



PHT Newsletter

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Support Conservation Efforts in Your Community!

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**PENANG
HERITAGE
TRUST**

*Persatuan
Warisan
Pulau
Pinang*

PHT

EDITORIAL

CELEBRATING twenty-five years at the forefront of conservation efforts in Penang, PHT plans to mark its silver anniversary with a series of commemorative and fund-raising events over the course of the next year.

While justly proud of PHT's leading role in the campaign for the World Heritage listing of the city of George Town, members must not be blinded by this triumph to the continuing threats to heritage in George Town and beyond. Every day we are reminded of these threats by decaying heritage buildings like the Shih Chung School or, neighbouring the E&O Hotel on Farquhar Street, the onetime St George's School building and the former Mission House, or the derelict former Judge's Residence on Sepoy Lines overlooking the polo ground. Illegal demolitions are also taking place as a result of deliberate actions by owners and developers who are undeterred by half-hearted monitoring, wilful neglect or weak sanctions on the part of the authorities. Another issue is the blatant reluctance of the authorities to act on the requirement to remove swiftlet breeding -- a multi-million dollar agricultural industry -- from George Town's urban heritage core, thereby threatening public health as well as the very UNESCO heritage designation Penang has fought so hard to obtain.

Neither is Penang's heritage limited by the geographic boundaries of the historic city of George Town. It encompasses areas beyond Transfer Road, beyond Gottlieb Road, beyond the core zone and beyond the buffer zone of the UNESCO World Heritage Site. Of concern, for example, is the fate of a pair of exquisite houses on Burma Lane, until recently the site of Tenby School but once the pre-war residences of exiled Thai politicians and royalty. Such buildings are part of the historic links between Penang and Thailand. Another site, representing a nexus between the town and Penang Hill, is Kek Lok Si Temple where, unfortunately, unrestricted "development" has degraded the area so much that the original stream and hillside have been almost destroyed.

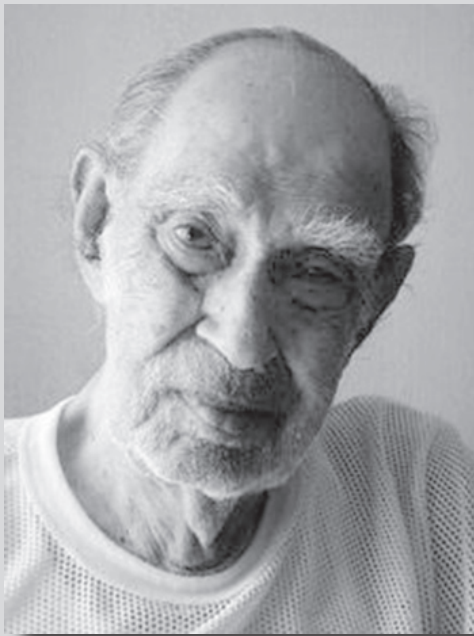
Conserving Penang's heritage is not just a matter of protecting one area or individual sites within or outside the WHS area. When considering Penang's heritage it is important to take a holistic approach, to include those areas that are integral to Penang's historic identity. Thus, our vision beyond George Town must embrace Penang Hill and the Botanic Gardens; the harbour and the shoreline; selected suburban streetscapes of outstanding beauty and architectural merit; the several historic community cemeteries; the many mosques, temples and churches; the old and famous schools; as well as the state's impressive public water works. Areas that must not be overlooked include Balik Pulau, Seberang Prai, Tanjung Tokong and Pulau Tikus -- all at risk of being submerged by mammoth building projects that are destroying their traditional character and displacing historic communities.

Concerns are also being raised about the possible loss of important green spaces such as those occupied by the Turf Club and the Penang Sports Club. Before approving "development" on these sites, the authorities should be mindful of the recreational purposes for which these areas were originally intended and set aside. If use of these sites by limited club memberships is no longer needed or sustainable by them, then consideration should be given to retaining them to meet the requirement of the wider Penang community for more public parks and recreation areas.

After twenty-five years PHT has much to celebrate but there is also much work to be done if Penang is not only to retain the outstanding universal values recognised by the international community in George Town's World Heritage listing but also remain the special place so many residents and visitors believe it to be.

Editor

THE LAST JEW OF PENANG



Mordecai David Mordecai
9.10.1921 ~ 15.07.2011

Eulogy read by Gary Braut at the burial of Mordecai David Mordecai at the Jewish Cemetery, Penang, on 17th July 2011.

“Mordecai David Mordecai, who died peacefully in his sleep on Thursday. He was born on 9 Oct 1921 in Penang and lived a long life, almost 90 years. He was the last Jew from Baghdad background left in Malaysia.

Modi was the son of David and Mozelle Mordecai. David Mordecai came to Penang from Baghdad in 1895, was a noted member of the colonial society in the Straits Settlements in the 1920's and 30's and involved in tin and rubber development. He was also a leading member of the colonial turf racing community, both in Penang and Singapore.

In a varied and an interesting life in Penang, Modi served for many years as the manager of the E&O Hotel in George Town, and the manager of the Casuarina Hotel at Batu Feringhi.

He had a son, David, by his former wife, and two grandchildren who live in the United Kingdom. He is also survived by his long time partner and carer of over 40 years, Annie.

Modi will be very much missed by his former staff in the E&O and the Casuarina Hotels, by his angelic partner, Annie, his sister Helen, and Helen's friend Derek, and her four daughters, Sally, Flora, Mozelle and Rachel in Australia, and Sally's husband Eric and daughter Sarah-Davida, and Mozelle's son, David.

Modi will also be missed by many other people in Malaysia and Australia, including Raimy Che Ross, the independent scholar, who has a particular interest in the history of the Jews of Penang, and a great affection for Modi.

It is wonderful that Daniel and Donna Jeremiah, from Kuala Lumpur, Mod's relatives, joined me today.
REST IN PEACE”



“(Left) Grave of Modi's father, David Mordecai, who died on 24th May 1950. Placing pebbles on the grave is a mark of respect for the deceased. (Right) Burial of Mordecai David Mordecai, 17th July 2011
Photos from Clement Liang

PHT IS FINALLY ON FACEBOOK!

This year, we have taken steps to set up a Facebook account in order to reach out to the general public, with the hope that disseminating information on our heritage alerts and activities will raise awareness among a wider audience.

The design and programme of the PHT website have been completed. The design has been improved to provide more interactive and user friendly interface.

The website has a special link reporting heritage alerts in Penang. It also features a forum inviting interested persons to post their concerns to our website.

We would like PHT members to participate in all our events and we invite all to subscribe to the RSS feed as soon as possible to get first-hand reports and information on all the alerts and events organized and promoted by Penang Heritage Trust.



NOTICE

MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL

Reminder for membership renewal:

Admission: RM50 | Annual subscription: RM60

Overseas postal surcharge:

RM14 annually for Asia, Australia, New Zealand

RM24 annually for the rest of the world

PHT ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2011

On Sunday, 25th September, the Penang Heritage Trust held its Annual General Meeting at 3.30pm at the Eastern & Oriental Hotel.

The AGM was attended by 48 members, including 6 council members and 2 trustees. As this was an election year, 10 council members were nominated and elected.

PHT COUNCIL MEMBERS (TERM 2011-2013)

President: Khoo Salma Nasution

Vice President: Dato' Dr. Mohd Razha Rashid

Hon. Secretary: Clement Liang

Hon. Treasurer: Lim Gaik Siang

Loh-Lim Lin Lee

Rebecca Dorothy Duckett

Hassan Abdul Hamid

Khaw Juat Seng, Joann

Ong Choon Imm, Lyndy

Wisemen Bendula

IPOH AND THE KINTA VALLEY

After a postponement in March, a site visit five years in the making finally saw the light of day when on Saturday morning 18th June 20 PHT members including our guide Tim and Sheau Fung, our manager, assisted by Pei Ling, assembled at the Caring Society Complex. The bus left at 8.20 a.m. and reached the Regal Lodge hotel in Ipoh at 11.30a.m. En route, Tim gave a brief introduction to the history of Ipoh and the Kinta Valley. Villages sprouted up along the West Coast of Peninsular Malaya because of the proximity to the sea but it was because of tin discovered and mined in these areas that we have the inland towns that developed into cities such as Taiping, Ipoh and Kuala Lumpur. The earlier wave of Chinese migrants who migrated to Penang and the northern region came from Fujian province where the Hokkien dialect is spoken. It was these Chinese who mined the tin in Taiping. When new tin mines were started in Ipoh and Kuala Lumpur, a new wave of immigrants arrived from Canton, the reason why the main dialect in Ipoh and Kuala Lumpur is Cantonese.

After leaving our luggage at the hotel, we set out for the most important stop for most Malaysians, a food stop! The bus dropped us off at what was considered the food capital in Ipoh. With several coffee shops to select from, most of the group ended up having bean sprouts chicken before stocking up on biscuits and other dry food products from nearby shops.



PAPAN AND SYBIL KATHIGASU

Our first stop after lunch was Papan where we visited Sybil Kathigasu's house and makeshift clinic.



