



# THE FIELD NATURALIST

*Quarterly Bulletin of the Trinidad and Tobago Field Naturalists' Club*

July – September 2016

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## 1891-2016: Celebrating 125 years of the Trinidad and Tobago Field Naturalists' Club



**'Nurturing the Future': 14-year-old Sarah Panchoo's interpretation of the Club's motto "Nature is Most to be Admired in the Smallest Things". Sarah was awarded first prize in the 13-16yr category of our Anniversary Schools' Art Competition**

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### Editors' note :

Many thanks to all who contributed and assisted with articles and photographs.

### Disclaimer :

The views expressed in this bulletin are those of the respective authors and do not necessarily reflect the opinion and views of the Trinidad and Tobago Field Naturalists' Club

# THE FIELD NATURALIST

Quarterly Bulletin of the  
Trinidad and Tobago Field Naturalists' Club

## 125th Anniversary Special

### Editors

Amy Deacon, Mike G. Rutherford, Renoir Auguste

### Contributing writers

Renoir Auguste, Vicki Blanchard, Hans Boos, Amy Deacon, Aidan Farrell, Mala Guinness, Haroon Husain, Ian Lambie, Esperanza Luengo, Mike G. Rutherford, Ishmael Samaad, Kris Sookdeo, Christopher K. Starr, Elisha Tikasingh, Glenn Wilkes, Ann Williams, Roma Wong Sang

### Photographs

Jeffrey Wong Sang, Roma Wong Sang, Amy Deacon, Renoir Auguste, Kris Sookdeo, Steve Parker (Trinibats), John C. Murphy, Mike G. Rutherford

### Design and Layout

Eddison Baptiste, Amy Deacon, Mike G. Rutherford

The Trinidad and Tobago Field Naturalists' Club is a non-profit, non-governmental organization

## Management Committee 2016

President .....	Kris Sookdeo	647-5556
Vice-President .....	Palaash Narase	751-3672
Treasurer.....	Selwyn Gomes	624-8017
Secretary .....	Amy Deacon	390-0826
Assist-Secretary .....	Renoir Auguste	761-9197
Committee members ...	Dan Jaggernauth	659-2795
	Darshan Narang	678-6291
	Imran Khan	791-6939

## Contact us!

Email: [admin@ttfnc.org](mailto:admin@ttfnc.org)

Website: [www.ttfnc.org](http://www.ttfnc.org)

Facebook: [www.facebook.com/ttfieldnaturalistsclub](https://www.facebook.com/ttfieldnaturalistsclub)

YouTube: [www.tinyurl.com/ttfnc](http://www.tinyurl.com/ttfnc)

Postal: The Secretary, TTFNC, c/o P.O. Box 642,  
Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago





Report on the Schools' Art Competition

# CELEBRATING OUR BIODIVERSITY



by Amy Deacon and Roma Wong Sang

The Schools' Art Competition, under the theme "Celebrating Our Biodiversity" was a definite highlight among the activities held to commemorate the Club's 125<sup>th</sup> anniversary. It culminated in a spectacular exhibition and prize-giving ceremony on the 17<sup>th</sup> September 2016 in the Centenary Hall, St. Mary's College, Port of Spain.

The competition was supported by the Ministry of Education, and more than 320 entries were received from over 40 primary and secondary schools throughout Trinidad and Tobago.

Not only was it wonderful to receive so many entries but the quality was exceptional and so reassuring to lovers of natural history to see young people demonstrating a genuine passion for our

biodiversity.

For example, even some very young children in the 5-8 year category knew the difference between a monarch and a scarlet peacock butterfly, or a red howler monkey and a white-fronted capuchin, with great attention to detail in their representations.

In line with our mission "to foster education and knowledge on natural history and to encourage and promote activities that lead to the appreciation, preservation and conservation of our natural heritage," this seemed a fitting way to celebrate the anniversary of the club. Engaging youth in an appreciation of our natural heritage, which is surely one of the best ways to nurture the next generation



**Art Competition winners:** (back row) Sarah Panchoo, Reita Antoine, Mary-Grace Blanc, Kenia Joseph, Rianna Rampersad, Amy Deacon; (front row) Matthew Panchoo, Sanari Mohammed, Onika Chase, Muhammad Mallum, Ariella Roopnarine.





*This page: Winning paintings in the 5-8yr old category "My favourite native species":*

**1st - Trinidad Motmots on Cocoa Tree by Sanari Mohammed (7) of TML School, St Joseph**

**2nd - The Endangered Pawi by Onika Chase (8) of Rosec School,**

**3rd - The Iguana by Muhammad Mallam (5) of TML School, St Joseph**

*Facing page: Winning paintings in the 9-12yr category "A habitat I think is important":*

**1st - Scarlets' Home by Matthew Panchoo (10) of Avocat Vedic School (below)**

**2nd - Caroni Swamp by Phoebe Jerome (9) of Carapichaima RC School**

**3rd - Trinidad's Ocean Reef by Mary-Grace Blanc (10) of Dunross Prep. School**









**Winning paintings in the 13-16yr old category  
“Nature is Most to be Admired in the Smallest  
Things”:**

**1st Nurturing the Future by Sarah Panchoo (14)  
of Naparima Girls’ High School**

**2nd Bioluminescence by Rianna Rampersad (16)  
of Saraswati Girls’ Hindu School**

**3rd Blossoms and Blooms by Kenia Joseph (15)  
of St Joseph’s Convent**

of field naturalists and conservationists. The winning artwork of Sarah Panchoo, entitled “Nurturing the Future” is a fitting embodiment of this goal.

Entries were judged by a panel of three judges representing the Art Society of Trinidad and Tobago (Fazad Mohammed), the Asa Wright Nature Centre (AWNC) (Kimberly Chu Foon) and the TTFNC

(Ayodhya Ouditt). Judging was based on the following criteria: technique, composition, creativity, clarity of theme and overall impression.

A special “125th Anniversary Prize” was awarded to 7 yr old Ariella Roopnarine of Sevilla Private Primary School. Ariella’s beautiful leatherback turtle painting was an important reminder of how the




determined monitoring and tagging efforts of TTFNC members back in the 1960s and 70s led to the introduction of legislation to protect our nation's turtles.

Ms. Reita Antoine, Visual Arts Curriculum Officer, representing the Chief Education Officer, Ministry of Education, commended the TTFNC for providing the opportunity for young artists *"to plough through the landscape of our nation's rich, cultural heritage and for helping us to better appreciate and build on our unique and impressive identity."* Kimberly Chu Foon of the AWNC, also addressed the audience at the prize-giving ceremony.

Prizes were awarded to winners, runners up, the

winning schools and the schools with the most entries. Prizes were designed to assist the winners and winning schools in their continued appreciation of the natural world and included waterproof digital cameras, binoculars, wildlife guides, Bush Diary DVDs, a digital microscope, posters and art materials.

The Competition was supported by Atlantic LNG, Petrotrin, Deltex Art Shop, Paolo Kernahan of Idiom Productions Ltd, Asa Wright Nature Centre, UWI Zoology Museum, and St. Mary's College, the meeting place of the TTFNC Club for over four decades. 



**Judge Kimberly Chu Foon of AWNC addresses the audience; 7-yr-old Ariella Roopnarine's winning Leatherback Turtle painting; Roma Wong Sang and judge Ayodhya Ouditt present Muhammad Mallum with his prize.**





# Report on the National Museum Exhibition SHOWCASING OUR BIODIVERSITY

by Mike G. Rutherford



The TTFNC has always had a close relationship with the National Museum and Art Gallery, indeed early club meetings took place in the Royal Victoria Institute, as it was then known. For the club's 100th anniversary in 1991 members refurbished the entire Natural History gallery in the museum. Therefore when it came time to plan the 125th anniversary activities it seemed only fitting to put on a new display at the museum. This time however, instead of a fixed display it was decided that a mobile display that could be taken around the country would be the best option.

I proposed the idea for a display to the committee in early 2016 and, along with Amy Deacon (TTFNC secretary and UWI lecturer), Kris

Sookdeo (TTFNC president), Roma Wong Sang (125th anniversary committee member) and Renoir Auguste (TTFNC board member), developed the display.

We decided to arrange the display into several themes which could all be mixed together or used separately for different outings and events in the future. All the graphic panels were printed as vinyl banners and were mounted on tubular metal frames which meant that the whole display could be quickly rolled up and packed away for easy transport and storage.

The exhibition was set up in the temporary gallery on the ground floor of the National Museum and stayed in place for about a month. Nisha



**Clockwise from top left:** Attendees mingle in the gallery; Objects loaned by the UWIZM for the evening; A special display of species with significance to the club's history. **Facing Page:** Cupcakes with the club logo by Eileen Rutherford.



