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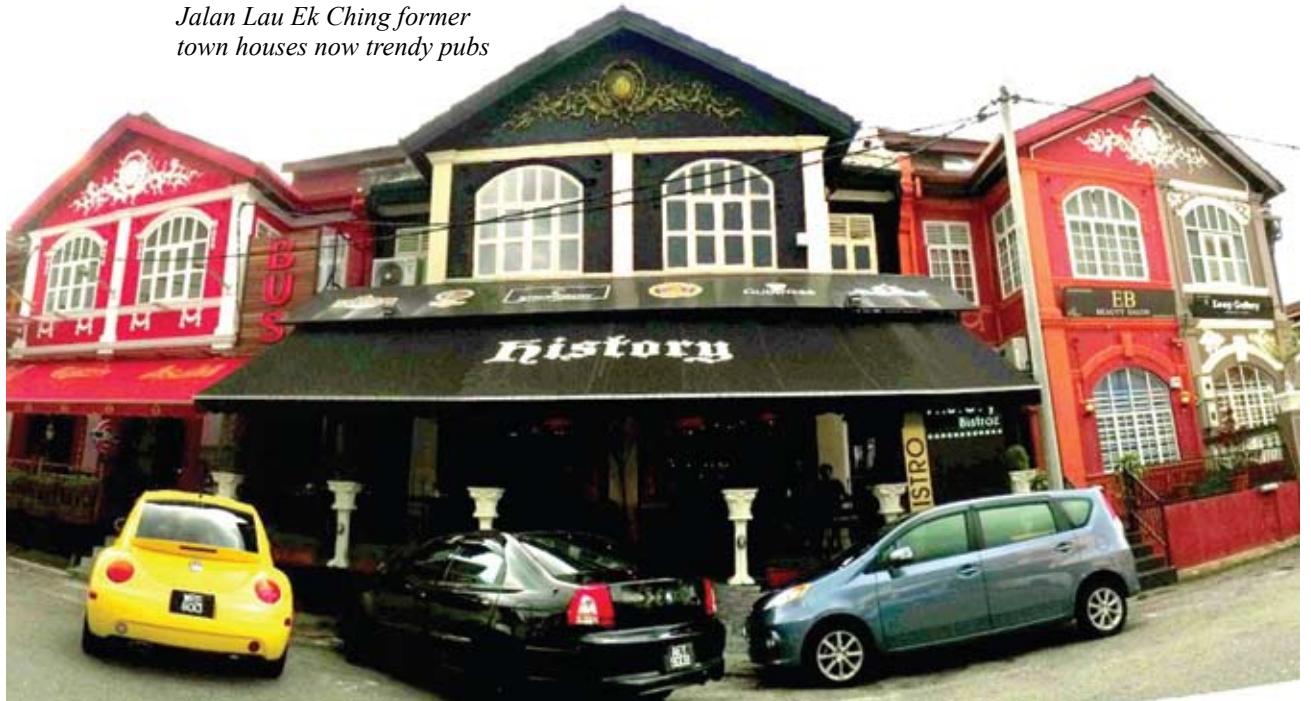
From Heritage To Renaissance

by James Gough

Almost a year ago IE carried a report on the developments in Ipoh entitled 'Shining Through: Ipoh's Heritage Spirit. (IE141/ April 16 2012) in which we described the few developments which were beginning to change and influence the mood about Ipoh town, specifically the Old and New Town area. Back then we covered Old Town locations such as Sekeping Kong Heng and Lim Ko Pi whose owner, Lim Chai Hock was then repainting seven units of balconied shop-lots at Jalan Sultan Iskandar (Hugh Low Street), the colours of the rainbow. However as we review the amount of new building developments that took place in 2012 a picture is emerging of a rebirth of lifestyle, art and culture in Ipoh, better described as a renaissance.

Continued on page 2

Jalan Lau Ek Ching former town houses now trendy pubs



Burps and Giggles artistic decor



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“Renaissance”: a renewal of life, vigour, interest, rebirth, revival – Dictionary.com

How did it start?

In the year 2000 the government repealed the Rent Control Act whereby building owners had to rent their premises at a fixed rate. With the removal of the Act the building owners could now rent and sell their premises at market rate.

According to Encik Mohd Tajuddin Mohd Tahir, MBI's Town Planning Officer, buyers subsequently bought into these old shop lots and after some time some buyers began to demolish their properties to realise better returns from their purchases.

Only when old buildings were being pulled down, did it raise the interest of heritage aficionados and the man in the street, concerned that a part of Ipoh's heritage and image was disappearing, would alert Ipoh Echo each time a building was being torn down.

This subsequently prompted Ipoh City Council to issue a requirement that shop-lot owners could demolish their units but had to maintain the original facade. The result of this directive is that more and more facades are being upgraded with minimal or massive reconstruction behind, to accommodate modern facilities.



Mohd Tajuddin Mohd Tahir

UNESCO's Heritage Listing

Another factor that Tajuddin mentioned that had contributed to the interest was UNESCO's Heritage listing for Penang and Malacca specifically with property prices soaring three to five times higher than before instead of declining as originally anticipated, especially the “per unit appreciation values contributed to owners rebuilding their lots.”

Year of Dragon: New Buzz, New Openings and New Events in Ipoh

Before 2012 it was common knowledge that Ipoh was frequently busy during weekends and public holidays. With the introduction of the electric train service and printing of the



French Hotel's Manager Chah. Non-smoking and niche decor.

Heritage Trail Maps 1 & 2 it gave day trippers and weekenders something to do in between exploring the sumptuous Ipoh food outlets. 2012 was the year of the Dragon and it was also the year that a fair number of new businesses set up shop.

Hotels, Hotels, and more Hotels

Tune Hotel opened its doors to Ipoh as did local hotelier Seemsoon Hotel, Ipoh Downtown Hotel and not forgetting the heritage hotel Sekeping Kong Heng. Kinta Riverfront Hotel opened with great fanfare while two existing Ipoh Hotels, D Eastern (formerly Eastern Hotel) and French Hotel which opened at the end of 2011 under new management, saw healthy occupancy rates averaging 60% throughout the year. Both hotels declared that their customers consisted of corporate clients and families from local companies, Singaporeans and Europeans and stayed on average three days.

French Hotel Manager, Kenn Chah said that his Hotel has 48 rooms with comfortable and niched decor, is non-smoking and whose customers come for the Ipoh food and cave tours.



SOS Dance Club and House Music Club barely a kilometre apart

However, it was the Riverfront Hotel and Suites that contributed synergy to the tourism market

With its 410 rooms and service apartments all in one location it attracted “large never been done before events” to town, examples of which were the 1800 strong participants of the Kelab Roadrunner Ipoh ((KRI) Cycling Team's “annual Century Ride event” or even My Dancesport's International Dance Competition which held its first ever international event in Ipoh. With the largest pillarless ballroom in Ipoh, Kinta Riverfront attracted many world class events such as the first ever full length opera La Traviata.

Night Scene

For the night scene the dance club, S.O.S. opened its doors at the former Grand theatre located on Jalan Sultan Idris Shah while House Music Club opened at the former Borneo Motors, both located on Jalan Sultan Idris Shah, barely a kilometre apart.

As for pubs, what began as one tastefully designed Irish Pub (in Ipoh!) called St Patrick's along Jalan Raja Ekram (Cowan Street) has now spread to three pubs and a music club at the parallel Jalan Lau Ek Ching millionaire's row of heritage town houses all tastefully renovated with quaint themed interiors.



Burps and Giggles eclectic art

Blending Art with Heritage

Sekeping Kong Heng opened their Old Town Art Gallery last September and recently organised an art demonstration that attracted a lot of young people which was a refreshing change.

