

## 0007 Photos of the year (2024)

These photos show some of everyday scenes that I see regularly in Malaysia and Thailand, photographed by myself when I happened to see them. This listing was started in Dec 2022 and each section covers several months.

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Scroll down to see the photos, arranged in date order.

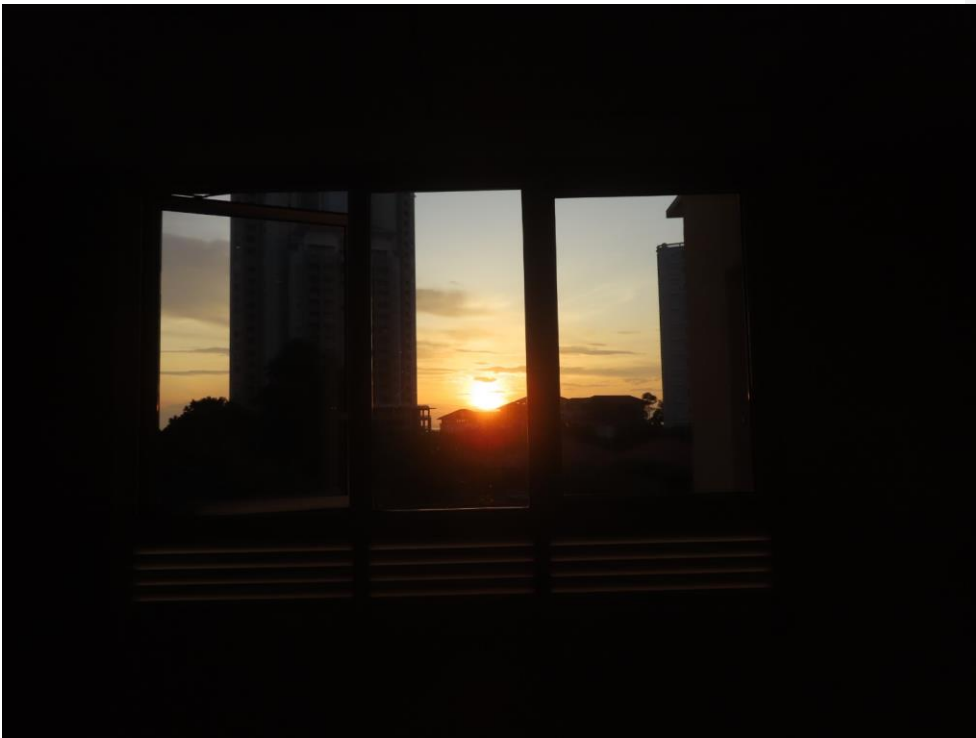
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## Photos of the year 2023-2024

### SUNRISE AT HOME

As in Bangkok at this time of the year, the time of sunrise coincides with our return from swimming.

5 Jan 2024, from the windows of our block



## Photos of the year 2023-2024

### WATER PROBLEMS

Repairs in the local water network may leave our area without normal supply for several days. As a precaution, we are advised to stock up on bottled drinking water and keep a buffer stock in containers or in a bath. Local buildings like ours typically have water tanks which hold a 2-day reserve supply, not more.

8 Jan 2024, in our apartment at Quayside Condominium, Penang, Malaysia





## Photos of the year 2023-2024

### REDEVELOPMENT OF THE OLD "GARAGE"

Work continues at a fast pace. This is probably as high as the new apartment block will go behind the old art deco facade of "The Garage", but it will almost certainly add to the incongruous juxta-positioning of old and new in the historic part of Penang.

8 Jan 2024, from the carpark at E&O Hotel, Penang, Malaysia



## Photos of the year 2023-2024

### REDEVELOPMENT OF THE OLD "GARAGE"

A closer view, showing the old art deco façade and the garage sign that has fortunately been preserved.

8 Jan 2024, from the carpark at E&O Hotel, Penang, Malaysia



## Photos of the year 2023-2024

### COLOURFUL CONSTRUCTION EQUIPMENT

As in the redevelopment of The Garage site, construction equipment often brings a welcome touch of colour to the urban landscape. .

8 Jan 2024, opposite the E&O Hotel, Penang, Malaysia



## Photos of the year 2023-2024

### FLOWERS OF THE POON TREE (*Sterculia Fetida*)

A flower cluster on the E&O Hotel's venerable Poon tree. The flowers of this tree, with their unpleasant smell (like manure) are said to lie behind its botanical name and many of its nicknames. However, the example of the tree at the E&O hotel seems not to cause any problems with smell – possibly because the area is well aerated by the sea breezes.

8 Jan 2024, in the seafront gardens at E&O Hotel, Penang, Malaysia





## Photos of the year 2023-2024

### FRUIT OF THE POON TREE (*Sterculia Fetida*)

A cluster of fruits (not yet ripened) that has developed from a flower cluster.

8 Jan 2024, in the seafront gardens at E&O Hotel, Penang, Malaysia



## Photos of the year 2023-2024

### E&O GARDENS

One of the classic views.

8 Jan 2024, in the seafront gardens at E&O Hotel, Penang, Malaysia



## Photos of the year 2023-2024

### CRUISE SHIPS

These giant ships, with typically 2,500 passenger spaces, will be a feature of the next 3 or 4 months, providing short cruises within the SE Asia region in particular for Europeans and North Americans wishing to escape their winters. In this photo the vessel peeping out from the Penang Cruise Terminal is just over 1km away. A full photo of it (Mein Schiff 5), captured from our balcony on its departure in the evening, is shown a few pages further on.

8 Jan 2024, from the seafront gardens at E&O Hotel, Penang, Malaysia



## Photos of the year 2023-2024

### PALM COURT

The Palm Court, the informal restaurant at the E&O Hotel, does in fact have potted palms inside and lives up to its name.

8 Jan 2024, at the E&O Hotel, Penang, Malaysia



## Photos of the year 2023-2024

### SEED PODS OF THE POON TREE (JAVA OLIVE TREE)

The results of our visit to the E&O Hotel for lunch today.

8 Jan 2024, in our home at Quayside Condominium, Penang, Malaysia



## Photos of the year 2023-2024

### CRUISE SHIPS

These giant vessels, with typically 2,500 passenger spaces, will be a feature of the next 3 or 4 months in Penang, providing short cruises within the SE Asia region in particular for Europeans and North Americans wishing to escape their winters. This vessel is the Mein Schiff 5, seen earlier in a partial view from the E&O Hotel today. The Mein Schiff cruise operation is a 50:50 joint venture between Royal Caribbean lines (providing the maritime expertise) and TUI, the German travel group (providing the marketing and the passengers).

