中文版在第 7-8 頁

香港扶輪社於 1931 年主導興建修頓遊樂場

Hong Kong Rotary Club initiated the establishment of Southorn Playground in 1931

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

15 December 2020

[Southorn 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), KCMG, KBE, CMG, Hong Kong's Colonial Secretary (輔政司) from 1925 to 1936. His vision emphasized children welfare and community recreation in response to growing urban needs following child labour restrictions.

The Rotary Club of Hong Kong was inaugurated with 90 plus charter members on 8 December 1930, and was admitted to Rotary International on 20 February 1931. The first Club President in 1930-1931-1932 was Sir William Woodward Hornell (康寧爵士), Kt, CIE, MA, Vice-Chancellor of the University of Hong Kong (香港大學). He was succeed by the second Club President 1932-1933 Dr. The Honourable Ts'o Seen-Wan (議員曹善允博士), OBE, LLD, JP. During his tenure as Colonial Secretary of Hong Kong, Sir Wilfrid Thomas Southorn was elected Honorary Rotarian of the Rotary Club.

Southorn Playground today features key sports amenities managed by the Leisure and Cultural Services Department of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Government (香港特別行政區政府康樂及文化事務署), including 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 attracting about 275 daily visitors by 1934 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*, 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 Imperial Japan's 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 officials in 2018 and during the 2019–2020 anti-government demonstrations, as well as a COVID-19 testing center with adapted facilities to manage crowds. Bounded by Hennessy, Luard, and Johnston Roads and adjacent to Southorn Centre, 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.

Historical Development

Location and Layout

Southorn Playground is situated in the heart of the Wan Chai District on Hong Kong Island, at coordinates 22°16'37"N 114°10'20"E. Covering an area of approximately 0.9 hectares (8,900 square metres), it serves as a compact green space amid the District's high urban density.

The site 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 surrounding high-rise buildings to the east. Its layout centers on a seven-a-side football pitch, with surrounding basketball courts and children's playground equipment providing diverse recreational zones. Pedestrian access is enhanced by its integration with the nearby Mass Transit Railway Wan Chai Station (港鐵灣仔站) via an underground subway that passes beneath the playground.

The land was reclaimed from Victoria Harbour (維多利亞港) as part of the Praya East Reclamation Scheme (海旁東填海計劃) in the 1920s, which extended the Wan Chai coastline and contributed to the area's dense urban fabric. This historical context underscores the Playground's role as a vital open area in a rapidly developing neighborhood.

Pre-Opening Reclamation and Planning (1920s–1933)

The land for Southorn Playground was created through the Praya East Reclamation Scheme, a major public works project initiated in the 1920s to expand usable territory in Wan Chai by filling in portions of Victoria Harbour. Completed in 1929, the scheme added approximately 90 acres (36 hectares) of new land, much of which was earmarked for public amenities including open spaces for recreation.

In response to growing urban density and the need for children's recreational areas, the Hong Kong Government formed the Playing Fields Committee in 1929 to assess and recommend sites for playgrounds across Hong Kong and Kowloon. Chaired by Colonial Secretary Sir Wilfrid Thomas Southorn, with Canadian missionary John Livingstone McPherson (麥花臣) of the Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA) (香港基督教青年會) serving as Secretary, the Committee identified suitable open areas and proposed their development into organized play spaces. Southorn specifically advocated for preserving the reclaimed plot between Johnston Road and Hennessy Road as a dedicated playground site, emphasizing its central location and accessibility for local communities.

Following the Committee's recommendations, the Government allocated two reclaimed sites for playground development: one to the YMCA and the other, encompassing the area between Johnston and Hennessy Roads, to the Rotary Club of Hong Kong. The Rotary Club assumed responsibility for financing and overseeing the initial construction, marking a collaborative effort between public authorities and civic organizations to provide structured recreational facilities.

To formalize management and ensure sustained operation, the Children's Playground Association (兒童遊樂場協會), the predecessor to the modern Hong Kong Playground Association (香港遊樂場協會), was established on 1 July 1933 under Southorn's leadership, taking over administration of the Wan Chai site. This non-profit entity represented a pivotal shift toward organized public recreation, involving community stakeholders in the Playground's preparatory development ahead of its official opening.

