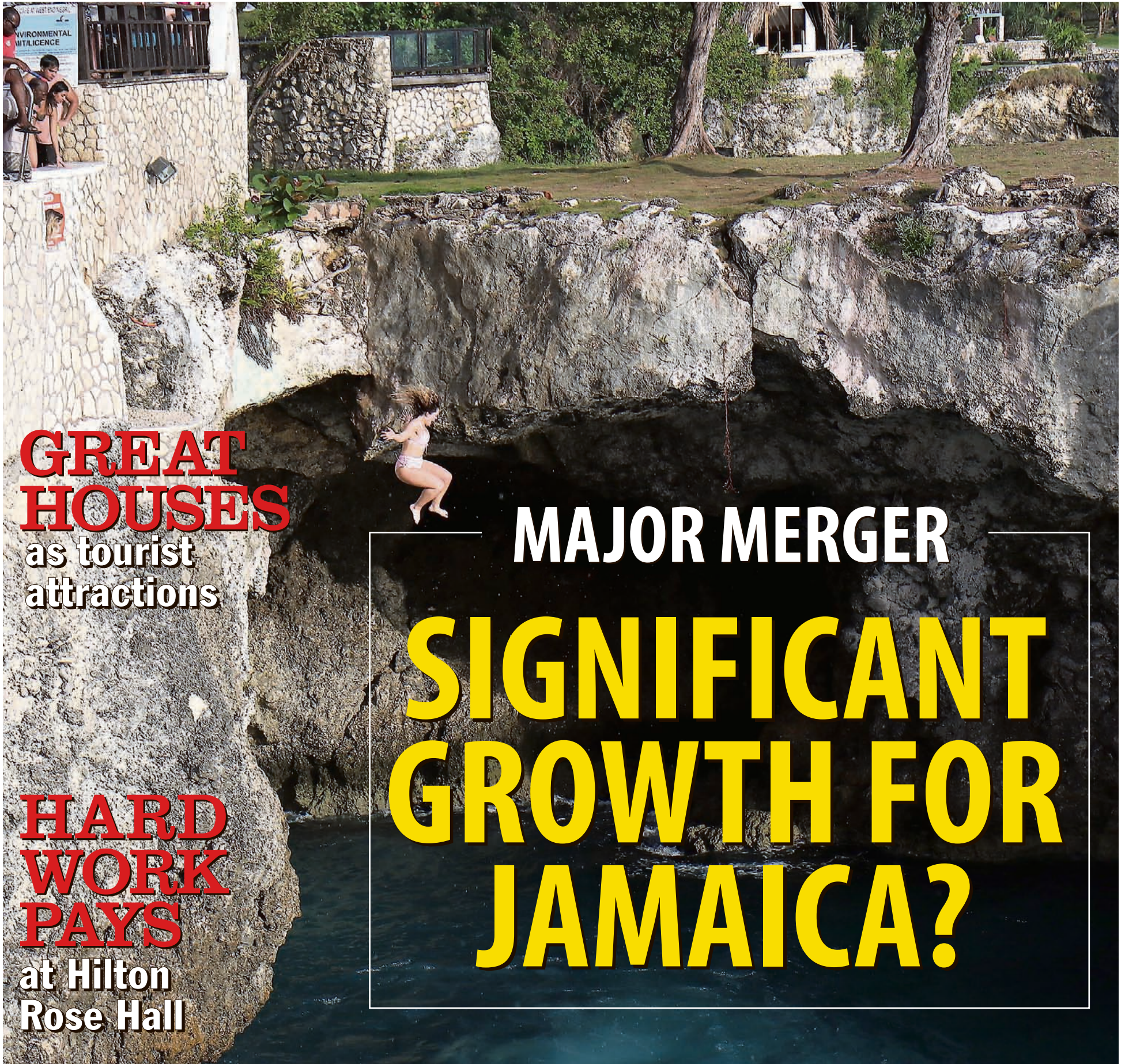


The Gleaner
Hospitality Jamaica

KEEPING YOU CONNECTED TO THE BUSINESS OF TOURISM

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 18, 2018



**GREAT
HOUSES**
as tourist
attractions

**HARD
WORK
PAYS**
at Hilton
Rose Hall

MAJOR MERGER

**SIGNIFICANT
GROWTH FOR
JAMAICA?**



Beaches Negril's Annual Prestige awardees for 2017 all came together for a winning photo op with General Manager Surinder 'Lucky' Kahlon.



The ladies of the Beaches Negril Kids' Camp department, (from left) Kadia Robinson, Chamal Brown and Sharon Rushie, certainly did not disappoint as they came out regally dressed and reflecting the 'Royal Affair' theme of the night for the Beaches Negril Annual Prestige Awards.

Diamonds:

The Glitz and Glam

THE YEAR 2017 was a successful one for Sandals Negril and this could not have been possible without the efforts and dedication of their team members. The resort remains committed to rewarding these individuals. Just recently, the resort hosted its annual Prestige Awards at the Negril Hills Golf Club, under the theme, 'Diamonds: The Glitz and Glam', honouring key players in the industry. The event was nothing short of prestigious. Scores of team members were present and were fêted from the moment they arrived on the blue carpet. There were 24 award categories ranging from most guest mentions to revenue earner, to most improved, to that one individual who displays a great deal of community stewardship. The team was thoroughly entertained throughout the evening, but the piece put on by the managers at Sandals Negril is still the talk on everybody's lips. Sandals Negril is certainly committed to service excellence, both to our external and internal guests.



