

A Very Rough Guide to Dengkil

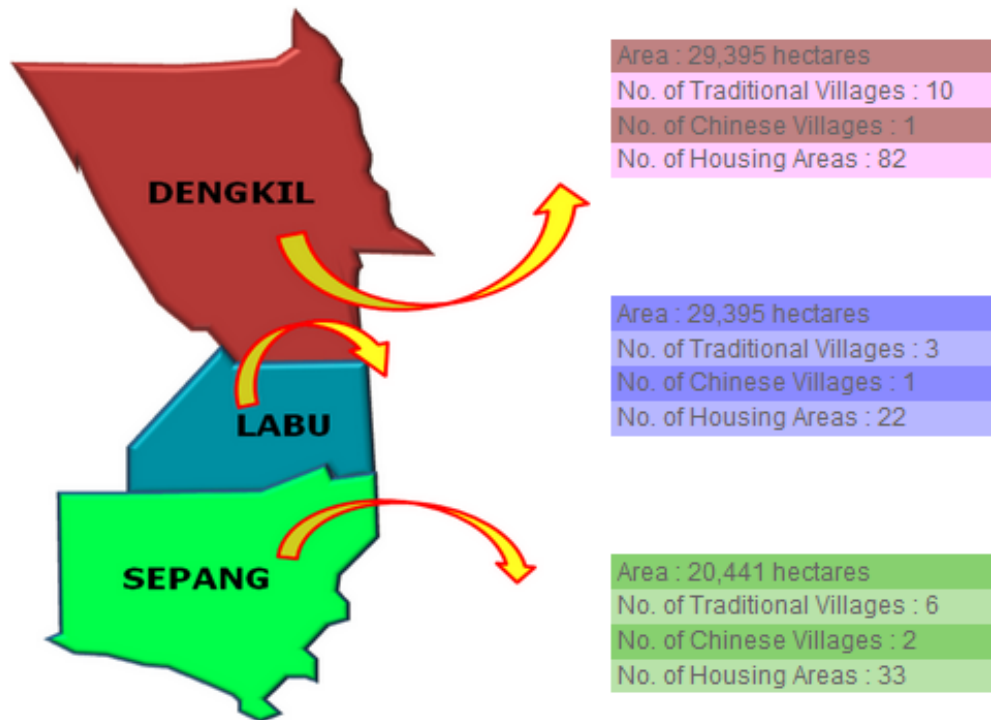
by Eric Lim

Introduction



Dengkil town / Photo source : Eric Lim

Dengkil, Sepang and Labu are the three *mukim* that make up the Sepang district. Sepang officially became a district on 1 January 1975, making it the ‘youngest’ district in the state of Selangor. Previously, Dengkil was part of the Hulu Langat district. Incidentally, **Sepang** is the local name of a shrubby plant found in the area; its wood produces a red dye that is used for dyeing textiles. The tree was a major source of red dye used throughout the world up until the end of the nineteenth century. Its scientific name is *Caesalpinia sappan L* and the tree is also found in India, Myanmar, Thailand, Indo-China and China.



District of Sepang / Photo source : [Portal Rasmi PDT Sepang Kampung Dengkil](http://portal.rasmi.pdt.sepang.kampungdengkil.gov.my)

