



PHT Newsletter

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Support Conservation Efforts in Your Community!

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Editorial ~ Mixed Report Card

The past few months have registered a mixed record for heritage conservation in Penang. The euphoria that accompanied World Heritage Listing last year has given way to confused perceptions of where the responsibility lies for safeguarding and promoting George Town's heritage status. Where is the delineation of responsibility between levels of government? The Federal government has incurred an international obligation as a result of the UNESCO listing while the establishment of a World Heritage Office in George Town is a responsibility of the Penang state government. Funding for activities related to George Town's listing remains a thorny issue. A recent Federal government announcement confirmed the role of a corporate entity as the channel for funds once earmarked for Penang, thereby conveying the impression that Penang is being treated differently from Malacca.

Returning to the conservation record, after much public posturing discussions on the issue of the four high-rise hotels in the core and buffer zones appear to have reached a satisfactory conclusion on height limitations in line with the guidelines in Malaysia's submission to UNESCO. Although one of the developers in the core zone is understood to be less than pleased, it is to be hoped that all parties will recognise that preserving the integrity of George Town's heritage status will benefit everyone in the long run.

Less satisfactory is the fate of the Penang Hill Railway which has become the victim of an expensive plan to replace it with a single system obviating the need for changing trains at Middle Station. Counter arguments in favour of improved maintenance and simple modifications to the existing system at a fraction of the cost were ignored. Meanwhile, even before work has begun, the cost of the planned project has risen astronomically. Assurances that rail service will be interrupted for only six months during construction have been greeted with scepticism. Hill residents are likely to be denied rail service for a long time and Penang will have lost a treasured part of its heritage. Cui bono?



Photograph by Frank D. Viernann

The Penang Hill Railway, almost a hundred years old, is not the only part of Penang's heritage outside the core and buffer zones of George Town that should be protected. The Hill itself has come under threat before and was saved in the 1990s only by the combined efforts of a coalition of heritage and environmental groups. Unfortunately, the Hill remains threatened by the encroachment of illegal agriculture. The Botanic Gardens, the oldest such gardens in Malaysia, is also under threat – this time from ill-considered expansion and construction by the very authorities who should be protecting the site.



Elsewhere, construction of massive condominium towers on Gurney Drive has already undermined a neighbouring access road and caused damage to the historic Loke Mansion. The condition of the St Joseph's Novitiate also remains a matter for concern. Monitoring by local authorities has been ineffective despite many complaints.



Photograph by Rebecca Wilkinson

*Finally, the continuing and expanding operations of swiftlet breeders in inner city George Town have become a large-scale and **unacceptable threat to heritage buildings and public health** alike. Repeated deadlines for the cessation of these activities, most of which are unlicensed and illegal, have passed with the authorities doing nothing -- an abdication of responsibility representing a complete failure of governance. We publish an appeal by a George Town resident for decisive action.*

Guest Editor

OBITUARY

Y.T.M. TUNKU DATO' DR ISMAIL BIN TUNKU MOHAMMAD JEW A (1937-2009) **Former Vice-President of Penang Heritage Trust**



The Penang Heritage Trust mourns the passing of YTM Tunku Dato' Dr Ismail bin Tunku Mohammad Jewa who died on 19th August 2009. Tunku Ismail was born on 31st August 1937 in Alor Star, Kedah. He was the nephew of Malaysia's first Prime Minister, Tunku Abdul Rahman.

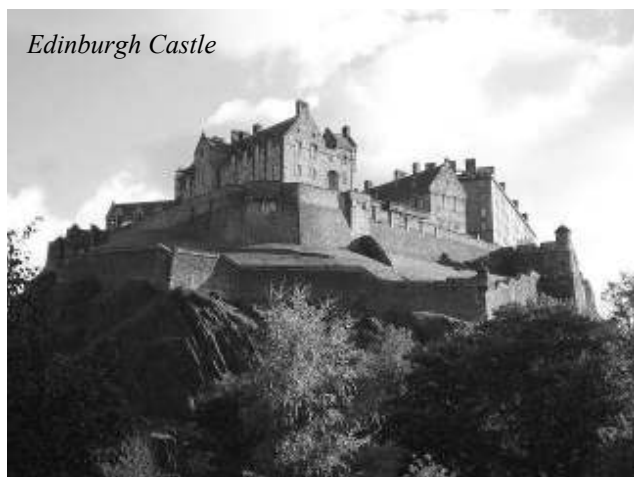
Tunku Ismail trained as a secondary school teacher at Brinsford College in England. He obtained his B.A. and PhD from the University of Malaya and M.Ed. from Pennsylvania State University.

He was principal of Sekolah Abdullah Munshi in Penang before joining University Science Malaysia as a lecturer in 1973. He was Dean of Education and Professor of Educational Administration at USM until his retirement in 1995.

Tunku Ismail was active in non-governmental organizations, serving as president of the Penang Family Planning Association, and vice-president of the Penang Heritage Trust (2001-2007). He had a keen interest in history, writing several articles and monographs on Kedah history and the life of Prime Minister Tunku Abdul Rahman. (See Newsletter Issue 91, September 2007)

The Penang Heritage Trust extends condolences to Datin Rose and family.

THE OLD AND NEW TOWNS OF EDINBURGH



Edinburgh Castle



Former Edinburgh Tram

The capital of Scotland is a city of dramatic landscape, history and architecture. Inscribed by UNESCO as a World Heritage Site in 1995, the city is set among the hills and valleys of an ancient volcanic landscape which accounts for some of its more notable geographic features such as Arthur's Seat, Calton Hill and the rock on which Edinburgh Castle stands. The city even boasts a village at its heart, the Village of Dean in the valley of a charming river called the Water of Leith. The city itself comprises two parts, the Old and New Towns which present a sharp contrast in architectural style and urban planning. The Old Town is mediaeval in character with narrow winding streets. The New Town -- "New" being relative as it was laid out in the late 18th century with broad avenues on a grid pattern -- is regarded as the world's largest complete example of town planning of that era. Buildings in both the Old and New Towns are constructed of grey stone, a building material common in many Scottish towns and cities. The New Town's streets and avenues are lined with magnificent Georgian townhouses of uniform height giving an impression of elegance and grandeur. Municipal regulations ensure that height restrictions are observed. Similarly the townscape is not marred or blighted by unsightly advertising. Signage on shops and commercial houses is of restricted size with none permitted to obscure the building façades. Even well-known brand-names like McDonald's and Starbucks keep to the standard for their signs.

Culturally and politically Edinburgh has been the capital of Scotland for over five centuries, a Royal Burgh and the seat of Scotland's kings and queens. It has spawned great writers, philosophers, scientists, doctors and inventors. The Protestant Reformation in Scotland witnessed a struggle of faith and ideas that was sometimes bloody but gave birth to a tradition of intellectual creativity and free thinking. While the Edinburgh Festival every August has long been one of the world's largest annual cultural events with its mainstream dramatic, musical and artistic shows as well as innovative "Fringe" performances, the devolution of political autonomy from Westminster to a Scottish assembly has enhanced Edinburgh's role as one of Europe's leading cultural centres.

Edinburgh is very much a city to be explored on foot despite its sometimes wet and dreary weather. The Royal Mile from the Castle to Holyrood Palace offers a walk of great historic interest while Princes Street remains the city's premier shopping venue bounded on one side by the beautiful Princes Street Gardens below the Castle.

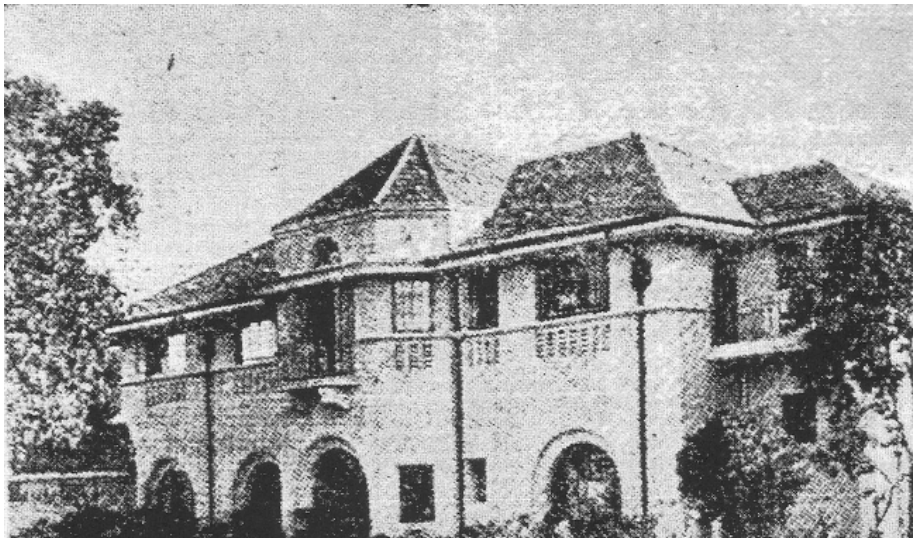
A visit to Edinburgh in August this year, however, revealed a massive construction site along the middle of Princes Street as the city constructs a dedicated tramway which will bring back trams for the first time since the previous tram system was closed down in 1956. Although the construction works were unpopular for the disruption they caused to pedestrians and motorists alike, especially during the Festival month of August when the city was teeming with tourists, Edinburgh like several European cities looks forward to the reintroduction of trams as part of the solution to its traffic problems.



Edinburgh Castle from New Town

Text and photo bottom right by Leslie A.K. James

The Tanjung Bungah House of Dr. A.S. McKern



In recent issues of the Newsletter we have told the story of Dr. Albert S. McKern, a prominent Penang doctor in the inter-war years. McKern, who was the subject of post-war myth and ghost stories in Penang, died in a Japanese internment camp in Sumatra in July 1945 leaving a multi-million dollar legacy to the Universities of Sydney, Yale and Edinburgh for medical research.

According to the 1923 **Alumni Directory of Yale University**, Dr. McKern's clinic was at 37A Beach Street. In the 1930s, however, he built a residence in Tanjung Bungah Road, now the site of the four condominium tower blocks of "The Cove." In an article under the headline, "House with a Supreme Site – Dr. A.S. McKern's Residence in Penang," **The Straits Times** of 19 September 1935, reporting that the house had been designed by Messrs. McNeil and Miller, reproduced the following description from the journal **Malayan Architect** accompanied by a photograph of the house (see above):

"Situated about four miles from town on the shore side of the north coast road, this new house enjoys what must be one of the finest sites in this part of the world for a residence. It overlooks the entrance to the harbour on the north with Kedah Peak in the distance and commands a fine view of the hills to the south.

"The plan has been arranged to take advantage of these views and the natural beauty of the site. Trees were preserved wherever possible and an effort has been made so to group the house and its appurtenances that the mass might conform with the general disposition of the landscape.

"The library and the owner's suite above have been arranged at the west end of the site, as far as possible from the noisy elements of the house, namely the entrance and the kitchen wing. Privacy in these apartments has thereby been obtained.

"The sloping ground to the east caused the natural entrance to be from that end of the house. The floor of the porch and vestibule is some three feet below the ground floor of the house so that the dining room is not disturbed by the entrance, yet cross ventilation is obtained in that room.

