



PHT

Newsletter

Issue 92/ January 2008

Support Conservation Efforts in Your Community!

26 Church Street, City of George Town, 10200 Penang, Malaysia

Tel: 604-2642631 | Fax: 604-2628421

Email: phtrust@streamyx.com | Website: www.pht.org.my

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

Editorial



Heritage is like memory. It contributes to a community's sense of identity and belonging. Through heritage conservation the community strives to ensure that familiar and significant expressions of its culture and history are retained and maintained from one generation to the next – even as the community grows and the world changes around it. What would Penang be without its streets of pre-war shophouses, without its colonial-era public buildings and *ang moh lau* mansions, without its clan jetties, without its historic mosques, temples and churches, without Penang Hill and its delightful funicular railway? The list goes on but it is a list continuously under threat. In every issue of this Newsletter, along with articles celebrating examples of Penang's priceless built and living cultural heritage, we are forced to document and lament the disappearance or destruction of yet another site.

The challenge for heritage advocates lies in the failure of urban planning to take full account of heritage conservation. Indeed, the problem is even bigger -- the absence of a holistic approach to planning that recognises heritage conservation as an essential and integral aspect of development in a modern society. The issue is not one of heritage impeding progress as some proponents of unbridled "development" argue. "Are you against development?" they ask in face of public criticism of massive projects like the PGCC. Let us make it clear that the Penang Heritage Trust is not against development as such but against development that is simply project driven. Thus, the PHT is in favour of urban planning that is not only open, transparent and accountable to the community, but a process in which community needs -- including appropriate regard for the community's heritage -- are fully taken into account. In short, the PHT calls for a process driven by the community rather than the present ad hoc response to the grandiose ambitions of investors and property speculators.

Amid recent signs that the authorities -- their minds doubtless focused by the prospect of elections -- may finally be listening to the voice of reason, in this issue of the Newsletter we chronicle the mounting public opposition to the mega PGCC project, mounting despite a despicable blackout of any critical coverage in the mainstream media. As we approach the first anniversary of the completion of the restoration of Suffolk House, we ask, in the company of its many donors and sponsors, when this iconic symbol of Penang will open its doors to the public. What is the plan for its management? We also ask about the future of the old Runnymede Hotel and the former Shih Chung Branch School, both classical heritage sites that have been the subject of recent news reports describing development proposals by their owners. On the positive side, we await with interest the opening of the newly restored High Court building and we congratulate local authority for undertaking the repair and restoration of the Cenotaph on the Esplanade, its desecrated condition long a source of embarrassment to Penang.

Guest Editor

Kee Estate

Sungai Bakap

The Penang Heritage Trust conducted a site visit to the Kee Poh Huat Kongs in Sungai Bakap, Sebarang Prai on 30th September 2007. At that time, the ancestral hall was still undergoing restoration. We were given a briefing on the background of the heritage building by Dato' Kee Phaik Cheen, who is one of the many descendents of Kee Lai Huat, followed by a tour of the premises.

Kee Poh Huat Kongs is a sprawling Chinese ancestral temple and residence in Sungai Bakap. It was built by the founder of Sungai Bakap, Kee Lai Huat, in the late 19th century, and is being restored by trustees of the Kee Clan Association.



Kee Lai Huat arrived in Penang in the year 1853, at the age of 19, leaving behind his hometown of Teng Hai, China. Unlike the indentured labourers who were arriving at that time and travelled free in return for a year or two as coolies, Kee was educated, an only son to one Kee Choe Im, and had travelled first class on the boat that brought him. He came ashore at Batu Kawan, and made his way to Bukit Tambun. There he came into contact with Khaw Loh Hup, a Teochew who had arrived earlier, in the 1810s, penniless. Khaw had worked his way up, however, and had established himself as a wealthy sugar-cane planter in the area.

The Khaw family was the most powerful in the area, owning thousands of hectares of sugar cane plantation. Loh Hup recognised the potential in the young Kee Lai Huat, and employed him as his accounts clerk. The relationship blossomed, and led to Kee marrying into the family, to Khaw's only daughter, Khaw Bee Gaik. The union produced six sons and two daughters.

Khaw Loh Hup's son, Khaw Boo Aun, was the most prominent member of the Khaw clan. He was leader of the Ghee Hin Society and had acted as financier to Raja Abdullah. Khaw Boo Aun was involved in the Third Larut War (1871-1873) and was later made a member of the Perak State Council, in 1886. Khaw Boo Aun had 2400 hectares of sugar cane plantation which was left to Kee Lai Huat to run.

