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THE LEADER

ALUMNI MAGAZINE OF UNIVERSITI SAINS MALAYSIA



SPEEDING
PAST



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From The Chief Editor

USM is 40 years old. From a shared campus in obscured Gelugor in 1969, it has mapped a recognisable presence in the world of higher learning.

In the early years when the local academia was abuzz with medical science, USM went on unperturbed to establish the School of Pharmaceutical Sciences. Similarly USM merged architecture and engineering to set up the School of Housing, Building and Planning. Other examples of its innovations included the introduction of a degree in Communications, a major in Performing Arts, and numerous departures from the conventional discipline areas, all with the view of diversifying knowledge and skills.

Far from slowing down, and past 40 years of age, USM is speeding past its many milestones. It continues to push frontiers and explore new opportunities. This year it pioneers a new approach to student admission, so as to achieve its plan of attaining a more visible international presence as a result of the conferment of the Accelerated Programme for Excellence (APEX) last year.

The role of alumni will also be elevated. The 106,000 plus alumni will be reached out and networked to assist the alma mater to reach its high goal.

The articles in this issue serve the dual purpose of tracing USM's journey to international recognition and illustrating some of its unique endeavours in introducing new possibilities for others to emulate. Obviously these will not do full justice to the myriad of firsts and unique initiatives that USM has done, but they should be eye openers lest they are forgotten.

If you think you are the first batch of any unique programme or initiative, we would like to hear from you too.

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B. Soc. Sc. '74



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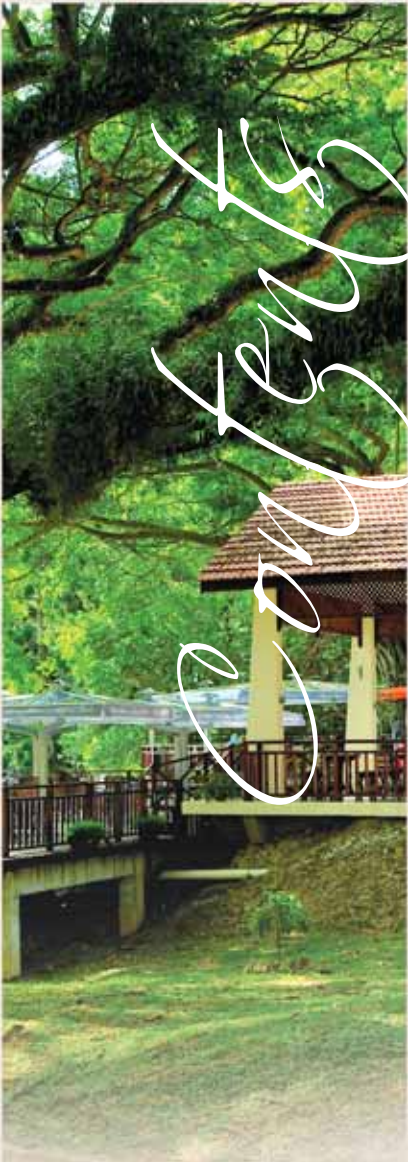
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<http://alo.usm.my>

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Notable Milestones - THE FIRST IN THE COUNTRY



- 1969 The first university to be set up after the formation of Malaysia
- 1969 The first university to be located outside the Klang Valley
- 1971 The first campus with a swimming pool
- 1972 The first Malaysian university to establish relations with an Indonesian university (via Universiti Sumatra Utara) after the confrontation years
- 1972 The first official visit by a Malaysian student group to visit Indonesia after the confrontation years
- 1972 The first Desasiswa (Student Village) system
- 1972 The first convocation festival by a university
- 1972 The first university convocation without a master of ceremony
- 1975 The first out-of-campus marine research station
- 1977 The first library to introduce the On-line Public Access Catalogue (OPAC)
- 1985 The establishment of Pusat Islam (Islamic Centre Complex)
- 1986 The establishment of Muslim Staff Association
- 1986 The establishment of Hadanah (infant and childcare centre)
- 1990 The establishment of Astronomy and Atmospheric Science Research Unit (AASRU)
- 1993 Setting up of the Islamic astronomical field observatory, Pusat Falak Sheikh Tahir in Pantai Aceh
- 1994 The establishment of the National Poison Centre
- 2001 The establishment of the Women's Development Research Centre (initiated from KANITA project)
- 2007 First to receive five-star ranking in the Academic Reputation Survey (Ares) of Public Higher Education Institutions
- 2008 The first Malaysian university to be conferred the Accelerated Programme for Excellence (APEX) status
- 2009 Adopted own criteria for undergraduate student selection, independent of Public Universities Central Admission system
- 2009 Micro-Credit Programme (MicroPinj) to assist lower income staff in small businesses



SPEEDING PAST 40

Degree Programmes - FIRST TO BE OFFERED IN THE COUNTRY



- 1971 The School of Distance Education was opened, creating new university entry criteria, giving qualified candidates with working experiences to get degrees 'from home'
- 1972 Bachelor of Pharmacy
School of Pharmaceutical Sciences
- 1973 Bachelor of Science (Housing, Building and Planning)
School of Housing, Building and Planning
- 1975 Bachelor of Social Science (Social Work)
School of Social Sciences
- 1999 Bachelor of Engineering (Aerospace Engineering)
School of Aerospace Engineering
- 1999 Master of Communication in Science and Environmental Journalism
School of Communication
- 2000 Bachelor of Health Science (Forensic)
School of Health Sciences
- 2001 Master of Surgery
School of Medical Sciences
- 2002 Master of Science in the Teaching of Mathematics
School of Mathematical Sciences
- 2004 Warga Mas Programme
Special Admissions Programme for Senior Citizens into full-time undergraduate studies

Degree Programmes - FIRST TO BE OFFERED IN SOUTHEAST ASIA



- 1971 Bachelor of Social Science (Off-Campus Programme)
School of Distance Education
- 1973 Bachelor of Science in Physics and Mathematics
(Off-Campus Programme)
School of Distance Education
- 1973 Master of Science (Planning)
School of Housing, Building and Planning
- 1974 Bachelor of Science in Biology and Chemistry
(Off-Campus Programme)
School of Distance Education
- 1984 Bachelor of Engineering (Mineral Resources Engineering)
School of Industrial Technology
- 1992 Master of Clinical Pharmacy
School of Pharmaceutical Sciences
- 1995 Bachelor of Education (Off-Campus Programme)
School of Distance Education
- 1995 Bachelor of Engineering (Off-Campus Programme)
School of Distance Education
- 1997 Bachelor of Management (Off-Campus Programme)
School of Distance Education
- 1998 Master of Medicine in Emergency Medicine
School of Medical Sciences
- 1999 Master of Pathology in Immunology
School of Medical Sciences

Compiled by Mohamed Talhah Idrus, Nor Rafizah Md Zain and Saw Cheang Kee.

BATIKAMPUS

curahan kasih

23 - 25 Oktober 2009
Kampus Minden, Pulau Pinang

<http://alo.usm.my> | 04 - 653 4 792

Anjuran bersama
Pejabat Pemajuan dan Perhubungan Alumni
Persatuan Alumni USM

PROGRAM BALIKAMPUS ALUMNI 2009

Jumaat, 23hb hingga Ahad, 25hb Oktober 2009
Kampus Minden USM

TARIKH	MASA	AKTIVITI	TEMPAT
23.10.2009	3.00ptg	Pendaftaran / Golf	Anjung Budi
	8.00mlm	Malam Menyambung Kasih [Alumni Tunjuk Bakat]	Anjung Budi
24.10.2009	8.00pg	Pemeriksaan Kesihatan	Anjung Budi
	9.00pg	Senaman	Padang Minden
	9.30pg	Sarapan pagi bersama NC	Anjung Budi
	10.30pg	Suka Cari	Padang Minden
	12.30ptg	Makan tengahari	Anjung Budi
	2.00ptg	Aktiviti bebas	Padang Minden
	5.30ptg	Sukan Suka	
	8.00mlm	Jamuan Makan Malam	
25.10.2009	8.00pg	Projek Kelestarian Kampus	Anjung Budi
	2.00ptg	Jamuan ringan	Anjung Budi

MAKLUMAT PENGINAPAN

Urusetia Program Balikampus 2009 telah berurusan dengan hotel-hotel dibawah. Peserta dikehendaki menghubungi urusetia sebelum 11 September 2009 bagi urusan tempahan. Peserta hendaklah menjelaskan bayaran sendiri dengan pihak hotel. Hotel-hotel yang boleh dihubungi adalah seperti berikut:

NAMA HOTEL	NO. TEL	NO. FAKS	LAMAN WEB
Rumah Tetamu USM Universiti Sains Malaysia, 11800 Pulau Pinang	04-653 2030/ 2050	04-659 1724	www.usainsgroup.com /brochure.pdf
Hotel Vistana 213 Jalan Bukit Gambir, Bukit Jambul 11950 Pulau Pinang	04-646 8000 Samb. 8047	04-646 8343	www.penang-hotels. com/vistana/rates.htm
B-Suite Sdn Bhd B-Tower, Bayan Point, 19 Medan Kampung Relau, 11900 Pulau Pinang	04-646 7777	04-645 7100	www.B-suite.com.my
International House SEAMEO RECSAM Jalan Sultan Azlan Shah, 11700 Gelugor Pulau Pinang	04-659 7928	04-658 7558	www.recsam.edu.my/ internationalhouse/ index.htm

BORANG PENYERTAAN

hendaklah sampai kepada Sekretariat Program Balikampus sebelum/pada 11 September 2009

[A] MAKLUMAT DIRI

Nama penuh : _____
No. K/P : _____
Tahun berijazah : _____ Ijazah diterima: _____
Alamat : _____

[B] MAKLUMAT PEKERJAAN

Jawatan : _____
Nama Organisasi : _____
Alamat Organisasi : _____
No. Tel (P) : _____ (R) : _____
(H/P) : _____ E-mel : _____

[C] PENYERTAAN SEGMENT ALUMNI TUNJUK BAKAT

Persembahan (✓)	Jenis Persembahan <i>[nyanyian, lakonan, sketsa, dll, tidak melebihi 3 minit]</i>	Bilangan Peserta
Solo		
Berkumpulan		

[D] YURAN PENYERTAAN (Tidak termasuk golf)

Penyertaan keseluruhan pada 23-25 Oktober 2009	(✓)	Penyertaan bagi Jamuan Makan MalamCurahan Kasih sahaja	(✓)
RM 120.00 untuk seorang		RM 60.00 seorang	
RM 200.00 untuk (keluarga, 2-3 orang)		Penyertaan golf	
RM 250.00 untuk (keluarga, ≥ 4 orang)		RM200 untuk seorang	

[E] MAKLUMAT BAYARAN

Disertakan kiriman wang/ cek bernombor

sebanyak RM _____ atas nama Bendahari, Universiti Sains Malaysia sebagai bayaran menyertai Program Balikampus Alumni 2009 dan dihantar kepada urusetia dialamat seperti berikut: **Urusetia Program Balikampus**

Pejabat Pemaajuan dan Perhubungan Alumni
Anjung Budi
Universiti Sains Malaysia
11800 Pulau Pinang

Tarikh: _____ Tandatangan: _____

Untuk maklumat lanjut sila hubungi Urusetia di talian 04-6534796/4792/4791
Laman Web: <http://alo.usm.my> E-mel: alo@notes.usm.my

Zalhatun Nazira Mohd Nordin
B. Eng. '00

I have read *The Leader Magazine*, and having graduated from the Engineering Campus, I feel disappointed to see that the magazine focuses more towards the main campus. Please add more stories or information regarding other branch campuses so that we can feel more in touch with USM as a whole. Thank you.

Azrie Razif Johari
B. Sc. '05

Please do not keep bragging about the editorial guys and their buddies. That is the last thing we want to hear in our magazine. Instead, please write about the contributions of lecturers.

Chief Editor replies...

