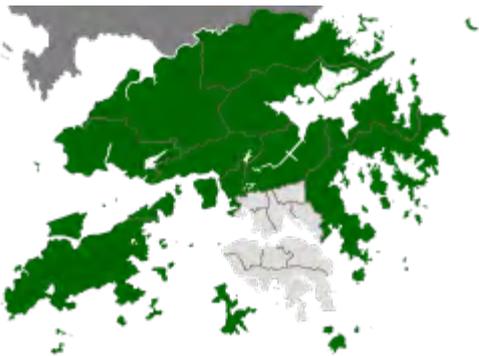


## Hong Kong New Territories Administration and Policing



### Early North Hong Kong Settlers

Taiping Rebellion, 1850–64, revolt against the China Ch'ing (Manchu) dynasty was led by Hung Hsiu-ch'üan, a Hakka visionary from Guangdong. His objective was to found a new dynasty, the Taiping 'great peace'. The rebellion was finally suppressed in 1867.

During the rebellion there was a mass exodus largely of Han Chinese ethnicity 'Punti' literally 'original land' referred to by the dialect they spoke, Yue Chinese (Cantonese) and Hakka meaning 'guest family' who migrated from north to south of the Yangtze River.



The origins of this bloody conflict lay in the resentment of the Punti towards the Hakka whose dramatic population growth threatened the Punti. The Hakka were marginalized and resentful in turn were forced to inhabit the hills and waterways rather than the fertile plains. The wars were particularly fierce in around the Pearl River Delta, especially in Taishan of the Sze Yap counties. The "Great Five Hakka Clans" — the Hau (侯), Tang (鄧), Pang (彭), Liu (廖), and Man (文) — were among the earliest recorded familial settlers of Hong Kong.

The Tang Clan expanded from Pat Heung alluvial Shum Tin valley from Kam Tin to Ping Shan, establishing three walled 'Wai' villages - Sheung Cheung Wai, Kiu Tai Wai, Fu Sha Wai and six 'Tsuen' villages: Hang Tau Tsuen, Hang Mei Tsuen, Tong Fong Tsuen, San Tsuen, San Hei Tsuen, & Hung Uk Tsuen. The Chinese villager paternal culture constructed ancestral halls, temples, for ancestral worship and study halls.



## The 1898 New Territories Lease

Stewart Lockhart Report on the New Territories First Year of Administration 19 February 1900  
Proclamation

### Appendix No. XX.

#### PROCLAMATION.

[L.S.] HENRY ARTHUR BLAKE,  
*Governor.*

By His Excellency Sir HENRY ARTHUR BLAKE, Knight Grand Cross of the Most Distinguished Order of Saint Michael and Saint George, Governor and Commander-in-Chief of the Colony of Hongkong and its Dependencies, and Vice-Admiral of the same.

Whereas by an Order of the Queen's Most Excellent Majesty in Council, made on the 20th day of October, 1898, after reciting that by a Convention dated the 9th day of June, 1898, between Her Majesty and His Imperial Majesty the Emperor of China, it is provided that the limits of British territory in the regions adjacent to the Colony of Hongkong, shall be enlarged under lease to Her Majesty in the manner described in the said Convention; and after reciting that it is expedient to make provision for the Government of the territories acquired by Her Majesty under the said Convention, during the continuance of the said lease, it was ordered (*inter alia*) as follows:—

1. The territories within the limits and for the term described in the said Convention shall be and the same are hereby declared to be part and parcel of Her Majesty's Colony of Hongkong in like manner and for all intents and purposes as if they had originally formed part of the said Colony.

“A proclamation had been issued by the San On Magistrate. The Viceroy also claimed that full agreement over custom collections had not been agreed as a land Chinese syndicate rumoured including Dr. Kai Ho a vocal supporter for Sun Yat-sen and his revolution to overthrow China's Manchu-led Qing dynasty was buying up land at the fraction of the true value.”

The New Territories covering 366 sq. miles (green) map above were leased by China to Great Britain under the Convention of Peking for 99 years from 1 July 1898. The larger part was located north of Kowloon and Hong Kong Island (grey). The leased area included 235 islands, coves and the waters of Deep Bay and Mirs Bay, the New Kowloon which is the strip of land of 7.5 sq. miles between Boundary Street and the Kowloon hills. The northern boundary was only fixed on 3 March 1899. The formal take-over did not take place until April of the following year.

Captain Superintendent May toured the New Territories to site the police posts. On 15 April Governor Blake sent 25 police and a company of the Hong Kong Regiment under Capt. Berger arrived at Tai Po Flagstaff Hill constructing matsheds to prepare the flag raising ceremony. The construction enraged villagers into a violent resistance to the new occupying authorities. The soldiers were met by villagers who took to a gallantly armed stand against the Hong Kong Regiment troops. It resulted in six days of mayhem leaving about 150 to 250 insurgent villagers dead. Many were buried in a mass grave at Sha Po near a buddhist nunnery dedicated to pray for the souls of the dead. The practice continues.



