BG Yeo to be at Society's dinner

If you have not made your booking for the Society's "Meet the Minister" evening, do it now. The Minister for Information and the Arts, Brigadier-General George Yeo, will be the guest of honour at the Society's annual dinner on November 4. The dinner will be held at Tudor Ballroom, Goodwood Park Hotel. It will be a buffet dinner to maximise opportunities for members to interact and enjoy fellowship. There will also be a pre-dinner cocktail from 7pm until guests are seated at 8pm. There will be an address by the Executive Committee and BG Yeo will address members. Dinner will be served at 8.30pm. The cost will be $60 for members and $80 for non-members. Dress code will be smart casual.

Members may remember that BG George Yeo, then Minister of State for Finance and Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, officiated at the prize-giving of the Society's first-ever Heritage Hunt in 1989. The surprise at the ceremony was discovering that BG Yeo's wife was related to Ho Sum Tin, a Chinese pioneer submission which had won Miss Lee Ming Cherk the first prize in the personalities category. Ho was a prominent merchant and a Chinese physician who not only started a reading room to improve literacy, but was one of Dr Sun Yat Sen's active campaigners in Singapore. He was one of the original founders of the Tung Meng Hui.

Members would have received the circular informing them of the venue and cost of the dinner. But if you have not received your circular, it is still not too late. The co-ordinating secretariat for the dinner is Hexa-team Planners' Pte Ltd at 26 Duxton Hill, Singapore 0208. Contact Lynn Yong at tel. 227-8110 or fax: 227-8113 during office hours to make your booking.

Grand Old Lady is back - and bigger too

Raffles as in a 1915 postcard. Picture courtesy of Raffles Hotel

After a more than $100-million restoration and a two-year closure, the Raffles Hotel has opened again for business with a flourish but raised a question among some Society members about what is conservation. Known affectionately to many as the Grand Old Lady, the Raffles was first made a national monument in 1987 and its restoration has added greatly to the stock of graceful buildings in Singapore. It has also greatly improved the character of Beach road.

The Sarkies brothers who started the original hostelry in a humble bungalow would probably not recognise the sumptuous hotel now. The guiding principle was to restore the hotel to the 1910-1930 era. This was the era of grand travel when the Raffles saw the likes of Charlie Chaplin and Douglas Fairbanks, writers Somerset Maugham and Noel Coward and kings, queens and sultans. The hotel was the centre of colonial high life, and the natives, it must be said, were not exactly welcome. Today, however, local patrons are more than welcome as seen in the number of its food outlets which bear no relation to its 104 suites.

These suites now reveal the original 14-foot-high moulded ceilings once lowered for air-conditioning. Period furnishings, the right artwork, the very spaciousness of the suites, verandas and grand arches give Raffles the feel of a grand hotel.

Among the features restored or upgraded were the:

- Facade of the main building complete with the elegant cast iron portico;
- Verandas encircling the entire hotel facade on the upper storeys;
- More than 400 pieces of furniture from the old hotel. A brass tag and now back in use;
- More than 8,000 pieces of silver and china, some dating back to the days of the Sarkies Brothers. These have been inventoried and dated and will be used where appropriate or put on display.

*A nation must have a memory to give it a sense of cohesion, continuity and identity. The longer the past, the greater the awareness of a nation's identity...a sense of common history is what provides the link to hold together a people who came from the four corners of the earth.*

S Rajaratnam, former Senior Minister, Prime Minister's Office, 1986, as quoted in the URA's A Future With a Past: Saving Our Heritage
URA's conservation plan complete

The Urban Redevelopment Authority has issued a full-colour booklet outlining its complete conservation programme which now includes areas on the fringes of the central historic areas. The programme includes also selected private houses and bungalows. The Society is pleased to see the extension of the programme to cover secondary development areas outside the city centre. The Conservation Master Plan which complements the Central Area Structure Plan highlights the five phases of identifying buildings and areas worthy of conservation. The well-illustrated booklet lists the different conservation areas, its importance and conservation history.

A total of 1,900 buildings in secondary development areas have been listed for conservation. These are aside from some 3,000 buildings in the historic central areas. Buildings in the central area cover an area of about 100 hectares spanning Chinatown, Kampong Glam, Little India, Clarke Quay, Emerald Hill and the Singapore River.

