

JUNE 2010 Volume 5 No.2

THE LEADER

ALUMNI MAGAZINE OF UNIVERSITI SAINS MALAYSIA

GREAT THINGS
START WITH A DREAM



ISSN 1675 - 0063



9 771675 006000

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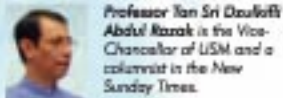
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Guest Contributors



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Cover artwork by Alec Chin. 'Getting There' attempts to capture some of the processes that lead to the production of **The Leader** (symbolised by the dropping ink) as well as other 'forgotten' stories.

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From The Chief Editor

In this issue we look behind the scenes of events, places and processes that contribute to the production of *The Leader*. Many things have been cut, refined, changed and hotly debated before the magazine gets into your mailbox.

The smooth, orderly pages you are looking at belie the many things we take for granted but are actually good stories. One example being the 'old faithful' roof tiles that have been crowning the old buildings in USM for more than half a century.

Similarly, the students' newspapers *Berita Kampus* is much rooted in the freedom of expression that have given rise to the pioneering paper *GRASISWA*, a paper that few of our current students may be aware of. It started from a simple, humble idea to communicate.

Draining the Mire is about how the engineering campus was reclaimed from a water-logged land mired in viscous mud whenever it rained. *The Name Game* attempts to redirect the reader's attention to the more natural (sustainable?) species names given by locals even if these may not fit into the accepted 'scientific nomenclature'.

The editors of *The Leader* have often been chided for tending to hog the past. While we make all attempts to criss-cross time and geographical borders, we need to communicate our past to the younger and future generations. I believe that a firm understanding of our heritage can help guide us in the building of a sustainable future.

Chief Editor
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B. Soc. Sc. '74

Artwork by Alec Chin



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Our Stories

The First was not the Last.

A copy of a foreign university alumni magazine arrived at my table in late 2005 with a note from the Vice-Chancellor Tan Sri Prof Dzulkipli Abdul Razak. The note succinctly suggested that USM should try to publish an alumni magazine. I took the suggestion as a challenge but it was indeed a tall order, particularly with just two other staff besides myself: an assistant registrar and a clerk.

To get the project moving, I contacted Assoc Prof Mohamad Zin Nordin who was then Dean of the School of Communications and also the chairman of Alumni Advisory Committee. I asked if he could help to produce the magazine and was greeted by an enthusiastic response.

For a start we looked for members to sit in the editorial board. The first editorial board consisted of Zin as the Chief Editor; myself, Deputy Chief Editor; and Assoc Prof Talhah Idrus, Alec Chin, Nur Rafizah Md Zain, Nur Padhlina Misni and Zaahari Ahmad as the rest of the board members.

Publication of the magazine cannot go without photographs and other logistical support. The Public Relations Office and the Centre for Instructional Technology and Multimedia (CITPM) provided these. It was a relief that the basic needs were met but there was another hurdle that we needed to overcome. With the exception of Zin, none of us has the experience of feature writing, let alone producing a magazine! Failure was not an option since we have already committed ourselves to the project.

We then brainstormed on the name of the magazine. Finally, we decided on *The Leader* after USM's motto 'We Lead'.

We planned to launch the inaugural issue during our biannual Sirih Pulang ke Gagang Dinner which was scheduled in November 2006. It was an uphill task for the editorial team as we did not have enough skilled writers, good photographs or appropriate articles, particularly those of human interest, and we also lacked technical support. In order to supplement the cost of production, we decided that *The Leader* should have exclusive advertisements. Following that decision, we canvassed and managed to get three well established companies to advertise.

In the meantime, we prepared the first draft and presented it to the Vice-Chancellor for his approval. He gave the go ahead and it was printed on time for its scheduled launching. Even before we could heave a sigh of relief, it struck us that we have to get cracking on the next issue.

While we were preparing the second issue, the Vice-Chancellor made a passing remark that he thought the November issue was the first and the last. We had proven him wrong with this 16th issue.

- Sharifah Munirah



Those who have served as editors of *The Leader* since 2006

It was brave of us to start *The Leader*. We, the Alumni Liaison Office (ALO), were a small unit comprising mostly by contract personnel and volunteers. None of us had any experience producing a magazine. We didn't know what we were getting into. We took the challenge head-on. I still remember leading the team discussing on the concept of the magazine. While the magazine is by the alumni office, it was never meant only for the alumni. The magazine has always been about the university and those who are connected to it one way or another including the birds and the bees, the insects and trees on campus. Looking back I realized while we lack the experience and man-power to the task, we compensated that with a lot of determination, ownership, and camaraderie to make it work. I am honoured to be associated with *The Leader* and most of all with the pioneering group who believed that it can be done.

- Mohammed Zin Nordin



The original editorial board members in the makeshift office

The Trip to Tabula Rasa

Covering the Tabula Rasa, USM's first rock band (Dec 2007) was like travelling backward 35 years. However, face-to-face meetings with most of the band members have to be in the present, and these were fun-filled sessions that bonded us again. But before the article was finished I had to attend a course in Devon, UK. The fun was elevated to another level, when from a rented farmhouse in Totnes I completed the final version with help from Zabas and Jenny halfway across the globe. That was a truly surrealistic double trip.

- Mohamed Talhah Idrus



Ihsan, a member of Tabula Rasa in their studio



The farm in Devon where the story was completed



Discussions sometimes get heated up

With Sharifah and Talhah as members of the editorial team the work is a nostalgic ride – sharing memories of people and spots on campus to be featured in the publication. Most of our working lives had been on campus as well. Sometimes, while brainstorming for article titles we would burst into songs should the words remind us of those oldies which were part of our undergraduate days. Generally, the working atmosphere was comfortable and informal. Having Professor Tan Sri Dzul as the Vice-Chancellor was a plus. We all share the same frame of reference. Most of all that sense of pride and belonging to USM never left us. What is unique is our love for USM.

– Hasnina Dona Mustafa

Constructive arguments are a norm during The Leader meeting, it may become aggressive sometimes, but fortunately, no real casualties so far.

The most memorable incident happened during the production of March 2008 (Vol.3 No.1) issue, the whole page 5 (article on Tan Bin Sim, a successful alumni) had to be covered with a sticker because of serious slip ups. To make matters worse, prior to the publication, we spent days in Tan's villa finalising the issue, imagine that awkward feeling.

– Alec Chin



Ah Hock, Tan's villa manager, holding the issue

Through the Glass

It was almost midnight, May 1, 2008. The Leader editorial work session in Terengganu was in progress. I accidentally walked through a full-length glass window and received a glistening shower of glass slivers. One triangular piece, measuring several inches long, stuck in my left shoulder. I ended up with eight stitches which remain as scars on my left shoulder and right elbow. Fortunately, the last piece of glass jutting out in the frame, like a dagger, about an inch from my head did not drop. Otherwise my story would have taken a more dramatic twist.

– Yong Cheek Yoon



The (Data) Keeper

My role in The Leader is to ensure that the names of our alumni and their details are correct in the magazine. This is done with the help of our database. When each issue of the magazine is printed, I have to mail it to each of the alumni in our mailing list. I am also inspired by the success stories that our alumni relate in The Leader.

– Yusuf Swid



The Leader ready for posting

I was given the opportunity to join the editorial team in September 2007. I have not written feature articles for a magazine and was thus anxious when assigned to write an article on Campus Life. Finally I managed to complete my first article and it was published in

the December 2007 issue. I felt proud looking at my article *Through Thick and Thin* with my byline on the page! Although it underwent a major editing, the original story structure is intact. That experience taught me an invaluable lesson in believing in myself. Moreover, my involvement in the editorial

team has enabled me to learn new skills such as how to conduct interviews and how to express myself through writing.

- Sharifah Darweena



The "F-words"

Looking back, I cannot come up with a clear answer as to why I got interested in the old Minden Barracks buildings. This is the "fun" part. Perhaps it's the thrill of trying to find evidence and sharing that thrill with others. I like old things - structures, objects and anything over 50 years. My task is to provide a "three-dimensional experience" to show and help reader aware and think. However, "frustrations" emerge when advancing development 'bulldozing' traces of the old Minden Barracks. Some of the results are heartbreaking. Right this minute, I do feel that the campus would be so much better without us.

- Rusli Jamaluddin

Never in short supply of caffeine



Food, Food, Galore

Editorial meetings are never dull as editorial team members can be rather passionate in defending their views but democratic process of 'majority wins' often takes precedence. Nasi lemak, fried bee hoon (rice noodles) kwh (cakes), and hot beverages are often served and such stressful environment caused us to eat more of the than we normally do. We love every moment of the mental gymnastics that we have to undergo and, of course, the food.

- Zulkifli Osman



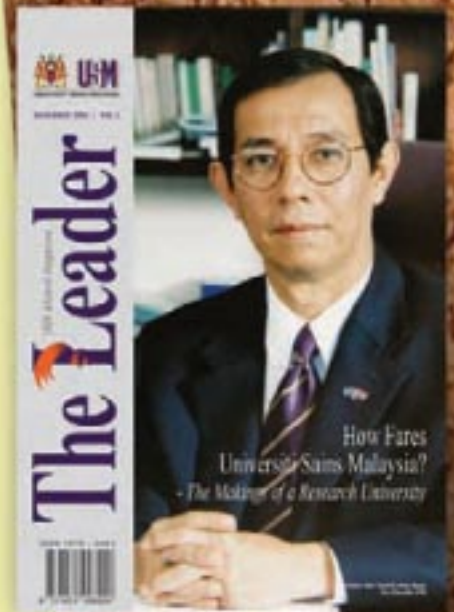
Fitting in with the team

When I first saw *The Leader* magazine in 2008, I was impressed and intrigued by it. I was thrilled when I was given the opportunity to write for the magazine. The best thing is that the editorial team is VERY young at heart and is ALWAYS hungry for new ideas!

- Jonathan Chen

I was recruited together with Nur Fadhlina Misni in August 2006 to help with the publication of the Alumni magazine, *The Leader*, headed by Assoc Prof Mohammed Zin Nordin. We manage to launch the magazine on 26 Nov 2006 during Sirih Pulang ke Gagang and I have to compile alumni addresses to post the 2,000 copies magazine we printed to them. We have been continually updating the data of our alumni by writing to all departments on campus and receiving updates from their friends and family members who touched base with USM. In 2006, it was a task to find addresses of alumni to mail the 2,000 copies but now, we manage to update the data of about 10, 000 alumni. The number is growing daily but we have only 6,000 copies of *The Leader*.

- Nor Rafizah Md Zain



Revisiting Examination Fever...Togetherness Lives On

The Leader not only makes contemporary reading to alumni wanting to stay connected but also carries with it the magic of bringing back many memories (pleasant or otherwise) of the campus days.



Kandasamy with the first Vice-Chancellor, Tan Sri Hamzah Sendut

I experienced this nostalgia whilst recalling the 1970s era of working with S. Kandasamy in the Examinations Section in the course of preparing the article on 'Combat Missions' (December 2008, Vol.3 No.4). The preparatory stage spanning data collection on course registration to getting the time table and venues ready represent the hidden part of the exam iceberg. Hard work and tears there were aplenty, but what made it particularly satisfying was the spirit of camaraderie that prevailed in the Section and that contributed much to the success of running the university examinations each and every time. Alumni would not be able to see it first hand but nevertheless be assured to know the same type of camaraderie runs strong today in Pejabat Pemajuan dan Perhubungan Alumni (PPPA).

The staff conscientiously working as a closely-knit team be it to get the magazine content ready by each publication deadline or ensuring its quick send-off once printed and when organising other PPPA activities for the benefit of alumni.

- Saw Cheang Kee

Two things stand out when I reflect on my involvement with *The Leader*. The Advanced Medical and Dental Institute (AMDI) in Bertam was to be featured in the December 2008 issue and I was given the task of doing a write-up on the institute. I had passed by Bertam so many times before but I had never been to the institute. There was no real reason for me to go before but now that I had been given the task, I finally had a reason to drive up to the institute. It houses a number of state-of-the-art equipment, some probably costing millions of dollars, but what left a deep impression in me were not the machines but one clear, screw-top jar which I had spotted on a shelf. I remember stepping to examine the jar and its contents, which I immediately learnt was cancerous breast tissue. I can still vividly remember standing in front of the jar, transfixed with horror, and frantically searching for something intelligent to say. I can't remember, nor do I care to remember what I actually said after that but I do remember not being able to concentrate on anything else anymore after that gruesome discovery. Even the sophisticated MRI equipment which I saw after that failed to impress me. I must say that the sight of the cancerous tissue haunts me till this very day.



