

Selamat Datang ke FRASER's HILL

By Dr Martin Chio

We reached the Gap at 1pm as the single-lane 8km road that lead to the summit had a unique system for one-way traffic: odd hours for ascending and even hours for descending.

I always look forward to spending time with the Goodenough gang (www.goodenough.ac.uk). They are the bunch I (DH) met while on HMDP in London: Rampant, HM, Swinger, SSG, BP, GNK+1 and GNK. It was Swinger's idea to rent his company's bungalow in Fraser's hill and we thought it would be an excellent way to escape for the weekend.

Being wary that the weekend coincided with the Formula 1 Grand Prix and also Qing Ming in Malaysia, Rampant and I were dreading the potential jam at the Second Link but we were pleasantly surprised as we breezed through. We arrived at the Hotel Nikko in Kuala Lumpur at 11pm and rendezvoused with the others who had taken the afternoon off for a more leisurely drive.

We set off the next morning after a tasty local breakfast of rawa bawang tosai and light fluffy chicken *murtabak* at Restoran Madura's, Sri Gombak. As we were driving in a convoy of erm... two cars, Swinger arranged for walkie-talkies so as to communicate driving instructions and lively banter ensued.

Fraser's Hill is named after Louis James Fraser, a Scottish trader who mined tin in the 1890s. It is located in the state of Pahang about 100km north of KL. With the resort being 1300 metres above sea level,



it enjoys a much cooler climate than in KL. We reached the Gap at 1pm as the single-lane 8km road that lead to the summit had a unique system for one-way traffic: odd hours for ascending and even hours for descending.

We stopped by the Sungai Selangor Dam for a photo break and comparisons with the Lake District set the mood for the weekend in 'Engrand'. The air was appreciably cooler so we drove up with windows wound down (doing our bit to be green).

We arrived at Bunge Bungalow, a colonial stone house situated in the south-east part of the hill. It consisted of 4-bedrooms, a drawing room with bay windows and a living room with a working fireplace(!) which triggered more comments about being back in 'Engrand'. We were quite famished by then and the Hainanese caretaker had prepared a generous spread. It was evident that the caretaker had green fingers too as the garden was blooming with flowers.

Having had our fill, we drove into the town centre so Rampant could pick up some fridge magnets to add to his collection. I was busy snapping photographs of the local flora and I hope this montage does it justice; it is a change from my usual photos of food ☺.

We returned to the bungalow for tea and were greeted by homemade scones. Alas this was sans clotted cream but the homemade jam and butter was sufficient to keep us happy. We added to the illusion of being back in 'Engrand' by sipping Pimm's, enjoying the cool breeze and reminiscing of times gone by. Nightfall was accompanied by clouds rolling into the horizon and we partook of a sumptuous steamboat almost like how we celebrated the Lunar New Year in the London House buttery. This was accompanied by a Moscato, a late harvest Muscat and ended with a 1984 single vintage tawny; I was ever so glad we didn't need to travel home and could just tumble into bed thereafter. I was also relieved I didn't get bitten by any mosquitoes either.

On waking the next morning, the bungalow was wrapped in morning mist. After a simple breakfast of sausages and eggs, being a true Cancerian, I suggested we take a drive to the Air Terjun Jeriau – the waterfall. No road-trip would be complete without music and as we drove we listened to 80s hits and sang along to irreverent Broadway puppet sensation "Avenue Q" – "It Sucks To Be Me", "Everyone Is A Little Bit Racist", "The Internet Is For Porn" and "Schadenfreude".

The Jeriau waterfall is situated in the north-west section of the hill amidst the tropical rainforest. The 6-metre tall fall ends in a wading pool and several families had taken the opportunity to play in the somewhat muddy waters. We stopped at the charming Ye Olde Smokehouse and deposited ourselves around the charred fireplace (complete with brassware and pokers) for a coffee break before heading back to the bungalow for a Mer-chicken lunch (Hainanese-style fish/chicken and chips).

After the satisfying meal, we were mindful of avoiding the southbound traffic in the direction of the Sepang circuit and set off early along the highway. It poured cats and dogs but that did not dampen our memory of a serene and cool weekend spent in the hills. I stocked up on the usual *dodol* at the Pangoh rest-stop and we ended the evening with XO fish noodles in Buona Vista.

We have planned our next trip: Malacca *makan* mission...SMA

Martin aspires to be a food and travel photographer but is 'bonded' to serve for many years to come...