute food shortages of 1940–1941, while the Colony's economy strengthened post-1939 as a military staging post, underscoring effective crisis response under British colonial structures.

Across postings, Southorn's career progression---from entry into the Ceylon Civil Service in 1903 to Principal Assistant Colonial Secretary by 1920---exemplified sustained implementation of rule-of-law mechanisms and bureaucratic efficiency, contributing to developmental stability in export-oriented economies without ideological overhauls.

### Honors and Titles

Southorn received the Companion of the Most Distinguished Order of St. Michael and St. George (CMG) in the 1927 King George V's Birthday Honours, recognizing his

administrative contributions in the Ceylon Civil Service. He was promoted to Knight Commander of the Most Distinguished Order of St. Michael and St. George (KCMG) by 1936, coinciding with his governorship of The Gambia, in acknowledgment of sustained excellence in colonial oversight across Ceylon, Hong Kong, and West Africa.

Southorn was also appointed Knight Commander of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire (KBE) in 1933, reflecting imperial recognition of his effective civil service tenure in multiple territories. These honors, awarded through royal nomination and peer review within the British honors system, provided formal validation of his governance outcomes, including fiscal stability and infrastructural progress, as empirically demonstrated in colonial records---affirmations that persist despite subsequent historiographical tendencies to de-emphasize such metrics in favor of ideological critiques. No additional major imperial distinctions are recorded, underscoring the focused merit-based elevation typical of pre-World War II colonial administrators.

In 1936, Southorn was conferred the degree of Doctor of Laws, *honoris causa*, by The University of Hong Kong (香港大學). The ceremony was officiated by University Chancellor, Hong Kong Governor Sir Andrew Caldecott (香港總督郝德傑爵士), and the citation was written and delivered by Vice-Chancellor Sir William Woodward Hornell (康寧爵士), the Public Orator of the University. Full text of the citation is reprinted on Page 13.

[Note] These two gentlemen were eminent Rotarians: (1) Sir Andrew Caldecott was Charter President 1929-1930 of the Rotary Club of Kuala Lumpur, Federated Malay States; (2) Sir William Woodward Hornell was Charter President 1930-1932 of the Rotary Club of Hong Kong.

### Criticisms and Historical Assessments

Southorn's tenure as a colonial administrator attracted few documented personal criticisms, with historical records indicating no major scandals or ethical lapses attributed directly to him. Instead, any scrutiny largely stems from broader anti-colonial sentiments prevalent during his service in Ceylon (1903-1926), Hong Kong (1925-1936), and the Gambia (1936-1942), where local resistances occasionally challenged British authority, including policies overseen or influenced by Southorn. For instance, in Hong Kong, his role as Colonial Secretary involved the 1931 arrest and attempted extradition of Ho Chi Minh (胡志明)---the Vietnamese Communist leader who was using the alias Sung Man Cho/Nguyen Ai Quoc at that time---on charges related to anti-colonial activities, which anti-imperialist narratives later framed as suppression of nationalist figures, though the case ultimately failed on procedural grounds under British law.

In the Gambia, economic policies under Southorn's governorship faced retrospective critique for perpetuating slow developmental progress in a resource-poor Colony heavily reliant on groundnut exports, with budgets constrained by chronic deficits and limited imperial funding---averaging under £200,000 annually during his term, insufficient for

large-scale infrastructure. Southorn himself acknowledged these limitations, defending incremental advances in agriculture and administration against detractors who decried the pace as indicative of exploitative neglect, yet empirical records show net gains in stability and basic services, such as coordinated forestry management with neighboring territories to prevent overexploitation, rather than pure extraction. Exaggerated claims of systemic colonial “absurdity” or unmitigated plunder overlook verifiable outcomes like reduced intertribal conflicts through indirect rule, which Southorn advocated as a pragmatic bridge to eventual self-governance, prioritizing local chiefs’ authority over direct imposition.

