BTPS 1968-2018 – 50th Anniversary

We marked our 50th Anniversary with the election of three Honorary Members. This is in recognition of their outstanding contributions to town planning in the island. The three honorees are two former Chief Town Planners – Luther Bourne and Lionel Nurse – and the specialist planning and environmental lawyer Christine Toppin-Allahar.

The presentations to the honorees were made by Hon Marsha Caddle MP, Minister in the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Investment, who thanked them for their outstanding contributions to town planning in Barbados.

The Minister went on to say that this is an important time for town planning in Barbados. The Planning and Development Act 2019 is a major step forward and gives us the framework for a modern town planning system that matches the needs of Barbados in the twenty first century. However, more work needs to be done before that Act can be proclaimed and implemented. Minister Caddle said these changes involve challenges for both public servants and for the private sector but it would be worth the effort in that it will give us a system that facilitates the development and investment that the country needs.
BTPS – our history and our work today

The Society (originally called the Barbados Town & Country Planning Society) was founded in 1968 at a meeting convened by the late Leonard St Hill. We are celebrating completion of our first 50 years. The principle objective of the original rules was “the promotion of the study of land use planning and the provision of a forum for the development of informed public opinion on all planning matters for the improvement of the community as a whole”. This broad aim has been central to the Society’s work for 50 years.

The Society has always been outward looking. It includes professional planners from both the public and private sectors and since 1972 has welcomed people from related professions or with an interest in planning to join as Associate Members.

BTPS has always had an international perspective. In 1970 Richard Gill (now Past President of BTPS) was one of the people who drafted a constitution for the Commonwealth Association of Planners. We have continued our involvement with that body ever since.

BTPS is also active in the Caribbean Planners Association. Our President, Dr Yolanda Alleyne, is Vice President of CPA and is working with colleagues to achieve the accreditation of planning schools in the region and on accreditation standards for planners. Locally, this will translate into a proposed Planning Profession Bill which will set standards of professional competence, a code of ethics and requirements for continuing professional development.

In 2014 we hosted the Caribbean Urban Forum – an annual conference for planners, related professionals and academics from across the Caribbean (not just anglophone). This was a very successful event and we expect to be asked to organize the event again soon.

In Barbados we continue our work to promote an understanding of planning in the wider community, to promote planning as a profession (particularly as a career for young people), to encourage best practice and to discuss planning issues that have major consequences for the future of the island. A major example was our 2015 Symposium on Modernization and Transparency in Planning which we followed up with a Prospectus recommending improvements to the planning system in Barbados. In recent years we have also held seminars (some with related study visits) on:

- Updating the Physical Development Plan
- Improving the nation’s health and wellness - planning and health
- Water resource management
- Ridge to reef - planning and climate change
- Developing within the UNESCO World Heritage Site
- Renewable energy

BTPS also assisted the Prime Minister’s Office in organizing and delivering the stakeholder events that started off the process for reform of the town planning legislation in the island.

Planning is a small profession in Barbados and BTPS is a small organization. However, we like to think we make a contribution beyond our size.
The Three Honorees

To mark our 50th Anniversary BTPS decided to invite three individuals to join as Honorary Members. Our rules allow us to do this where someone has made an outstanding contribution. This is the first time we have done this and we are honouring three outstanding people.

**Luther Bourne**

Luther was educated at St Andrews Church Boys School, the Alleyne School and Harrison College. His first degree was in Economics, History and French at London University. He has an MA in International Relations (Johns Hopkins) and Diploma in Town Planning (Newcastle) and qualified as a chartered town planner (Royal Town Planning Institute).

Luther taught in St Kitts and worked for the Federation of the West Indies before joining the TCDPO as a planning assistant in 1964 and working with the UN team on the first Physical Development Plan. Luther returned to the office after completing his postgraduate training and was appointed head of the department in 1970. He was the first Barbadian Chief Town Planner and held the role for 14 years - developing the organization over that period as well as overseeing growth and transformation across the island. Luther then became an acting Permanent Secretary in 1984 and Cabinet Secretary in 1990. From 1992 until 1996 he was a United Nations consultant on planning.

**Lionel Nurse CBE**

Lionel was educated at Combermere and studied Geography and History at UWI. He has an MA in Geography from the Memorial University of Newfoundland, an MPhil in Urban Design and Regional Planning (Edinburgh), and also studied at the Lincoln Institute for Land Policy (Cambridge, Massachusetts) and the University of Wales (Certificate in Protected Landscapes Planning). Lionel qualified as a chartered town planner (Royal Town Planning Institute).

Lionel started as a trainee in TCDPO in 1976 and worked in different roles before becoming Chief Town Planner in 1984, holding that post until 1998. He was a Permanent Secretary from 1998 until 2014. As Chief Town Planner he worked on two updates of the Physical Development Plan, introduction of special control for Harrison’s Cave, introduction of water conservation measures, the Adams Barrow Cummings land use study, the first steps towards computerization in the 1980s, the 1987 Bridgetown Physical Development Plan, development of Warrahs as a strategic sub-centre, and the introduction of Environmental Impact Assessments. From 1991 to 1994 Lionel served on UNCHS (United Nations Centre for Human Settlements). More recently, he worked as part of the consultancy team on the draft amendment to the Physical Development Plan 2017.

**Christine Toppin-Allahar**

Christine was educated at Queens College, winning the Barbados Additional Scholarship for Girls in 1967. She has a BA in Geography and Economics from UWI (Mona), an MA in Geography and Planning (Toronto), a Certificate in Integrated Surveys for Natural Resource Development (ITC, Enschede, Netherlands), LLB (UWI Cave Hill), Legal Education Certificate (Hugh Wooding Law
School), and a Certificate in Legal Drafting from the International Legislative Drafting Institute, Tulane Law School, New Orleans.

Christine worked in the Town & Country Planning Division, Trinidad and Tobago (1972-1980) and as a Housing Planner in the Ministry of Housing, Lands & Environment in Barbados (1980-82). As an attorney-at-law she has worked for the Attorney General’s Department in Trinidad & Tobago and in private practice. As a specialist in planning, environmental and land law she has advised private clients, Governments and international agencies throughout the Caribbean and further afield as well as teaching and writing on these subjects. As a legislative drafter she has prepared environmental, planning and coastal zone legislation in Caribbean countries including Guyana, Grenada, St Lucia, Antigua & Barbuda, and St Kitts & Nevis. Notably, she was responsible for drafting the new Barbados Planning and Development Act 2019.