

My City My Heritage MY SHILLONG



My City My Heritage

MY SHILLONG

Initiated by Sahapedia in partnership with the InterGlobe Foundation, the 'My City, My Heritage' project is focused on rediscovering the culture and heritage potential of Indian cities. The project entails exploration, documentation and dissemination of varied heritage and cultural aspects of 10 locations in India, including through the publication of these booklets. As a part of the project, a number of heritage walks, museum tours, baithaks and engaging educational activities for school students and general audiences were organised between 2020 and 2022. The locations covered in the first year were Ahmedabad, Indore, Prayagraj, Goa and Shillong and the locations covered in the second year were Bhubaneswar, Chandigarh, Hyderabad, Kolkata and Nashik.

This booklet documents a mix of well-known as well as offbeat subjects from among Shillong's cultural heritage. We hope you enjoy the articles, self-guided walks, museum listings and listicles within and that they enrich your experience of this remarkable city.

More about the project

The My City, My Heritage project caters to a wide user group, including but not limited to children with disabilities and from financially and socially marginalised backgrounds, culture enthusiasts, scholars, heritage professionals and tourists. The project aims at creating opportunities, building interest and capacity of young local scholars through collaborative research, documentation and mapping. An equally important and compelling goal is to create fresh avenues for residents, local administration and local businesses to re-engage with their cities' living cultural heritage and renew old as well as create new relationships of participation, community and ownership within these places. This booklet is a small step in that direction.

More detailed versions of all pieces covered in this editorial and more information about each city can be found on our website. This specially crafted cultural mapping portal features an interactive map, through which you can explore many other locations and themes documented by Sahapedia over the years. Scan this QR code to visit our portal and get access to our entire encyclopaedia.



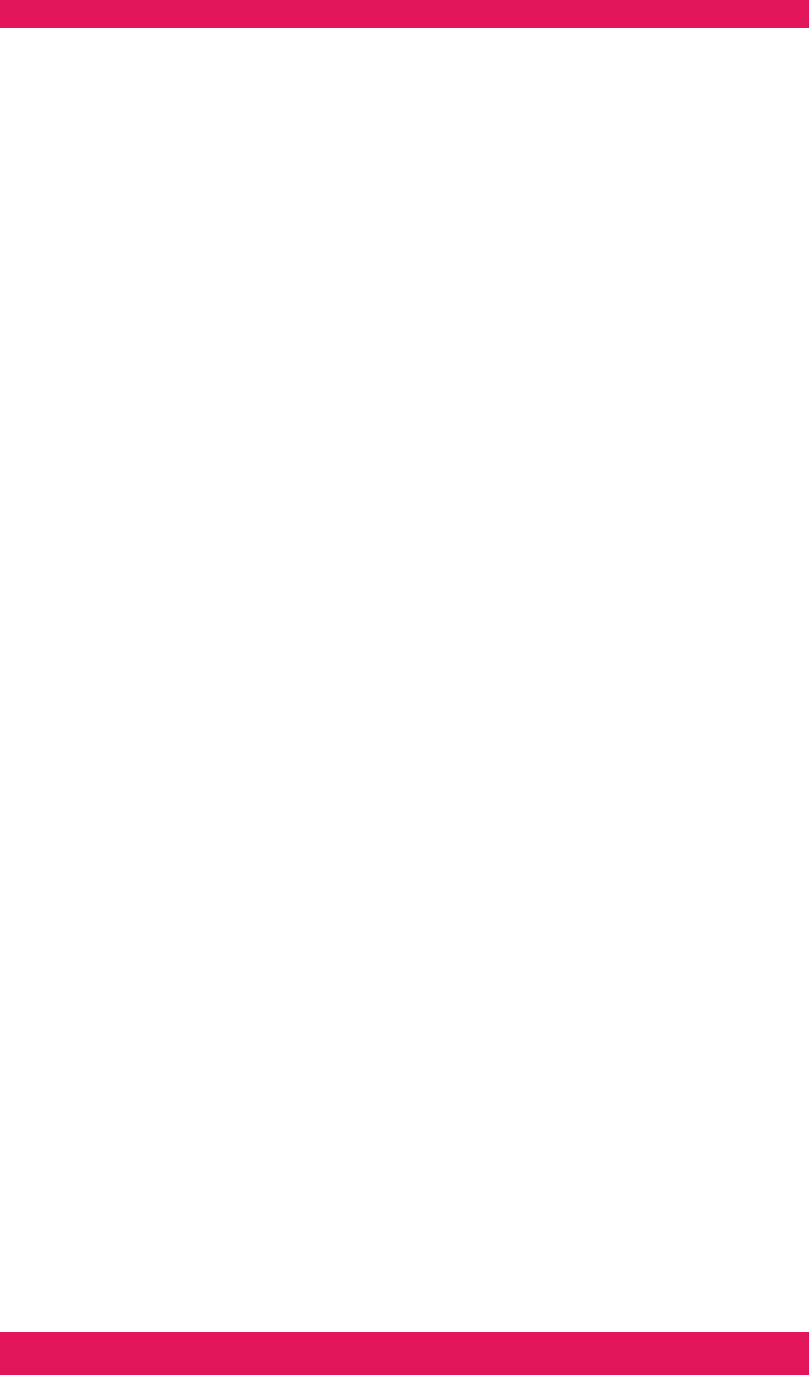
**My City
My Heritage**
MY SHILLONG

Project Head and
Co-Editor
Abhinav Gupta

Project Coordinator
and Editor
Aditi Rakhe

Designers
Kritika Kaul
Alpana Khare

Contributors
Sashi Teibor
Andrew Mawein
Nayantara Singh
Ashi Datta
Rituparna Pal
Dharna Mudgal



