



**BADAN WARISAN MALAYSIA**  
Committed to Malaysia's built heritage

# buletin warisan

August - September 2011



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**Badan Warisan Malaysia** (Company No. 104798-A)

2 Jalan Stonor, 50450 Kuala Lumpur

Tel: (03) 2144 9273 Fax: (03) 2145 7884

Email: [heritage@badanwarisan.org.my](mailto:heritage@badanwarisan.org.my)

[www.badanwarisan.org.my](http://www.badanwarisan.org.my)

### Opening hours

**Office:** Mondays to Saturdays 9 am to 5 pm

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### No 8 Heeren Street Heritage Centre

Colin Goh, PJK, *Manager*

Raymond Fredericks, *Asst. Manager*

8 Jalan Tun Tan Cheng Lock, 75200 Melaka

Tel: 06 – 281 1507

E-mail: [8heeren@badanwarisan.org.my](mailto:8heeren@badanwarisan.org.my)

Open Tuesdays to Saturdays 11 am to 4 pm

### Suffolk House, Penang

Melanie Anthony, *Visitor Services Coordinator*

Punitha Ganesan, *Admin & Events Assistant*

250 Jalan Air Itam, 10460 Penang

Tel: (04) 228 1109 Fax: (04) 228 1103

Email: [info@suffolkhouse.com.my](mailto:info@suffolkhouse.com.my)

[www.suffolkhouse.com.my](http://www.suffolkhouse.com.my)

### Buletin Warisan Editorial Team

Managing Editor Dato' HS Barlow

Guest Editor Anthony Hughes

Editor Elizabeth Cardosa

E-mail: [editor@badanwarisan.org.my](mailto:editor@badanwarisan.org.my)

## Between a Rock and a Hard Place

by Tun Ahmad Sarji bin Abdul Hamid 17 June 2011

Melaka's new tourism offering, the Hard Rock Cafe, is going to be built within the UNESCO World Heritage Site, on Jalan Hang Jebat, beside Sungei Melaka, and immediately facing the iconic Stadhuys (built 1650) and Christ Church (built 1753), both of which are gazetted National Heritage buildings. Directly opposite, close to these two buildings, is the collapsed embankment of the river which happened in late May 2011, and which is still in need of repair.

The restaurant is touted to become a new landmark, a focus for tourists from all over the world. The signboard at the site announces this as a single storey structure, with one level of sub-basement car-parking facilities. In most instances, a single storey new building in a historic site, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, would not raise any red flags.

How well do Melaka's cultural history with its built environment, and a cafe expressing an American rock 'n' roll sensibility, mix?

How well will the design and proportions of the sub-basement car parking facility and the single storey building which will obviously be elevated above the upper part of the car-park, coalesce with the existing historic environment? This is an issue for a Heritage Impact Assessment.

Will the presence of a Hard Rock Cafe draw larger numbers of visitors to this already congested area?

Recent media reports put these estimates at between 360,000 to 480,000 a year; daily 1,000 to 1,300 patrons a day, only a modest proportion of the daily visitors already coming to the area. Earlier reports had stated it would attract between 700,000 to one million patrons monthly, a daily patronage of 25,000 visitors.

Badan Warisan Malaysia has reservations that even if the presence of the Hard Rock Cafe Melaka draws in large numbers, both in terms of visitors and revenue generation, the authenticity of this unique historical city will surely be compromised. Achieving sustainability is not limited to large profit margins; the sustainability of Melaka's future is based on its ability to continue to draw visitors because of its inscription as a UNESCO World Heritage Site, for its heritage values and cultural authenticity. Will visitors continue to flock to Melaka, seeking to experience its unique living cultural heritage, or, instead, for its well-rated, modestly priced, casual American fare and rock 'n' roll music and memorabilia?

We apologise for the gap of three issues between Buletin Warisan. We are delighted to announce Anthony Hughes as our new Guest Editor. We welcome articles from our members and friends of heritage. Thank you, *Elizabeth Cardosa*.



## Unarmed, Unescorted and Unwanted

by Elizabeth Moggie



On Saturday 15 January 2011, over 30 people gathered at the Heritage Centre at 11.00 a.m. Almost a year after her talk 'An Introduction to the Malayan Volunteers', Rosemary Fell, Hon. Secretary Malayan Volunteers Group (MVG) very kindly amended her holiday plans to speak once again at Badan Warisan Malaysia (BWM).

This time her talk, entitled 'Unarmed, Unescorted and Unwanted', told the story of the Malayan Volunteer Air Force (MVAf). Rosemary took us through the formation of the Flying Clubs, the basis of the MVAf, and the bravery and antics of the early pilots in their rather delicate-looking "flying machines". Her talk was well illustrated with photographs of both these men and their machines. In their light unarmed aircraft the MVAf crews flew over 2000 hours in hostile skies of the 11 weeks of the Malayan Campaign. Reconnaissance, passenger service (both Percival and Gordon Bennett were frequent passengers) and intelligence gathering were some of the major roles of the MVAf.

The focus of the talk attracted a number of people who had family members associated with the Malayan Volunteers. Dr Henry Tung whose late wife's uncle was the colourful Flt. Lt. Loke Yaik Foo had brought him to our attention at last year's talk. Dr Tung has since collated more information and photos which Rosemary included in her talk.

Members of the well known Kuala Lumpur Tallala family were also present. They are related to the two MVAf brothers, Jimmy and Sonny, and their MVAf cousin, Hector. Also present was Datin Bahariah Md Yusuf whose father, Pte Md Yusof bin Harun was a member of No.3 Platoon, A (M.G.) Company, 4SSVF, (Malacca Volunteer Corps).

BWM member Dato' Anthony Cooper's father (who died in captivity), Major G.D. Cooper of the Manchester Regiment was "attached to the Volunteers possibly at Port Dickson". His step-father, Pte 13876 Richard Middleton-Smith of the 1 SSVF survived the War.

There was a Q & A session which raised a number of points. Col (Ret.) Max Theseira of the RMAf queried whether some of the first Malaysians (of the Army Air Corps and the Auxilliary Air Force) might have been

trained by former MVAf members. Another query was how "voluntary" were the volunteers? Subsequent discussion on this confirmed that until January 1940 men were truly "volunteers" – after that date able-bodied British males aged 18–55 were required to serve. The local-born were of course always volunteers. (Did this apply to Malaysians of the MCS I wonder?)

There were no members of the Press present (so, sadly, no publicity in the newspapers) but this was a Godsend to Rosemary who was able to chat at length with members of the audience. New members were also recruited for both BWM and MVG.

