

MENTION Tarzan and what immediately comes to mind is a brawny apeman in loin cloth swinging from tree to tree, defending the meek and weak in the jungle against unscrupulous parties.

But Tarzan can be found not just in the wilds of Africa. There's a village near Port Dickson called Kampung Tarzan.

The name has raised eyebrows because people think the village has something to do with the famous comic-book hero created by Edgar Rice Burroughs, but it has nothing to do with that, nor is it located in dense jungle inhabited by ferocious animals.

Kampung Tarzan is located just two kilometres from the Pengkalan Kempas jetty, about 40km from Port Dickson town and is a favourite destination for anglers and tiger prawn hunters at Sungai Linggi.

According to Permatang Pasir village headman Hussein Mohd Nor, Kampung Tarzan was initially part of his village which was formerly a rubber estate owned by Chinese businessmen.

He said almost the entire village was planted with rubber trees which was the sole source of income for the villagers.

"When rubber prices plunged in the 1970s and 1980s, many villagers left in search of income elsewhere and finally, the estate was closed.

"However, the old smokehouse located near the estate manager's house is still standing."

Kampung Tarzan got its name from one of the village's founders, Goh Tha San. Estate workers at that time used to call him "Tha Sen" which over time became Tarzan.

Tha San's grandson, Goh Teck Fai, 53, said he was not sure when the name was changed to Kampung Tarzan but knew that it originated from his grandfather's name, who died more than 20 years ago.

"Among the stories I heard was

There's no apeman in Kampung Tarzan



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The tranquil and picturesque Kampung Tarzan is an angler's haven.

that workers at the estate used to call my grandfather 'You Tha Sen' and over time, the name changed to Tarzan.

"Finally, the village was registered as Kampung Tarzan and it has remained so until now."

Teck Fai said those days, people could put up any name for a place.

"Now, there is so much protocol. Then, you could call a place Super-

man or Ultraman or the name of any superhero and it would be acceptable but try doing that today," he said with a smile.

He added that many people used to wonder why the village had a strange name and some people used to make fun by saying one needs to make Tarzan's trademark call when entering the village.



The dilapidated old smokehouse at the village.

Teck Fai explained that his grandfather used to be a headmaster at the Chung Hwa school in Port Dickson town and used to write Chinese books.

"He was a teacher, a writer, an estate manager and he also took care of the village.

"I was only 10-years-old at the time and have a very vague recollection of him but every opportunity I get, I will cycle to my grandfather's house to spend time there," said Teck Fai, who has been living close to 15 years at his grandfather's house.

The medicine practitioner-cum-businessman said because the rubber estate is no longer operational, most of the villagers now are either involved in the oil palm or dragon fruit business.

Teck Fai said the old rubber smokehouse at Kampung Tarzan was now abandoned, decayed and had succumbed to the ravages of time.

It has been derelict for more than 30 years, with the closing down of the rubber plantations.

Teck Fai, who lives next door to the smokehouse, said he has no plans to restore it as it is in a very bad state of disrepair and may even collapse at



any time.

"Nothing much can be done with it and I plan to bring it down and build a house on that land.

"It's not even safe to go in as the structure is very unstable and may fall apart."

Though the smokehouse is of no use anymore, Teck Fai can't help but reminisce about the good old days when workers would busily go about their jobs and there was smell of smoked rubber in the air.

"I would cycle to my grandfather's

“MY GRANDFATHER, THA SAN, TOOK PRIDE IN LOOKING AFTER THE SMOKEHOUSE AND THE ESTATE AND HE WAS A VERY HARDWORKING MAN, SO MUCH SO THE WORKERS HELD HIM IN HIGH REGARD.”

— Goh Teck Fai

house in the village and watch the workers as they went about their work in the smokehouse and watch them dry the rubber sheets outside.

"My grandfather took pride in looking after the smokehouse and the estate and he was a very hardworking man, so much so the workers held him in high regard," he said proudly.

He added even though the smokehouse had sentimental value, it was impractical to leave it standing as it could become a nesting ground for snakes and rodents.