



# Basherama!

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The Official Newsletter of the Kuala Lumpur Mountain Bike Hash

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## KLMBH 3<sup>rd</sup> ANNUAL DINNER

### 25 November 2000

Once again, the time approaches for that orgy of good food and prizes that is known as the KLMBH Annual Dinner. This year, as opposed to last year, the Year 2000 KLMBH Annual Dinner will actually be held in the Year 2000 (If you would remember, the 1999 Annual Dinner was held this year).

This year, the Annual Dinner is slated to be held a little closer to home at the Sri Mongkun Restaurant in Desa Sri Hartamas. We've shifted the choice of cuisine has a little further to the East this year, as variety is the spice of life.

Ticket prices are being firmed up and will be announced at the next Hash and via e-mail. Members' tickets will be partially subsidized and guest tickets will also be available. We will need to confirm numbers by **13 November 2000** so the **last day to book your tickets will be at the October Bash on, strangely enough, 12 November 2000.**

As usual, we're looking for volunteers to help out before and on the big night so please feel free to contact your nearest Committee Member to offer a helping hand.

The KLMBH Annual General Meeting will also be held in conjunction with the Annual Dinner so for all those with a hankering for some fun served up with a side of responsibility, it's time to start campaigning!

More details will be forthcoming in the next Basherama or you can also contact your nearest committee member for more info. **See you there!**

### Ed.itorial

1. **e-slavery** is a term that some of us have never heard of. But if you pause to think about it, most of us are e-slaves. How could I say such a thing in this age of liberation and political correctness? Well, how could I not? It's true!

We don't call our friends anymore. We e-mail them and have on-line conversations. Those friends who don't have e-mail miss out on all the fun and are soon forgotten. Some people have more online friends than real live friends. We've all heard plenty of stories about online "pals" who turn out to be serial killers, perverts, stalkers, disgruntled former lovers/colleagues or FBI Agents (oops!). Who are your online friends?

Cont'd >>

### **DIRECTIONS TO THE SEPTEMBER BASH @ KUANG – 9.30 a.m., Sunday, 15 October 2000**

#### **Option 1 – Via North-South Expressway**

From KL, head North on the North-South Expressway. Exit at Sungai Buloh. Turn left after the tollgates heading towards Kuala Selangor (Route B54). Zero tripmeter at traffic lights.

#### **Option 2 – Via Damansara-Puchong Highway ("LDP")**

Take Jalan Damansara (Damansara-Puchong Highway or LDP) from PJ, going past Bandar Utama and tollbooths. (Note: this is NOT the Plus Expressway. If the toll operator hands you a ticket, you are at the wrong tollbooths!) At the end of the highway, filter left at the traffic lights. Continue straight on, passing under the North-South (PLUS) Expressway to the traffic lights just after. Zero tripmeter at traffic lights.

#### **Options 1 & 2**

1) Go straight towards Kuala Selangor. 2) At 7KM turn right. 3) Continue straight on and will pass a BP gas station on left. 4) At 13.5KM turn right. 6) Cross bridge over Rail Road Tracks. 7) At 14KM turn left 8) At 15.5KM park at the t-junction - there is a small road to the right which leads to a business. **Do not Block!** Hare-mobiles are Red & White Mini with roof rack and Silver Perdana WHH-1632

Hares: Eric Teo and Paul Sweeney

[www.bikehash.freesevers.com](http://www.bikehash.freesevers.com)

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## August Bash - Meru - 3 September 2000

### The Short Ride

The hash started late as no one could find the turning past the quarry because the measurements were wrong in the (mis)directions. My dad and I were glad it wasn't just us because our trip meter is always miles off. This got us thinking it was old and stolen, which probably meant all the other little gadgets on our car were also probably old and stolen ( which could explain why it has to get serviced practically every week!!!). But it happened to every one which meant it was the hare's tripmeter!!!

Anyhow the hash finally started with the long riders setting off first then us, the scenic bashers. As we started we were beginning to believe that the saying " What goes up, must come down" was false as the first few KM were all up hill but it eventually flattened out. The rest of the hash was really funny because we went down so many false trails. This was because we were all acting like a bunch of sheep, following one another in a bunch with out checking what was down the path. This lack of teamwork and leadership must have been the reason we got kind of lost a lot!!!

