



# PHT newsletter

ISSUE NO. 78 / FEBRUARY TO APRIL 2003

SUPPORT CONSERVATION EFFORTS IN YOUR COMMUNITY!

26A Stewart Lane, 10200 Penang, Malaysia

Tel: 604-264 2631 Fax: 2628421 • Email: phtrust@po.jaring.my • Website: www.pht.org.my

PENANG  
HERITAGE  
TRUST

Persatuan  
Warisan  
Pulau  
Pinang

PHT

## EDITORIAL

Dear PHT members,

We have had a period of much activity within the PHT over the last 3 months. January was dominated by the UNESCO - Nordic Foundation Workshop - the Lijiang Models. We were actively involved in the planning, technical support, management, logistics, tours and hospitality for the workshop involving representatives of 8 heritage sites and UNESCO as well as international experts. Report on page 13

Entering our 4th year of site visits, we have been overwhelmed by the support shown by members for this monthly activity. The sites so far this year have, of course also been very exclusive, normally inaccessible to the public and highly prominent. Reports on pages 2, 3 & 4

We welcome a new Treasurer to the Council, Mr Ang Peng Hai. We hope he will enjoy his involvement in the efforts to save our historic city. At the same time we cannot thank Catherine Loh, our ex-treasurer, enough, for her diligence and her forbearance in dealing with PHT and its financial conundrums.

We also welcome a new member of staff, Mr John Loh, who will be assisting Magdaline in the office. We are very happy to have you, John and hope you will enjoy working with the council members and other PHT staff.

To you and to all members, the Council would like to state that despite our often-times, flakiness, indecisiveness, possibly questionable management skills, emotionality and highly differing personalities, we are, all of us, passionate in our love for Penang and steadfast in our efforts to save it. We ask for your indulgence and your patience.

L.L.Loh-Lim

## REPORT ON OUR 'HOUSE HUNTING' EFFORTS

Our appeal in the last newsletter led to a number of offers of buildings to restore and use as the PHT office. We are however unable to confirm any definite site. Each has its own problems, deemed unsuitable because it was considered too large, too small, too expensive, too dilapidated with landlords unwilling to put in any repair works, out of the inner city, unsuitable feng shui, etc etc. But we are still looking and are still very open to suggestions from members who may know of a suitable site. Please keep an ear / eye open and help us to find a new and more suitable home.

We re-iterate:

- AMEX has offered us US\$80,000 to restore a prominent building for our use
- it should not have been altered beyond restoration efforts, particularly facade-wise
- it should be in the inner city
- it has to be larger than our current office
- it has to have a friendly landlord
- it has to have a long lease
- it should be in a rentable condition or have a landlord willing to put in at least minimal repairs
- it should not be easily mistaken for a brothel, bar, funeral home or coffee shop
- correspondingly, our staff should not be mistaken as personnel belonging to any of the above...

To keep members informed so we don't repeat efforts, so far we've looked at :

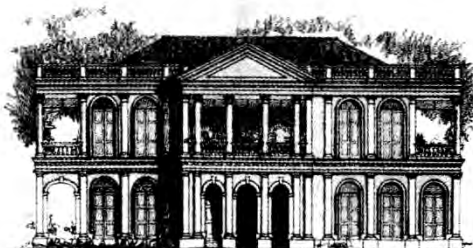
- 4 Penang Street
  - Kong Soon House (Kee Huat Radio) Beach Street
  - India House
  - 1st floor of a building in Green Hall
  - ABN-AMRO
  - Yeap Chor Ee Chambers
  - 44 Bishop Street
  - 66 Church Street
  - Bungalow on Hutton Lane
  - Star Building
  - Tong Lock Hotel, Campbell Street
- We are very interested in contacts for
- UAB at the corner of Victoria Street & China Street Ghaut
  - George Town Dispensary (KTM)

**APRIL SITE VISIT ~  
PAGE 6**

SITE VISIT REPORT 26 JANUARY 2003

## Seri Mutiara, The Residency, Penang

Courtesy Akitek LLA



Tun Dato Seri Haji Abdul Rahman bin Haji Abbas will be the first Governor of Penang for a long time, to occupy the Residency looking more or less as it was intended to by the original architects. In 1890 this great house was designed on a well established Anglo-Indian format. Open-ended with airy galleries, Italian carrera marble floors, and a magnificent chengal wood staircase. It has cross-ventilation corridors and very high ceilings, with the heat-producing kitchens outside in a separate single-storey building. One can almost hear the creaking of great fans wafting to and fro, operated in the days before electricity by a string attached to a punka wallah's foot.

Adapting such a building to modern use, and especially air-conditioning, meant sealing off almost everything, lowering the ceilings, and developing an interior living space that was more modern, comfortable and convenient. However, in the current climate of conservation this clearly would not do. With the appointment of the new Governor, the State Government decided to set aside the modest sum of RM5.5m to restore the building to something like its original concept, without making it too uncomfortable to live in, or receive a Datukship in.

Laurence Loh, the Conservation Architect has gone a long way to achieve this difficult goal. Gone is the clash of styles, back are the beautifully ornamented ceilings, wide open corridors and airy spaces. Where necessary an area will be sealed off for air conditioning with a discrete inner curtain of glass, but in many instances spaces and corridors will rely upon natural ventilation. Gone is the stark latter-day utility of the rooms and furnishings, back will come graceful proportions with elegant furnishings and fittings.

With few exceptions, restoration has drawn upon Malaysian resources and craftsmanship. For all that, this type of work is very costly, and it is surprising that Mr. Loh's meticulous attention to authentic detail has so far been carried through within budget. Damp-proofing for example utilized an Australian system for leeching accumulated salts out of the walls before injecting a new damp-proof course under pressure.

The building itself should be ready by the end of July 2003 although interior fixtures, furnishings and fittings will take somewhat longer. The 107 PHT members and friends who had the rare privilege of viewing and nosing about this historic building and gardens don't need to become Governors or receive Datukships for after all, we've been there.....done that.....!

Dr.J.R.Robertson



The historic Residents stone





## PENANG HILL RE-VISITED

[picture courtesy of Dr.Choong]

Instead of using the sedan chair that had long gone out of fashion, PHT members were given three options to reach Penang Hill for our Bel Retiro/Crag Hotel site visit

- 1) Hike up at 9:30am with Urs Capol leading the way, for those who were ambitious and could get out of bed
- 2) use the funicular railway and fight the Sunday afternoon crowds or
- 3) find your own 4-wheel drive transport, or as one PHT member did, on motorcycle.

86 members met at the Upper Station at 2pm, where we were given an introduction to the history of Penang Hill and its name Bukit Bendera or Flag Hill by Ahmad Chik (affectionately referred to as 'de factor Dato Bandar of Penang Hill') before we proceeded to Bel Retiro. Built early in the nineteenth century, Bel Retiro was immortalized in the 1818 oil painting by Capt. Robert Smith, the aquatint of the same Painting by William Daniels, and the 1856 watercolor by Captain Charles Cazalet - all from the same view from Convalescent Bungalow. Currently under restoration, Bel Retiro has been underutilized since the days of the Colonial Governor who used to live there among the cool hills and communicated with George Town via flags, and only descended when the mail boat arrived. Now Bel Retiro is seldom used and sits in silent recall of past glory.

As in our January visit to the Residency, we had to register our names & after some fast talking by Loh-Lim and adamant promises that we would not take any photographs, we were permitted to keep our cameras. After walking through the dilapidated guest house, the ad-hoc extension for 'kenduris' (parties) and the sadly deserted main house itself we gathered out back, by the overgrown clay tennis court that had since turned to grass. While lamenting Bel Retiro's neglected state we nevertheless have hopes for its renewal in a sensitive fashion. Scaffolding is evident around the house and roofing works appear to be underway.

