
Curt von Hagen Monument rehabilitation project

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Abstract

This research brings to light a significant heritage site which has been long neglected in Papua New Guinea. The Curt von Hagen Monument and the history associated with it are of cultural and historical significance. Curt von Hagen was an administrator of mainland German New Guinea in the 1890s and shot to death in 1897 attempting to capture two criminals. A monument was erected in the Bogadjim area of the Madang Province in honour of his contribution to the people. This research aims to raise awareness of the monument and its potential to be developed into a tourist attraction. This research investigated the history behind the monument, public knowledge of the monument, people's view on its potential to be a tourist attraction and who should promote such a project. In so doing this research applied a mixture of qualitative and quantitative methods and flexible approaches in conducting the research and collecting and analyzing data. The study found high levels of ignorance about the monument but interest in having it rehabilitated to a standard where it had the potential to be a tourist attraction. With the combined efforts of the community, tourist organizations and the government it is hoped that this monument is rehabilitated and becomes more widely known.

Key words: Curt von Hagen, cultural heritage, rehabilitation, historical monument, tourism attraction

Introduction

This research was conducted in Madang based on the history and significance of Curt von Hagen, a German Administrator of mainland German New Guinea in the 1890's. Curt von Hagen is best known throughout PNG for having the capital city of the Western Highlands Province named after him, as well as the mountain (an old eroded volcano) located about 24 kilometres from the city. The annual Hagen Show also carries his name and is a popular tourist destination. However, his base in PNG was really in the Madang area where he lived and it was here he died.

Curt von Hagen was born 12 September 1859 in East Prussia. As a young man he became a field artillery officer in the Prussian army but resigned in 1886 after a fall from a horse. He married in 1881 and had a daughter in 1886. He went on to become a tobacco planter in the East Indies for a company which later was declared bankrupt. He came to German New Guinea in 1888 and successfully managed a company in Madang. In September 1893 he was appointed Commissioner of mainland German New Guinea by the German

Administration. On the 13 August 1897, Curt von Hagen was shot and died near Madang while attempting to capture two Buka outlaws.

The administrative wisdom and friendship of Curt von Hagen to the local people earned respect and loyalty. A monument known as the Curt von Hagen Monument was built in the Bogodjim community (South Coast, Madang PNG) in honour of his service and commitment to the administration of mainland German New Guinea and the people of the Bogodjim community. He left behind a great impact on the culture and livelihood of the local people in the Bogodjim area where he first landed. The monument is seen as a historical heritage attraction.

Research problem

The historical monument of Curt von Hagen in Bogodjim underpins the history of the people of Madang and thus it has the potential to be a tourism attraction. The local people have great respect for the monument and would like its existence to be more widely known. The people of Madang are aware of the monument but little is known about it beyond the local community. The local people want tourists to come and see the monument and generate income from the venture, but it is not developed to a standard that it can be advertised.

Research questions

Questions which guided the research were:

1. Why was the monument neglected for such a long time without developing it as a cultural heritage site?
2. Why did this research project focus on rehabilitating the monument?

Research purpose

This study aimed to highlight the significance of the monument and its potential to be developed into a tourism attraction and income generating project. It aimed to help the host community understand where problems lay so that they could contribute to the solutions. The information generated from this research should be useful to the Madang Visitors and Cultural Bureau (MVCB), tourism promoting bodies and institutions in Madang including the Madang Provincial Government. Data was obtained by sampling different target groups such as the host community, tourism oriented organisations in Madang and the Madang Provincial Government. Each participating group was given a questionnaire or interviewed so that they provided feedback which was significant in compiling the body of knowledge.

Significance of study

The monument has been overlooked, but it could be developed into a tourist attraction. Many people know about the Kokoda trekking heritage and its historical significance and likewise the Curt von Hagen Monument has the potential to have its fascinating history more widely known. However, most

people, even those who own the historical monument, appear to know very little of their own history and the importance of its heritage to their people. While conserving the culture and history of the people, developing this product will bring economic benefits to the local community, the province and the nation as a whole. Moreover this will create new job opportunities for the locals and help to alleviate poverty conditions. Information collected, analyzed and presented in this report can benefit the Madang Visitors and Cultural Bureau, Madang Province, tourism organisations and research institutions such as Divine Word University.

