



PHT newsletter

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PHT

EDITORIAL

We are pleased to bring out our latest newsletter in the form of a bumper issue for March-June 2001. As you can see in these pages, PHT has been busy organising not only site visits, talks, tours and educational workshops and extending our hospitality to visiting groups, but also tirelessly fielding one major event after another.

The first big event was the Women in Urban Governance event on May 12 opened by the DPM's wife Datin Seri Endon Mahmood, followed closely by the Mass Circumcision Ceremony (part of the Heritage Community Revitalization project) on 26 May officiated by the DCM's wife Datin Jamilah Mohd. Zain, and finally the Penang Heritage Trust Fund-Raising Dinner, Dance & Silent Auction on 30 June attended by the Penang CM Tan Sri Dr. Koh Tsu Koon.

The PHT staff didn't have much chance to rest before the launching of the Penang Story project on 13 July followed by the Oral History workshop on 18-19 August, the Pengkisahan Melayu Pulau Pinang on August 25, officiated by the Yang Dipertua Negeri Pulau Pinang, then the upcoming Annual General Meeting on September 2 and the Indian community colloquium on September 22!

PHT's main project for the next eight months will be 'The Penang Story project', featuring four community history colloquia culminating in a major international conference in April 2001. These events will involve Penang's diverse cultural and community groups in collecting, sharing and telling their part of the 'Penang Story'.

PHT's proposal received support from the prestigious Japan Foundation, a funding body set up by the Japanese Government to promote international cultural exchange. Our main co-organiser STAR Publications has helped to get further funding from

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EXCLUSIVE GUIDED HERITAGE SITE VISITS



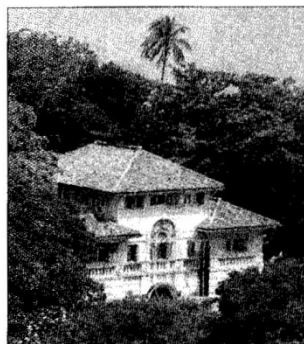
**Site Visit #18
SUNDAY, 2 September 2001, 3.00 P.M.
The Mansion
No. 32 Jalan Sultan Ahmad Shah
& the PHT's A.G.M. 2001**

First order of business, our AGM 2001 will start at 3.00 pm sharp (at the above venue). This is a voting year, so all members should show up to exercise your right!

Members should find our August site visit to this recently restored and lovely mansion a rare treat. Immediately following the AGM, council member Loh-Lim Lin Lee will brief us on a short history of the mansion. Refreshments will be served.

Built for a quarter of a million Straits Dollars in 1926, this compact palace was the fancy of Leong Yin Kean, a young man who fell in love with Italy and things Italian. He incorporated panels and floors of Neapolitan mosaic, which have survived intact to this very day. After years of neglect, the mansion was recently restored to its former glory and currently houses the corporate headquarters of the famed Escoy Smelting Corporation and a posh restaurant where jazz fans can go and unwind on selected nights of the week. Definitely the scene where the in-crowd hang out!

An interesting anecdote among the Straits Chinese relates that the immigrant Chinese can keep their family wealth no longer than three generations. The first generation would be the generation to change the rags into riches; the second would turn the riches into fortunes for the third generation to fritter away... ■



◀ This elegant mansion by the sea was designed by architect Charles Miller of the firm of Stark & McNeill. It is located across the road from the Protestant Cemetery.

SITE VISIT REPORTS

Nattukkottai Chettiar Temple & Hilltop Temple Waterfall Road (February 25, Site visit # 12)

Report by Dilys Yap

An unusually large group of PHT members and friends gathered on a very hot afternoon at the Nattukkottai Chettiar Temple in Jalan Waterfall. We were greeted by Teresa, who introduced Dr. Narayanan and Mr. Ramanathan to the group.



Photo: Mike Berman

The Chettians were originally bankers and financiers, that came from southern India in 1810. Having spent time in Malacca, they travelled to Penang in 1818. They purchased land in Jalan Waterfall in 1854 and built a temple, which was consecrated in 1857. The temple is built on the pattern of the popular board game of Ludo or Chokkatan. The wood is teak, from Burma. They brought artisans or Karaikudi, from Tamil Nadu to create the tiles that adorn the roof and tops of the walls. During Thaipusam, the silver chariot which is kept in Penang Street, is brought to the temple for the three day celebration. All the Chettiar families move into the temple to help with the celebrations of Thaipusam. The Chettiar community in Penang has around 500 members.

PHT members listen in rapt attention while Dr. Narayanan related the history of the Nattukkottai Temple in vivid detail.

Sixty of them form the four kongsi's that look after this temple. Ten percent of their salaries go towards the cost of maintenance.

Dr. Narayanan's talk was both interesting and informative. PHT members asked many, many questions and these were all patiently fielded by either Dr. Narayanan or Mr. Ramanathan. At the end of the talk, chilled packet drinks were produced from an ice-cream freezer and distributed to everyone, a welcome respite from the heat.

We were then taken on a tour of the building and were shown the large rice store, cooking utensils and the huge cauldrons for cooking the meals during Thaipusam. The main shrine contained the icon of Lord Subramanian in the form of Thandayuthapani, the destitute. There were many questions asked by an inquiring group and they were all answered by Dr. Narayanan and Mr. Ramanathan.

We then walked to the Bala Thandayuthapani Temple -- also known as the Hilltop Temple. Dr. Ramanathan guided us to the top of the 270 odd steps. He told us that we were to circle the temple in a clockwise direction before we entered the main hall. The temple is dedicated to Lord Murugan retreating to the hills and was built in the 1820's. Again many questions were answered during a short rest period in the temple and on the steps leading down, before we descended to the hall at the bottom of the hill for a delicious serving of coffee, curry puffs and an assortment of cakes.

The group were invited across to the Hindu Mahajana Sangam. It was originally a mess hall for the 200 waterfront



Photo: Mike Berman

After the steep climb to the top of the Waterfall Temple, everyone was glad to get out of the hot sun and gather around Dr. Ramanathan while he related the history of the Temple and its daily rituals.

◀ Looking in awe at gigantic cauldrons used for cooking the meals during Thaipusam.

workers in 1906. Their office is in Church Street and was registered in 1935. Now the buildings are used to house the chariot and the 75-year-old kavadi that is used during the mini Thaipusam -- this year was celebrated from 6-8 May. The members run cultural and language classes and are hoping to start a library.

The monthly meeting was well organised and highly informative. ■

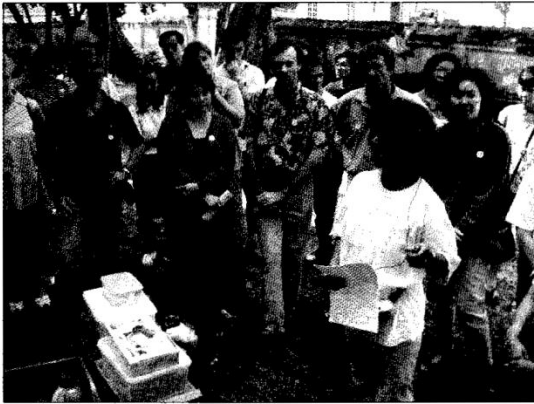


Photo: Gregg Curd

Francis Light Cemetery and the E&O Hotel (March 25, Site visit #13)

Raja Abdul Razak writes...

An appreciation of heritage structures in Penang is a paradoxical experience, invoking both the ugly and the beautiful. Ugly, because a study of Penang history inevitably raises the bitter spectre of the colonials, whose government in Britain paid scant regard to the rights or welfare of the millions under their sway. Beautiful, because the British colonists built or inspired some of the most interesting structures still standing in George Town.



