

MEDIA RELEASE

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THE NATIONAL HERITAGE BOARD AND NATIONAL LIBRARY BOARD CELEBRATE 100 YEARS OF THE JOHOR-SINGAPORE CAUSEWAY

*New exhibition, specially curated website, and talks to
commemorate the centenary of the Causeway*



Mr Edwin Tong, Minister for Culture, Community and Youth & Second Minister for Law and YAB Dato' Onn Hafiz Ghazi, Johor Menteri Besar at the launch of NHB's *The Causeway: A Century of Connections* travelling exhibition.

Credit: Minister Edwin Tong's Facebook page

Singapore, 28 June 2024 – In celebration of the Causeway's centennial anniversary, the National Heritage Board (NHB) has launched a new travelling exhibition, ***The Causeway: A Century of Connections***, while National Library Board (NLB) has rolled out a **specially curated website** and **a series of talks**. These commemorate the Causeway's significance as part of the heritage of both nations, and its role in the lives of Singaporeans and Malaysians.

2 The Causeway was officially opened on 28 June 1924 by Governor of the Straits Settlements Sir Laurence Guillemard and Sultan Ibrahim of Johor. Over the last 100 years, it has connected Singapore and Malaysia both physically and metaphorically. As one of the busiest land border crossings in the world, it links two countries bound by geography, history, culture, and kinship, and is also a symbol of deep, abiding international ties and innumerable personal ones.

3 Mr Gerald Wee, Director (Education and Community Outreach), NHB said: "Over the last century, the Causeway has become a ubiquitous part of life for Singaporeans and Malaysians, and in that time, it has borne witness to countless events and stories, from the historic to the deeply personal. Through this exhibition, we hope to tell some of these tales, set against the backdrop of the Causeway's evolution through the 20th and early-21st centuries."



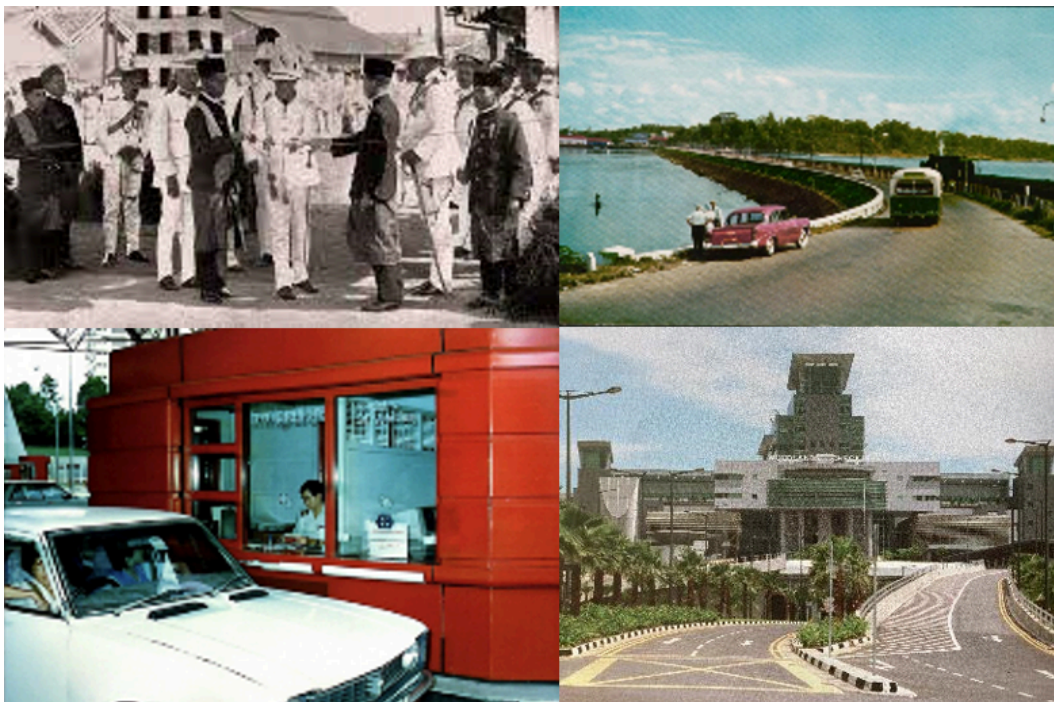
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4 Ms Julia Chee, Director, National Archives of Singapore (NAS), added: “For 100 years, the Causeway has been more than a border crossing between Singapore and Malaysia, facilitating the flow of people and goods as well as boosting bilateral relations. We hope that the resources featured in our curated website and public talks will reflect this strong connection, and inspire more to share their own stories of this special link the Causeway has offered us.”