"This arrangement also permitted of a mezzanine floor connecting the pantry and upper floor by service stairs so that this very necessary adjunct to a house in the tropics is thereby obtained in the most inconspicuous manner possible and no bedroom is disturbed by a back passage.

"The house is of fire resisting construction throughout. The exterior walls are finished in granolithic brushed out to expose the granite chips. The roof is covered with French tiles and all the valley gutters are copper.

“The interior walls and ceilings to all the rooms are plastered with hardwall plaster. The upper floor and stair are reinforced concrete finished with teak. The floors of entrance, stair hall, lounge and loggias are paved with marble, whilst those of the library and dining room are finished with teak parquet.

“The walls and ceiling of the library are panelled with specially selected figured teak and built-in book cases and furniture are of the same material. There is a fireplace in this apartment executed in Bukit Mertajam granite having an electric fire in a burnished steel dog-legged grate.

“The dining room, which is of an interesting shape, has a domed ceiling with concealed lighting. The walls and ceiling of this room are stippled in a primrose yellow and the metal work is painted matt apple green tipped with gold.

“The owner’s bathroom and adjoining offices are carried out in Rosa Aurora del Portogallo Marble, the bath being sunk and a marble wall cupboard has a sliding plate glass mirror as a door. The other bathrooms and lavatories are tiled to 6 ft. 6 in. with mottled eggshell finished tiles, having mosaics on the floors.

“The walls and floors of the pantry and kitchen are also tiled. All the sanitary appliances are of the most up-to-date type, come coloured fittings having been installed. Hot and cold water is supplied throughout the house from a ‘cookerheat’ stove in the kitchen.

“The low arches on the ground floor provide wide shaded openings whilst on the upper floor uninterrupted views are obtained by the use of folding sliding steel casements and shutters. There are four specially designed stained glass windows in the house and ornamental grilles have been used in several places to ensure ventilation when the house is shut up.

“The internal finishings are all of selected teak and the ironmongery of bronze and chromium plate.”

Research by L.A.K. James

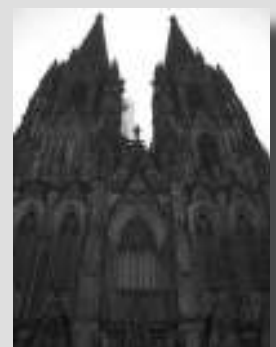
WORLD HERITAGE LISTING

Dresden Loses World Heritage Listing

One of Germany’s most famous cultural cities, Dresden, lost its World Heritage Listing at the meeting of the UNESCO World Heritage Committee in June 2009. The reason was the construction of a bridge that meant the site “failed to keep its Outstanding Universal Value”.

Dresden was not the first German site faced with losing its World Heritage Listing. The status of Cologne Cathedral, inscribed on the World Heritage List in 1996, was endangered after high-rise tower blocks were approved on the opposite bank of the Rhine.

In 2004 the UNESCO World Heritage Committee deemed that the integrity of the urban landscape around the Cathedral would be threatened. Consequently, in order to retain Cologne Cathedral’s listing, authorities in the city withdrew approval for the high-rise buildings despite the requirement to pay compensation to the developers.



Cologne Cathedral by C. Manhart | UNESCO

N14

NATION

SUNDAY STAR, 13 September 2009

Another heritage hiccup

Kg Tanjong Tokong folk fighting to end development plans

By TUNKU SHAHARIAH
tshah@thestar.com.my

GEORGE TOWN: A Kampung Buah Pala-like controversy is brewing in Kampung Tanjong Tokong where villagers are opposing plans for a mixed-development project.

Mohd Salleh Yahaya, the resident association chairman of the 200-year-old village said they hoped to collect at least 3,000 signatures from concerned Malaysians to voice their displeasure over the move.

"We will hand over the signatures to the Prime Minister after Raya and seek his intervention in resolving this long-standing issue," he said at a press conference at the village yesterday.

He claimed that the developer, Uda Holdings, was given a 99-year lease of the land on May 30, 1974, on the condition that any development would be solely for the rehabilitation, reconstruction and renewal of Kampung Tanjong Tokong, and not a prime project for the rich.

He said the signature campaign was also to protest Uda managing director Datuk Jaafar Abu Hassan's statement recently that the company planned to go ahead with its plans.

On Sept 8, he said Uda planned to build low and medium-cost flats, apartments, condominiums and commercial building, with a gross sale value of between RM800mil and RM1bil, at the site.

Mohd Salleh said 60 houses would be demolished to make way for the development in April, next year.

"The families from 40 of the houses have moved into transit homes provided by Uda as they have given up fighting," said Mohd Salleh.

"Families from the remaining 20 houses are



Staying put: Mohd Salleh holding up an old newspaper article from The Echo which showed the second Prime Minister Tun Abdul Razak Hussein's visit to Tanjong Tokong in 1972.

adamant about staying put. We've been told to vacate our homes by October," he said.

There are currently 1,026 families staying in 260 houses in the village.

According to Mohd Salleh, they were told that they would be given a three-room apartment each, under a special compensation package.

Penang Heritage Trust (PHT) Muslim heritage affairs advisor Datuk Dr Wazir Jahan Karim,

who was present, said any development in Tanjong Tokong would have to consider the historical sentimentality of the locals there, or the traditional ambience of the place would be lost forever.

Dr Wazir said PHT was preparing a dossier on the historical evolution of the village, which would be handed to the state and Federal governments.

国内

2009年10月3日 星期六

光華時

业主不按世遗规格违建 Issue of Non-compliance

古迹建筑面目全非

独家报道

报道：蔡昌卫

(本报·日刊) 台南市成功入選后，原以为古迹建筑享有“保身”获得保障，但实际情形并非如此，自去年7月

采和里在核心区内外百年保身古迹建筑竟被拆除及不按世遗规格违建其建筑情况发生，试图在鸡豆巷（Bakwan Alley）的一排百年双喜店屋，被围封业主拆毁的奇闻。

破坏原貌
国际古迹遗址理事会（ICOMOS）台南市分会指出，台南市2008年7月列入世遗后，却发生古迹被拆毁的事件发生。

找出，再改建一幢数栋“仿清式”建筑的古迹建筑，建于1840至1900年代，有数百年的历史，然而却遭到业主非法拆除而破坏原貌。

得知，有关方面是照搬台上的违建百叶窗完全拆毁，并以廉价及冲动的木料取代代表，再从中间挖个洞让人窥视。

欲获批准
然而，这属严重违法

坏古迹的行径，违建建筑并未经过台南市的核心区及缓冲区地带，不过却受到市政府管理下受到保护，任何拆建须获得市政府批准。

指示停工
无论如何，台南市古迹信托会蔡小芬表示，台南市政府相关部门已对违建行为发生的建筑立即被破坏事件。她表示，除了对违建已立案发出30天传



陈耀成：世遗区内违建发生乱修破坏古迹行为。
里，指示停止任何拆建工程及动工。



一幢11间的半唐折翼式建筑，其中有多间已被业主拆毁，传统的木结构消失。



此三者的下降可避免。

然而，整个中国各系统的展开过程，在安全方面值得警惕。政府不鼓励任何组织中的成员随意发表批评意见和主张平等原则，反之亦然。任何有碍于行政系统本身运作的意见，都会被忽视。

此外，虽然，领导官员的素质也不是一成不变的，但他们的政治素质对外完全封闭，所以给个人素质提高提高没有有效刺激和来源。

因此，尽管中国已颁布了改革，不过从经济体制到政治体制本质的改变，则为开明社会体制提供一个必要前提。

然而，目前，若要实现改革，必须使国家

在行洪山后新、舊堤間的堤。此各堤系，由
酒和年長沙并集山后并行的堤岸使無開
門。

南堤設計：目前設計之堤係用重力式，
計劃下進行。原已施放總橫斷面計劃和單
行。

解說：公共工程局將合眾銀行和河濱
堤加比和銀行行堤聯合，在堤岸政府前
堤後和合眾銀行行堤行堤建設。一



A black and white photograph of a man in a military uniform, likely a sergeant, holding a newspaper. The newspaper has the word "WORLD" visible at the top. The man is looking directly at the camera.

丁俊晖在斯诺克世锦赛首轮比赛中，以三比零横扫外国的“台球王子”希金斯，成为首位在斯诺克世锦赛首轮比赛中取得三比零胜利的选手。希金斯在首轮比赛中，以三比零横扫外国的“台球王子”希金斯，成为首位在斯诺克世锦赛首轮比赛中取得三比零胜利的选手。



**The Outing
Verses**

[illegible]

An owner had the FHIS and the Tenancy Matters, through which the bank was allowed, recovered from the creditors when a Dutch court of master ruled in his favour. The agreement that the bank had the FHIS will be an important step.

In 1967, nearly last month, a group of residents began to build the Fresno Heritage Foundation and related PAF and related efforts to build a Fresno Heritage Center to drive home the fact that the residents of the old town have a heritage.

The group's chief spokesman was a young, London-born literary engineer, Ed Finkler, who had done much research at such systems in Yale, and introduced a book on *Planning Towns*. Finkler then introduced Finkler to such studies at Johns Hopkins when he pointed out that the military system employed was due to be introduced.

And, it would take two days to

monthly journal of 3). How important it would probably start the road to cure this? (3) One was eventually received, among other things, was for the tablets and used to be required, the table and table errors to be stamped, and for the money, gear losses and electrical system to be checked.

The campaign only resulted in the taking on board of engineering. The present leadership wants to do just enough changing at all, just for the sales, which even though only last year, would be wasted if they were discontinued.

There would be no damage to slopes and the trees, and minimal disturbance to residents and farmers. Most significantly, the gentle 1:100 gradient of the incline incorporated by fast growers and willows is within the range of the typical 1:100 slope, much of the hill's surface appears to would be covered.

But the entire exercise is significant not just for the quality of protection the factory's small workforce, the episode is essentially a test case of the government's sense of dignity and integrity, its sense of the truth.

The arbitrators would they not not

without improving the railroads. They worry of the specter that it is possible to upgrade the system and achieve the same capacity in a railroad which would not only be cheaper and faster, but also less disruptive to freight and tourism.

being the country's most valuable foreign assets. An engineering miracle, it is the only one of its kind left in Asia. (The Japanese system of Yamanashi, Nagano, was rebuilt after World War 2 under Japanese rule in 1960.)

Now, 80 years after it was opened, the railway line has become a regional economic spine, albeit in a different context. This time, the choice of how a regional system is designed, and how well it works, remains crucial, with business

the structure. In line with international evidence, the government of India took strategic and significant action that

Discussions in theory and practice should
 be sent to: discussions@journals.sagepub.com

MEDIA CONVERGENCE

by **Bernard Cheah**
 professor of literature at McGill University

GEORGE TOWN: The Pinang government has given the nod to the owners of The Rice Millie Wet Quay development project located within the George Town heritage zone to start construction.

Asian Global Business Solutions AGS, the company in-charge of project, was given approval by Penang Island Municipal Council (MPMC) on Dec 1, after submitting the plans in August.

The five-story building will house a luxury boutique hotel with 30 rooms, 30 rest-and-entertainment

and office and commercial retail lots – all not exceeding 15m in height to comply with the building height policy in the state heritage checklist.

