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# THE LEADER

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*Paving  
the Path*

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**Guest Contributors**



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For those who are interested to contribute articles to The Leader, please refer to <http://alo.usm.my/> for a writer's guidelines.

Cover artwork and photograph by Rusli Jamaluddin. The girl is Safieh Ghassan, the daughter of an international postgraduate student, at Tadika Mawaddah, USM.

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# From the Chief Editor



Even though the word 'Islam' or 'Islamic' is not attached to Universiti Sains Malaysia (USM) as in some other universities, USM has been embarking on many initiatives and programmes that strive towards promoting knowledge and the sciences from Islamic perspectives. Pusat Islam (Islamic Centre) is the most noticeable among these initiatives, being located prominently beside one of the university's entrances. Less conspicuous are the other centres and services that have also been pushing the frontiers of science and technology with the Islamic spirit. A number of academicians have also been 'Islamising' the sciences through research and writings since the early eighties.

This issue of *The Leader* samples some of these initiatives and people who have contributed to make Malaysia's Islamisation policy a success. Again, there are more activities and personalities than can be fit into the few pages of this magazine, but within the usual constraints, the editorial team as well as guest writers have done a commendable job of attempting to show this other side of USM.

We look forward to hearing your feedback. We also welcome non-fictional articles for future publications.

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B. Soc. Sc. '74



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*A common motif adorning the walls in Alhambra, Granada*

# THE NEXT ANDALUSIA

*Dzulkifli Abdul Razak Photographs by  
B. Pharm. '76 Mohamed Talhah Idrus*

*View of the Grand Mosque in Cordoba where  
scholars of various religious denominations held  
discourses before the fall of Andalusia*

**A**ndalusia or *Al-Andalus* was the best kept secret among many of us on campus. There seemed to be no reason for the name to surface in a science university that preoccupies itself with new discoveries for the future. Even though it has a place in the disciplines of the social sciences and humanities, it did not go beyond the tutorial rooms and lecture halls. It is a part of ‘The Dark Ages’ that were created more to confuse than to enlighten based on a complete misreading and misinterpretation of history - intentionally or otherwise. The interest therefore is more for academic reasons than anything else, more so of the past than the future.

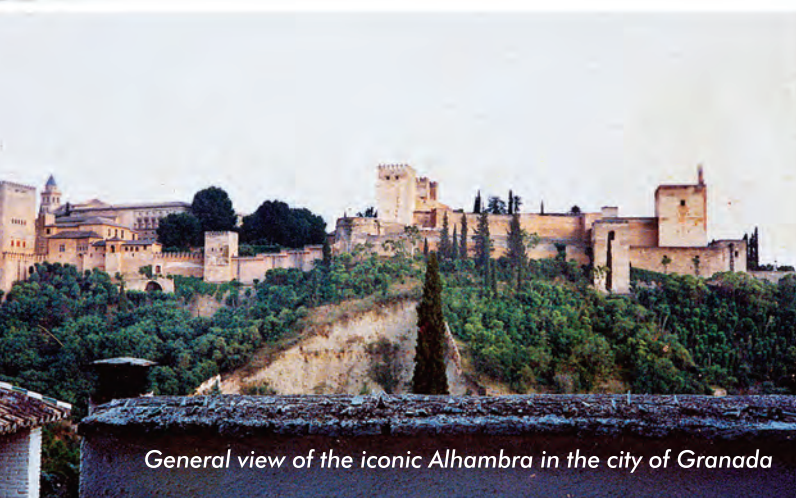


*Architectural details in Andalusian cities concentrated much in the interior design as seen in the Grand Mosque's dome*

But in the last few years, this seems to have changed quite dramatically. ‘Andalusia’ has become better known among the campus population. Seminars and conferences were held. Articles were written, documentation published, research conducted, exhibits displayed and many more people asked about it. Andalusia seems to have come alive in our minds once again - a window through which we peek into, to see what we can glean from the period where learning was at its zenith, around the 10<sup>th</sup> century or so. It represented the knowledge hub of the world with people from far and near flocking to it, regardless of geo-political boundaries, religions, creed, and nationalities. They became knowledge nomads whose preoccupation was to learn from the best there was.

Presently, Andalusia is neither academic nor about the past. It is being studied and referred to with great interest as though it could provide an inspiration in the search for the future.

It was in Andalusia where the most advanced cities and citadels of knowledge were located throughout the southern part of Muslim Spain: Toledo, Cordoba, Granada, Seville. Many housed libraries as the bearers of knowledge to attract large numbers of scholars. Cordoba of the time boasted of 70 libraries for its 500,000 population. The Mosque of Cordoba was itself a knowledge centre. So too the majestic Alhambra of Granada with its fountain of water aerating the surrounding palatial buildings and its beautiful garden, all crafted from knowledge. These are but a few highlights that made Andalusia, with some of its beauty still apparent till this day, the envy of many.



*General view of the iconic Alhambra in the city of Granada*

The Next Andalusia



A visitor in one of the halls of the Grand Mosque in Cordoba which used to be the seat of European scientific knowledge



Street in Andalusia cities opened up to public squares which were later emulated in other European cities



Statue of the Jewish scholar Ben Maimode in the Jewish sector of the Cordoban city

USM continuing the Andalusian tradition as the centre for knowledge dissemination



Translations of books and materials from other ancient civilisations and cultures were encouraged and handsomely rewarded. The same applied to innovations and inventions that spurred new knowledge ranging from the mechanical to the more sublime. Some existed for centuries whereas others were adapted and made contemporary. Book printing and writing were at its height allowing for even greater knowledge diffusion and dissemination.

In a nutshell, much of the Andalusian experiences pose as exciting models to be investigated in detail as we aspire to create our version of a knowledge society. More so because the influences exerted by the Andalusian scholars, in part at least, led to the Renaissance of Western Europe and later, the so-called Scientific Revolution. Unfortunately this was not duly recognised.

As such the history of the Islamic Moors with their contribution in advancing knowledge in the fields of medicine, mathematics, astronomy, philosophy, the social sciences and the society they built and ruled in southern Spain (Andalusia) for some 700 years were 'blacked out.'



The Masjid USM is well patronised by the Islamic community




The Vice-Chancellor interacting with the international students (Photograph courtesy of Pusat Islam)

According to Robert Briffault in *The Making of Humanity*: *'What we call science arose as a result of new methods of experiment, observation, and measurement, which were introduced into Europe by the Arabs. [...] The debt of our science to that of the Arabs does not consist in startling discoveries or revolutionary theories; science owes a great deal more to Arab culture, it owes its existence....The ancient world was, as we saw, pre-scientific. [...] The Greeks systematized, generalized and theorized, but the patient ways of investigations, the accumulation of positive knowledge, the minute methods of science, detailed and prolonged observation and experimental inquiry were altogether alien to the Greek temperament.'*



Young girls taking photos of *nashid* performance organised by Pusat Islam (Photograph courtesy of Pusat Islam)

In summary, the rekindling of interest about Andalusia among an increasing number of the USM community is gradually brightening up the period misnamed as 'The Dark Ages.' And more importantly is the process of drawing the right lessons from what took place over at least 700 years.

As for an APEX University that seeks to transform higher education, Andalusia must be of special focus. It is not inconceivable that USM could rekindle the spirit of Andalusian learning as part of the APEX agenda. 



## @ Anjung Budi



### Tudung Sales

A sale of a good range of *tudung*, clothing and women's accessories was held from 12 - 14 July from 10 am to 4 pm. It drew a good response from staff and students, particularly during lunch hour.

### Be Entertained

A group of about 10 musicians from Dewan Budaya put up a performance of mostly traditional songs on 12 July. They performed to promote the talented group to the lunchtime crowd from noon to 2 pm.



### Tazkirah Ramadan

Tazkirah Ramadan was held on 25 July in conjunction with the approaching Muslim fasting month. The talk was delivered by Ustazah Rohayati Daud from Pusat Islam, USM. It is a 'reminder' (the meaning of 'Tazkirah') to all Muslim about the dos and don'ts during Ramadan.