FOREWORD

It is with great pleasure that we present to you this compendium of booklets showcasing some of the lesser known and lost treasures of select cities in our country. InterGlobe Foundation is committed to protecting and restoring the heritage and culture of India. We started this journey about seven years back by supporting the restoration and upkeep of the famous Khan-i-Khanan or Rahim's tomb in New Delhi. Since then, we have taken on a few more large and small restoration projects, which, while directly reviving these monuments, also contribute to the lives of craftspeople and neighbouring communities. Another project we have supported is the documentation and dissemination of a lost dance form. 'My City, My Heritage' is the first large project that we have launched to promote the intangible heritage of our country. We are fortunate to have found an able partner in Sahapedia. As part of My City, My Heritage, we endeavour to curate content and activities around both tangible (like museums) and intangible cultural heritage (like food, music, people, dances, fairs and festivals).

We also hope that in each of the project cities, a group of concerned citizens, institutions and government will come together to carry forward this beautiful curation of their city's history.

The recent disruption of our lives by the COVID pandemic has further brought to light the importance of the outdoors and local economies. This project will ably contribute to both.

We hope these booklets will entice you to discover these cities and their treasures and share it with others. We welcome more organizations, individuals and researchers to build on the repository created here. I am grateful to Sahapedia and my colleagues at the InterGlobe group of companies for making this project a reality.

With best wishes,

Rohini Bhatia
Chairperson, InterGlobe Foundation

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To access Sahapedia's cultural mapping portal, visit map.sahapedia.org/home/

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U Lum
Sohpetbneng

Ka Shad Suk
Mynsiem

Mot Phran
Iew Duh

All Saints'
Church

Shillong Teer Association
(The Teer Lottery System)

Ever Living
Museum

Mylliem
Village

Ing Sad

Mawphlang
Sacred Grove



SHILLONG

Perched atop a plateau at 1,496 metres in the north-eastern state of Meghalaya, the capital city of Shillong is widely recognised for its cool, wet climate and high annual rainfall.

The earliest inhabitants of the region were the hill tribes of the Garos, Khasis and Jaintias. Their unique culture was impacted by the West in the eighteenth century upon the arrival of the British. Shillong city itself was founded on 28 April, 1866, built on land purchased by the British from the Chief of Myllem. It was chosen to be the capital of undivided Assam in 1874 due to its serene weather, reminiscent of their home country, even earning the nickname 'Scotland of the East.'

Much of the cityscape still retains its original Khasi flavour in the form of Assam type houses, built to withstand earthquakes, and ancient marketplaces like Iew Duh that cater to the entire state and specialise in the sale of food and traditional houseware. Found alongside these are British constructions like the Shillong Golf Course and the All Saints' Cathedral.

The Khasis, a matrilineal tribe, form 48 per cent of Shillong's population. Their

Facing Page: The Mawphlang sacred grove is a forest track located in the central uplands of Meghalaya.

inextricable link to nature allows them to view their surroundings as sacred. This translates into contemporarily relevant conservation techniques, such as sacred forests watched over by guardian clans, housing a plethora of unique flora and fauna. Other customs endure, including a rich legacy of festivals and folklore. Khasi celebrations are incomplete without traditional music and dance; for instance, the festival of *Ka Pom-Blang Nongkrem*, celebrated in hope of a bumper harvest, has a ritualistic dance performed by young girls and men as its highlight. Similarly, almost every element in the environment is brought alive by magical tales and legends about their origin. Plenty of traditions, however, are more recent, such as the city's association with rock music and concerts with national attendance, such as the NH7 Weekender, as well as the multitude of quaint cafes that serve large varieties of locally sourced tea and coffee, like the You & I café. The city also boasts richly curated cuisine, available within the city and in the adjoining food market at Myllem.

Today, Shillong's urban landscape sits alongside its natural topography offering an experience.



Photo by Andrew Marwein



The church built in Tudor style, comprises wood from Myanmar, and tinted glasses from England.

All Saints' Church

IGP Point, near Barik Point

Timings: Sundays | 8:30 am to 5:30 pm
Established: 1877

The All Saints' Church is one of the oldest churches in Shillong and belongs to the congregation of the *Diocese of North-East India, Church of North India*. The Church's foundation stone was laid by Lord Northbrook, the Viceroy of India (1872–76), during his visit to Shillong on August 22, 1874. The Church was completed in the year 1877 and unlike many other churches in the city that are named after individual Christian saints, this Church's committee decided that it should be collectively dedicated to 'all the saints'.

