



Bespoke Homes Jamaica

February 2011

Your Positive Connection To Jamaica

Issue 5

Great News I - Crime Down

All types of major crime fell in 2010 – the first overall fall since 1999. All crimes fell by 7%, but murder was down a whopping 15% on 2009. Just looking at May to January, the murder fall was 35%.

Why the falls, especially during a recession? Part of the answer lies in Commissioner Ellington's approach to leadership. Also, a better approach to policing and tighter operational procedures. But a big factor may well have been the strong arm tactics deployed in Tivoli Gardens last May.



Meanwhile, the security forces have recently moved to eliminate illegal taxi and bus centres from Spanish Town. The facilities were operated by both the Klansman and One Order Gangs. Key roads were blocked with piles of dirt and posts.

More good news for policing saw 4,000 people in the pipeline to join the Jamaica Constabulary Force. Women and graduates comprise a greater share than previously. And the Twickenham Park centre in St Catherine is being expanded to accommodate the queue of trainees.

Marley the Performer

Marking Bob Marley's 66th birthday on 6 February, the annual UWI lecture was the first to see a standing ovation for the speaker, Dr Matthew Smith. Meanwhile, the public have voted "One Love" the top Jamaican song.

Proverb

TROUSER TOO BIG FE HARSE, DARG SEH 'GI ME YAH!'

A resourceful person will make use of things that seem useless to others.

Please send us your favourite proverbs, to feature in the next BHI Newsletter. **Send to: lillalee@bhj-ltd.com**

Great News II – Jobs Up

While we watch crime fall, we see more signs of jobs growth. More international businesses have announced expansion plans – as have several small and large local businesses.

Payless, the US shoe store, is to open seven more outlets to go with the three already trading - adding more than 70 new jobs. Following expansion in Annatto Bay, St Mary, JP Tropical Foods will be able to make 250 tonnes of bammies and other cassava products by the end of 2011. Having been closed in April 2009, the Kirkvine alumina mine in Manchester is set to re-open on 1 July after expenditure of US\$17.5m by UC Rusal.

Three days after St Valentine's Day, *Voyager of the Seas* became the first cruise liner to dock at the old Georgian town of Falmouth, Trelawny. Many people from Kingston and elsewhere gathered to welcome the 4,500 passengers and crew. Many musicians, artists and other performers turned out. And "taste of Jamaica experience booths" were provided by the HEART Trust National Training agency.



Recently Trelawny has also seen plans to re-open the Great House at Coopers Pen, after spending of \$35m. And plans are afoot for Spain's Excellence Group Luxury Resorts to build a Captain Hook attraction and a 450-room hotel in Oyster Bay.

Clearly, many businesses of all sorts see Jamaica as a great place to be for the future. Page 3 has even more examples.

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Lesser Known Facts

Maurice Ashley from St Andrew is the first and so far only black Chess Grand Master. Ashley will be 45 on 6 March.

Focus on St Ann

Each issue of BHJ News focuses on a parish. Last month we had Manchester and now it is St Ann.

St Ann is the birthplace both of Bob Marley and Marcus Garvey. Other well known people include Burning Spear, Shabba Ranks and Floyd Lloyd. The Jamaica Dogsled Team was formed in Ocho Rios in 2005 by Danny Melville. Peter Cargill played soccer for the Reggae Boyz & two clubs in Israel.

St Ann covers a greater area than any other parish, a fraction larger than St Elizabeth. With 166,672 people at the 2001 Census, St Ann had the sixth largest population.

While Ocho Rios attracts many tourists and cruise ships, agriculture and mining remain important.



Recent good news from St Ann saw the Reynolds Pier load 43,000 tonnes of limestone on to a single ship, for export to the USA. This was the first large-scale shipment from the pier in 20 years, since bauxite ceased to be handled there. In a deal with TBS Shipping of New York, US\$3m will be spent on improving facilities. Both business and St Ann residents are hoping that limestone exports and cruise ship arrivals can be combined at Reynolds Pier. Three hundred jobs could follow from the project.

PM Youth Awards go to 31 Jamaicans

At the end of January PM Bruce Golding handed awards to 31 youngsters aged 15 to 24.

At just 12, Yanique DaCosta had been director of the board of the Chevannes Basic School and then founded the Yanique Nissan DaCosta Scholarship. Alyssia Morgan graduated in computer science and has established her own website development company, Cyber Master, with clients including Family Life Ministries and the Bible Society of the West Indies. Founder and M.D. of eZines electronic magazine – Tyrone Wilson – won the Entrepreneurship award.

Kenisha Allen mentored and taught at the John Franklyn School of Learning for inner-city youth. As a community service volunteer and youth development advocate, Marlon Thompson was recognised. Aubrey Stewart (pictured), Sean Davis and Jamar Howell were recognised as leaders in a variety of community-based groups.



