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(HN 5.1 & 5.2)

Heritage News

A bi-monthly newsletter of the Perak Heritage Society. For Members only.



Taking a walk on the "wow" side.
For more see pg 6.

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Greetings!

The year 2008 is moving fast and furiously. By the third week of January, the Hindus, and many Chinese devotees, had celebrated Thaipusam with religious fervour. It was a 3-day affair, featuring processions in most parts of the country. In Ipoh, along the route to the two major temples, rows of delightful make-shift enclosures lined the street, decorated with woven palm fronds, ferns and fruit-bearing banana trunks, punctuated by customized temporary shrines. The night procession by bearers of *kavadi*, lit by hundreds of light bulbs, was a spectacle of walking sculptures.

On 7 February, Malaysians celebrated the year of the rat, which marks the start of the twelve-year cycle in the Chinese zodiac. The Chinese community, generally, has experienced a lean year. That made this year's celebrations appear anemic -- less money spent meant

less splashes of decorative red on our shops and houses. Nevertheless, the reunion of family and friends and the sharing of festive food would have made this cultural event a meaningful and enjoyable time.

Then, it was March. This is a year of Elections. Not just for the country but also the PHS. Polling dates have been set for 8th March and 14th March, respectively. Notices for our **AGM 2008 & Members Night** were sent out to members in February. The AGM went smoothly. Su Win and Pui San declined re-election to devote more time to their personal pursuits. We welcome the return of Audrey. See our new line-up in the side column, this page. The Members Night following the AGM included a quality buffet dinner, after which we enjoyed a well-made documentary on the Royal Belum-Temenggor Forest.

After the General Elections, in streamlining the new Cabinet, the Ministry of Culture, Arts and Heritage has been merged with the Ministry of National Unity. It is now called the Ministry of Unity, Culture, Arts and Heritage. YB Datuk Hj Mohd Shafie Bin Hj Apdal, former Minister of Domestic Trade and Consumer Affairs, is the new Minister with YB Teng Boon Soon as his Deputy. In the line-up for the state assembly, Heritage has been dropped. Instead, we have to figure in different portfolios: Culture, Tourism, Human Development and Non-governmental Organisations. Does that reflect the importance of Heritage in our state?

Due to time constraint, this issue of Heritage News combines issues 5.1 and 5.2. In this 12-pager, there is Siak Hong's report on the Kampar Water Supply Pipeline of Gopeng, illustrated with photographs from contributors James Gough and Ben Schwarzacher. With a slew of news on the Royal Belum State Park, we bring you a summary on the state of conservation and business interest in the ancient forest. As we found out, Ipoh's urban village Kampong Kuchai was close the heart of the Municipal Council, which sponsored the special trail for their officers and invited guests. Mohd Taib reports, page 3. Note, too, our map on the back page which highlights the places covered in this issue.

Enjoy.

Membership Renewal

The PHS minds your Perak heritage. It needs your continuing support. Don't delay. For only RM20 per year, you'll enjoy the benefits of a priceless PHS membership.

Heri.trail: Heritage-rich Kampar in transition

The new UTAR campus is a stimulus for growth. New development in Kampar will test the will of its councilors and residents in uplifting and improving the quality of life for their communities. What does the old tin-mining town of Kampar have to offer to heritage tourism? Lots! Come along and enjoy some of its best before they are spoilt by ardent urban renewal.

Date	Sunday, 29 June
Duration	8 am - 6 pm
Start n end	8 am: Meet at Ipoh Railway Station. Back in Ipoh by 6 pm
Cost	Members and below-18: RM20, Non-members RM40
Booking	Hong: 017.506 1875. Pay up one week before the trip.

TAIPING HERITAGE SOCIETY HIGH TEA TALK

It was a very pleasant Saturday affair in the heritage town of Taiping. The High Tea, organized by the Taiping Heritage Society (THS) at the Legend Hotel, Taiping was graced by the THS President, Dato' Dr Hj Wan Mohd Isa Bin Dato' Seri Wan Ahmad, Orang Kaya Menteri Paduka Tuan merangkap Orang Besar Jajahan Larut Matang & Selama, territorial chief of the District in which Taiping is situated. Over seventy had turned up in support of the event.

PHS President, Law Siak Hong was the guest speaker. His talk, Taiping: Heritage Town of Everlasting Peace comprised two segments: What is Heritage and The Heritage of Taiping. Feedback has it that it was a stimulating talk aimed at motivating those in the audience (mostly locals) to go out there, to see and learn about (to experience) their rich heritage. He introduced 'heritaging' (someone quipped 'heri.aging'!), as an enriching heritage experience, a process in self-education, for fun and surprises. The talk was accompanied by a slide show from the Vice President of the THS, Yeap Thean Eng.

Things are looking up for Perak heritage. It is great to have a local group dedicated to the heritage of its town. Since its formation in May 2006, the THS has been busy pushing for the preservation of 'the heritage of this lovely town of Taiping for the benefits and education of future generations'. It has cast itself in the heritage network.

MEASURED DRAWINGS

Based on 'Measured Drawings - What Are They', by Ar Lim Take Bane, published in the Badan Warisan Malaysia web site.