However, for more modern and quirky art and which includes wall art, head over to Burps and Giggles Café located at three lots along Jalan Sultan Yussuf immediately behind Sekeping Kong Heng. Besides its interesting menu of burgers and pastries its artistic decor is eclectic and pervades throughout every nook, corner and wall of this old but resurrected shop lot. It's even possible you might see some of your old furniture decorating the tables and walls (see page 5 Food Musings this issue).

Council Study

Ipoh City Hall, aware of the changes happening in town, will do a study this year. The study, called RKK Pekan Ipoh or Ipoh Town Special Area Programme has been allocated RM890k for the study covering Old and New Town, an area of approximately 3 sq km.



Dr 'Mike' at his future Concubine Lane home-stay

Town Planner Tajuddin said the plan, announced at a recent Council full board meeting, was to preserve the image of Ipoh with guidelines to focus on the details of heritage buildings and urban design covering drainage, materials used and will work towards identifying Ipoh as a Tin Heritage City.

What's Next

For Dr 'Mike' Gurmail Singh, who has invested in several units at Panglima Lane or commonly known as Concubine Lane, he plans to open one of his units at the entrance as a cafe sometime in April and will call it “Concubine Lane”. His other units currently undergoing renovations will become an antique shop and a home-stay though the dates have yet to be confirmed.

Concubine Lane where several of its buildings had collapsed a year ago was provided an allocation of RM200k by the state government to do a study to ensure the structures were safe. To date “RM108k has been used to settle the engineering fees while the balance will be used for the upgrade of the drains, street and back lane” said Mike, adding that “the building owners were glad for the assistance from the government”.

Lim Chai Hock, the owner of Lim Kopi updated Ipoh Echo that his hotel, which was the former OCBC Bank, will be ready by June this year. Bubbling with enthusiasm as he explained his plans, Lim repeated that Ipoh had so much of its grand history to share and said that OCBC Bank was originally the Bank of Malaya which was co-founded by Towkay Leong Sin Nam in 1920. “My guests who live here will not only relive the era gone by they will experience the past,” added Lim.

Tourism Master Plan Needed

Chan Kok Keong, the co-owner of Sekeping Kong Heng, also acknowledged that “Ipoh has it all but we need more tourists. Government and City Hall should work together to aggressively promote the town”.

Tourism is all about living the experience of Ipoh's glorious past and Old Town can provide that experience. “To achieve and enhance it, the authorities must work together to enforce a neat, tidy and clean environment,” added Chan whose proposal was echoed by other industry players as well.

Chan, the motivator for the art gallery, was of the opinion that a tourism master plan for Ipoh will be a good long-term strategy for success. With so much enthusiasm and optimism it is possible not to move forward. Ipoh Echo will do a review a year from now to find out.



Lim of Lim Ko Pi in his upcoming hotel, opening in June. At back, adaptive reuse for a garden.

IPOH echo

From the Editor's Desk

• by **Fathol Zaman Bukhari**

TRANSFORMING ATTITUDE AND ETHICS

However good an idea maybe, it will turn sour if the human factor attached to it does not perform to expectation. I am saying this with much conviction considering the attitude, ethics and working culture of our civil servants.

The Perak Urban Transformation Centre, fondly known by its abbreviation UTC, is a major landmark in downtown Ipoh. Located at the now defunct Super Kinta shopping complex, the centre is set to make an impact on Perakeans, in general and Ipohites, in particular. The Perak UTC, the third of its kind in the country after Malacca and Kuala Lumpur and the largest of the three, has 53 operational counters dispersed on its two floors. The services provided are being divided into ten clusters ranging from welfare and human development, entrepreneurship, financial and health services, youth development, education and job-seeking.

Some of the much sought after government agencies such as the Immigration Department and the very elusive Ipoh Land Office have counters here. Thus conducting business with these agencies becomes much easier with a vastly improved accessibility.

Before the opening of the centre, Ipohites had to go to Jelapang to renew their international passports. Getting to the land office in Kampung Manjoi is an exercise in futility, as rate-payers have to navigate the intricate roadways of this misshapen village. Understanding the poorly worded signage is another problem in itself. Many would end up in Silibin after making a wrong turn. It is very confusing, especially for first-time visitors. No wonder the Manjoi Land Office is the least patronised public agency in Ipoh. People would rather pay their dues at the post offices or at accredited banks since it is much more convenient.

As is widely reported in the mainstream media, the Perak Urban Transformation Centre and its cousin, the Gopeng Rural Transformation Centre (RTC), are part of Prime Minister Najib's Blue Ocean initiative aimed at "providing various services for the convenience of the people in the state". One serves urbanites while the other the rural folks. Besides facilitating dealings with government agencies, the Gopeng RTC also "serves as an integrated service centre encompassing the collection, processing and the distribution of agricultural products."

Unfortunately, the full potential of both these centres has yet to be realised fully. One reason I find it wanting is the speed with which this idea was pushed. The building of a transformation centre in Ipoh was mooted sometime in mid-2012. It was originally planned to be opened in December 2012 but was delayed to February 15 with the Prime Minister himself doing the honours.

A pre-launch was done on February 1 officiated by Second Finance Minister, Dato' Seri Ahmad Husni Hanaziah, raising speculations that his presence was more than a social visit.

The original plan was to find some suitable usage for the former Super Kinta shopping complex, once a magnet for shoppers in the Kinta Valley. It lost its lustre when newer state-of-the-art shopping complexes and malls came into existence in the early 1990s.

With the exception of its wet market, the largest in the city, the crumbling complex was turning into an eyesore. It stood out like a sore thumb in the midst of an unforgiving city centre, devoid of charm. The timely makeover, therefore, was a welcome change rather than an anticipated one. In fact, Ipoh City Council was at wits' end trying to find likeable options for its continued relevance. It was God-sent, in every sense of the word, as there is now a reason for its second lease of life.

However good an idea maybe, it will turn sour if the human factor attached to it does not perform to expectation. I say this with much conviction considering the attitude, ethics and working culture of our civil servants. Being sent from pillar to post is the norm at government offices. The sight of sullen and sulky officers manning the counters



is nothing strange. What is more distressing is being singled out for being of a different race other than a Malay.

My niece had the misfortune of being treated as such when she inquired about her misplaced application recently. The lady officer mistook her for a Chinese and gave her the runaround. She had to produce her identity card to prove her ethnicity. I hope those manning the Perak UTC counters are not as bad. From what I have observed they are a likeable bunch of minders. Hopefully, this equation remains.

But in all probability, the excitement of serving in a new environment will soon wear off and they will be back to their old lacklustre ways like before.

One other problem, which may impact the centre's viability, is parking. Parking space is limited to about 200 lots. And since most are being taken by the staff what is there left for the public?

My other concern is – will the centre survive a post GE 13 apocalypse? I shall leave this to the rakyat to decide.

EYE HEALTH – THE TWITCHING EYELID

Ipoh Echo's EYE HEALTH series continues with Consultant Eye Surgeon Dr S.S. GILL talking to us about THE TWITCHING EYELID.



Dr. S.S. Gill
Resident Consultant
Ophthalmologist,
Hospital Fatimah

Twitching of the eyelid is a term for spasms of the eyelid muscles that occurs involuntarily. This is an annoying problem when it happens. Twitching of the eyelids and eyelid spasms are quite common. Most of the time, only the lower eyelid is involved and that too, commonly in one eye only. However, sometimes the upper eyelid may also be involved.

Most eyelid twitches are MINOR and not dangerous. Thankfully, they also do not last for very long although sometimes they may, though rare, last for a few months. The good thing is that eyelid spasms are often so subtle that people around us do not even notice that someone has an eyelid twitch.

The MORE SERIOUS or problematic form of eyelid twitching is called *blepharospasm* or *hemifacial spasm*. Thankfully, these serious forms of twitching occur less often. When they do occur, they may warrant further testing and investigation.

