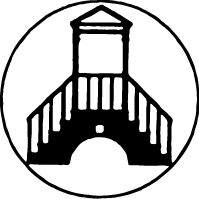
**The Barbados National Trust**



*For the preservation of places of historic and architectural interest of natural beauty and ecological importance*

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**PRESS RELEASE FROM THE BARBADOS NATIONAL TRUST**

**HISTORIC CARIBBEAN NATIONAL TRUST CONFERENCE A RESOUNDING SUCCESS**

“The best conference I’ve ever been to!” “Today was the most memorable day of my life!” “What an experience!” These were just some of the excited comments at the end of the historic first Caribbean Conference of National Trusts which just concluded at the Savannah Beach Hotel, the Garrison, Barbados. The conference ended with a Heritage Island Tour and lunch at the famous Fisherpond House on Sunday.

The Barbados National Trust hosted some 75 people at this conference, designed to share experiences, challenges, skills and solutions between the 13 Caribbean countries represented. The recent inscription of Historic Bridgetown and its Garrison as a UNESCO World Heritage site was part of the inspiration for the gathering. But it was also the recognition that we are all in the same Caribbean boat of having a rich heritage that is largely ignored by our Tourism authorities and our Ministers of Finance. Hence the Trust secured funds to assist several countries to participate. Trusts represented included those from UNESCO World Heritage sites St. Kitts (Brimstone Hill), Dominica (Morene Trois Pitons) and St. Lucia (the Pitons) as well as Bermuda, Belize, Trinidad and Tobago, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Grenada, Curacao, Aruba, St. Eustatius, Dominica and Montserrat. The Minister of Tourism opened the Conference and the Minister of Culture spoke at the Reception at the famous George Washington House. Both praised the work of our national trusts and spoke with passion and conviction on the huge importance of our heritage and heritage tourism in restoring our economic health.

Outstanding Keynote Lectures were given by Dr. Lennox Honychurch of Dominica, on the restoration of the Cabrits, and Barbadian descendent Ian Sanchez of Charleston, South Carolina, on “Restoring Prosperity: Economic and social Benefits of Preserving Natural and Cultural Assets in Barbados and Carolina”. In fact Ian Sanchez’s lecture received the Chairman’s award (by participants’ votes) for the best lecture of all, beating Dr. Honychurch into a close second! But all of the presentations were five star in quality. Ian Sanchez is in fact the grandson Barbadian hero, the famous “T.T.” Lewis, trade unionist of the early 1940s, and is a leading preservationist in Charleston.

There were several international leading experts on preservation, and other keynote lectures were given by leading members of the International National Trust Organisation – Dr. Bill Turner, the Vice President, from British Columbia, Ms. Catherine Leonard, Head of the INTO Secretariat and based in Britain, and Ms. Natalie Bull, Director of Canada Heritage Trust.

Tracey Todd of Middleton Place, South Carolina, Terry Suthers of Harewood House in Britain and Jeff Soule of the American Planners Association completed the international experts panels, while Donald Insall Associates with architect Rudylynn of Citizens for Conservation in Trinidad presented a splendid Workshop on Historic Building Restoration. A cross section of stakeholders including Mr. Paul Altman, realtor, and Mr. Colin Jordan of the BHTA, took part in the panel discussions.

Michael Newton of Curacao was voted best Country Presenter, closely followed by St. Vincent. But the passion and the sharing of ideas (and solutions) was extraordinary. The conference concluded by the affirmation of a Declaration – the Caribbean Conference of National Trusts’ Bridgetown Heritage Declaration.

This declaration states, among other things, that “Conscious of the long standing struggle to protect, preserve and restore the riches of our buit heritage and to protect from despoiling and over development of our beautiful natural heritage …… we declare our full support for all measures designed to protect, preserve, restore and utilise our natural and built heritage in a sustainable way, for the social, cultural and economic benefit of ALL the people of the region ….” Other aspects of the declarataion addressed issues of building capacity (in technical restoration skills), sharing of both information and expertise, collaboration with both local agencies and governments and international agencies, and regular meetings to advance the goals of restoration for attainment of both cultural and economic goals.

The conference was supported by a number of generous partners, of whom the Peter Moore’s Trust, the Tourism Development Corporation and Mr. Nick Parravicino of Realtors were the major donors. At the closing banquet on Saturday night, Dr. Karl Watson, President of the Barbados National Trust, presented Lifetime Achievement Awards to Mr. Paul Foster, past Director of Tourism, President and Director of the Trust, and Dr. Lennox Honychurch of Dominica. A full list of supporting partners who made this history making conference possible will be published separately.

Senator Professor Emeritus Henry S. Fraser

Conference Chairman

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