

January 2018



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

MNT Newsletter

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MNT UPDATE

MAKING PROGRESS IN CONSERVATION OF MONTSERRAT'S HISTORY

The MNT Archiving project expanded in June 2017 with additional funding from the Government of Montserrat through the ICT Project within the Ministry of Communication and Works. The funding contributes to the preservation of history through digitization of photos and documents. Five new cadets were taken on last year and they will be with us until the end of the financial year, March 2018.

Mr Javon Sweeney, the cadets' supervisor, reports that consistent progress has been made each month, though additional training would be required to have them work at an international standard. Cadet D'Andre Lee will be going to the UK in February for further training. He also acknowledges the fine cooperation of the Montserrat Public Library and the Legislature Department in providing records for the Project. The Cadets' worked hard and their efforts to preserve Montserrat's history is commendable. Indeed, the speed of their work was not anticipated in the original plan and additional hard drive storage has had to be acquired. Since the MNT Digitisation Project started some 129,617 images have been digitised.



Photo of the Montserrat Shield in UWI Chapel, Mona.
© D Sutherland.

FROM THE MNT ARCHIVES - THE MONTSERRAT SHIELD- THE LADY AND THE HARP

The picture above shows the shield of Montserrat, which dates from the 1830s. The British Museum has a seal die of Montserrat engraved by Benjamin Wyon showing the woman with the harp and cross, dated 1838-9. The Lady is called Faith and her dress and harp depict Irish Culture, while the cross represents Christianity.

UPDATES ON THE PETROGLYPHS

The Montserrat National Trust received a grant of 10,000 Euros from the EU Association of Overseas Countries and Territories' (OCTA) Territorial Strategies for Innovation (TSI) Project to develop further information on the Amerindian Petroglyphs found in Soldier Ghaut in January 2016. The project will engage the services of an Archaeologist, who has the expertise in studying Amerindian Petroglyphs, It will allow the Trust to explore, design and develop a suitable trail access to the site. Finally, it will allow for the development of education and promotion programmes using research information on the petroglyphs, flora, and fauna of Montserrat. The Project will start in March 2018.



Hikers discovering petroglyphs © N. Tirard

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BIODIVERSITY PROTECTION ACTIONS

DARWING PLUS PROJECT

The project held its fourth Darwin Plus Project (*Save our Special Nature*) workshop on the 10th November 2017 at the Montserrat National Trust with nineteen (19) in attendance representing different interest groups from all over the island. Four members from the Project Managers, United Kingdom Overseas Territories Conservation Forum (UKOTCF) and the Minister of Environment were in attendance.

The Darwin Project committee aims to monitor the usage of lands in and near the restricted zone in the southern part of Montserrat in order to protect and support biodiversity, the people and the economy of Montserrat. It is a futuristic desire to safeguard and manage two thirds of the island's environment which was damaged by the Soufriere Volcano from 1995. Although it is unlikely that the southern area of the island will be re-inhabited in the near future, the Darwin committee, in partnership with the Government of Montserrat, UK Overseas Territories Conservation Forum and the MNT intends to facilitate the re-building of the natural ecology of that part of the island.

During the workshop, many interesting activities were discussed which can be summarised under two main headings: Environmental Protection and Creation of Jobs. Participants noted that the feral livestock in the southern part of Montserrat has been a major concern for the conservation of native habitats. However, there are ways in which these can be controlled with the assistance of local Hunters' Association to shoot the animals and use helicopters to remove the carcasses. Much of the southern area was formerly farmland and the soil is still rich and suitable for propagation. Furthermore, tourists visits to the buried Capital, Plymouth, have become very popular so there is an opportunity for more tourism activities in the future.

An action plan will be elaborated using the two headings mentioned above and will be discussed with the public.

TACKLING INVASIVE SPECIES BY EDUCATING AND RAISING AWARENESS ABOUT ENDANGERED SPECIES

Over the years, it has been proven that conservation work is more effective if the local population is aware of the need for protecting the environment. This is why the Trust's mission in this project, funded by the EU BEST in partnership with RSPB, is to raise awareness within the general public of the threats to native and endemic species on Montserrat.