Photo and videographer at Sandals Negril Keron Scott (centre) happily accepts the title of Money Maker of the Year at the resort's Annual Prestige Awards. There to hand over his well-deserved prizes are Food and Beverage Director Fitzroy Christie (left) and Sales Manager Fabriella Wynter.



A philanthropist at heart, animations team member at Beaches Negril, Shanique Gray (centre), proudly accepts the Sandals Foundation Sentinel of the Year Award from Regional Public Relations Manager Jervene Simpson (right) and Regional Public Relations Coordinator Renee Deleon.



Nicola Griffiths' smile cannot be missed in this photo after she secured the Most Valuable Player title during Grand Pineapple's Annual Prestige Awards. Sharing in the photo is Human Resources Manager at Beaches Negril Oneika Frazer (right).

Apple Leisure Group & Mark Travel Merger should bring significant growth to Jamaica



Secrets Resorts

Janet Silvera

Hospitality Jamaica Coordinator

TOURISM STAKEHOLDERS are convinced that the merger between two of the United States' largest tour operators to the Caribbean, Apple Leisure Group (ALG) and Mark Travel Corporation will result in significant growth in the sector.

Apple Leisure's president, Alex Zozaya, announced the merger of the multi-billion dollar entities on April 2, with the expectations that the deal will become effective by the end of May, dependent on US regulatory requirements.

ALG operates all the AMResorts on the island, namely, Secrets, Sunscape, Zoetry and Breathless.

While Mark Travel, a leader in the industry, has provided excellent leisure travel experiences to customers for over 40 years.

Their portfolio comprises the vacation brands Funjet Vacations and Blue Sky Tours. Mark Travel is also a private label operator of



Alex Zozaya is CEO of Apple Leisure Group.

vacation and holiday brands for several large commercial airlines. Mark Travel's sister company Trisept Solutions, operates additional technology for major airline vacation outlet such as United Vacations, Southwest Vacations and a company out of the UK called Funway Vacations and Blue

Sky Tours, mostly sending clients to Hawaii and the Pacific.

BROADER RANGE

"Together, ALG and Mark Travel will offer travellers a broader range of travel and vacation products and services for consumers, travel agents, airlines, hotels and other travel industry partners," Zozaya said in an advisory to stakeholders recently.

He noted that part of this great combination, is the fact that Mark Travel will be bringing its suite of leading technology products and services.

He revealed that the leadership team will be a combination of ALG and Mark Travel executives who will represent the deep experience and operating capabilities of both companies.

"I will lead the combined company as CEO, and John Hutchinson will serve as president," he explained in his letter.

Since the merger was announced

the subject has been on the lips of the tourism sector, with one hotelier describing the move as very strategic.

"Such a merger means better economies of scale, the two corporations will cooperate on things like charters, resulting in growth in each area they operate," he said, adding that both companies were significant sellers of Jamaica, which in his mind will equate to major growth to the island, "Because both companies have access to important sales channels".

One of the island's largest tour operators responding to questions from Hospitality Jamaica said the move will reinforce their dominant position in the United States, which remains the number one source market for the Caribbean.

It will also allow the group leverage in relation to their biggest competitors, who are the Online Tour Operators (OTAs) such as Expedia, Travelocity and Airbnb.

OTAs over the years have

eaten into the market of traditional tour operators such as Apple and Mark Travel. Up to recently, Zozaya argued that companies such as Airbnb should be regulated and start paying taxes to the destinations.

In order to facilitate a smooth transition, Zozaya announced that Bill LaMacchia will continue leading Trisept Solutions, LLC and Bill LaMacchia Jr will continue to lead Mark Travel. They will also both provide insight and guidance as members of the Board of Directors.

According to Zozaya, the top priority for everyone is to remain focused on serving their customers, suppliers and partners during this very busy time of the year.

"We appreciate the incredible contributions of our employees, and will work tirelessly to maintain a strong corporate culture that offers you many opportunities for professional development and growth.

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Carters racing around the track.



From left, Carol Miller of Ilandestiny Tours, Janice Carr, and Karen Brown, both of JPS, having fun in the push carts.

New tourist attraction based on push cart derby

Carl Gilchrist

Hospitality Jamaica Writer

IT MIGHT have come 30 years late, after the world got to know about Jamaica's push cart derby through the 1988 film *Cool Runnings*, which mapped the journey of the island's bobsled team at the Winter Olympics, the bobsled having been inspired by the push cart derby.

But it's finally here. Show Cart, a tourist attraction that mimics the push cart theme, has opened at Noranda's Port Rhodes Sports Club in Discovery Bay, St Ann.

Breezing down the hill at breakneck speed, the adrenaline factor that made the push cart derby so popular back in the '80s, is absent as the races are done on the playing field.

However, as a package that includes five exciting push cart races, cultural concerts by Jamaica Cultural Development Commission gold medal winners Young Skankers and One-Ten Singers from Farm Town; the veteran group Trysee Singers, who will present authentic Jamaican folk singing; drumming, treasure hunts, Jamaican foods and more, Show Cart seems set to take off.

According to Noranda's Lance Neita: "Show Cart, the latest attraction for St Ann and the whole of Jamaica, is a community-based, sustainable project introduced and managed totally by Discovery Bay citizens and residents, also the Kaiser Retirees Association."

The attraction is based on the push cart derby which originated in Discovery Bay.



Brothers Shawn Henry (left) and Shane Henry doing poetry during a presentation at the Port Rhodes Sports Club.

