

# THE FORGOTTEN PAST OF KHS

THURSDAY, JANUARY 28, 2010

Some Old Forgotten Things About Kajang High School

## CHAPTER 2

### THE KAJANG HIGH SCHOOL (1930 - 1945)

#### Some Old Forgotten Things About Kajang High School

The old rickety Kajang Government English School in Jalan Besar beside the Police Station (Balai Polis) might experience a great fall and cause fatal accidents due to its decrepit condition. A new and more spacious ground, a more dignified building and, of course, a new name had to be found for the school which had seen better days. The enrollment kept on increasing and the school had become overcrowded. The enrollment stood at 389 pupils in 1926 (1). A new site and a new name was therefore inevitable.

The search for the site of a new school was initiated especially by five concerned gentlemen in the District of Ulu Langat. They were RCM Kindersley, Haji Abdul Jalil, Low Ti Kok, Raja Muhammad and, of course, the dynamic and indomitable Ng Seow Buck, the incumbent Headmaster. As a result of their strenuous effort they were able to secure a gentle slope of a hillock along Jalan Semenyih for the site of the new school-the site of the present-day Sekolah Menengah Kebangsaan Tinggi Kajang in area. All five of them are appropriately regarded as the Founding Fathers of the new school which has a sprawling area of 28 acres.

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Some Old Forgotten Things  
About Kajang High School

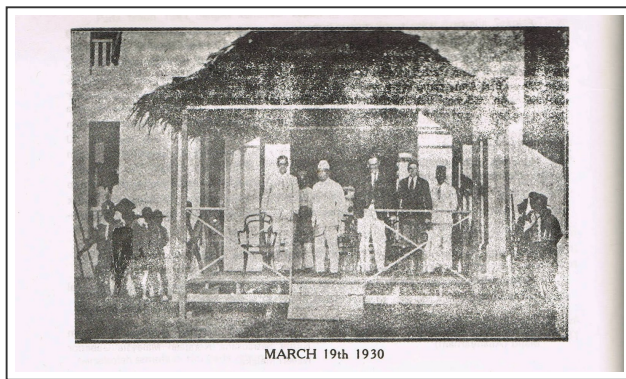
Chapter 1 - The School and The  
Site

#### PREFACE

HANAFIAH LUBIS

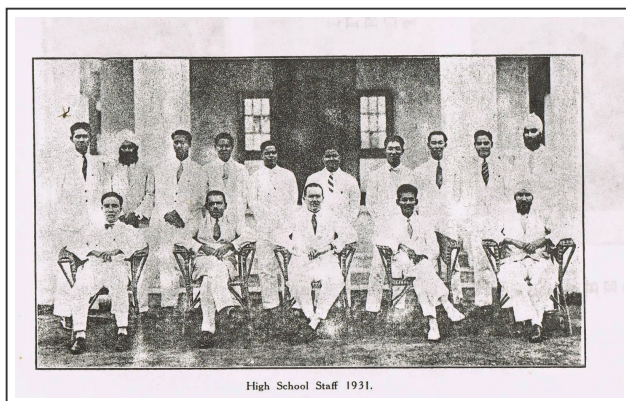
KAJANG, HULU LANGAT, SELANGOR,  
MALAYSIA

Hello everyone out there. This blog is about the early years of the Kajang High School, most of which are nearly forgotten due to the absence of written records. These notes could perhaps help awaken interest in its past and unearth other forgotten memories. They are especially written in anticipation and celebration of its coming 91st anniversary on March 17, 2010. Hope readers especially KHS alumni and other friends of KHS will perhaps find these notes helpful.



(Official Opening of Kajang High School)  
(KETINGGIAN 47/80.Pg 20)

His Royal Highness the Sultan of Selangor, Sir Ala'iddin Sulaiman Shah G. C. M. G. graced and performed the official opening of the school, henceforth known as the Kajang High School, on March 19 1930 (1). But as a matter of fact, the school had begun to enroll pupils and functioning on January 5 1930 (2). The initial enrollment was 402. Among the pioneer batch of pupils who joined the Kajang High School was Tan Chee Koon (Tan Sri) (3). The others were Kong Siew Hock, Loh Pak (later Headmaster of Kajang High School 2(Primary)) and Tajuddin (Datuk)-an outstanding hockey player in his school days and who played for the Federated Malay States. They were all classmates (4).



