



Research . Education . Advocacy

ANNUAL REPORT FOR YEAR ENDED 31 July 2011

The Singapore Heritage Society was established in 1986 as a Society. It was registered under the Charities Act on 12 March 1987 and was granted Institution of Public Character status on 14 January 2009.

UEN Number: S87SS0042J

Registered Address: 179 River Valley Road #05-06
Singapore 179033 (till May 2011)

50 East Coast Road
#02-57 Roxy Square
Singapore 428769 (wef May 2011)

Management Committee The Management Committee elected at the Annual General Meeting held on 8 September 2009 is as follows:

1. Dr Kevin Tan (President; on leave wef October 2010)
2. Ms Dahlia Shamsuddin (Vice-President & Acting President wef October 2010)
3. Mr Alvin Tan Peng Hong (Hon Secretary) [resigned September 2010]
4. Dr Loh Kah Seng (Hon Secretary wef September 2010)
5. Mr Tan Wee Cheng (Hon Treasurer)
6. Dr Chua Ai Lin (Member)
7. Mr Alex Tan Tiong Hee (Member)
8. Dr Yeo Kang Shua (Member)
9. Dr Philip Holden (Member)
10. Mr Tony Tan (Member)
11. Dr Khairudin Aljunied (co-opted in September 2010)

Trustees NIL

Banker	OCBC Bank
Auditor	Louise Neo & Co 619E Bukit Timah Road Singapore 269725
Investment Advisor	NIL
Other Advisor(s)	NIL

OBJECTIVE

The Society is dedicated to the preservation, transmission and promotion of Singapore's history, heritage and identity. The Society further aims to promote active interest in the cultural life and history of Singapore and to initiate action on research, evaluation, documentation, publication, collection, display, and preservation and restoration of skills and items of historical interest.

POLICIES

Finance & Funding

The Society is funded by a combination of subscriptions from members, donations from well-wishers as well as through the sale of its publications and the provision of heritage consultancy services. It is the Society's policy that all new projects be self-financing. Throughout its history, the Society has never taken a loan from any individual or institution to finance its activities.

Premises for Registered Address & Meetings

The Society does not own any property. Up till May 2011, its registered address was at 179 River Valley Road #05-06 and its continued use of its meeting room facilities has been made possible through the generosity of W Architects Pte. However, when W Architects Pte shifted its premises to Henderson Industrial Park, the Executive Committee determined to change the registered address of the Society to 50 East Coast Road #02-57, Singapore 428769, the premises of Bizcomm Pte Ltd, our administrative support company.

REVIEW FOR THE YEAR 2010–2011

Introduction

This report covers the period August 2010 to July 2011.

Administration

The Society has no paid staff. Since June 2006, the secretarial work of the Society has carried out by Ms Wendy Chua of Bizcomm Pte Ltd who acts as the Society's administrative secretary on a service contract. Since January 2009, the Society has been given Institution of Public Character (IPC) status.

Talks and Forums

Talks and forums remains the most popular of the Society's numerous events and initiatives. During the period under review, most of our talks were co-organised with the National Library Board and the Arts House. The following are a list of talks the Society organized between August 2009 and August 2010:

BIG ON BIG-O: A JUMP BACK IN TIME
Koh Nguang How, Ivan Thomasz & Paddy Chng
hosted by Lim Cheng Tju
3.00 pm, Saturday 25 September 2010
Show Room, The Post Museum

The idea for this talk cum music extravaganza came from member Lim Cheng Tju who used to write for the magazine *Big-O* (Before I Get Old). It was hosted by Cheng Tju and featured the pop rock visuals of Koh Nguang How, one of the most important archivists and researchers of Singapore's pop and arts scene. The talk was followed by a special live performance by Patrick (Paddy) Chng of the *Oddfellows*. DJ Ivan Thomasz then took to the floor with his blend of pop indie music featuring Singapore banks of the 1980s and 1990s. About 60 persons attended the talk/show.

