

THE neweurasian

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APRIL - JUNE 2017



WHO
ARE
YOU?

TRACING YOUR ROOTS

PLUS

HAPPY TIMES WITH HOMEWORK
A scheme that makes studying a joy

MEMORIES, HOPES AND DREAMS
A history of Singapore's Eurasians

HOGGING THE BEST ROLES
Actress Frances Lee is enjoying the taste of success

CONTENTS



AT THE HELM

03 President's message

NEWS

- 04 Well spoken - wowing the crowd as a Toastmaster
Lunch with the President
Catholicism in the Eurasian community
- 05 The Schoolings notch up further honours
Chinese New Year with the Prime Minister
The Fall of Singapore commemorated
- 06 Well-deserved recognition for the EA's volunteers
The new balut season is on a roll

EDUCATION

- 07 Students give top marks for homework with a difference
Self-help groups sign a multi-million-dollar scholarship deal
- 08 Art class is a recipe for success
From near zero to maths hero in just a week

COVER STORY

- 09 The joys of genealogy

FSS

- 13 A debt-ridden mum gets her life back on track

YOUTH

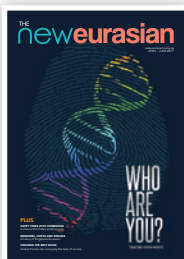
- 14 Christopher Gordon has ambitious plans for young Eurasians
- 15 Legal brief - students get a taste of lawyers' work
Waking up to smell the coffee - at the baristas' workshop

CULTURE AND HERITAGE

- 16 Recording the Eurasian story
- 17 Anniversary tours relive the Japanese Occupation
In step for Chingay

PEOPLE IN THE COMMUNITY

- 18 Actress Frances Lee on treading the boards to success
- 19 Have your say on the EA's centenary celebrations!



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President's Message

It has been a wonderful first quarter for the Eurasian community and the Eurasian Association. Firstly, I would like to congratulate the Schooling Family for receiving *The Straits Times'* Singaporean of the Year award. Not only did Joseph make Olympian history for Singapore but, equally importantly, we have been inspired by the critical role that both Colin and May Schooling played in their son's success. They are role models to many of us as parents, with their steadfast support for their son and their belief that success can be defined by achievements beyond just the academic arena.

I am pleased that our efforts to engage and get more youth involved in the community are bearing some fruit. In this issue you will find some examples of our youngsters giving back to the community by volunteering for the homework supervision programme (see page 7) or running workshops for younger kids (page 8). You will also find initiatives by our Youth Committee to build a Eurasian youth network and provide career support and development forums such as a recent legal career session (page 15), which was organised in collaboration with Bridging Law, an organisation which works to inform and educate students from less privileged backgrounds about the profession. This valuable event gave the students an insight into what a career in the legal sector entails and the personal qualities one needs to make a success of it. I strongly encourage younger members who are considering their career options to participate in the next career dialogue.

In recent years, there have been growing concerns among many Eurasians about the apparent increasing loss of identity of our community in Singapore. I too have personally had many encounters in recent years with Singaporeans who were unfamiliar with who the Eurasians are. While such encounters can be disappointing, I believe we should try to look at this positively as it can be a conversation opener and an opportunity to share an interesting story about our heritage and the Eurasian community. As Eurasians, we have an interesting diversity and cultural mix in our heritage, which makes us very memorable.

Nevertheless, the small size of the Eurasian community continues to pose a challenge to our visibility. It is therefore important that all of us play our part in stepping up efforts to promote greater understanding and recognition of the Eurasian community. In this vein, the EA has over the last year worked on several significant book projects about the community and people within the community. We are also planning a series

of events to promote and showcase the Eurasian community in Singapore. A project to revamp our Eurasian Heritage Centre has also been initiated, the concept planning has been completed and tenders have been called to commence the work. I would like to encourage all Eurasians to play an active role in contributing ideas and memorabilia for this important project. Please look out for our call for participation, which will be out soon.

One of our most important book projects, *Singapore Eurasians: Memories, Hopes and Dreams*, was completed earlier this year and launched by Minister S Iswaran in February (page 16). The book encapsulates the history and many diverse aspects of Eurasian culture and lifestyle. The first edition was published in 1992 and this new edition includes new chapters to bring the journey of the Eurasian community up to date. I would like to thank the EA's first Vice-President, Alexius Pereira, for overseeing the successful production of this special book and the many authors involved. This is an informative book that enables readers to learn more about the interesting heritage and culture of the Eurasian community in Singapore.

On the subject of building our own interesting story of family heritage, our cover story for this issue (page 9) looks at genealogy and how to trace your roots. An important part of discovering our identity revolves around finding out more about our ancestry. With modern technology, tracing our DNA and finding relatives on the other side of the world can be done in a click. We share the experience of Eurasians who have conducted extensive investigation about their roots and find out where their research has taken them.

Last but not least, we have an important event coming up: the Kristang Festival in May (see back page). We invite the Eurasian community to join this event as it's an important occasion to create awareness of and celebrate efforts to revive this unique Portuguese-Eurasian heritage language.

Thank you to all who have made this a productive quarter for the Eurasian community. I look forward to your continued support of the Eurasian Association and our future initiatives.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'Alexius Pereira', written over a light blue horizontal line.

Excuses, Lies - and a Well- Presented Speech

Is making an excuse worse than telling a lie? That was the conundrum contestants at a Toastmasters competition on 4 March had to decide – within minutes – before presenting their arguments clearly and entertainingly before the other contestants and judges.

The impromptu subject, known as the Table Topic, was part of the Toastmasters Club's in-house contests, which are among its activities to teach communication, public speaking and leadership skills.

Michelle Tessensohn emerged as the first prizewinner of the section, followed by Christian Eber and Carolyn-Street Johns. Before that, Peter Lee won the prepared subject section, speaking on 'Champion', in which he gave his views on who was deserving of such a title and what it takes to champion a cause successfully.

