



PHT newsletter

Issue No. 73/July-December 2001

Support Conservation Efforts in your Community!

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**PENANG
HERITAGE
TRUST**

*Persatuan
Warisan
Pulau
Pinang*

PHT

EDITORIAL

Dear PHT members and friends,

We held our AGM in September 2001 and ushered in a new PHT Council. Most council members, including all office bearers, were re-elected.

This is another bumper issue for the year 2001 due to a long delay in producing the newsletter. We apologize for the delay, which was due to major changes within the organisation. Priscilla Charles-Chee, our dynamic Executive Secretary who has worked with us since 1998, left us in September 2001. Sarah Abdullah, hired for the Women and Waqf projects, also left that month. William Chow and Raja Abdul Razak, our brilliant desktop publishing team for both PHT and AWPNUC, left before the end of the year. Our Penang Story project officer Melissa Ananthraj, who came in in August 2001, is now holding the fort. We have advertised for a Manager and hope to have a wonderful new person heading the office.

On the bright side, our site visits have been as popular as ever, and PHT has received numerous inquiries and requests for interviews and tours. Our Waqf Revitalization project of 1999-2000 won the UNESCO Special Achievement Award, and we also received a RM 15,000 grant from Ford Foundation for our education project.

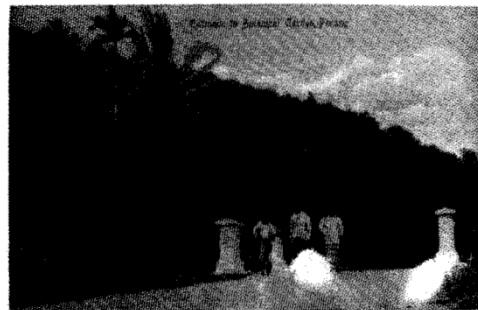
Judging from the response, the Penang Story colloquiums seems to have stirred community interest in social history, and various individuals and organisations have undertaken to record, preserve and promote their histories with renewed vigour. Already three colloquiums have been held for the Malay, Indian and Chinese communities respectively. During the preparation for the recent Chinese colloquium - the first mainly Mandarin language event PHT has organised - the office was abuzz with dozens of volunteers. We are now preparing for the Minorities colloquium on February 2. The interest in the upcoming International Conference on 18-21 April, has been overwhelming.

Khoo Salma Nasution

EXCLUSIVE GUIDED

HERITAGE SITE VISITS

Members only! Please renew your 2002 membership



**Site Visit #22
Saturday
26 January 2002,
3.30 PM**



The Historic Penang Botanic Gardens

Established by Charles Curtis as a botanic research centre and a nursery for colonial horticultural products in 1884, original plants were brought from the Kew Gardens in London via the earlier Singapore Botanic Gardens. The Gardens remain almost unchanged in topography and still have some of the most important trees in Penang.

It is also called the Waterfall Gardens as a natural Waterfall supplies a water reservoir within its 72 acre grounds. The great Waterfall, often depicted in the early paintings of Penang, is still a sight to behold. This source supplied early George Town with its drinking water, considered the sweetest and purest.

The site visit will include a visit to the reservoir, PBA filtration pump and Waterfall. Join us at the much loved and much used Gardens on Saturday 26th when experts from the Friends of Botanic Gardens will lead us through a botanic journey of nostalgia and appreciation. Please meet at the gate of the Gardens at 3.30 p.m.

SITE VISIT REPORTS

Restoration of Fort Cornwallis, Penang

Text by Associate Professor Dr. A. Ghafar Ahmad, photos by Lim Gaik Siang and Khoo Salma Nasution

Fort Cornwallis is regarded as an important monument and landmark in the historical development of Malaysia, particularly the island of Penang. It was named after the late 18th century Governor-General of Bengal, India, and built by Francis Light after he took possession of Penang from the Sultan of Kedah in 1786. From an original structure built of nibong (palm tree trunk), it was rebuilt in 1804 with bricks and stones by Indian convict labour. Finally in 1810, the fort was completed at a cost of \$80,000.

Early survey maps, old photographs and historical records indicate that the star-shaped fort was packed with buildings and structures including military barracks and offices as well as a gunpowder magazine, a chapel, a harbour light, flagstaff, cannons, cell rooms, a store and guard houses; some of which still survive and are structurally sound. A moat 9m wide and 2m deep built around the fort was filled in during the malaria epidemic in the 1920's. The harbour light was used to signal incoming ships whilst the flagstaff was used to announce the arrival of mail ships or



the descent of the Governor and other dignitaries from Bukit Bendera (Penang Hill).

Even though the fort was originally built for military purposes, it had never, in its entire history been engaged in any battle. Over the years, the fort lost some of its structures and those remaining

include the gunpowder magazine, a Christian chapel, cell rooms, flagstaff, harbour light and several cannons. A modern amphitheatre was built inside the fort in the early 1970's to stage cultural activities.

Given the significance of the fort and concerned by its deterioration, the Malaysian Government in 1977 listed the structure

under the Antiquities Act 1976 for the purpose of conservation and preservation. In March 2000, the Malaysian Government through the Department of Museums and Antiquity granted RM1.9 million for the restoration of the fort. Restoration works, involving a structural engineer, conservation consultant, quantity surveyor, archaeologist, microbiologist, geologist and electrical engineer, were completed in March 2001.

The restoration of Fort Cornwallis was a great challenge for many, particularly those directly involved in the conservation of this historical landmark of Penang. It involved a systematic method of recording and documentation based on the Historical Architectural Building Survey (HABS) introduced by the Museum and Antiquities Department of Malaysia. The HABS, which comprise three major stages, was carried out throughout the entire project to record and document the conditions of the fort before, during and after restoration.

Apart from the HABS, all archaeological works involved in the project were also recorded systematically for documentation purposes. Artifacts discovered during the excavation works including pottery, roof tiles, smoking pipes, coins and bottles were carefully registered and photographed.

Before the commencement of any restoration works, dilapidation surveys were carried out to identify building defects and causes — these included leaning walls, cracks, erosion of mortar joints, broken brickworks, harmful growths, poor drainage system, improper maintenance and poor electrical installations. All building defects were classified into five major categories, recorded systematically in pictorial documentation, fort plans and elevations. A specific coding system was established by the conservation consultant to keep track of the total numbers of building defects of the respective categories, locations of building defects and possible causes. The codes were transferred and



recorded accordingly on the fort plans and elevations.

Since most of the building defects involved structural rectifications and remedial measures, the restoration works required in-depth technical knowledge, particularly in architecture, building conservation, quantity surveying and structural engineering — in addition to expertise and knowledge in other related areas like archeology, microbiology and quantity survey.

In restoring the fort's walls, for example, tests were carried out to determine the age, texture and strength of the red clay bricks used. Based on the findings, salvaged bricks of the same type and strength from abandoned old shophouses in Penang, built between 1892 and 1928, were identified and used.

Today, the fort is a privately-managed cultural venue which can be visited for a small admission fee.

For more details on the restoration, contact Associate Professor Dr. A. Ghafar Ahmad, at the School of Housing, Building & Planning, Universiti Sains Malaysia, 11800 Penang. Email: aghafar@usm.my Website: <http://www.hbp.usm.my/conservation>

The Fort Revisited

Sunday, 29 July 2001 Site Visit #17

Text by Woo Yee Saik, photos by Khoo Salma Nasution and Lim Gaik Siang

Some 80 PHT members and supporters turned up to get a first hand account of the results of the restoration. They were not disappointed.

Key players in the conservation and restoration project, Dr. Ghafar Ahmad of Universiti Sains Malaysia's School of Housing, Building and Planning and Encik Najmuddin Kader of the construction firm Najcom Sdn Bhd presented the visitors with a one-hour show and tell, blow-by-blow account of the painstaking steps taken to restore the over 200 year-old structure. Listening with rapt attention, most of the visitors didn't mind the heat and discomfort of being jam packed into a bunker which could

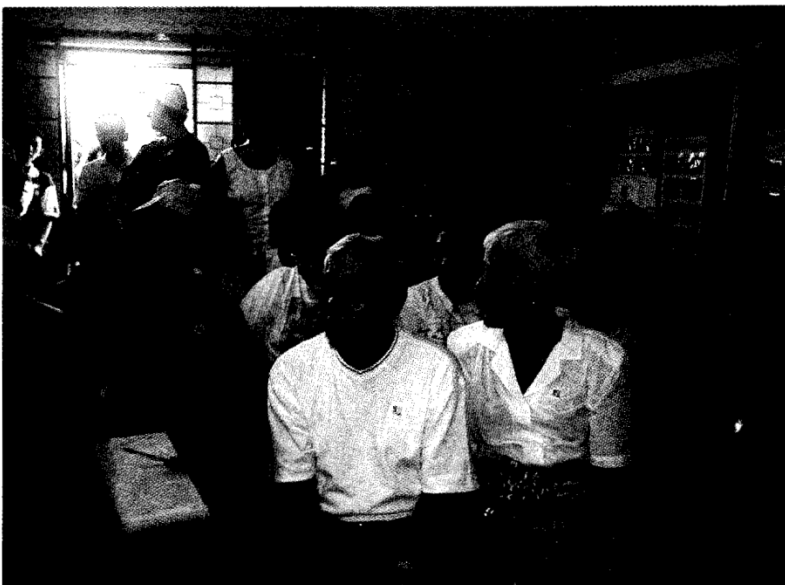
comfortably accommodate no more than 25 people at a time!

