

# *The Georgian Society of Jamaica*



## *Newsletter*

Vol. 8 No. 1, December 2003



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# Our Island Heritage

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE  
GEORGIAN SOCIETY OF JAMAICA

## Clermont Estate, St. Mary, Jamaica

by Marguerite Curtin



In the year 1817 Clermont property in St. Mary was listed as being owned by the estate of Patrick Lynch, deceased. On the property were 130 slaves and 240 stock. Another property, Bellfield, which had 422 slaves and 388 stock, was also part of the estate of Patrick Lynch. (In 1826 it is recorded as being in the receivership of J.H. Livingston.)

Robert Hume Gordon, the owner of Cromwell Estate, also in St. Mary, bought Clermont in

the 1820s and it is believed that the present great house was built at that time. The number of slaves on the estate had not changed significantly (139 slaves) but there was now less stock (218). See *The Jamaica Almanack of 1826*.

In 1840, shortly after the end of slavery (1838) the Gordon family sold the 840 acre "Clermont Pen" to J. Bell. At what point Clermont again changed hands has not been ascertained, but in

*Cont'd on pg. 3*

## THE PRESIDENT'S LETTER

*Dear Members and Friends,*

**A**s this is the last Newsletter for 2003, I take the opportunity to wish all a happy holiday season and only good for 2004.

My sincerest thanks go out to Pauline Simmonds and my dedicated team who have all worked so hard during the year without whom, I as president, could not function.

The highlight of the year was the visit of Dr. Pamela Beshoff and her team from the Friends of the Georgian Society U.K. in September. I was particularly happy to meet Pamela and the team to thank them personally and on behalf of the Georgian Society of Jamaica for their dedication to Georgian Jamaica and their generosity in donating so heavily to the restoration of the Falmouth Post Office. The Postmaster General, Dr. Blossom O'Meally Nelson, told me herself how pleased she was to meet the visitors from Britain and how well all went at the function.

My very special commendation goes out to Dr. James Parrent the chairman of the Falmouth Chapter of the Georgian Society of Jamaica for his total dedication, leadership and hard work in completing the project.

You would by now have received your tickets for the fund-raising brunch on Sunday February 22, 2004 at the Renaissance Jamaica Grande Resort and I urge you to sell all and ask Pauline for more. Please bring as many friends as you can as we so badly need the funds to repair Clermont House in Highgate.

I must also take this opportunity to remind members that the Society's financial year is January to December and I urge those whose subscriptions are outstanding to send in your payments as without funds, we cannot continue the work that is planned.

*With my very best wishes*  
*George Paria*

Fund-raising Brunch at the  
Renaissance Jamaica Grande Resort,  
Ocho Rios on Sunday,  
February 22, 2004 at 11:00 a.m.

This is an appeal to all members of the Georgian Society, island-wide, to make a very special effort to sell the tickets to our national fund-raising brunch, which were recently sent to you.

The back of Clermont House, as can be seen in the photograph elsewhere in this Newsletter, is urgently in need of repairs as indeed are other parts of the building. It is, therefore, necessary for repairs to the building to start without delay.

I am also appealing to members to donate new or good second-hand items to the stalls which will be located around the room in which the Brunch will be held. The stalls are, **ARTWORK/BOOKS/PRINTS, BRIC'A'BRAC, PLANTS T-SHIRTS and TOMBOLA/RAFFLE.** In addition, there will be an **ART AUCTION** and **GSJ Information Desk.**

Please send into the office your returns for tickets sold so that the amounts can be lodged to the savings account at the National Commercial Bank which is being used for the event (early returns will ensure the restoration fund earns some interest leading up to February 22, 2004)

shall look forward to seeing you in Ocho Rios

Pauline Simmonds  
Chairman,  
National Fund-raising Committee

### S.O.S.

All members are reminded to look out for old buildings which seem worthy of preservation/restoration and for any buildings which seem in danger of being wantonly destroyed.

All such information should be sent to our National Headquarters at Richmond Park Great House, 58 Half-Way Tree Road, Kingston 10 so that the appropriate action can be taken.

### Preservation/Restoration

Are you planning on restoring a house, saving a landmark or helping to revive your neighbourhood? Gain valuable information by joining The Georgian Society of Jamaica and support preservation/restoration efforts in Jamaica.

*Make preservation one of your  
blueprints for the future*

## Clermont Estate...

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1882 the property was owned by Charlotte Constantine and its 840 acres were still intact though only 50 acres were in pasture and pimento, 790 acres being in "wood and ruinate."

The Clermont property's well-kept grounds - beds of roses and sloping lawns - added to the charm of the Highgate area and of special interest were the imposing pillars at its gateway. Later, Clermont property was subdivided and the section with the great house purchased by two Quaker ladies, Sada Stanley and Mary White, who planned to live in it upon their retirement from the mission field.

