

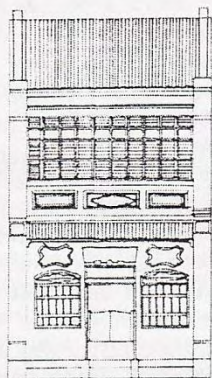
PHT *newsletter*

PENANG HERITAGE TRUST * PERSATUAN WARISAN PULAU PINANG

26A Stewart Lane, 10200 Penang, Malaysia * Tel/Fax:604-264 2631 E-mail:phtrust@po.jaring.my

Number 68 www.pht.org.my

June - July 2000



Office

PHT thanked all the volunteers, friends and the Kelab Belia Warisan for their help in the Chinese History Teachers' camp, Evaluation Workshop on Good Governance in Cultural Heritage, Bangsawan, and the Memories forum.

We would like to thank Sharon Cheah Ui-Hoon formally from the Star Publications for editing this newsletter which will be her last. Sharon will be joining Business Times in Singapore soon. Good luck Sharon!



ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The Annual General Meeting will be held on

Date & Time
Sunday 27 August 2000
at 3.30 pm

Venue
Runnymede,
Jalan Sultan Ahmad Shah,
10050 Penang

The AGM will start at 3.30pm followed by a talk on Runnymede by Dilys Yap. While tea is being served, the Kelab Belia Warisan will give a presentation.

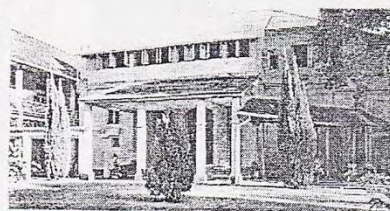
EXCLUSIVE GUIDED HERITAGE SITE VISITS

SUNDAY 30 July, Convent Light Street, 3.30 P.M.

CONVENT Light Street is one of our few "success" stories of conservation in Penang. Saved after a massive public fund-raising, the oldest girls' school in the country now sparkles in its new coat of white paint.

Visit the Government House with us, Francis Light's "Bungalow in George Town", now functioning as the school's classrooms including domestic science and needlework classes.

From the Government House as its first building, Convent Light Street as we see it today was constructed by the Sisters of the Holy Infant Jesus Mission over a span of two centuries.



Highlights include the art nouveau-styled chapel, Light's well, the graceful and airy colonaded halls, and the scratchings of American naval officers as they were incarcerated in the school when the Convent was occupied by the Japanese during the Second World War.

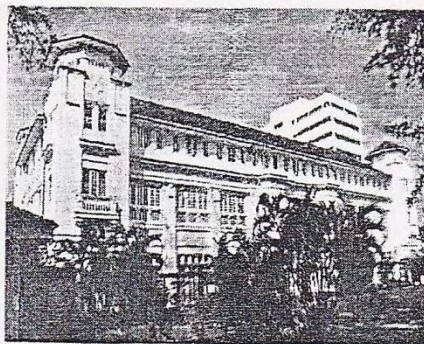
SUNDAY 27 August 2000, Runnymede,
Jalan Sultan Ahmad Shah, 3.30 P.M.

LET this grand old dame of heritage buildings in Penang charm you, not only with its beautiful architecture but also with a real romance story of its famous resident, Sir Stamford Raffles and his first wife Olivia Marianne Fancourt.

As you gaze out into the calm blue ocean of the North Beach from the doors of the former hotel, learn how Raffles and his wife had spent the first few years of married bliss, in a brick bungalow called Runnymede.

The original brick bungalow was later ravaged by fire in 1921, and but the surviving bungalow was incorporated into the present complex which was subsequently expanded by two Scotsmen in the 1930s.

The ballroom which, at the height of its glory, accommodated hundreds of people during the dances held twice a week when liners called into Port Swettenham. It certainly should be interesting to see how the Malaysian



Second Army Infantry division today functions in the former hotel, which was first requisitioned by the British army as a transit camp and officers mess.

Due to strict security, please give your name and IC No./Passport No. to Priscilla by 24 August 2000 otherwise entry will not be allowed. No photographs and Press allowed.

Chung Keng Kwee

Ancestral Hall - Sunday May 28



Trust members who visited both the Chung Keng Kwee and the Kee Lai Huat ancestral temples during the last two site visits must have been struck by the contrasting moods and conditions of the two heritage buildings.

The Chung Keng Kwee visit certainly had an eventful start, as members were locked out and had to contend for almost an hour with thick iron chains and a massive padlock. As Owen Chung, trustee of the estate and great-grandson of the Chung Keng Kwee estate, said, his ancestor must not have been too happy about our visit!

The ends of his impressive moustache curling in the afternoon humidity (or was it gel?), he puzzled over how his clear instructions to the caretaker about our visit could have been misunderstood, and how none of his keys he brought could open the lock!

Some pliers and cutters were brandished, but that didn't work so council member Laurence Loh valiantly climbed over the antique grilles to open the temple, however also to no avail! A locksmith finally did the trick, and by then, Trust members were feeling like since we'd waited for so long, we're going in no matter what!

Inside, despite the bright sunny afternoon, the cobwebbed ancestral hall only emanated a cold, neglected

feel, and many were dismayed to see the many antique fixtures such as priceless mother-of-pearl furniture and intricate wooden carvings left to the ravages of our merciless tropical weather.

We learnt a bit of the late 19th century Chung Keng Kwee temple's history, of how it used to be the former site of the Ghee Hin secret society, and how Kapitan Chung built his temple over it to become the Hai San headquarters.

There was a bit of debate over the location of the well where Ghee Hin heads were thrown in, but it was no fun peering in as the well had been sealed for a long time.

We listened to Owen (who used to be the aide-de-camp of the late Tunku Abdul Rahman, Father of Malaysia) share briefly his family history and Penang's link with Taiping as embodied in this building.

And as evening drew near, we bid quite a hasty exit from the ancestral temple (it was good to just get out and take in some fresh air), hastened in part by Owen relating tales of the building's supposed haunting.

The atmosphere was almost totally in contrast with the sunny June afternoon when Trust members hit the North-South highway to Sungai Bakap to visit the Kee family home.

The quintessentially Chinese doors to the 4-acre estate were wide open as members (as well as several Kee descendents) were graciously ushered into the bright airy ancestral hall, similarly fronted with the open courtyard, and seated to listen to the briefing given by Datuk Kee Phaik Cheen, great-granddaughter of the progenitor of the Kee family in Malaysia, Kee Lai Huat.

As PHT members sat in the great ancestral hall, surrounded by gilded family altars and furniture, and a great number of family pictures, Datuk Kee deliv-

ered an animated brief of the family roots eight generations ago in Sungai Bakap.

With slides transmitted by a laptop, we heard how Lai Huat landed in Tambun when he was 19, got work as a clerk for Khaw Loh Hup sugarcane estate in Tambun, and eventually married Khaw's only daughter, Bee Gek.

