



## **A Media Release by My Community**

Embargoed until 8am on 23 February 2019

### **LAUNCH OF MUSEUM @ MY QUEENSTOWN – SINGAPORE’S FIRST GROUND-UP COMMUNITY MUSEUM**

**Singapore, 17 February 2019** – The family-run provisions shop, Thin Huat, had been serving the community for more than five decades. Helmed by the affable Ang family, the humble shop was a throwback to the 1960s where provisions shops were sparse and non-airconditioned, and offered payments by credit, purchases in small quantities, free deliveries and freshly grated coconut. Competition from chain supermarkets, rising operational costs and the proprietors’ declining age and health prompted its closure in April 2018. On the last week of its operations, elderly residents and regular customers in the ageing neighbourhood hovered around the stall, took photographs with the shop keepers and reluctantly parted company with the Tanglin Halt institution and its loquacious proprietors.

2. The iconic Thin Huat signage, its decades-old weighing scales and sacks bags will be displayed at Museum @ My Queenstown, a ground-up community museum which serves as a repository of social memories and a focal point for social networks where members of the community interpret, negotiate and form their identities and relationships with their neighbours and the neighbourhood where they live in. The communal space operates on a sustainable model which receives no government funding and is entirely funded, managed and curated by residents in Queenstown.

3. Mr Kwek Li Yong, Co-Founder and President of My Community, said, “Museum @ My Queenstown is an important establishment which serves as an anchor for localised memories where residents can interpret, negotiate and form their identities in an everchanging environment. The museum narrates the endearing story of the common man, immortalises our collective memory as a community, celebrates the little things which makes Queenstown special and reconnects individuals to the social

networks in the community. On a broader note, the museum is a representation of how the community – businesses, religious institutions, politicians and residents – can come together to document and preserve things that are culturally significant to the community.”

4 Dr Chia Shi-Lu, Member-of-Parliament (MP) for Tanjong Pagar GRC (Queenstown) agrees, “Museum @ My Queenstown is a testament to the growing maturity of the cultural and heritage sector in Singapore where residents take the front seat in the planning and negotiation with government agencies, curating the exhibitions and programmes, managing the day-to-day operations of the museum, and even funding the museum space. By involving the community in every phase of planning, the museum imbues a greater sense of belonging, rootedness and attachment to the community.”

### **A community museum in the making for 9 years**

5 The idea of an independent ground-up community museum in Queenstown, which provides an avenue for residents to preserve and share the town’s history and heritage, was first mooted in 2010. Over the past five years, My Community has engaged businesses, residents and other stakeholders in Queenstown to collect more than 2,000 photographs, 300 oral histories and 50 artefacts. The civic group has also raised over \$250,000 from Queenstown residents and institutions including ABC Brickworks Business Association, Tiong Ghee Temple, Sri Muneeswaran Temple, Faith Methodist Church, Church of the Good Shepherd, Queenstown Chinese Methodist Church, Church of Our Saviour, Queenstown Lutheran Church and Queenstown Baptist Church; charitable foundations including BinjaiTree, Lee Foundation, Ho Bee Foundation, SPH Foundation, SBS Transit Ltd; and numerous current and former Queenstown residents.

6 The current shophouse museum serves as a precursor to the future My Queenstown – Centre of Community Arts and Heritage in Dawson, which comprises an archival centre, a community archaeology centre, permanent and temporary exhibition and programme spaces, a collaborative exhibition space, and offices for community arts and heritage groups.

