



Volume 11

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PERAK'S CULTURAL HERITAGE



Perak's treasure trove of Malay cultural heritage is mainly due to its historical past being the centre of commerce. When tin, and later rubber, became a major source of revenue, its fate was sealed. From thence the migration of people from the Malay Archipelago, South China and India began in earnest, culminating in the British Intervention of the Malay states following the Pangkor Treaty of 1874.

The free mixing of the races did not, however, result in a cultural infusion, as one would have expected. Religion could be the cause of this dichotomy with the various races keeping their traditions and cultures intact. Traditional and cultural values were issues best kept within the communities and the races. Despite the need to protect and to safeguard one's identity it did not, however, inhibit the desire to show off.

The Malays of Perak are proud keepers of their traditional dances, games, tools and weapons, but to an extent. The erosion of values comes with time. Today our connection to the past is only through performances staged by state-owned cultural troupes. The Jabatan Kebudayaan dan Kesenian Perak (Perak Department of Arts and Culture) is one such entity.

foreword

Dato' Hamidah Osman

State Executive Councillor for Tourism



With the closure of another fruitful month insofar as tourism is concerned, June has been meaningful to all and sundry. The month started on a depressing note as I bade farewell to the Chief Executive Officer of Perak Tourism Management Berhad, Encik Ahmad Fathil Abdul Ghani. After helming the state tourism body for seven long months, Fathil decided to quit and move on. I wish him the very best in his new vocation.

June is an auspicious month for former soldiers who served the nation during the Malayan Emergency (1948 to 1960) and Confrontation with Indonesia (1962 to 1966). For over two decades these former servicemen have been making an annual pilgrimage to Ipoh to remember their fallen comrades who were interred in the cemeteries at Batu Gajah, Tambun's Camp Syed Putra and Kamunting.

The memorial services themselves serve to promote Ipoh to the tourist market. What better way than to capitalise on their presence by hosting a dinner for these Commonwealth veterans who were instrumental in defending the nation against internal and external aggressions. The Veterans' Night, given in honour of these heroes, was well attended and I am proud to announce that those feted had responded positively by agreeing to propagate the beauty of Perak to their kinsmen back in Australia, New Zealand, United Kingdom and Nepal. I hope they will continue to come to Perak each passing year.

A number of events of dramatic proportions took place in the month of June. The inaugural Gua Tempurong Challenge 2012 was a resounding success. Over a hundred participants took part in the 4-km race that tested their endurance and dexterity to the limits. Having started on a good footing, next year's outing will be more appealing.

Jet skiing is set to become a popular sport with young Perakeans. This will become a reality with the launch of the Pangkor World Jet Race Challenge 2012 at Pantai Bogak, Pangkor on July 14. The competition, the first of its kind in this part of the world, has a huge international following. Participants from all over the world will be flocking to Pangkor Island for the two-day sporting extravaganza. For sports enthusiasts, this is your moment of reckoning. Take time off to see the best in the world doing the stuff they know best.

We are now into the seventh month of Visit Perak Year 2012. More activities are in the pipeline to ensure that the year-long programme meets its objectives. In spite of July being the beginning of the fasting month, my staff and I will not let our guard down to ensure a smooth transition.

The emphasis in this instalment of Perak Tourism News is on culture peculiar to Perak. Five items of interest will be on display for all readers.



TARIAN DABUS



As the name suggests, Tarian Dabus could have its origins in Saudi Arabia during the time of Prophet Mohammad (pbuh). Dancers will go into a trance just like when performing the *kuda kepang*. It was possible that *dabus* was used to train soldiers when battling the enemies of Islam. The dance is a combination of singing, dancing and the use of sharp instruments known as *anak dabus*. When performing the *dabus*, dancers would stab themselves with the *anak dabus* and have stones hurled at them. Surprisingly, none were injured. You have to see to believe.

CEMPAKA SARI

This is a traditional court dance whose movements are accompanied by melodious music with equally matching lyrics. The song “*Cempaka Sari*”, incidentally, was an original composition by the late Sultan Idris Shah II of Perak. The dance attempts to highlight the astuteness of the Perak sultanate of yore. The colour of the dancers’ attires and the heavily hand-crafted fans that the female dancers carry, epitomise the grace, the beauty and gaiety of the dance, *per se*.



