



PHT Newsletter

Issue 98 /October 2010



**PENANG
HERITAGE
TRUST**
*Persatuan
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Pinang*
PHT

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Editorial

Plus ça change...

Returning to Penang after an absence of even a few months reveals how much things have changed but also how much they remain the same. The completed restoration of the imposing Whiteaways Arcade and Logan Heritage Building on Beach Street not only re-opens an historic and elegant streetscape but promises to reinvigorate the city's old banking and commercial district. A short distance away, however, the slowly disintegrating structure of the formerly grand "Chinese Residency" (and sometime Shih Chung Branch School) on Northam Road greets visitors as a conspicuous and embarrassing reminder that heritage conservation cannot be taken for granted despite the UNESCO listing. Similar sorry reminders are the two dilapidated villas opposite the E&O Hotel on Farquhar Street, one formerly the pre-war Mission House and Chapel, and next door to the E&O another crumbling mansion once home to St. George's Girls' School, this year celebrating its 125th anniversary. Elsewhere, sad to say, wrecking crews continue to demolish irreplaceable heritage houses – as on Pykett Avenue (illegally), Brook Road (with MPPP approval) and Argus Lane..

In July Penang marked the second anniversary of George Town's inscription as a World Heritage Site with the month-long GEORGE TOWN FESTIVAL 2010, a celebration through art, music, opera, theatre, dance, film, food, photography, sport and much more. We congratulate the organisers and sponsors of the Festival. With the success of this year's event it is planned that the George Town Festival will be held annually.

Following the second anniversary of George Town's World Heritage listing it is timely to recall that concern for Penang's heritage does not end at the boundary of the core and buffer zones of the World Heritage Site. The remit of the Penang Heritage Trust extends to the whole of Penang, encompassing the historic, social and geographic fabric of the former port settlement that is the present State of Penang. This includes Penang Hill,

the Botanic Gardens, Balik Pulau, Ayer Itam, the historic cemeteries (Muslim, Christian, Chinese and Jewish), the shoreline and the harbour as well as Sebarang Prai. All are integral to Penang's unique heritage and an inventory is needed for the documentation and protection of heritage assets beyond the George Town World Heritage Site. Moreover, in support of increased heritage awareness, advocacy and conservation there is a requirement for improved access to relevant museum and library resources by researchers as well as members of the public.

Talks organized by PHT this year – on the 1914 Emden raid and on the 19th century defence of Penang – have reminded us that Penang's strategic location was a significant aspect of its history. Thus, there are stories to be told not only by Fort Cornwallis but also by Fort Auchry, Batu Maung, Pulau Aman, the Cenotaph and other war memorials, as well as the numerous Second World War pill-boxes dotted about the landscape.

Determined public campaigns have registered welcome successes on two important fronts in recent months. The first was the reversal by the authorities of the ill-conceived and inappropriate building project at the Botanic Gardens. The second was the announcement at last of Federal Government guidelines requiring the removal of swiftlet breeding from the World Heritage Site within three years. Vested interests continue to balk at this sensible decision and George Town residents will have to remain vigilant and insistent that the guidelines be rigorously implemented. (Full details of the swiftlet issue are contained in this year's PHT Annual Report.)

Guest Editor

NOTE: We apologise for the late publication of this issue of the Newsletter which was caused by the pressure of so many events on the workload of the PHT office staff.

A Landmark Judgement for All

After fourteen years and much angst and grief for the conservators and owners, the courts have finally made Hotel Continental liable for the damages caused at the Cheong Fatt Tze Mansion in 1996.

It is a landmark decision much like the one made by the late High Court Judge Vincent Ng, who found that the injunction given to the Mansion in 1996, to stop works at Hotel Continental, was rightfully done. In 1996, Justice Vincent Ng deemed that the “act of conservation was in itself an act of development.”

Today in 2010, Judicial Commissioner Chew Soo Ho ruled that the Hotel had “failed to exercise reasonable skill and care in piling and earthworks...resulting in damage to the 19th century heritage building which is located nearby.”

The defendants attempted to allege that as the building was old, it was bound to have cracks and failing that, nearby traffic on Farquhar Street could have caused the cracks rather than the pounding hammer-driven piling works. They chose to ignore totally the facts that the Mansion had been fully restored at the end of 1995, fully repainted and, having just won the PAM Conservation Award, was highly unlikely to have been left with huge cracks in walls, terraces and roofs three months later.

A clear message has been sent to all developers that no longer can development works ignore the rights of neighbouring properties, no longer can the safety of lives and buildings be compromised, and no longer can it be accepted that “repair” works means slapping some cement over cracks after the damage is done. No longer can arguments that “old” means “already damaged” be allowed and no longer can an all-risks



insurance policy mean that development can move full-steam ahead in an unrepentant and recalcitrant fashion.

The developers of the carpark block at Hotel Continental :

- did not conduct a dilapidation survey of neighbouring properties
- ignored warnings given before the start of piling works, of possible damage to neighbouring properties
- did not submit earthworks plans to the MPPP
- did not conduct soil tests of their own development site
- ignored an earlier “stop work” order by MPPP
- refused to visit Cheong Fatt Tze Mansion before or during the piling works
- refused to adapt/change the hammer-driven piling system

The defendants have never once in fourteen years ever expressed regret to their neighbours or attempted to seek a way to solve the situation. They remain, to this day, unapologetic and unremorseful and have submitted an intention to appeal.

by L.L.Loh-Lim

Restoration of St George's Anglican Church

As we look forward to the completion of the restoration of St. George's Church, it is timely to contemplate some of what has been lost in times of war and peace at this historic church, the oldest Anglican church in South East Asia and, with the exception of Fort Cornwallis, perhaps Penang's oldest building still in use. In the article that follows, PHT member Andrew Hwang relates the story of the two church pipe organs, the last one destroyed by enemy bombing in December 1941.

Also destroyed in the wartime bombing was an extraordinary sculpture by the English sculptor John Flaxman (1755-1826), a monument to Lord Charles Cornwallis, Governor General of India who died in 1805. Commissioned for St. George's Church, this iconographic relief sculpture exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1812 and on which Flaxman began work in 1807 depicted a female personification of India with the figure of Britannia presenting an Indian youth to Cornwallis, the whole imagery seen as representing the British subjugation of India*. The sculpture stood at the east end of the south aisle of the church, its place now marked by an engraved stone in the wall.

After the war remnants of this and other damaged monuments were buried in the churchyard while other memorials have reportedly been deliberately removed in recent years.

According to the East India Company's **Asiatic Journal** for 1819, "The new church at Penang was opened for the first time for the performance of divine service on Christmas day" of that year. The **Asiatic Journal** also reported that the church was said to be built on the model of St. George's church at Madras, and was constructed under the superintendence of Captain Smith of the Royal

Engineers. The Bishop of Calcutta, whose diocese covered all the territories of the East India Company including Penang, had consecrated the church in May 1819. Moreover, two what we might call "high society" marriages were held in the church on 30th July when W.E. Phillips, member of the Council, wed Janet, eldest daughter of the Governor, Col. Bannerman, and Lieut. H. Burney, 20th Bengal Native Infantry, Acting Town Major and Military Secretary, wed the Governor's niece Jane Bannerman. **Phillips was later to succeed his father-in-law as Governor.

Notes:

* Barbara S. Groseclose, **British Sculpture and the Company Raj: Church Monuments and Public Statuary in Madras, Calcutta and Bombay to 1858**, London, Associated University Presses, 1995.

***Asiatic Journal and Monthly Register for British India and its Dependencies*, Vol. VIII, July to December 1819.

By Leslie A.K. James

Photograph by Goh Hun Meng



History of the pipe organs of St. George's Anglican Church

St. George's Anglican Church's first pipe organ was installed around or before 1838. In John Turnbull Thomson's reminiscences, **Some Glimpses Into Life In The Far East**, which covered the years from 1838 to 1841, Thomson mentions a 'pagan' who "pumped air into the organ up in the gallery" and the organ pealing forth "soul – inspiring strains."

The next organ was the pipe organ built by the notable firm of Forster & Andrews of Hull, England. This organ was built in the style of German organ builder, Edmund Schulze, and cost £750. The charges for assembly came to another £250, making a total of £1,000, which was paid in full by the Straits Settlements Government. There are two conflicting dates for when the organ was built. **The Straits Times**, 19th September 1947, reported that it was built in 1896. However, it appears in Forster & Andrews' 1899 Order Book as Order 09 on page 16. The date of 1899 is deemed to be the more probable one.

The Forster & Andrews organ was made to a specification which incorporated some old pipe-work from the first organ. The old ranks were to be inserted once the new organ was assembled in Penang. Dr. G. Smith of 38 Albany Street, Hull was the agent for the instrument and he played it in the workshop before it was sent out to Penang as instructed.

A Forster & Andrews journeyman was sent out with the organ to assemble it and finish it tonally in situ. The finished Forster & Andrews Opus 1238 organ was a 2-manual organ with a mechanical action and 16 stops.

The organ was entirely rebuilt in 1939 at a cost of \$5,000, which did not include the organ case, a magnificent piece of work which was added by the generosity of a private donor.

However, the organ was not to last. On Wednesday 17 December 1941 St. George's became the only church in Malaya to be hit by a Japanese bomb. Six bombs in total were dropped on the church compound, but only one hit the church.

The damage originally sustained was relatively minor. The bomb entered through the roof over the gallery at the West end, near the main porch, bringing down part of the gallery and leaving a pile of debris on the floor. The organ was installed in the gallery and was wrecked by the explosion.

As the George Town police had deserted with the news of the approaching Japanese army, law and order all but collapsed and looting was rife. St George's was not spared. All its remaining furnishings and fittings, including statuary and floor tiles, were looted. Even the roofing materials, doors and windows were completely stripped away. What remained of the organ was also not spared. The streets around the church were for some days strewn with the remains of organ pipes and components.

St George's never rebuilt the organ after the war as the restoration of the church building was the main priority. By the time the church was reconstructed, it was already 1948 and the Malayan Emergency was just beginning. Security issues took priority over the restoration of the organ. The source of funds for the construction of a new organ went with the declaration of independence of the Federation of Malaya on 31 August 1957.

Notes:

The following sources were used in preparing this article:

1. John Turnbull Thomson, **Some Glimpses into Life in the Far East** (London: Richardson & Co., 1864), p. 39.

2. **The Straits Times**, 19 September 1947, p.4, "St George's Church in Ruins" and 26 May 1956, p.9, "Malaya's first Anglican church makes history."