He eventually bought up 1,000 acres of swampland in what we know today as Valdor, drained it to cultivate sugarcane, had six sons and two daughters and built this complex for the family. Lai Huat died at 58 and his body was sent back to China, but his widow lived till 98 to become the matriarch of the family, said Datuk Kee.

Members eventually visited two of the six double-storey terrace houses; most now are empty since the descendents have flown the nest.

The two visits certainly gave us at least an insight into the family lives of two prominent Chinese men, decorated Mandarins no less, of the 19th century. Rival Kapitans of their respective dialect groups — one Hakka, the other Teo Chew — both men left behind different architectural and family legacies.

The visits certainly gave us food for historical thought, for instance, the differences in their leadership, stemming from them culturally and also individually, how they fashioned their wills and family legacies, how the household was run daily — the question marks are endless. - Sharon Cheah

Kee Lai Huat Ancestral Hall
Sunday June 25



Logan's Memorial

I have never been to your George Town, but I have played some part in the study of the buildings of our George Town in Tasmania. I also know something of Logan and understand something of why you have a statue to his memory. He richly deserves such memorial.

I am saddened to hear that there is a building proposal which will diminish the opportunity for all Malaysians, and all visitors, to become more aware of his legacy and I hope that some way can be found to accommodate both the needs of the present with the claims of heritage and identity. As we well know in Tasmania, it is important to retain the structure of our cities from the last century and, with a little imagination, ways can always be found to build the new in such a way that the best of the old is preserved.

I wish you well in your effort to save Logan's statue in one way or another. I would be happy for you to use this letter or my name in any way which may seem appropriate to you.

- Campbell Macknight
Professor of Humanities
University of Tasmania

Historic Archaeology

Hello! My name is Dan Martin, I visited Penang this last February and saw a copy of a book about the historic architecture of Penang.

I found it quite fascinating and enjoyed Georgetown much more because of it. I am currently working as a Museum Technologist at Fort Vancouver National Park, a reconstructed Hudson Bay Company outpost from the early part of the 19th century. I was particularly struck with the parallels between the British commercial presence in Penang and NW America. Has any Historic archaeology been done in Penang? Is there any local interest in early 19th century material culture in Georgetown? The Museum where I work has an extensive archaeological collection excavated from the workers' village associated with the

Fort. This group of workers was amazingly diverse. Would the collection, or my experience with these artifacts be helpful to someone's research there?

Thank you for your attention
Daniel Martin
E-mail: <julijay@AOL.COM>

Kee's Ancestral Home

At long last the sun shone...literally...on Penang Heritage Trust on the last Sunday of the month. June 25 was a beautiful day for our site visit to the Kee Clan House complex in Sungai Bakap on the mainland. It was also the day of the annual Penang Bridge Run; and after the rain on the day of the March tour, the downpour on the day of the April tour, and the hour-long search for the right key on the day of the May tour, I envisioned the closure of the Penang Bridge or a massive traffic jam there on the day of our June tour. But, no, everything went just right, and we were treated to what I consider the best-organised tour yet.

The Kee complex, though right in the heart of the little village of Sungai Bakap, is behind a ten-foot wall; and it would be easy to drive past it if you can't read the Chinese name plaque over the entrance. Fortunately, we spotted the familiar faces of some PHT members, found a parking place, and arrived at the ancestral worship hall just as Dato' Kee Phaik Cheen was about to begin her presentation.

The scene was a study in contrasts. As Madame Kee related her clan history, we were watched over by portraits of long-dead ancestors in formal Mandarin garb. At the same time we were seeing visual image projected onto a screen by the latest technology controlled from a lap-top computer. After she finished her presentation, Madame Kee invited us to accompany her around the estate as she showed us various points of interest.

Behind the worship hall and separated from it by a large courtyard was

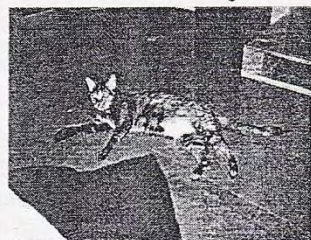
a bloc of six interconnected double-storey terrace houses, one house for the families of each of the six sons of Kee Lye Huat, first leader of the clan in Malaysia. (His two daughters were given houses too, but outside the family compound.) The houses were unimpressive from the outside but proved to be remarkably large from the inside. They were fairly narrow but very deep and featured central air wells and large kitchens with the original stoves and some very old utensils. Antique lovers busily snapped photos of the interiors of the houses, three of which are still occupied by Kees.

When we finished our tour of inspection, we went to the courtyard between the entrance hall and the worship hall. There Kee clan members had set up an impressive tea, with that beverage accompanied by both sweets and savouries and a large container of delicious noodles. Was that mee hoon? The noodles looked a little larger than usual. In any case, this PHT member has at least two helpings before heading back to Penang and home.

Many thanks to Dato' Kee Phaik Cheen and the members of the Kee trust who helped make the tour a success.

- Marcia Howard

Obituary



PUSS,

unknown date of birth (possibly 1996) to 9th June 2000
PHT permanent life member.

leaving behind,
Joseph, Gwynn, Tong, Priscilla, Irena,
and many other ear and chin tickling volunteers.

Deeply mourned and sadly missed

Lying in state at Peng Au Veterinary clinic,
cremation care of S.P.C.A

No flowers by request, Donations to S.P.C.A

Trams and Trolley Buses

Anybody with knowledge about Penang's former transport system?

Ric Francis from Australia is writing an article on the history of "Trams and Trolleybuses in Penang". He is desperately seeking pictures of London trolleybuses exported to the former British Colony of Penang.

The trolleybuses in question were of C1 class No's 138, 142, 148, 175 and 183 and were withdrawn in London early in 1956. They saw service in Penang only on one route -- because of their size -- from May 1956 until the closure of that system on 31 July 1961.

Unlike the batch of Q1s exported to Spain, the vehicles required no modification before entering service. However, in Penang it was necessary to use two conductors, one for each deck!

It is known that Geoff Lumb's book 'British Trolleybuses 1911-1972', published by Ian Allan, page 38, middle photograph, showed a Q1 1779 [the caption says 1778 but the number plate ends in 779] alongside C1 175 which was the only known picture of any of the exported vehicles to Malaya.

Subsequent extensive research has located a picture of C1 183, shortly after delivery, and is seen in the livery of Penang George Town Municipal Transport with a fleet number of 23.

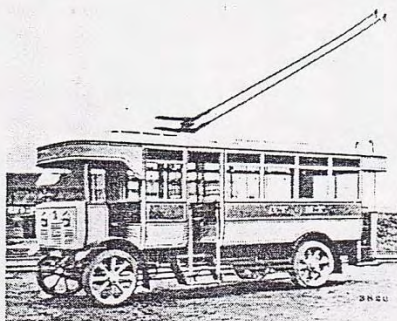
Interest now centres on the ultimate fate of these vehicles, through contact with Penang Government Officers for information, but it remains a very slow process.

