

NATIONAL TRUST OF TRINIDAD & TOBAGO



ANNUAL REPORT 2023/2024

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MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRMAN



Margaret McDowall (image courtesy Nesyamn Ranut)

It is my honour to present the Annual Report of the National Trust of Trinidad and Tobago for the fiscal year 2023/2024. As Chairman, I take this opportunity to reflect on the year that has passed—one that brought considerable progress, important lessons, and a deepened commitment to securing the future of our nation’s heritage.

This Report highlights some of the more significant activities of this year, but I want to stress that all the staff have worked tirelessly all through the year meeting increasing demands. We were greatly assisted in our productivity now that we were able to move into our office in the Mews. While we still do not have sufficient room especially for storage of artefacts and meeting space, we can now operate in comfortable surroundings. I should stress that the management of the office renovation and the move was carried out by our own in-house staff.

We should celebrate our achievements this year. Through the Public Sector Investment Programme (PSIP), we successfully executed restoration, outfitting, and infrastructural works at three of our most iconic sites: Nelson Island, Banwari Trace Archaeological Site, and the Mille Fleurs Heritage House.

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRMAN

These projects did more than improve the physical infrastructure—they revitalised narratives, made spaces more accessible, and opened new pathways for education, revenue generation, and innovation. Whether through the installation of water conservation systems, our study of the marine heritage around the Five Islands, security upgrades, additional restoration of the Heritage House, or the outfitting of our new head office at the Mews Building, we have improved and strengthened the assets of the Trust.

We also made tangible investments in our outreach and education agenda. Over 4,400 people—including 1,345 students—participated in our heritage tours this year, gaining insight into the social, political, and architectural narratives that define our identity. We expanded our celebrated *Toute Bagai* lecture series, advanced the digitisation of our Resource Centre, and welcomed new local and international collaborators in research, including through our Resilient Heritage Trinidad and Tobago project with the US Embassy and the University of Florida. This resulted in a significant international conference entitled *Keeping Heritage Above Water* – the first time this has been held outside of the United States. We also commenced a series of monitoring listed sites working with the property owners to find ways of maintaining their heritage assets. Supported by our Ministry, we have also participated in group meetings of our sister agencies and increased our collaboration with them to jointly forge national development. These activities have deepened public understanding, supported national development goals, and helped cultivate the next generation of heritage stewards.

I am especially proud of the efforts to modernise internal systems, strengthen project delivery, and elevate public engagement. The creative energy poured into events like “Sea of Light,” our Divali celebration at Mille Fleurs, “Kay Miste,” our Caribbean Folklore experience and our Banwari archaeological experience, has made heritage feel alive and relevant to people of all ages and backgrounds.

Yet, alongside these accomplishments, we are mindful of the challenges. Our financial statements for the year reflect a deficit of approximately \$386,000. While our overall revenue from Trust-generated sources increased—rising to \$1.68 million especially due to the rental of Mille Fleurs and our tours—we continue to operate within tight budget constraints.

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRMAN

Like many institutions of our kind, we remain heavily dependent on government subventions, which have not increased in response to rising costs. The resulting cash flow challenges have limited our capacity to accelerate project timelines and expand staff capacity. These realities reinforce what we already know: long-term sustainability must come from a more diversified funding model and improved internal efficiency. We also need to increase our number of members and deepen our interaction with them. We will be reaching out to you in this year to gain insights as to how this can be successful.

In 2024, we began the preparation for our new Strategic plan with workshops for staff and Council. Our five-year Strategic Plan (2025–2030), now adopted by Council, prioritises not only the safeguarding of heritage assets, but the development of a thriving heritage economy. We are positioning the Trust to become a more agile, accountable, and commercially capable institution. This includes expanding our revenue from rentals, tours, and retail sales, as well as actively pursuing sponsorships, grants, and private-public partnerships. Importantly, we will invest in staff training, digital systems, and stronger project delivery mechanisms to ensure we are fully equipped to carry out our growing mandate.

I am convinced that the Trust must lead on issues of environmental stewardship and sustainability—areas inseparable from heritage preservation. Initiatives such as our Five Islands Marine Experimentation Hub and blue economy pilot projects are not merely innovative; they align closely with the goals of Trinidad and Tobago’s Vision 2030 national strategy and the United Nations’ Sustainable Development Goals. We are showing that heritage conservation can serve as a catalyst for climate resilience, community empowerment, and economic diversification.

In this report, we honour the legacy of visionaries like the late Geoffrey MacLean, whose lifelong commitment to conservation continues to inspire our work. His example reminds us that heritage is never static. It is dynamic, layered, and alive—and it requires care, courage, and collaboration to protect.

As Chairman, I express my deep appreciation to my fellow Council members, our dedicated staff, our partners in government, academia, civil society and our members, who believe in our mission. The road ahead will require discipline, new partnerships, and a sustained effort to reimagine how we connect our heritage with the future we seek.

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRMAN

Thank you for your continued support. I invite you to continue the journey with us in shaping a National Trust that is not only preserving the past, but stimulating a commercial approach to the development of our heritage assets, thus contributing to the diversification of the national economy.