BWM is honoured that Rosemary, accompanied by her husband Donald, flew in specially to give her talk. We trust that the interest generated by the revival of the commemoration of those who served our country some 70 years ago will see a renewed commitment to ensure the conservation and preservation of the Memorials in their honour.

### POSTSCRIPT

Rosemary, Donald and the writer drove across to Kota Bahru where we spent some time looking at the areas of conflict of December 1941. A word of advice to those contemplating a visit to the beaches (Kuala Pa' Amat, Sabak & Badang) of the Japanese Assault – recent erosion has altered the coastline and one needs a guide familiar with the area. There are no information boards to assist. We located the airfields of Pengkalan Chepa (now Kota Bahru's Sultan Ismail Airport) and Gong Kedah (now a TUDM Airfield) but we did not have time to pinpoint the exact location of the former Machang Airfield.

The Museum Perang housed in the former Bank Kerapu in K.B. contains a wealth of information with excellent maps, diagrams, photographs and captions in both Malay and English. One needs at least 2 hours to take it all in. Just around the corner on the riverbank in front of the Grand Riverbank Hotel (ideally situated for walking to the heritage buildings area) is a WWII Pillbox – the only one we saw in spite of various instructions that a number still remain.

Conscious that railway communications played an important part in pre-war Kelantan we visited the stations of Tumpat, Wakaf Bahru and Kuala Krai. Official histories tell us that the retreating British troops were evacuated down the line from Kuala Krai to Kuala Lipis because "there were no roads". Yet the Japanese troops managed to advance down the Coast using "rough cart tracks...."

Finally, after crossing the East West Highway, we arrived in Penang where Rosemary was kind enough to repeat her talk at the Penang Heritage Trust on 23 January.

## Singapore Re-visited: All Aboard

Mindful of our common heritage, diversity and divergence, 18 members of Badan Warisan Malaysia (BWM) undertook an historic journey by KTM's Express Sinaran Selatan from KL Sentral to Tanjong Pagar (headland fence) Station in Keppel Road, Singapore.

The trip, which took place from 6 to 8 May 2011, was scheduled to mark the end of an era in the rail link between the two countries originally established in British colonial days by the Federated Malay States Railway (FMSR) in 1903. On 1 July 2011 ownership of the railway track and the station buildings at Tanjong Pagar and Bukit Timah passed to Singapore as the result of an agreement between the Prime Ministers of Malaysia and Singapore signed in May 2010.

However, the purpose of the excursion was not merely to entrain down memory lane but also for members to observe the way in which old and new co-exist on Singapore's crowded island. How contemporary art and heritage increasingly share common space and how heritage neighborhoods thrive with both traditional communities and new generation occupants.

The visit programme was only possible because of the generous help and support from BWM members Lim Huck Chin and Dr Lai Chee Kien and members of the Singapore Heritage Society, especially Dr Kevin Tan, Dahlia Shamsuddin, Tony Tan and Dr Yeo Kang Shua.

### Day 1 The journey begins - Puan Sri Elizabeth Moggie entrains at KL Sentral

Quietly at the scheduled time of 9.00 a.m. the Ekspres Sinaran Selatan eased out of the station – its surroundings similar to those of all modern soul-less subterranean train stations. Soon there appeared the haphazard mixture of high rise, scruffy factories and modest wooden, zinc-roofed houses which fringe all large Malaysian towns. I was seated on the left hand side of the train traveling backwards and so my observations are limited by those specifications – life on the left of the line....

In no time at all we were at Kajang and then passed Batang Besar and Nilai when *kampung* houses, both traditional and modern, began to appear. By now we had relaxed into the rhythm of the journey – tried out the loo (clean – with paper towels as well as toilet tissue) and discovered the catering facilities did not sell bottled water. Time to ration the supplies we had brought with us. We passed a delightful rural mosque content to blend into its surroundings while a modern one just before Kajang with a hideous tiled orange dome rudely thrust itself towards the Almighty's awareness.



After Labu we passed the first Labour Lines of an Estate – wooden dwellings painted a pleasing pale blue topped off with brown zinc roofs. But there were also signs of the times – unused padi fields, perhaps destined for yet another housing estate.

After Tiroi and approaching Seremban the many *kampung* dropped away and several parallel lines appeared carrying commuter trains. We were delayed for some minutes awaiting a passenger train travelling north. Seremban Station, though renovated, has the ambience of an old time station – when the whistle blew and the bell clanged we were off again. On the outskirts we passed a row of KTM Quarters – pale yellow with purple roofs – they looked happy in the sunshine, evocative of a way of life that is passing. In contrast we passed yet another abandoned half-built housing estate. One wonders what happens – has the contractor absconded, dashing the hopes of people who invested their life savings in the house of their dreams?

At about 10.30 we came to halt at Sungai Gadut, seemingly, like a location in an Ingmar Bergman movie, in the midst of nowhere – but with a very new, very large, very expensive-looking station in that depressing stony grey beloved of modern engineers – not a cheery start to the long commuter day. And I believe Sungai Gadut is to be a commuter Mecca for the Klang Valley destinations. There were huge raised embankments, cement block dumps and other evidence of new building works at intervals for some distance.

By Tampin we were running 17 minutes late. Now we were beginning to check the schedule and chafe at the slow passage over newly constructed track. We stopped less than a minute at Batang Melaka. As we approached Gemas (and, we thought, the delightful Station Coffee Shop) our hopes were dashed. No, we would not be able to alight – we were to remain at the mercy of the

tubercular looking purveyors of the KTMB cuisine. Gemas, the historic junction of the North/South and East Rail lines, is a town steeped in railway history. There are sidings on which ancient rusting rolling stock hibernate. In the distance there are extensive KTM Quarters and bungalows. We were given a very smart wave of the green flag send off as they take such things seriously there. Gemas will always be important to rail travel because of its position but the timeless ambience will inevitably change.

We rattled on to Segamat, an important station, but “a real whistle stop” for us as one member remarked. We had time to note that Segamat was host to very impressive pieces of shiny new canary yellow rolling equipment of the shunter/crane variety – Jabatan Urusan Jalan painted very large on the sides. We pulled into Labis at 1.20 p.m. (20 minutes late), the location of a huge Sime Darby Estate – a pleasant town with mosque, hospital, temple compound and other buildings in clear sight. Then the scenery changed again to large areas of secondary growth, rubber gone wild, some small *kebun*, a belt of durian trees giving way to rubber but little sign of housing.

To my mind one sees much more rubber from the train than from the highway – perhaps because the railway follows the earlier settled areas whereas the road cuts through new country.



