



The Jamaican High Commission London – Newsletter

Year In Review 2015

MESSAGE FROM THE HIGH COMMISSIONER



I am pleased to be able to share with you our 2015 Year-in-Review Newsletter. It was a challenging but equally rewarding year for us at the High Commission.

There were many highlights during 2015 as you will see in this special Issue of the Newsletter. There were a number of significant meetings, conferences and visits that took place throughout the year, as well as workshops, seminars and presentations that were specifically targeted towards the Diaspora. Our engagement with the UK as well as with a number of other countries was also advanced through continued bilateral discussions as well as through cooperation in multilateral fora such as the Commonwealth. We are indebted to the countless individuals, organisations and companies who have supported us and with whom we continue to work

closely. You have all given of your time and talent to the High Commission and for this we are eternally grateful.

I would also like to take this opportunity to publically thank the staff of the High Commission for always going the extra mile to ensure that we were able to accomplish many of our goals.

We look, with great expectation, to the coming year. The staff and I stand ready to play our part to ensure that any opportunities presented will be fully maximised.

I would like to close by encouraging you all to keep up the hard work and to continue to work together, to not only make a difference here in the UK, but across the length and breadth of Jamaica. You have proven that we are a people of great strength, determination and resilience. Let us continue to hold true to this tradition and inspire the next generation towards even greater heights.

DIASPORA NOTES

6th Biennial Jamaica Diaspora Conference: 13th – 18th June

The Sixth (6th) Biennial Jamaica Diaspora Conference (JDC 2015) was held from 13th to 18th June, at the Montego Bay Convention Centre, Montego Bay, Jamaica. Conference records show that eighty-two (82) persons from the UK registered for JDC 2015. There were eighteen (18) UK presenters for the respective Conference sessions and the quality of the presentations, including the various recommendations, was lauded by the audiences. There was a myriad of activities for delegates to participate in during the Conference, and UK delegates had their fill. Starting with the Marketplace activities, delegates had the chance to explore business and investment opportunities. Delegates were exposed to the many facets of Brand Jamaica and were familiarized with the various ways in which they can protect and promote the brand. Discussions were held daily on a range of issues such as tourism and entertainment; information technology; agro parks & agri-business; cultural and creative industries; stocks and venture capital; integrating Diaspora skills; engaging 3rd/4th generation Diaspora members; education and health; issues impacting the Diaspora; the role of the Church; immigration and deportation; social business enterprises; housing development services; and local government/ Diaspora partnerships. Following these discussions, delegates had the opportunity to enjoy the hospitality events that were put on each evening courtesy of the many Conference sponsors. The relevant follow-up work with Government Ministries and Agencies following the Conference is being done by the High Commission.

Diaspora Day of Service – 18th June

The Diaspora Day of Service, which was held on 18th June, saw many UK delegates actively participating in

mentoring and other education activities at the Spot Valley High School, the Moneague Primary School as well as the Sam Sharp Teachers' College.

The UK Health Initiative Group, in collaboration with Jamaica National, carried out its Day of Service from 19th to 20th June, at the Percy Junor Hospital in Spaulding. Donations of equipment, including a cooker, refrigerator and medical supplies, complimented the physical work done – mainly painting of walls, planting of flowers and sprucing up other areas of the institution.

The JET-UK Board Elections – 5th November

The Jamaica Education Task Force UK, (JET-UK) held its Board elections on 5th November. The following persons were elected to the respective posts:

Dr. Lorna Cork – Chair
Mr. Seymour Mattis – Vice-Chair
Dr. Mark Richards – Secretary
Mrs Taneisha Westcarr – Vice-Secretary
Mr. Wilson Hylton – Treasurer

The other Board Members without portfolio are:

Mr. John Warren
Mr. Larry Simpson
Mrs. Elaine Powell

The JET-UK Board has a full programme of activities scheduled for 2016, in its bid to fulfil its mandate to contribute to the development of Jamaica's education sector.

JET-UK's Quiz Evening – 24th November

As part of the Group's Black History celebrations, a Quiz Evening was held on 24th November. The event was held at the High Commission and it was full to capacity as educators and other supporters turned up to test their knowledge of all aspects of Black History. Funds raised from this event will be used to assist various schools in Jamaica.

