



Jamaica and tourism industry tackle Air Passenger Duty tax in London

Jamaica's Prime Minister Bruce Golding, the island's tourism Minister, Edmund Bartlett, and a delegation comprising the acting Secretary General of the Caribbean Tourism Organisation, Hugh Riley, the Director General of the Caribbean Hotel and Tourism Association, Alec Sanguinetti, and the Chairman of the Jamaica Tourist Board, John Lynch, visited the UK from 16-19 June for a series of meetings regarding the proposed changes to UK

Air Passenger Duty (APD).

This is a duty that the UK currently imposes on all passengers departing from UK airports. In the case of the Caribbean and all non-European destinations it is presently set at £40 (US\$62) on an economy (coach) ticket. The tax was designed to account for aviation's impact on the environment but to date no one can show how the £2 billion (US\$3.1 billion) that is collected is being used to this end.

Last November the UK made known that it planned in the context of its annual budget a number of significant changes by introducing distance-related banding. For the Caribbean they proposed that anyone travelling in coach from the UK will pay 25 per cent more (US\$ 112 or £50) from 1 November 2009 and 87 per cent more (US\$ 117 or £75) from 1 November 2010. Higher rates apply in Premium Economy, Club and First.

Extraordinarily, the tax is to be levied in a manner that is discriminatory 'for reasons of administrative ease' and will give preference to the United States over the Caribbean by determining that all of the US (even Hawaii) is 'closer' to London than all of the Caribbean. Not only will this place the Caribbean at a disadvantage over destinations such as Florida, but will also result in ticket prices for the Caribbean Diaspora in Britain increasing significantly; making the frequent travel by family and friends hugely more expensive.

Meetings with Peers and MPs

As part of an intense programme coordinated by the Caribbean Council, the Prime Minister and the delegation met with Peers at a meeting hosted by Lord Grocott and chaired by Baroness Amos. The Jamaican leader then went on to meet in Parliament with an all party group of MP's representing constituencies with significant numbers of voters from the Caribbean Diaspora. The meeting with MP's, which was chaired by Diane Abbott MP (pictured) focussed on the discriminatory aspects of the APD legislation and the need to identify ways to re-band the Caribbean so that it was not taxed at a higher level than the US.



During the meetings, the delegation argued that the proposed structure of the APD, in which countries are placed in charging bands determined by the distance of their capital city from London, was discriminatory, in that it favoured large developed countries over smaller ones.

A consequence of the meeting is that MPs are expected to table an amendment supportive of the Caribbean interests when the bill containing the measure goes back to Parliament on July 7/8

Following the Prime Minister's return to Jamaica, the delegation met with travel industry leaders including: Jim Forster, British Airways' General Manager Regulatory & Government Affairs; Andy Cooper, Head of Business Development and Consumer Affairs ABTA & FTO, and the Head of the World Travel & Tourism Council, Jean-Claude Baumgarten to discuss the impact of the increase in APD on the travel industry. Minister Bartlett met separately with Conservative MP Greg Hands, who has recently been critical in Parliament of the banding scheme and is supportive of the Caribbean's case for change.

Commenting after his meetings, Minister Bartlett said: "The increased tax is inherently unfair and not the least bit 'green'". "The structure of APD as an environmental tax suggests that the impact of a flight to Jamaica or Barbados is greater than one to Miami, Los

Events Diary

15-26, 2009
Cuba Libre Photo Exhibition, London

25 June, 2009
The Leasing of Guantanamo Bay, London

27-28 June, 2009
Cuba50 Festival of Cuban Culture, London

1 April – 31 July, 2009
Living Ancestors Exhibition, London

6 - 10 July, 2009
International Conference on the Environment and Sustainable Development: Creating Awareness to Save the Planet, Havana, Cuba

For information on any of the above events please contact
admin@caribbeancouncil.org

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In 2009, Virgin Atlantic celebrates 25 years of flying. In this time it has become the largest scheduled airline between Europe and the Caribbean, carrying 825,000 passengers on its ten Caribbean routes last year.

