

Ile de la Passe Heritage Project



REPORT ON THE 2008-09 CSR GRANT PROGRAM
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Ile de la Passe Heritage Project

National Heritage Fund

Director of the National Heritage Fund: Mrs Minakshi Thannoo

Project Leaders: Françoise and Geoffrey Summers

Project Co-ordinator: Dilshaad Balbolia



REPORT ON THE MCB 2008-09 CSR GRANT TO THE ILE DE LA PASSE HERITAGE PROJECT

The Ile de la Passe Heritage Project - National Heritage Fund

The Ile de la Passe Heritage Project, led by Geoffrey and Françoise Summers, operates under the auspices of the National Heritage Fund to secure an interest in Ile de la Passe and consolidate its status as a National Heritage Site.

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Researchers

The individuals listed below have been involved in different aspects of the research.

Architecture: Françoise Summers

Archaeology and Heritage: Geoffrey Summers

Heritage and History: Dilshaad Balbolia

History: Philippe La Hausse de la Louvière and Marina Carter

Archaeozoology and Palaeontology: Anwar Janoo and Owen Griffiths

Archaeology: Jayshree Mungur

Underwater Archaeology and Artifact Conservation: Yann von Arnim

Ecology: Pierre Baissac and Vincent Florens

Wildlife: Nick Cole, Ashok Khadun, Vikash Tatayah and Jean Claude Sevathian

Collaborating Organisations

The project seeks to strengthen collaboration with and between the following organisations and NGOs.

- National Heritage Fund
- Mauritian Wildlife Foundation
- Friends of Environment
- Société de l'Histoire de l'Ile Maurice
- The Mauritius Museums Council
- University of Mauritius and other Educational Institutions
- SOS Patrimoine
- Mauritius Marine Conservation Society.

Objectives

To ensure the preservation of Ile de la Passe for future generations of Mauritians by heightening public and international awareness through brochures, publications, tourist trails, information panels, public talks and exhibitions, in combination with a maintenance and enhancement program.

Background

Since 1989, research by members of the Société de l'Histoire has raised interest in Ile de la Passe. At the 1996 International Conference on the Fortifications of Mauritius it was proposed that Ile de la Passe be nominated as a *World Heritage Site*. In 2002 the NHF commissioned an architectural and archaeological study. With the backing of Earthwatch and local sponsors the project expanded to embrace several long-term aims and objectives which include:

- (i) Increasing public awareness of the importance of Ile de la Passe to Mauritian Heritage.
- (ii) Ensuring preservation of this asset for future generations of Mauritians
- (iii) Adding to the stock of assets and attractions in the Mahébourg Bay area with potential for economic development and increasing tourism.

As the project progresses there is increasing involvement of Mauritian students and volunteers.



Figure 1. Ile de la Passe and Ile aux Fouquets as seen on the horizon from the beach at Pointe d'Esny.

INTRODUCTION



Figure 2. Ile de la Passe, with its unique eighteenth and early nineteenth century remains, has to be preserved for future generations of Mauritians.

2010 marks the 200th anniversary of the *Battle of Grand Port*. The main purpose of the Ile de la Passe Heritage Project is to assist in every way possible the implementation of a National Heritage Fund program of preservation and restoration of the islet. Involvement of Mauritian students and volunteers in fieldwork, post-fieldwork and outreach activities contribute to the training of young Mauritians who will thus be better prepared to take on responsibilities for the preservation of Cultural Heritage. At the same time full cognisance of the fragile ecology has to be taken.

Ile de la Passe is under increasing and immediate threat as well as being subject to intense long term pressures. These dangers include:

1. Use of the islet and its standing remains by groups of Mauritians for recreation, including camping in buildings, cooking in and against buildings and general lack of regard for the remains (through ignorance). There are also low levels of vandalism.
2. Increasing tourism that is causing erosion of ramparts.
3. Break up of World War Two reinforced concrete which has reached the end of its expected life. The result is both dangerous to visitors and threatens to cause irreparable damage to three of the most important standing structures (the French Storehouse, the British Observation Tower and the World War Two underground Generator Halls).

For the islet to have a sustainable future the situation must be monitored, a management plan prepared, assets enhanced and public awareness increased.

MEASURABLES

Measurables listed in the proposal are discussed below.

- *The project's success can be measured by regular monitoring of the condition of the islet as well as by the levels of participation in activities connected with public outreach.*

Trips to clean the islet and control the vegetation growth were organised by the project team during the project duration. Subsequently it was proposed that the NHF should continue cleaning operations on a regular basis and it was approved by the Board that cleaning operations would be scheduled every 3 to 4 months.

- *A record of the number of visitors, especially groups of school children and university students, to the 2008 exhibition will be kept. A visitors book will provide an opportunity for feedback.*

Although it was not possible to record systematically the number of visitors, during the trips organised for cleaning operations and as site visits for students taking modules related to Heritage and Archaeology it was noted that ongoing boat activity brought a good number of visitors to Ile de la Passe before the groups are taken to the neighbouring Ile au Fouquet (also known as Ile au Phare) where the lighthouse shelters numerous barbecues.

- *The level of demand for organised talks and guided visits to the exhibition will provide one indication the degree to which public awareness has been heightened.*

The powerpoint presentation was prepared in 2009 by the project coordinator, Dilshaad Balbobia, and research assistants. The first talk was organised by Mr Lalande of the NHF and took place at the Emmanuel Anquetil School in Mahebourg on the 2nd February 2010. The talk, given by Françoise Summers, was attended by Form V students. It is hoped that Mr Lalande, is the NHF Education Officer will be able to arrange for more talks to be given during 2010.

