

The town that tin built

By Shanti Gunaratnam **01 April 2012** | Last updated at 11:20PM

[Sunday Life & Times - New Straits Times](#)

UNIQUE: Klang offers an interesting blend of Malay, Chinese and Indian heritage which can be seen in Arab Street, Jalan Tengku Kelana and also in many other parts of town. While Klang saw its fair share of civil wars in the past, today it is bustling and offers good food, as well as shopping, writes Shanti Gunaratnam



The Klang railway station replaced the Bukit Kuda station. Opposite the railway station, there are many pre-war shophouses that have been passed down from generation to generation and where one can get a good cup of coffee.





1 / 4

MANY civil wars have been fought there but Klang has not lost its appeal.

One of the oldest towns in Selangor, it continues to thrive and attracts thousands of visitors there thanks to seafood and shopping.

On weekends, seafood outlets in Pandamaran, and shopping areas such as Jalan Tengku Kelana, are packed with visitors, some coming from as far as Johor and Ipoh.

So, how did Klang get its famous name? It appears to have taken its name from the Klang River which flows through the town.

However, there are other theories pertaining to the origins of the name, including the belief that it is either derived from the Mon-Khmer word klang or from the old version of the Malay word kilang which means warehouses or factory.

There are also two amusing stories as to how Klang got its name.

According to the first, the royal town of Selangor was named centuries ago after the sound made by a bell in town which went "klang, klang" every so often.

The second revolves around how the Chinese, the early settlers of the town, used to pick cockles at the estuary.

Cockle is kerang in Malay, and this was pronounced as kelang by the Chinese. The rest, as they say, is history.

According to ancient documents, the name Klang was already on a map drawn up in 150 A.D. by Greek voyager Ptolemy.

For two centuries, beginning from the 16th, Klang was one of the most important mining areas in the peninsula. Wars were fought over the area rich in tin ore, which in its heyday came under the rule of the Malacca sultanate.

The Raja Mahadi Fort, which sits behind the Majlis Perbandaran Klang (MPK), was built in 1867.

Local chieftain Raja Mahadi Raja Sulaiman built the fort to keep away the marauding Bugis and also his arch enemy, Raja Abdullah Raja Jaafar, who also wanted to control Klang.

Near the fort's entrance lies the grave of one of Raja Mahadi's henchmen who was killed in the Selangor Civil War, which was fought by both men over a period of seven years, beginning from 1864.

Some of the other attractions in Klang include Gedung Raja Abdullah, built in 1857 and used to store weapons, tin and food.

The British converted the warehouse into government offices and in 1880, it was turned into a police station and remained as such for almost a century. In 1985, it was turned into a museum to showcase Selangor's tin mining industry.

These days, Klang is also well known for its many jewellery shops along Jalan Tengku Kelana. Many come from afar for the traditional designs on offer.

J. V. Sharmila does her jewellery shopping in Klang as the items are more affordable and there is a wider range to select from.

"Even my parents-in-law and other relatives who live in Penang, do their Deepavali and Christmas shopping here."

A goldsmith operating a small shoplot in Jalan Tengku Kelana says many customers come to his shop to trade in their traditional designs for more contemporary ones that are brought in from New Delhi and Chennai in India.

"My father and grandfather came from India to work in goldsmith shops in and around Kuala Lumpur and eventually we started a small shop in Kuala Lumpur.

"I remember my grandfather telling us about Klang when we were children.

"He said Klang was well known in many parts of South India because workers were brought in from there to work in plantations and also to do business here.

"The workers who had money bought jewellery here and also worshipped at the Sri Nagara Thandayuthapani temple."

The Sri Nagara Thandayuthapani temple is the oldest one in Klang.

The other two popular places of worship include the Church of Our Lady of Lourdes, that was built in 1918, and also the Kuan Yin Temple, said to be one of the oldest temples in Selangor.

Klang is also famous for its Kota Bridge, known as the double-decker bridge.

The bridge was opened to the public in 1957. Its upper tier was for cars and heavy vehicles, and the lower one for motorcycles and pedestrians

Read more: [The town that tin built - Sunday Life & Times - New Straits Times](http://www.nst.com.my/life-times/sunday-life-times/the-town-that-tin-built-1.69015###ixzz1qwDlx14M)
<http://www.nst.com.my/life-times/sunday-life-times/the-town-that-tin-built-1.69015###ixzz1qwDlx14M>