A few days later the villagers in an act of submission, carried two handsome damaged pairs of Kam Tin Kat Hing Wai and Tong Hung Wai gates to Flag Staff Hill Tai Po. The remaining gates were combined to make a pair and were appropriated by Governor Blake for "Myrtle Grove", his Irish home in Youghal County. Following demands from the Tang Clan in 1924, the gates were eventually returned in 1925 by the 16th governor, Sir Reginald Stubbs.



## “J.H.Stewart Lockhart Colonial Secretary Report 1900”

In June 1898 J. H. Stewart Lockhart was temporarily relieved of his duties as Colonial Secretary and Registrar General and sent on a fact-finding tour as Special Commissioner.

During August 1898 he visited various parts of the area and in general was given an "excellent reception" by the inhabitants; but the Tang villagers at Kam Tin were less polite unimpressed by the sight of the first steamer ever to navigate their river.

“At the time many low areas were no more than swampy ridden anopheles mosquito breeding pools causing malaria and of great concern to the staff Indian, Chinese and European staff compliment”.

The Governor’s speech assured the people the taxes would be collected justly and no need to fear being squeezed by officials and tenure of land would remain practically undisturbed and rights of property respected but mentioned the possibility of tenants forming ‘rings’ over cultivated land.

On the 2nd of August, the Committee-men of the eastern portion of the territory waited on the Governor at Táipó, and on the 4th of August the Committee-men of the western portion waited on His Excellency at P’ing-shán. I attach a copy of the Governor’s remarks on those occasions and of the replies of the Committee-men (see Appendix No. II).

We are well aware that Your Excellency’s policy in this Territory is a kind and benevolent one and your subjects are unanimous in their feelings of gratitude.

Your Excellency’s character will act as a transforming influence for good among us. We also predict that this barren region will become a land of wealth and progress under Your Excellency’s administration. What we feel with the deepest pleasure is that all evils are being now eradicated while what is good and noble are being encouraged. Law and order, peace and prosperity, alike distinguish Your Excellency’s government.

The Chinese authorities, at the suggestion of this Government, established a force of soldiery along the northern border of the New Territory during the latter part of the year under review. The “braves” have co-operated with our Police in preventing the incursion of bands of robbers across the borders. The close co-operation has enabled the Government to effect a reduction in the number of police stationed in the New Territory and has had a good effect in checking crime.

STATEMENT OF EXPENDITURE FOR 1901.

	Personal Emoluments.		Other Charges.		Exchange Compensation.		Total.		
	\$	c.	\$	c.	\$	c.	\$	c.	
Colonial Secretary’s Department, .....	4,201	...	672	46	318	19	5,191	65	
Treasury, .....	1,253	77	1,178	72	...	...	2,432	49	
Public Works Department, .....	2,569	76	345	...	675	45	3,590	21	
Harbour Master’s Department, .....	3,680	...	7,008	93	318	21	11,007	14	
Lighthouses, .....	5,660	92	6,245	25	1,232	76	13,138	93	
Botanical and Afforestation Department, .....	264	...	2,551	59	...	...	2,815	59	
Education Department, .....	...	...	40	06	...	...	40	06	
Medical Department, .....	1,200	...	1,369	18	...	...	2,569	18	
Land Court, .....	22,278	05	4,181	71	2,440	60	28,900	36	
Police, .....	67,232	84	26,670	57	7,980	60	101,884	01	
	\$	108,340	34	50,263	47	12,965	81	171,569	62

It was found expedient, however, to exempt the New Territory from the operation of certain Ordinances owing to local conditions and variations. Accordingly an Ordinance (No. 10 of 1899) was passed by which the New Territory was duly exempted from the operation of a number of Ordinances, a list of which was furnished in a schedule attached to the Bill, and which will be found in Appendix No. XXI.

“ He acknowledged the territory continued to be plagued with robbers, triads and pirates”.

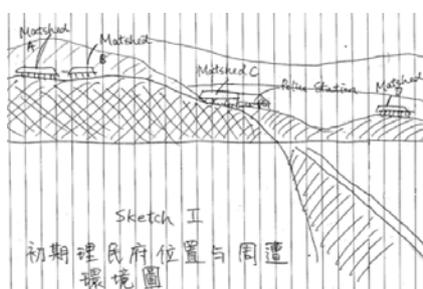
Governor Blake simply thought the land problem was too baffling for him. The problem of NT village land and the 1972 'small house' strategy still defies logic today according to the Hong Kong Ombudsman!

## The New Territories Administration

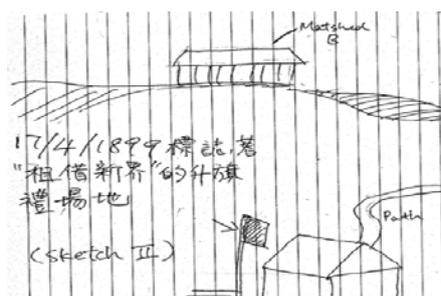
Tai Po was the largest district in the New Territories covering an area of 114 sq. miles. The population may have been about 200,000. At first, the territory was administered by an Assistant Superintendent of Police resident at Tai Po who was also a magistrate. The first objective was maintenance of law and order directed to crime prevention and detection.

From the outset it was decided that the administration established in 1899 of this newly acquired territory would be quite separate from the urban area. Once surveys had been completed and title established, district officers were appointed.