Our efforts to take a brief side trip to the nearby historic Convalescent Bungalow, were thwarted when we found that the connecting gate under lock-and-chain. An insightful and open discussion ensued, led by Loh Lim, about Penang's privatization plans for some of the State government bungalows, which could bring them back into proper usage, and the development of Penang Hill itself, including past, overzealous plans that had been totally rejected by Penangites. Many members wanted to know more about the Memorandum of Understanding that had been signed with a private entrepreneur for the development and management of these State properties. Dr Choong then enlightened us about the surrounding water catchment area and Penang's highly successful water management, the envy of all other states.

With time pressing, we hiked over to the Crag Hotel and then gingerly crossed single file (but not too closely) over an old rickety bridge where several timber doors had replaced broken or rotting boards to the persistent tune of several dogs barking - or were they applauding us for being so brave?



[picture courtesy of Loh-Lim]





[picture courtesy of Dr.Choong]

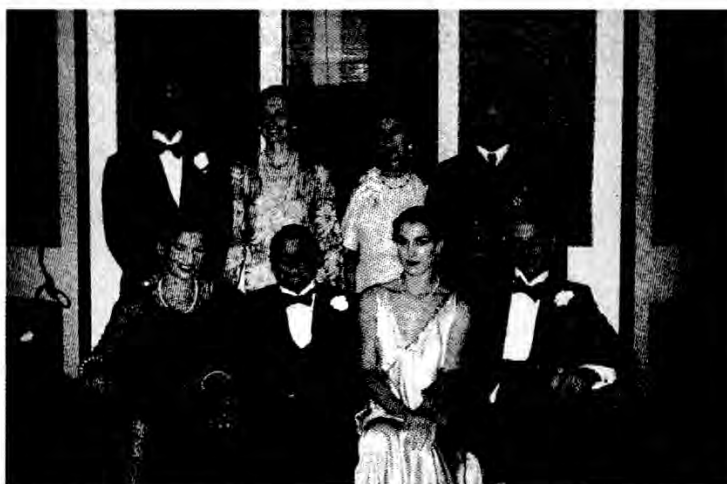
The site was originally owned by a William Clubley, who had merely wished to enjoy the splendid isolation. By 1890 the ownership of the hotel had passed to a Scot named Captain J. Kerr. An advertisement in the Penang Gazette dated Nov 1, 1894, stated that "wines and liquors of the best brands, lawn tennis, billiards, croquet and other amusements" were available at the hotel. The Sarkies brothers, the legendary Armenian hoteliers, who also ran the E & O, The Raffles, and the Strand in Rangoon, took it over at the turn of the century and transformed it into a full-scale hotel, adding nine chalets and no doubt a touch of class. In the late 1920's the hotel was acquired by the Penang Municipal Council and was still quite popular right up until the Japanese Occupation in 1942. After being empty for nearly a decade, the Crag Hotel was leased to the Incorporated Society of Planters which converted the buildings into the Uplands School for expatriate children in 1955 and was used for this purpose until 1977 when it was promptly abandoned and forgotten about until 1991, when it was briefly restored to its former glory for the French film 'Indochine', a French movie set in Vietnam in 1930's. Indochine garnered an Oscar nomination for Best Actress for the beautiful Catherine Deneuve and won an Oscar for Best Foreign Film 1993 - a fitting ending for the Crag Hotel ?

Mrs. Daniels, the Matron of Uplands School gave a brief talk about the school, the students who attended, and what it was like for them at the former Crag Hotel - for example how each time they went up and down the funicular railway they had to be escorted. The main building where we gathered was used for dining and the kitchen, and also for ballet lessons. This was appropriate since for Indochine it was used for the Christmas party scene where they dined on Yule log cakes for dessert and danced the tango. PHT member Robert Raymer, one of the eight tango dancers in the film, shared his memories and passed around some photographs of the shooting.



(pic courtesy of Loh-Lim)

We then trudged back up to the Hindu temple where a much appreciated tea, arranged by Ahmad, was enjoyed by all. When we had cooled down somewhat (where was the famous cool hill air?) we were rewarded with an invitation to Ahmad and Joan's delightful hill cottage with its tranquility and breathtaking views of George Town, truly representing all that is good and worth saving on Penang Hill.



Report by Robert Raymer who stands on the extreme left / picture shows the tango dancers of 'Indochine' at Crag Hotel, Penang Hill





### *New Staff & New Intern*

*PHT welcomes John Loh, the new Admin Assistant who will helping out our Office Manager, Magdeline, in the day-to-day affairs of PHT. John was previously a copywriter and now does freelance writing. If you find him familiar, it is because he was briefly in the heritage circle back in 1998 when he did his practical training at PDC, AR & T Heritage Consultancy (now PEN Heritage Consultancy) and Penang Heritage Centre.*

*Also new is Md Yusri b. Md Yusoff, a Penagite, who is currently doing his practical training for 10 weeks at PHT. An undergraduate in the field of Urban And Regional Planning, Yusri will be studying for his final year at Kulliyyah of Architecture and Environmental Design (KAED), International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM).*



PHT at the State Chinese New Year Open House 9th February 2003

[pics courtesy of Dr Choong]



PHT at Gaik Siang's Open House 12th February 2003

[pic courtesy of Kim Wong]

## APRIL 27TH 2003 SITE VISIT

## THE HISTORIC CLAN JETTIES



The original 7 clan jetties were actually clan villages that were built over water in the 1800's - Lim, Chew, Tan, Yeoh, Lee, Koay and 'mixed'. To-day they are under-going tremendous change and social strain and are facing an uncertain future. While international UNESCO consultants see the existence of the Clan Jetties as essential testimony to our 'living heritage', to others they are merely an eye sore to be shunned and hopefully removed. The residents themselves ask only that their living conditions be improved and that they be considered in any future town planning.

We are very pleased to announce that we have managed to get Mr Lee Hack Teik, local State Assemblyman for the area, to meet with us and show us the Clan Jetties at 'grassroots level'. We are also hoping to get Dr Chan Lean Heng of USM to join us. Many of you may remember Lean Heng from the Penang Story - she regaled us with stories of her experiences at the jetties while doing her PhD research on the jetties.

## JUNCTION OF CHULIA STREET / WELD QUAY - 3.30 PM. - SUNDAY 27TH APRIL

*PHT member, antique collector and Penang lover, Raymond Kwok once again wishes to share his feelings..*

Once

I had kissed your lustrous pearl  
Swum in clear, blue waters  
Felt the soft caress of breezes  
And sung a lullaby of praise  
Totally enchanted

Once

I had strolled along tranquil beaches  
Picking up dainty shells in sheer delight  
How I loved your picturesque countryside  
And captured every lovely scene in sight  
Totally mesmerized

Once

I had sountered along your freeway  
Explored your quaint alleyways  
Wandered through your streets  
And experienced your unhurried life-style  
Absolutely captivated

Once

I had admired the old, disappearing trades  
The unfamiliar call of the hawkers  
Tasted your wonderful food  
And felt the vibrancy of your pulse  
Absolutely entranced

Once

I had admired your colourful people  
Amused by their confusing speeches  
Appreciated your unique architecture  
And loved the strains of 'Keronchong'  
music  
Totally enraptured

Now

Only memories remain  
One by one, like fallen pearls  
upon the ground  
they slowly fade away and die  
Vanished overnight before our very eyes  
Totally disappointed



## 'Women's Participation in Urban Governance & Urban Revitalization'

### *PHT's new project for 2003*

Women comprise the majority of the 'silent majority', and seldom are their voices and aspirations heard in urban governance. What heritage would we like to see passed on to our children? What do we want for our city? What are the amenities and facilities that we want to be added, improved or retained?

The main sustainable strategy to reverse the decline of George Town is through urban revitalization, which needs to be supported by a growth in the service industry and cultural tourism. In order to mobilize inner city dwellers to play a more active role, it would be necessary to:

- a) create awareness so that they see themselves as the custodians and interpreters of their historic city and urban environment*
  - b) create forums where people from different backgrounds and affiliations can network with each other beyond their own narrow circles.*
  - c) create opportunities for people of different sectors to interact and work out solutions in partnership.*
- 'Women's Participation in Urban Governance & Urban Revitalization', is expected to complement existing urban revitalization initiatives by bringing together greater women's participation.*

This project is funded by the Canadian Fund for Local Initiatives administered by the Canadian High Commission, which funded PHT's 'Heritage Community Revitalization through Women & Youth' project (2001-2002). While the previous project was targeted mainly at the inner city Muslim community, the current project is targeted at inner city women of all cultural backgrounds.



