



TRUST NEWS

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Enmore Martyrs' Monument: 60 Years After the Incident

The Enmore Martyrs' Monument is located at Plantation Enmore, East Coast of Demerara. This monument was erected in honour of the five heroic sugar workers, Rambarran, Pooran, Lallabagee, Surajballi and Harry, who were killed during a massive working class protest against the social and economic conditions on the East Coast sugar estates. These workers made the ultimate sacrifice in a brave quest for working class rights and, in 1976, they were designated the Enmore Martyrs. Their martyrdom was recognized at the Continental Conference of the national affiliates of the World Peace Council, which met in Bagota, Columbia during June 4-7, 1976. During this meeting a resolution supporting Guyana's anti-imperialist and development policy was passed as well as the designation of June 16, 1976 as Guyana Solidarity Day. Subsequently, the Government of Guyana caused a monument designed by Guyanese artist Dr. Dennis Williams, to be raised in their honour. On Thursday, June 16, 1977, this monument was unveiled by Prime Minister, His Excellency, Mr. Linden Forbes Sampson Burnham. This was the occasion of the 29th anniversary of the death of the five gallant sugar workers.

The monument stands raised on a concrete base six feet high with five repetitive verticals each adorned with brass symbols reminiscent of cutlasses and inscribed with the names of the five martyrs. There is also a plaque 30" x 20", designed by Guyanese artist, Mr. Stanley Greaves, and cast by the Brass Aluminium and Cast Iron Foundry.

The incident started on April 22, 1948 with approximately 1200 labourers drawn from plantations Enmore, Non Pariel, Lusignan, Mon Repos, La Bonne Intention, Vryheids Lust and Ogle. At first, the estates authorities were not particularly troubled by the strike action as they had grown accustomed to such protests actions. They simply recruited scabs from as far away as Rose Hall on the Canje Creek, in Berbice and from the Essequibo Coast who performed the duties of the striking cane cutters. But because production continued to be erratic, the Sugar Producers' Association adopted new draconian measures to force the striking workers back to the fields.

In spite of these acts of provocation, the workers remained defiant and the strike dragged on. On June 5, 1948, the striking workers staged a massive street demonstration in Georgetown. The next ten days were critical as the strikers became increasingly restive and resorted to actions which made both the management and the colonial police force fearful for the fortune of the industry and the safety of estate management and members of their families. The evening of June 15, 1948, saw a flurry of activity as the striking workers were determined to bring the issues to a head. Both estate management and the police were just as determined to see the end of the strike and so on June 16 the police opened fire on the workers, killing five and injuring several others.

This incident marked the turning point in industrial relations within the sugar industry and working conditions began slowly to improve.

This year, the National Trust of Guyana joins the rest of the nation in observance of the 60th Anniversary of the Enmore incident in which five valiant sugar workers, committed to bringing about real improvements in the working conditions in the sugar industry were gunned down by the colonial police.



Enmore Martyrs Monument

The National Trust of Guyana joins in celebrating 170 years of Indian Immigration, 1838-2008.

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

OUR ACTIVITIES.....2-3

- ?International Monuments & Sites Day**
- ?Model Making Presentation**
- ?Publications**
- ?Site Enhancement**

HERITAGE TRAIL.....4

Saluting International Day for Monuments and Sites

On April 18, 1982 on the occasion of a symposium organised by the International Council on Monuments and Sites, ICOMOS, in Tunisia, a motion that **International Day for Monuments and Sites** be celebrated simultaneously throughout the world was adopted. This idea was approved by both the Executive Committee and the UNESCO General Conference which passed a resolution at its 22nd session in November 1983 recommending that Member States examine the possibility of declaring April 18, each year **International Monuments and Sites Day**.

This day has traditionally been called **World Heritage Day**. The World's Heritage is the shared wealth of humankind. Protecting and preserving this valuable asset demand the collective efforts of the international community.

This year, to mark **International Monuments and Sites Day** ICOMOS has encouraged its National and International Scientific Committees and their membership to organise activities with due regard to the theme **Religious Heritage and Sacred Places**.

The National Trust of Guyana, under the auspices of the Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sport spearheaded the local observances on Friday April 18, 2008. An exhibition showcasing religious places and sites, along with other relevant monuments, were mounted at the Gallery of the National Trust.

Here in Guyana we must ensure that every effort is made to preserve, promote and enjoy our heritage, tangible and intangible. Various cultural traditions were brought to our shores by each arriving group and these have all made an indelible imprint on the Guyanese cultural landscape. No where is this more evident than in the field of religion; its practices, ceremonies and traditions. Its built heritage is most significant as is evidenced in the distinctive variety of well maintained [timber] structures, many of which date back to the 19th and early 20th century. The St. George's Cathedral, St. Andrew's Kirk, Providence Mandir, and Cumberland Open-Air Mosque to name but a few. These continue to stand as treasured testimony to the grandeur of a distinctive religious heritage.

It is a national lament that, over the years, this built heritage has been reduced by losses to the common threat of fire, deterioration, neglect and the lack of proper conservation and management mechanisms to safeguard them. Further, the yet fragile sense of appreciation for heritage conservation has also contributed to losses by way of demolition and reconstructions. Among the most recent significant losses of magnificent heritage sites within the precincts of the capital city were the 2004 fire resulting in the total destruction of the Church of the Sacred Heart Cathedral and the 2007 demolition of the Queenstown Masjid which occurred not by accident but by design.