Measured drawings are a set of line drawings made of an existing building, usually an old building of architectural merit; it is the reverse of construction drawings (architect's plans).

Measured drawings show graphically the building 'as-built', or 'as-found', including the effects of age and various alterations over time. Each part of the building is carefully measured and drawn. More than architectural plans, measured drawings portray the very nature of the place or building that they are documenting. These drawings also record to scale, the many quirks and characteristics that all old buildings exhibit, such as uneven floors, varying floor heights and out-of-plumb (not perfectly vertical or 90°) walls. Measured drawings can capture views of a building that photographs cannot, such as floor plans and cross-sections.

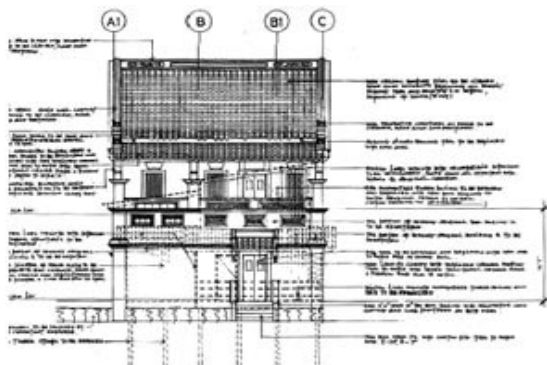
Invaluable for restoration projects, especially if the building is badly damaged by fire or other disasters, measured drawings are meant to be graphically pleasing.



Thanks for the Talk

NEW LIGHT ON OLD DREDGE

Go inside TT5, Malaysia's oldest tin dredge, in Chenderong, Tanjong Tualang. Admission: adult RM15, children RM10.



Shophouse in Kampung Cina, Kuala Terengganu

Illustration for measured drawings; Caption : shophouse in Kampung Cina, Kuala Terengganu

HERITAGE WALK: KAMPONG KUCHAI RE-VISITED

By Mohamed Taib Mohamed

On 23rd February, 2008, a bright Saturday morning, the Ipoh City Council, *Majlis Bandaraya Ipoh* (MBI) hosted a walking tour in and around Kampong Kuchai, formerly the wealthy Malay enclave of Ipoh. Our president, Siak Hong guided the party of twenty, comprising officers from MBI's Town Planning Unit and *Jabatan Warisan Negara* (JWN of KeKKWa), a lecturer from *Universiti Teknologi Mara* (UiTM), lecturers and students in Architecture from *Politeknik Ungku Omar Ipoh* (PUO), PHS member Stephen and myself. For most of us, the walk was an eye-opener.

The trail skirted the boundary before it went into the kampong proper. We started from the Dato' Panglima Kinta Mosque in Jalan Mesjid. From the east bank of the Kinta River, we observed some stylish but under-utilised old bungalows. Kampong Paloh Mosque is just across Jalan Datoh, the road that separates the kampongs. The JWN officers took a keen interest in the mausoleum of Orang Kaya-Kaya Sri Adika Raja Wan Muhamad Salleh (1861-1917) beside the mosque because an inventory of royal mausoleums in Perak is in progress.

Next to the mosque, a unique group of modest shophouses contains the heritage of early Malay nationalism in Perak. Quite amazing! It once housed the office of the newspaper *Warta Kinta*, the society *Persatuan Melayu Perak*, the All-Malaya Muslim Missionary Society (Kinta Branch), the Malay Drivers Federation of Perak, the Malay Badminton Association of Perak and the Bawean (read 'Boyan') Association. I wondered if the dilapidated block would be restored to tell the stories about its heritage. The 'beautifully crafted' wooden house at No.20 Jalan Datoh looked very sad. (See HERI. BUILDING, page 4, this issue.) We moved on.

In the late morning sun, we admired the imposing Chinese mansions along Jalan Datoh and Jalan Bendahara. Then we got into the cool and shady Kampong Kuchai, Ipoh's 'hidden', predominantly light-industrial urban village. Here, Chinese workmen were busy at work. Their vehicular workshops occupied dilapidated old buildings and ramshackle sheds on vacant lots. Interspersed by big trees and small clearings, four very old industrial blocks, one in ruins and over-grown, set the mood of this urban jungle. (See HN4.3 for our story on Kampong Kuchai.)

At a corner of Kuchai, we marvelled at the house, dated 1903, which probably belonged to Abdul Wahab bin Dato' Domba. The architects among us surmised that the original building was accessed from Jalan Mesjid. One gate post, a brick column, stood, while the footprint of the other was still evident in the ground. The annex, back to back with the original house, has a building form and decorative details similar to another house in Kampong Kepayang, which belonged to the same Abdul Wahab. Then, we inspected the Malay Girl School nearby.

With foresight, the Kelab Bakti Gunung Keledang acquired the school and two wooden buildings next to it. While the smaller buildings house the Perak Malay Electric Association and the *Gabungan Pelajar Melayu Semenanjung* (GPMS), that is, the Assembly of Enlightened Malay Students, the Malay Girls' School has been refurbished. It is an activity centre managed by GPMS. It hosts a small exhibition on Malay nationalist-educationist, Aminuddin Baki (1926-1965), who came from Chemor.