8 Jan 2024, from our balcony at Quayside Condominium, Penang, Malaysia



## Photos of the year 2023-2024

### SKYGAZING

Back to our usual early morning view of the sky at our home swimming pool (here with the Moon and planet Venus just above and to left) .

9 Jan 2024, from at Quayside Condominium, Penang, Malaysia



## Photos of the year 2023-2024

### THE CRUISING SEASON

The comings and goings of giant cruise ships continue, since we are now in the peak season for short SE Asian cruises – during the winter months that are experienced in Europe and N America. Below are shown the evening/dusk departures from Penang of Diamond Princess (Carnival Cruises, top) and Norwegian Jewel (Norwegian Cruise Lines, bottom). Both vessels have capacity for around 2,500 passengers.

9 Jan 2024, from our balcony at Quayside Condominium, Penang, Malaysia





## Photos of the year 2023-2024

### OLD AND NEW

This Indian Laburnum tree (*Cassia Fistula*) displays the long hanging brown seed pods from an earlier flowering at the same time as it produces the next crop of fresh yellow flowers.

11 Jan 2024, Quayside Condominium gardens, Penang, Malaysia.



## Photos of the year 2023-2024

### ULTRA LARGE

The even larger cruise ship *Spectrum of the Seas* (Royal Caribbean Line), with capacity for 4,200 passengers, arrives for an afternoon/early evening short stopover. This is currently the largest cruise vessel visiting Penang. Close-up it looks a little like a floating apartment block. It is about 5km (3 miles) away in this photo.

12 Jan 2024, from our balcony in Quayside Condominium, Penang, Malaysia.





## Photos of the year 2023-2024

### SUNRISE

Just caught the sun rising over our rooftops as we returned from our early morning swim. This is about 7 minutes after its scheduled rise about the horizon today at 07.32.

13 Jan 2024, from our level in Quayside Condominium, Penang, Malaysia.



## Photos of the year 2023-2024

### CHINESE NEW YEAR (1 of 2)

Christmas decorations have now rapidly given way to those for Chinese New Year (CNY) in most shopping malls and retail outlets now. The festival falls this year on 10 February, being the date of the first new moon occurring between 21 January and 20 February. With some 25% of the Malaysian population being of some form of Chinese descent, CNY is an important cultural event and holiday for the Chinese-related community. We have noticed this year that retailers and the hospitality industry were somewhat restrained in their use of the traditional western Christmas/New Year as a promotional platform, but have now made particularly vigorous efforts to draw on CNY to promote their activities. Pink (artificial) cherry blossom figures prominently in the shopping mall display seen below – as well as Chinese dragons, since this will be the “Year of the Dragon”.

13 Jan 2024, in Gurney Plaza shopping mall, Penang, Malaysia.





## Photos of the year 2023-2024

CHINESE NEW YEAR (2 of 2)

Closer view of one of the dragons.

13 Jan 2024, in Gurney Plaza shopping mall, Penang, Malaysia.



## Photos of the year 2023-2024

### CHINESE NEW YEAR AGAIN

Some of the decorations at the street entrance to our condominium, including notably the red hanging Chinese lanterns and the pink-blossomed cherry tree.

14 Jan 2024, at Quayside Condominium, Penang, Malaysia.





## Photos of the year 2023-2024

### ANOTHER GIANT CRUISE SHIP

Another frequent giant visitor to Penang, the Singapore-based Genting Dream, 1,100 feet long and with a passenger capacity of 3,350 + 1,700 crew.

16 Jan 2024, from our balcony at Quayside Condominium, Penang, Malaysia.



## Photos of the year 2023-2024

### A SMALLER VESSEL

By contrast from yesterday, a more manageable size vessel, a local fisherman's boat.

17 Jan 2024, from our balcony at Quayside Condominium, Penang, Malaysia.



## Photos of the year 2023-2024

**PIED FANTAIL** (*Rhipidura Javanica*)

**A couple more pictures of our local friendly Pied Fantail.**

18 Jan 2024, at Quayside Condominium, Penang, Malaysia.



## Photos of the year 2023-2024

### OLD AND NEW

Another picture of the Indian Laburnum tree (*Cassia Fistula*) displaying the long hanging brown seed pods from an earlier flowering at the same time as it produces the next crop of fresh yellow flowers.

19 Jan 2024, at Quayside Condominium, Penang, Malaysia.

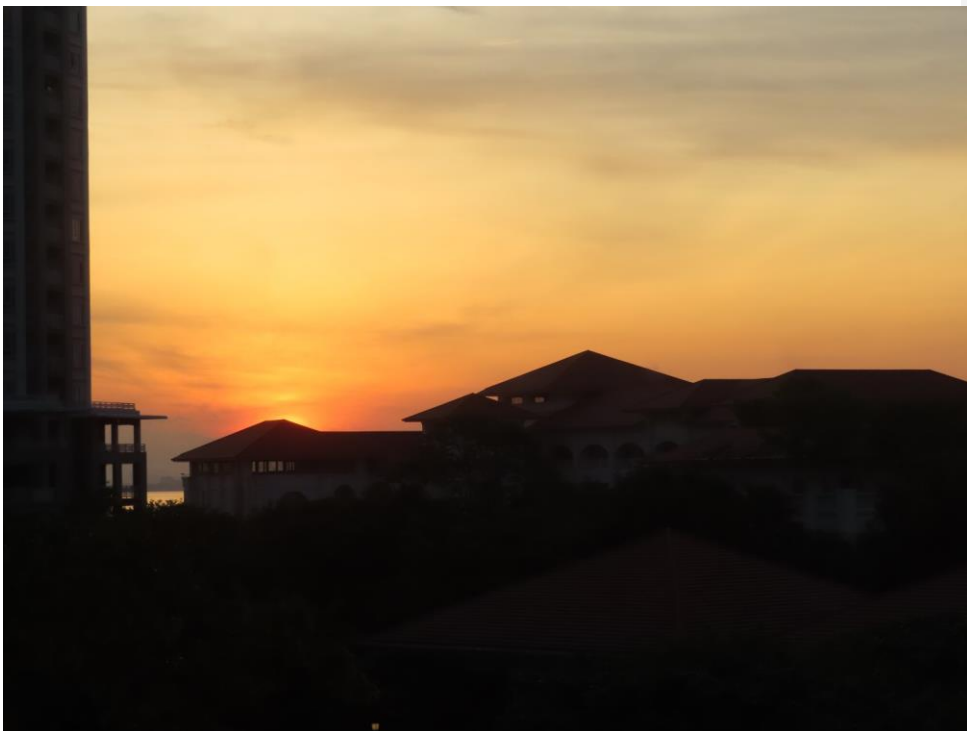


## Photos of the year 2023-2024

### SUNRISE

Another picture from our floor as we return from early morning swimming. The sun appears above the horizon at 07.33 and will appear above these rooftops around 07.40.

