



Aapravasi Ghat
inscribed on the World Heritage List in 2006

Aapravasi Ghat Trust Fund NEWSLETTER

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MGI Immigration Archives

ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESEARCH AT TRIANON HERITAGE SITE

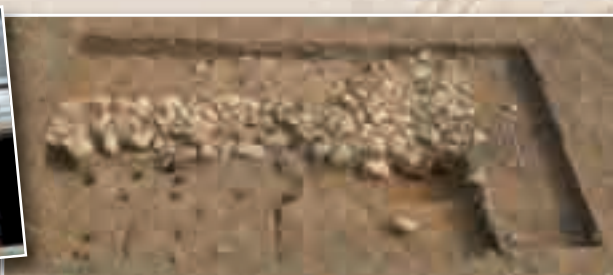
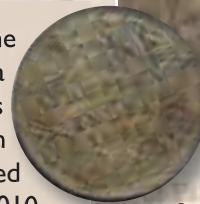


Illustration of the foundations uncovered during the archaeological works which gives a tentative indication of the extent of this large structure



Courtesy of Dr K Seetah

A team of Archaeologists composed of Dr Diego Calaan from the Università Ca' Foscari in Venice (Italy), Dr Saša Čaval from the Institut za antropološke in prostorske študije, in Ljubljana (Slovenia), Dr Aleks Pluskowski from Reading University (UK) and Dr Krish Seetah from McDonald Institute & University of Central Lancashire (UK) conducted archaeological excavations at Trianon Heritage Site from 6 to 17 July 2010.



Quarter Rupee coin found during excavation

Shows a drainage system that may have been associated with this large structure

WORKSHOP ON "BHOJPURI AT THE CROSSROADS"



Participants of Bhojpuri workshop at UoM

From 13 to 15 July 2010, AGTF organised a workshop on Bhojpuri heritage at the University of Mauritius. The workshop aimed at reinforcing collaboration between research institutions and discussing future research programme for Bhojpuri cultures and traditions based on research undertaken in this field together with possible means of promotion and dissemination. The discussions focused on the impact of modernity on Bhojpuri languages and traditions on the similarities and differences between Bhojpuri traditions and cultures in Mauritius and India thanks to the collaboration of Dr Archana Kumar, Associate Professor, Department of English, Banaras Hindu University in India and Chief Guest at the workshop.

THE INTERNATIONAL DAY FOR MONUMENTS AND SITES

In the context of the International Day for Monuments and Sites created by ICOMOS (International Council of Monuments and Sites), the Aapravasi Ghat Trust Fund proposed activities in collaboration with the Nelson Mandela Centre for African Culture and the National Heritage Fund on Sunday 18 April 2010.

Educational activities during Heritage Week



(AGTF Collection)

EDITORIAL



(AGTF Collection)

16 Steps of the AGWHS

2010 has been a very fruitful year for the Aapravasi Ghat Trust Fund and several new projects have been initiated which should start bearing fruit very soon. The Beekrumsing Ramlallah Interpretation Centre has had a slow start but has finally taken off. The only site in the world, inscribed on UNESCO's list that is devoted to indenture, will officially open its Interpretation Centre next November 2011.

Conceptualization of such an interpretation centre has been

slow and painful, as we reflect on our history, and decide what we think is important for Mauritians to know, even though some may not agree or wish to know. Although we live in a world where information is readily available everywhere, we face a public that reads less but wishes to access information in other mediums or has no time to read lengthy texts. The challenge of presenting historical information in a manner that is attractive has been a formidable one and will no doubt give rise to further intense discussion.

The AGTF faces other challenges, that of not having a legal Buffer Zone, four years after being inscribed on the World Heritage List. Our desire to preserve our cultural heritage faces a credibility challenge, when all over the world, new sites are continually being added to national and international heritage lists. As a small island-state, Mauritius' cultural and natural heritage is in greater danger, where resources are scarce and competition for space intense. Our forests and traditional walking paths in miles of open land are increasingly closed. Mauritians are no longer free to roam the woods and mountains to look for medicinal plants as our grandmothers and grandfathers did or enjoy clean, fresh air. Our health is as much in question today as it was in the nineteenth century and despite medical advances, many Mauritians prefer traditional methods. This history has been documented for the first time on the first ever book written on the health of indentured immigrants.

Traditional knowledge and healing practices are under threat. For this reason the AGTF has embarked this year on an Intangible Heritage project with the assistance of historians and anthropologists who have with field guides, scoured the island observing and recording all items of our heritage they encounter. We hope to present the results of this work next year in BRIC.

Dr Vijayalakshmi Teelock, GOSK
Chairperson, Aapravasi Ghat Trust Fund

24 October 2010

MESSAGE FROM
THE PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC

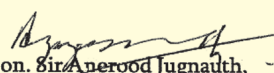
I am thankful to the Aapravasi Ghat Trust Fund for associating me with the publication of this Newsletter on the occasion of the 176th anniversary of the arrival of indentured labourers in Mauritius.

The arrival of our ancestors who migrated to Mauritius has greatly influenced the course of history and served as the basis for our present society.

We should pay homage to our forefathers for their fortitude and resilience, with which they have faced hardship, humiliation and sufferings, besides leading a wretched and miserable life. It is only through their sacrifice and foresight that the very first generation of children of Indian immigrants was able to get access to education. This has allowed them to emerge as the first elites from their ranks, to challenge the established order and rally support for democracy and liberty.

These memories should serve as an inspiration to the younger generation to work harder and make Mauritius a still better place to live. Our heritage, our culture and our language should be preserved as these give us our true identity. Coming generations should know the truth and the difficult stages of life that we have been through before making Mauritius what it is today.

I wish the Aapravasi Ghat Trust Fund plenty of success in its mission to preserve our heritage.


The Rt. Hon. Sir Anerood Jugnauth,
G.C.S.K., K.C.M.G., Q.C.
President of the Republic

29 September 2010

PRIME MINISTER'S MESSAGE



I commend the Aapravasi Ghat Trust Fund for the issue of its annual newsletter to mark the 176th anniversary of the arrival of the first indentured labourers in Mauritius.

The Aapravasi Ghat Site, formerly known as the Immigration Depot, epitomizes an important chapter of our history since the ancestors of the majority of our population arrived on the island through this immigrant depot.

The indentured labourers who climbed up the site's famous sixteen steps helped build our country through their toil and endurance in the face of overwhelming adversity. As a mark of respect and affection to them, the 2nd November has been decreed a public holiday. Each year, this day is commemorated, at the highest level, at the Aapravasi Ghat.

In 2006, the Aapravasi Ghat, classified as a national monument, was inscribed on the prestigious World Heritage List of UNESCO, thus this Mauritian lieu de mémoire gets the recognition of the whole humanity.

Government is determined to preserve our historic sites and we must ensure that the Aapravasi Ghat Trust Fund adheres to its mission of preserving this World Heritage Site and continues its research work on our heritage.

I congratulate the board and employees of the Aapravasi Ghat Trust Fund for their achievement.

Dr the Hon. Navinchandra Ramgoolam, GCSK, FRCP
Prime Minister

12 October 2010

MINISTER'S MESSAGE



MINISTRY OF ARTS AND CULTURE
(Office of the Minister)

I am pleased to be associated with the publication of this annual newsletter by the Aapravasi Ghat Trust Fund, to mark the 176th anniversary of the arrival of the indentured labourers in Mauritius.



The Aapravasi Ghat, previously known as Coolie Ghat, was an immigrant's depot constructed in 1849, on the shore of Trou Fanfaron Bay in Port Louis harbour, in order to receive indentured immigrants who came mainly from India. Between 1849 and 1910, about half a million indentured labourers, from various parts of the Indian subcontinent, transited through the Aapravasi Ghat. In 1987, the depot's name was changed from 'Coolie Ghat' to 'Aapravasi Ghat' when it was decreed a national monument. Furthermore, in 2001, the Government decreed the 2nd November a public holiday to honour the memory of the indentured labourers.

In terms of both cultural as well as natural sites, the UNESCO World Heritage List contains relatively few sites in small island developing nations. The inscription of the Aapravasi Ghat on this list in 2006 is testimony to the highly symbolic nature of the site.

My Ministry will continue to support the protection of all forms of heritage: oral, tangible and intangible. Heritage is not only a manifestation of culture but most importantly, it is a means of strengthening a nation through its memory.

I will continue to take a keen interest in this unique World Heritage Site and wish the Aapravasi Ghat Trust Fund plenty of success in the implementation of its projects.

Hon. Mookhesswar Choonee
Minister

MESSAGE LORD MAYOR OF PORT LOUIS



The Aapravasi Ghat, the first World Heritage Site of Mauritius, is located in Port Louis and will celebrate this year the 176th anniversary of the arrival of indentured labourers in Mauritius.

We in Port Louis are proud of having been closely associated with all the procedures leading to the inscription of this national heritage, vestige of the arrival of the first indentured labourers. This site bears testimony to the hopes, the aspirations of these people who had left their country to settle in Mauritius. The arrival of these labourers had been a historical event which later was to have a social and economic impact, thus changing the course of history.

There is no doubt about the fact that it is mankind who makes up history. Those indentured labourers who stepped on the land of Mauritius, at the specific point where Aapravasi Ghat stands now, would never have imagined the extent of events which were to take place in their country of adoption.

The Aapravasi Ghat is now altogether a symbol and a commitment in memory of these Indian immigrants whose contribution to the development of Mauritius has to be remembered always.

The Municipal Council has played a significant role right from the start when the project of inscription of the site had been launched. As Chairperson of the Buffer Zone Committee, it is my duty and also of those who will be my successors to contribute to efforts of the Aapravasi Ghat Trust Fund to uphold the symbolism, the dignity of this site.

Sheikh Mukhtar Hossenbocus
Lord Mayor

19 October 2010

Aapravasi Ghat World Heritage Site and its Buffer Zone

Raju Mohit - Officer-in-Charge, Aapravasi Ghat Trust Fund



Mauritius is blessed with several important historical and cultural heritage sites and structures such as the Aapravasi Ghat World Heritage Site, the Le Morne Cultural Landscape and l'Île de la Passe. Most of these tangible survivors of our country's rich, complex, and unique past which until recently have remained underdeveloped.

Altogether they have the potential to make of Mauritius an exceptional heritage tourism capital in the Indian Ocean and the rest of the world. Each one provides a narrative of the past. The different epochs of our history are encapsulated in them. They need to be deciphered and disseminated. They lead us to historical insights of considerable depth and breadth.

The exceptional thing about history is that events and those who were instrumental in their creation, never belong exclusively to a specific period and time. In fact, historians have the skills as well as the dexterity to reinterpret and revive the long forgotten events over the ages. Writers filter the fact and data as per their ideology and requirements of their times and situate them in their perspectives.

Mauritius is a country with many faces. Every Mauritian preserves his/her cultural identity in the varied context of our plural society. It is incumbent on the authorities to preserve the recognition of the past of every community which helps to consolidate our nationhood.

Every Mauritian should be given the opportunity to identify himself with his/her heritage. This identification develops a sense of belonging to history of the country and ultimately to the Mauritian nation itself. Nation building is a programme which evolves at its own pace and potentials.

The molding of a distinct Mauritian identity which started only as far back as 1968 still has a long way to go though it proved its mettle. Mauritianism is a matter of common ownership. The Aapravasi Ghat World Heritage Site is one of cornerstones of our Mauritianism and of the cultural heritage of Mauritius. It is that unique place in time and space which helped to fashion the history of our country.