Opening and Early Years (1934–1945)

Southorn Playground, originally designated as the Wan Chai Children's Playground, was formally opened on 11 July 1934 jointly by 2 Rotarians---Sir Wilfrid Thomas Southorn, Honorary Member, and Ts'o Seen-Wan, Past President, of the Hong Kong Rotary Club.

The site, developed on reclaimed land from the Praya East Reclamation Scheme of the 1920s, was immediately accessible to the public as a dedicated space for children's recreation, marking it as one of Hong Kong's earliest organized playgrounds. By April 1934, prior to the official opening, the area already saw an average daily attendance of about 275 children, indicating strong community demand for such facilities in the densely populated Wan Chai District. The playground was renamed Southorn Playground later that year in honor of Sir Wilfrid's advocacy for public recreation spaces.

In the years following its opening, the Playground quickly became Wan Chai's primary recreational hub, initially centered on child-focused activities such as play on swings, seesaws, and open fields, but evolving into a multi-purpose venue for broader community use. Supporting amenities enhanced its appeal, including a public toilet and bathhouse that opened on 12 February 1934 at the junction of Hennessy Road and O'Brien Road (柯布連道), providing essential hygiene facilities for users in an era when such infrastructure was limited. Daily life at the playground in the late 1930s involved children engaging in unstructured play and organized games, while adults utilized the space for casual socialization, fun fairs, and early sports events like football matches, fostering a sense of community cohesion in the growing urban area. This shift from exclusive children's use to inclusive recreation underscored its role as a vital open space amid Hong Kong's rapid urbanization.

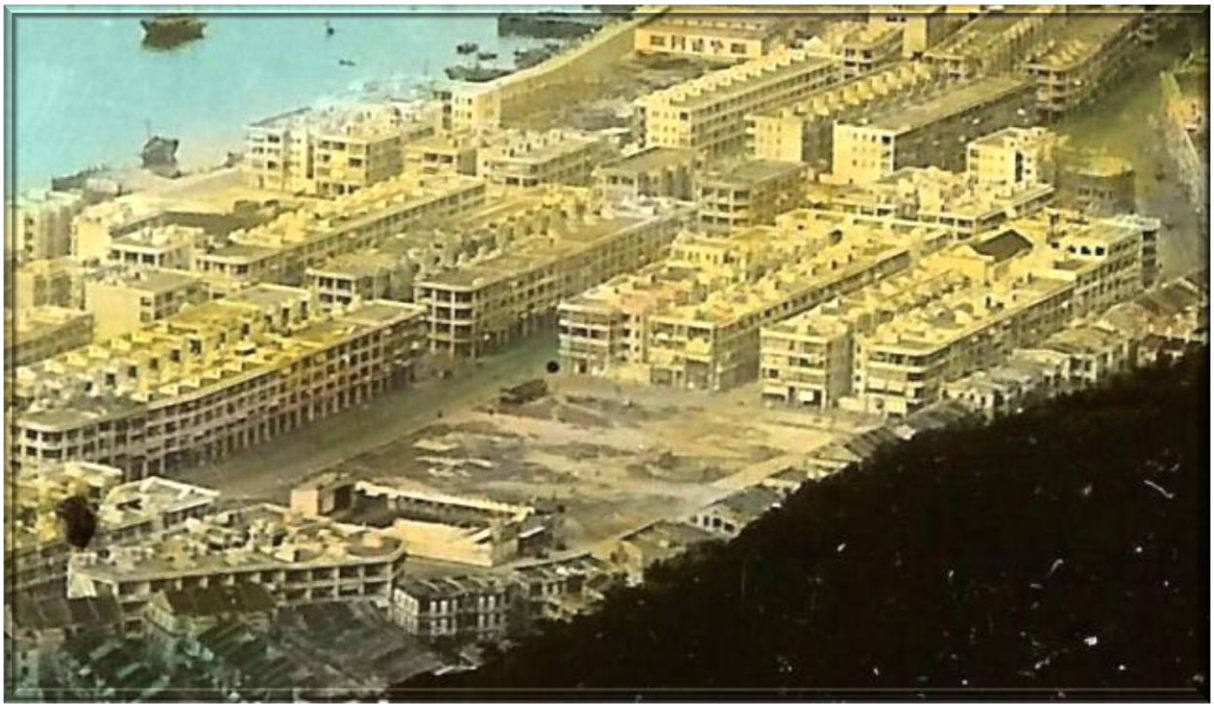
The Playground's operations were severely disrupted by the Imperial Japan's military occupation of Hong Kong from December 1941 to August 1945, during which it was closed to the public and allowed to fall into a state of dereliction, with limited or no recreational access permitted. This period contrasted sharply with its pre-war prominence as a cherished community asset, where it had symbolized colonial efforts to promote public health and leisure for Wan Chai residents.

