

Protect and profit

Ideas, concepts on limestone barrens shared at first sustainable ecotourism conference

By AARON BESWICK / STAFF WRITER

When the English general Oliver Cromwell brutally crushed a 17th century Irish rebellion, he called the Burren area of Ireland "a land where there is not enough water to drown a man, wood enough to hang one or earth enough to bury one."

But if you were to ask Dr. Brian Dunford, who works to protect and promote Ireland's limestone barrens, he'd tell you "that bloodthirsty Cromwell" lacked an appreciation for the small and precious.

When the words "500,000 tourists a year visit the Burren" left Dr. Brian Dunford's mouth at the first Limestone Barrens: Conservation and Sustainable Ecotourism Conference in Plum Point, a hush went over the room - soon followed by an excited murmur from the tourism industry stakeholders and scientists.

"People call Ireland the Emerald Isle, with its 40

shades of green," said Dr. Dunford in a thick Irish accent. "But on the Burren we have 40 shades of grey."

His face lit up as he flicked through slides showing a flat grey expanse, dotted by the odd lonely cow or rock fence. But on closer inspection, Dr. Dunford's slides revealed a miniature world of old growth trees and rare flowers - their colour all the more precious for the emptiness that surrounds them.

It's a world similar to the Northern Peninsula's limestone barrens, that extend from Bellburns to Burnt Cape near Raleigh. The conference was part celebration of the founding of the Burnt Cape Ecological Reserve and part think-tank on how to preserve and promote the barrens as a tourism destination. Dr. Dunford's talk followed a presentation on the reserve by Elizabeth Smith and Wavy Greenham, representing Friends of Burnt Cape, and biologist Sue Meades.

Ms. Smith and Ms.

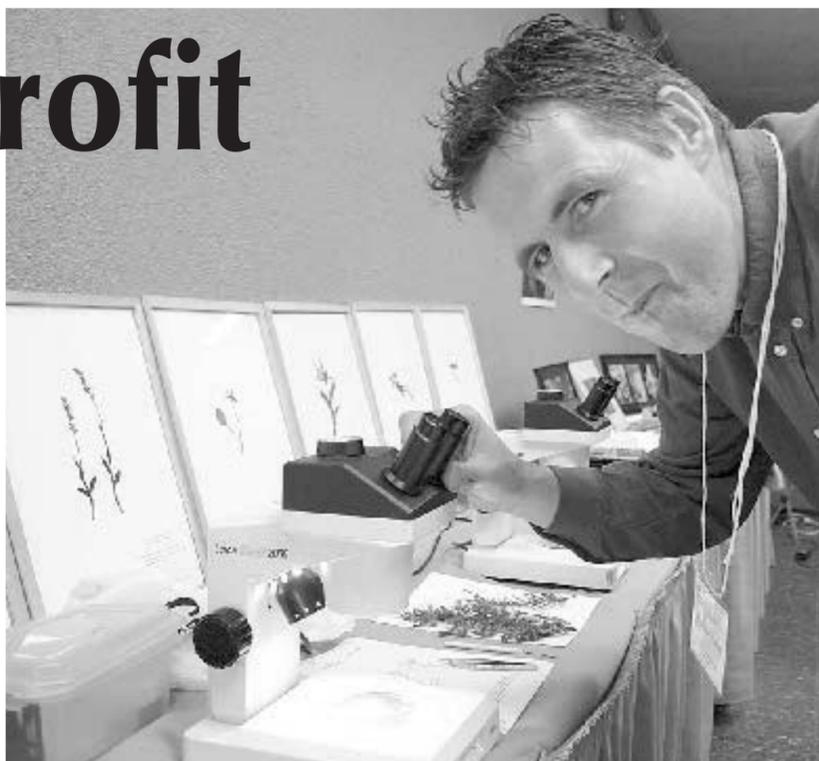
Greenham told of the reserve's early days when they'd take visitors to limestone barrens in the back of their pickup trucks.

"Burnt Cape is an excellent example - there's nothing more powerful than local people interpreting their own landscape," said Dr. Dunford of the reserve.