The Diaspora Health Initiative Group

The Diaspora Health Initiative group continues to raise funds to purchase Blood Pressure machines for Jamaica. Approximately 100 Blood Pressure machines have already been purchased.

One of the special Christmas projects for the Group was the provision of gift packages for various Infirmaries in Jamaica. The Group plans to give more gift packages throughout 2016 and in collaboration with Returning Residents.

Other Diaspora Health Initiative projects include collaboration with the Penta Foundation and the Ministry of Health on a HIV prevention/treatment for young children affected by the HIV virus. This is expected to be officially implemented in September 2016.

The Group also plans to expand its membership to ensure that more persons can be actively involved in its activities.

Visit of Government Agencies and Departments to the UK – November/December

Representatives of eight (8) Government Agencies and Departments visited the United Kingdom for the staging of Consular Surgeries from 26th-27th November in London, 30th November in Birmingham and 1st December in Manchester

The Agencies/Departments which visited were: The Registrar General's Department (RGD); Passport Immigration & Citizenship Agency (PICA); National Land Agency (NLA); Jamaica Customs; Administrator General's Department (AGD); Companies Office of Jamaica; Department of Co-operatives and Friendly Societies (Charities Authority) and Land Administration Management Programme (LAMP).

Hundreds of Jamaicans made use of the opportunity to utilize the vital services that were provided by the representatives of the respective Agencies and Departments. Jamaicans at home were able to follow developments during the visit as Mr. Dervan Malcolm of Power 106 was also present to provide media coverage of the visit.

The feedback from persons who benefitted from the services has been positive and Jamaicans in the Diaspora look forward to having future visits from these Agencies/Departments.

REGGAE MONTH AT THE HIGH COMMISSION

A panel discussion to mark the 70th anniversary of the birth of Bob Marley was held at the High Commission in February.

Professor and Senior Lecturer in Media Studies and Sociology at the Open University, Dr. Jason Toynbee, said of the late Jamaican Reggae legend, 'Marley is indeed an emblem of resistance of the domination of international capitalism and imperialism.'

Drawn from the music industry and academia, the panel also comprised singer and Marley's songwriting partner, Delroy Washington; Dr Adrian Booth, a professor of photography who spent considerable time travelling with and photographing the singer; and Dr William 'Lez' Henry, a social anthropologist, author and former dance hall DJ, who has conducted significant research on the role of Jamaican music and culture in shaping black cultural politics in the UK.

High Commissioner H.E. Aloun Ndombet-Assamba, who opened the evening's proceedings, noted that Marley's journey was the embodiment of the way reggae is perceived throughout the world today. She encouraged the gathering to actively participate by sharing a broad range of perspectives.

Head of Music Production at the University of Westminster, Mykaell Riley - who was also one of the founding members of the West Midlands based Reggae band, Steel Pulse - moderated the debate.



Audience at Reggae Month

CARICOM DAY CELEBRATION

CARICOM High Commissioners, High Commission staff and members of the wider CARICOM family, joined the congregation of the St. Anne's Lutheran Church for the official celebration of CARICOM Day at a Church Service held on July 5 at the St. Mary-at-Hill Church in London.



COMMONWEALTH DAY SERVICE

H.E. Aloun Ndombet-Assamba, High Commissioner and Ms Sydonie James, intern at the Jamaican High Commission (right), following the annual Commonwealth Day Observance at Westminster Abbey on 9 March. Ms James was selected as the flag bearer for Jamaica and participated in the "procession of flags," which is one of the highlights of the annual Observance at Westminster Abbey.



DEPUTY HIGH COMMISSIONER ATTENDS FAREWELL EVENT FOR COMMONWEALTH SCHOLARS

Deputy High Commissioner, Mrs. Diedre Mills (left), joined Mr. Richard Middleton (centre), Chair of the Commonwealth Scholarship Commission, along with Jamaican Graduate Students at the 2015 Farewell Event for Commonwealth Scholars and Fellows at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) on July 9. The students from left to right are Mr. Karl McKenzie Chin, Ms. Terry-Ann Nicole Dennison and Mr. Kevon Stephenson.



EVENSONG AT WESTMINSTER ABBEY

The High Commissioner, H.E. Aloun Ndombet-Assamba, members of staff and members of the Jamaican Community, were special guests at the Evensong service at the Westminster Abbey in August to commemorate Jamaica's 53rd anniversary of Independence.