Some of the possible causes for eyelid twitching are as follows:

- Stress induced
- Caffeine intake
- Alcohol consumption
- Eye fatigue
- Nutritional deficiencies
- General fatigue



Identifying the cause for the eyelid twitching helps us to handle the treatment. Often it is just a matter of setting something right. The more serious varieties of twitching however may be a part of a nerve condition and may need to be investigated.

Stress

Mankind is now living in possibly the most stressful era of all time. We are often reminded that "life is not a bed of roses". The stresses of everyday life with regards to job stress, health conditions and emotional issues are common problems that one may have to face.

The stresses of life have often been identified as underlying causes for various health problems ranging from constipation, depression, hypertension, menstrual irregularities, decreased immunity and even precipitating heart attacks that may lead to death. We all react to stress differently. The response to stress may result in a major illness as mentioned above or just a simple annoying eyelid twitch. If the cause for the eyelid twitch has been identified as stress-induced, then concerted efforts should be taken to address it, the scope of which is beyond this article.

Caffeine

Caffeine is a psychoactive stimulant drug. Caffeine was first discovered by a German chemist, Friedrich Ferdinand in 1819. Caffeine is found not only in coffee but also in some leaves, beans and fruits of some plants. Believe it or not, it can actually act as a natural pesticide that kills some insects that feed on the caffeine-containing plants.

Caffeine is a stimulant (central nervous system or CNS stimulant) that restores alertness and postpones drowsiness. It enhances the effect of the stress we experience. Additionally, caffeine also increases blood pressure and so caffeine and stress do work synergistically in a negative sense. If you do have an annoying eyelid twitch, it would be worth a try cutting back on caffeinated drinks such as coffee, tea, soft drinks and energy drinks. The problem often is that too many of us are in some sense "addicted" to caffeine and claim to not be able to function without that morning cup of coffee! More on Eyelid Twitch in the next issue of the Ipoh Echo.

For more information, call Gill Eye Specialist Centre at Hospital Fatimah (05-545 5582) or email: gilleyecentre@dr.com.

Chinese New Year 2013

Chinese New Year 2013 was a relaxing week of celebration. For the media, their celebration started a few days earlier when MB Dato' Seri DiRaja Dr Zambry Abdul Kadir treated them to a 'makan kecil' at his residence where he presented the media Chiefs with a poster that read "Peace and Prosperity".



Of the many events undoubtedly the most elaborate of all the celebrations was the State-level celebration held on the seventh day of the Lunar New Year at Kg Baru Kopisan Gopeng. The event was officiated by their Royal Highnesses DYMM Raja Muda Perak Raja Nazrin Shah and DTYM Raja Puan Besar Tuanku Zara Salim who certainly lent that aura of pomp and ceremony with their presence.

Other VVIP's who graced the event include DYAM Raja DiHilir Perak and DTYM Raja Puan Muda Perak, Menteri Besar Dato' Seri DiRaja Dr Zambry Abdul Kadir and MCA Chairman Datuk Seri Chua Soi Lek together with Organising Chairman Dato' Dr Mah Hang Soon.

The cultural performances presented were grand and spectacular and enthralled the audience. Additionally, everyone was awed when popular artist Shila Amzah who won the Asian Wave Chinese Reality singing talent show in Shanghai, China last year, took over the microphone and presented her strong vocals to the joy of all present especially the young crowd who moved closer to the stage to watch her perform.

For a full pictorial coverage of this year's Chinese New Year celebrations go to www.ipohecho.com.my.

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Sexual Harassment at Work

Your friend confides in you; she is pale, admits that she has not been sleeping well and you have noticed that of late, she is jumpy and makes careless mistakes at work. She attributes these to the unwarranted attentions of a colleague.

She says that the workmate has been making lewd comments about her, both in public and on the few occasions when they are alone in the office. Despite declining his invitations to dinner or the movies, she says that her colleague has not been discouraged but has stepped up his charm offensive. He now sends her text messages which are getting increasingly sexual in nature.

Your friend is afraid and has refused to work overtime even though she would like the extra money. This has also not gone down well with the boss. This job is only part-time but the money helps to pay for her college fees. Your friend's health is affected and her tutors have noticed the deterioration in her studies.

Many of you may have heard of similar stories experienced by your work colleagues or family members. Perhaps, you have been the victim of sexual harassment in the workplace.

A friend who could not tolerate the persistent attentions, resigned. It was a well paying job in a company which she had enjoyed working in for a decade. Her problems started when her former boss retired and a new manager was recruited. Unable to take the strain of his suggestive comments and his behaviour at work, she left. She found it a daily struggle to avoid him and she was afraid to complain, in case she would not be believed, or worse, lose her job.

Similar stories of sexual harassment describe the victim's ordeal and the feelings of helplessness and anger. Helpless because there was no one they felt they could turn to for help, and insufficient guidelines to help them deal with the situation; angry because very little attention has been given to sexual harassment at work, which is a serious problem which is not given sufficient attention.

Many women who have been sexually harassed feel vulnerable and that their dignity has been violated. They feel degraded, humiliated and are forced to work in an atmosphere which is both hostile and offensive.

Most remarks are about a woman's breasts or about her sexual proclivities.



Many also complain about being "touched" in inappropriate places or being leered at. Almost all feel that they will not be believed, that their complaints will be regarded as a trivial matter, or that by complaining, their own character will be questioned.

Sexual harassment is not confined to the normal places of work like the office, factory floor, supermarket, warehouse or market stall. Over the years, reports have been made about female Members of Parliament being subjected to lewd comments in parliament. If parliamentarians are not censured by the Speaker or condemned by other MPs for making sexist comments, where does that leave the rest of the population?

If the majority of our MPs lack the drive, energy and moral fibre to take the problem of sexual harassment seriously, does this help explain why Malaysia does not have any laws which deal specifically with sexual harassment in the workplace?

It is important that anyone who feels that they are sexually harassed at work, do the following:

- Avoid the work colleague and if possible, do not work alone with him. Tell him if his behaviour is inappropriate, such as standing too close, continually touching or sending text messages with a sexual connotation.
- If communicating your disapproval does not work, make a record of the incidents. Keep a notebook on your person, and record the date, time and details of each incident. Any text message or e-mails should also be kept as evidence of his behaviour. Record his sexist remarks on your mobile phone. All the evidence gathered may be used against the harasser.
- Tell a trusted colleague at work, who can also observe his behaviour. The more senior the person in the organisation, the better.
- Be prepared to make a formal complaint. See a union leader if you are a member. If the boss is guilty of sexual harassment, make the complaint to his superior. Copy your formal letter of complaint to the CEO or Managing Director of the company, and also the Personnel Manager. Keep the letter short, and include a reasonable time-frame for action to be taken. Do not let the matter be swept under the carpet.
- If no further action is taken, seek further information from an NGO which deals with such matters or make a police report.

Employers must also take their responsibilities seriously and help free the workplace environment from sexual predators who bully and prey on defenceless women and men.

No one should tolerate sexual harassment at work and no one should be made to suffer in silence or leave their job.



THINKING ALLOWED

• by Mariam Mokhtar

Community

Jeyaratnam's Birthday Party

Tan Sri V. Jeyaratnam, Chairman of Yayasan Sultan Idris Shah, celebrated his 88th birthday recently. The auspicious day, which falls on January 15, was observed with much pomp and ceremony by staff of the foundation who gave the octogenarian a fitting birthday party. Some 500 guests, comprising members of the Board of Trustees, caregivers, well-wishers and clients, were present to share the happy moment. Performances by clients of the foundation formed the climax of the party.



Yuna

Crematorium for Hindus Becomes a Reality

The hassle over a crematorium for Hindus is over since the Perak State Government has given RM1.3 million to the *Ipoh Hindu Devasthanam Paripalana Sabah* (IHDPS) to build a crematorium on the existing cremation ground in Buntong.

