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24 August 2018

To: All SSA Members

**SINGAPORE MARITIME HERITAGE TALK – “WHAT TREASURES LIE IN SINGAPORE WATERS?”**

Today Singapore Strait is one of the busiest shipping lanes in the world. In relative terms, this has been the case for well over a thousand years. And where there are lots of ships there are generally lots of shipwrecks, particularly when congestion is compounded by reefs, sandbanks and squalls. The trick is to find and excavate the wrecks in crowded anchorages, beneath steaming VLCC's, or around heavily guarded rocks. The wrecks are there, and they will come to light. But for the time being, we must vicariously envisage Singapore's underwater treasures via shipwreck finds in neighbouring waters.

Several ships either had traversed Singapore Strait shortly before they sunk or were headed in that direction. The earliest is the 9th century *Belitung (Tang) Wreck* with her cargo of Chinese ceramics and gold. The 10th century *Intan Wreck* is nowhere near Singapore waters, but ships supplying the Srivijayan entrepot port where she loaded did pass nearby. The 12th century *Lingga Wreck*, with her cargo of Guangdong ceramics, may well have sailed through Singapore Strait. Without doubt the 14th century *Nipa Shoal Wreck* did, for that's where she was discovered. Unfortunately, on the Indonesian side of the maritime border. The 15th century *Bakau Wreck* wasn't headed for the Strait, but as she is contemporary with Zheng He's voyages, a sister ship could well have been while in transit to Melaka. Finally, the early 17th century *Binh Thuan Wreck*, fully laden with Ming ceramics, was not only bound for Singapore Strait, but perhaps for Singapore itself.



**Speaker - Dr Michael Flecker**  
Managing Director, Maritime Explorations  
(Singapore)

**Date:**

Monday, 17 Sep 2018

**Program:**

1830hrs – Registration

1900hrs – Presentation

1945hrs – Q&A 2030hrs – Light refreshments

2130hrs – End

**Venue:**

The POD, Level 16

National Library Building

100 Victoria St, Singapore 188064

Michael started working life in 1985 as a civil engineer in a Singapore-based company. In 1987 he joined Pacific Sea Resources for the two-year excavation of a Manila Galleon, Nuestra Senora de la Concepcion, in Saipan. Since then he has directed some of the most important shipwreck excavations in Asia, including the 9th century Belitung Wreck; the 10th century Intan Wreck, the 13th century Java Sea Wreck; the 15th century Bakau Wreck; the 1608 Binh Thuan Wreck, and the 1690 Vung Tau Wreck.

Michael's specialty is ancient Asian ship construction and trade. He earned his PhD from the National University of Singapore, based on his excavation of the Intan Wreck. This thesis was published as a book by the British Archaeological Report Series (2002). Other works include the book, Porcelain from the Vung Tau Wreck (2001), chapters in Southeast Asian Ceramics: New Light on Old Pottery (2009), Shipwrecked: Tang Treasures and Monsoon Winds (2010) and numerous other books, along with many articles in international journals. He recently completed a stint as research fellow at the Singapore ISEAS-Yusof Ishak Institute.

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