At 1.35 p.m. we stopped at Bekok which won my prize for the best kept station. Flowering potted bougainvillea and other cheerful blooms were dotted around the neat stone-marked paths. The Station Master and everyone else had happy smiles – this was what train travel was all about. Still with a happy glow we drew into Kluang at 2.15 p.m.– one of the last remaining “proper” stations. Solid *tiang* support the shading roof. Through open doors we glimpsed rows of shophouses with various quaint roofline embellishments – the flow of life as it was.

We traveled past long stretches of seemingly unoccupied land (who owned it we wondered?), some cattle and low lying flooded areas. It was at this stage I began to nod off in the afternoon heat but came to at Kulai at 2.58 p.m. (now only 10 minutes behind) and then Kempas Baru at 3.25 p.m. Soon there appeared the large construction

sites of the outskirts of Johor Bahru and at 3.30 p.m. we oozed into the new J.B. Sentral – that ominous field grey yet again with nary a welcoming sign. I feel one oozes into those stations and slides out rather than arrives and departs. There is no one to receive and farewell the passenger apart from the odd uniformed personnel. But the Immigration Officers who came on to inspect our passports were courteous and friendly.

We were all alert now and within minutes (at 4.00 p.m. I noted) we were trundling across the Causeway – stunning views to left and right. There was a pensive pause in one’s thoughts that what once joined a Peninsula and an Island now separates two countries. At Woodlands we alighted with all our *barang* to go through Singapore Immigration. It seemed rather dilatory (compared to the slick efficiency of the Tuas Checkpoint) and though all the passengers were through we had to wait for some time before being allowed to re-board. Once back on the train we gazed at the huge buildings of HDB flats amidst manicured greenery – and it is amazing how much mature greenery there is. I must have blinked because I missed historic Bukit Timah Station, which, under the Agreement, is to be conserved. Tired and sweaty we arrived into Tanjong Pagar Station – just half an hour late, not bad really.

One thinks of all those over the years who have arrived hot, weary and dusty – government officers on transfer, students for the University of Malaya as it was, people visiting relations and friends, excited holiday makers, businessmen with hopes of financial deals and those for whom this was just the first port of call in a long journey overseas. One understands that it makes sense for the train journey to end at the Woodlands Checkpoint. But somehow with the coming of a faster more efficient double tracking train service, the eclipse of the quaint welcoming stations and without the romance of the grand arrival at Tanjong Pagar the soul of the journey will have gone forever for this reactionary train traveler.

#### Diana Cooper profiles Tanjong Pagar Station



Constructed on reclaimed swamp land, the station took three years to complete. An Italian sculptor and architect Rudolfo Nolli created the four imposing elevated marble statues that contrast sharply with the grey exterior of the building. These allegorical reliefs represent: industry,

transport, commerce and agriculture. Above each figure is a shield with a single initial spelling out FMSR: Federated Malay States Railway, the original railway operators. Nolli also designed the lamps and lion reliefs on the Elgin Bridge and the sculpture for the Singapore Old Supreme Court Building.

The design was strongly influenced by European Neo-Classical and Art Deco school of architecture, in particular by the architect Eliel Saarinen who designed the granite clad Finland's Helsinki railway station. Notable features of this building are the arched ceiling of the main hall and the four large figures holding lamps that flank the entrance.



The interior is dominated by a 72-foot high vaulted ceiling lobby. The original floor was made of rubber blocks apparently in an attempt to reduce noise levels. Rubber was also the material used to create the unique triptych mosaics portraying the staples of the Malay economy and life: tin mining, rubber, padi fields, coconut harvesting, country landscapes with bullock carts and harbour scenes. These were made from specially patented coloured rubber by the Singapore Rubber Works. Below a first floor open verandah is the solid teak ticketing counter. On the other two walls below the windows on either side of the Federated Malay States coat of arms showing the guardian tigers are escutcheons with the FMSR initials replicating those of the exterior.

The main hall also had an entrance to the Station Hotel, a 34-room establishment, said to provide services comparable with Raffles. This was the third hotel managed by FMSR, the others being in Kuala Lumpur and Ipoh.



Inside the station there are two long platforms that are protected by an umbrella style roof. The station when opened was known for not only for its special design features but also for its up to date mechanical equipment including the signal system.

The official opening was conducted in the station's main hall at 5.15 p.m. on 2 May 1932, by the Governor Sir Cecil Clementi Smith, who had arrived on a special train from Bukit Panjang with the Sultan of Perak. Sir Cecil at the inauguration ceremony stated that the station would be "a terminus of world importance". At 8.30 a.m. the following day the first daily train left the station for Kuala Lumpur.

Tanjong Pagar became the most southerly point of the Malayan Railway system, which was important for not only public travel, but also the transport of goods from Singapore's harbour, and, as a consequence, the former main station functioning since 1903 at Tank Road was closed.

Now, after almost 80 years the Tanjong Pagar and Bukit Timah railway stations will close on 1 July 2011, when operations will be relocated to the Woodlands Train Checkpoint. A joint statement to this effect was made by both the Prime Ministers of Singapore and Malaysia in May last year. In 1965 when the two countries separated, in compliance with a 999 year lease, Malaysia retained ownership of the railway land and buildings, a situation that has often caused friction and complex immigration clearance procedures. As a result of the closure Singapore will take over ownership of the land and stations.

Due to the uncertainty of the future of both Tanjong Pagar and Bukit Timah stations an online petition was launched with the objective of protecting their status as historic landmarks. On 8 April the Singapore Government announced that the Tanjong Pagar station will be gazetted by the Preservation of Monuments Board, while the Bukit Timah station will be gazetted by the Urban Redevelopment Authority. There is a proposal from organizers of the online petition to convert Tanjong Pagar station into a transportation museum, but there is concern that the building could become absorbed insensitively in a redevelopment of the whole Tanjong Pagar area. Another proposal endorsed by the Nature

Society is to retain the tracks of the Bukit Timah line as green corridors to be incorporated into a park network project.

### A final farewell from Haji Zainal Abidin

Badan Warisan Malaysia's visit to Singapore had many highlights. Specific of course was to see the vestiges of Malaysia's railway station on Singapore's territory but in reality existing on Malaysian land. Tanjong Pagar Railway Station will cease to be Malaysian owned from 1 July 2011. How patriotic and nostalgic to walk on the platform and into the foyer with the duality of being on Malaysian soil but realizing both sides of the track beyond the fences belonged to Singapore. Whatever the arrangement, the sharing of the property and development, Malaysia has given away an historic property and a structure that exemplify the classic Kuala Lumpur and Ipoh Railway Stations but sadly all left aside for modernity.

