

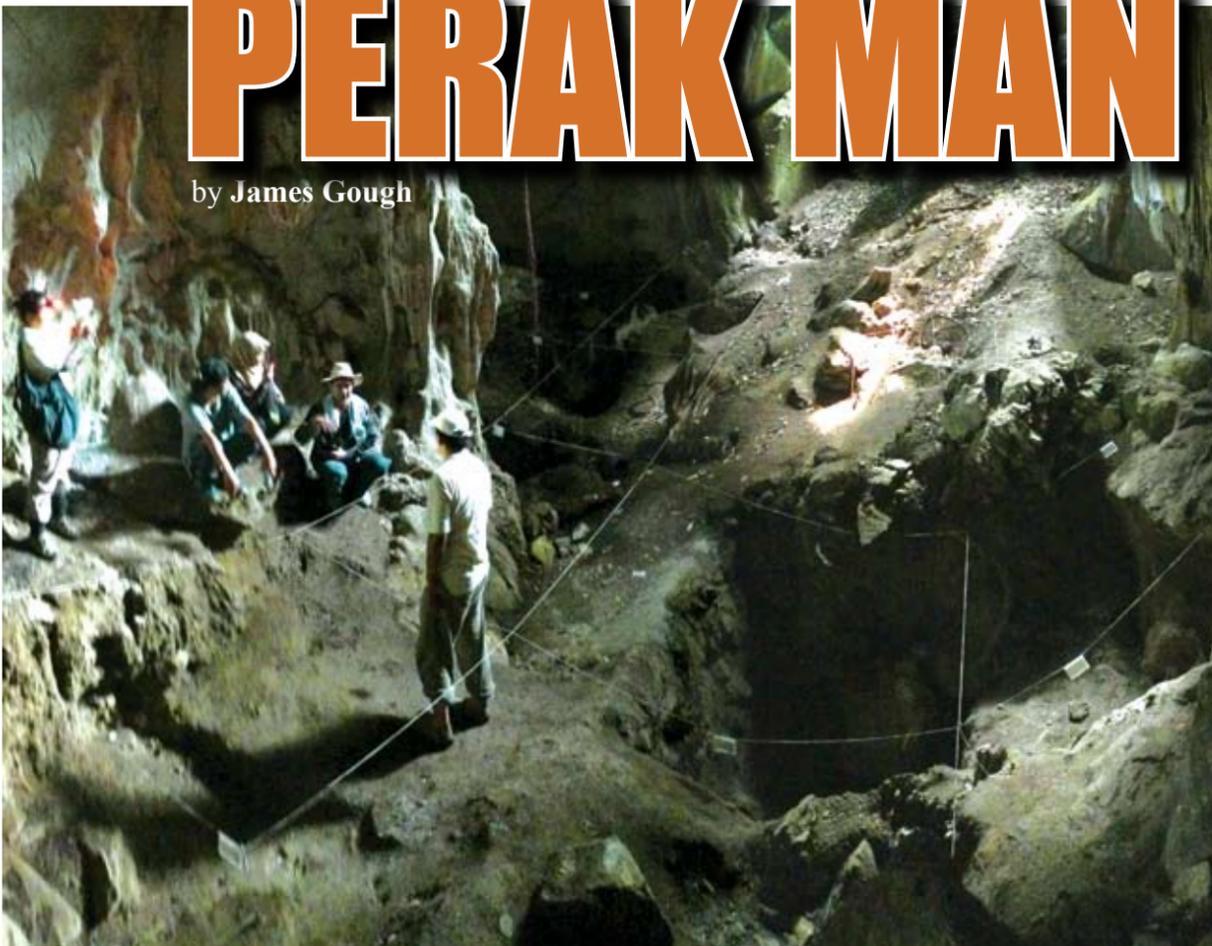


Volume 2

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Lenggong Valley And The PERAK MAN

by James Gough



In tandem with Visit Perak Year 2012's tagline "Green Tourism, Yours to Discover - Nature and heritage", Perak Tourism News was invited to another heritage trail-outing, this time it was the "Lenggong Valley Archaeological Trail". Organised by the Perak Heritage Society, the trail included a visit to the Lenggong Museum and the site where the Perak Man was found.