After the talk, visitors viewed the showcase of artifacts from the archaeological dig, before moving on to inspect the reconstructed portion of the fort wall and the "representation" of the former bridge and moat on the skating rink/basketball court side. Visitors also took turns to enter the barely recognizable chapel — the restoration had shorn the building of all religious significance. Next stop was the 'fertility cannon' at the northwestern point of the fort called the Seri Rambai. Presented as a gift to the Sultan of Johor from the Dutch, it somehow found its way to

Penang, allegedly looted by the Portuguese from the Sultan! Today, as in the past, local women place flowers on the barrel in supplication for improved fertility.

Questions were raised during the site visit related to the method of restoration, for example the type and color of the finishing used for walls, and differentiating between various phases

of the fort's physical development and subsequent repairs. Despite a few reservations, it was generally acknowledged that the restoration has underscored the commitment of the Malaysian Government, particularly the Department of Museums and Antiquities in protecting heritage buildings and monuments for future posterity. Conservationists hope that the restoration of Fort Cornwallis will generate a groundswell of interest and support for heritage conservation within Penang.



The Mansion

After the AGM, Sunday, 2 September 2001, Site Visit #18

Text by Annalies Allain, photos by Lim Gaik Siang and Tong



place a tight, closed-in feeling. The ground floor restaurant did much better in reinterpreting former grandeur and elegance.

The Mansion somehow fell into neglect and served all kinds of questionable purposes, including that of a low-class bordello and drug haunt. Bought up by a Singaporean company, it risked the sledgehammer but was saved by road-

widening regulations that made the site too narrow for property development.

Recently restored, the ground floor now houses a posh restaurant, while the first floor hails back to the money-making tin heritage by housing the offices of ESCOY Smelting Corporation.

The PHT congratulates Dato' Nazir Ariff for getting The Mansion restored and wishes to thank him for allowing us all a glimpse of early 20th century glory in a corner of downtown Penang.

Editor - The restaurant 'Thirty-Two' now serves Italian cuisine.

The AGM proceeded smoothly despite some good-natured confusion on the procedures for Council elections. Thanks were offered to Dato' Nazir Ariff who sponsored space and refreshments. Soon afterwards, Lin Lee in her inimitable lively way provided a short history of The Mansion, a 1926 dream house for Leong Yin Khean, located at 32 Jalan Sultan Ahmad Shah, opposite the Protestant Cemetery.

Son of tin mining tycoon Leong Fee, Leong Yin Khean spent lavishly to

build and furnish the house Italian style. He imported genuine mosaic from Naples, which can still be admired today on the second floor around a magnificent circular air well... Lin Lee read recollections of Leong Yin Kean's grandson about breezy rooms, frosty glass lights and a romantic top floor. She added her own recollections and pointed out how the entrance had showcased an airplane propeller and ... a coffin. During the wartime, the Japanese requisitioned the house and the family retreated to a Penang Hill property.

The PHT crowd spread out to get a sense of the old days and many of us headed for the third floor to find all romance gone out of the window because a false ceiling, air-conditioning and ordinary blue carpeting gave the





Keng Yen, the Hon. Secretary of the association, who briefed us on the origin of their association and their present activities. He also explained to us on the significance of the main deity of the temple, Kuan Kong, the God of War who represented chivalry, honour and strength. At the Wu Ti Meow, members were appraised of the differences to be found between Cantonese buildings and Hokkien ones, both in form and decorative details.

The beautifully intact association of the Sing Lings, the Ng See Kah Meow or association of Ngs (similar to the Chinese character of 'five') was next with its Art Nouveau wall

King Street Temples

Sunday, 25 November 2001, Site Visit #21

Text by L.L.Loh-Lim, photos by Dr. Choong Sim Poey

A warm and muggy afternoon saw 68 members and friends gathered at the corner of King and Church Streets. Dr Choong welcomed everyone and introduced Goh Mai Loon, the facilitator for the afternoon. She led us on to the Poe Choo Seah, a 1903 building of the Baba Chinese. Recently repaired, the association which goes back 200 years, represents one of the most exclusive 'clubs' in town, having only 19 members. Applications are not entertained, members have to be invited to join and women have never been considered worthy. The Poe Choo Seah own only 19 properties in the historic core of George Town and

84 years old Mr. Khoo of the association welcomed us and provided a background history. PHT member and history buff, Wong Kam Choon, also gave us some interesting insights. We were then invited to go upstairs to view some antiques and furnishings by Mr. Khoo's grandson.

Amidst a light drizzle we then proceeded to the Penang Toishan Ningyang Wui Kwon, an association of Cantonese people from the Toi San area and of the Sing Ling dialect. There we were greeted by Mr. Chan



tiles and decorative flower stands. Hundreds of ancestral plaques adorn the altars and continue to be honoured by their descendants. Mai Loon gave us a brief history of this clan house and the present activities.

The last stop and tea, was at the Cantonese and Hakka 'Tua Peh Kong' temple. In a critical state of disrepair, the temple is connected to the one in Tanjung Tokong and administered by a different board from the Hokkien 'Tua Peh Kong' on Armenian Street. It is hoped that any renovation works will be conducted with authenticity as the main concern.

Many thanks to Mai Loon for leading us through the site and to Teresa for buying the drinks and kueh.



Suffolk House Rescued

Sundays, 30 September & 28 October 2001, Site Visits #19 & #20

Text by Wendy Lavender and Gwynn Jenkins, photos by Lim Gaik Siang and Tong

The old adage "Where there's a will there's a way" aptly sums up the restoration efforts on George Town's historic Suffolk House. Formerly the Governor's residence, it fell into decline with its last known use as the canteen for the adjacent Methodist Boys' School, until 1972. The possibility of restoration of this property was already discussed in the early 1960s. However, the suggestion of restoring a symbol of colonial authority so soon after Independence was not top priority.

The fledgling Penang Heritage Trust (PHT) held a tea party on the site in 1986 to raise public awareness of its demise, but little else was done until a dilapidation study was conducted in 1993 by South Australian Construction (SACON), sponsored through the efforts of PHT. Then with a grant from the British High Commission RM45,000-00 was spent helping to avoid further decay by erecting scaffolding and tarpaulin, without which little of the building would have remained to restore.

The State Suffolk House Restoration Committee was launched in 1994 by the State Exco Member for Tourism, then Madam Kee. Finally a land exchange between the Methodist Church and the State, which had been actively pursued by Penang Heritage Trust (PHT), took place in 2000, together with an announcement of State funding. Conservation could commence.

On 30 September, 2001, sixty staunch PHT supporters gathered at their own risk, and undeterred by rain, to see for themselves, what work had been achieved for such a restrictive budget. They assembled in the stabilized and partly restored grand ballroom, reached only by a scaffolding staircase, to listen to those actively responsible for what we were now able to see. PHT council member



Loh-Lim Lin Lee, supported by vice chairman Ahmad Chik presented the history of the struggle for recognition and restoration. Project Architect, Laurence Loh and contractor Najmuddin from Najcom explained the work, their discoveries as the work had progressed, and their restoration methods.

Any good conservation project focuses on keeping the renovations as close as possible to the original, and this has been faithfully followed at Suffolk House. Built circa 1792, Suffolk House is arguably the best example of Anglo-Indian architecture outside India, thus important as a conservation example. The jack roof, directly above the ballroom which allowed for a tall vaulted ceiling, was an early modification and had originally been covered in the ridge and furrow Chinese roof tiles used on Chinese temples. The few original tiles remained in place and were clearly different in pattern from the new tiles brought in from China, as were the newly laid salvaged brick in the walls. The main pitched roof, which was a later addition (the original flat roof having proved unsuitable in a tropical climate), used

Indian ridge-and-furrow tiles as can still be seen on many of George Town shophouses. The change from flat to ridge roof has meant that the original colonnaded facade has had either end chamfered to take the slope of the roof. This roof restoration is Phase Two and is currently protected by a temporary metal roof.

Looking up into underside of the jack roof, huge hardwood (*Chengal Batu*) beams span its width. One new beam had to be made from several pieces bolted together as large timbers are no longer available. *Chengal Batu* was also used for the new timber floor beneath us. The 24-inch thick brick-and-lime mortar walls and pairs of Tuscan columns were finished in chunam lime plaster. The columns were rubbed with granite blocks until polished smooth. Fortunately no modern paints had been used and so restoration back to the original was fairly simple. Material samples were continually tested until a close match with the originals was achieved.

This fine house is an elegant mixture of Georgian proportions. The double cube volumes, enhanced by the needs for ventilation learnt from the

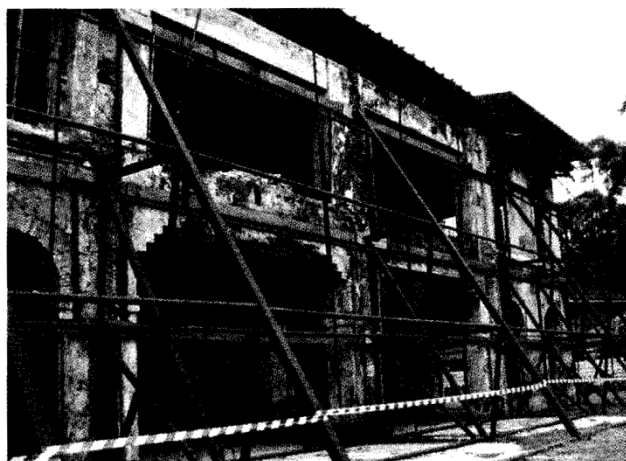
earlier Indian settlements, are satisfied by sequential openings for both people and air, from one side of the house to the other. Although its heart is now stable, the rooms around the core showed years of neglect and decay.