TREASURER'S REPORT



Dominic Romain, Treasurer

It is my privilege to present the Treasurer's Report for the National Trust of Trinidad and Tobago for the financial year ended 30 September 2024. This past year has been one of mixed financial outcomes—marked by notable gains in our internal revenue streams and key operational investments but also characterised by tightening liquidity and an overall deficit that underscores the urgency of strategic reform.

Despite the fiscal challenges faced by many public institutions, the National Trust demonstrated its capacity to generate independent revenue. Total Trust-generated income for the year reached \$1.68 million, reflecting a 24% increase over the previous year's \$1.35 million.

TREASURER'S REPORT

This commendable growth was led by improved performance in our core commercial services:

- Tours generated \$797,131, up from \$707,837 in the prior year.
- Mille Fleurs rentals yielded \$500,905, a 40% increase over the previous year's \$358,230.
- Event income rose to \$111,439.
- We also introduced new revenue streams from book publishing, partnership activities, and professional service fees related to the WRC, totalling \$101,622.

These gains reflect the strength of our heritage offerings and the dedication of our staff to enhancing the Trust's visibility, relevance, and client service. They also affirm the potential of our revenue-generating departments when supported by effective programming, marketing, and operations.

However, we must view these achievements alongside the reality of our expenditure and cash flow trends. Total income for the year—including Government subventions and PSIP support—stood at \$4.97 million, while total expenditure reached \$4.53 million, resulting in a deficit of \$385,641. This compares to a surplus of \$295,755 in the previous year. The deficit was driven primarily by:

- An increase in staff costs, which rose to \$3.03 million from \$2.41 million, reflecting expanded project staffing under PSIP and key hires to support institutional growth.
- Council fees and travel rising to \$567,369, aligned with an active governance year that required increased oversight of capital projects, strategic planning, and compliance.
- General and administrative expenses, while down slightly from the previous year, remained substantial at \$851,662.

Cash and cash equivalents at year-end stood at \$1.33 million, down from \$2.83 million the previous year. This steep decrease in liquidity—over 53%—was due in part to the execution of PSIP projects and purchases of plant and equipment amounting to \$144,755. In addition, deferred PSIP income for ongoing works on Nelson Island, Banwari Trace, Mille Fleurs and the Mews Building reduced from \$1.1 million to \$893,102.

TREASURER'S REPORT

What is clear from these figures is that while we are investing wisely in capital development and expanding service delivery, we must now prioritise financial resilience and institutional efficiency. The Trust cannot continue to rely predominantly on subventions, which were themselves reduced by over \$550,000 this year. Instead, our path forward must be guided by the Strategic Plan 2025–2030, which sets out a clear financial sustainability agenda.

Key strategic areas already receiving attention include:

- Strengthening our organisation structure, for managing rentals, tours, and retail sales, with a clear mandate to increase efficiency, value for money and income.
- Expanding our sponsorship and grant-writing capacity. Notably, the Trust secured US\$199,960 from the U.S. Ambassadors Fund for Cultural Preservation for the Resilient Heritage project—an example of the types of opportunities we must continue to pursue.
- Improving financial controls and reporting systems, particularly in project accounting and receivables management. This year we saw a marked increase in accounts receivable (from \$62,961 to \$118,039), which we aim to resolve through more robust invoicing and collections protocols.
- Improve digital infrastructure and inventory systems which will eventually reduce manual processes and improve service quality.

Looking ahead, the Trust will need to incorporate an entrepreneurial posture to complement its outreach and preservation activities. We must treat every tour, every rental, and every publication not just as a service, but as a strategic opportunity for growth. At the same time, we are committed to maintaining full compliance with international financial reporting standards (IFRS for SMEs), sound procurement practices, and public accountability requirements. I wish to express sincere appreciation to the Audit Committee, our financial staff, and our external auditors, Aegis Business Solutions, for their rigour and professionalism. Their work ensures that this report is more than a formality—it is a tool for transparency, for decision-making, and for strengthening the public's trust in our institution.

I am confident that the National Trust is positioned to emerge stronger, more responsive, and more financially sustainable. With clear direction, committed leadership, and the support of our stakeholders, we will transform these challenges into opportunities for growth. We will not simply preserve the past—we will finance the future of Trinidad and Tobago's heritage economy.

Thank you.

A TRIBUTE TO GEOFFREY MACCLEAN (1942-2024)

Geoffrey MacLean, was a valiant defender of our national heritage. Born in Pointe-à-Pierre, Geoffrey dedicated his life to the conservation and celebration of our nation's artistic and architectural treasures. His passion and commitment left an indelible mark on our cultural landscape, making him a figure of national significance and affection.

Geoffrey's work in promoting historic and contemporary art and architecture across Trinidad and Tobago was unparalleled. As a conservationist, his efforts in the restoration of historic buildings not only preserved our physical heritage but have also raised public awareness about the importance of conservation. He was the Nation's leading authority on Michel-Jean Cazabon, Trinidad's National Hero, and celebrated nineteenth-century artist, manifested in seminal publications that brought Cazabon's work to the forefront of national consciousness.

