



## The 'Great Flood' of 1926 in British Malaya: Historical Case-Studies as a Way of Learning from the Past

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**Speaker:** Dr Fiona Clare Williamson  
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**Chair:** Dr Chris Gouramanis  
Department of Geography, NUS

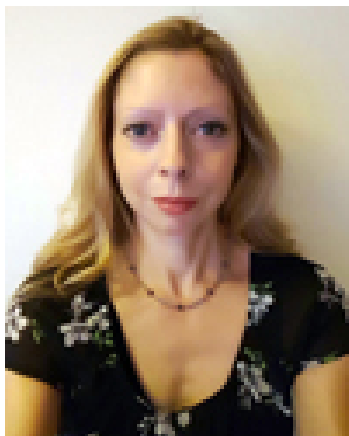
**Date/Time:** Friday, 17 November 2017, 3.30pm – 5.00pm

**Place:** Earth Lab, AS2-02-03, NUS

### Abstract

This paper is an historical case study of a major flood that occurred in British Malaya in 1926. It focuses on two key points. First, that the magnitude and subsequent impacts of the flood were exacerbated by contemporary industrial, agricultural and hydraulic practices. Second, that this event pushed the British colonial government toward increasing their planning and investment in land and river management strategies over the following decades. This article draws on recent research arguing the importance of an historical approach to disaster (Mauch and Pfister, 2009; Schenk, 2007; Bankoff et al, 2004). The historical perspective allows long-view insight into disaster cause and effect and the wider, long-term political, social and environmental implications.

### About the Speaker



A social and environmental historian working on intersections between climate & urban society in Singapore and Hong Kong, especially how climate shaped cities, societies, and cultures. I also work on the history of meteorological science in the China Seas region, connecting this with the trend to view urban centres as global knowledge hubs. My background is in British early-modern society and cities, exploring space, place, gender and urban topography. I also work on a variety of multi-disciplinary projects, including the history of urban heat, nature-induced disasters, and climate change with scientists and geographers. I am currently working on a monograph project provisionally titled *Cities and Climates: Extreme Weather and Society in Colonial Singapore and Hong Kong*.

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