



# SAINT LUCIA NATIONAL TRUST

TEL: (758) 452-5005/31495 P.O. BOX 595 CASTRIES, ST. LUCIA WEST INDIES  
FAX NO: (758) 453-2791 Email: [natrust@candw.lc](mailto:natrust@candw.lc) Website: [www.slunatrust.org](http://www.slunatrust.org)

*Patron: Her Excellency Dame Pearlette Louisy*

6<sup>th</sup> October, 2020

## SLNT Staged its First Virtual Trust Pioneers Lecture for its 45<sup>th</sup> Anniversary

By Eleanor Maurille

SLNT Programme Assistant- Documentation Centre

The Saint Lucia National Trust (SLNT) held its 7<sup>th</sup> annual Trust Pioneers Lecture on its 45<sup>th</sup> Anniversary on September 26, 2020. Like many other events taking place in this COVID-19 era, it was conducted virtually. Mr. Bishnu Tulsie, the SLNT's Director welcomed all who had tuned in and noted that the lecture, under the theme "*Patrimony or Patricide: The natural and human impacts threatening archaeological heritage*", had come at a time when there are significant threats to our archaeological assets. He briefly spoke about the organization's financial situation and provided an explanation about the non-convening of the Quarterly Membership Meeting. He also spoke to the SLNT's upcoming Annual General Meeting, slated for November.



SLNT Director Mr. Tulsie, as well as feature speakers Dr. Phulgence and Dr. Hofman presenting at the 2020 Trust Pioneers Lecture

The first feature speaker, Dr. Corinne Hofman began by giving an overview of the indigenous occupational history of the Caribbean. She noted that Caribbean communities have been exposed to adverse climatic conditions since they inhabited the archipelago 8,000 years ago, which has impacted Amerindian settlements located primarily along the coastlines. Human impacts, she continued, accelerate damage to the coastline. These include the construction of roads, airports and touristic resorts as well as sandmining.

Dr. Hofman cited examples of rescue missions which addressed the imminent threat from natural hazards that could have resulted in the loss of important archaeological artefacts. One such mission was undertaken at the La Voutte site in Saint Lucia. The excavation at La Voutte revealed that this was an area of great historical significance and as a result of the rescue operation, complex burial rituals were observed and human remains as well as artefacts were unearthed. Summing up her presentation, Dr. Hofman noted that the impacts of natural phenomena and human actions on the archaeological remains of the Caribbean islands as well as the absence of legislation for the protection of our heritage are very worrying. She recommended that the island draws up archaeological value maps for environmental planning to assist the government and other parties involved in proposed developments.

The second feature speaker, Dr. Winston Phulgence, revealed that one of the first publications which he co-authored after university was on the topic of this lecture. He was alarmed after reading that a number of golf courses were earmarked for Saint Lucia, and based on the trend of development at that time he concluded that the Caribbean, including Saint Lucia, was slowly losing its patrimony, possibly inching toward patricide. Like Dr. Hofman, Dr. Phulgence believes that all stakeholders should be involved in the management of our heritage. He explained that non-governmental organizations play a critical role in the management of our heritage and part of the conundrum was that prime real estate oftentimes are also prime heritage sites.

How do we then change our trajectory? Dr. Phulgence's solutions were simple: Heritage legislation must be enacted; Government institutions must be strengthened with heritage professionals; Professional archaeologists and heritage practitioners must be hired; NGOs must increase their public engagements and heritage awareness; and Caribbean History MUST be taught in schools. In closing, Dr. Phulgence noted that "Heritage must be seen as a national resource and managed as such. Development should not be the destruction of the past but a negotiation in the present which sustains the future. To do otherwise is to commit patricide."

After the presentations, SLNT's Programme Officer for Communications and Advocacy, Karetta Crooks Charles launched the SLNT's special initiative dubbed, '[45 Actions for 45 Years of Conservation](#)', geared at celebrating and getting members and non-members more involved in the work of the organization over the next year. Activities include clean-up campaigns at natural and built heritage sites, island wide membership recruitment drives, continued promotions of the GlobalGiving Fundraising Campaign, advocating for Saint Lucia to ratify and implement the Escazú Agreement, family fun days and heritage tutorials among other activities.

The livestream of the Lecture can be viewed at the following link: <https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=1429995023876871>. You are encouraged to watch and share this vital information with your contacts.