The original stone building on Kacheri Road was devastated in the great earthquake of 1897 and a new building was completed in 1902, which was designed and supervised by Mr W. Arundel, an engineer and architect in the Assam–Bengal Railways. It was built in *Tudor style*, comprising mostly wood brought from Myanmar, and tinted glasses shipped all the way from England. The wood construction

was done keeping in mind Shillong's location in an earthquake-prone zone. The interior of the Church is arranged according to the *Anglican* tradition: the altar occupies the central part of the eastern side of the Church, the *pulpit* is placed on the right, and the *lectern* is placed on the left side of the *chancel*. Except for the floor of the *nave*, the rest of the building has remained the same since 1902.

The Church premises are very distinctive, with an ornate garden that houses one of Shillong's oldest deodar trees dating back to 1877. It is also situated close to other attractions, such as the Lady Hydari Park, the State Museum and the Butterfly Museum. The Church holds three regular services every Sunday, beginning 8:30 am onwards, and holds daily mass as well. On Christmas Day every year, when it is lit up with a decorated Christmas tree alongside, the Church is a beautiful sight to behold, a reminder of the colonial heritage of the city.

Facing Page: The All Saints' Church was designed by Mr W. Arundel, an engineer and architect in the Assam–Bengal Railways.

■ SASHI TEIBOR | ANDREW MARWEIN



Photo by Andrew Marwein.

Bara Bazaar, or Iew Duh is the largest and oldest market in Shillong.

Iew Duh

Iew Duh, Bara Bazar

Nestled in the heart of Shillong, Bara Bazaar, or Iew Duh as it is called by the locals, is the largest and oldest market in the region. In 1874, the capital of Assam province was shifted from Sohra (*Cherrapunjee*) to Shillong, and Iew Duh played an important role in the development of Shillong, meeting the needs of the British Cantonment as well as the non-tribals who helped to run the colonial machinery. The Urdu term *Bara Bazaar* (Big/Important Market) suggests that the market began with the arrival and settlement of people from various communities across India.

The management of Iew Duh comes under the purview of the Chief of Myllem. The market is believed to have originally existed in Nongkseh and later shifted to its present location near the Mot Phran Statue. Each morning at the crack of dawn, the market comes alive with the arrival of country buses and trucks bringing fresh produce from all parts of the *Khasi/Jaintia hills*. The market caters to both wholesale and commercial sale of the finest produce, ranging from groceries, household goods, clothes, shoes, agricultural necessities, electronics and so on—arranged in sections in an orderly manner. Iew Duh also has many popular food stalls serving delicious local dishes and snacks.

Interestingly, as the local population follows the *matrilineal system*, women play a vital role in the trade and commerce at Iew Duh, participating in running the shops and daily transactions alongside the men. Iew Duh continues to play a major role in the daily activity in Shillong and helps hold the economy of the surrounding rural areas together.



Photo by Andrew Marwein.

A stall selling fish at the market.

■ SASHI TEIBOR



Shad Suk Mynsiem is a three-day festival in April, held at the Weiking Grounds.

Ka Shad Suk Mynsiem

Madan Weiking, Jaiaw

The Khasis have been an agricultural community for centuries and their festivals therefore mark events like sowing and harvest. One of these festivals is *Shad Suk Mynsiem*, celebrated by the entire Khasi community. *Shad Suk Mynsiem* translates to 'dance for peace and mind' and celebrates spring, commemorating the agricultural activity of harvesting as well as the start of the sowing. Another of the festival's purposes is to bring together the various Khasi–Jaintia clans once a year to inculcate a sense of togetherness and community.

Shad Suk Mynsiem translates to 'dance for peace and mind' and celebrates spring, commemorating the agricultural activity of harvesting as well as the start of the sowing.

In Shillong, Shad Suk Mynsiem is a three-day festival in April, held at the

Weiking Grounds or Madan Weiking, and is organised by the Seng Khasi, an organisation established to preserve the indigenous culture and heritage of the Khasi people.

Before the dance begins, elders of the Seng Khasi, flagbearers carrying red flags with the symbol of the Seng Khasi and a group of traditional musicians take out a procession from Seng Khasi Hall in Mawkhair to Weiking Grounds. On entering a traditionally decorated gate, the elders offer prayers, and shortly after, the dance commences to the tunes of drums, flutes and cymbals. The dances are performed in two concentric circles – unmarried women in the inner circle, and men in the outer circle. As the dance progresses through the day, it gets faster. The festival and the dance concludes by sunset.

Although this dance is performed in different parts of the Khasi Hills at *Raid* (commune), *Hima* (state) and village levels, the performance at Weiking Grounds in Shillong is observed as a State Festival.

■ SASHI TEIBOR | ANDREW MARWEIN



Photo by Andrew Marwein.

Ing Sad

Smit, Meghalaya

Timings: Daily | 10:00am to 4:00pm
Established: Between 1903 and 1919

Ing Sad, located 15 kms from Shillong at Smit, is the traditional residence of the Priestess of the Khyrim Royal Family. In the past, every *Hima* (state) in the Khasi community had their own Ing Sad, but only a few remain today, and even these are not as well-preserved as the Ing Sad at Smit, which was constructed sometime between the years 1903 and 1919. It is customary that every Chief of Hima Khyrim renovate the Ing Sad once during their reign. The present *Syiem* (ruler) of Hima Khyrim, Syiem Balajied, renovated the house in 2004.

