

MV Monthly

The latest news from our volunteers and the museum

Nr 5 - March 2014

2013 was a good year!

Better late than never: the statistics for 2013. Last year, we guided a total number of 1974 people around the museum, 430 more than in 2012 and 9 times more people than in 2007 when the Museum Volunteers first started!

Missing the Islamic ceramics?

As you might have noticed, the Islamic ceramics in Gallery B, next to the diorama of the conversion to Islam, have gone missing. Last month, the glass of the showcase broke and the museum is busy getting it replaced. The 'magic square' and other ceramics will be back as soon as possible...

Merci Beaucoup to the French!

The French volunteers are a very active group and we all profit from that: they are one of the biggest contributors to our funds, with their 'Regard Croises' activities. 20 March will be another example. It's 'Night at the Museum' with a (French) talk on forests in Malaysia.

Please don't disappear...

If there is any reason whatsoever why you won't be able to guide, temporarily or permanently, please don't forget to inform Ashok and/or Karen. It saves us a lot of guessing. Please mail ashok_sheth@hotmail.com

Save the date: 15 March

A group of 55 trainees is ready to start their guiding. On the 15th of March they will be receiving their well-earned Certificate of Attendance. Yes, that is slightly different than before. More on page 2.

Sahabat Support Center spends a day at the Museum

It was the day they were waiting for, from last September... Wednesday 19 February they finally came: 45 students and their six teachers from the Sahabat Support Center. Laurence Maille was there.



"The Sahabat Support Center (SSC) falls under the Malaysia Social Research Institute. As a support center for refugees and their families, SSC has been established in Kuala Lumpur, close to the areas of residency of urban refugees from small scattered communities. The Center provides education for refugees (adult, teenagers and children), a kindergarten, a resource centre, and a family health care programme, among others. It is expected that through providing these services to the refugees it will be possible to have a direct and positive effect on their wellbeing.

The 45 students that came to the museum that day all have different stories that brought them to Malaysia, stories that are part of the history of Syria, Iran, Palestine, Afghanistan, Pakistan and Liberia.

Now they were about to discover a bit more about the history of the country that welcomed them and their family.

Interesting challenge

The day started early, especially for Fiza who made the trip to the SSC in Ampang in the bus (so graciously provided for by the JMM) that brought the students from there to the Museum. When they arrived, the children looked very serious and concentrated.

The group was very mixed, with children from grades 5 up to 11, so it was quite a challenge to

make the visit interesting for each and every one of the students. Dividing time according to their ages, we formed two smaller groups of students.

Look, find and tengkolok

The first group went inside the Museum to do an adapted version of the Look and Find activity. They were assisted by four Museum Volunteers, one in each gallery, to help them and answer the many, many interesting questions the students came up with.

The other group headed to the Discovery Room where the museum staff had prepared a presentation and activities with a tengkolok. With the help of two volunteers, there is no more secret on how to fold one!

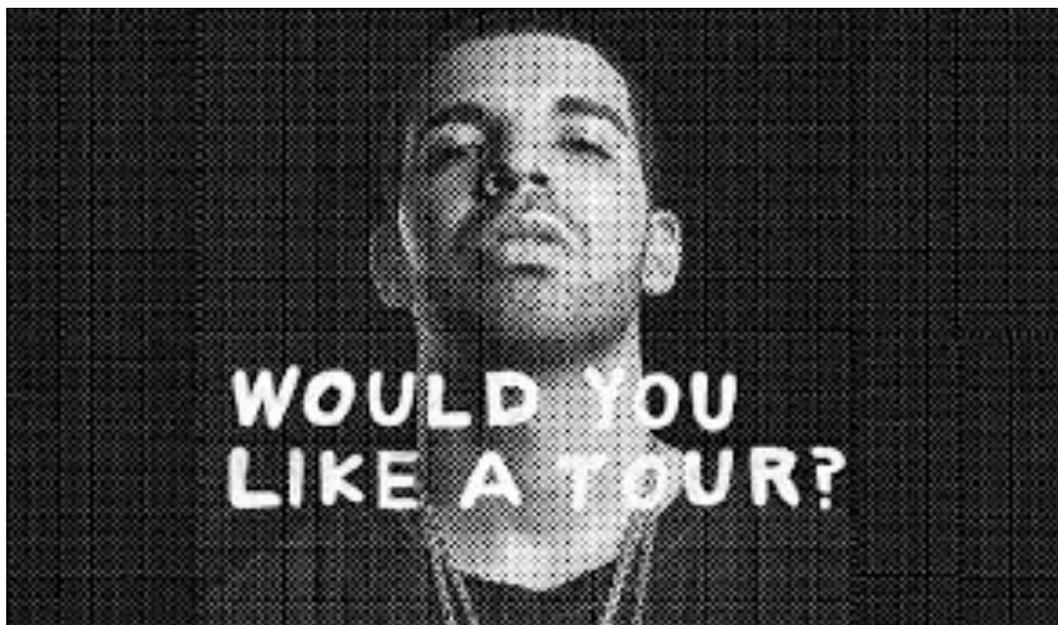
After one hour, the groups exchanged activities and at 12 pm it was time to have a well deserved picnic. When it was time to go back, there were no more serious faces. Everybody was pretty excited and all smiles. For them, it had been a first contact with the museum and some of them will definitely be coming back in a smaller group for a guided tour.