Pretty as a postcard -- the poolside and tables are perfect for reminiscing of days gone by. ▶

◀ A glimpse into Penang's past -- Armed with her faithful portable microphone, Teresa briefs visitors on the history of the Francis Light Cemetery.

Some seventy visitors braved a sweltering afternoon on March 25 during a site visit to the Francis Light Protestant Cemetery. As usual, Priscilla and her 3 lovely daughters were on hand to greet and register everyone. Her husband Philip helped with the refreshments.

PHT Council Member Teresa Capol and volunteer Joann Khaw -- both professional tour guides -- gracefully walked us through the many grave-stones, stopping every now and then to explain the history behind some of

the more famous deceased. Reporters and members alike were seen busy scribbling notes and clicking away with their cameras. Tea and cakes were served *in situ*, much to the relief of the visitors, who ate and talked under the cool shade of the frangipani trees.

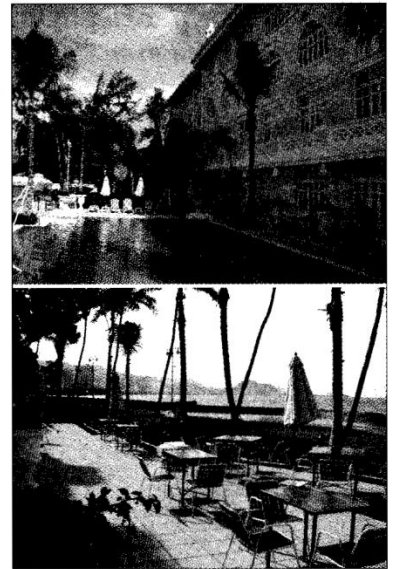
For something old, something new. Re-energised and revived by the snacks, the visitors then made their way, on foot, to the newly refurbished, reopened and definitely deluxe E&O Hotel, a stone's throw away from the cemetery.



◀ The grand old lady was never this grand -- guests breath in the cool glamour of the new lobby.

Prepare to be blown away by the splendid promenade. ▶

All photos on this page courtesy of Michael J. Berman



The new owners retained some of the building's original architecture and re-designed the rest in a style one could only describe as *nouveau heritage*. The cool interior of the grand-looking, skylight-lit lobby was a balm for scorched and clammy skins and the visitors wasted no time in exploring the hotel's reception area, antique lift, restaurants, rooms, and poolside.

The hotel boasts an impressive palm-tree dotted promenade, with the original cannon still in place. The sun setting over the horizon, accompanied by the gentle swaying of the palm trees has a magical effect on the observer, transporting one to the exotic stories of Eileen Chang and Somerset Maugham, or Chin Kee Onn's *Twilight of the Nyonyas*.

A tad too expensive for *char koay teow*, *mee rebus* and *laksa*-loving Penangites, the hotel is without a doubt the final statement for the jetsetting chic set clamouring for some culture in a vacation. ■



Sikh Gurdwara, Brick Kiln Road

(April 29, Site visit #14)

Joann Khaw's contribution...



Photo: Tong C.K. Ho

An enthusiastic group of PHT members & friends gathered at the little library inside the Sikh Gurdwara, where we were all given a warm welcome by the President and the committee members of the Gurdwara. The word Gurdwara means "the door leading to the Guru".

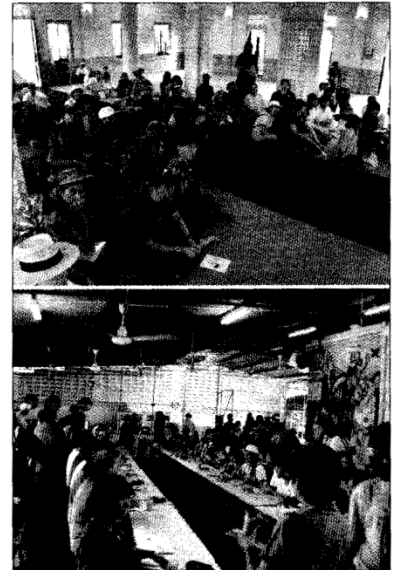
Mr. Kuldeep Singh, President of the Sikh Gurdwara, gave us the historical background of the temple. In March 1901, The British government granted 20,050sq.ft of land along Brick Kiln Road for the construction of the

from all the Sikhs in the Guides and Police Forces, who each contributed one month's salary. In June 1901, Col. Walker, the Commander of the Malay State Guides laid down the foundation stone. On 13 April 1903, the Gurdwara was officially opened by the Resident Councillor. In commemoration of the Diamond Jubilee celebration of Queen Victoria, the temple was renamed *The Diamond Jubilee Gurdwara Sahib*. It is also known as *Malaya Tapuan Da Gurdwara* meaning the Sikh Gurdwara of the Malayan Territories.

All heads demurely covered before being allowed to enter the upper chamber where the holy books are kept (left), and for the finale -- a lavish vegetarian spread which everyone enjoyed (bottom left). ▶

◀ Committee members of the Gurdwara (and Dr. Choong Sim Poey) welcoming the PHT group at the Library.

Gurdwara. Although the plans were drawn up by the government engineer, the building funds came



Photos: Mike Berman

Mr. Kuldeep's speech was followed by a few words from PHT President Dr. Choong Sim Poey. There was a Q&A session afterwards, which commanded great interest from those present, and a lively discussion followed. Then we were invited to view the exhibits in the library, after which Mr. Kuldeep showed us around the compound. Before we could go upstairs where the holy books were housed, everyone had to cover their heads as a sign of respect.

The visit ended with a lavish spread of vegetarian "tea" in the dining hall. ■

Penang Buddhist Association, Anson Road

(May 27, Site visit #15)

Raja Abdul Razak reports...

The Penang Buddhist Association was another house of prayer PHT members spent a lazy, sunny afternoon touring. The short tour gave us a breathtaking view of some of the most magnificent and opulent architecture found in George Town. Built in 1931, the Association comprises an extensive library, free clinic, study area, prayer and meditation hall, cafeteria and hostel.

The visit started with a wonderful 'lecture' on the origins of the Association by Honorary Secretary Chan Seong Lok, who then walked us through sev-

eral areas of the building, explaining their respective histories as we went along. We were taken upstairs to view three miniature sculptures of Kwan Yin rescued from an ancient shipwreck and donated to the Association. Mr Chan then showed us the clinic where volunteer doctors healed the sick for free and prescribed 'natural' medicines if necessary, a study area for students and a hostel. The excursion

Cast-iron spiral staircase and small paned windows, part of PBA's eclectic architecture. ▶



Photos: Mike Berman



▲ Admiring the spacious and high-ceilinged main prayer hall.

ended on a sweet note as we were treated to vegetarian food and drinks. It was a delicious way to round off a very interesting and informative visit. ■

Balik Pulau Convent, Chee Ancestral Home & Official Residence of the D.O. (June 24, Site visit #16)

By Josephine Choo

The PHT site visit to Balik Pulau took place on 24 June 2001. Approximately 70 members -- young and old, many wisely armed with sun-glasses and hats -- gathered at the Roman Catholic church compound at 3.30 pm. Under a shady tree, the author gave a brief history of the area, followed by a tour of the Convent of the Holy Infant Jesus. Built as a school in 1930 at the behest of French priests, the Convent has stopped teaching activities, and instead acts as a home for retired nuns as well as providing rooms for meetings, reunions and camps.

The parish priest opened the church doors for the members to view the interior. The church, initially a dependency of the Pulau Tikus parish, was built in 1854. It began with an attap hut; the pioneer French priests taught the boys and girls of the village as well as were tirelessly involved in the church construction. The church when completed was deemed "one of the most beautiful in the diocese of Malacca".

