

*Preserving, Protecting, Promoting
Our Cultural Heritage*



NATIONAL TREASURES
OF ST. VINCENT AND THE GRENADINES

National Treasures of St Vincent and the Grenadines'
Report: August 2014 to December 2015

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Background:

National Treasures of St Vincent and the Grenadines is a non-profit organisation which was established in 2014. Discussions began in June of that year and over the following five months the framework was for the entity was crafted. This process included identifying and setting up a Board of Directors; drafting a synopsis of National Treasures, a Proposal document, budgets, non profit company articles and By Laws; the legal requirements for registration; the TOR for a logo design and seeking Cabinet/Government endorsement of the organisation.

Definition and Conceptualisation:

The idea for an organisation of this nature and the work that needs to be done emerged from conversations- over a twenty year period- with older Vincentians (in their 70's to 90's) and from listening to their oral histories both personal and general. Initially the focus was to be primarily linguistic and etymological: looking at words, phrases, sayings, meanings, origins, Creole dialectal variations, stories, etc. However, over time it became clear that not only were 'things' changing, but that there were few records of many aspects of our cultural heritage. Not only were the knowledge and oral histories being lost with the death of older Vincentians, but the younger generations would not have been exposed to many aspects of our cultural heritage, which would, unless some initiative was taken, eventually disappear.

The tangibles such as flat irons, drum ovens, photographs, written or printed materials are being preserved and can be used to illustrate how we lived etc., but what about the sayings, e.g. "*guava can't bring lime*"; the stories, the songs; the ways in which different communities, families, individuals lived, prepared foods, celebrated festivals etc.? What about oral histories? We need to preserve some of that which still exists before it dies with our older citizens and is lost forever.

Mission:

National Treasures of St Vincent and the Grenadines is committed to the procurement, preservation, protection, promotion and dissemination of that which encompasses the intangible history, heritage and culture of St. Vincent and the Grenadines and its people.

Purpose:

The purpose of National Treasures of St Vincent and the Grenadines is:

- (1) to fill the gap in the preservation of our cultural heritage by beginning the process of capturing some of the trove of knowledge, experiences, memories and oral histories which are a vital part of our cultural heritage in order to preserve some of that which still exists before it is lost forever.
- (2) To remind Vincentians about and/or raise awareness of our cultural heritage through the process of collecting or gathering the 'data' of our history, heritage and culture. This is intended to re-awaken or engender, (where necessary), a sense of national pride. Also it will help us to understand that which has made us what we are; and make us able to esteem or value ourselves as individuals, as a people and as a nation.

1. Administration/Management Structure

National Treasures of St. Vincent and the Grenadines is managed by a Board of Directors and officers of the company according to the Non-Profit Company By-Laws. A total of five Directors (one of whom is the Executive Director), and an Advisor constitute the Board.

The following serve as directors:

Chairperson	Anthony Theobalds
Deputy Chairperson	Deirdre Myers
Treasurer	Tony Regisford
Secretary	Carlita Daniel - Executive Director
Director	John Horne
Honorary Member	Sir Errol Allen

The Board is ultimately responsible for the full accountability of the organisation and its resources. Presently Board meetings are held at Frenches House and following an initial setting up period where the Board met twice per month, the Board now meets on a monthly basis to set guidelines in accordance with organisation's objectives; to assist with the work; and to review and assess the work and the performance of National Treasures; and to initiate fund raising and promotional activities.

The office of National Treasures, in the future, subject to available funds, will be staffed by an Executive Director, an Administrative Assistant, a Technical Officer, an auxiliary worker and volunteer support.

As of November 2014, the person to serve as Executive Director was identified and officially began working: carrying out administrative functions, fundraising, promoting the organisation; and began some of the work and research of National Treasures. Until the necessary funds are available the Executive Director works from home and receives a stipend.

Legal and Accounting/Auditing services are presently being provided pro bono.

2. Legal Status

Zhinga Horne Edwards of ZHE Chambers provided legal advice and carried out the work necessary to set up and register National Treasures as a non profit company.

