The re-launch of Jamaican Geographer as an e-newsletter provides an opportunity to reflect on how the Society’s newsletter has changed during the 40-year history of the Jamaican Geographical Society. So, it was with great interest and no little amusement that the archives were opened recently and fingers became grubby browsing the pages of our past.

“The Society’s first newsletter... was priced at one shilling, but was free to members.”

The JGS was formally launched in October 1966, a year after the Geography degree began on Mona campus. The Society’s first newsletter appeared in May 1967. It was priced at one shilling, but was free to members. It took the form of a neat, soft cover, 24-page booklet, and was free to members. It was produced by an editorial committee whose Chairman was John Macpherson, author of Caribbean Lands, the classic textbook first published by Longman in 1963, and used by generations of West Indian schoolchildren. That landmark first newsletter had some fascinating contents: a short article on the Kaiser Tobalski bauxite project in St Ann, an item on apartheid, and a document presented to the Ministry of Education by Dr Barry Floyd, Head of Geography at UWI. His recommendation was that all Jamaican schools should have a dedicated geography room, equipped with a list of 12 items, including a globe, wall maps, topographic sheets and aerial photographs, and a Gestetner machine for “the mass production of outline maps”.

The Gestetner, as it was fondly known, was widely used in those pre-photocopier days, to produce anything from field trip guides to postgraduate questionnaires. “Printing” involved a laborious process whereby stencils were cut, attached to a revolving inked roller, and printed sheets were “run off” by feeding blank pages through this infernal machine. It was a noisy, gloriously cheap process, but messy for the poor soul operating the machine. Yet, this method produced our newsletter for more than 20 years, blots and smudges included. Indeed, so important and nostalgic was this time-honoured process that some lecturers (who shall remain nameless) were still using the Gestetner to produce student handouts in the early 1990s.

But back to the newsletter. After the small format of the first four issues, John Fermor, a physical geography lecturer, took over as Chairman of the Editorial committee, and briefly enlarged the newsletter into a “quarto” size format. Then, a youthful Mike Morrissey burst on the scene as Editor in late 1970. Mike transformed the newsletter into a “foolscap” size format and his editorial enthusiasm went into overdrive. He immediately increased the frequency of publication to 9 issues per year, a feat neither repeated nor since even attempted by sane people. In those days the Society was very active, with monthly public lectures and talks, as well as the usual sprinkling of field trips. Geography teachers too were prominent among the membership and on the Council so the newsletter had much to communicate to its members. Later, Mike Morrissey put his editorial skills to further use as a founding editor of the journal Caribbean Geography, our regional journal first published in 1983, and in the publication of several Caribbean textbooks and atlases.

Brian Hudson took over as editor in late 1973. Brian was a geography and physical planning lecturer in the Department and another JGS enthusiast and stalwart. He produced seven issues in 1974, though over the next two years, the newsletter shrank in size and frequency into a more manageable op-
Last year’s committee organized slightly fewer events than the previous year. This was mainly due to the fact that many of the Council members were involved in organizing the 5th British-Caribbean Geography Seminar held in the Department of Geography and Geology in July. The conference, entitled “Global Change and Caribbean Vulnerability: Environment, Economy and Society at Risk?” was a resounding success with 32 papers presented, and participants from the UK, Holland, the USA and Canada as well Trinidad, Barbados Antigua, Nevis and Guyana. Nevertheless, the JGS hosted two panel discussions, two field trips and a Christmas Barbecue.

**Panel Discussions.** The first panel discussion focused on the environmental problems associated with the Yallahs fording and the plans in place to build a new bridge on the site. That discussion took place at the beginning of November and again attracted an audience of around 50 persons. This discussion proved to be very enlightening and offered a good opportunity for the various interest groups to engage in a topical discussion about the viability of the proposed plans.

The second and best attended panel discussion focused on the controversial issues surrounding the Cockpit Country and its boundaries (details on page 3).

