

LIVING ON THE

HILL

Mid Year Issue 2010

Residential Renaissance

**BOOMING
BUKIT**

MY BT

Colonial musings

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Holes & Drains

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DEFINITELY

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SAFETY FIRST

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BUKIT TUNKU
RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION

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THE PRESIDENT SPEAKS

Muthanna

Dear BTRA Members & Neighbours,

The overall response to our inaugural issue of this newsletter has been very encouraging. Neighbours whom I had not met before sparked off conversations by referring to our newsletter and continuing with expressions of interest to be members of BTRA and become closer to our community. All great stuff! Paul, our Editor is now fully motivated to publish this issue having now realised that at his age, he can still unveil hidden talents...

Residents will have noticed incidents of soil erosion on some of our slopes (which we have many). One can't help but wonder if these have been triggered by the various pockets of redevelopment of properties on The Hill. In recent years, we have seen a number of properties change ownership and understandably the new owners redevelop their properties. The Committee has always been supportive of these changes as we think that this has resulted in less vacant properties on The Hill as many of the new owners occupy the homes themselves. The new homes also enhance the appearance of our neighbourhood. But what causes concern to the Committee is when the property is overbuilt as these may adversely affect our environment. There have been several occasions when the Committee has questioned the Datuk Bandar if the existing laws and regulations have been complied with eg. when the Committee comes across 4-storey structures (seen from below slopes) when application may have been made for fewer stories (seen from ground level). In their earnestness to maximise their land area, residents may have forgotten the risk they expose themselves by over-stressing their slopes.

The Committee has been generally in support of the KL Plan vis-à-vis The Hill. We have therefore been anxious for the KL Plan to be approved as law as quickly as possible. Until then, all of us at The Hill are at the mercy of the authorities' interpretation of the existing guidelines. And some interpretations have raised eyebrows in the past. So lets hope that the KL Plan is gazetted soon.

BTRA has been fortunate to have a good working relationship with DBKL. Members and neighbours will have seen the Newsflash in the previous issue about the Wall of Shame. Residents nearby the affected area were very concerned about the obvious danger they were facing. It was the good relationship with DBKL that managed to activate DBKL to take quick action to address the problem. We hope that those affected neighbours who are not already members of BTRA will take equally quick action to join BTRA! As they say, membership has its benefits...

As most of everything outside our walls falls under the jurisdiction of DBKL, BTRA also met with DBKL to discuss the deplorable physical state of our neighbourhood. In response DBKL officials toured The Hill with BTRA committee members to see for themselves the condition of The Hill. We hope to see action taken soon to improve areas of concern which BTRA has highlighted to DBKL.

Our membership has been increasing steadily. Our hope is that all residents become members. Obviously this will provide BTRA with the necessary clout when it needs to raise any issues. So I hope that members will persuade residents who aren't yet members to join us soon The Committee does not want to spend all its time dealing with development and environmental issues. We hope that our social activities will take equal importance. So keep a lookout for news on this and hopefully we become a true neighbourhood.

Keep Watching This Space!

A note from the editor



Well how nice! Our second issue. Bigger and brighter; we're now up to 20 pages. There are bits from our usual updates and regulars; Kat, Marcia and Tee Jin. We should take particular note of the team's efforts in having the infamous 'Wall of Shame' problem solved. Sybas! We also have an interesting look at the gossip mill on The Hill from new contributor Rina and some ideas on stress relief from another newcomer, Jennifer Chan.

And there's some roving reporting from my good friend Oh Teik Tatt looking at both Fire and Ice. And 'The Andrew Barber Clan' wax sentimental about living in their old British Government pile. And Lorien again finds often overlooked beauty on the Hill. But mostly you will notice a real emphasis on property in this issue; John Smurthwaite has written a most thought provoking bit on the sudden building boom. Says a lot for the attraction of living on the hill and says a lot for property prices. Jed Reality have also aired their opinion which, while guarded still seems very optimistic. So the Hill says goodbye to the recession!

Finally I must thank our new advertisers; Crown, Jed and others (as well as our old standby supporter, Sid's Pub). I'm sure they will benefit from the exposure.

So look out for the next issue and thanks for all your support. And remember if you have any dirty water you need to get off your chest, this is the place to do it.

