



GIVING A FUTURE TO OUR PAST
**SINGAPORE
HERITAGE
SOCIETY**

ROOTS: Newsletter of the Singapore Heritage Society August 2018 Issue

Message from the Editor

Dear SHS members and friends,

It has been a long six months, but welcome to the second issue of ROOTS for 2018 and we have a lot of catching up to do.

In this issue, we will be introducing our 5 new SHS interns that will be interning with us from May 2018 to November 2018. We will also be providing updates to what has been going on in the society since February 2018.

In March 2018, we were extremely privileged to have **Dr. Seth Gopin** and **Dr. Anitha Devi Pillai** speak to our members and members of the public on their respective research topics that they hold dear to their heart.

Walking tours, a favorite of our members were also organised between February and August. **Mr. Ang Yik Han, Ms. Chuah Ai-Lin, Mr. Sarafian Salleh and Mr. Jon Cooper** were our tour guides and we would like to thank them for their help.

The society was once again involved in Pesta Ubin 2018. A number of activities were organised by us to bring attention to the living heritage that still exists in Pulau Ubin.

The society has also been collaborating with a few key partners in 2018. We were the research partner of **Drama Box's** production promenade theater production, Chinatown Crossings that just ended its run. We are also the official partner of **The Substation's "En Bloc, or Buildings Must Die"** programming season from the 21st of August 2018 to the 23rd of September 2018.

Finally, our Annual General Meeting is just around the corner. This year, the registration for our AGM will start at **1.30pm** at **The Peranakan Museum**. We will of course be having our Post AGM activities after the AGM is over. We will be having a talk by **Mr. John Teo**, a tour of the Peranakan Museum, free refreshment from Chilli Padi Catering and a book sale. For

members whose membership is about to lapse, this is a good time to renew your membership and join us for the AGM and Post AGM activities.

Warmest regards,

Han Ming Guang

Honorary Secretary of the Singapore Heritage Society

New SHS Interns - May 2018

In February 2018, the Society started its open call for new interns who will be interning with us from May to November 2018. After intensive rounds of shortlisting and interviews, we are proud to announce the five interns who will be working closely with us.



From left to right: Lee Kah Hui, Alina Soh, Clara Lim, Calvin Yeo, Sarah Ang & Tham Sok Yee
(January Batch Intern)

The interns who have joined us are:

- **Ms. Clara Lim**, a NTU ADM Visual Communications Undergraduate
- **Ms. Alina Soh**, currently majoring in Fine Arts in LaSalle
- **Ms. Sarah Ang**, a Geography undergraduate studying in NUS
- **Ms. Lee Kah Hui**, who just recently graduated from NUS School of Architecture
- **Mr. Calvin Yeo**, who is currently reading History at Yale-NUS and is also the President of the Yale-NUS Southeast Asian Society

You may see our interns decked out in our red SHS T-Shirts helping out at our events. Do welcome them to the SHS family as we aim to build a core group of young heritage enthusiasts.

Death & Burial in Paris: Père Lachaise to Fort Canning Cemetery - 10th March 2018

We were proud and honored to be able to host and hear from **Dr. Seth Gopin** from Rutgers University, give us a talk about how Paris was where modern day traditions of Western death and burial were established.



Dr Seth Gopin delivering his lecture

Dr. Gopin traced the tradition of mass burial in Parisian church graveyards to the new modern idea of the world's first cemetery in 1804. Père Lachaise Cemetery is the culmination of a struggle to reform burial practices and this radical idea of a cemetery became the basis for all the tradition of burial in the west. The revolutionary idea of individual burial in a modern cemetery spread quickly in the west—England, Spain, Germany, and the United States - and arrived in Singapore surprisingly early in 1834 in the now disappeared Fort Canning Cemetery.

In conjunction with Dr. Gopin's lecture about Death & Burial in Paris, we also organised a walking tour of Fort Canning led by our SHS member and STB-license tour guide, **Ms. Chuah Ai-Lin**.



