



PHT newsletter

Issue No. 74 / Jan-March 2002

Support Conservation Efforts in your Community!

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**PENANG
HERITAGE
TRUST**
*Persatuan
Warisan
Pulau
Pinang*

PHT

EDITORIAL

Dear PHT members and friends,

Please welcome new office manager (since mid-February) Magdeline Ng-Leong Sin Yee, a dedicated social worker who has been the Hon. Secretary of the Children's Protection Society since its inception in 1992. She was recruited with the help of Woo Yee Saik, who has been generous to PHT with his time and human resources expertise.

Before Magdeline came in, we had a lot of help from our temporary staff Ch'ng Mei Mei and British volunteer Rory Carrigan, short-term volunteers Kent Foster and Rebecca Savin as well as our faithful long-term volunteers Joann Khaw and Mary Savari. We also have a couple of new volunteers, Mrs Toshimi Utaka from Japan and Cindy Hu from China. For the dozens of volunteers who helped with our PENANG STORY events, they are mentioned in our colloquium souvenir programmes.

We are thankful for donations from generous individuals and organisations. Penang Seagate RSS generously donated some of their office equipment and stationery, including 3 computers, 1 HP laserjet printer, box files/arch files and plastic filing trays.

The American Women's Association (AWA) has been giving us an annual RM1,000 donation, as well as providing us with a merchandising table at AWA meetings, and putting PHT announcements in the AWA Newsletter. We are grateful for the support of their members, especially volunteers like Cecile and Marika. PHT council member Teresa Capol is our strong link with AWA.

We are still in need of volunteers for various PHT activities ~ please drop by the office or write in to phtrust@po.jaring.my

Khoo Salma Nasution

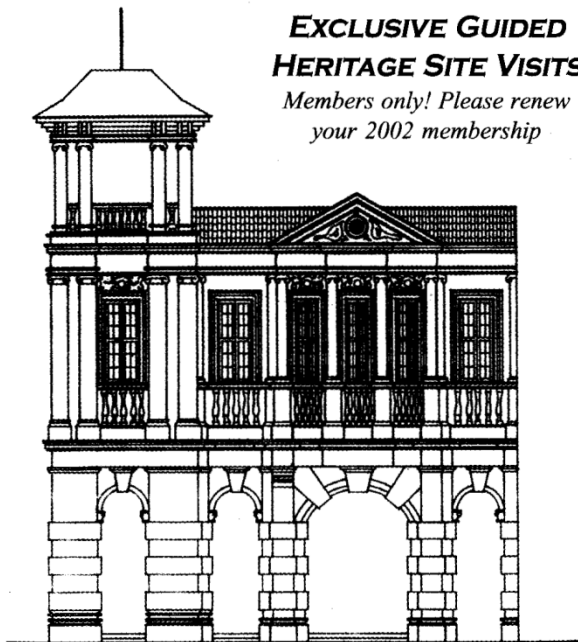


PLEASE NOTE:

The April 2002 Site Visit is announced on page 23.

EXCLUSIVE GUIDED HERITAGE SITE VISITS

*Members only! Please renew
your 2002 membership*



The Commercial Waterfront

Site Visit #23

Sunday, 31 March 2002, 3.30 PM

We will be brought on a leisurely Sunday walk down the northern end of a quiet Beach Street, once the hub of George Town's commercial area. The tour will identify the many historic banks, shipping offices and merchant houses along this street. We will also look at some sympathetic conversions, the 'Old China Cafe' in the former ABN-AMRO Bank building, and a very charming Taiwanese-style book cafe in the Sandilands Buttery & Co. block. We will also visit the Lum Choon office with a courtyard garden at No. 55 Beach Street.

The tour will also take us into China Street – the street of Penang's earliest Chinese traders -- which connects the waterfront to the Kuan Yin Temple. It will end with tea at the recently restored Cheng Hoe Seah at No. 83 China Street. There, we will be met there by well-known Penang artist, Tan Lye Hoe, who will brief us on the history of the premises and architect Tan Yeow Wooi of Nanyang Folk Culture, who will brief us on the restoration.

Meet in front of the Standard Chartered Bank on Beach Street (where it's shady).

SITE VISIT REPORTS



The Waterfall Gardens

Text by Ahmad Chik and Loh-Lim Lin Lee, photos by Loh-Lim

'Year 2002 Site Visits' kicked off with one of our most stupendous outings yet. Saturday 26th January witnessed a truly awesome experience for the members who turned up at the Penang Botanic Gardens.

A leisurely walk through the gardens with informative tit-bits of horticultural data, normally inaccessible plant houses unlocked for our perusal – the bromeliad house, the agloenemas, the cacti, the deffenbachias, the palm house, the orchid house with those wonderfully understated wild flowers, the stroll through the renewed lily pond area. The entire experience was highly agreeable, though the best was yet to come.

The second half of the tour led us to the security area of the reservoir, again specially opened to PHT with the consent of Dato' Lee Yeow Ching of the Penang Water Corporation, (better known as PBA). Pamphlets detailing the workings of the water filtration system were handed out to us while we marvelled at century old stop corks, wheels and fittings of brass polished to the highest shine. It is to the great credit of the original designers and engineers that almost everything in use today is exactly as it was before. Threading our way

through filtration and sediment ponds and precariously narrow walkways, we climbed the ancient steps cut into the hills to reach *The Waterfall*.

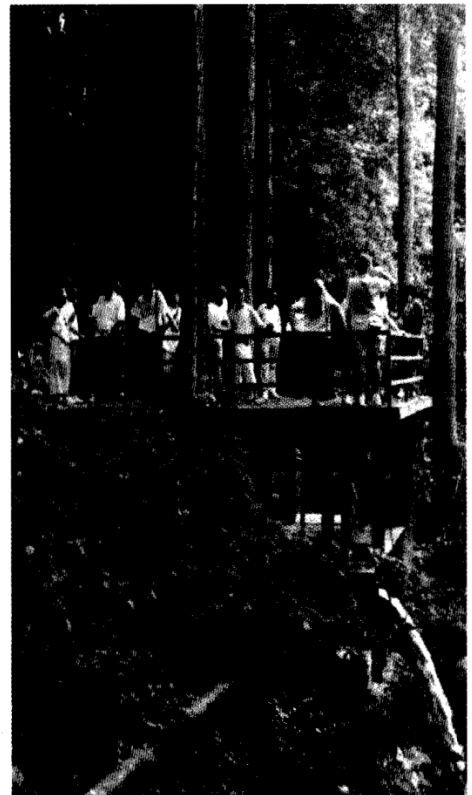
The favourite subject of some of the earliest painters of Penang, such as Captain Robert Smith and William Daniell, the Waterfall was not only known quaintly in the 18th century as a 'lion' – a tourism product in modern bureaucrat-speak – but also a source of potable water to the nascent George Town.

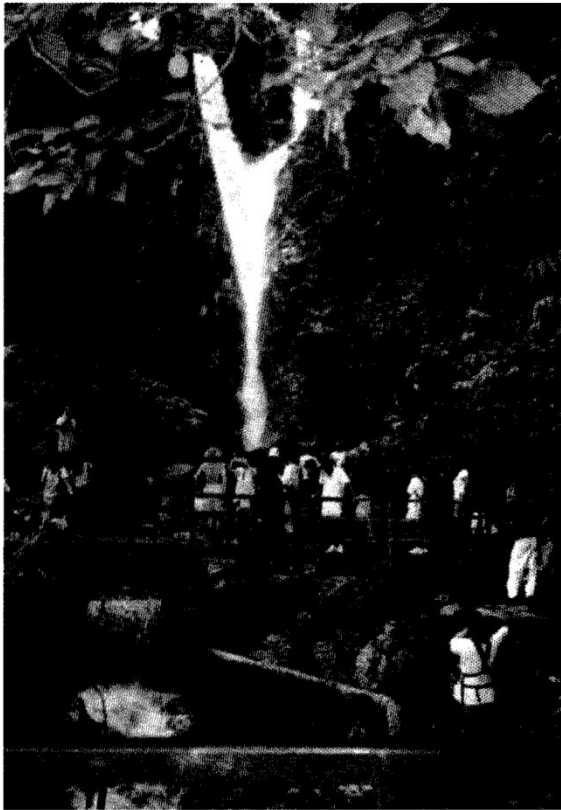
Reputed to provide the sweetest water East of Suez, the first attempt to tap it was in 1804-5 when Governor Farquhar built an aqueduct to the town and port. Parts of this aqueduct were uncovered recently by the seafront near the St. Xavier's field. In 1892 a reservoir and treatment plant was built at the foot of the cascade which even today continues to supply parts of Pulau Tikus and Jesselton. In 1884 Charles Curtis, the Penang Botanic Garden's first curator, made it

a central feature of his design, and carefully planned the garden so that the Waterfall could be seen in the distant hills. Indeed, in time, 'Waterfall Gardens' became synonymous with the Penang Botanic Gardens. Until the late 1960's, it was open to the public, but as a result of the Indonesian Confrontation in the 1960's, access was closed, and today very few people have seen it at close range.

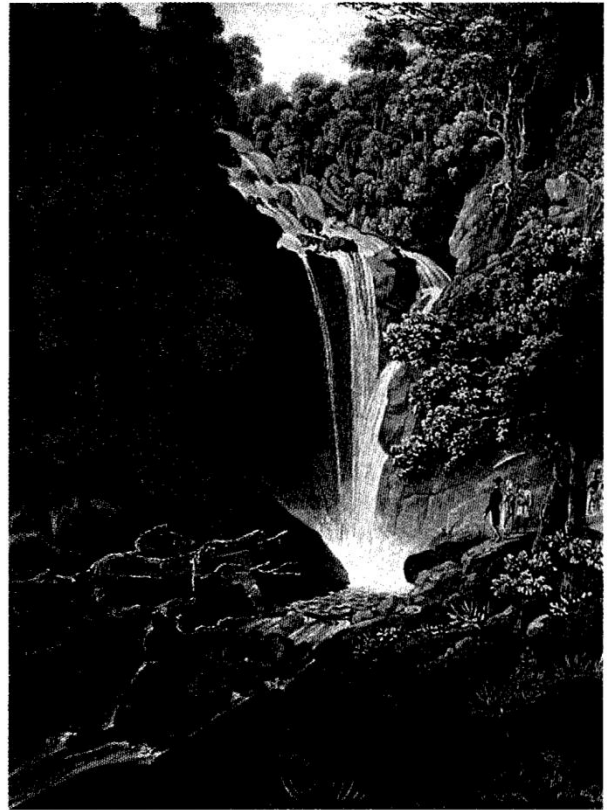
The visit to the Falls was at the end of the tour, by deliberate choice. We walked past the ancient Hindu shrine, and huffed and puffed up a steep slope onto the shoulder of a boulder-strewn glade with a magnificent 280-foot-high torrent – *The Waterfall* – tumbling into it. The roar was deafening, but after the exertions, the cool air gave instant relief. It was an idyllic, tumultuous and yet calming spot.

