

UK Barbadian community celebrates with Educational Discussion!

On a wintry evening in South London members of the Barbadian Community braved the elements to hear presentations based on the topic " Barbados and the UK in an age of Austerity. Three eminent UK based Barbadians; Historian and Rhodes Professor of Imperial History at Kings College London Professor Richard Drayton; Financial Times Journalist Hal Austin ; and Global Head of Risk of Risk Strategy for HSBC Bank Alan Smith - all gave entertaining and informative deliveries to an enthralled and appreciative audience which included Barbados High Commissioner to the UK His Excellency Hugh Anthony Arthur and Deputy High Commissioner Donville Johnson.

The audience were welcomed first by Maureen Stewart Chairperson for the evening and Secretary of the Barbados Overseas Community and Friends Association (BOCFA) and then addressed by High Commissioner Arthur.

First speaker to the podium was Professor Richard Drayton who addressed the theme from an historical perspective citing 1948, 1966 and 2010 as probably the most significant years in Barbados' development . Among his arguments was one that Barbados' high taxation, high social provision, high debt model is under significant strain as it rests on the slender foundations of tourism and the service industry.

Hal Austin gave a provocative delivery laced with statistics and personal opinion. He attacked the economic record of our post- independence governments and argued that Barbados should reposition its economy away from its dependence on US and UK tourism towards the rapid growth economies of China, Brazil and Africa for example.

Alan Smith talked about the challenge of the current economic climate (*and the kinds of efforts at self sufficiency it is imposing on us*) He spoke about education and the its relevance and preparedness for making and or dealing with a new world economy.

The thoroughly enjoyable evening was a first for any Barbados overseas community and The National Council of Barbadian Associations UK should be congratulated .It has been promised that subsequent events will be streamed live for cyber Barbadians anywhere to enjoy.



Members of the debate panel together with the High Commissioner and Deputy High Commissioner of Barbados. From left, Mr Hal Austin - Financial Journalist; Mr. Donville Johnson - Deputy High Commissioner; Prof. Richard Drayton - Rhodes Imperial Historian; Ms. Maureen Stewart – Chairperson; HE Hugh Anthony Arthur OBE High Commissioner; Mr Alan Smith – Banker; Mr. Tyrone Roach - NCBA Executive Officer

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