



## SCHOOL HISTORY

On the 6th February 1816, a committee headed by Reverend Robert Sparke Hutchings, then colonial chap-lain of the Prince of Wales Island submitted a proposal of the establishment of a school to the Governor of the day. On the 21st of October 1816, Penang Free School came into existence. The school is open to all children regardless of race or religion. Hence, it is named the Pinang Free School.

Housed on rented premises in Love Lane, Free School started as a Day School for boys and continued without interruptions since 1816 to the present day. The first school building was only ready for occupation in 1821 and was used for 107 years until 1927. By the 1920s, the school was badly over crowded and to accommodate the rising enrolment, the government acquired a new site of 30 acres in Green Lane. Construction of the new buildings commenced in 1924 and on the 9th of January, the new school buildings in Green Lane were officially declared open by the Resident Councilor of Penang, Mr. Ralph Scott. The old building was named 'Hutching's School' catering for primary education while Penang Free School became a secondary institution. The old building is now the State Museum.

The administration of the school was initially the responsibility of a Committee of Directors. How-ever, on the first of January 1920, by the passing of the Penang Free School (Acquisition) Bill, the Government took over the management of the school. The school, however, retained its endowments, administered by a Board of Trustees and chaired by the Chief Minister of Penang. The trustees are responsible for the provisions of scholarships for deserving students. One such scholarship is the Hutchings scholarship. With the implementation of the Educational Ordinance in 1957, Penang Free School became a national-type fully assisted secondary school run by a properly constituted Board of Governors. Since the loss of "Government" status, the provision of more facilities for the school had been greatly affected.

To solve this problem, the Penang Free School Development Fund was launched in early 1963. The objective of this fund was to raise money for a number of building projects including a swimming pool. A Food and Fun Fair held in April 1963 netted a collection of RM18,622. However, the 'Swimming Pool Project' was shelved and in its place, a new library was planned.

It became a reality on 29th of December 1969, when the first Prime Minister of Malaysia, the late Tunku Abdul Rahman Putra Al-Haj who was an old Free, officially opened it. In December 1990, he made his last visit to his Alma Mater in conjunction with the Library's 20th Anniversary.

Science was first introduced to the curriculum in 1923, and a Special Class was started. In 1923, the Science Block (eastern wing) was built. The school prepared candidates for the London Matriculation and Queen's Scholarship Examinations. The late YTM Tunku Abdul

Rahman Putra Al-Haj officially declared open the Sixth Form block and Hostel on 21st October 1958. Free School then became the centre of Sixth Form education in Northern Malaya. 1966 was undoubtedly a very important year for the school as it held its Sequicentenary Celebrations. The 1970s saw new edition to the infrastructure of the School. In 1972, a Nuffield Science Block, an Industrial Arts Block and a new Hostel Block was constructed. With the completion of the new hostels, the old hostels on the second floor of the Sixth Form block were converted into classrooms and now forms part of the present Sixth Form Block.

In 1988, the Form One students were on the threshold of the new academic era with the implementation of KBSM (Integrated Curriculum for Secondary Schools). The following year saw the teaching of a new subject "Kemahiran Hidup" (Living Skills) to the First Formers. In 1990, two new blocks of classrooms, science laboratories and a basketball court were added. In December 1990, the school welcomed the introduction of the 2-semester system and provided proper parking facilities for her staff.

In 1991/1992 Penang Free School adopted the single session school system with the construction of two new blocks. In 1994, the side gate at Free School Road was constructed and financed by Mr. C.A.Goh, an old Free and troop leader of the 7th Georgetown Scout Troop. The following year saw the introduction of compulsory IT education for all Form 1 students who have to continue their com-puter classes until Form 3, a move in line with the national education policy to produce computer literates. Penang Free School Foundation was officially registered with the Registrar of Society on 19th April 1996. It was launched officially by the Deputy Prime Minister on 15th September 1996. The primary aim of the Foundation is to help the school to achieve greater heights in education and at the same time to preserve the rich traditions and glories of Penang Free School.

From March 1999 onwards, work on the upgrading of the school, as a premier school commenced and scheduled to be completed in August. Within this year itself, two new blocks are constructed to meet the ever-demanding needs of the school.

The school is fortunate to have many old boys coming forward to help monitor and to improve the school academically, physically and financially. Thanks to OFAs' of Penang, Selangor & Wilayah Persekutuan, as well as, Singapore and other individuals who have always responded positively to our alma mater's call.

Presently Penang Free School is working towards building a school community of scholars, sports-men and gentlemen with the continual and collaborative efforts, cooperation and commitment of students, parents, old frees and educators of Penang Free School.