

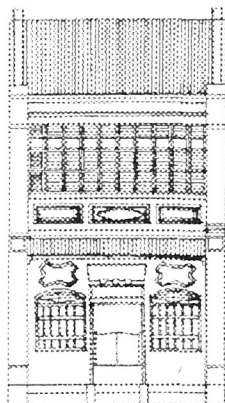
# PHT newsletter

PENANG HERITAGE TRUST \* PERSATUAN WARISAN PULAU PINANG

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PHT's OFFICE

## PHT Office Launching

About 150 people attended the launching on the evening of 20 November to show their support for the Penang Heritage Trust. They also came to hear what the Penang Chief Minister and PHT chairman Dato' Nazir Ariff had to say about the future of our heritage:

### Chairman's Speech by Dato' Nazir Ariff

First of all, I would like to thank YAB Tan Sri Dr. Koh for finding time to visit our humble home and later to officially declare open this new office of the Penang Heritage Trust.

Since the formation of the PHT over 10 years ago we have not had a proper office to operate from. We drifted from one place to another. From the State Museum, we moved to Dato' Lim Chong Keat's home and office, then on to Amy Heah's home and office, to Khoo Salma's front room, then on to Tan Teong Kooi's front room, and on to No 19 Kelawei Road where we shared a space with Pertubuhan Akitek Malaysia, then to the front door but not quite inside the Caring Society Complex, then back to Khoo Salma's front room while waiting for our fate at the Syed Alatas Mansion, yet again unsuccessful... and finally to this beautiful old building belonging

to the Hainanese Seafarers' Association.

*We did all this for the love of heritage, and I would like to take this opportunity to thank all members of the PHT Council especially Loh Lim Lin Lee for helping to restore this building with such a low budget so that we can all call this our new home which is in the heart of the inner city of George Town. The location of our office is also excellent as we place great importance in reaching out to the surrounding community.*

*PHT struggles to educate the community towards realising the actual benefits of maintaining our heritage continues, despite on-going moves by vested interest groups to focus on quick profits while sacrificing quality of life.*

*We are confident that clear thinking Penangites will be able to see the short-sightedness of working for a quick buck, with the loss of an integral part, not just of our history, but of people's lifestyles and the surroundings that have served them well, for almost two centuries.*

We appreciate the Government's wish for transparency and consultation. *We however urge the Government to seek this consultation with the community, the real people who will be most affected. It is their lives and their homes we are talking about.* After all, surveys have shown that there are less than 50 major landowners of properties in the inner city. While they may be important, surely of greater importance are the lives of the hundreds of thousands who will be affected by any moves to change the heritage city. One enjoys a constitutional right to enjoy one's property in peace. It is not one's right to develop, it is a

privilege.

One of PHT's oldest projects is Suffolk House. It is a matter of some disappointment to us that there has been no progress in this matter in all this time. We would urge the State Government to expedite the land transfer and to approve some funds to enable us to erect a roof over the noble house to prevent further deterioration of the building. At the present rate, Suffolk House will be no more within 2 years.

UNESCO's interest in Penang has resolved us in our efforts to work towards the continuation of the viability of inner city survival. It is not soulless and empty monuments that we are seeking to retain, it is people's lifestyles operating within these same wonderfully scaled, meaningful and functional structures that make up our inner city. *It is the aspiration of the Penang Heritage Trust that Penang be put on the World Heritage Map and we believe that the people of Penang share our aspiration.* We will then be recognised, not because we are a dead monument, but because we are a living city with great potential for sustainable development.

Before I end my speech, I would like to announce the launching of the 'Paint a Shophouse' campaign and we have invited the community of this area to share with us our vision and our love of our city. **I would like to thank Jotun Paints (M) Bhd for donating all the paint for this campaign.**



## PHT AGM

The PHT AGM went smoothly as 1998 was a non-election year. Thirty people attended. The Secretary's and Treasurer's reports were presented.

We introduced our new council member Ms. Yeoh Swee Lin to the members. The members also agreed to nominate Mr. Peter Foo to replace Mr. Fahmi Ismail as a council member. Peter has been managing the Penang Heritage Trust shop at the Penang Museum and has recruited quite a few members for PHT. We also urged members to come up and volunteer for PHT, as things are now in full swing. Dato' Saleena, Mr. Oo Khaik Cheang and several others volunteered.