Ric Francis is a retired 60-year old, a former tramway engineer that likes to research into tramway & trolleybus systems of Asia. Ric has made a lot of annual visits here, meeting fellow members of the Lions International Club, specially the Penang Lioness Club members who treat his wife and him extremely well.

"I cannot thank them enough as good hosts of Penang so in return my thanks is to write and research

Georgetown transport from an engineer's eyes, to show the people of Penang that someone cares enough to record their history that may be lost forever," he says.

Note: This website www.trolleybus.net has extensive pictures and information on trolleybuses. If anybody has further information then Ric Francis at Ric@iinet.net.au would really appreciate hearing from you. If a picture of 183 operating in London exists it would be nice to use it on this site.



Would anyone like to form a movement to find out "What happened to Penang's trolleybuses?" This requires scrounging around MPPP depot and archives. While you are at it, please look out for other interesting finds.

City council depot Brick Kiln Road may have road signs, antique lamp posts, even the Mayor's chair — perhaps we could get permission to photograph some of these things?

MPPP Archives : We don't know where they are at present, but they will soon be in the refurbished Town Hall. The best bet would be to look for them before the move, because things do get lost in the moving. We may find files pertaining to MPPP's old buildings, old maps, municipal and transport history, why road names were so named (no one seems to know) and perhaps we could we get permission to photocopy some of these?

Khoo Salma

Discounts! Discounts! Discounts!

Seven retail outlets in Penang have become our pioneer "discount" givers in our new effort to bring more value to your PHT membership card! Look out for PHT stickers at these outlets, which have kindly extended 10% discount or special rates if you present your card.



21A Codrington
Avenue
10350 Penang

THE
ART Gallery

368-4 Bellisa Row, Jalan
Burma, 10350 Penang

Jai Puri Courte



11 Lebuhr Leith
10200 Penang

BUKIT
MERAH
LAKETOWN
RESORT

Jalan Bukit Merah, 34400 Semanggol,
Perak Darul Ridzuan, Malaysia
Tel: 05-897 8888 • Fax: 05-897 8000



M-K1 Mezzanine
F1, Island Plaza
118 Jln Tanjung
Tokong, 10470
Penang

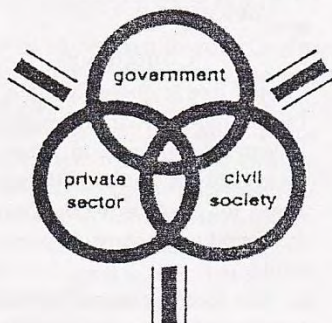


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Evaluation Workshop on Good Governance in Cultural Heritage Conservation



The Urban Government Initiative (TUGI) sponsored workshop held on June 10 was well-attended, and 37 participants filled out report cards for the evaluation of Good Governance in Heritage Conservation. These are the recommendations made as a result of the evaluation.

Recommendations for Good Governance in Cultural Heritage Conservation

1. Steps should be initiated to ensure that local elections should be restored as soon as possible. In the meantime, NGO representation to local government should be introduced and council meetings can be open to the public and the media.
2. Local government's scope of responsibility should include protecting historic and cultural communities (rural, indigenous, peri-urban or urban villages) according to international standards of conservation. This includes ensuring rights to housing and habitat and even intervening to save disintegrating communities.
3. Local government must have a vision of cultural vibrancy, providing support and infrastructure to encourage arts and culture to be protected, and ensuring the survival of traditional forms of expression and traditional trades.
4. Cultural significance should be given priority in the Local Plan, and a process of consultation should be initiated with different stakeholders in cultural heritage to ensure that the Local Plan reflects the needs and aspirations of diverse cultural groups.
5. To improve its performance, the local government should take proactive measures such as setting :
T= targets: need to set targets so that performance can be measured
A=assistance; need to provide technical and financial assistance
D=department in charge of heritage management to be set up.
I=information; improve information flow to public

TUGI is a United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) project to help local governments make cities in the Asia Pacific more liveable, particularly for the urban poor, women and children, by promoting good governance principles. It aims to improve the quality of urban life by developing indicators, tools and methodologies for good governance, identifying positive references that can be developed, and enhancing the capacities of local authorities.

The Asia Pacific Network for Urban Conservation (AWPNUC), a regional network for which Penang Heritage Trust is the secretariat, has been appointed the consultant to undertake the field-testing for the Good Governance Report Card on Cultural Heritage. This report card focuses on the performance of Local Government in cultural heritage conservation.

The full report is available from the Penang Heritage Trust.

Penang Heritage Trust Museum Shop

in the compound of the State Museum, Farquhar Street is managed by Mr. Peter Foo
OPEN 11-5PM, 6 DAYS A WEEK,
CLOSED ON FRIDAYS.

Heritage information, books, old photographs, T-shirts, antiques, related to Penang.

Postcards, *Journal Past & Present* and calendar published by the Penang Museum.
Handphone: 012 498 9617



Manik slippers

NEW Bead Workshop

Michael Cheah, a specialist in Nyonya & Baba heritage, is organising another beaded slippers course at the PHT's office, by popular demand.

Fees: RM140 for 4 sessions held weekly.

The courses will now start on:
Tuesday 22 August 2000

at 9.30 am - 12 noon or
Saturday 26 August 2000
at 3.00pm -5.30 pm

Part of the proceeds will go to support PHT. Materials are not included, but Michael will be selling them at RM25. Nyonya kueh and Chinese tea will be provided.

Those interested, please contact
Priscilla at Tel : 04-264 2631

Chinese History Teachers' Camp

A total of 44 teachers came from all over Malaysia, including Sarawak and Sabah, to attend this camp. Most of them were history teachers in private schools, and some even with history degrees. The camp also attracted a fair bit of media interest, including a Taiwan reporter, and a Nanyang Siang Pau chief feature writer and his assistant from KL. There was also local media representation from The Star and ChinaPress.

We collected back survey forms and group reports were also sent to us, the following are some of the conclusions:

Overall review

1. On the whole, the teachers expressed satisfaction with this camp, and felt they had learned a lot. "It was worth coming for!" was the declaration! One teacher from Sarawak told me that the four of them from the same school were reluctant to come at first, but when they arrived, they were already delighted with the unique hotel. The whole course overwhelmed them, so they were very happy that they did come and learned so much.
2. They all agreed that they had learnt more about Penang, and was glad to have a "relook" at historical figures, events and concepts in our textbooks.
3. They started to realize the important of heritage conservation, and some expressed interest in getting involved with heritage conservation work.
4. They realized that by getting the students to visit historical locations, students would be "brought closer" to history and would be more interested to learn about facts and figures.
5. They would like to see in future, similar camps organised in other places in Malaysia so they

can learn more about other historical places, and some of them even volunteered to help.

6. They were very impressed with the English language speaker, Khoo Salma, who had organized her works and research so well, and Sue Gross's research method in her study on Francis Light and Martina Rozells (presented by Goh Mai Loon in Chinese).

