

A CRUISING GUIDE TO JAMAICA 2.0

by

Frank Virgintino



Flag of Jamaica

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A Cruising Guide to Jamaica 2.0 (2015)

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Figure 1. Jamaica – key to trans-Caribbean cruising

Jamaica is convenient to a passage north to the States and Canada. It is proximate to Cuba and the Hispaniola (Haiti and the Dominican Republic). Port Antonio is a very safe harbor with facilities; marina and haul out. From the south side of Jamaica it is a beam reach to make Colombia and points south. Jamaica is under visited by cruising boats. Whether you are going north or south, east or west, make a stop at Port Antonio (northeast corner of Jamaica). The stop is well worth your time in so many ways.

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Frank Virgintino

Dedicated to:

*All the cruising sailors who have a desire to sail far and wide.
May this guide provide you with the insights that will make
your trip through Jamaica an unforgettable experience.*



Figure 2. Map of Jamaica



Welcome to Jamaica!

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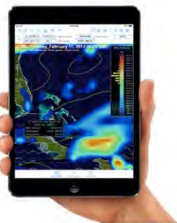
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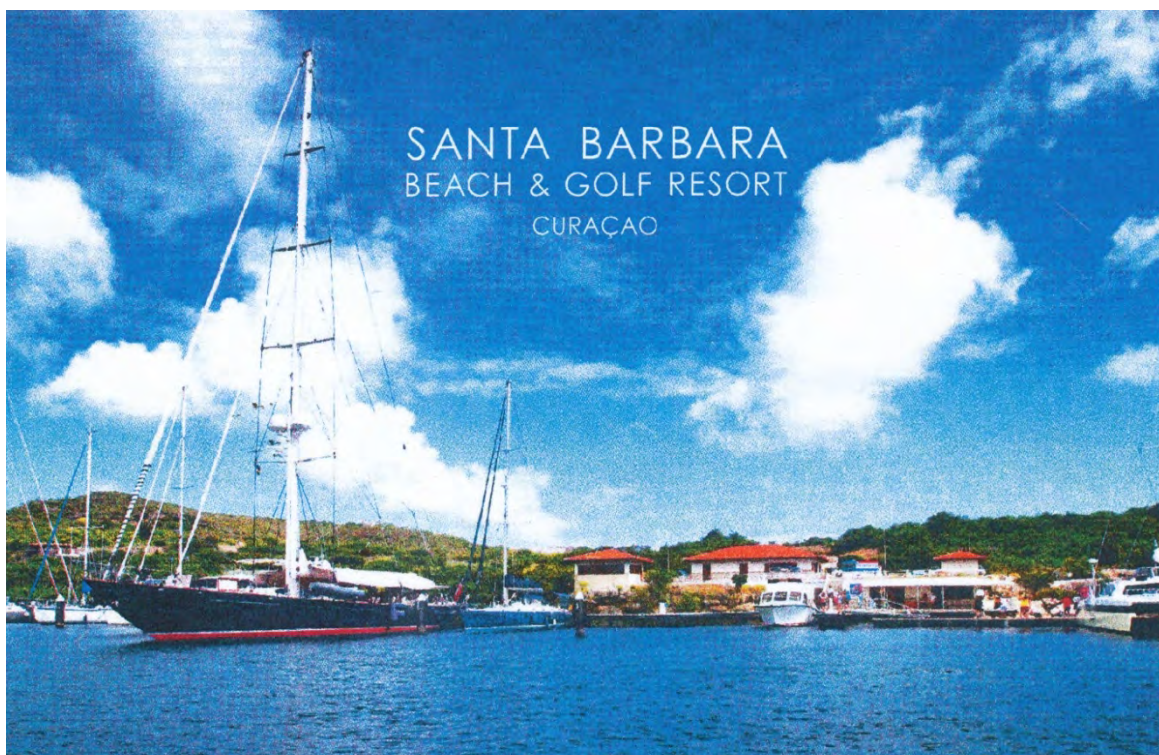
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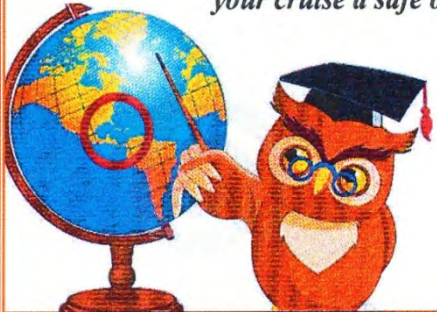
When was the last time you sat down and had an old fashioned discussion with your own sail maker regarding all the details that concern you about your boat? Mark and Kent are never in a rush and always seem to have the time. They will cheerfully answer all your questions and they have the background to provide you with meaningful answers.

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INTRODUCTION

THE JAMAICA CRUISING GUIDE STORY

In 1996 John Lethbridge, Commodore of the Royal Jamaican Yacht Club published **The Yachtsman's Guide to Jamaica**. It was a comprehensive work written by a civil engineer and ardent sailor with great attention to detail. After he passed, the guide was not renewed and Jamaica has been without an up to date cruising guide for over a decade. One of the great cruising routes of the NW Caribbean that allows for a multicultural experience is to visit the south shore of the Dominican Republic, and then Ile à Vache, Haiti at the SW end of Hispaniola and then on to Jamaica. From Jamaica the cruising sailor can easily reach Cuba or the Caymans or go west to the Islands of Honduras.

Such a cruise allows for the Caribbean experience through Spanish, French and English impressions formed during colonial days as well as an exposure to a sampling of contemporary Caribbean cultures and languages.

While today's charts and GPS positions of Jamaica are excellent, there were certain "chartlets" contained in Mr. Lethbridge's guide that were so beautifully rendered, that I felt they should not be lost. Maurice Lethbridge, one of Mr. Lethbridge's three sons, very graciously agreed to allow them to be utilized in this guide. All of the chartlets were handmade by Mr. Lethbridge and each is a work of art. It is with a great sense of awe and reverence that I have inserted them in this guide for your use.

JAMAICA – CRUISING BOAT SECURITY

Many of us go cruising and say we do it because we want to explore new places and experience other cultures. However, if you watch cruising

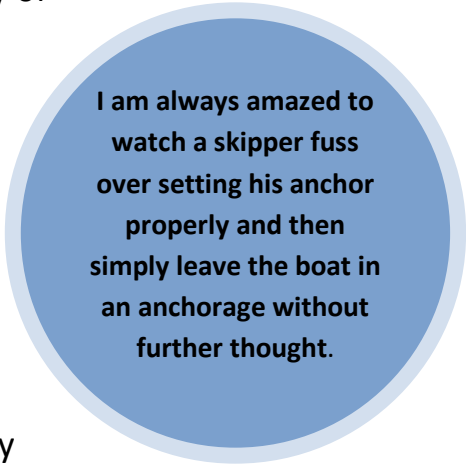
patterns, the majority of cruisers stick to the beaten track and for many that means not wandering too far from one's own culture as well. Antigua, the Virgin Islands and Grenada have always been popular as "Caribbean destinations" because they are English speaking and until recently have been considered 100% safe. An island like Jamaica has seen fewer cruising boats because some members of the yachting community read crime statistics arising from inner city Kingston, the capital, and extrapolate them to the entire island. As Caribbean islands go, I have found Jamaica to be as safe as the average. Some rank safer, and some rank worse. Everyone fears what we do not understand and it is easy to misunderstand Jamaica. Jamaica is an extraordinary country. A country of "wood and water," of smiles and music. Jamaica is "*THE* celebration of African Culture in the Caribbean." Its music, art and culture have impacted the entire world.

What are Jamaican people really like? The vast majority of Jamaicans are church going family people who value traditional family beliefs and have a reputation for raising their children very strictly. They are on the average polite and many are very well educated. They are African, Chinese, East Indian and other cultures as well.

Kingston is the capital of Jamaica. In certain areas it is overpopulated and there are deep pockets of poverty. Such an environment breeds crime. Any large city in any country in the world that is overpopulated with areas of great poverty has seen crime and violence.

When cruisers speak of safe cruising and crime, many times gossip takes over and exaggeration sets in. Boats have been robbed in Venezuela. And boats have been robbed in St. Vincent and St. Lucia as well. I have visited Jamaica many times and have never had a problem in any part of the country. Crime is not the norm, it is the **exception**. Moreover we can reduce our risk of being a victim by taking reasonable precautions. While cruising in any country there are many things we can do to protect ourselves and our boats.

- **One should not leave the dinghy in the water at night.**



I am always amazed to watch a skipper fuss over setting his anchor properly and then simply leave the boat in an anchorage without further thought.

- Or tie it up at a dock without having it watched or properly secured.
- One should not invite strangers aboard.
- And we should not leave our boats unattended except in the most secure areas.

I am always amazed to watch a skipper fuss over setting his anchor properly and then simply leave the boat in an anchorage without further thought. A poor man on shore sees your “floating palace” and is drawn to it like a bee to honey.

The purpose of this guide is to help you explore Jamaica and to give you insights on the culture as well as the harbors and anchorages. The object is to explain to you how to take advantage of the best harbors, know the safest areas and maximize your experience of Jamaica and its wonderful culture. If you hurry through or past Jamaica, you will have missed one of the true jewels of the Caribbean. You will miss Jamaican music, Jamaican art and crafts, Jamaican patois, Jamaican food and coffee, and most of all, you will miss Jamaican smiles. The heart and soul of the Jamaican people is in their smile. Jamaica is a complete and separate experience unto itself. Do not miss it and when you visit do not rush through. You cannot rush Jamaica. The one thing Jamaica is not, is rushed. Welcome to Jamaica!



ENTRY REQUIREMENTS and TRANSIRE

One can enter at Port Antonio, Kingston, Ocho Rios and Montego Bay. These harbors are the most acquainted with clearing in cruising yachts. There are also clearance facilities at Port Esquivel and Discovery Bay but these are typically used for commercial purposes. One can also enter at Port Morant at the SE corner of the island. This is a coast guard station and they will call the authorities.

When you arrive at your first port of entry, be sure to fly your quarantine flag. This is very important in Jamaica and to not do so is to begin on the wrong foot. There are three departments you will meet when you clear in. They are as follows:

- a. **Quarantine.** This individual will give you a few forms to fill out. He/she will ask you questions about health on the boat; i.e., if anyone is ill. They will also want to know if there are any animals on board. Animals are not allowed to go to shore under any conditions. And they will want to check foodstuffs for expiration dates and type of food. They may also ask you if you have a holding tank for your boat. Port Antonio harbor is a “no discharge zone” and if you do not have holding tanks, they will ask you to use shore side facilities.
- b. **Immigration.** This individual will examine your passports and ask you to fill out forms related to crew members and prior port. A typed crew list helps reduce the time needed to fill out the forms.
- c. **Customs.** Customs will ask you to fill out forms related to the boat’s equipment. They will also examine your passports and ship’s papers. They will ask if you have firearms, which *must* be declared. *Customs is the agency in charge of your port to port movements.* Thus, if you clear into Port Antonio and ask for clearance to Ocho Rios, when you arrive at Ocho Rios you must check in with customs who will forward you to your next port. **YOU DO NOT HAVE TO CLEAR IN AND OUT OF EVERY PORT.** You just need to check in with the customs officer at

your destination. You can stop between ports provided you have a reasonable explanation: Too tired to go on, in need of repairs etc.

There is no cost to CLEAR INTO JAMAICA. There is no charge for anything, and it is rare that any official would even accept a tip.

However, if you attempt to clear in or clear out after or before 9-5 on Monday through Thursday or 9-4:30 on Friday, there is an overtime charge based on the salaries of those who need to attend to you. The amounts are not enormous, but it is best to clear in during normal business hours.

You are required to report when you arrive. They will ask what time you arrived, so do not arrive on a Sunday and decide to clear in on a Monday. That is a No-No.

Once you are cleared in you will be advised and you can lower the yellow Quarantine flag and hoist the Jamaican courtesy flag. You do not have a Jamaican courtesy flag? That is considered bad form. Jamaica was part of Great Britain for over 300 years and all the pomp and circumstance that is required to demonstrate proper etiquette is still a big part of the culture. Your yellow Quarantine flag must be flown from the starboard spreader and after you have cleared in, fly your Jamaican courtesy flag prominently from the starboard spreader.



You will find Jamaican authorities well prepared to do their job, and extremely professional and courteous. Be sure to reciprocate.

TRANSIRE

When the officials complete their work they will give you a “transire.” It is permission to go to the next port that you have indicated during your interview. It is equivalent to a “Zarpe” or a “Despacho” from Spanish speaking countries. When you arrive at your next port, you seek out Customs and present your paperwork. Depending on the Customs agent, he will forward you to the next port by issuing you new paperwork or by making a notation on the one you currently have. There is no charge for this service, but you **MUST** do it.

If you stop at a port between ports, you must have an acceptable explanation. Thus if you leave Port Antonio with paperwork for Montego Bay, and you decide to anchor for the night at Ocho Rios, you must explain your reason for stopping to the Customs agent. In almost every case the customs agent will accept any reasonable explanation: You were tired, the boat malfunctioned, etc. To not report to Customs is a violation of the law. While you may consider the need to “clear in and out at every port” onerous, keep in mind you are a visitor in someone else’s country. It is your job to conform to their laws and requirements. Your concern is the safety of your boat and crew. Their concern is the safety of their coastline. Be cooperative and pleasant and your cruise through Jamaica will be happier for it.

Keep in mind that when you clear into your next harbor, it is with customs only. You do not need to seek out Immigration or Quarantine. And you do not have to do all the paperwork over again. Just present yourself and show your *transire*, and explain what your next desired port of call will be. Along the way you may be boarded by the Jamaican Marine Police as well as the Jamaican Coast Guard.

The Jamaican Coast Guard and Jamaican Marine Police work hard to protect the Jamaican coastline and keep it safe.



JAMAICAN MARINE POLICE -- Professional and ready to assist.

Their job is to ensure that those who are in Jamaican waters are not engaging in any illegal activity. They also want to be on watch to assist you in any way possible. They monitor channel 16. When they approach you, do have your papers ready, and be ready to work with the officer to help him become familiar with your boat and crew. You will find these men highly trained and very capable when it comes to information of any type.



JAMAICAN MARINE POLICE on board checking paperwork

JAMAICA'S OFF LYING BANKS AND CAYS

A large part of Jamaica's appeal to cruising sailors is its beautiful and frequently challenging off lying banks and cays rich in sea life and snorkeling/SCUBA opportunities. There are frequent references throughout this guide to "local fishermen" and the need to be wary of fish traps or pots as well as breaking reefs and shallow banks. Jamaicans need no license to fish in their waters, so many do. It is best to keep about one mile off shore as you cruise the Jamaican coast.

