



Bespoke Homes Jamaica

September 2011

Your Positive Connection To Jamaica

Issue 10

Best ever time to invest in Jamaica?

This year continues to see good signs of economic progress. The economy grew well in the first six months of 2011. And inflation was at the bottom of the Bank of Jamaica's projection. Such gains and others saw business tell the Planning Institute of Jamaica that now is the best ever time to invest in Jamaica.

Of those who have already seen the light, Island Entertainment Brands is investing US\$7m in the next six months. This should double the 700 currently employed by the operator of Margaritaville. Lasco is spending US\$13m to expand its manufacturing operations. Meanwhile, Noranda Bauxite has invested more than US\$2m in new facilities at its Discovery Bay plant in St Ann.



The retail sector is also expanding. After the success of its first four bakery cafes, Sugar and Spice is to open a fifth, in Constant Spring Road. And WISYNCO is spending US\$1m to open three new restaurants, all with Wendy's and Domino's.

Recognising future prospects, the French shipping group CMA CGM has done a deal with the Government to invest US\$100m to create a major hub at the Gordon Cay Terminal in Kingston. There will be 1,000 new jobs by 2015. Gains will be had from expansion of the Panama Canal.

The booming IT and communications sector now employs 11,000 persons. Jobs range from IT systems, websites and social network marketing to back-office and call-centre work. New Industry Minister Christopher Tufton now thinks that ICT jobs could double in "a relatively short space of time". Vistaprint's plan to build a technology plant in Montego Bay costing US\$15m will help.

GRUNG NEVER FORSAKE IM MASSAH

Buying land is always a good investment: even after land is exhausted, you can still live on it

Standing room only for BHJ in New Cross

It was standing room only when our new season of seminars kicked off on 14 September in New Cross. Lewisham persons were joined by others from as far away as Hackney, Clapton, Streatham, Crystal Palace and Whyleaf.

Our chief executive, Lillalee Wright, described how the company had grown to become a one-stop shop. She ended by offering one-to-one consultation to help people crystallise their dream. Jane Kerpens-Lee from Victoria Mutual gave a thorough review of finance options, including examples for buying a range of houses. Hamilton Daley again gave a helpful review of the key legal issues. All speakers attracted queues of persons seeking further advice once the speaking had ended.



Pictured (left to right) are Hamilton Daley, Lillalee Wright; and Odell Campbell, Jane Kerpens-Lee & Daven Hinkson of Victoria Mutual

The evening was truly stimulating, thanks to the speakers and the keen audience. Comments afterwards included "very informative event" and "This was an excellent meeting. This is needed for all people in the diaspora including African countries. I found it v. helpful & informative."

BHJ in The Midlands

Our next evenings of talks are on Wednesdays:

- Wolverhampton on 5 October at the Bagot Arms – email bagot@bhj-ltd.com to book;
- Birmingham on 12 October, at the Afro-Caribbean Millennium Centre – email afcc@bhj-ltd.com to book;
- Nottingham on 19 October, at the Afro-Caribbean National Artistic Centre – email acna@bhj-ltd.com to book.

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

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Budding Bransons

On 8 September, Sir Richard Branson opened the new Branson Centre of Entrepreneurship Caribbean in Montego Bay. This followed the 2005 opening of the Branson Centre in Johannesburg.

Sir Richard welcomed the first intake of 14 aspiring young entrepreneurs to the first facility of its kind in the region. Through an incubator programme, persons will access mentoring, practical coaching and access connections that may open doors to new funding.

Virgin Holidays is sponsoring the Centre to the tune of US\$2m over ten years. While Chris Blackwell of Island Records and Diageo are also funding to some degree, the centre needs more commitments of money and/or time. If you want to contribute, go to www.virginunite.com.



The Urban Development Corporation has been highlighting the tax and other incentives that entrepreneurs and developers can gain from setting up in downtown Kingston. As the incentives currently run to 2015 and as downtown property values have just started to rise, now may be the time to go downtown.

INVESTMENT OPPORTUNITY

New Kingston, St Andrew - J\$5.5m (approx. £42,500)



One-bed flat, 4th floor in the business district – a bargain.

Giving more help to children

Many children in Jamaica need all the help they can get. Yet many pupils at a primary school in Portmore have just raised \$100,000 to help with the treatment of a former student suffering from a brain tumour.

Meanwhile, the Sandals Foundation is aiming to get more children involved in its Care for Kids programme. With the right to extra support at school comes the responsibility to complete ten community service hours per term and average 70% in their subjects. Sandals has also partnered with Island Routes to enable resort tourists to volunteer to help children with reading at an early childhood centre or primary school - known as "Voluntourism".

