



**THE NATIONAL TRUST**  
OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO



# **ANNUAL REPORT**

**OCTOBER 2022 - SEPTEMBER 2023**

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## MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRMAN



Margaret McDowall (image courtesy Nesyamn Ranut)

Once again, we get an opportunity to reflect on the National Trust's performance in the fiscal year that is over a year past. This can be useful as it reminds us of how resilient we were and how many initiatives that we started that helped the National Trust develop in new ways.

However, it does seem to be better that our annual report reflects the year that has more recently ended and once the membership agrees, we will change the regulations in this General Meeting to enable us to hold our meeting closer to the end of the year that we are reviewing. So hopefully this is the last year we will be so far behind in our reporting.

For this reason, I will focus solely on the fiscal year 2022/2023 instead of trying to bring us up to date. I look forward to having another general meeting within the first four months of 2025 in which we present the annual report and the audited accounts for Fiscal 2023/2024.

This annual report details the activities of all the departments and so I will highlight the activities in which I and the rest of the Council were particularly involved, relying on the 'Council Chat' which was so thoughtfully archived by our Deputy Chairman.

You may recall that just before the new fiscal year, the Council held a retreat in Tobago and spent a very productive two days with the Secretary responsible for Tourism, Infrastructure and Antiquities. This time away from the normal bustle helped us to prepare for what was a very busy year ahead.

October 1st, 2022, saw an outstanding themed event at Mille Fleurs hosted by Angostura for the closing ceremony of the Patriartism. This certainly showed the potential of this property for lavish events and throughout the year, Mille Fleurs became the backdrop and venue for a host of events – from weddings and fancy tea parties, to promotional launches and photoshoots.

We were extremely fortunate to deepen our relationship with the Garden Club and the Horticultural Division of the Ministry of Agriculture, Lands and Fisheries and develop our garden to begin to live up to its name – Mille Fleurs.

## MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRMAN

This first event also shaped another direction for the National Trust as the Honourable Prime Minister in hailing the success of the Patriartism event, exhorted us to be active in 'Saving and Protecting our Legacy' and in particular, to showcase the art and creativity of our citizens as a regular feature on the agenda of Trinidad and Tobago.

The National Trust rose to the challenge and had several exhibitions throughout the year, many of which were associated with other cultural and heritage events. These included a fundraising exhibition and art auction for a listed building that was being restored – the St Francis of Assisi church of Belmont; A Carnival exhibition of former Monarchs, a virtual tour and experiential events with traditional characters; the collection spot for large costumes of a popular band; the Shouter Baptist showcase, Sale of Plant and seeds for Corpus Christi, in conjunction with the Citizens for Conservation and the Horticultural Division, Indian Arrival Day and Emancipation Day exhibitions co-hosted by the Art Society, a Steel pan tribute and exhibition, Divali Light up with traditional events, sale of food and an exhibition of decorated deyas by young persons from all over the country; and in September, a Kairi and Urupaina Art Contest which brought many talented young people to share their creative interpretations. The 20 finalists were exhibited at Mille Fleurs and the award ceremony was also held there. The National Trust also had its popular Parang and Ponche de Crème event at Mille Fleurs and this encouraged other organisations such as the Holistic music school to utilize the yard and lovely gallery for open air events.

The National Trust procured coloured lighting for the Heritage House and this supplemented the decorations for Christmas, Independence and Divali as well as for many of the private and fundraising events that were held there.

The National Trust also implemented improvements to the Nelson Island Heritage site, increasing its solar generation capacity, expanding its entertainment space, restoring its landing deck and providing bollards so that boats could moor more easily. This resulted in additional tours by schools as well as two themed trips for Carnival and Indian Arrival celebrations.

It also commenced the building of a benab at the Banwari Archaeological site after this had been delayed by Covid. The traditional construction of the benab by the First Peoples has been recorded so that it can be shared and used as a teaching opportunity. This year also tours have restarted, slowly gaining numbers as we emerge from the pandemic hesitancy, but also as new locations are being offered. Mr. Greene had been able to train some more guides during the partial lock down and this enabled a wider variety and choice of smaller tours.

The general meeting held in November 2022 saw the inclusion of one additional elected member, Ms. Susan Shurland who joined the other four elected members, Dr. Ryan Mohammed, Ms. Cezanne Chang, Mrs. Marie Abdulla and Mr. Mark Franco. Later that year, we welcomed the representative from Tobago, Mr. George Leacock who then was honoured with a National award soon after.



## MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRMAN

These six members added to the appointed members, Neisha Ghany, Candice Ramsaran, Dominic Romain, Jacqueline Weekes-Penco and myself made up the full Council for the first time in many years.

Several staff and Council members were involved in several research and educational activities this year. On Oct 3rd Ms. Ghany and Mr. Bertrand represented the NTTT at the INTO conference in Dundee Scotland, while on October 20th Mr. Morris represented us at the Aruba Archaeology conference. In November, Mr. Franco represented the NTTT at the commencement of the restoration committee for the Holy Trinity Cathedral. Ms. Roopsingh attended training in Antigua on maintenance and preservation of historic buildings and then gave a presentation upon her return. Early in the year, arising out of the MOU that we had signed just before Covid, we had a visit from three professors in Archaeology from Leiden University and we had a lecture by Professor Artie Boomert on his seminal work in Trinidad. This visit paved the way for the mounting of the Caribbean Ties exhibition which was installed at its first location at the compound of the First Peoples of Santa Rosa in Arima. The archaeological team also advised on the way forward with the creation of a national archaeological committee and finalized the visit of students from Leiden to spend several weeks in July/August to assist the National Trust in locating many of the archaeological sites that had been discovered decades previously. Two additional sites were located and visited and the team also provided guidance on additional archaeological research on our existing sites including Banwari.

The National Trust has traditionally advised Regional Corporations and community groups as to ways of promoting their heritage. However, that year we particularly worked with the Rio Claro Heritage and Preservation Organisation as they raised funds to install a historic marker in tribute to little known persons slain in labour riots in Rio Claro. This was finally unveiled in June of that year and was made more significant by the address of Professor Brinsley Samaroo who passed away soon after.