(KETINGGIAN 47/80. Pg. 21)

Mr. C.E. Gates who was appointed Headmaster of the school in 1929 assumed the same appointment in the new school. Mr. Muncha Singh who had served as a 1st year Normal Student in the former Kajang Government English School when it was first established was also assigned to the Kajang High School. En Hashim bin Ibrahim most probably followed suit. Both Mr. Muncha Singh and Mr. Gates served as the link between the old and the new. There was continuity and Kajang High School should not be regarded as a new entity at all because of this continuity factor.

When the House System of the British Public School was introduced, the Founding Fathers were given the honor to be House Patrons. Raja Muhammad had the distinction of the only alumnus to be made House Patron-Raja Muhammad House. (Sch Nos ending in 7 and 8; house colour; green). Thus were their effort and memories perpetuated among generations of KHS pupils.

The motto in Latin, LABOR OMNIA VINCIT was adopted as the school's motto, perhaps, at the suggestion of C.E Gates. The school emblem was also probably designed and adopted at almost the same time.



(SPN MPIK 1992. Pg. 10 - Lee Yong Heng)

#### "The Golden Age" of KHS (1930-1936) (5)

In the estimation of one of his pupils, Tan Sri Dr David Tan Chee Khoon, Mr. C.E. Gates is arguably "the greatest Headmaster the Kajang High School has ever known" (6).

Mr. Gates' tenure as Headmaster could be regarded as the school's Golden Age. He let "a hundred flowers bloom". He exhorted them to scale greater heights and be true to the school's motto. He drove them on with the exhortation: "Hitch your wagons to the star" (7). The boys thus became inspired and motivated.

The ex-pupils of Mr. Gates became men of substance and men of excellence in the government, professions, politics, police, army and journalism later in their lives.



(KHS MAG 21/1953.L of Pg

2)

### **(TAN SRI) DR. TAN CHEE KOON**

In the case of Dr. David Tan Chee Khoon, he was best known to all Malaysians as an articulate and highly critical politician. He entered Parliament representing the working class and became parliamentary Mr. Opposition in the early history of Malaysia's parliamentary democracy. He created the Gates Medal Award in memory of his Headmaster, Mr. Gate who had helped shape the lives of several of Modern Malaya's/Malaysia's administrative elite and eminent politicians. The award is given every year since 1950 to the Best Scholar Of The Year in the Kajang High School. The first winner was Dr. Pretam Singh who later became the Consultant Orthopaedic Surgeon, Federation of Malaya (8).

Not only Dr. Tan Chee Khoon but also several other ex-pupils of the 1930's also became involved in the Malayan

working class movement. Lee Moke Sang became the President of the Malayan Labour Party. Tan Tuan Boon, a prominent trade unionist, stood for election representing the working class in 1955. V. Selvanayagam, who held a senior position in the Civil Engineering Department of the Malayan Railway, was also active in trade unionism. It is interesting to know that he was also a member of the F.M.S.V.F (Federated Malay States Volunteer Force); saw action in Gemas and suffered the loss of his right leg. He was mentioned in dispatches (9).



**Mr. V Selvanayagam**  
**(KHS MAG 23/ 1955. PG. 28)**

The Kajang High School of the 1930s produced first class legal minds too like Abdul Kadir bin Shamsuddin, (later Tan Sri), Paramalingam and Atma Singh among others.





**Mr. Paramalingam**  
**(KHS MAG 29/ 1959. Opp Pg. 3)**

K. Paramalingam obtained a law degree from London University, became a barrister and Deputy Public Trustee, Federation of Malaya.

Atma Singh Gill also joined the legal fraternity. He passed his Bar Finals within a year but he had set his heart on other interests. It was no wonder that he also became a successful planter and businessman in Negeri Sembilan. While attending law school in London he took the opportunity to visit Mr. Gates who lived in retirement at Barton, Kettering, north of Cambridge (10).

The years 1932-1934 were notable, perhaps historic, for the school. For example, Mr. Gates ordered school blazers and awarded them, for the first time in its history, to those who were outstanding in school sports and games (11). Muhiyuddin b. Mohd Zin who was cricket captain in 1935 must be one of those who had earned his "school colours" (given a blazer). He and another alumnus, P.T. Samanthar, turned up wearing what appears to be their old school blazers during a cricket friendly School vs Old Boys on Aug 3, 1954 (12).

In the academic field the school notched a 91% success in the Cambridge School Certificate Examination in

1933. It was an all-time best in the 1930s. Several of the brilliant students like Low Nan Wan and Cheng Swee left for Hong Kong University to pursue medicine or Arts -- a rare and memorable occasion for the District of Ulu Langat (13). The others who also had excellent grades were still eyeing the prestigious and elitist Malayan Civil Service in the Federated Malay States just like their predecessors from the Kajang Government English School of the 1920s.



