

Dear friends,

May I take this opportunity to wish all my Muslim friends 'Selamat Hari Raya, maaf zahir batin' and also to thank my non-Muslim friends for their Hari Raya Greetings.

To my Indian friends may I wish you happy Deepavali and to my Christian friends, season greetings for the coming Christmas.

The articles I received from Kirkbyites are very few, and to make up the rest I have to copy some of the interesting articles and news from website MTTC Yahooogroup. Some of those who subscribe to MTTC Yahoo may have read them.

Being above 75 years old one tends to be forgetful. I am now one of them, so if any of these articles below has been produced in my previous Newsletter please forgive me for doing so. I too sometime do receive same article twice.

ZAINAL ABIDIN MANAF



**Third Batch Kirkby – 1953-55  
Nov. 2007, 29th Series**

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### **Tan Sri Dato' Dr Yahaya Ibrahim ( 1952-54) on Info Semasa RTM 1**

In conjunction with Teachers' Day, local television station RTM1 interviewed Tan Sri Dato' Dr Yahaya Ibrahim, a prominent figure in the education field, during the programme 'Selamat Pagi Malaysia'. In the segment 'Info Semasa', the presenters aimed to give tribute to the contributions of teachers from the time of Malaysia's independence which records its 50<sup>th</sup> year this year

As a former student of the renowned Malayan Teachers' Training College, Kirkby, England, Tan Sri shared with viewers on why the college was so special. He said that Kirkby College, as it was popularly known, was the first and only project of its kind launched by the government of Malaysia (or known as Malaya at that time). The college was set up to train and produce teachers as there was a critical shortage during that period. The government chose to set up Kirkby College in the UK to enable the transfer of ideas and Expertise to the future teachers of Malaya

There existed only three other teacher training colleges in the country during that time. One was the Sultan Idris Teachers' College and the other two were in Melaka and Singapore respectively. To meet the growing demand for teachers, Kirkby College was established in 1951 and Tan Sri was selected to study there for two years in 1952. The government continued to send 150 teachers a year to Kirkby College for ten years, Bringing the number of teachers trained there to approximately 1500.

Tan Sri explained that some teachers then became 'trainers of trainers' using the Kirkby model. He had fond memories of his time at Kirkby College. He commented that there was a strong sense of unity among the teachers of different races especially just before the declaration of independence of Malaysia. Tan Sri shared that incidentally, it was at Kirkby College that the first prime minister-to-be made an official announcement on the imminent declaration of independence. He added that this was A little known but interesting fact.

Over the years, Tan Sri had contributed relentlessly to the education sector. Presently, he is the Pro-Chancellor of Universiti Pendidikan Sultan Idris (UPSI) Perak and has a keen interest in contributing towards the development of early childhood education. Tan Sri has also contributed in the compilation of a study guide called "Education Guide Malaysia" which has information on the courses offered by education establishments in the country. There's also an international edition namely, 'Study in Malaysia Handbook', aimed at providing foreign students with valuable information on education in Malaysia.

When asked about how a teacher today can contribute towards society, Tan Sri said that a teacher's role is to produce quality students. The student must be multi-lingual and multi-skilled. Further, he stressed that students must have self-discipline, critical thinking skills and an enquiring mind.

He also commented that while many teachers have had the opportunity to take up multiple degrees, not many are willing to pass on the knowledge to the next generation. Tan Sri advised all teachers to give back what they have learnt and to be passionate about education. He added, "When you teach a person, you Change a person"

*I went through the 'Kirkbytimes.co.uk'. and I am proud to share with fellow Kirkbyites the following article:*

43 Years, and still the name of Kirkby is held in high esteem in Malaysia. This is a great addition to Memories of Kirkby, and it's a heart warming tribute to our town, still remembered in such high esteem after all these years by Mr Zainal Arshad and his fellow Malaysian 'Kirkbyites'. Please e-mail him if you remember the Malayan student teachers, or were in any way involved. Some of those who educated themselves here have

sadly passed on, and I'm sure readers who remember back to the early days of Kirkby would send there condolences.