We could only gaze, through the thin mist of spray, in awed silence at the magnificence of the entire scene.... (for those of us for whom the PHT site visit was the only exercise of the month, it was through trying to catch our breath....). There was an over-



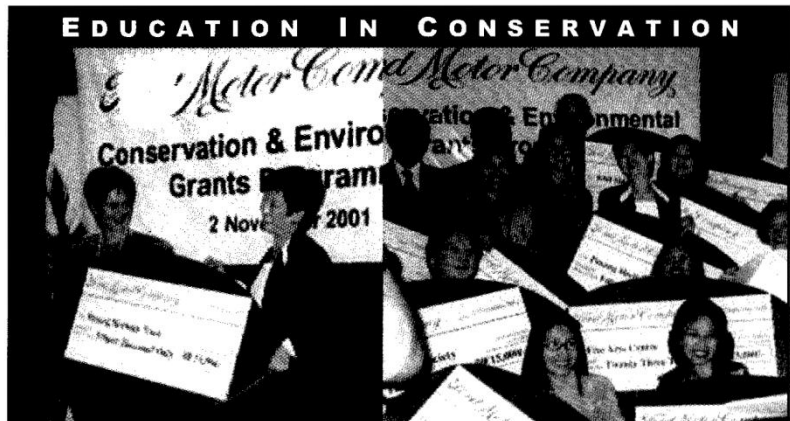


The Waterfall that lent its name to Waterfall Gardens. The painting on the right, 'Willaim Daniell, View of the Cascade, Prince of Wale's Island', 1818. Aquatint, 1821. By courtesy of Penang Museum.



whelming temptation to dally, and many members lingered on. But tea was waiting in the formal Garden, and there we eventually repaired to partake of some well-deserved refreshments.

The PHT wishes to thank Mr. Lim Boon Tiong of the Penang Botanic Gardens, Dato' Lee Yeow Ching of PBA for making the visit possible, and Ahmad Chik for arranging the tea.



Programme funded by Ford Foundation

Text by Loh-Lim Lin Lee, photos provided by Badan Warisan Malaysia

The Ford Motor Company's support of the Education in Conservation Programme will be used to advance the ongoing activities being conducted by the Trust. For the year 2002, we will be working with schools to interest teachers of specific subjects, in the value of the inner city of George Town. Walk-about are being planned for teachers in 5 areas - History, Geography, Art, Language and Tourism. A dozen inner city schools will then be approached to

have PHT speakers present a short video and slides on the value of our past, to be followed by the children being exposed to the inner city and hands-on experiences with carvings, stone rubbings, signages etc. The Fund will also be used to support the printing of a pamphlet showing a Trail of Endangered Trades designed by schoolchildren, with specific trades being described.

Pictures show Loh-Lim receiving the mock cheque on behalf of PHT.

**We depend on your
subscriptions
to keep going!**

**DON'T FORGET
to renew your PHT
membership for 2002.**

**Admission RM 50
Annual sub RM 36
Overseas, extra RM 14
annual postal surcharge**

LETTERS

The first three letters are examples of many inquiries the PHT receives on a regular basis. We do our best to provide a service by answering or redirecting these inquiries, but find that we need more support to maintain the service. - Ed.

Story of a Trishaw Man

I'm a student at Emerson College in Boston, working on a Masters in writing and publishing. I'm currently working on a short story about a trishaw man. Granted it is fiction, the story, I believe, still has a responsibility to actual facts. I'm coming up against my own ignorance about the topic, despite having lived in Penang for much of my life and gone to school at St. Xavier's, which is but a stone's throw from the Penang Trust Heritage office. But it has been 10 years.

I'm looking for information on the history of the trishaw community and in particular the simple facts about trishaw riders. For example, where do they stay? do they have families? why did they become rickshaw riders? what keeps them doing it? where do they eat? Are most trishaw men Chinese? where do they hang out etc....? It is shocking how little I know about these people.

Also, I'm curious about the status about rickshaw men, and how they have fitted in with the larger Chinese communities, since the time of the coolie migration from southern China. I've taken a great interest in my Chinese-ness after reading Lynn Pan's *The Sons of the Yellow Emperor*, which is a pretty monumental book. Now in a quest to understand my own history, I'm trying, amidst school deadlines, to read up on works by other scholars on the subject of Chinese migration - people like Wang Gungwu, and Yen Ching-Hwang. I would be very grateful if you could point out other scholars or writers whose work from which you think I might benefit greatly.

Kelvin Goh

email kelvin_goh73@hotmail.com

P.S. My aunt used to lived in 10 Stewart Lane. After school, I use to walk over to her house for lunch. I believe the house is now uninhabited. Any idea what are the fates of these lovely houses as their occupants move away? Who owns these houses?

Cultural Heritage Websites

Hi! I'm a architecture student from Uni of Tasmania. First, I would like to introduce myself. I'm Joanna, from Penang. Well, I had visited the PHT website. Honestly, it's extremely good! It's awesome! It did really give me a surprise! As far as I know, it's better than any other Australian cultural heritage website that I'd ever visited. Well done! The reason why I need to get in touch with cultural heritage expertise like yours is that I'm taking a heritage class for my specialized studio. Apparently I'm the only Asian in class. I have no doubt I will be asked to do some research on Penang's heritage. Can you suggest other Malaysian cultural heritage websites as well?

Joanna Ooi

komodoliz_81@hotmail.com

The Brown Family

The Penang website is beautiful and informative, and a credit to the web master. Thank you.

I am writing from Australia, having difficulty knowing how to go about getting the information I am seeking. My great Aunt, Olive Ross Reid married a David Brown in Penang in either 1901 or 1902. They had 2 daughters -- as far as I know, Maisy and Betty.

There was a Glugor Estate owned by a David Brown who died in 1825 and I can only assume that my Aunt married into that same family. I would be so grateful for any help at all.

Frances Davies [nee Reid]

9 Lindfield Park Road
Port Macquarie NSW. 2444, Australia
email reidsogawler@yahoo.com

The Seckford Foundation

The Seckford Foundation is a member of the Penang Heritage Trust. Curious as to what the foundation was about and why it joined, I inquired. The answer reveals an interesting connection with Francis Light - Ed.

The Seckford Foundation was established in 1587 by Thomas Seckford who served Queen Elizabeth I for some 40 years as a distinguished lawyer and as Master of a number of her Courts. His principal position was Master of the Court of Requests which no longer exists although generally his successor in title is considered to be the Master of the Rolls.

Before he died, Thomas Seckford built Almshouses for 13 poor men. This was very early housing provision for people in need. When he died, Thomas Seckford left us a handsome bequest to support the continuing work.

Woodbridge School was refounded in 1662 by three people, one of whom was Thomas Seckford's niece, Dorothy (the last Seckford). Woodbridge School and the Seckford Almshouses worked side by side in the town for the following 200 years but early in the 19th century parliament gave its formal consent to the two operations being brought together as one charity. This position has continued ever since.

Francis Light was a boarder at Woodbridge School. As a charity we obviously take a continuing interest in all activities where alumni from the School have been involved in the past and hence our wish to retain links with the Penang Heritage Trust.

Of course, we are at a considerable distance and it is difficult to keep a closer link but we enjoy hearing from the PHT from time to time. As a small point of interest, you may wish to know that the small pane of glass in the Penang Museum, with Francis Light's signature on it, came from the window of the office in which I sit today!

Robin Vickers, Director
The Seckford Foundation

email
funding@seckford-foundation.org.uk

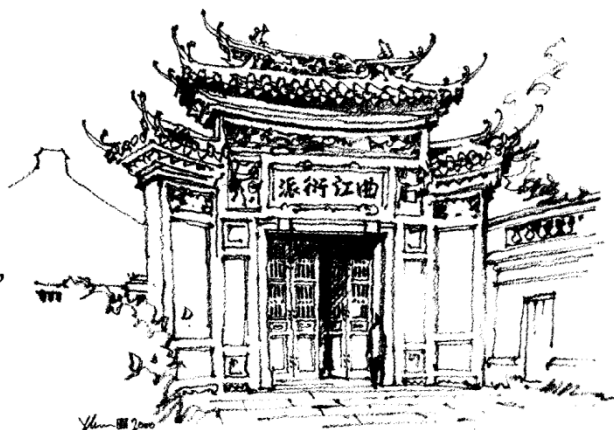
The Blue Mansion

*A Chinese tycoon's grandiose ambition,
Executed by master craftsmen,
Combining East and West elements,
Harmonising subtle 'feng-tsui' influences,
Creating a truly architectural wonder,
Fulfilled his long cherished dream.*

*Thus the Blue Mansion stood,
Reflecting one man's indomitable spirit
To build a dream house....
With Gothic windows, painted arches,
Fine timber lattice work,
Victorian cast iron railings,
A spiral staircase....
Through Art Nouveau stained glass,
Dancing spectrum of lights blend in gracefully,
Basking the 38 rooms and 5 courtyards*

*The Blue Mansion now restored,
A true labour of love,
An architectural work of art,
Preserved for posterity,
Its colourful past intact,
A rare jewel shimmering,
Unmatched in all its magnificence,
Glistening, hauntingly beautiful, surreal.
Exuding an aura of mystery,
Along with its ethereal beauty.*

Raymond Kwok
24 February 2001



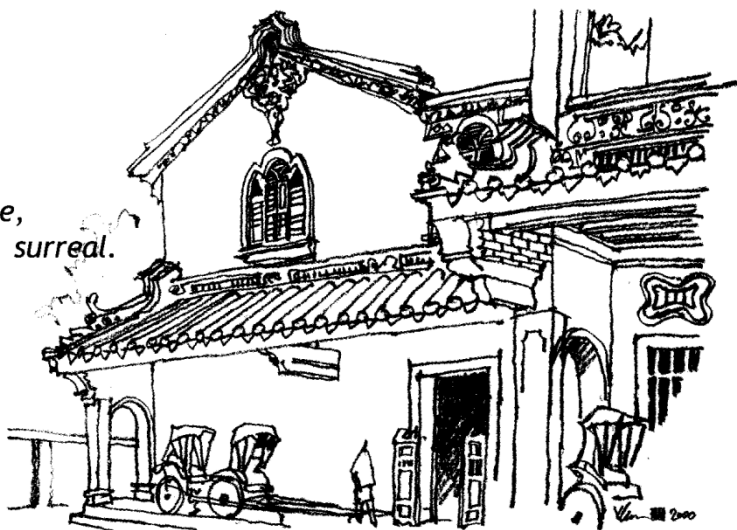
Drawings by Khoo Cheang Jin

8 views of Cheong Fatt Tze Mansion

4 portrait / 4 landscape

A4 size, with border for framing

at \$10 each, or \$35 for set of 4.



