

The Gleaner
Hospitality Jamaica

KEEPING YOU CONNECTED TO THE BUSINESS OF TOURISM

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 1, 2016

FROM CANOE VALLEY
TO BALLARDS VALLEY

HYATT ZIVA &
ZILARA LABOUR
FOR GRANVILLE
ALL-AGE SCHOOL



**THE
CLIFF
HOTEL
NEGRIL**

NEW DIMENSION OF UNDERSTATED LUXURY
AND STYLE IN THE ISLAND'S WEST END



The Cliff Hotel lobby.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS

A one-bedroom suite at the Cliff Hotel in Negril.

PRISTINE SEA views, luxurious suites, magical sunsets, and intoxicating Jamaican culture at Negril's newest boutique resort, The Cliff Hotel, joins savoury cuisine at Zest Restaurant and the rejuvenating KiYara Spa.

"The Cliff is Jamaica's most mesmerising new escape," said Diandra Shand, assistant general manager at the resort.

"At The Cliff Hotel, you will be embraced by genuine Jamaican hospitality and service. The spirit of The Cliff creates harmony and balance," she stated during an interview with **Hospitality Jamaica** last weekend.

"Immerse yourself in the privacy of our Negril hideaway and watch your cares drift away with the ebbing tide."

Opened on December 1, 2015, sprawling over five acres and wrapped around a stunning pool, The Cliff features 33 suites and villas in a main hotel building and four adjacent cottages. The cottages feature one, four, and five bedrooms.

Among the largest in Jamaica, the rooms and suites showcase residential appointments and contemporary designs. All have private verandas or balconies with hammocks, in-room dining and sweeping views.

"Whether it is a romantic getaway, a destination wedding, a

THE CLIFF HOTEL NEGRIL

New dimension of understated luxury and style in the island's West End

CONTRIBUTED
Cliff natural salt-water pool.





Lounge area.

yoga retreat or simply a well-deserved break, we encourage our guests to leave their busy lifestyle behind and find inspiration here,” said Shand, who was recently appointed to the assistant general manager position.

No stranger to stunning award-winning resorts, Shand explains that The Cliff is a re-interpretation of the former Moon Dance Resort.



DIANDRA SHAND

Investors Avra Jain, Dalia Lagoa and Joseph Del Vacchio, real estate developers based in Miami, have partnered with Delius Shirley and his partner, Chef Cindy Hutson, operators of the celebrated Ortanique Restaurant in Coral Gables, at the helm of food and beverage operations at the resort.

“Zest at the Cliff offers international menus with Jamaican influences that will draw visitors from around the island just for the experience,” Shand said.

The boutique resort boasts three bars – the Pool Bar, Cliff Bar and Zest Bar – and are all open daily.

The resort’s Ki’Yara Spa is a sanctuary for the mind and body, taking advantage of indigenous

Jamaican ingredients, including botanicals and herbs. Treatments are available in the spa, or in the guest rooms for added privacy.

To supplement The Cliff’s on-property beach and pool experience, The Cliff provides special access to a nearby beach club just 10 minutes away on Negril’s famous seven-mile beach.

With a promise to build on the status of Brand Jamaica, the Cliff’s investors, promote the resort as the perfect location for vacationers looking for an exclusive hideaway.

“The goal is to deliver an exceptional kind of luxury that is second to none,” said Shand.

She added that The Cliff was an exclusive hideaway offering high-quality experiences for those who wanted to escape the outside world and indulge in great culinary offerings enveloped in a relaxed atmosphere.

The aim, she said, is to ensure that The Cliff becomes one of the best hotels in Jamaica and the Caribbean.

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The bathroom.



Zest at the Cliff.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS
The Cliff Hotel.



A woman with curly hair, wearing a dark pinstriped suit, stands in profile looking out a large window. Her hand rests on the windowsill. The window looks out onto a bright outdoor scene with greenery. The title text is overlaid on the right side of the image.

The Montego Bay Cultural Centre

A tale of spiritual reparation

CONTRIBUTED
Centre Manager Valerie O'Bryan
caught in a reflective mood.

THE STATELY and historic building that houses the Montego Bay Cultural Centre speaks strongly to the painful journey of our ancestors and their unbridled resilience in ensuring that future generations would not suffer the pangs of enslavement.

It is difficult to walk into the building and not feel an eerie sense of nostalgia coupled with a sense of spiritual reparation. A building that once brought pain to so many of our ancestors is now ours.

Centre manager Valerie O'Bryan shared that it was an honour to be at the helm of the Montego Bay Cultural Centre and that she was privileged to call the historic building her workplace. O'Bryan, while being interviewed, paced the beautiful Brazilian wood floors of the town hall, looking solemnly at the very large, colourful images of slaves being whipped by other persons of colour; of the slave ships carrying our ancestors, those images juxtaposed with one of slaves going to church, seemingly trying to find some semblance of normalcy even with such harsh punishment being meted out to them daily.