Dhamodaran Munusamy, President of IHDPS said that relevant documents have been submitted to DOE (Department of Environment) and are waiting for approval. He added that they are planning to build four chambers, but initially only two will be built.

The crematorium will be built within the 10,000 sq. ft. area of the cremation grounds. It will incorporate the latest in cremating technology so as to ensure a clean and healthy environment. The site will have a new access road and ample space for a car park. The work will be awarded on an open tender basis. Upon award of the contract, the job is expected to be completed within a year.

Dhamodaran is happy that the crematorium will be built on the existing location so that the old graves can be maintained. He plans to carry out a *Bhoomi Puja*, a ceremony performed to inaugurate a new site for the construction of a building, on a grand scale before commencement of construction. According to Hindu beliefs, by performing this *puja*, the right energy and natural elements surrounding the site can be propitiated. It is usually carried out in the morning, which is considered most auspicious for this ceremony.

Dhamodaran informed that IHDPS would be operating the crematorium on a non profit basis as a service to the community.

AJ



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RAMESH KUMAR



016 553 1092

New Help Service

The Church of St John the Divine has started a help service at its premises. Called the *St John's Community Help Service*, it is open to anyone who has a problem of any kind, be it health or physical disability to emotional issues or simply assisting someone to fill up a form.

The Project Coordinator for this service, Ruth Yates, said that 12 of its volunteers have been trained to personally listen to your problems and help you to find the best possible option to solve them. Consultations are free and kept confidential.

According to the Church's Vicar Reverend Tom Cherian, the Church does have people coming each month requesting assistance for a variety of issues. By initiating this service, the church called upon its community network to provide assistance in areas of expertise where they can

be of help.

The centre will operate twice a week on Tuesdays from 12pm till 6.30pm and Saturday from 9.30am till noon.

St John's Church is located at Jalan St John (off Jalan Panglima Bukit Gantang Wahab). Email: stjohnschsipoh@gmail.com.



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MUSINGS ON FOOD



By See Foon Chan-Koppen

Photos by Ginla Foo

seefoon@ipohecho.com.my

SeeFoon checks out the new life in Old Town

When Julie Song told me the name of their new outlet **Buku Tiga Lima**, next to **Burbs and Giggles**, my first question to Dexter Song, scion, manager and co-owner with Mum Julie, was "So can I establish credit for food and beverage here?" He laughed and explained that the name came about because there were already a few of these tiny exercise books being used as decoration in Burbs and Giggles when they opened, so instead of scratching around for another fun name to match, they decided on the quaint little books which were ubiquitous in the old days when credit would be recorded in them, one for the trader and another for the buyer. This honour system was probably the forerunner of our current credit card system today.

Burbs and Giggles and now its adjoining sister outlet, *Buku Tiga Lima*, is certainly bringing the life back to old town. Where hitherto, the only reason to wander into that part of town was to either go to the bank or to eat at the twin hawker food mecca, *Kong Heng* and *Thean Chun*; now foodies and the hip and trendy have a new venue to eat, drink, sip coffee, meet, and to see and be seen. And its all happening at these two iconic cafes/restaurants/bar/ coffee house depending on your preference for naming venues.

Like its equally iconic neighbour, *Sekeping Kong Heng*, an example of

minimalistic heritagic conservation with 21st century artistic flair, *Burbs and Giggles* and its newly-opened sister outlet *Buku Tiga Lima*, is a fine showpiece of modern creative interior design married to old framework, with a large proportion of the old walls, stairs, ceilings, windows and doors left in its original dilapidated state, some parts even embellished with additional plaster work to accentuate the feel of peeling plaster, faded signage, flea market pickings of odds and ends and pieces of furniture.

Vibrant wall art, whimsical lamps with outrageous shades, mismatched



'Reverend Mama'



'Chocolate Orgasm'



'Bam-Bam'



chairs and throw away tables from abandoned houses, quaint yet attractive 'artsy' arrangements like an assortment of wooden stools, contrast starkly with bottles of expensive single malts and a few champagnes adorning the bar shelves, all assaulting the usual staid Ipoh sensibilities as one walks in from busy Jalan Sultan Yussuf. More odds and ends catch the eye and modern toilets that work combine in an eclectic mix of the old with the new; bold splashes of colour juxtaposed against the drabness of unpainted walls; chatter and laughter assail the senses as one goes in search for a table or during peak hours, just a chair to perch on.

The decor was a collaboration between Julie Song of Indulgence fame, her son Dexter who runs the place and his girlfriend Rachel Yeow who assists him. Rachel who was responsible for all the lampshades and the very creative art

arrangements, also dabbles in painting and helped to do some of the calligraphy dotted around. According to Dexter, the three of them used to go scavenging at abandoned homes, flea markets and even furniture dumps, picking up pieces that people had discarded and yet with a creative eye had been resurrected and given a new lease of life in *Burbs and Giggles* and *Buku Tiga Lima*.

And it all works. Not only in decor but also in the menu offerings. *Buku Tiga Lima* specialises in **Crepes and Bagels** while *Burbs and Giggles* dish out **fancy hamburgers**. In between there are the usual **savoury and sweet delectables** available behind the glass counter which one can choose to take away or eat on premises. There are no printed menus and all items are hand written on huge boards hanging on the walls.

Chipped enamel plates to eat from lend humour as we were first served a **bagel**

with **cream cheese** arriving on the usual fancy serving platter. The bagel was crispy on the outside and softer on the inside than most bagels I have eaten in other parts of the world particularly in the US where they are most popular. The **'Reverend Mama'** which comes with soft egg, smoked salmon, dill gherkin and ricotta cheese is a mountain of a 'sandwich' - RM15; as is their **'Bam-Bam'** a whopping stack of a **wagyu beef burger**, skewered with a steak knife. This is served with egg, cheese, tomato, beetroot, carrot, horseradish and onion - RM28. Hale and hearty and perfect for lunch. Other burgers are more scaled down with a choice of chicken, lamb, fish, and the vegetarian one with portobello mushroom, brie cheese, broad bean and salad ranging in price from RM18 for the **Angus beef** to RM15 for the **portobello**. Additional include their **chunky cut chips with cheese**, chillies RM4 and if you add truffle oil which imparts a heavenly fragrance, it's RM6 a portion.

On the crepe selection, I tried the **seafood crepe** which was generous in its serving of prawns, fish, basil and cheese in a thick tomato sauce, the crepe arrived crisped at the edges but alas was eventually overwhelmed by the sauce turning soggy very quickly - RM16. I had more luck with the sweet crepe, the **Hazelnut Choc** with crushed hazelnuts and **Crepe Brulee** dollop. This arrived



crispy all around, the nuts lending even more crunch and the chocolate cream velvety smooth, providing a textural contrast that was delightful - RM14.

The **crème de la crème** was just that at the end of the meal - a large scoop of chocolate ice cream called **'Chocolate Orgasm'** which quite lived up to

its name, called the **Lola**, sandwiched in a special handmade brioche. An absolute must-have should you ever go for coffee or tea.

Dexter, a true blue Ipoh boy who spent some years in Australia, has certainly come home to roost and is keen to do his bit for Ipoh. He loans out the upstairs premises of *Burbs and Giggles* for charity fairs and functions for free and to date has hosted five functions. He hopes to generate more activities upstairs and is planning a children's play later in the year.

I for one certainly wish him all future success for not only has he brought life back to old town but he has raised the bar on iconic preservation of old premises, and other potential heritage conservationists need to take note.



