

Home to Writers' Circle

The National Library was where I first found my love for writing.

From 1983 to 1984, the library organised regular group meetings and activities for the Young Writers' Circle (YWC) to promote local literature - prose, poetry, freelance writing, and short stories. Membership was open to aspiring writers and professionals, and many who attended the monthly meetings shared their experiences in writing.

In February 1984, for example, chairman of the Circle, Ms Lee Yin Cheong conducted its first session for the year by holding a discussion on critical and practical writing, where she played a musical cassette tape entitled, 'Shadow and Light' and asked the audience to write comments about the lyrics. This was to stimulate critical thinking. To encourage practical writing, she presented an on-the-spot writing on the topic of 'The Dream that Lies Awake' to have attendees write a poem or prose on the subject. She then provided materials on how to tackle "the creative block" that afflicts all writers.

Such were the kinds of meetings held monthly to encourage people to write. Special invitations to guest speakers were also key activities of the Circle, where topics included 'Writing in the Bewildering Age' by Prof Hascillos Lucilla, 'Singlish' by Dr Leong Liew Geok, and many other refreshing topics, packed with insights on writing and skill learning. All these meetings brought to life the many areas that helped build seasoned writers. These meetings and activities I remember vividly because I was then the secretary of the Circle, and I took minutes of the meetings.

The library and its Young Writers' Circle launched the start of who I am today, and it is with sadness that I bid farewell to this building which holds many fond memories for me. It is sad to see it consigned to history.

Edmond Ng, Writer