With Mr Law Saik Hong at Sybil Kathigasu's House

Our host and guide for the day was Law Saik Hong of the Perak Heritage Society. The humble house where Sybil performed her heroic deeds stands alone in what was once a row of shophouses. Papan today is a sleepy town where the population is on the decline as most young people have moved to bigger towns in search of greener pastures. Saik Hong showed us various artefacts and shared stories of Sybil's bravery during the Japanese occupation. She secretly kept a short-wave radio and listened to BBC broadcasts. One can still see today the hole in the floor underneath the staircase where she hid the radio. She also secretly provided medical supplies and services and information to the resistance forces until she and her family were arrested in 1943. Despite being interrogated and tortured by the Japanese military police, Sybil refused to cooperate and was detained in the Batu Gajah jail. After Malaya was liberated in August 1945, she was flown to Britain for medical treatment. At a ceremony at Buckingham Palace in October 1947 she was awarded the George Medal, the only woman in Malaya to receive this award for bravery.*

Our next stop was the house of Raja Bilah, the headman of Papan, just a short walk from Sybil's shophouse. The Sumatran nobleman's home was restored by the National Museum several years ago and has since been used as a location in several films, most notably **Anna and the King**.

BATU GAJAH

From Papan, we made our way by coach to Batu Gajah Jail and the cemetery known as “God’s Little Acre.” Here, we visited the graves of the three English planters whose deaths at Sungei Siput on 16th June 1948 resulted in the declaration of the Malayan Emergency (1948 -1960).** Before leaving Batu Gajah we had a final stop at the lovely hospital which also enabled us to view the church and the surrounding administrative buildings.



TIN DREDGE

Our next stop was to the last remaining tin dredge in Malaysia. It is a remarkable example of engineering. Opened to the public in 2008, it is badly in need of repair (tilting to one side with water seeping in) but it is a great place to explore and marvel at for its sheer size. Walking onto the tin dredge was like stepping back in time. The cavernous interior was silent, but when the dredger was in full operation, the noise would have been unbearable. One can imagine when it was fully operational; its huge buckets scooping and transporting alluvial to its body. The excavated material was then broken up by jets of water as it fell onto revolving screens. The tin-bearing alluvial then passed to a primary separating plant. Large stones and rubble were retained by the screens. The largest dredge could dig continuously to depths of up to 200 metres below water. It could handle over three-quarters of a million cubic metres of material per month. The first tin dredge was introduced by Malayan Tin Dredging Ltd. in the Kinta Valley tin fields in 1913. During the heyday of the tin mining industry in 1940, there were 123 dredges in operation. This number began to

diminish after 1981. By the end of 1983 there were only 38 dredges left. Although it looks too big to move, these massive dredges once devoured swamps and jungles as they searched hungrily for tin deposits, reshaping the local topography at the same time. Kinta Valley is now full of ponds due to the mining process. Members who went to the top of the dredger had a bird’s eye view over the surrounding ponds. At the entrance to the dredge there is a small museum displaying a selection of tools. It was here that some members bought custard apples from the museum’s fruit orchard. After a refreshing jelly dessert drink in Tanjung Tualang, we visited a nearby seafood restaurant for dinner before returning to Ipoh. One member remarked that *tualang* in Hokkien refers to grown-ups, so we really felt still like kids (*gheena* in Hokkien) amongst the *tualang* there!



IPOH HERITAGE WALK

Next morning after a sumptuous breakfast of dim sum and other local hawker favourites, we were met by Mark Lay and several key members of the Kinta Heritage Society. The head of the State Legislative Council for Tourism also made a brief appearance.

Following the Ipoh Heritage Walk maps produced by the State with the help of Kinta Heritage Society, we set out on foot, led by Mark. Mark was one of the key people involved in producing these self-guided walks. He shared many interesting anecdotes as we made our way to the major sites. It was a balmy morning and the overcast sky without the direct sunlight made it easier to walk. Sites that the group managed to cover included the Ipoh Railway Station (also known as the “Taj Mahal of Ipoh”), the Cenotaph in front of the railway station,



With Mark Lay on Ipoh Heritage Walk

the Court House, Church of St John the Divine, Ipoh 'Padang' (field), the Indian Muslim Mosque and St Michael's Institution. The group then proceeded to the Birch Memorial Clock Tower passing a few heritage buildings in the Old Town 'high street' such as the Mercantile Bank Building and HSBC Building. The tour ended with a walk through Concubine Lane, a narrow lane flanked by quaint pre-war shophouses believed to have been inhabited by concubines belonging to rich mining merchants. Ipoh does have a reputation of having fair maidens!

Before leaving Ipoh, we had lunch at one of Ipoh's most famous coffee shops, located at the end of Concubine Lane. Considered as a food institution by some where Ipoh's heritage food can be savoured, members enjoyed the wide hawker selection. Some members even *ta pao* (takeaway) food back home! It was indeed a weekend to remember, equal parts of interesting sites, stories, people, and of course food! The best part is that Kinta Valley is just a stone's throw away from Penang, so one can always go back for more! *By Eric Yeoh.*



City Hall, Ipoh



St John's Anglican Church, Ipoh

Editor's Notes:

*Sybil Kathigasu's own remarkable story is related in her autobiography **No Dram of Mercy** (Kuala Lumpur, Prometheus Enterprise, 2006). Sadly, after several operations Sybil Kathigasu died in England from complications due to the injuries she suffered at the hands of the Kempetei.

**The three planters murdered by communist terrorists at Sungei Siput were A.E Walker, J.A. Allison and J.D. Christian. "God's Little Acre" contains the graves of many planters, tin miners, policemen and servicemen killed during the Emergency and is the site of an annual ceremony of remembrance on the closest Saturday to the anniversary date of 16th June.

RESERVOIRS, AQUEDUCTS AND DAMS

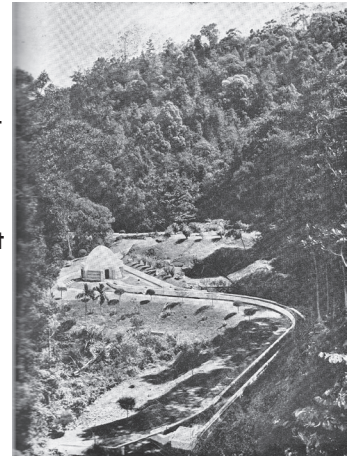
An appreciation of Penang's history is integral to understanding the importance of heritage. For example, one of the reasons why early mariners stopped at Penang was to replenish their supplies of fresh water. Batu Ferringhi (Foreigners' Rock) with its waterfall once visible from the sea was one such source for sailing ships to obtain water before and after crossing the Indian Ocean. Near the current E&O Hotel on the north shore was a later site -- known as Sweet Water Bay and depicted in early paintings -- the terminus of an aqueduct from the Waterfall behind the present Botanic Gardens. That waterfall and the reservoir at its base are the site of the oldest water works in Malaysia and should be regarded as a heritage site.

Other early reservoirs and aqueducts also deserve designation as heritage sites. In particular, the picturesque Guillemard Reservoir at Mount Erskine built in 1929 under the supervision of Penang's first municipal water engineer J.D. Fettes is not only a functioning example of early 20th century engineering but a site of outstanding beauty that was a popular venue for pre-war picnics before it was closed to the public. The Guillemard Reservoir is part of a public water supply system designed by Fettes that includes a four-mile-long aqueduct built in 1926-1929 winding through the hills above Batu Ferringhi. Fed by three intakes from hillside jungle streams, this historic aqueduct leads to a mile-long tunnel and a 24-inch cast-iron pipeline ending at the Guillemard Reservoir.



Guillemard Service Reservoir (1929)

The Guillemard Reservoir and Batu Ferringhi aqueduct were opened on 16th July 1929 by Sir Hugh Clifford, Governor of the Straits Settlements, who named the reservoir after his predecessor Sir Lawrence Guillemard and Lady Guillemard. In commending Fettes for his design and work on the reservoir and aqueduct Governor Clifford noted he had worked for six years without taking leave.* Construction of the new water scheme had been approved during Guillemard's term in office. Details of the reservoir and aqueduct were described in full in **The Straits Times** of 17th July 1929. Built at a cost of \$3,700,000 with a capacity of 7 million gallons the reservoir was constructed in two halves so that



one half may be in use when the other half is being cleaned. Following the contours of the hills the smallest section of the Batu Ferringhi aqueduct has a gradient of 1 in 500 at the intake end. The largest section beyond the intakes has a gradient of 1 in 1,800. From the reservoir a 27-inch cast-iron pipeline was laid to Pangkor Road and from there a 24-inch pipeline to Pitt Street.

Other examples of impressive public water works are the Ayer Itam Reservoir with its prominent art deco clock tower as well as the separate Ayer Itam Dam.

**Note: James Dollery Fettes died on home leave in England in 1931 after delaying his leave for several years. His widow was awarded a gratuity of \$15,000 by the Penang Municipal Commissioners in recognition of his "highly meritorious services". (Straits Times, 21 Feb. 1931; Singapore Free Press & Mercantile Advertiser, 3 Nov. 1931)*

By Leslie A.K. James. Photographs from Penang Past and Present 1786-1963, George Town, City Council of George Town, 1966

AUS-HERITAGE FORUM: PROGRESSING WITH HERITAGE, March- May 2011

With George Town's listing as a World Heritage Site, the growing importance of heritage to Penang's future is now widely recognized. Through collaboration between AusHeritage and Penang Heritage Trust (PHT), eight Australian heritage specialists were invited as resource persons for four heritage forums and workshops that took place in Penang over four weekends from March to May 2011. The forums and workshop were organized by George Town World Heritage Incorporated (GTWHI) and supported by the Penang Government, Penang Global Tourism (PGT) and the Pertubuhan Akitik Malaysia (PAM - Malaysian Institute of Architects).