Says the URA in its booklet: "Conservation is a continuing process of planning the development of a city which recognises its history. The conservation effort can only succeed with the collective commitment and effort of all Singaporeans. In retaining parts of old Singapore, we are retaining the memory of the early immigrants as embodied in their churches, temples, mosques, houses, street names and localities are reflected in the conservation of these historic districts and secondary developments."

The Preservation of Monuments Board also announced at the Heritage Day '91 that private houses were among about 60 buildings being considered for conservation. The process of evaluating the buildings is still going. Nine government buildings - Istana, Parliament House, City Hall, Supreme Court, Attorney-General's Chambers, Victoria Memorial Theatre, Victoria Concert Hall, Empress Place, St Joseph's Institution and the National Museum - are expected to be gazetted as national monuments by early next year.

Work on Kampong Glam

The Urban Redevelopment Authority will start work on developing Muscat, Bussorah and Bagdad Streets into landscaped pedestrian malls at the end of this year. These streets are part of the Kampong Glam conservation project. Kampong Glam is the area bounded by Victoria Street, Jalan Sultan, Beach Road and Ophir Road. The area was originally land granted to Sultan Hussein Shah by Raffles after the signing of the 1819 treaty. Work on restoring 48 shophouses will start next year. The pilot conservation project is estimated to cost about $14 million.

Secondary areas affected

* Geylang where many of the 467 buildings gazetted front Geylang Road stretching from Paya Lebar Road junction to Mountbatten Road;
* Blair Plain with 170 buildings within the boundaries of Kampong Bahru, Everton and Neil Roads;
* River Valley Road with 96 buildings in Kim Yam and Mohammed Sultan Roads;
* Beach Road with 94 buildings mainly in Purvis and Liang Seah Streets;
* Bukit Pasoh with 80 buildings in the Keong Saik-Kreta Ayer-Neil Road area;
* Jalan Besar with 462 buildings within Desker, Kitchener, Sam Leong, Tye Whitt, Syed Alwi and Petai Roads;
* Joo Chiat and the East Coast Residential Corridor along Mountbatten Road with 518 buildings.

Rent Control Act repeal

Rent Control Act repeal

Sharing ideas in KL

Badan Warisan Malaysia (Heritage of Malaysia Trust) recently invited the president of the Society, William Lim, for a mutual sharing of experiences on the conservation of pre-war buildings and the repeal of the Rent Control Act.

The impetus for the discussions was the announcement earlier this year by the Malaysian Minister of Housing and Local Government that the Rent Control Act would be repealed. There are fears among conservationists that, if not properly controlled, the repeal could result in the wholesale demolition of pre-war rent-controlled buildings.

Following up on the fears expressed, Badan Warisan was invited by the Ministry to work out an implementation programme for the repeal of the Rent Control Act as well as a new Conservation Act. The repeal of the Rent Control Act has been postponed pending the outcome of Badan Warisan's efforts.

The president reported that the time in Kuala Lumpur was usefully spent sharing with government officials and Badan Warisan Council members the experience on conservation and the compensation system in force here. The Malaysian and Singapore Rent Control Acts were originally similar in nature. Over the years, Singapore has been amending its Rent Control Act to conserve certain areas of the island. These amendments operate in conjunction with a compensation system set out under the Controlled Premises (Special Provision) Act. This Act allows landlords to clear out tenants from some of these controlled premises for further development or conservation under certain guidelines.

Little India's restored shophouses sold

Fifteen of the first-ever restored buildings in the Little India conservation area were sold by tender in May. Prices ranged from $2.8 million for the bungalow complex to $328,000. The 14 shophouses and a bungalow complex in Buffalo Road opposite Tekka Market were originally built between 1840 and 1940. The renovations by the Urban Redevelopment Authority cost over $3 million. Nearly 90 per cent of the original structure of the bungalow and about 70 per cent of that of the shophouses were retained. Another 12 shophouses fronting Chander Road were leased out by the Housing and Development Board. The Board is managing the lease.
New use for old shophouses

The Duxton: No coolie keng

The coolies of old flapping down in a cramped coolie keng in Tanjong Pagar would not recognise The Duxton, Singapore’s first boutique hotel which opened its doors in October. The tiny luxury hotel is in what was formerly a row of eight shophouses numbered 80 to 87 Duxton Road. It has now been re-numbered 83 Duxton Road. From the outside, the hotel still looks like an row of old shophouses. Once through the front door, a spacious lobby opens out with the reception desk on the right and the lobby lounge on the left.