Ms Chuah Ai-Lin leading the tour - Photograph by Jerome Lim

Ai-Lin led the tour group around Fort Canning Green, down Armenian Street, and to the Singapore Management University Campus to connect with Dr Seth Gopin's lecture. She regaled the group with stories from the past.

We would like to thank our partner **Singapore Management University's Wee Kim Wee Centre** for co-presenting this event. We would also like to thank **Ms. Chuah Ai-Lin** for conducting a tour of Fort Canning to accompany the talk.

Photographs from the talk can be found at our [Facebook Page](#), while the photographs from the walking tour can be found [here](#).

Exploring the History and Evolution of Malayalees in Singapore - 17th March 2018

We were privileged to have **Dr. Anitha Devi Pillai**, who also happens to be our member, highlight her key research findings relating to the history and evolution of the Malayalee community in Singapore over the last one hundred years. Her talk was based on her book *From Kerala to Singapore: Voices from the Singapore Malayalee Community*, which was published in 2017.



Dr Anitha Devi Pillai speaking to the audience

She shared interesting anecdotes, gathered first-hand from different generations of the community as she led the audience through a journey of how the Malayalee community evolved from one with strong ties to Kerala, India, to one where the second and third generation assimilated into the larger Singapore society; as well as the recent changes to the community with the influx of migrant professionals over the last ten years.

The Q&A part of the talk was also extremely lively as the audience openly shared their thoughts and views about the community.

We would like to thank the **Indian Heritage Centre** and **Dr. Anitha Devi Pillai** because without their help, we would not have been able to organize the talk.

Photographs from the talk can be found at our [Facebook Page](#).

Pesta Ubin 2018 (24th May to 26th June 2018)

We were once again involved in Pesta Ubin, which ran from the 24th of May 2018 to the 26th of June 2018. Working closely with **NParks**, **Ministry of National Development** and the other members of the **Friends of Ubin Network**, we managed to organize three

events for Pesta Ubin.



Visit to Ivy and Ah Ma's house in Pulau Ubin

The first event held on the 10th of June 2018 was a visit to [Ivy and Ah Ma's house in Pulau Ubin](#) to experience what kampong life in Pulau Ubin was like. From Ivy and Ah Ma, the tour participants managed to get insights into what life was like in the past and how it has changed in the present: the home they built, the everyday tools used in their kitchen, and the challenges of making a living in what remains of rural Singapore.



Ministers Chan Chun Sing and Desmond Lee with Nor Syazwan Bin Abdul Majid & his mother, Dr Chua Ai Lin, and our SHS interns

The next two events that were held on Ubin Day (24th June 2018) itself was the film screening of *German Girl Shrine* and *Moving Gods* produced by Ho Choon Hiong, and a walking tour led by 21 year old Nor Syazwan to 818k Kampong Surau, where his family used to live.

In addition to the two events, we also had a booth on Ubin Day where visitors could learn more about the heritage of Pulau Ubin and the society. The SHS booth also documented Syazwan's story of tracing his family roots from his mother's photo album growing up in Ubin.

Society News and Updates

SHS the Official Partner of The Substation's CITIES CHANGE. PEOPLE DIE. EVERYTHING YOU KNOW GOES AWAY

We are proud to announce that the **Singapore Heritage Society** is an official partner of The Substation's "[En Bloc, or Buildings Must Die](#)" programming season that runs from the 21st of August 2018 to the 23rd of September 2018.

One of the major events that spans the whole festival is the [BIG4ENBLOC: The Substation Instagram Competition](#). Our Executive Director **Dr Chua Ai Lin** is the Jury Chair for a panel of judges to decide the winner and the grand prize is a trip to Germany!

The highlights of the programming season include: [Time is Up?: A Panel on En Bloc and Singapore's Post Modernist Icons](#) with **Assoc Prof. Daniel Goh** (Sociologist), **Mr. Ho Weng Hin** (Conservation Specialist), **Dr. Malone-Lee Lai Choo** (Urban Planning Specialist), **Mr. Adrian Tan** (Real Estate Lawyer) and the panel will be moderated by our President **Dr. Jack Tsen-Ta Lee**.