The heritage forums on Saturdays consisted of public lectures in the morning, presenting international and Australian heritage practices and issues. In the afternoon, stakeholder forums with representatives from different sectors identified current challenges and possible areas of cooperation between heritage practitioners from different fields and other relevant stakeholders and expertise areas. These one-day forums were open to the public.

On the Sundays and Mondays, closed-door focus-group workshops were held to table and produce realistic and achievable action plans and recommendations to the government and other relevant bodies.

The forum and workshop series was designed to nurture the expertise and build on the existing knowledge in Malaysia required for the conservation of the World Heritage Site. The sessions aimed to raise the general level of interest and awareness, promote dialogue between government, non-government organizations and professionals, as well as forge collaboration among different sectors of the heritage industry. It was anticipated that the series would contribute towards skills development and institutional strengthening for the care and management of the unique George Town WHS as well as other heritage sites across Malaysia.

NOTICE SITE VISIT FEE 2012

The fee for site visits will be increased from RM5 to RM10 per person for members and spouses effective January 2012. For non-members the fee will be increased from RM12 to RM20. It is hoped that the increase in fee will further enhance the site visit experience of all PHT members and friends.

We hope that members will continue to support and enjoy future site visits. We invite your input and suggestions for new site visits.

Penang Heritage Trust

THE PROCESS OF RIVITALISATION

As usual there are too many things to see and do around George Town: Chinese New Year, Chap Goh May, Hokkien New Year, Thaipusam etc. but anyone who has been through town lately will notice (unless they are totally out of tune with their surroundings!) the busy bustling changes that are happening. The restored Whiteaways has Mutiara Art Gallery, Ipoh White Coffee, Subway, Lava Boutique, with more on the cards, I'm sure. Logan Heritage should insist that Star Cruises get rid of their banners on their frontage, but they have Kopi Tan and more food outlets to come. In the area we have smaller more local businesses opening: Lighthouse Coffee on Union Street, Ka Chai Cafe, The Leaf Healthy Store at 5 Penang Street that sells organic food and rents bikes. Further along, Pitaya at 80-82 China Street for good juices, Kaffa (just down from Pitaya), Amalies at 6 Armenian Street for great pasta and coffee, new galleries, and small shops, all opening amongst residents, sundry shops, wholesalers, toisai shops etc. This revitalization process is producing a domino effect with owners and tenants tidying up their frontages, repainting and redoing little bits which have visual impact. Visitors from KL, Singapore, you name it, who have been regular visitors, all notice this difference and it's exciting, refreshing, and yes, it's definitely pushing up property prices. People are starting to return -- those who married overseas, worked elsewhere and see themselves coming back at some point. Some just want a 'pad' in Penang and are looking for a place with some character; others, such as young couples who want to set up their own small businesses. This is a good thing.

However, it has been obvious too, that people are just rushing to renovate houses so that they can get in on the 'heritage' branding that is becoming a very big part of what George Town is. Things are not always done with sympathy to the site. Some of them just want to make improvements and, although their hearts are in the right place, often their methods do not fit into what is required in preserving a heritage site. To my mind, this is in big part the result of lack of information trickling down to the general public.

Whiteaways Building



It's very easy for people 'in the know' to get information. I am more and more of the opinion that the UNESCO listing and all it encompasses, does very little in terms of providing the 'little guy' with information and tools to grow within this wonderfully opportunistic time. The ordinary residents and small traders in George Town should be given all the information and tools needed, as simply and as cheaply as possible, in order for them to benefit. Members of Penang Heritage Trust, for example, are sent all sorts of information about forums, discussions, workshops etc, as are members of MPPP, the GTWHI, developers, MICCI etc. These people (and I'm one of them) also have access to information on things like grants from THINKCITY, for example. All this information is not so accessible to any Johan or Chin who lives on a street, sees all the tourists and wants to open a shop or cafe, restore his roof or whatever. First of all, this kind of information is given mainly to those on a mailing list, who may be members of some group, who speak English (generally) and who have the income to be interested in heritage (again, generally). I know that it seems that I have my cake and eat it too, but I really feel that your 'down on the ground locals' are not given the support or knowledge to do the right thing. All these committees and foundations are also incredibly intimidating for the guy on the street and seem way too fancy, academic, snotty (amongst some of the terms I've heard used) for a lot of the local residents and traders to feel comfortable making contact. Investors, developers, people with a project and lots of money ask for or are given assistance and publicity but the little guys out to make an improvement to their humble heritage building can get left behind, leading them to feel sidelined.

When wanting to make small improvements to heritage buildings there is a seemingly terrifying process of paper work, heritage impact reports, permits etc. that all need to be obtained. We all know Penangites hate any kind of due process and have become very cynical of authority but in the case for preserving this site, a certain amount of procedure must be accepted. However, this procedure must be easy and should be provided with minimum fees and fuss. Ideally a body such as GTWHI should be providing locals with a subsidized service of consultants and architects, assistance with permits for a very minimal fee -- I'm talking as low as RM50 for the lot -- and THINKCITY could think about (they may have already) providing lots of little grants, e.g., to return tiles to roofs, return original wood shutters to brutalized heritage houses, especially where the local owners or tenants of these buildings want to make a small improvement. Small projects like this when done over a wide area make a large impact and instill pride in the properties. I admit to being totally proud of our house facade after it was restored with a THINKCITY grant, but I'm even more thrilled when lots of local residents have said they are proud of it too! The impact of the THINKCITY grants is definitely being noticed around town.

Permits for small repairs should be given quickly and assistance to make the right choice of materials and such, has to be provided. Ideas should also be made available for people to make choices; lots of people cannot afford the original materials, e.g., terra-cotta tile floors. Information on cheaper alternatives, creative ideas should be provided -- cement floors have been used in this town for years, you see them everywhere. Adding colours or imprinted designs using string to make tromp d'oeil tile patterns are cheap alternatives that the local person living in his house can use. They should not be condemned or pushed out of the revitalization process for not being able to afford the luxury of original materials. There are definitely strong reasons to support the use of original lime mortar instead of cement, and lime wash instead of emulsion paint. Thankfully these are not expensive at all. The reasons for their use just have to be explained and understood. There is also the matter of taste and creativity. What

you may love, someone else may hate, and a lot of people cannot think out of the box. Small budgets often force you to think creatively -- just look at some of the small businesses opening now, e.g., Amalies. Local residents and small trades have to be helped somehow so that George Town keeps its long-term, local population and that they can thrive here again.

Believe me when I say that I know it's not straightforward and I know it's all so easy for me to say GTWHI or THINKCITY or the State Authority should do this or that. The whole premise of democracy is that the winning party has to inherit and deal with all the problems left behind by the last party; that's all part and parcel of people power and we all know how complicated it is here in Penang. Everything happening now is a learning curve and everyone has an opinion. The State authorities have to set the precedent now for heritage preservation and the management of this World Heritage Site in order to preserve the opportunities so blazingly obvious to all of us here in George Town. They must act and all of us should help this process.

Text by Rebecca Duckett-Wilkinson

Images by Timothy Tye



Logan Heritage Building

PENANG'S DISAPPEARING THAI HERITAGE

Penang Island has traditionally been called Koh Maak (or "Number One Island") by the Thais, not surprising given that Penang was at one time part of a Siamese vassal state together with Kedah which was also known as Saiburi. In a letter to the Government of India in Bengal in 1793 (seven years after the establishment of Penang as an East India Company settlement), Captain Francis Light described the main communities in Penang and noted the presence of 100 Burmese and Thais. The 1828 census of Penang reported a total population of 22,503, out of which 1,117 were Thais and Burmese, mostly living in Teluk Ayer Raja, now Pulau Tikus, (665 people) and Kuala Muda (256 people).

Besides the mass migration of the Eurasian community from southern Siam to Penang during Light's time, the Thai community in Penang was attracted by the abundant opportunities and grew constantly over the years under the auspices of the British. In 1845, the community sought a piece of land and Queen Victoria granted them a five-acre site in Pulau Tikus as a gesture to promote trade with Siam. The land grant was presented by W.L. Butterworth, Governor of the Straits Settlements (1843–1855). It is interesting to note that a British-Siam boundary stone was erected at Pinang Tunggal, north of Province Wellesley, in the 1800s to mark the official border between Siam and Penang. The stone still stands in the same spot today.

In the eyes of the Thais, Penang by the turn of the 20th century was an advanced state and well managed by the British authorities. Penang was and still is a favourite place for Thais to seek an English education and hence was nicknamed "the other London". King Chulalongkorn (King Rama V), taught by the British governess Anna Leonowens (whose husband is buried in Penang) was the first Western-educated Siamese king. He paid an official visit to Penang in 1890 to study the government administration. In 1897, when he visited Europe, he stopped over at Chakrabongse House where he was received by the household of the Sultan of Kedah, at that time still a vassal state

of Siam. When King Prajadhipok (King Rama VI) visited Penang in 1929, he stayed at Asdang House on Northam Road. Asdang House and Chakrabongse House were built by Phya Rasada Nupradit of Ranong, better known as Khaw Sim Bee, of the legendary Sino-Thai family whose illustrious members were appointed by King Chulalongkorn as governors of the southern west-coast provinces of Siam, stretching from Ranong, Phuket to Trang. To enhance the prestige of Siam, Khaw donated a piece of prime real estate at the Esplanade to the public. Called Ranong Ground, the football-size field was meant for public recreation. It has completely disappeared and today is the site of Dewan Sri Pinang.