The physical edifice is only one aspect of this place, it is also rich in social history. One can only imagine the far-reaching decisions made within its walls when it served as Governor's residence in the early 19th century where for instance, Sir Stamford Raffles discussed the founding of Singapore. Suffolk House was also the hub of social activities of the era, and written of in many a writer's diary. "... it is in short, an English Gentleman's mansion and park, where clove and nutmeg trees (in full bearing during our visit) are substituted for oaks, elms and ashes. The grounds contain from two to three hundred spotted deer." (John Crawford, 1828).

Rounding off a successful afternoon, Najmuddin and Laurence showed the group around the rest of the site, hard hats at the ready, cautious of areas yet to be restored and huge steel frames supporting vulnerable facades. The restoration efforts at Suffolk house are far from over. Subsequent to the findings of the dilapidation study, funds were secured from Phase 1, which has been used to stabilize and secure the centre of the house. With this phase now almost complete, we wait with bated breath for the much whispered funds for Phase Two.

We cannot end of course, without thanks to all involved in this site visit -- Teresa and Wendy for organising, baking and brewing our refreshments. William, Melissa, Razak -- PHT's devoted staff, and of course Laurence Loh, Najmuddin, as well as PHT council members, Loh-Lim Lin Lee and Ahmad Chik.

One final comment- As he ended his talk, Laurence Loh posed us with a question: "What should Suffolk House become?" In all seriousness, please, if you have any ideas, forward them to PHT.



Seminar on Healthy Cities

1-4 October 2001, Langkawi

At a recent seminar on Healthy Cities, Ahmad Chik representing the Penang Heritage Trust gave a talk on "Conservation of Heritage Buildings".

Since the early 1990's, the Ministry of Health has been promoting the concept of a Healthy City as one '...that improves its environment and expands its resources so that people can support each other in achieving their highest potential...' and '...is conscious of health as an urban issue and striving to improve it.'

By 1996, when it was evident that the two pilot cities Kucing and Johor Baru had successfully implemented the "Healthy City" concept, the Ministry decided that the programme would be extended nationwide by 2005. The aim was to galvanise the government departments and other concerned parties to encourage them to work towards common objectives. Each participating department was encouraged to identify key parameters, objectives and develop a work plan.

George Town has been chosen as the next city to implement this programme and in preparation, a four-day seminar was held in Langkawi. Nearly 40 participants representing most of the major

departments attended and about a dozen papers were presented. Several NGO's including the PHT were invited to make half hour presentations.

Ahmad Chik explained that PHT is not only concerned with the preservation of communities, old trades, traditions and cultures. He pointed out the societies that lived in the historic heart of the city long ago achieved a balanced and viable lifestyle. Indeed it can be said that in some ways they achieved the objectives of the healthy well before it was even thought of. However, with the repeal of the Rent Control Act, there is a very real possibility that these communities would be destroyed and their way of life lost forever.

He appealed to those present to help preserve these communities by preventing illegal demolition and the wrong use of the buildings such as ware-houses. He appealed to those present to help preserve these communities by preventing illegal demolition and the wrong use of the buildings such as ware-houses. He also reminded the participants how the quality of life in the inner city area is being badly affected by traffic congestion, lack of open space and greenery.

TECHNIQUE

Why they did what they did...

Text and illustrations by Gwyn Jenkins, photo by Lim Gaik Siang

The longer I work on the restoration of Penang's historic buildings, the longer I live in a 100 year old shophouse and the precious moments I spend photographing and sketching these structures, the more I marvel at the intelligence of the original builders.

Why they did.

If we take a look at Popham's map of 1798 it is easy to see that George Town was mainly built on a swamp. Swampy ground can be an asset as long as it is respected. Our early builders therefore, used layers of *bakau* - mangrove trunks as platforms on which to build brick footings and walls. These walls are of soft burnt brick with lime mortar and a breathable skin of lime plaster both allow moisture to rise and evaporate. In doing so it helps cool the room above (1). Terracotta floor tiles and later patterned cement ones were used on the floor, again these allowed the water to evaporate and cool the space above. So the choice of materials used kept the occupants cool.

What happens if we don't.

Problems occur when the materials are changed for modern ones. Concrete floors push too much water into the walls. Wall tiles or black cement plaster forces the water to rise through the floor or above the wall tiles (2 and 3). Please visit PHT's office for a fine example!!! (we inherited it)

Modern acrylic paints used on lime plaster walls have the same effect as a plastic sticky plaster, band aid, on your skin, it make you sweat and so does the lime plaster. Traditional methods are the best, it is also cheaper.

What they used - we can use too.

Bakau trunks - still available today and still in use in the building industry, no need to change unless the water table alters, so watch out for local modern development projects. Remember Prangin Mall and 300 cracked houses.?

Burnt bricks - if they are badly eaten away by moisture then they should be replaced, but try to use recycled bricks of the same kind.

Lime plaster needs to be replaced every 100 years or so, but should always be replaced with lime plaster. It comes in a ready mixed form of putty and hydrated lime that needs soaking for months. There are contractors in Penang that can use lime plaster and they can be contacted through PHT.



Lime wash is just a watered down version of lime plaster, with a powder pigment, both still easily available. Lime has a natural fungicide which deters mould. It can be coloured using powdered pigment though the old recipe for yellow was to use the urine from cows fed on mango leaves - not so common these days!!

Terracotta tiles should never need replacing - PHT's are over 100 years old, 1 inch thick washed only with water and are polished daily with hundreds of feet.

Modern needs - Air conditioning and old walls.

The ground floor of a shophouse was designed before the invention of air

FOOTPRINTS

by Mrs. Peel

At the bottom of our stairs you will find two paw prints pressed deep in the terracotta tile. A reminder that these were made by hand, placed to dry where a mischievous dog decided to play, packed up and shipped from China - or were they made here? Does anybody know? Huge, thick slabs of smooth red clay, pressed by hand polished now by feet. Laid by



craftsmen hundreds of miles from home saving their dollars to return. How can we smash up this history, these tellers of tales? And get in every street you walk down today, someone somewhere is doing just that. And in their place soulless concrete or factory perfect copies of emotionless designs are installed with 'cheap lak' care. What price has history.

conditioning and so allowed natural airflow through openings and screens. If these remain open then fans should be all that is required to keep cool. Air conditioning draws moisture out of the walls and floors. As Tanjung was a swamp, more water will follow. Too much water then causes the old lime plaster to break down and the floors to be permanently wet.

The first floor, also designed to allow natural airflow through openings and screens is less of a problem. The floors are timber and the walls are well above the wet earth. Air conditioning piping can be run up to 100 feet from the unit to the condenser, therefore can be placed at the back, leaving the original front facade free of ugly modern attachments.

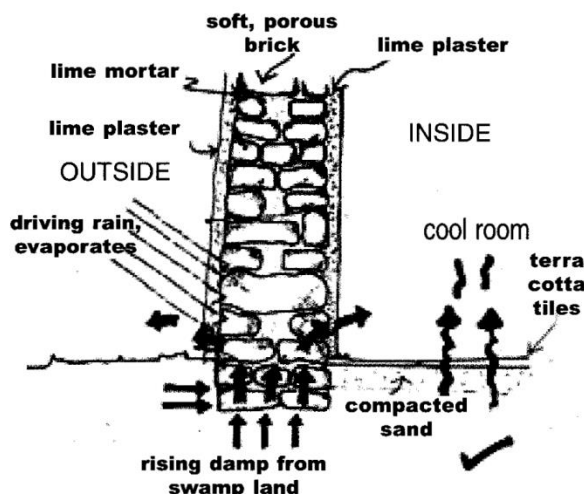
Party walls

Shophouses share a party wall with the neighbour so if one neighbour decides to use black cement or tiles on their side of the wall they will cause the other side of the wall to work harder at evaporating the moisture. Thus the lime plaster will break down quicker. Again take a look at PHT's walls, under the staircase, which is flaking off (thanks to our neighbour!!!) In contrast, the air well wall opposite is totally dry as it has maximum ventilation and is lime plastered on both sides.

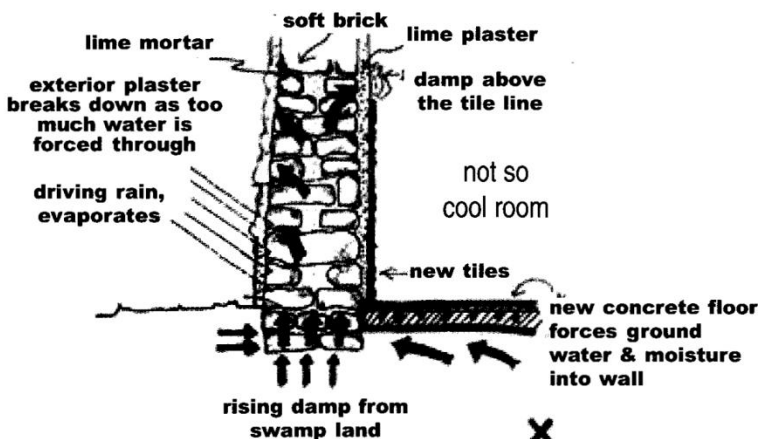
White ants

White ants will rise up wet walls. Therefore keeping the wall and floor moisture balanced with traditional materials is a sure way to avoid them. Concrete floors make your walls wetter and that's where they come up from the ground. Tiled wall make the walls even wetter and attract the ants more. Lime plaster and terracotta or patterned cement floor tiles keep the moisture content even, which deters the ants. PHT doesn't have white ants - our neighbour does.