The walls between the individual shophouses have been knocked down to form one large unit. Upstairs, common corridors run through the linked buildings leading off into the rooms. The hotel has 49 rooms including 14 suites, two of which are ground floor garden suites to maximise the airwells common in old shophouses.

Besides the lobby lounge which features a piano bar, there is also a French restaurant which doubles as the breakfast room for guests. Prices which include breakfast range from $320/double for a suite to $250 for a standard double room. As befits a boutique hotel, the staff to room ratio is one to one.

The conversion of the old shophouses was at the cost of more than $15 million. The hotel is a venture by construction company Low Keng Huat and two Singapore businesswomen, Mrs Esther Su and Mrs Margaret Wong.

Grand Old Lady is back

* Continued from page 1

* Decorative cast iron work around the hotel.

* Garden space which has been increased to about 25 per cent.

Much work has gone into getting the details right. For instance, researching the exact design of the ornate cast iron portico in front of the hotel went as far as Glasgow where original patterns of early 19th century cast iron designs are kept on microfilm in the Mitchell Library, said Gretchen Liu, Curator of the hotel’s historic collection in a press release: “As with every other part of the building, we will be as historically accurate as we can to preserve the hotel’s unique character.”

In addition to the old Raffles, a new wing has been added fronting North Bridge Road. Known simply as Raffles, this wing which is in the same architectural style as the Raffles Hotel itself has met with reservations from some members of the Society. Although it was felt that the hotel was to be congratulated on the whole for the attention given to getting period details right, it was also felt that the extension itself was not in the right spirit of conservation. While it would have been fine for the new wing to be in a style sympathetic to the old Raffles, to mesh what was previously non-existent so closely with what was old was not correct in conservation terms. It was argued that conservation should preserve or rebuild what was originally existing during a particular era. Building something totally new in the old style to integrate it with an old building was not conservation. The new wing will consist of six restaurants, 70 specialty shops, the Raffles Hotel Museum and the Jubilee Hall Theatre Playhouse.

Restoring the plasterwork of the verandahs

Picture courtesy of Raffles Hotel

British Council invite

The British Council through Prof Tommy Koh has invited the Society to look at the present heritage and conservation activities in the United Kingdom. Expenses in the UK will be met by the British Council but the airfare will have to be borne by the Society. The Executive Committee of the Society is looking for sponsorship for the airfare.
Why does Eu Court have to go?

Enough cars, enough roads, enough demolition

This is the full text of the Society’s letter on the demolition of Eu Court which was sent to the media in May. An abridged version was published in The Straits Times Forum Page.

We write to express our concern and reservation on the plan to demolish Eu Court, at the corner of Stamford Road/Hill Street, as part of a road-widening exercise.

Members of the Singapore Heritage Society do appreciate this has to be a very difficult decision to make as it has major impact on our urban environment.

However, Eu Court is an aesthetically charming building and one of those particularly endangered species in Singapore, a curved corner building which has landmark qualities. We would prefer to see it preserved. But at issue, we feel, are far wider concerns than the value of Eu Court alone.

Firstly, there is the matter of the substantial number of historic and heritage buildings lining the stretch of road from Hill Street, along Victoria Street to Kallang Road, and between Coleman Street and Lavendar Street, all of which could well be affected by the road-widening. However, we note with gratitude that there has been a conscious effort on the part of the Ministry of National Development not to harm such buildings.

Secondly, there is the more fundamental issue of traffic congestion and control in urban centres, apparently a major factor in this decision.

Let us deal with this latter concern. The fact is, the answer to traffic congestion in urban centres is not the building of more and more roads, expressways and highways. No matter how many roads we build, there will never be "enough". Many published studies have shown this. The car population will go on growing as long as there are roads to drive on. It is up to all of us, and our policy-makers, to set a benchmark point at which car growth must stop.

So we have to ask: is the proposed road-widening designed to accommodate a traffic expansion which the authorities regard as inevitable - that is, beyond their control? Or is it to accommodate an expansion which they are actually planning for, and therefore, by implication, virtually encouraging? In short, is the road-widening really necessary?

Singapore already has excellent public transportation systems in place - good bus services, plentiful taxis and the new MRT system (one branch of which, ironically enough, runs along the line of the proposed highway) - besides ingenious traffic-control measures like the ALS and the weekend car. We must promote these further and educate everyone to understand that there are definite limits to car growth in tiny Singapore.

