HERITAGE IN
OUR BACKYARD
- or how we started telling the
stories of Kent Ridge
Kent Ridge
Literature, old street directories, web searches, National Archive photos, conversations
Flora and Fauna
Ecology of Kent Ridge - a classroom since the 60's
Adinandra belukar of Kent Ridge
Bat dispersal of Adinandra belukar
Bats on the Ridge
The Tembusu (*Fagraea fragrans*) grove
White leaved fig (*Ficus grossularioides*), leaves and fruit
Simpoh ayer (Dillenia suffruticosa), flower and fruits
Simpoh ayer (Dillenia suffruticosa), fruit, points upwards
Senduduk
(Melastoma malabathricum)
Rubber (*Hevea brasiliensis*)
Rubber (*Hevea brasiliensis*) - seeds
Fauna
Plantain squirrel  
(*Callosciurus notatus*)

Moult skin of a cicada
“Last night (or early this morning) I saw a 1.5 m long adult banded krait in the middle of the road...”

“Guess what? Saw another beautiful snake at 3am. A very beautiful 2 m long rock/ reticulated python juvenile.”

“A 3.5m long (8cm girth) glistening adult rock python.”
Oriental Whip Snake (Ahaetulla prasina)
Flying dragon
(*Draco volans*)
Changeable lizard (Calotes versicolor)

Praying mantis
Green Crested Lizard
(Bronchocela cristatella)
White-crested Laughing Thrush
(Garrulax leucolophus)
Hornbills on the Ridge

Photo by Hugh Tan

©Kuet Shao Heng
Black Bazas migrating. Photos by Laurence Poh.
Ecology of Kent Ridge - a classroom since the 60’s
Kok Oi Yee
Oi Yee, a Kent Ridge guide since 1959!
Kent Ridge
Oral History reconstruction

Fig. 2 - Sketch map of Kent Ridge and environs, circa. 1960's, based on the impressions of Mr. Abdul Latiff bin Zainal and Ms. Kak Oi Yee.
Pasir Panjang
& the Southern Islands
1st Dec 1950: Houses on stilts, Pasir Panjang
20 May 1950: View of a prawn farm at Pasir Panjang
Pasir Panjang, c.1911

National Archives of Singapore
Angular coastline
Pasir Panjang
South Buona Vista Road, c.1925
On of the earliest motorcycle races on the Gap,
1st September, 1927
Motorcycle race on the Gap, 1st September, 1927
1st August 1954
Pagoda with Buddha,
Haw Par Villa,
Pasir Panjang.
Tour of Pasir Panjang Village by PM Lee Kuan Yew, 21 Jul 1963
Fire at kampung, 5 mile junction, Pasir Panjang, 27 Nov 1959: Firemen and volunteers battling the blaze.
Fire at kampung, 5 mile junction, Pasir Panjang, 27 Nov 1959:
Lucky Bedah, rescued by her uncle in the nick of time.
Fire at kampung, 5 mile junction, Pasir Panjang, 27 Nov 1959: escaped with his crutches.
19 Jan 1961:
A fire gutted Pasir Panjang Brick Factory
Konfrontasi -
an Indonesian infiltrator captured in Pasir Panjang mangroves,
29 Dec 1964
National University of Singapore, > 1975

National Archives of Singapore
Kent Ridge, a colonial name
BY GRACIOUS CONSENT OF
HER MAJESTY QUEEN ELIZABETH II
THIS RIDGE IS NAMED
KENT RIDGE
BY
THE GOVERNOR OF SINGAPORE HE SIR JOHN NICKELL KCMG
IN COMMEMORATION
OF THE TOUR OF THE QUEEN IN THE COMPANY OF
H.R.H. THE DUCHESS OF KENT
AND
H.R.H. THE DUKE OF KENT
ON 4 OCTOBER 1947
By the gracious consent of
Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II
This Ridge was named
KENT RIDGE
BY
The Governor of Singapore HE Sir John Nicoll KCMG
To Commemorate
The visit paid to the Army in Singapore by
HRH. The Duchess of Kent
and
HRH. The Duke of Kent,
on 3 October 1952
The first Duke of Kent died on 25 August 1942 in an aeroplane crash in Scotland while on active service with the RAF.
The second Duke of Kent, cousin of QE2, was 17 years old in 1952 when he visited Singapore.
Princess Marina of Greece was of Greek and Russian descent, also a princess of Greece and Denmark. 1906 - 1968

