

THE STORIES
BEHIND JUBILEE
WALK

COMMUNITY
HERITAGE TRAIL:
OUR GEYLANG
SERAI

MUSEOLOGY
HIGHLIGHT:
WHEN OBJECTS
BECOME THE
SUBJECT





Front Cover

National Day, August 9, 1966
Photo courtesy of National
Archives of Singapore

Front Inner Cover

*Mummy-board, probably from
Thebes, Egypt, 950 – 990 BC*
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FOREWORD FOREWORD

MUSE SG is beginning the New Year with a new look and a look back on Singapore's Jubilee Celebrations.

A key milestone in the Jubilee Year, the Jubilee Walk was launched to commemorate the 50th anniversary of Singapore's independence. The Jubilee Walk covers 23 architectural gems, bringing visitors up close and personal with Singapore's past, present and future.

MUSE profiles 12 individuals for *The Stories behind the Jubilee Walk* (page 27) in this bumper issue introducing the trail. The articles showcase intimate life stories and each is interwoven with the histories of our iconic sites, offering greater insight to how far modern-day Singapore has come from its past. Men and women dedicated to their work and communities, the profiled individuals are 12 strains of the same song – creativity, resilience, camaraderie and commitment, all that have moulded Singapore into today's vibrant city state.

A homecoming youth's perspective in *The Singapore Story* (page 20) tells us about the rich fabric of Singapore and the way it has come together to create the country we are today. She joins two other young students in this issue to offer their vibrant voices

of the Singaporean identity. The new generation highlights our multi-faceted cultural identity, continuing the thread of our past as a heterogeneous mix of immigrants who called Singapore home. They remind us that we are only as strong as we are resolute in creating a better future together, while keeping the roots of our beginnings close.

Finally, to round up the year and usher in new beginnings, we remember that history also lies in our diverse communities all over the island and, for this issue, we focus on Geylang Serai. In the article *Our Geylang Serai* (page 51), we explore one of Singapore's oldest communities and showcase the area's rich cultural elements and food haunts.

As we cross the 50-year mark of a nation, with increased knowledge of our heritage, we look towards the new year with an expanded vision to encompass endless possibilities.

MUSE SG TEAM

Publisher

National Heritage Board
61 Stamford Road,
#03-08, Stamford Court,
Singapore 178892

Chief Executive Officer

Rosa Daniel

Assistant Chief Executive

Alvin Tan
(Policy & Community)

MUSE SG team

Editor-in-chief

David Chew

Design Consultant

Ian Lin

Editorial Managers

Reena Devi
Ruchi Mittal
Raudha Muntadar

Production Manager

Lawrence Low

Layout

Kaleb Loh

Copy-editing

Hedgehog
Communications

Printing

Hobee Print Pte Ltd

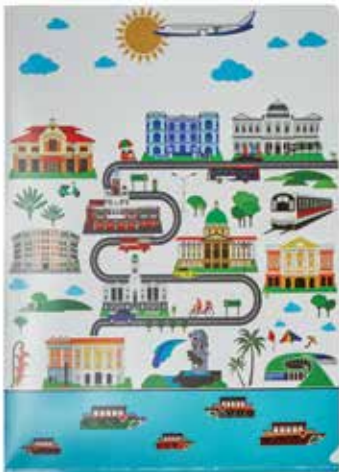
Contributors

Chung Sang Hong
Joel Tan
Nicole Chen
Nurliyana Halid
Priscilla Chua
Raudha Muntadar
Reena Devi
Ruchi Mittal
Szan Tan
Stefanie Tham
Yane Lee

JUBILEE WALK



JUBILEE WALK
MAGNETS



JUBILEE WALK
FOLDER

JUBILEE WALK
MESSENGER BAG



In conjunction with the launch of the Jubilee Walk in November 2015, MUSEUM LABEL has developed a range of merchandise – comprising L-shaped folders, notebooks, magnets, sticky notes and messenger bags – featuring well-loved landmarks along the Jubilee Walk. These merchandise are sold at the MUSEUM LABEL shops.

AVAILABLE AT FOLLOWING LOCATIONS:

Asian Civilisations Museum

1 Empress Place, Left Lobby
Singapore 179555

Saturdays - Thursdays | 10am to 7pm

Fridays | 10am to 9pm

National Museum of Singapore

93 Stamford Road
Singapore 178897

Mondays - Sundays | 10am to 6.30pm

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WHEN OBJECTS BECOME THE SUBJECT

Text by Szan Tan



Photo on this page
Shield, Late Bronze Age, around
1200 to 1000 BC. Sheet Bronze. North
Wales. Presented by Sir A.W. Franks

01. *Stone Hand Axe*, about 800,000 years old. Lower Palaeolithic. Quartzite. Tanzania.



01

02. *Ru Dish with Emperor's Inscription*, AD 1086 to 1125. Stoneware with Celadon Glaze. China.



02



“[R]ight from the beginning, we – unlike other animals – have felt the urge to make things more sophisticated than they need to be. Objects carry powerful messages about their makers, and this chopping tool is the beginning of a relationship between humans and the things they create which is both a love affair and a dependency.”

Neil MacGregor,
former Director of British Museum,
in *History of the World in 100 Objects*

Objects embody ideas and concerns common to mankind. From creating hand tools to dishes to metal alloys/ware, mankind created objects to meet evolving needs over time. As such, these objects tie in strongly with the development of human civilisation. Objects reflect our close relationships with our physical environment and the natural and animal world, and also capture the relationship we have with the spiritual world. Throughout history, humanity’s complex interconnection with each other has also been further demonstrated through objects.

From December 5, 2015 to May 29, 2016, *Treasures of the World from the British Museum* at the National Museum of Singapore brings together many objects that illustrate the fascinating relationship we have with the objects we create and possess.

HAND TOOLS

A 800,000-year-old stone handaxe, discovered in the Olduvai Gorge in Tanzania by the archaeologist

Louis Leakey, is much like the chopping tool mentioned by Neil Macgregor, former Director of British Museum. It represents the beginning of mankind’s story, and our relationship with the objects we create. The making of the tools like the handaxe tells of man’s resourcefulness and ability to harness the raw materials from his physical environment.

Man may know to utilise raw materials for survival and protection, but great skill and dexterity are required to transform a lump of stone into a tool, and to craft it exquisitely too. Based on many of the handaxes found in the Olduvai Gorge, it is speculated that early humans went beyond function and created them as art pieces and status symbols. The handaxes were simply too large and beautifully crafted to function as practical tools for everyday use.

PRIZED POTTERY

The transformation of clay into pottery, stoneware and porcelain through firing marks another



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- 03. *Blue-and-white Porcelain Dish*, AD 1403 to 1424. Porcelain with Underglaze Cobalt-Blue Decoration. China.
- 04. *Seated Figure of the Goddess Bastet*, Late period Egypt, 664 to 302 BC. Bronze.
- 05. *Ritual Wine Vessel*, 500 BC. Bronze. China.
- 06. *Processional Cross*, AD 1730 to 1755. Bronze and Gold. Ethiopia.

development in man's relationship with his environment. A Ru dish and blue-and-white porcelain dish in the exhibition are splendid results of man's search for the finest materials, his exploitation of them, and the success of his many experiments in creating fine and delicate objects reserved only for the imperial family.

Admired for their thin bodies, duck-egg blue glaze and delicate crack lines, Ru wares were only produced briefly for a period of about 30 years, from AD 1086 to 1127. Today, there are only 70 extant pieces, mainly in museum collections.

Appreciated and sought all over the world later in history were Chinese porcelains with under-glazed blue decoration, commonly known as "blue and white" porcelain. These Chinese porcelains made from a combination of porcelain stone and kaolin, which was then found only in China, were very much

adored for their highly vitrified, pure and translucent bodies. Produced mainly in Jingdezhen in southern China's Jiangxi province, many of these wares were exported to the Near and Middle East and other countries in Asia from the fifteenth century onwards. Great quantities of these Chinese export porcelains eventually found their way to Europe and were all the rage there in the seventeenth to eighteenth century.

METALWORK AND SOCIAL STATUS

Besides ceramics, the course of metal technology development also demonstrates our abilities in transforming our natural resources to make objects that will protect, serve and bolster our social positions. Man created bronze using copper and combining it with other metals such as zinc and lead. Through inventive techniques – such as mould casting, lost wax technique, repoussé and chasing



07

– bronze figurines, weapons, armours, shields, vessels and ceremonial implements were formed and decorated in various cultures.

Examples of these bronze objects can be found in the *Treasures of the World from British Museum* exhibition. They range from the figure of the Egyptian goddess Bastet in the form of a cat (dating to the Late period of Egypt from 664 to 302 BC), an Eastern Zhou wine vessel from the Houma Foundry in China, a shield from North Wales dated to the Late Bronze Age (around 1200 to 1000 BC), to a processional cross from Gondar, Ethiopia (dated AD 1730 to 1755).

SPIRITUAL CONNECTIONS

In negotiating our harsh environment and fighting for survival with other species, man turned to the spiritual world for protection. Spirits were appeased

and propitiated; protection was sought from gods, goddesses and ancestors. The teachings of great beings were studied and revered, and religious systems and beliefs were created.

In some societies, certain animals were considered sacred and venerated as deities which were both feared and loved. An obsession with afterlife arose in certain cultures, where elaborate ceremonies and belief systems were created to ensure a smooth transition to the netherworld and/or to achieve everlasting life after death. Humanity's relationship with the spiritual realm can be seen in many objects, ranging from the mummies of ancient Egypt, the sculpted or cast figures of Buddhas in Asia and Southeast Asia, to the exaltation of Christ or the Virgin Mary in prints and votive plaques.

A masterpiece of this communion with the spiritual realm can be found in the work of Rembrandt

07. *Harmensz van Rijn, Rembrandt. The Three Crosses, AD 1653. Dry Point Etching.*

08. *Statue of Ganesha, around AD 1200. Sandstone. India.*

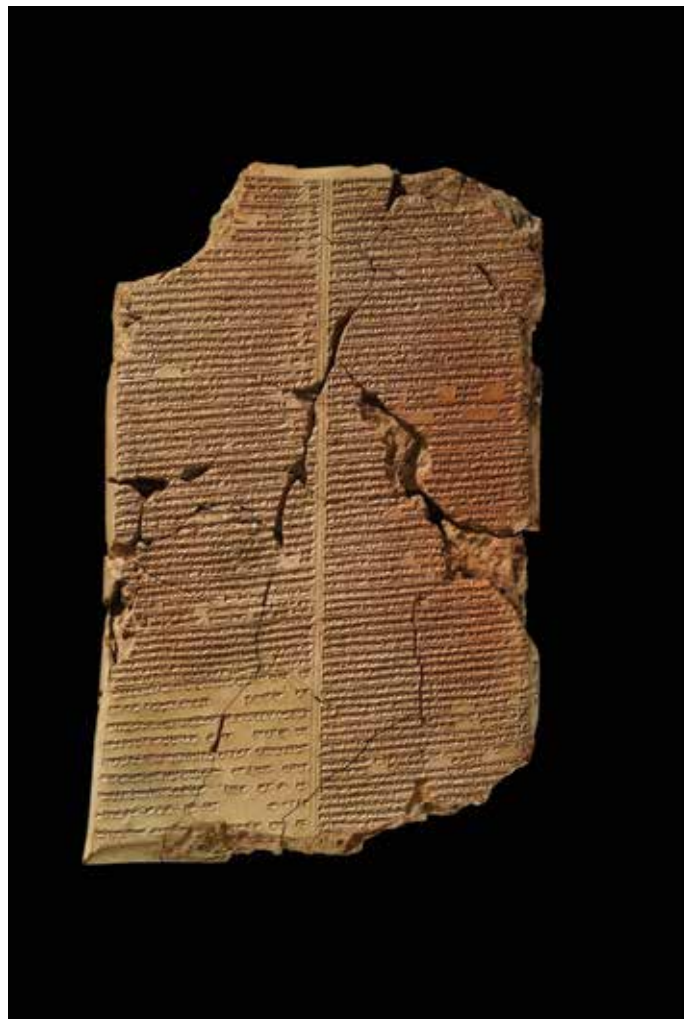


08

(Harmensz van Rijn, 1606 to 1668), entitled *The Three Crosses* and dated AD 1653. Here, the scene of Christ's crucifixion is highly dramatised through the clever use of light and shade. The frail body of Jesus is situated in the centre, and all light and focus are on him and his death. Only upon closer study can one see the confusion and suffering surrounding Jesus. Prints such as this were a means of bringing Biblical stories vividly to life and to aid in private prayers. Other striking examples from the exhibition that tell the story of man's spiritual connections include a Gandanran Buddha, a statue of Ganesha from Orissa, India and a Tang dynasty silk painting of the Bodhisattva Samantabhadra, found in the Mogao Caves in Dunhuang.

COMMUNICATION

Through objects, we can also trace man's communication and



09. *Painting of the Bodhisattva Samantabhadra*, Tang Dynasty (around AD 750 to 850). Ink and Colours on Silk.

10. *A Tablet from King Ashurbanipal's Library*, 700 to 600 BC. Clay. Northern Iraq.

complex relationships with each other. With the invention of writing, information could be passed down as records could be kept. One of the earliest forms of writing was in the form of a cuneiform (wedge-shaped) script inscribed on clay or stone tablets from Mesopotamia.

The relationship of man with each other were outlined, defined and reinforced through writing. Social hierarchies and political legitimacies were thus strengthened too.

Knowledge was also passed down via written word. Representative of this are insights into common ailments and their remedies,



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11. *War Shield*, early 1900s. Mangrove Wood and Natural Pigments. West Papua.

12. *Group of Netsuke*, Edo period (1800 to 1900). Ivory, Lacquer, Wood. Japan.



12

found on the tablets from King Ashurbanipal's library in Nineveh, northern Iraq. A clay tablet from his collection, dated 700 to 600 BC, details stomach disorders and prescribes remedies for each. It is part of a therapeutic series entitled "If a man suffers from a phlegmy cough, and it turns into intestinal disease".

OBJECTS AND SYMBOLISM

Through the ages, man has sought to define his place in society through the use of symbols, the enactment of rituals, or performance of ceremonies. Objects carved with powerful symbols, sometimes passed down for generations, acquired extra blessings and power. An Asmat warrior would have carried a war

shield to emphasise his strength and to intimidate his enemies. Personal adornments made from rare, precious materials and attached with powerful symbols were worn by man to define his position and to set him apart from other men. *Netsuke* were intricately carved toggles, worn by Japanese men from town during the Edo period. They were miniature and portable art pieces which were an essential part of the costume of a Japanese townsman, defining his status and wealth.

WE. DEFINING STORIES.



**Text by Priscilla Chua
and Stefanie Tham**

WE: Defining Stories is a photography exhibition showcasing headline photographs taken from the collections of *The Straits Times* and the National Museum of Singapore. In celebration of SG50, a travelling version of the original exhibition presented at the National Museum of Singapore was created, bringing our people's story to the heartlands. The exhibition travelled to public libraries in 2015 and will be traveling to various schools this year.

THE SINGAPOREAN FACTOR

Having walked through Singapore's journey towards independence, efforts at building our country and the heroes and icons that have become part of our national story, *WE: Defining Stories* rounds up with a buffet of quirks and eccentricities that define us as Singaporeans.

Over the years, a Singaporean culture has emerged and is typified by certain unique characteristics. When confronted with the behavioural quirks of Singaporeans, sometimes the most appropriate response is to laugh. And why not?

A lot of our idiosyncrasies, such as our irrational competitiveness, penchant for queuing and unending campaigns, have become running inside jokes. As much as we sometimes cringe in embarrassment at our antics, these little actions have become something like a shared secret—almost a code—that only those who have been here long enough would know, and actually *get it*.

PHOTO ABOVE

Shoppers at the Robinsons' annual sale. Robinsons department store has been drawing crowds of bargain hunters over the years to its attractive sales with significant price slashes. 1966.

Photo: Ali Yusoff / *The Straits Times*

Striving for the best is a practice that most of us Singaporeans pursue. Indeed, whether we like to admit it or not, Singaporeans tend to make the effort to excel in every aspect: from the standards of our tertiary education and airline service, to holding the accolades for making the longest *popiah* (fresh spring roll) in the world, and having the largest number of people donning facial masks at one time.

“It is probably my one and only chance at setting a world record, and it’s great I got to do it through my favourite activity.”

- Yap Yee Tharm (b. 1949) was part of the team of 280 people who formed the longest inline skating chain in the world during the Samsung Inline Skating Festival in 2006.

(source: *The Straits Times*, 19 November 2006, p. L2)

- 01. Hundreds gathered at Nex shopping mall to help beauty company Mary Chia establish a new Guinness World Record for the largest number of people wearing facial masks (859). 9 April 2011.
Photo: Lim Sin Thai / The Straits Times
- 02. On 27 April 2005, students from Nanyang Girls’ High School broke the Guinness World Record for the longest *popiah* in the world. It was 196.14 metres long.
Photo: Shahriya Yahaya / The Straits Times
- 03. The Merlion celebrated its coming of age on 15 September 1993 with a cake weighing 2.1 tons and spanning the size of half a badminton court. It was entered into the Singapore Guinness Book of Records.
Photo: Albert Sim / The Straits Times
- 04. Contestants braving the elements during the Subaru Team Challenge in 2005, where two Subaru Imprezas were awarded to the couple who could keep their hands on the cars for the longest time.
Photo: Joyce Fang / The Straits Times
- 05. Contestants of Action Asia Challenge, the first extreme sports race in Singapore held on 24 October 2004.
Photo: Mugilan Rajasegeran / The Straits Times



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There is something about queuing that we identify as typical Singaporean behaviour. Whether it is to register for the Primary One intake, collect freebies, or chase after the latest fad, many would agree that queuing is an intrinsic facet of our culture, and perhaps indicative of the *kiasu* spirit (Hokkien for “afraid to lose”) that is in us.

“I’m not too sure how I got embroiled in this.”

- Jacqueline (b. 1984) visited five McDonald’s outlets between the hours of 11pm and 5am to buy the final Hello Kitty in her collection in 2013.

(source: *The Business Times*, 9 August 2013, p. 1, 6.)

06. Student Tze Swee Poh with his haul of Hello Kitty soft toys from McDonald’s after queuing over 10 hours for them. 2000.
Photo: Alphonso Chan / *The Straits Times*



06

07. Parents in long queues, such as in this photo taken at St Michael’s School in 1976, are usually seen when registration for Primary One classes begins.
Photo: Hairis / *The Straits Times*



07

08. The queue for Phase 3 Primary One registration at Tanjong Katong Primary School on 26 August 2007 began almost a whole week before registration officially started.
Photo: Ng Sor Luan / *The Straits Times*



08

09. Crowds queue for tickets for the Malaysia Cup semi-final match between Singapore and Selangor at the National Stadium on 13 May 1977.
Photo: Mak Kian Seng / *The Straits Times*



09

10. Scores of people gathered to queue for the 1976 silver coin at the Currency Board at Empress Place on 21 January 1976.
Photo: Kok Ah Chong / *The Straits Times*



10

11. Queue at Singapore Pools’ new iToto draw for the \$5 million Mid-Autumn jackpot at a Singapore Pools’ outlet in Clementi on 5 October 2006.
Photo: Mugilan Rajasegeran / *The Straits Times*



11

12. Queue in front of a Blanco Court Food Centre stall at Old Airport Road before it opens, 1 June 2013.
Photo: Kua Chee Siong / *The Straits Times*



12

“Tissue paper: The ‘dangerous weapon’ Singaporeans use to ‘chope’ seats. A mere packet sends the signal to fellow patrons to stay away from the ‘taken’ seats.”

- Gayathiri Ilango’s entry to a contest organised by The Straits Times inviting readers to submit reasons why they love Singapore in 2009.

(source: *The Straits Times*, 16 August 2009, p. 9)



PHOTO ABOVE

People using packets of tissue paper to ‘chope’ seats at Lau Pa Sat Festival Market during lunch hour on 9 April 2010.