We thank the reader for his observation. The Leader strives to reflect the views of all sections of alumni. However, only certain groups are forthcoming in furnishing us with resources. We are more than happy to receive input from alumni young and old so that we can produce more representative material. Better still, send us your articles.

Albert Tee
B. App. Sc. '76

I have lived outside Malaysia since 1977 and it is indeed a great feeling to receive *The Leader* from USM. The magazine reminds me of those long suffering days in lecture halls, library and the poor living condition of rented rooms near the campus or even around Bukit Gelugor. Personally I believe you have done a great job of getting this magazine started. The fact that you are able to reach out to thousands of past graduates from USM is in itself an achievement.

Chief Editor's note:
The Leader was nominated to submit for a ACU publication award last year and ACU's comments on the magazine are reproduced on this page (right)

The Association of Commonwealth Universities

**ACU PR, Marketing and Communications Awards 2008
Judges' Report to Entrants**

Overall Strengths of Entry:

- Creative and well-organized with a visually-rich design
- Content appropriate for target audience and publication goals
- Organization of content into regular sections strengthens the publication
- Themed issues work well
- Use of some very striking visuals/graphics

Recommendations for Enhancement:

- Publication is visually rich, but the copy and photographic elements are competing for dominance on a number of spreads. As a result, some of the copy is difficult to read. Efforts should be made to avoid this in the future.
- Consistency in treatment of section heads is good, but they are relatively small and get lost behind the graphics. Suggest making them more dominant so the reader is clear on which section of the publication he/she is reading.

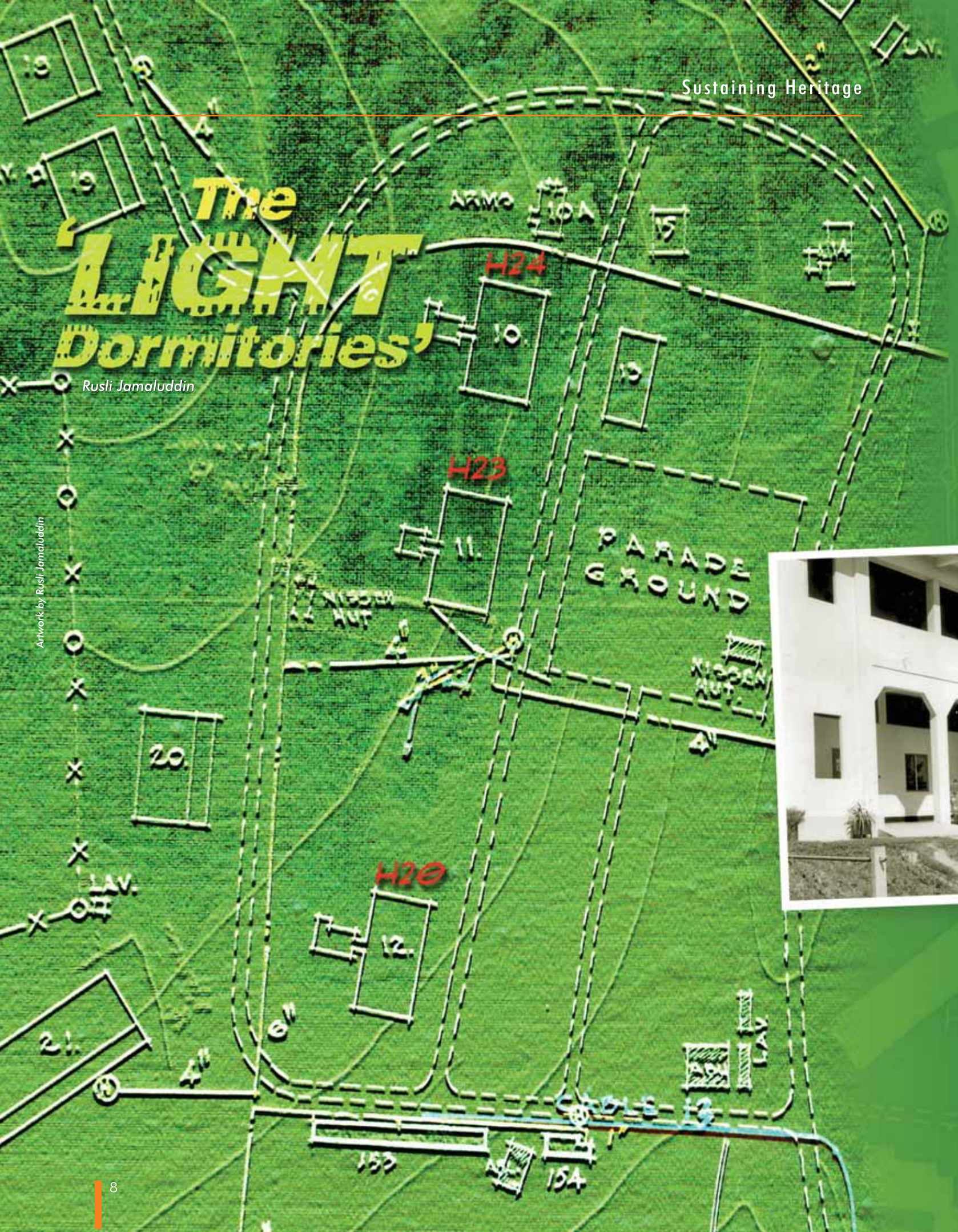
Additional Comments

A mature publication with a strong sense of itself and its target audience.

The LIGHT Dormitories

Rusli Jamaluddin

Artwork by Rusli Jamaluddin

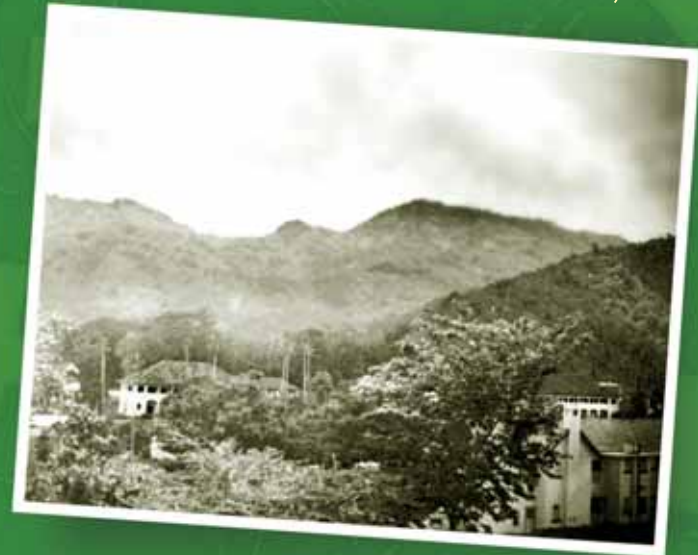


The 'Light Dormitories'



Blocks 10, 11 and 12 (buildings H24, H23 and H20) are three of a kind. They are like the soldiers who once occupied the premises. Despite the blemishes that come with age, they stand strong and proud, full of character and charm, in a neat row. Through the years, they have never faltered under the relentless onslaught of their enemies - the harsh tropical weather. Contrary to the sterile identities that the word 'barracks' seem to suggest, these enduring edifices still effortlessly cast their own peculiar kind of enchantment.

Block 10 (right) and 12 (left) in the '60s (Photograph courtesy of www.mindenbarracks.com)



Royal Army Service Corps at Block 10 in the '60s (Photograph courtesy of www.mindenbarracks.com)

Widely acknowledged as the 'heart' of Desasiswa Cahaya, where the undergraduate dormitories are, all three represent the last remaining vestiges of old world charm. What is perhaps most enduring is the spirit that makes H20, H23 and H24 unique. Perhaps it is also a case of 'first love' to the early Mindeners.

Cuddled by the shady *pukul lima* trees, these old army barracks offer a blissful break for those longing for the laidback ambiance of a peaceful kampong which many pioneering inhabitants yearned for. It was this impression of repose that gave encouragement and motivation to many and it makes a particularly convenient stay for those wanting to indulge in a bit of nostalgia and those thrilling days of yesteryear.

Strategically located in a row along Lorong Cahaya, each dormitory has a two-storey footprint of approximately 14,000 square feet of floor area which share common access to wide recreational open spaces in between the buildings which were once army drill grounds. This forges the spirit of neighbourliness, which was fairly pervasive.

The apparent visual qualities of the three buildings were once compared by pioneering student Fatimah Busu in the early '70s to "... the grounds of an ethereal palace set within woods..." Her sense of awe and wonderment holds good till today. Indeed, these three stalwarts of 1938 buildings represent consistent examples of 'palatial' army barracks more than any other military structure on the campus. The three buildings are certainly the best positioned barracks and were eye-catchers in their heyday. The distinctive chamfered colonnade verandahs on the ground floor facade are attentively compelling.

The 'Light Dormitories'

Old pictures have brought to light a great deal of evidence that the buildings, despite their 'regality', provided a sense of respite and seclusion. The staid-looking 'palace' of H20, H23 and H24 were once a restful haven to a large number of British and Commonwealth military personnel. In the early '50s, transient guests included the first Battalion of Queen's Own Royal West Kent Regiment and the first Battalion of Manchester Regiment, their presence adding prestige to the memory and history of these barracks. As the picture testifies, the buildings had much original character with a wide verandah around the peripheral enclosure. Even though the architectural style can be traced to Gujarati origins, the expression, however, is entirely vernacular.

Through the years it has gone by many names: The Barracks, The Royal Army Service Corps (RASC) Stores, The British Army Children School, among others. In 1971, each barracks was tastefully refurbished to meet the requirement for 26 rooms to accommodate 2 or 3 students to a room. They now go by the name Desasiswa Cahaya, literally the 'Light Dormitories'.



The First Battalion of Queen's Own Royal West Kent Regiment posing against Block 11 in 1952 (Photograph courtesy of Boston Photos)



British Army School in Block 12 in the '60s (Photograph courtesy of www.mindenbarracks.com)

The 'Light Dormitories'



Block 10 (H24) and Block 11 (H23)



A GEC fan

The modest barracks exude quiet dignity without being luxurious. It might not be plush but the room could be rented for a meagre price. Back in the early '70s the room rate was \$8.80. Yes, that's right... Malaysian \$8.80 per week! The comfort provided by the 240 sq ft room is surprisingly satisfying to those who have stayed there. The air that wafts across the rooms is cool, refreshed by the whirl of the old General Electrical Company (more popularly known as GEC) ceiling fans, a definite invitation for an afternoon siesta.

In more than 70 years of their existence, the premises have endured remarkably well up till now. One would expect dilapidated walls and worn-out corners but surprisingly all remain intact as if the walls were plastered just yesterday. This is another silent testament to the quality of 'old world' construction. What was once the heart of Desasiswa Cahaya, however, is now being encroached

on by development, which could be a prelude to all manner of surprises. The appearance and the ambiance of the place may be rapidly changing but their intrinsic character and charm have remained. Those who knew H20, H23, and H24 during the earlier years can continue to reminisce through the fond stories of the early years despite the current transformation. **L**



Encroaching development
(Photographs by Rusli Jamaluddin)

Rusli Jamaluddin is currently a lecturer at the School of Housing, Building and Planning, USM. He can be reached at rj_hbpsm@yahoo.com

Artwork by Rusli Jamaluddin



When Adnan Ahmad did not make the grades in the Higher School Certificate examination in 1968 as a science candidate, his hopes for a university education were shattered. With a bleak academic forecast, Adnan spent the following three years helping his father eke out a living from the family's rubber patch in the northern state of Perlis to feed ten family members.