We must have more tree-lined walkways. And bicycle paths. The "park-and-ride" system of keeping traffic outside the city centre notoriously failed several years back, but this was before the existence of the MRT. Perhaps the idea could be re-looked now and we could persuade motorists to park outside the CBD, at MRT car-parks with a proper system of shuttle buses inside the CBD. In some countries, such buses are available free of charge to the public. It is quite lamentable that no attempt has yet been made to pilot the idea of MRT car-parks.

We have to base our city-centre planning on considerations other than just the car. We have to decide when enough is enough in terms of how many roads we can tolerate if we are to have liveable human cities. We cannot go on building our cities for cars. They must be built for people - the users of the environment.

Emigration will continue to escalate if we continue to remove wholesale our citizens' "psychological map" of their own home town, within the space of a single generation. There will be nothing left for them to be attached to; they might as well be in a foreign country, for all the unfamiliarity of their own country.

Nor is tourism likely to benefit from the spectacle of a mesh of highways in the heart of our historic city.

To return to our first point, we suspect Eu Court is only the "thin end of the wedge" in conservation terms. Only a few years ago we were informed that the historic civic centre was to be declared a conservation area, a delightful heritage district connected by tranquil pedestrian walkways. What happened to this dream? The proposed multi-lane highway we are referring to now, cuts straight through the heart of this very centre.

The sketch map shows the main heritage buildings lining this proposed highway. As you can see, they include such well-known buildings as the Old Central Fire Station (1934) and the Armenian Church (a national monument), the Cathedral of the Good Shepherd (1840s, a national monument), St Joseph’s Portuguese Church (1904), several old shophouses still practising traditional trades and crafts, the ancient (pre-Raffles) Royal Muslim Cemetery and the Aljunied Madrasah AL-Islamiah school...
right up to the Malabar Mosque.

What guarantee do we have that these buildings will not be affected by the road-widening? Is Eu Court only the first "domino"?

It is interesting to note that many historic buildings have already been lost on the right side of Victoria Street, the side opposite to Eu Court as you proceed along the street in the direction of Kallang. Presumably, these have been cleared in the preparation for the road-widening. We have already been told that the unique walls surrounding the old Convent of the Holy Infant Jesus (1840s-90s) along Victoria Street must go. These are also on the right side of the street.

We note that were the road to be uniformly widened on the right side instead, the road from Hill Street to Victoria Street, this would possibly pose a threat to the Singapore Chinese Chamber of Commerce (1964) and to the quite ordinary, modern Telecoms exchange building (1979), both on the right side. Is Eu Court the sacrificial lamb to save these buildings?

This is not to say that there would not be other important features at risk on the right side of the road - that charming nook, St Gregory’s Place, and the Burhani Mosque (1925), sandwiched between the Telecoms exchange and the Chinese Chamber of Commerce, would also be badly missed.

And of course, on the right-hand corner, Stamford Road-Hill Street, is the magnificent Stamford House (1904), now under a preservation order.

We believe that many other groups and individuals besides ourselves may have views on this issue and we believe they should be thoroughly aired before any firm action is undertaken. We would like to hear from the Singapore Institute of Architects, from the Singapore Institute of Planners, the History Society, and the many citizens who share our feelings that "enough is enough". Enough cars, enough roads, enough demolition.

On the 7 May sitting of Parliament, the Minister of National Development, Mr S. Dhanabal was asked by Dr Tan Cheng Bock about the conservation of Eu Court. Mr Dhanabal began by reiterating that "the solution to our traffic problems does not lie in road widening and construction. "Roads," he said, "already occupy 11 per cent of land in Singapore as a whole and 21 per cent of the land within the central area."

He said: "Though traffic demand within the city area will increase, we cannot meet this by widening or building new roads. We have to adopt the other measures I have mentioned, ration the use of the roads and even subject those who insist on using the city roads to suffer more congestion."

On the widening of Hill Street, he said the public could not yet see the need for it because congestion was not bad at present. It was government policy to anticipate problems before they arose and PWD studies showed that it was "essential to widen and improve this traffic corridor, that is, New Bridge Road, Hill Street, Victoria Street and Kallang Road, in order to cater for the increasing traffic demand that is expected."

An alternative route was considered but the environmental damage was much greater. Thus the choice was limited to Hill Street and the question of which of two buildings, Stamford House or Eu Court, to demolish.