PSYCHOLOGICAL DAMAGE

O'Bryan, seemingly close to tears, said the paintings, which were done by Suzzette Harriott and Edmondo Souza, made her sad. "Can you imagine the psychological damage that was done to them, having not only to be whipped, but having that act carried out by your brother?" she asked in disbelief.

The paintings are just a small part of what makes the town hall special as its large Victorian windows overlooking the courtyard with the Freedom Monument and the centre's car park reflect light on the gleaming wood floors.

Built in 1804, the Montego Bay Cultural Centre building was once a courthouse where slaves were prosecuted for any form of rebellion they exhibited. The building's purpose was later changed and the town hall was made into a grand ballroom. "This historic building that houses the Town Hall has a great history, which is embedded in the freedom movement," O'Bryan said. The centre manager also indicated that plans are afoot to retrofit

CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS

The Montego Bay Cultural Centre.



the Town Hall, which is now rented for events and functions, to create a performing arts theatre.

An architectural masterpiece smack in the middle of Sam Sharpe Square, Montego Bay, the cultural centre is a place where revered artists, both traditional and contemporary, are showcased at National Gallery West. This is seen in the gallery's current exhibit, 'Masculinities'.

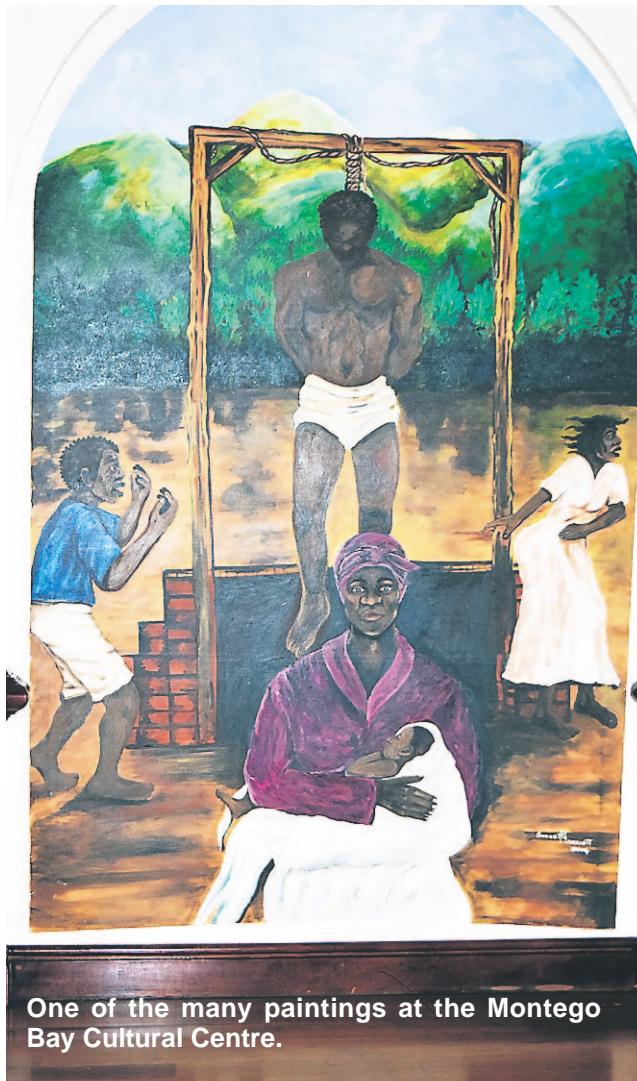
"Our history is stamped for posterity through the five-century journey depicted through artefacts and story boards in National Museum West," she said, pointing out a first-of-its-kind exhibition being staged at the museum tagged 'Rastafari'. Featured in the 'moving museum', it showcases a comprehensive eye-opening journey through the Rastafari culture, O'Bryan said.

Next on the horizon for the centre is 'Classics on the Cobblestone', set for July 3, and a summer programme slated for July 12-22, a collaboration between National Gallery West and National Museum West.