TAGORE IN SINGAPORE
Angela Faye Oon
3.00 pm, Saturday 30 October 2010
The Pod, National Library, Victoria Street

Until this talk, few people knew that the great Bengali polymath and humanist, Rabindranath Tagore visited Singapore in 1927. This talk by Angela Oon focused on the motivations for Tagore's visit, on how he was received by the various communities and the controversy the great man found himself arising from the anti-colonial comments he supposedly made to a Shanghainese newspaper earlier. This talk was chaired by Dr Loh Kah Seng and was attended by about 80 persons.

TOWKAY BLOOD TIES

Andrew Tan

3.00 pm, Saturday 4 December 2010

Possibility Room, National Library, Victoria Street

This afternoon talk featured the work of independent researcher, Andrew Tan who painstakingly connected the dots linking the various 'towkay families' in Singapore. Not one for conspiracy theories, Tan focused on how these various relationships enabled certain families to control particular segments of local politics and business. The key feature of the talk was Tan's unveiling of his 'magic scroll' in which the connections of the various families are mapped out in an innovative genealogical tree. About 40 persons attended this talk.

LIGHT ON LOTUS HILL: THE SINO-JAPANESE WAR & WORLD WAR II IN SINGAPORE

Chan Chow Wah

3.00 pm, Saturday 8 January 2011

Possibility Room, National Library, Victoria Street

Chan Chow Wah has written extensively on the role of the Venerable Pu Liang, Abbott of Shuang Lin Monastery in Toa Payoh, in recruiting, training and despatching Nanyang volunteers for the construction of the Burma Road. Based on his research in Singapore, Penang, Kuala Lumpur, Kunming, Hainan and London, Chan fascinated the audience with very young men *and* women were recruited and trained through the China Relief Fund during the Sino-Japanese War. More than 70 persons attended this talk.

CHINESE SCHOOLS IN THE 20TH CENTURY

Dr Neo Peng Fu

3.00 pm, Saturday 2 April 2011

Possibility Room, National Library, Victoria Street

This talk summarised the many years Neo spent researching the history of Chinese schools in Singapore. Beyond looking at the history of individual schools and their provenance, Neo examined the syllabi of Chinese education and showed how key educationists of the modern Chinese Republic greatly influenced Chinese vernacular education in Singapore. The audience was surprised to learn that there were more than 300 Chinese schools in Singapore just before the Japanese Occupation and that more children went to Chinese schools than English schools up till the 1950s. The talk and lively discussion was facilitated by Dr Loh Kah Seng and attracted an audience of about 50 persons.

THE MAKING OF THE SINGAPORE CONFERENCE HALL & TRADE UNION HOUSE

Datuk Seri Lim Chong Keat

2.00 pm, Saturday 23 April 2011

Lee Foundation Theatre, Nanyang Academy of Fine Arts

Bencoolen Street

This talk was organised in conjunction with the Nanyang Academy of Fine Arts who provided the venue gratis. It featured pioneer and legendary architect Lim Chong Keat who was responsible for half the iconic buildings along Shenton Way and many others. The decision to hold a talk on the architecture of the Singapore Conference Hall and Trade Union House came about following the gazetting of this unique building as a National Monument. The talk, which attracted the 'Who's Who' in the local architectural and planning scene, focused on the inside stories of the concept behind the Conference Hall and the difficulties in getting the plan off the drawing boards. The talk was moderated by Dr Yeo Kang Shua and the slides were put together by Dinesh Naidu. Over 180 persons attended the talk.

SINGAPORE EDUCATION IN THE AFTERMATH OF WAR: A LONG LOOK BACK

Dr Verner Bickley, Dr Ann Wee & Ms Ivy Soh

moderated by Lim Cheng Tju

7.00 pm, Thursday, 12 May 2011

Play Den, The Arts House

1 Old Parliament Lane

The evening's panel discussion featured three veterans of Singapore's education scene. Verner Bickley began teaching in Singapore at Raffles Institution in 1951; Ann Wee taught at Methodist Girls' School from 1950 to 1954; and Ivy Soh was one of Bickley's colleagues at the Teachers' Training College in the 1950s. Each of the speakers recalled how teaching conditions and contingencies were like after the War and the challenges they faced in getting their students back on track. The talk attracted about 35 persons.

