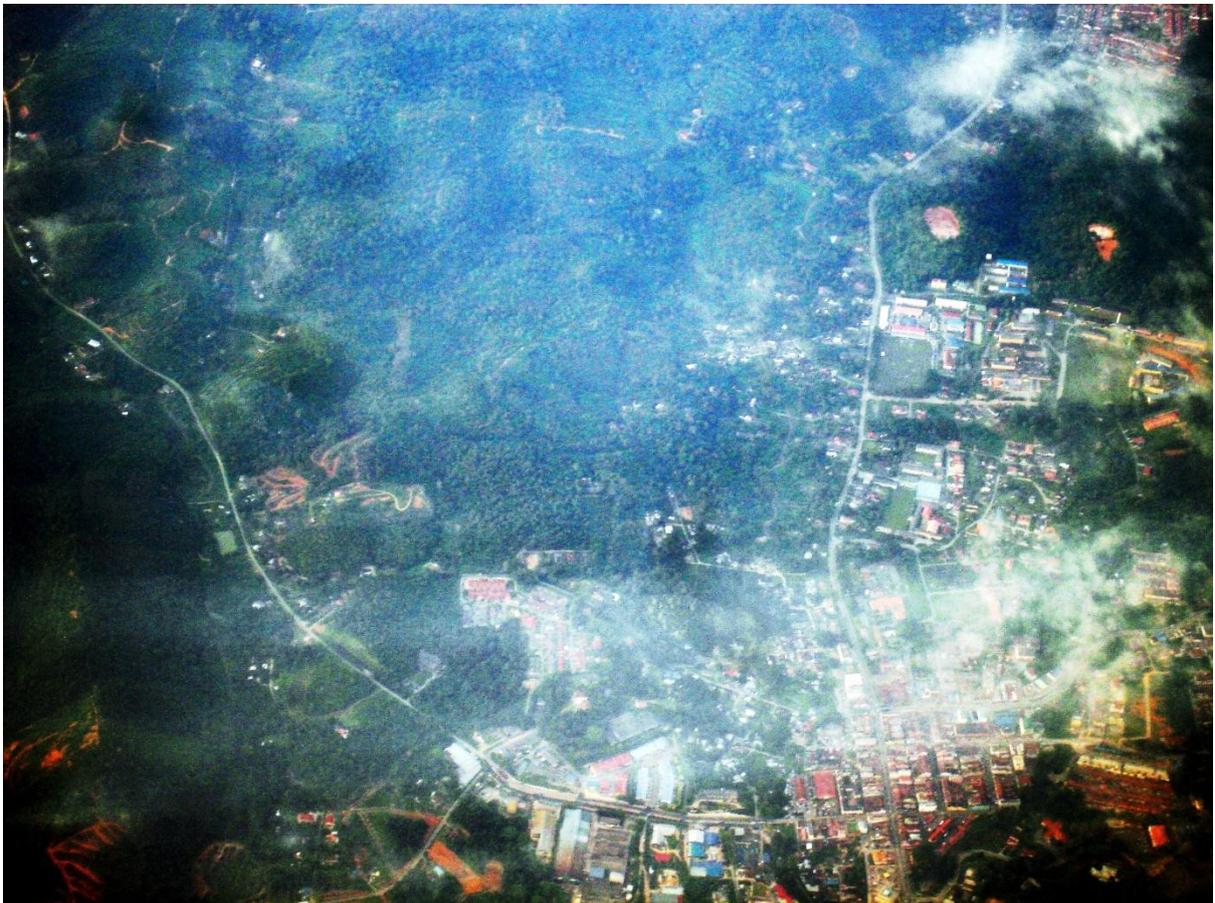
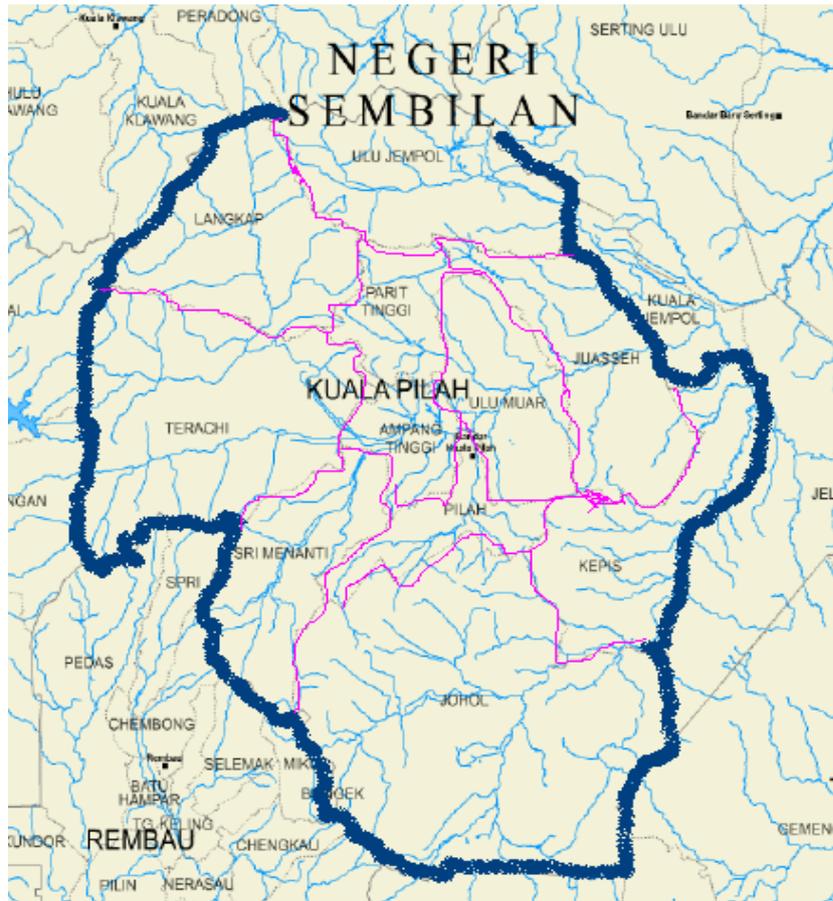


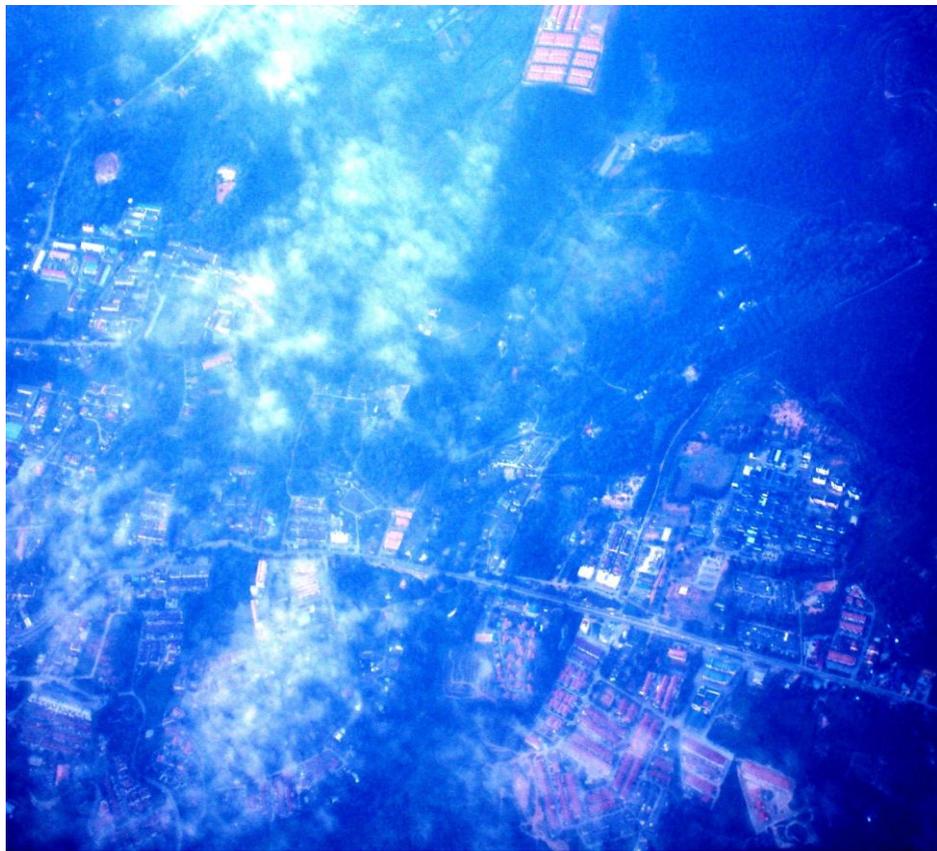
KUALA PILAH

STORY



M P Deva

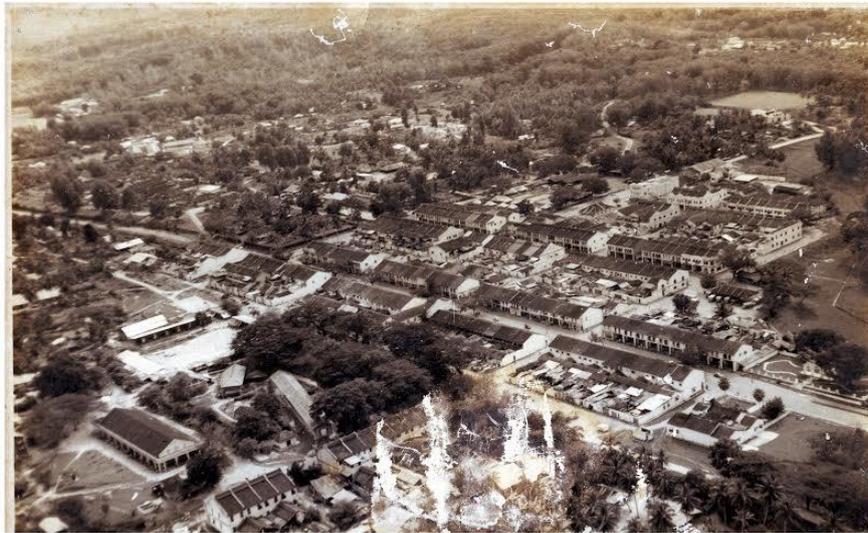




The Seremban Kuala Pilah Road at Melang (right) entering Kuala Pilah to left of picture

KUALA PILAH

STORY



M P Deva

Prologue.

This is a collection of illustrated reminisces of Kuala Pilah at the out break of World War 2 until recent times with a little background to its origins.I cannot vouch for the accuracy of all that is in this account of KP. Hence the title. It is but a story . I apologise for lack of references and acknowledgements

The author wishes to acknowledge the many old pictures from such illustrious persons as Ah lek who's pictures of the old Railway station of Kuala Pilah actually inspired this small book. And is

grateful for the loan of the pictures for this book whose references I was unable to record. This book is NOT FOR SALE. It is an attempt to keep the spirit of KP alive in the K-P philes old and new..

Writing this account of Kuala Pilah in has been an adventure in more ways than one. So much more could have been done, by interviewing older residents to get their views on Kuala Pilah in an earlier era. If this account had been started in the 1970s more valuable information of Kuala Pilah could have been got .But in just 5 months I was unable to add more although every day new ideas come up and trawling the internet late into the night produced excitement and 'new' discoveries a hundred years old ! If I had waited patiently to gather all the facts about KP to put them to print this might have had to wait till the second century of the founding of TMS.

I have no doubt that KP-philes much younger and more energetic will do a real book on KP some day .

E&O E

"Breathes there the man with soul so dead who never to himself has said

'This my own my native town of Kuala Pilah'"

M P Deva

parameshvara24@yahoo.com

PS. Do look up KP-Philes in Google search

24 Jalan Jelutong, 3/16

40000 SHAH ALAM, Selangor D.E.,Malaysia

11 April 2013

Dedications.

TO ALL RESIDENTS, FORMER RESIDENTS OF KUALA PILAH TO WHOM I OWE A DEBT OF GRATITUDE FOR THIS BOOK SEEING THE LIGHT OF DAY

To My Parents, siblings and my wife, son and grandchildren and daughter in law who charted this book in my mind.

To my primary and secondary TMS school mates in KP, My teachers of TMS and the old Tamil School, KP.

And All my friends !

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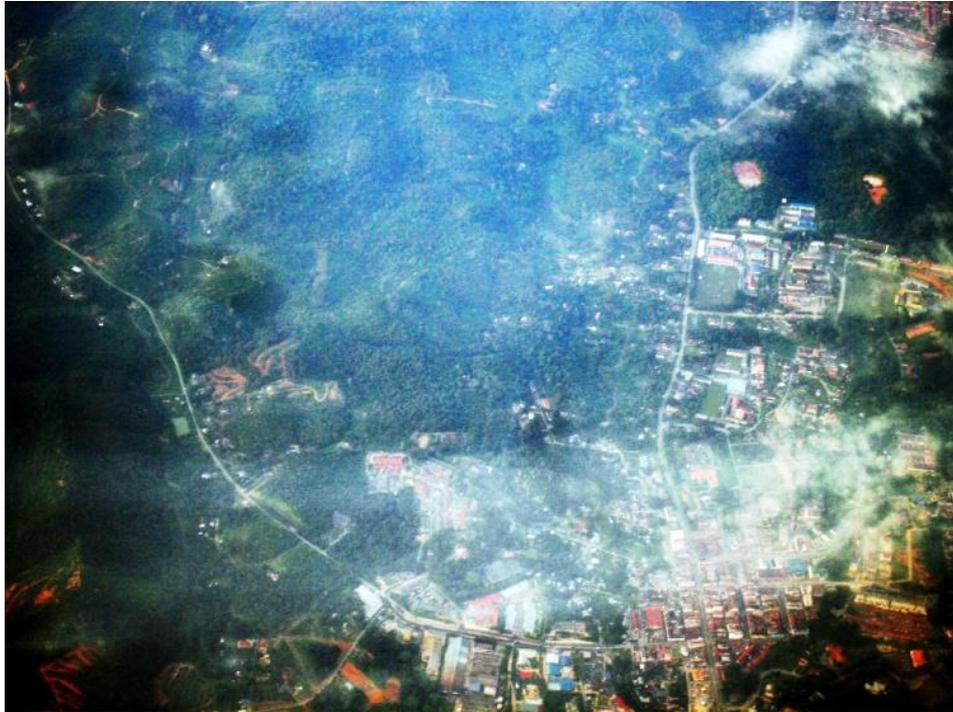
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CHAPTER 1



North to South main Road is Jalan Lister NW to South is Jalan Kg Dioh

Kuala Pilah Story - ROOTS !

There is little by way of available evidence to show when and how Kuala Pilah started. But there is ample evidence that the first inhabitants of Kuala pilah came hundreds (perhaps thousands) of years ago along the river from east or west of the peninsular. The widespread presence of megaliths in the Negeri Sembilan area and particularly in Kuala Pilah point to a long settled land. Megaliths once thought to be burial places are now proven not to be so. The almost forgotten bukit penarikan in Jempol that allowed boats from one river of 3 to be pulled across to the other 2 at the junction of rivers (see map courtesy of En Norhalim Hj Ibrahim and En Jamaluddin bin Samsuddin) Serting, Jempol and Muar is another important indicator of Kuala Pilah as an important trade route across the Malay Peninsular in olden days.

A popular belief is that Kuala Pilah as a village at the mouth of the river Pilah was first settled in the 17th century or before when tin was discovered in the area and miners travelled by river from the west coast of Malaya from Muar to seek fortunes. The River Muar and the upper tributaries of the Pahang River were separated in low hills by short distances where through traffic by boat was made possible by Penarikan routes where boats were literally pulled from one river system to the other along a relatively short distance across hills. The Tri-junction of the Jempol, Serting and Ulu Muar Rivers is shown in the maps below. The western adventurers who came later knew of the trans-peninsular routes of the Malays but perhaps not of the ingenious Malay system of penarikan

so that their maps showed falsely a wide canal connecting east to west across La Famosa. Many Minangkebau settlers from west Sumatra who had settled in the 15th and 16th Century in Melaka, Naning, Rembau and Sg Ujong then moved from the west coast to Kuala Pilah. The Chinese and Indians followed to mine tin and plant rubber and support these industries in later years. Parit Tinggi and other areas in Kuala Pilah were then known for tin deposits and as recently as 1950s fine grains of dark tin ore (Stannus oxide) could be found in the rivers near the Tuanku Muhammad School off the Tampin road. Towkay Tung Yen was a tin miner who led the Chinese community in Parit Tinggi and Kuala Pilah and responsible among other things for obtaining land for the Parit Tinggi Chinese cemetery and built the Martin Lister Memorial at the Bahau Road end of Lister Road, renamed Jalan Bunga Raya and more recently Jalan Dato Undang Johol.

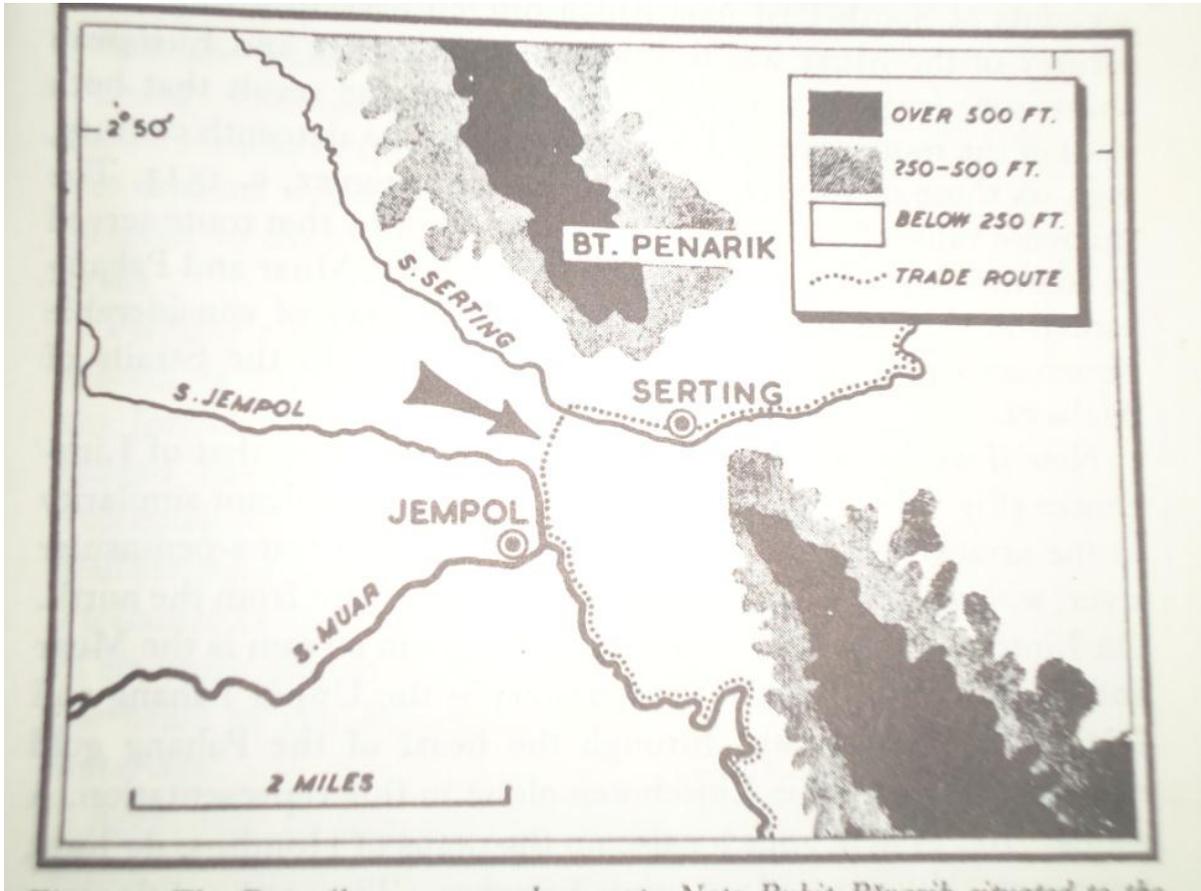
Origins and beginnings



Megaliths of Kuala Pilah



Megalith in Madagascar, near Antananarivo (Tanah se-ribu)



Map from Thomas Wheatley's book *The Golden Chersonese* showing the small portage route between the two river systems connecting the eastern to the western river systems of Malaya



Peta Lukar Abad ke-16 Menunjukkan "Terusan" yang Merintang Semenanjung Tanah Melayu

41 * WARISAN PERSATUAN SEJARAH MALAYSIA CAW. NEGERI SEMBILAN KE-22

T

This ancient western map purports to show a wide obstruction free navigable channel across the peninsular (Chersonese) from Muar river at Muar to Paham (Pahang) presumably at Pekan.