Clockwise from left to right: Governor Sir Laurence Guillemard (centre) and Sultan Ibrahim of Johor (right) cutting the silken cord at the opening ceremony of the Causeway on 28 June 1924, *courtesy of National Archives of Malaysia*; Bus crossing the Causeway, c. 1970, *National Museum of Singapore collection, courtesy of National Heritage Board*; The present Woodlands Checkpoint, c. 1999, *courtesy of Singapore Press Holdings*; A vehicle going through immigration at the former Woodlands Checkpoint, c. 1989, *courtesy of Immigration and Checkpoints Authority*

NHB travelling exhibition — The Causeway: A Century of Connections

5 *The Causeway: A Century of Connections* traces the origins of the Causeway, from the conditions in the 19th century that led to its construction and how it was built, to its development alongside the rapid post-war growth of the region and its evolution through tumultuous events such as the Japanese Occupation and the COVID-19 pandemic.

6 Juxtaposed against this historical backdrop are stories of some of the men and women whose paths have intersected with the bridge. Notable stories include the women who would cross the Causeway in the 1970s from Johor into Singapore in old clothes to shop at the

Woodlands Saturday night market and return wearing their new hauls; students like Isabel Chang who would wake up as early as 4am daily to get to school in Singapore and only return home in Johor at 8pm; and workers who were stranded on either side when the Causeway was shut down in March 2020 because of the pandemic.



Kampong Lorong Fatimah immigration post, 1989
Courtesy of National Archives of Singapore

7 The exhibition also features anecdotes about how the Causeway impacted people living near it, such as that of Kampong Lorong Fatimah. The main route to the kampong passed through the newly constructed Woodlands Immigration Checkpoint following the separation of Singapore and Malaysia (an immigration checkpoint was not needed before the separation). Mr Rudy Z, who used to visit Kampong Lorong Fatimah frequently, said: “Drivers had to go past the old Woodlands Checkpoint and show their passports or identity cards there, but residents would not need to get their passports stamped. After that, there’s a small *lorong* on the left before the Causeway starts where there’s a Cisco guard post. The guard would check your passport or identity card again.”

8 The exhibition’s design is inspired by the old Woodlands immigration checkpoints and booths. It takes visitors on an immersive journey by mimicking the passage through the Causeway, with a ‘passport’ that can be used to collect various ‘immigration stamps’ around the exhibition. The stories are brought to life with displays of archival photographs from both Singaporean and Malaysian institutions.

9 The exhibition begins its run on 28 June 2024 at Woodlands Civic Centre, and will subsequently travel to the National Archives of Singapore building at Canning Rise to coincide with a public talk on the Causeway in September 2024. Following this, it will tour institutes of higher learning, public libraries, and other public spaces. More details can be found at <https://go.gov.sg/nhb-hotm>. Please refer to **Annex A** for a list of photos used in the exhibition.

10 To mark the 100th anniversary of the official opening of the Johor-Singapore Causeway on 28 June 1924, NLB has rolled out a curated website at <https://go.gov.sg/causewaycentenary>. Online visitors can explore archival records related to the Causeway, which range from photographs and audio-visual resources to oral history interviews.

11 The website presents bite-sized stories on the history of the Causeway, covering the background and its construction, its well-established role in facilitating the movement of people and goods, and lesser-known events that occurred there. It aims to present interesting facts about the Causeway through light narratives.

NLB — BiblioAsia feature: The Making of the Causeway

12 An extract from The Causeway book (jointly published by the National Archives of Malaysia and the National Archives of Singapore in 2011) is featured in BiblioAsia's July-September 2024 issue. With this, one can journey back 100 years to find out how the Causeway was built. Print copies of BiblioAsia are available at all public libraries and at the NAS building (whilst stock lasts) or read it digitally at <https://go.gov.sg/biblioasia-causeway>.

NLB — Public Talks

13 Public talks will be held on 27 June, 4 July, and 19 September 2024. Speakers include Archivists from the National Archives of Singapore, as well as guest speakers from the National Archives of Malaysia and the National University of Singapore, and will cover the different facets of the Causeway. Details of the talks are in **Annex B**.