Although he was now integrated into the powerful Khaw family, Kee Lai Huat was eager to establish himself in his own right. Through a Frenchman in Singapore, he acquired 1,000 acres of swampland between Tambun and Nibong Tebal. The swampland was called Val d'Or, which means Valley of Gold. The swampland was drained and on it Kee Lai Huat established his sugar-cane estate which he called Valdor. Although the sugar cane plantation no longer exists, the village of Valdor lives on today in its place.





Along the main road that runs from Tambun to Nibong Tebal, Kee Lai Huat and his two friends Lau Kuang Mia and Tan Ah Pow founded a new township, called Sungai Bakap - today famous for its chye koay, a local delicacy.

In the middle of Sungai Bakap, Kee Lai Huat built his ancestral hall, the Kee Poh Huat Kongs. It comprises the ancestral temple, accessed through a gateway and a courtyard, and residences for his six sons. At the two ends of Sungai Bakap, he built a home for each of his two daughters, his younger daughter's home to the north and his elder daughter's home to the south. The homes of his sons and daughters follow a similar Straits Eclectic townhouse style.

Poh Lai Huat's success and philanthropy did not escape the attention of the Imperial Chinese Manchu Government. They conferred on him the title of Mandarin Second Rank, and retrospectively made his wife, father and mother Mandarins Third Rank. Their paintings, in all the Mandarin finery, grace the main chamber of the ancestral hall.

St Anne's Church

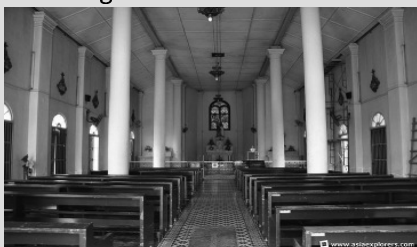
Bukit Mertajam

St. Anne's Church of Bukit Mertajam can be traced back to the 1840s, when Chinese and Indian Catholics from Batu Kawan settled in the foothills of Bukit Mertajam. They were part of the congregation that had earlier settled at Batu Kawan in 1833. The church was started by French missionaries. There was already a congregation of 190 believers in those early days. The very first church, a small chapel, was built on top of the hill, some time between 1840 and 1860. As the congregation grew, another bigger chapel was built in 1865. The present Old Church was built in 1888, under the leadership of Fr. F.P. Sorin. He died in 1907, right on the day of the St. Anne Feast, and was buried at the entrance to the Old Church.



St. Anne is regarded as the mother of Mary, the virgin who gave birth to Jesus Christ. Catholics observe her feast day on 26 July every year. St. Anne is believed to have been born around 50BC in either Nazareth or Bethlehem. She is the patroness of cabinet makers and miners, as well as those engaged in the craft of spinning, weaving, embroidery, sewing and other such skills.

In 1957, during the Emergency period, another church building was constructed. Fearful that the Chinese community in Bukit Mertajam would be sympathetic to the Communist movement, the British Government relocated them to new villages. The Old Church was located in a "black area", where Communist activities were regarded as strong. A new church was built next to Kim Sen School. For the following 48 years, this was the "new St Anne's church".



The year 2000 sees the latest, and biggest addition to the sanctuary, with the construction of the present church building, on the grounds just below the Old Church. The new building incorporates local elements such as multi-tiered Minangkabau roofing. The new church was dedicated on the St. Anne Feast Day on 26 July 2002 and the Old Church became the Shrine.

Editor's Note. Above the high altar of the old church is a beautiful stained-glass window dated 1896 and bearing the name of the the stained-glass studio of Martin Peintre Verrier (Martin Painter Glass-Maker) of Angers, France. Also dated 1896 is the church bell cast in France which hangs in the belfry above the front door of the old church.



Since the “official” launch of the Penang Global City Centre project on 12 September 2007, several civil society NGOs have articulated public concern about this mega project and the misleading manner in which it has been promoted. In addition to the Penang Heritage Trust which drew attention to concerns about the PGCC in its last **Newsletter** (Issue 91 September 2007), the Consumers Association of Penang in the English and Chinese editions of its bi-monthly **Utusan Konsumer** (Vol. 37, No.6, Nov-Dec 2007), **Aliran Monthly** (Vol. 27, No.8) of the reform movement Aliran, and the Malaysian Nature Society in a cover story its latest newsletter, have all opposed the PGCC.

Faced by constraints on public debate and a blackout in the mainstream media, however, these NGOs and others have formed a PGCC Campaign Group to raise public awareness of the true nature of the PGCC project and lobby the authorities for it to be scrapped. The PGCC Campaign Group has held public forums, issued press statements, distributed car stickers, sponsored a post-card writing campaign and started an online petition. In his recent statement calling for the project to be reviewed and scaled down, the Chief Minister acknowledged the impact of the public campaign. Below is an outline of the PGCC Campaign Group’s activities.