The other incident was memorable for a totally different reason. To prepare for the March 2009 issue, I was given the task of contacting Daphne Iking and getting her to write a short article about her life at USM and what she had embarked upon after leaving the campus. That was no small task, I thought, and just thinking about it left my stomach churning and my heart racing. I dreaded the thought of calling her. This was, after all, the same Daphne that graces the cover of countless magazines and appears in so many advertisements. In my head, I imagined that her Personal Assistant would probably be so busy fielding calls made to her phone that it was likely that I would be put on hold or asked to call again some other day. I also imagined that writing for *The Leader* would not even make it to Daphne's 'To-do List', that is, if I ever get to talk to Daphne at all. Daphne Iking is, after all, a celebrity whose life is about magazine shoots and television appearances. And so, it came as a huge surprise when Daphne herself answered the phone, in a voice that definitely matched the bubbly personality I often see on television. A short introduction led to a rather lengthy conversation that definitely quashed whatever preconceived ideas I had about Daphne, who eventually contributed an article for the March 2009 issue. People may have their own ideas about Daphne but to me she came across as a real gem because of her down-to-earth and amicable ways despite her celebrity status.

- Haslina Haroon

What say we...

Very informative magazine. It is a challenge to work on this type of periodical which has captured the interests of readers. Try getting the views of financial experts (USM Alumni of course) on what can be done to further improve the magazine's finance, etc.

Nathan Govindasamy
B. A. '82

Expand the Keeping Track section to include more of those who have become 'the leaders'.

Atiqah Abd Rahim
B. Sc. Ed. '08

Chief Editor replies...

We consider everyone in Keeping Track a leader because of his/her important contribution to society. If we define 'leader' within a narrow context, then we are not doing justice to those who have emerged as successful entrepreneurs or teachers who are leaders in their own field.

Increase the number of articles in Bahasa Malaysia to emphasise the use of the national language. I feel it is not wrong for this magazine to have its contents in both Bahasa Malaysia and English.

Nor Afidah Mohd Amri
B. A. '06

Chief Editor replies...

The editorial team invites contribution in Bahasa Malaysia too but at this juncture, we are facing constrains in manpower. We have actually been encouraging our alumni to write about their experiences on campus, for example.

I read *The Leader* everytime it arrives on my desk. It is commendable that a small group of USM's alumni strives so hard to strengthen the bond between alma mater and alumni. From the names of the editorial board, I remember Talhah, Munirah and Hamima. Congratulations to them and all the others for your outstanding effort and achievement. It would be good if *The Leader* could become dwibahasa (two languages) especially since there are many graduates from the nineties onwards who may be more comfortable with Bahasa Malaysia rather than English. Perhaps at some point in the future you could look at how USM's post grads have fared especially those who did higher degrees in the various sciences.

Chandra Muzaffar
M. Soc. Sc. '74

I was delighted to see my picture in Keeping Track; we should retain this section as a permanent feature. I wish to commend the article on "Redeeming the Kaduk" as it is informative as well as reflective of USM's research into herbal medicine. The other article "On All Accounts" was well written giving a good description of Puan Mawan Nooraini Ismail whom I had worked for previously.

Rohaya Baharum @ Harun
B. Soc. Sc. '07

Thank you USM! To those responsible for producing *The Leader*, you are the best.

Alvin Lee Sze Howe
B. E. '08



@ Anjung Budi

Greening Them Early



A drawing and colouring competition was organised by Pejabat Pemajuan dan Perhubungan Alumni (PPPA) involving pre-school and primary school children, aged 4 until 9 years, in conjunction with the one-week school break in March. The 13 participants, all children of USM staff, were given a drawing and demonstrated their prowess and creativity by putting colour and adding images to it in keeping with the 'green' theme and sustainability.

In its effort to spread awareness for the 'green' campaign, PPPA plans to hold such competitions during future school holidays by extending participation to include those from outside the campus community.

Improving Anjung Budi

Anjung Budi opened its doors in March 2009 with Pejabat Pemajuan dan Perhubungan Alumni (PPPA) as anchor tenant. PPPA has been paying meticulous attention towards the maintenance of the building and its surrounding area as a conducive workplace and creating a congenial atmosphere for those who frequent the cafeteria as well as for networking among alumni. The landscaping of the open area between the cafeteria and rear porch was undertaken in January together with maintenance of the open deck.



Hi-tea

A hi-tea was held on 1 April at Anjung Budi in appreciation of the efforts by the organising committee in the Global Higher Education Forum 2009 which was held from 13 to 16 December 2009. There were about 100 organising committee members and staff from the National Higher Education Research Institute (IPPTN) who turned up for the event.

Herbs for Health

USM Alumni Association hosted a Minggu Sihat Sejahtera (Health Week) at Anjung Budi from 27 to 29 April with the participation of nine stalls selling health products. As part of the seven-hour programme starting from 10 am each day, medical personnel from Pusat Sejahtera provided free medical check-up to visitors.



Text by Saw Cheang Kee and Yong Check Yoon.

Photographs by Yong Check Yoon, Khairul Anuar Zainon and Asnizal Haidy Jasni.

Something 'TILE-FISH'

Artwork by Rusli Jomatiuddin

Something 'TILE-ISH'

Sustaining Heritage

*Text and photographs by
Rusli Jamaluddin*



Sometimes things that are obvious are also the easiest to overlook. The old roofs of Minden Barrack buildings are one instance where they help to project the ageing buildings in an aura of grand and conspicuous eminence on the campus scene. Their roof tiles have resisted years of weathering. Nothing is comparable to the warm red clay tiles that only come with age. Although appeared weather-stained, these red tiles add some of the ambience and color to the old Minden Barracks.

Roof tiles to a building are as important as our hair to our looks! Like hats, roof tiles provide protection from the elements. They keep out the rain, offer shade from the sun and they are fashion statements giving clues to the status of the buildings. These roof tiles are nevertheless subtle (because they are usually beyond visual scrutiny), practical in application, comforting to the building's occupants, often 'eco-friendly', and also durable considering their direct exposure to the elements.

Somebody 'TILE-IT-H'

*The roof tiles of Minden are able to outlast the existence of most old buildings
(Photograph courtesy of Centre of Instructional Technology and Multimedia [PTPM], USM)*

If we scrutinise the stacks of tiles piled up at buildings under renovation on campus in the recent construction frenzy, we find that interesting stories can be exfoliated from these tiles. Each of these heavy terra cotta pieces has a story that spanned more than 150 years! Anyway, these are the brainchild of a missionary who provided locals with jobs and the 'product' of this man could be found on many buildings here in Minden Barracks.

A brief note from my 'scavenger hunts' while profiling the mysterious personality whom I had always wanted to know, revealed: "Sported a moustache ensconced above the lip and a well-trimmed beard wisps away from his chin. He has lively and alert eyes and a lean affluent noble-look with a love to clad in black-and-white suits."



The pressure of over development and unsympathetic renovation is a threat to the old roof tiles

Some sources attributed the establishment of the Basel Mission Tile Works in 1860 to a German missionary named Plebot. However, the name has raised many questions as Plebot is not a German name and his identity has been elusive.

The name Basel Mission is derived from the name of the Swiss city lying at intersection of the Swiss, French and German borders.

The first production line was located by the banks of Gurupura and Nethravathi rivers in India. Subsequently, more production plants mushroomed in Jeppo, Calicut, Kudroli, Malpe, Codocal, Phalgat and Feroka. The tiles get their characteristic red colour due to the high content of iron compound found in the clay of those areas.



*Basel Mission Tile Factory on the bank of Nethravathi River
(Source: **Basel Mission Archive-Mission 21**)*

Something 'TILE-ISH'



It is said that the humidity of the surrounding production sites and the quality clay available ensures that each tile weighs about 2 kilogram and 95 per cent of the tiles are not brittle. Since then, the Basel Mission became a household name when it comes to hearth products, not only in India, but even had them exported to the Straits Settlements, East Africa, the Middle-East, Europe, Sumatra and Australia.

The continuing success is a fair tribute to the quality of the manufacturing process that is still in use. The pug mill and the crushing machine are driven by a 12-horsepower steam engine by Marshall & Sons, of Gainsborough, England and the process for pressing tiles is done by hand.

The 'Basel Mission Patent 1865' and the 'Pound Mark' are the two prevalent roof tiles that define the old Minden Barracks skyline. Both are the symbols of uncompromising toughness and still encapsulating its character and pristine qualities. The same warm 'hearty glow' of the tiles has greeted many for more than 72 years. For those who have associated with the tiles either as roofers or residents of these buildings, they are likely to testify that the tiles are as tough as proverbial nails and able to maintain the insides of the building at a constant temperature because they conduct heat very slowly and dissipate it relatively fast.



The 'Pound Mark' red clay tile
(Source: *Indian Trade Mark Journal*)



The simplicity of form and shape makes the tile ideal for funneling and draining water from roofs



The roof of *Rumah Tetamu* (Guest House) lends an air of old world charm

Ex-Development Engineer of USM, Ir Foong Yee Chye who formerly served with Standard Institute Malaysia (now known as Standards and Industrial Research Institute of Malaysia or SIRIM) has provided me with unexpected corroboration.

"The old clay tiles," he explained, "have a Class-A fire-rating and none will burn. That means that there is little chance for a fire to ever start on the roof from the outside."

Enlightened voices have also spoken in the past about the importance of their presence. The late Tan Sri Hamzah Sendut once penned his stand in an informal memorandum to Ir Foong that affirmed "...what we have, we must hold." He eulogized the old clay tiles as "indestructible" and "without them Minden campus would have a lot less charm."

The caution bears relevance on the current situation. These Basel Mission tiles are going to serve Minden buildings many more years given their integrity and their known service on many buildings elsewhere in the world. They are certainly made to last and not last to make as seen from their track record. We just need to put them back where they belong and let them continue their dutiful service without forcefully 'pensioning' them to oblivion! 🇲🇾



Despite the original roof tiles being heat resistant, they also absorb solar radiation



These roofs are designed for tropical weather as they drain water easily during heavy downpour

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



just another day

Shahrill Ramli @ Ramli
B. Sc. '07

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

Photographs courtesy of
Hatta Azad Khan

A scene from *Pi Mai Pi Mai Tang Tu*
(Source: www.3gpdb.com)

Pi Mai Pi Mai Tang Tu, a television sitcom that featured colloquial use of various Malay dialects, was the creation of Prof Hatta Azad Khan. It is a reflection of how ordinary people coped with life in their stride and that attracted a large following of faithful fans to ensure that the sitcom remained on air for 18 years.



Hatta with Othman Hafsham and Usman Awang

"I modelled the sitcom after several American productions of the day which involved live audiences of no less than 100 people during the shooting," he said.

Such productions are tougher because it requires actors to go through stage training to familiarise themselves with the characters and to execute accurate punch lines! This method known as the international standard of theatrical chronology thus made its debut in Malaysia.

Hatta had the financial back-up from Othman Hafsham who also served as the producer. The strategy produced an impressive quality sitcom.

"Hafsham and I were the only two directors at that time who dared to record the sitcom in front of live audiences because we wanted to capture spontaneous laughter," he said, adding that the success was also attributed to the contribution by talented actors and team work.

Hatta said Hafsham and he share the same concepts about things and this enables them to generate refreshing ideas for new projects.