**Mr. Low Nan Wan**  
**(KHSM 21/ 53. Pg. 18)**

Regardless of their lower middle class status or peasant background -- often an implicit and a decided impediment -- both Sharif (School Captain 1933) and Maruf (School Captain 1934) (14) applied for appointments in the Malay Administrative Service in the Federated Malay States. To everyone's astonishment, they were accepted to fill two of the only 3 vacancies available in the whole of the Federated Malay States (15). They had gone in strictly on their mettle, not on the basis of their social class background.

Both of them were later admitted into the British and aristocracy --dominated Malayan Civil Service. In the early 1950s they were sent to England to do post-graduate in public administration -- the Devonshire Course at Oxford or Cambridge University. During their stay in England, they managed to take time off to visit Mr. Gates, their former Headmaster, who in 1953 lived in Kettering. During a visit by Sharif (M.C.S) Mrs. Gate prepared curry for him. He enjoyed it tremendously. In

his fantasy, it was then the best East of Suez! He spent a most happy time with his ex-Headmaster and family.  
(16)

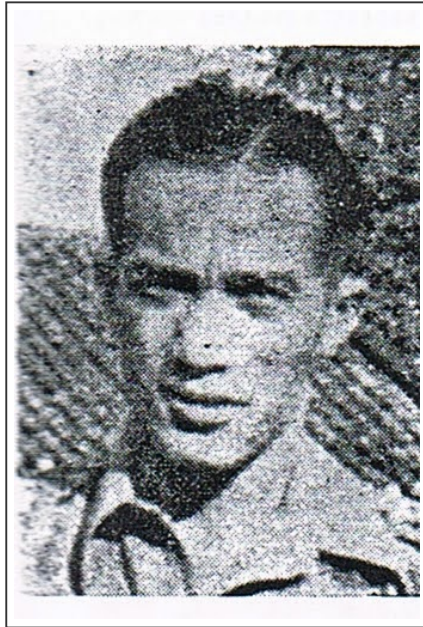
In the summer of 1954, Mr. Gates visited Maruf at Cambridge University and they watched a cricket match between Pakistan and Cambridge University at Fenner's - the university's famous cricket ground (17). For his part, Mr. Gates who lived in Kettering, fifty miles north of Cambridge, was always glad to meet old boys who had come to visit him like Sharif, Maruf and Atma Singh. In 1951 he sent a message to the KHS magazine and was published in KHS MAG 19/1951. Early in 1954, Mr. Gates and elder daughter visited Maruf at his flat in Cambridge. Maruf cooked tiffin for them. He was very eager, according to Maruf, to know everything about Kajang High School and its Alumni. Later Maruf returned Mr. Gates' visit. He had lunch with him and his family. They served him "Malay makan", all cooked by Mrs. Gates. It seemed, however, that the delicious curry was prepared by Mr. Gates himself and he jokingly called it "Gates Curry" (18). Such was the affection and high esteem in which Mr. Gates was held by his ex-students. He didn't forget to send X'mas Greetings to KHS staff when Kajang High School reopened its doors one again after the Pacific War. Such was his deep sentimental attachment for his old school.

Like Tun Abdul Aziz, Abdul Kadir bin Shamsuddin had a meteoric rise and was a towering figure in the Civil Service. He obtained a law degree (Hons) from Bristol University. He also attended the Imperial Defense College in London and did postgraduate studies at Yale. Being secretary of the Malayan Delegation to the London Merdeka Mission in 1956, he played an important role in the negotiations with the Colonial Office. Abdul Aziz bin Haji Abdul Majid was one of the representatives of the Malay Rulers who took part in that negotiation to achieve Independence for the Federation of Malaya.

Mr. Gates introduced cricket and hockey in Kajang. The pupils were enthusiastic. Mr. Gates shaped the School Cricket Team and it emerged as one of the best School Cricket Teams in Selangor. It also had one of the best cricket pitches. Among the formidable cricket players of the day were Mohd Sharif bin Abdul Samad (MCS), Abdul Maruf bin Sheikh Ahmad (MCS), K. Paramalingam (Barrister-at-Law), Tajuddin and Majid Ismail.



Paramalingam was the School Captain in 1938 and he was a reputable bowler. Abdul Majid Ismail set a school record by taking a hundred wickets in the 1931 School Cricket Season (19). The record remains unbroken to this day. Tajuddin was a classmate of Tan Chee Koon and being very good at hockey, he played for the FMS even during his school years (20).