7. They thanked PHT for organizing this camp for them, and



expressed their great appreciation of the conservation work that PHT has done in Penang. PHT has been invited to send a speaker to Johor Bahru in September for a Heritage Conservation Seminar organized by one teacher who attended this camp. It is an activity organised by a Chinese-speaking group, but he wanted PHT there to share our experiences with them.

8. They liked the stay at Hotel 1926, and felt it was suitable for the theme of our camp. The architecture of the hotel impressed them, and they were also delighted with the food (except for the fact that refills were too slow).

9. They commented that overall, the speakers were good.

10. They recommended that maps be given for the tours.

11. They were delighted with Tan Yeow Wei's slide presentation, and hope that PHT will produce similar slides, or VCDs or postcards for sale.

12. They suggested that PHT organise similar workshops for primary schoolteachers and they in turn can teach the younger children

since it is better to learn at a young age.

Conclusion

I would like to quote from the Taiwan reporter Mr. Yu regarding Taiwan's experience. In recent years, Taiwan started with training camps for teachers similar to ours, and found great response and results.

1. The teachers started to promote conservation ideas to the students and heritage awareness spread rapidly.

2. The teachers liked to learn more about enhancing their teaching methods, as a result, some of them became seriously involved in heritage and history research and contributed a lot of findings.

3. The teachers became actively involved in conservation projects, and they eventually became a

forceful group in heritage conservation (since teachers have more free time compared to other professional groups).



"I hope that PHT will continue to view the training of teachers as a very important method to spread awareness of heritage conservation to a larger community. Thanks to a few of our volunteers, Ms Yeoh Oon Bee, a Penang teacher, Priscilla for coming to set up the table to sell our PHT things, and Ms. Han of Ipoh for hosting the event.

Last but not least, thank you Dr. Choong for opening the ceremony, Loh-Lim for giving the opening speech, and Salma for donating her book to the United Chinese Schools Committee Association Malaysia. Thank you to all of the speakers.

The teachers from all over Malaysia were especially delighted with the heritage tours. They promised to do similar field trips for their students in future." - Goh Mai Loon

The History Teachers' Camp was co-organized by PHT and the United Chinese Schools Committee Association of Malaysia from May 27 to 30.



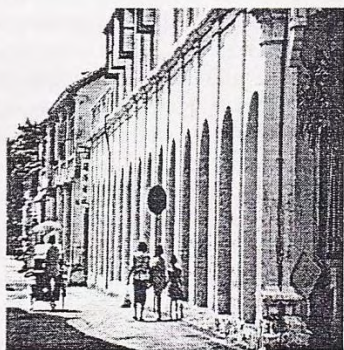
Art Exhibition

"OLD WORLD CHARM IN MODERN LIVING"

*Organised by Penang Heritage Trust
August 21 - 30 2000, Penang State Art Gallery,
Dewan Sri Pinang, Lebuh Light 10200 Penang*

Penang Heritage Trust has been actively promoting greater public awareness and interest in the cultural heritage of Penang. As more people are moving away from the inner city, there is a real possibility that part of our traditional way of life and cultural will be lost forever. We will therefore need to do more to motivate people to value our unique cultural heritage and help conserving it for our future generations. This is very much in line of having Penang included in the World Heritage City list by UNESCO.

Artistic expression incorporating the unique local cultural heritage is the "soul" of where art is vis-expression in-
tecture of build-
tures, paintings,
handiworks,
landscaping,
etc... is a city
and vibrant. It is
appealing point
the other hand a
any form of art
dry and dead.
has many good
has the potential
vibrant city of art.



a city. A city
ible in all its
cluding archi-
ings, sculp-
carvings,
decorations,
monuments
that is alive
also the most
to a visitor. On
city without
expression is
Penang which
artists certainly
of becoming a

"Old World Charm.... In Modern Living" art exhibition is organised by Penang Heritage Trust as part of its effort to move Penang to greater artistic height. It is a joint effort between PHT and the arts. The response from the artists has been overwhelming. So far more than 65 artists have submitted over 80 paintings and several sculptures. The artists are mainly from Penang, but also from other states and even one from Australia. Many of the paintings are of excellent standard. This exhibition will prove to be one of the most exciting one for PHT and for Penang art lovers.

The art exhibition will start from August 21 until 30 at the Penang State Art Gallery, 3rd Fl Dewan Sri Pinang. The opening of the art exhibition will be on Monday August 21 2000 at 5.00pm. We hope many PHT members and art lovers will be present. - *Dr Tan Chong Guan*

BE ON THE LOOKOUT FOR...

Members and friends with pre-war houses, please retain Indian rooftiles or save the tiles if you want to strip them off. Note the Prime Minister himself has mentioned the need for more terra cotta! Also, members who see roofs and floors being stripped, do notify PHT or you can call Gwynn at Tel: 227 0076

Praise for Bangsawan

I am writing to congratulate the Penang Heritage Trust and supporting organisations who staged the beautiful and fascinating *bangsawan* production at the Dewan Sri Pinang recently.

It was an unforgettable performance, full of drama, human interest, colour and humour. I used to listen to *bangsawan* on Radio Singapore a few years ago and immediately recognised the distinctive and traditional mode of delivery of the actors and actresses in that beautiful archaic bahasa. The professionalism of the production was truly amazing. It would seem invidious to pick out any particular actor for praise since all played their parts superbly. But one could not but be moved by the empathy between the attractive and tragic Eng Tai and her young lover, Sam Peck. Curtain interludes served to make the whole evening go with a momentum, particularly the gracious dancing of elderly (and one very young) *wanita Pulau Pinang*, clad in *nyonya wear*. (Not *nyonya ware*!). And let's not forget 'Mambo Number Five'. They should have seemed out of place, but somehow didn't. For though contemporary, they were an affirmation of youth and the fact that though we have a past that should be remembered, there's a present too!

Seldom could the Dewan Sri Pinang have housed a more attentive audience. From my seat at the side, I could see that old and young were completely enthralled from beginning to end. The intensity of expectation as the scarlet wedding palanquin bore the grieving Eng Tai solemnly down the aisle to her forced marriage was palpable. The old legend was working its magic and the audience were not disappointed. As Eng Tai stepped into Sam Peck's grave, with superb stagecraft two beautiful butterflies fluttered into the air, affirming that the two lovers would be together in eternity . if not on this earth.

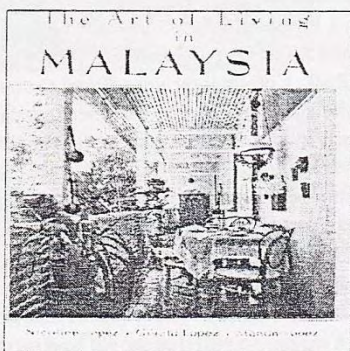
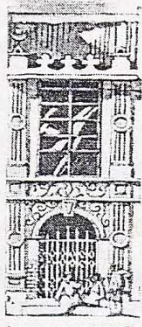
Having read, that very morning, in the *New Straits Times* a feature article about the former Queen of Bangsawan, Mak Minah, it was a revelation when the apparently frail 82 year-old was escorted onto the stage. She addressed the audience in ringing tones that belied her age and won their hearts. It was truly a night for old and young.