The Muar River was a major trade route in ancient times and had as the maps below show a wide network of rivulets feeding it and affording in many places navigable waterways. These are now all but clogged with silt and not navigable even by small boats. Metalled roads and tracks on the other hand have proliferated and are the main means of transport even to remote villages that were reached only on foot just 50 years ago. Bringing of produce to markets is now done in cars, or lorries and rarely on motor cycles and very rarely ever on boats. Indeed no boat has been seen on the Ulu Muar river at Kuala Pilah post World War Two.

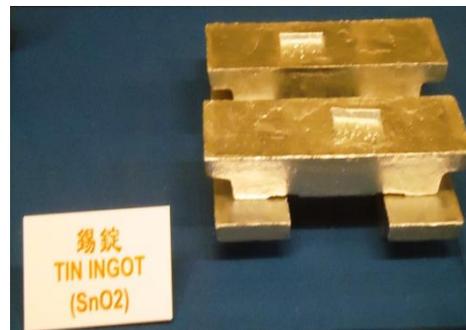




River Muar's meandering route from Negeri Sembilan, near Kuala Pilah leads to the mouth at Muar the Bandar Maharani (Queen's Town), in the Malacca Straits which linked the interior with the busy trading route and Malacca town that the Sri Vijayan prince founded in the late 1300s or early 1400s. At the confluence of the River Pilah and the larger River Muar the village of Kuala Pilah started - hence named Kuala (mouth of the river) Pilah. KP, Piloh, Kolopiloh are other popular names use in local slang with a distinctly local Minang accent not found eleswhere easily.



Malay and Chinese tin miners using the Dulang washing (panning) method for recovering tin from rivers . This was before the Palong method and the Tin dredge method that required heavy investment in infrastructure, machinery and skilled human resources that helped Perak become the Silver State famed for its numerous commercial tin mines in the 1950s.



Tin filings in a dulang pan and tin ingots after smelting at a smelter



Sungai Ulu Muar at Kuala Pilah facing west taken from the bridge at Pekan Lama in KP on the KP Bahau road. In the 1890s this river was the venue of the swimming contests held in conjunction with new year celebrations that also saw other sports such as bullock cart race and Chinese picul race held at the club and other parts of town and organised by the District Officer Mr Chevalier.



A palatial Malay house at Pekan Lama off the Bahau Road and a stone's throw from the present (and old) District offices, by the west bank (KP Town side) of Muar river in the original town of Kuala Pilah. On the east bank was a Chinese town with then thatched roofed shops that modernised still exist today and cater for the iron, repair and steel trade. It used to house tin and ironsmiths' shops even in the 1960s and had till then thatched attap roofs. Below the sign to Pekan Lama and a Chinese shop house in Ulu Pilah fronting the Bahau road.



Johor – still has wooden shops – perhaps what the shops of old KP may have looked like

Malay villages sprang up all around Kuala Pilah of old, most displaying the Minang heritage of the Minagnkebau traditional curved roofs of Sumatra.



The ordinary village house seen throughout south east Asia has a distinct Minang look with the roofs arching upwards at both end thus perpetuating the victory of the Buffalo (see Pages 38-40)

CHAPTER 2



The original Seri Menanti Palace, now Istana Lama was built without a single nail.

THE PEOPLE ARRIVE

Clearly there had been people in Kuala Pilah area for many hundreds of years before the present town that is Kuala Pilah took shape. Among the earliest were the Minangkabau people of the north and west of Sumatra in Indonesia, who are believed to have moved into what is now Negeri Sembilan in the 15th Century. They brought with them their language, culture and customs such as adat perpatih and the matrilineal society that exists today. Their food contributed to the uniquely Negeri cuisine . A trade route between the west coast and the east of the peninsular was already known in ancient Greek times as noted in the maps reproduced in this book. They thought the route connected two river systems .The Muar river became the high way to Kuala Pilah. In reality the trade was probably so good that the people actually pulled their boats from one river system (Muar River) to the Seriting and Pahang river systems No doubt they developed the land for rice and other crops and traded in jungle produce and prospered until sometime in the 18th century it is believed tin was discovered in the Kuala Pilah district. This attracted more people from west and perhaps east and set in motion the importance of Kuala Pilah.

Tunku Melewar arrived in the 1773 and the palace above was built in late 1800s in Seri Menanti under the reign of Tuanku Muhammad whose passing away in 1933 led to the naming of TMS .

Among later new comers were the Chinese tin miners and workers, British administrators followed by Indian workers and Ceylonese civil servants and the numerous people employed in

the industry and ancillary services. Gradually the work attracted more work as rubber planting became a new industry that eclipsed tin as the main attraction mostly around Parit Tinggi. Kuala Pilah never looked back.



Where people migrate, religion follows. The earliest record of the present religious edifices in Kuala Pilah was the start of the Kanthasamy kovil in 1896 with the planting of a Vel in a coconut plantation near where the Kanthasamy kovil of today stands.

A 1950s picture of the zinc roofed Kanthasamy Kovil with its traditional belfry on the right of the picture was rebuilt several times with the kumba abishegam done several times to re-consecrate the temple deities. The Tamil school stood to the left of the temple and had a well to provide water for the temple and school children. A large Bo tree also stood next to the temple to its left



The picture on the right is of the Guruwara Sahib, KP built in 1937 on Jalan Melewar (Jalan Melang).The Sikh community in Kuala Pilah started with less than 20 policemen in 1906 or so and they built a small sikh temple soon after. This was rebuilt several times until the present version that was built in 1937. It stands next to Kanthasamy kovil compound with which it shares a common wall. The longest serving priest was Mr Labh Singh until the 1960s.



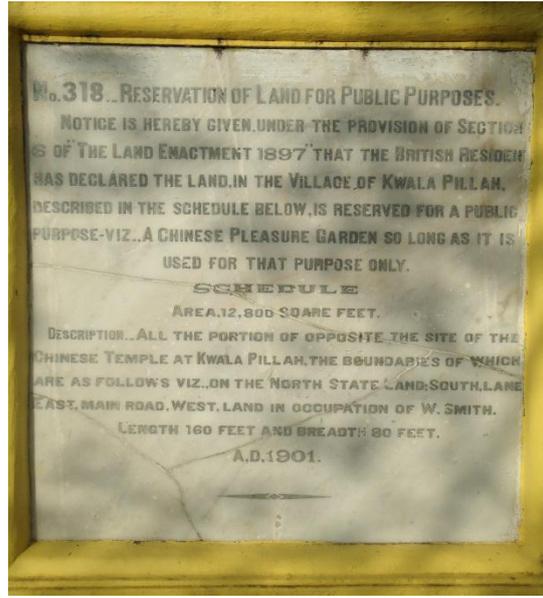
Although this plaque is dated 1900 the temple itself is reportedly built two years earlier in 1898



The Pre war mosque on Seremban road and the newer 1960s and 70s mosques on Bahau Road



The St Joseph's Chapel built at least before 1938 and the Chinese Methodist Church KP



The Martin Lister memorial commemorating the role played by the Resident of Negri Sembilan Martin Lister 1887-1897 in quelling unrest in the state still stands and is well maintained in a garden opposite the Temple of the Three Gods built in 1898.



Lister Road 1964- in keeping with the times has had a name change to Jalan Bunga Raya



Martin Lister was a member of the British aristocracy became a Resident of Negeri Sembilan in whose memory the Lister memorial was built. He first came to Malaya as a coffee planter in 1883. And joined the British Civil service in 1884 and in 1886 was appointed the second Collector of Revenue for the Seri Menanti Federation. .Martin Lister played a crucial role in uniting the various factions in Negeri Sembilan and was appointed the first resident of the reunited Negeri Sembilan and served in this post from 1889 till 1897. On his way back to England on sick leave , he died in Suez of ‘blood poisoning contracted while on a jungle outing in Malaya’.

Although Tin was the origin of Kuala Pilah’s commercial boom by 1895 Rubber had been introduced into Kuala Selangor in a coffee plantation by the Kinderly brothers persuaded by the Father of Malayan Rubber Nicholas Ridley. Ridley was then the Director of Botanical Gardens of Penang and Singapore and prior to that worked in Kew Gardens in London. It was Ridley who had 22 *Haevea Brazilencis* seedlings from Kew Gardens to Singapore. The successful cultivation in Singapore led to its spread rapidly in Peninsular Malaya and by the 1920s or so Rubber was probably making its way into Kuala Pilah as by 1932 there was a collapse of the Rubber industry that also affected Kuala Pilah. Rubber plantations and Traders recovered and boomed again with the Second Word War in the late 1930s.

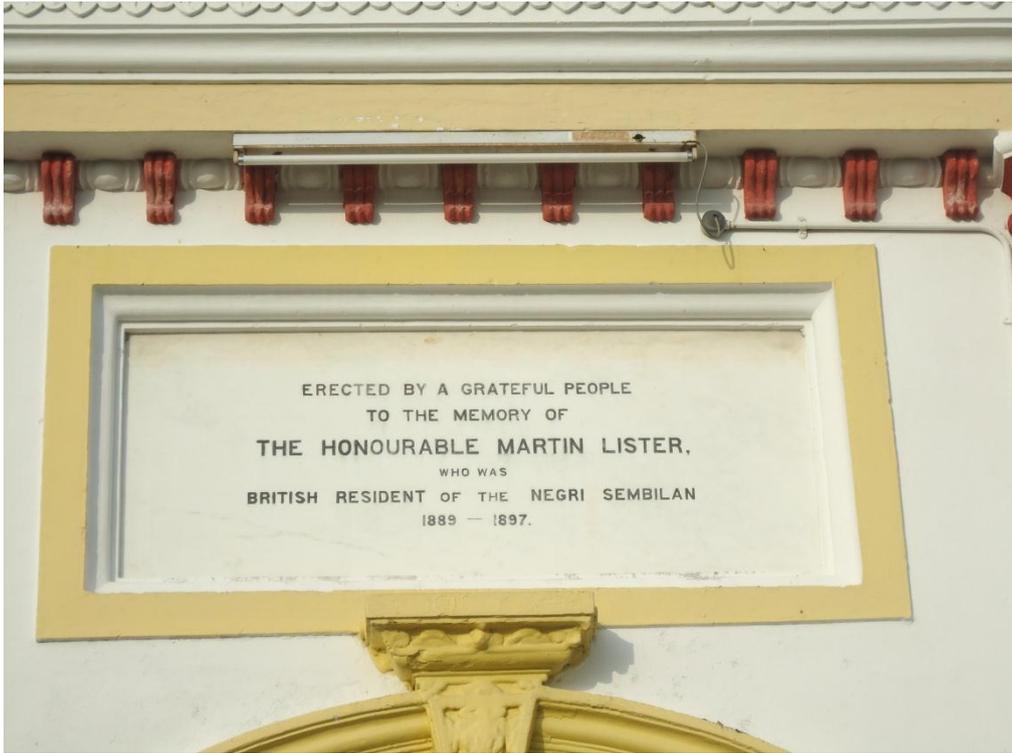


The Rubber industry found a hugely successful place in District of Kuala Pilah and nearby Bahau. Huge rubber estates such as Dunlop Ladang Geddes estate near Bahau were reputedly among the largest at 13, 000 acres and employed thousands of mostly south Indian tappers but including

small groups of kerala and Orissan origin. The advent of the Communist Emergency in 1948 brought notoriety to these vast rubber plantations that were seen as British enterprises supporting colonialism although they also supported innocent civilian workers who depended on the estates for their livelihood. The Korean war soon after that boosted the rubber trade as rubber tyres were in great demand . KP Prospered despite the tight security situation.

Rubber is what most post war people of Kuala Pilah saw as the mainstay of the economy of the town and district. Clearly which ever direction they looked at there were rubber estates by the mile. The estates were mostly “small holdings” owned by villagers but near Bahau there were huge estates owned by Dunlop, Harrisob Crossfields and other colonial companies which owned estates nationwide. The tapping on the larger estates was mostly by Indian tappers and was very well organised with administered and managed by British but the small holdings was by Malay or Chinese families . They did the tapping, coagulating the latex, rolling the sheets and drying them to bring them into the shops in Jalan Tung Yen and other streets of KP to sell for cash.





No. 318.. RESERVATION OF LAND FOR PUBLIC PURPOSES.

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN UNDER THE PROVISION OF SECTION 6 OF THE LAND ENACTMENT 1897 THAT THE BRITISH RESIDENT HAS DECLARED THE LAND, IN THE VILLAGE OF KWALA PILLAH, DESCRIBED IN THE SCHEDULE BELOW, IS RESERVED FOR A PUBLIC PURPOSE-VIZ.. A CHINESE PLEASURE GARDEN SO LONG AS IT IS USED FOR THAT PURPOSE ONLY.

SCHEDULE

AREA, 12,800 SQUARE FEET.

DESCRIPTION.. ALL THE PORTION OF OPPOSITE THE SITE OF THE CHINESE TEMPLE AT KWALA PILLAH, THE BOUNDARIES OF WHICH ARE AS FOLLOWS VIZ., ON THE NORTH STATE LAND; SOUTH, LANE EAST, MAIN ROAD, WEST, LAND IN OCCUPATION OF W. SMITH.

LENGTH 160 FEET AND BREADTH 80 FEET.

A.D. 1901.



**No. 376. RESERVATION OF LAND FOR A PUBLIC PURPOSE.
KUALA PILAH.**

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN UNDER THE PROVISIONS OF SECTION 6 OF THE LAND ENACTMENT, 1897, THAT THE RESIDENT HAS DECLARED THE LAND IN THE VILLAGE OF KUALA PILAH DESCRIBED IN THE SCHEDULE BELOW IS RESERVED FOR A PUBLIC PURPOSE - VIZ., FOR THE SITE OF A CHINESE TEMPLE, SO LONG AS IT IS USED FOR THAT PURPOSE ONLY.

SCHEDULE.

AREA; 9,600 SQUARE FEET

DESCRIPTION: ALL THAT PORTION OF LAND OPPOSITE THE OLD VERNACULAR SCHOOL SITE AT KUALA PILAH, WHICH IS BOUNDED AS FOLLOWS - VIZ., ON THE NORTH, STATE LAND; SOUTH; CROSS STREET; EAST, GOVERNMENT RESERVE; WEST, MAIN ROAD.

A. D. 1900.

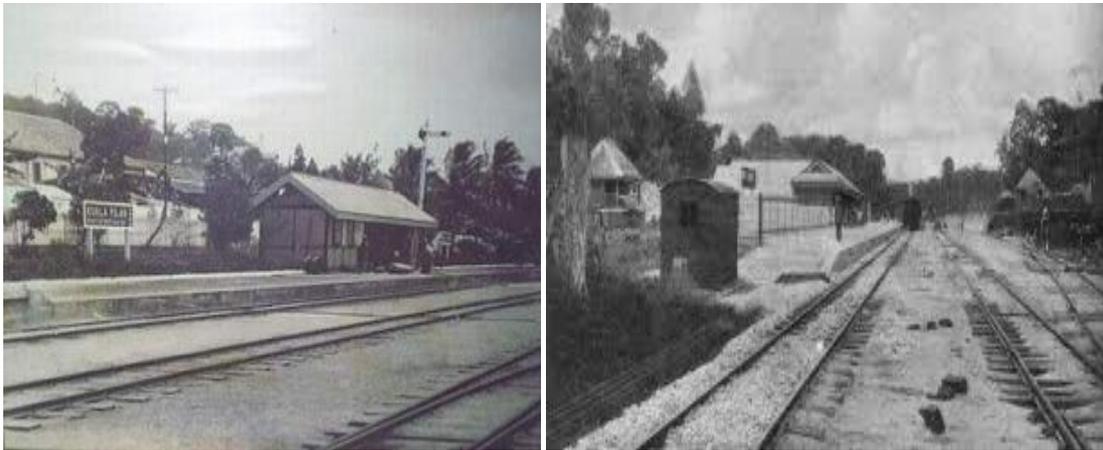


CHAPTER 3

FMS RAILWAY LINE, BAHAU TO K P

All ancient b/w Pictures courtesy of <http://4.bp.blogspot.com/4defcttu9iUTgZqfpCowl/AAAAAAAAAiw/>

All colour pictures by author



100 years ago Kuala Pilah and Bahau Railway Stations



Kuala Pilah Railway station closed around 1930 and active Bahau Railway Station in use 2012

Kuala Pilah Railway station and KP-Bahau railway line of Federated Malay States Railways was opened on 4 April 1910. It testifies to the importance of Kuala Pilah as a centre of economic activity, that merited a dedicated line for the transport of goods, produce and people. As the economic importance of Kuala Pilah declined presumably with tin production declining the line

ceased functioning sometime in the early 1930s. Those born after 1932 when there was a world-wide slump, do not recall a functioning railway. Tracks of the 22 kilometer or about 16 mile railway spur were removed gradually and by the 1950s there were a few rusty nails along the once functional track that ran from the Kuala Pilah station now a re-discovered wooden building behind the old T G Kandahar and Mydin shops on Lister Road. It ran east crossing the present Jalan Dato Ulu Muar to Sawah Lebar (then a thriving lush and broad padi field) to cross a small river and then after a bend to the left at the junction to Bahau through an old path, it crossed the Ulu Muar river west of Pekan Lama to arrive at the present Bahau Road just east of the Parit Tinggi Chinese cemetery that Towkay Tung Yen obtain permission to set up. In fact the rail line used to cross the present road to Bahau towards Pelangai. That part of the old railway track (hereafter called Rail-Track Road (RTR) is now almost intact as a narrow but almost always recognisable village road system by its straightness.

F.M.S.R - Bahau - Kuala Pilah Railway Line

Courtesy Blogspot.com V-OziFsW7s4



Peta Landasan Keretapi RSSR dan FMSR tahun 1920 - Landasan Bahau - Kuala Pilah direkod dalam peta.

* FMSR - Federated *Malay States Railway* sebelum nama *KTMB*.

* *RSSS* - *Royal Siamese State Railway*.

- Landasan dibuka pada : 4 April 1910
- Pembukaan rasmi : -

- Pembiayaan : -
- Status : sudah dibongkah sebelum WW II
- Panjang landasan : 21.7 Km

Stesen / Perhentian (Halt):

Bahau 0.0 Km - JEMPOL 6.0 Km - JUASSEH 12.5 Km - PLANGEI 16.9 Km - KUALA PILAH 21.7 Km



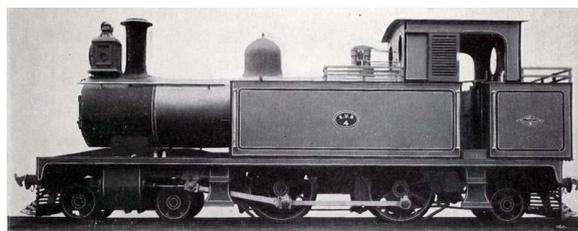
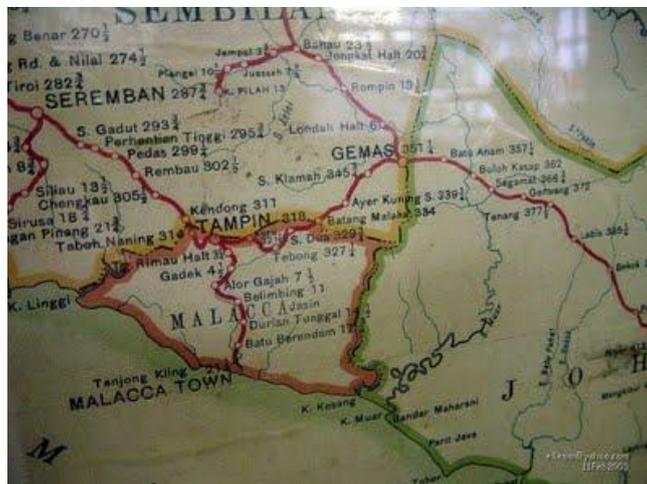
The front of the Kuala Pilah Station is blocked by stalls of the Malay Bazaar 2012. The more photographed view is that of the rear facing the back lane of Jalan Lister. The old historical building of over 100 years saw its life as a station, a reading room and last as a stationery shop before being abandoned- and being re-discovered and pleading restoration (see notice by well wisher or Kuala Pilah Phile)



The Track the Railway took – 1910-30



The Ah Lek Photo of Kuala Pilah Railway station around 1920s

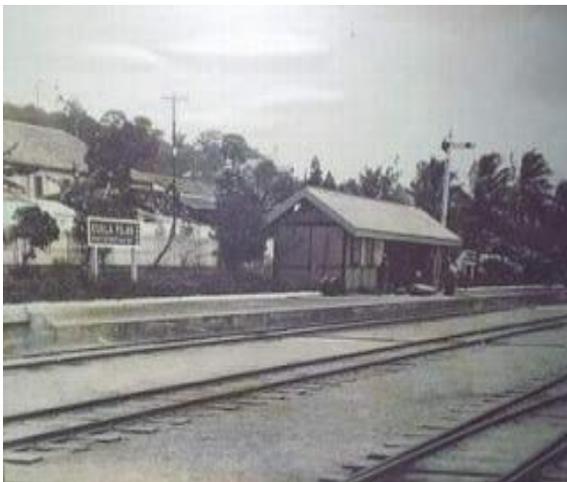


F.M.S.R. "Old K" class 4-4-2T as Sungai Ujong Rly. No. 4.