Photo: Joyce Fang / The Straits Times

From time to time, events such as the Grand Prix ignite excitement across the whole nation, and also produce some interesting shots of excitable Singaporeans. Since 2008, Singapore's beautiful cityscape has served as the backdrop to the Formula One Grand Prix night race every September. The race in Singapore is competed on a five-kilometre street circuit that runs through the city's civic district. But unbeknownst to some of us, Singapore's first Grand Prix was actually in 1961 and the nation's first Grand Prix circuit was also a street circuit known worldwide in the 1960s and 1970s as the Thomson Road Circuit.



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13. Spectators at the 8th Singapore Grand Prix on 20 April 1973.
Photo: Francis Ong / The Straits Times



15

14. The starting line at the Singapore Grand Prix in April 1972.
Photo: Chew Boon Chin / The Straits Times

15. An overview of the lit up Singapore Grand Prix race track as seen from the 65th floor of Swissotel The Stamford on 16 September 2013.
Photo: Mugilan Rajasegeran / The Straits Times

16. Crowds scale fences to catch a glimpse of the first edition of the Singapore F1 Grand Prix night race on 28 September 2008.
Photo: Alphonsus Chern



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A quintessentially Singaporean event is our National Day Parade. Since its beginnings in 1966, Singapore's National Day Parades have evolved over the years, with each edition growing in scale and originality. Tickets for the event are usually in high demand and get snapped up way in advance. Past National Day Parades have been held at the Padang and the former National Stadium, with the current parade at Singapore Sports Hub. A typical parade features military marches, fighter jet fly-bys, as well as spectacular fireworks. These parades are a highlight of the year for most Singaporeans, and some have amassed a large collection of National Day souvenirs over the years.



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17. Adults and children watching the 1985 National Day Parade at Guillemard Road being thrilled by the fly past of a squadron of 15 planes from the Republic of Singapore's Air Force. 9 August 1985. Photo: Nghai Chee Wah/The Straits Times

18. The hosts for National Day Parade 2014 (from left) Ebi Shankara, Jean Danker, Hossan Leong, Siti Khalijah and Joakim Gomez donned a variety of costumes and outfits that matched the pop art colour theme to a tee. The parade was held at The Float@Marina Bay. 9 August 2014. Photo: Kevin Lim / The Straits Times

“I was there for the 1987 parade as part of the combined schools’ choir and have been wanting to go again ever since... My previous experience as a performer was awesome. It was so overwhelming once you got into the stadium and you just get caught up in the euphoria of the moment.”

- Madam Ainah Manap (b. 1969) is a translator at the S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies at Nanyang Technological University. (source: *The New Paper*, 9 August 2013, p. 10)

“It is one thing to watch it on TV, but nothing beats seeing it live... It’s the marching tune from the parade – it reminds me of my days in the Volunteer Corps. Even after 47 years, no other parade can top the NDP.”

- Choo Khoo Hock (b. 1940) is an ardent fan of the National Day Parade and has watched every parade live. (source: *The Straits Times*, 23 July 2012, p. B4)



18

CHINESE NEW YEAR GREETINGS

A THROWBACK TO SINGAPORE IN THE SIXTIES

Text and photos courtesy of Tan Kei En Joel





02



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05

01. Chinese New Year greeting cards collection

02. Poetry featuring strong sense of companionship

03. Card with name typed in

04. Photo added to give card a personal touch

05. Card with name inserted directly on printout

Technology advancement has brought about an increased popularity of emails and e-cards in place of traditional greeting cards. In today's society, Chinese New Year greeting cards are on the verge of extinction, with only seniors and some organisations keeping the practice alive. Sending Chinese New Year greeting cards is now often perceived as an old-fashioned afterthought.

Yet, an interesting trivia is that sending Chinese New Year greeting cards was the "in" thing in Singapore in the sixties. Posting Chinese New Year greeting cards was once a popular practice, regardless of one's economic and educational background, gender

or social status. The popularity of Chinese New Year greeting cards then, along with its wide audience and variety, reflects a great deal about the rich cultural history of Singapore in the sixties.

In an era without mobile phones, postal delivery was the most common channel of communication. Sending Chinese New Year greeting cards through the mail was one of the ways of showing 礼 (courtesy) to one's friends. Greeting cards from that period contained beautiful poetry that conveyed well-wishes for the receiver, regardless of the cards physical sizes. The usage of words such as 我们 (we) indicated a form of togetherness, mutual support

and companionship in welcoming a brand new year.

There used to be spaces provided in greeting cards that allowed senders to insert their own photographs, adding a personal touch to the cards that demonstrated a deeper level of sincerity. More significantly, the Mandarin characters 鞠躬 (bow) were printed in all the cards, referring to the sender taking a bow to symbolise politeness and respect for the recipient.

The sending of these greeting cards was once a show of the senders' appreciation for the relationship with their recipients. During the sixties, the cost of Chinese New Year greeting cards were cheap and

affordable, at about 10 cents each. Notably, the usage of typewriters or the engagement of printing service providers was common, to insert names directly and more efficiently on card printouts – this signified the large numbers of New Year cards that were sent out by individuals then.



06 These practices suggested that there were numerous greeting cards sent by the more affluent, or those wishing to maintain a wide relationship network, which contributed to the growth of the popular practice. Through mutual exchanges of greeting cards, friendships and business relations were renewed annually. The sixties in Singapore may have been a period of rapid change with industrialisation, development of modern housing and the decline of villages, but cultural ties were maintained and we were socially tightly-knit.

The young adults of the sixties were often educated in the fifties, a period in which the percentage of students in English and Chinese streams were relatively similar: 47.4 percent in the English stream and 45.9 percent in the Chinese stream. Chinese New Year greeting cards

were used by both the English- and Chinese-educated population in Singapore then, with the two different social groups sharing a common practice. While different cultures took root among local populace in the sixties, Chinese New Year greeting cards began to include English translations of Chinese poetry, indicating their common audience of Chinese and English readers.

Additionally, students who were educated in English streams were also trained in a second language through Language Exposure Time (LET) and the 1966 compulsory second language act. This meant that those who went into the English stream were still in touch with Chinese cultural practices that were already strong amongst the Chinese population. Notably, the romanisation of Chinese names spelt with Hanyu Pinyin reflected how the English-educated Chinese were sending Chinese New Year greeting cards and thus connected with Chinese culture. Common assumptions of a cultural division between the English and the Chinese-educated populace then are thus not entirely true.

Unlike present-day Chinese New Year cards, which only emphasise traditional Chinese culture, Chinese New Year greeting cards back then were a blend of traditional Chinese culture and modernity. Rich traditional Chinese culture were present in three aspects:

- Firstly, the Chinese characters in most greeting cards were in traditional Chinese, with either a right to left text vector or a writing style that starts from top to bottom, echoing traditional Chinese writing styles.



07



NO. 10055 C

- 06. Card containing English and Chinese version of a poem
- 07. Traditional Chinese colours and symbols
- 08. Card featuring Hong Kong star in the 60s



08

- Secondly, card pictorials included flowers, butterflies and animals such as peacocks, commonplace symbols of prosperity and longevity in traditional Chinese culture.
- Thirdly, the colours utilised in these greeting cards were warm colours such as yellow or pink, symbolising peace in traditional Chinese culture.

indicated the popularity of these Hong Kong stars among the local population in Singapore. Modern ways of dressing, in terms of hair styles and fashion, thus entered the society through the emulation of these popular stars.

Yet these rich traditional Chinese components were placed alongside modern elements. Chinese New Year greeting cards in the sixties often included pictures of famous Hong Kong pop stars and Mandarin pop song lyrics. The incorporation of these stars and their songs into greeting cards and their desirability as gifts

Young Singaporeans of the sixties began adopting Western clothing and embracing a modern identity. This phenomenon is represented by the women in image 8, who wore Western dresses instead of traditional cheongsams. This embracement of modernity was largely influenced by the historical context of Singapore in the sixties. The export-oriented economy inevitably exposed Singapore to cultural influences from other emerging economies such as Hong

F調 4/4

意乱情迷
潘秀瓊唱

选曲並詞

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自從我遇見你，心裡總不忘記， 我祇怕後會無期，一心想見你，
第二次遇見你，心裡不要認錯你， 可足你姿態輕盈，怎不教人迷。

0 1̣ 2̣ 1̣ | 2̣ — | 2̣ 3̣ 2̣ 1̣ 6̣ 5̣ | 6̣ 6̣ | 1̣ 2̣ 6̣ 5̣ | 3̣ 3̣ 2̣ 3̣ | 2̣ — | 2̣ — |

有一天， 在街上見你對我陰陽怪氣，
走上前， 要和你談談情意 你說你已有愛侶。

0 1̣ 1̣ 1̣ | 2̣ 2̣ 3̣ 5̣ | 0 5̣ 5̣ 6̣ | 1̣ 6̣ 1̣ 2̣ | 0 3̣ 5̣ | 2̣ 3̣ 5̣ 6̣ | 1̣ — | 1̣ 0 ||

我心裡祇有懷疑，你好像對我無意 從此不想你。
我自嘆沒有勇氣，把愛情隱藏心底 不再想念你。

Kong. Furthermore, the need for a strong workforce invited men and women to step into the working world. This empowered women to have higher purchasing power, affording them choices in asserting their modern identities through the consumption of popular music and Western clothing.

The blending of traditional and modern elements in Chinese New Year greeting cards of the sixties reflected how tradition and modernity were not at odds and often co-existed. When examined closely, Chinese New Year greeting cards that were popular in the sixties reflected the social and cultural aspects of the times that may not be known to many.

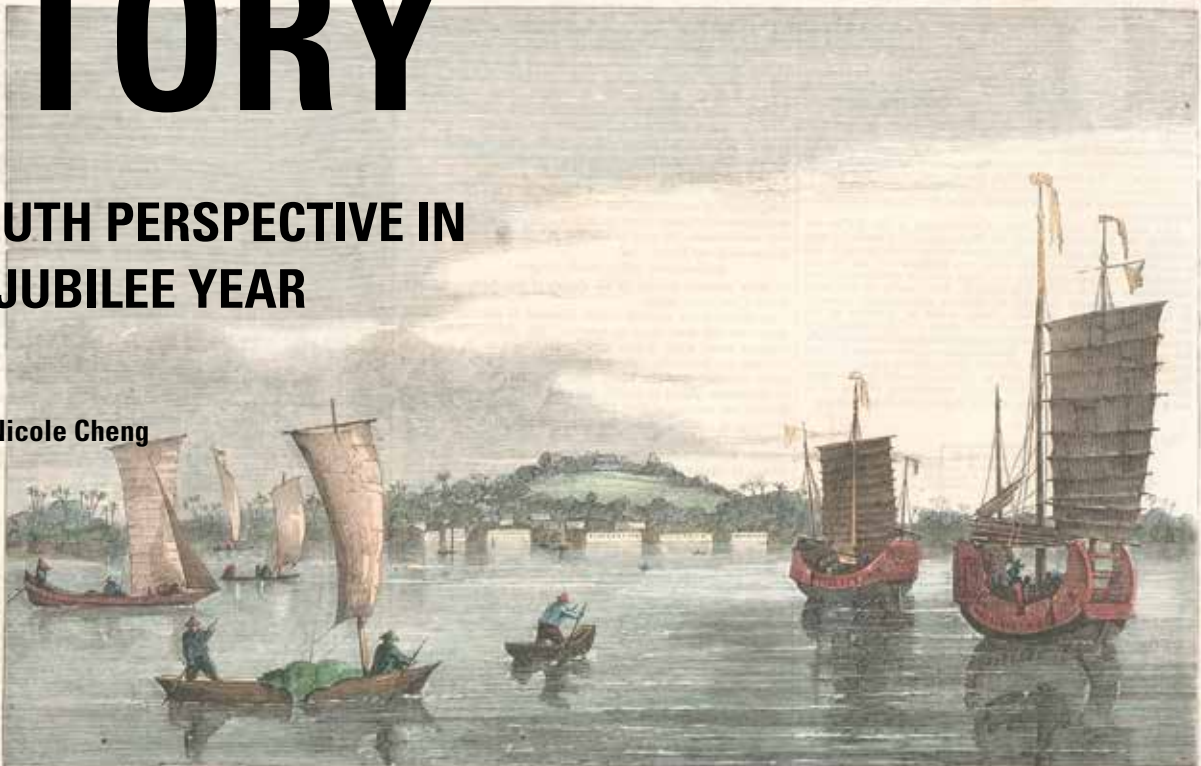
These cards reveal a dynamic society that was united in a common culture of social exchanges. Singaporeans did not compromise traditions in their acceptance of modernity; despite differences at many levels, we were undivided in maintaining a culture that embraced a modern identity alongside the remembrance of tradition.

09. Card featuring Mandarin pop song lyrics

THE SINGAPORE STORY

A YOUTH PERSPECTIVE IN THE JUBILEE YEAR

Text by Nicole Cheng



Sketch of Singapore with Fort Canning Hill in the background, 1857. Print. Collection of National Museum of Singapore.





01. View of the public district from Fort Canning Hill, 1950s to 1970s. Collection of National Museum of Singapore.

02. Staff and Students of Tao Nan School, 1960s to 1970s. Collection of National Museum of Singapore.

A NATIONAL IDENTITY

I had effectively grown up outside of Singapore all my life. After just a month in the country, my parents and I had moved to Hong Kong, where I would be raised for the next 18 years. The red Singaporean passport I was identified by felt like nothing more than a label.

I felt a compelling urge to understand this alien identity I was tied to. In search of the meaning behind my national identity, I decided to spend my summer in Singapore despite many parties telling me greater opportunities abound elsewhere. Recalling my arrival in May 2015 when I first unpacked my bags in my Aunt's flat, I realise that I didn't have the slightest idea then of the adventure I was about to embark on.

A LASTING LEGACY

While I had studied a Singaporean curriculum in primary school, I have forgotten most of it. To ground myself in the island's history, I attended the *SINGAPURA: 700 Years* exhibit at the National Museum in hopes

of finding a starting point. What really captivated me about the exhibition was the uncertainty of our origins.

I realised from the exhibit that our entire city had been planned around Fort Canning Hill. It was neither a person nor a building, but a hill that had seen the country through the most change: From Sang Nila Utama's sighting of a lion, the docking of British ships and the invasion of Japanese troops, to present day Singapore.

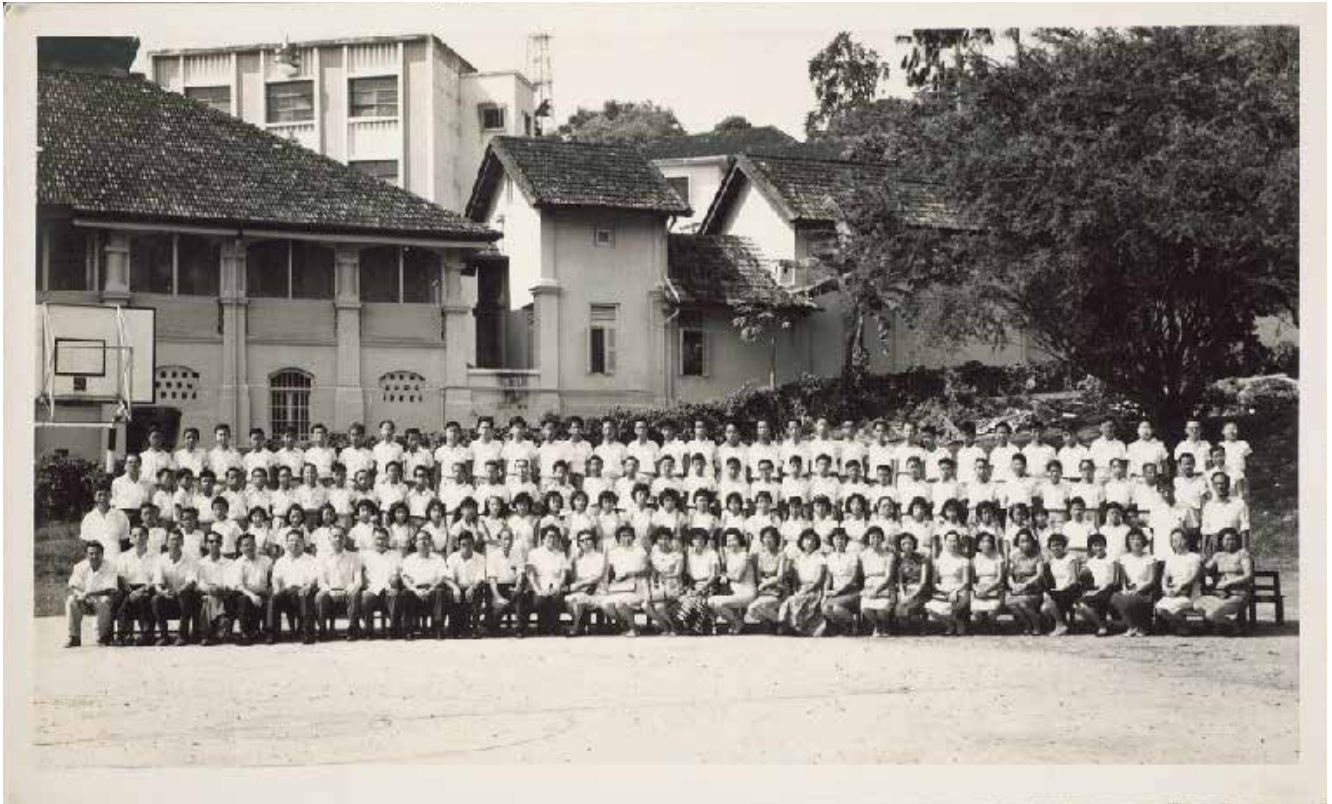
Those grassy slopes were home to the palace of Srivijayan prince Sri Tri Buana when he claimed the throne as the first King of Singapura in 1299. Previously known as Bukit Larangan (Malay for "Forbidden Hill"), the British renamed the hill Government Hill in the early nineteenth century. It served as the residence grounds of Sir Stamford Raffles and subsequent British governors. *The Plan of the Town of Singapore* was drafted by Raffles to organise the colony around the precinct – then dubbed as "European Town", it being the central governing area. Interestingly, there was no

intention of building a permanent Singapore then. The nineteenth-century plan was for a place where British businessmen and Asian migrant workers would work together to make their fortunes and return home. Despite the multitude of urban changes, this precinct around the hill remains the Civic District we know today.

My great-grandmother had sailed here from the shores of South Africa, assuming that Singapore would merely be a stop on the way back to Guangzhou, China. I wonder now if she could have pondered at how a pit stop would become home for generations to come.

In my search for more stories like hers I turned to the National Archives of Singapore, which became my treasure trove of history for the next few months. Sifting through numerous cassette tapes and photographs, I was able to dive into the life stories of those before me and really contextualise the buildings around me. I would pass by so many historical buildings just on my walk from the MRT station to the Archives!

02



ARCHITECTURAL GEMS

I was surprised to learn that the Peranakan Museum and the very room at the Archives I was conducting my research in were once home to two significant schools. These institutions were instrumental to the early communities that settled in the Town of Singapore. What we now know as the Peranakan Museum was once home to Tao Nan School, the first Chinese school that held classes in Mandarin instead of in dialect. It was founded in 1906, and started accepting Chinese students from all dialect groups by 1909. Similarly, the Singapore Philatelic Museum and the National Archives are now situated in the earliest compounds of the Anglo-Chinese School. It was the first school to teach English in the country since its establishment in 1886.

Many like Lee Seng Gee who have lived their childhood through the 1920s would recall splitting their schooling between both institutions. He said, “attending two schools a day was quite a strain sometimes because of the weather. It gets hot and you don’t feel like studying...but my parents knew it was necessary in order to understand both English and Chinese – to be bilingual.” I felt that Lee spoke of a common trait that defines a Singaporean identity, rooting himself in bilingualism that many of us can relate to.

One of the earlier settlers in the country formed a small but influential group of Armenians, whose legacies live on through their church. The Armenian Apostolic Church of St Gregory the Illuminator was built just 16 years after Raffles first signed the treaty to establish the British free port. That makes it the oldest surviving

church building on the island. Beyond this national monument, other prominent Armenians also left important legacies: Agnes Joaquim cultivated our national flower, the Vanda Miss Joaquim, and Catchick Moses founded *The Straits Times*.