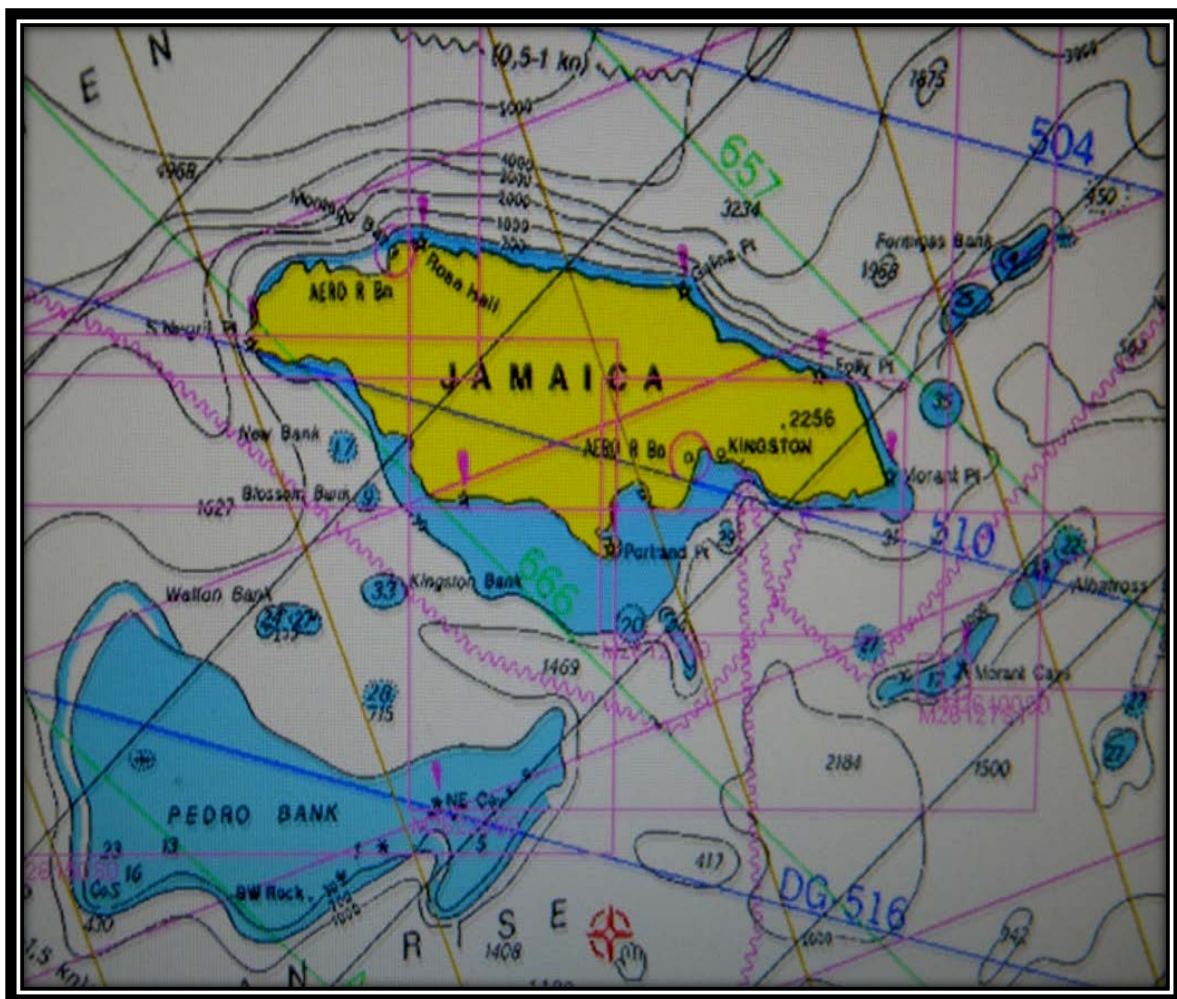


Figure 3. Jamaica and off lying banks and cays



Fish traps ready to go



Fish traps on their way to the reef

APPROACHES TO JAMAICA

APPROACHING JAMAICA FROM ANY POINT SOUTH -- PRECAUTIONS

PEDRO BANK

17°10.00N 77°16.00W extreme east end of bank

16°40.00N 78° 09.00W south of bank at SW Rock

17°13.00N 79°05.00W west end at center of bank

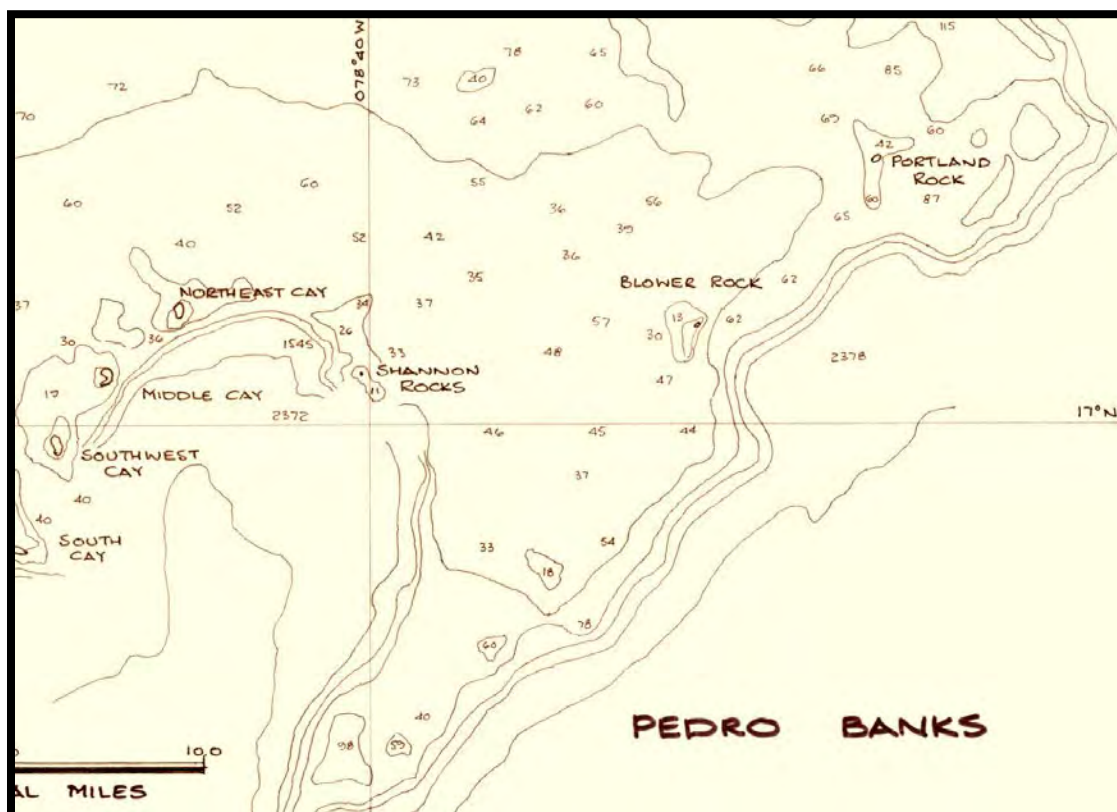


Figure 4. Pedro Banks

The largest offshore bank is Pedro Bank, a great area of shallow water more than 100 miles long E to W. Most of the bank has a depth of 45-90ft except at the east and south parts of the eastern end where there are rocks, some cays and some shoal areas. The eastern end of the bank breaks even in moderate weather and should be avoided. Currents are consistent with the Caribbean 1 knot westerly current but in some areas the current can be up to 2 knots and one should be conscious of set and drift.

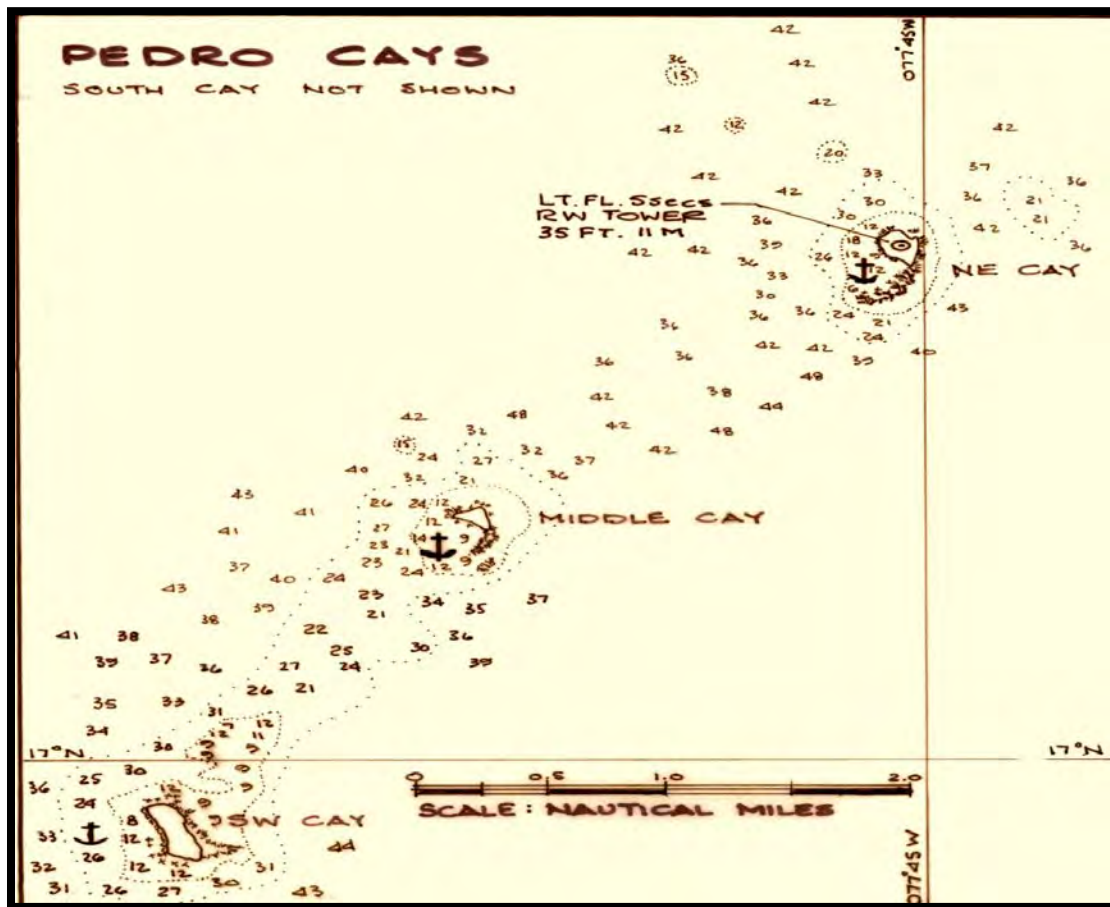


Figure 5. Pedro Cays

There are four Pedro Cays. NE Cay and Middle Cay are inhabited by fishermen. You will see shacks and huts. SW Cay is a bird sanctuary and is so designated; no landing is allowed here. South Cay is exposed coral and sand so there is no vegetation. The four anchorages on the banks are:

- Portland Rock at the E end of the bank (**17°07.00N 77°26.34W**),
- The Pedro Cays at the NE Cay (There is a 35ft high steel light tower, Fl 5 secs, 11M at GPS **17°03.10N 77°45.10W**),
- Middle Cay, and
- SW Cay.

Jamaican authorities say that they do not want cruising yachts to visit the cays without prior permission of the Jamaican Coast Guard.

A MAJOR HAZARD TO NAVIGATION when approaching Jamaica from the south is SOUTH WEST ROCK (16°49.00N 78°12.00W). This rock is a few feet above water but in normal conditions of wind and sea it is not easily seen. (Located on PEDRO BANK at east end)

Portland Rock (17°06.00N 77°27.00W) is located at the eastern end of Pedro Bank and appears coming from the East as two rocks. Give Portland Rock a wide berth, especially in heavy weather when approaching Jamaica from the south. **Blower Rock (17°03.00N 77°31.00W)** is 5 miles SW of Portland Rock and shows about two feet above the water. There is shoal water around the rock and water breaks over it continuously even in normal weather. **Shannon Rock (17°02N 77°40W)** is approximately 9 miles WSW of Blower Rock. The sea breaks heavily over this rock which is about 2 feet above water.

Banner Reef (16°52.00N 78°06.00W) is awash and is 1.5 miles in length. The reef breaks in all but very settled weather. There are numerous coral heads north and west of Banner Reef within a distance of 1.5 miles. **AVOID THIS AREA.**

Navigational Warning: Pedro Bank is shoal in many areas and has rocks that are exposed. Parts of the bank are still uncharted. There are also many fish traps and fish pots scattered over the bank. Without local knowledge it is best to give Pedro Bank a wide berth, regardless from what direction you are coming.



Figure 6. Jamaica's Banks and Cays to the East

APPROACHING JAMAICA FROM THE SOUTHEAST - - PRECAUTIONS

MORANT CAYS

17°25.00N 75°57.00W just E of NE Cay

17°23.00N 75°58.00W just S of SE Cay

The Morant Cays are about 33 miles SSE of the E end of Jamaica. They are a group of four cays surrounded by reefs. The seas due to the easterly trades constantly break over them. SE Cay is designated a wild life preserve mainly for birds. NE Cay is the largest of the cays; sometimes fishermen live there.

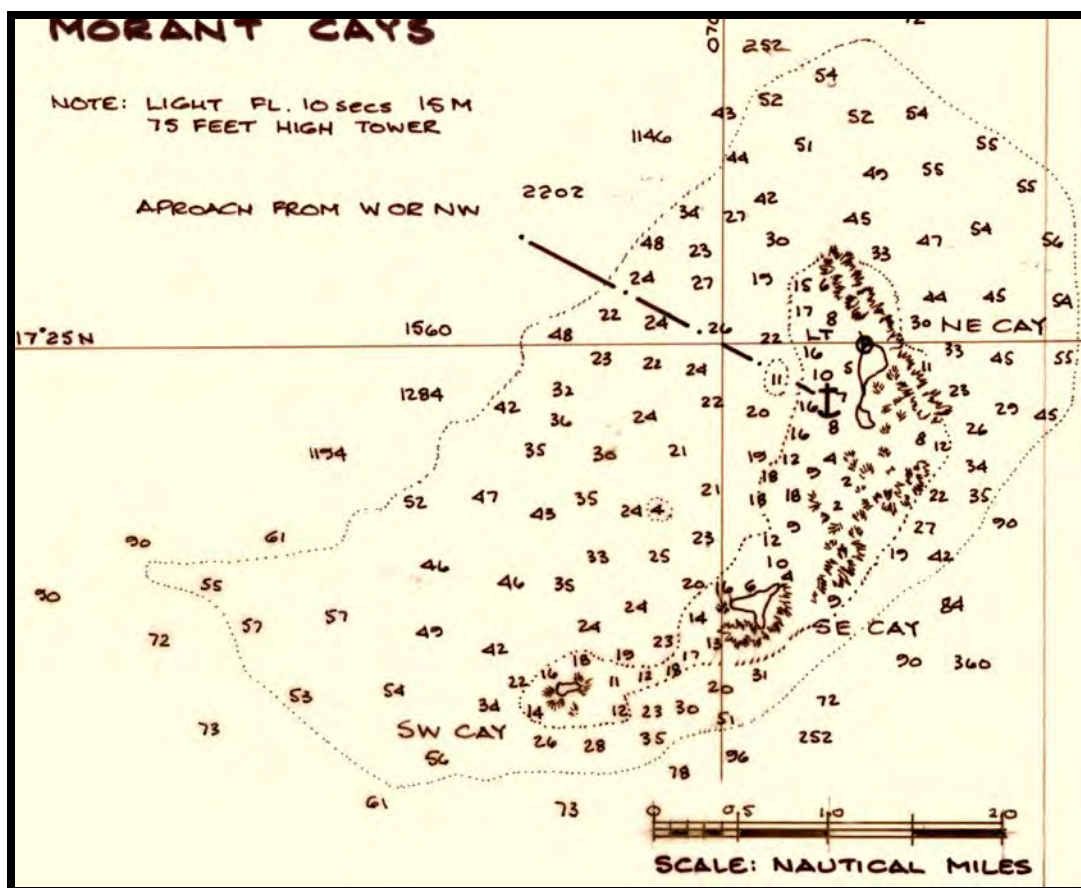


Figure 7. Morant Cays

Currents in the Morant Cays vary greatly and have been observed as high as 3 knots but without any predictable pattern. There are a great many shipwrecks amongst the cays. There is a Fl. 10S 75ft tower on NE Cay at **17°24.97N 75°59.22W**. The banks surrounding the cays are an area frequented by sport fisherman, especially during fishing tournaments.

It is against the law to dive on any of the wrecks and to remove any part or piece of the wreckage.

ALBATROSS BANK

17°40N 75°42W

This bank is located approximately 30 miles ESE of Morant Point at the Eastern end of Jamaica.

APPROACHING JAMAICA FROM THE NORTH THROUGH EAST -- PRECAUTIONS

FORMIGAS BANK

18°31.45N 75°45.47W

This is a rocky bank with less than 60ft of water for the greater part of the bank. At the NE corner of the bank the water is about 15ft deep. The bank is approximately 30 miles northeast of the northeastern tip of Jamaica. It is about 16 miles long from SW to NE. During strong trade winds the north end of the bank breaks with a heavy swell running. The most dangerous part of the bank is an old stranded wreck which is sometimes visible. It is noted on most charts.

GRAPLER SEAMOUNT

18°24N 75°58W

It is located approximately 30 miles NNE of Morant Point at the eastern end of Jamaica; about 10 miles SW of the tip of Formigas Bank. It is coral and is located at a depth of less than 100 feet. When the trades are blowing hard, this bank is known to break.

HENRY HOLMES BANK

18°09N 76° 06W

This bank is really two small detached banks approximately 15 miles NNE of Morant Point at the eastern end of Jamaica. Depths range from less than 50ft to approximately 100ft. These banks also break in fresh easterlies.

APPROACHES TO JAMAICA – WHERE TO MAKE LANDFALL

ARRIVING FROM THE EAST THROUGH NORTHEAST

If you are approaching from the East, the first thing you must take into account is **Formigas Bank** which lies about 30 miles NE of the island. It is shoal and breaks in heavy weather. There is also a wreck, parts of which are still above water. *Give Formigas Bank a wide berth.* Plot its location and be conscious of it as you go West.

Coming from the East, your best approach is the North Shore of Jamaica. You can clear in at Port Antonio, which is also a reasonably well sheltered harbor. From Port Antonio you can go west, putting to good use the numerous stops, anchorages and harbors. As you approach the island from the east you will see the beautiful John Crow and Blue Mountains. They are one of the longest and highest mountain ranges in the Caribbean.

ARRIVING FROM THE SOUTH

If your object is to visit Cuba after Jamaica you have to decide which part of Cuba you plan to enter, East or West. If you plan to enter the East end, then the north shore of Jamaica should be your choice. Give **Morant Cays** a sufficient berth (they are about 35 miles off the SE tip of the island) and plan to enter at Port Antonio.

If you are headed to the West end of Cuba, you would proceed NW leaving **Pedro Banks** (located approximately 50 miles due south of the island) to port. On this route you will arrive on the West End of Jamaica and really beautiful anchorages in Bloody Bay. If the weather is unsettled, you can remain on the SW end of the island in the protected lee until you have a favorable forecast. On this approach you can enter at Port Morant or Kingston. Use Morant if you simply want to clear in and be on your way. Use Kingston if you want to stop a few days to see Kingston and/or replenish stores.

ARRIVING FROM THE WEST THROUGH NORTHWEST

If you are approaching Jamaica from the West or North your best approach is to the north shore of Jamaica, clearing in at Montego Bay.



North coast, east of MoBay

PORTS AND PORT REFERENCES

NORTH COAST (EAST to WEST)

- | | |
|-----------------------------|--|
| • San San Bay and Blue Hole | Two wonderful small anchorages, one next to the other just a few miles east of Port Antonio. |
| • Port Antonio | Excellent. Good protection . |
| • Foster's Cove | Very small cove. |
| • Port Maria | This bay is surrounded by hills. |
| • Oracabessa | Pleasant small anchorage at the NE end of the harbor off the beach. |
| • Ocho Rios | Big tourist area with lots of activity. |
| • St. Ann's Bay | Nice anchorages, quaint Victorian town |
| • Discovery Bay | Good place to anchor |
| • Rio Bueno Harbor | Attractive but open harbor |
| • Falmouth Harbor | Harbor under construction |
| • Montego Bay (MoBay) | Nice anchorage~Don't miss town with numerous shoreside facilities. |
| • Bogue Lagoon | Excellent for protection-hurricane hole. |
| • Mosquito Cove | Small anchorage used mostly by local small boats |
| • Lucea Harbor | Nice anchorage with old town on West shore |
| • Green Island Harbor | Not noteworthy |

WEST COAST (NORTH to SOUTH)

- | | |
|------------------------------|--|
| • Bloody Bay (Negril Harbor) | In actuality this is all one long bay running North-South. There is a great anchorage in Bloody Bay in what is called Negril Harbor. |
|------------------------------|--|

- Negril Beach (Long Bay) This entire Bay has anchoring opportunities all the way to Negril Town. There is also an anchorage just north of the Negril Lighthouse at approximately 18.15N, 78.22 W

NOTE: All anchorages on the West coast require NORMAL TRADEWIND CONDITIONS. The sunsets on this coast are extraordinary.

SOUTH COAST (WEST to EAST)

- Savannah-la-Mar Avoid except in emergency. Run down and unprotected.
- Bluefields Pretty "get out of the wind" anchorage.
- Whitehouse Anchorage Protected anchorage, pretty beach
- Black River Don't miss-excellent. River with wonderful wildlife-a trip back in time.
- Great Pedro Bay Excellent "get out of the wind" anchorage. Easy entry.
- Port Kaiser Avoid; commercial.
- Alligator reef Excellent anchorage behind reef at east end.
- Rocky Point/Carlisle Bay Avoid/Not secure.
- Portland Ridge/Portland Cays Beautiful area surrounded by cays
- Kingston and Port Royal Large and windy harbor, capital of Jamaica. Lots to see and do. Airport, comprehensive provisioning.
- Port Royal Cays Attractive cays used by local boaters.
- Manatee Bay/Coquar Bay Popular with local sailors/great beach
- Port Morant/Bowden Harbor Excellent anchorage; wonderful views

EAST COAST

- Manchioneal Harbor East coast anchorage off small village; unprotected from Trade winds.