The project had been scaled down by 50% in height from its original plan.

Still managing director De Noronha Alabdali said the project, which is on 12,100-sq-m plot near Wadi Qary, has a gross development area of 57,180-sq-m and a gross development value of RM250 million.

She said initial construction had been carried out, and the around

breaking will be in January. The project is expected to be completed by Christmas 2011.

Naraini said this in a press conference at the AISH office yesterday.

Project architect Dajiang Architects, who was at the press conference, said the project will include restoration of five interlinked buildings, which used to be warehouses. In the area, two of the standardized pre-war buildings are part of the heritage conservation guidelines.

"We have also engaged quality reviewers and the National Heritage Department (Jabatan Warisan Negara) on this matter," he said.

restorative practices will be based on the Green Building Index accreditation.

*The whole project focuses on reducing energy consumption and reducing the carbon footprint.

The Blue Miller project was one of the four high-rise projects in George Town which caused controversy when they were found to be have exceeded the height limit under Unesco guidelines, says Michael Henderson, Green

Three other three projects are the Bonstead Parade Riverside Hotel, a Leitha Housing, an E&O Hotel extension project and a 23-storey hotel project along Jalan Sultan Ahmad Shah by Low Yai Giam.

Discontent over Botanic Gardens expansion

by Bernard Cheah
newsdesk@thesundaily.com

GEORGE TOWN: Nature activists, non-governmental organisations and residents are up in arms over a controversial federal government project to expand the Botanic Gardens here and are questioning why it is being carried out without due public consultation.

The Malaysian Nature Society (MNS) said work on the RM5 million project had deviated from the original plan for expansion drafted

some four years ago.

Initial work had already necessitated the uprooting of an estimated 30 trees and the demolition of a 150-year-old colonial building that housed the Waterfall Café.

Chairman of the society's Penang branch Kanda Kumar said several state NGOs were drafting a masterplan expected to be ready by the middle of next month, detailing what the expansion should ideally look like.

"The project may have begun, but we still want to get feedback from the public

and stakeholders," he said.

"Even though this is a federal government project, it does not mean that the state can *lepas tangan* (let go) of this matter," he said at a press conference at the project site yesterday. Also present were several other NGOs and concerned residents.

"Originally there were no car parks planned, but now one is being built," he said.

Kanda Kumar also pointed out that an "eco-stream" walkway completed earlier this year was supposed to have been located along the river

and not where it is now.

He suggested that a team be set up to monitor any expansion work and called on the government to conduct a geotechnical survey of hill slopes that may be affected by the project.

Kanda Kumar said geotechnical and soil studies were urgently required for slopes located near the "Moongate" where the walking trail to Penang Hill begins, as a "Tourism Pavilion" was being planned for the hillside.

He said 1962 had seen a major landslide on the slope along Waterfall Road, with three more landslides occurring since then.

"We have received many complaints from the public, hawkers and residents nearby who fear that a landslide could occur in the area."

Friends of Penang Botanic Gardens chairman Rashidah Begum said she had brought the matter up with the Botanic Gardens Department.

拆除植物园百年瀑布茶室

要求暂缓拆茶室 陈耀威:应先研究历史背景

在拆除植物园百年瀑布茶室前,文史工作者要求暂缓拆除,反之先深入研究茶室的历史背景后才动手。

文史工作者陈耀威表示,从茶室建筑的外貌看来,或许这幢建筑有进行多次改造,然而不能仅从建筑外看来判断其古蹟价值,相反的必须探讨茶室与植物园的历史渊源,了解它为何会独树一帜,获得尊重与重视。

所以,他认为在进行拆卸前不该轻率发动拆除行动,他愿意,在获得政府的计划并不关注生态环境及古蹟价值,所以州政府应该扮演关键角色。

他也是文化遗产咨询委员会(ICHAT)成员,他表示把这件事反映于文化遗产咨询委员会。



百年瀑布茶室将在发展计划下不保。

王康立:势在必行

植物园州议员王康立表示,瀑布茶室的拆除势在必行,而且在这项会议上已提出这项报告。

他说,植物园百年瀑布茶室是植物园发展的一环,至于业者也同意拆除瀑布茶室,于今日与罗兴强行政会议员有这件事。他表示,州政府已同意业者接受在附近附近路旁的小中心,并提供两个策略,所以业者不准备接受接受政府提供更好的发展地点。

他已向业者先接受两个策略。



陈耀威(左)和罗兴强(右)在新闻发布会上。

瀑布茶室获妥 罗兴强:拥护

针对植物园瀑布茶室必须让路发展事件,州行政会议员罗兴强表示,其实州政府已安排瀑布茶室,在植物园新小中心内拥有1个单位,同时可在旁边的传统式茶室营业,因此对方将拥有2个单位。

他补充,一旦植物园游客中心中心竣工后,瀑布茶室东主也将获得在中心内营业。他说,这一安排已获得其中一名

黄吉兴:搬迁通知 3年前已接获

州议员黄吉兴表示,拆除瀑布茶室是延续前政府的发展计划,而他本身也曾不出声有任何古蹟价值。他认为发展是好事,更何况这幢茶室在3年前已接获搬迁通知。

他针对植物园古蹟信托会及文化历史工作者反对拆除瀑布茶室的意见,如是回应。

珍妮比莱:违背林冠英捍卫古迹指示

“文化遗产委员会”(ICAH)珍妮比莱指出,拆除植物园茶室建筑,如同违背林冠英曾力保古迹的指示。

他表示,在首长致力捍卫全保的古迹时,任何一方若要拆除园内古蹟,就必须先获得世界文化遗产委员会及市政府古蹟小组认可。她针对



对植物园百年茶室团对植物园管理表示,她已向市议会查询,迄今尚未接获批准。她认为,植物园茶室的拆除行动必须重新检讨。



州政府于2个月前,在石矿公司

Guan Eng questions PHT over 'silence'

by Glem Say Khoo
newsdesk@thesundaily.com

PENANG: Chief Minister Lim Guan Eng yesterday questioned the "total silence" maintained by the Penang Heritage Trust (PHT) over the denial of promised allocations for heritage conservation by the federal government to the state.

Lim took a dig at PHT when hitting out at the federal government for sidelining the state by not handing over the RM25 million allocation promised by former premier Tun Abdullah Ahmad Badawi for heritage preservation.

"We demand transparency! Why is PHT - a non-governmental organisation (NGO) involved in heritage preservation - not daring to stand up for the right of Penang?" he asked during a briefing on the National Heritage Act 2005 organised by the George Town World Heritage Office.

"This is a question it must answer and it should search its conscience to see if it has

done its duty for the people," said Lim when commenting on what he termed as the "silencing" of the state's heritage conservation allocation.

He said when Penang and Malacca were inscribed as World Heritage sites by Unesco last year, Abdullah had promised to channel RM50 million to the states to promote, conserve and preserve the sites.

However, he said not only has the federal government allocation not been shared equally by the two states, but the RM20 million allocated to Penang had been given to Khazanah Holdings Bhd to fund the preservation and protection of heritage sites.

"If Malacca (state government) can be given RM50 million, why not Penang? We feel we have been discriminated and it also does not reflect the reality on the ground because in terms of area, George Town has 250,42ha of heritage buildings compared to Malacca that only has 172,615

"In terms of heritage buildings, George Town has 250,42 (4,605 units) more than Malacca (1,878) and yet 50% less in the allocation," he said, adding the state government still hopes for the RM25 million allocation to be given directly to the state government, as done for Malacca.

Lim described the management of the "allocation" by Khazanah as a "hoarding" and urged the stakeholders to apply for the money to maintain the heritage sites.

"At no time, the former prime minister had said that the money would be channelled to Khazanah," he said.

PHT president Khoo Salma Natanson, who also present in the briefing, clarified that the NGO is neutral.

She said the organisation is willing to work with any agency so long the money is spent on George Town to ensure that the works are being implemented so that the city will remain in the World Heritage list.

Penang and Malacca to get RM50mil

PENANG was allocated RM20mil and Malacca RM30mil to restore heritage buildings listed by Unesco in Budget 2009, said Deputy Finance Minister Datuk Chor Chee Heung.

He told Liew Chin Tong (DAP - Bukit Bendera) that allocation for Penang was channelled to Khazanah Nasional Bhd while the allocation for Malacca went to the Heritage Department under the Information, Communications and Culture Ministry.

"The fund allocated is also meant to support activities carried out by non-governmental organisations and the private sector," he said.

The Finance Ministry would receive progress reports from Khazanah Nasional and the Information, Communications and Culture Ministry on the expenditure and projects for each quarter of the year, he said.

N20 NATION THE STAR, SATURDAY 12 DECEMBER 2009

Penang's missing link

Iron bridge over Sg Kerian has vanished

By CHRISTINA CHIN
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GEORGE TOWN: The historical iron bridge of Kerian River has gone missing.

The 10m railway bridge at Nibong Tebal, South Seberang Prai, which was built in the 1880s by the British, seems to have vanished into thin air.

"The bridge across the Kerian River connected Perak and Penang. It was still there when I started researching its history in 2006," said Universiti Sains Malaysia (USM) School of Social Sciences senior lecturer Dr Saidatulakmal Mohd.

"Last month, when my team returned to the site to gather more information, the bridge was no longer there," she told The Star.

Dr Saidatulakmal is heading a project on Penang's undiscovered heritage.

She said the project's objective was to gather information on the island and mainland's many historical sites.

"We want to promote conservation of these sites but before we can do so, we need to determine its heritage value. The bridge is one

»We want to promote conservation. Unfortunately the bridge is now gone«

DR SAIDATULAKMAL MOHD



of more than 40 sites identified. It was built from solid iron. It's amazing that it remains strong and standing to this day, which is why we want to conserve it."

She said the bridge and its structure has unique architectural value because of its inter-



Undiscovered heritage: The iron railway bridge was built by the British in the 1880s. The bridge has architectural value because of its semi circle arches that connects the sides of the bridge. This photo is courtesy of School of Social Sciences, Universiti Sains Malaysia.

esting semi-circle arches that connects the sides of the bridge that resemble an open tunnel.

"Unfortunately, the bridge is now gone," she said.

She said the team would continue to gather

information about the bridge and what had happened to it.

State Tourism Development and Culture Committee chairman Danny Law said he would check with the relevant authorities to try and find what had happened to the bridge.

theSun | WEDNESDAY JUNE 17 2009

Stemming the decline of traditional living cultures

by Himanshu Bhatt
newsdesk@thesundaily.com

GEORGE TOWN: The Penang government is working on ways to arrest the decline of traditional trades and living cultures in the Unesco heritage zone of inner city George Town.

State Local Government Committee chairman Chiew Kon Yeow said numerous traditional businesses and residents have moved out of the city following the repeal of the Rent Control Act in 2000.

Describing the people in the city as valuable intangible assets of its heritage, he said making them stay in the city was not as easy as preserving the buildings.

In the latest case, a traditional Chinese medicine business run by a family has announced it will leave the city and the Straits Eclectic building it has occupied for 120 years, by the end of the month.

The move prompted the Penang Heritage Trust (PHT) to intervene and induce the business to remain on the premises, by mediating between the tenant, property owner

Cheah Kongsi and corporate sponsors.