PASSIVE DEFENCE: THE ROLE OF CIVILIANS IN THE DEFENCE OF MALAYA &
SINGAPORE IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR

Dr Liew Kai Khiun

3.00 pm, Saturday 4 June 2011

Imagination Room, National Library, Victoria Street

This talk draws on Liew's long-abiding interest and research into the role played by local populations just before, and during the Second World War. Deviating from the standard narratives of military strategies and battles, Liew focused on the contributions on civilians in the war effort in what he called 'Passive Defence'. Civilians did everything from manning radio control stations and air raid sirens, to first-aid stations, and those involved came from all walks of life and from every segment of society. About 20 persons attended this talk.

THE NATIVE PLANTS OF SINGAPORE: GROWING YOUR NATURAL HISTORY

Dr Hugh Tan

3.00 pm, Saturday 9 July 2011

The Pod, National Library, Victoria Street

Hugh Tan's was the most graphic talk of the year. With the aid of numerous stunning slides, Tan showed the audience what plants were native to Singapore. In the course of his presentation, Tan made a highly-persuasive argument that local gardeners and planners should grow more of the 2,145 native species of plants instead of relying on exotic species like the rain tree which are not native to Singapore and the region. The talk was moderated by Kevin Tan and attracted about 100 persons.

Book Launch

SPACES OF THE DEAD: A CASE FROM THE LIVING

edited by Kevin YL Tan

3.00 pm, Saturday 28 May 2011

Armenian Church, Hill Street

After a decade in gestation, this volume was finally published, thanks to a 50% Hi2P grant from the National Heritage Board, generous donations from well-wishers and to Ethos Books for taking up the remainder of the risk. The launch was held at the Armenian Church at the suggestion of long-time member, Geraldene Lowe-Ismail and was made possible by the generosity of Mr Pierre Hennes of the Armenian Church. The launch, which attracted about 80 persons featured speeches by the editor and by Liew Kai Khiun (who first conceived of the project) as well as a presentation of complimentary copies to contributors. Its advent was noted in the *Straits Times*.

Exhibitions

TIMES OF OUR LIVES

in conjunction with Match-Up Cards

1 August 2010 to 30 September 2010

The Singapore Flyer, 30 Raffles Avenue

The idea for this exhibition came from Mr Clarence Ho, inventor of Match-Up Cards, a popular card game. He sought assistance and endorsement from the Society for his exhibition. President Kevin Tan personally assisted him in putting together the exhibition and securing images from Mr Lim Shao Bin. He has promised to make a donation to the Society for its efforts when his sales make a profit.

Walks, Tours etc

The Society organized seven local tours, one overseas tour and one hands-on practicum to the National Art Gallery (NAG) archeological site between November 2010 and June 2011. Between January and June 2011, the Society jointly organized six heritage tours with the National Heritage Board (NHB). These heritage tours were an opportunity for members and members of the public to get to know Singapore's heritage and it proved to be popular. The following is a list of tours that were organized:

NATIONAL ART GALLERY ARCHEOLOGICAL SITE

a hands-on Practicum with Lim Chen Sian

10 am, 14 Nov 2010

National Arts Gallery Archeological Site

14 members had the opportunity to participate in the archeological dig at the site of the National Art Gallery. Led by archaeologist, Lim Chen Sian, members saw the artefacts which the archeological team had found earlier and were given the opportunity to dig for artefacts in the 2-hour hands-on practicum. Two short movies of the event have been uploaded onto YouTube.

HONG SAN SEE TEMPLE: A HERITAGE GEM
an Architectural Tour with Dr Yeo Kang Shua
9.30 am, 20 Nov 2010
Hong San See Temple, Mohamed Sultan Road

The Hong San See Temple was awarded the 2010 UNESCO Asia-Pacific Heritage Awards for Cultural Heritage Conservation – Award of Excellence for its restoration efforts. Dr Yeo, who was part of the team of this project, gave an inside view of the preparations and hard work behind the restoration project to 33 members and friends.

