

TRAVEL:

Donmore Town is a paradise

By ANNE WANSTALL
Travel Editor

DONMORE TOWN, Bahamas — From the moment your reliable but ancient Bahamasair prop-aircraft sets its wheels on the sand-blown strip at North Eleuthera airport, you're assured that this is paradise.

Left behind are the often grim faces of Nassau, the commercial tugging at your vacation budget purse strings, and the feeling that tourists are to be tolerated and amused only for a price. Gone too, is the flat landscape and highrise towers of tourist hotels.

Instead, there is a warm, soft breeze and the flutter of palm leaves; the gentle lapping of crystal clear water patched by colorful coral, and smiling faces of welcome.

In a 25-minute transition from Nassau you have reached the paradise of Christopher Columbus in a Bahama Out Island. You feel embraced by the cheerfulness as the small plan load is divided and dispersed to various destinations.

It's a quick jaunt by taxi over a pot-hole filled road to the sudden clarity of the multi-colored sea channel that divides North Eleuthera from Harbor Island. Your suitcase is taken by a

ferryman who looks as though he's a friendly, but direct descendant of Bluebeard the pirate.

Gold-capped teeth flash out of the black bushy growth on his dark face as he packs the luggage on the roof of his small craft — and the passengers inside — for the 15-minute trip directly over the blue, green, often translucent water.

Beside you, small families with sleepy children clutch parcels bought in the distant city. Tourists peer through the spray-dripped windows to catch their first glimpse of Donmore Town.

Once the capital of the Bahamas, Donmore Town comes at you like the pop-up picture in a children's book. The well-kept 300-year-old houses, painted in gay colors and trimmed with white gingerbread, dot the small hillside, multi-hued bougainvillea drips over white walls, and hibiscus drapes over neat picket fences. Beyond them, a coral white sand stretches out to meet the incredible colors of the water. The "real life" seems far away as the ferry closes in on paradise.

Once docked at the wharf, cab drivers hustle for their passengers, each dispatched by one of the hotels or private rental residences to collect their

human cargo. Mr. Bluebeard doesn't bother to collect the \$2 ferry fee — knowing he will catch you on the way back. It's just another \$1 to the hotel, because Harbor Island is a mere 1½ square miles of waving palm trees surrounded by soft sand.

At the hotel, a free rum punch is put into your sticky hand as a cooler before the formalities of registration and the first settling into your room.

Hotels such as Romora Bay Club, which overlook the sea and are perfect for fishing and sailing enthusiasts, offer modified American plan (accommodation, breakfast and dinner) for \$44 a day single, \$68 double, and waterfront rooms for \$54 single and \$82 double.

Valentine's Inn in the small downtown area of Donmore Town, but with a beach stretching out before its front door, has accommodation for \$30 a day double in the summer and \$45 a day in the winter. MAP is \$14 per person extra per day.

Ocean View Club, which "promises nothing" in its secluded position on a quiet beach, has recently been taken over by an Ottawa-born Cordon Bleu graduate,

Philipa Coupland. Summer MAP rates here are \$60 a day double and \$40 a day single. Ocean View also has an in-town cottage that would sleep 10 for rent at \$450 a week. There's maid service, but you'd do your own cooking.

I checked into Coral Sands Hotel, owned and operated by former film star Brett King and his wife Sharon (who looks remarkably like the young Elizabeth Taylor once dated by Brett).

An intimate, friendly hotel set in a palm grove above the huge stretch of sand owned by the complex, Coral Sands is a haven for weary minds and bodies (former transport minister Otto Lang holidays there annually). Room prices start at \$31 single, \$35 double in summer, \$45 single and \$50 double in winter. For MAP add \$16 per person a day.

For some folks nothing could be closer to hell than to have nothing more to do than admire paradise! Coral Sands and Romora offer free tennis, snorkeling gear and picnic trips to hideaway islands. There are boats for rent on the island, native night clubs, in-hotel entertainment and dancing, generally a games room with a

television set (if you must keep contact with the world outside), and gourmet menus to tempt the appetite.

A popular excursion is a \$30 per person boat trip through the small island to Spanish Wells, with every turn presenting another view of this extraordinary coastline. About the only thing you can't do here is gamble at a casino.

In summer, the weather is hot (around 28 degrees Celsius) but fanned by trade winds. Short, sharp showers are

common in July and August, but I was assured that they are only a temporary diversion to keep the island its perfect green.

All prices quoted are in U.S. funds. For hotel reservations on the island, Canadian residents should call Bahamas Reservation Service by dialling ZEnith 99110 or your travel agent.

TO GET THERE: Air Canada has direct, non-stop flights to Nassau, then by Bahamasair to North Eleuthera.

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FOR MEETING INFORMATION CALL Mississauga (1) 826-9200

TRAVELCHAT

The gasoline shortage in some of the larger cities in the United States is drastic.

Friends who recently returned from California report that lineups are long and that rental car drivers aren't always welcome.

A recent edition of Travel Weekly, an industry magazine published in the U.S., surveyed the fill-up policies of rental car operators in Las Vegas, Nev. They found that Avis cars go out with only half a tank of gas, and that although Budget and National cars go out with full tanks, they must be returned with the same quantity of gas. American International and Dollar agencies will allow customers to return to

base for refuelling. Hertz cars go out with a full tank. There are no refuelling privileges, but the car can be returned empty.

National Geographic says that Guadalajara, Mexico has the second best climate in the world (around 28 celsius at noon, with nights cooling down to 18C), and it's now competing as the best sportsman's centre in the world. Golf, tennis and horseback riding are readily available under ideal conditions.

Adventurers looking for a sporting holiday closer to home should investigate Hemisphere Tours Rocky Mountain Magic '79 brochure (obtainable from travel agents or an Air Canada office).

THE CORPORATION OF THE TOWN OF RICHMOND HILL NOTICE OF ROAD CLOSING

TAKE NOTICE THAT the Council of the Town of Richmond Hill proposes to consider the passing of a By-law to stop up, close and sell a Public Highway known as Kilkenny Place as shown on Registered Plan M-1590.

A copy of the Plan and the draft By-laws are available for inspection at the Office of the Town Clerk, 10266 Yonge Street, Richmond Hill, Ontario. The Council will consider the proposed By-laws at its meeting on the 9th day of July, 1979, and at that time will hear any person or the solicitor or agent of any person who advises the Clerk in writing prior to the 9th day of July, 1979, that he would like to appear.

Dated at the Town of Richmond Hill this 6th day of June, 1979.
The Corporation of The Town of Richmond Hill
C.D. Weldon, Clerk.

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Date of Second Publication: June 20, 1979
Date of Third Publication: June 27, 1979
Date of Fourth Publication: July 4, 1979

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