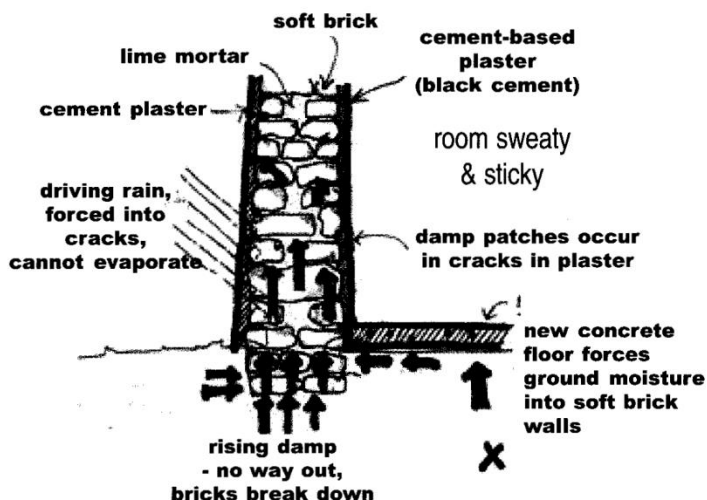
Note: Perhaps some of these theories need expanding, please feel free to comment and build up a library of experiences and knowledge for us all to learn.



1. A HEALTHY - SMART WALL



2. NOT SO SMART WALL



3. UNHEALTHY WALL

LETTERS

Penang's True Stories

Let me congratulate your group for initiating the Penang Story. That Penang is one of the world's most unique places and deserves to be considered for world heritage listing is not surprising, and if I may add, recognition is overdue. Sadly, while it may have lost much of its natural beauty - the traffic around the island can be testing and ugly concrete towers obscure the beautiful hills - it is still an irresistible place. (Perhaps, you could let me know if anyone has driven around the island in a shorter time than I have - 35 minutes in 1984 in a Honda Accord. It is impossible to do that today with the traffic snarls along the way).

It made me very sad to see the giant Angsana trees in the Scotland Road/ York Road areas partially destroyed. I grew up for a time in Western Road opposite the jail, and my father used to tell us stories of released prisoners who choked to death upon their release when they ate their food too quickly.

I grew up in Penang and lived there for 20 years before leaving its then pristine shores for overseas study. One thing I promised myself I would do is write a novel with a setting on the island. In my research I was surprised to learn that Penang's founder Captain Francis Light married a Thai national and could speak Thai and Malay. Since its inception as a base for the British East India Company, Penang has been a cosmopolitan town. Built on the preeminence of English culture during Britain's heyday, it was a truly multicultural place and still is.

One aspect of this multicultural heritage is the intermingling of the different races among segments of Penang's youths in the late 60's. Drawn together by the pop culture and an English education, I recall with fond and proud memories how

we all laughed, cried, played, and grew up together in an age of 'innocence', though some of the things that we did were hardly innocent! It is something which has disappeared and I hope in your quest for historical anecdotes that you do not overlook the pinnacle years of the 60's. At least, in our group there was racial unity and social cohesion and racial and religious polarity were unknown.

My grandmother was a member of the Khoo family and we grew up with a strong sense of strict Nyonya values interposed with English and Chinese cultures.

If there is some way I could contribute to the history of that era by recollecting some of the things we did I'd be happy to oblige. In our group Malay boys had Chinese girlfriends, and Chinese boys had Malay girlfriends and Indian girls went out with Malay and Chinese boys (not forgetting the odd Australian bloke from the ranks of the RAAF who were then stationed in Butterworth but many of whom lived on the island) and we were a microcosm of a truly Malaysian Malaysia. What made it possible was the place, Penang itself - the parochial atmosphere of the island and our rich English heritage.

In a sense I am disappointed with the way Penang has developed. Every time I return to the place on a short visit, I lament how little has been done to protect its natural assets and historic buildings etc. One does not need to go the way of Singapore so that everything that is restored looks so artificial, it gives one a clinical feel. But Penang with the stains of history on its old buildings deserves to be loved.

If Penang history can contribute to the world - it is in showing that a tiny island with a multicultural society and a hardworking people of all races and

religions can live and work together successfully given the chance and opportunity. Surely, this is a universal value worth preserving and promoting. Penang's success is without doubt of great universal significance and value in a world of increasing racial and religious tensions.

Steve Oh, Perth



Touch-less?

In response to Gwynn's interesting 'touch-me/touch-me-not' message, I hope to add to this subject.

I have not had the opportunity to read the letter by Fiona but in Malacca, the situation is like this.

Cheng Hoon Teng is the oldest Chinese traditional temple in Malaysia and the temple's constitution upholds the traditions of the Chinese. One of these, is the rubbing of the heads of the guardian lions and the rolling of the ball inside the mouth of one of them. This must be allowed to continue.

However, it has become a favourite line of tour guides to encourage the tourists to rub and many will create some fanciful and sometimes ridiculous stories to go with it. This I feel should be controlled.

The Temple has put up a notice requesting less touching but not forbidding all touching.

Jo Chua

Restoration Co-ordinator,
Cheng Hoon Teng Temple
Incorporated, Malacca.

Preservation of Malaysia's Antiquities

I have always had an interest in history, archaeology, and anthropology. My particular fascination with Malaysian history lies mostly in its ancient history, of which precious little is known, let alone preserved.

The few sites which have been discovered have been unfortunately been subject to tampering:

- a. Modern graffiti finds itself drawn alongside ancient graffiti in cave walls in Kelantan
- b. The 6th century CE Bujang Valley (I gather that this site gets its name from the Sanskrit word for serpent, "bhujanga") has been turned into picnic spot instead of maintaining it as an archaeological site.
- c. The Negri Sembilan megaliths, which are of unknown antiquity and origin, were excavated from its original location to make way for a gas pipeline! They now reside in the Petronas Megalith Park somewhere in Kuala Lumpur.

These and other sites are truly endangered sites. Colonial era sites are slightly more abundant, yet they to are subject to man's disrespect for heritage. Malacca's fort, A Famosa, suffers from the same short sighted mentality which the Bujang Valley is subject to. It's a poor preservation effort at best.

I suppose that there is an argument which says that the ancient must make way for the modern. The ideal is to see how they can both co-exist in this world.

I am glad that an organization such as the Penang Heritage Trust (PHT) exists, even if their efforts are solely directed towards Penang alone. Better some place than no place. I must say that they have made an excellent start towards preserving Penang's heritage, even if they do lack volunteers and the necessary funds needed to truly realizing their vision. It will come in good time. They just have to keep at it.

I do see many historical areas in Penang that needs to be improved:

- a. Francis Light's tomb is one of these. Like it or not he is a part of our heritage.
- b. Fort Cornwallis is another. It looks more like a horse's stable than a fort. The one and only artifact that does give it the semblance of a fort is the cannon, Seri Rambai

I do suppose that the preservation of Fort Cornwallis can be done tastefully, to bring out its historical and educational value, and yet bring the tourists in. I did see a similar fort once whose preservation did impress me - Fort Pitt, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, USA. It is in fact only slightly older than Fort Cornwallis, but its preservation is far superior.

There is a museum there <http://www.fortpittmuseum.com/WelcomePage.html>, complete with dioramas of what the place would have looked like during the 18th century. There are even reenactments



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of 18th century life. There are lots of educational material available at the fort. The museum shop also carries some decent souvenirs. This is the same way we should be doing it for Fort Cornwallis, A Famosa, and other lesser known forts located in this country.

Christopher John

Editor's Note - The author might have kinder things to say when he sees Fort Cornwallis in its present restored state. The management and presentation of the fort however still needs to be reviewed.

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'

2x 1st place winner 'Most Excellent Project' UNESCO Asia Pacific Heritage Award 2000

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ANNOUNCEMENTS

PHT Wins UNESCO Special Achievement Award

Penang Heritage Trust was one of the three UNESCO-LEAP projects that received the Special Achievement Award in Cultural Heritage Conservation, presented by the Office of the UNESCO Regional Advisor for Culture in Asia and the Pacific, UNESCO Bangkok.

The award was given for PHT's 'UNESCO LEAP (Local Effort and Preservation) project for 'Community Participation in Waqf Revitalization' (1999). The project objective was to educate the mosque community around the two historic mosques, Mesjid Melayu Lebuah Aceh and Mesjid Kapitan Keling, about Muslim heritage and to promote the idea of rehabilitating heritage buildings and urban environment for the mosque community.

'Community Participation in Waqf Revitalization' was organised by the Penang Heritage Trust and assisted with 'catalytic funds' of US\$5,000 from UNESCO LEAP (which stands for 'Programme on Integrated Community Development & Cultural Heritage Site Preservation in Asia & the Pacific through Local Effort'. Its partners were the Kapitan Keling Mosque Committee, the Kapitan Keling Mosque Women's Group, the Badan Warisan Masjid Melayu Lebuah Aceh (Acheen Street Mosque Heritage Trust), the Kelab Belia Warisan (Heritage Youth Club), the Badan Warisan Sumatra (Sumatra Heritage Trust) and the Women's & Human Resources Studies Unit of the School of Social Sciences, USM.