The built structure measures 61 ft. in length and 30 ft. in breadth. As the Khasi community considers iron nails *sang* or taboo for such buildings, the Ing Sad at Smit uses wooden plugs instead of nails. The house, consisting of 13 rooms altogether, has a *thatched roof* made from a local dry leaf called *U Tynriew*. The ritual of *Pomblang Syiem Nongkrem* is held here annually, a reflection of how the *Ka Thymmei* (foundation) of the ruling Syiem clan is symbolised in *Ka Syiem-Sad*, who may be an old woman, and *U Thning* (a source of living roots), an unmarried woman who may be a sister or a niece of the Syiem. The annual rituals are followed by a dance where the unmarried woman of the royal family dances among other dancers in front of the Ing Sad. Keeping in mind that the Khasi community is a matrilineal society, the dance indicates that the young woman will sustain the royal clan through her offspring.

The *Pomblang Syiem Nongkrem* is performed at the Ing Sad in the presence of the *Syiem Ka Syiem Sad*—the Priestess, who is considered the caretaker of all religious ceremonies, the ministers and the common people. The fourth day of the festival is when visitors throng the courtyard to witness the dance performed by men and women in their traditional attire.

■ SASHI TEIBOR | ANDREW MARWEIN



Photo by Andrew Marwein.



Photo by Andrew Marwein.



Photo by Andrew Marwein.

Above & Below: The annual Shad Nongkrem Festival. Middle: The Ing Sad made using wooden plugs. Facing Page: The built structure measuring 61 ft. in length and 30 ft. in breadth.



Photo by Andrew Marwein.

Left: An entryway to the Sacred grove. Right: A monolith inside the sacred grove.

Mawphlang Sacred Grove

Khasi Heritage Village, Mawphlang Village

The Mawphlang sacred grove is a forest track spreading across 78 acres, located in the central uplands of Meghalaya. It is bounded by the village of Mawphlang in the north and Mawkdok Dympep Valley in the south, and has attained global recognition for its undisturbed and rich biodiversity, which has been preserved by the Khasi community for centuries. Located 26 kms from Shillong, entry to the grove is through the Khasi Heritage Village in the west, where local guides are available.

As the forest is held in high regard among the community, it is taboo to cut trees or take back any produce from the forest, which is believed to invite misfortune.

In Meghalaya, sacred groves are looked after by particular guardian clans or caretakers, and Mawphlang is associated with the Lyngdoh Mawphlang Clan. Although these groves are open to the public, the caretakers expect visitors to maintain the sanctity of the place, since

a deity known as '*Basa*', a spirit sent by the Gods to look after the well-being of the villagers, dwells in its premises. According to the inhabitants of Mawphlang, *Basa* appears in the form of a snake, a tiger or a leopard.

As the forest is held in high regard among the community, it is taboo to cut trees or take back any produce from the forest, which is believed to invite misfortune. Mawphlang sacred grove has three parts: the first section, *Laitdyrkhang*, is near the village of Mawphlang, the middle section of the forest is known as the *Phiephandi*, and the third part of the forest called the *Law Nongkynrih* is essentially an extension to protect the main forest. Various rites and rituals are performed periodically in these forests, pointing to a rich culture going back to the *Megalithic* age.

The sacred groves of Meghalaya also act as a repository for a number of *endemic*, endangered plant species. A floristic survey undertaken here had revealed the presence of at least 514 species, representing 340 *genera* and 131 families, in these sacred groves.

■ SASHI TEIBOR | ANDREW MARWEIN



Myllem is famous for its blood sausages wrapped in a La Met (a leaf)

Myllem Village

Myllem, NH 40

Myllem village is located 17 kilometres from Shillong and is widely known for its food stalls. Local travellers and tourists often stop by the village en route to popular tourist destinations like *Cherrapunji* and *Dawki*. For the picnic goers of Shillong, Myllem serves primarily as a place to rent pots and utensils and buy firewood when they choose to have a cookout in the picnic spots and riverbanks along the countryside.

This stretch of road, extending 250 metres along the highway, accommodates several restaurants and *dhabas* owned by the locals that serve Chinese and Khasi cuisine, freshly prepared from produce received from surrounding villages. The stalls open in the morning, serving tea (*sha*) and breakfast to visitors while displaying food items in cane baskets. Unlike traditional restaurants, the local eateries have no menu to choose from and serve food based on availability and season. A major attraction is the smoked meat (particularly pork and beef) prepared using a method unique to the area.

Timings:
Daily | 8:00 am to 9:00 pm

The cuisine is primarily meat-based, including dishes like *Doh Khlieh* (a salad made of boiled pork mixed with onions and finely chopped ginger) and *Doh Shain* (minced and fried beef balls). Since rice is staple food in Meghalaya, there is also a variety of local rice dishes such as the local favourite *Ja Doh* (rice soaked in blood and cooked along with entrails). Speciality dishes include pork entrails cooked with black sesame seeds and paired with *Pu-Tharo* (a plain rice pancake).

Myllem is also famous for its *blood sausages* wrapped in a *La Met* (a leaf). A variety of chicken dishes are also served, including stewed chicken and Myllem chicken. Fish (especially *Tungtap*, a dried fish *chutney*) and egg are also available, as are vegetarian options, including salads and curries, as well as *chutneys* and seasonal fruit and vegetable pickles. During winter, people look forward to *Tungrymbai*, a fermented soybean paste that is known to compliment pork stew and mustard leaves.

