

## Heritage@Centrestage: An Inquiry into Singapore's Heritage, A Seminar by Educators and Students

Presented by Singapore Heritage Society Singapore Association for Social Studies Education

9 am-2 pm, Saturday, 8 September 2012

Venue: Possibility Room, National Library Building, 100 Victoria Street, Singapore 188064

Heritage may refer to something that is or may be inherited. It may be valued objects or qualities such as cultural traditions, historical sites and unspoiled natural environment. The idea of a collective inquiry into the making, gatekeeping and safekeeping of Singapore's heritage will help its citizens fully understand and comprehend the importance of a country's heritage in providing shared experiences and formulate a national identity that is perceived as elusive to a young nation like ours.

This seminar will provide a platform for the presentation of interest, creativity and potential many educators and students have towards Singapore's heritage, while highlighting the different perspectives and opinions they have of Singapore's heritage. It will, most importantly, listen to educators and/ or students' views and feelings – for it is the educators who play the critical role in selecting and representing the nation's heritage for posterity and it is the students who stand the inherit the legacy that we leave behind.

The seminar is free but registration is required due to limited seating:

<http://heritageatcentrestage.eventbrite.com/>

### Conveners

Ms Junaidah Jaffar, jun.jaffar@gmail.com

Mr Matthew Lim, matthew.noah.lim@gmail.com

Mr Daniel Lim, danzlim@gmail.com

Mdm Karen Chan, karenchanoikhum@gmail.com

### Programme

0830 – 0900	REGISTRATION	
0900 – 0930	Junaidah Jaffar Singapore Heritage Society  Dahlia Shamsuddin Singapore Heritage Society  Ho Li-Ching Singapore Association for Social Studies Education	Welcome
0930 – 1010	Panel 1: What is heritage? Chair: Mark Baildon, Deputy Head, Associate Professor, HSSE (NIE)	
0930 – 0940	Chia Shimin Temasek Junior College	Journey from Oral History to Heritage
0940 – 0950	Yeo Huijun Martina National University of Singapore (History and Southeast Asian Studies)	Tangible and Intangible Cultural Heritage: The Dilemma of Bukit Brown
0950 – 1000	Nurul Syazwani Ismail National University of Singapore (History and Southeast Asian Studies)	From Outside Looking In: A Batik Babe's Perspective

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1000 – 1010	<b>QUESTION &amp; ANSWER</b>	
1010 – 1110	<b>Panel 2: Whose heritage should be preserved?</b> Chair: Shahira Begum, Student, Bendemeer Secondary School	
1010 – 1020	Derrick Lim Hwa Chong Institution	Urban Heritage in Singapore: The Struggle between Preservation and Development since the Formative Years of Heritage Conservation
1020 – 1030	Teo Shu Hui Raffles Girls' School (Secondary)	Synergy of Heritage and Urban Renewal in Singapore
1030 – 1040	Raphael Soh Qin, Duong Duc Thanh & Reudi Chan Raffles Institution	The Preservation of Mom-and-Pop Provision Shops
1040 – 1050	Edwin Choo East Coast Primary School	Joo Chiat (1950s versus 2000s)
1050 – 1100	A/Prof. Wu Bing Sheng National Institute of Education (Humanities and Social Studies Education)	Spatial and Temporal Representation of Heritage using Geo-Spatial Technologies
1100 – 1110	<b>QUESTION &amp; ANSWER</b>	
1110 – 1210	<b>REFRESHMENT</b>	
1210– 1310	<b>Panel 3: Is heritage caught or taught?</b> Chair: Jaishree Jaybalan, Student Teacher, NIE	
1210 – 1220	Gul Inanc National University of Singapore	Introduction to Cultural Heritage: Classroom Activities for Primary Social Studies Course
1220 – 1230	Samuel Wee & Melvin Chan Ping Yi Secondary School	Heritage for LIFE
1230 – 1240	Tan Hui Ming, Ryan Lim Dao Wei, Foo Tze Han & Grady Ng Shi Kai Hwa Chong Institution	Façade
1240 – 1250	Frances Ess Mayflower Secondary School	Heritage, Our Roots and Our Wings
1250 – 1300	Vernice Seah & Koh Boon Xuan Holy Innocents' Primary School	The Challenges of Our School in the 21 <sup>st</sup> Century World
1300– 1310	<b>QUESTION &amp; ANSWER</b>	
1310 – 1400	<b>Panel 4: How do the young connect with heritage?</b> Chair: Kevin Blackburn, Associate Professor, HSSE (NIE)	
1310 – 1320	Jaishree Jaybalan National Institute of Education Nanyang Technological University	Heritage in the Future: Taking on a New Life for Young Citizens?