Between 1849 and 1910, the arrival of more than 400,000 indentured immigrants at the Aapravasi Ghat was a milestone in the evolution of our country's unique history. Their gradual introduction over a period of more than seven decades forever altered the demography, society, economy and politics of the island. It was by the sweat of their brows, hardwork and unwavering dedication that the indentured labourers transformed this small Indian Ocean island into a garden of sugar and into one of the most important sugar producing European colonies in world during the mid-19th century.

It was at the Aapravasi Ghat or 'the landing place of the immigrants' that the indentured labourers spent their first two days in Mauritius which most of them adopted as their new home. These labourers originated from different parts of India, China, South-East Asia, Madagascar and East Africa. The indentured workers who climbed up the emblematic sixteen of the Aapravasi Ghat were adherents to the Hindu, Muslim, Christian and Buddhist faiths.

It is also important to take note that the Buffer Zone of the Aapravasi Ghat is a historical urban landscape that contains a unique collection of remaining and highly significant urban buildings, spaces and elements from the French and subsequent British Colonial era, combined with those of other cultures who were drawn into their ambit.

The evolution of the Aapravasi Ghat World Heritage Site and its Buffer Zone,

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situated in the centre of the port city of Mauritius reflects the path followed by the island in its development between the mid-1700s and the mid-1900s. This progression can be seen in the continuity of the land use and the transition between traditional and modern architecture.

The bustling activity of the area today provides a fine indication of the atmosphere that existed during the Indentured period. Some of the small family owned shops dealing in retail and wholesale businesses date back from the Indentured period. Shopping in the area for goods such as spices, textile and accessories and hardware items, along with the fresh products from the Central Market, has been part of the daily lives of the local Mauritian since the 19th century.

Apart from the local population, the area also crowded with shopkeepers from neighbouring rural areas who came to replenish their supplies and trusted employees from the sugar estates who purchased the required provisions for the legally mandatory weekly rations. Supplies for distribution as rations for indentured labourers on the Immigration Depot also came from these shops and markets.

Following the expansion of trade and sugar production, the area also expanded over time to accommodate more and more port related activities such as the storing of goods and uploading of ships. The Granary is a fine example of this era, as are the various smaller warehouses situated along Farquhar Street and part of Louis Pasteur Street.

In 2007, the AGTF started the preparation of a Planning Policy Guidance for the protection of the Buffer Zone of the Apravasi Ghat with the collaboration of the Ministry of Arts and Culture, Ministry of Housing and Lands and the Municipal Council of Port Louis. Nine drafts were worked out and were circulated to relevant stakeholders including owners of property, who were consulted on a continuous basis. The comments and recommendations of the stakeholders were considered and integrated in the final draft of the Planning Policy Guidance - Apravasi Ghat.

The final draft has been submitted to the Authorities for adoption and promulgation.

Message from President of Global Organization of People of Indian Origin (GOPIO) International and GOPIO Mauritius

Mahen Utchanah



176 years after the arrival of Indian immigrants in Mauritius, our motherland has become a model where people from different parts of the world including Africa, Europe, Madagascar, China, India and Mauritius, have settled and are living in peace and harmony and have created a strong sense of brotherhood.

Mauritius has made remarkable strides on the path of development. Today we are proud of our Indianness and have contributed to create a rainbow nation.

The 2nd of November is a public holiday, in memory of our ancestors who left India and toiled so hard to make this rocky island a paradise on earth. This day also offers an opportunity to remember the illustrious sons and daughters of our soil; like Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam, the Bissoondoyal brothers, Sir Satcam Boolell, Sir Gaetan Duval, Pundit Sahadeo, Renganaden Seeneevassen, Sir Abdool Razak Mohamed, and also celebrate the achievements of our political leaders, like the present Prime Minister Hon Navinchandra Ramgoolam and the other young leaders who are contributing to shape our country's future. All of them have contributed to the upliftment of the country and give the People of Indian Origin, the dignity they deserve.

The Apravasi Ghat, the landing place for the Indian immigrants, was recognised as a monument by the Government way back in 1987. It was declared a World Heritage Site by UNESCO in 2006.

Besides Mauritius, a good number of other countries, with PIO population, also celebrate the arrival of Indian immigrants in their respective countries. Thus, this year, South Africa is celebrating the 150 years of the arrival of Indian immigrants to that country. GOPIO International together with socio cultural organisations and the South African Government and President Zuma personally, are giving full support to celebrate this event.

Guyana, the country of late president Cheddi Jagan and of the current president Bharrat Jadgeo celebrate the arrival of Indian immigrants on 5th of March. The first batch of the immigrants from India reached that country way back in 1858.

In Trinidad and Tobago, the 30th May is observed at the arrival date of Indian immigrants. Their forefathers first laid their feet on that land in 1845. Former PM Basdeo Panday and current PM Kamla Persad Bissessur also celebrate this event.

In the same context, in Surinam, 5th June 1873 is also a day of celebration. It's political leaders and former Vice President Sard Joe, Former Vice President Jules Ajodhia and current vice president Robert Ammeradi attach great importance to the 5th June.

In the islands of Fiji, the first Indian immigrants arrived there in March 1837. Mahendra Chaudhury was the first PIO to serve as Prime Minister of that country, unfortunately, his tenure as Prime Minister was short and he was ousted by a coup d'etat. The PIO's in Fiji have known some hard times and many are still experiencing difficulties. A large number of Fijian PIO's have migrated to Australia, New Zealand and other countries.

Reunion Island, Guadeloupe and Martinique also have a good number of PIO and their forefathers left the shores of India some 250 years ago. From the French speaking PIO's, we may mention illustrious figures like Senator Jean Paul Virrapoulley, Jean Francois Sita, Serge Lechimee and Ernest Mootoosamy. They have cut a figure for themselves and also contributed to the development of their respective countries of adoption. They show great pride in the motherland of their ancestors and they are proud of their Indianness. We are doing everything possible to bring the French Speaking PIO's in the PIO Mainstream and integrate them in the large PIO family.

In the name of GOPIO International and GOPIO Mauritius, I wish the PIO community worldwide plenty of success and my message to them is that they should be good patriots in their respective countries of adoption and contribute to keep the PIO flag high.

An exclusive interview with our Minister of Arts and Culture, Hon. Mookhesswur Choonee

Natasha Kheddoo – Research Assistant, AGTF



Hon. Mookhesswur Choonee had a very rich and lively experience in India for 10 years, first as a student and eventually as High Commissioner, where he had the opportunity to mix with diplomats from many countries, alongside his Indian friends; he also established good relations with people from all spheres of life: academics, people in bollywood, businessmen and politicians etc.

He first served the country as Minister of Arts and Culture from 1991 to 1995

and this stimulated his interest and attachment for heritage and culture. Living in India, a country with a rich civilization and different cultures has further strengthened this interest.

FINDING HIS ROOTS

“Finding our roots is a must,” as the Hon. Minister stated in an interview. Like other descendants of Indian origin, the Hon. Minister had carried out a research in order to trace his ancestors. He commenced his research at the Indian Immigration Archives of the Mahatma Gandhi Institute (MGI) where he obtained the information that his great grandfather was a 5-year old child when he arrived on Mauritius in 1865. Unfortunately no photograph of the latter was available. The most interesting thing that the Hon. Minister discovered was that his great grandfather did not come to Mauritius with his parents, he arrived with neighbours. No further information was found about who had taken care of him and how he managed to survive alone in a foreign country. Most probably he survived by working as child labour which was very common in those days.

During his stay in India, the Hon. Minister went to his great grandfather's village to find more. He learnt that his great great grandfather's name was Shiv Prasand. He was a very religious man and a great devotee of Lord Shiva. The latter had 5 children among whom his great grandfather was the youngest. The Hon. Minister's great grandfather was only 5 years old when he came to Mauritius, without any support.



Bhowanipore Depot before its demolition in 2004 (Source: Internet)

CONTRIBUTION FOR BHOWANIPORE DEPOT IN KOLKATTA

As High Commissioner in India, Mr Mookhesswur Choonee was instrumental in sensitizing the Central Government of India about Bhowanipore Depot. There was a need to link all the Non-resident Indian (NRI) and Global Organization of People of Indian Origin (GOPIO). The Hon. Minister acted as a ‘chain link’ as he describes it, to group all the concerned authorities to raise their voice against the harm that was being done to this site. In his own words:

“One of my personal satisfaction as ambassador in India is that I have been instrumental in convincing the Indian Government that untold damage was being done to history. If my country can get the Aapravasi Ghat inscribed as a World Heritage Site, then how could we allow the destruction of Bhowanipore Depot which was the point of departure. It was here that the first depot was built for Mauritius followed by the other depots meant for Fiji, Tobago, Surinam and Trinidad”.



Entrance gate of the Bhowanipore Depot
(Photo Courtesy of Mrs S. Deerpalsing)

In the near future a museum on indenture will be set up on the location where the Bhowanipore Depot once existed.

The nostalgic visit of the Chief Minister of Bihar, the Hon. Nitish Kumar in 2007 to Mauritius helped in raising awareness about the Indian descendants in Mauritius, among the people of Bihar. Mr Nitish Kumar was touched when he listened to the song “Calcutta se chootal jahaaz.....” On going back to India, he invited our Prime Minister Dr Navinchandra Ramgoolam to inaugurate the magnificent statue of the Father of the Nation of Mauritius, Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam, opposite the statue of the Father of the Nation of India, Mahatma Gandhi at Gandhi Maidaan in Patna. One of the roads has even been named Chacha Ramgoolam Marg. A building has been earmarked which the Indian Government wanted to call the “Mauritius House,”

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where computerized duplicates of all the records found at the Indian Immigration Museum, MGI would be put at the disposal of those who want to trace their roots under the "Trace your roots" project. The building will be used by all descendants of those who had left India. The Hon. Minister believes that the indentured labourers who have settled in different continents have got unique values that need to be researched and promoted. Our Bhojpuri language is one of these oral heritages that link the different countries of the Indentured Diaspora.

Mr Mookhesswur Choonee is proud that the Aapravasi Ghat is now on UNESCO's World Heritage List. He remembers initiating some actions to preserve the site during his regime from 1991-1995. He stopped further industrial development around the site. He describes the Aapravasi Ghat World Heritage Site (AGWHS) as a "*lieu de mémoire*" It is important to know our past. The Hon. Prime Minister rightly said in his speech recently:

"We need to know our past in order to control our present and prepare the future..."

Through the setting up of the Beekrumsing Ramlallah Interpretation Centre (BRIC) the AG will now be able to offer more information on indenture, in visual forms to locals and foreign visitors. The BRIC will certainly attract tourists and will eventually help in promoting cultural tourism in Mauritius.

As Minister of Arts and Culture, Mr Mookhesswur Choonee, in the long run wishes to preserve all the historic buildings situated in the Buffer Zone of the AGWHS mainly, the United Docks, ex-STC Building, Military Hospital and the Granary. These buildings are historical treasures which according to him, must be upgraded.

IN MEMORY OF INDIAN INDENTURED LABOURERS

International Conference on Indian Diaspora, organized by Maulana Kalam Azad Institute, Kolkatta, in January 2007, the Mauritian delegation made a request for the preservation of the Bhowanipore Depot, Kolkatta

Two sites are embedded to revisit history in Kolkatta. Following a request and a project proposal submitted by Global Organization of Indian Origin (GOPIO) International to the Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs (MOIA), in a first instance Indian Government will dedicate a

commemorative plaque at Clock Tower, Kidderpore, Demerara (formerly named Guyana) to the memory of Indian indentured workers who left the shore of the subcontinent for a new destiny in January 2011.

