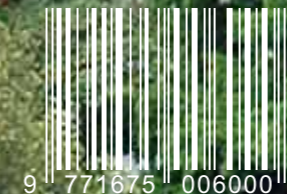


THE LEADER

ALUMNI MAGAZINE OF UNIVERSITI SAINS MALAYSIA

SCALING
NEW HEIGHTS

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Cover photograph of USM Chancellory by Rohana Mas'od

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from the Chief Editor

Since its humble establishment in 1969, USM has been pushing into new frontiers, with the resultant expansion in Pulau Pinang including the opening of new branch campuses. The medical campus, in particular, is almost halfway across the country thereby making physical contact between its community and that of the main campus in Minden a continuing challenge.

The Leader accordingly feels that there should be more effort to connect the students and alumni from these branch campuses into a unified USM community, true in spirit and resolve. We feel this magazine has a role to play in disseminating information and serve as the common link in bringing together the dispersed members of the community.

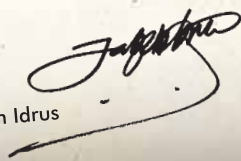
This issue attempts to kick-start this aspiration. In covering all the campuses, we hope alumni from the branch campuses who have raised this matter will be comforted by this small effort of ours.

In getting the materials together, The Leader team has received tremendous support from our colleagues in the various campuses. We cannot feature all of them, but we want to thank everyone of them who has supported us in one form or another.

This attempt to representatively cover all the campuses is largely due to USM's venture into its 40th year, a span that has seen the university growing in size and reputation. With the conferment of the Accelerated Programme for Excellence (APEX) status, USM is "scaling greater heights".

The Leader will try to keep track of this new journey. We hope that our alumni will offer their undivided support in making the national aspiration of putting USM on the global map a reality.

Chief Editor
Mohamed Talhah Idrus
B. Soc. Sc. '74



It's Us!



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TOWARDS THE

Universiti Sains Malaysia was honoured as the country's first institution of higher learning to be given APEX (Accelerated Programme for Excellence) status by the Ministry of Higher Education on 3 September 2008. The pathway towards this much coveted recognition began with the "Healthy Campus" programme in 2001, and continued with subsequent initiatives undertaken to enhance the University's capacity in terms of its teaching programmes, innovative research, reputation of academic staff and infrastructure development.

The Vice-Chancellor, Professor Tan Sri Dato' Dzulkifli Abdul Razak, said USM was prepared to embrace change and this included "the idea of making USM a university in the garden, as we think that a university ought to be like a garden (nurturing) rather than a

factory (manufacturing)". USM became a regional centre of expertise in 2005 under the United Nations efforts to spearhead Education for Sustainable Development. Dzulkifli added, "It gives us a very flexible way of transforming the present education paradigm. It is a journey we have taken and when the Ministry came out with the idea of an APEX university, it just fitted in naturally."

The APEX programme is aimed at putting one Malaysian university among the top universities in the world. It is expected to stimulate new ideas and best practices to be adopted including promoting top level research and teaching to create a better future. In this context, research programmes will be intensified in the areas of health biotechnology and molecular medicine, fundamental research, biodiversity and environment, and various engineering disciplines.

USM was chosen based on its clarity of vision, leadership, capabilities, state of readiness and preparedness for change as set forth in the plan entitled "Transforming Higher Education for a Sustainable Tomorrow". The plan also includes the revamping of other activities and programmes of the university including postgraduate studies, students and self-development services and alumni initiatives. Dzul kifli also explained that USM would be adopting the 'blue ocean' strategy by expanding into areas yet to be explored where there is minimum competition.

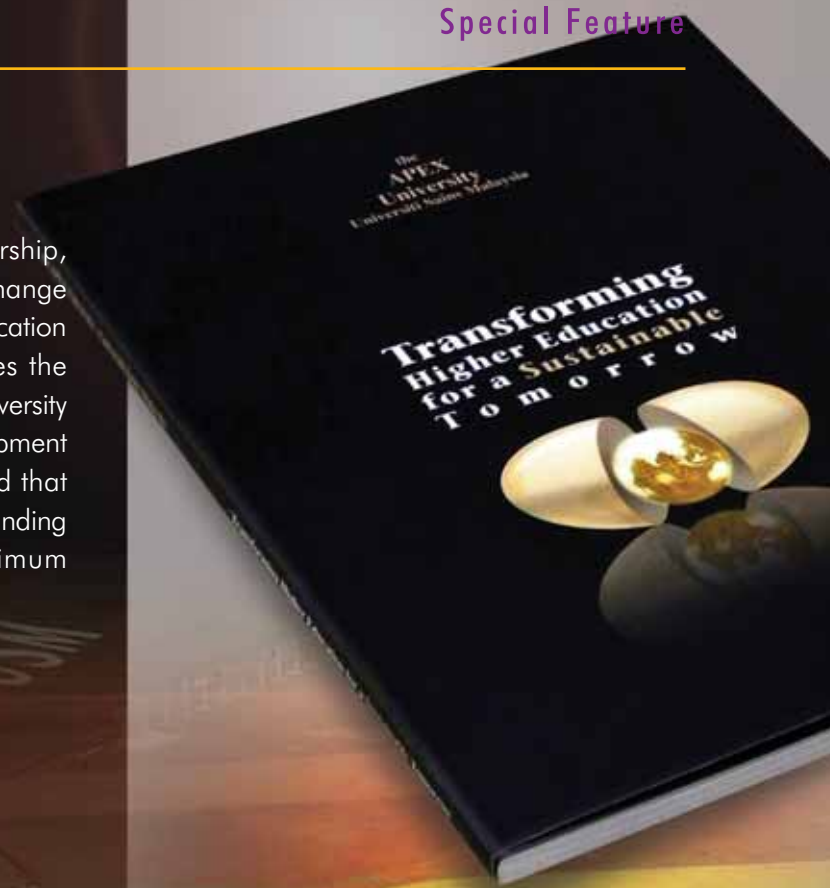
PEAK

Saw Cheang Kee

The APEX programme is about planning for the future, and the university accorded this status is seen as one with the greatest potential to be world-class; hence it would receive additional assistance to compete with top-ranked global institutions.

With the granting of the APEX status, the university hopes to improve on such critical aspects as its human capital development, resources and governance. USM views APEX with pride and sees this as an opportune time not only to transform itself but also fast-track the country's higher education sector as a whole towards excellence.

Saw Cheang Kee is currently an Executive Officer in the Alumni Liaison Office, USM. He can be reached at sck@notes.usm.my



APEX: The Implications

- * transformation road map (requirements and deliverables) to guide development
- * collaboration with relevant agencies
- * assessment by Key Performance Indicators (KPI)
- * benchmarking against world best practices
- * proactive support from alumni
- * potential to be a leading university by 2020

Text and Photographs by
Mohamed Talhah Idrus
B. Soc. Sc. '74

anchoring ROOTS

TS

*I*n June 1971, carrying my battered suitcase, I made my way from my hometown in Kedah, to a customs officer friend's house, 77 Kampong Kastam (Custom's Village). I was to enrol at the Universiti Pulau Pinang (UPP), a university I never knew, to study the Social Sciences.



Four of the first cohort to occupy Minden Barracks proudly posing in front of the varsity sign in 1971 (Photograph courtesy of Zainal Abdul Latiff)

On registration day, I was still nervous about the wisdom of my decision to be a student of this new university. I was not even sure of its location. Nevertheless, I set out on foot to the campus on Minden barracks, a distance of about two kilometers, for the registration programme.

Upon passing the guard house at the Batu Uban entrance I noticed a long-haired guy tending to his Suzuki Wolf by the *padang* (playing field). A number of young people were walking up the hill. A white bus came by and stopped to pick me up.

All new students, some of whom were my former classmates, were assembled in Block 30 (now housing the Centre for Languages and Translation). To register, we had to go to the 'Red House', next to the swimming pool, while the building was being renovated into a Registrar's Office. Indeed many buildings were undergoing various stages of transformation - from a military base into an educational institution. The Bursary, for instance, was a shack next to the former Chancellory.

This three-storey building where I registered my entry as a student was to serve as the focal point for all of

us. On the ground floor was the dining hall. The lecture rooms were on the first floor whereas the topmost floor was transformed into a dance hall for weekend parties, where live bands jazzed up contemporary songs which were danced to with much vigour and enthusiasm. The hall sported a revolving multi-faceted disco ball that reflected ultra violet rays.

When the UPP was established in 1969 it operated from the borrowed premises of the Malayan Teachers College (MTC) before moving to Minden in 1971, following diligent negotiations by the first Vice Chancellor Hamzah Sendut to turn the military barracks into a university campus.

The MTC transition was gradual. Though many of the army facilities have been removed from Minden, a Navy Army and Air Force Institute (NAAFI) shop remained, much to the delight of the seniors, especially those who had a penchant for cheap beer. Indeed, alcohol was featured in a number of orientation activities, such as making freshies dive into the swimming pool to retrieve beer cans tossed by the seniors.

Anchoring Roots

Diving for beer was part of ‘ragging’ which we were subjected to during the first two weeks of entry, when scruffy-looking seniors taught us to sing dirty songs. We had to run errands at their behest. Failure to deliver would result in more impossible tasks like ‘blowing out a street light’. Sometimes we were able to resist since we, the freshies outnumbered the seniors.

In those transitional days, students living on the Minden campus had to shuttle to the MTC to attend lectures or use the library, sometimes hitching rides on army trucks to get to the library in MTC. Another source of delight was the novelty of the Xerox copying machine in the library, where curious students even experimented to see how their scanned nostrils would appear on paper.

Meanwhile, others were having a field day scavenging discarded furniture, fixtures, odds-and-ends or for anything promising (even toilet rolls which proved handy, for jotting down lecture notes) from the

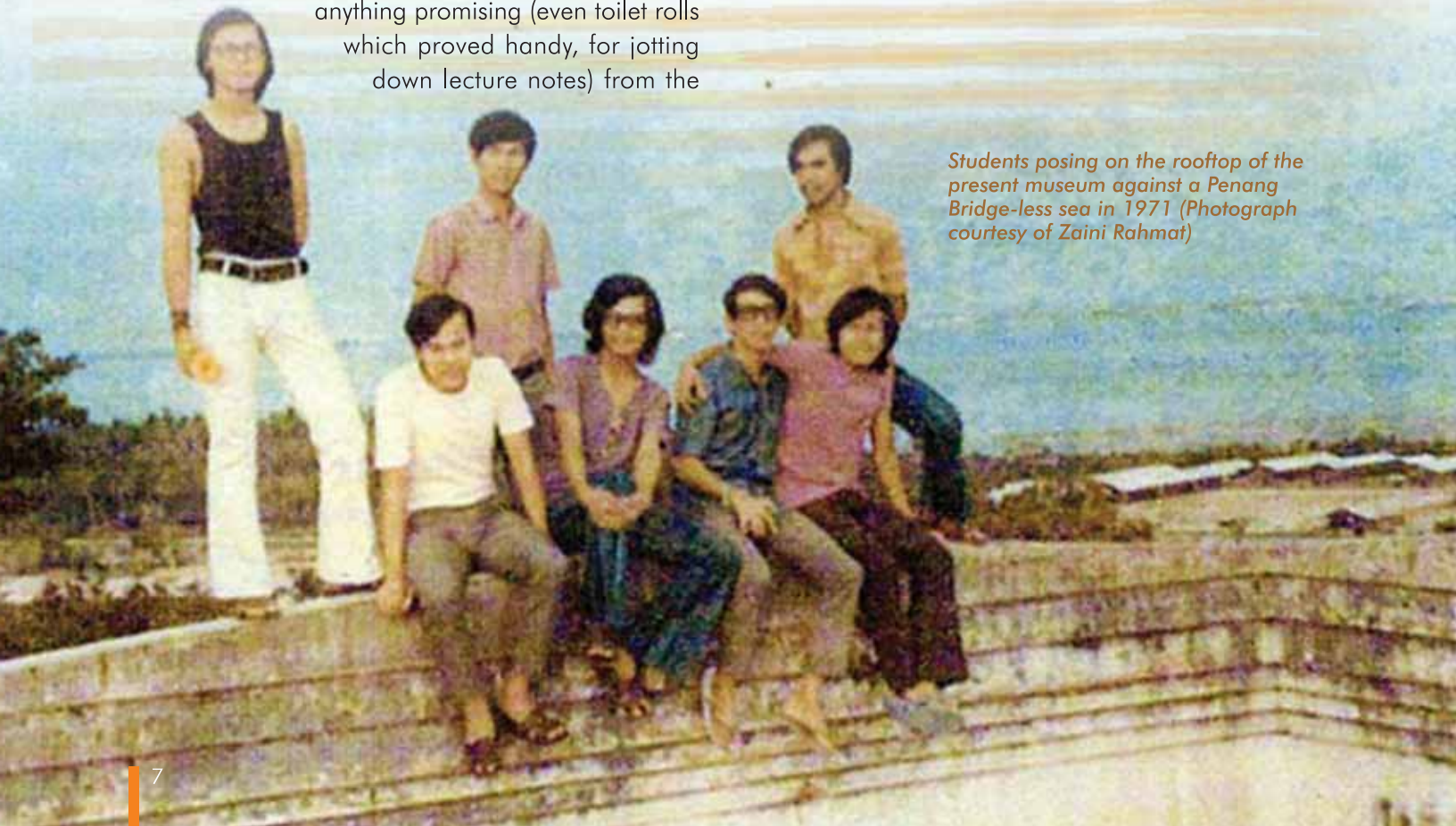


A library ‘red spot’ card showing the reference UP423 where UP denotes University of Penang (Photograph courtesy of Hamdan Omar)

largest building on Minden, which was being turned into UPP’s library. A number grabbed the opportunity to climb up to the roof to pose for the cameras against a panoramic view.

In 1969, the UPP pioneered the first ‘school’ (rather than ‘faculty’) system in Malaysia with the setting up of the School of Biological Sciences and the School of Chemical Sciences. Subsequently, it continues to create many firsts.

Barely three years old, plans were afoot to change the university’s name, which to some reflected a ‘regional’ focus, to ‘Universiti Sains Malaysia’ (USM), in consonance with the national aspiration of promoting science and technology. *Kami Memimpin* (We Lead), was adopted the Universiti’s motto. Some students dubbed it *Kami Lebih Terror* (We Are More Awesome).



Students posing on the rooftop of the present museum against a Penang Bridge-less sea in 1971 (Photograph courtesy of Zaini Rahmat)

USM marched proudly, expanding its domain. Programmes from the School of Humanities, later became full centres such as the School of Communication and the School of Arts, the School of Educational Studies and the Centre for Languages and Translation. From the School of Social Sciences came the School of Management, the Centre for Policy Research and International Studies (CenPRIS), the Research Centre for Women's Development (KANITA), the Centre for Archaeological Studies, and the Centre for Islamic Development (ISDEV).

The physical campus has now expanded beyond the original Minden barracks. In 2000 USM claimed the foothills across Minden to establish the student villages of Restu, Saujana and Tekun adding another 31 hectares to the original campus.

In 1986, the first branch campus was established in Ipoh for the engineering programmes. It was later moved to Seri Iskandar, and finally settling back near home-state Pulau Pinang, in Nibong Tebal.

In 1991 the Medical Sciences moved from Minden to the permanent campus in the east coast state of Kelantan. A 12.4 hectare science park is scheduled to be opened close to Minden, while another development is going on across the Penang Bridge in Bertam.

USM has about 97,000 alumni across the globe. The Minden campus' area now covers 240 hectares.



Open spaces are constantly being filled to accommodate new uses



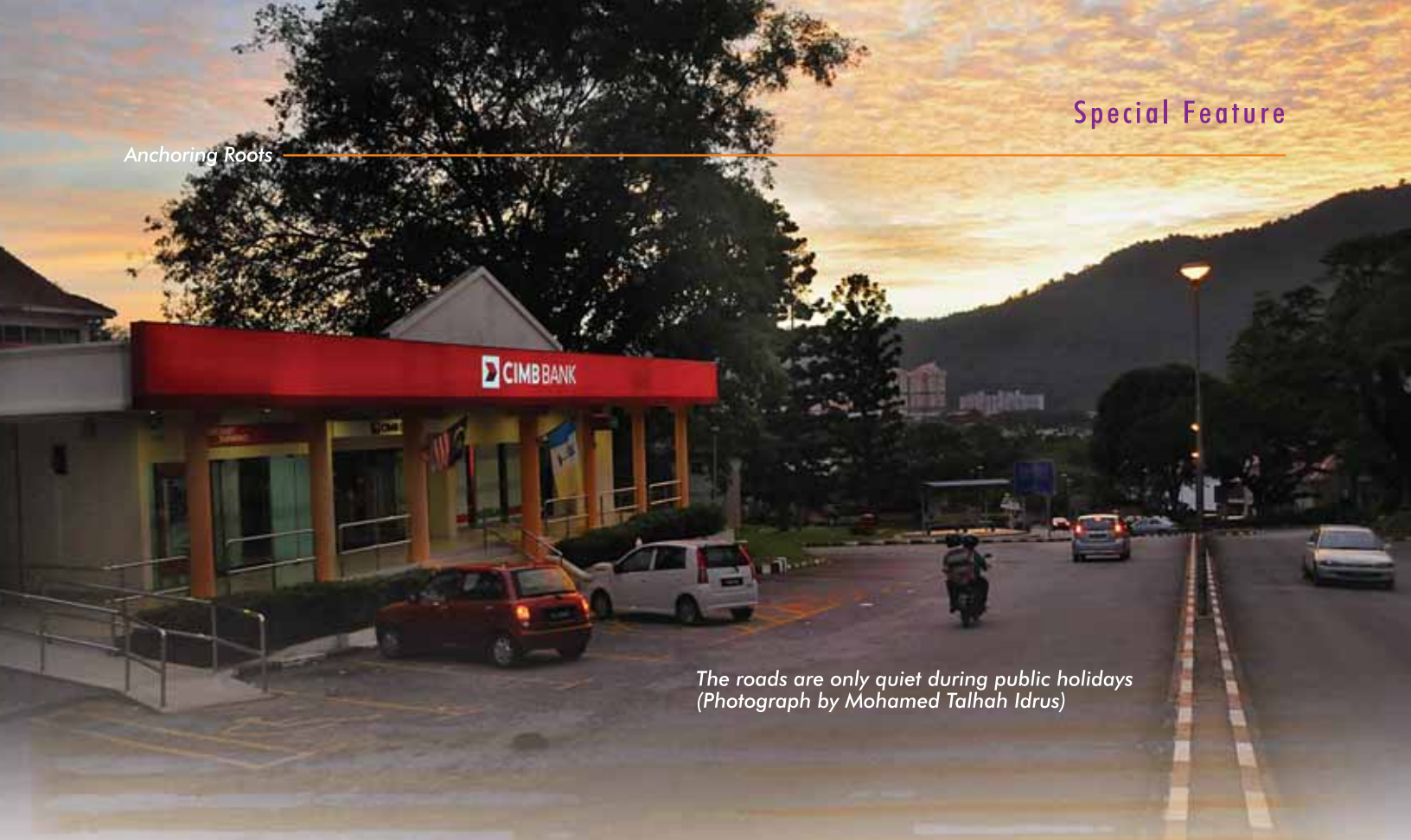
A flash flood near Eureka building

(Photograph by Mohamed Talhah Idrus)

When I first set foot on Minden campus the only entrance was at Batu Uban, along the only road connecting the city and the airport. Traffic was sparse. One had the time to greet friends and acquaintances.