Post-War Reconstruction and Expansion (1946–1979)

Following the end of World War II, during which Southorn Playground had been closed and damaged, the British colonial government initiated rehabilitation efforts for public recreational spaces in Hong Kong. On 11 October 1947, the《Government Gazette》announced the re-allocation of Southorn Playground to the Children's Playground Association for management, distinguishing it from other government-maintained sites that were slated for eventual oversight by the Urban Council (市政局). This move empowered the Association, originally formed in 1933, to oversee operations and development, fostering a community-oriented approach to post-war recovery.

In 1950, the Children's Playground Association completed construction of the War Memorial Centre (國殤紀念福利中心) on the eastern portion of the site, transforming it into a multifaceted welfare and sports facility. Funded partly by the Memorial Fund for Martyrs (香港戰爭紀念撫卹金) and government subsidies, the Centre provided recreational spaces for children alongside a public library, serving as a memorial to wartime sacrifices while addressing the growing demand for youth activities amid Hong Kong's post-war population surge. On 5 June 1951, a covered basketball court within the War Memorial Centre was officially opened, enabling year-round indoor sports and expanding the Playground's capacity for organized games like basketball, volleyball, and badminton.

The eastern site saw additional community uses during the 1950s and 1970s, hosting the Family Planning Association of Hong Kong (香港家庭計劃指導會) and the Violet Peel Clinic (貝夫人健康院), which offered essential health services to local residents.

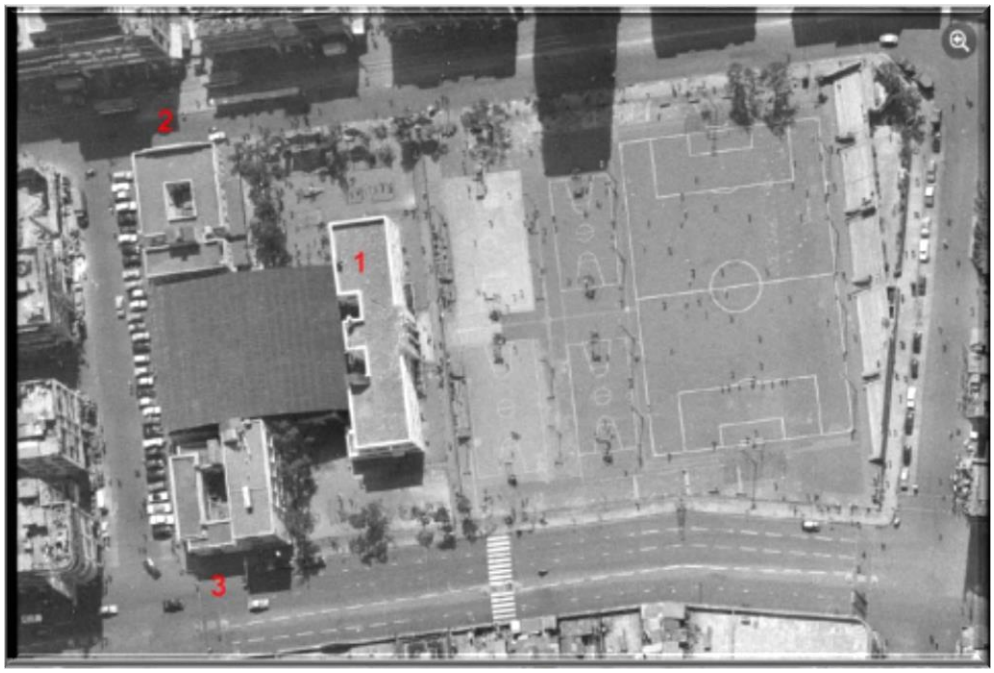


這張照片攝於 1932 年 7 月 1 日，展示了分配給香港扶輪社用於兒童遊樂場項目（後來的修頓遊樂場）的土地。

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).

