Borneo’s Palaeolithic site found in Lahad Datu

KOTA KINABALU: More than 200,000 years ago, humans migrated to Borneo where an early settlement was recorded in Lahad Datu.

The discovery of the Mansuli site, located about 50km from Lahad Datu township, uncovered thousands of prehistoric artefacts dating back as early as 235,000 years ago.

Discovered by chance, Mansuli is believed to be the oldest Palaeolithic site in the Borneo archipelago.

Local-born archaeologist Jeffrey Abdullah said in 2003, a team went to Gua Samang Buat archaeological site where they stumbled upon stone tools on the ground, about a kilometre from the cave.

“We dug the area to uncover more objects and excavations revealed that the site had been used as a workshop to make stone tools during the Palaeolithic period.

“This proves that there was early settlement in the area and we’ve used optically stimulated luminescence dating (OSL dating) to find out when it occurred.”

Jeffrey said this at the “Malaysian Archaeology: Tracing The Ancient Society” exhibition at the Sabah Museum here yesterday.

Present were state Tourism, Culture and Environment Minister Datuk Masidi Manjun, Sabah Museum director Joanna Kitingan and Universiti Sains Malaysia Global Archaeological Research Centre director Prof Dr Mokthar Saidin.

The excavations were carried out by the Global Archaeological Research Centre of Universiti Sains Malaysia in cooperation with Sabah Museum.