But unlike the Burren farmers, whose cattle keep invasive species in check, the lifestyle of many Northern Peninsula residents, who use all-terrain vehicles (ATV) to access hunting and berry-picking grounds, is a direct threat to the barrens.

"Currently the most damaging activity on the limestone barrens is the use of ATVs and other off-road vehicles," said Dulcie House, co-ordinator of the Limestone Barrens Habitat Stewardship Program (LBHSP).

While there are laws restricting ATV use on the barrens, the LBHSP is raising awareness of the vulnerability of species on the barrens and their value to the region's tourism industry.



Dr. Brian Dunford, who works to protect and promote Ireland's Limestone Barrens, was in Plum Point to speak about what they've learned about sustainable promotion.

In keeping with this, Grade 6 students from Straits Elementary performed a play on the importance of protecting the barrens for participants of the conference. Ms. House believes the future of the barrens and rare species like Long's Braya, Fernald's Braya and the Barrens Willow lay in

the hands of youth.

"Awareness and stewardship are long-term processes and they cannot happen overnight."

For Ms. House, the need for protection and education was best summed up in the presentation of Dr. Wilf Nichols, when he said, "Brayas and the

Barrens Willow may not be giant pandas, Bengal tigers or flamboyant orchids, but does that make them less important? As stewards of this planet and as the generation responsible for passing it on to our children, are we comfortable seeing species disappear on our watch?"



Sue Meades, the biologist who originally campaigned for Burnt Cape to be protected, wraps her arms around (left) Elizabeth Smith and Wavy Greenham from the Burnt Cape Ecological Reserve.



Dulcie House of the Limestone Barrens Habitat Stewardship Program organized the first Limestone Barrens: Conservation and Sustainable Ecotourism conference in Plum Point.



Grade 6 students from Straits Elementary in Flowers Cove performed a play about the importance of protecting the Limestone Barrens for the conference.

Baby & Children's Clothing

HUGE **FACTORY** **Outlet Sale**

O B C™
The Official Baby Company

1 DAY ONLY — Saturday, Oct. 21

UP TO 75% OFF | **TABLES \$10**
with 3 items for

ALL Boys' & Girls' Fleece-lined Denim Jackets
Reg. \$29.99 **Now Only \$5.99**

ALL Boys' & Girls' PJs
50% off or More!

Boys' & Girls' Overalls
Reg. \$29.99 **Now Only \$7.99**

Boys' & Girls' Jeans
Reg. \$24.99 **Now Only \$7.99**

Boys' Dress Shirts
Reg. \$19.99 **Now Only \$7.99**

Top U.S. Brands Available in limited quantities all up to **75% off.** Come early for the best selection!

carter's **GUESS** greendog fresh impressions POLO.COM

ANCHOR POINT LIONS CLUB
Anchor Point

Saturday, October 28 — 11 a.m. - 6 p.m.



International Grenfell Association

SIR WILFRED GRENFELL, K.C.M.G., M.D., FOUNDER

announces its

2007 Grant Program

Grant application deadline is **November 1, 2006.**

Application forms and guidelines for applicants are available from the website at: **www.iga.nf.net**

or from the I.G.A. general business office:

Mr. Paul Canning
Administrator — I.G.A.
66 Birmingham Street
St. John's, NL A1E 5M8
Phone: (709) 745-6162
E-mail: iga@nfld.net

I.G.A.'s priorities for 2007 have been identified as (in order) - healthy lifestyles, literacy, traditional skills, youth initiatives and mental health.

Please consult and abide by guidance notes and position statements on the I.G.A. website prior to submitting an application.

Final decisions on all applications are to be made at the I.G.A. Board meeting, to be held on **March 24-25, 2007.**

I.G.A. also requests that applications NOT be faxed, but postmarked or e-mailed prior to the deadline. Under no circumstances will late applications be accepted.

Because Miracles Happen Everyday

JANEWAY
CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL FOUNDATION

The Janeway Children's Hospital Foundation
300 Prince Philip Drive, St. John's, NL A1B 3V6
777-4640
www.janewayfoundation.nf.ca