The expectancy is that soon the historic Tanjong Pagar Railway Station with its rich architectural features will be a major tourist destination point on the island state. We lament why KTM had allowed such richness and distinction to escape scrutiny and exposure for all these decades.

Following the highly informative tour of the station conducted by architectural historian and BWM member Dr. Lai Chee Kien members were then transferred to the YMCA in Orchard Road. The evening was then free for all members to conduct culinary research and enjoy retail therapy - at Singapore prices, needless to say.

### Day 2 – Shared Histories. A Baba and Nyonya heritage.

Day Two saw a post breakfast transfer to the Baba House at 157, Neil Road, where members were met by the curator, Peter Lee, Bruce Quek and Chay Cheng. Jayanthi Sinnathamby takes up the story.



The guides gave us a step by step presentation of the house beginning with the courtyard, the ornamentations and helped translate the calligraphy and motifs on the walls, windows and doors.



We learnt that Ms Agnes Tan, a Straits Chinese, gifted this ancestral home to the National University of Singapore and, after restoration, it was opened to the public in September 2008. The restoration was carefully done with a view to preserving the architecture, household furnishings and the distinctive decorative features.

The ground floor comprises the hall, inner courtyard, kitchen and a spiral staircase to the upper floors. Here we were treated to a feast of Peranakan porcelain ware, pedestal vases, beadwork coverings and mother of pearl antique furniture. The altar had the ancestral shrine and the altar table lantern.

One wall was covered with family portraits, notable among them being the portrait of Tan Keow and Wee Boon Teck, the previous owners of the house. The walls surrounding the courtyard are richly worked with colourful tiles. The upper floors held the bedrooms of the family, each richly furnished with 19th century teak cupboards, 4-poster beds with Peranakan linen and lacquered cabinets of the period. The bedrooms were even furnished with the personal toiletries of Peranakan ladies of the time.

A particularly interesting feature of the house was the main bedroom where the lady of the house resided. She had incorporated in the floorboards two peepholes through which any visitor to the house could be observed as they stood on the threshold and as they sat in the hall. This bedroom had an ancestral wedding bed adorned with phoenix and peony appliques- yet again a beautiful reminder of the common Peranakan heritage which many Malaysians share with their Baba and Nyonya cousins across the Causeway. By this time of course it was time for another shared heritage - *makan*. Susan Nelson picks us up postprandially.

### Kampong Gelam

Having feasted on a delicious Thai/Chinese lunch at Bumbu Restaurant in Kandahar Street whilst admiring their beautiful collection of Peranakan furniture, our group proceeded to the Malay Heritage Centre or *Istana Kampong Gelam*.



We were welcomed there by Norsaleen Salleh and Noorashikin Zulkifli who were to be our guides and who explained that the Centre is actually closed for renovation at present. Before entering the *Istana* we walked a little in the manicured gardens and came across a *Gelam* or *Kayu Putih* tree from whence the name of the *Istana* was taken. This tree produces a medicinal oil called *cajuput* or tea-tree oil, used variously in S.E. Asian countries to treat gout, rheumatism, joint pains, colic and cholera. The timber is also used for carving and cabinet work as well as for boat building. An Indonesian *Bugis Prah* can also be seen amongst the trees.

*Istana Kampong Gelam* can be said to be where the history of Singapore actually began, being the historic seat of Malay Royalty in Singapore. In 1824 after signing the treaty that ceded Singapore to the British, Sultan Hussein Mohammed Shah was given around 23 hectares of land on which he built a palace, or *Istana*. Located between the Rochor River and the sea, the land was well suited to control the estuary formed by the Rochor and Kallang Rivers and it was here that Sultan Hussein established himself, near to the beach and overlooking the entrance to the estuary. Under the agreement with Sir Stamford Raffles he had the right to levy taxes on local shipping that had, since the 16th century or before, been anchoring in the estuary to replenish supplies and to trade. Many Malay and other traders settled around the *Istana* which became a royal citadel, much larger than it is now, and home to merchants and aristocrats. Sultan Hussein moved to Malacca in 1835 and died there, however, his son, Sultan Ali Iskander Shah returned to Singapore in approximately 1840 and commissioned the present *Istana*, believed to have been designed by British colonial architect, George Coleman. He also built a mosque.

Its prominence grew in the 19th century when it became a haven for Indonesian publishers, not free in their own country and slowly it also became a centre for political activists and writers. The first newspaper was produced there in 1876. It also housed many pilgrimage brokers who organised and gathered pilgrims about to go on the *Haj*, although not all who came actually managed to leave. A new community of Javanese, Muslim Chinese and Banjarese established themselves in the area. The *Istana* was also the venue of the inaugural meeting of an important Malay political organisation, the *Kesatuan Melayu* or the Singapore Malay Union in 1926. During World War II, after the British had surrendered to the

Japanese, the building provided shelter for some Malay Regiment soldiers who took refuge there.

At the conclusion of our visit we met Faizah Jamal, a long term resident of the area, whose family members have been born and lived in the same house since 1928. The story of her family begins in Banjarmasin, South Kalimantan, when her family moved to Singapore to begin a diamond trading business. Her grandfather was born in the family home at No. 14 Jalan Pisang, a stone's throw from the *Istana* and mosque. The house is still owned by her family.



She was also born there and all her childhood memories are of living in the area, of the barber occupying a place at the end of the five-foot way, of a throng of food stalls occupying the lorongs, selling both Indian and Malay food, and of parading around the area on Hari Raya Eve with all the other children of the neighbourhood singing traditional Malay songs.

### Day 2 continued – our Joo Chiat Walkabout. Hajah Wan Fatimah describes its delights.

Saturday 7 May 2011 saw Singaporeans on a public holiday but with the ballot boxes awaiting them. However following the tour of Kampong Gelam our group moved on to Betelbox at Katong and Joo Chiat.

As the hours turned into twilight and Singaporeans became more concerned with knowing the progress of their election results our group of twenty men and women took a most exciting walk organised by the proprietor of the Betelbox, Tony Tan. Betelbox is a backpackers' home-from-home attracting international youthful travellers to enjoy accommodation and shared values with the necessary comforts and advantages of the internet and connectivity. Tony Tan has built a tour programme specific to Joo Chiat and he takes his group on an evening tour when the equatorial island cools down. Our group wisely chose the short tour which even then entails a three hour excursion on foot along the footpaths and streets of Joo Chiat.

