

Malaysia provides splendor, isolation for planters

United Press International
KUALA LUMPUR, Malaysia — "We never talk about our lives here," said the planter's wife, a bird-like Scottish woman, as she watched the red sun slip away in the haze of a tropic evening.
 "If I told folks back home we'd entertained Lord Jellicoe or Lady Barbara Anderson or we lived in a big house with servants, they wouldn't believe us.

They'd think we were just boasting," she said.
 The planter and his wife live in isolated splendor on an expansive oil palm estate outside the Malaysian capital. The estate is owned by a Malaysian company — and a British company before that — but the Scottish couple has managed it for 20 years.
 The gabled, Tudor-style

company house, the size of a small hotel, rises incongruously above coconut and banana palms and the smoke of an oil mill.
 Inside, polished teak floors squeak under foot, the silver gleams and droning mosquitoes seldom dare invade the security of netting or the chilly blast of air conditioners.
 The furnishings are homey

and comfortable. There are few pictures but an abundance of hand-embroidered English hunting scenes decorate the paneled walls.
 The acres of garden facing the sea are filled with the heavy scent of orchids, magnolias and jasmine and the incessant sounds of crickets, lizards and multi-hued birds.
 From the dawn until the last glint of sunlight the planter works, his routine broken only by an occasional visitor or a "nuisance day" of rain that forces the cancellation of harvesting, trimming, weeding or pest control.

Most estate planters arrived in Malaysia in response to newspaper advertisements asking for strong young men to work in an exotic place. They knew they would never be able to buy their own farms if they stayed in Scotland.
 Some got into planting after leaving the British civil service or the army after serving in Malaysia. They started at a paltry wage as an assistant and, if they enjoyed it, worked their way up to the envied position of estate manager, staying 20 years or more.
 Wednesday evenings are spent at the club, another mock Tudor mansion with a velvet golf course and an aqua swimming pool, where a handful of company men and their wives meet for a quiet drink or a game of bridge.
 Every other Sunday it's back to the club — two minutes by car from the house — for curry tiffin, an English liquor — laden

lunch that is an almost forgotten planters' tradition.
 "Most planters are reclusives and not interested in the cocktail lines," said another Scottish planter who also asked not to be named. "We always used to have a Sunday curry tiffin. We'd go around at 11 in the morning to tank up with whiskey 'til the curry turned up and then we'd go home tanked up."
 "But that was the old days. Either we've grown up or there's not many of us left," said the Scotsman, who after 34 years as a planter will soon leave with his Malaysian wife to buy his dream farm in the Scottish highlands.
 Most planters' memories revolve around the club — or rather, their adventures after leaving the smoky sanctuary of the club's bar.
 "We'd gone down to Kuala Krai to collect the pay. It all had to be in silver coins so our sacks were very heavy," said an elderly English planter.
 "We'd popped in at the club for a tippie or two and then set off in fine spirits upriver in a motorized prow.
 "Well, one chap had to answer the call to nature. We moored at the bank and he went off into the jungle.
 "We waited 15 minutes and there was absolutely no sign of him. It was then we saw the fresh tracks.
 "A tiger had carted him off, poor blighter. He never was seen again," he said, sending his audience off into fresh gales of oft-told "do you remember" stories.

For all the big houses, private clubs and paid holidays home for the wife and children, it is a hard life for the handful of expatriate planter needs to be a walking encyclopedia," the November 1920 edition of the monthly magazine "The Planter" said. "He will have to acquire some knowledge of agriculture, botany, chemistry, hygiene, sanitary engineering, surveying, et cetera."
 Today the "et cetera" includes a working knowledge of computers, quality control, labor relations, power generation and productivity boosting techniques.
 Despite a large labor force, mechanization and computerization, the planter still spends much of his time walking his vast fields.
 "I love my work. It's almost the same as owning your own land," the planter said.
 He pointed to a bristling clump of trees, heavy with waxy red fruits.
 "See that oil palm there? That used to be a mangrove swamp. I get terrific satisfaction from seeing jungle converted into such rich land."
 For the planter's wife, life has few surprises and few rewards, but also few complaints.
 "I don't think about being lonely. I've got used to it. We don't like the hoity-toity," she said over morning tea on her plant-bedecked veranda, a ceiling fan gently "I'd say we don't really have any friends. I've never been one for coffee morn-

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Rewrite

Author Pauley says rewriting is key to success

United Press International
ANNISQUAM, Mass. — Writing, says author Barbara Pauley, depends on rewriting, whether it's a novel or a sexual case study.

"The best writing depends on rewriting and rewriting. If you're not willing to rewrite, you shouldn't write," she says.
 That's the advice she gives students in a writers' workshop she formed. And it worked so well, she says, that she and two of them co-authored a graphic sex book called "If You Love Me, Show Me How."

They believe the book, on how to improve sexual communication, will be a best seller. "It's not the kind of material I've worked on before," she explained. "When it was presented, one member was upset.

It's very graphic and deals with sex problems in getting and giving sexual pleasure."

But the approach — to writing — is the same, she says.
 "Writing is very difficult. The more I write, the slower it gets, which makes me unhappy. I feel very strongly the tools for learning to write can and should be learned.

"The tools of the trade can be taught but what eventually becomes literature comes from the imagination, which can't be taught. You can compare it to other arts. Anyone can be taught to play the piano because it's mechanical, but to play like a concert pianist is something different."

Pauley, 58, has written two romantic and suspense novels that were published. "Blood Kin," in 1972 and "Voices Long Hushed," in 1975, but had a third book rejected, resulting in a feeling of despair which the two successes did not dampen.

Her co-authors for the sex manual are Barbara Esmiol, a couples therapist, and Sandra Dodd, a registered nurse, who surveyed the publications market to see what was selling before formulating their idea for the book.

But Pauley says they still had to turn that premise into something marketable, and that took structure and writing, and rewriting.

Dodd has since sold her novel, a murder mystery set in Boston hospital, to a publishing company and hopes to spin sequels based on the same protagonist, a hospital administrator.

Pauley says her workshop hard work, giving tips on marketing, contacts with agents and editors and lets other members cross check the work and progress of their peers.

"The workshop is there to better writing and be constructive so the members can learn and that sometimes means being very critical, she said.

Looking for more members for the workshop in Wenham, Mass., where members are asked for a description of a project and a sample of the writing.
 "The fact you've written something that gets published and people read and like is a wonderful connection with the world," Pauley said. "It's a fantastic feeling."

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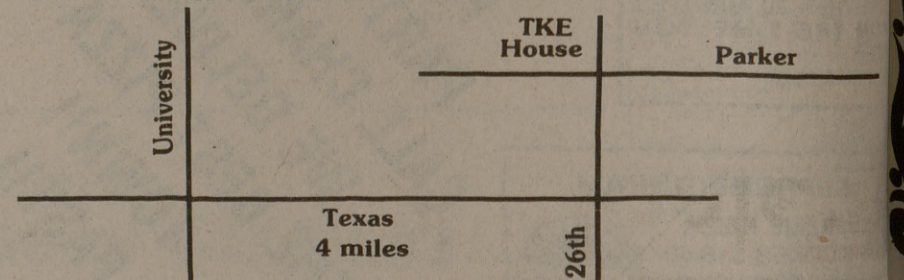
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