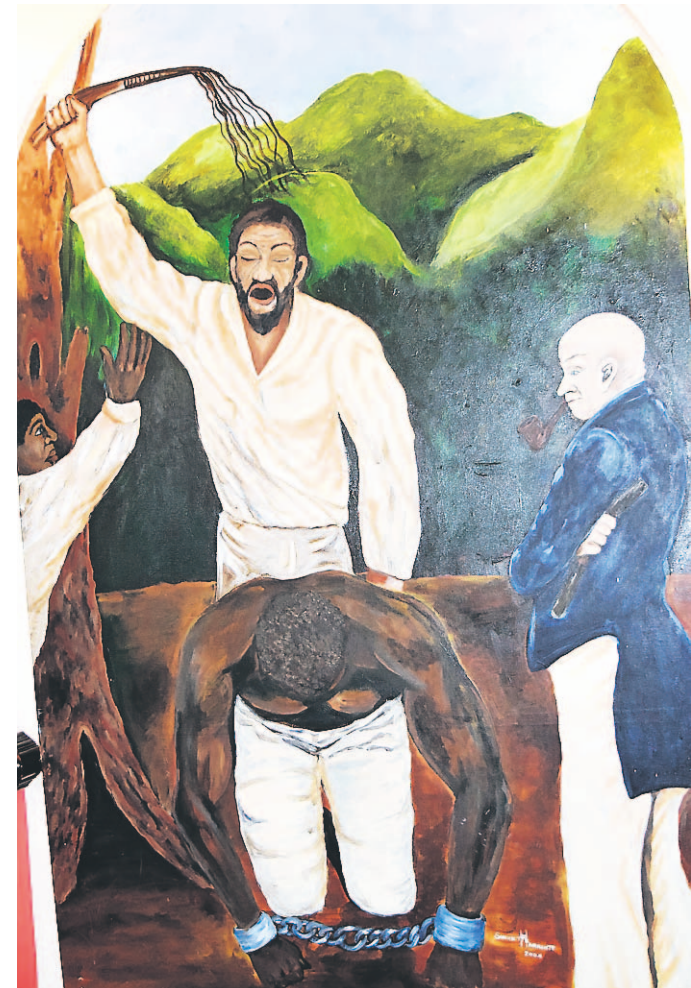
The centre is also now a registered tourism attraction site, and in the coming months will open a bistro and gift shop.

Open to both local and international guests, informative tours of the exhibits at the museum and gallery are carried out during the centre's opening hours, Tuesdays-Sundays 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.

"Our history is stamped for posterity through the five-century journey depicted through artefacts and story boards in National Museum West."



One of the many paintings at the Montego Bay Cultural Centre.



Three of the 10 amazing paintings by Suzzette Harriott and Edmondo Souza that currently decorate the town hall walls.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS

Coconuts! Aljaz Skorjanec (second left) and Janette Manrara (right), the stars of *Strictly Come Dancing* (the UK's version of *Dancing with the Stars*) are greeted by Sandals Whitehouse managers – Simone Black-Woodley (left) and Rochelle Forbes and were presented with coconuts as they enjoy a beach day during a romantic getaway at the luxury-included resort.



Enrico Pezzoli (left), general manager, Royalton White Sands, greets Assistant Commissioner of Police Winchroy Budhoo at a special meeting of the police recently.

THE BUSINESS OF TOURISM

Let's hear more from people like Sir Ronald

HAVING SPENT much of my working life between meetings in Europe, the Caribbean, and North America on issues affecting key Caribbean industries, I have probably met and observed more politicians and diplomats than most.

Throughout, I have been fascinated by the different ways that people relate to them and their position, and how they, in turn, respond. By this I mean the degree of actual or implied deference that is shown or expected at meetings and at conferences.

Compared with Europe, where for the most part, demonstrations of esteem have largely been replaced by informality on both sides, it sometimes comes as a shock to visitors to the region to hear lengthy, sometimes long-winded introductions and the repetitive recognition of the individuals present and on the platform.

As an industry, tourism has, in public, been perhaps more respectful and formal to those in government and positions of influence.

REGULATION AND TAXATION

This may be because its normal interface with ministers and officials often relates to regulation and taxation, and unlike in much larger societies, those in political office either know them or do not forget the positions they have taken.

Tourism also has more than its fair share of set-piece events, in part, one suspects, because there is still no formal ministerial mechanism within CARICOM to have its policy concerns heard at CARICOM's Heads of Government meetings, despite the industry now almost universally being recognised as the principal driver of the regional economy.

Whether politicians and participants at conferences want or expect such formality, remains something of a mystery, not least because every Caribbean tourism minister I have met or worked with has been down-to-earth, practical and able to relate easily to everyone from the most powerful in the industry to the sales person on



JESSOP

their first 'fam' trip to the Caribbean.

I was therefore delighted to see that not only had the St Lucia Hotel and Tourism Association recently invited Sir Roland Sanders, the diplomat, commentator, and sometimes iconoclast to address their annual general meeting, but that he had actively encouraged them to become more frank at the regional level about their requirements and encourage a more effective regional integration process.

While much of his address was devoted to the deficiencies of CARICOM, he made a number of telling industry-specific points, some of which those in tourism do not often hear from those as it were, on the outside.

First, he noted that an increasingly high degree of political and economic unpredictability in some of the region's key source markets for visitors, and the growing threat from terrorism. All of which, he said, had the potential to adversely impact travel and tourism.