Expanding into the hills, the Desasiswa Restu, Saujana and Tekun (Photograph by Mohamed Talhah Idrus)



The roads are only quiet during public holidays
(Photograph by Mohamed Talhah Idrus)

These days, despite the creation of more roads, only motor traffic exiting the Penang Bridge uses the historical gate. Instead entry into the main campus can be made via three additional gates, at Sungai Dua, Yeap Chor Ee Road and Minden Heights. Nowadays, road users on campus have to pay heed to students and staff crossing the road; some even while text messaging on their hand phones, oblivious of oncoming buses, cars, motorcycles or other pedestrians.

Inevitably, USM's expansion has taken its toll. Many of the fruit trees, such as, *durian*, *rambutan*, *cempedak*, and *manggis* are barely surviving. Concrete buildings have pushed them out without mercy. USM has sensibly put into gear plans to integrate sustainable practices, such as zero-plastic and zero-polystyrene, with the generation of new knowledge.

During my undergraduate days, there was no dress code, even for lecturers. No fashion style was indecent. Mini skirts, bare-back dresses and bell bottom pants were the craze. Today long sleeve T-shirts and *tudung* (beaded head scarves) for many of the Muslim girls are in vogue. Despite a dress code, some girls mostly

sport short-sleeve T-shirts and jeans that seem to be falling off. Backpacks and lap-top bags seem to be the necessary equipment as compared to the sling cloth bags of my time. In are RM200 designer sneakers instead of RM1.50 slippers bought at the 'everything-you-ever-need' shop along Penang Road.

*“All across the nation
Such a strange vibration
People in motion
There's a whole generation
With a new explanation
People in motion
People in motion”*

Scott McKenzie. 'San Francisco' 1969. 

Associate Professor Mohamed Talhah Idrus is currently a lecturer at the School of Housing, Building and Planning, USM. He can be reached at tolamhaha@yahoo.com

In 1984 Universiti Sains Malaysia commenced offering degree programmes in Electronics Engineering and Materials Engineering when the School of Applied Sciences (established in 1972) became the School of Engineering Sciences and Industrial Technology. In the wake of the government's decision to site the engineering programmes in the state of Perak, USM made plans to temporarily operate from the former Ipoh Municipal building along Jalan Bandaraya in 1986 pending construction of a new Perak Branch Campus (or KCP, its abbreviation in Malay Language).

Engineering a journey

THE STAR MONDAY, 4th June 1986

Saw Cheang Kee Yong Check Yoon

"Little did we realise come 15 years later engineering would make a come back, at least to the mainland part of Penang state," explained Jamahyah Basiron who continued in a matter-of-fact tone, "likewise my career posting with USM is also back a full circle." She started as Assistant Registrar with the Vice-Chancellor's Office in July 1983 before becoming one of the pioneer staff at the engineering campus.

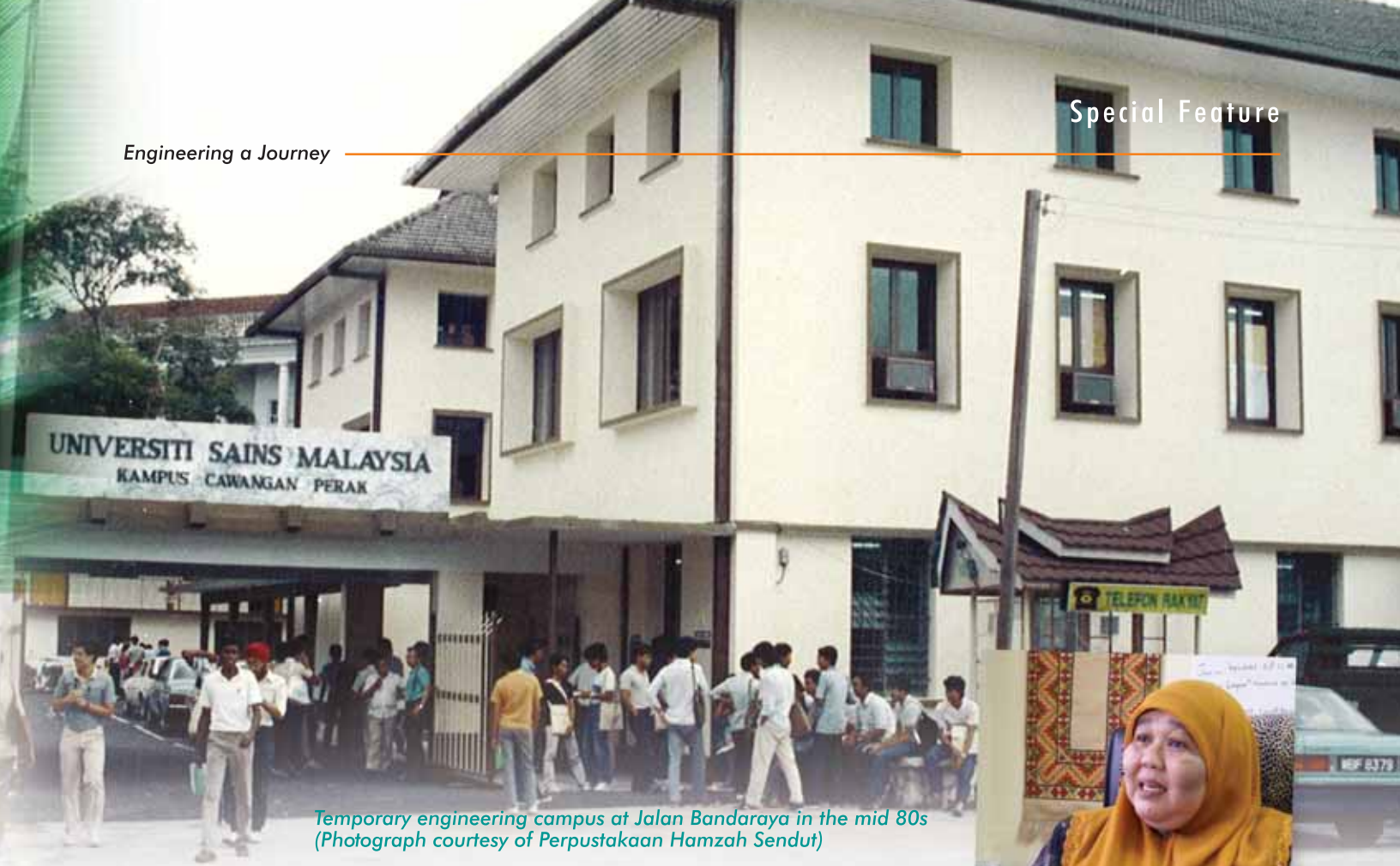
"I was happy to relocate to Perak - my home state - where we operated from the temporary KCP in Ipoh, 165 km to the south of Pulau Pinang, on 2 May 1986," added Jamahyah who faithfully followed the engineering campus to three different locations before returning to the main campus as Senior Deputy Registrar (Human Resource Management) in the Registry Department since September 2007.

Moving house has always been a daunting task. The two existing programmes and about 100 students were transferred to Ipoh from the 1986/87 academic session. The old Municipal premises were improvised

to accommodate the Universiti's teaching and administrative needs. The lack of space restricted physical movement and had made one ill at ease. Jamahyah could recall some of her colleagues likening the situation to "living with the mother-in-law". The students too suffered the inconvenience of having to put up at Asrama Perak (student housing) located in the suburbs and had to be bused each day to Jalan Bandaraya for lectures or when they need to work in the library.

Fond memories of the temporary campus still lingered. "We started with skeletal staff and were a closely knit family under, literally speaking, one roof. I knew the full name of every staff member," explained Jamahyah.

The campus itself was housed in a heritage building and other vintage structures such as the Ipoh Railway Station, Court House, Main Post Office and a renowned secondary school were within walking distance. The Ipoh Padang (or city playing field) lay adjacent to the campus and Jamahyah recalled, "The staff and students



Temporary engineering campus at Jalan Bandaraya in the mid 80s
(Photograph courtesy of Perpustakaan Hamzah Sendut)

Jamalyah Basiron (Photograph by Yong Check Yoon)



enjoyed a grand stand view of important games played out among competing teams on the *padang*." There was no in-house canteen but staff and students were spoilt for variety as the surrounding area was dotted with hawkers' stalls. It was thus a natural venue for lunch-time interaction with USM staff as well as those from other government departments and private sector firms who patronised these stalls.

It was a different scenario when the campus moved to the 'satellite township' of Seri Iskandar, some 30 km from Ipoh. This happened in 1990. If the premises in Jalan Bandaraya were 'crammed', the new buildings were neatly planned and spaced out within the 200 odd-acre grounds. Whereas the temporary campus had the hustle and bustle of mid-town traffic, the dedicated campus was desolate-looking being located in a former tin mining district with only scant vegetation.

Jamalyah remarked, "There were few amenities in Seri Iskandar at that time so our staff lived in Ipoh and had to tolerate the narrow roads when

USM Schools of Engineering	Year Established
Materials and Mineral Resources Engineering	1986
Electrical and Electronics Engineering	1986
Civil Engineering	1989
Mechanical Engineering	1989
Chemical Engineering	1992
Aerospace Engineering	1999




*Seri Iskandar campus under construction in the late 80s
(Photograph courtesy of Perpustakaan Hamzah Sendut)*

commuting daily to KCP. The students now lived in well-planned hostels on a campus which also exuded a conducive study atmosphere. They found the campus swimming pool a much welcomed relief after going through day-long lectures or laboratory sessions.”

Founding KCP Director Assoc Prof Mohd Muslim Mohd Yusoff was responsible for landscaping a couple of former mining pools into aesthetic looking lakes to blend in with the surroundings. He had vision both as campus planner and in fine-tuning the thrust areas of the engineering programmes. In this context, Muslim shared the dynamism and vision of the then Vice-Chancellor Dato’ (now Tan Sri) Musa Mohamad. Furthermore, Prof B. L. Clarkson from University College of Swansea (Wales) provided much input as Special Consultant during the critical years from 1986 to 1997. It was through the efforts of Clarkson and a team of senior professors from top British engineering schools who helped propel the quality of research and teaching in Seri Iskandar. By 1999, six schools were set-up and functioning.

As KCP developed, so did Seri Iskandar township and many staff began to reside in the nearby community. “Just when facilities were fully in place and we had built-up a student population of nearly 2,000, it was time to move again!” said Jamahyah.

The Seri Iskandar site was taken over by a new university when USM transferred the engineering campus to its present location at Seri Ampangan, Nibong Tebal on mainland Pulau Pinang in 2001. The present site is about 45 km south of the main campus. 



*Jalan Lestari, Seri Ampangan campus
(Photographs by Rusly Jamaludin)*

Chronology: Directors of Engineering Campus

in Ipoh and Seri Iskandar, Perak

Assoc Prof Mohd Muslim Mohd Yusoff	1986 - 1995
------------------------------------	-------------

Assoc Prof Hj Mohd Hashim Daud	1995 - 1997
--------------------------------	-------------

Prof Ahmad Yusoff Hassan	1997 - 2001
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in Seri Ampangan, Pulau Pinang

Prof Kamarudin Hussin	2001 - 2002
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As the Engineering Campus in Seri Ampangan is close to the main campus, it has been administered directly by Office of the Vice-Chancellor since 2002.

I love the well-arranged and beautiful layouts and the superb photos.

Hifzaila Ahmad Hafni
B. App. Sc. '05

The Leader has evoked the memory of my years in USM. I can still remember the moment I have to squat with my friends whenever I attended Lecture Hall 'A' because Management Class was always full. Those were the most precious moments that I'll treasure forever. Reading the magazine makes me smile each time I flip through the page.

Augustine Wong Ming Kong
B. Management '03

I first received the magazine from Darweena and Rafizah. Thanks to the editorial team for producing such a nice magazine for the alumni but I'm quite frustrated to see a lack of stories coming from my Engineering Campus. Despite being a young campus, I think the campus has much to share.

Puteri Yulianty Samsudin
B. Eng. '06

I love the quality of the magazine; it shows great team-work. I think the texts are quite long for some articles. I prefer articles that do not need much reading and that most of the pictures are quite straight forward. I prefer more design so that the pictures will look outstanding. For example, the box-type pictures should perhaps have a touch of design or shades so as not to portray the copy-and-paste style.

Diniha Hidayah Abdul Manan
B. Fine Arts '08

I would like to see more stories of the Kubang Kerian campus as we are part of the USM fraternity too. I am sure there are many interesting stories to be featured and perhaps The Leader can cover more of those.

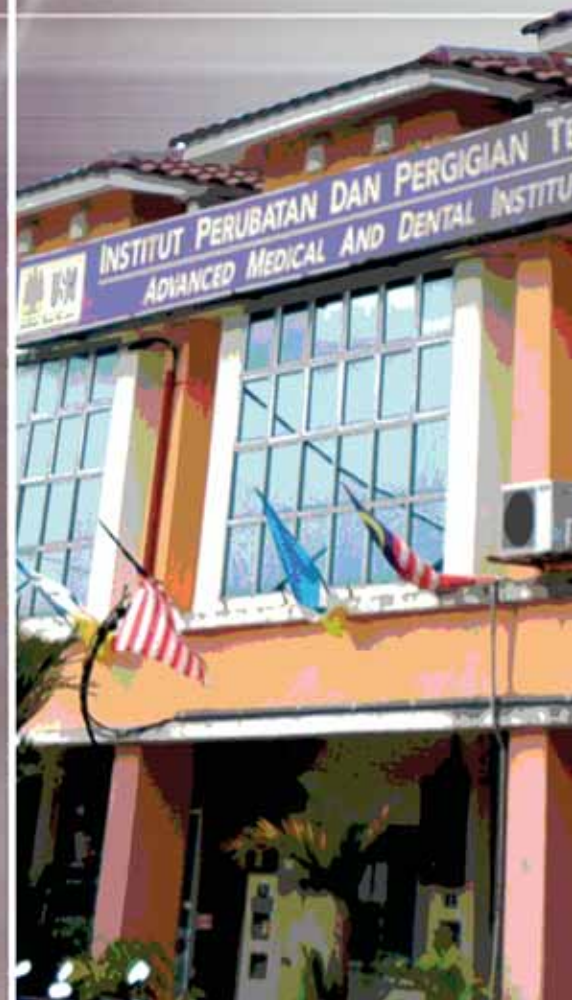
Nur Ilyana Md Salleh
B. Sc. '08

BERTAM in the FAST LANE

Text by Haslina Haroon

Photographs by
Haslina Haroon and
Rusly Jamaludin

Anyone travelling through Bertam would probably not give the row of shoplots a second glance. The building fronting the main road leading to the fast-growing township that is Kepala Batas, with its facade coated in a vivid orange, looks like any other building in any developing town. Appearances, however, can be deceiving, and this is perhaps an apt description of Institut Perubatan & Pergigian Termaju (IPPT) or the Advanced Medical and Dental Institute (AMDI), the Clinical Centre of which currently occupies two levels of three shoplots in the building. AMDI does not seem very imposing in terms of its outward appearance but it actually houses a whole panoply of state-of-the-art machines and medical equipment and facilities that can probably rival those at more established and modern medical centres.





Bertam in the Fast Lane

Special Feature



On 16 October 2002, the Cabinet formally approved a memorandum submitted by the Ministry of Education involving the setting up of AMDI in Bertam. The main aim behind the setting up of AMDI was to offer postgraduate training in both Medicine and Dentistry and to provide and support advanced research in these two fields. With the mission of developing state-of-the-art advanced research, conducting innovative postgraduate programmes and delivering tertiary healthcare services, AMDI can be seen as a comprehensive institute integrating medical diagnosis and treatment, postgraduate teaching as well as scientific research.

The clinical centre of AMDI began operating on 20 September 2004. It has quite a number of clinics including the Women’s Health Clinic, the Pediatrics Specialist Clinic, the Medical Specialist Clinic, the Surgical Specialist Clinic, the Oral Health Clinic, the Mental Health Clinic. AMDI also offers diagnostic services which include imaging services such as echocardiography, mammography and ultrasound. It also has its own MRI (Magnetic Resonance Imaging) equipment valued over RM 1.5 million. However, due to space limitations, the equipment has been placed at the Kepala Batas Hospital in an annexe to the main building. Manned by AMDI staff and those of the hospital, the MRI Centre is able to perform an average of seven MRI scans per day, most of which involve neurological, oncological and musculoskeletal imaging.

AMDI also offers a number of medical laboratory services relating to haematology, histopathology, cytogenetics and chemical pathology. To say that there is limited space at the institute is probably an understatement, but this has not prevented the staff there from doing their job well, from managing the clinics and carrying out tests to conducting experiments.

In terms of postgraduate education, AMDI currently offers higher degree programmes in various innovative fields of medicine, which includes the Master of Science (Medical Research) programme, the Master of Science (Transfusion Science) programme, the Master of Medicine (Transfusion Medicine) programme and the Master of Medicine (Nuclear Science) programmes. The lectures are conducted mostly at the AMDI Administrative Centre, currently occupying a row of shophots less than a kilometre away from the Clinical Centre.

Building works have already started at the site where the permanent building of AMDI will eventually stand. Situated in the middle of what is expected to become Penang’s Education Belt, AMDI, once completed, is poised to become a major landmark in the area and, together with other educational institutions sprouting up in the area, are set to transform the once sleepy town of Kepala Batas. With a strong foundation for achieving excellence firmly in place, in line with its motto “We Build and Lead Excellence”, AMDI already has what is required for it to set out on the journey towards excellence and can in fact put that journey on the fast track in its aim to lead excellence. **■**



Dr Haslina Haroon is currently a lecturer in the School of Humanities, USM. She can be reached at haslina@usm.my

Still Remembered

Artwork by Rusly Jamaludin

TWO MINDS, ONE VISION: MUSA AND ISHAK

Saw Cheang Kee

Yong Check Yoon



Photograph by Mohamed Talhah Idrus

It was one day in 1974 when Musa Mohamad (now Tan Sri) received an unexpected telephone call from Tan Sri Datuk Professor Hamzah Sendut, USM's founding Vice-Chancellor, to meet him at the Federal Hotel in Kuala Lumpur. The hotel was one of the popular ones during those years and it is best remembered for starting business the same year as Malaysia received her Independence - Merdeka - in 1957.