Right in the heart of the village is No. 100, Main Road, the ancestral home of the Khoos and Chees. The house is reputed



The D.O.'s official residence (top left), former District Office/Courthouse (left), and Murad's Antique Centre (bottom left). ▶

◀ Time has not diminished the breathtaking beauty of the intricately engraved and gold leaf-inlaid wood panellings in the Chee Ancestral home.

to be over a hundred years of age and boasts of many chambers, airwell, a back open courtyard with a self-contained chamber. The intricate gold-leaf wooden panellings, an archway and altar still remain as well as numerous old photographs and documents. The builder of the house, Chee, apparently had affiliations with the Sun Yat Sen regime.

Only a passing glimpse of the village centre, where the fountain built by the rich Hakka plantation owner, Koh Seang Tatt (who also built Edinburgh House) is firmly located, before the group journeyed to the D.O.'s residence at Titi Teras, 2 kms away. The residence which is over 100 years old and located on a hillock, has recently been beautifully renovated. We were warmly welcomed by the D.O. and his family, who prepared delicious *bee-hoon* and tea for us. The group was then directed to the building which was



Photos: Andre Ng

the original district office. This is located about two kilometres away from the main road at Air Puteh. It is also renovated and currently belongs to the owners of a large housing project that is already underway. The last stop made by the group was at the Murad's Antique Centre in Sungai Rusa, close to Sungai Pinang. Spread over a few Malay kampung houses, the complex houses antiques, old documents and photographs and keris.

With dusk fast approaching, time soon ran out and everybody swiftly dispersed to make their own way back to George Town before darkness descends. ■



◀ The Holy Name of Jesus Catholic Parish built in 1854.

▼ Group photo of some PHT members at the Roman Catholic church (inset). Stragglers were left out of the photo!



Photos: Andre Ng

LETTERS/EMAILS

Letters published under this section are open to direct correspondence by anyone who is interested in the subject matter, or who feel that she/he is qualified to offer help/advise in response to those who have written in to us.

Late again?

For those who don't get the chance to come over to 26A Stewart Lane ...



Dear readers (or by now frustrated readers),

Living above PHT's office, as I do, I would like to put you in the picture of why yet again the newsletter it is a little late.

When I first moved into 26A there was just Priscilla and Puss. Now when I come home I can hardly squeeze through to the staircase -- new staff and volunteers all busy producing something for some event somewhere in Penang. There will be exhibitions in Mandarin, Malay, English (we are working on Tamil), photos to mount, text to check, brochures to collate. Plus all the meetings now involving various communities PHT has inspired. The work they are producing is phenomenal as is their dedication. The continued efforts of the staff and volunteers, often until late at night and sometimes overnight too, must not be forgotten.

June is over, and all events were well received and well attended, with madness behind them the office can catch up, until the next efforts begin. A little late it may be but only because PHT is really making an impact on the shaping of George Town's heritage and the future of the communities.

Mrs. Peel, office cat
Email: gwynn@tm.net.my
Dated: 1 July 2001

In reply to Don't Touch!

In the previous issue of PHT newsletter (issue no. 71), we carried an article by Fiona Bower entitled "Conservation -- it's in your hands". Here's someone who begs to differ...

I was interested to read Fiona's disturbance in seeing the "primate instinct" of touching the newly restored paintings of the Khoo Kongsi.

Let's reflect a little on possibly why cultural approaches can be so different and what that difference can mean, before we condemn.

Certain items, particularly within a temple, are expected to be touched as part of the belief system, and oth-

ers are definitely out of bounds except to a privileged few. I am sure Lin Lee will mention the newly gilded lions at the Cheng Hoon Teng Temple Malacca, and how within days their gold heads were rubbed clean simply because they were part of a perpetuated ritual.

Although to touch means eventually to damage, but to damage leads to repair or renew, thus this allows for the original craft to be perpetuated

ad infinitum rather than exhibiting it as a meaningless object behind a protective screen.

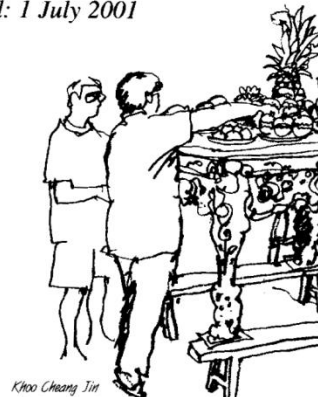
Chinese artists and artisans were, and I understand still are, apprenticed to great masters whose work they repeat and repeat until they have learnt all the techniques, only then they can venture out with their own creative ideas, (please correct me if I have misunderstood). Therefore there was always a plethora of craftsmen or artists to repair or replace with works of equal quality. What has happened though is an artificial belief that the more "civilised" primates are able to keep their hands to themselves and as a result, the original damage has not been replaced, and the crafts have almost died out.

We must also not forget that there have been generations of conservationists and restorers convinced that their method is better than one previously tried only to be scorned by a later generation for using damaging techniques. Thus, in respect of the fact that we are all continually learning, we must keep an open mind.

However one case where this rule might have been useful is if it had applied to Lord Elgin, when he didn't just touch the heritage of Greece but "borrowed it" instead. And what of Cleopatra's Needle, suffering the indignity of the pollution of London instead of gracing the banks of the Nile?

To be careful, yes, but don't touch?... let's see what others have to say.

Gwynn Jenkins (Penang)
Email: gwynn@tm.net.my
Dated: 1 July 2001



Khoo Chuan Jit

Historic George Town Inner City?

A "thinkpiece" sent in by Teo Chong Yean who currently resides in Cambridge, Massachusetts.

I am grateful that the Penang Heritage Trust is championing the fight to keep George Town Inner City intact. However, I feel that the efforts will be futile if the State and Federal Government are only half-hearted in supporting the efforts of the people.

A good example would be the "Preservation/Conservation" Guidelines drawn up for the various part of Penang city. When George Town is redeveloped according to the guidelines, we will have a new city but would have lost the heritage.

The proposed guidelines only aims to keep the places of worship and allow other building types to be demolished and replaced by new ones. The beautiful and humane 2 or 3-storey shophouses will be replaced by 5 or 6-storey modern buildings or imitations.

You can already see examples of this new topology around town -- don't you think that they are not representative of Penang's heritage?

The guidelines also calls for road widening of all streets. When implemented fully, the proportional width: height (road to shophouses) of the streets in Penang will be lost forever. The old street charm will be replaced by the typical streetscape prevalent in new city developments anywhere. Penang will then look like any town built between 1990 and 2010; and not like what it used to be and still is now. Is that heritage? Yes, if we start with a clean slate today. But, are we?

The combined acts will totally change the character of the urban fabric of George Town. I wonder which city in the world has proposed and carried out

such a strategy and then have the gall to market it as a preservation/conservation effort? Which city only keeps the place of worships and allow the whole urban fabric to change and dare to call that conservation efforts? Did London, Paris, Boston, Montreal, Tokyo, etc. do that? Conservation in these cities are not just keeping a few architectural pieces -- it meant keeping a large part of the city, even the smallest units are a few blocks!

If Penangites ever wish for Penang to be listed as one of the World's Heritage sites, then the people must get the State Government to be serious and come out with more meaningful guidelines. No wonder Penang is listed as one of the most endangered sites -- **THE HERITAGE WOULD MOST DEFINITELY BE LOST** with the implementation of the current guidelines.

Teo Chong Yean (M.I.T., U.S.A.)

Email: teocy@mit.edu

Dated: 20 June 2001

Do you know this house?

Margaret Barton wrote in to request help in locating this house. If you have information, please contact us...



I am writing on behalf of my brother who was in Malaysia (then Malaya) with the British Forces in 1952/53.