"It also features the bobsled dream, which started as a result of the push cart derby and the *Cool Runnings* film which was inspired by the push cart derby right here at Kaiser Sports Club, known as Port Rhodes Sports Club," Neita added.

He said that the initial response to Show Cart has been positive.

On the day *Hospitality Jamaica* visited the attraction, members of the Jamaica Hotel and Tourist Association (JHTA) were there experiencing the product.

"They told me today they really enjoyed it and they will be pushing and promoting it," revealed Neita,

who also stated that they were encouraging the cruise shipping operators, the hotels, and the travel agencies, tour organisers, and bus drivers, to visit Port Rhodes.

"It's a wonderful attraction, and it features Jamaican culture, Jamaican history, and a Jamaica institutionalised sport call push cart derby" he argued.

Show Cart will put on a show three days per week – Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday – between 9:30 and 12 noon.

Entrance fee is set at US\$30 with a specially discounted price of J\$1,500 for Jamaicans, with children under 14 required to pay \$500.



Portland Chamber of Commerce representatives, Fredrick Young and Simone Campbell play around in a push cart while at the Port Rhodes Sports Club.

Melia cops another award

Janet Silvera

Hospitality Jamaica Coordinator

IT WAS cheers all around on the property of Melia Braco Village in Rio Bueno, Trelawny, last Tuesday (April 10) as the hotel, for the second time in two years, copped another major international award.

Coming on the heels of being named by the World Travel Awards as Best New Caribbean Hotel in 2016, Melia Braco Village has just been named the Dreamiest 'I Do' destination for weddings by the very reputable travel entity CheapCaribbean.com.

At a glitzy ceremony at the Level area of the beautiful beachfront property, Melia Braco, in addition to being presented with the official award, was also given US\$100,000 worth of marketing exposure by the company.

"We had 227 entrants, and Melia Braco Village beat them all," said Michael Lowery, chief marketing officer of the Addison, Texas, United States-based



From right: Melia Braco celebrates 'Dreamiest I Do' Award: Sales Manager Sheryl-Kaye Thompson; Sales Executive Valesha Taylor; Director of Sales Angella Bennett; New Jamaica Tourist Board (JTB) Regional Director Odette Dyer; Group Sales Manager for Melia Belinda Blake; Cheap Caribbean's Senior Director of Marketing Dana Studebaker; Melia's Marketing Manager Nersibelis Rodriguez and Cheap Caribbean's Chief Marketing Officer Michael Lowery.

company.

"The competition was keen, but

in the end, it all came down to the intangibles, and I really cannot see

a more beautiful or better location for weddings. This, in itself, is a major boost for Jamaica's tourism product."

CheapCaribbean.com is a company that provides "unforgettable" vacation packages to the Caribbean, Mexico, and Central America. It also provides in-depth content on hotel properties and destinations, travel tips, as well as reviews from travellers.

'ASTONISHINGLY GREAT'

For her part, senior director of marketing for CheapCaribbean.com, Dana Studebaker said that Melia Braco should also be commended for providing a service that is "astonishingly great", adding that the spirit and morale at the property is "beyond par" and far better than in "many other places".

"There is no mystery why this resort is held in such high esteem," she added. "It is just a beautiful place that is run by some very professional and a magnificent group of people."

Formerly Braco Village Hotel and Spa, Melia Braco Village has been reopened under the Melia Jamaica brand since 2014. The 226-room property is operated by Melia Hotels International and owned by the National Insurance Fund, the financial manager of Jamaica's social security programme.

An ecstatic director of sales for Melia, Angella Bennett, said that what makes the resort special is that it is far more than just "sand, sun, sea and people."

"Service is a major part of what we do here, and this we take very seriously," she pointed out. "This award is really a team effort, and I can't find the right words to describe the quality people we have here at Melia Braco."

She also noted that the US\$100,000 in marketing exposure would be good for the hotel and, by extension, Jamaica.

"It is another opportunity to showcase our tourism product on the world stage in a big way," she added.

Bennett further pointed out that another high point of the resort was the cuisine, noting that "we can hold our own against the best in the world".

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THE BUSINESS OF TOURISM

The tourism sector should embrace the Caribbean's history

David Jessop

Hospitality Jamaica Writer

WHEN I visit a country, I always try to find an art gallery, museum, or historic building that in some way represents the nation's culture or its past.

In this way it is not only possible to understand more about where I am and the origins and influences that have made a nation's people, but to experience something new in ways that can sometimes be surprising, even moving.

In London, New York, Brussels, Paris and many other global cities, such offerings are, of course, extensive and enough to occupy many days of a visitor's time.

In the Caribbean, this is not necessarily so, although some nations have fine galleries, museums and buildings open to the public.

Cuba and Jamaica are particularly well-endowed. In Havana, the number of such facilities and sites is extraordinary and includes, for example, the National Museum of Fine Arts and the unique Museum of the Revolution. Kingston, too, has at least ten offerings, including the National Museum, the outstanding National Gallery, and, of course, the Bob Marley Museum. In both nations, there are also many historic buildings and sites located away from the capital.

More generally, however, museums, galleries and historic sites around the Caribbean vary enormously in number, size, scope, quality and intent.

This is because the principal problem they face lies in obtaining



Former US President Barack Obama visits the Bob Marley Museum. He is assisted by tour guide Natasha Clark.

and maintaining core funding for the upkeep of buildings, existing collections, and staffing. Moreover, special exhibitions are few and far between, and confusingly, some sites, particularly those in smaller islands that have been curated from private collections, seem not to want to explain the context of what is being exhibited or to encourage new thinking about the past.