As stated by the Executive Vice President, of GOPIO International, Mr Ashok Ramsarran, one of the initiators of the project, it will be "*A lasting legacy to present and future generations*". The second phase of the project will be the setting up of a museum and resource centre at Bhowanipore Depot site which is currently under litigation. Bhowanipore Depot set up in 1845 has been the site which sheltered majority of indentured labourers before their shipment in the 19th and early 20th centuries.



Mrs Saloni Deerpalsingh, ex-curator, Indian Immigration Museum, MGI. Late Ranjeet Putty, ex-Director General MGI/RTI in the company of Mrs Leela. Sarup has been one of the ardent advocate for the preservation of the Bhowanipore Depot site during the visit at the Depot in Kolkatta on 18th January 2007 (Photo Courtesy of Mrs S. Deerpalsingh)



Bare land where the Bhowanipore Depot once existed
(Photo Courtesy of Mrs S. Deerpalsingh)



Site of the Bhowanipore Depot at present located at 14A, D.L Khan Road, Kolkatta. This site was the place where thousand of indentured labourers were sheltered before shipment to Mauritiu
(Photo Courtesy of Mrs S. Deerpalsingh)

THE MON- LOISIR SUGAR ESTATE AND THE INDENTURED LABOURERS

Bhuruth Dinand – Board Member

On 28th November 1774, Antoine Jerome Pilot, native of Saint Omer, got a concession of 156 ¼ arpents at Riviere du Rempart. His numerous heirs constructed the estate of Mon-Loisir on an extent of 875 arpents in the year 1820.



Small Planter's uploading at Mon Loisir Suagr Estate during the 1940s

(Source: Mauritius Chamber of Agriculture)

The first centralisation took place in the year 1838 at Bonne Esperance. When Pilot sold Mon-Loisir to Volcy de Senneville in 1848, the area of the estate which was more than 1000 arpents comprised of the following lands: Cagnet, Pommerol, Bissiere, Dalere Cornet and Mon-Loisir of which 225 arpents were cultivated with sugar cane. In the estate there were two buildings of 41 ft by 27 ft and 41 ft by 20 ft respectively, each having a steam mill and a chimney made of stones. In 1859, Clemence was annexed to Mon-Loisir thus having 500 arpents more, of which, 250 were sugar cane fields. The area of the estate which had attained 1600 arpents did not increase during the 60 years which followed but the production of sugar increased from 740 to about 2000 tons in the same period. In 1883, Octave Adam, having inherited the estate, formed the Mon-Loisir company. His rights on this company were bought by Mr Ramnarain Rajcoomar Gujadhur in May 1925 who re-sold the estate and Schoenfeld area to Joseph Lagesse in 1938. Union Flacq in the east and Clemencia within it were bought by Mr Ramnarain R. Gujadhur in the same year. The production of sugar, then, at Mon-Loisir was 5000 tons. In a few years, this figure was doubled and in 1963 there was a break in its record by a production of 35,750 tons. The area of sugar cane cultivated had reached 5,250 arpents. Following the centralisation of Beau-Séjour in 1947, the mills of this estate were placed at Mon-Loisir where the two tandems operated simultaneously during five harvests. In 1838, the estate of Bonne Esperance which belonged to Philippe Pommerol comprising 70 arpents, of which 47 were under sugar cane, was annexed to Mon-Loisir.

Sugar camps in Mauritius were built by the sugar magnates just after the abolition of slavery and on the arrival of indentured labourers. The Mon-Loisir Sugar Estate had built sugar camps at Mon-Loisir, Coquinbourg, Beau Séjour, Bon-Espoir, Mon-Choix, Chauvaux, Camp-

Beton, Antoinette (Phoolyar) and Camp La Serpe. Most of these camps were located in the middle of sugar cane fields far from the main villages. It can be seen from the ruins of these camps that the living styles of the indentured labourers were in a disguised form of slavery. They were deprived of education for fear that they might climb up the ladder of the society and pose a threat to the plantation owners. Clement Charoux had said “*un coolie, c'est peu de chose, une paire de bras qui s'emploie avec des milliers d'autres à faire fructifier le bien d'autrui. Il disposait d'une case, d'un lit de cordes, d'une marmite ce qui est le confort; et la lutte dont on sort vainqueur d'une pioche d'acier fondu. Avec cette pioche, le humble Malabar a conquis une notable partie de notre Maurice*”. The labourers had to diversify their work in order to improve their economic conditions. The remarks made by Sir Virgile Naz were “*sans eux le prix de légumes, des fruits et du lait serait beaucoup plus élevé et la vie serait beaucoup plus chère*”. And Pierre de Sornay had observed : “*c'est grace a cette main d'ouvre Indienne que nous avons atteint les coupes realises aujourd'hui. L'Indien est travailleur intelligent, économe, aimant la terre*”. These are the few statements which go on record about the tremendous efforts of the labourers to make this country prosperous and participate in the development of this land. But at the same time the sugar planters knew that they would become wealthy with the help of the Indians. And if the indentured labourers were industrious, saved money and bought land, were they wrong?



A Sugar Camp near present Mon Loisir Sugar Factory

(Source: Photo collection of Mr Bhuruth Dinand)

Today, many descendants of these indentured labourers have been given “Voluntary Retirement Scheme” which comprises seven ‘perches’ of land to build their houses and a lump sum. This scheme was started in 2002 and deserves to be studied as the conditions governing the VRS are not fully known and do not appear to be in the best interests of the workers. Have they been adequately compensated by the sugar estate and Government for generations of cheap labour performed under mostly basic conditions. Are they paying for their industriousness, money-saving capability and desire for land. Were they wrong?

Aapravasi Ghat Trust Fund projects 2010-2011

Corinne Forest - Head of Technical Unit

In 2010, the AGTF undertook a number of projects in line with its mandate to preserve and promote the World Heritage Site and other indentured sites. In the context of UNESCO periodic reporting for Africa, the priority was to give a legal status to the Aapravasi Ghat World Heritage Site Buffer Zone (AGWHS BZ) in order to offer new opportunities for development in the immediate surroundings of the World Heritage Site. The proclamation of the Planning Policy Guidance (PPG) is imminent and would provide an appropriate legal instrument to foster development in the buffer zone. The PPG will be guided by a development plan that will provide a clear vision for the area together with orientations and appropriate measures for development opportunities. Since 2006, AGTF has conducted several studies of the area to propose the most suitable measures responding to local and international expectations for the revitalization of the buffer zone.

This also includes an Oral History project to document further the history of the area and consign the life experiences and invaluable knowledge still preserved in the buffer zone. The Oral History and Oral Tradition Unit also collects and documents information on Intangible Heritage such as songs, tales, know-how that were passed on from generation to generation. A preliminary inventory of elements related to indenture was completed in September 2010 and will be developed to constitute a wider documentation on the Mauritian Intangible Heritage related to indenture. The objective is to propose elements for inscription on UNESCO representative list of elements of intangible heritage. The collection of such information is highly valued for the historical and anthropological insights it provides and as such, it will be part of the Beekrumsing Ramlallah Interpretation Centre (BRIC) that AGTF is currently setting up. The BRIC project is the priority for the year 2011 as it will offer suitable visitor infrastructures for more than 15,000 visitors a year and provide appropriate interpretative tools to understand the history and specificity of the World Heritage Site. The opening of the BRIC is tentatively scheduled in November 2011.

In the meantime, dynamic outreach programmes conducted by a new team of Heritage Guides/Public Outreach Officers are organised to promote the World Heritage Site in schools and in associations. Their experience with the audience is a major opportunity to evaluate the visitor expectations and propose suitable activities that will be an integral part of the public programme of the Interpretation Centre. As part of activities for the public and foreign audience, AGTF also hopes to set up a heritage trail by 2013 including the visits of other indentured sites such as Vagrant Depot and Trianon. The conservation of the Vagrant Depot located at Pointe aux Sables is currently under way and will be completed by December 2010. In January 2011, AGTF will start the restoration of the old labourers' barracks located in Trianon since the urgent conservation measures were completed.

Further research was started on Trianon Heritage site. The foundation of a building and related artefacts were found during archaeological excavations held in July 2010. This led to a better understanding of the functioning of the sugar estate. However, complementary research will be conducted: the technical team will start an oral history project in Trianon in 2011 to collect life stories of the former employees of the sugar estate. This multidisciplinary approach is essential to allow an overall understanding of the indenture experience in Mauritius. To share our research on indenture and foster interest on this research topic, AGTF in collaboration with other institutions, intends to organise an international conference on indenture in December 2011. This conference will be a major opportunity to bring together scholars and researchers who conducted academic research on indenture. The main goal of the conference is to set the stage for the setting up of the Indenture Labour Route project to be submitted to UNESCO. This is a major opportunity to provide tools for the conservation, research and promotion of the history of indenture more widely known since the inscription of the Aapravasi Ghat on the World Heritage List.

Beekrumsing Ramlallah Interpretation Centre (BRIC): Concept and Vision

Munish Pandit

Principal Architect and Team Leader, BRIC

The statement of Outstanding Universal Value for Aapravasi Ghat states *"The Aapravasi Ghat site stands as a major historic testimony of indenture in the 19th century and is the sole surviving example of this unique modern Diaspora. It represents not only the development of the modern system of contractual labour, but also the memories, traditions and values that these men, women and children carried with them when they left their countries of origin to work in foreign lands and subsequently bequeathed to their millions of descendants for whom the site holds great symbolic meaning."*

This clearly states that Aapravasi Ghat is not just a monument of stone but has much more to share with the world concerning cultures, values, traditions, sufferings and hard work of the people who not only passed through it, but also to great extent of all those who were part of the indenture labour system across the world.

An Interpretation Centre in any World Heritage Site is aimed at briefing visitors about the history, architecture and other key features of the site. I personally believe, however, that an Interpretation centre for Aapravasi Ghat must not be simply a place to gather information but should become a medium to communicate with the soul of those persons visiting the place.

This interpretation centre is named after Shri Beekrumsing Ramlallah which itself explains the inspiration for concept of this centre and that is while progressing further, we shall remain attached to our values, principles and traditions.

The BRIC will be housed in a 19th century structure and for us this represented an opportunity not only to safeguard and reuse a heritage building but to also have a blend of historic and contemporary architecture with a strong symbolical identity, the manifestation of which will be reflected through art, architecture and landscape of this complex.

During the conceptualisation process, an attempt was made to use state-of-the art multimedia tools as well as traditional, local arts and crafts which will be the key aid to communicate to visitors about the sanctity of Aapravasi Ghat. BRIC is aimed at catering to both national and international visitors and with a special focus on activities for children.

AGTF has created a team composed of national and international professionals from different fields such as conservation, architecture, interior design, landscape, Museums, fine art, sculpture, graphic design, traditional crafts, multimedia and films, to name a few to complete this endeavour.

The in-house Research and Technical unit, Administration and AGTF Board are determined to deliver to the best of their ability and see this centre emerge.

To bring this concept to reality is a mammoth task and demands not only hard-work and dedication but also enthusiasm and trust among the team and needless to say all your blessings and wishes.

A History of the Old Labourers' Quarters of Trianon: A Rare National Monument

Satyendra Peerthum - Researcher - Aapravasi Ghat Trust Fund

During the mid-1970s, the Old Labourers' Quarters of Trianon was decreed national monument by the Government of Mauritius. Unfortunately, over the last three decades, it has remained largely neglected and it is already in an advanced stage of decay. In 1958, Deryck Hollingworth, a British colonial official, writer and admirer of Mauritian history, once explained that our country's national monuments "constitute a veritable treasure trove which exude edifying imprints of their epoch on the Mauritian identity." The Old Labourers' Quarters is such a national monument because it is intimately intertwined with the history of the indentured labourers and the sugar estate camps of Mauritius.