Doughlin, assistant curator at the National Museum, was the main liaison with the club and helped with sorting out the gallery space and providing cases for the objects.

The back drop to the display on the right hand wall was a 6 metre long timeline highlighting key events in the history of the club over the last 125 years (see pages 18-19). In the centre of the gallery were panels describing the different places that the club visits throughout the country, these were grouped together into the following themes: Mountains & Waterfalls; Swamps & Savannahs; Beaches & Islands; Caves, Mud & Pitch. Each descriptive panel was accompanied by two further panels with enlarged photos showing some of the most stunning sites. Along the back wall were two sections, one looking at the discoveries made by club members (see pages 16-17) and the other looking at the clubs publications over the years. These were both complemented by display cases, one containing examples of some of the species discovered, the other with some of the many journals, books and magazines published by the TTFNC.

On the left side of the gallery was a giant banner printed with a Google Earth map of Trinidad & Tobago. We invited visitors to add a small sticker with a comment about their favourite place to visit as well as leaving a note in the visitor's book. Just beside the map was a large flat screen TV on which we showed a short film, produced by Kris Sookdeo, about the club. This was played on repeat for the duration of the exhibition. See The TTFNC YouTube channel for the film.

On the immediate right hand side upon entering the gallery there was a display titled *Be a Naturalist* which consisted of a mannequin, sourced by Roma Wong Sang from the National Archives, dressed up as an over the top naturalist loaded down with equipment. Beside this was a table with displays of forest seeds and fruits by Dan Jaggernaut and a display of fungus by Jeffrey Wong Sang.


The Forestry Division were enlisted to set up a dried plant display in the entrance hall to give a more natural feel to the gallery and alongside this we displayed some scenic paintings by club member Maureen Ottier.

Vicki Blanchard, club member, designed the invitation, flyer and programme for the launch event.

The launch took place on Friday 20th May 2016 and was attended by around 70 members and guests, including representatives from the IMA, Paper-Based bookstore, COPE, CFCA, Sustain T&T, UWI, the National Herbarium, the Art Society, Asa Wright Nature Centre and Angostura Ltd. Lorraine Johnson, curator of the National Museum, Kris Sookdeo, Elisha Tikasingh and myself each said a few words to introduce the display and celebrate the 125th anniversary.

For the launch only a special display of endangered animals was set up on a plinth in the middle of the gallery. These included a leatherback turtle carapace, an ocelot skin, macaw skin and many other specimens from the University of the West Indies Zoology Museum. Unfortunately there was not a large enough case available to have these specimens safely on display for the duration of the exhibition.

Eileen Rutherford provided the catering for the launch (cupcakes, mini quiche and spanakopita, with much wine, juice and coconut water). Eileen was assisted by members Betsy Mendes and Kay Hinkson in serving the refreshments.

Since the exhibition finished the display has been used many times at shows and events including the University of the West Indies Alma Jordan Library, Trincity Mall, The Annual Orchid Show at the Country Club in Port of Spain and in many smaller events. I hope that in the years to come the panels and the stands help the members of the TTFNC to continue to reach out and display all over the country. 







**My first club hike was to Moruga Bouffe in South Trinidad in 2011**— it was a fairly long, muddy walk through magical rainforest, which included some of the largest silk cotton trees in the country. After a couple of hours of walking through the jungle we emerged from the trees to find ourselves in a completely alien landscape – a huge clearing scattered with bubbling mud pools and several large mud volcanoes, the edges lined with pink and yellow bromeliad flowers. I had no idea such habitats existed anywhere on earth! On the way back a highlight was a beautiful vine snake –it was perfectly still and had made its body crinkle to imitate a real vine – an amazing example of the wonders of evolution. I'm not sure who spotted it, but it was so well camouflaged I feel sure I would have missed it if walking with any other group of people!  
(Amy Deacon)

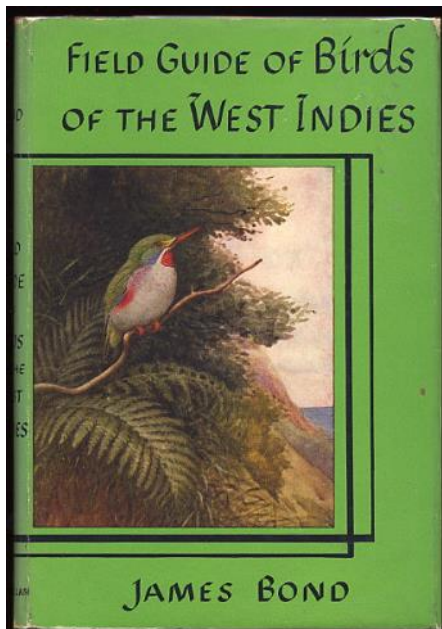


## MEMBERS' MEMOIRS

*Members of the club share their memories*



**It must have been the early 70s.** Richard French gave a lecture to the Club on his birding experience in T&T. He had trouble identifying a particular bird. So he wrote a detailed description and sent it off to the only expert on Caribbean birds, the distinguished American ornithologist James Bond, who replied advising him to shoot the bird and send him the skin. Richard said he couldn't do that as he was not 007. ( In the movies, the codename 007 gave Mr Bond the authority to kill.)



Ian Fleming was an avid birder, and on his bookshelf in Jamaica was a copy of *Birds of the West Indies* by James Bond. That's where he got the name for the most famous spy in the world. And the most memorable one liner in cinematic history is "the name is Bond, James Bond."  
(Ishmael Samaad)



**I have taken part in all the Bioblitzes thus far in Trinidad and Tobago.** All have been a great experience for me, but what stood out occurred during the third and fourth Bioblitzes. Here, along with members from the amphibian and reptile group, we potentially discovered two new species for the country, which included a frog and a lizard. Growing up as a child fascinated with animals, this was one of the things a young scientist dreams of. Work is still ongoing on documenting these species, but, who knows what other new species we may find yet in sweet T&T? (Renoir Auguste)



**In October 2015 I was one of a small group of Club members who stayed overnight on Huevos Island.** As evening fell the whole group congregated at the end of the island's only pier to benefit from the unrestricted breeze. Turning back towards the island, the covering of trees now a dark silhouette against a moonless night, I thought I saw a torchlight flicker high in the canopy. I continued to watch and the lights continued to flicker causing the Island's contours to merge with the star-filled sky. After a moment someone exclaimed- 'fireflies'. The whole group turned and watched silently as one by one the island's hidden residents lit up, puncturing the darkness with the green glow of fellowship.

*(Aidan Farrell)*



**I think my fondest experience with the club has to be when I found myself in the remote north coast forests of Grand Tacaribe at 1:00am in the morning, attending to a light trap for surveying moths with fellow enthusiasts.** Needless to say, the opportunity for such an experience doesn't come very often and would have been non-existent if I wasn't a member of the TTFNC. The diversity and number of species we recorded that night was just astounding and we all had a fantastic time. When it was time to take the lights off, we had to wait a few minutes in darkness to let the insects disperse. There was the sound of distant crashing waves, the moon overhead, forest night sounds and the darkness all around....nature is awesome. *(Kris Sookdeo)*



**I immigrated to Trinidad from Taiwan in September 1991.** In a time before easy internet searches, it took some effort to look up naturalist organizations in far-away parts of the world, but I was able to learn of the Club's existence --

then in its centennial year -- and to find some issues of the quarterly bulletin. As you can imagine, it gave me a large charge to read about places and neotropical biota with which I expected soon to be personally acquainted. The week after I got here I attended my first monthly meeting and was able to meet such luminaries as Hans Boos, Frankie Farrell and Victor Quesnel, names already known to me from the bulletin. *(Christopher K. Starr)*



## A VISION FOR THE CLUB

*By Roma Wong Sang*

**My earliest encounter with the Trinidad and Tobago Field Naturalists' Club were the occasions, when as a teen, I would visit their booth at the annual T&T Horticultural Society's Flower Show, as a participant in the Show's flower arranging competitions.**

My engagement with the effervescent Club member, Muriel Pierre (now deceased), and the countless flora specimens, always kept me coming back each year, secretly instilling a desire to join the Club.

My next, albeit closer encounter with the Club came when I won a five-year subscription to the Naturalist magazine, in an environmental school art competition. The magazine, produced by Stephen Mohammed, club member, highlighted the flora and fauna of Trinidad and Tobago in an engaging and attractive format and encouraged learning, observation and exploration through articles and photographs submitted by experts and club members. Once again, I was inspired to join the Club but never did get the opportunity as I lived in the East and it was difficult to trek to POS, where regular Thursday evening meetings were held. And so, many years passed...yet my passion for the great outdoors and natural history continued.