**Field Trips and Hikes.** The Society hosted two field trips. The first was to the Goat Islands in the Portland Bight Protected Area in May and the second was to the Lower Yallahs Valley in November. The Goat Island trip entailed a journey by fisherman’s canoes up the Salt Island Creek/Black River through the mangroves, a stop-off at Great Goat Island and then on to Little Goat Island where there is an old abandoned USA air base from the Second World War. A search for old plantation-period ruins in the middle of the island proved hot and arduous. The Council extends sincere thanks to Peter Espeut and the Caribbean Coastal Area Management Foundation (CCAM) for facilitating the trip. The trip ended with a stop in Old Harbour where attendants feasted on fried and steamed fish.

**Barbecues.** The JGS has been able to successfully undertaken three fundraising Barbecues, in December 2004, 2005 and 2006. Each Barbecue attracted more than 100 patrons. The menu usually includes Barbecue Chicken and Pork, Vegetable Kebab and Christmas Salad. The JGS would like to offer a special vote of thanks to Ryan Ramsook for his unwavering support and contribution to the success of these events.

Kevon Rhiney, JGS Council Member

The Yallahs valley trip, held in mid-November, was a follow-up event to the panel discussion on the Yallahs fording. The trip was led by Rafi Ahmad who also prepared a detailed field guide for the group. The Yallahs Valley trip involved a visit to the spectacular landslide site of Judgement Cliff, the rickety bridges at Ramble, and a short walk to the intake of the Yallahs pipeline, which feeds the Mona reservoir. On the way back down the valley, the group stopped at Easington bridge where Paul Henry provided a briefing on the quarrying operations in the river bed, then to the fording and the site of several failed attempts to construct a road bridge. The trip like all others before it, ended with the customary and compulsory stop for red stripe and, this time, jerk chicken.

In Memory of Steve Bailey

Steve Bailey was both a member of the Geography Department and the Membership Secretary for the Jamaican Geographical Society. Steve’s PhD. research was on land degradation and small farming practices in northern Clarendon. He was expected to complete his degree this academic year (2006/2007) and take up the post of assistant lecturer in the Department. Indeed, we have lost a great individual, a brother and a friend. The Jamaican Geographical Society takes this opportunity to celebrate the life of a lost member. Society members will be aware of the tremendous interest and outpouring of tributes which were posted on the created webpage to honour the memory of our friend. The site can be visited at: [http://www.monainformatixltd.com/jgs/tribute.html](http://www.monainformatixltd.com/jgs/tribute.html).
The Cockpit Country Panel Discussion

The Cockpit Country is a rugged, largely inaccessible inland area of Jamaica, and the site of one of Jamaica’s largest forest reserves, boasting high levels of biodiversity and endemism. Due to these peculiarities, it has been proposed that the site be named a World Heritage Site. Despite all its uniqueness and international acclaim, the Cockpit Country has long been the target of many developments. Recently, the threat has been amplified under the guise of economic development through bauxite mining. Bauxite is said to exist in high quantities beneath the cockpits. Consequently, a Special Exclusive Prospecting Licence (SEPL) was granted to JAMALCo. This elicited the ire of the environmental stakeholders and Jamaica’s environmental watchdogs. The issue sparked intense debates locally and internationally and proved to be one of the most topical environmental issues.

Against this background, the Jamaican Geographical Society saw fit to convene a panel discussion on the matter. Its aim was to provide information on the geographical extent of the Cockpit Country, inform participants of the research that has been done on the area, and facilitate dialogue among stakeholders. The session was held on February 17, 2007 in the Inter-faculty Lecture Theatre on the UWI Campus, Mona. It attracted over 100 participants from various stakeholder groups, including Government, Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO), maroons, students and researchers.

Presentations. Three informative presentations were made. Prof. David Barker outlined some of the research that has been conducted on the Cockpit Country by the UWI, particularly the Department of Geography and Geology. Mr. Mike Schwartz, of Windsor Research Centre expounded on how the Cockpit Country was formed, and several bases on which the boundaries of Cockpit Country can be defined, including history, culture, geography and existing road networks. Dr. Parris Lyew-Ayee of Mona GeolInfomatics countered with how the boundaries of Cockpit Country could be defined using strictly geological and geomorphological characteristics, applying GIS technology.