The Old Labourers' Quarters of Trianon, a national monument, during the mid-20th Century

(Source: Photo Collection of the Mauritius Chamber)

of one single compartment in a long row of similar habitations, without any aperture whatever for ventilation except the door, and of such moderate dimensions that it resembled rather the cell of a lock up than a human habitation".

During the nineteenth century, camp dwellings consisted mostly of long rows of thatched huts and barrack-style housing which were made mostly of earth, wood, cow dung and cane straw. A few of these living quarters were made of bricks and stones. In the 1800s, in the Plaines Wilhems district, large sugar plantations, such as the one at Trianon, provided some of their labourers with living quarters which consisted of stone barracks.

The History of the Structure

The Old Labourers' Quarters at Trianon was built sometime during the first half of the nineteenth century. It has often been called a barrack complex and it consists of 15 large chambers and is mostly black in color. The Old Labourers' Quarters is made of basalt stone blocks and has very thick walls. The structure is mostly intact, but decaying very rapidly.

There are some documents in the Mauritius National Archives which make brief references to this structure. In 1880, the Protector of Immigrants informed the manager of Trianon Sugar Estate that the stone barracks, where the Indian labourers were housed, was in an unhealthy state. The Protector took a personal interest in this matter and even summoned the manager to the Coolie Depot, the present-day Aapravasi Ghat and urged him to rectify the matter as soon as possible.

In a letter to the estate manager, the Protector emphasized once again: "Having seen you personally on this matter and heard your explanations that the overgrowth of shrubs and plants around the labourers' stone dwellings is a chief cause of dampness, dirt, and unhealthy conditions in the camp, I have to request that you will immediately take steps to have all such shrubs or plants cut down or entirely removed from the stone structures."

It was mostly during the winter months that the Indian labourers suffered a lot from the dampness and unhealthy conditions in the stone structure. Unfortunately for them, the manager and owners of Trianon Sugar Estate did not follow the Protector's instructions and the situation remained the same throughout the 1880s. In 1889, Mr. B.A. Francis, the Inspector of Immigrants, in his report on the sugar estates for the Plaines Wilhems district, observed that the estate workers at Trianon, in particular those who resided in stone barracks, still had to endure unhealthy conditions.

During the course of that same year, it was reported that there were 1469 Indian men, women and children who lived in the camps of

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A rare picture of a Group of Indian Indentured Labourers cleaning one of the rivers passing through Trianon Sugar Estate in 1907

(Source: Photo Collection of the Mauritius Chamber of Agriculture)

The Sugar Estate Camps

Between 1834 and 1924, more than 454,000 Indian indentured labourers were brought to Mauritius mostly to work on the island's sugar estates. In general, after leaving the Aapravasi Ghat or the Coolie Depot, the indentured workers had to settle in one part of the estate which became known as 'Camp des Indiens' as well as 'estate camps' or 'sugar camps'. During the entire period that the indenture system existed in Mauritius and until the late twentieth century, hundreds of thousands of Indian labourers and their descendants lived for many years in these estate camps. Furthermore, on many of the large Mauritian sugar plantations, there were usually hundreds of male and female labourers who lived in those sugar camps with their children.

In order to accommodate so many individuals, the large estates had one or several separate estate camps. In 1872, Governor Gordon explained that: "the house of each immigrant family consisted

Indo-Mauritian Female Labourers at work on Trianon Sugar Estate during the 1950s

Source: Photo Collection of the Mauritius Chamber of Agriculture



Researching the everyday lives of Indentured Labourers: Archaeological work at Trianon Barracks

Dr Krish Seetah - Lecturer in Archaeology Forensic and Investigative Sciences
University of Central Lancashire, Preston

In contrast to the monumental and globally recognised nature of Aapravasi Ghat, the Barracks at Trianon represent a rare and unique opportunity to investigate the daily life-ways of indentured labourers. But how best to go about such a venture, given that the labourers would not have been recording aspects of their own lives, nor would their daily existence fall within the purview of contemporaneous writers in any great detail? This is precisely where archaeological works can provide valuable insight, adding dimensions to the historical accounts that would otherwise remain underground and unreported.



Site grid, positioned within wider landscape; plan view. Grid in light purple
(Source: Photo Collection of Diego Calaan)

Archaeological works at the Trianon Barracks which started in 2009 comprised of the archaeologists who carried out photogrammetry, magnetometry and field walking survey on the area around the standing barracks.

The results of the magnetometry survey proved promising and demonstrated areas that could potentially be excavated. The conclusion from the 2009 fieldwork "suggested that there were additional built structures in this area, related to the sugar estate, and perhaps directly to the Barrack building itself. The extent standing structures are highly unlikely to have been enough to accommodate the total number of indentured workers on the site. Other buildings (potentially identified by our survey) may have been demolished at some point, or were less substantial" (refer to: Mauritius: Archaeological Research and Agendas. The 2009 Season).

Two rapid phases of works were undertaken in 2010 to complement the 2009 research: the first of these (taking place in May) was aimed at harmonising with the results of the



GPR survey results; areas subsequently excavated are boxed in red.
Area 1, 2 & 3 refer to phases / regions of site division for survey purposes
(Source: Photo Collection of Branko Mušić)

magnetometry. Using the very latest geophysical survey method, Ground Penetrating Radar (GPR), a team of Slovenian archaeologists were able to provide clear indications of subsoil anomalies (initially it was not possible to state whether these were remains of buildings) as per figure below.



The excavated structure. The foundations span some 1.3 meters in width
Indicating a considerable effort went into the construction of this building
(Source: Photo Collection of Dr Krish Seetah)

This was followed by a two-week season excavation where AGTF, in collaboration with the University of Mauritius and the University of Central Lancashire, revealed the extent and nature of the 'anomalies' shown by the geophysical survey. What the team uncovered was quite unexpected, even with the excellent GPR results to guide them. The foundations of a very large and potential multi-level building was excavated, along with a series of post-holes tentatively suggesting that a wooden canopy surrounded part of the structure. A second trench indicated a drainage system that appeared contemporaneous with this newly discovered building.



Quarter Rupee coin extracted at Trianon

Less monumental, but no less significant, the discovery of a small quarter rupee coin links this ancestral community directly with their nation of origin, and pays testimony to everyday facets of life. The coin typifies the practice of paying indentured labourers with Indian currency to facilitate the process of returning money 'home'. Though hardly rare in Mauritius, finding such an artefact associated with the barracks, and now this new structure, highlights the relevance and potential of this site.

These discoveries start the process of giving us a view of life of the indentured labourers living at Trianon. This is perhaps the most important perspective as it is one that cannot be addressed from other sources of evidence. Furthermore, archaeological research provides an important insight into the overall relationship between the organisation of the sugar estate and the relationship with the immediate and wider environment; we are thus given a unique view of the sugar industry, as the archaeology of sugar of various facets are being addressed.

The research carried out so far has been systematic and has employed the very latest technology. In this way, we have hopefully demonstrated the value and importance of archaeology and thus established a suitable precedent and protocol for future work. The archaeology of the island is far too precious to be researched in anyway but with the most advanced methods and techniques at our disposal.



Reconstruction of the possible building design, and its relationship to the standing barracks

(Source: Photo Collection of Dr Krish Seetah)



Photogrammetry of Standing Barracks (Source: Photo Collection of Diego Calaan)

ARCHAEOLOGICAL MATERIALS FROM THE AAPRAVASI GHAT WORLD HERITAGE SITE

Geoffrey Summers,

*Settlement Archaeology Graduate Program,
Middle East Technical University, Ankara, Turkey*

Archaeological excavations at the Immigration Depot, conducted between 2003 and 2007 confirmed the accuracy of surviving maps and plans and, most importantly, uncovered evocative buildings and features that now form an integral part of this World Heritage Site.

The main results of these archaeological investigations have been placed within the wider setting and published in an accessible form. Until now, however, scant attention has been paid to the broken and discarded fragments of pottery and glass, metal pieces and building materials.



Top of a Giladoni diamond pattern pantile, the underside is stamped Marseille. It was presumably tiles of this type that were used for the room of the Aapravasi Ghat kitchen
(Source: Photo Collection of Geoffrey Summers)

it was not only people who were imported, everything except ebony, spices and sugar came on ships, as is still very largely the case today. Excavated fragments from China, India, Africa and Europe, to mention



Dish or platter Pearl Ware, transfer print in underglaze blue. Very possibly a scene from the Great Exhibition of 1851 at the Crystal Palace, London, at which the finest products of the British Empire were displayed
(Source: Photo Collection of Geoffrey Summers)

Study of these finds and dissemination of the information that can be revealed from them present a considerable challenge. This is because archaeology is concerned in context, that is, the physical relationship between a fragment of an artefact and the place where it was found.

The peopling of Mauritius emanates from various parts of the world and under very different circumstances. But

only the most important ones, document the extent and value of this trade while at the same time providing insights into changing cultural values through the study of such aspects as to the choice between Oriental and European designs on ceramics.

When excavation began at Aapravasi Ghat, it was hoped that objects would be uncovered which might illustrate day-to-day conditions and practices. However, the entire design of the Depot laid much emphasis on cleanliness and hygiene as to anything else. Broken pots and pans, food remains, empty ink bottles, discarded clothing and all the other detritus of everyday activity appears to have been taken off site for disposal. Only one class of excavated materials appears to relate to the Immigration Depot itself, the building materials.

While basalt stones and lime mortar were products of Mauritius, terracotta roofing tiles which came from Marseille slate for lining water tanks was mined in Wales, most of the bricks and all of the sandstone paving flags originated from Scotland and the North of England.

Architectural iron elements and fittings, stoneware drain pipes and in the very late 19th century window glass would have come mostly if not entirely from England. In washing and toilet areas, surfaces were coated with bitumen to prevent foul water from soaking into foundations. Thus the excavated fragments of building materials, together with the standing remains of structures that form the core of the present site, indicate the emphasis that was placed by the colonial authorities on preventing the entry of epidemic diseases into the colony. Study of pottery fragments provides a microcosmic overview of the range and proportions of wares imported into Mauritius from about 1820 to circa 1900. Fragments excavated at Aapravasi Ghat will teach us much about Port Louis. In the future it will be of interest to compare what is found in the urban capital with the findings on the plantations and, indeed, to make comparisons with other excavated coastal sites in the Indian Ocean.



A British fire-brick in Sector T Kitchen chimney stamped with the brand name COWEN. Cowen bricks are common in Mauritius found in huge numbers throughout the Empire.
(Source: Photo Collection of Geoffrey Summers)

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Trianon Sugar Estate. The overwhelming majority among them lived in small huts and only a small number of the indentured labourers and their families lived in the stone barracks. In general, the archival records clearly show that by the late nineteenth century, the Old Labourers' Quarters had been in use for several decades and it was already in a dilapidated state.



Typical example of a Wooden Straw hut in the Estate Camp of Trianon Sugar Estate during the 1940s

Source: Photo Collection of the Mauritius Chamber of Agriculture

In 1909, a document was submitted to the Royal Commissioners, who were in Mauritius to investigate the island's sugar industry, which briefly mentions a labourers' quarters made of stone at Trianon where Indian workers were housed. Throughout the first half of the twentieth century, the stone barracks or the Old Labourers' Quarters at Trianon were still used to house Indian labourers. In 1960, after the passage of

the cyclone Carol, the 15 large rooms of this structure were renovated, with eight of the fifteen chambers being provided with a small kitchen which was built of concrete. The Old Labourers' Quarters was used to house some of the estate workers who had lost their homes during the cyclone. Therefore, until the early 1960s, this structure was still occupied by Indian labourers.