After lunch, we re-grouped in the meeting room of the MBI Town Planning office. All present agreed that efforts in tackling issues about Perak heritage should be shared among the local authority, NGO, State government and the Ministry of Culture, Arts and Heritage. While JWN put the implementation of the National Heritage Act into perspective, PUO was commended for their continuing effort in producing measured drawings of

SYBIL

To be presented by The Actors Studio at the Taman Budaya in Ipoh, U-En Ng first play, *Sybil* is a dramatisation of the events depicted in Sybil Kathigasu's memoir *No Dram of Mercy*, and for the sake of authenticity often contains dialogue exactly as the author reported it. This play, however, is not an historical work and, while it seeks to remain true to the spirit of Mrs Kathigasu's story, it does not in any way seek to present its material as historical fact. The dramatist trusts that those interested in the latter, or in the events of the War in Malaya generally, will consult *No Dram of Mercy* in the first instance.

The courage of Sybil Kathigasu, an Eurasian midwife who ran her clinic in Papan during WW2 in Malaya, is legendary. She is a beacon to our humanity and her story should be shared with young and old, for all the people of the world.

The PHS Performance on 27th June will raise funds to kick-start our project: Documenting Perak Heritage.

For your invitations, contact:

PHS:
016.534 1018

Perak Academy:
05.547 8949

PSPA:
05.548 7814



One for the album for Kpg Kuchai Revisited.

heritage buildings around Ipoh. Then, MBI suggested that we come up with a master re-development plan for Kampong Kuchai.

That is great. The old buildings will be saved and adapted for re-use. But what is the priority of heritage in this town planning exercise?

THE WOODEN MANSION OF JALAN DATOH

Text and photo by Nick Coffill

Here is a description of the wooden house at No.20 Jalan Datoh, Ipoh, which was probably Dato' Seri Adika Raja's.

This timber house is a perfect example of the cosmopolitan culture of Ipoh in the early 20th century. Perhaps it was a Mandailing owner from Sumatra who commissioned its identifiable protruding octagonal porch, and together with the modern asbestos tiled roof and the exuberant Malay and Chinese decorative flourishes this home would have been an agreeable companion to the surrounding masonry bungalows along Jalan Datoh.

Let's look at it in detail. A rather severe, if not blunt, personality pervades the street elevation. Perched on unadorned timber pillars, the first floor octagon-shaped room projects out to form the porch, a covered space for arriving guests. Behind is the *rumah ibu* with a *bumbung limas* or five-ridged roof surmounted with a heightened jack roof tipped with fine finials and surrounding ventilation panels. Further back the rectangular plan of the *rumah ibu* is repeated thrice with diminishing scale for family and kitchen needs. Each of these parts has its separate entrance for women and private guests. The entire building is roofed in diamond-shaped fibro tiles, in a lizard-skin pattern of grey and dark ochre.

Floor to ceiling double shutters abound on the first floor to create generous ventilation. All the eaves are decorated with timber fretwork icicles, with finely carved hanging bouquets of flowers at the façade corners. Conscious of changing scale, the owner (or the skillful carpenters) repeated these Chinese symbols further back but only as simple cut-outs and without the fine modeling. Unlike

Malay houses there is no *anjung*, or staircase with covered porch set to one side. The staircases are on the inside so as not to disturb the perfect symmetry that represents urban life that prospered on the back of tin, rubber and trade.

Remnants of the original garden in the magnificent mango trees survive, but the adjoining rectangular carp pond, so typical of Mandailing culture, has long since been removed.



View from the street.



Side view.



Finely carved hanging bouquets of flowers at the façade corners.

FINDING A PATH THROUGH THE BELUM-TEMENGGOR

In Bahasa Malaysia, our National Language, *'belum'* means 'not yet'. But things have finally begun to happen after prolonged inaction. Following its gazettelement last year, and while issues of its ecological management have yet to be ironed out, development projects are already proceeding in stages in and around the Royal Belum State Park, part of Perak's ancient rainforest. Since the Park has been identified as an important source of pharmaceutical produce and an eco-tourism destination, business investments capitalizing on its bio-diversity and eco-tourism have surged ahead.

So far, the Pulau Banding Foundation has been tasked to protect the rich bio-diversity of the Belum-Temenggor Complex. The Pulau Banding Research Centre has just been launched although there is only enough money to operate it for one year. Meanwhile, a panel of advisors has come up with the Pulau Banding charter to develop Pulau Banding as an eco-tourism destination and gateway to the Park.

In *the Sun*, 25 January 2008: Property Plus, Loo Pik Kwan interviewed the top men of the investment and management company, the Emkay Group of Companies, to inform us of its plan for the 'Green Haven'. Here is the situation:

- Pulau Banding will be developed in two phases over 10 years. The first phase will comprise hotel and residential projects, recreational facilities, and the research center.
- The 70-room Belum-Temenggor Resort will be operational in March. The average room rates will be between RM120 and RM150.
- Pending approval for environmental impact assessment (EIA), very exclusive 'niche homes' will be developed.
- The RM600million agricultural facility complex for Universiti Utara Malaysia on Banding Island has been approved by the state government. The faculty is expected to accommodate 5000 students, 80% of whom will be living on site.