Chakrabongse House and Asdang House were the venue of numerous parties and receptions especially for visiting dignitaries from Bangkok. Named after the sons of King Chulalongkorn, the two houses were built back to back, with Chakrabongse facing the sea and Asdang House facing the road. Asdang House was sold and later became the Metropole Hotel. Unfortunately, it was illegally demolished on Christmas Day in 1993 and the Mayfair condominium was built on the site. After being fined RM50,000 and instructed by the MPPP to reconstruct the entrance hall, the developer erected a mock-up façade of the original Asdang House. Chakrabongse met a similar fate in the 1970s when it was demolished to build a multi-storey family apartment.



Chakrabongse House

Chakrabongse House was described in glowing terms by the **Penang Gazette** at its house warming by Prince Chakrabongse in 1904:

"Mr Khaw Sim Bee has taste and very thorough notions of comfort. Standing on the brink of the sea, with its verandahs opening on lovely view of the harbour and purple heights of Kedah beyond, the position of the new house could scarcely be surpassed in Penang.

"Its snowy whiteness backed by the dark green of palms and flanked with tennis courts will render it the home beautiful indeed. The floors have marble in the halls and on the verandahs. The dining and drawing rooms are large enough for huge gatherings, and the latter might easily accommodate four or five sets of Lancers."



King Chulalongkorn with his entourage to Penang in 1897

During the Japanese occupation, the houses were appropriated by the Japanese military forces. After the war they were returned to Khaw Sim Bee's only son in Penang, Khaw Joo Chye, who inherited Chakrabongse House and had other properties including 20 Pykett Avenue. Sadly, the Pykett Avenue property met the same fate as Asdang House. It was illegally demolished on 26th July 2010, a few days ahead of a heritage building assessment to be conducted by MPPP.

In the 1930s, a new group of Thai royal dignitaries and politicians resided in Penang. Political turmoil in Bangkok caused by the failure of democratic reform and a coup d'état in 1932 forced the first elected Thai Prime Minister Phaya Manopakorn Nititada and Prince Damrong Rajanubhab and Prince Svasti Sophon, both sons of King Rama V, to flee to Penang and seek refuge. They took up residence at Burmah Lane, Kelawai Road and Burmah Road and lived a conspicuous lifestyle. Their exchange of letters with their Bangkok counterparts and family members as well as the documented visits from their friends vividly describe their life in Penang during those

years. Prince Damrong Rajanubhab's memoirs of his residence at "Cinnamon Hall", 15 Kelawai Road, became a famous classic reading book for all Thais. Cinnamon Hall was demolished long ago but many Thais who visit Penang are curious about this building and try to locate its whereabouts.

Praya Manopakorn never returned to Thailand and died in Penang in 1947. Two streets off Jalan Bagan Jermal were named after him, Jalan Mano and Solok Mano. Prince Svasti Sophon died in Penang in 1935 and his funeral at Wat Pinbang Onn on Green Lane witnessed a gathering of VIPs from Thailand and local officials. He was formerly the Minister of Defence and his daughter was married to King Rama VII. In 1942 Prince Damrong Rajanubhab was allowed to return to Bangkok where he died the following year. Prince Damrong was credited with founding the modern Thai education system and the modern provincial administration. From his books on Thai literature, culture and art works grew the National Library, as well as the National Museum. On the centenary of his birth in 1962, he became the first Thai included in the UNESCO list of the world's most distinguished persons. In April 2011, a group of historians from Bangkok interviewed the 92-year-old sister-in-law of Praya Mano, Prabandh Sanasen, who has lived in Penang for 80 years following her brother-in-law's exile to Penang. Her recorded memories fill a gap in the history of Thailand and Penang.

On the evening of 20th October, 2011, one of the bungalows at Burmah Lane where the Thai royal dignitaries used to live was demolished and reduced to a heap of rubble to make way for a yet-to-be approved high-rise development. It is understood that MPPP gave a conservation order only for the second bungalow on the spurious grounds that there was no need to conserve all bungalows of similar appearance -- a case of "heritage tokenism"!

To everyone -- especially tourists -- the charms of Penang lie in its rich historic and cultural heritage. If the old buildings that witnessed these historic events are not valued and kept, there will not be anything left as physical evidence to relate to our past. *By Clement Liang*

POLICE GRAVES FROM THE 1948-60 EMERGENCY

The Western Road Cemetery is not the oldest Christian cemetery in Penang but it does contain many interesting graves recalling important aspects of Malaysia's and Penang's 20th century history. Of particular note are the graves of the Roman Catholic Brothers and Sisters who contributed so much to the development of modern education in the country. There are also the graves of the vanished Armenian community, graves removed from their original site beside the former Armenian Church on Bishop Street when the church land was sold in 1937.

Of topical interest these days are the graves of Malayan Police officers killed during the Emergency. Many of the graves share a common design and are to be found near the graves of Commonwealth servicemen also killed during the Emergency. The police graves tell interesting stories of those turbulent years when the country's future hung in the balance. Among them is that of 21-year-old Kenneth William Davies, Federation of Malaya Police, whose memorial inscription records that he was killed on duty at Badenoch Estate, Sungei Patani on 21st March 1950. Nearby is the grave of Kenneth Francis Dawson, killed in action at Kulim on 5th May 1950. According to a report in **The Times** of 7th May 1950, 28-year-old Assistant Superintendent Dawson was an Australian who had served two years in the police and had already been awarded the Colonial Police Medal. He was killed leading a jungle squad in a surprise attack on a "bandit camp". It is interesting to note that in these early years of the Emergency the authorities and media were not yet referring to the insurgents as communist terrorists. **The Times** report depicts Dawson creeping with a Gurkha kukri, "a relic of his Burma days", before being killed by a "bandit" sentry.

Other police graves include those of Inspector Douglas Stork "killed by bandit action" at Karandian, Kedah on 11th April 1951, Frank John James Thonger "killed in action" at Kulim on 14th July 1951, and William Henry Franks "killed in action" also at Kulim on 11th March 1952. In reporting

the death of Franks, **The Times** of 13th March 1952 identified him as officer commanding the police district of Kulim (mistakenly spelled as "Dulim") and said he was leading an attack on a "bandit camp" eight miles from the town. Kulim was still a particularly dangerous area a year later when police officer Alec Bernard Wilmot was "killed in action" there on 20th April 1953. According to **The Times** of 22nd April 1953, he was aged 27. This press report described the assailants as "terrorists".

The most senior police officer buried in the Western Road Cemetery was the Chief Police Officer of Kedah, Assistant Commissioner Charles Neville Godwin, who was killed on 28th May 1954 when his car was ambushed as he returned from a bungalow on Kedah Peak (Gunung Jerai) where he had been staying with the head of the Kedah Special Branch Mr. G. Dick. According to a report in **The Times** of 30th May 1954, the ambush took place at a point where a tree had been felled across the road. About thirty "terrorists" reportedly took part in the attack. Later, according to the same report, another police vehicle was ambushed and several people were killed including a police driver and the 12-year-old son of a special constable. The response of the security forces to these incidents was massive and included shelling of suspected terrorist positions on Kedah Peak by the cruiser HMS **Newfoundland** which had been in Penang for celebrations of the birthday of Queen Elizabeth. **The Times** reported on 10th June, that in two days **Newfoundland** fired 267 rounds with her 6 inch guns at a range of about eight miles.



Grave of Assistant Commissioner Godwin and other police graves, Western Road Cemetery

The target was a terrorist hideout on a plateau 2,700 feet high on Kedah Peak. In those haze-free days when Gunung Jerai was regularly visible, Penang residents must have had a ringside seat for the fireworks display provided by the British warship.

Notes:

(a) (a) A recent visit to the Western Road Cemetery revealed that the graves of Brother Symphorien and another brother have been vandalised (see photo). Brother Symphorien Augustus of St Xavier's Institution was murdered by communist terrorists on Penang Hill in 1954. (See "Murder and Art Treasure on Penang Hill", Newsletter No.89, January 2007).

(b) Information about the police graves and reports from *The Times* is taken from Justin Corfield's survey **Penang – Western Road Cemetery: Graves of Europeans in the Protestant Section** published by the British Association for Cemeteries in South Asia (BACSA), 1999.

(c) The killing of Assistant Commissioner Godwin was front-page news in *Malaya* and *Singapore*, *The Straits Times* running an article under the banner headline "Kedah Police Chief Shot Dead" with sub-headlines "Gun Missing" and "Four killed as Reds ambush two cars in hour on Peak road" in its Sunday edition on 30th May 1954. According to this article, news of Mr. Godwin's death was broken to Mr. Dick (still at the Kedah Peak bungalow) by a 12-year-old boy survivor of the second ambush who ran five miles to the rest house.



Vandalised grave of Brother Symphorien

Text and photographs by Leslie A.K. James

PENANG BOTANIC GARDENS

THE SAGA OF THE ARCHES AND THE FUTURE OF THE BOTANIC GARDENS

The PHT is very proud that it was centrally involved in the eventual demolition and removal of the two massive and controversial arches erected at the entrance of the Botanical Gardens in 2010. Working with members of Friends of the Botanic Gardens, the Malaysian Nature Society, the Penang Socio-Economic & Environmental Research Institute (SERI) and other concerned NGOs, Ahmad Chik, Tengku Idaura and Loh-Lim Lin Lee persisted for six months with agitation, advocacy, harassment, threats and generally making a nuisance of ourselves with the authorities. We held press conferences, made presentations, took part in on-line surveys, had meetings with the Minister of Tourism; we climbed fences, shot catapults, installed plumb lines and waded through streams and snake infested undergrowth. In August 2010, the arches were brought down to widespread applause and the Director of the Gardens was replaced by Tengku Idaura, who sacrificed a year of her well-earned retirement to serve in a very difficult position. We can all see the improvement in the Gardens and we would like to acknowledge and thank Tengku Idaura for her dedication and hard work over the past year.