The Jamaica Constabulary Force held a summer camp for children in St Ann. Corporates in Montego Bay are offering more scholarships. So far, the Digicel Foundation has helped the Ministry of Education to establish 30 "enrichment centres" to provide extra support for grade 2 and 3 children "at risk of failure". On a much smaller scale, BHJ's Saturday school (pictured below) has the same purpose; and our eldest student had a good GSAT pass this year.



The Diaspora is also making a difference. Almost 1,000 people attended the Basic Schools Foundation of London day in Crystal Palace, despite the rain. The Rotary Club of Kingston secured funding from the Rotary Clubs of Naples, Florida and White Bear Lake, Minnesota for a project in 50 Kingston schools. The "Transformation Through Signage" project is planting a new species of breadfruit tree in the schools.

Much, much more help is needed, of course.

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Focus on St Mary

Jamaica's fifth smallest parish, St Mary has a population of around 115,000. The parish town, Port Maria, was Santa Maria in Spanish days.

Fort Haldane was built to protect Port Maria from Spanish attacks. Tacky's rebellion started on Easter Day 1760 when Tacky and other persons killed the guards at Fort Haldane and managed to obtain firearms, gunpowder and provisions that would sustain their rebellion for five months. Hundreds of slaves and Maroons fought during that time but were ultimately defeated by greater firepower and Tacky died in battle.



After the abolition of slavery, Maroons continued their struggle in St Mary. They joined up with Reverend James Phillippo in his quest to establish one of his Free Villages in the parish. Pressure from the Maroons and Phillippo ultimately led the local landowner to sell enough land to enable houses to be built for the local population.

By the early twentieth century one of the largest landowners was Blanche Blackwell, mother of Chris Blackwell. She sold some large plots, notably to Noel Coward and Ian Fleming. Now the Firefly Estate of Coward, which overlooks Port Maria harbour, is a national historic site.

Having been one of the poorest parishes, despite a wide range of crops, St Mary's tourism has increased significantly in the last ten years. The extension of the north coast road has helped a lot, as also the development of Boscobel aerodrome in to Ian Fleming International Airport. James Bond Beach featured in the film, "Dr No".

A climate of protection

International Coastal Clean-Up Day on 17 September saw a record 56 sites in Jamaica getting a beach-clean. Last year's great effort saw 2,700 volunteers pick 2,500 bags of garbage.

While the Jamaica Environment Trust co-ordinates operations island-wide, its own effort concentrates on Fort Rocky Beach in the Palisadoes - Port Royal Protected Area in Kingston. Last year saw 1,100 volunteers on the Palisadoes clean-up.

Meanwhile, Jamaica recently became the first Caribbean country to be endorsed by the UN Adaptation Fund, which will send US\$10m to help protect the island from climate change. Measures will include increasing the climate resilience of the coast in Negril and of the agriculture sector.

The newly expanded Wigton Wind Farm is set to save 60,000 barrels of oil a year, equivalent to 85,000 tonnes of carbon dioxide. The wind farm in Rose Hill, Manchester should earn US\$600,000 per year from selling carbon credits on the world market - on top of what JPS pays it for the electricity.



Cheaper plane fares in the Caribbean?

From Sunday, 20 November we can look forward to flying from Jamaica to Barbados or Trinidad for just US\$9.99 each way. The government has just approved the plans of REDjet - the Caribbean's low-cost operator. Meanwhile, Cabinet approved an "open skies" deal with the United Arab Emirates that will soon see direct flights to Jamaica. The start of direct flights to China has also come a step nearer.

The first half of 2011 saw an increase of 32,000 passengers arriving at Sangster International Airport - up 2%. This contributed to a 16% rise in operating profit for Abertis Airports - the Spanish operator of the Montego Bay airport.

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Empowering persons through land

In mid September, Prime Minister Bruce Golding set out a plan to transform the Land Administration and Development Programme in to the Land Access for National Development programme. Like LAMP, LAND will press to speed up the titling process, as more than half of some 800,000 parcels of land recorded in Jamaica still do not have a title.

But LAND will also pave the way for new opportunities, especially in rural areas. Once persons have their title, the Government wants them to be able to borrow money against the land, not just for agriculture as now but also for non-agricultural developments. As the Prime Minister said, "...I want it to be a broad, general approach that helps to empower people, through assets that can become transactable".



Communities and policing

Jamaican police are to be trained in community policing via an internet-based course of the University of the West Indies. Some of the funding comes from the British department of government, DfID. Part of the aim is to achieve better policing by building closer partnerships with the communities being served.