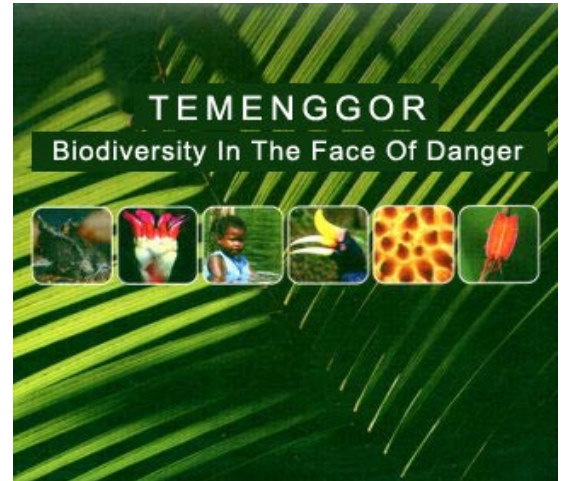
Then the startling news of a 6-star Aman Resorts on Pulau Besar! Is Sarawak's Batang Ai Hilton its model of success? Concerned and disappointed with such development in a sensitive environment, a heri.friend familiar with the place wrote:

Pulau Besar is the biggest island in this forest complex, about 10 times the size of Banding! It is a very pristine island, not logged, plenty of wildlife. It lies just next to Banding Island, to the south east; it is not in Royal Belum. Located within the Temenggor Forest Reserve, and just south of the highway, it may well be part of the bands of land 2 km north and south of the highway belong to the state, so this could mean Pulau Besar is state-owned.

The problem is that many islands in the Belum-Temenggor Complex have been 'claimed' by several government and private agencies. For development, there is another island next to Pulau Besar which is, to me, a more sensible and less destructive alternative. This is Pulau Tali Kail, 'owned' by Perak Forestry Department (PFD). There are already very good facilities for 200-300 persons, with chalets, dormitories, etc. To me, the state could have negotiated with PFD to hand over the island for this purpose. Then, Pulau Besar, just across the water, could remain as the site for tracking, nature appreciation, and camping.

It is very alarming that the state government is giving away chunks of this natural heritage to questionable development.

Another heri.friend observes: 'It would be ironic, and typically Malaysian, if the luxury resort goes ahead, but the research centre fails due to lack of funds.'



Cover of DVD documentary shown at Members' Night.



Loggers' track.



A picture of tranquility.

A RUDE AWAKENING: THE DISMANTLING OF GOPENG'S 'KAMPAR WATER SUPPLY PIPELINE'

Text: Law Siak Hong, photos: James Gough and Ben Schwarzacher



Machines at work.

The news came out of the blue. When the operation has already been in progress for three weeks, a landowner in distress came to me. He is the owner-operator of a resort near the Kampar River.

When I shared the news with some members and friends, their response showed that the value of the pipeline was not understood. In fact, most of them thought that the useless pipeline should be removed. At most, a short section of it relocated and displayed in a museum for the sake of history and tourism. As it turns out, even this little bit is unlikely to happen for heritage sake.

The iconic pipeline has been taken for granted. The issues surrounding this dastardly act are complex, and fingers will be pointed at PHS for failing to highlight the heritage value of the pipeline and intervene. Alarmed, I arranged for press coverage to inform the public at large, hoping to get some feedback from the people in Gopeng, especially the kampong folk -- stakeholders -- who have lived with it for all their life. Then, I went to various sources to dig up more about its history and to prepare a press release on its heritage.

What I found got me quite worried. I realized that a Malaysia heritage of the world tin heritage is going out indignantly as scrap metal. This is its fate, 'chopped' by the very company which 'inherited' it.

The day of reckoning

In the company of Ben, a landowner, and the editor of *Ipoh Echo's*, Fathol Zaman, Mohd Taib and I took the press reporters and photographers to where the pipe was being cut. The contractor's representative on the site tried to stop the photo-shoots and refused to talk to the press. Work was in progress at several spots simultaneously. Two days later, the Chinese press reports came out in their respective Perak Supplement.

A section of the pipeline was to be retained as the unique feature for the kampong homestay programme (*WARTA PERAK, 20 Jun 2007*). This was pointed out by the anonymous spokesman for Gopeng Berhad (*the Star, 6 December*). But, in truth, the first to go were all the pipes in the Malay kampongs. Interestingly, nine days after the report in the Star, a story appeared in a *Bahasa* newspaper. It claimed that one elderly kampong woman was happy to see it go. Was this orchestrated to counter the cries of foul play? See box.

What is it like, this giant pipeline cutting through the jungle? I had to see it. So, Ben arranged with Ahha, the local Semai trekking guide, and together with James, we walked along the pipeline, through the Semai kampongs to the intake, on the ancestral land of the Semai, an Orang Asli tribe. That was one moving experience to be treasured my whole life long.