In October of 2014 the organisation was given the right to use the name National Treasures of St Vincent and the Grenadines after application to CIPO. Our application for non profit status was granted in November 2014, and National Treasures was registered on 14th November. In February of 2015 the By Laws were registered with CIPO.

In November 2014, once we were legally registered as a non profit company, National Treasures applied to the Minister of Tourism and Culture, to seek Cabinet/Government endorsement of National Treasures on behalf of the organisation. In June 2015 we received official notification that National Treasures had been fully endorsed by Cabinet.

Once our logo design and font style for the name of the organisation were finalised and approved by the Board, National Treasures applied to CIPO for Trade Mark registration on 30th June 2015.

3. Financial: Budgets, Accounting and Funding

3.1 Budgets

A budget was drawn up for setting up and carrying out the work of National Treasures for two years. The budget included capital costs and running costs for Year One and running costs for Year Two. A Start up Budget was also included to cover the first six month period.

3.2 Accounting

Arrion Barnwell of BDO Financial Services, agreed to assist National Treasures with reviewing the budgets, setting up bookkeeping and accounting systems; and future auditing services. She revised and tidied up the budgets and the budget narrative in 2014; and in 2015 worked on the accounting systems with our Treasurer and has produced the Financial Report for National Treasures.

3.3 Funding

In the Proposal document various strategies and activities were outlined for raising funds to run the organisation and carry out its work. Our first source of funds came from subscriptions from Board members- this was used to open our bank account.

Initially, National Treasures sought financial assistance from local businesses and organisations: this was intended to cover the Start Up phase over the first six months. To this end a letter requesting a meeting was sent out with a copy of the Start Up budget and a synopsis of the organisation.

Generally the response to National Treasures and what we are trying to do was very positive, and several of those with whom we met said they would see how they could assist us. However, the Bank of St Vincent and the Grenadines and Metrocint General Insurances were the only ones that provided financial assistance in 2015. A few other companies assisted by providing products or services free of charge for National Treasures' Media Launch in June 2015.

We have identified Membership subscriptions and Supporters' donations as an ongoing source for raising funds and to this end produced a Membership/Supporters' form in the last quarter of 2015. We are all working on getting people in St Vincent and the Grenadines to sign up; and the form has been and will be distributed through contacts in the UK, the USA and Canada as an ongoing activity.

4. The Work of National Treasures

Our Proposal document outlines many ways in which the intangible and tangible cultural heritage of St Vincent and the Grenadines will be researched, recorded, documented, preserved and disseminated. The scope of work is wide and in order to begin the process the following were selected:

- 1) Interviewing and videotaping Vincentians over 70.
- 2) Kingstown Heritage Walks.
- 3) Sayings, proverbs and idioms/Foods, drinks and herbal remedies.
- 4) One off Projects
- 5) Preparation of future projects

Before any of the work could start we had to plan what would be done, how it would be done and what was needed. We also divided up the work and two, three or four persons worked on planning and preparing the projects as required.

4.1 Interviewing and videotaping Vincentians over 70

This project is called the 'Treasure Trove'.

- A list of thirty names was compiled and prioritised so that those at the upper end of the age range 70's to 90's, and those who have/had health issues would be first.
- Two sets of interview questions were compiled- one was of biographical questions with the emphasis on the early years; and the other was about seasons or events such as Christmas, Nine Mornings, Independence, La Soufriere eruptions and Hurricanes.
- Once the lists of interviewees and questions were finalised, we contacted the first persons on the list to explain what National Treasures is and the work we are doing and to request permission to interview them. Once they agreed, appointments were made to begin the interviews.
- The first interviews were at the subjects' homes- first as a written record which will be filmed at later date. Three interviews have been completed as written records and one of those has been filmed. Only one has been filmed thus far primarily because of the cost of getting the interviews filmed and edited. Two interviews as written records are unfinished: sometimes only one hour can be completed at a time, so it requires three or four sessions.

This project will be ongoing with more people added to the list and more interviews being completed once we have the necessary equipment and personnel in place.

