



Some of the exhibits on display at the year-long exhibition, 200: A Natural History, at the Lee Kong Chian Natural History Museum. Held in conjunction with the Singapore Bicentennial, it aims to help the public "understand and appreciate our natural environment better". PHOTO: LEE KONG CHIAN NATURAL HISTORY MUSEUM

Tracing 200 key events in Singapore's natural history

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It may seem hard to imagine now, but turtle meat was very popular in 19th-century Singapore and the poor creatures were often kept alive and then slaughtered when they were needed for the dinner table.

And less than 30 years ago, wild elephants roamed Pulau Tekong for as long as a week, after a family of

three swam over from Johor. They co-existed with national servicemen who were training there until the animals were captured and sent to a national park in Malaysia.

These are some of the 200 stories documented in a new exhibition at the Lee Kong Chian Natural History Museum.

The exhibition – 200: A Natural History – was opened by guest of honour Grace Fu, who is Minister

for Culture, Community and Youth, yesterday. It is being held in conjunction with the Singapore Bicentennial and highlights 200 significant natural history events in the island's past.

Ms Fu said the exhibition "helps us understand and appreciate our natural environment better, and informs us of impact on our biodiversity as a mark of infrastructural development".

She also said the "treasures" on display "remind us of our past, help us appreciate our present, and guide us in charting our future".

The year-long exhibition is supported by the National Heritage Board.

A corresponding book thematically categorising the 200 events was also launched.

Mr Martyn Low, 37, research associate at the museum and one of the key people behind the exhibition and book, said: "I want people to realise that history is not just old and boring. People used to do all kind of things – strange, weird, stupid.

"I want people to read the snippets and be excited to find out more for themselves."

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