

Headline **Museums with a focus**
 Date **23 May 2010**
 MediaTitle **Sunday Star**
 Section **Star Education**
 Journalist **N/A**
 Frequency **Weekly**
 Circ / Read **320,964 / 1,072,000**

Language **English**
 Page No **E1,8,9**
 Article Size **2281 cm²**
 Color **Full Color**
 ADValue **85,360**
 PRValue **256,079**



Showrooms of special exhibits

The country does not only have museums with ancient artifacts of historical importance, but also other more contemporary ones dedicated to automobiles, telecommunication and forestry.

By **TAN SHIOW CHIN**
educate@thestar.com.my

DURING my school days, I remember always getting excited whenever my class or a club had a field trip or *lawatan sambil belajar*.

Not only was it a chance to hang out and have fun with my friends, but also an opportunity to get out of the classroom and visit new places.

Headline **Museums with a focus**
 Date **23 May 2010**
 MediaTitle **Sunday Star**
 Section **Star Education**
 Journalist **N/A**
 Frequency **Weekly**
 Circ / Read **320,964 / 1,072,000**

Language **English**
 Page No **E1,8,9**
 Article Size **2281 cm²**
 Color **Full Color**
 ADValue **85,360**
 PRValue **256,079**

Generally, the favoured destinations for such field trips were national monuments, places of interest like the Petronas Twin Towers and Menara Kuala Lumpur, historical sites, and educational sites like zoos, art galleries and museums.

Museums, in particular, were quite popular as they combined history with education through displays of actual artifacts or dioramas.

While most people would have heard of *Muzium Negara* (National Museum), there are actually a number of lesser-known museums in the Klang Valley that focus on specific subjects.

Crazy over cars

As you approach the Welcome Centre of the Sepang International Circuit (SIC), it is quite hard to miss the big signboard of the National Automobile Museum or *Muzium Automobil Nasional*.

Opened in March 2004, the museum occupies two floors and has three sections.

The first section, as one enters the museum to the left, is on the SIC and the various motorsport events it hosts.

Aside from the well-known Formula 1 Petronas Malaysian Grand Prix, the circuit also holds the Malaysian Motorcycle Grand Prix (MotoGP) and the Super GT International Series, among others.

Vintage car enthusiasts will enjoy the second section, also on the ground floor, which displays various antique cars that were donated to, or bought by the museum.

Each car is accompanied by a brief explanation of its history in both English and Bahasa Malaysia, as well as a summary of its specifications, like engine capacity, power and top speed.

The oldest car displayed there is a 1904 Brush Mobile, manufactured by the Brush Electrical Engineering Company in Leicester, England.

Among the other exhibits are a 1954 Jaguar D-Type, a 1960 Austin Healey 3000, a 1923 Ford Speedster and a 1935 Alvis Tourer.

Up on the second floor is where visitors can get a sense of the history of Malaysia's local automobile industry.

The display starts with DRB-Hicom, which helped develop Malaysia's first national motorcycle Karisma, and locally-made truck

Perkasa.

Moving along the gallery, one will see exhibits on the coun-

try's first car manufacturer Proton (Perusahaan Otomobil Nasional Bhd), Bufori — an Australian luxury car company, which relocated to Malaysia in the mid-1990s, local motorcycle manufacturer Modenas (Motosikal dan Enjin Nasional Sdn Bhd), and Perodua, Malaysia's second car manufacturer.

Along with videos and explanations on each company and their products, there are also displays of the vehicles produced by these companies.

Although the museum is not very big — an estimated visiting time of about 45 minutes should be sufficient to go through the museum thoroughly — it is a good place to get up close to vintage cars (but no touching allowed!).

The museum is open from 9am to 6pm daily, except for Hari Raya Aidilfitri and Hari Raya Haji.

Admission is free, and school group tours can be arranged through the museum head Intan Fadzri by calling 03-8787 4759/1499 or e-mailing intanfadzri@jmm.gov.my.

Organised together with a tour of the circuit, which can be arranged in advance with the SIC, a visit to the museum should appeal to both students and teachers interested in cars and racing.

Getting in touch

Almost every other person nowadays — even students — owns a handphone.

Many people would have at least one e-mail account, and at the very least, there is always the regular push-button landline telephone.

Not surprising then that there is a whole museum dedicated to the history of telecommunications in Malaysia.

Comprising of two floors and three galleries, *Muzium Telekom*

(National Telecommunications Museum) is housed in a gazetted historical building on Jalan Raja Chulan, Kuala Lumpur.

The building was constructed in 1928 to house one of the manual telephone exchanges serving the area at the time, and eventually became the Selangor Telekom Headquarters in the 1960s.

Much of the original equipment that was once used in the building is now part of the display at the museum.

As one enters the museum, the first gallery is dedicated to historical, and even pre-historical, means of communication, like cave paintings, *batu bersurat* (inscribed stone), and hollow wood drums.

Do not be surprised to see a vase and a piece of *songket* among the exhibits in that gallery, as items like those were used to communicate messages or stories through the patterns or drawings on them.

The next gallery traces the path of modern telecommunication methods through the country's transition from Malaya to Malaysia.

Starting with the introduction of the telegraph and Morse code to Malaya in 1876, the exhibits take visitors through the development of wireless telecommunication, from radios to telephones and teleprinters.

The displays are a combination of original equipment once used by Telekom, dioramas, explanatory notes and reproductions of old photographs.

Visitors can also access audio explanations and reproductions of typical telecommunications scenarios through mock phones located at the various displays.

The upper level of the museum is dedicated to modern telecommunications via satellite and fibreoptic technology.

As with the National Automobile Museum, *Muzium Telekom* is also small and can be visited thoroughly in about 45 minutes.