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About the National Heritage Board

The National Heritage Board (NHB) was formed on 1 August 1993. As the custodian of Singapore's heritage, NHB is responsible for telling the Singapore story, sharing the Singaporean experience and imparting our Singapore spirit.

NHB's mission is to preserve and celebrate the shared heritage of our diverse communities, for the purpose of education, nation-building and cultural understanding. It manages the national museums and heritage institutions, safeguards and promotes intangible cultural heritage, and sets policies relating to heritage sites, monuments and the national collection. Through the national collection, NHB curates heritage programmes and presents exhibitions to connect the past, present and future generations of Singaporeans. NHB is a statutory board under the Ministry of Culture, Community and Youth. Please visit www.nhb.gov.sg for more information.

About the National Library Board

The National Library Board (NLB) nurtures Readers for Life, Learning Communities and a Knowledgeable Nation by promoting reading, learning and history through its network of 28 libraries, the National Library and the National Archives of Singapore. NLB also forges strategic partnerships that encourage awareness, appreciation and greater discovery of Singapore's history through its rich collections on Singapore and the region.

NLB achieves excellence through innovation, focusing on citizen engagement and co-creation, resource and digital innovation. This creates learning opportunities, greater access to library resources, services, and archival collections, as well as a continual development of innovative library spaces. Established on 1 September 1995 as a statutory board, NLB is under the Ministry of Communications and Information (MCI).

For more information, please visit the [NLB website](#), and NLB's [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), [LinkedIn](#) and [YouTube](#) channels.




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Annex A — Images from The Causeway: A Century of Connections

	<p>Passenger horse-drawn carriage, also known as an omnibus, c. early 19th century</p> <p><i>National Museum of Singapore collection, courtesy of National Heritage Board</i></p>
	<p>Singapore-Johore ferry service, 1905</p> <p><i>Arshak C Galstaun Collection, courtesy of National Archives of Singapore</i></p>
	<p>Railway station at Woodlands, 1907</p> <p><i>National Museum of Singapore collection, courtesy of National Heritage Board</i></p>



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Causeway under construction seen from
Woodlands, July 1922

Courtesy of National Archives of Malaysia



Construction of the lock, 1921

Courtesy of the National Archives of Malaysia



Sir Guillemard (centre) and Sultan Ibrahim
(right) cutting the silken cord at the opening
ceremony of the Causeway on 28 June 1924

Courtesy of National Archives of Malaysia



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Japanese soldiers crossing the Causeway into Singapore, 1942

*Lim Kheng Chye Collection, courtesy of
National Archives of Singapore*



Former prisoners-of-war walking across the Causeway, 1945

*Nederlands Instituut Voor
Oorlogsdokumentatie (NIOD) collection,
courtesy of National Archives of Singapore*



Orang Seletar on their floating shelters, 1950s

*Dr Ivan Polunin collection, courtesy of
National Archives of Singapore*



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Old Woodlands Checkpoint, c. late 1970s

*Courtesy of Immigration & Checkpoints
Authority*



Prime Minister Goh (left) and Malaysia's
Prime Minister Dr Mahathir Mohamad (right)
at the opening of Second Link, 1998

*Ministry of Information and the Arts
Collection, courtesy of National Archives of
Singapore*



Aerial view of Woodlands checkpoint, the
Causeway and Johor, 2024

Courtesy of National Heritage Board



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Annex B — Public Talks

- 1. Archives Invites: Johore Causeway: Materials in the National Archives of Malaysia by Senior Archivist, Mr Nurul Azizi bin Sapihee, National Archives of Malaysia.**
Thu, 27 June 2024, 7pm to 8pm, Zoom
Register now via [Eventbrite](#).
- 2. Archives Unlocked: The Causeway: The Line That Ties by Hamizah Ibrahim, Archivist, National Archives of Singapore and Yong Jing Jing, Assistant Archivist, National Archives of Singapore**
Thu, 4 Jul 2024, 7pm to 8pm, Zoom
Register now via [Eventbrite](#).
- 3. Archives Invites: A 100-Year Connection: The Johor-Singapore Causeway Through Social Sciences and Humanities Lenses by Dr Tim Bunnell, Professor at the Department of Geography and Director of the Asia Research Institute (ARI) at the National University of Singapore**
Thu, 19 Sep 2024, 7pm to 8pm, NAS Oldham Theatre, L3, National Archives Building
Register now via [Eventbrite](#).