The Canadian High Commissioner, her Excellency Jean Maclosky, a PHT member with inner city women

The objectives of this project are:

- To strengthen women's roles as agents of change in their heritage and historic environment of George Town, which is being nominated for World Heritage status.*
- To get ordinary women to participate in urban governance, to learn about urban issues and to engage political representatives and local authorities*
- To strengthen networking among women from all cultural backgrounds and to expand the network of support services relevant to them.*

*PHT will organize a year-long programme for inner city women in heritage awareness, skills training and network building through meetings, monthly talks and workshops.*

*As part of this project, we are compiling a community directory, a hand book that will promote community resources and services, e.g. arts & culture, endangered trades, traditional healthcare, legal aid, service organizations, childcare services, support groups, heritage-friendly businesses, building contractors and suppliers, recycling centres, hotlines etc. The listing should be helpful to both consumers and providers of resources and services. We envision that such a community directory will help make George Town more liveable and vibrant.*

If you would like to join any of the activities, or give inputs to the community directory, please contact: Magdeline Ng-Leong at Penang Heritage Trust, tel 04-2642631 and email phtrust @po.jaring.my



**Urban Blight - An Update***"How often have you ....."**stumbled over a broken pavement**or wondered how long it would take to repair the fallen lamp-post?*

*How do the blind negotiate our sidewalks or the disabled and the elderly manage our blocked 'walkways'? Are utilities and amenities installed without the slightest thought given to actual usage let alone aesthetics?*



*Welcome to our Urban Blight Programme.*

*Since the middle of 2002, several NGO's of Penang have been agitating for improvements to our inner city - real upgrading that meets the needs of the people of Penang, the users of George Town, the ones who are walking on the sidewalks, using the buses and the public phones, the ones who need to have their rubbish cleared in front of their homes and shops and who do not wish to walk home in the dark. We need to have comfortable street furniture, we need small shade trees in town, we need to keep our grass verges so our drains don't flood so quickly, we need to be able to walk without falling into potholes or uncovered roadworks....*

*In short we need our historic city to be upgraded for domestic users and at the same time it will become a most enjoyable, comfortable, clean, informative and rewarding city for visitors. Basically the message from Penangites is: Please....can something be done about -*

*fluorescent coloured plastic palm trees, year-long Christmas lights, half of which don't work, signboards with announcements for events 2 years ago, purple dustbins, blocked 5-foot ways, inter-locking pavers that buckle and cause you to trip, lack of co-ordination in installation of utilities, expensive materials used on roads that are unsuitable for traffic and are broken within 6 months.....the list goes on.... ?*

*But....credit must be given where credit is due.... the Local Authorities have been VERY receptive, many improvements have been recorded since last December. While much remains to be done, we are very proud of our MPPP free shuttle bus service, sidewalks have been repaired, old signboards have been removed, positions and heights of road signs have been improved, representatives from TNB, Postals and Talikoms have come together to try to work through the problems of co-ordination, designs, installation, locations etc.*

*Currently, Little India is being upgraded with the above in mind, Penang Road is also being prepared to receive a pedestrian friendly walkway throughout its length. There are plans for the upgrading of Beach Street along historic guidelines and with a view to implementing disabled access and pedestrian friendly walkways and the Lebuh Armenian /Lebuh Acheh revitalization should give us a core area that we can all be proud of.*

## **AND FROM A CONCERNED PENANG BASED TOURIST GUIDE & PHT MEMBER ..... Bring back the lustre to Penang**

On the 27<sup>th</sup> March 2003 at about 3.00 pm, I took a group of tourists from the Eastern and Oriental Express Train on a tour of the City of George Town. These tourists are on their way from Singapore to Bangkok and are only here for a short visit of Penang. In the precious 2 hours, my job as a guide is to try and lure them back to Penang, in particular and Malaysia, as a whole. As in the photos, you can see how difficult it is for the local guides like me, to do a good job. This is how places like Fort Cornwallis and Goddess of Mercy Temple look like to the visiting tourists. On many occasions, the tourists asked this question "Do the locals throw rubbish everywhere?"

What is the most appropriate answer without damaging the image of this country? As it is, a picture is worth a thousands words. The conditions of these places are damaging enough and have given very bad first impression to the tourists.

In one photo, one can see a pile of styro-foam food packets in the compound of the Goddess of Mercy Temple. Obviously, some devotees have given food to the homeless and beggars found around the temple compound. Can the state and temple authorities work together and find a solution to keep the surrounding areas of the temple clean?



In the other photos, one can see rubbish thrown everywhere outside Fort Cornwallis. As it is now, there are two entrances going into the fort. For many of the tour buses, we use the entrance facing towards City and Town Halls. There is

rubbish everywhere and very often we see them floating in the sea as well. For the past few years, it has been a dreadful experience for guides to bring tourists to esplanade after the celebration of ushering in the New Year. In one particular year, the rubbish looked like they've been left there on the field for days.

There is a strong need to educate the public about how important it is to keep clean. Very often we see people throwing rubbish from their moving vehicles. The parents are setting bad examples to their children. We see school children having a field of time throwing rubbish out from their school buses. Can something be done to stop this habit?

*Towards Beautiful and Clean Penang.*

Joann Khaw (T.G. no: 3120)

## **AND FROM A DISGUSTED VISITOR TO PENANG .....**

THE STAR 9TH APRIL 2003

### **'PAVEMENTS IN A HORRID CONDITION'**

William Flynn, aged 63, from England tripped and fell on a stretch of defective pavement along Burmah Road and said 'The Penang Municipal Council should be ashamed for leaving the pavement in such conditions'. Flynn also said that while Penang may be a tourist destination, it was pointless for the Government to publicise the success of new highways and road systems when it could not even maintain proper pavements. He has made a police report and is considering taking legal action against the Council. A Council spokesman said "We will find out the conditions of our pavements before taking appropriate action" (!!!)

Note: we don't advise holding your breath while waiting.....



# THE PHT HERITAGE TOUR

30th December 2002

Mrs. Thum and Co. x 8 pax from Kuantan returned for a second heritage tour with us Little India and the Historical Enclave.

10th January 2003

Eileen Carey x 5 pax) from the American Womens Association (now called the International Womens Association) went on a heritage trail with Cheong Fatt Tze Mansion included

15th January 2003

Unesco - Nordic Foundation Lijiang Models Workshop - about 70 pax went on an Armenian Street, Khoo Kongsi and Little India Tour. Lim Hooi Siang briefed the participants at the new Heritage Centre, Laurence Loh, the restoration architect of Khoo Kongsi conducted the Khoo Kongsi tour and Teresa and Joanne together with MPPP senior representatives such as Tan Thean Siew, Chief Planner, briefed the participants and answered questions on the upgrading of Little India.

22nd January 2003

2 visitors from the Diethelm Group joined Teresa on a fullday tour with lunch. In the morning a tour of Little India was conducted, taking in the sights and smells and ending up at a Banana Leaf restaurant for a sumptuous lunch. After lunch, the Historical enclave was explored with the tour ending at 4.00 p.m.

17th February 2003

Jane Jenkins and Co. x 3 pax discovered the historical enclave.

25th February 2003

42 pax from the Diethelm Group toured the historical enclave. The tour was conducted by Mr. Yeap and Teresa and the guests were very vocal in their enjoyment and appreciation

9th March 2003

Dr.Zygmunt Langer of the Polish Embassy and his family together with Professor Jacek Puchla of Krakow, Poland, here in Penang for a public lecture on 'The Conservation of Krakow', were brought on a Heritage Tour of George Town by Teresa

21st March 2003

2 visitors from Diethelm Travel enjoyed Little India Tour with a banana leaf lunch and an afternoon in the Historical Enclave

25th March 2003

4 pax from Diethelm Travel were shown the secrets of the historical city by PHT

A thank you note to Diethelm Travel for supporting PHT with their tours.



