

ONLINE POLL ON CRIME

Ipoh Police has come under fire for allegedly failing to provide adequate crime preventative measures in the city. As a result crime rate has increased with reports of robberies, house-breaking and snatch thefts occurring daily, particularly in residential areas. At a dialogue with the police recently, residents called for more police crime preventative patrols. Do you agree? To partake in the poll go on-line at:

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April 1-15, 2010

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ISSUE **94**

>> Pg 4

FEBRUARY'S HEAT WAVE IS A SAMPLE OF OUR FUTURE



>> Pg 7

COUNCILLOR JOINS DIRT VIGILANTES' CAMPAIGN



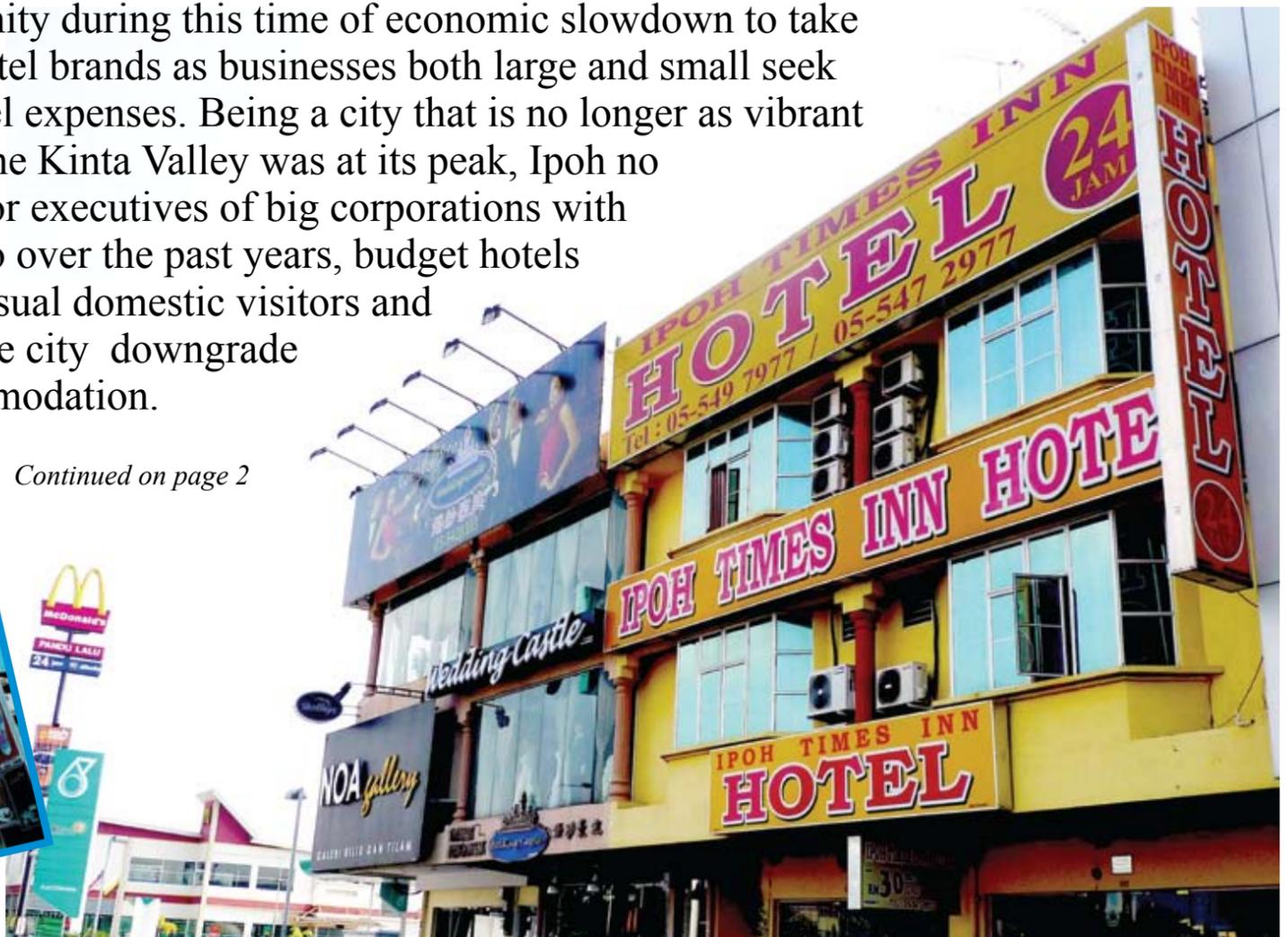
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BOOM ON BUDGET HOTELS

Over the last two years, about half a dozen budget hotels or those below four-star rating have emerged in various parts of the city. Their investors are seizing the opportunity during this time of economic slowdown to take business from prime hotel brands as businesses both large and small seek to scale down their hotel expenses. Being a city that is no longer as vibrant as when tin mining in the Kinta Valley was at its peak, Ipoh no longer attracts tourists or executives of big corporations with money to spend. And so over the past years, budget hotels have seen a boom as casual domestic visitors and business travellers to the city downgrade to cheaper hotel accommodation.

Continued on page 2



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AFFORDABLE COMFORT

These budget hotels are offering a comprehensive range of accommodation facilities to travellers at affordable prices. And since these hotels are mostly located near the heart of the city and close to popular eateries and entertainment establishments, travellers prefer to stay there for obvious reasons.

It may come as a surprise to know that Ipoh has a total of 66 licensed Hotels or Rumah Tumpangan (Boarding Houses) as they are officially described? They are in two categories, the Star (5 categories) and Orchid (3 categories). Of the 66 hotels located in the city, 25% are in the star category while the remainder are budget hotels under the orchid category.

In case our readers are asking themselves "Where are they?" and rattle off the star-rated hotels like Impiana, Syuen, Excelsior and Regency Tower, totally not remembering that the Fairmont, Eastern and that 'Grand Old Lady' – the Station Hotel, are still around.

Generally all that any guest expects from a hotel is a pleasant, clean and secure accommodation and hopefully at affordable rates.

That is what most of the new budget hotels located at shop lots are offering, thus providing a competitive service package to guests visiting the city.

According to Jimmy Yeo, the Chairman of Malaysia Association

of Hoteliers (MAH), the budget hotels typically consist of 20 rooms and above, and provide the basic amenities for guests.

Budget Hotels in Sub-Centres

Over the last two years several budget hotels have opened up at sub-centres around Ipoh. Ipoh City Council defines sub-centres as being immediately outside the main city centre and has classified the areas of Medan Ipoh, Meru Raya, Simpang Pulai and Pengkalan Station 18 as sub-centres, allowing budget hotels to be located at converted shop lots.

The first of the new budget hotels, the Ipoh Times Inn Hotel opened for business in 2007. Located on busy Jalan Sultan Azlan Shah (Jalan Tasek), it is the first hotel you see when you exit from the North-South Expressway in the city.

According to its General Manager, Mr Kumar Thas, the Times Inn Hotel is part of a chain of budget hotels next to highway interchanges, explaining that the reason for selecting such locations was for easy accessibility for their customers. Additionally the location must have a variety of food outlets and some entertainment nearby.

At the Ipoh outlet all its rooms have attached bathrooms, television, air conditioning and Wi-Fi. All the corridors in the hotel are fitted with CCTV cameras. Each room rents for between RM60-90 per night with the highest rate

for a family room.

The Times Inn Hotel does indeed follow closely its location specifications. Just down the road from the hotel is a 24-hour food outlet and about a kilometre behind is the sprawling Medan Ipoh food, entertainment and shopping outlets.

All hotels have their regular corporate customers. For Times Inn their customers regularly have dealings with the nearby shopping malls, hospitals and factories whose visitors commonly stay for several days.

Popular with families

Another common group of its customers are the Malay, Chinese and Punjabi families that come home during the long weekends, weddings and school holidays. During the major holidays like Chinese New Year and Hari Raya the hotel is full for 2-3 days.

These families usually stay at the hotel to freshen up and rest for the night. Incidentally Times Inn has several rooms on the ground floor to cater for senior citizens.