Times have changed, but the memories of the Malaysians point to a decent kind working class community that welcomed these students to what must have seemed a strange land. The Malaysians have long had a mixture of various cultures in their own Country and are in a way similar to us Scourers. That some still call themselves Kirkbyites is a tribute to the older generation here which greeted these good people. The good manners, kindness and willingness of Kirkby people to help the students become familiar with our culture are acts of kindness which are still remembered 43 years later

'For Truth and Knowledge in tribute of and in anticipation of what might be 'better days' ,Kirkby Times will be adopting the old emblem of the Malayan Teachers Training College. We might make some addition to it, but the motto of 'For Truth and Knowledge' is as good a motto as any to live by and has long been the standard under which Kirkby Times chooses to campaign under. It certainly did not do the Malayan classes from 1951 to 1962 any harm. Nor the thousands of Malaysians who have had the benefit of being educated by the Kirkbyites

We thank Zainal Arshad and all the former Kirkbyites in Malaysia and wish them, their families and the young people of Malaysia all the very best of luck. We also wish all the teachers in Kirkby past and present all the best, especially the older retired teachers who will remember the pioneering spirit which Kirkby once took in educating people.

*On the 8<sup>th</sup> August, 2007 a group of about 100 Kirkbyites from K.L. , Ipoh and other towns came to UPSI to attend the Opening Ceremony of Kirkby College Museum declared open by Her Highness Permaisuri Bainun. It was a very nostalgic occasion where Kirkbyites warmly greeted each other especially for those who have not met each other after a lapse of 40 - 50 years. The following article is written by Beng Fai (1952-54) describing the event.*

*Those who happen to pass by Tanjung Malim please drop at UPSI Tanjung Malim to see our Kirkby Museum and perhaps you may be able to help by contributing any of your personal collection of Kampong Kirkby. The museum is still at its early stage and needs more exhibits.*

### **Kirkby's Nostalgic Home Coming** By Chan Bing Fai (Kirkby 1952-1954)

Kirkby College (KC) officially came home to Malaysia on 8.8.07. It was only a symbolic home-coming rather than an actual relocation. It was established in 1951 as a teacher training college (TTC) in Kirkby near Liverpool England. Trained teachers were in short supply immediately after WWII. Training teachers in Malaya then was on a part time basis under the normal class system. A trainee teacher had to teach full time in a school and attended weekend courses over a period of 3 years. The system was slow and the training was inadequate because of the lack of facilities and teacher trainers.

On the 8<sup>th</sup> August, 2007, two UPSI buses were waiting at the Wilayah Persekutuan Mosque in Jalan Duta, K.L. to take a group of 50 Kirkby trained teachers to Tanjong Malim to witness the official launch of the Tuanku Bainun Library and also the official opening of the Exhibition on Kirkby College in the Universiti Pendidikan Sultan Idris (UPSI). When the Sultan Idris Training College (SITC) was upgraded to a University in 1977, Tuanku Bainun was installed as her 1<sup>st</sup> Chancellor. She was a student in Kirkby from 1952-1954 and she was also our beloved Queen from 1977 to 1982. Riding in the bus reminded us of the many trips we travelled in Mr Bold's bus to many places for our vacations. This bus ride was different. It was a sentimental journey down memory lane to trace our roots in kampong Kirkby.

Bringing Kirkby back home was a logical proposition because it should be where your heart is. Even making a pilgrimage back to the actual site where the College once stood would be meaningless and futile because the College had been demolished to make way for a new housing estate. Can anyone imagine that the place is now flourishing with shops, boutiques and restaurants? Visiting the location alone would not bring back those happy memories and feelings for the place. Kirkby was not about the place. It was about people and their interactions. Establishing a college in England was a noble idea.

The choice of UPSI formerly known as the Sultan Idris Training College (SITC) to house the Education Museum was a fitting one because SITC was the 1<sup>st</sup> TTC set up in this country in 1922. KC was the 1<sup>st</sup> TTC set up by Malaya in a foreign country in 1951. UPSI has strong links with Kirkby because one of the Pro Chancellors there is no other than Tan Sri Dato Dr Yahaya Ibrahim who was student in Kirkby from 1952-1954. Nuruddin Jamin and Ramli Shaari from the 2<sup>nd</sup> batch joined the academic staff of SITC in 1954. A year later 3 other Kirkby trained teachers were sent to teach there. They were Shaari Isa, Zainal Akbar and Ahmad Salleh



who was later promoted to become the principal of SITC. Also in the same year Yasmin Hanoum Ariff, Zainab Hamidon and Shahrul Bariah were sent to teach in the "experimental school" of SITC. In this special school trainee teachers did their teaching practice.