"I met Hamzah and he discussed with me the vision of how he is going to develop the university into a par excellence stature," said Musa. "He then asked me to help him and I was just a 32-year-old pharmacist with the Malaysian Health Ministry (MOH) then."

Musa felt that he would not fit the niche because, despite his 10 years of service with MOH, he had not been an academician. In fact Musa had carefully planned a career as professional pharmacist after returning from the University of London where he completed a two-year programme with distinction, and was awarded the Abbot's Prize for best student.

"I did my Masters with the intention of advancing my career at MOH but during that time I was also deeply involved in the Malaysian Pharmaceutical Society (MPS) activities pertaining to the separation of roles from doctors," said Musa, adding that "perhaps my


name appearing in the mass media had caught the attention of Hamzah." Musa was then the president of MPS and was made the director and subsequently founding dean of the School of Pharmaceutical Science (SPS).

It took Musa six months to reply Hamzah in the affirmative. He recalled meeting the first academic staff at SPS, (now Dato') Dr Gan Ee-Kiang. Hamzah became Musa's mentor and exposed him to aspects of the university's administration system.

Hamzah completed his term in 1976 and the late Tun Hamdan Sheikh Tahir took over as the second Vice-Chancellor. Hamdan was very hardworking and full of drive as Musa soon discovered.

"From these two persons (Hamzah and Hamdan), I learned many things: Hamzah taught me to be an academician and a leader while Hamdan taught me to be an effective administrator," said Musa.

He was the dean of SPS until 1979 and became Acting Deputy Vice-Chancellor of Academic Affairs [DVC(Academic)] when (now Dato') Professor Sharom Ahmat went on sabbatical leave. He was made the substantive DVC(Academic) the following year.



Photograph by Mohamed Talhah Idrus

Musa felt that his promotion was too fast and was not too sure why he was chosen to be the DVC(Academic), “a post I have never dreamt before”. He remained in the post for three years and in 1981, he felt that he had played his role in USM.

“I was supposed to be temporarily transferred to USM by the government and have the urge to move on after six years,” he revealed. “I then returned to MOH.”

However, his ‘escape’ from USM lasted just a year because in 1982 he was recalled to USM to become its third VC. Musa led the university to new heights until his retirement in 1995.

During Musa’s tenure, USM achieved a first among local institutions of higher learning in 1986 when an International Relations Unit was set up to expand links with foreign universities to promote academic and research developments. Several of these projects were jointly funded under the aegis of renowned agencies like the British Council, International Development Program of Australian Universities and Colleges (IDP) and others. It was during this time that USM established its medical campus and dedicated teaching hospital in Kelantan (on the east coast of Peninsular Malaysia) and engineering programmes were started in the state of Perak, to the south of Pulau Pinang.

Musa’s appointment as VC at the age of 39 is believed to have made him the youngest academic in the country to be appointed to that post. In December 1999 he was appointed the country’s Education Minister and held this portfolio until March 2004.

Professor (now Dato’) Ishak Tambi Kechik, who succeeded Musa, was Dean of the School of Biological Sciences before being made Deputy Vice-Chancellor in 1984 where he headed the Student Affairs Division for about a year before being transferred to the Academic Affairs Division. As DVC (Academic), he enjoyed the confidence of Musa and in many ways they both shared the same ideals pertaining to the direction and policies that guided USM’s development. Both believed that bosses should be approachable to their subordinate staff and maintain a harmonious working relationship, an essential ingredient to the makings of a good university.

“I was given flexibility by the VC in formulating important academic decisions,” said Ishak. When Musa passed on the baton in 1995, it was not surprising the change was seamless from the perspective of academic policies since several programmes were initiated by Ishak and continued to be pursued with vigour.



From right: Ishak, Tan Sri Ani Arope, Tan Sri Dr Lin See-Yan and Musa (Photograph courtesy of Centre for Instructional Technology and Multimedia, USM)

implementing the cumulative grade point average (CGPA) system in 1996/97; opening of new schools such as the School of Dental Sciences, School of Health Sciences and School of Aerospace Engineering; and building new desasiswa (student accommodation) blocks to house a larger number of students on-campus. Ishak was also involved in the setting-up of USAINS Holding Sdn Bhd as a university holding company to promote business-like opportunities such as commercialising research.

Citing an example, Ishak recalled the bold step taken by USM in the 1980s when the Universiti introduced the major-minor programme. He explained, “The single major degree served the need of good students to specialise and delve into a chosen subject area. However, the major-minor alternative gave many other students a credible opportunity to study a subject with some depth and also augment this with a minor package of courses which can be selected from a different School.” Many years later the wisdom of this move proved a saviour to many USM graduates by giving the much needed extra edge in an increasingly competitive employment market.


Although the Universiti spent considerable sums on development of its science-based programmes, the humanities and social sciences were not neglected as USM held steadfast to the importance of maintaining a ‘balance’ in the courses offered including the need to produce holistic graduates through the interdisciplinary approach.

Overall there was satisfaction in achievement in various areas which he grouped under academic programmes, infrastructure, student welfare and miscellaneous developments. These included the push towards

VCs - Past and Present

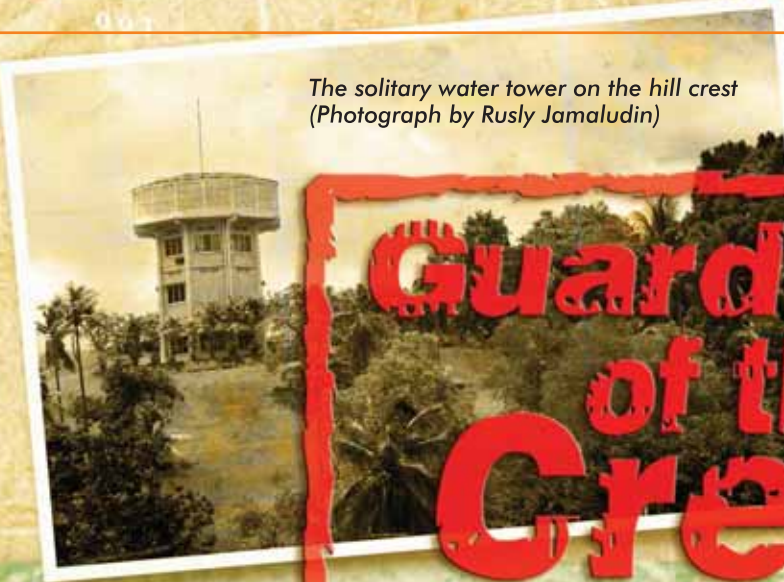
Tan Sri Hamzah Sendut	1969 - 1976
Tun Haji Hamdan Sheikh Tahir	1976 - 1982
Tan Sri Musa Mohamad	1982 - 1995
Dato' Dr Ishak Tambi Kechik	1995 - 2000
Professor Tan Sri Dzulkifli Abdul Razak	2000 - present

* The titles are correctly recorded as in current official documents.

Some of the changes and new developments reflected good foresight and helped maintain USM’s lead among local universities. The internationalisation process continued to expand into 1990s and among many new programmes was the introduction of Study Abroad. This scheme opened a window of opportunity for USM students to gain exposure for a semester’s length to a different study environment in a foreign partner institution whilst the Universiti received overseas students on an exchange basis, giving the campus an international flavour. At USM, ‘Global Competitiveness: Our Commitment’ had become an important milestone since 1999. 

Musa and Ishak, the two former Vice-Chancellors were recently invited to present talks as part of the Universiti’s Oral History series.

The solitary water tower on the hill crest
(Photograph by Rusly Jamaludin)



Guardian of the Crest



The USM water tower (circled) and its surrounding area prior to the construction of the Penang Bridge that would later occupy the land to the right of the picture (Photograph courtesy of Fawizah Haji Kamal)

Artwork by Rusly Jamaludin



Rusly Jamaludin

The old surviving water tower (Building D07) merits a close look. Quaint it may be, but still a visual delight (as much as ever). The tower forms part of a vibrant past of the campus history and it takes pride of place. Wherein lies its charm?

There is much to like about the 'disguised' water tower, which, thanks to its enviable position on the highest point in campus, greets visitors at every turn. A glance on a map is sufficient to indicate an arresting landmark that the tower is.

Also known as the Chancellory tower, it was originally built in the 30's as an elevated water storage reservoir and used as a garrison observatory post by the military up to 1969. Subsequently, it was refurbished into office suites for the Deputy Vice-Chancellors (DVCs) and is now partially occupied by the Students Affairs and Development Division.

Nestled on the brow of a hill south-east of the campus, overlooking the Channel of Pulau Pinang, the cream-puff coloured facade has an imposing outline of the ramparts of a castle or a likeness of a 'chess rook' which, when seen from afar, can hold the gaze of an observer. Whatever impression is most apt, an important point comes into view which distinguishes this tower from the ordinary architecture: it seeks to be one of a kind. This sculptural gesture not only emphasizes the tower's immediate attraction but significantly provides a splendid navigation point to the campus.

Standing at 150 feet above sea level and rising three-storeys in the air like a veritable stronghold, the tower is neither a rudimentary design nor grace of architecture. But then, for all their simplicity, it has a breathtaking elegance that still captivates the casual onlooker with its unpretentious beauty and moderation.

It is by far, one of the rarer buildings among the barrack structure and it seemed to do its job more successfully both visually and socially. The Tower has the great virtue that it endows the campus's life with a form which is both memorable and delightful. Those who live and work there will remember the place with an implicit gratitude. Matter-of-factly, the Tower as a whole takes on the austere and sombre in appearance yet is 'sweet' enough to make any heart flutter.

According to the former Bursar, Mawan Nooraini, in early 70's, the top floor was once a favourite lounge for the late Tan Sri Hamzah to hold an informal staff gathering from the highest rank to the gardener, whom he invited personally for a high-tea and a 'pep talk session'. It was done after office hour on every Wednesday and occasionally on Friday accommodating 20-25 people per session.



Gurdian of the Crest

Sustaining Heritage

Annexed to the former Chancellory building (once served as a Warrant Officers and Sargeants' Mess), the tower gazes over the coconut grove (Photograph by Idris Md Yusop)

"I enjoyed the pleasure of conviviality and that it had impacted us a sense of comradeship and it was truly unforgettable," she said, recalling one of the session she attended.

Puan Norsalmah, an ex-PA to the DVC Dato' Professor Emeritus KJ Ratnam, enjoyed gazing nature's handiwork from the tower.

"Not as dull as you imagine. To stay literally under the tower roof with a great lookout point over the picturesque scenery is a novel experience," she exclaimed breathlessly with cheeks aglow with excitement.

"I have great memories of all the DVCs viz. Dato' Sharom Ahmat, Dato KJ Ratnam, Dato' Amir Awang, Dato Musa Mohamad, Dato' Dr Kamal Saleh & Dato' Ishak Tambi Kechik whom I enjoyed a good working relationship with. The old workplace still grows on me," she added.

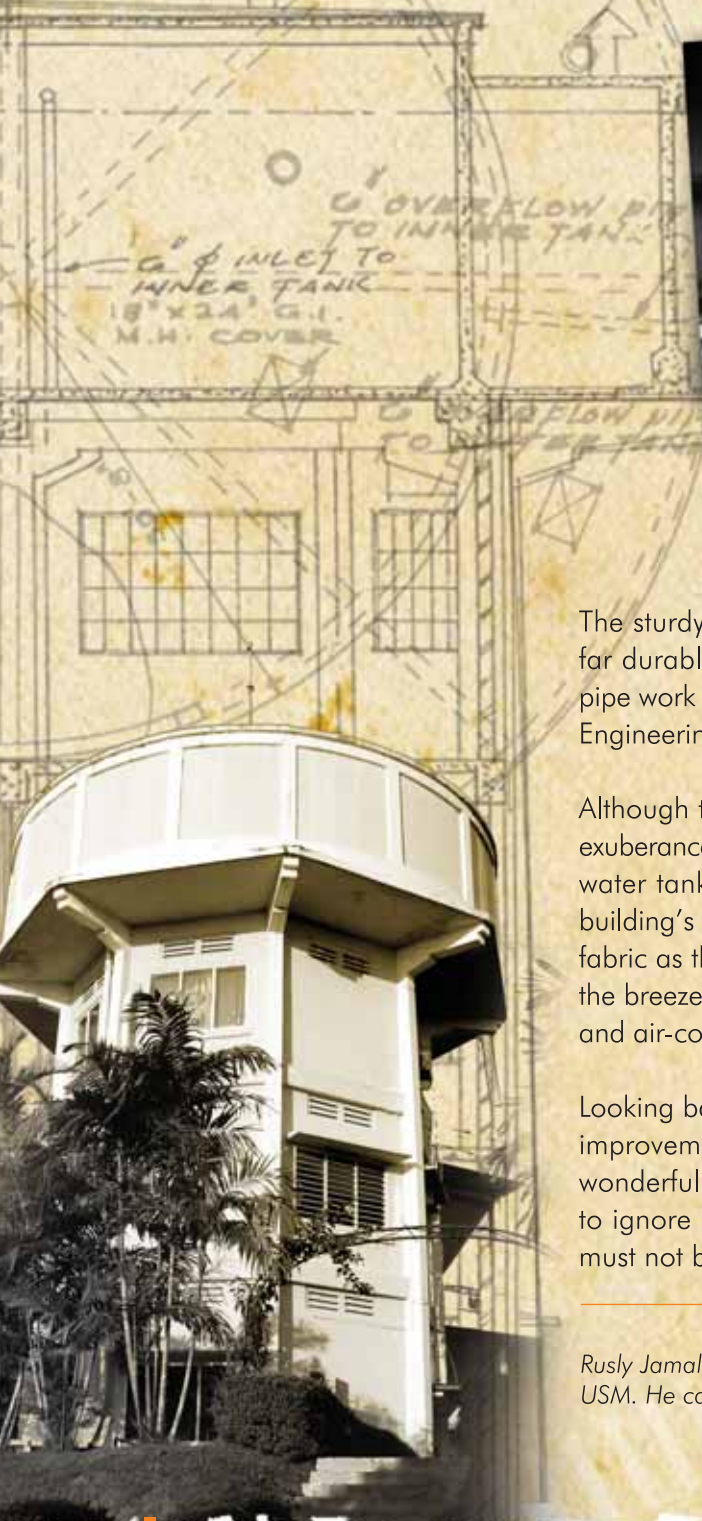
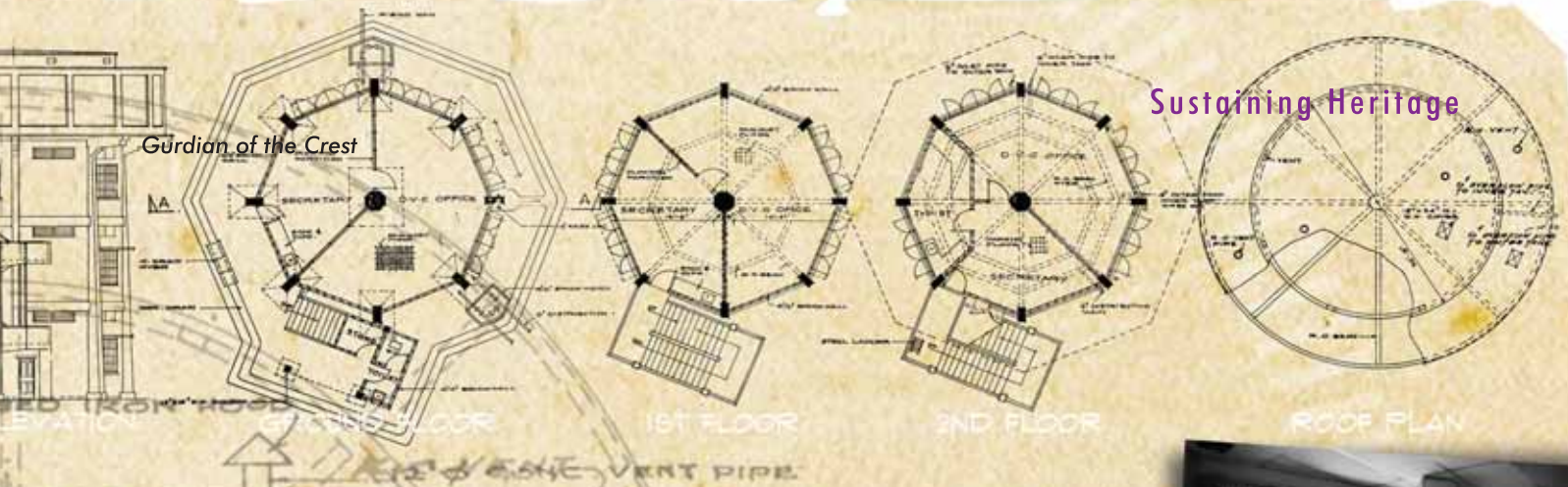
Senior water pump operator, Rajoo a/l Muruthiah monitor operating pressures and take a check ride regularly to ensure the 80,000 gallons in the tower are properly regulated and stay at peak form.

"Care has been taken over the years to keep the tower in good shape. No other tower is more pleasantly situated than this. This is the most charming, to my eye," Rajoo recalled with fondness his time spent working there.

Drawings courtesy of the School of Housing, Building and Planning, USM.

The forlorn tower awaits whatever the future may bring (Photograph by Rusly Jamaludin)

Sustaining Heritage



Interior views of the former DVC office have remained unaltered through its memorable past. The built-in wall case and furniture are of their former state (Photographs by Rusly Jamaludin)

The sturdy tower, even though for the most part lacks ornamentation, it is far durable than any other modern structures. Even more convincing, the pipe work is stamped with the name Elkington Patent No 316012-The Dover Engineering Works Ltd England, a significant testimony to old world quality.

Although the Tower had adapted to changing needs, much of the original exuberance are still intact. The octagonal ('eight-sided') tower base, cylindrical water tank and the external concrete staircase are essentially part of the building's original features. Some fittings are slightly at odds with the existing fabric as the old Victorian cast-iron casement windows which once open to the breezes had been knocked down and replaced by the new glass louvers and air-conditioned boxes (not entirely applauded by some preservationist!).

Looking back over nearly 40 years, we saw the shortcomings as well as the improvements that have been made; the very existence of the tower offers wonderful encouragement for all of us. It is hard to forget and harder still to ignore it. Care is what we need. The tower's beauty and that of its site must not be impaired. 🏡

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Artwork by Mohamed Talhah Idrus

*"I only work with
a clear view of
the desired end
product"*

shaping A VISION

Mohamed Talhah Idrus
B. Soc. Sc. '74

Yusuf Suid
B. Comp. Sc. '06

Photographs by
Che Engku Ramlah Che
Engku Mat

Shaping A Vision



Roslani (fourth right) and Syed Mohsin (second right) in an early work session



"The Gang of Four" which planned and gave shape to USM's medical programme in Pulau Pinang and Kelantan. Right to left: Syed Mohsin, Saidi, Ong, and Roslani (seated front)

In 1991 the USM branch campus in Kubang Kerian, Kelantan was officially opened. The main driving force behind this visible dream was Professor Mohd Roslani Abd Majid.