CHEONG FATT TZE MANSION



Restoration Tours

11am and 3pm - Monday to Friday

11am - Weekends/ Public Holidays

Duration of tour, 1 hour.

Admission fee RM 10.

Special rate for PHT members RM 8

Events Venue

Concerts, weddings, dinners, seminars etc.

Owner-Hosted Home Stays

16 themed courtyard bedrooms

for a truly unique heritage experience

14 Leith Street, 10200 Penang, Malaysia
Tel/Fax: 6-04-2625289 Email: cftm@tm.net.my
Website: www.cheongfattzemansion.com

HERITAGE TOURS



12 March 2002 - A four-hour special PHT heritage tour was conducted for His Royal Highness, The Prince Consort of Denmark, Prince Henrik. His Royal Highness was fascinated at the living heritage in the inner city of George Town and was very impressed at what Penang Heritage Trust is doing.

We visited the Historical Enclave - Cannon Street, Acheen Street and Armenian Street with stops at the Khoo Kongsi, Syed Alatas Mansion, Acheen Street Mosque and the Sun Yat Sen Base. We also visited Little India, Chinatown, the Campbell Street Market and mall, as well as the Clan Jetties at Weld Quay. This picture was taken at the famed Cheong Fatt Tze mansion, where his Royal Highness was taken around by Mr. Laurence Loh. (Teresa Capol)

PHT Heritage Tours

Under this program coordinated by PHT council member Teresa Capol, no fewer than 16 tours were conducted between end October 2001, and early March 2002, with January being a particularly hectic month. The tours start at the PHT Office at 26A Stewart Lane and most of them last between 2 to 3 hours. The Trust charges full fees for private groups, but runs subsidized educational tours for school groups.

TOURS 2001

26 October - IT and CMA post-tour
Booked by the Penang Development Corporation, this trishaw tour covered the Cheong Fatt Tze Mansion, Fort Cornwallis, Little India and the Historical Enclave. (Guided by Teresa Capol)

27 October - UNESCO Schools Camp

This tour was part of a camp for 70 schoolchildren organised by the UNESCO Commission of the Malaysian Education Ministry. Loh-Lim gave a presentation on heritage

conservation followed by a tour of the Cheong Fatt Tze Mansion. After that, the group of 70 was divided into 2 groups and taken on a walkabout of George Town. They enjoyed the trip, with many of them participating in Q & A. (Teresa Capol and Joann Khaw)

3 November - Mr. Westerhausen

This private tour for 4 persons covered the Fort, Little India and the Historical Enclave. (Teresa Capol)

10 November - Anak-Anak Kota Endangered Trades Tour

Requested by Janet Pillai as part of the *Anak-Anak Kota* programme, the tour was joined by 17 schoolchildren and adults. We visited the coffee-maker, joss-sticks maker and flower-shops. Then we went to Little India and visited the signboard maker and an old mill that grinds spices for curries. At the spice shops, explanations were given on the spices. We then proceeded to Armenian Street and visited the Nyonya beadwork shoe-maker. Our tour ended at the Cheah Kongsi. (Teresa Capol)

14 November - Bilden Creative Learning

Jackie Low headed this group of 28 children and 4 adults from Kuala Lumpur. Most of the shops in Little India were closed as it was Deepavali day, but the group still enjoyed the explanations given. Then it rained heavily and we all ended up in a Nasi Kandar Restaurant to have tea. We proceeded to the Historic Enclave and finished our tour at lunch time. (Teresa Capol)

30 November - Dalat School culture and traditions project

For this school project on culture and traditions, 1 teacher and 13 fourth graders took a tour of Little India and the Historical Enclave. (Teresa Capol)

12 December - Universiti Sains Malaysia SEA Studies group

A spice trail was conducted for 18 persons from the Southeast Asian Studies group, taking Professor Wazir Karim's course in arts and heritage. Explanations were provided on spices, Indian cultures and tradition. (Teresa Capol)

27 December - Mr. Jamieson

This private tour for 3 persons covered the Cheong Fatt Tze Mansion, Stewart Lane, China Street, Beach Street and Little India. The participants were very much interested in the architecture and urban history the city. (Joann Khaw)

TOURS 2002

8 January - STAR journalist

We took Star journalist Andrew Sia on a 4 hour intensive walking tour of heritage and traditional trades. His report appeared in *Star Section 2*, dated Saturday 9 February 2002, entitled '*The Life and Soul of George Town*', with fabulous pictures of endangered trades. (Teresa Capol)

10 January - Lisa Case

This private customised tour covered the Museum, Little India and Cheong Fatt Tze Mansion. Although only two persons came on this tour, they paid for 3, to cover the minimum payment for the tour. (Su Lian)

12 January – ‘Blind Date’

This trishaw tour was booked by the Penang Development Corporation for the cast and crew of “Blind Date” that was being filmed in Penang. The tour covered Fort Cornwallis, Little India and the Historical Enclave. (Teresa Capol)

24 January – American Womens’ Association

This group of 7 was taken on the Little India Spice Trail. We ended up at a Banana Leaf Restaurant after an interesting tour of the spice shops. (Teresa Capol)

25 January – Young Presidents’ Organisation

A customised tour for 28 pax was conducted, starting out from the Eastern & Oriental Hotel. We went through Leith Street, Muntri Street, made a stop at the Penang Heritage Trust office to pick up our water bottles, then went on to the Kuan Yin Temple, Little India and Historical Enclave. (Teresa Capol)

26 January – St Xavier’s Institution


This tour of the Historical Enclave was conducted for 30 secondary school students, mainly boys, from the SXI tourism club. (Teresa Capol)

4 February - Uplands School

A tour of the Historical Enclave was organised for 32 schoolchildren doing a project on Chinese culture, temples and clans houses. The kids were quite inquisitive and participated in the Q & A. (Teresa Capol)

2 March – Elsie & Co.

Private tour covering American Express Heritage Trail II and Cheong Fatt Tze Mansion. (Teresa Capol)

HERITAGE PLAY

Emily of Emerald Hill

..... RETURNS WITH NEW TOUCHES

Everybody's favourite Nyonya is back! Pearly Chua returns to Penang to reprise her role as the indomitable *Emily of Emerald Hill*, the celebrated one-woman Nyonya heritage play by Stella Kon that has achieved near-cult status in Malaysia and Singapore.

Said director Chin San Sooi, "The Penang performance will be Pearly's 80th performance as *Nyonya Emily Gan*. It will mark the start of a new series of performances leading up to her 100th appearance as the strong-willed matriarch of *Emerald Hill*."

"Some interesting new changes to the earlier productions are bound to delight fans and bring about a new dimension to the drama's interpretation," revealed actress Pearly Chua.

Don't miss *Emily of Emerald Hill*
8.00 pm Saturday 6 2002
8.00 pm Sunday 7 April 2002
KOMTAR Auditorium "A"

Tickets at RM20 and RM30 are available from
 Kaunter Kebudayaan & Kesenian, G. Fl., Dewan Sri Pinang (Tel: 04-2642273)
 Jenni Homemade Cakes at 33-A Cantonment Road (Tel: 04-2268596)
 Penang Heritage Trust at 26-A, Stewart Lane (Tel: 04-2642631)
 website <http://emilyofemeraldhill.cjb.net/>

Organised by the Kiwanis Club of Georgetown to raise funds for the Rumah Seri Cahaya Children's Home in Batu Maung



A new art gallery has opened on 83 China Street, in a restored historic building. The Ching Lotus Humanist Space, a 'humanist space in the city', offers an exhibition space, a 'kitchen' serving tea, coffee and light meals (eastern and western), and a book gallery.

These premises were formerly the town branch of the Cheng Chooi Chor Soo temple, better known as the 'Snake Temple' in Sungei Kluang. The magnificent shophouse is unusually tall, with the upper floor facade in three bays. The exquisite stucco decorations are among the finest to be found on a Penang shophouse. The work of unknown artisans, they represent a sort of creative fusion of Chinese symbolism set amidst reconfigured western classical motifs and detailing.

The Ching Lotus Humanist Space is a project of the Nan Yang Folk

Culture, a network of young designers, photographers, artists and architects. They are mainly a Mandarin-speaking group, a few are Taiwanese graduates. This group has been annually organising the Chinese New Year street festivals in Penang. Since 1998, the Nan Yang Folk Culture has been renting offices at 50 Marican Road, with part of the premises being used as '50 Humanist Space', a space for art and cultural activities. The China Street exhibition space is their second gallery.

The Ching Lotus Humanist Space has been open since 1 February 2002, while the official launching by the Penang Chief Minister YAB Tan Sri Dr. Koh Tsu Koon took place on 17 February, thus marking the re-opening of the Cheng Hoe Seah building. The date corresponded with the 6th day of the Chinese first lunar month, the birthday of the Cheng Chooi Chor Soo.

Calling
Penangites
& friends
wherever
you are . . .



The Penang File

<http://members.nbci.com/penangfile>

or mirror site at

<http://www.geocities.com/penangfile>

Brings you...

News of Penang & its concerns
Stories of its culture & heritage
Essence of Baba/Nyonya life

IN ISSUE #20, MARCH 2002

- Tan Sooi Beng examines the search for Malaysian identities by Chinese artistes in the performing arts (Part Two)
- We report on the restoration of Fort Cornwallis
- There is more from Raymond Kwok's Baba/Nyonya saying
- Kensu Wanandi continues his wanderings (Part Three) in the world of the Baba
- Tan Yeow Wool discovers that early George Town resembles a Chinese provincial grid city
- Cheah Hon Yin introduces an artist of the miniature
- We introduce Ass. Prof. Rajakrishnan Ramasamy's pioneering work on the Jaffna Tamils in Malaya
- We look at legends of the night of the 15th moon
- Page 11 eavesdrops on the preparations for the Year of the Horse
- Stories and articles in the Baba dialect will be particularly welcome

Write in to
thepenangfile@yahoo.co.uk

The Convent Light Street

A History of a Community, A School and A Way of Life by Dilys Yap

The Author

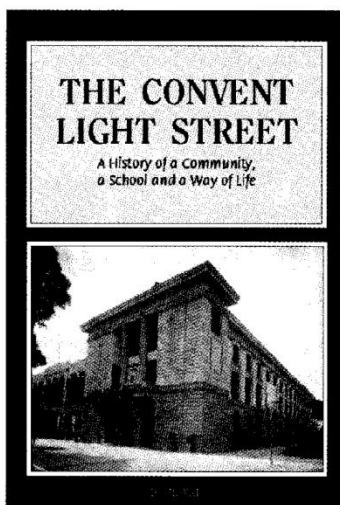
Dilys Yap has undertaken extensive research work for several site visits of the PHT. These included the Runnymede, the Penang Town Hall and the Convent Light Street as well as several such projects in Kuala Lumpur. Her passion for old buildings and in particular the Convent Light Street, culminated in her first publication "The Convent Light Street, A History of a Community, A School and A Way of Life".