JAMAICAN CULTURE

Jamaicans have a tremendous sense of humor which peppers their conversation all the time. They constantly tease each other for whatever. A very warm and friendly people, they have a wonderful sense of hospitality. As in any relationship it takes time for these traits to come through. Certainly street vendors have their own priorities, the biggest of which is to sell you something. It is important that you not take repeated advances personally. Remember to smile and say “Little more time, mon, little more time.”

It is never easy to define culture, and Jamaican culture is no exception. In its simplest terms Jamaican culture incorporates Arawak native American, a diverse amount of African influence (diverse in the sense that Africa is a large continent and the African Jamaican population came from many different areas of Africa with distinctive traditions), as well as East Indian, Chinese and others who came to Jamaica over time. Plus 300 years of British rule whose impact does not go unnoticed in so many areas of Jamaican life. “Out of many, one people.” So it is that Jamaica developed.

Jamaica is strong in tradition. The famous NINE NIGHT after a loved one dies is part of almost every Caribbean country and in Jamaica to witness a NINE NIGHT is something of an event that gives rise to the spirit. Surely it is one of the best cures for grief that I have ever witnessed.

JAMAICAN FOOD

Then there is the happiness of the SORREL DRINK. Its color and its flavor. And CHRISTMAS PUDDING and CHRISTMAS CAKE. In a country as rich in traditions as Jamaica, every season gives you an opportunity to see and

experience them. Jamaican food is a big part of the culture. Think jerk pork and jerk chicken.



Rice and peas. Ackee and saltfish, the national dish. Fried patties. Plantains. Curried goat. And of course RED STRIPE BEER, the beer of Jamaica.

FAMILY LIFE

The typical Jamaican family is a close knit group. Children rarely become separated from their families. Even as adults they remain someone's children. Everyone has a nickname and is called by it throughout their life. Older people are accorded respect. Every attempt is made to pass on traditions and values to the younger generation.

Jamaica is a largely Christian country (Jamaica is reputed to have more churches per square mile than any other Caribbean country). There is also Rastafarianism. Contrary to popular belief, very few Jamaicans are true Rastafarians. Rastafarianism is a religion filtered through the lens of African culture. A true Rastafarian neither smokes tobacco nor uses foul language.

They do not use drugs (they use marijuana which is considered a sacred herb). They do not consume alcohol, or if they do, they do not become intoxicated. A Rastafarian man may wear DREADLOCKS. The term comes from “dreaded appearance” or “dreaded looks.” The longer the dreadlocks, the longer the person has been a Rastafarian.

The Jamaican national anthem is not something you may find easy to sing, but if you read it carefully you will understand what Jamaicans believe they stand for. It is what moves and motivates them.



THE POLITICAL SCENE

Politically Jamaica is a parliamentary democracy whose construct follows the same lines as the United Kingdom. Jamaica won its independence from the United Kingdom in 1962. When Michael Manley became prime minister of Jamaica in the early 70s he changed the political structure of the country by shifting power to the people through a move to socialism.

In the past, Jamaica was ruled by parties that were largely groups of educated wealthy Jamaicans; many with family ties. Much of political debate in Jamaica centers around poverty and unemployment. Many of the inner city ghettos are ruled by local politicians with strong ties to different wings of national parties. This leads to “winner takes the spoils” -- who wins determines who gets a job and who loses their job, especially in Kingston. And that leads many times to violence, especially during political campaigns. During Manley’s first presidency, the country formed a deep alliance with Fidel Castro’s Cuba. As time went by, the country moved away from its far left position, and the government became more centrist.

Jamaica has tried hard to solve its economic problems, using International Monetary Funding to improve the country. However, the results have been mixed and Jamaica now has a very sizable debt to service. This coupled with continued devaluation of the country’s currency has made for extremely complicated economic problems that plague the island. They are the basis of the problems that Kingston deals with daily. Lack of opportunity and extreme poverty are the basis of Jamaica’s crime statistics.

ART AND MUSIC

Jamaica is known for its distinctive art and music. In the street fairs you will see all types of arts and crafts made by local craftsmen. Some of it is exceptional. You will see lots of wood carvings of birds and animals. Talented carvers find the soul of a creature in the wood and bring it forth.



Patrick brings a frog to life!



If you see something you like, remember to take your time and negotiate. Having said that, remember not to take the “last dollar.” It is simply bad manners. This can happen when tourists feel they may be taken advantage of and pushed beyond reasonable limits. Your lifestyle is not going to change for a few dollars, pounds or euros, one way or another, and the fellow selling gets to go home with something to show for his work. Not charity; just a fair exchange.

Music is the realm where Jamaican culture has touched and spread around the world. Jamaicans simply love to sing: Harry Belafonte singing “Island in the sun” (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E41LNLIC5g0>), Jamaican folk music to Reggae, which can be considered to be the heartbeat of the island. And Dancehall; the music of the younger generation, emanating from dancehalls.

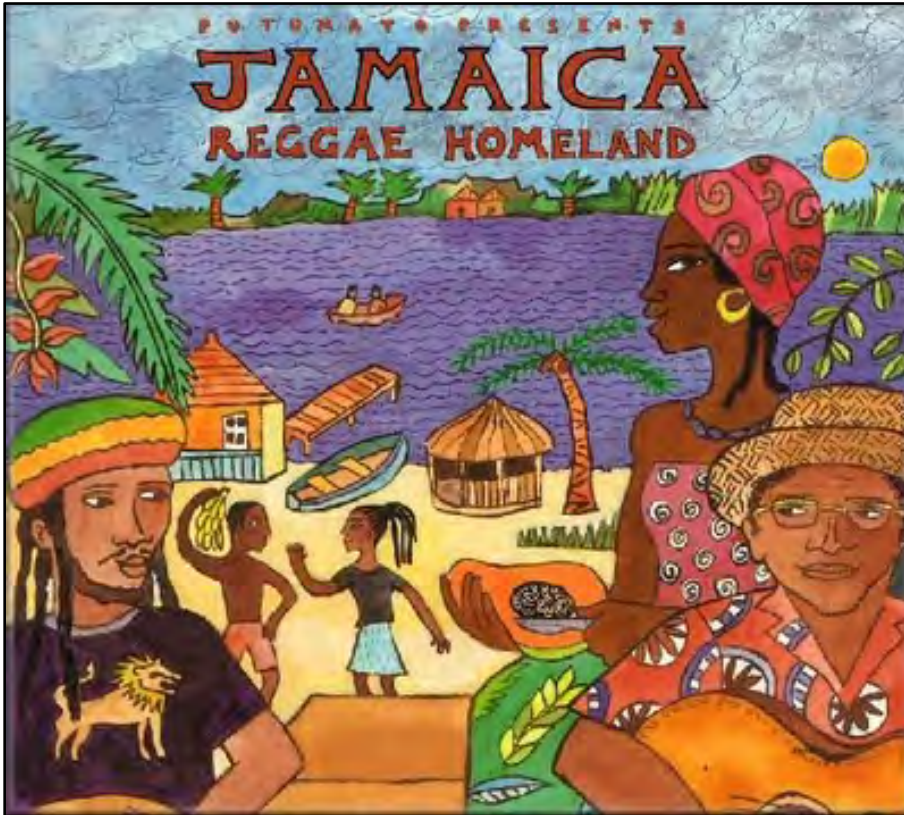
While Dancehall is filled with violence and anger, it is how the younger generation expresses their dissatisfaction with the legacy of overcrowding and poverty. The violence in the music tells it like it is and unfortunately too many times it is acted out.

Reggae is the *ultimate* Jamaican experience and Bob Marley is Jamaica’s international ambassador who took it global. If you do not yet know who Bob Marley is, you need to learn if you want to understand a big and very important part of Jamaican culture.

Some of Marley’s best known songs include one of his greatest hits with the Wailers, “ONE LOVE.” (http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cp-6g_CdpJs)

He was known for trying to bring people together by writing Reggae music that reflected political issues and addressed questions of poverty, racism, injustice and war. Bob Marley’s father was English, a Captain in the Royal Marines. His mother was an African Jamaican. Bob Marley embraced Rastafarianism.

Often chided about his mixed race background, Marley responded, *“Them call me half-caste or whatever. Me don't dip on nobody's side. Me don't dip on the black man's side nor the white man's side. Me dip on God's side, the one who create me and cause me to come from black and white.”*



Bob (Nester) Marley (February 6, 1945 – May 11, 1981) died of melanoma (cancer) at 36 years of age.



From that sentiment we get “ONE LOVE!” You cannot stop in Kingston and not visit the Bob Marley Museum.

To call Marley a singer is to undervalue him. He brought a message of love and peace. His funeral was the largest in the history of Jamaica. He sang all around the world and everywhere he went he was loved. His music touched people deeply. Visit the museum (in Kingston) and take the hour tour; it is well worth the \$20.00 US price of entry. You will learn who Bob Marley was. You will learn about Rastafarianism as a religion. You will learn why “everything will be alright.”

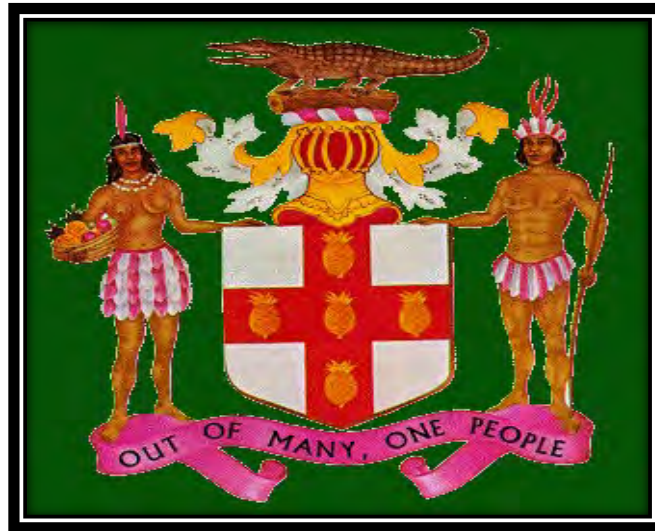
Art and Jamaican clothing will be displayed everywhere you stop and visit on the island. In addition you will probably be hounded by street merchants who want you to buy a souvenir of your visit. I have personally seen people get extremely angry because they feel hounded. Getting angry is bad form and to do so publicly in someone else’s country is the worst form possible. The key is patience and courtesy. You do not have to buy and if you are not ready to buy, look the vendor straight in the eye and say **“Little more time, little more time!” (In patois: likle more time, Mon). And SMILE!** Always smile.

That is how Jamaicans tell each other to back off and that is the polite way of saying you are not ready. Smile when you say it and be graceful, and you will most often be accorded the respect you are entitled to because you are being respectful, even in the face of aggressive salesmanship. If they continue still to push, you can always walk away; quietly and without fuss.

ENGLISH – AND PATOIS

The official language of Jamaica is English and most of that English comes from the United Kingdom. It is not always the case but the more educated a Jamaican is, the more likely he or she is to use the Queen’s English, with a Jamaican lilt.

However, there is also another language and that is JAMAICAN PATOIS. Many say it is not a language at all, but just street slang. Perhaps, but I will let those who have degrees in linguistics figure it out. Here is a very brief example of what to expect. However, remember, not all Jamaicans think that patois is “cool.” Many who are educated or upper class will take offense if you assume they speak it; notwithstanding that they may.



“Small up yourself ”

Used when they want to get 30 people on a bus that holds 15.

“Babylon”

How the police or bureaucracy are called

“Everything cook and curry”

Everything is fine

“Chatty, chatty”

You talk too much

“Vex”

To be angry as “I am vexed with you”

“Saal”

Bad Luck

“Tings saal Mon”

Times are rough

“Bashment”

Party

“Braata”

A little extra when you have purchased, as in “where me braata mon?”



Fischer the Jerk man. A pound or two will do with a Red Stripe Beer. Ready to go, "Everything cook and curry Mon!" Do not forget to ask for your bratta. He gave me some wonderful baked breadfruit. You will find Fischer in Port Antonio market



Happy faces full of smiles at the open market

Jamaica has many open markets and they are especially active towards Friday and Saturday. Walk through them and you will get the real flavor of Jamaica. You will smell jerk seasoning, and see the colors and variety of the fruits and vegetables of Jamaica. Best of all you will see those fantastic Jamaican smiles. What could be better? At Port Antonio the open market is very colorful and very alive. Walk through it and interact with the people. Buy some fresh oranges, see the local crafts.



Jamaica from sunrise to sunset -- work of art by the hand of God





The Jamaican Tourist Police will keep an eye on you while you shop at the Local Craft Markets. Their smiles tell you the whole story. Visit the craft markets, eat the local food and “you be jamming in Jamaica, Mon.”

CRUISING JAMAICA

Jamaica has about 350 miles of coastline. There are many ports, harbors and anchorages as well as many cays. For most of the year, the easterly trades blow 20 knots. The southeast corner (Kingston to Portland Bight) has an average of 5 knots higher. At night, cool mountain air slides down the mountains to create an offshore breeze (katabatic winds).

Tides vary in Jamaica by about one foot. Anchoring in Jamaica is normally fairly easy as the bottom is usually sand and turtle grass. **However, there are a great number of fish traps** set off the coast of Jamaica. They normally extend out to the 100 foot mark, and thus along the coast, one should keep a watchful eye. **In short, keep about one mile off shore as you move around the island.**

The current around Jamaica runs on average 1 knot from East to West. Around the off lying cays on the south side, currents can run as high as near 3 knots and not necessarily in one direction.

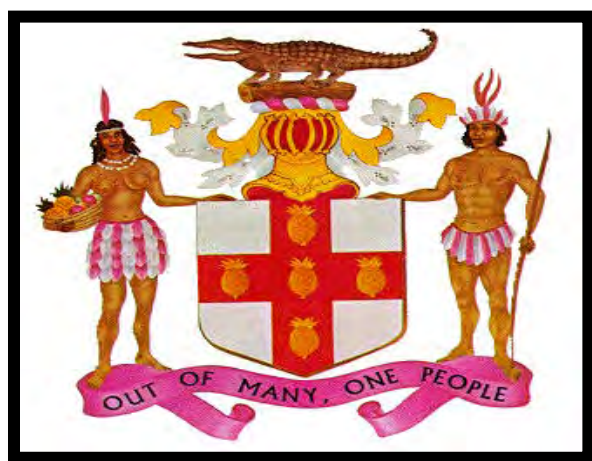
Time of year will have a big impact on your cruising through Jamaica.

If you are cruising Jamaica early in the trade wind season, December through end of March, the north shore of Jamaica is susceptible to weather. In cases like this, it is best to get weather prognostics on the strength of the norther and plan accordingly. Some northers tend to be brief and bring just slight increases in wind speeds from the north through the northeast. Other northers last longer, 3 or more days, and can bring near gale conditions. Proper planning allows you to be in a snug harbor while the weather is challenging. Below is a list of harbors on the **north coast** that can provide refuge when the weather is not cooperating:

Port Antonio	Excellent
Montego Bay	Fair
Bogue Lagoon	Excellent
Ocho Rios	Fair
St. Ann's Bay	Good, behind reef
Discovery Bay	Good, east side of bay
Oracabessa	Fair

As the trade wind season progresses, the trade winds become more constant and northers come to an end. If you are going west, sailing the Jamaica coast, especially from April through June, can be an extraordinary experience.

If you are going eastward, it is best to either harbor hop early in the day before the trades set in, or make your easting at night, when the Katabatic winds stall the trades.



PORTS AND HARBORS

NORTH COAST

San San/Blue Hole to Green Island Harbor, east to west

BLUE HOLE

18°10.65N 76°23.43W approx. one mile NE of Blue Hole and SanSan

Blue Hole is the small and beautiful lagoon that launched Brooke Shields' movie career. It is fed by freshwater springs that enter about 120' below the surface. The color of the lagoon changes through the day and you can see many shades of emerald and jade. The entrance is marked by a very narrow channel (perhaps 30' wide) made from floating plastic bottles. At low tide, there is just a bit more than 4' to get over the bar. Once into the lagoon, there is actually too much depth to anchor. The depth of the lagoon has been certified to 282'. **This anchorage is not recommended for larger boats** and it would be wise to find a local guide prior to attempting entry.

