



**PUBLIC PETITION NO.**

**PE01585**

### **Name of petitioner**

Isabel Lennox on behalf of Flag Up Scotland Jamaica

### **Petition title**

Scottish Jamaican Relations

### **Petition summary**

Calling on the Scottish Parliament to urge the Scottish Government to create a formal bilateral partnership with Jamaica and make it a Priority Country for trade and international development as a means of acknowledging that trade with Jamaica has contributed significantly to the foundations of economic growth and prosperity in Scotland and recognising that Scotland should now seek to advance the prosperity of Jamaica.

### **Action taken to resolve issues of concern before submitting the petition**

A new initiative called Flag Up Scotland Jamaica was launched at the Glasgow Chamber of Commerce during the Commonwealth Games on 1 August 2014. The project is building on previous initiatives, such as the Memorandum of Understanding between Jamaica Promotions Corporation (JAMPRO) and Glasgow City Council and Glasgow Chamber of Commerce in March 2013. The initiative is seeking innovative ways to develop a closer partnership between Scotland and Jamaica, which will benefit both nations.

The project has received widespread support, including endorsement from the historian Sir Tom Devine, Hon Mrs Aloun Assamba, Jamaica's High Commissioner in UK, Sir Geoff Palmer of Heriot Watt University and Anne McLaughlin MP. The project has encouraged schools partnerships and through a Big Lottery Grant was able to bring two Jamaican artists, Yasus Afari and Claudius England to take part in the Glasgow MELA Festival and to visit schools, churches and prisons.

We have sought and gained the support of numerous MSPs. On 18 August 2014, Margaret Mitchell lodged Motion S4M-10824 to support the launch of this campaign and raise awareness of its aims. We have worked with William McGhie's son in forming our campaign. As such, on 21 November 2014, John Mason MSP lodged Motion S4M-11652 to commemorate the centenary of William McGhie's contribution as an example of the important links between Jamaica and Scotland and to acknowledge our work in promoting this. On 31 July 2015, Kenneth Gibson MSP lodged Motion S4M-13867 to recognise the achievements of this campaign and to show cross-party support for it in the Parliament.

### **Petition background information**

There are many special links between Scotland and Jamaica that warrant a formalisation of relations between the two countries and listing Jamaica as a Priority Country for Scotland:

### **Jamaican/Scottish surnames**

Many people would assume that the country outside of Scotland with the highest percentage of Scottish surnames might be Canada or New Zealand, but it is in fact Jamaica. It has been said that up to 60% of names in the Jamaican telephone directory are Scottish in origin and evidence from a list of the 30 most common surnames in Jamaica, which include Anderson, Campbell, Gordon, Graham, Grant, Malcolm and several others like Dixon and Miller, which are frequently Scottish, suggest that this claim may have some foundation. The original cause of this is that Scottish prisoners of war from both the Cromwellian wars and the Jacobite rebellions were exiled to Jamaica, as were some of the Covenanters. Many of these exiles were indentured servants working alongside slaves of African descent in the sugar plantations.

One of the most common surnames in Jamaica is Campbell and there are believed to be more Campbells per square acre in Jamaica than in Scotland. At the end of the eighteenth century, Colonel John Campbell from Inverary left the failed Darien experiment and came to Jamaica where he had a large family, which initiated the spread of the Campbell name all over the island. The frequency of other Scottish surnames is largely a consequence of the fact that during the period of slavery in the island, a large number of slave owners and overseers were from Scotland, particularly from the Lowlands.

### **Famous Jamaicans with Scottish names**

Robert Wedderburn and William Davidson were Jamaican born radicals in the early nineteenth century. The leaders of the Morant Bay Rebellion in 1865, Paul Bogle and George William Gordon, both had Scottish surnames. Mary Seacole (who was born Mary Grant) was a famous Jamaican/Scottish nurse during the Crimean War. Two famous athletes with Scottish names are the Olympic 100 metre gold medalist Shelly-Ann Fraser-Pryce and her fellow sprinter Veronica Campbell-Brown.

### **Scotland's economy and slavery in Jamaica**

The fact that Scotland played a huge part in Jamaica's slavery-driven economy is well documented. Edward Long, who was a planter-historian in the colony, claimed that: 'Jamaica, indeed is greatly indebted to North Britain (Scotland), as very nearly one third of the inhabitants are either natives of that country or descendants from those who were. Many have come from the same quarter every year, less in quest of fame than of fortunes'. Lady Nugent who visited Jamaica in 1801 stated: 'almost all the agents, attornies, merchants and shopkeepers, are of that country [Scotland] and really do deserve to thrive in this, they are so industrious'.

