

2016

## There's a whale, do you want it? A new Museum, a new whale

“On Friday 10th July 2015, an informal meeting was being held in the contemporary conference room of Lee Kong Chian Natural History Museum, as staff Dr Tan Swee Hee, Shu Shwu Li, Kate Pocklington and Chen Mingshi, discussed the future of the temporary gallery with Museum Head, Professor Peter Ng. At 10:30 a.m., there was a knock on the door and in rushed the Curator of Mammals and Birds, Marcus Chua, declaring: ‘There’s a whale, do you want it?’”

— Kate Pocklington and Iffah Iesa

2016.1



2016.2



2016.3



In the subsequent upheaval, the response of those present goes unrecorded. The dead cetacean is later identified as a Sperm Whale, *Physeter macrocephalus* Linnaeus, 1758. It is the first record of the species in Singapore's territorial waters. In the months that follow, staff from the Museum deflesh, dissect, disarticulate and desgrease the entire 10.6 metre whale. Two months and nine days later, the skeleton's preparation is complete. Coinciding with the fiftieth year of Singapore's independence, the whale gets the nickname "Jubi Lee". The next six months see the reorganisation of the brand-new gallery to incorporate a newly-fabricated display for the whale. The public is able see Singapore's first Sperm Whale after the exhibit is unveiled on 14 March 2016.

2016.4



2016.1

The dead Sperm Whale, *Physeter macrocephalus* Linnaeus, 1758, off Jurong Island on 10 July 2015

2016.2

Removing blubber and flesh from the dead whale at Tuas

2016.3

Removing the last remnants of flesh from the whale's skeleton

2016.4

The Sperm Whale exhibit at the Museum that opens on 14 March 2016



1820

1840

1860

1880

1900

1920

1940

1960

1980

2000

🌿 2016