The project was coordinated by volunteer site managers Khoo Salma Nasution and Abdur-Razzaq Lubis, with the great help of PHT stalwarts Ms. Gwyn Jenkins, Mrs. Loh-Lim, Cikgu Bahroodin and Prof. Wazir Karim; young volunteers including a



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graduate student of University Malaya Ms. Koh Sheh-Ren, two interns from Badan Warisan Sumatra Ms. Yenny Rahmayati and Ms. Mimie Kardina Batoebara, and many other members of PHT and the mosque community, who are too many to mention here.

Several dozen events, talks, consultations, workshops and tours were organised for the community from late 1998 until February 2000. The efforts are being continued under the programme entitled 'Heritage Community Revitalization through Women and Youth', sponsored by the CIDA Women's Initiative Fund and the UNESCO Participation Programme in 2001 and 2002.

The two other winners of the UNESCO Special Achievement Award were 1) the Kim Bong Village Woodcarving Workshop in Hoi An, Viet Nam and 2) the Rehabilitation of Traditional Mustard Seed Oil Production and Upgrading of the Main Square and its Surroundings in the village of Khokana, Lalitpur, Nepal.

The award to PHT was received by Mr. Lim Huck Chin on behalf of the organisation, during the closing ceremonies of the UNESCO Conference/Workshop on "Cultural Heritage

Management and Tourism: Models for Co-operation among Stakeholders" which was held in Lijiang, China from 8-18 October 2001.

According to the 'UNESCO Local Effort and Preservation Partner Citation' the award was in recognition of the project's success in:

- ~ mobilizing the Muslim community to become more aware and responsible for the Muslim heritage of Penang;
- ~ promoting the waqf issue to the general public through extensive media exposure, educational
- ~ heritage tours, video-documentation of heritage values of the waqf and fruitful collaboration with other academic fora;
- ~ encouraging the involvement of other cultural associations, academia, conservationists and interest groups;
- ~ creating channels of communication and lobbying of waqf issues;
- ~ providing community services, such as setting up legal clinic and facilitating applications for renting waqf premises; and
- ~ facilitating small physical urban improvements.

In the citation, Dr. Richard Engelhardt expressed that he was "very pleased that the project activities were in accordance with the principles of the UNESCO programme on "Integrated Community Development and Heritage Site Preservation through Local Effort in Asia and the Pacific" or LEAP. The citation also recognizes PHT's successful efforts in carrying the project to its second phase and in sourcing external funding from UNESCO under the Participatory Programme."

PHT Education Project Wins Ford Grant

The Penang Heritage Trust is very happy to announce that it has been selected as one of 13 Malaysian organizations to receive the Ford Motor Company Conservation and Environmental Grants. Mrs. Loh-Lim as coordinator of PHT's ongoing project 'An Education in Conservation' made a successful bid for funding.

The projects, selected by an independent panel of eight jury members, were assessed on usefulness, practicality, dedication, financial need, originality and replicability. Out of 52 applications from individuals, environmental organizations and community groups, received by Ford this year, 13 projects were granted support - five were for the Natural Environment category, three for Heritage, one for Conservation Engineering and four for Child and Youth projects.

The Ford Motor Company Conservation and Environmental Grants programme is a continuation of the successful Henry Ford Conservation Awards, launched in Europe in 1983. Since then, more than 15,000 groups and individuals, across 34 European countries have received aid. In 2000, Ford extended the programme to cover 50 countries, including Malaysia. The programme, in its 2nd year in Malaysia, aims at assisting individuals and organisations to initiate projects that help the local environment, heritage and natural resources

Website
www.ford-environmentalgrants.com



HERITAGE IN DANGER

The Ghee Hin Memorial at the General Hospital

by Loh-Lim Lin Lee

The Penang Heritage Trust would like to register its concern at the ongoing works at the Penang General Hospital grounds. Besides the loss of some buildings dating from 1882, one of the most magnificent and oldest Angsana trees in the car park, was cut down in the need to widen the road junction during the last major works carried out in 1990. Upon the entreaty of concerned citizens and as an 11th hour decision, the historic Ghee Hin Memorial was saved and relocated to the North-Eastern corner of the grounds (somewhere just behind the recently erected blood-bank column).

While Penang was known as a convalescence port for British India, there were no medical facilities for the Asian poor. The leader of the Ghee Hins, Mun Ah Foo, built a Paupers' Hospital at the junction of Residency and Hospital Roads in 1854. A Committee headed by Lieutenant-Governor Anson administered the Hospital after Mun's death and the colonial administration added the Penang General Hospital in the adjacent lot in 1882. The Ghee Hin Society donated the site of the original Paupers' Hospital to the people of Penang in 1886 and the Memorial is testimony to this very important civic act.

All the grounds and the car park around the Memorial have currently been excavated, leaving it standing on its own little patch of green tuft. The public wishes to be informed of the plans for the Memorial. Is it to be left in its current position? If so, will bracing and other protective measures be taken, in the course of piling works being carried out around it? If it is to be moved, will it pose a danger to the monument itself? Will the new position be an equally prominent one?

The Trust would also like to express concern for one of the last remaining historic buildings within the hospital complex, believed to be the original Staff Nurses' Hostel built in 1930. It is one of the most gracious buildings in the complex, stacked a little like an elongated wedding cake with icing. It is important as an example of medical public buildings of the period and should be carefully restored and reused.

Postscript - JKR had subsequently officially informed the Penang Department of Health that it should take serious cognisance of PHT's comments as the Trust's council consists of highly respected professionals such as architects, engineers and historians who have vast experiences in conservation and heritage. The department was requested to arrange a meeting involving representatives from JKR and the Penang Heritage Trust, in order to sort things out and arrive at an amicable decision.

Penang Heritage Trust Council Term 2001-2003, as of Sept. 2001

Immediate Past President: Dato' Nazir Ariff
President: Dr. Choong Sim Poey
Vice-President: Mr. Ahmad Chik
Hon. Secretary: Ms. Khoo Salma Nasution
Hon. Treasurer: Ms. Catherine Loh
Council Members: Ms. Loh-Lim Lin Lee
 Ms. Teresa Capol
 Dr. Tan Chong Guan
 Ms. Lim Gaik Siang
 Mr. Teoh Poh Huat
 Mr. Kim Wong

TOURS

Save Historic George Town - Listed on 100 most endangered sites 2000, World Monuments Watch.

Inner City Trails of George Town



Organized by the Penang Heritage Trust in collaboration with Ken-Air PHT

Please help us to promote!

*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 Melissa 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).*



Penang
Heritage
Trust
Persatuan
Warisan
Pulau
Pinang
PHT



KEN-AIR
THE RELIABLE TOUR

Reports by Teresa Capol

Uplands School Student Group 25 June 2001

Walking Heritage Trail

We met at 10.30am at Market Street. (Little India). We walked along the Spice shops, textile and accessories shops and various other shops selling anything and everything that an Indian household needs. The students were quite amazed at how much one can learn and see if only on takes interest. We continued out tour to the Mariamman Temple. By then, everyone was quite tired and they decided to take a break by having "roti canai & teh tarik". After the break, we walked on to Khoo Kongsi, Acheen Street Mosque, Syed Al-Attas Mansion, Sun Yat Sen's Base and onwards to the Yap Kongsi. Explanations were given along the way. We then walked straight to the Kuan Yin Temple, passing the Kapitan Kling Mosque. The tour ended at 12.30 p.m.

Tour for Japanese Vice-Mayor 11 July 2001

We gave a tour to the Vice-Governor of Kanagawa Prefecture Mr. Eiju Hayashi and his group, 8 persons in all. We started with a Museum tour and boarded trishaws for the heritage tour starting from Fort Cornwallis. Then we proceeded to Little India, the Khoo Kongsi, Acheen Street, Syed Alatas Mansion and Sun Yat Sen Base, before finishing the last leg of the tour at the Cheong Fatt Tze Mansion.

The Perak Academy 8-10 September 2001

(see the article on Pearl and Pewter, Cut-and-Paste, overleaf)

Familiarization Tour for Neckermann representative from Alam Mutiara 10 August 2001

We did a 4-hour tour covering Little India, the Khoo Kongsi historical enclave, the Street of Harmony and Chulia Street. Along the way, explanations on the way of life of the people who live in the inner city of George Town were given. We also gave an insight on the Hindu temples, the Khoo Kongsi, the Acheen Street Mosque, the Syed Al-Attas Mansion and the Sun Yat Sen Base. Alam Mutiara hopes to encourage its guests to go on a walking Heritage Trail and we at PHT certainly welcome that!

Ian McLean 3 September 2001

A 4-hour walking heritage trail cum traditional trades tour was given to Ian McLean. We walked along Little India and captured the various trades that have been there for years. We spoke to the people who had interesting tales to tell us of their first arrival in Penang. All in all, the four hours just wasn't enough.

Dr. Huang's Group 7 September 2001 Heritage Trail 2 & Cheong Fatt Tze

The tour for 3 adults & 9 children started at 9 a.m. at the Penang Museum and we walked to the Cathedral of the Assumption. The children were wonderful and patient and were encouraged to always listen. Dr. Huang constantly asked questions to keep their interest going. We passed the St. Xavier's Institution and came to Cheong Fatt Tze Mansion for a guided tour. All in all, they were exhausted and ready for some lunch.