■ SASHI TEIBOR | ANDREW MARWEIN



Photo by Andrew Marwein.

U Lum Sohpetbneng

Shillong-Guwahati Highway,
Adjacent to Umiam Lake

The U Lum Sohpetbneng peak stands at a height of 1,344 metres and lies 17 kilometres from Shillong. *Sohpetbneng* translates to 'Navel of Heaven'; according to folklore, Men and Gods were once linked through a golden bridge that connected Heaven and Earth at this sacred hill. The *Lum* or hill is sacred to the Khasi - Jaintia community as it is believed that the seven founding clans or *Ki Hynniew Trep* - comprising the Khyntiam, Pnar, Bhoi War, Maram, Lyngngam and the extinct Diko - descended from this ladder and settled in the present-day Khasi-Jaintia Hills. According to a popular myth, when humans found that the land around Lum Sohpetbneng was fertile, they began to cultivate it but never stayed overnight on Earth. Instead, they would ascend to Heaven every night through the ladder. The sixteen families/clans that took up cultivation led this peaceful life until one day, due to their ambition, they chopped off the tree that served as the ladder, and God closed the way as man didn't fulfill the covenant resulting in seven of them being stranded on Earth. God, however, had pity on the seven clans and blessed them with good harvests. Therefore, every year on the first Sunday of February, the Seng Khasi (the community which still follows the Traditional Faith) treks to the location where the Jingkieng Ksiar or Golden Ladder was believed to have existed, to perform thanksgiving rituals in a place called Lum Dorbar, and also at the boulder rock called Mei-Mawbuh. Since 2013-14, regular excavations by archaeologist Marco B. Mitri and his team have unearthed a number of *neolithic* pottery and agricultural tools in and around Lum Sohpetbneng. Based on these findings, the researchers have concluded that the settlement sites go back to as early as 1220 BCE.

Facing page: The U Lum Sohpetbneng peak standing at a height of 1,344 metres.

■ SASHI TEIBOR | ANDREW MARWEIN



Photo by Andrew Marwein.



Photo by Andrew Marwein.



Photo by Andrew Marwein.

Above: An altar where sacrificial offerings are performed. Middle: Gateway to the peak. Below: Offerings left as a part of the pilgrimage by Seng Khasi.



Photo by Andrew Marwein.

Left: Bows of the Khasis. Right: Archers taking their aim at a distance of 50–60 yards from the straw target.

The Teer Lottery System

Khasi Hills Archery Sports Institute, 4th Furlong

Archery, or *Siat Khnam/Ka Rongbiria*, as it is known in the local dialect, is the most popular sport in the Khasi community. Legend has it that before the Khasi ancestors established any type of social activity, they instituted *Ka Hok* (rights/privileges) for the sport of archery through a covenant gifted by *Ka Mei Hukum* (legislative attribute of God). This gift, given as a sport of pleasure, joy and merriment to the goddess *Shinam* and her husband *U Mangring*, was handed down by them to their sons, *U Batiton* and *U Shynna*. Today, one of the many reasons archery still retains its status is the *Teer* (Hindi for arrow) lottery system, played every day at the Khasi Hills Archery Sports Institute.

The lottery is played daily and takes the form of a betting game, colloquially known as *Ka Thoh Tim*, and it is officially recognised and governed by the Meghalaya Amusements and Betting Tax (Amendment) Act, 1982. Every day, the Khasi Hills Archery Sports Institute, located at 4th Furlong, invites two clubs represented by ten archers each,

alongside the Institute's thirty archers. There are twelve affiliated clubs that help conduct the daily Teer. The fifty archers selected that day then shoot thirty arrows each in the first round, and twenty in the second round. Archers take their aim at a distance of 50–60 yards from the straw target. When the arrows that hit the target are counted, the last two digits of the arrows on the target are declared the winning 'numbers of the day' which comprise two sets of numbers—predictions of the first round and the second. Locals and tourists alike enjoy competing in the lottery, and can gamble any amount of money. Winners see their investments multiply several times over—up to 80 rupees for each rupee initially bet!

The Lottery has been steadily gaining in popularity, and apart from contributing to the state revenue, it helps the youth – Khasi and others alike – to be trained by the various clubs to perfect and continue an art that has been handed down through generations.

■ SASHI TEIBOR | ANDREW MARWEIN



Left: Mot Phran. Right: Names of the labourers who aided the British war effort in France during WW1.

Mot Phran

Iewduh, Bara Bazar

Mot (a Khasi term for structure) France, or as the locals call it *Mot Phran*, is an octagonal stone structure in the city's most vibrant intersection overlooking Iew Duh, the oldest market in Shillong. It commemorates the services rendered by the Khasi-Jaintia labourers in France during the First World War. In March 1917, the British recruited 2,000 people from the Khasi and Jaintia tribes to aid their war effort in France, with the promise of freeing them from bonded labour. Of these, only 700–800 survived and returned home in December of the same year.

The structure bears the names of the labourers on all four sides as well as the Latin words of the poet Horace, *Dulce et Decorum est pro Patria Mori*.