19 Jan 2024, from our floor at Quayside Condominium, Penang, Malaysia.



## Photos of the year 2023-2024

### CHILIS

A close-up of “hot” chilis (one of them red and ripe) growing on a chili plant in the grounds of our apartment complex.

21 Jan 2024, at Quayside Condominium, Penang, Malaysia.



## Photos of the year 2023-2024

### BANANAS

A banana plant growing in the grounds of our apartment complex. The hanging flower spike (each plant produces just one flower spike per fruiting) shows an extremely prolific crop of small bananas – probably the small Lady’s Finger variety or similar, found widely across SE Asia – somewhat different from the Cavendish variety that accounts for almost all the bananas produced for export and sold in supermarkets today. Bananas are known historically to have originated as local crops in SE Asia before they were progressively taken westwards through trade to other tropical regions. The Cavendish banana variety known today to consumers worldwide was developed in a hothouse at Chatsworth House (home of the Duke of Devonshire) in Britain in the mid-1800s and was named “Cavendish” after William Cavendish, the holder of the Duke of Devonshire title at that time. The Cavendish variety subsequently made its way to the Canary Islands and from there to the Caribbean and Central America, superseding the earlier SE Asian varieties that had preceded it there.

21 Jan 2024, at Quayside Condominium, Penang, Malaysia.



## Photos of the year 2023-2024

### CHINESE NEW YEAR DRCORATIONS (1 OF 2)

Some further pictures of the extensive decorations put up by the mall operator. The pink cherry blossom seems somewhat overdone this year.

22 Jan 2024, at Gurney Plaza shopping mall, Penang, Malaysia.





## Photos of the year 2023-2024

### CHINESE NEW YEAR DECORATIONS (2 OF 2)

Some further pictures of the extensive decorations put up by the mall operator. The pink cherry blossom seems somewhat overdone this year.

22 Jan 2024, at Gurney Plaza shopping mall, Penang, Malaysia.



## Photos of the year 2023-2024

### ANOTHER CRUISE SHIP

The MV Mein Schiff 5, photographed before on 8 Jan 2024, operated by the TUI Group/Royal Caribbean Lines joint venture, departs in the evening from Penang to Singapore. The vessel here is seen about 8km (5 miles) away.

22 Jan 2024, from our balcony at Quayside Condominium, Penang, Malaysia.



## Photos of the year 2023-2024

### SPECTRUM OF THE SEAS

The ultra large Royal Caribbean Lines vessel, with its space for 4,200 passengers, arrives for a short stopover in Penang. It is about 5 km away in this photo; the island seen to the left of the vessel is around 30 km away.

23 Jan 2024, from our balcony at Quayside Condominium, Penang, Malaysia.



## Photos of the year 2023-2024

**YELLOW-VENTED BULBUL** (*Pycnonotus Goiavier*)

**This small bird, seen just off our balcony, looks wet and puffed up as he rests during a rain shower.**

23 Jan 2024, from our balcony at Quayside Condominium, Penang, Malaysia.



## Photos of the year 2023-2024

### DRAGON

Close-up of another dragon featuring in this year's Chinese New Year decorations near where we live. With the forthcoming Chinese Year (starting on 10 Feb) being the year of the dragon in the 12-year Chinese zodiac cycle, dragons are a prominent feature in this year's decorations – particularly since they lend themselves well to red and gold decoration .

24 Jan 2024, at Straits Quay complex, Penang, Malaysia.



## Photos of the year 2023-2024

### THAIPUSAM – MORNING AFTER

Thaipusam is a Hindu festival celebrated by the ethnic south Indian community in Penang. One of its features is the throwing and breaking of coconuts by devotees when a procession carrying a traditional statue passes by. This photo shows the aftermath, the following morning, of some of the coconut-throwing outside one of the Hindu temples on the procession route.

26 Jan 2024, outside the Hindu temple in Pulau Tikus, Penang, Malaysia.



## Photos of the year 2023-2024

### DRAGON BOAT PRACTICE

Chinese dragon boat races require extensive practice by the competing crews. One of the local teams is seen here in a practice boat in the sea in the sheltered waters of the local fishing-boat anchorage. The races originate from an old tradition in China of competitive races that are held during a dragon-boat festival that typically falls in May or June (on the 5th day of the 5th month of the Chinese calendar). The Penang races are held over a 400m course, with categories for male, female and mixed crews and boats with 20 or 10 rowers – although the boats themselves are all the same size, about 40 feet long (the size of a long shipping container), decorated with a traditional dragon's head placed at the prow. Each boat carries a drummer at the front and a steersman at the rear. Penang also hosts an annual international dragon-boat regatta, which is open to other international teams, each December. With 2024 being the Year of the Dragon in the Chinese Zodiac cycle, there may be particular interest in these races this year

27 Jan 2024, seen from our balcony, Quayside Condominium, Penang, Malaysia.



## Photos of the year 2023-2024

### TROPICAL VIEW

Bright sunshine and a clear sky create a truly tropical-looking sight as we walk out of our apartment complex this morning.

28 Jan 2024, outside Quayside Condominium, Penang, Malaysia.





## Photos of the year 2023-2024

### OUR BALCONY VIEW

View from the balcony on a warm and sunny day, looking over the little local harbour for inshore fishing boats.

28 Jan 2024, from our balcony at Quayside Condominium, Penang, Malaysia.



## Photos of the year 2023-2024

### SEA TRAFFIC

The Aegean Paradise looms on the horizon about 20 km away, returning from its daytime cruise (cruise to nowhere), in this long shot, while a small cabin cruiser passe in front.