The first and second prizewinners moved on to the Area E contest which was held on 25 March, where Christian emerged as a winner, proving again that he can think on his feet when



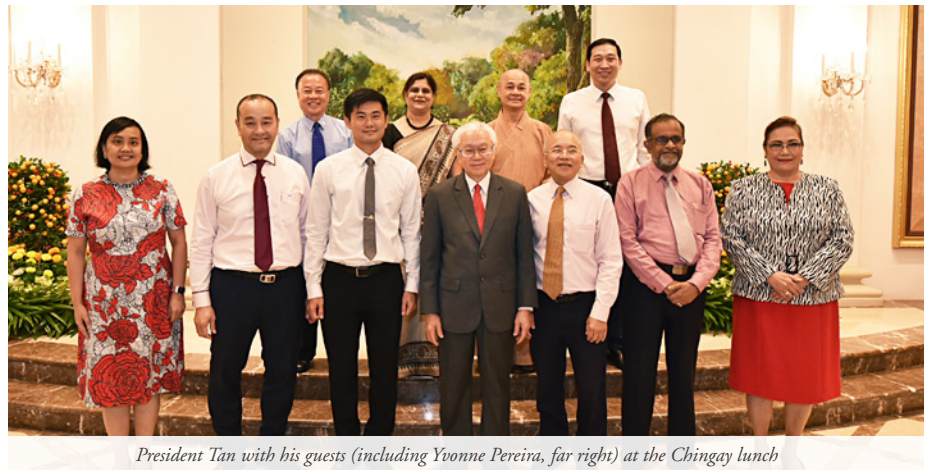
Smooth-talking Toastmasters at the Area E competition, with Christian far right

he aced the Table Topic section with his thoughts on 'Not everything that is faced can be changed, but nothing can be changed until it is faced.' His win took him to the next stage – representing the EA in the Division E contest at the Sindhi Toastmasters Association on 22 April.

If you enjoy competitive public speaking – or are a beginner keen to learn, the Toastmasters Club offers a warm welcome. For further information, contact Ms. Denise, on 6447 1578 ext 206/denise@eurasians.org

Chingay Lunch at the Istana

President Tony Tan Keng Yam hosted a lunch at the Istana on 13 February to personally thank Chingay's sponsors, donors and partners for their contributions to and active participation in this year's Chingay Parade. EA's Second Vice President, Yvonne Pereira, represented the Eurasian Association at the event.



President Tan with his guests (including Yvonne Pereira, far right) at the Chingay lunch

A History of Singapore's Catholic Community



From left: Phan Ming Yen, director of Global Cultural Alliance, EA President Benett Thezeira, Dr Yaacob Ibrahim, Professor James Boss and Ambassador Barry Desker

A book, *Journey of 190 Years: The Eurasian Catholic Community in Singapore 1852-2015*, was launched on 4 March at the Eurasian Community House.

Written by Professor James Newton Boss, it documents the establishment and evolution of the Catholic Church and community in Singapore by Portuguese missionaries. Although his background is in science – the author is a research scientist in the field of Biomedical Engineering – he has always been passionate about St Joseph's Church and connection with the Eurasian community.

More than 80 guests attended the event and the guest of honour was Associate Professor Dr Yaacob Ibrahim, Minister for Communications and Information.

Schooling Family Wins Top Singaporean Award

The Straits Times Singaporean of the Year 2016 award was shared by Olympic gold medallist Joseph Schooling and his parents, Colin and May, at a ceremony in February after they beat 11 other contestants to clinch the prestigious title.

Joseph was unable to attend the event but his parents were presented with the award for overcoming odds as a family to create history for Singapore. Colin and May said: "We are privileged and honoured to have won the award. We share the award with all the other nominees, as we feel they are just as deserving. Joseph's victory at the Olympic Games is testament that we Singaporeans can achieve excellence on the world stage. We pray and hope that this podium finish will encourage fellow Singaporeans to 'Dare to Dream'.

Joseph said of the honour: "I feel that the two most deserving of this award are my parents. I was one that raced and won the Olympic medal, but without their help, their unwavering love, their contributions, I would not be where I am today."



Award-winning family: Colin and May Schooling with Joseph

Photo credit: Angela Schooling

Welcoming the Rooster in the Meadow

The Prime Minister and members of the cabinet attended a Chinese New Year garden party organised by the People's Association on 12 February at the Meadow at Gardens by the Bay, where they heralded The Year of the Rooster with grassroots and community leaders. EA management committee members Benett Theseira, Angelina Fernandez, Martin Marini and Julia D'Silva attended the event on behalf of the EA.

On 8 February, the Prime Minister's Office organised a Lunar New Year celebration at Resorts World Sentosa Convention Centre, which was attended by Benett and Alexius Pereira.



Emeritus Senior Minister Goh Chok Tong (middle) with representatives from the self groups and EA management committee members (from left) Benett, Angelina, Martin and Julia at the garden party

Photo credit: The People's Association



Percival Shepherdson (middle) and representatives of other Singapore ethnic communities at the ceremony

Photo credit: Singapore History Consultants, Pte Ltd

Remembering the Fall of Singapore

A commemoration ceremony was held on 15 February at Kranji War Cemetery to mark the 75th anniversary of the Fall of Singapore and pay tribute to all who had fought in the defence of the nation during World War II. Percival Shepherdson, a member of the EA's Heritage Sub-Committee, represented the association at the event and laid a wreath to pay respects.

Putting Others First



The EA's loyal band of volunteers

The EA relies on a dedicated band of volunteers who help to ensure the smooth running of the association's programmes for education, helping the disadvantaged and fostering a Eurasian community spirit. They come from all walks of life and help to raise funds, organise events, distribute rations and undertake diverse roles and responsibilities.

On 25 March, at its annual Volunteer Appreciation Lunch held at the Eurasian Community House, the association officially recognised and rewarded more than 50 loyal volunteers.

Zoe Lazaroo, 71, a volunteer with the EA says: "I joined the EA close to 10 years

ago and started with the Family Support Services team and helped them out with delivering rations. Currently, I am with the Community Engagement committee and assist with organising events and ad-hoc duties. I am always looking for more opportunities to help out wherever I can as I believe that volunteering is my calling; it's something I enjoy doing tremendously." The guests enjoyed a meal provided by Quentin's restaurant and had the chance to chat with their fellow volunteers.

The EA always needs more help to improve its services. If you can spare some time, please contact 6447 1578 / secretariat@eurasians.org



Volunteer Zoe Lazaroo receives her certification of appreciation from EA President Benett Theseira

Bring on the Balut

After a four-month hiatus, the balut players were ready to roll when the new In-House Balut tournament began on 8 March. Two dozen lively players gathered not only for an exciting game but also to catch up with their fellow players.