It was not until the end of the performance that I was able to get a programme. Only then did I realise the extent to which the cast and stage crew were multi-racial. Truly *bangsawan* is for all races in Malaysia. Syabas to all concerned.

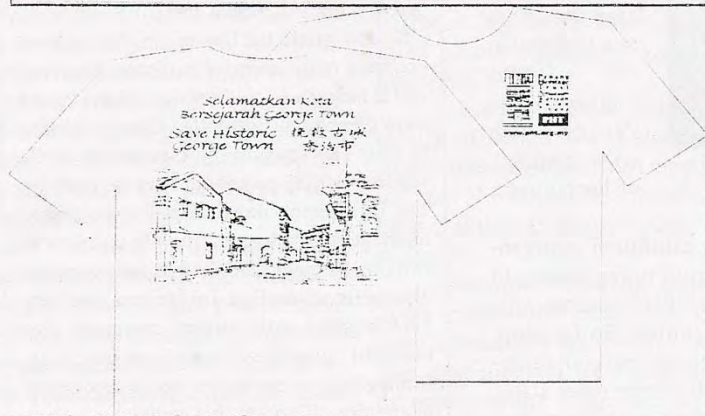
- *C.H. Gallop*

Fancy sending a picture-perfect card of Penang to a friend?

Local-born artist Khoo Cheang Jin has produced a set of postcards and bookmarks featuring Penang's street life and architecture. The set of eight postcards is on sale for RM12, while the set of eight bookmarks is selling for RM6. Also for sale is a unique picture for RM12. Streets featured include Prangin Lane, Armenian Street, Sek Chuan Lane, Queen Street, and Jalan Mesjid Kapitan Keling.



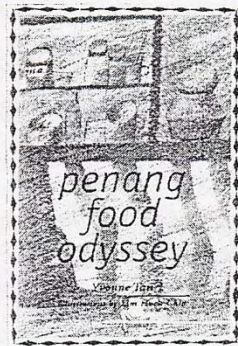
The Art of Living in Malaysia is a lush coffee table book by Nicoline Lopez, Gerald Lopez and Manon Lopez. Full of rich colour pictures, the book costs RM220 and covers an extensive range of interiors throughout Malaysia.



NEW PHT T-SHIRTS :

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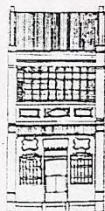
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Penang Heritage Trust
Persatuan Warisan Pulau Pinang



A wet, misty tour to savour

STAR, 31 May 2002

By CHEAH UI-HOON



FROM A
DISTANCE
... the misty
air creates
an eerie
impression of
tall, towering
trees on
Penang Hill.
- STARpic
by K. T. GOH

PENANG HILL on a rainy day is an experience to be treasured. The 830m hill mists over, making the visitor feels as if he or she is walking among the clouds (except for the reality of those wet and soddy feet) and the trails get imbued with a sense of other-worldliness in the genre of horror movies.

It was such an afternoon when some 40 Penang Heritage Trust "intrepid" (as one of them emphasised) members met at the summit for an architectural exploration of its historic buildings.

The trust's expedition was a novelty given that most people rave about the hill's unique flora and fauna rather than its architectural heritage.

Indeed, the last time an "official" heritage tour was conducted was in 1990, and in 1988, the heritage sites and buildings of Penang Hill were the focus of the Visit Penang 1988 programme.

The buildings have been on the hill since colonial days and are today so much a part of the hill's personality that they are often taken for granted.

Almost every Penangite would have gone up there for a "bungalow stay" at least once in his lifetime, especially during his school years.

(I have fond memories of the process of preparing for retreats at the Methodist Bungalow - lugging boxes and packets of groceries, bags and guitars up and down the hill - and of the freezing showers in the morning and mosquitoes at night.

Of course, I also remember the escapades with my companions, not to mention the fresh air, great home-cooked food and the glittering sea of lights when Penang is lit up.)

The trust's architectural expedition, led by council members Loh-Lim Lin Lee and Ahmad Chik, started with a visit to the dilapidated Crag Hotel, once regarded the tourist destination of Penang.

The hotel was the first of its kind on the hill, having been completed by 1890, and it is noted that this opening signalled a new usage of the hillstation - recreation and amusement - besides its original function as a convalescence centre.

In its heyday, there were "wines and liquors of the best brand, lawn-tennis, bill-

● TURN TO PAGE TWO

Sad state of hill's colonial buildings

● FROM PAGE ONE

liards, croquet and other amusements" according to an advertisement in the *Penang Gazette* in 1894, noted Universiti Malaya student Ng Siang Chien in her 1982 thesis on the hill.

It was a place of social significance especially for Europeans, but since post-colonial days, when the bungalow reverted to the government, Crag Hotel went rapidly downhill (pardon the pun), even after the filming of the movie "Indochine" there in the 1980s.

After that dismal introduction to government-owned buildings on the hill, trust members stopped at the food stalls for a teabreak and some drying off before continuing the walk.

The next building we visited was Bel Retiro, which is the oldest building on the hill since it was built for governors in 1830.

Penang Hill is actually the first hillstation built by the British in South-East Asia, and Bel Retiro exudes the right stately aura, albeit carrying a bit of the high-

lands flavour with its stoney structure.

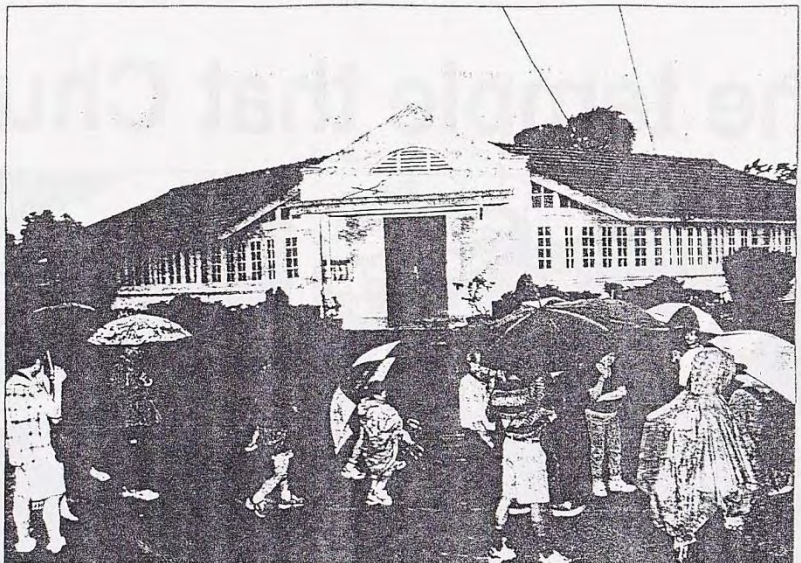
Trust members traded memories, some recalling when the class and racial mores of the colonial days dictated that only the "top-class" British could build bungalows on top of the hill and "locals" or even other "lower-class" Europeans built their houses on the lower slopes.