### Pasar Ramadan

Throughout Ramadan, the cafeteria at Anjung Budi stayed opened during afternoons to enable customers to buy food for breaking of fast (*iftar*). On most days, there was a ready crowd that snapped up the food as takeaway.







Mumdas (centre) with committee members of the women's section of Persatuan Staf Islam, Helwa, on its annual hospital visit, 2005

# The Giver

Hamima Dona Mustafa  
B. A. '73

Photographs courtesy of  
Mumdas Beham Abdul Karim

**T**he last item of the family laundry was securely fastened to the clothes line, to dry under the backyard porch. After making sure that the back door had been locked Mumdas who brought up six children got ready to leave the house in her second-hand national car, the Proton Saga. As with other mornings her destination was the Minden campus, about 15 minutes away.

"I learnt to drive without the knowledge of my mother who was quite a conservative woman," Mumdas confided when we met at the alumni house, Anjung Budi. "But, my father gave his approval."

It appeared to be a good move since she did not have to depend on her husband to help her get around especially when her voluntary involvement at the University's Islamic Center could sometimes end close to midnight.

After retiring in 2006 from USM, Mumdas Beham Abdul Karim has been devoting much more of her time to the Centre that was established in 1983. From the beginning of her career as a typist at the Bursary, on January 2, 1970 she had committed herself to various committees, organising numerous events pertaining specifically to the Centre. For all the hard work rendered she was duly rewarded with certificates of appreciation besides achieving awards of excellence in her career as well.



In her office at the Student Accounts, Bursary

The Giver

Mumdas' interest in Islamic affairs began as a child. As with most Muslim children her primary school education ran concurrently with the Quran recitation lessons. After school, in the afternoon, she and her two younger siblings would walk to the next kampong to Mami Chom's house to learn to recite the Quranic verses.

"What we looked forward to was the end of the lessons because we got to chase Mami Chom's ducks into their pen," Mumdas chuckled. "The ducks would go helter-skelter under people's houses that were on stilts and we would follow suit. What a riot that was."

After a pause, she said, "Actually, what we liked most was receiving a duck's egg each from Mami Chom as a reward."



The Governor of Pulau Pinang presenting Mumdas with a certificate of appreciation during **Ma'al Hijrah** (Muslim new year) celebration



In a seminar on pregnancy and breast-feeding, 2003

Bringing her attention back to the present day of being a pensioner she related how she would spend the mornings at the Islamic Centre. With the approach of the fasting month of *Ramaḍan* Mumdas, as usual, would join some of the other staff members to prepare meals for the *iftar* or breaking of fast at sunset. The University plays host annually to Muslim students and staff, foreign as well as local, in addition to the neighbouring community. It was during this period that Mumdas would return home at almost midnight after helping with the chores of cleaning up with the other members.

She still pursues her other earlier activities, such as organising motivational workshops for Muslim school children, to prepare them for their examinations in addition to arranging Quran recitation classes for adults. Since 1995 she has been on the committee for the Islamic Centre's women's section, *Helwa*, which has its own annual programme. Additionally, she continues to see to the running of the *farḍhu 'ain* course for the staff and students every Friday afternoon.



Mumdas is on hand to help out with the **iftar** (breaking of fast)

The Giver

Mumdas also took part in *Nur Kasih*, a programme organised by the Centre that provides new Muslim converts with foster parents. She took a student from Sabah under her wings and was happy to be able to meet his parents when they came for his graduation ceremony.

Mumdas' volunteerism also encompassed activities from other offices. For example, she took part in the programme organised by the International Office which sought foster parents for foreign students. She has been 'mother' to students from Australia, Canada and Japan, having them in her home for a minimum of a weekend and a maximum of two months.



The first *nasyid* group from the Bursary after a performance in 2001

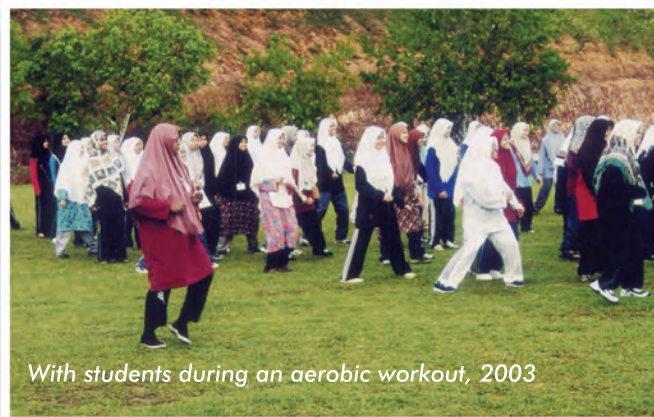
Looking back on the earlier days, Mumdas remembered the beginning of the *nasyid* (religious songs) group. She remembered how June, the graphic artist at the Educational Technology Unit, used to conduct practices in the building. Quran reading classes for staff and students were taught by Ustaz Yusof Tahir after office hours at building C10 annex in the early 70s for a handful of participants. The Muslim Staff Association collected money from the members in order to invite speakers, such as, Ustazah Khairu Nissa. As more members began to show interest, other classes, such as Arabic language and religious talks were organised.

According to Mumdas it was during the former Vice-Chancellor Tan Sri Hamdan Sheikh Tahir's leadership (1976-1982) that emphasis on the religious aspect became apparent. She remembered being asked specifically by the Public Relations' Office to accompany the Vice-Chancellor's wife to the *Maulid ul rasul* (Prophet's Muhammad's birthday) celebration at the University field in the late '70s. Hamka, a renowned Muslim scholar from Indonesia, was the invited speaker.

"Bus loads of school children from the northern region of peninsular Malaysia were brought to campus," Mumdas recalled.



The renowned Muslim scholar, Hamka (seventh from left)



With students during an aerobic workout, 2003

The Giver

For her own self development, one of the most enduring activities she has ever participated in since its inception is the *tafsir quran* (interpretation of the Quran) course conducted by Dr Danial Zainal Abidin.

When she began her career in 1970 the campus was still on borrowed grounds of the Malayan Teachers' College, Glugor. As is the case with the 'old timers' of the University, Mumdas recalled the family-like atmosphere then. The small number of staff members took their own initiative to organise various activities after work.

Besides being involved in religion-related activities Mumdas was a keen netball player. With the support from those interested in the game Mumdas formed a netball team. She recalled how the laboratory boys or technicians participated with much enthusiasm. There was no segregation of the sexes. Friendly matches were held with teams from the academic staff and students.

Mumdas certainly has come a long way from her duck-chasing days to earn an egg. For her, to be able to participate actively in campus programmes for the past forty one years is reward enough. 🇲🇾

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AHMAD MAHER  
HAJI OMAR



ANUAR ISHAK



ARIFF HAKIMI  
ABDUL RAHIM



BADORUL HISHAM  
ABU BAKAR



HARUDIN HUSIN



HASNIAH MAT ALI



KUAN POH HUAT



LIM CHOON WEI



LOW TACK HUAT



MOHD YUSRI YAHAYA



MOHD ZULKIFLI  
ABDUL RAHMAN



SHANTY MAURICE  
REGINALD PONNUDURRAY



SURAJ T PARAMASIVAM



TONY YAP MENG SOON

Photographs provided by Data Processing and Records Unit, Registry Department, USM.  
Compiled by Nor Rafizah Md Zain and Saw Cheang Kee.  
The Leader appreciates your updates. Please contact alo@usm.my

# Touch of the

Campus Life

# Art

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

**S**triking black calligraphy could be glimpsed through the half-folded stacks of A0 art sheets neatly arranged in the Suffah Ilmu (The Knowledge Hut) at Pusat Islam USM. Unfolded, they reveal lines upon lines of exquisitely immaculate *khat* (Islamic calligraphy) of the *thuluth* style.

Touch of the *Ijok*

Ustaz Nik Abdul Rahman working on the script in his house in Kelantan



At first glance, there appeared to be a withered peacock feather on one of the stacks. Upon closer inspection, what was assumed to be a feather turned out to be a very hardy stalk of the *ijok* fern, known as *qalam jawi* (Javanese pen) by the Arabs because of its utility as pen nibs in *khat* writing. There were also a couple of handmade pens from the *rasam* plant. The delicate tools used gave me an indication that whoever used them must be a great artist.