The first administrative office was a group of two matsheds erected in April 1899 sited on the hill in Tai Po district near the police station to serve as the first Administrative Offices of the New Territories. From early photographs taken in 1900 /1901, and now in the Colonial Office Library in London, show a group of matsheds on the hill on which the present buildings stands.



On the hill on which the former District Office stands there are three groups of matsheds. A and B seem to be the site of the former District Office. C is adjacent to a newly completed permanent building which is clearly recognisable in the photograph as the present Police Station. Matshed D is on the site of the Police Bungalow.



The (sketch II) above is a view of the matshed and flag erected for the flag raising ceremony and directly behind it what could be the Police Station under construction and the District Office matshed higher up. The characters on the matshed read "All the People Look Up to You-- Governor Blake."

The occupying authority's construction of the matsheds propelled a short but violent resistance by villagers close to the present site. The two matsheds close to the present site were destroyed by fire. The subsequent matshed's fire is uncertain, but they may have been repaired to function for awhile. A permanent administration building was erected on the site around 1907.

## District Officer System

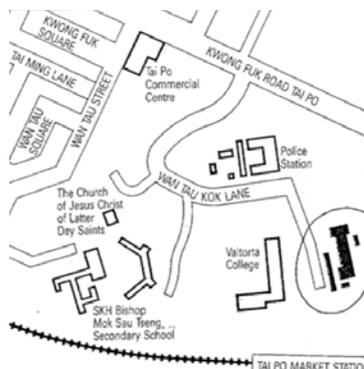
The District Officer system of administration was adopted for the territory with a district headquarters and land office established at Tai Po. In the early days, there were two District Officers, one for the north and the other for the south. Each had broadly similar responsibilities for his geographical area. Their duties were undertaken by cadet officers. Steps were then taken to define 8 Districts and 48 Sub-Districts under Section 4 of the local Communities Ordinance No.11 of 1899 closely to the divisions formally recognised by traditional 597 villages inhabitants and natural features. The islands were treated as a District apart from Lantau divided into three sub-districts. Requests were received for names to become sub-district village committee members as a link between villages and government.

## Land Survey

A survey of the territory and the compilation of a land register commenced quickly by two Assistant Land Officers in the mainland and islands under the Land Officers. The difficult and complicated task was completed in 1905. Thereafter the Police Magistrate and an Assistant Land Officer in the islands became collectors of Crown rent. In the New Territories, the Block Government Leases (BGL) were granted in 1905 pursuant to the New Territories (Land Court) Ordinance 1900 (land parcels held under BGL are known as Old Schedule Lots (舊批約地段) Unclaimed lots were declared as government Land. Territories which were disposed of after 1905 are known as the New Grant (NG) Lots (新批地段).

## Tai Po District Office

A permanent building to house the administration was erected on the site around 1907 near the police station 1905 and 2010 photos (below).



Architecturally, the District Office building is a turn of the century colonial-style structure and early example of western architecture in the New Territories. Finished in red brick, simple design, with open verandahs and horizontal brick lintels. Internal alternations were needed to cope with staff increases and functions. The enclosure of some verandahs became inevitable. The building remains historically of interest evolving with many changes that have taken place in the development of the New Territories over the years.

### **Change of Title and Responsibilities**

In 1907, the title of the Police Magistrate was changed to District Officer (North). Early in 1909, the Assistant Land Officer (North) was transferred to the administration with the title of Assistant District Officer. It was not until 1910 before a formalised government department was formed administrating the newly acquired lands -The District Office New Territories.

In 1910 the District Office (North) was created as a separate department under the District Officer. At the same time, the title of the Assistant Land Officer in charge of the islands was changed to Assistant District Officer (South), who was also made a Magistrate.

District Officers were responsible for land registrations, the issue of land use permits and hearing court cases. The District Officer heard court cases at the Tai Po District Office. Every Thursday he had to go to Au Tau with his interpreter to deal with the Yuen Long District court cases.

In 1913, the District Officer's police powers were removed when the post of Assistant District Officer (North) was abolished and the police in the mainland New Territories came under the control of an Assistant Superintendent of Police.

This situation was maintained until the Japanese Hong Kong occupation. Files and records were locked in a store room at the Land Office before the Japanese military arrival. The building was damaged during the Japanese occupation, but after repairs it re-opened in May 1946. Apparently, the documents suffered little harm from the Japanese military occupation.

After the war, many of the staff returned to their former positions. At first, they worked and lived at the Peninsula Hotel as the Tai Po Office while the building was under repair due to the war damage. In May 1946, the District Office moved back to Tai Po. Hearings started at Tai Po in the middle of August three mornings a week. Most of the cases heard were larceny, armed robbery, possession of arms, smuggling of dutiable commodities, dealing in opium and drugs and traffic offences.

In May 1949, Mr. I.M.G. Williams, District Officer, Tai Po, on transfer his duties were taken over by Mr. B.D. Wilson and Mr. D.C.C Luddington. Two officers were appointed to the Tai Po District, as the volume of police court and administrative duties increased. Mr. D.C.C. Luddington assumed duty as Magistrate and Assistant Land Officer, while Mr. B.D. Wilson handled the general administration of the District. During the writer's Hong Kong government administrative service worked with both able leading Administrative Officer's departments.