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STEAMED RIVER FISH WITH EXOTIC SAUCE
by Pauline Chang

Ingredients:

Ingredients A

- River Fish 1pc (1kg) Talapia etc.
- Angel Taucu (Bean Paste) 1 tablespoon
- Chopped Red Chilli 2pcs or more
- Chopped Chilli Padi 5 pcs
- Pepper, Sugar and Salt to taste

• Cooking Wine (optional) 2 tablespoons

• Ginger Shreds 2 tablespoons

• Spring Onions, Celery for decoration

• Angel Light Soy Sauce 2 tablespoons

Method:

- Cut River Fish so that it lies on its belly.
- Blend together "Ingredients A".
- Steam the fish using high heat for 5 minutes. Throw away the water from the fish.
- Place "Ingredients A" mixture and ginger shreds on fish. Continue steaming the fish for 5 to 8 minutes or till cooked.
- Pour 2 tablespoons cooking wine (optional), spring onions, celery over fish. Sprinkle Angel Light Soy Sauce.
- Serve Hot.









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News Roundup

Everybody's Birthday



A special Chinese New Year event to usher in the Year of the Snake was hosted by Ipoh City and Country Club (ICCC) on the seventh day of the lunar New Year. According to Chinese tradition, the day is considered as "everybody's birthday" (*Ren Re* in Mandarin).

This annual celebration, held at the club's premises on Saturday, February 16, received overwhelming support from members and the public. All available tables were booked. The event was graced by Dato' Wan Azahari, ICCC's Liaison Committee Chairman, members of the club's board of directors and managerial staff.

A host of interesting activities were lined up for the evening. The evening opened with a traditional double lion dance performance followed by Malaysia's version of the popular Taiwanese girl-group, SHE and an acrobatic show by a troupe from China. Although the party was long over, revellers stayed on for a night of karaoke and dancing.

Emily

World Peace and Understanding Night



Rotary Club of Greentown celebrated its 19th Anniversary and *World Peace and Understanding Day* at Impiana Hotel Ipoh recently.

The event was attended by about 100 members and guests, including the Acting High Commissioner of Sri

Lanka, Maj-Gen Lalith Daulagala, Rotary Club District Governor, Mansor Saat and representatives from its sister club from Makati Edsa, Philippines.

The Rotary Club of Greentown has actively participated in various community projects since its inception in 1994, mainly in the health and literacy fields, locally and abroad. It is currently involved in a sanitation project in Seam Reap, Cambodia.

The government gave a grant of RM35,000 recently for the club's various humanitarian programmes. During the dinner, past president Lee Swee Ching made a personal donation of RM2000. Nachemutu Karappannan, the Club President thanked donors for their generosity and promised that money collected would be spent wisely.

Guests were treated to a sumptuous buffet dinner and then entertained to traditional dances, including a performance by a local Sri Lankan troupe. The evening ended with a drum and percussion demonstration, a fitting finale to a grand night.

SH Ong

Sunway's Appreciation Night



Some 500 guests were treated to a sumptuous buffet dinner and non-stop entertainment during Sunway City Ipoh's Chinese New Year PALS (Privileged Advantages for Loyal Supporters) Appreciation Night recently.

The event, held at the Mont Bleu Residence's clubhouse, an exclusive gated residential development within Sunway City Ipoh's integrated township, was in honour of the company's loyal customers who have supported Sunway City Ipoh's growth as a future township for Northern Malaysia.

The function, held in conjunction with Chinese New Year, saw an extensive line-up of activities, including an intriguing performance by Vincent the Illusionist, a "feng shui" talk by Master Chua and a lucky draw where attractive household electrical appliances were given away.

After a spectacular fireworks display, guests danced the night away, accompanied by live music provided by the *Echoes Live Band*.

Emily

A Hug For Valentine's Day

How did you spend your Valentine's Day this year? While some of you were walking on beaches, having romantic candlelit dinners and spending time alone together with your loved ones, *De Garden* held a DG Chinese New Year Longest Hugging Competition.

A first of its kind for Ipoh, the event was coordinated by *H Twenty Three Event MGMT* together with sponsors *Industree Production* and *Wedding And You*. Twelve pairs of couples from ages 18 to 32 years registered to participate in the "Longest Hugging Valentine's Day Competition" but only 11 pairs were present.

Couples were briefed on the rules and regulations before the competition started. They were not allowed any drinks, rests or even toilet breaks during the competition. They were to hug each other, standing on a 2x2 feet area which was



designated for each couple. They were to remain in that spot until the end of the competition.

The competition started at 12.20pm with the organizer creating a warm and romantic atmosphere by inviting Music King Association's singers to go on stage and sing some love songs. As some couples sang along, a couple showed their affection by kissing.

To make the competition a more memorable one, the organizers added to the intensity by degrees. Contestants had to continue hugging with only one foot standing. Towards the end of the competition, the competition became even more challenging. The men had to carry their partners as the ladies' feet were not allowed to touch the floor. One could see how much fun the contestants were having by the looks on their faces.

After four and a half hours, only two couples were left standing. They persevered bravely as audiences cheered for them. In the final eight minutes of the competition, one couple finally gave up due to exhaustion and the winners Chau Pui Seng and Tham Qian went home with the cash prize of RM888 sponsored by *De Garden* as well as a Valentine's Day dinner voucher sponsored by *Ninja Jones Japanese Restaurant*, together with the title of the first "Hugging Contest Winners" at *De Garden*.

Susan Ho



"1 Egg 1 Child"

Dr Peggy C. Wong, the chairman and founder of NGO *Living Hope*, was at SJK (C) Bukit Merah on the 11th day of the year of the snake to adopt 100 poor, needy and marginalised children from five schools under its "1 egg 1 child" and "Educate a child" programmes.

The "1 egg 1 child" programme provides an adopted child one meal every school day while the "Educate a child" programme provides the children with the basic necessities such as uniforms, books and stationeries.

The beneficiary schools this time included SK Pusing, SJK (C) Bukit Merah, SJK (C) Papan, SJK (C) Lahat and SJK (C) Yit Chee, Pusing.

Wong, also referred to as the 'Corporate Matchmaker to the Poor and Marginalised' for her ability to obtain CSR funding from corporations for her programmes, also brought along 18 Diamond water filters valued at RM14.4k which was donated to 18 schools in the poor communities around the area.

Living Hope also engaged a Lion Dance troupe to spread the festive joy to the children who absolutely loved it based on their shrieks and screams at the antics of the playful lions and Chinese clowns. To date, *Living Hope's* programmes have touched the lives of 31,956 young children.

JAG



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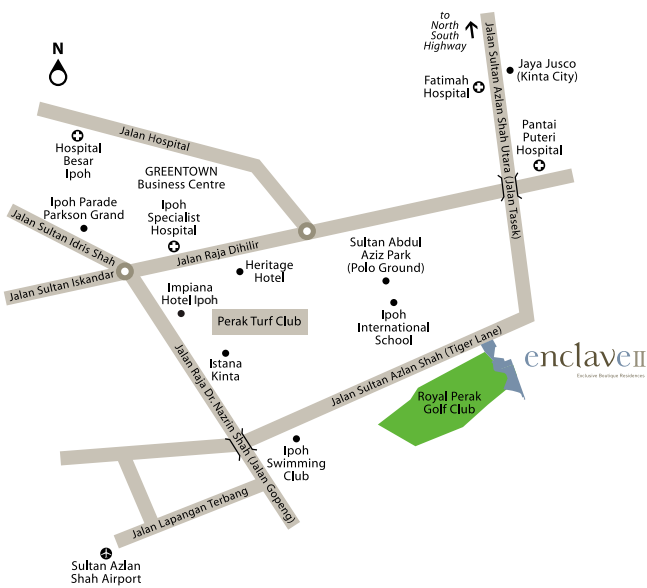
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LETTERS

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.

Don't Be Taken For a Walk

I refer to your article in the Community section entitled, "Walking for a Good Cause" (Ipoh Echo Issue 159, February 1-15).

I am Dr Shan Narayanan, a Consultant Paediatrician. Working with individuals with special needs is my passion. The incidence of Autism is on the increase but the opportunity for early intervention for these children is limited.