The Route and the possible type of locomotive used on KP-Bahau line. (this picture is of the locomotive used on the Sungai Ujong Railway PD-S'ban run) Malaya had many such short railways.



Eating stalls now crowd the once tracked part of the KP station



The 4 April 1910 opening of the Kuala Pilah railway station was a need of the times in an era when motor cars and lorries that later replaced trains were still rare. The large area allocated for multiple rail lines by the station, for shunting were left vacant after the rail service stopped in the 1920s. In 1936 the further end became the Jubilee Park to commemorate the silver Jubilee of king George V. The area next to the station became a food stall complex much later (picture above). Luckily the wooden station itself remained undemolished and had various uses till its present state of disrepair.



The poignant reminder of an era gone by – the repair shed of FSMR stood till the late 1970s This shed stood at the side of the Jalan Dato Ulu Muar near the old market that still stands.

To the east just past the present Muar Road leading to Sungai Pilah there was later a Taxi Stand. It was Kuala Pilah's first Taxi stand. Taxis that were parked on Jalan Yam Tuan near the Bus stand of old were relocated to this sandy space and it was actually called a Hackney Carriage Stand in the tradition of (Sherlock Holmes, I presume) hansomes and horse drawn carriages of British origins. It is now a car park and boxed in by busy shops with the Bus Station at the distance in the above picture. The old track must have gone over this Taxi stand .



All that remains of the Railway shed & KP's first Taxi stand for hackney Carriages along Jalan Muar then called cross street in the pre Lister Road years.



The RTR may have been located a little away from this present road that leads straight to the mosque and Chinese Temple. The RTR then cuts across the new link to the main Bahau Road, seen here with the Signboard for N12 to Bahau. In fact the RTR is now a main artery to Bahau, despite the 1 lane very narrow bridge over the sungai Muar (albeit linking at the Parit Tinggi cemetery to the larger regular Bahau Road)



The RTR goes behind the old Police barracks to Sawah Lebar, seen in picture crossing the Sawah Lebar bridge that used to be a wooden one post war and much earlier the 1920s rail-bridge.



Sawah Lebar used to be a beautiful wide sawah like this in the 1950s. A Japanese fighter plane in distress force landed in 1944 or 45 in Sawah Lebar at its far end. Today Sawah Lebar is making some effort to return to its pristine sawah status after years of neglect but is blocked by houses and trees and could hardly offer a smooth landing to a plane in distress.



After making a gradual turn to the left at a road junction to Kepis and Bahau by an older road (that was a pre war track) the RTR goes straight past freshly ripening rambutan orchards and lovely kampong houses with manicured lawns to cross the River Ulu Muar on a very narrow single lane bridge of concrete. It was a narrower wooden bridge for decades and could not support a car, before - and yet before that was a real railway bridge. Kepis was where Force 136 landed in KP.





The RTR meets the main KP- Bahau Road about 100 meters from the Parit Tinggi junction and at the edge of the Chinese Cemetery that Tung Yen obtained from the British government and about 3 Km to Kuala Pilah – with the continuation of the RTR to Pelangai clearly visible in the above picture. However the track led to a steep embankment leading to a dead end and a set of new low cost houses. Sadly that lead led to a dead end.. it is possible that the RTR actually took a right turn at the junction of the present Bahau Road and actually followed the present road until it reached Peangai where the old railway track continued (and clearly visible and marked on JKR boards to meet the Bahau road again and cross it to reach Juasseh.

Searching the area now criss-crossed by many rural roads one comes across small and very beautiful villages which in the fruit season is inundated with fruiting rambutan trees. The following is a sample of the search for the RTR in Jemapoh.



After Soul searching and backtracking to Parit Tinggi, Jemapoh, through lanes, narrow bridges and many unlikely looking tracks all now metalled and all fringed with mostly abandoned juicy rambutan orchards heavy with fruits, the RTR reappeared again - at Pelangai just a few kilometres from the Parit Tinggi Chinese cemetery. It is a long very straight road that with some new junctions formed the remainder of the KP-Bahau Rail Track with a sign board to prove it at Kg. Jemapoh.

The Minang Story



On the way is a not very common Jemapoh example of a tin-horned roof typical of Minang (minangkebau) houses of Sumatra which use the real buffalo horns to decorate their roofs.



The Asian water buffalo was a common sight in Kuala Pilah before the modern tractors started to plough the padi fields of Sawah Lebar and other parts of the district.

The tradition of curved roofs of Minangkebau houses dates back to centuries ago when Java and Sumatra were often enemies. During one such confrontation the Sumatran ancestors of today's Minangkebaus fearing they might lose in battle to the superior Javanese forces suggested rather than shed lives blood and property and numerous families on both sides being left fatherless after the battle, they hold a contest between two of their best buffaloes – one from the Javanese side and one from the Sumatran side. The winner of the contest would be the winner of the battle with no lives of men lost. Seeing the obvious advantage of a buffalo contest to a human one the Javanese agreed. On the day of the much awaited contest with thousands on both sides watching, the Javanese let loose their pride buffalo bull snorting and fierce looking for a fight. At the Sumatran end the cage was opened to reveal a small buffalo calf no match for the bull. Seeing the calf the Bull was bewildered, but not the calf on seeing what he thought was his mother. He rushed to the bewildered bull and thrust his horned head and mouth to the bull's belly forcefully expecting fresh milk. In the forceful act the calf purposely starved by its Sumatran owners, had at the tips of its small horns sharpened blades that sliced the belly of the snorting bull- killing it instantly.

The Sumatrans had won the battle fair and square using the horns of a buffalo. In Sumatra the event was celebrated as Menang-Kerbau or the victory of the Buffalo. In short Minang-kebau, and signified by actual buffalo horns decorating many minang houses, the horn shaped roofs and even a horn shaped headdress for women! This tradition exists even today and Kuala Pilah, Seri Menanti, Seremban and Tampin all sport curved roofed houses commemorating that epic battle of the buffaloes and victory to the Minangkebau



A traditionally dressed Minang lady with traditional headdress



The decorative gateway to Seri Menanti the Royal Town reflecting the Minang tradition

The Pelangai to Juasseh Stretch of the RTR



The RTR leaving the health centre at Pelangai, Juasseh bound

Along the whole 22 Km now of the RTR that follows the old rail road exactly but except for local residents few know its history. At only one part of the Pelangai-Juasseh portion is the RTR marked with a signboard alluding to its origins and history of over 100 years.



The signboard signifying the origin of the road that was once a railway track , near Jemapoh on the Pelangi-Juasseh line of the RTR.



The Pelangai RTR crosses the now very busy Kuala Pilah-Bahau Road and is ram-rod straight all the way to Juasseh just 2-3 kilometers away.



Bridge across the Juasseh River and Juasseh Town near where the Japanese had a WWII air field and many Kuala Pilah school boys were sent to work on vegetable farming projects on weekends.



Juasseh Town 2012 with sign pointing to Bahau Entering Jempol district on the very straight RTR



Jempol is the district that includes the town of Bahau. The RTR had in its heyday obviously made its way from the area around the hill with the signboard above to the left to join the East Coast FMSR and on to the south to Bahau station and beyond. That spur line is not recognisable now.



The first glimpse of the East Coast Gemas-Tumpat Line is when the road out of Bahau town makes a sharp bend to the right and rail lines and wagons are sighted running parallel to the road, left.



The Bahau Station should be more than 100 years old still going strong and almost a replica of the Kuala Pilah Station, but with the usual waiting hall open unlike the closed building of KP Station



There are several theories why the railway was abandoned in just 20 years or so. Firstly just as trains were the rage of the day in 1900-1920s, roads that were more flexible and needed very little hardware such as locomotives, tracks (that only ran in straight lines) that were costly and needed maintenance. Roads could reach any village on tracks or dirt roads and cheaply metalled roads took off in the 1920s and rapidly overtook trains. The once expensive motor vehicles started to become cheaper. The other possible reasons were the coming worldwide recession of the early 1930s that led to cost cutting. The tracks and trains disappeared and the straight tracked gave way to narrow paths or roads – that still exist as the Pelangai- Juasseh- Bahau road shows.

The many small rail lines such as Muar railways, Sungai Ujong railways were amalgamated with time and later became the Malayan Railway and still later the Keretapi Tanah Melayu of today. Inevitably the side spur lines such as the KP line from Bahau, the Muar line just closed down . However the Seremban-PD line remains till today to serve the oil refinery in Port Dickson but no

longer takes passengers. The Taiping Port Weld line continues long after the amalgamation of the smaller lines.

Post Script. Railways in Malaya that went through Boom to almost Bust with the proliferation of both motorised vehicles and highways and roads, and even overtaking the goods movement industry with lorries and container traffic has started a comeback with a vengeance to even challenge airlines. Although huge highway systems such as the PLUS highway from North to South is becoming choked the new electrification of the railway from north to south is proceeding in earnest. The latest is a plan to build a high speed railway from Kuala Lumpur to Singapore in the coming years. Being a city centre to city centre in 1 to 1 ½ hours by high speed train would beat an airline challenge that requires 2 airports 20-60 km away and long check in times . Goods trains too have many advantages of hauling goods more safely and in bulk at cheaper rates than lorries can. The rail system is also being considered further afield. A Singapore to Kunming, Singapore to Beijing await the missing stretch in Cambodia recovering from the long civil war. In a reunited North and South Vietnam the rail services are returning throughout south east Asia.

CHAPTER 4

KUALA PILAH IN THE WAR YEARS 1941-45

Kuala Pilah was according to my late father not an important part of the Japanese war in Malaya. When the British forces retreated down the peninsular they by-passed Kuala Pilah completely although in preparation for war Indian troops were billeted in the rubber estates around the town. My parents remember the Indian troops mostly north Indians cooking kheema (minced mutton) brought in kerosene type tins and making chappati to go with it prior to the war coming south. They retreated with other forces in late December so as not to get left behind and for a few days there were no police in the town. European houses like that of Miss Lomas the TMS teacher were broken into and looted. Even when the Japanese occupied Seremban and had bombed Tampin railway station Kuala Pilah remained quiet. Then belatedly Kuala Pilah was sent a Japanese team to warn against looting, and stayed in daylight hours at the police station in the present social services training centre on Jalan Tung Yen (the former dental clinic). With the Japanese enforcing law and order military style many looters threw their looted possessions into the valley off Jalan ulu Muar to avoid punishment. Opposite the Police station was a sawmill named Mokusai sawmill. That piece of land at the junction of Jalan Seremban and Jalan Tung Yen opposite the then police station today houses the former Majestic, later Rex cinemas – that is now Gedung Minang Department Store. Several Japanese barbers and photographers in pre-war Kuala Pilah were reported to have been Japanese intelligence officers .



Wartime Police station, now a social service training centre which after the war was a dental clinic.

The Japanese presence in Kuala Pilah was never large but clearly recognised and feared. The early months of the war saw the Japanese stamp the violent authority in blood and carnage. Parit

Tinggi and Senaling suffered brutally with hundreds of Chinese slaughtered and villages wiped out. Reports of bodies dumped in a well, houses razed to the ground abound. The Sungai Lui massacre near Bahau is commemorated with a memorial that surprisingly visited by groups of Japanese long after the war ended.



TMS was used as a Kempetai (Military Police) headquarters and prisoners from Senaling were tortured and killed and bodies buried in the rubber estate around the school. Targeted for torture and killing were local Chinese supporters of fund raising efforts (for the nationalist cause in China) to fight the Japanese. As late as 1980s students in TMS hostel talked of hearing the sounds of marching boots, chains being dragged and weird sounds of crying in the night.

The Parit Tinggi Story



The war Memorial at Parit tinggi for civilian victims



The very large Parit Tinggi Chinese cemetery is part of the History of Kuala Pilah

Parit Tinggi about 8 Km from Kuala Pilah off the Bahau road was the place where tin was mined in the late 1800s and where Tung Yen owned tin mines. To the Kuala Pilah residents of the 21st century Parit Tinggi is but a huge Chinese and a smaller Hindu grave yard. This unfortunate association hides the truth about a village that is richly steeped not only in history of Kuala Pilah but tragedy. Actually the large cemetery that is the resting place for thousands of Chinese from the 19th century was started by Towkay Tung Yen a rich miner when he negotiated the land from the British authorities. But the story of death took a different turn when WWII broke out.

Over 600 men women and children were massacred in Parit Tinggi at the early part of WWII by about 80 Japanese soldiers out to eliminate supposed sympathisers of the aid effort to help Chinese resist Japan;s invasion of China. A memorial as set up to honour the victims in Parit Tinggi in 1984 and many remains of the dead were recovered.

The origin of this town was in essence the origin of Kuala Pilah when tin was discovered and Malay and Chinese rushed to pan for tin in Beting, Paya Dalam and Parit Tinggi and employing as many as 200 Chinese labourers. The mines in the 1890s were producing over 1800 piculs of tin and tin ore and if more labour was available there was scope of more production of tin. Although this sounds unthinkable today one can imagine tin contributing to the bustling economy of Kuala Pilah and even perhaps contributing to the laying of a railway line linking KP in the interior to Bahau which was on the already established east coast line. in the 1800s. There were reportedly 2 Railway Engineers in 1890 in Kuala Pilah. Mr Tung Yen was at the forefront of the tin mining industry and naturally a leader of the Chinese community. Tung Yen was a Koumintang leader in Kwangtung province and a trusted friend of Sun Yat Sen the revolutionary leader trying to Unite China. Tung Yen became a well known Koumintang leader in Kuala Pilah and when the call came from Yat Sen for overseas support for the Koumintang effort in China Tung yen helped in no small way. This fund raising also made the Koumintang in Parit Tinggi prominent in the anti Japanese effort in later years after Tung yen left for Kwangtung to become warden of mines at the invitation of Yat Sen in 1920.

When the Japanese made their lightning advance down Peninsular Malaya they bypassed Kuala Pilah for its lack of strategic importance or military significance but did not forget the leading role Parit Tinggi residents made to the anti Japanese effort in China. With swift vengeance they massacred over 600 Parit Tinggi residents.

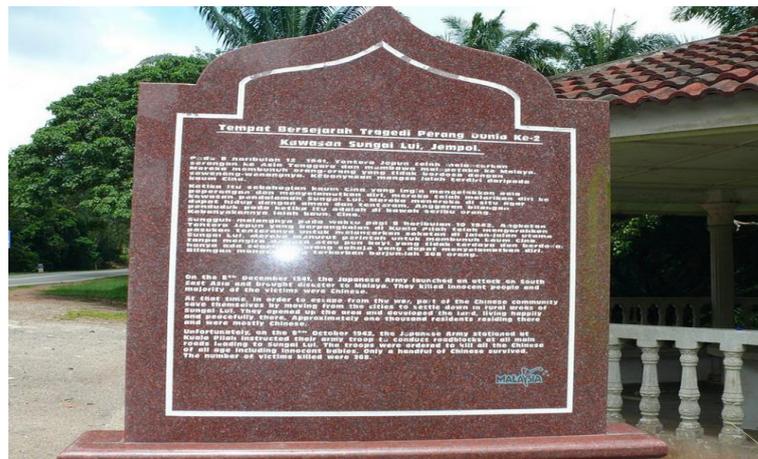
The tragedy did not end there. After the Japanese surrender in 1945 following the dropping of the Atomic Bomb on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, the Malayan Peoples Anti Japanese Army or MPAJA that fought the Japanese with the Force 136 from British Ceylon, turned against the British colonial government of Malaya. Once again the population of Parit Tinggi were subject to restrictions and suspected to be supporting the Malayan Communist Party and communist Terrorists in the jungles around Parit Tinggi. Indeed Lincoln Bombers of the Royal Australian Air Force subjected to MCP hideouts in the area to bombing that even shook the houses of Kuala Pilah Town some 8 Km away !



The Parit Tinggi Hindu cemetery

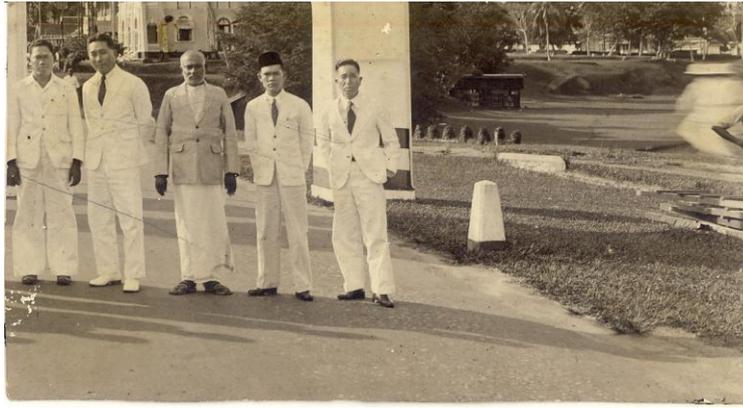


Today Parit Tinggi is famed for a brand new Mara College and a small industrial estate in Beting .



Sungai Lui Memorial to victims of Japanese Masacre, Jempol about 23km from Bahau town

Any sign of loyalty to the British colonialists was in the war years met with severe retaliation to the extent that pictures of King George, and white colonial administrators had to be cut out see picture below 1939.



A Pre war picture on Bahau Road, KP showing an arch to celebrate a British function

This truncated picture (excluding British) also shows the Sawah Lebar end of the valley which was also a retention pond but like the rest of the KP valley was well tended with regular cutting of grass. In the background is visible the old solid concrete post office – that lasted well into the 1970s

Life under the Japanese who replaced the British for nearly four years had its ups and downs . Things that cost 2 cents were costing 20 dollars of Banana money. Rice was a luxury and all got used to eating tapioca, millet, home grown vegetable and drinking coffee with a small piece of gula Melaka. Not being used to tapioca, many grated it using a grater to make the tapioca look at least like tiny grains of rice and then steam them. Petrol was almost non-existent and lorries and busses were modified to run on wood or charcoal. Fish was common source of protein pre war but lack of reliable transport led to it being a luxury that came once a week to Kuala Pilah. No one thought of chicken for lunch as they do now. Malnutrition was rife, beri beri killed many. Medicines such as quinine were very rare.

Despite all this and perhaps even because of its lack of importance, Kuala Pilah became the focus of attention of Force 136, a clandestine British force based in Ceylon (now Sri Lanka) that coordinated support for the Malayan anti-Japanese forces. Force 136 had links near KP in places like Parit Tinggi, Kepis and Titi. Parachute drops of men, supplies and arms to the anti Japanese forces grew in the 1944-45 period until the war ended. Some of the planes crashed and several wrecks have still to be identified in the thick jungle around Kuala Pilah.

In October 2012 the remains of one of these wrecks, an RAF B-24 Liberator bomber crew who perished near Kuala Pilah while on a supply mission to Force 136 was finally recovered. Some 67 years later their remains were handed over to the British High commission in a sombre ceremony. Pictures below.



