



PENANG FREE SCHOOL BICENTENARY COMMITTEE

200 Years of Excellence

PRESS RELEASE

PFS Bicentenary 2016 Overland Drive from Penang Free School, Penang to Dittisham, U.K. Flag-off Ceremony at Penang Free School – 18 July 2016

Penang Free School is the oldest English school in South-East Asia. The school was founded in 1816 by Reverend Robert S. Hutchings who hails from Dittisham, U.K. Thus, this year 2016 is of such a historical and significant milestone as it will be the Bicentenary of Penang Free School, a celebration of 200 years of excellence. Many memorable events and nostalgic activities will happen or had already happened.

The Overland Drive is an epic journey to be undertaken by Old Frees and their associates. A convoy of six 4WD vehicles will undertake this adventure which takes them across the European and Asia continents of 18 countries travelling approximately 18,000km in 74 days.

Malaysia, Thailand, Laos, China, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Russia, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Slovakia, Hungary, Czech Republic, Belgium, France, Germany, U.K.

Today, 18 July 2016 the convoy flags off from the “grand old lady” – Penang Free School. This first leg of participants will drive through Thailand and Laos before entering China. In China along the journey, some participants will depart and return to Malaysia while another group will join in from Urumqi, China. It will be a challenging experience for the total of 30 participants, many will take on the entire journey. Convoy participants come from as far as Australia, Singapore and Kuala Lumpur, not forgetting from Penang, too consisting of old Frees and their families and friends. There will be 9 lady participants, some are old Frees who had studied 2 years of sixth form in Penang Free School.

The objective for this event is to commemorate this bicentenary year of Penang Free School with a visit to the village of Dittisham in the South Hams district of the English country of Devon in the U.K. This project serves to inspire not only old Frees but young Frees as well, that a true indomitable spirit was imbued to all who had walked the corridors of Penang Free School. An attitude that befits the school motto, Fortis Atque Fidelis – Strong and Faithful!

The project was mooted in 2012 where a group of old Frees did a recce to experience a similar overland drive from Penang to U.K. Some of the challenges encountered in the 2012 recce drive helped in the planning and preparations for this year’s drive. With six 4WD vehicles and 30 participants, this year’s organizing committee faced numerous challenges. However, good coordination and supportive efforts of the working committee and participants was instrumental for the event to happen.

c/o The Old Frees’ Association

No. 41, Jalan Sultan Ahmad Shah, Gerogetown 10050, Penang, Malaysia

Tel: 604-226 9290 Fax: 604-227 7952

Website: www.pfs200years.com Email: admin@pfs200years.com FB: PFS BICENTENARY CELEBRATIONS



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This is a self-funding event with a spend of approximately RM1,000,000.00. However, the below companies had sponsored generously:

DRB-HICOM sponsorship of RM15,000.00 was used for the purchase of items necessary to facilitate the journey such as; jerry cans for diesel fuel, GPS units, camping tents, etc.;

Motorola Solutions Singapore Pte. Ltd. sponsored 3 sets of walkie-talkies

Peninsular Freight Sdn. Bhd. for sponsoring Toyo-Lube engine oil

And Tourism Malaysia will organize a reception at the Malaysia Embassy in Bangkok on 20 July 2016

The convoy and PFS Bicentenary Committee are much appreciative to all the above sponsors for their support and generous contributions. As well as the school Headmaster, teachers and students and the Old Frees Association of Penang, K.L./Selangor, Singapore and Yayasan PFS.

Interested parties can follow the expedition via Facebook, PFS Penang – Dittisham (UK) Drive 2016.

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/1237685622938241/>

Thank you.

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