A Competitive Age

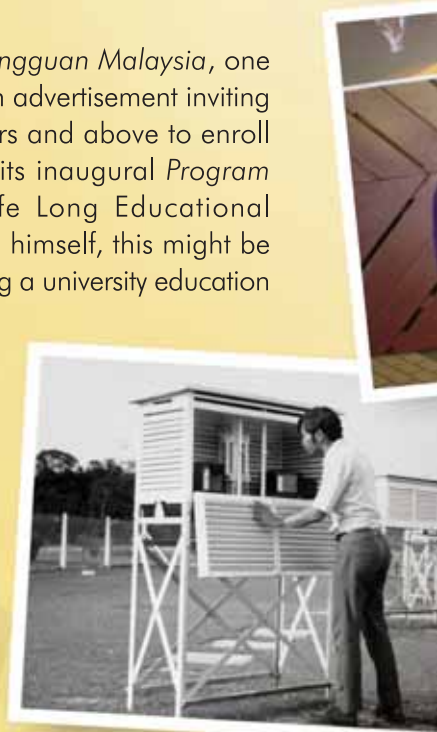
Hamima Dona Mustafa
B. A. '73

Photographs courtesy of Adnan Ahmad
B. Soc. Sc. '08

In 1971, he obtained a job as an assistant at the Petaling Jaya meteorological headquarters. He has served in a number of meteorological stations during his 33 years of career span. For the last 24 years (1980 to 2004), before retirement, he had been in charge of the Mata Ayer Meteorological Station, Perlis.

Scanning his Sunday newspaper, *Mingguan Malaysia*, one day, Adnan's eyes caught sight of an advertisement inviting "silver-haired citizens" aged 50 years and above to enroll at Universiti Sains Malaysia under its inaugural *Program Pendidikan Sepanjang Hayat* (Life Long Educational Programme). At last, Adnan said to himself, this might be his chance to fulfill his dream of getting a university education which had evaded him in 1968.

He read on. The conditions were: one must have obtained one's *Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia* (Malaysian Certificate of Education) with a credit in Bahasa Malaysia or equivalent; one must not be younger than 50 years and must have at least 10 years of working experience in the related academic programme applied. Successful applicants were given a discount of 50 percent on the course fees as well as the hostel/accommodation fees.



Adnan worked for 24 years at the Mata Ayer Meteorological Station in Perlis

A Competitive Age

His heart beats quickened.

Turning to his wife, he showed her the advertisement.

“What do you think of this?”

Alawiyah Abdullah, who has known all along of her husband's unfulfilled aspirations agreed that he should apply.

Much to his happiness, he was among the 20 ‘silver haired citizens’ (as they are known) accepted to pioneer the life long learning programme beginning in the second semester, 2004. Adnan chose to pursue a degree with the School of Social Sciences, USM, for three years. While adjusting to the life of a ‘mature’ student living on campus, Adnan was accompanied by his wife.

His high points were the once-a-semester meeting with the Vice-Chancellor who, according to Adnan, urged and motivated them to persevere. Apart from that he noted the undergraduates’ form of address towards him as *Pak Cik* (Uncle) during their meetings and discussions. Adnan said he enjoyed sharing his ideas with these other undergraduates who were mostly in their early twenties. Indeed, sometimes the lecturers had to restrain the ‘silver haired citizens’ from being too carried away in their contributions to the discussions.

In 2007, Adnan was among the seven others who completed the programme. When they donned on



Achieving his dream in 2008




A grandson is Adnan’s latest family member

the university robes and mortar boards, much to their families’ pride, USM has once again marched ahead in spear-heading an innovative approach to provide full-time degree courses to candidates regardless of their age.

Presently, Adnan is attached to the Peace Unit, USM, as a coordinating officer of its projects on a contract basis.

Not satisfied with his achievements, Adnan is now attending night classes in his new venture of a part-time master’s degree programme in public administration (MPA), stretching over four years.

His wife who has chalked up 10 years’ working experience in a bank and who fulfilled all the conditions stipulated is following in his footsteps. The year Adnan graduated marked the beginning of Alawiyah’s academic adventure. 



Dr Hamima Dona Mustafa is currently a lecturer at the Women’s Development Research Centre (KANITA), USM. She can be reached at hamima@usm.my

Searched *and* Found

Noor Ida Yang Rashdi
B. A. '74

Photographs courtesy of
Perpustakaan Hamzah Sendut

Today you can search for book titles and their availability in many of the public and institutional libraries in the country without having to be physically in the library. It is made possible through a system known as On-line Public Access Catalogue or more popularly called by its acronym, OPAC. This system had its origins in the library Information Technology innovation programme initiated by the Universiti Sains Malaysia library since the 1970s.

For that, perhaps the Malaysian Machine Readable Catalogue (MALMARC) is best remembered as a project involving co-operation and resource sharing among specific public university libraries and the National Library of Malaysia during the initial years.

The development of MALMARC can be attributed to the keen foresight of the first Chief Librarian, Edward Lim Huck Tee whose pioneering work on the system started in 1977. He established the Automation and Research Division in the library with Lim Chee Hong as its first Head of Division.

During that time no other library in the country had computer facilities except for the USM library which had already been linked to its Computer Centre. Hence, the USM library took the opportunity to spearhead the automation process. In 1979, MALMARC was launched and became operational on a batch processing system under a pilot funding from the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO).

*A New Straits Times
report on 18 July 1985*

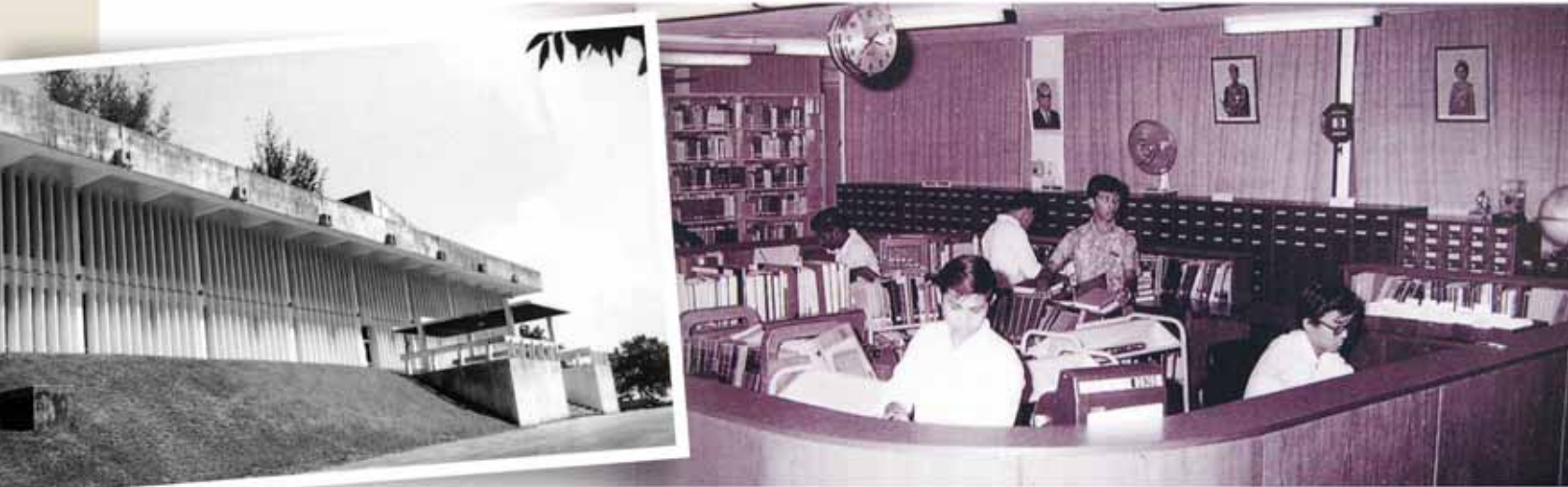
PENANG, Wed. — Universiti Sains Malaysia is the first in the country to have members' information linked to data bases through



Library users accessing resources through KRISALIS then



Presently library resources can be accessed online
(Photograph by Yong Check Yoon)



The Malayan Teacher's Training College in Gelugor generously allowed USM to share its library premises

The advantage of using MARC records means that the data in a cataloguing record can be read by a computer. It became necessary at that time to take advantage of an industry-wide standard whose main purpose was to foster communication of information.

A consortium comprising the National Library of Malaysia and specific university libraries acquired bibliographic records from overseas databases such as the U.S. Library of Congress and the British libraries. By 1987, the entire USM library catalogue comprising 110,000 titles out of a collection of almost 250,000 volumes of books and media collection was converted into a machine-readable form.


The system saved library users much time from laboriously flipping through rows of index cards used in the card catalogue system to search for books. To the members of the consortium, the distinct advantage of using MARC standards is to prevent the duplication of work since they share resources. Eventually a faster microfiche catalogue and the microfiche readers replaced the archaic card catalogue system.

The USM library became synonymous with MALMARC. Visitors from within and outside Malaysia came to observe its operation while numerous articles are written in local and international library and information science journals. Its library staff involved in this project became well-known personalities within the global library circle at that time.

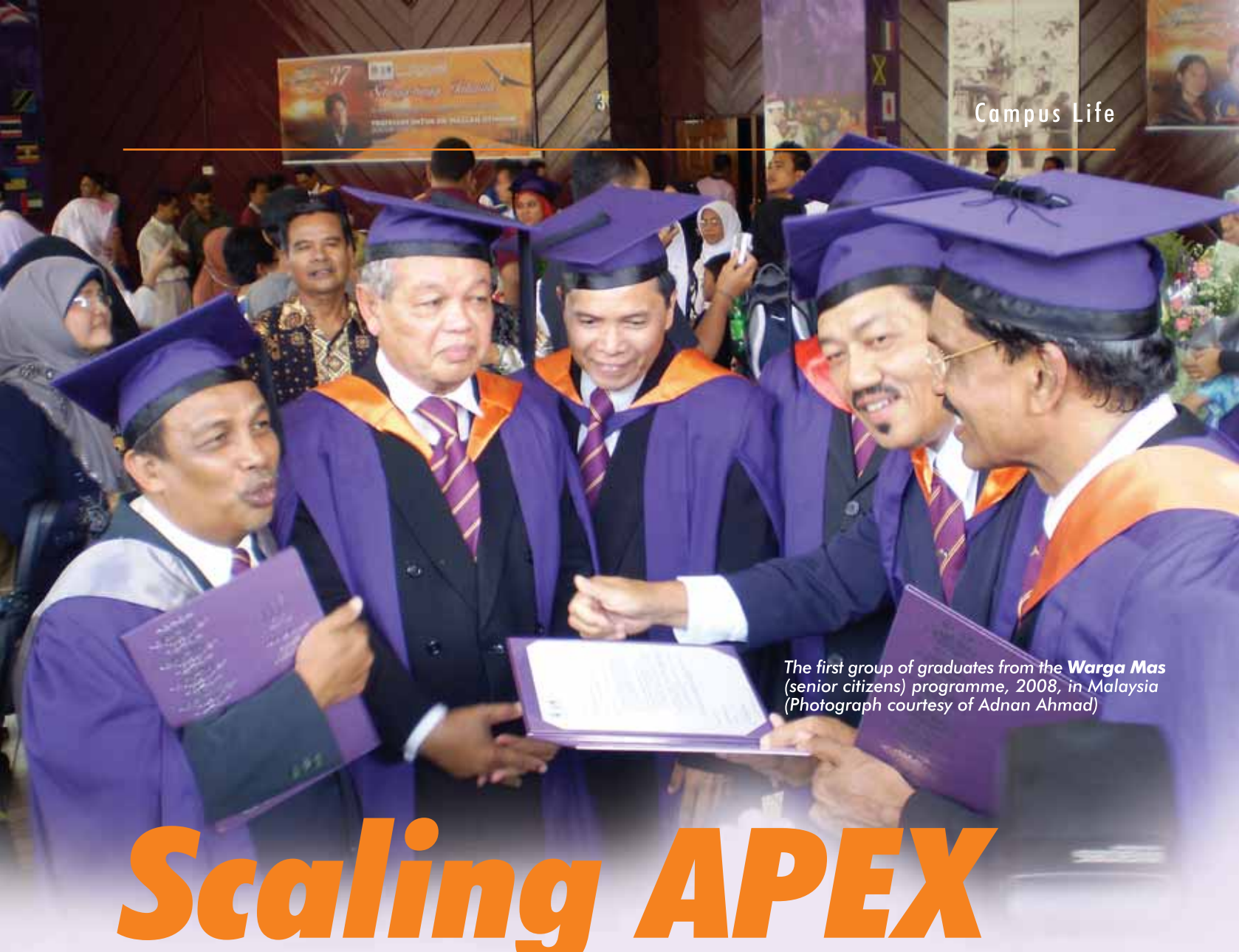
The conversion of the USM library records was a way forward towards an integrated library automation system called DOBIS/LIBIS which took place in the early '90s, yet another milestone in its fast-paced journey towards modernisation, a pride not only for the USM library but also to the Malaysian library development.