Mr Dhanabal said he had personally gone down with architects and engineers to take a look at both buildings and it was decided to retain Stamford House because it has a "more outstanding architectural style". Stamford House also has a "greater potential to become an active and successful commercial centre" since it was designed and built for commercial purposes unlike Eu Court which combines shops and residences.

"This residential design, in addition to Eu Court’s ‘L’ shaped layout, makes it very difficult to convert the building into as good a commercial centre as Stamford House. Hence by conserving Stamford House, rather than Eu Court, instead of the other way round, the land use in the area is optimised."

He said it took some imagination right now to see the potential of Stamford House but once restored it he did not doubt that it would be more outstanding than Eu Court.

He concluded that the decision to demolish Eu Court was not lightly taken, but that it was necessary to complete the east-west corridor from New Bridge Road through to Kallang Road.

He said that the PWD had "not been oblivious to the need to conserve old and attractive buildings that are part of our history and heritage", The solution picked, he said, "struck the best balance between road-widening and conservation."

Takes imagination to see potential

**Stamford House**

Stamford House was built in 1904 by Seth Paul and designed by R.A.J. Bigwell of Swan and Maclaren. Bigwell was also the man who designed the Raffles Hotel, Goodwood Park Hotel, and other architecturally prominent buildings. With its elaborate ornamental mouldings and carvings, Stamford House is typical of High Victorian architecture. Stamford House is under a conservation order, like the MPH building on the other side of Eu Court.
See Telok Ayer Market

Telok Ayer: A wet market*

The Cultural and Life Styles Sub-Committee is organizing a members' evening on one of the pre-opening evenings of the Telok Ayer Market tentatively fixed for Friday December 6. Members will receive a circular to confirm the date and other details. The restored market which is expected to have the ambience of other successfully restored markets around the world such as that to be found in Quincy Market in Boston, Central Market in Kuala Lumpur and Convent Garden in London will be re-opening after a closure of more than five years.

Be among the first to see the restored market and an example of adaptive re-use of an old building. A section of the huge market will be cordoned off for Society members that evening. Make it a family affair and don't forget friends who won't want to be left out.

The Market will consist of more than 10 food stalls, four restaurants, two pubs and an outdoor restaurant. Among the traditional favourites available would be Odeon beef noodles, Bugis Street chicken rice and Zam Zam murtabak. Look out for Huaxu herbal products and the Coffee Club for a freshly brewed cuppa after dinner.

In keeping with the traditional ambience of a market setting, there will be no air-conditioning, and food will be sold from kiosks and food carts as in days of old. One of the new features of Telok Ayer Market will be evening openings and entertainment to attract crowds. On weekends and public holidays, nearby Boon Tat Street will be closed to traffic and there will be outdoor dining and entertainment.

Telok Ayer Market was converted from a wet market into a food centre in 1973. In 1986 because of possible damage from MRT works, the cast iron structure was dismantled, the pieces tagged and kept for conservation. In 1989 reconstruction of the market was completed at the cost of $6.8 million. In 1990 Scotts Holdings was awarded a 30-year lease for the adaptive re-use of the market.


Print advertising study

The Written Heritage Sub-Committee is proposing to do a study on print advertising between 1935 and 1985. The study will examine marketing tactics and spending trends as well as be a study of graphics and changing tastes of society. Since advertising is in one sense a reflection of social aspirations, this study of print advertising hopes to track some of the changes in society.

The period to be covered represents three distinct eras of Singapore history: colonial (1928-41), postwar/pre-independence (1945-1965) and independence (1965-1985). The study will focus on two types of publications - newspapers and periodicals in all four languages.

The committee is looking for interested researchers. There is the possibility that this study could become a joint project with the National Museum. Anyone interested should call Goh Eek Kheng, chairman of the Written Heritage Sub-Committee at tel. 734-4579 during office hours.

Shards for picking

Amateur archaeologists and others interested in old pottery shards may find it worth their while to pay a visit to Pulau Semakau. The beaches are littered with thousands of pieces of old pottery and smoware shards.

"You could pick up literally hundreds of kilograms," said Dr John Miksic of the National University of Singapore History Department who took a group on a mini-expedition there recently.

A study is now going on to look into the feasibility of Pulau Semakau as an off-shore dumping site for rubbish. Environmentalists have expressed concern over the proposed plan.