The Sikh Naujawan Sabha of Penang is celebrating their Hari Vasakhi and Expo Punjabi 2003 on 19th April 2003 (Saturday), from 5 pm to 7 pm at Fort Cornwallis.

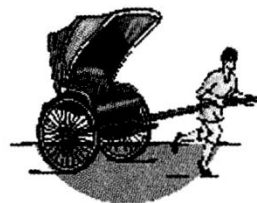
YAB Tan Sri Dr Koh Tsu Koon will be the guest of honour for this event. All are welcome to attend.



## And if you want to know what one of our tours is like - John Loh on his first PHT Heritage Tour writes.....

### *A Heritage Trishaw Ride in George Town with the PHT*

Going on a trishaw ride to follow the heritage trail in George Town is less tiring than walking which I did five years ago in 1998. Of course having the trishaw coming to pick me up and having it to myself greatly enhanced the experience.



After a brief courtesy call by Professor Jacek Purchla and the Polish Embassy officials at the Penang Heritage Trust (PHT), we then proceeded on our journey of discovery. From PHT's office at Stewart Lane we ventured out to Pitt Street (now known as Jalan Masjid Kapitan Keling) where we passed by the Goddess of Mercy Temple with its ornately decorated roofs.

The first stop was at the St George's Church which stands at the corner of Pitt Street and Farquhar Street. Dating from 1818, it is the oldest Anglican Church in South East Asia and is modelled after a large church in Madras. The difference in climate didn't really go well with the building and a gable roof was added in the 1860s.

The church has shady, cool and spacious grounds which I think is one of the few well-maintained 'green' areas where one can walk on grass with fallen leaves all around. It was the centre of the Anglican congregation but as the years went by and with the inner city losing its population due to the repeal of the Rent Control Act, its role has been somewhat diminished.

Next on the itinerary is the Penang Museum which once housed the Penang Free School. The museum, which opened in 1965 only occupies half the building as the eastern half was destroyed during bomb raids in World War II. A few of us were wondering if we could sit inside one of the historical cars parked in the museum compound, and somehow be transported back to a bygone era, but I guess snapping photos is all we can do...sigh. As time was not on our side, we went to the next stop: the Cathedral of the Assumption. The name derives from the first group of Roman Catholic Eurasians from Kedah who landed in Penang on the eve of the Feast of the Assumption in 1786. The church was situated at Church Street before moving to Farquhar Street in 1857.

The history of the church is like this: shortly after Captain Francis Light arrived in Penang Island in 1786, he arranged for the Roman Catholics Eurasians to be brought over from Kuala Kedah. These Eurasians were from Phuket and Ligor, and because of political persecution, they escaped to Kedah.

From Farquhar Street, we rode along Light Street, and then to Tun Syed Sheh Barakbah Street where we stopped at the very futuristic Millennium structure which is a stark contrast to the historical monuments surrounding it. A brief history of the City and Town Hall was given which included its role in the movie *Anna & the King*.

Just a stone's throw away is the famed Fort Cornwallis which stands at the very tip of the cape of George Town. There is an old wife's tale that barren women who want to get pregnant would place flowers inside the barrel. If Sigmund Freud is alive today, just imagine the comments he might make!

We boarded back into our trishaws and headed towards Weld Quay to visit the Clan Jetties which are now undergoing a recycling project organised by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). On why the Clan Jetties are built on stilts, Teresa Capol (Council Member) told us that it was to avoid paying taxes to the British. Despite the haphazard organisation of the buildings, modern technology like internet connections and satellite TV has slowly crept into the homes of the occupants.

Moving on, we visited Chung Keng Kwee Temple, and Hai Kee Chan Office & Residence at Church Street. Our gracious host and also PHT member, Owen Chung, who is the great grandson of Chung Keng Kwee and one of the three trustees of the Chung Estate, gave an informative history of the family temple and the Sea Remembrance office 'Hai Kee Chan'. The resemblances of the office and the Cheong Fatt Tze mansion are uncanny, right down to the Victorian cast iron with Chinese lattice work. Restoration work has begun, and a proposal to set up a boutique hotel at the back portion has being submitted to the Penang Municipal Council for approval.

We then proceeded to Little India, a vibrant place filled with delightful sights and scents of flowers and spices. Totally immersed in this wonderland, we were mesmerized by the various colours of sarees and accessories sold in this area. A must see in Queen Street is the Sri Mahamariamman temple which is the oldest Hindu temple in town with a magnificent sculptured entrance gate. Entering the temple, we were greeted by the hypnotic sound of drums and trumpets, and fragrant scents of burning incense.

Boarding back to our trishaws, we quickly ventured to Khoo Kongsi, one of Penang's famous historic monuments. As a patriarchal clan association, the Khoo Kongsi is the congregation place for male Khoo descendants back in the olden days.

Now the touristy aspect has nearly taken over the place and the occupants staying in the periphery are almost gone. Even the bats and birds that used to breed in the temple have been driven out by the nettings. Here is what Richard Engelhardt, UNESCO Regional Advisor for Culture in Asia and the Pacific, said during the Penang Story – International Conference (as quoted in AWPNUC Newsletter Vol. 7 No. 2, 2002 page 12): "...My opinion is that the preservation of heritage and culture has nothing to do with tourism. If you are preserving heritage as a tourism product, this is not preservation of heritage, this is the development of the tourism product; and perhaps you would be more well-advised to develop a theme park from scratch out of concrete...."

I think preserving heritage and culture has something to do with tourism. But tourism is not the be all and end all; it's just by product. My opinion is that the main 'product' is a lasting cultural legacy and a sense of belonging for the people involved and for the next generation like the Anak2 Kota programme.

Of course the archaic filial piety stories carved into the four stone panels at Khoo Kongsi are no longer relevant today but the essence of filial piety still lives on (I hope I'm not wrong here).

By the time Salma and Teresa finished telling the story of the son who sacrificed his body for the mosquitoes instead of letting them attack his parents, the trishaw riders' time was up, and we had to walk to Dr Sun Yat Sen's Penang Base located at Armenian Street.

There the politics of the Middle Kingdom became alive with stories of gatherings, speeches and uprisings - all these thanks to Salma. After a quick look at the old kitchen, we became famished and decided to go for lunch. On the way to a local eatery, we stopped by at the Penang Heritage Centre, and looked at the model heritage buildings inside the glass display.

During lunch, we met up with a government official who opined that restoration of private properties can be done at a reasonable fee if there are more architects and contractors involved in heritage restoration. Currently there is only a handful of people who are capable, and because of this charges are high. The lack of professionals can be traced back to the lack or non-existence of training programmes in Malaysia which is quite the opposite in Poland, according to Professor Jacek Purchla. The long term solution is to set up training programmes with government backing and financial assistance.

In the final analysis, property owners can afford to restore their buildings instead of letting them crumble to the ground. Of course it is easier said than done with the Catch-22 problem as explained above.

So now we have the 'wait and see' situation where everybody is waiting for someone to make the first move. Who is the someone? Well, you have to wait and see (no pun intended!).

As lunch comes to an end, we bid adieu to Professor Jacek Purchla and the Polish Embassy officials. I then boarded into a rather technologically advanced SUV to go back to the office. Even though the air-con is a welcome delight in this hot and humid weather, I kind of miss the laidback pace and nostalgic charm of the trishaw....

John Loh March 2003

For more information on the PHT guided heritage trails, kindly contact Magdeline (PHT Office).