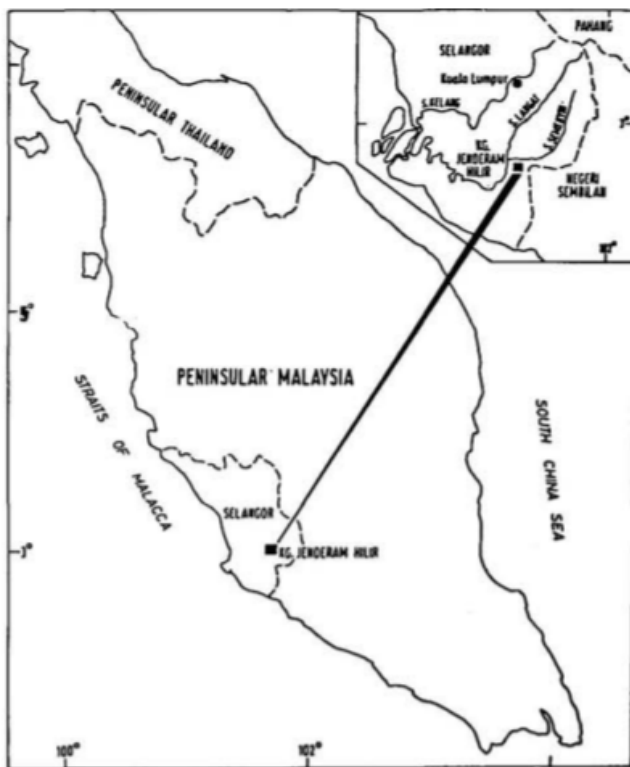
According to the district portal, Dengkil is the largest mukim and it comprises ten Malay kampungs, one Chinese new village, one Indian community village and 82 public housing developments. Dengkil has benefitted from its proximity to our country's mega projects namely Putrajaya, Cyberjaya, KL International Airport and KL International Airport 2. Today, Dengkil is conveniently accessible via major highways like MEX, LDP, SKV4, ELITE, Putrajaya-Cyberjaya Expressway, North-South Expressway, Jalan Banting-Semenyih (B18) and Jalan Putrajaya-Dengkil (B15).

History

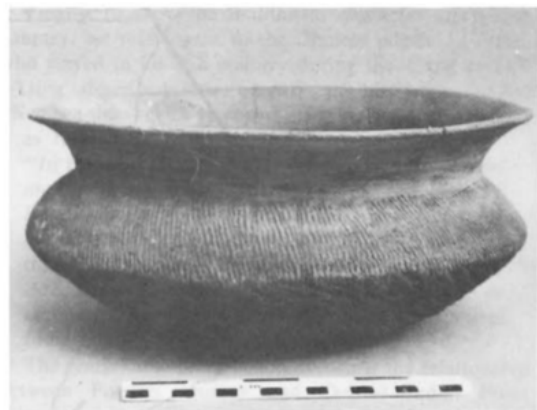
The first version on how the name 'Dengkil' came about originated from an aboriginal word '**dingkil**', which was used to describe a type of durian that has less/no pulp but has large seeds. There used to be a lot of durian trees planted on the banks of Sungai Langat. The second version came from the word '**dengkat**', which means the shallow bed of the river, in this case Sungai Langat. In the third version, Dengkil came from the name of a plant called **Nibong Dengkil**, which is

found in the area. Incidentally, Nibong Dengkil was the original name of Telok Panglima Garang, located at the Kuala Langat district. The Chinese name for Dengkil is **Long Xi (龙溪)**, or **Ling Kay** in Hokkien, which means Dragon River. Local Chinese believed that an ascetical dragon was living in the area for a very long time but the British chased it away by setting it on fire. The dragon was badly injured and spew out black blood, which later formed a river and thus the name Dragon River. Another name for the river is **Sungai Air Hitam** (black water river in English) which still exists until today.

Chinese migrants settled in Dengkil in the early 1920's and worked in the tin mines and rubber estates. In 1950, during the time of the Emergency, British gathered scattered Chinese communities in Banting, Air Hitam, Batu 4 and Dengkil into the newly established **Dengkil New Village (today Kampung Baru Seri Dengkil)**. The transition back to normalcy returned, and tin mining and rubber tapping again became the primary source of income. When tin mining reached its peak in the 1960's, Dengkil had seven tin dredges. In 1969, a fire razed through the town and caused massive amounts of damage. Many families lost their possessions and decided to move to Pandamaran in Klang.



Map showing the location of Kg. Jenderam Hilir in South Selangor.