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## International Bash - 24-25 June 2000

### The Long Ride

How many times standing around the Hare Mobile, sucking down a cold ale (or coke as the case may be), directly after completing another epic romp (our equivalent to the Tour de France, Alps sections) through the Malaysian jungle, have you uttered those fateful words?

**"I will let that happen to me again"**

What are you talking about? I hear your collective minds ask.

**"I will train hard before the next Bash, everyday on the bike, at least 400 kilometres before you see me again!"**

Well that is what I say through the panting and wheezing, if you could ever understand what I am saying, that is.

**"Starting tomorrow I am on that bike everyday, this is a solemn promise".**

All good intentions driving back to Singapore, I drive Susan and Caitlyn mad with the continue gibberish.

**"By golly starting tomorrow I am in training mode for the next four weeks, do not speak to me as I will be like a tiger focused on the kill, intense to the maximum, with one aim only to put kilometres into my legs."**

The nonchalant reply remains the same each trip, "Yes Noel, sure thing Noel, I am sure that you will be ready next time Noel."

After a while the pack did spread out widely and we all made it through the brilliant hash a breakneck speed. The reason I liked it was because after the start there wasn't to many up hills, but there was a good mix of different types of riding and lots and lots of false trails.

The hash was set in a very nice area and it had some really nice scenery. It was to bad my dad's front tire got completely ripped just at the end (teach him to buy cheap Firestones from a back street dealer next to a laundry in Damansara Utama) (**Taman Megah maybe? - Ed.**). Luckily he was almost back on the main road and he was glad it didn't happen sooner other wise he could not enjoy the brilliant hash. Congratulations to all the hares who set this hash, I look forward to the next one and till the, on on...

**Robbie Knowles (Junior Member)**

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And each month the bike is put way for another four weeks or so as the case may be.

You may well ask what this has to do with the Second International Bash held in Malacca over the weekend of June 24-25. Ask indeed I say!

As is normal practice on receipt of the Basherama it is scoured within an inch of it's life and then placed for safe keeping in a secret place, not to see the light of day until the Saturday morning moments before we leap aboard the car and scurry off to sunny KL.

For some unknown reason a week before this Bash I happen by the Basherama only to read in horror that Pigpen was the co-hare.

Having visited Malacca on a number of occasions before I could not remember having seeing many, if in fact any hill there, but knowing Pigpen as we all do if there where any hills to be found we would surely have to ascend to the top for the view.

This in mind each day at five o'clock for the week prior to the Bash I was in full training mode. Onto the road bike and off to training circuit for 20.5 kilometres of steer bliss and heart rate at the red line.

On collapsing at the front gate for five days in a row, I was warned by the one who knows all, and must be obeyed, (Susan), "Surely this can not be good for you, and I would say that you once again have left your training run a little late don't you think?"

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## The Long Ride Cont'd

Feeling that at least I had done my bit to keep the "Temple of the Mind" in peak physical condition, we set out to Malacca.

Arriving at the hotel we were greeted to see Ray Keys running from the pool to the elevator, as we fought with thousands of others trying to check in.

Not daunted by Ray looking trim and taught, I slipped into my riding gear in the gentlemen's room and headed off. And whom should I see RIDING to the Bash sit? That's right Ray, I pulled over to offer the poor chap a lift in the car, only to be politely the "No thanks I ride to the Bash as a warm up"

A warm up? Oh dear am I in trouble!

Arriving at the On site, I was pleasantly greeted by a very respectable numbers of Bashes (and a great turn out by our Singapore counterparts ready for an afternoon's fun in the sun, or the plantation as it may be).

Conducted like a slick military operation, we signed in and parted with our money as directed, by Co Bonker, or is that co Basher?

Instructions (orders) were given that it was a rolling 25 or so kilometres, to stay on paper, look for the Hares in the blue tee shirts and for Pigen's mud hole. Hmm this sounds like fun.

So off we pedalled, only to turn up what I thought (with a knot in my stomach) was to the first of many hills.

"Save yourself I kept telling myself 25 kilometres is a long way" shift down a few gears, to the Granny Gear let the truth be known, only to discover to my dismay that only two gears were adjusted as they should be, and it was not the Granny as I had hoped. Seven and nine would have to do.

