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Your Stories, Our Heritage

Heritage Awareness among Singaporeans at an all time high as Singapore HeritageFest 2007 opens with an expanded programme

Singapore, 18 July 2007 – The Singapore HeritageFest 2007 (SHF 2007) opens today at the *Festival Hub* at Suntec City. Back again for the fourth year running, this year's Festival encourages people to share stories of their memories as part of the Festival's theme of 'People and Memories'. The Festival will run from today to 29 July.

Heritage Awareness Among Singaporeans – The Heritage Awareness Survey 2006

The National Heritage Board (NHB) commissioned a survey in 2006 to assess heritage awareness among Singaporeans and the effectiveness of NHB in promoting such awareness. The survey was carried out by Professor Brenda Yeoh and Associate Professor Shirlena Huang, from the Department of Geography, National University of Singapore. The inaugural survey was carried out in 2002.

The key results are as follows:

- The Heritage Awareness Index rose 20%. The Index measures the level of heritage awareness, knowledge, appreciation, and action through involvement.
- Almost all Singaporeans surveyed (98.4%) felt that heritage plays a positive role in their lives. This is a 38.1% jump over the previous survey's result in 2002.
- More than 90% of those surveyed rated our government's efforts in heritage awareness and preservation as successful. This is up from 83.8% from 2002.
- An overwhelming 90% agreed that preserving our heritage would become more important as Singapore moves towards becoming a global city. This is up from 82.3% in 2002.

- The majority of Singaporeans affirmed heritage as a “rooting” factor. 87% of the respondents agreed that a better understanding of Singapore’s history and heritage will increase their own sense of belonging to Singapore - a 5% increase over the 82% in 2002

“I am happy to report that the Board has achieved significant headway in making heritage a part of every Singaporeans’ lives. The positive results of this survey is a great boost to all of us in the heritage sector, and we hope to push forward with more activities like the Singapore HeritageFest to build on our good results. I look forward to welcoming more Singaporeans and visitors at our museums and heritage events,” said Professor Tommy Koh, Chairman of the National Heritage Board.

Singapore HeritageFest 2007

This year’s theme, ‘What’s Your Story?’, aims to get Singaporeans thinking about the memories, stories, traditions and cultures that make up the unique Singaporean story. Through the fun-filled and educational festival programmes, the Festival aims to make Singaporeans realise that everyone plays a part in shaping the heritage of the future, and that the personal and collective stories of Singaporeans are what makes our multi-cultural heritage rich, interesting and unique.

“We want Singaporeans to start thinking about their memories, and share their stories with everyone through the SHF 2007 activities. These stories make up our unique and colourful Singaporean story, and they can connect and root us as a people,” said Michael Koh, CEO of the National Heritage Board.

In addition to the *Festival Hub* at Suntec City Mall, highlights of SHF 2007 include familiar favourites like *Fun on Foot*, a heritage-based treasure hunt featuring Singapore’s ‘Firsts’, as well as *Expedition ‘H’*, guided adventure tours to off-the-beaten-track sites in Singapore. New programmes like *Culture By The Bay*, *MyStory Portal*, a *Vintage Car Showcase* and *Sound Stories 1 & 2* (a concert at Zouk and a closing finale by Singapore’s popular band, Tania) have also been introduced at this year’s Festival.

New Programmes at the Singapore HeritageFest 2007

Culture By The Bay (27th July to 31st August 2007)

The Singapore HeritageFest this year also acts as the curtain raiser for the National Day Festival 2007. In conjunction with the National Day Festival, NHB is partnering NDP Exco and the Ministry of Education for the first time to present *Culture By The Bay*, a new festival outreach event designed to showcase students' memories of the lifeline of Singapore – the Singapore River. *Culture By The Bay*, which will be launched on 27th July, will coincide with the first National Day Preview held at Marina Bay the following day, and visitors can look forward to viewing art sculptures bearing students' artworks located along the banks of the river starting from Clarke Quay and ending near the Marina Barrage. *Culture By The Bay* also has two other components – an Arts Fair selling exquisite yet affordable handmade art (e.g. paintings by budding artists, photographs by amateur photographers, prints, etc) and craft items, as well as movie screenings at the Asian Civilisations Museum on 22nd July.