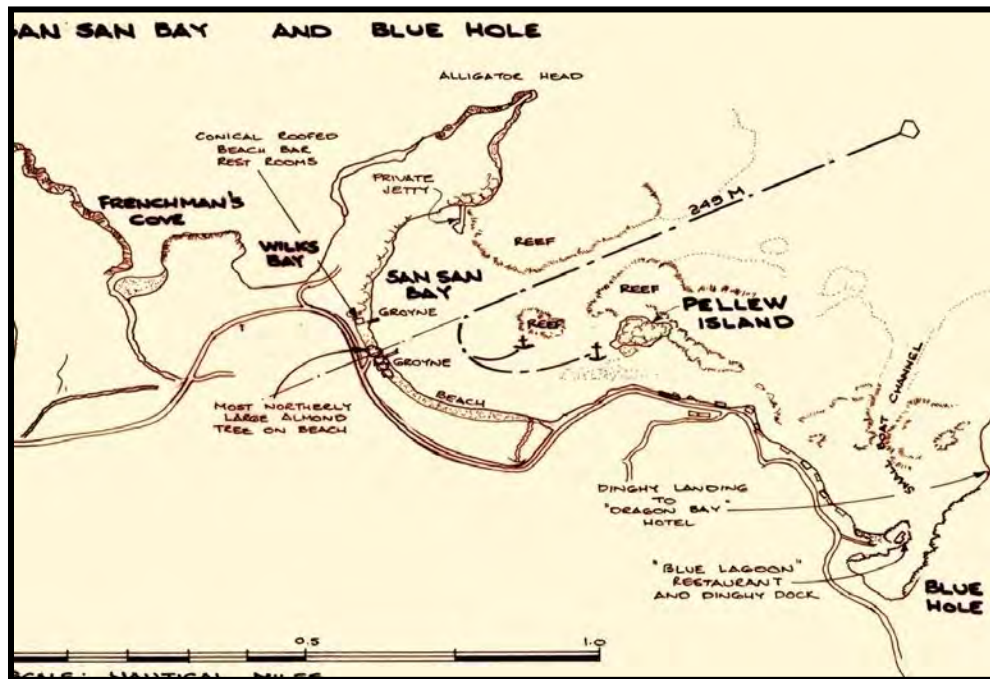
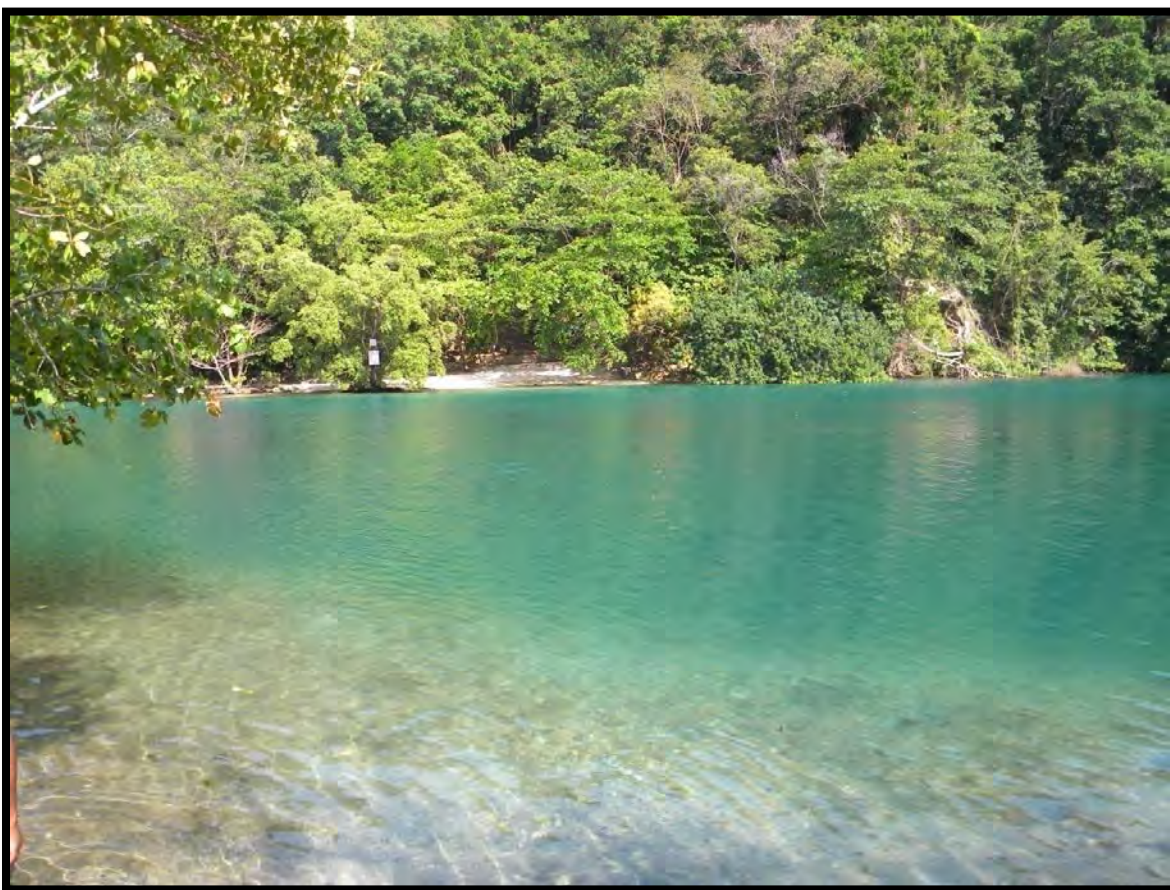


Figure 8. San San Bay and Blue Hole



Blue Hole looking east in lagoon

SAN SAN

18°10.65N 076°23.43W approximately one mile NE of the entrance

From the above heading one takes up a heading of 249 M and proceeds between the two reefs. If you do not have a local guide, it is best to have the sun behind you as the reefs are not readily apparent. Once in you will find two places to anchor depending on conditions. The first is south of the small reef area to the west of Pellew Island in about 20ft depth. The second is at the SW corner behind Pellew. The anchorage is used by local boaters out of Port Antonio and sometimes boaters out of Kingston. It should not be attempted in anything but calm conditions.



San San

Keep in mind that if you have not cleared into Jamaica you may not anchor in San San and must proceed to Port Antonio.

Pelley Island in the photo above is left to port as you enter. Also take note of the reef off of the island. You must keep it to port on entering. The reef off of Alligator Head is to be left to starboard. (see Figure 8 above)

PORT ANTONIO

18°11.50N 76°26.81 W, harbor entrance

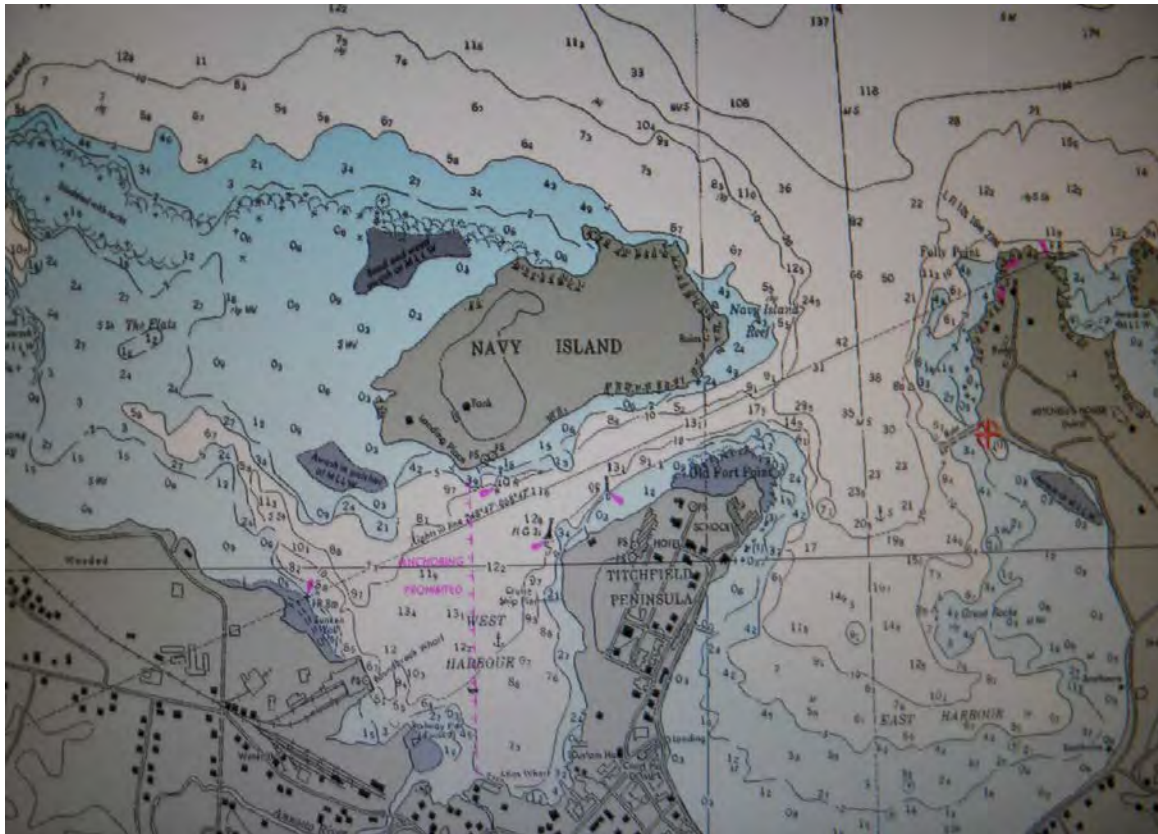


Figure 9. Port Antonio

As you approach Port Antonio framed by the John Crow and Blue Mountains, you are in for a visual feast. The Blue Mountains are one of the highest ranges in the Caribbean, rising over 7000ft.

Port Antonio is actually two harbors, East Harbor and West Harbor. The entrance is via East Harbor and then to starboard to follow the markers into West Harbor. Everything is clearly marked. The entrance is straightforward.

West Harbor has three marine facilities. The newest is the Errol Flynn Marina. The second is what is referred to as the “old marina” and the third is the boatyard adjacent to the old marina.

As you enter the harbor, Navy Island is to starboard. Once the site of a marina facility, it is now in disrepair and there is nothing of interest for the visiting yachtsman on the island. All three facilities are owned and managed by the Jamaican Port Authority.

Anchoring in the harbor is permitted and there is more than adequate anchoring room. I do not recommend anchoring in East Harbor as it is exposed to the prevailing wind and swell.

The harbor and marina are “no discharge zones” and boats are expected to use their holding tanks. If your boat is not equipped with a holding tank, they will ask you to use shoreside facilities. No one checks, but you are expected to comply.



The boatyard facility is excellent, and has a 100 ton lift that is 24 feet wide. If you need to be hauled this is an ideal place to have it done. The boatyard facility has excellent security as does the marina.

In addition to hauling your boat, there are a number of individuals in the area who can help you with virtually any type of work or repair that you may need. While at the marina I met **Donavan "Scanny" Hudson** and **John "Hulk" Brown**. If you do not see them at the marina they can be contacted through the front office. They can do everything from temporary care of

your boat to cleaning and painting and varnishing. They can also help with any type of excursion you may desire as well as serve as guides if you plan to cruise the island or any part of it.

Always be sure you are clear on what you are contracting for and that the terms and price are well defined. We invited a fisherman named **Clive Black** to come with us for the trip around the island and he was nothing but helpful and informed. If you choose to take a local guide with you as you cruise Jamaica, you must inform the authorities who will have you add him to your ship's list as a passenger. A fringe benefit of having a Jamaican with you is that if you want to fish, you will not need to obtain a fishing license as Jamaicans are allowed to fish their waters.

In addition to bathroom facilities at the marina, there is a wonderful restaurant on the second floor overlooking the harbor that is a great place for lunch or dinner. And if you take the beach path at the marina, it leads to a nice beach as well as *Norma's at the Marina*, which is an attractive open bar/restaurant.



Figure 10. Port Antonio's two harbors and Navy Island

The town of Port Antonio is a bit worn around the edges but I found the people friendly and the open market wonderful. It has fruits and vegetables as well as a craft market in the back end. You enter the open market at one end and as you walk through it will return you at the other end to the main part of town. There are ample banks and ATM machines. Taxis are also available and the driver I had went out of his way to show me around. He charged about \$15.00 US per hour.

There is much to do within a reasonable distance from Port Antonio. Among the many choices are REICH FALLS, considered to be the most beautiful of Jamaica's waterfalls. The falls are close to Manchioneal harbor. In addition you can arrange a rafting trip on the Rio Grande. There are also picture perfect white sand beaches close by.



Picture taken from Errol Flynn Marina looking into West Harbor

Port Antonio is a safe and interesting stop with a secure harbor. Clearing in is easy with the help of the marina staff and the nearby town is a 5 minute walk.



Do not miss the open market as it is as Jamaican an experience as you will find.

The market is at its best on Friday and Saturday. The arts and crafts include a wide variety of Jamaican handicrafts and one can spend hours looking at what is available. Since the crafts market is located at the produce market, you can also pick up whatever fruits and vegetables that you may need. The oranges are wonderful and if you love mangos, during mango season you can eat your heart's delight.

At the old train station, a stone's throw from the "old marina" you will find the Portland Art Gallery which presents art from a number of Jamaican artists. The art and the setting make for a wonderful experience.



FOSTER'S COVE

18°20.92N 76°50.60W directly offshore of cove

Foster's Cove is not well known. The harbor faces NW and as a result provides some protection from north wind and wave. To enter you must transit a channel about 300 feet wide and pass between reefs on both sides. Once in you can anchor in 10ft of water. The bottom is sand with good holding.

This anchorage is not the place to be in a norther. In normal NE winds the bluff on the east side of the harbor provides adequate protection. Do not look for any facilities as the cove is quite isolated from any town.

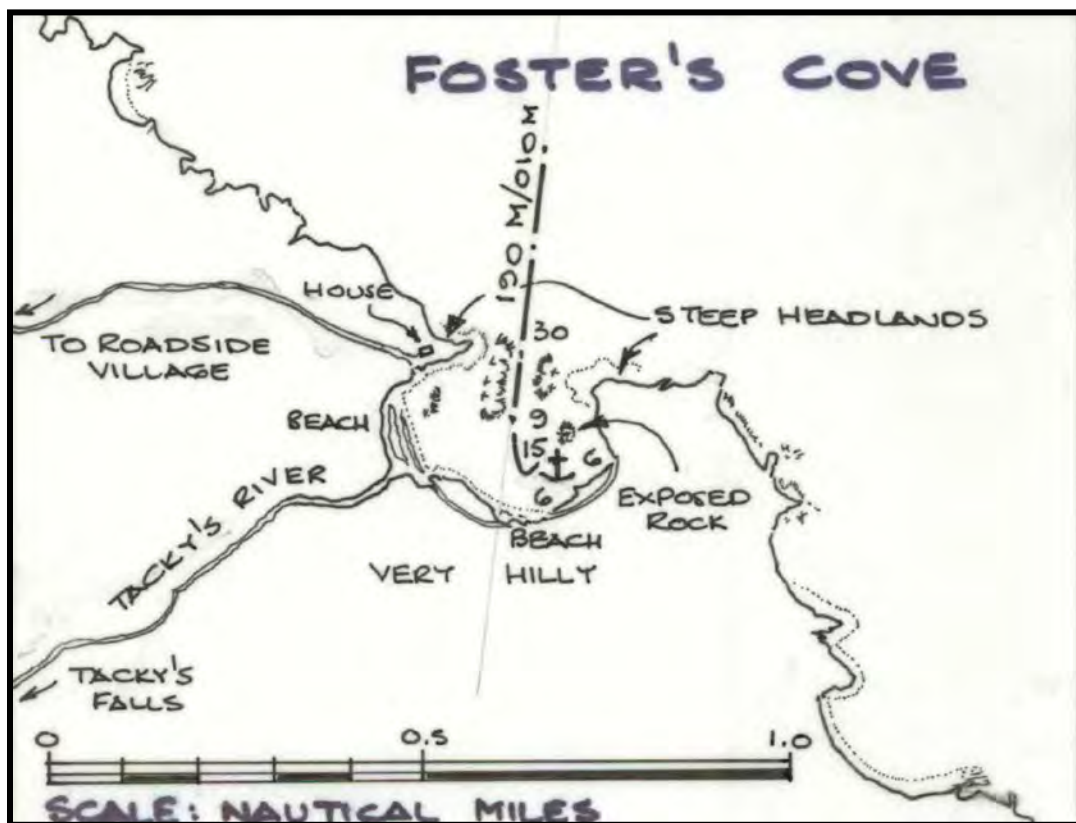


Figure 11. Foster's Cove



Photo from *The Yachtman's Guide to Jamaica* by John Lethbridge.

Foster's Cove



A shelled denizen of the reef

PORT MARIA ANCHORAGE

18°22.70N 76°53.20W at entrance to the anchorage

This is a pretty anchorage as there are hills and scenery to take in. In the center of the anchorage is Cabarita Island. There is a nice sand beach here and the holding in the anchorage is also good. This anchorage works for normal trade winds but it is not the place to be in a norther as it is open to the north. Anchor just behind Cabarita Island and to the west.

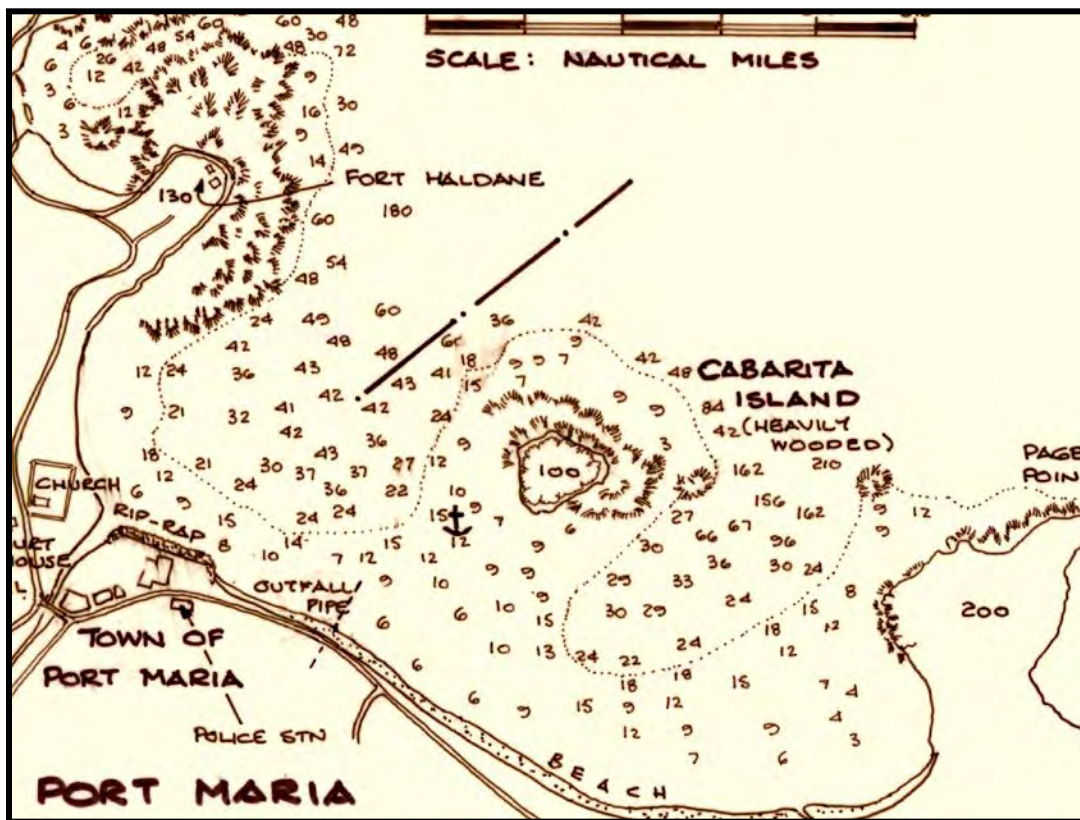


Figure 12. Port Maria

Fort Haldane is located here overlooking the bay and if you have the time it is worth a visit. You can leave your dinghy at the stone rip rap sea wall close to the church. You can also visit Noel Coward's home *Firefly* which is open to visitors and has magnificent views.