Hasnah Mohd Ali, 83, lives in Kpg Pintu Padang in Gopeng. She has been quoted in the *Harian Metro, 15th December*, that her prayer has been answered and that she no longer has to climb over the giant pipeline to get home. The report presents problems of accuracy: both the age of the pipeline and its length are wrong. It seems to have appeared just to counter the report in the Star which said that the kampong folk were not happy with the dismantling of the pipeline.

Panoramas: James Gough



Cry me a river: court case, heartaches and tears

Meanwhile, my investigation continued. Establishing the ownership, the legal status of this piece of industrial heritage, has proved challenging.

Ben, an aggrieved landowner, understood the significance and the beauty of this historical pipeline and started legal action to try to retain the pipeline on his land. But his resistance to the dismantling has touched the nerve of the contractor. Despite police reports on earlier attempts, workmen succeeded one last trespass and removed by force all the metal parts, including the sentinel pipeline trestles near the entrance to his land. He has lost 196 metres of the historic pipeline.

On the other hand, in Kampong Empang Besar, Ulu Kampar, (Headman) Tok batin Bah Sukong said, 'People are important, the pipeline is not'. To him and his people in this Semai settlement displaced by the construction of the dam, the pipeline has been part of their landscape for generations. It is an alien thing, bringing little more than a few jobs through the decades.

The Gopeng Tin Mining Company

By Dr Ho Tak Ming

The Gopeng Tin Mining Company was started by F. Douglas Osborne, an Irish mining engineer who came to Kinta in 1890. He was employed as manager of the Leh Chin Mine at Changkat Pari near Ipoh where he introduced the first hydraulic monitor in the State. However, the terrain at Changkat Pari was not suitable for hydraulic mining as it was not sufficiently steep.

In 1893 Osborne obtained the concession of a hill at Gopeng which was suitable for hydraulic mining. However, the drawback at Gopeng was that there was insufficient water to work the mines - in fact, many of the Chinese miners were leaving Gopeng for the newly-established township of Kampar. Osborne proposed to pipe water in huge iron pipes from the sources of the Sungei Kampar at the foothills of Cameron Highlands, a distance of seven miles from Gopeng, to work his monitors. He got James Wickett of Redruth and his Cornish friends interested in the project. Ten shareholders subscribed £700 each to form the Gopeng Tin Mining Company, initially working with two monitors. This was the first instance of hydraulic mining for tin in the world. It was hugely successful and could work land profitably, land that had been too poor to be used under any other system.

In 1894 Osborne procured an additional concession of 300 acres for the company. Over time the shareholders invested another £11,000 to bring the number of monitors to ten in 1904, altogether spending £18,000. On that basis the company was reconstructed. The profit for 1905 alone was £18,000. All in all, Gopeng had paid back the shareholders' money several times over, making them the luckiest accidental tin-miners in the country.

Quotable Quote

'If this is one of the criteria for gazetting, how do you quantify the price of heritage -- purely in ringgit and sen? The cost of conservation cannot be a criterion for heritage listings.'
-- Elizabeth Cardoso, Executive Director, Badan Warisan Malaysia, NST 31 DEC 2007:
And the walls came tumbling down, stresses that the cost of conservation should not be a yardstick for gazetting heritage buildings.

Dr Ho Tak Ming

A practicing doctor in Ipoh, and with three history books to his name, Dr Ho is currently engrossed in research on the Kinta Valley and Ipoh for his next book.



Step ladder to get home.





Cut away pipe over the main trunk road in Gopeng.



Like a giant worm.



Kitchen by the pipeline.



Water intake at the dam.

Together with another mining engineer, WRH Chappel, Osborne founded the famous mining consultant firm of Osborne and Chappel, eventually managing a dozen large mines (it was known in Cantonese as “Sup Yee Kong Si”). The firm introduced the same system of mining successfully to other properties, such as New Gopeng, Kinta and Seremban. In 1912 the Gopeng Tin Mining Company merged with New Gopeng Ltd and Ulu Gopeng Ltd to form the famous Gopeng Consolidated Ltd, which was one of the most successful tin-mining companies in the country.

Osborne’s idea of piping water in gigantic pipes over such an enormous distance to work his hydraulic monitors was a bold and innovative concept, which spearheaded the introduction of modern technology to the tin mining industry in this country.

The dominant presence

There were five pipelines sourcing water from Sg Kampar, Sg Geroh and Sg Geruntum. Without the water supply pipelines, including this iconic giant, Gopeng would not have had such a strong tin-mining heritage. The largest by far, this giant pipeline sources its water from the Kampar River; thus it was named the Kampar pipeline. (The last remaining pipeline is scheduled for dismantling in April.) The pipelines were left behind when mining operations in the Gopeng area ceased in 1985.

The pipeline traverses the terrain through many zones. It runs through the jungle, Semai Settlements and Orang Asli Reserve, small rubber holdings (some of which are now converted to profitable, small scale eco-resorts), Malay kampongs and urban housing area. Until it was dismantled for road work in the 1990s, a section of it used to run beside the Federal Highway to deliver water to the area north of Gopeng.