Catch glimpses of colourful Tanjong Pagar

Getting glimpses of one of the oldest and most historic areas of Singapore will now be easier with the permanent display at 51 Neil Road. Tanjong Pagar which means Cape of Stakes was the engine of growth in early Singapore.

When the Singapore River mouth proved too small for the increasingly large numbers of boats which came to trade, the deep waters at Tanjong Pagar was the perfect answer. The Suez Canal and the age of steamships furthered the growth of the area once given to nutmeg plantations.

Adjacent to the Chinese quarter with its large pool of cheap coolie labour, Tanjong Pagar also developed a Little India with the settling of Indian migrants employed at the docks. The traditional Malay community was also to be found in Tanjong Pagar with the original Temenggong's home located on a hill overlooking the harbour.

Tanjong Pagar's landmark: The Jinrikisha Station

The exhibition titled Tanjong Pagar - Singapore's Cradle of Development was actually created in 1989 by the Tanjong Pagar Citizens' Consultative Committee to showcase the rich heritage of the district. The exhibition was in conjunction with the publication of a two-volume commemorative on the colourful area.

The books, one of pictures and one of essays, were published by the Tanjong Pagar Citizens' Consultative Committee with the help of the National Archives Department and the Oral History Department in 1989.

Called Glimpses of Tanjong Pagar, the exhibition consists of several artifacts such as an antique barber chair and opium den paraphernalia, three dioramas and 180 photographs showing the changes in the landscape of the area and lifestyles of the people.

Said Mr Leong Chuan Loong, chairman of Tanjong Pagar Citizens' Consultative Committee: "We are happy that Tanjong Pagar Heritage offered us a shop in 51 Neil Road. Being in the Tanjong Pagar Conservation Area, the venue serves as a historical link to the districts glorious past."

The exhibition is open from 11 am to 9 pm daily and admission is free.
Accord on information sharing

Conservationists at a seminar in Penang agreed to form an Asia-Pacific NGO to share information and experience on conservation. The temporary secretariat is in Penang and the Persatuan Warisan Pulau Pinang (Penang Heritage Trust) has agreed to do the initial co-ordinating work to get an Asia-Pacific seminar going. The venue and organiser have yet to be decided but Taiwan is said to be keen to start the ball rolling.

New executive committee

Twelve members were elected into the executive committee at the annual general meeting held in May. Incumbent president William Lim was later re-elected as President for another two-year term from 1991-1993.

The Director of the National Museum and Director of Oral History Department, Kwa Chong Guan, is the Vice-President.

Other officials are Claire Ho, Honorary Secretary, and Goh Eek Kheng, Honorary Treasurer. Committee members are Y.P. Chee, Rafiq Jumabhoy, Geraldine Lowe, William Sim, Tan Teck Kiam, and Bobby Wong. Co-opted into the executive committee was Kenson Kwok.

Walkabouts

The Cultural and Lifestyle Sub-committee is putting together a series of heritage walks with Ms Geraldine Lowe, the expert guide in this field. There will be more details on time, place and themes before long.

Members and their friends who are interested in this walk should get in touch with Y.P. Chee at tel. 339-7633.

Treasures underground

Construction sites in the heavily built-up older parts of the city could be invaluable archaeological sites - provided some system could be set up to give archaeologists like Dr John Miksic of the National University of Singapore History Department first crack at examining the layers of newly dug earth.

The early settlements of Singapore were not just found on Fort Canning. They stretched down towards the banks of the Singapore River and such heavily built-up areas as Hill Street, High Street, Boat Quay and Empress Place have potential as archaeological digs.

Dr Miksic and the Director of the National Museum, Kwa Chong Guan, who often spend lunch-time peering down newly dug ditches and construction sites in the area around Fort Canning whenever there are diggings have been rewarded with some interesting finds.

Said Kwa: “Every time a drain is dug or cables laid, some things can be recovered.”

He lamented the absence of a formal system of notification of the National Museum about such “digs” in areas with potential as archaeological “sites”.

During the construction of the two CTE tunnels which were opened recently in September, part of the disused railway track which once ran along Tank Road down to Keppel Harbour was uncovered.

Said the PWDs Chief Resident Engineer Khor Poh Hwa: “We found the tracks and even the timber sleepers intact about three metres underground.”