Virgin Atlantic flies to Antigua, Barbados, Grenada, Havana, Kingston, Montego Bay, St Lucia and Tobago from London Gatwick and to Barbados and St Lucia from Manchester.

For more details and to make bookings, please visit www.virgin-atlantic.com.

Angeles or Honolulu. Why should Caribbean countries with relatively low emissions suffer the effects of an environmental tax, in favour of the world's biggest polluter?"



The changes will particularly be felt by UK voters of Caribbean descent. The UK has a large and vibrant Caribbean community, many of whom visit friends and family in the region regularly so the fact that a family of four would have to pay £300 in tax alone under the proposed scheme will hit the Diaspora hard.

During the visit the delegation met with a number of Diaspora activists to discuss how they can assist in lobbying against the new scheme and spent time sensitising the media to the Caribbean's concerns.

The proposed changes to Air Passenger Duty are contained in the 2009 Finance Bill which is currently before the House of Commons.

(Top Picture: Prime Minister Golding; Middle Picture, left to right: John Lynch, Diane Abbott, Minister Bartlett, Alec Sanguinetti; Bottom Picture, Hugh Riley)

CBBC helps place Interns from University of the West Indies

The CBBC is working with the Alumni Division of the University of the West Indies to assist them to find quality 6-8 week work placements with companies in the UK. The candidates are all recent graduates of the University of the West Indies and have been shortlisted via a competitive process for the Universities Alumni Apprenticeship Programme. They come from a variety of degree disciplines including law, economics, political science, banking and finance.

Companies are not normally expected to pay any formal salary to the interns however, where possible, it is asked that they assist in assisting with in-country day to day travel and meal costs. Any assistance with finding accommodation is also much appreciated.

UWI currently have three graduate candidates who are interested in undertaking a placement either in London or Birmingham this summer. Two of the candidates have a BSc in Banking and Finance; the third candidate has a BSc in Management Studies (Accounting).

Any company that would be interested in learning more about this opportunity, or who would like further information about the candidates, should please contact Chris Bennett chris.bennett@caribbean-council.org



Chris Bryant MP new Minister in the Foreign and Commonwealth Office with Responsibility for the Caribbean

Chris Bryant MP has been appointed as Parliamentary Under Secretary of State in the UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office. He was appointed Deputy Leader of the House of Commons in October 2008.

Chris was born in Cardiff in 1962 and brought up in Cardiff, Spain and Cheltenham. He read English at Mansfield College Oxford and Theology at Ripon College, Cuddesdon, before ordination in the Church of England in December 1986.

Following his election as Rhondda's MP in June 2001 he has served on the Culture, Media and Sport Select Committee of the House of Commons, as well as the Joint Committee of the Lords and Commons on Reform of the House of Lords.

From May 2005 to June 2006 Chris was the Parliamentary Private Secretary to the Lord Chancellor, Lord Falconer of Thoroton, then to Harriet Harman as Leader of the House of Commons from July 2007 to October 2008.

He is an Associate of the National Youth Theatre of Great Britain and a member of the Co-op Party, Amnesty International, Amicus and the Fabians. He speaks fluent Spanish and good French. He lives in Porth in the Rhondda Fach.

In his new position, the Minister will have responsibility for: Overseas Territories; South America; Caribbean and Central America; Australasia and Pacific; Consular policy; Olympics; Protocol; HR and Diversity; Public Diplomacy, including British Council and BBC World Service; and leading on Baroness Kinnock's business in the Commons, including Europe.



Cuba50 Festival of Cuban Culture 27-28 June, Barbican, London

The jewel in the crown of the Cuba50 Festival is a dazzling weekend of some of the world's best musicians and dancers direct from Cuba at the Barbican, London, 27 and 28 June.