When Times Inn first opened its doors at the end of 2007 its occupancy rate was averaging 90%. Since then another two budget hotels have opened within a 3km radius and currently the occupancy rate is averaging 70%. However, that didn't discourage Kumar from opening his second outlet immediately at the back of the current one in February this year.

Close-by is the Highway Hotel. Its

Manager, Mr Patrick Hoo, explained that it was originally called the Highway Café. After his diners frequently asked him to recommend a nice hotel to stay, he decided to convert his premises to a hotel and named it the Highway Hotel.

Maintaining a similar modus operandi Hoo, also claims an occupancy rate of over 70%. His customer base too was similar. I enquired from a customer who was checking out, on his opinion of the hotel, and he replied it was "clean, had Wi-Fi, was close to the highway and had a nice price."

Across town in Falim is another budget hotel, the Fresh Hotel which opened about two years ago. Its location at Taman Mas Falim lies in the centre of another sprawling suburb stretching from Menglembu to First Garden with Buntong in between. Hence it is not surprising that it too has a healthy occupancy rate with a similar customer base.

Other converted shop lot budget hotels can be found along Kuala Kangsar Road and at Pengkalan Station 18.

Approval of New Licences on Hold

After approving licences



Budget room

for several budget hotels on the outskirts of the city, a city council's spokesman revealed that the Council is currently reviewing the licences due to certain "social issues".

All of these budget hotels rent their rooms out on a "day use" basis meaning customers pay a low rate charge averaging RM30 for 2-3 hrs use only. Sensing this long term potential 'social' issue, the City Council is currently 'drafting a policy' to control it. Until the policy is completed all future approvals for budget hotels are on hold.

However future application for hotels located at "free standing" locations, (meaning a hotel located at a block by itself and not located in a converted shop lot), will be allowed.

But what of the other budget hotels that have been around for a long time. I had been asked not

to name them but a reason why these older budget hotels are not well patronized is because the management has not upgraded the hotels.

The rooms may be generally clean and spacious but guests prefer a room with that refreshing feel. This is another factor why the newer budget hotels are popular.

One point noted by most of the interviewees was their guests were mainly families and corporate customers, rarely tourists. If there are tourists they would be transit tourists staying just one night.

Perhaps when we attract tourists to spend two nights or more per stay it would provide a reason for the older budget hotels and other hotels in general to upgrade their premises and bring vibrancy back to the city centre.

JAMES GOUGH

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PDRM – SHORT ON PROMISES HIGH ON HOPES

“We can’t question the rakyat’s expectation that the Police Force respond efficiently and effectively with integrity and fairness. This is their right and, therefore, it’s our responsibility” - Tan Sri Musa Hassan

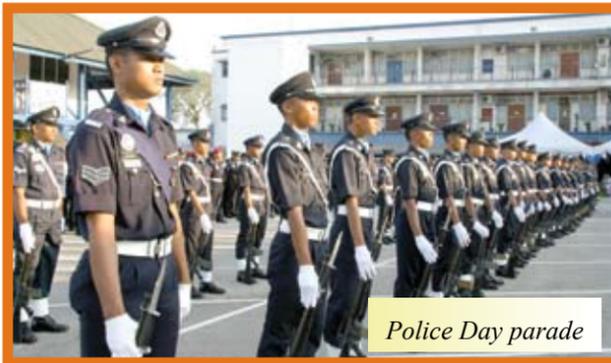
History

The Royal Malaysian Police or PDRM (Polis DiRaja Malaysia) in Bahasa Malaysia has been around for over 200 years. It traced its origins to the Malacca Sultanate of yore. The modern-day police took shape on March 25, 1807, in Penang. Policing duties later extended to the Straits Settlements and the Federated Malay States, as British colonial hegemony and commercial interests grew. It was strictly a state affair.

The centralisation of the police force came about only after World War II when the Civil Affairs Police Force was formed.

The British Administration had to rebuild a demoralised police force caused by the Japanese invaders. The ensuing struggle by the outlawed Malayan Communist Party forestalled these restructuring programmes, as attention was focused on blunting the Communist threat. During Malaysia’s confrontation with Indonesia (1962 to 1966), police personnel, along with soldiers, were deployed in Johore and Sabah to thwart Indonesian infiltrators.

The title “Royal” was bestowed on the force in July 1958 by the nation’s first Agong. When Malaysia was formed in September 1963, the Royal Federation of Malayan Police, the North Borneo



Police Day parade

Armed Constabulary and Sarawak Constabulary merged and the present-day PDRM came into being.

Progress report

So how far has the nation’s police force progressed since the heady days of the 1800s? Judging from comments in the media, the rakyat’s perception of PDRM is rather poor. The major grouse concerns its inability to combat crime, especially in the urban areas. The recent dialogue between residents of Canning Garden, Simee and Ipoh Garden and the city police is a good indicator of this dichotomy. One resident lamented that it was no longer safe to walk in his neighbourhood after 6 p.m. Another bemoaned the lack of police presence in residential areas. Incidents of snatch thefts, robberies and petty thefts are on the rise and the Police seem powerless to contain them. These are major worries and percep-

tion, being what it is, will remain unchanged.

Statistics have been liberally used to show a downward trend in criminal activities. The reluctance of victims reporting to the Police is the reason. Many incidents of thefts and robberies go unreported largely because the victims do not see the necessity of making such attempts. “It’s too troublesome”, said the owner of a photo studio which was burgled last February.

The thief entered his shop through the roof, disarmed the alarm system and carted nearly RM40,000 worth of cameras, lenses and petty cash. The intruder tried to dismantle a CCTV camera but failed and in the process an image of him was captured. Armed with the photo, the owner lodged a report but nothing was forthcoming. The same culprit was again caught on camera traipsing through a house at night in Taman Merdeka. Another report and yet an-



The elusive intruder

other dead end. Even with photographic evidence, no arrest or identification has been made to date.

Frustration of Ipohites

This is the kind of frustration that confronts Ipohites on a daily basis. A feeling of impotence seems to dog those entrusted with the care of the nation’s security. In spite of assurances and reassurances by senior police officers during dialogues and meetings, residents have not warmed up to them. Most are skeptical. They want admissions not denials, actions not words, facts not fictions and results not figures.

Cars are hijacked. Even taxis are being targeted, what more necklaces and hand bags. All are fair game for these hardened

criminals.

The days of the *matamata* making their rounds on foot and bicycles are long gone. Pak Abu, the constable on the beat, in my kampong in the 50s and 60s, was one fellow we rowdies would not dare to tangle with. The mere sight of him on his rickety bone-shaker would send shivers down our spines. Today you hardly see them, less for the ubiquitous traffic cops and the occasional patrol cars, with flashing blue lights, passing by.

PDRM Under Siege?

The Perak Police contingent observed the 203rd Police Day on March 25 with an impressive parade at the contingent headquarters. Deputy CPO, SAC 1 Dato’ Zakaria Yusof, de-

livered the IGP’s speech. “We cannot question the rakyat’s expectations that the Police Force respond efficiently and effectively with integrity and fairness. This is their right and, therefore, it’s our responsibility.” Is this sufficient to shore up confidence in the force? I can’t possibly say.

Hopefully, the new restructuring exercise and a pay revision will spur the personnel to greater heights.

A third force, said the IGP, was meddling in the affairs of the police. The Home Minister refuted the IGP’s claim. Tengku Razaleigh Hamzah, an Umno stalwart, made this pronouncement recently. “Before we can pursue meaningful economic strategy we need to get our house in order. We need to undertake bold reforms to restore the independence of the police, the anti-corruption commission and the judiciary”.

Restore the independence of the police? This is very interesting. Is PDRM under siege? I don’t have an answer.

Whatever it is, people’s expectations are high, and so are their hopes.

YOU DECLARE

by Peter Lee

Chin owns 80% shares in a successful company known as Chin Trading Sdn. Bhd. which he set up years ago. Under the company law, a private limited company (“Sdn. Bhd.”) requires a minimum of 2 shareholders and 2 Directors. Because he is single, Chin gave 20% of the company’s share to his trusted cousin named Paul. Paul understands that he is only the nominee shareholder and at any point of time upon the request of Chin he must transfer back the shares to whoever Chin chooses. Chin also arranged for Paul to pre-sign a transfer form to get back the shares in the event of Paul’s death.