"It's doing to be a long day in the saddle, Lance Armstrong and I have a lot in common" I thought to myself. Time in the saddle verses kilometres travelled not one, for sure! (In actual fact the only similarity is we both own bicycles, and this is where it ends).

Down a small decent we all flew, only to turn right, and UP. The beginning of the end, surely. But no, the Brennan powerplant of rippling muscle propelled me up that incline (it can not be referred to as a hill due to the actual difference between the elevation at the base and the summit).

On we pushed through a lovely fast and flowing single track as the peleton cut a fine figure as we jostled for position. Things are good so far, who needs 36 gears when 6 will do?

As the peleton broke into smaller riders I found myself handing onto the rear of a group of young ladies and gentlemen from the Singapore HASH who were obviously having a great time toing and froing in the plantations of Malacca.

At around 10 or so kilometres the leading group where reassembled at what seemed to be a tricky check, which I only just managed to find myself as I had gone off in totally the incorrect direction some time before, only to have to carry my bike up and over five terraces as I had thought that I had seen "Ray the Rocket Boy" ride along the top of the hill going the opposite direction after we had both ventured out "checking". I must have been hallucinating as after reaching the trail at the top "Rocket Boy" was nowhere to be seen and was resting under a tree waiting for me at the T-junction of the trails.

"No paper?" we each said as we set off only to find that elusive shred of recycled tree, located about a spit from where we had turned off the main trail. True professional when it come to navigating our way around the BASH we are not! And Ray has a GPS somemore!

The next little hurdle was infact "Pigpens Hole", thoughtfully sign posted for anybody crazy enough to ride up and over the mound camouflaging what would be a nasty surprise. But understandably we all did the sheep thing and filed (tiptoed) single file through and around the pit, with the exception of Eric Teo who had to be different and skirt around the opposite side. Good thinking as he got the jump no all of we sheep standing in line, very KASIO, Eric I must say.

Now some how I was still within earshot of the lead bunch, and was pleased to see Uncle Richard tearing towards me heading up another slight incline, saving my now slightly tired leggings any more punishment that absolutely required. So around I turned and dutifully headed on up the hill.

This is where something went horribly wrong, next thing I knew I had arrived back at the On On site. Strangely Uncle Richard was nowhere to be seen, although a good percentage of our Singaporean friends where.

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## The Long Ride Cont'd

"They must have complete the Scenic Ride I thought to myself". No so as the case was they had the advantage of a full range of gears, that is way I was soundly beaten. This is what I will tell myself anyway.

Staggering up to the Drinks wagon and after downing a cold coke or two, Uncle Richard appeared and with the tone of interrogation plain to hear, inquired,

"How did you beat me back, we were together!!!!"

The answer is simple Richard, training is the key to any successful BASH, remember that"

The truth be known, I had unintentionally followed a number of Malacca locals who where familiar with the location from HASHING and cut the last five kilometres from the BASH. Good thinking, no?

So after everybody drank their collective fills, we headed back to change and on to the ON ON, where a great turn out, turned out to enjoy good food, drink and a number of unfamiliar rituals (for me at least) which centred around drinking and singing, with the chorus lead by Barbarian from Singapore. Can the man sing or what, - or what I hear you cry!

All in all a great Second International Bash, with full marks to Denis and his Merry Men and Woman who staged a memorable trip to Malacca.

Well done to all.

A little Post Script, who did I see riding back to the Hotel, AFTER the BASH, that's correct "Ray the Rocket Boy"

Some people make you feel ill to the pit of your stomach don't they?

See you all soon

**SUMO**

<b>HARELINE</b>	<b>BASHES</b> don't set themselves, they need <b>YOU!</b> So don't delay, sign up as a hare and be all that you can be! We'll pair you with an experienced Hare should the need arise.
<b>#72, 15 October 2000</b>	Eric Teo and Paul Sweeney
<b>#73, 12 October 2000</b>	Joe "Casper" Adnan & Adli Dahalan.
<b>#74, 26 November 2000</b>	Jake Slodki and Conrad Fawcett
<b>#75, 17 December 2000 (tentative)</b>	Volunteers kindly contact Richard (remember the Hare Tonic!)
<b>#76, 21 January 2000 (tentative)</b>	Volunteers kindly contact Richard (remember the Hare Tonic!)