Dato' Roslani, as he is referred to by many, resides in Petaling Jaya, and works part time in a private college.

He was seconded from Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (UKM) to assist USM in setting up a medical school.

Why would he want to come to USM?

"Actually I was not sure until I got a letter from from Dr Mahathir (the country's former Prime Minister)."

With three other staff members from UKM to assist him, the late Dr Saidi Hashim, Dr Syed Mohsin and Dr Ong Kok Hai, Roslani headed for Pulau Pinang and commenced service in 1979.

He immediately envisioned his end-product...an all-rounded doctor who understands the interrelationships of the various disciplines of his profession and has a deep understanding of his patients and their environment.



Block 46 which housed the pioneers of PPSP in 1980 is now part of the Pusat Seni complex

To start PPSP Roslani had to perform a number of tasks concurrently - starting an office, planning the curriculum, planning for the first student intake, advertising the programme, recruiting staff, as well as building up an array of supporting infrastructure including USM's own hospital.

One thing he did not want to do was duplicate the existing system of medical education. It was during this time that he hit upon the integrated problem-based approach.

"I hated the conventional approach even when I was a student", he said resolutely.

Hardly two years later, classes for the first intake of students were conducted with meagre facilities. The approach, naturally, was a new one, much to the annoyance of the conventionalists.

Personality

Shaping A Vision

Next was the construction of a hospital to serve the students as well as members of the the public. Roslani made the surprising choice of Kubang Kerian, a sleepy corner in the state of Kelantan to locate it. But why Kelantan?

“Poverty. No development. The yearly flood made cholera an epidemic. The conventional approach has always favoured cities as ideal locations for hospitals, while the environment in Kelantan is perfect to pursue the problem-based production of good medical practitioners. The rural environment would give them hands-on experience rather than theory,” Roslani explained.

He envisioned locating the whole PPSP in Kelantan as a good opportunity to change the conventional educational system. And he seized on it.

However, there were things beyond his control. Although the university hospital was completed in 1983, the mid-80s saw an economic recession which slowed the relocation of PPSP to Kelantan.

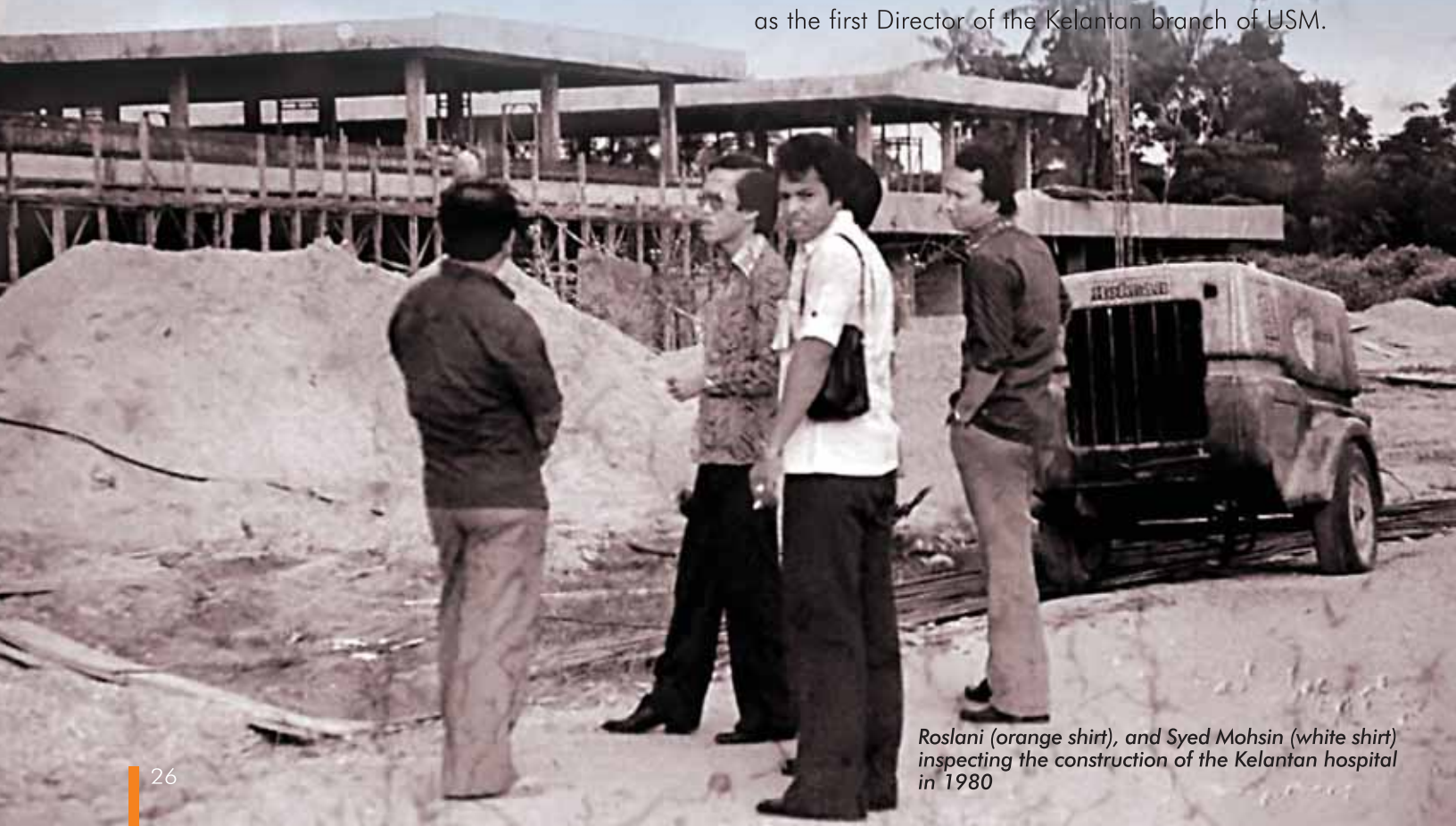


Registration of the first cohort of medical students in 1981

By the time the Kubang Kerian campus was completed in 1990, four cohorts of students had already graduated, and Roslani had become a regular Pulau Pinang-Kelantan commuter for eight years!

The relocation of PPSP to Kelantan, half a country away from the main campus in Minden signaled a new approach to developing and managing a programme. It means the creation of a totally new campus within budget and political constraints.

Apart from lecture halls and accommodations traffic has to be planned, a mosque has to be built, and even a golf course was felt as important in integrating the education of his doctors. The new campus was fully operational in 1991 and Roslani was appointed as the first Director of the Kelantan branch of USM.



Roslani (orange shirt), and Syed Mohsin (white shirt) inspecting the construction of the Kelantan hospital in 1980

Personality

Shaping A Vision

With the physical development of the campus completed, Roslani concentrated on expanding the academic programmes. By the 1990s, PPSP embarked on the development of postgraduate medicine. The School of Health Sciences was established to simultaneously accommodate undergraduate needs. Nursing, which started as a diploma programme by the new school, developed into a full-fledged bachelor's degree programme.

In November 1999, at 55 years old, Roslani retired from USM.

What is his fondest memory?

"Hmm!" Roslani pondered, rubbing his chin while looking into space. "It has to be seeing the first cohort of students graduate," he said after some contemplation.



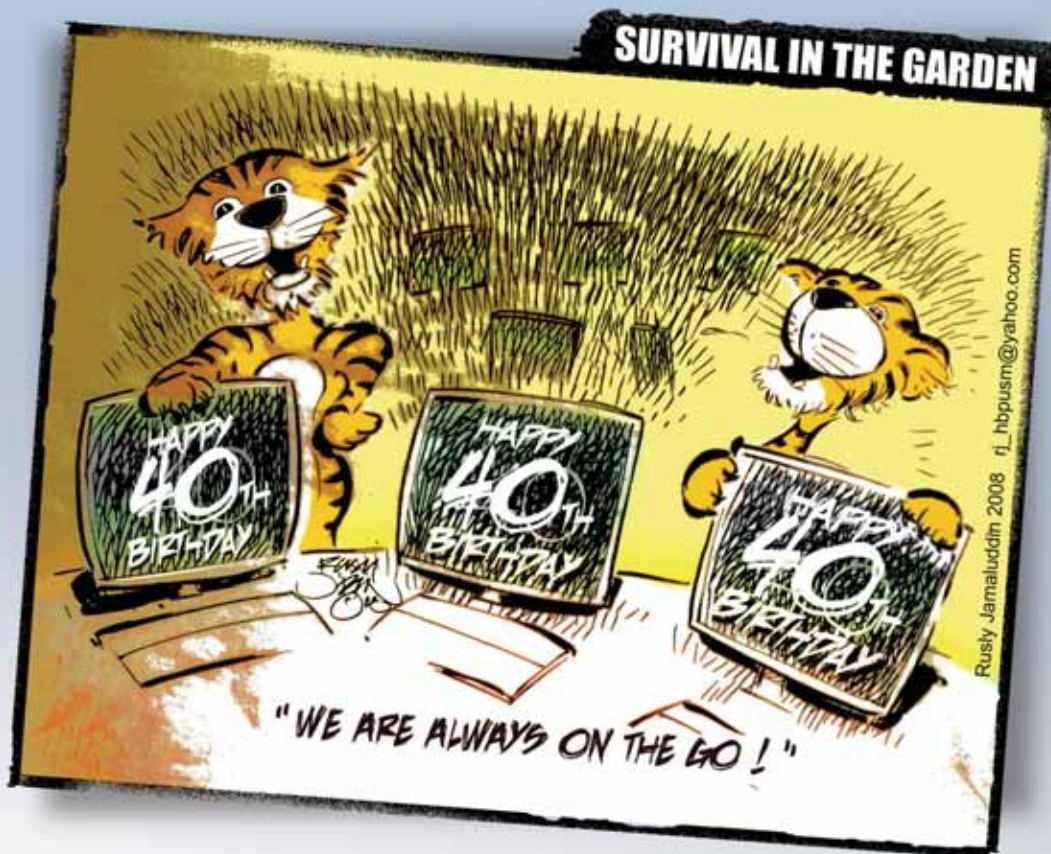
Later in the conversation he recalled this question and mentioned the farewell buffet given by his staff as most touching and humbling.

So what is his future plan?

"I want to play golf." 🏌️

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Business Unusua

Malaysia moves ahead as an independent sovereign nation, aided by its wide-ranging accomplishments. Likewise, Universiti Sains Malaysia (USM) looks forward to coming of age 40 years after its establishment in 1969 as the second oldest university in the country. The coming of age is indeed decisive when USM is recognised as Malaysia's premier research university, along with it being the only university bestowed the APEX status in September this year. This prestigious inaugural recognition sets USM apart from the rest, as a university that is poised to shape the universities of tomorrow.





Dzulkifli Abdul Razak
B. Pharmacy '76



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enyelidikan
& Foyer DTSP
Jun 2008

Dzulkifli

D.Y.M.M. Tuanika Syed Saadulain Tari
Al-Mohammad Tuanika Syed Pasha Jamaluddin
Canselor
Universiti Sains Malaysia

Business Unusual

Together with its internationally acclaimed status as ASEAN's only Regional Centre of Expertise (RCE) on Education for Sustainable Development accorded by the United Nations University in 2005, to coincide with the launching of UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development, USM is determined to reinvent itself as a valued global institution, collaborating with the best in forging new global agenda.

Since the turn of the century, in 2001, the Universiti has launched a number of major platforms for change, change and more change beginning with the introduction of *Program Kampus Sejahtera* (loosely, translated as Healthy Campus Programme) to empower the campus population in challenging the status quo.

In 2002, it enlarges the concept into a new tagline: The University in a Garden, beyond just an aesthetic symbolism. Instead it is rooted in a new metaphor for a 21st century university that USM set to pioneer, modeled and inspired from nature. By 2003, the Universiti embraced the idea of transdisciplinarity as we learn from any credible garden of repute, naturally. This allows for diversity, the richness of inspiration, and the highly symbiotic relationship that is typical of any garden. Transdisciplinarity also puts USM in close touch with the community, allowing it to interact and transfer knowledge and technology as early as 2004 in the name of sustainable development.

It is not surprising therefore in 2005, USM is made ASEAN's only pioneering RCE with the global charge to put in place the foundation of a new higher education. Later it goes on to be the top research intensive university in 2007.

Its 'unusual' business approach combined with the theme "Transforming Higher Education for a Sustainable Tomorrow" earned it the status of the first APEX university the following year.

This badge of honour is an outcome of a comprehensive but intense audit-based assessment carried out independently for the first time by a eminent group of professionals, local and abroad, commissioned by the Ministry of Higher Education.

Through numerous relentless mission-oriented continuous and collective efforts towards transforming USM into an APEX University, the Universiti has already enmeshed in the challenges to solve local issues for global problems with the confidence to make a lasting difference at all levels. In this regard, USM has chosen sustainability as a platform to create a new future. The catch-all term denotes an over-arching concept of meeting "the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs" as contained in the Brundtland Report of 1967.



Business Unusual

Sustainability, broadly defined thus, cuts across all disciplines, including economic development, environmental and natural resources management, food production, energy, and socio-cultural dimensions and lifestyles engaged in the transdisciplinary mode. It is within this framework that USM focuses its vision of a sustainable tomorrow on the back of higher education in particular, while keenly promoting values such as equity, accessibility, availability, affordability and quality (E4AQ) as the universally-accepted optimal endpoints. Concomitantly, USM will embrace the protection of the multiple ecosystems, the conservation and development of dwindling resources-natural, human and socio-economic - as well as many others for this purpose.

USM will position itself to facilitate the meeting of existing (eg. Millennium Development Goals, Education for All, Education for Sustainable Development) and other future global and universal aspirations towards the upliftment of the billions trapped at the bottom of the quality of life pyramid.

The highlight of this effort will be the creation of an innovative test-bed of ideas epitomised by the successful launch and implementation of the made-in-USM Science and Arts Innovation Space or **sains@usm** as the unique nursery to sow the seed for a sustainable tomorrow. Here, the vital ingredients for our future survival as a community of nations, namely: people, ideas and wisdom, will be keenly harnessed to buttress an increasingly fragile planet. Yet on its own each will not be able to unleash the creative energy needed to make the difference that will see us through. More so in a silo-ed environment where the fields on science and arts are not pursued independently from each other rather intertwined with one another. These are some of the current artifacts in knowledge design that have artificially prevented new thinking about the future. A design that was based on yesterday's needs and reality, and not that of tomorrow's and the future!



*A model of the science park
(Photograph by Yong Check Yoon)*

In the age of convergence, where not only geopolitical boundaries are transcended, there is an equally urgent need to remove these traditional barriers on higher education and between knowledge so that it is more reflective of the “real” world and its needs directed towards the next generations. The reality is that all knowledge intersects with one another, and people-ideas-wisdom is one vital nexus that allows for intersections in a variety of creative and enterprising ways.

This is where the journey to the world of **sains@usm** begins in support of USM’s transformation through simultaneous transformation of talent (people), resources (ideas) and also governance (wisdom). It is therefore a never-ending journey towards the vision of oneness through the interconnectivity of people (talent), ideas (resources), and wisdom (governance), as well as that of the tangibles and the intangibles, of modern and indigenous, and of profits and humanity.

The world of **sains@usm** will represent an innovative space that promotes highly integrated research with dedicated incubators, collaboratories and gardens as platforms to nurture transdisciplinarity as the way forward in seamless ways. We envision **sains@usm** will be the new idea garden (rather than of a factory!) where minds will blossom, driven beyond the mere

the spirit of innovation and entrepreneurship, but endowed with wisdom as inherent in centuries-old nature and its well-tested workings. Supported by sophisticated shared facilities and range of expertise, it therefore taps directly into the wealth of the nearby main campus of Malaysia’s leading research institutions, USM, as well that of its health and engineering campuses. These campuses accommodate a number of satellites of **sains@usm** which are already functioning as USM’s proven idea power house.

Thus, **sains@usm** will not only represent the ideal space for the academe and businesses to thrive, but also reaches out to the communities near and far, local and global in truly comprehensive and interactive manner. Yet it is maintained in a constant balance that promotes sustainability as one of its core values that places humanity at the top most of the value chain. The ultimate goal will be to meet and address the needs of billions at the bottom of the wealth pyramid representing at least two-third of the global community.

In this way **sains@usm** is poised to make a lasting difference and takes in rightful place as a significant nursery that sows the seeds of new and revolutionary thinking in making meaningful contributions, i.e. by synergising creativity and nurturing enterprise towards uplifting the quality of lives of communities around the world.

To realise this ambition, several transformational and strategic plans have been laid out for the university to accomplish within the foreseeable future. In the area of teaching and learning, for example, the university will provide and offer various programmes relating to a deeper understanding of “sustainability” so that the learning accrued by students and staff will compel them to be more involved, committed and dedicated for the sustainable wellness of the institution, community, and global environment. Though many attempts have been successfully carried out in the past, some are still on-going to engage and instill values which will further help to nurture ethically-responsible, and morally-sound adolescents of the school-going age. Their involvement in tertiary education and campus life will not only prepare them as employees with good corporate responsibility but also to be responsible global citizens with strong national-local commitments.

Since the turn of the century, USM has taken various proactive and productive steps to transform itself as a reputable university dedicated to the promotion of wellness and well-being of the human ecosystem. The newfound APEX stature based on plans to carve innovative inroads into diverse but cutting-edge transdisciplinary fields will further better position USM and Malaysia, as leaders in translating the notions of sustainability into reality. And at once, entrench a new metaphor of The University in a Garden as its brand for higher education in the 21st century.

For this purpose, teams of committed researchers and scholars as well as students and alumni of USM will be empowered to immerse themselves with cross-sectoral partners be they public agencies, the industries and members of civil societies across the nation and beyond, in the spirit of USM’s motto, “We Lead.”

In conjunction with all these excitement, we would like to recognise the contributions of the past leaders of the university, upon whose shoulders we will build the next crests of successes for USM.

Happy 40th Birthday USM!

Welcome to **sains@usm** and discover the dynamics of “We Lead.” 🏡

Professor Tan Sri Dzul kifli Abdul Razak can be reached at vc@notes.usm.my



“USM has taken various proactive and productive steps to transform itself as a reputable university dedicated to the promotion of wellness and well-being of the human ecosystem.”