Love

Credits

Design. The Art Shop Sdn Bhd. www.artshop-kl.com
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KUALA LUMPUR, Bukit Tunku Residents' Association No.
Pendafatar 1443/92 (Wilayah Persekutuan)

What's Going On

Marcia Kok & Kat Khalid



Back in Nov 2009 we had written and advised JKA of the two areas of work in Bukit Tunku which are most pressing – upgrading of drains and roads. The following points were put forward and noted by DBKL:-

1. Some of the drains have not been upgraded since they were first built, which would have been more than 30 years ago. They are small and narrow and inadequate for present day use.
2. Some upgrading of drains was done at Jln Bukit Tunku and Jln Girdle one and a half years ago but the quality of work done was so bad at Jln Girdle that shortly thereafter, the drains caved in at 3 places at Jln Girdle; this has however now been rectified. At Jln Bukit Tunku, the contractor took off even before completion of the project as a result of which part of the drain from house no 35 downwards is new whilst the drains further uphill are old and cracked and even broken off. In essence, selection and supervision by DBKL of its contractors is poor.
3. Most roads are in poor condition and ad-hoc patch ups no longer help.
4. As in the case of drains, recent retarring and repair of road shoulders were so badly done that hardly a year later, the retarred portions are now again riddled with potholes and in an even worse condition than the untouched-up original portion. This is unforgivable and again points to poor workmanship and poor supervision by DBKL.
5. DBKL noted that their budget was limited in respect to the work requested. Nevertheless, they agreed to meet us on Tues 9 March for a tour of Bukit Tunku/Taman Duta to note the areas of priority. It is to be noted that drains should be upgraded before roads in a proper flow of work.
6. We suggested that a schedule be given for an upgrading programme over the next few years so that we could keep our residents informed accordingly.

	Roads	Drains
Persiaran Bkt Tunku		From junction of Jln BT to hse no 16 – new; the rest are old and narrow
Tepian Tunku		All covered and blocked up at end of road
Jln Bukit Tunku	1. Potholes near Sri Tunku condo. Because of sharp turn, there have been repeated repairs – suggest concrete? 2. Hole at hse no 35. Convex mirror s/b installed at that turn. 3. Uneven surface and damaged road shoulder – suggest resurface	1. Drains half finished upto house no 35. 2. Broken drains opp no 35. 3. Project @ junction of Langgak / Jln BT has closed off drain. 4. 2008 constructed drain broken off @ junction of Girdle
Kelok Tunku	Road shoulder done in 2008 already in poor condition and riddled with potholes	Drain recently constructed outside no 4 is broken
Liku Tunku	Road shoulder done in 2008 already in poor condition and riddled with potholes	Drain @ junction of Liku/Psrn Tmn Tunku clogged
Langgak Tunku		Sections of drains not flowing – From no 27 to junction of Jln BT From no 9 to junction of Dalamam
Girdle	Holes around no 18	Drain not flowing at culvert at house no 3 Landslip at wide turn
Cerunan Tunku	Uneven	Cracked and broken near junction of Dalamam
Dalamam Tunku	Uneven with many potholes	
Pinggiran Tunku	Worst in BT – offroad condition	Fully blocked and clogged up at house no 10 and around ongoing construction sites
Selekoh Tunku	Road shoulder damaged at junction	Narrow and small and clogged up near junction of Pinggiran
Dataran Tunku		Not flowing opp hse no 4
Lembah Tunku		Drain cover opp no 1 has dropped in
Lrg Lembah Tunku		Drains not flowing and always smells
Simpangan Tunku		Closed up at no 6
Tinggian Tunku	Uneven	
Lurah Tunku	Uneven; damaged road shoulders	V small and narrow

On March 9th, this year, we took DBKL for a walkabout round the Hill. All in all a very positive event.

We toured the whole of BT, took photos and identified the following (see attached table) with coloured sections indicating areas of priority. We did not have time to cover Taman Duta on this occasion and will make a separate appointment for that purpose. Based on accompanying table, En Musa will analyse and revert to us as follows:-

1. Small jobs which can be handled by DBKL inhouse eg minor repair work
2. Bigger projects which will have to be outsourced to external contractors with tenders called eg upgrading of whole stretches of drains
3. Areas where JKA will have to work hand in hand with Jabatan Seni Taman to determine if drains are not flowing because of clogged up vegetation/rubbish or because of structural problems.

En Musa will also give us an indication of what can take place first and what will require more time and an overall time frame for the works to be carried out.

Naturally we will continue to follow-up. But we all feel this is a very positive step forward.



