

## CONTACT US

Email: [sarawakheritagesociety@gmail.com](mailto:sarawakheritagesociety@gmail.com)

Website: [www.sarawakheritagesociety.com](http://www.sarawakheritagesociety.com)

FB: Sarawak Heritage Society SHS

Whatsapp/sms: +6018 988 2343



# SPOTLIGHT

connecting with SHS members

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## Sarawak Heritage Society

### Exco (2020-2022)

James S L Yong  
(President)

Donna Yong  
(Vice President)

Datin Rosemarie Wong-Jabu  
(Hon. Treasurer)

Deborah Dris  
(Hon. Secretary)

### Committee Members

Ar William Khoo

Arif Arabi

Dr Atta Idrawani bin Zaini

Angelina Jong

Eden Bong

## Update on Sarawak's Gazetted Heritage Register

42 is the current number of cultural heritage buildings, monuments and sites gazetted by the Sarawak Government. Up until recently, the known gazetted cultural heritage comprised 18 items gazetted in 1971 and 1985 (the list includes the Satok Suspension bridge, which collapsed and has been reconstructed). Further to requests by our Society, the Sarawak Museum Department (SMD) - the authority in charge of the Sarawak Heritage Register - provided us, in early September, with the current list. We learnt that in September 2019 - i.e. shortly before the new Sarawak Heritage Ordinance was tabled at the State Legislative Assembly- the Heritage Register was topped up by the gazetting of 24 additional buildings, monuments and sites. This is good news. These items had been approved for gazetting in 2007 and appear so far to be the only ones gazetted under the Sarawak Cultural Heritage Ordinance 1993 (to our knowledge the Sarawak Heritage Ordinance 2019 is not yet in operation).

The additional list includes the Royal Charles Brooke Memorial Hospital and for the first time, non-government owned buildings such as the Anglican Bishop's Residence, the Tua Pek Kong temple (Kuching), St James Church (Quop) and the old Darul Maziah Malay house in Kuching. The Santubong archaeological sites are also now finally gazetted.

See on our [website](#) the full updated list of Sarawak gazetted heritage. The SMD has also an internal remaining list of 43 further items proposed to be gazetted.

Gazetted heritage properties are protected and are required to be conserved by their owners, with any dismantling, altering, defacing, etc. being subject to permits by the SMD.

## POINT OF VIEW

### Paradigm Shifts in Heritage Protection

The heritage protection movement is not a static one. Over the years, it has evolved and expanded to encompass different perspectives of and ways to manage heritage assets.

In the early years, global focus was predominantly on tangible heritage (such as buildings, monuments and objects) but this later went into intangible heritage (such as customs, traditions, arts, crafts etc), especially with the 2003 launch of UNESCO's "Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage".

With that, people started to look beyond just places and products, but also at processes. Another change emerged as a result of ponderings on how does one best protect one's heritage? The conventional ways of 'preserving or conserving' (which implied trying to restore the heritage asset as closely as possible to some 'original' state) was complemented by 'safeguarding' as it was clear that some heritage could be best protected only by accommodating the changing environment and usage patterns.

Yet another shift was from a solely object-oriented heritage management approach to a value-based management approach. The term 'heritage values' (typically comprising cultural, social, historical, architectural, scientific and spiritual values) is now widely used to gauge the heritage significance of a place, rather than just the state of the physical heritage objects.

Adopting these paradigm shifts will hopefully help us, here in Sarawak, to better appreciate the rich heritage we are blessed with and which need to be protected.

### Paradigm shifts in heritage protection

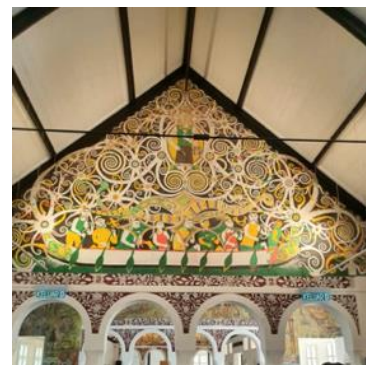


## HERITAGE WATCH

### 130<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Sarawak Museum building

On 4<sup>th</sup> August 2021, the Sarawak Museum building celebrated its 130<sup>th</sup> anniversary since its opening by the Second Rajah, Sir Charles Brooke in 1891. The first temporary museum was set up in 1886 at the Market on Gambier Road, before a proper building was erected at the present site. On this occasion, SHS sent the Sarawak Museum Department a brief congratulatory video. SHS Vice President Donna Yong attended a commemoration ceremony which allowed us a glimpse of the interior renovation of the 'Grand Old Dame'.