4.2 Kingstown Heritage Walks

This project has been very involved and complicated so far and is intended as a fundraising and an educational initiative. The aim is to create a series of walks which will introduce tourists, Vincentians in general and students in particular to the history, cultural heritage and stories of the people of Kingstown in the first instance.

- A list of buildings, sites which have cultural heritage or historical significance was compiled and maps of Kingstown were sourced and checked to ensure they had the relevant information.
- Next we had to walk and time the route around Kingstown. Following this we split the walk into two routes one up town and one down town.
- Then we began the time consuming process of plotting each route- for this John Horne and Sir Errol Allen provided the commentary: the history and the stories.
- The routes were documented: notes of the stories, names and places etc.
- The routes have been plotted; next the information gathered will be checked and verified.

This process took place throughout 2015. It took some time due to the volume of information to be documented and the difficulty of getting all those working on this together regularly for two hours at a time.

We are mapping the routes and have sourced maps from different years to check the original locations of buildings etc that have been demolished and or replaced.

We are now selecting the information to be included in the walks then the map will be drafted for each route.

(Not all information gathered will be included in the walks, but it will become part of a written account of Kingstown's history, heritage and some of the people who lived or did business there).

4.3 Sayings, Proverbs and Idioms/Foods, drinks and herbal remedies

The collection, collation and documenting of sayings, proverbs and idioms and of foods, drinks and herbal remedies is ongoing and began with those known to members of National Treasures. Any others that are used or brought to our attention are added to the lists.

The sayings already collected were shared with the GHS Heritage Committee and they used the idea as the theme for their 2015 pageant. Several new sayings were added to our list by the GHS Committee.

4.4 One off Projects

Many one off projects or topics will be part of our work when and as they occur or are relevant. We have two such projects to date: the moving of Carnival from the pre-lent period to June/July and a potted History of Victoria Park.

- The date of Carnival was changed in 1977 to June/July and we looked at this to coincide with our media launch on 30th June. The dates, the reasons for the change and the differences in the festival as a result of the change were examined and discussed in an interview with Alston 'Becket' Cyrus. The interview was recorded in writing and on film. Additional information on dates, names of winners etc. were obtained from the CDC office.
- A History of Victoria Park is also being researched as a one off project which was inspired in part by our 'Clean-up Kingstown Campaign's efforts in and around Victoria Park for the 2015 Independence Parade. So far documents and newspapers from the National Archives, papers written by Vincentians and the memories of persons who lived in the vicinity of the Park or who used it as children, have been the main sources of information. Some persons have offered the loan of photographs of the area before and at various times since the Park was opened.

This research was intended to be an article for the newspapers following Independence, but the information on how and when the Park was commissioned, is more suited to commemorating the anniversary of the Park itself.

4.5 New Projects

There are two new projects for which the initial planning stages have been completed: 'Unsung Heroes' and 'Pioneer Vincentian Women. For both projects the following were done:

- A list of criteria
- A list of names suggested
- Verifying qualification to be on the list
- Identifying some preliminary sources of information.

For the 'Unsung Heroes' there is a list of persons who have died and have contributed to SVG in a varying fields/ways. Two from the list have been selected- one man, one woman to be the first subjects.

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A list has also been compiled for the Pioneer Women's project of categories and a name suggested for each one. Some enquiries have been made already to verify the persons to be considered for the various categories. Next we will finalise the list of categories and the names to be included.

'Schools Pages' is also a new project for which some preliminary work has been done. This information is intended for the website and to be added to over time. A sheet with the type of information required has been drawn up and some schools have been contacted about the 'page'. Each school will identify a person who will have the responsibility of supplying the information and liaising with National Treasures.

5. Affiliations and Collaborations

National Treasures is well aware that there has been a lot of work done over the years in terms of recording or documenting St Vincent and the Grenadines' cultural heritage; however, what exists is not always readily accessible or available- especially that done by individuals or within communities. One of our objectives is to collect or collate as much as possible of what exists, have it stored, make it accessible and disseminate it to Vincentians in the first instance. To this end we aim to collaborate with or be affiliated to the relevant organisations, Government Ministries/Departments and individuals.