3. **1899 Forster & Andrews Order Book 09**, p. 016. Information provided by Chris Kearl, BIOS Archivist at the British Organ Archive, Birmingham, United Kingdom.

4 Laurence Elvin, **Forster and Andrews: their barrel, chamber and small church organs** (Lincoln: Laurence Elvin, 1976), p.126.

5 Manicasothy Saravanamuttu, **The Sara Saga** (Penang: Areca Books, 2010), pp.106-107. Brief description of the Japanese bomb raids of Georgetown beginning on 11 December 1941 and the looting that followed.

by Andrew Huang

Efforts to keep Pearl Hill green

Sun 4 Oct 10

BY OPALYN MOK
newsdesk@thesundaily.com

GEORGE TOWN: Efforts are under-way to get the state government to protect Pearl Hill in Tanjung Bungah from future development by gazetting the area as a forest reserve.

Tanjung Bungah assemblyman Teh Yee Cheu said about 6ha of the

hilltop, covered in lush greenery and foliage, have been earmarked to be gazetted.

A proposal to gazette the land was submitted to the land and district office as well as the state planning committee three months ago.

"Based on the request by Tanjung Bungah residents, I submitted a

proposal to gazette the land so that it would be protected from future development," Teh told *the Sun*.

There are several private bungalows and townhouses on the hill which were built more than 10 years ago.

In addition to protecting the forest and the hill, the move will protect the seven bunkers that were

built on the hill during the British occupation before the Second World War, he said.

"We have plans to repaint and repair the bunkers and possibly use the area as a resting place for bikers or a venue for mini exhibition centres," he said.

"Pearl Hill is a beautiful place for hikers and residents to hike up and

enjoy the scenery so it should be protected and preserved for future generations," said Teh, an environmentalist who is known for using the bicycle as his main mode of transportation as well as for tree-planting projects in his constituency.

The assemblyman hoped the state exco would approve the proposal by the end of this year.

Adelaide Week to be revived after 10 years

Star
3 Oct 10

GEORGE TOWN: Adelaide Week will be held in Penang next year after a hiatus of about 10 years.

Chief Minister Lim Guan Eng said the revival of Adelaide Week in Penang and Penang Week in Adelaide next year would serve as a catalyst for forging not just government-to-government ties but also closer people-to-people contacts between the sister cities.

"Medan was the first sister city for Penang. As Adelaide was our second sister, established far back in December 1973, there is no reason for allowing what was once a close relationship to lapse and wither away," he said.

He said this in his speech at the Adelaide Town Hall during the Adelaide City Council's official reception by Lord Mayor Michael Hargison for a high-level delegation from Penang to the city on Friday. The speech was released here yesterday.

Lim said the reason for the visit was to reconnect with Adelaide and "link again our

peoples not just based on trade, tourism and education but also our common heritage."

"Both Penang and Adelaide share the same forebears. Captain Francis Light founded Penang in 1786 whilst his son, Colonel William Light, founded Adelaide 50 years later.

"Colonel William Light's mother is a native Malay and it is this cultural tie that bonds our people by blood," he said.

He told the Australians that many of their leaders had been to Penang.

"However that was a long time ago. We need to rekindle our memory and renew our ties. You have so much to offer in your expertise and experience. In return, we offer our energy, entrepreneurship and willingness to learn."

"We hope to learn from Adelaide's successes. In return, we offer the opportunity for Adelaide to tap into the most happening and livable city in Malaysia," Lim said.

The last time Adelaide Week was reported to be held in Penang was in 1998.

MEDIA COVERAGE

Restored building to house museum

A HERITAGE building on Macalister Road near Komtar in George Town has been turned into a branch of the Penang state museum.

The 98-year-old building at 57 Macalister Road was in a derelict state for 15 years before the Penang Municipal Council (MPPP) started renovating it in 2001.

Council president Patahiyah Ismail said due to the building's heritage category 2 classification, the RM6.5 million renovation work took six years before it was completed at the end of 2007.

"Time was needed to carefully scrape the previous layers of paints and look for the original tiles," she said, adding that the building was now sporting its original colour.

Penang Town and Country Planning, Housing and Arts Committee chairman Wong Hon Wai, who is also the state museum board's chairman, said it would take time to promote the building.

"It will take us three to five years to have a good collection of artefacts and collection. However, we will continue our efforts to make this museum an important education source for Penangites and tourists," he said.

Museum director Haryany Mohamad said no entry fee would be charged for the moment but it



Like new:
The Penang International Print Exhibition 2010 is now being held at 57, Jalan Macalister.

would be imposed when there is a good collection of exhibits at the double-storey building.

She expected the entry fee to be higher than the RM1 per person charged at the museum on Farquhar Street.

The Penang International Print Exhibition 2010 is currently being held at the Macalister Road building. It will end on Oct 16.

Haryany said the Penang state art gallery would also use the

building to showcase artwork and organise activities involving visual arts.

The MPPP handed over the building to the state museum board in a ceremony last Saturday, which was witnessed by Penang Chief Minister Lim Guan Eng.

The building was first used as the King Edward VII Memorial Hospital from 1915 to 1955 when the hospital moved to its present premises on Jalan Residensi.

Lim hoped that the heritage building could become a tool to promote Penang as a vibrant and cultural heritage city.

"I hope that this building will be a museum that can personify our unique culture and heritage with its artefacts and exhibitions."

"We want unorthodox and dynamic displays that can attract the younger generation," he said in his speech during the handing over ceremony on Saturday.

Star Metro 21.9.10

The Sorry Saga of the Arches at the Botanic Gardens



In early March 2010, the Penang public was stunned to see two monstrous arches marring the beauty of the Botanic Gardens. A campaign was immediately launched to persuade the authorities to remove the arches. More horrifying than the arches themselves was the discovery that they were merely symbolic of a series of failures and mismanagement at the Gardens:

A. A non-botanist Director of the Gardens had been appointed in December 2007.

B. The Director refused to consult the Gardens Management Committee or Scientific Committee.

C. Four Federally funded projects (with apparent State agreement) had totally deviated from their original aims:

- i) a bambusetum (costing RM 1million), with little bamboo to be seen;
- ii) an eco-stream walk (costing RM 1 million) resembling a glorified drain complete with concrete 'pondoks' and with no planting of any sort;
- iii) an entrance water-mall (costing RM 2.5 million) with the infamous arches, some fountains destined to stop working after a few months, lots of concrete, car and bus parks and a massive unprotected storm drain (large trees had been uprooted although the original plan had supposedly "car-free" and "green");
- iv) a visitor centre (costing RM 2.5 million) being built under previously unstable slopes.

D. A Stimulus Grant of RM 750,000 under 9th Malaysia Plan to be used at the discretion of the Director led to:

- i) total devastation of the famed and much-loved Formal Gardens;
- ii) destruction of a beautiful rolling valley below the reservoir with the crowded construction of three unsightly buildings - a second surau, a store and a fertilizer shed;
- iii) the destruction of precious historic ferns in the Fern House with the ill-advised opening of the roofs leaving no protection from the sun;
- iv) the senseless construction of numerous concrete 'pondoks' all over the Gardens;
- v) the awarding of contracts to pollution-spewing petrol driven trams, instead of opting for electric trams;
- vi) the installation of large Hume pipes all over the Gardens to constrain trees and plants from growing;
- vii) a decision to 'light up the Gardens with huge flood lights at night' (stopped after NGO protests re destruction of rest, mating and breeding patterns of insects and other animals);
- viii) plans to install a so-called "Malay Garden".

By April 2010 after great dissatisfaction was expressed at a public Q & A session with the Ministry of Tourism and the consultants, the Ministry's Secretary General, Dato Dr. Ong Hong Peng, responded by convening several meetings between the stakeholders, the NGO's and the consultants. Several attempts at "beautifying" the arches were proposed, all of which were rejected by the NGO's as 'throwing good money after bad'.

In May, fate took a turn when one arch started to tilt. The authorities denied the tilt, saying it was

a ‘perceptual illusion’ or at worst, a plastering defect! Volunteer engineers proved with the use of a theodolite that the arch was tilting. Again the authorities issued denials and would not accept liability, stating, “It might be tilting but it is perfectly safe.” All this time, no safety hoarding of any sort was erected around the arch or the building site.

In June, the Ministry conducted an online survey to gauge public opinion on the arches. For 11 days, the ‘Nays’ stood at over 93%, then suddenly within a span of 36 hours a massive online attack on the insecure site led to ‘Ayes’ gaining almost 50%. The public were affronted at this blatant manipulation and came back in full force with ‘Nays’, leading the Ministry to suspend the survey while it stood at almost 70% against the arches. The Ministry then decided to engage USM to conduct an on-site user survey which resulted in 71% of respondents being against the arches. This finally provided the rationale needed by the Ministry to agree to the demolition of the arches.

In the meantime the tilting arch continued tilting. The authorities continued to deny any danger and still resisted erecting any public protection. In desperation the NGO’s installed a plumb line on 17th June demonstrating that the tilt had increased to 38 cm off the vertical, an increase of 25 cm since April. The authorities then quickly erected narrow hoarding around the arch- not to protect the public, just wide enough to prevent further access by non-authorized NGO’s.

On 27th June the Minister herself, with the consent of the Cabinet announced the demolition of the arches – in response to the wishes of the public, of course.

On the night of 9th August, at 8.45 p.m. demolition of the tilting arch began. The press and the public gathered and were shocked



when ten minutes later the entire arch unexpectedly collapsed crashing onto the narrow hoarding. Fortunately no-one was harmed. This revealing incident raised many questions, as the base of the arch clearly showed little sign of structural reinforcement.

Results for the Gardens

- 1) After much bargaining, the entrance will incorporate large ponds with water plants and giant lilies.
- 2) Tengku Dato Idaura, past president of the Friends of Botanic Gardens, has been appointed Director on a two-year contract.
- 3) USM has agreed to assist with the bambusetum and the eco-stream walk. .
- 4) The Ministry has agreed to re-examine the slopes behind the new Visitor Centre.
- 5) The Formal Gardens are being tended to and re-instated. .
- 6) The Herb Garden is being tended to.
- 7) The Fern House is being tended to.
- 8) New signage is being installed.

Lessons Learned

Looking ahead, what are the lessons learned? What can be done for the future of the Penang Botanic Gardens?