As we grow older we yearned to return to our roots to trace our ancestry to meet old friends and visit old haunts. In the case of Kirkby there was no ancestry so to speak because its existence was only transitory. Therefore, it had not sufficient time for deep seated roots to establish. However, it was there long enough to have adventitious roots like that of a bamboo. These roots appeared only at the knots representing the different batches of students.

So balik kampung now is made so much simpler because you just need to make a visit to Gallery Kirkby in the Education Museum in UPSI. The many exhibits and memorabilia will surely bring back many happy memories of the place where we spent two happy years studying and getting a well rounded education.

What remained of Kirkby now is only a fading memory. I remember clearly the dreadful wintry mornings when I needed to drag myself out from bed after having tugged in for the very cold nights. Then dashing to the wash room to clean up and get dressed to begin another day. In winter the weather was often cheerless and dull. When it was 8.00 am it was still gloomy I hated it because it was cold, dreary and colourless. It was always damp and slushy and I had to put on a heavy woolen overcoat to protect myself against the weather whenever I had to go out in the open. It was heavy and uncomfortable and also the absence of sunshine had a depressing effect on me.

I liked spring and it was worth remembering after enduring the harsh cold and gloomy winter. When crocuses appeared it was the 1<sup>st</sup> sign of spring. Then followed by daffodils and other springs flowers. I liked spring because it was young and refreshing. There was life, vitality and growth. Grass awakened from its sleep, tried to reach for the light. Buds everywhere learned to unfold and bloom into things of beauty. Birds came out of hibernation and soared high into the sky.

I liked summer too when flowers were in full bloom to display their many and varied colours It had the exuberance and vigour of youth. I like autumn best because leaves began to change colours from green, yellow into gold and red. It spoke of abundance, maturity and wisdom. And so the cycle of seasons came and went. When winter returned could spring be far away? The beauty of living in England was that there was always something to look forward to.

Despite Kirkby's drab exterior it inspired me with a sense of tenacity and accomplishment. I hope every Kirkbian who passed through its postal will always be proud of being a true Kirkbian. Like every "emigrant" I long to return to my roots "Who am I?" when I returned to my "ancestral home" in Kampong Kirkby. "Whom do I identify with?" These questions are best left to the future pundits to decide.

**CHAN BING FAI**  
(Kirkby 1952-1954)

From: Dr Shaari Isa (1953-1955)

You might have known that recently an educational museum has been established at the UPSI (Sultan Idris Educational University) at Tanjung Malim. One part of the museum relates to teacher training which includes the Kirkby Training College. Various Kirkby artifacts have already been collected for the museum and are now on display in the university original assembly hall. In addition to the existing artifacts, a special book is being planned to collect all the necessary information on Kirkby.

In a meeting held on 8 September 2007, the university identified several Kirkbyites (please correct spelling) to collect and write on several topics. I have been asked to write on the background of the College. For this purpose the only place I could go to gather the needed information on the background history of the College is the National Archives. I went there twice, the first time to search the old files from the then Department of Education during the years before Kirkby became a Malayan Teachers' Training College. During the second visit I searched the Federation Annual Reports. The items of information that I sought were:

- (a) Who or which meeting decided on Kirkby?
- (b) When was the decision made? and
- (c) what were the rationale behind that decision?



It was a great disappointment. I was not able to obtain the information that I sought. Many of the files were missing. I was told that the Archives only have what have been sent to them. However, all are not in vain. I have managed to obtain some information which relates to Kirkby.