“Allahu Akbar” (Allah is Great) escaped my mouth countless times. No word of praise can adequately do justice to the magnificent spectacle before me. Assoc Prof Nasirun Hj Mohd Saleh (B. Sc. ‘82), the Director of USM’s Islamic Centre was the one who started the idea of compiling a handwritten Qur’an after assigning one of his members of staff to handwrite the oft-recited ‘Ya-Sin’ chapter of the Holy Book.



Nasirun



A sample of Ustaz Nik’s masterpieces as displayed in Pusat Islam, USM

It was a real privilege for me to be able to meet the great artist himself a few months later at USM’s Masjid Al-Malik Khalid. He was unassuming, unlike other artists I’ve met. Despite his pleasant smile and likeable personality, there were no adoring fans. Even those few who shook his hands did so briskly, little realizing that they were actually shaking the hands of one of the world’s top 15 *thuluthkhattat* (Islamic calligraphers)! When he demonstrated the art of writing of my own name in various styles, he made it look so easy. It was indeed a joy to see the master at work, and more so when the work was done with such effortless artistry.

“I was thinking that if I could get the writing of the Ya-Sin to be completed by hand, it would not be totally impossible to get the whole Qur’an done the same way,” recalled Nasirun, who by then had already ‘discovered’ the existence of Ustaz Nik Abdul Rahman Abdul Qadir, a world renowned *khattat* residing in Kelantan.

With the full support of the Vice-Chancellor, Nasirun traveled to Kelantan and found his way to Ustaz Nik’s house. Getting the master to agree to the task was akin to asking for the hand of a lady in marriage. Nasirun almost had to woo Ustaz Nik into agreeing to undertake the task of being USM’s *khattat* and to complete the writing of the entire Qur’an. Throughout the courtship, Ustaz Nik remained quiet. The ‘knot was tied’ when Ustaz Nik’s mother indirectly coaxed him into doing it.

Touch of the *Ijok*



An unfinished script and an exquisite *zakhrafah* (right)



Choosing the right *rasam* stalk in Kuala Kerai, Kelantan, to be made into pens

“Molek bena la tu!” (That would be truly good), she said after Nasirun explained the importance of preserving one of the traditions in Islam through the skill that has been gifted to Ustaz Nik.

That was in mid-2010. Since then, Ustaz Nik has been working at his own pace in his workshop in Kelantan. He writes only when he feels the strong urge to do so. At other times, he trains new apprentices the art. When he finishes a few pages, he would either bring them to USM or Nasirun would drive up to Kelantan to fetch them.

Ustaz Nik writes by meticulously copying from a printed Qur’an. Spacings between letters are carefully measured for accuracy. *Waqf* (stop) points are spaced exactly as in the printed version. So too are margins and borders. Where new chapters begin, Ustaz Nik has measured out and allocated spaces for the *zakhrafah* (from which the word ‘graphics’ is derived) for titles of the chapters.

He also gives particular attention to his tools. He cuts and sharpens his own pens. He picks his own *ijok* and personally determines the sharpness of the nib. He also decides on the length of the handle and the way it should be encased. Only the ink is imported from Japan.

I wonder whether there will be different tools for the *zakhrafah* when the time comes for the decorations.

“Itu oghang lain pulok, saya khot saja” (That will be done by someone else, I only write) came his casual humble reply. 🇲🇾

*Editor’s comment: USM needs to seriously consider appointing Nik to be the next resident artist so that due recognition is accorded to a unique artist that has been conveniently sidestepped by conventional artists. By having an accomplished *khattat* and *muzakhrif* as a resident artist the Universiti can again be a first in tapping this rare and invaluable treasure for the nation.*



Associate Professor Mohamed Talhah Idrus is currently a lecturer at the School of Housing, Building and Planning, USM. He can be reached at [tolamaha@yahoo.com](mailto:tolamaha@yahoo.com)



## What say we.....

Adalah dimaklumkan bahawa saya inginkan **The Leader** dalam bentuk soft copy kerana ia dapat menjimatkan masa dan kos penghantaran. Tahniah kepada semua yang terlibat dalam penghasilan majalah yang mengandungi info yang berguna untuk tatapan alumni USM.

Zaharil Anuar Arshad  
B. Eng. (Chemical) '04

Terima kasih kerana sudi menghantar majalah alumni **The Leader**. Untuk keluaran akan datang, tolong hantar melalui e-mel dalam format PDF. Ini bukan saja mengurangkan kos tetapi menjaga bumi hijau kita.

Govindaraju Alagumalai  
B. Eng. (Material and Mineral Resources) '89

USM is in Penang, a state that is promoting 'Going Green'. I hope USM Alumni magazine will be promoting the same too.

Syahrul Yusri Romli  
B. Eng. (Mechanical) '03

Good job, editorial team, for offering such valuable stories. There will be no harm if we go online. Since I get double profits doing my business online I am very sure *The Leader* can double its circulation online too and reduce cost.

Saidatul Aqmar Mohd Tahir  
B. Soc. Sc. '05

Chief Editor replies:

It is heartening to hear from USM alumni that they want softcopies of **The Leader** to help promote environmental conservation in a sustainable way. Thank you for such kind thoughts. For your information, we have been sending out softcopies via e-mail since June 2009. For past issues of the magazine, visit <http://alo.usm.my/v2/mag.asp>.

An 18<sup>th</sup> century Egyptian astrolabe quadrant made from copper, wood and lacquer

# THE ART IN SCIENCE

## FROM THE MUSLIM WORLD

Chan Suan Choo    Photographs by Jeremy Khor

**L**ike in all civilisations, old and new, arts and sciences have always been very much a part of its formation. The quest for knowledge is an inherent trait of its people and its artifacts are surviving evidence of a progressive and developed human society. In the Muslim world it is no different; with an extensive collection of items celebrating its glory, especially during its Golden Age (7<sup>th</sup> to 15<sup>th</sup> century) when the advancement in the fields of mathematics, medicine and astronomy grew by leaps and bounds. Tools were invented or at the least improved upon to achieve greater results in the various scientific fields. One such instrument is the astrolabe. This medieval instrument of Greek origin which is used to determine latitude, longitude, and time of day, was refined by Muslim astronomers to locate the *qiblat* (direction of Makkah) from different points of origins and to determine the time for *solat* (prayers).

*Rather unusual for an Islamic artifact to have such animalistic detailing on its hilt and sheath but this long sword made from iron and copper originated from the Malay Kingdom of Bugis from around 16<sup>th</sup> to 18<sup>th</sup> century.*

The Art in Science from the Muslim World

USM's Muzium and Galeri Tuanku Fauziah (MGTF) has on exhibit a collection of astrolabes of various constructions and origins together with other apparatus like the navigation compasses, celestial globes and measuring equipment. These astronomical artifacts identify its Islamic origins through the many Arabic inscriptions engraved onto them. Although these items, made from copper, were not from the time of the Islamic Golden Age but dated from around the 18<sup>th</sup> century, nevertheless their inclusion to the museum's Islamic collection is more than noteworthy.

Long swords engraved with Quranic verses, a copper battle axe with delicate carvings on its blades and even a body armour complete with a pointy helmet, are some menacing looking archaic weaponry from the Islamic world.



These navigation compasses made from copper came from Africa in the 18<sup>th</sup> century

A close-up view of a 19<sup>th</sup> century astrolabe from Spain which is used to measure height



The decorative finial on the archaic copper measuring equipment from 19<sup>th</sup> century Spain



This copper twisted astrolabe or **rubu mujayyab** was originated from Iran the 18<sup>th</sup> century





A view of the Islamic Art Gallery at the MGTG with Islamic calligraphy in various media hanging on the walls



This huge copper censer or incense burning pot from India has Quranic verses etched on its bulbous body



Hand-scribed illuminated copy of the Quran with decorative borders



Chinese pottery from the Ming period (1368-1644) with Islamic calligraphy

Islamic calligraphy graces the walls of the Islamic Art Gallery, a specially dedicated room within this expansive museum. Earlier local pieces were formed on *plaster of paris* while the turn-of-the-century works of art from China were executed Chinese ink painting style on rice paper. Also on display are handwritten Qurans and a Ming ceramic bowl. But what stands out, quite literally at its height of 145 cm, is a huge copper incense burning pot.

