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## NEWS OF THE SOCIETY

### Margaret Alice Langlois Dies

Mrs. Arthur C. Langlois of The Retreat, Bahamas, died on July 25th, 1985. Affectionately known to many as "Wumpsie," Mrs. Langlois played a major role in assembling and maintaining a fine collection of palms at the estate (see following article). She also assisted her husband, Arthur C. Langlois, in the preparation of "Supplement Palms of the World."

The Retreat, to become the headquarters of the Bahamian National Trust, will be maintained as a botanic garden. It was dedicated on October 17th with Prince Charles attending.

### A Pilgrimage to Nassau

We were a happy, enthusiastic, and expectant group of Florida palm-lovers who gathered early in the morning of March 3, 1984 at Miami International Airport for a 45 minute flight to Nassau. We were going to The Retreat, the Langlois property, to see one of the world's best-known private palm collections. It was made famous by its owners who were avid palm collectors for a period of over 40 years, long before there was a Palm Society.

Our flight was smooth over the brilliant waters. First one crosses the rather narrow continental shelf, then the sudden deep blue of the Gulf Stream which gives way to the shallow waters of the Bahama Bank with their tones of emerald, azure, and blue, a beautiful never-to-be-forgotten sight, especially when viewed from above.

In Nassau, two chartered mini-buses took us to our hotel for a quick check-in before taking off for the 30-minute ride to our real destination. Since most of us were from the Miami area the Bahaman vegetation was rather familiar though our

native Dade County pines undergrown with *Serenoa repens* were not a feature of the landscape as they are in southern and central Florida. Bougainvillea was in bloom, papayas as well as bananas were everywhere as well as some akees and, yes, even coconuts. One very different aspect was the topography; Nassau is not at all flat, but has hills!

Suddenly, there we were. A modest entrance in a wall of vegetation which we entered on foot as it was too small even for our mini-vans. Palms were immediately in evidence, mostly self-sown *Ptychosperma elegans*, as we walked the curving road to the old house with its friendly open windows and doors. And there was our delightful, charming hostess, "Wumpsie" Langlois. After greetings were exchanged, we were handed a combination guide and plant list worked out by our hostess. It listed the names of palms as we progressed from the Cathedral area, to the Poinciana Lawn to the Little Green Hell down the Main Coppice path past Hole #2 and Hole #3, the *Licuala* Hole, Green Hell Jr., South of the Path, North of the Path, etc., etc.

The exotic palms were grown mostly in natural sink holes, areas where the coral rock had been dissolved by some natural process, and which were anywhere from 5 to 20' across, or more. The Langlois had filled the holes up almost to the level of the surrounding land and used these areas to plant their choicest plants. Here, because moisture is retained, the plants did not have to compete with native ones for the thin soil layer covering the coral rock. They were also more protected from the storms and shaded by the surrounding native coppice. Cheek by jowl, we found *Pelagodoxa henryana*, *Satakentia liukiuensis*, *Astrocaryum mexicanum*, *Pritchardia pacifica*, *Aiphanes erosa*, dwarf *Gronophyllum* sp., *Balaka* sp., *Paralinospadix* sp., *P. hollrungii*, *Licuala grandis*, *Neonicholsonia watsonii*, *Drymophleous beguinii*, *D. olivae formis*, *Chrysalidocarpus madagascariensis* var.