

# Camping & Tramping: The Museum in Malaya

By Patricia Bjaaland Welch

Yes, the National University of Singapore Museum (NUS) is off most of our beaten tracks, but it's actually very easy to find. You can drive right up to the museum itself where there is ample public parking at the museum's entrance (for less than \$2 on most days). The museum is only 261 meters on your left from the well-signposted main entrance to the NUS campus from Clementi Road, when you turn into Kent Ridge Crescent. So switch on your GPS and as Nike says, "Just do it!"

Their current exhibition, *Camping and Tramping through the Colonial Archives: The Museum in Malaya* is well worth going to. Bring your family, especially your children, and step back into the wonderful, awe and smile-eliciting exhibition of museums as our grandparents and great-grandparents knew them. There are bottles of newts, snakes and toads, skinned animals, preserved birds, kris and wayang kulit (shadow) puppets. And all of them are labelled with wonderful little white tags penned by hand in the minutest of writing, many from Raffles' time and some with names you'll recognise. I stopped by for 10 minutes and stayed two hours.



Rows of carefully prepared birds remind one of Wallace's joy at the discovery of new species



What hands wrote these tags carefully describing where each specimen was found?



A skull guards a display case of kris and other local daggers

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The NUS Museum is open Tues-Sat 10:00 am to 7:30 pm and Sundays 10:00 am to 6:00 pm. Closed Mondays and holidays. This exhibition runs through 2 June only, so hurry.

All photos by the author



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