The need for a teacher training college was recognized well throughout the period after World War II. This matter was of most interest to the Malayan Teachers' Union. As far back as 1948, the Malayan Teachers' Union which had its headquarters in Singapore, had written a letter to the Director of Education, Federation of Malaya. Among the contents of the letter dated 7 December 1948, is as follows:

*"...The Malayan Teachers' Union strongly urges the establishment of Teachers' Training Colleges as early as possible".*

*The Director of Education in a letter dated 13 December 1948, replied that:*

*"....The need for Training Colleges for English School teachers has been recognized, and will be pressed on with as soon as the financial and other conditions permit".*

Two years later (1951) the Federation Annual Report stated as follows:

*"...We still have Normal Classes but no English Teachers' Training College. Plans are now being prepared for the building of one such College."*

The College mentioned above was only complete and opened in 1954 in Kota Bharu, Kelantan.

But even before the completion of the College in Kota Bharu, the government had already sent trainees to Kirkby beginning December 1951. No information pertaining to this decision is available. When the decision was made and the basis for such a decision is not known. The first mention of Kirkby was found in the 1951 Annual Report which stated:

*"...The most noteworthy advance in this field (training of teachers) has been the sending to England in December 1951, of 149 students of both sexes and all races to Kirkby Training College, Liverpool, 129 of them being Normal students and the remaining 20 experienced teachers who will be able to help with the supervision of the lower and middle parts of English schools and assist in the training of teachers in Malaya."*

Note that as mentioned in the above letter, Kirkby was also to assist in the training of teachers. This implies the necessity for Kirkby to start well before the local training colleges were established.

Except for the above, no further information on Kirkby was available. If anyone happens to come across any relevant information, please let me know. Thank you.

### ***DR SHAARI ISA (1953-55)***

*I often receive e-mail from a gentleman named Mat Isa. He is not a Kirkbyite but he was taught by many Kirkby-trained teachers: After sending him one of the Newsletters, here is his reply:-*

Assalamualaikom cikgu ,

Terima kasih kerana mengirinkan saya the newsletter .There is the inner feeling dalam diri saya , cukup terikat dengan Kirkby . Ke mana saya pergi masa belajar dulu cikgu2 saya adalah dari kirkby. They were (are) extraordinary people .

When I entered Special Malay Class , there was not an English word in my head .My teachers were from Kirkby , They taught me beautifully till I passed my Cambridge School Certificate. I became a temporary teacher for 16 months. There I met Syed Abu Bakar whom I wrote a lot about him in the Kirkbyites net . He taught me to be a teacher. To me he is the Teacher Training College itself. I learned a lot . I studied then at SITC, again here I met many more Kirkbyites : Abu Hassan Ali, Wan Dus Muhammad, Abdul Aziz Sutan and Baharuddin Marji .Very many wonderful people.

I went for specialist course at STTI in Cheras ,KL . And here I met Puan Maimunah Ali also a Kirkbyite . Now I have a good friend, also a Kirkbyite . He is no other than Cikgu Zainul Abidin Muhammad from Alor Setar. And now another Tuan Haji Zainal Abidin Manaf from Ipoh. ....

I forgot to tell you that when I was at STTI,Cheras , cikgu Abd.Rahim bin Mohd.Yusof was also there as Vice-Principal of the college. A second time meeting him, he could still recognise me after a lapse of 19 years . He taught me English when I was at Special Malay Class. It was through him I uttered the first English word in my life. You know what?

"Good-morning, sir, my name is Mat Isa ".....very nostalgic.

*I also received another interesting story from Mat Isa. He is talking about Tuan Syed Abu Bakar, our fellow Kirkbyite who had done a wonderful job to make us all proud of him. Let us hear what Mat Isa has to say about Syed Bakar :*

I first met Tuan Syed Abu Bakar when he was the headmaster of Sik English School . He opened the school from nothing, not even a chair or a desk, or even a piece of chalk. He was alone .He had to run to and fro searching for everything borrowing the left-out colonial benches from Sekolah Melayu Sik. He walloped everything that came through. At that time there were no lorries in Sik. He carried the left-over benches by a bullock-cart belonging to the district office. He 'tumpang' the verandah of the community hall for his class. He was not only the headmaster but a teacher, office-boy, clerk, the school caretaker, the sweeper and the canteen-man. He represented everybody that needs to run a school. He collected school fees by barter trading .

Parents brought eggs and chickens. He transferred those to money by buying the products. During fruits season, he had to buy the fruits. Whaaaa, what teacher he was.