Second, while noting the industry's success, and the recognition accorded by international bodies like the IMF in driving the economy in most Caribbean nations, he observed that this was taking place against a background of increasing inter-regional competition for visitors, higher regional taxes on air travel, increased utility costs, the negative implications of climate change, and more general, governmental pressure to deliver employment, revenues and foreign exchange.

Third, on climate change, Sir Ronald made clear that although

the Caribbean is among its greatest victims and least among the polluters, it would not benefit financially on an equivalent basis. This was, he said, a legitimate question for the industry to raise questions about as its businesses will be the first to be affected.

Fourth, he did what few diplomats or regional politicians have done before. He acknowledged that despite tourism often being dismissed as being "too fragile" to be a real player in the economic development of the Caribbean, the industry had emerged "as a strong and resilient economic activity that has been a fundamental contributor to global economic recovery by generating billions of dollars in exports and creating millions of jobs".

And fifth, he called for meetings of tourism ministers to become "an organ of CARICOM, enshrined in the treaty similar to ministers of foreign affairs and ministers of trade".

CORRECT THE MISSING LINK

"It is time," he said, "that this missing link be corrected, and I hope that you will encourage your colleagues in the Caribbean Hotel and Tourism Association to call for it."

He also spoke about closer co-operation with Cuba on building a stronger Caribbean brand; the need to focus on diversifying feeder markets for visitors, from China in particular; and encouraged the industry to call on all decision-makers to recommit themselves "in deed" to the objects of regional integration, including how CARICOM as a whole might at an economic level integrate with other nations in the region.

As it moves forward, the industry in the Caribbean needs to be more direct about its policy requirements at a regional level.

It needs to invite and hear from more speakers like Sir Ronald, who are able to mix the regional and political with thoughts about the industry, so that its members and governments come to recognise that it has become the most powerful economic player in the region, with the legitimacy and position that sugar and bananas once had.

UnWine  with CPJ



THE ART OF FORGING YOUR OWN PATH.



ARGENTINE WINE PRODUCER OF THE YEAR
2004 - 2006 - 2011 - 2012



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Paul Sloley, maintenance technician at VIP Attractions.



PHOTOS BY JANET SILVERA

The VIP Attractions team shares lens time at their Labour Day project.



PHOTO BY JANET SILVERA

Members of the VIP Attractions team working at the Montego Bay Autism Centre.



From left: Adriel Reid, Michelle Bailey, and Ricardo Esteban.

'WE MAKE IT HAPPEN'

Jamaica's Club MoBay and Kingston inspiring possibilities

VIP ATTRACTIONS (Club MoBay and Club Kingston) added colour to the lives of 31 children through its inaugural Labour Day initiative, which led 100 members of staff to the Montego Bay Autism Centre.

Compelled by their passion to serve, the staff opted to spend the holiday painting classrooms, redoing the kitchen, and landscaping the gardens in an effort to enhance the property.

Autism is a lifelong developmental disability that causes individuals to experience difficulties in understanding what they see, hear and sense. This results in severe challenges with social relationships, communications and behaviour. It affects one in every 68 children.

Founded in 2010 by the husband-and-wife team, Adama and Adam Blagrove, the centre was developed from an in-home service, catering to the needs of a mother with a special-needs child. The non-profit organisation offers early intervention, preschool, and primary education services.

A tearful Adama Blagrove told

Hospitality Jamaica she was in awe by the outpouring of love.

"They are upgrading us to VIP status," she said, noting that the majority of the children at the centre were autistic, while some had cerebral palsy.

PRAYED FOR HELP

Blagrove said she prayed for God to send help from the east, north, south and west, and she received a call from VIP. "We are tucked away in this corner, no one knows where we are here," she pointed out. The centre is located in the Appleton Hall area off the Brandon Hill main road in Montego Bay next door Dr Doris Channer Watson's Faith Maternity and Medical Centre.

Commenting on the project, VIP's new Chief Executive Officer Ricardo Esteban said this was no ordinary Labour Day project.

"We have forged a linkage here and will come back at least once per month, because we are dedicated to making a difference in the lives of the children."

Reiterating the company's slogan, Esteban, who has a track record of

being involved in projects which assist children, said, "We make it happen".

A media release from VIP Attractions said since its inception, the company has been actively involved with assisting children with special needs and their families.

"We are guided by the footsteps of our executive chairman, David Hall, who dedicated years of his life towards building a special-needs academy for children in Kingston. It is our core value of service that motivates all of us to help to make a difference in our community and this year we have chosen the Montego Bay Autism Centre of St James to lend our support," said the release.



CONTRIBUTED

Tameka Bryce, revenue and retail manager, VIP Attractions, painting parts of a classroom at the Montego Bay Autism Centre.



From left: Mayor of Montego Bay, Councillor Glendon Harris; Nicola Thomas, assistant director of operations, VIP Attractions; Joy Clark, Digicel Foundation; Adama Blagrove, principal, Montego Bay Autism Centre; and CEO of VIP Attractions, Ricardo Esteban pose for the camera.