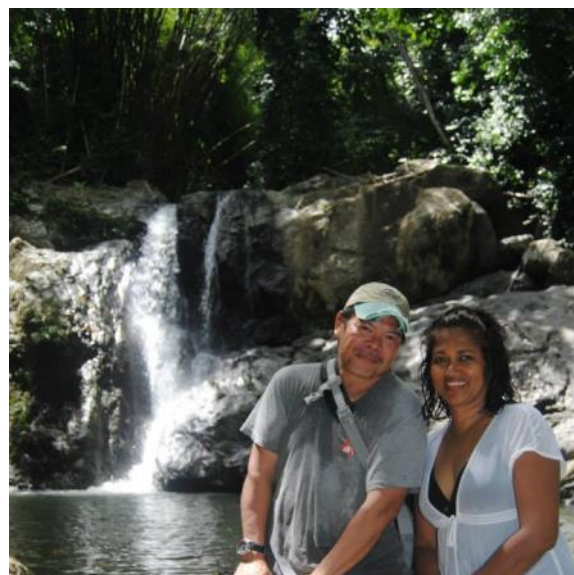
It was not until in later years, in 2012, after building a family and career, that I was finally able to join the Club along with my husband, who for years was my "bush" and snorkelling partner trekking to all parts of Trinidad and Tobago and photographing and enjoying its beauty.

Becoming a member has brought many benefits. I have been able to go on field trips to places which are not well-known, are off the beaten track and to which I would not have had easy access. The monthly lectures, field trips and online access to past issues of their newsletter are engaging ways of learning of our flora and fauna. My most memorable moments have been the occasions when I camped overnight on the shoreline (Chacachacare, Huevos, Monos, Grand Tacaribe) where one felt closest to nature without the distractions (and comforts) of

modern living. With specific interests in flora, coral reefs, and geology, (and now fungi!) I have been able to learn first-hand from the experts in the Club.

Phillip Farfan and Reg Potter are engaging and entertaining on their geology trips; and it is always a pleasure to walk forest paths alongside Dan Jaggernaut, our indefatigable field trip leader, and Edmund, both walking encyclopaedias on our local flora. The fellowships and friendships that I share with TTFNC members are to be treasured, as in this technological age, it is refreshing to share interests in our natural history with other like minds. Importantly, the monthly field trips are always opportunities to feed my soul and spirit as I am always rejuvenated after treks in nature.

My own vision for the Club at this juncture in its development is to encourage the passion and interest in nature among our young ones through junior naturalist sessions/activities as it is in their hands that the safeguarding of our environment and mother earth now resides. How different may it have been for me if my early passion was allowed to take flight? I also envision a permanent home for this accomplished 125-yr-old club where naturalists and others can learn, explore and enjoy our rich biodiversity in a "live" laboratory, walking on trails, and learning of our natural history through live/specimen displays, books, videos and engaging talks.



**Roma,  
enjoying  
nature  
with  
husband  
Jeffrey**



# What the Field Naturalists' Club means to me

By Hans Boos

**I became a member of the Club early in 1960, and I fondly remember how that association allowed me to meet so many interesting and professional people who influenced, encouraged and mentored me and my interests in the following years.**

Ludolph Wehekind, who introduced me to the writings of his mentor, Richard Richardson Mole, and let me copy his seminal work, "The Trinidad Snakes," published in 1926, in the Gazette Newspaper.

Arthur Greenhall, who always encouraged me to look closer to things and who witnessed my first snake bite- a Rainbow Boa that he had identified for me.

Tommy Aitken of the Virus lab who gave me my first Boa Constrictor, "Mac" which became one of my favorite study subjects.

Joselyn Crane of Simla who, reputed to be unfriendly, kindly welcomed me to that facility and presented me with an original copy of William Beebe's "Snakes of Kartabo."

Professor Garth Underwood who provided me with space in a laboratory in the University of the West Indies wherein to house my growing collection of Snakes, and Jack Price who provided a room to relocate them when Jake Kenny threatened to throw them all into the street if I did not remove them after Underwood retired.

Dr Harold Cogger, curator of Reptiles at the Australian Museum in Sydney, for his friendship and assistance in my research into the genus *Candoia*, the Pacific Boas.

John Dunstan of Arima who taught me several handling and housing techniques from the snakes he was keeping. Urban Cross for showing me his bottled collection of specimens and sharing folklore tales about snakes. Joanna Darlington for leading me and Kenneth Kong into Tamana Cave to capture the largest Yellow Bellied Puffing Snake, which she thought was a Bushmaster.

His Royal Highness the Duke of Edinburgh for listening intently while I explained that, contrary to what he thought, Coral Snakes in Trinidad were not marine snakes that lived on Coral Reefs. David Attenborough for chatting with me on two occasions and being interested in the stories I could tell about Trinidad's wildlife.

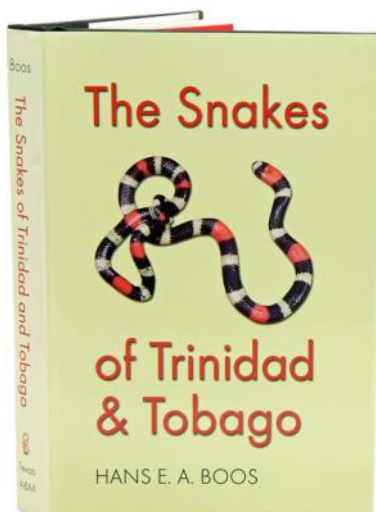
Dr. Chris Starr for saving and preserving my library and my dog, "Ollie." Detta Buch, Peter Reis and Jalaludin Khan for saving and storing my possessions from my house in Emperor Valley Zoo. Attorney Brian De Gannes and his brother Dr. Charles De Gannes for the many kindnesses to me in my times of trouble and Professor Lise Winer for managing my finances in my time of need.

The Members of the Club, (You know who you are) who stood behind me when I needed assistance.

Professor Charles Carpenter of Oklahoma University for recommending that my book, "The Snakes of Trinidad and Tobago," be published by Texas A & M University Press.

Dr Victor Quesnel for offering me a place to live, and for being my co-author in several publications. For Granting me a place of honour in their books, Jan Lindblad, in "Journey to Red Birds," Phillip Dodd in "The Reverend Guppy's Aquarium," Dan Eatherley in "Bushmaster," and Terry Boylan, for an entire chapter in "The Keepers and the Kept."

All these wonderful people have made my life a richer and more fulfilled journey, and It was all mainly because of the Field Naturalists' Club of Trinidad and Tobago.



**Hans' book was published in 2001 and is still widely used by naturalists today**





# My Field Naturalists' Recollections

By Glenn Wilkes



**Not long after I joined the Club, the planned monthly field trip was to the Madamas waterfall.**

Since I was living at Santa Rosa Heights, it seemed pointless to drive to either of the normal meeting points, so instead, I decided to rendezvous with the members at Brasso Seco. Although I had never been to the falls, I had a copy of French's trail guide, and drove to the parking location he described. I waited there for some time, and eventually another vehicle came and parked some distance away. More time passed and it became obvious that like me, the other people were waiting for someone, so I went across and asked them if they were connected to the Field Naturalists' Club.

That's how I met Denise and Richard. They weren't married yet, and over the years I realized that while Richard seldom came on field trips, Denise was a regular. The only problem was that she was habitually late, and ironically I got in the habit of calling her the "late" Denise Lee. But I can't think of another person, male or female, who was less daunted by any of the "hiccups" we've had on field trips over the years.

It turned out that on that particular day, when the members met at the second meeting point, there was a last-minute decision to change the destination.

The three of us at Brasso Seco didn't know, and since it was long before cell-phones, we simply waited until it became obvious that we would be the only ones on this particular field trip. I suggested that we could perhaps use French's description to try and find the waterfall, and to my surprise, the lone female was quite keen to give it a try. There was one problem with the description, since you had to count the number of water-course crossings to find the correct turn-offs, and after a while it became obvious that our concept of a watercourse differed from the description. We never did find the falls that day, but Denise earned my respect by the way she handled herself. Nothing fazed her – the bush, the uncertainty of not being sure of where we

were going, not even the sudden appearance of a group of hunters. She took everything in her stride.