We salute all the 31 high achievers. But as PM Golding said: "There are too many of our young people today who allow time to slip away. They make a mistake and believe that they have enough time that they can catch up later on... Get up, stand up. Stand up for your rights and take your place in this society that is more yours than it is ours. There is a star in every one of you, let it shine, let it shine."

Development Loans

The Development Bank of Jamaica has \$2.5 billion available to lend at concessionary rates to small businesses in the "productive sector". Yet there has been little take up, partly because the main banks prefer to steer their customers toward their commercial loans.

Why not encourage your business contacts in Jamaica to seek out the Government's cheap loans?

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Karaoke Upstaging Dancehall

Believe it or not, but karaoke really is taking over from dance and live shows. This follows enforcement of the Noise Abatement Act making use of the loudest sound systems much less attractive.

Donovan Cunningham seized on the opportunity via his Starz Entertainment group, having witnessed a karaoke event in Miami. He secured Wray & Nephew as a sponsor, paying \$1m a quarter across his 8 venues – 6 in Clarendon and 2 in St Catherine. While start-up capital costs are high, Cunningham sees much more scope for growth, as people switch from the club scene back to the bar setting. His only real constraint is the time it takes to train the right staff to host events. The type of fun and entertainment offered makes violence much less likely.

Internet Here, There and Everywhere?

Despite cellphone banking having grown enormously in Haiti in the last year, there remains far to go in Jamaica. However, a recent conference helped in starting to focus minds.



Internet shopping is rather more advanced, thanks largely to Global Courier. Based in Miami, GC helps many get round the barrier that their credit card only covers purchases on the island.

The first ever Jamaica Blog Awards took place in January – thanks to 23 year old Corve Dacosta, who secured sponsorship from 4 large companies. Many businesses can gain. As Katie Delhaye Paine said: “Success in today’s marketplace is measured not by how broad your reach is but by how deep your network is.”

Great News III – Some Tings Down, Some Up

Lower inflation looks firmly on the cards. Bank of Jamaica Governor, Brian Wynter, recently said he expected inflation for the year ending March to be well within his projected range of 7.5-9.5%. Interest rates have already fallen 3% to 7.5% in the last year and more falls may follow. The events in Tivoli Gardens may have helped, with the markets seeing a period of improved stability and the dollar rising strongly.



In 2010, Kingston Container Terminal saw growth in transshipment cargo of 11.7%, lifting activity to nearly 3% above the 2006 record level.

Three of the main packaging manufacturers are planning expansion – AMG Packaging and Paper, Corppack, and Boxes and Labels. Waxed boxes, pizza boxes and file boxes are among the growth areas. The Government’s ending of the import duty waiver has certainly helped. Outgoing president of the Jamaica Manufacturers’ Association, Omar Azan, urged anyone with funds available “to invest in any area of packaging...(as there was) great demand for that”.

Christiana’s Road to the Future

Finance Minister and MP for North-East Manchester, Audley Shaw, recently looked forward to the end of 2011, when the Christiana Development Road is scheduled to open. At a cost of US\$9m, it is far more than a by-pass for the heavily congested town centre.

Rather, it is also a development tool, with key links to the rest of the fast-growing north-east Manchester area. Already one of the main areas of choice for returnees, Shaw said that “new vistas of opportunity” would arise upon opening of the road. Christiana’s population is expected to rise by 23,000 to reach 86,000 in ten years.

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Rail-Roads to Our Future

Work is well advanced on re-starting a passenger rail service, with the first leg from Spanish Town to Linstead. The Jamaica Railway Corporation has been doing much work, including finding ways of re-locating squatters. Last year the British engineers Halcrow assessed that a passenger service could be viable – as have other studies since 2008. The second leg is likely to be Spanish Town to May Pen and Williamsfield. Further lines should include Kingston to Spanish Town and Montego Bay.

NHT to Meet Only a Fraction of Housing Need

The National Housing Trust recently announced that it will be building 7,900 homes in the next three years. Unfortunately, that is barely 0.4% of the 437,000 homes to end housing need identified by the NHT five years.

Around 100,000 people are “ready to buy” and are thereby deemed to have “effective demand”. Barriers of various sorts prevent those people purchasing right now - including lack of supply in the right location at the right price.

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BHJ – “Practical Property Solutions for Your Safe Passage to Jamaica”

Here at Bespoke Homes Jamaica we bring only positive news. There is too much bad news around. Let’s celebrate our heritage, our “now” and our future. Let’s work for a better Jamaica - a better future for all of us.



The first BHJ home – St Catherine

When to Build Your Dream Home?

Crime falling across the board. Inflation and interest rates falling. Various businesses growing. Much pent-up demand for housing. May be now is the time to start planning that dream Jamaica home? Plan now, build in 1, 2, 3... years’ time.

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