JTB targets new source markets in **GROWTH STRATEGY PLAN**



IN A bid to diversify its source markets and strengthen visitor arrivals, Director of Tourism Paul Pennicook has announced a growth strategy plan. Speaking at the recent staging of Jamaica Product Exchange in Montego Bay, the Jamaica Tourist Board (JTB) head said the agency believes that with international outbound market totalling more than 1.2 billion per year, Jamaica has untapped potential to increase its share of the tourism market. To this end, the JTB is seeking more visitors from Latin America, Asia, Northern and Eastern Europe. These regions were selected because of the size of their outbound travel market to the Caribbean, their huge spend and length of stay in the destination.

Mexico, Argentina, Brazil, Peru, and Chile are some of the select countries from the Latin American region. The Nordic countries of Sweden, Norway, Denmark and Finland, along with Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic will be the focus in Northern and Eastern Europe. Out of Asia, China and Japan will see increased marketing efforts by the JTB.

According to Pennicook, "While Jamaica continues to enjoy positive growth year-over-year, there are many low-hanging fruits from which

JAMAICA

we can benefit." He cited that "many outbound travellers vacation in the Caribbean, but the lion's share of Latin America's outbound travel to the Caribbean visits the Dominican Republic, Cuba and Mexico".

MULTI-DESTINATION MARKETING

In 2014, 309,000 Brazilians visited Mexico and more than 112,000 visited the Dominican Republic, compared to 2,900 which visited Jamaica. It is for this reason that there is a pursuit of multi-destination marketing arrangement with Cuba and the Dominican Republic, to get travellers to visit various destinations, including Jamaica, during one trip.

Likewise, Japan and China have huge outbound populations that vacation in the Caribbean. However, they are heading to Dominican Republic and Cuba. For example, in 2014 more than 107,000 Japanese

travelled to Mexico and 7,500 to Cuba, compared to 2,000 to Jamaica. In that same year, more than 28,000 Chinese visitors went to Cuba, in comparison to approximately 2,500 who visited Jamaica. This travel pattern is also true of the Europeans, as a disproportionate number vacation in these Caribbean islands.

Pennicook stressed, "It is important to note that these arrival numbers are trending up, even in the face of the obvious language differences. This means that language is not as detrimental when choosing a vacation destination," he concluded.

To increase the number of Chinese arrivals to the island, Jamaica is currently in discussions with China with a view to solidifying agreement among China, Jamaica and Cuba.

In addition to these arrangements, the JTB's strategic approach entails investing in these



CONTRIBUTED

A visitor enjoying the best of Jamaica while zip lining.

AT TOP: A visitor is exhilarated by Jamaica's tourism offerings.

select markets by exploiting the extensive influence of the 2.3 billion active social media users; leveraging existing relationships to develop new partnerships; expanding the public relations machinery, taking advantage of Jamaica's brand strengths such as its hospitable people, tantalising gastronomic experiences, infectious music and guaranteed authentic experiences.

With global industry recognition

such as the recent No. 3 'World's Best Islands' designation on the TripAdvisor Travelers' Choice awards' list, Jamaica will capitalise on its brand recognition in the international marketplace. Together with its agencies, the JTB will continue to work with tour operators, travel agents, airline partners, international media and local industry stakeholders to promote 'Jamaica, Home of All Right'.

HYATT ZIVA: LABOUR DAY PROJECT



Teamwork! Members of the Hyatt Ziva and Zilara family put hands and heart into cleaning up the Granville All-Age School in St James on Labour Day.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS

General Manager Diego Concha (left) and Hotel Manager Carlos Fresco (right) of Hyatt Ziva and Zilara Resorts chat with Mark Kerr-Jarrett of Barnett Estates on ways the two companies could partner to help the Granville All-Age School in St James, during a Labour Day project at the school.



Making progress: Hyatt Ziva staff members, led by their managing committee members, working hard to clean up the Granville All-Age School on Labour Day 2016.