Literature review

Definitions

Cultural heritage –

- Monuments: architectural works, works of monumental sculpture and painting, elements or structures of an archaeological nature, inscriptions, cave dwellings and combinations of features, which are of outstanding universal value from the point of view of history, art or science
- Groups of buildings: groups of separate or connected buildings which, because of their architecture, their homogeneity or their place in the landscape, are of outstanding universal value from the point of view of history, art or science
- Sites: works of man or the combined works of nature and man, and areas including archaeological sites which are of outstanding universal value from the historical, aesthetic, ethnological or anthropological point of view. (WTO, 2004)

ICOMOS – International Council on Monuments and Sites

Curt von Hagen – German company manager and Administrator of the Madang area 1888-1897

Rehabilitation – to upgrade or improve to an exceptional standard (context of study)

WTO – World Tourism Organization

Local literature

Historical books on Papua New Guinea give basic information about Curt von Hagen and his term of administration of mainland German New Guinea, with little information on how he lived and died. Very limited literature is available. However the oral history of Curt von Hagen is more informative. In the mid 1880's when the German New Guinea Company moved into Madang from Finschhafen in Morobe, von Hagen was one of the company managers. The German colonial government appointed him to be the administrator of mainland German New Guinea in 1893, a position which he held until his death in 1897. There is very little literature on what von Hagen actually did for the people of Bogadjim and Madang. However oral history (personal communication, Br Hugo DWU & Yaga of Lalok, 2010) revealed that many people were introduced to English and pidgin languages, modern tools,

business cash cropping, imported food and Western style clothing. The monument was erected soon after von Hagen's death to remind the village people of his first contact with their ancestors and how he influenced their life with modern things.

International literature

Cultural and historical heritage sites are increasingly threatened with destruction. This was noted by the General Conference of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) meeting in Paris (November 1972). This occurs not only by the traditional causes of decay, but also by changing social and economic conditions which aggravate the situation with even more formidable phenomena of damage or destruction. This conference also considered that deterioration or disappearance of any item of the cultural or natural heritage constitutes a harmful impoverishment of the heritage of all the nations of the world. The protection of heritage items at a national level often remains incomplete because of the scale of the resources required and of the insufficient economic, scientific and technological resources of a country where the property to be protected is situated.

This literature really pinpoints the issue of heritage destruction caused by changing socio-economic factors, and that disappearance of heritage items results from carelessness or negligence and affects our knowledge of the past. Furthermore it is considered that the government should be involved in preserving what are culture and nature heritage products.

Over the last five years it is widely acknowledged that the culture, heritage and historical tourism segment has been increasing at a rate higher than the growth of tourism worldwide. It is estimated that around 20% of tourist trips worldwide incorporate some form of cultural, heritage or historical activity; consequently the size of the market can be estimated as being over 160 million trips per annum (ICOMOS, 2008).

World Heritage Sites include many of the planet's most outstanding attractions and grandest monuments of the past. For tourism promoters they act as magnets while for the nation in which they are found they serve as icons that continue to influence current values. They are treasures in the fullest and deepest sense. They require management that preserves them for future generations, and at the same time, makes them accessible to the public for purposes of education and enjoyment (WTO, 2004).

Literature taken from both ICOMOS 2008 and WTO 2004 acknowledges heritage tourism as a fine market in the tourism industry with its economic importance and socio-cultural contributions, which is also a major concern in this study. It is viewed as the duty of the international community as a whole to cooperate in protecting world heritage.

Under the national and international protection agreement of International Conference on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS, 2008) member countries the following were the agreements:

- Adopting a general policy giving cultural and natural heritage a role in the life of the community and integrate the protection of that heritage into comprehensive planning programs
- Set up mechanisms to protect, conserve and interpret that heritage
- Develop research studies and operating methods to counteract dangers to that heritage
- Foster national or regional training and research centres in the fields of conservation and interpretation.

This study identified the weaknesses and strengths in terms of conservation, preservation and rehabilitation of the Curt von Hagen Monument. In particular this research explored the issues and constraints that make the above ICOMOS recommendations and definitions of culture and heritage challenging to achieve. Identifying the issues in this regard and finding solutions for sustainable preservation and development was thus the main focus for undertaking this study.

Methodology

Research design

The research utilized both qualitative and quantitative descriptive and explanatory methods in questionnaire design and interviews. It was important particularly in this research that a mixture of methods were used because one method linked to the other. Questionnaire items concentrated on why the problem existed, (the underdevelopment of the von Hagen Monument) and why rehabilitation should commence. But in order to understand the questionnaire responses, interviews were also used so that they provided data to substantiate the questionnaire responses for good judgments to be made in reporting the findings. It was important to discover what people understood as the problem and what was understood as requirements to help minimize the issues affecting the monument and its preservation.