- Dzul kifli Abdul Razak

Applied Sciences 1976

The Pioneers



ANG CHIN JOO



CHEW CHENG CHUAN



CHIA KAM WENG



CHUAH SEONG TAT



GOH SENG AUN



GOH SENG SOEK



KOO LEONG SING @
KHOO LEONG JOO



LAU BOON LING



LEE CHONG SENG



LEE TEIK KHIM



LIM EAM HEE



LOKE HON SANG



MAT ISHAK
ABDULLAH



MOHD AMAR
HJ NAWI



MOO SIT KONG



NG CHONG CHIN



NG JIN CHAI



NG SZIT CHONG



NG TIEW MENG



OOI HUN BENG



POH BENG TEIK
(Lecturer, School of
Industrial Technology, USM)



SATHIA NARAYAN
LETCHUMANAN



TAN SOO SENG



TAN NYEOK YEE



TEE AI BEN



TEOH YONG SEONG



THINAKARAN
JAGANATHAN



WONG POON
KHEONG



YEE FAI KHAN



YEOH LAY FOOK



YUEN FOOT FAH

ANYBODY YOU KNOW



1972

Photograph courtesy
of Ong Eng Joo '73



1973

Photograph courtesy
of Ong Eng Joo '73



1971

Photograph courtesy
of Abdul Rais Abdul Majid '74

As part from the enthralling display of martial prowess by members of the Kung Fu Club, the Silat Society and Karate Club during the annual Kung Fu Night, the USM Kung Fu Club's drum performance is also a much awaited item in the programme. With the thunderous rhythmic roll of the drums, you can feel the entire hall reverberate as the drummers went through their choreographed routine.

The drum team was established 31 years ago and was then headed by Master Mah Yok Seng. Currently it has been taken over by Master Goh Chee Beng who is also a coach for The Penang Ching Xing Sport Cultural Centre.

"We have various drum formations such as the Welcoming Drums, War Drums and the 24 Seasons drums," said Kung Fu Club president Poh Wan Ting who then added that the number of the drums and participating drummers are dependent on the size of the stage.

Drums of the Sea

Yong Check Yoon

Zulkifli Osman

The drums come in different sizes but drums of a standard size are used in the 24-Season drum performance which is usually featured during Chinese festivals. The reason why there are 24 seasons is that each of Chinese's 12 lunar months is marked by two 'nodes' (jie) of the seasons, one on the first and another on the fifteenth day of the month. Since China has a large agrarian society, the perceptible changes of the seasons are very important to determine when to till the field, sow and harvest the crops.

Currently the drum team has 46 multiethnic members of whom 16 are Bumiputeras and one is a Spanish lecturer. The rest of the team members are Chinese.

"Each performance lasts between eight and 10 minutes and it is arranged according to the size and shape of the stage," said Poh, adding that the drum team is open to students and staff of all races.

The drum performances came with great sacrifices as the drummers toiled for long hours practising mostly in the evenings to perfect their rhythm and moves. However, it is a 'small' sacrifice as compared to their love and passion for the drum. **L**





SEASONS

Photographs courtesy of USM Kung Fu Club

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Universiti Islam

A Driven Career

Nor Rafizah Md. Zain

Photographs by Rusly Jamaludin

The students were uncomfortable in the sweltering heat of the day as their bus can only 'crawl' at a miserable 20 kilometers per hour after a rugby tournament. Soon male students and the driver took off their shirts under the unbearable heat and after travelling some distance, smoke started to drift from the engine of the bus. The USM driver Mohd Naziri Bahari finally had to stop the bus and sought help from bystanders. Subsequently the journey from Perlis to Seri Iskandar took 18 hours which otherwise would take five hours.

"It was a 'memorable' day-at-work for me as the bus was hit by a double whammy: air-conditioner failure and a clogged fuel pipe," Naziri told The Leader.



“We have been able to go to some of the ‘off limit’ places such as the Segari Camp in Lumut, Perak. It is a very nice camp site and if I had not been a driver, I would probably not have the opportunity to visit such interesting places,”

Naziri started his career in 1986. During that time, USM Engineering Campus was located in Jalan Bandaraya Ipoh. He travelled by motorcycle everyday from his hometown Setiawan, about 20 km away.

“For me, Ipoh is the place to work as it is a better developed town and life there moves in a faster lane than Setiawan. When we shifted to Transkerian, it was generally barren except for some oil palm trees,” he said.

Over the last few years, there was a massive transformation as infrastructures were put in place but conserving vital 'green lungs' on the campus. It is to harmonise the blocks of buildings with the surrounding terrain to fulfill the objective of a sustainable development.

Naziri joined USM Engineering Campus when it was in Ipoh and later followed it to Seri Iskandar, Tronoh Perak and before settling down in Transkerian, Nibong Tebal.

During his leisure hours, he participated in athletics or otherwise fish. His wife Sharifah Azila Syed Jaafar and three children have very supportive although his job requires him to travel all over the peninsular.


Over the past 22 years as a driver, he has seen changes in work schedules and developments in the workplace.

“When I started working in Development Department, we have to work in two shifts. The morning shift starts from 7 am to 3 pm and then 3 pm to 11 pm. There were only five drivers to manage three buses and one car but now there are three buses, three cars, two mini buses, 2 lorries and one van in our care. We have enough drivers, and working time is from 8.10 am to 5.10 pm unless there is any outstation trip,” Naziri said.

His longest outstation trip was to send participants to a sports tournament and it lasted 15 days. He said that during that time he missed his family dearly and his consolation was knowing that they understand what his work requires of him.

Then relating about ‘chapras’ (identification tag), Naziri said that in the 1980s the police would usually not stop USM vehicles when the driver of the vehicle flash their ‘chapras’.

“We have been able to go to some of the ‘off limit’ places such as the Segari Camp in Lumut, Perak. It is a very nice camp site and if I had not been a driver, I would probably not have the opportunity to visit such interesting places,” he added.

“You never know what you’re gonna get.” Indeed, Naziri has been to several interesting places that add a dash of spice in his job. This has been a driving force that keeps him on the job day in and day out. 

WE



An orb spider makes the biggest web, usually stretching metres across dark spaces in the Durian Valley

Webmasters Inc.

*Text and Photographs by
Mohamed Talhah Idrus
B. Soc. Sc. '74*



In certain sunny mornings, one can often see the fields in Minden glistening with patches of vague, white blobs. From afar, they look like pieces of tissue papers that have been recklessly discarded. It does not take much scrutiny to learn that these are actually meticulously-spun spider webs. If you look closely enough, you might even see its tiny residents sitting nonchalantly in the centre, or if you're lucky, one might even peer back at you from funnels in the web.

A dedicated mother carrying her babies on her back

These are the wolf spiders, the most numerous and common species of the scores of webmasters found in the Minden campus. Due to their large population, their various activities are easily detected. They are also the most photogenic among the webmasters, whether they're in the midst of snatching a prey or just idling.

Though the wolf is the most numerous spider species in Minden, its other cousins are no less noticeable if you care to look. On the grass, behind leaves, in tree hollows, in buildings and even cars, the campus is a spider's haven. They are mostly of the smaller species, but having said that, size does not really matter where these creatures are concerned. Their colours, patterns and behaviour make them very watchable.

Despite the fact that spiders are often associated with webs, a number of the species, particularly the jumping spiders, are normally sighted away from their webs.

The web, it must be said, is a fascinating piece of architecture, varying in size and style. Each species has its own preference and inclination where the location and design of the web are concerned. The wolves are known to build uniformly solid, dense webs which can even trap water droplets, while the nymphyllias tend to string huge, transparent silky screens across spaces between trees or any other clear space.



They are everywhere, on an air-condition grill (top), in a car (centre) and among leaves (bottom)



All of them are adept at concealing their dwellings. The smaller ones are especially skilled in building strong webs of extremely thin silk threads which, not surprisingly, are difficult to detect. Only a breeze can sway them into the sunlight, in which case the webs become visible. This, however, does not guarantee the sightings of the webmasters.

A little bit of patience and perseverance, however, will reveal these fascinating residents, for they are busy and effective hunters. Those with dense or large webs can be easily traced because they are likely to ambush their prey. The tinier ones, despite their size, are equally excellent hunters, often appearing out of nowhere, snatching a grasshopper or insect that seemed to be non-existent seconds ago. Some others can be found roaming the edges or stalks of leaves, looking for food.

These hunter webmasters are creative and multi-talented. Their webs, which function principally as their dwellings, also double as traps, and consequently as larders for food. A number of species would often rush to a trapped prey, only to roll it into a package and drag it to a specific corner for later consumption. And these fellas can even snare bigger residents like grasshoppers and dragonflies for their meals!

The Other Residents



A nymphilia bundling its prey for later consumption



A wolf spider can kill and eat grasshoppers larger than itself



Two species of jumping spiders which are effective hunters despite of their small size





A lynx spider guarding her nest




Some of the smaller species of spiders that make Minden campus their home



Among the spiders in Minden, the lynx spider is the “designer” species, beautiful in both design and colour. This beauty is complemented by its skills - it is not uncommon for the lynx spider to appear swiftly from behind a leaf to pounce on an unsuspecting fly or an inattentive insect. Sensing a threat, it would freeze along a leaf vein or stalk, causing it to blend in with the environment, thus effectively ensuring its survival. In any case, this is instinct at its very best.

Whenever I stumble upon an orb web of the nymphillia, the largest on campus, I could not help but be impressed at how ‘invisible’ the huge web is to the naked eye! I am also constantly amazed by how smoothly the large resident is able to glide over the web, despite the fact that the web traps and tangles any other insect that comes into contact with it. Also remarkable is the fact that it can daintily remove unwanted leaves and other ‘trash’ with the tip of one of its legs.

In spite of the fact that they lead very quiet, inconspicuous existence, they obviously help the university clean up and dispose of much of the debris and insects in the campus. Their variety and number certainly help create a more livable environment on campus. The residents of USM should take some time off their harried lives to observe and more importantly appreciate the role these insects play in sustaining the spaces around us. 

Associate Professor Mohamed Tahah Idrus is currently a lecturer at the School of Housing, Building and Planning, USM. He can be reached at tolamhaha@yahoo.com

GREETINGS

The Leader wishes...

Eid-ul Faha

Maal Hijrah

Merry Christmas

Gong Xi Fa Cai

Happy New Year 2009

Noraini Darus has been a cleaner with USM for the last 23 years. She started her employment at *Desasiswa Gemilang* (a students' hostel) on the main campus. As she recalled, "Back then we have never heard about the term 'sustainability' as the campus surroundings were well-kept, the air was unpolluted and you could smell fresh leaves as you stroll through the campus." Her responsibility required her to ensure the cleanliness of the Desa including sweeping the compound twice daily and there were fewer motorised vehicles then.

Although the student population has since doubled to over 20,000, it is through the efforts and dedication of staff like Noraini that cleanliness and greenery have been maintained thus helping the campus to be at balance with its environment.

While she was in Penang, Noraini had also wanted to be at a place close to her hometown in Parit Buntar yet she has grown attached to USM that she does not want to leave her job. In the meantime she commuted between her house in Batu Uban and her work place daily by walking.

When she learned that USM was planning to establish a new campus in Transkerian for engineering courses she almost cried with joy. Noraini had by then served 19 years at the main campus.



Artwork by Rusly Jamaludin

Through a DIFFERENT WINDOW

Sharifah Darweena Syed
Ahmad Amir Feisal
B. Sc. '07

"When I received news that USM is opening a branch in Transkerian, I immediately applied for the transfer and it was approved," she said. Noraini was in her freshly pressed Prussian blue uniform and cream-coloured *tudung* when *The Leader* interviewed her recently.

Noraini explained that she had wanted to return to Parit Buntar to be with her parents as she was the youngest of five siblings. She is the only one remaining in the north as the rest of them had moved to Kuala Lumpur and settled down there.

"Although I have been waiting to return to my hometown, I felt sentimental about having to leave the main campus," she said.

Transkerian campus is about quarter the size of the main campus and when she started working at the engineering campus, she cycled to work.

"I cycle 3 km each way, from my house to the university and back daily, mostly passing by oil palm estates," she said, adding that cycling is much easier than having to do it on the Main Campus which has an undulating terrain.

The environment in the engineering campus is also different as it is often very quiet and the air is very humid, thereby encouraging students to spend their time indoors. At the engineering campus, Noraini was placed under the Development Department. As a general worker, one of her tasks is to ensure that all sinks and toilets are not clogged.

Since Noraini joined the engineering campus, she has been a regular figure on her trusty mini chopper bicycle pushing off from her house punctually at 7.30 am come rain or shine. Much has changed over the past four years. Her widowed mother had since died, leaving her alone but she wants to stay on in Parit Buntar, an old town that is located at the Perak-Kedah-Seberang Perai border.

For Noraini, pedaling to work is an exercise and the way to a healthy life style and she, being a 'picture of health', is a testimony of this. The grit and dedication of cleaners like her are evident when one steps into a washroom to find that it is spanking clean and free from unpleasant odours. **L**



Sharifah Darweena Syed Ahmad Amir Feisal is currently the Assistant Registrar at Alumni Liaison Office, USM. She can be reached at darweena@notes.usm.my



The first cohort of medical students had their convocation on 26 June 1986. Despite the jubilation after the five-year course, they remembered those who never made it. Out of the 64 who took up medicine, only 50 graduated; the other 14 either left the course or had to repeat a year.

Neurologist Prof Jafri Malin Abdullah, one of the graduates from the first cohort, recalled Prof (now Dato') Mohd Roslani Abdul Majid being appointed as the first dean of the School of Medical Sciences from 1979 to 1993.

"Roslani was one of the first professors in the medical school but even then he received it quite late," Jafri said.

We were the First!

*Sharifah Munirah Syed Mohamed
B. Soc. Sc. '74*

Yong Check Yoon

*Jafri (front left) with fellow students
at Desasiswa Aman during a flood
in Minden in the early 80s*

We Were The First!

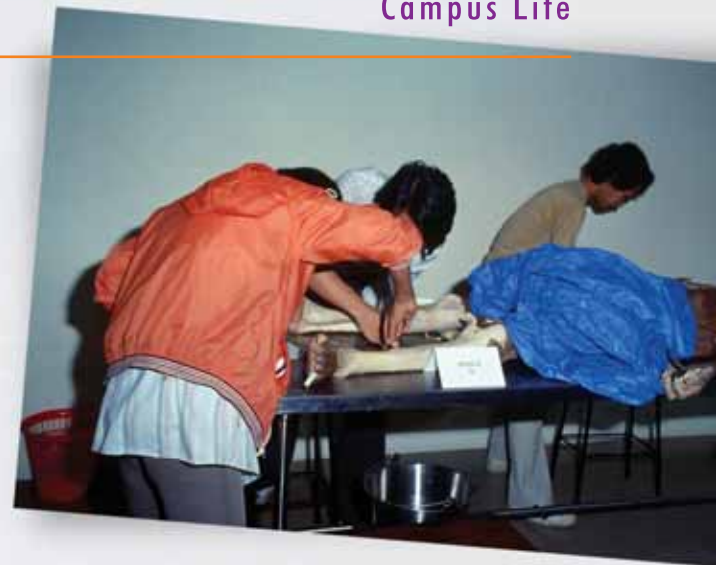
As for the students, they have a number of Caucasian lecturers such as Assoc Prof Peter Simmons, an immunologist; Prof Jason King, microbiologist, Prof Luc Calliauw and Prof Gerhard Rammes, neurologists. However, most of them have passed away. The students then often gave nicknames to their lecturers.

“We studied anatomy under a lecturer whom we nicknamed her Ong ‘Mayat’ (Mayat is the Malay word for ‘corpse’). We remember (Dr) Ong Lean Swee as a thin lady who taught us anatomy with corpses. Later, I heard that she read law specialising in cases involving the breaching of medical ethics,” Jafri said.

Then there were a couple whom the students perceived them as like Bollywood stars ... a handsome husband and a gorgeous wife.

“We were interested in that subject; it was not because of the slides she presented but because we were mesmerized by her beauty,” Jafri recalled.

Eventually most of these lecturers did not return to their country but took foreign or local exams and they ended up working in countries other than their own.



Present-day students examining a corpse as part of their medical training, just as Jafri used to do as a student

Despite the racial mix, the students were well integrated, helping each other in their study and even spending leisure time together. Most of the Chinese came from Form Six while a sizable number of Malays and the sole Indian in that batch - (now Dr) Murali Mohan - were from matriculation, according to Jafri. Those who went through Form Six had preconceived idea that students who came from the matriculation programme were not so smart.

“Despite having such preconceived ideas, there was a healthy competition between us to excel in our studies and we wanted to prove that matriculation was as good and if not, better than Higher School Certificate (H.S.C., sat by students in Form Six, was later changed to Sijil Tinggi Persekolahan Malaysia),” Jafri said.

He added that when the results of the first biochemistry exam were announced, the top two students were from matriculation. Jafri was one of the two, scoring for the paper and the H.S.C. students were jokingly told that their hypothesis had been proven wrong.

*Jafri (in red shirt) striking a pose with students from a **bangsawan** group in 1982*



We Were The First!

The tide of time has changed the lives of many graduates. For example, the best student in the group was Dr Heng It Bin who is now a general practitioner of a private clinic in Air Itam (Pulau Pinang).

"I recently met her at MAS airlines' Golden Lounge in Vietnam and asked why she had not been a specialist which I expected her to be given her academic achievements," said Jafri. "Apparently she decided to be a housewife and a general practitioner after marrying (Dr) Khoo Poh Him who went on to become an anaesthetist. He was also in the same batch."

Another couple from the first batch was (now Dr) Chong Seng Fook married (now Dr) Agnes Tan Yao May. Chong is currently the Consultant Breast & General Surgeon while his wife is a paediatrician. Both are currently with the Penang Adventist Hospital.

Murali is now a consultant urologist at the Kedah Medical Centre in Alor Setar.

When it was announced that USM was intending to move its Medical School to Kubang Kerian, Kelantan, on the East Coast of Peninsular Malaysia, a group of students decided to engage a lawyer to sue USM to prevent the move from taking place and to get the medical students transferred to another university.

Jafri (Photograph by Yong Check Yoon)

The objection raised was largely because of the general comments about how 'ulu' (rural) and how terrible Kelantan was. It was then when Roslaini and Jafri (who was the Medical Science assistant secretary then) decided to visit Kelantan to "see things for ourselves".

"We boarded a plane with propeller engines and arrived in Kelantan," said Jafri. "We scouted around the place around the university and spoke to the folks. Finally we asked one final question, 'Boleh pi kut?' (Can we go?). We managed to convince the group not to sue but instead give the idea a chance and follow us to Kelantan."

When Jafri asked some members of the group if they regret not suing the university when he met up with them, they said they did not regret because most of them managed to obtain prestigious degrees from foreign universities after their graduation. During the early years, USM does not offer Masters degree and so they have to get their postgraduate qualifications elsewhere. However, they have the confidence to sit and pass the difficult specialist examinations because the undergraduate training provided by USM had prepared them well.

The reason for them to perform well was because USM adopted a unique integrated system. Such system focuses on problem solving rather than memorising facts. It means that the lecturer will provide a case for students to do own research, have group discussions and solve the problem before presenting their findings.




Jafri (third from right) with friends in 1983

We Were The First!