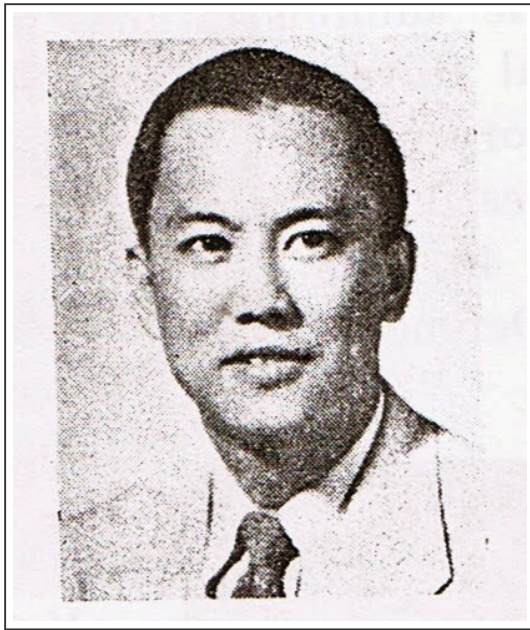


**ASP Tajuddin**

(KHS MAG 20/1952. Pg 17)

R. Sathivelu who attended the Kajang High School from 1928-1935 was also a first class school cricketer. But his real love was hockey and gave his attention to the development of the game in the country. He was ultimately elected to be the Hon. Sec. of the Malayan Hockey Umpires' Board, 1953-54 (21).

An ex-pupil who had set out from Kajang for medical school in Hong Kong, Gary Wang ended up in the Graduate School of Journalism of Columbia University, New York. He was one of the few Asian journalists who witnessed the historic surrender of General Okamura in Nanking in 1945 at the end of World War II. Subsequently he became the Editor-in-Chief of the Hong Kong Standard. When he returned to Kajang after the Pacific War, he was appointed the Sub. Editor of the Malay Mail in Kuala Lumpur in an ironic turn of fate. Being a much-travelled man as a journalist, he was dubbed as "the Ulysses of Kajang High School" (22).



**Mr. Gary Wang**

(KHS MAG. 23/1955. Pg 26).

Those in the armed forces and police were also a source of pride and fame to the school. Abdul Majid bin Ismail of school cricket fame joined the Police and later graduated from the Police College in Coventry, England. During the days and weeks before the formation of Malaysia, he was the Liaison Officer of the Reid Constitutional Commission (23). His brother Abdul Aziz Ismail graduated from the RAF Officer Cadet Training Unit in Lincolnshire (24). Later he became a pilot in the RAF and served in Hong Kong.

One of the earliest recruits to the Malay Regiment was Mohd Nazir bin Yacob, a very humorous and jovial personality to his classmates. He joined the army in 1935 and held the rank of Major. He was awarded the M. B. E (Member of the British Empire) by Queen Elizabeth. Another alumnus, Zainal bin Hitam joined the army in 1937 and was also one of the earliest recruits to the Malay Regiment. He was a trail blazer in the army. He was the recipient of the Military Cross (M. C) which is perhaps next to the Victoria Cross (V. C) and the George Cross in prestige, according to age-old British military tradition. He went to Buckingham Palace to receive the M. C from Queen Elizabeth for gallantry and leadership

in battle against the Chinese Communists Party of Malaya. He held the rank of Captain and was the 1st Malay Officer in the Malay Regiment to be so honoured.  
(25)

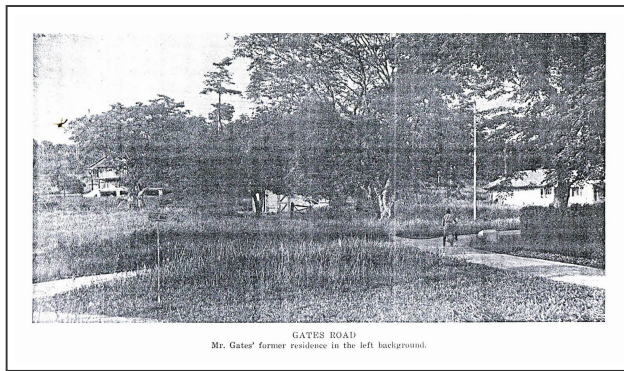


**Capt. Zainal Hitam**  
(KHS MAG 24/ 1956. Pg.20)

After a stint of seven long years as Head Master of Kajang High School during which he nurtured many of his students to bloom and become men of substance and excellence later in life, Mr Gates left the school and Kajang Town, perhaps his second hometown, in 1936 to live his retirement years in Barton Seagrave, Kettering, England. For his services to the school and the Kajang community, the Kajang Town Board named the road near his house Gates Road (demolished long ago) in Jalan Timur (26). Now Jalan Gate and serves as the access road to new housing areas such as Taman Sri Minang, Taman Kajang Mulia and Taman Angkasa Indah.