Although his duties often caused him to travel all over, he was billeted in

Penang and had given to us a photo of the house in which he stayed. It was a very impressive and beautiful house which my brother hopes would be of interest to you and he wonders therefore, if you would like to have the

photo for your records. From your maps, he thinks it may have been located somewhere along Jalan Sultan Ahmad Shah. Sadly, from the information he was able to give to us and enquiries of friends who we met, it appears that the house was one of those which were demolished so the area could be redeveloped.

My brother tells me he has made contact with the widow of one of the officers who was also stationed in Penang at that time, and she has several photos including one of a young lady who worked at the house in George Town. Her name was Beulia (not sure of spelling and surname forgotten) and she played in the Penang Ladies Hockey team. She would be about 70 now and I don't know if she could be traced but, if so, would remember the house. I look forward to hearing from you.

Margaret Barton (England, U.K.)

Email: thepondhouse@ukonline.co.uk

Dated: 23 June 2001

.. continued from page 1, Editorial

ABN-AMRO Bank and support in kind from City Bayview Hotel. We hope to get more corporate sponsors for this worthwhile project, as STAR Publications has promised year-long publicity for the sponsors. The newspaper has also undertaken to carry a Heritage Series which focusses on conservation issues, World Heritage listing, successful restoration and adaptive reuse projects, as well as community history and heritage.

Volunteers trained at the oral history workshop will embark on collecting the narratives of members of 'trade communities', such as Arab perfumers, Indian barbers, Hainanese coffeeshop operators, Teochew charcoal dealers, Sinling carpenters etc. prioritizing the endangered and dying trades. We believe these interviews will provide glimpses of migration history, occupational specialization, oral traditions as well as cultural practices of the diverse groups that make up Penang society. We are looking for additional volunteers as well as interesting interview subjects.

Khoo Salma Nasution

HERITAGE IN DANGER!

Forum on Penang Botanic Gardens 20 February 2001

Report by Ahmad Chik

It is not general public knowledge that there are far-reaching plans to corporatise the Penang Botanic Gardens (PBG), and to dramatically enlarge it. Held at the Caring Complex on the morning of 20 February, the SERI and PBG forum was to remedy this and to obtain public response to these proposals.

Very soon the 80-acre Garden will be enlarged by about 6 times to include all the adjoining forested hill areas, the abandoned quarry near the entrance and all the land on both sides of the approach road between the Moon Gate and the present entrance. The forested area will be left untouched as a buffer zone, but about 30 acres of the other areas are slated for development for:

- an extension to the Formal Garden
- a picnic area
- A series of Japanese, English, Thai, Islamic and rose gardens. This is the so-called 'Gardens of the World'
- A commercial/hawker complex.

Most participants welcomed the creation of the buffer zone; many were unhappy with the 'Gardens of the World' and the commercial complex, and almost all doubted if the Garden with its present management can successfully undertake such an ambitious expansion.

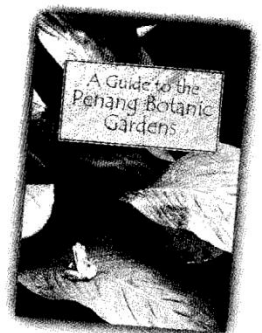
This was the other matter that was discussed extensively. Management consultant company Kassim, Chan had been asked to examine the organization of PBG and make a report that was presented at the seminar. Unsurprisingly they found that it is under-funded, understaffed and under-managed. Their main recommendation is for the Garden to be turned into a corporation, to overcome the rigidities of the civil service. As for additional funds, it was recommended that some activities and features should be farmed out to the private sector, with the government providing a generous launching grant (*An interesting and significant incidental disclosure was that half of the RM1.8 million PBG budget is spent on the Governor's Residence and on other government buildings*).

Most participants had serious reservation about turning the Garden into a corporation. Corporatised bodies have an unfortunate history in Malaysia and it was feared that public interest will be sacrificed in favour of private profit. The Garden has a special significance for Penang and PHT members have a duty to ensure that any development is done in an acceptable manner. So watch this space. Better still, be watchful; and speak out loudly, please. ■

A Guide to the Penang Botanic Gardens

This book is a labor of love by four persevering volunteers of the Friends of Penang Botanic Gardens Society. It is a guide to the different ways of enjoying the Penang Botanic Gardens, giving a wealth of botanical and non-botanical facts, as well as ideas for exploring off-the-beaten-tracks. It attempts to stimulate the senses -- not only to see but also to touch the different textures and to smell the aroma and fragrances, to listen to the voices of the forest and savor completely the tranquil beauty of nature. The reader will also find useful information on the economic and home uses of some plants along with the beliefs and folklore attached to them. Thus the pages also hold fairy tales, recipes and herbal remedies. Definitely a book for the whole family and one that every Penang home should have.

Available at PHT office
for RM 20 per copy



EVENTS/ACTIVITIES

Heritage Community Revitalisation through Women & Youth -- Project launch, 17 Feb 2001

Report by Raja Abdul Razak

Believing that women and youth play an important role as custodians of their heritage and historic environment, the Penang Heritage Trust launched a RM 30,000 project to empower and educate women and youths in the Acheh Street and Kapitan Kling mosque area.

Funded by a grant from the Canadian High Commission's CIDA Women's Initiative Fund and unveiled during a press conference on February 17 at the PHT premises, the project will among other things, involve women in urban governance issues.



Photo: Raja Abdul Razak
Her Excellency Jean McCloskey being welcomed by the Penang Heritage Trust executive secretary, Priscilla.

The Canadian High Commissioner, Jean McCloskey, who was present at the press conference, said the fund would assist women to participate in social, economic and political decision-making policies.



Photo: Faiz Izwan Anuar

◀ Khoo Salma explaining to Ms. McCloskey about ongoing restoration works at the Kapitan Kling mosque in Pitt Street.

cencing, Mr. Wong Mun Hoe, attracted a crowd of approximately 60, including the Penang municipal councillors, PHT president Dr. Choong Sim Poey, and various local interest groups. Among the issues discussed were the MPPP's RM 2.2 million plan of Campbell Street pedestrian mall, and the importance of signage in enhancing the heritage character of buildings and streetscapes.

Vines believes that the Campbell Street pedestrian mall reflects inadequate public and stakeholder consultation prior to implementation. Ideally, the design of a street should say something about its people and culture, and it is best to engage those trading in the street to say how they would like to have the design work for them. She added that authorities in Australia usually conducted open discussions with the locals rather than hastily engaging foreign professional designers when sprucing up a place. She concludes that it may be a worthwhile effort to fully pedestrianise a street, but cautioned that it would be largely dependent upon the type of businesses and activities conducted there.

On signages, Vines thinks that they should be clear and simple, adding that they should not obstruct the beauty and aesthetic values of a building, let alone disrupt the surroundings. She is of the opinion that when there are too many signages, one tends not to read them anymore. She warns that strict enforcement of signage policies is essential to prevent the buildings here from being draped with advertisements, and if the authorities continue to allow unregulated construction of signages, Penang's heritage buildings will end up being visually polluted.

Urban Signage Seminar at Penang Town Hall 20 February 2001

Report by Faiz Izwan Anuar

A seminar on urban signage was organised by the MPPP and held at the Penang Town Hall on 20 February 2001. Two experts -- Elizabeth Vines, a partner of Adelaide based conservation architectural firm Mcdougall

& Vines, and William Harald-Wong, one of Malaysia's top graphic designers -- were sourced as specialists with the help of the Penang Heritage Trust. The seminar, which was chaired by the Municipal Councillor in charge of li-



▲ Too many signages pollutes the vista!