In the 1950's, Tai Po was under the administrative charge of a District Officer assisted by two Land Bailiffs and a small clerical and outdoor staff numbering about thirty personnel. The number of staff gradually increased annually.

A large part of the Sai Kung area traditionally under the administration of the District Office (North) was taken from the Northern District and added to the Southern District as the postwar motor road to Sai Kung brought it closer to Kowloon than Tai Po. A further change was the appointment of an Assistant District Officer for the Yuen Long area, traditionally under Tai Po.

The District Officers Yuen Long and Tai Po each took police court hearings three mornings a week at Ping Shan and Tai Po respectively, The Magistrate at Tai Po was busier hearing police court cases than his colleague at Ping Shan.

For many years the District Officers held certain judicial powers under the New Territories Ordinance (Chapter 97). An Assistant Land Officer had been empowered to hold Land Courts as a Special Magistrate. He had been empowered to hold a Small Debt Court. On 8th Sept 1961, with the coming into force of the New Territories (Amendment) Ordinance 1961, the jurisdiction of the District Courts was extended to cover land and small debt cases throughout the New Territories.

### **New Towns Urbanisation**

The Tai Po and Yuen Long traditional market towns urbanisation expanded quickly as the population increased with the new towns including Tin Shui Wai New Town developed since the early 1990s built on land reclaimed from former fish ponds once common in the district.

The original District Office scheme also had to meet the changing circumstances while retaining traditional contacts with the local public. As a result the District Officers ceased to have judicial functions. The District Officers, with the assistance of Liaison Officers and rural committees, continued to act as informal mediators in a variety of village, clan and family disputes. They also carried out the duties of official Justice of the Peace and Commissioner for Oaths.

Perhaps one of the more challenging aspects of a District Officer's duties today is liaison with his understanding of community needs and local opinion and culture. The District Officer can advise and co-operate with the work of specialist government departments operating in the District. Also arrange ad-hoc meetings for the District Council committees including large capital infrastructure and environmental projects such as the move of the Shell Petroleum Depot from Kwun Tong to Tsing Yi.

The former Tai Po District Office, North, was declared a monument in 1981. The Tai Po District Office now houses the Boys Scouts Law Ting Pong Centre.



### **New Territories Policing**

The lease of the New Territories in 1898 required an expansion of police presence to ensure adequate security to protect the long coast boundaries.

In 1899 thirty-eight Europeans were recruited with a further 49 being recruited in 1900. Included in these figures were two intakes from the Royal Marines.

On taking over the New Territories in 1899 temporary matsheds were constructed at Tai Po, Au Tau, Sha Tin and Fu Ti Au for police use. By 1901 several new police stations had been built such as Tai O, Sheung Shui and Ping Shan. Undredged pools and rice paddy fields encouraged swarms of mosquitos and unhealthy for the new foreign residents.



The Tai Po Police Station was built on 16 April 1899, shortly after the British leased the New Territories in 1898. It was the first police station and police headquarters in the New Territories. It is said to have been built at the site of the British flag raising ceremony which marked the official British take-over of the New Territories. It operated as a police station on 16 April 1899 until the new district police station of Tai Po started its service in 1987.

In August 1899 Governor Blake toured the New Territories the nine districts and forty-seven sub districts for security, order and regulation of village affairs. Due to robberies and piracy the Governor increased the police presence and doubled the water-police crews.

Between 1898 and 1900, three hundred men were recruited. Below the rank of Captain Superintendent of Police, there were five classes of ranks in the Police Force, including 1st class inspector, 2nd class inspector, Sergeant, Acting Sergeant and Constable.

### **New Territories Police Station Expansion**

Consequently, between April 1898 and December 1899 there were eleven police stations or posts were established. Commencing with Tai Po the first New Territories police headquarters in 16 April 1899. Then Shatin old Customs Station April; Kowloon City old Customs Station April; Ping Shan 22 April ; Cheung Chau old Customs Station 29 April; Then, Fu Ti Au 14 May (Sheung Shui), Tai O village house 18 May; Yung Shue Wan 30 May; Au Tau 3 June; Tung Chung 24 June, Kat O 14 October; Starling Inlet 24 October; Sha Tau Kok canvas structure; San Tin (Lok Ma Chau) village house 14 December. In 1900 two more police stations were opened in Sai Kung in July using a village house and replaced the flimsy structure in Sha Tau Kok in October. Sheung Shui 19 May 1900. To man the new stations 300 men were recruited including 113 Europeans although under 200 men were deployed to the New Territories. Two steam launches were chartered to patrol the New Territories waters.

Following a custom Queen Victoria throughout her widowhood spent the Christmas of 1900 at Osborne House on the Isle of Wight. Through early January, she felt "weak and unwell" and died on Tuesday 22 January 1901 at half past six in the evening, at the age of 82.

European James Edward New D.O.B. 1875 was posted in April 1900 to Sheung Shui police station the New Territories as Police Constable P.C. 99. On 22 June 1901 James went on duty as normal but by the evening he was feeling sick. He was attended by the Medical Officer station but he died at 10 pm on 24 June 1901 from sunstroke having been in Hong Kong for just 15 months.