As his house in Jalan Timur was just a walk away from the school, Mr. Gates must have walked his way to school along Jalan Gates before getting into Jalan Timur. The significance of this particular road is lost to the 21st century generation of Kajang folks. It may even suffer obliteration as in the case of Jalan Raja Allang, the father of one of the school co-founders, Raja Muhammad. A road was named after Raja Allang, in memory of a wealthy and prominent member of the Mandailing community in Kajang at the turn of the 20th century. It used to run beside Dr. Ng Bow Kwee's residence in Jalan Timur. Due to the cavalier attitude

towards local history and heritage, Jalan Gate might also be wiped out from memory.



### **GATES ROAD**

**(Mr. Gates former residence in the left background)  
(KHS MAG 23/ 1955. Opp Pg. 4)**

Taking a leaf from the former Kajang Town Board who had thus honored Mr. Gates, those running the Sekolah Menengah Tinggi Kajang should honour this man, its former British Headmaster and perpetuate his memory. They can do so by naming a prominent building or landmark in the School Campus after him. Galeria Gate would be an appropriate name for the school's own Galeria Warisan which was established in 2006. But such prospect seems remote because, as Dr. Tan Chee Koon once observed, it is now fashionable (cool?) to belittle the efforts of expatriate in the post Merdeka Era (27).

### **SOURCES - (MOSTLY SECONDARY)**

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2. Ibid. Page 44-T.A. O'Sullivan
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4. KHS MAG 41/1974. Page 26
5. Ibid
6. KHS MAG 21/1953. Page 2-Tan Chee Koon
7. Ibid
8. KHS MAG 41/1974. Page 26 (authentic)
9. KHS MAG 23/1955. Page 28
10. KHS MAG 24/1956. Page 21
11. KETINGGIAN 47/80. Halaman 18
12. KHS MAG 22/1954. Page 37
13. KETINGGIAN 47/80. Halaman 18
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16. KHS MAG 21/1953. Page 14
17. KHS MAG 22/1954. Page 26
18. Ibid
19. KHS MAG 21/1953. Page 15
20. KHS MAG 41/74. Page 26
21. KHS MAG 23/1955. Page 27
22. Ibid
23. KHS MAG 24/1956. Page 20
24. KHS MAG 21/1953. Page 15
25. KHS MAG 24/1956. Page 20
26. KHS MAG 23/ 1955 - Editorial
27. KHS MAG 41/1974. Page 26 Dr. Tan Chee Koon -  
By HANAFIAH LUBIS KHS 1956.

POSTED BY HANAFIAH LUBIS AT 7:20 PM

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## 6 COMMENTS:



**Shaharuman Shahadan** July 23, 2015 at 9:12 AM

I was completely enthralled reading about my alma mater and its proud beginnings and the people that made Kajang High School very special. Thank you very much for the wonderful journey through memory lane. Shaharuman Shahadan (1966)

[Reply](#)



**KAHESA - Billy LEE** March 11, 2016 at 5:00 PM

A very comprehensive and detailed historical documentation of our beloved Kajang High. I salute you for the effort put in. However, sadly - with the Form 1 class being taken off this year (2016) and eventually Form 2 (2017) and Form 3 (2018).....the historical journey of our school will eventually disappear and forgotten. Personally, I think that we the ex-kahisans need to do something before it is too late.

[Reply](#)



**Unknown** August 28, 2016 at 8:35 AM

Great to know more on the history of my former school and proud to have studied there. Our standard of English from the class of 72 was as good as the Aussies when I went there to do my mechanical engineering degree. Thanks to the dedicated teachers whom we hold dear till this day and still have get togethers with.

[Reply](#)



**Unknown** August 28, 2016 at 8:36 AM

Great to know more on the history of my former school and proud to have studied there. Our standard of English from the class of 72 was as good as the Aussies when I went there to do my mechanical engineering degree. Thanks to the



dedicated teachers whom we hold dear till this day and still have get togethers with.

[Reply](#)



**Pk gill** June 9, 2020 at 2:49 AM

Anyone recall Besant Singh who taught in Primary school and M.S.Gill who taught in secondary school. any details or info..going down memory lane.

[Reply](#)



**Roy Burhan** June 22, 2020 at 11:53 AM

It is a very interesting writings about the history of KHS and it is worth the efforts.

At least there is something about the school that we can be proud.I am here only 4 mnths in the Lower six but feel proud to be here..Kahisan

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