

## MNT APPRECIATES THE CONTRIBUTION OF FRANCESCA FRANCHI



MONTSERRAT NATIONAL TRUST PRESERVING THE PAST \* PROTECTING THE PRESENT \* ENRICHING THE FUTURE

# MNT Newsletter

EDITED BY JEAN HANDSCOMBE

In October, 2016, the MNT reluctantly said goodbye to Francesca Franchi, a retired Curator from the Royal Opera House Museum. Francesca first came to work on Montserrat in 2015 via the West India Committee in London that administered a grant awarded by the Linbury Trust. The grant enabled her work with the MNT that built on the Endangered Archive Project (EAP) funded by the British Library, London, and this coincided with the Government of Montserrat's ICT programme, 2015-16, that also partially funded her work here.

Francesca's role was to gain an overview of the different collections at the MNT, and crucial collections housed elsewhere on the island, to make recommendations for collections management, and to provide training for staff and volunteers. Francesca researched and recommended a software programme *Past Perfect* capable of cataloguing the range of object, print and photographic materials held by the MNT. The software also allows for attaching digital images to the catalogue records, and a web-interface for unmediated public access.



Cadets trained by Francesca and Neil © Neil H

In September 2015, six cadets were engaged by the MNT as part of the Government's ICT programme. - D'Andre Lee, Javon Sweeney, Gatrack Joseph, Bianca Chambers, John Jeffers and Amika Osborne. Francesca supervised their work, and provided training in cataloguing and the handling and storage of historic documents.

The cadets were previously trained in the process of digital photography by Neil How, a volunteer, who continues to work with the MNT on digitization and quality control of the digital images. Two other MNT Volunteers, Jean Handscombe and Elinor Schiele were trained by Francesca in cataloguing and continue to work with D'Andre to sort and catalogue over 100,000 images. There is still work needed to allow public access via the web to the collections.



Francesca F. and D'Andre Lee in the digitization room © Neil H



Francesca F. - © Ravo R

The MNT wishes to express gratitude to Francesca, the Government of Montserrat, the British Library, the West India Committee, the Linbury Trust, the Government Registry, the Montserrat Public Library, the Volunteers and Cadets for all the assistance given to advance the work of digitization, subsequent cataloguing and eventual web-based access. This is a big step forward in ensuring that Montserrat's historical record is preserved and made available to future generations.

# FLOWER NEWS

## THIRD MONTSERRAT NATIONAL TRUST FLOWER SHOW AND GARDEN PARTY

Once again earlier this year, the Flower Show and Garden Party led by the Flower Show and Garden Party Committee was welcomed by flower and plant lovers, including many MNT friends and visitors.

More than 50 exhibitors shared their horticultural skills and creations. Visitors to the Flower Show could admire more than 300 items exhibited on the premises of the Montserrat National Trust in Salem. The display demonstrated the wide variety and magnificence of the island's natural flora.

A range of judges with different backgrounds chose the best exhibits from each of the 50 categories. The MNT staff and the Flower Show Committee were also delighted to welcome six artists in the Photographers, Painters, Art Work section who exhibited their talents inspired by the beauty of Montserrat's natural wealth.

The MNT and the Flower Show Committee distributed prizes to the winners at the Sunday 20<sup>th</sup> March closing ceremony. The Champion Exhibitor this year was Mrs Esternella West. Her Excellency Elizabeth Carriere, Patron for the Flower Show, congratulated the Trust and the winners and distributed the prizes. In total, the 47 winners received \$ 8,170.00 EC in prizes in this year's Competition.

MNT would like to congratulate the three children (Selarine Lake, Beyonce Osborne, Rayne Smith) who took part in this venture despite a really loaded week for all schools during that period. All of them produced work that was warmly appreciated.

The MNT and the Committee express sincere thanks to our major Sponsor - Flow - and to other contributors, United Insurance, Bank of Montserrat, MS Osborne, Delta Petroleum, MUL, MATHLE, Montserrat Tourism Office, Montserrat Social Security. And special thanks to the Montserrat Arts Council team who helped with decorations and with the setting up of the exhibition rooms for the flower show. We also want to gratefully acknowledge those who donated food, drinks and time for the Tea Party which was a success again this year.

If you missed this event, check our website or facebook page for an announcement of the next Flower Show.