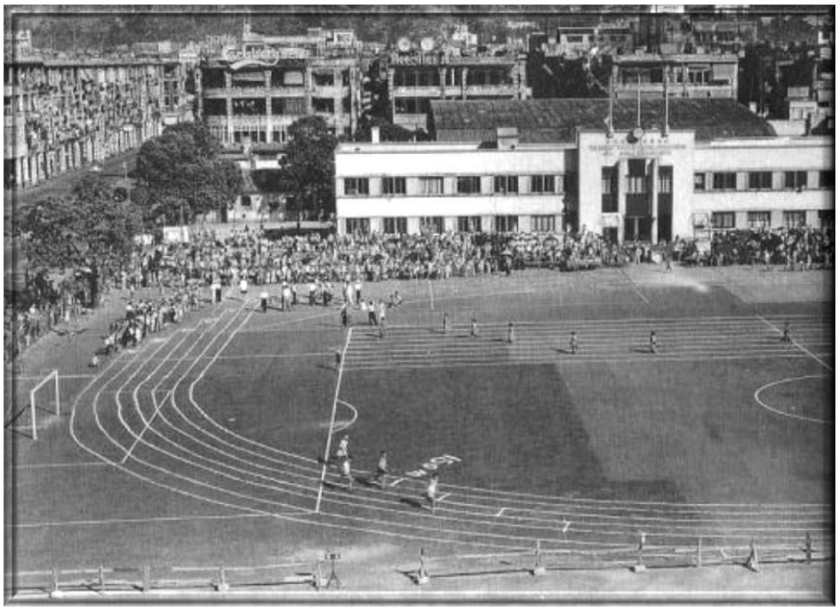
這張 1957 年的照片展示了位於灣仔市中心的修頓遊樂場的整個建築群。

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

香港扶輪社於 1931 年主導興建修頓遊樂場

［修頓遊樂場 Southorn Playground］ 最初是香港扶輪社(Rotary Club of Hong Kong)於 1931 年成立之初的服務項目，如今已成為香港灣仔區的運動休閒場地。場地佔地約 96,000 平方英尺（8,900 平方公尺），是繁華都市中一片重要的開放空間。它於 1934 年 7 月 11 日以[灣仔兒童遊樂場 Wan Chai Children's Playground]之名開放，後為紀念 1925 年至 1936 年擔任英國殖民地香港輔政司的修頓爵士(Sir Wilfrid Thomas Southorn, KCMG, KBE, CMG)而更名為[修頓遊樂場]。靈感源自錫蘭(Ceylon)（今斯里蘭卡 Sri Lanka）的鄉村風光，修頓爵士的願景強調兒童福利和社區休閒，以應對童工限制後日益增長的城市需求。

香港扶輪社於 1930 年 12 月 8 日成立，並於 1931 年 2 月 20 日加入國際扶輪。首任社長（1930-1931-1932）為香港大學校長康寧爵士(Sir William Woodward Hornell, Kt, CIE, MA)。其後，第二任社長（1932-1933）為曹善允博士（Dr. The Honourable Ts'o Seen-Wan, OBE, LLD, JP）。在擔任香港輔政司期間，修頓爵士當選為香港扶輪社榮譽社員。

修頓遊樂場，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。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，基督教青年會(YMCA)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，修頓爵士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，由兩位扶輪社員---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。

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。

香港重光後的 1940 年代晚期，修頓球場內在現今觀眾看台的位置，曾經設有獲特許經營的「經濟食堂」。這家飯堂是為民眾提供售價便宜的飯菜而設，每人只需兩、三毫子便可飽餐一頓，很受草根階層市民歡迎，飯堂經營至 1957 年 6 月結束。

1951 年，兒童遊樂場協會獲紀念殉戰烈士基金撥款及政府補貼，在修頓球場東面的土地上興建福利大樓，開辦國殤紀念福利中心(War Memorial Center)，及修頓室內場館。修頓室內場館是當年香港最大的體育場館，也是全香港第一所室內體育館。

修頓爵士　Sir Wilfrid Thomas Southorn

曹善允博士　Dr. Ts'o Seen-Wan