Aside from just visiting the museum, school groups can also arrange to participate in the "Night at the Museum" programme, where students get to sleep over at the museum.

The programme also includes educational and fun activities organised at Menara Kuala Lumpur and the Bukit Nanas Forest Reserve, which are near the museum.

Opening hours are from 9am to 5pm daily, except for public holidays. Admission is free. Guided tours can also be arranged by calling the museum at 03-2031 9966.

The wonders of wood

The Forest Research Institute Malaysia (FRIM) in Kepong, Selangor, is well-known for its nature trails

Headline **Museums with a focus**
Date **23 May 2010**
MediaTitle **Sunday Star**
Section **Star Education**
Journalist **N/A**
Frequency **Weekly**
Circ / Read **320,964 / 1,072,000**

Language **English**
Page No **E1,8,9**
Article Size **2281 cm²**
Color **Full Color**
ADValue **85,360**
PRValue **256,079**

and canopy walkway.

Less well-known perhaps, is its museum and research gallery.

Established in 1929, the FRIM Museum has been around for as long as the institute itself.

Beginning last January, the museum underwent a one-year renovation to create the brand-new FRIM Research Gallery on the museum's upper floor.

The gallery showcases samples of the many products, prototypes and specimens from the institute's various research sections, along with explanatory posters.

Among the interesting exhibits are two doors made out of bamboo, a model of how furniture is tested for strength and durability (FRIM is the only European-certified furniture testing centre in South-East Asia), and a diorama of various tropical fungi, which consist of real specimens.

The gallery also has biodiversity and biotechnology sections.

Visitors can view mounted insect specimens, as well as seeds from various tropical plants in the biodiversity section.

The biotechnology area showcases commercial products that FRIM has developed with different industrial partners.

There are also two sections of the gallery devoted to the history of the institute, as well as the awards it has won in the last decade.

Meanwhile, downstairs, in the museum proper, visitors can get up close to various artifacts made out of wood.

These range from traditional boats and drums to weapons like spears, bird traps and agricultural equipment.

Make sure to take note of the 64-metre-long *rotan* suspended around the top of the room, as well as the

blocks of different types of timber wood lining the room's columns.

At an average pace, a visit to the museum and research gallery can be completed in about an hour.

While the museum itself is free-of-charge, visitors to FRIM must pay an entrance fee of RM5 for a car with its driver, plus an additional RM1 for each passenger, or RM1 each for walk-in visitors.

Students, however, can go in for free.

To make the most of a field trip to FRIM, schools can combine a visit to the museum with recreational activities like trekking, cycling or having a picnic at the Kepong Botanical Gardens, and visits to the institute's various arboreta, where students can observe the different species of trees that grow in Malaysia.

Check these out

Here is a list of a few other interesting museums that cater to specific interests in the Klang Valley:

Biomedical Museum

Located at the Institute for Medical Research (IMR), Jalan Pahang, Kuala Lumpur, the most interesting aspect of this museum are the preserved specimens of various animals and diseased human body parts. The museum also showcases the history and research achievements of IMR.

Royal Malaysian Air Force (RMAF) Museum

Located at the RMAF base at Jalan Lapangan Terbang Lama, Kuala Lumpur, aviation buffs will enjoy being able to get up close to the various aircraft displayed at the museum, as well as learning about the history of the RMAF.

Orang Asli Museum

Located in Gombak, Selangor, this museum is an excellent place to learn all about the various Orang Asli tribes in Malaysia, particularly their way of life and their contributions to the nation.

Bank Negara Money Museum

Located within the Bank Negara complex at Jalan Kuching, Kuala Lumpur, visitors can check out the exhibits of old money and learn about the history of currency in Malaysia. The museum is currently undergoing renovations and will open early next year.

Headline **Museums with a focus**
Date **23 May 2010**
MediaTitle **Sunday Star**
Section **Star Education**
Journalist **N/A**
Frequency **Weekly**
Circ / Read **320,964 / 1,072,000**

Language **English**
Page No **E1,8,9**
Article Size **2281 cm²**
Color **Full Color**
ADValue **85,360**
PRValue **256,079**



The Brush Mobile (left), displayed alongside a Jaguar D-Type 1954 and an Austin Healy 3000 1960, is the oldest exhibit at the National Automobile Museum. — IBRAHIM MOHTAR/The Star



Teleprinters, displayed here at Muzium Telekom, were the predecessors of fax machines in the 1960s in Malaysia. — KEVIN TAN / The Star

Headline **Museums with a focus**
Date **23 May 2010**
MediaTitle **Sunday Star**
Section **Star Education**
Journalist **N/A**
Frequency **Weekly**
Circ / Read **320,964 / 1,072,000**

Language **English**
Page No **E1,8,9**
Article Size **2281 cm²**
Color **Full Color**
ADValue **85,360**
PRValue **256,079**



Some of the equipment (foreground) used by technicians to maintain the telephone exchange housed in the Muzium Telekom building, before it became a museum.



A section of the base of a 200-year-old keranji tree trunk (foreground) displayed at the FRIM Museum, with a meraga tree trunk in the background. — MOHD SAHAR MISNI / The Star

Headline **Museums with a focus**
Date **23 May 2010**
MediaTitle **Sunday Star**
Section **Star Education**
Journalist **N/A**
Frequency **Weekly**
Circ / Read **320,964 / 1,072,000**

Language **English**
Page No **E1,8,9**
Article Size **2281 cm²**
Color **Full Color**
ADValue **85,360**
PRValue **256,079**



Some of the equipment on display at Muzium Telekom. They were used by railway station masters to manage the movement of trains.



The Karisma motorcycle and Perkasa truck are part of the DRB-Hicom display at the National Automobile Museum.