- The authorities must always consult the public and seek feedback.
- The Gardens must be taken out of the tourism portfolio and put under agriculture, environment or local government.
- Graduate staff must be increased and trained in botanic gardens management
- An experienced botanist must be employed.
- The key recommendations of the PBG Master Plan Working Group for the future well-being of the Gardens should be adopted - these address a new physical master plan, traffic issues, a biodiversity centre, a natural arboretum, the necessity of scientific, educational and management expertise, the re-positioning of PBG as a centre for environmental and botanic research and the setting up of a PBG Trust Fund and a Board of Trustees.

L.L.Loh-Lim



Lim visiting the site where the controversial 'leaning' arches stand

Tengku Idaura appointed Botanic Gardens chief controller

BY BERNARD CHEAH
newsdesk@nhdaily.com

GEORGE TOWN: The state government has appointed Datuk Tengku Idaura Tengku Ibrahim as the chief controller for the Penang Botanic Gardens.

Chief Minister Lim Guan Eng said the appointment of the former deputy general manager of Penang Development Corporation (PDC) and vice-president of the Friends of the Penang Botanic Gardens Society (FPBOGS) was to coordinate the development of the gardens.

"I hope she can strengthen the management of the gardens as well as maintain and upgrade it to international standards," he said.

Lim said that Tengku Idaura would hear from various quarters, including state NGOs and the federal government on the development of the gardens.

He said Penang Botanic Gardens director Nor Wahida Hassan would be reporting directly to her.

"I'm confident she can get all parties to work together, not for the benefit of anyone but for the preservation and

sustainability of the Botanic Gardens," Lim said at a press conference here after visiting the Botanic Gardens yesterday.

He said although Tengku Idaura's contract begins from Aug 1 onwards, she will be at work immediately to meet with the Tourism Ministry today on the demolition of the controversial arches in the Botanic Gardens expansion project.

Also present at the press conference were Tengku Idaura, Nor Wahida and state flood mitigation committee chairman Law Choo Kiang.

Ex-PDC deputy general manager appointed to oversee Gardens

GEORGE TOWN: The state has appointed a former Penang Development Corporation (PDC) deputy general manager as the chief controller on a contract basis to oversee the development of Penang Botanic Gardens.

Chief Minister Lim Guan Eng said Datuk Tengku Idaura Tengku Ibrahim (pic), who is also Penang Botanic Gardens Society vice-president, would be entrusted with the task of coordinating development there.

"We hope she can strengthen the man-



agement of the gardens and raise it to international standards.

"I'm confident she can get all parties to work together for the interest, preservation and sustainability of Penang Botanic Gardens," he told reporters yesterday after visiting the site.

He also said even though her duty would officially start next month, Tengku Idaura would be meeting with officials from Tourism Ministry today to discuss the progress of the arches at the gardens.

The Destruction Of The Brook Road Historical Urban Landscape- A Rare, Matured And Established Residential Setting Combining Bungalows, Large Gardens, Mature Trees And Adjoining River

**Before****No 7. Brook Road****After**

Track Record of Heritage Destruction

Since Independence, almost every heritage building in this country has been demolished and destroyed for the sake of financial profit through real estate development. It is a damning track record to boast of. There appears to be only one operative equation – that of huge profits. Actions taken 20 to 30 years ago are forgivable although nonetheless painful. However, in the light of today's experience, knowledge and aspirations, it should not always be a foregone conclusion that when it comes to a choice between heritage conservation and real estate development, which is always viewed as an economic driver, development is favoured, especially when it generates income for the Local Authority. Given that Penang has led in the creation of a World Heritage Site, the powers that be should act to protect our common legacies for future generations and rule in favour of protecting our non-renewable cultural assets.

The irony of the present context is that unwittingly No. 11 Brook Road has been identified as a Category 2 heritage building, whilst permission has been granted to demolish Nos. 7 and 9, of exactly the same age and architecture. Where is the parity in this decision, even if it is not a gazetted decision?

The Local Authority should reserve its judgement on the demolition of any site that is thought to have heritage value until it has exhausted all avenues to ensure its survival and not rule in favour of demolition at the first instance when the proposition is presented to it for consideration. Penang should learn from its past disasters.

Laurence Loh

The article was published in the bulletin of Badan Warisan Malaysia

**No 9. Brook Road Before****After**

The Bujang Valley rises at last



THE next time you happen to be anywhere near the northern side of Penang or the southwestern stretch of Kedah, turn your gaze northward; you will see in the horizon the silhouette of a large mountain with a sharp peak.

Most of us have taken Gunung Jerai, also known as Kedah Peak, the highest mountain in northern Malaysia, for granted. However, a few of us are conscious that some of the most historic discoveries in Southeast Asia are now being made around the mountain's surroundings.

Almost every country in Southeast Asia has at least one ancient monument that has served as a source of pride for its people who view it in awe, as an important part of their roots. Indonesia, for example, has the magnificent Borobudur (8th century AD), Cambodia has the Angkor Wat (11th century AD) and Vietnam has the Siva-Bhadresvara Temple in My Son (4th century AD).

Little do we know that peninsular Malaysia has also been home to an incredible set of age-old structures, which though not as large as the other

well-known monuments in the region, are impressive enough for their sheer numbers in the area named the Bujang Valley.

Since as far back as the 1840s, archaeologists have been unearthing remnants of a civilised settlement that existed in the Bujang Valley from around the 8th century AD to the 13th century. More than 80 sites have been uncovered with structures like the *candi*, a religious building with Hindu-Buddhist elements, most prominent among the findings.

Of these, the famous Candi Batu Pahat still stands glorious, as it did more than a thousand years back, near the Muzium Lembah Bujang in Merbok. Together with the structures, archaeologists also found hundreds of pottery, implements, beads and figurines.

Incredibly enough, although the archaeological works have been extensive and intense, little is known or even told about this ancient civilisation, veritably the cradle of Malaysia. But a new discovery made about two years ago is set to change the invisibility of the Bujang Valley among our public. Archaeologists have discovered at least 97 ancient sites around some oil palm estates in Sungai Batu. So far only 10 have been uncovered.

And what they have revealed are propelling the rewriting our land's recorded history and what is being taught to our children in schools. The discoveries point to evidence that the Bujang Valley civilisation existed 2,000 years ago, long before neighbouring empires such as Majapahit (AD1200) and Sri Vijaya (AD700).



At the heart of the findings is a perplexing clay brick ritualistic monument that has been dated back to AD110, making it the oldest man-made building to be recorded in Southeast Asia.

The Sungai Batu monument and its surrounding structures – including ancient jetties and iron smelting workshops – point to an advanced culture pre-dating many Indianised kingdoms in Southeast Asia. Also found with the monument were various pottery placed ceremoniously around, and a Buddhist tablet with Pallava-Sanskrit inscriptions likely to have been made in the 5th century AD.



An extensive research is being done by the Centre for Global Archaeological Research (CGAR) of Universiti Sains Malaysia to determine how advanced the little-known civilisation – known variously in historic annals as Kataha, Kidaram and Chieh-Cha – was. Just this week scholars from around the world converged at the Bujang Valley to express amazement at the discovery and how it is reshaping understanding of the region's history.

Long before the empire of Malacca, there was already this powerful trading settlement in Kedah, which just happened to mysteriously disappear. But the secret of its existence cannot be held back any longer. The legacy of the Bujang Valley has risen at last. And it now promises to fully gain our attention, to reclaim its stature that is long overdue; just as it did among the early people of this land who lived around the majestic Gunung Jerai many centuries ago.

This above article by Himanshu Bhatt was published in The Sun, 8th July 2010

MEDIA COVERAGE

NEWS STARHerald, Friday 17 September 2010

Preserving city's old charm

Guidelines on managing heritage sites to be submitted to Unesco committee

By JOSEPHINE JALLEN
Josephine Jallen is a freelance journalist.

A HERITAGE building may not look as different as it should be if there are modern devices or materials used in its construction.

These can be banners, air-conditioners or satellite dishes that do not contribute to the original look and design of the building.

George Town World Heritage Site general manager Margaret Mohd Shafiq said it was important for advertisement boards or banners to cover parts of buildings such as the windows.

"But air-conditioners are allowed to be installed as long as they are not attached to the back of the building," she said.

"The nearest road to follow the guidelines for the preservation of the place."

She added that they would not consider to be included in the Special Area Plan (SAP) for managing heritage sites.

"We will provide guidelines during our planning, design, development, as well as the construction of air-conditioners."

However, she added, "We will not consider air-conditioners installed on the roof."

The SAP will be submitted to the UNESCO World Heritage Committee in February next year.

"For now, we are giving advice to people on restoration and repair of the buildings," she said.

Preserved Malacca Council (PMPC) Building stands 'very long long'.

Colonial glory: The restored George Town World Heritage Site building.

It is that things like air-conditioners are not a total part.

What is important is that the whole building should be intact and the owners should comply with the guidelines," he said.

"We have a heritage enforcement unit that will look for any illegal activities in relation to buildings in the World Heritage Site."

"We will advise those that they carry out upgrading work without taking approval from the council. They will be fined if they choose to ignore it."

PMPC's responsibility is to control the heritage by educating and advising the building owners," he said, adding that the public should co-operate in preserving the city's heritage status.

»For now, we are giving advice to people on restoration and repairs

... 44

MARGARET MOHD SHAFIQ

Modern extensions: A heritage building in George Town with air-conditioners installed at the windows.

APRIL SITE VISIT – WISMA KASTAM

Now known as Wisma Kastam, the former Malayan Railway or F.M.S. Railway Building with its distinctive clock tower is the most prominent building along the Weld Quay waterfront. On Sunday afternoon, 4th April, some 66 members and friends of PHT gathered at the front entrance on China Street Ghaut to be greeted by Encik Roslan of Royal Malaysian Customs for a briefing and tour of this landmark heritage building. Information on the history of the building was provided by PHT council member Timothy Tye and heritage consultant Gwynn Jenkyns.

The F.M.S. Railway Building was often referred to as “the railway station with no trains”. Instead of platforms or trains, it housed administrative offices, a ticketing booth and a railway restaurant with bar and grill. After purchasing tickets at the ticket counter, passengers boarded one of two small Railway Ferry Steamers from the Penang Ferry Jetty to catch the trains at the F.M.S. Railway terminus at Prai. The rail tickets included the fare on the ferry steamers.