28 Jan 2024, from our balcony at Quayside Condominium, Penang, Malaysia.



## Photos of the year 2023-2024

### THE PILOT BOAT

A Pilot boat from Penang harbour approaches a container ship, in order to drop off the pilot who will guide the vessel through the narrow channel leading to Penang container terminal.

28 Jan 2024, from our balcony at Quayside Condominium, Penang, Malaysia.



## Photos of the year 2023-2024

### TREES AT THE E&O

The venerable Poon tree (*Sterculia Fetida*) at right stands high above the other trees on the E&O's seafront.

29 Jan 2024, from the car park at E&O Hotel, Penang, Malaysia.



## Photos of the year 2023-2024

### REDEVELOPMENT OF "THE GARAGE"

Work continues at a fast pace. This does appear to be the final height of the block.

29 Jan 2024, from the car park at E&O Hotel, Penang, Malaysia.



## Photos of the year 2023-2024

### POON TREE'S TRUNK

This tree's trunk is an impressive size, seen here beside the E&O's veranda. The parasitic Neem Tree (*Azadirachta Indica*) that is growing out of the Poon tree can be seen rising diagonally at left. The Neem tree in turn is also hosting a parasitic creeper plant.

29 Jan 2024, at E&O Hotel, Penang, Malaysia.



## Photos of the year 2023-2024

### CHINESE NEW YEAR DECORATIONS

The E&O Hotel has decorated one of its main entrance doors with traditional red hangings for the Chinese New Year which is still 12 days away. This is the door through which guests will pass on their way to several of the special New Year dining events. The potted mandarin orange trees each side of the door are another item of traditional decor at this time; you have to have them in pairs, though, but not in odd numbers – and not in two pairs, because that would equal four, a number that is generally avoided in Chinese culture, because when spoken in Mandarin it sounds like the word for death. The symbolisms of the decorations all relate to good luck, prosperity and wealth in the coming year. The orange fruits are an important part of this. The words used in Mandarin Chinese language as well as in other Chinese dialects for these fruits are said to be similar to the words for good fortune and luck; and the orange colour of the fruits is seen as suggesting gold coins or wealth. (Note: mandarin oranges are a broad category of orange citrus fruit that originated in south and east tropical Asia family and that includes tangerines, clementines and satsumas; the main characteristic is that the fruits are small, sweet, thin-skinned and flat at top and bottom.)

29 Jan 2024, at E&O Hotel, Penang, Malaysia.

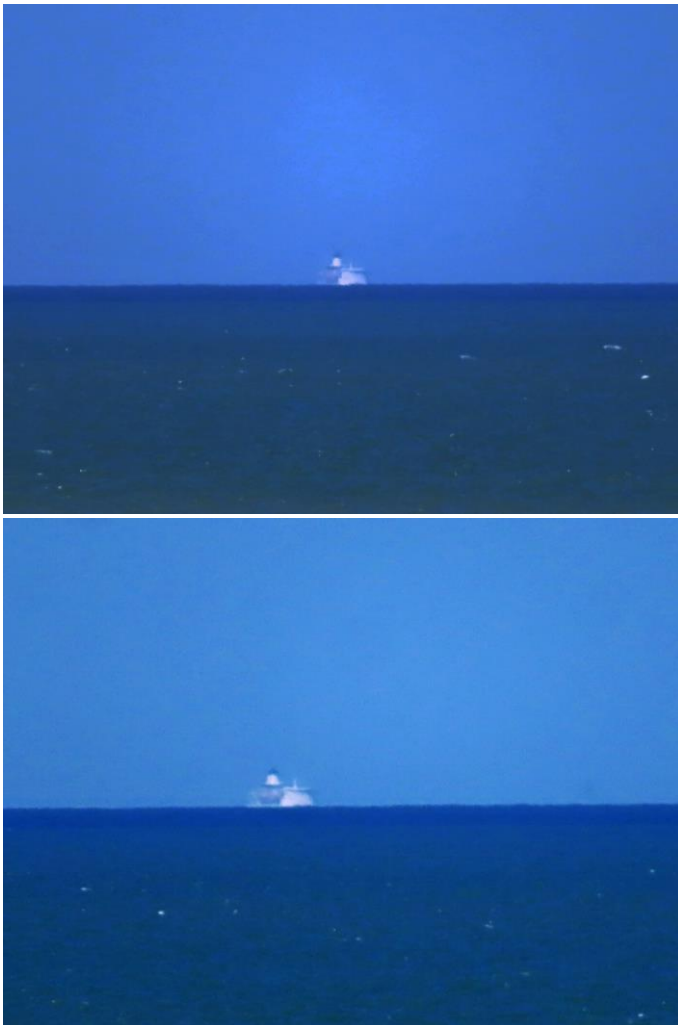


## Photos of the year 2023-2024

### COMING OVER THE HORIZON (2 Pages)

The Aegean Paradise, the vessel that operates the twice-daily “cruises to nowhere” out of Penang, usually disappears from sight over the horizon as it makes its leisurely way out to sea. With today being a very clear day, it was just possible this afternoon to capture some shots of the vessel “resurfacing” over the horizon on its return journey back to Penang. The horizon is some 20km (13 miles) distant in these shots, which are taken from about 100ft above sea level.

29 Jan 2024 from our balcony at Quayside Condominium, Penang, Malaysia.







Below, for comparison, is the vessel's full profile when it is fully back over the horizon (from photo taken yesterday).



## Photos of the year 2023-2024

### CLEAR MOON

Another clear view of the moon and its craters this morning. As noted previously, the visible area of the full moon is roughly the size of Australia. Here we are looking at it around 240,000 miles away – a distance equal to 10 times round the earth at the equator. The large crater (with shadow inside) at the bottom centre of the image would be something like the size of greater London inside the M25 on a map.

31 Jan 2024 from the sea front at E&O Hotel, Penang, Malaysia.



## Photos of the year 2023-2024

### NORWEGIAN JEWEL

The vessel departs Penang Harbour after a one day stopover. This one has the passenger capacity of 2,400 passengers, typical of the large vessels that visit Penang. It entered service in 2003 and belongs to Norwegian Cruise Lines, third of the big 3 cruise ship groups. At present it cruises mainly in the western Pacific.