Museums and national art galleries first and foremost play an essential role in helping educate a

nation's children and citizens about their history and culture. However, few involved in such activities in the Caribbean have sought to enhance their funding by establishing linkages to the tourism industry and those involved in selling a destination internationally in ways that might support a country's visitor offering.

Last November, France's president, Emmanuel Macron, pledged that Africa's heritage 'cannot be a prisoner of European museums' and that France would develop and

support plans for the repatriation of African artefacts held in France.

Although legally complicated and controversial, it is an initiative that could lead to visitors traveling to new French-supported museums and galleries in the countries from which the objects concerned were originally taken. If developed in an Anglophone Caribbean framework with Britain – perhaps in relation to claims for reparational justice – a similar idea could lead to the creation of



David Jessop

well-funded, high-quality museums in the region that are able to house artefacts relevant to local history in locations that would attract residents and visitors alike.

There is potentially a role for the tourism sector and friends of the region to begin to explore such ideas with, for example, the University of the West Indies-based Caribbean Heritage Network and other regional groupings that bring together those who run museums, galleries and historic buildings.

It is now widely accepted that visitors increasingly want authentic cultural experiences, wish to understand more about the country they are visiting, and are interested in spending some of their vacation time away from the beach. It is also accepted that 'responsible tourism' should create more meaningful connections with local people and a greater understanding of local cultural, social and environmental issues.

There is much more to be written on the subject, but there is, in the region and internationally, a confluence of interest in heritage issues that could be turned to the region's, government's and the industry's advantage.



Justice Roy Anderson

Gleaner names new reader ombudsman

AS PART of its continued commitment to resolve all public complaints relating to its content, **The Gleaner** has named a new reader ombudsman.

He is retired High Court judge Justice Roy Anderson, who assumed duties on April 1. Justice Anderson is a past student of Titchfield High School in Portland, the University of the West Indies, London University and Georgetown University in the United States. Between March 2001 and 2012, he served as a puisne

judge and a judge of the Revenue Court. He has also acted as a judge of the Grand Court in Grand Cayman.

While this media company always aims to get it right the first time, it has had a long-standing pledge to correct in a timely manner errors made across its platforms.

The ombudsman is empowered to handle public complaints related to editorial content that are unresolved by the newsroom and to suggest

corrective measures, if necessary, for internal action.

Each decision by the ombudsman will be addressed in association with the management of the newsroom and, where necessary, the office of the managing director.

Complaints can be sent to ombudsman@gleanerjm.com; You can read the company's Code of Conduct and Professionalism at <http://www.jamaica-gleaner.com/editorialpolicy.html>

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JANET SILVERA PHOTOS

Hilton Rose Hall Resort and Spa's Department of the Year, Engineering celebrating their win at the recent staff awards.

Hard work pays

Janet Silvera
Hospitality Jamaica Coordinator

KERRIAN GARDNER, of the Seaside Restaurant at the Hilton Rose Hall is the 2017 Associate of the Year.

Gardner, who has been with the resort for the last three years walked away with a Honda Fit motorcar, over \$300,000 in cash, five nights vacation at the Doubletree by Hilton, entry fee to Universal Studios, return airline tickets to the USA, a television set, laptop, microwave, a watch, gas stove and several other gifts at the hotel's resort staff awards.

Gardner outpaced first runner-up, Adassa Poyser in accounts and second runner-up room attendant, Devine Grizzle, who both received cash amounting to \$300,000, and a host of prizes.

In fact, Hilton Rose Hall presented prizes valued at millions of dollars, in celebration of

the work carried out by its associates.

"Today we celebrate our passion by showcasing those who have risen to the top through hard work, while developing their craft. By their drive and perseverance, they are shining examples," declared Hilton's area director of marketing and communications, Charmaine Deane.

She added that in celebrating their passion, it was critical for them not to forget that every great dream begins with a dreamer. "Always remember, within each of us lies the strength, the patience, and the passion to reach for the stars, and to change the world."

Gardner and her closest rivals shared the spotlight with the resort's banquet manager Howard Bailey of the food and beverage department, who was named manager of the year, while engineering supervisor, Otis Schloss copped the supervisor of the year title.

The engineering department took home the department of the year trophy, while the front desk team was recognised as the Hilton Honors recipients.

The other winners included songstress Karen Smith, who received a special recognition; Dahlia Smiley-Grant, for Best Smile, Mark Hudson, who was named Hilton Ambassador; Lisa Blair, the Blue Energy lady, Claudette Satchwell, the General Manager's Merit Award and Chadene Bryan, the Most Recognised Award.

Norrett Myrie copped the Bartender of the Year prize and Wilson Shaw, the Chef of the Year.

Hospitality Jamaica brings you highlights of the dedicated staff at the Montego Bay based resort.

janet.silvera@gleanerjm.com



Associate of the Year, Kerrian Gardener (centre) flanked by last year's winner, Debbie Irving (left) and general manager, Carol Bourke



Wilson Shaw, Chef of the Year (2nd left) is flanked by from left: Collin Downer, Best Dressed Chicken representative, Tricia-Ann Robins, Best Dressed Chicken's Lincoln Robinson.



Supervisor of the Year, Otis Schloss (centre), accepts one of his many prizes from Hilton Hotel Manager, John Miles and Sagicor's Stephanie Vassell.



The Hilton Honours Team Member Award recipients the Front Office Department.



Manager of the Year, Howard Bailey (left) accepts his award from Patrick Samuels, engineering manager.



Singer Karen Smith accepts a special recognition award from Daine Golaub of Jewel Paradise Cove.