**American Women's Association
18 September 2001
Little India Spice Trail**

About 18 ladies from the American Women's Association took part in PHT's Little India Spice Trail. Even the early morning rain did not dampen these ladies' spirits. At 9.30 a.m., we walked from the PHT office, passing Stewart Lane. It was raining quite heavily, so we stood by the flower shops and gave an explanation of the surrounding area. We then walked across to Market Street and by that time the rain had stopped, making it easier for us to continue on our tour without the hassle of umbrellas. We stopped at a local sundry shop, a butcher, and then headed on to the Mariamman Temple.

With the wonderful smells of food around us, we could not resist but to stop at our favorite "*roti canai & teh tarik*" shop. After a sumptuous breakfast, we visited more shops and explanations were given on the various clothes, accessories, joss sticks and incense. We also passed a 60 year old spice and flour-grinding mill with machines from Denmark and Holland.

Finally, we ended up at the spice shops and explanation of the types and uses of each spice was given. By this time, all the ladies vowed to learn to cook a curry. To end the tour, we made our way to "*Sushi Banana Leaf Restaurant*" and had a "finger-licking good" lunch. For some of these ladies, it was the first savouring of rice on a banana leaf, using fingers. As the saying goes, there is always a first time for everything.



Muslim Heritage Tour

**for International School of Penang (Uplands)
6 & 8 November 2001**

Text by Alexis Kerr

The Year 6 students at the International School of Penang have been studying Penang as their humanities topic this term. They have spent a lot of their time looking at the history and the various different cultural influences that have shaped Penang into what it is today.

The students enjoyed an hour long walking tour with Abdur-Razzaq Lubis, site manager for PHT's Muslim Heritage project funded by UNESCO Participation Programme. Starting at 120 Armenian Street, they visited the Syed Alatas Mansion, crossing into Leboh Aceh, along towards the Mosque, looking at the sites of the old Arab bookshops and printing presses and learning a lot just from looking at the names, dates and logos on the shop fronts.



They passed by the site of the offices in Lumut Lane - known in the past as the "Second Jeddah" as it was the gathering place for the Hajj pilgrimage. When the pilgrims gathered to go by sea from Swettenham Pier the journey took about 40 days! On towards the Mosque, where Lubis pointed out the Chinese influences in the mosque - built by an Arab from Sumatra - in the swallow tail roof and the pagoda-like minaret.

Throughout the tour there were constant reminders that in this area of Muslim influence. Between the two oldest mosques in Penang on Acheen Street and Kapitan Kling Street, there are many Chinese temples and clan houses. A look at the model of George Town in the Syed Alatas Mansion showed the children that Pitt Street - now known as Jalan Mesjid Kapitan Kling - is the home of a Christian Church, a Hindu Temple, two Mosques and two Buddhist temples. As one of the children said at the close of the tour: "Why can't the rest of the world live like this, if we can do it in Penang?"



Photos by Lim Gaik Siang

EVENTS & ACTIVITIES

Initiation into the Architecture of The Inner City

Monday, 1 October 2001

Text by Janet Pillai, photos of Anak-Anak Kota by Loh-Lim Lin Lee

Laurence Loh stood nonchalantly in front of the PHT office waiting for the last of us who were desperately looking for parking bays with no meters. 'Us' refers to the artists and facilitators who are resource persons in the heritage awareness program for young people, entitled *ANAK-ANAK KOTA* (Children of the City), organized by ARTS-ED Penang, with lots of information and manpower support from PHT.

The tour began right there on the porch of the PHT office with a promise of a broad overview of architecture in the inner city. As we stood there he got us examining buildings on a vertical plane from the road upwards; bullnose bricks, granite edgings, Indian brick walls, terracotta roof tiles, skyline....We would have continued to listen if he had gone on to explain sun, moon and stars, for he was so infused with a passion for all that he spoke of.

A horizontal perspective followed, with a very intimate journey through the five-foot way of terrace houses on Stewart Lane. We literally experienced the architectural definition of public space, intermediary space and

private space in the relationship of the shop house to the road. This was evident in the levels, materials and spatial separation.

Braving a light rain we enthusiastically moved on to different buildings; Religious Buildings, Schools, Public buildings, Residences. These categories really helped sort out a previous jumble in our heads. Laurence showed us excellent examples of different architectural styles; Cantonese, Neoclassical, Anglo Indian etc from one building to another and often innovative 'three-in-one' styles rendered to the façades, moldings, windows, porticos, pillars and corridors. More importantly he highlighted where eclecticism worked and where it did not. Landscaping became a 'hot' issue as we walked alongside the sea-wall at the Esplanade and rounded Fort Cornwallis, which we have to admit, became quite invisible at certain points due to landscaping that ignored the bigger picture. Some of us greenies were feeling quite guilty by then.

Past the PPC we stood awhile on Weld Quay to contemplate the relationship of godowns to the waterfront. Our vision was led to the end of the street where suddenly the street corner seemed to go wrong as the newer building around the edge, took on drastically different proportions. By this time we were getting the hang of this tour and expressed a collective desire to replace the government car park with a 'town square.'

We walked through Beach Street savoring art décor, classical and modern style buildings with some pretty *canggih* (sophisticated) façades. As we reached the centre, Laurence started on the intriguing topic of 'vistas' or views. Like the



needle of a feng shui compass he gently directed us towards telescopic views at the end of certain streets that revealed a direct view of the sea or the hills to the north, south, east and west of George Town. Residents in the city would only have had to lift their heads to the horizon and they would have had a clear sense of where they were and where they were heading to, in relation to the rest of the island! Now however, there were office 'blocks' which obstructed the flow of energy, broke the link of the micro to the macro, and took away the relationship of the 'here' to the 'there'.

We finished off with an overview of different temples and clan houses on King Street and Pitt Street and wound our way back to PHT. There were three interesting concepts that perhaps encapsulate the essence of the tour, 'transitions' connecting one fabric to another, one space to another, 'eclectic' drawn from various sources and 'vernacular' the language and meanings understood by all and sundry. This gives us a whole new understanding of heritage as a rather rich layering and intercalation of cultures over time. We hope we can fulfill the challenge to get the young participants in the *Anak-Anak Kota* to feel and understand this as well. Thanks Laurence Loh and PHT!

'Anak-Anak Kota' (AAK) is a very special non-profit community project created for children living in the inner city of Georgetown, Penang. Children will be working with professional artists on the streets, recording the history and living culture of Georgetown using many art forms. Anak-Anak Kota has since held a number of workshops, tours, exhibitions and performances.



EXCHANGE & NETWORKING

Pearl and Pewter, Cut-n-Paste

**Perak Academy's Goodwill Field Trip,
8-10 September 2001**

Text by Lau Siak Hong, photo by Lim Gaik Siang

It is easy to understand the vital social and mining links between Penang, the Pearl of the Orient and Perak, the Silver State. From late 19th to early 20th Century, Peranakan Kapitan Chung Keng Qui, Kapitan Chin Ah Yam, Leong Fee, Kapitan Chung Thye Phin, Eu Tong Sen and other historical figures had made their money from tin-mining and commerce in Perak and returned to Penang. As wealthy community leaders, they had created landmark buildings. The north-south rail link completed in 1909 further facilitated communication and family ties between the States right up to 1950's. This trip to Penang in 2001 would rekindle the interest in our "shared heritage".

With the assistance of Salma, Penang Heritage Trust (PHT) Honorary Secretary, eleven volunteers of the Built Environment Council (BEC) of the Perak Academy came to see Penang on a September weekend to learn about Urban Conservation. Struck by the ambience of old Penang over three days and two nights, the tourists got totally culture-blasted.

Saturday afternoon: PHT Council Member, Teresa started it all by leading the walk from our hotel through Church Street to the PHT office in Stewart Lane. En route, Judy the tourist got us into a living museum, an old terrace house and the ancestral home of her friends. We passed the humble shophouse where Eu Tong Sen was born, the forlorn Victorian mansion of Chung Keng Qui and the venerable Guan Yin Temple. We entered "Little India", where we basked in vibrant colours and spicy aroma and took in the streets from a *teh tarik* stall.

PHT Council Member, Gaik Siang, packed them in for the "grand tour" of the Chinese clan associations' kongsi houses and complexes on Canton Street. Through special arrangements, we were able to enter them to see some pretty incredible decorations and read the beautiful Chinese epigraphs. A rare privilege, indeed.

Sunday morning: the Penang Museum for an overview of Penang's ethnic mix and *La Maison Bleu*, international conservation award-winner, Cheong Fatt Tze Mansion. PHT Member, Joanne gave an inspired tour, spinning tales from the rich history of this architectural marvel, this feng shui-perfect cultural asset of Malaysia.

PHT Council Member, Lin Lee, who is closely associated with its pristine restoration, graciously gave the PHT Powerpoint Presentation in the blue mansion. After tea, PHT staff and representatives held an informal chat with the BEC tourists. To mark the goodwill visit, a copy of "Doctors Extraordinaire" (a Perak Academy publication) was presented to each of our guides and hosts. Later, we saw the renovated E&O Hotel and the Garage, an example of commercial adaptive re-use, where commerce and conservation strike a happy balance for mutual benefit.