SEEKING AN IDENTITY

With my newfound understanding of Singapore, I would muse at how much of our surrounding architecture seems unchanged along the Singapore River. In Singapore’s road to independence, their permanence is a poignant reminder of the pivotal moments rooted in the memories of the older generations.

I have been a Singaporean all my life and have always taken my red passport for granted, never really thinking of citizenship as something I had to fight for. This was not the case for those who



03. A view of Empress Place, 1910. Collection of National Museum of Singapore.

04. A National Day Parade Contingent in front of the Victoria Theatre and Memorial Hall, 1967. Collection of National Museum of Singapore.



04

flocked to Empress Place Building, now the Asian Civilisations Museum, to register as citizens of the Republic of Singapore after Singapore gained full independence in 1965.

Lee Geok Boi was one of them. She had chosen to become a Singaporean in the building of “very big cavernous high ceilings [and very] dusty unpolished, very rough, floor boards.” To me, this conscious act of seeking citizenship is powerful, and reminds me that committing to an identity is very much a conscious choice.

This sense of belonging was reinforced when I joined the National Day Parade at the Padang in August 2015, to wave my red and white flag for the second time since I was in Primary Five.

I was uneasy in the crowd at first. However, in reciting the national pledge and singing the national anthem, an unshakable sense of pride washed over me. Those physically present at the Padang may be a fraction of the whole population, but I felt a connection in our joyous celebration, shared with viewers watching the event from their television screens.

While the green expanse at the Padang has seen many significant events on a national scale, we must not forget signature places like Esplanade Park. Once a hawker food paradise and go-to for a night about town, it is now the frequent haunt of many arts and culture enthusiasts. The Esplanade is no less important than grand halls flanked by classical columns, and exudes a sense of nostalgia despite

the surrounding buzz of the city.

Chua Chye Chua spent most of his childhood on Beach Road and remembers the famous Satay Club during the 1930s and 1940s: “It [had] such small stalls, all portable stalls, carried by the satay man himself. He has a grill to grill his satay and the other one was his ungrilled meat, rice pudding, chili sauces. We were all having a good time, just sitting on stools and ordering our satay.”

Listening to the fond memories of Singaporeans through their recorded oral histories of the Esplanade Park unlocked a depth of meaning I now associate with the area. It is comforting to know that some areas will always hold a special place in people’s hearts despite our rapidly changing cityscape.



05



06

05. *SG50 National Day Parade 2015.*
Photo courtesy of Ministry of Culture,
Community and Youth.

06. *Satay Seller, 1970s – 1980s.* Collection
of National Museum of Singapore.

MARCHING FORTH AS ONE

Nearby, Gardens by the Bay stand with two iconic domes glittering along the skyline. It was the primary location that helped me visualise Singapore as a “City in a Garden”. At the cutting edge of environmental technology – with practices such as energy generation from horticultural waste and solar cells – the Gardens expose us to the larger beauty of our planet through its mystical botanical worlds.

Another feat of modern technology is the Marina Barrage, which houses a reservoir with a catchment area one-sixth the size of Singapore. Looking at its grand structure and musing at the amount of water in there, I can distinctly recall being told off by my grandmother for not being careful of how much water I was using from the tap. There were days in the past when we would have to survive daily on a bucket of water each, raising awareness of water’s scarcity locally.

The construction of the Marina Barrage directs five rivers to flow into it, including the iconic Singapore River. To think that then-Permanent Secretary for Environment, Lee Ek Tieng, thought in 1975 that cleaning the Singapore River was “almost an impossible job because Singapore River [and] the Rochor Canal [were] black and dirty!” The completion of the Marina Barrage, coupled with the history of today’s pristine Singapore River, demonstrate Singapore’s resilience in overcoming physical restraints as a nation.

Having celebrated Singapore’s Jubilee, I can’t help but wonder how the urban landscape will morph in the next 50 years. I hope, as we advance the Singapore Story as a nation, that we will be mindful of retaining the rich culture and spirit which bond us amidst our ever-evolving landscape.



07



08

07 *Gardens By the Bay.*
Image courtesy of Gardens by the Bay.

08 *Merlion Park during SG50 celebrations.*
Courtesy of Ministry of Culture,
Community and Youth.

THE STORIES BEHIND JUBILEE WALK

Text by Reena Devi



The Jubilee Walk was launched on 29 November 2015 to commemorate the 50th Anniversary of Singapore's independence, marking heritage sites and spaces involved in key milestones of our nation building. Through the subsequent interviews and features, we come to witness the story of the people behind these physical buildings and sites. Theirs are stories of resilience, camaraderie and adaptability in the face of change - from the pioneers who overcame the war and struggled to build a modern, sovereign nation, to inspired individuals conserving the past and gazing towards the future.

Singapore's story began at the area where the Padang, the former Supreme Court and Parliament House are located. These are the historic sites where policies were formulated, independence

declared and heads of state sworn in. The people who have worked and are working in this vicinity provide insight about these significant moments rooted in Singapore's history.

The Jubilee Walk leads us to the old Hill Street Police Station and the Central Fire Station where we recognise the contributions of the individuals who worked in collaboration to ensure the sustained security of Singapore through its developing years. The stories of the individuals behind heritage sites such as the Victoria Theatre & Victoria Concert Hall (VTVCH) and Fort Canning Park showcase the vibrancy of the arts and the integration of flora and fauna in Singapore.

The Fullerton Building was also another significant focal point during our nation building

years - with the advent of international trade and travel, communication via post was key. The dedicated service of people who worked in the postal industry is testament to its prominence.

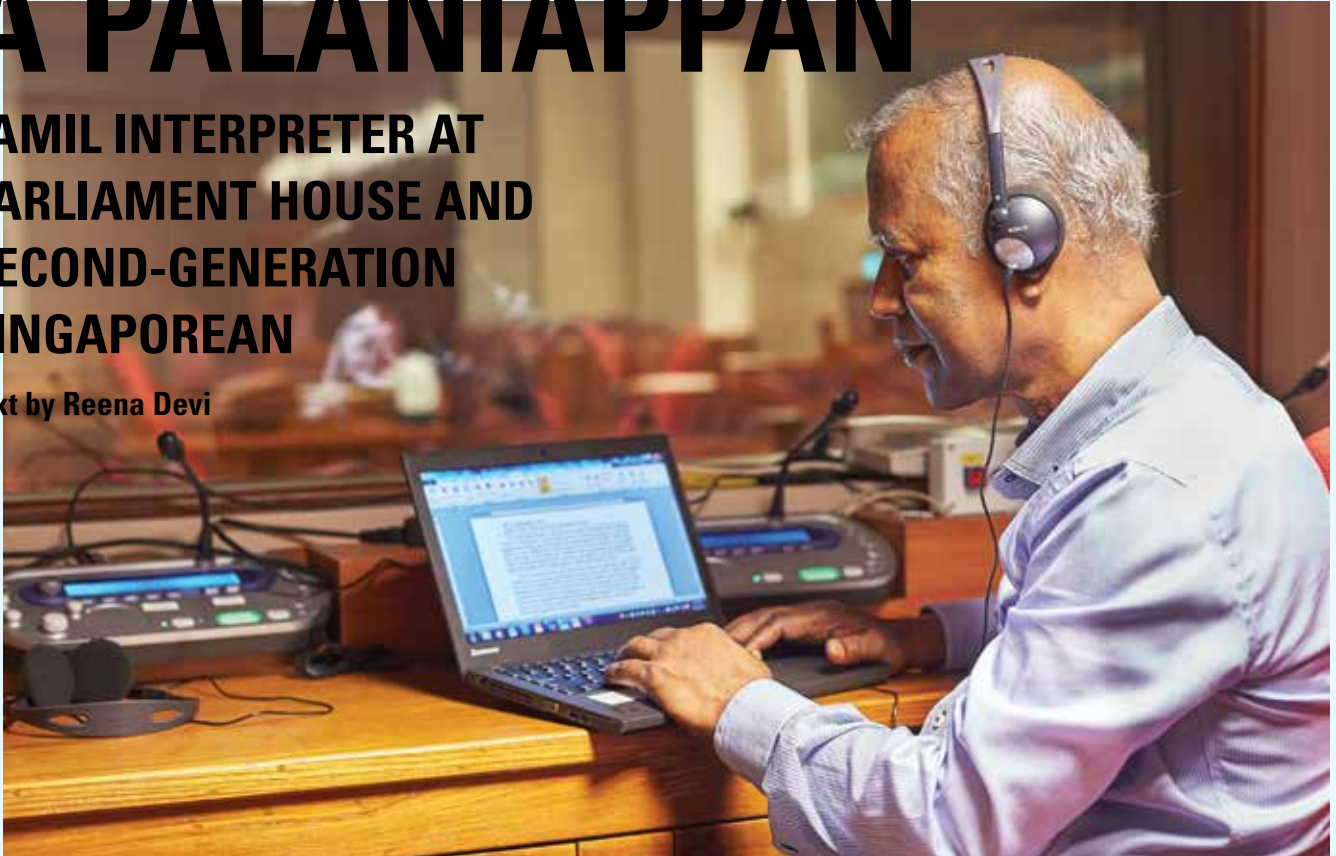
Jubilee Walk showcases diverse communities which worked towards making Singapore economically robust and culturally rich including those who lived and worked by the Singapore River and the Armenian community who built a church on Hill Street.

We are also reminded to consider the future that lies before us through *The Future of Us* exhibition at Gardens Bay. As the *The Future of Us* exhibition and the various stories behind the heritage sites reveal, the story of Singapore was and will always be written by its diverse communities and individuals.

A PALANIAPPAN

TAMIL INTERPRETER AT PARLIAMENT HOUSE AND SECOND-GENERATION SINGAPOREAN

Text by Reena Devi



Mr A Palaniappan has worked at the Parliament House for over 25 years as a Tamil interpreter. He was previously working as an interpreter at the old location of the High Court, where the current National Gallery Singapore now stands.

From arriving in Singapore at the age of six as a new immigrant, to becoming Head Specialist of English and Tamil at the Parliament House, Palaniappan's journey is a uniquely Singaporean one. Today, he bears witness on a daily basis to the finer points of policymaking at the highest level of government.

Please tell us more about being an Interpreter at the Parliament and High Court?

In Parliament, where we are known as simultaneous interpreters. As the Members of Parliament (MPs) and Ministers speak, you put on the earphones, and you cannot stop. You have to carry on, and you cannot ask them to pause to clarify what they just said. You are expected to know the words, and to keep up with the pace of the ministers' speeches. That's one of the challenges we face.

Another challenge is that in Parliament, we have to use standard Tamil used by news practitioners. The sessions are also more serious – policies and papers are discussed, and MPs raise serious questions regarding national and international issues. You get first-hand perspectives

of ministers and MPs discussing national issues and policies.

How did you get started in this vocation?

In 1968, I finished my "O" Levels and there were a lot of jobs available post-independence. I wanted to become a teacher and I applied to the Public Service Commission (PSC), but when I went for the interview they told me to try for the interpreter's job because I am good in both Tamil and English.

I consulted my father and he said, "why not?" Working at the court was a prestigious thing in those days, and this meant that you will not only be an interpreter but also a Commissioner for oath. That was how I ended up working at the High Court.

Subsequently, I started working part-time for Parliament in the

seventies, while also working across the road at the High Court building. When Mr Narayanan, my predecessor in the Parliament Secretarial, retired in the eighties, I applied for this job over here.

Can you share about the differences between the past and present Parliament House?

Over the years, I have observed the different profiles of MPs at the Parliament House. In the past, you did not have many educated professionals; you had a fair number of people who came from the grassroots and spoke ordinary Tamil and English, so you could keep pace with them and understand.

Now, you have more educated, professional MPs. There are also MPs educated overseas who use modern English terms, so we have to keep up. We have to discuss with senior interpreters and translators to come up with new Tamil words for new English terms.

The locale has also changed a lot since then. I used to live at Market Street, walking to Raffles Institution every day for school, observing the bumboats and godowns along the Singapore River. Along the footpath leading to High Street, there were a lot of little shops – there used to be a bookshop where Minister Rajaratnam would go to browse in, because his office was nearby at the old City Hall Building. When I was working at the High Court, I used to go out for breaks and would see him there. The present Treasury building used to have shops run by Indian Muslim merchants, and the whole place has changed a lot since then.

Can you share any memorable incidents during your time working at the old and new Parliament Houses?

I enjoyed the debates at the old Parliament House where our founding Prime Minister Mr Lee Kuan Yew used to engage in debates. There was cut and thrust

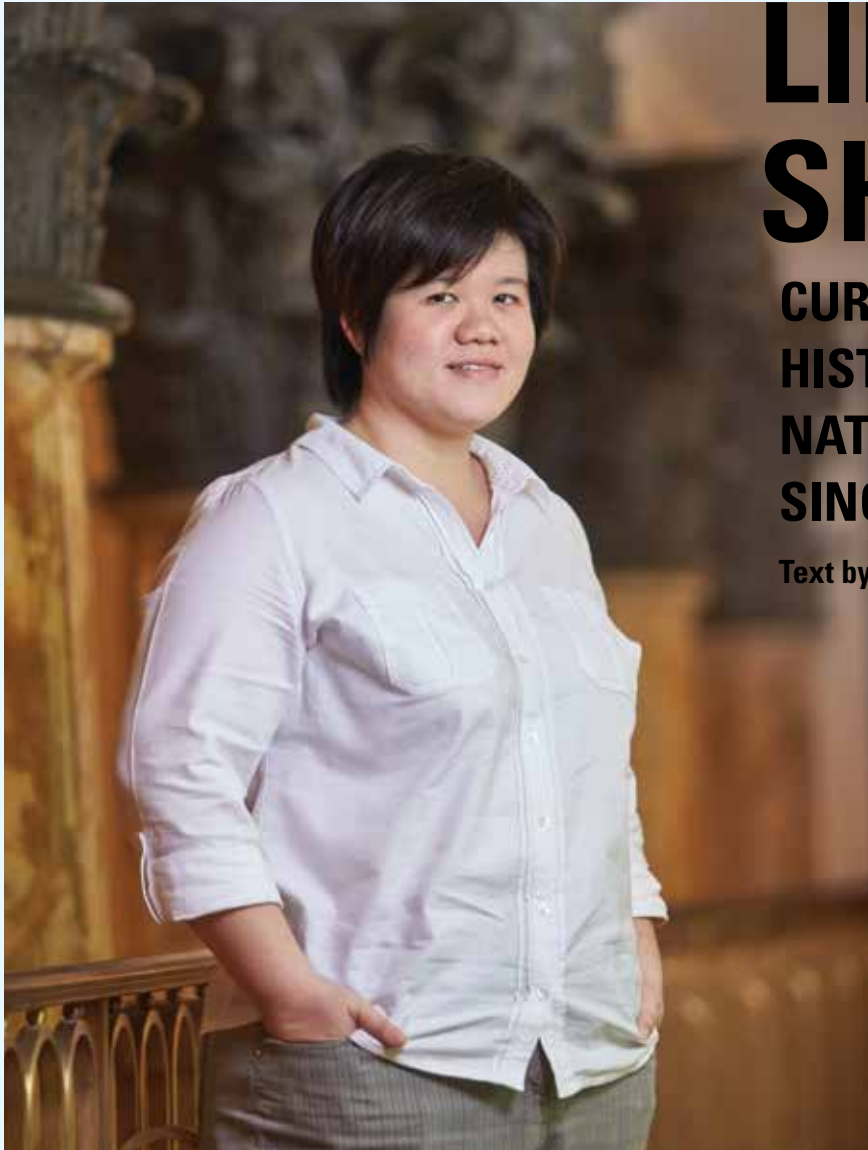
to the parliamentary debates, and you could see there was a lot of excitement between him and the other political leaders he was debating with. I miss the lively debates by the late Mr Lee, Mr JB Jeyaretnam and other political leaders. There were a lot of off-the-cuff speeches made back then, when Mr Lee would just rise from his seat and offer rebuttals on the spot, very robustly.

Another memorable moment was when I was a pallbearer for Mr Lee's Lying in State as the cortege was arriving at the current Parliament House. It was a very emotional moment for me. When the motorcade came in, I felt like going on my knees and was almost in tears. I grew up under his system and benefited from it, from him.



The Old Parliament House, c.1911. Collection of National Museum of Singapore.

Supreme Court, Singapore.



LIM SHUJUAN

CURATOR OF BUILDING HISTORY AT THE NATIONAL GALLERY SINGAPORE

Text by Reena Devi

Lim Shujuan's interest lies in excavating untold stories of people, buildings and photography. She has witnessed and documented the transformation of the National Gallery from two separate national monuments – City Hall and former Supreme Court building – into a single visual arts institution.

Could you tell us more about the architectural history of both City Hall and the Former Supreme Court?

The thing to note is that the City Hall building was built 10 years earlier than the Supreme Court. But as you walk through them, you get the sense that the City Hall building is quite contemporary. This is because it was built with the intent for it to become an office space, and it did see different offices come and go. As such, the walls were often torn down or changed over the years. In contrast, the former Supreme Court was built as a High Court and used as one till the nineties.

Currently, as the National Gallery Singapore, the buildings have been greatly transformed – connections have been created between both buildings which was never done before. However, we made efforts to retain and conserve the historical fabric of the buildings. We have retained certain historical elements throughout the buildings, such as the Shanghai plaster. There are also markers around the conserved buildings to provide information of certain conserved spaces.

What do these historic buildings mean to you? In your opinion, what makes the City Hall and Former Supreme Court distinct?

I would read into a building's history beyond its architecture; it also has its own stories and meaning to different people at various points in time. A building can also be an expression of the various aspirations of the communities and the people.

The significance of these buildings lies in their proximity and their architecture.

Their proximity to the Padang played an important role in local history, with the original steps being so close to the field. They provided the backdrop and a ready stage for leaders to



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01. *The newly-built National Gallery Singapore, 2015.*

02. *Supreme Court and City Hall, 1952. Collection of National Museum of Singapore.*

give their speeches, while people congregated on the Padang in the fiery atmosphere of the fifties. In addition, High Street runs behind these buildings, and it was considered the “Orchard Road” of the past.

They are the two last neoclassical buildings built in Singapore and the two grandest, occupying a very central location and also holding deep significance for Singapore’s people and history.

What are the most historically-significant spaces in these buildings?

Most would know the City Hall Chamber as the most historically-significant space in the City Hall building. When it was first built in 1929, it was designed to be the grandest room in the whole of City Hall. Historical events, such as the Japanese surrender to the Allied Forces and the swearing-in ceremonies of Lee Kuan Yew, Goh Chok Tong and Yusof Ishak, all took place here.

The distinctive red carpeting in the chamber has been removed, but other elements have been retained. We realised that the timber flooring beneath the carpeting was still in good condition after all these years.

Former Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew’s office was once on level three of the City Hall building, facing the Padang. However, the proportions of the office have evolved, due to the City Hall building serving different purposes over the years. Lee was there the longest and S Rajaratnam moved into the office after him, using it during his time as Minister for Foreign Affairs.

RAHMAT BIN ADBAN

PARK OFFICER AT NATIONAL PARKS BOARD (NPARKS)

Text by Reena Devi



Now in his fifties, Rahmat Bin Adban has been working at Fort Canning Park for over 30 years. Adban dedicates himself towards preserving and sustaining the park. He started his career as a Foreman Gardener at the Singapore Botanic Gardens (SBG) with the Parks and Recreation department, before NParks was established. Recognised for his tireless enthusiasm and commitment, Adban has strived through the years to become a Park Officer today.

Please describe your life as a Park Officer at Fort Canning Park?

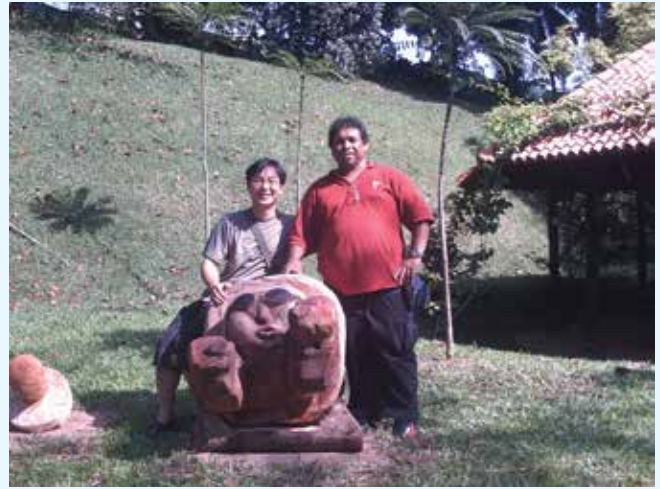
It is wonderful and awesome to work at Fort Canning Park. Over the years, I have seen many changes and improvements to the park. It gives me great pleasure and a sense of pride to say that I have been involved in most of the enhancements here.