Each year, the High Commissioners of Commonwealth countries are invited by the Dean of Westminster Abbey to evensong on or close to their national day. The National Flag is flown on the day when the High Commission is represented at Evensong.

DEPUTY HIGH COMMISSIONER CONGRATULATES YOUTH LEADERS

Nicole Nation and Jerome Cowans were congratulated by Deputy High Commissioner, Mrs. Diedre Mills, at the reception for young people who received the inaugural Queen's Young Leaders Awards from Her Majesty The Queen at Buckingham Palace in June.

Twenty-two-year old Nicole, a medical student, is a disability ambassador, and was recognised for raising funds for projects to assist the disabled community, including a school for the hearing impaired. She provides online content for the Jamaica Observer's All Woman magazine.

Jerome, 25, has been recognised for co-founding the Leaders Endeavouring for Adolescent Development. The project provides personal development opportunities for young people.

Both Nicole and Jerome were among five young people from the Caribbean and 60 from across the Commonwealth, who received the honour, "for taking the lead in transforming the lives of others and make a lasting difference in their communities", the Queen's Young Leaders secretariat said.

The Queen's Young Leaders Programme recognises young people aged between 18 and 29 who are working to support others, raise awareness and inspire change.



HIGH COMMISSION HONOURS OUTSTANDING WOMEN

The High Commission paid tribute to four outstanding Jamaican women in the United Kingdom, at a reception to celebrate International Women's Day 2015, in March.

They were Mrs. Mavis Stewart MBE, a former nurse and midwife who is a founding member of the Association of Jamaicans UK Trust; Dame Karlene Davis, former General Secretary of the Royal College of Midwives; Ms. Beverly Johnson, Birmingham-based businesswoman and entrepreneur; and Rev. Rose Hudson-Wilkin, Chaplain to Her Majesty the Queen and Speaker of the House of Representatives.

High Commissioner Ndombet-Assamba said it was fitting way to commemorate International Women's Day. "It is our pleasure to be able to host this special reception to honour some of our outstanding Jamaican women here in the Diaspora, who have and continue to blaze a trail for so many others – both men and women – to follow," she said. The High Commissioner said that the four women were shining examples of what can be accomplished through hard work and perseverance.

"Each of these ladies has excelled and overcome their own challenges in their respective fields to be beacons of hope and inspiration for all generations. They have continued the long tradition of outstanding and unwavering commitment by members of the Diaspora who have not only come and settled in the UK, but have contributed significantly to this country's overall development," she noted.

She said that the High Commission was particularly proud of each of the honourees who has been an integral part of the work of the Mission.



High Commissioner with honourees and other specially invited guests

TRIBUTE PAID TO STUART HALL

The High Commission hosted a panel discussion to commemorate the life of Jamaican Professor Stuart Hall on Tuesday 10 February.

The High Commissioner, Her Excellency Mrs Aloun Ndombet-Assamba, welcomed the panellists and highlighted the Jamaican roots of Professor Hall. The High Commissioner also read a statement from Professor Hall's widow, Dr Catherine Hall, who said that her husband always remembered his Jamaican roots in his campaigns on behalf of the black British community.

Dr Cecil Gutzmore, who moderated the panel discussion, noted with sadness how Professor Hall's achievements have not received the public acclaim they deserve in the United Kingdom. One of the panellists, Professor Augustus John, suggested that British society was uncomfortable with the idea of a black man finding fault with British society. The other panellists were Ester Standford and Dr. Kehinde Andrews.



CHARITIES BENEFIT, STALWARTS HONOURED AT INDEPENDENCE CELEBRATIONS

Independence Church Service

The Mustard Seed Communities and the Pringle Home for Children shared more than £1,700 pounds (J\$310,00) collected during the Independence Service of Praise and Thanksgiving, organised by the High Commission as part of the festivities in the United Kingdom (UK) to celebrate Jamaica's 53rd anniversary of Independence.

The cheques were presented by Minister the Hon. A.J. Nicholson to Dawnette Lewis (Pringle Home) and David Silvera (Mustard Seed Communities) at the headquarters of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trader in New Kingston.