Convenor Yvonne Pereira emerged as the champion with 663 points, followed by Hyacinth D'Silva and The Ban Khi with 648 and 613 points respectively. The highest individual score of 152 points for a single game was achieved by Hyacinth D'Silva.

Yvonne says: "I would like to thank Quentin's restaurant for the wine prize sponsorship and Evelyn Rodrigues and The Ban Khi (Yang) for their kind donations towards the balut section."



Players hope for the elusive balut – five identical dice

When Homework Gets a Helping Hand

The EA's Homework Supervision Programme is proving rewarding for both the mentors and the young students they take under their wing

The Homework Supervision Programme (HSP) was launched in 2015 with the idea of recruiting Eurasian tertiary level students to act as mentors to younger pupils who needed help with their homework. The older students volunteer their time, not as teachers but as role models who can help develop the mentee's confidence and motivation in both academic and non-academic areas.

When the EA asked 19-year-old Viaano Mikhael Spruyt to join the scheme as a mentor, he rose to the challenge. He says:

"It was a heart-warming moment when Nicholas texted me on the day of his results. He was over the moon as he had done well"

"I started out with the EA at a young age and joined their football team, and I also received various educational awards and progressed to volunteering regularly for EA events. I have always had a special connection with the EA and wanted to give back to the Eurasian community." He recently completed a diploma in Social Sciences at Nanyang Polytechnic, which gave him an interest in working with young people, and the HSP programme was the ideal opportunity to put this into practice.

Last year, he began tutoring 16-year-old Oliveiro Nicholas Nelson. Viaano describes him as a hard-working student and feels that the sessions have transformed him for the better. "As someone who has gone through the same system, I understand the hardships that he is going through. I can advise him how to make decisions to cope with the challenges," he says.

Nicholas recently completed his 'O' level examinations and is aiming to pursue Aerospace systems and management. He describes Viaano as a motivating force. He says: "Viaano encourages me to follow my desired path and always asks me to take on roles with passion."

One of his toughest subjects was 'A' mathematics and Nicholas used to have sleepless nights because he found the subject

confusing and felt that he was disappointing his teachers by failing the tests. Under Viaano's patient guidance, he overcame each setback, enabling him to receive a B3 grade during examinations. Viaano says: "It was a heart-warming moment when Nicholas texted me on the day of his results. He was over the moon as he had done well, especially for A Maths. I felt that he had developed a lot as a young man and he achieved this wonderful result because of his positive attitude, determination and commitment to learn!"



From left: Chong Siok Ling with sons Benjamin and Nicholas, and Viaano

Nicholas' mother, Chong Siok Ling, says: "My son looks up to Viaano as he has talked to Nicholas about his own personal struggles. After each session, Nicholas is more confident and determined to resolve his academic issues. Viaano also paid us a visit after Chinese New Year and talked about his ambitions, which was a sincere effort and further motivated my three sons."

Viaano encourages more tertiary students to join the HSP. He understands that time is a factor for many young people but says he scheduled sessions well in advance in order to organise his time. He says: "Being a mentor allows us to gain experience and also use our own stories to ensure that our mentees do not make the same mistakes as us. We also gain a sense of accomplishment and make a positive difference to another person's life. In turn, the mentored youth will pay it forward in the future!"

Scholarships Offered to Self-Help Groups



At the signing (from left): Kumaran Barathan, CEO, SINDA; Bennett Theseira, President, The Eurasian Association; Rahayu Buang, CEO, MENDAKI; Viva Sinniah, Executive Chairman, PSB Academy; and Mr Derrick Chang, Acting CEO, PSB Academy

PSB Academy has signed a three-year Memorandum of Understanding with the Eurasian Association, MENDAKI and SINDA self-help groups to enable members of their communities to tap on over \$2.7 million in scholarships over the next three years to study at the academy. The signing ceremony was held on 14 January in conjunction with the launch of the academy's new campus in Marina Square shopping centre.

The scholarship programme will enable the three self-help groups to recommend individuals who will be considered based on their academic grades, exemplary behaviour and financial standing. If you are keen to find out more about the courses offered by PSB Academy, please visit: www.psb-academy.edu.sg/

To apply for a scholarship at PSB Academy, please contact Mr. Keith at keith@eurasians.org or call 6447 1578 (ext 205).

Natasha's Painting Takes the Cake

Art teacher Ruby Wyse conducted her second Art Workshop for young people at the Eurasian Community House

Ruby Wyse conducted an Art Workshop for Eurasian students on 18 March, teaching youngsters how to master

textures and a three-dimension artwork.



Juwaidi Apps, Nicole, Alyssa Dyason, Natasha and Shirleen Pestana show the results of their workshop

Nicole Ong, 12 who attended the class was delighted with what she'd learned. "I painted an ocean landscape and was fascinated by how shading can bring out the textures and details of a painting," she said.



Ruby receives a token of appreciation from EA management committee member Graham Ong-Webb

"I was fascinated by how shading can bring out the textures and details of a painting"

painting techniques, sketching, and texturing their artwork on a framed canvas. They also learnt colour-mixing skills and how to use different art tools such as pallet knives and pastes to create

A prize – a \$150 Popular voucher – was presented to Natasha De Souza, who had painted an intricate cupcake. A token of appreciation was given to Ruby who says: "It was exciting to be back at the EA for

the second time and conduct this Art Workshop themed: Seascapes, Islands and Colourful Cupcakes. I was very pleased with the participants and they show great artistic potential!"

Figuring the Way to Exam Success

A revision programme for PSLE students turned a struggling schoolboy's maths results from terrible to terrific – in just one week

Last year, the EA held its first mathematics intensive programme for students taking the Primary School Leaving Examination (PSLE). The week-long course covers revision of all the important maths concepts, formulas and rules.

"I know that my mum was disappointed with my past results and I wanted to see if I could improve"

Thirteen-year-old Hans Gerhard van Huizen had not been performing well in mathematics for several years and when Keith Kuah, of the EA's education department, advised his mother of the tuition programme, Hans decided to give it a try. He says: "I know that my mum was disappointed with my past results. The programme was only for a week during my holidays and I wanted to see if I could improve."