There was not much of a landscape – it was pure vegetation. Shelters were not built like they are today: Raffles House was just a shelter open to the public. When I came in, things began to change. Raffles House was built to replace the shelter, new footpaths were introduced, and all wild vegetation was removed and

replaced with proper landscaping. When I first came here, the former Fort Canning Arts Centre was under renovation. It used to be a military barrack used by the Singapore Armed Forces, until we took over in 1989. We did renovation, proper landscaping, and created a driveway for it.

Would you like to share any memorable incidents during your work at Fort Canning Park?

A memorable incident involved the white-bellied sea eagles who are residents here. They used to nest on top of a Singtel-telecommunications tower in the park. However, when it was time to remove the tower, they cleverly shifted themselves to a nearby tree. We have not located the parent, but



Rahmat Bin Adban with colleagues at Fort Canning Park. Photos courtesy of Rahmat Adban

the chick was there with another eagle. We noticed that they had tried nesting, but the nests kept breaking as the tree branches were too thin to support them. To aid their transition to nesting on a tree, my team from Fort Canning Park built a flat platform for them up on the highest branches, allowing them to nest.

How have the years working as a Park Officer contributed to your life, professionally and personally?

I started my career with only PSLE qualifications. I remember the

day when Yeong Yee Sheong, my former supervisor at SBG, decided to send me to Fort Canning Park. He gave me his reassurance about my future working here, but I found it a huge challenge and responsibility for me, someone with only PSLE results as the highest level of education.

Yet, I managed to always think positively about the future and strived to overcome all my challenges. I have been given many opportunities to upgrade myself

with numerous courses. All the effort that I have put into my work has paid off, and my commitment is being recognised. Throughout the 30 years here, I was promoted from Foreman Gardener, to Senior Foreman Gardener, to Horticulture Assistant, to Assistant Park Officer, and finally to Park Officer. The journey has really been amazing, and I am proud of my achievements.



SARAJ DIN

RETIRED ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT OF POLICE

Text by Joen Goh

Seventy-year-old Saraj Din relives his memories of living as a young police officer in the Hill Street Police Station and Barracks, now the revamped complex housing the Ministry of Culture, Community and Youth and the Ministry of Communications and Information. His entire career with the police force spanned the early years of Singapore's growth from 1963 to 1999, of which 33 years was served in the Internal Security Department (ISD).

How did the Barracks look like when you lived there?

In those days not many people owned housing, and many were living in slums. A lot of people joined the police force for housing benefits as the Police Force provided the best quarters available then. The covered atrium of the Hill Street complex was once a parade square. Bachelors used to stay on the second to fourth storeys, and we would chit-chat together. Some of them would sit on the parapets and polish their boots! Families

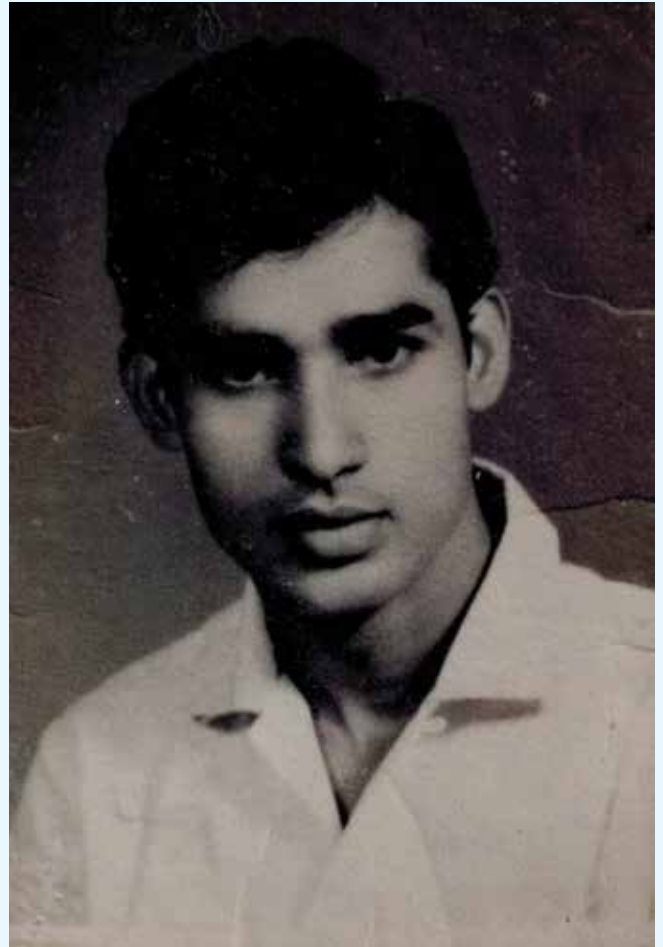
were given one room each with an attached kitchen. There used to be movie screenings every Saturday at the parade square, and a badminton court to the side.

When I officially joined the force in 1963, we trained at the Police Academy and slept in the barracks there first. The beds consisted of two or three wooden planks placed on iron bars with torn mattress on top. You had to bring your own bedsheet and pillow. My salary was \$90 then, and we

used to each have a wooden black box to store our belongings. After passing out, I was assigned to the Central Police Station and to this Hill Street Barracks.

What were some of the highlights of living here then?

With the other bachelors, it was easy to have fun and be a little naughty. We would go to High Street, have coffee, browse at shopping centres, and "tackle" girls. But we had good chaps. Some of them have passed on. The



Saraj Din as a young officer. Photos courtesy of Saraj Din

streets were ruled by clans, gangs and hawkers then. Chaos, conflict and confrontations were common and the police had to put order to things.

Why did you decide to join the police force?

Two of my uncles were policemen. There weren't much choices for good jobs back then. I went to the Central Police Station then to take a recruitment form to fill it up – they used to give them out that way. I was almost rejected because I was only 17, but the interviewees saw my height when I stood up to walk away, and called me back. They recruited us with a height requirement of five-feet-eight then.

What did it mean to you, being a policeman in the early years of Singapore's independence?

After Singapore's separation from Malaysia in 1965, I was assigned to guard the late Mr Lee Kuan Yew's house. Then, be it rain or shine, you had to stand guard outside the main door. Now they have sentry houses.

In our time, we were dedicated and prepared to sacrifice our lives if the situation called for it. I had a good record and was promoted to the rank of Inspector by the time I was 21. After that, I applied and joined the ISD, which I remember as being the most "prestigious" department in the force then.

I was really proud to be in the Police Force. I would wear the uniform with pride, and tailor my own shorts for the uniform because I wanted it to look smart.

YUNNOS BIN SHARIFF

RETIRED FIREMAN WHO SERVED AT CENTRAL FIRE STATION

Text by Reena Devi



At 72 years old, Yunos Bin Shariff is best remembered for his recent appearance at the SG50 National Day Parade, wearing his old uniform on the grand occasion to commemorate his service to Singapore.

Yunos hails from a family of firefighters: His father, elder brothers and uncles were all firefighters. He was born in the Geylang Fire Station where his family had lived, before a transfer to the Central Fire Station. Yunos later went on to work as a Control Room operator and supervisor at the Central Fire station.

What was it like working in the Central Fire Station and how did you become a fireman?

I was actually born at the Geylang Fire Station. My father was later transferred from the Geylang Fire Station to Central Fire station in 1950, and then to Alexandra Fire Station in 1954, and the family followed him. There was no proper communication system in the past so everyone in the profession had to live in the fire station or near it.

I had initially wanted to become a lecturer, not a firefighter. C Kunalan, the retired Singapore runner, and all my team mates used to exercise together. I was interested in long-distance running, photography and drama, which I would participate in to occupy myself. That's how I gained experience in many fields. However, I did not get a grade good

enough to be a lecturer, so I chose to become a fireman. I worked with the service for 41 years as a control room operator. I would go around the stations as required. Also, I was known amongst my colleagues for being able to speak and write English well.

What are some of the differences between the past and the present Central Fire Station?

I have noticed so many differences, especially in the facilities. Equipment are now sent outside the station for servicing. Previously, this was not the case. There used to be a chief fire officer, John Engles, who was a Scottish man. He used to be an engineer and told us that he would oversee servicing any equipment that required fixing. So most servicing was done in-house and we didn't engage external workshops.



How do you feel about being part of the Singapore Civil Defence Force?

Operations were very smooth and efficient during my time in the control room, even when we faced major accidents such as the MacDonald House bombing and the fire at the Pulau Bukom plant.

I've always been part of the Civil Defence Auxiliary Unit. At 60, they called me back to be a guide at the Central Fire Station. Whenever they have overseas visitors such as delegations of firemen from other countries, I receive questions about how our firefighters operate.



Yunos as a Fireman through the years.
Photo courtesy of Singapore Civil Defence Force.

LYNNETTE SEAH

SSO VIOLINIST AND CO-CONCERT MASTER

Text by Raudha Muntadar

Lynnette Seah is no stranger to the classical music industry. As a Cultural Medallion recipient, founding member of the Singapore Symphony Orchestra (SSO), and one of Singapore's most well-known and respected musicians, Lynnette is fiercely disciplined and passionate.

She has contributed significantly to the local classical music industry by flying Singapore's flag internationally as a fine musician. In her years of artistic development, Lynnette has trained under renowned violin teachers, performed with famous orchestras, and participated in numerous competitions around the world.

In 2006, Lynnette was awarded the Cultural Medallion, Singapore's most prestigious award to recognise individuals of artistic excellence. Today, Lynnette is co-concertmaster with the SSO, and continues to see to the growth of the national symphony orchestra.



How and when did you begin your journey with the SSO?

When I was 16, I received a scholarship to study at the Hannover Hochschule for Music in Germany. That more or less determined my destiny as a classical musician.

I first auditioned for the SSO in 1978, and was happy to be offered a place because I enjoyed performing. Later, at our first inaugural concert in 1979 at the newly-reopened Victoria Concert Hall, I was offered to be the acting leader of the concert by maestro Choo Hoey – and today I'm the co-concertmaster of the SSO.

It has been a dream of mine for Singapore to have its own national symphony orchestra and I've dedicated my life to building the Orchestra. I've stayed on with

the Orchestra through the years because I wanted to be a part of its development and growth. I'm happy that we've come full circle and we are now back at our original home in the Victoria Concert Hall, after performing for years at the Esplanade Theatres.

You first started performing with the SSO at the Victoria Concert Hall, how was it like performing in such a venue?

Towards the late nineties, the Victoria Concert Hall was aesthetically old and run-down but we had plenty of camaraderie between the musicians. We were like family. The acoustics in the old Hall was also very warm and friendly, and it felt intimate. I still feel the same excitement and tension today as I did when I first performed at the old Victoria Concert Hall.



Do you have any fond memories to share of your many rehearsals and concerts at the old Victoria Concert Hall?

I remember having my children with me whenever I had my solo concerts in the old Victoria Concert Hall, and they would be running around the corridors of the old Hall. My late mother also attended most of my concerts and she would seat herself somewhere at the front. She was one of my greatest supporters in life, and the person who ignited my passion for classical music.

Is there anything about the old Victoria Concert Hall that you miss?

In the past, we would frequent the old Transit Hawker Centre during our rehearsal breaks. It had plenty of good hawker food. The old Hall also had a small café at the ground floor where we would have breaks and meet audience members

before the concert. The layout of the old Hall made it easier for the musicians to meet the audience after the concerts, which I used to look forward to.

What is it like playing in the Victoria Concert Hall, now that it has been refurbished?

I performed my SG50 recital at the newly-renovated Victoria Concert Hall in March last year, and I enjoyed how the violin and piano sounded acoustically in the refurbished space.

As an accomplished violinist, what advice do you have for young musicians who have plans to join the Orchestra or even the local music industry?

I would say practise hard and find your own musical identity and personality, to stand out among many other musicians. During auditions, we look out for musicians who have something

extra or special to say through their music. They should be able to communicate it to the audience, in addition to being confident and having all their basic techniques sorted out. As a woman and a mother, I'm a romantic and into romantic classical music, so when I play the violin it comes from the heart. The biggest reward for me as a musician is when I am able to transcend all boundaries of nationality, religion, race and gender by communicating my music from my heart to listeners.

Photo above
Thousands of people gathered at the opening of Television Singapura at Victoria Theatre, 1963. Photo courtesy of Singapore Press Holdings Limited.

MAZLAN BIN ANUAR

MANAGER (TECHNICAL DISPLAY) FOR THE ASIAN CIVILISATIONS MUSEUM

Text by Ruchi Mittal



Mazlan Bin Anuar has been working with exhibition display and design since he started at the National Museum in 1983. He takes pride in his detail to attention through his meticulous processes of measuring, crafting and refining displays to protect and display the artefacts.

Anuar's most recent project was his work for the Tang Shipwreck Gallery at the Asian Civilisations Museum (ACM) where his ingenuity and creativity with display are clearly evident,

for instance in the "wave" formation of bowls with a model ship floating upon them.

Most importantly, Anuar believes in using his experience to train and impart knowledge to those who are interested in this field, building on the legacy of his work.

Describe your life as an exhibitions staff at ACM?

Every exhibition is a new experience and each has a different display technique. Display techniques vary with the type of exhibition and sometimes we have special requirements from the curators. This is a high-risk job, as we deal with museum objects and rare, priceless treasures. I have to be very careful when handling the artefacts and be very focused on every detail when doing the installation work.

For each exhibition, I first get the exhibition layout from the

curators, then proceed to the Heritage Conservation Centre in Jurong where the artefacts are stored to measure each one. Only after I have their dimensions can I work out ways to display them.

Sometimes the curators want them raised, or mounted on the wall but with a gap between the object and the wall. I then have to work out a way to make it happen. I make my own mounts from the raw material, brass strips. This is why I have welding equipment in my workshop. After shaping the brass, I apply an undercoat before putting on a protective foam layer. Then the artefact can be mounted.

How were the surroundings, building and museum like when you first started working there? Can you share the differences between then and now?

I have witnessed so many changes in this area since we moved here, such as the Parliament House shifting to its new building. I was involved in the process, installing the archaeological finds in the display showcases in the new Parliament House. The old Parliament House was then converted to the Arts House.

I have also witnessed Victoria Theatre and Victoria Concert Hall going through many changes. There were alterations to the landscape as well, when five huge old trees were shifted to their new locations near the ACM. I was here when they buried the time capsule in front of the ACM building, and I was here when it was unearthed and displayed in the Museum.

How did working at ACM contribute to your life personally and professionally?

As a well-known and a world class museum, it makes me proud to be part of ACM. I am also proud to be a person with special and



An aerial view of Empress Place civic area, mid 20th Century. Collection of National Museum of Singapore.

rare skills that are required in exhibition installations. I have had the opportunity to travel for work and instruct others in this unique skillset. In 2011, I was invited by the Embassy of the Republic of Singapore to conduct a workshop on mount-making for about 40 museum staff at the National Museum Yangon in Myanmar. I am also involved in conducting workshops for local museum staff and Institute of Technical Education (ITE) students.

There is no formal training available in the market at the moment for exhibition display creation. I like to train more staff in this skill and aid in developing more museum mount-makers for as long as I can.

ALBERT LIM

SON OF MERLION CRAFTSMAN LIM NAM SENG

Text by Reena Devi

Albert Lim and his father
Lim Nam Seng. Photo
courtesy of Albert lim.



Our attention often lies with the Merlion and rarely is the focus on the men behind its making. The 8.6-metre tall, 70-tonne statue which showcases Singapore's ancient past and its maritime progress was designed by artist and educator Kwan Sai Kheong and made by the late craftsman, Lim Nam Seng.

Lim's son, currently retired from years of being involved in contemporary dance and performance arts, remembers his days helping his father in the makings of this symbolic statue and more.

Tell us about your experience as a son of the man behind the Merlion and being involved in its making.

My father was an enthusiastic sculptor and it had been his dream to create something memorable that symbolises Singapore globally. This led to the creation of Merlion.

Sculpting was my father's love and interest and this lasting enthusiasm inspired him to creating continuously till this Merlion which is his best and proudest achievement.

It is really an honour that my father has created this ideal lovable symbol of Singapore. It has been his dream piece and as his family, we are very proud of him.

In the process of building the Merlion, the whole family got together in harmony and worked

diligently and conscientiously towards the completion of this masterpiece of work. The Merlion was not a single person's effort, it was the joint effort of a family dedicated to the arts and heritage of Singapore.

What does the Merlion symbolise to you?

I personally feel that the current Merlion is the best symbol of Singapore and hope it will always remain the symbol it is today. As my father envisioned, the Merlion symbolises the open hearted, smiling, welcoming, friendly part of Singapore and he hoped Singapore would always remain like that and be welcoming and open and friendly to its own people and people from other shores.

ENG SIAK LOY

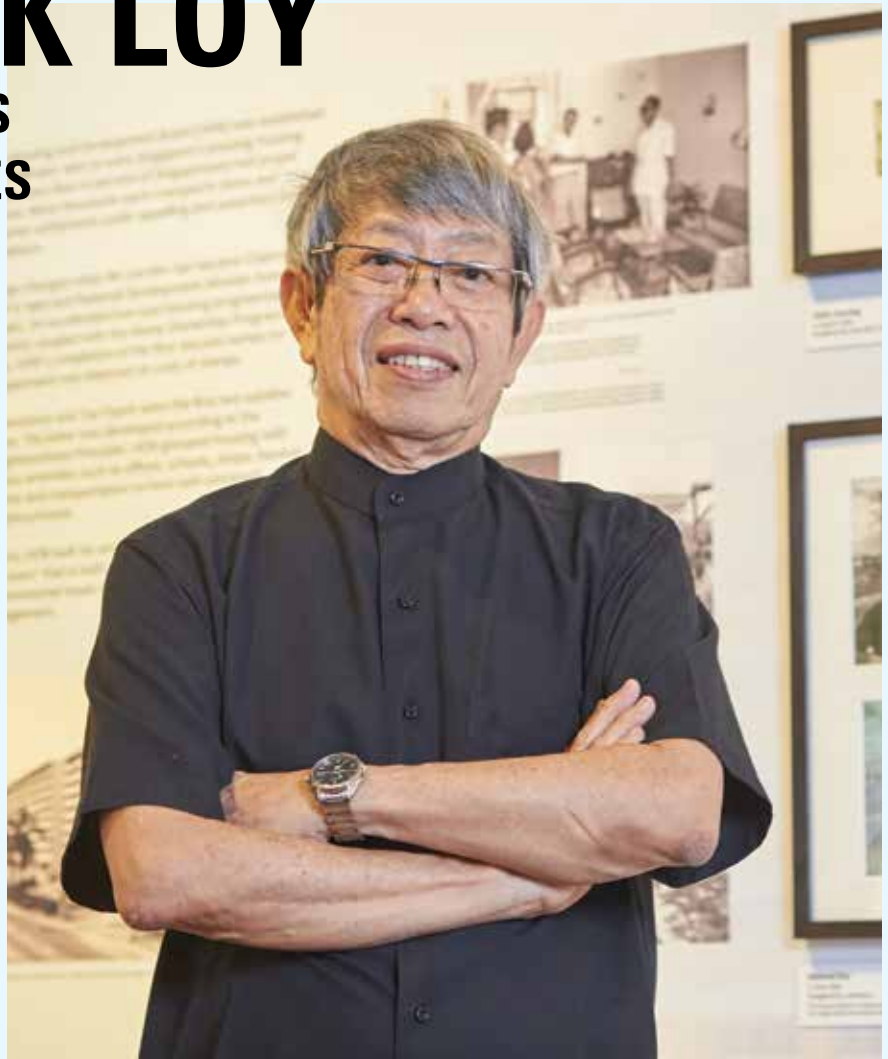
DESIGNER OF STAMPS AND CURRENCY NOTES

Text by Ruchi Mittal

Eng Siak Loy began a long and prolific art career with his training at the Singapore Academy of Art in 1960.