The Book

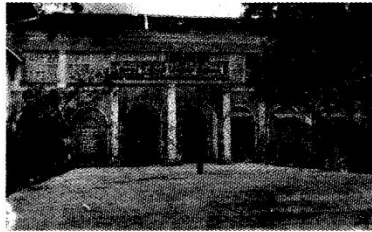
The Convent Light Street founded in 1852 is the oldest girls' school in Malaysia. The book traces the history of the school and extracts from it reads.....

The Convent Superior General Reverend Mother de Faudas of the Holy Infant Jesus sent a small group of these sisters from Antwerp, Belgium, on the ship, "La Julie" in December, 1851 bound for Malaya. Their mission was to start a school. The party of Mother Paulin and five sisters took five months to reach Malaya. During their long voyage they studied English and Malay. The Vicar Apostolic Bishop Boucho met them on arrival in Penang on 12th April 1852.



In her book, Dilys recounts how the nuns first stayed in an attap roofed house on Church Street. They started with 16 orphans, 9 boarders, and 30 day

students. The sisters sewed at night in order to raise money. Another significant landmark in the history of the Convent Light Street is the purchase of Government House in March 1859. This was part of the property owned by Francis Light under "Well Estate." A price of Frcs. 50,000/- was paid for a 7 acre piece of land with a sea frontage.

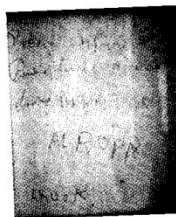


Government House

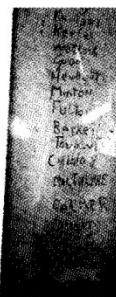
Dilys Yap relates how Government House was first used as a Novitiate. The surrounding buildings were used as dormitories, kitchen and classrooms. Further expansion included the Baby House for the orphans and bigger premises for the First and Second Boarders.

The War Years

The Japanese bombed Penang in 1941. The Convent Light Street was not spared and several buildings in the school were also targetted. Dilys Yap writes about the atrocities during the Japanese occupation.



Etchings left by P.O.W.s



The Japanese navy used the Convent as their naval base. The submarine USS Grenadier was sunk near Penang and the submariners were captured and housed at the Convent Light Street. Read about the prisoners and the etchings left by them on the walls and doors of the torture chamber before they were taken by boat to Japan. These scratched names are carefully preserved in glass in the present classrooms.



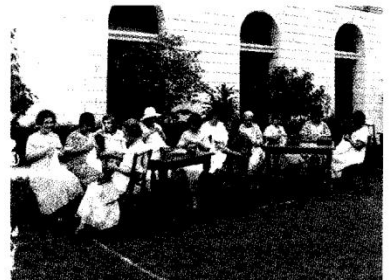
Orphans on a picnic.

A Treasure Trove of Old Photographs

There are over 300 photographs which document the Convent's history and glimpses into the life that prevailed behind its walls.

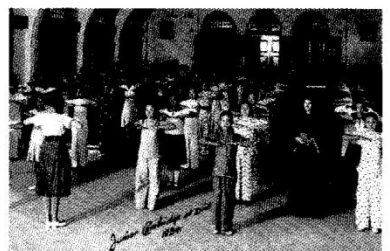


First Baptism



Lady benefactors - Ex-pupils of the Convent gathered together in the grounds to sew and embroider Church vestments and items for sale at the Convent Fair.

The book is another testimony to an old heritage building which has been preserved to this day. Of interest to girls who have been to the Convent is a register of names of students from 1947-2001. It is a hardcover book of 145 pages and a bargain at RM60/-. Purchases can be made through the PHT office.



Senior Cambridge at Drill.

EVENTS & ACTIVITIES

Anak-Anak Kota

A Heritage Awareness Project for Children
October-December 2001

Report by Janet Pillay, photographs by various facilitators



In this pioneering project, children worked with professional artists on the streets, recording the history and living culture of George Town using many art forms.

The Aims

The objective of the 'Anak-Anak Kota' was to help young people living in George Town understand and appreciate how their cultural identity is rooted in the heritage of the city -- in the trades, craftsmanship, food business, language, customs and built environment -- and how to view this heritage as an asset.

The Participants

A total of **200 children, aged 10-16 from diverse communities** (Indian, Chinese and Malay), attending primary and secondary schools in the inner city, participated in the project. Although the project was targeted at inner city children, at least half the participants were from the buffer zone surrounding the inner city. A minority were from the city suburbs.



The project also attracted about 15 children between the ages of 6 and 13 living in the inner city who had not registered formally with the program, but were curious about the activities surrounding the administrative building *Tingkap Hijau*. They became dedicated '**members**' of **Anak-Anak Kota** and took it upon themselves to form a team of working assistants who proved invaluable in providing services such as purchasing of materials, photostating, messenger services, exhibition set-up etc. They also participated in multiple workshops.

The project employed 3 **teenage assistants** Yong Shen, Edward Loh and Shari Chong who worked full-time to run the administrative office and to service the artists and facilitators. All 3 had previous experience and training in the arts and were extremely persevering throughout the project, which requires them to improvise constantly under very pressured circumstances.

The Projects

Children worked in **groups of 10, with 1 professional artist to each group**, assisted by a facilitator. Most of the work involved practical projects carried out on the streets in the city. Some projects especially research projects were reclassified as long-term projects with extended durations of approximately 10 days. The major research project on endangered trades covered 2 months. Every project had the following components:

1. A Historical Tour
2. Research/Investigation on a Heritage Theme
3. Analysis of information
4. Expression through the Arts

The Artists and Facilitators

Projects were led by local Penang **artists and craftspersons**, professionals in their respective fields, such as David Yeoh, Goh Hun Meng, Tan Sooi Beng, Aida Redza, Chong Lee Lin, Liew Kung Yu and others. The artists were assisted by an extremely dedicated team of young adult facilitators experienced in some aspect of theatre or the arts, such as Ang Bee Saik, Hardi Shafie, Kipli Mohd and others.

Heritage inputs

Facilitators and artists also participated in several **heritage walks** organized by the Penang Heritage Trust to acquaint them with the architectural, historical and cultural heritage of innercity George Town. The knowledge shared by Loh-Lim, Teresa Capol, Laurence Loh and Khoo Salma from PHT were invaluable in providing a framework for the project leaders. The latter found the information stimulating, but difficult to restructure for the consumption of children.

The Projects

Videography (Sia Boey Market)

Carving & furniture restoration

Graphic (T-Shirt Design)

T-Shirt Printing

Music of Sound: Market Street

Dance: People in the City

Graphic: Signboard

Wood Carving

Story on the Wall: Relief Carvings

Research: Dying Trades

Research: Family History

Research: Street History

As part of the warm-ups, children were given a general overview of heritage in the inner city in a 3 hour heritage walkabout. What seemed to come across was the multicultural profile of the city; however, a more encompassing understanding of the history, built environment and living heritage were not possible to achieve.

Exhibition

The program was targeted at children, but mid-way, the committee realized the need for advocacy to make the program known to the larger community in the inner city, to advocates of heritage conservation and to the children themselves who seemed unaware of the several other projects that did not involve them.

The exhibition had an excellent impact on more elite public audiences and heritage advocates. At least a third of the participants had a much clearer picture of the project as a whole as a result of participation in the exhibition. However the exhibition did not attract the innercity community who remained curious but ignorant of the project.

Organised by
**The Arts-Education Working
Committee (ARTS-ED)**

**Penang Educational
Consultative Council**

in co-operation with
**Penang Heritage Trust &
Pusat Warisan Pulau Pinang**

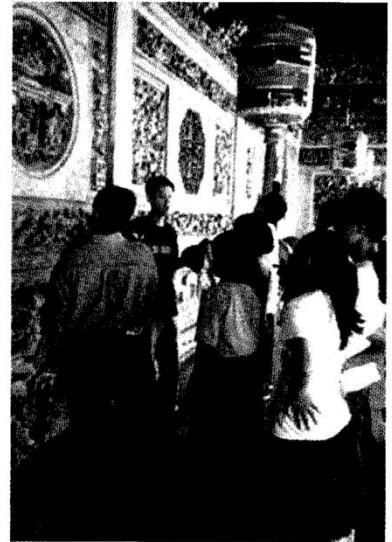
Documentation

The program was heavily documented in the form of photographs. A short video documentary will be made available soon. Some of the creative work of the children have been retained to provide continuity in the form of a mini exhibition through 2002. The mini exhibition and video will be displayed at the Penang Story ~ International Conference organised by the PHT in April 2002.

Workstations

Cheah Kongsı and Intec College as well as inner city schools such as St. Xavier's Institution, Sri Tanjong, Aik

Hua, Hutchings, Island, Convent Light Street and Shih Chung School, all served as workstations. Ahmad Chik's building at 156 Jalan Mesjid Kapitan Keling, nicknamed *Tingkap Hijau* was used as the administrative office.



As the finale, an exhibition on 'Heritage in The Inner City of George Town' was put up by the *Anak-Anak Kota* at the Syed Alatas Mansion, 128 Armenian Street on Saturday, 8th December 2001, with:

Performances ~ Music of Sound: Market Street, *Teh Tarik* Dance, story-telling 'Carps for My Mother', puppet show of historical incidences from family history

Demonstrations ~ T-shirt making, flower garland making, engraving, incense object making, traditional games

Exhibitions ~ hawkers' sign boards, T-shirts, models of endangered trades, rubbings, do's and don'ts of repair, family history diaries, wood-carvings

Acknowledgements:

Penang Heritage Trust
Pusat Warisan Pulau Pinang,
Department of Education, Penang
Heads of inner city schools
School of Arts, USM
Intec College
Liberaco Agencies
AR&T Consultants
Heng Lee Group
Cheah Kongsı
Khoo Kongsı
Didier Repellin
Ahmad Chik
Anwar Fazal



What the children learnt....