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1320 – 1330	Herishma Kaur Sher Gil, Izzah Raihannah, Lee Cher Main, Jessica Wang Jia Hui, Shahira Begum, Rifaya Parveen, Israth Farhana Bendemeer Secondary School	Connecting the Dots: the Present and the Past
1330 – 1340	Lazarus Chok, Russell Ang Zen, Wee Jing Long Raffles Institution	Uncovering a hidden treasure: the heritage of Bukit Brown
1340 – 1350	Wen Xing Yue, Yu Xin & Yuen Ai Zhen Carol Raffles Girls' School (Secondary)	The Rich Heritage in the Simplest of Places
1350 - 1400	<b>QUESTION &amp; ANSWER</b>	
<b>1400 – 1430</b>	<b>CLOSING</b>	







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Gul Inanc is a part-time faculty member at the Department of History, National University of Singapore.

Cultural heritage is undoubtedly a sensitive topic in every society, yet it is especially delicate in multicultural societies like Singapore. In April 2012, coverage of UNESCO World Heritage/Cultural Heritage was formally introduced into primary school curricula by the Ministry of Education, although Singaporean government has not yet committed to signing the UNESCO World Heritage Convention. Gul Inanc's paper offers certain classroom activities on how to introduce cultural heritage and search the feedback of the participants (teachers and students) of the seminar.

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### **Samuel Wee & Melvin Chan, 'Heritage for LIFE'**

Ping Yi Secondary School

Samuel is a senior teacher for History, Social Studies and National Education at Ping Yi Secondary School. He is also a finalist for Outstanding History Teacher in 2009. Melvin is a teacher for History, Social Studies and National Education at the same school.

Samuel and Melvin believe that heritage defines who we are and it provides the meaning and context behind our daily practices in the community. For this seminar, the presenters will share how Ping Yi Secondary School helps its students to attain the outcome that they long for—Heritage for Life, a curriculum which encompasses:

*Heritage for Appreciation:* This acts as a foundational stage of exposing our students to both our national and local heritage through our Archives and Singapore corner. Together with the various other internal programmes such as the Go East Heritage Trail, our students experienced the treasures and learnt the importance and appreciate the relevance of heritage in their lives.

*Heritage in Action:* This acts as the most crucial and significant aspect of heritage infusion. Students who are selected as Ping Yi's National Education Ambassadors lead the school population and overseas visitors in the Go East Heritage Trail, the From Colony to Nation: Civic District Trail, Lari Sini Lari Sana Kampung Chai Chee Race and the other NE programmes. In doing so, these students engage in discussions on heritage such as whose heritage is being presented; whether heritage remains stagnant and fixed or whether it adapts and assimilates according to context; and how we can introduce activities that will enable the audience to better connect with heritage?

*Heritage through Association:* Through the collaboration between IP (History) and National Education committee, students explore the varying purposes and agencies on the preservation and conservation of heritage. It is hoped that such association (associating heritage to agency/purpose) allows students to develop a more accurate and comprehensive understanding to Singapore's heritage and/or recognize the power, beauty and dynamics of heritage.

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### **Tan Hui Ming, Ryan Lim Dao Wei, Foo Tze Han & Grady Ng Shi Kai, 'Façade'**

Hwa Chong Institution





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why heritage should be experienced rather than being taught with reference to their school's Ethnic Bonding Programme.

### **Panel 4: How do the young connect with heritage?**

#### **Jaishree Jaybalan, 'Heritage in the Future: Taking a New life for Young Citizens?'**

National Institute of Education, Nanyang Technological University

A 4<sup>th</sup> year History major at NIE, Jaishree's interest and awareness of the rich heritage surrounding her was piqued after she was given the opportunity to take a module on Heritage & History and explore her own heritage and culture. Having been raised by her grandmother, Jaishree grew up with stories of *life back in the ol' days* and learned about her Indian heritage since young.