KL City Plan 2020

Latest check with the Local Plan Dept revealed that the KL City Plan 2020 is still under review by the Mayor's office, after which it will be presented to the Ministry of Federal Territories.

The Mayor, in a press statement of 19 January 2010 (Malay Mail) said that the plan is expected to be gazetted by the middle of 2010, and will become the blueprint for development in the city right up to the year 2020.

We're keeping track of its progress.

Telco Towers

Celcom Tower at Langgak Tunku and Asiaspace Tower at Pinggiran Tunku – Proximity to Residents Houses.

Brief history – DBKL and MCMC (Malaysian Communications & Multimedia Commission) gave approval for the structures and has reassured us that the towers are 'safe' (www.rfrad.gov.my) and that approval was given as residents had complained of poor reception in our area. The two locations chosen were to cover the "blind spots".

However, residents complaints on the towers not complying to Ministry of Housing guidelines were not looked into.

This is in relation to "falling objects" safety issues ie Minimum distance from Tower of 45 meter height and below to a Residential House is 20 meters. Tower above 45 meter meanwhile should be 30 meters or more from a House.

We have lodged another report, this time with the DBKL Hotline (Ref No 8133 29.03.10). The feedback received was that there is another agency that the Telcos need to apply to, called the WPI, a one-stop centre for Telco towers infrastructure in KL. Apparently CELCOM received DBKL and MCMC approval, but did not apply to WPI. We're following up on this.



Dangerous exit – Langgak Tunku to Jalan Duta

DBKL has not reverted on their proposals to mitigate the situation.

Wall of shame – Dataran Tunku

Residents of Dataran Tunku can rest easy for now.

We must commend DBKL for taking swift action by issuing notices to the owners, cordoning off the area and creating 3 meter buffer zone and also monitoring the movement of the slope to prevent further disaster. DBKL staff was also stationed at the site for a number of days, plus their rescue team was on standby 24-7.

DBKL Director General Datuk Salleh Yusop took it upon himself to inspect the wall on December 16, 2009, accompanied by DBKL Public Works Director Puan Siti Saffur Mansor, DBKL staff and journalists. This illegal retaining wall received coverage in NST, Star, a few days after the visit. IKRAM, DBKL's consultant did a preliminary study and discovered that a minor land slip caused the retaining wall to collapse. Since then, a large amount of soil was removed to



alleviate pressure off the wall; the top halves of the concrete wall slabs were dismantled; and extensive slope reinforcement was done. DBKL said that the land owner would be billed for all remedial works done by DBKL.

Kongsi

No, we're not talking about Kongsi Raya or Kongsi Deepavali, but houses in Bukit Tunku and Taman Duta being used as kongsi (housing?) for construction workers. We have had to make various complaints to DBKL when neighbours see a house being used as a hostel. DBKL is monitoring our hill as we speak.

DBKL 24 hour Call Centre 1 800 88 3255

They're multi-lingual, very efficient, and professional and they do call you back as promised. Be sure to have all your facts in hand before lodging any complaints. And be sure to take down the reference number that they give you.

TV3 Show on Public Complaints

Launched on January 6, 2010, this show called Aduan Rakyat ("Public Complaints") is on air every Wednesday at 9pm. Helmed by the famed Karam Singh Walia and other well known journalists, this program aims to provide another avenue for the public to air any issues and grievances involving local councils. We have not had the honor of using this avenue just yet, but just the same, there is a complaint form on the website <http://www.tv3.com.my/aduanrakyat/> which will be addressed by the TV3 team.

Development & Planning Committee



NEWSFLASH

Fire up above



The usual calm and balmy morning air on this Monday morning was interrupted by the shriek and blaring siren of a fire engine winding its way around the Hill. It was the first of three fire engines that was looking for a house on fire in Dalaman Tunku. By the time the firemen arrived there was already a crowd outside the house as the immediate neighbours had been trying to put out the fire with extinguishers while waiting for the Fire Engines to arrive. On arrival the search for working fire hydrants was frantic as thick black smoke was billowing out of the burning house. Finally having got all the pumps and their other equipment to work the firefighters proceeded to fight the fire. Most important of all no one was injured and the initial help offered by the immediate neighbour is worth mentioning. When push comes to shove the neighbors chipped in. Good for you Glen Teh!