Participants from more than five countries met to look at the role of non-governmental organisations in promoting urban conservation through working with the government and increasing public participation. Miyoko Shimazaki of Nihon Fukushi University spoke on urban social movements in Japan; Katsukira Kihara of a citizens' conservation group in Nara on citizens' groups in Japan; Prof Reinhard Goethert of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology on the Boston experience.

Although the Society has limited experience with public participation, president William Lim spoke on promoting urban conservation in Singapore, and Badan Warisan on the Kuala Lumpur situation, and the Penang Heritage Trust on the Penang situation.

The Seminar on Urban Conservation and Public Participation held in Penang in late September was jointly organised by the Penang State government and the Persatuan Warisan Pulau Pinang (Penang Heritage Trust). It was co-sponsored by the United Nations Centre for Regional Development.
Four new committees formed

The Society has formed four sub-committees which will organise the heritage activities for the year. The president, William Lim, explained that the rationale was for better organisation of activities. In the past, activities criss-crossed each other instead of being in the hands of people with a special interest in the subject. The activities for this year will now be organised by these new sub-committees and co-ordinated by the executive committee.

These four new sub-committees now headed by members with an interest in those areas of heritage are:
* Heritage of the Physical Environment
  headed by Bobby Wong of School of Architecture, National University of Singapore, Kent Ridge (0511); tel.: 772-3520, fax: 779-3078
* Written Heritage headed by Goh Eick Kheng, 12-A King Albert Park (2159); tel.: 734-4579, fax: 235-3487
* Heritage of Performing and Visual Arts headed by Claire Ho, 67 Faber Drive (0512); tel.: 772-3724, fax: 462-0186, pager 207-4001
* Heritage of Culture and Lifestyles
  headed by Y.P. Chee, 15 Queen Street, #03-01 Tan Chong Tower (0718); tel.: 339-7633, fax 339-5665

Members who are interested in these areas or who want to help plan activities on any one of these areas can get in touch with the chairperson of the particular committee.

Japanese Occupation anniversary coming up

Heritage Hunt 1992

The might of British colonialism ended on Sunday, 15 February 1942, at the Ford Car Factory on Bukit Timah Road when British Commander in Singapore Lt-Gen A.E. Percival (first on right) surrendered the numerically superior British forces to the Japanese Army Commander, Lt-Gen Tomoyuki Yamashita (centre). It was not an auspicious start to the first day of the Lunar New Year of the Horse. Singapore was renamed Syoman and four years of Japanese Occupation began.

The 50th anniversary of this event which changed significantly the perspective of Asians towards the British promises to be a big one involving theSHS MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION AND RENEWAL FORM

I wish to join the Singapore Heritage Society as (tick appropriate box below):
- Ordinary member (Singapore citizens/permanent residents aged over 21 only, annual subscription $50.00)
- Associate member (all others over 21 and resident in Singapore, no voting rights, not eligible for office, annual subscription $50.00)
- Corporate member (all organisations, no voting rights, not eligible for office, invited as observers to meetings, annual subscription $1000.00)

Name: Mr/Mrs/Miss/Ms ........................................
Organization: (corporate members) ......................................
Address: .......................................................................... (home) ................................................................................ (Office)
Telephone: ............................................................................

I enclose my cheque for $ ........................................... No ........................................... made out to the Singapore Heritage Society. (Due to shortage of space, a detailed application form for membership will follow shortly.)

RENEWAL OF SUBSCRIPTION

I enclose a cheque for $50.00 in renewal of my subscription.

Date: ........................................... Signature: .................................

(Please note that those who joined between April and October 1991 will need to have their subscription renewed by 30th April 1992.)

Sentosa waxworks of the surrender

dangerous heritage

Not all heritage items are prized finds. Some can be downright dangerous. Early in September the find of a war relic in the form of a rusty shell killed a four-year-old boy.

The shell was found on the beach off Changi Coast Road by the boy's uncle when the family went there on a picnic. The army's subsequent search of the area with its 38 gun batteries uncovered 14 bombs and artillery shells.

Construction work at Victoria School in Geylang Bahru also uncovered more than 20 shells which were not armed. They were removed by the army.

The coastal areas and islands off Singapore were the scenes of feverish defence preparations against a Japanese invasion in the 1940s.

Gun batteries were built and small contingents of troops deployed in the areas where the British expected the Japanese invading force to land. These potential and the real battle sites could come into their own when Singapore celebrates the 50th anniversary of the British surrender of Singapore in 1942.

Printed by Ngai Heng Book Binder Pte Ltd