Desmond Walker accepts a Special Recognition Award from general manager Carol Bourke.



General Manager, Jewel Paradise Cove, Daine Golaub embraces Associate of the Year, Kerrian Gardner as she makes her way on stage during the Hilton Rose Hall annual awards.



Joel Ford, recipient of the General Manager Merit awards raises his hands to the heavens during the Hilton Rose Hall Resort and Spa annual awards recently.

PORTLAND

the place you'd rather be

'There is no place in the world to me like Portland,' exclaimed Maggie Hemmings as she welcomed Jen Abbott, and her daughters to her hometown. 'The rugged coastlines, the verdant landscape, the jaw-dropping vistas are so good for the soul,' she gushed.

Portland overlooks the Caribbean Sea and is a place of beauty. Affectionately called 'Porti,' this parish is decorated with lush vegetation, the Blue Mountain ranges, undulating rivers, towering waterfalls and pristine beaches. Undoubtedly, Portland is the desired go-to place to be one with nature. The hospitable residents have played host to countless visitors, as Portland was the cradle of Jamaica's tourist industry from as early as the late 1,800s.



Titchfield Hotel in Port Antonio, circa 1890.

One of the first hotels to be built in Jamaica and signaled the beginning of the Government's commitment to the development of the island's tourism sector.

Also dubbed the birthplace of the world-renowned jerk cuisine, a visit to Portland is incomplete without a stop at the Boston jerk centre, or any of the other jerk spots that serve up delicious

roadside meals. Portlanders are very proud of their beloved parish and this is willingly shared with all visitors to the parish. During their trip to Portland, Hemmings took Abbott and her girls on an excursion. As they meandered down the iconic Rio Grande river on rafts captained by skilled raftsmen, they soaked in the views of the foothills of the Blue Mountains.



Visitors participate in activities at the Charles Town Maroon community.

So what is your favourite Portland spot or your idyllic Portland getaway? This Jamaican gem is truly a treasure to

locals and visitors alike. It is no wonder Errol Flynn described it as 'more beautiful than any woman I have ever seen'.



Visitors to Reach Falls enjoy the emerald river at the base of the waterfall.

As the rafts pulled up on the riverbanks for a lunch stop at Belinda's, Abbott commented on the rustic ambience and the fact that the meal was prepared on wood fire. She broke into a broad smile and declared, "This is luxury" There was no holding back on her joy as her smile got even broader. During the meal, one could hear sounds of satisfaction and delight as they consumed all that was set before them.

Their Portland excursion also took them to Reach Falls, the eco-attraction hidden in the

Montane Forrest of the John Crow Mountain range. Abbott and her daughters were agog at its beauty, and took turns to dive into the emerald river pool at the base of the falls. The boat ride on the famous Blue Lagoon and to Pellew Island provided a never-before experience that elicited more 'ooooohhs' and 'aaahhs'. They were amazed by the interesting things to do and see. This confirmed what Hemmings had always known, Portland is the place you would rather be. But hearing it from her guests stirred within her a greater appreciation for her beloved Porti.



A couple strolls along the Errol Flynn Marina.

But what's not to like about Portland – in fact, there are so many more things to love about Portland. Lounge in the Frenchman's Cove, where the river flows right into the ocean. Or walk on white sands of Boston Bay Beach, or get an adrenaline rush as you surf on the crest of breaker waves. You may prefer to dive into the inviting waters at Winifred Beach. And there are plenty of menu items to satisfy your hunger as the food vendors offer delicious options.

There is still more. The Errol Flynn Marina has the distinction of being the only Caribbean marina capable of handling the largest yachts in the world, yet it offers a quiet and intimate space to relax and unwind. Learn about Jamaica's vibrant cultural heritage that is inextricable linked to the Maroons. Visit the Charles Town community and learn about the resilience and exploits of the Maroons at the museum, the library and the Asafu Ground.



NFL players take the students at Granville All-Age through their drill.

Playa Hotel hands over newly renovated sick bay to Granville All-age School

MONTEGO BAY'S Hyatt Ziva and Zilara resorts, owned and operated by Playa Hotels, have handed over a three-bedroom sickbay to the Granville All-Age School in St James.

The school is one of the resort's main corporate social responsibility projects, tagged 'Granville 404'.

The handing over was done through the resort chain's 'Through our Eyes' project in collaboration the National Football League (NFL) group, which consisted of players from the NY Giants, Cleveland Browns, New Orleans Saints, Pittsburgh Steelers and California Panthers.

Giving back to the community of Granville, the team of players taught the children the basics of American football, played soccer with them, and also led a music clinic utilizing the services of a saxophonist.

"While they were there, Dr Michele Pinnock, regional director of the Ministry of Education, joined us in the handing-over ceremony and received on behalf of the school the newly renovated three-bedroom sickbay and guidance and counselling suite. This project saw work being done on it by the Playa general managers when they visited Jamaica for their annual meeting," the resort's human resources director, Betty-Ann Brown told *Hospitality Jamaica*.

According to her, the handing over of the newly renovated facility came at the perfect time. "We were just crowned the national champions for tourism service excellence and it was a great way for us to give back to the community by celebrating and sharing with our sponsored school. This is who we are as a company; this is who we are as Playa; service to others and caring about others, simply put, is in our DNA."

The footballers also visited the Blossom Gardens children home in Montego Bay during their four-day trip to the island.

Hospitality Jamaica has highlights of the day's events.



Granville All-Age students welcoming NFL players to their school recently.