Thus I came up with the suggestion to form Autism Asperger's Help Association (AAHA). The primary aim of AAHA was to set up an autism-specific early intervention programme. The formation meeting was held in my clinic and I was the founding president.

The association had no funds, no office and no teacher. As such, my clinic's address was used as the registered address. My two sons donated RM1000 to open an account at Public Bank in Ipoh Garden. As more money was needed to take us towards the setting up of the AAHA Centre, I gave RM10,000 as a loan to the association, which I later treated as a donation.

We recruited a lady who now teaches at the centre. She was placed in Blooming Kidz for hands-on work for the whole of 2011 and was given an allowance of RM600 a month. I contributed RM300 towards her monthly allowance for the whole year.

As more funds were needed, I came up with the idea of a "Walk for Autism". To get participants, I personally campaigned in various colleges during my clinic hours thus

losing out on my income.

My regular patients' parents donated between RM7000-8000. Upon my request, Dutch Lady Malaysia Sdn Bhd donated RM5000. Introduced by a parent of my regular patient, Camfil Farr Malaysia Sdn Bhd donated RM2500.

I resigned in early 2012 due to health reasons. The article says funds were collected by a "Walk for Autism" but the very foundation in which AAHA and AAHA Centre came about has been omitted.

The association is going to be three years old. The AAHA Centre is just one year old and is considered a "baby" in the Autism fraternity. I am shocked that in the article, the Centre is portrayed as having so much experience. It is just a basic early-intervention centre with limited experience in autism.

If AAHA Centre has indeed become an expert centre, I request those responsible to exhibit its accreditation certificate for public viewing. They also claimed to have four experienced teachers. Can they reveal their credentials? This is of utmost importance to assure the public and those with autistic children the credibility of AAHA and the Centre.

With these concerns and the moral responsibility to protect the public from being misled and to ensure that funds raised are not misused, I have made a police report. I have also lodged a complaint with the Registry of Societies.

Thus my message to the readers is WALK FOR AUTISM but DO NOT BE TAKEN FOR A WALK. Check your facts before contributing or participating.

Dr Shan Narayanan
Ipoh

Community

Unity Through Arts

Continuing its commitment to promote arts and culture among Perakeans, PORT (People Of Remarkable Talent) hosted the IMalaysia Arts Festival with the theme, "Unity Through Arts". Located along Jalan Sultan Azlan Shah, the venue saw a hive of activity, organised with the collaborative efforts of nine groups. Among them were UiTM, Ipoh Bas Stand, Mashdar Legacy, Pewaris, Barisan NGO Negeri Perak and Pincer.

The event was graced by Aminudin Hashim, a member of PORT's Board of Directors



and its Chairman, Dato' Zainol Fadzi Paharudin, Executive Councillor for Culture, Arts, Youth and Sports. Their arrival was greeted by a flash mob dance performed by Ipoh City Rockers.

Once the formalities were over, the stage was opened for multi-cultural performances; a dhol (double-headed drum) by the Ipoh Dhol Federation, a Chinese dance by students from SMK Poi Lam, a semi-classical Indian dance by Suchitradewi followed by a Malay number by Urban Tari Dancers.

Indie rock band, *Bittersweet*, then took to the stage. The five-piece band from Ipoh has been making waves internationally. Fresh from their gig at the Saarang World Music Fest 2013 in Chennai, India, the band entertained the audience with four tracks including their hits, "A Perfect Match" and "Kuching Hitam".

Taiping-born crooner, Jamal Abdillah was the star of the evening. With a singing career spanning almost four decades, Jamal had the crowd singing along with him, especially to his classics, "Gadis Melayu" and "Seniman Menangis".

Jamal Abdillah and *Bittersweet* were subsequently recognised by the Perak State Government as Perakeans who have crossed international boundaries with their songs and music. They were given the Legendary Pop Artiste of Malaysia and Perak Young Musicians awards, respectively.

Besides stage performances there was also an exhibition on local arts and handicrafts.

Emily

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.

Public Forum – Ovarian Cancer: The Silent Killer organised by KPJ Ipoh Specialist Hospital, Saturday **March 2**, 3pm to 5pm at 5th Floor, Dewan Anugerah, KPJ Ipoh Specialist Hospital, Ipoh. By Dr Lum Wan Wei, Resident Clinical Oncologist & Radiotherapist. Contact Pn Aziera or Ms Sarah Toh at 05-240 8777 ext. 8111 for enquiries.

Perak Women for Women Society celebrating International Women's Day 2013 with the theme, "RESPECT & BE RESPONSIBLE: STOP VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN NOW!", Sunday **March 10** between 10am to 6pm at Concourse of Mydin Hypermarket, Jelapang. Plenty of activities arranged, including the global One Billion Rising flash mob dance. For details see Perak Women for Women Society facebook or call its office: 05-546 9715. Website: <http://www.qiup.edu.my>.

FIST 7th seminar, entitled "Conservation of Plant Germplasm: A Cryopreservation Approach" by Professor Dr Paul T. Lynch (University of Derby, UK), Thursday **March 14**, 3-4pm at Lecture Room 2 & 3 @ Level 3, Quest International University Perak, Plaza Teh Teng Seng, Jalan Raja Permaisuri Bainun, Ipoh. Contact: Ms Metteline 05-249 0500 ext. 256. Website: <http://www.qiup.edu.my>.

UTAR Convo Carnival (in conjunction with UTAR's convocation), **March 15 to 17**, from 9am to 5pm) at Universiti Tunku Abdul Rahman (Perak Campus) Open Area (opposite Sports Complex), Kampar. Free entrance. Fun activities such as food fiesta, games and performances! Visit www.facebook.com/UTAR.ConvocationCarnival for campus map. For booth rental, email: sm.convocarnival@gmail.com.

Antenatal Class organised by Pantai Hospital Ipoh, Saturday **March 23**, 2pm to 6.30pm at Dahlia Utama, Pantai Hospital Ipoh. Limited seats. Admission is free. For further information or registration, call Ms Renuka or Ms Gloria at: 05-540 5712 or 540 5725.

Earth Hour @ Earth Camp (a fund-raising event by Nomad Adventure), **March 23**, 2pm to 10pm at Earth Camp, Kampung Chulek, Gopeng. This event involves a nature walk, mountain biking, bird watching, drum circle, discussions on environmental issues, a kampung kenduri and a candlelight concert. 100 participants who get 10 or more people to pledge an action for the environment, will get a free ride on Nomad's new zip line tour. Part of the proceeds will be donated to WWF-Malaysia and will also pay for 40 underprivileged children to enjoy the festival. For fees and details, contact Nomad Adventure 03-7958 5152 or email: media@nomadadventure.com. Facebook: www.facebook.com/nomadadventure; website: www.nomadadventure.com.

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Sport

Hockey: 22nd Sultan Azlan Shah Cup on Schedule

The 22nd Sultan Azlan Shah Cup Men's International Hockey Tournament to be held from March 9 to 17 promises to be an exciting event. Six teams will be participating and these are Australia (ranked no. 2), Pakistan (5th), New Zealand (6th), Korea (8th) India (11th) and Malaysia (13th).

"All of these teams are the No. 1 teams and all will be using the SAS Tournament to prepare for the qualification for the World Cup Tournament to be held next year," said Perak Hockey Association President Dato' Abdul Rahim Mohd Ariff after chairing the meeting of the preparatory committee for the tournament.

Stadium Azlan Shah is currently undergoing upgrading work to provide covered stands throughout the stadium while a lift is also being installed at the main grandstand building. All work will be ready well in time before the start of the tournament.

The first match will be played between New Zealand and Pakistan at 4.05pm on March 9. Malaysia will play against Korea the same evening beginning at 8.05pm. Astro Arena will be covering the event.