Comments from the young participants were recorded. While some of them concerned skills learning, personal growth and friendships, many of them revealed their heightened appreciation for heritage. Selective comments are reproduced for purposes of this article:

Carvings and Restoration (15 year olds)

- ~ Learnt about historical buildings
- ~ Opened up our perceptions on Chinese culture
- ~ Increased sense of pride with regards to Chinese crafts
- ~ Carving and history should be taught in school

Rubbings of Heritage Motifs (11 – 15 year olds)

- ~ Understood the symbolism behind carvings, searched for motifs to rub
- ~ Learnt techniques of rubbing using various mediums
- ~ Learnt how to organize and create art work from rubbings

Research 1 - Endangered Trades (13 -15 year old girls)

Q. What have you been doing here?

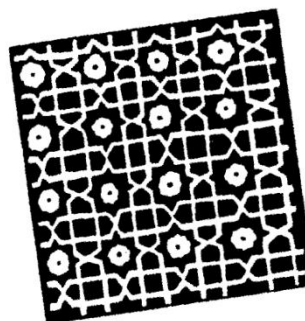
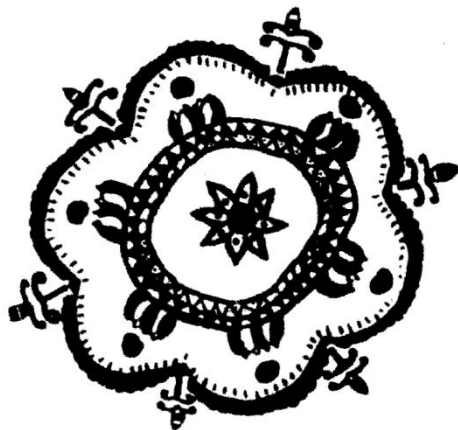
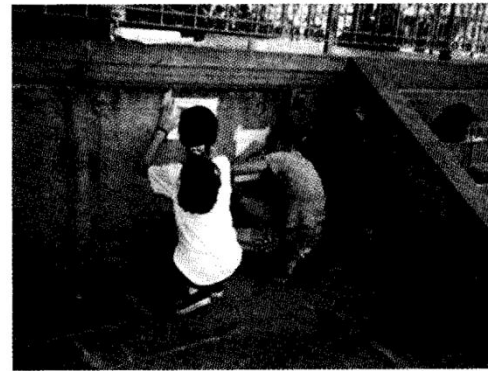
- ~ Interviewing endangered tradesmen and preparing brochures to help visitors or tourists know more about them.
- ~ Researching trades which are difficult to do and which young people are not interested in.

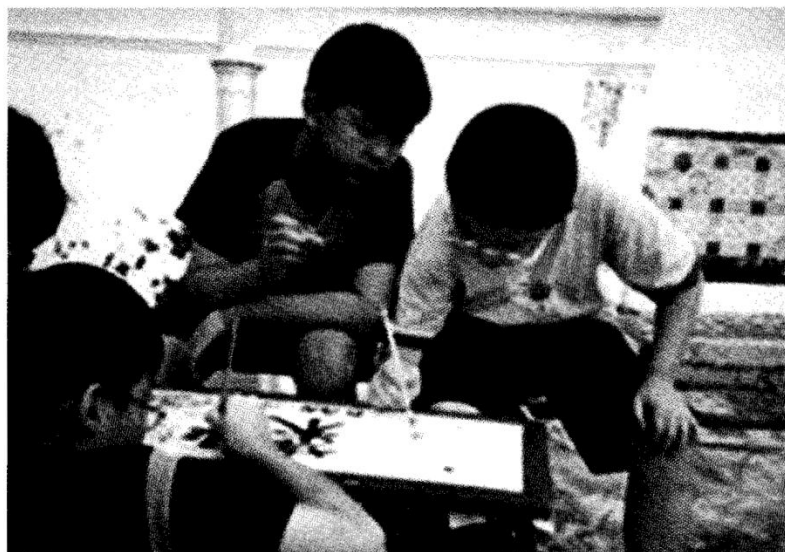
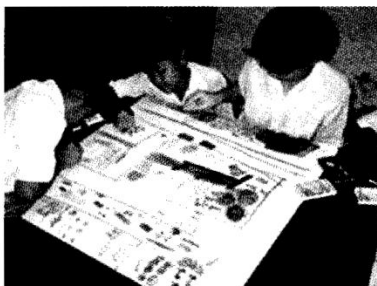
Q. What was the single most important thing you learnt?

- ~ Never knew Penang was so interesting especially the traditional trades.
- ~ Learnt about peoples' lifestyles and their struggle to keep alive. Amazed and shocked.
- ~ Made me realize how valuable tradition is. When I think about the people who made the building we should work hard to restore it. We can only admire what we have now.

Q. The most important experience you can remember?

- ~ The shape of Chinese roofs. Respect for Chinese heritage and how they built it.
- ~ The historical trails done by us independently as a group.
- ~ Cheong Fatt Tze Mansion – the antiques, the philosophy of 'chi' and airing the house naturally.
- ~ Museum – learning about different cultures.
- ~ Walkabout – different kind of houses, carvings, culture and lifestyle. It is nice that Penang is eclectic.
- ~ Realized that people in the inner city are extremely friendly.





What the children said....

Research 5 – Restoration (one 11 year old boy)

- ~ How to differentiate between original architecture and renovations
- ~ All this knowledge will be useful – example, if I need to build something I would prefer using original materials/designs e.g. I would not use plastic
- ~ Last time, designs were handmade with lots of carvings which had aesthetic value. Modern architecture is mechanical.
- ~ Before the project I already thought that old heritage buildings were quite unique. I thought that modern materials could be used to repair old buildings. Now after the project, I have a stronger feeling that buildings need to be conserved by not destroying the structure. They should be kept clean.
- ~ It is possible for people to re-learn these crafts.
- ~ I am not interested in learning these crafts, I want to be a mechanic.

General Comments (12 year old girl)

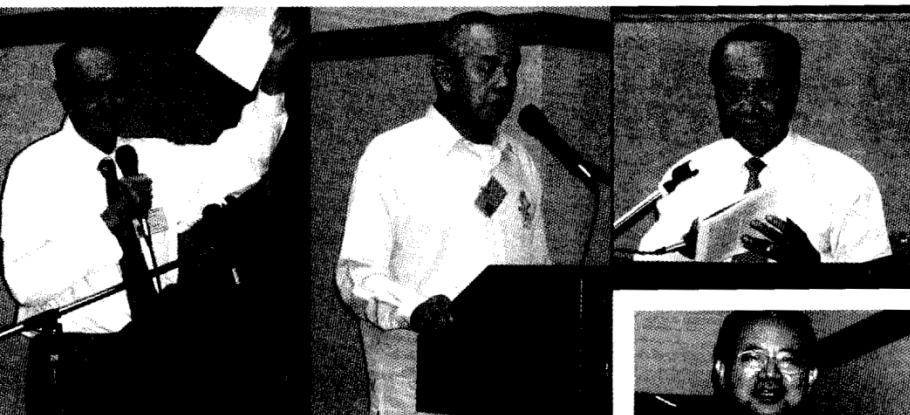
- ~ Know how hardworking people in George Town are, what they do, why they do it and how they do it.
- ~ Saw many building with hand-crafted walls and many designs on the wall like flowers, dragons and so forth
- ~ Inside the building there is a lot of history and very interesting stories
- ~ We learnt about different carvings like wood and stone carvings
- ~ One of our masters, Mr. Raju, taught us how to make flower garlands
- ~ We also interviewed many people, such as the nyonya beads teacher
- ~ We learnt all these things because nobody wants to do it, so we do it

General Comments (12 year old boy)

- ~ I got to know about the history and heritage of Penang
- ~ In this program, I am looking after the heritage of my ancestors
- ~ I also learnt to do many things like stone carving, printed t-shirts
- ~ I made many friends from many places



EVENTS



History of the Chinese Communities in Penang

Saturday and Sunday, 5 & 6 January 2002, City Bayview Hotel, Penang

Text by Khoo Salma Nasution, photos provided by Lim Gaik Siang

The 'Colloquium on the History of the Chinese Communities in Penang', the third out of four community colloquiums of the Penang Story project, was the most ambitious colloquium so far, in several ways.

It was the first two-day colloquium with the most number of speakers (32). Secondly, it was a fully bilingual event, where speakers presented papers in either English or Chinese, and all chairpersons were fluently bilingual. The printed materials and powerpoints were in both languages. Thirdly, it was the most international colloquium, with speakers from China, Taiwan, Thailand and Singapore as well as from Kuala

Lumpur, the Universiti Sains Malaysia and the local Penang community.

The colloquium attracted about 150 participants each day. We are proud to note that the sponsors and speakers included several community leaders, Dato'-Dato' and representatives of important Chinese organisations in Penang. A number of people signed up as PHT members during the event. Many thanks to Dato' Steven Yeap of Hin Lee Group for a donation of RM 2,000 and also to Penang Che Hoon Khor Moral Uplifting Society, the Penang Teochew Association and the Teochew Association Women's Group for their donations.

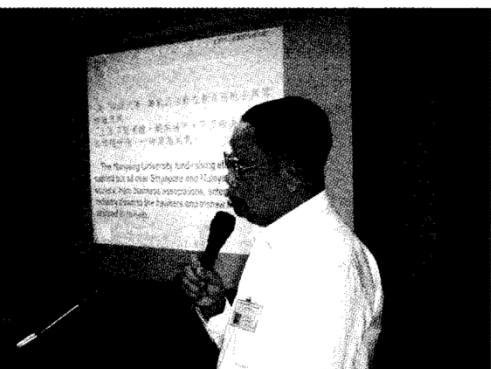
The auspicious occasion was marked by an opening address by Dr. Choong Sim Poey, Chairman, Penang Heritage Trust, and a written message by the Penang Chief Minister Tan Sri Dr. Koh Tsu Koon. The keynote address was delivered by Chinese cultural studies scholar Mr. Ong Seng Huat.

The first day started with an oral history session chaired by Dr. Kim Phaik Lah, featuring Mr. David Ng on the Japanese Occupation, Ooi Hock Tiam on the history of St. Nicholas' Home and Michael Cheah on Baba Nyonya heritage.

Dr. Yee Thiam Sun chaired the second session on education and press, with Dr. Kim (representing the Persatuan Kebudayaan Rakyat Pulau Pinang) speaking on Penang Hokkien in a multilingual society. Mr. Yeap Chong Leng from Singapore spoke on the first editor of Kwong Wah Jit Poh while Dato' Oon Chin Seang, president of the Sam Toh Bean Lok Keok, spoke on Chinese education. The fourth speaker Yeap Tan Lim announced the plans of the Penang Philomathic Union to start a Sun Yat Sen Museum.