Oh Teik Tatt

Brunei Lot update

TO: MEMBERS OF THE BUKIT TUNKU RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION
Update on Demolition Works at Lot 9 & 19, Jalan Tun Ismail, Kuala Lumpur

Since our last update at the end of 2009, we are pleased to report that work is progressing smoothly and in accordance with Dewan Bandaraya Kuala Lumpur's (DBKL) rules and regulations. We are also pleased to report that the Contractor is on schedule to finish by 30 June 2010.

We have worked closely with residents living within the vicinity of the project site and the support extended to us in return, is much appreciated. As mentioned earlier, once the demolition exercise is completed, the piece of land will remain vacant. At the time of this update, no applications have been made to the relevant Government Agencies to build on this site. The focus, since the beginning of this exercise, has been to demolish the existing structure on the site. This remains the priority till the project is completed. Any future plans to build on this site will adhere to DBKL's recommended guidelines for the neighbourhood.

We take this opportunity to thank all immediate neighbours and those in the vicinity for their patience and tolerance as we approach the tail end of the demolition exercise. While we try to make an unpleasant experience as bearable as possible, we continue to seek your kind support and understanding to allow us to complete this exercise safely and within all stipulated guidelines.

Should there be concerns, however small, please call me directly on 012 203 8829 or drop me an email at sseye4words@gmail.com.

Thank you.

SHALINI SOCKALINGAM
Managing Principal
eye4words



NEWSFLASH 2

Dangerous Sub-station



In the aftermath of the big storm in March it seems that Tenaga has put in a new sub-station at the foot of Jalan Bukit Tunku. While one can applaud any effort to ensure an uninterrupted supply of power it must be noted that this is probably the most dangerous piece of work ever. There is no fencing, no wall, no means of keeping people out. Children coming back from school, too young to understand, lose animals (you must have noticed the dogs) could far too easily receive an enormous and almost certainly fatal shock if they touched the exposed wires. This shows a remarkable lack of care and foresight.

STOP PRESS

- Subsequent to the BT tour in March covered on page 4, we are thrilled to report that work has started at Jln Bukit Tunku and Jln Girdle
- Replacement of cow grass at lower half of Jln Bukit Tunku which previous drain contractor had destroyed.
- Repair of broken drains opposite no 35 (WIP).
- Rectification works carried out at culvert at no 3 Jln Girdle where water is not flowing.
- All baby steps but nevertheless steps forward.



Safety First

Tee Jin



Security boys on their toes.

Most incidents that our guards encounter involve romancing couples or ghost seekers (at abandoned houses), but one that warrants further elaboration occurred on 15th February. At 0004hrs LKpl Faizal (motorbike patrol) saw a white Nissan Vannette dropping off a man in front of 16 Persiaran Tunku Putra. Upon seeing the patrol bike, the man ran towards an empty house on the opposite side of the road.

LKpl Faizal called for assistance from the Sjn Fadzil (car patrol) to help search for the suspect, but were unsuccessful. About 20 minutes later, the motorbike patrol came across the regular police neighbourhood patrol, reported the encounter to them, and they proceeded to check the empty house and the area together. Again, the suspect was nowhere to be seen but they found a gap in the fence near the forest.

Additional caution was given to the location during every patrol on that night.

"The security men remind mum and dad to shut the gates on our house, which is good as they forget and leave the gates open".

Willo Green, age 9

STOP PRESS **Launch of The Star People's Voice**

The Star newspaper has just launched "The Star People's Voice - You've Got the Power" campaign, aimed at building an effective platform for all Residents Associations within the Klang Valley to engage directly with their respective local councils and relevant agencies. Star Metro will be dedicating a page every Tuesday for this endeavour, and creating a Facebook page as well as a Twitter account for residents to interact with the Star. 24 mini-carnivals will be organised at selected residential areas over the course of one year where residents can meet Local Council and Police representatives. Radio RED FM would hold live broadcasts at each location so listeners can interact on the issues being discussed. More info - <http://thestar.com.my/peoplesvoice/>.

Encik Mohammad and Kat attended the launch on Sunday. Sounds like good news for all residents. Well done the Star

“The mullockay we took home
was simply amazing.

Wow, haven't tasted fish like that
since I was in Sydney too long ago...”