We have established links with The Ministry of Tourism/Department of Culture, The Department of Libraries and Archives, The St Vincent National Trust, National Broadcasting Corporation, the UWI Open Campus SVG, the St Vincent and the Grenadines Community College and the Girls' High School National Heritage Committee.

National Treasures has also contacted the Ministry of Education, the Indian Heritage Foundation and the Garifuna Heritage Foundation with a view to meeting to discuss ways in which we could work together and support each other.

6. Challenges

National Treasures has faced many challenges between September 2014 and December 2015. The following had the greatest impact overall: 1) Financial, 2) Promoting National Treasures and 3) the Work of National Treasures.

6.1 Financial

The difficulties experienced in getting financial assistance locally and accessing international agencies' funding was our biggest challenge. Funding from international sources was not available to us because National Treasures had not been in existence for the required minimum length of time (usually two years); or because St Vincent and the Grenadines was not eligible to apply or because some agencies were only offering funding on a national or regional basis- not to individual organisations.

Some of the local companies to which we applied for financial assistance, after showing initial interest did not get back in touch with us or they stated prior commitments to other organisations or Carnival; or said that they were not able to assist us 'at this time'.

The financial challenge, however, had/has more of an impact on the work of National Treasures, than on promoting the organisation.

6.2 Promoting National Treasures

Promotion and Public Relations are often challenging, and in the past year National Treasures had to compete with different people, activities and events for media coverage and the public's attention; which made effective promotion of the organisation difficult:

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-In 2015 General Elections in St Vincent and the Grenadines were due by December and campaigning began gathering momentum early in the year.
-The GHS Miss Heritage Pageant was to be staged in October and related events and activities took place throughout the year.
-Our Carnival is officially launched in May and culminates in July- after Carnival last year, election campaigning intensified.

We experienced firsthand how difficult it was to get significant media coverage and generate high levels of interest when we held our media launch at the end of June. The launch was well attended, but media coverage and public interest were focussed primarily on Carnival.

Later in the year some initiatives which were spearheaded by National Treasures were covered primarily by NBC Radio news while the focus of the media and the populace was the election campaign and finding out the election date.

National Treasures did not, however, capitalise on two excellent ways to promote the organisation: one is opening an office and two is setting up a web site. The lack of an identifiable National Treasures' office space with signage and our logo prominently displayed meant that we missed a good opportunity to have a very visible, tangible presence promoting our organisation. Another promotional opportunity missed is having a National Treasures' web site up and running. The lack of finances also meant that we could not employ anyone to assist in setting up our web site, launching it, maintaining and monitoring it.

Too many people in SVG have not heard of National Treasures and while there were factors which made Promotion/ Public Relations challenging, we did not do enough to promote our organisation in 2015 and this therefore has to be a priority in the future.

6.3 The Work of National Treasures

There is a lot of work to be done and many areas that need to be covered. The scope of work presents an ongoing challenge, especially as regards what should be a priority. In terms of the interviewing of older Vincentians we have to consider their age, the health and ability to communicate- especially those who are regarded as nation builders. In some cases persons who we had identified to interview either their health deteriorated so much that they could not be interviewed; or a few have died before we approached them.

The research of things seasonal presented a challenge in that the information was not gathered in a timely manner so that it could be disseminated at the relevant time. This meant that the impetus was lost and we then had to wait until the following year when the season was approaching once again.

A major factor in our ability to carry out the work of National Treasures has been the financial challenge. We were unable to get the necessary equipment such as a video camera and microphones, the software and laptop for editing film; and the person to assist with the filming and editing as we did not have sufficient funds.

The amount of work product we generate has a direct impact also on the promotion of National Treasures: the more information gathered, footage shot and photos collected, the more there is to disseminate and the more publicity and recognition National Treasures would get both in St Vincent and the Grenadines and in the Diaspora.

While the challenges we have faced in 2014 and 2015 may have been of some significance in the first year of National Treasures' existence; they are only a part of what has taken place and impacted on National Treasures. The concept, the purpose, the mission and the work of National Treasures are paramount. The challenges have not become our focus- rather they are viewed as problems to which we have to find creative solutions. In 2016 we continue to learn from them and strive to come up with strategies to deal with the challenges.

