

# MARJORIE DOGGETT'S SINGAPORE

*A Photographic Record*



EDWARD STOKES

*Marjorie Doggett's Singapore* records the work of the pioneer local photographer Marjorie Doggett. From 1952–57, camera in hand, she roamed Singapore capturing for posterity the then colony's cityscapes and buildings with striking images and descriptive text.

The photographs and narratives in *Marjorie Doggett's Singapore* offer an entirely new presentation. Many of this book's photographs have not been previously published. The book reflects on Marjorie Doggett's original writings that vividly captured 1950s Singapore, then on the cusp of great change. Doggett foresaw the risks that rapid progress posed for the city's buildings and thus sought to record them in her photos. She had clear views concerning the preservation of old buildings, and her work would later contribute to Singapore's architectural conservation.

Doggett's 1957 book, *Characters of Light*, is considered a classic photo book on Singapore. With full access to Marjorie Doggett's personal archive, and helped by modern photographic reproduction, *Marjorie Doggett's Singapore* offers the reader a fresh and wide-ranging view of Singapore and Doggett's own life. The photographs are enriched with evocative texts by Edward Stokes that give insights into the photographer and her subjects.

Born in England, Marjorie arrived in Singapore in early 1947 together with her future husband, Victor Doggett. Far more than typical expatriates, Marjorie and Victor lived and worked beside the city's other communities and groups. Singapore took hold of them and they made it their home. In 1961 they became citizens.

As well as being a gifted photographer, Marjorie Doggett was a dedicated animal welfare advocate. For her photography and animal work, in 2017 she was inducted into the Singapore Women's Hall of Fame.

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**This publication is based on the Marjorie Doggett Collection now held by the National Archives of Singapore. This material was donated to the National Archives in 2016 by Nicholas Doggett, the son of Marjorie and Victor Doggett. The Collection is a unique body of photographs and documents that portray Singapore, especially during the 1950s.**

***Marjorie Doggett's Singapore* was originated by The Photographic Heritage Foundation. The project was supported by funding from Ng Teng Fong Charitable Foundation. Based on Marjorie Doggett's material held by the National Archives of Singapore, the book is co-published under the Ridge Books imprint with NUS Press, Singapore.**

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**Edward Stokes** is an Australian photographer and writer. He has a special interest in the photographic history of Asia. The Founder and Publisher of The Photographic Heritage Foundation, Edward's many books about Hong Kong and Australia have been widely praised for blending photographs with illuminating historical texts. He was educated in Hong Kong, at the Royal Australian Naval College and at Magdalen College, Oxford.

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**The Photographic Heritage Foundation** was established in 2008 as a Hong Kong not-for-profit body to present Asia's photographic heritage. It is a bridge between rare, often forgotten historical photographs of Asia and all those who are interested in the region's cultural heritage. The photos that TPHF seeks out, researches and publishes hold up a mirror to fast changing societies. In partnership with its sponsors, the body originates books and exhibitions that bring to light the images of Asia's earlier photographers, to help ensure the preservation of their photographs and to record their achievement.

[www.photo-heritage.com](http://www.photo-heritage.com)

**The National Archives of Singapore** was established in 1968, with its roots planted in 1938 with the creation of an Archivist in the Raffles Museum and Library. The NAS is Singapore's main keeper of records of national and historical significance. Its rich and diverse holdings are acquired from public agencies, private sources and overseas institutions and archives. Photographs and oral history recordings are a major part of NAS' invaluable store of materials, and these collections now include the Marjorie Doggett Collection and related oral history recordings.

[www.nas.gov.sg](http://www.nas.gov.sg)

Marjorie Doggett's photos of Singapore in the 1950s reflect her belief in the value of conserving the best from the past. A thoughtful, caring person, she was passionate about architectural heritage and all animal welfare. This book presents an entirely new, intimate portrayal of Doggett and 1950s Singapore through her memorable photos and personal experience. The book also traces her life from 1920s England to becoming a Singapore citizen.



Marjorie Doggett's book *Characters of Light* marked her first decade in Singapore. This publication records that 1957 book and its 1985 revised edition. In both versions, Marjorie Doggett recalled:

“As night descends, heralded by a short twilight and a sunset that is often a riot of colour, and we sit watching the tropical moon trace a shimmering silver path across the sea and glisten darkly on the palm trees overhead, we know that Singapore has taken a part of our hearts for her own.”



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