Robyn Eckhardt, EatingAsia.typepad.com



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Another Year Another Earth Hour

Ruth Yeoh

The global movement, as you may already know, is making waves globally with countries joining forces to switch off their lights for one hour on this very special day. Earth Hour is a global event organized by the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) and is held on the last Saturday of March annually, asking households and businesses to turn off their non-essential lights and other electrical appliances for one hour to raise awareness towards the need to take action on climate change. Earth Hour was first conceived by WWF and *The Sydney Morning Herald* in 2007, when 2.2 million residents of Sydney participated by turning off all their non-essential lights. Following Sydney's lead, many other cities around the world adopted the event in 2008.

This year, Earth Hour 2010 took place on 27 March from 8:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m., at participants' respective local time. Earth Hour 2010 was reportedly the biggest Earth Hour yet, aiming to garner more than the one billion participant goal of 2009's Earth Hour. A total of around 126 countries signed up



for Earth Hour 2010 and about 4000 cities participated, including world landmarks such as the KLCC Twin Towers, KL Tower, Big Ben, the Sydney Opera House, the Empire State Building, the Eiffel Tower, the Brandenburg Gate, and the Forbidden City. In addition, 214 ambassadors have signed on to support Earth Hour 2010 and Earth Hour has garnered global support from over 45 international corporations. Malaysia has just celebrated its second Earth Hour since it was launched for the first time in this country in 2009 (See Earth Hour Malaysia's website at <http://ehm.my>). According to *The Star*, Earth Hour Malaysia 2009 saved around



550 Megawatts, which is equivalent to around 14 million fluorescent bulbs at 40 watt each.

I am proud to observe that many citizens worldwide are participating and getting involved where possible, and that my firm personally participated in this campaign for the second year, where more than 30 of our properties worldwide switched off their lights with respect to this global movement. Not only that but we also had our very own Earth Hour Celebrations in the heart of the city. An excellent interview by *The Star Online* which you can certainly check out is available at the following weblink:

<http://www.youtube.com/user/thestaronline#p/search/0/bHkZST7kXj0>

For those of you who personally participated in Earth Hour, and demonstrated your commitment by switching off your lights for one hour during Earth Hour, Thank You for your support for the Initiative.

So you see, we can all certainly make a difference in this world we inhabit!

Like I always believe, we all have the capacity to change positively if only we put our hearts and minds into action, and do our part as global citizens.

Let's make Earth Hour, Every Hour!

Blessings.



How to recycle.

Please prepare your papers, bottles and plastic containers for recycling.

For information, a recycle truck comes by on 1st. and 3rd. Wednesdays of the month between 4 - 6 pm to Taman Tunku (Selangor Properties) shops and apartments at Langgak Tunku.

Please note that the truck may not be parked at the same spot every time. However, if you have any problems, you may call Mr. Umesh of Alam Flora, hp no. 019-276 2208



Booming

Bukit.

John
Smurthwaite



It seems that the Hill is enjoying a nice surge in residential interest. Apart from the Tijani and Sutera developments the number of new homes built and completed in Taman Duta and Bukit Tunku has been quite small over the past few years – perhaps less than ten.

But building is underway now at a frenetic pace with around 30 individual bungalows either under construction or near construction across the Hills – roughly half in Bukit Tunku and half in Taman Duta. In Bukit Tunku the new houses tend to be houses replacing previously abandoned old homes and are widely spread around the area. In Taman Duta there are two small gated developments nearing completion, one of 3 houses and another of 5 houses respectively and various other widely scattered around mainly on vacant lots.

A few years ago there were about 40 houses that were run down or abandoned. Those 40 were nearly all privately owned but many of these have now been demolished and rebuilt.



Now there still appears to be around 35 abandoned houses in Bukit Tunku and 10 in Taman Duta making a total of 45. But there has been a change. Half of these are properties previously owned by Tenaga such as in Jalan Tunku Putra, Jalan Bukit Tunku and Persiaran Bukit Tunku, most of which will soon be developed for bungalows.

There are a number of new gated communities planned but work is not likely to commence in earnest this year. The most significant of these is on the old Tenaga properties in Jalan Bukit Tunku where around 15 high end bungalows are envisaged. This is an SP Setia development – SP Setia appears to strive for high standards so we are looking forward to a quality development to replace the run down/abandoned houses there at present. These run down homes are due to be demolished in the later half of this year. SP Setia will probably offer the new homes for sale later in 2010.



All future construction in Taman Duta and Bukit Tunku is likely to be for individual houses as the Draft Kuala Lumpur Plan designates these areas for bungalow residential.