## UNESCO - Nordic World Heritage Foundation Workshop on Culture Heritage Management and Tourism - Self-Evaluation and Mainstreaming 15th - 18th January 2003 Penang, Malaysia

### The 4 Lijiang Models for Co-operation among stakeholders

- Model for Fiscal Management .... Heritage Conservation and Maintenance at Municipal Level*
- Model for Involvement and Investment ..... Tourism Industry and Sustainability of Cultural Heritage*
- Model for Community Education and Skills Development...Creating Employment for especially Women and Youth*
- Model for Consensus Building among Tourism promoters, Property developers, Local residents & Conservationists.*

A closed-door workshop was held in Penang as evaluation and mainstreaming of a recently completed 4- year project backed by the Norwegian Government and sponsored by the World Heritage Committee. The objectives involve the modeling of new ways of mutually beneficial co-operation between the tourism and heritage sectors, particularly at the local community level, in historic towns across the region. Practical experiences of the heritage sites in maintaining and sustaining themselves economically were shared. In this respect, this was probably the most practical of the UNESCO Heritage conferences held in Penang so far. Representatives of 8 pilot sites as well as international experts from Unesco, the World Bank, Asian development Bank, World Tourism Organisation and Pacific Asia Travel Association (PATA), were involved. The 8 pilot sites are: Lijiang, China / Hoi An, Vietnam / Bhaktapur, Nepal / Vigan, Philippines / Kandy, Sri Lanka / Levuka, Fiji / Luang Prabang, Lao PDR / Melaka, Malaysia

The workshop had the full backing of the Penang State Government and was viewed as an opportunity to expose our local Penang policy makers and strategists to policies, problems and management strategies for culture heritage management and tourism of other historic towns. PHT was fully involved with presentations, facilitations, technical support & heritage tours focusing on applications of the Lijiang models, as well as assisting in the planning and management of the running of the workshop.

### THE STRAITS TIMES PRESS 19TH JANUARY 2003

Chief Minister, Tan Sri Cr Koh Tsu Koon, said "from the evaluation of the Lijiang Models in the last 4 days, we realise that it is crucial to have a comprehensive plan for heritage management, and we have also gained an insight on how to draw it up. The Lijiang experience for example shows the tourism benefits of heritage conservation, the city which had only about 90,000 before being listed as a World site in 1997, saw an influx of 3 million visitors a year after that."

## Praise for state's 'efforts'

**PENANG:** A heritage advocate has praised the state for "doing well" in culture heritage conservation along Unesco standards.

Badan Warisan Malaysia deputy-president Laurence Loh said Penang had fulfilled most of the items in the checklist of the 2001 "Unesco Lijiang models".

The four Lijiang models were developed under a four-year Unesco project in 1999 to tackle issues related to the development of sustainable culture tourism in heritage sites.

"Penang has every item identified in the (models) flow charts and has done it in its own way," he told a press conference on Tuesday when dispelling doubts on the state's preparedness for the nomination to the Unesco World Heritage List.

The models were developed during a workshop in Lijiang, China, which was attended by delegates of eight pilot historic sites in the Asia Pacific.

The sites are Bhaktapur (Nepal), Hoi An (Vietnam), Kandy (Sri Lanka), Levuka (Fiji), Lijiang (China), Luang Prabang (Laos), Vigan (Philippines) and Malacca (Malaysia).

The delegates have regrouped in Penang for a four-day workshop starting yesterday to evaluate the project implementation

and explore the mainstreaming of lessons learnt from the pilot site activities into government policies.

The workshop is jointly organised by the state government, Unesco and the Nordic World Heritage Foundation.

Australian conservation and heritage consultant Elizabeth Vines said Penang faced a big challenge of developing a viable culture heritage fund to provide funding for the conservation of heritage buildings.

"Penang is an excellent example of using the four Lijiang models to legitimise the process of culture heritage conservation at the political level but the culture heritage fund (under Lijiang model 1) is still a challenge to Penang," she said.

She said a common part of heritage management in many historic sites was the provision of incentives for private property owners to conserve their buildings.

Noting that the funds available in Penang were loan funds, she said direct grant had proven more successful in other historic sites.

She called on the state government to consider introducing entry tax for visitors to contribute directly to the fund.



Nian Jiwei, Deputy Director of Lijiang Management Committee & Zhang Liwei of the Foreign Affairs Office of Lijiang Prefecture



## Need for 'sense of belonging'

**PENANG:** In the "battle" between development and conservation of historic sites, the community's quality of life and need for a sense of "homeland" should not be neglected, according to an Indian heritage consultant.

Consultant Amita Baig (pic), who is involved in a four-year Unesco Asia-Pacific heritage project, said there would be an enormous attraction for cities to be completely modern to look like New York for instance.

"The pressure of development is an all-time battle but on a day-to-day basis, we still want a sense of belonging," said Amita, a participant in the four-day Unesco-Nordic World Heritage Foundation workshop on Culture Heritage Management and Tourism which started here on Wednesday.



The workshop is participated by about 70 delegates from eight historic cities in the Asia-Pacific, regional and local experts and officials from heritage and tourism-related organisations.

Amita said the tight-knit

community in historic cores promoted a sense of belonging, adding that giving way to the development of high-rises might lead to an "annihilation of the community spirit."

She said the development versus conservation tussle was also present in India, despite been more successful in protecting its monuments compared with the conservation of pockets of historic cores in some of its cities.

She said Penang still had an enormous opportunity to manage its historic core before it was lost.

Asian Development Bank Mekong division director Arjun Thapan said keeping intact Penang's cultural heritage would be "something done not just for Penang but for the rest of the world."



## Further Threats to Muslim Heritage in the Inner City of George Town

The PHT has written to both the President of the MPPP as well as the Director General of the Department of Museums and Antiquities in K.L. with regards to the following :

***The Tomb of Kapitan Keling, Cauder Mohideen Merican (died 1834) at KAMPONG KOLAM is under threat. A car park and lay-by are proposed for the site of the existing mausoleum. The mausoleum is under Kapitan Keling private waqf and is presently administered by the Majlis Agama Pulau Pinang.***



*Historical Significance of Makam Kapitan Keling, 1834*

The Kapitan Keling Mosque on Pitt Street was named after 'Captain Kling', the headman of the South Indian community, who was appointed by the British administration in 1801. The first mosque on the site, the predecessor of the present Kapitan Keling Mosque, was a small "Chulier Mosque" which appeared on a map of 1798.

In 1801, the Leith administration appointed Cauder Mohideen as Captain of the South Indian community and in that same year granted the piece of land for the Kapitan Keling Mosque. Leith on behalf of the East India Company granted to the "Mohammedan Church" a piece of ground on the south side of Malabar Street (Chulia Street). The property was estimated to contain 5,468 square jumbas, or about 18 acres. In this grant, the land is described as being bounded towards the West and South by grounds belonging Cauder Mohudeen.

A 1904 report on Muslim trusts describes the circumstances of the founding of the mosque:

"As the trade of the Settlement increased, attracting many Mohammedan traders and mariners it became necessary to erect a more permanent building and to provide a larger burial ground. Cauder Mohuddeen, a wealthy Mohammedan Kling, took the matter in hand and, having collected subscriptions, built the present mosque. He also prevailed upon the Mohamedan merchants and mariners to subscribe certain sums for the upkeep of this mosque". (Hand Book, 1932; p. 9)

The Muslim community, including the Sepoys and Arabs approached Cauder Mohudeen to build the mosque and supplied him with a letter of request from the community. Then given a letter of authorization from the government, Cauder Mohudeen brought builders and stones (or bricks) from India to erect the brick mosque. (Hand Book, 1932; 23, Merican, 1981; 2).

The Captain Kling was thus regarded as the founder of the mosque. The Kapitan Keling Mosque was probably the first congregational mosque (Masjid Jamek) to be built in George Town. It is possible that the sermons and other matters were conducted in Tamil, and for this reason, the Achehnese community under the leadership of the Arabs decided to build the Masjid Melayu at Acheen Street in 1808.