Geoffrey was a foundation member of the Citizens for Conservation, a past President of the TTIA and a Council member of the National Trust both from 2000 to 2008 and again from 2014 to 2019 and served as Deputy Chairman for part of that time. As a tribute to the Fiftieth anniversary of the Nation's Independence in 2012, Geoffrey collected and curated a book of 50 Heritage buildings in Trinidad and Tobago for the National Trust and this book is still a popular gift item. Even after he demitted office on the Council Geoffrey willingly gave of his time to provide advice on a range of heritage issues including the Old Police Headquarters in San Fernando as he was also on the San Fernando Heritage Trust for many years.

Geoffrey MacLean's legacy is a testament to a life lived in passionate service to the preservation of Trinidad and Tobago's cultural heritage. As we remember him, we are reminded of the responsibility we share in continuing his work, ensuring that our nation's cultural and historical treasures are cherished and preserved. Geoffrey's dedication, passion, and achievements will continue to inspire and guide us in the stewardship of our cultural heritage. The National Trust of Trinidad and Tobago mourns the loss of a true cultural icon but celebrates the legacy he leaves behind.

OUR TEAM (COUNCIL)



CHAIRMAN
MARGARET MCDOWALL



DEPUTY CHAIRMAN
NEISHA GHANY



TREASURER
DOMINIC ROMAIN



SECRETARY
CANDICE RAMSARAN



THA REPRESENTATIVE
GEORGE LEACOCK



MARK FRANCO



SUSAN SHURLAND



JAQUELINE WEEKES-PENCO



DR RYAN MOHAMMED (PHD)



TURKESSA BLADES

OUR TEAM (STAFF)



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



PROJECTS & FACILITIES

NELSON ISLAND NATIONAL HERITAGE SITE



IMAGE COURTESY: CHIOT'S RUN (FLIKR.COM)

DESIGN, SUPPLY AND INSTALLATION OF A RAINWATER HARVESTING SYSTEM ON NELSON ISLAND.

This was completed in 2024 and comprises four (4) new 800 Gallons Water Storage Tanks and four (4) new 1,000 Gallons Water Storage Tanks connected to the 1802 Building, Jail Cells Building and the Custodian Quarters, with a total storage capacity of 7,200 gallons. This rainwater harvesting storage system is directly connected to the Male Toilets at the Jail Cells and the Female Toilets at the 1802 Building, reducing onsite reliance on the Desalination Unit and thereby promoting water conservation and sustainable water management. We also undertook the restoration of the Concrete Water Storage Tank at the Butler's Cottage, providing an opportunity for Visitors to experience the traditional water collection methods.

PROJECTS & FACILITIES - NELSON ISLAND HERITAGE SITE

OUTFITTING OF BUTLER'S COTTAGE

This was completed in 2024 and provides accommodations for visitors to spend the day at this unique replica of where Butler was kept by the British Colonial Government during the World War 2 period. It now provides additional opportunities for the Trust to further monetize the activities on the Island. New furniture, small appliances, utensils, curtains and other similar items were added to provide a cozy environment for our guests.



PROJECTS & FACILITIES - NELSON ISLAND HERITAGE SITE

OUTFITTING OF BUTLER'S COTTAGE



PROJECTS & FACILITIES - NELSON ISLAND HERITAGE SITE

RE-ESTABLISHMENT OF THE TRADITIONAL BATHING AREA & SMALL CRAFT ACCESS AT NELSON ISLAND

Phase 1 of this project was completed in 2024. This consisted of an oceanographic survey which was done to determine both the topography of the seafloor and the biodiversity in this area earmarked for sea bathing. A report was then submitted which provided positive feedback towards embarking on other phases in Fiscal 2025. This project will serve as a platform from which preliminary data collection infrastructure and strategies can be conceptualized towards modelling economic indicators within a micro-Blue Economic initiative. By definition, the Blue Economy is the sustainable utilization of the ocean resources for supporting and improving the economy, livelihoods and jobs, as well as maintaining a healthy ocean ecosystem. The National Trust now seeks to embark on the implementation of a pioneering micro level ecosystem at the Five Islands with Blue Economic Initiatives and projects towards sustainable development within the Blue Economy, at scale within Trinidad and Tobago.

PROJECTS & FACILITIES - BANWARI TRACE ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITE

IMPORTATION OF THE CARIBBEAN TIES EXHIBITION FROM BARBADOS TO TRINIDAD.

This was done in 2024 with an initial set-up at the Santa Rosa First Peoples Community and a partial set-up at Banwari for our Minister's Outreach Function. Eventually the Exhibition will permanently be accommodated at the Main Benab at the Banwari site. The Caribbean Ties Exhibition is a unique exhibition that presents the diversity and complexity that existed in the Caribbean before the arrival of the Europeans and that is still present today. It helps promote awareness of the rich cultural heritage of the First Peoples of the Caribbean throughout the Islands.