29 Jan 2024 seen from the seafront at E&O Hotel, Penang, Malaysia.



## Photos of the year 2023-2024

### GIANT INSECT

We found this winged insect (dead) in our swimming pool early this morning. It's on its back, with underside exposed in this picture. It's about as long overall as a credit card or ID card (compare it with orange ID card in the background), that is 3¼ inches or 8.3 cm long. The insect, which we haven't seen before, appears to be some variety of Cicada. These exist in many varieties in several parts of Malaysia (and other SE Asian countries), especially hilly areas, but they are little documented. Their distinctive chirping noise is actually not a vocal sound but a sound made by the deforming and re-forming, through muscular action, of a "sound box" contained in their abdomen. Incidentally, Malaysia appears to be home to the world's largest variety of Cicada – see second image below from a file source. Cicadas are not dangerous and do not bite or sting.

1 Feb 2024, found in the pool at Quayside Condominium, Penang, Malaysia.



Malaysian Giant Cicada on a man's thumb.  
Image courtesy of Frans de Waal – Public Page

## Photos of the year 2023-2024

### EXCESS OF CHERRY BLOSSOM

Some of the Penang shopping malls are overdoing the cherry blossom in their attempts to put visitors (largely Singaporean visitors) in the right mood to spend lavishly on Chinese New Year gift purchases.

3 Feb 2024 inside Gurney Plaza shopping mall, Penang, Malaysia.



## Photos of the year 2023-2024

### MARELLA DISCOVERY 2

One of the cruise ships of the cruises arm of German travel group TUI, seen on a misty evening departure from Penang. This one is based in Singapore, providing 1-2 weeks cruises around the SE Asia region and is an occasional visitor to Penang. With 1,800 passenger capacity, it is not quite as large as the typical 2,500 capacity vessel that we generally see here.

4 Feb 2024 seen from our balcony at Quayside Condominium, Penang, Malaysia.



## Photos of the year 2023-2024

### CHINTZY COFFEE SHOP

Our favourite coffee shops fall into and out of favour with us for a variety of reasons. Today we have reverted to a small, traditional local chain called Winter Warmers, which has a relaxing, chintzy interior decor (chintzy in the English sense of fussy, cheaply decorated and unsophisticated – rather than the American sense of low-class, low quality, cheap).

5 Feb 2024 In Winter Warmers café Gurney Plaza, Penang, Malaysia.



## Photos of the year 2023-2024

### SPECTRUM OF THE SEAS TAKES ON PILOT FOR THE LAST 13KM INTO PORT

The cruise ship has slowed down to allow the pilot to board from the pilot boat through the special pilot door just above the waterline.

5 Feb 2024 from our balcony at Quayside Condominium, Penang, Malaysia.





## Photos of the year 2023-2024

### SPECTRUM OF THE SEAS APPROACHES

A more complete view of the Royal Caribbean Lines Spectrum of the Seas, with its 4,900 maximum passenger capacity, picking up its pilot from the Penang Pilot Boat on approach to the port. It is here about 13 km (8 miles) away from the Penang Cruise Terminal at Swettenham Pier. This is the largest regular cruise ship that visits Penang. The vessel is about 7km (4 miles) offshore from our home at this point. Use of pilots is vital in the port of Penang: the main in-and-out channel through the northern part of the Penang Strait is dredged to a depth of 11.5m but is quite narrow and requires careful navigation. The water depth at the cruise terminal is 11m. All this will accommodate the largest passenger ships: Spectrum of the Seas has a draft of 8.8m, its larger relative, the new Icon of the Seas, has 9.25m. The deepest draft ship visiting Penang is the Carnival Cruises Cunard Queen Mary 2, with a draft of 10m.

5 Feb 2024 from our balcony at Quayside Condominium, Penang, Malaysia.



## Photos of the year 2023-2024

### CHEQUERED SWALLOWTAIL BUTTERFLY (*Papilio Demoleus*)

Seen today in the gardens of our apartment complex. This variety of butterfly is quite common across a wide swathe of tropical areas in Asia, ranging from Arabia in the west to SE Asia and across the island chain to Australia in the east. It has several other popular names, including Orange/Lime/Lemon butterfly or Swallowtail, with these names often referencing the citrus fruits that it typically attacks. It is classed as a Swallowtail butterfly, but this particular sub-type is the only one that does not in fact have a swallow tail (meaning long tips or tails extending from the back of its wings).

6 Feb 2024 in the gardens at Quayside Condominium, Penang, Malaysia.



## Photos of the year 2023-2024

### BANANAS

A follow-up to the note of 21 January this year. This is a better image of the whole flower cluster and hanging fruit bunch. Seen today in the gardens of our apartment complex.

6 Feb 2024 in the gardens at Quayside Condominium, Penang, Malaysia.



## Photos of the year 2023-2024

### POMEGRANATE FLOWER

A flower and other flower buds on a rogue pomegranate bush that has started to grow in the masonry outside our balcony. The things that look like red fruits (and are about 1cm long) are in fact just flower buds. One of the buds can be seen opened and the petals of the flower spilling out from it. The pomegranate fruit develops after the flower petals and flower bud have shrivelled. The flowers appear to be very attractive to the local ants (see them in the photo), which may account for the fact that we have never seen any pomegranate fruit survive and emerge from the debris of a flower yet.

9 Feb 202 on our balcony at Quayside Condominium, Penang, Malaysia.



## Photos of the year 2023-2024

### CELEBRITY MILLENNIUM

One of the big cruise ships of Celebrity Cruises, another branch of the Royal Caribbean Lines Group. This 2,100 passenger vessel is 25 years old and is currently based in Singapore for the North American winter, conducting a variety of cruises around SE Asia, and based in Alaska for the N American summer. The vessel is seen here on an evening departure out of Penang.

10 Feb 2024 from our balcony at Quayside Condominium, Penang, Malaysia.



## Photos of the year 2023-2024

### CRYSTAL SYMPHONY

A cruise ship of the company Crystal, which is based in Miami and owned by the upmarket US travel group Abercrombie & Kent. This was originally a Japanese cruise company, founded in 1988 but sold in 2015 to the Hong Kong travel and entertainment group Genting. The Genting group, which had a number of cruising interests, met with financial difficulties during the Covid period and entered insolvency in 2022. The Crystal Cruises brand and two of the Crystal cruise vessels were then acquired by the American Abercrombie & Kent Group which has relaunched the Crystal brand in 2023. This particular vessel originally entered service with Crystal in 1995 and currently, since the A&K relaunch, is undertaking extended regional cruises in the SE Asia and Australasia region. The Crystal Symphony was originally built for 900+ passengers, but has now been reconfigured for a capacity of 600.