Meanwhile, a policeman from Jones Town, Kingston has just been sworn in as the new chief of police for the city of Lauderdale, Florida. Andrew Smalling left for Florida when he was eight. He made history eleven years ago when he became the first black person to be chief of police in Lauderdale Lakes, near Fort Lauderdale.

National Heroes and awards

In September, Prime Minister Golding announced a committee to consider persons who might receive the Order of National Hero. The law requires such a committee to be in place, but there has not been one since 2008. Four of the six-person committee are women.



Meanwhile, on National Heroes Day, 17 October, 98 persons will be honoured for their contribution to nation building.

Of the 98 persons this year, six are to gain the Order of Jamaica (OJ), 24 the Order of Distinction in the Rank of Commander (CD) and 25 the Order of Distinction in the Officer Class (OD). In addition, three persons are to gain the Badge of Honour for Gallantry, 17 the Badge of Honour for Meritorious Service and 23 the Badge of Honour for Long and Faithful Service. They will receive their honours from the Governor General at a ceremony at King's House.

Fixing furniture?

The furniture industry in Jamaica is a bit of a puzzle. It employs 4,000 persons and yet imports at US\$170m are 1,000 times the value of exports, at US\$170,000. New industry minister, Christopher Tufton, has just allocated J\$100m over three years to begin to make a difference. Non-availability of materials and sometimes "archaic production processes" are some of the issues to be overcome, along with the need for better design, product development and greater use of websites.

Our own association with Bespoke Furniture Jamaica (see Newsletter 9) is trying to improve things in a small way.

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More housing but much more needed

The National Housing Trust recently announced plans to build 29,000 new homes over the next four years, at a cost of \$129bn (c. £1,000m).

Around the same time, the chairman of the NHT, Howard Mitchell, highlighted the housing difficulties faced by persons on the minimum wage or little more. They would only qualify for an NHT mortgage of \$1m (barely £7,700). Mitchell called on large housing developers to help, as they have tended to steer clear of housing for people on low pay.

Investment opportunities

LAND: Moorlands, Manchester – J\$8.2m (c. £65,000)



This lot is just over 1/2 acre, on a gated estate. Located within a cul-de-sac, the land gradually slopes up hill.

LAND: Moorlands, Manchester – J\$7.6m (c. £60,000)



This cul-de-sac residential lot is just over 1/3 acre and is flat in contour.

FARM: Walderston, Manchester: \$49m (c. £380k)



A recent piggyery & 14 acres of land, part-cultivated.

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.

Investment opportunities in Manchester

Mandeville investment opportunity: 3-bed & 2-bed apartments on 1 acre: less than 5 mins from Mandeville centre - J\$28m (c. £215k)



A great investment opportunity – whether for a family or investor. The two-bed apartment is downstairs and currently occupied. The upstairs three-bed apartment is unfinished. Must be seen.

Mandeville: 4-bed detached house in Marshalls Pen - £240,000



In the quiet neighbourhood of Marshalls Pen is a lovely 3,000 sq. ft., 4-bedroom, 3.5-bathroom house with enclosed wrap-around verandah. Occupies a quarter acre of well-fruited gardens.

Newfield: very large property some 20 minutes from Mandeville centre – J\$15m (approx. £115,000)



A house with lots of potential. Seven one-bed units and a 2-bed unit. The property is approx 15 minutes’ drive from the main Northern Caribbean University campus & 20 minutes from Mandeville. Lots in close proximity to the property have recently been sold to returning residents. **All offers will be considered.**

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Investment opportunities

Montego Bay, St James – US\$380,000 (£245k)



A four-bedroom, five-bathroom detached house with a/c in bedrooms. Gutters & water tanks. 10 mins from Montego Bay clock. **The seller is motivated to sell.**

Tower Isle, St Mary - \$16m (approx. £125,000)



This two-bedroom en suite bungalow is near the St Ann border, just 15 minutes from Ocho Rios. One-third of an acre of well-fruited land.

Bespoke Furniture Jamaica

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www.onehandcantclap.co.uk

Facilitators For a Better Jamaica

FFBJ for news, debate, events
and much, much more

On Facebook: Facilitators FB Jamaica

Investment opportunities

Nr Hellshire, St Catherine: 3-bedroom, 3-bathroom town house – J\$15.5m (approx. £120,000)



A recently renovated town house with helper's quarters. Only minutes from Hellshire Beach.

To purchase any BHJ property

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

New business association: law

To help you to achieve best advice on legal matters in Jamaica, Hamilton Daley attends our London seminars and speaks about legal issues. If you need legal advice before the next seminar, his details are given below.

HAMILTON DALEY

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