- 15 September** Joint Press Conference by PGCC Campaign Group to oppose the proposed Penang Global City Centre (PGCC) project. PHT is one of the six leading NGOs. Others are CAP, MNS, ALIRAN, SUARAM and CEPAT.
- 27 September** Public protest by the PGCC Campaign Group during the public hearing for the nearby residents held at MPPP City Hall, Esplanade.
- 07 October** First Public Forum on PGCC. Sponsored by PHT and PGCC Campaign Group at Dewan Sri Pinang. Speakers: Consumer affairs lawyer Meenakshi Raman and columnist and former municipal councilor Dr. Goh Ban Lee
- 31 October** Briefing by PGCC Campaign Group for residents of condominium at 71 Scotland Park.
- 03 November** PGCC Campaign Group members provide information to public at site of PGCC developer’s road show at Queensbay Mall.
- 13 November** Briefing by PGCC Campaign Group for residents of Sri York condo.
- 23 November** Open dialogue between the PGCC Campaign Group and representatives of the developer, Abad Naluri Sdn Bhd, on PGCC issues at the Penang Local Government Consultative Forum held at Paradise Sandy Bay Hotel.
- 23 November** Second Public Forum on PGCC. Sponsored by PHT and Coalition of NGOs at Dewan Sri Pinang. Co-chaired by Datuk Chet Singh and Datuk Anwar Fazal. Speakers: Affected resident and PHT Council member Loh-Lim Lin Lee, urban planner Chau Loon Wai, and environmentalist Gurmit Singh.
- 02 December** Public Forum on Transparency in Local Government. Sponsored by Tanjung Bungah Residents Association in cooperation with PHT and Coalition of NGOs at Dewan Sri Pinang. Keynote Speaker: Derek Fernandez, legal adviser for residents associations in Klang Valley.

Press Release by PGCC Campaign Group

3 February 2008

PENANG GOVERNMENT SHOULD PUT LOCAL PLANS IN PLACE BEFORE ALLOWING FURTHER DEVELOPMENT IN PENANG

The PGCC Campaign Group would like to make clear its position on the proposal to develop the Turf Club land.

Before all else we would like to emphasise that, contrary to some press reports, the opposition to this project did not come solely or even primarily from the residents of Jesselton. Most of the anger came from ordinary Penang folks, and it was widespread; bridging all racial, generational and income groups.

We are grateful that the CM has put a temporary halt to it, and without being churlish we hope it is not a mere election ploy.

Be it as it may, we wish to state in unequivocal terms that the CM, no matter how well meaning or how well experienced he is, is not the person to determine how the site should be developed.

The international team of experts that Dato Patrick Lim is assembling, no matter how eminent, also has no right to dictate what should be built on this lovely site.

The only group that has the sole right to make that decision is the people of Penang. The site is so big and prominent as a landmark that it belongs to all of us. Any development there will change the face of the Island and will have far reaching consequences (social, cultural and traffic) for all of us for generations to come.

Every pre-requisite of good democratic governance requires that the public (and not just the immediate neighbours) should be consulted. This is why local plans are required under the Town & Country Planning Act, which give an opportunity for every member of the public to give their views and participate in the decision-making of what the details of development in the area in question should look like. The Local Plan is an essential planning document, and it is our stand that no plan should be even considered before a Local Plan is finalised.

At the same time we wish to be assured that the Local Plan will be done fully in the spirit of the Act; that the public will be consulted at all stages; that their views will be given proper consideration; and the Planning Committee will operate transparently.

This principle of involving public participation at every level of decision-making is further underscored by the commitment of the Malaysian government to the Rio Declaration and Agenda 21 which was the outcome of the Rio Summit in 1992.

We will resist very strongly any attempt to develop the Turf Club land without a Local Plan or to subvert the planning process or the Local Plan by reducing them to a series of pro forma exercises.

In addition, the State Government should expedite Local Plans for the whole of Penang, prior to further developments in the State, given experience of the PGCC and other haphazard developments which are taking place.

Following the finalisation of the Local Plan, we also request the State, the MPPP and the Department of Environment (DOE) require project proponents of any major developments to prepare a detailed EIA, including a traffic report and a flood risk assessment. These studies should be done by reputable and independent consultants chosen by the MPPP and DOE (and not by the project proponent).