"These living cultures are important intangible assets of the city's heritage," Chow said during a visit to the building in China Street yesterday. But the issue of them moving out is not easy to resolve," he said.

PHT manager Magdalene Ng said the Yin Oi Tong family business, which has its roots in China from 1795, was an example of Chinese investment in Penang during the early colonial period.

The business was instrumental in supplying traditional medications throughout the Malay peninsula, Singapore and Borneo, as well as to Medan during the past 120 years.

Yin Oi Tong manager Chong Yit Leong said the family had thought of moving out of the premises 15 years ago as they were not enjoying good business, but remained because of the family legacy and interest shown by tourists.

He said he was willing to donate his family's artefacts if the Cheah Kongsi plans to convert part of the building into a gallery.

He said the family may consider maintaining its business on the ground floor, but lamented that the fewer residents in the city meant a declining business clientele.

Cheah Kongsi representative Cheah Swee Huat denied a newspaper report that it had increased its rental and was forcing the tenant to move out.



Chong ... willing to donate family artefacts if the Cheah Kongsi converts part of the Straits Eclectic building into a gallery.



Yin Oi Tong - the 120-year-old Chinese medicine parlour.

*29 Church Street*

CORE LIVING

We moved into our newly restored home in China Street on 15th February this year. The day after Valentines Day was full of festivals. Chap Goh May, Thaipusam and our contractor Eric's birthday all were celebrated on the 15th. There were fireworks, drums, traffic jams, lots of people, music and the chariot pulled by its beautiful leading bulls. We didn't get much sleep, our 'moving in' was celebrated by all and we have slept well ever since! It has been very, very happy.

First, I need to give you a bit of background so that you can see how I have formed my opinions and views about living in this area of George Town. Both David and I are Malaysians, both of us growing up on plantations, in amazing old houses. My family moved all over the country, David's lived out at Batu Caves. My mum is from Johore and my dad is British. Originally based in KL, we moved out to Pangkor Island in the early 90's with the idea of giving our own two boys a taste of our kind of childhood. Jungle, outdoors, nature, small towns. Pangkor is a fantastic place and we still have our house there and go down to it regularly. The boys went to the Chinese school on the island and Tessa, our little girl, was born there.

As a family we moved to Penang in mid '99 for David's work and the kids' schooling. We felt completely at home here and we quickly decided we wanted to be here permanently. I fell in love

with George Town after spending time in the 'Little India' area while researching the spice merchants for the Tropical Spice Garden. We decided that if we could find the right building we would restore it and live right in the heritage core.

We owe Penang Heritage Trust big time! It was PHT that saved the house we now live in. Without the PHT protest in front of the house in the early 2000's and their insistence that it be saved, there would not have been the derelict merchant's house to attract us to save it. Its double courtyard, extra wide frontage and back entrance onto

Lorong Chee Em, its simple and practical design grabbed us as soon as we managed to get access through the hoarding that had covered the building for years.



David and Eric managed the restoration and building. Gwynn Jenkins documented and recorded the process and after one year and nine months we moved in with the family and haven't looked back. I never thought that it would be this delightful to live

here in town. I use the local restaurants, I buy my vegetables, fruit and flowers from the local shops and stalls, tailor clothes around the corner, buy bread and local cakes and sweets from the bicycle stalls that come round at different times, buy the best yogurt from Enrico's, my spices from Market Street and my lovely Bollywood movies from the boisterous shops on Penang Street. I use my old bicycle, I walk, Tessa rollerblades on the Esplanade, rides her bike on the padang and we watch modest cricket games between the Indian foreign workers sometimes early on Sundays. I also drink way too much masala tea and eat too many times at the Sri Ananda Bhawan restaurants on Penang Street.



We have become part of the community here and it's a great feeling walking down the street and being able to say 'Morning' to lots of people from very different backgrounds. I am thankful for the council road sweepers and cleaners who, by the time I open the door at 7.15 am, have cleared away all the rubbish each day, swept the street clean and cleared the drains. These men work thanklessly doing their jobs each day.

Then there are the surprises. At the end of the nine days of Hindu vegetarian fasting, on 28th September this year, the chariot appeared after the sound of drums. Dancers, not just a few but a hundred, come down the street dancing with sticks, crowds come to the chariot, families, individuals offering trays of fruit to the holy chariot with flowers returned in thanks. You suddenly realise that all around you here in George Town people are living very quietly and on days like this they get cleaned up, put on smart clothes and come to give offerings on the side of the streets. It is wonderful. Each time this happens our upstairs shutters overlooking China Street are opened and we spend our time hanging out and watching the show.

Earlier on 8th September I had gone out at about 9.30 pm to water my bamboo at the front of the house. I opened my doors to see a vision of metallic papers scattered all the way down China Street. When cars came driving down the effect was magical as the breeze tossed these



metallic papers into the air and up into the street lights. It was beautiful and yet I had no idea, no inkling at all, that people had obviously gone by in some sort of vehicle tossing out piles of metallic paper money all over the street for Cheng Beng.

For me, as someone who has made the deliberate move to live in the inner city, all of this activity is an eye opener. It is something I enjoy and learn from and I find it all fascinating. I am reminded of my childhood all the time here and because it was so happy, this place makes those memories come alive for me. I am also thrilled that my own kids can still experience some of these traditions before they do die out or are forgotten. This is the beauty of George Town. So much of it is simply taken for granted and because of that, its value is not realised. This kind of value is often not counted until it is gone forever and more often than not it is remembered with regret, one not having been more appreciative of it all at the time.

There are far more tourists in George Town since the UNESCO listing, there is far more traffic in town, there is lots of property exchanging hands, new people are moving in, old people are moving out, new restaurants, loads of boutique hotels! There are lots of issues that need to be dealt with. (My pet issue being the absolute menace of the swift breeding that is taking over George Town. Please read my separate opinion and account on this. It is a big issue that has to be highlighted separately.) Not all these issues are bad. George Town has always been a place where the world meets, where products are brought, where people immigrate to, where things are exchanged. With the UNESCO listing George Town has been offered a chance to revitalise itself and to realise its value once again on the world stage. Its wealth is in its heritage and its people and I cannot tell you how much I appreciate this on a daily basis living here in the core zone.

With this column I hope to introduce you to some of the local characters that I see and meet on the streets, some of the issues both good and bad that need to be highlighted.

Rebecca Duckett-Wilkinson

SUFFOLK HOUSE OPENS ITS DOORS

After years of anticipation, Suffolk House has finally opened its doors to the public and is poised to take its place as one of the most important heritage landmarks in Penang,

As the operator of the site, Badan Warisan Malaysia (BWM) plans not only to make Suffolk House relevant to Penangites, Malaysians and others who have an interest in heritage but to promote the benefits that heritage conservation can generate for the people of Malaysia. In managing the house, BWM aims to deliver the highest standards in visitor experience and customer care and to champion creativity and innovation in all activities.

Above all, BWM wants Suffolk House to be an inspiring and inclusive civic and cultural space and to achieve and promote international standards of stewardship.

Visitors can now explore this historic building, its period interiors refurnished with Anglo-Indian antiques and its themed heritage garden. They can enjoy a drink or a meal in the restaurant or on the outside patio and, before leaving, pick up a little something from the gift shop. With its lofty Georgian reception rooms, broad verandas and verdant gardens, Suffolk House also offers a perfect setting for weddings and corporate and social functions and events.

The house and garden are open for self-guided tours everyday from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. (last admissions 5.30). Admission costs RM10 but is free for children under six. Guided tours are available by appointment for groups of ten or more visitors at a cost of RM15 per head (though discounts can be offered to school groups).

For PHT members with a valid membership card, site entry is at a discounted rate of RM8 while the cost of a group tour by PHT members is RM12 per head.

The Suffolk House restaurant, which is managed by the people who gave you Thirty-two at the Mansion, serves lunch from 12 noon to 3 p.m., high tea from 3 p.m. to 6 p.m. and dinner from 7 p.m. to 11 p.m. Bookings are also being taken for functions and events.

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Website: www.suffolkhouse.com.my (under construction)

Photographs by Mark Gibson and Frank D. Viermann (top right)



CHINA STREET AND LITTLE INDIA

A large crowd of close to 70 people gathered at the PHT office on a hot Sunday afternoon on 2nd August, 2009. Everyone was keen to explore an area many found familiar and yet were not too sure what to look for - Little India and the China Street precinct.

Our heritage trail guide was Teresa Capol who led us through the narrow streets with brief stops at the Chung Keng Kwee Temple, the Chinese clan temples along King Street and the lesser known Poh Choo Seah, a Baba association “Kongsi” house. Messrs Tan Kim Hong and Ong Bok Kim, well knowledgeable in local Chinese community affairs, shared vivid accounts of how the early settlers from China set up these clan houses and temples of worship to unite their kinfolk and at times use them as a base for power struggles with rival dialect groups. The distinctive Cantonese architecture that adorned the rows of century-old buildings withstood the wear of time and constant up-keep by the old caretakers making the building structure look as good as yesteryear. Worth mentioning here was Mr. Khoo Lay Kwan of “Poh Choo Seah”, a 93 year old veteran caretaker who spent years looking after this abode of ancestor tablets for the Babas. According to him, the Babas of Penang originated from various dialect groups, were generally educated in English medium schools and seldom spoke patois Malay in daily life, unlike their counterparts in Malacca.



Temples along King Street

From King Street, we crossed over to Queen Street, named after Queen Victoria and yet distinctly Indian in flavor. In front of the magnificently sculptured Mahamariamman Temple, the oldest Hindu temple in town which dates back to 1833, Teresa reiterated a true story of an Indian woman who was neglected by her husband and had to toil the streets to bring up her four children, a sad fate that befell many immigrants who landed here but never gave up the hope to search for better lives.

Later, the temple priest opened the gateway and led us around the sanctum. He explained the significance of the symbols and statues found inside. Leaving the temple, we visited the shophouses nearby and chatted with the traders and residents. A number of shops and restaurants with familiar names like Dawood witnessed the growing presence of the descendants in the area. An interesting feature noted in some of the houses was the raised platform on both sides of the entrance, said to mimic the sand moulds commonly found outside houses in southern India where they are used for resting when the temperature gets too warm inside the room.



Our tour ended in 29 China Street, a masterpiece of restoration and a true marvel of resurrecting a nearly condemned three-link shophouse into a neo-classical oriental dwelling. The Wilkinson family greeted us and patiently explained the various artifacts in their house. The history of the building remains mythical – according to one story the original owner was linked to Ong Boon Keng, a Hai San gang sympathiser of the mid-19th century. Discovered during the restoration work were the Indian terra-cotta floor tiles and some evidence of the building’s early use as a godown.

With the tastefully decorated interiors and surrounded by the knick-knacks of old grandma memorabilia, we settled comfortably into the afternoon ritual of teh tarik, nyonya kuih and more chatting, a perfect ending to a day that brought back the good old days of George Town.

Text by Clement Liang

DISCOVERING LIGHT STREET

This site visit – another in the series of exploring George Town's historic streets -- took place on 5 April 2009 and provided an insight into the early development of the northern waterfront area of George Town, also known as the Esplanade.