Hans has never had formal tuition during his schooling years and he thought hard about joining the EA's mathematics intensive programme. It was a decision he wouldn't regret. He was able to build on his basic knowledge of the subject and was pleased that the trainer used the same book that he used in school.

One of his most challenging topics was algebra and Hans says his results in the first test during the intensive programme were

"terrible". But the small group allowed the teacher to pay him special attention and help him to really get to grips with the subject. The result? A leap from maths 'C' grade to 'A' in his PSLE examinations!

Hans recommends the programme to other students and says: "This class is important to build on our skills. The personal attention from the teacher and regular breaks motivated me to ace mathematics!"

The EA will be conducting this year's programme from 5 to 16 June 2017 for PSLE, 'N' and 'O' level students. To sign up for the class, please contact Keith Kuah at 6447 1578 (ext 205) or email keith@eurasians.org



Hans with his tutor, Yalin Lin, and EA Education Sub-Committee Chairman, Graham Ong-Webb

A Place on the Family Tree

Digging into your family history can reveal intriguing insights into who you are. We talk to some amateur genealogists about their findings

Virtually everybody in Singapore is the descendant of adventurous ancestors who crossed the ocean to make a better life for themselves away from their home country. For Eurasians, that cultural history is by definition a richer mix than for most people – and finding out who our forebears were can be a rewarding – and even addictive – pursuit.

For Eurasians, tracing one's ancestry, when there are going to be at least two very separate lines, is not an easy task, and most often it includes researching extensive birth records, data and even conducting DNA tests. But now, with many records online and social networking opening up the world to us, the task has become a little easier. Here, we talk to some people who have asked themselves "Who am I? Where am I from?" – and have undertaken the fascinating quest to find out.

Joan Pereira's Story

Joan Teresa Pereira, 46, is Malaysian, born and raised in Sabah (formerly British North Borneo). In 2008, a clan reunion was held in honour of her paternal great-grandfather Dominic, a Filipino who had settled there. "Dominic had 12 children and my grandpa Andrew had married Dominic's fourth child, Teresa Clare Pauline Dominic (my grandmother). Andrew was a Portuguese Eurasian from Singapore and he had a dark complexion with Indian features. While most of my relatives were able to trace their ancestors, I realised I knew very

was mention that her grandfather had been adopted (he was born a De Cruz), that he had set his sights on coming to Sabah at the prompting of a good friend (a Singaporean, Patrick Lawrence Davies, who had married Teresa Dominic's sister, May), and that he had sailed across the South China Sea to Sabah with another fellow Singaporean called Mr Eber.

Kota Kinabalu) in 1919. His illustrious career path led him to become the head of the government printing department, a career that was tragically cut short when he was executed during the Japanese Occupation." The document also revealed that Grandpa Andrew had also been employed by the Singapore government's Monopolies Department, Singapore Harbour Board and Anglo-Saxon Pet.Co. before coming to Sabah.

Joan's sisters Judy and Josephine chipped in with the research efforts and



Grandparents Andrew (standing at the back and carrying a child) and Teresa (on the seat holding a baby)



Andrew Pereira (sitting on the right)



Andrew Pereira with his family, c.1942



Andrew Pereira's housewarming party, c.1937



Andrew Pereira and Teresa Dominic's wedding, 1923. On Andrew's left is Patrick Lawrence Davies

little about my grandfather." As Joan was often asked if she, herself, was of Indian descent, the reunion triggered her curiosity, which turned into a mission to trace the roots of her grandfather, Andrew Justin Pereira.

Joan began enquiring among relatives about her grandfather's origins and what unfolded was a puzzle comprising different nuggets of information to be pieced together. Aunt Rosemary Pereira (Andrew's fifth child), advised her to contact the Desker family in Singapore to find out more, while Joan's late Uncle Alfred Pereira (Andrew's sixth child) had a godfather named Peter Desker, also from Singapore. Among other snippets, there

It was a while before work and family life afforded Joan some time to pursue her quest. Armed with so little information, she made contact through the Eurasian Association's Facebook page. She also managed to get in touch with the EA's first Vice-President, Alexius Pereira, who provided her with useful links.

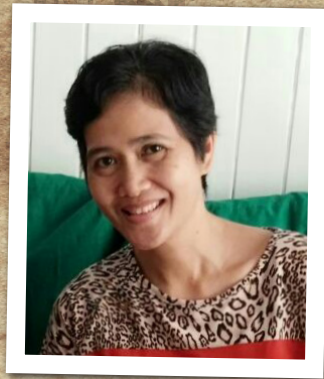
Joan says: "In the meantime, I spoke to my mother, Purificacion Pereira (née Caronongan), to whom my late father had related quite a bit of the family history. We looked through old photos and even found an employment record of Grandpa Andrew. His first job in Sabah was as an acting chief clerk at the Public Works Department in Jesselton (now

soon their cousin, Robert Ong joined the team. Judy looked up other possible sources of information in Singapore, such as the National Library and Archives (through St Joseph's Church), and schools which she thought Grandpa Andrew might have attended. Robert contacted Aunt Gertrude Pereira (Andrew's second child and oldest living Pereira, now living overseas), who confirmed that Grandpa Andrew had been given up for adoption to a Pereira family as he was a sick child; it was believed at the time that by taking on a new surname, his health would improve.

The research started to bear fruit. Through the EA, Joan contacted Barry Desker and



Robert Ong



Josephine Pereira



Judy Pereira



Joan Pereira

Facts about Andrew Justin Pereira

- He was born on 29 November 1899
- At 20 years old, he arrived in Sabah (then British North Borneo) from Singapore
- He held various positions in the British Administration
- In 1923, he married Teresa Dominic and they had 10 children (seven girls and three boys)
- The seventh child was Joan's late father, Wilfred Pereira
- Andrew was executed during the Japanese Occupation in Sabah around 1945
- Joan and her sisters are the last Pereiras in the line

Adrienne D'Rozario, née Desker, who turned out to be crucial in tracing Grandpa Andrew's roots and establishing a Desker and De Cruz link. With their involvement, Joan was able to find out that Grandpa Andrew's real name was Nelson Andrew De Cruz and that he was the brother of Adrienne's grandmother, Emilia De Cruz; their parents (Joan and Adrienne's great grandparents) were Nicholas De Cruz and Celestine Longue.