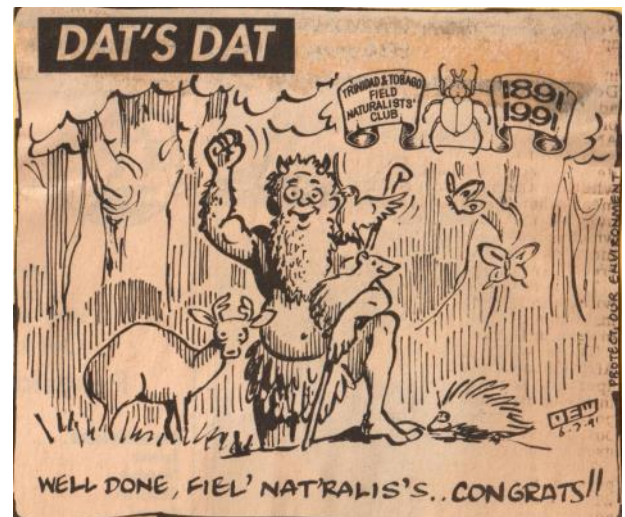
On another occasion, the field trip was to Lagoon Bouffe. As usual, Denise was late. All she knew was that Lagoon Bouffe was somewhere off the oilfield road at Guayaguayare. She drove from Port of Spain *by herself*, got to the gate and asked the gateman if the "naturalist people" had passed there earlier. She got directions from him and headed down the oilfield road. By then, members had parked, and led by someone who knew the way through the bush, cut our way (with some difficulty) to the bouffe. As we scouted around the perimeter, I came upon a well-used hunter's trail, and thought it would be worth investigating, in case there was perhaps an easier, if longer way, back out. Sure enough, the trail came out on a dirt road, which I felt had to be linked to the main road. To make sure, I started following it out....and met Denise, coolly walking along with her knapsack on her back.

"Denise, where *are* you going?"

"Well I saw the cars parked on the road, so I figured you all must be somewhere around".

R.I.P. Denise, I'm quite certain they broke *that* mold.

*In Memoriam – the "late" Denise Lee*







# My TTFNC Memoirs

*By Mala Guinness*



I remember trying to fall asleep in my sleeping bag that night, some years ago, as we, members and guests of the Club, camped in the forest in the eastern northern range in Trinidad. But, sleep eluded me that night. That story that I had read kept gnawing at me. It was about two guys who had slept in the jungle somewhere in Africa. One of them could not get out of his sleeping bag until around noon the following day. He had been constrained to lie motionless and in great distress until a snake crawled out of his bag.

As I lay awake that night in the forest, looking at the bright moon and listening to the therapeutic gurgling of a stream nearby, our hunter guide returned to the campsite. He got into not such a good mood. He couldn't have a cup of hot coffee. Someone, he complained, had thrown water in the fireplace.

I remember also, on another field trip, having lunch at the summit of El Tucuche while a snake lay coiled on a short plant just a few feet away. Someone identified it as a mapepire. This time, I didn't feel fear but was cautious. A little later, I looked on, impressed, as a member very gently touched the snake with a stick. The snake raised its head and photos were taken of it in this position. What a difference some knowledge of snakes makes to comfort level!

Soon after joining the Club some decades ago, I

saw it as a superb association. Through its admirable membership and diverse activities, I continue to gain knowledge and experience of our natural history in a pleasant way.

Now, it is with fondness and a bit of nostalgia that I recall some of the Club's field trips to which I went. How beautiful it was to go close up to a nesting leatherback turtle for the first time and observe with wonder its teary-looking eyes; to swim in our pristine fresh water pools; to feel the mud of a volcano; to explore part of a cave with bats, oilbirds and fish; to climb our forested hills and mountains; to enjoy the scenic landscape of Speyside...! In all of these trips, there were club members who gave freely of their knowledge.

This year 2016 in which the Club celebrates its 125<sup>th</sup> anniversary, I went to the School Art Competition Prize Giving Ceremony and the Bioblitz in the Botanic Gardens. The art work of the young ones in TT was very impressive. The fascinating natural designs of our mushrooms and the huge size of some of our ochroes come to mind as I recall the Bioblitz displays.

Heartfelt congratulations and thanks to the Club and all its members - past and present, young and old, amateur and expert, national and non-national. The results of your passion, dedication and commitment over the years are a treasure and a source of pride and joy.



**The 125th Anniversary Display on tour at Trincity Mall. Elements of the display have also been exhibited at various other events around the country and will continue to form a central part of the Club's outreach efforts. By Roma Wong Sang**





# TTFNC Members in the (Natural) History Books

by Amy Deacon and Mike G. Rutherford

Adapted from the Anniversary Display



Photo by A. Deacon

## Bachac eat fungi, not leaves

In 1892, club member J. E. Tanner was the first person to observe leafcutter ant behaviour in artificial nests.

He confirmed that the leaves are used to grow a fungus, which is eaten by the ants.

Previously, people thought the leaves were eaten by the ants directly, or used to build the roof of their nest.



Photo by R. Auguste

## Frogs can rotate their eyeballs

In 1956, club member Victor Quesnel noticed that the eyes of some tadpoles had a 'nick' in the pupil, allowing him to observe the way in which they moved.

In doing so, he discovered that Trinidad leaf frog tadpoles were able to rotate their eyeball further than anyone had previously documented in any animal (125°). This phenomenon is known as 'cyclorotation'.

## Bushmasters lay eggs

Pre-1900, it was widely believed that the bushmaster, or mapepire zanana, gave birth to live young, like its relative the mapepire balsain. However, in the early 1900s, Club member A. B. Carr stumbled upon the eggs of the bushmaster in a lappe burrow.

Carr informed his friend R. R. Mole, who sent a live snake to R. Ditmars at the Bronx zoo. Here, Ditmars witnessed the egg-laying with his own eyes and published the findings.



Photo by A. Deacon

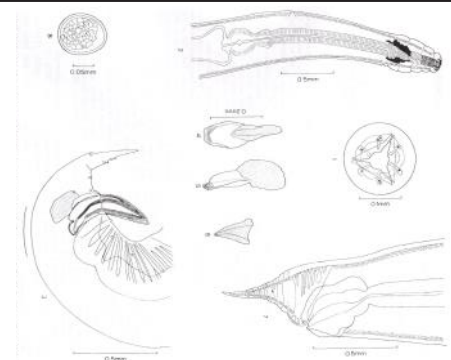


Photo by S. Earnshaw

## World Famous Guppies

Club member R. L. Guppy collected this little fish from the St Anne's River and sent specimens away to be described.

Although the scientific name no longer honours Mr Guppy, his contribution lives on in the common name of this extremely popular aquarium species.



## Turtle parasite (*Spironoura tikasinghi*)

This nematode worm was found inside the guts of a galap turtle from Aripo Savannah by Club member Elisha Tikasingh in the 1970s. It is 13-16mm long with distinctive spicules.

The galap lives in ponds and streams, coming out to feed on plants and invertebrates at night.

## Odd-Legged Millipede (*Pandirodesmus rutherfordi*)

Club member Mike Rutherford found this little millipede while rummaging in a rotting log near Charlotteville, Tobago in 2014. Thinking it looked unusual, he sent it to experts who confirmed it was new to science, and named it in his honour. It has alternate long and short legs.



Photo by M.G. Rutherford

### Northern Grass Mouse (*Necomys urichi*)

This mouse was first described in 1894 and named in recognition of F.W. Urich (1872-1937). Measuring 10cm long (excluding the tail), the northern grass mouse is a specialized rainforest dweller and eats insects and seeds on the forest floor. Urich had many other local species named after him—including 5 ants, a moth, a butterfly, a beetle, a frog and a vine.



Drawing by F. Freer

### Great stripe-faced bat (*Vampyroides caraccioli*)

H. Caracciolo (1859 – 1934) was the first President of the Club. He was also the first to collect this large bat in 1889, which is found throughout T&T, feeds on fruits such as figs and hog plum, and roosts in trees.

Without Caracciolo's enthusiasm and determination, the Club may never have come into existence.



Photo by S. Parker



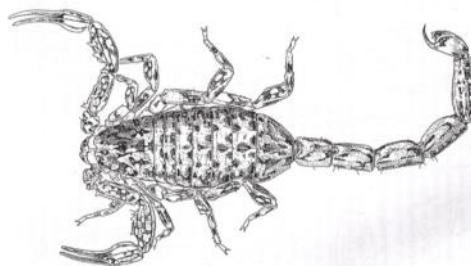
Photo by J.C. Murphy

### Mole's Dwarf Gecko (*Sphaerodactylus molei*)

R.R. Mole (1860-1926) had a passion for snakes and lizards.

On finding an unidentified gecko in Caparo, he sent a specimen to Germany, where it was officially named *Sphaerodactylus molei* in 1894.

He published the first account of T&T's reptiles and amphibians in the same year.



### Little Tobago Scorpion (*Tityus starri*)

This tiny scorpion was discovered by an amateur naturalist from Austria in 1997, and named after Club member Christopher Starr. It is just a few millimetres long and has only ever been found on the island of Little Tobago.



### Tucuche Adelpha (*Adelpha seriphia barcanti*)

Until recently, this butterfly was thought to be restricted to the top of Mt El Tucuche, where it was first found and named after Club member and butterfly enthusiast Malcolm Barcant.