For the third session on religion and society, chaired by Mr. Yeoh Ban Eng,





Keoh Lean Cheow of the Young Buddhist Association of Malaysia paid tribute to the Penang proponents of Mahayana Buddhism, while respected scholar Mei Jing highlighted the history of volunteerism. The absence of Mr. Loh Cheng Sun, who had submitted a comprehensive paper on Chinese religion in Penang, was regretted.

The last session on arts and music was chaired by Dr. Tan Liok Ee. It featured Dr. Tan Sooi Beng on identity and performing arts; Ms. Lim Gaik Siang on Penang's own Beijing Opera; Mr. Khaw Guan Liang on music; Toh Teong Chuan on Penang's balladeer the late Tan Tong Tong; PHT council member Dr. Tan Chong Guan on the



pioneer painters, and Dato' Koh Wee Khian of the Penang Arts Society on Chinese fine arts.

The first session of the second day, featuring historical personalities and communities, was chaired by Dr. Tan Liok Ee. Prance Sakulpipatana from Phuket Cultural Centre paid tribute to Khaw Sim Bee. John Chan from NUS library spoke on Aw Boon Haw, Mr. Cheah Jin Teong on the Cheah Kongs and Chan Lean Heng on the clan jetties of Weld Quay.

The second session was chaired by Mr. Lee Kok Hua representing Pertubuhan Akitek Malaysia (PAM). Dr. Huang Lan Siang of Academia Sinica, Taiwan, compared the architecture of Penang, Vietnam and Taiwan; Tan Yeow Wooi of Nanyang Folk Culture compared the town layout in Penang with that of the old cities of China; Ooi Bok Kim looked at urban history through historical maps; and David Yeo showed us the beauty of Penang's doorways.

The session on trades and occupations was chaired by Mr. Ch'ng Choong Hai. Mr. Chen Yong Mei spoke on the history of Chinese guilds and Mr. Liew Chock Yoon spoke on

Chinese Colloquium Proceedings on CD

Compact Discs (CDs) containing the voice files, bilingual powerpoints, papers and profiles of the 32 speakers at the Chinese colloquium can now be ordered from the Penang Heritage Trust.

The CDs contain the full papers (in either English or Chinese), the powerpoints (bilingual, with photographs and visuals), the voice recordings (at least 1.5 hours in wave file) and the speakers' profiles. Each CD features 4-8 speakers.

Price per CD, RM 25.

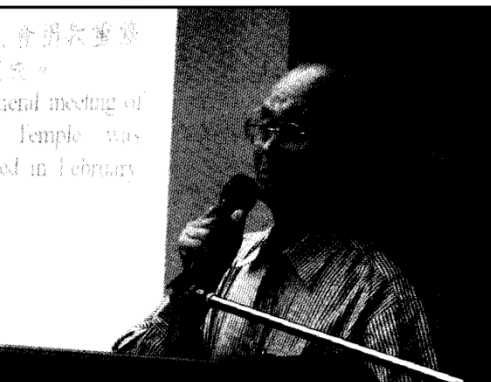
Price per set of 6 CDs, RM 120.

To order, please call Magdeline at PHT, tel 04-2642631

Chinese medicine. The audience was entertained by Dato' P'ng Chye Khim's demonstration of Shaolin martial arts; Dr. Leong Yee Fong's talk on prostitution in prewar Penang; and the introduction to Hainanese coffee and chicken rice by Mr. Lim Theng Yit, representing the Hainanese Association. The final session, on Penang Chinese identity and historiography was chaired by Mr. Tan Kim Hong. Mok Son Chong spoke on Ch'ng dynasty diplomacy, Professor Cao Yun Hua from the Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, Jinan University, China, spoke on acculturation, and Lee Chin Seng from NUS library gave an outline of Chinese bibliographical and archival sources.

The event was coorganised with the Clan Associations Youth Committee, who put up an exhibition on Chinese

continued on page 21





What they talked about

Khoo Salma's closing speech to 'wrap up' the two-day Chinese colloquium.

Over the last two days, we heard an amazing range of speakers—from academicians to local historians to practitioners—altogether 32 speakers

made an attempt to *pau sua pau hai, pau thee pau thay*. We are beginning to realize the regional significance of Penang to its hinterland—South Thailand, Indonesia and the Malay States. As our friends in Perak commented, we didn't know that without Penang there would be no Taiping, no Ipoh, no Papan, and no Tronoh. As for our Phuket friends, without Penang, there would be no shopping!

We are delighted to have received papers detailing how diverse languages, religions, arts or even martial arts from China took root in Penang and some became indigenised and hybridised, until many of us like the singer Ah Gu may ask, 'What is my language? What is my culture? What

is my identity?'

In the late 19th century, the Manchu government tried to remind the overseas Chinese of their ties to China. The response to this was the Chinese revolutionary movement with its headquarters in Penang, and the tremendous and enduring impact this movement had on Chinese education and press to this day.

The Chinese communities in Penang have demonstrated their ability to organize, to volunteer, to help one another, to mobilize and raise funds—for good works, for religious advancement, for social and political causes—and we hope, in our age, to conserve our rich heritage.

Many good causes were supported by philanthropists. Giants like Khaw Sim Bee had one foot in Penang and another in Thailand, whereas even bigger giants like Cheong Fatt Tze and Aw Boon Haw were the multinational figures of their day. Behind these great men were also women—we are glad to remember Ong Sin Neoh as the woman behind the Cheah Kongsi.

Historical communities like the clan jetties reflect the people's history and heritage. We heard the story of ordinary people's lives that provide glimpses into the Japanese Occupation and the history of the home for the blind. We saw the gracious lifestyle of men and women in the hey-day of the Baba Nyonya, and we also heard

about the careers of Sinkah women at the hands of traffickers, pimps and colonial policy-makers—their fate was dependant on 'youth, beauty and adroitness.' On the other hand, people with ordinary trades like '*choo kay-pooi*' and '*phau kopi*' could survive in Penang, while those with specialized skills in Chinese medicine fared even better.

Penang was not only a centre for traditional fine arts and performing arts, but also a place of innovation for music, theatre and visual arts. We heard that the Zhang Zhou folk ballads and the Beijing Opera are both extinct because the practitioners are too old or have passed away without passing on their art to the younger generation.

If we consider architecture a form of public art, then we can only lament the destruction and degradation of our built heritage, and the loss of our beautiful doorways and calligraphic boards, which may have gone into private collections, but are no longer for people to enjoy freely and free-of-charge. Our built heritage is like a record of our historical development, and if we treasure knowledge, then our city, which can be read like a book about our collective history, should also be treasured and preserved. It is in the city neighbourhood that the communities lived and prospered, the dialects were spoken, the festivals celebrated, the culture evolved.

We are proud to have Penang nominated for World Heritage. However, to support this effort, we see the need for a local history centre, to compile all these records and references on Penang history in whatever language and make them accessible, to provide a resource for young people who may be asking, 'What is my culture? What is my history?'



EVENTS



Persatuan Siam Malaysia Mr. Sungkram and Nai Wan Dee's son Boon Laer Aroonratana helped in the translation. Later, during lunch, the colloquium participants were treated to a live performance of **Penang Menora**

staged in the hotel lobby. The eight musicians, some who came from as far as Baling on the Thai border, played exquisite Siamese music. The two dancers, Suni and her husband, among the last practitioners of Thai Menora, demonstrated this endangered performing art.

Penang's Historical Minorities

Saturday, 2 February 2002, City Bayview Hotel, Penang

Text by Khoo Salma Nasution, photos provided by Lim Giak Siang

The Colloquium on 'Penang's Historical Minorities' was in some ways the most colourful - and certainly the most musical - of the four community colloquiums. The representatives of the Penang Eurasian Association, the Penang Burmese Society as well as the Penang branches of the Malaysian Ceylonese Congress and the Malaysian Siamese Association took active parts in formulating the programme.

We had the **best emcee in town**, Gerald Green, president of the Penang Eurasian Association, a professional speaker and trainer in public speaking. He started out by thanking the organisers for using the term 'Historical Minorities' — 'We regret that the term "Others" or "Lain-Lain" is used to categorize minority ethnic groups — as if we don't have an identity of our own or as if we don't belong to the Malaysian nation. Let's hope that,

starting with this event, we can eliminate the use of the term "OTHERS" and be recognized as historical minorities, on our own terms.'

Khoo Salma stood in for the chairperson of the panel on 'Living Heritage: Penang's Siamese, Burmese and Filipinos', and had the pleasure of introducing the first speaker Dato' Mary Ritchie, a renowned social worker. She spoke on the Burmese community, including the contributions of many Burmese women. To give us a taste of Burma, she donated door gifts of Burmese cheroots.

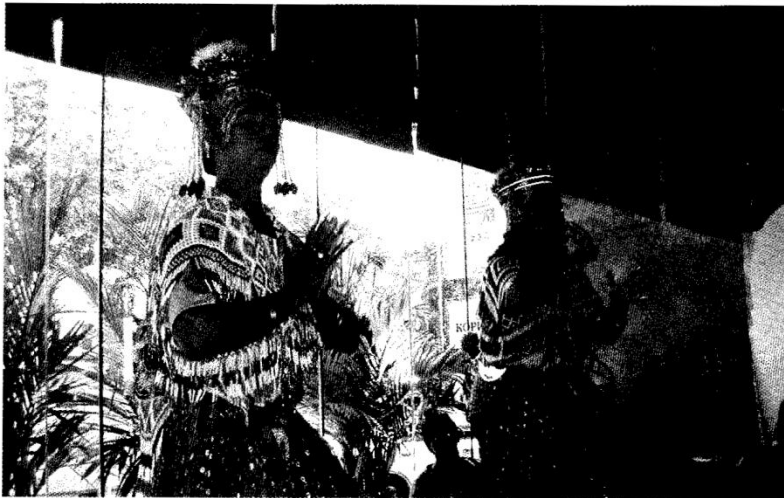
The Siamese elder and shaman of Pulau Tikus, Mr. Noo Wan @ Nai Wan Dee Aroonratana, the 79-year old leader of the Menora troupe *Rombongan Menora Thai Malaysia*, spoke in Thai about the significance of Menora. Vice-President of the

Catherine Lee Su Sie talked about the Filipino musicians who came to join the town band, intermarried and settled down in Penang. Beautiful old photographs were shown of the Geronimo and Andres families.

