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**NICHOLAS WOOLF'S VISIT TO MALAYSIA WITH THE LAW SOCIETY'S
INTERNATIONAL DEPARTMENT**

By Nicholas Woolf, Director & Principal, Nicholas Woolf & Co

I was privileged to be asked to be a member of a delegation arranged by the Law Society of England & Wales to travel to Kuala Lumpur in Malaysia. The Law Society International Department arranged a number of meetings on 1st and 2nd July. Given the 12½ hour flight to Kuala Lumpur, and the other meetings I had arranged myself, I left early arriving late on Thursday evening.

I was met by my great friend, a very able lawyer, Gunaseelan Thambinathan ("Guna"). I was treated by Guna royally. He introduced me to a number of his professional colleagues, where we all discussed comparative law and business. Guna also showed me around Kuala Lumpur over the weekend. It is an extraordinary city bridging the ancient numerous religions and the very modern together. The infrastructure for such a young country is impressive.

On Friday I had a private meeting with Tommy Thomas, the Attorney General, whom I knew as a student. From my discussions with him it appears that the rule of the law in Malaysia is now in safe hands.

On Monday and Tuesday, the Law Society arranged meetings with the Malaysian Bar Council, the Asian International Arbitration Centre, the British Commission and separate firms of lawyers of different sizes. The largest was Shearn Delamore, who have over 100 lawyers and are an impressive outfit. The medium sized (by Malaysian standards) firm, with five partners and at least eight other lawyers, was the Izral Partnership who are able litigation specialists. The small firm was GM Tan, run by a sole practitioner who has a very keen and active interest in human rights. The meetings were, no doubt, beneficial to the delegates.

I had several meetings with Guna who was generous in his hospitality not only towards me but the other delegates of the Law Society, who he entertained at the Royal Selangor Club. The lawyers I met all had a keen interest in the law. Indeed, Guna's law library is extraordinary and would probably make many English large firms jealous as to the number of books, the detail and the care in which he chooses them. They are also read. He is clearly a fine lawyer and much respected by his professional colleagues.

Finally, Guna arranged a meeting for me and another one of my colleagues with a Judge Firuz in his chambers. His views on judicial methods, engaging with the advocates and overall interventionist case management were interesting and could certainly be learned from.

My overall impression was there is a huge respect for English law and practice in Malaysia. Most of the lawyers I met had attended English Universities and/or also been called to the bar in England. For that to be maintained it is important that we do not dilute or denigrate our own system.

Further, it is clear that the connection with England & Wales through both education and our legal system promotes an emotional tie to England & Wales, which ultimately has many cultural and financial benefits for both countries.

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