11 Feb 2024 from our balcony at Quayside Condominium, Penang, Malaysia.



## Photos of the year 2023-2024

### CHERRY BLOSSOM TREE

The artificial cherry blossom tree (part of the Chinese New Year decorations) at the entrance to our apartment complex really stands out in the sunlight.

12 Feb 2024 at Quayside Condominium, Penang, Malaysia.



## Photos of the year 2023-2024

### GENTING DREAM

The second-largest cruise ship regularly visiting Penang, the Genting Dream, with space for 3,350 passengers. Completed in 2016 and locally owned and operating just in the SE Asia region, it offers affordable “luxury” short cruises within the region to the mass market.

13 Feb 2024, from our balcony at Quayside Condominium, Penang, Malaysia.





## Photos of the year 2023-2024

### VALENTINE'S DAY

We celebrated today with a good bottle of Valdobbiadene Prosecco. The Lao Airlines cotton tray cloth (most likely made for the airline's business class) was acquired by us a couple of years ago from our usual household linens shop in Chatuchak market in Bangkok, where a quantity of them was being sold off cheaply, probably a result of some production overrun by a Thai manufacturer.

14 Feb 2024 in our apartment at Quayside Condominium, Penang, Malaysia.



## Photos of the year 2023-2024

### LE JACQUES CARTIER –“ MEGA YACHT”

This is one of several similar small, so-called “mega yacht” luxury vessels, that are operated by Ponant Cruises, a boutique cruise line belonging to the French luxury goods group Artémis. This group is part of the giant French luxury conglomerate known as Kering, founded by François Pinault, and whose subsidiaries include Gucci, Yves St Laurence and Christies auction house. The vessel – one of several of this type and known as Explorer class – has a capacity of 184 passengers and in this case focuses on the Asia-Pacific region. The vessels in this class are all named after famous French explorers. Jacques Cartier (1491-1557), a Breton, was a very early French explorer who was responsible for the early mapping of the Gulf of St Lawrence in Canada and who set up the very first European settlement in North America after the Vikings several hundred years earlier

15 Feb 2024 from our balcony at Quayside Condominium, Penang, Malaysia.



## Photos of the year 2023-2024

### SEED POD

A seed pod of the Indian Laburnum tree (*Cassia Fistula* – see notes of 10 Jan 2024) lies on the path near our swimming pool. It is at least one foot long and cylindrical. It reminds us always of the tops of bullrushes.

16 Feb 2024 at Quayside Condominium, Penang, Malaysia.



## Photos of the year 2023-2024

### MEIN SCHIFF 5

One of the big cruise ships of the German TUI Group. These TUI ships are operated in a 50:50 joint venture with Royal Caribbean Line, which provides the cruise ship expertise while TUI provides the customers from its extensive German-oriented travel business, another branch of the Royal Caribbean Lines Group. This 2,100 passenger vessel is 25 years old and is currently based in Singapore for the North American winter, conducting a variety of cruises around SE Asia, and based in Alaska for the N American summer. The vessel is seen here on an evening departure out of Penang.

16 Feb 2024 from our balcony at Quayside Condominium, Penang, Malaysia.



## Photos of the year 2023-2024

### A SMALLER VESSEL

Shortly after Mein Schiff 5 passed by we found a nice contrast in the small local sailing boat that followed. The yachting fraternity will insist that technically this is a ketch (not a yacht), having a second smaller mast located behind the main mast.

16 Feb 2024 from our balcony at Quayside Condominium, Penang, Malaysia.



## Photos of the year 2023-2024

### AIDA BELLA

The AIDA cruise line is German-based and is one of several German cruise lines – most of which are frequent or occasional visitors to Penang – that target the large and buoyant German cruise market. The AIDA company evolved out of the old East German state-owned cruise line, Deutsche Seereederei Rostock (German Shipping Company Rostock), based in Rostock, former East Germany, that country's largest and most important port city, lying on the Baltic coast some 200 km north-west of Berlin. AIDA is still headquartered there, but is now owned by the US Carnival Cruises Group. Carnival has chosen to retain the AIDA brand and its German associations, with the brand being now pitched strongly at young German people seeking a floating resort experience with active lifestyle. The line has 11 or so vessels, ranging up to giant ones with 6,600 passenger capacity and one or two of these are generally on round-the-world itineraries. The AIDA Bella with up to 2500 passengers is among the smaller of the AIDA fleet. It is a frequent visitor to Penang on a current programme of typically 10-14 day cruises around SE Asia.

17 Feb 2024, from our balcony at Quayside Condominium, Penang, Malaysia.



## Photos of the year 2023-2024

### MARELLA DISCOVERY 2

One of the cruise ships of the Marella brand, part of the cruising arm of German travel group TUI, seen on a rainy early morning arrival into Penang. This vessel is based in Singapore, providing 1-2 weeks cruises around the SE Asia region, and is an occasional visitor to Penang. With 1,800 passenger capacity, it is not quite as large as the typical 2,500 capacity vessel that we generally see here. Marella cruises originally evolved out of the UK Thompson Cruises business and is still marketed by TUI primarily to cruise customers in the UK. When absorbing Thompson Cruises into the TUI Group, TUI rebranded it as Marella (which means shining sea in Celtic language) in order to maintain some separation from the general TUI brand and to support continued marketing into the UK market. TUI's cruise business also includes the Hapag-Lloyd cruises and the Mein Schiff cruises (which is a 50:50 joint venture between TUI and Royal Caribbean Lines). One of the other four Marella-branded ships (Marella Explorer 2), handling short cruises within the Mediterranean this season, operates as adults-only, reflecting a growing trend among cruise companies to cater specifically to older passengers who wish to be free from the distractions of families with children.

18 Feb 2024 seen from our balcony at Quayside Condominium, Penang, Malaysia.



## Photos of the year 2023-2024

### MARELLA DISCOVERY 2

Departing same day in better weather.

18 Feb 2024 seen from our balcony at Quayside Condominium, Penang, Malaysia.





## Photos of the year 2023-2024

### LOCAL PARTY BOAT

Another refreshingly different vessel (different from the repetitive parade of container ships, large cruise ships and small inshore fishermen's boats) – this time a substantial cabin cruiser apparently being used to host an early evening party on board. Not a common sight from our balcony.