(left) Map showing location of Jenderam Hilir (top right) cord marked earthen pot (bottom right) leg and stand of tripod pot. Photo source : [Ancient Finds From Kampong Jenderam Hilir](#)

Kampung Jenderam Hilir, nine kilometres east of Dengkil, is the location of an archaeological site. Brian C. Batchelor (today Dr Daud Abdul Fattah Batchelor) first discovered the place in December 1975, and, in 1977, Professor Leong Sau Heng and the Museum Department conducted further studies at the site. Most of the artefacts were recovered from the Teck Lam Hong Tin Mining Sendirian Berhad tin mines; a large collection was from the **Neolithic period**. It includes a cord marked earthenware pot, large quantity of pottery sherds, legs / stands of tripod pots and stone adzes. It also yielded artefacts from a later **historical period**, such as bronze bowls, wooden boat paddles and oars, ceramic wares, a celadon bowl of Lung Chuan type, a small stoneware jar and tin ingots. In her research paper [Ancient Finds From Kampong Jenderam Hilir](#), Professor Leong mentioned that Kampung Jenderam Hilir, located near the confluence of the Sungai Langat and Sungai Semenyih, was first occupied in the late Neolithic and its inhabitants made stone implements and pottery and were involved in agricultural activities. She also said the place might once have been a **feeder point** to the entrepot at Pengkalen Bujang. Feeder points refer to places which regularly send supplies of their local produce to the entrepot and this type of trading sites may be found in inland riverine areas (like Kampung jenderam Hilir) or on the coast (like Kuala Selingsing in Perak). Excavation was also carried out at **Bukit Piatu**, located directly on the opposite bank to Kampung Jenderam Hilir, and it yielded mainly pottery sherds.

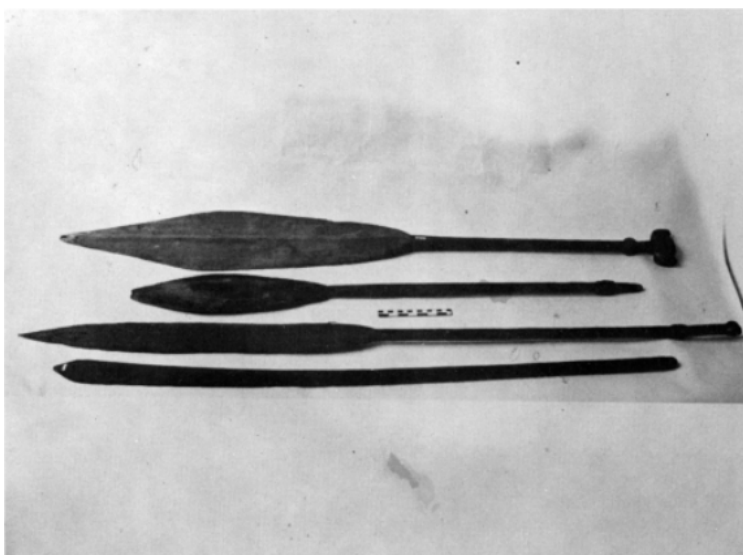


Plate 9. Oar blades excavated from Kampung Jenderam Hilir, Dengkil, Selangor.



(left) Oar blades (top right) Bronze bowl (bottom right) Tin ingots. Photo source : [Ancient Finds From Kampong Jenderam Hilir](#)

In 1993, the Selangor state government sold a piece of land at **Bukit Tunggul** for the development of a golf resort. Thirty-four families of the Temuan Orang Asli group were told to vacate their land. This was the second time they were asked to move. Originally, the Temuan were from Bangi and in 1974, the Government told them to move as the land was marked for the construction of Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia. They resettled at Kampung Sungai Buah and Bukit Tunggul. The golf resort developer agreed to offer cash and build houses for them at Kampung Kechau Orang Asli Settlement, Semenyih. Many do not want to move there as that belongs to another group of Orang Asli. According to a press report in 2016, these families are still staying put on the land that now belongs to Bukit Unggul Golf and Country Resort Sdn Bhd without electricity and water supply.