The site visit was led by council member Timothy Tye. Participants gathered at the Queen Victoria Jubilee Clock Tower and received an explanation of the early development of Jalan Tun Syed Sheh Barakbah (formerly Fort Road) on one side, and the Esplanade on the other. Participants learned about the early reclamation works that created land for Swettenham Pier, and how the shoreline originally looked.



Participants next visited Fort Cornwallis Lighthouse and learned about its association with the flagstaff on Penang Hill (also called Bukit Bendera or Flagstaff Hill). They were hosted by the person in charge, who provided an in-house tour and briefing. The lighthouse, one of the oldest in Malaysia, was built in 1882 and was originally called Fort Point Lighthouse.

Participants viewed the most likely spot where Francis Light came ashore in 1786, while gaining an appreciation of how the fort developed in stages. Participants learned about the development of the parade ground, now called Padang Kota Lama, and the various structures erected there over the course of history -- the Cenotaph (1928), City Hall (1903), Town Hall (c.1880) and Koh Seang Tat's Municipal Fountain (1883). Participants also learned about the history of Esplanade Road, now called Jalan Padang Kota Lama, and the likely landscape of the area in the 19th century, and how it differs from today. The walk continued to Duke Street with an explanation of the former Edinburgh House (now the site of Dewan Sri Pinang), these names recalling the 1869 visit of the then Duke of Edinburgh.

The Discovering Light Street Heritage Walk ended at the Logan Memorial opposite the High Court buildings. Although the walk was intended to finish at the Convent Light Street entrance where Light Street originally ended, an impending storm forced an early end to the walk and immediately after the group dispersed there was a heavy downpour.



Text and images by Timothy Tye

RETURN TO SOONSTEAD



On Sunday afternoon 5th July 2009, the Penang Heritage Trust organized a tour of “Soonstead” mansion with the permission of Bayview Group. The tour started with a brief history of the mansion provided by the descendant of the Heahs. He brought some photographs of the past to share with the group.

“Soonstead” at 46B Northam Road, once known as “Millionaire’s Row”, was built in the 1910s by millionaire planter Heah Swee Lee as “Northam Lodge”. He had made his fortune in sugar and rubber plantations. The mansion or *ang mo lau*, as it is known among the dominant Hokkien community in Penang

because of its reputed European style, was later sold or transferred to his in-laws, another rich Chinese family, the Soons. The new owners renamed the mansion “Soonstead”. The name encapsulates the combination of Chinese and British heritage. In 1973 the mansion was sold to the late Datuk Loh Boon Siew.

“Soonstead” was left in a state of advanced decay until recently. The mansion has been given a new lease in life. Bayview Group, linked to the Boon Siew Group, has restored the mansion to its former glory. Mr. Watson Chong of Bayview Group revealed that the upper floors of the mansion will host Datuk Loh Boon Siew’s antiques, whilst the lower floor will be used for functions like wedding receptions, company dinners and product launches. When the mansion re-opens to the public, Mr Watson said, it will revert to its original name, Northam Lodge.



Later, for the walk-about tour, together with my Dad, “Ronny” Soon Ewe Ghee, we explored the house he grew up in. He shared with the group his memories of the house, recalling where things were, and which rooms held what functions throughout the mansion. He also pointed out that the original gates of the mansion had been dismantled and installed at the residence of the late Datuk Loh Boon Siew further down the road.

My Dad also shared told the story of one significant event held in the mansion. It was, according to a report in **The Straits Times** of 1st October 1961, “the wedding of the year,” his sister’s wedding when 1,000 guests attended including many dignitaries.

Text by Keith Soon

Photographs by Fidel Ho



INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON SUSTAINABLE CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT, GEORGE TOWN, 8 – 9 OCTOBER 2009

As a new World Heritage Site, the city of George Town faces many challenges. ‘The Economics of Heritage Revitalization’ was the theme of a two-day international conference designed to learn from international speakers and to engage local stakeholders, in order to formulate the correct approaches and broaden the movement to revitalize the George Town World Heritage Site. The conference was organised by Invest Penang, the Penang Development Corporation and the State government’s World Heritage Office, and was supported by PHT among other organisations. The venue was sponsored by the G Hotel.

Panels were organised according to the following themes:

- Optimising returns from cultural tourism
- Value adding to property & business in the World Heritage Site and its surroundings
- Developing a win-win-win relationship with community organisations
- Effective enabling and enforcement: The role of government

Why Sustainable Cultural Development?

Penang’s progress - as a multicultural society, seaport, tourist destination and manufacturing base - has always been predicated upon its position as a sub-regional trading hub with a robust local economy that is open to international interest. Penang’s future hinges on how it can increase its attractiveness as a place to live, a city to invest in and a cultural tourism destination. At the same time, improvements in quality of life, a revitalized economy and a flourishing creative sector will help to retain and nurture its young people. Recognizing that - more than anything else - it is the World Heritage listing and Outstanding Universal Values that set George Town apart from other cities. The World Heritage listing is a great boon for George Town. It also entails the following challenges:

- How do we capitalize on the World Heritage listing to ensure socio-economic benefits for its stakeholders?
- How do we safeguard the Outstanding Universal Values amidst current pressures of unsympathetic property development, neglect of heritage assets, declining inner city population and loss of traditional trades?
- How do we build upon our cultural resources to create a rich cultural life for both locals and visitors?
- How do we upgrade the urban environment, thereby improving the city’s environmental sustainability and ‘livable’ index, yet ensure a place for people of different backgrounds and socio-economic levels?
- How do we broaden our awareness, skills and knowledge base in order to facilitate the city’s cultural development?
- Exploring New Approaches for George Town
- The George Town WHS has the potential to be a regional centre for cultural tourism, creative industries, education, environmental initiatives, events, food, leisure, retail and services. George Town needs to explore strategies to stimulate public and private sector investments in conservation

and infrastructure improvements. The conference was expected to introduce new ideas about the role of heritage, eco-sustainability and design in value creation.

Conference Objectives

- *To engage stakeholders in the conservation and revitalization of the George Town Heritage Site and to create a networking platform for stimulating the heritage industry.*
- *To address some of the World Heritage Committee's recommendations for establishing a comprehensive conservation plan.*
- *To showcase George Town's conservation and cultural development efforts, in celebration of the anniversary of its WH listing*

Among the anticipated results were:

- *To build understanding and capacity towards creating cultural infrastructure, platforms and partnerships in order to use tourism and economic development as a positive force for retaining George Town's Outstanding Universal Values*
- *To explore ideas and strategies of creating alternative livelihoods, as well as to identify areas of refocusing and retraining during the economic downturn*
- *To create partnerships that tie up culture and heritage with business development in the food & beverage, tourism and property sectors (for example, beach hotels and city attractions)*

Speakers included Mr. Tim Curtis of UNESCO Bangkok; Mr. Tran Van An, Deputy Director, Centre for Monuments & Preservation (Hoi An World Heritage Site in Vietnam); Prof. Walter Jamieson, Thammasat University, Bangkok; Mr. Karl Stein, Galle Fort Hotel, Sri Lanka; Prof. Yoshifumi Muneta from Kyoto Prefecture University in Kyoto (World Heritage Site); Mr. Hu Weidong, Chinese Academy of Cultural Heritage, Beijing; Ms. Gurmeet Rai, CRCI India; Ms. Eva Marie S. Median, Mayor of Vigan City (World Heritage Site in the Philippines); and Ms. Verena Ong, heritage specialist from Sydney.

Above report adapted from PHT report to Japan Foundation.



HISTORIC CEMETERIES

On Sunday, 4th October the Penang Veterans' Association in cooperation with friends of the Old Protestant and Roman Catholic Cemeteries organised a *gotong royong* to clean up the two cemeteries. The PHT applauds this initiative.

Sadly, the two cemeteries continue to suffer from the lack of regular maintenance and routine repairs. For example, the main gate has been damaged and is in danger of collapse. (see photograph).



Swift Action Needed!

There is an activity in George Town that threatens the basic fabric that this historical city is based on. It threatens to ruin not only its buildings and historical architecture, but truly threatens its communities and its cultures. It is detrimental to the health of the residents of George Town. It is detrimental to the value of real estate in George Town, to sustainable tourism, to the basic quality of life in George Town. It totally threatens the very valuable UNESCO World Heritage listing of George Town and in turn threatens the joint listing given to



Malacca. And yet it remains an activity to which the council, the local government, the health department and the local people themselves turn a blind eye and, in effect, allow the complete deterioration of a vibrant, exciting city that can offer long term sustainable prosperity to all.

This is fact. Bird faeces ages and becomes airborne. These particles contain dormant fungi that once inhaled into the warm, moist environment of the lungs, breed infectious disease. These airborne spores can also settle on food and water, be taken into air ducts. Birds are a perfect vector for spreading disease. They travel over great distances, can harbour over 40 types of parasites and are able to internally host 60 types of infectious disease. People do not tolerate rats, yet in terms of disease and damage the two pests are very similar.

The practice of swiftlet (*aerodramus fuciphagus*) breeding in heritage buildings amongst residents must end. It is unfortunate that the local authorities misled not only the people of George Town but the people who are investing in George Town and Penang. On the one hand the authorities are encouraging investors and developers to revitalise the historical core zone of George Town, hoteliers to open boutique hotels, and Malaysia My Second Home applicants to buy and restore in George Town; on the other hand they allow the very activity that will drain all value out of these investments. Who will want the developments, the restored houses, the boutique hotels, when they are surrounded by illegal swift breeding houses? What will happen to the value of these properties? Who will want to live next to a health hazard? Who wants to live with the noise pollution offered by these thousands of birds and the artificial taped sounds that accompany them? Why invest in a home next to a building being destroyed by the sprinkler systems and the piles of bird droppings that keep these swift houses damp and dank? In effect, by allowing this activity to expand rapidly, the authorities are conning all stakeholders in George Town.

Am I talking nonsense? I am talking from experience. We as a family have always wanted to live in George Town, from the moment we moved here from Pangkor in 1999. It reminded me of all the towns I grew up around on the various plantations we lived on as kids. It was a question of what property would come up that we felt could become our permanent home. This property came up in 2006

on China Street. We decided to buy and restore and although we knew that there were several swift houses on Beach Street and on China Street itself, we were lulled into a false security by trusting in our authorities. They promised that at the end of December 2008, swift houses would be moved out of George Town. I pay my taxes, I am a good law abiding citizen and I trusted the Penang authorities. I felt confident that they would follow through and were doing something for the good of all residents in George Town; they were thinking of everyone's long term health and prosperity; of the long term development of a unique historical city of which there really is no equal anywhere else in the world. The authorities then deferred this ruling and gave the swiftlet breeders another year until the end of 2009. I have been deeply disappointed by this lack of political will, by the total inability of the authorities to enforce law, to protect their people. It seems to have been a total academic exercise -- sort of like all those people that get 8 A+'s and then don't go on to do anything with their lives. What is the point of important looking bits of paper and all that pompousness if there is no will to make a difference?

It is very easy for council and the government to say that they cannot act. At the end of 2008, however, it was made public that no more licenses would be issued for swift breeding. In effect, all new breeders who are now ripping apart historically valuable buildings in the core zone of George Town are illegal and have no licenses. Why have they been allowed to continue, even to start and now to expand all over the core zone of George Town?