Scope and limitations

The study is based in Madang, in the Bogodjim area of the Rai-coast District in the Madang Province. Specifically the research targeted the local population of Bom, Nalok and Bukati villages which surround the tourism attraction and historical heritage of the von Hagen Monument. These villages are the host villages who will influence any changes that may happen concerning the monument. To understand the problem from an outside perspective, representatives of the Madang Visitors and Cultural Bureau (MVCB), Melanesian Tourist Services Madang (MTS), DWU Department of Tourism & Hospitality Management, and Madang Technical College (MATECO), were selected as participants in this research. These organisations are based in

Madang and can directly or indirectly impact on the development and preservation of the Curt von Hagen Monument as a historical heritage site and a potential tourism attraction. Some factors that hindered full data collection included delays in data collection due to no or slow replies from respondents and limited visits to the villages due to time factors and transport costs.

Data collection and instruments

The three instruments used for data collection were focus group interviews, individual interviews and questionnaires. With the focus group interview simple open-ended questions were developed and dialogues were used to suit the target audience in Bom, Nalok and Bogodjim villages which are the surrounding villages to von Hagen Monument. Particularly open-ended questions were appropriate as people were able to express their feelings and emotions with regard to the project. This also included arranging a schedule of visits to meet the chiefs of the three villages. The main points collected in these focus interviews were summarized and analysed.

All other interviews are done one-to-one with key informants made up of selected local Bogodjim participants. Interview questions were both specific and general. Quantitative and quantitative responses were analysed, tabulated and converted to tables or graphs.

Two questionnaires are designed to collect information from the target groups. The first questionnaire was designed for respondents in the host villages and surrounding community of the Curt von Hagen Monument while the second questionnaire was directed to the five tourism-oriented organisations of choice in Madang. These questionnaires began with an introduction or background information on the topic of research what was expected to be achieved at the end of the research. Questionnaires were hand delivered to local participants and emailed to the five industry participants. The completed questionnaires were collected one to two weeks after they were delivered.

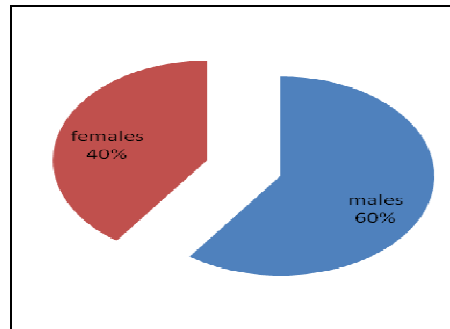
Data analysis

This research utilized the Microsoft Excel software to analyse its data. Specific Excel functions used were the sum-function which was used to add values of responses from closed questionnaire items and the graphics-function which was used to process graphs showing the differences in responses. These tools were used because the researcher was familiar with them.

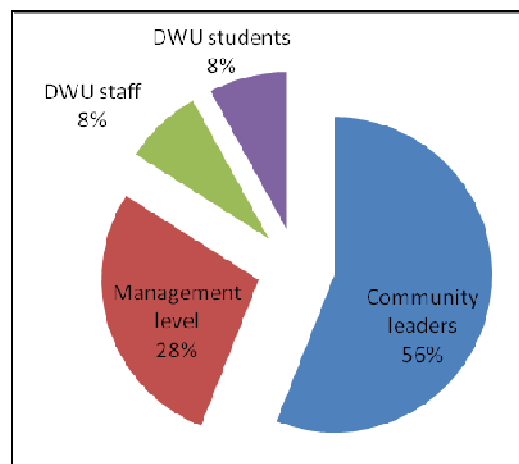
Findings

Participants

More males than females participated in the study. The percentage of each gender is shown visually in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Gender of participants

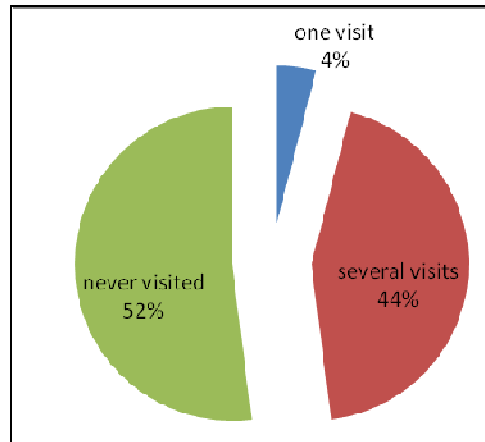
Categories of participants included community leaders, management level people from tourist oriented organizations, DWU staff and DWU students. Most of the participants were from the local community (Bogodjim, Bom & Lalok villages) while the second main contributors were from tourism oriented organisations. These comprised 80% of all participants. The distribution is shown visually in Figure 2.

