



Research . Education . Advocacy

ANNUAL REPORT FOR YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2010

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

Management Committee The Management Committee elected at the Annual General Meeting held on 8 September 2007 is as follows:

Dr Kevin Tan (President)
Ms Dahlia Shamsuddin (Vice-President)
Mr Alvin Tan Peng Hong (Hon Secretary)
Mr Tan Wee Cheng (Hon Treasurer)
Dr Loh Kah Seng (Member)
Dr Chua Ai Lin (Member)
Mr Alex Tan (Member)
Dr Yeo Kang Shua (Member)
Dr Philip Holden (Member)
Mr Tony Tan (Member)

Trustees NIL

Banker OCBC Bank

Auditor JB Chua & Co
55 Lorong L Telok Kurau
#03-63 Bright Centre
Singapore 425500

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. It's registered address 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. The correspondence address of the Society is provided by Bizcomm Pte Ltd and is at: 50 East Coast Road #02-57, Singapore 428769.

REVIEW FOR THE YEAR 2009–2010

Introduction

This report covers the period August 2009 to August 2010.

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. In January 2009, the Society was accorded the status of Institution of Public Character.

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:

THE MULTICULTURAL KOPITIAM

Dr Lai Ah Eng

3.00 pm, Saturday 5 September 2009

Imagination Room, National Library

Dr Lai Ah Eng, who actually comes from a coffee-shop (*kopitiam*) owning family took the audience down memory lane with her talk on the roles kopitiam play in modern Singapore. She examined how the ubiquitous coffee shop, mostly found in HDB estates, where 85% of Singapore's population live has been transformed from the humble stall serving drinks and nibbles to the site of Singaporean multi-culturalism.

TIGERS, PANTHERS & POWs: THE WAR TIME HISTORY OF ADAM PARK

Jonathan Cooper

7.30 pm, Friday 18 Jun 2010

Possibility Room, National Library

Battlefield archaeologist Jon Cooper gave an exciting talk on the battle at Adam Park, the last battle before the fall of Singapore in February 1942. It was a tale of great heroism and fortitude on the part of the 1st Battalion of the Cambridgeshire Regiment and how they remained the only British regiment to hold the line till the British surrendered. More importantly, Cooper demonstrated with extensive use of maps and illustrative material on how Adam Park remains like a time capsule, with its terrain, architecture and flora largely unchanged since 1942.

REMEMBERING SINGHAPURA & OUR TRANS-CONTINENTAL PASTS

Dr Farish Noor

3.00 pm, Saturday 2 July 2010

Possibility Room, National Library

Charismatic Farish Noor took the audience back to Southeast Asia's and Singapore ancient past, arguing that in the era of the nation-state which came about only 70 years ago, many Southeast Asians have forgotten their historical roots in a much more transnational landscape, where the peoples of the region did not regard themselves as being citizens of states but rather inhabitants of a much larger, richer geography.

THE FAJAR GENERATION: A FORM ON READNG SINGAPORE HISTORY

Khairudin Aljunied, Sai Siew Min & Edgar Liow

2.30 pm, Saturday 28 Aug 2010

Possibility Room, National Library

The Fajar Generation: The University Socialist Club and the Politics of Postwar Malaya and Singapore appeared quietly in 2009. This collection of essays on a group of English-educated student activists at the University of Malaya (later Singapore) in the 1950s and 1960s, edited by the Club's former presidents: Poh Soo Kai, Tan Jing Quee and Koh Kay Yew sought to 'open the way to a more objective review and analysis of the diverse trends and movements that have contributed to the emergence of our nation-state'. In this symposium, three young Singaporean historians critically examined the writing of Singapore's recent past and discuss the challenges faced by current efforts to reclaim the histories of the marginalised.

Book Launches

GEDUNG KUNING: MEMORIES OF A MALAY CHILDHOOD

Hidayah Amin

2.00 pm, Saturday 9 Jan 2010

The Pod, National Library

This launch featured the Society's latest publication which it published in collaboration with the author, Ms Hidayah Amin. The event was a spectacular success and featured *angklung* performances by the Raffles Girls' School's Anklung Orchestra, a panel discussion featuring Mr Kwa Chong Guan, Dr Rahil Ismail, Dr Timothy Barnard, and Tengku Sri Indra, and moderated by Dr Chua Ai Lin. The event came to a close with a foot-stomping performance by the legendary Malay music duo, *Nuradee* who set Hidayah's poem on *Gedung Kuning* to song.

**THE SINGAPORE & MELAKA STRAITS:
VIOLENCE, SECURITY AND DIPLOMACY IN THE 17TH CENTURY**

Peter Borschberg

2.30 pm, Saturday 6 Feb 2010

The Pod, National Library

The Society joined NUS Press in launching this landmark book on Singapore's early maritime history. The launch was preceded by a speech by Prof Borschberg, Dr Paul Kratoska, managing director of NUS Press, and Prof Wang Gungwu, the Guest-of-Honour.