**BITS & BOBS** – 1) Christmas is fast approaching!. **KLMBH Mugs** (RM15), polo t-shirts (RM15), 1<sup>st</sup> Annual Int'l Bash t-shirts (RM5) and 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Int'l Bash t-shirts (RM12) are still available and **make great gifts!** Kindly inquire with the Committee. 2) **Thumbnail Thrash Test. Chris King headsets are the BOMB!** (Don't say this on the plane, though!) Sealed cartridge bearings and excellent machine and anodizing work make for the greatest headset ever known to mankind. Granted, they don't come cheap (about RM380 = USD100) but I've had mine for more than a year and it has needed no maintenance except for being tightened twice. Fire and forget as they say in the army. In comparison, my previous Dia-Compe headset, which came with my 1995 S-Works frame, had to be re-packed every three months and was, later in life, prone to going out of adjustment every month. 3) That's all for Bits & Bobs for now...

## HARE TONIC

In Basherama! 48, Hare Tonic was introduced in an effort to encourage more members to step forward as hares. The idea was to reward hares who had set 5 or more Bashes with Pewter Mugs. The Committee is currently sourcing the rewards (which may or may not be in the form of Pewter Mugs) with the intention of presenting them to the deserving hares at the 2000 Annual Dinner to be held in... 2000.

To keep score, presented below is the updated Hare League Table as at September 3, 2000. As mentioned before, if you feel that you've set more Bashes than listed below, kindly contact Ed.

<b>Azizul Adnan</b>	<b>12</b>	Alistair Swanson	2	Clara Chin	1	Paul Booth	1
<b>Richard Aubry</b>	<b>11</b>	Animal Elford	2	Colin Jackson	1	Peter Pickernell	1
<b>Gordon Fraser</b>	<b>6</b>	Dick Shelly	2	Dave Baker	1	Phaedra	1
<b>Eric Teo</b>	<b>6</b>	John Hagedorn	2	David Foo	1	Pinhead	1
<b>Pat Brunndon</b>	<b>6</b>	John Mugford	2	Emma Booth	1	Simon Ng	1
<b>Ngah Fuji Bakri</b>	<b>6</b>	John Spencer	2	Geoff Stecyk	1	Steve Ellison	1
<b>Peter Bloomer</b>	<b>5</b>	Mark Chaterton	2	Graham	1	Annett Frohlich	1
<b>Barry Hills</b>	<b>5</b>	Nigel Blott	2	Ian Miller	1	Kenny Stewart	1
<b>Mike Elliot</b>	<b>5</b>	Shariman Alwani	2	James Aubry	1	Karen Brunndon	1
Denis French	4	Tan Boon Foo	2	Jeff Dean	1	Janie Ravenhurst	1
Alison Keeler	4	Grant Lee	2	Johnathan Startin	1	Jake Slodki	1
Hulk	4	Larry Chan	2	Marie Benedix	1	Paul Moir	1
Bill Steven	3	Kelvin Wong	2	Mark Clark	1	Angus Knowles	1
Peter Heston	3	Andy Blake	1	Mike Smit	1	Jamie Knowles	1
Shaharudin Damis	3	Andy Knellar	1	Mike Wright	1	Robbie Knowles	1
Simon Kenney	3	S.Y. Chong	1	Noel Brennan	1	Raymond Keys	1

## Editorial cont'd

Sometimes getting out and meeting people can be so much more rewarding. The e-world (XXX-rated sites included) has nothing on body language and eye contact. The ability to edit your photos on Microsoft® Photo Editor may get you to first base, but after that, you're still on your own.

We also keep our schedules electronically and depend on our computers or Personal Digital Assistants ("PDA's") to tell us where to go and what to do at what time. Tough luck if you're your hard disk goes kaput or there's a blackout/your batteries go flat. Make sure you back it up, one way or another, or you'll end up like Paul the Kok's lost flock in Bukit Kiara.

Don't get me wrong though. I'm not anti-technology like the Unabomber. E-mail is a great way to keep in touch with friends who are far, far away and is also handy for forwarding attachments (like the Basherama). And PDA's are great tools if used properly (like as a TV remote).

