



# Bespoke Homes Jamaica

May 2011

Your Positive Connection To Jamaica

Issue 7

## More economy green shoots

Winding up the Budget debate in early May, the Prime Minister announced that the economy had started growing for the first time in 3½ years.

Confirming the good news, cell phone subscriptions were up in the first 3 months of 2011 for the first time since 2008. And Industry Minister Michael Stern said that almost 6,000 jobs were created by the small business sector (SMEs) in the first three months of 2011.

Rainforest Seafoods is expanding from its Montego Bay base to open a processing plant in Slipe Road, Kingston, that will take its employees to more than 350. Processes include cooking, breasting, filleting and smoking. Jerk shrimp is one of its ready-to-eat meals.

The newly refurbished Coronation ("Currie") Market has now opened in downtown. The cool, clean, more comfortable new structure is free of rain leaks. Also being said to be free of extortionists has brought forth both more buyers and more sellers.



Early 2011 saw agricultural crops up a quarter on last year. Vegetable output rose by a half, as did coffee – and cocoa output almost doubled.

Meanwhile, Falmouth Parish Council has been inundated by 1,000 applications to sell arts & crafts. The council had planned to allow 20-25 vendors on Water Square and 50 on the pier, but is now trying to decide how to proceed.

**NO JUMP DE RIVAH BEFORE YAH KETCH TO IT**  
Wait for the right time before taking decisive action.  
If you act too soon you will fail.  
If you act too late you will also fail.

Please email your favourite proverbs to: [lillalee@bhj-ltd.com](mailto:lillalee@bhj-ltd.com)

## Ivy League for nine young men

Nine Jamaican males have earned scholarships to America's most prestigious Ivy League universities, including Stanford & Princeton. Seven attended Campion Jesuit College (pictured).



## Investing in Jamaica - BHJ's Cricklewood event

London. A good number of keen people gathered together on 17 May to hear about owning property in Jamaica. 'The Woman of Proverbs' - Lorlett Hudson – chaired a full and stimulating evening at Heritage Inn, Cricklewood.

The people of north-west London – from places like Harlesden, Willesden and Stonebridge – welcomed the event with open arms. Rarely had such an event been held there.

After describing the family-based structure of the company, Lillalee Wright invited the audience "to put their dream to the test". How specific was it? How achievable? How realistic? Lillalee encouraged everyone to address such points on the Enquiries Form. She also showed how partnering with others had created an umbrella group – a one-stop property shop.

Vasle Atkinson of Jamaica National Building Society gave an excellent description of borrowing options and the main requirements. Hamilton Daley highlighted 4 key legal issues – especially the importance of getting that land title sorted.

As one of our lucky door prize winners emailed, "I found it useful and winning a bottle of rum topped the evening off for me". Other feedback included: "Very informative" and "Very helpful. Everything was well explained". Thanks to everyone who attended – together we built on the success of Brixton.

To book your place for our next evening of talks on 16 June in Bethnal Green, use [oxford@bhj-ltd.com](mailto:oxford@bhj-ltd.com) or 020 3318 0993.

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## More progress on crime

The big falls in crime seen in 2010 have now been bettered, with murder down 44% in the first quarter of 2011.

Partly this is thanks to real community policing. Kingston Central police division, for example, is using community meetings to listen to the ways people want them to work. Now the police are often given warnings – and they act on them quickly. Working with neighbouring divisions, the head of Kingston Central is confident that crime can be kept down downtown.

The police have also begun to tackle other areas. Extortion in Spanish Town is now much reduced after the recent conviction of the Klansmen leader, Tesha Miller. Since his arrest in December, seven or more alleged gang members have been killed – some by other members. A series of police curfews have had big impacts.

Perhaps soon will be a good time for communities in Spanish Town and elsewhere to follow the lead of places like August Town and Trench Town. It is now three years since August Town signed a peace agreement that ended years of local warfare.



At the end of April, the largest group of JCF officers since 2004 graduated from the Twickenham Police School. As PM Golding said, “You have joined at...a time when the police have been doing tremendous things...when the people of Jamaica have begun working with the police. You must be a part of what seeks to improve the nature of the Jamaica Constabulary Force.”

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## More environmental green shoots?

The expansion of Rainforest Seafoods in Slipe Road (see opposite) will find the company using a newly-built well to meet its large need for ice. Meanwhile, the new Coronation Market uses gutters and storage tanks to capture enormous quantities of water, for use in cleaning and in toilets.

With 30 freezer trucks operating across the island, Rainforest Seafoods uses lots of diesel. More than a tenth of this is found through its collection of used oil from hotels and restaurants and its subsequent conversion into bio-diesel.