When built in 1907, the F.M.S. Railway Building marked the completion of the Federated Malay States Railway which efficiently transported tin and crops from Malaya for export. Built during the short reign of King Edward VII (1901-1910) the building at its front entrance boasts probably one of the few post office pillar boxes in existence bearing the monogram E VIIR -- and most certainly the only one in Penang! Unfortunately, with each resurfacing of the road the base of this historic post box is slowly sinking below the road level!



The Malayan Railway Building has been occupied by Royal Malaysian Customs for several decades. Apart from some temporary partitioning for offices the Customs tenancy has ensured that the building remains more or less in its original state with no structural modifications. We were briefed in one of the rooms on the ground floor that had once served as the Railway Restaurant. We noted the excellent condition of the original European-made floor tiles as well as the picturesque shoulder-high tiles lining the walls. Some members of our group recalled as youngsters visiting both the restaurant and the barber shop.

Before leaving, PHT members expressed their appreciation to Encik Roslan and his team of customs officers for taking time on their day off to open the building for our visit. We also congratulated Customs for their stewardship of this magnificent heritage building on behalf of the people of Penang.

JUNE SITE VISIT – SWETTENHAM PIER



On Saturday afternoon, 5th June, 68 members and friends of PHT visited Swettenham Pier and the newly completed Cruise Terminal at the northern end of Weld Quay. Swettenham Pier was established in 1903, at the height of Penang's role as a port on the principal shipping routes of the region and the world. The new cruise terminal was completed in 2009 to provide modern arrival and departure facilities for cruise ship passengers. Swettenham Pier was named after Sir Frank Athelstane Swettenham (1850-1946), who served as the first Resident General of the Federated Malay States from 1896 to 1901. Port Swettenham at Klang in Selangor was also named in his honour.

AUGUST SITE VISIT WADDA GURDWARA SAHIB

On Sunday, 1st August, some 51 PHT members visited the Wadda Gurdwara Sahib or Gurudwara Sahib Khalsa Dharmak Jatha on Jalan Gurdwara (formerly Brick Kiln Road). This is one of the few gurdwaras or Sikh temples in Penang. A gurdwara, which means “doorway to the guru”, is the place of worship of those embracing the Sikh faith. Within a gurdwara one can find the Sikh holy book, called the Guru Granth Sahib, and a triangular orange flag, called the Nishan Sahib.

In recognition of the contribution of the Sikh community in Penang, Brick Kiln Road - originally named after the brick kilns that stood on the site of today’s incinerators - was renamed Jalan Gurdwara.



SEPTEMBER SITE VISIT – CHURCH OF THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION

The September site visit, delayed on account of Ramadan and the Malaysia Day holidays, took place on Sunday, 19th September at the Church of Immaculate Conception on Burmah Road in Pulau Tikus. 45 PHT members and friends took part. The church was founded by Portuguese Eurasians who settled in Penang to escape persecution in Phuket. They were latecomers -- an earlier wave of Catholic immigrants arrived in Penang from Kedah in 1786 with Captain Francis Light and founded the Church of the Assumption on Farquhar Street. The Eurasian Catholic community in Phuket, although dwindling in numbers, remained in Phuket until the Phya Tak Massacre of 1810, which forced them to leave.

The Eurasians, or Serani (a Malay-language corruption of Nazarene, a reference to Jesus of Nazareth) as they were locally called, adopted local customs such as speaking Malay, and lived in kampong houses, similar to those in the Portuguese settlement in Malacca. There was a sizable Eurasian community in the Pulau Tikus area of Kelawai Road until after Independence, so much so that the area was called Kampong Serani, and local road names such as Leandro’s Lane still bear their imprint.

The present building of the Church of Immaculate Conception was erected in 1899, and was last renovated in the 1970s. With the moving away of the Eurasian community in recent years the congregation of the church has become predominantly Chinese.

PHT members were briefed on the history of the church and the Eurasian community by Dr. Anthony Sibert, an authority on the history of the Roman Catholic Church in Penang. Dr. Sibert is author of **Pulo Tikus 1810-1994: Mission Accomplished**, a book soon to be published. He showed us the small museum housed in the northeast corner of the church and explained the many artifacts, documents and memorabilia displayed there. Members of the Immaculate Conception congregation are very proud of the fact that one of their priests was the only parish



priest in Malaysia to be canonized (not counting St Francis Xavier). Jacques Honoré Chastan was a Roman Catholic missionary born in France. He taught at the College General in Penang 1828-1830 and served as the fourth parish priest of the

Church of the Immaculate Conception 1830-1833. From Penang Father Chastan went on to carry out missionary work in China and Korea. The Korean authorities became alarmed at the rate at which Koreans were converting to Catholicism and Father Chastan and his colleagues were arrested and martyred in 1839. Father Chastan was beatified by Pope Pius XI in 1925 and canonized by Pope John Paul II in 1984. A monument to St. Chastan was recently erected in the southwest corner of the church grounds facing Burma Road.

OCTOBER SITE VISIT – PENANG GENERAL HOSPITAL

The sprawling complex of Penang General Hospital was the venue for the PHT site visit on Sunday afternoon, 3rd October. Some 31 PHT members and friends assembled at the hospital's main entrance in Block B. Now known as Hospital Pulau Pinang and previously as Hospital Besar Pulau Pinang, this is the biggest public hospital in Penang and second largest in the country. Located along Jalan Residensi, with various departments on the opposite side of the road as well as along Jalan Sepoy Lines, as a public hospital it provides health care and emergency treatment for all illnesses and accidents.

The Penang General Hospital traces its history to the Pauper's Hospital started by Mun Ah Foo, a leader of the Ghee Hin Society. The aim of the hospital was to provide healthcare to the poor and needy as well as rehabilitation for opium smokers. After Mun Ah Foo passed on, the Pauper's Hospital continued to be managed by a committee headed by Governor Archibald Anson, with representations from the Chinese clan associations, guilds and other pillars of 19th century society. During this period, the Leper Hospital was relocated to Pulau Jerejak, off the southeast coast of Penang, where it remained until the mid-20th century.

In the hospital grounds we viewed the monument to those who had made significant donations to the hospital in the early years, including the King of Siam. Unfortunately, enquiries as to the location of the memorial to Health & Medical Services staff killed in the Second World War drew a blank from the hospital officials acting as our guides. The unveiling of a commemorative plaque had been reported in **The Straits Times** on 2nd October, 1948.

Other sites of interest which we were shown were the Nurses' Mess built in the early 1930s and the nearby Matrons' Residence, a beautiful and distinctive structure of older vintage in excellent condition. The latter deserves to be conserved although both are reportedly destined for replacement.



Newsletter editor's mother Nursing Sister D.M. Preston with local children at Penang Hospital and (above) Nurses' Mess, circa ,1935

CORE LIVING III

These last few months as we whizz through 2010 have been pretty thrilling! So many things have happened and passed, it is hard to actually put them all back in a specific order. It has also been frustrating, each morning providing unexpected events to deal with. Just as I wake up and believe that I have a day in which to catch up on an organized list of personal chores or actual work which will earn me my living, I get sidetracked and spend my day discovering something completely different. Frustration for me isn't necessarily a negative vibe. It is also frustratingly positive in that "I'm frustrated because there isn't enough time in the day to do all of this amazing stuff!"

World Heritage Day

The success of the George Town Festival and the UNESCO World Heritage Day on July 7th has to be highlighted. The arrival at 29 China Street, our gallery, of our Chief Minister Lim Guan Eng by pony carriage was very charming. His entourage included the Mayor of Adelaide and they all arrived in a posse of trishaws. They made a quick visit to our show, **Parting Shots: A Photographic Survey of Cemeteries from Sri Lanka to Spain** by Sharon Cheah Ui-Hoon, and then moved to the next location on their itinerary.

I woke early on the morning of the 7th in order to move my car to the front of the house, deliberately so that I could park it in a position that would allow easy access at the front of the house. With several other house owners around George Town, we had opened our houses to PHT-arranged tours just for the day. I went out onto the street before 7am to find uniformed MPPP officers with their



motorbikes across the road and bright orange bollards set up all along the front of the Gallery and the house. I immediately grabbed my camera because it was the first time I had a clear road in front of the two facades.

The atmosphere was fantastic. Certain roads had been cordoned off to allow pedestrians safe walking around the heritage zone and all day we had all sorts of people coming in and out of the Gallery asking "What was going on?", "So much to see", "Wow, everyone is so friendly", "We had no idea this was going on", "What else is going on?", "This place is amazing" etc., etc. We were giving directions, answering questions and it was satisfying to see so many people really enjoying this city. The wonderful Chettiar House opposite the Gallery joined in the fun and happily allowed visitors to go in and view their building. There were locals, tourists from faraway lands, local tourists from KL, Singapore, all taking the opportunity to view the city on cleared roads with people in the right frame of mind to offer guidance in the most generous way. The State Government should set aside one day a month over the weekend as 'Pedestrians Only Day'. This would encourage more people to walk around the city and thereby encourage more businesses to stay open over the weekend. I know parking is an issue but at weekends you don't have to deal with people coming into work. This is worth doing and should be encouraged.

Our CM was photographed and interviewed at practically every heritage site and event from early morning to late in the evening, forced to take in all George Town has to offer and promoting the State government as a dedicated supporter of the UNESCO Heritage Site.

Congratulations to all involved with the organization of the Festival and the success at bringing together so many people to participate in so many events that provided eye-opening information, visual arts, tours of private homes and buildings, different opinions and, more than anything, successfully drawing Penangites into talks and sites that introduced them to many aspects of heritage preservation.

Hungry Ghosts

Riding around on my bicycle the last couple of months has allowed me to really 'get into' the Hungry Ghosts Festival, and I have been totally enamoured of all the wonderful effigies of 'Hades'. On the bicycle I have just stopped at all the tented effigies, taken in the visions of offerings and people giving respects, the donation lists, the small paper effigies and the skill of the paper craftsmen. Most of all though, I have spoken to the people on duty at these installations (and they really are the most magnificent artistic installations!) and found out when these effigies would be sent back to Hell. My brother Richard was then forced to drive up from KL with all his cameras and equipment and the two of us have madly walked the streets at night, driven around getting lost, looking for statues of Hades, the wonderful operas and best of all, the 'Face Changing' performances.