- *The number of Mauritians visiting the islet because of its importance as a cultural heritage site will provide added impetus to the implementation of conservation measures.*

Ile de la Passe continues to be an exciting destination to Mauritians who enjoy the expedition, often with the purpose of fishing and barbecuing. It is however very clear that more stringent measures must be taken so as to avoid deterioration and damage to the standing structures. Ile de la Passe should remain accessible and visits facilitated but controlled. In this respect the NHF is following procedures for the building of a quay and in January the Board approved the proposed project. This has the full support of the Minister Bunwaree himself who has suggested that facilities for embarkation from Mahébourg must also be improved. Once the quay is completed the NHF will start implementing its restoration program for which a substantial budget has already been approved.

- *Participation of local stakeholders, especially boatmen and guides, in training and dissemination of information as well as in monitoring the condition of the islet will provide a further indication of the interest in potential generated by the project.*

Local boatmen have been given maps and copies of the Pocket Guide to Ile de la Passe and were able to sell some copies to visitors. They have also been encouraged, when the opportunity presented itself, to ensure that their party do not leave behind their rubbish.

- *Sales of the pocket guide, generating funds which should be injected back to the project, will be a good indicator of success.*

The book was launched by Minister Bunwaree during the opening of the Ile de la Passe exhibition at the **Blue Penny Museum** in February 2009 and copies were sold in the Museum bookshop. Initial sales of the Pocket Guide were managed by the Project team and the NHF. Since November 2009 CODIT has taken over distribution to major bookshops and touristic hotels in Mauritius. The sales figures for December were a very encouraging.

ACTIVITIES

Completion of activities initially scheduled to run from July 2008 to March 2009 was of necessity extended to late in 2009.

The Ile de la Passe exhibition at the Mahébourg National History Museum was inaugurated in August 2008 by the Minister of Arts and Culture, Mahendra Gowressoo. In February 2009, his successor Dr The Hon Vasant Kumar Bunwaree Minister of Education, Culture and Human opened the same exhibition this time housed at the Blue Penny Museum in Port Louis. The exhibition Ile de la Passe, Jewel of Mauritian Heritage / Joyau du Patrimoine Mauricien, is to be once more set up at Mahebourg as part of the program to commemorate the bicentenary of the Battle of Grand Port in 2010.

The opening at the **Blue Penny Museum** was also the occasion to launch the *Ile de la Passe Pocket Guide* written by Geoffrey and Françoise Summers. Formatted and printed by MSM Co. Ltd, the Pocket Guide is laminated and thus will not be damaged by rain or splashing water during the boat trip. The leaflet, Ile de la Passe, Jewel of Mauritian Heritage / Joyau du Patrimoine Mauricien, sponsored by the 2007-08 grant from the Mauritius Commercial Bank, was reprinted for distribution at the **Blue Penny Museum**. The map on the inside page of the brochure was also printed and laminated as an A3 format which could be taken on the boat without fear of damage if wet.

Cleaning, maintenance and monitoring of the islet takes place on a regular basis and trips to undertake cleaning and vegetation control are scheduled to take place every 3 or 4 months. In 2009 the trips were partly financed by the MCB budget but it must be noted that the NHF covers the cost of the scheduled trips. Mr Kaviraj Juleeman was responsible for two trips, the first in October 2009 and the second in February 2010.

The main panel placed near the landing place has not yet been updated but new panels will be installed once the jetty is completed and disembarkation of people and material facilitated.

There was no formal training of local boatmen and guides but when the opportunity arose, the project team passed on as much information as possible to boatmen and guides. Tourist trails and information panels have not yet been put in place but are included in the 2010 program.

Other Long Term Goals

The long term goals listed below did not form part of the 2008-09 proposal, but there is progress towards these goals.

Inscription on the UNESCO World Heritage List

The target date for inscription on the UNESCO World Heritage List was 2010, the 200th anniversary of the Battle of Grand Port which was fought in August 1810. This significant event in Mauritian and world history has the potential to raise international awareness of Mauritius and its unrivalled attractions as a tourist destination. The NHF has submitted the necessary documentation to the Ministry. Mrs Thannoo who was appointed as the Director of the NHF in August 2009 has confirmed that the matter would be followed up by the NHF.

Publication of an Illustrated Book on Ile de la Passe

Publication of a substantial semi-popular book, with corporate backing will need additional time and resources but there is sufficient material and information for its production.

August 2010 - 200th anniversary of the Battle of Grand Port

It was suggested that events connected with the 200th anniversary of the Battle of Grand Port could include the establishment of a Mahébourg Bay Heritage Trail (cultural and natural), a major exhibition on the battle in the National History Museum at Mahébourg, a brochure to accompany the exhibition, a new pocket guidebook for the Mahébourg Bay area, and extensive media coverage.



*Figure 3.
Restoration work
such as that carried
out previously at the
Upper Battery with
the help of masons
from the Aapravasi
Ghat Trust Fund
helps preserving the
monuments.*



Figure 4. Rubbish left in the Hot Shot Furnace.



Figure 5. Heat from the barbecues set up next to the walls damage the fossilized sand blocks.



Figure 6. Visit in January 2009 with students from the University of Mauritius and a team to clean the islet.



Figure 7. In August 2009, Honorable Minister Bunwaree visited the Mahebourg Fish Landing Station to discuss issues related to the construction of jetties.



Figure 8. The existing jetty at the Fish Landing Station in August 2009.