Only both of them knew about this arrangement and it went on smoothly for some time until one day Paul died in a tragic plane crash. After the funeral was over Chin explained to Paul’s wife that Paul is only the nominee shareholder of Chin Trading Sdn. Bhd. for him and he has transferred Paul’s shares to someone else with the pre-signed transfer form. Paul’s wife told Chin that Paul did not inform her about this and further said “Let’s see what my husband’s will says”. It was discovered that in Paul’s will, it states that all his assets including the company shares are to be given to his wife. Now Paul’s wife wants to claim back the 20% shares. As you can see, this scenario is going to be a long drawn out battle between both parties proving the rightful owner and the pricing of these shares.

To overcome this scenario, Chin can get Paul to sign a “Declaration of Trust” as well as asking him to pre-sign a transfer form. In Paul’s Declaration of Trust, he is still the registered owner and also the main trustee of the trust of the company shares. In the event of Paul’s death, total permanent disability, critical illness and mental disability, his share will be transferred to a trustee company like Rockwills Trustee Berhad acting as the substitute Trustee by way of a power of attorney.

Thereafter, the trustee company will transfer the shares to the next nominee that Chin chooses. Chin is able to do so as the trust deed compels the trustee to transfer the shares to any person that is named by Chin. This will all be stated in Paul’s Declaration of Trust. By using a Declaration of Trust, Chin can ensure that Paul’s 20% company shares will not form part of Paul’s estate. A declaration of trust can also be used where properties are registered in the name of another person.

Peter Lee is an Associate Estate Planning Practitioner (Wills & Trust) with Rockwills International Group. He is also an Islamic Estate Planner providing Wills & Trust services for Muslims. He is based in Ipoh and can be reached at: 012-5078825/05-2554853 or excelsec@streamyx.com.



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THINKING ALOUD

• By G. Sivaprasagam

This February's weather was brutal with many parts of the country registering record high temperatures. Predictably no one appeared to be bothered by this odd occurrence. Observations remained limited to high sales of air conditioners and increase in energy consumption. No question was raised why this occurred and whether it is a matter that deserves some attention.

Well I certainly am concerned. It requires no clairvoyant to prophesy that this abnormal event will soon become the ordinary and change we will experience from now on will likely trend to the more bizarre. I fear our next generation is looking at a bleak future and the generation after that perhaps none at all.

Reading books like Tom Friedman's *Hot, Flat and Crowded* petrifies me as to what the future holds. I would suggest that each and every one who can read English invest in this book and read it from cover to cover. As for our leaders they better study it as if their life depended on it for it probably does.

Global Warming 101

For the benefit of those who have not heard of global warming or having heard of it have no real concept of what it is all about I have summarised below what Friedman says.

For 10,000 years there was roughly 280 parts per million (PPM) of carbon dioxide (CO₂) in the earth's atmosphere. Since

the industrial revolution in the mid 19th Century it has steadily increased particularly in the last 50 years. In 2007 it was 384 parts per million, a figure the earth has not experienced in the last 20 million years. It is still climbing at the rate of 2 parts per million a year.

Large scale manufacturing activities are driven by fossil fuels that emit carbon dioxide. Since the 20th century transportation powered by the internal combustion engine has been adding carbon dioxide to the atmosphere at an astronomical scale. These activities in addition, have been the cause of increased exploitation and consumption of raw materials, urbanisation, suburbanisation and a massive highway system all contributing to carbon dioxide emission in one way or another.

The pollutants called greenhouse gases generated by the industrial and transportation activities are accumulating in the atmosphere. The greenhouse gases trap sun's heat near the earth's atmosphere before that heat radiates back to space, making the globe warmer.

Added to these activities is deforestation that is releasing carbon stored in the trees, plants and soil, the generation of methane, which is 21 times more potent than carbon dioxide as a heat trapping agent, from rice farming, petroleum drilling, coal mining, animal defecation, solid waste landfills and even cattle

belching.

The earth has already warmed on average by 0.8 degrees Celsius above the level in 1750 and the ten hottest years since the advent of thermometers in 1860 all occurred between 1995 and 2005.

2012 Too Late for Action

Friedman warns that "we are entering an era in which our effects on the climate are becoming potentially unmanageable and irreversible. Without a dramatic reduction in human induced Co2 emissions climate change may bring abrupt or irreversible effects on air, oceans, glaciers, land, coastlines and species. If there is no action before 2012 it will be too late. What we do in the next two to three years will determine our future. This is the defining moment. Since we can't stop Co2 emissions cold, if they continue to grow at just mid-range projection 'the cumulative' warming by 2100 will be between 3 and 5 degrees and these are just mid-range projections".

In the next 50 years 100 PPM or more CO₂ will be added to the atmosphere. If CO₂ reaches 550PPM in the next 50 years there will be a 3% increase in temperature, an intolerable level. More significantly increase of 2 to 2.5 degrees would take us to the tipping point, a point of no return.

We must however bear in mind that the figures are averages, estimates

FEBRUARY'S HEAT WAVE IS A SAMPLE OF OUR FUTURE



and lowest consensus and feared events have lately been happening 100 years ahead of schedule.

Problems Compounded

Added to this is the fact that problems arising from changes in climate compound when factors interact with and amplify one another. For example the Arctic tundra has 500 billion tons of carbon trapped in the peat bogs and if the permafrost thaws, gigatons of carbon would be released which in turn would lead to higher temperatures with more ice melt and more catastrophic and unpredictable consequences. What is certain is that global warming is about to trigger all sorts of unusual weather events – from hotter heat spells and droughts in some places, heavier snowfall in others, violent storms, more intense flooding, forest fires and species loss in still others.

Further complications will arise as even a small increase in global average temperatures will have a huge impact on the weather because differences in temperature is what drives the winds and their circulation patterns on the surface of the earth affecting besides temperature precipitation, humidity, soil moisture, atmosphere circulation patterns, storms, snow and ice cover, ocean currents and upwelling.

Not only is the climate changing because of human activities but it is

changing faster than even the most anxious climatologists were predicting just four years ago.

Malaysian Opportunities to Help

What is the solution to this impending doom? Friedman has suggested various steps that could be employed to, as he puts it manage the unavoidable and avoid the unmanageable'. Whilst many of the recommendations are beyond our Nation's means and ability there are some gems that our nation could adopt which can possibly lead to critical positive impact.

Nature has endowed us with some unique strengths that could serve as a foundation for a serious endeavour to address this problem. We could be a leader in this task. For decades we have been attempting to gain the respect of the world by engaging in some peculiar activities which has produced mixed results. Here is an opportunity to attain legitimate respect of the world community and perhaps even their following whilst benefiting our society.

To be perfectly frank, fashionable statements and symbolic gestures will be quite useless. What will make a difference are hard decisions rigorously enforced. They may be unpopular and cause much pain but they will be meaningful.

What Malaysia Can Do:

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2. Clean our rivers
3. Impose very high fuel taxes for private vehicles
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5. Introduce carbon tax
6. Reform urbanisation
7. Encourage energy efficiency by rewards and penalty system
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By See Foon Chan-Koppen

Dining 'al fresco' or under the stars has always appealed to me, ideally in a more temperate climate with a gentle breeze creating a soothing susurrant from surrounding trees as one sipped slowly from a glass of wine. But with the recent heat wave, I was somewhat reluctant when friends suggested I join them for an 'al fresco' meal in old town. I was about to make some excuse when my friend C.K. Cheah mentioned the fantastic iced beer that was the chief attraction. At this I accepted with alacrity, as this was just the right antidote to the stifling heat. So dressed in my skimpiest (my modesty and concern for not outraging other's sense of aesthetics notwithstanding), I hurried down to old town to rendezvous with my friends.

Iced Beer

Kafe Yoon Wah is located on Jalan Bijeh Timah, almost on the

corner of Jalan Panglima. In fact the table we were sitting at was directly outside Lorong Panglima, more popularly known as Concubine Lane. An iced beer mug was immediately delivered, followed by an iced beer that was poured in quickly. The resulting foam almost filled half the glass and I was told to drink it quickly before the foam dissipated.