On November 21, 1924, representatives

Established:
1924

from all the Khasi-Jaintia states raised funds towards building Mot Phran, and it was completed by 1927, ten years after the loss of lives. The structure bears the names of the labourers on all four sides as well as the Latin words of the poet Horace, *"Dulce et Decorum est pro Patria Mori"* (It is sweet and honourable to die for one's country).

Even though the once-famous overhead bridge and the small garden that once stood near Mot Phran are no more, kind gestures from the surrounding localities, especially the Mawkhars, have led to the renovation of Mot Phran in an attempt to revive its lost grandeur. Today, the Mot Phran roundabout is known to everyone. For those using public transport, it is a pick up and drop off point for Iew Duh.

■ SASHI TEIBOR | ANDREW MARWEIN



Photo by Andrew Marwein.



The museum's heritage section.

Ever Living Museum

Nongpdeng, Mawshbuit Village, P.O. Happy Valley, East Khasi Hills District

Timings: Daily | 11 am to 6 pm (Feb to Oct),
11 am to 5 pm (Nov to Jan)

Established: 6th April, 2015

Entry Fee: Adult: Rs. 50,
Children: Rs. 20,
Students: Rs. 30

Facilities:

Photography • Videography • Museum Shop • Restroom • Parking • Garden/Picnic Area • Guided tours • Seating facilities • Elderly friendly

Located just a thirty-minute drive from Shillong, the Ever Living museum is nestled in the village of Mawshbuit. Established in 2015, it is a private initiative owned by Mr. Kyntiewbor War. He started his ardent collection of rural artefacts and archaeological remains as early as 1964 when he was just 10 years old. The vast collection is a result of War's years of travelling or has been donated to the Museum by his friends, family, and well-wishers. Most objects have been acquired from occasional field visits and by attending rural market days in many remote places of Meghalaya.

The Museum is divided into three sections. The first comprises the Heritage section, which is also the main part of the Museum. The Museum houses the everyday utilities of the past and rare antiques of the Khasi, Jaintia, and Garo community. The collections also display wood carvings and a miniature Khasi hut. The second section

displays the Stone Collection along with photographs. This section comprises stones, minerals, and fossils found in Meghalaya and other parts of the world along with photographs of breathtaking waterfalls, landscapes, and the endangered traditional architecture of the region. The third part of the Museum comprises the garden, displaying the rich flora of Meghalaya which has a deep presence in local folklore. Wild and rare orchids, local medicinal plants, trees, and fruits are also conserved here.

The Museum takes pride in having an actual life size *Khoh Kit Briew* or human carrying basket used to transport people in the rugged terrain in the past. The Museum also has a *Mawtylliat* or stone grinder as well as examples of the region's agricultural and culinary equipments which are rarely used these days. The unique displays also consist of indigenous as well as colonial weapons which attract the attention of many visitors.

Facing page: The Ever Living Museum is a private museum setup in 2015 by Kyntiewbor War.

■ SASHI TEIBOR | ANDREW MARWEIN

DIY Heritage Trail

Colonial built heritage in Shillong

The British favoured the city of Shillong due to its cool and misty climate, and to make themselves at home, they established several religious and civic buildings within the city. This trail will take you through four beautiful remnants of Shillong's colonial past to give you a glimpse of the city's history.

Starting Location: Cathedral of Mary Help

Ending Location: Shillong Golf Course

Distance: 3.8 km

Time taken: 2-3 hours

Walk requirements:

Please bring comfortable shoes and water.

ALL SAINTS' CATHEDRAL

IGP Point, near Barik Point

All Saints' Cathedral is one of Shillong's oldest churches and was originally built in 1877 and then reconstructed in 1902 after a massive earthquake. The church's wooden structure and stained glass paintings make it a beautiful example of Shillong's colonial architecture.

WARD'S LAKE

Police Bazar

Shillong's Ward's Lake was constructed in the year 1984 by Colonel Hopkins, following a plan by the then chief commissioner of Assam, Sir William Ward.

SHILLONG GOLF COURSE

Golf Links

Shillong Golf Course was built in the year 1898 by officials from the British civil service. It is one of the largest natural golf courses in India and is surrounded by pine and rhododendron trees.

CATHEDRAL OF MARY HELP OF CHRISTIANS

Laitumkhrach

The structure of this cathedral is heavily inspired by Gothic architecture and features several scenes from the scriptures in the form of paintings and murals.

DIY Food Trail

Shillong's most popular local eateries

As the capital of Meghalaya, Shillong is exposed to several cultural and culinary influences from neighboring districts of the state as well as other parts of North-East India. This trail will take you through four food joints in Shillong's central market, lewduh, to give you an authentic experience of Shillong's local cuisine.

Starting Location: Nat Khasi Restaurant

Ending Location: Bread Cafe

Distance: 1.1 km

Time taken: 2-3 hours

Walk requirements:

Please bring comfortable shoes and water.

TRATTORIA RESTAURANT

Police Bazar

Trattoria is a small food joint famous for the traditional dishes of *jadoh* (rice cooked in pork or chicken blood) and *jhurkheh* (mixed vegetables).