This year also resulted in several more requests for comments on impact on natural heritage sites and invitations to consultations on quarrying in particular. The big highlight of the year however was the formal listing of 16 additional properties of interest. For all of these activities, the Landmarks Subcommittee of the Council has provided yeoman service. This subcommittee has two members of Council, Dr Mohammed and Mr. Franco as well as three members of the National Trust, Ms. Rudylynn Roberts, Mrs. Avril Siung Chang and Mrs. Roma Wong Sang as well as all of the Heritage Preservation and Research Officers. The Landmarks Subcommittee also assisted the project unit of the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and the Arts, in planning to restore several heritage sites under their jurisdiction and worked hard, in particular to get Fort George refurbished in time for the visit of His Royal Majesty Otumfuo Osei Tutu II of Ghana who visited at the time of Emancipation celebrations in August of that year. I also represented the NTTT at the official ceremonies for His Majesty and a pivotal address was given by Ms. Ranut, one of our HPRO's at the ceremony at Fort George.



## MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRMAN

Members will know of the grant that the NTTT received from the US Ambassadors Fund, which we used to study the impact of climate change in particular relation to sea level rise in downtown Port of Spain and on Nelson Island. Working with the University of Florida, the selected staff, Ms Roopsingh and Ms. Austin and as required, the rest of the Landmarks Subcommittee, successfully implemented the programme which culminated in a major international conference entitled Keeping History Above Water at the Hyatt Regency hotel in March.

This is a landmark accomplishment for the National Trust, especially as this particular conference has never been held outside of the United States before this.

December 2022 saw the launch of the book Growing up Woodbrook - An Amazing Square Mile and our emergence into the publishing world. This was the culmination of continuous work throughout the pandemic and a deep partnership between the Woodbrook Residents Committee, the National Trust and the writer, editor and graphic designer.

Another very important event was the commencement of the retreats of Council and senior staff in July 2023, to begin the strategic work towards the National Trust's new development plan. The draft of the strategic part of this plan is now available for members to peruse and comment so that we can finalise before the next General Meeting earlier next year. The final activity which is worth mentioning was the Stakeholders event, which we held at Nelson Island on the 30th September.

This gave us the opportunity to showcase the National Trust and recognize and treat existing and potential contributors to our development plans in the short and medium term.

October 2022 to September 2023 was a very successful year despite all the challenges related to the lack of funding which has stymied many of our plans especially with relation to obtaining additional staff. Once again, our existing staff led by the dependable Graeme Suite, has showed that they are our greatest assets and their commitment despite the lack of suitable accommodation and the ever-increasing workload is really heartening. I also give thanks every day to the Council and subcommittee members who have worked as executive members rather than solely policy makers.

I must mention the contribution of the Honorable Minister, who despite her busy schedule has attended very many of our events and is one of our greatest promoters. The Planning Division of the Ministry of Planning and Development has been particularly helpful, and we appreciate the collaboration of the sister agencies many of whom we are working with on a regular basis. The project unit of the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and the Arts and the Historical unit of the Ministry of Works and Transport have also become important partners joining the Archives Division who is always ready to assist.

Finally, I want to thank all the National Trust Members, especially those that are volunteers, who read the articles, come out to our events, tours and lectures and provide feedback.



## OUR TEAM - COUNCIL



**CHAIRMAN**  
MARGARET MCDOWALL



**DEPUTY CHAIRMAN**  
NEISHA GHANY



**TREASURER**  
DOMINIC ROMAIN



**SECRETARY**  
CANDICE RAMSARAN



SUSAN SHURLAND



MARIE ABDULLAH



CEZANNE CHANG



**THA REPRESENTATIVE**  
GEORGE LEACOCK



JACQUELINE WEEKES-PENCO



DR RYAN MOHAMMED (PHD)



MARK FRANCO

## OUR TEAM - STAFF



From left to right (back row) Dean Philips, Sean Austin, Aaron Phipps, Tiy Cross-Lovelace, Graeme Suite, Ashleigh Morris, Junior Marciano, Joseph Bertrand (front row) Courtney Martin, Kumi De Souza, Marlon Green, Nesyman Ranut, Kelly Ann Cazabon, Margaret Harewood, Crystal Austin, Pascualina Heresford, Pauline Philip.

## OUR TEAM - STAFF



# TREASURER'S REPORT



Dear Members

It is my distinct pleasure to once again report to you on the financial performance of the National Trust of Trinidad and Tobago.

Commendations as per usual must be extended to our auditors, Aegis business Solutions for their efficiency in the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the IFRS for SMEs, as well as our reliable accounting staff who assisted in expediting the process.

For yet another year, the Trust can boast of having received an unqualified audit opinion, testimony to the efficient management of assets under our stewardship.

Fiscal 2023 can best be described as a year of improved fortunes for the Trust as most of our revenue metrics recorded noted growth.

Net realized income for 2023 stood at \$4,247,780 an increase of \$1,002,779 approximately 31% over the prior year. This yielded a net profit for the Trust of \$295,755 a notable turn around from a net loss of \$565,488 recorded in fiscal 2022.

Both government subvention and Trust generated income continue to be the two main sources of revenue for the Trust with both scoring increases in 2023.

The latter received a significant boost from tours and rentals of the Mille Fleurs heritage house which has become a much sought after venue of choice for upscale social events.

Income from tours stood at \$707,837 up from \$253,256 for the corresponding period prior, while heritage house rentals stood at \$358,230 up from \$3500 in 2022. This lends itself to the aggressive marketing thrust of the business development and marketing co-ordinator who has also been serving in the capacity of team lead in lieu of a substantive CEO.

The general reserves fund also reported a surplus increase of \$295,785 to close the year at \$758,228 up from \$462,473 in 2022 when it suffered a significant decline due to a shortfall in subvention income which it had to supplement.

## TREASURER'S REPORT

Continued cost management efforts resulted in general and administrative expenses showing a minimal increase of 0.8% or \$8900 from the prior corresponding period.

A decrease would have been realized were it not for the expense incurred to host a one time stakeholder event at Nelson Island which brought together line ministry personnel, members of the diplomatic core, UDECOTT officials and others, to show appreciation for their contributions to the Trust's efforts and to solidify continued patronage of same.

The proclamation of the Public Procurement and Disposal of Public Property act In April of 2023 would have had an impact on the execution timelines for some infrastructural projects owing to challenges experienced by contractors in navigating the new registration and pre-qualification requirement to do business with public bodies.

This would have resulted in some items listed for completion in 2023 having to be pushed to fiscal 2024.

As new opportunities present themselves for the efficient and expedited roll out of our 5 year strategic plan, the Trust stands ready and able to find innovative ways to embrace same. This includes the retention of temporary staff for short term projects geared towards improving the Trust's operations, how we interact with our membership and the wider public across various media platforms and how we reposition our revenue model from one of sustainability to one that is more profit focused.