Vintage Car Showcase (22nd July 2007)

Another new programme for SHF 2007 is the Vintage Car Showcase, which partners the Malaysia and Singapore Vintage Car Register to bring in a display of much-loved vintage and classic cars, all above 35 years old, for a one-day display on 22nd July at the grounds of the National Museum of Singapore. The owners of these special cars will also be making an appearance to share their memories and stories of their cars with the public. Before the display, these cars will also be driving around the city similar to the proposed F1 route that morning from 9am for members of the public to have a closer look. It's a not to be missed event.

Sound Stories 1 & 2 (Concert at Zouk and a closing finale by Tania) (28th and 29th July 2007)

Also premiering at SHF 2007 is Sound Stories. Comprising two such events, Sound Stories 1 is a concert at Zouk where bands like Jive Talkin', Max Surin (member of the former *Tokyo Square*), Vernon Cornelius, and Matthew and the Mandarins will present the music of yesteryear in a night of nostalgia at Zouk on 28th July. These well-established veterans of the music industry will also share their memories of the music scene at this event, hosted by veteran Gold 90.5FM presenter, Brian Richmond. These bands and musicians will also be accompanied by younger bands such as Dubious Brothers and Reverie.

Sound Stories 2 will see a 50-minute performance by Singapore's well-loved band, Tania at the Festival Hub at Suntec City on 29th July. Fronted by musical and entertainment stalwarts Alban De Souza and Zul Sutan, Tania has been performing songs from legends like Santana, the Beatles, Dire Straits, the Eagles and many more. Don't miss the musical closure to this year's Singapore HeritageFest.

Culture 101

And to help people gather the tools to start documenting their stories and memories, the festival this year will for the first time offer a new programme called Culture 101. This series of 11 talks given by experts in the various fields will tickle the interest of, and boost Singaporeans' knowledge about, the arts and heritage.

Culture 101 will impart useful tips and general knowledge on art appreciation, conservation of keepsakes and how to conduct oral history recordings.

To round off the new programmes above are other events that help to share stories and memories of people and places.

Launch of Bukit Timah Trail (23rd July 2007)

A brand new Bukit Timah Trail will be launched on 23rd July. A project collaboration between the National Heritage Board and the National Junior College, this trail will highlight the many interesting spots within Bukit Timah and the never-before told stories of the area will be shared. A trail booklet will also be launched.

10 Years That Shaped a Nation (28th July 2007)

Another significant event is the launch of the *10 Years That Shaped a Nation* exhibition by the National Archives of Singapore and the National Library Board. This exhibition will highlight and tell the stories of the people of the First Cabinet and their team, and their contributions to the building of the initial chapters of the Singapore Story.

More information on the festival components can be found in the attached factsheet or via the festival website www.heritagefest.org.sg.

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About the Singapore HeritageFest

Organised by the Education and Outreach Division of the National Heritage Board (NHB), Singapore HeritageFest is NHB's signature annual event aimed at raising the level of awareness and appreciation amongst Singaporeans for our rich and multicultural heritage. Over the past three years, over 2.5 million visitors, local and foreign, have participated and been delighted by the Festival's specially-curated exhibitions, treasure hunts, heritage trails, competitions, cultural performances, events, etc. Singapore HeritageFest won the inaugural "Uniquely Singapore" award at the 21st Singapore Tourism Awards 2006. With this feather in its cap, the festival aims to continue delighting visitors with its fun-filled, interactive and educational programmes.

About National Heritage Board

The National Heritage Board (NHB) champions the development and promotion of a vibrant cultural and heritage sector in Singapore. It makes heritage enriching, relevant and accessible to all through staging innovative programmes and forging collaborative partnerships with both private and people sector counterparts. NHB leverages on state-of-the-art technology and refreshing new approaches to make heritage more dynamic, alive and exciting for different audiences. It also manages both national and public museums, the National Archives of Singapore, and the Heritage Conservation Centre. NHB was formed on 1 August 1993 as a statutory board under the Ministry of Information, Communications and the Arts (MICA).