Figure 9. Visiting Ile de la Passe with students from the University of Mauritius and a team to clean the islet in January 2009.



Figure 10. The Blue Penny Museum at Le Caudan, Port Louis.



Figure 11. Dr Anwar Janoo setting up the bones and shell display at the Blue Penny Museum.



Figure 12. Refreshments served after the opening.



Fig 13. Opening of the Ile de la Passe exhibition by the Honorable Minister Bunwaree at the Blue Penny Museum in February 2009. The Ile de la Passe Pocket Guide was launched on the same occasion by the Honourable Minister.



Figure 14. The Ile de la Passe artefacts are housed at the National History Museum in Mahebourg where a small permanent display has been set up on the first floor.



Figure 15. The display on Ile de la Passe at the Mahebourg National History Museum was set up in August 2009.



Figure 16. Geoffrey Summers explaining to students from the University of Mauritius the importance of archaeological finds from Ile de la Passe.



Figure 17. Students helped preparing artefacts from Ile de la Passe for display at the Mahébourg National History Museum.



Figure 18. In February 2010 the NHF organised a trip to Ile de la Passe with the team of ladies from a small cleaning company based in Plaine Magnien. A gardener with his grass cutting machine accompanied the team. Regular cleaning operations help to keep the vegetation under control. It must be noted that advice is sought from the Mauritian Wildlife Foundation regarding some of the vegetation which should not be cut down as it provides refuge for some of the reptiles that have been reintroduced on the islet by Dr Nik Cole and his team. The Coast Guard once more helped removing the sacs of rubbish collected.



Figur 19. Illustrated talk to Form V students at the Emmanuel Anquetil School in Mahébourg in February 2010.

BENEFICIARIES

Beneficiaries include:

- Local organisations and institutions (MWF, Museums etc).
- Schools and educational institutions benefiting from the program of public outreach.
- Local licensed boatmen and guides benefiting from an increased visitor numbers, both Mauritian and international.
- Tourist hotels and tour companies by the provision of a heritage focal point in the Mahébourg Bay.
- Small-scale employment of workmen for maintenance. A very good example is the small cleaning company based in Plaine Magnien employing a staff of ladies under the leadership of a very dynamic and enterprising director, Stephanie.

Monitoring and maintenance activities ensure that any negative impact is stopped before damage becomes irreversible. Beneficiaries become aware of the importance of protecting resources as they come to appreciate these assets as being theirs in their own right for their own posterity while also having potential as sources of tourist revenues.

Boatmen, guides, hotels and travel agents have assisted with the distribution of the brochure and in 2009 with the sales of the Pocket Guide.

Groups from schools and other educational institutions are being encouraged to visit the Museum of Mahébourg where a small permanent exhibition is now in place. In this respect it was very sad to hear of the loss of the Acting Director Sunil Nossib, whose enthusiasm and dynamism contributed very significantly to the progress and development of the project.

The benefits and impacts of the Ile de la Passe Heritage Project to society at large is first of all the preservation of the rich Cultural Heritage on Ile de la Passe for future generations of Mauritians who will be able to appreciate their heritage and environment. It is also contributing significantly to the stock of assets and attractions in southern Mauritius. Local communities can hope to enjoy recreation on a clean and safe islet.



Figure 19. Ile de la Passe left clean.

FUTURE PERSPECTIVES

The participation of Mauritian volunteers has always been welcome. MCB employees and others could participate during the fieldwork campaigns, as well as in cleaning and maintenance visits. MCB employees with IT skills or interests in education could participate in a range of outreach activities that include web page design and the creation of information packs for schools.

It is anticipated that the Ile de la Passe Heritage Project will continue to bring together different organisations each with their particular fields of expertise, such as administration and management, ecology or history. This would make significant contributions towards the sustainable long-term management of the Cultural Heritage at Ile de la Passe and ensure that it fills its rightful place within the rich and unique Natural and Cultural Heritage Landscape of the Mahébourg Bay.

Ile de la Passe project will make an excellent model for the preservation and management of other Heritage sites in Mauritius. Activities that increase public awareness can be a model for similar programs of monitoring and public outreach. In particular, it is to be hoped that the Ile de la Passe model can be adapted and expanded to include other cultural and natural assets within the Mahébourg Bay area.

PANEL 2



PANEL 3

FIRST DEFENCES

Cossigny's construction began in 1756. It was to take 3 months but actually took 3 years. Works included the Lower Battery, called Batterie de Belle Isle, the North West Battery protecting the Landing Place, the Powder House, Store and Guard House, Barracks, Cook House, and Cistern. A flag mast stood on the peak. The battery overlooks and commands the pass. Cannons, mounted on two-wheeled carriages, stood on a wooden decking behind each played embrasure. Ile de la Passe has been likened to a ship. Except for building blocks from fossilised sand dunes, everything, all other building materials, manpower, weaponry, tools, food and drink, had to be supplied from the mainland.

PREMIERES FORTIFICATIONS

La construction des défenses conçues par Cossigny débute en 1756. Ce travail qui devait prendre 3 mois va durer 3 ans. Parmi les constructions, on retrouve la Batterie de Belle Isle, la Poudrière, la Batterie Nord-Ouest protégeant le débarcadère, le Magasin et le Corps de Garde, les Logements, la Cuisine et la Citerne. Un mât de pavillon était érigé au sommet de l'îlot. La batterie commande la passe. Derrière chaque embrasure, un canon monté sur affût à deux grandes roues était installé sur une plateforme en bois. L'île de la Passe a été comparée à un bateau. Mis à part les blocs provenant des dunes de sable fossilisées, tout provenait de la terre ferme, autres matériaux de construction, la main d'œuvre, les armes, les outils et les vivres.