Catch Los Van Van, Pablo Milanés, Yoruba Andabo and other major acts in two unique concerts for an exhilarating and unforgettable experience. During the day on the Cuba50 freestage - live music from

Changui de Guantanamo, Osvaldo Chacon, Tumbao Tivoli, Omar Puente and more plus Cuban dance workshops plus Cuba50 club night with Cuban hip-hop star Kumar. For more information please visit www.cuba50.org



CUBA LIBRE! A photography exhibition by Eleanor Marriott marking 50 years since the Cuban Revolution **15-26 June, Canning House, London**

In 2009 Eleanor Marriott travelled around Cuba photographing the island in order to capture the spirit of the place 50 years after its revolution.

Through her photographs Eleanor wanted to convey that Cuba is a land of educated, patriotic people full of warmth, vitality and pride. They are people living under extraordinary circumstances following the American embargo, who are still able to express a zest for life through their music, friendliness and general good humour.

Selected prints will be on display in the gallery of Canning House on London's Belgrave Square from 15 to 26 June. The exhibition is free and is open from 2-6pm Monday to Friday.

Cuba Libre! follows on from Eleanor's 'Journeys through Latin America' London exhibition in Autumn 2008. She will have a further solo exhibition at Bridewell theatre this July as part of the London Bridge Festival.

For further information please visit www.eleanormarriottphotography.co.uk



The International Institute for the Study of Cuba events in June

25 June: The Leasing of Guantanamo Bay, Dr. Michael Strauss (pictured), Centre d'Etudes Diplomatiques et Strategiques, Paris, 6.30pm, London Metropolitan University, London

In this seminar Dr Strauss will examine the critical factor underlying everything that has occurred at Guantanamo Bay: the century-old lease by which the United States controls this piece of Cuban territory. The talk summarizes how the lease came about, what it says, how it has functioned, why it still exists, and what some scenarios are for its future after the U.S. prison is shut down. The talk will explain how the arrangement allowed Guantanamo Bay to fall outside of the conventional legal frameworks of both the U.S. and Cuba, a feature that made the territory more valuable to the U.S. than its original use as a naval installation.

The seminar will be followed by a book launch and signing by Dr Strauss. Attendance at this seminar is free but please register with admin@acubastudies.org

Windrush Square

A new cultural landmark for Brixton Lambeth Council is to honour the first generation of African Caribbean settlers in Britain by naming a new pedestrian square in Brixton, Windrush Square. The first modern migrant black community arrived in Brixton in 1948 having sailed to Britain on the Empire Windrush and made the Brixton area their home.

Local residents, organisations and businesses were asked to choose a name for the new square. Two strong contenders emerged - Windrush Square and Roots Square. A portion of the area which will become the new square is already named Windrush Square, and this, with representations from local community groups including the Black Cultural Archives and the Brixton Society, established a preference for the name Windrush.

Brixton central square is currently benefiting from a multi million pound redevelopment under which two separate areas, the Tate Gardens and the existing Windrush square area will be joined together to create a new high quality space in the heart of the area. Work on the new square is due to be completed in Spring 2010, with the new space providing a focal point for the town centre and a much needed venue for community events.



Living Ancestors: A tribute in portraits and stories to the world's oldest woman and other Caribbean centenarian women

1 April - 31 July 2009, Museum of London Docklands

This display of portraits of women over the age of 100 from the island of Dominica, including the world's oldest woman Ma Pampo who was 126 years old when she was drawn. Accompanying the portraits are stories recorded by the artist, as she and the women elders got to know one another during the drawing process.

The display builds a bridge for the viewer between the ten women portrayed, and their mothers and grandmothers, who were enslaved and whose stories were never recorded. Living Ancestors is an acknowledgement and celebration of an enduring female lineage of resilience and resistance.

Artist and feminist activist Gabrielle Le Roux creates travelling exhibitions of portraits and stories which raise awareness about social issues and pay tribute to people whose social contribution goes unrecognised because of their gender, race, class or sexual orientation.