SINGAPORE'S KTM RAILWAY LINE: A JOURNEY ALONG HISTORY
a Heritage Walk with Dr Lai Chee Kien
7.15 am, 22 January 2011

This was the first heritage tour that was jointly organised by SHS and NHB. The SHS thought it was timely to organise this tour before the handover of the railway land from Malaysia to Singapore on 1 July 2011. The tour highlighted the history of rail transport and its economic importance to Singapore in the 19th and early 20th century. Led by Dr Lai Chee Kien, the tour was a resounding success. All 45 seats on this bus tour were taken within 24 hours of its announcement. The tour was featured in the Channel 8 News at 6.30pm on 22 January 2011 and Lian He Zao Bao published an article about the tour on 23 January 2011. SHS received many email messages and telephone calls to repeat the tour while a few organisations requested that it be organised for their members. This tour was significant in reminding Singaporeans the important role the railway played in Singapore's history and made the Tanjong Pagar and Bukit Timah railway stations a household names in Singapore once again. The tour caught the imagination of the public and galvanised many to call for the preservation and conservation of the two railway stations. It was heartening to see many young and older Singaporeans become interested in heritage matters.

SINGAPORE'S SHUANG LIN (SIONG LIM) MONASTERY
a Heritage Walk with Chan Chow Wah
9.30 am, 13 February 2011

18 members and friends spent an interesting Sunday morning exploring and learning the heritage of the Shuang Lin Monastery, a major Chinese Mahayana Monastery.

The tour was inspired by Chan Chow Wah's talk on Venerable Pu Liang which the SHS organised on 8 January 2011. This was the second tour in the SHS-NHB heritage tour series.

BUKIT BROWN: LIVING MUSEUM OF THE DEAD

a Heritage Walk with Raymond Goh

9.00 am, Saturday 26 March 2011

Led by Raymond Goh and his brother Charles, 35 members and friends had the opportunity to explore and learn about the many prominent Chinese buried in this cemetery and Chinese customs, traditions and heritage and how it has evolved over the years. The Bukit Brown Cemetery is also an important site for nature lovers and birdwatchers in particular as many species of birds can be found here. The idea for the Bukit Brown Cemetery was to tie in with the launch of the SHS book *Spaces of the Dead*. This was the third tour in the SHS-NHB heritage tour series.

THE HERITAGE OF SINGAPORE'S BOTANIC GARDENS

a Walk by Dr Shawn Lum

8.00 am, Saturday 24 April 2011

The Singapore Botanic Gardens celebrates its 150th anniversary in 2011. It was fitting that a tour be organised to highlight its heritage and the important role it plays in botanical research in Singapore and overseas. Led by Dr Shawn Lum, President of the Nature Society (Singapore), 31 members and friends spent an interesting morning learning about heritage trees, the eccentric botanists who worked there and the pioneering work of the popular Botanic Gardens. This was the fourth tour in the SHS-NHB heritage tour series.

KAMPUNG GELAM: A WALK THROUGH HISTORY

a Walking tour with Khir Johari

9.00 am, Saturday 21 May 2011

Khir Johari shared his memories of growing up in Kampung Gelam, his interest in the history of the area and the Malay royal family, and the many communities who lived and worked in the area with 24 members and friends. His vivid descriptions of the sound and the smells of food and the people brought to life a way of life that no

longer exists in Kampung Gelam. This popular tour ended with a tasting of the delicious kuih-kuih made by former residents of Kampung Gelam. This was the fifth tour in the SHS-NHB heritage tour series.

SINGAPORE'S CITY MONUMENTS
a Kick-Scooter Tour with Tony Tan
8.00 am, Saturday 25 June 2011

This tour demonstrated that you are never too young or too old to ride a kick-scooter to learn more about the buildings and monuments in Singapore's Civic District. Sixteen intrepid members and friends ranging in age between nine and 63 years old spent the first half an hour learning how to ride the kick-scooters. Once they were familiar with it, they started their tour were accompanied by, among others, a RazorTV reporter and cameraman and a PR officer. The tour was led by registered tour guide and Exco member, Tony Tan. All the thrills and spills of the tour were duly captured and broadcasted on RazorTV. This was the sixth tour in the SHS-NHB heritage tour series.