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Tarian Babu

According to Malay mythology, a fisherman dreamed that his daughter was abducted by spirits when she went fishing in a river one day. The following day, the fortunate man was blessed with good fortunes. A shaman advised him to return the favour by performing a ceremony to please the jungle spirits. The dance focuses on a girl encased in a fish trap (*bubu*). The male dancers carry fish traps (*bubu*) adorned in female attires.

BELOTAH



This dance is performed after a *padi* harvest. The movements of the dancers' legs depict the harvesting of padi where the grains are being separated from the stalks, as farmer would do in the *padi* fields. The female dancers carry a rattan pan called *nyiru* to demonstrate panning actions to separate rice grains from husks. The dance is definitely ritualistic in nature done to appease the spirits for a bountiful harvest.



Tourism Roundup

VETERANS' NIGHT



The contributions of Commonwealth veterans to Malaysia were duly recognised when the Perak state government hosted the “Veterans’ Night” at Syuen Hotel, Ipoh recently. These former soldiers who hail from Australia, Great Britain, New Zealand and other Commonwealth countries come to Ipoh annually for the numerous memorial services on the card. Most are members of the National Malaya and Borneo Veterans Association of Incorporated Australian States. The association chairman, Mr David Kent was in attendance. David was glad that their presence was cherished by the people of Perak.



Royal and Colonial Perak Tour 2012



The Singapore Heritage Society (SHS) which is celebrating its 25th anniversary this year made a 5D4N tour of Perak recently. Called the Royal and Colonial Tour 2012 their tour covered Taiping, Kuala Kangsar and Ipoh.

Society President, Dahlia Shamsuddin described Perak as having so much to see and it "definitely warrants another longer visit".

At Taiping their tour included the charcoal factory at Larut Matang, airy town market and a sunset dinner at Kuala Sepetang. At Kuala Kangsar, they had breakfast at the Malay College canteen and then visited the Ubudiah mosque.

ONE-STOP CULTURAL CENTRE



This is one of the major initiatives taken by the Perak Department of Arts and Culture to propagate Perak's arts and cultures to the public. The centre is located within the department's complex along Jalan Cadwell, Ipoh. Two programmes are held each month. Visitors can witness a multitude of cultural activities such as dancing, singing, traditional Malay games; Malay plays etc all within an area. For details on upcoming programme, readers can inquire with Puan Nor Fairus Alias of the Perak Department of Arts and Culture at **605-2541032**.

Australians Media Representatives Feted



Media and travel representatives from Perth, Australia, were feted at MH Hotel recently, when they made a brief visit to Ipoh. The dinner was hosted by Tourism Perak Management Bhd.

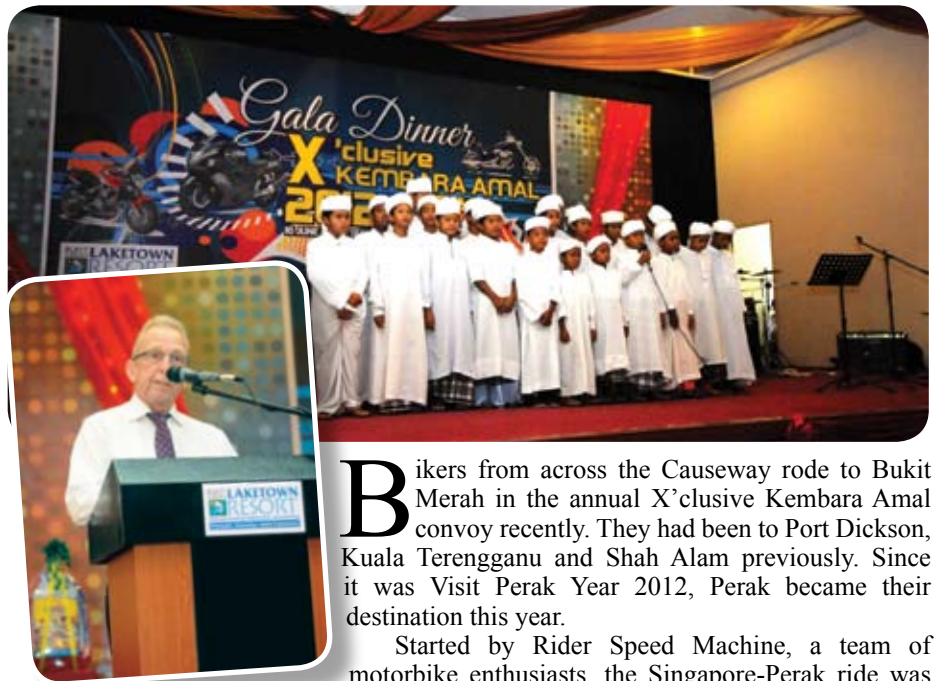
It was well-attended by players in the state tourism industry, namely the Malaysian Association of Tour & Travel Agents, the Malaysia Association of Hotels Perak Chapter, Perak Tourism Association and the Malaysia Budget Hotel Association. The guest of honour was Dato' Hamidah Osman, Executive Councillor for Tourism.