To police the New Territories it was divided into two districts, North comprising the mainland beyond Kowloon Hills while South included many islands. Three chief officials were appointed to the budding administration to control law and order and land revenue collection. The chief police officer, an assistant superintendent as police magistrate and revenue collector. Two assistant land officers dealt with land matters, one in Kowloon and islands and one for the rest of the mainland forming northern district.

### **Ping Shan Traditional Village**

The Yuen Long Kam Tin district was the largest alluvial plain in Hong Kong with an area of 144 km<sup>2</sup>. There were many traditional villages scattered throughout the district. Ping Shan Heung, Ha Tsuen Heung, Kam Tin Heung, Pat Heung, San Tin Heung and Shap Pat Heung, including Yuen Long Town and Tin Shui Wai used to be a traditional market town. Since the Tang Dynasty, the Tang's clan has been living in the Kam Tin plain.



## Ping Shan Police Station



The Police Station was constructed by the Public Works Department and opened on 22 April 1899. It commanded villages and valley lying between Castle Peak and Deep Bay. The site for the police station is said to have been chosen by the Superintendent of Police Francis Henry May in 1899.

The station was constructed on the hilltop east of Hang Tau Tsuen (坑頭村) near Ping Ha Road in Yuen Long later known as Tuen Mun district when the writer became Assistant District Officer. It was one of the 11 police stations constructed for the Police Force following the lease of the New Territories in 1898. The police station compound consisted of two 2-storey main blocks and a single-storey annex block. Local villagers stated that the police station imitates a rock suppressing the crab-like hill, upsetting the fung-shui of the hill.

## J.H.Stewart Lockhart Colonial Secretary 1902 Report

Grass turfing, to the extent of 16,000 square yards, has been done to cover loose soil near Police Stations; in future it would perhaps be better for work of this sort to be undertaken by the Public Works Department in connection with the erection of new buildings.

I append (Appendix No. 6) a return of the crimes committed in the New Territory during the year 1901 which have been tried before the Police Magistrates.

The number of cases heard was 551, involving 708 accused persons.

In my Report last year, I drew attention to the criminal statistics and pointed out the apparently large increase in crime which had taken place. This increase was probably due, as I then observed, to the more complete development of the Police organisation and to the growing confidence of the natives in British methods of administering justice. This year it is satisfactory to be able to report that, although there has been a slight increase in the number of serious offences, there is no increase in the number of crimes committed.

There was one case of murder, for which three men stood their trial and were convicted. One of the murderers was hanged; the sentences on the other two being commuted to imprisonment for life.

There were 25 gang robberies, in connection with which 21 persons were convicted and sentenced to long terms of imprisonment.

The special legislation passed in 1901 to protect the lives and property of passengers by launches from attack by armed robbers disguised as passengers has been effectual; no case of this kind having occurred during 1901.

The figures for this year shew a decrease of 35 cases and of 99 accused persons, as compared with the year 1900. Breaches of the Opium Ordinance are still responsible for the largest list of offenders, 161 cases having been tried under this enactment alone.

Recognised precautions were more fully taken against malaria; the neighbourhood of the Police Stations were kept as free as possible of *Anopheles*; the Police were instructed how to recognize *Anopheles* pools and were shewn the methods of destroying the larvæ; all standing collections of water were as far as possible got rid of and many trees *eucalyptus* and others—were planted.

The health of the Police staff was generally much improved this year. The number of cases of malarial fever had been much smaller than that of the year previously. Preventive treatments had been vigorously carried out during the season by the use of quinine and arsenic. The use of the former had been met with a good effect, and of the latter practically ineffectual as a preventive measure.

One European Constable, JAMES NEW, died of sun-stroke on June at Sheung Shui Station. This was the only case of death among the Police, which took place in the New Territory during the year.

*Examination of Mosquitoes.*

	<i>Specimens received.</i>	<i>Anopheles.</i>	<i>Culex.</i>
Sha Tau Kok, .....	4,428	14	3,987
Ping Shan, .....	251	12	233
Sai Kung,.....	648	8	544
San Tin, .....	916	14	823
Tái Pó,.....	819	191	618
Sha Tin, .....	662	43	529
Tai O, .....	251	12	233
Au Tau, .....	1,853	113	1,728
Sheung Shui, .....	829	10	805

It must be remembered that all the Chinese living in the New Territory are British subjects and several cases of infanticide have already occurred; in order to check the native practice of abandoning their female children, some such measure is necessary.

I would suggest that each Police Station should be a place for registration.