The Kapitan Keling Mosque was named after Cauder Mohuddeen (Kader Mydin), a Maraikkayar and a ship mandor (foreman) who traded with Nagore, Nagapattinam and Kedah. (Fujimoto, 1988; 42-43) He came from Porto Novo — the Tamils call it Paringgipettai while the Muslims call it Mahmudbandar — on the coast of South Arcot, 32 miles south of Pondicherry. (Haji Mohd. Ismail Merican, 1991)

Several family traditions about Cauder Mohuddeen's family have been handed down. (Fujimoto, 1988; 43-44; Merican, 1991 a and b; Abdul Kahar, 1974) Although differing in detail, all of them emphasise the prominent role of the women in his family. According to one family tradition, Cauder Mohudeen Merican and his younger brother Muhammad Noordin Merican sailed to Penang with their mother Fatimah, when the boys were 11 and 7 years respectively. All versions claim that Cauder Mohuddeen had three wives, including an Indian wife and a princess from Kedah.

In addition to founding the Kapitan Keling Mosque, Cauder Mohudeen also donated his own lands to waqf. When he died in 1834, Cauder Mohuddeen left behind a personal fortune of 50,000 spanish dollars. "I do not leave this as a sufficient Estate to my wives and children," he wrote in his will, "but I have for them unperishable goods in the hands of God." By this, he meant that his deed as a founder of the mosque and waqf and his other charitable acts would stand him in good stead in the hereafter. Cauder Mohuddeen is buried together with his family in a mausoleum in Kampong Kolam, which is part of his private waqf, just next to the mosque. This mausoleum is still intact though in a somewhat dilapidated condition, reminding us of the great man who founded one of Malaysia's most prominent mosques.

On this site, a tank had been built for the use of the poor, and so the village around Cauder Mohudeen's tomb was called Kampong Kolam. The tank and the village were removed when the present road 'Kampong Kolam' was made and widened.

### **Capitan Kling's Private Wakoff, established 1834**

According to paper No. 13 of 1904, STRAITS SETTLEMENTS Paper to be laid before the Legislative Council by Command of His Excellency the Officer Administering the Government, General Report Upon the Moslem Trusts and Foundations in Penang:

"The above title is adopted in order to distinguish this foundation from the 'Capitan Kling Mosque'.

"By his will dated the 25<sup>th</sup> day of February, 1834, written in the Tamil character and of which an English translation made in 1869..., Capitan Cauder Mohuddeen appointed his sons, Othman Naina and Othman Saib, his Executors and directed that: **'the ground where the tomb is situated, as well as the lands belonging thereto, will not be disposed of and sold, and they will be added to the Charity lands, but the lands will remain under the management of my said sons. All other people will have nothing to do with these Charity lands.'** The Testator also directed that, after his sons, their sons should succeed them as Executors, and if they had not sons, then his (the Testator's) daughters, the eldest grandson to be preferred to the younger. ...

"... [Othman Naina, son of Cauder Mohuddeen] had kept the devised lands as Charity land for the interment of deceased Mohammedans and with the rents and profits arising from other part of the land upon which he had allowed Mohammedans to build houses paying a small ground rent, had provided Kenduri, kept the Tomb in order and maintained a tank for the use of the poor. ...

"There seems some probability that the Testator, who, during his lifetime, had buried his wife and several children in the place referred to in his Will as the 'Tomb', intended that the lands devised by his Will as above set out should be held in Trust to apply the profits arising therefrom in maintaining the Tomb and any balance in alms. ..."

[For further information, please contact Khoo Salma, Hon Secretary, PHT]



*An early view of the State Mosque*

THE STAR 7TH APRIL 2003

### **DCM : It'll take time to degazette mosque**

The Deputy Chief Minister of Penang Dutuk Dr Hilmi Yahaya says that the State Islamic Religious Council would liaise with the Culture, Arts and Tourism Minister on the fate of the controversial Kampung Mesjid Melayu redevelopment project at Lebuh Achek in George Town.

It was earlier reported that the RM9 million project was referred to the Cabinet for discussion and a final decision. The mosque and the buildings within the mosque have been gazetted under the Ancient Monuments and Historical Sites Order 1984 of the Antiquities Act 1976. Dr Hilmi said that the mosque building would remain a national monument but that works would begin on the front portion outside the mosque within the next 3 months, adding that about 14 shop-houses would be demolished under the redevelopment project.

**PROFESSOR PURCHLA OF WORLD HERITAGE SITE, CRACOW, POLAND VISITS PENANG..**

Distinguished conservationist from Poland Prof. Jacek Purchla was in Penang from 18<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> March 2003. His visit was arranged by the Embassy of Poland as well as through the Badan Warisan and Malaysian Institute of Planners. Professor Purchla, an Art Historian by training, is an academic, a politician and an administrator. He heads the Department of Urban Development in the Cracow Academy of Economics as well being Director of the International Cultural Centre in Cracow. He was previously a deputy Mayor of Cracow when he played a major in formulating its conservation policies.

On behalf of the Polish Embassy, the PHT organized a cocktail gathering and a public lecture at the Cheong Fatt Tze Mansion. 56 people turned up for Prof. Purchla's talk on 'HERITAGE and TRANSFORMATION – THE CASE OF CRACOW'. We were told that this very old city (founded in the 10<sup>th</sup> Century) had under gone many political changes during its history. However, it was during a period in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century when Poland was so divided between Austria, Prussia and Russia that made the Poles virtually 'homeless' that Cracow became a 'Free State' under the joint 'guardianship' of the three partitioning powers. This new status created a catalyst for the revival of the city as a proud symbol of Polish culture and history. The Polish aristocracy would build their castles and palaces thus creating its rich heritage of historic buildings.

During Soviet rule, it was forcibly made into a major center for the steel industry that eventually created major environmental problems including destruction of the old buildings. But it created jobs and did not directly threaten the historic city. After Polish independence in 1989, Cracow was faced with new problems of unbridled development created by the free market economy. They were thus faced with the problem of balancing conservation with economic development especially with the collapse of the steel industry. At that time, there was a resurgence of the conservation movement and Cracow together with 10 other cities became the first group of UNESCO heritage sites to be officially listed; the meeting which established the listing process also took place in this city.

During his visit to Penang, accompanied by the Polish deputy ambassador Dr. Langer, the PHT arranged a very full programme. On arrival they had a lunch with Dato Kee where Penang's rich multicultural history and architectural diversity was advertised. The delegation admitted that much of Polish public perception of Asia was derived from their most popular tourist destination Thailand. Following lunch, Mr Lim Hooi Siang gave them a briefing on Penang's efforts to conserve and be listed in the UNESCO Heritage Register.

A courtesy call on the Chief Minister followed. Among other things, they discussed some of Penang's conservation problems, especially the difficult balancing act between the conservation movement and the business community. Prof. Purchla explained that it was no different in Poland after the adoption of the free economy in the post-Soviet era.

The next morning, PHT arranged for a city tour by trishaw conducted by Salma and Teresa during which they were briefed on PHT's work. Prof. Purchla was taken by the diversity of ethnic groups and cultures existing in George Town and particularly impressed by their social harmony despite the close proximity of the different ethnic 'enclaves'. He referred to our heritage as "a gold mine" with a great potential for enhancement if properly developed; he stressed the importance of getting the local residents actively involved in conservation if it is to succeed. After lunch they were taken to the Kek Lok See Temple which was a 'must see site' according to the Polish guide book on Penang (the only one that existed Prof. Purchla believed). On their drive back to KL, Prof Purchla specially called me up to express his appreciation to the PHT for arranging his visit. He promised to return.