The entourage from Perth comprised of three members of the media and ten travel agents, chaperoned by two representatives from Tourism Malaysia Perth Office.

During their visit to Ipoh, they visited Gua Tempurung, the Ipoh train station, and limestone cave temples. Hamidah expressed optimism that they would promote Perak through their respective newspaper, magazine, website and radio programme.

While dinner was served, slide shows were presented, introducing some of Perak's places of interest. The Australians tasted, some for the first time, local delicacies such as *ice kacang*, pomelo and Ipoh's famous white coffee.

X'CLUSIVE KEMBARA AMAL 2012



Bikers from across the Causeway rode to Bukit Merah in the annual X'clusive Kembara Amal convoy recently. They had been to Port Dickson, Kuala Terengganu and Shah Alam previously. Since it was Visit Perak Year 2012, Perak became their destination this year.

Started by Rider Speed Machine, a team of motorbike enthusiasts, the Singapore-Perak ride was done to raise funds for orphans and the disabled in Bukit Merah and Taiping. Over RM5,000 was collected and handed over to the recipients earlier on.

Petrol for the 131 bikers was sponsored by Mr Klaus Bosshammer. Klaus hoped more funds could be collected next year.

TOP SPINNING



Top-spinning is a favourite traditional game of the Malays of Perak. Many, however, prefer to relate top-making and top-spinning to the East Coast states of Kelantan and Terengganu. But this is a time-honoured cliché confined to the tourism brochures of yore. The game has a huge following in Kuala Kangsar, as it is a pastime enjoyed by the royal household of Perak. A top-spinning festival was held in Kuala Kangsar in May with very encouraging results. Besides top-spinning other traditional games such as congkak, sepak raga and localised telematches were held over the two-day period.



TOURISM CALENDAR – JULY 2012

- July 1 – **Ipoh International Run 2012** – Ipoh by Majlis Bandaraya Ipoh. Tel No: **605-2083333**. Fax No: **605-2537396**. Website: www.mbi.gov.my.
- July 6 to 7 – **Karnival Kebudayaan Orang Asli** – Hutan Lipur Kuala Woh by Batang Padang District Office/Tourism Perak Tel No: **605-4011402/605-2083600**. Fax No: **605-401358/605-2410671**. Website: www.mdt.gov.my.
- July 6 to 8 – **Road to Kubu Gajah** by Exco Sukan/Pusat Khidmat Adun Batu Gajah. Tel No: **605-2411537/605-3655882**. Fax No: **605-2547990/605-3666091**.
- July 6 to 8 – **7th Perak Iron Bound Challenge 2012** – Lumut by Exco Sukan/SNR Adventure Ent. Tel No: **605-2411537/605-8908888**. Fax No: **605-2547990/605-8908000**. Website: www.snradventure.com.my.
- July 15 – **Century Ride 2012** – Ipoh by Exco Sukan Tel No: **605-2411537**. Fax No: **605-2547990**.
- July 13 to 15 – **Gua Tempurung – Gopeng Eco Challenge 2012** – Gua Tempurung by Kampar District Office/Tourism Perak. Tel No: **605-4671020/605-2083600**. Fax No: **605-4671040/605-2410671**. Website: www.mdkampar.gov.my.

Dates subject to changes.