Its Heritage Value

In September 1974, the Old Labourers' Quarters was decreed national monument through *Government Notice No.666*. In fact, this structure is one of the rare monuments in Mauritius which offers us an insight into what the living conditions of Indian labourers might have been like. In a few years, a fully renovated Old Labourers' Quarters may even form part of a local Mauritian Indenture Route Project which would include the Aapravasi Ghat and the Vagrant Depot. After all, these three national monuments are closely associated with the history of more than seventy percent of the Mauritian population.

Between the mid-nineteenth and mid-twentieth centuries, this structure has played a central role in the daily lives of some of the Indian workers and their families who lived on the Trianon Sugar Estate. Therefore, the Old Labourers' Quarters is directly and tangibly linked with the way of life of the Indian labourers who lived in the sugar camps during and after the indenture period in Mauritius.

Route de l'esclave et Route de l'engagé: Plaidoyer pour un dialogue des mémoires

Dr Khal Torabully



Lors des années précédentes, dans ces mêmes colonnes, j'ai fait un plaidoyer pour un dialogue entre les mémoires, notamment, celles de l'esclavage et de l'engagisme. Depuis, j'ai constaté des convergences dans le paysage intellectuel du pays, des désirs de ne plus opposer mais de discursifier, de mettre en relation, engagisme et esclavage. Et la route est prometteuse...

Cet exercice de mise en relation, a incontestablement des supports (Le Ghat, Le Morne) et des supporteurs, parmi lesquels, *primer inter pares*, le Premier Ministre, l'honorable Dr Navin Ramgoolam.

La Commission Justice et Vérité constitue aussi, dans son rôle de pacificateur social, un vecteur de choix, car elle laisse entendre des ressentis douloureux. Elle est devenue un réceptacle de mise en discours de non-dits, des espoirs et des possibilités de dépassement de ce double traumatisme qui a marqué de façon indélébile, l'histoire, la psychologie et la physionomie du pays mauricien.

Des choses avancent, et les discours autour des sites sont plus ouverts, plus portés vers ce partage de mémoires dans une histoire nationale commune, qui laisse clairement augurer que les paradigmes de la construction identitaire à Maurice, fondamentalement, sont à mettre en perspective à partir des deux pans de cette mémoire douloureuse.

Ce fut la teneur de mes propos lors de mon intervention à l'UNESCO en mai 2010, où je fus invité à parler de l'importance de l'engagisme dans la construction identitaire à Maurice et aux Antilles, car ce souci d'éviter la concurrence victimaire a été au centre de mes écrits, notamment à travers la coolitude, depuis une vingtaine d'années.

L'UNESCO, comme je l'ai rappelé avant, à maintes reprises, est particulièrement sensible à l'expérience mauricienne, l'île étant le seul pays à conjoindre deux sites, l'un pour l'engagisme, l'autre pour l'esclavage. Elle fonde de grands espoirs sur cette mise en relation initiale à travers les deux sites du Patrimoine Mondial de l'Humanité, cas qui pourrait s'avérer exemplaire pour le reste du monde.

Suite à mon intervention à Paris en mai, une proposition m'a été faite par Doudou Diène et Ali Moussa-Iyé, que j'ai déjà présentée au Premier

Ministre l'honorable Dr. Navin Ramgoolam : celle de célébrer le quinzième anniversaire de la Route de l'esclave à Maurice, vu les graves événements politiques au Bénin, pays où cette célébration devrait avoir lieu. Proposition que le Premier Ministre s'est fait une joie d'accepter.

C'est une grande nouvelle pour le pays, et une reconnaissance internationale pour sa contribution potentiellement forte à la culture de la paix et au dialogue des cultures dans le monde.

C'est aussi l'aboutissement de 15 ans de plaidoyers pour que l'esclavage et l'engagisme trouvent un terrain fécond de dialogues. J'avais amorcé ce mouvement en 1996, durant le 150^{ème} anniversaire de l'abolition de l'esclavage. J'avais parlé, alors de la nécessité de ne pas couper ces deux paradigmes historiques à Doudou Diène. Il m'avait écouté avec beaucoup d'attention, en homme de vision. Mais le moment n'était pas encore venu d'entamer ce dialogue. L'esclavage commençait à peine à sortir des tabous et non-dits et il ne pouvait faire de la place à l'engagisme, lui aussi étouffé dans des censures de l'époque. 15 ans après, mon discours a été entendu, des débats enclenchés, des prises de position affirmées. Doudou Diène, avec qui j'ai longtemps parlé, de même que Moussa Ali Iyé, m'ont fait comprendre que l'heure est arrivée d'une rencontre entre ses deux mémoires. D'une vraie mise en relation dans le pays de prédilection de l'engagisme et de son humanisme de la diversité, la coolitude.

Aussi, dans les lignes préliminaires à l'orée de cette célébration, l'UNESCO m'a demandé qu'elle spécificité donner au 15^{ème} anniversaire de la route de l'esclave à Maurice en 2011. J'ai donc proposé une idée chère à moi : la route de l'engagé-coolie, afin d'y poser les bases d'un dialogue durable avec la route de l'esclave. C'est un chantier de grande envergure et une chance inouïe pour l'Aapravasi Ghat d'acquérir une visibilité plus grande au niveau international, en participant à un dialogue avec Le Morne, deux symboles d'un échange de grande importance pour de nombreux pays du monde.

WORK-BASED LEARNING PROGRAMME (WBLP) 2010

Natasha Kheddoo - Research Assistant

This year the AGTF received the placement of 10 undergraduates/students intended for the Work-Based Learning Programme (WBLP) previously known as Student Work Experience Programme (SWEP) from the University of Mauritius (UoM). The UoM learners from the Faculty of Humanities namely:- Jessika Chothi, Rishta Gopee, Komal Devi Drepaal, Prashini Guriah, Semila Moonesawmy, Girish Buckhory, Rudhi Ashley Kinnoo, Jinnih Awotar Vedita Ramdoyal and Leckrani Gupta Quédou carried out their internship from 25 June to 16 July 2010 and acquired work experience in the following:

1. Guided visits on the AGWHS;
2. Research on the buffer zone at the Registrar General's Office and National Library;
3. Cleaning artefacts and entering data for cataloguing;
4. Archaeological excavations at the Trianon Heritage Site;
5. Transcription of Oral History interviews and input of data;
6. Conducting inspections of buildings in the buffer zone;
7. Administrative works of the Research Unit of the AGTF.

All the 10 students contributed in the on-going projects of the AGTF during their short stay.



**Undergraduates from
the University of Mauritius**
(Source: AGTF Photo Collection)

An Overview of the History of Forbach Sugar Estate (1816-1943)

Dr. Satteeanund Peerthum, *(Senior Historian and Ex-Ambassador of Mauritius to the United Nations)*

&

Satyendra Peerthum, *Researcher - Aapravasi Ghat Trust Fund*



The Windmill of Forbach and a Sugar Chimney in 1870

(Source: The photo originally belonging to Mrs. H. Barlow and reproduced in Guy Rouillard, L'Histoire des Domaines Sucriers de l'Île Maurice)

The history of Forbach estate, one of the most well-known sugar plantations in the north of Mauritius during the nineteenth century, began in January 1816, when Mr. Joseph Staub purchased a triangularly shaped plot of land of 2 arpents and 44 perches for 75 piastres in Rivière du Rempart (near the present-day village of Cottage) from Mr. Joseph Collard. Mr. Staub was a former French army officer who had settled in Mauritius and during the 1810s became a businessman and landowner. In 1818, he purchased from Mr Latour 2 plots of land to the extent of 55 arpents which was located close to the land he acquired just two years before. According to Guy Rouillard, as early as 1817 or 1818, Mr Staub erected a sugar mill which was a large stone structure and part of his land was brought under sugar cane cultivation.

However, as the years passed by, Mr Staub was determined to expand his small sugar estate and in 1826, he bought 11 arpents and 55 perches from Mr. Joseph Jacques. During the course of that same year, he acquired almost 300 arpents of land through land transactions with individuals such as Damain, Joseph Jacques and Pitchen who were some of his landowning neighbours. During the following year, Mr Staub paid 900 piastres for 9 arpents of land.

Thus, between 1816 and 1827, or over a period of more than a decade, through several successful land transactions, Mr Staub was able to bring hundreds of arpents in one specific part of Rivière du Rempart within his possession and which formed the basis for the establishment of Forbach Sugar Estate. Between the late 1810s and 1830s, Forbach's consisted of slaves of Creole origin or Creole born in Mauritius. They usually worked under the supervision of slave commandeurs who reported directly to their master, Mr. Staub. From the archival sources, it seems that the slaves were well treated and provided with adequate food and clothing. In August 1827, Joseph Staub died and this marked the end of the founding era of Forbach estate.

Between the late 1820s and early 1840s, the inheritors of Mr Staub, such as Nicolas Staub, his son, continued to expand the sugar estate although at a much slower pace when compared with previous years. In 1842, Forbach estate covered a total area of 743 arpents and the inheritors of Mr Staub sold it to a group of individuals, namely Aristide Aubin, Vincent Bourgault Ducoudray and H. Déroulède. During the mid-19th century, Forbach became one of the few sugar plantations in British Mauritius to have a windmill which was used in the processing of sugar cane. This windmill was finally closed in 1852. Many years later, in 1867, Mr. Wiehé and Mr. Aubin purchased Forbach Sugar Estate. In 1875, as part of the process of the centralization of the Mauritian sugar industry, Forbach became part of Labourdonnais Sugar Estate which covered an area of 1,390 arpents. Between 1840's and early 20th century, indentured Indian labourers formed the backbone of Forbach's workforce. The archival records indicate that the Indian workers were well treated and provided with adequate food, clothing, and medical treatment.



The Old Sugar Chimney and Sugar Factory and Windmill of Forbach during the Early 20th Century

(Source: Photo Collection of the Mauritius Chamber of Agriculture)

It is interesting to note that Mr Hurruparsad Ramnarain, the famous trade union leader, was born in the estate camp of Forbach in 1914. During the early 1940's, Messrs Ramnarain and Sharma Jagdambee actively tried to fight for better working and living conditions for the Labourdonnais estate workers. In order to achieve this noble objective, he tried to organize them into labour associations but with very little success. In 1943, he was prosecuted by Mr. Wiehé for trespassing on his property when Ramnarain tried to meet a group of sugar cane workers who resided in the estate camp of Forbach. During that same year, the sugar workers, who were descendants of indentured labourers and lived and work on Forbach, played an important role in the labour protests which shook the sugar estates in the district of Rivière du Rempart. These important events, such as the labour unrest at Forbach Sugar Estate, are vividly described in the official depositions and the *Moody Commission Report of 1943*.

WOMAN IN MAURITIAN SOCIETY

Dr Archana Kumar - Associate Professor - Department of English - Banaras Hindu University

I visited Mauritius on the invitation of the Aapravasi Ghat Trust Fund to participate in the workshop "Bhojpuri at the Crossroads" to talk about living traditions of Bhojpuri Folksongs in India and also to carry out some research work. The deliberations at the workshop reinforced my earlier impressions that we, the Inter-culture Group at Banaras Hindu University, Varanasi, India and AGTF are involved in similar activities of identifying, collecting,

documenting, preserving and interpreting the Intangible Cultural Heritage; location of cultures, however, does make difference, I began with the assumption and my fieldwork in Mauritius confirmed it.