Sadly, Bel Retiro is seldom used nowadays compared to its heyday when banquets and tea parties were held officially.

That is also the sorry fate of the six under-utilised government resthouses such as Convalescent which was refurbished for use by state executive councillors and senior government officials.

The government-owned buildings include Fernhill, Southview (belonging to the Penang Municipal Council), Richmond, Edgecliff, Hillside, Woodside, and in terribly poor conditions are the Engineers' bungalow and the JKR bungalow.

However, some corporate buildings fared better,



HISTORIC BUILDINGS... Trust members braving the rain during their walk to view the architecture of Penang Hill's buildings - seen here is Convalescent, which is owned by the state government.

such as the MWE-owned Browhead, which has been restored and nicely decorated with plants on well-kept grounds.

It was finally with great pleasure that trust mem-

bers made their final stop at Ahmad's quaint cottage, the one distinguished by its rows of hydrangeas and weather vane.

The cottage, once named "Through," is one of the

best-kept houses on the hills and made even prettier with its foliage and flowers.

After Ahmad's hospitality, it was with great reluctance that the members,

who by now have dwindled down to only a handful, the end of the expedition eventually conclude an eventful afternoon with a train-ride down the hill.

The temple that Chung built

Star, Wednesday 5 July 2005



LOCKED OUT... a locksmith is finally called in to pick the lock at the temple gate after steel cutters fail to do the job for Owen (right).

By CHEAH UH-HOON

DO locked gates mean that a visitor is unwelcome? Most people would interpret it as being so, but since there are no real occupants in this building except "ancestral spirits" as believed, Penang Heritage Trust (PHT) members persisted to make their way into the dilapidated Chung Keng Kwee temple during a visit to the state's heritage buildings recently.

The PHT's visit to this temple, languishing in Church Street, did not start out smoothly.

The temple's caretaker had left the main gate firmly locked (with a chain and a big padlock) that particular Sunday afternoon.

Trustee Owen Chung tried using all his keys, but to no avail. Even pliers and steel cutters were no help.

One of the visitors even climbed over the elaborate wrought iron gate to open the temple's doors from inside, but that attempt did not help at all.

"I think my ancestors are so ashamed of the state of the temple that they are trying to stop you from visiting," said Owen, half ominously, half in jest.

He puzzled over how his care-

ful arrangements with the caretaker had fallen through, but finally the lock was picked - an hour later - with the help of a locksmith.

The PHT members, who were duly rewarded for their patience, eagerly trooped into the lallang-covered temple complex for a rare visit since the temple is not normally opened to the public.

"The family comes in once a year during Qing Ming," explained Owen, 64, the fourth generation of Chungs in Penang descended from its founder, Chung Keng Kwee.

Keng Kwee had come to Malaya in his 20s and found wealth in opium, tobacco and tin.

At the height of his tenure, Keng Kwee, Owen's great-grandfather, was a *Kapitan Cina* (leader of the Chinese community) who headed the Hai San secret society in Penang.

As a Hakka leader, Keng Kwee had successfully led the society against the Cantonese-dominated Ghee Hin in the Larut War over tin-mining rights in Perak.

He was awarded "Mandarin of the Second Rank" by the Manchu government in China because of



DILAPIDATED STATE... a sense of neglect and abandon mark the main hall of the Chung Keng Kwee ancestral temple. - STARpix by LAWRENCE SEOW

● TURN TO PAGE FOUR



FASCINATING HISTORY ... Owen giving a commentary on the history of the temple to PHT members.



PATIENT CROWD ... a group of PHT members waiting outside the gate of the temple for it to be opened.

Historic temple in a state of neglect

● FROM PAGE ONE

his charitable efforts raising funds for flood relief and education for poor students.

Keng Kwee died in 1901 and was buried at the Mount Erskine cemetery.

Tai ping is named after one of Keng Kwee's sons, Thye Pin, who later inherited Keng Kwee's tin-mining business and also political standing to become the country's last Kapitain Cina.

The ancestral temple with its office annex, the Hui Kee Chan office, was built by Keng Kwee in the late 19th century.

It has tremendous historical significance in that it was the scene of many Hui San-Ghee Hin political intrigues as the site used to be the rival Ghee Hin society's headquarters.

It also served as a monument to the Taiping-Penang link.

However, oral habits are so strong that Church Street is still called *Ghee Hin Kay* by locals despite the fact that it was later the Hui San stronghold.

The main temple hall was a sorry site with broken fixtures and decorations, weathered mother-of-pearl furniture stripped of its glorious black sheen, covered with cobwebs and bats hanging overhead.

Although it was a bright afternoon, it was not difficult to imagine what the temple would be like at dusk, especially when people claim it is haunted.

The place also had such a sad neglected feel especially when much of its original antiques and fixtures are still in place but in a very dilapidated condition.

At the altar, which had a number of ancestral tablets, were two pictures of Chung ancestors — one of them Thye Pin in Western garb — flanking the life-sized bronze statue of Keng Kwee in his Manchukuo-style outfit.

As Owen related stories about his family, PHT members walked around the typically Cantonese building, characterised by its straight roof ridges. Hokkien-style architecture is distinguished by its curved roofs.

Standing in the courtyard inside the main temple, visitors marvelled at the intricate ceremonial



PRIVATE PROPERTY ... the temple proved to be a fascinating place for the public does not normally get to visit it as it is a private building.

dance and the fine workmanship of the blue slate tiles (although they looked like light green bricks) covering the top portion of the interior walls.

Shoes scraped across the white Italian marble floor skirted by ubiquitous granite slabs as members lamented about the beautiful but broken figurines (from myths and legends) that decorate the top of the two side doors.

Because the Cantonese were good at sculpture, the carvings of figures, especially, were in three dimension which was in contrast to Hokkien decorative works favouring cut and paste ceramic shard works.

Grisly tales about the place relate to a well at the back of the temple.

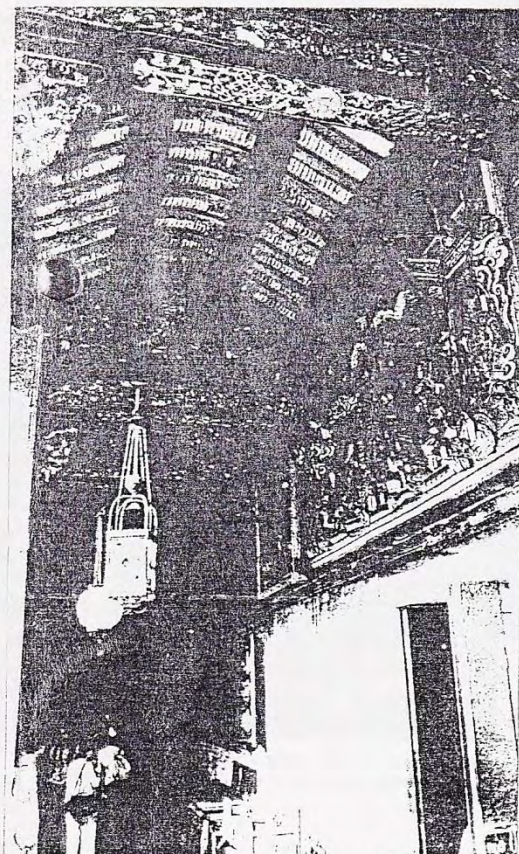
It was said that during the Ghee Hin-Hui San wars, any Ghee Hin,

unfortunate enough to fall into Hui San hands, would be decapitated and thrown into the well.