Joan says: "My family and I are elated to have found Grandpa Andrew's biological family and that we have relatives in Singapore. Our wish is also to find out about his adopted family, the Pereiras. We hope that people will come forward with links to our grandfather's past." If you can provide further information about Andrew Pereira, please contact Joan at joan.pereira18@gmail.com or Judy at jpereira1@hotmail.co.uk

Kevin Shepherdson's Story

Kevin Shepherdson has been conducting research for more than 20 years in search of his Eurasian roots – and has discovered family all over the world. For a long time, he had found it odd that he had Chinese facial features but bore an English surname. He says: "I didn't like it when people made fun of my surname and the others who could not pronounce it!"

When he was an undergraduate, he learned that his uncle, Percival, was also curious about the Shepherdson roots and had already begun the family search back in the 1970s. They formed a key part of a 'family research committee' that was set up by a few relatives to trace their roots. Little did they realise that this collaboration will lead to three major family reunions in Singapore, Malacca and Kuala Lumpur. Or that it would result in their publishing two books: *Journey to the Straits – The Shepherdson Story* and *The Great Genealogical Research*.

Kevin advises readers that one of the best ways to begin a genealogical search is to start by interviewing the elders of the family or anyone connected with the

family in order to construct a basic family tree. He says: "Don't rule out any stories or anecdotes no matter how ridiculous they may sound." He also encourages people to collect photos, memorabilia or any family heirlooms as they could have a story behind them. He says: "In our family's case, we documented all the stories about the Shepherdson elders; many of them have passed on, but their legacy remains in our family records. Once we had a basic ancestral trail, it was easier to officially trace the family tree."

Research also had its spooky moments. As recorded in the family history book, "we had our exciting moments. While we were scanning old family photos, we saw what seemed like a ghostly image of a nun in a photo of Appolina Shepherdson, my great-grandaunt when she was a sponsor at a wedding.

Kevin explains that there are three types of search methods – traditional, online and scientific. Traditional methods include speaking with elderly members or tracing church records, which may inform you about marriage unions or



The Shepherdson family researchers from all over the world (Kevin and Percy are first and second from right)

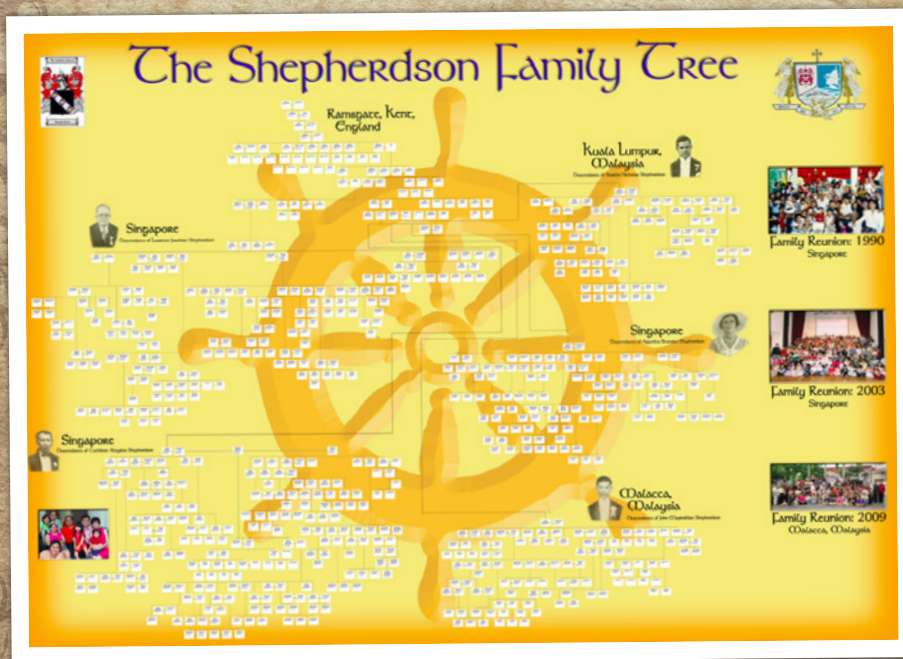
death records. This allows you to create a timeline. Online research is conducted via portals such as www.familysearch.org or <http://indiafamily.bl.uk/>, which are useful to Eurasians as they can input their family surname and search for birth, baptism and marriage records. There are also more modern methods, such as using Facebook to track and contact those with the same surnames. Scientific research method entails establishing genetic connections through DNA tests.



A ghostly apparition at a wedding – or simply a technical glitch?



The home in Durham



A DNA test is conducted to identify if people have common ancestors and the information can be used to discover possible links between various families.

Kevin's favourite method is to research online, followed by traditional and scientific research, which is usually used to confirm or rule out family connections. He says: "With online, you don't have to travel to your ancestral land until you're absolutely sure you are on the right track! Once you have located the relevant

records, you can then start doing your traditional research. "I visited the British Library in London only after I was able to verify that Shepherdson records existed. With information obtained online, I even had the opportunity to visit the home where my ancestors lived in Durham in the north-east of England (in the 1600s) and Ramsgate in the south-east (in the 1800s). He says that besides the local Family History Center, which is run by the Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, and several churches in Singapore and

Malaysia, which are particularly useful to Eurasians, the National Library and National Archives are also good sources for family history research.

Kevin adds that for those who are more interested in the scientific approach can always order a DNA test kit from www.ancestry.com or www.familytreeDNA.com. He explains that a DNA test – a simple mouth swab that you post to a laboratory – is especially useful to confirm if two or more people are related and also to assist in connecting them with other genetic cousins worldwide with similar DNA profiles or markers – similar to how Facebook connects friends. This creates an opportunity for individuals to collaborate with other family researchers around the world. He concludes, "I have been collaborating with Shepherdson branches in England, Canada, USA and Australia!"

Books written by Kevin can be purchased at the Eurasian Association at \$22.40 or from <http://www.greatgenealogicalsearch.com>

If you are interested in your Eurasian family tree, turn to the inside back cover of the magazine to find out how you can join in our centenary celebrations.