The Service, which was held at the Emmanuel Centre in Westminster London on July 25, was attended by nearly 1,000 Jamaicans and friends of Jamaica from across the UK. The sermon was preached by Professor Anthony Reddie, Professor Extraordinarius, the University of South Africa, and Coordinator for Community Learning, Bristol Baptist College.

It featured the Croydon Youth Choir, singer and musician Ms Harlem Ngyuem, and children of the staff and friends of the High Commission reciting the National Pledge. The children were dressed with hats and bow-ties reflecting the Independence fashion theme of Bandana and Denim.



Minister Nicholson hands over cheque



Section of the congregation



Children reciting the Pledge



High Commissioner, Mrs Gloria Leslie, Mr Wade Lyn CBE and his honorary consul in Birmingham

Independence Reception

The Independence Reception was held at the International Maritime Organisation (IMO) on the Albert Embankment in London on August 5. The occasion was used to present special awards to those members of the community who had contributed to the Diaspora.

Those honoured in this regard were Community Stalwart and former Community Relations Officer, Mrs. Delores Cooper, OD, who was recognised for the work done during her tenure as CRO. The opportunity was also used to present the Governor-General's Jamaica Diaspora Award for Excellence to Mrs. Gloria Leslie, founder of the Friends of the Noel Holmes Hospital and the West Haven Children's Home charity, who was unable to travel to Jamaica to collect her award.

In addition to the awards, the Independence Reception featured a special performance by the Praise Academy of Dance, renowned Jamaican singer JC Lodge and the Freedom Band UK.



Staff enjoying the Reception



High Commissioner, Mrs Gloria Leslie, Mrs Delores Cooper (OD), Mr Cooper and Mr Wade Lyn CBE

HIGH COMMISSION HOSTS SECOND LITERARY EVENT

The High Commission hosted its literary afternoon at the Waterlow Park in Camden in May, featuring four UK-based writers of Jamaican heritage.

It was Deanne Heron's second appearance at the event, reading entertaining excerpts from *Pardner Money Stories*, which featured fictional stories that take a whimsical look at the interactions of four generations of the extended Jamaican family in Britain. Newcomer Nicola Hall, who served in the British army for more than nine years and is a veteran of the Second Gulf War, read excerpts from *I Was a Soldier*, a story of one woman's life-changing journey from poverty to triumph over illness, and to the service of Queen and country.

Norma Gregory read from *Jamaicans in Nottingham*, a unique collection of personal and reflective interviews and articles that present narratives of life in that city, from individuals of Jamaican heritage who have contributed to the spirit and life of the city and its surrounding areas from the 1940s to the present. Dave Neita narrated poems from his spoken word album, *The Ultimate Love Collection of Love Poems PURE*, and *Manuscript of a Scripture Man*.

The event also featured an open mike section for budding writers, poets and singers to showcase their talent.

High Commissioner Aloun Ndombet-Assamba said the event was organised to showcase the rich diversity of the Jamaican culture and the country's rich tradition in literature and the spoken word. She also described it as a mini-Calabash, in reference to the international literary festival that is held biennially in St Elizabeth, Jamaica.

The event was sponsored by National Baking Company Distribution Ltd, Hansib Publications, Sackville Travel and the Jamaica Tourist Board.



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OFFICIAL VISIT TO BRISTOL

High Commissioner H.E. Aloun Ndombet-Assamba paid an official visit to Bristol in February, where she was hosted by the Bristol West Indian Parent and Friends Association.

High Commissioner Ndombet-Assamba met with the Lord Mayor of Bristol, Councillor Alastair Watson and Lady Mayoress Sarah Watson. She visited the Bristol Sickle Cell and Thalassemia Centre and several Jamaican-owned businesses in the city, including the Portland Cafe; Smith's Travel and Shipping; Jamaica Inn; Rice and Thing Restaurant; Urban Concept Barbers; First Choice Flowers; Georgians; BRB's Groceries and the Phoenix Social Enterprise.

The High Commission also hosted a Consular Surgery at the Malcolm X Centre, and High Commissioner Ndombet-Assamba and the team, including Mrs. Vivienne Siva, Miss Leonie Livingstone and Mrs. Veron Thorpe, were special guests on the breakfast programme on Ujima Radio, hosted by Ms Primrose Granville.