The first Hades we saw sent back to Hell was at Komtar at the junction of Jalan Sungei Ujong. Here, the list of donors was impressive and I learnt so much about the process of these offerings. As a kid I remember watching all of this going on

but it was just a show. Because we were filming at these events, we donated, and I loved that

this gesture was rewarded with the ringing of the bell. I also loved the temporary movie screens -- sheets strung up above the streets, great reels spinning near the offering table, the movie set up for the God of Hell to view before he was returned to the other side. The operas, the karaoke performances, the sexy singers, the very young child singers performing in front of these effigies are for the entertainment of the gods, not for the humans walking in the street although, of course, the neighbourhood residents were out enjoying all this free entertainment too.

I dragged the family and guests along to the Jalan Sungei Ujong site and we joined everyone as the effigy 'came alive' and was carried down the street. We joined the crowd as joss sticks were handed to everyone, as everyone was encouraged to throw the offerings around the base of the effigy, and then we followed as everyone gave respects and knelt on the road. We followed the actions of the Taoist priest -- all this as cars, lorries, buses whizzed around. They didn't slow down even when the effigy was in full flame in the middle of the road! Organization was great, the charming little fire engine from Kampung Pisang in place ready to work in an emergency, and a gang of men controlling traffic, getting it to stop as loads of paper offerings were carried across the street. It was a real Malaysian affair. The Chinese were performing their spiritual duties, a mixture of Malay and Indian men made up the traffic controllers, the firemen from Kampung Pisang were Malay, the crowd was Chinese but numbers were made up with Eurasians like us, European tourists and a very busy group of photographers from all over the place. There was even a couple of slightly kooky characters in the melee, a truly multicultural night out, and although it may sound totally corny, it really wasn't. The atmosphere was phenomenal and the whole process accepting of anyone who was in the area.

Richard and I got exhausted running from one burning to the next a few streets along, only to be told that we should go on to another site for a burning in the next half hour! You'd think one burning would be the same as another but it wasn't. Each street, each junction provided a different atmosphere, a different crowd of people,

and Richard and I would get back to the house well after midnight stinking of smoke, ash in our hair, drink down cups of tea and shovel down a quick sandwich before crashing into bed. The next day it would start again and we'd find ourselves having to suddenly pull off roads to get out of the way of a procession and then the mad rush to get the cameras out of the car and up and rolling.

Face-changing Film Stars

One of the highlights of these festivities was the 'Face Changing' performance in Sungei Pinang. We had been told about this by a gentleman named Teoh at the opera performance at the Kuan Yin Temple. He was uncertain when it would actually take place as the performers had to find sponsors in order to put on the show. Teoh called us up to see the opera performers and we were delighted to be allowed backstage to see all the performers apply their make-up and costumes. I took photographs while Richard did the filming. These actors and actresses are complete artists, proud and highly skilled. They take great care and a huge amount of time to apply their face make-up, their hair pieces, costumes and you can see them transform into their stage characters as the process goes on. Backstage at the opera was magical. They all possess a make-up chest and I was fascinated by these -- art forms in their own right. Each of the boxes is protected by images of little gods; Ganesha was popular. We spent a few hours there the first night and the next day got word of the 'Face Changers'. We had never seen them before and so went the next evening with no expectations.



I dragged along my husband David and daughter Tessa and we waited for the show to begin. A

good crowd arrived in anticipation of this performance. The troupe was from Thailand but many of the performers were from China. The 'Face Changer' himself was Thai and this man should be in Vegas! I tried to photograph each face change but it was impossible, he did it too fast.

The Face Changer's make-up area was tented off and on this night we were not allowed backstage. His secrets had to be protected. The Face Changer wears many masks and as he performs kicks, moves his arms and dances, he removes a mask, or does a face change. He can change his 'masks' four times in a matter of seconds, a blink of an eye. It is very impressive. More impressive however, was the way he changed his whole costume. His whole outfit changed with just a flick of his cloak, and we were mesmerized! The Face Changer is basically a magician. He made tables float, flowers appear, umbrellas fly out of bags, he changed the clothes of his assistants in seconds and at the end of his performance we eventually saw his face, smiling -- a very happy man and a true entertainer! What was also very nice to see during the performance was his apprentice, a young Face Changer -- a young Chinese man with a pink costume and a cute soft monkey at his neck. This young man was not as skilled as the master but in time it was obvious that he would be.

These performances should have had full, packed-to-the-brim audiences. The whole idea of these open air performances is wonderful. They are family affairs. People roll up on their motorbikes and sit there on them and then just start up the engines when its time to go. There is definitely interest but information of times and location is lacking. The traditional operas are wonderful and to see them in this open air brings art to everyday people. The performers are proud, great artists and their skills are not diminished by where they perform. This is true non-elitist, open-to- all art and performance. It would be great to see the western style philharmonic orchestras, the smaller chamber orchestras, musicians used to just playing indoors in perfect conditions, get out into the street, into George Town. Sometimes, you just need to say it's about

doing the performance, bringing it out, introducing it to the people. I will continue now to look for these traditional performances and encourage people to go to them. They do not expect anything of you -- no leather shoes, no special clothing regulations, no age limits, just an open mind, and a sense of enjoyment, and perhaps, a donation to the temple.

Filming Traditional Trades

Having my brother in town has meant that I am the guide and I have been dragging him around to record things as they happen. I have ordered traditional signboards from the sign board maker on Queen Street. We have now on film, a record of his skill and our signboard! I'm removing the basic painted signs I had made for the gallery opening and they will soon be replaced by lovely handmade wooden signboards that can be treasured! Luckily he happily told us that his daughter helps him out now and he hopes she will carry on the business.

We also went along to the paper-effigy maker where I order basic paper lanterns, only to find him making the most gorgeous and precious bicycle, a Mercedes car and a huge golden horse. It was all destined to be burnt for the 49th day after the death of an individual, the day the spirit leaves and crosses over. My lantern order has to wait until this busy period of festivities and deaths abates as they are now flat out making effigies. The delight here was meeting the master papermaker's son. 'Boy' is 25 years old, went to school at St Xavier's, listens to rock music as he makes the effigies and in his spare time composes music. He is carrying on his father's trade.

We also went to find the old lantern maker on Jalan Magazine. This took a while with lots of different people telling us where he is. We eventually found him in Macallum Ghat. Newly made yellow lanterns were hanging up drying.



This little discovery was slightly sad in that he will not take any more orders; unfortunately, he has been ill. He told us he didn't have the strength to do any more orders and besides he had a waiting list which may take up to two years to complete. Unfortunately there is no one in his family to take over and he seemed a little disillusioned, mentioning that some people did come to take lessons but after coming once or twice, they left. From the bits of bamboo that were about his porch it was clear to see that this gentleman is highly skilled. The bamboo ribs of the lanterns are cut by hand, thin in places where they need to be bent. The fabric is stretched and starched onto the ribs and he has to hand-make the tops and bottom 'caps' of the lantern. His painting skills are totally phenomenal and there is a tactile quality to his work that makes you feel the life he has somehow installed into his lanterns.

Inner-city woes...

On China Street, the good news is that restoration has started on No. 15, apparently the first Tan residence in George Town. We are also hoping to see the restoration soon of another building along our road soon. Things are starting to transform!

On top of all the constant visual, emotional and physical stimulation and inspiration, we have to deal with the daily happenings, nitty gritty things that touch you when you live in the inner city. These revolve around 'enforcement', or rather the lack of it. The congestion on the five-foot ways really has to be addressed. People have to walk around the inner city. It is our central business district and full of people during the day. It is hot and it rains and all the time, pedestrians are forced onto the road fighting for space with cars and motorbikes, more coaches, lorries delivering goods and so on. If the five-foot ways were clear, freed of the metal grills locking them up, clear of parked motorbikes in the shade of them, daily life in George Town would be so much more pleasant. Council has to start working on this. I'm going to be redesigning my planter box between the Gallery and the house so that pedestrians can at least hop into our five-foot way from the Gallery side. Unfortunately everyone is stopped from going any further down China Street because the owner of the swiftlet house next to us has grilled up and locked his whole five-foot way area. The

five-foot ways should be clear. Why aren't they?

Traffic is daily becoming more and more painful. Car parks have been closed because of impending developments, so limiting spaces; but the culprits are really drivers double-parking, triple-parking, parking badly, so that they can stop and pick up a paper, stop and go into the bank -- Beach Street is nothing short of a nightmare on weekdays because of the banks -- or even park so that they can pop in for a quick banana leaf lunch! Granted there is a new MPPP multi-storey parking lot due to open on Beach Street but how about opening it now?

My bicycle has been worth every penny and saves me time, keeps me cooler than walking and provides exercise. The stenciled bicycle-images on the streets of George Town and elsewhere in Penang, however, are a waste of paint. What is the point of trying to highlight a bicycle trail when there are too many cars, lorries and coaches forcing cyclists to stop every two minutes? Traffic in the inner city has to be reduced and space has to be made available for pedestrians to move around in comfort and safety. Is Council planning to try to solve the problem?

One of our manhole/sewer tanks overflowed one very rainy and stormy day. We thought we had a problem but PBA found that the whole sewer line along the back of Lorong Chee Em was blocked at the Beach Street juncture. We were just glad it wasn't us! The lines were blocked up with rubbish and debris, highlighting again the problems of rubbish disposal. Thank goodness for the efficiency of PBA! They had it all sucked up and cleared in the 20 minutes to took them to go down Lorong Chee Em emptying everyone's manholes.

More annoyingly on China Street, has been the operation of a night club diagonally opposite us. It is a bar, opens about 9pm each night but really starts jumping at about 2am each morning. In the last couple of months there have been street fights amongst gangs of drunken men, and just three nights ago we awoke to find Richard my brother, looking absolutely knackered because he hadn't slept. The night before he hadn't slept because of

a band playing from 11.30 until 4am. This particular morning, there had been a fight in the street and the drunks had ripped up our bamboo pots and used the bamboo to beat up a chap on the road. They had also tipped up the sundry shop's collection of pot plants and damaged their car. Richard watched the whole thing but didn't wake us to call the police as he thought it would be over in just a few minutes. We were cocooned in our centre bay bedroom where we are oblivious to the rest of the world!

We woke up to find our bamboo pot broken and in the drain. David, straight out of bed in his flip flops and just a pair of shorts, grabbed the camera to record the mess immediately before our MPPP sweepers came along to clear it all away. As he took the photos he met a few of the neighbours including the workers from the makan shop, all foreign, who haven't been getting sleep for months. David called the police and went up to Beach Street to make a report. We had three sets of policemen come to see us and, of course, word on the street got round. The owner of the sundry shop came to tell us that their car was damaged but her son had to leave early for work, taking the car. Everyone on the street was fed up from lack of sleep. Her son also made a police report later that day which was excellent. The police told us that the club was operating with no license. We had called police on other occasions because of fights and noise until 5am. We have seen the police roll up and watched through our moveable louvres. The police leave after a word with the club employees at the car window and nothing changes.