No approval that we are aware of has been given for high rise development in the area since the Tijani approval which is nearly 15 years ago.

So all in all, a welcome boost to the Hill, carefully controlled and certain to continue to be the city's premier des res.

The need to ensure the well-being of our canine companions has created a social network comprising their careers and handlers who are seen regularly walking their charges mornings and afternoons along the streets of our suburb. This group has grown imperceptibly but significantly in the last few years and now forms an important part of the Bukit Tunku social scene. I became an accidental observer of dogs and dog-walkers because I have 3 dogs – a Labrador, a Beagle and a Cocker Spaniel (which makes me neurotic and confused!!!). My dedicated animal-loving maids, Susana and Lea, walk them daily without fail, come rain or shine as if their lives depended on it. I subsequently discovered that they did! I am told that most dog walkers do it not just for the welfare of the dogs but also for their own sanity and mental well-being. Many don't walk very far at all – just around the corner to the nearest cul de sac where others of their social strata would congregate to contribute their part in the social networking. Here they would exchange the latest news and gossips, introduce a new member, get fashion and beauty advice, swap recipes, conduct some barter trading (may involve some employers' personal items!!), pose for photographs and generally engage in harmless and hurried friendly interaction.

There is a discernible pecking order no doubt, based mainly on who they work for, how long they have been in Malaysia, how many people they know etc and it is reflected in their countenance and how they relate to each other. Meanwhile, their



canine charges spend time checking each other out or play their favourite game of “dominate or submit”. Others just fall asleep from sheer boredom. These meetings can last anything between 10 minutes to half an hour. Although they are usually harmless social breaks during which the dog-walkers recharge and motivate themselves to face another day of endless chores and humdrum, there have been situations wherein employees have made wrong choices to the detriment of their employers. So employers, beware!

Personally, I have been the happy recipient of countless benefits from the dog-walking group. Need a new gardener? No problem, the group will work to line up potential recruits for interview. Lost a pet? No worries, the dog-walkers will scour every street in Bukit Tunku to look for your beloved companion. Need a special plant in your garden? It will magically appear via your maid with compliments of the group. Want to know the latest society gossip? You cannot imagine what secrets (not!) lie with them.

Unlike the high society residents of Bukit Tunku who live a rarified and often unseen existence with no contact with their neighbours, the dog-walkers and handlers and their canine companions represent a component of BT that is

real and palpable. They make a definite and positive contribution to life on the hill and without them, dog-ownership, at least, will deteriorate into an unpleasurable, non-beneficial, messy chore that few of us would be able to undertake with equanimity. Viva dogs and dog-walkers!!

RINA RAJA MOKHTAR DOG DAY AFTERNOON



BT BY THE NUMBERS

How well do you know your neighbourhood? Above are 6 photos of house numbers from the streets of Bukit Tunku. So take a walk around your local streets and see how many of these numbers you can identify. When you get all the addresses, send them in to me at lorienholland@me.com. The first person with a correct set of answers gets extra curry puffs at our upcoming AGM in June.

I set off in search of Heliconias in Bukit Tunku one recent morning. Heliconias are those bright red and yellow, almost vulgar tropical flowers that come in many shapes and sizes and add a wonderful dash of colour to our leafy green streets. Although Heliconias are native only to Central and South America and some islands of the South Pacific, they grow easily in Malaysia and throughout the tropics. There are more than 200 species of Heliconia, and some grow up to 5 metres tall with all manner of weird and wonderful protuberances. On my stroll around Bukit Tunku, I found four different varieties growing in front gardens or on the roadside. You will recognize them from the photographs as some of the most common Heliconias seen in Malaysia. I have also included a photograph of a brilliant "Sexy Pink" heliconia that grew in our garden and joined an enormous flower arrangement my husband constructed. You can see from the enormous leaves that Heliconias are closely related to bananas. The shape of their leaves is lush and dramatic, but I think most people would agree that the stunning flowers are the main attraction.



Bihai



Rostrata



Psittacorum lady di



Chartacea sexy pink



Psittacorum golden torch

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MYBT

Andrew
Barber

We first arrived in Kuala Lumpur in August 1998 on a posting to the British High Commission. I was a Political Officer and had been told in advance what a quiet uneventful sort of place Malaysia was. Our arrival coincided with the Commonwealth Games and the State Visit of the Queen but also riots, the arrest of Anwar, black-eyes and all that stuff. My job involved liaison with Bukit Aman - boring it was not.