The High Commissioner spoke at a community meeting where she urged members of the community to ensure that they have regularised their status in Britain. She also urged persons of Jamaican heritage to become Jamaican citizens.



High Commissioner in Bristol

HIGH COMMISSIONER OPENS HEALTH AWARENESS FORUM

The High Commissioner officially opened the Health Awareness Forum hosted by Friends of the Caribbean, a local Milton Keynes charity, in May.

The Forum was convened against the backdrop of reports confirming that persons of African or Caribbean descent in the UK are more at risk for certain health conditions, including high blood pressure (hypertension), diabetes and prostate cancer.

Experts are not sure why these conditions are more common in people of African and African Caribbean origin, but they think it may be linked to diet and other lifestyle factors. Persons who attended the Forum were, therefore, able to get advice and information on a range of health issues.



High Commissioner with team in Milton Keynes

HIGH COMMISSIONER IN WATFORD

High Commissioner H. E. Aloun Ndombet-Assamba paid her first official visit to Watford in March, where she met with Watford Borough Council Chairman Councillor George Derbyshire at the Town Hall.

The High Commissioner was presented with a book about the history of Watford Palace Theatre and in return, Councillor Derbyshire received a book on Jamaica.

The High Commissioner also met with members of the Watford African Caribbean Association (WACA) – one of the oldest African and Caribbean voluntary organisations in the UK – during her visit. During a luncheon meeting at the United Friends Club (UFC) at Watford Elim Church Hall, the High Commissioner urged Jamaican to ensure that they regularized their status in the UK and to also become active participants in the political process.

She reminded the group that if they were not a part of the process and did not have, "a seat at the table," then decisions that affected their lives and community will be made without their input.



High Commissioner and Clive Saunders chair of the Watford Caribbean Association



High Commissioner and Councillor Derbyshire

HIGH COMMISSIONER PRESENTS CREDENTIALS IN CYPRUS

Her Excellency Aloun Ndombet-Assamba presented her credentials to President Nicos Anastasiades of the Republic of Cyprus, during a ceremony in February at the Presidential Palace, that formally confirmed her designation as Jamaica's High Commissioner to Cyprus.

Mrs. Ndombet-Assamba referred to the excellent bilateral relations between Jamaica and Cyprus, noting that the two countries, though vastly different in their historical evolution, share striking similarities. She said that the Government of Jamaica supports the independence, sovereignty, territorial integrity and unity of the Republic of Cyprus, as well as the peaceful settlement of the Cyprus problem through bicomunal talks under the auspices of the UN.

Receiving the credentials, President Anastasiades referred to the bilateral relations between both countries and expressed the view that there was a solid foundation on which to further promote cooperation in new areas such as tourism, trade and education. The High Commissioner also met with the Honorary Consul, the Foreign Affairs Minister of Cyprus, and the Head of Caribbean Affairs in the Mediterranean island.



High Commissioner with the President of the Republic of Cyprus



HIGH COMMISSIONER PAYS OFFICIAL VISIT TO CROYDON

High Commissioner, H.E. Aloun Ndombet-Assamba, paid an official visit to Croydon in October.

During the visit, she met with the Mayor of Croydon, Councillor Patricia Hay- Justice; Councillor David Wood; Councillor Alisa Fleming, Cabinet member for Children, Families and Learning; Councillor Toni Letts, Cabinet Member for Economy & Jobs; Deputy Leader, Councillor Alison Butler, Cabinet Member for Homes, Regeneration & Planning; Councillor Louisa Woodley, Cabinet Member for Families, Health & Social Care; and Nero Ughwujabo, chief executive of Croydon Black Minority Ethnic Forum.

The High Commissioner was also a special guest at the Black History Month celebrations at the White Horse Manor School, where there was a special welcome from the students, including a performance by the school's choir. The parents and some staff members prepared traditional Jamaican food, including ackee and salt fish, coconut drops and plantain chips.



High Commissioner with students of White Horse Manor School



High Commissioner and the Mayor of Croydon

THE MARY SEACOLE MEMORIAL ASSOCIATION ANNUAL WREATH LAYING CEREMONY

Mrs. Glenda Forde, the Chair of the Mary Seacole Memorial Association at the annual wreath laying ceremony at the grave of Mary Seacole on Saturday 9 May 2015.