The local government and council have a duty to uphold the law, to enforce it and to protect the basic health of the people. There are absolutely no guidelines to ensure swift farming does not become a nuisance. What measures are in place to deal with an outbreak of bird flu, an outbreak of lung disease that can occur from infection by the airborne fungus and spores that breed on bird droppings? It goes without saying that by creating an artificial overpopulation of these birds in an area heavily populated by both a permanent and a transient working population, the stage is being set for a nasty outbreak of some kind. What will the government do then,

what will council do, how will the health department take action? Who can we turn to? One house emptying its sewage in a lake may not cause a problem but a thousand houses doing this will make people very, very sick. It is just a matter of time.

My big question is: "If it is illegal to breed chickens and ducks, pigs and goats in a crowded, historical area full of people, restaurants and offices, how can it be morally right to breed swifts?" Swiftlets are birds that produce lots of droppings, that are allowed to breed in unhealthy artificial conditions, that produce spores, fungus and mites detrimental to the health of people living in the area.

It seems true that the breeders themselves feel no moral obligation to their fellow Penangites. They live away from the centre of George Town, they rent the buildings they use, they do not feel they need to maintain these buildings for the landlord. They believe it is fine to allow the deterioration of the homes connected to their rented swift houses, they feel that they can damage the health of the people living in the area of their swift houses and yet, keep themselves and their own families safe. They are motivated purely by money. It is cheaper to rent an old building in George Town than to build a custom swift house in an agricultural area. All that needs to be done is put in the pools for water, the sprinkler system and a CD system which blasts the swiftlet distress calls to attract the birds. The breeders who buy up these old building often piously claim that they restore the buildings, often renovating the frontage of the building whilst ripping up the rest of the building, claiming they are an asset to George Town.

Developers who offer and start worthwhile projects are often hammered with stop work orders when they do not comply, and even before they start they are made to wait months on end for approvals. In addition they must make concessions and space for substations and get permission for all changes and additions. Yet swift breeders who move into buildings seem to be able to rip out all architectural details, knock out structural walls, block up five-foot ways, and change the total landscape of a street without any interference from council and authority. It begs the questions: Are the authorities scared of the swift breeders? Are they paid off by the swift breeders? Why do the authorities practice these double standards? I would certainly like to know the answers.

(Please go and see Lorong Chee Em between China Street and Market Street, leading off Beach Street. Please note the newly bricked up buildings, windows, doors right along from the back entrance to Karikudi Restaurant. Also note the green slime oozing from under the roller shutter of 23 China Street -- also a swift house with a false frontage on China Street.)



I have complained to council about the bird droppings all over my house, in my house, the dead birds that we find in our house, the mites that crawl off the bodies of these birds when we find them, the noise pollution from the tapes that run 24 hours, the sprinkler system that keeps my party wall wet all the time and constantly in the state of damage. I have complained for nine months now. Council has visited and 'inspected' for nine months now. Council all tell me, 'That's not allowed'. Council tells me bluntly that by December 2009 the swift houses have to move out and that notices have been given, yet they have done nothing about trying to put stop work orders on the swift breeders currently building their caves out of heritage houses. Surely the blow would be much less painful if a swift breeder was stopped six months ago when reported, not left to completely build a cave, spend the money, destroy the building and work until midnight disturbing the neighbours to find that in December 2009, council is apparently going to zoom in and bash the

cave down. If the breeder received a notice on paper after spending his money, he would be unlikely to act on it unless forced and if forced he would certainly react much more strongly than if stopped six months ago before he had invested his money in an apparently lost cause. Council has dug itself into a great big hole. By not enforcing the basic laws on a certain group of people they have a much more difficult job ahead, while at the same time have lost the respect of the people they are supposed to serve.

It is absolutely true that swiftlet breeding for saliva nests is lucrative. It is a brilliant compliment industry to agriculture, as the swifts feed on insects over agriculture, jungle and vegetation. These particular swiftlets that produce the saliva nests for consumption are found only in a very small area within this region of Malaysia, Indonesia, Vietnam and Thailand. They are a protected species but no longer endangered and it is no longer justifiable to claim that breeding them prevents their extinction. Technically their nests cannot be sold and exported without a license. Even tourists are breaking the law by taking them out of the country. Permits should be obtained from Perhilitan.

In Sumatra the swift breeders are responsible for the creation of abandoned towns. In Batam they are being forcibly evicted to reduce noise pollution in the city and to prevent the city from becoming so unsightly. In Vietnam authorities have realised that swift breeding "will not be implemented in crowded areas to prevent problems in case there is a bird flu outbreak." Dr. Christopher Lim, a noted



swiftlet authority, (The Star, 23 August 2009) says that permits must be obtained from local councils and breeders must attend a Veterinary Services Department course. He also says, "Farmers must also adhere to the department's Good Animal Husbandry Practices Guide. Other rules apply, like using only non-residential areas and not using heritage buildings." George Town is a residential area full of heritage buildings. Why is Malacca not putting pressure on George Town? The benefits to the residents of Malacca since the UNESCO listing have been many. There has been a huge clean up, the river has been cleared, and the general upgrading of amenities, the increase in tourism numbers, has benefited everyone. Whether you agree with the way in which Malacca has made its improvements is beside the point. The authorities there have acted. George Town's lack of compliance regarding the danger of swift breeding and the lack of respect given

to residents and heritage structures alike directly endanger Malacca's listing. This should be a matter of concern not only to Malacca but the Federal Government as the authority ultimately responsible for safeguarding the joint World Heritage listing of George Town and Melaka.

It is time to have a say in this issue and it is time to protect not only your own future but that of your children and beyond. It is also crunch time on how you, the people of George Town, want this wonderful city, full of your own memories and family history, to be remembered in time. It really is time to say that the historical value, the intrinsic cultural make up of George Town, its wonderful mix of residents, are far more valuable to all residents and stakeholders than to just a few swift breeders that want to make their money at the expense of others.

Show your disagreement to swift breeding in residential areas and historical buildings by emailing the message "Swift breeding in residential areas and historical buildings of George Town is hazardous to your health" to YB Chow at chowkonyeow@penang.gov.my

Rebecca Duckett-Wilkinson
Photographs by Tan Yeow Wooi

3 September The Sun

No short-term gains from swiftlet farming

REFER to the various articles on swiftlet farming as well as letters from the CAP and Dennis Gong "Swiftlets are real hygienic lot" (The Star, Sept 2).

Being an expert in swiftlet farming, I would like to give a few pointers.

The species *Aerodramus fuciphagus* do not litter their droppings. Their droppings are only within the birdhouse. Extensive droppings in many towns are not from these swiftlets but from mud swallows that make their nest underneath shophouses.

Indeed, swiftlets are hygienic and do not mix with other birds. The moment they fly out of the bird-house, they will not touch the ground until they return to the bird-house. Swiftlets also prey on harmful insects, like fruit flies etc, and can increase the yield of farmers and reduce the use of pesticides. They are natural pest control agents.

However, in the long term, it is important that swiftlet houses are not located in shophouses in town centres due to aesthetics and noise pollution. They should be stand-alone units within agricultural areas.

They should also be located about 40km away from airports as they could pose a danger to planes.

Apart from that, swiftlet houses should conform to good farming practices as outlined by the Ministry of Agriculture.

As swiftlet farming is now increasingly seen as a financial gold mine, there are a few pointers potential investors must understand.

One disturbing trend is the development of huge bird-house complexes in one location. These are sold as units to potential buyers on the claim that these bird-houses will be filled with birds within a short time.

It is very unlikely that such huge bird-houses of hundreds of units can be filled within a short time. It will take 10 to 20 years or more for these massive bird-houses to be filled due to the slow natural population growth of the swiftlets in that particular locality.

As such, potential investors should make in-depth studies and consult experts in swiftlet farming before investing as the failure rate is more than 70%. The million ringgit investment may yield zero returns.

Apart from that, there are other quick-get-rich schemes using swiftlet farming as a front for their scam. Swiftlet farming entails a low initial return of one to five years, peaking only in the seventh to 10th year.

As such, it is impossible for the operators to give immediate 3% to 5% returns per month.

NATURE LOVER,
Kuala Lumpur.

UNVEILING OF COMMEMORATIVE PLAQUE AT LOGAN MEMORIAL

In a moving ceremony on Tuesday afternoon 20th October 2009, Justice John Louis O'Hara of the Penang High Court unveiled a commemorative plaque at the base of the Logan Memorial at the corner of Light Street and Jalan Tun Syed Sheh Barakbah, opposite the Penang High Court. The devising of the commemorative inscription and the installation of the plaque was the result of cooperation between the Penang Bar Council and the Penang Heritage Trust. In addition to Justice O'Hara other speakers at the ceremony included Irene Morgan representing the Logan family, several members of which had travelled from Australia and Singapore for the ceremony, doyen of the Penang Bar Lim Kean Chye, lawyer Cecil Rajendra and PHT president Salma Khoo Nasution.

Commenting that young Penangites and young Malaysians needed role models, PHT president Salma Khoo Nasution described lawyer and newspaper proprietor James Richardson Logan (1819 – 1869) as one of Penang's local heroes. In reviewing Logan's life Salma drew on his entry in the Oxford Dictionary of National Biography which she noted had been contributed by Professor Constance Mary Turnbull, who sadly had passed away just last year.

Born and educated in Scotland where he trained as a barrister, Logan moved to Penang in 1839 and was admitted as an advocate in 1841. After a period in Singapore, he returned to Penang in 1853 to practice law. Following are extracts from Turnbull's entry for Logan, outlining his contribution to Penang and its people:

"[He] was made a justice of the peace and was much in demand as a lucid petition writer, an effective leader of deputations, and as a legal spokesman for the European and Chinese communities in opposing irksome official restrictions.....In 1855 [James and his brother Abraham] bought the Pinang Gazette, with James as editor, and their newspapers became particularly influential in the absence of representative institutions. In powerful editorials James argued Penang's case, criticizing dictatorial East India Company and government of India officials, championing free trade, and urging strong policies to protect commerce in the Malay states and Sumatra..... But Logan's most lasting memorial was his Journal of the Indian Archipelago and Eastern Asia, always known popularly as Logan's journal. A fellow of the Geological Society of London, a member of the Asiatic Society of Bengal, and corresponding member of the Ethnological Society (of London) and the Batavian Society of Arts and Sciences, Logan contributed articles to prestigious journals of learned societies in London, Edinburgh, Calcutta, and Batavia. His own journal, the first attempt to promote a scientific periodical in the Straits Settlements at a time when most of the Malay Peninsula was unexplored by Europeans, was unique in being conceived, edited, and financed single-handedly. Logan drew on the considerable expertise of officials, clergy, naval and military officers, lawyers, doctors, surveyors, businessmen, and planters of diverse nationalities, including one prominent Chinese merchant, while he himself contributed articles on a wealth of subjects: geology, exploration, piracy, Malay customs, aboriginal peoples, ethnology, and comparative philology. An indefatigable, ever inquisitive traveller, Logan braved hardship and often danger, which undermined his health. Sometimes he returned a living skeleton, fever-racked with malaria, which eventually killed him. Twelve volumes of Logan's journal were

N18 NATION THE STAR, WEDNESDAY 21 OCTOBER 2009

Logan's kin descend on memorial

By K. KASTURI DEWI
kasturidewi@the-star.com.my

GEORGE TOWN: It was a significant moment as eleven descendants of 19th century lawyer and ethnologist James Richardson Logan came together for the unveiling of a marble plaque at his memorial here.