Historical assessments of Southorn’s legacy reflect polarized colonial debates: left-leaning perspectives, often rooted in post-independence historiography, portray British administration---including his indirect rule and fiscal conservatism---as inherently oppressive, prioritizing metropolitan interests and eroding indigenous autonomy, evidenced by tensions with Gambian chiefs over land and taxation enforcement. Conversely, defenses grounded in civilizing mission rationales highlight causal evidence of enhanced governance stability, such as Southorn’s interventions in local elections to bolster moderate leaders and his foreword to J. M. Gray’s *《The History of the Gambia》* (1940), which underscored long-term administrative continuity over chaotic pre-colonial fragmentation. Overall, verifiable data favors assessments of competent stewardship under imperial constraints, yielding measurable order without the revolutionary upheavals seen elsewhere, though at the expense of accelerated political devolution.

### Enduring Impact and Named Institutions

The Southorn Playground in Wan Chai, Hong Kong, opened as the Wan Chai Children’s Playground in 1934 and was renamed that year in honour of Sir Wilfrid Thomas Southorn, reflecting official recognition of his administrative contributions during a period of urban expansion. More detail about this project is mentioned on Pages 2, 3, 15, 16.

While direct historiographical writings by Southorn remain limited, elements of his governance model---emphasizing pragmatic local administration and infrastructure investment---influenced subsequent Commonwealth colonial practices, as seen in analogous recreational developments in other British territories during the interwar period, though primary attribution relies on archival records of his tenure rather than uncritical emulation. This impact prioritizes verifiable, material outcomes over narrative reinterpretations, with the playground’s role in mitigating urban density effects persisting as a neutral, empirical marker of efficacy.





## Periods of Service in the Hong Kong Legislative Council

16 January 1936 - 19 March 1936

Appointed (Ex officio - Colonial Secretary)

9 November 1935 - 5 December 1935

Appointed (Official - The Officer Administering the Government) \*\*

\*\* President of the Council

13 June 1935 - 12 September 1935

Appointed (Official - The Officer Administering the Government) \*\*

\*\* President of the Council

1 December 1932 - 16 May 1935

Appointed (Ex officio - Colonial Secretary)

19 May 1932 - 10 November 1932

Appointed (Official - The Officer Administering the Government) \*\*

\*\* President of the Council

31 October 1929 - 7 April 1932

Appointed (Ex officio - Colonial Secretary)

24 October 1929 - 24 October 1929

Appointed (Official - The Officer Administering the Government) \*\*

\*\* President of the Council

24 January 1929 - 23 September 1929

Appointed (Ex officio - Colonial Secretary)

28 June 1928 - 27 December 1928

Appointed (Official - The Officer Administering the Government) \*\*

\*\* President of the Council

13 October 1927 - 1 December 1927

Appointed (Official - The Officer Administering the Government) \*\*

\*\* President of the Council

27 May 1926 - 15 September 1927

Appointed (Ex officio - Colonial Secretary)

這一頁 1928 年的會議記錄顯示，修頓以護理總督的身份擔任香港立法局主席。

*In this page of 1928 Hong Kong Legislative Council minutes, it shows that Mr. Wilfrid T. Southorn served as President of the Council in his capacity as The Officer Administering the Government.*

## ***December 20th, 1928.***

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### **PRESENT:—**

HIS EXCELLENCY THE OFFICER ADMINISTERING THE GOVERNMENT (HON. MR. W. T. SOUTHORN, C.M.G.).

HIS EXCELLENCY THE GENERAL OFFICER COMMANDING THE TROOPS (MAJOR-GENERAL C. C. LUARD, C.B., C.M.G.).

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (HON. MR. E. R. HALLIFAX, C.M.G., C.B.E.).

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL (HON. SIR JOSEPH HORSFORD KEMP, KT., K.C., C.B.E.).

THE COLONIAL TREASURER (HON. MR. C. MCL. MESSER, O.B.E.).

HON. MR. H. T. CREASY (Director of Public Works).

HON. MR. R. A. C. NORTH (Secretary for Chinese Affairs).

HON. MR. E. D. C. WOLFE, C.M.G. (Captain Superintendent of Police).

HON. SIR HENRY EDWARD POLLOCK, KT., K.C.

HON. SIR SHOU-SON CHOW, KT.

HON. DR. R. H. KOTEWALL, C.M.G., LL.D.

HON. MR. A. C. HYNES.

HON. MR. J. OWEN HUGHES.

HON. MR. B. D. F. BEITH.

MR. H. R. BUTTERS (Deputy Clerk of Councils).

### **MINUTES.**

The minutes of the previous meeting of the Council were confirmed.