Significant upgrades have been undertaken at all sites under direct Trust management. These include the construction of the long awaited benab at Banwari Trace which was the venue of choice for the recent Warao coronation ceremony for the next Caciqua.

Our flagship attraction Nelson Island has also been the beneficiary of noteworthy improvements including the renovation and outfitting of Butler's cottage which would soon be available for rental by the public thereby adding to the income generating potential of the island. Exciting times lay ahead for the National Trust as we seek to undertake an ambitious agenda of activities in the coming year intended to bolster operational efficiency and institutional strengthening but more importantly heighten public awareness of the organization and its conservation mandate.

To this end we look forward to the continued support of our existing and fast growing membership. We encourage you to engage with us through the use of our various social media platforms and share ideas of how the Trust can better serve you and by extension the wider society.

On behalf of the management and staff of the National Trust of T&T, I bid you all season's greetings and a productive 2025.



## ACCOUNTING



## FINANCIAL STATEMENT - BALANCE SHEET

|                             | NOTES | 2023        | 2022        |
|-----------------------------|-------|-------------|-------------|
| <b>ASSETS</b>               |       |             |             |
| <b>Non-Current Assets</b>   |       |             |             |
| Plant and Equipment         | 3     | 231, 146    | 236,856     |
| <b>Current Assets</b>       |       |             |             |
| Inventories                 | 4     | 42, 199     | 86, 874     |
| Account Recievables         | 5     | 62, 961     | 32, 878     |
| Cash in hand and at bank    | 6     | 2, 832,222  | 1, 537, 574 |
|                             |       | 3, 168, 528 | 1, 894, 182 |
| <b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>         |       |             |             |
| <b>FUND AND LIABILITIES</b> |       |             |             |
| <b>Fund</b>                 |       |             |             |
| General Reserves fund       |       | 758, 228    | 462, 473    |
| <b>Current Liabilities</b>  |       | 1, 307, 786 | 971, 683    |
| Payables and Accruals       | 7     | 1, 102, 514 | 460, 026    |
| Deffered Income             | 8     | 2,410, 300  | 1, 431, 709 |
|                             |       | 3, 168, 528 | 1, 894, 182 |



## OPERATIONS

The Operations unit continued to support the other units of the Trust in the areas of leave management, management of staff files, petty cash disbursement and replenishment, the creation of purchase orders, ordering and disbursing of office supplies and stationery, and liaising with vendors and suppliers. The unit was also responsible for communications with financial institutions in the form of job letters and any other written correspondence. This unit also assisted with supervision at some events held at Mille Fleurs and with ensuring that there were adequate supplies of toiletries and garbage bags during and after events.

The operations unit also submitted proposals for performance appraisal methods and other administrative policies and produced and edited articles for a newsletter.



## PROJECTS & FACILITIES



The Facilities Department from left to right: Junior Marcano, Kelly Ann Cazabon, Sean Austin, Courtney Martin, Dean Phillips, Kumi De Souza (Senior Facilities Officer)

## PROJECTS & FACILITIES

### NELSON ISLAND HERITAGE SITE

Projects executed below in the total amount of TT\$2,725,000.00

- Construction and completion of Outdoor Deck at Nelson Island for hosting of Events and facilitating School Tours.
- Expansion of the Security Camera System at Nelson Island by adding cameras and associated infrastructure for coverage to the Jetty and the Walkway areas for improved security and monitoring.
- Installation of additional solar lights and poles to replace lights and panels damaged by the Vultures and to expand the quantity of external solar lights at night for improved security and monitoring.
- Execution of restorative paintworks at the Heritage Buildings on Nelson Island – Mess Hall, 1802 Building & Jail Cells.
- Installation of new perimeter rails along the walkways around the Island to provide a protective barrier for visitors, especially School Children on Tours.
- Construction of New Custodian Quarters, located south of the Jail Cells, to provide adequate accommodations for the Custodians on duty at Nelson Island.
- Upgrade of the Solar Power System on the Island by adding more Solar Batteries and an additional Inverter for increasing the electrical power capacity of the system.



## PROJECTS & FACILITIES

### NELSON ISLAND HERITAGE SITE

- Purchase of 200 new outdoor chairs for improved accommodations for visitors at Events and Tours on Nelson Island.
- Renovation of the Kitchen facilities at the Mess Hall with new Cupboards, Gypsum Ceiling, Light Fixtures and outfitting with New Appliances for enhanced Visitor Accommodations.
- Construction of concrete apron/walkway between the Jail Cells and the 1802 Building to provide safe access to this space.
- Supply and Installation of New Watercoolers at main Heritage Buildings, along with associated water distribution system, to provide filtered drinking water to Visitors at Events & Tours.
- Retrofit of the Main Landing Jetty at Nelson Island by replacement with new greenheart materials throughout for new steps and supports. All wooden members were replaced.
- Restoration of Butler's Cottage due to extensive termite damage and upgrade with new toilet and shower. This is to provide new visitor accommodation options through short-term rental platforms to be launched by the Trust.



## HERITAGE PRESERVATION & RESEARCH



From left to right: Ashleigh Morris, Nesyman Ranut, Crystal Austin, Karishma Nanhu