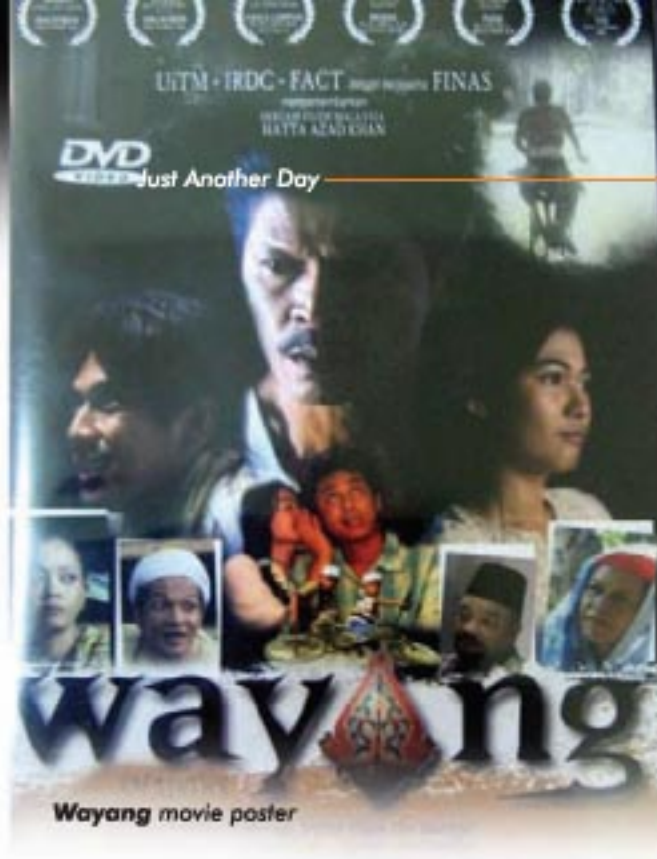
Pi Mai Pi Mai Tang Tu production was more expensive to produce as compared with conventional ones. Among the reasons are that to record four episodes, the crew took around 10 to 12 days to complete and buses had to be arranged to transport the audience to the studio to record unprompted rupturous laughter instead of using canned laughter.

Malaysia is still much far behind Singapore, let alone Hollywood, in terms of global theatrical and arts professionalism, according to Hatta.

"Singapore television stations abide by procedures such as having proper camera rehearsals and calling live audiences such as those being done in the USA," he remarked.

The Singaporean theatrical and arts industry was crippled when the Malay cinema era at Jalan Ampas ended. Without local production, foreign movies quickly took advantage of the situation and filled the vacuum! But gradually the industry recovered when Singaporeans started to think out-of-the-box and adapted international standards to expand creativity.

A recent visit to the Institut Kesenian Jakarta (Jakarta Institute of Arts) revealed the Indonesian artistic spirit of which he rarely seen here. Hatta discovered from conversations with students of the industry that they always compared themselves with renowned foreign filmmakers and arts aficionados. In other words, they benchmark themselves against the world.



Wayang movie poster

Wayang was Hatta's cinematic venture produced at a time when commercially-attractive films were flooding our theatrical and arts industry. He said that he was inspired by the late Teguh Karya whose works had usually revolved around patriotism and presenting the raw realities of life. On the risk of casting relatively unknown actors such as Eman Manan, Zulhuzaimy and Mas Muhammi to take on important roles, Hatta explained that he would like to "nurture young talents".

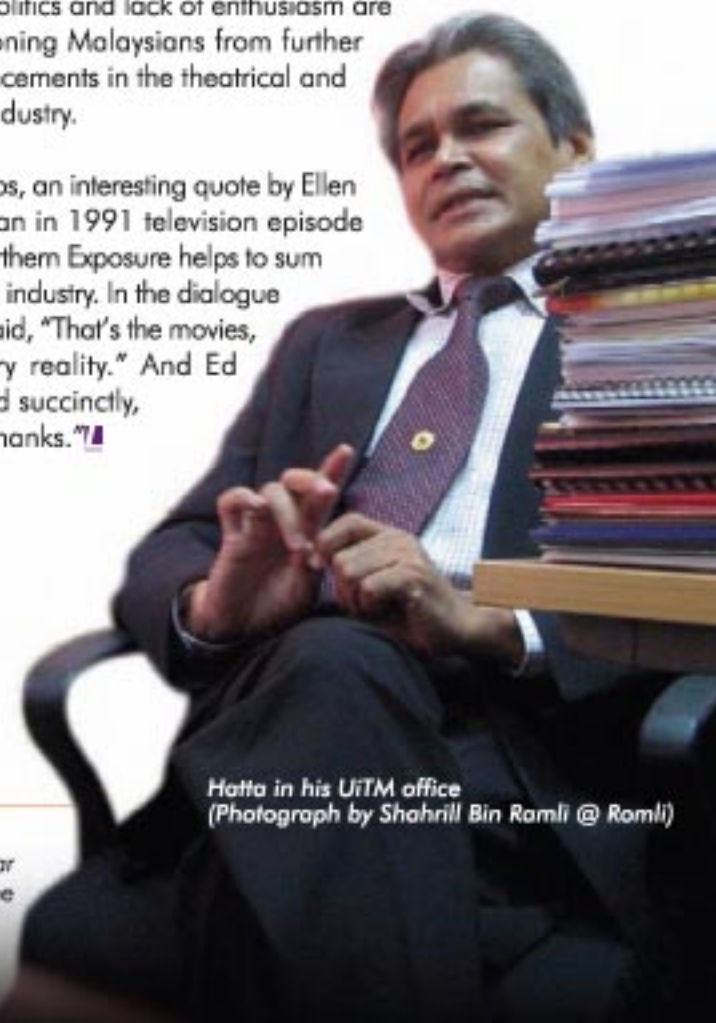
It is surprising that the bespectacled Hatta with neatly-combed hair and no-nonsense look is able to produce rib-tickling comedies. He remarked that serious people do better comedies because "comedy-like elements lie in everyone of us, the ordinary people" and it is "an expression of someone getting caught and trying to emancipate himself in a situation".

Inevitably the question of why Hatta chose USM popped up. He commented that during his time, it was difficult to get a place in universities and those who were selected could be considered as the cremes de la cremes. As the young Hatta has aspired to do theater, he chose USM which was offered a major in Performing Arts and thus could help him to achieve his ambition.

Majoring in Theater and Drama and minoring in Fine Arts, Hatta's choice was the best as USM combined critical thinking with philosophical approaches in the subjects taught and it has an abundance of drama books for revision. It too has dedicated lecturers who patiently entertained their students' questions and Panggung Sasaran experimental theatre facilities enabled the seniors to present their theatrical pieces. Hatta was there to observe and question about the performances. There were times when the seniors were irritated by his enthusiasm!


Hatta is inspired by Satyajit Ray, particularly his film Pather Panchali which was adapted from a novel of the same title. Despite working on a meagre budget, amateur actors and inexperienced crew managed to produce Pather Panchali which was an acclaimed success at an international film festival. The movie inspired Hatta to base his production on humanistic values and realism. Such values, according to Hatta, are much needed in most Malaysian productions despite the fact that Malaysia is rich in culture. He felt that politics and lack of enthusiasm are cocooning Malaysians from further advancements in the theatrical and arts industry.

Perhaps, an interesting quote by Ellen Herman in 1991 television episode of Northern Exposure helps to sum up the industry. In the dialogue Joel said, "That's the movies, Ed. Try reality." And Ed replied succinctly, "No thanks."■



Hatta in his UiTM office
(Photograph by Shahrill Bin Ramli @ Romli)

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UNIVERSITI SAINS MALAYSIA
KAMPUS KEJURUTERAAN

Draining the Mire

*Text and photographs by Zubaidah Amir Burhanuddin
B. Eng. '04*

The term 'pioneer' is perfect for those who dwelled in Desa Lembaran or Jaya back in 2001. We struggled to move around in the newly-built engineering campus which many of us have experienced with the so-called 'quicksand' incidents at one time or another. The campus was actually still under construction, yet we had to attend lectures and there wasn't much of a choice for us at that moment.

We dreamt of a campus amidst lush greenery with a canopy of trees to offer weary students a short break underneath its shade but a covered walkway was what we had to shelter us from the scorching sun (or rain). To provide additional protection against the bristling heat, I used to be equipped with my sunshade or hat, a pair of gloves, as well as my 'Alaska' knapsack, and ready to ride on my yellow LeRun bicycle to Parit Buntar (the only town within easy reach). Occasionally we hitched a ride on the USM mini coaster to commute from the engineering campus to USM main campus free-of-charge!

The campus was the first place where USM developed and evaluated the performance of sustainable urban drainage system (SUDS) led by Professor Dr Nor Azazi Zakaria. It was named as Bio-Ecological Drainage System (BIOECODS), a pilot project by USM's River

Engineering and Urban Drainage Research Centre (REDAC) that meets the requirements of Storm Water Management Manual for Malaysia. SUDS was actually being promoted for years in the United Kingdom to combat pollution arising from diffused sources in urban areas.

We are proud of our campus that it is the first in the country to have an open conveyance swale, a slight slope to divert rainwater towards a wide drain, as a pilot project. The drain is then fitted snugly with plastic cages and a layer of soil was laid on top of the cages for native cow grass to be grown, concealing the drain. Rainwater that filters through the layer of soil into the drain is diverted into a huge retention pond. However, rainwater overflowed and flooded the surrounding area during heavy rain because the drainage system could not cope. This problem has since been overcome.



Draining the Mine

*The campus maintains its original wetlands characteristics
(Photograph by Mohamed Talhah Idrus)*

During those years we were warned not to walk over the drain just in case the plastic cages below gave way. But none of us wanted to push our luck to walk over the cages even if they were new.

As construction was in progress, rain turned the soft laterite soil into 'quicksand' pits and unwary victims may find themselves mired up to their knees, struggling to get out, sometimes losing their shoes to the slush! This happened until the roads were tarred and students no longer left muddy tracks all over the campus.

Being very active in student activities, my friends and I had the opportunity to sharpen our multi-tasking skills and learn lessons from a myriad of experiences. Running projects with friends should suffice us to enjoy our life in 'constructing' the campus. We toiled tirelessly to ensure projects were in readiness and to minimise hitches, supported by our former Lembaran Fellow, Assoc Prof Datuk Dr Abu Bakar Md Diah. Painting banners, posters, flyers and laminating badges till dawn as well as having meetings at Lembaran foyer, consulting with organizations/agencies such as Johor-based Army Combat Training Centre (PULADA) for Kem Kepimpinan Mahasiswa (KEMAS) III project were just sweet memories.

Those were the days. I am sure most of us yearned to be in twilight zone back in these good old days. As time passes by, the campus now shines with lush



*The open conveyance swale
running parallel to the main road*

greenery with its beautiful landscape to be relished. But still the management keeps some of the oil palm trees (as symbolic memory) as well as the ponds at the back of Student House (SH)2 Desasiswa Lembaran where native residents used to fish.

Tarred roads and tree shaded lanes have been introduced. There are no more 'quick sand' incidents as drainage system has been rectified. A few car park areas are now planted with trees to provide shade. A visitor might be surprised to find a hangar intended for flight simulation study! A student centre, too, is currently being constructed at the nearby sports centre. A small traditional hut has also been built. Guys, it's really a mistake if you think engineering campus remains unchanged.

Plan a courtesy visit and see how vast the change has taken place. You may not recall the original look of USM engineering campus that we enjoyed long before. Make sure that you abide by the traffic lights in front of our campus too! A recent tragedy has unnecessarily taken the life of a student. My sincere condolences to her family. Al - Fatimah. 🙏

Maizakiah Ayu Abdullah

Photographs courtesy of
Maizakiah Ayu Abdullah

Intellectual TOTS



TADIKA KOPERATIF MINDEN
UNIVERSITI SAINS MALAYSIA

LAPORAN KEMAJUAN
PROGRESS REPORT
1984

MAIZAKIAH Ayu
RED. GROUP

An old photograph of a very
tomboyish Ayu and her report card

Minden Memories

Intellectual Tots

I walked into the office of the Koperasi Tadika Minden Bhd (Minden Cooperative Kindergarten Ltd) last week to find Joanne Lee sitting at the front desk. She looked up briefly from her paper work and said, "Aha. Yes, Ayu?" as if I was still one of the students and she had just seen me yesterday instead of 23 years ago.

I smiled. How remarkable her memory was (not to mention how quick and alert she is) and how marvellous that she could recognise me after so many years. 'Auntie Joanne,' as she is more affectionately known, has been with the Tadika as an administrative staff member since its inception in 1975. She has seen the Tadika evolve from its humble beginnings with six teachers and 50 students, into the four-building, 160-student establishment it is today.

I sat down for a quick chat and laughed as she called me 'Thumbelina' (a pet name in reference to how tiny I used to be as a child). I left her that day with a warm feeling in my heart, convinced that Auntie Joanne has discovered the secret to eternal youth as she has appeared not to have aged a single day.

