

UCSI Students Visit “School of Hard Knocks”



Students observing how pewter is crafted at the factory

The UCSI Student Affairs Office organised a trip for students to the Royal Selangor Pewter Factory on Saturday, 21 January 2006. The trip was a memorable one as all 22 students got to appreciate this particular handicraft unique to Malaysia. It is not often that students get to see and appreciate Malaysian culture at its finest but when they do, it is a truly rewarding time.

Students not only got a closer look at how pewter was crafted, they even got to try working on some pewter at the factory’s School of Hard Knocks. For many, it was an eye-opening experience. It was also a day of fun and enjoyment for students as they got to try their hands at the pewter-crafting process.

According to UCSI Student Development Counselor, Yoshiko Tey, students were first introduced to the history of Royal Selangor. It began with a brief look at tin and tin mining activities. Students visited the museum collection comprising traditional pewter smelting tools and antique pewter. Students were very excited to see magnified versions of ancient tin currency in the form of a pewter crocodile. According to Tey, during the factory tour, the students were fascinated watching the steady hands of the craftsman casting, filling, soldering, polishing and engraving each piece to create a flawless product. Students even got the chance to hammer on the pewter during the hammering process – the fourth process in crafting pewter.

It is important for students to learn about the Malaysian culture. “It was fun. For the students, it was very informative. The students got more exposure and built their knowledge on pewter. They got to see the latest products such as the coin tree, the giant weighing machine, the pewter tank and the chimes. They also learned the four hammering styles,” said Tey. Other than this, the students also learnt to be creative and how to use their imagination in everyday life.

Students found out that it takes a certain amount of care and persistence to produce a flawless piece of handicraft. This also holds true for pewter, although a pewter craftsman will need to take special care in such processes as casting, filling and soldering.

At the end of the trip, the students were excited to have tried their hands at the pewter-crafting process and returned with a sense of accomplishment and renewed self-confidence. Their knowledge of pewter and its importance in Malaysia also increased to some extent. For the Malaysian students, the trip drew a sense of pride for being a part of such a rich culture and heritage. For the international students, they returned from the trip feeling like they had just discovered a hidden gem – a fascinating, uniquely Malaysian craft.



Students posing with the signature giant beer mug outside the Royal Selangor Visitors’ Centre