By the final day, the tourists' appetite for heritage buildings was truly sated. Yet, the cultural mix around Armenian Street got to us: Dr Sun Yat Sen's Revolution HQ, the Acehnese



Mosque, Cheah Kongsi and Khoo Kongsi, its "cut-n-paste" roof-sculptures glistening in the morning sun. We also saw, with sadness, the senseless destruction of old wall-tiled panels in Armenian Street.

Seeing Penang afresh may be the inspiration to conserve the social and cultural heritage of Perak. PHT has proven that, for the benefit of all communities, conservationists must be seen as partners of the authorities and businesses, not dismissed as mere agitators and antagonists. It is this shift of mind-set which will tell on the core of our soul - and save our Heritage for generations of Malaysians, and for the appreciation and enjoyment of people from all over the world.

Contact person:
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'The Penang Story'

www.penangstory.net

Organised by

The Penang Heritage Trust

The STAR Publications

Main Sponsors

The Japan Foundation

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Official Hotel: The City Bayview Hotel, Penang

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Penang State Government

Penang, Malaysia, a historic port

at the northern end of the Straits of Malacca, attracted traders and settlers

from the Archipelago, China, South Asia, The Middle East and Europe.

Their legacy is one of the most extensive urban heritage areas in Southeast

Asia today, dating mainly from the late 18th century to the mid-20th century.

Their descendants are custodians of a living heritage,

a multicultural community forged through waves of migration.

'The Penang Story' project aims to bring together established and new scholars from various academic disciplines to revisit, reevaluate and consolidate the known history of Penang. Its objectives are:

- 1) to provide a historical basis for the interpretation of Penang's "outstanding universal values" based on its built and living heritage, towards the nomination of Penang and Malacca to UNESCO World Heritage status
- 2) to support conservation and education efforts towards this nomination
- 3) to generate a creative interface in urban and social history, to promote cross-fertilization between disciplines, as well as between local history and regional studies
- 4) to celebrate Penang's historical cultural diversity and to develop inter-cultural history
- 5) to explore Penang's historical role vis-à-vis its neighbours, particularly Malacca, and Penang's role in the region now known as IMT-GT

The World Heritage application requires that "The Penang Story" be told, in addition to the presentation of the inventory and management plan for the nominated historic area. "Story" implies history, while including historical perspectives of other disciplines and also embracing the stories of local communities.



For Registration/Further details:

The Penang Story project

Penang Heritage Trust

26-A Stewart Lane

10200 Penang, Malaysia

Tel/Fax: +604 2642 631

Email: phtrust@po.jaring.my

Website: www.penangstory.net

Charges:

Community colloquiums per day

RM 30 for PHT members

RM 40 for non-PHT members

inclusive of lunch & two teas

International Conference

18-21 April 2002

Registration Fee

- RM 300 (USD 95.00)

- RM 250 (USD 80.00 for early birds, registering before 1 February 2002)

Full-time Student

- RM 150 (USD 50.00)

- RM 125 (USD 45.00 for early birds, registering before 1 February 2002).

The fee includes 2 dinners, 3 lunches, 6 refreshment breaks and a full set of the abstracts.

'The Penang Story' project consists of an oral history workshop and four community history colloquiums leading up to a major international inter-disciplinary conference on the social history of Penang. The venue for all events is the City Bayview Hotel, Penang.

- *Oral History Workshop*, 18-19 August 2001

Community history colloquiums

- *Pengkisahan Melayu Pulau Pinang*, 25 August 2001
Co-organiser: Academy of Social Sciences, Malaysia (AKASS)
- *Indians in Penang – A Historical Perspective*, 22 Sept 2001
Co-organiser: Malaysian Indian Chambers of Commerce & Industry, Penang
- *History of the Chinese Communities in Penang*, 5 & 6 January 2002
Co-organiser: Clan Associations Youth Committee
- *Penang's Historical Minorities*, 2 Feb 2002
Co-organiser: Penang Eurasian Association



Oral History Workshop

**Saturday & Sunday,
18 & 19 August 2001
City Bayview Hotel, Penang**

*Text by Melissa Ananthraj, photos
this page by Lim Gaik Siang*

The Oral History project aimed to provide training in Oral History methodology. About 24 participants turned up for the 2-day workshop, mostly PHT members and volunteers. Noted Oral History facilitator Ms. Tan Beng Luan, formerly of the Singapore National Archives conducted the workshop.

The program started with an introduction of Ms. Tan Beng Luan by the Penang Story Project Manager, Woo Yee Saik. After the formal introductions, Tan took the participants into the interesting world of Oral History. She began with an overview of Oral History methodology, describing interviews and interviewing methods. She discussed the dos and don'ts of interviews and shared some of her humorous interview experiences.

After a hearty lunch, the group was given an assignment. The participants were broken into groups of three and had to play the part of interviewer, interviewee and an observer. The subject was "school days" and the group got busy applying the skills that they had learnt that morning. After a good half hour of interviews, the groups discussed and gave their opinions on how their interviews went. As she evaluated and reviewed some cases as reference, Tan noted down some of the problems encountered.

Oral History continued page 22

The Penang Story International Conference 2002

Language: English
Dates: Thursday to Sunday, 18-21 April 2002

*An exciting multi-disciplinary conference with local,
national and international speakers from the fields of
history, anthropology, geography, languages and culture.
This conference promises to offer fresh perspectives on
Penang's history and a reevaluation of the importance of
Penang's historical role as a regional centre.*

Pengkisahan Melayu Pulau Pinang

Saturday, 25 August 2001
City Bayview Hotel, Penang

Text by Melissa Ananthraj, photos by Lim Gaik Siang



The 'Pengkisahan Melayu Pulau Pinang' was jointly organized by the Penang Heritage Trust and Akademi Sains Sosial, Malaysia (AKASS) and officiated by TYT Yang Dipertua Tun Dato' Seri Haji Abdul Rahman bin Haji Abbas.

The colloquium began with welcoming remarks by Yang Berbahagia Dato Nazir Ariff, joint chairman of the "Pengkisahan Melayu Pulau Pinang". The TYT spontaneously broke out into a long speech about the uniqueness and diversity of the Penang Malays. At the end of it, he was invited to officiate the colloquium by beating a gong three times. Next, the TYT together with his wife, Toh Puan Seri Hajjah Majimor binti Shariff launched the AKASS website malaysiasociety.org. After that, there was a cheque presentation ceremony from the Japan Foundation, which was represented by Mr. Naoharu Fujii, Consul General and Mr. Sugihara Masamichi to the Penang Heritage Trust for the Penang Story

Project, the latter represented by project chairman Dato Kamal Hashim, vice-chairman Dr. Choong Sim Poey and joint secretary, Khoo Salma Nasution.

After the official ceremony and tea break, the first panel of speakers comprising of panel chairman, Dr. Badriyah Salleh, keynote speaker Dr. Nabir bin Haji Abdullah, Prof. Madya Mohd Razha Rashid, Pn. Mahani Musa, Prof. Omar Farouk Bajunid and Prof. Madya Arrifin Omar talked on Malay communities in Penang, before and during British rule. The panel elaborated on Malay communities such as the Arabs, the Straits Malays and Islamic groups in Penang. The chairman then opened the floor to comments and questions. After a good half hour of discussion, the participants broke off to enjoy a sumptuous lunch.

After lunch, the second panel talked about migration and the growth of Islamic groups in Penang. The second panel consisted of chairman, Prof.

Wazir Karim Jahan and speakers, Dr. Mohd Isa Othman, Abdur-Razzaq Lubis and Mala Rajo Sathian. This panel discussed the various economic and social relationships of Penang with its neighbors, Kedah, Southern Thailand and Sumatra. The floor was again open to the participants for their questions and views.

After the afternoon tea, the third and last group of speakers on the Oral History panel mesmerized the audience with their accounts and stories. Chaired by Prof. Omar Farouk Bajunid, the oral history panel was made out of Haji Yusoff Azmi Merican, Cikgu Mohd. Bahroodin Ahmad and Cikgu Mohamed bin Yahya. Among the topics discussed were Jawi Peranakan, the Malay community in Lebuah Acheh and the diverse colorful cultures of the Malay community. The inimitable Cikgu Bahroodin tickled the audience by mimicking a dozen Malay *loghat* commonly heard in various Penang neighbourhoods, thus proving the diversity of Malay communities found within such a small geographical space.

Prof. Wazir Jahan Karim concluded that the "Pengkisahan Melayu Pulau Pinang" gave us a fresh insight on the Malay communities in all aspects, political, economic, social and cultural. She also concluded that it is also important that we keep this living heritage and not bow down to the passages of time. The colloquium ended at 5.45 pm.



Indians in Penang

A Historical Perspective

Saturday, 22 September 2001
City Bayview Hotel, Penang

Text by Wendy Lavender, photos by Lim Gaik Siang



Co-organised by the Malaysian Indian Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Penang, this colloquium brought together representatives from various cultural and ethnic groups of South Indian origin. About 100 people attended this informative and very enjoyable day, gaining fascinating insights into the impacts on culture and commerce made by Penang's early Indian immigrants. Many of these influences remain today, witnessed in Penang's diversity and uniqueness, from architectural styles to the living heritage of cultural and religious practices.