MAKERS & KEEPERS OF SINGAPORE HISTORY

edited by Loh Kah Seng & Liew Kai Khiun

2.00 pm, Saturday 24 July 2010

The Pod, National Library

The Society joined Ethos Books in launching this collection of essays which were originally presented at the Makers & Keeper Conference organized by the Society and the Asia Research Institute in November 2008. Guest speakers at the launch were Professor Prasenjit Duara and

Associate Professor Kwok Kian Woon. Responding on behalf of the authors were Mr Kwa Chong Guan and Associate Professor Huang Jianli.

Exhibitions

WILLIAM FARQUHAR: FIRST RESIDENT OF SINGAPORE

curated by Kevin Tan

3 April to 31 August 2010

Level 7, The National Library

The idea for this exhibition came from Mr Jean-Claude Fuchs, who gave a talk on Farquhar to the Society in February 2009. Working closely with SHS President and the National Library Board, Fuchs contacted numerous descendants of Farquhar and helped secure the loan of paintings, sketches, letters and other paraphernalia never before seen in public. A family portrait of Farquhar (on loan from Mrs Wendy Lumsden) was displayed for the first time in public. This was one of the most successful exhibition organized and curated by the Society and had one of the highest visitor counts among all exhibitions staged at the National Library.

Walks, Tours etc

VIGNETTES IN TIME: SINGAPORE MAPS & HISTORY THROUGH THE CENTURIES

a Curator's Tour by Lim Chen Sian & Mok Ly Yng

5.00 pm, 30 Oct 2009

Level 10, The National Library

This landmark exhibition is jointly organized by the Singapore Heritage Society and the National Library and features the collections of Mr Lim Shao Bin, Mr Lim Chen Sian and the Lee Kong Chian Reference Library. Originally scheduled to close on 31 October 2009, it was extended for two more months till the end of 2009. A special curator's tour was given by curator Lim Chen Sian and map consultant Mok Ly Yng. What had originally been planned as a two-hour event ended up almost four hours later with lots of questions still to be answered.

JOHOR HERITAGE TOUR

Sunday 6 June 2010

Guided by Mr Kwa Chong Guan

The idea for this tour came from SHS Exco member Alex Tan after he visited the Sultan Abu Bakar Museum in Johor. Working closely with Mr Kwa Chong Guan, this materialized into a day trip to Johor with visits to the Sultan Abu Bakar Museum, the Kota Tinggin Museum and Johor Lama. In all 38 members and their guests participated in the trip which benefitted greatly from the expert commentaries of Mr Kwa.

A much publicized and fully-subscribed tour of Kampong Gelam by Hidayah Amin and Khir Johari scheduled for Saturday 17 July 2010 had to be cancelled as much of Singapore was flooded that morning.

Miscellaneous

SYMPOSIUM: HISTORICAL FRAGMENTS IN SOUTHEAST ASIA – AT THE INTERFACES OF ORAL HISTORY, MEMORY AND HERITAGE

This symposium was jointly-organised by the Society and the Institute of Southeast Asian Studies on 23-24 June 2010. The two day symposium attracted over 20 papers on various facets of oral history and memory. The Conference was the brainchild of Dr Loh Kah Seng who acted as convenor of the symposium. The Society secured a \$10,000 donation from the Lee Foundation which was used to defray the costs of the Symposium. It is understood that the papers presented will be edited for publication by ISEAS Publishing.

Book Projects

MAKERS & KEEPERS OF SINGAPORE HISTORY

This book contains the revised versions papers presented at the 2008 Symposium organized by the Society. Edited for the Society by Drs Loh Kah Seng and Liew Kai Khiun, the book is published by Ethos Books. It was launched at the National Library on 24 July 2010.

SPACES FOR THE DEAD: A CASE FROM THE LIVING

It was reported at the last AGM, that editing for the manuscript had been completed in November 2004 by SHS President Kevin Tan and that it has remained unpublished due to difficulties in raising funds for the book. In August 2010, the National Heritage Board approved 50% funding of the book which will now go to print. Ethos Books has agreed to bear the risk of the other 50%. We are grateful to NHB and to Ethos Books for believing in this project.

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. It is expected that the final draft will be completed by end of November 2010. Delays in completing the manuscript have been occasioned by a combination of personal issues on the part of two of the authors as well as in the unearthing of new archival material that entails substantial revisions.

Membership

Over the past two years, our membership figures have varied between 140 and 160. This is the highest number of members we have had in our history.

Visitors

On 15 February 2008, Dr Lee Kam Hing and his wife Celine, publishers of *Heritage Asia* visited Singapore and met up with SHS President Kevin Tan to brief the Society on the buyout of the magazine by MPH Ltd. They thanked the Society for their support and expressed the hope that we can continue to do so.

On 11 September 2008, Soehardi Hartono, former Executive Director of the Sumatra Heritage Trust and an old friend of the Society, visited Singapore and met up with President Kevin Tan and other members over dinner.

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 2009–2010 are in the publishing of books as well as in the organizing of tours. 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 has no financial commitment other than day-to-day operation expenses.

STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS

Statement of accounts for the financial year ended 31 March 2010 is attached.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Kevin Tan', with a small mark above the first letter 'K'.

Dr Kevin YL Tan

PRESIDENT

on behalf of the Executive Committee