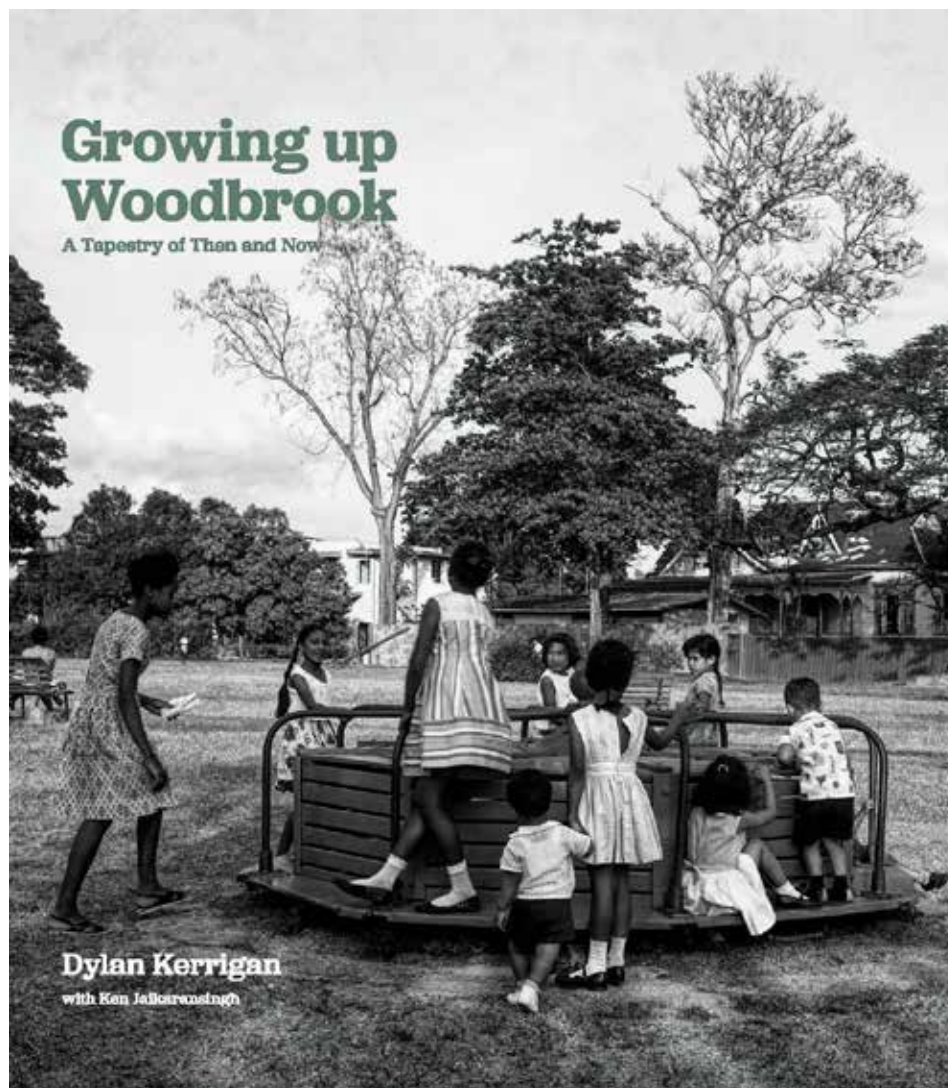
## HERITAGE PRESERVATION & RESEARCH

### PARTNERSHIP WITH THE WOODBROOK RESIDENTS COMMITTEE ON THE “GROWING UP WOODBROOK” HERITAGE PROJECT

In early 2020, the Woodbrook Residents Committee (WRC) approached the National Trust of Trinidad and Tobago with a proposal to collaborate on a “Living Memory Heritage Project.” The WRC aimed to create a coffee table book titled “Growing up Woodbrook - A Tapestry of Then and Now: An Amazing Square Mile in History,” commemorating the community’s rich history as it neared its 110th anniversary on November 1, 2021. This date marked the historic transfer of the Siegert Estate to the Town Board, now known as the Port of Spain City Corporation.

The primary objective of the WRC was to ensure the stewardship and preservation of Woodbrook’s historical assets while capturing the community’s living memories for future generations. The project’s goals aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) 2030 Thematic Clusters, particularly Goal 4.7 (Education – Learning Objective) and Goal 11.4 (Cultural Heritage). These priorities resonated with the Trust’s dual mission of preservation, education, and outreach.

The collaboration between the National Trust and the WRC drew upon historical and archival data, enriched by community memories, to craft a comprehensive narrative. The Trust recognized that a community with a well-documented historical legacy could serve as a model for others across the nation.



## HERITAGE PRESERVATION & RESEARCH

By documenting and sharing the experiences of Woodbrook's residents, the project offered younger generations a unique insight into the lives of their parents and grandparents, fostering a deeper appreciation of Trinidad and Tobago's diverse cultural heritage.

The project culminated in the successful production of the coffee table book, which not only chronicled Woodbrook's evolution from a thriving sugarcane estate into a vibrant residential community but also celebrated the achievements of its residents in sports, culture, academia, and politics. The book, authored by social scientist Dr. Dylan Kerrigan, explored the sociological aspects of growing up in Woodbrook and underscored the community's significance within the cultural fabric of Trinidad and Tobago.

The book was officially launched on Thursday, December 1, 2022, during a ceremony at the Mille Fleurs Heritage House in Port of Spain. This event marked a significant milestone for both the WRC and the National Trust in their joint efforts to preserve and celebrate the heritage of Woodbrook.



### PROGRESS IN HERITAGE DOCUMENTATION LISTING

During the reporting period, no new properties were officially listed. However, on November 23rd, 2022, the National Trust held a Listing Ceremony to formally recognize properties that were gazetted in August 2022 (as documented in the previous annual report).

The ceremony, organized by the Heritage Preservation and Research Division (HPRD), took place on Wednesday, November 23rd, and included the following Properties of Interest (POIs):

- Trinidad Government Railway Building (PTSC Building)
- Carnegie Free Library
- Lopinot House
- Cabildo Building
- Naipaul House
- Knowsley Building
- Woodford Square
- George Brown House
- President's House
- Our Lady of Montserrat Roman Catholic Church
- St. James Police Barracks and Commissioner's Residence (Trinidad and Tobago Police Service, Police Academy)
- Rock Island
- Caledonia Island
- Craig Island
- Lenagan Island
- Pelican Island

## HERITAGE PRESERVATION & RESEARCH

Substantial progress has been made on the dossiers for two significant assets: the Indigo Pit at Crown Point, which is an important representation of Tobago's larger plantation culture, and the River Estate Waterwheel and Museum, notable for being the only remaining intact waterwheel on the island of Trinidad. This progress was achieved with the valuable assistance of two interns, Ms. Abigail Charles and Ms. Marianna Burke. On August 23rd, 2023, both research areas were presented to the public, inviting recommendations and feedback. As a result, these dossiers are now well-prepared and will be ready for the next batch of listings.



**HERITAGE PRESERVATION & RESEARCH**  
**MONITORING OF LISTED PROPERTIES OF INTEREST**



## HERITAGE PRESERVATION & RESEARCH

The National Trust's site monitoring programme has been actively ongoing. The list below provides a detailed account of the listed properties that have been monitored between 2022-2023.

- Lopinot House
- Fort Picton
- Banwarie Trace Archaeological Site
- Killarney
- Mille Fleurs
- Nelson Island
- Sacred Heart
- Archbishop's Residence



## HERITAGE PRESERVATION & RESEARCH

- The Five Islands:
  - Rock Island
  - Lenagan Island
  - Pelican Island
  - Caledonia Island
  - Craig Island
- Our Lady of Montserrat
  - To assess ongoing restoration efforts
- St. Joseph R.C.
- St. Francis of Assisi
  - To observe ongoing restoration works
- Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception
- Trinidad Building and Loan Association
- National Museum and Arts Gallery
  - To monitor progress on restoration works
- PTSC Site
  - To discuss plans for improving the transportation hub.