In March 2008, MGTG premiered its Islamic antiquities in an exhibition entitled IQRA' - *The Garden of Wisdom* at the Innovation and Design Gallery and later, to various venues beyond the gates of USM, in Pulau Pinang, Perak and even Brunei Darussalam. Here was the opportunity to introduce these artifacts to both local and international audiences, including in an exhibition at a local shopping mall.

Now a permanent exhibit, the Islamic collection can be viewed at MGTG during its new opening hours, at 9.00 am - 6.00 pm on Mondays to Saturday. 🏠

Chan Suan Choo is currently an editor with *The Leader*. She can be reached at [matlock@streamyx.com](mailto:matlock@streamyx.com)

Malaysia's longest  
surviving varsity band



**Labulia Rasa**

is **40** years old

**24 September 2011**

Artwork by Mohamed Talhah Idrus

**COME TOGETHER**

at **Hotel Equatorial Penang**

Sustaining Heritage



# STRENGTH from WITHIN

Text and photographs by  
Rusli Jamaluddin

Strength From Within



aptly known as the ‘infantry armskote’, the old Blocks 13, 14 and 15 were once part of the high security corridors of Minden Barracks armaments. Tucked away in a secluded precinct, it was here that routine deployments of combat weapons took place. These buildings continue to stand the test of time and are silent witnesses of many glorious deeds. An ‘armskote’ is another word for ‘armoury’.

Originally designed for Malarial and Hygiene Control unit in 1938, the use of these buildings for such purpose was short-lived. As World War II started a year later and rapidly progressed, military logistical matters escalated in number and took precedence. The buildings were then requisitioned by the army high command to be used as a light infantry weapon repository.

“When a soldier joins the military, one of the first thing he receives is a weapon. He must learn to dismantle and assemble a gun. The gun had to be cleaned, dry and oiled by the soldier before handing over to the designated ‘armskote’,” ex-serviceman Abu Hanifah said, adding that all military personnel were required to turn in their firearms after use.

He revealed that Block 13 was where all the rifles and light-machine Bren guns were stashed whilst the hand grenades were stocked in Block 15.

“Even in those days, weapons were hoarded like gold for they were regulated items in the encampment,” Hanifah pointed out. “Double-armed guards were stationed at the checkpoint as the first line of defense”.

He recalled the security around Block 14 as being very tight, monitoring round the clock and of every visitor’s movement. The guards were authorised to shoot any intruder.

The charm of this secluded enclave remains encapsulated in time. The once forbidding buildings have transformed into a genial and familiar landmark that we see in Hadhanah Pusat Islam (Nursery of Islamic Centre, USM) today.

Strength From Within



Block 13 as it is today



Children reciting **du'a**

Although the war days are over, these refurbished old buildings are continuing to serve 'battles' but this time for peace to reign. From the sterile high security environment of the bygone years, one can notice the stark difference it is now vibrant with the recital of prayers, the joyful sounds of kids in the nursery.

'Strength from within' is how the preschool sums it up. Just about everywhere in the gathering space, the interior walls are adorned with valuable and insightful reminder: "Allah, The Most Powerful". Many prayers written on the walls have powerful truths, if discovered, can help motivate the child's confidence. The children will not have to load rifles, but they must be familiar with their routine lessons and learn them by heart. They may be preschoolers but they are taking all that are taught like good soldiers.

Just as weaponry being central to the soldiers' world, the preschoolers too have their own 'smart weapon'- the *du'a* (prayer) - to guide them in facing life's challenges. The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings upon him) said, "*Du'a* is the believer's weapon." The true believer is always in direct and constant interaction with Allah, his beloved and his Lord. In fact, the preschoolers are doing just that - seeking blessing in a fun and engaging way.

The rhythm of children chanting *du'a* (prayer before lesson) is one of the common prayer:

"O' Allah, reveal to us Your Wisdom;  
And bestow upon us Your Compassion,  
O' The Most Merciful,  
O' Allah, give us knowledge,  
And make us understand..."



The main hall with the various **du'a** painted on the wall



Strength From Within



Block 14

Sustaining Heritage



Outdoor play area



“Teach them when they are young and the values will remain with them for the rest of their lives,” said senior caregiver, Ustaz Rhaffor. He pointed out that the *du'a* gives the children an early start in developing strong, meaningful prayer habits.

“The basic *du'as* are easy to memorise and an average child knows more than her parents did at the same age,” he added with a chuckle.

Thus far, Hadhanah goals have remained clear: Bringing every child in direct and constant interaction with Allah. Through its ‘smart start’ programme, the age-appropriate chores for preschoolers are designed to stimulate the social, emotional, mental and physical growth of young children. Indeed the ‘spiritual weapons’ exist alongside the preschoolers daily activities are no ordinary weapons. On the contrary to the lethal weapons that once stored in these buildings, the ‘weapons’ now issued to the children are to enable them to negotiate the minefields in life and emerge as a better person. **L**

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# The Imam

Ustaz Abdul Wahab  
(Photographs by Rusli Jamaluddin)

حَمْدَانُ مُحَمَّدُ هَسَّانُ

Hamdan Mohd Hassan

Photographs courtesy of  
Pusat Islam

**T**he tranquil hall of Masjid al Malik Khalid resonated with the mesmerising, rhythmic and soothing hum of Ustaz Abdul Wahab's reading of the Qur'an. His Medina-style of recitation was unique then but would later become popular with other *qaris* (reciters). Many flocked to USM's mosque for *tarawih* prayers during Ramadan to listen to him.

With a jovial, easygoing and likable disposition, Ustaz Abdul Wahab Awang Kechik who began his tenure as the second *ustaz* with the Islamic Centre in the early eighties, personifies the graciousness and charming hospitality of USM by embodying spirituality with feelings and simplicity. Always a gracious host, he together with his wife Ustazah Faridah, often extended open invitation to his humble home, next to the *Masjid*, which was provided by the University. "*Mai ke rumah, minum kopi ke, teh ke.*"

His affable and sociable nature has led to his extensive network of contacts including those in Saudi Arabia. Those who had performed *umrah* (pilgrimage) with

him as guide had expressed their experience as adventurous. On one of the trips, he even got into an altercation with a local policeman at Jeddah Airport about parking. However it ended amicably; surprisingly with hugs and kisses.

Usually attired in a flowing white robe and white *kufiya* (headdress) especially at the *masjid*, Ustaz Abdul Wahab sometimes wore Arabian garb and would look majestic reading the sermons from the pulpit on Fridays as a *khatib* in an Egyptian-like white turban wrapped around a red cap. His lectures and sermons were simple, concise and forthright. He spoke in a plain language, gave succinct references and avoided giving abstract



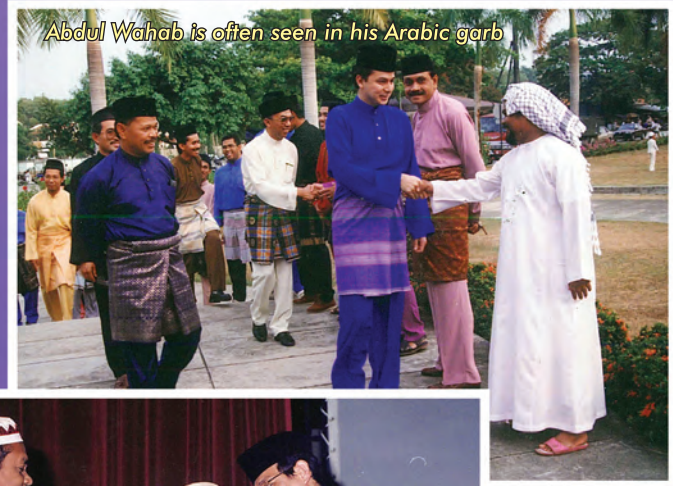
## Still Remembered

### The Imam

and complicated answers. When sought on performing the Hajj to the Holy Land, his counsel was, "Nak pi tu nak buat ibadah, jangan susah-susah." His short yet lively and meaningful Friday sermons were much appreciated by many in the congregation.