During this time too, the hockey coaching and umpiring courses at the Raja Ashman Shah Hockey Academy, next to the Stadium, will be held.



The Sultan Azlan Shah Hockey Tournament is the longest running invitational hockey tournament which initially started in 1983. Stadium Sultan Azlan Shah will also be the venue for another international hockey tournament, the Hockey Asia Cup Tournament slotted to take place in August this year.

JAG

Ang Pow Ride



Kelab Roadrunners Ipoh Cycling Team (KRI Cycling Team) organised an Ang Pow Ride on the eighth day of Chinese New Year. Starting from the opposite bank of Kinta Riverfront Hotel at 8am, 150 cyclists participated in the morning ride that took them via St Michael's School through town to Jalan Raja Dr Nazrin Shah, Jalan Tun Dr Ismail, Padang Polo, Jalan Hospital and return via Taman DR Seenivasagam.

According to KRI President Choong Him Shoong, KRI recently launched their Ipoh City Tour Bike Station Riverwalk outlet and has bicycles for rent to tour the city. The outlet also has ten biking routes for the visitor to choose, ranging from scenic, heritage and orchard routes.

Incidentally KRI Cycling Team had last July produced a booklet entitled 'Perak Bike Ride', which was launched together with Tourism Malaysia Perak branch and MBI, which identifies some worthy cycling routes in the state.

Hence, it is noteworthy that the bike station is another addition towards positively promoting tourism in the state.

JAG

Inconsistent Seladangs

If there is one aspect that frustrates every single football fan in the world, it is inconsistency. So much was said about this Perak side prior to the new season, about how they were solid defensively in the pre-season games, but struggled to impose themselves upfront. However, Azraai Khor was left clueless recently as his team succumbed to a 2-0 defeat to a struggling Terengganu team.

Now, this was a Terengganu side lacking not only confidence, but also cohesiveness. The monsoon floods pretty much disrupted their pre-season preparations back in December and the Turtles have struggled to assert themselves in matches this year. So it was normal for Perak fans to have high expectations heading into this match, as the Seladangs have been showing plenty of promising signs. The three-week break was deemed to have injected extra energy into the players and fans had expected them to steamroll past Terengganu, despite playing away from home.

But what happened in Kuala Terengganu on Friday, February 15 was something else. Perak proved a shadow of themselves as Terengganu dominated. The East Coast outfit had numerous chances throughout the game and netted two goals to gain their maiden win of the season in impressive fashion. It was, arguably, Perak's worst performance of the season and it left Azraai Khor fuming on the sideline.

"I have no idea why we played so badly and allowed Terengganu to score two goals past us, considering that our defense looked solid this year," he said.

The Seladangs regrouped and headed home to prepare for a clash against a high-flying Pahang side three days later. The Tok Gajahs were only recently promoted to the Super League, but they have been in imperious form this year. Facing up against them was always going to be a tough task, especially when you consider that Perak played so poorly in that defeat to Terengganu.

The day came, and both sides kicked off in Lumut. Perak was very cautious with their offensive approach early on in the game, not wanting to commit too many men forward and leave their defence empty. It was a edgy 90 minutes affair but Azraai Khor's men were given a lifeline when Pahang skipper, Jalaluddin Jaafar scored an own goal just before half time. The Seladangs held on and secured a morale-boosting win, much to the delight of Azraai.

The victory over Pahang, however, depicted what appears to be an inconsistent Perak squad this year. They, undoubtedly, do have quality, but not maintaining the similar tenacity in every game appears to be a cause for concern. They will next face defending champions Kelantan in Kota Bharu on Saturday, March 2. It will be interesting to see how the Perak lads cope with the pressure of playing in front of a boisterous home crowd.

Keesh



Perak Sportsman and Sportswoman 2013



In a glitzy ceremony held at the banquet hall of the State Secretariat building, Ipoh, recently, sharpshooter Hasli Izwan Amir Hasan and tenpin bowler Sin Li Jane won the Perak Sportsman and Sportswoman 2012 awards. The awards came with a trophy and RM5000 cash each.

Beating two other nominees, Hasli Izwan had a "golden" year, winning gold medals at

the Selangor Shooting Championship, NSAM President Ally T.H. Ong Trophy, Tun Hanif Trophy, Chia Woh Trophy, Tun Tan Siew Sin Trophy, National Shooting Championship and the 36th Southeast Asia Shooting Championships.

Li Jane, who also beat two others, had a string of achievements to her name last year. She won gold medals at the Asian Tenpin Bowling Championship (Women's Singles), Astro 25th Interstates and Astro 36th Malaysian National Championships in the National Masters Category, and at the 13th MILO International Junior All Stars Bowling Championship.

Hasli Izwan bagged the 2011 Perak Sportsman award as well, while diver Leong Mun Yee won the Perak Sportswoman award for the same year. Her mother received the award on her behalf.

The "Anugerah Jasamu Dikenang 2011" was awarded to Ahmad Fadzil bin Zainal Abidin for his past achievements in field hockey while the "Anugerah Keluarga Sukan 2011" went to the family of Samson Vallabouy for achievements in track and field.

Nor Azman bin Zambahari won the 2011 Media Award for his contributions to sports in terms of photography and coverage. Tun Ahmad Sarji bin Abdul Hamid bagged the "Anugerah Kepimpinan Sukan 2011" for his leadership.

To round up the list of awardees, "Olahragawan Harapan 2012" was won by lawn bowler Izzat Shameer bin Zulkeple while "Olahragawati Harapan" was won by diver Kam Ling Kar (2011) and Taekwondo exponent Nasirah Asman (2012). They each won a trophy and RM3,000.

Menteri Besar, Dato' Seri DiRaja Dr Zambry Abd Kadir presented the awards.

Emily



iSpeak

A. Jeyaraj

Residents Against Playground Conversion

A notice-board erected by the Prime Minister's Department on an open piece of land along Jalan Manjoi in Merdeka Garden is causing some concern to the residents. The signboard which lists the project as "RPT Setinggalan Taman Merdeka" means it is slated for resettlement of squatters and under the law, this should only occur in outlying areas, not within city limits and definitely not in a parcel of land reserved as an open space.

They fear that they would be deprived of their recreation ground, which has been regularly maintained by Ipoh City Council for years. According to the notice-board, the project is for the upgrading of drains and road, but there were no drains and road at the site. Recently, new drains and a road have been constructed across it.

Suspecting that some buildings would be constructed on the site, the residents sought the help of the Perak Consumers' Association (PCA) to get details of the development. PCA wrote to the Mayor, Menteri Besar, Prime Minister and Kinta Land Office seeking for details and also to stop the project, stressing that the open space in Taman Merdeka has been part of the housing estate since it was developed over 30 years ago.

In their attempts to get details of the project, the PCA and representatives of the residents were made to "run around." This reporter visited the Engineering Department of the Ipoh City Council with Mr Paul Raj from PCA and was told that the City Council is not involved. So we went to the Prime Minister's Department in Ipoh and were told that the department was only doing financial administration and that the Land Office in Batu Gajah was the place to get details. At the Land Office we were told to see Encik



Mohd Hariri bin Ahmad, Assistant District Officer in Ipoh.

We met Encik Hariri. He told us that he had not received the letter from PCA upon which a copy of the letter was personally handed to him on December 5 of last year. Since then there has been no reply from him.

A search at the Land Office shows that the land belongs to three individuals; which begs the question of why the Prime Minister's Department is developing private properties and without the knowledge of the local council? Does this mean that other open spaces designated for parks like Taman DR Seenivasagam can also be developed?

If this is the case, soon more vacant land in housing estates in the city will be gone, including those gazetted as playing fields.