A true heritage

By the National Heritage Act 2005, the Kampar Water Pipeline in Gopeng is hardly a national heritage. Surely, like the Green Ridge Battleground in Kampar is a historical site of World War Two, the pipeline is a Malaysia heritage of the world tin industry. We are going global, are we not?

The pipeline was designed and built by Osborne & Chappel for Gopeng Consolidated Ltd. during the period of 1911-1915. It was manufactured by the Mephan-Ferguson Lock Bar Pipe Co., Ltd. in the United Kingdom and shipped to Penang, by rail to Kota Bharu, then by steam tractor and bullock wagons to Gopeng.

The pipeline was used for hydraulic tin-mining, an adaptation from the hydraulic mining which started in the gold field of California in the 1850’s. It was 8.5 miles (13.6km) long and 45 inches (1348mm) in diameter. It carried a flow of 6,000 cu. ft. per minute under a working pressure of 150 lb. per square inch. The water was used by monitors to cut the tin-bearing ground for subsequent recovery of tin ore.

The pipeline was probably larger than any of its kind built anywhere in the world. It represents the tin-mining industry of Malaysia that has since ceased to operate. It is an industry that made Malaysia rich and famous.

Like many towns in the Kinta Valley, Gopeng was built through tin-mining. Here, generations of Malays, Sumatrans, Orang Asli (Semais) and Chinese have worked in the mines and spurred the growth of the town. For more than 92 years, the Kampar Pipeline has been a landmark in Gopeng, a part of the landscape.

The pipeline is a unique feature on the ‘rafflesia trail’, a popular nature tourism product. Promoted by Perak Tourism, it has provided income to the local community, the Semais in Kampong Ulu Geroh. Similarly, the environment of Kampong Empang Besar can be tapped for tourism. The fantastic concrete dam and intake look like they would stand for centuries.

The fallout: environmental degradation

The method employed by the dismantling team is destructive. Bulldozers and trucks created potholes in the narrow and windy road from the kampongs to the resorts, endangering road users. While all saleable steel: piping, nuts and bolts and trestles are taken, concrete pillars are left standing or pushed over. Some broke up. From the Kampar River to the intake, there is no road for bulldozers and heavy equipment. For expediency and cost-reduction, heavy machineries have taken over the Semai's 'road'. A narrow concrete path built by the community, this only access has disappeared. Already, large tracts of hillside have been stripped and the vegetation overrun. Soil material and mud are exposed to erosion. Rain has created quagmire. Rain has washed the mud into the river, where the Semais fish and wash, and white-water rafting passes. Will Gopeng Berhad and the contractor take responsibility for this and provide not only safe passage during their operation but also an improved road afterwards? What about regenerating the land destroyed?

The original people, the big losers

From their ancestral land comes jungle produce -- the source of the Semais' income. The concrete path gone, the land is impassable except on bare foot, and only gingerly. School children have to face this. Bikers have fallen onto the thick slippery mud. Safety is the issue. Their livelihood lost. The disadvantaged community is asking for fair compensation, which is the major issue with them.

The issue of the Semai is beyond PHS. We have high hopes that the united community and NGOs who work for OA community issues would seek just compensation with which to re-build their village and improve their infrastructure.

'How now, brown cow?'

Like a garden sculpture, the rusty-red giant steel pipeline dominates the land. While it may be true that the pipeline is, in parts, hindering road expansion, appropriate sections could have been left as a legacy to the kampongs to benefit the locals and resort operators. What can be saved and what needs to be done?

1. The section over the main thoroughfare, the most visible section of the pipeline, could be raised on new concrete pillars built for safer passage of traffic below.
2. Sections in private properties where the owners prefer to keep them should be left. There should be an agreement with the local authorities that they remain in situ and maintained.
3. In the hills, the pipeline and the bridges are married together and should be retained for safe passage of motorbikes and trekkers, kampong folk, their visitors and tourists.
4. Up in the hills, the dam and intake is a historical wonder. It needs maintenance and safety checks. This seems like a perfect corporate social responsibility project for Gopeng Berhad, with paid-jobs for the Semai villagers.

Already, to reduce the traffic on the kampong road constricted by the pipeline, an alternative road is being used. It is a scenic route which skirts the back of the Malay kampongs.

Heritage education

Heritage education is the best way to teach the younger generation that history matters and heritage counts. The heritage value of the pipeline is that it visibly, uniquely represents hydraulic tin-mining, a world's first for Malaysia. It is quite an engineering feat; it was not welded but bolted and clamped together. It is a piece of century-old engineering that showcases our country's history and wealth. (the end of this long story)



Pipeline as the bridge.



Metal bridge beside the pipeline.



Semai children on the pipeline.

Photos of Kpg Empang Besar

Semai houses - vernacular architecture



Collectors at work.



Tok Batin Bah Sukong was the perfect guide.

KL: KL-Selangor Chinese Assembly Hall

Dated 1923, this national heritage building will be restored for RM1.9 million, half of which coming from the Ministry of Culture, Arts and Heritage. Work includes re-building the original façade, which had four columns two-storey-high, repairing the dome, the windows and the decorations. It will become an affordable, multi-ethnic cultural performance centre. However, architect Teoh Chee Keong is concerned that, for integrity, the budget will prove inadequate if preferred practices are implemented.