He has been the designer behind many important projects, including stamp designs based on the Botanic Gardens and Gardens by the Bay, some of the note designs for SG50 and most of the public sculptures at Gardens by the Bay.

Eng's sense of precision and attention to detail have enabled him to craft masterpieces of very small scale, such as stamps and notes, to huge murals and public sculptures across various sites including Fort Canning Park.



How did you begin designing stamps?

During Singapore's early days of stamp design, stamps were mostly the work of commercial artists. However, local designers were later preferred, beginning from the first set of stamps for the committee of Economic Commission for Asia and the Far East (ECAFE).

Curator Choy Weng Yang was a committee member then. He recommended to Singapore Post, which was previously known as the General Post Office, that he would suggest a few artists to design different sets of stamps for ECAFE. The turnaround deadline was very soon on that occasion,

so it was lucky that I managed to come up with the designs during a short timeframe.

Local artists like me have been contributing from that point onwards. I would spend a lot of time to research relevant material for each set of stamps and draw them up, finishing them within three months. It was a difficult and rushed process, as I was working full-time and designing stamps after work.

Later, I went on to design another set of stamps featuring the first 150 years of Singapore. This set was very complex as it was a politically-themed one.



Heritage Trees
Singapore, 2002.
Singapore Philatelic
Museum Collection.
Designed by Eng Siak Loy.

There are two types of stamps: Stamps that feature real subjects, and those that feature semi-abstract subjects or themes, like “150 years of Singapore”. The latter type of stamps use graphics to tell a story.

This particular set of stamps covered many aspects, including history. I featured Raffles arriving in Singapore for the first stamp, and the Japanese Occupation for the next. The following stamps showed Singapore and Malaysia’s separation, and then Singapore’s addition to the United Nations (UN). This set took a lot of time to create, but I was very happy to have accomplished it.

I’ve designed around 60 sets of stamps to date. I don’t take part in every stamp design competition now, as I’m old and have retired. My son has been successful in the creation for a few sets of stamp designs. The SG50 stamp set is an example of his stamp design.

What are the differences being a stamp designer in the past and now, in your son’s time?

I draw my designs by hand all the time. Nowadays, it is easier as we can use the computer. I discuss an idea, then make a sketch, and my son then uses the computer to make a montage – the process goes like that. There is little difference between using the computer and drawing by hand for graphic stamps, but I still prefer hand-drawing for animals and realistic subjects. We can control the lightness or boldness of a single line with our hands, but a computer cannot; a line is a line on the computer. I don’t think the young designers now want to draw by hand, because the process takes a lot of time. But I’m only good at illustrating by hand – I can draw something no matter how small the canvas is.

How does it feel, seeing your designs on stamps and people using them?

I actually feel happy and very proud. I am also an artist, a painter. If you like my painting and buy it, only your family and friends can see it. With museums, it is also the same – only Singaporeans see my works. But with stamps I can introduce Singapore to a wider

audience. When I get awarded, my designs are used for Singapore’s published stamps. The stories on the stamps then reach beyond Singapore, to circulate worldwide. The stamp is so small, but the story can be very powerful. I can tell the history of Singapore and leave a legacy.

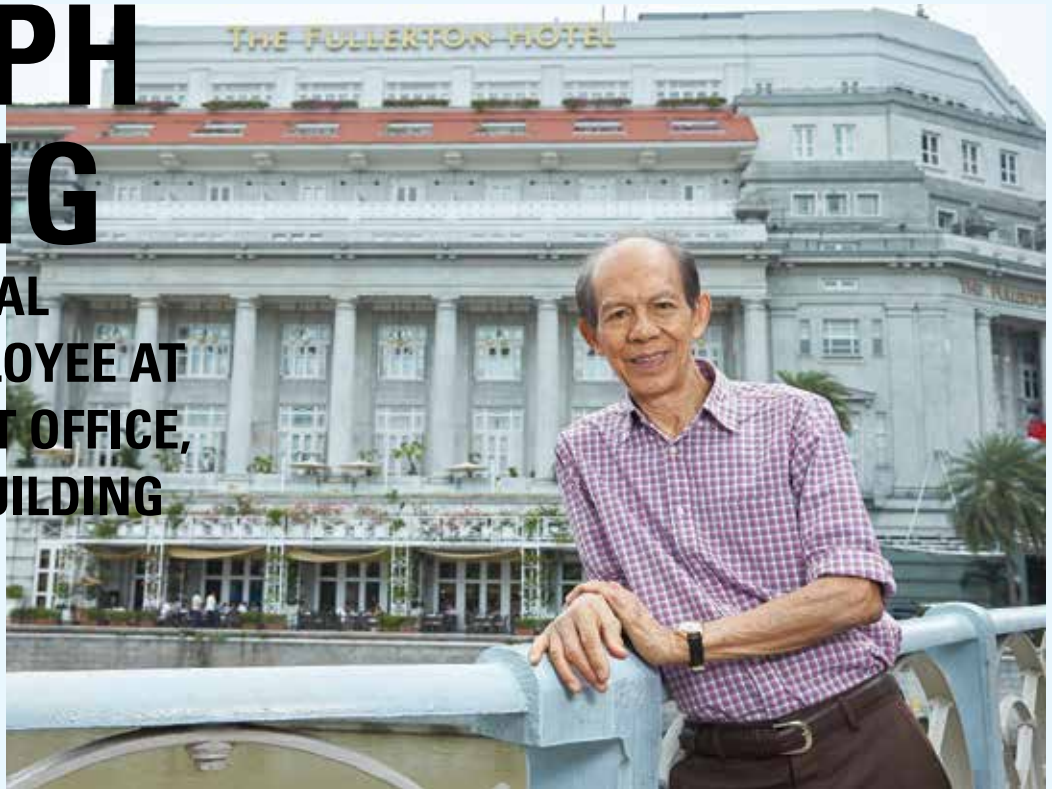
How did working full-time and creating award-winning artwork on the side drive you?

I have worked on other projects as a designer at NParks. Fort Canning also has my work, a few pieces, the murals, the signages are all done by me. The carving is my work, done by Balinese people. That one shows Singapore history. SBG (Singapore Botanic Gardens) also has a lot of my work. Most of the NParks artworks, sculptures, murals there are all done by me. The SBG gate was designed by me. The sculptures in Gardens by the Bay, the kingfishers, the butterflies, were all designed by me. The fish in the Children’s Garden, all designed by me.

JOSEPH CHUNG

FORMER POSTAL SERVICE EMPLOYEE AT GENERAL POST OFFICE, FULLERTON BUILDING

Text by Joen Goh



Joseph Chung Saik Tee is 78 years old and has a passion for philately. He even met his wife working at the post office. He remembers the unforgettable moments working at the General Post Office at Fullerton Building for 22 years as a postal service employee. He has been working at the Singapore Philatelic Museum for 20 years since his retirement from Singapore Post in 1996.

What were the highlights of working at the General Post Office (GPO) then?

The Fullerton Building used to be called the “Grand Old Dame”, and some called it the “Elephant Building”, because it was majestic and impressive. We used to have two challenges when working there at the counter and the mail operation areas. These were the first day covers of stamp issues and the Christmas pressure period.

Crowds of stamp collectors would rush in to queue at the stamp counters the moment the doors opened for them to buy first day covers of new stamp issues. Stamp collecting was very popular and the date stamp impression from GPO made them seem more valuable.

During the Christmas pressure period, leave was suspended for the staff working in those departments as it would be very busy for the whole month of December. There weren’t SMSes or emails back then,

and people would send Christmas cards and Christmas presents through the post during that time. If we were to take medical leave during those periods, we would be considered trying to “escape” from the busy work.

There were ceiling and wall fans, and no air-conditioning at the counter or the mails operation areas. There are also no computers then, or any battery-operated calculators. The adding machines, as far as I knew, were mostly manual. They were from the Olivetti brand and had levers and buttons. When you wanted to balance the account, you pressed the buttons and pulled the levers, and finally you pushed a totalling button. The scales for weighing letters and parcels were all manually operated. They used non-metric weights then to balance the scale, which were in pounds and ounces. Heavier parcels would be weighed with the Salter Parcel Scale.



View Of the Fullerton Building, Singapore, 1950. Photo courtesy of National Archives of Singapore.

At one point, I was in the Postal Development and Planning Section located on the mezzanine floor. I had a hand in designing the first locally-made rectangular posting box that was introduced in 1971. In that year, it was decided that existing red UK Pillar and Lamp posting boxes were to be replaced with locally designed and made posting boxes. Our department was called upon to design the new Singapore posting box.

I was inspired by a Cussons talcum powder container. The design was approved by the relevant authorities with some modifications.

When I walk past a posting box in Singapore today, I have a happy and humbled feeling that I had a hand at designing it.

Did working at the GPO leave you with unforgettable moments?

There was a daily working midnight shift from 12 midnight until 7 in the morning at the mail operation areas on the first floor. During the midnight shift, we would only have skeletal staff to receive the bags of late overseas mail brought in by the postal vans. The toilet was at the basement floor and it was quite damp and dark. There were a few incandescent

bulbs lighting up at the toilet area. Whenever I was on midnight duty, I would try to 'control' myself and avoid using the toilet until the next morning.

The postal counter in GPO used to be the longest in Southeast Asia. The postal staff would be sitting at the counter. There was a long ledge at the ceiling just behind where the postal clerks were seated. The pigeons would fly in and roost there. The postal clerks selling stamps there were mostly ladies, and once the pigeon chicks hatched, the adult pigeons would fly in and out, dropping ticks and mites from their nests. These fell onto the hair, necks and bodies of the clerks and it was very itchy! The ladies would be serving customers tearing stamps and scratching away at the tiny biting insects. It was quite a frequent occurrence and very embarrassing. It was also quite funny! Finally they called in the experts and boarded up the ledge and the problem was finally solved. The pigeons did not come back anymore.

There used to be election rallies at the Fullerton Square just next to the Fullerton Building. I remember rushing through lunch to listen to the late Mr Lee Kwan Yew's rally speeches. He was very

inspiring. I remember getting back to my office a bit late and being observed by the supervisor. I never forgot the general election rallies I attended there during my 22 years at the GPO.

You are 78 years old and still working! What keeps you going?

I love my job and I was promoted to be a postmaster in mid 1970s and that was very satisfying.

At the post office I got the chance to serve the public and learnt how to react to different encounters when facing the public. We have seen all kinds of customers but trained ourselves to stay calm, handle difficult situations and provide proper service to the people. We had to be alert and on our feet all the time. I have always treasured that and I am still happy to serve the public at the Singapore Philatelic Museum.

Mrs Chung is also in the same line. How did that happen?

One day I was sent to the Bukit Timah post office as part of the relief pool staff for two days, because someone was sick. So I went there to take over a counter duty. I said hello to the lady sitting next to me, and she said hello to me too. I looked at her, and she also looked at me. I was sent back to that post office a few months later. This time, I mustered my courage to chat with her. And it started from there.

My wife is still working at Singapore Post, and she is on her 43rd year of service. She is now attached at the Singapore Post Centre. She was also a postmistress before. Eventually when we both retire, we would like to spend more time with our three young grandchildren.

SINGAPORE FOOTPRINTS

STUDENT GUIDES ALONG THE SINGAPORE RIVER

Text by Reena Devi

“Singapore Footprints” is a team of walking guides from the Nanyang Technological University Tourism and Hospitality Management Club, providing fun, interactive and experiential walking tours for free. Their Singapore River-Bras Basah-Bugis tour takes people down the scenic banks of the Singapore River with the students relating personal anecdotes, shared memories and relevant historical facts of the precinct.

Lian Xiu Qin and Christine Poh Yun Li (left and right in photograph above), who are members of Singapore Footprints, shared their experiences as walking guides and their interest in heritage with us.

What is the most historically interesting site for you along the Singapore River?

To us, one of the most historically interesting sites along the Singapore River would be the Cavenagh Bridge. It is one of the oldest bridges in Singapore and named after the last Governor of Singapore, Sir William Orfeur Cavenagh. In the past, Cavenagh Bridge was an important feature



in people’s lives. Before the bridge was constructed, people could only either swim across or take a sampan to cross the river. After the construction of Cavenagh Bridge, it helped to facilitate both human and traffic flow.

Interestingly, the original bridge was not built high enough to allow the bumboats to pass through during high tide, and some of them had to wait till it was low tide before crossing under it. To make our tours more interactive, we would encourage tourists to participate in our activity and jump on the bridge, to feel the unsteady vibrations of it for themselves.

What does doing these guided tours mean to you?

With these tours, we have the opportunity to be exposed to the tourism industry beyond the classroom, and to meet and interact with people from various backgrounds each week. We believe that with “Singapore Footprints”,

tourism students like us can be equipped with a unique skillset, vital “product knowledge” and public-speaking skills. Moreover, it serves as a good platform for interaction between locals and tourists to explore Singapore’s history, cultures and personal experiences. These guided tours also enhance our interpersonal skills, given that we interact with different types of tourists each week.

Besides experience and gaining confidence in public speaking, how has being a part of Singapore Footprints impacted you?

With this student-led initiative, it has greatly improved our understanding of Singapore. We believe that “Singapore Footprints” has enabled us to learn more about Singapore’s background and how the government actually mapped out future plans for preserving Singapore’s national heritage from as early as the 1980s. We also learnt how different local communities assimilate each other’s way of life.



PIERRE HENNES

TRUSTEE OF THE ARMENIAN APOSTOLIC CHURCH OF ST GREGORY THE ILLUMINATOR, SINGAPORE

Text by Ruchi Mittal

Pierre Hennes proudly serves as one of four trustees of the Armenian Church, all of whom work on a voluntary basis. He looks after the opening, closing and upkeep of the Church, and is excited about establishing Asia's first Armenian museum here in 2016. His passion for entrepreneurship and work for the Church eventually saw him setting up Armenia's first venture capital firm with business partners that he met through his volunteering work.

What is it like being part of the Armenian community here in Singapore?

It is wonderful. I think Armenians are known for their warm hospitality, and for being a very tight-knit community. Our churches throughout Asia serve as beacons inviting our communities to gather.

I've been part of this community since 2003. The community has gone through several different waves of development since the early

1700s when there were flourishing Armenian communities along the trade routes. We've been a very small and transient community here from around 1938 to 2005. Today, the Singapore Armenian community has about a hundred people, one-third of whom are descendants from the original families who have intermarried. They don't speak the language and they don't necessarily look Armenian.

All of these people combine to make up our small, humble community.

How did the community help when you first came to Singapore in 2003?

What typically happens for most Armenians upon arrival is that they will first look up the location of the Church, and that becomes the first port of call. I came here for work 12 years ago, joined the Church then, and eventually started volunteering. I decided



Mrs P G Collyer (in dark dress), raises her baton and the sound of carol singing fills the air in the little-used Armenian church for the first time in years, 1969. Photo courtesy of Singapore Press Holdings.

that I would offer my help and assistance in any way I can. Our community grew from a very rudimentary 20 people or so, to about 100 people today. Now the community has higher visibility, we're more inclusive, and the Church is open every day. We've taken a lot of pains to clean it up and repair it in honour of the heritage behind it. The museum that we want to build here is part of that effort: We want to build the first Armenian museum in Asia here in Singapore.

What has been memorable for you, as a member and a trustee of the Church?

The memorable moments are in the day-to-day moments: When I read the guestbook, and when we have weddings, baptisms and community gatherings. This is fundamentally a place for the community to gather, and I've been fortunate to have gained a lot of friends through that community.

Today some of my closest friends in Singapore are the Armenians I've gotten to know over the years.

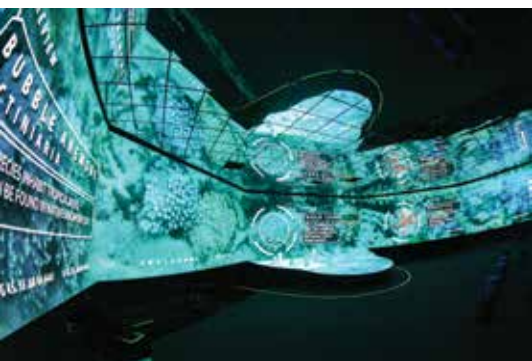
How has being part of the Church contributed to your life, personally and professionally?

It opens up the opportunity to meet more people. I met my current business partners in Armenia because of the Church. So, we joke that everything revolves around the Church here.

The Church and its community have a special place. It's been around for 180 years. We find it very admirable that the original settlers built the Church in the 1830s. A lot of the work we do is to honour their legacy and the work that they've done.

'THE FUTURE OF US' EXHIBITION

Text by Reena Devi



Hosted at Gardens by the Bay, the *'The Future of Us'* exhibition is an immersive, interactive and multi-sensory experience that raises the question about the heart and identity of Singaporeans as a people. Opened on 1st December 2015, the exhibition offers a glimpse of what the future of this country looks like based on the ideas and envisioning of Singaporeans.

The exhibition drew upon these ideas from various avenues that engage Singaporeans from all walks of life, such as Contact Singapore, Our Singapore Conversations, and National Day Parade etc. Mr Gene Tan, Creative Director, *'The Future of Us'* exhibition, commented on the interesting overarching themes and threads observed from the public's input and comments: "There is an emphasis on the kind of values Singaporeans should evolve and continue with for the future with a focus on areas such as living,

greening and sustainability."

Mr Gene Tan explains the link between the location of the exhibition at Gardens by the Bay as representative of the context and messaging of the exhibition. Gardens by the Bay was essentially created something out of which did not previously exist and therein lies the future of Singapore: the ability to choose what we want to do and do what it takes to create and build it.

As such, the *'The Future of Us'* exhibition presents glimpses of how we can live, work, learn and care in the future, a future that is for all of us to imagine, shape and strive for, together, based on our shared values as Singapore.

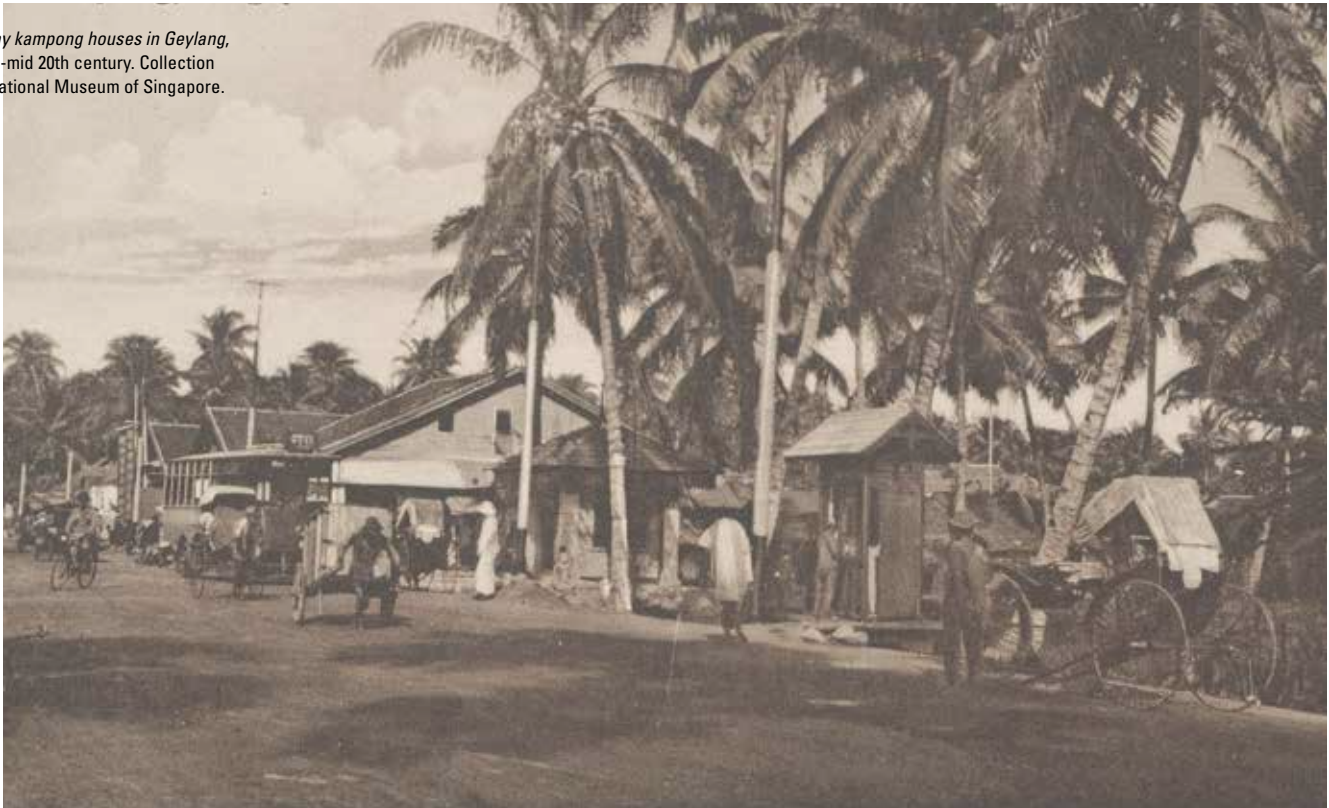


**COMMUNITY HERITAGE
TRAIL**

OUR GEYLANG SERAI

Text by Nicole Cheng

*Malay kampong houses in Geylang,
early-mid 20th century. Collection
of: National Museum of Singapore.*





01

*“Gelang si paku Gelang,
Geylang si rama-rama.*

*Mari pulang, marilah
pulang*

*Marilah pulang,
Bersama-sama.”*

Verse from
Gelang Sipaku Gelang

The verse above is from the beloved local folk song “Gelang Sipaku Gelang” and while its lyrics are not entirely definitive, the song is often associated with the Malay community’s strong sense of belonging to Geylang Serai. The reason for this can be traced back to the 1890s, when the British forced the Malays and Orang Laut (Malay for “Sea People”) to move further inland from their original settlement at the mouth of the Singapore River.