A. Jeyaraj

Arts & Culture

Wall Art Comes to Ipoh

The wonderful wall art that started in Penang has come to Ipoh. Initiated by art teacher, Eric Lai, who runs an art school Artgene Studio in Bercham, he had just completed his seventh and last mural at the lane in between Jalan Masjid and Jalan Sultan Iskandar (Hugh Low Street).

His earlier four murals had a cultural theme but his last three were of children's activities such as blowing bubbles, playing hide and seek and boys playing at a waterfall. Undoubtedly these scenes depicted a time when these were common activities even though they are now rare.

Lai's interest stems from his youth when his mother used to create images on their house walls. However, the inspiration to create this wall art in Ipoh came from Penang's Zacharevic wall art murals.

Lai had wanted to do this for sometime so when a 'supporter' offered to fund the material for Lai to proceed, he jumped at the idea. Lai promptly approached the building owners who had no objections and also alerted Ipoh City Council's Building Department before he started work.



The result is a wonderful glimpse of scenes of life and culture of a bygone era. When selecting the wall to paint Lai does not clean the whole wall, just the areas he wants to paint over saying the texture on the wall provides for a natural feel of the scene. Lai uses acrylic paint for his art work.

Lai intends to continue doing his wall art but only during the school holidays when his students will be able to participate. For him it is his contribution to make Ipoh more beautiful and hopefully attract more tourists.

JAG



Eric Lai at work

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Advertorial

Cancer Need Not Be a Death Sentence If Detected Early

Cancer is one of the major causes of death in the world. Despite advancements in medical science, there is no cure for most cancers, unless they are detected early.

Most deaths from cancer occur when it is discovered in the advanced stage, so it is important that we detect cancer very early on. However, how effective this is, to a large extent, depends on the technique used for cancer detection.

A Short History of Cancer Detection

The earliest noninvasive method of cancer detection is by touch. That is, the doctor physically feels for abnormal growth in the body. By the time a growth can be felt inside the body (at least 100 mm), it would already be in the advanced stage and treatment would be difficult, if not impossible.

Literally, this was a "touch and go" method, with a high degree of inaccuracy, and resulting in a high percentage of deaths.

Then came the discovery of noninvasive imaging techniques: X-Ray, Gamma-Ray, Ultrasound, Computed Tomography (CT), Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI) and Positron Emission Tomography (PET). Each is an improvement on the other, with PET being the most advanced.

Today, most doctors in Malaysia rely on CT and MRI for the diagnosis and management of cancer, and they still do not know that PET is much better for cancer diagnosis and management, especially when cancers are still in their very early stages, when even blood tests are normal.

Computed Tomography (CT) & Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI)

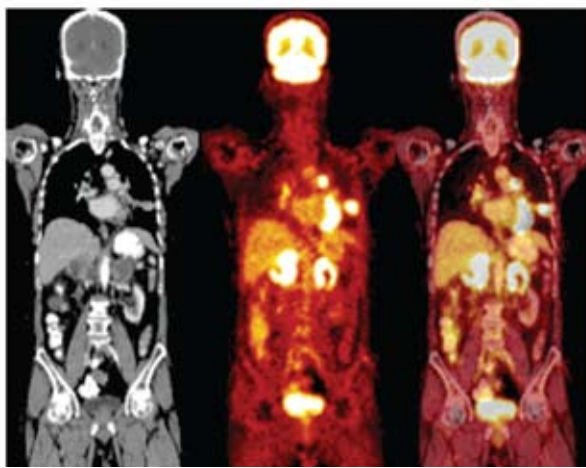
CT and MRI show structures within the body in black and white. They are "anatomical" imaging techniques. They tell you where the tumours are, and their size. They cannot tell you whether the tumours are active or not. Usually, they cannot detect cancers that are less than 10mm.

Positron Emission Tomography (PET)

This is the latest addition to the medical imaging techniques. It is a "functional" imaging technique, meaning that it shows the activity of tumours in colour. It is always combined with low-dose CT, to show in which organ the active tumours are located, and it is always a whole-body scan, known as PET/CT.

The amount of radiation received from a whole-body PET/CT, using low-dose CT, is less than from a normal whole-body CT, so patients should not be worried.

It can detect cancers as small as 1 mm, if very active, whether it is in the bones or in the soft tissues. It can also distinguish live cancerous cells from dead or non-



L-R: CT, PET and PET/CT of lung cancer with adrenal metastases

cancerous cells. After cancer treatment, it is important to know whether a tumour is dead or still alive, and only PET can do this, but not MRI or CT. Therefore, for the diagnosis and management of cancer, PET/CT should replace MRI, CT, and Bone Scan. For certain cases, PET/CT should replace Mammogram. Plain X-Ray, like Chest X-Ray, is obsolete, as far as cancer is concerned.

Today PET/CT Has Become the Medical Imaging Technique of Choice for Cancer, Internationally

In short, when doing imaging for cancer, doctors in developed countries are already using PET/CT, a "functional" technique combined with an "anatomical" technique, and not purely "anatomical" imaging techniques like MRI or CT. Unfortunately in Malaysia, many doctors are still unaware of this, and that is why we are writing this article to promote awareness among doctors and the public.

A Case In Point

In a high profile case recently, a client from Malaysia, sued a hospital in Singapore, because part of his pancreas was taken out thinking that it was cancerous, but it was not. There would not have been the need for surgery which is expensive and dangerous, if this person was correctly diagnosed.

So Why is PET/CT Not Widely Used in Malaysia?

Because PET/CT is a new technique and not many doctors are familiar with it yet. The other reason is cost.

When PET/CT first came out in Malaysia in 2005, hospitals were charging around RM7,000 for a scan. This is beyond what the average Malaysian can afford.

Fortunately, in 2010, AUSTRAL-EURO DIAGNOSIS brought the cost of a whole-body PET/CT down to RM1,000-RM2,000 per scan, which most Malaysians can afford. Others were forced to lower their prices, but they are still higher.

This company was founded and operated by a dedicated Nuclear Medicine doctor, upon his retirement from overseas, and with his own money (no investor believed in his project), to make PET/CT, the best technique available today for cancer, really affordable to the masses in Malaysia.

AUSTRAL-EURO DIAGNOSIS operates two PET/CT centres in Malaysia: one in Kuala Lumpur, and one in Johor Bahru. You can call the centres directly for more information, or go into their website: www.australeuro.com.

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Explorace Helps Bond People



The Yayasan Bina Upaya Darul Ridzuan (YBU) sponsored Pangkor Explorace 2013 held on the island recently was a huge success judging from the public's response. The foundation's objectives were two-fold, to extend its volunteer base and to increase its networking. Both were achieved within the stipulated time – two days.

Jodh Singh, organiser of the race and manager of YBU's Volunteer and International Unit, remarked that his unit, through programmes such as the one held in Pangkor, had managed to produce responsible volunteers out of youths.

"I wish to echo the sentiments of Perak Menteri Besar, Dato' Seri DiRaja Dr Zambry Abd Kadir, who insisted that volunteers need to act and behave professionally in order to earn people's trust and respect," said Jodh. "The other factors are empathy and concern for the people they serve. They can't be good volunteers if they don't have these qualities," Jodh added. He too felt that the volunteers could help foster good relationship between

the people and the foundation.

Some 60 participants representing 20 teams took part in the two-day race. They were required to do community works involving the cleaning of compounds ala *gotong royong*, community cooking and running errands for villagers. The activities were aimed at bonding the volunteers and the villagers in the spirit of oneness.

The foundation enlisted the help of associations and societies from Manjung District. They were Belia 4B Manjung, Manjung Amateur Radio Club, I Love Manjung Community and some government agencies.

Lumut's *Kumpulan Lemang Sebatang* won first place and took home RM1000 as prize money. Runners-up were *Seladan Mantap* made up of YBU volunteers and Lumut's *Kumpulan Duyung*. They won RM700 and RM500, respectively.

RM

