

On the Heritage Trail

By Aftab H. Kola



Once upon a star...



OF YORE: Iron Age falaj at Hili in Al Ayn

AN exhibition on the falaj at Bait Al Baranda Museum in Muttrah recently proved to be of immense educational value. It was organised by Dr Abdullah Al Ghafri, assistant professor at Nizwa University, Ministry of Regional Municipalities and Water Resources, and Dr Harriet Nash from the United Kingdom, who has recently completed a PhD from the University of Exeter on the use of stars for timing of falaj water release.

The ancient aflaj (singular: falaj) systems still course like arteries beneath the hills and plains of Oman, twisting along precipitous cliffs and threading through villages and date-palm groves, bringing to the parched land water, coolness and life itself.

Two rooms in the museum showcased interesting falaj pictures, sundials, a model of the working of a falaj system and informative text.

An interesting picture of an Iron Age falaj at Hili, Al Ayn, testifies to the fact that

The allocation of falaj water among farmers once depended on tracking the passage of time using the sun and the stars. A recent exhibition in Muttrah beautifully narrated the story of Oman's aflaj,



FALAJ EXPERT: Dr Harriet Nash