Not being a seasoned beer drinker, I spluttered through the foam and found the ice cold beer below, refreshingly cold on the tongue and absolutely what the doctor (if he was my kind of doctor that is) would prescribe! Apparently the beer and the mugs are kept in the freezer, taken out and immediately opened. RM12 for a large bottle.

Late Night Spot

We then proceeded to order and I was given the 'low-down' on the Kafe. Essentially open for business only at night, Kafe Yoon Wah stays open and serving till the wee hours of the morning (like

SEEFOON DINES 'AL FRESCO' IN OLD TOWN



2-3.00 a.m.). It is a favourite haunt for bar-flys, after-movie, after-banquet, after-dancing crowd and earlier for general diners and families. Tables covered almost half the street stretching from the corner of Jalan Panglima for about two blocks. I asked what happens when it rains and I had the opportunity to find out that evening for as we had just finished our meal and preparing to pay, we felt the first few drops of rain and ran scurrying to our cars. I then saw the waiters running forward to set up removable canopies which were already open and ready to provide instant shelter from the rain.

Signature Dishes

The first dish to arrive was the pig's fallopian tubes fried with dried prawns, dried chillies and chilli padi with a sprinkling of rendered lard (*ju yao jah*). While it may sound repugnant for a lot of folks, it must be remembered that unlike other offal meat which usually act as filtering systems in the body, pig's fallopian tubes purely act as a passage for eggs and are therefore much more hygienic. It has a crunchy texture and can be very tasty when cooked in the right way. Kafe Yoon Wah certainly cooks it right and in fact our bunch

of foodies liked it so much that we had to order a second helping. RM13.00 per portion.

Another dish worthy of note was the steamed frog with chicken essence. Soft and succulent, these bite-sized morsels of frog which on its own is quite bland, were given a lift with the addition of a whole bottle of chicken essence. Our portion for six – RM37.50.

Must-Haves

Other must have dishes included the dry boar curry (a must have) RM13; fresh eel braised in dark soya with dried chillies RM17.50; shelled Mantis prawns fried with Nestum RM15.00 and deep fried 'Sa Tsui' fish, a small local fish that is very popular with Ipohites – RM18.00.

For noodles, we had two types: the fried Hokkien noodles, thick udon type noodles in a dark sauce (RM9.00 for a 2-person portion) and the dry fried 'beehoon' or thin rice vermicelli (RM10.00 for a 2-person portion),

both of which were generously topped with crisp lardons.

Completely stuffed to the gills at this point, a lady approached us and asked if we'd like to try her boneless stuffed chicken wings – 3 for RM10.80. Her description of it was so tempting that we just

had to order three for a trial. And we were glad we did. Fried to a crisp on the outside, the stuffing which was a combination of pork meat, mushrooms, and water chestnuts, was most flavourful.

Kafe Yoon Wah, worth a visit.

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RECIPE



By MARGARITA LEE

Fried Chicken with Ginger Flower (Bunga Kantan)

Ingredients:

- 1 chicken -cut into 12-15 pieces
- 1 stick of ginger flower – sliced thinly
- 2 tsp salt mixed into 200ml of water
- ¾ cup of cooking oil

Pounded Ingredients:

- 1 tsp coriander (*ketumbar*)
- 3 pips garlic
- 3cm fresh turmeric (*kunyit*)
- 3cm ginger flower

Method:

1. Sauté pounded ingredients with 2-3 tbsp of oil till fragrant.
2. Add in chicken and stir well.
3. Add in sliced ginger flower and stir well.
4. Add in salt water.
5. Simmer chicken till the gravy thickens. Dish out and keep aside.
6. Heat oil in a wok on high heat until hot; deep-fry chicken pieces in it until golden brown.
7. Drain on kitchen towels and serve.



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at Ipoh

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One stunning ensemble playing all your favourite jazz music... and more!

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Date: 11th April 2010 (Sunday)

Time: 7.30 p.m.

Venue: Indulgence, 14 Jalan Raja DiHilir, 30350 Ipoh.

Reservations: 05-255 7051

RM240.00 nett

Award-winning New York-based jazz musicians of our genre will be in Ipoh for one night only on April 11th! They will perform at Indulgence in conjunction with a delectable dinner feast. It promises to be an enchanting evening!



One Night Only in Ipoh

Keyboard - Tay Cher Siang
Bass - Vincent Ong
Drums - Adam Osmianski
Saxophone - Benjamin Lee

LETTERS

We reprint some of our reader's comments from our online paper. Go to <http://www.ipohecho.com.my/> to read more. The views expressed in these letters are not necessarily shared by the Editorial Board. We reserve the right to refuse or modify the letters we publish.

Stop The "Kampung" Mentality, MBI!

"... if our authorities continue to hold on to their "third world mentality" of allowing hawkers free rein anywhere and everywhere they please, we will forever be nothing more than a backward "kampung" nation."

I would like to thank and commend Encik Fathol Zaman Bukhari for his excellent article "Polo ground - is a solution possible?" in the February 12-28, 2010, issue of Ipoh Echo. He has not only brought to light the increasingly intolerable issue of illegal hawkers at the park, an issue which has long been swept under the carpet by MBI, but also attempted to offer some possible solutions to the problem.

On the matter of legislation, Taman Rekreasi Sultan Abdul Aziz did start off as a strictly "No hawk-

ers" zone, but about ten years or so ago, this rule was flagrantly broken with the advent of the first hawker stall along Persiaran Brash. Emboldened by the total lack of action by the local council and encouraged by brisk business, hawker stalls began to mushroom along the street, first tentatively, but quickly gathering in courage and commitment. It was not long before the band of hawkers formed a strong alliance among themselves and became a "union" of sorts, watching out for one another and actively threatening anyone who dared stand in their way or come up against them. Even MBI, it seems, is rendered powerless by the might of this 'hawker mafia'.

Today, these hawkers, who number between 10 and 12 along the street, go about their business with total and uninhibited wild abandon. And why not? With no real legislation, they may as well have

MBI's blessings. In the last ten years, Polo Ground has been gradually taken over by hawkers who seem to be the law unto themselves. The lovely park of bygone days has completely lost its dignity, reduced to nothing more than a circus act controlled by the 'hawker mafia'.

How very tragic that the handful of hawkers who are the cause of this huge problem continue to be allowed to dictate matters at Polo Ground. What is the hidden agenda here??

We strive to be a developed country but the uncivilized sight that greets visitors to some of our parks speaks volumes that we have a long way to go before this can happen. For one thing, if our authorities continue to hold on to their "third world mentality" of allowing hawkers free rein anywhere and everywhere they please, we will forever be nothing more than a backward "kampung" nation.

What is the point of investing millions of Government funds into facilities and landscaping when the environment in the park is denigrated and ruined by the ugly sight of hawkers flogging their wares, while flies abound and rodents run rampant around the park. This is not to mention the traffic, pollution and general chaos that are brought about by the existence of hawkers.

In addition, Polo Ground does not have the capacity to accommodate large-scale events which are better organized at Dataran Ipoh, Ipoh Padang and Taman DR Seenivasagam.

Tourism Minister Datuk Seri Dr Ng Yen Yen has called for our parks and gardens to be tourism products, but tourists visiting Polo Ground would not find our park very pleasant at all! The Government should take a leaf from Penang's book and see how they have managed to draw tourists to their parks and gardens.

The lovely Botanical Gardens is a fine example of what a well-run park should be - a green lung strictly for rest and recreation - and totally devoid of

the menace of hawkers.

Yet Penang is a hawker's paradise, for both hawkers and fans of hawker food alike. Hawkers operate in strictly gazetted zones and streets dedicated to hawker fare. Look at Persiaran Gurney and New Lane, two very successful streets where hawkers flourish. They are not located in residential areas!

Majlis Bandaraya Ipoh, why not create Ipoh's own "food streets" instead of allowing hawkers to set up stalls wherever they please?

It is time to stop this "kampung" mentality! Stern action must be taken immediately to relocate the illegal hawkers at Polo Ground to a designated hawker zone away from the residential area surrounding the park. When law and order is firmly implemented at Taman Rekreasi

Sultan Abdul Aziz, only then can we turn the park into a tourist attraction all Perakeans can be proud of.