7 Highlights of Museum @ My Queenstown:

- **Our Stories: Do you remember them?** is an exhibition held in conjunction with the opening of Museum @ My Queenstown. Through a nine-year collection effort, the exhibition showcases physical and digital artefacts from the community that capture Queenstown's history and heritage and attempts to provoke conversations about its future. One of the highlights in the exhibition is the neon-lit “女皇” (Chinese: Queen) sign and bowling, retrieved from the beloved former Queenstown Cinema and Bowling Alley when it was undergoing demolition in 2013.
- The **programme spaces** on the first and second level of the shophouse museum will host a series of talks, seminars and workshops on anything and everything about Queenstown's history and heritage. The authors on Sherlock Sam, Adan Jimenez and Felicia Low, will be gracing Museum @ My Queenstown on 23 March 2019 to share how they incorporated the history of Queenstown into an exciting detective story. Other notable programmes include the monthly Stories of Queenstown, an interactive session where (ex) resident-speakers are invited to share their personal memories and discuss specific topics including conservation, architecture, sports, popular culture and religion with participants.
- The **archival room** of the museum is located on the 2<sup>nd</sup> level of the shophouse. The room houses a wide collection of old photographs and artefacts contributed by residents and various institutions in Queenstown. They include weighing scales from Thin Huat provisions shop, Palace KTV and Block 74 to 80 signages, and over 2,000 rare photographs of Queenstown.

8. With effect from 1 March 2019, the operating hours of the museum are:

<b>Day</b>	<b>Time</b>
Mondays, Tuesdays & Public Holidays	Closed
Wednesdays, Thursday and Sundays	9.30am to 2.30pm
Fridays & Saturdays	9.30am to 2.30pm, 5.30pm to 8.30pm

9. For more information, please refer to:
- Annex A: 7 things you probably don't know about Queenstown
  - Annex B: List of artefacts in the first exhibition "Our Stories, Do You Remember Them?"
  - Annex C: List of upcoming exhibitions and programmes at Museum @ My Queenstown

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**About My Community**

My Community is a civic society which documents social memories, celebrates civic life and champions community arts and heritage. We believe in and strongly advocate for greater community involvement in cultural management and urban governance. We aim to shape and transform community spaces through arts, culture and heritage.

Before My Community was established as a society on 26 August 2010, the community group began organising tours in 2008 and blogging in 2009. My Community was registered as a charity under the Charities Act on 12 December 2015 and conferred with the status of an Institution of Public Character on 13 December 2016.

Today, My Community organises guided tours, exhibitions, festivals and other art, heritage and place-making programmes in Queenstown, Bukit Merah and Tiong Bahru. In 2018, the non-profit heritage group has organised 84 tours and 29 programmes which attracted over 12,000 participants.

## **Annex A: 7 Things you probably didn't know about Queenstown**

1. Queenstown is named after Queen Elizabeth II on 27 September 1953 to mark her coronation. The husband of the Queen, Prince Philip Duke of Edinburgh, her sister Princess Margaret, and her grandson Prince William Duke of Cambridge had visited Queenstown in 1965, 1972 and 2012 respectively. However, the Queen had never stepped foot on Queenstown.
2. Places and roads in Queenstown are named after towns and cities in Scotland, where the Queen spent much of her childhood. Strathmore was a valley connecting Forfar, where the Queen spent much of a childhood, with Dundee, a city near Strathmore. Birkhall was the residence of the Queen's mother whereas Stirling was market town in central Scotland.
3. Queenstown is the first satellite town in Singapore. The town pioneers a myriad of social institutions including the first technical school in 1956, the first polyclinic in 1963, the first flatted factory and first vocational institute in 1965, the first community library, the first neighbourhood sports complex and the first school for children with special needs in 1970.
4. The Singapore Improvement Trust had originally planned for five neighbourhoods in Queenstown. These neighbourhoods were Princess, Duchess, Commonwealth, Tanglin Halt and Queen's Close. The Housing and Development Board took over in 1960 and added two more neighbourhoods in Mei Ling and Buona Vista.
5. Singapore's first HDB flats are located in Queenstown. Blocks 45, 48 and 49 were the first housing blocks constructed by HDB shortly after its establishment in 1960.
6. The Home Ownership for the People Scheme and the Public Housing Scheme were launched in Queenstown in 1964 and 1968. The former is a scheme which allows Singaporeans to own their own homes whereas the latter allows Singaporeans purchase a residential apartment using their Central Provident Fund (CPF). These two schemes contribute to the high home ownership rate in Singapore.
7. The first industrial estate in Singapore is located along Alexandra Road in Queenstown. Conceived by the Singapore Improvement Trust in the 1930s to arrest the declining entrepot trade, the industrial estate was once home to factories including the Tiger Beer Brewery, Archipelago Brewery Company (ABC), Thye Hong Biscuit Factory, Lea Hin, Hock Lee Bus Depot and Nanyang Siang Pau.