The writer (right) attending a talk for library staff

Today there are about a million books and journals, with thousands of current titles, media material being subscribed, and 115,846 microfiche in the USM library. Apart from these, it is growing annually at a prodigious rate of 25,000 materials comprising books, journals and multimedia. At such a pace, its libraries have to be able to keep track of every material that they own and an efficient OPAC system such as KRISALIS (a library cataloguing system) ensures of that. 

Noor Ida Yang Rashdi can be reached at niyr2749@yahoo.com



The first group of graduates from the **Warga Mas** (senior citizens) programme, 2008, in Malaysia (Photograph courtesy of Adnan Ahmad)

Scaling APEX

Syed Abdul Mutalib Syed Mahamad
B. Soc. Sc. '08

When USM first mooted the idea of a 'triple L' (life long learning) programme for senior citizens, I could hardly know how to hide my tears. I welcomed it with mixed feelings of joy and disbelief! The years of feeling like a 'has been' suddenly took another twist.

After the application, I was hoping to be accepted into the programme. I was already looking forward to write another chapter in my life, to be a better person.

My fears of being rejected were soon behind me when, out of the blue, a varsity personnel contacted me several times over the phone enquiring about my seriousness of becoming a student again. Being a focused person, my reply was a positive one.

So there I was, a student at the ripe 'young' age of 64 and that was some start!

The first day of registration was rather chaotic. Immediately after registration, the 'old-timers' headed to an English class at Pusat Bahasa dan Terjemahan (now Pusat Pengajian Bahasa, Literasi dan Terjemahan). We opted to take Public Speaking that offered four units. As most of us came from the old school, all of us passed with flying colors and our spoken language is much improved. There is now no turning back but to slog on.

Scaling APEX

The first few weeks were frightening. Students created a ruckus while watching live telecasts of the World Cup soccer matches on the television that gave us no choice but to join them... at 3.00 in the mornings and missing the *Fajr* (morning) congregational prayers at the *masjid* (mosque).

Undaunted by adversaries, the 'old horses' ploughed on, sometimes until the wee hours. The effort proved rewarding, for three of us from the pioneering seven were on the dean's list of merits. And they say old horses should be put to sleep?

The success showed that in their maiden outing, the 'old-timers' could overcome their first semester jitters superbly. We had succeeded in removing a 'complex' that haunted the senior citizens far too long. The brickbats thrown at us by pessimistic 'friends' have only made us more resilient.



Arriving for work at the USM Counseling Unit (Photograph by Mohamed Talhah Idrus)

Like everyone else, senior citizens have their pride too! We never wished to burden other students, nor do we like to rust and vanish into obscurity. On the contrary, we wanted to harmonise with them and to be part of the society. Still, some of the negative remarks and criticism thrown did hurt. Against all these odds, we remained unruffled, and were steadfast in our endeavour. In the end, starting from nothing, I now have something. Hopefully the younger students will emulate this lesson in life.

The understanding and cooperation from the top brass down to the supporting staff was really fantastic and greatly appreciated. The younger students were really helpful. They were ever ready to give a helping hand whenever we faced difficulties, especially so

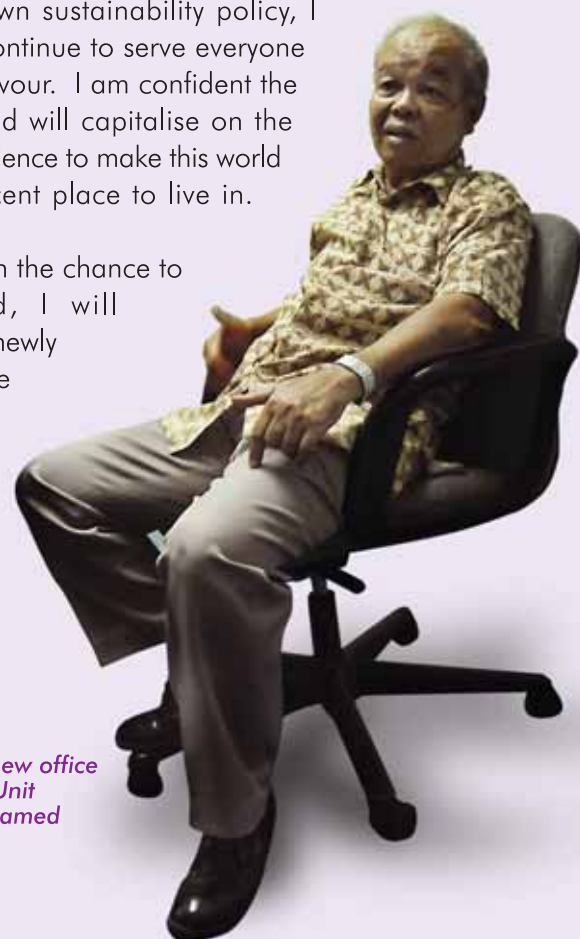
during the first few days when we could not find the correct lecture theater, such as DK Z. Luckily, this confusion lasted only a few days. We finally acclimatised to the real campus life. What a relief, for we could not have lasted the pace and may have dropped out of the paper chase.

During the whole time when we were university students, we never received any special favours. We were just like any other student, sharing the dorms and toilets with them. The most memorable experience was during the month of Ramadan when we had to wait our turn for a plate of rice before *iftar* (breaking fast).

How we loved campus life! USM is really a place that promotes unity, care, humanity and most of all, compassion to the underprivileged.

Looking back at the unique 'triple L' programme which has since been known as the *Warga Mas* (Golden Citizen) programme, I have nothing but praise. USM is one of the most well placed institutions which has its own culture, values, tradition, and more importantly its own sustainability policy, I hope USM will continue to serve everyone without fear or favour. I am confident the university can and will capitalise on the *Warga Mas* experience to make this world a better and decent place to live in.

As for me, if given the chance to be reemployed, I will definitely use the newly gained knowledge to serve with sincerity and to the best of my ability. 🙏



Syed Mutalib in his new office in USM Counseling Unit (Photograph by Mohamed Talhah Idrus)

In the early '70s, 'pharmacy' was a word alien to Malaysians generally. It was often confused with 'palmistry' or even agriculture as in 'pharming'. In any case, it sounded exciting either way.

In Pulau Pinang, palmistry is nothing new. Just walk along Penang Road and Pitt Street and you will invariably meet one of them along the five-foot ways. The less glamorous name is of course "fortune-telling" by using your palm as the database, but this is not all. Sometimes other aids and gadgets are used too: playing cards, budgerigars, and dices, just to name a few. Nonetheless they seem no lack of clientele from many walks of life, including the white-collared. So there is no problem as far as a career is concerned.

A Muddled Start to A Love Affair

Imagine if there is a university degree thrown in from a science university, the clientele could easily form a beeline, and the fortune derived could be easy triple or more! The offer to join a course with such a prospect was irresistible. For all we knew pharmacy is an advanced course on palmistry, a version 2.0 as they say nowadays. And if you are a bird-lover, especially for budgerigars, and have some flair in taking chances (read: gambling), this is definitely a course for you. Me?

Dzulkifli Abdul Razak
B. Pharmacy '76

Even it is not that, that agricultural slant cannot be that bad. Malaysia is basically an agricultural economy back then and padi-fields were a common sight in Bayan Lepas and its surrounding areas. Perhaps 'pharming' is the next generation of traditional farming; after all, the desire to improve the livelihood of the farmers has been the talk-of-the-town for quite while. For USM to introduce 'pharmacy' can only make things better and brighter once it graduated a new batch of 'pharmers' equipped with the latest science and technological knowledge in the labour force. Are the 'pharmers' ready as the latest breed to replace the old-style of labour-intensive farmers, transforming Malaysia into a more vibrant agro-economy? The reasons are too compelling to resist.

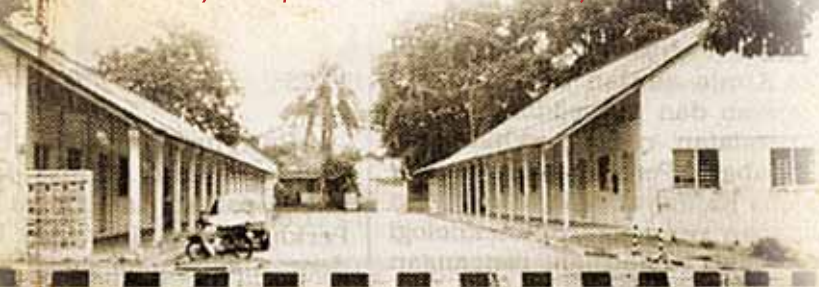
Moreover, rather than enroll in a mundane, run-of-mill basic science course, pharmacy sounds more mysterious, if not magical. And that was how finally I sell my soul to a discipline that I hardly knew, being among the pioneering batches of USM pharmacy students!

A Muddled Start to A Love Affair

However, there is absolutely no regret. Quite unexpectedly, the mysteries hidden under the cloak of the word 'pharmacy' suddenly revealed themselves with the magic explained. For every ailment we were taught there is always a remedy. All you need to do is to concoct one - the most appropriate, the most efficacious! Be it an eye- or ear-drops, a lotion or an ointment (we soon know how to differentiate them) or even the supposed torpedo-shaped suppositories. How about pessaries? It does not matter.

And in most instances, the ailment will go away like magic (only for the uninitiated). For us pharmacists (not 'pharmers', mind you) there is always an explanation. It is called 'mechanism of drug action' which soon becomes a dreaded subject since different drugs act in different ways in the body depending on the dose. And there are literally hundreds of drugs and thousands of doses and dosage forms! But then the basics are similar. You only have to memorise the more common ones that patients would most likely present to you.

The old pharmacy laboratory in the '70s, now replaced by Dewan Budaya (Photograph courtesy of Perpustakaan Hamzah Sendut)




The rest of which we have to peep into what is called a 'pharmacopeia' - something like an encyclopedia except that there are more Greek and Latin words and terminologies in them. Greek and Latin? This must be difficult when English is already enough to cause a riot! But to a pharmacist, this is as they say: p.r.n (*pro re nata*, or, as occasion requires). It does not need to crack our head as there is a time and place for everything. So instead of saying 'three times a day' we prefer to use the code 't.i.d' which stands for 'ter in die' or 'q.i.d' (quater in die) in Latin. We too soon learn the PR is not exactly a 'public relations' exercise; it is more to do with the 'launching' of torpedo-shaped suppositories p.r.n! If you know what I mean.

These terms are so useful that we can be doubled as codes to set appointment with our girlfriends without having to worry about eavesdroppers (and there were many busybodies around). It could be t.i.d, q.i.d or just q.h. (that is, every hourly). When an immediate rendezvous is required just say "stat!" (for statim). Viola what a life! What a course, a creative one at that!

Moreover, it gave us the (false) smug feeling now that we have learned a dead Roman language when no else in the campus has a clue. This can only increase the market value of pharmacy students among the campus population.

Thus, over the next few grueling years, we fell in love with the pharmacy courses; mine is pharmacology in particular. Some even manage to do so with the course mates, thanks to the interplay of Greek and Latin words that were put to work. With this added to a persuasive talent of a 'medicine-man' who can concoct just about anything, the formula is invariably an effective one.