Our structures show the skill and craftsmanship of our people who made good use of the materials at hand. If these reminders are allowed to fall into disrepair then we are bound to forget the sacrifice and artistic contribution of our ancestors. We will also forget the building traditions that are so very useful for the continued development of our society.

The National Trust of Guyana wishes to encourage all Guyanese to be vigilant caretakers of our cultural heritage. Safeguarding our national treasures is a task that requires the cooperation of all.

OUR ACTIVITIES

Model Making

On Tuesday, April 15, 2008 Ms. Nadia Madho, Research and Documentation Officer to the National Trust of Guyana, made a presentation, on model making, to a group of first year Bachelor of Architecture students from the University of Guyana. Model making is a part of the curriculum and the students' final project.



Constructing a model of a landscape requires the graphic representation of the buildings, the greenery, the mountains, the river. In short, the things that surround us in the past, present and possibly the future just as they are, in three dimensions but at a reduced scale. For a model of a building, it is well to work on the basis of the architectural drawings and dimensions, but when dealing with nature this is not the case. Here one must utilize instinctive perception. In the end it is merely a matter of skill, effort and devotion. The lecture, which was well received, was held at gallery of the National Trust of Guyana.



Photographs showing Ms. Nadia Madho delivering her presentation on model making.

Publications

The National Trust of Guyana has reprinted three brochures on Fort Zeelandia, St. George's Cathedral and Parliament Building. Drafts for the printing and reprinting of Chateau Margot Chimney, 1763 Monument, Mission Chapel Church and Christianburg Waterwheel are being prepared. Currently there are over fifty brochures and information leaflets available on various heritage sites throughout Guyana.

These and other publications are available for sale at the Trust, National Museum and bookstores.

Site Enhancement: Chateau Margot Chimney

The Chateau Margot Chimney is dated July 1, 1889. This Chimney stands at the front of the village from which its name is derived; Chateau Margot on the East Coast Demerara, some eight miles from the capital city. It is the solitary remains of a former sugar factory which according to a description from the weekly Argosy of 1883 'boasted the finest cane land in the colony of British Guiana during the nineteenth century operating successfully on the vacuum pan process for many years'.

The chimney was constructed by a brick layer, Anlemo Gordon, from Buxton, East Coast Demerara. It stands on a huge concrete base and was constructed from red bricks. The chimney, despite its functions during the time of sugar operation, served as a beacon to ships approaching Port Georgetown even after the sugar factory was demolished. Still standing today, this site represents an aspect of our nation's industrial heritage, thus signifying a very important historical milestone. It reflects humankind's dual power of destruction and creation; the hope of a better life, and the ever-greater power over matter.

Above all else it is part of our heritage and we are called upon to make a very special effort to preserve what our ancestors left as a legacy of their hard work and great sacrifice. To this end, the National Trust of Guyana, in keeping with its mandate to preserve and promote our historic monuments and heritage sites, has recently cleared the environs of the chimney making it easily accessible to visitors desirous of having a close-up and personal view of the site.



Photograph showing the Chateau Margot Chimney, East Coast Demerara

HERITAGE TRAIL

Hermanus Post Tomb

Interred in a plot of land, currently owned by Toolsie Persaud at Plantation Le Resouvenir, East Coast Demerara, is the remains of a Dutch cotton cultivator, Hermanus Hilbertus Post who died in 1809. Born in Utrecht in 1775, Post then came to Demerara to seek his fortune as a plantation manager. After accumulating the necessary capital he purchased Plantation Le Resouvenir where cotton was cultivated. Due to his interest in the spiritual welfare of enslaved Africans, he requested that the London Missionary Society send a missionary to evangelise the Africans enslaved on his cotton plantation and in 1808 Reverend John Wray came to Demerara to work on his plantation. Bethel Chapel was built by Post to accommodate the enslaved parishers. Today, his grave still exists as a reminder of this aspect of the nation's historic past which ought to be preserved for posterity.



The tomb of Hermanus Post

St. Peter's Roman Catholic Church

In September 1872, Bishop James Etheridge, SJ, together with Fr. Aloysius Casati, SJ, journeyed to Beterverwagting to see the ground proposed for a church and cemetery and on June 29, 1875 the church was blessed and dedicated to St. Peter. The corner stone is still in place. The first confirmation ceremony for one hundred and twenty persons was held in 1879 by the Bishop.

The Parish and Church changed hands over the years. They were under the charge of Plaisance from 1877 to 1905, Buxton from 1919 to 1929, then back to Plaisance from April 1929 to January 1930, back to Buxton from 1930 to 1935, and returned to Plaisance from 1935 to present. A total of thirty-seven priests have served the Parish over one hundred and thirty three years.

A school, known as St. Peter's RC Primary was built next to the church and opened sometime before 1892. One of the famous Head teachers was Mr. C. B. Carto, an accomplished musician who played on his harp for Queen Victoria in London.

The church bell was a gift from parishioner **Mr. Francis Faria in 1904** and is still in use today. In 1900 the Rosary Sodality was started. Around 1920 the church was repaired, painted and extended to include an apse, an aisle with Gothic arches between the nave and aisle and a new high altar. Subsequent modifications occurred in 1948 with the building of the lady altar **and the altar of St. Teresa**. The church hosted a Scouts' Jamboree in 1955.

The Parish Community has in the past celebrated the fiftieth, seventy-fifth, and centenary anniversaries of the church. Major restoration works are currently ongoing and are expected to be completed for the observance of St. Peter's feast day, June 29, 2008.



Recently rehabilitated St. Peter's RC Church, Beterverwagting, East Coast Demerara

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