### INTERNSHIP PROGRAMME

In July and August 2023, the National Trust of Trinidad and Tobago hosted two interns, Ms. Abigail Charles and Ms. Marianna Burke, for an eight-week internship programme. Each intern was responsible for producing a dossier, a comprehensive research document that outlines the significance of a Property of Interest (POI) and supports its listing under the National Trust Act, Chapter 40:53.

Two heritage sites were selected for this programme: the Indigo Pit at Crown Point in Tobago, and the River Estate Waterwheel and Museum in Trinidad. Both interns successfully completed their assigned projects.

During their internship, they actively participated in staff events, outreach activities, and provided valuable feedback. The programme concluded with a public presentation of their research findings and was successfully executed under the supervision of Ms. Nesyamn Ranut.

## HERITAGE PRESERVATION & RESEARCH

### PUBLIC ADDRESSES - COMMEMORATING THE VISIT OF HIS MAJESTY ASANTEHENE OTUMFUO OSEI TUTU II

In recognition of the historic visit of **His Majesty, Asantehene Otumfuo Osei Tutu II** and his delegation from Ghana, Nesyamn Ranut delivered a welcoming address on behalf of the Trust. The event, held at Fort George on August 2nd 2023, provided a platform to honour the profound historical ties between Trinidad and Tobago and Ghana, highlighting their shared ancestry and collective journey through history.

Ranut underscored the multifaceted importance of Fort George, a site that stands as both a symbol of colonial fortification and a testament to the resilience and contributions of enslaved Africans. She spoke to the historical and cultural connections between the two nations, from the influential Pan-Africanist movement of the twentieth century to the cultural exchanges that have shaped our societies, such as Lord Kitchener's "Birth of Ghana," a song celebrating Ghana's independence in 1957. His Majesty's visit presented an important moment to acknowledge the lasting impact of Africans in the diaspora on the cultural and historical fabric of the Caribbean.

The address also emphasised the ongoing work of the National Trust in preserving the tangible and intangible heritage of Trinidad and Tobago. Ranut expressed a commitment to fostering deeper dialogue and collaboration between Trinidad and Tobago and Ghana, underscoring the value of such exchanges in promoting mutual understanding, respect, and a shared commitment to learning from the past.



## HERITAGE PRESERVATION & RESEARCH

### DEVELOPING THE BANWARI ARCHAEOLOGICAL VISITOR CENTRE



## HERITAGE PRESERVATION & RESEARCH

### DEVELOPING THE BANWARI ARCHAEOLOGICAL VISITOR CENTRE

The Banwari archaeological site stands as the only public site of its kind in Trinidad and Tobago, and is recognised as one of the oldest known settlements of the First People in the Caribbean. During the 2022-23 reporting period, the National Trust made significant strides in transforming this historical location into an Archaeological Visitor Centre. This site will not only educate the public on archaeological excavation and research methods but will also serve as a vital resource for understanding the cultural practices and legacies of the First People.



### SOCIO-ECONOMIC IMPACT

The Banwari site holds profound significance for the surviving descendants of the First Peoples in Trinidad and Tobago, who continue to use this location for important worship ceremonies. The site's development not only honours their heritage but also offers citizens and visitors a unique opportunity to experience the architecture of an authentic Benab. The development efforts are being carried out in close collaboration with the First Peoples of Santa Rosa and the Warao Nation of South Trinidad.



## HERITAGE PRESERVATION & RESEARCH

### PROJECT PHASES

This ambitious project was divided into three phases:

#### Phase 1: Setting the Foundation

- The project kicked off in December 2021 with the sourcing, cutting, and transporting of wood to the site, followed by site preparation. This included cleaning and treating the wooden posts before laying out the Benab's footprint, digging holes, and placing the posts.

#### Phase 2: Erecting the Roof Frame

- The construction of the roof frame involved meticulous sourcing and transportation of materials, culminating in the framework's assembly.

#### Phase 3: Roofing with Timit Leaves

- The final phase saw the completion of the roof, with Timit leaves carefully selected, cut, processed, and placed onto the frame. This phase marked the culmination of the construction efforts.



## HERITAGE PRESERVATION & RESEARCH

### DOCUMENTATION AND MEDIA COVERAGE

The National Trust of Trinidad and Tobago took great care in documenting the construction of the Benab. A dedicated two-member team, including Business Development and Marketing Coordinator Graeme Suite and Heritage Preservation and Research Officer Nesyamn Ranut, provided comprehensive videographic and photographic coverage, along with conducting interviews for historical documentation.

- **February 2022:** The team initiated coverage by documenting the treatment of the building materials with wood preservative.
- **March 2022:** The team captured the ceremonial blessing of the space, the digging of holes, and the placement of posts, accompanied by an insightful interview with Chief Bharath on the history and construction of Benabs.
- **April-May 2022:** Progress with the Benab's frame was documented in detail during multiple visits.
- **September 2022:** The team journeyed to the Arena Forest Reserve to document the selection, cutting, and collection of Timit leaves, which were later processed and organized at the Santa Rosa Community Centre.

The last site visits revealed a fully completed roof structure, marking the successful completion of Phase 3. The next step, tiling the floor, was completed outside of this reporting period.



### ARTICLES & BLOGS

#### ARTICLES:

- Historic Indo-Trinidadian Architecture: The Avocat Mud House Museum
- Sites of Remembrance: Jewish Refugees in Trinidad during World War 2

#### BLOGS

- The Rose Window and Its Origins
- Errol Jones: A Tribute on the Centennial of his birth
- Remarks on the history of Fort George
- Sites to visit before the end of JAVA
- A Look at our Roman Catholic Heritage
- Cast Iron and Its Origins
- 5 Things To Know About Phagwa
- The Demerara Window and its Origins
- A Lopinot Christmas
- Legacies of the indentured Part 1: Indian Art & Visual Aesthetics,
- Legacies of the indentured Part 2: Sonar and Kohar: Indian caste-based professions in Trinidad



### DIWALI CELEBRATIONS AT MILLE FLEURS NOVEMBER 2023

- Tabla workshop by Mayank Ramgoolie
- Dance Workshop by Seema Suruj-Jardine
- Sari tying
- Henna by Aneesa Karim

### DECORATE A DEEYA

Our annual decorate a deeya campaign: We put out a call open to anyone to submit their decorated deeyas for our Diwali celebrations. We received over 150 beautiful deeyas from children and adults from across Trinidad.