**Annex B: List of artefacts in the first exhibition "Our Stories, Do You Remember Them?"**

No.	Photograph	Description
1		<p><b>The First Town Planning Map of Queenstown</b>  <i>Collection of My Community</i></p> <p>The first town planning map of Queenstown was completed by Singapore Improvement Trust's New Towns Working Party in 1958, five years after Queenstown was designated as the first satellite town in Singapore.</p> <p>The idea of constructing satellite towns was first mooted in the Report of the Housing Committee in 1947 to tackle severe housing crunch in the city fringes. The development of the community borrowed heavily from two related urban planning movements in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, namely the Garden Cities and the New Towns movement. On the one hand, the Garden Cities movement called for the creation of financially independent and self-contained towns at the outskirts of the city centre and surrounded by green spaces. On the other hand, the New Towns movement campaigned for the development of purposefully planned towns as a remedy to congestion and temporary settlements.</p> <p>Based on these urban planning concepts, a principal centre was constructed to house communal amenities including cinemas, a library, clinic and post office. The town centre was surrounded by five smaller residential neighbourhoods and industries. The colonial public housing authority, the Singapore Improvement Trust (SIT), hopes that "Queenstown will eventually have an identity of its own and a strong community existence."</p>
2		<p><b>Block 39 Forfar House sign</b>  <i>Donated by Kelvin Ang</i></p> <p>The former Forfar House was Singapore's tallest public residential building. Built at a cost of \$585,000, the 14-storey block of Singapore Improvement Trust (SIT) flats was officially</p>

		<p>opened on 24 October 1956 by then Minister for Local Government, Lands and Housing, Inche Abdul Hamid bin Haji Jumat, as the apex of architectural massing in Queenstown estate. The block comprised of 106 rental apartments and 4 shops which were served by two fast lifts that could take occupants to the top floor in 45 seconds.</p> <p>Designed in the Modern style, <i>Chap Si Lau</i> (Hokkien: 十四樓 14-storey) had a distinct zigzag appearance which played an important structural role in resisting wind pressure. The building was constructed with a reinforced concrete frame where its foundation of strip footings ran transversely across the block and held by longitudinal beams to give rigidity to the structure. The building also had a modern sanitary system where each unit was served by built-in asbestos cement refuse chutes running the full height of the block and discharging into removable bins at ground level. Water supply to <i>Chap Si Lau</i> was pumped to tanks at roof level and fed to each flat by gravitational force.</p>
3		<p><b>Block 76 Commonwealth Drive sign</b> <i>Collection of My Community</i></p> <p>Tanglin Halt is synonymous to Queenstown. It was among the earliest neighbourhoods built by the Housing Development Board. Developed between 1960 and 1967, the uniform row of ten-storey housing blocks spawned the precinct's colloquial name Tanglin Halt chap lau or ten storeys in Hokkien.</p> <p>Blocks 74 to 80 were also featured in the \$1 note of the Orchid's series</p>
4		<p><b>Mei Ling Street sign</b> <i>Donated by Kelvin Ang</i></p> <p>When WWII ended, the British government planned to acquire land from the <i>Boh Beh Kang</i> village for development. The colonial officials and later, the HDB, offered very little to the villagers. Many villagers joined the Singapore Attap Dwellers' Association and demanded</p>