The PHT would like to thank

- a) The Polish Embassy and Dr. Langer for their support for Prof. Purchla's talk at Cheong Fatt Tze Mansion
- b) Ms Elizabeth Cardoso of BWM for liaising with us over the travel arrangements and programme.
- c) The State Govt of Penang, through Dato Kee to underwrite some of the hospitality and expenses.
- d) The MIP Penang Branch for publicity for the talk
- e) PHT council members and staff

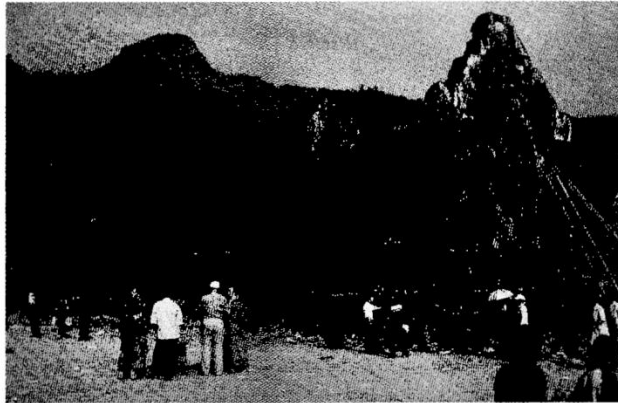
Dr.Choong Sim Poey  
9th April 2003



Salma & Teresa with Prof.Purchla in the centre with Zygmont Langer from the Polish Embassy together with his family



PHT Member Dr J.R. Robertson visits a World Heritage Site - Vat Phou in the Lao People's Democratic Republic and is enchanted. He shares the delights of the site, of the celebrations and of the Lao people, with us.....



On 25<sup>th</sup> December 2002 UNESCO declared Vat Phou in Laos, a World Heritage Site. Each year crowds of Lao people come to this temple to celebrate the "boon" at the full moon of the third lunar month, and this seemed a good time to commemorate its new international status.

For about 500 years this was part of the Khmer empire, centred around the small historic town of Champasak which is on the opposite side of the Mekong river from Pakse, the present-day regional capital. What attracted Hindus as far back as the 6<sup>th</sup> century was an odd shaped mountain, the top of which looks like a recumbent female breast, but to Hindus that nipple had to be a Lingam. With a spring of clear water issuing year-round from a crevice in the rocks below, the place took on mystical significance, and came to be associated with offerings to the god Shiva. Around the 9<sup>th</sup> century the Khmers took control of the area from the previous Chen La kingdom and built an ambitious sand-stone temple complex on the same site. It featured the type of intricate Hindu bass-relief carvings which were to be seen 200 years later at Angkor Wat. In fact traces of a connecting road to Angkor Wat can still be detected, running 250 kilometers across Cambodia. The complex of buildings at Vat Phou rise steeply up the mountain-side and still survive, although in a dilapidated state, and are still an important focus for religious devotions and ceremonies.

During the Khmer period Mahayana Buddhists used the temple alongside the Hindus. The Great Vehicle, with Buddha Sakyamani and a panoply of Bodhisattvas co-existed alongside the Hindu god-kings and their aristocracy, some of whom were later "converted" to Buddhism anyway. The peak of Mahayana popularity was in the 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> centuries under emperor Jayavaman VII who made it the state religion. Only after the fall of the Khmer empire did the temple shift its form of worship to the predominant Theravada cult of that region, and it remains so to this day.

I was invited by a Pakse friend to cover the last three days of the celebrations. Without him it would have been very difficult unless I had joined an organized tour. Vat Phou is out in the wilds surrounded by paddy fields at the foot of the mountains. The roads are difficult, many of them dirt roads which raise clouds of dust. Crossing the Mekong at Ban Muang is an experience in itself. Boats for ferrying cars across are little more than rafts of planks. Even getting to Pakse is not easy, the only flights being from Cambodia. The alternative is to fly to Ubon in Thailand, a one-hour taxi-ride over pretty rough roads to the border at Chong Mek, and then whatever transport you can find once you are over. Buses are very irregular and there are no trains anywhere in Laos. Visas are now available at the border, but you need to bring 2 passport photos and \$30 US. My friend picked me up at the border in a 4 wheel drive pick-up which is the only sensible transport there.

Vat Phou itself was absolutely crowded. Thousands of people were there, mostly in 4+4 vehicles, many from Vientiane and the North. Coach parties too, and many "tuk tuks" from Champasak town (more like a village actually). Foreigners were very few and were either hardy back-packers or the learned academic guests of the local elite - usually French - . Each night a great trek of these vehicles queued up to cross the Mekong on rickety boats, heading towards their accommodation in Pakse or its surroundings.

On Friday 14<sup>th</sup> February at 7.00 a.m. a dancing procession filed past the podium of the waiting President of the Lao republic, and the minister of education, flanked by dozens of other VIPs. Those in the procession were wearing the whole spectrum of Lao costumes, including tribes-people and minority groups. The procession went on for ages as the sun rose in the sky and everyone got hotter and hotter. All at the graceful pace of Lao traditional dance steps and hindu-style hand movements. By the time the elephants arrived I had run out of film. The true mark of the amateur. Once the procession was over, the whole thing degenerated into a fun-party involving parachute jumping, music and general jollity with the consumption of huge quantities of "Beer Lao", or food and drinks from hawkers and temporary coffee shops. I was invited to take some lunch which started with red ant soup. Real, large, whole, dead ants. Hundreds of them boiled up in there. It tasted sour; a weak solution of formic acid, and a bit crunchy. Glutinous rice cooked in coconut could be bought in bamboo tubes which you peeled back like a banana.



A stage had been erected opposite the presidential podium and the winners of the Vat Phou World Heritage Song Competition gave a repeat performance of their winning number. At the keyboards a young lad was hammering out repeat chords in quadruplets, imparting a driving rhythm. The rhythm and harmonies replicating in more urgent tempo the ubiquitous traditional bamboo-pipe mouth-organ found in Indo China. The singer had that Lao style of delivery; a kind of nasal bleating sound with subtle glissandos and little quarter-tone grace-notes; probably echoes of Hindu influences centuries old.

We returned the following night to see the temple ruins, rising up the mountain side, lit up with thousands of wax candles placed there by devotees, not just on the temple walls, Buddha images and statues, but in front of the sacred frangipani trees, many of which were objects of veneration in themselves. Candles were offered before images of Shiva, Vishnu and Brahma, and the sacred carved stone "Yoni" which was formally used as a duct for the spring water issuing from the mountain. By now the source of the sacred water was entirely blocked by small boys collecting the stuff in plastic bottles and selling it for ready money. Shamans squatted by the wayside surrounded by strange bric-a-brac, incanting spells or curses to order, for another modest fee.

Monks were busy fortune-telling shouting their wares from loud-speakers, some with cigarettes dangling from their lips, giving blessings and tying cotton threads around the wrists of supplicants in return for donations, which seemed plentiful despite the poverty that exists there. And all this in a sea of plastic litter which was ankle deep by the end of the proceedings. Environmental awareness was clearly not high on the agenda here. Nobody seemed to notice. They walked about on it as blithely as if it had been grass. At the bottom of the hill hawkers were doing a brisk trade and a discothèque was blaring out its music into the warm velvet night.

On Sunday 16<sup>th</sup> at 7.00 am thousands of devotees settled themselves down in immensely long rows, awaiting the final event, - the giving of alms into the monks' mendicant bowls, which quickly filled up and were then decanted into larger sacks carried behind them by volunteers, later to be emptied and sorted into great piles of bank-notes, cooked glutinous rice, biscuits, and other offerings. This took a very long time, but the devotees waited patiently in the blazing sun while the groups of monks (and one group of nuns) moved slowly down the lines collecting it all up. The wrappers for all this were abandoned on site, and left to blow about in the wind.

Although religious practice here was a fusion of all sorts of different influences, yet there was no doubting the strength of feeling. After their religious beliefs, the second priority for most Lao people seems to be having a good time and to some extent that reflects a society which has little consumer culture and even less money. But the warmth and good feeling is genuine and freely given.

The Vats or temples provide a vital underpinning of social and domestic life in this post-perestroika communist country so recently in thrall to the Soviet Union. Without them tens of thousands of students would not receive a proper education, both secular and spiritual. But the infrastructure of this country still has a lot of catching up to do, and there is little or no money available for luxuries like conservation. With Luang Prabang also declared a World Heritage Site the Laos have much to be proud of and hopefully with the funds made available to them through Unesco and other overseas aid organizations, these archeological and architectural masterpieces will survive and prosper.