Between 1760 and 1830 the Scottish economy grew from one of the weakest in Europe to becoming one of the most powerful. The vast sheds where Jamaican sugar arrived still exist in Greenock today. Glasgow in particular has monuments, edifices and street names that honour those who participated in the slave trade.

Other industries in Scotland profited in unexpected ways. The import of linen to clothe slaves in Jamaica increased tenfold between 1765-1795 and at that time 62% of all Scottish linen was exported to the Caribbean. As Professor Tom Devine has commented: 'Nine tenths of all linen exported from Scotland went to North America and the Caribbean.... In the last quarter of the eighteenth century, the standards of living of countless working-class families in the eastern Lowlands of Scotland came to depend on the huge markets for cheap linen clothing among the slave populations of Jamaica and the Leeward Islands.'

Even Scotland's hugely profitable whisky industry has Jamaican links because in the 1820s William Shand started distilling whisky at Fettercairn in Aberdeenshire, using the experience he had gained of making rum on his brother's sugar plantations in Jamaica. For ten years he ran parallel experiments in Jamaica and Scotland

to improve his rum and whisky production.

### **Scottish place names in Jamaica**

Scottish place names abound in the island and include Aberdeen, Culloden (two places), Dundee, Elgin Town (two places), Glasgow, Inverness, Kilmarnoch (spelt that way) and Perth Town. Many slave plantations were given Scottish names including Monymusk, Hampden, Argyle, Glen Islay, Fort William, Montrose, Roxbro and Dumbarton. St Andrew is the parish with the highest population in Jamaica.

### **The Jamaican flag**

The only national flag apart from that of Scotland that includes the saltire is the flag of Jamaica. As the time of independence in 1962 approached, an initial design for the flag with three vertical stripes in green, black and gold was deemed unsatisfactory. A Presbyterian minister, Rev William McGhie, who had become a friend of the Prime Minister Alexander Bustamante, suggested that the national flag should reflect Jamaica's status as a Christian country and have a cross in it. At Sir Alexander's request, he drew out the Scottish flag substituting the blue and white of Scotland with the green, black, and gold of Jamaica. This design was accepted and the Jamaican flag has become one of the best known in the world.

### **Tartan Jamaica**

The Jamaican National Dress includes vibrant reds and yellows and a plaid-like design. This red and white chequered costume is often called the bandana costume, which is a mixture of African kente and Scottish tartan.

In the light of these significant connections, it is surprising that there is so little awareness in Scotland when compared with the much more frequent mention of links with countries like Canada, New Zealand and Malawi. One possible reason is that on the whole the Scottish contribution in Canada, New Zealand and Malawi is generally regarded in a positive light but clearly, although the Scottish involvement in Jamaica has some positive features, a major aspect was certainly the immoral trade in, and exploitation of, those of African descent during the period of the slave trade.

### **Call for action**

In order to further these aims, we are calling upon the goodwill of all people in Scotland to recognise our responsibility to do all we can to improve the lives of ordinary Jamaicans. Scotland's prosperity today, founded in part on its exploitation of Jamaica during the industrial revolution, means that it is 14th in the Human Development Index. However, Jamaica is now the second poorest Caribbean island after Haiti and is listed as 96th.

The Scottish Government has two Priority Country lists. The first - a list of Priority Countries for trade - consists of USA, Canada, Pakistan, India, China, Qatar, The United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia. The second list of Priority Countries is related to the International Development Fund and includes the following nations: Malawi, Zambia, Tanzania, Rwanda, Pakistan, Bangladesh and India.

We are calling on the Scottish Government to include Jamaica on both priority lists and create a formal bilateral partnership with Jamaica in similar terms to that already created with Malawi through the Scotland Malawi Partnership, which was launched in 2004. The aim of that partnership is "to inspire the people and organisations of Scotland to be involved with Malawi in an informed, coordinated and effective way for the benefit of both nations." Our hope is that with governmental support, Flag Up Scotland Jamaica will become a vehicle through which the objectives outlined in this petition can be achieved.

### **Unique web address**

<http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/GettingInvolved/Petitions/PE01585>

**Related information for petition**

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**YES**

**How many signatures have you collected so far?**

200

**Closing date for collecting signatures online**

20 / 11 / 2015

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