Thank you for your participation. Thanks for help from young engineers Ganesh and See Fung, antique restorer David Yeoh, antique dealer Michael Cheah, anthropologists Gwyn Jenkins and Peter Zabielskis, the artist Ong Wah Peng, Dr. Leong Yee Fong from USM and many others.

*We need volunteers!* Our Executive Secretary, Priscilla, needs help and she needs a break. If you can organise a library, type a letter, call up members to renew their subscriptions, answer telephone calls or just spend some time at the PHT office during weekdays or weekends, please volunteer. Call Priscilla, tel 2642631.



### **PHT Launching**

Upon his arrival, Penang Chief Minister YAB Tan Sri Dr. Koh Tsu Koon was escorted by a colourful, drum-beating, kompang group down Lorong Chulia, and our Indian Muslim neighbours all came out to look. He was accompanied by MPPP President, Yang DiPertua Dr. Teng Hock Nam and PHT chairman Dato' Nazir Ariff. Then at the junction, the lion dance group took over to welcome the Chief Minister. Tan Sri cut the ribbon to officiate the PHT office opening and all came inside for the speeches. PHT vice-chairman Dr. Choong Sim Poey played MC. Among our distinguished guests were S.M. Mohamed Idris, president of Consumers Association Penang, Francois Sigrist, chairman of Penang International Hoteliers Association, Dato' Lim Cheng Tatt, Dato' Eddy Choong and the leaders of the Indian Chambers of Commerce and the Loo Pun Hong.

Tuan Haji Mohideen, Chairman, Jawatankuasa Khariah Masjid Kapitan Kling, announced the US\$5,000 grant from **UNESCO Leap** (Local Effort and Preservation) for "Popular Participation in Penang's Historic Inner City Waqf Revitalization". He also urged the government to improve the urban environment, and to make the inner city streets safe and child-friendly, as it used to be when he grew up in this area.

Heritage Fundraising '98 chairman **Dr. Khoo Joo Ee** presented a mock cheque for RM50,000 to the Loo Pun Hong and another one for RM11,178 to PHT's educational fund.

Mr. Teoh Poh Huat from Henry Butcher, Marie Helene from Alliance Francaise, Sunny Ho from Bellevue Group, Tan Yeow Wooi from Nanyang Folk Culture and Linda Ch'ng all sent flowers - thank you!



To refresh people's memories, in the early 1990s, Tan Sri Tan Sri Kok Ping was a substantial shareholder in Bukit Pinang Leisure Sdn. Bhd., the subsidiary of Berjaya Corporation which proposed the monstrous development on Penang Hill and signed an MOU with the Penang State Government during the Tun Lim Chong Eu's last term as Chief Minister.

The Environmental Impact Assessment of the proposed development was subsequently rejected by the Department Of Environment and the project was shelved by the Penang State Government after a huge public outcry. The Save Penang Hill campaign was probably the greatest environmental success which Penang has experienced to date, and it proved that Penangites and friends of Penang will rise up against a threat to something which we all hold dear and know should be saved for posterity.

Frustrated with the resistance against his proposed takeover of Penang Hill, Tan Sri Tan Kok Ping has now turned his attention to the history inner city of George Town.

The speech made in early November by the Penang Chinese Cham-

bers of Commerce President is reproduced here in full. Unless the members of the public and members of Penang's business community speak up, the Penang State Government and MPPP will assume that Tan Sri Tan speaks for Penang society. Although PHT Vice-chairman Dr. Choong has written a reply, *don't just leave it to the PHT.*

*The heritage of Penang belongs to all Penangites and Malaysians. Each and everyone of you has a say. Speak up and be counted. Make your stand known. We need to know, and the government needs to hear many voices and many people speaking up for heritage.*

We have provided a list of newspaper addresses in this newsletter. Please write to the press now!



### **Speech by Penang Chinese Chambers of Commerce President, Tan Sri Dato' Tan Kok Ping at the Dialogue Session on Heritage Conservation**

The dialogue session on "Heritage conservation" initiated by the Chamber has a very significant meaning. The issue is of great importance. I would like to thank all of you and the representatives from various Associations for attending this dialogue session. It also shows that everyone is concerned about the "Heritage Conservation" policy to be implemented by Penang State Government through MPPP.

I would like to bring up the view of the Chamber on this issue and I hope you will voice your wishes so that all the aspirations could be conveyed to the authorities.