		<p>better compensation. By 1968, the burial hill was exhumed and flattened to make way for the construction of Mei Ling Estate. Blocks 160 and 161 on Mei Ling Street were the first point blocks constructed by HDB.</p>
<p>5</p>		<p><b>Nippon Paint Emulsion Paint</b> <i>On Loan from Nippon Paint</i></p> <p>The former Tanglin Halt Industrial Estate was one of the first industrial estates in Singapore. Measuring some 20 acres of land and comprising a total of 38 factory lots for cottage industries, the establishment of the Industrial Estate marked Singapore's drive into industrialisation and diversification from a declining entrepot economy. Tanglin Halt was chosen for her close proximity to the former Malayan Railways and large labour catchment.</p> <p>Nippon Paint had established a single factory at the industrial estate between 1964 and 1975. The paint company, a joint Japanese-Malaysian venture, was established as "Pan-Malaysia Paint Industry Limited" in 1963 and its factory was declared opened by Dr. Goh Keng Swee, Minister for Finance, on 15 April 1965. In 1967, it was renamed "Nippon Paint".</p>
<p>6</p>		<p><b>Thye Hong Biscuit Tin</b> <i>Collection of My Community</i></p> <p>This biscuit tin was produced at the former Thye Hong Biscuit and Confectionery Factory at the junction of Alexandra Road and Tiong Bahru Road. Thye Hong one of the oldest biscuit manufacturers in Singapore and its the 40,000 square feet factory was opened in March 1935 to modernise biscuit manufacturing and expand production through automation.</p> <p>In the 1960s, the factory employed more than 200 workers and produced 1,500 tonnes of biscuits every month.</p> <p>Turned out from the factory each day was a wide variety of biscuits ranging from Marie</p>

		<p>Cream Crackers, Horlicks biscuits to Jam De Luxe cookies, a popular shortcake with pineapple jam sandwiched in between. The factory also produced the famous Torch brand sweets which were served to air travellers abroad Malaysian Airways flights. The factory exported biscuits and confectioneries to Hong Kong, Fiji, Thailand, Saudi Arabia and even Mauritius.</p> <p>In 1981, a British firm Huntley and Palmer bought up Kuan Enterprises, which owned Thye Hong, for \$12 million. The factory ceased operations on 7 January 1982.</p>
<p><b>7</b></p>		<p><b>Van Houten Chocolates Tin</b> <i>Collection of My Community</i></p> <p>The former Tanglin Halt Industrial Estate was one of the first industrial estates in Singapore. Measuring some 20 acres of land and comprising a total of 38 factory lots for cottage industries, the establishment of the Industrial Estate marked Singapore's drive into industrialisation and diversification from a declining entrepot economy. Tanglin Halt was chosen for her close proximity to the former Malayan Railways and large labour catchment.</p> <p>One of the most iconic factories at Tanglin Halt industrial estate was Sheng Huo Enterprises, which had produced Van Houten chocolates in its premises. Recollected former resident Calvin Low, "The chocolate factory started operations around 1964. At least twice a day, the factory would emit the most aromatic wafts of rich chocolatey smells into the air."</p>
<p><b>8</b></p>		<p><b>Long Hwee Book Store's Cheque writer</b> <i>Donated by Ker Ah Kin</i></p> <p>Long Hwee Book Store is an iconic book shop in Mei Ling estate. Since the 1970s, Mdm Ker Ah Kin, 64, and her husband have been mending the unimpressonable Long Hwee Book Store diligently. They sell bags, shoes, cassette tapes</p>

