

St. George's Caye Community Council



18 July 2009

Dear Friends & Residents of St. George's Caye:

The first field season of the St. George's Caye Archaeological Project wrapped up on Saturday, July 11, 2009 and was a great start to what may develop into a long term project.

This year the team conducted reconnaissance on the island using a metal detector, metal probes, and a few shovel tests. Most of the test pits were located in the cemetery and a couple tests pits were dug in areas identified by local knowledge as may having historical information.

Some of the more interesting finds are a military uniform button from the 7th West India Regiment, a couple of clay pipe fragments with markings that can be used to aid in dating, lots of turtle bone, and a large pile of ballast stone. We also recovered lots of old conch shells, black glass bottle necks and bottoms, and many brick fragments.

Detailed measurements and drawings were made of the large canon in front of Mr. Espot's house and these measurements will be compared to the cannon in Belmopan which is believed to have come from St. George's Caye. Preliminary indications are that the canon is a 24 pounder (meaning that the canon ball that it shot weighed 24 pounds).

With regards to the work done in the cemetery, the goal was to locate some of the graves in order to get a better understanding of the original dimensions and layout of the cemetery.



7th West Indies Regiment Button.



Thomas Potts' sarcophagus.



Clay Pipe Bowl with a "W" & a "1."

Then using this information, try to determine where to look for the Thomas Potts' sarcophagus. After four days of work in the cemetery using the metal detector, probes and opening 3 large units one 2 m x 2 m (6 ft x 6ft) and two 1mx1m (3ftx3ft), we were beginning to question whether or not we were actually in the cemetery, since we were recovering many interesting artifacts but not locating any graves. Then, on the last day (doesn't it always happen this way) while probing in an area that Rueben showed us, we hot what we believed may be a grave. Sure enough when we opened a 1mx2m unit we exposed a grave. The capstone was gone as were the contents of the grave. We believe this was due to hurricane damage. Since them Dr. Garber

has located a map of the cemetery indicating exactly where all the graves were located and we are hoping that with some more testing we will be able to possibly identify whose grave we exposed as well as look for any other remaining grave stones.

All this is very exciting for us and Dr. Garber is trying to squeeze in another short visit to St. George's Caye in mid August before returning to Texas. Dr. Garber will be preparing a preliminary report for us shortly.

The St. George's Caye Archaeological Project team was made up of Dr. Garber and his team of five assistants and John W. Searle. We were joined for a couple days by Dr. Lauren Sullivan, and Dr. Jaime Awe and his family.

I would like to thank everyone for your overwhelming support of the project. Special thanks goes to Bruce Bowen for sharing information and the shipwreck plank; Karl Bischof for information on the property



Dr. Jaime Awe & John W. Searle in cemetery.



Old plank with wooden dowel that was found by Bruce Bowen.

boundaries in Fisherman Town and for allowing us to photograph his artifact collection; Trevor and Jackie Roe and their family for information, hands on help and hosting our closing party on the caye; Maureen Quan for sharing an old property map; the Musa/Bowman family for historical information and a picture of the Lind home; and Reuben who provided us with invaluable local information. Also a big thank you to all who made the effort to attend the pre dig briefing on Sunday July 6, 2009, and who gave permission to the team to enter your properties and conduct archaeological investigations.

Thank you and best regards,

John W. Searle

Chairman



Trevor Roe & John W. Searle relaxing at the end of the first week!