### **THE KING'S ILLNESS.**

H.E. THE OFFICER ADMINISTERING THE GOVERNMENT— Hon. Members of the Legislative Council,—Before we take up the business on the agenda, I should like to make reference to that matter which has during the past fortnight been uppermost in the minds, not only of Hon. Members, but of all His loyal subjects, namely, the serious illness of His Majesty the King. It is too early to say that our anxiety is allayed, but I am sure that the Council will have received with feelings of the keenest relief the welcome news that His Majesty continues to make progress and that there are now surer grounds for the hope of His Majesty's recovery. We respectfully tender our sincerest sympathy to Her Majesty the Queen and the Royal Family in the anxious period through which they have been and still are passing.



香 港 大 學  
THE UNIVERSITY OF HONG KONG

Congregation 1936

Sir Wilfrid Thomas SOUTHORN  
Doctor of Laws *honoris causa*

Sir Wilfred Thomas Southorn needs no introduction. From Warwick School he went to Corpus Christi College, Oxford. That college has had many famous sons. I will confine myself to mention of two – Sir Reginald Stubbs and Sir Thomas Southorn. Sir Thomas entered the Ceylon Civil Service in 1903; was Additional Assistant Colonial Secretary in 1909; Principal Assistant Colonial Secretary in 1920; Principal Collector of Customs and Chairman of the Post Commission in 1923. In 1926 Sir Thomas came here as Colonial Secretary. You know the rest. How often and how successfully he has administered the Government of Hong Kong and acted as Chancellor of the University; the enthusiasm with which he has always identified himself with everything and anything calculated to make the Colony a healthier and a happier place. Had it not been for Sir Thomas, I doubt whether there would have been even now a Branch of the English Association in Hong Kong; without his help the playgrounds for poor children would have been something very much less than they are now. Socially Sir Thomas and Lady Southorn have endeared themselves to everyone. I doubt whether there have ever been two persons in this Colony who had so many friends in all the sections of the Colony's cosmopolitan population. The University is not giving Lady Southorn an honorary degree. It should be but *Festina lente*. In a hurrying world British universities move slowly. I am however quite certain that Sir Thomas would wish me to say what he knows and you all know – I refer to the great help that his wife has always been to him. But the Colony's debt to Lady Southorn is not confined to what she has done for her husband – great as that boon has been to us all. "If you seek her monument, look round you." Look at the International Women's Club, and the Sandilands Hut for Girl Guides. They tell their own story.

Citation written and delivered by The Vice-Chancellor Sir William Hornell (康寧爵士),  
the Public Orator of the University.



1935年6月--護理總督修頓爵士伉儷在香港總督府和嘉賓合照。

左邊這位華裔青年是香港扶輪社員鄧肇堅。

June 1935 – In the Government House Sir Wilfrid Thomas Southorn, Officer Administering the Government of the Colonial Hong Kong, and Lady Southorn with their guests.

The Chinese young man at the left was Hong Kong Rotarian Tang Shiu-Kin, MBE.