More recently it has been announced that the new Borneo Cultures Museum is now scheduled to open in the first quarter of 2022.



### Niah Caves now on Malaysia's 'Tentative List' of properties for UNESCO World Heritage nomination

A recent Jabatan Warisan Negara / UNESCO webinar on Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA) methodologies shed light on the fact that the Niah Caves National Park and Sarawak gazetted heritage site was formally added to Malaysia's 'Tentative List' for UNESCO World Heritage nominations in February 2021. The Tentative List gathers the properties that Malaysia intends to nominate for World Heritage listing in coming years. Malaysia has currently 6 properties on this list. Niah is the latest addition, under the title "*The Archaeological Heritage of Niah National Park's Cave Complex*". See [here](#) the submission document published on the UNESCO website.

### Heritage funding in 2022 Sarawak Government budget

Two budget lines involving heritage were mentioned when the Sarawak Government announced its budget for 2022 in early October: (i) RM 131 million for tourism development, promotion and cultural heritage, and (ii) RM 10 million for a (new) Heritage, Arts and Culture Facilitation Fund, the latter as "special assistance (to) assist heritage, arts and culture organisations and associations to organize activities and enhance the capacity of the organisations" (Borneo Post, 13/10/2021). We will try to get more specifics on these lines. It will be of interest to know if the Facilitation Fund is to be articulated with the Heritage Fund that the 2019 Sarawak Heritage Ordinance provides for. (To our knowledge, this ordinance is not in operation yet).

### Submission of The Marian restoration project for 2021 UNESCO Asia-Pacific Awards for Cultural Heritage Conservation

Congratulations to Datin Rosemarie Wong-Jabu and team at The Marian Boutique Lodging House for presenting a submission to the 2021 UNESCO Asia-Pacific awards for the restoration of the historic building. The property – a 1885 Chinese merchant mansion that became a church boarding lodging in 1933, is one of the few examples of privately-owned built heritage restoration initiative in Sarawak. We wish them the best of luck.



### Beccari Year

Kudos to the *Friends of Sarawak Museum* for their excellent series of talks to commemorate the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the death of the Italian botanist Odoardo Beccari (1843-1920). These talks came in addition to FoSM's Beccari Discovery Trail in Matang, being inaugurated in 2020. Beccari's visit to Sarawak yielded a fabulous documentation of Sarawak biodiversity. He is known particularly for his inventory of palms diversity in the Matang range.

## SHS NEWS



### TVS Interview with SHS ExCo member, Dr Atta Idrawani

On 23 Aug 2021, Dr Atta Idrawani bin Zaini represented SHS on TVS show "Sejahtera Asia" on the theme "Konservasi Warisan Sarawak Dalam Era Digital". He gave an overview of our Society, its focus and activities. The interview was conducted in Bahasa Malaysia.

### Conversation with Mike Boon

On 3 October 2021, ExCo members and members of the CBH Sub-committee had an informal conversation with Ar Mike Boon. Mike has been an ardent conservation architect and carried out several award-winning restoration projects as well as community engagement projects in Sarawak. He has been instrumental in the founding of the society and was past President (2008-2010).



### World Tourism Day 2021

SHS participated in the World Tourism Day 2021 function, represented by VP Donna and Treasurer Datin Rosemarie. The event, officiated by the Minister of Tourism, Arts and Culture, included discussions on Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), responsible tourism, preservation of Sarawak's natural and cultural heritage, and preparation for a post-pandemic tourism environment.

### Membership Boost

In the months of August and September, we had a membership increase of more than a dozen students from UNIMAS. Our current active membership is **104** with a further **17** pending renewal.

**Do consider joining the SHS sub-committees on Conservation of Built Heritage (CBH) or Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) to get more involved in projects and activities.**