Sik was then still rural, very rural. No good roads, no electricity, no water-supply, nothing at all. Luckily there was a Rest House, only the house but no facilities. It was there Tuan Syed slept and his only friend was Dollah Panjang. Dollah was a dropout boy. He had no proper education even at Sekolah Melayu. Dollah assisted Tuan Syed when asked for. If Tuan Syed being called to the Education Office in Alor Setar, it was Dollah who looked after the school. When Tuan Syed was away, Dollah will tell everybody around that he was the assistant headmaster. By no time Dollah also could speak English. Tuan Syed gave no chance conversing in English. Even the rural parents could utter a few words of English.

When the school building was built in the middle of the kampong, there was still no proper road. It was fit only for kumpulan kembara FWD. It was a mile from pekan Sik. Tuan Syed was not panic. He only grumbled who the hell chose the site. He had to buy a lambretta to go to school. During rainy season he used his KAKI (walk)

As time goes by, Sekolah Aneka Jurusan was introduced. Tuan Syed once more was chosen to run that school. also from nothing. He had to 'tumpang' Sekolah Melayu Sik and the Sik Chinese school. He had to run the classes in the afternoon. So Tuan Syed now hold 2 posts: as headmaster of Sik English School and the supervisor of Sekolah Menengah Aneka Jurusan Sik. Till then he had still no school clerk for both schools. He used his own pocket money and employed Cik Sopiah Abd. Rahim as a school clerk. Her salary was 30 ringgit a month.

God willing, I will write more about Tuan Syed and other Kirkbyites that I know .....so standby Till we meet again.

Below is my message:

The strength of a Kirkbyite isn't seen in the width of his shoulders.  
It's seen in the width of his arms that circle you.  
The strength of a Kirkbyite isn't in the deep tone of his voice.  
It's in the gentle words he whispers.  
The strength of a Kirkbyite isn't how many buddies he has.  
It's how good a buddy he is with his kids.  
The strength of a Kirkbyite isn't in how respected he is at work.  
It's in how respected he is at home.  
The strength of a Kirkbyite isn't in how hard he hits.  
It's in how tender he touches.  
The strength of a Kirkbyite isn't in the hair on his chest.  
It's in his Heart... that lies within his chest.  
The strength of a Kirkbyite isn't in the weight he can lift.  
It's in the burdens he can carry....

PS : I altered the above from funlok website. They are NOT of my own creativity.

I am pleased to list out my former teachers from Kirkby :

**From Ibrahim Sch. Sg. Petani:**

Puan Siti Kalsom, Encik Hashim Yunus, Mr David Raman, Mr Fang Eue Churh, En Mohd Noor Che Noh, En. Abdullah Yunus, En Abd Rahim Mohd Yussuf, En Ahmad Merican, Mr John Augustine, En Ismail Osman and En Aziz Abdullah.

**From SITC Tanjung Malim**

Tuan Hj Abu Hassan Ali, Tuan Hj Baharuddin Marji, En Wan Dus Wan Mohamad, En Abdul Aziz Sultan, En Shaari Isa, En Ridzuan Mohd Ali, dan Tuan Hj Zainal Akbar.

Wassalam.

**MAT ISA**

*There goes our true spirit of a dedicated teacher. Tuan Syed is also a very determined and jovial person. I still remember one mid-term holiday at Kirkby during which many Kirkby students had gone for holiday tours. A few of us were at the Common Room and had no plan whatsoever especially everyone seemed to be short of cash for holiday tour. Someone in the group suggested hiring a car for a short trip down south to Devon and Cornwall since one of us had a driving license. After a short discussion we all agreed and managed to rent a car. The driver was Mr Manan and the rest of the gang were Tuan Syed Bakar, Zainal Akbar, Low Lye Yu, Abu Bakar Samad and myself. Without delay we started our journey towards the south and finally we reached a town and it was already nightfall. We did not have enough money to rent rooms, so we decided to sleep in the car. After parking at a suitable place we then tried to get some sleep. The car, a Vauxhall, was comfortable enough for 6 of us. Then suddenly Tuan Syed decided to sleep in the booth. We did not agree but he persisted, so we helped him to get into the car booth and closed the booth cover leaving a small gap for fresh air. When we were about*