The entire episode serves as a useful lesson for decision makers in dealing with much-loved and much-used public assets without consulting the public and the stakeholders. It also serves as a lesson in avoiding "monumentalism" and inappropriateness in Penang.



Loh-Lim Lin Lee

STATEMENT BY PENANG FORUM**STATUS OF THE BOTANIC GARDENS – POST TENGKU IDAURA – WHAT NOW?**

The Penang Forum would like to begin by formally acknowledging the remarkable improvements made to the Gardens in the few short months of Tengku Idaura's stint as 'Pengarah'. She responded to the call for 'service', coming out of well-earned retirement, offering whatever she could in terms of experience and knowledge from her position as Past President of Friends of Botanic Gardens.

The Botanic Gardens was in turmoil after September 2010, following the demolition of the controversial arches and the revelations of mismanagement and ill-conceived development proposals for the much-loved historic site. The public in Penang were outraged at the obliteration of the Formal Gardens, the mismanagement of the Fern House, the construction of meaningless and inappropriate structures throughout the previously pristine site, the bambusetum with no bamboo, the eco-stream walk that resembled a neglected drain, the general lack of maintenance and the non-existence of any botanic enhancement, expansion or progress. Coupled with this was a total abandonment of any pretense of public participation, committee consensus or expert consultation.

Tengku Idaura's contributions are truly outstanding in the face of little official support, no expert botanist staff, despite many requests, and often virtual daily insubordination. With the help and support of a very small number of committed diligent staff, some academics from USM and friends who had been responsible for persuading her to take up the challenge, the Gardens have been resuscitated. Among other things, the Formal Gardens have been re-installed, the Herb Garden has been protected from pillaging wild boar, the Fern House is looking quite respectable, the Botanika Shop has been renovated and upgraded and is all set for a whole new era, the main entrance has been cleared of old bus stops, telephone booths and various paraphernalia, new interpretation signs have been put up, the site of the arches has been re-engineered and most importantly, no new structures have been allowed to be built. We applaud Tengku's forbearance and her resilience and we thank her on behalf of all Penangites who love the Gardens.

But what now? It has been barely 2 months since the departure of Tengku and already - the lily ponds at the entrance are covered with a film of water fungus, the water is stagnant and the plants are slowly but surely deteriorating, the show-piece of giant Amazonian Lilies have not been fertilized and are shrinking instead of expanding, the eco-stream walk is filled with rubbish, as is the storm drain next to the lily ponds. The lack of maintenance culture is rearing its ugly head with fallen branches and trees lying unattended for weeks, hawkers are starting to come back to the entrance, banners are starting to be put up illegally, the so-called Visitor Centre continues to have no electricity and no qualified botanists or experts have been formally appointed to take over the helm of the Gardens.

The Penang Hill Corporation has now incorporated the Botanic Gardens under its umbrella of responsibilities. We would like to appeal to the State and PHC to prioritize the management of the Gardens – quickly. The Public Services Department in Kuala Lumpur had previously approved at the beginning of 2011, a number of new posts for botanists, ecologists and horticulturalists as well as senior administrators. However, to date, there have been no appointments made. It is urgent that a qualified and competent person be appointed to head the Gardens. Appoint a qualified botanist on contract if necessary, or second an experienced administrator to helm the Gardens or change the Gardens portfolio to another Exco member. For too long, we have neglected the true significance of the Botanic Gardens, a proud legacy left to our care since 1884. A good Botanic Gardens is an invaluable asset for a city that aspires to be called international.

The Penang Forum, November 2011

MEMORIAL TO MARQUESS CORNWALLIS IN ST GEORGE'S CHURCH

When Francis Light established the port settlement at Penang on behalf of the East India Company in 1786, the newly appointed Governor General and Commander-in-Chief in India was General Charles Cornwallis. Cornwallis served twice in these posts, first from 1786 to 1793 and again in 1805 for a few months before he died in October of that year. Cornwallis had attained prominence as a military officer and colonial administrator. His military service during the American War of Independence culminated in his surrender of British forces at Yorktown in 1781. Despite this defeat Cornwallis retained the confidence of the government of Prime Minister William Pitt and in 1786 he was knighted and appointed to his new post in Calcutta. His main accomplishments in India were civil, establishing a number of reforms in governance and land tax administration which became known as the Cornwallis Code. On the military side, Cornwallis successfully prosecuted the Company's 1790-92 war with Tipu Sultan, the ruler of Mysore, thereby removing a major challenge to the Company's primacy in south India. In recognition of this victory Cornwallis was created Marquess Cornwallis and appointed Lord Lieutenant of Ireland 1798-1801. Shortly after his return to India in 1805 Cornwallis died of fever and was buried at Ghazipur on the Ganges.

In addition to the many monuments to Cornwallis in India, Penang was to have two, the first being Fort Cornwallis begun during his first term as Governor General. Following his death the British inhabitants of Penang subscribed to the erection of a memorial. **The Prince of Wales Island Government Gazette** records that a General Meeting of the British inhabitants was held on 8th January 1806 at the invitation and under the chairmanship of Governor W.E. Phillips "for the purpose of considering how they can best join their Countrymen in testifying their veneration for the virtues, and their desire of perpetuating the Memory of the late Most Illustrious Marquis [sic] Cornwallis."

The meeting unanimously resolved that a Cenotaph be erected at the public expense and that a voluntary subscription be opened to raise funds for the Cenotaph. It was further resolved that the subscription be open to all the inhabitants of Prince of Wales Island as well as to all subjects of the United Kingdom. The election of a committee with members "in India" (meaning Penang) and in Europe to carry out the decisions of the meeting was also agreed.

The names of 29 subscribers (and the amounts subscribed in Spanish dollars) were appended to the **Gazette** report. Among these names were some of the most prominent personalities in the British community: Governor Phillips - \$400, William Dick - \$200, Thomas Halyburton - \$50, James Carnegy - \$50, David Brown - \$50, John James Erskine - \$50, Phillip Dundas - \$400, Thomas Raffles - \$50, Quintin Dick Thompson - \$50, and James Scott - \$200.

The commission to create a monument to Cornwallis went to John Flaxman (1755-1826), a leading English sculptor with experience in Italy, whose work was popular in South India, several of his sculptures having been commissioned for Madras. According to American scholar Barbara Groseclose, Flaxman is recorded as praising the East India Company in the following terms: "They have ever behaved to me in a way at once graceful and liberal, and in everything worthy of a Company who have acquired a splendid territory with less violence than any dominions were ever won, and who maintain them with more wisdom than history has recorded of any ancient or modern people." (Groseclose, p.26).

Flaxman began work on the sculpture for Penang in 1807 and it was exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1812. Flaxman had been appointed the first professor of sculpture at the Royal Academy in 1810. His memorial was a relief sculpture featuring a medallion depicting a bust of Cornwallis. Below it were three figures, one of them Britannia instructively showing the medallion to an Indian

youth. The third figure was a grieving female representing India. According to Groseclose, Flaxman's personification of India was based on an antique relief of a woman, the so-called "Weeping Dacia", dating from the second century but gaining prominence in the 18th century as part of a group of classical sculptures displayed in Rome and conveying a strong imperial theme. (Groseclose, p.58) In the centre of the relief below the medallion was the following inscription:

TO
THE MOST NOBLE
MARQUIS CORNWALLIS
DEDICATED
BY THE BRITISH INHABITANTS
OF PRINCE OF WALES ISLAND

Flaxman's sculpture was installed in St George's Church but the inscription, bordered on one side by a palm frond, is all that remains in the church today. The original sculpture was among several memorials, including a large and imposing monument to Governor John A. Bannerman, destroyed or damaged by enemy bombing in the early days of the Pacific War. According to the Ven. A.C. Dumper, vicar of St George's 1957-1964, it was decided after the war that these memorials were too badly damaged to remain in the church and "they were given a decent and dignified burial behind the church close to the Hutchings School wall." Dumper noted that prior to December 1941 there were no less than 25 memorial tablets and monuments round the walls of the church commemorating several governors and other prominent residents of 19th century Penang. In 1954 a record of the inscriptions on these memorials was compiled by Mr. Lim Swee Hun, former librarian of the Penang Library. A list of the names commemorated on the missing memorials is also included in a chapter on the lost artifacts of St. George's Church in John Kalai's book **Anglicanism in West Malaysia**. Whether any of these and other missing memorials can be found and restored to their original place in the church remains an open question.

By Leslie A.K. James



Note:

I am grateful to Professor Emeritus Barbara Groseclose of the Department of History of Art, Ohio State University, for permission to reproduce above the photograph of the Flaxman sculpture appearing in her study, **British Sculpture and the Company Raj: Church Monuments and Public Statuary in Madras, Calcutta, and Bombay to 1858** (p.63). I am also indebted to Marcus Langdon for the reference to the report in the **Prince of Wales Island Government Gazette** on the 1806 meeting to open a public subscription for the erection of a memorial to Marquess Cornwallis.

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Ven. A.C. Dumper, "The History of St George's Church Penang", Address to the Penang Historical Society, 13 December 1961.