PROJECTS & FACILITIES - BANWARI TRACE ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITE

PREPARATION OF A SITE DEVELOPMENT PLAN FOR THE BANWARI TRACE ARCHAEOLOGICAL HERITAGE SITE

This site plan was completed in 2024 and provided the location of all the existing main elements of the site in addition to other planned future facilities.

COMPLETION OF THE WEST PERIMETER FENCE AT BANWARI

This job was completed in 2024 and involved the removal of the old chain link fence and replacement with new fence and refurbishment of the existing fence posts. The base of the fence was cast throughout to provide greater stability and to assist in easier maintenance of the perimeter. This project resulted in the improved securing of the perimeter of the site.

DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION OF A STOREROOM AS AN ADDITION TO THE EXISTING TOILET BLOCK

This project was completed in 2024 and involved the expansion of the existing Toilets to include the creation of a new storeroom space to accommodate the storage of tools, equipment and eventually exhibition materials. It was eventually expanded to include the installation of new floor tiles, wall fans and drop ceiling to the three (3) existing toilets.

PROJECTS & FACILITIES - BANWARI TRACE ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITE

FOUNDATION WORKS AT THE MAIN BENAB AT BANWARI

This project was completed in 2024 and involved the raising of the existing floor level at the Benab to prevent water damage to the posts of the Benab. It also involved the excavation of an earthen swale drain around the Benab to enhance the drainage of the site, especially at the Benab, where evidence of water damage began to appear.



PROJECTS & FACILITIES - BANWARI TRACE ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITE

DESIGN, CONSTRUCTION AND SUPPLY OF TWO MOCK EXCAVATION BOXES WITH SAND AND ACCESSORIES FOR ARCHAEOLOGICAL WORK

This project was completed early in 2024 under the useful advice and guidance of the Heritage Preservation & Research Department and provides a unique insight into the practice of archaeology and will be a useful addition to the Banwari product.



PROJECTS & FACILITIES - MILLE FLEURS HERITAGE HOUSE

NATIONAL TRUST NEW HEAD OFFICE (MEWS BUILDING)

A new PSIP Line Item was created in 2024 for the outfitting of the Mews Building for the relocation of Staff from our temporary Offices at Mille Fleurs to our New Head Office at the Mews. These projects below were collectively completed during a six month period.



- **SUPPLY AND INSTALLATION OF NINE (9) AC SPLIT UNITS AT THE MEWS AND GUARD BOOTH**

This project was completed in 2024 and involved the procurement and installation of AC Equipment necessary for the opening of the Headquarters/ Head Office of the Trust at the Mews Building.



- **BUILDER'S WORKS AT THE MEWS FOR THE ACCOMMODATIONS OF STAFF FOR THE OPERATIONS OF THE HEAD OFFICE OF THE NATIONAL TRUST.**

This project was completed in 2024 and involved the installation of doors, door frames, gypsum walls, skirting, floor tiles and painting of all internal walls throughout the Mews Building. This job was instrumental in the completion of the space to accommodate the relocation of Staff from Mille Fleurs and to accommodate those who were working remotely.

- **SUPPLY AND INSTALL OF ICT INFRASTRUCTURE AT THE MEWS.**

This job was completed in 2024 and involved the hard wiring of all workstations and workspaces with data and voice drops. It also involved the supply and installation of Network Switches, desktop UPS and Wireless Access Points. This was all necessary, as the Mews had no ICT Infrastructure, which was necessary for the operations of the New Head Office.

- **SUPPLY AND INSTALL OF FIRE EXTINGUISHERS AND SMOKE DETECTORS**

This job was done in 2024 and was necessary for the fire safety requirements of the space, as advised by the T&T Fire Service. It involved the purchase and installation of five (5) fire extinguishers and nine (9) smoke detectors.

PROJECTS & FACILITIES - MILLE FLEURS HERITAGE HOUSE

- **SUPPLY AND INSTALL OF FIRE EXTINGUISHERS AND SMOKE DETECTORS**

This job was done in 2024 and was necessary for the fire safety requirements of the space, as advised by the T&T Fire Service. It involved the purchase and installation of five (5) fire extinguishers and nine (9) smoke detectors.

- **SUPPLY AND INSTALL OF SECURITY CAMERA SYSTEM**

This was completed in 2024 and involved the installation of fourteen (14) security cameras, two (2) monitors, DVR Recorder, cable, other accessories and a Cabinet for the Equipment. This was necessary for the monitoring of the compound in real time by the Security and Staff.

- **MEWS EXTERNAL WORKS – BACK APRON, GUTTERING & SECURITY SPIKES ON THE BACK WALL.**

This job was completed in 2024 and was necessary for the completion of the exterior of the Head Office by the construction of an Apron which provided a safe walkway at the back of the Mews, especially for the Grounds Maintenance Staff and the installation of security spikes onto the Back perimeter wall for the improved security of the compound.

PROJECTS & FACILITIES - MILLE FLEURS HERITAGE HOUSE



UPGRADE & COMPLETION OF THE HERITAGE HOUSE (MILLE FLEURS)

- **FLOOR REFURBISHMENT WORKS.**

This job completed in 2024 involved the sanding and refinishing of the existing hardwood floors at the western balcony, ground floor of Mille Fleurs. A final stain and polyurethane floor finish was then applied to restore the floor to look like new.