Cabarita Island shown to port

ORACABESSA HARBOR

18°24.40N 076°57.20W off entrance

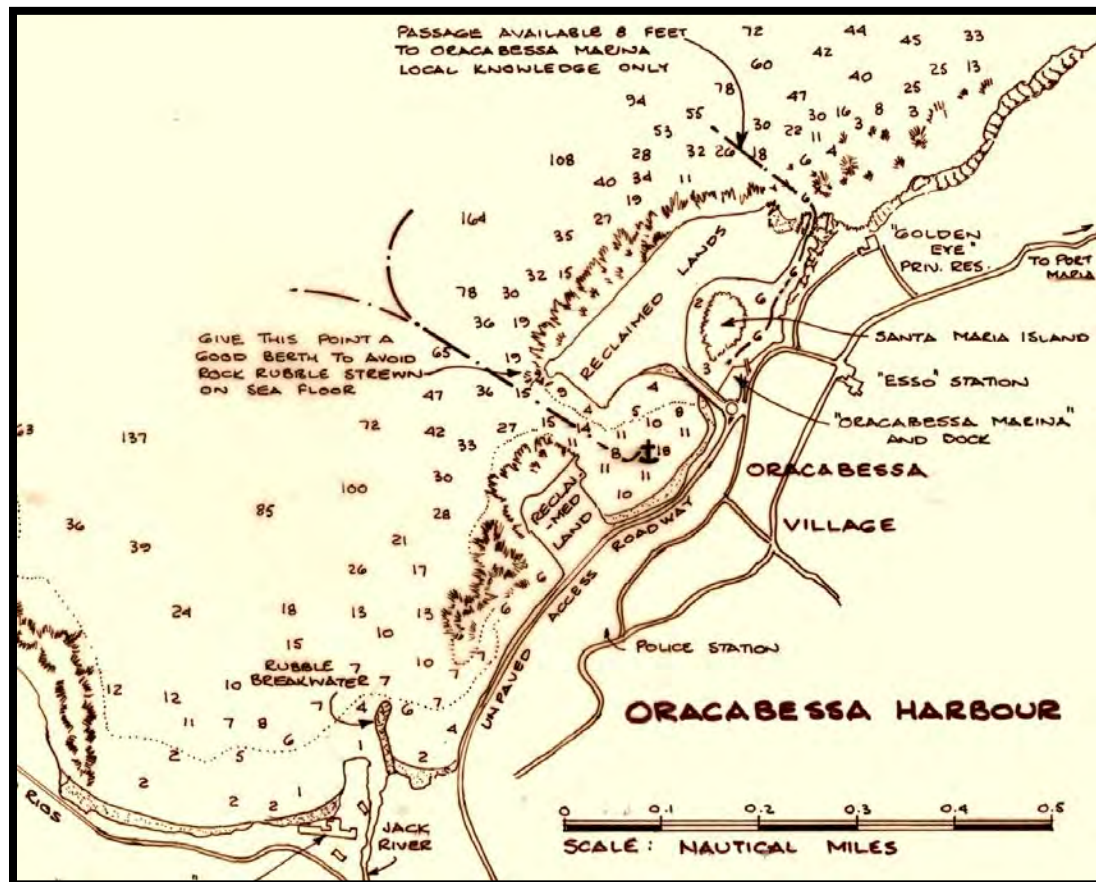


Figure 13. Oracabessa Harbor

Oracabessa is an easy stop. To enter the basin you must give the SE corner entering a wide berth. The basin is small and local boats are present, so finding a suitable anchorage can be a challenge. The basin is open to the NW and does not offer good protection in anything other than settled normal weather. The water is deeper off the beach at the NE end of the harbor.

OCHO RIOS

18°25.00N 77°06.90W Fl. green 3 secs buoy.

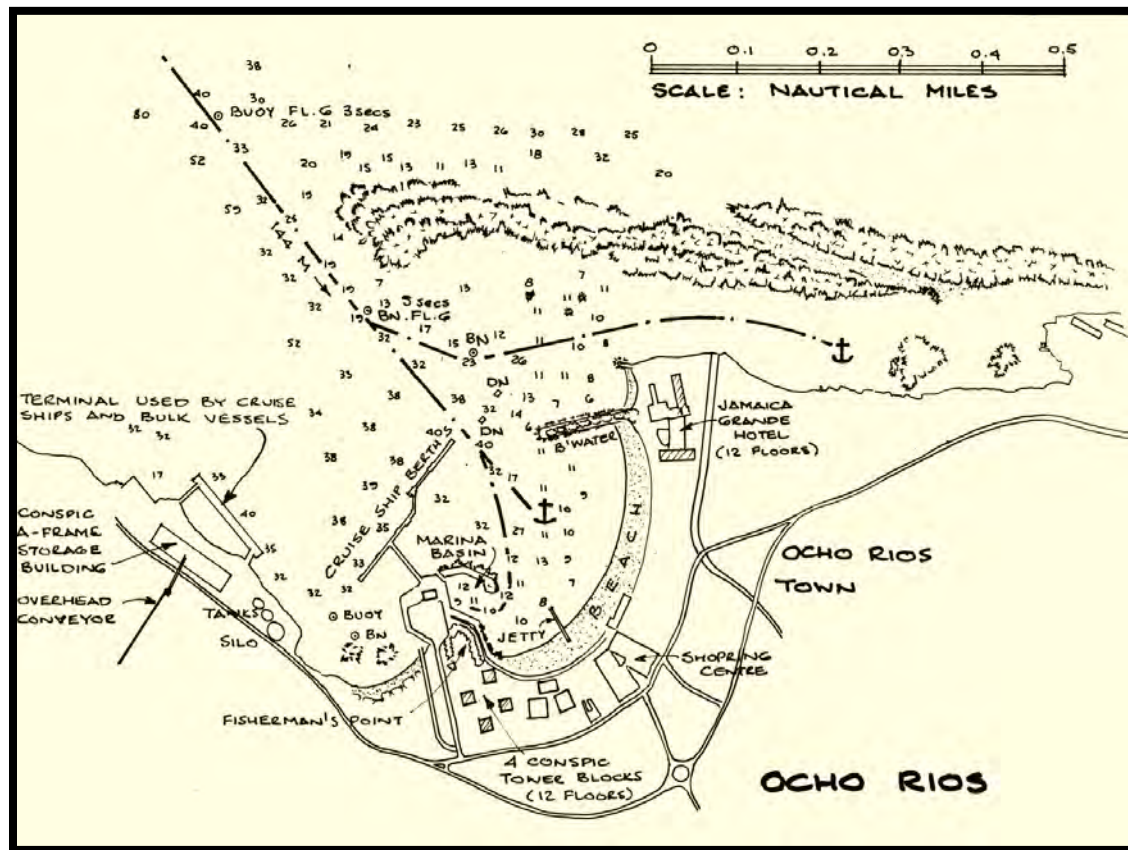


Figure 14. Ocho Rios

Ocho Rios is a tourist town; a *very* tourist-y town. Cruise ships call here almost daily in season. Ocho Rios was once a sleepy fishing village. Today its economy is based on tourism, both hotel and cruise ship. If you like harbors with lots of noise and activity, this is your place. The harbor is alive daily with the sound of jet skis roaring to and fro. Entrance to the harbor is easy. Once you pass the cruise ship dock you are in an area with good holding, essentially the middle of the harbor and most open to weather.

There are two other anchorages. One is to starboard from the main body of the harbor into what is called the “marina basin.” The problem with this area is that it is close quarters and there are local boats berthed here. It will not be easy to find a space, but if you do, it is far more protected than the

main harbor. They have been saying for years that this basin will be developed as a marina by some joint venture between the Jamaican government and the cruise ship industry, but to date nothing has changed.



OCHO RIOS MAIN HARBOR

Other than the marina basin you can anchor behind the reef at the outside of the harbor. The area averages 7-10ft of water and is protected from wave action by the reef. This is my favorite anchorage in Ocho Rios because it has the best view and is protected as well. However, if you plan to go into town it is also the farthest from where you will need to land.

The town of Ocho Rios contains many tourist duty free shops. Everywhere you go you will be encouraged to buy something. Fast food chain restaurants are present in abundance. There is also an active night life. For those that like to climb there is the popular Dunn's River Falls, which is a series of waterfalls that cascade 180ft down through terraced pools over a tenth of a mile from the hills to the sea.

**Picture perfect pool
along the Dunn's River Falls**



This harbor has clearance facilities and is an official harbor of entry. Given the amount of protection this harbor offers and the proximity of better harbors close by, I do not recommend stopping at Ocho Rios. It is best left to the cruise ships and their passengers.



ST. ANN'S BAY

18°26.80N 77°11.90W at outer markers

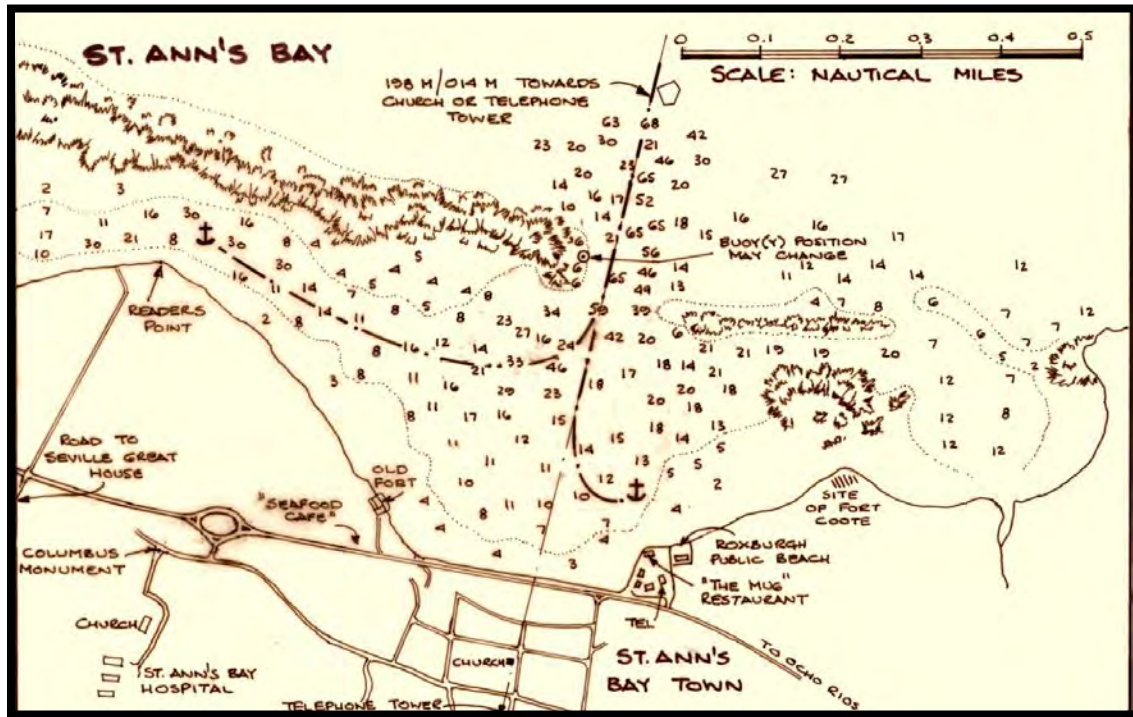


Figure 15. St. Ann's Bay

From a cruising sailor's vantage point there is much to be said for St. Ann's Bay. While the bay does not offer good protection in a norther, it does offer a variety of anchorages. You can anchor off the town on your port as you enter. If you want something more remote there are a number of anchorages to your starboard behind the reef in 8 to 20 feet of water. This is located just off Reader's point.

Coming from the east you leave Drax Hall Point to port and make for the above position to arrive at the flashing green and red buoys. From the west be sure to give Lee Reef a sufficient berth before turning in. Once between the flashing markers, entrance is straightforward but be careful to stay between the shoals entering. From the markers a course of 193M will take you in safely.

This bay is unsuitable in any kind of a norther as it is wide open. Be sure to monitor the weather before anchoring and passing a night here. If you do anchor behind Lee Reef and the weather were to come from the north during the night, you would be well challenged to get out of this harbor safely.

St. Ann's is a very pretty town. On Friday and Saturday there is an open air market on Main Street. There are small shops and restaurants in town located both on Main and Bravo Streets, the two main streets in town. Marcus Garvey was born here. There is a large statue of him at the library.



Town of St. Ann's

Keep in mind that if you anchor at the eastern side of the harbor it is much more convenient to the town but far more exposed in case of wind or sea than the anchorage behind Lee Reef.

DISCOVERY BAY

18°28.40N 077°24.40W at entrance buoys

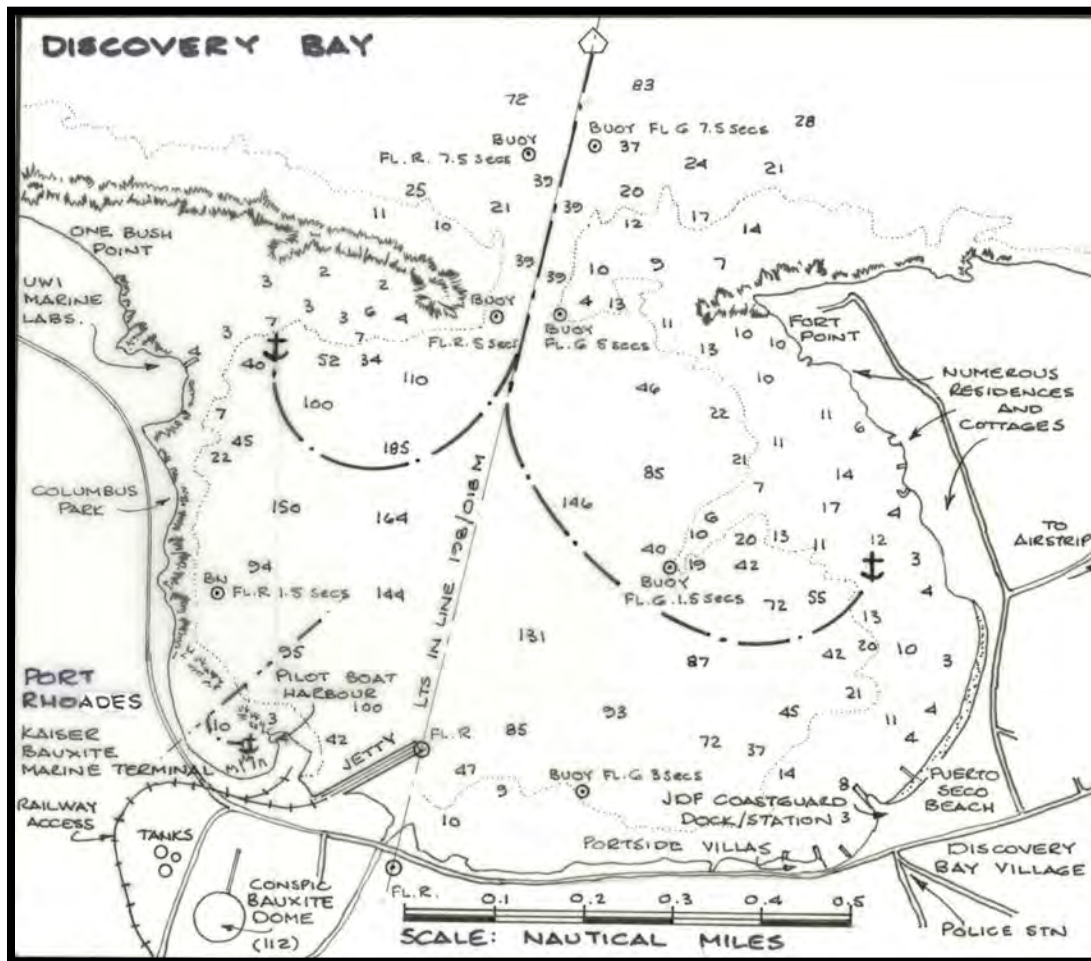


Figure 16. Discovery Bay

Very conspicuous on entering is the Kaiser Bauxite Plant. The Bay is also known as Port Rhoades, the name of the bauxite terminal. The bauxite plant is a major employer in the town. The full extent of the plant is apparent in the image below. There are hotels, shops, and restaurants in town as well.



Bird's eye view of Discovery Bay and the Kaiser Bauxite complex



The anchorage behind the reef to the west is normally the better anchorage. There are a number of anchorages that can be used but the best is at the extreme east end of the bay in 10-12ft of water. Holding is good. The anchorage is just north of Seco Beach.



Town of Discovery Bay

RIO BUENO

18°28.74N 077°27.33W N of inlet

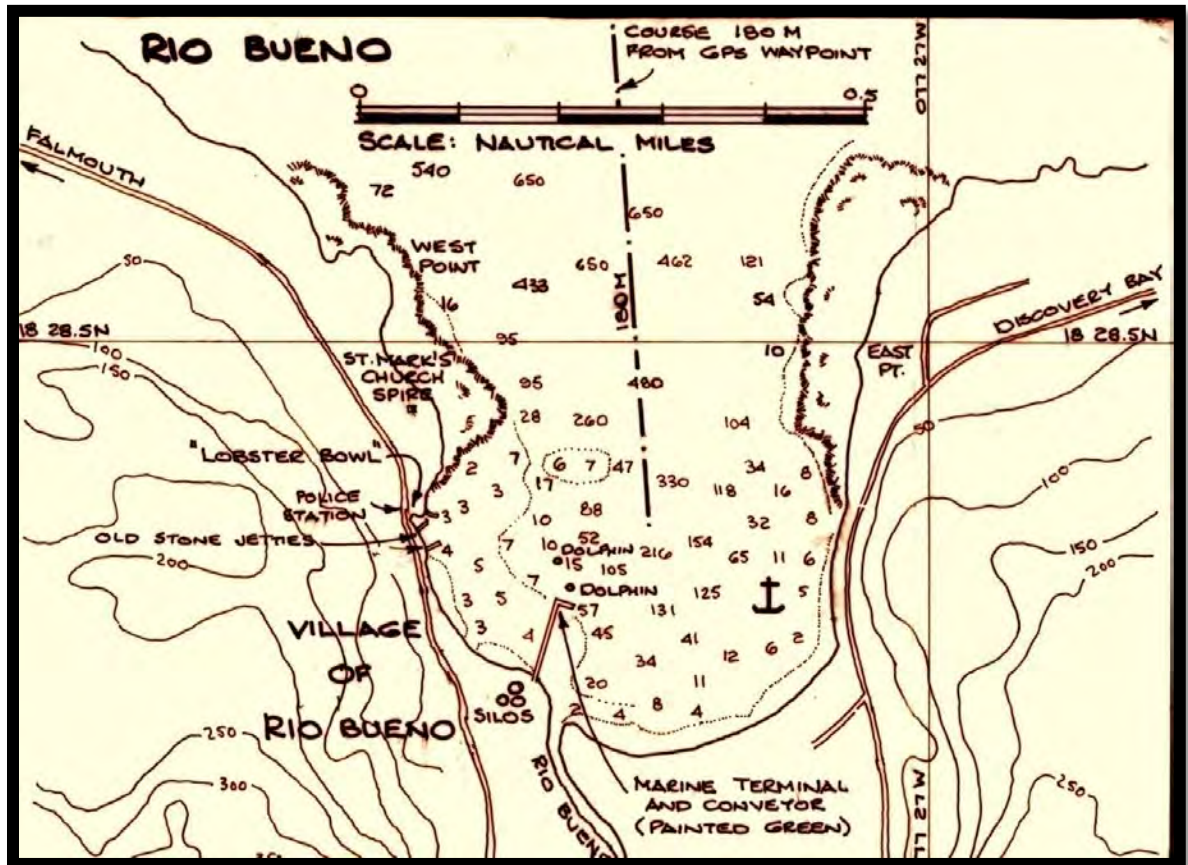


Figure 17. Rio Bueno

Rio Bueno is an easy entry. However it does not have good protection due to its wide open bay. This can be a real deathtrap in northerlies and northerly swells.