From this well, a tunnel led to the sea but it had been sealed for years.

Owen expressed his wish to have the family temple restored and open for public visits, but this had would cost millions of ringgit given the dilapidated condition of the building.

Today, besides two street names after him — Keng Kwee Street and Ah Kwee Street — there is not much to remind the people of this Hakka businessman and secret society leader unless one think of the Hokkien-dominated socio-cultural scenario in Penang that he had a hand in creating when he routed the Cantonese-speaking Ghee Hin from the island.



ARCHITECTURAL MARVEL ... the elaborate gilded work adorning the ceiling inside the main hall of the temple.

State to set up forum

By TUNKU SHAHARIAH

PENANG: Penang will set up a consultative forum next month to gather the people's views and aspirations to help in policy making and promote governmental transparency.

State Local Government Committee chairman Dr Teng Hock Nan said the Penang Local Government Consultative Forum would comprise senior government officials, non-governmental organisations and prominent Penangites.

He said the forum was to enable an exchange of views between the local government and the people on local government and urban services issues.

"Whether we like it or not, the government realises that

local authorities cannot act in isolation and require inputs from a broad spectrum of communities.

"The forum will allow citizens groups to voice concerns in their constituents and seek solutions through consultation with local councils and the state government," he told a press conference yesterday.

The forum was also aimed at promoting accountability in local governance and reducing unequal development along class, ethnic and geographical lines.

Dr Teng said the SocioEconomic and Environmental Research Institute, Penang (Seri) would act as the secretariat for the forum which would hold its inaugural meeting on July 20.

He said the forum would conduct a survey in August on 6,000 respondents from a cross-section of the community from various geographical locations, ethnic background, gender, social strata and economic activities.

Among the forum's 53 members were the Consumers Association of Penang, Penang Ratepayers Association, the three chambers of commerce and retired urban planner Dr Goh Ban Lee.

Dr Teng said media organisations such as the Penang Press Club and Penang Media Club would be made members too.

Groups and individuals who wish to contribute ideas can call Seri executive secretary Lim Poh Im (☎ 04-2283306).

DATE 4th JUL 2000 ON MONDAY

THE STAR MONDAY May 29 2000

NATION

Heritage awareness plan

By CHEAH UI-HOON

PENANG: The Heritage of Malaysia Trust is hopeful that the Government will incorporate heritage awareness into the curriculum for secondary school from next year.

Council member Lim Huck Chin (pic) said the Trust had launched a pilot project on heritage awareness in four schools in Kuala Lumpur and was planning to extend it to

Penang and Malacca by end of the year.

"Once we run through the pilot project for a year or so, we hope to hand it over to the Education Ministry for incorporation into the curriculum," he said.

Lim said the project involved organising workshops for teachers who would then introduce the topic in various subjects such as History, Geography and Art.

"We also provide them

with a kit and the basic idea is to train the teachers who will then teach the students."

Lim said the RM200,000 project was launched in April, with funding from the British Council and the Canadian High Commission.

Penang Heritage Trust council member Loh-Lim Lin Lee said the Trust was presently identifying some schools where the project could be launched by the

second half of this year.

"We hope that the project will inculcate heritage appreciation among the students while they are young," she said, adding that the Trust presently organised a number of programmes for schools.

She was speaking to reporters after the launch of a two-day camp for Chinese school history teachers organised by the Penang Heritage Trust.



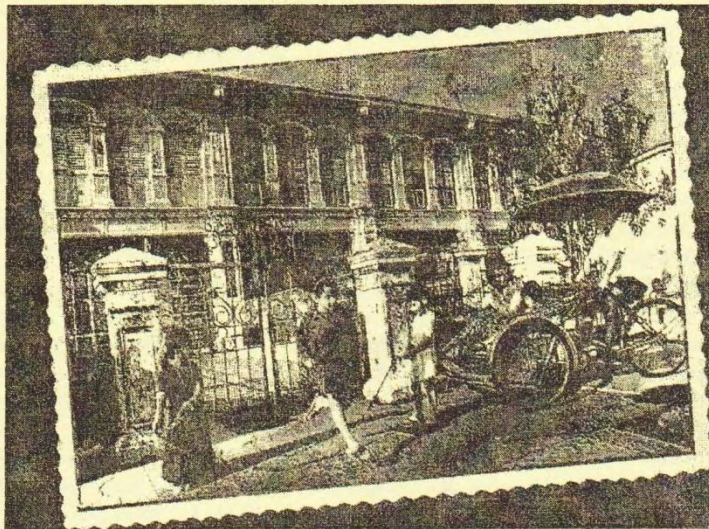
**WOMEN AND LIFESTYLES
IN GEORGE TOWN AND THE
VILLAGES BEYOND**

The seminar and public forum held at the newly restored Hotel 1926 in George Town opened to an enthusiastic audience of 150, representing governmental and non-governmental organisations, youth clubs and societies, seniors from premier schools in Penang and residents of George Town.

Organised by the Women and Human Resource Studies Unit of Universiti Sains Malaysia (KANITA) Women's Development Committee of the Women's Affairs Department (HAWA) Penang and the Penang Heritage Trust, the seminar and forum aimed to highlight the important role of women and the family to sustain Malaysian indigenous lifestyles that were rapidly being threatened with rapid urbanisation and high rise living. Professor Wazir Jahan, Chairperson of the Seminar, and wearing several hats as Convenor of the Women and Human Resource Studies Unit, Chairperson of the Research and Resource Committee of HAWA and Council Member of the Penang Heritage Trust said in her opening speech that "Memories was about the celebration of cultural diversity in an increasingly global and homogenous world. It was also a reminder of the invisible good deeds and contributions of women and elders in conserving the wealth of social knowledge and traditional wisdom, including language, rituals and material culture. It was also about giving youth a sense of direction in the constant innovation of lifestyles in the city. Children talked more to their computers than their

parents because they were left with few other alternatives for dialogue. Finally, it was about a concern for providing the young with pathways to a confident future. Without knowing and respecting their personal history, they would lose those core values which can help to shape their sense of belonging to Malaysia."