20 Feb 2024 seen from our balcony at Quayside Condominium, Penang, Malaysia.



## Photos of the year 2023-2024

### PENANG TOWN HALL

The newly renovated Penang Town Hall (the yellow-painted building on the left). This is an old "heritage" building in the old centre of Penang which served as Penang's main social event hall and meeting venue until quite recently. The building is Penang's oldest municipal building, built in the 1880s. Until 1903 it also housed the municipal administration offices – until these were shifted to the newer City Hall close by. We were here today to pay a property tax bill at one of the Council's payment counters (the one-storey building on the right).

23 Feb 2024 by the Esplanade, Penang, Malaysia.



## Photos of the year 2023-2024

### PENANG CITY HALL

Almost adjacent to the Penang Town Hall is the Penang City Hall of 1903 another one of Penang's "heritage" buildings. This has continued to house local administrative functions until the present day

23 Feb 2024 by the Esplanade, Penang, Malaysia.



## Photos of the year 2023-2024

### PENANG CITY HALL

Another view of this impressive old building.

23 Feb 2024 by the Esplanade, Penang, Malaysia.

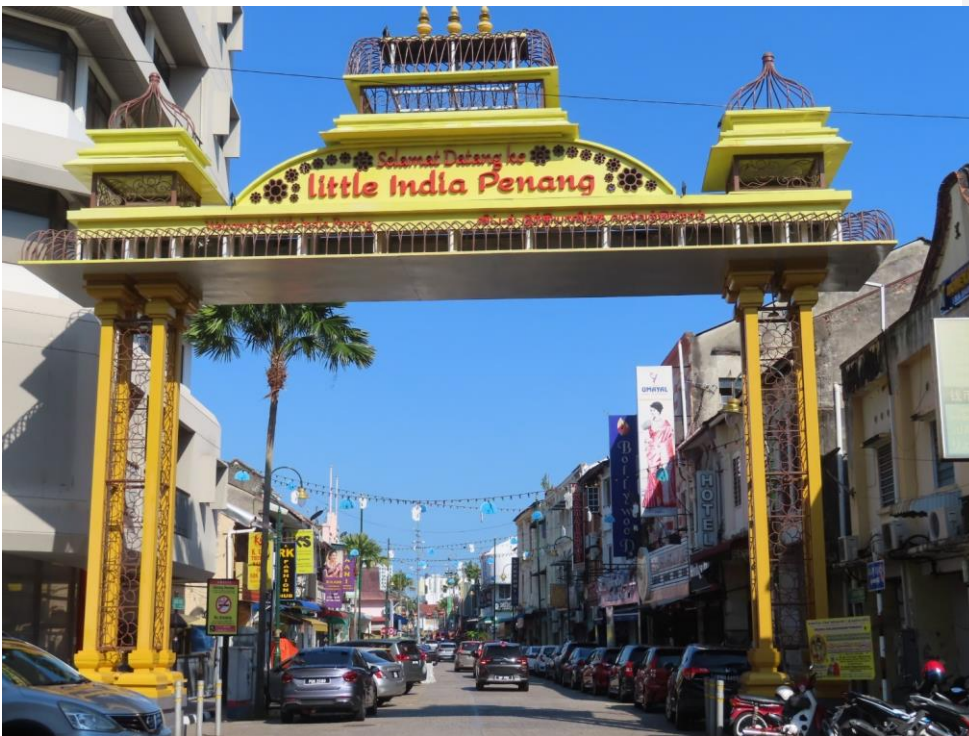


## Photos of the year 2023-2024

### PENANG'S LITTLE INDIA

The newly redecorated entrance arch to Penang's old Indian trader quarter, "Little India". The signage reads: Welcome to Little India, Penang.

23 Feb 2024, looking into Jalan Pasar (Market Street), seen across Beach Street, Penang, Malaysia.



## Photos of the year 2023-2024

### BEACH STREET'S OLD COMMERCIAL BUILDINGS

A foreshortened view of Beach Street showing some of the old bank and commercial buildings that made this the centre of Penang's business activity in the first half of the 1900s.

23 Feb, looking north in Beach Street, Penang, Malaysia.



## Photos of the year 2023-2024

### STANDARD CHARTERED BANK BUILDING

One of the largest and most impressive old bank buildings in Penang's Beach Street. This one has gone through a variety of "after-life" uses as cheap office accommodation, but has been unable to secure a long-term future for itself so far. The building was completed in the 1930s in the so-called British Palladian style. The doorway on the corner is a later addition – in an unfortunately different style (more akin to Germanic art deco). The doorway, however, has for some reason established itself as one of the most preferred photo locations for shooting professional pre-wedding photos (and other celebration type photos) and on most days it is possible to see such photos being taken there.

23 Feb 2024, in Beach Street, Penang, Malaysia.



## Photos of the year 2023-2024

### QUEEN VICTORIA MEMORIAL CLOCK TOWER

This prominently sited clock tower was built in 1897 to mark the 60th anniversary of Britain's Queen Victoria's reign (Diamond Jubilee). It was paid for by a wealthy local donor. Its architecture is said to be Moorish style. It is situated at an intersection close to the passenger port. The mast and funnel of the daily "cruise-to-nowhere" Aegean Paradise can be seen to the right of the tower.

23 Feb 2024, in Beach Street, Penang, Malaysia.





## Photos of the year 2023-2024

### PENANG ISLAMIC COUNCIL BUILDING

This is a 1907 building at the end of Beach Street, near the Victoria clock tower, that originally housed the offices of the British Colonial administration of the Straits Settlements. Only part of it survives; the rest succumbed to bomb and war damage during the Japanese occupation of Penang during the 2nd World War. Unusually for Penang at the time, it was constructed in neo-classical style and seems to fit with difficulty among the other old building of the area. To the right in the photo can be seen one of the ugly post-war buildings erected hastily after the war to replace the lost 1907 buildings.

23 Feb 2024 in Beach Street, Penang, Malaysia.



## Photos of the year 2023-2024

### A BANK'S LOGO

The Penang buildings of the Singapore OCBC bank in Beach Street include several 1880s classical-style structures, one of which was remodelled in 1938 with a new art deco façade. The bank's logo of a Chinese junk is commemorated here in a bronze plaque embedded in the new art deco façade.

