

# Treasure trove

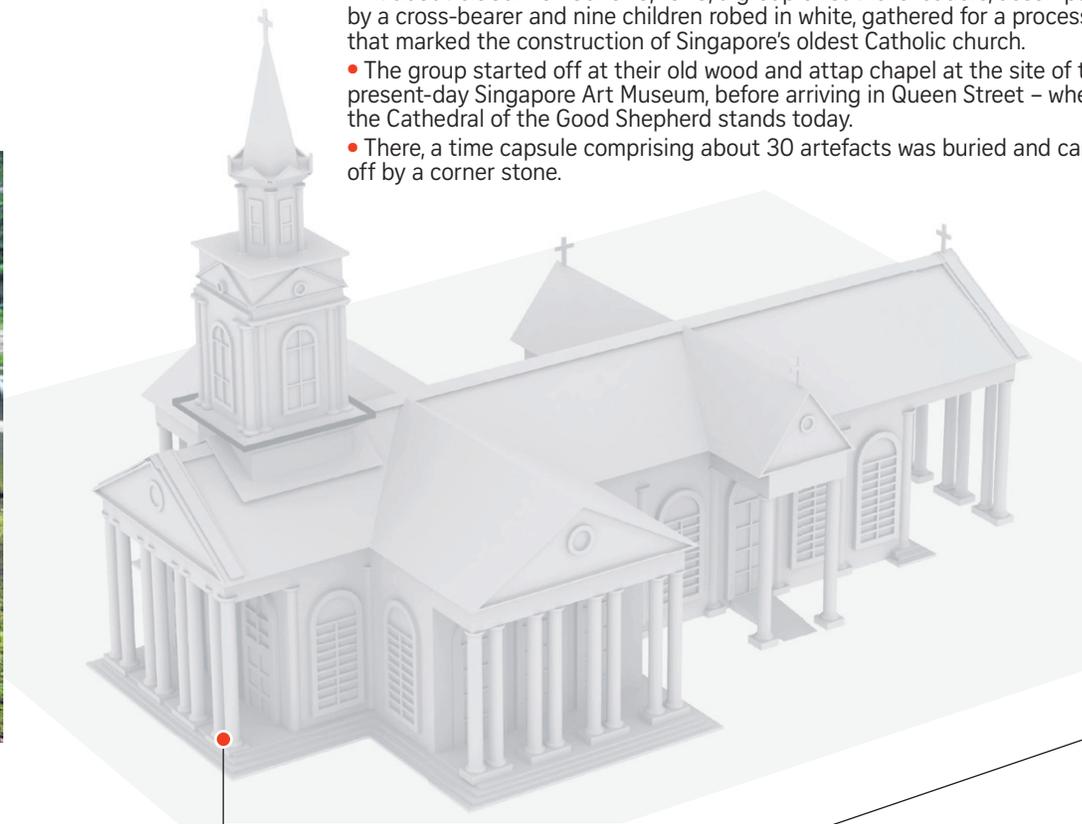
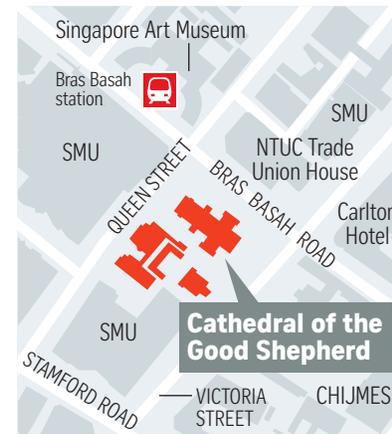
A treasure trove of items going back more than 170 years was unearthed by contractors carrying out restoration works at the Cathedral of the Good Shepherd in Queen Street. The 'rare discovery' was made earlier this year. Experts tell MELODY ZACCHEUS the significance of the discovery.



The rector of the cathedral, Monsignor Philip Heng, examines a segment of the base of the pillar in which the foundation stone of the cathedral is embedded.

## Burying the time capsule in 1843

- At about 6.30am on June 18, 1843, a group of Catholic leaders, accompanied by a cross-bearer and nine children robed in white, gathered for a procession that marked the construction of Singapore's oldest Catholic church.
- The group started off at their old wood and attap chapel at the site of the present-day Singapore Art Museum, before arriving in Queen Street – where the Cathedral of the Good Shepherd stands today.
- There, a time capsule comprising about 30 artefacts was buried and capped off by a corner stone.



The pit where the time capsule was discovered.

## The time capsule comprised the following artefacts that were likely stored in apothecary bottles



### 24 rare coins and tokens including:



• Copper tokens, minted by a collective group of merchants, which were paid out to their plantation workers who would then exchange them for merchandise and rations. They were also known as chicken tokens for their rooster emblem.

• An 1814 Spanish silver coin



• Portuguese tin coins from Portuguese Melaka (c.1511 to 1641), the oldest among the collection



### About five publications of the day including:



• The April 22, 1843 issue of the Bengal Catholic Herald



• The May 1843 edition of the Madras Catholic Expositor



• A prayer and ceremonies booklet from the first service at the new site

• The June 15, 1843 edition of the Singapore Free Press