Her Excellency the Governor visiting the exhibition with President Dulcie James and Anthony Tangkai of T&T Orchid Society

## MAC4 ART EXHIBITION Exhibition

The Montserrat Arts Council (MAC) in association with the Montserrat National Trust held its 2nd exhibition to coincide with the year end Festival celebrations from December 7, 2016 to January 4, 2017 at the Trust's Oriole Complex in Salem. This year another four local artists were featured - **Kelvin "Tabu" Duberry** displaying his paintings and drawings of people and cultural and historical scenes and topics; **Cecil Wade** a master leatherworker creating sandals in all sizes and shapes, belts, purses and key rings; **Nicole Duberry's** creations, of wood, beads and seeds to form delightful looking necklaces, key rings, earrings and bracelets and unique coffee mugs of bone and china; **Garfield Browne**, carpenter and joiner, showing his creativity and patience in the form of magnificent carvings on a four poster queen size bed, a beautiful wooden casket, an elegant chair and a side table in the shape of Montserrat.

The Montserrat Arts Council whose role is to encourage and coordinate arts and culture on island is located in the Upstairs Public Market in Little Bay and its Director is the well-known Montserratian poet and performance artist, Chad Cumberbatch.

The Council can be contacted at [info@artscouncil.ms](mailto:info@artscouncil.ms). The Trust looks forward to continued cooperation with the Arts Council and the island's talented artists.



Local Art Exhibition opening - © Ravo R

# BIODIVERSITY PROTECTION

## A NURSERY FOR ENDEMICS AND KEY NATIVE SPECIES

This project funded by EU BEST Initiative, aims at building an infrastructure that will be used by the Montserrat National Trust for the propagation of plants of special ecological value.

- The critically endangered, strictly endemic species *Rondeletia buxifolia* (Pribby) and *Epidendrum montserratense* (Montserrat Orchid), along with the endangered species *Swietenia mahagony* (West Indian Mahogany), *Cedrela odorata* (Spanish Cedar) and *Guaiaacum officinale* (Lignum Vitae), will be propagated for reintroduction on public lands, and made available to the public for garden planting, dramatically improving the survival prospects of these species.

- The 3 species found to be effective for dry forest restoration (*Cytherexylum fruticosum*– Sidelewood, *Tabebuia heterophylla*– White Cedar, *Bursera simaruba* –Gum Tree) will be propagated and replanted in devastated areas in an effort to restore patches of this at risk ecosystem. Successful reforestation is important for a lot of endemic animal species. This replanting will be done in cooperation with the secondary school.

Events organized during the lifetime of this project will provide opportunities to spread information to the general public about Montserrat's species, their uniqueness and the threats they face. It is an excellent way of increasing awareness of the value to all Montserratians of a healthy ecosystem.



Montserrat Orchid - © Nicolas T

## CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION IRRIGATION PROJECT

MNT was successful in its application to the OECS Global Climate Change Alliance (GCCA) Project on Climate Change Adaptation (CCA) and Sustainable Land Management (SLM) in the Eastern Caribbean. The Project, financed by the European Union (EU\_GCCA), has two components:

- Effective, sustainable land management frameworks and practices
- Physical adaptation pilot projects in relevant areas or sectors

During the drought of 2015, the Trust spent thousands of dollars trying to save plants in its Botanic Garden and was therefore seeking ways of addressing the needs of its gardens and that of small farmers, impacted by these challenges.

The project starting in January 2017 therefore aims to :

- Increase storage for rainwater collected from all the MNT roofs during the rainy season to irrigate plants throughout the drier season.
- Establish an irrigation system throughout the garden
- Install or use existing Solar Panels and batteries to provide the energy for pumping water for irrigation
- Use the Trust's garden as a demonstration project on water harvesting and the use of solar energy for irrigation in the dry season
- Demonstrate the relationships among clean power, environmental protection and climate change.

## DARWIN PROJECT

Montserrat National Trust staff are excited to work on a project run in conjunction with the UKOTCF (United Kingdom Overseas Territories Conservation Forum) team.

This project called "Maximising long-term survival prospects of Montserrat's endemic species and ecosystem-services" is financed by a grant from the Darwin Foundation. Volcanic and human activity have put at risk ecological health in general as well as endemic species survival. This project will enhance island-wide ecological sustainability and endemic species survival through local data gathering and use of biological records. The result will be the development of a planning and environmental impact assessment process for the cost-effective management of endangered areas.

We strongly hope that all owners will allow access to their lands, some of which are in now difficult to get to parts of the island, to conduct the surveys. We also look forward to local stakeholders sharing their knowledge to accelerate the progress of the work and add to its quality.