Auntie Joanne was not the only familiar face from my years at the Tadika. The current headmistress is none other than Puan Hazariah, who started out as an assistant teacher in 1981 and moved up the ranks to her current position in 2005. Hazariah took me for a



From right, Auntie Joanne, hard at work. Puan Hazariah, the Tadika's headmistress

brief tour around the kindergarten's new buildings (opened in early 2004), proudly describing the school's growth and development over the years. The current programme which includes computer and multimedia studies, Mandarin classes, as well as Islamic/Moral lessons is a world of difference from my simple memories of Ladybird books, dancing, singing and plenty of playtime. The curriculum now follows a Ministry approved pre-school syllabus which emphasises 'fun' learning and aims to create a holistic approach to equipping pre-schoolers with the necessary educational and social skills for today's world. The children do much learning and have far more responsibilities than when I was a child. Certainly it is a far cry from the 'Peter and Jane' books.

As I was leaving, I caught sight of yet another teacher. Memories rushed to my mind as I immediately recognised Cik Mariam. The faces of my other teachers and classmates (many of whom I am still in touch with) flashed in front of me as I remembered our daily activities then.

Classes were mainly held in one tiny single-storey building. We drew and coloured our own pictures without workbooks and sang nursery rhymes daily. Our teachers told all kinds of stories with useful moral lessons. We had pound or pandan cake with Milo for our break-time snack and washed our own plates and cups before returning them to the pantry. Then we would go outside to play, making up our own games as we went along, sometimes finding a poor animal to victimise (once it was a grass snake, much to our teacher's horror). Of course we got ourselves into the occasional mishap the teachers had to undo.

Cik Mariam with her current students ending their song with hugs all around



Intellectual Tots

Once I ran up the water tower situated behind the office building and scared myself silly imagining an old man lived there who stole away stray children. On another occasion, someone nabbed someone else's red fire truck and never returned it. Sometimes there were children who refused to play with other children. Plenty of wailing and crying ensued.



Gaik Ogle conducting a class

One of my favourite memories involved the first headmistress, Puan Gaik Ogle (now Datin). I had fallen sick one day but insisted on going to school. Gaik allowed me to attend, provided that I stay in her office all day and was to have little or no contact with the other pupils. I agreed. A small mattress and blanket were laid out in the corner of her little office with a number of Ladybird books for me to read. I was at my best behaviour and Gaik, bless her, kept me company all day long while I read. Towards the end of the day, to my surprise, two close friends, sisters Annahita and Banafsheh Bakavoli were allowed to visit me for a short while. It was the best prescription for a sick five-year old.

A Tadika concert with Ayu singing 'You Are My Sunshine'



Tadika's main office building with the famed water tower in the background



Ayu, lost on Sports Day

I remember the sports day held in the field behind the Tadika's main building. Balancing an egg on a spoon I rushed up and down that field to my parents' cheers during the occasion. On sunny days we would play games such as, 'Tok Harimau' (Lord Tiger) or 'Belalang Belatuk'.

Every other year the Tadika would stage a concert. Each class would perform an item, whether it be a solo or a group one. As a four-year old I sang 'You Are My Sunshine' to a large crowd of family members in a USM lecture hall. I was decked out in a pair of bright red shorts, a white t-shirt, and a red hibiscus flower tucked neatly behind one ear. Banafsheh danced on stage dressed in a graduation robe complete with mortar board singing 'Practice Makes Perfect', but it was Annahita, her younger sister, who became the performing artist on national television years later. There were many other concerts with unforgettable performances, each one more creative and memorable than the last. Fortunately, some of these concerts were recorded and preserved in VHS format. A few years ago, a former Tadika classmate and still my best friend, Sara Sukor, came across one of the recordings and reformatted it on DVD. We have yet to get the old gang together for a trip down memory lane. Presently some of us have become doctors, engineers, scientists, activists (Sara works for the World Wide Fund for Nature as a communications officer dedicating her life to saving the region's tigers) or other equally functioning members of society. Despite leaving our Tadika days 20 years behind us, we still keep track of the old gang. 🇲🇾

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CHOO CHOK
HENG



GOAY SAU HIANG



HOO MOW LIN



LAU GICK HOK



LEONG KOK MING



LIM IM TEE



LIM KIM HOCK



LOH MENG HON



MANJULA
MUNIANDY



MEK ZAH SALLEH



NG BEE PHENG



ROSALINE NG



SHANMUGAM
GOVINDARAJAN



TAN BOON CHING



TAN BOW KOK



TAN KOK KUANG



TAN TEE KOON



TEE YEOW CHEEN



TEH HON SENG



TEO SIOK LAY



VIJAYALAKSHUMI
VAITHILINGAM



ZAINI ISMAIL



ZAMRI ZAINAL ABIDIN



GRASISWA

Tuan Ibrahim Tengku Abdullah
B. A. '73

Even in those early years, students of Universiti Pulau Pinang knew the importance of a good and independent channel of communication.

Although the Persatuan Mahasiswa Universiti Sains Malaysia (PMUSM) has *Berita Mahasiswa* (Students' News), it was not enough because it only published information from PMUSM. There was no space on campus happenings.

The need for a news channel saw the birth of SISWA - Akhbar Bulanan Mahasiswa Universiti Pulau Pinang (The Monthly Newspapers for Universiti Pulau Pinang Students). This publication was more sophisticated than *Berita Mahasiswa* which was restricted to students on campus. SISWA, with its own KDN (Kementerian Dalam Negeri) (Ministry of Home Affairs) licence - No. 5205, had clear aims and objectives. Sold at 20 sen, it contained news on events, intellectual articles, an editorial, 'Letters to Editor' and a cartoon strip called 'Nuts, Bolts and Springs.' Being a licensed newspaper it could publish advertisements.

Although SISWA patched some of the gaps found in *Berita Mahasiswa* especially with news and articles of human interest, it was still seen as the mouthpiece of PMUSM. There was a need for an independent campus newspaper that could speak without fear or favour. The students wanted objective reporting.

Arising from this need, a group of then second year students from the School of Humanities initiated GRASIS (an acronym for Gerakan Siswa - Students' Movement) with the approval of the Dean, Prof Robert Van Niel. Funded by the School to kick-start the publication GRASIS was part of the course offerings for students majoring in Mass Communication and those who took Mass Communication courses as electives. The financial assistance was for the first two publications. Despite such support, GRASIS maintained its independence.

The first issue of GRASIS was on 9 August 1971. It carried the tagline of "LIDAH BEBAS USM" (The Independent Tongue of USM). Although the maiden issue was only six pages, the contents were compact. Its independence and truthful reporting was reflected in its editorial. It also carried a commentary on Administration-Students-Staff Relations which gave a non-biased view on the issue.

The inaugural issue carried the news on the birth of GRASIS which is produced below in its translated form:

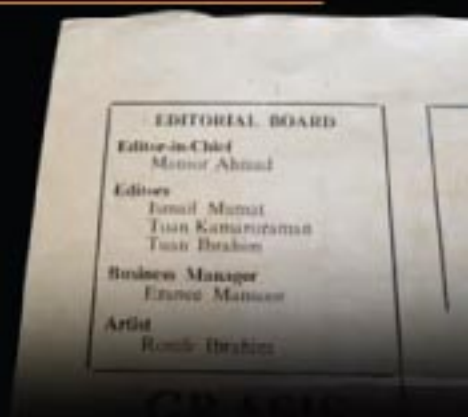
GRASIS (Gerakan Siswa - Student Movement) was formed via collaborative effort by four second-year students. This was because the existing publications did not meet the needs of the campus. The idea to establish a new campus publication was brought forth by Mr Mansor Ahmad, one of the editors of SISWA. Supported and assisted by Mr Ismail Mamat, Tuan Ibrahim and Tuan Kamaruzaman, the idea was then put into practice.

To ensure the success of the first and second editions of the publication, the costs incurred by GRASIS were supported by the School of Humanities with the consent of the Dean Prof Van Niel.

Mr Mansor, who has since resigned from SISWA said that GRASIS attempted to provide the wants of the campus which had failed to meet by existing campus publications.

The newspaper later changed its name to GRASISWA to reflect that it was truly a students' movement newspaper under KDN No 5971. In November 1972, the newspaper was recognised as the "Lidah Rasmi Mahasiswa Universiti Sains Malaysia" (Official Voice of Universiti Sains Malaysia Students).

In July 1972 with the publication of Vol. 2 No 1, the pioneers of GRASISWA handed over the baton to the new editorial board. ■





Burung

Burung Segani

THE Name Game Part 2

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

Tok-Tok

Burung Kubur

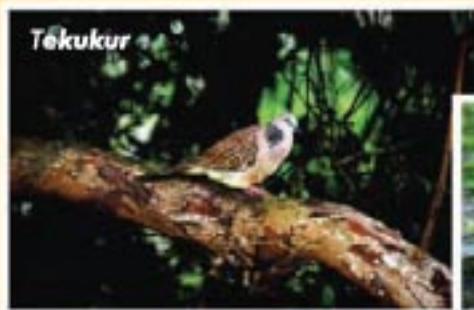
Unlike New Zealand and Australia, few Malaysia species names have penetrated the English dictionary, despite the fact that many of them are endemic to this part of the world. The most recognisable among these few is the iconic *Orang-Utan*, while the *durians*, *rambutans* and many local fruits are less recognised. Instead, many endemic species like *bunga pakma*, *binturungs* and *kubungs* are preferred to be known by their anglicised 'equivalents' of The Rafflesia, Bear-Cat and Flying Fox respectively.



A *kubung* in Bayan Lepas, Pulau Pinang

A common argument for such preference is the need for 'standardisation', a task actually already accomplished via the latinised identification of every species. However, while standardised Latin names are necessary to pinpoint a specific species for scientific and research purposes, locals are free of such need. This freedom has encouraged them to give numerous names to one species.

One form of the Malay 'standardisation' is based on the calls made by a particular species. A few of the bird-calls have been accepted as the most apt names to describe the particular birds like *Tu-Hu* (common koel), *But-But* (Coucal), *Tekukur* (spotted dove), *Kedidi* (sandpiper) and *kuang* (Great Argus). The sounds of others like those of *Pekaka/Kaka* (Kingfisher), *Cet-Cet* (flower pecker), *Wak-Wak* (moorhen), *Cak* (house sparrow), and the more dubious *Tek-Tiau* (lapwing) have not been not been unanimously accepted as standard local names.



Tekukur



Pekaka



Kedidi



Tek-Tiau



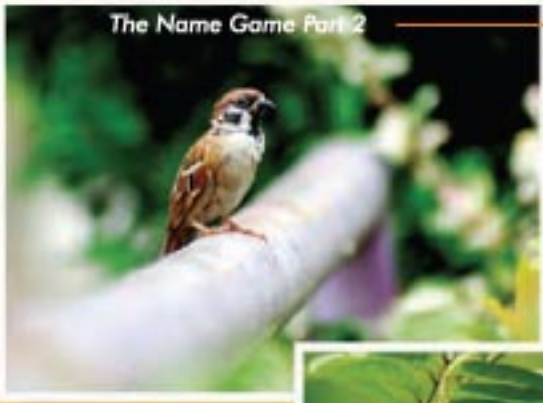
Cet-Cet



Wak-Wak

Some of the birds that were assigned names after their calls

The Name Game Part 2



Different locations would sometime even assign different sounds to the same species, as in the case of the *Cak* (pronounced Chaak) which is popularly *Pipit* in another region.

While these illustrate the indigenous Malays' ingenuity in expanding their vocabularies, it also illustrates their carefree and explorative spirit.

The minutest details of their surroundings were observed and verbally recorded. The smallest bugs and aphids, for example, have been classified into *kutu*, *kenit/sengkenit*, *kesin*, *hama* and *tungau*, (ticks and mites).

The Malays are linguistically innovative. They have managed to assign creative names for all the introduced species according to shape, colour, or a combinations of these. Even the alien hippopotamus was first called *kerbau laut* (sea buffalo), albeit erroneously, and later *badak air* (water rhinoceros). The raised eyebrows in the English world did not affect them, they continue to give names that THEY understand. These matter, for they have the ability to communicate the image conjured by the reference to even someone who is not familiar with it. Imagine the image provoked by the mention of a *kerbau laut*!

Sparrows and *Munias* have been grouped as *Cak* or *Pipit*

As such *ice* was originally *air batu* (stone water) to them. And every foreign item introduced to them will be returned with a new term that will trigger imaginations. So an airplane is a *kapal terbang* (flying vessel); a submarine is *kapal selam* (diving vessel); a parachute, *payung terjun* (jumping umbrella); the radio was originally *tetuang udara* (a cyber horn); a refrigerator, a *peti sejuk* (cold chest); and a record is *piring hitam* (black plate).