A block used in the construction of the Lower Battery.
Un rempartement en blocs utilisés à la Batterie de Belle-Isle.

Archaeological excavation revealed the battery's embrasure.
Des fouilles archéologiques ont révélé la base d'une embrasure existante sur la batterie.

North West Battery and Store House.
Batterie Nord-Ouest et Magasin.

Embrasure of the North West Battery with cannon on the base embankment and also completely visible.
Une embrasure de la Batterie Nord-Ouest sur son socle, le canon et son affût sont complètement visibles.

The Cistern could hold 11,000 gallons of rain water collected from the steep roof of the adjacent Barracks, built in 1818. These structures and the Cook House, at right, were raised during the Second World War.
La Citerne pouvait contenir jusqu'à 11,000 gallons d'eau de pluie provenant du toit en bois des bâtiments adjacents à gauche. Ces structures, ainsi que la Cuisine, à droite, ont été construites pendant la Seconde Guerre mondiale.

Reconstruction of the fortifications on Ile de la Passe.
Reconstitution des fortifications sur l'île de la Passe.

Architectural study of the fortifications.
Étude architecturale des fortifications.

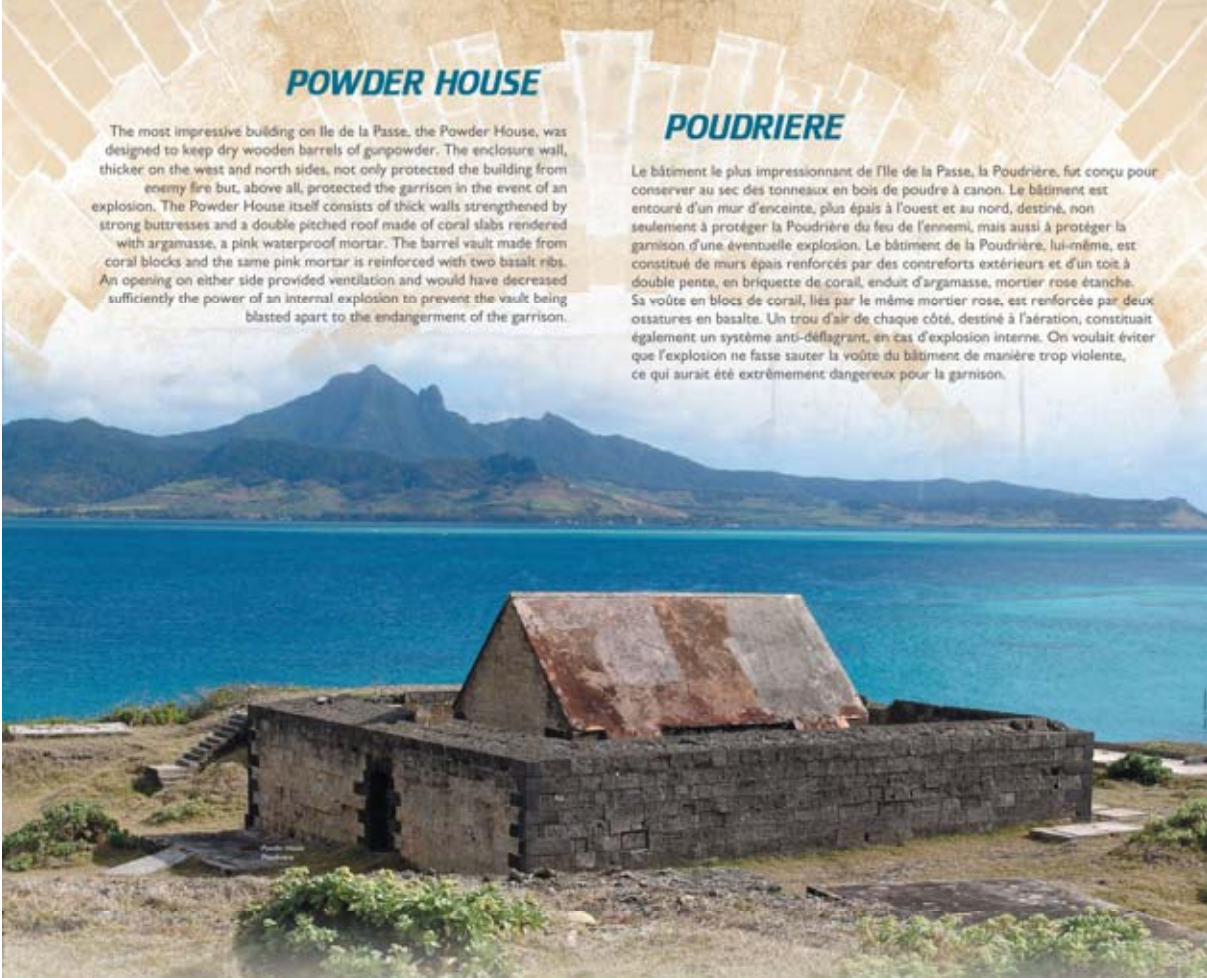
PANEL 4

POWDER HOUSE

The most impressive building on Ile de la Passe, the Powder House, was designed to keep dry wooden barrels of gunpowder. The enclosure wall, thicker on the west and north sides, not only protected the building from enemy fire but, above all, protected the garrison in the event of an explosion. The Powder House itself consists of thick walls strengthened by strong buttresses and a double pitched roof made of coral slabs rendered with argamasse, a pink waterproof mortar. The barrel vault made from coral blocks and the same pink mortar is reinforced with two basalt ribs. An opening on either side provided ventilation and would have decreased sufficiently the power of an internal explosion to prevent the vault being blasted apart to the endangerment of the garrison.