Last year, the Council announced the Draft Guidelines for Heritage Development in the Inner City of Georgetown which covers 6 zones of conservation area including the Seven Streets Precincts, Carnarvon Street, Chulia Street, Leith Street, Light Street, China Street, part of Weld Quay, Beach Street, Prangin Road, Brick Kiln Road and the proposed Penang Road and Dr Lim Chwee Leong Road. The total area is 426 acres.

The focal point of the Draft Guidelines in brief is as follows:

1. The buildings in these areas have historic character and should be conserved.

2. The buildings could be renovated or beautified, but for rebuilding the height of the building should not exceed 5 storeys unless with a very special reason (Extract from MPPP President Dr Teng Hock Nan). It is reported that MPPP has used its administrative power to freeze the application of development plan in these areas.

3. Preserving the original structure of the area will attract tourist and be listed as tourist attraction (Extract from State Executive Councillor Dato' Kee Phaik Chin).

4. The area is veritable "melting pot" of various races which reflects life in the early days.

5. The conservation area is divided into 6 zones to preserve its "original taste." (Extract from CM Tan Sri Dr Koh Tsu Koon).

With all the above grand reasons, the authorities decided to implement the Heritage Conservation Plan through administrative decree. Hence, those who want to develop the area have to adhere to the Guidelines, that is "the freeze on construction of building above 5 storeys in the Georgetown inner city area".

We strongly protest to these meaningless Guidelines, the rationale are as follows:

1. First we would like to query who proposed this impractical Guidelines? Is it Penang Heritage Trust, including Dr Choong Sim Poey's "idealism", which subsequently got the green light from Penang State Government and implemented by the Municipal Council. We want to query again, have they obtained the mandate of the affected owners to make such a proposal? Or is it based on a few person's "idea dream" and at the expense of most people's interest to "preserve" the old, shabby and poorly sanitation buildings. It is quite baffling that the tourists are told that this is our proud history.

2. Penang Island was founded in 1786 with a history of 212 years.

Many buildings were built less than 100 years ago. Among these old buildings, many are dilapidated and on the verge of collapse. The bird's-eye view of the inner city from Chief Minister's and MPPP President's office in KOMTAR is just like slum area.

The buildings are lack of planning and non-uniform. On raining days there will be traffic jam and the town area appears to be "boat dwellers". Such a "heritage site" is described as "cultural treasure" by Chairman of the New guidelines for Heritage In Inner City of Georgetown Special Committee Dato' Kee Phaik Cheen and "cannot tolerate to be damaged by high-rise buildings".

If Madame Kee really loves "heritage", we propose that she and her husband Dr. Choong Sim Poey to move their residence to Prangin Road to enjoy "her meditation on the past". The interests of the people are not to be made fun of.

3. We do not oppose to preserve the real heritage with historic themes. After thorough study, we can earmark certain buildings or streets to put on display and to show foreigners that we also have some valuable heritage. But to simply use a pen and circle a vast areas which is about 10% of the total area of Georgetown (Madam Kee said in fact this is not too much) means that the development of vast areas will be limited by the "Heritage Guidelines".

For instance, if the value of the land is RM150.00 per sq.ft., the total value for 426 acres will be around three billion ringgit. Is it worthwhile for the authorities to pay such a great expenses to suit the tastes of a few foreigners who are interested in visiting "streets and lanes"? Even if the expenses of such tourists reach several millions or tens of millions ringgit, it still cannot compensate for the loss in the development of the areas which are worth three billion ringgit. If it wasn't without business mind, then it must be too innocent.

4. The Chief Minister has said that we should not measure values with money. He also said that the value of these buildings would appreciate in future. It is not only contradictory, but also does not provide any rem-

edy. If Penang State Government thinks that the value will appreciate greatly, they should purchase these properties at market price and then renovate and wait for the price to appreciate before sale. This should be considered as the good fortune of the people.

In fact, the way of outlining heritage zone is a very smart idea by spending others money and the authority just simply draw a line on it. The big piece of land and properties embarked under heritage zone has indeed broke the "Guinness book of world record", become the largest area of heritage in the world.

We would like to propose to the State Government to put a halt to this heritage guidelines which did not take into considerations of the welfare of the people and set up a new committee to look into a feasibly study report which encompass the number of conserved buildings, the total cost to beautify the conserved properties, maintenance and protect the welfare of the affected people.