Close to Betelbox, we were shown shophouses with government approved renovations and expansion. Some of the pre-war shops and terrace houses still retain their

ornate decorations and facades. A trail through the back lanes and a stop at a small waterway revealed the need to expand homes, particularly to conserve rainwater but with strict adherence to the surface flow.

Soon we hit on the food trail of which the suburb is especially proud. Frog dishes have become somewhat of a favourite and we came across a restaurant which allows you to join the connoisseurs with a live dish if you so desire. The dish reportedly could enrich and smooth the diner's skin.

A few steps further on we stopped for a taste of *otak-otak* fresh from the oven. Next door we discovered a shop displaying fresh vegetables especially the *buah munggai* a hot favourite if cooked as a curry dish with added crabs or prawns. With Tony Tan doing a running commentary, audible to all since he carried a mini speaker, the group followed the piper discovering more culinary delights along the way. Nyonya food stalls and all orders of delicacies were there to be discovered. Tony Tan carefully explained the preparation and making of *bak chang* when we called at one such outlet.



After sampling the Hokkien prawn mee speciality at Kim's Restaurant we then got into a lift that shot us to the 17th floor of an HDB housing block to enjoy a panoramic view of the city which offers sightings of Johor and the Riau Islands in the daytime. Going down to the 3rd floor, we came to the end of the guided walking tour and sat down to dinner in a restaurant amidst a furniture shop with an ambience all of its own.

We finally departed after witnessing the *kuda kepong* acts performed in the open courtyard in the Malay Village across from the restaurant.

The performance of youthful vigour on 'horsebacks' with the strained and pulsating music of gongs, drums and *gamelan* only added to the sights and sounds of vibrant Singapore.

Thanks to the Singapore Heritage Society and the lady bus driver who transferred us from one place to another all day. We had a blissfully brief return ride to the YMCA, made more personal and friendly when understandingly we heard "Good night everybody. Have a good sleep" as the cabin light was switched off.

### Day 3 – A trip down memory lane chronicled by Datin Patricia Lim.

The BWM visit to Tiong Bahru Estate was for her a journey into a very personal heritage, as Datin Patricia relates:

"My family lived in Tiong Bahru during the war and I have clear recollections of that very memorable period in my life. Many of my father's friends also moved into the area with their families and we formed a very convivial group even in the midst of wartime anxiety.

The Tiong Bahru Estate was Singapore's first effort in public housing that started in the 1930s under the Singapore Improvement Trust. This agency carried on until it was superseded by the Housing Development Board established by the PAP Government after it came into power in 1959. Some 85% of Singapore's population now live in HDB apartments.

Our guide to Tiong Bahru was yet again Dr. Lai Chee Kien from the Department of Architecture, National University of Singapore. According to Dr. Lai, the development of the estate can be divided into three periods:

The 1930s when the first SIT apartments were constructed. The external features show art deco influences with strong horizontal lines and unique rounded corners. Only these apartments had been built when we lived in Tiong Bahru and I well remember the dark internal staircases and dark apartments with no balconies.

The 1950s apartments were constructed with external staircases which resulted in a better use of internal space. The apartments themselves had front and back balconies which provided through ventilation. The apartment blocks were spaced well apart with pedestrian paths and green spaces in between making for very pleasant living. They are only four storeys high and we hope that these low-rise apartments will be allowed to survive in high-rise Singapore.

In the 1960s "Emergency apartments" were built to re-house the victims of the Bukit Ho Swee fire of 1961. These are simple and utilitarian in design and they still present a contemporary appearance and are now apparently in some demand for office accommodation.

During the war, my family lived in Outram Road just on the edge of the Tiong Bahru Estate. Outram Road was a busy thoroughfare with continuous movement of people and traffic, mainly military vehicles, with staff cars flying red flags for colonels and blue for captains.



I remember prisoners-of-war marching smartly to and from work at the docks singing “Tipperary” to keep their spirits up, cars equipped with huge boilers puffing along on steam power, cabaret girls riding in rickshaws to Great World Park in the evenings, and a constant stream of pedlars and food hawkers.

As my family had previously been living in the quiet of the suburbs, this busy street life was an unfamiliar experience, sociable, and thoroughly enjoyable. Neighbours would drop in for a chat at any time and, naturally, everyone knew what everyone else was doing. Before as children, we had never had so many friends to play with or so many interesting places to explore - not always with our parents’ approval. The pavements and five-foot ways were both playgrounds and community spaces.

Children played and ran about at all times of the day while adults sat on wooden stools to look after their babies, keep an eye on their chickens scratching on the grass (one leg firmly tied to a stick in the ground), indulge in lively gossip or just to watch the world go by.

This was what I found missing in present day Tiong Bahru. It has gone up in the world, no longer inhabited by lower middle class families but by young professionals. The apartment blocks are freshly painted, the roadsides planted with trees and flowers, and the back lanes no longer smelly.

But something was missing - no grannies sitting on their stools and no children running about. Our BWM group walked all round the estate and hardly saw any people at all until we got to the hawker centre at Tiong Bahru Market. And that was where everyone was on a Sunday morning.”

#### End Note

The latter part of the third day saw members visiting Singapore’s colonial heritage with lunch at the Singapore Cricket Club on the Padang, where members were invited to tour the Club building and admire the colonial backdrop of City Hall and the Law Courts.

Following lunch at which members met Dr. Yeo Kang Shua, the party left the Club for a three hour walking tour of Colonial Singapore led by Dr. Yeo, a Singapore Heritage Society Ex-Co member and architectural historian.

We hope to bring a full report of this in the next Buletin Warisan.

Compiled by Anthony Hughes, Guest Editor.  
Stories and photographs contributed by trip members.

## “Warisan Kertas 2011” Exhibition and Sale of Books, Maps, and Ephemera on Malaya and Borneo by Popular Picture History Resources, 21 July- 30 August 2011

21 July to 30 August 2011  
Badan Warisan Malaysia  
Mon – Sat (closed Sun & public holidays)  
10.00am –5.30pm  
Free Admission

Badan Warisan Malaysia is pleased to host **Warisan Kertas 2011**, the third annual exhibition and sale of old and antique books, maps, prints, ephemera of mainly Malaya and Borneo, with some South East Asia and other interesting items.

The present collection has been acquired over the last year by Popular Picture History Resources and provides an extremely varied selection covering areas such as Malaysian and South-East Asian politics, Social and Scientific Studies, Travel, Entertainment, Fiction, Language Learning, etc.

There will be something of interest to everyone, cheap or expensive, old or newish, big or small, English or Malay or ..... Come and enjoy!