		<p>in addition to their wide collection of Chinese novels and literatures.</p> <p>In the early 1970s, Mei Ling was undeveloped and it was a hill covered by graves and farms. There were no schools (Mei Chin Primary was built in the late 1970s) and a mud road was all that led residents to Queensway. The township in Mei Ling blossomed and business at Long Hwee was brisk as the pioneer book store served a growing number of students in the estate.</p> <p>Long Hwee Book Store quickly became an icon where students from all walks of life would congregate and purchase their supplies of stationery and books. Recalled Eric Low, 42, an ex-Hua Yi Primary and Queensway Secondary student, "This was where I bought my school bag when I was studying at Hua Yi."</p>
9		<p><b>Archipelago Brewery Company beer bottle</b>  <i>Collection of My Community</i></p> <p>The beer bottle was produced at the former Archipelago Brewery Company at Alexandra Road, Built at a cost of \$2,250,000, the brewery complex was Singapore's second brewery opened on 3 November 1933 by then President of the Municipal Commissioners, W Bartley, to produce the well-known Anchor Beer. The site at Alexandra Road was chosen for its close proximity to the former Keretapi Tanah Melayu (KTM) railway tracks, which provided convenient transportation for the export of its beer.</p> <p>In 1939, the Archipelago Brewery Company was annexed by the British Government as enemy property. In 1941, Malayan Breweries, a joint venture between Fraser &amp; Neave and Heineken, took over the assets of Archipelago Brewery Company and the Anchor Beer brand. However, during the Asia-Pacific War, the Japanese Army expropriated all the production facilities of Fraser and Neave, and ordered Dai-Nippon Breweries to produce beer at the Company.</p>

		<p>The Archipelago Brewery Company expanded rapidly in the 1950s when Fraser and Neave came under the control of the Oversea-Chinese and Banking Corporation (OCBC). An additional plant was added and procedures were gradually mechanised. Production ceased in 1990 when operations were relocated to Tuas.</p> <p>The brew master house was gazetted for conservation in 1993.</p>
<p><b>10</b></p>		<p><b>Setron Black and White TV</b> <i>Collection of My Community</i></p> <p>The former Tanglin Halt Industrial Estate was one of the first industrial estates in Singapore. Measuring some 20 acres of land and comprising a total of 38 factory lots for cottage industries, the establishment of the Industrial Estate marked Singapore's drive into industrialisation and diversification from a declining entrepot economy. Tanglin Halt was chosen for her close proximity to the former Malayan Railways and large labour catchment.</p> <p>One of the most iconic factories at the industrial estate was Setron or Singapore Electronics, which manufactured Singapore's first black and white television in 1964. With its pyramidal roof at the corner of Commonwealth Avenue and Commonwealth Drive, the the factory served as a navigational landmark for residents driving to Tanglin Halt.</p>
<p><b>11</b></p>		<p><b>Thin Huat signage</b> <i>Donated by Florence Ang</i></p> <p>The family-run provisions shop, Thin Huat, had been serving the community for more than five decades. Helmed by the affable Ang family, the humble shop was a throwback to the 1960s where provisions shops were sparse and non-airconditioned, and offered payments by credit, purchases in small quantities, free deliveries and freshly grated coconut. Competition from chain supermarkets, rising operational costs and the proprietors' declining age and health prompted its closure in April 2018. On the last</p>

		<p>week of its operations, elderly residents and regular customers in the ageing neighbourhood hovered around the stall, took photographs with the shop keepers and reluctantly parted company with the Tanglin Halt institution and its loquacious proprietors.</p>
<p><b>12</b></p>		<p><b>Queenstown Cinema sign</b> <i>Collection of My Community</i></p> <p>The former Queenstown Cinema and Bowling Alley was one of Queenstown's favourite entertainment spots in the 1980s and 1990s. The former Queenstown Cinema and Bowling Alley was opened in 1977 as one of the several amenities built on a 1.4 hectare extension site of the Town Centre. The four storey entertainment complex comprised of two cinema halls, a bowling alley, KTV lounge, fast food restaurant and an arcade.</p> <p>The former Queenstown Cinema had two halls named Queenstown and Queensway which could accommodate 1,200 and 515 cinema-goers respectively. They were the first cinemas in Singapore which incorporated soundproofing features in its design. Seats were arranged hexagonally so that the audience could have an unrestricted view of the movie screen.</p>
<p><b>13</b></p>		<p><b>Bowling pins from Queenstown Cinema and Bowling Alley</b> <i>Collection of My Community</i></p> <p>The 18-lane Bowling Alley was located at the basement of the complex. Scoring boards at the Bowling Alley were manually recorded on pieces of paper in the 1970s before they were replaced with monotonous electronic boards in the mid-1990s. A Kentucky Fried Chicken restaurant was situated on the second floor of the complex overlooking the bowling alley, so that diners could watch the bowlers as they had their meals.</p> <p>The bowling alley and the karaoke lounge continued to operate even though the cinemas ceased operations in 1999. The Queenstown</p>