Discussion. The presentations were followed by intense debates and discussions among the participants. Ms. Diana McCaulay of the Jamaica Environment Trust (JET) affirmed the commitment of Cockpit Country Stakeholder Group (CCSG) to oppose mining in the Cockpit Country. Mrs. Althea Johnson-Herron of the Ministry of Tourism, Entertainment and Culture suggested that one possible strategy to hinder mining in the area was to have it declared a World Heritage Site. She outlined the process and encouraged the CCSG to follow through with it.

Colonel Harris N. Cawley of the Accompong Maroons spoke of the historical and cultural importance of the Cockpit Country to Jamaica, and particularly to his people. He explained that the area was the source of their life and the most critical constituent of their livelihoods. He invoked fear in some of the listeners by noting that mining the area would disturb the spirits of the ancestors, who he heard on occasions in the depths of the forest.

He spoke with passion, articulating the Maroons’ unflagging spirit to fight for their land if necessary, as they did against the British in the eighteenth century.

The Honorable Victor Cummings, Junior Minister in the Ministry of Agriculture and Land, sought to allay fears by announcing that the Ministry had no intentions of issuing licenses to conduct mining in the Cockpit Country. This admission was met with cynicism by the participants who preferred to adopt a “wait and see strategy”. Until then the stakeholders planned to strengthen their public education mechanisms to sensitize the political directorate and the public of the value of the Cockpit Country. They pledged to maintain their advocacy against mining in the area until the government abandons all thoughts of destroying the valued resources of the region and develop strategies to promote the sustainable development of the area.

Ayesha Constable, JGS Council Member

Upcoming JGS Events

Panel Discussion

The Jamaican Geographical Society Panel Discussion on "Megastructures - Tourism", scheduled for Thursday 29 March, has been postponed due to the unavailability of key participants. The Society hopes to reschedule the discussion for early next semester.

Hike!

The well-anticipated Cockpit Country Hike will take place Friday, May 25, to Sunday, May 27, with an overnight stay at ‘Last Resort’ field station near Windsor. We will see several cockpits, and a nearby waterfall.

JGS members: $5,000. Non-members: $6,000.
The JGS in Pictures

The *Jamaican Geographer* has had a long hiatus, but the JGS has been out and about. The Gestetner may have retired, but the cameras have still been clicking!

- A Fieldtrip or a beach lyme? Does it really matter? (Goat Island, May 2006).

- Maps were presented to the Moore Town Maroon Community during the JGS' visit in May 2004.

- A spectacular view of the Nanny Falls, caught during the JGS trip to Moorre Town, Portland in May 2004. Isn’t it breathtaking!!!!!

- Dr. David Dodman, JGS council member struts into the water Point (JGS hike along the St. Thomas coast).
A thrilling boat ride was had during the JGS trip to Goat Island, Portland Bight (2006).

A portion of the Rio Grande Valley.

Professor Ronald Young “rapping” with fellow council members while observing the spectacular Grand Ridge of the Blue Mountains (JGS hike to Cinchona Gardens).

Rafi Ahmad shares information on the landslide at Judgment Cliff during the JGS’ guided tour of the Yallahs Valley (November 2006).

Members of the UWI Geographical Society picnicking at the Cinchona Botanical Gardens during a JGS hike.

Discovering a new fruit in the Yallahs Valley (JGS hike, November 2006).
Mobility and Migration: Exploring Transnationalism in the Context of Jamaica

In recent years, discussions of migration, transnationalism, and community have had a growing presence in efforts to understand changing social inequalities and cultural identities. These discussions are especially relevant when exploring how we understand links across the globe and how Jamaica fits within them. This is particularly significant when addressing migration, mobility, and identity, and in light of the Jamaican government’s recent policy emphasis on Jamaican residents overseas and return residents. Through an analysis of interviews, immigration policy, media images and community organization strategies, this research project—funded by a Mona Campus Research Fellowship, a UWI New Initiative Grant, the American Geographical Society, the Association of American Geographers, and a Global Partnerships Grant—examines how concepts of mobility, transnationalism, and community have been intertwined to create very particular cultural geographies. More specifically, I focus on the experiences of Jamaican migrants to the UK (London), US (New York, Miami), and Canada (Toronto) in order to examine how individuals negotiate international moves and the maintenance of community ties in different locales. I also explore why and how some migrants decide to stay in their destination country while others decide to return to Jamaica.