Although the town was never bombed, Kuala Pilah had an air raid shelter (and ARP wardens) near where the new Post office is now (on right of picture below) and the area beyond that housing the Japanese army at the old district offices was out of bounds. As the only foot ball field was also there. as now, an armed Japanese guard checked all entering the field (which was also next to the old wooden Police Station at the far end of the field) All had to make a low bow as was the custom for the Japanese. When there was a risk of allied planes coming near Kuala Pilah, air raid gongs were sounded. Early warnings were brown out and serious warnings were black outs meaning lights had to be dimmed or put out altogether respectively.



Bahau Road facing Lister Road – new post office on right where air raid shelter was.

The war years saw many Japanese ways of doing things. School children were taught Japanese and Hindi instead of English in support of the Japanese administration and Indian National Army (INA) that allied with the Japanese in the war effort. Children were given green peas porridge with coconut milk and gula Melaka (brown coconut sugar) to encourage school attendance at the school (later Malay Girls' school) and allotted tasks to grow more vegetables and even coffee beans. Many of the oldest Kuala Pilah residents till today speak some Hindi and Japanese from their schooling at what became known as the Malay Girls' school off Jalan Melang behind the Men's hospital. This building is no more and replaced by a health office. (see the 3 instead of 1 VHF towers started in the 1950s during the Emergency on DO's hill in the same picture).

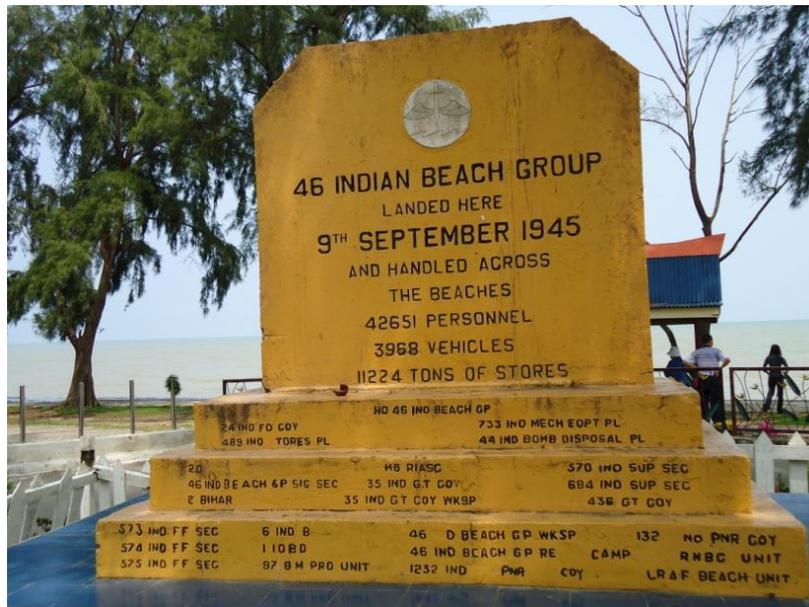


The end of the war was clearly near when hundreds of B 29 bombers overflow Kuala Pilah in formations on bombing missions in more important targets. Their huge formations reminded one of the thousands of flying foxes that flew over Kuala Pilah during the fruit seasons then.



This sight over Kuala Pilah is all but gone but Flying Foxes or fruit bats flew by the thousands in the 1940s every fruit season. They probably were killed for their meat – a delicacy to some.

Before Japan's surrender propaganda leaflets were dropped by the British urging the population to await the impending arrival of Allied troops. The war officially ended on 15 August 1945 with the Hiroshima and Nagasaki atom bombing of Japan but the Indian, and British troops came weeks later. The invasion forces landed peacefully in Morib as seen in this picture below.

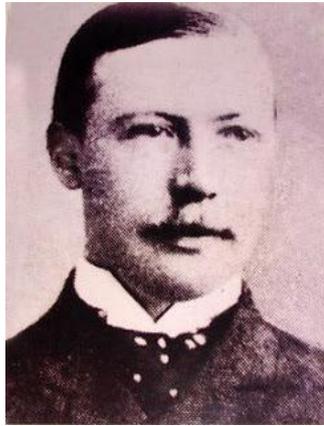


This monument in Morib marks the landing of British Indian Beach Group that had prepared for a land invasion of Japanese occupied Malaya in 1945 that might have caused thousands of casualties. In the event the invasion force landed peacefully to re- occupy the country after the 2 atom bombs were dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki in Japan in August 1945. The Liberating Indian and British troops paraded through Kuala Pilah distributing bully beef and hard biscuits, chocolates and lemon drink crystals from small tanks, Bren Carriers and trucks that rolled by waving to excited children and adults of Kuala Pilah. The three and a half years of war and deprivation was over. But peace was short lasting as the erstwhile allies – the Communists Tiga bintang (three stars for cap badges they wore) were planning a take over of Malaya.

The Japanese war years on the whole by-passed Kuala Pilah and spared the town much of the horror surrounding areas suffered. Massacres that occurred in nearby villages and towns however are legendary. But the end of the war brought about a reversal of fortunes and a parting of ways between the MPAJA and their erstwhile allies the Force 136. There was retaliation too by the MPAJA against those suspected of aiding the Japanese. Many of the arms given by Force 136 were hidden and not surrendered. The communists came back to wreak havoc on their erstwhile brothers in arms, during the "Emergency years" from 1948 to 1960.



YAM TUAN



LISTER



TUNG YEN

CHAPTER 5

The DO's Hill

The beginning of DO's hill from the Bahau road end housed 3 government houses with a large juicy machang tree in front of the house nearest the valley. The picture below, left is , of a similar design and unlike the wooden government houses, were of some quality. There were civil servants, technical assistants and teachers who occupied these. These were demolished to make way for the 10 three storey shops that stand there today.



The hill road narrows at the present rest house as it branches left to climb higher passing a former swimming pool of pre war vintage that was for use of the British officers on the DO's hill. The picture on the right shows where the first and only swimming pool for the British in KP was, overlooking the town above what is now the post office. I was abandoned and finally demolished.

The Hill itself is dotted with widely spaced bungalows used by the British but long since abandoned for the most part. One is a Territorial Army office. The Hill road has lovely branches covered glimpses of the town of Kuala Pilah and distant mountains. It is a good nature walk and

relatively well kept. The even narrower road up to the 3 tower VHF and repeater towers is heavy going for the elderly so that most walkers turn around at the Askar WATANIA office. The hill used to echo to macaque calls.



The pristine jungle was also home to troops of macaques, many monitor lizards, civet cats and significant varieties of birds from swallows and mynah birds to more noisy wood peckers and owls that kept a continuous chatter well into the night for residents nearby. But it was the confident troops of macaques that encroached on Hill Road itself near the present children's playground that was the main attraction with their early morning wooh, wooh, woohoo calls. There was no public playground with plastic slides and artificial playthings then. It was the thrill of sliding down this slope by Hill Road into the valley on a dried coconut leaf that brought thrills.



Minangkabau styled house off Kuala Pilah

CHAPTER 6

KUALA PILAH DURING THE EMERGENCY 1948-60



This new police station on Bahau road saw a lot of the anti communist war activities





This was the site of the old wooden police station which is now police housing on the far end of the Kuala Pilah stadium. It functioned well into 1950s even after the new police station was built .

The Communist insurgency started in 1948 with the assassination of British planters in Sungei Siput and spread quickly in a concerted attempt to overthrow the British rule in Malaya by armed rebellion. The Communist Party of Malaya was reportedly formed in Kuala Pilah early in the 1920s and the Vietnamese leader Ho Chi Minh was reported to have been at the Kuala pilah meeting. Other reports say that the British knew about the formation. The uneasy truce between the Communist Party of Malaya (CPM) the British and the Koumintang during the war years in common efforts to defeat the Japanese however did not last after the end of the war. The British were not prepared for the suddenness of the widespread series of murders and attacks but quickly rushed troops and material and reorganised the police and army units and the Communist Emergency began . The communists were termed Communist Terrorists and Bandits and hunted by all means possible. Troops from Australia, Fiji, New Zealand, Rhodesia, Britain, and Nepalese Gurkhas were deployed with Malayan police, army and Field Forces as well as thousands of Special Constables (SC) and Auxillary Police (AP) and HG (Home guards) to fight the communists. Kuala Pilah was the town in the centre of rubber plantations that was the lifeblood of the economy and had many planters who were targeted for attacks. Hence the action was thick and fast from many quarters .

To largely peaceful town descended a wide variety of armed units, army tented camps all over the town in populated areas. Vehicles used by troops and police never seen even in WWII were seen everyday . To the young boys it was a thrilling period of their lives. The soldiers from Britain, Fiji and Nepal were commonest to be seen in KP.



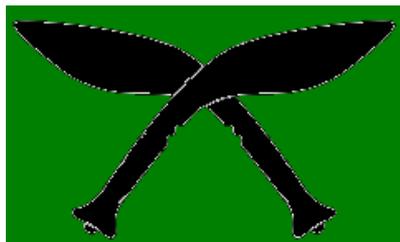
The APC, the Scout car and armoured car used to frequent the Kuala Pilah area ferrying troops and patrolling the roads apart from 3 ton trucks and land rovers. There were 3 army camps in Kuala Pilah.

1 Men's Hospital (between the wards)

2 Town padang opposite Kandasamy Kovil (now housing the Town Council and shops) and

3 Around the old District Office and old police station. Off Bahau Road

A number units including Green Howards, 2/1 Gurkha Rifles, Fijian Infantry Regiment, Black Cat regiment were based in Kuala Pilah along with transport and REME units almost all stayed in tents even in the terrible heat under khaki canvas.



Despite its relatively quiet experience in WWII, Kuala Pilah surrounded by vast rubber plantations run by colonial companies became attractive targets for the communist terrorists in post war years. Ambushes, of British planters on narrow estate roads, damaging of estate equipment and slashing of rubber trees along estate roads, cutting of telephone lines, burning of buses and even dynamiting of railway trains was not uncommon during the Emergency years.



A strict curfew was imposed at night and roads in and out of the town and all roads saw numerous check points, warning signs, barbed wire and thousands of AP (Auxillary Police) and the more common SC (Special Constables). Below are pictures of common sights along roads in and out of Kuala Pilah.



The new post war Police station was built around 1952 in the small padang in front of what was the wooden buildings of the TMS Primary school facing the Bahau Road and not far from the Ulu Muar River. – The school buildings later became the Police canteen for the station.

The small British community in Kuala Pilah consisted of the District Officer, Police officers, (OCPD, OSPC) the district Engineer, the Headmaster of TMS, and a number of British planters and of course the short term troops of the British forces. The British civilian staff stayed in large colonial type wooden bungalows well spaced out around the DO's (District Officer's) hill. Some of them later stayed in post war brick buildings on the same hill. The DO's Hill was pristine jungle with a narrow winding road to the top. On it in the early 50s for security reasons a VHF Tower was built for safe communication. They lived an exclusive life except for the occasional mixing with the locals in the Ulu Muar Club or at official functions . The British all had arms and those in the plantations had armed escorts and drove in armoured Ford or Humber cars – not a few of which

bore bullet marks of the not rare ambushes. For the planters life in the isolated estates like Sungai Inas about 16 km on the Tampin road out of Kuala Pilah was dangerous and lonely . A few of the British in Kuala Pilah had children who studied in TMS.



Old Estate Manager's Bungalow, Sg. Inas, near the Inas River and Chinese Keramat Temple. On weekends or when meetings necessitated it the British planters would drive into Kuala Pilah with side arms and escorts to do their shopping at a shop in Jalan Yam Tuan that kept a ready stock of liquor, western food and English delicacies such as ham bacon or Christmas pudding. On further trips to Seremban they frequented the SCS (Singapore Cold Storage) opposite the old wet Market for more frozen supplies.



Cars like this Ford were fitted with armour plating instead of glass windows with narrow slits on the windscreen for the driver to see



This palatial bungalow overlooking Kuala Pilah and across the Ulu Muar river was the site of a planter's bungalow in the Emergency years. Prior to that in the early 1900s it reportedly provided refuge to Sun Yat San the Chinese Nationalist who was fleeing the Manchu agents sent to get him. Tung Yen was the local Koumintang leader who provided hospitality and refuge to Sun Yat Sen.



The old TMS Headmaster's house on Hill road, off Seremban road. Headmasters including G E D Lewis, Ogle, HG Clarke, Rawcliffe and Mc Cumskey lived in this bungalow served by Chinese servants, a cook, kebun and a driver.



The new KP Police Station- nerve centre of the anti-communist effort



The old KP District offices and Padang

The Kuala Pilah stadium of 2012 was a District Padang and opposite the new police station built in 1950 on the left. It saw the landing of not less than 3 varieties of helicopters bringing armed forces personnel, casualties of firefights and many killed communist terrorists . Their bullet riddled bodies were laid out on the grass left of the police station for photographing, thumbprinting and identification.



Sikorsky



Westland



Sycamore



Valetta Leaflet Drop Aircraft



Auster Voice Aircraft

Other appearances by aircraft over Kuala Pilah were by Valetta aircraft of RAF that dropped leaflets urging the Communist Terrorists (CT's) to surrender with 'safe conduct passes' thrown to them from the air. Later large loudspeakers were attached to planes that flying at a height sent the same messages by voices from the skies in Chinese, Malay and English. Often the leaflets were actually dropped on the town itself and at least one unopened bundle of leaflets(probably by an underestimating crew) crashed on to the roof of one house breaking some tiles.



More exciting aircraft overflying Kuala Pilah were the RAF or RAAF Lincoln Bombers (of end of WWII vintage) out of Singapore that came rarely with their throaty roar of 4 Merlin engines to bomb suspected communist hideouts and camps near Kuala Pilah – especially in the direction of Parit Tinggi. Parit Tinggi was at the outbreak of WWII also the target of Japanese massacres of Chinese sympathisers of the Chinese resistance to Japanese troops in pre- communist China. On occasions the bombings by the Lincoln bombers were pretty close to Kuala Pilah to the extent the houses shuddered with the explosion of bombs. We sometimes knew when the bombers were coming as on the same afternoon we saw the large searchlight vehicles in town en route to take up positions to form reference points for the bombers missions that night. Occasionally other jet planes such as Meteors, Vampires were seen over Kuala Pilah. But by far the commonest planes during the Emergency were the single engine Auster planes with canvas fabric body covering that seated 2 or the slightly larger Scottish Aviation single engine Pioneer that criss- crossed the town on target spotting flights . On some occasions contrails of higher flying aircraft were seen too. The padang in town also sometimes housed search lights at the small army camp to be switched on at night, supposedly to guide surrendering CTs, by showing the direction of the town centre.

In the late 1950s the unexpected happened. A new airstrip was built on a small field below the level of Seremban road at the first milestone. The air strip had a grass runway and a windsock on one side below the level of the old Gurney Scout Camp but no building whatsoever. On rare occasions a single engine silver coloured RAF Pioneer presumably from the Paroi Air strip 20 miles away landed on the airstrip and had to take off facing the far end as the Seremban Road end at a height of 30 feet or so was a natural barrier for take offs. KP actually had an” airport” of sorts but never became as busy as the Paroi Air strip.



View of the seldom mentioned KP Airfield



narrow field a 30 feet drop from Seremban Rd.



The Auster



The "Single Pin" Scottish Aviation Pioneer



1970s View of Paroi Airstrip Seremban from Paroi New Village and KP end



The entrance to Paroi camp had a Nee Soon Hut. The Airstrip seen facing the Main Range and KP
 (2 Pictures courtesy British Army Personnel obtained from internet)

The Paroi camp and airstrip was a fair sized facility with a number of support units apart from the main Sikamat camp the home of the Black Cat Regiment of Gurkhas a few miles towards Seremban. As such Paroi was a busy airstrip with regular flights of Austers, Pioneers and of course the many types of helicopters. Today the airstrip is all but unrecognisable as Paroi is better known as a Sports complex with a large floodlit stadium, an Olympic sized swimming pool, and courts for badminton with more sports amenities coming up. Almost all the buildings are gone save one of several shelters or mini hangars for Auster aircraft, near the busy Seremban-KP road,



Note the Main Range in the direction of Kuala Pilah, the Stadium and light towers at end of runway and the remaining lone mini hangar awaiting demolition by the expanding sports complex



Kuala Pilah is 25 miles (42 Kms.) From Seremban the state capital and the narrow road connecting the capital had to cross the end of the main range of Malaya almost at its end at Bukit Putus pass. The road passed the majestic Gunung Angsi where pre-war there used to be a rest house at high elevations. This is long gone but the attraction and recent development of the then neglected Ulu Bendol water falls into a tourist stop has brought the Bukit Putus area into prominence again.



Royal Landmark for entry from Seremban into Kuala Pilah

The very steep, winding road to Seremban was covered with thick jungle that came right up to the roadside that during the emergency years posed danger of ambushes. After the Henry Gurney murder near Tras in 1951 in an ambush jungles fronting roads were cleared up to about 100 feet on either side, allowing less cover for CTs planning an ambush. This was not always possible on this stretch of road from KP to Seremban as the steep sides made clearing risk land-slides which were not uncommon even without the clearing. Seeing all the risks a small jungle fort next to a small jungle stream and overlooking the main road was set up. It was heavily fortified with barbed wire and with sandbagged pill boxes and bunkers. This mini fort was sited almost at the KP-Seremban boundary on the Seremban side. The access from the main road it defended was by a very steep path crossing a jungle stream. It was too risky a place for regular supplies by road so that on occasion Dakota planes parachuted supplies. Some of these parachutes were snared on the top of the very tall trees and remained there for years.

Although CT ambushes on the Kuala Pilah Seremban Road were not known the risk was always there so that military and police escorts for convoys of military vehicles and VIPs were fairly often seen. A Ferret Scout car would take up the front and Land Rovers the rear of the convoy. Civilian buses or cars did not need convoys as was the case in other parts of Malaya.



The Site of the Bukit Putus Jungle Fort and the 'Parachute Trees'



The famous Ghost corner, Bukit Putus

A story passed excitedly and repeatedly from mouth to mouth in the 50s was that of an elderly Chinese woman who would appear at the sharpest and last bend on the Bukit Putus road at its KP end at midnight especially on Sundays and ask for a lift from motorists. Drivers who stopped to oblige would realise after a while that the woman had disappeared from the car. The Ghost Corner story like all such stories was never proven by anyone who had actually met the ghost in question. Fortunately some 60 or so years later a new highway has been built to avoid the corner and ghost if any although the Ghost Corner albeit modified is still there with or without the ghost.



The new highway that deviates from the old Bukit Putus Road near Paroi fruit stalls makes a gradual climb with hardly a bend to cross a 48 meter ravine by a bridge which is the second highest in Malaysia. It passes below the old Bukit Putus fort and Parachute trees to meet the KP side entrance to Ghost corner and more earthworks that will widen the road past the Ulu Bendol waterfall to the school at the beginning of the straight stretch at KM 22. Once again after years being abandoned this lovely stretch of road has the young padi fields of green blossoming. Business is booming with Lemang, (rice cooked in bamboo) Ducks eggs and barbecued duck being sold by the road and of course fruits in season. The lovely green Padi fields around Km 22 was also the site of an RAF Sikorski forced landing in the Padi field in the 1950s. Despite all efforts at repairs the helicopter finally had to be dismantled piece by piece and the main engine with body airlifted by another Sikorski.



Despite Kuala Pilah's fame as the founding place of the MCP, the presence of MPAJA near Parit tinggi, and the targeted bombings near the same village Kuala Pilah was declared a White Area- or free of communists fairly early towards the end of the anti communists campaign. There were no more restriction on carrying of food and many Special Constable check points were taken away and one could drive between towns in the district without a curfew pass.



For a long time this stretch of 'Straight Road' was deprived of its traditional beauty of padi fields of the pre war and post war years. As families moved to towns, and numerous jobs in Seremban and KL and left the fields fallow. The greenery to golden face of Padi is back once again with a vengeance to re-beautify the KP that was.



Nearer Kuala Pilah the road passes through lovely traditional homesteads with rambutan orchards. Unlike in the 50s many of the houses that owned the rambutan trees are often empty or abandoned and during the December and July fruit seasons. The situation is even more on roads in Sawah Lebar and Jemapoh RTR where trees heavy with fruits in season are there for adventurous tourists.