In this regard, we were outraged that the DOE in the case of the PGCC project, had approved a preliminary EIA without a consideration of the traffic study and without an opportunity for public view and consultation. The DOE ought to have insisted upon a detailed EIA, given the nature and scale of the project.

Dato Patrick Lim has in several public statements said that he wants to be a responsible developer and has given the assurance that he will abide by all local and international guidelines to create a sustainable project that will be acceptable to all. If he is genuine, and is not just making a public relations statement, he should not object to any of our proposals in the public interest.

In summary, our position is this:

- There should be no development until Local Plans is in place for the Penang Turf Club site.
- In addition, the State Government should expedite Local Plans for the whole of Penang, prior to further developments to ensure proper and effective planning.
- The Local Plans should be done transparently with full public participation.
- Detailed EIA including a traffic report and flood risk assessment done by competent and independent consultants are required for any development in the present and future Turf Club area once the local plans are finalised.
- We will be extremely upset by any attempt to circumvent any of the above recommendations.

Ahmad bin Chik
for and on behalf of the PGCC Campaign Group

news without borders.

PGCC developer must revise plan

By Khaleda Willmer
SPECIAL REPORTER, THE STAR

SEMI-MAJOR MALAYSIA's leading government-linked newspaper, the *Malay Mail*, said yesterday that the PGCC developer must revise its plan to build a massive new city in the heart of Penang.

Mohamed Idris, CAP's executive director, said the plan is "unrealistic" and "unworkable". He said the plan is "unrealistic" and "unworkable". He said the plan is "unrealistic" and "unworkable".

The Star 18 Jan 2008

CM tackles concerns over global city project

PGCC developer told to scale down density, fulfil affordable housing quota

SEMI-MAJOR The developer of the PGCC (Penang Global City Centre) has been told to scale down the density of the project and fulfil the affordable housing quota.

Penang Chief Minister Tan Sri Dr Koh Tsu Koon said the developer must scale down the density of the project and fulfil the affordable housing quota.

SAY NO TO PGCC: ONLINE PETITION

PHT members who are Malaysian citizens are invited to sign the online petition against the PGCC at the following link: <http://www.petitiononline.com/stoppgcc/>
Let your voice be heard!

Scaling down PGCC project not the answer

STAR 18 JAN 2008

CAP: It will not alleviate congestion, environmental woes

By NIK KHUSAIRI IBRAHIM
nik.kh@the-star.com.my

SCALING down the proposed Penang Global City Centre project will not alleviate public concerns over congestion and environmental issues, Consumers Association of Penang (CAP) president S.M. Mohamed Idris said.

Penang needs green lung, not more concrete buildings, he said.

He said this in response to Penang Chief Minister Tan Sri Dr Koh Tsu Koon's directive to the developer to scale down the PGCC project as well as to ensure the 30% affordable housing quota was fulfilled.


Dr Koh also told the developer to exclude a nearby hill from its development plan.

"Ideally, the turf club (where the proposed PGCC is to be built) should be converted into a public park. People need green lung for a better quality of life," Mohamed Idris said when contacted in Penang yesterday.

PGCC campaign spokesman Dr

»We believe mega projects should not be considered in the area until a local plan is drawn up, scrutinised by the public, and approved and gazetted by authorities«

DR CHOONG SIM POEY, PGCC CAMPAIGN SPOKESMAN



Chong Sim Poy said the group welcomed Dr Koh's directive to scale down the massive development project.

"Many quarters have vociferously objected to the actual scale and density of the project.

"People are concerned over traffic, pollution, and environmental degradation issues highlighted in our forums and campaign postcards," he said in a statement.

He also questioned why the Department of Environment did not request for a detailed environmental impact assessment (EIA), given the scale and size of the mega project.

"Rationally, a project of such scale should only be considered after a local plan has been drawn up for the area.

"We believe mega projects should not be considered in the area until a local plan is drawn up, scrutinised by the public, and approved and gazetted by authorities.

"Until then, the area should be left alone," he said.

STARMETRO, MONDAY 3 DECEMBER

Ad hoc planning damaging

Lawyer: Residents unable to tell in advance what will happen in their area

By PRISCILLA DIELENBERG
prisdienberg@the-star.com.my

AD HOC development planning which is market driven can be very damaging to the economy, according to a local government legal expert.

Derek Fernandez, who is legal advisor to 42 residents' associations in the Klang Valley, noted that development in Penang was ad hoc as there were no local plans.

"With ad hoc planning, homeowners and property investors are not able to tell in advance what will happen in the surrounding area, and the last man standing with available land wins," he said at a public forum titled Transparency in Local Government in Penang yesterday.

He added that the law since 1976 required local authorities to come up with a local plan.