On comparing the admissions to the Hospital for this class of disease for the last two years find that the nine Police Stations to the North of the range of hills bounding Kowloon give the following figures:—

<i>Police Station.</i>	<i>Average Strength.</i>		<i>Malarial Fever Admissions.</i>	
	1900.	1901.	1900.	1901.
Sha Tau Kok, .....	19	13	33	4
Ping Shan, .....	23	14	3	9
Sai Kung,.....	6	7	2	2
San Tin, .....	19	12	2	3
Tái Pó,.....	16	10	30	7
Sha Tin, .....	14	8	14	2
Tai O, .....	11	10	12	1
Au Tau, .....	20	14	35	17
Sheung Shui, .....	25	11	7	7
	153	99	138	52

Table Two: Hong Kong Police Force Strength 1886-1889

	Race	Enlistment	Deaths	Resignations	Dismissals or Desertions
1886	Europeans	19	8	12	1
	Indians	59	2	18	8
	Chinese	98	1	12	67
	Totals	17	11	28	79
1887	Europeans	17	4	6	5
	Indians	14	1	19	5
	Chinese	44	4	30	27
	Totals	93	9	55	37
1888	Europeans	26	1	26	2
	Indians	15	4	16	5
	Chinese	59	10	35	15
	Totals	100	15	69	22
1889	Europeans	29	5	13	7
	Indians	28	4	32	6
	Chinese	36	5	24	4
	Totals	93	14	69	17
Averages for 1886-1889	Europeans	25.2	4.5	14.2	3.7
	Indians	26.5	2.7	23.7	6
	Chinese	61	5	28.2	28.2
	Totals	116	12.2	62	39.2

## J.H. Stewart Lockhart Colonial Secretary Optimism of the New Territories Future

I have always held the opinion that the New Territory was not "a white elephant," as I have not infrequently heard unkind critics describe it. Events have already justified the favourable estimate of its future which I formed and embodied in the Report I wrote after I had visited it for the first time. It is not prudent to prophesy unless one is certain, still I venture to predict that before long the inhabitants of this Colony will wonder how even the most arrant pessimist could have held any but the most favourable views regarding the future of the New Territory.

This will be my last report on the New Territory and, in bidding it farewell, I do so with great regret, mingled with pleasant reminiscences of conflicting work carried on in the midst of most charming and beautiful scenery, and lessened by the recollection that I have been and still remain a staunch believer in its future.

## Ping Shan Police Station Architectural Drawing



The police station main complex is a two-storey white walled building with observation posts at roof level and arched and colonnaded verandahs. Originally it had a pitched roof of Chinese tiles. It was a typical Neo-Classical Colonial style building. On the north side, quarters for officers in the form of a two-storey rectangular structure connected to the main building form the Annex Block. This annex building also has white walls, open verandahs and a pitched Chinese tile roof. A two chimney building was originally a store. It is a simple brick built building with a pitched roof and overhanging eaves. A single chimney stack to serve the fireplace still remains. The authenticity of the main building has been compromised to some extent by replacement of the original pitched roof with a flat roof and four corner observation towers. A flat roof prevails with a 'lookout' post in each corner, gun emplacements have also been erected for emergencies. The station gave the impression of a modern fortification rather than a police station.

## Half a Century Later

Two hundred and thirty Japanese Allied Force was the first to capture the west of the New Territories in 1941 and Japanese soldiers were once stationed during the Japanese occupation of Hong Kong at Ha Wai in Ng Ka Tsuen, Pat Heung until their surrender. In 1945, it housed the Pat Heung Police Post. The old Pat Heung Police Post was converted into a foamed plastics workshop in Kong Ha Wai

In 1949 four Alsatian patrol dogs were purchased and a civilian trainer recruited to police the Border Area. These dogs were used solely in the New Territories and kennelled in Fan Gardens located at the old New Territories Police Depot, Fanling. Then five in number, two dogs and three bitches, called respectively Tony, Wolf, Lina, Bingo and Anna. Another bitch Lina was presented to PDU by Chief Inspector Darkin. Their training and activities were in the hands of Sergeant Major Tsui Hing Pui, assisted by P.C.'s 54 and 735.

## NT Force Sections

In The 1950s the N.T. police force was divided into two sections, N.T. East and N.T. West. The N.T. East comprised of Sha Tau Kok, Ta Ku Ling, Sheung Shui, Tai Po, and Sha Tin whilst the west section consisted of Castle Peak, Ping Shan, Kam Tin and Lok Ma Chau. Ping Shan was the headquarters for the west side whilst Tai Po acted in the same way for the east. The New Territories Depot was also in the east section at Fanling.

Ping Shan was also the Headquarters of Criminal Investigation Department for the N.T. West, and housed the Divisional Detective Inspector of N.T. West. In addition to the Officer-in-charge there was a Sub-Inspector to assist him to operate the station. Attached to Ping Shan were the three police posts, Lau Fau Shan (S.I.) Sap Pat Heung (N.C.O. in charge) and Nam Sang Wai (N.C.O. in charge) to assist policing of this large area.

Close to the newly completed Shek Kong airfield the Kam Tin Police Station, a requisitioned house, stood a few hundred yards from the airfield. Plans were in progress for a new police station on the site architecturally design as Castle Peak and Tsun Wan Police Station establishments.

The Kam Tin road continued to the north of Tai Mo Shan and joined the Tai Po Road near Wang Toi Shan. This road was closed to traffic other than Military and Police but permits were available. (Tai Po may be reached easily from Ping Shan via this new route).

## Pat Heung Police Station 1952 Opens

The new Pat Heung Police Station in the New Territories was opened on the 8th September 1952, by Mr. Tang Tai Hei, the Chairman of the Pat Heung Rural Committee. Mr. P. I. M. Irwin, Commanding Officer, Kowloon and New Territories was present at the opening ceremony, along with Mr. A. Pittendrigh, who represented the Commissioner of Police. The new police station is a two-storey building of load-bearing brickwork with reinforced concrete floors and roof, situated in the fork of a road junction between the Lam Tsun Valley road and Route 2, Shek Kong—Fanling. The site of over one acre contained the main station building, a garage for police vehicles, water tower, dangerous goods store, laundry and dog kennels. In general design the station is similar to four other police stations.