A population was recently found in the mountains of Venezuela, which is good news for the conservation of this beautiful yet rare subspecies.

### Manac Palm or 'Mountain Cabbage' (*Euterpe broadwayi*)

This palm, which has an edible heart, was named after W.E. Broadway (1863-1935) and is found on ridges and valleys throughout the Lesser Antilles.



Photo by A. Deacon

Many other species were named after Broadway, including an orchid, a bromeliad, a vine, a spider and a moth.



# 125 years of the Trinidad and

1891—Club founded on July 10th by Henry Caracciolo; Alfred Taitt; W.E. Broadway; F.W. Ulrich; T.I. Potter; G.W. Hewlett; P.L. Guppy; R.R. Mole; In order to “...give pleasure to its members by observation of animal, insect and plant life in Trinidad”



1911—Former US President, Theodore Roosevelt, visits Trinidad and Cumaca cave assisted by club members



1923—Club members help restore National Museum (then Royal Victoria Institute) collections of natural history and geology after the devastating fire of 1920



1891

1900

1920

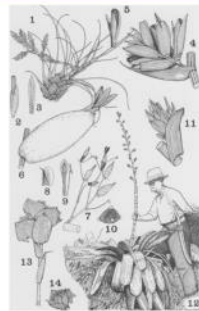


1892—First edition of the *Journal of the Trinidad Field Naturalists' Club* published

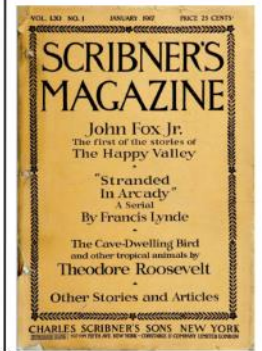


1894—Mole & Ulrich publish a list of the reptiles and amphibians of T&T, describing 25 lizards, 33 snakes and 12 amphibians

1893—Club offers to collect and send specimens of local fauna to the British Museum for identification and description of new species



1915—Club founder W.E. Broadway helps set up the T&T Horticultural Society. Even today, he is considered one of the most important collectors of T&T's plants



1917—Scribner's Magazine features Roosevelt's trip to Trinidad, mentioning several Club members and including photos by F.W. Ulrich

1956—Journal re-launched after a long hiatus



1962—T&T gains independence. The Club was represented on several committees for the new government, including the Wildlife Conservation Committee



1970—Club starts turtle-tagging project



1972—Richard French publishes *A Guide to the Birds of Trinidad and Tobago*



1973—Club is instrumental in protecting Caroni Swamp from destruction

1976—Member Stephen Mohammed establishes *Trinidad Naturalist* magazine

1982—Club twinned with Ottawa Field Naturalists' Club



1960

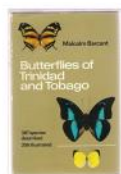
1980



1955—Plaque erected at National Museum (RVI) to honour founding members of the TTFNC



1963—Club starts investigating turtle slaughter at Matura



1964—Club hikes to Cumaca cave on the day of the sub-aqua club tragedy, in which two men drowned (including Club member Victor Abraham)

1970—Club member Malcolm Barcant publishes *Butterflies of Trinidad and Tobago*

1973—The Club helps Peter Bacon submit report on turtles leading to protection laws



1973—The Club's Bulletin *The Field Naturalist* is first published

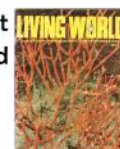


1974—Tobago incorporated into the Club's name

1978—Cumaca and Aripo cave mapping project completed

1977—TTFNC Botany Group established

1977—Journal is renamed *Living World: Journal of the Trinidad and Tobago Field Naturalists' Club*



1980—Club awarded Medal of Merit, Gold





# Tobago Field Naturalists' Club

1930—Club member Ludolf Wehekind conducts extensive fish collecting in Trinidad & Venezuela. Eight species found are new to science



1934—P.L. Guppy starts to popularise 'guppy' as a common name for the fish his father, R.L. Guppy, 'discovered' in 1866. The guppy is now an extremely well-known aquarium species



1947—St Mary's College became the Club's meeting place



1954—Yellow fever outbreak. The Club helps prevent proposed culling of monkeys in favour of inoculations



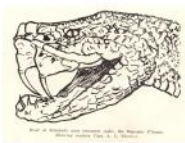
## 1940



1934—Bronx Zoo curator Raymond Ditmars visits Trinidad to collect a specimen of the famous bushmaster or 'mapepire zanana'



1940—Captain Alex Mendes publishes *The Marine Fishes of Trinidad*



1942—founder Thomas Potter publishes *Fruit—native and introduced—in the island of Trinidad, BWI*

1947—The Club founds the Zoological Society of T&T



1952—Emperor Valley Zoo opens

1989—Club becomes a founding member of Council for the President of the Environment (COPE)



1989—Yasmin Baksh-Comeau becomes first female president



1991—The Club's 100th Anniversary Special stamp issued, and club incorporated into an Act of Parliament. This same year, a Tobago Branch of the club was formed, which later became *Environment Tobago*



2012—First annual Bioblitz took place in Tucker Valley



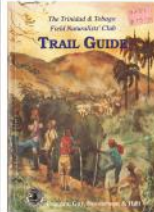
2013—Wildflower guide published

## 2000

1985—Club logo, *Inca clathrata quesneli*, described as new subspecies



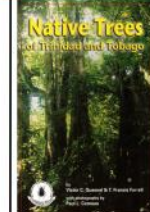
1989—Club's Conservation In Action Group host a symposium from which the Caribbean Forest Conservation Association is formed



1992—Trail Guide published



1999—Exhibition of member Ray Johnson's nature photographs



2000—Native Trees of Trinidad & Tobago by Club members Frankie Farrell and Victor Quesnel published

2012—Club begins teaming up with the T&T Eco Divers Club for marine field trips



2015—Butterfly guide published, in collaboration with Angostura Ltd, UWI Zoology Museum and Asa Wright Nature Centre

1995—T&T Bird Status and Distribution Committee (TTBSDC) established







*“Nature is most to be admired in the smallest things”*

## MUSINGS ON OUR MOTTO

*By Amy Deacon*



We all know that the club's motto is “*Natura Maxime Miranda in Minimis*”, but do we all agree on the English translation of the phrase? As we wished to use it as the theme for one of our Art Competition categories, it seemed a good time to get to the bottom of it. Looking in the archives and online I came across several variations, so I decided to make some enquiries among some of our more classically-schooled members.

### **Dr Elisha Tikasingh:**

“*Nature is greatest in the little things*” is strictly not correct as it does not account for the word “*miranda*”. My rendition is “*Nature is greatly admired in small things*”.

### **Professor Christopher Starr:**

The meaning is not at all obscure: “*Nature is best observed in her smallest creatures*”. Pliny didn't specify animals, but that was where his main attention was, so we can be pretty sure that's what he meant. There were already magnifying glasses at that time, but there is no reason to think Pliny ever used one, so it's fair to say that he mostly meant visible bugs.

However the translation above misses the play on words between *maximus* and *minimis*. One way to include this would be “*Nature looms largest in her smallest creatures*”. Note that it has to be *smallest*, not *small*.

### **Professor Julian Duncan:**

The quote is as you know from Pliny the Elder. The literal translation is “*Nature is greatest in small things*”. A more expansive translation is “*Nature is most to be admired in those things that are least*” I suppose if one takes liberties with the quote one gets “*The most beautiful things in nature are the tiny ones*”

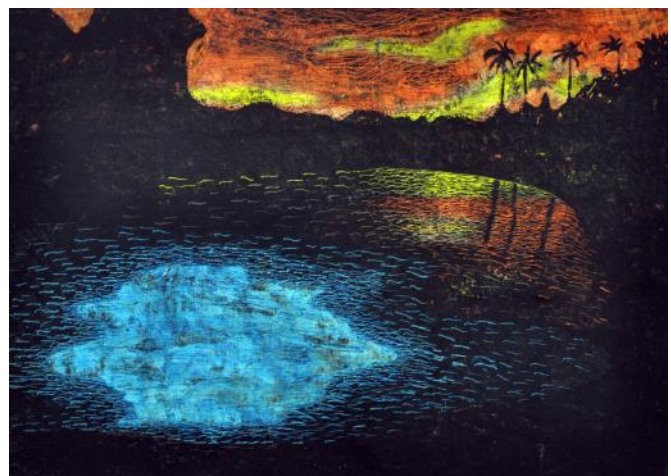


At this point, Mike Rutherford drew my attention to page 23 of the 1961 Journal of the Trinidad Field Naturalists' Club, where Andrew Carr uses the translation:

*“Nature is most to be admired in the smallest things”.*

This version loses the 'great/small' contrast but retains the right sentiments, and has a nice simplicity.