However, in settled weather it is an interesting stop. Be careful to note the shoal on the west side of the harbor going in. There is a wonderful art gallery in this town for those who want to see Jamaica art, the **Joe James Gallery**. Joe James is well known for his work and there are other artists to see as well.

FALMOUTH HARBOR

18°30.00N 77°38.62W North of the entrance at buoy

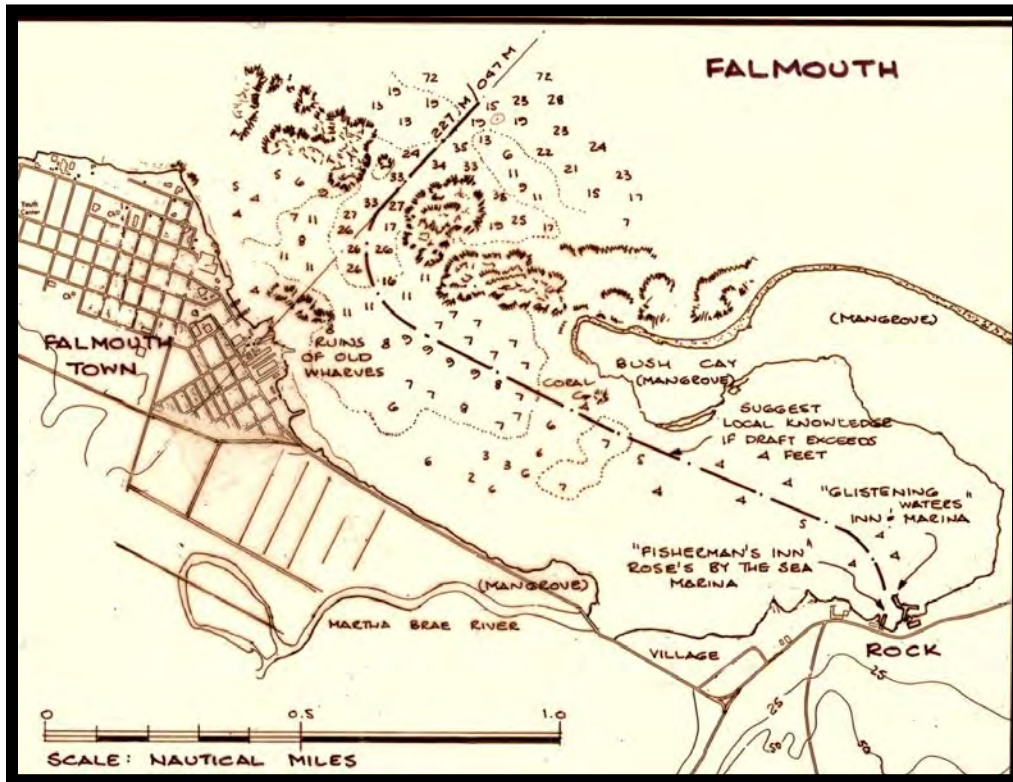


Figure 18. Falmouth

I had visited Falmouth on prior cruises and anchored in the lee of Bush Cay. The town is said to be the most architecturally pleasing town in Jamaica, with an interesting collection of Georgian buildings. Falmouth was at one



New Falmouth cruise port in Falmouth town

time one of Jamaica's busiest ports for the shipment of sugar, molasses, rum and coffee to England, receiving slaves and other 18th century staples in return. There are two old "marinas" at the inner harbor, but they are in shoal water and not suitable for most sailboats. One, however, the Glistening Waters Marina, has a seafood restaurant considered by many to be amongst the best in the country. The harbor has no shortage of mosquitoes.



Figure 19. Falmouth cruise port across from Bush Cay

MONTEGO BAY (MOBAY)

18°28.15N 77°56.035W Buoy 7, fl. G



Figure 20. Montego Bay, craft market upper right

When approaching Montego Bay one must keep well clear of the reefs which extend west of the airport and the shoreline to the south. Once past the reef you will be able to locate Buoy 7 without difficulty.

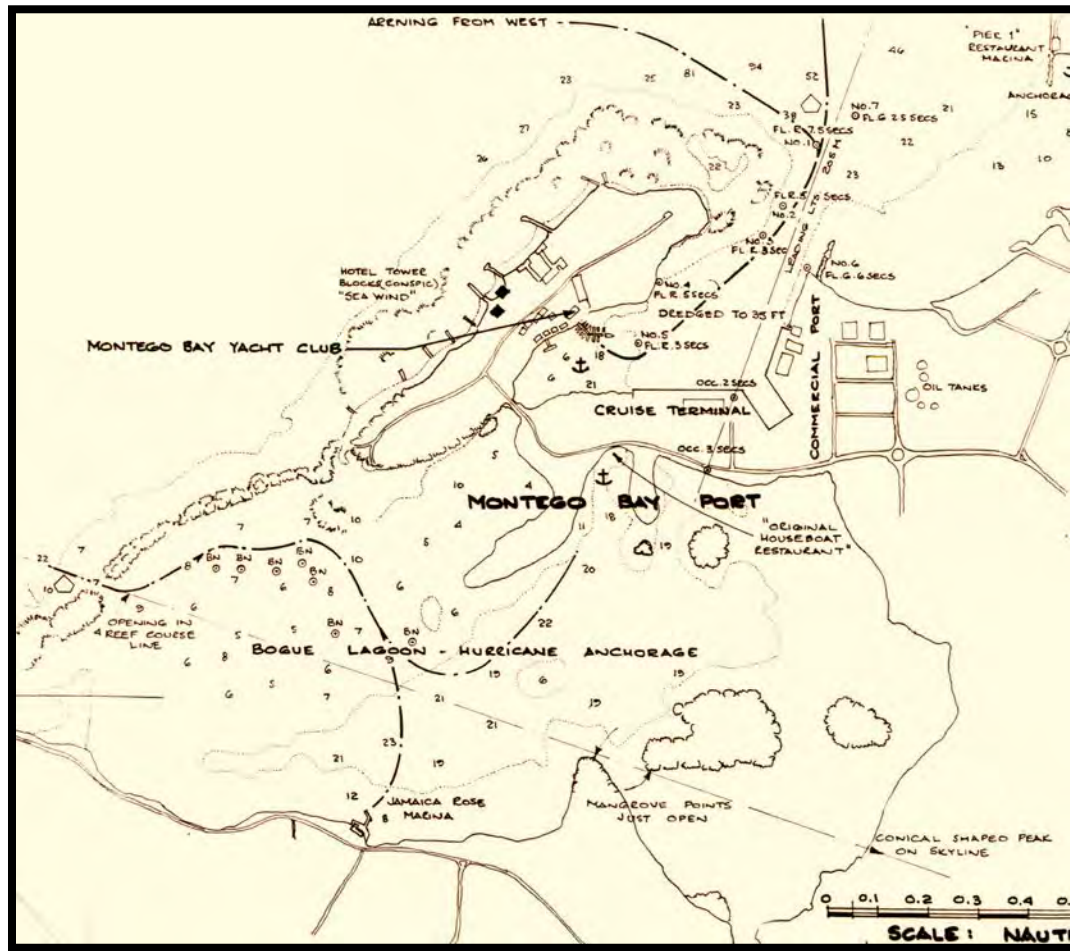


Figure 21. Montego Bay



As you follow the channel favoring the west side of it, round up to starboard and make for the Montego Bay Yacht Club. You will see a few moorings but these are generally occupied by local boats. Anchoring can be a little tight, but it seems like there is always room for one more.

Or you can contact the club and see if a slip is available. The club monitors

VHF 16/68. The Montego Bay Yacht Club has come a long way since its inception in 1936. The protected waters inside Montego Bay provide a great point of entry or exit to Jamaica. There is a long tradition of cruising hospitality by the club and there are several calendar events that have grown out of this, such as the Pineapple Cup Race - www.montegobayrace.com . This bi-annual race from Fort Lauderdale, Florida, to Montego Bay has taken place for more than fifty years.

The club has really luxurious bathrooms and showers, amongst the best I have ever seen. There are also a restaurant and a bar, as well as billiards and a swimming pool. The club is a very comfortable and secure facility.



Montego Bay Yacht Club, outside...



...and in

For visiting boats all club services are available:

- Immigration and customs service (by request through the club)
- Dock with 24 hour security
- Fuel and water
- Dinghy dock, laundry
- WiFi and electricity

While I was there, if you remained anchored in front of the club and chose to use the club facilities, the charge was \$6.00 per day, per person. Also for an average price of \$10.00 to \$15.00 US per person the restaurant serves a really first class meal.



One of the nicest things about the club is the friendliness of its staff. Mrs. Heather Vernon is the club secretary and Mrs. Beverly Russell the club manager. They have an excellent staff to make your stay as nice as can be.



View from the *Richmond Hill Inn* (500ft above the bay) includes the Montego Bay Yacht Club and anchorage area. The area directly behind the club is Bogue Lagoon.

One of the convenient things about the club is its convenience to the Mega Mart. A five minute taxi ride takes you to a “buyer’s club” type supermarket where you can reprovision to your heart’s content. They have it all and then some.

And a 10 minute taxi ride will take you to the Montego Bay arts and craft market.

This is a “DON’T MISS.” It is colorful, it is large, and it is very safe. You can shop for an entire day and not see everything. The Harbor Street Crafts Market consists of an enclosed lot with numerous wooden buildings in it. Each building has many merchants selling a wide variety of arts and crafts.

Don't be afraid to bargain, but try to remember that you are getting about 85 Jamaican dollars to 1 US dollar. The people who work there work long hours and you will clearly see that they work very hard. They want you to purchase something and they want you to be happy with it. When you walk into their booth, if it is a hot day, the owner will stay behind you waving a fan while you look.

The key to getting a good price is to smile and to keep the negotiations within context. If you are looking at a shirt for \$15.00 US and offer \$2.00 US, the chances are you will not end up owning it. You must be realistic. Think 20 to 30% off the asking price. As the large cruise ships do not bring their groups to the market en masse, you will get the distinct feeling that your business is *very* appreciated. You might even say, "A shopper's paradise."



One of the many booths at the "Harbor Street Crafts"

The center of the town of Montego Bay is interesting and has a great deal to offer. Be careful walking, for while it is safe, you will be approached by “guides, salesmen and others” who have something to offer you. Many times they will tell you they recognize you and strike up a conversation. As they walk alongside you, they automatically assume that you have hired them. The town square is referred to as SAM SHARPE SQUARE. Sam Sharpe was a slave who led the famous “Christmas Rebellion” in December 1831.



SAM SHARPE SQUARE

Not too far from the square is the open market where you can purchase all types of food stuffs. What really “shines” is FRUITS AND VEGETABLES and you will find the prices very reasonable. Everything you ever imagined that looks and tastes good is sold fresh each day. There are enormous mangos, succulent watermelons and eye-popping bananas and papayas. And vegetables that are so large and so colorful, they do not look real.

Further on and also close by is the “HIP STRIP” on Gloucester Avenue. This is where the action is. It is fabled to have anything that a tourist could want. The walk along the Hip Strip is a joy in itself as it bursts with activity and life. There is a lavish assortment of restaurants here that caters to many different palates and offers a wide range of ethnic foods. You will find everything from Red Stripe beer, to "We Be Jammin" and "Life's a Beach" T-shirts, to crafts of wood or seashell art. There are also many fine-jewelry merchants and duty-free items. Haggling is fairly easy with sidewalk vendors, who are simply happy you stopped by. American dollars are preferred here.



Jimmy Buffet's *MARGARITAVILLE* on the “hip strip”

You need travel only 7 miles northeast of Montego Bay on the North Coast Highway to step back into the sugar cane plantation and slave history of Jamaica. The 18th century Georgian mansion, Rose Hall Great House, is considered the most impressive of Jamaica's former plantation houses. It boasts an equally impressive back story as the home of the White Witch, Annie Palmer.

Orphaned at 11 in Haiti when her English-Irish parents died of yellow fever; reared till 18 by her Vodoun practicing nanny and then orphaned again;



Annie crossed to Jamaica and married John Palmer and became mistress of Rose Hall Plantation which comprised about 10 square miles and required 2000 slaves to operate.

Jamaican sugar cane cutters, late 1800s

Annie is believed to have murdered (or enlisted the help of her freed slave lover to murder) not one, but three, husbands, and perhaps other men as well. Annie, whose cruelty apparently knew no bounds, met her own violent end in 1831. But the story doesn't end there. Soon enough stories of hauntings began to circulate. Supposedly Rose Hall survived destruction during the slave uprisings not due to any virtues of its most famous inhabitant but to fear of her ghost. And ghost stories persist to this day.

Annie was reputed to have said that she would be the last mistress of Rose Hall, and though the house and plantation passed through several owners, none remained long...

The Great House had sunk into decrepitude by the time John Rollins, an American industrialist, and his wife Michelle acquired it in the 1970s. They then poured nearly \$3 million into the restoration of just the main house.



Rose Hall Great House when purchased by American industrialist John Rollins in the 1960s

Johnny Cash, long time friend of John Rollins and owner of a neighboring Jamaican estate at Cinnamon Hill, reported ghostly encounters in the Great House. The basement bar and restaurant area, formerly the dungeon, now contains an extensive collection of written accounts and photographs of strange occurrences encountered by visitors from all over the world.

Cash, American country western singer-songwriter, also wrote a song about Rose Hall and the White Witch, "The Ballad of Annie Palmer"
(<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YOSU5WMkOpo&feature=related>).

If you treat yourself to a guided tour of Rose Hall, it will end at the tomb of Annie Palmer with a recitation of the song by your tour guide in period costume (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CCgHSH--5Mg>).



Rose Hall post-restoration offers guided tours of the Great House and its grounds



Commanding view of the Caribbean whose waterfront was supposedly accessible by secret tunnel from the house in the event of a slave revolt



The refurbished dining room featuring a meal that would have been carried by slaves along the “whistling path” from the kitchen building



Glimpse into the former dungeon below stairs, scene of unspeakable cruelties by Annie, now bar and restaurant, where the collection of ghost stories is displayed

BOGUE LAGOON

27°173N 077°57.629W buoy that marks entrance channel

Once past the buoy there is a series of markers -- rusted and old, but serviceable -- to lead you in. Do not shortcut *any* of them. Their colors are faded, so you need to stay alert. Do not even think about entering at night.

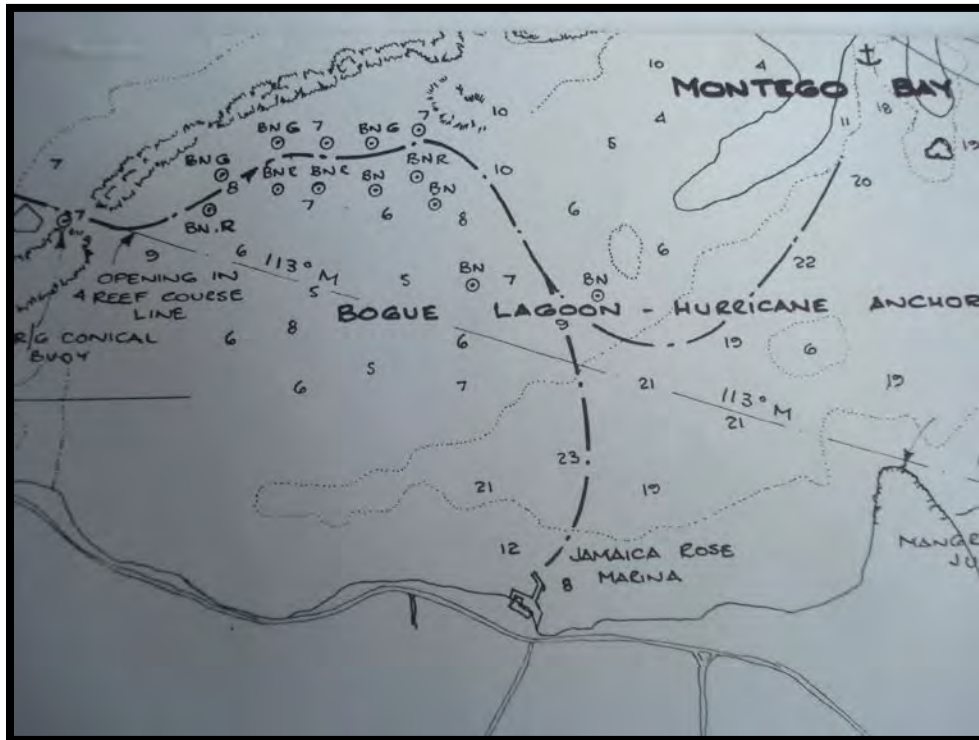


Figure 22. Bogue Lagoon

This anchorage should be used in heavy “northers” or even hurricanes. It is well protected with good holding. There is a Houseboat restaurant in the lagoon; you can anchor close by and dinghy over to enjoy a really nice meal.

The entrance channel carries 7ft of water. If you need more, wait for a high tide which will give you another foot. Once inside, the depth in the anchorage area is 15-20ft.

Unless you like this type of anchorage, there is nothing to recommend here other than avoiding heavy weather. This is mangrove country so when the wind is down, mosquitoes can be merciless. Check your screens.