POUDRIERE

Le bâtiment le plus impressionnant de l'île de la Passe, la Poudrière, fut conçu pour conserver au sec des tonneaux en bois de poudre à canon. Le bâtiment est entouré d'un mur d'enceinte, plus épais à l'ouest et au nord, destiné non seulement à protéger la Poudrière du feu de l'ennemi, mais aussi à protéger la garnison d'une éventuelle explosion. Le bâtiment de la Poudrière, lui-même, est constitué de murs épais renforcés par des contreforts extérieurs et d'un toit à double pente, en brique de corail, enduit d'argamasse, mortier rose étanche. Sa voûte en blocs de corail, liés par le même mortier rose, est renforcée par deux ossatures en basalte. Un trou d'air de chaque côté, destiné à l'aération, constituait également un système anti-déflagrant, en cas d'explosion interne. On voulait éviter que l'explosion ne fasse sauter la voûte du bâtiment de manière trop violente, ce qui aurait été extrêmement dangereux pour la garnison.





Entrance to the Powder House
Entrée de la Poudrière




East of the Powder House
à l'est de la Poudrière



Barrel vault interior
Intérieur de la Poudrière




Mortar on exterior wall
Mortier d'argamasse extérieure



Architectural drawing
Dessin d'architecture



Roofed photos of the building
Photos de la Poudrière



Ventilation holes for the building
Trous d'aération pour la Poudrière



Access to the building
Accès à la Poudrière

PANEL 5



Remains of the Upper Battery
Château de la Batterie Supérieure

A NEW SCHEME OF DEFENCE / UN NOUVEAU SYSTEME DE DEFENSE

In 1805 defences on Ile de la Passe were completely redesigned by Napoleon's emissary General Decaen, the last French Governor. The old Lower Battery was largely demolished and replaced by the elevated Upper Battery which afforded better views and was harder to attack from ships. Cannons no longer poked through embrasures in the parapet but, mounted on Gribeauval traversing platforms, represented the best and latest in military technology. The Hot Shot Furnace was constructed to heat cannon balls to red hot so that they could set fire to ships. There were now three masts for signalling by flags on the platform behind the battery. The new scheme was ambitious and expensive, requiring much labour to hew stone and construct ramparts. This new battery was designed for 12 guns firing over basalt emplacements in the parapet. The twin niches could accommodate the corners of the traversing platforms as they rotated.

En 1805, Général Decaen, émissaire de Napoléon et dernier gouverneur français, conçoit un nouveau projet pour améliorer les fortifications sur l'île de la Passe. La Batterie inférieure est en grande partie démolie et remplacée par une Batterie Supérieure qui, surélevée, offre une meilleure vue et rend son attaque plus difficile. Les canons ne pointent plus à travers les embrasures dans le mur d'enceinte, mais montés sur des plateformes Gribeauval, ils représentent la toute dernière technologie militaire. Le Four à Boulet Rouge est construit pour chauffer les boulets de canons qui doivent incendier les bateaux. Désormais, trois mâts de signalisation se dressent sur la plateforme à l'arrière de la batterie. Le nouveau projet, ambitieux et coûteux, nécessite une main d'œuvre considérable pour travailler la pierre et construire les remparts. Cette nouvelle batterie est conçue pour 12 canons pointant par-dessus le parapet et ses emplacements en basalte, les niches jumelées permettant une rotation plus importante.



Upper Battery emplacement with two niches and 300-lb gun wheels
Emplacement de la Batterie Supérieure avec niches jumelées et deux des roues de boulets superposés à terre.



Hot shot furnace in basalt block on a Gribeauval traversing platform
Four de la poudre dans un bloc de basalte, sur plateforme Gribeauval.



Cannon with Gribeauval traversing platform of earlier type in front installed on the Upper Battery.
Canon avec plateforme Gribeauval de modèle type qui avait été installé initialement sur la Batterie Supérieure.



Emplacement complet with basalt gun wheels
Emplacement de la Batterie Supérieure



Viewing the Upper Battery
Vues depuis la Batterie Supérieure



The Hot Shot Furnace, a single wheel from the Gribeauval era.
Le Four à Boulet Rouge, roue unique de la période Gribeauval.



Les boulets de canon étaient réchauffés dans le four par l'expansion arrière de la poudre granuleuse, recollés sur des rails, chauffés en traitement passifs de celui vers les deux extrémités, pour être ensuite réchauffés sur des supports en basalte. Les boulets réchauffés étaient ensuite à l'abri de la pluie et pointés sur une carrière à leur point d'exportation jusqu'à la Batterie Supérieure. Les boulets chauffés pendant 30 minutes jusqu'à ce qu'ils deviennent rouge vif. Le charbon était à la Batterie.








LEFT SIDE / FAÇADE GAUCHE
FRONT / AVANT
RIGHT SIDE / FAÇADE DROITE
BACK / ARRIERE

Photo by the author, Paris, 2014


PANEL 6


SENTRY POSTS, DITCHES AND QUARRIES

Two sentry posts, belonging to the final phase of French building, are strategically located. One at the north west corner guards the pass and landing place while the other, on the eastern edge of the islet, overlooks the stretch of reefs and lagoon extending to Ile aux Yacoas and Ile aux Fouquets. On the northeast side of the islet, a deep defensive ditch with inclined sides and a trench at the base served as quarry for the Upper Battery. It appears that this ditch, which was reused during the Second World War, was not completed. A smaller ditch on the west side became a rubbish dump. Excavation of two small trenches yielded a fascinating assemblage of animal bones and marine shell, most probably refuse from the kitchen, and waste material from bone and metal working. Other quarries were identified, the largest being along the sheltered eastern edge where waves are usually more gentle. At the foot of the northern end wall of the Upper Battery, the excavation of a quarry filled with refuse from the French period, shows the method of stone-cutting.