As part of this project over 120 interviews with Jamaican migrants and community leaders, media practitioners and writers, have been conducted and filmed providing a broad range of information for the production of a documentary, *Ackee, Burgers, and Chips: An ABC of Jamaican Migration*, and an accompanying book, *Traveling Home: Diaspora Dreams and Stories of Jamaican Migration* (both of which are currently in progress). Interviews in Jamaica were also broadened to include fiction writers whose work directly addresses migrant experiences, including Commonwealth Award winner, Velma Pollard, and Orange Prize winner, Andrea Levy.

Memories of home, and of the initial period of arrival in a new destination, are important for many of the Jamaicans who have been interviewed during this project. By consciously remembering these experiences people engage with awkward, exciting, and sometimes difficult parts of their own personal geographies, and in ways that locate their experiences, who they have come to be, and the new places and ties they have created. These ongoing acts of negotiating place are also about negotiating changing forms of citizenship—many participants have dual Jamaica-US, Jamaica-UK, or Jamaica-Canada passports—with Jamaica signifying a “spiritual” citizenship, or a reluctance to relinquish a loyalty to the island, while the US, UK, or Canada identification may symbolize longevity or legal security. Indeed, the process of filming and editing the choice of locations utilized has been an important part of creating a narrative of Jamaican citizenship: the film locations have largely been selected by participants—e.g., at home, at community meetings, or in coffee shops—but in a way that I hope represents the diversity of Jamaican experiences in transnational urban spaces.

Dr. Susan P. Mains, Lecturer, Geography, UWI-Mona

The JGS at the AAG

Four JGS Council Members recently returned from the 2007 Annual Meeting of the Association of American Geographers (AAG) held in San Francisco. Professor David Barker, Dr David Dodman, Kevon Rhiney and Chanelle Fingal participated in a panel on ‘Agriculture and Trade in the Caribbean.’ Dr. Susan Mains chaired and presented in a session entitled ‘Moving: Mobility, Identity, and Changing Spaces.’ In addition, Soyini Ashby was awarded the Annual Research Grant Award for Masters Students from the AAG’s Cultural Geography Specialty Group. Over 3,000 sessions on all aspects of the discipline were presented at the conference. Almost a quarter of attendees were from outside of the United States.

Whilst in San Francisco, the Council members explored some of the physical, cultural and historical geography of the area. A memorable evening was spent in Chinatown (the oldest in the USA), and there was also an interesting trip to the wine country of the Sonoma and Napa Valleys.

Dr. David Dodman, Vice President, JGS

Dr. Susan P. Mains

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Tourism Geography

Geography students are often asked: What can you do with a degree in geography? Geography is such a diverse subject, integrating the social and physical sciences, that there are actually many fields one can enter with a geography degree that the average person may not know. Ever heard of tourism geography?

How does tourism fall under geography, one might ask? Well, the answer is obvious: geography is about places, and tourism is about selling places (i.e. tourist destinations) to holidaymakers (who come from places too). Tourism links places together through the movement of people, goods, services, ideas and money over space; a spatial phenomenon that fits squarely in the domain of geography.

Our first instinct may be to think of tourism geography as producing maps, brochures, travelogues, and tours. Tourism geography is about much more. Stephen Williams’ 1998 book, Tourism Geography, describes the discipline as one that “explores the factors that have encouraged the development of both domestic and international forms of tourism, highlighting ways in which patterns of tourism have evolved and continue to evolve.” The journal Tourism Geographies, describes tourism as a “place process and a spatial phenomenon” that “transforms the environment of… places in ways that are distinct from non-tourism processes,” making it worthwhile to study tourism geography as a discreet sub-discipline.

Tourism is a major factor that both influences and is influenced by changes in the natural environment, and the political and socio-economic landscapes, at a variety of scales: international, national, regional, local and individual. Tourism influences how natural, man-made, rural and urban systems interact with each other. It affects how places are perceived, and influences people’s ideas of their identity in the places where they live and travel.