The plaque commemorating the life and contributions of Logan is located at the foot of the memorial in front of the seven-storey lower courts and car park building next to Dewan Sri Pinang.

The memorial was previously situated in the grounds of the Penang High Court before it was moved to the present location in 2007.

The plaque donated by the Penang Heritage Trust (PHT) and Penang Bar Committee was unveiled by High Court judge Justice David John Louis O'Hara yesterday.

Logan's great-great-grandniece

Irene Morgan, 69, the spokesperson for the descendants, said the most senior at the function was her uncle George Logan, 75, while the youngest was Cassira Langham, five, who is her twin sister's daughter.

Morgan said she and the other family members present at the unveiling were the direct descendants of James' brother Abraham.

She said the descendants who flew in from Australia, Japan and Singapore were honoured by the efforts taken by the PHT and the Bar Committee to commemorate the life and contributions of her great-great-granduncle who passed away exactly 140 years ago yesterday.

"Being a lawyer myself, I vow to continue to uphold the principles of justice, fortitude, temperance, wisdom and to uphold the good work James and Abraham had done in Asia Pacific," said Morgan who lives in Perth with her husband Prof Neil Morgan and daughters Isabelle, 23,

and Liara, 21.

Logan died of malaria in Oct 20, 1869, and is buried at the old Protestant cemetery in George Town.

Bar Committee chairman N. Murali said in his speech that the memorial was the only one in the country dedicated to a lawyer.

He said the committee wanted Oct 20 to be declared James Richardson Logan Day as many young lawyers today didn't know about Logan who devoted his life to justice and pursuit of knowledge.

Logan, born in Scotland in 1819, arrived in the Straits Settlements at the age of 20. He devoted his life to serving the public and was a strong advocate of freedom of speech, and law and order until his death.

Also present were National Legal Aid Committee chairman Cecil Rajendra and Justice Mohd Amin Farouk Abdullah.



Meaningful reunion: Some of the 11 descendants posing for the camera after the unveiling of a marble plaque at Logan's Memorial.

published between 1847 and 1859, until waning public enthusiasm and financial strain impelled Logan to abandon the journal and concentrate on public causes and the Pinang Gazette. But Logan's enterprise inspired the formation in 1878 of the Straits (later Malaysian) branch of the Royal Asiatic Society, with [his son] Daniel Logan as first vice-president, and the new society obtained a government grant to buy Logan's library."

Note by Salma Khoo Nasution

A passage from Logan's own writing shows his love of Penang and his familiarity with its every contour. After two years of unremitted labour in Singapore, Logan sailed back to Penang for a short visit. As he crossed the Channel from Prai, he was moved by the vision of the Penang Hills, as though, "all my old acquaintances looked down upon me with an air of friendly welcome. The feelings with which I gazed on the shifting scene as we proceeded up the channel were many and strong, and I thought this hour had been almost cheaply purchased by two years' absence. I was most forcibly impressed, on reaching the centre of the channel, with the contrast between the low and unattractive aspect of Singapur and the grand massive character of the island itself, stretching along the channel as a bold dark irregular mount-wall."

"When at last the town and harbour, with its shipping, came distinctly into view, the scene became indescribably varied, from its union of so much that is grand with so much that is soft. The channel, landlocked on all sides, shone like a broad glittering lake, or inland sea. Nearest to us on the left, lay the Batu Lanchong range of hills, with the quadrangular mount Restalrig and pyramidal Batu Bayas Over this range were seen the Pentland hills, with the peaked summit of Bellmont, surmounted by its bungalow, forming the background of the pass between Mount Restalrig and Batu Bertam."

Logan mentioned waking up at half past three in the morning, descending Restalrig, and reaching the valley of "Pyah Trubong" by daybreak. I have reason to suspect that Restalrig may have been James Logan's own hill residence, for Restalrig, near Edinburgh, is a principal seat of the Logan clan in Scotland.

Recently SERI organised a roundtable on "The City as a Knowledge Hub". The Penang Free School, founded in 1816, the Penang Library, founded in 1817, Logan's Journals, all these laid the foundation for Penang to be a knowledge hub. Dare we dream of a world-class library and research centre in the George Town World Heritage Site – with the Logan Library, or at least the Logan Room, named after him? This would allow the "Penang Collection", a collection of rare books largely donated by the Logans, now kept at the main library at Seberang Prai, to return to George Town.

PHT STAFF CHANGES

We announce with regret the resignation of Magdeline Ng as Office Manager with effect from 31st December 2009. Mag joined the PHT office in February 2002. We wish her every success in her new endeavours.

We are pleased to announce the appointment of Janet Saw as Office Administrator effective 1st December 2009. Janet formerly worked as Executive Secretary to the General Manager of the Datai Resort on Langkawi.

NOTICE

MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL 2010

Reminder for membership renewal with increase in subscription since 2009:

Admission: RM50 | Annual subscription: RM60

Overseas postal surcharge:

RM14 annually for Asia, Australia, New Zealand

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Penang Heritage Trust

26 Church Street

City of George Town

10200 Penang

Remembrance Day 2009 at the Cenotaph

At about 9.00 a.m. on Wednesday, 11th November, buglers from the 2nd Battalion, Royal Malay Regiment sounded the Last Post. As the Malaysian and Penang State flags were lowered to half mast by a naval colour party provided by the Resident Naval Officer Penang, a hush fell over the small crowd assembled at the restored Cenotaph on George Town's Esplanade. Thus, Penang once again marked Remembrance Day along with people throughout the Commonwealth, remembering those who gave their lives for peace and freedom in the First and Second World Wars and other conflicts, including the 1948-60 Malayan Emergency and Confrontation. The traditional two minutes silence was ended by the playing of Reveille by the buglers and followed by the laying of wreaths by various civilian and military officials. The ceremonies had begun earlier with speeches by YB Chow Kon Yeow, representing Penang's Chief Minister, by His Excellency David B. Collins, High Commissioner for Canada, the senior diplomatic representative present, and by Lt.Cdr. (Rtd) G. Thyagarajah, President of the Penang Veterans Association. A doa selamat was offered by Tuan Haji Ramli bin Jaffar

Mystery Resolved

As in previous years, the wreathlaying ceremony was organized by the Penang Veterans Association which was responsible for the restoration of the Cenotaph in 2008. At that time researchers and local historians were unable to determine when the Cenotaph was built and unveiled. Recent research, however, has finally resolved the mystery thanks to the online resources of the National Library of Singapore which has digitalized **The Straits Times** (1845-1982), making it available for online searches. An online search revealed several relevant articles published during 1928 and a follow-up visit to the National Library of Singapore produced the full details, including two articles in **The Straits Times** of 23 August and 3 September 1928 as well as an editorial in **The Straits Echo** of Penang of 13 November 1928 headlined "The Hush in Penang." (Although not yet digitalized, **The Straits Echo** can be searched on microfilm at the National Library of Singapore.)

At the annual Remembrance Day ceremony on Sunday, 11th November 1928 – the tenth anniversary of the Armistice ending the First World War – the two minutes silence was accompanied by the laying of the foundation stone for the Penang War Memorial. After short formal speeches the architect Mr. D. McLeod Craik handed a ceremonial trowel to the Resident Councillor Capt. Meadows Frost. The foundation stone was then lowered into position. Units on parade for the ceremony were two companies of the Penang & Province Wellesley Volunteers, the European and Eurasian Volunteer Corps forming one company and contingents from the Malay and Chinese Volunteers forming the other company. The Sikh Police and the Free School Cadets were also on parade.



Designed by McLeod Craik, the Penang War Memorial was described as "an oblong Cenotaph 7 feet by 9 feet by 20 feet high of fine dressed square granite blocks with stepped top and flanked by projecting plain slabs with wreaths at the side and four corner stones carved with the badges of the Navy, Army, Air Force and Mercantile Marine and suitable emblems." Rising "from a peristyle 20 feet by 16 feet approached by five granite steps 3 feet high flanked at the corners by four plain pedestals", the total height of the monument was 24 feet. The estimated cost of the memorial was reported as Straits \$7,000 and was raised through public subscription by the local branch of the Ex-Service Association of Malaya.

Researched and written by Leslie A.K. James

Photo: Laying of foundation stone 11 November 1928

WORLD HERITAGE SITE MELAKA



On Friday 1st May, 39 members and friends joined PHT for a hectic three-day trip to Malacca (or Melaka). The bus ride from Penang was smooth but with heavy traffic from the exit toll plaza to Malacca city centre it took more than an hour and a half to reach our hotel, the Baba House. The Malacca historical centre was crowded as the Friday was Labour Day, making it a long week-end. On arrival at the Baba House we were given a short briefing by PHT Council Member Timothy Tye on the history of Malacca first as an important entrepot under the Malay Sultanates from 1400 until 1511 when its “glory days” ended and then as a colonial possession of the Portuguese (1511-1641), the Dutch (1641-1795) and finally the British (1795-1957), not forgetting the Japanese Occupation (1942-45).

We started our programme with a walking tour along the Malacca River to the ‘Red Square’ in front of the Stadthuys. Built in 1650, the Stadthuys housed the government and the governor’s residence. Today it houses museums. With more than 30 types, it is the largest collection of museums in Malaysia. In the centre of the square is the Victoria Fountain, a reminder of British rule. We then hiked up and down St Paul’s Hill, ending at Malacca’s iconic landmark, A’Famosa, the gate of what was a fort overlooking the river. The entire fortress was dismantled by the British leaving only the entrance façade and the ruins of St Paul’s at the top of the hill. In front of St Paul’s stands the statue of St Francis Xavier. Of course, one cannot miss the new Malacca Revolving Tower not far away. The hill is also peppered with Dutch graves and other historical remains, reminders of an era long gone.

Walking back into the bustling crowds, we had to manoeuvre carefully to avoid cars, motorbikes and trishaws, all weaving through the heavy traffic typical of inner city Malacca on weekends. But worse was yet to come. At the Jonker Street night market (promoted to tourists as ‘Jonker Walk’), we were sandwiched by thousands of tourists, all having the same idea on how to spend a long weekend! It is a pity that the festive period is turning Malacca into a theme park; a classic example of how mass tourism without proper management plan can ruin precious heritage sites.

Day Two. The day started at 8 am with Josephine Chua (Jo), our enthusiastic and charming ‘heritage’ friend from Malacca meeting us in the hotel lobby. In addition to our own handout kits, she prepared her own handouts -- a walking map and a full programme ensuring we covered all the interesting sites in Malacca.

The bus took us to Kampung Java where we started our walk. Java Lane (or Jalan Jawa) is a narrow lane on the northern bank of the Malacca River. It was a Javanese-Malay settlement which has existed since the Dutch period. In former times, village men used to work as stevedores loading and unloading goods carried on the Malacca River. Due to the development around it, the river no longer serves that purpose and Kampung Java evolved into a bazaar for petty traders and craftsmen. A bit of trivia shared by Jo concerned the pedestrian bridge linking Kampung Jawa and Kampung Pantai -- known played host to three vices -- opium, gambling and brothels -- but you would be saved from going to hell if you were able to cross over from this end. Across the Malacca River in Kampung Jawa, Jo also pointed out a wooden Malay house owned by a Chinese who sells clogs. She expressed disappointment that the Malacca River, banked up at both ends, is today only a long and narrow ‘pond’, its main function being to cash in on tourism the ‘river’ cruise tours.