We worked with the following partners:

1. Sangre Grande Regional Corporation
2. Penal/ Debe Regional Corporation
3. Princes Town Regional Corporation (special instructions previously sent)
4. Couva-Talparo-Tabaquite Regional Corporation
5. Chaguanas Borough Corporation
6. San Fernando City Corporation (special instructions: please drop off deeyas at the auditorium at City Hall) it is on the same compound.
7. Radio Tambrin Tobago



### CHRISTMAS SOCIAL MEDIA STAFF PROJECT 12 DAYS OF HERITAGE

In December 2022 for Christmas the staff of the National Trust posted 12 Days of Heritage on social media. In the spirit of 12 Days of Christmas we asked our staff to choose 12 heritage assets which stood out to them personally. These included built as well as natural heritage assets. We shared the staff's picks and their reasons why they chose them.

1. DAY 1: St.Giles chosen by Ashleigh Morris
2. DAY 2: Marac Tar Lake chosen by Marlon Green
3. DAY 3: Toco Lighthouse chosen by Maya Doyle-Fox
4. DAY 4: Lapeyrouse Cemetery chosen by Graeme Suite
5. DAY 5: Maracas Waterfall chosen by Karishma Nanhu
6. DAY 6: Lopinot chosen by Joseph Bertrand
7. DAY 7: Fort James chosen by Crystal Austin
8. DAY 8: The Five Islands chosen by Nesyamn Ranut
9. DAY 9: Speyside Waterwheel chosen by Tiy Cross Lovelace
10. DAY 10: L'eau Michel Mud Volcano chosen by Kara Roopsingh
11. DAY 11: Hyarima Statue chosen by Sean Austin
12. DAY 12: Nelson Island chosen by Pauline Phillip



In the spirit of 12 Days of Christmas we asked our staff to choose 12 heritage sites which stand out to them personally.

## HERITAGE PRESERVATION & RESEARCH

### INTERNATIONAL COLLABORATIONS - RESILIENT HERITAGE TRINIDAD & TOBAGO



Resilient Heritage Trinidad and Tobago is a grant project funded by the US Ambassadors Fund for Cultural Preservation (AFCP), through the US Embassy Port of Spain, and implemented by the National Trust in partnership with the University of Florida Historic Preservation Program (UFHP) and the Craig Group. It is an initiative aimed at advancing the resilience and long-term preservation of Trinidad and Tobago's historic sites and cultural resources as they are impacted by climate change.

Resilient Heritage Trinidad and Tobago's areas of focus in its first phase are downtown Port of Spain (St. Vincent Jetty Lighthouse, Fort San Andres and the Port of Spain Old Railway Station, also known as the PTSC building) and the historically significant Nelson Island, located off the fishing village of Carenage. The project intends to serve as a model that can be replicated for the preservation of heritage sites across Trinidad and Tobago and in the wider Caribbean region.

As one of 22 applicants from around the world, the National Trust was able to secure funding through the highly competitive AFCP 20th Anniversary Partnership Program grant in 2021 and was awarded a total of US \$199,960 for the implementation of Resilient Heritage Trinidad and Tobago. The signature of the US Department of State Federal Assistance Award in September 2021, as well as the finalization of a Memorandum of Understanding with UFHP in March 2022, and later a Research Subaward Agreement in July 2022, allowed for data sharing and full collaboration among project partners.

Several key project activities took place during the reported period 2022-2023.

### DIGITAL DOCUMENTATION

In November 2022, UFHP Professor Dr. Sujin Kim, made his second visit to Trinidad, which provided him the opportunity to complete the digital documentation of Nelson Island, after having commenced this activity during his first visit in April 2022.

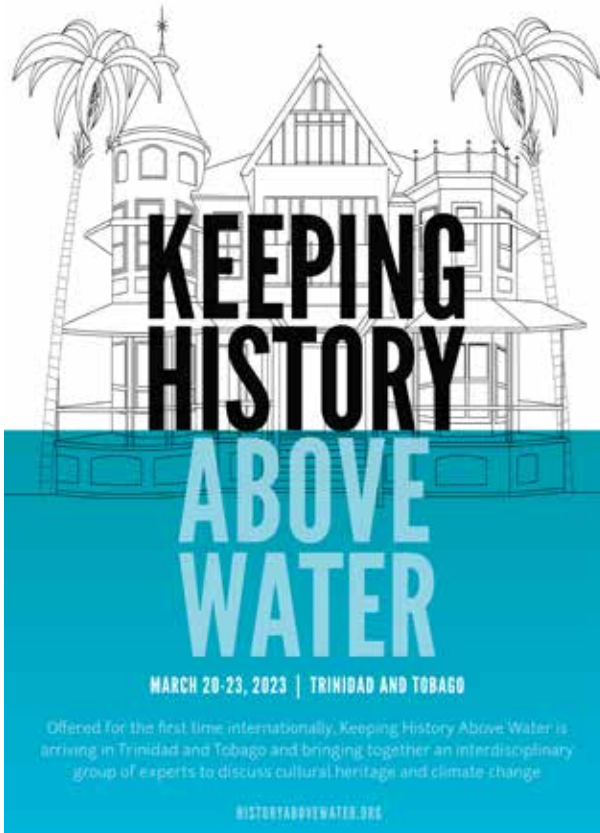


## TRAINING WORKSHOP

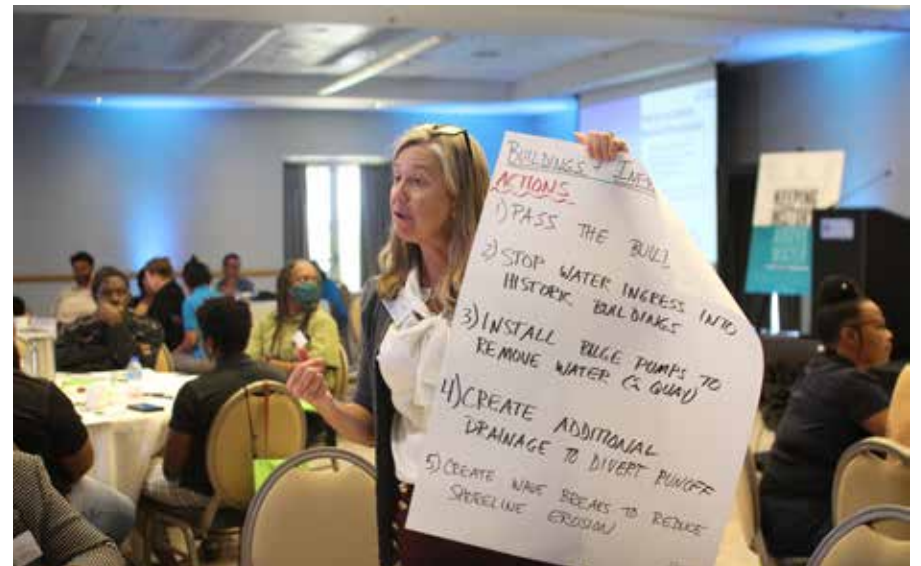
Dr. Kim also made use of this second visit to facilitate a two-day Built Heritage Documentation Training Workshop from 14th to 15th November, as part of the project's knowledge transfer component. Workshop participants included National Trust staff as well as representatives from the Institute of Marine Affairs (IMA), the Environmental Management Authority (EMA), the Environmental Policy and Planning Division of the Ministry of Planning and Development (EPPD), the Surveys and Mapping Division of the Ministry of Agriculture, Land and Fisheries, the UWI Geomatics Department and the Culture Division of the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and the Arts. The workshop entailed training in photogrammetry, 360° virtual tour development, as well as field conditions assessment and a demonstration of the terrestrial LiDAR (laser scanning) technology used for the project.