"When there is a certainty, there is less corruption."

Fernandez was responding to queries on the building of new shopping complexes and high-rises that blocked the view from existing residential buildings.

He was the keynote speaker at the forum, and sat on the panel along with Tanjung Bunga Residents' Association (TBRA) president Lim Hui Siang and vice president Lee Laine. Residents Association of Bayan Baru (RABB) president Datuk Syed Jaafar Syed Ali, and All Petaling Jaya Pro-Action Committee (Appac) president chairman Edward Lee.

Fernandez said Tanjung Bunga residents were "very fortunate" in their protests against development projects as their assemblyman was Chief Minister Tan Sri Dr Koh Tsu Koon.

"All you need to do is find out by

»The law requires local authorities to come up with a local plan«

DEREK FERNANDEZ, LEGAL ADVISOR



how many votes he won in the last election and get the support of 51% of the people who are like-minded people. Then you can say, 'Look, you put this out, there and you are out'," he said.

Lee advised RA representatives to be professional when protesting a project, and not to be disruptive.

"There is no point in being emotional and shouting at the Govern-

ment. You shouldn't take too antagonistic a stand but present the facts, and the people sitting across the table will listen," he said.

About 60 people from the island attended the forum, but only three residents' associations (RAs) were represented although the forum was aimed at gathering the RAs to discuss how to co-operate and form a coalition to speak as one on local government issues.

Hunza Development Project

8 news without borders

theStar | WEDNESDAY JANUARY 12, 2008

74 residents object to Gurney Paragon project

By Opalyn Mok
moked@the-star.com.my

PENANG: Seventy-four residents are objecting to the RM650 million Gurney Paragon project near their apartments but can one person represent all of them at the Penang Island Municipal Council's (MPPC) public hearing of the project?

According to the council, the answer is "no". It objected to Wriston Ooi appearing alone to submit his objections or behalf of the 74 at a public hearing yesterday morning.

Ooi's counsel, Malaysian Bar Council Legal Aid

Centre's public interest unit lawyer Cecil Rajendra, argued that there was no law prohibiting Ooi from representing the 74 residents, especially when he has signed letters from all of them for him to represent them.

If that was not enough, the closer-door hearing was only attended by Ooi and other interested parties who objected against the project while the developer, Hunza Properties Bhd, was not present.

The Appeals Board, headed by former sessions court judge Datuk Ho Mook Ching, then decided that representatives from Hunza Properties must be present for the hearing to proceed, so the hearing

was postponed.

Jan 29 was fixed to hear Cecil's submissions on why Ooi should be allowed to represent 74 other residents while the actual full hearing date is set on March 25.

It is learnt that the developer's absence is due to the fact that a notice of the hearing was not served on them.

"The MPPC blamed Ooi, claiming that it is his duty as the appellant, to serve the notice or the developer which is very ridiculous as it is the council's job to serve the notice on the developer," Ooi said.

The mixed development project, located on the former Uplands International School site on Gurney Link, has long been an object of controversy among residents in the area. The project consists of an upmarket shopping mall, two blocks of high-end condominiums and a heritage building on a 7.7-acre plot between Gurney Drive and Kelawai Road.

The chief concerns are the additional traffic congestion along both roads once the project is completed. Work on the project has already started and it is scheduled for completion by 2010.

Hearing of objection to RM650mil project on Uplands site postponed

By ANDREA FILLMER
andrea@the-star.com.my 16/1/08

PENANG: The hearing of an appeal against the approval of a RM650mil project on the former Penang International School (Uplands) grounds in Gurney Drive has been put off.

Penang Island resident Ooi Hai Soon had filed the appeal, against the approval of the project by the Penang Municipal

Council (MPPC).

The mixed development project by Hunza Properties (Penang) Sdn Bhd will consist of two 45-storey service apartment towers, a 37-storey business tower and other commercial buildings.

"The hearing has been postponed due to two reasons, the first being the panel's refusal to accept Ooi's role as spokesperson on behalf of 73 other residents," said Cecil Rajendra, the

legal counsel for the appellant.

Rajendra added that while there was no rule in the Town and Country Planning Act 1976 that allowed for representative action, there was no law that prohibited it.

"The court also requested the presence of representatives of developers Hunza Properties as an interested party to the appeal," he said.

Rajendra added that submissions had been

set for Jan 29.

When contacted, MPPC president Datuk Zainal Rahim Soman said the council was following the guidelines in the proceedings and would leave the judgment to the appeals board.

Penang Planning Appeals Board chairman Datuk Ho Mook Ching presided over the hearing at City Hall, while Dr Ong Hean Tee and Anandulu Raju made up the panel.