*to relax and go to sleep we suddenly heard somebody banging the car from outside. It was Syed ! He looked cold and was shivering. We then pulled him back into the car. We tried to sleep but with much difficulty, we managed however to steal a few short naps. We then decided to continue our journey to Wales where we met Maimunah with a group of Kirkbyites on their holiday tour.*

*We ended our journey back to Kirkby with a lots of laughter and jokes especially on Tuan Syed.....*



### **Sputnik Curry at Kirkby College** **By Tunku Yusuf Jewa**

By the way what is 'Sputnik Curry' ? Well, it was referred to the egg curry that came out from the kitchen of Kirkby College as concocted by the Chinese Cooks. It tasted so badly that the students (from my batch 1956-1958) dubbed it 'the sputnik curry' when Russia launched its first egg-like object into space that circled the earth for 22 days in 1957.

The sputnik curry was never popular with most students and for those who couldn't find substitutes had to swallow what was served. Whenever the egg curry appeared on the menu displayed on the Notice Board most students would skip lunch or dinner. Instead they would make a bee-line to the Fish & Chip shop outside the gate of the Kirkby College or to the Kirkby Store to purchase some provisions to do their own cooking. But for those with extra cash preferred to walk further down to the Cottage ( a small eatery ) for some juicy steak, eggs and chips. Never mind whether the meat was halal or not! At least it tasted better than sputnik curry.

For those students fresh from Malaya or rather going overseas for the first time like England food could be a problem but as time went on we got used to the garbage served in the Kirkby College. You cannot compare the food to your mother's home cooking or from the five star hotel. Why be so picky ? We had to endure and stay alive for the next two years or so before we could taste nasi kandar, char koei teow or murtabak until we went home.

**TUNKU YUSUF JAWA**  
(1956-1958)

### ***The nation-makers without a peer*** **By Yunus Raiss (1954-56)**

SOME people said it was a waste of money to send Malaysians to train in England as teachers. In the early 50s such a reaction would have been exceptional, but by the 60s there were clear demands to close the two training colleges for economic reasons

The first group of 148 students were sent in the winter of 1951 to train at an emergency teacher-training college in a tiny hamlet about six miles from the city of Liverpool, called Kirkby Fields. The place was literally farm followed by farm. It had been a munitions factory in the Second World War. They sailed on S.S. Chusan on a 21-day journey.

The selection for the two-year training course at Kirkby looked for able candidates, with the potential for a degree course, who, would on their return serve as teachers in the Education Department for at least five years

Among those chosen were young men and women from rural areas and poor families, who could not have gone on to Higher Education unassisted. The good mix of candidates from well-off and educated families and the children of labourers and farmers produced a magical quality that benefited Malaysia in no small way.

Kirkbians can be expected to say that even God smiled on this pioneering educational programme that had a Malayan curriculum taught in England by well-qualified staff, most of whom were graduates from such universities as London, Oxford, Cambridge and Aberdeen

The place was redolent with friendliness and open-minded discussions, high thinking and good manners. The content of the courses and the pedagogy were eye-openers for most of the trainees, who took home innovative approaches and a liberal attitude to learning. Education as a whole was elevated to a higher plane.

On Sept 15, 2001, a group of over 500 Kirkby teachers had a social get-together in Kuala Lumpur, with Tuanku Bainum, a former Kirkby teacher, as the guest of honour. It was a very happy occasion celebrating the 50th anniversary of the foundation of Kirkby.

Yet this momentous occasion seems to have passed by without some form of recognition of the invaluable service given by Kirkby (and later Brinsford Lodge) teachers towards building the nation.

The Ministry of Education seems to have regarded these teachers as sheep in sheep's-clothing with insufficient clout to be rewarded with official recognition for their service to the country.

They were not sheep. They were enthusiastic intellectual stalwarts who played a vital part in training the young to build the nation.