For birds, their calls were only one consideration for a name. Names were also assigned according to their distinguished features like a particular shape or colour. The *munias* (which incidentally are 'finches' by local classification) are differentiated through this means. So there are *Cak Uban* (white-headmunia), *Cak Sisik* (scaly-breasted munia), *Cak Kepala Hitam*, and *Cak Tuli* (literally deaf *munia*, but technically white-rumpedmunia).



Pipit Tanah



Pipit Batu



Mural Cacing



Mural Gila

Maggies, robins and shamas are all Mural

Since Malay classifications of birds are based on criteria different from the Latinised ones, shapes sounds and looks alone are insufficient to identify species. As such some of those too numerous to be categorised by these characteristics are named after their habitat preferences. The earlier mentioned cak for eg is also known as *Burung Gereja* (Church Bird) after it's affinity of roosting in churches. The grey wag-tail which lives in wetlands is *Pipit Batu*, while Richard's *Pipit* in the open fields is *Pipit Tanah*.



The origin of the name Merbah remains elusive



Mural Batu

Some names like *Merbah*, *Bangau*, *Tempua*, *Helang*, boggle the imagination of how they were coined. Maybe along the generations, people like me may have lost the earlier wisdom of being creative in communication.

♪ Oh, I know I could share it if you'd want me to;
If you're goin' my way, I'll go with you. ♪

Jim Croce ♪

BEFORE THE RESIDENTS

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

Readers of *The Leader* often ask me, "What camera do you use?" My standard answer has always been, "It's not the camera, it's the cameraman."

A twin-lens
reflex camera



The Petri 75
range-finder



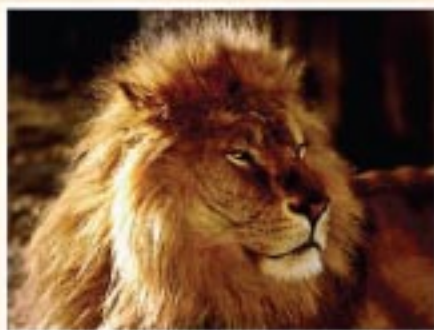
Nikon FM1

My first SLR with a fixed
200mm telephoto lens

When I was a young boy I was fascinated with a local photographer with his rather large Yashica camera (I later learned that it was a twin-lens reflex type). Until then, a cameraman to me was one who squinted from behind a camera to see the image through the viewfinder; but this guy looked straight at the negative image from above the camera! That started my first infatuation with photography.

Years later when one of my brothers bought a Petri 75 (anybody remembers?) rangefinder, I had my first chance of really toying with a camera. But of course we were very calculative about the shots that matter. Since films and processing were rather expensive to young men then, these shots usually boiled down to our posing selves.

I had my first single lens reflex (SLR) camera in 1975, a bulky Ricoh TLS 401, even though my dream camera was the prestigious and costlier Nikon. Films and processing were still expensive then, so my occasional ventures into landscape and wildlife in zoos were luxurious indulgences. I had the most satisfying results from this camera when I visited the London Zoo in 1979, where I managed to get many sharp close-up shots of the animals. Zoos, bird parks and aquariums became my favourite photo locations.



A thick one-way-mirror
and good lighting
conditions gave me this
portrait (The London
Zoo 1979)

Before the Residents

By the time I was studying in Wisconsin, USA, I broadened my photographic knowledge by subscribing to photography magazines. These exposed me to nature photography as well as camera products. When a local camera shop had a sale I acquired my first Nikon.

With this new toy, my photographic venture changed gear. Landscape was my favourite subject but I also began taking photos of the Redwing Blackbirds which were plentiful in Madison, Wisconsin, and the Cardinals and Ring-Necked Pheasants which made occasional visits in the yard. I was even brave enough to 'befriend' a particular racoon that was a regular visitor.



Pied Hornbill in the Penang Bird Park 1991. Bird parks were my best sites to practise bird photography



Despite steady hands, the incessant movements of a pair of Ring-necked Pheasants produced this blurry image (Wisconsin, USA 1979)

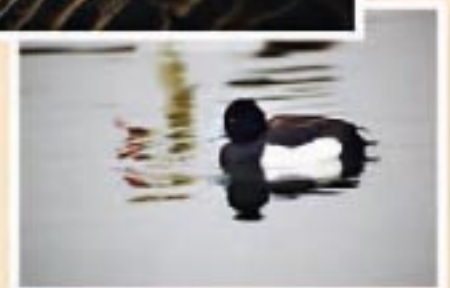
By the time I got back to Malaysia in 1983, My trips to bird-parks, zoos and the seas were always accompanied by both my Nikon FM1 and a pair of Bushnell binoculars. These companions opened up my world.

I developed the ability to associate animal-calls with the creatures that made them. Bird morphologies suddenly become fascinating and their activities stimulating. I would take time to idle in the nearest nature reserve with a local bird-book in almost every country I managed to visit.

But it is Malaysia that offers the most titillating array of 'photogenic' wildlife. Australian parrots and cuckatoos are splendid, but our forest edges and soggy river banks abound with fascinating avian and other faunal activities.



Everyone loves sunrises and sunsets. I prefer contrasts like the sunrise of Pulau Aman (right) and a sunset of Langkawi



Tufted duck (bottom) and a goose in Hyde Park, London

Before the Residents



Australian beaches offer sightings of wildlife like these seals on Kangaroo Island



Books are not the only means for wildlife identification but also provide helpful tips on their behaviour and photography

Occasionally there would be an excitement of another kind...the appearance of snakes! I was once smack in the path of a frog jumping away from a rushing Tedung Selar (King Cobra) in USM. I rose from my crouching position and stayed still. The snake somehow stopped momentarily to look at me and slithered away. Sorry no photo for this one!

But most wildlife stalking sessions are not as eventful. The typical session is almost always characterised by waiting, followed by waiting and more waiting.

So, in response to the last question, "What kind of equipment is best for getting good bird photos?"

I would say you only need one equipment, patience! 📷

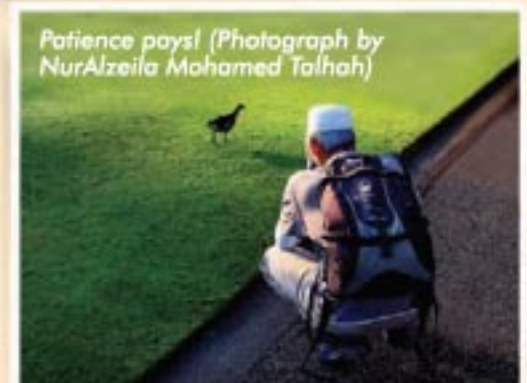
The next question that is often posed to me is, "How long do you have to wait to get those shots?" This is a little tricky, as on weekends I may spend at least four hours waiting at one spot. But this sometimes stretched until evening. On the other hand, if I had done my homework and the subject are birds like hornbills and many water birds that are more predictable, I just need to note their time of arrival and get there the next day before that time to wait for them. But most times I do not mind staying low and still in one spot for a few hours, in the hope that I may make a 'new find'. If this happens, which is very seldom now, it is a real adrenaline rush, heightened by the excitement of capturing them in photos. In fact I made it a personal standard of a photo as proof of sighting.

"If new species are seldom encountered why do you spend so much time waiting, just to get sight of the same things," they asked.

In photography it's really never the same thing. The birds and other creatures maybe the same but locations and lightings always convey different emotions. A ray of light on a Pekaka's (kingfisher) back would immediately make that picture more dramatic than the previous one taken in the shade. It would be more exciting and lucky if an action picture is taken of a Wak-wak (Moorhen) or a Sewah (Sparrowhawk) with a starling in its claws.



A Tedung Senduk (cobra) at the forest edge of the Durian Valley



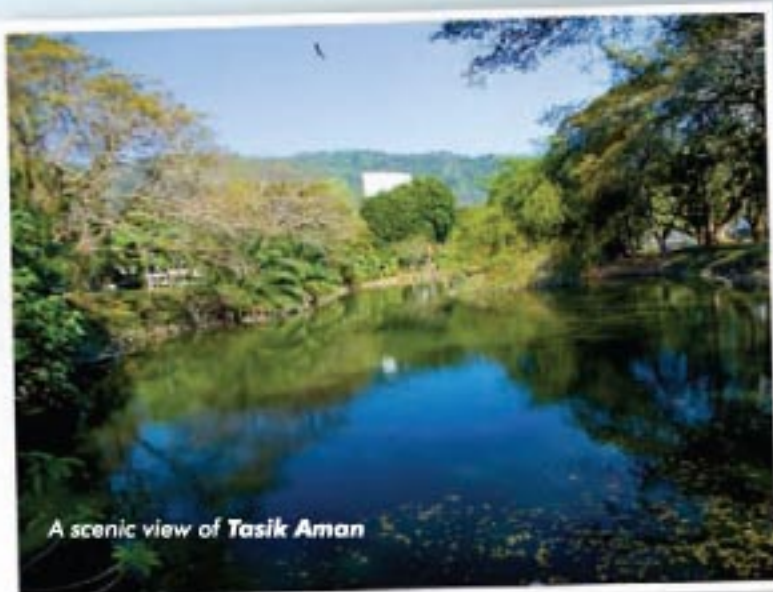
Patience pays! (Photograph by NurAlzeila Mohamed Talhah)

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Reflection of buildings in neighbouring
Sungai Dua on **Tasik Harapan**

Suddenly There Were **Two Lakes**

Zulkfli Osman Yong Check Yoon Photographs by Yong Check Yoon



A scenic view of **Tasik Aman**

A quarter of a century ago, there was only a depression in the ground where the man-made lakes - Tasik (Lake) Harapan and Tasik Aman - now are. There is, however, a stream snaking through the depression as you can still see today, draining into another stream flowing beside a section of the perimeter fence outside USM.

Suddenly There Were Two Lakes

Within this depression, single and double storey timber longhouses were built to function as student hostels. The streams would be swollen with water rushing down from the surrounding hills during heavy rain and when the section of the stream outside the USM main campus at Sungai Dua could not cope with the amount of water, it overflowed its banks and flooded the depression.

Students staying at these longhouses had to wade through knee-deep flood waters whenever they needed to go out for any reason. Therefore, rain was what they dreaded. Since the longhouses had stood on concrete piers above the ground, their interior remained above flood water level.

Then one night in 1987, a spark caused by an electric short circuit ignited some combustible materials and soon one of the longhouses was engulfed in flames. It spread to another before the fire was brought under control. There were no casualties in the incident because most of the students were away on holiday.



Formerly long houses used to stand where **Tasik Aman** is (Photograph courtesy of Centre of Instructional Technology and Multimedia [PTPM], USM)

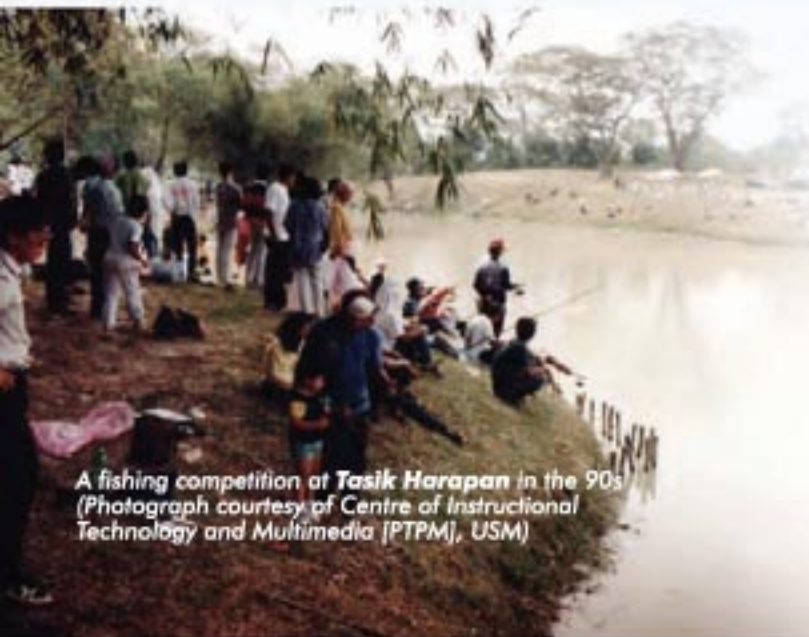


After a heavy downpour (Source: *Berita Kampus* 1978)

After the fire, the remaining longhouses were demolished and subsequently, two 1.5 m-deep lakes were dug to serve as retention ponds. A sluice gate was installed at **Tasik Aman** to release flood waters accumulated in the lake into the stream.

