

CONTACT US

Email: sarawakheritagesociety@gmail.com
Website: www.sarawakheritagesociety.com
FB: Sarawak Heritage Society SHS
Whatsapp/sms: +6018 988 2343



SPOTLIGHT

Volume 1 | Issue 1
Nov/Dec 2020

Sarawak Heritage Society Executive Committee (2020/2022)

President: James S L Yong

Vice President: Donna Yong

Secretary: Deborah Dris

Treasurer: Rosemarie Wong

Arif Arabi

William Khoo

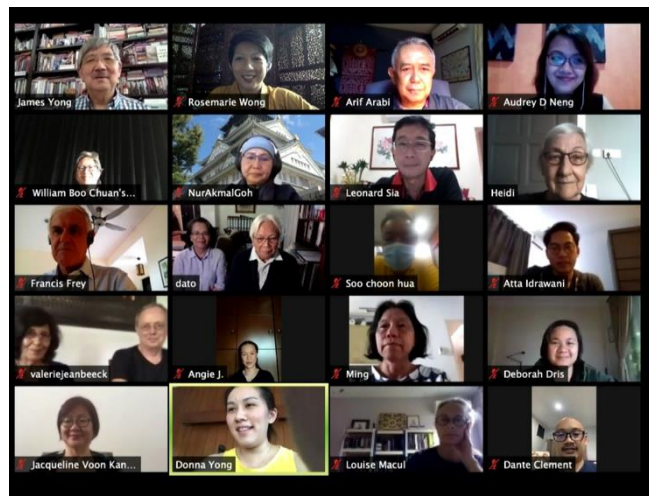
Angelina Jong

Dr Atta Idrawani bin Zaini

Eden Bong

WELCOME to this inaugural issue!

SHS finally held its AGM on 7th November 2020. Delayed since April due to the Covid-19 pandemic, we conducted it online using Zoom. The 2019/2020 Annual Report that we presented can be viewed on our website. A new Executive Committee was appointed for 2020/2022 (see sidebar). A vote of thanks was given to our past President, Dato Sri Robert Jacob Ridu for having led the society the past four years.



This is the first issue of a compact "SPOTLIGHT" newsletter that we intend to email to all SHS members once every two months. This will complement postings on the SHS website, Facebook pages and the whatsapp SHS Community chatgroup. We hope you will find this newsletter interesting. Do send us your comments or suggestions on what you'd like to know more about, heritage-wise. Also please do

recommend SHS membership to your friends and family who appreciate Sarawak's unique heritage assets and wish to do more to preserve them.

Each communicate will begin with a context-setting intro and go on to focus on three key areas: a POINT OF VIEW on a topical issue, significant learnings related to our ongoing HERITAGE WATCH and some SHS NEWS (e.g. activities completed, in progress or upcoming).



POINT OF VIEW

The dilapidated former Nurses Quarters building

It has come to SHS' attention through our members that the building opposite the Sarawak General Hospital (SGH) has been vacant for some years and is falling apart. SHS believes that this property, which is historically significant and has architectural qualities, deserves to be preserved, sensitively restored and re-purposed (e.g. as short-term stay for rural visitors with relatives warded in SGH, B&B, specialist clinic, office space or even an art gallery). It would be such a waste to let the structure simply deteriorate beyond repair. SHS has learnt that part of the reason why the place has not been receiving much attention is because of a land ownership issue (Federal vs State?). In any case, we hope there will be a quick resolution to the situation before the said structure becomes unusable.

What do you think?

HERITAGE WATCH



Memorial Clock Tower, Padungan

In early November 2020, Dato Wee Hong Seng, MBKS Mayor and Councilors installed replicas of the four long-missing plaques at the WW2 Memorial Clock Tower on Jalan Padungan. SHS applauds this action to highlight the significance of this memorial (built in 1951) dedicated to those who lost their lives during the Japanese Occupation of Sarawak (1941-1945). The plaques are in four languages: Iban, Malay (in Jawi script), Chinese and English. Do pop by for a selfie at this heritage site if you are in the area.



Sekolah St Joseph's Mill Hill Block Restoration

Passersby will have observed progress in the renovation of the historic Mill Hill Block of Sekolah St Joseph, Kuching, as part of the sizeable renovation project for the school supported by a fund raising campaign and a government grant. The original 1894 building, which housed the La Salle Brothers and expanded in 1927 with the addition of two wings, was 'approved to be gazetted' in 2007 as a Sarawak heritage item under the Sarawak Cultural Heritage Ordinance 1993. The project began in Aug 2020 and is due for completion by mid-2021. SHS hopes that the restoration works will follow recognized heritage conservation practice.

Cultural Heritage Management & Sustainable Development

Global approaches to heritage conservation have evolved over the years and continue to be refined. One significant aspect is an increasing recognition of the importance of heritage management in the pursuance of the global sustainable development agenda. The 2015 UN Agenda for Sustainable Development is a universal plan of action to transform the world by 2030. There are 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and 169 targets articulated on the three pillars of sustainable development: economic, social and environmental. Target 11.4 is on world's cultural & natural heritage protection. Cultural-forward solutions are, obviously, drivers or enablers of sustainable development. This calls, in particular, for cultural heritage management to be properly integrated into Government's development planning processes.



A new UNESCO publication entitled *Competence Framework for Cultural Heritage Management: A Guide to the Essential Skills and Knowledge for Heritage Practitioners* builds on this approach. (Downloadable from the *Resources* page of SHS website).

SHS NEWS

SHS ExCo Update

Since taking office, the new Executive Committee has met twice and carried out a strategic planning exercise to begin charting out activities for 2021. Details shortly.

Hotel signage blocking the Round Tower

SHS has had discussions with the management of the Waterfront Hotel about moving their signage which currently blocks part of the historic Round Tower on Jalan Tun Abang Haji Openg. The management expressed their willingness to relocate their signage to where it will not block the heritage building and have submitted plans to the authorities. We will follow up on this issue and keep you posted. Incidentally we have heard that a new restaurant will be opening in the Round Tower.

SHS informal members gathering

Beginning Jan 2021, SHS will host informal gatherings for members at 630pm on the last Thursday of each month (SOP permitting). It will be a freeform, casual chat among heritage enthusiasts, lubricated by some refreshments. More on our website/FB pages.

Upcoming SHS Study Visits

In the next few months, SHS plans to organise study visits to (a) Rajah Charles Brooke Memorial Hospital (RCBMH) heritage site, and (b) St James' Church at Kampong Quop (opened in 1865), among the oldest surviving wooden (Anglican) churches in Sarawak. Dates and other details upcoming.