So, like most love-at-first-sight, these stories eventually culminated with a happy ending. This is the case for most of the USM pharmacy students that I know and who seemed to 'live happily ever after'.

These are all because of the first encounter with pharmacy education at USM - the first of its kind in Malaysia. 

Pharmacy alumnus in a happy ever after wedding anniversary celebration (Photograph by Mohamed Talhah Idrus)



Computer Sciences 1987

The Pioneers



ABD RAHIM
RAMLI



ABD SAMAD
MOHTAR



ABDUL AZIZ
WOK GHAZALI



AHMAD ASRI
HUSSIN



AISHAH
AWANG



AISHAM
MOHAMED



AMERAN JAFFAR



AUZIR ABDULLAH



AZAH ABDUL
MALEK



AZHAR AHMAD



BAHARI
OTHMAN



BALAKRISHNAN
RAMAKRISHNA
NAIR



CHAN BOON
TIONG



CHAN LAI FUN



CHAN SAW
LIEW



CHENG KOK
WAH



CHEOW
KOK LAN



CHEW
YUIT MIN



CHIN KHIM
LOONG



CHONG
SHAK YEE



FAIZAH SHAARI



FUNG
HOU FUI



GOH LI LI



GOH SOH MING



HANIFAH
ABDUL
GHAFFAR



HASLINA
HASHIM



HASNUL OMAR



HO PIANG KIM



HO SUET
CHOO



IBRAHIM FAKIR



KAMARIAH ABU



KAMARUDDIN
MAHMOOD



KATHIRMATHY
@KALIESWAREN
M K RETNAM



KHAIRUDIN
MOHAMAD
MOR



KHALIDAH
OTHMAN



KHOO MING
FONG



KOID TENG
BENG



LAKSHIMI P
SUPPIAH



LEE CHIEW MUI



LEE NAN PHIN



LEE POH CHUN



LEE WOAN
LING



LEONG CHEE
KEONG



LIAU KOK FAH



LIM KA SEONG



LIM YIT PING



LOH CHONG
YEEN



LOW KEAN PENG



MASTHURA
KUTUB ALI



MAZLAN
MD ALI



MOHD SALLEH
SUPIAN



MOHD ZAKI
ISMAIL



MOI KOK WAH



MUHAMED EDIL
YUNUS



NG KOK HENG



NOR SAADAH
ABDULLAH



NORAHAN
HASSAN



NORASKIN HJ
MOHD DIN



NORLIDA
SHAFIE



NURIANNAHAR
MOHAMED



OOI YEE FONG



PATRICK LEONG
KING MIN



PUSPA BABU
VALLABH PATEL



RAFIDAH MOHD
NOOR



RAFIDAH
MOHID



RAVI SEKAR
RENGASAMY



ROHANI
MOHD SAID



ROZITA ISMAIL



RUHAZAH
MOHD SALLEH



SAFIAH MAT
NASIR



SALBIAH
MADON



SHARON JACINTA
MARY PINTO



SIM CHEE
CHUEN



SITI AMINAH
SHAIKH RADZI



SITI SALWA
MD TOP



SIVANESAN
RATNASINGAM



SOFIAH JAMAL
MOHAMED



SURIYANI
OMAR



TAN YAK MENG



TEK KEN CHAI



TENGGU ANUAR
TENGGU ABU
BAKAR



WAN BAHIAH
ISHAK



WAN
MOHAMMED
AYUB WAN
KHALID



WONG KOK
FOONG



YAP CHONG
HUAT



YAZID
SHAHIDIN



YEW AI LOON



YOP KIM LEONG



YUSOF SALEH



ZABIDI ALI



ZAINAB
ARSHAD



ZAINI WAZIR



ZAINUL ABIDIN
AHMAD



ZAITON
YAAKOB

The USM Annual Fund

With Your Support, We Lead

For enquiries, please contact:

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Anjung Budi, Bangunan D01, Universiti Sains Malaysia,
11800 USM, Pulau Pinang, Malaysia.
Tel: 04-6534798, Fax: 04-6588740,
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When I was growing up as a little girl, I was often told stories of Abraham Lincoln and Sir Alexander Fleming who, inspite of being born in poor families, made a huge difference in the world simply because someone believed in them and gave them that opportunity to education.

Looking Forward. Giving Back.

Asha Suresh Chand
B. Pharmacy '92

Photographs by
Yong Check Yoon

Giving is a great gesture of humanity. But giving someone an opportunity to education is a gift of diamond. It is the only way to empower the young minds and nurture the gems that could decay if unnoticed.

This year in line with USM's 40th Anniversary, the institution embarked on various missions focusing on the institutional brand that is "USM is a pioneering, transdisciplinary research university that empowers future talent and enables the bottom billions to transform their socio-economic condition".

One of the milestones is the launch of the **USM Annual Fund**. This is a new initiative that gives us, the alumni, staff, parents and friends of USM an opportunity to support our alma mater and USM in specific. All gifts will go towards funding a wide range of projects that directly benefit student life, educational facilities and international student opportunities. Each ringgit raised from USM's extended family helps to ensure two things: Our students receive the best education possible and they go on to become leaders who will drive social, economic and sustainable development in Malaysia and beyond.

For most colleges and universities, the annual fund is the backbone of fundraising strategies.

First, the annual fund is the simplest and most frequent of all fundraising appeals, and as such, it is a good gauge of a university's overall ability to raise money.

Second, annual giving is an important litmus test of alumni satisfaction, If giving is established and increases steadily, alumni are likely satisfied.

Third, alumni giving is also a key criterion that foundations evaluate when considering your grant request. Their reasoning is simple: If alumni supports the university, then we should too!


For these and other reasons, a strong annual fund programme is essential. **■**

"Your gift makes a difference and every ringgit counts"

Dr Asha Suresh Chand can be reached at asha.theva@gmail.com



MALAKERBAU rules



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

Walking with chest thrust forward, head bobbing to and fro, and exhibiting a pair of sharp, fierce eyes, the *malakerbau* (from *gembala kerbau* or buffalo herder) or *tióng* (mynah) is a picture of attitude.

It is as if they are reminding the students who first entered Minden Barracks in 1971 that malakerbaus are Minden's earlier residents, even before the site was anglicised from its original name of Bukit Jenaton.

The Other Residents



*Striding noisily on the rooftop of
Pusat Teknologi Pengajaran dan Multimedia*

Malakerbau Rules

A **malakerbau** would still chatter while in the midst of preening



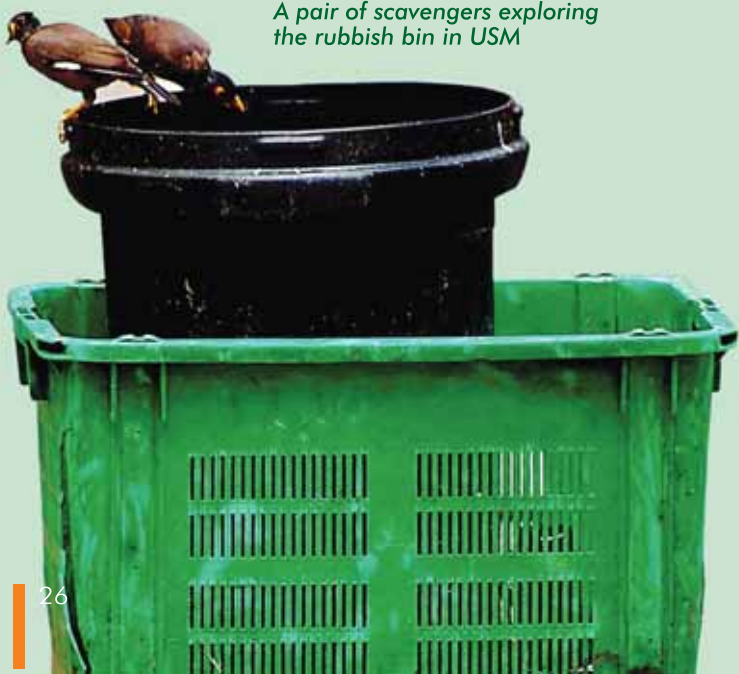
Malakerbau (with white patches in the wings) would comfortably flock with perling (starlings) and other species of similar morphology



Even in flight, the **malakerbau** exudes a strong personality



In adulthood a **malakerbau** is monogamous for life



A pair of scavengers exploring the rubbish bin in USM

Though some of the other earlier residents have left, when their homes were ravaged to make way for the incoming university population, the *malakerbau*, a species of intelligent birds that can adapt to extreme environmental changes, remain. They are true survivalists, able to make their nests from anything and almost anywhere. As for diet, they are omnivorous; they eat fruits, insects as well as scraps from rubbish bins.

Although relatively small in size, about 20cm in length, one cannot help but notice them. Sociable in nature with their own as well as other species, such as the *perling* (starlings), they command attention with their noisy “che kiow, che kiow, che kiow”. They ‘talk’ non-stop, even when alone. With more than ten different calls, ranging from low threatening murmurs of “kreqq, kreqq” to the shrill “Kiew, kiew”, they may be the most communicative creatures on campus.



Not only is it unfazed by the presence of the tree snake, this lone **malakerbau** is determined to chase it away



A **malakerbau** is not easily intimidated by human presence



Though they enjoy a bath, only one would take a dip while others watch or stand as sentry



When with a mate the male can turn fiercely possessive and attack another male

"You got a problem?"



When intimidated by perceived rivals which may wander too close to their mates, they can suddenly turn quarrelsome. Even when larger species such as the gagak (crow) or the lang kawi (brahmny kite) happen to intrude into their territory, they stand their ground, boldly rallying other members of the species to help them. A single *malakerbau* has even been seen to attack a snake.

Otherwise they are harmless, and even comical with their antics, walking about the campus as if making sure everything is in order. They are ever busy. Inquisitively, they love to flick scraps of rubbish and fallen leaves to investigate what lies underneath. At other times, when shallow pools are created after a downpour, they would take turns for a quick bath.

If the *malakerbau* were to be a graffiti artist Minden campus would probably have been sprayed "Malakerbau Rules! OK?" 🇲🇲

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



The Original Kickoff

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



Manoharan Kathiravelu
(Photograph by Yong Check Yoon)

With the exception of the pioneering students and staff, few would have remembered the first *Pesta Konvo* which, despite being unconventional, was held with pomp and pageantry. The fact that the week-long celebration was organised almost entirely by the students and their union is a singular testament to the spirit of freedom and independence that once prevailed.

It was celebrated by everyone in June 1972 for the first time in the fledgling university, three years after its inception, as Manoharan Kathiravelu fondly recalled. Mano (as he is better known, currently Wawasan Open University Penang Regional Office director) was one of the pioneer students and a member of the main committee for the *Pesta Konvo* 1972.

“Farid (now Dato’ Mohd Farid Ariffin, President of Majlis Kanser Nasional (MAKNA) or the National Cancer Council) was our student leader and he negotiated with the university on behalf of the students to enable us to organise this event,” said Mano.

Among the events held prior to the convocation ceremony itself was a mini float procession, graced by beauty pageant contestants, which made its way through George Town.