## **KEEPING HISTORY ABOVE WATER: TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO**

From 20th to 23rd March 2023, the National Trust hosted Keeping History Above Water: Trinidad and Tobago (KHAW TT), which was another important outcome of Resilient Heritage Trinidad and Tobago. This was the first Keeping History Above Water event to be hosted outside of the United States, building on the successful series begun by the Newport Restoration Foundation in 2016. The Conference, held from 20th to 22nd March, brought together local and international cultural heritage specialists, government officials, adaptation professionals, planners and climate change experts to examine the impacts of and share best practices regarding climate change and sea level rise in the Caribbean and beyond.



## HERITAGE PRESERVATION & RESEARCH - RESILIENT HERITAGE TRINIDAD & TOBAGO



## OUTREACH & EDUCATION DEPARTMENT



From left to right: Aaron Phipps, Graeme Suite, Marlon Green, Joseph Bertrand and Tiy Cross-Lovelace. Cheryl Ali not pictured. Image Courtesy Nesyamn Ranut

## OUTREACH & EDUCATION

### PUBLIC TOURS

The Trust was excited to introduce several new tours between 2022 and 2023 which exposed guests to new and exciting aspects of the country's heritage. The Trust hosted over 3800 local and visiting guests on 77 tours throughout Trinidad and Tobago including the following new tours:

- Marac Heritage & Adventure Tour
- Grande Riviere Heritage & Adventure Tour
- Matelot Heritage Tour
- Saut D'eau Heritage & Adventure Tour
- Covigne Gorge Adventure Tour

During this period, international guests who attending the Keeping Heritage Above Water Conference were hosted on tours to:

- Nelson Island
- Central Trinidad
- Turtle watching tours
- Others

### PRESIDENT'S HOUSE TOURS

The National Trust collaborated with the Office of the President to introduce for a limited time, special Magnificent Seven tours that included a tour of President's House. This provided the general public and Trust members with a unique opportunity to view the extensive restoration works done on the building. The Trust and President's House also used the opportunity to exchange special information about the history of the property and insights on tour administration and management.



### NELSON ISLAND MARINE ENVIRONMENT INITIATIVE

The National Trust is leading the way in fostering Blue Economy innovations in and around the Nelson Island and Five Islands Heritage Park. In the past, the area had a reputation for being a rich storehouse of marine life and reef systems that, over time have declined. Recognising the potential for environmental remediation and conservation, the National has supported research and experimental restoration programs spearheaded by the organisation - H.A.L.O.S - which stands for Habitats for Aquatic Life and Ocean Systems. Under this collaboration, manmade barrier reefs were seeded in the waters around Nelson Island. These made from multiple onshore waste streams including, but not limited to, waste glass bottles, waste oyster shells, bio char, spent coffee grounds and Sargassum seaweed.

The pioneering concept includes bio char-based composites, engineered aluminum and rebar frames which allow secure attachment of oceanographic buoys and instrumentation. The HALOS program seeks to also installation of monitoring equipment and cameras to support continuous data measurement and real time monitoring via telemetry and satellite feeds.

Join our journey online as we work towards deploying the first set of Five Islands reefs to protect our heritage for generations to come!

View livestreams from a global network of marine research programs -

<https://highlights.aqualink.org/>



### MAKING MEMORIES AT MILLE FLEURS

The magical story of a lady who build a magnificent house for her husband circa 1904 continues to be an inspiration for groups and organisations today who visit Mille Fleurs and make it their venue of choice for special events. Mille Fleurs is a model of adaptive re-use as the National Trust has opened the doors to allow citizens to conveniently and affordable host their private events. From birthday parties to weddings , anniversaries, awards and product unveilings, guests at Mille Fleurs always comment how special they feel, attending special events at thie Magnificent -7 building. According to Chairman Margaret McDowall “Mille Fleurs symbolises that our heritage is to be enjoyed and accessed by all. It is part of our identity and therefore must be open to hosting the range of commemorative events that different businesses, religious bodies, communities and individuals hold dear to their hearts.”

The heritage house remains open throughout the year and has been a popular setting for events on auspicious occasions like Independence and Old Years night. Amidst all of the festivities the Trust also makes provisions for hosting exhibitions of art and craft, musical demonstrations and dance. “Mille Fleurs has become quite the melting pot for the diverse expressions of the country’s culture and that helps to ensure that it will be around for many new generations to enjoy it in the future, as much as we enjoy it today.

The Trust was also pleased to make Mille Fleurs available for a number of worthy charitable and social causes during the period including-

- Fundraising for St Francis of Assisi RC Church in Belmont
- Book Launch for Woodbrook Residents Committee “Growing up Woodbrook”
- Bocas LitFest Prizegiving
- Rotary Club of Maraval fundraiser
- Basel Convention Regional Centre – Caribbean global plastics reception



## OUTREACH & EDUCATION

### DRAFT COMMUNITY-BASED TOURISM SUB-POLICY

The Trust facilitated feedback and comments on the Ministry of Tourism Culture and the Arts' Draft Community-Based Tourism (CBT) Sub-policy. The policy is a welcomed spotlight on the potential for the heritage economy and more directly how communities can play a key role in sustainable heritage business and conservation. The Trust has identified over 400 sites of historical importance and there are still more to be catalogued. Additionally there is a growing base of heritage site managers and community-based groups who volunteer their time and experience to create unique tour experiences. With improved collaboration and action among these stakeholders, the heritage economy is poised to make a tangible impact on national development and diversification.