So, in answer to the question: is a solution possible at Polo Ground? Previous Governments have shown they were either not capable of resolving the crisis, or could not be bothered. The present Government, under the helm of Menteri Besar Dato' Dr Zambry, Datuk Bandar Hj Roshidi and State Senior Executive Councillor Dato' Dr Mah Hang Soon, can prove otherwise, and indeed must be seen to be the people's Government rather than "all talk" only.

MBI, it's time to come clean. Come forward and answer to the people of Ipoh!

Polo Ground Action Committee

CHANGE YOUR WORLD 2010



"Good men make the difference, stamp their blueprints and create history". This was the chant of the night at the Change Your World 2010 Concert held at Syuen Hotel on Sunday, March 14. Organised by the interestingly named I.a.m, a Christian mission dedicated to bringing changes through music, performance arts and stage produc-

tions, the evening was nothing short of a spectacle in itself. The crowd rocked to the tunes played by I.a.m's resident band, Relent. A stunning dance routine by an African youngster was a show stealer. It got everyone on the edge of their seats. The objective of the concert was to reach out to youths and instil in them the desire to change for the better. Preceding the performance was a slide show

on William Wilberforce and Zach Hunter, two inspirational figures who led the fight against slavery. Zach is only 15 years old and is a modern-day abolitionist. The Change Your World wave has hit Ipoh and in line with its objective, the organisers challenged the crowd to make a difference by being an agent for change.

Dinesh K

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Announcements must be sent by fax: 05-2552181; or email: announcements@ipohecho.com.my, by the 9th or 23rd of every month in order to meet deadlines. Announcements by phone will not be entertained. Ipoh Echo reserves the right to verify any announcement before it is published.

KAMI Family Education 2-Day Course (English) for caregivers of persons with mental disorders; 4 & 4A Lebu Perajurit 3/2, Tmn Ipoh Boulevard Timur, Ipoh, April 10 & 24 from 8.30 a.m.-4 p.m.; Contact: Su - 016-5468003 or Georgie - 014-6008277.

Home for the Aged Simee Ipoh Family Day Food Fair. April 25, 9 a.m. - 1 p.m. For coupons contact: 05-5473252.

Tan Sri Lee Loy Seng Perak Grand Prix Chess Championship 2010 (2nd Leg - Larut Matang/Selama (Taiping). Chinese Recreation Club, 2 Jalan Stesen, Taiping, April 11, 8.30 a.m.-5.30 p.m. Website: <http://perakchess.blogspot.com/>.

Perak Community Specialist Hospital (PCSH) special offers for Pap Smear (RM28) and Mammogram Screening (RM70). Validity March 27 - April 27. For appointment: 017-2951982 (Ms. Angeline) or 012-5061515 (Ms. Selena Yee).

Solo Water-Colour Exhibition entitled, "Ipoh - A Colourful City", by well-known local artist Loo Win. Daily from April 24 to May 1, at the Syuen Hotel Ipoh Lobby, 10 a.m. - 9 p.m. Featuring traditional culture, heritage buildings, limestone hills and villages in and around Ipoh. For details contact Loo Win at: 016-5533027.

9th Malaysian Hospice Congress entitled, "Communication for Better Care" on May 7-9, Impiana Hotel Ipoh. Contact: Perak Palliative Care Society, 14 Lebu Woods, Canning Gdn, 31400 Ipoh, Tel./Fax: 05-5469021, email: ppcs95@streamyx.com.



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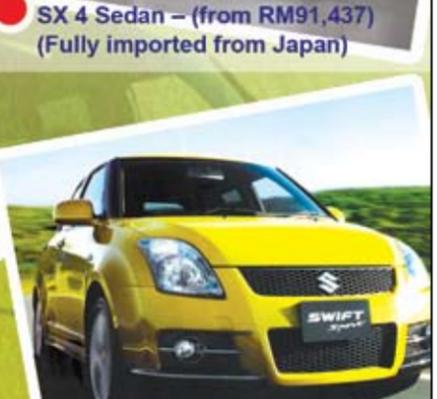
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LETTER FROM ULU KINTA



WISHING YOU WEREN'T HERE?

Ask anyone about Ipoh and 99% of them will say it is a boring place. How can the scene of political struggles, of nature at one's doorstep, of a place where the people can still find time for you, be termed boring? Maybe the young and dynamic crave better shopping malls, or a meaningful outlet for their creative energy. Maybe these people need the cities, for jobs or opportunities which are unavailable here. Ipoh boring? No. Laid back? Yes.

'Boring Ipoh' is the least of our problems. But, to be bored is a state of mind, just like happiness. You make the best of what you have and Ipoh can sometimes appear as a cultural desert, a place lacking taste, with too much kitsch and no style.

A Landfill Site?

Certainly, a travel brochure for Ipoh could describe it as the holiday equivalent of visiting a landfill site.

One need not visit Ipoh

to notice the dirty sights, horrendous smells and nerve wracking sounds. One only has to read the Ipoh Echo for the readers' views about how this once beautiful city has become a big rubbish dump.

We may moan about the choked roads during peak hours, or the state of the football team or the lack of a good transport system, but how will Ipoh compare in a ranking of Malaysian towns or cities in which to live?

Ipoites are proud folk and would react angrily if we were ranked somewhere at the bottom of this fictitious list. Haven't we the best and cheapest food in the country? Our roads are not incessantly clogged like the urban areas elsewhere, and isn't our atmosphere relatively unpolluted?

Our Icons

We may grumble about migrant labour, unemployment and the lack of culture (plays, theatre groups

etc.), or get annoyed with suggestions that the big white 'IPOH' sign at two exits on the north-south highway is the closest we'll ever get to Hollywood. But hang on; we have our very own Bond Girl, Michelle Yeoh and another budding actress, Christy Yow. And we've been fortunate to welcome foreign stars like Jodie Foster and Catherine Deneuve.

We probably have more colonial buildings in use and our shopping malls may not be as fantastic as Kuala Lumpur's. A sprinkling of small shops, such as the *rotan* shops, or shops that make the heads for the lions in the lion dance, still fascinate many a visitor. A sizeable number of typical groceries (*kedai runcit*) exhibit an air of authenticity (just like in our granny's day), though they are fast disappearing. The gentleman barber shops manage to snip men's hair just like in our grandfather's time. And our wet markets continue to have the same

smells, sounds and sights.

Just like any other city, Ipoh is lovely in many parts but it has its downsides. Litter is a massive problem, as the Ipoh Echo never tires to reveal. Wouldn't we love to blame our council entirely but half the problem is our own apathy. This paper too has revealed that the inhabitants of certain parts of town have no pride in their surrounding areas and are responsible for rubbish piles that mushroom overnight.

Shape Up or Ship Out

But why? This city has a lot going for it and it has some of the friendliest people in the country. We'd all love to say to those people who want to sully our good name - get a life!

Ipoh has got everything anyone would need from a city and we love it here. So if you want to be part of this great place, you'll just have to shape up.

YAM

COMMUNITY NEWS

SPREADING THE HAPPINESS



Y's Men's Club Ipoh (YMCI) chose the Perak Society for the Promotion of Mental Health as the recipient of its goodies this Chinese New Year. Members of YMCI recently held a ceremony at its premise in Ulu Kinta, Ipoh, to welcome them. There were residents and members of the society, led by Puan Zurina Afandi. The residents, numbering over a hundred, warmed up to the reception. They thanked the visitors for the treat. The aim of the visit, according to Puan Chanika Letchimanan, Chairperson of YMCI, was to bring cheers to the underprivileged. With the collaboration of the Perak

Malayalee Association, a blood donation drive was held recently.

In a simple ceremony held in Sung Hung Cheong Motors, Pasir Pinji, the Club also donated a specially designed motorcycle to Namasivayam a/l Rengasamy of Cameron Highlands who had lost both his legs due to Berger's disease. K. Letchimanan, Project & Finance Director of the Club said that this is part of their Community Service Project. Officials of the Club witnessed the ceremony. Namasivayam would use the motorcycle to deliver newspapers and sell flowers to support his wife and five children.

A. JEYARAJ

IPOH IN BRIEF

The Brothers of Mercy of Mary Help of Christians recently celebrated their 160 years of its founding by their Blessed Brother Peter Friedhofen in 1850.