Continued on page 2

foreword

By

Dato' Hamidah Osman

State Executive Councillor for Tourism



Perak is a land of immense natural diversity, breathtaking beaches, adventure and family fun. The scenic attractions alone – the stunning landscapes, never ending flows of rivers and waterfalls, serenading lakes, glorious caves, limestone hills and hotspots, will leave you reaching for superlatives. There's lush and magnificent flora, products of Perak's National Parks; walk through its amazing tropical forests where you can touch the unique, giant Rafflesia flowers. It's the place of more than 500 species of birds – amazing Plain-pouched Hornbills flock by the thousands to Royal Belum, the bee-eaters and the iconic 7 Herons of Kinta Valley. One State and so much to explore. Come, and its Yours to Discover!

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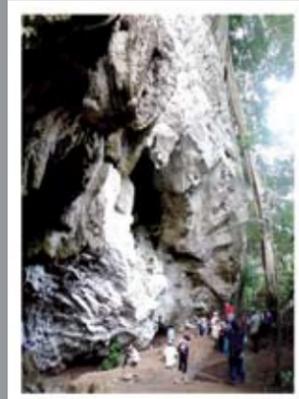
To get to Lenggong, one must leave the Plus Expressway at the Kuala Kangsar exit and head for Grik.

Lenggong Valley is Peninsular Malaysia's most important archaeological site, being home to the oldest known place of human activity dating back to the Palaeolithic era. Excavations at Kota Tampan, which began in 1983, revealed an undisturbed stone tool production area using equipment such as anvils and hammer stones.

Lenggong is a semi-rural area dotted with kampongs, oil palm estates and limestone hills. The largest limestone massif is Bukit Kepala Gajah where over half a dozen caves, with evidence of human habitation, are found.

The Perak Man was discovered in 1991 by Emeritus Professor Dr Zuraina Majid and her team from USM at Gua Gunung Runtuh, one of the Bukit Kepala Gajah caves. The skeletal remains of the Perak Man is the oldest and most complete Palaeolithic skeleton in Southeast Asia.

He is unique because he is the only known prehistoric skeleton, with a congenital deformity known as Brachymesophalangia type A2. He was 45 at the time of death and was 154 cm tall.



The age of the Perak Man dates back 11,000 years to the Palaeolithic era. His discovery has provided rare and important information on burial rituals during the Palaeolithic period and the way of life then. The discovery of a hand axe at Lenggong Valley also

provides one of the earliest evidence of man-made tools in Southeast Asia.

Within the valley was found such precious finds like stone tools, weapons and pottery and due to this, the Lenggong Archeological Museum was set up in 2004 to house the artefacts.

Lenggong Valley and Perak Man have been proposed for UNESCO World Heritage Listing by the Department of Natural Heritage in 2010.

Our Archaeological Heritage tour started at the Lenggong Museum, where we met up with Hamid Mohd Isa from the Centre for Global Archaeological Research, USM Penang, a member of the 1991 excavation team.

Our first stop was the cave of the Perak Man. To get to Bukit Kepala Gajah we had to leave our transport at Kampung Gelok and walked 1.5 km to the foot of the hill. We then made a gradual ascent up the hill until we came to a steep hill slope which looked like rocks that had tumbled down. The rocks were damp and slippery so caution was taken to climb the approximately 150 metres to get to the cave.

The ledge leading to the entrance of the cave was narrow. A board with information on the cave and Perak Man was found at the entrance.

The inside of the cave was a high-ceiling cavern. The original "digs" were still intact and marked. Hamid showed us where they found the Perak Man. According to Hamid, the consistent temperature at approximately 24°C and low humidity, contributed towards the preservation of Perak Man.

We then explored Gua Teluk Kelawar, on the other side of Bukit Kepala Gajah, where another dig uncovered skeletal remains of a woman who was later named the *Perak Woman*. Carbon dating identified her age at 8,000 years.

At the museum, artefacts on display were a replica of the Perak Man, stone tools and cave paintings found in Lenggong Valley. Photographs taken during the



excavation provided a comprehensive insight of the prehistoric community present then.

The participants, consisting of members of Badan Warisan Malaysia and Jabatan Warisan

Negara, Taiping Heritage Society and Taiping Tourist Association, Karst Society, MNS and Perak Heritage Society, were in agreement that the site is a national treasure.

Suggestions made during the tea-break discussion were that tour groups accessing the dig sites should not be too big. They should be guided by local guides with local knowledge. Tour groups should congregate at the museum first being transferred to the sites by vans.

Although this is a good niche market to exploit, most were of the opinion that steps to preserve its integrity should take precedence for it to be declared a world heritage site.