Popular Picture History Resources is run by Johan Nicholson. He came to work in Kuala Lumpur in 1968, carrying with him a childhood obsession with collecting things. On his retirement he felt the need to keep busy and decided to turn his hobby into a business.

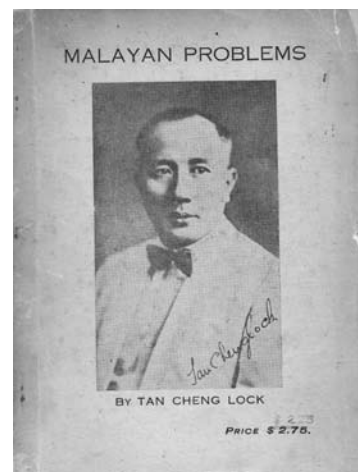
In conjunction with the exhibition, Johan Nicholson gave a talk “**Steaming through Malaya and Siam, Railway Travel before the Pacific War**” on Saturday 23 July. This talk was illustrated with photos, maps and ephemera, covering the routes, the trains and rolling stock, the places to stay and visit.

### Selected items from the Collection

The following are some items from the collection. The text and pictures reflect the flavour of the collection.

**Ellice Handy, My Favourite Recipes**, 2nd printing 1954, rebound, but the photo shows the original cover. Who can find me a first printing please? This book went through many printings until colour cookery books killed this type of book off!

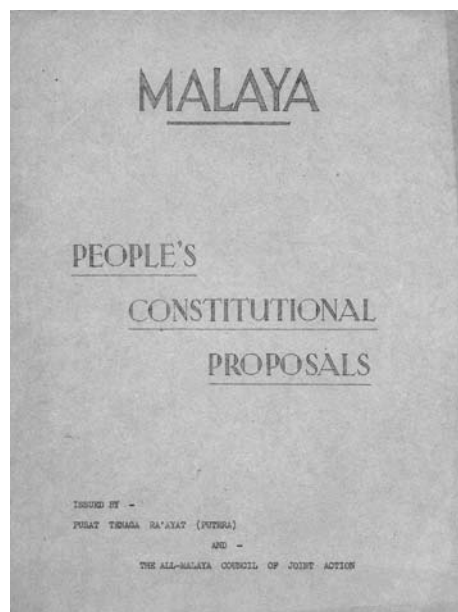
**Lesley Thomas, The Virgin Soldiers**, a best selling and still very funny novel made into a successful film, 1st edition in very good condition with jacket, 1966. All about the exploits of British national servicemen in Singapore and Malaya.



**Tan Cheng Lock, Malayan Problems**, Singapore, 1947, speeches from before and after the War in Malaya and also in India during the War. **Signed by the author** and sent to a staff member of the Special Commissioner's Office in Singapore. Special interest for post pacific War and BMA affairs.

**C B Holman Hunt, Indo-Malayan Musings in Verse**, Kuala Lumpur, 1921, includes 3 verse pantomimes, are set in the “magical” Batu caves, and miscellaneous verse, the one here being a poem in praise of the Selangor Club compared to the Lake Club! Very rare!

**Brand and Richardson, Two Plays about Malaya**, London, 1954, one play *Strangers in the Land* is about a newly married English girl and her planter husband during the Emergency, the other is *For Our Mother Malaya*, which looks at the Chinese side of the Emergency in the jungle. Alas the play was banned from public performance in UK by the Lord Chamberlain and needless to say was not performed here! One of the 4 poems in the play that caused the banning is reproduced here, *Polishing the Gun*.



**Malaya, People's Constitutional Proposals**, Pusat Tenaga Ra'ayat (PUTERA) and All Malayan Council of Joint Action (led by Tan Cheng Lock), 1948, mimeographed plus Cox and Lim Malaya Background, rare material from the BMA period and the subsequent fall out.

**Del Tufo, Report on the 1947 Census of Population, 1950**, long in length and tall in size, a key document showing the effects of the war and a tool for planning the future. Population density map is shown. Do Census reports today come out within 3 years of being taken!

**Laporan Kajibumi Tahunan 1968**, the first of the national geology reports to incorporate Malaya, Sarawak and Sabah as a Malaysian report, full of maps, diagrams, even of interest to non specialists!



**Iban Language ABC**, no date, 1960s, to help speakers of English but especially of Chinese. We all know the intricate web of inter-language learning in Malaysia, this is another example of the variety, the author says, "to understand other people better one must be able to speak even a little of another's language". Fascinating book!



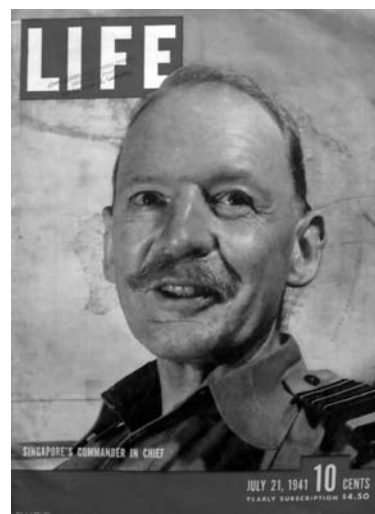
**The Pictorial Story of the Duchess of Kent's Far Eastern Tour, 1952**, covers Singapore, Malaya, Sarawak, Brunei, North Borneo, plus Hong Kong, hundreds of black & white photos of the tour with a royal journalist's comments. In excellent condition, rare to see like this! See places and people as they were!

**Cameron, Our Tropical Possessions in Malayan India, 1865**, with 7 engravings in colour, rebound but inside in good condition, the engravings are of Singapore and 2 of rural Penang, still very readable, really, very rare book!

**Konggeres Ekonomi Bumiputra Kedua, 1968**, three books – Report of First Congress, Memoranda, Working Papers – marked Terhad. Very interesting material!

Two **Cendera Mata of Sultan Idris Training College, 1951 and 1954**, full of insights into the teacher training system and the people becoming teachers.

**The Red Book**, no this is not by Mao Tse Tung but a reduced size true reproduction of the Standard District Rural Development Plan, with introductory letters/ instructions by Tunku Abdul Rahman and Tun Razak. Nicholson says, "I was puzzled on buying this item how it was used. Quite by chance I bought a few months later an issue of Esso's Pelita magazine of 1963 that explains the workings of "the Ops room, nerve centre of Economic development" and makes a lot of sense of the process, sold together, you really get a feel for the hum of rural development at the time!"



**Life Magazine 21 July 1941** with a photo of Brooke Popham, Far East Commander in Chief based in Singapore on the cover. An amazing 13 page article on Malaya and Singapore which gives good advice to the Japanese how to invade Malaya, tells quite accurately the regional disaster if Singapore falls and recounts the life of local inhabitants, and the army and expat life. Always a great magazine, this issue is really special!