In the British diplomatic system at least, the tendency is to inherit the house of your predecessor, in my case this was a bachelor who must have been a pea-in-a-pod. Accordingly we moved into a large old colonial house at the bottom of Bukit Tunku next to Rumah Sarawak.

The house – 20A Jalan Tun Ismail – had been with the High Commission for ever and was redolent of an earlier age. It was vast, with a sweeping drive and very grand double staircase. Much of downstairs was devoted to a “ball-room”, which was magnificent though we barely used it. There was a huge downstairs veranda faced onto a rather wild and unkempt garden and our own little jungle. This was a nice place to sit, though the mosquitoes could be fierce. We often used to entertain there though the mozzies could cause havoc: on one occasion one poor lady was so badly attacked that she had a reaction and spent Christmas day at Pantai Hospital. But when the conditions were right, such as New Years Eve 2000 we hosted a black-tie dinner and dance for sixty guests, it was a magical place. It was difficult to believe, surrounded by dense trees and with fire-flies darting about, that we were in the centre of a major international city. A great way to see in the millennium.

The property was vast and grand but, being neither ourselves, we tended to huddle under the air-conditioner in the family room. This was a scruffy upstairs room with three sides of windows and views through the trees at the bottom of the property to the city skyline and the Twin Towers beyond. It was a fun place and we ate, worked, watched TV and basically camped out there. The grand rooms downstairs and the sweeping staircase were largely for access.

Towards the end of our tour I received the message that we were “over-housed” (i.e. we were living in a property far too grand for my status) and that the Foreign Office wanted to sell. This decision was taken in mid-2000, which was around the nadir of the Malaysian property market then suffering from the Asian Economic Crisis. The Foreign Office operates a system of closed bids, and a locked but transparent ‘bid box’ sat in the lobby of the High Commission for a week leading up to the final sale deadline. I would pass it each day and note that there were no bids – despite a pretty aggressive marketing campaign. Difficult to believe now, but no one could be

persuaded to put in a bid. We were tempted and, though there was a reserve, to this day I ponder whether a speculative punt might have been accepted. That said, I would probably have been barred through ‘conflict of interest’. Well, the High Commission repeated the exercise some weeks later and this time a bid was accepted and in due course we left the property, which for a while rather sadly became a base for drug addicts and squatters.

The purchasers of the site had bold plans, however, and three years later – in about 2005 – the old house was pulled down and work started on a small condominium called Sutra Bukit Tunku. In 2007 we decided, more as a curiosity than anything, to take a look at the show flat and see what they had done to our old place – I had by this time left the Foreign Service to set up my own

company. We were impressed. It could not have been more different than the old colonial pile, and it was quite difficult to get bearings. But the new apartments were just what we were had been looking for, but until that point failed to find. So we decided there and then to buy one, and that is where we now live – a few strata up from where we previously lived but in its own way just as successful and pleasant a place to live; and the 25 meter pool is certainly a vast improvement on the old tank pool we set up in garden of the old house!



A MIGHTY WIND

Hail on the Hill

Suddenly, as if from nowhere, on the 22nd of March around tea-time, the Hill (and great areas of KL) were struck with a freak storm. Hail fell and the wind reached disturbing speeds. Possibly the worst storm we've had in the last decade. Trees fell, tiles blew off and there was general mayhem. Those with large areas of glass in their homes were in fear of the windows being blown out. Some families even grouped together in the centre of their homes. On Pinggiran Tunku particularly, trees fell onto houses and onto property walls as you can see from the pictures. At least three streets were blocked.

The emergency services did their best but, as it was still raining, and power lines had been knocked to the ground, there was a genuine fear of electrocution. But again from the pictures, they did a pretty good job and got things up and running mostly by the next day. But the biggest problem was the power lines. Almost the whole hill was without power, some for 24 hours some for two days. Even now Tenaga are trying to make more lasting repairs. Unfortunately overhead cables aren't safe from falling trees or big blows.

Still, whether you call it global warming or just a freak of nature, on reflection, it could have been a lot worse!

Photos courtesy Mr Oh Tiek Tatt, Ms Marama Schnitker and The Editor





HAPPENING ON THE HILL



DEFINITELY DETOX

Jennifer Chan finds a little place on the Hill to get rid of her stress.