## SECURING POCKETS OF PARADISE—TACKLING INVASIVE SPECIES

From October 17<sup>th</sup> to 20<sup>th</sup>, Montserrat National Trust hosted an international workshop organised along with the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB). This major workshop was planned under the European Union BEST project; a 3 year project called "Securing Pockets of Paradise in the Caribbean".

During this workshop, stakeholders from 14 territories, mainly from Caribbean UKOTs, had the opportunity to discuss their concerns and describe practical ways of Invasive Alien Species (IAS) management. Different sessions allowed each partner representative to address specific issues including the following:

- (a) Biosecurity; developing suitable approaches, systems and implementation at territory level
- (b) Firearm usage in invasive species control and management
- (c) Public awareness and outreach when managing sensitive invasive species (e.g. cats and goats)
- (d) National invasive alien species strategy development.

As part of this project, the MNT is conducting an initial survey of the population's views on, and knowledge about, invasive species. This survey will be completed by January 15th, 2017 and a public awareness campaign will be developed based on the results.



Workshop participants at Plymouth - © Ravo R

# PETROGLYPHS AT SOLDIER GHAUT



Two petroglyph markings © Ravo R

Petroglyphs markings made by Amerindians, the first known people of Montserrat.

In January 2016, hikers Shirley Osborne and Vaughn Barzey, saw them carved into a large, mossy rock exposed by landslide in the river valley and reported the petroglyphs to the Montserrat National Trust.

So far such petroglyphs have been found throughout the Caribbean islands, but not confirmed in Montserrat or Antigua. This is an exciting find for Montserrat. Shirley Osborne and her girls group, the MNT staff and Dr Reg Murphy from Antigua Historical Society visited the site at the end of May 2016. The group was accompanied by the Survey and Landscape Archaeology team (co-directors: John F. Cherry and Krysta Ryzewski) who were conducting summer research on Montserrat at that time. Their report counted nine petroglyphs with an area of 2.2 meters (horizontal) x 3.24 meters (vertical).

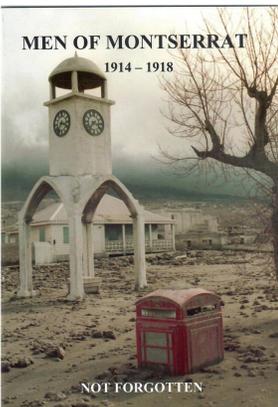
The press reported that according to University of Virginia anthropologist George Mentore similar petroglyphs are known near rivers in Amazonia in northern South America, where people who speak Arawak and Carib are still living.

The MNT is in process of arranging for January 2017 an interpretation and analysis by Dr Henry Pettitjean-Roget, an Archeologist from Guadeloupe who is an expert in Amerindian societies of the Lesser Antilles. This is one of the most important of Montserrat's historical artifacts. Following advice from Dr Pettitjean-Roget, the Trust will take necessary action to conserve this historical masterpiece.

We entreat every one to NOT TOUCH any part of the Petroglyphs and thus be a part of preserving this important find.

## Men of Montserrat

## Opening of Odd Cup Cafe



### NEW PUBLICATION

During the Remembrance Week in November, 2016, Sarita Francis, MNT Director, used the occasion to launch the release on Montserrat of the publication Men of Montserrat.

The book, researched and written by retired Major General Anthony Leask, gives valuable information about a number of the Men who served the island and Britain in the 1st World War.

The Montserrat National Trust is happy to announce that a café with a lovely view onto the botanical garden is now open to the public serving coffee, tea and juices and delicious treats.

We would like to thank Agnes Lempriere who stepped up to launch this café and to all who answered our call for donations. The café is open Tuesdays and Fridays from 9am to 12pm.



### DONATION MNT

MNT acknowledges with thanks a generous donation by Linda Lindsey in memory of her parents Mr and Mrs John Lindsey, which has allowed us to access the Montserrat Slave Register.

### MNT GIFT SHOPS

*Birding in paradise - A guide to bird watching, nature and heritage site* is available at the Gift shop for \$27 E.C. and the *Men of Montserrat not forgotten* for \$20 E.C.

You can find handmade items produced in Montserrat and local food specialties for a taste of the island. In line with the Trust's aim of protecting the environment the MNT also supports small scale organisations by selling fair-trade products.

Oriole Gift shop is open Monday to Thursday 8:30 am to 4:30 pm and Fridays 8:30 am to 4pm. Phone: +1 - 664-491-3086.