As part of the [Substation After Dark \(SAD\)](#) series on 1 Sep, **Dr. Chua Ai Lin** will be hosting a conversation with some of Singapore's landscape luminaries, **Mr. William S.W. Lim** - our SHS founding president, **Mr. Tan Cheng Siong**, and **Mr. Daniel Teo**, who share why they will "Never Say Die!". Tickets are available at <https://subafterdark.peatix.com>. SHS members are entitled to a 30% discount by using the code "SADFORSHS" on Peatix.

An Exhibit by **Dr. Chua Ai Lin**, **Too Young to Die: Giving New Lease of Life to Singapore's Modernist Icons**, which opens on the 21st of August 2018 is based on a new position paper soon to be released by the society in August.

More information of other activities can be found on the [Official Website](#) of the programming season.

Walking Tours around Singapore

The society organised four walking tours between February and July: [World War Tour with Mr. Jon Cooper at Adam Park](#), [The Bugis Trail from Kampung Gelam to Kallang](#) and the [Royal Myths and Facts of the Telok Blangah Trail](#) by "Tuah Bugis" aka Mr. Sarafian Salleh, were opened to the public. [From Swampland to Historic Site](#) walking tour covering multi religious sites in the River Valley area was a members-only tour led by Mr. Ang Yik Han.

Chinatown Crossings

The society was the research partner for **Drama Box's** promenade theater production, [Chinatown Crossings](#). In addition to helping Drama Box flesh out interesting stories about Chinatown, we also co-organized a [chit-chat session](#) on the 9th of June as a preamble to [Chinatown Crossings](#).

We are happy to announce that Drama Box sold out the first season of Chinatown Crossings and if you are interested for season two of Chinatown Crossings, you can register your interest [here](#).

Book Talk by Ms Jane Chew

Together with the awesome folks at **City Book Room**, we organized a book talk by Ms Jane Chew, who wrote [The Basket and the Rope](#) which was published last year. We would like to thank **Ms Jane Chew** for donating her royalties for the book to our society.

Cultural Tourism of Chinatown (Singapore) by Gettysberg College

In partnership with **Nanyang Technological University Chinese Heritage Centre** and **The Urban Redevelopment Authority**, we helped organized a [talk](#) on the 17th of July 2018 where the researchers of **Gettysberg College** presented their findings on the mixed-reviews of Chinatown as a tourist site. Their study also showed how tourism could impact the lived-experience and self-identification of Singaporeans.

Revitalising Pulau Ubin as a Living Kampung

Our Vice President and Executive Director **Dr Chua Ai Lin's** letter about the Society's and the Friends of Ubin's (FUN) efforts in conserving Pulau Ubin's heritage and revitalizing Ubin's living heritage was published in [The Straits Times](#) on the 14th of August 2018. We have also posted the original unedited letter on our [Facebook Page](#).

Upcoming SHS Events

Singapore Heritage Society - Annual General Meeting on the 16th of September 2018

The 2018 Annual General Meeting for the Singapore Heritage Society will be held on the 16th of September 2018 (Sunday). Registration for the Annual General Meeting will start at **1.30pm** at **The Peranakan Museum**.

The agenda of the AGM are as follows:

1. To confirm minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on 9th September 2017.
2. To receive & adopt the President's Report for the Year ended 31 July 2018.
3. To receive & adopt the Financial Statements duly audited for the Financial Year ended 31 March 2018.

Post AGM Activities on the 16th of September 2018

In addition to the Annual General Meeting, we will also be having a series of Post AGM activities on the **16th of September 2018** that will be opened to public. The activities will include:

1. A talk by **Mr. John Teo**, General Manager of The Peranakan Museum
2. A tour of The Peranakan Museum
3. Free refreshments provided by Chilli Padi Catering
4. Book Sale by Asian Civilization Museum, Ethos Books & Landmark Books

More details about the Post AGM activities will be released later. Please do look out for them in your email or on our [SHS Facebook Page](#).



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