

Location	Fort Alice and Chinese Temple at the riverfront, Sri Aman	Ref No.	SA/WS/AR011
Subject	Site Visits & Mooncake Festival Celebration	Date	31.08.2014
		Attended by	Refer to attendance list attached
Time	2 to 3 pm - Site Visit Session 1; 4 to 5 pm - Site Visit Session 2; 5.30 to 6.00pm - Mooncake Festival Celebration	Recorded by	Text by <i>Daniel Boon</i> . Layout of images by <i>Goh Tze Hui</i> . Photographs contributed by <i>Daniel Boon, Chai Phay Yung, Ee Shu Yen, Nelly Soh and Tan Ting Huat</i> .
		Conducted by	John Ting/ Jonathan Ko
		Coordinated by	Goh Kaw Sze/ Mike Boon

Site Visits

On Merdeka Day, a site visit to Fort Alice was organised. The bi-sessional tours were conducted by John Ting, who has conducted extensive research on the forts in Sarawak. The first session (2 – 3.00pm) was attended by an unexpected but encouraging 38 Kuchingites (many of whom were first-timers), while the second session (4 – 5.00pm) by 48 local students and teachers who are regular participants in our programme.

During the two tours, which were identical in terms of content, John gave a historical account of the Fort based on his research. This was slightly different from the previous site visits, which focused largely on a technical approach on the construction techniques of the Fort.

John briefly described how he conducted his research, and proceeded to explain how his research was utilised to reconstruct the interior of the Fort. As the participants were guided through the entire Fort, some participants who have worked in the Fort before, when it was used as government administration centre, would occasionally share their experiences related to the Fort. Comments were traded, many of which led to laughter and nods, generating a lively atmosphere. During the second session, the students asked many questions about what the environment was like in the Fort during Brooke's era. John then painted a picture of what life could have been like in the Fort based on his research, to which the students responded with awe.



First-timers were fascinated by the history and construction details of Fort Alice.

Mr. Lim Kian Hock, a retired government officer shared his experience working in this fort.

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Group photo with the local students and regular participants.



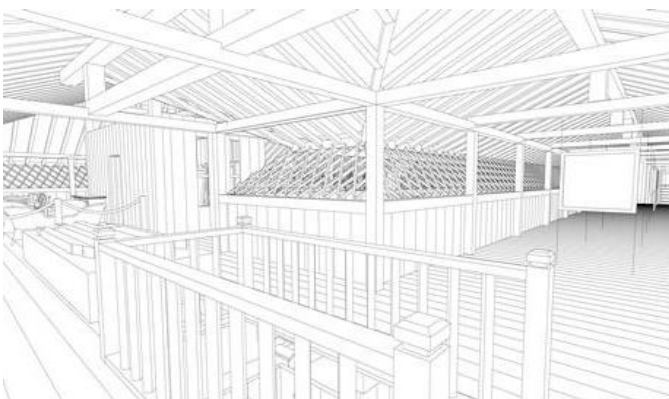
John Ting explaining the building structure to the students.

Reconstructed Interiors of Fort Alice

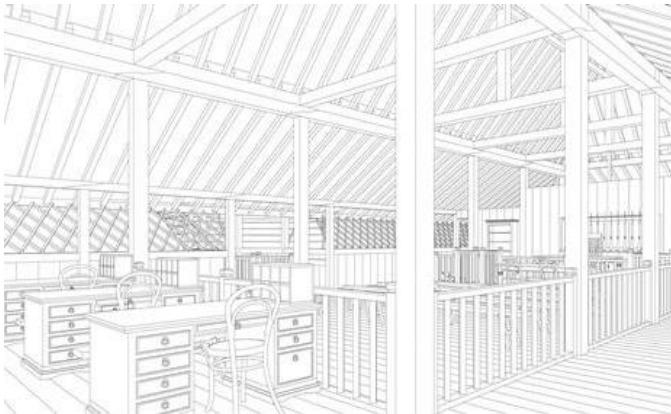
John’s research on the description of the interior of Fort Alice, gathered from texts and photos relating to the Fort, formed the basis for the reconstruction of the Fort’s interior, which will be exhibited when the Fort opens for public visitation. The reconstruction is important to allow visitors to have a better understanding of the atmosphere and function of the Fort during the Brookes’ era.

During the tours, John also shared the above descriptions with the participants, allowing them to imagine what the inside of the Fort used to look like. John has put his informed “imagination” into pictures, as shown below.

The following images show the reconstruction of the Fort’s interior envisaged by John Ting through perspective drawings and the reconstruction works progressing on site. The perspective drawings were prepared by John Ting and the photographs were taken by Tan Ting Huat.



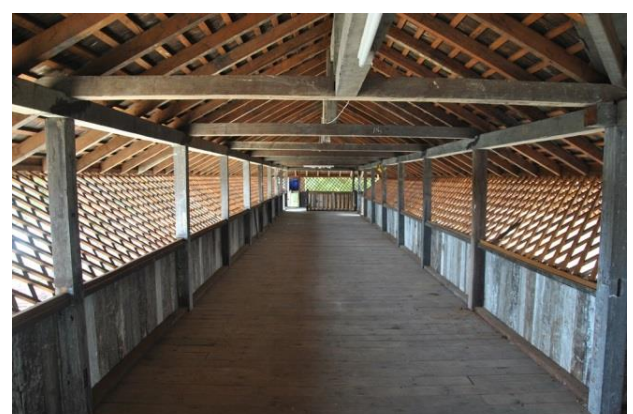
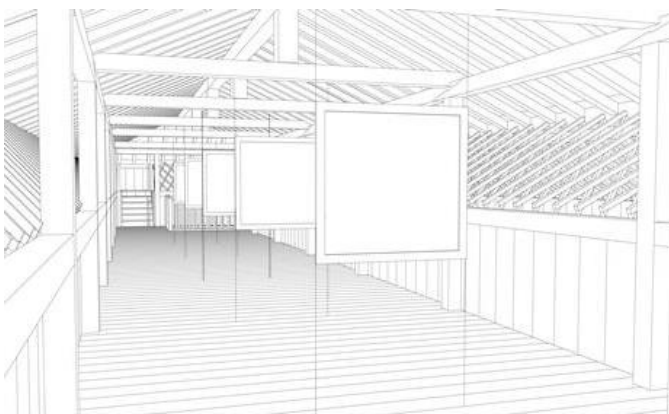
Perspective showing the Resident’s lounge and bedroom on far left. Exhibition panels will be mounted in the rear block on the right.