The Original Kickoff

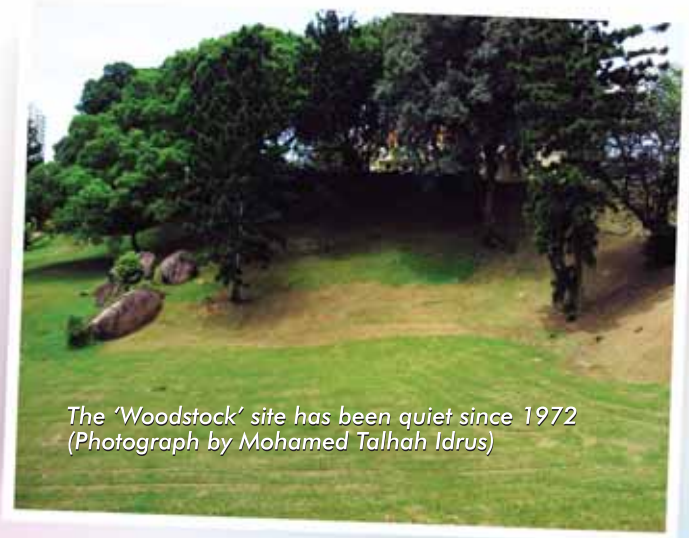
The convocation ceremony was held on Saturday (June 10) morning at Dewan Sri Pinang following strict protocol, as Loo Choon Chwi, an organising committee member then remembered. Loo is now a managing director of a Singapore-based company. Tuanku Syed Putra Ibni Al-Marhum Syed Hassan Jamalullail, the then Raja of Perlis headed the list of dignitaries who attended the function.

“After their graduation ceremony was over, the graduates looked forward to attending the Convo Ball held for them at a top Penang hotel,” said Loo.

One of the highlights of the celebration was an open-air concert, a much-anticipated event that injected much excitement into the celebration. True to the spirit of the time, the event was named after the renowned 1969 music festival in the Woodstock Festival.

For three consecutive evenings, stretching from Friday to Sunday (9 - 11 June), USM’s very own Woodstock concert was held at the valley behind the guard house (now Anjung Budi).

“During that time, there was only the smaller swimming pool and the concert was held right up to the pool area,” Mano recalled.



*The ‘Woodstock’ site has been quiet since 1972
(Photograph by Mohamed Talhah Idrus)*

He added that for the purpose of the concert, the organisers had a temporary fence erected around the field’s perimeter. The entrance fee was RM10.00 and a total of six bands - four from Kuala Lumpur and one each from Johor Bahru and Penang - took part in the gala celebration, with a token sum paid to cover their expenses and accommodation.

“We even invited Alleycats to perform during the event,” Mano told *The Leader*.

The event was fully organised by students and was open to the public, drawing a capacity crowd. A committee was formed to oversee the *Pesta Konvo* preparations and promote the event. Funds to run the event were contributed by the Student Union and were also obtained through sponsorships.

Students as well as members of the public who attended the event enjoyed themselves immensely over the three days of the *Pesta Konvo* celebrations that lasted till midnight each day. There were numerous food and games stalls which were managed by students.



*Pesta Konvo has a permanent site near where food and souvenir stalls dominate
(Photograph by Mohamed Talhah Idrus)*

The Original Kickoff

Many would undoubtedly agree with Mano when he remarked that the Pesta Konvo of today has lost much of its lustre compared to the Pesta Konvo held in the early years of the establishment of the university. Back in those days, the students were independent and were rather bold in making decisions, planning and implementing the plans hatched. The sense of bonding and camaraderie forged between students from different ethnic backgrounds was also clearly felt and was much more genuine and sincere.

"We all had fun but at the end of the event we received a bombshell that left some of us in tears. We came to know that almost 30,000 forged tickets were sold which, in retrospect, went some way in explaining why our stalls were doing brisk business," said Mano.

However, despite this setback, members of the committee were glad that they managed to do what they intended to do and were satisfied with the success of the event.

When the week-long hectic event was over, the students felt elated by the overall success. They were amazed that they could collectively undertake a task of organising an event of such a grand proportion. **■**

USM float meanders through George Town streets (News clip courtesy of Siti Zaleha Mohamed Noor)

Sharifah Darweena Syed Ahmad Amir Feisal is currently the Assistant Registrar at the Pejabat Pemajukan dan Perhubungan Alumni (PPPA), USM. She can be reached at darweena@notes.usm.my





That April Fool's Day, was the day that my cousin, Mohd. Noor Ayun and my nephew, Hashim Wahab joined me in reporting for work at Universiti Pulau Pinang (UPP), then quartered at the Malayan Teachers College in Bukit Gambiar.

Md Ghazali Md Yasin

My cousin was appointed Attendant at the Registry, and Hashim as Microfilm Operator in the main Library. As for me, I became a Typist at the Chancellory. What bound all three of us together to the new surrounding was our common bond to Prof Hamzah Sendut - the first Vice-Chancellor (VC).

Not long after we reported for work with the Registrar, (now Dato') N.A. Ogle, all three of us had to confront Hamzah who gave us not more than 15 minutes of his time. In that short time we found him to be quite a different person from the familiar *Pak Long* (eldest uncle) whom we adored back in the kampong which he never failed to visit during *'Eid ul-Fitr* (or *Hari Raya Puasa*). Now, he had a stern front and looked serious as though he had never known us at all.

He retorted with unexpected cynicism when I enquired why I had not been considered for a clerk's post, as

I had the required qualifications. I was compelled to raise this matter as I had been teased earlier by a lady stenographer who asked me to wear a skirt to office like the rest of the lady typists.

Hamzah's response keeps ringing in my ear to this day, "First, prove that you can type fast and understand all aspects of office work." He then advised the three of us to work hard and to finish a job even if it was beyond our normal duty. "This is not a coffee shop we are running. We are running a university. Here, everyone works hard."

He used the familiar analogy of the padi field to illustrate his points. "If Ali works hard but neglects to manure or fence his field, a portion of the food will be consumed by the buffaloes - leaving him with only 150 *gantangs* (1 *gantang* is about 2.54 kg) of rice. As for Ahmad, although he might have tilled the soil

Looking Back at My Early Days in USM



An apt depiction of the life of a filing clerk in the early 1970s

and planted the seedlings, everything is futile if he chooses to throw the manure lazily at the sides of the bunds, and to sit down to a drink at the coffee shop. Maybe he will get only 100 *gantangs* of rice. Take the third person, Abu, who does work from A to Z, from tilling the soil right up to ensuring that the pests do not destroy the yield. His yield is 600 *gantang*."

"If Abu reaped a rich harvest the other two have no reason to be angry with him. Abu was hard working, persistent, responsible and did not waste time like the other two," said Hamzah.

He also advised us against emulating the buffaloes that will only start working when they are beaten.

Prof Hamzah's advice was a mantra that constituted the basis for my positive outlook on life.

I made sure that I work fast and meticulous. I wanted to show Hamzah that I could type faster than Santha Devi (my colleague in the Chancellory); and better still, that I could do better than any other typist in the Universiti. I also wanted to be a resource person who knew every single detail about the Universiti.

At the Chancellory, I worked under the supervision of Cheah Swee Peng, VC's Secretary and the late Mohd. Ariff Abdullah (Special Assistant to the VC). Later I also had to assist (now Dato') Sheikh Sulaiman Ismail, the Assistant Registrar in charge of Public Relations. Working under many bosses I developed the skill to multitask.

I was promoted as a Clerk in April 1971 and was then transferred to the Registry and placed directly under S. Kandasamy. 'SKS' (as he was fondly referred to) was what schoolchildren would describe as 'fierce'. Practically all the Registry staff was scared of him. We had to work beyond the call of duty almost every day. Despite not being paid for working overtime, SKS was kind and generous enough to use his own money to provide food and drinks for all of us. I suppose he could afford to do that, as he was still a bachelor at that time!

From Ogle I learnt quite a bit on methods such as 'Management by Objectives' and 'Critical Path Analysis'. He also drove home the point that 'everything must have been done by yesterday'.

Others who guided me were Zambri Haji Mahmud, P. Arunasalam and Yeoh Oon Seng. All my colleagues worked hard. Among those that come to mind are Chin Saik Yoon (now a successful publisher), Janet Scully, Molly Toh, Philomena David, Naemah Zainur, Kalthom Che Din, Sharifah Aishah, Zainab Hassan, Razak Ahmad, Yusof Ari and Ismail Bidin.



Dinner organised in honour of Tan Sri Dr Hamzah Sendut, the first USM Vice-Chancellor, by a group of pioneer staff, of whom Ghazali was the organising chairman: Recsam, Bukit Glugor, 1986

Looking Back at My Early Days in USM

Mohd Nor Ayun continued working until his compulsory retirement age in 2006 from the day he joined the University until he retired. My nephew, Hashim Wahab, who worked in the Library, tendered his resignation from the Universiti in the late 70s to take up a better job with Petronas. As for me, I chose to opt for early retirement on 31 December 1994 after having served the University for almost 25 years. My last position was Computer Programmer at the Computer Centre.

On looking back over the silver jubilee years of my career as one of the pioneer staff, I must say that USM has done me proud. I was able to gain wide experience in academic administration under the able direction of three Vice-Chancellors (Tan Sri Prof Hamzah Sendut, Tun Hamdan Sheikh Tahir and Tan Sri Musa Mohamad) and two Registrars whom I admired greatly (Ogle and Dato' Hajjah Siti Mazenah Saad).

If I could be said to have imbibed an understanding of modern concepts of office management and administration from these towering personalities, I must also acknowledge the wealth of experience and knowledge gained from each and every single member of the campus and academic community whom I had the privilege to know.

Together with my tenure as President of the General Staff Union for six years, I gained precious experience working with, and getting to know people from the diverse communities. It helped to shape my worldview and open-minded attitude towards people of various races and religions.

By the time I retired, USM had transformed me from a boy who was nothing more than a *katak bawah tempurung* (frog under the coconut shell) to one who is able to analyse sympathetically, rationally and humanistically in order to understand this vast world full of intricate issues beyond my kampong confines.

“USM had transformed me from a boy who was nothing more than a *katak bawah tempurung* (frog under the coconut shell) to one who is able to analyse sympathetically, rationally and humanistically in order to understand this vast world full of intricate issues beyond my kampong confines.”



Ghazali (seated extreme left) seen with Mohd Noor Ayun (standing) in conversation with Uteh Maria at USM Annual Dinner in September 1970

When the three of us were leaving for an uncharted world away from the kampong in 1970, my late father gave this advice, “*Berhati-hati dinegeri orang, jaga diri baik-baik - dalam dunia ini ramai orang yang pandai tetapi tak ramai yang mempunyai hati yang baik!*” (Be vigilant in the land of strangers and take good care. In this world there are many intelligent people but few have a good heart).

Thanks to USM, the apprehension of being transported into a strangers’ land full of unknown dangers was soon to be transformed into a joyful learning experience of life in new surroundings and with new friends through whom I was able to relate to a complex world, an accomplishment well beyond my wildest expectations as a child back in the kampong. 🏠

Md Ghazali Md Yasin can be reached at ghazali_yasin@yahoo.com

Why USM?

Abdul Rais Abdul Majid
B. Soc. Sc. '74

Photographs courtesy of
Abdul Rais Abdul Majid

Scene 1: Family celebrating sister's wedding in Kota Bharu, Kelantan.
Year: 1971
Relative: *Loh ni buat gapo?* (What are you doing now?)
Rais: Social Sciences at Universiti Pulau Pinang (UPP)
Relative: *Pi-ne?* (Why Penang?)
Rais' father: Because he wants to leave home.

Scene 2: Tutorial room, Universiti Pulau Pinang
Course: Sociology 101
Topic: Introductory lecture on culture shock and expectations
Collin E. R. Abraham (lecturer): Now you are in a university, away from home. Mummy is not around anymore. You are on your own. Do not expect to be spoon-fed.

I was one of the eager beavers in the early 1970's with a sense of adventure. I did not take the usual route of applying to the University of Malaya to study Economics or Arts and graduate with a B.A. (Hons.), get a job in government ("neck-tie and collar, pocket no dollar!") get married, have children, wait for a pension, perform the haj (Muslim pilgrimage to Makkah) and look after grandchildren, or perhaps tend to goats and chickens.

I was to have none of that. The rebellious kid in me was yearning to leave home to experience the real world outside. I had read about the behavioural sciences, and the likes of them, offered by American universities. My headmaster had advised me to study law because of the good grades which I obtained in the subjects of English language and history. Lacking the funds and yearning to get away from home in Kuala Lumpur, I opted for the courses offered by the newly launched university in Pulau Pinang, 360 kilometers away. In the application form I indicated 'Social Sciences at UPP' as my first choice. For my second choice I indicated 'Humanities at UPP'. I left 'Third choice' blank.