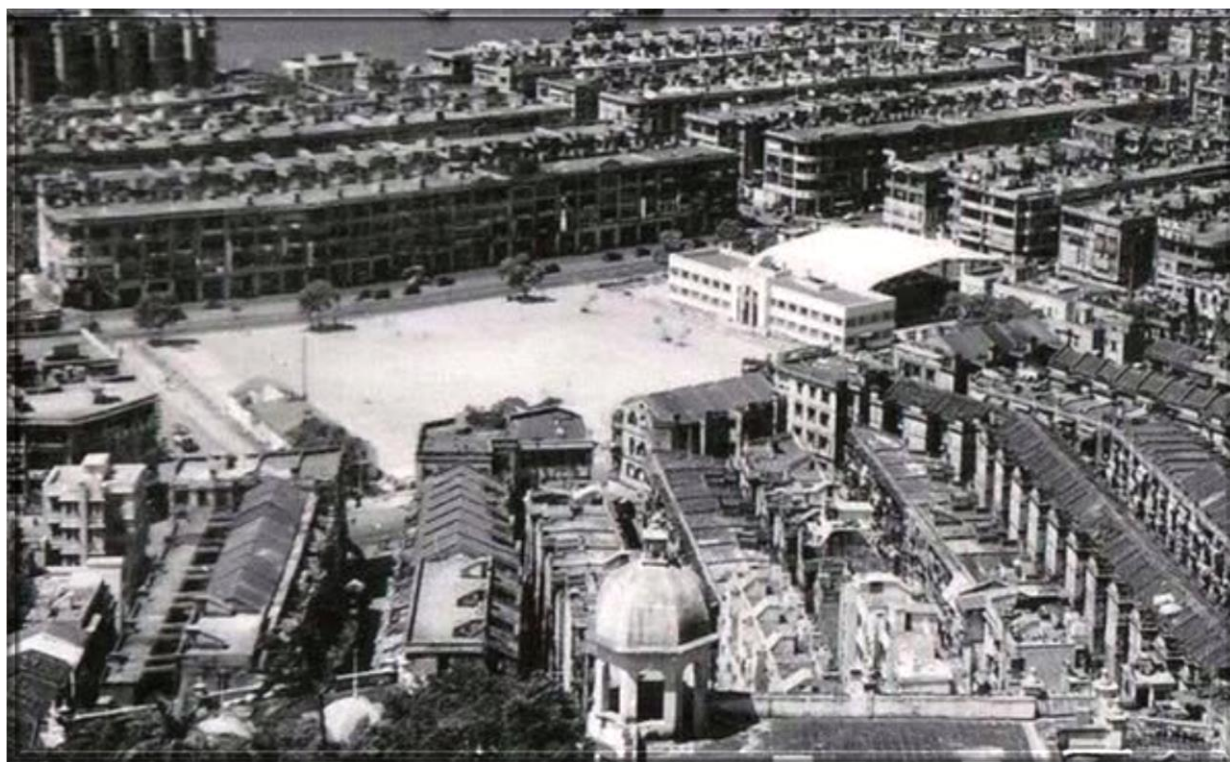


1926年-1936年修頓爵士夫人 OBE 曾任英國女童軍協會(香港分會)總監。

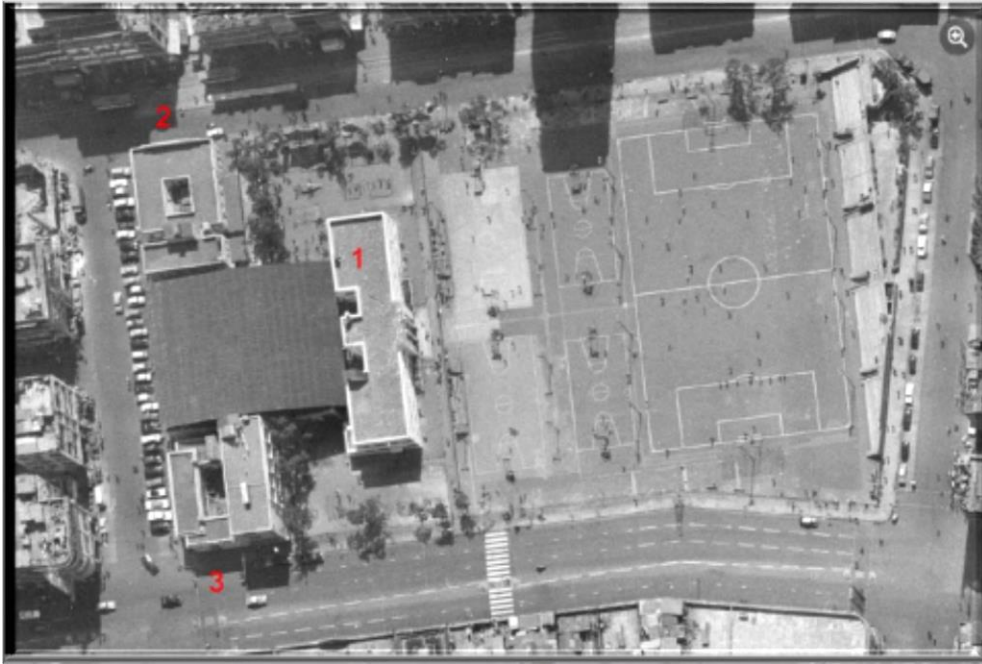
Lady Southorn OBE, had served The Girl Guides Association (Hong Kong Branch) as the Colonial Commissioner from 1926 to 1936.