Until Kirkby-Brinsford Lodge started training teachers, the best schools had one or two Raffles graduates alongside the normal trained teachers. No Kampong school had a teacher who was a graduate or of near-graduate quality. Malay schools, of course, had SITC trained teachers

Arriving at Kirkby or Brinsford Lodge was a unique experience at a time when very few people had the opportunity to fly to England. Going to either college was an exciting experience. Some students had the opportunity to go to the University of Malaya in Singapore or Queensland but chose England because it was England.

Besides improving their knowledge and honing their pedagogical skills, they learnt to view the world in a wider perspective. They came as raw young men and women gawky in gait, and returned home polished ladies and gentlemen with savoir faire.

They left a lasting legacy of good manners and friendship with the tutors, the people around the two colleges and, of course, the schools where they taught. They were excellent diplomats for Malaya and returned to Malaya as high commissioners for the good of the land.

Any sense of inferiority they might have had wore off soon after the first year. They could see their pivotal role in a global view of Malaya as a developing nation.

Those who had never been to a museum or an art gallery, heard an opera, seen a ballet, or even heard good English, took home a wealth of knowledge and culture that made them feel competent to inspire their pupils to aim for excellence in all things and to look forward to studying and working with confidence

They gave their pupils the opportunity to develop their minds by encouraging them to inquire and seek, as opposed to merely regurgitating facts pumped into them by their teachers. They became models for the students in dress, manners and cultivation of the mind, and they fired their imaginations to do better and better for the greater good of the nation.

Of course, there were a few who failed to make the grade. And there were those who had become Mat Sallehs who would want only fish and chips with knives and forks. But such 'orang puteh' were a rare breed.

It is a pity that the Ministry of Education regarded them as only slightly better than the ordinary teacher, both in terms of pay and other employment conditions. I hazard the guess that about a third of them left the profession to become lawyers, doctors, accountants, businessmen, diplomats and so on.

What a pity they were not given a better status to encourage them to stay on! If you pay peanuts, you get monkeys, as they say.

I could write a book about the educational contributions made to the nation by Kirkby-Brinsford Lodge teachers, but I must conclude my piece by one last observation that I consider has played a vital role in welding a Malaysian nation.

Raffles College and later the University of Malaya in Singapore were the only two institutions which made the students regard themselves as Malaysians. Kirkby-Brinsford made every student feel, think and act as a Malayan. They were no longer Malay, Chinese, Tamil, Sikh or Eurasian. They were Malaysians from a country called Malaya who presented a united front despite differences in appearance and speech

Without the Malayan badge, there was no place for them in these institutes. They learnt one another's customs and traditions, forming an amalgam called Malaysian culture.

Creme de la Creme, they did their country proud while they were in the UK and contributed handsomely to educating the young for nation-building on their return. They were the harbingers of goodwill to all that still prevails.

Malaysian nationalism might have been at the back of their minds when the British decided to set up Malaysia Hall in London, and Kirkby College and Brinsford Lodge later. All three institutes were a counter-weight to the onslaught of the CTs.

Kirkby College and Brinsford Lodge were closed down more than three decades ago. Malaysia Hall is now sentenced to extinction in the name of economy.

Great teachers and nation makers, I salute thee on behalf of your country. You were truly the catalyst that produced Malaysia and Malaysians. You helped the country become rich and famous. Magnanimity from the Ministry of Education would have been a bright jewel in your crown. Che sera sera!

## **YUNUS RAIS (1954-56)**

The author is now the Principal of Sels College, London

## **THE KIRBY STORY**

by Chan Bing Fai (1952-1954)

"Cikgu" is the most endearing and respectful term used by a group of Kirkby graduates to address their former teacher and mentor, Encik Baharuddin Marji. He was among the first group of students to undergo teacher training in Kirkby way back in 1951. Later he went back to Kirkby and taught there for 5 years from 1956-1960. For his long association with Kirkby College (K.C.) he could be regarded as the grand old man of Kirkby and could claim the title of being its doyen. For his unstinted services to education and also for rendering valuable social, religious and community services to his folks he was conferred recently the DPMS which carried the title

Dato by His Royal Highness, The Sultan of Selangor. We are justifiably proud of his achievement and extend our hearty congratulations to him.