However, we shouldn't allow ourselves to get too carried away and become dependent on e-mail and electronic gadgets to communicate and run our everyday lives. If we allow that to happen, then we will truly become e-slaves.

2. Watching snatches of the Olympic gymnastics competition reminds me of my own acrobatics on the Flyover on the Penchala Trail in Bukit Kiara over the course of a week.
  - **16 September.** Over-torqued the pedals going up the on-ramp in order to clear broken saplings at foot of ramp. Tapped brakes at the top of the off-ramp. Pulled too far back behind the saddle to compensate. Land o.k. but pull bike into irrecoverable wheelie over my head and get slammed into the ground, ass first, WWF Atomic-Drop style. Knocked the wind out of me. Witnessed, with much amusement, which then turned to horror, by **Charl Bester**.

- **23 September.** Must overcome the Flyover phobia. Rear wheel spins halfway up the on-ramp, knocking bike off line and heading over the edge of the Flyover, 3 feet up in the air. Eject as front wheel rolls over the edge. Land o.k. after a 10 point swan dive. Bike lands o.k. as well, lying sideways over the first log. Try it again and clean the Flyover. Phobia's all gone. No witnesses.

The lessons to be learned from the above are as follows:-

- Avoid riding alone in Bukit Kiara as danger lurks around every corner that you've ridden a hundred times before. I was able to ride out on the 16<sup>th</sup> but the back pain didn't subside for five days. It could have been a lot worse. On the 23<sup>rd</sup>, I mistakenly thought that some of the other guys would be following behind. They weren't, although Raymond did come looking for me eventually. If I had been unlucky and hurt myself, I might not be writing this.
  - Fear of crashing after you've had a big wipeout is something that can be overcome with persistence and common sense. I did it and so can you.
3. The Olympic Mountain Bike Races were nothing short of spectacular. My only beef is with Paola Pezzo for her controversial pass on Marga Fullana towards the end of the second last lap. Pezzo took a different line through a technical singletrack drop-off and made contact with Marga, sending Marga and her bike crashing to the ground and off the trail. It was obvious that Pezzo was stronger at that point of the race and that all she had to do was wait for an open double track to power past Marga and take the gold medal. Boooooo!!!!
  4. On the alternative (road) ride front, there are several organized road rides available to those who are interested as follows:-
    - Call Tan Boon Foo at 705 1989 to find out what rides Bike Pro Centre has planned for the weekend; and/or
    - Alternatively, Peloton2km rides Tuesday and Thursday nights (Nite Attacks they all 'em) and on Sunday as well. Contact Richard Aubry for details.

**Ed.**

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## Three Guys and one Large Backpack in the Cameron Highlands – Part Three

We passed two Orang Asli kids walking in the opposite direction towards Mensun. Both were towing wheeled school bags behind them and were walking barefoot with their shoes slung over their shoulders. That reminded me of my Dad's recollections of his primary school days (partly interrupted by the Japanese Occupation) in the late 1940's.

If only kids these days would care so much for their belongings. Instead all they care about are RM400 Nike® sneakers, mobile phones (!) and Game Boys.

The trail continued to climb upwards through the trees, running parallel to the Bertam River. The relaxing sound of rushing water was never far from us, which helped take our minds off the pain building up in our bodies. When we learned that Hulk's knees were giving him trouble, Chew wrestled the Backpack away from Hulk.

A couple of kilometers and photo breaks later, we heard the putt-putt of little motorcycles heading towards us.. They were ferrying passengers and goods up and down the road. We were to see them again later. Shortly after that encounter, we reached Kampung Kuala Boh.

**Cont'd>>**

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## Three Guys... cont'd

Kampung Kuala Boh was an idyllic village built onto a emerald green hillside along the banks of the Bertam river. The dirt road running through the village had just been freshly graded and a modern village hall dominated the center of the village, halfway up the hillside.

The sight of three brightly clad mountain bikers on their gaily-colored steeds climbing through the village brought out the entire juvenile population of the village. Being in front, I avoided most of the mob but Chew and Hulk were swamped.