Thank you to Mr Jamil and Ms Fiza for their support and JMM for having provided the bus and lunch.

Thank you to Ms Kiew, Ms Noor, Mr Badrolshisham from Muzium Negara for their educational program.

And a big thank you to our MV's Ursula, Serena Yee, Juliette M, Norisan, Marie-Andree and Kalai, and an extra special thank you to Carole who coordinated the volunteers!"

Laurence Maille



Where to pick up guests?

It's not always easy to find people that want to take a tour - a missing banner and the change of entrance haven't made it easier. But why stick to the front desk? You might find it easier to 'pick up' guests if you wait for them near the staircase or, probably even better, at the entrance outside! That way, they won't wander off in one of the galleries without having even seen you. But: don't forget to fill in the book. That's still at the front desk.

Meet Kalai: our new schools-coordinator

We are very pleased to announce that Kaliammal Shumugam will be taking over Cay Maru's task as local schools-coordinator.



Kaliammal, or Kalai as we may call her, graduated from University Malaya in the field of International Relations. Currently, she is teaching History at various schools to children from Form 1 to Form 5. "I'm looking forward to sharing my interest in history to all, especially to children", she says.

If you would like to help Kalai with her activities for the local schools, please do not hesitate to let her know. Her e-mail address is kalai5257@gmail.com

We'd like thank Cay for all her hard work during all those years and to Kalai: good luck!

'New Style' Graduation Day

On 15 March, a new group of volunteers will be ready to start guiding. Of course, there will be a Graduation Day to commemorate the end of their training - but this year, the new guides will not get their Graduation Certificate straight away.

Instead, the 19 Japanese, 24 Weekday and 15 Weekend guides will be receiving an 'Attendance Certificate' to show that they have been present at all the required training days and have done their compulsory presentations. They will receive the official Graduation Certificate after six months of 'satisfactory guiding performance', as it's officially called.

In those six months, three months of mentorship are included. In these three months the new guides are expected to be present at three of their mentor's tours and/or co-guide on their mentor's tours. The new guides can profit from their mentor's experience by watching them do their tours, use the mentor as a 'back up' while they practise their skills in one or more of the galleries and take note of the extra feedback they will receive.

Of course, we all wish our new guides lots of happy guiding!

Missed the Beautiful Beads? Read and use in Gallery A!

The special exposition on those beautiful beads has come to an end - but we did learn some nice little facts you can easily use in Gallery A!

People have used beads to adorn themselves, their clothing and their accessories as long as they have roamed the earth. The oldest beads found on the Malaysian peninsula are believed to have originated from India. The first Malaysian-made beads date back from the 7th century and were found in Kuala Selinsing, Perak.

Beads have always been a symbol of wealth, depicting the social status of the person wearing them. But some people, like the Orang Ulu, believed that some beads had special powers. Those beads had a special place in ceremonial rituals and would not be traded for any price in the world!

Other beads were treated like gold, especially in Sarawak in the olden days. You bought beads when you could afford it, and you would sell them again if you needed the money for your daily life. Fifty *bao tulong buror* or straw beads equalled the value of one buffalo!

Nowadays, beads are cherished more for their sentimental value, the uniqueness and variety of decorative motifs, sizes and colours. Although they're small, their mesmerizing colours and patterns will always draw people to them. They are never out of fashion.