NAT KHASI RESTAURANT

Bus Stop, lewduh,
Bara Bazar

Nat Khasi restaurant is an open-air eatery serving all sorts of traditional Khasi dishes like *jadoh* (rice cooked in pork or chicken blood), *doh khleh* (steamed pork stir-fried with green chillies and onions) and pork intestine sausages.

RED RICE

GS Rd, Police Bazar

Red Rice restaurant is popular for serving delicious Chinese and Khasi meal options. *Doh khleh*, a salad-like dish of steamed pork stir-fried with green chillies and onions, is a must-try at this place.

BREAD CAFE

Opp. Broadway Hotel,
GS Rd, Police Bazar

Situated conveniently amidst several street food stalls and crowded restaurants, Bread Cafe is supposedly one of the oldest cafes to have come up in Shillong, and is popular for its decadent German pastry.



Sahapedia's award winning program, India Heritage walks, offers guided walks across India. Visit www.indiaheritagewalks.org for more.

5 LOCAL FOODS TO LOOK OUT FOR IN SHILLONG

Food in Shillong is a unique mix of traditional tribal influences and flavours from urban India and beyond. Shillong is populated with a multitude of cafes and restaurants that coexist with small traditional food joints operated by the locals. Here are a few dishes that enjoy enduring popularity in Shillong.

Jadoh

Meghalaya's version of the biryani, jadoh is made by slow-cooking short rice or joha rice with aromatic spices and caramelised onions.

Doh Thad

A smoked meat dish native to tribes living in the region, doh thad consists of dried pork or beef, served with fried onions and chilies.

Tungtap

Tungtap is a chutney made with mashed fermented dry fish, green chilies, red chilies and onions.

Doh Khleh Sniang

Doh Khleh Sniang is a simple meat salad made of pork, onions and at times green chilies and ginger along with seasoning. Interestingly, the pig's head and brain are important parts of the recipe with steamed pig brain served as the garnish on the salad.

Pukhlein

Pulkhein is a traditional sweet bread dish made of rice flour, cane sugar or jaggery and refined oil.

5 LOCAL CRAFTS FROM SHILLONG

In Meghalaya, handicrafts have become a carrier of indigenous knowledge traditions along with being a means of livelihood for people. Here are five local handicrafts that Shillong specialises in

Eri Silk

Eri silk is also known as 'peace silk' as it is extracted without harming silkworms, unlike silk from mulberry cocoons. Farmed sustainably in the villages of Meghalaya, the yarn is made by hand and dyed with natural, plant-based ingredients.

Bamboo

Local artisans have been producing stools, baskets, mats, cone baskets and bamboo rice winnowers from cane and bamboo, which most communities grow on their own. Tynnai, a village in the south-west Khasi hills district of Meghalaya, is renowned for the bamboo handicrafts made by its residents who pass down their skill through generations as a knowledge heritage.

Weaving

Meghalaya has a rich variety of hand woven textiles, with most families possessing looms and producing weaves for personal and commercial use. The distinctive patterns which often contain indigenous motifs are obtained by combining different coloured threads in the warp and weft.

Khng Embroidery

Surviving for 200 years in the Eastern Khasi Hills, the art of Khng embroidery is done on Eri silk fabric. It features most prominently in the borders of traditional garments in single or double rows of symmetrical stitches.

Jewellery

In Meghalaya, jewellery is worn by both men and women, especially on festival days. Local jewellery includes *nadongbi* (brass earrings for the earlobes), *jaksan* (chunky bangles made from various materials), *seng ki* (waistband crafted out of crude conch shells) and *ripok* (necklace strings made from red glass or carnelian beads).

CALENDAR

Festivals and Cultural Events



FEB

STRAWBERRY FESTIVAL

People throng to Umsning and Sohliya village in Ri-Bhoi district every February to taste locally produced strawberries and encourage farmers and organic food production.

Strawberry wine, ice cream, cakes and jam are available for visitors to stock up with till the next Strawberry Festival.

SHILLONG STREET ART FESTIVAL

Established by Sanjib Roy, the street art festival was started to put Shillong in the global art scene and empower its youth through the medium of art. Murals were painted on all sorts of public buildings over several weeks by both local and visiting artists.

MAR

THE MEGHALAYAN AGE FESTIVAL

Thadlaskein area in West Jaintia Hills

Started in 2020 as a festival offering the experience of luxury tourism along with the 'authentic' Meghalayan experience, it claims to be appropriate for both 'thrill seekers' and 'slow life enthusiasts'. Hot air balloon rides, curated tours through local cave systems, treks and river scuba diving are a part of the multi-day festival.

CHAD SUKRA

Chad Sukra is a sowing festival of the Jaintias or Pnars celebrated before the sowing season for a prosperous harvest. Pnars perform ceremonial dances dressed in their traditional outfits, offering prayers to Mother Earth.

APR

Above: Strawberry festival, Photo by Eatcha, CC BY-SA 4.0, via Wikimedia Commons.
Facing Page: Cherry Blossom, Photo by Maciej Opaliński, CC BY-SA 4.0, via Wikimedia Commons.

UMSAN NONGKHARAI

Held to honour the major deity of the Khasi religion, the *Lei Shyllong*, after whom the town of the Shillong and the highest peak in the state is named, Umsan Nonkharai is a popular Khasi festival. Fertility rituals and prayers of protection from extreme weather elements are carried out over five days with the last day witnessing the largest crowds.

