

**Monday April 29<sup>th</sup>**

I visited the NCH again and I went to see Hyacinth Edwards (Clapham Member Louise Gray's sister-in-law) and spent a couple of hours with her. I called at the house of Rev Cunningham (a relation of Clapham member Mrs Bailey) but unfortunately didn't get to meet him.



*Hyacinth Gray-Edwards at her home in Kingston*

In the evening we went for a meal at Usain Bolt's Restaurant - *Tracks and Records*.

**Tuesday April 30<sup>th</sup> - Friday May 3<sup>rd</sup>**

I travelled back from Kingston to Treasure Beach and stayed with Alida and V again for 3 nights before travelling to Montego Bay for my last 2 nights in Jamaica. I had plenty of time to relax and managed to swim in the sea a few times, to go shopping with Alida at Black River, and to eat well.



*Stony Hill Methodist Church*



*Coke Memorial Methodist Church*

### May 3<sup>rd</sup> - Sunday May 5<sup>th</sup>

I booked in to Toby's Resort - a hotel in Montego Bay - for my last two nights in Jamaica. When I arrived on the Friday I saw my first Jamaican rain and was unable to go out until the evening, when I walked around the tourist market.

I spent the Saturday, swimming in the pool and the sea, and wandering around the tourist area in town. I phoned Mr Shepherd (a friend of George and Ena Hudson) who lived in Runaway Bay, St. Ann, but was unable to arrange a meeting. I also phoned the Revd Keith Edwards, the brother of Beryl Grey (a Walworth member), and, although he was preaching elsewhere on Sunday morning, he arranged for his daughter, Elaine, to pick me up and take me to St. John's Methodist Church in Montego Bay for the Sunday morning worship. I gave greetings from Clapham to the Montego Bay Methodists at the church service and met Mrs Edwards after church.

Elaine kindly picked me up and took me to the airport to get my flight back to Heathrow. Leaving at 6.55 p.m., I arrived at Heathrow at 9.45 a.m. on May 6<sup>th</sup>.



*Mrs Edwards with daughter Elaine  
at St. John's Methodist Church Montego Bay*

### The Jamaican Experience

So, that's what I did in Jamaica, and I feel that I largely achieved what I had set out to do. I visited Trench Town, a Maroon village, Stephen Lawrence's grave, the NCH in Kingston and several Methodist churches. I also had the very useful list of names, which were given to me by Clapham's congregation and others that I knew from my previous London churches. There were twenty five names on my list of contacts and I managed to contact all of them, apart from two, one of whom had died some time before and another whose telephone number was incorrect. I saw 12 of the people or their family members and

spoke to the others on the 'phone. In addition to that I saw 4 people who were not on my list at all, yet were well known to me through my church connections in London.

I realized that Jamaica is a very large country - about 150 miles long and with a varying width between 21 miles and 52 miles - a total of 4,213 square miles (10,911 sq. km). Its size made transport a bit difficult or bit expensive - so I was grateful for the Clapham members' gift, which enabled me to take a few long taxi journeys. The idea of a London Jamaican knowing another person with Jamaican connections is about the same as someone living in Birmingham knowing someone from Portsmouth.

I observed a little of what it was like to be a 'returning resident' and the relationship that existed between Jamaicans who had never lived anywhere else apart from Jamaica and those who had been in the U.K., Canada or the U.S.A for a large proportion of their working life and had returned to Jamaica for their retirement years.

I learnt something about the reputation of the Trench Town gangs and the developments which to some extent had changed the environment there. I experienced Christian communities and heard about the decline in traditional church membership and the increase in the Pentecostal-type churches. I was made aware of the rich tradition of the Maroon communities, the developments in child care and the attitude towards children with special needs. Living in people's homes I experienced something of what day to day domestic life was like and, of course, I enjoyed the beautiful environment and the joy of a warm climate.

It was a good introduction to the country and an experience which will be a great enrichment to my pastoral contacts in London.



*Sunset at Treasure Beach*

### May 6<sup>th</sup> - May 19<sup>th</sup> - BACK IN ENGLAND (and WALES)

I had 13 days before my next journey out of the country and I used these days mainly to catch up with friends and family in London and visiting my sister in Wales. I managed to fit in a few domestic chores, cutting the hedge and sorting out the back garden plants. I also preached at Fernhead Road Methodist Church's Anniversary on May 19<sup>th</sup> and attended the Ordinands' Testimony Service at Wesley's Chapel on the same day. Elizabeth Osei, who had been a member at Clapham, was one of the Ordinands and Jacqui Esama-John, a member at Springfield, had been accepted as a Diaconal Candidate, so it was good to attend the service, which included them both.

### MAY 20<sup>TH</sup> -22<sup>ND</sup> - VISIT TO ROME

I went to Rome with 9 other clergy from Clapham and the Chair of Churches Together in Clapham. The Catholic Priest at St. Mary's, Clapham is a member of the Redemptorist Order and he led our pilgrimage. We stayed with the Redemptorist Community in Rome, which was near to the Vatican and our group included Roman Catholic, Anglican and Greek Orthodox clergy.



*Rev John Ohen, Clare Turner and I meeting with  
The Rev Dr. Ken Howcroft  
on the roof terrace of Rome's Methodist manse*



*This is as close as we got to The Pope*

We visited St Peter's Square and shared the Eucharist in St. Peter's. We joined the general audience and saw Pope Francis. We had a tour of one of the catacombs and I saw the Sistine Chapel and museum. Three of us visited the Rev Ken Howcroft at the Methodist Church in Rome.

It was my first visit to Rome and a very worthwhile experience, sharing the three days with Clapham colleagues.