*Mr. Tang Tai Hei addressing the gathering at the opening ceremony.*

On the ground floor is a charge room, with built-in benches for the public and a prisoners cage and two cells. A recreation room with canteen, a small terrazzo shrine to the god Kwan Tai. The first floor contains barrack room accommodation for non-commissioned officers and other ranks, with latrine and bathing facilities. Quarters was provided for the Officer-in-Charge and a Sub-Inspector. The drill yard could be used for basket-ball. The station is enclosed by turfing interspersed with flowering shrubs. Mr. Tang Tai Hei addressing the gathering at the opening ceremony, said stations recently built in the New Territories contained additional accommodation and improved recreational facilities. The building was designed by the Architectural Office of the Public Works Department.

## Police Dog Unit Expanded

The dog unit was expanded and established a headquarters at the 1952 new Pat Heung sub-divisional station Police Station in 1956.

The police station was used as a dog training centre until the construction of Yuen Long Police Station in 1961 when the dogs Ping Shan station compound were used as kennels for the Police Dog Unit (PDU).

The Unit subsequently moved from Ping Shan Police Station in 1964 to Pat Heung .There it stayed until 1995 when it was re-located to the former British Army barracks in Queen's Hill Camp, Fanling. The PDU moved to its provisional Headquarters at Cheung Yip Street in Kowloon Bay In 2001. At the end of 2003, the PDU finally moved into its new Headquarters at Sha Ling in the North District. The newly completed PDU Headquarters an office block, a medical centre for police dogs, indoor training area and an outdoor training pitch. The extensive ground allows all police dogs to undergo the widest possible range of the latest training. With only four police dogs when it first started, the PDU has developed into a mature unit with more than 100 police dogs in active service today.



In 1993 following a study carried out by Traffic New Territories North Ping Shan Police Station In 1996, Traffic NTN moved into the station as a traffic operational West Sector Base Traffic New Territories North until 2001. The Ping Shan Police Station was vacated the site in 2001.

### **Ping Shan Police Station Second Lease of Life**



The old Ping Shan colonial police station's role maintained law and order for a hundred years in this remote corner of the New Territories. Nearby there are a number of traditional Chinese buildings and structures within easy walking distance of historical and social interest. Photo above of the police station dated 1987.

### **Ping Shan Heritage Trail**

The Ping Shan Heritage Trail is located in the Ping Shan area of Tuen Mun District. The trail was inaugurated on 12 December 1993 and was the first of its kind in Hong Kong. It passes through the villages of Hang Tau Tsuen, Hang Mei Tsuen and Sheung Cheung Wai including several declared historical monuments and graded buildings.

In 1996, a proposal was put forward by the Tang Clan to convert the old station to display artifacts on local folk culture and history and together an information centre for a Ping Shan Heritage Trail. It was agreed between the Government and the Tang Clan in 1997 that the new facility would be named as the Ping Shan Tang Clan Gallery cum Heritage Trail Visitors Centre (屏山鄧族文物館暨文物徑訪客中心) (the Centre).

Government's heritage conservation policy promulgated in 2007 restated in 2013 states: "to protect, conserve and revitalise as appropriate historical and heritage sites and buildings through relevant and sustainable approaches for the benefit and enjoyment of present and future generations."

The 1899 Old Ping Shan Police Station situated on the hilltop was given a Grade III historic building near Ping Ha Road in Tuen Mun by the Antiquities Monument Office AMO.

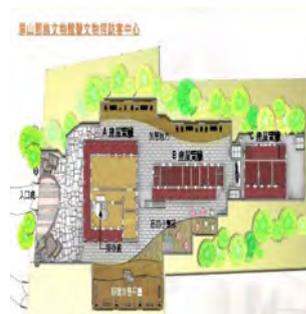
In 2002, the premises were formally allocated to the Antiquities and Monuments Office (AMO) and the Leisure and Culture Services Department (LCSD) for planning of the Centre. Following renovation the Centre was opened in 2007.

### Ping Shan Police Station Heritage Trail Centre

The Centre houses the Old Ping Shan Police Station now converted into the Ping Shan Tang Clan Gallery, the Gallery of Ping Shan Heritage Trail and the Community Heritage Gallery. Photo 2015.



The station compound is a convenient location connecting major attractions along the Ping Shan Heritage Trail (屏山文物徑) including the Tang Ancestral Hall (鄧氏宗祠), Yu Kiu Ancestral Hall (愈喬二公祠), Tsui Sing Lau Pagoda (聚星樓), Hung Shing Temple (洪聖宮), Yeung Hau Temple (楊侯古廟), Kun Ting Study Hall (覲廷書室), Ching Shu Hin (清暑軒) and other historic buildings. The conversion works commenced in February 2005 and completed in early 2007. The total gross floor area of the Centre is approximately 820m<sup>2</sup>. Facilities of the Centre will include two exhibition galleries, activity room, archaeological workshop, outdoor sitting out areas and management office. The annex block of 1970s was converted into an archaeological repository. The layout plans of the Centre see below.