Jafri (right) during the interview with **The Leader** in Kubang Kerian (Photograph by Yong Check Yoon)

Therefore, they learn to analyse, substantiate their findings and quote sources rather than memorising facts by rote. However, there have been changes in the system over the years.

"There were other factors that pushed us on," Jafri said. "We were young then and being the first batch without any seniors to turn to, we have to be self-reliant. There was also a fear that we will bring shame to our families if we kill our patients. However, it appears like our fears were misplaced as many students from our group did well in life."

Today, the Medical Campus has grown in strength since its establishment in 1983, housing three schools - Medical Science, Dentistry, and Health Sciences - and equipped with a 800-bed teaching hospital on campus. It is just about 15-minute drive from Kelantan's capital city, Kota Bahru. But what is more important is that it fulfilled its primary objective being located there. It was to address the state's high number of diseases and mortality rates. It is just coincidental that its presence had also brought economic prosperity to the surrounding area as businesses boomed. 

Photographs courtesy of Jafri

Sharifah Munirah Syed Mohamed is currently the Manager of Alumni Liaison Office, USM. She can be reached at sharifah@notes.usm.my



Photograph by Mohamed Talhah Idrus

Director of the Health Campus Dato' Prof Mafauzy Mohamed has been leading the Medical School on a war on tropical diseases particularly typhoid, cholera and filiarasis since January 2000.

In June 1984, Mafauzy joined the School of Medical Sciences as a trainee lecturer on secondment from the Ministry of Health. Subsequently he was absorbed by USM as an academic staff in 1992.

In an interview with **The Leader** editorial team, he described the growth of the Medical School as "phenomenal". From its humble beginnings as a teaching hospital which many patients felt reluctant to visit because of its "experimental approach", the hospital has now become the referral center for orthopaedics in Malaysia. He attributed its success to the excellent team work of its academic, technical and supporting staff. The entire campus is now ISO certified.

Yong Check Yoon is currently an Editor in the Alumni Liaison Office, USM. He can be reached at check_yoon@yahoo.com

FROM THE CORRIDOR OF POWER

*Text and Photographs by
Mohamed Talhah Idrus
B. Soc. Sc. '74*



The six-storey Chancellory of USM is the premier administrative building in the Minden campus. The topmost floor, houses the offices of the Vice-Chancellor and his three deputies. Each one of them has access to a corridor encircling the floor, from where panoramas of the campus and the surroundings can be viewed. These photographs capture the myriad of colours as viewed from “The Corridor of Power”.





From The Corridor of Power



Associate Professor Mohamed Talhah Idrus is currently a lecturer at the School of Housing, Building and Planning, USM. He can be reached at tolamhaha@yahoo.com



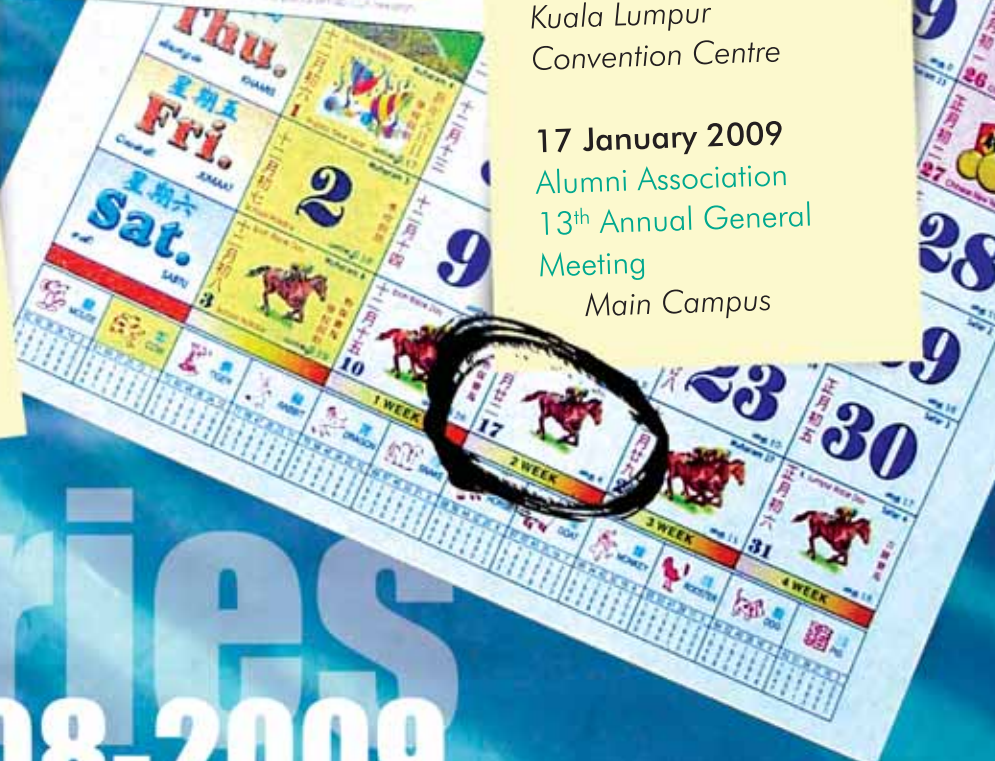
12-14 December
The 2008 ASAIHL
Conference-University
Autonomy: Interpretations
and Variations
Main Campus

18 December
Alumni Public Lecture Series-
"Public Administration:
Comparative Studies
between Indonesia
and Malaysia" by
Prof Yusril Ihza Mahendra
Main Campus

19 December
Malam Persada Kencana
(Postgraduate Awards Night)
Gurney Hotel, Penang

20 December
Sirih Pulang Ke Gagang
(Alumni Annual Function)
Kuala Lumpur
Convention Centre

17 January 2009
Alumni Association
13th Annual General
Meeting
Main Campus



Diaries 2008-2009



Edward Lim Huck Tee



Right to left: Winnie Hamzah and VC Hamzah Sendut being welcomed by Lim to the opening ceremony of an art exhibition by lecturer Chew Teng Beng in 1972

The Librarian

My first recollection as the foundation librarian of USM is that of being taken to a little office in the Malayan Teacher's College, Glugor, by Mr S. Kandasamy (then Assistant Registrar) and told that the University had about 50 students and 50 books, and my staff comprised of clerical assistants - V. V. Sarachandran, Joseph Ong, Oh Chooi Im, and Lily Oh Seng Yin.

The initial years of USM saw the Library staff play a very important and useful role in the development of the university. I was fortunate to have had with me a number of very able, competent, hard working and intelligent professional colleagues, some of whom subsequently became Chief Librarian at USM. Names that come to mind include Lim Chee Hong, Rashidah Begum, Noor Ida Yang Rashdi, Masrah Abidin (now Puan Sri), Sofiah Hashim, Fawzia Dawood, Yeoh Hoong Kheng, Wong Sook Jean, Chang Siew Lai, Tang Wan Fong, among many others. A good number of administrative, clerical and specialist staff also made important contributions.

The Library was one of the pioneers of library automation in Malaysia and I was on the University committee that acquired the first mainframe computer and established the Computer Centre. At that time the Library had acquired an expensive




Edward Lim was the foundation librarian of USM from 1969 to 1988. He subsequently took up the position of University Librarian at Monash University, Melbourne, Australia, and from 1995, concurrently held the position of Adjunct Professor at the Faculty of Information Technology, Monash University.

*Lim Huck Tee
(Photograph courtesy of Lily Oh)*

Wang Word Processor which has the ability to publish brochures, booklets and pamphlets. I persuaded Vice-Chancellor Professor Hamzah Sendut to set up a Press to publish Bahasa Malaysia textbooks. A Publications Committee was established, initially chaired by me, but subsequently by the Timbalan Naib-Cancelor (Research). Professor Hamzah had the habit of asking any one who proposed a project to take responsibility for it. As a result, I was designated to set up the USM Press. Publishing translations of textbooks took an inordinately long time. So, instead, we decided to publish the lectures of academic staff, as "preliminary editions", with the hope that this would eventually lead to the publishing of refereed textbooks.

I was involved with the establishment of the Kedai Buku under the Library as well as the running of the Student Shop. The combined operations of both shops had a turnover of a few million ringgit by the time I left USM.

It took many years before there were adequate numbers of trained Library professionals. From a little acorn a mighty oak has grown and the library is now one of the largest and the best in the country.

As Hamzah, a strong supporter of the Library, frequently said, "Show me your Library and I can tell you how good your University is." 



A group of pioneering Universiti Pulau Pinang students registering their library book loans in an exercise book



The German government's book donation received by the Library.



The MTC library building in which the USM library collection was initially housed.

The Librarian

Lim (second right) with foreign visitors in the Museum and Art Gallery.



Edward Lim Huck Tee

The Museum and

The origin of the University's Museum and Art Gallery is little known and is worth recounting. Professor K J Ratnam, then Dean of Social Sciences, had learned that Frank Sullivan was interested in selling his collection of Malaysian paintings, which was then considered one of the best and most comprehensive in Malaysia. (Frank Sullivan, an Australian, was one of the people responsible for persuading the first Prime Minister of Malaysia, Tunku Abdul Rahman, to establish the Balai Seni Lukis Negara, and whose name honours one of the most prestigious art prizes in Malaysia).

Professor Ratnam approached me about the feasibility of raising funds to purchase the collection. But the asking price was too high, and we decided, with Tan Sri Professor Hamzah's approval, to negotiate with Mr Sullivan about the possibility of selling a part of his collection, which he agreed to do. The collection was selected with inputs from art experts (and it has subsequently been claimed that USM acquired the "heart" of Frank Sullivan's collection, and left behind the less important works). The Vice-Chancellor agreed to my proposal to establish

a Museum and Art Gallery under the administration of the Library, with a Board of Management chaired by Professor Ratnam. He also agreed to provide funding to renovate the former Officers' Mess (which the Library had vacated) to house the initial painting collection. I understand that the Museum is now an independent entity with its own director.

"Hamzah believed that as a senior staff member, the University Librarian should also be involved in the administration of the University. Hence, I was included as a member of the selection committees for general, administrative and academic staff. I also served in various non-library specific capacities, and assisted the Bursar and the Registrar in planning the financial, physical and academic growth of the University - hence the three of us became known as the "three musketeers". We also had to serve as "Penggawa" or hostel wardens. Part of his thinking was strategic. The period from 1969 to the early 1970s was the time of student activism, which saw many students championing various causes. Professor Hamzah wanted senior staff to be on campus 24 hours a day in case of "student unrest".

Photographs courtesy of Edward Lim Huck Tee

Rashidah Begum Fazal Mohamed who worked under Lim from 1974 until 1988 summed up his management and leadership style as follows - "He will throw you, a non-swimmer, into the deep end of the pool, expect you to learn how to swim and to reach the other end alive, and in the process maybe break a few (Olympic) records."

Lily Oh Seng Yin was Lim's secretary from 1971 until 1988. According to her: "He is a man of calibre, integrity and was a great boss."

V. V. Sarachandran, the first to staff the Library in June 1969 worked with Lim until 1973. Sarachandran recalled: "He was a straight forward and meticulous planner. . . During those days a number of staff members were pursuing the external LL.B degree from London University. He expedited the purchase of reference books for this programme. . . Those under him rose in their career development."

Joseph Ong, another staff member from 1969 until 1983 said that rapport was good during those days, like working within a family. Lim was seen as a strict disciplinarian who stuck to rules and regulations. He was a focused and fair leader. He was very professional and expected a lot from his workers.

Puan Sri Masrah Abidin who worked with Lim from 1974 until 1988 testified to the following: "As a librarian Mr Lim was highly respected nationally and internationally. He was looked upon as a leader by other Malaysian librarians. He was a disciplinarian who did not tolerate late-comers nor clock watchers. Early in our career,

we were introduced to the work culture where you were expected to come to work on time but not leave on time. With his style of management he had laid a strong foundation for the USM library.

"Mr Lim cared for the welfare of his staff. Together with his professional librarians, each donating RM200, Mr Lim initiated a non-interest loan fund, **Tabung Kemajuan Kerjaya Kakitangan Perpustakaan** (the Library Staff Career Development Fund), to help the support staff improve themselves academically as well as career-wise. As a result, a number of them were able to take examinations, enrol in the university and graduate and move up in their career."

Noor Ida Yang Rashdi who worked from 1974 until 1988 said that Lim was recognised by other librarians as a leader with a vision. He wanted to hear ideas from his staff. One must enter the meeting room prepared with points to argue. He reminded the staff, "You are a professional. You must know more than other people."

Siti Kulthum Khalid, a librarian from 1973 until 1977 said, "He stood out among all the librarians in Malaysia."

Compiled by Hamima Dona Mustafa
B. A. '73

'COMBAT MISSIONS'

Saw Cheang Kee

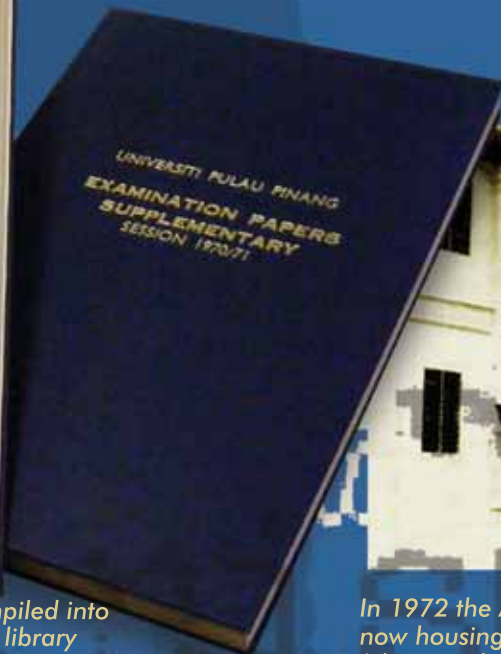
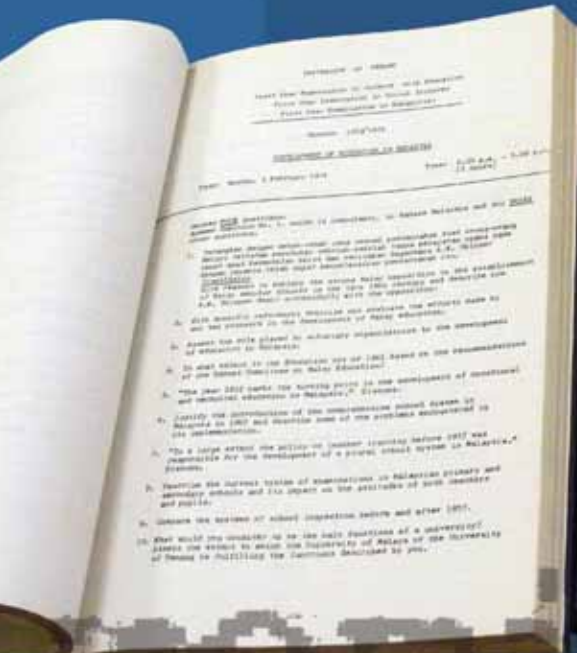
“We have to adjust our leave application, examinations are commencing the following week. It's like going on a combat mission!” the battle cry sounded rather shrill from across the room. S. Kandasamy, Assistant Registrar (Academic) was discussing with his 12 staff of the Academic Section on the preparations for the university's main examination.

Although this Academic Section was originally responsible for admissions, examinations and graduate studies, Kandasamy's name subsequently became synonymous with examinations when newly created units gradually took over admissions and graduate studies.

The year was 1972 when I landed my first job being involved with the running of an examination; it was quite a change in perspective compared to sitting for one. The overall student population was under 2,000 and the Universiti had just moved into its new found home at the Minden campus where examination venues were limited. USM was then operating on a three-term academic year - commencing June into February the following year - with the main examination being held at the end of each academic year.



S. Kandasamy in 1969



Past examination papers are compiled into volumes and are available in the library (Photograph by Yong Check Yoon)

In 1972 the Academic Section was located in Block 24, now housing the Centre for Policy Research, USM (Photograph courtesy of the Public Relations Office, USM)

Apart from the full-time student population, USM pioneered degree studies through the Off-Campus programme in the country. Arrangements had to be made with the various state education departments to invigilate outstation students to sit their papers in the state capitals; this move was aimed at easing the pressure on available venues in Minden campus.

Based on the course enrollment, the preparation of the examination time-table had to ensure that no two papers taken by each student were slotted on the same day and time. It was consistent hard work and there was no Computer Centre yet to help collate student statistics, schedule the papers or process the marks. Precision was nevertheless required and this fitted-in well with Kandasamy's meticulous nature, "...check and check again, nothing to be left to chance!" he used to say.

It was simply not possible to derive an examination time-table containing a spread of papers to the satisfaction of all student groups. Student representatives would thus come knocking at the Section to lodge their grouses for time-table modifications; a common complaint being, "I have four papers one day after another, besides two of these are slotted morning and afternoon of the same day ... that's too compact!" Some approached us with a desperate look, others sounded somewhat aggressive.



Some of the first cohort of medical students sitting for their examinations in the Minden campus in 1981
(Photograph by Che Engku Ramlah Che Engku Mat)

Check List (Prior to Examination)

- a) Enrolment statistics for each course collated
- b) Schools - requesting priority for scheduling specific papers
- c) Survey of examination halls
- d) Updated academic staff list by School
- e) Ensure stationery stocks up to requirement level
- f) Prepare examination time-table
- g) Finalising invigilation schedule
- h) Adjustments to (f) and (g) based on requests from staff and students
- i) Printing facilities in working order
- j) Printing and packing of question papers
- k) Off-Campus papers to be sent to the states
- l) Inspection of physical arrangements at examination halls

'Combat Missions'


Academic staff too joined the chorus of demand for their papers (especially those with high student numbers) to be held early to allow adequate time for marking. Often, we found ourselves at the receiving end of harsh words from both groups but took all these in good stride.

"They don't seem to understand the problem" lamented Kandasamy. At the end of the day the spirit of camaraderie in the Section was instrumental in helping us to labour on and rework the time-table until a 'best fit' could be achieved.

Come examination day the Section would be inundated with problems involving students like a mix-up in venue (later acknowledging they misread the time-table), overlooking to bring along the identification slip or an outstation call from one Off-Campus regional centre reporting a candidate having fallen ill. I also recall the case of a Fine Arts paper whose examiner required lights to be dimmed so as to project exhibits and torchlights had to be supplied to ensure candidates who arrived slightly late and feeling anxious, would not trip over the steps inside the darkened hall.

"All in a day's work," summarised Kandasamy and we were back preparing for the next day's examination. Indeed the printing machine too, rendered faithful service under the capable hands of Yusof Ari and Mohd Noor Ayun (the two dedicated machine operators) who had to work very late to ensure question papers were ready ahead of schedule. They would let off steam by humming popular Malay songs in the spirit of "don't worry, be happy" and sometimes muttering "Esok ada lagi" (there's still tomorrow) before calling it a night!

The next hurdle was processing the results and releasing these on time; graduating students were most anxious as they needed the result slips to go job-hunting.