From my heart to your heart! Students at Granville All-Age flank one of the eight NFL players who visited their school.



Regional Director MOE in Mobay Dr Michelle Pinnock (second right) cuts the ribbon, officially opening the sick bay handed over by Betty-Ann Brown (right), Playa Hotels and Resorts, owners and operators of Hyatt Ziva and Zilara. Sharing in the occasion were visiting educators NFL players.

Great houses as tourist attractions

Paul H. Williams
Hospitality Jamaica Writer

PLANTATION HOUSES were called great houses because they were simply grand, great edifices that invariably were perched atop a hill overlooking plantations and surrounding lands.

Designed by their owners and built mainly by enslaved people and the laity, they were quite symbolic of the great social and political disparity between the enslaved and post-Emancipation peasantry on one side and the colonialists and landed gentry on the other.

Close to these testaments of opulence and authority were servant quarters and places of work. This sort of juxtaposition was everywhere, and all over Jamaica, these emblems of inequity were constructed. Some have fallen into ruin, never to be repaired; some have totally vanished; some were restored and are now being used to attract tourists and locals.

Rose Hall Great House in St James is one of the restored houses and has the most romantic, if not the most blood-curdling, story, steeped in witchcraft and murder. The star of that fabulous narrative is none other than Annie Palmer, also known as the White Witch of Rose Hall, who, it is alleged, killed her husbands and was herself killed by one of her enslaved men. Her spirit, it is said, still haunts the spaces in the great house, a



A rear view of the planter's house-cum-interpretive museum at Seville Heritage Park in St Ann.



The basement of the Halse Hall Great house has been transformed into a gymnasium.



The ruins of the Stokes Hall Great House in St Thomas.

popular attraction

Seville Heritage Park in St Ann has a great house, the planter's house, which now an interpretative museum where the stories of the four peoples who met there are told in several ways. Spaces are dedicated to the Tainos, the Spaniards, the Africans, and the British, who drove the Spaniards out of the island by 1670.

In 1658, a Spanish force, led by Governor Cristóbal Arnado de Ysassi, confronted the British, commanded by Colonel Edward D'Oyley. The Spanish were defeated easily, losing about 300 of their men, while the British lost only 28. Artifacts from those days are now on show inside the Rio Nuevo Great House, another well-preserved vestige.

Halse Hall in Clarendon is regarded as one of the oldest English buildings in Jamaica. It is now owned by bauxite/alumina company Jamalco. A new wing was built to accommodate visitors and overseas contractors. Its facilities, including rooms, are open to the public at a cost. Apart from the great house, there, other historic spots, including a small cemetery, on the property.

The history of Bromley Great House at Walkers Wood in St Ann goes back to the 16th century when the Spaniards ruled Jamaica. The original structure of the main house was built on the stone foundations of a 16th-century fort. Those foundations, comprising gun slits, now enclose a cosy basement. In the late 18th century, the property was sold to a Scottish doctor, Sir John Pringle.

Pringle extended the original house, and the property has been owned by his descendants ever since. It is where the production of the famous Walkerswood food seasoning originated. It has been put to various uses and is a company owned by family members, who have now put it up for sale.

Built in the 17th century, Good Hope Great House in Trelawny is a Georgian structure. It is part of a property that was given as a land grant to Colonel Thomas Williams. It consists of 1,000 acres near, Martha Brae River. Colonel Williams was the grandson of one of the first settlers in the island. It was subsequently owned by John Tharp, a prominent land owner and holder of enslaved Africans. The great house is now part of a popular heritage tour attraction.

Many of these grandiose houses certainly have not weathered the storms of yesteryear, and a visit to those still standing is an entrance into a different time, our colourful past, from which many things may be pulled, pondered, and preserved to inform the present.



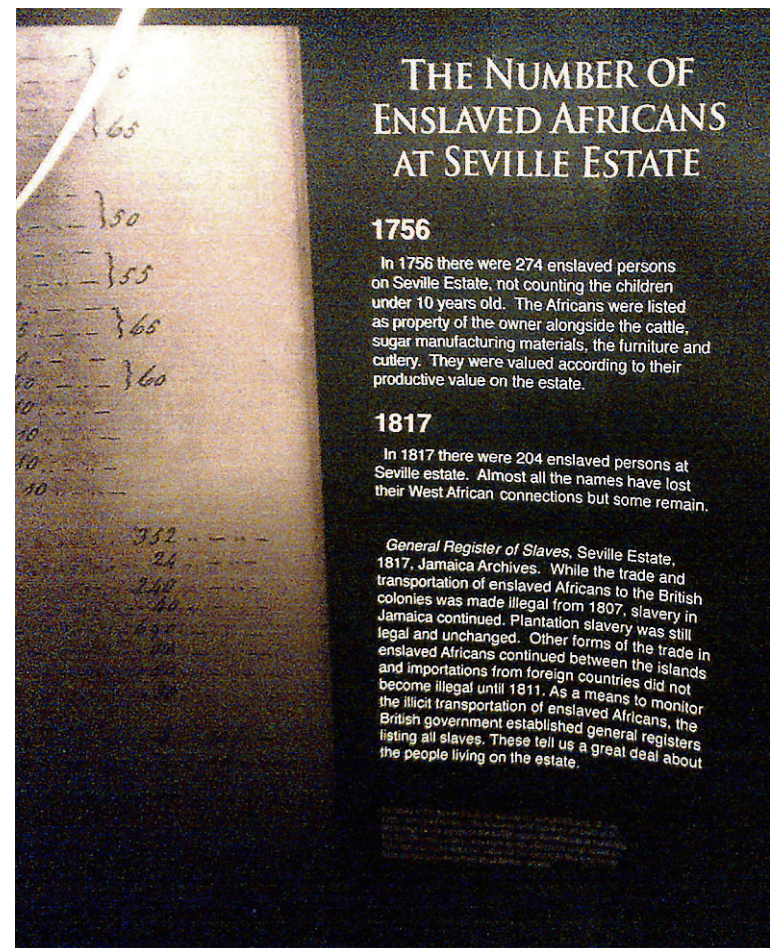
The Craighton Great House in St Andrew is part of a coffee plantation tour.