I have always had a short fuse and while the tai chi helped to control my short temper a little, (I've been doing this for many years), I still had flare ups. I still felt tired; my neck, shoulders and back were often knotted up and they felt very tight. I would go for a massage twice a week, each time for 2 hours. But the pressure and tightness never went away. Then a friend told me about a lady who could help me. That was when I met Pat.

Pat was a beautician who had lymphatic cancer some 20 years ago. She refused to go for chemotherapy, radiotherapy or surgery. So she studied energy healing, Chinese medicine, meditation and homeopathy determined to heal herself. She did just that. She's now healthy; she's a vegetarian, meditates 4 hours a day and is a qualified therapist and homoeopathist.

She has her therapy suite called Purest at the Taman Tunku shops, on the first floor just above the mini market. Her suite is really basic. There are no aromatherapy candles or oil, no posh furniture or clever lighting. Just clean, basic sitting area with soothing painted walls, lots of homeopathic bottles, fresh, beautiful flowers everywhere on the balcony. There is a second room with a bath room and therapy beds for massage. The funny thing is that Pat never puts the air conditioning on. She just has a fan in the sitting room and it's on low all the time. In the room where she does body massage, there isn't even a fan at all. But, I never once felt hot at her place, no matter how hot the weather is outside. I just feel very cool, calm and always relaxed at Pat's suite. Perhaps, it's to do with Pat's "yin" energy. That's why she only meditates between 5.00am – 7.00am in the morning and between 5.00pm – 7.00pm in the evening. Her hands are always cool and the aura and energy in her suite is always cool and calm.

I go to Pat for a few treatments. I first have a half – hour detox. Next, I get into a herbal bath. Next comes a hair and scalp massage. Then, I have an energy body massage. I rest for 5 minutes or so, take a quick, warm shower, get dressed and sit down for another cup of freshly-brewed herbal drink. This entire routine lasts about 2 hours. And I go home; feeling relaxed, re-energized, lighter, de-stressed and ready to face the challenges of another week again!

Pat does only one body massage a day so as not to deplete her yin energy. But she can take on more clients for bath, detox, head or face. Her clients consist of very well-known names who have been going to her for many years. Besides her highly effective treatments, Pat's discretion keeps her clients coming back for more. If you are keen to meet Pat, you can call her on 03 6201 4998.

JED
realty

**Property
Update
by JED**

Bukit Tunku has and will continue to be Malaysia's premier address. The area is home to the largest properties with the lowest city densities. However, as a result of the high absolute values, Bukit Tunku transactions and per square foot (psf) prices tend to lag its neighbours, Bukit Damansara and Bangsar. Bukit Tunku is relatively illiquid, numbering no more than 12 transactions each in 2005 and 2006. But recent developments have brought about renewed interest to this traditionally quiet neighbourhood.

The exemption of Real Property Gains Tax (RPGT) on 1 April 2007 spurred a speculative boom fuelled mainly by foreign investors, in part as a spill over from neighbouring Singapore. This boom was mainly focused on high-end condominiums in and around the KLCC area, where in some cases prices more than doubled. The significant increase in high-end condominium prices led to a re-rating of high-end landed properties, starting with the Bukit Damansara / Bangsar areas, and subsequently Bukit Tunku.

In 2007 alone, the number of Bukit Tunku transactions was more than double the combined transactions for 2005 and 2006. Land prices experienced a sudden hike, entering the RM250 – RM300 psf range, after remaining relatively flat for many years. Interest in the Bukit Tunku areas was further fuelled by the completion of Tijani 2 South by Bolton Berhad and the proposed launch of mega estates by SP Setia Berhad and Clearwater Development Sdn Bhd, both with record breaking price tags. In fact, SP Setia's acquisition of 6.2 acres of freehold land in Bukit Tunku from Tenaga Nasional Berhad for RM73.9 million was one of the most significant transactions in 2007.

However, the regeneration of Bukit Tunku has since been stalled by the global financial crisis of 2009. Fortunately, as prices in the Bukit Tunku area had only started to move while market prices in the KLCC area have dropped by 30 – 40%, prices in Bukit Tunku have continued to rise (albeit very gradually) and demand has remained stable.

Today, the equity markets have begun to recover. Property prices in general have stabilized and developers have started launching high-end properties again. We believe that the property market will recover soon. As before, it would start with the more speculative KLCC condos, followed by the Bukit Damansara / Bangsar areas, and subsequently Bukit Tunku.



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