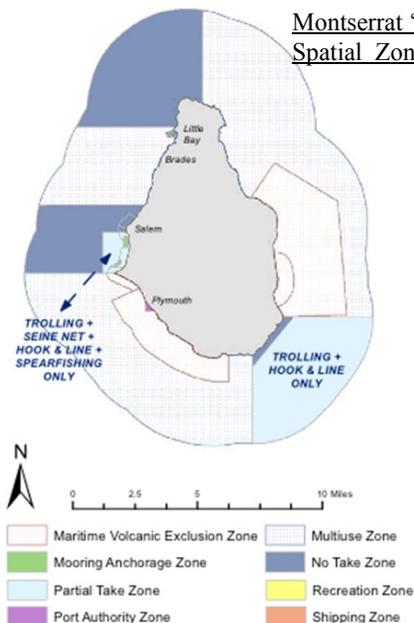
The survey that was completed in the first quarter of 2016 has helped to focus on the less known of these species. Indeed, the survey shows that the Mountain Chicken and the Oriole are basically the only two endemic species known by the general public. Other species such as the Galliwasp, the Montserrat Anole are known only by very few and if known, mostly by adults. Plants are the less known endemic species. Endemic plants (The Montserrat Orchid and the Pribby) are the most unknown. Regarding, invasive species the lionfish is fairly well-known by young people and adults. However, invasive plant species are generally unknown. Young people especially do not realize that plants can have negative effects on the environment.

Project Officer, Ravo T. visited schools, held sessions with each class and distributed calendars containing facts and description of 12 endemic species, including the endemic plants. During the 2017 Summer School activities children were able to enjoy painting activities relating to Montserrat's Biodiversity. For the closing show of the Summer School, the children performed a song about habitats and the importance of their conservation. Hopefully the children will convey this message to their parents.



Pupils with collage about habitats and endemic species © Ravo T.

Montserrat's Draft Marine Spatial Zones



MARINE SPATIAL PLANNING

Last year, members of the Waitt Institute/ Montserrat Blue Halo Steering Committee, and the Waitt Scientific Team met regularly at the Montserrat National Trust to develop a draft marine spatial plan. This plan includes the definition of several zones where different activities will be authorized or restricted to allow for an optimal long-term use of the natural resources.

From August, all the Montserrat stakeholders were contacted to provide feedback and adjustments to this draft plan. This process is still going on, with the last meeting being held on December 12th here at the Trust. After consultation, it is expected that the plan will be ratified by Government and the necessary laws and regulations will be adopted to ensure the protection of the Marine environment and sustainable livelihoods for fishers.

Waitt Institute, Ministry with the responsibility for Youth and MNT have just signed a grant agreement to support the young fishers in the construction of sustainable fish pots.

BOTANIC GARDEN ACTIVITIES

EDUCATIONAL AND ENTERTAINING ACTIVITY DAY

As part of the RSPB/EU BEST funded Projects (Securing Pockets of Paradise and MNT Nursery Project) the Montserrat National Trust (MNT) proudly invited the schools around the island to an educational and entertaining activity which was held from the 1st to the 15th of December 2017. In all some 332 students attended in groups of about twenty students per session and students were given an opportunity to explore the botanical garden with the entertaining knowledgeable tour guides, Nicolas Tirard and Philemon Mappie Murraine. It was a very interesting and interactive tour as Nicolas and Mappie taught each student to propagate one of Montserrat's endemic species, the Pribby. They were indeed excited when they were each given a chance to propagate one pribby. The students will return in a few months to individually collect their plants which they will plant at school or home. They also enjoyed a conservation video on Montserrat, written and narrated by Stewart McPherson. The film illustrated Montserrat's flora and fauna describing how the people and the nature of Montserrat were impacted after the eruption of the Soufriere Hills volcano in 1995 and attempts and successes in the recovery process. Students were quizzed about the video by Project Outreach Officer, Ravo T. and were rewarded for their good work with Oriole pins presented by Clerical Assistant, Dyan Archer. In giving feedback on the sessions the teachers thought that their students' time was well spent, commenting that they found the exercise to be very informative and well organised. They look forward to it becoming an annual event.



Nicolas Tirard, *project manager* and Philemon Murraine, *gardener*, in the Botanic Garden leading the Pribby propagation activity. © R. Tirard



Ravo Tirard, the *project outreach officer*, and Dyan Archer leading an interactive activity on Montserrat's biodiversity and invasive species. © N. Tirard



One of the classes from St Augustine School. © D. Archer

NURSERY PROJECT ORCHID PROPAGATION UNIT

An orchid propagation training was held at the Montserrat National Trust (MNT) on 18th November 2017 with Mr. Tony Tangkai from Trinidad of the Trinidad and Tobago Orchid Society, and Mr. Nicolas Tirard. Twenty-five interested members and friends of the Trust took part in the training and were exposed to few low cost techniques that are useful in propagation of orchids. The Montserrat Orchid is an endemic species and hence it is our aim to propagate that species on island. Participants were shown how to micro-propagate in a proposed the MNT Orchid Lab. They also got to practice using this propagation technique. The feedback on this training session was encouraging with participants looking forward to using the new technique in their greenhouses and gardens and will use the Orchid Lab whenever possible. In this way the endemic orchids can be propagated throughout the island.