David and I went along to the licensing office and spoke to the officer in charge. They said they have taken action before and a license application has been put in but, in the meantime, they should not be operating. Why isn't this enforced? We also found out that as a bar they can operate until 3am! We were advised to write to the licensing office with our objection and also to the police. We have now written up a residents' letter of complaint which we will be trying to fill with signatures of the local residents on the street. Meanwhile, why are the police not acting? Why is the licensing department not acting? Why is the

club allowed to carry on disturbing and damaging property? The owners of the club have not made one move to apologize for the damage, pay for the damage or indicate that they have even had one thought about their neighbours.

...deserve swift action plan!

So yes, the last few months has also highlighted a few negative frustrations but I'm hoping there is a little glow at the end of the tunnel, and we should all be working to push this along. The Deputy Prime Minister announced that the Council of Local State Governments has prohibited swiftlet farming in the heritage enclaves of Penang and Melaka. In order to achieve this a three-year plan to evacuate the farms would begin for the total removal of all farms by the end of the three-year period. This is a very positive development.

The State Government and Municipal Council should work together for a complete revitalization plan that reflects the importance of maintaining our UNESCO status in George Town. This three-year implementation plan should extend to all issues that need improvement. Running alongside the plan to remove the swiftlet farms, clear decisions should be acted on to decongest five-foot ways, improve traffic management, create pedestrian areas, provide more parking areas, educate people on rubbish management, work to enforce licensing rules on night-club operational hours and noise pollution, and improve the lives of everyone living and working in the inner city and UNESCO heritage zone. It is vital that we retain the current population as well as attract people into George Town.

Our CM received much kudos on the hard work of a few very dedicated people during this year and it would be great if he took advantage of this to kickstart a three-year plan that can set an example for heritage preservation and revitalization in the area. This is not a pipe dream and it is very possible to achieve with a clear commitment to act.

By Rebecca Duckett-Wilkinson



Fate of historic train station stirs nostalgia in Singapore

12 October 2010 (AFP)



No more glittering shopping malls, chic restaurants and expensive condos, please!

The fate of a shabby but historic Malaysia-owned train station tucked away in an obscure corner of ultramodern Singapore's port and business district is stirring nostalgia for a bygone age.

The Tanjong Pagar station, built during British colonial rule over the two countries, is to be vacated by July 2011 under a recent deal to settle a longstanding land dispute between the two neighbours.

The Singapore terminal is to be relocated to Woodlands, a northern suburb across a narrow strip of water from Malaysia. A causeway that includes the rail tracks connects the two countries. With its faded facade and four imposing life-size marble sculptures atop the main entrance, the station is an anomaly in a landscape dominated by office towers, hotels and high-rise apartment blocks.

The four sculptures represent agriculture, commerce, transport and industry -- key symbols of economic prosperity during the heyday of British rule until the late 1950s.

Time seems to stand still in the cavernous but sparsely furnished passenger hall of the 78-year-

old terminal, which relies on exhaust fans and breezes blowing in from outside to provide relief from the stifling tropical heat.

Lunchtime is always busy -- not from passenger traffic but from customers of Malaysian delights offered by food stalls such as the greasy Ramly Burger, featuring a beef or chicken patty wrapped in a fried egg.

There are no digital boards showing departure and arrival times of the service, which stops at sleepy towns until reaching Kuala Lumpur seven hours later even though the Malaysian capital is just 367 kilometers (228 miles) away.

Instead, a blue board with the service schedule is mounted on one side of the hall and any changes to the timing have to be made manually by station staff.

The future of the station as well as other Malaysian railway land to be handed back to Singapore will be part of an ongoing review by the Urban Redevelopment Authority (URA) on land use in the next 40 to 50 years.

"The land parcels will be put to optimal use," the Ministry of National Development said.

In a country where land is scarce and many colonial buildings have been refitted for commercial use, a group of Singaporeans has started a petition to preserve the station and its rich history for future generations.

"I want them to know that once upon a time, this station connected Singapore to the rest of the world... before Internet made it easy to Google for anything," Carolyn Seet, who started the petition in July, told AFP.

"Old buildings remind you of your roots," said Seet, an IT specialist who also created a public

Facebook account called “Turn Tanjong Pagar Station into a Museum.”

On Facebook, Seet wrote: “Not another restaurant. Not another condo. We need some culture and history. Think Musee D’Orsay. Not just about making money!”

The Musee D’Orsay is a museum in Paris housed in a former railway station.

Seet says she hopes to gather at least 1,000 signatures by the end of the year before handing the petition to the office of Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong.

The petition contains a few proposals including turning the station into a museum to showcase the roles of various means of transport in Singapore’s rapid rise from a sleepy tropical port to a world trading hub.

As of the first week of October, the petition had gathered just 360 signatures.

Seet says her campaign is driven partly by the demolition of several history-rich buildings to make way for the country’s urban development, and she worries her two young boys will have no inkling of Singapore’s past from the urban architecture.

“To me, this is the last bastion,” Seet said of the station, which holds plenty of fond childhood memories since it was there that she embarked on her first train ride to Malaysia.

Ho Weng Hin, an architectural conservation specialist who is co-authoring a book on the building’s history, said the British made a strategic decision to have the railway building next to the port.

“The station was built next to the port for a good reason,” said Ho, a partner of architectural restoration and research consultancy Studio Lapis.

“It is from here that valuable Malayan commodities such as tin and rubber were transported to

the rest of the world. The railway line expanded British clout in Malaya,” he said.

Malaysia, formerly known as Malaya, was under British rule until the late 1950s. Singapore joined the Federation of Malaysia briefly in 1963 before it gained statehood in 1965. Ho said the station could be described as Singapore’s version of New York City’s famous Grand Central Terminal building.

“Part of what makes a city great is you have the different chapters of its history still functioning and still accessible to the people,” he said, adding that historic train stations in Milan and Tokyo have been preserved and kept accessible to the general public.

Lai Chee Kien, an assistant professor with the National University of Singapore’s department of architecture, also feels the station’s colourful past makes it worth conserving.

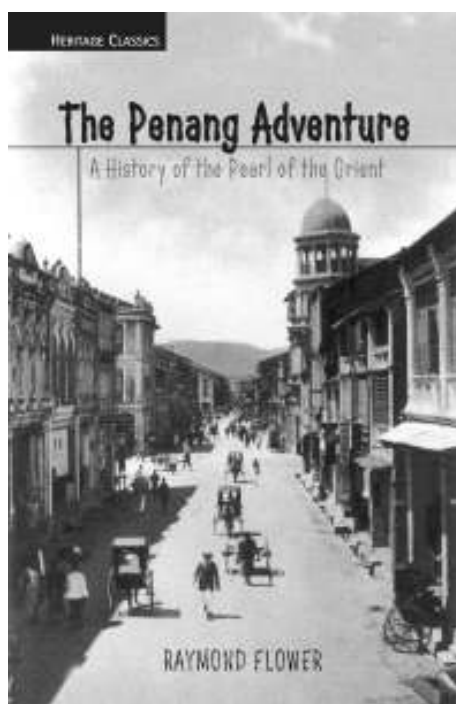
“There are not many places left in Singapore that can evoke memories of the pre-independence period,” he said.

“Before airplanes became prominent, the railway was the main source of goods and passengers. “Together with Keppel Harbour, the railway station is an important building that connected people to a larger history involving Singapore and Malaysia.”

For 63-year-old Masudul Hasan, who has operated a drinks stall at the station for 26 years, there is little he can do except wait for the day when he will have to lower the shutters for good.

“I will miss the place, it has been so many years,” said Masudul, who sleeps for just four hours and spends the rest of his time at the stall.





The Penang Adventure: A History of the Pearl of the Orient. By Raymond Flower. Marshall Cavendish Editions, Singapore, 2009.

Eagerly seeking authoritative sources on Penang and its history, the reader is first attracted to this book by the author's claim in his dedication that it was the result of a collaboration with Sjovald Cunyngham-Brown, a claim that might tempt one to overlook the absence of both footnotes and index, the standard indicators of serious historical scholarship. The author's description of Cunyngham-Brown as the "penultimate British governor of Penang" might also be forgiven; although he was briefly Acting Resident Commissioner in 1954, more importantly he was president of the George Town Municipal Council from 1954-57, the last president to be drawn from the old MCS.

The Penang Adventure is a story that deserves to be told and the anecdotal approach adopted by the author is not necessarily without merit. Unfortunately, however, the book is peppered with errors of fact that detract from any value it might have for either the student of Penang's history or the casual reader. For example, in an early chapter on the East India Company the author mistakenly identifies the EIC fort at Madras as Fort William (p.21). The fortress at Madras was Fort St.

George while Calcutta was the site of Fort William. The book contains other examples of geographic and historical confusion. The Sultan Idris College (p.93) was not opened at Kuala Kangsar but at Tanjong Malim; presumably the author is thinking of the Malay College at Kuala Kangsar established in 1905. In another instance the author dates Penang's first waterworks from 1905 (p.96), a century after George Town received its first running water supply under Lieutenant-Governor R.T Farquhar (1804-05). The author's mention of "foreign sailors from torpedoed ships" being tortured and "atrociously done to death", their names "scribbled on walls and behind doors" (p.107) is an obvious reference to the 76 officers and men of the American submarine USS Grenadier held for several weeks in Light Street Convent in 1943; while it is true they were brutally tortured, none in fact died during their captivity in Penang. Elsewhere, the author describes Penang's statue of Queen Victoria as being at the Cricket Club (p.108) rather than at the Chinese Recreation Club. Similarly, the author's account (p.108) of a group of British soldiers given assistance by local Chinese is completely erroneous. Rather than four British other ranks as claimed by Flower, the group comprised six British soldiers and one Indian sepoy. Four of the British soldiers died during the time they were hidden and sheltered by local people and they lie buried in the hills of Balik Pulau. The remaining two, Samuel Freer and John Edward Bennett, along with the unnamed Indian, were captured and died at the hands of the Japanese only months before the war's end. Contrary to the author's claim none of the group survived the war. The author is correct, however, in saying such stories are "an indication of the courage and friendship of those who protected them." Those brave men and women of Balik Pulau indeed deserve to be remembered for their heroic part in the Penang Adventure.

