

# Nostalgia Memories of Merdeka

While Tunku Abdul Rahman was doing his famous Merdeka performance in the Stadium in Kuala Lumpur on 31 August 1957, literally thousands of small celebrations were taking place, in towns, villages, tin mines and plantations right across the peninsula. This was probably the greatest celebration in this country for all time. Not really surprising as this was that day that Malaya gained independence from its British Colonial Masters. The day the Federation of Malaya became a nation in its own right.



*It's Merdeka at Kramat Tin*

One such tin mine in Perak was Kramat Tin in Bidor. The Allison family from England lived on the mine, which was well guarded by the Home Guard as the Communist insurgents were very active in Perak, then. Communal cooking was the order of the day for all the local staff and the family still remember that the two youngest in the family, Alison and Trish used to go down to the kitchen at lunchtime and after everyone had been given their meals, the girls would coax the cook to let them each have a big piece of the rice crust from the pans. They loved it.

Life for the children in those days was very different from the experiences of today's young people. Of course, there was school, but no tuition, and on the mine, certainly no dress code

for children, minimum clothing was normal for young boys and girls and nobody even noticed!

Turning to Merdeka on the mine, Alison remembers:

“The Federation of Malaya achieved its independence from British Colonial rule at the stroke of midnight on 30th August 1957. For Malaya “Merdeka” had come at last! The formal ceremony took place at the newly-built Merdeka Stadium in Kuala Lumpur when The Duke of Gloucester, representing HM The Queen, presented Tunku Abdul Rahman with the instrument of independence. However, there were thousands of small ceremonies that took place across the country and Kramat Tin was no exception.”



*Kramat Tin on Parade*

The entire staff of the mine gathered outside the local staff’s quarters (the *kongsi*) a little before 9am. On a table in front of them lay a new Federation of Malaya flag, close to a hastily erected flag pole. The senior European manager led the gathering in prayers for the future of the Federation. He then gave a short speech. At 9.30 sharp a mixed group raised the flag to the top of the pole where it fluttered in a light breeze. At that moment Kramat Tin was

in unison with the entire population of the country wherever they were. Independence was a reality!

The Allison family then went home on leave after Merdeka. During this time Roddy got notification that various tin mines were being closed and he was made redundant. He then applied and got a job with Harrisons and Crosfield, Golden Hope Rubber Estate Limited working in the Palm Oil Industry and the family returned to independent Malaya in 1958. They remained with Golden Hope until 1963.