It is said back then in the eighties that all the *ustaz* engaged by the Islamic Centre had to be talented in the kitchen. Ustaz Abdul Wahab was one such cook; known to buzz around the kitchen, giving instructions and creating sumptuous meals with his deft touches and the right sprinkling of spices. Memories of feasting by the *talam*, sharing a platter of rice, meat and vegetable with three others in sparse yet cheerful atmosphere then will be experiences always treasured.

The *ustaz* used to lead *usrachs* (study circles) where groups of people come together to learn, reflect and contemplate on religion and character improvement in an informal setting. He helped others in improving the reading and understanding of the *Qur'an*, the *Sunnah* and Islamic teachings as well as acting as facilitator during discussions of contemporary issues in an interactive situation. Participation was optional. "Siapa nak mai pun takpa, tak mai pun takpa," as he would just say. He assisted in getting the *usrach* to transcend and cut across barriers of rank and personal background. One such *usrach* led by him, *Usrah Pantai Jerejak*, broke new ground and went on to be established as an Islamic Outreach Centre in Pulau Pinang.



Abdul Wahab is often seen in his Arabic garb



The Vice-Chancellor conferring an honorary award to Abdul Wahab during Maal Hijrah celebration

Ustaz Abdul Rhaffor, his colleague from the Islamic Centre recalls, "Ustaz Abdul Wahab is a sincere person and easy to deal with. He is firm when it concerns *hukum* (religious commandments) but yet be amiable at the same time. Both strict and lovable, he is very committed to his *Imam* duties. He exudes great influence and plays a role in nurturing staff. People listen to what he says. His deeds and contribution to the Islamic Centre has been tremendous and had a vital role in the shaping of the campus community."

"He does not say that much but he practices what he preaches." Ustaz Abdul Rhaffor recalled the time when Ustaz Abdul Wahab's mother passed away, he had quickly arranged his mother's funeral and burial within a few hours of death. When asked, Ustaz Abdul Wahab remarked, "Kalau nak ziarah elok waktu hidup, kerana mayat elok disegerakan." Ustaz Abdul Rhaffor says he quotes this phrase during his own lectures as a constant reminder to his audience to make social visits and demonstrate care for loved ones while they are still living.

"Tak guna cakap bab-bab Islam tagha mana tapi bila lalu depan masjid dengar azan, tak singgah," reminds this wise man. Ustaz Abdul Wahab succeeded in obtaining a masters degree from USM and was offered a position to teach in the University before he retiring in 2005. Preferring a kampong lifestyle with his loving family these days, he lives in Pokok Sena, Kepala Batas. **L**



He is one of the key persons in expanding USM's international network



Busy in the kitchen with USM volunteers

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# THE Signs

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



The **Kuar** (night heron) is thriving well in Minden campus

Soon will We show them our Signs in the (furthest) regions (of the earth), and in their own souls, until it becomes manifest to them that this is the Truth. Is it not enough that thy Lord doth witness all things?

Al-Qur'an, Chapter "The Signs", verse 53



The **Bangau** (various egrets) do not have much choice but to contend with limited available spaces around Pulau Pinang

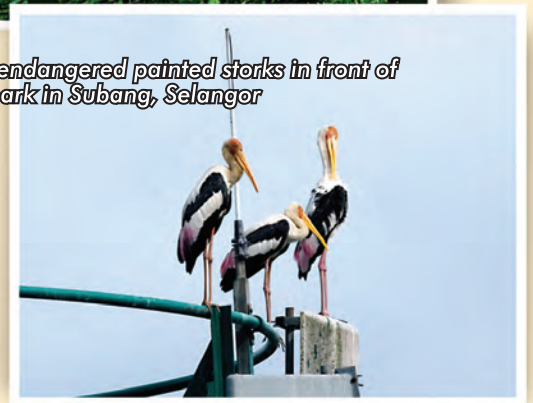
**T**he sciences as discovered and expanded by Islam have the unique claim of deriving their ideas about the world and of understanding it from Al-Qur'an. The great scholar Ibn Sina (Avicenna) was believed to have been inspired to study anatomy after feeling challenged by the verse above.

Before the fall of Granada in 1492, numerous Muslim scientists have pushed the limits of science to enable them to connect human understanding of the secular with Islam. Of particular interest was secular knowledge relating to nature and the environment since Al-Qur'an abounds with references to 'the sky, the earth and everything in between'.

The holy Al-Qur'an consistently draws the readers' attention to terrestrial and celestial elements and to what is contained within them. Birds are mentioned countless times in the Al-Qur'an, and the ability of our feathered friends to soar across the skies is constantly attributed to the Divine.



The **Burung Balai** (Brown Shrike) appears seasonally in campus and makes its presence quite conspicuous



The endangered painted storks in front of Skypark in Subang, Selangor

“Have, then, they [who deny the truth] never considered the birds, enabled [by God] to fly in mid-air, with none but God holding them aloft? In this, behold, there are messages indeed for people who will believe!” (The Bee:79)

“And We caused the mountains to join David in extolling Our limitless glory, and likewise the birds: for We are able to do [all things].” (The Prophets: 79)

Birds are thus prominently featured to intellectually challenge 'those who think'.

### The Signs

It is not surprising then that many societies were quick to explore how humans can benefit from birds. In many cultures, birds assume cultural and religious significance. In addition to that, birds, both domesticated and wild, are a food source. Some birds of prey also bring food to humans. For instance, the falcon, because of its hunting prowess, is widely trained and used by humans to hunt for food. Falcons are also used now to deter pests from tall buildings and even popular places like Trafalgar Square in London. Birds can also tell us about the state of our surroundings - a decline in the bird population in certain areas may indicate that there is a threat to our immediate environment.

Birds have also been tapped as billion-dollar earners in many countries. Sadly, despite the fact that a substantial number of species are readily found in the country, Malaysian policy-makers have not been too keen to tap their potentials to generate income. A commendable effort, however, can be seen in the form of the Kuala Gula Bird Sanctuary in Perak, a hot spot for birds and naturally, birdwatchers.



Kuala Gula in Perak has successfully managed to host large species like the **Burung Botak** (Milky Stork), **Burung Upih** (Adjutant Stork) and **memerang** (otter)



The Signs




The **Murai Cacing** (Magpie Robin) sings its songs boldly in carparks and near human activities



The night heron is breeding successfully in Tasik Harapan



The **sewah** (Japanese Sparrowhawk) is an effective controller of the smaller birds, yet its potentials have not been commercially utilised

USM claims to hosting between 80-100 species in the Minden campus alone but again the management of these species is almost non-existent and the economic potential has never been properly tapped. Minimal charges for birdwatching can no doubt generate some income to the university but perhaps more importantly, properly organised birdwatching tours will be able to highlight the importance of their conservation and the seriousness of the university to spearhead this belated awareness campaign. 



The **chestnut-coloured malkoha** is less seen in the campus these days

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# TRAILER

## **Switch-ed**

Switch™, an Apple Premium Reseller, will be opening an outlet at the former office of Pejabat Pemañuan dan Perhubungan Alumni, Anjung Budi in early September.



The former PPPA office at Anjung Budi to be occupied by Switch™

## **Convocation**

The 44<sup>th</sup> Convocation will be held at Dewan Tunku Syed Putra from 21 - 25 September.

## **Medan, Indonesia**

A school holiday package tour! Pejabat Pemañuan dan Perhubungan Alumni (PPPA) will conduct an exhilarating tour to Medan/Parapat/Samosir Island/Brastagi from 23 to 28 December 2011 for interested alumni and friends. Details, please contact PPPA at 04- 6534792/4791

## **Balikampus 2011**

All alumni and associates are invited to participate in *Balikampus 2011* scheduled for 2-3 December in Kampus Kesehatan, Kelantan. This is the first time the event will be held outside the main campus. Kindly contact Pejabat Pemañuan dan Perhubungan Alumni at [alo@usm.my](mailto:alo@usm.my) or 04-6534792/4791 for more details.