ROYAL RIAU: A HISTORICAL TOUR OF TANJUNG PINANG
with Dr Vivienne Wee
11 to 13 March 2011

The Tanjung Pinang tour was a rare opportunity for 36 members and friends to learn about the history of the Riau Archipelago and of the connections between the remnants of the Johor-Riau-Lingga empire and the founding of Singapore. Led by Dr Vivienne Wee, a respected anthropologist and scholar who has done extensive research on the area, the tour participants visited Tanjung Pinang, Pulau Penyengat, and Senggerang, were hosted by the royal family in Pulau Penyengat, visited the royal archives and royal mausoleum and watched a ghazal and dance performance. Pulau Penyengat was the spiritual and political seat of the Johor Sultanate at the time of Raffles while one of the oldest Chinese temples in the region is located in Senggerang.

TOURS CONDUCTED FOR OTHER ORGANISATIONS

In 2011, the Society received numerous requests to conduct various tours for different organizations. The Executive Committee decided to accept these requests with the view to generating some income for the Society. The tours organized is as follows:

Kampung Gelam Tour
for Docents and Staff of the Malay Heritage Centre
with Khir Johari
10 Dec 2010

A special tour was organized for 16 docents and staff of the Malay Heritage Centre (MHC) and one staff from the Indian Heritage Centre (IHC). The tour, led by Khir Johari, was an opportunity for the docents and staff to learn about the history of the Kampung Gelam area.

PARTICIPANTS OF THE COMMONWEALTH ASSOCIATION OF MUSEUMS
(CAM) CONFERENCE
28 May 2011

The Society organized four tours for participants of the Commonwealth Association of Museums (CAM) Conference. The conference was jointly organized by the Commonwealth Association of Museums and the National Heritage Board. The delegates had an opportunity to know the heritage of Singapore in tours that were specially tailored to meet their interests. The four tours were:

- 1) Kampung Gelam Walking Tour with Khir Johari
- 2) Telok Ayer Walking Tour with Dr Yeo Kang Shua
- 3) Joo Chiat Walking Tour with Huang Eu Chai
- 4) City by the Water Bus and Boat Tour with Tony Tan

Miscellaneous

ADAM PARK ARCHAEOLOGICAL PROJECT

The Society obtained a grant from the National Heritage Board's Hi2P fund to commence a comprehensive survey of Adam Park. The Park is the site of the last battle for Singapore which ended with the British surrender on 15 February 1942. The archaeological investigation was launched on 14 February 2011 with the view to uncovering and preserving Singapore's World War II history and heritage. The year-long project, supported by NHB's *Heritage Industry Incentive Programme (HI²P)*, encompasses historical research, preliminary surveys, topographic and botanical surveys, main excavation works, as well as post-excavation reporting. Adam Park was selected for its significance as a key battlefield of the British and Commonwealth forces in Singapore during World War II. It was also one of the last sites to be

surrendered to the Japanese before becoming a Prisoner of War camp in 1942. Since then, the terrain and landscape of Adam Park have remained relatively unchanged and untouched, leaving much potential for historical research and preservation.

Involving a team of local and international field experts, the Adam Park excavation is led by project manager Mr Jonathan Cooper, who trained as a battlefield archaeologist at the renowned Centre for Battlefield Archaeology at the University of Glasgow and comprises members such as archaeologist Lim Chen Sian from the National University of Singapore, and Dr Yeo Kang Shua, former Head of Monuments Inspectorate, Preservation of Monuments Board.

Since excavation began in May 2010, artefacts uncovered include ammunition, webbing, personal effects like buttons, shaving kit, and even a tube of toothpaste used by soldiers fighting the battle. The SHS and NHB hope these artefacts will add to the existing body of knowledge and research about the World War II period in Singapore. They will also form an integral component of preparations to commemorate the 70th anniversary of the Fall of Singapore in 2012. The project will be split into five distinct phases after which a progress meeting will be held that will look to refine the scope and timetable of the next phase. The five phases are as follows:

- a. The Historical Research
- b. The Initial Site Visit and Preliminary Surveys
- c. The Topographic Survey
- d. The Main Onsite Work – Geophysics, Metal Detecting, Field Walking and Excavation
- e. Post Excavation and Project Reporting

The team is currently preparing the final report for submission to NHB and Mr Cooper has prepared the first draft manuscript of his book on the history of the Adam Park site.