GUERITE, FOSES ET CARRIERES

Deux guérites, datant de la dernière phase de construction française, sont placées de manière stratégique. L'une, située au coin nord-ouest, garde la passe et le débarcadère, tandis que l'autre, sur le côté Est de l'îlot, surplombe l'étendue des récifs et du lagon qui se déploie jusqu'à l'île aux Yacoas et l'île aux Fouquets. Au nord est de l'îlot un profond fossé défensif aux côtés inclinés, avec à la base une tranchée, sert aussi de carrière pour la Batterie Supérieure. Il semblerait que ce fossé, qui avait été réutilisé pendant la Seconde Guerre Mondiale, n'ait pas été terminé. Un fossé plus petit sur le côté ouest s'est révélé être un dépôt d'ordures. Les fouilles de deux petites tranchées ont fourni un assortiment intéressant d'ossements d'animaux et de coquillages marins, très probablement des débris de la cuisine ainsi que des rebus d'os et de métal travaillés sur place. D'autres carrières ont été identifiées, la plus grande le long du côté est de l'îlot. Au pied du mur nord de la Batterie Supérieure, les fouilles d'une autre carrière remplie de débris datant de la période française donne une idée des techniques de taille de pierre.







The Ditch was also a stone quarry.
Le Fossé servait aussi de carrière.




A search in the Ditch showed that it was unfinished.
Une tranchée dans le Fossé découverte, n'était ni plus ni moins terminée.



Stone quarry along the east edge of the islet.
Carrière de pierre au levant de l'îlot.




Quarry at the foot of the Upper Battery wall.
Carrière au pied du mur nord de la Batterie Supérieure.



Quarry filled with debris from the French period.
Carrière remplie de débris de la période française.

PANEL 9



Ile de la Passe et son Fort de la Passe
Ile de la Passe et de la Passe

SECOND WORLD WAR SECONDE GUERRE MONDIALE

What better description than that written in May 2005 by Staff Sergeant Claude Michel who was himself posted on Ile de la Passe.

Quelle meilleure description que celle écrite en mai 2005 par le sergent-chef Claude Michel qui, lui-même, fut posté à l'île de la Passe durant la Seconde Guerre Mondiale.

According to my military record booklet, I was posted on Ile de la Passe on 8 December 1942. I was released on 14 November 1945. But in certain formalities were necessary to resume civil status I presume that I left the island a few days before.

D'après mon livret militaire j'ai été posté à l'île de la Passe le 8 décembre 1942. J'ai été libéré le 14 novembre 1945. Mais comme certaines formalités étaient requises pour redevenir civil je présume que j'ai dû quitter l'île quelques jours auparavant.

I do not remember the number of soldiers but I can make an approximate calculation. There were three officers, one sergeant-major, two staff sergeants and five sergeants. As for the troops, there were, I think, two men for each searchlight, six for the generator rooms and eight for each canon (one to aim, one to open and close the breech, one to load the shell and the others to transport the ammunition from the stock to each of the cannons). In addition there were two or three sentries, cooks, clerks, three men I think for the machine gun and two for the two small mobile searchlights run by two small petrol generators. Couching a small percentage of replacements I think that the total was about fifty.

The building in which I was sleeping was the sergeants' mess. I was staff sergeant in charge of the searchlights. The building had a strong timber frame, timber shutters, the walls and partitions in revenue (from the Travellers Palm) and the roof was made of fibrocement sheets. It had a dormitory, one or two individual rooms; one of which I occupied, a dining room and a veranda. I do not remember if there was also a kitchen because the sergeants' mess, as far as I remember, were not the same as those of the men.

The officers' mess was the same and there were three(?) dormitories for the troops. Additionally there was at least one more building serving as refectory and common room for the men. All the buildings were built with the same materials. I do not remember the arrangements for the kitchen. The toilets overlooked the sea. There were solid buildings the generator hall, the headquarters and 4(?) emplacements for the searchlights.


Water was brought from Mahébourg in tin containers that had been used for petrol. (Petrol pumps did not exist at that time and petrol was commonly imparted in such containers). The troops had to transport the containers from the jetty to the foot of a relatively high wall. From there a hand pump transferred water to a reservoir on top of the wall which fed the taps. The pumping of the water was a tough duty!

Je ne me souviens pas du nombre de soldats mais j'ai essayé un calcul approximatif. Il y avait trois officiers, un sergent-major, deux sergents-chefs et 5 sergents. Quant à la troupe il y avait, je crois, deux hommes par projecteur, six dans la salle des machines, huit pour chaque canon (un pour viser, un pour ouvrir et fermer la culasse, un pour introduire la cartouche et les autres pour transporter les munitions du stock à chacun des deux canons). En sus, deux ou trois sergentes, cuisiniers, ordonnances, trois hommes, je crois, pour la mitrailleuse et deux pour deux petits projecteurs mobiles alimentés par deux petits moteurs à essence.