But why rename the ridge?
The
Battle of
Pasir Panjang
Sharing the Heritage
A Kent Ridge Heritage

Impressions of the Ridge (updated, 20th September 2002)

The Ridge has a significant place in our natural heritage, as it is the most accessible area in Singapore to see the hardy plants of the Adinandra belukar ecosystem. 'Belukar' is Malay for secondary forest, and this one is dominated in parts by the Tiup-Tiup tree (Adinandra dumosa). Generations of biology undergraduates from NUS have been trained here, and recreational walks on the ridge were conducted in the 1960's by one of your guides!

Plant diversity on dry and nutrient-poor Ridge, cut off from the seed bank of a primary forest is quite low. As a result, you will begin to recognise the common plant species of the Adinandra belukar by the time we reach the Gap. In Kent Ridge Park, you will see larger and older examples of plants compared to the badly disturbed campus forest.

My favourite plant is the Tembusu tree with its sweet-scented flowers. Did you know these are planted all around campus, near Arts Canteen? If you stop to smell the flowers, you will get a whiff of a wonderful perfume. It is meant for creatures of night and has weakened by day. At dusk, however, the perfume makes some nervous, as they think it wafting from the ghost 'Pontianak' - merely the Tembusu trying to attract some moths!

Snakes are regularly seen, but only in the middle of the night these days. 3am is a good time to encounter a python crossing the road at his favourite place, as one of our postgraduate students, Sasi Nayar, will attest! Another exciting sighting has been
Introduction -- Adinandra belukar

The type of vegetation found on the Ridge is known as Adinandra belukar, as Adinandra dumosa is its characteristically most commonly found tree, and 'belukar' is Malay for secondary forest. Secondary forest is forest that grows on ground that has been previously cleared of its original vegetation (primary forest) or disturbed significantly. It is different from primary vegetation in many ways. For example, the species of plants growing in secondary forests are different from those in primary forests, and are more adapted to life in its different conditions. These different conditions include increased light intensity, lower humidity, higher temperatures, etc. In order to survive and be successful, plants in secondary forests also have to grow quickly and be easily and widely dispersed, so that they may colonize newly disturbed ground before other plants do. Adinandra belukar is found on degraded land, whereas another type of belukar, Trema belukar, dominated by Trema sp. and similar plants is found in naturally occurring gaps in primary forest, where the soil is still rich in nutrients and not degraded.

Adinandra belukar was first qualitatively (1992). Wee and Corlett (1986) have given Singapore, and Corlett (1991) has described secondary vegetation based on studies in the distinct differences from primary forest. Fungi per species per unit area than primary for much greater. The belukar is highly exposed during the night it is very cool. It is much humidity is 62% whereas primary forests are lacking various nutrients due to its previous and organic material as well. In short, belukar various aspects are explored in detail below.

Wildlife on the Ridge - a diary of encounters

To figure out the locations, please see: The NUS Interactive Campus Map: locations are between grids C3 and E7; click to enlarge.

Who's who:
Sasi Nayar, a postgraduate student with Reef Ecology Lab, Department of Biological Sciences & Tropical Marine Science Institute, NUS. Works late nights in campus; Kelvin Lim, Curator of Reptiles and Amphibians, Raffles Museum of Biodiversity Research, NUS. Tony O'Demspey, naturalist and snake-hunter, also known a Orang Ular. Victor Muthu, first year undergraduate who spotted a hornbill on the ridge, Jeffrey Low, his; Alvin Wong,

From: Sasi Nayar <scip8370@nus.edu.sg>
Date: Sun, 17 Feb 2002 04:51:32 +0800
To: "otterman@sivasothi.com" <otterman@sivasothi.com>, Lim Kok Peng
Kelvin <kelvinlim@nus.edu.sg>
The Kent Ridge Commemorative Plaque

"During a visit to this military area by the then Duchess and Duke of Kent (I believe they were mother and son), the area was named Kent Ridge. The Duchess was the Princess Marina of Greece, and the son was a Prince Edward Duke of Kent. The missing husband and father was a Prince George, who had died in 1942 in a plane crash.