The first major Shepherdson reunion in 2003



The ancestral home in Ramsgate

A Debt of Gratitude

Getting into serious debt can be a wake-up call. And tackling the problem head on can lead to unforeseen happy outcomes

Crystal (not her real name), 49, is a single mother who has been struggling to make ends meet.

She works as a front-desk administrator and is proud of her two children: her daughter, 22, is studying at the National Academy of Fine Arts and her son, 21, has recently enlisted in National Service.

However, she began to get into financial difficulties after her divorce when, she says, she not only became the sole breadwinner for her children as she struggled to obtain maintenance for them from her ex husband, but also had to take care of her mother. In addition, she needed to change jobs and had to accept one on a lower salary.

She says: "I took credit cards mostly to pay for my kids as they needed items such as laptops for school. Most of my

salary is used on food and rental for my flat."

With debts mounting up to thousands of dollars, Crystal learnt from her mother (who is an EA beneficiary) that the association might be able to assist. Crystal turned to the EA and after learning of her circumstances, the Family Support Services (FSS) team decided to provide the family with financial assistance, NTUC vouchers and monthly rations.

This was of tremendous assistance to Crystal and her family as they could now work towards moving out of their one-bedroom rented apartment. Crystal decided that it was also time to get to grips with her debts. She found the Credit Card Counselling charity online while researching for help for her problems and enrolled on its debt management programme to get her life

back on track. There, she learnt how to keep tabs on her spending, so as to manage her daily budget better and she is now paying back her credit cards – which will take between four to five years.

She says: "I am grateful to the EA as they helped my mum for many years and now me. I also have decided to apply for an EA scholarship so that my daughter can continue with her education." Crystal's wish is for both her children to be well educated and pursue careers that will be fulfilling and will also help them avoid the financial problems she has experienced.

Crystal is now sorting out her financial problems. She says that she also now has special arrangements that will allow her to move into a new Build-To-Order house soon – where she is looking forward to a debt-free future.



Whenever you're planning a get-together – from a family reunion or a wedding reception to a formal business meeting or evening a jamming session – the Eurasian Community House is the place to be!

Situated in the Joo Chiat area, the ECH provides a relaxed setting for all kinds of events. Rates are based on a four-hour block and a deposit of \$300 is required upon booking. Audio/visual and light/sound services are included although a technician will not be present during the event. The EA secretariat can assist with all your queries regarding renting the venue. External catering is not permitted at our premises but food and beverages can be provided by Quentin's restaurant.

Venue	Level	Capacity (est)	Rates	Peak (Sat, Sun, Eve of PH & PH)	Non-Peak (Mon-Fri)	Optional
Platinum Lounge	1	40 to 60 pax	EA members	\$150	\$130	Projector (\$50)
			Government agencies / Non-profit / institution	\$160	\$140	
			Corporate / guest	\$180	\$160	
Conference Room (JH Room)	2	15 to 18 pax	EA members	\$180	\$150	Projector (\$50)
			Government agencies / Non-profit / institution	\$200	\$180	
			Corporate / guest	\$220	\$200	
Meeting Room	2	10 to 12 pax	EA members	\$160	\$140	Nil
			Government agencies / Non-profit / institution	\$180	\$160	
Multi-Purpose Hall (MPH) 50ft (L) x 36ft (W)	2	120 pax (12-seater table)	EA members	\$500	\$500	Projector (\$50) Audio / visual / light / sound / technician (\$100)
		200 pax (theatre seating)	Government Agencies / Non-profit / institution	\$550	\$550	
			Corporate / guest	\$600	\$600	

Blazing a Trail for Young Eurasians

Christopher Gordon, who chairs the EA's Youth Sub-Committee, believes it has a major role to play helping young Eurasians achieve their aspirations

Christopher Gordon's links with the EA go back to his student days, when he benefited from a number of EA educational programmes and also received a Eurasian Community Fund



Christopher Gordon plans on greater roles for young Eurasians

(ECF) educational award in 2000. He also enjoyed participating in the mentorship programme initiated by the late Barry Pereira. "Being a beneficiary of these EA programmes motivated me tremendously when I was a student and has helped me to get to where I am today," says the 34-year-old who is assistant director (Strategy Planning) in the Ministry of Manpower.

Chris joined the EA Management Committee last year with a vision to create a vibrant Eurasian youth community where young Eurasians could "boldly pursue their dreams, with passion, purpose, determination and belief". In addition, he would like to see the younger generation developing a strong sense of shared purpose and service towards the country and to the Eurasian community, especially to the less fortunate.

He soon connected with other young Eurasians to form the Youth Sub-



Youth Committee members Viaano Spruyt, Hannah Hendriks, Danni Jay, Christopher Gordon, Noel Longue and (right) EA secretariat member Revatbhi

industry and obtain advice on career progression in their chosen field.

He says the launch is timely as young people are now entering a more challenging global economic environment, where technological advancements are taking place at a much more rapid pace, causing disruption to the jobs' landscape. He believes that the YECN will enable industry leaders to advise young people how to meet these challenges.

Having personally gone through the mentorship programme, Chris is also a great advocate of mentorship and the sub-committee is planning to revive

What Does it Mean to Be Eurasian?

Eurasian means celebrating unity in diversity. I'm of British, Dutch, Sri Lankan, Thai and Chinese decent – I don't know if there's another Eurasian in this world with the same combination of ethnicities! Yet, even though we are so diverse, we find a common identity and fellowship in our mixed heritage. I'm proud to be part of the Eurasian community, because despite our small numbers, we have, as a community, made significant contributions to Singapore. Through our programmes, I want to give our youth the belief that they, too, can make a positive difference.

"Being a beneficiary of EA programmes motivated me tremendously when I was a student"

Committee, with one of the main focuses to give practical advice to young Eurasians to help them to achieve their life goals. "Last year, we launched introductory career dialogues to help tertiary students make informed decisions about their future careers. This year, we are expanding to cover a wider variety of sectors such as law, medicine, culinary arts and many more," says Christopher.

The sub-committee also plans to kick-start several initiatives this year, such as a Young Eurasian Careers Network (YECN), which will enable young working Eurasians to have regular networking 'fireside' chats with Eurasian industry leaders in various fields. These sessions will enable young working Eurasians to better understand the trends in the

programme. "Throughout his life, Barry contributed a lot to the Eurasian community; most notably his passion to developing our youth. I remember him fondly," he says. "I was also fortunate to have Christopher de Souza as my mentor and he provided me with guidance when I was pursuing my university studies in the UK and subsequently entered the Civil Service."