CHAPTER 7

A Walk About KP Town



Jalan Lister (facing Bahau Road end) was named after the first British resident of the reunited Negeri Sembilan. His contribution to the reunification and help in resolving the disputes was widely recognised and Mr Tung Yen erected a Chinese Pleasure Garden at the beginning of the first and main road of Kuala Pilah. The Lister Memorial is still well maintained and was opened in 1900. Presumably by that time at least some of the shop houses were already there. It is likely that the smaller shop houses that start at the Jalan Ulu Muar-Lister road junction were the first one to be built and ones that are larger were built in the space between the old ones and the Lister memorial. The oldest and smaller shops must be not less than 120 years old by now.



There was a time (1890s) when it was called Cart Street as there were probably no cars and the main Road was used by carts. Later before the time of Lister's death it was called Main Street.

The Tampin Road end of Lister Road housed a few Chettiar businesses (on the right of above picture) from the 1920s but have long gone. Their business revolved around the rubber industry and providing financial support for small holders and those buying and selling land. It was a defacto banking system that lost out to the proliferation of banks in the town since the 1970s. They were also strong supporters of the KP Kanthasamy kovil.





Lister Road has undergone name changes to Jalan Bunga Raya and now Jalan Dato Undang Johol



This smaller shop with a wide front balcony upstairs at the junction of Jalan Dato Ulu Muar and Jalan Lister is one of the few of the earliest shops left unaltered. There is some evidence from 1891 news reports that this road (before Lister came into the picture) was known as the cart road and shops may have started here. The shops along the same side but nearer the Chinese temple are distinctly larger and full 2 storey without the large upstairs balcony.



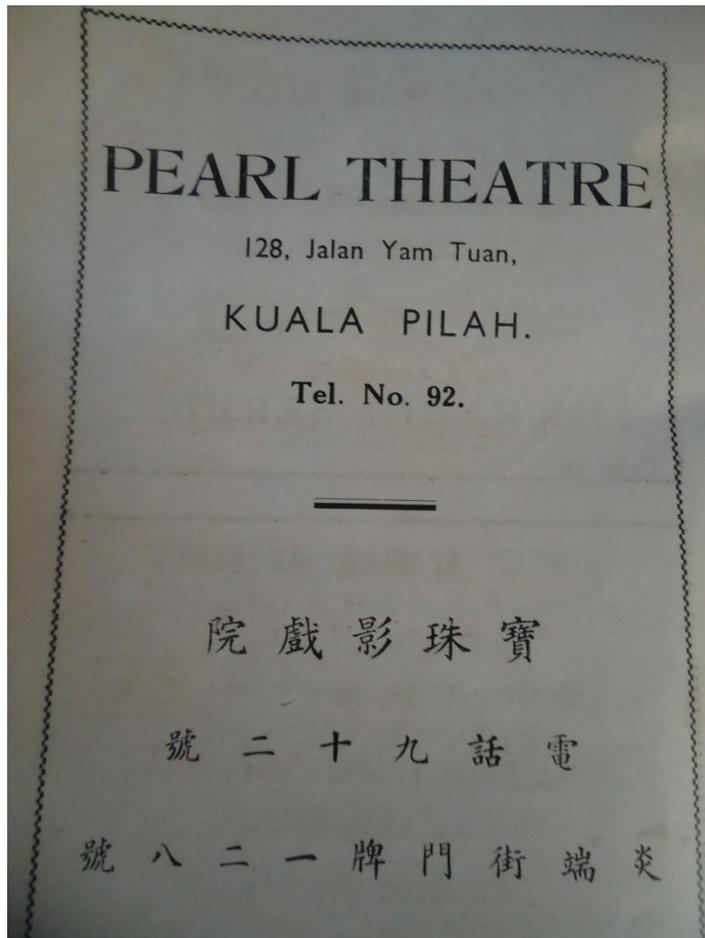
Along Lister Road many of the 2 storey wooden shops are crumbling and being rebuilt into larger modern structures of concrete, bricks and glass. The big celebration along Lister Road was the Chinese Festival of Hungry Ghosts around July every year and the final part of the Sooran Porr in November a week after Deepavali each year.



Jalan Yam Tuan is the second Road to have been built and runs parallel to Jalan Lister. The Pearl theatre of old half way down the road from the Bus terminus to Jalan Melang still has the words Pangung wayang 1916 clearly visible at the top



Pangung Wayang 1916 barely visible on picture on the right became the Pearl Theatre



The new Majestic was a state of the art cinema in the 1950s. It changed to Rex Theatre and then closed , a casualty of the advent of TV, Video tapes and CDs DVDs and Astro.

Kuala Pilah had its first proper film theatre Jalan Yam Tuan – the Talkies pre war- at what later became the Pearl theatre. Pearl was built in 1916 in 2 shop houses next to Seremban road and

functioned well until around 1960s. This may be one of the earliest documented old buildings in Kuala Pilah. But by the 1950s there was already a purpose built new cinema- the Majestic on Jalan Tung Yen just a few hundred yards down the Seremban road. (now Jalan Perpatih)



The advent of TV in 1964 video tape shops CDs and VCD and DVD and later Astro satellite TV in a span of 25 years has killed numerous cinema theatres around which social entertainment revolved. Many have re-invented themselves as shopping centres. The Pearl cinema in Kuala Pilah stopped showing films over half a century ago. The Rex (ex Majestic) followed . It is Gedung Minang department store now.



Another casualty of progress was the Radio and Radio repair shop

Kuala Pilah has a down town that is compact and walk-able . It has 3 main roads starting with Lister(now Bunga Raya) road that is the main through road from Bahau, Menchis and Temerloh

and Kuantan in the east to Tampin and Melaka in the west coast of peninsular Malaysia. In effect KP sits astride the East West route in the south central part of Malay Peninsular . At the Tampin end of the town Lister Road meets Seremban Road (Jalan Perpatih) to the right.



Parallel to Lister road and adjacent is Jalan Yam Tuan named after the ruler of Negeri Sembilan. Parallel to Jalan Yam Tuan adjacent and further back is Jalan Tung Yen the third of the 3 main roads of the town The Hailam Kopi-tiam Malaysia's fast food chain started at Sinaran Cafe in 1930 on Jl. Yam Tuan. The wooden Bus stand of the 1950s has become a bus terminus of some size and sophistication.

The main road of KP in the 1890s was cart Road- Presumably it was used by bullock carts of this type when motorised vehicles were not yet available. Motor vehicles came into fairly common use well into 1990s early. Bullock carts were in use fairly often for carriage of farm produce, fire wood well into 1950s but had to change from the wood and metal cart wheel into rubber tyres around 1955.

History of KP Streets

While it is difficult to know with certainty the year of KP's founding it is a little more certain that ,

Lister Road was the Cart Street(later Main Street) and certainly was in existence around 1890 and there well before Lister as Lister Memorial is dated 1901 and the Chinese Temple at least by 1898. In the marble slab on the Lister Memorial grounds the Lister Road of the Future is referred to as Main Street. Many of the older buildings have fallen into disrepair and replaced by concrete structures from the 70's and eighties or 1990s

The Cross Street referred to may be *Jalan Dato' Ulu Muar* of today In 1900. There may not have been a *Jalan Yam Tuan* as the Pearl Theatre was dated 1916. It is interesting that Lister was reported to have died in Suez after the tenure of his Residency ended in 1897 and the Lister Memorial was officially opened in 1901, which which leaves a 4 year gap during which Lister passed away and the memorial project began supposedly by Towkay Tung Yen.

Jalan Yam Tuan had the old Pangung wayang in 1916 so the shops were of that vintage or later.

Jalan Tung Yen has at least 2 buildings of 1928 vintage to prove it came later than the previous two

Chevalier Street the next Cross Street to Ulu Muar must have been named after Chevalier a district officer of KP from 1891 to 1903, left Kuala Pilah (old name – see Lister Memorial marble slab) on transfer to Kuala Kangsar in 1903. He is reported to have served in Kuala Pilah from around 1891-1903 . It was probably named after he left Kuala Pilah or after he died. The popularity of Chevalier as a DO is reported in the Straits Times of January 1891 when he organised 2 days of sports for New year 1891 – There were pony races with 11 ponies participating on Cart street, as there was no race track in KP, there was a duck shoot picul races, target shooting by the police, swimming contests on Muar river It is likely that the large valley that separated what is now the stadium from the town proper was gradually filled in to allow for the present Bahau road across the valley to be built. There is reported to have been a vernacular school near where the Lister Memorial stands long before the Committee school of Tung Yen was started in the first decade of 1900. In all the whole town centre that is now , took not less than 40 years to be built.

It is likely that the Bahau end of Kuala Pilah town Started first as it is adjacent to Pekan Lama that is on the banks of the Muar River. But as need for expansion of the narrow town that is Pekan Lama became obvious the town expanded towards Tampin and Seremban. But the two ends were separated by a large low lying valley. It appears that this was gradually filled in in stages so that the dated buildings of *Jalan Yam tuan* show 1916 buildings on the Seremban road area (Pangung wayang) and buildings of 1928 at the Tan Puan House end of *Jalan Yam Tuan*. Similarly the dated buildings on the 3rd street (*Jalan Tung Yen*) came around 1928 onwards. By the time the streets were all filled with shops it was about 1930 or about the time Tuanku Muhammad School on *Jalan tampin* was completed.

The Tung Yen Road Story



Jalan Tung Yen from the Seremban Road end facing Jalan Dato Ulu Muar



The 1955 Town Council road signboard designating Jalan Tung Yen still stands at 196 Jalan Tung Yen at the junction with Jalan Dato Ulu Muar. 196 was the first lawyer's office in KP.

Among the three main roads of Kuala Pilah Jalan Tung Yen was the last to be built around 1928. It is also a mystery to most residents of Kuala Pilah in 2012 . Who was Tung Yen ? The mystery for those of recent origin in Kuala Pilah is now no more . Mr Tung Yen a.k.a Deng Zeru a.k. Teng Che Yu was born in China in 1867 and became a prominent Koumintang leader who in the late 1800s moved to Malaya and became a prominent tin miner in Kuala Pilah with several mines in surrounding areas of Parit Tinggi. In fact it was Tung Yen who started the first English school which in 1908 had 28 pupils and a Mr De Witt as the Head Master. This school closed down due to financial problems. He also used his influence with the British to apply for land at Parit Tinggi for a Chinese cemetery. When Sun Yat Sen the Nationalist leader in China was being sought by the agents of the Manchu Emperor, Tung Yen and his wife provided refuge for him in a small house on the hill overlooking the Muar River for a few days. Tung Yen is mentioned as a prominent Koumintang leader from Kuala Pilah who attended the 1910 Penang conference that Sun Yat Sen called for to gain support and resources for the revolutionary cause in China. Tung Yen was called

by Sun Yat Sen later in 1920 to Kwangtung to become the Warden for Mines. In December 1934 at the age of 67 Mr Teng Chu Yu better known as Deng Zeru and later as Tung Yen died of pneumonia in Kwangtung and was given a State funeral . This was reported on page 10 of the 26 December 1934 issue of The Straits Times.. Tung Yen’s family owned a house in Kuala Pilah that was sold long after by his relations long after his death in China.



Deng Zeru alias Tung Yen in a 1910 picture

At a later date in the 1920s or 30s Kuala Pilah is said to have been the place where the Malayan Communist party was founded. Among the communist leaders who at this meeting is mentioned Ho Chi Minh, later to become the leader of the Vietnamese war of liberation from French Colonial rule , leader of the reunification movement of north and south Vietnam and founding father of modern Vietnam . Two prominent Asian leaders of China and Vietnam had visited Kuala Pilah.



A 1928 Building on Jalan Tung Yen



The 5-foot ways of shop houses in KP



THE OPIUM SHOP STORY



The Opium Shop (Kedai Candu) 198 Jalan Tung Yen must have opened around 1920s as a Journal report in the Journal of Estate Hospital Assistants reported that in 1926 the British colonial government made a substantial earning from sale of opium to addicts through Government opium shops in British Malaya.

The British government of Malaya had the monopoly on the opium trade and earned a sizeable income selling opium in Government Licensed Opium Shops to those who had special permits to buy opium. In the 1800s Britain and other colonial powers ran a lucrative opium trade then considered a legitimate enterprise. Opium was largely grown in British India and sold by the bale to China and South east Asia. The Opium wars started by Chinese rulers to try and curb the opium trade put an end to free sale of opium in China but the colonial powers felt it their right to sell opium with nominal restrictions in their many (British, French and Dutch) colonies in S E Asia. They set up colonial government licensed opium shops in all large towns to cater for opium addicts like the one above in Jalan Tung Yen in Kuala Pilah. It was smoked by use of an opium pipe and the wealthy used an opium bed and an opium pillow - all inventions from China.



Ornate Opium Bed, pillow and opium pipe



Opium smokers in Thailand in 1980s

The place was crawling with opium addicts whose habit was maintained by sales from the above shop. It was the only opium shop in Kuala Pilah. The strong smelling dark sticky opium pellets were sold through the small opening protected by wrought iron netting to prevent violence among addicts suffering from withdrawal symptoms. It closed down after the Japanese invasion and the occupation military government banned opium. It never reopened even after the British returned. The building became the offices of the Seri Menanti Bus company below left . It is now a Singer shop (right)



The Rubber Boom

Following the tin boom Kuala Pilah became a rubber boom town with newly introduced Rubber being planted in vast estates around Bahau and Kuala Pilah. Brought from Brazil and planted in Kew gardens, rubber was smuggled by Nicholas Ridley into Singapore and planted with great success. In no time rubber was being planted across the vast hills and valleys of Malaya- and around Kuala Pilah. Rubber was tapped from rubber trees as latex, coagulated with formaldehyde and rolled into sheets which were dried and sold to the rubber dealers of Jalan Tung Yen and Lister. They were brought on bicycles or on busses by small holders, to the bus stand and easily sold to the nearby shops. Many made fortunes, bought rubber estates and made yet more money.

The rubber boom collapsed in the world wide slump or recession of 1932 that also affected British Malaya. Shop after shop was closing down.

However the 1939 war boosted need for rubber and once again Kuala Pilah prospered. The War came to Malaya on 8 December 1941 largely because of Japan's need for rubber, Tin and oil. Rubber production took a dip but boomed in the war years. The Korean war boosted rubber trade again.



Rubber trees with latex cups collecting latex from cut bark

Jalan Tung Yen the Road that Rubber Built

By the time Jalan Tung Yen was built in the late 1920s it is likely Mr Tung yen had left Kuala Pilah some 8 or so years earlier for Kwangtung to become warden for Mines there. Two or more buildings have dates of 1928 in their front top end on Jalan Tung Yen . On the reported death of Mr Tung Yen in December 1934 it is likely the road was named after him.

But by the time Jalan Tung Yen was built tin had been likely panned out and rubber plantations and smallholdings were sprouting up all over the district and country. The third street of Kuala Pilah became the Rubber trade street. Every working day small holders would bring their overloaded bicycles with ribbed smoked sheets (RSS) of rubber to the 'rubber shops to sell them for ready cash. Latex as such was not sold in the market in liquid form. For those who brought the sheets from afar by bus the shop keepers would help by loading them on to tricycles from the bus stand on Jalan Ulu Muar and weigh them on large metal scales and pay the small holders ready cash in shops that permanently reeked of rubber sheets. Cheaper value scrap rubber salvaged from cups and trees were also brought in for sale.





Jalan Dato Ulu Muar



Hock Hoe on Jalan Chevalier (Jalan Dato Manap)



Jalan Perpatih



Jalan Raja Melewar



Front of Kanthasamy Kovil (first built 1896)



Gurdwara Sahib (started 1906) built 1937

The Jalan Tung Yen end of Jalan Chevalier (near where the Desa Inn hotel now stands) and behind Hock Hoe building pre war, housed a large wooden building that was the town garage for cars. In the tradition of Britain with a colder climate, cars had to be housed in purpose built garages and not parked anywhere overnight as is the practice now. KP had its own garage that post WWII fell into disrepair and remained an eyesore as cars multiplied and could not always find a garage.



Jalan Chevalier at its junction with Jalan Yam Tuan facing Jalan Tung Yen

If few know of Jalan Tung Yen's origins, fewer still today know of Jalan Chevalier. Chevalier was the District Officer in Kuala Pilah in 1890-1902. During the length of time he served in Kuala Pilah he was reportedly liked by the local population.



A view of Jalan Yam Tuan with the 1916 Pearl Theatre (panging wayang) visible with steeple on the right of the picture mid way down the road. It later closed and a fruit shop opened on the same premises, and yet later a clothing shop.



Decorative tiles that still look new in houses that were built during the 1920s-30s rubber boom



Licensed Rubber dealers on Jalan Tung Yen whose industry made KP prosper have changed



This not a vanished KP Lake Gardens to compete with Seremban's but a 1958 view of KP valley in flood in Malaya's driest town. In 2013 it also recorded the highest temperature of 36.3 degrees C.



The Kanthasamy Kovil on Jalan Melang, KP has a very large and matured Bo tree to its left and this is what remained of it before it was finally felled with the rebuilding of the temple in the 1980s. The temple over 110 years old and rebuilt and consecrated many times and is renowned for the Sooran Porr or Battle of Good over Evil celebrated in a grand way a week after Deepavali every year. It was attended by thousands from all over the country.





The old Sooran statue that was paraded around KP town



A back lane off Jalan Muar then and now - no washing poles, no telephone poles now



The old Market was a pre war structure and a new market to accommodate more traders was built in the 1960s. The site of this new market was the old Huttenbachs electric supply company. When the LLN later TNB started they connected the needs of Kuala Pilah to the national grid and the Huttenbachs closed its operations in Kuala Pilah. A new building is coming up near the old market which is a complex for clothing shoes and no longer tau foo, fish, vegetables, mutton beef and chicken. In those days the sale of pork and wild boar meat was at the rear end of the market in stalls separated by a wall from the rest of the market. Below the new Chicken market.



CHAPTER 8

The Vanishing Valley Story

How Green was The Valley - the 1950s to the 2010s



The view from Bahau Road of the town end of the valley with the wall of Lister memorial to the left and the old bus stand and toddy shop flanked by a huge Flame of the Forest tree, and coconut trees to the right and the main range in the background.



The Bahau road end of the valley had a lower slip road that connected Lister with Hill Road. This was at such low level that the road was flooded when the valley was itself flooded as seen in the picture of such a 1958 flood . The old Post Office was a very solid brick building that housed the quarters of the postmaster. Mail was delivered by postmen on bicycle or on foot.



Rare photograph of 1958 Floods of the valley spreading into Sawah Lebar side across the elevated Bahau Road through two large diameter tunnel drains. All these have been since closed and most of the Sawah Lebar side of the valley is taken up by a slip road joining the Bahau Road to the RTR to Sawah Lebar and on beyond to Bahau by the RTR. Picture of old Post office on right





The march of progress and destruction of the Valley





The Valley Now and Then

The Kuala Pilah Valley was not just an open space . The Valley was a low land that started getting smaller long before 1930s when the KP town was extended from the hill rise in what is now the Melang road. As the town expanded the valley became what it was in 1950s. This narrowed natural valley acted as a retention pond for the occasional heavy rains of December although Kuala Pilah was long recognised as the driest town in Malaya. In fact recognising this the valley had several wells which in particularly dry spells provided the townspeople with life saving water. One such was below the level of the toddy shop next to the bus stand and a local cherry tree. The slopes by the side of Hill road and facing the Government Toddy shop, bus stand and the Lister memorial were natural slides for children using long full coconut leaves and the occasional daredevil boys coiled inside the inner part of used car tyres and rolled down the slopes. The valley was a short cut to the hill road, Bahau Road and for Fijian and Gurkha soldiers based at the padang opposite Majestic Cinema to reach their camp for meals in the camp based next to the District Offices. The valley stretched from near the old Rest House on Seremban road all the way to Sawah Lebar. The Rest house portion has now been swallowed up by a new housing estate, and shops, below, and replaced by a new rest house on Hill road where the wooden Bungalow of the Executive Engineer’s house used to stand . The Tan Puan Fountain that was donated to

commemorate the Jubilee of King George V in 1936(below) is long gone. Site of old Rest House and the new Rest House on Hill road.