As the livelihood of the people who live in the squatter area should remain below living standard and sacrifice for original taste as the Chief Minister means thus fulfill the meaning of real taste of affected zones.

In actual fact, the utmost important effort of the Government is to alleviate floods and improve health condition and create a better environment for the people.

Rebate in assessment and quit rent is just a token gesture. Who will be paying for the large amount of restoration charges? We would also like to propose to the authority to hold genuine dialogue with the representatives of the communities and try to understand their needs. Don't let the people live below the living standards and embrace their history to show the foreign tourists that this is the history of Penang. We should not go backwards and show the poverty of people to foreigners.

MPPP should not get into a dead end when implementing the heritage conservation plan. This will cause us to lose a lot. In time of the economic downturn, MPPP should not be a hindrance to the economic recovery plan. The authorities should provide

favourable conditions to promote the growth of economy.

In short, the heritage development policy has caused a lot of doubts. In fact, during the economic crisis, the people need the urgent help from the Government but the strict measures has brought even more disaster to them.

We must consider the economic benefit of heritage development to avoid being idealistic and paying too high a price for poor result.

To avoid failure, the whole project must be implemented with a certain time frame.

Finally how much the ratepayers have to bear for the whole project, when will the investment recover? The authorities should make a clear explanation.



*The following letter was written in response to Tan Sri Tan's speech:*

Dear Editor, The Sun,

I refer to the interesting juxtaposition of reports in the Saturday SUN (7/11/98). On page 11, featuring a large flattering profile of Tan Sri Tan Kok Ping (the PCCC President) was a report of his blistering attack on the State Government's proposed conservation guidelines on the heritage inner city of Georgetown, describing them as a threat to landlords wishing to maximise their profits on their properties.

Placed next to it was a relatively small report of an announcement by YB Koay Kar Huah (without photo) announcing his committee's plans to compile a comprehensive history of the Chinese Community in Penang which would also include a pictorial record of the historic buildings.

I hope this is not an indication of Sun's editorial bias towards those who *destroy* being considered more important than those who wish to *record and preserve*.

Possibly, this serendipitous juxtaposition of articles would also have resulted in each knowing of the other's intentions so that they may perhaps acquaint each other of their work. Hopefully, things can be arranged so that YB Koay's enthusiastic photographers will be able to

record each historic building before they are demolished by the Tan Sri's merry men to replace it with yet another high-rise block (allowing the land owners to make another quick "kill").

YB Koay's men will have little time to lose, as has been clearly expressed by the Tan Sri; both time and space should be seen from its most important attribute i.e. they can convert into dollars and cents for the owner. It seems nothing else is of much importance to him; the displacement of people, cultures, small businesses, architecture and history; all this should be swept aside in the interest of profit for the few.

Perhaps Tan Sri Tan may not yet be aware that the objectives of good town planning does not include a proviso to *ensure maximum profit* for the land owners. Rather, but its main purpose is to ensure that the town improves as a *quality habitat for the people who live and "use" it*.

It has clearly been shown in the history of other cities that this purpose cannot be achieved by a *laissez faire planning policy* advocated by the Tan Sri. In fact, unfettered high density development and commercialisation has inevitably led to the *creation of slums and ghettos* in the medium and long-term.

If the Tan Sri is so confident of the benefits of his "vision" for the City of Georgetown, we would like to see him illustrate the kind of city that his development strategy will result in and then work out the so-called "benefits" to "the people". We in the Penang Heritage Trust would like to challenge him to compare this against the development strategies that have been proposed by the State Government on the same terms.

*-Dr Choong Sim Poey, Vice Chairman, Penang Heritage Trust.*



### **Popular Participation in Heritage Conservation**

The recent conservation seminar held on 2-5 November 1998 in the Historic City of Malacca, entitled "Conservation and Development of Heritage Tourism", was organised by

the Melaka Museums Corporation in collaboration with the Department of Town and Country Planning Peninsular Malaysia, the Melaka State Town and Country Planning Department, the Municipality of Historic City of Malacca, the Faculty of Built Environment University Technology Malaysia, the Department of Museum and Antiquity and the Institute for Housing and Urban Development Studies, and sponsored by the Melaka State Government and the Royal Netherlands Embassy Malaysia.

