



PRESS RELEASE
(FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE)

Trailing Through Bukit Timah

National Heritage Board Works with National Junior College to Create Singapore's Third Community Trail and the first collaboration of such a nature with youth

Singapore, 23 July 2007: Today marks the launch of Singapore's third community trail, as the National Heritage Board and National Junior College come together for the first time to create the Bukit Timah Trail. Launched as part of the Singapore HeritageFest 2007, this collaborative project will highlight the many interesting spots within Bukit Timah and share the never-before told stories of the area.

The Bukit Timah Community Trail is the third such trail to be launched, after the Jalan Besar and Balestier Trails in 2006. The Bukit Timah Community Trail is based on a cultural mapping project by the National Junior College. The National Heritage Board then developed the students' work further, adding more depth and information to it as well as designing the trail. This collaboration allowed National Heritage Board an opportunity to engage the youth of Singapore and, at the same time, move beyond national history into community history, telling the story of the ordinary Singaporeans.

"The launch of the Bukit Timah Community trail is a great addition to this year's Singapore Heritagefest," said Mr Michael Koh, Chief Executive Officer of National Heritage Board. "It talks about real people with real stories, which fits perfectly into our theme this year. Also it gives us a great chance to engage the youth in their heritage, allowing them to see that everyday, with everything they do, they are creating heritage for the future."



The Road More Traveled

Spanning 25 km, or 17 milestones, from one end of the island to the other, Bukit Timah Road has a history like no other part of Singapore. It serves as the main arterial road that feeds Kranji, Orchard Road, Newton and Little India. But to many older Singaporeans and Bukit Timah residents, it is not the road but the history and places that define Bukit Timah.

Of course, with such a wide area to cover, no one trail will ever do justice to the rich natural and historical heritage of Bukit Timah. However, this trail, which starts at the 9th milestone of Bukit Timah, near the Old Ford Factory, provides visitors with some of the interesting highlights of the area. Divided into eight themed areas, the Bukit Timah Trail gives an overview of the different eras in the history of Bukit Timah.

Buildings and their Stories

One of the first points on the trail is Memories at Old Ford Factory. Originally built by Ford Motor Works in 1941 to replace their old factory on Anson Road, it was the first motor-car assembly plant in Southeast Asia and later became the site for the signing of the unconditional surrender of the British Forces to the Japanese Army in the Ford Board Room.

Just further along the trail is another well remembered sight, the former Bukit Timah Fire Station. The 4th fire station to be built in Singapore, its façade has not changed, looking just like it did when the station was built in 1956.

Cultural Melting Pot

Bukit Timah has always consisted of a colorful mix of European and local communities that is distinctive of Singapore's multicultural society and evidenced by the variety of iconic locations, seen on the trail.

One such place is the former Bukit Timah Turf Club. Home to the Singapore Turf Club for 66 years (1933 – 1999), the Bukit Timah Race Course has witnessed the presence of illustrious



visitors like HM Queen Elizabeth II, HRH Prince Philip and HRH Princess Anne in their first visit to Singapore in 1972.

Places such as the Masjid Al-Huda, a mosque that was built in 1925, and the Hoon San Temple – known for its intricate, interlocking wooden beams typical of Hokkien architecture – are strong indicators of the local heritage that still exists in the area.

Back to Schools

One of the many distinctive qualities of Bukit Timah is the presence of a whole cluster of historically distinguished schools with long and illustrious histories. Among these illustrious names is Hwa Chong Junior College, which, in 1974, became Singapore's first government-aided Junior College. Also included is Methodist Girls' School, St. Margaret's Secondary School and National Junior College, which was Singapore's first junior college, established in 1969.

The launch of the Bukit Timah Community Trail marks a new step forward for National Heritage Board, as they go beyond the area of national history and delve into community history, telling the story not just of Singapore as a country, but of the people that make Singapore great.

Said Ms Thangamma Karthigesu, "This project highlighted the enthusiasm and willingness of our youth to document and promote our heritage. The entire process also helped them pick up skills such as leadership, research and writing skills and helped them work in teams and develop people skills. All in all, this project helped the students to better understand Bukit Timah and provided an opportunity for them to make new friends and understand another culture or religion experientially in a fun and engaging way."

-End-



About the Singapore HeritageFest

Organised by the Public Education 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).