MOSQUITO COVE

18°27.60N 078°06.47W just N of the entrance

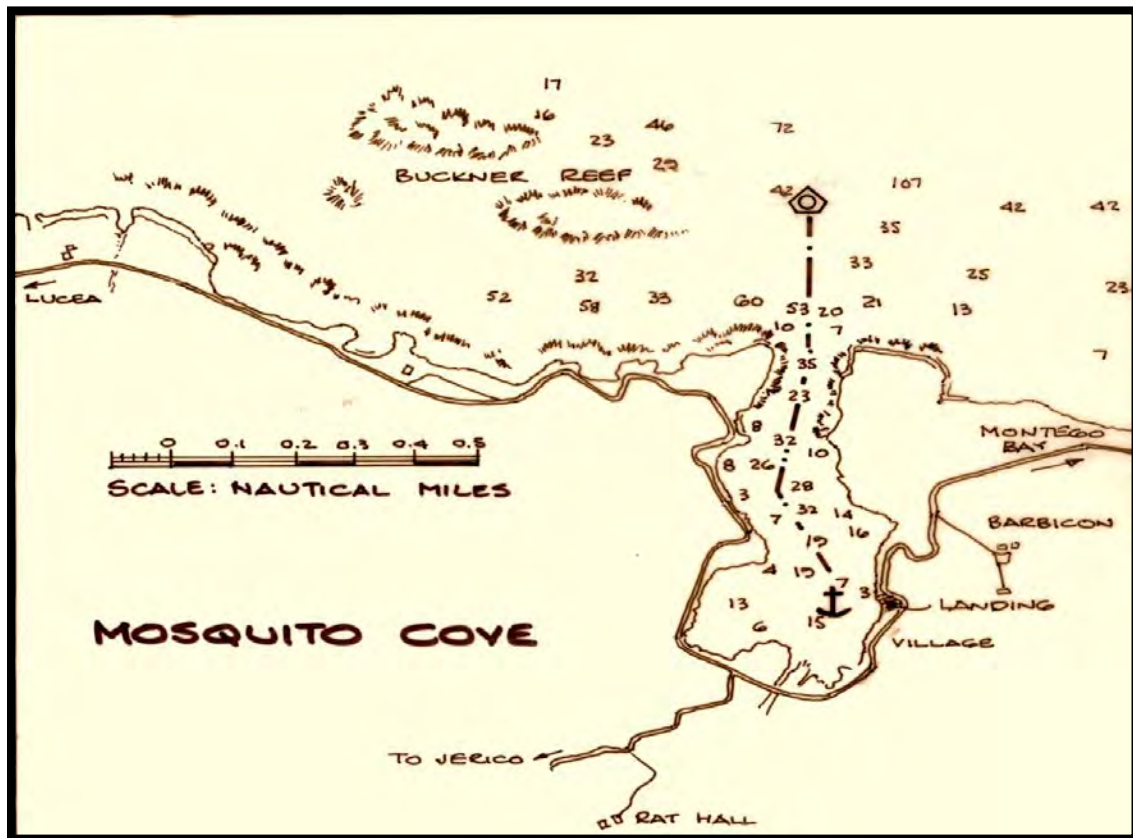


Figure 23. Mosquito Cove

Coming from the West, be careful to avoid Bruckner Reef. A course of 184M will lead you from the GPS position above through the entrance. The entrance is 250ft wide and carries over 20ft of depth all the way through. The cove is snug except in northerlies. Anchoring is best on the east side of the harbor in 10ft or more of water with good holding.

LUCEA

18°27.77N 78°09.70W just N of harbor entrance ½ mile

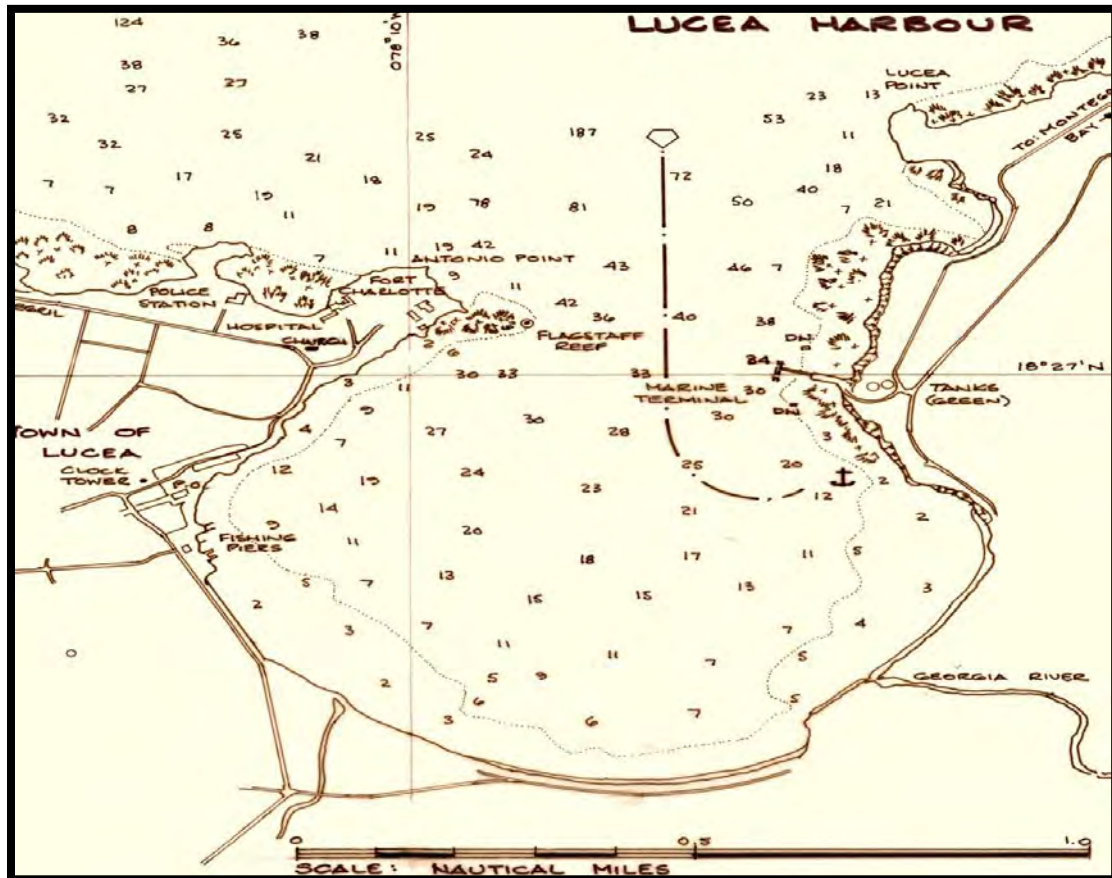


Figure 24. Lucea Harbor

Lucea Harbor, pronounced Lucy, is a lovely little harbor, easy in. The best anchorage is just south of the “marine terminal” in 12ft of water with good holding. The harbor is not protected against “northers” and would be uncomfortable in a blow. The anchorage is about a mile from the town of Lucea should you decide to go to town to provision or simply walk around.

While the harbor is secure, do not leave your boat here anchored and unattended. (I never leave my boat anywhere anchored and unattended).



LUCEA ANCHORAGE

One of the interesting things about Lucea is the beautiful clock tower on the courthouse. The clock was built for St. Lucia and erroneously shipped to Lucea. The townsfolk liked it so much they refused to return it and instead took up a collection to pay for it.

On the west side of the harbor entering you will see the remains of Fort Charlotte, named after King George III's queen. Parts of it are still intact and you can see two of the king's cannons mounted on rotary carriages.

The Anglican church has a rustic graveyard with a Jewish burial ground and an interesting story behind it.

A side road that begins 200m west of the church leads to the Hanover Museum, a tiny affair housed in an old police barracks. Exhibits include prisoners' stocks, a wooden bathtub and a miscellany of pots, lead weights and measures. It also has a tiny gift shop, toilets and a snack bar.

On the east side of the town square is the Cleveland Stanhope Market, which is a wonderful market to see and participate in on the weekends when the market is most active. There are so many vendors and buyers that it is like being at an old time fair. And there are so many interesting things on display. If you stop at Lucea, do not miss the market!



Lucea's famous clock tower

As an afterthought, while I was in Montego Bay there was a young minister in the town square speaking about his mission and his work in Lucea. His name is Pastor D.S. Connell and he spoke on "The Struggle is My Life." While I do not usually go out of my way for such a diversion, he spoke so passionately and charismatically about his work in Lucea that I had to stop and listen. He asked me to let all cruising sailors know that he would much appreciate the opportunity to welcome you to the town of Lucea if you make the stop.

GREEN ISLAND HARBOR

18° 24.50N 78°17.00W just offshore ready to enter the harbor

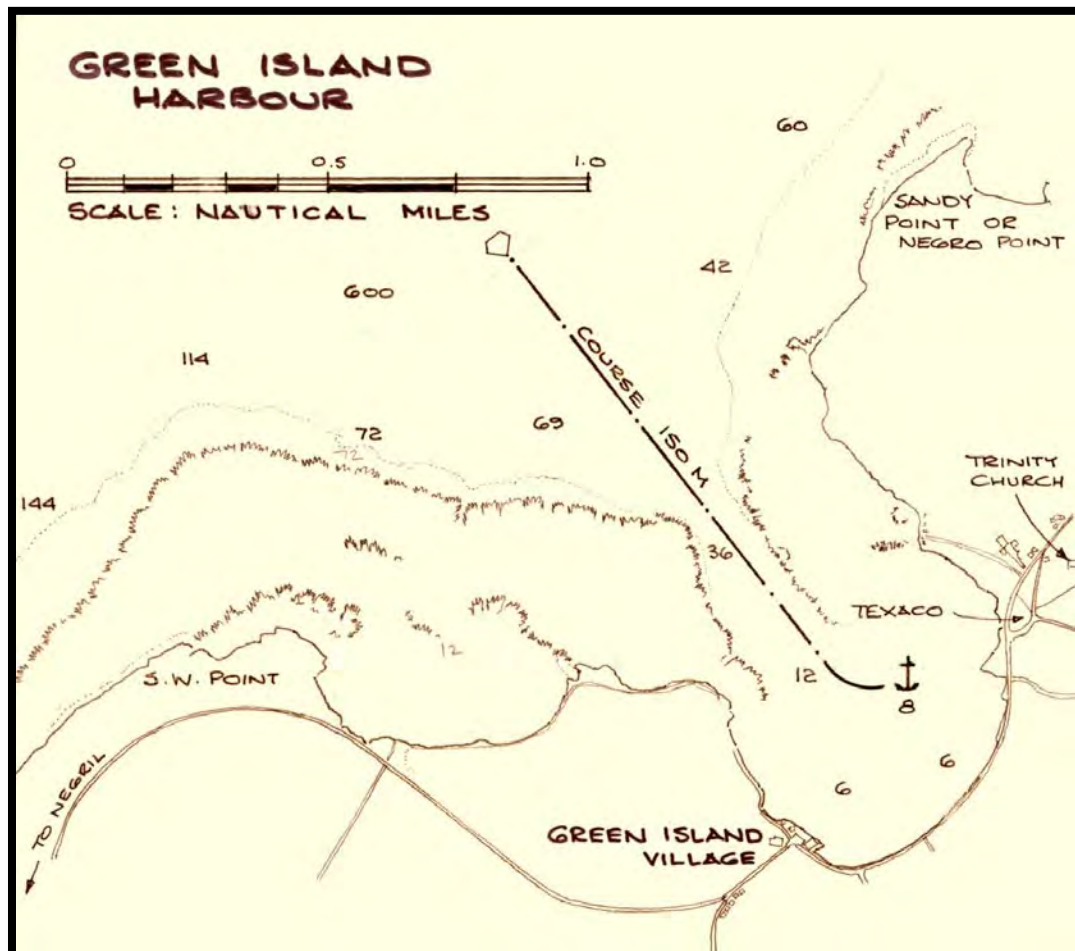


Figure 25. Green Island Harbour

This is a small and very laid back harbor. Since it is open to the weather and not particularly interesting, I can think of no reason to stop here. However, there is a small village where basic stores can be obtained.

The entrance channel is between two large reefs. If you hold 150 mag. Going in from the way point above, you will pass down the center of the channel which carries over 30ft of water. Anchorage is in 8ft of water with good holding.

WEST COAST (North to South)

NEGRIL: Bloody Bay and Long Bay

18°20.75N 078°20.604W at entrance of Bloody Bay

This should be called “PARADISE LOST” bay, as it is so beautiful that it makes your head spin; at least it spins mine. White sand beaches and a very protected anchorage. Pristine waters to swim in. The anchorage is just “under” N. Negril Point. It is in 10ft of water with a sand bottom that provides good holding.

From the anchorage, heading south along the bay, the distance is approximately 4 miles and terminates at Negril town. If you make the passage from Bloody Bay to Negril, unless you own a catamaran do not pass behind Booby Cay as the water is 6ft or less in spots. Take the “outside passage.”

The anchorage at Bloody Bay got its name because whalers used to anchor here to clean their catch and so much whale blood was spilled that the water turned red.

This anchorage is also where Jack Rackham (Calico Jack), the famous pirate was captured in 1720. He had with him two of the most famous woman pirates in pirate history. Mary Reade and Anne Bonney were both known for their quick tempers and ability with sword and pistol. Allegedly they complained to Jack after their capture that had he being doing his job, rather than getting drunk, the outcome would have been different. Jack and his crew were all hanged under British justice, but the woman pleaded their bellies as both were pregnant at the time.

Both were spared as under British law pregnant women could not be hanged. The stories of their lives afterwards vary. Some say Mary died of fever with her unborn child. Others say she feigned death to escape. Anne gave birth to her child and there is no record thereafter of her being executed. Many say she lived out her life with her child after returning to England.

Still others say she remained in the Caribbean. And yet others say she lived out her life with Mary and their children in Louisiana; the happy ending!

While you are anchored in this storied spot, as you drift off for your afternoon nap in the cockpit of your boat, you can dream of what it must have been like for Jack and Mary and Anne as they fought against the British right in this anchorage. If you're curious about further fascinating details, check out this Smithsonian article complete with extensive source materials: <http://www.smithsonianmag.com/history/if-theres-a-man-among-ye-the-tale-of-pirate-queens-anne-bonny-and-mary-read-45576461/?no-ist>



Negril anchorage



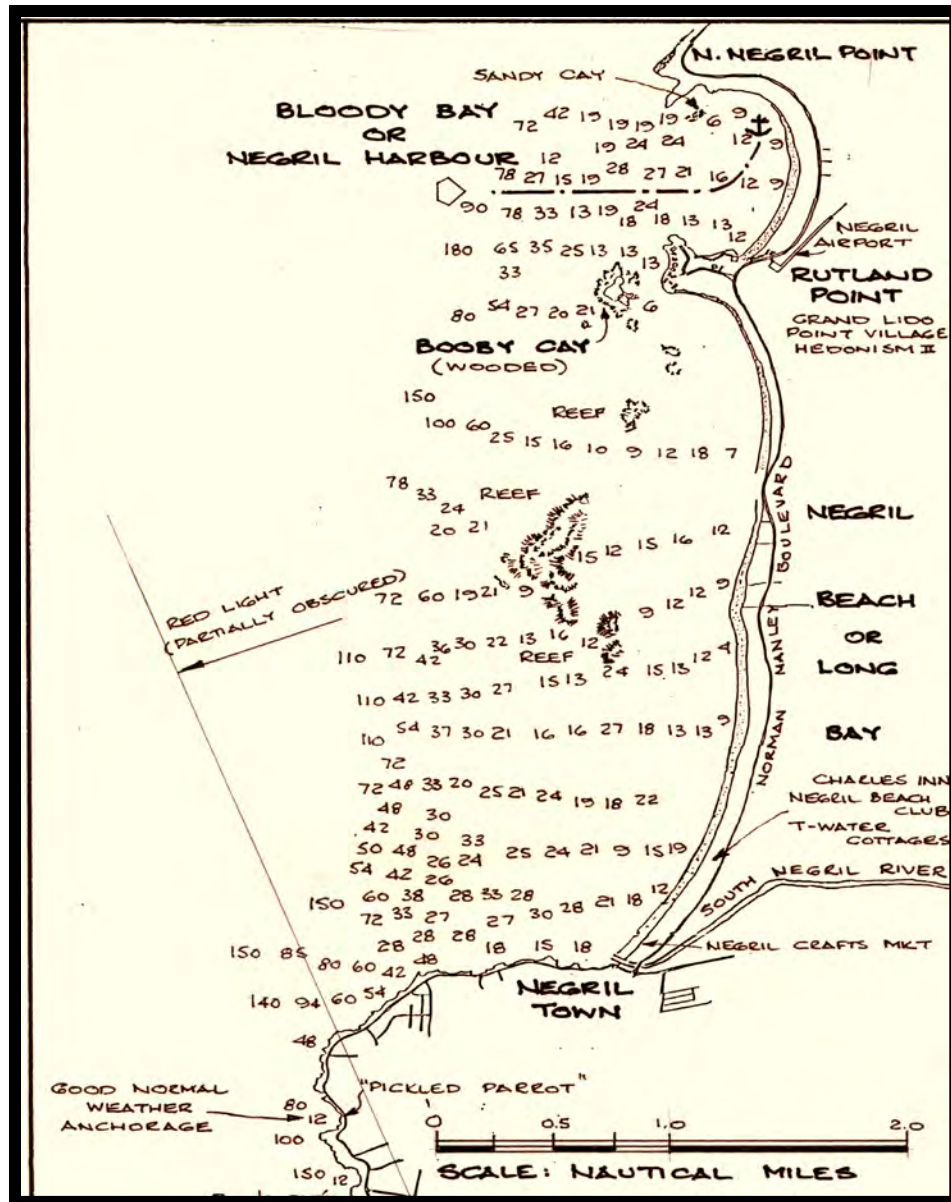


Figure 26. Bloody Bay (Negril Harbour)

If you do anchor at Bloody Bay and want to go ashore, there are a number of nice hotels along the beach. Some welcome cruising boats; some do not. You can leave your dinghy on the beach but be sure to find a hotel guard to keep an eye on it for you. While anchorages in this area can be considered safe, I do not recommend leaving the boat unattended.

The anchorage further south in Long Bay is not as good as Bloody Bay as there seems to be a swell that rolls in at night on occasion.

Should you decide to go to town to reprovision, there is the town of Negril. Proceed south from your anchorage and anchor directly in front of the town. Leave your dinghy at one of the establishments or docks in the area. Be sure to ask someone to watch it for you.