Le mess des officiers était pareil et il y avait trois(?) dortoirs, je crois, pour la troupe. De plus il y avait au moins un autre bâtiment servant de réfectoire et de salle de distractions pour les hommes. Tous ces bâtiments étaient construits avec les mêmes matériaux. Je ne me souviens pas des arrangements pour la cuisine. Les toilettes surplombaient la mer. Il y avait des bâtiments en dur: la salle des machines, le poste de commandement, et 4(?) emplacements pour les projecteurs.

L'eau était apportée de Mahébourg dans des récipients en fer-blanc ayant contenu de l'essence. (Les pompes n'existaient pas à l'époque et l'essence était communément reçue dans de tels récipients). La troupe devait transporter les récipients de la jetée jusqu'à un réservoir situé au pied d'un mur relativement haut. De là une pompe à main transférait l'eau jusqu'à un réservoir au sommet du mur qui alimentait les robinets. Le pompage de cette eau était une tâche corvée!


Claude MICHEL




Observation tower modified during the Second World War.
Tour d'Observation modifiée pendant la Seconde Guerre Mondiale.




Aerial view of Ile de la Passe.
Vue aérienne de l'île de la Passe.




View of the searchlight on Ile de la Passe.
Vue de la tour de l'Observation.




Stone walls with searchlight emplacements.
Murs de pierre avec des emplacements de projecteurs.




Soldiers on Ile de la Passe during the Second World War.
Soldats sur l'île de la Passe pendant la Seconde Guerre Mondiale.




Searchlight on Ile de la Passe.
Projecteur de la Seconde Guerre Mondiale.



Searchlight on Ile de la Passe.
Projecteur de la Seconde Guerre Mondiale.










Searchlight on Ile de la Passe.
Projecteur de la Seconde Guerre Mondiale.



Searchlight on Ile de la Passe.
Projecteur de la Seconde Guerre Mondiale.

PANEL 10

HERITAGE
HERITAGE

The uniqueness of Ile de la passe

The French defences on Ile de la Passe are unique. Similar sites in Europe and North America were altered, adapted or replaced in later conflicts, giving global importance to the heritage that exists today on Ile de la Passe. These remnants of European colonial exploitation and conflict in another hemisphere are physical reflections of the making of the modern world. In ways both similar and different, World War Two remains reflect an imperial policy of incorporating far flung outposts of empire into what was essentially a European war.

Bones, Stones and Battles

Graphic accounts were written of the dramatic events in 1810 and the brutality of war in Napoleonic times. The ruins on Ile de la Passe tell of the strategic importance of Ile de France before 1815 and the warning of that importance after Napoleon's defeat. Developments in military technology and design are evident. Buildings and ramparts remind us of the slaves and artisans who made them, and of the grim lives of the garrison which must have felt exiled on the islet. Archaeology has revealed evidence of a poor diet that included sea birds, fish and molluscs as well as imported salt meat.

Evocative Identities

Carefully cut graffiti by British troops in the later 19th century and by Mauritian soldiers in the 1940s are evocative of identities and senses of place.

Ile de la Passe in the 21st Century

Ile de la Passe bears testimony to the history of Mauritius and Mauritians. The islet is idyllic, its history both grim and heroic, it plays a role in how the Mauritian Nation came to be what it is, and in shaping its future. Witness to a turning point in the history of Mauritius, Ile de la Passe is one of the most precious jewels in our National Heritage sites. It is our duty to ensure that it will be passed on to our children's children.

Ile de la Passe, site unique

Les défenses françaises sur l'île de la Passe sont uniques. Des sites similaires en Europe et en Amérique du Nord ont été adaptés, changés ou remplacés durant des combats successifs, ce qui dote le patrimoine de l'île de la Passe d'une importance globale. Ces vestiges d'exploitation et de conflit colonial européen dans l'hémisphère sud constituent des témoignages physiques forts de la création du monde moderne par les pouvoirs européens. De manière à la fois similaire et différente, les ruines de la Seconde Guerre Mondiale reflètent une politique impériale qui visait à inclure des postes éloignés de l'empire dans un conflit essentiellement européen.

Ossements, pierres et batailles

On a rédigé des rapports détaillés des événements dramatiques de 1810 sur la brutalité de la guerre pendant la période napoléonienne, de courage et de défaite. Les ruines sur l'île de la Passe nous content l'importance stratégique de l'île de France avant 1815; importance qui diminua une fois Napoléon vaincu. Des développements dans la technologie militaire sont apparents. Parapets, fossés et bâtiments nous rappellent esclaves et artisans qui ont érigé ces édifices et de la vie morne de la garnison qui a dû se sentir exilée sur l'îlot. L'archéologie révèle un régime alimentaire pauvre qui inclut des oiseaux de mer, des poissons, des mollusques et de la viande salée.

Identités évocatrices

Les graffiti, gravés par les troupes britanniques à la fin du 19e siècle et par les soldats mauriciens dans les années 1940, sur le mur des bâtiments abandonnés, sont évocateurs d'identités et de certaines perceptions de l'espace.

L'île de la Passe au 21e siècle

L'île de la Passe reste témoin de l'histoire de Maurice et des Mauriciens. L'îlot est idyllique, son histoire à la fois terne et héroïque. L'île de la Passe joue un rôle déterminant dans le façonnement de l'île Maurice à ce jour et dans son développement à venir. Elle est témoin d'un tournant décisif dans l'histoire de Maurice. L'île de la Passe reste l'un des plus précieux joyaux de notre patrimoine. Il est de notre devoir de tout faire pour léguer ce site unique aux générations à venir.