He adds: "We have Eurasian leaders in several fields and I want young people to know that they, too, can make a positive difference to Singapore. Most importantly, I want them to know that as they embark on their journey, the Eurasian Association and community will be with them, supporting them every step of the way!"

Legal Representation

Students had an opportunity to learn exactly what lawyers do for a living when they attended an interactive seminar on the legal industry led by local professionals

Young Eurasian tertiary students contemplating a career in the legal profession had a chance to explore this area further when they attended a legal career session, titled 'Introduction to the Legal Profession in Singapore', on 14 March at Drew & Napier LLC. The event was organised by Bridging Law, a non-profit organisation dedicated to helping students from low-income families to pursue a legal career and supported by the Eurasian Association's Youth Sub-Committee.



Laying down the law: students listen intently to the careers talk

After the students were given a brief introduction about both Bridging Law and Drew & Napier LLC, Sin Boon Ann, deputy managing director at Drew & Napier LLC (Corporate and Finance Department) and former Member of Parliament, provided them with an overview of the legal profession in Singapore, explaining what lawyers do on a day-to-day basis and the different roles played by corporate and litigation lawyers; he also recounted his personal story of how he chose to study law after graduating with a Bachelor of Arts degree.

Monique Koh, an associate (Corporate and Finance Department) at the law firm, shared with the group her inspiring journey on how she overcame the odds and became a lawyer despite coming from an underprivileged background.

The session included a networking tea when the students had an opportunity to speak informally with the lawyers, who also included Kelvin Tan, a director at Drew & Napier LLC (Dispute Resolution Department) who had helped to organise the event.

Felix Galistan, 18 who currently attends Victoria Junior College, said: "The session was very 'holistic' and this was a shared sentiment with other participants, as the legal session has always seemed very obscure to students like us and they provided us with many insights and a realistic representation of the sector. I feel that I am now able to make an informed choice about my university options. The networking session permitted me to also talk directly to the directors, senior and junior associates and get answers to some of my questions."

Bean There, Done That

How cool is it to be able to fix the perfect cup of java? A group of young Eurasians finds out

These days, coffee jargon is almost as complicated as the language of wine, but at a barista workshop on 25 March organised by the Eurasian Association's Youth Sub-Committee a group of young people got to grips with what goes into making our morning caffeine hit.

They event was arranged with Kaldi's Berry, a speciality coffee ecosystem business, which provides participants with basic knowledge of the array of different coffees – and how to get the best out of the roasted beans. To date, hundreds of participants have benefited from the full-day course, which is subsidised by the Skills Future credit scheme.

The Eurasian group learned how to operate – and clean – an espresso machine and the techniques of milk texturing. It was then time to put theory into practice and prepare their own delicious cuppas, including espresso, latte, cappuccino and pour-over coffee.

Noel Longue, who participated using his Skills Future credits, felt the course was extremely worthwhile. "After learning about the history and science of coffee making, I'll never look at coffee the same way again," he says. "The hands-on session allowed me to experience the demands of being a barista. Who



Bonding over the barista workshop: Noel is second from right

knew that precise multi-tasking between the milk and the coffee would be so challenging yet such fun?"

Noel is constantly looking to learn something new and the allowance provided by Skills Future was a key incentive. He concludes: "Everyone with SkillsFuture credits should try and pick up new skills, and you can make new friends while you're at it!"

Taking the Eurasian Story Forward

A major new publication about Singapore's Eurasians was launched recently to bring the Eurasian story up to date

Singapore Eurasians: Memories, Hopes and Dreams, a major book providing insights into our small but influential community, was launched on 15 February at The Pod at the National Library. The guest of honour was Mr S Iswaran, Minister for Trade and Industry (Industry), and the event was attended by more than 80 members of the Eurasian community.

Eurasian community had come from and where it is today.

The project was led by EA's first Vice-President, Dr Alexius Pereira, who told the guests that the book was a timely update for the Eurasian community, by the Eurasian community, and hoped it would serve to give more Singaporeans

his working experiences with new authors such as Kevin Martens Wong, who wrote a chapter about the Kristang language.

In his speech, Minister S Iswaran said the book "does an excellent job, not just because it documents the events of the past, but also through the many vivid personal and family recollections, which capture the essence of who Eurasians



Mr Iswaran (third from left) with (from left) EA management committee members Alexius Pereira, Benett Theseira and trustee Timothy de Souza

The book is unveiled

Back row (from left): Keith Rodrigues, Edwin Thumbo, Alexius Pereira, Kevin Martens Wong and Charlene Shepherdson
Front Row (from left): Pat D'Rose-Monkman, Francesca Eber, Evelyn Leicester-Rodrigues, Ann Ebert-Oehlers, Louise Clarke and Pat O'Hara-De Souza

MC Shanice Hedger explained to guests that an earlier, first edition of the book, published in 1992 and entitled *Singapore Eurasians: Memories and Hopes*, written by Myrna Braga-Blake and Ann Ebert-Oehlers, was a momentous work that contained historical records about the Eurasian community and its unique culture and heritage. The book was a sell-out.

EA President Benett Theseira said that the new edition was published to broaden the scope and update the journey of the Eurasian community in the context of Singapore today. He described the book as serving as a witness to where the

a greater understanding of who the Eurasians are in Singapore. He spoke of

The book "does an excellent job, not just because it documents the events of the past, but also through the many vivid personal and family recollections, which capture the essence of who Eurasians are"

are." Mr Iswaran also presented books to 12 of the contributing authors who attended the ceremony.

The evening continued with music by guitarist Nikhil Hogan, who is featured in the book. The EA is especially grateful towards EA Patron and former Minister George Yeo and the publisher and distributor World Scientific for their efforts in making the book a possibility.

Singapore Eurasians: Memories, Hopes and Dreams is available for sale at leading bookstores and the Eurasian Community House, priced \$26 (paperback) and \$58 (hardback).