In the Indian context, while collecting women's folk songs related to birth, marriage, and other occasions, I seek to understand the position of women in India. In fact, in my second presentation at the workshop, "Women's folksongs: A Saga of Conformity and Dissent" I shared my findings with the co-participants. As a researcher, I had an eagerness to know about the status of women in the Mauritian Mauritian society - are there any similarities between position and status of Indian Women and that of Mauritian women? Through this newsletter, I would like to share my experience of interacting with women in Mauritian villages, the first thing that appealed to me was the position of unmarried women in the Mauritian society.

In Indian society, marriage is the sum and all of a girl's life. A renowned Indian psychologist, Mr Sudhir Kakkar is of the view that the formation of the girl's identity takes place after marriage. And marriage is usually settled by the parents, and dowry is the decisive factor.

In one moving Bhojpuri song, collected in the field, the girl is agonized to see that her father and brother face disgrace while they go searching a suitable groom because they have no money. The girl requests her mother and



Folk songs and dances by Mauritian women

(Source: Photo AGTF Collection)

sister-in-law to ask her father and brother to come back home. She tells them that there are two ways she can leave her house either by marriage or by death. She prefers to embrace death if she cannot leave her home in *doli* (palanquin) after marriage. She will be carried away on an *arthi* (wooden frame). Life becomes a burden for her and as well as for her parents, if the girl is not married. Some educated girls prefer to remain single. Many eligible and qualified girls have to remain unmarried because their parents cannot afford to arrange for the dowry. When I related this to the women in Mauritian village, they were surprised because exchange of money is not at all a consideration in marriage. It was a pleasant surprise how the people who have migrated, have maintained the sanctity of marriage bond by not selling grooms for money but by preserving marriage as a bond, as a union of two souls and two hearts and also of two families. In Ancient times, in Indian society, money was not exchanged at the time of marriage. In *Ramcharitmanas* and other such texts, we do get description of the gifts which fathers willingly gave to their daughters. During my stay and fieldwork in Mauritius, I observed that the girls are happy even if they were single. Mauritian society is relatively free from another bane of Indian society-barrier of caste and religion; one major reason I perceived for absence of demand of dowry is that the closed system of parents marrying their children only in their own caste/religion does not prevail here in Mauritius; barrier of

caste/religion is broken off and merit of the girl becomes the main consideration. Another remarkable difference noticed was the way women who have lost their husbands lived. Some of those to whom I spoke had lost their husbands and they were relatively not very old, some of them were in their early forty's and fifty's. The women, as a practice wore colourful sarees and they were not required to abstain from enjoying small pleasures

of life. In my field sessions, I noticed that the widowed women equally danced and sang as did the other women in India; it is something unimaginable. Life ceases to exist for a woman who is either a widow or deserted by her husband; the restrictions were too many in earlier times, but still some of the prejudices prevail because of which women are expected to conform to a certain code of behaviour.

The feminist writers, world over, are pleading for state of singlehood to break free from the shackles of patriarchy and Mauritian society proves that for their happiness, women are not just dependent on men, they can be happy, sing, laugh and dance within the institutions of marriage and also outside it. Another observation very relevant is, when I had singing sessions here in India, women would sing and sit at one place even when they sang songs of joy, somehow, somewhere, somekind of lack of exuberance is there but in Mauritius, most of the songs, *jhumar*, *lalana*, *kajari* have extremely joyful tunes. Women in group would sing and dance which is a rare sight in India. I have seen that women in Mauritian society have freedom of choice - to take decisions - to live their life fully and vibrantly. As a folklorist, we begin our explorations first by identifying the hypothesis about a society on the basis of initial observations and find folklore which supports and corroborates it. I hope to find more evidence of position of Mauritian women in extensive research.

What kind of Museum for Aapravasi Ghat World Heritage Site?

Corinne Forest - Head of Technical Unit



Old warehouse where BRIC will be set up

(Source: Photo AGTF Collection)

Museums long suffered from an image of a place devoted to the elite with no connection to the population at large. However, traditionally, museums are entrusted to preserve, educate and promote culture with a view to anchor the fundamentals of a nation. In museums, this is achieved through the presentation of objects that best represent the nation's past. Upon contact with physical testimonies, visitors are expected to produce an understanding of what they see but how far can this be achieved when visitors generally visit museums portraying a foreign culture?

The distance instituted between visitors and museum objects may create a frustration for visitors who find themselves face to face with works of art presented out of their context of production. The museum environment stretches this distance as it is not a usual place of social interaction where visitors can find familiar references. Museums are indeed atemporal places where objects stand for the history and culture of an entire nation which demands background knowledge to understand what is presented. Visitors find themselves out of reference onto which they can rely to understand what they see. This led professionals to debate on how to improve visitor experience since 1980s. Curators and Museologists have since then resorted to new methods of communication with a view to provide

interpretative tools reducing this distance to allow visitor understanding. The AGTF was concerned that collections presented may not speak to the specificities of the Immigration Depot and to the global indenture experience. This is the reason why the concept of Interpretation Centre was preferred to that of Museum relying on the presentation of collections. The objective of the Interpretation Centre is to produce an understanding and help the interpretation of the remains of the World Heritage Site. To fulfill this purpose, the Beekrumsing Ramlallah Interpretation Centre will largely rely on new technologies, multimedia in particular, and interpretative displays to create a close relationship between the World Heritage Site and visitors.

To devise the exhibition programme, the Research Team needed to understand visitor expectations to come to a successful result. Since 2006, the AGTF has set up a public programme proposing various activities and collects the views of visitors through surveys and direct contact with visitors. This was a tremendous help in devising an appropriate exhibition programme that would speak to the population as a whole and also provide tourists with a different insight of Mauritian Culture.

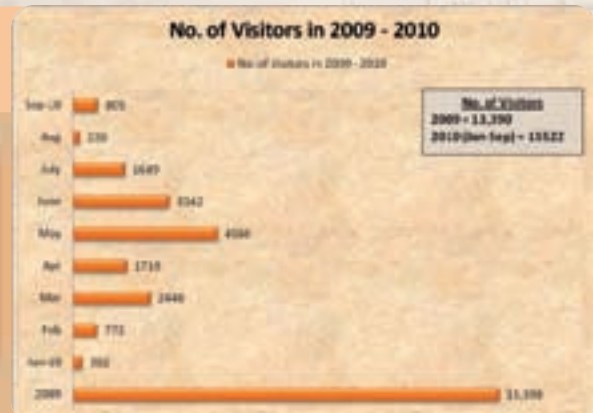
Surveys clearly showed that the audience expected more information on the history of the World Heritage Site and indenture as an international phenomenon. To serve this purpose, the Interpretation Centre project was divided in two phases: the first phase focuses on the physical evolution of the Immigration Depot within its surroundings that now constitutes the Buffer Zone. It seemed an essential element to valorize this area of Port Louis where several oldest buildings in Mauritius still stand. It is also important to recall in what context the Immigration Depot evolved through time since indenture had a direct impact on this area, most of which is now forgotten. This first part will be a major contribution to the understanding of the specificity of indenture in Mauritius that will be mainly presented in the second phase of the project.

The second part of the Interpretation Centre will indeed put into perspective the start and the development of indenture in Mauritius before it spread around the world as a system of recruitment that led to the migration of 2 million people. The Interpretation Centre hopes to be a place speaking to all types of audience, including the youngest, and take visitors to experience insights of our history that made Mauritius so special and unique.

Statistics showing the number of visitors at the AGWHS during year 2009 to 2010



(Source: AGTF Photo Collection)



THE HISTORICAL LANDMARKS OF ONE OF THE FIRST INDIAN IMMIGRANTS FAMILY IN MAURITIUS NAMESLY THE SEEWOODHARRY'S FAMILY

Pravesh Seewoodharry

In June 1855, Indian immigrant No. 152217 arrived in Port Louis aboard the Bushire Merchant ship from Calcutta. The 28-year young man, subsequently known as Seewoodharry Buguth came from the village of Soondurpore Korreeanea found in Patna District. While the reason he left India remains unknown, three years after his arrival Seewoodharry was free of his obligation to complete five years of industrial residence. On August 27, 1858, he entered into a partnership with two other old immigrants to establish a store in Grand Port. By 1866, Seewoodharry now described regularly as a landowner in Notarial deeds, was actively purchasing, leasing and clearing large tracts of land in Plaines Wilhems. For the next fifteen years, until his death in 1881, he would continue to figure in the district's economic life as a merchant, landowner, and businessman of some consequence. In this capacity, he not only helped to inaugurate the large-scale subdivision of sugar estates and other properties known as the **grand morcellement**, also heralded the active role Indian immigrants were to play in this process of social and economic transformation.

Seewoodharry Buguth was one of the **first people** in Mauritius who was involved as timber merchants and his business place was found at La Marie. He employed nearly 1000 workers and furnished timber planks to the Railway Department. He spoke English, Bengali and Sanskrit.

Following Seewoodharry's death in 1881, one of his sons Rambelas also known as Rampersad, joined with Monogilal to purchase three plots of land, with a view to acquiring the right to clear 3,650 arpents of forest in Black River and borrow Rs 24,000 from Jean Baspiste Jourde for this purpose. The visit to Mauritius of Mahatma Gandhi in 1901, marked the rise of political consciousness among Indian community. The Mahatma advised them to take interest in politics and to preserve their culture and religion. As the maker of world history in politics, religion and non-violence his message was received with enthusiasm among the Indians and Muslims of this island. The Mahatma knew that the Indians and Muslims immigrants had worked hard for the development and prosperity of this island and they deserved the same treatment and status as the non-Indians.

Mahatma Gandhi's influence and talks had triggered the Seewoodharry's family to put his ideologies into practice. So the first Indo-Mauritian élite who manifested the desire to serve the Mauritian community was Mr Harry Parsad Seewoodharry Buguth, one of the

sons of Seewoodharry Indian Immigrant No. 152217. He was born on June first, 1871 at La Marie, Curepipe. His mother's name was Suttoa, an Indian immigrant No. 110698 who came originally from the village Koorsowmy. He received his primary education at Glen Park Aided School and his Secondary education at Royal College of Curepipe. He was the **first Indo-Mauritian student to be admitted at the Royal College in 1884**. He passed his School Certificate examinations and took employment as clerk at the Government Treasury.



Harry Parsad Seewoodharry Buguth
(Source: Photo Collection of Seewoodharry Family)

After some time Harry Parsad Seewoodharry Buguth abandoned his post and ran timber business together with his cousin Boodhun Lallah. Later on, he became the **first Indo-Mauritian Land Surveyor**. He hired 5,000 acres of crown land with the government which was known as crown land Buguth near Mare aux Vacoas. Mr Buguth was one of the pioneers in cattle breeding, a planter of sugar cane and also the owner of several buildings at Bougainville, Farquhar and Lionel Cox Streets at Curepipe.

The fifth General Election of Mauritius for the District of Plaines Wilhems was held on January 25, 1906. There were 1691 electors in the voters' roll of Plaines Wilhems. Out of the 1691, there were 146 Hindus, 86 Muslims, 12 Chinese and 1447 of general population. Four candidates, Gilbert, Pitot, Boucherville and Buguth contested for the one seat of the District. **Harry Parsad Seewoodharry Buguth was the first Hindu who stood as a candidate for the General Election for the in the history of Mauritius.**

The result of the General Election for the District of Plaines Wilhems was published in the Government Gazette No. 17 of Friday, 26 January, 1906. Guilbert George obtained 521 votes, Boucherville Alatiqe 247 votes, Seewoodharry Buguth 204 votes and Pitot Arthur 201 votes.

