



Bespoke Homes Jamaica

August 2011

Your Positive Connection To Jamaica

Issue 9

Primary progress

More school pupils aged 10 to 12 passed the GSAT in mathematics, science and communication. At 62%, the maths figure was almost 9% above the figure of two years earlier. Language Arts and Social Studies showed more modest increases over the two years.

Much as in the UK, girls continued to perform better than boys, scoring 4 to 7 points more than boys across all subjects. One girl, Jeniel Green of Vaz Preparatory School, scored 99% in mathematics and 100% in the other four subjects. Hard work, self-motivation and confidence led to Jeniel's success. As she said, Saturday school and the foregoing of movies also helped, as did her parents' continuous checking of progress.

Another high-achieving female, from an earlier period, Marvalyn Taylor-Wright, advised the European Court of Justice in July. A former pupil at St Andrew High School, Taylor-Wright is now a senior member of the Jamaica Bar.



Albion Primary School, near Mandeville

Despite the success of some individuals, many of Jamaica's school pupils continue to need much support. Buying school books and uniforms is a significant burden for many parents at this time of year. At the Diaspora Convention, Dr Renee Rattray called on persons overseas to try to provide even greater support, not least for the six secondary schools in the Mutual Building Societies Foundation project.

NO KYAH KEEP BIG HOUSE

Extravagance (no kyah – don't care) will ruin you financially

Economic progress

At 2.5%, inflation was much lower in the first half of 2011 compared to the same period of 2010 - by 4.3 points. This helped the BOJ cut base rate by 0.25 points. Meanwhile, a survey showed consumers much more confident about the economy. Another survey showed business no longer citing crime as their main impediment.



The aluminium industry saw some good news, with exports up by two-thirds. Jamalco saw its best six months for 52 years.

Other gains saw Grace Kennedy open a new packaging plant in St Elizabeth. On the Hip Strip in Montego Bay, the Old Hospital Park re-opened following investment of \$45m. In the same city, BASHCO opened a new \$20m retail store. And Fiesta Hotels announced plans to create 1,200 new jobs once expansion at its Lucea site in Hanover is complete.

BHJ in New Cross and the Midlands

Our next evening of talks is on Wednesday, **14 September in New Cross Gate**. To book, use moonshot@bhj-ltd.com or 020 3318 0993. As usual, the event runs from 6.30 – 9.30pm.

We will be in Wolverhampton on Wednesday, 5 October, at the Bagot Inn – email bagot@bhj-ltd.com. We will be in Birmingham on Wednesday, 12 October, at the Afro-Caribbean Centre – email afcc@bhj-ltd.com. We will be in Nottingham on Wednesday, 19 October, at the Afro-Caribbean National Artistic Centre – email acna@bhj-ltd.com.

To book your place, please email or call 020 3318 0993.

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Bedside registration takes off

The Registrar General's Department reported more than a doubling of fathers registered on birth certificates following introduction of bedside registration. Following pilots at Spanish Town Hospital in 2007, registrations nationally have increased from 35% to 80%. Bedside registration has also resulted in 99% of babies being named at that time - whereas some hospitals previously had virtually no children named.

New transport gets going

Closure of the road through Bog Walk Gorge during July and part of August left difficult road journeys via Barry or Sligoville. The Barry road had been very well repaired before July – though large trucks still encountered problems negotiating some of its twists and turns.

But for persons able to use other modes of transport, the temporary operation of the passenger railway proved a great success. So much so that, for example, the 3.30pm service from Spanish Town usually saw some passengers getting to their seats as early as 2pm! By 3.30, it was standing room only, with much difficulty squeezing past other passengers.



The 3.30pm from Spanish Town station awaits another full loading of passengers

For air travellers, China announced that it plans to start direct flights to Jamaica. At the same time, Knutsford Express announced plans to add Negril to its existing destinations for coaches out of Kingston.

Focus on St James

St James is Jamaica's fourth smallest parish in terms of area. Its population in 2008 was around 200,000. Its highest point is 1524 metres, in the Nassau Mountains. Of the two main rivers, Great River forms the boundary with both Hanover and Westmoreland. The Montego River rises in central St James and flows north and west before reaching the Bay.

Among the famous persons born in St James is Sam Sharpe. Having been destroyed by fire in 1795 and 1811, Montego Bay was again destroyed in 1831 by a rebellion led by Sam Sharpe. Despite his attempt at passive resistance to slavery, a group of people set fire to buildings and plantations. As the overall leader, Sharpe was hanged in what is now Sam Sharpe Square. Another famous person from St James is Jimmy Cliff.