A commemorative plaque, of inscribed marble laid on granite, was erected on 3rd October 1952 to commemorate their visit. It is still visible on Kent Ridge, at the junction of Prince George’s Park and South Buona Vista Road. The inscriptions bear two arrows, one pointing to Marina Hill and the other, to Prince Edward Point in NUS." - N. Simpoh

"This is particularly interesting as it predates the NUS developments on Kent Ridge. This commemorative plaque, which is slightly chipped off at the top, has 3 marble slabs mounted on a concrete plinth. The marble slabs in the upper half have inscriptions with arrows, one pointing to Marina Hill (OSO) and the other Prince Edward Point in NUS.

Inscribed on the lower marble slab:
“By the gracious consent of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II and the Governor of Singapore, Sir John Nicoll, KCMG
The ridge is named the Kent Ridge to commemorate the visit paid to the Army by the Duchess of Kent and the Duke of Kent, 3 October 1952”


OL YEE ON THE RIDGE, circa Dec 1959

This is near the high point of the Ridge, possibly point 270, between the present day Department of Biological Sciences and Institute of Molecular and Agrobiotechnology. Note the wall along the ridge. It is still present in parts. The view to the coast was relatively unrestricted as the trees were shorter. The romantic sea view made it a popular lover’s haunt, the heroic events of 13th February 1942, by then, a distant memory.

Guided walk for Gan Eng Seng and Victoria Secondary school boys by Crescent Secondary School girls, led by Kok Ol Yee, c. Dec 1959. Ol Yee hale and hearty even then! Foreground plants include Simpoh Air and Tiulip.

Brisk walk from MacRitchie to Bukit Timah summit, 26 May 2002. Ol Yee (foreground, red t-shirt), is still hale and hearty and led the pack of much younger walkers! She will be one the guides on the 27th July walk.
Battle of Pasir Panjang - the modern landscape

FIG. 1 - Map of Kent Ridge and environs, 2002, with checkpoints and routes of RMBR Ridgewalk 2002

**KEY**

★ checkpoint

- boundary of Kent Ridge Park and NUS

= foot route

→ bus route

names in bracket reflect known usage in 1940's
News about nature and the environment in Singapore - Archives

List of Categories: about * books * events * photos * news * talks * tvradio * internet * articles * nature * errata * envt * marine * software * trade * malaysia * animalwelfare * heritage * parliament *

Sun 13 Feb 2005

Commemorating the Battle of Pasir Panjang

Category: heritage

As we did a year ago, the Pasir Panjang/Kent Ridge Ridge Guides commemorated the Battle of Pasir Panjang with an observance walk, but this time from the start point of the battle to the point of the last stand.

At dawn of 13th February 1942, Mutaguchi’s 18th division attacked the Malay Regiment at what is now the stretch of Clementi Road next to NUS. This marked the start of the
Heritage Fest 2004

Training
3rd July 2004 [rmbr/as]
3rd July 2004 [nas/csy]
3rd & 10th July 2004 [sajc]

Heritage Fest
Saturday 17th July [sajc]
Sunday 18th July [sajc]
Sunday 25th July 2004 [rmbr/tpt]
Sunday 25th July 2004 [rmbr/tpt]
Sunday 25th July 2004 [sajc]

Guides from:
St. Andrew’s Junior College Green Club,
Raffles Museum Toddycats
Reflections at Bukit Chandu

Organised by
Reflections at Bukit Chandu
(National Archives of Singapore),
National Heritage Board

Raffles Museum of Biodiversity
Research, Department of Biological
Sciences, National University of
Singapore
Now an annual collaboration with Reflections of Bukit Chandu, National Archives of Singapore

10 volunteer guides 2002 - present
Pasir Panjang Heritage

- Feb - Battle of Pasir Panjang commemoration
- May - International Museum Day
- Jul - Heritage Fest
- Sep - End of WWII
Similar models applied elsewhere

- Changi Heritage - since 2002
- Sembawang Heritage - since 2002
- Labrador - since 2002
- Pedal Ubin - since 1998

- Volunteer powered, long-term sustainable
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- Yesterday.sg