In the early 1930s when it was decided by the Quaker and the Baptist denominations to merge their small boys' homes (the Swift Home in Buff Bay and the Purscell Home on Arnold Road in Kingston) Clermont Great House seemed to be the ideal spot for the new boys home. Successful negotiations between the American Friends Board of Missions and the two missionaries led to a satisfactory exchange of property.

On April 8, 1941, the Swift-Purscell Home was officially



Back of Clermont House

opened at Clermont great House. In her book, *The Fairest Isle*, Mary Langford tells us that on that occasion the public were invited to see exhibits of carpentry, cabinet work, and tailoring all done by the boys of the Home, who also received formal education on the ground floor of the great house, which was now the Clermont School.

## Kudos Corner



*Congratulations to the following:*

The Friends of the Georgian Society - U.K, the Postal Corporation of Jamaica and Falmouth Heritage Renewal for the splendid restoration of the Post office, Market Street, Falmouth

The Hart Group of Companies and Falmouth Heritage Renewal for the fine restoration of the former Baptist Mause, Market Street, Falmouth

Both projects were supervised by Dr. James Parrent.

Mr Desmond Leaky for the restoration of the Persian Water Wheel at Martha Brae, Trelawny.

Mr Dennis Seivwright for the upgrading of the Albert George Market, Water Square, Falmouth

## Restored Post Office - Falmouth



# ARCHITECTURE IN FALMOUTH -

## A Plea for Preservation

By the late T.A.L. Concanon

Enthusiasm in the Colonies for buildings in the Georgian expression was very much alive during the late 18th and early 19th centuries, when Falmouth came into being, a small town on the coast where an abundance of domestic buildings was created in a simple yet charming vernacular using classical elements adapted to local conditions. Similar types of town buildings were to be found elsewhere, particularly in Kingston, Spanish Town, St. Ann's Bay, Black River, Lucea and parts of Montego Bay, but the conception of Falmouth in its grid plan, and construction in stone, brick and timber seems to have resulted in a more complete and comprehensive small town with its own distinctive environment. Although much damage has been and continues to be done in the name of 'progress' resulting in the loss of more and more of its best pieces, Falmouth remains perhaps the only where 18th century Jamaica can still be felt, and to some lingering extent, seen in stone, brick and timber.

Falmouth still possesses a number of distinguished town houses built with an honest direct construction, with the typical and characteristic timber posts, beams, panels, sash or louvered windows and pitched shingled roof. Market Street has the most representative collection (alas, rapidly disappearing) followed by parts of Duke Street. In other sections of the town, the march of time has seen the graceful buildings of the 18th and 19th centuries give way to concrete and steel

structures, a sad but inevitable chain of events that, unless arrested, must lead very soon to the extinction of Falmouth as an architectural show-piece, the loss of a tourist attraction of immense potential, and the removal for all time of a valuable specimen of the country's architectural heritage.

The efforts of the Georgian Society of Jamaica to ensure permanent preservation of Falmouth's unique collection of 18th and 19th century architecture are noteworthy, and should be commended to all citizens and to the Government, for their active support in the interests of the nation and for the benefit of all.

### National Councillors for 2003/2004 Annual General Meeting - July 06, 2003

Mr. George Faria	President
Mrs. D. Whitehorn	Vice-President
Mr. Geoffrey Pinto	Vice-President
Mr. Barrie Curtis	Hon. Treasurer
Miss P. Simmonds	Hon. Secretary
Miss Joyce Chang	Chair. - Kingston Chapter
Mr. Paul Dadd	Chair. - St. Ann/Mary Chapter
Mr. George Palmer	Chair. St. James Chapter
Dr. James Parrent	Chair. Falmouth Chapter
Mrs. Norma Benghiat	
Mr. Don Drayton	
Mrs. Sylvia Paul	
Mrs. Annabella Proudlock	
Mrs. Wanda Stephenson	
Mr. Peter Williams	
Ex-Officio Member	
Dr. Pamela Beshoff, President	
Friends of the Georgian Society, U.K.	

### NEW MEMBERSHIP FEES EFFECTIVE JANUARY 2004

Decision of National Council on July 06, 2003

Supporting Corporate Member	-	US\$5,000 per annum
Corporate Member	-	\$2,500 per annum
Ordinary Member	-	\$500 per annum
Pensioner	-	\$200 per annum
Student Member	-	\$100 per annum
Overseas Member	-	£10 or US\$20 per annum

*NB: The society's financial year is January - December so early renewal of your membership fees would be greatly appreciated.*

**THE GEORGIAN SOCIETY OF JAMAICA**  
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