



## Nothing but Smiles at Han Chin Pet Soo

by Ian Anderson

"Time flies when you are having fun", the old English idiom says, and there is no doubt that it has applied to the IpohWorld team since I wrote about Han Chin Pet Soo, the home of the Hakka Miners' Club in issue 22 of this publication. It seems like only yesterday, but it was actually 15 months ago; and in the intervening period, the team has managed the restoration of the building (complete with period bay windows), and built an exhibition about the club which turns 122 years old this year. Today therefore, we are smiling as we survey what we have actually achieved.

At the outset, this was managed by IpohWorld as a community project with all finance and specialist skills being supplied by Ipoh people. The key players were Kinta Properties which financed the restoration, Tenby Schools Ipoh which paid for the artifacts, students from Perak Institute of Art (PIA) who painted 1,000 square feet of murals in the building, and specialist contractor Y Cheng Thymes who did most of the restoration and exhibition construction.





But we are not the only people smiling, for after a truly enjoyable trial evening for invited guests, we opened to the public on 5th February this year and have had a generally good response for a new attraction tucked away in the depths of Old Town, Ipoh. Those that have managed to find us have undoubtedly had a good time and hundreds of smiling faces have joined the ranks of Facebook albums. You can see some of these here. We have also received great coverage from the Ipoh Echo, the Malay Mail and Nanyang Siang Pau. So the word is out in town that this is a great new place to visit, with something for everybody, with displays in three languages, Malay, Chinese and English throughout.

Speaking of languages, our modus operandi is to run fixed tours of about one hour with a 30 minute free time for photographs. The tours are taken in the most appropriate language for the group and this can normally include Malay, Mandarin, Cantonese, Tamil and English. With advance notice by request we can also include Punjabi and possibly Japanese. Regarding the latter I would like to thank one Japanese group

who were very helpful in giving advice about Japanese costume and tradition. We always welcome such constructive comments.

So far this project has been a happy experience for both guests and guides alike and nothing but laughter and compliments have filled the air. Just taking a sample from those featured in the photographs, we heard: "Fantastic", "A beautiful building, wonderfully restored", "The best attraction in Ipoh", "Lovely restoration project. Hope you can do more like this.", "Nice heritage for the younger generation to learn and ponder on.", "An awesome and fantastic place. Keep up the Good Work.", "Very happy to have visited HCPS, It reminds me of the old days and the atmosphere during the mining years", "It reminds me of when my mum was a Dulang Washer." And from the younger guests, "Cool", "Awesome". What greater praise could one wish for?

So why not come along and practice your smile. It is easy to do so at Han Chin Pet Soo.

### Han Chin Pet Soo Building

No. 3, Jalan Bijeh Timah (Traacher Street), 30100 Ipoh.

Tours by appointment/booking. Tuesday to Friday: 9.30am, 11.30am and 2.30pm.

Saturdays & Sundays: 9.30am, 11.30am, 1.30pm and 3.30pm. Closed on Monday for maintenance.



Online tour booking via

[www.ipohworld.org/reservation](http://www.ipohworld.org/reservation), but if you turn up in time for a tour and there are free spaces (up to the maximum of 20 guests) you are welcome to join on a first-come-first-served basis.

Entry to the building and the guided tour are currently free of charge, but there is an old red postbox in which we ask you to place a meaningful donation. All of these will go towards maintaining this dignified and beautiful building that forms a unique part of Ipoh's heritage.