## OUTREACH & EDUCATION

### MAGNIFICENT 7 – 70KM RUN

The Trust collaborated with BAFA Sports for reintroducing the Magnificent 7 run, where athletes, enthusiasts and well wishers earned a seven-medal set for covering 70 kilometres over a period of time anywhere in the country (or abroad). The special commemorative medal set represented each of the Magnificent 7 buildings and served as a reminder of the ongoing work to ensure their conservation.



## OUTREACH & EDUCATION

### RE-IMAGINING SITES OF AFRICAN ENSLAVEMENT

RISE is a transformative initiative that unites managers of heritage sites across the Atlantic with connections to the transatlantic slave trade. This program focuses on the institution of racial slavery that spanned the sixteenth to nineteenth centuries, exploring innovative approaches to heritage management and interpretation.

Key themes addressed by RISE include:

- Re-imagining Heritage Sites: Developing equitable and respectful interpretation strategies.
- Fundraising and Development: Creating sustainable financial models for site management.
- Staffing: Enhancing recruitment, training, and retention practices.
- Leadership and Governance: Fostering change through board diversity and ethical stewardship.
- Tourism: Engaging the Black diaspora and promoting inclusive visitor experiences.
- Marketing and Communications: Crafting strategies to reach domestic and international audiences inclusively.
- Event Hosting: Balancing heritage preservation with site rentals for weddings and celebrations.
- Education and Outreach: Inspiring the next generation through educational programs and community engagement.



- Visitor Etiquette: Addressing challenges like selfies, re-enactments, and history theatre to promote respectful behaviour.
- Ideological Controversies: Navigating debates and their impact on the interpretation of historic sites.

We are proud to note that Joseph Bertrand, our Outreach & Education Officer, participated in this prestigious program. His involvement ensures the National Trust remains at the forefront of inclusive and innovative approaches to heritage preservation, education, and visitor engagement.



### INTO HERITAGE: NOW CONFERENCE

The International National Trusts Organisation (INTO) Heritage: Now Conference brings together heritage professionals from around the globe to collaborate on protecting world heritage.

Originating in the 1970s as the International Conference for National Trusts (ICNT), this biennial event provides a platform for the global network to meet, share insights, and address challenges within the heritage sector.

The 2024 conference, held in Dundee, Scotland, centered on the theme “Heritage Now: Relevance & Community” and explored ways to ensure heritage remains meaningful to diverse communities. One of the standout sessions, Session 3: (Re)interpreting Relevance, featured the presentation “What’s in a Name? Lopinot Presentation”, which examined how names and narratives influence heritage site interpretation.

We are delighted to highlight that Joseph Bertrand, our Outreach & Education Officer, represented the National Trust as a speaker at this esteemed conference. His presentation showcased our commitment to exploring complex histories and fostering inclusive narratives in the interpretation of Trinidad and Tobago’s heritage sites.



## OUTREACH & EDUCATION

### AQUILLA TOUR GUIDING EXCELLENCE (INTERNATIONAL CERTIFICATION)

The Aquilla Tour Guiding Excellence program provides professional development for tour guides through a structured curriculum and rigorous assessment. This international certification program enhances the skills and expertise of participants, equipping them to deliver exceptional tour experiences.

The course comprises six comprehensive lessons covering essential topics for tour guides, culminating in an assessment that includes a written exam and a video component. Participants who achieve a score of 70% or higher earn the prestigious Tour Guide Excellence International Certification, along with a certificate and pin, joining the global community of certified tour guides.

#### Course Topics:

1. Lesson 1: Introduction to the Cruise Industry.
2. Lesson 2: Hospitality & Service Excellence.
3. Lesson 3: Research & Field Skills.
4. Lesson 4: Presentation, Storytelling & Interpretation.
5. Lesson 5: Preparation & Processes.
6. Lesson 6: Difficult Situations & Risk Management.

This certification reinforces the Trust's commitment to building capacity among its team, ensuring the delivery of world-class heritage experiences.



## OUTREACH & EDUCATION

### LECTURES

In the post-COVID-19 period, the National Trust successfully adapted its lecture series to a mix of online, in-person, and hybrid formats. These lectures continued to fulfill the Trust's mandate to educate and engage the public on heritage topics. Highlights from the period include:

#### Online Lectures

- **Hidden Treasures:** Indigo Pits at Parlatuvier & Crown Point and Diego Martin Waterwheel – Presented by the Tobago Library Team.

#### In-Person Lectures

- **Indigenous Spirituality and Medicine** – Payi Cristo Adonis.
- **“Never Get Weary: Spiritual Baptist”** – Pastor Ingrid Ryan.

#### Hybrid Lectures

- **Miniatures of Trinidad and Tobago** – Tremayne Frauenfelder.

These lectures reflect the Trust's commitment to making heritage accessible through diverse and inclusive learning platforms.



### VIRTUAL TOUR DEVELOPMENT

#### Virtual Tour Development

The National Trust has embraced virtual technology to showcase and preserve the heritage of Trinidad and Tobago, making key sites accessible to global audiences. Virtual tours bring history to life, fostering deeper engagement while preserving cultural narratives in a dynamic and interactive format.

#### Featured Virtual Tours:

- Nelson Island – Trinidad and the Abolition of the Slave Trade Project (TARP).
- Arima – Indian Arrival Day Tour.
- Forts of Port of Spain.
- Rancho Quemado.



## OUTREACH & EDUCATION

### HERITAGE KEEPERS PROGRAM

The Heritage Keepers Program is the National Trust's youth initiative, designed to create meaningful, hands-on experiences with heritage sites for young participants.

Highlights:

- Belmont Boys' RC School: Port of Spain, June 29, 2022.
- Holy Cross College: Bush Bush Wildlife Sanctuary, July 6, 2022.
- Girl Guides Camp: July 2022.
- Heritage Keepers Outreach Activities:
- Corpus Christi College Career Day: June 2023.
- Trinity College East Level Up Program: June 2023.



## OUTREACH & EDUCATION

### EVENTS

The National Trust hosted several successful events showcasing the country's cultural heritage:

- March 26, 2022 – Carnival at Mille Fleurs “Living Museum”: 159 attendees enjoyed performances and workshops.
- February 14, 2023 – Traditional Carnival on Nelson Island: 224 attendees celebrated this unique cultural tradition.
- December 2, 2023 – Ponche de Crème and Parang on Nelson Island: 191 attendees celebrated the festive season with music and local flavors.

