



MEDIA RELEASE

SCS collaborates with NUS to create the premiere on Alfred Russel Wallace

Exhibition commemorates 100 years of his legacy

Singapore, 28 November 2013 – Events around the world this year have commemorated the centenary of the death of Alfred Russel Wallace, co-founder of the modern theory of evolution. Science Centre Singapore (SCS) has collaborated with the Faculty of Science and Raffles Museum of Biodiversity Research, National University of Singapore (NUS) to create Singapore's largest ever exhibition on the famous explorer-scientist Wallace – "ISLAND ADVENTURER: Alfred Russel Wallace and the quest for the origins of species". The exhibition reveals how Wallace's work in Singapore and Southeast Asia led him to formulate a theory of evolution by natural selection.

The exhibition consists of six zones on themes of a forgotten Singapore, biodiversity, exploration, discovery, and scientific adventure. During his 8-year expedition in the Malay Archipelago, Wallace collected over 200,000 specimens of insects, birds and mammals. A brilliant observer of nature, he noticed interesting trends in the appearance and distribution of the animals across many islands. This led him to come up with his theory of how species evolved by natural selection, as well as develop our modern ideas of biogeography.

Visitors can watch an animated 'theatre' telling the true story of the interactions between Wallace and Darwin. Wallace's jungle work environment has been re-created in unprecedented detail including a replica hut with his rudimentary scientific work station. The exhibition also showcases some of the breathtaking creatures Wallace collected including mammals, birds, the Golden birdwing butterfly, the Rajah Brooke butterfly and giant Rhinoceros beetles.

Dr John van Wyhe, of the Departments of Biological Sciences and History, NUS, and one of the world's leading scholars on Wallace and Darwin, helped design and write the exhibition, building on his extensive research on Wallace's travel and discovery in the region.



Dr van Wyhe said, "Wallace has often been forgotten, but his pioneering work in Singapore and Southeast Asia led to the greatest revolution in the history of science. This is by far the most elaborate and accurate exhibition on Wallace's life ever created. It is both fascinating and very entertaining and can help inspire a new generation of scientific curiosity and discovery."

To bring visitors closer to the inspirational character and life of Wallace, SCS is also bringing in a show "You Should Ask Wallace" by Welsh theatre group *Theatr na nÓg* from 29 November to 2 December 2013. The 45-minute play takes viewers through Wallace's life as a young boy growing up in Wales and how he embarked on epic adventures to the Amazon and Malay Archipelago.

"We have always looked at how we can bring out the fun aspect of science when we create our exhibitions so that we can continuously excite and inspire the young minds of Singapore. *ISLAND ADVENTURER: Alfred Russel Wallace and the quest for the origins of species*, through the theme of exploration, discovery and adventure, will shed a different light on the natural history of our region. We believe that this exhibition will excite people about the natural habitat that surrounds them and inspire more students to go into the field of science discovery", said A/Prof Lim Tit Meng, Chief Executive, Science Centre Singapore.

Commenting on the collaboration, Professor Andrew Wee, Dean, Faculty of Science, NUS said, "The Faculty of Science, NUS, is delighted to again partner Science Centre Singapore to put together the Wallace Exhibition. Alfred Russel Wallace was an intrepid explorer and ardent student of natural history in Singapore and Southeast Asia whose energy and passion brought many important discoveries to light – notably the modern theory of evolution and natural selection. We hope to inculcate the same spirit in our students as they push into new and uncharted waters of science."

The exhibition is complemented by a suite of education programmes. Dr George Beccaloni, a curator, Natural History Museum, London and the Director of the Wallace Correspondence Project, will give a talk on the development of Wallace's ideas about evolution on 4 December 2013, 2.30 pm at SCS. The exhibition will be featured at SCS, Hall B, Mezzanine Floor from 30 November 2013 to 30 November 2014.



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About Science Centre Singapore

The Science Centre Singapore celebrates 35 years of promoting interest and creative learning in science and technology. Over the past 35 years, the Centre and its partners have played a pivotal role in transforming the way students and the public interact with and learn about science & technology. The Science Centre, Omni-Theatre and Snow City have engaged and enriched more than 29.5 million students and visitors since 1977. A custodian of creativity and innovation, the Centre has captured the evolution of scientific developments through unique and relevant exhibitions and shows. It continues to ignite young minds and foster new generations of scientifically savvy Singaporeans.

A non-formal educational institution and leading Science Centre in the region, the Science Centre houses 14 exhibition galleries with more than 1,000 exhibits, and another 30,000 sq metres of outdoor exhibition space showcasing the Waterworks exhibition, Ecogarden and Kinetic Garden. It also houses the Omni-Theatre — Singapore's only dome-shaped, 5-storey high IMAX theatre. The Science Centre, Omni-Theatre and Snow City received 1.26 million visitors for FY2012/2013. For more information, please visit www.science.edu.sg

About the National University of Singapore

A leading global university centered in Asia, the National University of Singapore (NUS) is Singapore's flagship university, which offers a global approach to education and research, with a focus on Asian perspectives and expertise.

NUS has 16 faculties and schools across three campuses. Its transformative education includes a broad-based curriculum underscored by multi-disciplinary courses and cross-faculty enrichment. Over 37,000 students from 100 countries enrich the community with their diverse social and cultural perspectives.

NUS has three Research Centres of Excellence (RCE) and 23 university-level research institutes and centres. It is also a partner in Singapore's fifth RCE. NUS shares a close affiliation with 16 national-level research institutes and centres. Research activities are strategic and robust, and NUS is well-known for its research strengths in engineering, life sciences and biomedicine, social sciences and natural sciences. It also strives to create a supportive and innovative environment to promote creative enterprise within its community.

For more information, please visit www.nus.edu.sg.

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