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

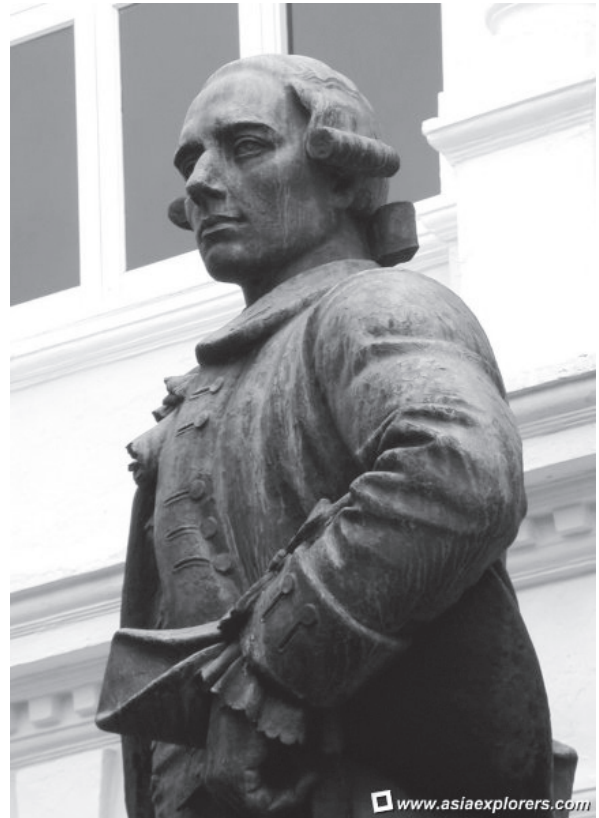
John Kalai, **Anglicanism in West Malaysia**, Auckland, John Kalai, 2004.

Lim Swee Hun, "Alphabetical List of Memorials and Monuments in St George's Church, Penang, with Short Biographical Details of the Persons Commemorated", 3 December 1954.

STATUE OF FRANCIS LIGHT

Penang's statue of Francis Light has had a peripatetic existence and a history of some controversy. After the war it stood in the High Court compound and until recently was in the grounds of the State Museum from where it was moved to Fort Cornwallis, the site where it was originally unveiled in 1939. It had been removed from the Fort by the Japanese during the Occupation. (**Straits Times**, 18 July 1946) Reports that the statue might be discarded by Penang as an unwanted symbol of colonialism led to an offer by the Australian city of Adelaide to take it which led to a pledge by Penang Chief Minister Wong Pow Nee that Penang would not part with it. (**Straits Times**, 24 September 1966) There are other memorials. Light's grave in the old Protestant Cemetery bears a memorial inscription on a marble plaque placed there in 1894 on the centenary of his death to replace a badly weathered earlier inscription. Although Light was also already commemorated by a plaque in the Graeco-Roman pavilion in front of St George's Church and in the names of a school and a street, planning began in the 1930s for a memorial to mark the 150th anniversary of Light's establishment of Penang as a port settlement for the East India Company.

The Straits Times on 31st January 1935 published extracts of a letter from Sir Frank Swettenham, former Governor of the Straits Settlements then in retirement in England, stating his views on the kind of memorial that should be erected. The idea of a memorial had apparently been mooted in a letter to the **Pinang Gazette** which in turn wrote to Swettenham seeking his views. With appropriate modesty Swettenham replied that this was a question for the people of Penang. Maintaining that he was commenting only at the request of the newspaper, he opined, "if they don't mind calling attention to the fact that for 150 years successive generations have neglected an obvious duty, the sooner the omission is made good, the better." As to the form of recognition that should be accorded Francis Light he preferred a statue to a museum, arguing that unless a museum was "absolutely first rate – a very costly business – it is apt to become a very dull and dusty affair," adding: "I hardly see how a



Museum would attract attention to the Founder of Penang, or perpetuate his foresight and services to the Settlement." He then argued for a statue at the landing place. In ending his letter, Swettenham said that the inscription should not call Light 'Captain'; "Francis Light is good enough and cannot be questioned."

A sidelight on the memorial issue was shed in 1936 when a competition with a prize of \$100 was held for the design of a memorial. Eighteen designs were submitted by the deadline but no award was made. Most if not all the competitors were architects. In a letter to the editor published in **The Straits Times** on 13th October, an anonymous architect took exception to the competition on the grounds that no conditions were laid down for the competition and architects were forbidden by the Straits Settlements Architects Ordinance from participating in competitions except under conditions prescribed by the Royal Institute of British Architects to which the Institute of Architects of Malaya was allied.

In September 1936, as none of the competition entries was considered suitable (the original plan had been for a granite column), the responsible committee decided that the memorial should take

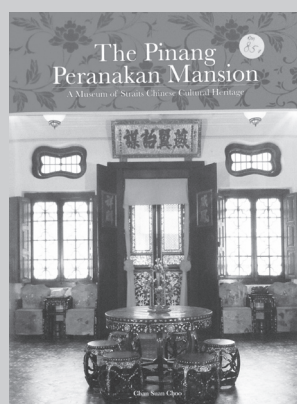
the form of a statue. (**Singapore Free Press & Mercantile Advertiser**, 24 September 1936) In 1937, the George Town Commissioners in Committee applied for the sanction of the Governor-in-Council for a contribution of \$4,000 from the Municipal Fund to supplement about \$8,000 in private subscriptions raised for a statue. The statue would be made in England for about \$9,000 and the pedestal made in Penang for \$2,600. (**Straits Times**, 15 April 1937)

So, a statue it was. The sculptor selected was Frederick J. Wilcoxson A.R.B.S. of London who had made the statue of the late Dr. Loke Yew in Kuala Lumpur as well as the Dyak figures on the Brooke Memorial in Kuching. Wilcoxson was assisted in the design by Denis Santry. The story of the absence of a likeness of Francis Light is well known. Wilcoxson used two sources – the drawing by Elisha Trapaud of the scene of the proclamation by Light on occupying Penang and the portrait of his son Colonel William Light in the National Portrait Gallery, London. (**Singapore Free Press & Mercantile Advertiser**, 24 January 1938)

The statue was unveiled by Sir Shenton Thomas, Governor of the Straits Settlements, in a ceremony at Fort Cornwallis on 3rd October 1939. According to **The Straits Times** the next day, several thousand people gathered to watch as the Governor arrived and was given a royal salute by a guard of honour composed of Indian soldiers and local Volunteers. In his speech, the Governor noted that according to Francis Light Penang island was “a vast jungle with a population of only 58 souls” when he landed. At the time of Light’s death eight years later, Sir Shenton said, the island had become a prosperous settlement of 20,000 people.

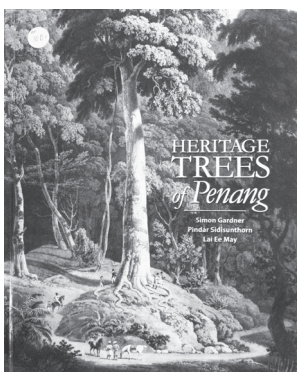
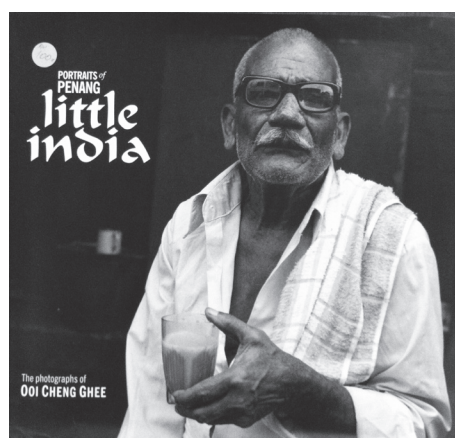
By Leslie A.K. James

MERCHANDISE

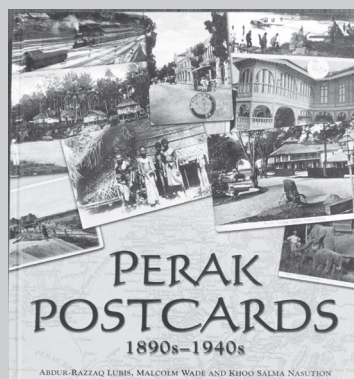


The Pinang Peranakan Mansion by Chan Suan Choo RM85

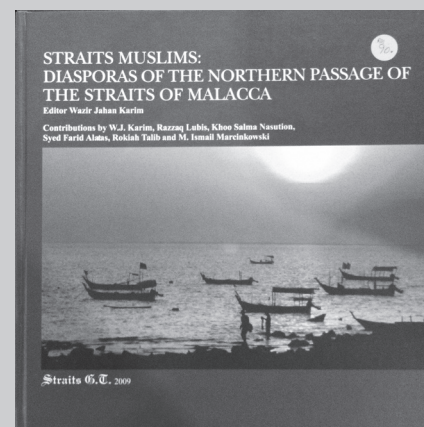
Little India by Ooi Cheng Ghee, RM100



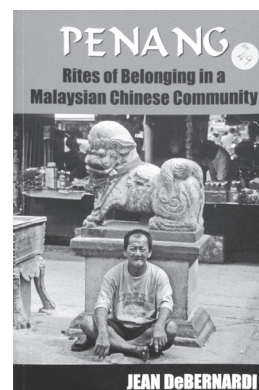
Heritage Trees by Simon Gardner, Pindar Sidisunthorn & Lai Ee May, RM100



Perak Postcards 1890s-1940s by Abdur-Razzaq Lubis, Malcolm Wade & Khoo Salma Nasution, RM120