Kandasamy's attention to detail concerning the examination processes, in particular, the security aspects have stood the test of time as much of these procedures are still in practice today. He may have long retired but his legacy lives on. When I reminisce those early years, I can hear his familiar cry echoing in my mind, "time to embark on a new combat mission!" 

Saw Cheang Kee is currently an Executive Officer in the Alumni Liaison Office, USM. He can be reached at sck@notes.usm.my

L17 Dewan Utama Pelajar, is the present central examination venue (Photograph by Yong Check Yoon)



YESTERDAY: NOW SHOWING

A.S. Hardy Shafii
B. A. '93

Artwork by Rusly Jamaludin



Yesterday: Now Showing

One of my seniors asked me, “Did you choose USM because of the movie, *Ali Setan* (Ali, the Satan)?”

I supposed the movie, shot on location at USM, could be one of the reasons why some students chose to enrol at USM after 1986. It was not for me.

I enrolled in the School of Humanities in July, 1989. Most of my friends were from the Arts Centre, now known as School of Arts. Those were the years when huge glasses and extra large T-Shirts were in and hand phones weighed like a brick.

My friends, mostly seniors, were Ahmad Tarmimi Siregar, Zaibo, Hamzah Tahir, Rosminah Tahir, Zulkifli Baba Noor and Ang Bee Saik, among others. They made a huge impact on my perspectives towards life, in general, and campus life, in particular.

Living on campus was a big deal for us. The most popular student villages were Desasiswa Harapan, Bakti and Cahaya. Unfortunately, I was selected to stay at Desasiswa Tunas Muda at Sungai Nibong Kecil, close to, what is now, the Penang International Sports Arena (PISA).

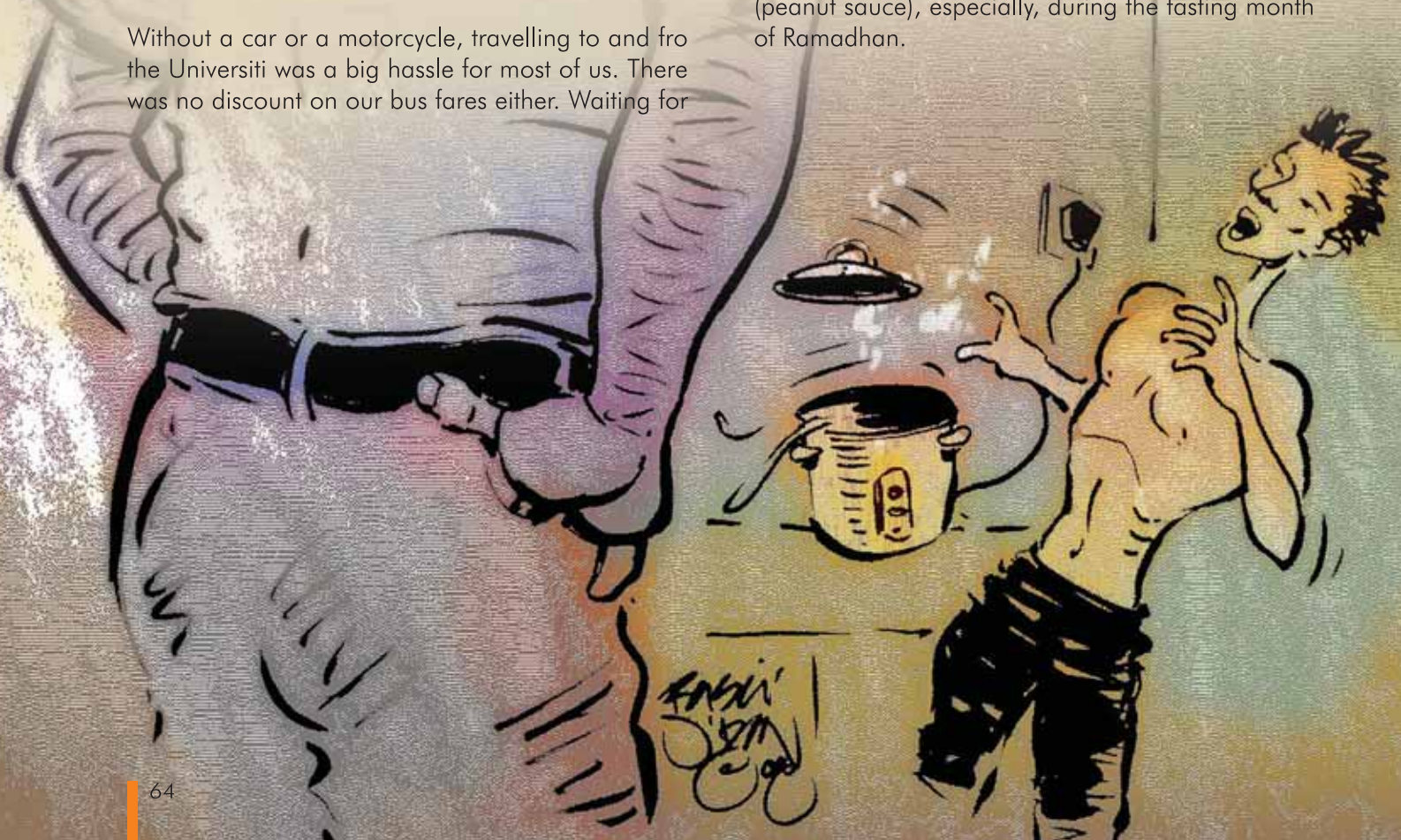
Without a car or a motorcycle, travelling to and from the Universiti was a big hassle for most of us. There was no discount on our bus fares either. Waiting for

more than 45 minutes to catch the number 69 bus was normal. One of my friends (now a lecturer at USM) was devastated when he was picked to stay at the Tunas Muda hostel. Fortunately, he was able to move to Desasiswa Harapan when he was selected to play in the Universiti’s hockey team.

Desasiswa Harapan was not problem-free. During certain times of the day, depending on the wind, you could puke from the stinking smell emanating from a small pig farm nearby.

There were no bus services on campus then. So, most of the first year students had to walk to the lecture halls, the Language Centre, Field A, and just about everywhere else. Those who could afford a motorcycle or a second-hand car were mostly senior students. However, to his credit, one senior had to save his money to help his siblings in primary schools.

Saving money was on most of our minds, even at the risk of being caught breaking the rules. For instance, we were not supposed to use rice cookers in our rooms but they were so handy for preparing *bubur kacang* (green pea broth), *pulut hitam* (black glutinous rice broth), *tom yam* (Thai soup), and *kuah kacang* (peanut sauce), especially, during the fasting month of Ramadhan.



Yesterday: Now Showing

"I could not help but feel a pang of emotion. I stopped and stood under the tree. In my mind's eye, I could see the wooden bench where most of us used to 'lepak' (hang out) to gossip while waiting for our lecturers."

- A.S. Hardy Shafii



The nights close to the deadlines for the submission of assignments were filled with the tapping of typewriters. In those days only rich students could afford to buy computers. The way they protected their computers was unbelievable. Some covered them with a piece of cloth whereas others used a huge box!

Another important aspect of living on campus was the relationship with the security guards or Pak Guard. We were so *kamceng* (close) with them. I attributed it to the fact that members of Encik Noorizan's (Security Chief Officer) "gang" were very humble and understanding of the nature of our courses. Most of male students pursuing courses from Pusat Seni could wear three-quarter length shorts and sport long hair or a pony-tail to attend lectures.

If we were interrogated by the Pak Guard, we would say, "It's for character study. We are acting students."


Some nights, my friends and I hanged out at the coffee shop across USM's Sungai Dua Gate. There were no internet cafes then. It was also safer to cross the road because there were hardly any cars.

During my second year I was selected to stay at the Desa Harapan which used to hold a competition for the 'Best Room' every second semester.

A friend, 'H', went to Panggung Sasaran (Sasaran Theatre) and grabbed whatever looked "arty" and "in vogue", ranging from banners, buntings, posters. He also borrowed some sculptures from the theatre.

Another friend, 'K', took pebbles from the hostel's garden and made a tiny garden in his room! As for "J", he folded all his clothes at the exact length by using a ruler and borrowed a *Gamelan* CD to dance to when the judges stepped into his room as a welcoming gesture. After the event the borrowed things had to be returned to their original places.

During those bygone days the lecturers used the overhead projector as teaching aids. Some of the transparencies were yellow with age. The small clip-on microphones that they used sounded so distorted most of the time. For those who could not write notes fast enough, they had to copy from their friends immediately after class. Nowadays, students could just "snap" at the lecturers' Powerpoint presentations using their latest hand phones.

That was 15 years ago. Sometimes, when I passed by the former building of Pusat Seni (where the Bursary is presently housed), I could not help but feel a pang of emotion. I stopped and stood under the tree. In my mind's eye, I could see the wooden bench where most of us used to *lepak* (hang out) to gossip while waiting for our lecturers. Even though I was not a performing arts' major, I always felt welcome as a family member. Now the cycle is almost complete. My students will have their own stories about USM. May my powerpoint presentations never turn yellow. 

Dr A.S. Hardy Shafii can be reached at pakdogol@yahoo.com

This is about my experiences of studying drama in 2nd and 3rd year at USM, 1971/1972 and 1972/1973.

I pursued a double major, drama and history. I took five courses in history and three in drama. I loved acting and directing but not script-writing. For our final year requirement we had to produce one script under Vijaya. I produced a script for the children's theatre. It took a miserably long while for me to come up with an idea. I managed somehow and the end product was *Dewi Bunga* (The Flower Fairy), a story of Malaysian children romping in the garden, disturbing the flora and fauna. At one point, the heroine got tired and fell asleep. She had a dream: the flowers and animals approached her, complaining of being tortured. When she woke up she was full of remorse. The story ended with the children, flora and fauna living happily ever after. That was in 1973 - a musical children's play.

Shamsiah Mohamed

Kak Ani's Fairy Tale

In 1981, Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka (DBP) published it together with Nuraihan Idris's (also a drama major) *Dendam Manis* (Sweet Revenge) in the form of a book. In 1984, the English Society of University Malaya performed the play in conjunction with National Children's Day. The event was televised by Radio Television Malaysia.

I attended the performance along with the present Deputy Minister Dato' Hajjah Maznah Mazlan. I was told that other schools and universities have studied the play as well as performed it.

The best part of all was when the Ministry of Culture, Arts and Tourism selected the play in conjunction with Malaysia Flora Fest in 1996. My two sons who have been members of the *Tunas Budaya* (Cultural Shoots) an outfit through which they learned the various aspects of theatre; music, dance and singing were selected to perform in the play.

I instructed them not to divulge to anyone that their mother was the playwright. Later that year, the play was taken on tour of seven states, including Pahang, Perak and Sarawak. TV Pendidikan (Educational Television) aired it. I had hoped to improve on the script but I never get around to it. I dreamt of making this play a legacy - something to remember me by.

Pages from *Dewi Bunga*
(Photograph by Rusly Jamaludin)



Kak Ani (circled) and performers during a break
(Photograph courtesy of Shamsiah Mohamed)

The DBP published 10,000 copies of the book in 1981. My fourth son, studying at the National Arts and Heritage Academy Malaysia (ASWARA) told me that the play has been included in his course, The Children's Theatre.

I said to myself, "That's great. Any item after 25 years is considered an antique, what more after 36 years. . ."

My other reminisces included attending drama classes, performing in the university with the Penang Players (a local theatre group), wearing a sari as an Indian mother, doing voice-over at Radio Pulau Pinang (Penang Radio), practising and holding rehearsals tirelessly into the night.

There was one unforgettable occasion when I had to turn down an offer to perform in a play which had a kissing scene because of objections from those around me. I was supposed to be the heroine and the lecturer, Sabapathy, was cast as the hero.

Drama made my life so meaningful with no time to waste. I was productive and creative.

Thank you very much USM. 🇲🇾

Datin Shamsiah Mohamed (affectionately known as 'Kak Ani' by her friends).

Datin Shamsiah Mohamed has retired from civil service.

Lecturer Harry Aveling (right) and Izhar acting out a scene from *Si Kebayan* in the early 70s

It was thirty seven years ago, but it seems like yesterday. I remember that day in 1971 when I received a call from Noel Ogle (now Dato'), the Registrar of Universiti Pulau Pinang (then), asking me if I would be willing to teach at the newly set up drama section at the Universiti. Was I willing! In those days people did not travel by airplane from Kuala Lumpur to Pulau Pinang just to give lectures every weekend. I felt so important.

I had just returned from the University of Hawaii and was teaching theater courses, part time, at the University Malaya's English department, besides holding a full time job at the MARA Institute of Technology (ITM).

*Welcome Aboard
... the Stagecraft*

Vijaya Samarawickrama

Welcome Aboard...the Stagecraft

The new section was very small, with Dr Ghulam Sarwar Yusof holding the fort while I was in charge of teaching Acting and Children's Theater. I would arrive every Saturday morning. I taught for four hours and returned to Kuala Lumpur the same evening. The late Dr Lloyd Fernando would also be on the same flight as he had been invited to teach literature. When there were performances I would stay overnight at the Mandarin Hotel.

What a beautiful campus it was. The prewar buildings had been very tastefully renovated to suit the needs of an academic institution. What I remember most were the majestic old trees and the wonderful SPACE surrounding the buildings. And the view! From the classroom I could look out to the sea and the mainland in the distance. This must surely have been one of the most beautiful university campuses in the world!

Acting was fun. The classes were small but since the students were not distracted they spent a lot of time perfecting their skills at rehearsals and reached very high standards. Besides examining plays by western playwrights like Shakespeare, Beckett, and Miller we also experimented with *wayang kulit* in English, very successfully.



Posing for a group photo after an experimental theater class (Photograph courtesy of Zainal Latiff)



Practising for a theater in 1973
(Photograph courtesy of Zainal Latiff)

Perhaps our most memorable success was in Children's Theater. At that time Children's Theater was relatively unknown as an art form and our challenge was to come up with suitable scripts in Bahasa Malaysia. I remember the most exquisite of these was *Dewi Bunga* (The Flower Fairy) by Shamsiah Mohamed which incorporated old Malay folk songs and dances. Also I remember *Azad dan Gergasi* (Azad and the Giant) by Mohd Izhar Abdullah and *Sang Kura-Kura Dengan Serulingnya* (The Tortoise and his Flute) by Herani Ismail Suki. They were published by Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka and the plays were performed in schools throughout the country for many years since.

Yes, my experience of teaching theater at USM was memorable. I have over the decades lost track of my students, although I occasionally hear that some of them have become very successful, like Dr Zainal, Datin Shamsiah, Dr Hamima Dona, Kee Thuan Chye, Anne James, to name a few. The drama section made great contributions to the national drama scene in the last three decades and it all began those many years ago. **L**



THE
TEH TARIK
CLUB

More than 20 years after they first met, a group of *warga* (citizens) USM are still together, linked like a chain, moving together like parts of a conveyer belt.

Together with the pioneers of the School of Medical Sciences, they were among the earliest group of supporting staff to help launch USM's medical programme. Working closely with Prof Syed Mohsin Sahil Jamalullail they unconsciously formed a lasting fraternity.



Photographs by
Mohamed Talhah Idrus
B. Soc. Sc. '74

Nor Rafizah Md. Zain

PUSAT PENGAJIAN
SAINS PERUBATAN

Block 46 which housed the PPSP general office and the Dean's office in 1980 (Photograph by Che Engku Ramlah Che Engku Mat)



Minden Memories

Tuan Syed (wearing a tie) joining in the conversation

"We were interviewed by Tuan Syed" Mohd Zain Mamat recalled. Nik Md Noordin Nik Hussin and Halim Othman concurred.

Despite Syed Mohsin's appointment as a Professor and Research Dean of the Health Sciences and Biomedicine, they remain close friends, and refer to Syed Mohsin as Tuan Syed.

Over *teh tarik* (tea with condensed milk), *karipap* (curry-puffs), and fried *popia* (spring rolls) and lots of laughter, they recalled some of the pioneering events, while Tuan Syed was attending to a call.

Even though they were recruited as laboratory assistants, the scope of their job expand beyond the laboratories. "Before the first cohort of students came in, all the staff have to act as students for a video documentary which was to be used for promoting the medical programme".

Their tasks expanded when the School of Medical Sciences (PPSP) created a diploma programme in the 1980s. USM started the Diploma in Medical Laboratory Technology programme in recognition of the need to produce competent medical laboratory technologists for PPSP. But it expanded to help address the national shortage. Lokman Ali and Abdullah obviously appreciated being contributive in such a big programme.

"We were also required to help in the practical training aspects of the diploma programme," Abdullah recounted with pride and satisfaction. Their

disappointment are noticeable when they recalled the phasing out of the programme.

It was, however, mainly in the laboratory that camaraderie among themselves and the lecturers developed. Each one of them related his own collection of stories, some of which triggered lots of laughter.

"We were to check the specifications of equipment, keep records and help unload various instruments from the transport vehicles while supervised by the lecturers," reminisced Lokman.

"...apart from helping the academic staff prepare a series of experiments for the medical students," added Halim, sipping his *teh*.

"...when the lecturer was busy, he would ask me to assist in conducting the lecture for the day," Dollah grinned with pride, passing the plate of *popia* around.



Abdullah

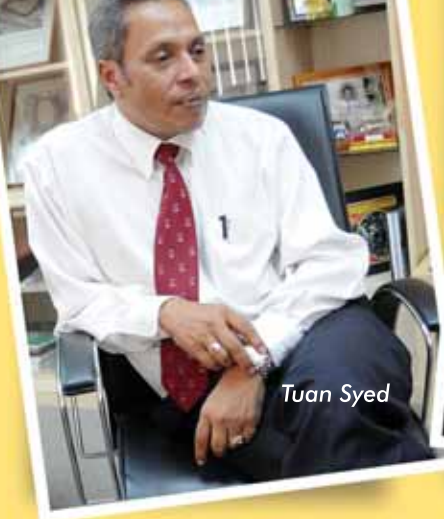


Lokman

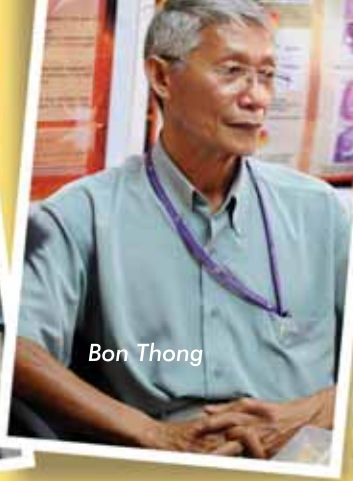


Mohd Zain

The Teh Tarik Club



Tuan Syed



Bon Thong



Blok J was completed within budget and on time

Such relationships continued even when PPSP moved to Kubang Kerian, where there were only two workers in some departments, Abdullah Bujang, who worked with Dr. Khairul Anuar Abdullah in the Department of Parasite observed.