Kampung Orang Asli Bukit Tunggul / Photo source : Eric Lim

Places of Interest



For fans of Dr Henry Walton 'Indiana' Jones Jr., a visit to the archaeological sites of (1) Kampung Jenderam Hilir and (2) Bukit Piatu (today Kampung Bukit Piatu) are definitely a must-do. You may not find the Temple of Doom, Lost Ark or the Kingdom of the Crystal Skull but you will get to see an ex-tin mine, which is now a vast vacant sandy land, near the rivers. Start digging; you may chance upon the discovery of some Neolithic relics! Steeped in Orang Asli land issue controversy, the (3) Bukit Unggul Golf and Country Resort is a par-71, 5,858 metre long 18-hole hilly golf course. It was designed by American Ronald Fream and was established in 1994.



Bukit Unggul Golf & Country Resort / Photo source : Eric Lim

Places of worship are located at the town centre – (4) **Masjid Jameatus Solehan Dengkil** which is next to the Shell petrol station, (5) **Tian Hu Gong temple**, built in 1926 and dedicated to Chinese deity Nezha (哪吒) and (6) **Mariamman Temple** at Taman Permata. Located close-by is the (7) **Dengkil Police Station**, which is located at the town's T-junction overlooking Jalan Banting-Semenyih (B18) and Jalan Putrajaya-Dengkil (B15). It was established in 1928.



(L) Masjid Jameatus Solehan Dengkil (R) Tian Hu Gong temple / Photo source : Eric Lim

Using Jalan Banting-Semenyih (B18), about 6 km away from the Police Station heading to Banting is (8) **Paya Indah Wetlands(PIW)**. On the right just before reaching the gate of PIW is the (9) **former Paya Indah National Service Training camp**. The three-month training programme for selected 18-year old youths started in December 2003. It was halted for a year in 2015 and finally abolished in August 2018. PIW was officially opened on 13 October 2001 by Tun Dr Mahathir Muhammad. The park is divided into three zones namely Recreation, Education and Conservation & Research. Walk-in visitors are only allowed to enter the Recreation zone while prior booking is required for the other zones. The activities at the Recreation zone include cycling, bird watching, fishing (charge for fishing rod), nature walk, photography, kayaking and paddle boat (chargeable), observation tower and feeding hippopotamus (at 10.00 am), pelican (10.30 am), crocodile (11.00 am) and porcupine (11.30 am). There are four hippopotamus, which are a gift from the Government of Botswana, and the crocodiles were transported to PIW from Langkawi. Chalet accommodation is available for rental.





Paya Indah Wetland / Photo source : Eric Lim

The current site of PIW was formerly a tin mine operated by Selangor Dredging Berhad (SDB). The Selangor government awarded a 1,200- acre mining concession to the company in 1963/1964. Due to its size, the company decided to use a dredge and it was commissioned in 1967. SDB became the first Malaysian company to have its own dredge. The dredge was the largest in the world and it operated around the clock. To facilitate operations, a village was built around the dredge and the workers stayed on site. The village became known as **(10) Kampung Selangor Dredging** and the settlement still stands today in Dengkil. A second dredge was commissioned in 1973. At its peak, the population of Kampung Selangor Dredging was 1,800, which included staff and their families. The land was returned to the state government in the 1980's.