View of the courtroom with timber balustrades around the courtroom separate it from the officers' work desks.



View showing part of the Resident's lounge and bedroom (front left) and a glimpse of the courtroom beyond (far right).



The thinner block away from the river was the sleeping quarter of the Fort-men manning this Rajah's out-post. Exhibition panels will be installed to display the history of the Forts built by the Brookes in Sarawak.

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Public Talk on the Ceramics found in Fort Alice site

After the tours, a buffet dinner was served at the Chinese Temple at the waterfront, before a talk given by Jonathan Ko to the public at 6.30pm. Jonathan is an Archaeologist trained in Northwest University in Xi'an, China and USM in Penang. In conjunction with the upcoming Mooncake Festival, Jonathan's talk, in Mandarin, centered on the depiction of the Festival on ceramics.

Unlike the common myths and legends, Jonathan has interestingly traced the origin of the Mooncake Festival from an archaeological perspective. He showed examples of antique Chinese porcelains decorated with paintings and poetry related to the festival. The talk was very well received, and even had to be translated into English for the benefit of English-speaking audience.

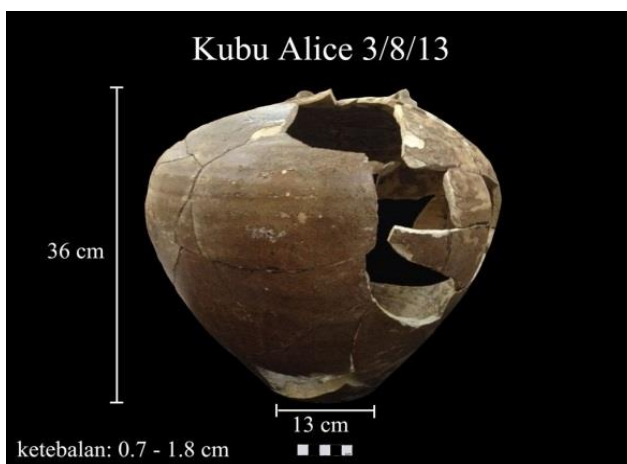


Public lecture given by Jonathan Ko.



An example of Mooncake Festival themed painting and poetry (貂蟬拜月) depicted on porcelain.

In addition, he also talked about how he reconstructed the broken pieces of ceramics excavated from Fort Alice site, at the request of Jabatan Muzium Sarawak. Jonathan further speculated that these may be the objects of secondary burials of the natives with high social standing, based on the geography of the site and the nature of the ceramic pieces found. An example of excavated stoneware jar reconstructed by Jonathan is shown in the following photos.



A stoneware jar excavated from Fort Alice site, reconstructed by Jonathan Ko.

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The organisers would like to thank NS Bluescope Lysaght (Sarawak) Sdn Bhd for their continuous support throughout this "Reminiscing Forgotten Treasure...Simanggang" programme. NS Bluescope Lysaght (Sarawak) Sdn Bhd has donated a further RM10,000.00 to the programme. A mock cheque was handed over to the organiser at the end of the talk by Lydia Toh, President of NS Bluescope Lysaght (Sarawak) Sdn Bhd.

Thereafter, visitors and children, tailed by their parents, went on a lantern procession along the waterfront and Taman Panorama Benak. The teachers who went along led the children in singing Chinese songs related to the festival. Everyone was then treated to mooncakes and local pomelo at the Chinese temple, marking the end of the evening's event. Needless to say, the day was one to be remembered both for its enlightenment and cheerfulness.

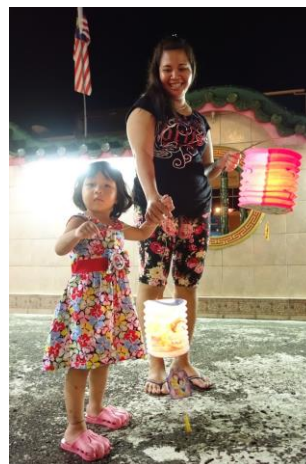
Unfortunately, following the end of the events during the night, one of the first-time public participants from Kuching was involved in a road accident. Mike Boon and Goh Kaw Sze, with the help of some locals, provided support when needed throughout. Thankfully, the participant did not suffer serious injuries. The organisers would like to take this opportunity to encourage future participants to take extra precaution on personal safety, but hope that this will not discourage future participation. Greater efforts will be taken to ensure higher safety of participants in future events.



Lydia Toh (second left), President of NS Bluescope Lysaght (Sarawak) Sdn Bhd, handing over sponsorship money to Chai Phay Yung (second right), Secretary of SHS, witnessed by Goh Kaw Sze (first left) and Mike Boon (first right) .



Lantern procession started from the temple to Fort Alice along Batang Lupar.



Both kids and adults were having fun in the lantern procession.

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