All in all, while promising much, this is a disappointing book and a disservice both to Penang and to the memory of Sjovald Cunyngham-Brown.

Leslie A.K. James

**Talk by Dr. John Robertson
with Afternoon Tea at the E&O Hotel:
“Witness to History: How the French lost the Mousquet in the 1914 Battle of
Penang”, Saturday, 3rd April 2010**

This talk and accompanying afternoon tea in the Arshak Suite of the E & O Hotel was a fundraising event in support of PHT’s efforts to conserve Penang’s heritage. In his talk Dr. John Robertson, a medical practitioner and former Royal Navy officer, presented the results of his research into one of the aspects of the **Emden** raid on Penang, a naval battle in Penang Harbour and off Muka Head that put Penang into the world’s headlines in the opening months of the First World War. The daring raid of the German cruiser SMS **Emden** in the dawn hours of October 1914 resulted in the sinking of the Russian cruiser **Zhemtchug** which was at anchor in Penang harbour. The dramatic naval action was watched by horrified spectators from the Penang waterfront and the terrace of the E&O Hotel.

Dr. Robertson’s talk focused on the story of the four French destroyers tasked with patrolling the northern Malacca Straits and assisting the defence of Penang harbour. One of the French vessels, **Mousquet** was sunk by **Emden** off Muka Head as the German warship left Penang. Dr. Robertson detailed the story of this mismatched encounter, a story full of human interest and great heroism by **Mousquet**’s French crew, many of whom gave their lives. It is a story that has never been told or written about before. The audience of more than a hundred was held spellbound by Dr. Robertson’s account which was supported by interesting charts, maps and contemporary photographs uncovered in his research.

**Screening of Film on the Penang Hill Railway
Thursday, 22nd April 2010**



With the closure of the 87-year old two-section Penang Hill Railway in February prior to the Malaysian Government’s construction of a new single funicular system to replace it, Penang lost a much loved and treasured part of its heritage. PHT members took a last ride on the old funicular during a memorable site visit on 22nd February. Two months later, at the PHT office 36 PHT members and railway lovers had the opportunity to enjoy a nostalgic screening of **Funiculi Funicula**, the appropriately entitled DVD film of the old railway shot by British independent film producer Rob Dickinson. The material for this DVD was filmed by Rob and his wife Yuehong during a week’s stay in Penang in December

2009. It was recorded in DV-AVI format and the result was a 45 minutes broadcast quality film. Railway enthusiast Ric Francis of Perth, W.A. and Garth Johnson (UK) provided invaluable technical information on the building and operation of the railway to help make the commentary as accurate and informative as possible. Following the screening Rob described his experience in making the film and answered questions from the audience. He particularly acknowledged the cooperation and access he was accorded by railway staff. PHT members expressed their appreciation to Rob for his timely documentation in film of the old Penang Hill Railway. By courtesy of Rob, copies of the DVD **Funiculi Funicula** are available from the PHT office at a special price to members.

Talk by Marcus Langdon on Fort Cornwallis and the Defence of Early George Town Saturday, 17th July 2010

Fort Cornwallis represents not only the first British toehold in the Malay Peninsula but is also a symbol of the safe and successful establishment of one of the world's most multicultural communities. This success, however, was never guaranteed. From the first day in 1786 Francis Light anticipated a hostile response to his establishment of a British settlement in Penang, though primarily from a regional rather than a European foe. The first hastily-constructed timber fort was therefore not designed as a defence against heavily-armed warships, but prahus mounted with small weapons.

Speaking to an audience of 126 at the Town Hall across the Padang from the Fort, Australian researcher Marcus Langdon outlined the story of Penang's early years under East India Company rule during which the settlement was tested only once by the threat of regional invasion although wars with European foes would maintain fear of an attack on Penang itself for nearly three decades. Despite this it was the East India Company's reluctant support of the settlement that posed the greatest threat to its survival. Marcus's presentation was based on research of original correspondence and documents such as the **Straits Settlements Records** which he is preparing for eventual publication.

Marcus's talk was followed by an historical tour of Fort Cornwallis.

The talk was part of George town Festival, see page 27 for more details about the George Town Festival.

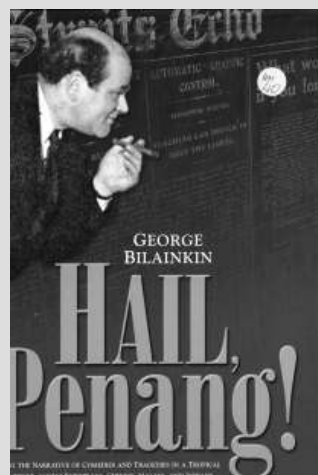
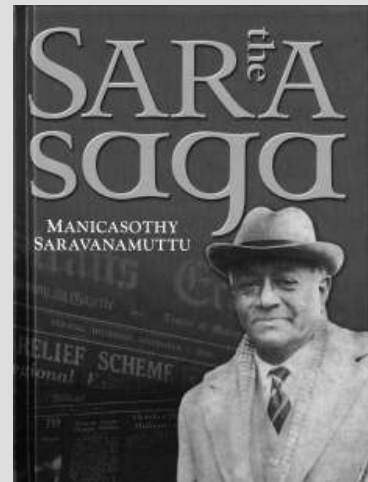
By Leslie A.K. James

Merchandise



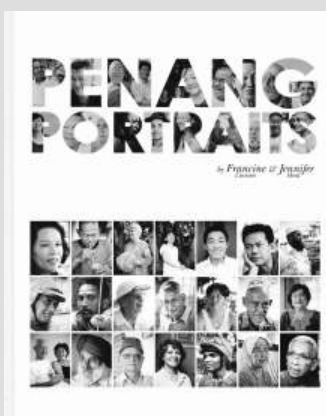
Penang Story in Pictures
by Nanyang Folk Culture
RM40.00

The Sara Saga by
Manicasothy Saravanamuttu
RM40.00



Hail Penang!
by George Bilainkin
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Note Card (Penang Series)
by StudioHoward RM10.00



Penang Potraits
by Francine Lissen &
Jennifer Heal RM80.00

Authenticated Facsimile
Reproductions of the
**Original Historical 1821
Aquatints of Penang
Views in Price of Wale's
Island** by William
Daniell, RM1600 per set.



THE 22ND JOINT CONFERENCE OF THE SUN YAT SEN AND SOONG CHING LING MEMORIALS AND SUN YAT SEN'S 1910 'PENANG CONFERENCE' CENTENNIAL CELEBRATION IN NOVEMBER 2010 IN PENANG, MALAYSIA.



In 1910, Dr Sun Yat Sen spent over four months in Penang. He called a meeting to plan the Huanghuagang Uprising, also called the Canton Uprising, a key event that led towards the China Revolution of 1911. The people of Penang are organizing a series of events to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the 'Penang Conference' and to remember the contributions of Dr Sun's Penang supporters.

There will be 60 delegates from more than 30 international memorials from eight cities in China, as well as Taiwan, Japan, Singapore and the Philippines; many of them are high-ranking government officers at national, provincial and municipal level. The Sun clan comprising about 30 direct descendants of Sun Yat Sen and Sun Mei from around the world will participate, making this the first major Sun family reunion ever to be held in Malaysia.

Our Malaysian Prime Minister, Dato' Seri Mohd Najib Tun Razak has agreed to officiate the grand launch of the 22nd Joint Conference on Saturday 20 November 2010. It will be a historic occasion for Penang and Malaysia.

As a legacy of this conference, the Penang Heritage Trust will establish a **Penang Sun Yat Sen Heritage Trail**, which will consist of at least 10 historical sites in Penang associated with Dr. Sun Yat Sen and his followers. This trail will remember the contributions of Dr. Sun's Penang followers, who were involved in establishing the Penang Philomatic Union; a Penang-based newspaper which is today the world's oldest Chinese newspaper; Penang's premier schools such as Chung Ling School, Penang Chinese Girls' School; and friendly societies such as Hu Yew

Seah, Li Teik Seah and Min Sin Seah.

Min Sin Seah is organising a major joint exhibition of the **international memorials entitled 'Sun Yat Sen, Soong Ching Ling: Their Life and Legacy'**, calling upon 40 organizations from more than 10 countries. The exhibition will be held at the former Maternity Hospital under the auspices of the Penang State Museum, from 12 November 2010 to 17 February 2011.

Wawasan Open University will co-organise a **symposium on 'Sun Yat Sen, Soong Ching Ling and Southeast Asia'** on 21 November 2010. The symposium will have panels on the contributions of Soong Ching Ling, the impact of Sun Yat Sen in Southeast Asia, and the significance of the 1910 'Penang Conference'.

The events which are part of the celebrations are collectively organised by a coalition of government and non-government bodies. The celebrations started with an exhibition and charity premiere of Road To Dawn at the Sun Yat-sen Memorial Hall, Taipei, launched by the Vice President of Taiwan in July 2010, and the last event will be the closing of the exhibition after Chinese New Year in February 2011. **By holding Sun Yat Sen's Penang Conference Centennial Celebration in 2010, we will be the precursors of the China Revolution Centenary Celebrations which will be jointly organized by China and Taiwan for the first time in 2011.** The publicity generated for Penang and Malaysia will spread far and wide over the following year.

by Khoo Salma Nasution

Exploring Pill Boxes in Penang



On September 3 2010, **Kwong Wah Yit Poh** published a full-page photo feature by Chua Chang Wee on Penang's pill-boxes. Although built by the British for the defence of Penang on the eve of the Second World War, the pill-boxes were never used as British forces abandoned Penang without a fight. Photographs courtesy of **Kwong Wah Yit Poh**. (clockwise from top: Marina Bay, Mount Erskine Cemetery, Mount Erskine Road, Mount Erskine Cemetery).

by Leslie James

GEORGE TOWN FESTIVAL 2010

The month-long inaugural GEORGE TOWN FESTIVAL 2010 was held in conjunction with the 2nd anniversary of George Town as a UNESCO World Heritage Site on July 7th.

The festival featured over 80 programmes to promote arts and heritage in Penang with the concerted effort from the Penang State Government, Municipal Council of Penang Island, George Town World Heritage Incorporated, Penang Global Tourism, Penang Heritage Trust and the various communities of Penang.

Scheduled to be an annual event, the George Town Festival 2010 presented a feast of theatre, music, dance, film, art, opera, food, fashion, photography, and inspirational talks. The festival had an approximate reach-out audience of 200,000 people (*festival programmes only). There were 50 events held at 27 venues within the city for the month long festival with the 7th July Celebrations having 75 programmes performed by over 400 performers.