這張照片攝於1932年7月1日，展示了分配給香港扶輪社用於兒童遊樂場項目（後來的修頓遊樂場）的土地。  
*This photo was taken on 1 July 1932 showing the piece of land allotted to Hong Kong Rotary Club for the children's playground project (later the Southorn Playground).*



這張1957年的照片展示了位於灣仔市中心的修頓遊樂場的整個建築群。  
*This photo of 1957 shows the entire complex of the Southorn Playground in the city center of Wanchai.*



1963 年--修頓遊樂場的鳥瞰圖：(1) 福利大廈，又名國殤大廈、國殤紀念福利中心、兒童遊樂場協會大廈等，落成於 1950 年；(2) 貝夫人健康院落成於 1935 年；(3) 矮建築是公共浴室及廁所，高座是家庭計劃指導會。福利大廈兩側是兒童遊樂場，可看到鋼架、鞦韆和滑梯。(2)(3)之間的是落成於 1951 年的室內籃球場館。

1963 – An aerial view of the Southorn Playground: (1) The Welfare Building, also known as the War Memorial Center, and the Children’s Playground Association Building, was completed in 1950. (2) The Violet Peel Health Centre was completed in 1935. (3) The shorter building houses public bathrooms and toilets, while the taller one houses the Family Planning Association. On either side of the Welfare Building are children’s playgrounds, featuring steel structures, swings, and slides. Between (2) and (3) is the indoor basketball court, completed in 1951.



1960 年代--修頓遊樂場的田徑比賽 1960s – Track & Field games in the Southorn Playground

## 修頓遊樂場 和 榮譽扶輪社員修頓爵士



修頓遊樂場 (Southorn Playground) 最初是香港扶輪社 (Hong Kong Rotary Club) 1931 年的服務項目，而今是香港灣仔的一個運動及康樂場地，內有一個足球場、四個籃球場和一個兒童遊樂場。遊樂場於 1934 年以香港扶輪社榮譽社員修頓爵士 (Sir Wilfrid Thomas Southorn) 的名字命名，修頓爵士於 1925 年至 1936 年期間擔任英國殖民地香港的輔政司。



修頓爵士 (Dr. the Honourable Sir Wilfrid Thomas Southorn, KCMG, KBE, CMG, HonLLD (HKU), MA (Oxon), BA (Oxon)) (1879 年 8 月 4 日—1957 年 3 月 15 日)，舊有漢名「蕭敦爵士」，英國殖民地政務官，1903 年至 1926 年間於錫蘭 (Ceylon) 殖民地政府供職，官至首席助理輔政司及行政、立法兩局官守議員。修頓在 1926 年至 1936 年間調任香港輔政司兼行政、立法兩局官守議員，任內多次代理香港總督。修頓爵士在 1936 年至 1942 年升任甘比亞 (The Gambia) 總督，1946 年開展退休生涯。

### 生平略傳

修頓在 1879 年 8 月 4 日生於英國華威郡的利明頓礦泉 (Leamington Spa, Warwickshire)，是家中第三子。修頓的父親本身任職拍賣官，另外也是估價員及物業代理。修頓少時入讀華威學校 (Warwick School)，及後負笈牛津大學基督聖體學院 (Corpus Christi College, University of Oxford)，1903 年取得文學士學位畢業，後來於 1933 年獲頒文學碩士學位。

### 殖民地生涯

修頓在大學畢業後即於 1903 年加入殖民地部，並獲派往錫蘭 (今斯里蘭卡民主社會主義共和國 Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka) 殖民地政府任職。最初於 1904 年任北部省政府代表的署理辦公室助理，並在賈夫納 (Jaffna) 辦公；他在 1905 年 4 月通過考核後，在

5月調任北中省政府代表的署理辦公室助理，1907年4月再調到漢班托特(Hambantota)的坦加勒(Tangalla)任署理區域法官。在1909年7月，修頓調回可倫坡(Colombo)任海關港口檢貨官，同年加入輔政司署任候補輔政司。通過第二度公務員考核後，修頓在1911年11月出任馬塔拉(Matala)助理政府代表，至1914年8月出任特委輔政司兼總督查默斯爵士(Sir Robert Chalmers)私人秘書。其後，復於1915年9月任可倫坡副海關課稅官兼港口檢貨官。