It was a wonderful seminar with the right mixture of conservation, history and community. A few Malaccans first came in almost as observers in this international meeting full of distinguished speakers, top-ranking government bureaucrats and politicians. But towards the end the people of Malacca spoke out passionately to make sure their views were taken into account. The following important resolutions were passed, and the Penang government and Penang community would also do well to endorse these points.

At the 2nd International Seminar on European Architecture outside Europe, "Conservation and Development of Heritage Tourism", held in Malacca from 2-5 November 1998,

The delegates passed the following resolutions:

The first point being - public participation. It is said that it is essential for any successful conservation work to have a joint collaboration between the authorities implementing the project or planning the project to involve the participation of the communities here in particular, in Malacca. There are at least 3 or maybe even more ethnic communities that would be willing to participate in any kind of action if so called forth to do so. The Baba community, the Portuguese community, the Malay community-within certain areas and also other members of the public at large.

The seminar concludes that the development plan concerning historical Malacca apparently lacks in the participation of the local community and henceforth suggests this collaboration and this participation.

And, it recommends also that the authorities to actively include the participation of these communities.

The second point in the resolution is the extension of the conservation area. It is seen that a large amount of the benefit has centered around the St. Paul's Hill & within a close vicinity of this the area. Therefore it is suggested that area of concern be extended to other parts to include places like the Portuguese Settlement, Kampong Morten-the Malay settlement, and other outlying areas namely the one that is close by, the Chinese quarters and also the Chitties community. In this, it is hoped that the contamination, the pollution of the area within the historical core would be avoided and that a proper management could be served henceforth.

The third point is regarding non-compatible development in the conservation area. This is reflective of various other comments about the large-scale development that has been of concern among the delegates in the seminar especially those large-scale projects which have a theme park connotation and it is hoped that the authority be concerned and to be sensitive as to consider deeply into its implementation.

And the fourth is on tourism. The delegates of the group recommends that tourism cannot be the main source of income in the conservation area. The community has the right to live and work in the normal way hence it is suggested the way of life of the communities concerned is the prime factor to consider within any conservation scheme.

With this I conclude the resolutions made by the group.

Read by Associate Professor Syed Zainol Abidin Idid at the Closing Ceremony on 5th November, 1998. Malacca.



## LETTERS

### *Proposal to establish a British Branch of PHT*

*As your AGM is within a few days of ours I thought you might like to have a copy of our Annual Report, in return for yours.*

*(From the letters the PHT has received), I wonder whether it might be worth trying to form a UK branch of PHT. The trouble is that I haven't got time to do it, nor (if I am honest) the inclination to trundle up to London for meetings. I don't know how many UK members there are, though I remember that Mrs. Amy Heah used to stay in London regularly. Possibly one of them might take the lead?*

*One way of starting might be to get a letter into a suitable magazine. Country Life might be the one to try first - really rather too up-market for me, though I read it regularly because it is the only magazine which carries much about architecture and historic interiors. I have at least drafted something to try on the Correspondence Editor :*

*"As a member of the Penang Heritage Trust living in the UK I have been asked to assess what level of support there might be for the formation of British branch. There must be many who, like me, have happy memories of George Town, in particular, with its richly varied culture. This is reflected in the city's memorable mosaic of historic buildings, from 18th-century Suffolk House, where Raffles is thought to have planned the development of Singapore, to clan houses, mosques and handsome mansions in the style aptly known as Straits Eclectic.*

*Sadly, Suffolk House - which in Britain would be a Grade I national monument - is on the verge of collapse, while insensitive redevelopment is poised to continue the inroads it has been making on the city's historic core. Against great odds the Penang Heritage Trust is struggling to avert disaster. It has created a heritage centre in a derelict (shophouse), it is reviving traditional building crafts, and its members have restored the old European cemetery. It has over 200 members but needs all the support it can get.*

*Perhaps anyone in the UK interested in furthering its work could get in touch with me?"*

*Possibly even I could send such a letter - it wouldn't commit me to taking the lead in forming a branch, and I could always hope that respondent might take on the job.*

*This is all against the background that there are quite a large number of people in UK who know Penang. Unfortunately for reasons of honesty (I've never been there) I can't say anything about the rest of the Island, or Butterworth etc, but this may not matter. George Town, at least for the moment, is what it's all about.*

*It would help, incidentally, if a I could say that PHT is what we call a registered charity. I am sure it is de facto but is it in law, or is there no mechanism in Malaysia for recognising charitable status?*

