

Going Back to our Roots

“I never knew that there was so much open space, trees and things to see here!” remarked one of the participants who spent Saturday morning exploring the Southern part of Saint Lucia. Fourteen individuals, mostly members of the Saint Lucia National Trust Southern Group were guided by historian, Dr. Gregor Williams on a fascinating tour of View Fort.

The tour which was held on June 13th, 2009 was another activity on the calendar of events for the vibrant SLNT Southern Group. The expedition began at the Old Sugar Mill at Beane Field near the Vieux Fort quarry. There the participants actually saw ruins of sugar mills and a well. This was followed by a walk to the Pointe de Caille Amerindian Site at Saltibus Point.



The trek from the main road to the Saltibus Point was particularly educational, as it gave the participants an opportunity to delve into their rich ancestral past. At the site they saw and held remains of pottery, conch shells and conch tools. According to Dr. Williams over 50 burials have been found at the Amerindian Site. He went on to paint a vibrant picture of how the Amerindian settlement was set up, “There was a bay rich in marine life and tons of crabs crawled through the mangroves (crab soup was their favorite dish).” He also

showed the group where there would have been flat land for gardening purposes and other activities. With a conch shell in hand he explained, “The conch shell was used to make a whole range of tools such as kitchen utensils; saucers, knives, boat building tools; axe and chisels, gardening tools; hoes and axe and various instruments; whistles and horns.”

However, Dr. Williams warned that the site is at serious risk not only from natural elements but from developers. He noted that in the 1980’s an excavation team from the University of Vienna in Austria established that some 500 years of the Amerindian settlement had already been washed away by the sea and heavy rains. The excavation project was a joint initiative between the Saint Lucia Archaeological and Historical Society and the University of Vienna, with some assistance from the Trust. He also said fortunately several previous plans by developers to build hotels on the property have not materialized. “We cannot lease and give everything to developers... it is big enough for both of us to enjoy it. It’s the young people - like you, who have to start making noise, it cannot be left to one or two people alone”, the Historian emphasized. Dr. Williams said it was suggested that that a geodesic dome¹ be built over the burial area to preserve the Pointe de Caille Amerindian Site at Saltibus Point for Saint Lucians and visitors alike and for future generation.



¹ According to Wikipedia: A geodesic dome is a spherical or partial-spherical shell structure or lattice shell based on a network of great circles (geodesics) lying on the surface of a sphere. It is able to withstand considerable wind loads, such as those created by hurricanes.

The next destination was Honeymoon Beach, however, Mother Nature decided to grace the group with heavy showers. Although the rain momentarily halted the expedition, the participants suited up in their rain gear and umbrellas and headed to a winery and honey factory at the Canelles junction. Here the group got an opportunity to taste local wine and honey and the proprietor gave an in-depth explanation of how these products were made.



The next activity on the Saint Lucia National Trust Southern Group's calendar is an "Illegal Sand mining Awareness Campaign" in July. This energetic group meets every 2nd Tuesday at the Pointe Sable Interpretation Centre (View Fort) at 6:15 p.m. The group invites interested individuals to join today and encourage existing members to renew their passion and play their part to conserve Saint Lucia's rich culture.