- **TERMITE TREATMENT OF MILLE FLEURS.**

This job completed in 2024 involved the complete fumigation of Mille Fleurs for the control of dry wood termites. The building was shut down and completely covered with tarpaulin during the fumigation process. The building disappeared from sight for 2 weeks. But it was re-opened once all the safety checks were completed.

- **INSTALLATION OF WI-FI EQUIPMENT AND INFRASTRUCTURE.**

This job completed in 2024 involved the hard wiring of Wi-Fi infrastructure for the improved connectivity of Staff our respective Offices on the compound and also at the Trust Shop at Mille Fleurs.

- **INSTALLATION OF A CENTRAL AC SYSTEM AT MILLE FLEURS.**

This job started in 2024 and is earmarked for completion in 2025. The first phase involved the design, supply and installation of a Central AC System at the Ground Floor only. The tender was completed and funds requested and received. The contract was awarded to Peake's Technologies who has ordered the main equipment from China and delivery and final installation is earmarked for early 2025.

PROJECTS & FACILITIES - STAFFING

In 2024 through PSIP funding we acquired the services of a Civil Engineer and an Architect to assist with the PSIP Programme and specifically with a few Mille Fleurs related projects.

Project Management Staff consists of the following:

1. Senior Projects & Facilities Officer
2. Civil Engineer
3. Architect

Facilities Management Staff consists of the following:

1. Facilities Technician
2. Custodians (8) – Nelson Island (4), Mille Fleurs (3), Banwari (1)

OUTREACH & EDUCATION

NATIONAL TRUST OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO TOURS



The National Trust took **4464 people** on tours. **1345** of them were **students.**



OUTREACH & EDUCATION

NATIONAL TRUST OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO RESOURCE CENTRE

The National Trust of Trinidad and Tobago is committed to the preservation and dissemination of cultural and historical knowledge. As part of this mission, the development of a dedicated Resource Centre has been a key initiative during the reporting period. This report outlines the progress made in establishing the Resource Centre, including the identification of a suitable space, cataloguing of books, acquisitions, donations, and the implementation of a digital record-keeping system.

• IDENTIFICATION OF SPACE

One of the primary objectives for the Resource Centre was to secure an appropriate location that is accessible, functional, and conducive to research and learning. After careful evaluation of available options, a dedicated space within companion building at Mille Fleurs has been identified and designated for the Resource Centre. This space meets the necessary criteria for housing historical and contemporary resources while ensuring accessibility to members and researchers.

• CATALOGUING OF BOOKS AND PUBLICATIONS

A systematic cataloguing process was initiated to organize existing books and publications efficiently. This involved:

- Assessing and documenting available materials.
- Classifying books and publications according to subject matter, relevance, and historical significance.
- Implementing a standardized cataloguing format for ease of access and future expansions.

OUTREACH & EDUCATION - NATIONAL TRUST RESOURCE CENTRE

• DONATIONS OF BOOKS AND PUBLICATIONS

The Resource Centre has benefited from generous donations from individuals and institutions.

- Publications relevant to Trinidad and Tobago's heritage, history, and cultural preservation.
- Special collections, including rare books and archival materials.

• ACQUISITION OF BOOKS AND PUBLICATIONS

To enhance the depth and diversity of available materials, strategic acquisitions were made. These acquisitions aimed to fill gaps in the collection and include:

- Reference materials on conservation, architecture, and historical Trinidad and Tobago.
- Books that support educational programs and outreach initiatives.

• DIGITAL RECORD OF BOOKS AND PUBLICATIONS

In an effort to modernize and streamline access to the Resource Centre's materials, a digital record system has been initiated. This includes:

- The development of a searchable digital database for books and publications.
- Integration of an inventory management system to track lending and resource usage.

FUTURE PLANS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Moving forward, the National Trust aims to:

- Complete the full digitization of existing records and make them available through an online portal.
- Rename to the "Winston Suite Resource Centre." and install signage to same.
- Expand the collection through targeted acquisitions and continued partnerships with donors.
- Develop policies for public access, membership benefits, and research support.
- Secure additional funding and sponsorships to enhance the Resource Centre's facilities and resources.

OUTREACH & EDUCATION

UNESCO CARIBBEAN HEAD VISITS NELSON ISLAND

The Trust was pleased to host Dr. Anna Paolini, Director and Representative of UNESCO Caribbean along with other representatives from UNESCO's Trinidad and Tobago office on Nelson Island.

Dr. Paolini was on mission to Trinidad and Tobago in November 2023 and was keen to visit places of cultural significance. Nelson Island proved to be a fantastic hub of deep history covering military heritage, indentureship, the Black Power movement and Butler's detention.

Dr. Paolini also learned of the Trust's more contemporary green initiatives for the five islands heritage park including the use of solar power, desal water and exploratory work on the rehabilitation of marine habitat around the islands.