Unwittingly, the lakes and their surrounding greenery have become the home for fish, biawak (monitor lizards) and birds as well. Over the years, the lakes have become stagnated and algae has turned the water green and USM is working to restore the pristine condition of the lakes.

Little do we know that the tiny stream exiting from USM, passes through under *Jalan Sungai Dua* and flows in a south-easterly direction to merge with a river. This river is just about 125 m away from the *Pulau Jerejak Jetty*, off *Lebuhraya Bayan Lepas*. And by then, any water that is discharged from the lakes would have coursed 2 km into the sea. 🇲🇾



A fishing competition at **Tasik Harapan** in the 90s (Photograph courtesy of Centre of Instructional Technology and Multimedia [PTPM], USM)

Yong Check Yoon is currently an editor in *Pejabat Pemajuan dan Perhubungan Alumni (PPPA)*, USM. He can be reached at check.yoon@yahoo.com. Zulkifli Osman is currently a lecturer at the *School of Housing, Building and Planning*, USM. He can be reached at zulasm@usm.my

Se-jah-te-ra

Dzulkifli Abdul Razak
B. Pharmacy '76

Photograph courtesy of Centre of
Instructional Technology
and Multimedia [PTPM], USM

Se-jah-te-ra. This word was practically unheard of, at least in the campus, prior to the turn of the century! It is an indigenous Malay word that has no equivalent in the English language - underscoring the fact that indigenous knowledge and wisdom have their own strength and relevance to the local community all these years.



“In other words, *sejahtera* is a journey to a desired state of well-being of an indigenous community. It acts as a societal glue that bonds things together into a harmonious and optimal balance with one another.”



Indeed, *sejahtera* captures the essence of life in a holistic way when its deeper meaning encompasses the nexus that cuts across the physical, emotional, mental, intellectual, and spiritual well-being of the individual as well as the society as a whole. In a sense, it is a very unique experience that individuals and societies aspire to and try to preserve as much as possible. In other words, *sejahtera* is a journey to a desired state of well-being of an indigenous community. It acts as a societal glue that bonds things together into a harmonious and optimal balance with one another. Such is the worth of the word *sejahtera* that unfortunately has fallen into oblivion as society preoccupies itself in a state of having rather than being. At times it went into contradiction with each other; where the latter can be pursued to the fullest as the end goal, while it is not so for the former. In contrast, too much focus of “having” can be at the detriment of “well-being,” and thereof. We only need to read the book of life to see how true this is, especially today.

The challenge then is how to infuse *sejahtera* back into the scheme of things; and what better place to do this if not at an institution of learning that is largely invaded by the notion of “having.” This was where it all began. Some 10 years ago, I engaged a group of no more

than five people to think of how it is possible to bring back *sejahtera* into the campus life and ecosystem. I perceived the campus then was overbuilt and that we “have” too many artificial structures built that can threaten the natural environment that I was used to, when I was a student some three decades ago. It is somehow in a state of serious imbalance. If this had gone on for a while longer we would probably have reached tipping point sooner than we thought.

The idea then is to re-educate ourselves about the meaning of *sejahtera* and better still put it to practice. Hence the idea of *Kampus Sejahtera* - a concept that builds on five basic elements of (a) volunteerism, (b) evidence-based, (c) teamwork, (d) in-sourcing, and (e) documentation. Volunteerism, for example, is a hallmark of sincerity to contribution, which in turn is a source of well-being to both the one who volunteers and the beneficiary. Evidence-based, on the other hand, is to ensure objectivity, rather than hearsay which could result in being emotion-driven, instead of data-driven. A sense of objectivity makes *sejahtera* more achievable.



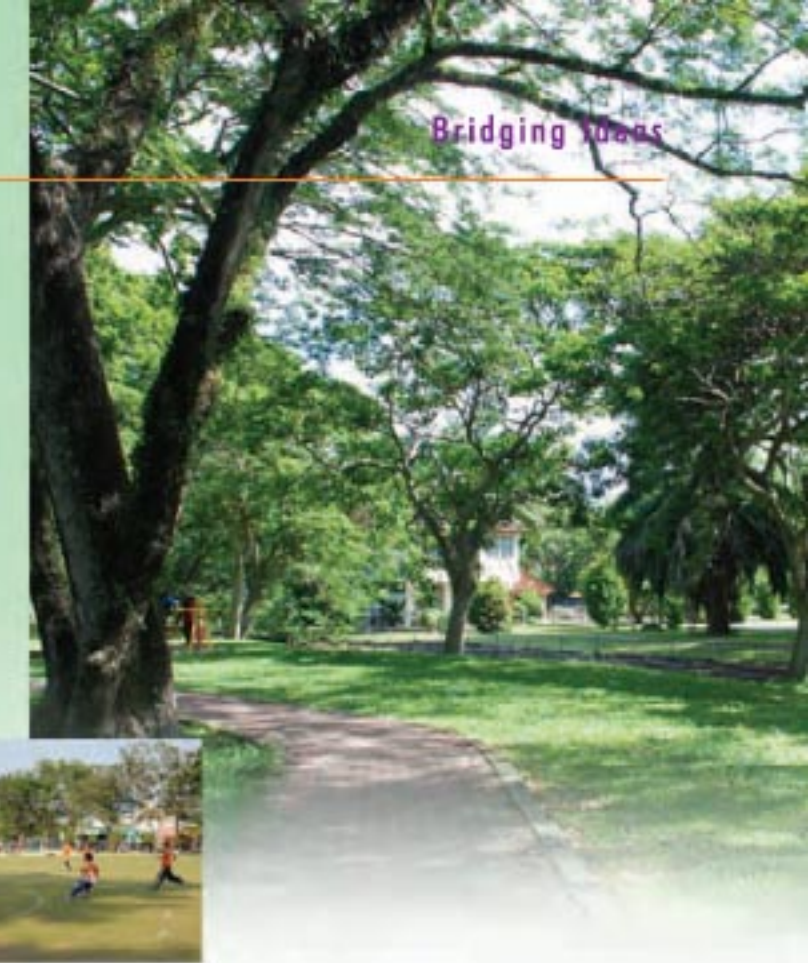
Se-jah-te-ra

In much the same way, teamwork ensures that objectivity is better preserved when diverse opinions and ideas are sought after on a particular issue. It also meant that a sense of shared value be forged, avoiding potential sources of conflicts; hence making *sejahtera* achievable. In so doing, it is encouraged that as many people as possible be consulted internally (in-sourcing) expanding further the circle of influence towards making *sejahtera* even more pervasive. In-sourcing allows for participation and sharing in the making of a *sejahtera* campus.



Finally, the processes and outcomes are to be fully documented as permanent records for reference in continuing to bring *sejahtera* to the next level. However, when it comes to putting pen to paper and translating the concept into action, there were many sceptics. In an initial forum of about 25 people many questioned the practicality of the concept. Others felt it was a flash in a pan and hence not sustainable. Still others felt that it was a waste of money and effort. It seemed like a crazy idea.

But as more consultations were carried out many were keen to try it out. Hence a pilot phase was launched by opening the option to the entire campus. One concerned the quality of canteen food, whereas another was about in-campus transportation. To cut a long story short - all the five elements of *kampus sejahtera* were put into action, ending up with a suggestion of a monograph series. Today more than 30 monographs have been compiled. *Kampus Sejahtera* is now a mainstay in the journey towards a more balanced and harmonious campus community - a core principle of campus development.



The concept came to the fore in 2005 when USM was designated by the United Nations University based in Tokyo as one of the seven pioneering Regional Centres of Expertise on Education for Sustainable Development and the only one in the ASEAN/South-east Asia region. This coincided with the declaration by the United Nations then commencing the United Nations Decade on Education for Sustainable Development (2005-2014). This catapulted USM's *kampus sejahtera* into the forefront internationally as a unique approach to mainstream the idea in higher education. On the home front, *sejahtera* has gradually become pervasive based on activities led by sustainability. So too the attempt to institutionalise it. We now have, among others, *Sekretariat Kampus Sejahtera*, *Sekretariat Warga Sejahtera*, and the latest, *Pusat Sejahtera*. This is one way of ensuring that the *sejahtera* concept continues to be relevant as the campus further developed sustainably for the future. Over time there will be acceptance internationally when *sejahtera* will be expanded as a global principle.

Salam *sejahtera*! 🌱



TRAILER

Reunion Dinner, 1972-74

Graduates and lecturers of 1972 to 1974 will meet for a reunion dinner on 12 June at 7.30 pm at Cititel Hotel, Jalan Penang, Pulau Pinang. There will be a cocktail at 6 pm. For details, call K. Asairinathan at 012-6079288 or Peter Ho at 019-2217902.

Permai's Reunion

'Sua Kembali Teman Permai' is a reunion for students who stayed at Desasiswa Permai from 1991 to 2000. It will be held from 11 to 13 June at Minden Campus. For details, call Mazidah at 013-4289195.

SUKUM Ke-35

The 35th Malaysian Inter-varsity Staff Sports (SUKUM Ke-35) will be held in USM from 16 - 26 June. There will be a total of 30 events inclusive of sporting events for the physically challenged.

Sabah Visit

Pejabat Pemojauan dan Perhubungan Alumni representatives will revisit USM Alumni Sabah, Kota Kinabalu, on 19 June.

USM Alumni Petronas Chapter Launch

Vice-Chancellor Prof Tan Sri Dzulkifli Abdul Razak will launch USM Alumni Petronas Chapter in Kerteh, Terengganu on 18 September.

Premier League Soccer

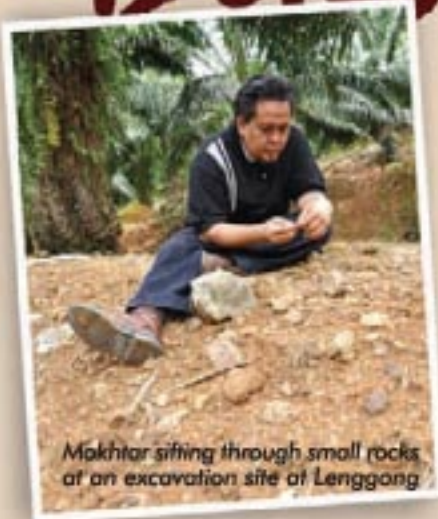
USM fraternity can watch its home team playing in the Premier League on its own turf in a series matches as scheduled below:

USM FC Matches from June to July 2010

Date	Time	Team	Venue
4 June	8.45 pm	Majlis Perbandaran Muar	Stadium Tan Sri Dato' Hj Hassan Yunus, Larkin, Johor
12 July	8.45 pm	Sabah	USM Stadium
23 July	8.45 pm	Kuantan	USM Stadium

The Backyard We Never Knew

Jonathan Chen Photographs by Adrian Cheah
B. Comm. '05



Mokhtar sifting through small rocks at an excavation site at Lenggong

When one thinks about archaeology, one can look back to the adventures of Indiana Jones, the highly romanticised figure of an archaeologist. However, there's much more than meets the eye when it comes to excavating artefacts under layers of soil. For instance, doesn't it prick one's curiosity to think of how Indy always manages to find the right spot to unearth lost civilisations in the thick of the woods in South America?

Closer to home, and in not-so-thick-woods archaeologists at Universiti Sains Malaysia have actually unearthed what is believed to be a civilisation dating back to the 1st century. Headed by Assoc Prof Mokhtar Saidin of USM's Global Centre for Archaeology Research, they have currently made several startling discoveries which may lead to history being re-written.

Using a host of methods such as land surveys, remote sensing and geo-physics, the team has to date mapped out 97 sites in the Bujang Valley district of Kedah for excavation. So far, the team has excavated 10 sites, out of which eight display evidence of 1st century architecture and the remaining two showing evidence of iron-smelting activities.

"It all began years ago when paleo-environmental studies were carried out in Sungai Batu in the area of the Bujang Valley. These studies showed that back in the 1st century, the river and the sea in the area was at the same level," Mokhtar said.