Brother Peter of Germany had a love for looking after the sick and suffering and had dedicated his life to caring for them. In 1849 with episcopal approval he started a new order and built his convent at Weikersburg Germany. Its mission statement was "To care for the sick as well as possible in every aspect".

The order is now present in several countries around the world including Ipoh Malaysia where they were instrumental in the setting up of Hospital Fatimah.

The anniversary was celebrated with a Mass held at the Hospital Fatimah Chapel and was attended by fellow Brothers from Germany and Singapore together with staff and guests.

The Brothers of Mercy is a nursing order. Due to the poor health conditions in Malaya then Archbishop Olcomendy of Singapore in 1953 invited the order to come to Ipoh to assist with the health situation.



Brother of Mercy clinic at Simee@1953.

THE BROTHERS OF MERCY AND FATIMAH HOSPITAL



Brothers of Mercy 2010. Brother Patrick is on the right with necktie.

Their original clinic took up part of the Simee Old Folks Home which then was run by Father Khaw as part of the Catholic Welfare Services and offered polyclinic services.

The Brothers also operated a Mobile Dispensary service with scheduled visits at assigned clinics such as the Chinese temple at Gopeng. Other assigned clinics were at Bota Kanan, Kampar, Batu Gajah and up north at Province Wellesley. They also provided their services to the Orang Asli.

After independence in 1957 and the gradual improvement of medical services by the federal government the work of the Brothers of Mercy gradually became redundant.

It was then that the idea of upgrading to a hospital was mooted.

Additionally several of the town's boys joined their novitiate and were

undergoing training in Germany. Upon completing their training they would be able to man the hospital work.

One of those early trainees is Brother Patrick who went on to become a doctor and is currently the resident Dermatologist with the hospital.

The ground breaking for the Hospital was held in 1969 and their first patient was admitted in 1974. The name selected for the hospital was 'Fatimah' after the saint of 'Our Lady of Fatimah' in Portugal.

Due to the shortage of nurses initially a batch of German Sisters, the Franciscan Sisters of Solzkotten were brought in for a limited stay. The German Sisters were subsequently replaced in 1983 by the Franciscan Nuns formerly from Our Lady's Hospital at Chung Thye Phin Road.

The hospital has grown from strength to strength and is now a 223-bed establishment, has been quality certified and is currently adding an Oncology Centre to its list of services.

What started as an invitation to care for the sick

and suffering has blossomed into a full service hospital.

It appears that the mission statement by Brother of Mercy Founder, Brother Peter Friedhofen "To care for the sick as well as possible in every aspect" is



Travel Dispensary.

still relevant today even though it was first spoken 160 years ago.

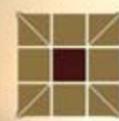
JAG

SCENE AND HEARD

ONGOING CHARITY



The Ladies Hour Club held their annual fellowship lunch at Mun Choong Restaurant in Pasir Putih recently. The ladies have been meeting weekly for the past 20 years to network, share recipes, attend cooking demonstrations and raise funds for various charity projects in Ipoh. These include baking and selling cakes at the annual Salvation Army food and fun fair; making regular donations of cash and food to Asrama Bintang and the Jelapang Old Folks Home; making monthly cash donations to the Perak Thalassaemia Society as well as conduct awareness talks together with BP Lab in many secondary schools in Ipoh, and provide Thalassaemia blood-screening to the students.



太平山莊

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IPOH IN BRIEF

MEDICAL CAMP
IN TAMAN CHERRY

Rukun Tetangga, Taman Cherry with the support of Klinik Kesihatan Greentown held their annual Medical Camp at Pusat Rukun Tetangga, Taman Cherry. During the Camp, Eye Tests, Dental check, Blood pressure measurement, Body Mass Index, PAP smear, Self-breast examination and Blood Glucose level were carried out. Based on the results of the tests, doctors advised the individuals on the condition of their health.

A. Lucus, Secretary, Rukun Tetangga, Taman Cherry said that the annual Medical Camp has been organised for the past five years and more than 100 residents make use of the facility. Follow up examination would be carried out at the Klinik Kesihatan, Greentown. It would be easier for individuals to get treatment in Klinik Kesihatan since they have a referral letter. **AJ**

ZAMBRY
ASSURES SHOE
MANUFACTURERS

Perak Menteri Besar Dato' Seri Zambrzy Abd Kadir did an on-site visit to the shoe manufacturers located at Menglembu and Bukit Merah on March 18 recently. "I wanted to have a first-hand look at this place which has been making shoes for 100 years."

Perak Footwear Industry Association (PFIA) Chairman, K.K. Tham was on hand to greet Zambrzy and his team upon their arrival.

A WEDDING FAIR
TO REMEMBER

The "IMalaysia Wedding Fair" organised by Heritage Hotel Ipoh was a roaring success judging from the crowd and the number of participating boutiques present. The fair, held over a weekend on March 13 and 14, attracted many visitors, especially those with a keen eye on wedding gowns and dresses. It was officiated by Datin Faridah Din, wife of the Perak State Secretary and president of Puspanita Perak. She thanked the hotel management for organising the event, as it provided an ideal platform for budding designers to showcase their talents and boutiques in Ipoh to promote their products. She hoped Heritage Hotel would make this an annual affair. Lesser known boutiques benefitted from the fair as it gave them an opportunity to jostle for space in the competitive fashion market. Students from the Vocational Training Institute Seri Iskandar, Perak, were the major beneficiaries. Norlia Kamaruddin, 23, who is pursuing a certificate course in dressmaking, was elated. "I've picked many new ideas and concepts which will help enrich my experience", she mused. Another student, Nornatasya Tajuddin, 19, was similarly thrilled, "I am mesmerised by the variety of colours of the dresses and gowns. It gives me an idea how to mix and match colours according to my whims", she remarked. The fair had certainly made an impact on the visitors. **RM**

The shoe industry in Malaysia is worth RM1 billion annually and the new villages of Bukit Merah, Lahat, Menglembu and Pengkalan, are the main producers of shoes for the whole country.

However, at Bukit Merah over 80% of the villagers participate as a cottage industry operation with each household performing one of the more than 20 processes for a complete shoe. This cottage industry needs to be regulated and was earlier threatened with a stop-work order.

Due to their valuable contribution, Zambrzy assured the operators at Bukit Merah "not to worry. We won't stop your work". His announcement at the Bukit Merah community hall was greeted with applause by the residents.

"We need to understand the nature of the cottage industry and work together with PFIA for a solution. Hopefully shoes will be synonymous with Perak similar to Limau Tambun Pomeles", added Zambrzy.

Amongst the officers in Zambrzy's team were the Directors of Town Planning from MBI, Tuan Azizuddin Alias and the state Dr Dolbani Mijan. **JAG**

NEW MARKET
FOR GUNUNG RAPAT

Gunung Rapat will have a new wet market in another two years time.

This was announced by Ipoh Mayor Dato' Roshidi Hashim on Wednesday, March 10, during his schedule "Turun Padang" session with the residents of Zone 15 (Sungai Rokam/Ipoh Jaya/ Ampang).

The future market located at the current site will be an upgrade of the existing market.

The new market costing RM6 million will be a single-storey building with an underground car park. The market is designed to accommodate 187 stalls with another 131 stalls located outside the market building. The underground car park will have 118 parking bays.

During the duration of upgrading, the existing market will be relocated off Jalan Gopeng on the road leading to Sam Poh Tong and behind the existing Pomelo stalls.

A spokesman from MBI acknowledged that a meeting with the stall owners was held last week to hear their views and the response to the new design of the market was positive.

The same stall owners had last year rejected the earlier MBI design citing the first floor as not being conducive for business using the Bercham market as the benchmark. **JAG**

REMEMBERING THE
RESIDENTS OF SPECIAL HOME

A delegation of Lionesses led by organising chairperson Datin Thavamani Thambipillay and Tadika Adik Bistharri's administrator Mrs Pushpa Jeyasingam visited the centre run by the Perak Society of the Promotion of Mental Health in Ulu Kinta recently. It was part of their joint community service - Lioness Club and Tadika Adik Bistharri.

On hand to welcome them were the president of Perak Society of the Promotion of Mental Health Dato' Dr Majumder and the Manager Pn Latifa. The entertainment for the morning was the sing-a-long session while Dato' Dr Majumder played the music. The Lionesses joined them in the sing-a-long.