Logan Memorial – Remembrance of an advocate of Penang and its People

As the restoration of Penang's 1905 High Court building and the construction of the matching extension buildings near completion, attention has been drawn to an elegant Victorian gothic memorial that has stood for over a hundred years in the High Court grounds. Restored and relocated across the road from the High Court, this monument commemorates an extraordinary Scotsman who devoted his life to justice, tolerance, reform and knowledge in Penang.

James Richardson Logan was born in Berwickshire in the Scottish borders in 1819 and studied law at Edinburgh with his brother Abraham. The two brothers came to Penang in 1839 and James soon gained a reputation as a lawyer prepared to represent local people in conflicts with the colonial authorities. An early instance was his defence of an Indian squire planter in a case against the ruling East India Company in which he skilfully appealed to public opinion through the press before finally being admitted to the bar.

In another case he represented the Chinese community in a culturally sensitive dispute with the Governor of the Straits Settlements. In 1857, Governor Edmund Blundell had tried to impose restrictions on celebrations associated with Chinese religious festivals. Clumsy attempts by the police to enforce these restrictions led to open conflict and rioting. Assisted by James as their lawyer, Chinese community leaders petitioned the Governor General in Calcutta who rebuked Blundell, accusing him of being "injudiciously offensive" in his response to the Chinese complaints.

These events came at a time when many sections of society in the Straits Settlements, both local and European, were calling for political reform, including the transfer of responsibility for the colony to London from the East India Company in Calcutta (which eventually took place in 1867). Joining in these calls and mindful of the autocratic behaviour of Governor Blundell, James Logan also advocated the introduction of representative government.

Logan's activities were not limited to the law and political reform. While his brother became editor of the **Singapore Free Press**, James founded in 1847 the **Journal of the Indian Archipelago and Eastern Asia**, a publication in 27 volumes of which he was writer, editor and publisher until 1859. He was also editor of the **Pinang Gazette** until his death in 1869 and developed the newspaper into a vigorous vehicle of debate and criticism. His other writings included **Language and Ethnology of the Indian Archipelago**, promoting understanding of the peoples and cultures of the region, and an article which still has resonance for people in Penang today, **The Probable Effects On The Climate of Pinang Of The Continued Destruction of Its Hill Jungles**, published in his journal in 1848.

The death of James Logan from malaria on 20th October 1869 was described as "a public calamity" and the memorial in Penang was erected by public subscription, so highly regarded was he as lawyer, scholar, publisher and writer by the people of Penang. In the language of today, James Richardson Logan was an early advocate of civil society and robust public discussion of issues that affect the community.

Leslie A.K. James





Announcing New Line of Heritage Tours

We have exciting news for travel enthusiasts!

Penang Heritage Trust is working with AsiaExplorers to create a new line of specialty tours, taking advantage of our knowledge of heritage sites. There will be three types of tours – international, local (within Malaysia), and domestic (within Penang).



What do we want to achieve by creating these tours? We want to give travel enthusiasts a chance to visit some of the most beautiful places in the world in ways that has not been possible with commercial tour packages. For example, we want to avoid commercial shopping stops. Our shopping trips are meant to showcase local crafts and heritage trades. The meals that we provided, as far as possible, are the local cuisine and specialties.



The international tours are created under the brand name of World Greatest Sites, created by AsiaExplorers with support from Penang Heritage Trust. Already the first tour has been announced with overwhelming response. “Wonders of Ancient Angkor” is scheduled for 28 February, 2008. We are awaiting confirmation of seat availability by Malaysia Airlines on the return flight – once those seats are confirmed, we will proceed to process the booking.

The second tour of the 2008 season is “Heritage Sites of Ancient Japan,” scheduled for 29 March, 2008. This is a tour of the “real Japan” that heritage enthusiasts should not miss. It takes you to the ancient sites in cities such as Nara, Kyoto, Osaka, to the places recognized by Unesco as World Heritage Sites. We will visit popular sites like Mount Fuji, and less well-known ones like Mount Koya and the Wedded Rock of Meotoiwa. Participants will get to experience local Japanese cuisine as well as taking a bath in an authentic Japanese hot spring. The tour is specially arranged to coincide with cherry blossom season, so that you get to experience Japan at its most beautiful. For this tour, all seats are confirmed available.

Other international destinations on the way include Korea, Santorini & Greece, Venice & Italy, Borobudur, and many more. Watch out for the announcements. There will only be one trip, or at most two, per destination per year, and they are always timed to follow the best season.