A gun slit in the basement of the Bromley Great House in Walkers Wood, St Ann.



A section of the private cemetery on the property of the Halse Hall Great House in Clarendon.



A part of the storyboard in the African section inside the interpretive museum at the Seville Heritage Park in St Ann.

AROUND JA WITH PAUL H

Light and giddy in PORT ROYAL



PHOTOS BY PAUL H. WILLIAMS

Ruins of the original buildings of the Plumb Point Lighthouse on the Palisadoes strip.

I SUFFER from vertigo, and when it peaks it can be a frightening experience. Just imagine feeling as light as a feather, as if you were floating, especially when going up flights of stairs, travelling in a speeding vehicle, going up long escalators, walking on precipices, and being atop a multistorey building.

But the adventurer that I am makes me forget sometimes that I have this dreadful condition. There I would be enjoying myself, until I find myself in one of the situations listed above. Yet, what happened on Easter Sunday at Port Royal did not occur in any of them. The first sign of a potential episode came when I was at the Plumb Point Lighthouse with some friends.

Seventy feet tall, it rose majestically against a cloudless, blue sky. The sun was out in all its glory and fury. The blackish sand was so hot it could cook food. We could not get enough pictures of this decades-old sentinel. Every angle was simply beautiful. I kept looking up at the turret until it seemed to be moving. Red flag. So, I turned my eyes back to terra firma. This illusion was just too powerful.

When we went to the other side



The Giddy House has been leaning at a very odd angle since the 1907 earthquake in Port Royal.

away from the sun, I noticed the peak of the lighthouse seemed to be directly in front of the glow of the sun. The glare looked like a halo. As the sun rose gradually, it looked like it was the light coming from the lighthouse. Another amazing illusion, and a sight I could not get enough of until the lighthouse seemed to be moving again, and the

glare had become blinding. I remembered my vertigo and looked away knowing that I would have enough photos to look at.

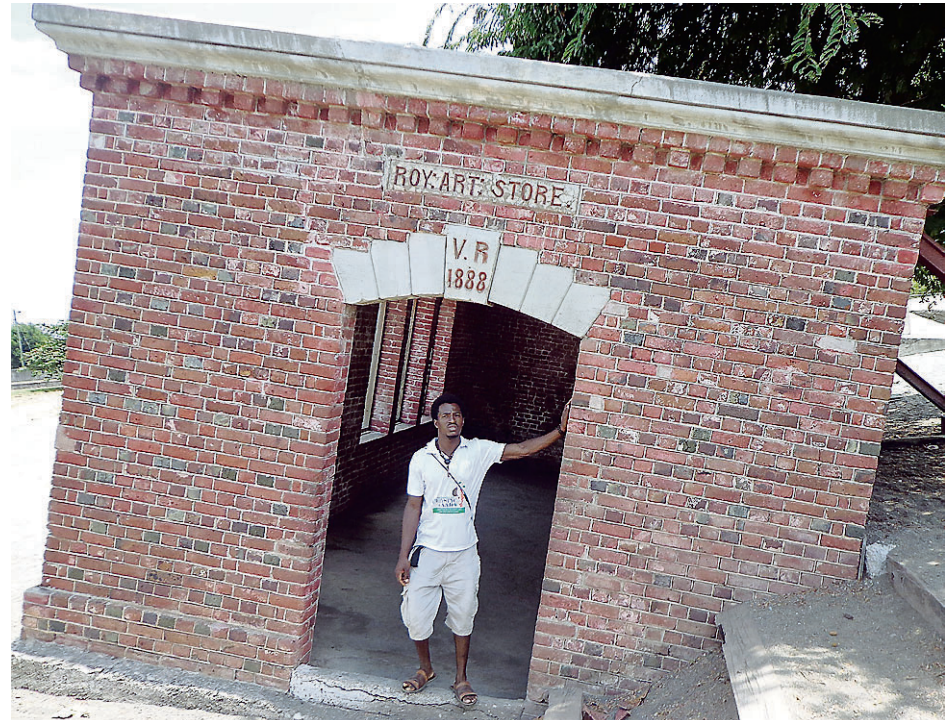
As I walked away, I looked at the spiral staircase, out of bounds, that led to the top. I thought about the views from above, perished the thought, and moved on. Something was pulling me, elsewhere in Port Royal, and that was



The sun seems to be the light coming from the Plumb Point Lighthouse on the Palisadoes strip.



Amri Hanson relaxing at the entrance to Fort Charles where the Giddy House is located in Port Royal.



Kavim Abayomi Deer holding on lest he get dizzy trying to stand straight.

Giddy House, part of the Fort Charles Heritage Site.

Fort Charles, formerly called Fort Cromwell, was one of the first forts established at Port Royal. A large portion of it sank during the 1692 earthquake. It was rebuilt in 1699. Other earthquakes and hurricanes were to shake and batter the peninsula over the years. Yet, there was another massive quake, in 1907, that all but flattened Kingston and Port Royal, where 180 metres of coastline sank.