The 90 residents were given parcels containing a bath towel, soap, toothpaste and a tooth brush, all sponsored by Tadika Adik Bistharri. Forty-seven lucky draw prizes were given by the Lioness Club.

The visitors were taken on a tour of the five chalets, the Volunteers Quarters, the Workshop where the residents produce handicrafts and ceramics for sale and the Orchid Farm with its more than 1,000 pots in full bloom.

Dato' Dr Majumder expressed her gratitude to the Lioness and staff of Tadika Adik Bistharri for visiting the home.

CITY COUNCIL LAUNCHES OPERATION BRIGHT



Ipoh City Council launched Ops Cerah (Operation Bright) at Gunung Lang Recreation Park recently to ensure that all street lamps in the city are lighted up at all times.

The operation, which was officiated by the State Executive Councillor for Infrastructure, Public Facilities, Energy and Water YB Dato' Ramly Zahari, is a joint collaboration effort of the City Council, TNB and JKR - the departments responsible for providing street lighting for the city.

Present at the launch was Ipoh Mayor Dato' Roshidi Hashim, JKR State Director Dato' Dr Safray Kamal and the General Manager for TNB Perak Hj Mohd Zahir Md Nagor.

Stickers are being pasted on all lamp-posts with a reference number for its location and the telephone numbers of the respective department to call in case of breakdown. The departments are being identified by the colour of the stickers, which are blue for MBI, red, blue and white for TNB and yellow for JKR. The labeling of all street poles will be completed by May 1.

Members of public are required to provide the road reference and the pole reference when making their report. They will be given a reference number for each report made. The maximum time taken to replace a faulty street bulb is 48 hours. **JAG**

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BEFORE AND AFTER – HAZARDOUS ROAD JUNCTION

Motorists getting out from Jalan Kinta into Jalan Tun Abdul Razak (Jalan Maxwell) now have a clear view on the right of on coming vehicles, thanks to the prompt action by the State Water Supply Board.

Following a 'Thumbs Down' report by the Ipoh Echo (IE88), the board removed a metal box located at the junction which had been obstructing the view of motorists.

Secretary of Lim Garden Residents' Association, K. Sagadevan, conveyed his thanks to Ipoh Echo for drawing attention on the issue. He said no action was taken on their complaints on the issue over the past several years. He also thanked Perak Water Supply Board for their prompt action.

A. JEYARAJ

BILLBOARD PROMOTING PERAK'S HERBAL GARDEN



Perak's Herbal Garden – one of the state's 10 tourism icons – is being proudly presented with a big billboard at the junction of Jalan Sultan Azlan Shah Utara (Jalan Tasek) and Jalan Teh Lean Swee in Ipoh.

The poster does not state where the Garden is located or give any contact details. However, the website of Perak Tourism is given in a panel under the poster.

When I enquired how to get there from Ipoh, the receptionist in the Garden informed that I should drive along Gopeng Road and turn right into the road leading to Kellie's Castle. The Garden is about one kilometre from the main road. There is no signboard of the Garden along the main road. How are tourists going to get there?

The booklet issued by Perak Tourism Action Council on 10 Tourism Icons of Perak states the Garden is open Monday-Friday from 8.30 a.m. to 5.30 p.m. and closed on weekends just like the Tourist Information Centre.

Family outings are normally done during weekends when people are free and if the Garden is closed during weekends and Public Holidays how does Perak Tourism expect people to visit the site.

A. JEYARAJ

COMMUNITY NEWS

A CAUSE FOR CONCERN



The air quality in Menglembu, especially in areas surrounding the many factories, is bad. It is claimed that there are traces of chromium and arsenic particles in the air.

The worse affected areas are Taman Bukit Merah,

Taman Impiana Adril and Taman Badrisah.

The residents had therefore formed an action committee to highlight their plight and voiced its concern to the relevant authorities but to date no actions were forthcoming.

However, a recent study by Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (UKM) over a 24-hour period, discounted the presence of harmful chemical that would impair the health of residents.

The report also stated that the air was not contaminated, as alleged. The contradiction in the report had the residents crying foul.

The MP for Sungai Siput, Dr. D. Jeyakumar, who is also the President of Parti Sosialis Malaysia, claimed that the results were totally unexpected. He credited the state health department for initiating the study but questioned the methodology used.

Dr. Jeyakumar was puzzled why the health department was the one to announce the results and not UKM.

He had posed several questions to the department but could not get any satisfactory answers. "There are traces of chromium and arsenic particles in the air which are harmful to the residents in the long term", he said.

The Sungai Siput lawmaker hoped the authorities

would view the residents' concern seriously, as their health was at risk.

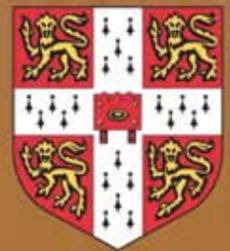
Many of the residents interviewed shared this fear. V. Sundarajoo, 62, had put up with the situation far too long.

"We can't stand the smell and the stench emanating from the factories. The noise too is deafening." Most agreed that something needs to be done to overcome the problem.

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BEHIND THE STREET NAMES

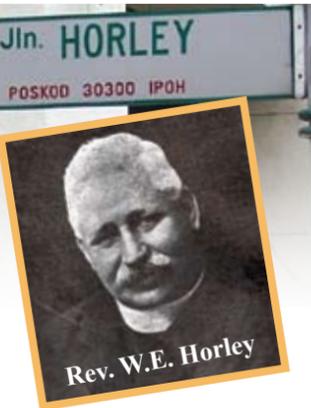
By Yeun Yin Fong

WHICH STREET?

Horley Street (from Brewster Road to Towkay Leong Sin Nam's shop – towards North)

Who was Horley?
The late Reverend William Edward Horley, MBE, was one of the great educationists of the Methodist Mission. He was born in 1870 and died in 1931. He founded schools and did church and educational work in Perak and Selangor for 37 years. The ACS Ipoh and the MBS Kuala Lumpur were the schools he started. On his death, at the graveside, the Bishop of Singapore, the Right Reverend B.C. Roberts paid a generous

tribute to his memory. The following is one passage from the Bishop's address. "For 37 years William Edward Horley spent himself in passionate devotion to the social and spiritual welfare of the people of this country. His zeal did not go without recognition and he gained a public distinction which many men might covet, but far more precious to him must have been the confidence of the hundreds of simple souls which he won, and the personal friendships which he made



by his cheerful and sympathetic nature. But he was more than a good comrade and kindly humanitarian. He had an exceptionally clever vision of God, and the witness whom he bore was never obscure or half hearted or compromising." Apart from the street, there are also schools, buildings and sports houses named after the great educationist.

What is Horley Street most popular for?

- Flea market on Sundays
- Vicinity to Public Pusing Seafood Restaurant (popularly known as Mun Choong)

Source: www.ipohworld.org



Sunday flea market

ONGOING REFURBISHMENT FOR IMPIANA HOTEL IPOH



Centrally located in the heart of Ipoh, the four-star Impiana Hotel Ipoh offers lavish facilities set against breathtaking views of rugged limestone hills. The hotel has started its renovation and refurbishment works, which involved some of the public areas and rooms.

The new Deluxe rooms and Executive Suites have been given a complete facelift to give that exclusive and contemporary look, with all 200 spacious guestrooms equipped with individually controlled air-conditioning, direct dialling, five ASTRO channels, Internet data port, broadband services, hair dryer, in-room private safe and coffee/tea making facilities.

The Garden Terrace at the lobby level, which offers a culinary tour of the best in local and international cuisine, is the perfect venue to meet and greet. A tempting spread of daily buffet breakfast, buffet lunch and buffet dinner beckons and signature dishes: *cucur udang*, *roti canai durian*, *mee rebus*, *nga choy kay* and *teh tarik* are there to tempt most palates.

Another excellent place to dine is The Bistro, a newly opened F&B outlet located at the Lobby Level. The Bistro is the place to head to for tasty food and beverages in a comfortable yet subdued setting. With a fine selection of wines from all over the world, The Bistro is an excellent choice for both lunch and dinner. Lunch is served from 12.00 p.m. to 2.30 p.m., while dinner is from 6.00 p.m. to 12.00 midnight. The restaurant caters to individuals and groups of up to 50 people.