I stopped at the top of the hill by the "Kampung Kuala Boh" sign to take in the view and let the guys catch up. A friendly wave to an adult saw him duck into his house, put on a shirt and climb up to where I stood.

We had a short but interesting conversation. The gentlemen told me that we were lucky to come by now when it was dry and the roads weren't muddy. Other mountain bikers who had been through earlier, possibly Raymond Keys' group and Charl Bester's group, hadn't been so fortunate and had to fight their way through the mud.

I remarked at how well developed the village was and was told that it was due to the conversion of most of the village to the Islamic faith. Other villages further inland had also done the same and received the same benefits. Otherwise, they would all be living as they had been 20 years ago, like some other villages were.

It all sounded like a crock of shit to me. Development is a right that every Malaysian citizen is entitled to, regardless of race or religion. Embracing a religion to obtain development for your village and a better life for your family is akin to selling your soul to the devil. Why should the Orang Asli have to put up with this kind of extortion? After all, they've been here longer than all of us. That's why they're called Orang Asli which, literally translated, means Original People. I suppose in their case, it was a choice of the lesser of two evils. I was sorry that they even had to make that choice.

Chew and Hulk had a photo session with the kids, with the wind-swept village and emerald green hills as a backdrop. We bade farewell to the gentlemen and the kids and continued our journey upwards towards the Boh Tea Plantation.

The gradient increased as we pedaled on. All I could think about was the little picnic spot, 3km from the village, where we could stop and have LUNCH! "It's just over the next rise!" I would tell myself and lo and behold, I would be wrong. And so it went for the next 2km. Finally, after pushing up a couple of really steep sections, we found the picnic spot, marked not with an 'X' but with an abandoned (I think) motorcycle. Oh joy!

We lay our bikes down, unzipped the Backpack and proceeded to snarf down our 18 hour old Burger King® burgers and anything else that got in the way. Whopper's never tasted soooo good! After filling our bellies, we lazed around for quite a while, taking in the beautiful scenery and the sounds of nature, to give our aching bodies some rest.

A Land Rover with a guide and a couple of tourists passed by heading in the same direction and that was our cue to pack up and get a move on. After all, we did want to get back to the hotel before dark. We stuffed all our trash back into the Backpack and headed off up the hill.

Our lunch break had recharged us and the next couple of kilometers were pleasant and covered at a reasonable pace. Along the way, we passed an Orang Asli village whose houses were built on stilts and were perched on a steep hill. Some kids waved at us from the top of the hill and we waved back. From the village onwards, the trail was pretty flat and running slightly downhill in some parts.

A little bit later, we came to the back gate of the Boh Tea Plantation. It was adorned with the usual 'private property' and 'we're not responsible blah! blah! blah!' signs. If I'm not mistaken, there was also that famous picture of a man with a gun chasing the other dude! The dirt road eventually turned into a paved road. This was for the ease of travel of the estate vehicles, I'm sure. The road from Mensun to the plantation was nice and hard-packed when we rode it but I can imagine the quagmire it would turn into with a little rain.

The slopes as far as the eye could see were covered in tea trees. Some of them were at such precarious angles that I wondered how the tea leaves were harvested from them. We stopped to take a couple of photos and noticed that the sky was getting darker. Well I guessed that one of the main reasons why there was a tea plantation was because there was plenty of water available, in this case from the sky.

The directions said to take a left at a fork in the road, and this we did at the first fork that we came to. The trouble was that almost immediately after the first fork was another fork! Out came the directions again as we put our heads together to try and figure this mystery out. We finally concluded that the first fork was an insignificant fork and that the second fork was the one referred to in the directions. We totally ignored the plantation worker who was waving at us in the distance off the right fork and charged down the left fork.

The road started to climb and we came to another junction! The signage indicated that we had a choice of heading up to a Manager's Bungalow or deeper into the plantation. There was no mention of the Tea Factory. We headed deeper into the plantation. After rounding a few corners, we came across a bunch of workers. Guess what! Wrong way!

We retraced our steps and sheepishly said hello to the kind Bangladeshi (I think) soul who had been trying to get our attention earlier.