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University of Mauritius
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Mauritius Wildlife Fund
National Coast Guard

TIMELINE


1989
Nascent du Ministère de l'île Maurice
Start of initial research on the history and remains of the site.
Début des premières recherches sur l'histoire et les ruines du site.

2002
National Heritage Fund
Systematic recording of standing structures and archaeological excavation.
Des fouilles archéologiques, ainsi qu'un relevé systématique des structures existantes et des ruines visibles.


THE ILE DE LA PASSE PROJECT

National Heritage Fund

Sponsors

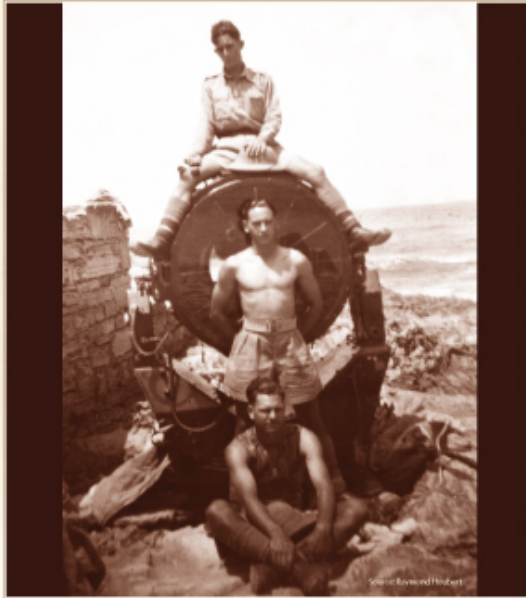


Help In kind



APPENDIX II

Photos of Soldiers on Ile de la Passe during WWII



Mauritian soldiers on Ile de la Passe during the Second World War.
Soldats Mauriciens sur l'île de la Passe pendant la Seconde Guerre Mondiale.



Mauritian soldiers on Ile de la Passe during the Second World War.
Soldats Mauriciens sur l'île de la Passe pendant la Seconde Guerre Mondiale.



Mauritian soldiers on Ile de la Passe during the Second World War.
Soldats Mauriciens sur l'île de la Passe pendant la Seconde Guerre Mondiale.

*Can you help us?
We are searching for
any letters,
photographs,
memoirs or other
accounts of troops
who were posted
on Ile de la Passe in
World War Two.*



Source: Raymond Hoobert

Mauritian soldiers on Ile de la Passe during the Second World War.
Soldats Mauriciens sur l'Île de la Passe pendant la Seconde Guerre Mondiale.



Source: Raymond Hoobert

Mauritian soldiers on Ile de la Passe during the Second World War.
Soldats Mauriciens sur l'Île de la Passe pendant la Seconde Guerre Mondiale.

APPENDIX III

The Ile de la Passe Table Mat

Controlling the pass through the east end Canal Port Bay de la Passe, like a ship, has to be controlled from the mainland.

In the second half of the 18th and the early 19th centuries, it is la Passe is heavily fortified by the French. The metropolitan government in 1801 had it dismantled by the great and expensive to construct and maintain parts of the fortifications during the period of global conflict between Britain and France. Charles's plans, implemented in 1774, comprise the Batterie de Belle Ile, the North West Battery, a Powder House, a Cannon Battery, and a Cannon House. A Stone House is also located adjacent to the main fortifications. The fortifications were destroyed in 1801, and the island was left to the British. The fortifications were destroyed in 1801, and the island was left to the British. The fortifications were destroyed in 1801, and the island was left to the British.

JEWEL OF MAURITIAN HERITAGE / JOUYAU DU PATRIMOINE MAURIC

Ile de la Passe
Key to the Indian Ocean / Clé de l'Océan Indien

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Project Location: Ile de la Passe, Mauritius
Coordinators: [Names]

Research / Recherche: [Names]
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Design and Illustration: [Names]

ENJOY YOUR VISIT TO THE ISLET / PROFITÉZ DE VOTRE VISITE SUR L'ÎLOT

THE ILE DE LA PASSE PROJECT NATIONAL HERITAGE FUND MAURITIUS

Sponsors: EARTHWARD, MCB, GAZ, XEROX.

ILE DE LA PASSE MAURITIUS

STRUCTURES

- 1 Powder House
- 2 Stonehouse
- 3 West End Platform
- 4 Cannon
- 5 Barrack
- 6 Cook House
- 7 Cannon Wall
- 8 North West Battery Wall
- 9 East Sentry Post
- 10 Observation Tower
- 11 Canal Building
- 12 Stonehenge Building
- 13 Cannon Platform
- 14 Building Platform
- 15 Cannon
- 16 Cannon
- 17 Building Platform
- 18 Building Platform
- 19 Building Platform
- 20 Building Platform
- 21 Building Platform
- 22 Building Platform
- 23 Building Platform
- 24 Building Platform
- 25 Building Platform
- 26 Building Platform
- 27 Building Platform
- 28 Barrack Platform
- 29 Building Platform
- 30 Stone
- 31 Stone
- 32 Building Platform
- 33 Wall
- 34 Lower Battery
- 35 Upper Battery
- 36 Ditch
- 37 Walled Cannon Platform

Initial Construction Period

- Early French
- Late French
- British
- Mauritius

Timeline:

- 1598: The first settlement
- 1638: Construction of the fortifications
- 1710: Arrival of the French
- 1715: Construction of the fortifications
- 1759: The end of the French presence
- 1805: The end of the French presence
- 1810: British occupation
- 1838: The end of the French presence
- 1840s - 1860s: The end of the French presence
- 1938-41: The end of the French presence
- 1952: The end of the French presence
- 2018: The end of the French presence