		<p>hall was converted into a billiard and LAN centre for 2 years before the entire building was vacated. The complex was subsequently demolished in 2013.</p>
<p><b>14</b></p>		<p><b>Jap Chong's last performance costume</b>  <i>Donated by Florence Chong</i></p> <p>The Quests were a popular band in Singapore during the 1960s. The band was formed by Jap Chong, Henry Chua, Raymond Leong and Lim Wee Guan in 1961 and later included guitarist Reggie Verghese and singer Vernon Cornelius. The band was named after the school magazine of Queenstown Secondary Technical School, where Jap Chong and Raymond Leung were students.</p> <p>The Quests first shot to fame at a Talentime programme while studying Queenstown Secondary Technical School. Inspired by music acts such as the Shadows and Cliff Richard, the quartet clinched a recording contract with EMI in 1964 and produced two original compositions, "Shanty" and "Gallopin." "Shanty" became the first single by a local band to reach the top of the Singapore charts, displacing The Beatles "I Should Have Known Better" and staying at No.1 for 12 weeks.</p> <p>By the mid-1960s, the band was extremely popular in Southeast Asia. In 1964, the Quests toured Malaysia with Maori-Hi Five, followed by tours in Brunei and the Philippines. Their appearances in some countries caused near riots where hysterical fans ripped the clothing off band members.</p> <p>The Quests disbanded officially in 1971.</p>

**Annex C: List of upcoming exhibitions and programmes at Museum @ My Queenstown in Q1, 2019.**

<b>No.</b>	<b>Programme</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Description</b>
1	<b>Sherlock Sam in Queenstown!</b>	23 March 2019 (Saturday), 2pm; Free	<p>The authors of Sherlock Sam, Adan Jimenez and Felicia Low will be visiting Museum @ My Queenstown to share more about their inspiration behind Sherlock Sam and the Quantum Pair in Queenstown.</p> <p>Attendees will get to hear the authors talk about the inspiration behind their book, their experiences during the tour and how they incorporated the history of Queenstown into an exciting detective story! As a special treat, one of the characters of the book, Uncle Victor, will also be appearing at the session.</p>
2	<b>Stories of My Queenstown</b>	Every Third Saturday, 2pm	<p>Stories of My Queenstown is an interactive session where (ex) resident-speakers are invited to share their personal memories and discuss specific topics including conservation, architecture, sports, popular culture and religion with 20 to 25 participants. Each session is about 60 minutes long. The main objective of the programme is to provide a platform for (ex)residents to reunite and interact with one another through collective memory.</p> <p>Upcoming speakers include ex-residents Kelvin Ang, Joseph Nair, Nicky Loh, etc</p>
3	<b>Sketching Memories!</b>	Every Second Saturday, 2pm	<p>The workshops aim to enhance the community's understanding of local food delights that are iconic of Queenstown/Tanglin Halt.</p> <p>Participants will learn basic painting techniques and complete a final art piece of selected food delights for the</p>

			specific workshop. They will bring home works that offer opportunities for conversations with family and friends about the food heritage of Queenstown.
4	<b>Curatorial Tour</b>	Every 1 <sup>st</sup> Saturday, Timing TBC	A curatorial tour of the exhibition and Tanglin Halt allows residents and audience to wander behind-the-scene.