Fort Charles was once against destroyed. Some areas of the fort disappeared forever, many of its cannons and guns sank into the

sand. Buildings and docks were badly damaged, and the Royal Artillery House, built in 1888 to store weapons and gunpowder, was part of the casualty.

It tilted into the sands at an odd angle, and has been like that ever since. It has come to be called Giddy House because of the dizzying sensation that people feel when they attempt to stand straight in it.

Now, on Easter Sunday, when I stood at the entrance taking some pictures of the slanted interior where some youth were, I felt something like a magnetic pull drawing me towards the inside of the building. The young men inside

said they, too, felt weird, but they seemed to be enjoying the weirdness, for there they were taking pictures of each other. And I was outside resisting the energy that was pulling me from inside.

I felt my vertigo coming on, so I quickly removed myself from the entrance. If I can feel this giddy and I am not inside, why would I want to go inside, I thought to myself. My brain would have been scattered.

Scatterbrain is one of the meanings of giddy, which the lighthouse and Giddy House almost gave me on Easter Sunday, when I went to resurrect the history of the much-crucified Port Royal.



The turret of the Plumb Point Lighthouse on the Palisadoes strip.



A view of the sea can be quite refreshing after the Giddy House experience.

Tourism commissioner tells partners USVI open for business

US VIRGIN Islands Commissioner of Tourism Beverly Nicholson-Doty continues to make audiences across the US mainland and the globe aware that the territory is open for business.

Addressing a broad range of consumers and industry stakeholders over the past week in Atlanta, Chicago and New York, Commissioner Nicholson-Doty thanked partners for their support of the US Virgin Islands during the ongoing recovery process and suggested that the best way to continue helping the US Virgin Islands is to visit the territory.

Last weekend, the commissioner addressed close to 200 delegates attending the National Association of Black Journalists (NABJ) Region III Conference in Atlanta, Georgia, and thanked the media for keeping St Croix, St John and St Thomas in the spotlight since last September's storms.

COMPREHENSIVE UPDATE

While in Atlanta, Commissioner Nicholson-Doty participated in a live on-air segment with Lynda Kinkade on CNN International's 'CNN Newsroom', where she gave a comprehensive update on the US Virgin Islands' recovery.

"We have several hotels that have reopened ... our yachting industry is absolutely glorious, and we have wonderful villas. However, it is a journey ... we will



From left: JetBlue Airways' Jack Massey and Dylan Kleopfer, Virgin Islands Port Authority Executive Director David Mapp, Commissioner of Tourism Beverly Nicholson-Doty and JetBlue's Eric Tanner in New York recently.

have more hotels opening at the end of the year and as we look towards the future, we really feel that we're going to have an even better tourism product," the commissioner told national and worldwide listeners tuned into the popular news program.

During her in-market travels, she also met with journalists from the **Chicago Sun-Times**, the **New York Daily News**, and **TravelPulse**.

At a meeting with United

Airlines in Chicago, the commissioner, who was accompanied by David Mapp, executive Director of the Virgin Islands Port Authority (VIPA), provided updates on the territory's accommodations and tourism offerings. She reconfirmed that United resumes service to St Thomas this weekend from Newark, New Jersey and Washington, DC. The airline will recommence flights to St Thomas from Houston later this month, and

provide daily flights from Washington Dulles International Airport this summer between early June and late August.

The commissioner and executive director held similar talks with JetBlue Airways in New York and attended an airline training programme in the city. "As we bounce back, it's critically important that we update our partners on the significant progress we are making, while taking the necessary steps to

ensure that flights return as more accommodations become available," Commissioner Nicholson-Doty said.

"Power has been restored across the territory, our beaches and attractions have reopened, cruise lines and airlines have returned, and a wide variety of accommodations are available even as our rebuilding and resiliency work continues," she reported, affirming that the "USVI is still nice".

Minister to garner support for Global Disaster Resilience Centre in South America

MINISTER OF Tourism Edmund Bartlett is off the island attending a series of meetings in South America.

While there, he is expected to make a presentation on the Global Disaster Resilience Centre that is to be established in Jamaica, as well as garner more support for small and medium-size tourism Enterprises.

The centre, which was first

announced at the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) global conference on Jobs and Inclusive Growth: Partnerships for Sustainable Tourism, held in Montego Bay last November, will be located at the University of the West Indies, Mona campus.

It is being designed to help vulnerable states to recover quickly from natural disasters and

is currently endorsed by the World Bank, Inter-American Development Bank, Caribbean Hotel and Tourism Association, and the Caribbean Tourism Organisation.

While in South America, the minister will visit Paraguay to attend the 63rd Meeting of the UNWTO Regional Commission for the Americas. This is the first meeting since Jamaica was elected

to serve on the executive council and will also be the first time that the new secretary general of the UNWTO, Zurab Pololikashvili, participates in a Commission of the Americas meeting.

The minister was scheduled to attend the 8th G20/T20 Tourism Ministers Meeting in Buenos Aires, Argentina, on Monday. The meeting, staged under the theme "Tourism as Protagonist of

Sustainable Growth: An Engine for Employment', highlighted the significant contributions that the tourism sector makes towards the growth and development of the global economy.

While in Argentina, Minister Bartlett will participate in a panel discussion on Recovery and Resilience in Crisis Management for Tourism during the World Travel and Tourism Council's (WTTC) 18th Global Summit, which is opened today, April 18, and set to end tomorrow, April 19.

The Minister is expected to return to the island on April 26.