This is NOT the old Rest House of KP but a building of similar design and a much longer one was what the Government Rest House built in 1891 looked like. It served as a gathering place for the colonial gentry of the time and place for the visiting government officials of the day to stay on their inspections of the district. . The first Rest House was a long wooden building built in 1891 by Singhalese workers and had 4 bed rooms. It was the only hotel in town and frequented by civil servants on inspection visits to Kuala Pilah and used for functions, meetings and celebrations. Rest houses were integral parts of smaller towns that had no hotels and run traditionally by Singhalese Rest House keepers. The Kuala Pilah Rest House was contracted to one Mr Janis De Silva a long time resident of Kuala Pilah and Tampin (Straits Times 1891 January). Much later Rest Houses almost exclusively were contracted to Chinese of Hainanese origin .

A much larger two storey building was the Rest House in the Seremban lake gardens that served a similar function. In those days when there were few “coffee shop hotels” or no hotels at all the Rest Houses served the function of providing clean, standard accommodation and food. Most Rest Houses have since been re-built and are less important with the rise of hotels even in Kuala Pilah. In 2012 KP boasts at least 3 modern albeit small hotels.

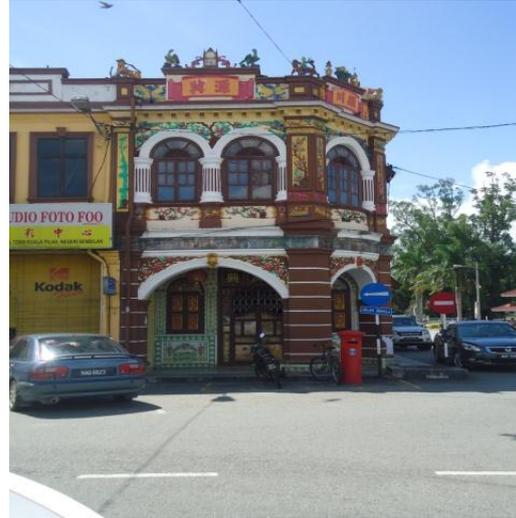


Where Rest House was and the new Rest house at the site of the old wooden Executive Engineer's house on Hill Road in Kuala Pilah



The old Coronation Fountain Jalan Seremban Kuala Pilah – opposite the old Rest House

A Kuala Pilah landmark the Towkay Tan Puan Fountain stood in front of the old rest house on Seremban Road (where a small bush on a divider stands in front of the eating stalls) today The fountain stopped functioning long ago and is no more. It was built to commemorate the coronation of King George and Queen Elizabeth on 5th May 1937 by Towkay Tan Puan of 165 Jalan Yam Tuan who in 1927 built the most decorated shop house in Kuala Pilah that stands opposite the new Bus Station. Well maintained it is an attractive addition to history. Fortunately it has been restored and is well maintained. Clearly the Pangung Wayang of Jalan Yam Tuan was built a good 11 years earlier and probably the town developed from the direction of the Jalan Seremban that and its junction with Jalan Lister with the shops being built after Pangung Wayang (1916) in stages to reach the 1927 building of the fabulous house of Towkay Tan Puan.

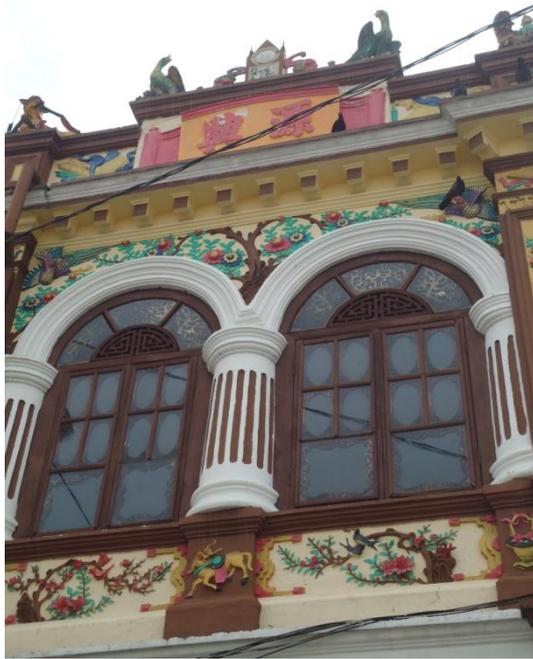


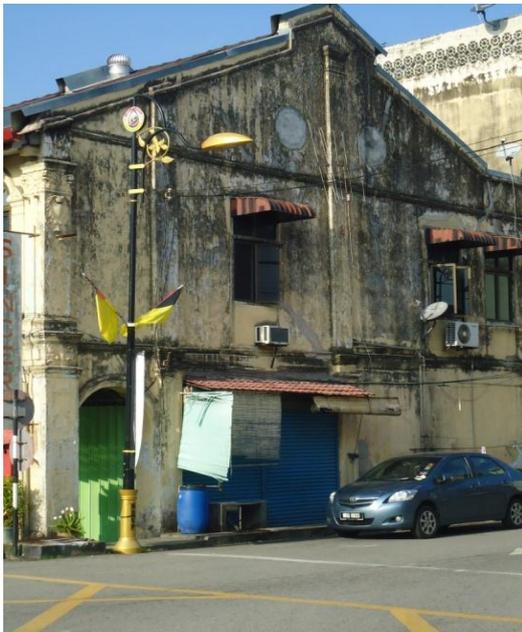
The building is richly decorated in 1920s style with Chinese mythological motifs both inside and outside and decorated with period tiles. It is a living museum worthy of a heritage building. The adjacent building is dated 1927, was also owned by the same family.



Towkay Tan Puan's richly decorated house and pictures of him and his wife on the ornately gilded interior with antique furniture and gilded panels that still stand some 85 years later. The Extended family lived in 3 shop houses on Jalan Yam Tuan, the other two adjacent houses are now shops.







The trademark pre war shop houses with long wooden widows are dying (or rotting) out fast and literally falling apart, and being replaced by aluminium and glass ones.

The tall shop ends with varying decorations still stand but as the wooden floors of the shop-houses collapse new concrete shops are being built in their place



Opposite the Kanthasamy kovil is the Town council and rows of shops that till the 1960s was a field used for football, free Malayan Film Unit shows at nights and later became a REME British camp for vehicles during the emergency.

The Kuala Pilah Sinaran –Hailam Kopi Tiam Story



The 5 pictures above tell of the origin of *Hai Lam Kopi Tiam* of the Malaysia wide fame of 2012 , on Jalan Yam Tuan. It was started in 1936 by the Goh family in Jalan Yam Tuan as Foh Heong kopitiam. Its popularity led to the opening of the Sinaran Restaurant and Cafe in 1943 as a joint venture between Tunku Kudin and the Goh Family. This is where it all began. The new board and logo of Hailam Kopi tiam is visible to the left of the Sinaran sign board on upper picture.

The trademark of pre war coffee shops were the plywood chairs of a classic design and the round marble tables. These are avidly sought after by collectors along with kopi tiam white coffee cups and saucers decorated with drawings in green. Thick coffee served with liberal helpings of condensed milk and taken with roti bakar (toasted bread) and kaya or egg jam were trademark coffee breaks with quaint cakes with brightly coloured butter icing. Packets of nasi lemak wrapped in newspapers and banana leaf with hard boiled eggs was and still is the Malaysian breakfast.



Scenic wooden bridge across the valley replaced by road bridge across to Hill road



Jalan Yam Tuan in the 1960s with yet to be famous Sinaran restaurant and Cafe on left



Jalan Ulu Muar 1950s with old Standard Oil (later Mobil, Esso) and Shell petrol pumps. Chinese funeral along Jalan Ulu Muar. Note Bullock cart on left of picture and lamp post in the middle of the road. The bus stand also had one of very few public phone booths, and a post box. Before the war the town was lit by gas lights. Houses and roads got their electricity late into the 1930s.



Bus Stand opening 1955 . Only 3 bus companies operated from the bus stand then United Bus was Union Bus and ran services to Seremban and Bahau and a school bus service , Seri Menanti Bus company operated to and from Seri Menanti and ran a Melang bus route from KP and the Eng Giap bus company provided the KP-Tampin service.



The Modern Hentian Bas KP



A rare 1947 picture of Srimenanti Bus by En Rusdi Mustapha



1978 view of the roofs of KP Bus stand



KP Bus Terminal 2012



Views of the Kuala Pilah Bus station and site of old Government Toddy Shop, right



The Tan Puan House gilded front door way flanked by period tiles

CHAPTER 9



The Tuanku Muhammad School complex from 10,000meters 8-8-2008

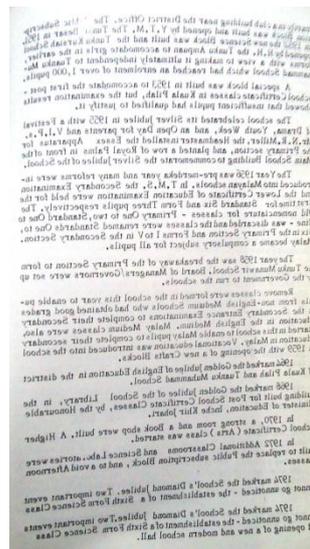
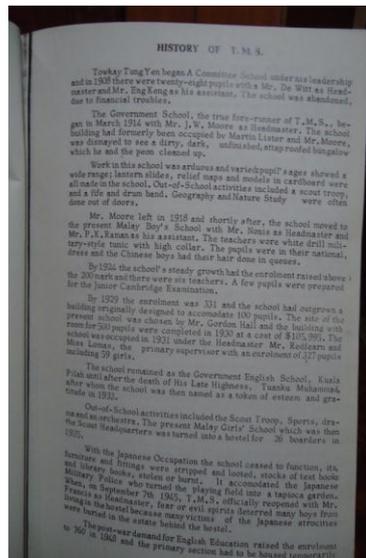
TUANKU MUHAMMAD SCHOOL STORY

The Tuanku Muhammad School was when built in 1930 in what was a rubber estate at the foot of Bukit Temensu on the Kuala Pilah-Tampin road a mile from the town. The school was two storey state of the art concrete structure with an administrative extension to the rear and a spacious hall. catered for the 8 class roomed school and 180 or students. It had a separate nice covered canteen a toilet building and a very spacious field. For students from the rural areas a spacious Malay students hostel was built on a hillside overlooking the field. Just two houses for teachers were included in the school grounds. But as numbers of students grew post war, two temporary classrooms were added to the canteen and two rows of new single storey wooden buildings with asbestos roofs were added in 1950. In 1952 students helped clear the hill side behind the school hall for the opening of yet more wooden classrooms in the form of a public subscription block.



TUANKU MUHAMMAD SCHOOL HISTORY

The story of TMS as it is still fondly called is much older than the 1930 opening of the large imposing structure that is Sekolah Tuanku Muhammad today. It stretched back to at least 1914 when the first Government English School was established in Kuala Pilah. The term Government English School was the equivalent of Sekolah Menengah Kebangsaan today. Hence there were GES, Port Dickson, GES Tampin until some changed their names to honour royalty. Thus High School Melaka remained HSM into the 1950s. But before this Towkay Tung yen did help start a school in 1908.(see page 81)



- History of TMS - Extract from TMS Annual School Magazine

Thanks to articles in TMS Annual Magazines we have a glimpse of the early history of what is now TMS. But it is now evident that an old “vernacular” school (presumably Malay) existed before TMS’s origins when the Chinese temple opposite it was built in 1900 on what was Main Street, or later became Lister road. Thus basic school education in KP started at least in the late 1890s. The marble plaque on the wall of the Chinese Temple on Lister Road refers to this (see page 28)

rarity in a club building near the District Office. The Public Subscription Block was built and opened by Y.T.M. The Tunku Besar in 1951. In 1952 the new Science Block was built and the Tunku Kursiah School opened by H.H. the Tunku Ampuan to accommodate girls in the earlier forms with a view to making it ultimately independent to Tuanku Muhammad School which had reached an enrolment of over 1,000 pupils.

A special block was built in 1953 to accommodate the first post-school Certificate classes in Kuala Pilah, but the examination results showed that insufficient pupils had qualified to justify it.

The school celebrated its Silver Jubilee in 1955 with a Festival of Drama, Youth Week, and an Open Day for parents and V.I.P.s. Mr. N. R. Miller, the Headmaster installed the Essex Apparatus for the Primary section, and planted a row of Royal Palms in front of the Main School Building to commemorate the Silver Jubilee of the School.

The Year 1956 was pre-merdeka year and many reforms were introduced into Malayan schools. In T.M.S. the Secondary Examination and the Lower Certificate of Education Examination were held for the first time for Standard Six and Form Three pupils respectively. The Old nomenclature for classes - Primary One to two, Standard One to Nine - was discarded and the classes were renamed Standards One to Six in the Primary Section and Forms I to V in the Secondary Section. Malay became a compulsory subject for all pupils.

The year 1958 saw the breakaway of the Primary Section to form the Tunku Munawir School. Board of Managers/Governors were set up by the Government to run the schools.

Remove classes were formed in the school this year to enable pupils from non-English Medium Schools who had obtained good grades in the Secondary Entrance Examinations to complete their Secondary education in the English Medium. Malay Medium classes were also started in this school to enable Malay pupils to complete their secondary education in Malay. Vocational education was introduced into the school in 1959 with the opening of a new Crafts Blocks.

1964 marked the Golden Jubilee of English Education in the district of Kuala Pilah and Tuanku Muhammad School.

1968 marked the Golden Jubilee of the School Library, in the building built for Post School Certificate Classes, by the Honourable Minister of Education, Inche Khir Johari.

In 1970, a strong room and a Book shop were built. A Higher School Certificate (Arts) class was started.

In 1972 Additional Classrooms and Science Laboratories were built to replace the Public subscription Block, and to a void Afternoon classes.

1974 marked the School's Diamond Jubilee. Two important event cannot go unnoticed - the establishment of a Sixth Form Science Class

1974 marked the School's Diamond Jubilee. Two important events cannot go unnoticed - the establishment of a Sixth Form Science Class and opening of a new and modern school hall.

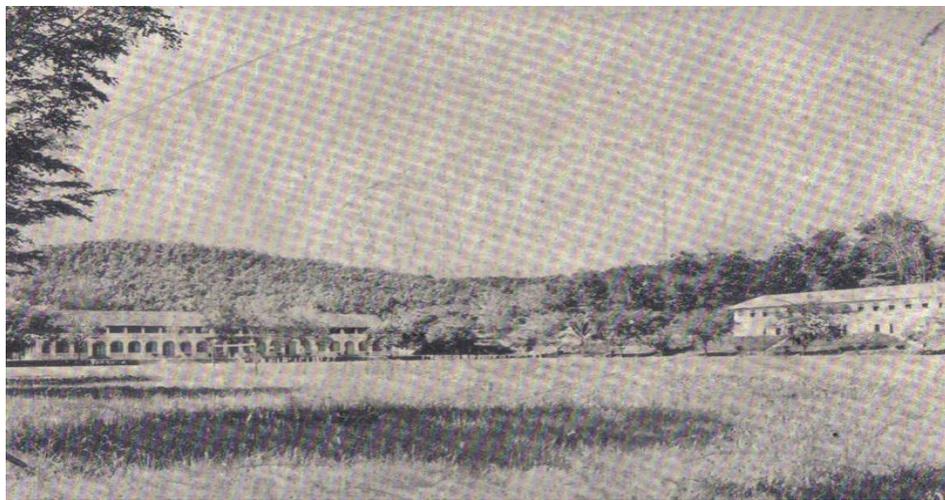


1914 Government English School, Kuala Pilah





His Highness The 7th Yan Tuan of Negeri Sembilan



The GES was renamed Tuanku Muhammad School in 1933 after the death of the 7th Yang di Petruan Besar of Negeri Sembilan.



TMS 1946 and 2013 on its 99th year



1946 to 2012 – note rubber estate and tall trees of post war years and 2012 pictures



The grandstand at TMS Padang started as a bicycle shed in early 1950s for the hundred or so bicycles that school boys and girls used to cycle to school. In those days the Union Bus Company ran a limited school bus service from around the town to school and back using at most two buses. Even most teachers either walked to school from the Government Housing Quarters near the Ulu Muar Club , or rode bicycles to school. There were only a few staff who had cars and a 3 place shed near the school canteen was where they parked their cars. Some parents had their children driven to schools in their own cars.



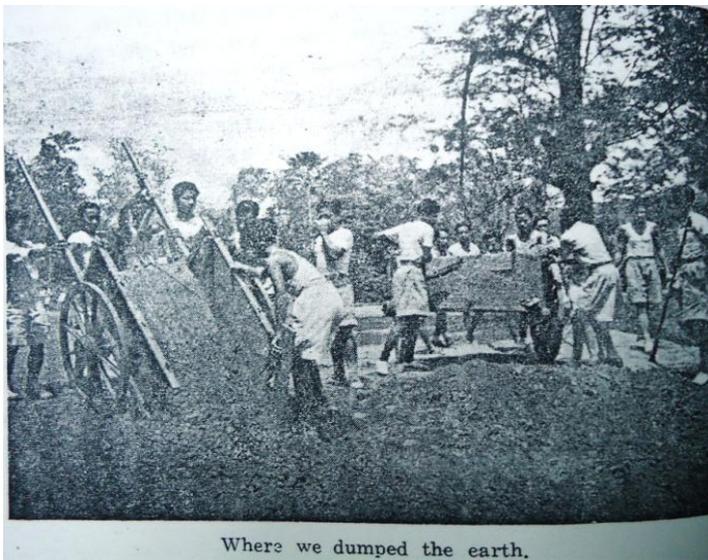
The TMS Gates through which many an illustrious son of KP passed and which was strictly closed by Prefects at 7.30 am to catch late comers, to be reported to the Discipline master for Detention Class.



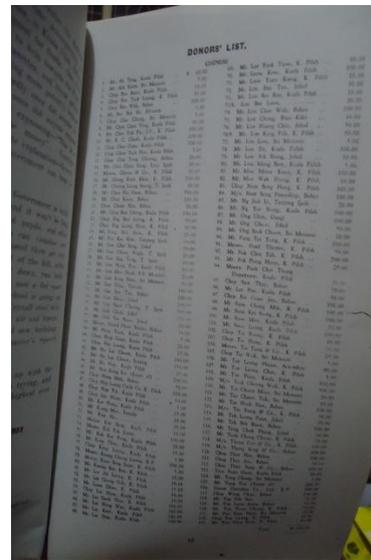
The Thatched class rooms of the old wooden primary school behind the present police station was closed and students moved to new asbestos roofed wooden classrooms next to the TMS Malay Boys' Hostel around 1950. But this was not enough for the ever larger enrolment to TMS. For lack of ready funds a Public Subscription block of classrooms were built next to the TMS School hall on a hillside and linked by a steep set of steps to road level. On its other end it linked with the asbestos roofed classrooms build by government funds.



Public Subscription Block with 3 classrooms 1952 School boys working on clearing land for the block



Where we dumped the earth.



Instead of PE (Physical Education) school boys were asked to level the ground to help in the building of the new Public subscription block. The earth was removed on carts – one of which seen above was actually a disused hearse !!