Singapore: Jinriksha Station upgraded into a new entertainment spot

Hong Kong superstar, Jackie Chan sealed his love affair with Singapore by acquiring the former Jinriksha Station with a cool RM25 million. Dated 1903, this 4-storeyed heritage building in the Neil Road conservation area of Tanjong Pagar, once the central depot for rickshaw drivers in Singapore, will continue as a commercial building. With rentable floors for offices, it will also house a piano bar and a foot reflexology business.

Ipoh: the day the camel strolled into town

In conjunction with Hari Raya Aidiladha, celebrated on 20 DEC, animals were sacrificed and the meat distributed to the poor. Late in the morning of 16 DEC, a camel imported from Australia for its meat, ran loose from its confine in the State Mosque. It took more than ten men and two hours to recapture the camel from the street.

Ipoh: the FMS pauses

It is the end of a chapter in FMS' century of existence. Many long-time regular customers turned up to mark the closing of the premises for renovations. It is not clear if the FMS will return and what it would look like. Let us hope it returns to resume an enviable tradition of making happy memories for so many faithful customers.

Taiping: Homecoming for the charity cyclist

Taiping native, Law Tzuo Hann, 23, left the United States last May on an expedition for charity: around the world on a bicycle, covering 21,900km across Europe, Central Asia and China. His last leg was Padang Besar to Taiping, 6-8 March. For more info, visit www.crazyguyonabike.com/doc/longwayhome or e-mail him at tzuohann@gmail.com.

KL: Sultan Suleiman Club, Kampong Baru

The former Menteri Besar of Selangor has asked the Ministry of Culture, Arts and Heritage to make 'the entire area of Sultan Suleiman Club' a heritage site and a historical centre for Malaysians. Formed in 1909, this oldest of Malay social clubs 'has great national historical significance. This was the spot where the spirit of Malay nationalism was fanned and, through it, UMNO was born... Actually, it symbolizes the struggle and unity of the Malays. Preserving it shows that we want to preserve our roots', he was quoted.

Kuala Terengganu: Waterfront Heritage City

Heralding Visit Terengganu Year 2008, this historic estuarine town was proclaimed the "Waterfront Heritage City" as the year started. It is the very first city on the East Coast of Peninsular Malaysia. The teething problem of this new city is inflation: artificial increase in rent and price of goods and food. Worse is yet to come, as the new urban poor is set to become prominent, bringing in new social problems.

Sowdagar Singh, the grand old man of Kpg Kepayang

Nonagenarian Sowdagar Singh speaks clear and immaculate English. Born and bred in Malaysia, this Sikh community leader, educationist, sports enthusiast and successful businessman and landowner lives in Kampong Kepayang. During a special interview arranged by the Khalsa Diwan, Harchand Singh and the PHS for Professor Lynn Lees, he relishes trusting cross-cultural friendships as his treasured memories.

Shared cultural ownerships: Whose life is it anyway?

Through the millenniums, grown from common roots, countries are now 'competing' to claim sole possession of cultural heritage. Last year, the Koreans applied to UNESCO to claim certain Chinese festivities are their own. Now, Malaysia's claim on the folk song 'Rasa Sayang' has met the opposition of Indonesia.

Penang: The last trishaws?

While trishaws are re-branded as friendly transport for sight-seeing tourist in various towns, there remains but one trishaw maker and repairer in Penang. 60-year-old Choo Yew Choon, who inherited the business from his father, has been looking for an 'heir' to his trade since his children are disinterested in his trade. Choo's Hup Huat Tricycle and Bicycle Repair shop is in Jalan Pintal Tali, George Town. The last trishaw-maker in Ipoh closed shop in 2005.

Tanjong Rambutan: Tat Choi Chinese Primary School

The historic government school on our heri.trail has just been allotted RM25,000 for repairs. It was established by the Philomatic Union ('reading club') and it became a public school in 1922, but the building, as found on its gable, is dated 1929.

Ipoh: Incense coils with the sweet smell of pomelo

Incense coils and sticks in this shop-cum-factory in Bercham are exported to Thailand, Indonesia, Hong Kong and the United States. Using nearly three decades of experience, the entrepreneur creates the refreshing aroma of pomelo using the leaves and the peels of this iconic fruit of Ipoh.

Karai: Historic Victoria Bridge immortalized in a stamp

The Pos Malaysia Bhd statement proclaims, 'Bridges play a significant role in connecting people and places. It also connects the development of society and civilisation'. In a new series of stamps showcasing our historical bridges, Perak's Victoria Bridge is featured. The others are Kedah's Merdeka Bridge, Selangor's Kota Bridge and Johor's Sg Segamat Bridge. They are first issued on 28 February 2008.

Green Ridge for the world

Green Ridge is the last WW2 battleground where the Battle of Kampar was fought by the Indians and the British against the Japanese invaders. It has been partially destroyed by a comedy of errors. What remains, however, is still a site to be reckoned with. In fact, this historic site is not only part of the history of World War Two, but also a heritage site for the world.