# RECONCILING DEVELOPMENT

Jonathan Chen  
B. Comm. '05

Photographs by  
Yong Check Yoon and Yusuf Suid

Artwork by Alec Chin

“The thing is, conventional world views on both development and management stem from the capitalist and communist ideologies. We are trying to redefine the meanings of development and management as well as to come up with strategies to carry out our findings.”

- Prof Muhammad Syukri Salleh



Nestled somewhere in the lush greenery of Universiti Sains Malaysia (USM) lies the Centre for Islamic Development Management Studies (ISDEV). It is a small unit, which at the moment comprises only two full-time staff, but packs quite a big punch in terms of researching alternative streams in the fields of development and management.

The centre, which comes under the purview of the School of Social Sciences, was launched in 2005 under the leadership of Prof Muhammad Syukri Salleh (Soc. Sc. '78). In the six years of its establishment, ISDEV has constantly battled against the tide in voicing out its views on issues pertaining to development and management from an Islamic perspective.

Recounting the beginnings of ISDEV, Syukri tells *The Leader* that setting up the Centre was certainly no walk in the park.

"In fact, it took me nearly 25 years to set up this place," he said with a pause, "about my entire career as an academician."

The beginnings of ISDEV can be traced back to as early as 1981 when Syukri returned from his doctoral studies at the University of Oxford. It was during that time when Malaysia faced an Islamic resurgence, both politically and socially.

"It was interesting to me because the country's Islamic resurgence seemed to go against the establishment. Also, during that time, there were a great number of foreign lecturers who were teaching in USM, with their backgrounds revolving around the main ideological streams of capitalism and neo-Marxism, which were antagonistic of Islamism."

As a result, Syukri had to face two challenges; the stigma of being anti-establishment and a clash of ideology. But thanks to these hurdles, opportunities emerged for him to start a sole course in Islamic Development.

Not knowing whether his course would be a success or a failure, he was pleasantly surprised to see that a number of students keen on the subject were growing. However, the rising popularity of his course was met with indignation.

"I remember being accused by the authorities for polarising students, but I think it was due to the students not having alternatives in the popular ideologies at the time. Islamic Development provided them with a new avenue of thinking," he said.

With the growing popularity of Islamic Development studies, a new set of challenges arose when Syukri wanted to expand the course into a larger entity.

Reconciling Development

“We had a hard time trying to convince the University to expand the course into a programme probably because during that time, a lot of graduates in Islamic studies were unemployed or had trouble finding jobs.”

“However, I guess our message got through to the University that we were not undertaking Islamic Studies per se, but we were studying Islam from a Social Science perspective,” he explains.



Slowly but surely, Syukri built on his track record before finally launching ISDEV in 2005 as a virtual centre in USM. But with it came a new set of challenges. “Being a virtual centre, we have no financial backing and we were not autonomous but accountable to the School of Social Sciences. However, these challenges have made us strong and we are now financially independent of the University with funding obtained from our members as well as from consultancy works,” he says.

What makes research at ISDEV unique is that it is centred on development and management from an Islamic context.

“The thing is, conventional world views on both development and management stem from the capitalist and communist ideologies. We are trying to redefine the meanings of development and management as well as to come up with strategies to carry out our findings,” Syukri explains.




A showcase with the reproduction of covers of publications with ISDEV contribution

“You see, when one speaks of development, it is usually materialistic and is measured by growth, productivity and earning capacity to fulfil one’s ‘wants’ beyond their needs. Similarly, conventional views of management are mostly on managing resources to maximise production, also to fulfil the ‘wants’ more than the needs.”

“This is where Islamic development and management come in. We feel that development and management needs to be looked at and measured from a spiritual perspective. Ultimately, we want to study on how to manage our desires, known as *nafs*,” he expounds further.

Syukri believes that the proper management of *nafs* is one of the corner stones of sustainable development, a major focus of the University.

“Basically, we believe that one of the fundamental functions of human beings is to be managers, who are able to manage ‘horizontal’ relationships with fellow human beings, the environment and most importantly, a ‘vertical’ relationship with God,” he says in conclusion. 

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# 2011 Balikampus *in Kelantan*

**2-3 December 2011 | Kampus Kesihatan, Kelantan.**

For more details, please contact Pejabat Pemajuan dan Perhubungan Alumni at [alo@usm.my](mailto:alo@usm.my) or 04-6534792/4791 for more details.

# مسجد الملوك خالد

## Point of Convergence

Yong Chek Yoon  
Photographs courtesy of PTPM

Artwork by Rusli Jamaluddin



**W**

hen USM was temporarily located at the premises of the Malayan Teachers' Training College in Glugor, most of its Muslim community attended prayers at the nearby Masjid Sungai Glugor. When USM moved into the Minden campus in 1971, some staff and students used the building across the road from the present Centre for Distance Learning as a *surau* (prayer room). However, Friday prayers were done at the Glugor and Batu Uban mosques.

Pusat Islam during construction in 1982

## Point of Convergence



The site of the first **surau** is now occupied by **Dataran Merah**



**Pusat Sejahtera's dental clinic** was a **surau** used for Friday prayers (right, partially hidden by the trees)

In the mid-1970s, the first floor of the Dewan Pelbagaiguna (Block 309) where Pusat Sejahtera's dental clinic is now located, became the campus venue for Friday prayers.

The surau remained in use until the construction of Masjid Al-Malik Khalid at the Sungai Dua gate. During this period, most of the Muslim staff and students continued to join the congregation on Fridays at Masjid Sungai Glugor while some attended the Masjid Batu Uban.

When Tan Sri Hamdan Sheikh Tahir took over as the second VC, he visited several mosques around the Klang Valley to glean ideas and obtain inspiration pertaining to the mosque that USM was planning to build. He also managed to seek a contribution amounting RM 1.5 million from Al-Malik Khalid Abdul Aziz Ali Su'ud, the fourth king of Saudi Arabia and this explains how USM's mosque got its name. Helping Hamzah in realising his objectives were Sheikh Abdul Rahman Ghannam Al-Ghannam Religious Advisor for the Embassy of Saudi Arabia in Malaysia, also a religious teacher, and Mohd Yusoff Tahir from the Advisory and Religious Affairs Unit (Division of Student Affairs) USM.

An allocation of RM350,000 for the construction of the mosque was approved under the second Prime Minister of Malaysia, Tun Abdul Razak Hussein Al-Haj, and he agreed to be its patron. Work on the mosque then started in early 1981 and was completed in 1983.


The following year, USM merged the Islamic Hall with the Advisory and Islamic Guidance Unit to create the Islamic Centre.

The site on which Masjid Al-Malik Khalid was erected was formerly military truck inspection bays and a painting workshop. This workshop, standing on part of a half hectare land, was demolished to make way for the construction of the mosque.



**Inaugural Friday congregation in Block 309**  
(Photograph courtesy of Pusat Islam)

Fawzah Lucas, Dean of the School of Building, Housing and Planning, designed the mosque, drawing inspiration from the 18<sup>th</sup> century Masjid Kampong Laut of Kelantan (the oldest surviving wooden mosque in Malaysia.) The result of which we can see today as a steep multi-tiered roof design, capped with golden domes and 46-metre towers in their majestic glory.

When the mosque was built, it could only accommodate a congregation of 1,700 people but after its expansion in 1999, it had the capacity to accommodate a total of 3,000 worshippers. The renovated and enlarged mosque was officiated on 6 June 2000. Gelugor and Sungai Dua *qaryah* (Arabic for 'village' or 'town') members also joined in at Masjid Al-Malik Khalid for prayers and charity-related activities. 



Recipients of the Annual Fund disbursement checking out the contents of their envelopes  
(Photographs by Mohd Fairus Md Isa)

# Touching Hearts

Text and photographs by Yong Check Yoon

**P**overty recognises no boundary be it race or creed and USM remains resolute in its effort not to let poor students fall behind in their studies just because they lack the means to pay their tuition fees, purchase study materials or sustain themselves with daily necessities. Students who are less distracted by financial worry would be better able to focus on their core business of studying and succeed in life.