On the local level, we are working on heritage tours of sites within Malaysia. The tours are arranged in partnership with a local expert from the respective towns.

The first destination is probably a one-day Taiping tour, with a two-day Ipoh and four-day Malacca in the plans. Look out for further announcements on this.

On the domestic level, we will be looking at all our existing heritage walks to see how we can improve them, to enhance the experience of discovering George Town.

Text and photographs by Timothy Tye



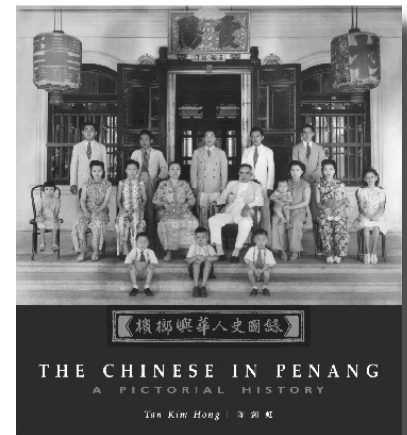
The Chinese in Penang: A Pictorial History

Areca Books, Penang, 2007

by Tan Kim Hong

If we want to understand the Chinese in Penang – a ‘community’ or ethnic block who are economically dynamic, politically divided, socially complex and culturally resilient – you could do well to look at Tan Kim Hong’s book.

Kim Hong’s broad yet particularistic overview gives many insights into the development of the Chinese in Penang. The Chinese in Penang have made history for more than two hundred years, and they continue to make history.



Kim Hong has taken the approach of writing a people’s history. Although he has not avoided compiling profiles of prominent people, he has taken great pains to include the stories of the common people.

Here I shall quote the definition of ‘people’s history’ found in Wikipedia, which seems a fair enough definition – “A people’s history is the history of the world that is the story of mass movements and of the outsiders. Individuals not included in the past in other types of writing about history are part of this theory’s primary focus, which includes the disenfranchised, the oppressed, the poor, the nonconformists, and the otherwise forgotten people. This theory also usually focuses on events occurring in the fullness of time, or when an overwhelming wave of smaller events causes certain developments to occur.”

Throughout the book, the author tries to give a balanced perspective, representing the rich and the poor, the political right and left, people of ideas and people of action, the Chinese-educated and the English-educated, across dialect groups and religious persuasions. Though women do not exactly make up 50% of the book, they are not neglected either.

What is the point of all this? It is important for a community to know itself, and to be known by others. History enriches our understanding, helps us to avoid mistakes of the past, and to chart out our future.

The Chinese in Penang: A Pictorial History is an important contribution to Malaysian history and therefore should be of interest to all Malaysians, old and young. It is hoped those who write the history curriculum for schools will also sit up and take notice of it, possibly incorporating some of this history into the history that schoolchildren learn in classrooms.

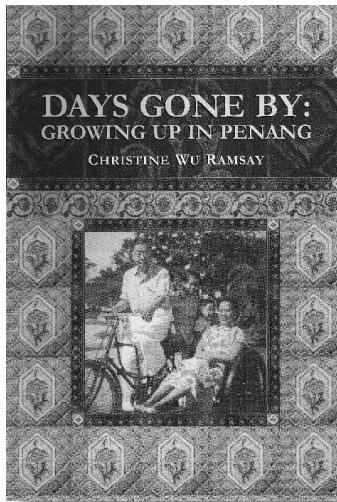
I would like to congratulate the author for taking up such the challenge and turning out quite an even-handed and exciting work, and his remarkable team, for the good work done. I would also like to congratulate the publisher Areca Books for producing a number of interesting books on Penang, the latest being this impressive coffee table book.

*From remarks by YB Dato’ Dr. Toh Kin Woon, Penang State Executive Councillor, at the launch of **The Chinese in Penang: A Pictorial History** by Tan Kim Hong, on 25th January 2008 at the Penang Teochew Association.*

The Penang Heritage Trust
invites nominations for the
Living Heritage Treasures of Penang Awards 2008

Closing date: 29 FEB 2008

While we welcome new nominations, nominations from
previous years(last year) may also be re-submitted



Days Gone By: Growing Up in Penang Revised Edition Areca Books, Penang, 2007 by Christine Wu Ramsay

One of the inexplicable aspects of international book publishing and distribution is that books on Malaysian themes are often not available in this country. One such book, first published in Australia in 2003, was **Days Gone By: Growing Up in Penang** by Penang-born author Christine Wu Ramsay. Now, however, thanks to local publisher Areca Books, this autobiographical gem in an updated edition is readily accessible to readers in Malaysia. It was launched at a 50th anniversary gala dinner of the St. George's Girls' School Ex-Pupils Association on 4th November 2007 – most fitting as the author herself is a St. George's ex-pupil who on completion of her secondary education at the school left Penang in December 1957 to continue her studies and eventually settle overseas.