The service was held in the Chapel in St Mary's Catholic Cemetery, Harrow Road, and Kensal Green. The sermon was preached by the Reverend Rudolph Gordon

The Mary Seacole Memorial Association was established, by Connie Mark, Shirley Graham-Paul and Vie Lawrence and since 1981 it has commemorated Mary Seacole's life and legacy with an annual wreath-laying memorial service, luncheon and lecture on the second Saturday of May.



MOBLIE BLOOD UNIT DONATED BY JAMAICANS IN THE UK

A mobile blood collection unit was donated to Jamaica's National Blood Transfusion Service in January. The then Minister of Health, Dr. Fenton Ferguson, said the Unit, which was the only in the island, would provide access for blood donors who are not be able to go to the ten fixed blood collection centres.

Birmingham-based RAFFA was responsible for the acquisition of the mobile unit and worked with the Angel Foundation, the High Commission, and other groups, such as Grace Foods UK and JLB International (Shipping) Limited, to get the unit to Jamaica. Kiwanis Clubs in London and Jamaica raised funds to support the day-to-day operations of the mobile unit.

The efforts of the various groups showed early signs of success, with some 58 units of blood collected at Jamaica National's Kingston office on the first day.



HIGH COMMISSION HOSTS SPECIAL TRIBUTE TO MISS LOU

The High Commission hosted a special tribute to the late cultural icon, Hon. Louise Bennett-Coverley, OM, OJ, MBE, in October.

“Miss Lou has had a very profound impact on Jamaica and Jamaicans across the world,” said High Commissioner Aloun Ndombet-Assamba, noting that she is credited with raising the appreciation and mainstream acceptance of Jamaican Patois through her poetry, stories and music. “Those of a certain age will remember waking up on Saturday mornings for ‘Ring Ding’. Those a little older will remember the many Pantomimes and the long running popular ‘Lou and Ranny’ radio show, where she and another legendary Jamaican, Ranny ‘Maas Ran’ Williams, kept us glued to the radio and laughing at their many adventures,” she reminisced.

The event in London featured internationally renowned poet and musician, Linton Kwesi Johnson, OD; Dona Croll and Luke Williams, who all gave their ‘reflections’ on how Miss Lou influenced them and their careers.

JAMAICAN AMONG THE QUEEN’S YOUNG LEADERS FOR 2016

It was announced in December 2015 that Tijani Christian, a 24-year-old Jamaican, was among 60 young people from across the Commonwealth being recognised as exceptional leaders in their community and who would receive a prestigious Queen’s Young Leaders Award.

Despite a difficult childhood, Tijani excelled at school and went on to win many awards, including the Prime Minister’s National Youth Award for Excellence for 2013 in the category of Leadership. He currently spearheads an initiative called Plant Jamaica, a non-governmental organisation (NGO), which aims to promote sustainable livelihoods through community farms.

The NGO was formed to encourage people to grow healthy produce for their families, as well as to keep their communities clean and tidy. Mr. Christian is also trying to launch an initiative called Commonwealth Emerging Leaders Connect, which will bring young leaders from across the Commonwealth together to share knowledge and ideas.

The Award, which will be presented in London by Her Majesty The Queen in June 2016 and is part of The Queen’s Young Leaders Programme, celebrates the achievements of young people who are taking the lead to transform the lives of others and to make a lasting difference in their communities.

As part of the Award, winners will receive bespoke mentoring and online learning provided by the University of Cambridge. Award winners will attend a week-long residential programme in the UK in June 2016.



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ANNUAL SCHOOL CHRISTMAS PROGRAMME

The High Commission hosted more than 60 students and teachers at its annual Jamaican Christmas programme for schools in December.

A special feature of the day was Christmas reflections and a-sing-along by staff of Victoria Mutual, led by the Chief Overseas Representative, Leighton Smith; and a baking demonstration by nine year old third generation Jamaican Ilana Rennalls. High Commission staff members Naltia Crossfield, Ann Marie Pinkney and Leford Hanchard taught the children traditional Christmas songs. High Commissioner, Her Excellency Aloun Ndombet-Assamba who formally welcomed the students and their teachers, spoke of the importance of Christmas to Jamaicans.