They settled at the area now known as Geylang Serai, forming one of the oldest Malay settlements in Singapore. The area’s name hints of its past as a lemongrass plantation with *geylang* possibly deriving from the Malay word *kilang*, which means a factory or press-mill, and *serai* referring to lemongrass. Much of the area was reclaimed from swamp lands to build the foundations for the Geylang Serai we recognise today.

01. *A Geylang Police Post, Late 19th Century.* Collection of National Museum of Singapore.

02. *An inter-class drill competition at the Geylang English School sports meet, 1930.* Collection of: National Museum of Singapore.



02

While Geylang Serai was largely known as a Malay enclave earlier, the increasing population of the small island nation and the departure of the British blurred physical boundaries and created more porous communities. People of different religions and cultures learnt to live in harmony with each other. Lee Hong Ping was born and bred within this united climate. His fondest memories are of the Lorong 40 Geylang playground next to the Geylang River, where he and family members would play at for over a decade, sharing walks around it and attending the many community events nearby, such as cultural performances and carnivals.

Lee gained a deeper understanding of the rich history and culture of the over 120 clans, associations and organisations in Geylang Serai when he became a member of the Geylang Serai Inter-Racial Religious Confidence Circle



03

03. *Children splashing themselves with water at a kampong (villages) standpipe in Geylang Serai. 1960s. Collection of National Archives of Singapore.*

04. *Pre-War Shophouses. Courtesy of Kusala Photography.*

05. *Inside the Khadijah Mosque. Courtesy of Kusala Photography.*



04



05

(IRCC). Hoping to share the heritage of the area with a wider audience, Lee championed a multi-year project to develop the the Geylang Serai Foot and Food Heritage Trails.

Organised by the Integration and Naturalisation Champions (INC) Committee and supported by the National Heritage Board, these heritage trails showcase what Lee described as “the variety and diversity of Geylang Serai [that truly mirror] the multi-racial, multi-cultural Singapore”. Every trail site was selected carefully, taking into account a myriad of factors. At the core of each chosen site was the strength of its story – its history, founding values, objectives and the organisation’s faithfulness to its mission. The architectural conditions at these sites were also

considered for driving the trail experience.

The work on the trails culminated in the creation of a guide map, allowing one to have an insider’s perspective of Geylang Serai. Marked with over 20 sites, the trails weave through numerous *lorongs* (Malay for road) and give a glimpse into the lives of its residents. Important places of worship and architectural remnants from a bygone era are brought to light on the guide map. A trail-walker will see rows of iconic shophouses line *lorongs* on either side, their ceramic tiles and colourful façades adorning the shops. Walking towards the entrance of the former Queen’s theatre, one can almost picture mid-nineteenth century residents hurrying in the light of ornate street lamps as they flocked

to the foyer of the once-bustling cinema.

Places of worship are situated throughout the trail. Soon Thian Keing, the oldest Chinese Temple in Singapore, was established during the Qing dynasty and stands just metres away from the prayer halls of the Khadijah Mosque. This is testament to the peaceful relationship between the diverse religious groups. Another reflection of the community spirit and understanding was the reaction to a fire in February, 2011: It broke out at Chong Hood Lim Association, a Buddhist temple, and had badly affected the neighbouring Coronation Baptist Church. Upon learning that the church was unable to conduct service sessions, the temple association offered to let the church



06. Lim Lam San. *A flood in Geylang Serai.* 1930s. Photograph. Collection of National Museum of Singapore. Gift of LTC Lim Eng Lian.

07. *Former Queen's Theatre.* Courtesy of Nicole Cheng.



07



08

08. Lee Hong Ping and resident at Amitabha Buddhist Centre. Courtesy of Kusala Photography.

conduct temporary services at one of their newly-acquired activity centres.

No less important are the beloved food haunts on the trail, where one can spot locals gathering and sharing culturally-diverse meals. From enjoying a durian feast with friends and family at the “five-foot way” along the stalls, to savouring soft and fluffy *putu piring* (Malay sweet snack) at the renowned Haig Road Centre – the simple pleasures in life remain unchanged from the past.

Since its launch in April, the Geylang Serai Foot and Food Heritage Trails have revealed to many the fascinating and unique story of a former kampong. Amidst the rapid development of our urban landscape, Lee hopes that others can also experience Geylang Serai “[in] its current charm and characteristics [and] see very diverse clans, groups and religious organisations like churches, temples and mosques remaining true to their roots, retaining their rich cultures and

heritage, while continuing to co-exist harmoniously as good neighbours next to one another”.

Eager to share other facets of his community, Lee already has plans for the launch of more heritage trails in the future. His and the efforts of Geylang Serai INC are inspiring, and a reminder that everyone has a unique story to tell in the weaving of our Singapore Story.

To find out more about the Geylang Serai Foot and Food Heritage Trail, you can check out their Facebook page at facebook.com/gsheritagetrail, or sign up for the monthly tour at one.pa.gov.sg under Geylang Serai CCC.



A BRANCH OF HISTORY



Tembusu Tree on Five Dollar Note.

Text and photos courtesy of Lee Yane





01. Tembusu Tree at Botanic Gardens.
02. Tembusu Tree on stamp.
03. Local Artist Eng Siak Loy.

THE FIVE-DOLLAR TREE

A majestic icon stands, tucked away within the Singapore Botanic Gardens (SBG). At 30 metres tall, its commanding presence dominates its surrounding landscape. It is a tree – a tembusu – believed to be at least 150 years old and which probably existed before the Gardens was set up in 1859. Perhaps, its most striking feature is a curled and low-lying branch, which makes it stand out from the other trees in the Gardens. This tree holds great significance in the nation’s heritage: Affectionately known as the “Five-Dollar Tree”, it is the iconic tree found on the Singapore five-dollar note, drawn by local artist Eng Siak Loy.

TEMBUSU TREES

The tembusu, also known as the *Fagraea fragrans*, is commonly found in Southeast Asia. The trees are plentiful in Singapore, with many old ones still present at the Tanglin area where flora has survived the course of Singapore’s development. The tembusu bark often has deep fissures; it flowers twice a year in May and October with white and yellow blooms, and is often pollinated by nocturnal moths that feed on its round berries. Its wood is durable, tough and frequently used to make

chopping boards. The tree has been likened metaphorically to a “lover’s hard heart” by Singaporean poets.

While conical in shape when young, tembusu trees tend to become very tall and irregularly-shaped upon maturity. These older trees usually grow a few horizontal and short branches, which in turn bear many tall and vertical branchlets. The tembusu is regarded as a slow-growing tree that is robust and resistant to many pests and diseases.

HISTORY OF THE “FIVE-DOLLAR TREE”

The widely-recognised tembusu is featured on Singapore’s current five-dollar notes. While the actual age and origins of the tree are unknown, it had probably grown naturally on the leftover wasteland of gambier planting days before the SBG was set up. Its earliest documentation was in the 1880s, by a British named Walter Fox. At that time, Fox was the Assistant Superintendent of the SBG, a position he held from 1879 to 1903. Fox had recorded the existence of the tembusu tree in his horticultural guide of the gardens that was published in 1889, and also produced in the guide the earliest known photograph of the “Five-Dollar Tree” to date, taken

in the 1880s. Given that the tree was already mature when Fox wrote his horticultural guide, it is evident that the “Five-Dollar Tree” is now well beyond 150 years old!

ONE OF A KIND

Unmistakably, the most defining feature of this venerable tembusu tree is the thick, low-lying and twirled horizontal branch that stems from its main trunk. It is unclear exactly why this tree sports such a unique branch, but common consensus agrees that when lower tembusu branches are left unpruned, they sag towards the ground and then “turn up” as they continue growing. Moreover, since this tree existed before the Gardens was set up, it likely grew amidst lower canopies and secondary rainforest growth that existed then, resulting in the low-growing branch. It is this iconic branch that gave Singaporean artist Eng Siak Loy his inspiration for the five-dollar bill design.

ON THE FIVE-DOLLAR NOTE

Besides the five-dollar note, Eng has also designed for the other currency denominations. His drawings were selected after he won a design competition organised by the Monetary Association of



03

Singapore, from which winning designs were selected for the 1999 Singapore Currency Portrait Series. Eng has a distinct impression of the “Five-Dollar Tree” since his youth, especially when he worked for the National Parks Board as a graphic designer at the SBG.

“The theme for the five-dollar note was ‘Garden City’, so I wanted to select a tree native to Singapore. I settled on this particular tembusu because it is a distinct landmark that locals and tourists recognise at the Botanic Gardens,” said Eng. “The main thing I wanted to capture was the unique branch. There are many tembusu trees around, but none of them look like this one, and you can easily identify this tree just by looking at the branch!” Eng has also incorporated the “Five-Dollar Tree” into his designs for a “Heritage Trees Stamp” series, which went on to win many international awards.

CONSERVING THE FIVE-DOLLAR TREE’S HERITAGE

Since the tree is extremely old,

measures have been taken to conserve its structural integrity. After many decades of growing without support, the SBG installed a wooden prop beneath the low-lying branch in 1992. Then, in 2003, this prop was replaced with two others for additional support. Without these props, the iconic branch would possibly have broken off under its own weight and compromised the structural integrity of the entire tree. Still, a long-term solution was required because those props were static, unable to adapt to organic changes of a tree and restrictive to a tree’s growth patterns.

Eventually, a team of engineers from Singapore Technologies Kinetics developed a dynamic support system in 2014. It had a suspension mechanism to brace the branch at three points without obstructing its growth. A decision was also made to fence the tree up to prevent visitors from stepping on its roots and perching on the horizontal branch. According to the National Parks Board, high visitation had caused soil compaction that had hindered root growth. It was hoped that over time, the leaf litter around the trunk will decompose and enrich the soil together with soil organisms, thereby allowing the tembusu’s roots to thrive once again.

Having a photo taken while posing on the iconic horizontal branch used to be a popular trend, but it seems unlikely that visitors today will get the chance to do so again.

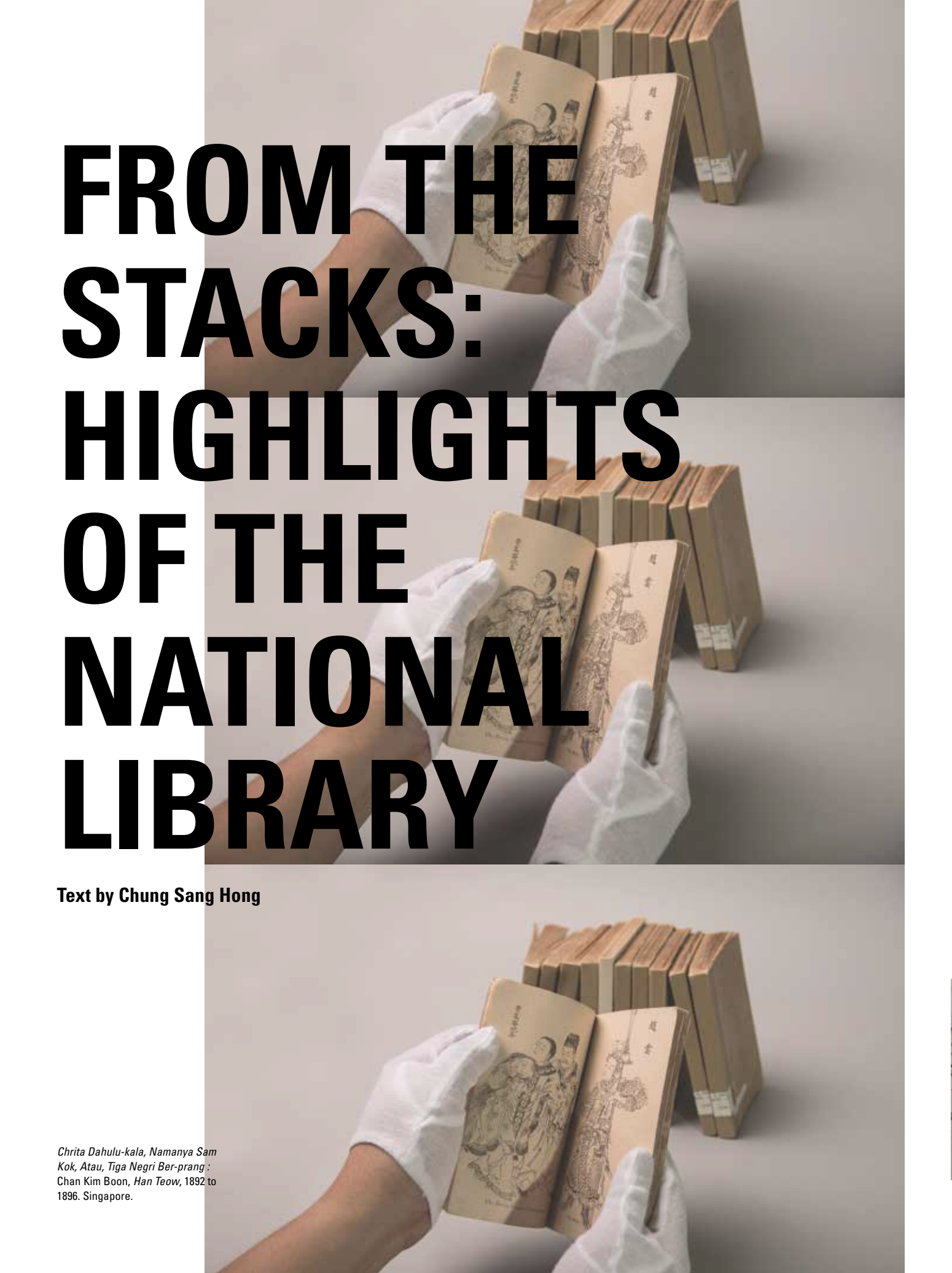
OTHER TEMBUSU TREES IN SINGAPORE

The “Five-Dollar Tree” is not the only tembusu Heritage Tree in

Singapore – twelve others across the country also have the Heritage Tree status – with a couple on St. John’s Island and Sentosa Island.

That said, perhaps no other tembusu tree besides the “Five-Dollar Tree” will ever achieve similar historical status. With a combination of factors – the unique low-lying branch, the majesty of its physical stature, its presence throughout Singapore’s modern history, and its significance on the five-dollar bill – the “Five-Dollar Tree” will definitely continue to be a celebrated part of Singapore’s heritage at the SBG.

Singapore Botanic Gardens was inscribed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site on 4 July 2015. The Gardens is the first and only tropical botanic garden on the UNESCO’s World Heritage List. The Tembusu Tree is one of the Heritage Trees in the Gardens.



FROM THE STACKS: HIGHLIGHTS OF THE NATIONAL LIBRARY

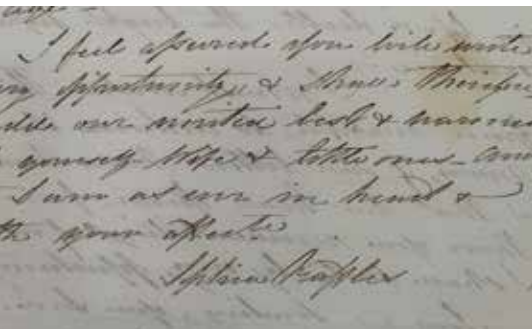
Text by Chung Sang Hong

*Chrita Dahulu-kala, Namanya Sam
Kok, Atau, Tiga Negri Ber-prang :*
Chan Kim Boon, *Han Teow*, 1892 to
1896. Singapore.

Singapore has inherited a rich published heritage thanks to its history, socio-political development and strategic location at the confluence of civilisations. It was once the publishing hub in the region and a body of printed works, manuscripts and records of every description have survived through the ages. Part of this fascinating legacy will be showcased in a new exhibition by the National Library of Singapore, *From the Stacks: Highlights of the National Library* – which takes place from January 30 to August 28, 2016 at the National Library Gallery. The exhibition presents over 100 items drawn largely from the library's Rare Materials Collection: Publications, manuscripts, maps, documents and photographs from the 1701 to 1960. Here are some of the highlights.



01



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THE PRIVATE RAFFLES

Over the years, the Library has acquired a small collection of holograph letters by Stamford Raffles (1781 to 1826) and individuals related to him, which form an invaluable primary resource material for research on Singapore's early history and its modern founder. While most of the letters in the collection contain information relating to Raffles' public life and endeavours, two letters featured in the exhibition provide glimpses into his private life and character.

A letter to his cousin (with the same name) is the longest private and only autobiographical letter by Raffles. It contains a detailed account of his career progression as well as reminiscences of his humble early life. Due to family circumstances, Raffles withdrew from school when he was barely 14 and worked as a clerk with the East India Company. Despite the hardship, he persevered in self-study and mastered French and acquired knowledge in literature and science. On his learning and family poverty he recalled:

“This was, however, in stolen moments, either before the office hours in the morning, or after them in the evening; and I shall never forget the mortification I felt when the penury of my family once induced my mother to complain of my extravagance in burning a candle in my room. And yet I look back to those days of misery, difficulty, and application with some degree of pleasure. I feel that I did all I could, and I have nothing to reproach myself with.”

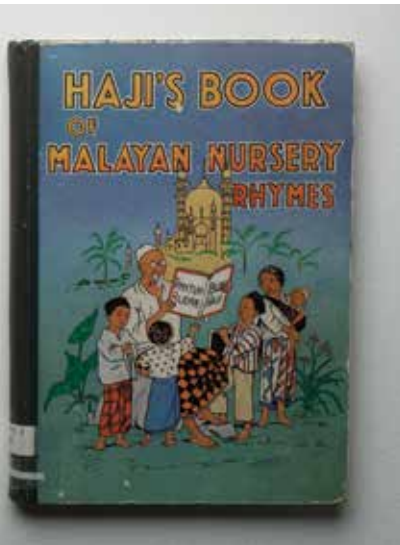
The letter to the same cousin by Raffles' second wife Sophia (1786

to 1858) portrays a blissful scene the Raffles family enjoyed in Bencoolen (present-day Bengkulu), Sumatra, where Stamford Raffles was the Governor-General from 1817 to 1823.