It is also to be noted that one of the greatest achievements of the Seewoodharry's family is the upbringing of Sir Seewoosagar Ramgoolam also known as Kewal during his childhood and adolescence. It would be exactly 100 years ago that Kewal's brother, Ramlall and his wife Sosil, who were related to Seewoodharry sent him to stay at Harry Parsad Seewoodharry Buguth's place at Bougainville Street, Curepipe. He attended the scholarship class at the Curepipe Boys' Government School. The members of the Seewoodharry family namely Gunnesspersad Seewoodharry helped him a lot to succeed his scholarship examinations. After his successful attempt at the scholarship examinations he was

Continued on Page 19 →

Workshop on Bhojpuri Heritage

Kiran Chuttoo-Jankee - Research Assistant



Workshop held at UoM in July 2010

(Source: AGTF Photo Collection)

Aapravasi Ghat is inscribed on the World Heritage List under the criterion (vi). This criterion highlights the importance of intangible heritage. In line with World Heritage Committee recommendations, to 'Undertake research on indentured labour to consider the extent, scope and impact of the indentured labour Diaspora around the world,' The Trust Fund has embarked on research on intangible heritage. The Oral History Unit of the AGTF has been entrusted with this responsibility. A major project was initiated in 2009 to collect oral histories of elderly persons who have resided in sugar estate camps. Some 400 interviews have been collected so far and are currently being analysed with the assistance of anthropologists.

The AGTF has also undertaken research on intangible heritage in other 'indentured' countries. A three-day workshop on Bhojpuri Culture was organized by the Oral History Unit of the AGTF from Tuesday 13 to Thursday 15 July 2010 at the University of Mauritius in collaboration with Banaras Hindu University (BHU).

The theme of the workshop was 'Bhojpuri at the crossroads' and the objectives of the workshop was to Identify the impact of modernity on Bhojpuri, its changes and hybridisation; identify similarities and differences between Bhojpuri traditions and culture in Mauritius and India; reinforce collaboration among scholars and professionals to create a research network on Bhojpuri as part of the Indentured Labour Route Project; to assess research undertaken on this subject and propose new research directions; launch a research programme to encourage the preservation of the Bhojpuri; make recommendations and propose activities for dissemination and knowledge of Bhojpuri culture; to preserve Bhojpuri language and culture and its understanding by other groups.

The opening of the workshop was marked by the vibrant speeches of the Minister of Tertiary Education, Hon. Rajesh Jeetah and the Minister of Arts and Culture, Hon. Mookhesswur Choonee. In their speeches both dignitaries emphasized the role of Bhojpuri as a primary tool for the transmission of culture and ancestral values and the need to preserve this language through promotion and involvement of the younger generation. Dr Archana Kumar, Associate Professor, Department of English, BHU, the guest speaker for the event, presented the results of her research in her two papers, "Living Tradition

of Bhojpuri Women Folksongs in India: The Dynamics of Continuity and change" and "Women's song: a saga of conformity and descent". General introductory presentations were also made by Mr Raviraj Beechook, University of Mauritius on "History of Immigration of Bhojpuri speaking to Mauritius"; "Constituting an inventory: promotion and preservation of Intangible heritage" by Corinne Forest and "Hamare Itihas: The Use of Bhojpuri in Rural Mauritius during the First Half of the 20th Century: A Historical Analysis" by Satyendra Peerthum.

Scholars, researchers, folklorists, singers, students, lovers and bearers of Bhojpuri traditions and the members of the public at large attended the workshop. Discussions that were held during the three days covered various topics such as "**Bhojpuri: a way of life (Bhojpuri Culture)**", "**Language: emergence of Mauritian Bhojpuri**", "**Preservation of Intangible Cultural Heritage**" and "**Preservation of Intangible Cultural Heritage.**"

Some of the resolutions adopted during the workshop towards the promotion of Bhojpuri culture included the production of a DVD of Bhojpuri folk songs of India and Mauritius in collaboration with the BHU, to be launched on 2nd November 2010; teaching songs at primary level and organisation of song/ game competitions in Bhojpuri for pre-primary school children; publishing e-newsletter on Bhojpuri culture; researching on bhojpuri culture- bringing out academic journal to foster debates on Bhojpuri matters; Creating research network, interaction between diaspora countries, exchange of knowledge, experience and materials and setting up a local network of professionals working on Bhojpuri culture; fostering teaching of bhojpuri culture, standardization of Bhojpuri language; and creation of a dictionary on Bhojpuri language to develop an "agreed standardised spelling and grammar" which is in line with the Government programme stipulating that Bhojpuri (and Mauritian Kreol) will be introduced in schools as optional subjects; Setting up projects for University/secondary school students to discover intangible heritage in their villages, localities – collect folktales, sayings, songs, artefacts, learn about food habits, folk medicine and clothing and jewelry; training preprimary teachers; Organising workshop for them on how to introduce Bhojpuri in Oral form.

Current activities include a UNESCO - funded "Inventory of Intangible Cultural Heritage" across the island. The AGTF has also been organising living exhibitions whereby folk songs and dances have been presented by young and old generations. On these occasions, traditional game players and craftsmen had been invited to exhibit their know-how and traditional delicacies, some of which were also on sale.

Working on the Intangible Cultural Heritage project has been a learning experience for the staff working on it. They have learnt to cope with expressions of strong human feelings, sometimes painful memories of the past or memories which make the informants think, smile and laugh. These experiences will be given their full recognition in future publications of the AGTF and in the future Interpretation Centre.

Historical buildings in the Aapravasi Ghat World Heritage Site Buffer Zone

Compiled by M. Soodin - Researcher



Port Louis Central Market

Inner yard of the Central Market, 1923

(Source: Cartes Postales du Passé by A. Kerven and Y. Martial)

Over the past 160 years, the Central Market has served as the main market for the city of Port Louis and is the second largest market on the island. It is an important part of the urban architectural heritage of Mauritius which dates to the early Victorian Era.



Jummah Mosque

Jummah Mosque in 1908

(Source: Cartes Postales du Passé by A. Kerven and Y. Martial)

The Jummah Mosque originally occupied a smaller area and was known as the 'Mosque of the Arabs.' This mosque was steadily enlarged until it was completed in 1894 and finally came to be known as the Jummah Mosque.



Source: AGTF Collection

The Trou Fanfaron Police Station

was built during the mid-1770s. It was occupied by French troops and it was used to defend Port Louis harbour and town from British invasion. The French used to call it "Corps de Garde". For more

than 160 years, it has been used as a military post in Mauritius which made it one of the oldest and longest serving posts from the French period. It was decreed a National Monument in 1951.



Military Hospital Complex

Photolithograph showing the Military Hospital Complex in 1859

(Source: Blue Penny Museum)

The Military Hospital is the oldest building on the island. Constructed by Mahé de Labourdonnais in 1735, it was also known as the Rice store or the Commissariat store or the Civil Stores, when being used by the Civil Commissariat Office. In 1844, it was also used as an immigration depot.

The Mauritius Postal Museum was built between 1767 and 1772. This site was used as a prison and it was commonly called the "Bagne". Those condemned for minor crimes were imprisoned here and sentenced to hard labour. Ratsitatane, a Malagasy nobleman and military commander was imprisoned here as a British State Prisoner. During the late 1830s, the prison served as the first 'depot' for indentured labourers who were caught as vagrant.



(Source: Blue Penny Museum)

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admitted at the Royal College of Curepipe and during that time under the colonial's rule there were very few children from the Indo-Mauritian families who could step into that College. He stayed at Curepipe for at least 10 years and he enjoyed his stay in the company of the members of the Seewoodharry and Lallah families. It is to be noted that both families are related.

As mentioned in Anand Mulloo's book entitled "Father of the Nation" it was in such an atmosphere that young Seewoosagur Ramgoolam, a well-behaved and studious boy, inquisitive, fond of reading and debates and who was never punished for misbehaviour, went through his secondary education and passed his Senior Cambridge Examinations.

Furthermore, Kewal uncle's place that is at Harry Parsad Seewoodharry Buguth's house at Bougainville Street, Curepipe was buzzing with political talks. Kewal's uncle had been siding with Manilall Doctor who had allied the Indo-Mauritian with the Action Libérale. So, it was here that Kewal developed a taste for politics which kept ticking in his mind.

Just imagine what would have been the state of Mauritius, had we not have the contributions of such people in our country. So, we have to pay tribute and be very thankful to all those Indian Immigrants and their descendants who had struggled hard for the development and welfare of Mauritius in order to make it a better place to live in.

Elodie Audoor – Stagiaire à l'Aapravasi Ghat Trust Fund en 2010



Je m'appelle Elodie, je suis belge et mauricienne d'origine. Dans le cadre de mes études en Tourisme et Animation des Loisirs, je devais effectuer un stage de quatorze semaines au sein d'une entreprise touristique de mon choix. Après maintes et maintes demandes de stage dans plusieurs entreprises touristiques, cette belle expérience allait finalement se dérouler à Aapravasi Ghat Trust Fund. Je pensais connaître l'île Maurice comme ma

poche. Pourtant, j'étais loin d'imaginer l'expérience et le plein de découvertes que j'allais faire.

Inconnue au premier abord, mes premiers jours dans cette institution étaient hésitants. Qu'est ce qu'un travailleur engagé ? Un coolie ? C'était à peine si je ne trébuchais pas sur les mots Aapravasi Ghat. Mais de fil en aiguille, j'ai appris à connaître le sens et l'ampleur de ces termes.

En quoi ce stage allait être bénéfique pour moi ? Mes desseins étaient surtout d'apprendre à connaître l'impact historique sur la société mauricienne actuelle. L'esclavage, l'engagisme et les différentes colonisations ont eu un impact certain sur celle-ci. En visitant l'île Maurice, un touriste prend-il connaissance de cette riche histoire ? Comment la perçoit-il ? Et surtout, est-il nécessaire de développer cet aspect touristique ? Toutes ces questions étaient la base de mon Travail de Fin d'Etudes qui allait conclure mon stage à l'AGTF.

Pendant toute la durée de mon stage, j'ai porté la casquette de Heritage Educator. J'avais différentes tâches dans mon sujet de prédilection : le Tourisme !

- Planifier les visites
- Coordinations entre les Guides
- Promotion du site
- Animation des activités pour les enfants
- Les visites guidées

De plus, des événements ont ponctué mon stage. Il y a d'abord eut le 24/7 : avec l'équipe de AGTF, nous avons présenté un stand dans cette exposition à l'occasion de la fête de l'indépendance de l'île Maurice. Et puis il y a eu la fameuse Journée Internationale des Sites et des Monuments, avec la collaboration de l'Ecole Hôtelière Gäetan Duval. Ces événements demandent une bonne préparation, une bonne promotion, une équipe organisée, des activités ludiques et pour le reste l'histoire de l'Aapravasi Ghat a joué de sa magie.

Mon rôle à l'AGTF était principalement basé sur un travail d'équipe. Grâce à la Research Unit et l'administration, sans oublier les guides, Vijaya et Pravesh, mon maître de stage, Mme Forest et Lovehin Andiapen, collègue et conseiller hors paire, mon stage s'est déroulé dans les meilleures conditions qu'il soit.

Pour conclure, je dirai que ce stage a été une vraie expérience pour moi. Non seulement d'un point de vue professionnel, j'ai tenu un rôle qui comportait des responsabilités dans une entreprise touristique. Cela m'a permis d'obtenir mon diplôme mais aussi de me rendre compte que le tourisme est bel et bien mon avenir professionnel. De plus d'un point de vue humain, cette expérience m'a fait découvrir une facette de l'île que je ne connaissais pas du tout. Mais quelle découverte ! J'ai compris que l'île Maurice ce n'était pas juste du sable, du soleil, des palmiers et des hôtels tout confort. L'île comporte bien plus de valeurs, telles que sa culture, son histoire et son patrimoine.