"Then in 2007, we did some land surveys, geo-physical and remote-sensing studies to gather more data on the area. After visiting the site, which now is a palm oil estate, we found bricks scattered around the area, which is a positive sign that the site may have housed a community back in the past," he explained.

The Backyard We Never Knew



A worker collecting samples from the ancient monument in Bujang Valley



Mokhtar surveying a site in Lenggong

Upon the discovery of bricks in the area, Mokhtar proposed that the site undergo more study and excavation to the appropriate authorities in Kuala Lumpur and was given the clearance to do so in 2009. The findings are of significance to the history of the area as they point to commercial smelting activities being carried out there. Earlier studies and findings were based on religion with the discovery of many *candi* (ancient tomb temples) there.

"In addition to religion, we now know that there was a prehistoric civilisation here that depended on basic knowledge, trade and large scale industrial production," he said.

Earlier, the team uncovered tuyeres, which are tubes believed to be used as nozzles for air to be channelled into a furnace.

"This discovery was the first for the country and when I consulted experts from France and India, they told me that these tools were used for iron smelting. "Actually, information on the Metal Age in Malaysia is quite limited compared to all the other ages, and we hope that our findings may be beneficial to the greater understanding of this particular era in the country," he said.



Iron ore, iron slag and a tuyere that was found at the site

Just about two months ago, the team discovered a 1,900 year old monument resembling a sundial which was built with detailed geometrical precision, believed to be the oldest man-made structure in Southeast Asia. Based on chronometric dating, this monument predates other man-made structures in the region such as the Angkor Wat (1200AD) and Borobudur (900AD), a discovery which may lead to the region's history being rewritten.

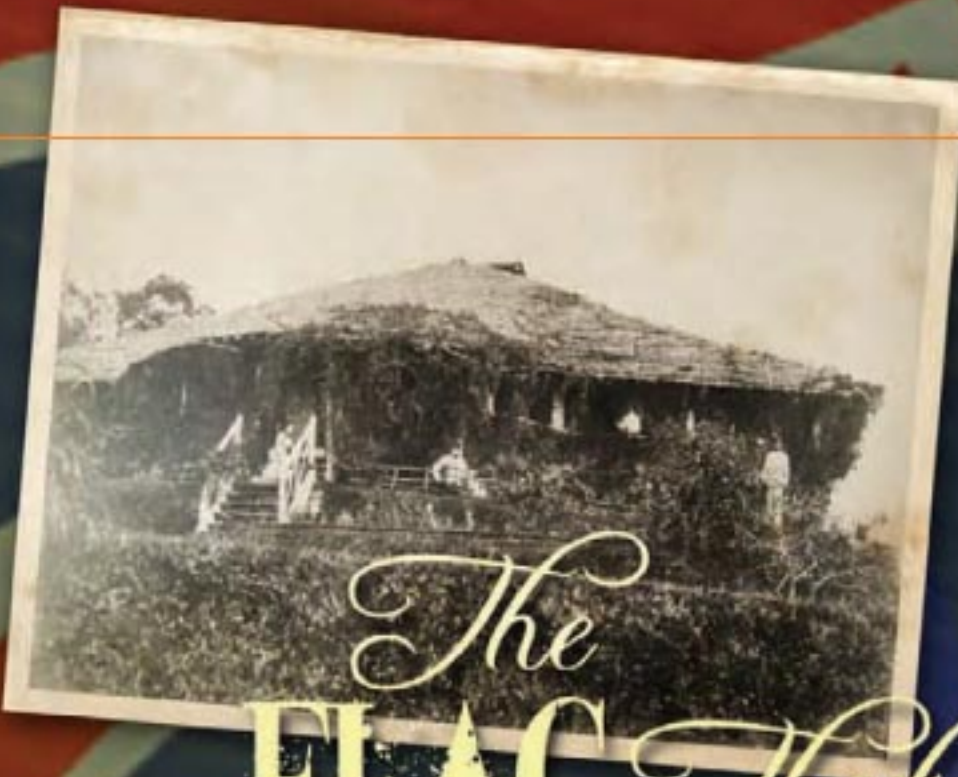
"Our discoveries, such as the monument, traces of iron-smelting and also evidence of jetties in the area all point to the fact the community here in the 1st century was a high-tech society.

"One wonders what may have happened to them - our hunch is that maybe they were wiped out by floods or the river became unmanageable," Mokhtar said.

He added that the team was now focusing on uncovering evidence of humans in the area to further solidify their findings.

"We hope we can find some form of human remains in the remaining 87 mounds which will be excavated soon," he said. 🇲🇾

Jonathan Chen is currently the Assistant Registrar at the Research Creativity Management Office (RCMO), USM. He can be reached at jonathanchen@rocketmail.com

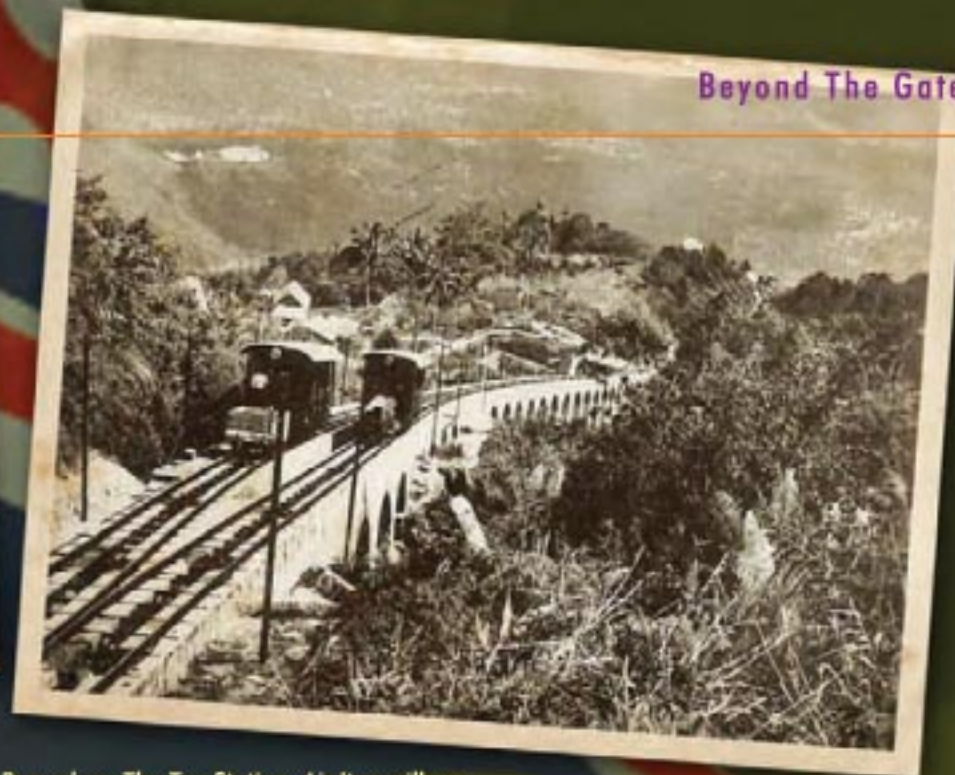


The FLAG That PROMPTED RIOTS

Yong Check Yoon

Penang Hill had been variously named the Great Hill or Government Hill but, just as Pulau Pinang was once called Prince of Wales Island, the names did not catch on. However, the names Bukit Bendera ('Flag Hill' in the Malay language) and Seng Kee Sua ('Raising the Flag Hill' in the Hokkien dialect) remained. Old documents mentioned that the Union Jack was proudly raised at Bel Retiro, a government bungalow built in 1789, whenever the Governor was at the bungalow, earning its name Flagstaff Hill. The flag later proved to be a bane, at least during the infamous 10-day secret society riots of 1867.

The Flag that Prompted Riots



From left: The Convalescent Bungalow; The Top Station; Air Itam village with the Air Itam dam (top left hand corner) as seen from Penang Hill (Photographs courtesy of Penang State Library)

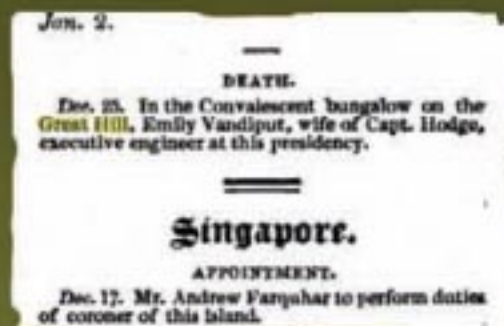
When Major General A.E.H. Anson took office as Lieutenant-Governor of Pulau Pinang in June 1867, he would return to Bel Retiro in a sedan chair from the foothill after travelling in a gharry from his office in town. He was ignorant about secret society disputes that were edging towards their tipping point. A month later, fights broke into a full scale riot known as the Penang Riots. The sight of the Union Jack on Penang Hill hinted secret society members that they can 'safely' swarm the streets and fight with little intervention from the authorities. It must have been a painful lesson, leading to the revamping and beefing up of the police force after the Riots. Bel Retiro, standing at 735 m above sea level, remains as one of the government bungalows until today.

Besides Bel Retiro there is another government bungalow - the Convalescent Bungalow - which, as the name suggested, was for 'the invalids, who come down from India, to obtain relief from their sufferings from the mildness of mountain temperature of these regions'. It was for the recuperation of sick high ranking officers of the East India Company and Europeans.

Penang Hill has become a few degrees warmer as compared with what it was in the early 19th century. The cool climate on Penang Hill then had inspired early Europeans to compare it with the highlands of Funchal on Madeira Island, Portugal. In a 1934 magazine, it

was mentioned that the "hills behind Taiping" (about 90 km away) can be seen on clear days from Penang Hill and these days you may hardly see the trees on Penang Hill on a hazy day from 3 km away.

An obituary (Source: The Asiatic Journal and Monthly Register for British India and Its Dependencies)



The Penang colonial hill station could have been the earliest of its kind in the country. Bel Retiro was a mere timber bungalow when first constructed in 1789. Within the vicinity are Hygeia Hill, Woodland Brae, Strawberry Hill, and Haliburton's Hill. It was documented in 1834 that a doctor lived at Woodland Brae (now Fern Hill), in a bungalow named Belle Vue which was located at Haliburton's Hill. Strawberry Hill was a property of John Macalister (Macalister Road was named after him), an assistant collector of customs and land revenues, before Cachatoor Galastawn, an Armenian merchant, acquired it in early 1800s. Galastawn died and was buried in Calcutta in 1841, aged 60.

The Flag that Prompted Riots

Belle Vue bungalow was one of the earliest permanent stone buildings owned by the then sheriff of Prince of Wales Island, William Halliburton, on Penang Hill and that part of the hill was named after him. Currently Bellevue Hotel - the only hotel there - stands on the site of the early 19th century bungalow.



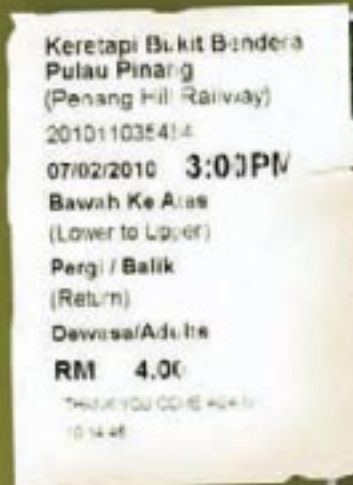
Penang Heritage Trust members visiting the operation room that controls the cars (Photographs by Yong Check Yoon)



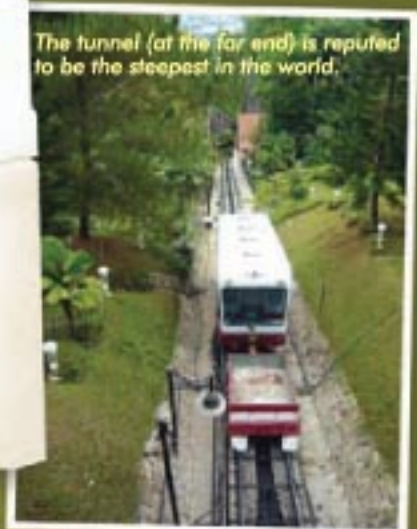
Before the introduction of the funicular railway, the way to ascend the hill was by hiking, on horseback, or be carried in a sedan chair by coolies. There are numerous tracks leading to Penang Hill and many of these were well trodden, particularly by vegetable farmers of the old days who traversed the hills to market their produce in Air Itam or Balik Pulau. Today the same tracks are also used by hikers. The adventurous will find the 13 kilometer-Laksamana Trail, reputed as "the longest and toughest forest trek on the island" that connects Batu Ferringhi to Penang Hill, challenging.