Jaishree contends that given our fast-paced lives, where our physical and economic landscapes are continually changing, the fear that the younger generations may become cultural orphans, isolated from their rich heritage drawn from major civilizations, is legitimate. There is a tendency to fall prey to a mere superficial understanding of our heritage, culture and tradition as practices of the past appear to have been diluted and adapted to suit the current context.

It appears that for some of the young generation, information on their heritage, culture need not be regurgitated into them. There seems to be an increasing trend of the young in Singapore actively searching for their heritage or more, on the lookout for things from the past, and this has even extended to profiteering based on nostalgia. Therefore, taking into consideration the various aspects of heritage in today's context, this presentation will focus on the main issue – to what extent do the young have a connection with heritage?

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#### **Herishma Kaur Sher Gil, Izzah Raihannah, Lee Cher Main, Jessica Wang Jia Hui, Shahira Begum, Rifaya Parveen, Israth Farhana, 'Connecting the Dots: the Present and the Past'**

Bendemeer Secondary School

The presenters are all secondary 3 students who are involved in the school as Heritage Guides. This is a student leadership role in which the presenters are actively involved in the conceptualization, planning and execution of a local community trail.

The students were involved as local heritage guides for the Kolam Ayer Trail which sought to engage the community they live in. Working together with the local Community Centre, the students actually had the experience of bringing members of the public on this trail. Through the process of developing this trail, the students had a chance to learn more about themselves, and in the process, connect the dots between the past and the present. They began to see themselves as members of a larger community and indeed, the nation. This presentation is a sharing about their experiences, and what we as educators can do to support their experiences.

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#### **Lazarus Chok, Russell Ang Zen, Wee Jing Long, 'Uncovering a Hidden Treasure: the Heritage of Bukit Brown'**

Raffles Institution

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The presenters are a group of three Year 4 students currently enrolled at Raffles Institution, who have had the opportunity to embark on a project that involves organizing Bukit Brown heritage tours for our fellow schoolmates.

Preservation of heritage and conservation of nature areas without inhibiting development have long been an environmental and developmental challenge faced by Singapore, a land and resource-starved city-state. These challenges are typically those found in any highly-urbanised community in Southeast Asia and indeed the world. With greater affluence and economic success, citizens are now more concerned with keeping intact the link to our heritage and the protection of natural areas and habitats. As such, they have embarked on a project centred on Bukit Brown Cemetery – a heritage and conservation site slated for development to highlight the need to strike a reasonable balance between developmental needs on the one hand and the imperative to protect the national heritage and natural habitat on the other, and to create awareness of this place of our national heritage among our younger generation.

Their presentation comprises three sections:

- 1) Why they think that it is important to inculcate a sense of awareness of our heritage in students or why they sought to organize heritage tours to Bukit Brown for our schoolmates.
- 2) How they had strived to instil within participants, a deeper appreciation of local history and culture through our tour and other learning resources we created.
- 3) Lessons they have taken away from this project.

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### **Wen Xing Yue, Yu Xin & Yuen Ai Zhen Carol, 'The Rich Heritage in the Simplest of Places'**

Raffles Girls' School (Secondary)

The presenters are Year 4 students at Raffles Girls' School (Secondary).

This topic will be explored in a role play format, with a wise old woman, who treasures the past, bringing a 25-year-old granddaughter who has been overseas for her studies since she was 12 around Singapore in search of the heritage belonging to neighbourhoods such as Holland Village and forgotten parts of Chinatown.

Through their performance, the presenters aim to enable the audience to think about how much there is to gain from preserving and getting to know old buildings. As the character of a young woman is portrayed, we will also look at whether young citizens have a connection with heritage. The following issues will also be explored:

- 1) The perceptions young Singaporeans have of heritage, the values they can see in it, and whether their actions are influenced by heritage
- 2) The reasons behind their perceptions, possibly due to the influx of new cultures brought about by globalization and technology, among other factors
- 3) The effects their perceptions have on themselves and the future of Singapore, and if these consequences are positive or negative
- 4) Ideas to encourage a greater connection with heritage and how this has benefits

Information on the performance is based on primary and secondary sources, from the youths' own opinions to other academic papers on heritage, especially in Singapore, as the context differs in various countries.

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