Installing a Solar irrigation system

A solar irrigation system was installed by a local contractor, KTEC Ltd, using a design by Daniel Engineering, Project Manager, from Grenada. This project was funded through a grant awarded to the OECS by the European Union as part of the *iLand Resilience Initiative project*. The rainwater harvested from the Montserrat National Trust (MNT) buildings is being stored and circulated around the garden using solar energy. The water is pumped into two tanks situated in the highest parts of the garden and distributed by gravity to different sections of the garden. This will decrease consumption of potable water with the use of the solar generated pump, collected rain micro-sprinklers. This will reduce the stress-level of plants in the dry season. The final result will be a more attractive botanical garden and a workshop aimed at educating local farmers and horticulturists on the use of rainwater harvesting and solar technology as a means of responding to the challenge of climate change.

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A shade for our little ones

On your next visit at the Botanical Garden you will notice that a new greenhouse is now part of the garden landscape.

This new construction is part of the Nursery Project and has been possible through financial support from the EU BEST Initiative to help the Trust to better shelter seedlings of native plants and especially the endemic plant, the Pribby. Therefore Montserrat inhabitants will be able to buy more plants such as the Pribby and regional endemics such as the Broom Palm and the Turks Head Cactus.



Botanical garden shade house © Ravo T.

MNT NEWS

MAC 4 ART EXHIBITION

It is that time of the year when the Montserrat Arts Council (MAC) and the Montserrat National Trust (MNT) collaborate on the MAC4 annual art exhibition. The grand opening was on the 4th December 2017 and it was an undeniable success with a great turn out as special guests and friends came to extend their support to four artists who contribute to the cultural landscape of Montserrat. . MAC highlighted four talented artists this year each bringing a unique and passionate vision to their work. They were :

- Kirk Brade who uses his creative skills for carving and wire-bending;
- Susan Edgecombe has BA in Art and Design and delights in painting, creating batiks and printing on fabrics.
- Valbaun from Montserrat but now resides in the United Kingdom. He is a well-known landscape, wedding and portrait photographer and his work allows him to travel the world. Recently he published a book of photos on Montserrat's landscape called *Ipharadesi*.
- Thanendran Singarajah is a recycler of glass, beads and bottles originally from Sri Lanka but now resides in the Woodlands area where he spends most of his time refining and creating beautiful pieces.



Exhibition's visitors at the opening ©MAC4

IN MEMORIAM

MNT is saddened by the passing of Dorothy Burbank on January 24 2018. Dorothy and her husband Bob were benefactor members of the Trust who were responsible for acquiring the MNT property in Olveston during the early stages of the volcanic eruption. The MNT is indebted to the Burbanks and extends condolences to the family MNT also expresses condolences to all the families of Members of the Trust who passed away over the last year.

MNT UPCOMING EVENTS

26 February 2018:

MNT Annual General Meeting (AGM)

Annual General Meeting of the members of the Montserrat National Trust, will be at the MNT National History Center in Olveston. It is a good time to renew your membership. You will also be able to renew your membership at the meeting if you are on island, or you can become a member of the Trust. Call or email us at the Trust Office Monday to Friday. 8:30 am - 4:30 pm

DO NOT MISS!!!!

- MNT Flower Show and Tea Party and Hat Parade
March 14-15, 2018
- Museum Exhibition March 9 until July



THE ODD CUP CAFE

After an enjoyable visit to the MNT Botanical Garden, relax and have coffee or tea with some sweets at the Odd Cup Café. The café is opened from Tuesday to Friday from 9am to 2pm. The service is provided by Agnes Lempriere, who volunteers her time to assist in making our guests feel relaxed and well watered. Call for reservations for breakfast, tea/coffee or lunch. Muffins, sandwiches, quiches and other treats are available.

MNT GIFT SHOPS

Montserrat National Trust polo t-shirts and caps are available in green, red, white at the Gift Shop in Olveston. Come and check out the new items local artists, producers and the Trust are offering this year. In line with the Trust's aim of protecting the environment, the MNT also supports local small scale entrepreneurs by selling recycled glass and craft items as well as some processed sweets like jams, jellies and pepper sauce. Get your T-shirts, Madras items and beads for St Patrick's Week of Activities.