THE PENANG FUNDRAISING DINNER, DA

Roaring '20s evening

The gala fundraiser theme this year says it all -- a celebration of the Rip-Roaring '20s. Smoking jackets, art-deco jewellery, feather boas, sequins, 'Piccadilly' vanity bags, dropped waistlines, bobs, Clara Bow cloches, classic sarees, period kebayas & kerongsangs were once again in vogue at the fête held on 30 June at the ballroom of the Eastern & Oriental Hotel, Penang, from 7pm until midnight. And for added effect, a fleet of vintage cars were parked outside the ballroom.

This unique, romantic social fundraiser included an elegant dinner, ballroom dancing and live

music, performed by M The Penang State Sym getting the evergreen Yeoh, which transports memory lane and even ers, much to everyone

Guests were presented arrival and registration point prepared by Lin Lin Lee delivered a the cause for heritage set the tone for the were also treated to





HERITAGE TRUST DANCE & SILENT AUCTION

was a roaring success!

Mark Ostin & members of the Penang Symphony Orchestra. Not forgetting the contributions of Nancy & Albert and some 300 guests down the road to bid and contribute to state leadership and amusement!

with door gifts upon arrival. Armed with a powerful microphone, Gaik Siang, Loh-Lim and a dynamic presentation on the importance of conservation, which help in the evening's event. Guests enjoyed the lucky draws, a si-

lent auction and an open auction. Raffle winners walked away with prizes like hotel stays, jewellery and meal vouchers. The open auction saw several valuable works of art, a model of a Spanish galleon and a ride on the E&O Express go under the hammer. 'Auctioneers' R. Murali and Himanshu Bhatt adroitly spurred the guests on to making higher bids. A fun time was had by all and special thanks go to the Planning Committee and volunteers for putting together a wonderful evening. ■

*write-up/layout: Raja Abdul Razak & William Chow
photos this spread: courtesy of Andre Ng*



Fort Cornwallis Restoration Committee Meeting 10 March 2001

Report by Dr. Choong Sim Poey

As noted in press releases, Fort Cornwallis is being excavated and restored under the supervision of the Museum Negara. At the last restoration steering committee meeting (10 March 2001) chaired by En. Adi Hj. Taha, deputy director of the Department of Museums and Antiquities, it was projected to be completed by 31 March 2001, some three months late because of some problems in getting old bricks to rebuild the old fort wall.

The restored building will see the old moat and all the walls restored. The modern amphitheatre (put in at the previous upgrading of the site 1981 under a



Photo: Geoff Wade

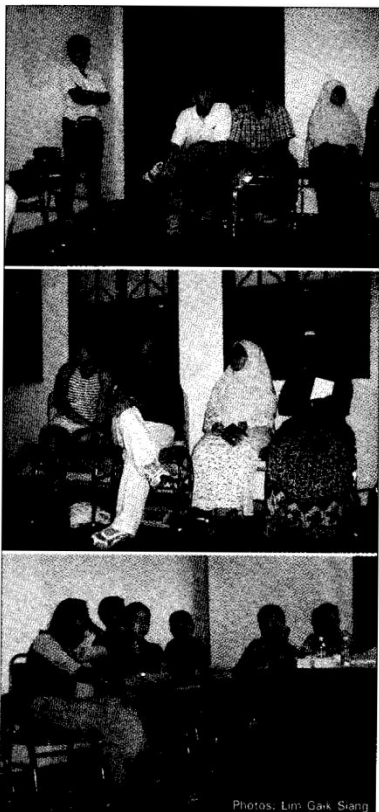
Restoration and archaeological works in progress. Parts of the wall (foreground) have to be completely rebuilt.

committee under Dato' Lim Chong Keat) will be left untouched. At a walk around the site afterwards, the amphitheatre and stage were looking distinctly seedy and clearly in need of some upgrading. There are also proposals to restore the cannons so that they will have the original footing and wheels but this has not been budgeted for.

Representing the Penang Heritage Trust, Dr. Choong raised the question of the use of this site after restoration. Unfortunately, it seems that this is outside the purview of the committee beyond a general intention that part of the fort will be an exhibition area relating to its history. It was further explained that since the State Government was the owner of the site, it was therefore left to them to decide on its future and that in all probability it would again be privatized.

PHT requested the chairman to urge the State Government to urgently convene a forum involving representatives from Museum Negara, State Museum Board, the Penang Heritage Trust and others to discuss this and to formulate clear guidelines for suitable uses of the site. These guidelines could then be used as a basis of offering it for privatization.

The Penang Heritage Trust will also be sending a formal request to this effect to the Museum Negara and the State Government for this to be done as soon as possible. ■



Photos: Lim Gek Siang

Penang Heritage Trust - Badan Warisan Malaysia Joint Heritage Education Workshop 24 March 2001

Report by Lim Huck Chin & Loh-Lim Lin Lee

Penang Heritage Trust and Badan Warisan Malaysia jointly organised a Heritage Education half-day workshop on Saturday 24 March 2001. This is the second collaborative workshop of its kind following the first which was held with Arts-Ed's "Heritage in Education" programme in September 2000.

This joint effort between PHT and Badan Warisan is aimed at sharing existing resources and contacts to develop a more comprehensive education programme and to address a broader age group and audience mix. It also enables Badan Warisan to trial its Education Programme -- Pilot Project 2000 beyond the Klang Valley area and at the same time gives PHT

the opportunity to enhance its role in providing heritage awareness programmes for schools.

Interest in this latest workshop from both teachers and students representing a mix of inner city and suburban schools was positive and encouraging, and signaled the possibility of different responses from which PHT and Badan Warisan might learn. Held at the magnificent Cheong Fatt Tze mansion, and attended by twenty participants (comprising 8 teachers and 12 students) the workshop was an introduction to more imaginative and creative ways in which heritage awareness might be introduced and revisited. Indeed, the inspiring environment offered by the mansion itself put into

place a very positive sense of excitement about heritage issues amongst the participants... interest levels were visibly elevated!

The workshop programme was designed to introduce the participants to the available education resources offered by both PHT and Badan Warisan, to initiate a discovery process - both within individuals and in groups - for heritage consciousness and awareness, and to offer ideas for heritage related projects which the students and teachers may then initiate at their respective schools.

Loh-Lim Lin Lee, director of PHT's education component, kicked off the session with a succinct introduction to heritage within the Penang context, offering a selection of slides as a jumpstart to the workshop proper. Following a brief description of the two organisations' respective programmes and the benefits to the participants of their joint implementation in Penang, Charlene Rajendran, workshop facilitator for Badan Warisan, embarked on an energy-filled series of activities and creative thinking exercises. Participants were compelled to adopt cross-cultural roles, to test their imaginary and memory skills, to articulate their own perspectives of heritage and their concerns relating to it, and to share their varying interests with contemporaries and peers from different cultural backgrounds. The material used during the workshop included Badan Warisan's video presentation, which is still being developed as one of the main components of its education resource kit.

Cheong Fatt Tze Mansion

Penang, Malaysia



➤ The Orient's best preserved paradigm Chinese Courtyard house, could be the discerning traveler's next discovery - the unravelling of the myth behind 'China's last Mandarin and first capitalist'

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Website: <http://www.cheongfattzemansion.com>



The video is intended to serve as a starting point in building interest levels in aspects of our heritage environment.