Dr. Choong Sim Poey, President of



the Penang Heritage Trust presented his "heritage speech" with the message that Memories was about developing an "understanding of why we as Malaysians have, can and will live together as one people, one nation, one family while we respect the diversity of our origins and social experiences. He added, "women are a major force in promoting rich cultural experiences but their contributions are seldom acknowledged. They give credit to their men who take the limelight for the work they do". Dato' Kee Phaik Cheen launched the magazine and special feature Memories of Penang 2000 applauding the editor, Prof. Wazir for portraying the contributions of women and the wealth of family lifestyles in Penang. She acknowledged the team spirit of the group which has successfully steered HAWA Penang, to boast of having the most comprehensive set of publications on women through the Information Bank and ERA 21 Series. "Women will never isolate themselves from the family despite their multiple tasks and responsibilities," she added

"and it is for this reason that special care must be accorded to their needs. The young generation they nurture will be our future hope".

The seminar was launched with Dato' Kee giving three resounding bang on an antique Malay gong. It was followed by a haunting serunai silat demonstration by Saturo

Tsunashima, a Masters' student studying social anthropology under the supervision of Associate Professor Mohd Razha Rashid of Universiti Sains Malaysia. The accompanying performance by Pung Aik Khai on the Yang Qin was equally mesmerising. A member of the Penang Chinese Classical Orchestra, his mastery of this ancient Chinese instrument spellbounded the audience, young

and old. The final performance by the Kelab Belia Warisan Pulau Pinang, comprising eight secondary school children from George Town schools, was both colourful and delightful. The only youth heritage club in Malaysia, under the tutelage of Cikgu Mohd. Bahroodin bin Ahmad a well known cultural and adat specialist, who has been an inspirational force behind the revival of the bangsawan (Malay Opera) in Penang, the group captured the hearts of the audience with their makan sireh dance, traditionally performed at engagement and wedding ceremonies. What was equally touching was to see girls from different ethnic communities representing premier schools in George Town; Penang Chinese Girls' High School, St. George's and Convent Light Street, rushing to the girls after the dance to ask them to demonstrate the steps and to enquire on how to set up social heritage clubs. The Kelab Warisan Belia initiative and nurtured by Khoo Salma Nasution, Honorary

Secretary of the Penang Heritage Trust is based on an integrated neighbourhood concept, encompassing youth from the Acheen Street complex but it admits members from all George Town schools, including those who have graduated from school and have just started to work. Its champion leader, Roslin Hanifah stated that they were eager to receive membership from other communities and to extend their repertoire of activities to include Chinese and Indian cultural performances.

Unlike many other public seminars and forums when the audience begins to thin out towards the afternoon, the hall was fully seated throughout the proceedings until six in the evening. The first session, on Lifestyles, Families and Socialisation opened with Dato' Saleena Yahaya-Isa, woman activist and counsellor, vividly describing her Chinese Muslim experience. She explained why she chose her Muslim name as 'Saleena' – it allowed her to keep the LEE in the middle, she exclaimed proudly, while it pleased her Muslim friends. Professor Ghouse Nasaruddin went down memory lane at Kampung Makam, describing the fantastic sense of unity and comradeship which the neighbourhood brought to its residents. He lamented, "now, if the pollution does not kill you, your hospital bills will," and proceeded to sooth the audience with a smooth demonstration of the rebab and serunai. Yusof Azmi Merican gave an introductory account of Malay endowment land or wakaf in Penang, appealing for more participatory decision-making in its utilisation and development. The grand finale for the morning was the legendary Mak Minah, describing her childhood and entry into bangsawan theatre to an enraptured audience. She delivered four songs on popular request, in Malay, English, Japanese and Hindustani, to wolf whistles and cheers from seniors of St. Xavier's and Penang Free. This was followed by flowers, hugs and kisses from students of the Penang Chinese Girls' High School, and other young men and women, including a large yellow chrysanthemum from a beaming Gerald Green, President of the Penang Eurasian Association, who

was clearly as smitten as the rest of the crowd. A happy Mak Minah said at the end of her performance, "I feel 28 and not 82!".

The afternoon session ushered in Palanivelo s/o Palsami on the tabla and Chandra Mohan on the sitar, playing to a public audience for the first time at a seminar. As the hypnotic beat of the sitar and tabla embraced the chat of powerful gods for an hour, the audience came forward closer to observe flying fingers respond to the challenge of a mystical conversation. What was touching afterwards was to see the grandmasters explaining patiently to Malay and Chinese young admirers on fundamentals of beat and tempo and the spiritual links between classical Indian music and Hinduism.

The session on Houses, Entertainment, Rituals and Festivals chaired by Ahmad Chik, Vice-President of Penang Heritage Trust, brought in numerous experts on different subjects; Associate Professor Zainal Abdul Latif on the Malay silat, as an institution of self-defence which deters violence; Puan Badru Nissa on Jawi Pekan culture; Associate Professor Mohd. Razha Rashid on Malay kampung (rural) life and comparisons between the mamak-mami (Indian Muslim) townfolk and Kedah rural Malays; Mary Vincent Savari and the games children used to play; Mr. David Yeo on the diversity of Chinese lifestyles through the symbolism of doorways; Jenny Ling Leh Ling on traditional Penang foods and firewood cooking and Cikgu Bahroodin on the tempat sireh (piper vine and betel-nut condiment) and the history of boria (group singing unique to Penang). The final session on Visions of the People of Penang brought forth many comments and proposals from the floor. Many said the seminar was an eye opener, a pasembur (a savory salad, only found in Penang) treat into the eclectic vibrant indigenous communities of Penang they thought had fast disappeared. The champion leader of St. Xavier's, Prasanth Marlin said that he did not realise that sireh was associated with women, with Malay and Southeast Asian hospitality and with courtship and marriage. "My life on the Internet

seems boring," he admitted. Penang Free gave a reflexive comment. Abdul Raqib Karim, selected to speak for the school said this of the seminar, "We are here today because we realise we have all something to share – we have identity. Sure, culture is evolving and our memories will always be different and we may find it hard to appreciate what we have not missed but heritage is a memory in something we can say is ours". A student leader from St. Georges' said in a somewhat frustrated note that there will be no more Malay kampungs when they are adults; in a constantly changing environment, how can adults expect them to appreciate what they have destroyed? Ahmad Chik said, "We acknowledge our mistakes and our generation owes yours an apology". On this somber mood, seniors of the Chinese Girls High School said that the young had to look for new meanings to their lives but if elders could integrate the youth better in their lives and emulate the theme of this seminar, at the same time accommodate to changing lifestyles and mindsets, the youth of Penang and Malaysia would be able to carve out a more enriching experience from their social heritage.

Globalisation was inevitable but it has its downside in that the new homogenous culture which was being created was mostly based on Western food chains, megamalls and other consumer oriented commercial and service industries. If a trip down memory lane for Malaysians in future is a virtual chatroom of an elder posing as a teenager, a Coffee Bean encounter with a tea addict or a nugget from McD's which turned out not to be gold, these would be sad memories indeed. At least with the sireh-pinang, Yang Qin, gula tarek and teh tarek, the enjoyment would be linked to our own unique history, a history of common people, sharing common social experiences linked to a shared Asian culture, and one which integrates the social with the spiritual. Call it what we will, it is our way, "to tell our tales which to us was so dear, long long ago, long long ago