For that reason, USM launched the Universiti's Annual Fund in 2009 with the objective of helping students cope against the rising costs of living and also dispense financial aid to meet other contingencies. It was thus a touching moment on 1 July when Vice-Chancellor Professor Tan Sri Dzulkifli Abdul Razak handed out this aid to 35 recipients at the Dewan Persidangan Universiti (USM Conference Hall- DPU). Another 78 students on the aid list could not attend the ceremony for one reason or another but mostly because they were deterred by the cost of travel, particularly those from the Health Campus in Kelantan.

Life was hard for some of the students who survived on either one meal daily or on instant noodles, not by choice but by circumstances. The Annual Fund is supported by contributions from alumni, parents of current students, staff and well wishers. Pejabat Pemajuan dan Perhubungan Alumni (PPPA), coordinated this project that reaches out to all the Universiti's campuses.

"Our total hand-out comes close to RM120,000 is made possible by our generous donors," said Development Manager Dr Asha Suresh Chand from PPPA.



Touching Hearts

One of the recipients Ow Simone was elated to be given a place in the USM School of The Arts and has to live frugally on campus within the amount provided by a study loan from the national agency National Higher Education Fund Corporation (PTPTN). She is grateful for the RM700 from the Annual Fund as it would be a further relief on her aunt's financial burden. Simone whose mother had died and had lost contact with her father, is dependent upon her aunt who works as a cleaner.

Komala Wanie, a third year Computer Science student undergoing her final year industrial training, is in a dilemma being neither the recipient of a scholarship or loan. Her father suffered a stroke last year and her mother has to babysit so as to support the family. The Annual Fund disbursement could not have come at a more opportune moment.



Tan Sook Kim signing the attendance book



The best birthday gift for Anantha Kumar Arumugam



Mohd Sajulfitri



Assoc Prof Dr Gurjeet Kaur

Son of village sundry shop operators in Terengganu, Mohd Sajulfitri Mohamad Salleh is the fourth of five siblings and is currently a second-year computer science student. However, Sajulfitri has to work part time to supplement his RM5 daily allocation for meals to cover other expenses like accommodation and tuition fees. As a result, his grades suffered and he promised to perform better. He said that the fund would lessen his financial worries and enables him to focus on his studies.

These are but a few cases where the Annual Fund has made a small but important impact. Accordingly, Assoc Prof Dr Gurjeet Kaur (M. D. '89), a donor from the Institute for Research in Molecular Medicine (INFORMM) said that she is glad to help because it will bring "comforting relief to parents/guardians while their children or those under their care can continue to focus on their education". She is one of the many donors who upon receiving the appeal letter responded with an open heart. Gurjeet also donates to other charities.

In the interest of transparency and in accordance with good stewardship in the management of the Annual Fund, some 15 donors invited to the simple ceremony at DPU witnessed at first hand how their contributions were distributed to such deserving recipients. Indeed, the collective effort of individual donors has given the students a glimmer of hope for a better tomorrow.

USM is committed to its APEX agenda with the noble aim of helping to uplift the wellbeing of the world's bottom billion. However, it has not overlooked the old adage ... charity must surely begin at home! 🇲🇾

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

Artwork by Rusli Jamaluddin

Yusuf Suid  
B. Comp. Sc. '06

Photographs by  
Yusuf Suid  
Yong Check Yoon  
Rusli Jamaluddin

# اے کھانے کے پیمانے



Those on campus who are partial to Middle Eastern foodstuffs such as Syrian tea, dried figs, exotic spices and date vinegar do not really have to go far to find these delicacies. In fact, one does not even have to look beyond the campus walls.

A nondescript stall located beside Masjid Al-Malik Khalid, fronting the car park, has a variety of imported Middle Eastern dry goods, nicely arranged on wooden racks. It also offers *briyani* (rice cooked with spices, meat or vegetables) with chicken cooked in different styles with slices of potatoes. This rice dish usually comes readily packed in microwavable containers, ready to be sold.

Exploring every nook and cranny of the tiny stall proved interesting, and it was even more so when a Pakistani Computer Science student, Abdusami, who helps out at the stall, provided a comprehensive 'guided tour'. He pointed out that the Rabea tea from Saudi Arabia is popular among Malaysians, especially those who have been able to sample the delights of this drink during the Hajj. This, however, is not the only tea that has become a firm favourite among many Malaysians. The Syrian tea is also many people's tea of choice.



Preserved grape leaves



Fava beans in olive oil

"Spices are also important in the preparation of Middle Eastern meals because they are used not only to give flavour but also to add colour to the food," he explained. "We also stock various types of grains and beans."

For those who relish dried fruits, dates and figs are readily available. Other exotic finds here include bottled grape leaves, canned Egyptian fava beans in olive oil, and green olives in various preparations.

Because of its strategic location, this small stall enjoys brisk business, especially after Friday prayers and during the fasting month of *Ramadhan*. With the existence of this stall, members of the USM community can have easy and immediate access to traditional Middle Eastern fare and dry goods. 🇺🇸

Yusuf Suid is currently the IT officer at the Pejabat Pempajuan dan Perhubungan Alumni (PPPA), USM. He can be contacted at [yusufsuid@gmail.com](mailto:yusufsuid@gmail.com)



# GLUGOR'S MUSLIM LEGACY

Yong Check Yoon

Photographs by Rusli Jamaluddin

Artwork by Rusli Jamaluddin

When USM first moved into Minden in 1971, many Muslim staff and students used to trek a little more than 1 km to Masjid Jamek Sungei Glugor, one of the earliest mosques in Pulau Pinang for prayers, especially on Friday.

The main congregational hall with the niche (centre) where the *imam* leads the prayer



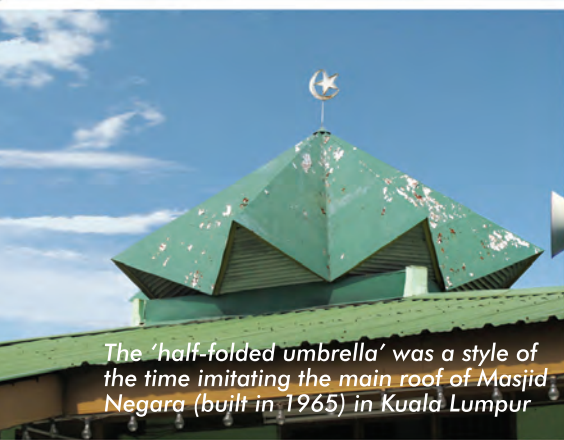
This section of the hall was added on during later years



The site of the original timber mosque

The original was a timber structure which would have stood on the site of the quarters for marine base workers, less than 30 m away. As with most, if not all, structures of those days, they crumbled with age and eventually other structures were built over them. In the process, only morsels of information passed down by word of mouth are available.

The present mosque was constructed circa 1810 by an Indian Muslim on a piece of land donated by David Brown of the Glugor Estate fame. David would have been in his mid-30s and as James Low wrote in his book *A Dissertation on the Soil & Agriculture of the British Settlement of Penang*: '(David) stood alone in 1810 as a spice planter on extensive scale.'



The 'half-folded umbrella' was a style of the time imitating the main roof of Masjid Negara (built in 1965) in Kuala Lumpur



The minaret with the still-functioning old loudspeakers

During those early years, the shoreline was close to the mosque with gentle waves sometimes lapping into the fringes of its compound. Therefore, it is not surprising if this mosque served a small fishing community that existed long before land reclamations works transformed the shape of the Pulau Pinang eastern coastline into an obese 'turtle' as we see in maps today.

Glugor's Muslim Legacy

The mosque's compound and the graveyard adjacent to it are sited on sandy ground, the same type of white sand that you find on a beach. The sand spreads out towards the cluster of quarters for Marine Base workers and perhaps beyond, now tarred over, and sometimes, laid over with other types of earth.

Behind the mosque is an old unmarked grave. Considering that it is one of the two that is surrounded by a low wall found in the mosque's vicinity, it could belong to someone of importance.