The Penang Eurasians had their own show, chaired by Gerald Green. Educationist Dr. Anthony Sibert gave the 'keynote', a very substantial historical paper on 'The History of Penang Eurasians', focusing on the entry of the Catholic Church, Catholic schools and Eurasian community into Penang. He also reminded us of bygone heritage landmarks - the monumental **College-General** that was demolished in the 1980s amidst Penang's first heritage protest, and the **Kampung Serani** and **Noah's Ark** demolished in the 1990s in spite of community objections. Eustace Nonis,

continued next page





Minorities continued

an economist with the Asian Development Bank, gave a succinct talk on the Eurasian personalities and professionals who contributed to Penang.

The contributions of more than two dozen Penang Eurasian musicians to the Malaysian music scene was outlined by James A. Rozells and Kathleen Rodrigues, performers at the *Rozells Country & Western and Oldies Pub* in Tanjung Bungah.

Paying a tribute to one of the country's greatest composers, **Jimmy Boyle**, their rendition of 'Putera Puteri' and 'Jauh Jauh' brought tears to the eyes of many in the audience.

The panel on the Malaysian Ceylonese community and its contribution towards the development of the State of Penang, was presented by Dato' Dr. D.M. Thuraiappah and Mr. S. Karthigesu, respectively the President and Vice-President of the Malaysian

Ceylonese Congress (MCC). Dato' Dr. Thuraiappah, himself a renowned personality in the medical field, introduced the Ceylonese community and the MCC. Mr. Karthigesu, a veteran leader of the municipal services unions was the main researcher behind the fantastic compilation of **profiles of prominent Ceylonese personalities in Penang**. Other invited panelists were Dr Raj Kumar Maharajah and S. Jeyaratnam, also from the MCC. Harold Vernon Speldewinde spoke on pioneer journalist **Uncle Sara** and Ruth Thillaimuthu spoke on the first Mayor of George Town **D.S. Ramanathan**. Karthigesu introduced **Mr. Sonny Pillai**, the former City Secretary of George Town, and invited Mr. Pillai to recount his years in the city administration.

The final panel on 'Other Legacies' was chaired by PHT Vice-Chairman, Ahmad Chik. The journalist Himanshu Bhatt spoke on the bygone Jewish community, Chinese studies researcher

Ong Seng Huat spoke on the transformation of the Koay Jetty community, and the lawyer Rumi Maneksha spoke on the small Parsi minority. Clement Liang in his paper on the prewar Japanese Community in Penang, highlighted the recent demolition of **Asahi Hotel**, a high-class Japanese Hotel on Transfer Road.

Clement had sourced a number of old photographs of Japanese premises in Penang, and organised an expedition, a couple of weeks before the colloquium, to visit the Japanese Cemetery and scout the inner city for the surviving sites. We were delighted to find Chungking Hotel on Chulia Street and a few other sites which matched the old photographs. Our joy at the discovery of Asahi Hotel on Transfer Road was short-lived as it was **demolished** the day before the colloquium! Lim Gaik Siang acted quickly, inserting a picture of the demolition into the powerpoint.

The closing forum, '*Quo Vadis, The Heritage of Penang's Historical Minorities*', was itself a historic occasion bringing together the Eurasian, Ceylonese, Thai and Burmese associations. The forum was chaired by Anthony Sibert, who proposed a **fellowship of the minority groups** - starting with those who were represented at the colloquium. He was flanked by Gerald Green, Dato' Mary Ritchie, Mr. Karthigesu and Boon Laer representing their respective associations. Boon Laer called upon the Ministry of Culture Arts and Tourism to recognize the historical minorities. Speaking on behalf of the newly-registered Penang Burmese Society, Dato' Mary appealed to the govern





ment to set up a **museum for minority cultures**. The government could also develop an educational package for Penang schoolchildren to teach them about the minority groups in Penang.

Karthigesu said that the continued use of 'others' to denote those other than Malay, Chinese and Indian, 43 years after Independence, was a sore point among the minority groups. The MCC had written to the Prime Minister requesting that the Ceylonese and other groups be recognized. Gerald pointed out that the use of 'others' makes people feel that they don't belong, whereas in fact, **'there is no truer Malaysian than a minority that's all mixed up!'** He stressed that it's not about politics, because minorities

could never win in the numbers game – minority groups just want to be appreciated, acknowledged and recognized. Dato' Thuraiappah proposed that the fellowship should be developed through regular meetings among the various groups. Raj Kumar read out the MCC's 9 point petition to champion the political rights of the minorities, however, Dr. Sibert reminded the audience that this was not the forum to talk about politics.

Neil Khor insisted that as Penang was falling down, **we shouldn't just talk, we should do something!** Mrs. Loh-Lim suggested that we could have a site visit to the Pulau Tikus Church and the house of Jimmy Boyle to highlight the Eurasian heritage. Dr. Kim proposed that since the Penang Story project has shown that the social history of Penang constitutes a 'substantive area' of study, we should inaugurate **'Penang studies'** as a new field. All felt that the Penang Eurasian Association should take leadership of this new fellowship of minorities. Their challenge would be to preserve the heritage of Penang's historical minorities, to pave the way for greater cultural representation and to strive for recognition for all the minority groups who have helped to develop Penang and Malaysia.

Y.B. Dato' Dr. Toh Kin Woon, State Executive Councillor for Economic Planning, Education, Human Resources, Science and Technology, representing the Penang Chief Minister Tan Sri Dr. Koh Tsu Koon, officiated the closing of the set of four Penang Story community colloquiums. He took note of the recommendations of the 'Quo Vadis' panel, and encouraged the

minorities to move forward with their aspirations. He quoted a part of Khoo Salma's message in the souvenir programme, 'If we were to look at the social history of Penang through tri-coloured 'Malay, Chinese, Indian' eye-glasses, we would only see a limited spectrum rather than the complete rainbow of human diversity. It is our choice whether to dilute our multiculturalism, or to recognize it, build upon it and celebrate it.'

We had a number of special participants at this event. We were most honoured to have our Penang Story advisor **Professor Wang Gungwu** and his wife Margeret in the audience. Though Mr. Lim Kean Chye of **The Penang File** made more than his fair share of comments, all of them were exceedingly valuable. Mr. Aloysius Robless of the **Malacca Historical Resource Society**, himself a living link between Penang and Malacca, shared with us his memories of 'rampong' at Waterfall Gardens. We had long-time PHT member Dato' Param and Dr. Nadarajah from KL, and a couple of new friends from Singapore, Errol Neubronner and Elisabeth Chan. All went home with a smile, keen to try out their Burmese cheerots.



Penang Heritage Trust Museum Shop

The shop occupies an adapted Penang Hill railway car in the compound of the Penang Museum on Farquhar Street. From here, PHT member Peter Foo sells the Trust's merchandise and books as well as postcards, antiques, collectibles and Penang souvenirs.

Open 11am- 5pm, daily except Friday
(The Penang Museum is open 9am-5pm, daily except Friday. Admission RM 1).

LESSONS

Bath — a Living City, not just an Historic Show Piece

Text by Rory Carrigan

Mary Stacey, Built Heritage Project Manager, Bath & North East Somerset Council, England, gave a talk in Penang on Britain's second World Heritage Site.

The city of Bath is a compact, lively city with a population of 80,000 people. Located in a valley, its river and hills are an important landscape setting, with its physical size constrained by a greenbelt. Bath has been settled for over 2000 years, due to the 'hot waters'. The 'Bath Spa', a regency spa built in the late 1700s and early 1800s Georgian period, for the well-to-do to visit, and take the waters, is unique in its completeness of architectural style - all in 'Bath stone' - and famous for its crescent and circus of four-storey Georgian terrace houses as well as the Roman baths.

Bath has always been a tourist hotspot. However, it serves as a place for the local people to live and work, as well as accommodating many thousands of tourists. In order to sustain its habitability for the local population, **the quality of tourists is considered more important than the quantity.** As a result the council has had to overcome heritage conservation issues, which concern both the residents and the tourists.

A great deal of effort has gone into keeping the original facade and signage of local shops. **Small individual shops which occupy single units are encouraged,** in preference to the large chain stores, which want to knock small historical units into large retail spaces. Smaller shops elicit more curiosity and offer interesting items, thus presenting an exciting shopping experience and a popular shopping venue.

One of the toughest management problems for the council is the control of traffic. Current schemes to combat the problem in the town

center have led to some of the roads being reclaimed and prioritized in favor of pedestrians, **with the creation of pedestrian friendly zones**.

The introduction of new buildings into an old city has been a particular challenge for the council and conservationists. Historic research is carried out before the work is undertaken, so that original materials and styles can be adopted, and **in some cases new buildings have been set lower in height against old buildings,** to be less dominant. A focus is made on the reuse of old buildings. A disused old stable was converted into office and accommodation facilities - the original facade and building materials were maintained.

The planning department tries to avoid conflict, by encouraging appropriate conversion. Building and planning permission even affects the interior of the once grand family houses when converted into smaller modern living units. The front rooms, often the grandest and most elaborate in historic design features, are required to be kept. The rear rooms can be divided according to needs. More important was the control over the external facades; all the doors and windows are white - minority of shop fronts are permitted a controlled range of colours.

Bath council was not always pro-heritage - it underwent a radical change and a complete turn around from the 1970s when the new urban center ripped out the heart and destroyed much of the artisan housing. An ex-councilor is well known for the quote, **'What is the use of having 18th century work houses if there are no 18th century workers to put in them!'** A *Times* newspaper column by Adam Ferguson brought the destruction to the attention of the National Government. NGO's



The aim of the Bath Spa Project is to reconnect the City with its very reason for being - the naturally-occurring thermal springs. The project involves the restoration of 5 important heritage buildings, including the sacred Cross Bath and the construction of a contemporary building to complement Bath's outstanding 18th Century urban landscape. This Millennium Commission supported initiative has been described as 'the most extraordinary project in local government'.

continued to protest and a book highlighting the destruction was published. The 'Sack of Bath' was the product of the collective blindness of those who ran the city i.e. the city council and its councillors. The priority and purpose of the concerned public and conservationists at the time was twofold: **to halt the demolition of all period architecture while a new approach could be worked out.** It was urgent to prevent the further spread of recklessness which seemed to be the only motivation of the city's planners, architects, consultants, and developers. Insisting that it was not significantly dearer to refurbish, adapt and restore than to destroy and rebuild, concerned citizens highlighted what

was then the central challenge, to find new uses for old buildings, and put new life into the old city.

Much of the minor architecture of Georgian Bath was wrongly and needlessly destroyed: *wrongly*, because of its **intrinsic beauty**, because of its **sociological importance**, and because of its **vital contribution to the city's character**; *needlessly*, because with the energy and will, **much or most might have been saved and renovated, and that character preserved**. Following concerns raised by the 'Sack of Bath' by 1987, the British Government and ICOMOS proposed to nominate the city for UNESCO World Heritage inscription; welcomed by the newly elected council.