St James is now one of the fastest growing parts of the island. Forestry and sugar cane combine with traditional domestic crops. The south of the parish has woodworking, garment production and food processing. Even so, one in four people in the parish works in tourism, mostly in Montego Bay. Over half a million tourists visit the parish each year and account for one-third of the island's revenue from tourism.

Much of the parish's growth occurs in Montego Bay. While tourism dominates the northern part, the rest of the Bay has plenty of commerce and industry. The Montego Freeport and the Bogue Industrial Estate are important. But the growth of commerce more widely means that Montego Bay is seen as a potential alternative to business in Kingston.

Under the Spanish, Montego Bay was known as Bahia de Manteca - Lard Bay, following the large amounts of lard exported, thanks to the large number of pigs raised. Several scenes from the 1973 James Bond film *Live and Let Die* were filmed in Montego Bay.

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Net catches friends, films & shopping

By mid-2011, Facebook users in Jamaica had soared past 600,000 - virtually a quarter of the island's population and a remarkable figure.

Meanwhile, EZone has just opened an office in Jamaica. Based in the USA, EZone provides an internet-based shopping service, with delivery by sea or air. In addition, California-based Netflix announced plans to stream its service throughout the Caribbean and Latin America.

New housing on the up

April's Budget cut in stamp duty - down massively, to a nominal J\$100 per transaction - is having even more benefits than originally expected. The cut has spurred mortgage providers to compete more on lending rates. Coupled with the latest base rate cut, this year looks like a good time to buy or build a house in Jamaica.

There was much support for the Urban Development Corporation's project to create new, low-cost housing in downtown Kingston. The pilot project covering 40 homes has just started.



One of our teams is now working on this project in Redhills. The directors of BHI spent the summer viewing houses and plots of land across the island. Watch out in a couple of weeks for our "Letter from Jamaica" on the lessons we gained. One big lesson is not to "over-develop" - meaning, don't build a house lots bigger than the location can justify. Or, you'll not get your money back. Hence the proverb above: "No kyah keep big house".

BHI - "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 Manchester

Mandeville investment opportunity: 3-bed & 2-bed apartments on 1 acre: less than 10 minutes from Mandeville centre, Manchester - J\$28m (approx. £215,000)



A great investment opportunity. The two-bed apartment is downstairs and currently occupied, in good condition. The upstairs three-bed apartment is unfinished. The whole property and the acre of land offer good potential for the investor. The property is close to Mandeville centre.

Newfield: very large property some 10-15 minutes from Mandeville centre - J\$20m (approx. £155,000)



A house with lots of potential. Currently four bedrooms upstairs, with several kitchens and bathrooms. Downstairs there is a two-bed flat, two one-bed flats and a studio apartment. Close to Northern Caribbean University as well as being 10-15 minutes from Mandeville centre.

To purchase any BHI property

For further details and help with finance and legal matters, contact us at info@bhi-ltd.com or on 020 3318 0993.

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Opportunities in Manchester (contd)

Mandeville: four-bedroom detached house in Marshalls Pen, near Mandeville - £240,000



In the quiet neighbourhood of Marshalls Pen is a lovely 3000 sq. ft., 4-bedroom, 3.5-bathroom house with enclosed wrap-around verandah. Also a laundry room, double garage & water tank with solar water heater. Occupies a quarter acre of well-fruited gardens.

New, quality furniture

To help ensure we fit top-quality kitchens, BHJ is now associated with a company using highly skilled carpenters to produce high quality units.

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Based in Kingston and Spanish Town, the company is known as Bespoke Furniture Jamaica.

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www.onehandcantclap.co.uk

Facilitators For a Better Jamaica

FFBJ for news, debate, events
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On Facebook: Facilitators FB Jamaica

Christiana: 4-bed house: J\$17m (approx. £135,000)



A delightful 4-bed house with large bar/games room downstairs and large rooms upstairs. Equally delightful 2 acres of land with great views. Ideal for a large family. Or, a great opportunity to establish a guest house. Overall, the **best deal that BHJ directors saw** in Jamaica this summer.

New business associations

To help us and you to achieve best estimates of costs and quantities of materials, BHJ now works in association with Geecho Consultants.

Geecho Consultants & Construction Ltd

for Quantity Surveying, Costings, etc

Contact George Henry, Director

Phone: 001 876 981 5648

Email: geechoc@gmail.com

Geecho Consultants & Construction Ltd are led by George Henry, with whom we have worked for six years. They are based outside Old Harbour, St Catherine.

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