DR. ANNA PAOLINI, DIRECTOR AND REPRESENTATIVE OF UNESCO CARIBBEAN, (SECOND FROM LEFT) AND OTHER PERSONNEL FROM UNESCO ON A FAMILIARISATION TOUR OF NELSON ISLAND.

OUTREACH & EDUCATION

SEA OF LIGHT

The festival of lights always takes on a spectacular flavour against the backdrop of the magnificent Mille Fleurs Heritage House. For Divali 2023, the Trust hosted the public, diplomats and members to an immersive experience. The “Decorate a Deya” program yielded spectacularly creative entries from students and members of the public which then formed the basis for an exhibition at Mille Fleurs. Scores of ornately decorated deyas filled the house, as guests were also treated to workshops on Indian Dance, Sari tying and mehendi. At sunset everyone gathered for the traditional lighting of deyas, transforming the landscape into an awe inspiring sea of light.



OUTREACH & EDUCATION

SEA OF LIGHT



OUTREACH & EDUCATION

CARIBBEAN FOLKLORE CELEBRATION OCTOBER 29-31

Our folklore is a tapestry of cautionary tales filled with heroes and villains offering wisdom and warnings about navigating life. It is also extremely entertaining, as hundreds of guests found out when they visited Mille Fleurs for Kay Miste. Guests were treated to special effects workshops, storytelling and memorable interactions with characters brought to life. Papa Bois guardian of the forest and la Diabliesse, the grand dame of deception were among the special characters regaling guests with fascinating tales of how they came to be.



OUTREACH & EDUCATION

KAY MISTE - CARIBBEAN FOLKLORE CELEBRATION



OUTREACH & EDUCATION

NATIONAL TRUST TOURS TO PRESIDENTS HOUSE

“The present mansion has a fine entrance with lofty hall and tessellated floor, from which the grand staircase leads to the private rooms.” This sounds like the opening lines of a classic romance novel but in fact, it is the description of what greeted guests on our inaugural and hugely popular Presidents’ House tours. Tucked between the whispering trees of the Botanic Gardens and the grand Queen’s Park Savannah, guests stepped through time to visit the iconic grounds that has seen princes, presidents—and even a wallaby! Imagine it: mahogany doors swung wide for royal balls, laughter echoing beneath embossed ceilings, and fragrant jasmine curling through the air from sunlit balconies. Built in 1876 on a foundation of ambition and limestone from Laventille, this stately mansion has survived fire, earthquake—and colonial gossip! Sixteen British governors called it home, followed by Governor Generals, and, after 1976, the Presidents of Trinidad and Tobago. If these walls could talk, oh, the stories they’d tell. After decades of wear, this grand dame received a full royal makeover and was restored in 2019—proud, polished, and ready to dazzle again.



OUTREACH & EDUCATION

BANWARI TRACE ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITE

The Banwari Archaeological site has a new feature that gives budding archaeologists a chance to activate their inner explorer. The National Trust installed mock digging pits and replica artefacts to allow visiting students the opportunity to simulate what it is like in the field carefully extracting and cataloguing buried under centuries of earth and sediments. The National Trust facilitated a tour of work in progress at the site and was pleased to host the Minister of Planning and Development Penelope Beckles-Robinson, other Ministry officials and the Member of Parliament for Oropouche West Davendranath Tancoo.

As one of the oldest known settlements for First Peoples in the Caribbean, and having the reputation for being the place where human remains thousands of years old were found, the site has a special significance for first people. The Trust is developing it to encourage greater understanding and appreciation for research into the ways of life of First Peoples.

Chairman of the National Trust , Margaret McDowall noted that , the work on the site is a critical element of the Trust’s mandate for diversity, equity and inclusion in its heritage conservation. “Extensive research now available about First Peoples affords a greater understanding of their lives and struggles and it commands our respect in treating with them and their descendants.”

When completed, the Banwari Trace Archaeological Site will feature a visitor Centre in authentic first people structures called Benabs, and a regionally themed exhibition known as Caribbean Ties that provide enormous insights into First Peoples culture with examples from throughout the hemisphere. An exhibit of artefacts of tools, pottery, food sources and modes of transport will complement the mock archaeological digging pit to give visitors a hands-on experience of some of the field research processes involved in archaeology.”

The Trust was pleased to host a group of visiting Hampton University students accompanied by Dr Sujin Kim to explore local built and natural environments and discuss sustainable urban design strategies. The group visited Nelson Island and did a tour of downtown Port of Spain. As a special exercise, the students designed their vision for a visitor centre for Nelson Island.

OUTREACH & EDUCATION



OUTREACH & EDUCATION

FIVE ISLANDS MARINE EXPERIMENTATION HUB

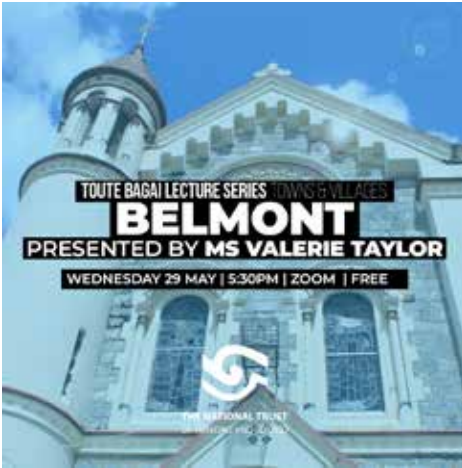
Nelson Island and Five Islands hold a unique place in the country's history with their link to so many different eras in the country's development. These remote islands located off the coast of Carenage are the embodiment of great things in small packages and are now making a new reputation for themselves. The waters around the island is teeming with untapped potential and a collaboration with the HALOS group has identified a number of ways in which Nelson Island and the Five islands can become a Marine Experimentation Hub.