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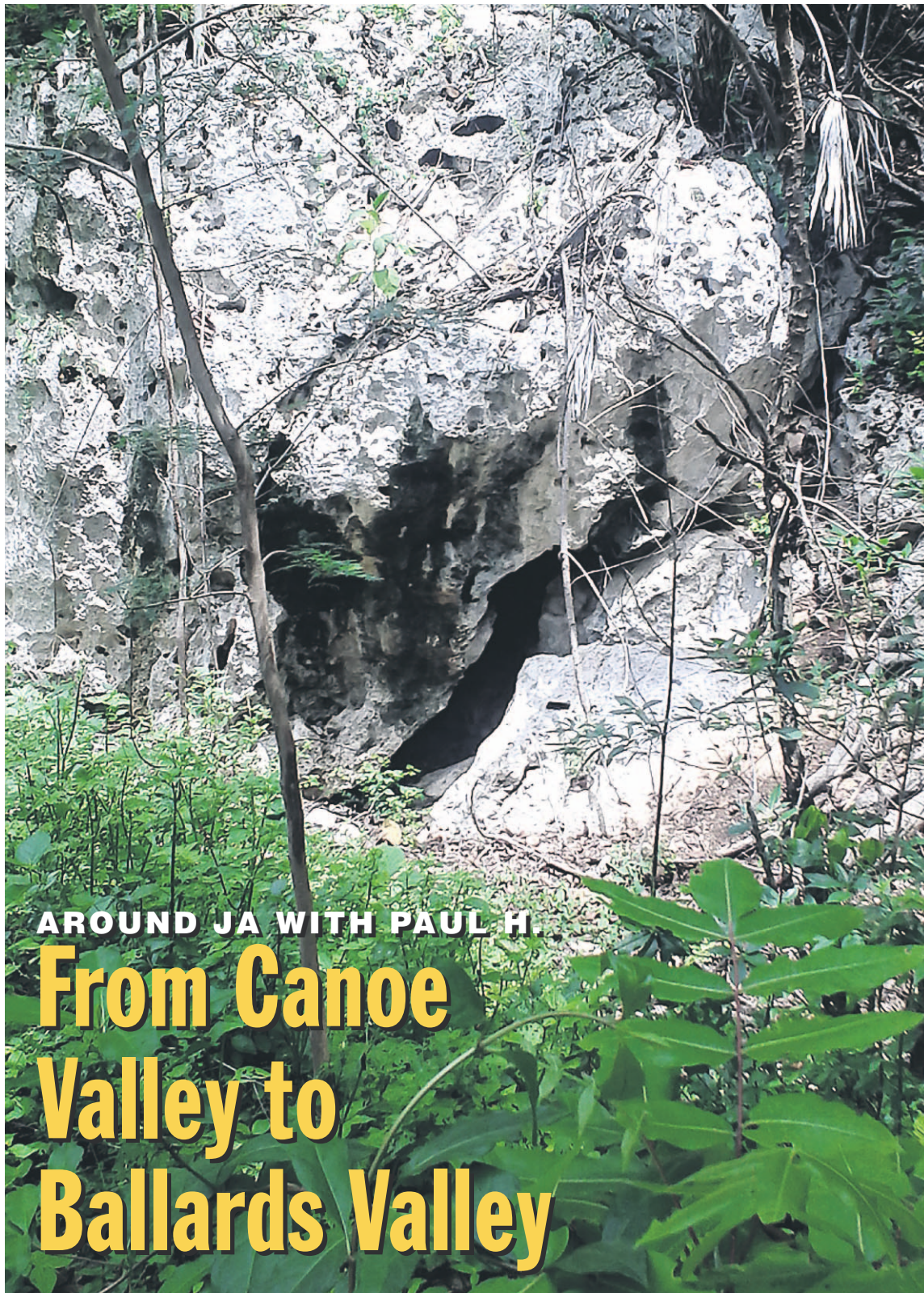


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AROUND JA WITH PAUL H.

From Canoe Valley to Ballards Valley

PHOTO BY PAUL H. WILLIAMS

Canoe Valley in south Manchester consists of a huge dry limestone forest replete with caves and underground water sources.

Paul H. Williams
Hospitality Jamaica Writer

RECENTLY, I travelled from Canoe Valley in south Manchester to Ballards Valley, St Elizabeth, and it was a very strange experience. But, today, I want to dwell on the not-so-strange elements of that very interesting journey.

For many reasons, I have always wanted to go to Canoe Valley. Its

view, juxtaposed with that of the sea from Morley Hill, is one of my favourites. It's like looking down into another world. And then there is the history, never out of the picture.

The valley is so called because the Taino would make canoes from the huge silk cotton tree that abounded there. It was once one of the biggest Taino settlements in Jamaica, and according to local

lore, their spirits are all over the place.

The path into the valley actually started just outside of Milk River in Clarendon. My eyes were all over the place as I listened to the fascinating stories of the person who took me there. He once lived in the middle of nowhere, along the coast road by the sea.

It is perhaps one of the loneliest roads in all of Jamaica, all the way



The breathtaking view of Canoe Valley from Morley Hill in south Manchester.



Guts River emerging from limestone near the road in Canoe Valley.



Alligator Pond, Manchester, is home to the longest sand dune in the Caribbean.

to Alligator Pond. I counted fewer than 12 vehicles. And this was because people were going to and from Guts River, a holiday hangout spot. People believe the place is haunted, and it is said that every man-made structure will eventually come to ruins, and I saw many such ruins.