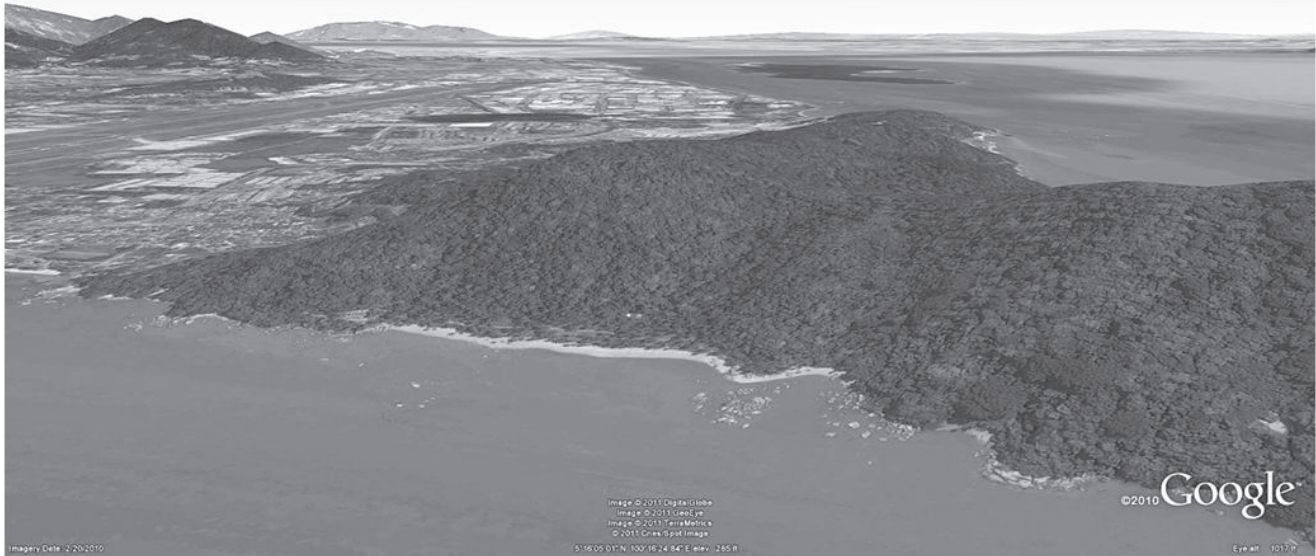


Straits Muslims: Diasporas of the Northern Passage of The Straits of Malacca, Edited Prof. Wazir Karim, RM90



Penang, Rites of Belonging in a Malaysian Chinese Community by Jean DeBernardi RM49

TUA PEK KONG TEMPLE



An interesting Taoist temple can be visited at the south-east corner of the island – requiring a half-hour walk along the coast from the nearest road.



The Tua Pek Kong temple is situated about 1.5 km SSE from the Police Station at Kampung Permatang Damar Laut (near Batu Maung), where you can park. From there the path to the temple is largely concreted, with

a few inclines and two flights of steps, as it follows the coastline. The path runs mainly under trees, but on the way you pass a Buddhist retreat house, an old coconut plantation, a fine stretch of beach (Pasir Ikan Mati or Dead Fish Beach), a picnic pavilion and a tall, old banyan tree with spectacular hanging roots. There are also several small shrines along the way. The views of the sea and islands are unspoilt. Pulau Rimau lies offshore, close-by.

The temple itself lies in a beautiful, tranquil forest setting some 50 metres above the water level. The views from it are limited, however, due to the vegetation. The best sea views occur at various points earlier along the path. The temple is said to have

been built by local residents a century ago and the access path has been improved recently. The temple lies on the other (west) side of the cape from Teluk Tempoyak on the east and is just visible (if you know where to look) from a right-hand window seat in any plane landing at Bayan Lepas from the south on a clear day.

One article in **The Star** in 2007 (which, incidentally, mis-described the location of the temple) referred to the hill above this area as Essen Hill, but we have not been able to find any other link at all for this name, which may possibly have German origins through the local German community or through the British forces in Penang and their military associations with Germany (as for example with Minden Heights and Minden Barracks).

Text and photographs by Brian Walling



LEE RUBBER FACTORY PAYA TERUBONG, PENANG



The last remaining rubber factory on the island, the Lee Rubber Co Pte Ltd in Paya Terubong, is due to close down early in 2012, after operating for 50 years. A large group of PHT members were given a rare chance on 2 October of a guided tour through the production plant, together with a fascinating illustrated presentation on the A-to-Z of the rubber business by Mr Ooi Boon Chye, the Lee Rubber Group Quality Assurance Manager of 43 years' service.

The factory is closing due to Company plans to consolidate production in the Company's several other mainland factories, situated closer to sources of raw rubber material. Raw rubber is no longer produced in commercial quantities on Penang Island and the raw material for the Penang factory is now being transported in entirety from sources outside the island.

Located in the Paya Terubong Valley, the factory with its blue roof can be seen to the left (east) side of the road as you travel south up the valley, just below the high-rise clusters at the top end of the valley. The factory was originally built in 1954-5 by another rubber company and was acquired in 1970, being then the largest rubber factory in Penang, by Lee Rubber which moved here from Lee's earlier Penang factory located in Ghaut Lebuh Noordin, Georgetown.

The founder of Lee Rubber Company was the Singaporean entrepreneur and philanthropist Lee Kong Chiang (1893-1967), who built his first rubber factory in Muar, Johor in 1927. His company.

grew rapidly into a multi-million dollar rubber business and expanded extensively into pineapple plantations and canning. The well-known Lee Rubber building in Art deco style in central KL, close to the old central market, dates from the early days of the business in the 1930s.

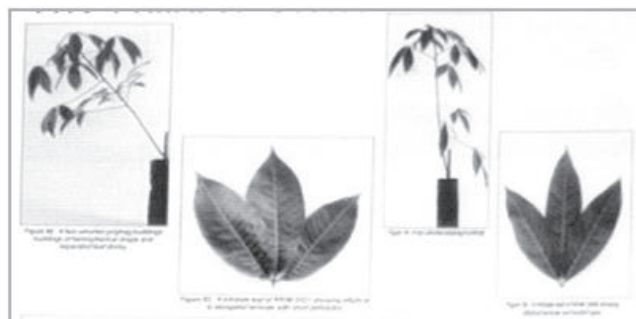
Lee Rubber subsequently expanded into further sectors, notably banking (OCBC Bank) and real estate development, and the Lee Rubber Group's portfolio today also includes palm oil production, edible oil products and biscuit production. In rubber, Lee Rubber Company remains a processor and does not own or operate rubber plantations itself.

During the growth of the rubber business Lee Rubber established production plants in a number of locations in peninsular Malaysia and in Indonesia. Today, Lee Rubber accounts for a significant portion of the entire Malaysia rubber output. The Group remains incorporated in Singapore and under the control of the founding family.

PHT is extremely thankful to My Ooi Boon Chye for his presentation, as well as to Mr Huang Thiay Sherng, the Group General Manager for Rubber, who welcomed the PHT visitors and Mr Chew Chee Beng, the Lee Rubber Penang Branch Manager, who led the factory tour. The refreshments provided by the Company at the end of the visit, including samples of the Company's food products, were much appreciated.

A vast range of interesting points about rubber were laid out by Mr Ooi Boon Chye during his illustrated briefing. A few of these are given below.

Rubber trees



You can recognise a rubber tree (*hevea brasiliensis*) by its distinctive clusters of three long leaves at the end of each branch (hanging downwards like an umbrella). The rubber tree originates from the Amazon region of Brazil and is one of several tree families which produce a white latex-like sap.

and the first recorded rubber tree was planted here in 1877. Once mature (which takes a minimum of 5 years, a rubber tree is economically good for 10-20 years, thereafter declining and becoming uneconomic – although the trees may well be able to survive for as long as 100 years or more. Tree life is very much affected by the quality of tapping and the care taken in the progressive removal of sections of the tree's outer bark.

Uses of rubber

It is believed that Christopher Columbus first brought rubber to Europe in the 1490s after seeing local inhabitants, during his travels in the Americas, playing a game with bouncing balls. However, no great uses for rubber were developed until the early 19th century after Charles Goodyear discovered the vulcanization process in 1839 (heat-treating rubber with sulphur), which renders the rubber unaffected by changes in temperature. The rapidly developing road transportation sector (tyres, inner tubes, automotive belts) subsequently became and remains the principal factor driving the demand for natural rubber. Transportation today consumes 70% of the world's output of natural rubber and the demand from this sector looks set to expand steadily. Even with the evolution of tyre specifications to include chemical, textile and metallic ingredients, natural rubber today still accounts for 17% by weight of the typical car radial tyre and 34% of the typical truck radial tyre.

Rubber tree tapping

Rubber trees have to be tapped diagonally downwards from left to right and not right to left, in order to cut the latex-bearing veins at the optimum angle to maximise extraction of the raw latex. Tapping is very skilled work, given the objectives of maximising the capture of latex and at the same time ensuring long productive life for the tree. It has not so far proven possible to mechanise this process on any scale (although hand-held electric tapping cutter tools have been tried) and it therefore continues to depend on human skill.

Production process



Rubber in its raw latex form is usually received at the factory by truck in large bulk container loads, with the rubber in 'cup-lump' form – naturally coagulated into small lumps – seen here in the receiving bay at Lee Rubber Co. A multi-layer structure of middlemen and dealers is often involved in collecting the raw rubber from farmers and batching it into economic quantities for delivery to the processors, such as Lee Rubber Co. Production comprises a number of mechanical processes, including washing, blending and drying the material, before forming it into standard size slabs or sheets for delivery to the final users, principally the automotive tyre manufacturers.