- A= Ping Shan Tang Clan Gallery** the history customs and Tang Clan culture relics.
- B= Gallery Ping Shan Heritage Trail** introduces buildings along the trail and the old station.
- C= The Community Heritage Gallery** presents special exhibitions on the history and and culture.



## View From Old Ping Shan Police Station Roof



## Ping Shan Heritage Trail Map



## Tang Ancestral Hall (early 14th Century) & Yiu Kiu Ancestral Hall (early 16th Century)



## Kun Ting Study Hall (c.1800) & Hung Shing Temple (c.1767)



## Guest House (c1870) Ching Shui Hin



## Sheung Cheung Wai (c.1800) & Hang Tau Tsuen Old Well Shrine Earth God Altar



### Tsui Sing Lau Pagoda (c.1400)



### Elegant Ping Shan Chinese Roofs



## NT Policing Continued

In joining the HKP force in 1962 the writer enjoyed early opportunities to visit colleagues serving in the New Territories remote closed border police posts such as Nam Hang and Kong Shan 700 feet perched like eagle nests overlooking the Sham Chun River below dividing Hong Kong and China mainland. Nagging thoughts of further NT adventures were fulfilled while serving in the Narcotics Bureau arresting illegal narcotic importers and smugglers seizing large quantities of dangerous drugs in the N.T. There was time to rethink seek new NT constabulary possibilities and open spaces.



In 1965 the writer was posted to Pat Heung Police Station as Sub Divisional Inspector (SDI) located half way between Kam Tin village and the Shek Kong army barracks amidst the long standing Tang Clan villagers. My wife and I together with my daschund 'Lulu' were quartered in the police station. Many of the constables were Hakka and spoke the dialect, important to communicate with the villagers. The local farming villagers were relatively law abiding apart from arrests among some of the village old opium smokers. Most of the trouble came from the foreign soldiers getting into a fracas in the local Kam Tin girly bars.

There was plenty of space to stretch one's legs to climb the verdant formerly tea planted hills.

A few opportunities arose to visit the Ping Shan police station noting little changes of the old pleasing colonial architecture. It was easy to conjure up images of the District Officer dispensing palm tree justice within its walls.

## New Territories Administration Continued

The NT police posting was followed in 1972 as a spell as Assistant District Officer Tuen Mun (ADO/TM) New Territories Administration (NTA). Planning for the first stages of urbanisation had commenced. The district was commonly known as Castle Peak. One of the first tasks was to find a suitable Chinese name for the new district as the population grew. After discussion with one's old friend and old sage Hakka linguist and historian Mr. K.M.A. Barnett and local community villagers the name of 'Tuen Mun' was put forward to the Colonial Secretariat for consideration. The name change was agreed.

Tuen Mun was a sub-district under the District Officer Yuen Long and the ADO Tuen Mun offices were in the Yuen Long Government complex. The writer passed by the Ping Shan area driving to Yuen Long daily from our Castle Peak Road garden house residence.

The District and Assistant District Officers were required to live in their districts. It was necessary to know one's own community, district and villages well walking the coastal and hill paths among the unspoiled environment. There were opportunities to visit the Ping Shan old villages. During this period Mr. Denis Bray NTA District Commissioner promulgated his questionable 'Small House' policy. Offering indigenous males 'rights' to build a three story house on land hungry space. The 'ding uk' was exempted from the building regulations and the policy was seldom monitored or revised. Consequently abuses still arise today. Many indigenous villagers did not live in their 'ding uks' and sold them off to property developers or to non-indigenous persons. Later Tuen Mun was designated as a new town under its own District Officer.

The writer's few years sojourn and administration work in the New Territories did not end there.



1974 to 1983 brought another new bruising mainland exodus of refugees from China to Hong Kong and a posting to the Housing Department Squatter Control and Temporary Housing responsible for both the NT and the urban area to house the new flood. A new appointment in the Recreation and Culture Department made it possible to act in a more positive manner setting up community recreational sailing facilities in the New Territories.

Ten year's later in 1985 the writer returned to the New Territories Administration. This time as District Officer Kwai Chung and Tsing Yi District. The urbanised and busy container port fortified with heavily populated public housing, many schools and dirty factories spouting litres of toxic dyes into the sea and down public drains. The task was to set up the administration of the new District and Board to manage the challenging obvious problems and numerous community aspects of the burgeoning crowded conurbation.

There was no escape from the New Territories! The writer worked in the Transport Department running 'inter alia' the government tunnels the strategic gate ways to and fro the NT. A posting to the University Grants Committee involved visiting the urban and NT Universities recommending dishing out money to the universities.

After the professional work there was thirty five years of happy voluntary work mostly in the NT constructing and managing local elderly persons facilities and sports programmes for children.

## Conclusion



Since the 1898 New Territories lease the administrators and police officers working for and with the community has shaped the once malaria infected land into what Colonial Secretary J.H. Stewart Lockhart imagined? The reader can be the judge.

**Brian Coak**



Email: [briancoak@gmail.com](mailto:briancoak@gmail.com) Website [www.kernowkid.com](http://www.kernowkid.com)