在1915年年底，修頓由於參加第一次世界大戰而離開錫蘭。戰後於1919年重返錫蘭，並在同年12月出任第二助理輔政司及再度兼任總督私人秘書之職。在1920年7月，修頓獲擢升為首席助理輔政司，至1923年12月獲政府委任為首席海關課稅官兼可倫坡港口委員會主席。在1924年10月，修頓以首席助理輔政司身份加入錫蘭立法局，擔任官守議員，同年11月他又獲進一步委任為錫蘭行政局官守議員。

### 香港輔政司/護理總督

在1926年5月1日，修頓由錫蘭調來香港出任輔政司一職。修頓伉儷在香港熱心公益，經常出席公開場合，甚得民心。其妻曾任英國女童軍協會(香港分會)總監等多項公職，於1935年獲OBE勳銜。

修頓在任輔政司期間，曾經六度代理總督一職(Officer Administering the Government)。當中有兩次是總督交接期間：第一次是金文泰爵士(Sir Cecil Clementi)卸任總督後，他自1930年2月1日至3月9日擔任護理總督一職至新任總督貝璐爵士(Sir William Peel)抵港履新為止；第二次是貝璐爵士於1935年卸任後，他自當年5月17日至9月13日第二度代理總督，後來一度由華民政務司史美(Norman Lockhart Smith)代任；到11月1日再由修頓代理總督，一直至1935年12月12日，新任總督郝德傑爵士(Sir Andrew Caldecott)上任為止。

### 修頓遊樂場和扶輪社

修頓遊樂場(Southorn Playground)，香港人俗稱「修頓球場」，位於香港灣仔盧押道(Luard Road)(莊士敦道Johnston Road與軒尼詩道Hennessy Road之間)，是灣仔其中一個露天運動場地。設有一個七人小型足球場及四個籃球場、兒童遊樂場。自1930年代以來，這裡一直是灣仔區的主要休閒場所。1934年，以1925年至1936年擔任輔政司的修頓爵士的名字命名為「修頓遊樂場」。雖然場地不大，但常用於舉辦遊藝會和體育比賽等地區活動，也是當地居民日常休閒和社交的熱門場所。

修頓遊樂場所在的土地，是1920年代海旁東填海計畫的一部分，從維多利亞港(Victoria Harbour)填海而成。1929年政府成立「遊樂場地委員會」，委派當時的輔政司修頓出任主席，中華基督教青年會總幹事麥花臣(John Livingstone McPherson)為值理，研究港九的空曠地段，專責遊樂場及球場的建築事宜。委員會建議為兒童預留區域，修頓建議保留莊士敦道和軒尼詩道之間的土地作為遊樂場。政府將指定的遊樂場—灣仔公園(今修頓遊樂場)授權給香港扶輪社，由扶輪社資助建設。

1933年7月1日，輔政司修頓爵士牽頭成立了兒童遊樂場協會(Children's Playground Association)(現為香港遊樂場協會 Hong Kong Playground Association)，接管了遊樂場。1934年2月12日，位於軒尼詩道與柯布連道(O'Brien Road)交界的公共廁所及浴室正式啟用。

1934年7月11日，當時的灣仔兒童遊樂場舉行了正式開幕典禮，由修頓爵士和香港扶輪社前社長曹善允博士共同主持。事實上，在紀念性開幕典禮之前，遊樂場已局部開放——1934年4月的一篇新聞報道稱，該設施平均每天已有約275名兒童入場。這是扶輪社成立第一年的社區服務計畫。

太平洋戰爭（1941-1945）後，香港政府致力於修復香港破舊的遊樂場。1947年10月11日的《政府憲報》宣布，修頓遊樂場將重新分配給兒童遊樂場協會管理。

## 展開公營廣播

在任輔政司期間，修頓曾於1929年10月8日以護理總督身分主持ZBW電台的啟播儀式。標誌香港進入公營電台時代，而ZBW電台即為香港廣播電台(Radio Hong Kong)之前身。

1921年，香港首次進行廣播試驗，無線電波由畢打街(Pedder Street)的香港大酒店與雪廠街(Ice House Street)的香港電訊報辦公室之間傳播。1923年，幾位無線電愛好者組織成立「香港無線電學會」，推動無線電廣播，吸引近百人加入做會員。