The first phase of the Source Farm Ecovillage is set to take residents, on 99-year leases. Built on 63 acres of St John's Town, it has stunning views of the St Thomas coastline (pictured above) and of the Blue Mountain. One of the founders, Nicola Shirley-Phillips, says that the community will foster personal growth and development that will empower members to be ambassadors of natural and progressive living. Nicola, her mother and the wider family are returning to Jamaica after many years living in Philadelphia.

Already two earth-bag houses have been built, one of which only uses solar electricity and water captured from the roof.

*(Reporter: Christopher T. Taylor)*

## Hotels buying at farmers' markets

For years we have wondered why hotels do not source more vegetables locally. Now we bring news of three north coast hotels visiting – and buying from - one of the Ministry of Agriculture's farmers' markets, at White River, St Mary. While some traders in Coronation Market fear competition from the farmers' markets in Papine, Three Miles and Portmore, there is some chance that both forms of market can flourish.



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## Focusing on St Catherine

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

St Catherine is very nearly as big as St Ann and St Elizabeth – officially the biggest parishes. It has one of the fastest growing populations and is said to have the biggest economy of any parish.

Agriculture remains the main source of employment. The parish is second only to Kingston as an industrial centre. Spanish Town has the largest salt producing plant in the Caribbean. The largest power plant on the island & several factories are located in Old Harbour. A Canadian company is seeking permission to build a cement clinker works at nearby Port Esquivel.

Spanish Town (St Jago de la Vega ) was the Spanish and English capital of Jamaica between the 16<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. More recently, Grace Jones and Asafa Powell were both born in Spanish Town.



Emancipation Square contains some fine buildings and is the only Georgian Square in Jamaica.

### Lesser Known Facts

In Charlotte Bronte's novel, "Jane Eyre", Bertha Antoinetta Mason – the insane wife of Edward Rochester – came from Spanish Town.

## Travelling back to our future

Saturday, 16 April 2011 will go down in history as the day the passenger railway returned to Jamaica. Hundreds of people rode the train from May Pen to Linstead or lined the route and stations to greet it. Spanish Town and Bog Walk are among the other places that stand to gain once the first leg of the restored railway starts a regular service following the trial.



(Bog Walk rail station, St Catherine)

Transport minister, Mike Henry was among the 200 passengers on board. Others included entertainer Jimmy Graham who, after 40 years living in China, became so nostalgic that he produced a guitar and sang for the other passengers.

Meanwhile, as part of the Budget, the Government announced a 40% increase in funding for infrastructure this year. Some of that will help with the \$1,200 million slated for road repairs in St James.

## Touring to our future

On 20 April, Jamaica saw a record number of people arriving on the island in a single day – at 20,000. That followed a successful winter season, with stopovers up nearly 6% and cruise ship arrivals up nearly a tenth.

Phase 2 of the US\$5m Dolphin Cove of Negril project will commence soon, ready for the next winter season. The marine park will become the largest such park in the West, employing 200 people directly. As tourism minister Ed Bartlett said, the park will neatly complement the planned US\$280m expansion of the Grand Palladium & Resort in Lucea.

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## Fast forward to your home

The Government recently announced that it would take steps through the new Building Act to enable the faster processing of building permits.

The Building Act says any building under 3,000 sq ft – and any subdivision for 9 lots or fewer - no longer has to go to Kingston; it now resides with the local parish council. Already, according to Robert Montague, local government minister, 90 per cent of all building and subdivision applications to parish councils are approved within 90 days, as against 18 months previously.

Housing in St Catherine is developing rapidly. Portmore is almost out of capacity – though a development of 2,000 homes has just been approved by the Housing Agency of Jamaica.

Approval for a new site in Hellshire has also been announced – with 226 houses to follow.

Brand new houses in the area are, however, immediately available – see the three types near Old Harbour listed opposite.

### Jamaica Heritage and Other Things

Find that book on Jamaica culture, heritage & other things Jamaican on 07812 591 080 - or:  
[www.promotingourheritage.co.uk](http://www.promotingourheritage.co.uk)

### Facilitators For a Better Jamaica

FFBJ for news, debate, events  
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Additional reporting by Christopher T. Taylor

## 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.

### Opportunities in St Catherine

Pictured below is one of our “For Sale” properties. Situated between Old Harbour and Spanish Town, it can be bought in three sizes – 1032 sq ft, 1083 sq ft and 1100 sq ft. All versions offer a covered car port. All also have a cleverly designed slab roof that will permit easy expansion at a later stage.



The 2-bed, one bathroom is \$7.9m. The 2-bed, two bathrooms is \$8.85m. The 3-bed, two bathrooms is \$9.95m. For further details and help with finance and legal matters, contact us at [info@bhj-ltd.com](mailto:info@bhj-ltd.com) or on 020 3318 0993.

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