Each year, the High Commission hosts a special event for school children to give them a taste of Jamaican life, culture and heritage, and to highlight outstanding Jamaicans, especially those living in the United Kingdom.



HIGH COMMISSION SUPPORTS CHRISTMAS CELEBRATIONS FOR SENIORS IN WOOD GREEN



The High Commissioner, H.E. Mrs. Aloun Ndombet-Assamba, was a special guest at the annual Christmas Lunch for senior, hosted by the Wood Green New Testament Church of God on Thursday December 17.

High Commissioner Ndombet-Assamba commended the Wood Green NTCG for hosting this annual event noting that it fostered good relationships within the community and provided fellowship to many.

The High Commissioner said that the Mission was pleased to have been able to assist with the special gift packages that were handed out to all those in attendance. She also commended the Church and all of the volunteers who worked hard to ensure that the Christmas Luncheon was a success.

HIGH COMMISSIONER RECEIVES JOE BIDEN CREDIT UNION AWARD

High Commissioner, Her Excellency Aloun Ndombet-Assamba, was presented with the 'Joe Biden Award for Development Educator of the Year 2014-2015' for the Caribbean.

The award was made at the International Credit Union Leadership Development and Education Foundation's awards Ceremony in London in November. The High Commissioner was nominated by the Caribbean Confederation of Credit Unions.

Mrs. Ndombet-Assamba, who was also the special guest speaker at the award function, spoke of her lifelong connection with the credit union movement, which saw her becoming a credit union member as a teenager, and her career at the City of Kingston Credit Union (COK), where she joined as legal officer and rose to the level of General Manager in 1994, a post she held until 2002.

She also spoke of the integral role that credit unions continue to play in the social and economic development of Jamaica, noting that 60 percent of the adult population or more than 920,000 Jamaicans were members of a credit union.

The award is named after the US Vice President in recognition of his support of the credit union movement. In July the High Commissioner received the 2015 World Council of Credit Unions Distinguished Services Award (DSA) at a special ceremony in Denver, Colorado.



Special reception to Mark Commonwealth Day 2015

The High Commission, in partnership with the Jamaica National Building Society (UK office), hosted a special reception on 12th March, to commemorate Commonwealth Day. In keeping with the theme, "A Young Commonwealth", the evening's activities placed the spotlight on young people, particularly the Jamaican Commonwealth scholars studying in the UK. In her opening remarks, the High Commissioner spoke of Jamaica's long and fruitful relationship with the Commonwealth Scholarship and Fellowship Plan and also suggested that the theme should be used as an opportunity to re-energise young people in all things Commonwealth. The Commonwealth Secretary General H.E. Kamallesh Sharma, brought remarks and Ms. Paulette Simpson, Senior Manager Corporate Affairs and Public Policy, Jamaica National UK Office addressed the gathering. Two Jamaican Commonwealth scholars also spoke. The Reception was attended by members of the diplomatic corps, officers and staff of the Commonwealth Secretariat and Commonwealth Foundation, the Commonwealth Youth Award winners for 2015, Jamaican Commonwealth scholars, representatives from Jamaica National, members of the Jamaican community and staff of the High Commission.



The Commonwealth Countries League Fair

Once again, the staff and friends of the High Commission mounted a stall at the annual Commonwealth Fair hosted in November by the Commonwealth Countries League. The Fair is held annually to raise funds to sponsor the secondary school education of girls throughout the Commonwealth, including Jamaica. The continued support of the Jamaican community, through their attendance at the Fair and donation of their time and products for sale, is greatly appreciated.



High Commission Hosted Three Citizenship Ceremonies In 2015

The High Commission hosted three Citizenship Ceremonies during the year and more than 100 persons were presented with their certificates to celebrate the fact that they had chosen to confirm their Jamaican citizenship. Victoria Mutual partnered with the High Commission to host the ceremonies.