Production issues

The production process involves a number of issues and challenges. Principal among those mentioned by Lee Rubber was the contamination (foreign matter and other impurities) found in the cup lumps on arrival at the processing plant. This is a perpetual problem due to lax quality standards in the early stages of the rubber collection process. Other significant issues include the environmental issues of odour and other pollution resulting from the factory process, which can become significant community issues. On the plantation side, far from it being a simple process of planting and growing trees and then harvesting the latex, considerable scientific resources are permanently dedicated to R&D in matters such as tree species and subspecies; development and testing of new and more productive clones; pests, diseases and their containment; and planning and testing of new routines, schedules and techniques for the actual tapping operations.

Rubber plantations vs oil palm plantations

The current and forecast long term trends in natural rubber prices (rising) compared with those of palm oil prices (falling) indicate that traditional plantation companies which have actively converted their planted areas from rubber to palm oil may not have made the best strategic choice. *By Brian Walling*

Heritage footnote

An interesting gem from the Lee Rubber Company archives: an armoured car used by the Company for transporting wages during the Emergency period.



MEDIA COVERAGE

22 NATION The Star, TUESDAY 25 OCTOBER 2011

MPPP halts work at foothill

Huge boulders at construction site may endanger residents, says rep

GEORGE TOWN: The Penang Municipal Council (MPPP) has issued a stop-work order on construction at a site near the Thni Kong Thua (Jade Emperor Temple) at the foot of Penang Hill.

Chief Minister Lim Guan Eng's political secretary Ng Wei Aik said the stop-work order at the site in Jalan Pokok Ceri was of immediate effect.

He said the huge boulders that were seen scattered around the plot posed a danger to the resi-

dents nearby.

"We have urged the state land office to investigate if the land is privately owned or belonged to the government," he said when he visited the site yesterday.

Ng said the construction was believed to be illegal, and all machinery at the site would be confiscated to prevent further works from continuing.

He added that construction works done without certification from geo-tech engineers could result in landslides and threaten

public safety.

A spokesman from the state Land Office said they received a request from MPPP on Friday to investigate the ownership of the land.

He said they were identifying the location and would check promptly, and provide the information to the council as soon as possible.

Also present were representatives from MPPP's building and engineering departments and enforcement division.



Rocky hazard: Council officers inspecting the work site filled with boulders. In the background is the Jade Emperor Temple at the foot of Penang Hill.

Hilltop food pavilion set to be ready in January

Star Metro 19.10.11

THE food pavilion on Penang Hill is scheduled to be completed by January after it experienced a series of delays due to contracting work and the unwillingness of hawkers to shift to a temporary site.

State Local Government and Traffic Management Committee chairman Chow Kon Yeow said the pavilion, previously known as a hawker complex, is a three-storey structure which could accommodate 400 people.

He said 33 stalls would be built in the 12,000sq ft food pavilion, including stalls for food, beverages, souvenirs as well as a thematic art and craft gallery.

Chow said the pavilion is part of the development projects atop Penang Hill now and this includes the restoration of Craig Hotel and the building of a new canopy walkway.

He said that the upgrading works would create a new image for the island's highest peak to become an international tourism destination.

It was earlier reported that the site was to have been handed over to the contractor by Nov 8 last year but commencement of work was delayed to January due to problems of relocating the current hawkers.

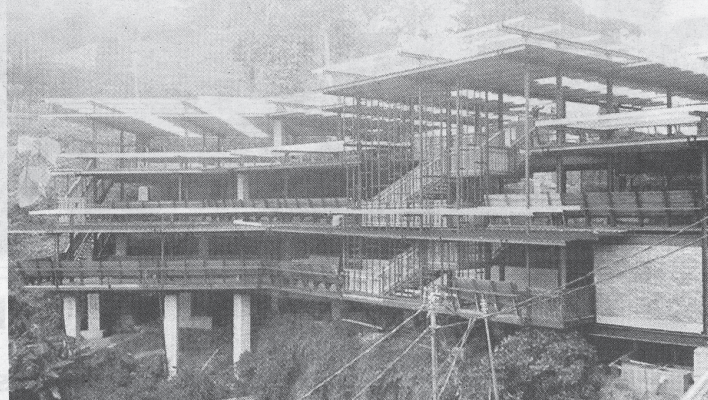
"After a negotiation between the Penang Municipal Council (MPPP) and the 25 hawkers, 23 of them agreed to move to the new pavilion once it is completed," said Chow after visiting the site on Monday.

Present were MPPP building director Yew Tung Seang and MPPP public health standing committee alternate chairman Ong Ah Teong.

In July last year, Chief Minister Lim Guan Eng

New attraction:

A view of the new food pavilion on Penang Hill.



announced that the entire area around the hilltop station on the hill would undergo a major facelift as part of the state government's efforts to spruce up the place.

Design plans by renowned architect Prof Dr Jimmy Lim included the food pavilion, a recrea-

tional walk path, a visitors centre, terrace dining areas, restoration of old government quarters and a business centre.

The cost of the project will be jointly borne by the state and MPPP, which is appointed as the project's implementor and coordinator.

SWIFTLET BREEDING IN THE WORLD HERITAGE SITE

The Penang State Government has stated that swiftlet farms will be removed from the UNESCO World Heritage Site (WHS) within three years from 1st January 2011. This is in line with the statement on September 2nd 2010 by Deputy Prime Minister Tan Sri Muhyiddin bin Md. Yassin that all swiftlet breeding farms would be prohibited in the UNESCO World Heritage Sites of George Town and Malacca and that all would have to be removed within three years.

In April 2011, a physical count was undertaken by PHT volunteers equipped with the swiftlet-house lists compiled previously by USM and MPPP. A total of 173 swiftlet houses were recorded in the 1 square mile of the UNESCO WHS. This information was presented to MPPP and George Town World Heritage Inc.(GTWHI) for these authorities to follow up with investigations and enforcement. It should be noted that this figure is conservative as volunteers did not, in some cases, have the capacity to enter suspected houses to confirm the presence of swiftlets. Moreover, the rear portions of some of these properties were inaccessible.

The 1GP (Garis Panduan Pembangunan Industri Burung Walit or Official Guidelines & Regulations for the Swiftlet Nesting Industry) was published and made available in June 2011. The Penang State Government, however, has yet to endorse and adopt the 1GP although other states have endorsed the 1GP in order to enhance their regulations and enforcement powers.

During July, after Malaysian Red Birds' nests exported to China were found to contain unacceptable levels of nitrate, a group of swiftlet producers from Penang, claiming to represent the Malaysian Veterinary Department and Bird Nest Export Association, called a press conference in China to state that Red Birds' nests from Malaysia were safe for consumption. Some of these representatives have since been arrested by the Malaysian authorities. In the meantime, the bird populations in the swiftlet farms in George Town continue to increase at alarming rates. Swiftlets are now visible at all times all over the island. Just a year ago they were not so noticeable. Swiftlet farmers continue to operate and renovate without fear of reprisal from State or MPPP authorities.

As yet there has been no enforcement against swiftlet houses within the UNESCO WHS and implementation of the State removal plan has yet to get underway.

PHT will continue to lobby for the adoption of the 1GP by the Penang State Government and to urge State authorities to begin the removal implementation plan and enforce regulations. PHT needs public support and appeals to PHT members to register their objections to swiftlet farming in the World Heritage Site with the State Government.

The authorities also need to address public health concerns about urban swiftlet farming against the background of the recent regional outbreaks of new deadly strains of avian flu.

By Rebecca Duckett Wilkinson

12 NATION The Star, SATURDAY 22 OCTOBER 2011

Blue Mansion in world top 10

Cheong Fatt Tze building is one of two in Asia featured on Lonely Planet list

By ANDREA FILMER and FONG KEE SOON
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GEORGE TOWN: The Cheong Fatt Tze Mansion here has been named one of the world's top 10 greatest mansions and grand houses by popular travel guide Lonely Planet.

The grand dwelling, often dubbed the Blue Mansion due to its vivid colour, is one of only two buildings in Asia to make the list.

The other is the Marble Palace mansion in Kolkata, India.

Others that made the list include the Villa d'Este in Italy, England's Castle Howard that provided the backdrop for the television and cinema adaptation of *Bridgeshead Revisted*, famed 16th-century Chateau de Chambord in France and the Catherine Palace in Russia.

The United States was the only country with two venues making the list – Fallingwater in the woods of Pennsylvania and Beauport House in Massachusetts – while Australia and

Ireland rounded up the grandest homes list with Werribee Mansion in Melbourne and the 13th-century Powerscourt Estate in the Wicklow Mountains respectively.

The Lonely Planet list was reprinted last Sunday by the Fox News website, which chose the Blue Mansion as its story's main picture.

This latest accreditation follows several other prestigious awards already given to the mansion, including a Unesco "Most Excellent" Heritage Conservation Award in 2000, an Asean Tourism Association Excellence Award for Best Asean Cultural Preservation Effort in 2004 and the Malaysian National Architectural Award For Conservation in 1995.

The mansion was built in the late 19th-century by Cheong Fatt Tze, a self-made wealthy Chinese merchant.

Loh-Lim Lin Lee, who bought and restored the dwelling with husband Laurence Loh in the late 1980s to 1990s, said the mansion received some 2,000 visitors every month.



True blue: The Cheong Fatt Tze Mansion in Penang. The historical structure was also featured as the title picture for the Lonely Planet list.



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