Today's council views modern development as a chance not to destroy what exists, but to regenerate it. A new development 'Millennium Project' aims to restore the city, so that it is once again 'Bath Spa'. It involves the renovation and the creation of new, controlled development right in the heart of the World Heritage site. This huge challenge aims to follow the council's guidelines by not copying buildings from the past, but by incorporating new projects with the old buildings to contribute to the **21st Century architecture of Bath**. Bath has learned from its past mistakes and now actively encourages conservation. **With considerable consultation with the local people**, conservationist, and heritage groups alike, it is thought that the recreation of a spa will be a much-welcomed success.

The talk was short, but the audience made up of members from PHT, SOS, Arts Ed, kept the questions and answers session going for over an hour - such was the interest. Perhaps parallels can be drawn, and the local movement might be encouraged by **the knowledge that NGO pressure truly did make a difference**, helping the authorities view conservation in a positive light.

The talk on 'Experience of Bath as World Heritage site' was presented by Mary Stacey at the Pusat Warisan Pulau Pinang, 128 Armenian Street, on 29 October 2001. The event was organised by the Penang State Heritage Conservation Committee.

Chinese Colloquium continued

clans and surnames. It was the first event ever organised by the PHT which substantially used the Mandarin medium, allowing us to expand our networking with the Mandarin-speaking community. We had a committee of 18 and a pool of 32 volunteers, in addition to our staff Melissa Ananthraj, temporary staff Ch'ng Mei Mei and volunteer Rory Carrigan.

Almost every presentation was supported by a powerpoint, using two laptops and LCD projectors to provide better viewing. The event involved a lot of hard work, as all papers (which were submitted in both English and Mandarin) had to be summarized into points, which were then translated from English to Mandarin or visa-versa. We learnt that 'Chinese input' is not like typing in English or Malay at all - it is a time-consuming process where individual characters have to be selected. The powerpoints featured the talking points in both languages, and in addition to that, the number of photographs and visuals used was maximised.

We had a number of young Chinese-speaking volunteers - tourist guide trainees from Systematic College and Chinese school students waiting for their exam results. After the event, a barbeque was held at Dr. Choong Sim Poey's house for new and old volunteers.

The press coverage of the Chinese colloquium, especially in the Chinese press, has been tremendous. Interviews and speakers' papers were carried a couple of weeks before and many weeks after the colloquium.

Special mention should be made of the outstanding contributions of the colloquium chairperson, Ms. Lim Gaik Siang, and the organising committee secretary Tan Yau Chong, who both dedicated a lot of time and effort. Although recently elected as a PHT council member in September, Gaik Siang has been contributing greatly to

PHT since early that year. She has a full-time demanding job as a regional manager for a US-based engineering products company, where she has to take charge of distributors in 10 Asia Pacific companies! As our technical consultant, she can be said to be primarily responsible for bringing PHT into the technological age.

Yau Chong, a graduate in English Literature from a Taiwanese university, is a prize-winning poet and professional translator, who is a very much in demand for his Chinese to English translations. We at PHT learnt a lot from the Mandarin-speaking community about the spirit of volunteerism and teamwork!



Inner City Trails of George Town

PHT regularly conducts 3 different heritage tours:

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Little India, Spice Trail

Wednesday

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ORAL HISTORY

The Japanese Occupation

by Lim Siew Kang

Last issue, we reported on the interviews conducted by Lim Siew Kang with David Ng, Khoo Boo Hong, Khoo Kay Hin and Sonny De Silva; the first three focused on the Japanese Occupation. Since then, Siew Kang has done two more interviews on the Japanese Occupation. The synopses are provided by the interviewer:

Madam Chan Teck Wah was a nurse attached to the Penang General Hospital (GH) when the bombing of Penang started on 11/12/1941. She was then working on the 4th Floor of A Block. When the bombs fell, all the nurses could do was to huddle on to their patients, to keep them safe, and then to move them down to the lower floors.

On the second day of the bombing she was posted to the casualty ward to attend to the wounded. The hospital was like a mad house. full of the wounded, half dead and the dead. Bodies, torn limbs and blood were all over the place. She literally walked on and over dead bodies in the ward. She could see amputated legs and hands thrown into big dust bins which were then pushed out to the corridors to be cleared off by the mortuary staff (it was then impossible to keep records of the dead and wounded).

By then all the European doctors had been evacuated, except for the chief medical officer Dr. Allen who chose gallantly to stay back. The Japanese later interned him in the matron's quarters. The nurses secretly fed and sewed for him during his internment. During this traumatic period she could remember the remaining 5 doctors, all locals, who attended to those in need. They were doctors Apparajoo, Rajaram, Baboo, Tan Boon Beng and Tan Hock Kee. A Mr. Jelani who was then the senior hospital assistant took charge of the day-to-day running of the GH.

She could vividly recall meeting with a Nyonya lady refugee coming in with one of her arm almost severed from the shoulder and bleeding profusely from her wound suffered as a result of the air raid. The wounded lady told Mrs. Chan that she walked all the way from Carnavon Street to the GH in Residency Road. Madam Chan, from her experience, knew the lady would not last long due to the tremendous loss of blood. True enough she soon died.

What struck Madam Chan was that this lady was wearing gold and diamond rings on every one of her fingers and her body and legs were clad in jewellery. When they lifted her blouse after she had died they found she was wearing a large canvass belt sewn into partitions and these partitions were stuffed with currency notes of big denominations. The staff then removed the valuables and wrapped them up with the big handkerchief of the deceased (of more than 2 feet long which was typically used by Nyonya ladies of the era) and handed them over to the clerk in charge for safekeeping.

When the Japanese subsequently took charge of the hospital, they used the A Block for treating the top Japanese military and their civilian officers, as well as the Geisha girls sent over from Japan to entertain the top ranking

officials. The Japanese chief medical officer stayed in the nearby York House along York Rd. The local GH staff lived in fear, for the Japanese had put up notices stating "whether you live or die it is our wish" all over the GH and threatened to chop of the heads of those who opposed them.

Madam Chan subsequently left the nursing service to quickly marry her boyfriend (presently her husband) in order to avoid the unsolicited advances made on her by one of the Japanese officers. At the time, one had to be single to continue with the nursing profession. Her ambition to be a fully qualified nurse was shattered when she had to leave the nursing service. She was also heart-broken when she lost her father, a newspaper reporter, when he was killed in Singapore in 1942. Madam Chan went on to describe the living conditions of the war years.

Mr Natha Singh was with the British Field Security Service in Singapore attached to Hill Station when the second world war broke out in Malaya. He escaped death when the Japanese dropped their bombs. His friend who was standing beside him was killed. He returned to Penang in April 1942 in a goods train after the fall of Singapore. His family fled to Batu Gantong near the Penang Turf Club when the bombing first started in Penang.

His younger brother Mr Jit Singh who was with the British Penang Volunteer Army was accused of listening to Allied radio broadcast and spreading news of Allied forces was sent to the Taiping jail. Among the prominent

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people jailed was Mr. C.O. Lim and Mrs. I. K. Cheah. So was Dr. N.K. Menon who was detained and later released. Dr. Menon was the local head of the Indian Independent League.

Life in the prison was bad. It was quite common for prisoners to last less than a year before they died, unless they were able to obtain food and medicine - usually smuggled in through the assistance of corrupt warders. Besides malnutrition, the prisoners normally died of beri beri and malaria. However, if one was close enough to the warders, one could obtain some of the latest information. In fact Mr. Natha Singh received news of the Hiroshima bombing and Japan's impending surrender when he visited his brother in the jail, that is, before this information was published in the newspaper.

During the occupation period many Indians volunteered to join The Indian Independent League and The Indian Independent Army to fight for India's independence. Many people were then looking back at their country of origin and there was not a great deal of nationalistic feelings for Malaya then.

Food and medicine were scarce, partly because there were not enough ships to bring them in. This led to the 'grow more food' campaign by the Japanese authority. For this exercise, Mr. Natha Singh was sent to Permatang Tinggi on the mainland. In the urban area little plots of land were converted to vegetable gardens. Tapioca and corn became substitutes for rice as the staple. Cloth was also in short supply. It was common to see people wearing patched clothes.

There was talk that the Japanese in Penang were preparing to defend the island to the last against the coming Allied invasion. This would mean another round of bombings, fighting and sufferings for the inhabitants. The people were thankful when Japan surrendered.

After the war, Mr. Natha Singh 'rejoined' the Police Force for some years before proceeding to read law at the Middle Temple in London.

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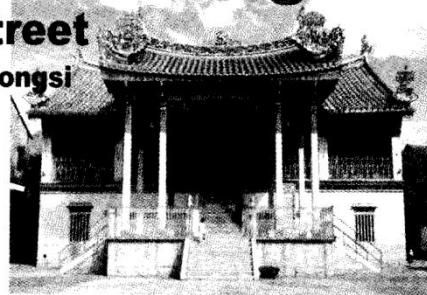
at Victoria Street

The 'Other' Khoo Kongs

Site Visit #24

**Sunday, 28 April 2002,
3.30pm**

*Please write this in your diary
as no reminder will be issued!*



Join us at the ancestral hall of the Khoo subclan called 'Hai Kee Kak'. Founded in 1878 by the famous Khoo Thean Teik (of Thean Teik Estate, now Farlim) it was renovated in 1907 just one year after the main Leong San Tong Khoo Kongs on Cannon Square was rebuilt - the same workmen and artisans probably worked on this temple.

Although less ostentatious, it is nevertheless exquisite in the skill and craftsmanship demonstrated. The temple is sea-facing unlike the one on Cannon Square, and originally was entered through a small and well-hidden passageway from Beach Street. However when Victoria Street came into being due to natural land reclamation, the entrance was changed to Victoria Street.

Meet in front of the temple at Victoria Street (Go down the one-way Victoria Street - which is parallel to Weld Quay - and the temple is located just after the Acheen Street Ghaut junction.)

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ANNOUNCEMENT



The Penang Story ~ International Conference

April will see the culmination of the Penang Story project in the form of the International Conference 2002. For this event we have attracted 60 speakers from more than a dozen countries!

In addition to the previous sponsors, we managed to secure funding for this project from the Canadian High Commission, the British High Commission and the US Embassy. *The announcement of this conference is carried in a separate brochure sent out with this issue.*

Registration fees:

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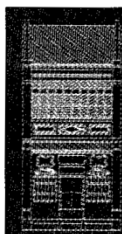


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