The research is looking at repopulating seagrass and reefs around the islands to provide habitat for an array of aquatic life. There is a heavy environmental conservation focus in the projects and that includes an innovative use of sargassum seaweed and waste oyster shells for making plugs to rehabilitate reef development. A SMART BOUY was also deployed that captures a range of oceanic data to plot how temperature, currents and other variables are changing through the day. The group is also experimenting with off-shore farming, installing systems for clam and oyster and farming.



OUTREACH & EDUCATION

TOUTE BAGAI LECTURE SERIES - TOWNS & VILLAGES



The National Trust built on the Toute Bagai Lecture Series with a focus on Towns and Villages. This lecture series comprised 9 lectures, and had an audience of 1100 persons.

- Let's Go Paramin with Cornelius Felicien
- The Royal Chartered Borough of Arima with Holly B Jr
- Moruga with Sharon Taylor
- Lopinot with Donna Mora
- Belmont with Valerie Taylor
- Chaguaramas with Lt Kerron Valere (Coast Guard)
- The Coup Tapes Project with Joseph Bertrand
- Cazabon Unveiled with Stephenka Lina
- Woodbrook with Wendell Manwarren

With the growth of the lecture series, the Toute Bagai Lecture series 2024 took the focus of Towns and villages. The presenters all were from the community and presented:

- History
- Heritage Sites
- Community Sites
- Community experience
- Personal Experiences

It was very well received by the public and the recordings were put together for sale to generate income.

HERITAGE PRESERVATION & RESEARCH

ONGOING MONITORING OF LISTED PROPERTIES OF INTEREST

The National Trust's site monitoring programme has been actively ongoing. Monitoring heritage assets is a crucial activity of the National Trust as it ensures the ongoing preservation, protection, and sustainable management of sites of historical, cultural, and architectural significance. Regular monitoring allows the Trust to assess the condition of these assets, identify potential threats or areas of deterioration, and take proactive measures to mitigate risks. It also helps maintain the integrity of heritage sites, fosters public awareness, and supports informed decision-making for adaptive reuse or restoration, ensuring that these treasures remain accessible and meaningful for future generations. The table below provides a detailed account of the listed properties that have been monitored between 2023-2024, as well as other site visits conducted during this period for observational purposes.



HERITAGE PRESERVATION & RESEARCH

MONITORING OF LISTED PROPERTIES OF INTEREST

- PTSC Site
- St James Barracks
- Banwari Trace Archaeological Site
- National Museum and Art Gallery (RVI)
- Lopinot House
- Hayes Court
- Conquerabia
- Exchange Village Shiv Mandir
- Nelson Island
- Fort San Andres Museum
- PTSC Building



The National Trust's site visits to assets that exist or have the potential to exist on the Inventory of Heritage Assets, are crucial for comprehensive heritage management. These visits provide opportunities to evaluate and document sites that hold cultural, historical, or architectural value, even if they do not meet the criteria for formal listing.

By examining such properties, the Trust gains a broader understanding of the nation's heritage landscape, identifying underrepresented narratives and overlooked elements of cultural significance. Additionally, these visits allow the Trust to engage with property owners and communities, fostering a sense of shared responsibility for heritage preservation.

Even if a site is not listed, the insights gained from these visits contribute to research, educational initiatives, and policy development, ensuring that the nation's rich and diverse heritage is acknowledged, respected, and celebrated in meaningful ways.

HERITAGE PRESERVATION & RESEARCH

OTHER SITE VISITS

- Canaan Farm Road Sugar Mill, Tobago
- Rambharose Shiv Mandir and Kootiya
- North Coast Pillars
- McDonald Jorsling Building
- Tunapuna Old Post Office
- Armalaya Presebyterian Church and Morton House
- Fort George
- Fort Monck, Tobago
- Caroni Swamo and Embacadere Sluice Gate
- Marios Pizza Building, Independence Square



HERITAGE PRESERVATION & RESEARCH

HERITAGE PRESERVATION AND RESEARCH DEPARTMENT INTERNSHIP PROGRAMME

From July 3rd to August 23rd, 2024, the National Trust hosted Ms. Stéphenka Lina, a Master's student in Heritage Tourism at Panthéon-Sorbonne University in Paris. Her internship focused on compiling a dossier on the Cazabon Collection, a project of profound cultural significance. Through her work, Ms. Lina aimed to highlight the rich cultural and natural beauty reflected in Michel Jean Cazabon's art, broadening the representation of Trinidad and Tobago's tangible heritage. In addition to her research, Ms. Lina actively participated in outreach activities that aligned with her interest in exploring and understanding Trinidad and Tobago's unique cultural heritage. The internship concluded with a public presentation of her findings, which was highly commendable and completed under the guidance of Ms. Nesyamn Ranut.