**Map of Malacca Town 1750**, 10 by 7 inches but clear and in good condition, text to map in French and Dutch, translation provided. Malacca was under Dutch control and not much had changed for more than 200 years! 2011 marks the 500th anniversary of the loss of Malacca to the Portuguese, and a key turning point in S E Asian history

**Pages from the Straits Echo, Penang** from the 1930s. Mainly loose pages, many in very poor condition, some of which have been professionally restored, others framed to show some interesting ads or fine artwork. These pages are double the present day tabloid size! The Straits Echo gives a marvelous view of Penang and Malaya long ago. Shown here are the E and Os Xmas and New Year progamme and what happened at the Wembley Entertainment Fair, the KL equivalent was Bukit Bintang and more. Many other pages are available.

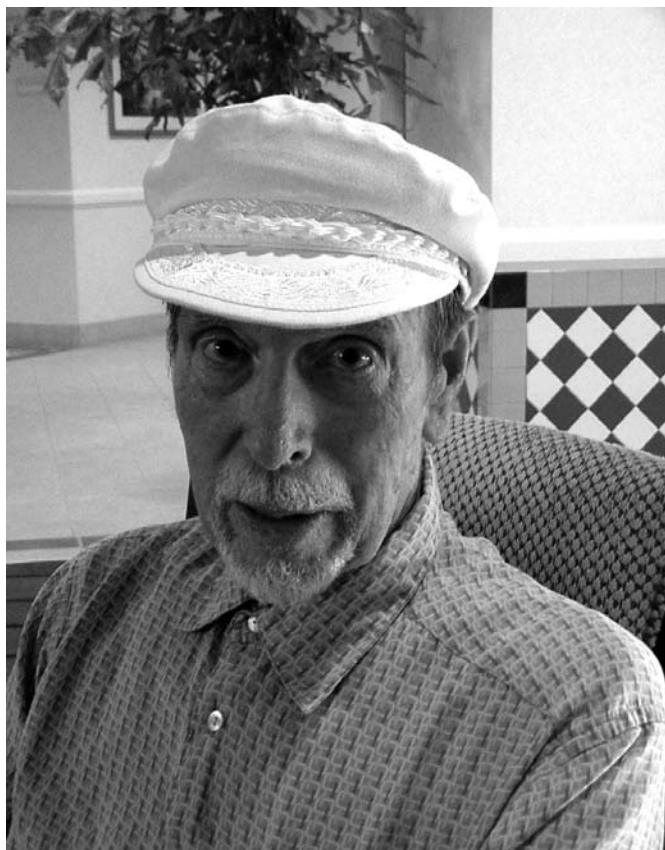


Photo courtesy C K Lai, 2002.

### **Stanley Edward Jewkes (9 Oct 1913 - 19 June 2011)**

Malaysia has lost one of her most important architect-engineers, if not THE most important. Stanley Edward Jewkes, P.M.N., O.B.E., passed away peacefully at the Mission Oaks Hospice in Oxford, Florida, on Sunday, aged 98.

He leaves behind his wife Ella, his daughter Carole, his son Peter and their families.

Jewkes was the architect and engineer of Stadium Merdeka (1957) and Stadium Negara (1962), both located on Petaling Hill, and was the Director of the Public Works Department from 1959 to 1962. He arrived in Malaya in 1941 to join the Public Works Department, serving first in the districts of Krian and Keroh.

War soon broke out in the peninsula, and he was made a lieutenant in the Federated Malay States Volunteer Force that fought the Japanese while they advanced southwards towards Singapore. He was a passenger on the S.S. Kuala that was sunk by the Japanese that included K. Nunn and K. Brundle. From Pompong Island, he went on to serve in the Indian Army as a Technical Co-ordination Officer before returning to Malaya.

Born in the U.S., he travelled to Birmingham with his parents after World War I and won a scholarship to study at Dudley Grammar School. He then read engineering and architecture at Northampton Institute

as well as the London Polytechnic before being hired as the chief engineer of British Steel Construction.

His interests straddled the professions and he was associated with both the Royal Institute of British Architects as well as the Institute of Civil Engineers in London. After World War II, he returned to Kuala Lumpur to reinstate the railway system before settling at PWD HQ.

In 1950, he was asked to head the new Design and Research Branch, where he ensured that engineering capabilities of the department were maintained on par with most developed nations in the world.

As Director PWD, he convinced the Cabinet about the location of a triumvirate of national structures: the Parliament House was to be sited at its present location near Lake Gardens, adjacent to the National Monument and Masjid Negara.

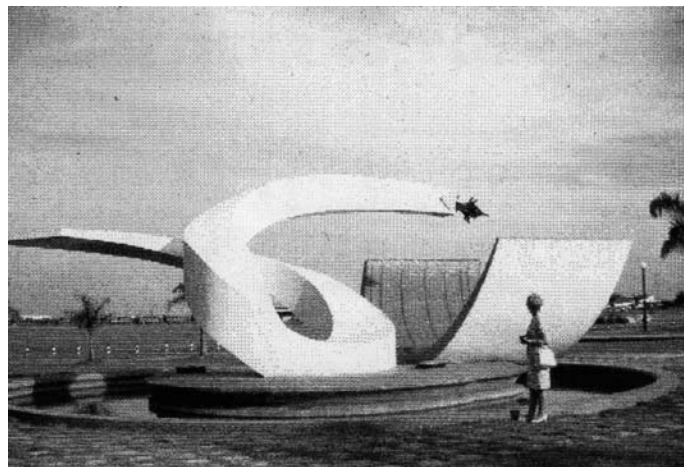
The National Mosque was subsequently relocated upon the insistence of the Tunku.

Jewkes had also provided preliminary designs for both the Parliament House and the National Monument, which were relinquished under his own instructions in favour of designs by W. Ivor Shipley and Felix de Weldon, respectively. He developed the Fast Track method of project administration and construction, and permitted public sector consultants to assist with projects, such as inviting BEP for the terminal design of Subang International Airport.

Under his charge, the Engineering Faculty as well as Pantai Valley for the University of Malaya was designed and completed within a year of the decision to transfer it from Singapore.

Together with Tunku Abdul Rahman, he had envisioned Petaling Hill (formerly Coronation Park) to be the prime civic, green public space for all Malaysians for all posterity.

For this reason, the Tunku Abdul Rahman Park (later Merdeka Park, 1958) was landscaped with many features including a Merdeka Sun Clock that Jewkes also designed.