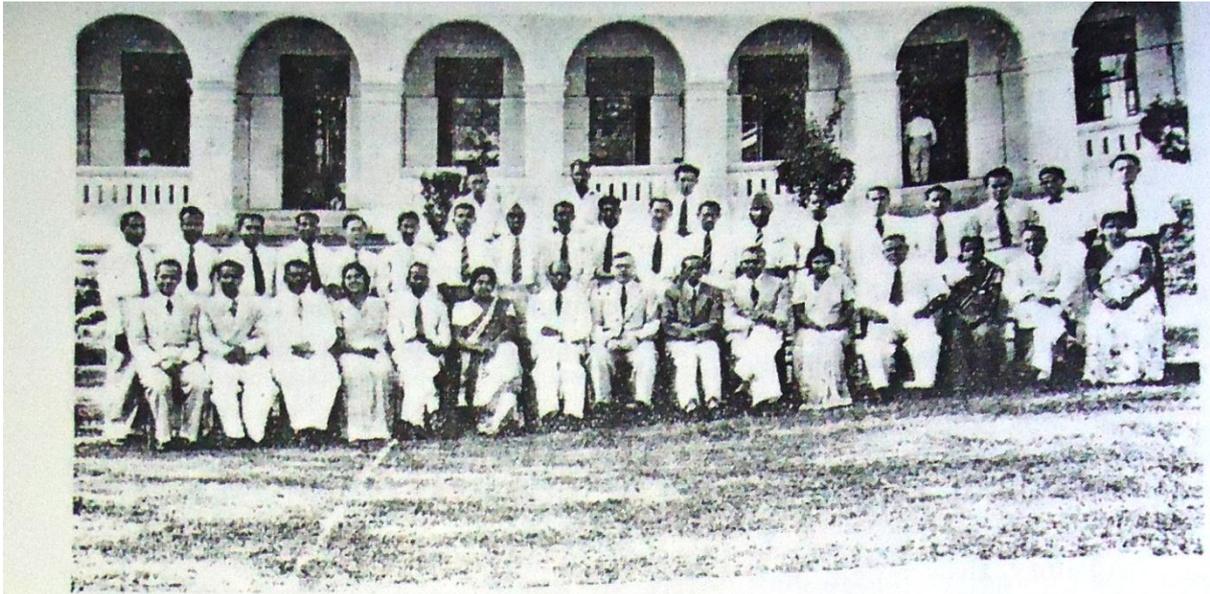


The Public Subscription Block is no more and replaced by a PWD built 3 storey block



TMS Speech Day with headmaster Mr M A Ogle leading guests to Boys' Hostel 1951

The first Speech day was held in 1938 and attended by His Highness Yang di-Pertuan Besar and Her Highness Tunku Ampuan of NS, Mr JG Cowgill the British resident, Mr H R Cheeseman the inspector of English schools and dignitaries of the community in Kuala Pilah including Tengku Nassir, Tengku Ahmadku Tengku Kahar, Dr Lyons, Dr Rasanayagam and Mr Muttu Ramalingam. The district officer Captain E E Pengilly and the headmaster Mr. JG Gurney were present to receive their Highnesses



STAFF 1951.

Head Master. Mr. M. Ogle M.A. (Oxon)

- | | | |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------|---------------------------------------------|
| 1. Mr. T. Mailvahanan | (N. C. Trained) | |
| 2. Mr. P. Gunaratnam | (Raffles Diploma) | To be transferred to K.G.V.
from 1.1.52. |
| 3. Mr. V. Murugasu | - do - | |
| 4. Mr. Paul Asirvadam | (N. C. Trained) | |
| 5. T. Syed Jong | - do - | |
| 6. Mr. S. Ponniah | - do - | |
| 7. Mr. George Ung Bcon Guan | (Raffles Diploma) | |
| 8. Mrs. K. Asirvadam | (N. C. Trained) | |
| 9. Miss M. Sarojini Devi | (Raffles Diploma) | |
| 10. Mr. P. Selvaratnam | (N. C. Trained) | |
| 11. Mr. S. Chelliah | - do - | |
| 12. Che Abd. Karim b. Ineh | - do - | |
| 13. Mr. W. Jesudasan | - do - | |
| 14. Mr. E. Paramasivam | - do - | |
| 15. Mr. T. W. D'Cruz | - do - | |
| 16. Mr. Lim Chin Aik | - do - | |
| 17. Che Ishak b. Meon | - do - | |
| 18. Che Kamarudin b. Adb.
Rahman | - do - | |

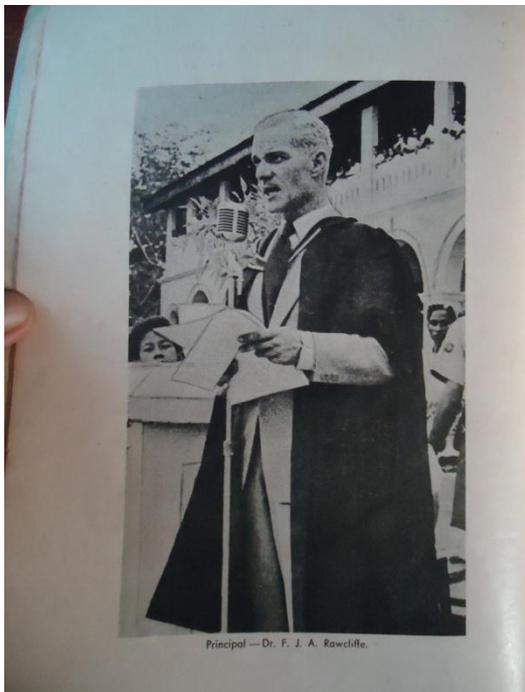
TMS PRINCIPALS in the 50s



Mr H G Clarke



Mr Miller



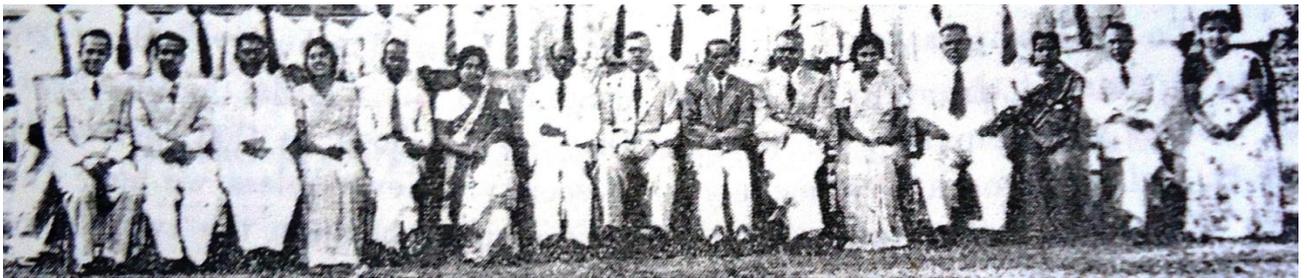
Dr Rawcliffe



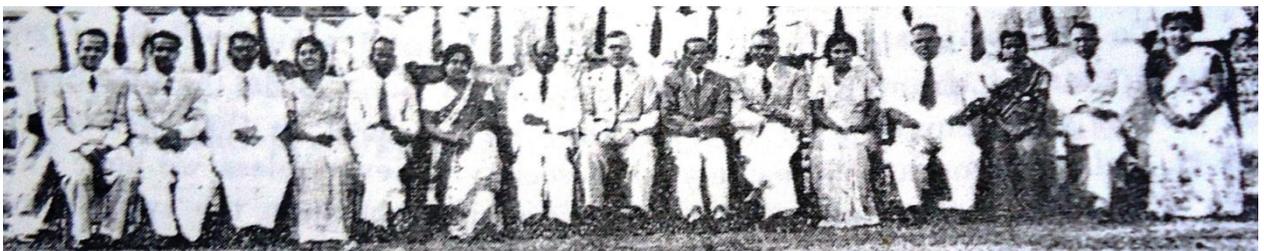
Mr Mc Cumskey



THE STAFF OF TMS 1951



Senior Teachers with Principal Mr Ogle flanked by Mr Gunaratnam left And Tunku Syed Jong right



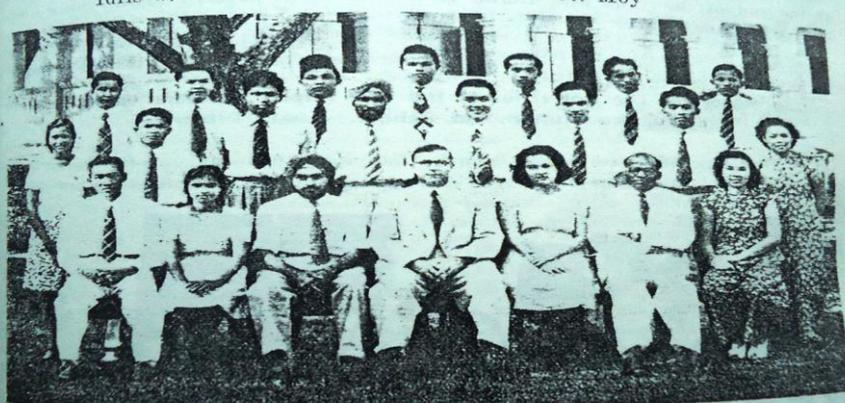
Some of the senior teachers identified from this 1951TMS staff picture

- 1 ?
- 2.SELVARATNAM
- 3 Paramasivam
- 4 Savithri Devi

- 5 Murugesu
- 6 Mrs Paul Asirvatham
- 7 Gunaratnam
- 8 Ogle HM
- 9 Tunku Syed Jong
- 10 Paul Aasirvatham
- 11 Sarojnji Devi
- 12 Ponniah
- 13 Narayani

SCHOOL PREFECTS 1951.

Head Boy	- - -	L. Pritam Singh
Head Girl	- - -	Ng Khin Ying
Boys		
Mustafa b. Amin		Ismail b. Ali
Tahir b. Majid		Lee Ting Teong
Asidin b. Ali		Jalaluddin b. Idris
Mohd. Nor b. Hamid		Gan Kim Wan
Lee Geok Hoe		
Rajagopal		Girls
Idris b. Salleh		Elizabeth Chacko
Mokhtar b. Yunus		M. Annaletchumy
Idris b. Lassim		Lee Kam Chee
		Ho Sit Moy



SCHOOL PREFECTS 1951.

The nomination of 16 new Prefects to fill the usual vacancies at the end of each year took place on 12th January. Pritam Singh and Ng Khin Ying having been selected as Head Boy and Head Girl. Idris b. Salleh was nominated Deputy Head Prefect, and Mustafa b. Amin was appointed Head Prefect of the Hostel.

The Prefects' Board met regularly, and a Prefects' Court was established for investigating and dealing with minor offences. New Prefects' Badges became available about the middle of the year. Prefects wear them at all times, so that they are encouraged to feel that they are on duty both inside and outside the school.



TMS Std II class 1950 with Miss Lomas and Mr William Jesudason The new class rooms of 1950 were wooden buildings with asbestos roofs that were modern compared to the primary one class behind the present police station that had thatched roof but much cooler and safer .



The new training course in Kirkby, UK organised by the colonial British government was a welcome effort to improve the teaching skills of TMS and numerous other teachers in Malaya. The First batch went in 1951 and included 5 TMS teachers (above) This was followed by more teachers in later years being sent to Brinsford Lodge also in UK



THE SCHOOL SENIOR AND JUNIOR RELAY TEAMS.

The following are the records established this year on our S

Day:—

1. One Mile	-	-	Boys "A"	Rahim bin Ahmad	5m. 7.2 sec
2. 880 yards	-	-	.. "A"	Rahim bin Ahmad	2m. 13.2 sec
3. High Jump	-	-	.. "A"	Muhidin bin Ismail	5'5"
4. Long Jump	-	-	.. "A"	Rahim bin Ahmad	20'5"
5. 100 Yards	-	-	.. "B"	Yap Hock Leong	11.4 sec.
6. 120 Yards Hurdles	-	-	.. "B"	Baharudin b. Ali	19 sec.
7. Putting the Shot	-	-	.. "B"	Yap Hock Leong	32'4 1/2"
8. Inter-School Relay	-	-	.. "B"	K. G. V. Seremban	49 sec.
9. 220 yards	-	-	.. "C"	Ng Ah Tang	28.4 sec.
10. 100 yards	-	-	.. "C"	Ng Ah Tang	12.4 sec.
11. Long Jump	-	-	.. "C"	Ng Ah Tang	16'1"

A historic picture of relay teams that included Malaya's first medallist at Asian Games Rahim bin Ahmad of TMS in his younger days . TMS Rugby and Hockey teams won many games

girls had had no opportunity of meeting any outside team. We thank all referees who gave us their valuable service. We also wish a prosperous future to those players who will be leaving us this year. We congratulate Harcharan Singh, Pritam Singh and Zainudin bin Ariffin for being awarded "Colours" this season and also Idis bin Salleh and Mustapha bin Amin for being selected for the Combined Schools' Hockey XI.

THE SCHOOL HOCKEY 2nd XI

The following are the results of the Inter School Club matches:

Teams	Venue	Result
School XI Vs. King's Own Gurkha XI	Home	Won 4-0
School XI Vs. King's Own Gurkha XI	Home	Won 2-0
School XI Vs. Kuala Pilah District XI	Home	Lost 0-2
School XI Vs. Anglo Chinese School, Seremban	Home	Won 2-0
School XI Vs. C.E.S. Batu Pahat	Batu Pahat	Lost 1-2
School XI Vs. High School, Malacca	Malacca	Lost 0-4
School XI Vs. St. Paul's Inst. Seremban	Seremban	Lost 0-3
School XI Vs. A.C.S. Seremban	Seremban	Won 5-0

53

THE SCHOOL RUGGER 2nd XV.

Lastly we thank Mr. Lawton, Major Smith and various other gentlemen for having spared some of their precious time in either coaching the teams or refereeing the games.

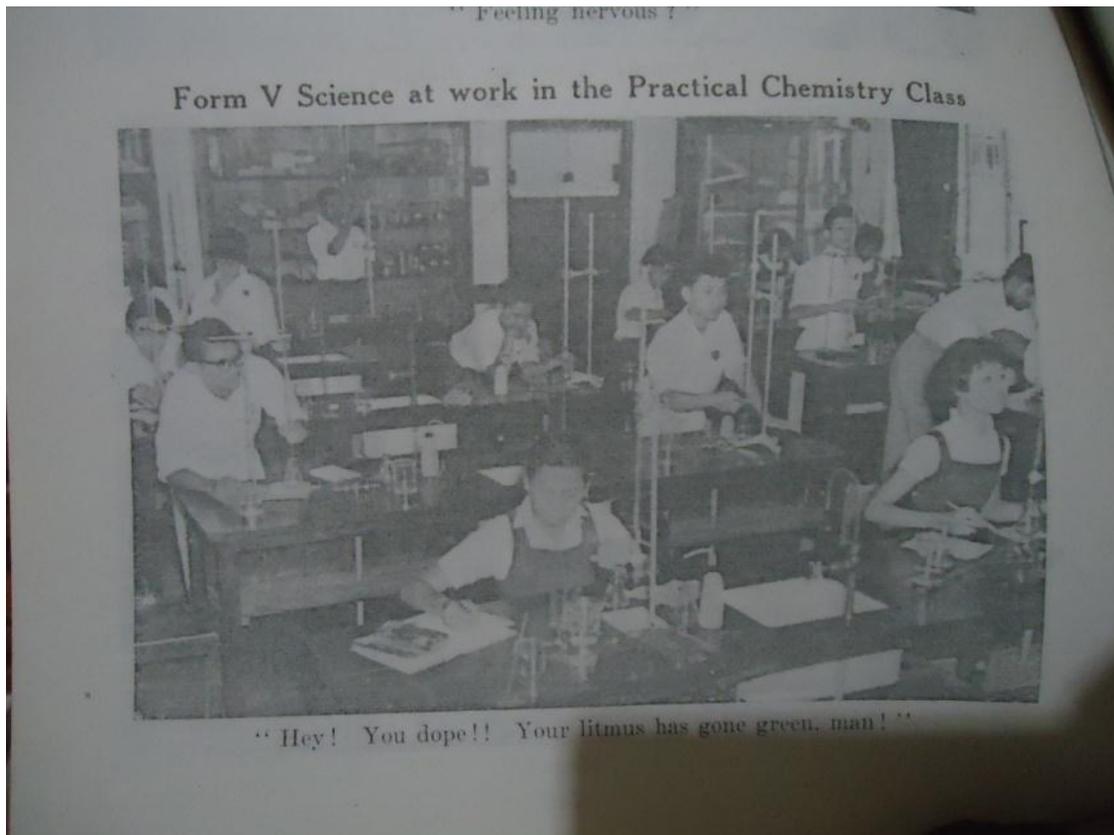
The School 1st and 2nd XV played the following games:-

Inter-Clubs	Home	Result
School 1st XV vs. K.P. XV	Home	Drawn 5-5
School 1st XV vs. K.P. XV	Home	Lost 5-4
School 1st XV vs. K.P. Bahau XV	Away	Lost 10-10
School 1st XV vs. Green Howards XV	Home	Won 11-10
School 1st XV vs. 12/18 Hussars XV	Home	Lost 8-10
School 1st XV vs. N.S. All Blues XV	Home	Lost 8-10
School 2nd XV vs. Green Howards XV	Home	Won 11-10
School 1st XV vs. C.E.S. Batu Pahat 1st XV	Away	Lost 10-11
School 1st XV vs. High School, Malacca 1st XV	Away	Lost 8-10
School 1st XV vs. K.G.V., Seremban 1st XV	Away	Won 10-11
School 2nd XV vs. K.G.V., Seremban 2nd XV	Away	Won 10-11
School 1st XV vs. V.I., Kuala Lumpur 1st XV	Home	Won 10-11
School 2nd XV vs. V.I., Kuala Lumpur 1st XV	Away	Won 10-11
School 2nd XV vs. V.I., Kuala Lumpur 2nd XV	Away	Won 10-11
School 1st XV vs. High School, Malacca 1st XV	Home	Won 10-11
School 1st XV vs. K.G.V., Seremban 1st XV	Home	Won 10-11
School 2nd XV vs. K.G.V., Seremban 2nd XV	Home	Won 10-11
School 1st XV vs. Clifford School, K.Lipis 1st XV	Away	Won 10-11



The 3 room science block of 1955 has been demolished for a 3 storey block next to TMS gate

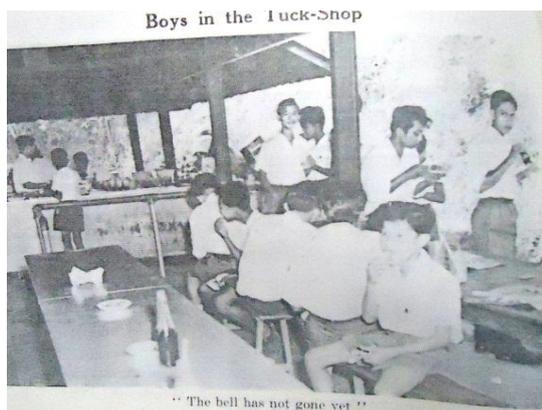
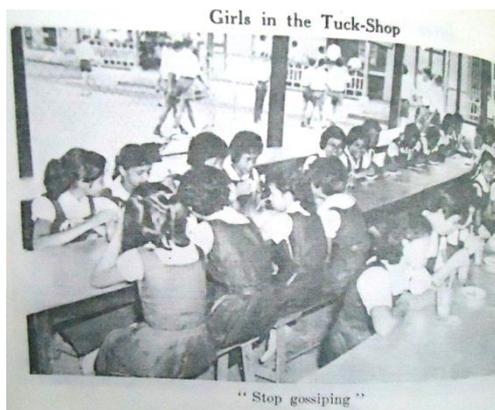
Until 1958 TMS had only offered General Science as Form 5 subjects. But things were changing fast in a science led world and Pure Science classes were started in 1958 in the newly built classes in a slight depression next to the entrance to TMS by the main gate. It had state of the art Science labs with 3 separate classrooms for Physics near the gate, followed by Chemistry in the centre and Biology at the end next to a separate two room form 5 classroom block specially for Form 5 Science and Arts students. The Biology teacher was Mr Sham Singh an expatriate from India who was the first ever teacher in TMS with a Masters in Biology.



TMS School Hall where so much history was made is still there. It was used for school debates, film shows, Prize giving and School days. School assembly was too large to be accommodated in the small hall by 1955. The school assembly was held in the padang and the headmaster, teachers stood on the road in front of the main building with watchful Prefects kept vigil to catch late comers.



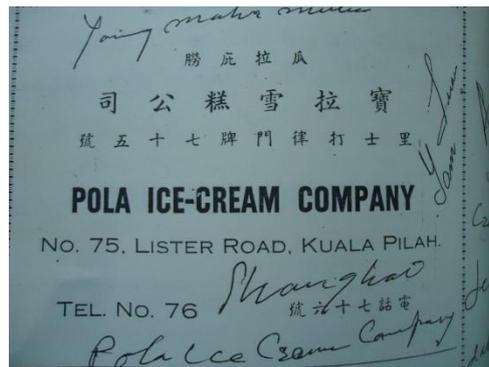
Bell and Howell 16 mm Projector that was in use for school film shows advertised in TMS Annual



Girl students at school tuck shop and Boys at School tuck shop in the 1950s



The School Canteen has not changed much except in price. 3 cents bought a glass of Horlicks or plate of mamee goreng or rice and curry pre war. A new cake called Femi(forflour, eggs and milk) was introduced pre war. Mr Foo .Kee Heong the post war Tuck shop owner seen on left of lower picture with former students Dr M Kumaradeva and Dr M Ganeshadeva on a 1975 visit to TMS. Tuck shop.