Indeed, the workshop was for Badan Warisan, part of a learning process in its endeavour to design and develop an education resource kit that is flexible, adaptable and comprising a variety of learning tools which would enable it to reach a wider audience. Additionally, the workshop helped reinforce PHT's role as a resource for schools that wish to explore heritage education through the

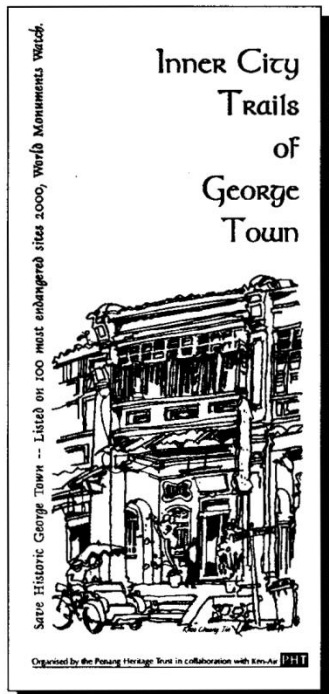
organisation's range of activities and programmes, and its commitment to providing guidance in heritage awareness among the younger generation and the communities of Penang.

This project was an overwhelming success, due largely to the knowledge and experience that the facilitators Lim Huck Chin and Loh-Lim Lin Lee shared with the participants -- SMJK Bukit Gambier, SMJK St. George, SMK St. Xavier, SMK Convent Lebu Light, Sri Inai Secondary School, Uplands International School, SM Tanjung Bunga, and SM Pendidikan Khas. Thanks also go to Priscilla Charles-Chee, Lara Ariffin, and everyone from PHT and Badan Warisan for their contributions. A very special thanks to Charlene Rajendran for making heritage truly come alive for all of us. And last but not least, thanks also to Fendi and his team at Cheong Fatt Tze mansion, for providing such delicious and necessary nourishment! ■



Photo: Lim Gek Siang

◀ Charlene Rajendran in action, making heritage truly come alive for everyone.



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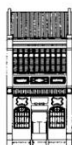
*PHT will be conducting
these three trails:*

Tuesday
Little India, Spice Trail

Wednesday
Heritage Trail 2 &
Cheong Fatt Tze

Thursday
Street of Harmony &
Historical Enclave.

*Those interested to join can
contact Priscilla at Tel 264-2631
at least a day before for any of
the tours. The fees for the trails
are RM50 per pax (3-10) and
RM40 per pax (11 & above).*



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Persatuan
Warisan
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Pinang
PHT



Three Heritage Trail Tours

Report by Teresa Capol

Date: 23rd March 2001

4 pax (Heritage Trail 2 & CFTze Mansion)

*Guests were from Hong Kong and enjoyed the
tour tremendously.*

Date: 10th April 2001

5 pax (The Spice Trail and Little India)

Guests enjoyed the ambience of Little India and we even had roti canai and teh tarik on the way. After the tour, especially when they got the smells of curries being cooked, we ended up having a banana leaf lunch. All in, it was a wonderful tour -- so they said.

Date: 13th April, 2001

17 pax: Pata Post Conference Tour (Trishaw Heritage Tour)

The trishaws were booked by PenEvents and I conducted the tour personally. Participants comprised Tourism Malaysia officers, Travel News editors, Media and Travel Agents, and also PDC Officers. I was given only 2 hours to do the tour, including a stop at the famed Cheong Fatt Tze mansion. Our stops were at Fort Cornwallis, Little India, Khoo Kongsi, Acheen Street, Syed Alatas Mansion and Sun Yet Sen Base (we were unable to go in due to time constraint). We arrived at the Cheong Fatt Tze mansion at noon. After the tour, they boarded the bus to E&O hotel for lunch. The guests enjoyed the tour very much. They were each given our PHT Heritage Trail tour brochures and PHT membership forms.



Visit by Friends from Nara Machizukuri Centre 24 March 2001

Report by Khoo Salma Nasution

Nara Machizukuri Centre is a citizen's group which promotes the conservation of the old quarter of Nara, one of Japan's most historical temple towns with a famous deer park. Nara is located near Kyoto, at the eastern end of the Silk Route. NMC is PHT's sister organisation in Japan. In the early 1990s, they sponsored PHT representatives on study tours to England, Japan, and also to attend the AWPNUC Symposium hosted in Nara. They also sponsored Arthur Percival of the Civic Trust to visit Penang. NMC was one of the initiators of the formation of the Asia & West Pacific Network for Urban Conservation (AWPNUC) in 1991, and have always been supportive of PHT's role in it.

To renew NMC's friendship with PHT, seven members of the NMC delegation visited Penang from Saturday, 24 March to Monday, 26 March. Lim

Gaik Siang prepared the itinerary and faithfully followed the group for two whole days, sometimes serving as Japanese interpreter.

On Saturday morning, council member Teresa Capol took them for a tour of Little India, accompanied by PHT member Mrs. Linda Khoo (Salma's mother). They then visited the Cheong Fatt Tze Mansion, where the tour was led by Joanne Khaw. Dr. Choong Sim Poey received them at the PHT office, presented souvenirs to the guests, and hosted the lunch at Sin Kheng Aun. Junko Tanaka, a PHT member who has contributed articles on heritage to the newsletter of Penang's Japanese expatriate community, joined us at this point. After lunch, architect Kim Wong and Joanne organised a trishaw tour to the kongsi temples of the Five Great Clans. The president of the Cheah Kongsi Dato'

Cheah Jin Teong gave them a warm reception. At Lim Kongsi, they were welcomed by the trustees there. The Honorable Consul of Japan Mr. Naoharu Fujii and his wife hosted a sumptuous Japanese dinner at Kampachi, arranged through the good graces of Dato' Kee Phaik Cheen and Dr. Choong Sim Poey. Lim Gaik Siang, Khoo Salma and her husband were also present. Khoo Salma met up several of her old friends whom she had not seen in years. Mrs. Kuroda was wearing a beautiful traditional kimono.

The next morning, Mr. Clement Liang met them and brought them to 120 Armenian Street, where we were holding a talk on Dr. Sun Yat Sen in Penang. The event was organised to commemorate the Penang Hwang Hwa Kang Uprising (Canton Uprising) of the Chinese Revolution in March 1911 and to promote the conservation of the buildings in Penang associated with Dr. Sun Yat Sen and his followers. The main speaker was local historian Mr. Ong Seng Huat. Lim Gaik Siang not only provided powerpoint support, but also acted as Chinese and English interpreter! Clement was the main Japanese interpreter. The talk was attended by Dato' Oon Choo Khai, former MD of Kwong Wah Jit Poh, Professor Dr. Kim Phaik Lah (formerly with USM School of Education), teacher Gooi, as well as conservation planners Lim Hooi Siang and Alex Koenig. PHT recruited one new member amongst the audience. A few newspapers were represented and articles subsequently appeared in *Kwong Wah Jit Poh* and *Kwong Ming Ri Bao*.

A simple lunch of fried rice, keropok and inchi kebin was prepared by Mrs. Linda Khoo, with the support of her Japanese discussion group. Teresa Capol contributed curry chicken while Shirley Tan made sago pudding, and Dr. Kim Phaik Lah brought us colorful Nyonya kueh. While having tea at Old China Cafe, we had a discussion about how to further cultural exchange between the two organisations. Professor Taro on behalf of NMC kindly offered to support PHT in whatever they could. The NMC delegation visited The Garage before joining the PHT site visit for the tour of E&O Hotel. Dinner was again hosted by Mrs. Linda Khoo at Ocean View (Paramount Hotel) and we were joined by Joanne Khaw, Teresa Capol and daughter.

Upon returning to Japan, Professor Taro confirmed his offer in writing:

- to look for sources of funding for PHT's work in Japan
- to approach Japanese and international organisations to recognize PHT's work
- to contact Sonbun (Sun Yat Sen) Memorial Foundation in Japan to support our activities
- to propose to UNESCO that Penang should be listed as World Heritage site
- to publicise PHT's activities in the Japanese press
- to have an annual member exchange programme between NMC and PHT

We are happy to renew our friendship with the warm and far-sighted people at NMC. Through the leadership of Mrs. Kuroda, NMC has conducted many com-



Top: Everyone joins in singing Japanese songs at 120 Armenian Street.

