



Message

from Wearnes Chairman
Wong Nang Jang



Wearnes put the first
“Yellow Top” taxis
on Singapore roads.



Wearnes Air Services
inaugurated.



In February, company ceased
operations in Malaya due
to Second World War.



On 1 April, Wearne
Brothers recommenced
operations.



Progress Motors set
up to handle Fiat
agency.

Double-decker buses
introduced by
Federated Motors.

I am pleased to note that this collection of anecdotes and stories has served to highlight two ingredients of our success story. First, that Wearnes has been built by many dedicated people, and second, Wearnes is an adaptable and innovative company, qualities that will enable us to succeed in our second century of existence.

This book traces the story of how we started out as a one product company in 1906, selling second-hand cars and spare parts from the back of a coach house, to a company with an annual turnover of S\$2 billion, a diversified portfolio and particular strengths in technology manufacturing. You will learn that Wearnes has clocked many firsts. The first company to operate a commercial airline in Singapore, the first to offer postal air services in Malaya and the Straits

Settlements, the first to bring in double-decker buses, one of the first Singapore companies to manufacture personal computers and the first to venture into Northeast China via the city of Shenyang.

The stories recount how Wearnes has proven its ability to adapt and reinvent itself while staying true to its roots over the years. They show how strong leadership built a team dedicated to excellence and which had a “can do” attitude which holds true till today. Venturing into the future, these qualities, together with an entrepreneurial spirit inherited from our forebears, will ensure our continued relevance.

This project was spearheaded by Royston K S Tan, Chairman of the Wearnes Centennial Organising Committee in 2006. The team has spent much time researching and

unearthing information and have turned what could have become just another coffee-table book, into a compelling and sometimes humorous collection of stories. Some of the stories are downright amusing, such as “Driving Away with the Bride”; others offer interesting insights into development, not just of a company but of working in foreign countries, like Phil Harding’s account of setting up a factory in China in the early 1980s entitled “Surviving Shenzhen”. Still others offer a glimpse of the thinking and strategies which helped build a multi-nation conglomerate which is today’s Wearnes. More importantly, these are real stories, told in the first person, by real people.

The book is a way to remember all who have contributed and who are still contributing to our success. I have been inspired by them. Happy reading!



Theo Wearne retired as Chairman.



Diversified into heavy equipment.



Wearne Brothers Limited became a holding company.



Walter Wearne appointed Chairman, Tan Sri Tan Chin Tuan joined Board of Directors.



Tan Sri Tan Chin Tuan appointed Chairman, intensified diversification efforts.