Book Projects

OUR MODERN PAST: MODERN ARCHITECTURE IN SINGAPORE 1920s TO 1970s

This book project is progressing well. In 2005, the Society received a grant of \$60,900 from the Urban Redevelopment Authority under their Architecture and Urban Design Excellence (AUDE) grant scheme. Volume 1 of this publication is now ready for layout while the team will finish Volume 2 by November this year. The Society is

still trying to raise funds to get the publication out.

OH MY GEYLANG

The Society is currently working closely with well-known artist and caricaturist Morgan Chua on a graphic book on Geylang. Chua was the Creative Director of the *Far Eastern Economic Review* for 25 years and grew up in Geylang. The final version of this 88-page book is due to be completed by October 2011.

SONG ONG SIANG'S ONE HUNDRED YEARS OF THE CHINESE IN SINGAPORE

The Society has embarked on a new project to annotate, edit and re-publish Sir Song Ong Siang's classic volume, *One Hundred Years of the Chinese in Singapore*. This volume was first published in 1921 and underwent 2 reprints in 1968 and 1991 before going out of print. As Song passed away in 1941, the book is now in the public domain. The Society has engaged Dr Loh Kah Seng to undertake the revisions and annotations. It is expected to take 8 months and the book will be published sometime around July 2012, a fitting project for the Society's 25th year. Application has been made for Hi2P funding for this project and efforts are underway to raise the other half of the money required for the project.

Membership

Over the past two years, our membership figures have varied between 200 and 220. This is the highest number of members we have had in our history.

Conclusion

As can be seen, the Society has organized a great variety of events and projects. These have not only benefited members directly, but also substantially raised the profile of the Society. All this has been possible only because of the commitment and dedication of the Society's Executive Committee members as well as the ex-Officio members. The problem remains that most of the work is being handled by only a very small minority of the Society's members and this is likely to result in fatigue in the long run. It is our hope that more members will come forward to serve and offer their expertise and help in running the Society so that its missions of Education, Research and Advocacy in the interests of Singapore's heritage may be advanced. The Society places on record its appreciation to the out-going members of the Executive Committee and also to Ms Wendy Chua for their hard work and dedication.

REVIEW OF FINANCIAL STATE AND EXPLANATION OF MAJOR FINANCIAL TRANSACTIONS

The Society's main source of income is from the sale of its books. Membership subscriptions alone are insufficient to meet day-to-day expenses. Major expenditure items in the Accounts for 2010–2011 are in the publishing of books as well as in the organizing of tours as well as in the various projects we have organized, such as the excavation at Adam Park. In all activities the Society has organized, every effort has been made to ensure that each event is self-funding. It should nonetheless be noted that subscriptions by members *do not* cover year-to-year operation costs and that cross subsidies are secured through money made in publishing and other ventures.

FUTURE PLANS AND COMMITMENTS

The Society plans to strengthen its financial position by the establishment of a finance and business committee and the development of a business model for the publication of its books and provision of its services. Currently, the Society's financial commitments stem from current projects in which funds have already been secured or pledged. Further funds will need to be raised from the public in respect of three publications: *Our Modern Past*, *Oh My Geylang* and *Song Ong Siang's One Hundred Years of the Chinese in Singapore*. These efforts are ongoing. Mok Wei Wei of W Architects has kindly taken the lead in spearheading the fund-raising for *Our Modern Past* while artist-writer Morgan Chua has undertaken to secure full funding for *Oh My Geylang*. Kevin Tan will oversee the fund-raising efforts for the *Song Ong Siang* volume.

STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS

Statement of accounts for the financial year ended 31 March 2011 is attached.



Dr Kevin YL Tan

PRESIDENT

on behalf of the Executive Committee



Ms Dahlia Shamsuddin

VICE-PRESIDENT & ACTING PRESIDENT

on behalf of the Executive Committee