*Some time when you have a moment, let me know what you think.*

*Best wishes - Arthur Percival, Hon. Director, Faversham Society - Fleur de Lis Heritage Centre.*

*Dear Arthur,*

*Yes, please send out your letter. We need all the encouragement and support we can get.*

*There are also many Malaysians and ex-Malaysians residents in the UK and who knows, they might be moved to help out.*

*We are a registered charity and all donations to the PENANG HERITAGE TRUST are tax exempt.*  
*Editor*

### *Proposed Citibank overhead pedestrian bridge*

*The proposed Citibank bridge will be another modern icon which reinforces the image of Jalan Sultan Ahmad Shah as an office city. It will do nothing to reinforce the heritage character of Jalan Sultan Ahmad Shah, no matter what the design. Even if the design is "heritage" it can only be tacky pastiche at best, as there is no such thing as a heritage overhead bridge, at least not in Penang.*

*Personally, I have nothing against modern buildings and highrises, but they would be more appropriate somewhere else - near the Penang Bridge, for example. The Citibank bridge design would indeed be attractive, classy and appropriate if the bridge were spanning the North-South Highway instead of one of Southeast Asia's most admired heritage suburbs.*

*However, the overhead bridge is*

not just an aesthetic issue. It is a problem of the lack of foresight in development planning which now makes us choose between heritage and new development, between cars and people.

The sack of Jalan Sultan Ahmad Shah seriously began during the last building boom. What was once Penang's millionaire's row of charming mansions and roadside trees, has been ruined by poor development planning, juxtaposing thirty storey highrises with two story buildings and increasing the built-up space along this road - consequently, the traffic, sewerage and other infrastructure demands - by fifty or a hundred-fold.

During the term of the former Yang Dipertua, the Municipal Council made a feeble attempt at conservation guidelines, and one products of their vision is the heartwreck of Hardwicke on the corner of Jalan Pangkor and Jalan Sultan Ahmad Shah, which looks like a gatehouse for the monstrous development towering above it.

What do we have today? Half a dozen gigantic office blocks, mostly half empty. Jalan Sultan Ahmad Shah, which also serves a thoroughfare connecting the Pulau Tikus suburbs to the inner city, was choked with too many cars turning off into the private developments. Jalan Sultan Ahmad Shah was turned into a one-way street, bringing heavy traffic into surrounding residential streets and causing traffic jams further down the system. Trees were sacrificed, roads were widened and more one-way systems were introduced, all to make traffic smoother.

We are now dealing with pedestrians as an afterthought after a few people have been victimised while trying to cross the road. How many people have been knocked down already on the new one-way streets? If we need a pedestrian bridge in front of Citibank, why not on Jalan Larut, near Wellesley School? Why not on Jalan Burmah in front of Union School?

Where will it end? How much will it cost? Will people use the overhead bridges or will they be white el-

ephants and cheap permanent advertising space for their sponsors?

The solution, if we choose people over cars, is to slow down traffic with traffic lights and a level pedestrian crossing or zebra crossing. To make it even safer, a speed hump can be introduced. Such a crossing will be infinitely more people-friendly, schoolchildren friendly and disabled friendly than an overhead bridge. Then motorists will stop thinking that one-way streets are meant to be racing tracks. They may even pause long enough to admire what is left of our heritage buildings on Jalan Sultan Ahmad Shah. - Mary Tye

### Regrets:

#### OLD SALT CAFE

**We are sorry to say that Old Salt Cafe has not worked out, and will not be open for business. For the moment, at least, there will be no cafe at the PHT premises.**

**Tourist or local groups that are interested to use the PHT premises as a venue for small receptions or cultural gatherings (seats about 50) may do so for a small donation to the Penang Heritage Trust.**

#### Throw Away The Car Drivers' Blinkers

I was upset to hear that yet another pedestrian bridge (this time by Citibank) is going to be put up. As a bus user and pedestrian, I would like to give my views on overhead pedestrian bridges in general. Pedestrian bridges are meant to convenience the motor vehicle users, not pedestrians. When vehicular traffic is allowed to flow freely through the roads and freeways of a city and its suburbs, the imagination of the driver enjoys the illusion of speed, power and superiority. It encourages the "kiasu" mentality and the potential aggressive road rage.