After much consideration, we decided to accept Carr's version for the Art Competition, which inspired some wonderful, imaginative interpretations from 13-16yr olds around the country, including Rianna Rampersad's “*Bioluminescence*”, based on the glowing Ortoire.



Many thanks to Elisha Tikasingh, Julian Duncan and Christopher Starr for their insights.



# REFLECTIONS ON 49 YEARS WITH THE TTFNC

by Elisha Tikasingh



**I returned from studies abroad in October 1960.** I had a fellowship from the Rockefeller Foundation to study arthropod-borne viruses at the Trinidad Regional Virus Laboratory. By arthropod-borne viruses, abbreviated to arboviruses, I mean viruses transmitted by insects, ticks and mites. The one that is making news today is the Zika virus, last year it was Chikungunya, there is the ever-present dengue virus, and in 2018 we can expect activity of the yellow fever virus in monkeys.

At the time of my arrival, I did not know of the existence of the Trinidad Field Naturalists' Club.

My first encounter with the Club was with its journal. One day I was browsing in the book section of Stephens & Todd Departmental Store on Frederick St (no longer in existence) when I saw the "Journal of the Trinidad Field Naturalists' Club". Two issues were on sale – 1956 and 1957 and I bought both issues for the whopping price of 50 cents each. I thought then I might want to join this Club, but did not actually pursue it.

It was sometime during the first quarter of 1967 that Ian Lambie visited me in my office in Federation Park. Ian said he was the Secretary of the Trinidad Field Naturalists' Club and asked if I can give a lecture to the Club. I agreed, but I said I wanted to join the Club. "How much to join" I asked. He said \$3.00 to join and \$5.00 annual fees or vice versa. I gave him the money and I became a member. That was some 49 years ago! I am still a member as I believe in the objectives of the Club.

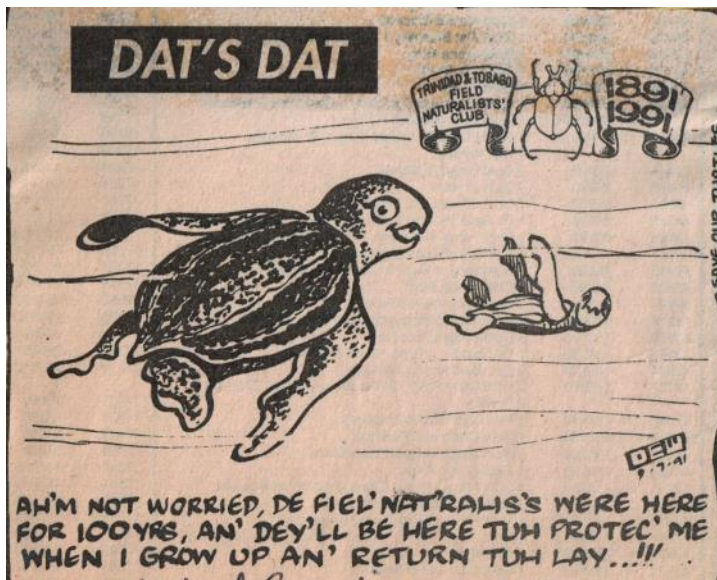
Soon I started attending meetings and field trips. Meetings were held at St Mary's College as they are now. I remember Ian as Secretary used to write the minutes in a big legal sized book and would read the minutes which would take 15 to 20 minutes so that when he reached the end you forgot what he said in the first five minutes. In this way members could not make any meaningful suggestions or corrections. So the members decided that was too tedious and took up precious time and asked for the minutes to be mimeographed. In this way each of us would have a copy. Remember we did not have many copying options in the 1960s.

The membership at the time consisted of mainly amateurs with a few professionals. Today, I think we have a good mix of professionals and amateurs. I do remember at one time the membership asking for some basic information on some of the animal groups. Their cry was that they were clerks, secretaries and other such type workers and they did not have a biological background in their education. They said they would like get some basic knowledge of birds and bats and snakes and the other creatures. Remember there was no Google to look up for information nor were there many books in which to find information.

Management did provide seminars on a Saturday which were divided up in various groups with different people going to the group of their choice. I took one group interested in insects. I talked about the basic structure of insects and how to collect and preserve them. One member of the group was a youngster named Graham White. Today as you know, he is the editor of our Journal.

I went on many field trips with the Club. One stood out. It was a trip to Fishing Pond. It was the early days of turtle watching. We knew nothing about the Leatherback turtles nesting on our beaches. We only knew that they were being slaughtered at Matura when they came to nest. The Club decided to take this up as a project and Dr. Peter Bacon took charge of the turtle project. The purpose was to collect information on the breeding season and nesting behaviour of these turtles. We had already patrolled the Matura Beach, but we did not know how far south they nested along that beach. This particular time the Club led by its president, Mr. Laforest decided to get to the beach via Fishing Pond and the rice fields in the area. That day there was heavy rainfall and the tide was high so there was a lot of ground water. I had some misgivings of going through that water, but Mr. Laforest decided to go anyway. We followed him and as we entered the rice fields the water reached our ankles, then our knees and then almost to our waists. I swore I was going to drown that night. Mr. Laforest thought he knew the passage to the beach, but he lost his way and we had





to zig zag our way until we entered the mangrove and the beach. We searched the beach but no turtles were seen, but these were pioneering days. Some days you will go out and see turtles other days you will not. Information on the turtles was slowly gathered day after day or rather night after night and year after year until we had sufficient data to make some recommendations which the Government accepted.

The Club was never a pressure group nor is it now. However, we once had to exert pressure on Shell Trinidad Ltd when they tried to use a barge to bring liquefied petroleum gas through the Blue River in the Caroni Swamp. We were in the forefront in forming the Blue River Action Group which gave rise to strong protests which eventually persuaded Shell Trinidad Ltd. not to use the barge in the Caroni Swamp.

That was an extreme case when we had to exert pressure to get something done. I raise this point only to mention that we have had young people joining our Club every year only to disappear after one or two years. Why did they leave? I did raise this point with a past president of the Club (deceased now). He said these people joined because they thought our Club was a pressure group and when they found that this was not so, they left.

When the Club was founded in 1891 its objectives were:

1. to bring together persons interested in the study of natural history;
2. the diffusion of knowledge thereof; and the
3. conservation of nature.

One way of the “diffusion of knowledge” was the publication of a journal which started in 1892. Two volumes were published during the period 1892-1896. Its title was “Journal of the Trinidad Field Naturalists’ Club”

Then like the Club, the journal was dormant for a while. The Club restarted in 1954 and resumed the publication of its journal in 1956 with its original name: Journal of the Trinidad Field Naturalists’ Club. I doubt however, that members are aware that the journal had 4 name changes: The first name change came in 1961 when it became Field Naturalist. Journal of the Trinidad Field Naturalists’ Club. In 1965 it reverted back to its proper name, Journal of the Trinidad Field Naturalists’ Club. The 2nd name change came in 1967 and repeated in the 1969 and 1971 issues: it became The Trinidad Field Naturalists’ Club Journal. The 3rd name change came in the 1973 and 1975 issues as Journal of The Trinidad & Tobago Field Naturalists’ Club to reflect the change of the Club’s name from The Trinidad Field Naturalists’ Club to the Trinidad and Tobago Field Naturalists’ Club.


The 4th name change came in 1977 as Living World, Journal of The Trinidad & Tobago Field Naturalists’ Club.

The Journal is geared to the naturalist doing research work in Trinidad and Tobago and the wider Caribbean. But we need a publication written in simple language for the general public and the High School students. I think this is one way in which we can get information on our flora and fauna out to the public. The Bulletin can be expanded and carefully edited to meet this purpose. Contributors of articles could be paid a small sum while an editor could also be given a stipend as it takes a lot of time in editing and preparing an article for publication. In this case the Bulletin could be distributed free to High School with sponsors meeting the costs for printing and distribution. Perhaps the Green Fund could help although our experience with this Fund so far is not encouraging or as my son suggests, a pdf which can be downloaded in people’s electronic

devices.

Let me end with a note from our Centenary Celebrations in 1991. One of our activities was a dinner organised by Luisa Zuniaga and her Committee which was held at the Golf Club at Moka. Club meeting after club meeting I would ask members to let Luisa know if they would be attending the dinner. The silence was deafening and I had visions of a group of five or six Club members sitting with President Noor Hassanali and his wife alongside the British High Commissioner and his wife, who were members of the Club, and having dinner together. It was the last week before the start of centenary activities that people started submitting their names. In the end we had 175 persons for dinner. People were calling on the day of the dinner to join the group, but of course it was too late. I do not know why we wait for the last minute to say yea or nay!

