



Commonwealth Broadcaster

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Working for Quality Broadcasting throughout the Commonwealth

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Local Broadcasters take the Plunge

Paul Calverley, Director, Captain Morgan's Mystery Ships.

Two coral encrusted cannons point like accusing fingers toward the surface from the floor of the Caribbean. They are just two of 60 found at a wreck site off the Southern Coast of Haiti last year by a joint British/Canadian expedition to find the lost ships of the world's most infamous pirate Henry Morgan.

They represent the climax of five years' work by the team. More importantly, they point the way to a new joint venture to exploit the Caribbean's rich cultural and archaeological heritage for the benefit of local broadcasters and the community.

Dreams Discovery Network, maker of Discovery Canada's popular *Oceans of Mystery* series - founded by diver filmmaker and ecologist, Rick Haugt, now plans a major shift in intellectual property rights away from the major broadcasters to local companies too often sidelined by major productions.

For too long, the Caribbean and its heritage, both on land and under the sea, has formed the backdrop for major productions. Countless filmmakers have come, explored and exploited these resources and then left.

But Haugt is now using the worldwide publicity generated by last year's finds to turn a dream into reality. A Caribbean based umbrella organisation, Dreams Discovery Foundation, will co-ordinate filming on major wrecks and archaeological sites in the region with local producers and broadcasters to provide material for documentaries, educational films, multi-media presentations and more importantly detailed pictorial evidence of the historical treasures scattered around the region.

A key component of the Foundation's work will be to train people in underwater filming and editing techniques to generate a critical skill base to eventually take over the whole operation.

Crucially, all intellectual property and copyright will



The two cannons from the wreck of Morgan's ship

remain with the partners within the Caribbean to ensure maximum return to the local communities. Discussions are underway with a major UK media marketing agency to sell these co-produced documentaries worldwide. They immediately became a source of revenue for the region and a stimulus for the trainers working on the Foundation's projects.

By bringing together the region's broadcasters, the Foundation aims to generate enough material for a significant international documentary series, the basis of a film library as a long-term revenue source, and a training programme which will have become the catalyst for major growth in Caribbean filming expertise.

UNESCO has expressed an interest in using specially cut short films from the library for its World Heritage Outreach Project.

The Foundation is now working with CVMFV in Jamaica and the Bucco Reef Trust in Tobago on two pilot projects at Morgan's former base in Port Royal and at Bucco Reef in Tobago.

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Filming divers

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*Patrick Cozier
CBU Secretary General*

Recent discussions have also been taking place between the Caribbean Broadcast Union and ODF with a view to forming partnerships within the region. The CBU's Secretary General Patrick Cozier is excited by the prospect of a partnership in which new skills training could be imported and, new and interesting content could be created within the region, bringing the Caribbean the benefit of exposure to a global audience.

He added: “The Caribbean has a rich historical association with marine activity, from the international pirates who roamed our waters to the shipwrecks lying under our sea. We have much

in terms of marine assets to offer. A partnership between the CBU and ODF would represent a new set of opportunities available to the region for capacity development and international exposure and we hope to be able to advance these alliances in the near future.”

As Rich Langton from the Bucco Reef Trust put it: “Working with the Oceans Discovery Foundation presents a unique opportunity to deliver accurate and comprehensive information to a wide audience. Video images are important not only for entertainment but also information exchange. They are becoming the medium of

choice for marine scientists to document and monitor change in the world's oceans. The prospect of working with this group to develop not only a video image of some of Tobago's marine heritage but to also actively involve local people in the data collection and production process is truly cutting edge. By working with Oceans Discovery to develop local capacity and local ownership in this process the Bucco Reef Trust will be fulfilling its goal of locally and regionally developing the tools for marine environmental protection that are essential for sustaining the diversity of life in tropical systems.” ■