Middle: Dinner with the Japanese Consul and his wife at *Kampachi*.

Bottom: Exchanging gifts at PHT office.

munity activities and their premises are used by community people of all ages and walks of life. We hope that Prof. Taro can give us a talk about NMC the next time he's in Penang.

We would like to thank our PHT volunteers who helped us organise the events, especially Mrs. Linda Khoo, Mr. Clement Liang and Ms. Lim Gaik Siang. We would also like to thank the Honorable Consul of Japan Mr. Fujii for his hospitality. NMC's visit was an important catalyst in bringing together PHT, the Malaysian Japanese speakers and members of the Japanese community in Penang, and we hope this will lead to future collaborations in cultural and heritage projects.

◀ Ong Seng Huat giving a talk about Dr. Sun Yat Sen with a powerpoint prepared by Gaik Siang who also acted the interpreter.



Photo: Lim Gaik Siang

Local Government - Local Community Dialogue on Women in Urban Governance Held at Komtar, Penang. 12 May 2001

Introduction by Khoo Salma Nasution

The Penang Heritage Trust has been championing the heritage of Penang, and pushing for inner city George Town to be listed as World Heritage. However, we realize that the problems faced by George Town, especially after the Repeal of Rent Control are not merely that of loss of physical heritage, but also a crisis of housing, a loss of community, movable heritage and intangible heritage, the decline of economic and social activity, exacerbated by unsatisfactory conditions of the city with regard to infrastructure, public amenities, transport, and urban environment.

These problems affect all users of the city, including the residents who constitute the cultural communities and historic communities, but have an even greater impact on the differently abled and the urban poor, which include many women and women-headed

families. A holistic vision for George Town should include the well-being of the communities. These communities are important custodians and interpreters of our heritage, they keep alive the festivals and oral traditions, they use and maintain the historic fabric.

Their well-being can only be ensured through better urban governance, and greater public participation to ensure that ordinary people, including women, have a greater say in how the city is run and how it develops. Women, especially low-income women, have often been neglected as stakeholders in organised consultations. Therefore, with our new initiative Women in Urban Governance, we hope to explore how women use the city, how they view the changes in the city, how they are affected by housing problems with the repeal of rent control, what issues are important to them and how



▲ DPM's wife Datin Seri Endon Mahmood officiating the event with a stirring speech.

women envision a better city for this and the next generation.

From March to May, the Penang Heritage Trust held a series of small dialogues with several stakeholder groups. The issues and recommendations were brought up to the authorities during the Local-Local Dialogue on Women in Urban Governance coorganised by HAWA and PHT on May 12. ■

Reflections on the Women in Urban Governance Dialogue

Loh-Lim Lin Lee comments...



Photo: Yeoh Oon Bee

◀ Lin Lee voices concerns about the state of social housing in Penang.

very meaningful. It was also very courageous. The number of people (close to 200) who turned up as well as the spectrum of society that they represented, was very humbling. It showed us how important the issues were considered to be, by all.

The disabled/physically challenged were there in full force; the marginalised Indian Muslim women from Chulia Lane who left kids and

work & who sat through 9 hours; the female senior citizens who expressed how amazed they were at some of the things they were hearing, seeing and learning; the many PHT volunteers who were there all day; and those wonderful brave, open and liberal males who gave up a day to find out what problems were being faced by dwellers in the city in general, and specifically by women.

Many of the issues raised were certainly viewed as applicable to all, not merely women, and it allowed us to focus on access, public amenities, maintenance, safety, transparency, responsiveness, rule of law, etc.

It was also very gratifying that the invited female powers-that-be in the State (Assemblywomen, city councillors, heads of depts) turned up, for what they must have known, would be a grilling, formidable session. ■

I would like to say how proud I was to be asked to be associated with the Women in Urban Governance Seminar. It was very well organised, very powerful and

The Gendering and Empowerment of Women in Urban Governance

Raja Abdul Razak reports & comments...

The Dialogue served as the first important step of many, that marginalised women (and men) in Penang will have to take towards gaining recognition in important decision making policies. Many questions were raised, and many were left unanswered! But there's hope yet -- despite the uncertainty, the spirit and enthusiasm displayed by the participants will ensure that some of the issues raised do not get swept away. The Consumer Association of Penang (CAP) for example, started a signature campaign to protest against the transformation of the Campbell Street Market into a clone of the Central Market in Kuala Lumpur.

Some would argue that there is no need for formality in the struggle towards victory. Others believe that it is possible to achieve triumph through restrained, well planned polemics. And as noted during the Dialogue, these struggles often encountered the limits of traditional Governmental organisations, although attempts were made to transcend these barriers!

Significant emphasis was given to the 'differently-abled' community. This included an absorbing video made by PHT volunteer Ambiga Devi, which clearly showed how unfriendly some buildings are to the differently-abled. However, Khor Hung Teik of the State Economic Research Institute (SERI) pointed out that it was not only buildings but people that had to be 'sensitized' to the special needs of the differently-abled -- and this included the police, bus drivers, civil servants, etc. Traffic crossings for example, have to be accessible not only to the differently-abled, but the elderly and the very young too.

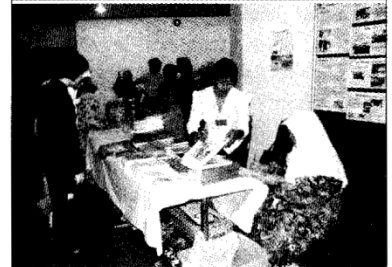
Two panel discussions were organized. The first featured a panel of international experts in women's issues, one each from the US, Fiji, Nepal & Malaysia sharing their experiences. One of the panelists Dr. Vanessa Griffen,

Coordinator of the Asia And Pacific Development Centre - Gender & Development (APDC-GAD) Programme said "the benefits of a Dialogue such as this, is that it is at local level so you can really get down to issues that affect women's lives". The second panel comprised Dato' Kee Phaik Cheen, in her capacity as the State Exco for Women's Development, flanked by representatives from the Municipality and Housing & Local Government Department. This panel, chaired by Dato' Prof. Wazir Jahan Karim, Director of the Women's Research Centre, Universiti Sains Malaysia fielded questions from the floor on several social issues -- chief among them being housing and public amenities.

The Dialogue ended on a rather promising note. The State Women's Development Committee (HAWA) promised to set up a committee to look into the issue of 'holistically' friendly public amenities and buildings. CAP invited the government to participate in a public dialogue on the Campbell Street Market. Representatives from Women & Waqf, who made up about a third of the participants, learnt about empowerment and the technique of negotiating with the authorities. Understanding that many of them were not conversant in English, the second panel was conducted in a mixture of English and Malay.

An interesting observation -- some people were "surprised" that a heritage conservation organisation is involved in "women's issues". Up until that day, they didn't realise that heritage and conservation issues also included peoples and cultures. Without them, what we have are only old and lifeless buildings!

All said and done, the Dialogue was a very humbling experience for some and for others, simply good experience for the soul. It puts things in the right perspective. ■



Photos: Cécile Francken Ooi & Yeeh Oon Bee



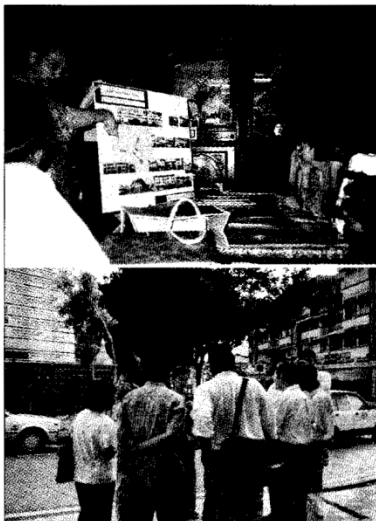
▲ Scenes from the Dialogue -- irrespective of gender, race or age, people from all walks of life and different parts of the world came together that day to try and make a change for the better.