23 Feb 202, in Beach Street, Penang, Malaysia.



## Photos of the year 2023-2024

### PENANG BEACH STREET CENTRAL FIRE STATION

Penang's main fire station, dating from 1909 – the first one in Penang to be manned by full-time firemen (as distinct from volunteers). One of the largest and most impressive old bank buildings in Penang's Beach Street. The building is interesting for its combination of classical façade and Mughal (Indian) style in the tower.

23 Feb 202, in Beach Street, Penang, Malaysia.



## Photos of the year 2023-2024

### BLACK KETTLE COFFEE SHOP

A coffee shop that we visit occasionally, opposite the Central Fire Station in Beach Street. This is a converted old 2-storey shop-house. The wooden beams support the floorboards of the upper floor; there is no separate ceiling to conceal them. The building's old "light-well", open to the sky, can be seen in the background left of centre.

23 Feb 2024 in Beach Street, Penang, Malaysia.





## Photos of the year 2023-2024

### LION DANCING

Members of the dance crew practising some positions before they don their lion heads and dance across the poles in a performance of lion-dancing at the entrance to Quayside. This is on the occasion of the last day of the Chinese New Year 2-week celebration period.

24 Feb 2024, at Quayside Condominium, Penang, Malaysia.



## Photos of the year 2023-2024

### OFFSHORE FISHING BOAT FROM PERLIS

A larger than usual fishing boat seen from our balcony. This is a type that has a multi-person crew and is used for deep sea fishing further away from the coast than the regularly seen open boats manned by just 1 or 2 fishermen. This design of boat, with a cabin and wheelhouse on top, is found (with variations) all over SE Asia. The registration letters PSF on this boat indicate (PS) that it is registered in Perlis state to the north, next to the border with Thailand, as a commercial fishing boat (F). By contrast, the large numbers of small inshore fishing boats seen around Penang all carry the registration letters PPS. In that, PP indicates Pulau Pinang (Penang State) and the S indicates sampan or open, dinghy-type boat.

24 Feb 2024 seen from our balcony at Quayside Condominium, Penang, Malaysia.



## Photos of the year 2023-2024

### MV DIAMOND PRINCESS

The Diamond Princess cruise vessel of Princess Cruises (part of Carnival Group) passes by the Perlis fishing boat shown in the previous photo. The cruise vessel is seen leaving Penang after a short one-day stop in the port. It is currently stationed in Asia, undertaking a variety of cruises around the region. The Diamond Princess, which carries up to 2,700 passengers and 1,000 crew, became notorious in 2020 when it was forced by Japan to stay in quarantine in Yokohama harbour for over 3 weeks at the end of a 15 day cruise after a severe outbreak of Covid-19 emerged on board. Around 20% of the 3,700 people on board became infected and 9 of them had died within 6 weeks of the quarantine in Yokohama being imposed. Carnival Corporation and the vessel's management received heavy criticism over this disaster, due to their lack of preparedness for such an event, their cover-up of the initial symptoms and their incompetent handling of the quarantine.

Commented [BW1]:

24 Feb 2024 seen from our balcony at Quayside Condominium, Penang, Malaysia.





## Photos of the year 2023-2024

### FINISHED SWIMMING

The full moon shines brightly in a clear sky as we finish our early morning swim at 0610.

26 Feb 2024 at Quayside Condominium, Penang, Malaysia.



## Photos of the year 2023-2024

### EARLY MORNING VIEW

This morning's bright sunlight and clear sky gave us some good colours from our balcony.

26 Feb 2024 seen from our balcony at Quayside Condominium, Penang, Malaysia.



## Photos of the year 2023-2024

### VIEW ACROSS THE BAY FROM E&O

View from Penang's E&O Hotel across the bay to where we live – in one of the towers at far right.

26 Feb 2024 seen from the parking garage at E&O Hotel, Penang, Malaysia.



## Photos of the year 2023-2024

### ART DECO RESTORATION

The restoration of the old Lim Mansions building continues to push ahead.

26 Feb 2024 seen from the parking garage at E&O Hotel, Penang, Malaysia.



## Photos of the year 2023-2024

### HEAT HAZE SPOILS THE VIEW

**This view northwards, through a window opening in the building structure, captures a sand dredger/hopper barge just offshore, with the hills and mountains of the mainland hazy in the distance.**

26 Feb 2024 seen from the parking garage at E&O Hotel, Penang, Malaysia.



## Photos of the year 2023-2024

### SPECTRUM OF THE SEAS LOOMS

**This ultra-large cruise ship (4,200 passenger capacity) of Royal Caribbean Lines looms on the horizon, coming from Phuket to the north, and starts its turn in to Penang for a short afternoon stop.**

27 Feb 2024 seen from our balcony at Quayside Condominium, Penang, Malaysia.



## Photos of the year 2023-2024

### SPECTRUM OF THE SEAS – A GOOD SHOT

A very good view of the vessel as it nears Penang.

27 Feb 2024 seen from our balcony at Quayside Condominium, Penang, Malaysia.



## Photos of the year 2023-2024

### PILOT BOAT

The pilot boat races back to its base in Penang port, after handling the exchange of pilots between two outgoing cargo vessels and the incoming Spectrum of the Seas cruise ship.

27 Feb 2024 seen from our balcony at Quayside Condominium, Penang, Malaysia.





## Photos of the year 2023-2024

### SPECTRUM OF THE SEAS (REARMOST 20%)

The rearmost 20% of Spectrum of the Seas, seen as the vessel passes out of sight behind our building on its way to Penang port.

27 Feb 2024 seen from our balcony at Quayside Condominium, Penang, Malaysia.



## Photos of the year 2023-2024

### CAROLYN'S BIRTHDAY 2024

Ready for dinner at the E&O Hotel.

28 Feb 2024, at E&O Hotel, Penang, Malaysia.



## Photos of the year 2023-2024

### CAROLYN'S BIRTHDAY 2024

The E&O Hotel's Palm Court restaurant and the sensibly shaped champagne glasses (getting away from the illogically shaped "flutes" that much of the restaurant industry has sought to impose for decades). The ones here are German and their provenance is etched on their base: a traditional glass-making region near Dresden in the former East Germany. The birthday was in fact on 24th, but we deferred the dinner by four days since 24th was a busy time at E&O. (We are not actually drinking champagne, but Italian Prosecco.)

28 Feb 2024, at E&O Hotel, Penang, Malaysia.