The Lobby Lounge rounds out the facilities on offer, providing the ambience and atmosphere for families and friends to socialise or get together for light refreshments. Impiana Hotel Ipoh also boasts a grand ballroom, the Crystal Ballroom, which can accommodate up to 800 guests, the site for many a lavish function.

The Impiana Hotel Ipoh is certainly a retreat within the city, a welcoming presence in Ipoh.

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ECO-TOURISM

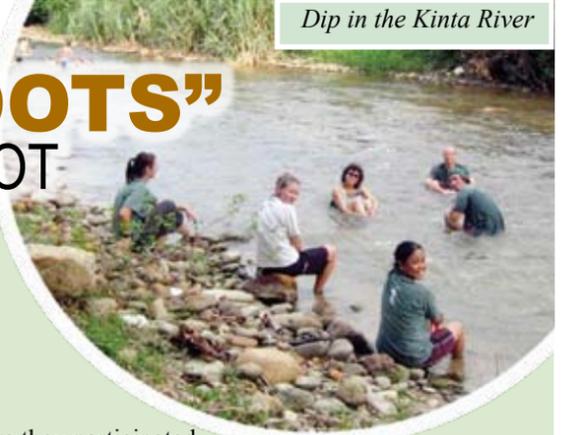
"THE ROOTS" ... TAKING ROOT

By James Gough

The Roots, a resort dedicated to eco-tourism on the banks of the Kinta River in Tanjung Rambutan, had their first intake of visitors from the German European School in Singapore recently. Comprised of 71 students

where they participated in a quest designed by Ecofieldtrips that took them through its dungeons and secret passageways

Dip in the Kinta River



Bridget herself is an experienced biologist and conservationist with a Masters in Education and is pro-active in marine conservation and education.

For the remainder of the year Roots already has bookings from another 10 schools from countries like France, Singapore, Dubai and Hong Kong as well as KL and Penang.

One of the visiting



The group at Matang Mangrove Forest Taiping

and four teachers, the group was on a five-day field trip throughout Perak.

The resort's study programme focuses on raising awareness of environmental conservation and sustainability issues, particularly to young people who have the power to shape the future of our planet.

The students, whose average age is 13 years, were taken on action-packed field trips from Gua Tempurung at Gopeng and its surrounding adventure camps to Matang Mangrove Forest at Taiping where they had a chance to re-plant mangrove seedlings, thus replenishing an important habitat for many endangered bird species found nearby.

Conservation of indigenous cultures is also part of the programme and as such their trip included a visit to the Orang Asli village at Kampong Tonggan, Ulu Kinta where students integrated with the children of Orang Asli families. The ice-breaker activity was singing the song "heads, shoulders, knees and toes" repeatedly but in various dialects starting from English to Bahasa Malaysia.

Back at The Roots, the students learnt to play sepak takraw, made a poster inspired by the Orang Asli visit, and even had some target practice using traditional Orang Asli blow-pipes.

For a sense of adventure the students visited Kellie's Castle



Blowpipe training

to discover the tale of The William Kellie Smith family.

Ipoh history was a major focus throughout the week especially the tin industry culminating in a fun tin panning session.

Throughout the week the students were led by a team of eight experienced biologists to learn about the diverse history, biology, people and attractions that Perak and Ipoh have to offer.

According to the co-owner of the resort, Bridget Hedderman, the programme for this first batch took over eight months to prepare together with her team of biologists.

teachers said that the Roots programme was one of the best programmes available for eco-tourism and educating young minds. With this in place, Perak now has a tour programme, albeit a study programme, which enables participants to appreciate the diverse natural attractions available in the state, as well as to learn about its history.

The new Perak fieldtrip has certainly taken off to a brilliant start and if the response of the first batch of students is anything to go by, it has taken firm root for The Roots to receive more students in the future!

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COMMUNITY NEWS

'KEKABU' A SOURCE OF INCOME



● By Rosli Mansor

The unassuming 'kekabu' tree, which grows profusely along river banks and in the kampongs, is a

source of income for one gritty widow. Puan Radziah Yeop Ibrahim, 60, sells 'kekabu' filled pillows and mattresses to eager buyers from as far away as Kuala Lumpur and Penang. Local customers too are aplenty.

The soft and silky texture of the cotton-like fibres found in the ripe and swirled-up pods make good fillings for pillows and mattresses. "It has some therapeutic values", said Puan Radziah or Mak Cik Wok, as she is popularly known. "It's good for the body as the softness of a kekabu-filled pillow and mattress cushions the head and back when one lies on

them."

Radziah is a mother of two. Eldest son, Nor Hisyam, 21, pursues a degree course at Universiti Pendidikan Sultan Idris Shah, Tanjung Malim while daughter, Norlizatul Akma, 14, studies at the Methodist Girls School, Ipoh. Her ex-soldier husband, Zulkefli Mat Yatim, died five years ago and since then Radziah has been raising her two kids on her own. Her only source of income is derived from the 'kekabu' pillows and mattresses. Lately she has ventured into the traditional cookie business making dried jelly, a popular shopping mall in



sold in packets, is found at a retail outlet in Megoplex, a popular shopping mall in

Gunung Rapat. Radziah hopes it will be a hit with customers. "It's tough raising two kids with my meagre income", Radziah told Ipoh Echo recently. But Mak

Cik Wok is determined to persevere despite the insurmountable odds. She rents a single-storey terrace house at Taman Harirela, behind Hillcity Hotel from where she makes her pillows and cookies. "I've to set aside RM280 for the house rent every month. Sometimes it's difficult to make ends meet, especially when orders take a tumble."

This gutsy lady needs our help. Those keen on sampling her hand-made products can reach her at her house, No. 6, Lebuhraya Harirela, Taman Harirela, Ipoh, or her mobile 016-536 6174.



FUN WITH ORAL HYGIENE

Or how to remove the fear of dentists for children

Fun activities related to dental care are organised by Pantai Hospital Ipoh (PHI) to inspire children from orphanages to have good oral hygiene.

It is part of the hospital's Oral Hygiene Workshop and Free Screening for orphans under its "Corporate Social Responsibility" (CSR) programme.

Held at its Dental Clinic recently, 29 children from the Precious Gift Home, apart from

participating in the fun activities were also given a talk on oral hygiene, demonstrations on brushing technique and dental screening. It was conducted by Resident Dentist, Dr Sunita Diwakar Naidu.

It was a fun-filled day for the children as their fear of visiting dentists were forgotten as they excitedly took part in colouring pictures, maze challenges and doing puzzles which are dental related.

This event is the start

of the hospital's "Bright Smile Project", which is to provide health awareness and educate children and the public on oral hygiene and caring for their teeth.

Oral Hygiene Workshops

Every month (starting this March) the hospital will carry out various activities to provide education and health awareness under this project. The hospital started its dental services early this year and as part of its outreach to the community, it is conducting oral hygiene workshops and providing promotional rates for children during the school holidays as well as for adults.

Pantai Hospital Ipoh has always been very actively involved in CSR projects. Just the first two months of the year saw them carrying out CSR projects which included providing free refreshments for devotees and public as well as medical aid (ointment rub) for kavadi bearers and public during 'Thaipusam' on January 30. In February,

they hosted a Chinese New Year Party and choir performance by PHI staff for clients of Perak Palliative Care Society, a Chinese New Year Party at Rumah Warga Tua Wa Khiew in Sungai Siput in collaboration with Rotary Club of Kuala Kangsar, a Chinese New Year Party and dance performance by PHI nurses for 250 residents of Rumah Seri Kenangan and organized a Chinese New Year Caring from the Heart Project, where free medical screening and donation of sundries was done for 29 poor families in Manjung.

About Pantai Hospital

Pantai Hospital Ipoh is a 180-bedded private specialist hospital. The Hospital offers a wide range of outpatient and inpatient services equipped with modern medical facilities, plus the experienced expertise of dedicated Medical Consultants, well-



trained Nurses and professional administrative staff. The hospital is committed to its customers and practices its motto "Caring

From The Heart". And, it constantly strives to improve its services to meet customer's expectations and needs.

JERRY FRANCIS



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