**Cont'd >>**

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## Three Guys... cont'd

We couldn't understand much of what he was saying (confirming my belief that he was Bangladeshi) but he was pretty excited to see us and kept pointing up the road. That must be the way! We could see some buildings at the top of the ridge. The only thing was, they looked like they were a thousand feet up and 10 kilometers away!

We thanked him and set off up the valley as the sky grew darker and a cold wind started blowing. It is often impossible to outrun mother nature and so it was that afternoon. Barely 500 meters on, the rain started coming down in buckets. Hulk and Chew whipped out their black rain gear but all I had was my Pearl Izumi® windbreaker. Thus, my only defence from the rain was to keep on movin' and that I did, rapidly outpacing my two dry companions up the valley.

About 1.5 kilometers later, I spotted the plantation village through the rain and light mist. An Orang Asli Welfare Department truck accompanied by a police truck were trundling down the road towards us. As they passed, the lead driver asked if it was raining further down the valley. I told what I knew and continued into the village, finding shelter outside an abandoned house. The Men in Black soon joined me and we decided to move on since the rain had died down to a fine drizzle.

We spotted a little village store and decided to stop and get some drinks before heading up the hill (more like a mountain) to the Tea Factory. 100 Plus never tasted so good. Once more, we mounted our steeds and followed the road as it zigzagged upwards through the village and beyond.

We passed several idyllic cottages on the way up along the road which was bordered by neatly trimmed hedges with tea trees beyond. Looking down into the valley, we saw a rainbow arcing across the sky. It was so beautiful that it made me forget how wet, cold and hungry I was (amazing how fast your body metabolizes food when you're on the go!). That scene made the entire trip worthwhile.

The climb to the Tea Factory seemed to last forever with every switchback and corner turning into another switchback or corner. But eventually, with gritted teeth and burning quads, we made it to the highest point of the ride and the famous Boh Tea Factory at a little past 5.00 p.m.

There were beautiful flowers planted around the factory and we took in the scenery while checking to see if the restrooms were still open. Tough Luck! They had closed the restrooms at 4.00 p.m. along with the Tea Factory. We hung about for a bit and took the normal touristy pictures before heading down the road towards Habu and home.

The road down was steep, wet and had plenty of sharp turns to catch the unwary so we took it easy down the first few kilometers. Remember what I said about being cold and wet? Well, the wind chill began kicking in and pretty soon we were shivering so bad that we could hardly hold onto the bars. Someone signaled for a stop and we all lined up beside the road. Lucky a tour bus or the estate manager didn't happen to pass by at that exact moment or else we would have been in big trouble.

With our internal loads lightened, we continued down the road, passing the guardhouse and numerous vegetable farms on the way down. A couple of dogs tried to come after us but we easily outran them, being so strong and all. We eventually came to the t-junction with the main Ringlet-Tanah Rata Road.

We turned left, formed a loose paceline and rode into the headwinds. The effort required to keep our speed up soon warmed us up and we stopped shivering and got down to the business at hand; i.e. getting our asses home without being run over by the large number of heavy vehicles on the road.

About a kilometer from the junction, we crossed the bridge over the muddy lake that gave our hotel its name. It was 6.00p.m. We stopped at the hawker center directly opposite the Lakehouse and proceeded to eat, drink and smoke (for some) like we'd been out on a desert island. The guy who sold me half a kilo of steamed groundnuts was shocked to see me snarf almost all of it down on my own. Burp!

When we had worn out our welcome, we jumped on our bikes and crossed the road to the Lakehouse. We had one last obstacle to traverse before that though. The super-steep Lakehouse driveway!

We put our bikes away into our cars and trudged through the lobby towards our room. The sign with the dinner menu on it caught our eye. Soup, Roast Beef and Dessert for RM80++. "Don't call it the Lakehouse," Hulk said, "Call it the Slaughterhouse!" We all agreed.

That night, after dinner in Tanah Rata (why were there so many steamboat places up there?), we slept the sleep of the dead. A bomb could have gone off and we wouldn't have even stirred. We finally dragged ourselves out of bed at about 11.00 a.m. but even then, we found ourselves dozing off on the chairs.

A call from the reception got us into high gear and we showered and packed up our gear before they decided to come and kick us out. We checked out of the hotel around 12.30 p.m. and began our long journey down the mountain and back to K.L. But that's another story...

**Ed.**

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