Then there was something that happened at the

dinner which I thought was funny. At about 5:00 pm on the day of the dinner, I went to Moka to see if everything was OK. The place was very beautifully decorated by Luisa and her Committee. I noted that the tables and chairs were carefully arranged, but then I said where is the President's Aide de Camp going to sit? I wasn't sure where he was going to sit. With help from some of the Golf Club workers I got a small table, table cloth and a single chair and place it a strategic point where the Aide-de-Camp could see the President and the President could see him. When we were all seated the Aide-de-Camp came to me and asked where was he going to sit? I said "come with me" and I went to the place where I placed the chair and table. But the chair and table were not there. Someone moved it. I could just hear the person who moved the table saying "who so stupid to put a single table with a single chair in this place?" I ended up having to share our table with the Aide de camp. All's well that ends well. I thank you. 



From L to R: Jalaludin Khan, Elisha Tikasingh, Diane Renaud, John Correia, Linda Awaj, Ann Hilton, Luisa Zuniaga, Barbara Zollna, Noel Vaucrosson, Frankie Farrell, Paul Christopher, Yasmin Baksh-Comeau, Muriel Pierre, Graham White at the 100th Anniversary Dinner in 1991.





# A Natural Connection


## *Memoirs of couples united by the club*



### Esperanza and Bobby

When I arrived in Trinidad and Tobago sixteen years ago the TTFNC was not only the strategy to get to know and love these islands but it was a real inspiration that kept me motivated.

In my memory it stands out when Victor, Betsy and I got lost in Bush Bush and of course when I met my husband Bobby in Cumaca. This January 2017 we are celebrating as well that our daughter Asha joined us on her first hike with the club. We have learnt a lot from most interesting members, and Dan has always been there as the genuine naturalist.

We can only be deeply grateful to the club for being a source of inspiration and life. (Esperanza Luengo) 



**Top:** Esperanza and Bobby camping with the club. **Bottom:** Ann and Gerard Williams with fellow naturalists Stuart and Joy Millar, Winston and Dianne Boodoo, and Bernadette Harris and Clayton Hull on a birding trip to Panama in 2014.

## Vicki and Paul

**The Club holds a very special place in my heart for bringing Paul and I together.**

Though we knew each other on a professional level since 1985, we only connected on a personal level and became a couple through meeting up with each other at the Field Naturalist Club, after I joined in 1996. This year marks our 20th wedding anniversary. Members of the Club were present at our wedding on November 8th 1997 and Sylvia Kacal wrote about it in a newspaper article. Juanita Henry caught the bridal bouquet =)

We both wanted the wedding to be an informal nature-oriented event. The ceremony was at the Roman Catholic Church (since we needed a church for the marriage to be sanctified, our original plan of a rock in Toco had to be scraped) in Mission Village, Toco, photos were at Sans Souci beach and the reception/beach lime was at a beach house in Cumana. We chose Toco because that is where my heart is, my father is 'a fish' and we have been going there from as long as I can remember. I used the seashells that I had collected at this very same house when I was about 15 years old, to make a collage on each wedding invitation.

Coincidentally in the early 80s, when I was in my teens, I came across an article in the Club's magazine that my cousin had in his possession (I knew nothing about the Club and the magazine was something that my cousin had picked up merely out of curiosity as he was also a lover of the outdoors and hiking). Paul had written an article in it on birding at his school's compound (Trinity) in Moka and he had included one of his paintings of parrots to illustrate it. That painting was however misplaced on a later page in the magazine and no indication of the artist accompanied it. I fell in love with that painting and for years wondered as to who the artist was. Years later in 1996, when I went to Paul's flat to meet him, there it was, framed and hanging on his wall. I enthusiastically told my story of it and eagerly asked with bated breath if he knew who the artist was. Needless to say his answer blew me away. That painting now hangs on our wall and is the first thing that you see on entering our home.

So yes, it seems we were destined to meet through the Club.

(Vicki Blanchard) 



**Blue headed parrots, originally published in the Naturalist magazine in the early 1980s by Paul Christopher**

## Ann and Gerard

**Gerard & I met in 1977 at the annual TTFNC trip to Tobago led by Ian Lambie.** Ian teamed us up and we still call him our matchmaker! Thanks Ian, it's been an interesting 40 years.

(Ann Williams) 







## My TTFNC Memoirs


By Haroon Husain



I became a member of the Trinidad and Tobago Field Naturalists' Club in 1982 and can say that the knowledge gained of the flora and fauna of Trinidad and Tobago can be attributed to the Club from participation in the many field trips, attending monthly lectures and serving on the TTFNC Management Committee as President, Vice President and Management Committee member.

There are many pleasant memories to cherish over the years but the ones that stand out are going to Tobago for the weekend and staying at Grafton Estate Great House and at Turpins Cottages in Charlotteville. Also participating in the overseas

trips to St Lucia, Dominica, St Vincent and the Grenadines, Guyana and Venezuela. Serving on the Organising Committee for the Club's 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary was an enlightening experience.

I have developed many lifelong friendships and important contacts from my interactions with Club members over the years. Many members have made significant contributions to the progress of the Club over the years but the ones that stand out in my mind are Ian Lambie, Frankie Farrell, Victor Quesnel, Dr Elisha Tikasingh, Selwyn Gomes and Dan Jaggernaut. 



Painting by Kenia Joseph (16)

### A Poem by Mala Guinness

*Recited by the author at the 2016 Christmas Lunch in Brasso Seco*

At Yuletide here it's seen  
Poinsettias red 'n' green.  
We drink, eat, clap and sing,  
Dance the parang with swing.

Somewhere, elsewhere, not here,  
Are wars, bombs, fire and fear.  
Folks are dashing everywhere  
To find peace in this sphere.

What to do? What to say?  
Love your pals every day.  
Earth our home love her too.  
Keep her bright, green and blue.



# Snippets of Club History

By Ian Lambie



*Some important club milestones recalled by former Club President, Ian Lambie:*

1. The first meeting to discuss the formation of a National Trust was held at the Royal Victoria Institute in 1941 (more than 70 years ago). The Club's representative at that meeting was Capt. Alex L. Mendes.
2. At a meeting of the then *Trinidad Field Naturalists' Club* held in 1947 it was agreed that a Zoological Society be established. Hence the Emperor Valley Zoo.
3. When the late David Rooks relocated to Tobago he was instrumental in the formation of *Environment Tobago*. Mrs. Pat Turpin of Charlotteville is the current President.
4. I recall that a meeting of the Club held at the Horticulture Society's premises on Lady Chancellor Road, Sylvia Kacal and some other members broke away to form a conservation organisation [Caribbean Forest Conservation Association - CFCA].
5. During a Field Excursion of the Club held in the 1930s or 1940s a participant was accidentally shot and killed by another participant who was carrying a loaded shotgun.
6. As detailed in an article written by Hans Boos and published in a previous QB, one Sunday in March 1964 Club members coincided with members of the British Sub-aqua Group on a hike to the Oilbird Cave on the Leotaud's Estate at Cumaca, North Oropouche. During that fateful trip two young men of the sub-aqua group, Adam Richard and Victor Abraham, lost their lives in the cave. Victor was also a member of the TTFNC.
7. Up to the late 1960s the Club was the sole NGO actively concerned with wildlife and environmental conservation and the Club has repeatedly been called upon to nominate naturalists to the Wildlife Conservation Committee. (There were also representatives of the Hunters' Association and the Cage Birds Association serving on the Wildlife Conservation Committee)
8. I recall that the late Dr Victor Quesnel protested the cutting of trees in the Botanical Gardens to prepare the site for the construction of what is now the residence of the President.
9. The Club also protested the cutting of the hillside along the Lady Young Road at Morvant to provide "fill" for the widening of the Churchill Roosevelt Highway at Valsayn. The Club named the area of the 'benching' "The Hector McLean Monument", after the then Minister of Works who over-rode the opinion of his Quarries Advisory Committee which did not grant permission for the cutting of the hillside. The Chairman of this Committee was Ronald Williams, an engineer and founder of The Society for the Conservation, Appreciation and Preservation of the Environment (SCAPE), which attracted some members of the TTFNC.
10. In the early 1970s, our Club was in the vanguard of the protest movement, together with other organisations, for the removal of the Shell Barge "Pelican" which was being used to transport LPG from the P-a-P refinery up the Blue River in the Caroni Swamp to a bottling plant at the head of Drain No. 4 in the Caroni Swamp. This was the first ever organised protest by Environmental Conservation Groups. The protest included public meetings, the printing and distribution of leaflets, bumper stickers, appropriate articles in the daily newspapers, interviews on the radio and television and a small peaceful demonstration by members in cars, around the Parliament building, the Red House, during a sitting of the Parliament. After about two years the Bottling Plant was relocated to the NP Compound at Sea Lots and the "Pelican" no longer used the Blue River.