Tunku Syed Jong's house and Mr and Mrs Paul Asirvatham's house are still there and well kept at the far end of the school hostel and facing the Padang. Both were revered teachers of some of Malaysia's renowned sons and daughters of the 1950s. Below TMS 2012.



The school assembly was held every Monday morning with HM and teachers lined on the road facing students in the field by classes



The Tunku Kurshiah School and the Zaaba School are part of a huge complex of schools now



The Bungalow in spacious grounds on Hill Road still remains designated as the District Officer's house. Nearby is the old TMS Headmaster's house and the Gurney Scout camp.



The road to Gurney Scout camp had a government bungalow which is now a Drug rehabilitation centre.



The Gurney Scout camp named after Sir Henry Gurney the High Commissioner of Malaya (who was assassinated on the Fraser Hill Road to Kuala Kubu road) was cut out of the slope of the DO's hill. It was opened in 1953 or so. It had a large parade ground and small lots for pitching tents, a bath and toilet and a large covered building as a indoor sleeping area in case of rain and used as an activity training room. A smaller building was used as a Scout masters' room There was a couple of buildings lower down for storing of tents, cooking utensils, kerosene lamps, ropes and gardening tools. The picture above is that of a morning parade at the site of the camp fire the night before with tents visible on the upper right .



A 1950s picture of Cubs of TMS



A part of the large wooden zinc roofed hall in Gurney camp is seen in this picture of a tree being cut down safely without damaging the building - as part of the Venturer badge training supervised by Mr Sebastian a Dental assistant who was an avid scout master. Once a scout always a scout he used to say. Another enthusiastic scout master was Mr Terence D' cruz a teacher in TMS.



Mr Sebastian extreme right with scouts after tree was successfully felled Among those recognised are front row from left, Yasvantrai,(with rope) Tan Meng hee, Chong Chon Sin, Shanmugam. Back row from left Hassan Nordin, Selvamanickam and Chew Hon Nam

The scouts held scouting activities like knotting, marching, tracking in TMS grounds but the best part of their scouting lives was on camping days in Gurney camp off Seremban road or on cycling or road treks out of town or the occasional jamborees. Below are some of the 1950s scouting activities .



Cooking on home made stove at Gurney camp



Venturer's Badge march to Seremban at mile 14



Venturers Badge scouts cycling to Tampin mile 11



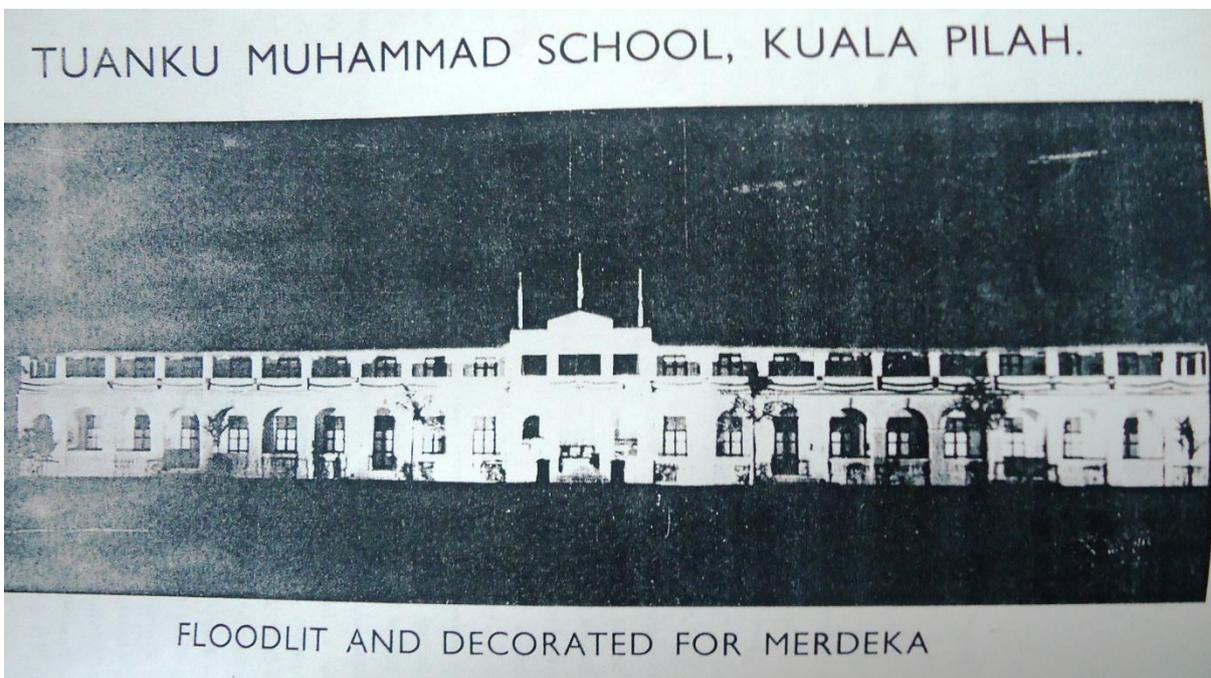
KP 3rd Troop Scouts at Sheppard Camp S' ban



KP scout troop at Scout Meeting of Negeri Scouts in Seremban with scout master Terence D' Cruz

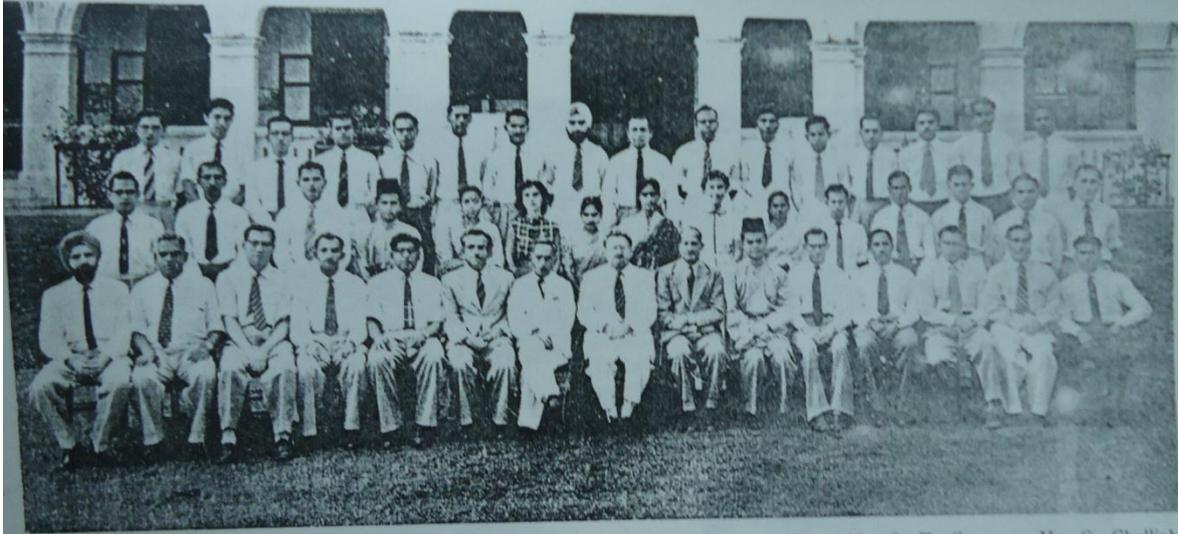


Kuala Pilah Scouts with Mr D' Cruz at Telok Bahang Centenoree 1957 August



The Residents and students decorated the town to welcome the Independence of Malaya from British colonial rule. TMS had a lantern parade and floodlit the school. for a week in 1957.

STAFF 1957

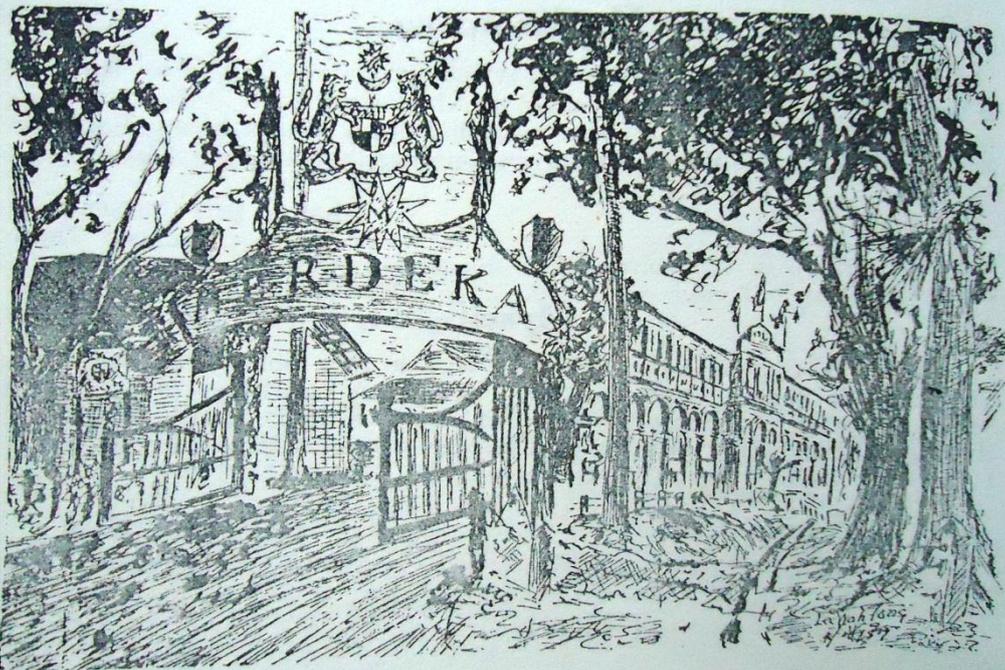


Sitting (Left to Right):—Mr. Sham Singh, Mr. S. Ponniah, Mr. Chin Chin Ngan, Mr. S. T. Gnanam, Mr. S. Chelliah, Mr. P. Selvaratnam, Tengku Syed Jong, Mr. J. A. McCumiskey (Principal), Mr. S. Dharmalingam, Che Ishak bin Meon, Mr. T. W. D'Cruz, Mr. P. Subramaniam, Che Mohd. Nor, Mr. K. Ponnudurai, Mr. C. G. Menon.

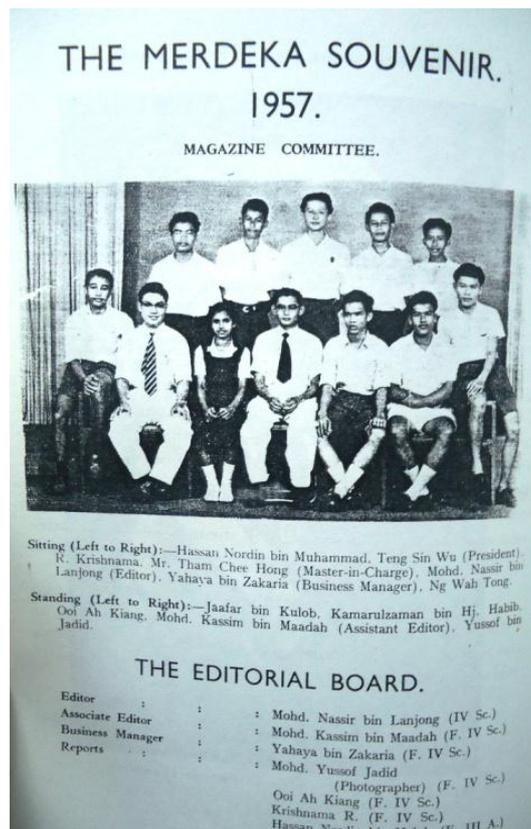
Middle Row (Left to Right):—Mr. Leong Soon Wah, Mr. W. Jesudasan, Mr. P. Phalasundram, Che Zarim bin Samah (Lab. assistant), Miss C. Sugirthamalar, Mrs. B. Rodrigues, Miss P. Rajeswari, Miss Rukmani Devi, Miss Ho Choy Moy, Miss T. Siriawathie, Che Israni bin Yusof (Lab. assistant), Mr. Karthigasu, Che Kamarulzaman bin Bador, Che Mohd. Nor bin Manaf, Che Nor bin Abdul Rahman.

Back Row (Left to Right):—Mr. Tham Chee Hong, Mr. Woo Ah Kow, Mr. Lai Sow Khuen, Mr. André Luis, Mr. Tony Theseira, Mr. V. Kanagasundram, Mr. Dilip Ghosh, Mr. L. Pritam Singh, Che Hashim bin Wahab, Mr. K. Tharmalingam, Mr. M. R. Skandadeya, Che Zakaria bin Daud, Che Othman bin Harun, Mr. P. Ganesan, Mr. F. Yawarajah, Mr. P. Appukutten.

Our School Decorated for Merdeka.



by: LEE WAH TONG,
Form IV Science.



The Government Tamil School is just visible on extreme left of picture next to the Bo tree in this 1970s picture of the Kanthasamy kovil whose origins date back to at least 1896



The site of the old Tamil School in a simple wooden building is now part of the Kanthasamy Hindu Temple grounds. The new Tamil school is in the Government Quarters area between Chung Hwa School and the town and fairly near the Hindu temple and fronting the padang – that fortunately still remains. Chung Hwa School has expanded beyond belief from a wooden building to the huge main building that is there today with many ancillary buildings



The old Chung Hwa School on left and new, in background

CHAPTER 10

A TALE OF 2 HOSPITALS



An imposing view of the Nursing college where the Women's Hospital stood

Kuala Pilah had a unique distinction of having had 2 hospitals one for males at the beginning and right of Jalan Tampin in the town and a Women's hospital at the hilltop on the left of Jalan Melang. It is not clear why this was so but after 1960 the women's hospital was turned into an Assistant Nurses training centre and ceased functioning as a hospital. In the 21st Century the same was demolished and a huge College of Nursing with a 10 storey hostel built in the same place. The present Hospital Kuala Pilah is further along Jalan Melang on the way to Seremban.



The KP Men's Hospital entrance from Tampin road



The old hospital for men was a traditional wooden complex of wards with French windows or swiveling doors and were laid out in a row and connected by long corridors



Today the whole Men's Hospital is a complex for ambulatory (outpatients) care. The hospital of old was a 150 bed hospital that pre was largely run by Dressers or HA's (Hospital Assistants) or male nurses, with one doctor- when one was available. The British doctors were followed by locals with LMS qualifications from Singapore or Ceylon. The term Dresser was in vogue then to describe the assistants who did the dressing of wounds. There were also attendants who had limited training and with HA's taking charge of wards the attendants became dressers stitching wounds and dressing them in a small theatre near the hospital entrance. It was unsterile by today's standards but was all there was. The death rate from such diseases as typhoid and pneumonia in the era of sulphonamides was high and being admitted to hospital was indicative of near death illnesses.



The Health Clinic in the grounds of the old KP Men's hospital

But the area around the hospital has undergone a major change. It used to have well over 30 government bungalow houses called Government Quarters housing government officers, hospital assistants and teachers for the most part. Some where in the past 20 years it has been completely cleared of all these houses to reveal a wide area of emptiness facing the still functional Tamil school and the sports field. The famous Ulu Muar Club at the top end of the government quarters leading to the town proper is swallowed up in a jungle of creepers as are the few more government houses nearby. Only the old tennis court , now a futsal court is there, and the alleyway between it and the club remains.



These were once filled with rows upon rows of wooden government houses raised above ground (picture below) and housing families of teacher, Hospital assistants and civil servants now lie cleared and empty. Generations of school children of TMS, TKS and Chung Hwa school played with their friends in the Government Quarters area as they were called. The changing times and prosperity has led to more people owning houses, renting more modern houses rather than staying in wooden Government Quarters with numerous complaints of need for repairs. Abandoned they became dens for vagabonds and were overgrown with creepers and plants. (see below)





The old Tennis court of Ulu Muar Club, where one armed General Bourne played tennis and the creeper covered remains of the Ulu Muar Club and another government quarters decayed and finally demolished. From records in newspapers of 1891 there was a club – presumably the one that was named the Ulu Muar Club in later years in Kuala Pilah. Many reports of tennis and other tournaments took place in the club and nearby Padang can be read in archives of the newspapers of the 1930s. Further along the same lane leads to the town seen in the picture below past the old site of Malay Girls' school formerly Japanese School where they dished out green peas porridge.



EPILOGUE



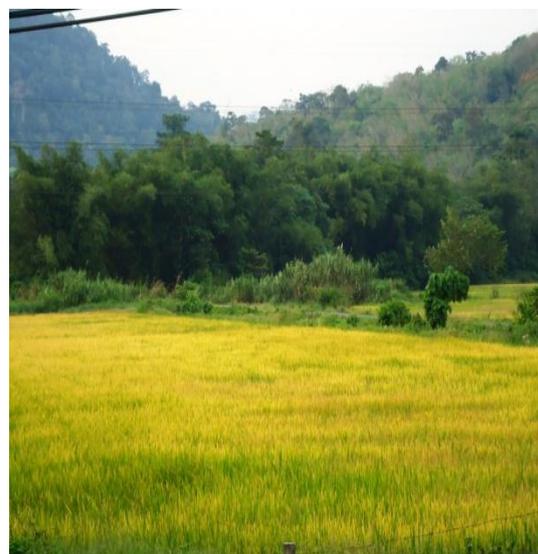
The vast Government Quarters area was cleared around 2011 – for more “progress’

WHAT NEXT For Kuala Pilah ?

From Tin mining town to padi planting town to rubber estates town to transit town for Pahang timber? Perhaps an Educational Hub for the state ? We already have a UiTM campus, a MARA Junior College, a Nursing College and IMU uses the KP hospital for teaching medical students and there are fully 5 large schools in KP. A state University perhaps ? Who knows. Industries have not done well. A new highway might take off as an entrance to the East Coast now that the Bukit Putus tortuous winding roads and perhaps the ghost of

Bukit Putus has been put to rest - and the Muar River silted up long ago . There is no need for a rail line, no need for Bukit Penarik, not even a Single Pin airstrip - just a 4 lane highway ?

But Please do not destroy the tranquillity and peace that is Kuala Pilah, our home !





The Kuala Pilah Incinerator was the at end of Melang road as was the facility for washing of latrine buckets that collected nightsoil, house by house, in lorries very early in the morning . The incinerator was a grey tower but when abandoned in favour of land fills for disposal of town waste, and the eye sore tower was decorated with multi coloured slogans . The main entry to KP from Seremban was diverted from the old to the new by extending Melang Road to its present junction with the old Seremban Road at the 3rd milestone. The now busy Melang Road planned in the 1950s to be the entry into KP from Seremban, with so many shops, housing estates a hotel and the new modular hospital are all built in the 1980s onwards. In the process the Women's Hospital was turned into an assistant Nurses training school and then completely demolished to build the Nurses Training College. The incinerator has been demolished (incinerated)

Unlike the new road connection to Kuala Pilah, the entry to KP from Bahau and Tampin remain much the same though more developed.

About the Author and his family in Kuala Pilah.

Dr M Parameshvara Deva was the last son of his parents Mr Muttu-Ramalingam and Mrs Sellapakiam Muttu Ramalingam. Mr Muttu Ramalingam was born in Kuala Kubu Bahru in 1899 to his parents who migrated from Ceylon. His Father Mr s Ramasamy was the post master in Kelang in 1914 in the post office that stands (modernised) on the same place. Mr Muttu Ramalingam graduated in Law and practiced as a lawyer in Kuala Pilah (196 Jalan Tung Yen) for 40 years from 1930. He served in numerous town committees pre war, post war and well into the independent years of the country in Kuala Pilah including the Town Board, TMS Board, Scout Committee, Air raid Precaution as warden, and Sanitary Board . He was elected Hon. Rotarian the week before his passing away on 9 May 1970

Parameshvara Deva studied in the Tamil school near the Kanthasamy Kovil, and later TMS from its Primary school near the present police station near the first TMS building and later at the TMS main building on Tampin Road and spent many happy weekends camping in Gurney camp off Seremban Road and next to the KP airfield. In fact in the TMS magazine of 1958 he wrote an article on Kuala Pilah Magnified in which he suggested that one could fly into Kuala Pilah by single engined Pioneer aircraft courtesy of RAF. He used to cycle around the town to school and with the scouts went as far as Seremban, Tampin and Bahau.

Many of these boyhood adventures are nostalgically re-lived in this brief account of the KP of 1950s



Grand father and Fathe centre of Picture , Klang Post Officer 1914