From 1897 to 1906, the Penang Hill funicular railway was constructed by D. Logan, Joseph Heim and Alan Wilson but the project was met with failures. The Straits Dollars 1.5 million project resumed in 1920 with the engagement of a Senior Engineer from Administration of Railway for Federated Malay States, Arnold R. Johnson, who had studied about funicular railways in Switzerland. It was completed in 1923 and was considered an engineering feat in those days, having also to blast a tunnel through solid rock. The project was officially launched on January 1, 1924.

The aquaduct on which the funicular railway runs remains intact for more than 86 years since its construction. In 1977, the old wooden cars were changed to metal ones. On 21 February 2010, these cars stopped operation for a complete revamping of the system. Instead of taking 30 minutes to reach the top station, the new cars will take only 10 minutes, without having to change cars at the middle station. For the duration of the RM63 million project which is expected to be completed by this December, Penang Hill residents and visitors will have to hike or take a jeep. When it is ready the cars are expected to be able to increase its previous capacity of 280 passengers to 1,000 passengers every hour.



A ticket stub (Photographs by Yong Check Yoon)



Penang Hill funicular railway could have been the second oldest in this region after Hong Kong's Peak Tramway that shuttles between the central district to Victoria Peak since 1888. Other than this morsel of information, the tunnel is reputed to be the steepest in the world. Four of the original cars were built and delivered by an engineering company in Switzerland but only three are known to exist today at each of these locations: Strawberry Hill in Penang Hill, Penang State Museum, and the National Museum in Kuala Lumpur. The location of the fourth car remains a mystery. 📌

Yong Check Yoon is currently an editor in Pejabat Pemajuan dan Perhubungan Alumni (PPPA), USM. He can be reached at check_yoon@yahoo.com.

Rolling 'em Out

Alec Chin
B. Comm. '92

Photographs by
David Chew



Since its maiden publication in 2006, *The Leader* has received tons of feedback. Some of the comments were penned down and given to us directly while others reached us via e-mail. Many of these have been published in the 'What Say We...' department, some appeared together with our response. Quite a number of the comments, however, came to us through verbal means. Unlike those comments which were written in one way or another and therefore recorded for posterity, verbal comments, because of their transitory nature, were often forgotten and overlooked. But some comments appeared on such a regular basis that we feel the need to address them here in this issue.



These comments relate to the process of producing the magazine - how ideas and suggestions are put together to bring about the final, glossy product that you now hold in your hands.

The journey often begins rather harmoniously, with a series of meetings held to iron out the theme of a particular issue, the stories to be featured that would fit in with the theme selected, and to discuss how best to fit the stories into the various departments, followed by the loathsome process of setting deadlines. We are then left to our own devices to sort out our individual 'assignment'.

A week or two later, articles would start trickling in. In the event that The Chief Editor finds this unsatisfactory, several gentle reminders are often issued, followed by a stern, cautionary warning that is never taken lightly by the rest. A few days later, articles would start gushing in, although unfortunately in their raw, unedited form.

Faced with a looming deadline and a pile of unedited articles, many get agitated and anxious, but try nonetheless to get the work done. As soon as the edited articles come in, more discussions are held. Friendly banter and light-hearted jokes are common during these discussions. But so are heated arguments and ruthless verbal exchange, although none are taken to heart. Comments are given, feedback is provided and suggestions and recommendations are made. Meetings like this often last the whole day, sometimes until late evening. Some sessions have even denied us weekends with the family. This goes on until we come to an agreement that the materials are all fit for printing.

As soon as the colour proof is ready, the articles go through a round (sometimes, several rounds) of tedious scrutiny. Every word is checked for accuracy and correctness. Every caption is analysed. The colour and contrast of every picture is studied. Minor modifications (if any) are made, and only then are the materials approved for mass printing.

Rolling 'em Out

making



paper
feeding



printing

It is at this point that we begin having sleepless nights. The printing plates have to reach the production floor at the allocated time. Prior to that, the printer has to be informed of the whole process and timeline, so as not to jeopardise the delivery of the magazines, usually fixed in the first week of the month. The whole process is fraught with difficulties and frustration. Sometimes arguments and persistence are needed to secure the earliest production slot.

There is no fixed time for the printing work to start - it can be early in the morning or late in the evening. Dashing to the production floor in the wee hours of the morning is something that we have gotten used to, especially when technical doubts are raised by the production operators. When the printing is complete, we have to go through that nail-biting and nerve-wrecking wait as the finished materials go through the process of trimming and lamination (on covers), followed by binding, before delivery can be made.

Where delivery is concerned, the despatch boy, Ahmad, is the vital link between the printer and us. He is the one who makes sure that everything is delivered to us safe and sound.

There is no greater satisfaction than seeing *The Leader* roll out from the plant on time and getting e-mails from readers saying that they've received their magazines. But bear in mind that as you are reading the new issue, we are already on our journey to produce the next *Leader*. 🇲🇾



the link



ready for
binding

Tucked away 500 metres off Jalan Sultan Azlan Shah in Gelugor and located along Hiltir Pemandar, Taman Tun Sardon food court is not very prominent. It is, however, a bustling market and particularly a food court serving mostly local Malay food in the morning. It offers an array of local delicacies that you'd definitely be spoilt for choice. Few people know that members of the royal family, police top brass and other public figures are regulars at some of the stalls at the food court, including the serabai stall. Some customers coming as far as from Singapore and Sarawak even had them packed in ice to prevent the coconut milk-based pancakes and sauce from turning bad, en route to the airport.



Although smaller in size than before, the serabai are still affordable desserts

The Endearing Serabai



Zulkfli Osman Yong Check Yoon Photographs by Yong Check Yoon



The enterprising sisters, Jamaliah Hassan (top) and Jamilatun Hassan



The stall that goes by the name Serabai Special sells serabai, a kind of pancake that is eaten with a thick creamy sauce. Here the serabai indeed sells like hot cakes. Two sisters - Jamaliah Hassan and Jamilatun Hassan - start their business at 6.30 am and usually by 11 am or earlier, they would have called it a day. They are second generation serabai sellers, having inherited the 35-year-old business from their parents, Hassan Pak Wan Cik and Zaiton Hassan, 18 years ago.

According to Jamaliah, serabai was traditionally served to family members and friends who attend prayers offered on the seventh day of the death of a Muslim. This tradition is no longer practised but the pancake continues to be enjoyed, especially as a delectable dessert. On a side note, the Penang peranakans make a similar pancake under the name of apom bokua (a corruption of the name 'apom berkuah' or pancakes with sauce). From what we know, serabai is a dessert found in the northern states.

The Endearing Serabai

Serabai is made from a mixture of rice flour, yeast, and water soaked overnight to allow fermentation to occur, giving the final product a slightly sour taste. Coconut milk and salt are then stirred in early the next morning before pouring scoopfuls of this milky white liquid into eight circular cavities, each about 10 cm in diameter, of a gas-heated brass mould. A lid is then placed over them and the fluffy pancakes are removed from the mould with a spatula onto a large stainless steel tray when they are done. By this time, customers are often already waiting in the queue to be served.

The pancake is eaten hot after dipping in a thick sauce prepared from rice flour, coconut milk, and a mixture of refined cane sugar and brown sugar.

"We are able to sell about 500 pieces of serabai on weekdays and double that number on weekends," said Jamaliah. "Mondays are our rest day."



Serabai are made using a pan with eight circular cavities

Although the tradition for eating serabai is no longer practised, the scrumptious pancake is still being enjoyed by many. At least we are heartened to realise that this pancake is saved from the brink of 'extinction' by people like Jamaliah Hassan and Jamilton Hassan who popularise the dessert. 🍴

Yong Chek Yoon is currently an editor in Pejabat Pemajuan dan Perhubungan Alumni (PPPA), USM. He can be reached at check_yoon@yahoo.com. Zulkifli Osman is currently a lecturer at the School of Housing, Building and Planning, USM. He can be reached at zulasm@usm.my





Protected for Life

A memorandum of understanding was inked at Anjung Budi between MAA Takaful Berhad (MAAT) and USM on 13 May. This is to provide Group Personal Accident Takaful Scheme to provide protection covering hospitalisation, permanent disablement and death for all new intake students of 2010/2011 to 2014/2015 batches. Such insurance scheme has also been offered to students over the past five years.

Tenant @ USM

Four tenants occupy Rumah Alumni (above Bank Muamalat) which is owned by Persatuan Alumni USM. The businesses include HZL Bersatu Sdn Bhd (printing, photocopying, faxing), Celcom (M) Berhad (phone and broadband services), Far East Integrated Enterprise (bus and air travel) and Sekolah Memandu Syawal (a driving school).



Postcards to Write

The Pejabat Pempajuan dan Perhubungan Alumni (PPPA) printed 100,000 postcards in February depicting USM scenes and sent 97,000 of these to its alumni to update their personal information. The response so far has been encouraging.

International Women's Day 2010

On 10 March the Women's Development Research Centre (KANITA) celebrated International Women's Day (IWD) at the Eastin Hotel, Pulau Pinang. KANITA's director, Prof Datin Rashidah Shuib, representing the Vice-Chancellor of USM, officiated the event. The highlight of the IWD event was a forum addressing this year's theme, 'Equal rights, equal opportunities, progress for all'.



Protect Environment says Tan Sri Razali

Pro-Chancellor, Tan Sri Razali Ismail advised the campus community to ensure that whatever development was carried out in USM did not destroy the environment and that it should be sustainable in nature. He was speaking at the launching of the 'Gotong Royong' at the 250-hectare USM Recreational Park on 21 March.

Pro-Chancellor at 41st USM Convocation

The Pro-Chancellor of Universiti Sains Malaysia (USM), Tan Sri Razali Ismail presided over the 41st USM Convocation held at the USM Engineering Campus on 20 March. The Convocation ceremony involved a total of 821 undergraduates and postgraduates. Dato' Baharuddin Zainal, a prominent and distinguished intellectual was conferred the Honorary Doctor of Letters.



Six Lecturers Honoured

Six USM lecturers who were recognised as outstanding researchers received the 'Anugerah Tokoh Sanggar Sanjung' 2009 at the Sanggar Sanjung Awards Presentation at the Equatorial Hotel, Penang on 19 March. The Pro-Chancellor of USM, Tan Sri Razali Ismail presented the awards to the recipients. During the function, 120 academic and administrative staff of USM were also honoured for their achievements.

Two Years in a Row

On 26 March, the Minister in the Prime Minister's Department, Senator Datuk Seri Idris Jala presented 'The Brand Laureate Awards 2009-1010' (the Asia Pacific Brands Foundation) to USM for its corporate branding. This is the second time in a row that USM has clinched the award.



Seeking the Right Chemistry

Chemistry Alumni Association (CAA) held a series of talks about seeking employment after graduation and also organised eight companies to conduct job interviews for its members on 12 and 13 May at the School of Chemistry. This is the first time that CAA arranged job interview opportunity for its members.



**Zainol Abidin
Ahmad Shariff**
B. Humanities '75
Artist,
Kuala Lumpur



Wan Mohd Sharif Wan Ali
B. Sc. '79
Geophysical Consultant,
Petronas Carigali Sdn Bhd,
Kuala Lumpur



Abdul Satar Mohamed
B. App. Sc. '84
Director of Network,
Celcom Axiata Bhd,
Selangor



Tan Suan Gaik
B. Sc. '91
Country Manager,
Perkin Elmer Sdn Bhd,
Selangor



**Venu Gopal Kunji
Krishna Pillai**
B. Soc. Sc. '92
Head, Project Development,
General Administration
Department,
Bank Simpanan Nasional,
Kuala Lumpur



Rashida Sulaiman
B. Mgmt. '93
Caregiver,
Valley Residential Services,
Washington,
USA



Emily Chua Siok Lian
B. Soc. Sc. '94
Registered Financial Planner,
Kuala Lumpur



Teh Ai Lee
B. Sc. '96
Senior Sales Engineer,
Perkin Elmer Sdn Bhd,
Pulau Pinang



Yeow Liang Ming
B. Sc. '97
General Manager,
Acumen Scientific Sdn Bhd,
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