

PRESS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Exploring Our Maritime Heritage

The story of our maritime heritage lies at the very heart of our national identity. From the first permanent settlers harvesting turtles and salvaging shipwrecks, to our merchant mariners who travelled the globe, and more recently with the advent of a sea-based tourism industry, Caymanians have looked to the sea for a livelihood and our culture, society and economy have been influenced accordingly.

These themes are being explored in the National Gallery's current exhibition *Founded Upon the Seas* which is being held in conjunction with the Seafarers Association, The Catboat Club, The Cayman Islands National Archive (CINA), and the National Museum, and Butterfield Bank (Cayman) Ltd. Throughout the summer a series of events and lectures have been held starting in June with a series of family art events inspired by an exhibition visit. On July the 19th, a packed audience were on-hand to share in conversation with some of our esteemed seafarers: John Douglas, Capt. Paul Hurlston, Wenzil Burlington and Neils Godfrey. The gentlemen reminisced about their experiences at sea – of the triumphs, hardships, loss, and near misses. It was a truly wonderful evening of reminiscing and laughter that brought history to life.

In early August Charisse Morrison (CINA) and Rita Estevanovich (CNCF) hosted "Stories from our Maritime Heritage" reading extracts from the CINA Oral Histories and The Southwell Years respectively. The lively performance was repeated in part on Radio Cayman's Talk Today show and NGCI Director, Natalie Urquhart, joined Loxley Ebanks' for his Saturday afternoon broadcast to discuss the importance of bringing our maritime heritage to the forefront in a way that is both lively and accessible to the younger generation.

Later in the month, on August 28th, members of the Cayman Catboat Club will give a lively lecture on the 'History of the Catboat' and discuss their current museum project at Whitehall Bay which, upon completion, will tell the story of these unique vessels.

The related programming schedule continues through September and will include art classes, lectures and screenings. Family Fun Mornings will be held each Saturday at 9.30am with a variety of maritime inspired art projects; school tours, each accompanied by an interactive activity guide, will be available

for booking. On September 13th and second “In Conversation” evening will be held with the wives and daughters who remained at home and kept the fires burning through the many long months of separation.

These events are free of charge and open to all members of the community and visitors to the island.

For information about an event or visiting the exhibition email Ivanna Powry at assistant@nationalgallery.org.ky or call 945 8111.



(L to R) John Douglas, Captain Paul Hurlston, Neils Godfrey and Wenzil Burlington share their accounts of life at sea.



A young artists creates a painting inspired by John Broads's *The Rembro*, currently on display at the NGCI *Founded Upon the Seas* exhibition.