Dr J.R. Robertson  
Celebration of the Unesco World  
Heritage Listing of Vat Phao  
7th to 16<sup>th</sup> Feb. 2003.



[Pics courtesy of Dr Robertson]

**AND A NEWS ROUND-UP.....****STAR 8TH APRIL 2003****THE REVIVAL OF TEOCHEW OPERA**

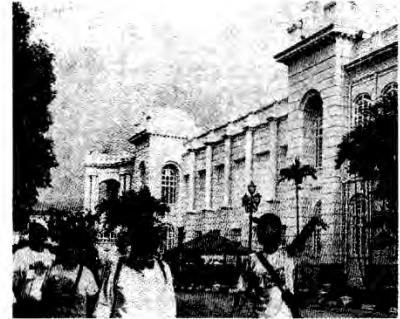
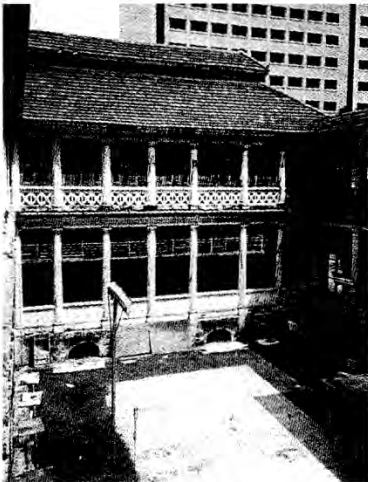
PHT Council Member & Teowchew Association Board Members, Lim Gaik Siang, addresses new students of Teochew Opera. Gaik Siang's musician grandfather Lim Chew Teng co-founded the opera first performing in 1964. Her late father, Lim Wye Tong was the leading percussionist and conductor. Enrolment is still open, sessions are free on Sundays, 2-4 p.m. Call 019-471-8523

**STAR 10TH FEBRUARY 2003**

99 Bishop Street is under threat from unsympathetic renovation works. The shophouse has 2 entrances - Bishop & Church Streets and was once owned by garment tycoon & philanthropist Yeoh Chiang Chye. Yeoh was a member of the Penang Chinese Town Hall and donated generously to temples and cemeteries. Tan Yeow Wooi of Penang Heritage Trust & Nanyang Folk Culture has alerted the new owners and the MPPP, saying that Indian terracotta tiles were being replaced with blue metal zinc roofing. The new owners are taking steps to rectify their mistakes and take the advice of conservation experts.

**STAR 23RD MARCH 2003**

The Perak Heritage Society has started Heritage Walks, aimed at opening the eyes of participants to the wonders of the town's historical treasures. Here we see pro-temp vice-president and also PHT member, Law Siak Hong, briefing members. Behind him is the Ipoh Town Hall

**STAR 27TH FEBRUARY 2003**

The 1912 Maternity Hospital, 57 Macalister Road

The MPPP announced that 'Restoration work will start next year'. MPPP President, Mahadi Mohd Ibrahim, said that RM5 million had been allocated but the consultant had 'yet to submit a report'. The building had been used as a maternity hospital from 1912 till WW2. It had been reported that it had belonged to an Englishman who had donated it to charity. A library is planned for the site.

[Ed.'s note: The King Edward Memorial Hospital arose from efforts of the community to serve an urgent need for improved medical services for underprivileged women. A Trust was incorporated to protect the property with the City Council appointed as the trustees. It is understood that the Trust stipulates the usage of the building for 'charitable purposes'. The MPPP therefore serves as caretaker of a very significant 'people's property' and it is mandatory that the spirit of the Trust be served in the conversion of the site for civic use and enjoyment of the general public.]

**STAR 18TH JANUARY 2003****'PRESERVE PENANG'S SOUL'**

Pak Lah: Conservation will be a boon to tourism too

The Deputy Prime Minister stated that the preservation of dominant historical architecture in inner George town is crucial to conserve 'the soul of Penang'. He said that the inner city housed Muslim, Buddhist and Hindu enclaves 'all in one place' adding that such a set-up reflected a high degree of religious tolerance which was crucial for harmonious living. "Some degree of conservation is necessary as evidence of a thriving multi-ethnic community that existed many years ago," he told reporters that Penang stood to benefit in terms of tourism if it made it to the Unesco heritage Listing



## Don't miss it

**The academy that  
proven changed many  
people's lifestyles  
since 1999**



### Professional Geomancy Courses in English

- ✓ Full course syllabuses
- ✓ 100% practical Study
- ✓ Professional Training
- ✓ Outdoor practical
- ✓ 100% workable methods
- ✓ Absolutely non-religious etc.

如意吉祥国际风水专门学院  
**PROSPERITY GEOMANCY ACADEMY**  
International School of Feng-Shui  
Since 1999

37, Vale of Tempe, Tg. Bungah, 11200 Penang  
Tel: 04-8992978.

Call our organizing executive **Adam Chew**  
**017-4736993**

**www.progeomancy.com**

The PHT has one of the lowest N60  
subscriptions - RM3 a month - but we DO  
depend on them to keep going.

So, if you enjoy the site visits & the newsletter,  
if you appreciate the projects that have been  
conducted, if you share in the vision for  
George Town and if you believe that PHT is  
doing a good job, but that a lot more  
needs to be done...

### DON'T FORGET

to pay up your subscriptions

Admission : RM500

Annual subs: RM36

Overseas postal surcharge [Please NOTE]

RM14 annually for Asia, Australia, N.Z.

[RM36 + RM14]

RM 24 annually for rest of the world

[RM24 + RM36]

You can also pay by CREDIT CARD. Please  
e-mail the office for the credit card form  
phtrust@pc.jaring.my



**Tuesday**  
Little India, Spice Trail

**Wednesday**  
Heritage Trail 2 &  
Cheong Fatt Tze

**Thursday**  
Street of Harmony &  
Historical Enclave.

## Special Discounts!

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

  
**Fairy Tale**  
21A Codrington Avenue  
10350 Penang

  
**Jaipur Courtyard**  
  
11 Leith Street  
10200 Penang

  
**26 AFE**  
26 Service Road  
10050 Penang

  
**Old China Cafe**  
No. 9 Beach Street  
10300 Penang

**WHITE RAJAH  
RESTAURANT & BAR**  
4, Jalan Telawi, Bangsar Baru  
59100 Kuala Lumpur

  
**The Bookshop**  
52 Jln Chow Thye  
Burma Square  
10050 Penang

  
**Nyonya  
Secrets**  
32 Jalan Service  
10050 Penang

2, Jalan Bukit Jambul  
11900 Penang

  
**Bukit Jambul**  
Country Club - Penang

**Linen  
&  
Things**  
Lot F-9, 1st Floor KL Plaza  
Jalan Bukit Bintang  
55100 Kuala Lumpur

Gurney Plaza  
Persiaran Gurney  
10250 Penang



  
**PICASSO**  
Coffee & Bar  
M-K1 Mezzanine Floor  
Island Plaza, Tg. Tokong  
10470 Penang

  
**BUKIT  
MERAH  
LAKETOWN  
RESORT**  
Jalan Bukit Merah  
Semanggol  
34400 Perak

54 Jln. Chow Thye  
Burma Square  
10050 Penang



  
**Bock  
Garden**  
36 Nagore Road, 10050  
Penang

A31, The Garage  
2 Penang Road  
10000 Penang

  
**Purser's Choice**  
Asian Contemporary Living  
www.purserchoice.com

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

  
**THE  
ART Gallery**  
368-4 Bellisa Row  
Jalan Burma  
10350 Penang

These last about 3 hours. Special customized trails may also be arranged :

- Traditional Foods Trail
- Sun -Yer Sun Trail
- Traditional Trades Trail
- Muslim Heritage Trail etc.

Special rates may also be arranged for Government officials, V.I.P. visitors, students and  
those on official business

CONTACT MAGDALINE AT PHT FOR MORE INFORMATION: 2642631