MAY

WANGALA FESTIVAL

Celebrated traditionally by the Garo people, Wangala is a post harvest festival celebrated to mark the end of the agricultural year.

There are several state sponsored celebrations that are held in and around Shillong where spectators come to witness groups of dancers moving to the rhythms of traditional Garo drums accompanied by the cries of the leading warrior.

OCT

THE HILLS FESTIVAL

Umiam, Umbir,
Mawlyndep Road

A two day festival that celebrates Meghalaya's music, art and local cuisines, The Hills Festival combines performances by both little known artists along with famous ones.

SHILLONG AUTUMN FESTIVAL

Water Sports Complex, Orchid
Lake Resort in Umiam

The Shillong Autumn Festival provides a stage for top music artists from across the state and country – catering to fans of all genres.



CHERRY BLOSSOM FESTIVAL

Ward's Lake, Police Bazar

Held in autumn when the famed cherry blossoms of Shillong are in full bloom, the festival has music gigs, a beauty pageant and stalls showcasing the cuisine, wine, arts and crafts of the region.

NOV

NONGKREM DANCE FESTIVAL

Celebrated for 5 days in Smit (13 kms from Shillong) for good harvest and peace, Nongkrem is the main festival of the Khasi tribe. The rituals are performed by the *Syiem*, the head of the Khasi state and *ka Syiem Sad* (head priestess) who is revered as the caretaker of the ceremonies and the people.

Glossary of Terms

All Saints' Church

Diocese: A territory ruled by or under the control of a bishop, who is a high-ranking member of the Christian clergy.

Tudor Style: A type of British architecture prevalent from 1485 to 1558, reminiscent of both Renaissance and Gothic elements and characterised by its half-timber detailing, long rectangular windows, complex roofs and patterned brickwork.

Anglican: Of or relating to the Church of England.

Pulpit: An elevated, often enclosed platform in a church, from which the priest delivers his sermon.

Lectern: A platform or pedestal-like piece of furniture with a slanted top, meant for resting the speaker's holy books on during a speech.

Chancel: The part of the church containing the altar, typically reserved for the clergy and the choir.

Nave: The principal part of a church's architecture, comprising a long aisle from the entrance of the church to the altar, and often including horizontally placed passages on both its sides.

Iew Duh

Cherrapunji: A village located southwest of Shillong, famous for having one of the world's highest average annual precipitation levels.

Khasi & Jaintia Hills: A mountainous region falling under the territory of Meghalaya.

Matrilineal system: A system where kinship is traced through the female line. This could include differences from patriarchy such as inheriting property or titles from the maternal line, assigning the care of children to the males, or postmarital residence being the wife's home.

Ing Sad

Thatched Roof: A roof constructed from dry vegetation such as straw, leaves, heather and the like.

Mawphlang

Megalithic: Related to megaliths, which are ancient, huge stone monuments belonging to the late Stone Age and early Bronze Age.

Endemic: Species that are native to a particular geographical region, and not found naturally occurring outside of it.

Genera: The plural of genus, a biological classification into which animals or plants displaying similar characteristics are divided; a genus is a smaller classification than a family but larger than a species.

Mylliem

Cherrapunji: A village located southwest of Shillong, famous for having one of the world's highest average annual precipitation levels.

Dawki: A town situated in the West Jaintia district of Meghalaya on the Indo-Bangladesh border, famed for its natural beauty.

Dhaba: A roadside restaurant or food stall found across the Indian subcontinent, usually serving local cuisine at affordable prices.

Blood Sausages: Sausages prepared by making a stuffing consisting of pig's blood, chopped meat and onions, which is then stuffed inside the pig's intestine and boiled to perfection.

Chutney: Originating in the Indian subcontinent, chutney indicates a condiment or sauce made of fruit, herbs, vegetables, yoghurt or nuts, and is often freshly prepared.

U Lum Sohpetbneng

Neolithic: The final stage of cultural evolution among prehistoric peoples, characterised by stone tools, permanent settlements and domestication of animals.

Mot Phran

Roundabout: A circular structure built at the intersection of many roads, allowing traffic to circle around it to avoid a jam or accident.

Bibliography

To get access to bibliography for all the pieces in this booklet visit:



About Us

InterGlobe Foundation

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The key focus areas of IGF include Heritage Conservation, Promotion of Livelihoods and Environment Conservation including Waste Management. The Heritage projects cover both the tangible and intangible aspects of heritage. The environment projects support development and protection of Natural Resources thereby increasing the green cover and ground water recharge. It also includes work on Waste Management. The livelihood projects support income enhancement of marginalized groups, especially women through environment friendly projects. By partnering with leading NGOs of the country, IGF has been able to impact more than 600,000 lives.

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This booklet documents various well-known and offbeat treasures of Shillong's living heritage and culture. Designed as a guide to navigate the city's better kept secrets, the publication spans themes such as built heritage, natural heritage, people and communities, institutions of cultural importance, and literature and the arts.

Other editions include: Ahmedabad, Bhubaneswar, Chandigarh, Goa, Hyderabad, Indore, Kolkata, Nashik, Prayagraj



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