Highlights

- Street Celebrations on 7th July: Streets Come Alive – Unforgettable George Town
- Beijing Opera performance by internationally acclaimed Beijing opera performer, Ghaffar Pourazar & Chie Morimura
- Public Art Installations by New York based Malaysian artist, Leon Lim (Public Art: The Last Chairs) and Penang based artist Fuan Wong (Dream Ficus)
- Movie screening of movies shot in Penang including **The Blue Mansion** and **Red Kebaya** with appearances by directors Glen Goei and cast
- Theatre production, **Emily of Emerald Hill**, directed by Malaysia's foremost film director Saw Teong Hin (known for his acclaimed local film – **Puteri Gunung Ledang**) starring Neo Swee Lin, Pearly Chua, and Leow Puay Tin
- Dance performances, including Vision of Forever, a classical Indian dance by Ramli Ibrahim and Sutra Dance Company
- Street opera performances by Japanese soprano, Ranko Kurano
- George Town Ball featuring Patrizio Buanne, an internationally acclaimed singer from Italy.
- Exhibitions & Talks, including Historical Minorities of Penang slides presentation by Clement Liang, Governors of Penang, Peranakan Penang Photo and Penang Heritage Houses by Halim Barbar
- Showcase of Malay Culture & Arts at the Jawi Peranakan Museum



PROGRAMMES IN-COLLABORATION WITH THE PENANG HERITAGE TRUST

1. FORT CORNWALLIS & THE DEFENCE OF EARLY GEORGE TOWN

Talk by Marcus Langdon,
Saturday, 17th July 2010

See report on page 25.

2. MOVIE SCREENING

THE BLUE MANSION & RED KEBAYA, 30 & 31 July 2010 (Friday & Saturday) at WOU, Penang

In collaborative effort between GTF Secretariat 2010 and PHT, the movie screening had featured two film productions shot in George Town, Penang. The private screening of the *The Blue Mansion* packaged with special appearance and “question & answer” session with the Director Glen Goei and cast. An approximate total of 756 people had attended the movie screening.



3. 7TH JULY STREET CELEBRATIONS CEMETERY TOUR, 7 & 10 July 2010

(Wednesday & Friday) at Protestant Cemetery, Jalan Sultan Ahmad Shah.

PHT conducted the cemetery tours during the 7th July Street Celebration to celebrate the very important cultural assets in the World Heritage Site. Several guides were trained by our very experienced council member, Loh-Lim Lin Lee to conduct this specialised tour. We would also like to record our appreciation to Ms. Sharon Cheah and council member Rebecca Wilkinson to put up a cemetery exhibition at 29 China Street. Sharon has kindly donated the proceed of the postcard to PHT as cemetery fund.

4. 7TH JULY STREET CELEBRATIONS SHOPHOUSE TOUR, 7 July

The tour is a collaboration project with Arts-Ed, & Penang Tourist Guides Association acted as the secretariat for Tan Yeow Wooi Culture & Heritage Research Studio.

Licensed guides were trained by Tan Yeow Wooi to conduct the tours. The tours were conducted in Chinese and or English language within George Town World Heritage Zone. The selected private residential (shophouses) were open for public who attended the tour.

- Book Launch “Sara Saga & Hail! Penang”
- Tea Talk “Early Defence of George Town” by Marcus Langdon
- Movie Screening “The Red Kebaya” & “Blue Mansion”
- 7th July Celebration: George Town Shophouse Trail & Cemetery Tour

*Reported by Joe Sidek & Alex Ong
Images by George Town Festival*

INNER CITY SWIFTLET BREEDING OPERATION



On September 2nd, the Deputy Prime Minister Tan Sri Muhyiddin Bin Mohd. Yassin announced that the National Council for Local Government has decided that swiftlet farming would be prohibited in the Penang and Malacca heritage enclaves. This statement has been welcomed by the Penang Heritage Trust who has been lobbying with various other NGO's to remove swiftlet farming out of urban areas and particularly, out of the UNESCO World heritage sites.

More importantly, this statement by the Deputy Prime Minister and the decision by the National Council of Local Governments has sent a clear message that Government, both Federal and Local, are supporting the preservation and revitalization processes in these precious multi-cultural heritage enclaves. This is a real step forward for everyone who views 'Heritage' as a positive catalyst for business and growth in the UNESCO zones.

However, despite statements made and decisions taken, nothing can move forward unless there is implementation. The DPM and Penang State Government has said that there will be a 'grace period' for swiftlet farms to move out to agricultural areas. The term 'grace period' is misleading. The State Government, on 24th September 2010, in a meeting on the issue of swiftlet farms in George Town, chaired by YB Chow Kon Yeow, has confirmed that the 3 year period is actually an evacuation implementation period at the end of which, all swiftlet farms have to be closed and gone from George Town.

ASNI (The Association of Swiftlet Nests Industry) president Carole Loh was also present at the meeting, as was PHT, represented by Janet Pillai, Sheau Fung and myself. Despite the clear statement by our DPM, ASNI continues to object to the decisions made by State and continues to question the reasons behind why swiftlet farming should be removed.

ASNI made it clear that although they have members signed up to ASNI, they claim to have no clue as to how many swiftlet farms these members are operating in George Town. Ms Loh also commented that although ASNI may provide advice, their members are not compelled to adhere to any of it.

YB Chow, Mr Oon Lai Kuan, with Mr Yew Tung Seang, made very clear statements on the issue of the evacuation implementation plan. Puan Maimunah bt Mohd Sharif of World Heritage Incorporated was also very impressive and has to be commended on her very clear explanations and answers made to various questions by ASNI. It has to be noted that Puan Maimunah and these gentlemen formed a very united front for the removal of swiftlet farming.

The meeting resulted in the clarification that swiftlet farming would be removed from George Town in 3 years. In the meantime it was agreed that a working committee would be set up. Representatives from State, MPPP, WHI, PHT and ASNI will sit to thrash out the implementation plan. This includes working on the ground and identifying the actual swiftlet farms in the Heritage zones. Thinkcity will also be requested to participate as they may be involved in limited restoration and rehabilitation stages of the buildings after evacuation. YB Chow plans to begin the implementation plan at the beginning of next year.





Personally, I left this meeting feeling like a young pup meeting a friendly stranger. Shivering with excitement at the thought of getting a back rub and a long term home but holding back slightly, muscles taut and ready to dodge at the possibility that actually, the stranger wants to kick me. A mixed bag of feeling great that the State has made a clear decision but a sense of frustration too that this decision is still nothing until action is taken to complete this important move. This meeting though, gave me something I have really wanted to see for a long time. The State and MPPP, the people in charge making positive statements that say they are in charge. It was very heartening.

The hard work of implementation, however, begins now. With the strong support of the very few residents of George Town who actually came forward to put their names on paper, PHT will continue to lobby to ensure that the plan to remove swiftlet farms out of George Town will be successful.

Opinion and comments by Rebecca Duckett- Wilkinson, Images by Tan Yeow Wooi and Cultural Mapping Group.

Illegal Demolition

20 Pykett Avenue



Before



After

After

9 Argus Lane



Before



NOTICE**MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL**

Reminder for membership renewal with increase in subscription for 2011:

Admission: RM50 | Annual subscription: RM60

Overseas postal surcharge:
RM14 annually for Asia, Australia, New Zealand
RM24 annually for the rest of the world
Enquiries: phtrust@streamyx.com
Tel: +604- 264 2631

Please send your cheque or visit
Penang Heritage Trust
26 Church Street
City of George Town, 10200 Penang

Newsletter Guest Editor~Leslie A.K. James

Production~ Sheau Fung

Unless specifically stated, the views and opinions expressed in the articles are the author's own and do not necessarily represent the views and opinions of PHT

Book Review: Relatively Speaking. By Joan Hon. Hope Publishers, Singapore, 2008.

Originally published in 1984 by Times Books International, this book was republished by the author to commemorate the 25th anniversary of the death of her Penang-born father Hon Sui Sen, Minister of Finance of Singapore from 1970 until his death in 1983. Joan Hon recollects lovingly Sui Sen in his roles as father, cabinet minister, friend, colleague and boss. It is the story of a Balik Pulau Hakka boy who made good in the cabinet of Lee Kuan Yew, himself a Hakka. Sui Sen was born in 1916 and educated at St. Xavier's Institution and Raffles College. He began his career in the Straits Settlements civil service in 1939. Penang readers will be interested in Joan Hon's nostalgic descriptions of the town and countryside of Balik Pulau as well as her anecdotal account of the lives of its Roman Catholic Hakka community. Hon's biography of her father also illustrates the close and longstanding family ties between the peoples of Malaysia and Singapore.

By Kok Pow Lin

Penang Heritage Trust would like to congratulate the State Government for its very brave and committed stance in reducing the amount of plastics consumed by the public. We also encourage all our members to support the initiative of the state government.

Penang: No plastic bags starting next year *Opalyn Mok, The Sun, 2 Nov 2010*

GEORGE TOWN (Nov 2, 2010): Starting Jan 1, Penangites must bring a bag along whenever they go shopping as the No Plastic Bags campaign has been extended to every day.

From next year, all hypermarkets, supermarkets, departmental stores, pharmacies, fast food chains, nasi kandar chains, chain stores and petrol station kiosks will have to implement the No Plastic Bags ruling every day.

As for mini markets and small enterprises, they are required to fulfil the condition of implementing No Plastic Bags three days a week, from Monday to Wednesday, in order to renew their licences.

Announcing this when tabling the state budget for 2011, Penang Chief Minister Lim Guan Eng said feedback from 73 participants of the Declaration to Reduce the Use of Plastic Bags has shown that a total of 32 million plastic bags were saved under the No Plastic Bags programme between July 1, 2009 and Oct 26 this year.

Under the state's environmental programmes initiative, an environment resource centre will be set up in Tanjung Bungah under the Penang Island Municipal council's Local Agenda 21.

The centre will produce EM mudball and garbage enzyme and set up a nursery for trees.

Lim said both the Penang Island Municipal Council and Seberang Perai Municipal Council will be giving 50% discount to hawkers for their licence as an incentive to reduce the use of plastic bags and to ensure the cleanliness of their premises and surroundings.

"Another programme in the planning stage is the '100 steps for cleanliness' programme where a plastic rubbish disposal facility will be placed at every 100 steps," he said.