Announcement

'GEGARIA' CARNIVAL

The two-day "Karnival Gegaria Harian Metro – Jom Jelajah Perak 2011" will be held at Dataran MBI on September 24 and 25, as part of a tourism programme in the state. It will be organised by Harian Metro with the co-operation of Ipoh City Council and sponsored by Tourism Perak. Numerous activities have been planned for the event. They include: an Addin forum, stalls selling handicrafts and food, Senamrobik, cultural shows, and an auto-show. There will also be various competitions. Among them are: arm-wrestling, tourism quiz, cooking, flower arrangement, Explorace, drawing, colouring, karaoke and the selection of a Metro Idol.

Come and explore Perak!



Tourism Malaysia Perak organised a 4-day seminar entitled "Rail Tourism in Perak" recently.

The primary objective of the seminar was to develop a viable rail cum homestay package while establishing rapport with the media. The complementary role of the media is crucial, as it has the power to influence decision-making.

Those participating included travel agents and homestay operators from Sungai Klah, Gopeng and Bukit Gantang. The participants took the electric train from KL Sentral and stopped over at Batu Gajah where they were accommodated at a Gopeng homestay.



RAIL CUM HOMESTAY PACKAGE

The following day they were taken to Bukit Gantang, a homestay haven of sorts. They then visited the Kg Sayong handicraft centre and witnessed how *labu sayong* is made. Other places of interest on the itinerary included the Sultan Azlan Shah Gallery in Kuala Kangsar, First Galleria in Taiping and Tambun's pomelo farms.

The participants were then tasked to create attractive short-term packages incorporating the places they had visited. The mode of transport was by train in tandem with the theme of the seminar.

The general consensus is that a rail travel cum homestay package is a saleable product. An aggressive marketing strategy is all that is required.

James Gough



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CARTOON CHARACTERS TO IDENTIFY BUILDING

Photos by Ed Shahir

The Perak Tourism Information Centre building near Ipoh Padang is under-utilised, under-manned and poorly managed. In spite of calls to have it maintained the way tourist information centres the world over are run, these well-meaning attempts have fallen on deaf ears.

In view of Visit Perak Year 2012 (VPY 2012), there is an urgent need to enliven the building with a character of its own, besides making it more user-friendly.

Perak Tourism News suggests that cartoon characters be drawn on the building façade, including the barren wall of the shop lot facing the centre. Preferably, it should be Lat's cartoons since Dato' Mohammad Nor Khalid (Lat) is an Ipohite. His permission need to be obtained beforehand.

Our impression of the cartoon-dabbed building and wall is as per these photos. It will help visitors in identifying the centre. Hopefully, this will prompt the authorities to do the needful.

Fathol Zaman



passport to ... TAIPING "THE TOWN OF MANY FIRSTS"

by Fathol Zaman Bukhari

Photos by Ed Shahir

The following two pages will focus on Taiping, "the town of many firsts" an allusion to its historical past when tin revenue afforded the town with its many "firsts" – first hill station, first lake gardens, first railway track and railway station, first golf course, first museum, first clock tower and the list goes on.

Taiping, to the intrepid traveller, is not about the imposing Bukit Larut (Maxwell Hill) or the pristine Lake Gardens or the indomitable Kamunting Prison. There is much more to Taiping than meets the eyes.

The town is steep in history. The name Taiping means "eternal peace" in Chinese, an ironic inference to its tumultuous beginning. Taiping owns its origins to the Pangkor Treaty of 1874, for it was from this moment of British intervention in Perak that it has transformed into what it is today.

Taiping's attractions are not confined to its irresistible natural settings, nestled beneath the benign Bintang Range. A visit to Taiping will be incomplete if one fails to stop by or take up temporary residence at the following places:

THE FIRST GALLERIA TAIPING

Taiping's only gallery is housed in a heritage building with an equally interesting past to boot. It was built in 1891 by the Public Works Department to accommodate the state survey office. In 1930, it was taken over by the Taiping Town Board and was later called, the old Taiping Municipal office.

Fully restored to its present glory by Badan Warisan Malaysia in 2008 and costing a whopping RM1.5 million, the gallery is being managed by Anuar Isa, founder-owner of First Managers Sdn. Bhd.

First Galleria provides visitors a unique experience of Taiping, alluding to its rich past presented in a viewer-friendly picture cum power-point format. The gallery is open 7 days a week – Monday to Saturday, 9.30 a.m. to 5.30 p.m. Friday, 9.30 a.m. to 12.30 p.m. Sunday, 12.30 p.m. to 5.30 p.m. Entrance: RM5 (adult) and RM3 (children).