7. 2014 to 2015

Since National Treasures has been established there are many things of which we can be proud and which have given us a sense of achievement.

7.1 Setting up National Treasures

During a six month period we moved from the discussion of a concept to achieving the steps necessary to create, set up and register National Treasures of St Vincent and the Grenadines as a non profit company. During this time we had drafted and revised our Proposal document, our By Laws and begun doing some research and collecting information.

7.2 National Treasures' Logo

We take great pride and pleasure in our logo having spent several months working on it. We began working with three persons to come up with a concept and a design which encapsulates National Treasures. Steven Veira, Maria Dougan and Parnell Robinson contributed ideas and designs free of charge and we appreciate their efforts and willingness to work with us. However, the logo design we finally agreed on was a concept from a member of the Board which was created by Maxin Browne with input and revisions by the Board. The design exceeded expectations and we appreciate the creativity, patience and hard work which produced our logo.

7.3 Cabinet Endorsement of National Treasures

In November of 2014 we wrote to the Ministry of Tourism, Culture et al asking the Minister if he would put forward a Cabinet Memo seeking the endorsement on behalf of National Treasures of St Vincent and the Grenadines. After various communications and meetings and requests for additional information, in June 2015 we received a letter informing us that National Treasures has been fully endorsed by Cabinet. The Prime Minister expressed his personal support for our organisation when he delivered the feature address at our Media Launch at the end of June and also made a personal donation.

7.4 Affiliations and Collaborations

- The National Archives has agreed to store and make available any materials we collect or produce once it is in a format they specify- National Treasures has already given some papers written by Vincentians to be copied and stored in the Archives.
- St Vincent National Trust- National Treasures agreed that anything which we access which is the province of the Trust would be passed on. There are two buildings of some historic significance which National Treasures came across and passed the information on to the Trust.
- GHS Miss Heritage Committee- National Treasures met with the Committee and suggested the use of sayings and proverbs for the Theme for the 2015 Miss Heritage Pageant: we sent the sayings we have documented and they added some to the list.

Three National Treasures' Board members served as judges for the section of the competition as it related to the portrayal of the theme.

National Treasures also took the Miss Heritage delegates on a sample Kingstown Heritage Walk and invited them and members of the Committee to our Media Launch where the delegates assisted us as ushers.

7.5 Media Launch

On Tuesday, 30th June 2015 National Treasures held a Media Launch to introduce our organisation to St Vincent and the Grenadines and to talk about the work which we are doing. It took place at the UWI Open Campus from 9.30 a.m. We made it a sample of what we are trying to preserve in terms of the entertainment- Becket playing his guitar, singing some of his classics. The food served e.g. lime balls, starch cakes. How the space was decorated: renditions of petro glyphs in chalk and breadfruit leaves around the backdrop. The choice of the venue itself- has ruins from the original site which was the cotton ginnery which burnt down in 1962.

7.6 Clean up Kingstown Committee

In the course of plotting the Kingstown Heritage Walks, we saw the need to clean up Kingstown in various ways. We convened a meeting to establish a committee for the purpose. We invited many organisations and Government

Departments and had a very positive response- about fifteen entities were represented. We agreed that we had to begin the process with small scale clean ups.

For Independence we cleaned up the area around Victoria Park. The Public Health Department: Sanitation Unit, Kingstown Town Board, CWSA Solid Waste Management Unit and BRAGSA were the main agents along with National Treasures.

We initiated a similar clean up for Christmas in the vicinity of South River and Heritage Square. We worked with the Nine Mornings' Committee in conjunction with the same agents from the Independence clean up and managed to clean the river and the drains and roads; but we were not able to get any additional Christmas decorating done.

8. 2016

There are three key areas on which National Treasures will focus in 2016:

1. We will be engaging in income generating and fundraising activities,
2. We will be completing the work started last year and planning the work priorities for this year; and
3. We will be promoting National Treasures and working to establish a tangible presence.