On 28.01.07 I was invited to give a slide show on Kirkby to some 30 of his former students in his lovely home in Jalan Utara, P.J. I accepted his invitation with gladness without realizing what it entailed. So I spent the next two weeks searching and sorting out my collection of slides. Memories of Kirkby were getting dimmer with each passing year. The difficult part was arranging them into some coherent order to tell the full story of Kirkby.

I have always been interested in photography and I had taken lots of photographs during my 2 years stay in Kirkby from 1952 to 1954. Kirkby had given me an opportunity to use my camera on weekend trips to Liverpool. I took pictures at the bus terminal in Pierhead and also the Chinese Restaurant which offered Nanking Special to students at a reasonable price. I took pictures in Sefton Park, Knowsley Hall and nearer to K.C. the Kirkby Parish Church and Kirkby Woods in the vicinity. About 2 Km from K.C. along the country road to Omskirk there was a lovely farm house which had been converted into a beautiful tea house known as the Cottage. This was a perfect place to dine with one's girl friend if one came back late and missed high tea.

K.C. was unique in that one enjoyed much freedom in finding new frontiers and to move about freely as one wished. Kirkby gave me the opportunity to grow, explore and to practise my photography. To me Kirkby was more than a College, it was also my home. It was placed in a vast country full of friendly people and many beautiful sites. The only constraints were time and much needed financial support.

Piecing them together from boxes of disjointed pictures into a picture story was a daunting task with only a fading memory and a couple of tattered copies of the Panduan for guidance. It was challenging no doubt, but putting together some old pictures into a story was pure joy and nostalgia. It brought back many happy memories of the place which was fondly referred to as Kampong Kirkby. Many of the photos were taken for my own personal album. For the Kirkby Story to unfold without being too egoistic with the "I was there" looming in each photo was not easy. It was pared down to a minimum without them dominating. Whenever there was a missing photo for the story to move forward, a caption, a cartoon or a graphic was created to fill the missing gap.

Living 2 years away from home I learned to live in harmony across boundaries of race, colour, creed or religion. I feel at ease with fellow students, lecturers and their families and the entire College Staff from cleaners, gardeners and kitchen staff. We lived like one big family. They taught me about courage, self reliance, stamina and harmony. From them I learned about the meaning of life and Kirkby would always occupy a unique place in my heart. Together they defined the quintessence of Kirkby as eloquently as the daffodils did to Wordsworth in his beloved Lakeland.

Some very touching and emotional scenes were captured at the car park where the entire college staff were gathered to bid farewell to some returning students after completing their courses. They were boarding their bus for Lime Street Station in Liverpool. It was a tearful and sad farewell for two years had gone by so fast. On the other hand as one phase of one's life ended another one was about to begin. Now armed with a hard earned teacher's certificate we were just as excited to meet new challenges ahead of us. Kirkby had prepared us just for that. The Kirkby Story was retold undistorted on that Sunday afternoon in Cikgu Baharuddin's house. It was a very pleasant and nostalgic gathering. When we met we reminisced about the good old days. I was happy that my audience enjoyed the Kirkby Story as much as I did in preparing it.

Once again we proved that the old Greek philosopher, Heraclitus was wrong when he said that you could not step into the same river twice. He meant that time like the river flowed through only once and that the same water could not be returned to its source to flow again. We have the technology now and water can be made to flow again over the same spot. We also have the technology to store images in the form of photographic slides and we could bring back past events vicariously from the stored images.

The general comment from the group was that my Kirkby Story was retold faithfully and truthfully except that the players and backdrops were slightly different. This was to be expected because the daily dramas and screen-plays were as diverse as the number of different students represented there. Shakespeare was so right when he said, "All the world is a stage, and men and women merely players." Kirkby College was like a bangsawan stage set in Kampong Kirkby in the early 50s and 60s. And every student who passed through its portal had a small part in it.

The Kirkby Story presented on that memorable Sunday afternoon was just one version of it. And if each student were to write the story of Kirkby we will have at least 1500 versions of it. Our country thrives on diversity as it enriches our history, culture and the arts and Malaysia celebrates its diversity as it breeds creativity.

**CHAN BING FAI**  
(1952-1954)

*If only each Kirkbyite just write one short story about of their experience in Kirkby as stated by Bing Fai in his last paragraph above, our Newsletter will be a tremendous success.*