*Continued on next page...*

11. In 1963, the TTFNC first became aware of the slaughter of Leatherback Turtles on the Matura Beach when it was brought to its attention at a Monthly meeting by a club member. In 1965 the club began regular visits at night to the Matura Beach. Dr Peter Bacon was appointed co-ordinator of the Club's Turtle Tagging Project. Tagging equipment was supplied by the University of Florida at Gainesville and in 1969, using the information gathered during the past five nesting seasons the Club submitted proposals to the Government for amendments to the Turtle Conservation Laws. Our proposals were accepted and formed the basis of the current Turtle Conservation Laws. Unfortunately the Club took the decision to bring to an end its Turtle Tagging Project after the 1981 Season.

The Nature Seekers' Organisation was established in 1990 more than nine years after the TFNC had closed its Project, through the instrumentality of Dr Carol James, the then Head of the Wildlife Section of the Forest Division, who was introduced to Leatherback turtles as a Junior Member of the Club more than twelve years earlier. The Turtle Village Trust was established in 2007, more than 40 years after the Club began its Turtle Tagging Project. Would you believe that the founders of the Trust were not aware of the work of the TTFNC? During the State of Emergency in 1970 the Club was issued with Special Permits by the Commissioner of Police for members in a limited number of members' vehicles to travel to and from Matura during the curfew hours. 🐢



**David Rooks tagging a leatherback as part of the Club's efforts in 1975. This one is on Grande Tacaribe.**



# A PLAN FOR THE CLUB'S FUTURE

by Kris Sookdeo



Despite the fact that the TTFNC has been founded since 1891, a concrete long term plan of action for members and management to adhere to has never been firmly established, despite several valiant attempts and urgings to do so by members. Such a plan is sorely need. It is instructive that the issues highlighted for attention over the years are much the same as the issues still needing attention today.

As part of our celebrations, the '125th Anniversary Strategy Plan' was crafted, pulling together prior suggestions, surveys and new ideas. The intent is that future management committees will not only endeavour to meet these targets, but also to continue to adapt them as needed.

The plan proposes changes which improve our financial sustainability and so enables a shift in both the approach of management and in the range of activities of the Club. Importantly, we believe that this shift allows members to continue having printed publications (i.e. the Living World Journal and the Quarterly Bulletin) but now allows us to become financially sustainable. With less attention needed to ensure the financial stability of the Club, management is tasked with a broadening of focus to include those activities which truly help us to meet our objectives.

The underlying thrust of management must be to attract membership and to then retain that membership. This is both a goal in its own right as well as an important part of enabling future activities.

A copy of the strategic plan is available on request to [admin@ttfnc.org](mailto:admin@ttfnc.org)



This clutch of Scarlet Ibis eggs were collected 50yrs ago by Club member Richard ffrench in Caroni Swamp, and were displayed as part of our 125th Exhibition in the National Museum. Will there still be eggs there in another 50 years? That is up to us...



## A Club History in Jerseys!

Garnet Hislop wearing the 125th Anniversary Jersey from 2016 (also available in green or white), Roger Edghill sporting the 100th Anniversary edition released in 1991, and Paul Edghill modelling a vintage 1989 T-shirt.





# CELEBRATING WITH FOOD

By Amy Deacon



Other events during the year included a special Anniversary Dinner at Namaste restaurant in Chicklands on the 10th September. This event was well-attended, with many standing up to share their fond memories and humorous stories with the group after the meal. Several members came early to enjoy a tour of the nearby El Socorro Centre for Wildlife Conservation, courtesy of Ricardo Meade. Dan Jaggernauti honoured several members with awards in recognition of sterling contributions over the years.

In December we had our usual Christmas function, hosted for the second year in a row by the Brasso Seco Paria Tourism Action Committee at the Visitors' Centre. We were especially grateful for their hospitality given that they were in the midst of recovering from serious storm damage just a few days before. The club brought along supplies as a donation to the villagers of Madamas who had been worst affected. However, it was a happy occasion and we were treated to local festive treats and some traditional parang for entertainment—accompanied by our very own Glenn Wilkes!



Top: Elisha Tikasingh, Haroon Husain, Jeffrey Wong Sang, Amy Deacon, Darshan Narang, Reginald Potter, Glenn Wilkes and Dan Jaggernauti (front). Bottom: Christmas parang in Brasso Seco Photos: Roma Wong Sang

## A few words from the President...


On behalf of the management committee, I extend my congratulations to the members of our fine Club. Just over 125 years ago, our founding members had the tremendous foresight to create an avenue for the citizens of the then colony to explore, learn about and share their knowledge of the natural world around them. It was a simple idea – to bring together persons who had an interest in our natural environment – and one that endures to this day.

The Club has been an important part of the history of natural history on the island. We have done a very commendable job of documenting various aspects of the island's environment. A look at our membership list over the years reveals that many noteworthy individuals have been members of our institution. And several organisations have emerged from the club over the years.

But while we congratulate ourselves, we should not become complacent and simply being an old organization does not guarantee success. Are we ready and able to adapt to the opportunities and challenges of the rapidly evolving digital age? Why have so many of those noteworthy individuals stopped being members of the Club over the years? Do we need to add more value to our 'product'? Why have so many organisations split off from the Club? Do these represent missed opportunities to expand the impact of the club?

I am sure that many of us sitting here share the feeling that the Club has a lot of untapped potential. The Club, like the subjects that so many of us devote our time to, is a living thing that will require our continual care and attention.

We should never underestimate the enormous sacrifices that went into making the club what it is today and the effort require to ensure that it continues to operate. To this end, we have to thank all the stalwarts that made their mark on the Club, from the founding members to those that only recently departed this life and to those members that continue to dedicate their time and energy today.

After all, the fact that we are here today means that they have succeeded in achieving our core objective – to bring together persons who had an interest in our natural environment. Congratulations to all our members on the celebration of our 125<sup>th</sup> Anniversary. 

Kris Sookdeo, July 2016  
(TTFNC President 2014-2016)



**TTFNC QUARTERLY BULLETINS & INDEX ONLINE LINK :**

<http://ttfnc.org/publication/field-naturalist/>



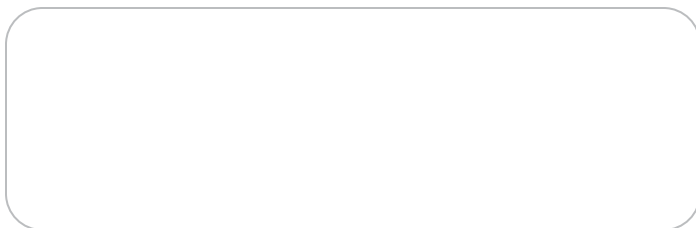
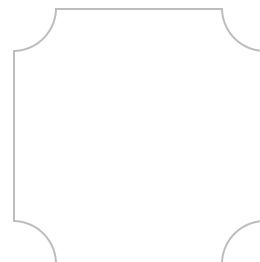
### Management Notices

#### New Members

The Club warmly welcomes the following new members:

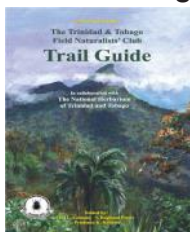
Sandeep Maharaj, Joy Dillion, Trina Halfhide and Wendell Gill



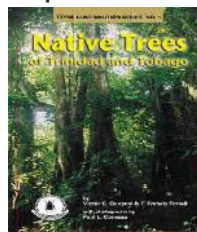


## PUBLICATIONS

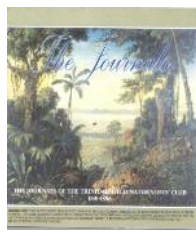
The following Club publications are available to members and non-members:



The TTFNC  
Trail Guide  
Members :  
TT\$160.00



The Native Trees  
of T&T 2nd Edition  
Members :  
TT\$80.00



Living World  
Journal 1892-  
1896 CD  
Members :  
TT\$95.00



Living World Journal back issues  
Members price : free



Laminated wildflower and  
butterfly guides  
Members : TT\$50.00 each

## MISCELLANEOUS

### The Greenhall Trust

Started in 2005, in memory of Elizabeth and Arthur Greenhall, dedicated artist and zoologist, respectively, the Trust offers financial assistance to aspiring artists and biologists (in the areas of flora and fauna) in Trinidad and Tobago. Full details are available on their website: <http://www.greenhallstrust-wi.org/link.htm>

### Your 2017 Annual Membership Fees are Due:

Please view bottom right of the mailing label to check if your subscription has been paid.

### Submission of articles and field trip reports:

1. All articles must reach the editors by the eighth week of each quarter.
2. Electronic copies can be submitted to the editors at: [admin@ttfnc.org](mailto:admin@ttfnc.org) or directly to the editors or any member of Management. Please include 'QB2017' in the email subject label.