8.1 Income Generation/ Financial Assistance

In order to complete the work we have already started and to begin some new projects, National Treasures needs sufficient funds to purchase equipment and supplies and to pay the necessary personnel. The ways in which this will be done are one, for National Treasures to generate income or raise funds and two, to seek financial assistance and donor funding.

Income Generation and Fundraising

The following are some of the activities we intend to engage in:

One off events in keeping with National Treasures' mandate-

- Street fairs with local/indigenous foods and entertainment to coincide with National Heroes' Day, Carnival and Independence.
- Take away food sales featuring local dishes.
- Local music evenings focussing on music from the past, steel pan and string bands.

Annual events-

- National Heroes' Day Heritage Walk and Brunch
- A Heritage Treasure Hunt at Carnival time
- National Treasures' Anniversary Dinner

Regular Events/Activities-

- Kingstown Heritage Walks
- Kingstown Heritage Walks for Schools
- Island Heritage Walks

Production of items for sale-

- Tee shirts: designs which reflect our heritage
- Collectibles: commemorating our heritage

Financial Assistance

Early in 2016 National Treasures will present to the companies which have provided financial assistance a report for 2014/2015 which will include financial statements. We will be seeking to continue such relationships and hope they will assist us in 2016.

We have already begun to set up meetings with and to speak to other companies about providing financial assistance to carry out or complete some of our work. In addition we will be approaching some companies to seek sponsorship for our various events and activities.

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Donor Funding

National Treasures has been exploring the possibility of applying for donor funding from regional and international agencies throughout 2015; this we will continue to do, as well as identifying new sources of such funds. Where necessary we will request assistance from Central Government and/or the Ministry of Tourism, Culture et al. with such applications.

As this is our second year of being established we should be eligible for consideration for some of the available funding in the areas of preservation and promotion of heritage and culture.

Membership Drive

Late in 2015 we embarked on signing up members and supporters which will provide an ongoing source of revenue and we intend to intensify this in 2016 and aim to include people from as many countries in the Diaspora as possible.

8.2 The Work of National Treasures in 2016

Our work in 2016 will include the continuation and completion (where applicable), of work already begun; and some 'new' projects identified in our Proposal document. We will include also work on any relevant new topics. Some projects which work will continue are: the Kingstown Heritage Walks; (including walks specifically tailored to primary and secondary schools); the Treasure Trove interviews of older Vincentians and if possible, National Treasures will also continue to be involved in the Clean-up of Kingstown.

Work will begin on the biographies of the 'Unsung Heroes', 'Pioneer Vincentian Women' and the Schools' Pages for our website. We will also be gathering information on seasonal and historic events, and the History of Victoria Park and 'the Change of Carnival from pre-lent to June/July' will be finished for publication and the website.

In conjunction with the work and research we will disseminate information in a variety of ways and seek feedback and contributions from Vincentians.

8.3 Promoting National Treasures and working to establish a tangible presence.

It is clear that many Vincentians either do not know that National Treasures exists or what it is and to address this we must do more to promote National Treasures, to raise its profile and to establish a tangible presence.

A key ingredient in promoting National Treasures is our website: once we have sufficient content it will be launched and this will give us a link with Vincentians both at home and in the Diaspora. Also we will create a face book page which will enable us to reach a wider demographic- including younger Vincentians.

We will be taking advantage of offers of media coverage on radio, television and in the newspapers. These activities will also serve to raise our profile as they will include programmes produced by National Treasures as well as coverage and interviews about our organisation and our work. National Treasures will also continue to support other organisations and assist if we can with the work they are doing.

In an effort to promote and publicise National Treasures we have paid for an advert which will appear in Vencie Cares magazine in 2016. The advert is for the purpose of recruiting members and supporters. This magazine is produced in New York, USA and distributed in the Diaspora.

National Treasures will have to be more proactive about documenting our work, our involvement in events and any collaborations; both in terms of audio visual/photographic and written accounts.

In 2016 National Treasures will establish a tangible presence in terms of our website, radio and television programmes and newspaper columns. We also aim to have a physical presence in terms of an office with signage depicting our name and our logo, which will serve as a constant reminder of the existence of National Treasures and the work we are doing.