When vehicular traffic comes

closer to the heart of a city, thus to the point where it is most likely to interact with foot-borne traffic of inhabitants, shoppers, schoolchildren and tourists, to name but a few, the importance of reminding the drivers of their need to respect the outside world and the environment that they have intruded, is high.

Traffic lights and pedestrian crossings force the drivers to stop, and relate back to the outside world. Over head bridges whilst allowing the traffic to flow, encourage a mental neglect of the environment in which they are in.

Even considering an overhead bridge as a solution to a problem, indicates little more than myopic vision and scant thought. The bridges that exist, are ill placed away from main pedestrian flows, whilst crucial crossings are overlooked by planners. Both with the net result that those non-polluters who wish to cross on foot, have to do so at their own risk, on roads designed for high speed flows.

Whilst overhead bridges provide cheap high profile advertising space, do they, in all honesty provide a solution to the problem for all the parties concerned?

Sure, they are excellent for the advertiser and the vehicle user, but what of the pedestrian - those that are too young to drive, supporters of public transport (for economic or ethical reasons), people with disabilities both temporary and permanent? Their number is far greater than those of the vehicle user and yet their lives are constantly marginalised without a thought.

Level pedestrian crossings may inconvenience car-drivers, but they are the best solution for pedestrians, able or with disabilities, and they also remind motor vehicle-users that they have to share the road with others.

I've heard of 'smart schools' and 'smart cards', well why not a 'smart planning office' a 'smart State Council' and a 'smart MPPP'. Think holistically, throw away the car drivers' blinkers, for a better future for all Penangites. - Francis Loh

**Upcoming Seminar:  
Rent Control -  
"The Aftermath"**

The purpose of this seminar is to enable rent control property investors, owners, residents, city councillors, members of heritage trusts, developers and bankers to have a better understanding and appreciation of the problems, uncertainties and complexities of the aftermath of rent control.

**Date: Thursday 17 December 1998**

**Time: 8.30am - 6.30pm**

**Venue: Crown Prince Hotel,  
Tanjung Bungah, 11200 Penang**

Fees, RM 250 per delegate. Those interested please call Henry Butcher, Lim & Long, International Property Consultants.

Tel 04-2298999 Fax 604-2298666  
Email hbpenang@tm.net.my

**PROGRAMME**

Opening speech by YB Dr. Toh Kin Woon, State Executive Councillor for Education, Information and Economic Planning

**Topic No 1 : The Legal Aspects of Rent Control - The Aftermath** by Mr. Steven How of Miranda & How, Advocates & Solicitors - Philosophy Behind Rent Control, Legal Aspects of Rent Control Act 1966, Economic Effect on Property Governed by Rent Control # Act 1997, Legal Changes Implemented by the Rent Control (Repeal) Act 1997, Effectiveness of the Repeal Act in Reviving the Attractiveness and Competitiveness of the Controlled Property

**Topic No 2 - Rent Control - The Aftermath** - The real estate developers' perspective by Mr. Ong Gim Huat, Chairman of Housing Developers' Association, Penang Branch

**Topic No 3 - Rent Controlled Properties as Investments**

**Topic No 4 - The economic aspects of Rent Controlled Properties after 31st December 1999 - what's next?** - An academic's viewpoint" by Associate Professor Dr Megat Mohd Ghazali

**Topic No 5 - Heritage, Conservation and The Rent Control (Repeal) Act 1997**

(i) From a heritage conservationist's point of view by **Ms. Khoo Salma Nasution**

(ii) From a town planner's point of view by **Mr. Lim Hooi Siang**

(iii) From an architect's point of view by **Mr. Laurence Loh**

*Panel Discussion*



**NEW PUBLICATION**

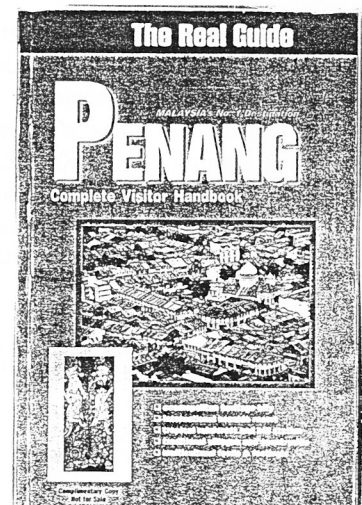
**Leong San Tong Khoo Kongsì,  
The Heritage Jewel of Penang,**

Compiled by Khoo Kay Hock, written by Rita Lim-Khoo.