This internship programme exemplifies the National Trust's commitment to engaging young professionals in heritage research and preservation while fostering a deeper appreciation for the nation's diverse cultural assets.



HERITAGE PRESERVATION & RESEARCH

ARTICLES & BLOGS

- Big things come in small packages: The Jahaji Bandal/ Bundle by Karishma Nanhu
- Rambharose Shiv Mandir and Kootiya by Karishma Nanhu
- Mud Architecture of Trinidad by Kara Roopsingh
- Congratulations Dr. Kumar Mahabir by Karishma Nanhu
- Screen Stars Mural: A Journey Through Belmont's Rich Heritage by Nesyamn Ranut
- Things to do in Tobago by Karishma Nanhu
- African History Month in Trinidad and Tobago: Preserving Heritage, Fostering Change by Nesyamn Ranut
- Ganesh Utsav 2023 by Karishma Nanhu
- Two Aspects of Celebrating Divali in Trinidad and Tobago by Shivam Rampersad

HERITAGE PRESERVATION & RESEARCH

DIWALI CELEBRATIONS AT MILLE FLEURS NOVEMBER 2023

The National Trust of Trinidad and Tobago hosted Diwali celebrations at Mille Fleurs, featuring a diverse range of cultural activities and community engagement.

CULTURAL ACTIVITIES:

- Tabla Workshop – Led by Mayank Ramgoolie, introducing participants to the rhythms of Indian percussion.
- Dance Workshop – Conducted by Seema Suruj-Jardine, showcasing traditional Indian dance techniques.
- Sari Tying Demonstration – Teaching the art of draping the sari, a staple of Indian cultural attire.
- Henna Art – Beautiful mehendi designs by Aneesa Karim.


As part of our community outreach, we invited individuals across Trinidad and Tobago to submit decorated deeyas for display at the event. This year, we received over 150 beautifully crafted deeyas from both children and adults, reflecting the creativity and enthusiasm of our participants.

The success of this initiative was made possible through collaborations with several regional corporations and organisations, including:

1. Sangre Grande Regional Corporation
2. Penal/Debe Regional Corporation
3. Princes Town Regional Corporation
4. Couva-Talparo-Tabaquite Regional Corporation
5. Chaguanas Borough Corporation
6. San Fernando City Corporation

These partnerships played a crucial role in ensuring widespread participation and fostering a deeper connection to our heritage and cultural traditions.

**INTERNATIONAL COLLABORATIONS
RESILIENT HERITAGE TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO**



**KEEPING
HISTORY**

**ABOVE
WATER**

MARCH 20-23, 2023 | TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

Offered for the first time internationally, Keeping History Above Water is arriving in Trinidad and Tobago and bringing together an interdisciplinary group of experts to discuss cultural heritage and climate change

HISTORYABOVEWATER.ORG

HERITAGE PRESERVATION & RESEARCH

INTERNATIONAL COLLABORATIONS RESILIENT HERITAGE TRINIDAD AND 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.

More information about Resilient Heritage Trinidad and Tobago can be found on the project website: <https://resilientheritagett.com/>.

RESILIENT HERITAGE TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

Project activities during the reported period included the following:

MEDIA AND SOCIAL MEDIA

The Trust liaised with various media sources to ensure the promotion of RHTT in traditional media sources, including:

- Climate journalism website Climate Tracker published an article making mention of the project in November 2023;
- RHTT project lead and Senior Heritage Preservation and Research Officer Kara Roopsingh was interviewed and is featured in a documentary film produced by Climate Analytics Caribbean about climate change in the Caribbean. The documentary titled “Island Action, Global Goals: Can the Global Stocktake change the Caribbean’s climate future?” premiered at the Green Screen Environmental Film Festival Schools Screenings at Queen’s Hall on 24 January 2024, and was screened to the wider public on CNC3 on 25 February and 22 April 2024.

In addition to these, the Trust also prepared press releases and received other news coverage around project-related activities such as the RHTT Built Heritage Training Workshop and KHAW TT.

REPORT COMPILATION AND PUBLICATION

The completion of the final project report for Resilient Heritage T&T was a major project deliverable, since it conveys the conclusion of the project’s work in the form of the conservation and adaptation resilience actions to be prioritised, and also provides insights into the findings and outcomes of other project activities. The final report was completed in April 2024 and is publicly accessible link on the Resources page of the RHTT website.

HERITAGE PRESERVATION & RESEARCH - RESILIENT HERITAGE T&T

The work undertaken in executing the first phase of Resilient Heritage Trinidad & Tobago has highlighted that there is a general interest in our country to ensure the preservation of national heritage for future generations, but there is also a crucial need for this interest to be channeled into cohesive and feasible actions. As the custodian of national heritage, the Trust believes that, in the face of a rapidly changing climate, the impetus to increase resilience should now be stronger than ever.