Ella Jewkes with the Solar Clock, Bangkok designed by S E Jewkes.  
Photo courtesy K T Lee.

Elsewhere on the hill, Stadium Merdeka won global engineering accolades as having the tallest prestressed structures then known in the world with the 140 feet tall lighting towers, as well as longest cantilevering shell roofs in the world.

For the unique roof structure design at Stadium Negara, Jewkes left instructions for its materials to be changed after twenty years but this was eventually not carried out.

His other contributions to the city include reworking and clarifying traffic circulation around the city, as well as supervising the construction of the Klang Gates Dam for KL's water supply, the site of which he also determined after extensive surveys.

Jewkes was equally thorough and incorruptible in his administrative roles. He taught Advanced Engineering at the KL Technical College and nurtured a whole generation of local engineers at PWD who would take over after his departure from Malaysia, including the awarding of overseas engineering scholarships based on meritocracy rather than on race.

It was extremely fortuitous for Malaysia that he was helping the country's developmental agency at the most crucial time for post-war KL and Malaysia.

His multiple interests in engineering, architecture and city planning made him the perfect person for the job.

Jewkes joined the U.S. consultancy firm Louis Berger after his work in Malaysia, where he designed a version of Stadium Negara in Thailand: the Kittikachorn Indoor Stadium in Bangkok among other projects.

Besides family and projects, he had sustained his interests in philosophy by ruminating about his life in relation to his own encounters, eventually compiled and published as "Humankind: Planet Earth's Most Enigmatic Species" in 2001 by 1stBooks under the pseudonym of "Arcas" (ISBN: 0-7596-8786-2).

In my interview with Mr. Stanley Jewkes conducted in 2002, he told me about the book and it might be appropriate to close this obituary with his words: "My dealings with people throughout the world, of different ethnicities, of different religious beliefs, led me to believe that we're all the same; we're very enigmatic. No one is better than anyone else or worse than anyone else."

Dr Lai Chee Kien  
Assistant Professor, Department of Architecture, National University of Singapore  
30 June 2011



Jewkes 'Acropolis' on Petaling Hill. Photo courtesy S E Jewkes.

## Tan Sri Stanley Edward Jewkes, 1913 - 2011

by Tun Ahmad Sarji bin Abdul Hamid

It is with great sadness that Badan Warisan Malaysia records the passing of Tan Sri Stanley Jewkes on Sunday 19 June 2011, in Florida. Jewkes would have turned 98 this October.

Jewkes served in the P.W.D. until 1962, and continued throughout his life to speak fondly of his time working with the PWD, and, as he referred to him, Prince Abdul Rahman. He established the Design and Research Branch of the P.W.D. to ensure competent, efficient and cutting-edge engineering and architectural practices. He designed both Stadium Merdeka and Stadium Negara and the Merdeka Park, a ten-acre park on the north side of the Merdeka Stadium, with its umbrella-shaped bandstand more commonly known as "the mushroom" because of its shape, and the Merdeka Clock, a sundial which incorporated the local mean time as well as the date in the zodiac calendar.

In the commemorative programme for the opening of Stadium Merdeka on 30 August 1957, Tunku Abdul Rahman stated, "Today we have in this Stadium, which is the finest in Asia, a sports ground of which any country in the world can justly be proud.... Its completion in record time is an achievement for which the engineers and the contractors deserve abundant credit. I wish to thank them all, particularly Mr S. E Jewkes of the P.W.D, Headquarters, Kuala Lumpur, who spared no efforts to ensure that work was completed by Merdeka Day and whose planning and engineering skill had produced such perfect results."

Designing Stadium Merdeka began on 15 July 1956, with work commencing on 25 September. Using just a slide rule to do the drawings and engineering calculations, Jewkes made a total of 160 drawings outside of his regular office work at P.W.D. As soon as he completed a major design aspect or finished detailed work, he would hand the drawings over to an engineer; he was always present on site and very focussed on completing the project within the specified time frame.

Jewkes was Director of PWD when he designed and built Stadium Negara (1962), adjacent to Stadium Merdeka and the Merdeka Park; he continued to refer to this site as an "acropolis" in the middle of the city. A multi-purpose indoor stadium to be used for exhibitions, conventions, indoor games, concerts and even ice rink-shows, Stadium Negara was built to accommodate over 10,000 people.

An engineering feat of its time, it had a 300-foot diameter column-free space, with an innovative concave suspended roof system with a central circular truss ring held in place by cables from a larger concentric truss ring system.

The roof was clad with sheets made out of compressed paper and resin which had an approximate life-span of twenty years, and despite Jewkes' notes which he had left with PWD to change the material nearer the time, when the time came, this was forgotten, and instead a convex dome was constructed to replace this.

Laurence Loh, Deputy President of Badan Warisan says "Although I never met the man, I feel as if I know him intimately in the context of his creations, viz. Stadium Merdeka and Stadium Negara, having been associated with their conservation since 2003. By having to prepare the conservation plans for both the stadia, I had to study the two buildings in depth over many years, down to the most minute detail.

I have walked along the corridors and through the spaces he created, in search of a way to understand his thought processes. I have felt his presence in the architectural details, the muted colours, his use of art, his contemporary materials and his plans. I had the chance to study close up the way he designed his buildings to respond to the tropical climate and I have learnt many valuable lessons.

His innovative thinking propelled the architectural and engineering ideas that he gave life to into the future. He was way ahead of his time, a genius that walked on Malaysian soil and gave it places with a spirit of place and depth of memory.

I owe him my gratitude because he has made an important difference to my life and enhanced my love for Malaysia's early modern architecture. The gifts he bequeathed to us that will forever anchor us to the legacy of Independence should never be forgotten."

Jewkes graduated as an engineer from the Institute of Civil Engineers after which he became an associate of the Royal Institute of British Architects in London. He served under Her Majesty's Home Guard, where he held several positions throughout Malaya and the Far East in the war against Japan. He is a survivor from the fall of Singapore, and later served under "Vineger Joe" Stillwell's 14th Allied Army. He received an O.B.E. from Queen Elizabeth II in 1958 for meritorious service to the United Kingdom.

After leaving the Malayan Civil Service, he joined a large international consultancy group in the United States of America; he worked in over 70 countries directing projects and studies including for the World Bank and the United Nations. He retired at the age of 75 in Florida, USA. He is the author of "HUMANKIND? Planet Earth's Most Enigmatic Species" in 2002. The nation of Malaysia owes a lot to Tan Sri Stanley Jewkes.

He leaves behind his wife Ella, daughter Carole, son Peter, and their families.

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