Almashoor Students visit Waqf Enclave

27 April 2001

Report by Raja Abdul Razak

Waqf in language means setting aside, confining the use of, or stopping the benefits one draws from a particular property for a specified purpose. As to the technical legal meaning in Islamic law, the term "waqf," refers to the protection of the property and ensuring its use for purposes pleasing to God—for the benefit of mosques, schools, hospitals, the maintenance of scholars, and assistance to the poor (A. L. Tibawi, *The Islamic Pious Foundations in Jerusalem*).



Armed with a video camera, a group of students and teachers from the Sekolah Almashoor were recently taken on a visit to several waqf properties in the Kapitan Keling, Armenian Street, Kampong Kolam, Campbell Street and Acheen Street vicinities by Khoo Salma and Abdur-Razzaq Lubis.

The teachers and students, who were collecting data for a CD-ROM project on the history of Muslim heritage, were shown several historical sites significant to Muslims.

The group also witnessed the sad state of affairs of some of the waqf properties, including burial grounds, which were in urgent and dire need of major repairs and maintenance. Neglected by their custodians, the fate of some of these properties face an uncertain future. ■

Top Left: Abdur-Razzaq Lubis in a show and tell session with the group.

Left: Learning from the expert -- the group listening in fascination as Khoo Salma narrates the history of Waqf properties.

Photos: Raja Abdul Razak.

Former DPM pays Courtesy Call

28 April 2001

Report by Raja Abdul Razak & Abdur-Razzaq Lubis

Chairman of the Human Rights Commission of Malaysia Tan Sri Musa Hitam paid a courtesy call to 120 Armenian Street on 28 April 2001.

The former Deputy Prime Minister of Malaysia was in Penang to deliver the the inaugural Putra Memorial Lecture entitled 'Education and Excellence. The Challenges of the 21st century', organised by Penang Free School Foundation in collaboration with the State Economic and Research Institute (SERI) and Universiti Sains Malaysia (USM).

Dato' Musa, accompanied by Dato' (Dr.) Anwar Fazal, PHT life member and Senior Regional Advisor to UNDP Asia-Pacific, and Abdur-Razzaq Lubis, Malaysian representative of the Sumatra Heritage Trust, discussed a variety of issues -- conservation, ethnicity, heritage and general politics over servings of hot tea and nyonya cakes. ■

Phor Tay Secondary School Historical Society visits Dr. Sun Yat Sen Base -- 28 April 2001

Report by Raja Abdul Razak & Abdur-Razzaq Lubis

Some 73 visitors comprising students and teachers from the History Society of Phor Tay secondary school conducted a short heritage tour of the Acheen Street/Armenian Street enclave on 28 April 2001.

Led by three teachers, the group made its first stop at the historic 120 Armenian Street, a late 19th century shop-house which once witnessed great energies of revolution in the salad days of the Chinese nationalist revolution leader Dr. Sun Yet Sun.

From 1909 to 1911, the house served as the base of the Southeast Asia Tung Meng Hooi (Sun Yat Sen's political party), and also saw the founding of the Kwong Wah Jit Poh newspaper in 1910. Now, the house is a museum dedicated to Sun Yat Sen and his Penang followers. Students and teachers alike paid close attention as Abdur-Razzaq Lubis, the Malaysian representative of the Sumatra Heritage Trust, presented them with a detailed history of the house and the political uprising.

The group were also informed of the significance of the Acheen Street and Armenian Street vicinity as the meeting point and shared heritage of two great civilizations -- Islamic and Confucian.

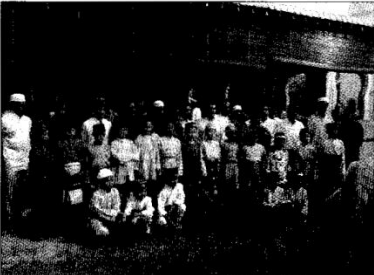
This coexistence can be seen in the waqf and kongsi heritage of both the Muslim and Chinese communities. The relationship is enhanced through trade, marriage and 'secret societies' alliances. The Acheen Street and Armenian Street area is the shared heritage of both Muslims and Confucianists.

The short history lesson was followed by a quick tour around the premises, before the group departed for nearby Cheah Kongsi. ■



▲ Dato' Nazir cuts a dashing figure in *Baju Melayu* as he made his speech.

All photos on this page
courtesy of Lim Gaik Siang



Revival of Mass Circumcision Ceremony for Inner City Boys of George Town

26 May 2001

Report by Raja Abdul Razak

The ritual of circumcision is compulsory for all Muslim children and in the case of a male child marks his entrance to 'manhood'.

On 26 May this year the Penang Heritage Trust, with the 'help' of some 22 male children re-aquainted Penangites (and tourists) with the pomp and ceremony of mass circumcision, a practice that is fast disappearing. The event

was organised by the Women & Wakf group through the Heritage Community Revitalisation project, with Cikgu Baharoodin as advisor. Dato' Nazir Ariff gave an inspiring speech about the need to revive urban Muslim tradition and heritage and the importance of keeping the Campbell Street market as a neighbourhood amenity for the community.



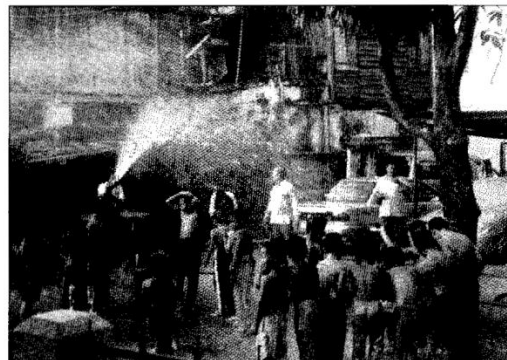
Suwandi Tondar

The ceremony started early in the morning with the boys who were around the age of 12, being given a shower from a fire engine hose. After the bath, the boys were dressed in their finest clothes and taken to a specially erected marquee on the shoulder of their fathers. Prayers were recited and the boys were first sprinkled with rose water and then fed nasi semangat by Datin Jamilah Mohd Zain, wife of the Penang Deputy Chief Minister. After being presented with book vouchers worth RM20, the boys were once again hoisted on the shoulder of their fathers and brought to a specially chartered bus which whisked them off to the Penang Hospital.

Top left: A cold shower precedes the ritual of male circumcision.

Mid Left: Prince for a day - participants dressed in their finest.

Left: Khoo Salma, Datin Jamilah (in blue) and Keith Fountain at the ceremony.



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In this issue ...

We COMMENT on the state of the hill railway; a statutory declaration about police arrest is carried in CONCERNS; NEWS draws attention to papers read at a women's discussion; PEOPLE introduces the family of Yusof Aziz Merican, and a remarkable pianist; HERITAGE presents the Appendix to Raymond Kwok's Nyonya Superstitions; in CONCORDANCE there is more from Raymond Kwok's collection of Baba sayings; in BOOKS we introduce Lim Kean Siew's book on Chinese tea and teapots; Marina Yusof is found to be seditious at PAGE 11.

Issue 14, year 2001

Webmaster: Lim Kean Chye

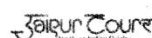
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36 Nagore Road, 10050
Penang



A31, The Garage
2 Penang Road
10000 Penang



Purser's Choice
26, Jln Pudu Lama
50200 K.L.

368-4 Bellisa Row
Jalan Burma
10350 Penang

"Save Historic George Town" Car Sticker: RM 2.00 each. Available at PHT office.

Save Historic George Town

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