Figure 2: Categories of participants

Awareness of the Curt von Hagen Monument

In seeking to find out people's awareness of the Curt von Hagen Monument, people were asked how many times they had visited it. Figure 3 shows that 4% of the respondents had visited the site only once, 44% of the participants had visited the site a few times, while 52% of the respondents had never visited the site nor had any knowledge of the monument and its historical significance.

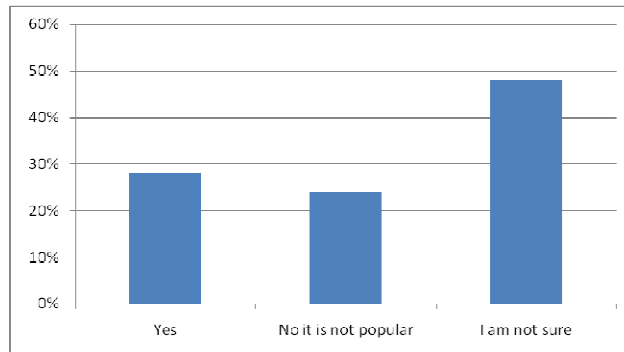
Figure 3: Visits to the von Hagen Monument by the respondents



Tourism demand

Participants were asked if they thought there would be a tourist demand to visit the Curt von Hagen Monument in Bogodjim if it was rehabilitated and advertised as a tourist destination. While some respondents thought that tourists would be eager to visit the monument, others thought it would not be very popular, and most respondents were not sure whether or not visiting a monument would appeal to visitors. The results are shown in Figure 4.

Figure 4: Tourism demand to see the von Hagen Monument



State of preservation

Participants were asked what they knew about the current state of preservation of the monument. As most respondents were unaware of the monument or had not visited the site, it was clear that they could not answer this question. A few respondents (8%) indicated that the community looked after it while some others (20%) stated that the monument was cleaned and protected by the local community.

Beneficiaries if monument was rehabilitated

Another question asked participants who they thought would be the main beneficiary if the monument was rehabilitated and became a tourist attraction. The main beneficiary was seen to be the host community or owners, but other answers included tour operators, *haus tambuna*, and a minority group.

What is lacking to make the monument a tourist attraction?

Participants were asked to identify what they thought was lacking in the current situation regarding rehabilitation of the von Hagen Monument. Answers included: lack of promotion by the appropriate authorities (60%), lack of initiative by the local community (20%) and lack of awareness of the monument and its potential to be developed into a tourist attraction (20%).

Suggested solutions

All participants agreed that the solution required a team effort with the Tourism Promotion Authority, Non-Government organizations, the Provincial Government, tourism organizations and the local community working together. It was suggested that the government should have a policy to preserve sites of historical significance and funding to support preservation activities. Community determination and technical support from local tour operators were seen as important to make a success of restoring the monument and developing it into a tourist attraction. A comparison was made with the Kalibobo Lighthouse in Madang which is a well-maintained cultural and historical landmark. The lighthouse stands at the entrance to the Madang Harbour and is dedicated to the coast watchers in New Guinea who helped the Allies during the war. Its significance is respected and valued by locals and tourists.

Conclusions

The study found that there was little public knowledge and awareness of the Curt von Hagen Monument and its history, even among the communities close to the monument. There was limited or no written materials about the subject. Someone needs to record the history, include a photograph of the monument, and produce a pamphlet or brochure. Through the Internet and media channels, public awareness can be raised by providing information about the Curt von Hagen Monument. There is need for greater documentation and research for information to be made available to the public.

No-one seemed to know the state of preservation of the monument although some thought that the local community cleaned and cared for it. This needs to be investigated. A working party of enthusiasts is needed to conduct fund raising activities to restore the monument to its former glory. Once it was a monument with a bronze eagle on top but the eagle was removed and is now located in the city of Mount Hagen.

International literature that was reviewed indicated that heritage tourism was an acknowledged market in the tourism industry with many tourist trips worldwide incorporating some form of cultural, heritage or historical activity. It was clear from the findings that the custodians of the monument had little idea how to turn it into a tourist attraction. They would need the expertise of the PNG Tourist Promotion Authority to develop the monument and market it as a tourist destination.

The study found that there were no pressure groups seeking to set up mechanisms to protect, conserve and interpret the heritage of the Curt von Hagen Monument. The study found that community determination with expertise from tourist organizations is necessary to gain support from relevant authorities to develop and promote the monument as a cultural and historical heritage site.

The upgrading of the Curt von Hagen Monument benefits not only the local community and tourists but should be a source of pride for the whole nation. Without action, the history of the monument will fade from memory and be lost from the heritage of further generations.

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David Monai was a final year student in the Bachelor of Tourism and Hospitality Management program at Divine Word University when he undertook this research.