

P.S. Just heard from Cecil Lee about Philip Wickens, he agrees with me on the July 1939 start. He's recently been quizzed about H³ by a Chinese Fu Chee Cheng, a Shell trainee, presumably K.L. or S'pore, who arranged for a T.V. Video recording of their talk. Hope it doesn't clash with John's history - have put
Dear Colin, this P.S. on John's copy of letter.

27/6/8I.

Many thanks for your long letter dated 16/6/8I with enclosures, I am sorry to have put the cat among the pigeons but facts are facts, and in reply to John's queries the answer is his Para (a) or as Sam Goldwyn would have said "In two words its In Disputable". One thing you may have spotted in my letter is that I refer to going on leave end November and returning end July, a total of 8 months. This is quite correct and I had a row about it with Singapore who tried to cut me down to 6 months. John Ford was the K.L. manager and sorted it out for me and later went on leave and it is almost certain that he would choose the Spring and leave about April¹⁹³⁹ and G. would have come up from Malacca about then. This last bit is surmise but G. was definitely still in Malacca at the end of November 1938. I think the truth is that no-one else had specific dates to fix anything^{BY} and at a much later date 1938 did sound a very reasonable time for the start. If Cecil Lee read this he would say as he once did before "It's no use arguing with you Torch, you have a bloody Chartered^e Accountant's morbid desire for accuracy". I shall send a copy of this letter to John to save time and hope he can sort something out. One possible let-out - The H³, being of Eastern origin, was greatly influenced by Chinese Culture and Customs, was CONCEIVED in 1938, and by the time it saw the light of day in July 1939, it was by Chinese calculation of age, ONE year old!! You'd only have to consider "Birth Day" as "Conception Day". The great secret could be kept from the Hoi Polloi (to save recalling 5M tee shirts) recorded in the secret archives at H³ H.Q., and passed on by word of mouth by retiring hierarchs to their successors. But seriously, I would like to know what happens, having got you into this mess.

My only comments on Ancient History which are of no real importance, I actually left Evatts for Neill & Bell (now Couper Bros) on 31/3/47 and retired from N. & B. on 31/3/58. The Jan 1958 run was a farewell run and Whyatt-Smith (a fine athlete) and Young were brought in to do all the dirty work for Morris Edgar and myself. I had actually stopped active participation some time earlier, partly on account of anno domini and partly as having survived^R the war and subsequent P.O.W. life, I didn't want my impending retirement stopped by bandits.

For your own information you may be interested in the following sequence, G. was the first person I met when I first arrived in Singapore in 1934, he had been sent by Evatts to meet and greet me

and be my guide and mentor during my early days. We became good friends, two years later I was transferred to K.L. and two further years later we met up in Malacca and after my return from leave, in K.L. By that time the Hash had started and Cecil Lee and G. were buddies I'd known Cecil since being in K.L. Cecil and I were in the Armoured Cars together and early in 1942 we were attached to the Argylls for the inner defence of the ^{ISLAND} ~~mainland~~ just north of the causeway. G. had been on leave in Australia and moved heaven and earth to get back. When he did, the Volunteers couldn't find a post for him so he dropped a "pip" to join the Argylls. Cecil and I heard about this and the day before the withdrawal over the causeway went in search of G. There was an air-raid, we dived for a slit trench and found G. in it. Less than a week later G. was no more. Sad, but at least we were able to see him again. And on the same note I was very sorry to hear about Philip Wickens, he was a good sort and I am only surprised that Cecil hasn't written about him, for he used to mention him in previous letters, they kept in close contact.

As regards John's comments of a trip to K.L., we have given some thought to it in the past and may yet do it but we don't like the heat, and the Malaysian authorities don't like people who live in S.A. We did a nostalgic return to the East in 1963/64 and the S'pore H³ gave me a splendid evening following a run (without me). Is Anthony Rolly still the H³ anthem? We're off to Canada in August and then back to the U.K. for Christmas so we'll enter K.L. and S'pore on our waiting list for another time.

Yes, I did get the Singapore H³ 1000 run mag. for which many thanks, it seemed to escape the S.A. censors. As far as the draft history is concerned I think that it is fine (apart from the date problem) and much more accurate than earlier editions in other publications. I did tell you that an American friend sent me a cutting from the Wall Street Journal in 1975 with a long article about us, and said "surely there can't be two Torch Bennetts in this world". In it, both G. and myself were called Australians, horrible thought!

I must close now as I have a lot of writing to do in connection with our impending trip but having got you into the shiggy-pit, the least I could do was to let you have an early reply. All very best wishes to you Colin, and I shall always be glad to hear from you and your current activities, and don't forget the offer of the crayfish.

Salaams and ON. ON.

Yours,

Torch