Days Gone By recounts the tale of the Penang descendants of nineteenth century Hakka tin magnate Leong Fee. The life she describes is that of a local elite built on the hard work and ambition of a first generation ancestor who came to this land with nothing but a determination to better himself and provide for his family. Wu also attributes the success of her *kong tai* (or great-grandfather) Leong Fee to that elusive but, for many Chinese, all important factor called *fook* or luck. Leong Fee had *fook*, she says adding that it plays a dominant role in her story.

Leong Fee arrived in Penang from China in 1876 and six months later moved to Perak where he was to make his fortune in tin mining. In time, he had homes in both Ipoh and Penang, marrying with four wives and an untold number of mistresses. His Penang house was at 7 Leith Street (now the Equator Art School), opposite Cheong Fatt Tze Mansion on George Town's "Hakka Millionaires' Row". Leong Fee's success, however, was measured not only in the acquisition of wealth and wives but also in attaining prominence in civic life as a community leader and philanthropist. He was active in local government as well as serving as vice consul for the Manchu government. His greatest contribution to the Chinese community was undoubtedly his support for education in the founding of schools such as the Chung Hwa School and the Shih Chung School.

While Leong Fee's accomplishments set the scene, Christine Wu Ramsey's story is really that of the second and third generations of the family he established. Her book is amply and beautifully illustrated with remarkable photographs documenting the family's life through the first half of the twentieth century. Her account reveals a life of luxury that combined tradition and modernity, in which cosmopolitan values were embraced alongside such timeworn practices as *mui tsai* (bondmaids). It was also a life in which the women of the family had great influence. Wu herself was raised mainly by her maternal grandparents -- and their "black & white" amah -- at 16 Farquhar Street, a seaside mansion since displaced by an ugly row of modern shops near the E & O Hotel. Along the shore next door at 32 Northam Road (now restored as a well-known restaurant) was the magnificent Italianate-design villa of her grand-uncle Leong Yin Khean.

It was a lifestyle destined not to endure. War and the Japanese Occupation intervened, of course, physically dividing the family and reducing life to its essentials. More significantly, however, the generation that had inherited Leong Fee's wealth did not share his industry and entrepreneurial ethic. Rising costs made it difficult to sustain a life of leisure with servants in large villas. Thus, while Wu was in primary school her grandparents moved to a house on Codrington Avenue.

With her lively anecdotal style Christine Wu Ramsay has provided a sympathetic and informative first-hand perspective on the lives led by the Chinese elite who lived in the *ang moh lau*, the once stately European-style mansions that still characterize Penang. Her story enriches our understanding of this by-gone era which with its villas is part of Penang's identity and heritage.

Leslie A.K. James

An egg for the Prime Minister, a public talk by Drs. Pim ten Hoorn, subtitled "Dynamics and Strategies in Indo-Dutch Eurasian Ethnicity", attracted an audience of more than 30 at the PHT on Saturday afternoon 24th November. Although the catchy title of Drs. ten Hoorn's talk no doubt piqued the curiosity of many, the subject was genuinely one of great interest in a post-colonial society such as Penang with its own historic Eurasian community. This interest was reflected in the attendance of several members of the Penang Eurasian Association.

Drs. ten Hoorn, a Dutch ethnologist of mixed ancestry himself born in Palembang, traced the history of ethnic inter-marriage in the former Netherlands East Indies and the role played by Eurasians in Dutch colonial society in the country that was to become Indonesia. Although their position in the colonial period was socially ambiguous, albeit politically and administratively important as intermediaries with the Indonesians, Indo-Dutch Eurasians (known in the Dutch language as *Indisch* or *Indos*) were not a legally recognized community despite their substantial numbers. Suffering great privations during the Second World War and not accepted in an independent Indonesia, most Indo-Dutch Eurasians left for the Netherlands. It was there that the community faced a new challenge, that of obtaining recognition from the Netherlands government of their special identity. The issue came to a head over the community's demands for a memorial to commemorate those who suffered as POWs and civilian internees during the Japanese Occupation. It was an egg thrown at the Netherlands prime minister by a radical leader of the Eurasian community during this campaign that led to a reversal of the government's position and occasioned the title of Drs. ten Hoorn's most interesting lecture.

Leslie A.K. James



MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL 2008

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Just send you cheque to:

Penang Heritage Trust
26 Church Street
10200 Penang

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