A Taste of Intangible Heritage

Lutchmee Pydatalli - Field Guide

It is a well known fact that the inscription of Aapravasi Ghat on the list of World Heritage Sites was acquired based on criterion (vi) which is related to intangible heritage. New methodologies are being put into practice in order to uncover the lost history of Mauritius. Thus Oral History forms a crucial part in this respect.



"Ariselu" preparation by Mrs L. Pydatalli
(Source: AGTF Photo Collection)

It is through Oral History that we are documenting the intangible heritage. One of the elements of intangible heritage that comes under the theme 'food and health' is traditional recipes. As nourishment, food consists of tangible, material substances which humans consume. But the knowledge and practice of food preparation, etiquette of eating and symbolic meanings tied to various foods are all intangible. The UNESCO *Living Human Treasures* program states that: "although the techniques for producing artefacts and even preparing food can be put in writing, the actual act of creation has no physical form. The performance and the act of creation are intangible; embodied in the skills or techniques of those who do them."

Below is a recipe of a sweet "Ariselu" a dish brought by immigrants of Andhra Pradesh in India. In Mauritius it is mostly known as *Adourson*. *Ariselu* is an Indian sweet made from glutinous rice which is left to rest for days and shaped and fried until it becomes of golden colour. It may be served at any time, but has a special ritual significance. Further it symbolizes prosperity during *Pasapu* rituals and prayers like *Rambhajanam*.

This recipe was transmitted to me by my grandmother.

Ariselu - Ingredients:

- 3 cups of Rice
- 1 ½ cups of sugar
- ½ teaspoon ginger powder
- ½ teaspoon Ghee
- ½ teaspoon Cindammon
- 1 tablespoon milk powder
- 150g sesame seed
- 1 teaspoonful bicarbonate of soda

Methods:

- 1) Soak the rice for 2 hrs after which let it dry for 2 hrs and grind it.
- 2) Next prepare a syrup (Boil a cup of water with 2 cups of sugar).
- 3) In a bowl add the grounded rice, ginger powder, ghee, cindammon, milk powder, 50g sesame seeds, one teaspoonful of bicarbonate of soda and then pour the syrup and mixed well.
- 4) Let the dough chill for 2 days. Then make small balls.
- 5) Before frying spread the sesame seeds on the small balls.
- 6) Heat oil or ghee and fry until golden brown. Drain on absorbent paper.
- 7) Can be served hot or cold.

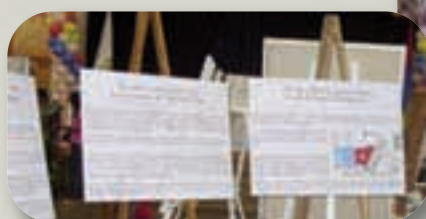
ACTIVITIES ORGANIZED AT THE AGTF IN 2010

Natasha Kheddo - Research Assistant

The AGTF received the Queen's Baton Relay on 7th January 2010. The relay passed through different symbolic places found in Mauritius prior to the holding of the Commonwealth Games in New Delhi. The Queen's Baton was carried by the Mauritian athlete, Stephane Buckland and the AGTF had the honour of welcoming such a remarkable event.



24/7 activities held at the Municipality of Quatre Bornes in March 2010 for three consecutive days. The AGTF displayed an exhibition on AGWHS and the Oral History team presented to the public folk songs and dances.



18 April is decreed the "International Day for Monuments and Sites."

To mark this event, this year the AGTF organized the following activities:

- Guided visit of the site and historic buildings found in the buffer zone.
- Living exhibition on crafts work and traditional Mauritian gastronomy.
- Educational activities based on the techniques of construction during the 19th century and demonstration/activity on archaeological excavations.
- Exhibition on the history of Le Morne World Heritage Site.
- Film on the AGWHS.



(Source: AGTF Photo Collection)



The 4th Anniversary of the inscription of the Aapravasi Ghat on the World Heritage List was held on 28th July 2010. To mark this occasion a cultural programme, based on Intangible Cultural Heritage, was presented by the Luchmee Ramayan Mandal of Montagne Longue. There was also the launching of the Panoramic Views on the AGWHS, with the aim of presenting to the public an overview of the Immigration Depot during the 18th century. The Nelson Mandela Centre for African Culture made their contribution as well through an exhibition on liberated Africans.



Eminent personalities who visited the AGWHS in 2009 - 2010

Compiled by Natasha Kheddoo - Research Assistant

Shashi Tharoor

Minister of External Affairs - New Delhi, India - 02.11.2009

It has been a deeply moving experience to visit Aapravasi Ghat on the occasion of the 175th anniversary of the landing of Indians in Mauritius. The memorial is a worthy tribute to the memory of those forebearers whose struggles and sweat, toil and tears built the Mauritius of today. My thanks for the privilege of being here and my best wishes to the Aapravasi Ghat Trust as it completes the excavations and rebuilding of this remarkable World Heritage Site.



Meira Kumar

Speaker Lok Sabha - India - 19.01.2010

It is a great honour and privilege to visit the historic Heritage Aapravasi Ghat where a group of brave men and women landed on 2nd November 1834. They all had a story to tell – tale of tear, anguish, suffering, servitude, cruelty and misery. The Aapravasi Ghat played a central role in the day to day functioning of the inhuman indentured labour system. But they were masters of their tale and never lost hope. It is to these courageous men and women, we owe what Mauritius is today – a true Paradise on Earth. I pay homage in all humility to the memory of the Aapravasis.



H. É Ramesh Pokhriyal

Chief Minister - Uttarakhand, India - 10.02.2010

By coming to Aapravasi Ghat we can remember the struggle of our ancestors who endured a lot of suffering, by embracing pain but they still did not give up struggling. They fought against the circumstances and one day after innumerable difficulties and boundless struggle they achieved freedom.



This is a sacred place which can be referred as the place of struggle for Mauritius.

This place should always remain sacred and by remembering our struggle it is important to give inspiration to our cultural and national unity. India is the heart of Mauritius. The infinite deepness of this heart lies in the Indian culture. That is why even today Mauritius is making its land firm through its cultural activities.

Our culture is the example of brotherhood and world peace. Due to this greatness characters various time we became slaves. People took undue advantage because of our modesty.

But now both India and Mauritius will protect its freedom and cultures at any cost.

My best wishes to the great and dynamic Mauritians.

I thank the Officer-in-Charge of this Trust, Mr Raju and all his team.

In the presence of the reputed Indian Ambassador in Mauritius, Mr H. E. Shri Madhusudan Ganapathi, I give all my best wishes to India and to the people of Uttarakhand.

Joaquim Chissano

Former President of Mozambique - 02.02.2010

This monument shows us where we came from. Therefore it is an important site to show us where we are going to – a United Humanity.

Thanks for the initiative.



J. N. Narlikar

IUCAA - Pune - 04.03.2010

I wish this heritage place is preserved for posterity.

Navin B. Chawla

Chief Election Commissioner of India - 04.05.2010

It has been a very moving occasion for my wife and I, and my delegation, to visit the Aapravasi Ghat. We are grateful to the Fund to have preserved it, not merely because it is such an important milestone in the history of the country, but as an example to the young and to visitors, to remind them of those who came through here and which has eventually and happily evolved into such a fine multi-cultural and vibrant nation.



Thank you for the privilege of this occasion, where we could share in our joint histories, India and Mauritius.

Mr Alieu Bah

Minister of Finance - Banjul, Gambia - 20.05.2010

It should serve as a lesson of all human beings to accept evolution.

Mr Didier Ejda

Ministère de Finances - Cameroon - 20.05.2010

Très forte impression d'une expérience unique au plan historique car trouver une alternative à l'esclavage et à mettre au bénéfice de l'humanité toute entière.

Baroness Sandip Verma

Spokesperson of International Development
Minister of State at International Development
Whip in Cabinet Office, London
17.08.10

It was a joy to visit such a historical site of importance; I will go away with some knowledge memories.



Ramakant Pattanaik

Fleet Commander - Western Fleet - Indian Navy
06.10.10

Privileged to visit this World Heritage Site.



Mr Mookhesswur Choonee

Minister of Arts and Culture - 28.07.2010

I am a gift of the Aapravasi Ghat. My great-grandfather landed here at the age of five. He accompanied others, not his parents. Please think it over.



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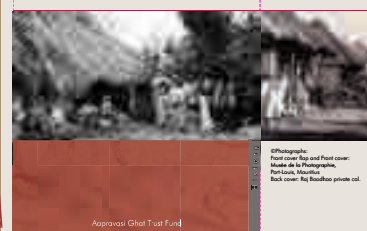
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Mr Vickram Mugon	Researcher
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Ms Natasha Kheddoo	Research Assistant
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Mr Deeneshkumar Gungaram	Site Conservation Worker
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Health, Disease and Indian Immigrants in Nineteenth Century Mauritius

Raj Boodhoo



This book deals with the outbreaks of diseases and epidemics in Mauritius during the Indian immigration period. It is based on original documents found in the different archives, Mauritius, India and UK. It explains the efforts made by colonial administration and planters to set up hospitals and dispensaries to serve the needs of Indian labourers and their families. The authorities introduced campaigns of preventive medicine, especially vaccination against smallpox. They also established a quarantine system, based on the contagion theory to keep at bay diseases carried by immigrants. The nineteenth century also witnessed missionary activities related to health care: the setting up of convents and asylums. The book also argues about the response of Indian immigrants to western medicine.



PUBLICATIONS AVAILABLE AT THE AAPRAVASI GHAT TRUST FUND OFFICE



**The Aapravasi Ghat:
Past and Present:
Archaeological
Investigations (2003)**

Price: Rs.100



**The Aapravasi Ghat:
Past and Present:
History (2003)
(Out of print)**

Price: Rs.100



**The Vagrant Depot of
Grand River,
its Surroundings and
Vagrancy
in
British Mauritius
(2004)**

Price: Rs.250



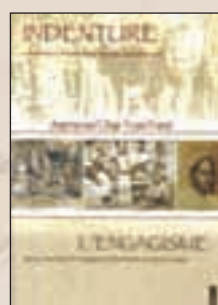
**Aapravasi Ghat and its
Surroundings
by
Brindah Annasawmy
(2006)**

Price: Rs.150



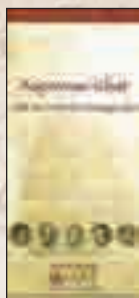
**Beekrumsing Ramlallah:
A Man of Principles**

Price: Rs.100

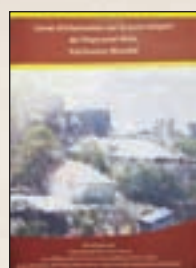


**Indenture: A Brief History of
Indenture in Mauritius
and in the World (2007)**

Price: Rs.50



**Brochure of the
Aapravasi Ghat World
Heritage Site
available at the AGTF
Office**

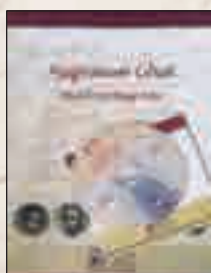


**Livret d'information
sur la zone tampon de
l'Aapravasi Ghat,
Patrimoine Mondial
(2009)**

Available in Kreole
and French



**Aapravasi Ghat School
Kit Booklet (2009)**



**The Aapravasi Ghat
Educational
School Kit
with DVD
(2009)**



**Rajah à
l'Aapravasi Ghat
(2009)**

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Dr V. Teelock
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Mr B. Dinand
Mr M. Jhummun

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