Deputy High Commissioner Mrs Delores Cooper and Director Victoria Mutual with some of the children who became citizens

Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting

The Honourable Minister of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade, Senator the Hon. A. J. Nicholson, QC, headed Jamaica's delegation to the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) in Malta in November. The Leaders issued a Statement and a Communiqué, covering peace and security, sustainable development, migration, small states issues, young people and the continued renewal of the Commonwealth. Cognisant of the impact of climate change on all our countries, the Leaders also issued a special stand-alone Statement on Climate Action. CHOGM 2015 provided the platform for the launch of a number of Commonwealth initiatives, which are of interest to Jamaica. These include, the Commonwealth Climate Finance Access Hub and the Commonwealth Trade Finance Facility. The United Kingdom will host the next Commonwealth Heads of Government meeting, scheduled for 2018.

International Maritime Organization Assembly

The Honourable Minister of Transport, Works and Housing, Dr. The Hon. Omar Davies, headed Jamaica's delegation to the 29th Session of the IMO assembly in London in November. The Assembly is the highest governing body of this 171 member strong Organization. The agenda for the meeting covers a wide cross section of issues including, the work programme, budget and financial arrangements of the IMO. It is also during the Assembly that the 40 member Council is elected during a keenly contested campaign. Regrettably, Jamaica was not successful in its bid for re-election on this occasion.



Minister Davies with the Jamaican delegation and the Deputy High Commissioner

HIGH COMMISSION HOSTS TALK ON MARCUS GARVEY FOR BLACK HISTORY MONTH

The High Commission hosted a presentation by music and history consultant Kwaku on the 'Global Lessons From Marcus Garvey & The UNIA 100 Years On'

The event which was well attended was held in late October. A special presentation of books and other resources Black History material was made to the High Commission.



In the photo from L-R: BTWSC co-ordinator, Awula Serwah, Kwaku and Deputy High Commissioner Mrs Diedre Mills.

CHEVENING SCHOLARS VISIT HIGH COMMISSION

Six of the 11 Jamaican Chevening Scholars paid a courtesy call on the High Commissioner, H.E. Aloun Ndombet-Assamba and Deputy High Commissioner, Mrs. Diedre Mills in November.

Chevening Scholarships in Jamaica are awarded to outstanding emerging leaders to pursue a one-year Master's programme at any UK university. The scholarship programme provides a unique opportunity for future leaders, influencers, and decision-makers from all over the world to develop professionally and academically, network extensively, experience UK culture, and build lasting positive relationships with the UK. for more information on Chevening Scholarships please visit <http://www.chevening.org/jamaica>

HIGH COMMISSIONER H.E. ALOUN NDOMBET- ASSAMBA AND THE STAFF OF THE JAMAICAN HIGH COMMISSION

Seated from left to right: Ms Nordia Jackson; Ms Annmarie Pinkney; Ms Leonie Livingstone; High Commissioner, Mrs. Aloun Ndombet-Assamba; Deputy High Commissioner, Mrs. Diedre Mills; Ms Sophie Henry; Mrs. Juliette Dennison; Mrs. Inez Campbell

Standing from Left: Mr. Vajira Liyanage; Mrs. Naltia Crossfield; Mr. Aloysius Thomas; Mr. Leford Hanchard; Mrs. Annmarie Turner; Mr. Trevor Pinnock; Ms Angela Edwards; Mrs. Veron Thorpe; Mrs. Vivienne Siva; Mrs. Dawnette Mullings; Mr. Owen Letford; Ms Raquel Wilson and Ms Anita Morgan



SAVE THE DATE:

THE INDEPENDENCE SERVICE OF PRAISE AND THANKSGIVING

The Jamaican High Commission, on the occasion of Jamaica's 54th Anniversary of Independence, will host a special Service of Praise and Thanksgiving on Saturday, 30th July 2016, starting at 11 o'clock at the Emmanuel Centre 9-23 Marsham Street, London SW1P 3DW.

While every effort will be made to welcome as many Jamaicans and Friends of Jamaica as possible, the capacity for the venue is 1,000. Consequently, **seating will be on a first come first serve basis.**

Once the capacity of the Emmanuel Centre is reached, additional access to the building will not be allowed due to health and safety regulations.

Persons planning to attend the service are being asked to be seated by 10: 45 a.m. and to follow the instructions of the stewards and ushers. Please note that the doors of the Centre will close at 10: 55 a.m. to facilitate the prompt start of the service.

Your usual kind cooperation is requested.



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*Source: IRI UK Caribbean Food & Drink - Unit/Value Sales, Period: MAT 52 w/e 21st June 2014.



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