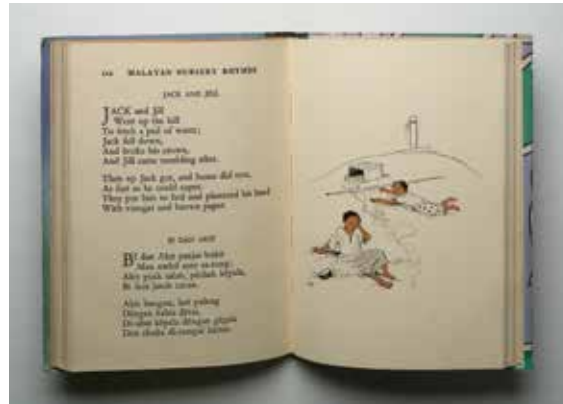
“Our domestic scene is so blessed and happy, I scarcely know how to describe it – my dear husband's health and spirit are so bright and light and his mind so relieved from anxiety and cheered by the consciousness of having performed his duty, thus the present scene is more than usually happy – my sweet children are expanding daily – my little Lily is so gentle and interesting, that I am sure you would love her and I am as certain that you would love her bolder brother, because he is a miniature picture of his father in form, in face, in manners and I hope hereafter to add in mind, I have been so blessed as a mother. I ought not to regret the expectation of an additional tie next month but I could have been satisfied with the treasures I now possess and in watching them have formed sufficient occupation.”

Unfortunately, such happy scenario was very short-lived as four of their five children did not survive past early childhood and died of illnesses in the next few years before Raffles and his family returned to England in 1824.

01. Letter from Raffles to Reverend Dr Thomas Raffles, At Sea October 14, 1819. Collection of National Library, Singapore.
02. Close up of letter with signature of Lady Sophia Raffles to Reverend Dr Thomas Raffles, Fort Marlborough, April 8, 1820. Collection of National Library, Singapore.



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03 – 06
Haji's book of Malayan nursery rhymes,
 Arthur Wedderburn Hamilton.
 Singapore: Printers Ltd, 1939.

07 – 09
Chrita Dahulu-kala, Namanya Sam Kok, Atau, Tiga Negri Ber-prang : Siok, Gwi, Sama Gor di Jaman "Han Teow",
 Chan Kim Boon.
 Singapore : Kim Sek Chye Press, 1892 to 1896.

“MALAYANISED” LITERATURE

The Malay language has been the *lingua franca* of maritime Southeast Asia for centuries. Traders and travellers had to learn Malay in order to communicate with the local populations. For some early diasporic communities such as the Peranakans, they adopted the language and spoke a creolised form of Malay peppered with Hokkien words and phrases known as Baba Malay. It is thus natural to find that some early books published in Singapore were in Malay or about the Malay language. To help with learning of Malay, dictionaries and grammar books were produced. Attempts were even made to teach Malay through nursery rhymes, such as a compilation of English nursery rhymes translated into Malay and adapted to local culture. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, the Baba Malay translations of Chinese historical novels were very popular among the Peranakan community.

Some samples of such ‘Malayanised literature’ are showcased in the exhibition.



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“HAJI’S BOOK OF MALAYAN NURSERY RHYMES”

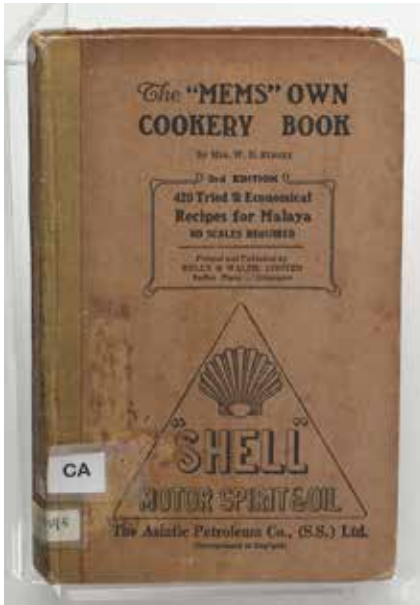
In this collection of popular nursery rhymes both the original English version and the Malay translations are featured. In the latter, some words were replaced with local terms to give a familiar Malayan setting, for example, “Jack and Jill” became “Bi dan Akit”. The book was intended to be used for learning Malay as it includes a glossary of Malay vocabulary for the benefit of readers not proficient in the language. The book features charming illustrations depicting idyllic Malayan lifestyles in the pre-World War Two era.

Hamilton (1887 to 1967) lived in Penang where he learnt Malay and became acquainted with the local way of life. He was an officer of the Federated Malay States Police, a linguist, botanist and an author of Malay text books.

“HAN TEOW”

This serialised 30-volume novel is probably the earliest Baba Malay translation of the Chinese classic *Romance of the Three Kingdoms*. From 1880s to 1942, translations of Chinese historical novels in Baba Malay were highly popular among the upper middle class Peranakans in Java and the Straits Settlements. They were indeed bestsellers of the day with a print run of up to 2,000 for each publication in 1930s.

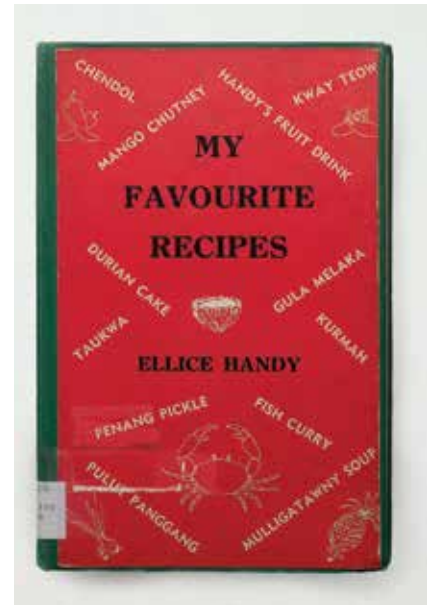
Among the numerous translators of such novels in Singapore, Chan Kim Boon (1851 to 1920) was the most illustrious. A native of Penang, Chan was educated in English but received private tutoring in Chinese. He pursued further studies at the Foochow Naval School (in present-day Fuzhou) and went on to teach mathematics in that institution. He came to Singapore in 1872 to work



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10 & 11
Image: Cover and an advertisement from
The mem's own cookery book
The mem's own cookery book: 420 tried and economical recipes for Malaya,
W. E. Kinsey.
Singapore : Kelly & Walsh, 1929, 3rd edition .

12 & 13
My favourite recipes,
Ellice Handy.
Singapore: MPH, 1960.

as an administrator at law firm Aitken & Rodyk. However, he was better known for his translations of three Chinese classics: *Romance of the Three Kingdoms* (Sam Kok), *The Water Margin* (Song Kang) and *Journey to the West* (Kou Chey Tian).

RECIPES FROM THE MELTING POT

Singapore's melting pot of cultures has produced a rich multi-ethnic culinary heritage with countless recipes passed down through the generations. Certain Singapore-published cookbooks were once regarded as "cookery bibles" and presents a myriad of sumptuous Malayan dishes.

The book contains "tried and tested" recipes which the author compiled while living in Seremban, Malaya between 1915 and 1919. The recipes emphasise on economy due to the shortage of food and price hikes during World War I. It was written for expatriate wives who wished to cook for their households instead of relying on local cooks. When first published in 1920, it sold out in a few months.

"MY FAVOURITE RECIPES"

The recipes were meant to create typical European or British fare using local ingredients. Tips on local weight measurements, food prices and names of ingredients in Malay are given. A small proportion of the recipes are on local dishes such as *satai* (*satay*), *rundang* (*rendang*), curries and *gula malacca*. Several dishes probably would have been rather exotic to the locals, such as sheep's brain on toast, sheep's head broth, and jugged sheep's heart.

This is the first cookbook by a Singaporean author, Ellice Handy (1902 to 1989), a Eurasian educator. First published in 1952, it contains recipes from the various communities in Malaya and catered to a cosmopolitan audience – the book includes a chapter on "Asian Recipes that can be used in U.K., U.S.A., Australia and places where Malayan Curry Ingredients etc., are not available."

On creating the Malayan flavour, Mrs Handy offered the following tips:



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“If we want a Malayan-style dish of Chinese *Beehoon* (Rice Noodles) or *Nasi Goreng* (Fried Rice) we use a paste of pounded fresh red chillies and *blachan* (shrimp paste) and onions, instead of or in addition to the garlic and onions.”

“To European stews we add cloves and cinnamon and to omelette we add plenty of sliced onions and chillies and just before serving a teaspoon of soy sauce. When we roast a chicken the addition of ground cinnamon, cloves and pepper, thick soy sauce and a little sugar makes it a Chinese-style dish, while the addition of the “Satay Paste” gives it the very popular Malay Satay flavour.”

As a culinary classic and the longest selling local cookbook, 11 editions have been printed since 1952 with the most recent one released in 2012.

There are too many publications of note in the exhibition to be highlighted in this article. The exhibits cover a wide array of topics, from politics, history, sociology, language and religion to current affairs, nature, travel, food and more. Some of the more novel items on display include an address to Alfred, Duke of Edinburgh by the Singapore Chinese merchants on the occasion of his visit in 1869; a 1901 photo album by G.R. Lambert with images of old Singapore and what is probably the first travel guidebook of Singapore, published in 1892. Look out also for the first English-Malay dictionary (1701); early nineteenth century Christian literature published by the Mission Press, the first printing press in Singapore; one of the earliest Qur’ans printed in Singapore (1869); and photographs of the war crime trials held at the Supreme Court in 1946.

From the Stacks: Highlights of the National Library will be held at the National Library Gallery, Level 10, National Library Building, from January 30 to August 28 2016. Complementing the exhibition are public programmes, including free talks, workshops, themed events and guided tours.

For more information, visit nlb.gov.sg/exhibitions/

14 & 15

Address to Alfred, Duke of Edinburgh by the Singapore Chinese merchants on the occasion of his visit to Singapore in 1869.



THE VIETNAMESE WOMEN'S MUSEUM

CHRONICLING WOMEN'S DEVELOPMENT IN VIETNAM

Text by Reena Devi

All Images courtesy of The Vietnamese Women's Museum



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The Vietnamese Women's Museum is sited on Ly Thuong Kiet Street in Hanoi, near the central Hoan Kiem Lake. With its location on the most ancient street in Vietnam's capital surrounded by French-style buildings, foreign embassies, hotels and government offices in the old quarter, the physical location of the museum introduces the visitor to the beginning of a rich heritage experience.

Reopening in October 2010 after more than four years of renovation, the Vietnamese Women's Museum is a contemporary and unique gender museum. The Museum clearly represents how women have always played an important role in the development and defence of the Vietnamese nation.

All museum displays are offered in three languages: Vietnamese, English and French. The Museum features three main thematic galleries: "Women in Family", "Women in History", and "Women's Fashion". More than 1,000 objects and photographs are on display, ranging from ceremonial items and documents of war to personal keepsakes and exquisite clothing.

Historical accounts in the "Women in History" gallery hark back to 40 AD, telling a legacy of extraordinary female fighters. They begin with the famous Trung Sisters who led the battle for independence against the Han Chinese, when Trung Trac proclaimed herself Queen and made Me Linh the capital. Then there was 23-year-old Trieu Thi Trinh of Thanh Hoa who fought against the oppression of the Wu Chinese in the third century. King Quang Trung's female General Commander-in-Chief of the

elephant-mounted troops, Bui Thi Xuan, also contributed to a victory against 290,000 Qing Chinese invaders in 1789.

The "Women in Family" gallery focuses more on the development of women, as they mature from teenagers to married women who start new lives as wives and mothers. The exhibits also showcase wedding rituals in a society with both patrilineal and matrilineal descent systems. The gallery offers insight on practices related to crop cultivation, fishing and foraging, meal preparation, pottery, sewing and weaving, and childcare.

The Museum also holds special exhibitions, one of which is *Worshipping Mother Goddess: Pure Heart – Beauty – Joy*. This exhibit is attractive for visitors interested in the dominant form of worship in Vietnam. Worship of the Mother Goddess is a Vietnamese folk belief with a long history influenced by social changes over time. This belief is still widely practiced today throughout Vietnam and in overseas Vietnamese communities. Devotees from all walks of life worship the Mother Goddess for good health and good fortune, besides drawing emotional support for their daily struggles.

The exhibition introduces the key values of Mother Goddess worship through the voices and experiences of worshippers in Hanoi and some northern provinces, allowing visitors a better understanding of the folk religion. The exhibit is divided into four sections featuring the Mother Goddess, pure heart, beauty and joy. Each section corresponds to one of four colours identified with the four palaces of the Mother Goddess religion:

Red (Palace of Heaven), white (Palace of Water), yellow (Palace of Earth), and green (Palace of Mountains and Forests).

A trip to this particular exhibition would complement visits to the pagodas in Vietnam, providing the spiritual and historical context to these places.

Curated in an accessible manner, with quality exhibitions and well-presented content, the Vietnamese Women's Museum is a must-go for any first-time visitor to Hanoi. Through its diverse offerings and activities, one can explore the roles of women in modern Vietnamese society, learn about the country's rich cultural heritage, and appreciate the impact of local women's contribution to the country throughout its history.

Photos on previous page

01. The Vietnamese Women's Museum on Ly Thuong Kiet Street in Hanoi.
02. Schoolchildren on a guided tour at *Women in Family* Gallery.
03. Students on a guided tour at *Women in Fashion* Gallery.
04. Altar display at Mother Goddess Special Exhibition.

FUN WITH HERITAGE ON THE JUBILEE WALK

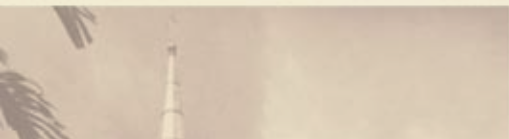
Text by Nurliyana Halid



Anglo-Chinese School, Singapore.



Anglo-Chinese School, Singapore.





Looking for fun-filled activities for your family on weekends? Fret not, the Jubilee Walk is here! A trail that connects the past, present and future elements of Singapore, it provides a wonderful opportunity for families to bond and discover more about people and communities who have contributed to our cityscape.

A *Family Time Jubilee Walk Activity Sheet* for Primary 1 to 3 students has been developed in collaboration with the Ministry of Education Character and Citizenship Education Branch, creating an avenue for families to bond over meaningful discoveries. This activity sheet features seven of the 23 sites on the trail, making it a more manageable expedition for families with young children.



Here are some tips to note for your walkabout:

- Each walk lasts about 1.5 to 2 hours
- Recommended timings to go for the walkabout are 9am or 5pm
- Admission to the museums is free for all Singaporeans/PRs
- Please bring along the activity sheet for the walk
- Wear comfortable shoes and clothes
- Pack drinks and light snacks such as sandwiches, biscuits or fruits
- The “Jubilee Walk Mobile App” is also available for download at the Apple and Android Store



During the walk:

- Collect all admission stickers and complete the activities found on the activity sheet
- Take “we-fies” with your family to capture fun memories and tag them on social media and #FunWithHeritage
- Take short breaks in between. You can consider having a family picnic at the Picnic Terrace at Fort Canning Park.



Guiding questions to ask your children/wards:

- Take a closer look at some of the buildings. Are the buildings old or newly-built? What makes you say that?
- Some of the buildings used to be schools. Have you ever wondered how schools are like



in the past?

After the walk

- Present a completed activity sheet and redeem a limited edition Jubilee Walk gift till June 30, 2016 (while stocks last)! Each activity sheet allows one gift redemption at the following locations:
 - The Peranakan Museum front desk
 - Museum Label Shop at the National Museum of Singapore
 - Museum Label Shop at the Asian Civilisations Museum

With the Jubilee Walk, you can look forward to spending quality time with your wards or children and creating a family photo montage of the pictures taken at the various iconic sites. There are also opportunities for rich conversations about the pioneers of Singapore, discussing how they have contributed to our nation and the values they are representative of.

WHAT'S ON



TREASURES OF THE WORLD FROM THE BRITISH MUSEUM

National Museum of Singapore
Ongoing to May 29
10 am to 6 pm

Explore the finest artefacts the world has to offer at this highly-anticipated exhibition from the British Museum! Featuring stunning relics from ancient civilisations and treasures spanning Africa, Oceania, the Middle East, as well as Europe, Asia and the Americas, this extensive collection encompasses over two million years of abundant culture and history.

For more information, please visit nationalmuseum.sg



BALESTIER: A HUNDRED YEARS

Sun Yat Sen Nanyang Memorial Hall
Ongoing to April 24
Tuesday to Sunday | 10 am to 5 pm
Free admission for Singaporeans
and Permanent Residents

In conjunction with SG50, Sun Yat Sen Nanyang Memorial Hall is organising the *Balestier: A Hundred Years* special exhibition to celebrate the rich heritage and multi-cultural society of Singapore. This exhibition narrates the century-long history of the Balestier precinct, features the characteristics and development of the settlements in the area and highlights how the different communities lived and interacted in this precinct.

For more information, please visit wanqingyuan.org.sg

THE SINGAPORE JOURNEY: 50 YEARS THROUGH STAMPS

Singapore Philatelic Museum
Ongoing to April 2016
Daily | 10 am to 7 pm
\$6 for adults and \$4 for children (3 to 12 years old). Free admission for Singapore Citizens and Permanent Residents

Singapore stamps document the growth of the nation, archiving trials, tribulations, achievements and aspirations. Journey through 50 years of our nation's progress with specially selected stamps, philatelic materials and rarely seen original stamp artworks. Let these remarkable treasures tell you the story of Singapore in a way only they can.

For more information, please visit spm.org.sg

MORE THAN MONKEYS

Singapore Philatelic Museum
January to December 2016
Daily | 10 am to 7 pm
\$6 for adults and \$4 for children (3 – 12 years). Free admission for Singapore Citizens and Permanent Residents.

More Than Monkeys explores the fascinating world of monkeys through stamps and philatelic materials. Swinging from tree to tree is no monkey business. Their agility allows them to move with ease in the trees to search for food and stay away from predators on the ground. Are these primates clever or is it just "monkey see, monkey do"? Let *More Than Monkeys* provide the answer and separate the facts from fables.

For more information, please visit spm.org.sg

WHAT'S ON



WITH LOVE FROM SNOOPY, CHARLIE BROWN & THE PEANUTS GANG

IN CONJUNCTION WITH SNOOPY & CHARLIE BROWN: THE PEANUTS MOVIE

Singapore Philatelic Museum

Ongoing to April 2016

Daily 10 am to 7 pm

\$6 for adults and \$4 for children (3 to 12 years old). Free admission for Singapore Citizens and Permanent Residents.

Singapore Philatelic Museum celebrates the 65th anniversary of the Peanuts comic strips created by Charles M. Schulz. The comic strip made its first appearance on October 2, 1950. December 2015 also celebrates the 50th anniversary of the animated *Peanuts*. The first animated film was a Christmas special aired on TV in USA on December 9, 1965.

Schulz's journey with *Peanuts* comic strips began in 1950. After many mailbox rejections, Schulz boarded a train from St. Paul to New York with a handful of drawings for a meeting with United Feature Syndicate. On October 2 of that year, *Peanuts*, named by the syndicate, debuted in seven newspapers. 50 years later, *Peanuts* appeared in over 2,600 newspapers worldwide and Charles M. Schulz had become a household name. The strip continues to maintain its universal appeal throughout five distinctly different decades

Charlie Brown and the *Peanuts* gang created a universal language that

speaks to readers around the world, filled with winless baseball seasons, lonely vigils for the Great Pumpkin, and a kite-eating tree. The daily comic strip has appeared in 75 countries and 21 languages, including Croatian, Malay, Tlingit and Catalan. The characters can be found on plush dolls, music boxes, salt and pepper shakers, tub toys, lunch boxes, band-aids, model kits and countless other items.

DISPLAY COMIC STRIPS

Even after producing almost 18,000 comic strips, Schulz remained devoted to *Peanuts*. When questioned about the overwhelming passion for to his work, Schulz explained, "Why do musicians compose symphonies and poets write poems? They do it because life wouldn't have any meaning for them if they didn't. That's why I draw cartoons. It's my life."

On February 12, 2000, Schulz died in Santa Rosa, California, of complications from colon cancer. Just a few hours later, his final original strip appeared in the Sunday papers.