Alexius Pereira shares his thoughts on the new edition of the book

Guests can't wait to read the book

Nikhil Hogan entertains the guests

The Battle for Singapore

Eurasians commemorated the 75th anniversary of the fall of Singapore with a heritage tour and personal stories related by those who survived this dark period in the nation's history

To commemorate the 75th anniversary of the fall of Singapore, the Eurasian Association organised a series of special tours between 18 February and 12 March, which included a visit to its World War Two – The Eurasian Story gallery in the Eurasian Heritage Centre, where guides provided visitors with an insight into Singapore's time under Japanese rule and the horror the Eurasian community and the nation suffered during those tumultuous years.

The tour guides, Lucille Marcus, Sharon Miller and Euyth Fernandez volunteered their time to make this an informative and enriching experience.

After the tour, guides led visitors to the Platinum Lounge, where Eurasian speakers shared their experiences of the war, their struggle to survive and how the smallest good deed could be potentially life threatening. Helen Joseph, 87 said: "I was only about 12 years old during

the war and risked my life to help the prisoners of war in Rangoon Road Camp by making them sandwiches and passing them secretly under the fence!"

Burton Westerhout told how his mother, when she was pregnant with him, survived the bombing when the Japanese invaded. Bernard Mesenas described his family building an air-raid shelter to escape from the bombing. Louise Branson related her ordeal as a 12-year-old child when her



Battle for Singapore tour group

Red crocheted poppies were presented to guests as a symbol of peace and remembrance of the fallen soldiers

family and five siblings were taken to Changi Prison in the early hours of the morning. Vicky Rodrigues shared stories of how her family was sent to Bahau.

Each speaker's experience was unique and together they provided a broad overview of the Japanese Occupation. Visitors asked questions and also shared their own memories of the war.

As a memento of the tour, red poppies crocheted by the Craft@EA group members were presented to guests as a symbol of peace and remembrance of the fallen soldiers who sacrificed their lives in the service of the country.

Making Waves

It was best foot forward for the EA Dance Troupe when they joined the annual conviviality fest that is the Chingay Parade

The Chingay Parade, organised by the People's Association and held on 10 and 11 February at the F1 Pit Building, was themed 'Soundwaves Chingay, WeCare Singapore.' A 21-strong EA Dance troupe, decked in silver, grey and blue, performed to the folksong *Rasa Sayang*, choreographed by Syarul Ezuan.

Hershey Coleen carried the EA banner alongside others to celebrate peace and harmony among the nation's various communities.



The EA Dance Troupe at the Chingay Parade

A Big Fat Promising Career

Actress Frances Lee was thrown in the deep end when she was given the lead role in her first professional performance. Three years later, she's going from strength to strength

Frances Lee's professional acting career began only three years ago, but the 26-year-old Eurasian, whose mother is Peranakan Chinese and father is of Welsh and Dutch descent, has already been nominated for awards and recently clinched the title of 'Best Newcomer' in the 2016 Trailblazer Awards of leading fashion beauty and lifestyle website StyleXStyle.

Blessed with a cheerful personality, she describes herself as someone who loves singing and making people laugh and: "Basically all my hobbies fall into my line of work! Yay!"

"Basically all my hobbies fall into my line of work! Yay!"

Frances thanks her mother for exposing her to the theatre at a young age and says her interest in drama was sparked when she first saw the Phantom of the Opera nearly 20 years ago. She was mesmerised by the production: "I was lost in the show and there is something about watching a play or a musical that has a magic which is difficult to express verbally."

In the past three years, Frances has been in a total of 12 productions and her professional debut in 2014 was playing the role of Helen in *Fat Pig* produced by Pangdemonium, a role which led to a nomination for Best Actress award in the M1-Straits Times Life Theatre Awards. She is hugely grateful to Pangdemonium directors Adrian and Tracie Pang for trusting her with the role, especially since she was unknown in the industry during that time.

She says: "In theatre work, discipline is key. It's a quality I am constantly trying to improve on. It's also important to have empathy towards your co-actors, and of course a sense of humour is great, too!"

"There is something about watching a play or a musical that has a magic which is difficult to express verbally"

One of her most challenging performances was her role as Rosemary Joseph in Dick Lee's production, *Beauty World*, which earned her a nomination for the Best Supporting Actress in the Life Theatre Awards. The story revolves around a naive character, Ivy Chan, who arrives in Singapore to search for her long-lost father. Frances played Ivy's bubbly pen-pal and Frances describes the role as a dream come true as she loved the 1998 version of the production and was pleased to be a part of the revival alongside her biggest inspiration, actress and jazz singer Jacintha Abisheganaden, who gave her singing lessons when she was eight years old.

Frances' upcoming performance is *La Cage* from *Wild Rice*, a touching tale about a family's struggle to stay together. She is excited about the production and promises the audience "a visual and musical spectacular".

La Cage is on from 19 April to 13 May at the Victoria Theatre and tickets can be purchased through Sistic.



EA@100

Celebrating Our Community

In 2019,
the Eurasian Association will be proudly
celebrating the 100th anniversary of its founding.
We are calling on members to suggest, contribute and
participate in events and activities to commemorate this
momentous occasion.



The First Project:

The Great EA Family Tree

For EA@100, the EA is planning to build Singapore's biggest linked family tree and have it displayed at a special event in 2019.

How can I get involved?

1. Contribute your family tree
 - a. With your consent, the EA Secretariat will input your family tree into the Great EA Family Tree database
 - b. With many family trees in our database, we can find out who we are related to!
 - c. You can request a copy of your extended family tree (printout or electronic file)
2. Join the organising team if you have an interest in the history of the Eurasian community and genealogy.
 - a. You can assist assist others to research and build family trees
 - b. You can organise the main event to launch the Great EA Family Tree

If you have any other ideas on how the EA can celebrate its 100th anniversary, do let us know!

Contact: revathi@eurasians.org

Tempu birah kaza.
It's time to come home.

Festa di Papia **KRISTANG**

1st Kristang Language Festival

May 20-21, 2017
Asian Civilisations Museum



**Experience the 500-
year-old endangered
heritage language
of the Portuguese
Eurasian community
come alive again like
never before.**

Take part in the first ever:
Kristang Poetry Competition
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Languages of Singapore Trail
Forums, Workshops, Panels
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With a Gala Dinner* graced
by Guest of Honour
Mr Teo Chee Hean,
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*paid event

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