Rais (seated right) with friends in front of the present Pusat Pengajian Bahasa, Literasi dan Terjemahan

Why USM?

So, I was elated when I was granted my first choice. Only then did I begin to read up what are the social sciences. Later, I was to discover that at that time the government had begun to focus on the human aspect of rural development. Hence the introduction of social sciences in the universities would provide invaluable inputs into the matter.

The other aspect was the interdisciplinary approach which I found very interesting and I exploited it to the maximum. I studied a wide range of core subjects and options according to my interests. For instance, my optional papers were Drama in Southeast Asia for first year, Introduction to Music in second year; and International Relations in third year. These have put me in good stead over the years; music for Tabula Rasa (the university band), international relations for my career as an international banker, and the knowledge gathered from sociology/psychology papers gave me an additional perspective to problem solving.



Chairing a Bank Bumiputra Malaysia Berhad staff meeting in New York in 1996



The budding banker in Bank Bumiputra Malaysia Berhad Kajang, happy to be armed with a state-of-the-art table calculator in 1977



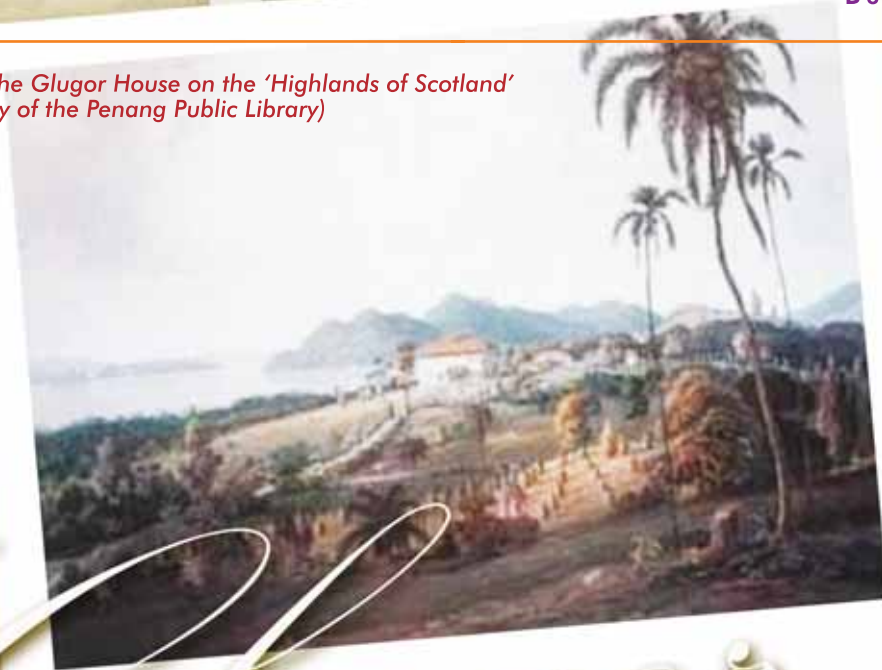
With family and friends revisiting 'Penang' in New York

Upon graduation, after twenty applications and many interviews later, I found myself in the corporate sector in financial services. After the initial adverse comments of "USM is second rate . . . UM is better," I won a scholarship from the very people who uttered those words to pursue a postgraduate degree in business management majoring in finance at a well known business school, and thereafter spent about 20 out of 33 working years crisscrossing the world, living in various countries.

Moral of the story: As a young school-leaver one must not think about a specific field of studies as gospel. Explore various disciplines. Be brave. Take up challenges. Dare to dream and aim for the stars. 🇲🇾

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Smith's painting of the Glugor House on the 'Highlands of Scotland'
(Photograph courtesy of the Penang Public Library)



Artwork by Rusli Jamaluddin

Glugor Legacy

Yong Check Yoon

In 1818, Captain Robert Smith of the Bengal Engineers painted Glugor House and Spice Plantations. It depicts an undulating terrain with a solitary bungalow standing in the distance. The bungalow, built 1812, belonged to Scotsman David Brown (died in 1821).

Brown, one of the earliest Europeans as well as one of the largest land owners in Pulau Pinang, had rightly selected the place to cultivate pepper and nutmeg besides experimenting with other crops such as hemp and benzoin.

The cool hilly terrain, 620 ft (189 m) above sea level, which commands a view of the South Channel with Pulau Jerejak in the distant background was dubbed the 'Highlands of Scotland'.

To the local people the area is known as Glugor. It is believed that *asam gelugur* (a sour fruit used to tone down curries and other chillie-hot dishes) might have

once thrived there, hence giving rise to the name. The Brown family had owned the land stretching from Glugor to Sungai Ara.

After Merdeka (Independence) in 1957, two educational institutions were to change the landscape of Glugor. The first was the Malayan Teachers' College (MTC) established in September 1957 on Combe Hill, where, formerly stood the bungalow belonging to Cheah Chen Eok who died in 1922 at the age of 70. He was the person who had the 60-foot Victoria Memorial Clock Tower built at the Esplanade in 1897.



Glugor Legacy

Perhaps the only known photograph of the Glugor House (Photograph courtesy of the Penang State Library)



Cheah's bungalow on Combe Hill later made way for the Malayan Teachers' College (Photograph from the 'Historical Personalities of Penang')



Malayan Teachers' College as it was in the '70s (Photograph courtesy of Perpustakaan Hamzah Sendut)

MTC indirectly brought development to Glugor, transforming it from a sleepy hollow into residential areas such as Taman Brown and Taman Bukit Glugor in the '60s.

The second institution, Universiti Pulau Pinang (later renamed Universiti Sains Malaysia), was established in 1969. It 'borrowed' some space from the MTC to set up its initial operations. When it moved to its present location in 1971, the campus lies smack beside Brown Estate.

The area grew by leaps and bounds with traders and entrepreneurs moving in to meet the needs of clientele from MTC, USM and residents from the surrounding housing estates. Taman Tun Sardon is one of the public housing projects of that period that, again, is sited on the sprawling Brown Estate.

Among the pioneers were Victor Ananda Bakery, Minah Restaurant and few other shops. Perhaps the more memorable one was an old Chinese man who ran a laundry service. He is best remembered by, particularly USM pioneers, for using a Chinese calligraphic brush to write receipts for his customers instead of a pencil or a pen.

The Penang Yellow Bus shuttled between the bus terminus at Prangin Road (now Jalan Lim Chwee Leong) and Balik Pulau, hence providing transport for those living in the Glugor neighbourhood. Before USM operated its own shuttle services, almost all of the

students had to patronize that bus company. The other option was for the passengers to take a City Council bus to its Jelutong terminus before changing to a Penang Yellow Bus for trips anywhere beyond this suburban township.



Malayan Teachers' College and USM were the catalyst for the development of Glugor (Photograph by Rusli Jamaluddin)

USM 'borrowed' the premises and facilities at MTC for two years and eventually moved the current address in Minden which is located beside the lofty Brown Estate. Minden was then occupied by the British military and the name was probably derived from the German town of Minden where the British fought alongside the Germans to defeat the French in 1759 during the Seven Years' War.

Eventually the military vacated Minden and the last occupants to do so were Queen Mary's Gurkha Rifles before USM completely 'invaded' the place without a shot being fired, proving that education is mightier than the rifles. 🇲🇾

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Pitchay

Kuah on Mee

Penang has regained its luster, not as the Pearl of the Orient but as a Food Paradise. It is therefore hardly surprising to find people knowing precisely where to find delectable food and patronizing food outlets. Mee Pitchay is not an exception in the list of favourite food haunts on the island.

Nor Rafizah Md Zain
Zulkifli Osman
Photographs by Yong Check Yoon

Scrumptious **pasembur**



Kuah on Mee

Nagoor Pitchay who is in his seventies was the 'founder' of this business of selling *mee goreng* (yellow noodles fried with onion, fried tofu, chili, vegetables, tomatoes, and egg), *mee rebus* (yellow noodles with a spicy slightly sweet curry-like gravy), *pasembur* (a Malaysian Indian salad of shredded vegetables, bean sprouts, prawn fritters served with a sweet and spicy groundnut sauce) and tomato rice in the '50s. His *pasembur* is considered the 'hottest' item as it usually finishes by about 3 pm despite replenishing the ingredients continually from the time he opens his business at about noon.

His stall is tucked away in a food court off the main road of Sungai Nibong but it did not deter patrons from finding it and make a beeline for the stall. Pitchay, in his seventies, has allowed his family members to actively run the business while he would supervise its day-to-day operation. "I am no longer young," he pointed out.

"I first sold *mee goreng* and *mee rebus* from a tricycle, plying around Gelugor, Sungai Dua and Sungai Nibong in the '50s," he told *The Leader*. "It was only in 1982 that I move into this present stall."

Pitchay recalled the early years when times were tough because a plate of the noodles was priced at 20 cents and customers were hard to come by because of the limited purchasing power back then and the population density was low. A plate of the noodles is now priced at RM3.00, with an additional 50 sen if you decide to add curried cuttlefish.

"Operating a business is sheer hard work without a guaranteed profit and one must have the tenacity to persevere," Pitchay remarked.

His perseverance is paying off as most of his customers are regulars and some of whom continued to patronise the stall despite having moved out from the area. Moreover, he has expanded his business by renting another two adjacent shoplots to sell drinks and *nasi dalca* (rice served with lentils curry).

Flour-batter fritters and crispy prawn fritters (right) for pasembur



On reflecting upon the lean years of pushing a tricycle around the villages in Sungai Nibong area, Pitchay said he does not mind the tough times. "As long as my customers want me to pour *kuah* (gravy) on *mee* it means that I am in business," he said. 🇲🇾

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@ Anjung Budi

*Dari Hati
Senyuman Menguntum*



Anjung Budi (literally: 'The Corridor of Virtuous Deeds') was conceptualised in 2006 to serve as a venue for fostering closer ties between USM and its alumni as well as allowing alumni to interact with current students, conduct intellectual discourses and for holding social events. The name Anjung Budi signifies the 'kindness' shown from donations by alumni to help realise the project which was undertaken by Pejabat Pemajuan dan Perhubungan Alumni and the USM Alumni Association. The facilities at Anjung Budi are available to the campus community and the public, and this hospitality is aptly reflected in the tagline which translates as *Where Smiles Are From The Heart*.

The building was officially opened by the Vice-Chancellor on 25 March 2009.

First Alumnus Wedding

Following its formal opening in March, Anjung Budi witnessed its first grand function in the form of an alumnus wedding on 6 June. Syazreen Sara Sukor (B. Sc. [HBP] '05) tied the knot with Dylan Jefri Ong amidst a glittering luncheon ceremony attended by about 500 guests. Besides sharing the joy of the occasion with the happy couple, guests were mesmerised with the breath-taking view of the campus grounds from the open deck and the Penang Channel as backdrop.



Campus Community Spoilt for Choice

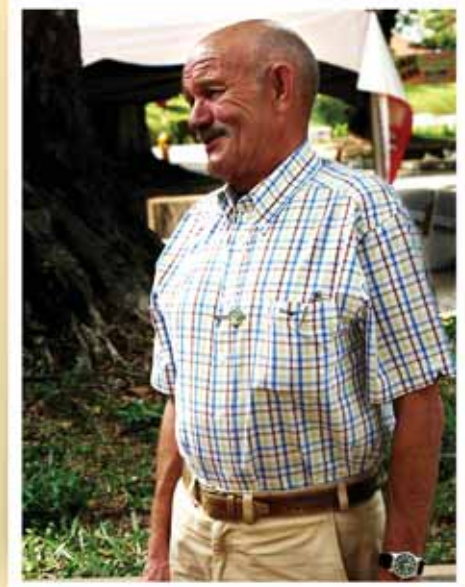
Undecided about your breakfast or lunch venue? The 'in' place to be on campus now is the alumni's cafeteria with anchor tenant Mawar Ismariza making a soft opening on 18 May. It offers a sumptuous spread of its *nasi campur ala kampung* (traditional local dishes with rice), an assortment of western-style cuisine and chef's specials on selected days.