Tourism geography draws on other perhaps more recognized branches of geography. It involves economic geography, because tourism is an industry. It engages with the field planning in dealing with regulating development and promoting sustainable forms of tourism. Planners are concerned with the carrying capacity of tourist destinations, the economic and social impact of the construction of hotels and other facilities for tourists, and how the benefits of tourism accrue to the local population. Sustainable tourism is a particularly hot topic. Agricultural geography is involved too, as tourism impacts domestic food production and domestic food markets at destinations.

However, tourism does not only involve consuming the obvious commodities like food, and hotel packages; destinations themselves are sold as commodities through media images, and even the literal reshaping of the landscape to make a place marketable. This alters the way the place is experienced not only by tourists, and residents. Sex and sexuality are also influenced by tourism. Tourist destinations often become places where tourists abandon the inhibitions that apply to them at home, and they are often exempted from those which apply to locals. Therefore, tourists tend to engage in more promiscuous behaviour, which promotes the spread of sexually transmitted diseases. Sex, human beings, and interpersonal relationships at tourist destinations also become commodified in the eyes of tourists, leading to the sexual exploitation of locals; in other words: ‘sex tourism.’

There are even more issues that students interested in tourism can explore through geography. Interested in learning more? Check out Critical issues in tourism: a geographical perspective, by Gareth Shaw and Allan M. Williams, and Destinations: cultural landscapes of tourism edited by Greg Ringer, both available in the UWI Main library.

Soyini Ashby, Secretary, JGS

From Gestetner to Internet (cont’d)

(Continued from page 1)

budget as Jamaican Geographer, professionally printed with an international serial number, ISSN 1017-4753. It was designed in a three-column page format and printed in two-colours. Typesetting was done by what was then state-of-the-art desktop publishing software, Ventura. The production process was done on campus, at the University Printery. The Society was fortunate to have the patronage throughout this period of Donny Miller, Manager of the UWI Printery. Donny never charged the Society for his typesetting services and even passed on his software skills to the Editor, yours truly. He ensured printing was within the Society’s modest budget. In this format, Jamaican Geographer enjoyed a successful run of 14 issues, ending in 1997.

Unfortunately, the Society could not maintain the momentum for the newsletter nor sustain its mode of production, so there was another gap in publication. To our credit, geography postgraduates Fatima Patel and Judy Rocke kept things going for a while and produced several issues of a photocopied, newsletter-style information sheet for members during the late 1990s, but thereafter the Society became dormant for a while.

Since coming out of hibernation three years ago, the surge of activity in the Society has built up steam for a re-launch of our newsletter. Not surprisingly, at the forefront are a new generation of younger geographers (our postgraduate students). The 21st century demands new ways of doing things since a newsletter reflects the times and technologies of the day. No more the grotty Gestetner. No more printed paper. Forward into cyberspace. As we recognize and thank past Editors and others for their selfless contribution to the newsletter’s success, we acknowledge the enthusiasm of the Council members who have stepped up to produce this, our first e-newsletter. Read on and enjoy, and more importantly, send us your news, views and photographs.

Mygeographyspace rules.

Prof. David Barker, President, JGS
The Faculty of Social Sciences of the University of the West Indies, Mona and the Caricom Caribbean Climate Change Centre are hosting a conference jointly under the theme:

“Climate Change Impacts on the Caribbean, with special attention to Tourism and Insurance”

June 15-17, 2007
8:30 am to 6pm (each day)
Venue: The Social Sciences Lecture Theatre, the Faculty of Social Sciences, UWI, Mona
(with web casting to selected sites throughout the Caribbean)

The Conference will feature papers on:
- Climate change and the Caribbean
- Climate change and tourism in the Caribbean
- Climate change and insurance in the Caribbean
- Climate change and public policy in the Caribbean
- Climate change, Sustainable Development and Civil Society
- International Community and Climate Change in the Caribbean

Chaired by Dr. Michael Witter, Head of Department, Department of Economics, UWI, Mona.

Contact: The Department of Economics, UWI Mona
Phone: 977-1188, Website: www.mona.uwi.edu/economics