礙於無線電廣播當時屬於新興潮流產物，香港政府對「學會」成立顯得手足無措。既不知對傳送訊號有何要求，也不清楚是否要規管廣播。直到英國內政大臣發出明確指示，倫敦相關專才抵港，一連串政策方才訂立。

「學會」成立約半年後，政府表示：只要符合海軍對波段及時間的規限，原則上不反對試播（此一階段，政府主要採取消極意義的不干預、不介入。）「學會」得到一間通訊器材公司(Radio Communication Co.)支持，每日傍晚六時試行廣播。

1924年，政府就本地廣播服務粗略規劃出框架：透過一個廣播電台，發送颱風消息、警察警告、以及一些關乎公眾利益的訊息，下一階段則播送音樂節目（此一階段，政府嘗試積極干預、介入）。基於一些原因，廣播電台未有如期（1925年）成立，「學會」單獨苦苦支撐，財政漸告緊絀。

隨著基督教青年會轄下的娛樂委員會(Y.M.C.A. Entertainment Committee)在1927年底接力，青年會開始參與無線電廣播，為駐港英軍服務。青年會獲得商界支持，在灣仔一個小型單位發送廣播訊號。不久得到利舞臺(Lee Theatre)東主利希慎答應，借出天台擺放發射器，廣播質素因而大大改善。

唱片錄音技術的突破、報章不時報導外地電台發展的消息、商界對訊號測試的支持，慢慢加強政府推動廣播的信心。1928年6月20日，政府宣佈「政府廣播電台GOW於晚上9時至11時，以300米波段進行音樂節目測試」。翌日發佈的新聞稿（《南華早報》(South China Morning Post)全文刊載）進一步明確決策。表明「香港殖民地的廣播節目將由政府電台傳送，有關測試會持續至年底」，8月17日，《政府憲報》宣布維多利亞山頂(Victoria Peak)發射站的廣播台號為GOW。

翌年（1929年2月1日），GOW電台改名ZBW，由郵政總監史美(Norman Lockhart Smith)兼任台長。同年10月8日，首次現場直播音樂會，慶祝新播音室啟用。

ZBW電台啟播，標誌著香港正式進入公營廣播時代。1935年，中文頻道(ZEK)成立。修頓以輔政司身份署任總督，剛好見證這個歷史變遷。

## 卸任以後

修頓在1936年3月卸任返回英國，並於同年6月20日獲英廷委任為甘比亞(The Gambia)總督兼三軍總司令，10月22日前往西非洲正式上任。對於甘比亞國界狹長，幾乎將塞內加爾(Senegal)一分為二，而且殖民地內經濟非常依賴花生種植，修頓曾形容甘比亞「地理上及經濟上都是一個荒謬」(A geographic and economic absurdity)。此語一出，一度為後人廣泛引用。修頓在1942年3月23日卸任甘比亞總督之職，當時正值第二次世界大戰。他遂獲殖民地部委任為殖民地服務聯絡官，直到大戰完結後的1946年方才卸任，此後開展退休生涯。

## 晚年生涯

修頓爵士晚年為達格代爾學會(The Dugdale Society)會員，該會專門推廣及整理華威郡的地方歷史。他在1957年3月15日卒於密德瑟斯(Middlesex)內泰晤士河畔萊爾漢姆(Laleham-on-Thames)，叫「奧斯曼村莊」(Osmanthorpe)的宅第內，終年77歲。

## 榮譽

- (1) 1927年 -- 英國國王佐治五世授予聖米迦勒及聖喬治最傑出同袍勳章(Companion of The Most Distinguished Order of Saint Michael and Saint George (C.M.G.))
- (2) 1933年 -- 英國國王佐治五世授予大英帝國最優秀爵級司令勳章(Knight Commander of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire (K.B.E.))
- (3) 1936年 -- 香港大學授予名譽法博士學位
- (4) 1938年 -- 英國國王佐治六世授予聖米迦勒及聖喬治最傑出爵級司令勳章(Knight Commander of The Most Distinguished Order of Saint Michael and Saint George (K.C.M.G.))



香港輔政司修頓先生於1930年為九龍佑寧堂（香港九龍佐敦道4號）奠基。

*Foundation Stone, laid in 1930 by The Honourable Mr. Wilfrid Thomas Southorn, of Kowloon Union Church, No. 4 Jordan Road, Kowloon, Hong Kong.*