Still on the subject of 'dredger', currently there are only two in our country. **The Tanjung Tualang Tin Dredge No.5 or TT5**, located at Batu Gajah has been rehabilitated and revived into a tourist attraction. Weighing 4 500 tonnes, TT5 was built in England in 1938, rebuilt in 1963 and was retired in 1982. The last owner, Malaysia Mining Corporation, donated it to the Perak government in 2014. It opened to the public in late 2017 in conjunction with the Visit Perak Year 2017. I guess by now you should know the location of the other 'dredger'. When PIW started operation, there was a tin dredge lodged at one of the lakes; this was Petaling Dredge No.9 owned by Petaling Tin Berhad. **'PetD 9'** was constructed at the mining site in 1982 and was later sold off. The other surviving dredger is the **(11) Sri Banting Dredge** currently located at Kampung Dengkil. Built in 1974, this 5,000 tonnes structure is up for sale. To view it, follow the map that starts at the Dengkil Police Station to the site – <https://goo.gl/maps/334qmjyGaSWrS5gBA>



Update – The writer visited Dengkil a day before it went under MCO and would like to make the following updates.

1. The archaeological sites of Kampung Jenderam Hilir and Bukit Piatu are now located inside the Semenyih 2 Water Treatment Plant and entry to the sites may/will be denied.
2. The Orang Asli are now staying at Kampung Orang Asli Bukit Tunggul, which is next to the entry road to Bukit Unggul Golf & Country Resort. They have access to water by sharing a water supply pipe but there is still no electricity supply.
3. Many chalets in PIW are in a state of decay and visitors to the park are rare.
4. To reach Sri Banting Dredge, you have to walk the last one kilometre or so to the site.



Sri Banting Dredge (photo taken in May 2021) / Photo source : Eric Lim

From the North, use **Lebuhraya Damansara Puchong (LDP/E11)** and exit at the end of the toll expressway at Serdang Interchange. Then enter **Putrajaya-Cyberjaya Expressway (Federal Route 29)** and exit at Dengkil East Interchange (Exit 15) to join **Jalan Banting-Semenyih (Federal Route 31)** to Dengkil.

In this Series

Please click [HERE](#) for a list of articles in the 'A Very Rough Guide' series.

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[RECENT ARCHAEOLOGICAL DISCOVERIES IN PENINSULAR MALAYSIA 1976 – 1982](#) (page 59 & 60)

[Ancient Finds From Kampong Jenderam Hilir](#)

[Time to resolve orang asli land issues near Dengkil](#)

Personal communication with Mr Lee Kim Sin – Director of Kajang Heritage Centre

Mangsa Pembangunan : Orang Temuan di Sungai Buah dan Bukit Tunggul, Sepang, Selangor.

By Dr. Mohamed Salleh Lamry

[Paya Indah Wetlands Introduction](#)

[Untitled](#) (Selangor Dredging Berhad)

[Opening of tin dredge delayed to year end](#)

[Sri Banting Dredge](#) (also check Dredge supply > construction of new dredges)



Author: Museum Volunteers, JMM

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limkokkeong

I am pleased to learn of your interest in the series. Coming to your question, these old dredgers are definitely not museum artifacts, they are still in working condition. According to a 2016 report, three of our ASEAN neighbors namely Indonesia, Burma and Vietnam, were in the Top Ten Tin producing countries in the world. And tin production came in at 280,000 MT that year, so there is still a lot of tin to be mined worldwide. I have read that one of the old dredgers was towed to Bangka Island of Indonesia. There is a company in Ipoh that still do the construction and erection of modern alluvial bucket line dredges for the world market. The same company is still looking for a buyer for the Sri Banting Dredge.



eunicemoss

May 27, 2021 at 10:29 am

Thanks!

Eunice



eunicemoss

May 26, 2021 at 1:14 pm

Thank you, Eric, for all your interesting 'A very rough guide' series of articles! I'm a little confused by details of the tin dredges. I gather that when Selangor Dredging Bhd returned their tin mining land to the Selangor government in the 1980s, the government turned it into the Payah Indah Wetlands. So what happened to the two tin dredges Selangor Dredging Bhd commissioned in 1967 and 1973? And, aside from the one in Tanjung Tualang which is now a museum, might you know what's been done with the dredges that have been sold off? I'm just curious about what someone/company would want with a defunct tin dredge!

Comments are closed.