First Galleria is located at PWD 105, Jalan Station Taiping (SK King Edward and the District Police station are located nearby). For details, call Anuar Isa at 012-3412885. Website: www.firstgalleria.com.my

CHERRY INN

The idea of a boutique hotel is hard to come by, especially in a provincial town far removed from mainstream activities.

This, however, did not discourage Taiping-based entrepreneur, Khor Hong Kwan from doing the unthinkable. Having dabbled in the hotel business for as long as she cares to remember, Khor took it upon herself to carve an idealistic niche in the town's hospitality industry. In 2008, she set about to build a simple boutique hotel in downtown Taiping, and the rest is history.

The hotel has 12 rooms with two delectable suites. Rates range between RM60 to RM120 for the individual rooms and RM300 for the suites. Interesting spots within the town are within walking distance from the hotel, and that includes First Galleria.



Cherry Inn is located at No 17, Jalan Stesen, Taiping (SK King Edward is across the road). For details and reservations call 05-305 2223.

SENTOSA VILLA

If you are a nature lover and cannot have enough of Bukit Larut (Maxwell Hill), Sentosa Villa is just the place for you.

Sited at the foothills of the Bintang Range and within reach of the first hill station in the country, Sentosa Villa beckons you. Built on a 15-hectare site it comes complete with running streams, cascading water and fish-filled ponds. The green concept is being optimised to the fullest. Located at an elevation approximately 300 feet above sea level, the all-round weather condition is pretty mild by Taiping standards.

Getting to the villa is half the fun, as one has to traverse the Lake Gardens past the Taiping War Cemetery and the Burmese Pool before arriving at this all-consuming resort by the hillside.

Accommodation comes in the form of chalets and hotel rooms. Prices for the chalets range between RM188 to RM588 (depending on seasons). The hotel rooms are priced at between RM128 to RM418 (depending on seasons).



Sentosa Villa is located at Jalan 8, Taman Sentosa, Taiping. For details and reservations call Muzamir Ismail at 05-805 1000 or 017-518 8242. Website: www.sentosa-villa.com

AUN TONG COFFEE FACTORY



Who would have guessed that an unassuming wooden structure that straddles an open space next to the fly-over to Kamunting is the oldest operational coffee factory in the country? Built in 1933, Aun Tong Coffee factory is almost as old as the town itself.

Founder, Tian Ee Mooi, a Chinese immigrant who made Taiping his home during the tin boom, gave the town folks something to cheer about. He turned coffee-roasting into a fine art.

The family business expended with the infusion of new ideas introduced by his IT-savvy grandson, Thian Boon Chung, 35, a two-term Taiping councillor and a civil engineer by profession.

Thian has come up with his own signature products, which are attractively packed for sale at Aun Tong outlets in the country and for the export market.

The Antong-brand label includes items such as coffee powder (Kopi O), 3-in-1 white coffee satchel, honey lime, chilly sauce and chocolate malt.

Iconic Aun Tong Coffee factory has one other building of heritage significance under its wings. Its office is located within the walls of the bungalow which once sheltered the great Chinese revolutionary leader, Dr Sun Yat-sen and his companion, Chen Culfen.

Dr Sun Yat-sun went on a fund-raising campaign in South-East Asia prior and after the beginning of the Chinese Revolution on October 10, 1911.

The Aun Tong Coffee factory is located at No 8A, Asam Kumbang, Taiping. For details call Thian Boon Chung at 05-807 5189 or 012-506 8671. Website: www.antong.my

HANIM RAMLY

All of the aforementioned will come to naught if not for the determination of one gritty lady, Hanim Ramly of the Taiping Municipal Council. Hanim hails from Kg Pinang in Kamunting. A mass-communication graduate from ITM, she was gainfully employed by RTM for whom she worked for five long years.

Before assuming her current position as Head of the Tourism Department, Hanim was PRO of the council from 1993 to 2010. Her office is located within the Zoo Administration Office. She is directly involved in the management of the country's top-notch zoo.

Hanim's enthusiasm in promoting local tourism is evident from the many brochures and leaflets that she has crafted for distribution. She is busy promoting the Golden Jubilee celebration of Taiping Zoo in September, group tours for destinations within the Larut-Matang-Selama District and educational tour packages for students to the zoo.

Having all the information at her finger tips places her in an advantageous position over other aspirants. Her only problem is, local operators are reluctant to take on these tours, she laments. "If only there are takers, Taiping eco-heritage tours will be a definite money-spinner," says a forlorn Hanim.



For those wanting to know more about Taiping and its surroundings, you can contact Hanim at her office: 05-808 6577 or her mobile: 012-403 1967. Website: www.zootaiping.gov.my

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