



**Retreat @ Janda Baik**  
by Ir. Abdul Razak Yakob

Ir. Abdul Razak Yakob is currently the Secretary in Oil, Gas and Mining Engineering Technical Division (OGMTD).

On the 26<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup> March 2016, the IEM Oil, Gas and Mining Engineering Technical Division (OGMTD) organized a retreat for the committee members of 2015/2016. The goal of this retreat were to review the OGMTD's past achievements as well as brainstorm and plan for the upcoming activities to be organized. It was initially thought to be a relaxing weekend by the attendees as a reward for the hard work done the previous year, turned out to be a tiring but fruitfully rewarding fun-filled session as we grilled into the planning for the year's activities on a late Saturday night and continue on early Sunday morning.



The participants started arriving at 2:00pm that Saturday afternoon to check in and rest before the monthly meeting started at 3:30pm. Suria Hill Country House is located in Janda Baik on the hilly side of Pahang, at the foothills of Genting Highlands, about 2 hours' drive from Kuala Lumpur. It has only 16 rooms to accommodate a small group of organization looking for a quiet place to concentrate solving issues, teambuilding or brainstorming. A total of 13 committee members and 2 secretariats participated in the session. Only 2 of the committee members cannot make it to the event due to family and work commitment. The session was started with the 2015/2016 OGMTD Chairman, Ir. Mohd Azwira Mohd Azmi welcoming the delegates as well as officiating the session. We proceeded with the monthly meeting as usual with the review of the previous meeting minutes and proceeding with the agenda of the new meeting. The monthly meeting was completed by 5:30pm and we were treated with a light snack before going sightseeing the area or simply rest before dinner. A small river is located at the back of the country house and a few kilometers walk can take you to the pleasing scenic view of Janda Baik's greeneries.

We gathered back at the dining area at 8:00pm for a BBQ dinner of chicken, lamb, fish and other seafood. The dinner was actually very good with exceptional spicily marinated fish wrapped in banana leaves before being grilled.

From 8:45pm until 11:00pm that night we trashed out what was achieved in the previous years and lesson learnt on how we can do better in this session. We also reviewed and discussed the point's allocation system in the latest Presidential Awards Of Excellence (PAOE) to know the latest judging criteria for the technical division. As OGMTD is an industry based technical division rather than a major discipline like Mechanical or Electrical, our goal was not to be the in the first position, but to be the Best Improved technical division. As it was getting late and members were starting to get affectionately irritated with each other, the committee members decided to rest for the night and recharge for the session the next day.

We gathered back in the conference room at 8:45am the next morning and concentrated on listing the activities that we can plan for the year 2016 and 2017. It was an exciting session as the ideas keep pouring while certain quarters debated the validity and practicality of such ideas. In the end, we obtained a good list of activities that the committee will try to achieve by the end of this year as well as the next year. We ended the retreat session with the closing remarks from our Chairman, thanking all the participants for their contribution and encouraging the team to keep contributing to the IEM organization especially the OGMTD. As it was already 10:30am at that time, the participants proceeded to rest for a bit and prepare for check out at noon. We were served lunch before hitting the road back to Kuala Lumpur.



It became apparent to us at the end of the session that the monthly 2-hour meeting of the 2<sup>nd</sup> week Saturdays of the month is insufficient to bring out and challenge great ideas to bring meaningful activities for the IEM members. The retreat is definitely a necessary annual event for every newly formed committee. It is not only to churn out new ideas but also to bring the committee members closer together despite the occasional discussions on emails or WhatsApp's messenger.