For more information, please visit spm.org.sg



FROM THE STACKS: HIGHLIGHTS OF THE NATIONAL LIBRARY EXHIBITION

National Library of Singapore

Gallery, Level 10, National Library Building

January 30 to August 28

Daily 10 am to 9 pm

Free admission

Documents, publications and photographs from Singapore's early days reveal fascinating insights into our history and culture. Discover early Singapore from a fresh perspective through over 100 highlights from the National Library's collection of rare publications, manuscripts, documents, maps, photographs and more.

Receive a complimentary souvenir when you visit the exhibition!

For more information, please visit nlb.gov.sg/exhibitions/

BETWEEN HERE & NANYANG: MARCO HSU'S BRIEF HISTORY OF MALAYAN ART

NUS Museum
Ongoing to August 28
Free admission

In 1963, art critic and columnist Marco Hsu published a series of essays on the cultural history of the people of the Malayan Peninsula. These were gathered and published as the book *A Brief History of Malayan Art*. Presented on the 50th anniversary of the book's publication, this exhibition features art and artefacts referred to in the book. They highlight questions of identity and nation-building raised on the eve of a merger.

For more information, please visit nus.edu.sg/museum

OPEN EXCESS | PREP-ROOM

NUS Museum
Ongoing to May 15
Free admission

Beginning from a collection of books and publications donated to the NUS Museum by art historian TK Sabapathy, *Open Excess* is a prep-room initiative dealing with the question of the library, the role of publications, accessibility, and visibility/transparency in relation to the region of Southeast Asia and its discourse.

For more information, please visit nus.edu.sg/museum

VIETNAM 1954-1975: WAR DRAWINGS AND POSTERS FROM THE AMBASSADOR DATO' N PARAMESWARAN COLLECTION

NUS Museum
Ongoing to April
Free admission

Vietnam 1954 – 1975 features the collection of Dato' N Parameswaran, which commenced while he was Malaysia's ambassador to Vietnam from 1990 to 1993. This collection comprises posters, woodcuts and drawings from

the French phase of the Indochinese war of resistance against the Americans, and drawings and sketches of life and people at the frontlines.

For more information, please visit nus.edu.sg/museum



GREAT PERANAKANS: FIFTY REMARKABLE LIVES

Peranakan Museum
Ongoing to April 3
Free admission for Singaporeans and Permanent Residents

Great Peranakans celebrates the achievements of 50 men and women who have shaped Singaporean life and culture over the past two centuries. These pioneers made important contributions in art, culture, education, business, governance, and public service. Collectively, their stories and more than 100 objects from their lives invite greater contemplation of evolving Peranakan and Singaporean identities.



VICTORIA THEATRE AND VICTORIA CONCERT HALL: A MONUMENT TO OUR HISTORY HERITAGE GALLERY

Preservation of Sites and Monuments
Victoria Concert Hall, Level 3
Daily 10 am to 9 pm
\$10 for adults and \$30 for a family of four. \$4 for adults, \$2 for children and \$12 for a family of four for Singaporeans and Permanent Residents.

Did you know the Victoria Theatre and Victoria Concert Hall originated as two buildings, built at different times? Visit *A Monument to Our History* and learn more about this national monument's rich history and outstanding architectural features, through a display of photographs and memories shared by many who have cherished this gem of a performance venue.

For more information, please visit nhb.gov.sg/psm



SURRENDER CHAMBERS GUIDED COMMENTARY

Resorts World™ Sentosa
Fort Siloso Surrender Chambers, Sentosa
Daily 10 am to 6 pm
Every 30 minutes
\$6 for adults and \$4.50 for children (3 to 12 years old). Admission for Singaporeans and Permanent Residents is \$5 for adults and \$3.50 for children (3 to 12 years old).

Relive the fall of Singapore 70 years ago when the British surrendered to the Japanese troops. The gallery of the Fort Siloso Surrender Chambers features two significant surrender ceremonies in Singapore during WWII. A guided commentary is available to bring you through the exhibitions, as you go back in time.

For more information, please visit sentosa.com.sg



FORT SILOSO GUIDED TOUR

Siloso Point, Sentosa

Daily | 11:30 am to 1 pm, 1:30 pm to 3 pm, 2 pm to 3:30 pm, 4 pm to 5:30 pm

\$20 for adults and \$7 for children (7 to 12 years old). Admission for Singaporeans and Permanent Residents is \$15 for adults and \$5 for children (7 to 12 years old)

Maximum group size of 20 guests for each tour

Learn why the Fort was built, discover life as a soldier, and explore preserved underground ammunition stores and WWII-era guns. Experience the Fort with our guides in our 90-minute walking tour.

The tour will retrace the historically preserved remains at the fort to discover the purpose of the various fortified structures and the guns they serve, ending with a visit to the Surrender Chambers to witness the two historic surrender moments that changed the life of the people of Singapore during WWII.

For more information, please visit sentosa.com.sg



FORT SILOSO SURRENDER CHAMBERS

Siloso Point, Sentosa

Daily | 10 am to 6 pm, last admission at 5:30 pm

\$6 for adults and \$4.50 for children (3 to 12 years old)

Admission for Singaporeans and

Permanent Residents is \$5 for adults and \$3.50 for children (3 to 12 years old).

Relive the fall of Singapore 70 years ago when the British surrendered to the Japanese troops. The Surrender Chambers gallery at Fort Siloso features two significant surrender ceremonies in Singapore during WWII. A guided commentary is available to bring you through the exhibitions, as you go back in time.

Go back in time and experience these surrenders with our guided commentary available every 30 minutes.

For more information, please visit sentosa.com.sg



GUIDED TOUR OF MALAY HERITAGE CENTRE

Malay Heritage Centre (MHC)

Registration and starting point at Visitor Services Counter

Tuesday to Friday | 11 am to 12:15 pm

Saturday to Sunday | 2 pm to 3:15 pm

Join our free guided tours of MHC's permanent galleries and learn more about Kampong Glam as well as its significance to the Malay community from our museum docents.

Tours are conducted in English and limited to 20 people per tour. For groups of more than 20 people, please book your tours two weeks in advance. For corporate or special needs tours, please email your request to nhb_mhc@nhb.gov.sg.

The availability of the guided tours is subject to the availability of our volunteer docents.



LET'S PLAY! TRADITIONAL MALAY GAMES

Malay Heritage Centre (MHC)

Every Tuesday | 10 am to 10:45pm

and 3 pm to 3:45 pm

Come and learn more about traditional Malay games at the MHC! Learn skills you will need to play *capteh*, *main lereng* (wheel spinning), *congkak* (traditional Malay board game), *batu seremban* (five stones) and many more. This 45-minute session will also invite participants to use their creativity as they invent new and fun games with newfound items.

WEEKEND TOUR OF FROM



THE STACKS: HIGHLIGHTS OF THE NATIONAL LIBRARY

(CONDUCTED IN ENGLISH)

National Library of Singapore

Gallery entrance, Level 10,

National Library Building

February 20, 21, 27, 28

March 5, 6, 12, 13, 19, 20, 26, 27

1 pm to 2 pm

Admission is free

Join in our docent-led tours to explore the rich treasures of Singapore's published heritage from the collections of the National Library and discover fascinating stories from our past. Limited to 20 participants, on a first-come-first-served basis.

For more information, please visit nlb.gov.sg/exhibitions/

PUBLIC GUIDED TOUR

Mint Museum of Toys
Every Wednesday | 3.30 pm
Admission is \$15 for adults, \$7.50 for children and senior citizens, inclusive of complimentary tour.

Jump back in time to a world of vintage toys and cartoon characters, and get to know the fascinating stories behind them. From vintage toy designs to complete collections and rare toy exhibits, the tour will bring you on a nostalgic journey of rediscovery and imagination.

Registration opens 15 minutes prior to the start of the tour. Each tour session is limited to 20 participants, and is on a first-come-first-served basis.

For more information, please visit emint.com



GALLERIES ALIVE!

Malay Heritage Centre (MHC)
Traditional Malay Music | Every third Wednesday of the month
Wayang Kulit I | Every third Thursday of the month

Watch MHC's permanent galleries come alive with live performances of traditional music or enjoy a wayang kulit performance as our dalang tells the stories of Sang Kancil and his adventures.

For more information, please visit malayheritage.org.sg

CURATOR'S TOUR OF FROM THE STACKS: HIGHLIGHTS OF THE NATIONAL LIBRARY

(CONDUCTED IN ENGLISH)
National Library of Singapore
Gallery entrance, Level 10,
National Library Building
February 19 | March 18 | April 15 | May 27 | June 17 | July 15 | August 19
7.30 pm to 8.30 pm
Admission is free

Join in our Curator's-led tours to explore the rich treasures of Singapore's published heritage from the collections of the National Library and discover fascinating stories from our past. Registration is required.

For more information, please visit nlb.gov.sg/golibrary/programme/Tours.aspx

SINGAPORE MARITIME TRAIL 1

Maritime and Port Authority of Singapore
Lobby of Swissotel The Stamford
Every first Saturday of the month,
8:45 am to 11:30 am
Free Admission

Take a tour of local maritime heritage sites on *Singapore Maritime Trail 1* – including Fort Canning and Boat Quay – and trace the progress of Singapore's maritime sector.

For *Singapore Maritime Trail 1*, participants start the tour by boarding a bus at the lobby of Swissotel The Stamford. Then, they will visit some maritime heritage sites on foot and finish the tour at Harbourfront MRT station.

For more information, please call 6836 6466 (Monday to Friday, 9 am to 6:30 pm) or email fang_jiayun@mpa.gov.sg

SINGAPORE MARITIME TRAIL 2

Maritime and Port Authority of Singapore
Every second Saturday of the month, 9 am to 11:30 am
Free Admission

The *Singapore Maritime Trail 2* takes visitors on a journey that maps out

progress and advancement of our port, focusing on its history and the stories of the people in the maritime sector who have contributed to the nation's maritime success. Launched in May 2015, this second trail is an extension of the 2014 *Singapore Maritime Trail 1*, which included a tour of local maritime heritage sites.

The guided tours are open to the public and spaces are limited. For registration, please call 6836 6466 (Monday to Friday, 9 am to 6:30 pm) or email fang_jiayun@mpa.gov.sg.

\$98 (includes museum admission and workshop materials for two)

For more information, please visit emint.com, email info@emint.com or call 63390660.

If you wish to feature your events, please email us at muse@nhb.gov.sg

All details and information were correct at time of publishing but could be subject to change. You may wish to check with event organisers before setting off. NHB cannot accept responsibility for any errors or omissions.



The Museum Roundtable (MR) is an initiative led by National Heritage Board since 1996. It represents and comprises a collective of public and private museums, heritage galleries, and unique attractions of science and discovery in Singapore. With more than fifty members currently, the MR strives to develop a stronger museum-going culture in Singapore while positioning museums as unique and fascinating destinations. Please visit museums.com.sg for more information.

* By Appointment Only

¹ Free

² Free for Singapore Citizens and Permanent Residents

³ Opening soon

A **THE ARMY MUSEUM OF SINGAPORE²**

520 Upper Jurong Road,
Singapore 638367
+65 6861 3651

ART RETREAT MUSEUM*

10 Ubi Crescent, Lobby C,
#01-45/47, Ubi Techpark,
Singapore 498564
+65 6749 0880
artretreatmuseum.com

ARTSCIENCE MUSEUM

10 Bayfront Avenue,
Singapore 018956
+65 6688 8826
marinabaysands.com/museum.html

ASIAN CIVILIZATIONS MUSEUM²

1 Empress Place,
Singapore 179555
+65 6332 7798
acm.org.sg

B **BABA HOUSE*¹**

157 Neil Road,
Singapore 088883
+65 6227 5731
nus.edu.sg/museum/baba

THE BATTLE BOX³

2 Cox Terrace,
Singapore 179622
+65 6338 6144

THE BUILDING & CONSTRUCTION AUTHORITY GALLERY*³

Building Construction & Authority
200 Braddell Road,
Singapore 579700
+65 6248 9930
bcaa.edu.sg/learning-journey-sites/bca-gallery

C **CHINATOWN HERITAGE CENTRE³**

48 Pagoda Street,
Singapore 059207
+65 6534 8942
chinatownheritagecentre.sg

CHINESE HERITAGE CENTRE²

Nanyang Technological University, 12 Nanyang Drive, Singapore 637721
+65 6513 8157
chc.ntu.edu.sg

CIVIL DEFENCE HERITAGE GALLERY¹

62 Hill Street,
Singapore 179367
+65 6332 2996
scdf.gov.sg/community-volunteers/visit-scdf-establishments/cd-heritage-gallery

THE CHANGI MUSEUM¹

1000 Upper Changi Road North, Singapore 507707
+65 6214 2451
changimuseum.com.sg

E **EURASIAN HERITAGE CENTRE**

139 Ceylon Road,
Singapore 429744
+65 6447 1578
eurasian.org.sg

F **FORT SILOSO**

Sentosa Island, Siloso Point, Singapore 099981
1800 736 8672
sentosa.com.sg

FU TAK CHI MUSEUM^{2,3}

76 Telok Ayer Street,
Singapore 048464
+65 6580 2888
fareastsquare.com.sg

G **GAN HERITAGE CENTRE***

18 Bukit Pasoh Road,
Singapore 089832
+65 6223 0739
ganclan.sg

GRASSROOTS HERITAGE CENTRE¹

National Community Leaders Institute, 70 Buona Vista Road, Singapore 118176
+65 6672 5200
nacli.pa.gov.sg/grassroots-heritage-centre.html

H **HDB GALLERY¹**

HDB Hub, Basement 1, 480 Toa Payoh Lorong 6, Singapore 310480
hdb.gov.sg/hdbgallery

HEALTHZONE

Level 2, Health Promotion Board, 3 Second Hospital Avenue, Singapore 168937
1800 435 3616
hpb.gov.sg/healthzone/

HOME TEAM GALLERY*¹

501 Old Choa Chu Kang Road, Singapore 698928
+65 6465 3726

I **IEXPERIENCE CENTRE**

B1-10/19 Esplanade Xchange, 90 Bras Basah Road, Singapore 189562
+65 6820 6880
iexperience.sg

INDIAN HERITAGE CENTRE²

5 Campbell Lane, Singapore 209924
+65 6291 1601
Indianheritage.org.sg

THE INTAN *¹

69 Joo Chiat Terrace, Singapore 427231
+65 6440 1148
the-intan.com

IRAS GALLERY¹

Revenue House, 55 Newton Road, Level 1, Singapore 307987
+65 6351 2076
iras.gov.sg/irashome/irasgallery.aspx

L **LAND TRANSPORT GALLERY¹**

1 Hampshire Road, Block 1 Level 1, Singapore 219428
+65 6396 2550
lta.gov.sg/ltagallery/index.html

LEE KONG CHIAN NATURAL HISTORY MUSEUM

2 Conservatory Drive, Singapore 117377
+65 6516 5082
lkcnhm.nus.edu.sg

M **MALAY HERITAGE CENTRE²**

85 Sultan Gate, Singapore 198501
+65 6391 0450
malayheritage.org.sg

MARINA BARRAGE¹

8 Marina Gardens Drive,
Singapore 018951
+65 6514 5959

pub.gov.sg/Marina/
Pages/Sustainable-
Singapore-Gallery.aspx

**MEMORIES AT OLD
FORT FACTORY²**

351 Upper Bukit Timah
Road, Singapore 588192
+65 6462 6724

nad.gov.sg/moff

**MINISTRY OF EDUCATION
HERITAGE CENTRE**

402 Commonwealth
Drive, Singapore 149599
+65 6838 1614

moeheritagecentre.sg

MINT MUSEUM OF TOYS

26 Seah Street,
Singapore 188382

+65 6339 0660

emint.com

N

**NATIONAL HEALTHCARE
GROUP POLYCLINICS'
GALLERY OF MEMORIES¹**

Level 3 of Bukit Batok
Polyclinic, 50 Bukit
Batok West Avenue 3,
Singapore 659164

+65 6355 3000

nhgp.com.sg

**NATIONAL LIBRARY
GALLERY¹**

100 Victoria Street,
Singapore 188064

+65 6332 3255

nlib.gov.sg/golibrary/
exhibitions.aspx

**NATIONAL MUSEUM
OF SINGAPORE²**

93 Stamford Road,
Singapore 178897

+65 6332 3659

nationalmuseum.sg

**NEWATER VISITOR
CENTRE¹**

20 Koh Sek Lim Road,
Singapore 486593

+65 6546 7874

pub.gov.sg/water/
newater/visitors/
Pages/default.aspx

**NGEE ANN CULTURAL
CENTRE¹**

97 Tank Road,
Teocheew Building,
Singapore 238066

+65 6737 9555

ngeeann.com.sg/en/
ngee-ann-cultural-centre

NUS MUSEUM¹

University Cultural Centre,
50 Kent Ridge Crescent,
Singapore 119279

+65 6516 8817

nus.edu.sg/museum

P

PERANAKAN MUSEUM²

39 Armenian Street,
Singapore 179941

+65 6332 7591

peranakanmuseum.org.sg

**POLICE HERITAGE
CENTRE*¹**

28 Irrawaddy Road,
Singapore 329560

+65 6478 2123

police.gov.sg/spfheritage

R

**RED DOT DESIGN
MUSEUM¹**

Ground Floor, Red
Dot Traffic Building,
28 Maxwell Road,
Singapore 069120

+65 6327 8027

museum.red-dot.sg

**REFLECTIONS AT
BUKIT CHANDU²**

31-K Pepys Road,
Singapore 118458

+65 6375 2510

nhb.gov.sg/
NHBPportal/Museums/
ReflectionsatBukitChandu

**REPUBLIC OF SINGAPORE
NAVY MUSEUM¹**

112 Tanah Merah Coast
Road, Singapore 498794

+65 6544 5147

mindef.gov.sg/content/
imindef/mindef_
websites/atozlistings/
navymuseum/home.html

**REPUBLIC OF SINGAPORE
AIR FORCE MUSEUM¹**

400 Airport Road,
Paya Lebar Airbase,
Singapore 534234

+65 6461 8507

mindef.gov.sg/imindef/
mindef_websites/
atozlistings/air_force/
about/museum.html

S

**SCIENCE CENTRE
SINGAPORE²**

15 Science Centre Road,
Singapore 609081

+65 6425 2500

science.edu.sg

THE SGH MUSEUM¹

11 Third Hospital Avenue,
Singapore 168751

+65 6326 5294

sgh.com.sg/about-us/
sgh-museum/Pages/
SGH-Museum.aspx

**SINGAPORE ART
MUSEUM²**

71 Bras Basah Road,
Singapore 189555

+65 6589 9580

singaporeartmuseum.sg

**SINGAPORE CITY
GALLERY¹**

45 Maxwell Road, The URA
Centre, Singapore 069118

+65 6321 8321

ura.gov.sg/uol/citygallery

**SINGAPORE COINS
AND NOTES MUSEUM**

20 Teban Gardens
Crescent, Singapore
608928

+65 6895 0288

scnm.com.sg

**SINGAPORE
DISCOVERY CENTRE**

510 Upper Jurong Road,
Singapore 638365

+65 6792 6188

sdc.com.sg

**SINGAPORE MARITIME
GALLERY¹**

Marina South Pier, Level
2, 31 Marina Coastal
Drive, Singapore 018988

+65 6325 5707

maritimegallery.sg

**SINGAPORE PHILATELIC
MUSEUM²**

23-B Coleman Street,
Singapore 179807

+65 6337 3888

spm.org.sg

**SINGAPORE SPORTS
MUSEUM²**

6 Stadium Walk,
Singapore 397698

+65 6653 9710

sportshub.com.sg/
venues/Pages/singapore-
sports-museum.aspx

**SUN YAT SEN NANYANG
MEMORIAL HALL²**

12 Tai Gin Road,
Singapore 327874

+65 6256 7377

wanqingyuan.org.sg

T

**TAN TOCK SENG
HOSPITAL HERITAGE
MUSEUM¹**

11 Jalan Tan Tock Seng,
Level 1, Singapore 308433

+65 6357 8266

ttsh.com.sg/TTSH-
Heritage-Museum

W

WOODBIDGE MUSEUM¹

10 Buangkok Green,
Buangkok Green Medical
Park, Singapore 539747

+65 6389 2000



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