My guide took me to the spot where he lived years ago, and there was absolutely nothing to say that a house had been there. Everything was buried under the black sands of time. He, however, found the cave from which he would sometimes draw water. The spring was still within it.

Springs and other water sources are all over. Guts River seeps from under rocks near the road and flows to the nearby sea, giving people a sort of riparian/marine experience. The very inviting crystal-clear water comes from the limestone hills that go way back.

LIMESTONE FOREST

The dry limestone forest is massive, replete with caves and caverns, some of which have Taino rock sculptures and paintings. Residents say people have been removing them with high-tech equipment.

The hills are near the road, and at points, we were driving between hills on one side and mangroves and swamps on the other. The



PHOTOS BY PAUL H. WILLIAMS
A picturesque section of Alligator Hole, where three manatees (seacows) live.

swamp is huge – acres and acres of it. For miles, it had no water and much of the grass was burnt. No crocodiles made their presence felt. Not even at Alligator Hole. Disappointed.

Alligator Hole is a nature reserve teeming with crocodiles and is the home to three female manatees (seacows). It also has an



Round Hill in the distance, Guts River in the foreground.

interpretive centre to educate visitors about the protected species.

When we got out of the swampy/mangroves area, it was the blue sea and black sands on the left. There was no end to the mountain range on the right.

The sea road ends at Alligator Pond, home of the largest sand



The entrance to a cave along the 'sea road' in Canoe Valley.

dunes in the Caribbean and where people build their houses on the glittering black sands. By then, the merciless sun had sent my blood pressure up, and I felt like I was floating on the wind. A big, black grain of shaky sand I was.

TAINOS

From Alligator Pond, we went to Bull Savannah. Along the way, we met a half-Taino man. More anon. As we climbed the mountains to Bull Savannah, I couldn't take my eyes from the sea sights below. Even Alligator Pond was visible. I stopped in Bull Savannah to see Miss Patsy, a woman I had met earlier this year. I am convinced that she, too, has Taino blood.

On the way to Ballards Valley, we could still see the sea, but when I saw the escarpment on which Lovers' Leap was located, I just couldn't keep still. The sun's reflection from the sea was

blinding, but I was able to get some shots.

As we descended into Ballards Valley, I was amazed to see the massive mansions sprawling all over. I mentally renamed the place 'The Valley of Big Houses'. In the valley itself there are quaint, old houses exuding nostalgia, reminiscent of a time when life was more idyllic and not so ostentatious.

We exited Ballards Valley through Junction back into Bull Savannah. We visited a woman who once could not remember her name. Long story. She, too, said she has Taino blood. The communities in that region are turning out to be the places where people of Taino lineage are more concentrated than anywhere else in Jamaica.

And I shall return to take them from the shadows of history.



Much to learn at Mason River Protected Area

One of the varieties of orchids in the Mason River Protected Area and Bird Sanctuary.



Vejay Bryson, a student of the Village All-Age School in St Ann, inspects a piece of Spaghnum moss in the bog area of the Masson River Reserve.

Paul H. Williams
Hospitality Jamaica Writer

ALMOST AT the centre of the island, there is a very interesting property called the Mason River Protected Area and Bird Sanctuary. The 202-acre field station is located on the border of Clarendon and St Ann.

The property is owned by the Jamaica National Heritage Trust and is managed by the Institute of Jamaica through the Natural History Museum of Jamaica, located at 10-16 East Street, Kingston.

It was established in 1963 to protect Jamaica's only inland peat bog and rare plants. It became a bird sanctuary in 1998 through an amendment of the 1945 Wild Life Protection Act, and in 2002, it was declared a protected area under the 1991 NRCA Act. More than 30 species of birds may be



PHOTOS BY PAUL H. WILLIAMS

The Venus flytrap (*Dionaea muscipula*), introduced from The United States in 1969, attracts insects with an odour, then traps them with clamp-looking teeth.



The prickly pole (*Bactris jamaicana*) is endemic to Jamaica. Its trunk and leaves are covered with needle-like pricklets.

observed on the property.

The 202 acres are divided into an agricultural area (44 acres) used by residents; the controlled area (36 acres); and the reserve (122 acres), which “is a permanently fenced and protected area containing several unique plant species of a regenerating forest, as well as several endemic avifauna and insects”, according to museum documents, made available to **Hospitality Jamaica** during a recent tour of the property. Fire destroyed the original forest in 1980.

The reserve also includes a peat bog, which has several species of the Sphagnum moss, which can hold 40 times its weight in water. The bog is a very special wetland, which was discovered in 1956 by scientists from The University of the West Indies, Mona campus. Bogs produce peat, which can be burnt like charcoal.

Sinkholes and a marsh are also on the property. Sinkholes are depressions created when limestone is dissolved. The marsh is that area that is usually covered with a few feet of water, with some sections being 18 inches deep. It is one of the four Ramsar sites in Jamaica. A Ramsar site is a wetland of international importance.