'Local heritage at cultural village'

The idea of building a cultural village in KL came from desire of the Ministry to make the city the cultural centre in peninsular Malaysia. To be built for RM32.5 million, the Kota Warisan will comprise a cluster of villages from every ethnic group in Malaysia. Actors will portray the Malaysian identity. This is a chance to save some endangered authentic village buildings by relocating them here!

More photos of Gopeng pipeline



The last hugs.



MAP OF PERAK

We Care About Our Past

PHS, as we call ourselves, is a non profit-taking non governmental organization.

Our main aim is to promote heritage preservation and raise awareness of the natural and cultural heritage in our midst.

An elected committee runs a programme of activities for members and friends.

We network with individuals, groups and local communities for local knowledge.

We support information-gathering on 'hometown heritage'.

Heritage News (HN) is the vehicle for news, views and information to reach our readers.

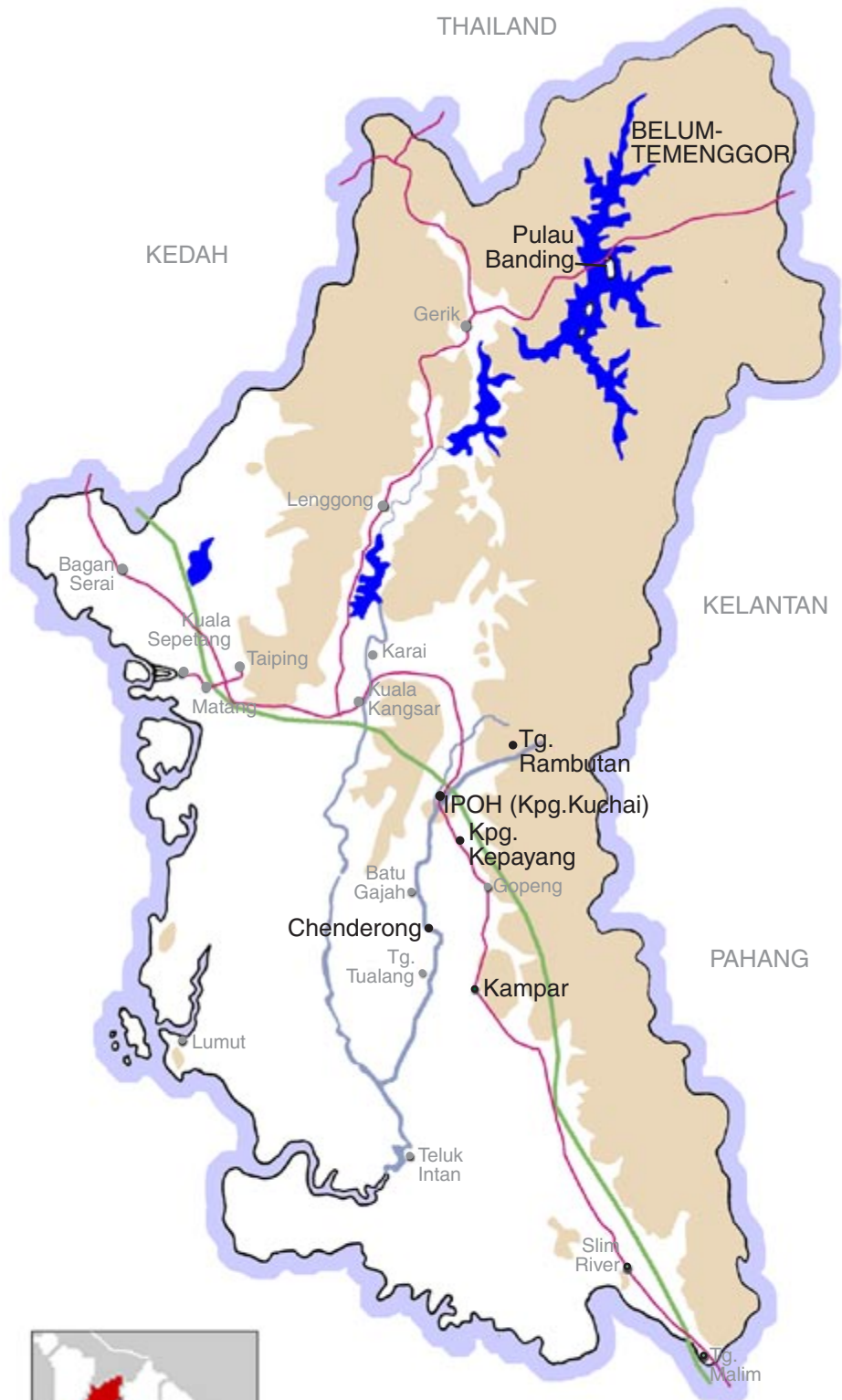
Membership has its privileges; more information and application forms are available from our office.

Persatuan Warisan Perak, the Perak Heritage Society (Reg No:1254) was registered with the Registrar of Societies in August, 2003.

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Location of the state of Perak in Peninsular Malaysia

LEGEND

- Land 150m above sea level
- North-South Expressway
- Main Road