Complementing the main caterer is Uncle Hooi, a corner offering hot wok favourites such as *char koay teow*, fried rice and *Hokkien char*. In addition, Nino's Garden Cafe serves cakes, curry puffs and other oven-fresh pastry.

A Soldier Returns

An ex-serviceman with the British Army's 1st Battalion Green Jackets revisited his old quarters in USM main campus on 27 June. Mervin Sprague (now residing in Queensland, Australia) was stationed at the then Minden Barracks from 1962-65 and last visited Pulau Pinang about six years ago. He was impressed with the changes that have taken place on campus, in particular the makeover of the former Security Department (Building D 01) into the present-day Anjung Budi. He marveled at the view from the open deck and commended the Universiti for undertaking its development without sacrificing the campus greenery.



AUSM Hi-Tea

The USM Alumni Association (AUSM) held its second hi-tea event for about 40 deputy deans (responsible for Academic and Student Development), assistant registrars and representatives of School alumni chapters at Anjung Budi on 10 July. The event was aimed at fostering goodwill and cooperation among AUSM members, the deputy deans and assistant registrars.

First Dinner

The School of Languages, Literacy and Translation hosted a dinner for 180 staff members from the three campuses on 22 June who participated in a workshop entitled *Bengkel Profesionalisme Pembangunan Staf dan Pemanjapan Kurikulum*. The Vice-Chancellor, Prof Tan Sri Dzulkifli Abdul Razak, graced the first dinner function to be held at Anjung Budi.



Lat Was Here

What was supposedly a lunch routine became a pleasant surprise for many at Anjung Budi when Dato' Mohamed Nor Khalid a.k.a. Lat, Malaysia's renowned cartoonist came to campus on 8 July. Lat, accompanied by his wife, was mobbed by staff and students who sought autographs and took photographs with him.

Eid Mubarak



Artwork by Mohamed Talhah Idrus



First Day Rush

Saw Cheang Kee

Photographs by Yong Check Yoon and Yusuf Suid

The Minden campus exuded a carnival-like atmosphere on 27 June. Canopies in a myriad of colours were pitched adjacent to each desasiswa (student residence) complete with banners galore welcoming the freshman students. On that Saturday, the students came in droves to report at their designated desasiswa, thus heralding the start of orientation week for the 2009/10 academic session.

A total of 3,599 undergraduates were admitted into programmes ranging from Communication to Computer Science at the main campus on Penang Island, and into Medicine, Dentistry and allied health professions in Kelantan and the Engineering disciplines in Seri Ampangan on mainland Pulau Pinang.

This year's intake represents the first cohort to be admitted since the granting of the APEX (Accelerated Programme for Excellence) status to USM. Students wishing to study at USM applied directly to the institution without having to go through the Central Universities Admission process as practised before. USM

held the Malaysian Universities Selection Inventory (MUNSYI) as a form of aptitude test for its applicants whilst some programmes also required prospective candidates to undergo an interview process.

At the main campus, a long line of cars had been crawling up Jalan Universiti (the campus artery road from the Batu Uban gate) since early morning, bringing in the new cohort and their anxious parents. *The Leader* took the opportunity to mingle with the new arrivals to capture the pulse of the moment.



New students walking towards Desasiswa (student residence) Indah-Kembara

Mohamad Firdaus Majid (a pioneer in the new major of English for Professionals) came from Kuala Kurau, Perak in a delegation comprising parents, an elder brother and sister. With great confidence, he explained: "It is my first choice. Like many kampung boys, I had some reservation at first about studying English, let alone doing it at the university level. However I am not one to run away from a challenge. I'd like to set an example to others and to show that we can make it, with effort and determination."

When asked how he became interested in English, Firdaus smiled, "My parents started singing English hits to me from a young age." His father, Majid Hamid, a retired employee of Pos Malaysia added approvingly and with pride, "Firdaus would like to teach or join the media profession when he finishes. I give him full support, whether it is regarding his enthusiasm for athletics or his choice of field to study, so long as it benefits him, and he, in turn, can contribute positively to society".



Firdaus and sister



Sharveen Kaur and mother

Factory worker Sakila, mother of Sharveen Kaur, was equally far-sighted when commenting on her daughter's future, "It's her first time away from home but being a Girl Guide, she will probably cope well. I shall miss Sharveen during her four years at varsity but this is her future".

"When she qualifies as an accountant later on, that will take her away from home in Chemor, Perak but her career takes priority, not me," added Sakila. A top performing student in the STPM examination, Sharveen said in a humble tone, "I am very happy to be accepted into a leading university like USM and to be given the chance to do the course of my choice. I received much support from my family and teachers and will certainly work hard so as not to disappoint them."

Without doubt, the issue of APEX was at the back of the mind of this year's freshies. Cheam Seow Fang from Bukit Mertajam, Pulau Pinang encapsulated that special feeling when she answered with firmness, "I wanted USM because of APEX; being near to the family was secondary. I hope to do well in my studies and be a dedicated teacher in English which has become the language of communication in a globally competitive environment."

"I was unsure whether I gave all the correct answers at the interview but when asked 'why should you be

First Day Rush

accepted by USM', I guess telling them that I come from a family with cousins in the teaching profession helped secure a place for me," said Seow Fang. Her father Cheam Wah Goh and brother Jackz nodded at her witty response and agreed that the trait would come in handy when trying to control a classroom.

It was also encouraging to see that some 120 international students had accepted places at the bachelor's degree level. Programmes such as Management and Communication remain popular with such students; however, interest is also now shown towards science-based disciplines.

One such case involved Nadia Suleman Pandor who willingly left Lusaka, Zambia to come to a distant land for a university education. How did she first hear of USM?



(From right) Seow Fang, father and brother

"I saw an advertisement in the newspapers regarding higher education opportunities in Malaysia. I surfed the internet and was impressed with the user-friendly USM webpage and the information it provided. Realising that USM has the potential to become a world-ranking university

is probably one of the major factors that made me decide to apply for the B. Sc. (Education) programme with Biology major," said Nadia.

She explained that her country has mixed cultures and studying abroad gives the added advantage of learning about new peoples and understanding their diverse cultures. On how she has adjusted to the local scene, Nadia added, "I was introduced to noodle soup the other day and I find the r a m b u t a n s wonderful."



Nadia from Zambia



Taking turns to mind personal belongings



Relatives accompanying new students



Waiting to register



First lesson on Malaysian culture for international students



Registration in a USM branch campus

The students on all three campuses were busy the next day reporting to register and attending talks. Over in the Engineering Campus, *The Leader* had the opportunity to interact with Mohd Khairi Uje and Siti Nor Hidayah Abu Bakar taking a respite from their form-filling routine.

Both were happy that the hard work at school had paid off and they were rewarded with the courses of their respective choice. Khairi from Sarawak said his motivation for training as an engineer was influenced by the present development of the petrochemical industry in his home state. Nor Hidayah, from Terengganu, found the MUNSYI test rather broad-based but she conceded it was helpful in guiding the applicant to make the right choice.

"I am confident USM is the university that can provide me with the all-round education required to succeed in my chosen career pathway," Hidayah affirmed aptly.

The new academic year opened on Monday, 6 July. The freshman students have arrived and have since completed their orientation to campus life. Roommates on campus and friendships forged on campus are more than likely to translate into lifelong camaraderie as a result of efforts by the Pejabat Pempajuan dan Perhubungan Alumni (PPPA) in promoting alumni networking.

It is heart-warming to know that when they do look back in future, it all began on that registration day.



Khairi



Siti

ACE '09

Alumni Conference for Excellence 2009 (ACE '09) was organised by Universiti Putra Malaysia from 3 - 5 June. In consonance with the conference theme Bonding & Belonging, Assoc Prof Mohamed Talhah Idrus, Director of Pejabat Pemajuan dan Perhubungan Alumni, presented a paper entitled *Bonding for Better News*. The event was attended by about 40 participants from alumni offices of public and private universities to discuss common issues affecting alumni welfare. Universiti Malaysia Perlis will be hosting next year's ACE conference.



Alumni Caucus Meeting

The 8th meeting of the Alumni Caucus Group was held on 30 June at Seri Pacific Hotel, Kuala Lumpur. The agenda included discussions on alumni upcoming events, *Balikampus* and the operational set-up at Anjung Budi.

Through McCurry's Lenses

American photographer/journalist, Steve McCurry gave a talk-cum-slideshow presentation, *Celebrating Multiculturalism Through Photography*, on 17 June at the Centre for Policy Research and International Studies. The trip by McCurry, famous for the *Afghan Girl* photograph on *National Geographic* magazine's cover, was a joint collaboration between the United States Embassy in Kuala Lumpur and USM's School of Social Sciences.



VC on NEAC

USM Vice-Chancellor Prof Tan Sri Dzulkipli Abdul Razak was named as one of the nine-member panel of experts for the National Economic Advisory Council (NEAC) in July.

KSK Tambun Tulang vs USM

Edging closer towards the TM League Football Association of Malaysia 2009 finals, Kelab Sukan Kakitangan Tambun Tulang Football Club played against the USM Staff Football Club at the Universiti's Stadium football pitch on 26 July. The game ended with an even score of 1-1.



Worldwide Imagine Cup 2009 Awards go to...

In July, the Cosmic and Capricorn teams (from the School of Computer Science) clinched the first and third places respectively at the Worldwide Imagine Cup 2009 organised by Microsoft Corporation in Egypt. The Cosmic's invention 'Virtual Health Connect' is a compilation of one's health information from birth to adulthood while the Capricorn's invention 'GreenEve2Peace' is a short messaging information delivery system on weather and crop problems.



(Source: www.bharian.com.my)



Addressing PPPJ Students

As part of the orientation programme for Distance Education (PPPJ) students, Assoc Prof Mohamed Talhah Idrus, Director of Pejabat Pemajuan dan Perhubungan Alumni (PPPA) gave a briefing on 2 June to acquaint them with the role and function of this office. The briefing includes efforts by PPPA to nurture closer rapport between successful alumni, students and USM for the benefit of all parties concerned.

Auspicious 40

The 40th convocation ceremony was held from 12-16 August. The Chancellor, DYMM Tuanku Syed Sirajuddin Ibni Al-Marhum Tuanku Syed Putra Jamalullail, conferred 4 honorary doctorates and 2 Professor Emeritus titles on this occasion whilst 6,438 graduates (comprising 803 higher degree and 5,635 at bachelor degree level) also received their scrolls.



Inaugurating New Chapters

The USM Alumni Association (AUSM), with the support of the Pejabat Pemajuan dan Perhubungan Alumni (PPPA), has launched the pro tem committees of the Sabah and Sarawak chapters of the AUSM. The ceremony was held respectively in Kota Kinabalu on 1 July and in Kuching on 2 July. The Vice-Chancellor, Prof Tan Sri Dzulkifli Abdul Razak officiated the launching on both occasions which were attended by officials of AUSM, PPPA and pro tem chapter committee members.

Text by Saw Cheang Kee, Yong Check Yoon and Yusuf Suid. Photographs by Mohamed Talhah Idrus, Yong Check Yoon and Yusuf Suid.



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FARMERS IN THE HILLS

UPLAND PEOPLES OF
NORTH THAILAND



edited by

ANTHONY R. WALKER

DATA PAPERS IN SOCIAL ANTHROPOLOGY
SCHOOL OF COMPARATIVE SOCIAL SCIENCES, UNIVERSITI SAINS MALAYSIA

Farmers in the Hills by Anthony R. Walker was published by USM publications in 1975, making it one of the earliest publications by the university. (Book courtesy of Dato' Syed Jamal Syed Jaafar. Photograph by Mohamed Talhah Idrus)