However, the beginning was even humbler. "Prior to the first admission, we operated out of an old building next to the present School of Arts whilst Block J was being planned." they somberly recounted.

"Block J was the 'mini-medical complex' intended to accommodate the teaching needs of the students before their transfer to Kelantan. It was functional in the record time of 11 months and within budget," Syed Mohsin interjected.

The plan to transfer of the programme to Kubang Kerian was good news to the Kelantan-born staff. While they get to build their careers with USM in Pulau Pinang, they also have a chance to return to their hometown or village.

Go Bon Thong, himself from Kelantan, summed this up, "I joined the Department of Anatomy in 1981 when PPSP was based in Pulau Pinang with the singular thought that I would eventually return to my home state. If I had remained in the government health service, the likelihood is I would have been transferred to another state. Besides, I would not have the opportunity to acquire specialised skills, like I have now, by working in PPSP's modern Tissue Bank."

They remembered fondly their frequent bus trips back to their hometowns through the East-West Highway which reduced their travelling time between Pulau Pinang and Kelantan by a few hours. Prior to that the fastest means was by the 'adventurous' option of leaving Malaysia for Thailand and re-entering via the town of Sungai Golok.

They are all settled in Kelantan now, including the non-Kelantanese. A phone call is all it takes whenever Tuan Syed needs another *teh tarik* session. 🇲🇾



Halim



Nik

Start of the construction of the branch campus in Kubang Kerian



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Nor Rafizah Md. Zain is currently the Assistant Registrar at Alumni Liaison Office, USM. She can be reached at nor_rafizah@notes.usm.my

BRIDGING THE DIVIDE

Rusly Jamaludin Yong Check Yoon

Few people would have realised that the idea of a bridge connecting Pulau Pinang to Seberang Perai was first mooted by the late Prime Minister Tunku Abdul Rahman Putra Al-Haj in 1964. However, the idea did not take off because it was feared that the bridge might 'kill' the Pulau Pinang ferry service.

Then on 6 May 1969, he announced that the Federal Government would proceed with the plan to build the bridge. In September, six international firms tendered for the RM70 million project. After considering for three months, the Pulau Pinang Government responded positively to the proposal.

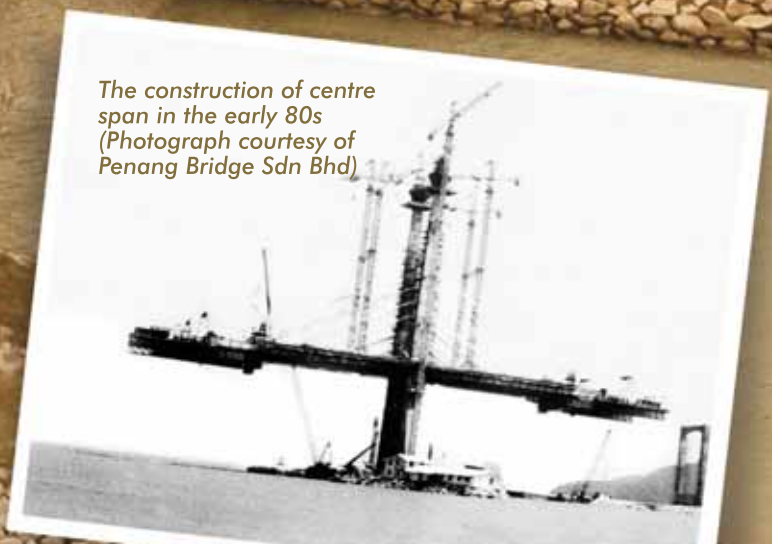
Tenders for pre-feasibility studies were submitted by 45 consultancy firms in March 1970 and in December the following year, the then Pulau Pinang Chief Minister (now Tun) Dr Lim Chong Eu announced that work on the bridge would commence on 1 January 1972 which by then, Deputy Prime Minister Tun Abdul Razak Dato' Hussein had become the Prime Minister. However, the date was deferred to 29 March 1974. Even then, actual work on the construction did not start until April 1982.

Out of 16 international companies, Hyundai Engineering and Construction Co. clinched the project. It involved a workforce of 1,600 Malaysian and South Korean workers to complete the bridge by 24 January 1985. The 13.5 km long cable-stayed bridge was designed to withstand earthquakes up to 7.5 on the Richter scale. Quakes of this magnitude are strong enough to cause massive damage over a large area and even trigger a tsunami. In this context, the project was fortunate to have the expertise of the late Tan Sri Prof Emeritus Ir Chin Fung Kee as the local principal consultant engineer.

During the construction, 15 lives were lost - eight Koreans and seven Malaysians - with the worst tragedy on 12 October 1984 when a 300-tonne cross-beam collapsed, killing three Koreans, two Malaysians and injuring four other workers. A memorial was constructed in Perai near the bridge for the victims.

When the bridge was finally completed, the cost had already reached RM850 million and with miscellaneous expenditures totaling another RM0.35 million. On 3 August 1985, the country's fourth Prime Minister (now Tun) Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohammad officially opened the bridge by driving across it in a red Proton Saga, carrying the Malaysian flag. It was for the first time that the excited public got a glimpse of the national car which would be launched the following month. The bridge was also opened to pedestrians and shutter bugs for just a day on 8 September 1985. The bridge was finally opened to traffic six days later at 8 am but many had already arrived three hours ahead of time.

*The construction of centre span in the early 80s
(Photograph courtesy of
Penang Bridge Sdn Bhd)*



Bridging The Divide

Since its launching, the *Penang Bridge International Marathon* has become an annual event with runners converging from all over the world. It was reported that in 2007, the event attracted more than 21,300 runners of whom 800 were from 50 countries. On the day of the run, the bridge was closed for several hours in the wee hours of dawn.

The bridge is very significant to Noor Hasmah, now 23 years-old, because she holds a record for being the first baby to be delivered while on the bridge. The 3.02 kg baby was delivered by a midwife in an ambulance while on the bridge just a day after it was opened to traffic. Hasmah's mother Che Wan Hassan, then 35, was in transit to the Pulau Pinang Maternity Hospital from Bukit Mertajam District Hospital.

Fishing enthusiasts discovered that the area around the pile-caps of the bridge is a rich fishing ground and they would pay up to RM3 for a return trip on a fishing boat to one of these pile-caps. The lure of the

fish was as strong to the fishermen as the reverse was also true. These fishing enthusiasts would spend hours fishing on the concrete pile-caps with vehicles passing over head.

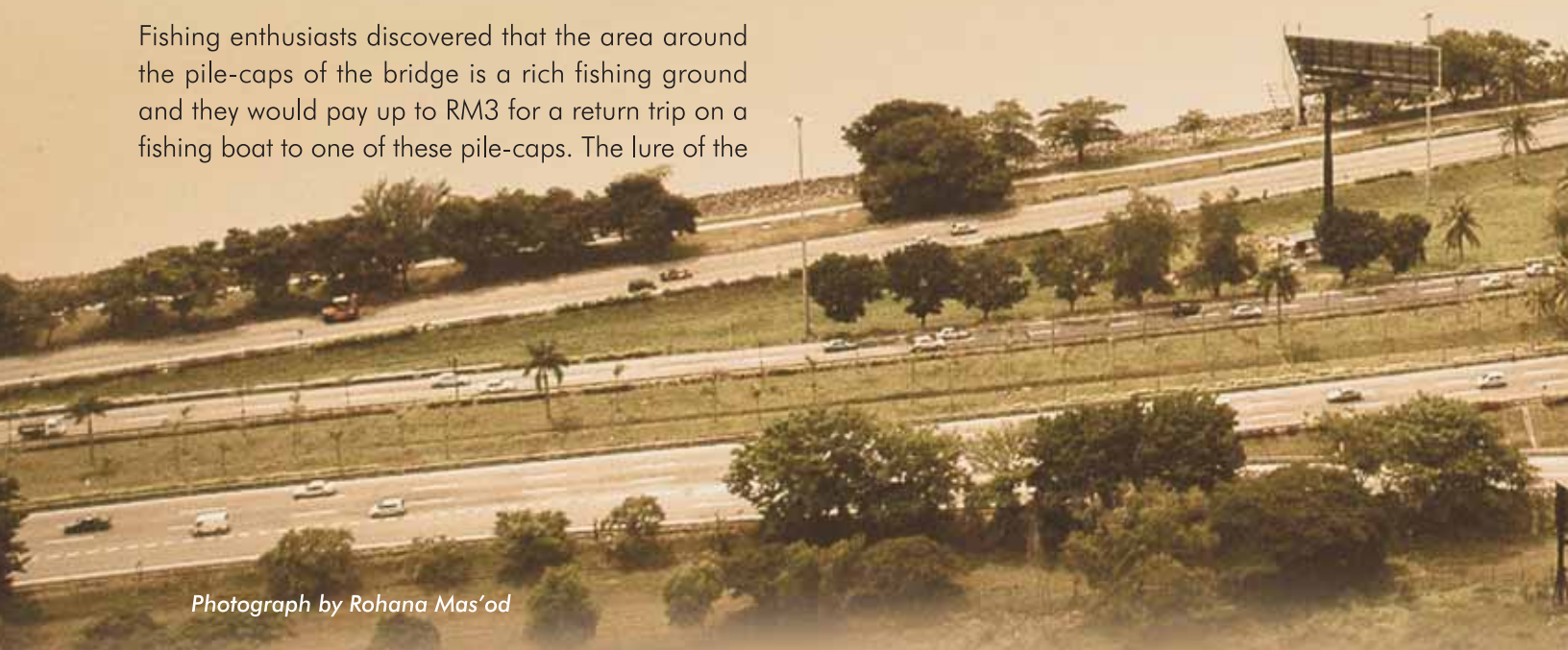


One of the unusual events reported in The Star

Necessity is the mother of innovation as it is clearly evident. In the early years, motorists were able to buy a booklet of 50 coupons at a cost of RM280 at a discounted price of RM5.60 each. The normal toll rate to cross the bridge is RM7.

Tragedies took place within a month of its opening as a carpenter and a night club singer leapt to their deaths on separate occasions. Soon such statistics ebbed with only sporadic cases over the years but these did not stop those with highly fertile imagination to spin ghost stories pertaining

to the bridge. However, such ghost stories could not dent the high volume of traffic passing through day-and-night.




Photograph by Rohana Mas'od

Bridging The Divide

Prior to the opening of the Penang Bridge, Penang Port Commission enjoyed a RM7.7 million profit from the 12.8 million vehicles that used its ferry service in 1984. It was the only link between the island and the mainland and was serviced by 14 ferries. In 2008, Penang Port Sdn Bhd (as the corporatised entity is now known) has eight ferries, operating only about six at any one time and incurred a loss of nearly RM13 million annually. On the other hand, before the petrol price increase this year, the Penang Bridge Sdn Bhd reported that the two-way volume of traffic is about 134,000 vehicles daily. If the vehicles using the bridge in a day were all Proton Saga lined up bumper-to-bumper, they would stretch 563 km or about the distance to Malacca!

During the construction of the interchanges for the bridge on the island, a portion of land of about 3 acres facing Jalan Sultan Azlan Shah was acquired from USM. That piece of land is bordered by Padang 'A', the Sports Complex, and Padang Nyor.

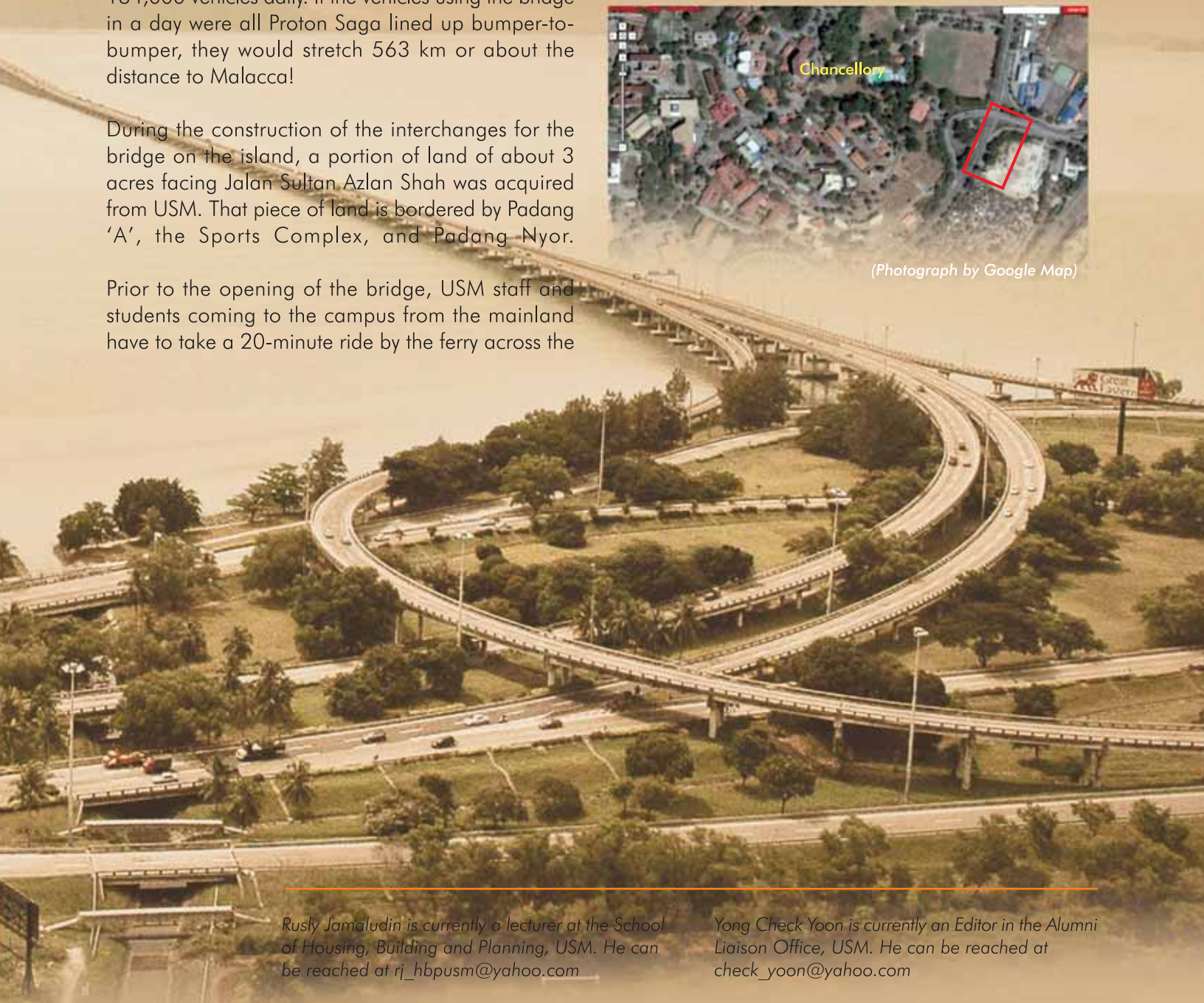
Prior to the opening of the bridge, USM staff and students coming to the campus from the mainland have to take a 20-minute ride by the ferry across the

Pulau Pinang Channel and it would further entail another traveling more than 10 km through narrow winding city streets. Today, about 15 per cent of USM staff commuted using the bridge daily. The fact remains that despite slow traffic flow during peak hours, they still find that using the bridge is considerably faster than queuing for the 20-minute ferry ride. It is possible to use one of the interchanges to conveniently arrive at the Batu Uban main entrance. 

A satellite view and the red box showing the USM land alienated for constructing part of the interchanges



(Photograph by Google Map)

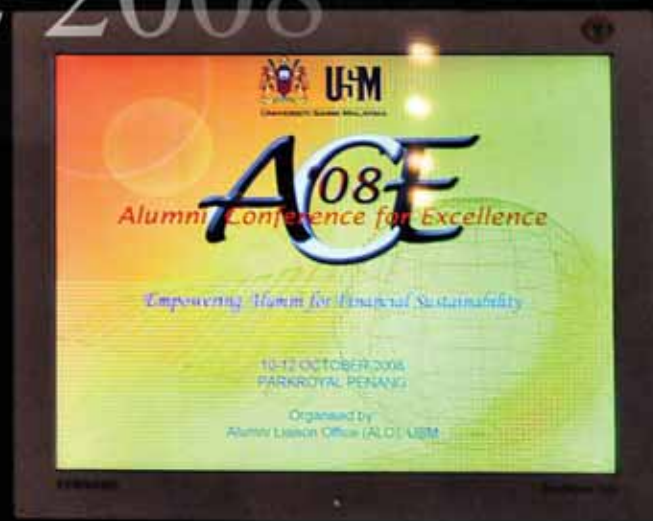


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The Alumni Conference for Excellence 2008

Highlights



The Alumni Liason Office (ALO) of USM organised The Alumni Conference for Excellence (ACE) 2008 in Parkroyal, Pulau Pinang 10-12 October. ACE, formerly known as the Alumni Conference (AiKon), is a continuing effort by alumni offices of Malaysian universities to deliberate on matters of alumni development and welfare.



The theme, Empowering Alumni for Financial Sustainability, was intended as a guide for presenters and participants to share experiences of struggles and best practices.

The keynote speech was given by USM's Pro-Chancellor Tan Sri Dr Lin See-Yan, while Vice-Chancellor Prof Tan Sri Dzulkifli Abdul Razak gave a special address.

Seven other invited speakers shared their experiences in empowering alumni as an organisation. The presentations and discussions were conducted in an informal manner allowing participants to express their opinions and concerns freely.



Feedback from participants was very positive and encouraging, with most agreeing that the two-day discussions have reflected the theme of the conference.

ACE '09 will be hosted by Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM) in Kuala Lumpur.

Photographs by Mohamed Talhah Idrus

USM 40 years Oral History

A talk on oral history was organised by Penerbit USM on 25 September. Penerbit USM invited two pioneer staff members, Hj Romli Abu Bakar, (former Deputy Registrar for Students Affairs and Development) and Marimuthu Ramachandran (former Security Officer). They narrated their experiences before an audience of about 80 staff members and students at Taman Buku.

Photograph by Yong Check Yoon



Appointed to Board of Directors

Datuk Abdullah Abdul Wahab was appointed a member of the University's Board of Directors for a term of two years effective 16 July.

Photograph by Mohamed Talhah Idrus

ALO Spreading Wings

On 30 Oct, ALO representatives visited their counterparts from Universiti Malaysia Sabah in Kota Kinabalu and later also met up with USM alumni over hi-tea at the Imperial International Hotel to discuss the setting up a chapter in Sabah.

Photograph by Yong Check Yoon



Recognition for 'white coffin' ban

USM received the 'Award for Creative Development in Healthy Cities 2008' for its ban on the use of polystyrene (aka 'white coffin') on campus. The Alliance for Healthy Cities (AFHC) presented the award to USM students at AFHC's 3rd Global Conference held in Ichikawa, Japan, in late October.



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**Assoc Prof Dr
Tang Thean Hock**
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