

‘Jim Thompson Mystery Walk’

Sunlight bungalow is visible if one was to look to the right from the Jim Thompson terrace. Only the roof and upper-half of the bungalow is visible between the fingers of the tropical jungle that seems to be in the midst of engulfing it. The coffee terrace at Strawberry Park Resort is named after the American silk king who disappeared mysteriously one fateful day in 1967. On lonely mornings, as one sits in the Jim Thompson Terrace, one is offered an intimate peak into the mystery of Thompson’s disappearance.

Jim Thompson – the Mystery Man

Jim Thompson the man is as mysterious as the circumstances surrounding his disappearance. James H.W. Thompson was no ordinary businessman; he was the founder of the modern Thai silk industry and also reputedly an ex-CIA agent.

He was fond of taking long solitary walks. In 1967 however Thompson, who was then 61 years old, was not in robust health. However, he was an experienced trekker and it must have been rather inconceivable that he could simply vanish into thin air. Yet that is precisely what happened.

On Easter Sunday in 1967, Thompson who was a guest of Dr T.G Ling, a wealthy Singaporean businessman who owned Moonlight Cottage, was reportedly edgy while picnicking not far from the cottage. He was eager to get back saying that he felt tired.

The Lings and their other guest, Connie Mangskau, had retired to their rooms for a nap. Thompson last walked out of the Cottage at about 3pm and was never seen again.

The Mystery

Subsequent to his disappearance, the Malaysian army aided by American military helicopters combed the area for days. Native trekkers were also involved in the search but found no trace of the missing man.

Even mediums and bomohs were consulted to no avail. Theories of kidnapping, angry jungle spirits, espionage and even suicide have thus far been inadequate to explain his disappearance.

Thompson’s sister, Mrs. Woods – a prominent Philadelphia and Wilmington citizen – was discovered murdered in August of the same year her brother disappeared. This deepened the mystery surrounding Thompson’s own disappearance. Many speculated that there was an international plot against Thompson and his prominent family. Yet, nothing conclusive was ever uncovered.

However what remains a curiosity is the equally sudden disappearance of Thompson's favourite dog in Bangkok. Like its master, it too disappeared without a trace almost exactly one year later!

The Jim Thompson Walk

Strawberry Park Resort is located so near the two bungalows that a walk during dusk is most ideal for those eager to re-live the mystery of Jim Thompson's disappearance. A leisurely stroll downhill will lead one to the main road. The bungalows are to the right of the junction. From here, one walks on a smaller road until it forks towards the targeted bungalows while another path leads one to the Lutheran Mission Bungalow.

Both bungalows are private property and one must be cautious not to disturb the people living there now. Sunlight bungalow has a very beautiful garden but it is Moonlight Cottage that has the beautiful view. Both bungalows offer a very secluded atmosphere.

Trace Thompson's steps out of Moonlight on your way back to Strawberry Park Resort and try to figure out where he got lost. On the way back, take the not often trodden path to the Lutheran Mission Bungalow. A pleasant surprise awaits those who love a little mystery in their lives.