The old section of the mosque



Friday prayer



The grave of Tok Ismail

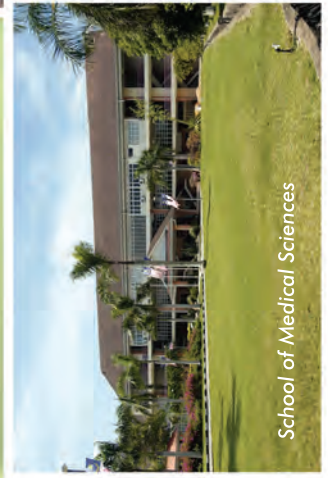


This badly weathered grave could have been that of one Tok (an honorific title) Ismail who died around 1890 as it is sited close to the old section of the mosque (before extensions were added on) together with a handful of existing graves. The locals believed Tok Ismail to be a wali, an Arabic word denoting 'saint'.

Since the opening of USM's Masjid Al-Malik Khalid in September 1983 fewer USM staff and students join the congregation at Masjid Jamek Sungei Glugor. Nonetheless it still draws in a large Muslim community from the much developed Gelugor area. 🕌

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# Health Campus Kubang Kerian, Kelantan



Views of the campus  
(Photographs by Photography Unit, School of Medical Sciences)

# touchdown Beijing

Text and photographs by  
Sharifah Darweena Syed Ahmad Amir Feisal  
B. Sc. '07

It was truly a memorable trip indeed for those who have been to the 'Northern Capital', Beijing, China. Besides being a home to some 19.6 million inhabitants, it has been estimated that about two per cent of its population are Muslims. There are no fewer than half a dozen mosques in the metropolitan city and one of which is Niujie Mosque which is claimed to be the oldest, built more than six centuries ago.

During the Pejabat Pemajuan dan Perhubungan Alumni (PPPA)-organised trip in April, the PPPA group, despite having 'suffered' an initial culture shock, marveled at the cultural diversity and the immensity of the ancient city against the backdrop of the new. The tour participants managed to bring back souvenirs but not as many as those photographs captured within their cameras, and leaving their footprints at the places they visited.



Hand-pulled noodles and **hong bing lou** are among the local Muslim fare



A **halal** convenient store



A hybrid public transport



Touchdown Beijing



Niuji Mosque



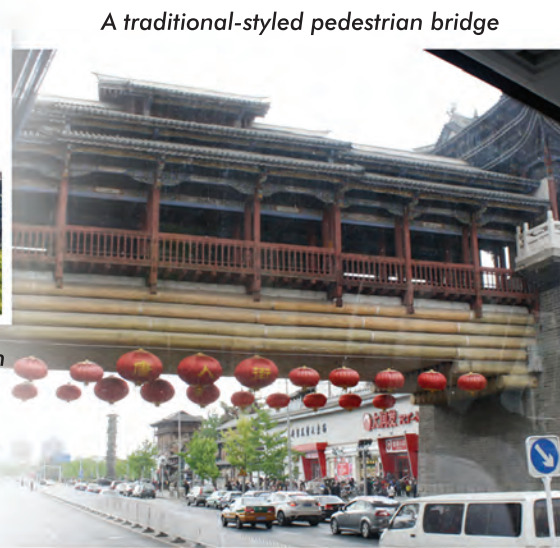
Wudu (ablution) area with hot water provided



The night life



The 44-storey China Central Television (CCTV) headquarters in the Beijing Central Business District



A traditional-styled pedestrian bridge

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Yong Check Yoon

Photographs by  
Rusli Jamaluddin  
Yong Check Yoon  
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# A Trip of Discovery

It was a familiarisation visit for *The Leader* editorial team to the Advanced Medical & Dental Institute (AMDI) in Bertam, Kepala Batas, on 6 July. The team members were taken on a tour of the Women's Wellness Clinic, Specialist Medical Clinic, Specialist Dental Clinic, Clinical Research facility, Advanced Clinical Diagnostic Laboratory and Oral Health Clinic. AMDI is in the progress of developing the Clinical Trial Centre (CTC) and the Animal Research Centre (ARC) on a dedicated 45 hectare site. Its clinical services are opened to the public and also facilitate research and post-graduate teaching.



Arriving at the Specialist Clinic



At the one-year-old Fatimah Az-Zahra Hospice Centre



The Eye Clinic at AMDI



The 'cooking lab' where food is prepared by dietitians for patients



A mobile clinic that provides services in kampungs and the suburban areas





The dental clinic

A range of physiotherapy equipment



Dr Bakiah Shaharuddin (second from right) introducing the Day Care Centre



Getting an invigorating rub down by a massage chair



The Clinical Trial Centre (CTC) will be functioning soon



## A Deserving Cause

A visit to Pertubuhan Bela Didik Anak-anak Yatim dan Miskin Al-Farabi (PBDAYM), Sik Kedah on 9 July was organised by Normah Hussin (B. Sc. Ed. '81) with the help of Assoc Prof Dr Abdullah Embong (B. Sc. '78) and Pejabat Pemajuan dan Perhubungan Alumni (PPPA). This visit brought joy to some 30 children at the orphanage. Those who wish to contribute to the orphanage can do so at PBDAYM Al-Farabi Acc No: 200510100005754-8 (Agro Bank).

## Toy Tales

A 12-day exhibition of traditional and contemporary toys and games *Play Any Way* was launched at Tuanku Fauziah Museum and Art Gallery on 18 May. Besides the exhibition, it also hosted toy making workshops and the playing of traditional games such as *guli*, *congkak*, *kalitoi* and *konda-kondi*.



## Bowling Party

A friendly bowling competition was organised by Nor Azizah Ismail @ Abdul Aziz (B. Comp. Sc. '08), supported by PPPA, on 11 July at the Ampang Bowl in Sunshine Bayan Baru. About 50 alumni, particularly the cohorts from 2007-2009, and their friends participated and thoroughly enjoyed the game.

## Visit to Oman

USM officials visited Muscat, Oman, on 24-26 April to explore areas of research collaboration with Sultan Qaboos University including the possible establishment of the Sultan Qaboos Chair in Sustainable Community Development in USM. The delegation headed by Vice-Chancellor Prof Tan Sri Dzulkipli Abdul Razak also hosted a dinner for the USM Omani Alumni.





### Right Chemistry

Persatuan Alumni USM (PAUSM) was involved in an initiative to help technical personnel in chemistry-based laboratory and research work to meet their in-house QA/QC requirements via a workshop entitled *AA Instrumentation Validation Course* on 28 June. The workshop, attended by 25 participants comprising chemistry alumni, was conducted by Perkin Elmer (a technology leader providing laboratory solution in chemical analysis) with support from the Malaysian Institute of Chemistry, Pulau Pinang branch.

### P. Ramlee - An Academic Discourse

In conjunction with Hari Seniman (Artistes Day), the School of The Arts, USM and the National Archives co-organised *Majlis Bicara Seni P. Ramlee, Seniman Sepanjang Zaman* on 28 June at Pasiban Agung. Dato' Mustapha Ma'arof, a veteran actor and filmmaker, delivered the keynote address, followed by an academic discourse on the impact of P. Ramlee's films in the local art scene. The panelists were Assoc Prof Abdul Samat Salleh B. A. '77 (inset), Assoc Prof Razif Mohd and Dr Mahyudin Ahmad.



### Commercial Licensing Agreement

A memorandum of agreement was signed between USM and MBL Biotech Sdn Bhd on 8 July which allows the latter to commercialise an innovative palm kernel oil extraction process arising from research by the School of Industrial Technology. The technology, using supercritical carbon dioxide as solvent, helps to reduce oil loss during extraction and ensures its by-products are environmental-friendly.

### SUKUM-36

USM participated in the 36<sup>th</sup> Inter-Varsity Games (SUKUM) and won three gold medals in futsal (men), *sepak takraw* and soccer (senior), ranking it in second position among the 21 participating public universities. The games were held at Universiti Teknikal Malaysia Melaka (UTeM) from 8 - 17 July.





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The celestial globe from Sheikh Tahir Astronomy Centre in Balik Pulau, Pulau Pinang (Photograph by Rusli Jamaluddin)