The Indian colloquium's carefully chosen list of speakers each added their own individual knowledge and expertise, as well as a unique cultural perspective, to their chosen topic. The day's activities began with a welcome speech by president of the Indian Chamber of Commerce, Penang, Mr. N. Ramanathan, followed by a keynote address entitled South Asian Cultural Impact Upon Penang, by Professor Ghulam-Sarwar Yousof. Next came an interesting melding of history with modern technology; the launching of "The Penang Story" website by Dato' Anwar Fazal, senior advisor, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), who also holds the position of Advisor, "The Penang Story" project.

The first panel of speakers, chaired by Dr R. Karthigesu, addressed a number of topics related to Major Cultural, Social & Economic Trends. The development of the Indian Chamber of Commerce, Penang, was told by Taizoon, Tyebkhan, while Dr Satish Shukla and Geeta Ashram explained the history of some of Penang's Indian temples. A particularly colourful and insightful look at Penang's Tamil festivals was presented by Mrs Thilagavathi Vasudevan, of Universiti Sains Malaysia. The Development of Tamil Language and Literature in Penang, by the President, Penang Tamil Writers' Association, Mr K. Thiruvrasu, provided the closing topic for this panel.

Following a summary by the Panel 1 chairman, the floor was opened for Q & A. This opportunity was enthusiastically taken up. One gentleman in particular was vociferous in declaring that some aspects of the Tamil Festivals paper were not accurate; a lively discussion followed. This healthy debate is bound to stimulate added interest, which often translates into extra research, the result of which is a larger and more accurate body of information on the given topic.



Sated from the sumptuous lunch and eager to digest more of Penang's history, attendees reassembled to listen to Panel II: Migration, Settlement and Flourishing of Diverse Ethnic Communities. Chaired by Shashikant Papatlal, the erudite panel of speakers included Professor Suresh Narayanan, who spoke on the Untold Story of Malayalees in Penang and Mr P. Rajavelan, whose topic was Tamil Communities. The final two speakers' topics were the Chettiars in Penang, and Indian Muslims In Penang, by Mr Annamalai, and Mr Seeni Naina Mohd respectively. All four speakers contributed immeasurable knowledge and depth of information on their chosen subjects.



After the afternoon tea break, the third and final panel began. Panel III: Migration, Settlement and Flourishing of Diverse Ethnic Communities was chaired by Mr Gurcharan Singh. Mr Rajindar Singh, whose topic, the Early Arrival of the Sikhs in Malaya, presented a colourful history of the progression of Sikhs, from early days to the present. This minority group within a minority group, which began as a ragtag assortment of political prisoners, merchants and money-

Indian Colloquium continued

lenders, today has the highest ratio of professionals among all the ethnic groups in Malaysia. Next up, was Ms. Jessica Binwani whose talk on North Indians: Rediscovering Roots in Penang, was accompanied by excellent overhead presentations. As she explained, the North Indians are not one homogenous group, but rather a collection of various groups, each with its own unique culture. Ms Binwani is a founding member of YUVAAN, which aims to foster closer ties among Penang's North Indian youths, and to inspire a revival of North Indian cultural traditions and heritage by various research and activities. The final speaker was Reverend Marshall Thomson Sundradas, a priest of the Anglican Church of Malaysia. His talk, entitled Early Indian Christians in Penang gave a brief overview of the Roman Catholic, Anglican and Methodist churches, each of which has played an important role in providing Christian worship and influence to Penang's Indians. After closing remarks by Professor Ghulam-Sarwar Yousof the colloquium concluded.

All four colloquiums have a common objective: promoting enrichment of historical and cultural knowledge, and thus, by increased understanding and appreciation, aid in the preservation and continued growth of Penang's heritage. In this way can the colourful tapestry which is Penang - and which makes Penang unique - be preserved and enjoyed by future generations.

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Oral History continued

Bright and early the next day, Tan took the participants through the other part of Oral History - processing of data. The group was briefed on transcribing, data storage, types of equipment used and dissemination. The group learnt that interviewing is not as easy as it seemed - one has to be sensitive, neutral, patient and above all a good listener. After (another) hearty lunch, the group began brainstorming on the Penang Story Oral History Project. Ideas for names and places to conduct oral histories were intensely discussed. Participants were asked to name trades and businesses that were endangered. As interviews might ideally be done in various languages and dialects, it was valuable to have participants with different language skills. Before bringing the meeting to a close, the group scheduled another meeting to further discuss the Penang Story Oral History.

Special thanks to Ms. Tan Beng Luan for facilitating the workshop



The First Interviews

by Lim Siew Kang

With Lim Gaik Siang's advice, a digital voice recorder was purchased as a tool for the oral history interviews and also to record seminar proceedings. The following are the synopsis of several interviews I have carried out for PHT:

David Ng, an ex-St. Xavier's teacher talks about his experiences during the Japanese Occupation. He dreaded the 3 years 8 months of Jap military rule. He felt life was hanging in a limbo then. Every knock on his door brought him shivers. He recounted meeting up with Suzuki, who is an infamous executioner. Suzuki stank from high heavens. Reason? He vowed not to wash until Japan won the Pacific War! Not surprisingly

there were flies all over his head! David also related how at the end of the War one of the Japanese collaborators was caught by the locals and his body was chopped up to more than 30 pieces and thereafter sent to his wife.

Khoo Boo Hong, a former shipping company director and Hon. Secretary of the Khoo Kongsi, also recounted his experiences during the Japanese Occupation. He took up 2 jobs for a livelihood. He was only 17 years old then. He was a barber by day and a cobbler by night. Circumstances forced him into such. According to him, during that period you just have to be ingenious to survive. Interestingly he also disclosed how a local rubber tycoon saved some mothers, daughters and sisters from being raped by the Japanese military forces when they first set foot in Penang. This gentleman quickly gathered and encouraged all former prostitutes to ply their trade again at what was the former Lin Radio building in Burmah Road. Mercifully, thanks to him, the rapings subsided.

Khoo Kay Hin was then the rent collector and caretaker of Poh Choo Seah. At the onset of the Japanese Occupation, he was a volunteer with the local defence corp. He recounted how people were flocking to Ayer Item when the bombings in Penang started. He recollected how he and a group of volunteers under the command of a certain volunteer Captain Lim Khoon Teik maintained law and order at the Ayer Item village i.e. during the interim period prior to the arrival of the Japanese Military Administration.

Sonny De Silva, the MD of De Silva Sdn. Bhd. He gave a glimpse of the early Sinhalese inhabitants of Penang. Accordingly they were very skillful jewellers and were well known for their diamond settings. They were well sought after by the European customers. The Sinhalese who hails from Sri Lanka (formerly Ceylon) were closely knitted and settled in the Bishop Street area in the early years. PHT welcomes suggestions of interesting interview subjects.

fish lips

by Carolyn van Langenberg

Published by: Indra Publishing

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Paperback, 216 X 138mm

A powerful love story that moves recklessly back and forth through time to the most intimate meetings of cultures, histories and bodies. - Nicholas Jose

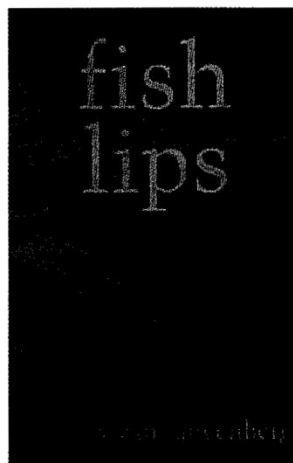
Gillian Hindmarsh is an Australian researcher, investigating architectural history in Penang, Malaysia. From a city archive, she souvenirs a photograph of Rose, a young English woman from the 1940s. In Gillian's imagination, Rose is a black and white romantic fantasy taken from an old forties movie.

Rose, however, was real. She has no family name to identify her. Her ghost is seen from time to time by fisherman in the waters off Georgetown, and in 1982, when disturbed by dredging for a bridge to the mainland, she looks for a body into which to reincarnate. And she wants her

lover, Li-tsieng to reincarnate also.

Wang Li-tsieng, the dissolute son of a wealthy Straits Chinese family, returned from the safety of exile in Chile, to be with his English Rose. Shortly after his return, they were killed by a bomb, as they danced in the underwater dining hall of one of the Wang family mansions in Georgetown.

Patrick Dreher, Gillian's lover, is a dredging engineer who rents a house on Jalan Dunn, where he is disturbed by Rose's spectral presence. Rose makes a significant choice by allowing herself to be seen by Gillian, in Patrick's house. *fishlips* weaves together issues of history and memory, east and west, body and spirit, coloniser and



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Carolyn's frequent appearance in literary magazines has already developed for her, a significant literary following. In 1997, Carolyn was awarded first prize for short fiction in the Bauhinia Literary award, and in 1988, she was runner-up in the ABC Bicentennial State of the Art Literary Award.

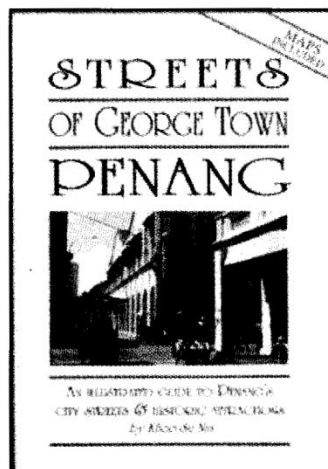
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- Part 2 of Ganesh Rasagam's penetrating study of Traffic Problems in Penang
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- Penang Sketchbook, water colours by Chin Kon Yit, text by Chen Voon Fee
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