We walked through Kampung Kuli, Tofu Street, Goldsmith Street, Hai Xian Street and Kampong Hulu where Jo shed light on the few surviving traditional traders in the area. The Hang Jebat Mausoleum along Lorong Tukang Kuli, supposedly the grave of Hang Jebat (but no factual evidence has been put forth to verify this), is Indian in style.

Next we went by bus to Chitty Village in Gajah Berang. The Chitty community is a village of Malacca-Indian Peranakans. Although Indians, some of them have adopted Malay customs, with the exception of their language and that the men wear Javanese style skull caps. Their food is very Indian and the ladies wear kebayas. With three Hindu temples in the village, the main one is Sri Maha Mariamman Temple built in 1822. Some Chinese live alongside the Chitty families, the latter distinguished by the pictures of deities displayed at their house doors. At the entrance of the Seri Maha Mariamman Temple there were three huge Chinese joss sticks (normally reserved for ceremonial prayers). Several Chinese worshippers were seen praying to the Indian deities using joss sticks, an amazing sight reflecting Malaysia’s multi-religious diversity.

The bus then took us to Bukit China, the oldest ancestral graveyard in Malaysia. At the foot of Bukit China is the Poh San Teng Temple built in 1795 by the Kapitan China, Tsai Shih-Chang. The main deity worshipped is Fu-te Cheng-shern (or in Hokkien Hock Teik Cheng Sin or Tua Pek Kong). The temple is commonly mistaken for the Cheng Ho Temple. Within the premises is the famous well, San Pao Ching or Perigi Raja, about which many legends and stories abound. The Cheng Ho statue, replica of a smaller statue on St Paul's Hill, stands at the far end of the courtyard. As many Chinese are considered superstitious, a guide was overheard telling his Hong Kong tour group, "If you caress the head and belly of Cheng Ho's statue, you will have luck in your business." We were also shown the ancestral tablet of Kapitan China Chua Su Cheong (Tsai Shih-Chang), Jo's ancestor. Jo is a Project Co-ordinator of the Cheng Hoon Teng Temple as well as the Poh San Teng Temple. Bukit China with two adjoining hills, Bukit Tempuring and Bukit Geduing, forms a Chinese graveyard of over 250,000 square metres. With the graves of five Kapitan China and over 12,000 other graves, some dating back to the Ming Dynasty, the cemetery is said to be the largest Chinese graveyard outside China.

Making our way to Praya Lane, one of the last Portuguese Eurasian settlements in Malacca, we were met by Martin Theseira in front of the Assumption Chapel built in 1888. Martin explained that many Portuguese soldiers who invaded Malacca married local women and settled in Malacca, living along the coast and fishing for a living. Although land reclamation has resulted in their homes losing the sea front, the Lady of Assumption statue in the Chapel miraculously still has a glimpse of the sea. Martin, who used to be a fisherman, is now known for his Eurasian pickles instead. He found a ready market among our lady members!

Lunch was at Papa Joe's Restaurant, with authentic Portuguese cuisine including signature dishes like devil curry, grilled spiced fish and more, all served with copious amounts of herbs and spices, making every dish rich, aromatic and full of flavours, some enough to blow your eyebrows off! The mood was boisterous after lunch as Papa Joe serenaded us with his guitar, singing traditional and modern Portuguese songs – all very festive as members and friends clapped and sang along. What a way to end a marvelous lunch!

Time constraints and horrendous traffic forced us to pass by Kampung Morten with only a short explanation. Named after a British land commissioner, Fredrick Joseph Morten, who bought land further down river to relocate most of the families near Bunga Raya, it has become a show-case 'model kampung' for the Federal Government's restoration work efforts. Another new landmark in the area is YTL's Majestic Hotel. Unfortunately, all these sites will be affected by the proposed monorail cutting through the area for which piles already dot the river bank.



Returning to Jalan Tun Tan Cheng Lock (Heeren Street) we visited several significant houses. The first was the Baba Nyonya Heritage Museum, the only Straits Chinese mansion open to the public as a museum. The Straits Chinese community were Chinese who married local women, adopting much of the Malay culture into their lifestyle. They became known as the baba nyonya in 'Peranakan' culture. The museum showcases lavish design of an early 20th-century rich Straits Chinese home.

Next stop was No. 8 Heeren Street where the manager, Colin Goh, explained this was a conservation project by Badan Warisan Malaysia undertaken in response to a recommendation in Elizabeth Vines's report for a model project to serve as a contribution to Malacca's bid for World Heritage Listing.

It represents a typical early shophouse of the Dutch period. The front section with a verandah was used for trade while the back portion and floor above were for residential purposes. Simple lime-plastered walls and timber windows were the main finishing. No. 8 Heeren Street serves as a resource and interpretative centre for the local community as well as visitors. The interpretation centre exhibits the building materials used, the restoration process and artisans involved and includes a small gift shop.

Another stop was the restored house of Frenchman Serge Jadin who explained why it was called the 'Snail House'. The name had nothing to do with the French penchant for escargots! He said that the gable ends of the roof over the five foot way of the house were snail-like in design and shape. Beautifully and sympathetically restored with tasteful interiors, the house is a model of ideals and homeliness and, in Jo's words, indeed a slice of paradise in the middle of old Malacca town.

Our last destination this day was the home of Tun Sir Tan Cheng Lock at 111 Heeren Street where our host was his

granddaughter, Tan Siok Choo. Each of us was given a biography 'A son of Malacca – Tun Dato' Sir Cheng Lock Tan'. Tan Cheng Lock (1883 - 1960) was founder and first president of the Malaysian Chinese Association (MCA). He worked closely with Prime Minister Tunku Abdul Rahman, president of UMNO and John A. Thivy, president of the Malaysian Indian Congress (MIC), to achieve independence on 31st August 1957. A Baba whose family had lived in Malacca since 1771, he was remarkably free of racial bias and showed great compassion for the less fortunate. As an unofficial member of the Legislative Council and a community leader, he helped Malay farmers, Chinese businessmen, Indian money changers and the mui tsai (servant) girls who were often mistreated. He devoted his life to fighting for the rights and welfare of the people.



Tan Cheng Lock was grandson of Tan Choon Bock, first owner of the Great House. The entrance of the house is adorned with elaborate Chinese character carvings of proverbs and wise sayings. The house not only possesses splendid Chinese timber carvings but showcases valuable family heirlooms such as photographs, antiques of spectacular craftsmanship, hand-carved wooden and mother-of-pearl furniture, a collection of carvings, wall tapestries and precious dinnerware of silver and ceramics, each with a story to tell of the past inhabitants.

As this grand historical house is not normally open to the public, it was indeed a very rare privilege for PHT members who were given a tour of the house. Members also appreciated the warm hospitality extended by Ms. Tan Siok Choo with a spread of local delights (curry puffs, various nyonya cakes, packet drinks and Malacca's signature dessert, cendol) for afternoon tea, all catered by the famous Nancy's Kitchen in town.

Day Three. The final day's tour after breakfast was a stroll to Cheng Hoon Teng Temple which stands at the end of the streets of harmony -- Blacksmith Street, Goldsmith Street and Temple Street of Malacca. Along Jalan Tukang Emas is the Kampung Kling Mosque and the Sri Poyyatha Vinayagar Moorthi Hindu temple). The Kampung Kling mosque is one of the oldest in the country, blending Sumatran and Western architecture.

The Sri Poyyatha Vinayagar Moorthi temple, built in 1781 and one of the oldest in Malaysia, was celebrating its vegetarian festival that day with a procession similar to Thaipusam. It was worth being there early just to catch the rituals like cleansing showers, skewering and piercing ceremony and prayer offerings by devotees. We squeamishly watched the piercing process (some were pierced through the tongue, some on the back with little milk bottles) with continuous chanting of prayers and hymns. It was an amazing scene, a sea of yellow (from devotees' robes) when they passed by the Cheng Hoon Teng, chariots and kavadi bearers, and devotees dancing to the thunderous drumming. What a way to start the morning in Malacca!

Back at Cheng Hoon Teng Temple, Jo gave us a very interesting briefing. Being on the restoration committee and a descendent of the Kapitan China Chua Su Cheong who rebuilt Cheng Hoon Teng in 1801, Jo's passion and dedication illuminated the information and facts she provided, always peppered with anecdotes and humorous tales.

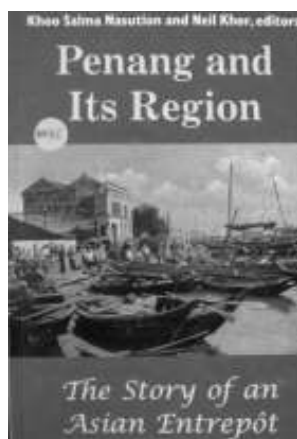
Cheng Hoon Teng, the oldest Chinese temple in Malaysia was founded in the 1600s by Kapitan China Tay Hong Yong. Constructed by master craftsmen from China, its wooden beams are covered by delicate paintings, its roof ridges and edges with intricate design of chienien (cutting and pasting of porcelain shards) and decorative ornaments, its granite pillars hung with hand-carved panels while its doors are adorned with real gold-leaf 'pressed' onto it. Across the road is a traditional Chinese opera theatre, which forms part of the temple complex. The restoration was completed in three phases, first the main building, second the auxiliary buildings and finally the opera theatre. In 2003, the meticulous restoration and conservation works were recognized with the UNESCO award for outstanding architectural restoration. In 1949 the Federation of Malaya enacted the Cheng Hoon Teng Temple Incorporation Ordinance and the prime mover of the Ordinance, Tan Cheng Lock, became one of the first trustees under the Ordinance. The temple is a traditional Chinese temple consisting of several prayer halls, with the large prayer hall dedicated to the Goddess of Mercy, Kuan Yin, serving as the main place of worship for the Hokkien community. The temple serves the propagation of three doctrinal systems of Taoism, Confucianism and Buddhism.

With gratitude to our guide Josephine Chua and others who hosted our visits to Malacca's rich heritage sites we began the long bus ride back to Penang.

By Magdeline Ng and Eric Yeoh



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The PHT Council 2009- 2011

The PHT Annual General Meeting was held at the PHT office on Sunday morning, 4th October 2009 attended by 41 members. The election of new Council members was held during the AGM. At the first meeting of the new Council on 15 October 2009 Council members agreed on the appointment of the President, Vice President, Honorary Secretary and Honorary Treasurer. Below is the complete list of Council Members and Office Bearers.

President: Khoo Salma Nasution
Vice-President: Dato' Sharom Ahmat
Secretary: Clement Liang
Treasurer: Lim Gaik Siang
Immediate Past President: Dr. Choong Sim Poey

Council members:

Ahmad Chik Jack Ong Joe Sidek Loh-Lim Lin Lee Rebecca Wilkinson Timothy Tye

Newsletter Guest Editor~Leslie A.K. James
Production~ Sheau Fung

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