Richly illustrated, 20 pages, with Foreword by Dato' Khoo Keat Siew, Chairman, Board of Trustees. Chapters: Origin of the Khoo Clan, Khoo Clan in Penang, Tua Pek Kong, Ancestral Hall, Geneological Chart, Cheng Soon Keong (Central Hall), Toon Boon Tong Khoo Kongsì (The

Parentage Society of the Khoo Clan, Mooi Sin (Door Deities), The Stage, Gods of Wealth - Chai Sin Yeah, Wall Murals of Ink Frescoes Adorning Wall In the Back Corridor. The book is selling for RM5 and RM10 and can be obtained from the Penang Heritage Trust office.

**NEW - Leong San Tong Khoo Kongsì Video CD** selling for RM 15 can also be obtained from the Penang Heritage Trust office.



**NEW PUBLICATION**

**The Real Guide: Penang: Complete Visitor Handbook**, by Khoo Salma Nasution, published by Coda Designs, 1998. Price RM 30

Fully illustrated, 128 page guidebook to the cosmopolitan heritage city, international seaside resort, tropical rainforest and hill station, traditional villages and countryside, multicultural foods & festivals. The book can be obtained from the Penang Heritage Trust office.



## PENANG POEMS

by Carolyn van Langenberg

Carolyn van Langenberg is an award winning Australian writer currently writing an historical romance mixing Australia (Byron Bay) and Malaysia (Penang), circa 1950's, for a PhD in Writing at UWS-Nepean. For several years, Carolyn has published short fiction internationally and in Australia in journals and anthologies, and recently she has returned to the writing poetry.

Carolyn was awarded an Overseas Travel Research Scholarship to assist with her researches into Penang of the 1950's. She spent ten months in the State Archives and at the Universiti Sains Malaysia and chatting with people to piece together a picture of what it might have been like.

Back in Australia, Carolyn is finding the writing of novel slow, and she took some time out to write some poetry about Penang - the present-day Penang with its one-way streets for cars, its cement and towers. She is not alone in wondering when the distinctive Penang will disappear. Or will the distinction manage a survival of sorts in the work?

### in Cannon Square

Visiting glances down alleys  
not my own and made less  
ordinary by the camera's intrusive  
eye snapping certified scenes,  
exotic and old buildings  
easily stuck in an album  
with no obligation to  
feel anything --- these are  
evidence of having been there--  
I missed shooting the woman.

Framed by a half-open door  
and sitting in a breezeway,  
grey hair scraped into a twisted  
roll capped by tortoise shell,  
her sarong pleated over  
slightness, shoulders bare, she  
possessed the moment as she to it  
surrendered, unbalked, her shape  
unfolding in me remembered.

## sadly

The curve of the street corner arrested me.  
The plain sweep, the oblong slatted louvres,  
greenly layered, swerved round the building's  
second storey like the bow of an old ocean  
liner docking at Weld Quay, proudly  
beached where business happened with a  
clang, redly dated nineteen thirty  
four, pre-war, and surviving solid

Time translates it smooth enough  
in the solidity of its function, and  
piteous, too, jutting under clouds  
briefly banking, the haze sogging the blue  
from the tropical, bright-sky.  
Wood framed doors, the glass striped with  
chrome weighed heavily on the footway,  
opened and closed over tumult...

Memories tucked in Penang's history  
soaked in dollar bills, blood, latex,  
cloves, nutmeg and, graciously conceived,  
deals, honed commensally, whispered  
perhaps deeply in a marble bath -- an  
alchemy, resilient, composed of  
anxious Chinese, their Indian neighbours  
and the gently taciturn Malays..

A miscellany of images permeated the hard  
skull, sweat trickling under hair a mere  
impediment to conjuring a French  
icon, the glacial Catherine Deneuve  
freezing frames in *Indochine* lounging  
languid in Cheong Fatt Tze, the blue  
bright mansion where Feng Shui  
design cherished shadowed coolness....

### the old buildings

Between towers, there's a cluster of trees,  
red rooves, broadly eaved, and shielding  
arches rising whitely to cherish  
passages of cool and quiet repose.

From my lofty flat, my eye finds  
the everyday forgotten thought that  
columns and architraves set up the  
grace old buildings lay claim to.

And if there is a music humming,  
murmuring whispers through those branches  
shadowing roof tops, may I  
hear it now, a harmony surviving.