A nature walk, which may include a visit to the marsh, takes visitors on an interpretive trail. A botanist usually accompanies visitors on the guided tour, which exposes them to the rare plants on the site.



The yellow latex from the tarpot tree is waterproof and is used to plug holes, among other things.

There are 32 species of ferns at the reserve. They include the braken fern, which used to be woven together to make mats to dry ginger on. The lindsaea portoricensis can only be found there and in another place in

Westmoreland. “And of all the ferns in Jamaica, only 12 species are tree ferns like the ones growing here.”

The most interesting plants in the reserve area are the insectivorous ones. The sundew



PHOTOS BY PAUL H. WILLIAMS

Botanist Keron Campbell (right) of the Natural History Museum of Jamaica explains how the Venus flytrap works to Sophia Thorney Findlay, teacher at the Village All-Age School in St Ann, while some of her students look on.



The pitcher plant (*Sarracenia rubra*) gets some of its nutrients from insects that get ingested when they crawl into it.

(*Drosera capillaris*), native to Jamaica, is a tiny red plant growing close to the ground. It has small needles to devour insects and is found only in this reserve.

The Venus flytrap (*Dionaea muscipula*), introduced from The United States in 1969, attracts insects with an odour, then traps them with clamp-looking teeth. The pitcher plant (*Sarracenia rubra*) gets some of its nutrients from insects that get ingested when they crawl into it. It, too, was brought here in 1969.

Other interesting plants are the prickly pole palm and the tarpot tree. The prickly pole (*Bactris jamaicana*) is endemic to Jamaica. Its trunk and leaves are covered with needle-like pricklets. The rubbery, yellow substance from the dramatically structured tarpot tree (*Clusia rosea*) is waterproof and can be used to stop holes. The thick

leaves are used, it is said, to write notes on.

But the reserve is under threat from two highly invasive species: the strawberry guava (*Psidium cattleianum*) and the vampire fern (*Dicranopteris pectinata*). They are displacing native species. The strawberry guava is native to Brazil and was brought to the reserve to attract birds, whose droppings have led to a proliferation of the species.

Also to be found in the reserve are orchids, grasses, and sedges, wild pines, coco plum trees, and 21 varieties of Melastomes. A weather station, consisting of an anemometer, a thermometer, and a rain gauge are also on the trail.

Two wardens are on duty, and tours are offered to schools, tourists, organisations, etc.

The Natural History Museum of Jamaica may be contacted at 922-0620-6.

Labour of love by Palladium Hotels & Resorts

TEAM MEMBERS from the Palladium Hotels & Resorts participated in several Labour Day projects, including the construction of a garbage skip for the Elgin Town, Hanover, community.

Donation of paint supplies and assisting with the painting of Esher Primary School were among the activities carried out by the team.

However, the 'Labour of Love' project was the completion of a house for Lamone McLaren from the landscaping department. McLaren's home was gutted by fire in February and the Grand Palladium Welfare Fund provided the monies to rebuild and partially furnish the two-bedroom dwelling at no cost to him.

Singer Jamaica Limited graciously, without hesitation, contributed a stove and a bed towards the project.

Commenting on the project, general manager at the resort José Morgan said, "Taking care of our own family of team members is of paramount importance, as well as the surrounding communities where they reside."

The Palladium Welfare Fund has spent more than \$6 million in three years to cover medical, funeral, and reconstruction expenses for team members and their families.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS

Sandals Whitehouse entertainment manager Ashley Martin gets to work painting a lunch bench at the Culloden Early Childhood Institute in Whitehouse, Westmoreland, on Labour Day. **AT RIGHT:** Sandals Whitehouse Food and Beverage Director Stefan Onofrei paints a lunch bench at the Culloden ECI on Labour Day. Onofrei and Martin were two of more than 30 volunteers who helped to make the space at the Sandals Foundation-adopted school more comfortable for the little ones.

Sandals Whitehouse gives Culloden ECI a facelift

FOR LABOUR Day 2016, approximately 35 volunteers from Sandals Whitehouse and the Culloden Early Childhood Institute converged at the Sandals Foundation-adopted school to carry out a beautification project. During the Labour Day exercise, several

sections of the school's exterior were painted, including picket fencing, sections of the school's lunch area, classroom and restroom doors. The resort's engineering team also assisted in correcting several plumbing defects inside the schools restrooms.



ROYALTON STAFF LABOURS FOR MARTHA BRAE INFANTS



CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS

Staff members from Royalton White Sands at the Martha Brae Infant School after labouring all day.



Anthony Harvey of the Spa at Royalton White Sands in Falmouth, Trelawny, applies the final touches to a painting on a wall at the Martha Brae Infant School, one of a number of community relations projects which the resort's team members were engaged on Labour Day.