

# The day Mr. Rhino walked through

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# The day Mr. Rhino walked through a hospital ward

## RETIRED MALAYAN BIG-GAME HUNTER TELLS OF

**SIR** George Maxwell, one of Malaya's greatest big-game hunters and killer of the famous "Pinjih" rhino, wants to know more about the "phlegmatic" one-horned Rhinoceros Sondaicus, which was seen strolling in Lima Blas Oil Palm Estate at Slim River last month.

From his Worthing, Kent, home, the retired Chief Secretary of the Federated Malay States, has written to his old friend, Mr. Gerald Hawkins, Supervisor of Elections, Selangor, commenting on a curious fact about the rhinoceros

"It is a curious fact, but a well-known one," he says, "that rhinoceroses and tapirs temporarily throw off their normal timidity and become so unafraid of human beings as to ignore their presence.

"One day, before sunset, a rhinoceros entered a large ward in the Taiping hospital, and walked slowly and deliberately down the central corridor. Patients scrambled out of the windows or got under the beds.

"When it reached the open door at the opposite end of the ward, apparently still in deep thought, it disappeared".

Sir Maxwell, who uses his gun no more, describes as "excellent" the pictures of the R. Sondaicus taken by the young French planter, M. Pierre Bazin, which appeared exclusively in the Straits Times of March 22 this year.

To help get more details of this rare animal, Sir George suggests that

**IF** any fresh footprints are seen accurate measurements or casts of them should be taken, and

**IF** a fresh wallow is found it should be carefully searched in the hope of finding some ticks.

**A young animal**

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He says he remembers vividly that the "Pinjih" rhino had numbers of large ticks with extremely long legs.

After studying M. Bazin's pictures, Sir George has these comments to make:

"Without any doubt, it was a young animal, perhaps not much more than one-half or two-thirds grown. Mr. Bazin estimates its height at four feet, and this figures accords fairly well with its size in comparison with the Alsatian alongside it.

"....The animal in Mr. Bazin's photograph is slender by any standard."

**Footnote:** Sir George Maxwell shot the famous "Pinji" rhinoceros in the Pinji valley, in the Kinta area in 1899. It had terrorised the district long before the British occupation of Perak in 1874, and had killed at least three men.

The dead animal measured 5ft. 5½in. at the shoulder. Its head may be seen at the Selangor Museum in Kuala Lumpur.