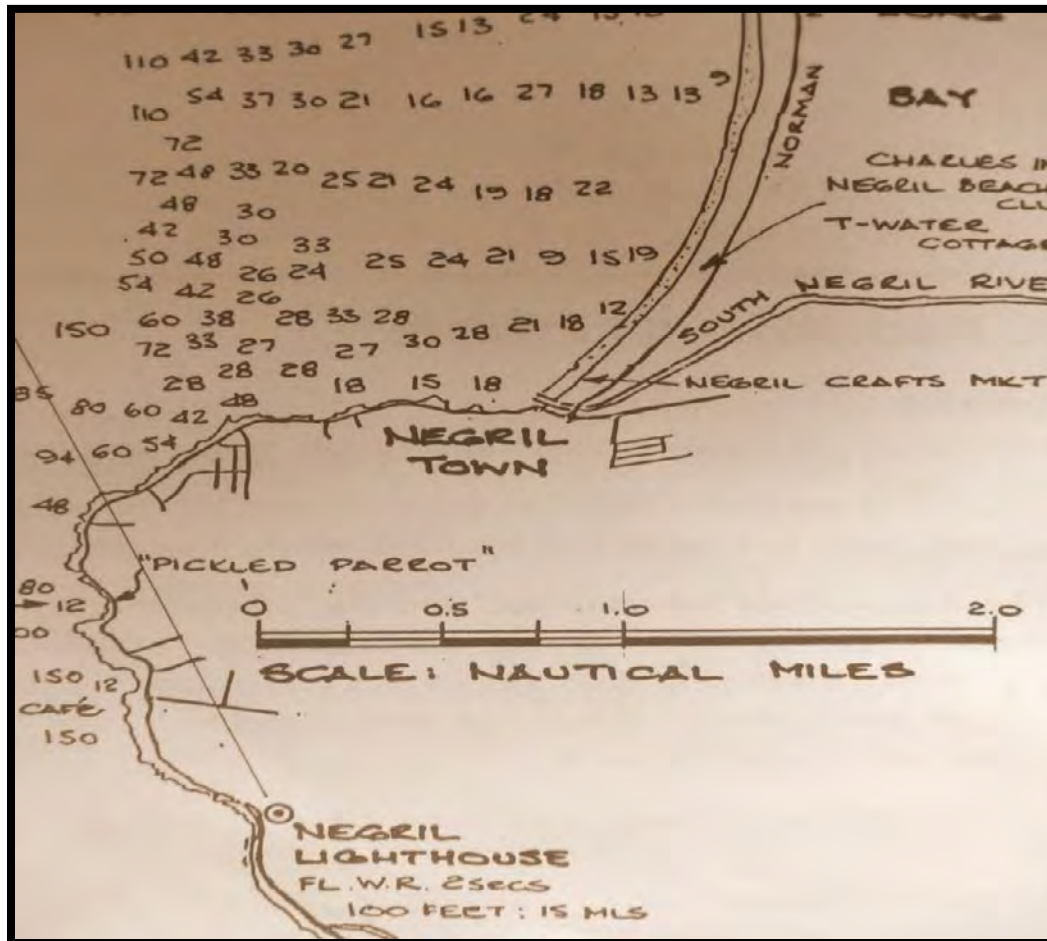


Figure 27. Negril Town

The town has ample supermarkets as well as many fruit and vegetable stands to choose from. One of the nicest things about the town is that it has a small airport with daily flights to both Montego Bay and Kingston. Picking up or discharging crew is very convenient. The average price for a one way ticket to either Montego Bay or Kingston is \$60.00 US.

I do not recommend staying anchored off this town overnight. As an anchorage it lacks sufficient protection from wind and wave. And it is not as secure as Bloody Bay in that you are clearly visible from the town area. I have never heard of a problem with anyone anchored here, but just a few



miles to the north at Bloody Bay, you are far more secure in every respect.

Figure 28. Bloody Bay and Booby Cay

As you continue south you will come up to the Negril Lighthouse. If the weather permits and you are so inclined, you can anchor for the day in this area. (**18°16N 78°22W**). This puts you just north of the Lighthouse. There are a number of small hotels and restaurants in this area. You will see small boats that come and anchor here with tourists from the hotels who want to see the Lighthouse and have lunch or dinner here at one of the many attractive terraces. I do not recommend you stay anchored here overnight, regardless of the conditions; if it kicks up during the night, you could find yourself on a dangerous lee shore in the event of a wind shift.



Nice stop – great views!



Terrace restaurants in the Negril Lighthouse area



Negril Lighthouse



Negril Lighthouse close up: Beautiful, and well worth the visit

Right across the street from the lighthouse is the Lighthouse Inn that serves great food and provides views of spectacular sunsets. Don't miss it!

SOUTH COAST (West to East)

SAVANNA la MAR

18°10.47N 78°09.22W SW of black and white buoy

Savannah la Mar has a large town. There are stores, and repairs can also be undertaken in this area. The anchorage is in shoal water with depths in the 5' to 6' range. If you must stop here, anchoring behind the reef structure to the east as you are approaching the harbor is easier and carries a depth of about 15'. Close to the reef it is 7'. *The beacon that is on the chart that marks the west side of the reef was not to be found.*

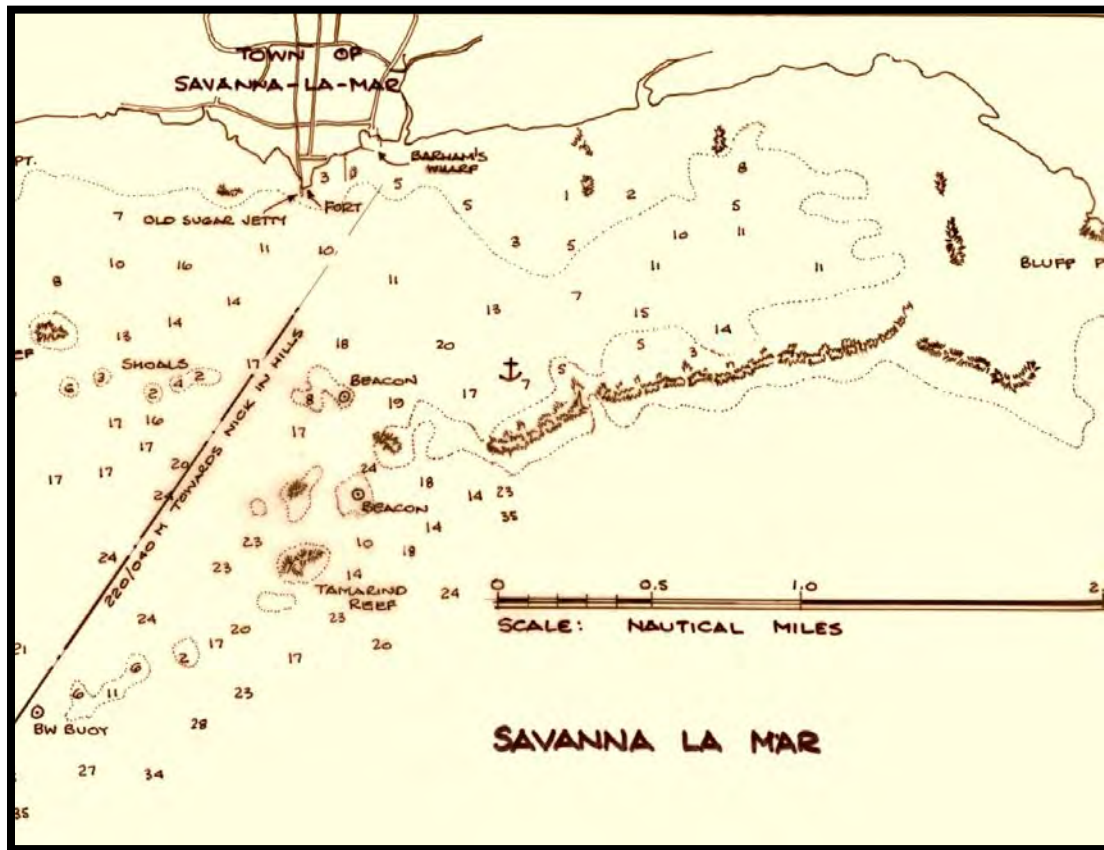


Figure 29. Savanna la Mar

Aside from the town, in the event that you need to make an emergency repair, this is not a particularly attractive stop, and I do not recommend it.

BLUEFIELDS

18°09.30N 78°02.17W just south of the point and boathouse

If you are headed in either direction, Bluefields is a wonderful stop. It is an anchorage only and the bar shown on the chartlet is no longer in business. It is now a fishing cooperative. This is an area of lovely upscale homes. Anchoring is in 9-12ft of water and the holding is good. As you enter you will see a really nice boathouse off of the house at the point. Tuck in behind the point and you will find good protection from wind and surge.



Figure 30. Bluefields

While we were anchored here, a few fishermen came out to speak to us. They asked us if we wanted to buy some fish; very polite older men. They said that years back many cruising boats would anchor here but now it is

rare as not too many cruising boats cruise the south side of the island. Whatever we needed they said they would be happy to accommodate.



Bluefields anchorage

If there is a drawback to this anchorage, it is its proximity to the main highway from Savanna la Mar to Kingston. Sometimes you hear passing cars, but at night it becomes very quiet and still. We dropped our fishing line here and in no time had plenty of small to midsize fish for dinner.



This is a very nice anchorage, easy in and easy out with good protection and pleasant views.

WHITEHOUSE BAY ANCHORAGE

18°05.80N 79°59.20W just SE of the reef entrance

You can access this anchorage by going to the above waypoint and taking a bearing of 015 magnetic. This will take you through the reef opening which carries more than 10ft. After you enter Bannister Bay and are behind the reef, go to port to anchor in 9-10ft of water. The water is extremely clear and you will see the bottom which is sand and grass.

You will swing at night on the hook, so be sure your boat is sufficiently north of the reef that you have swing room. The holding at this anchorage is good and there is adequate protection from the swell. You will have an unabated sea breeze. There is a small market in Whitehouse for basic foodstuffs. Leave your dinghy on the beach, but do not leave it unattended.

If you do not mind negotiating the reef entrance, this is a pleasant anchorage. The beach here is really quite nice.

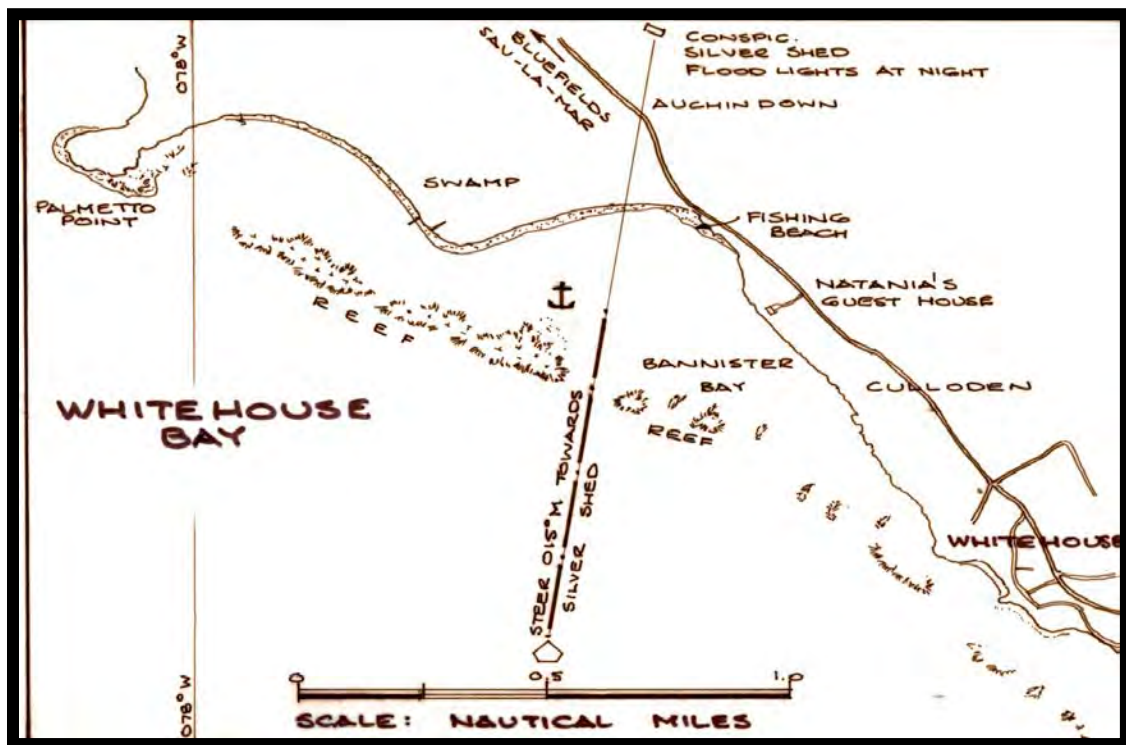


Figure 31. Whitehouse Bay

BLACK RIVER

18°00.40N 77°54.00W NW of Ravient Reef at buoy

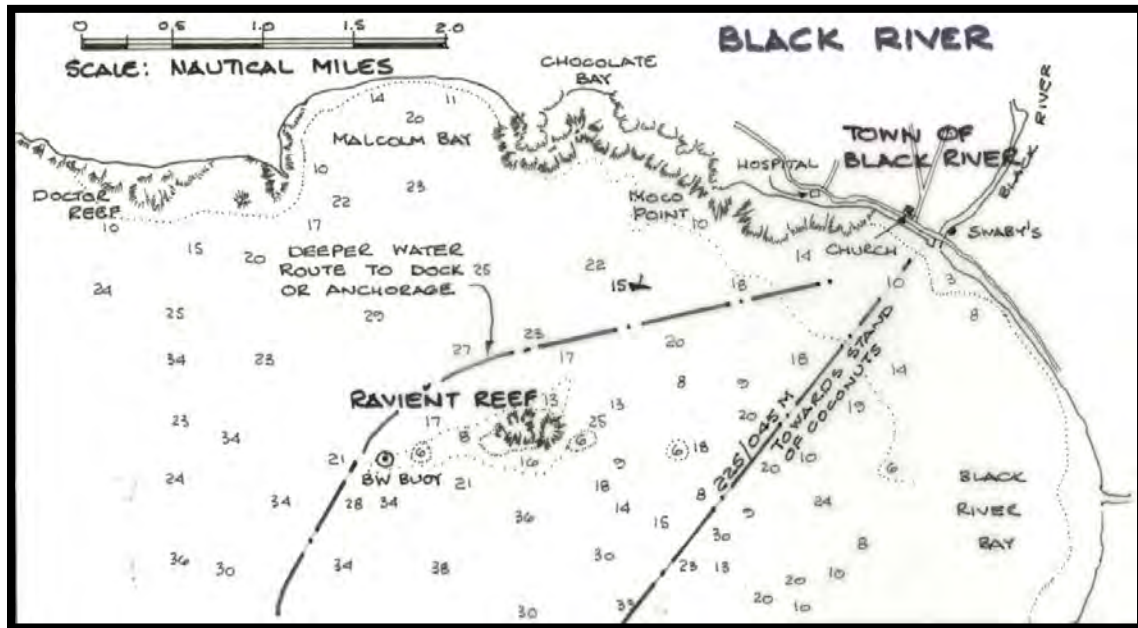


Figure 32. Approaches to Black River

The Black River is Jamaica's longest river. The town of Black River is a nice town set on the river and today is active with eco-tourism. The river is famous for its birds -- herons and snowy egrets, among many others -- and for its crocodiles.



There is a bridge over the mouth of the river which unfortunately does not allow for sailboats to go upriver. There is a dock at the mouth of the river that carries 8ft. More than that and you will have to anchor out and dinghy in. The Black River Bay is reasonably well protected and provides for good shelter and good holding.

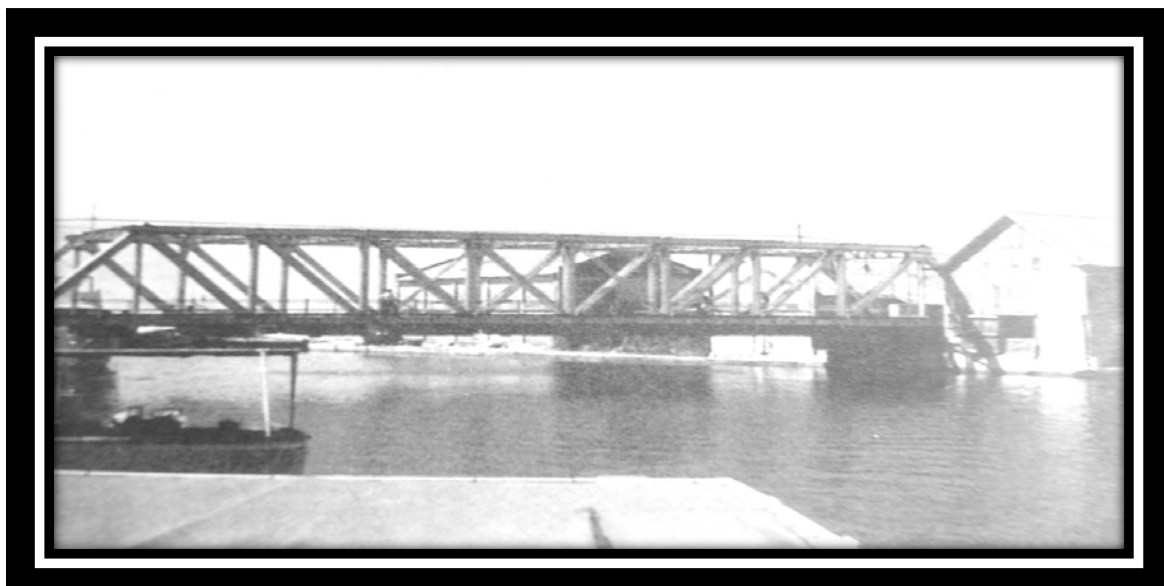


Photo from *The Yachtman's Guide to Jamaica* by John Lethbridge

BRIDGE AT MOUTH OF BLACK RIVER

The Black River is so called because the waters are stained by tannins which make the river the color of molasses. There are over 100 bird species, including Blue and White Herons, in this complex ecosystem which is also Jamaica's most significant crocodile area. There are many river tour companies as well as guides who will take you upriver by boat.

To see crocodiles, go during midday. To see birds, the later tours are better. Mosquitoes are ever present on the river, so bring your repellent and a hat to protect against the strong sun.



Posing for a picture -- so still you will think they are not real

The Black River has the largest population of crocodiles in Jamaica. Need I say more?



The sinuous Black River



CROCODILES~They have *BIG* smiles!



River rafting crocodile style

Not far from the Black River are the Y S Falls. These are a series of falls on a private estate. They are probably the best waterfalls in all of Jamaica and well worth your time and effort to visit. The falls are set between limestone cliffs and surrounded by forest. A dip in one of the 8 pools is sheer joy. The waterfalls are absolutely pristine.



A sample of the Y-S Falls

When you inquire about the river tours just above the bridge, you can also ask about tours to the falls. It is an easy trip and well worth it.

GREAT PEDRO BAY

17°51.80N 77°44.90W just W of the anchorage

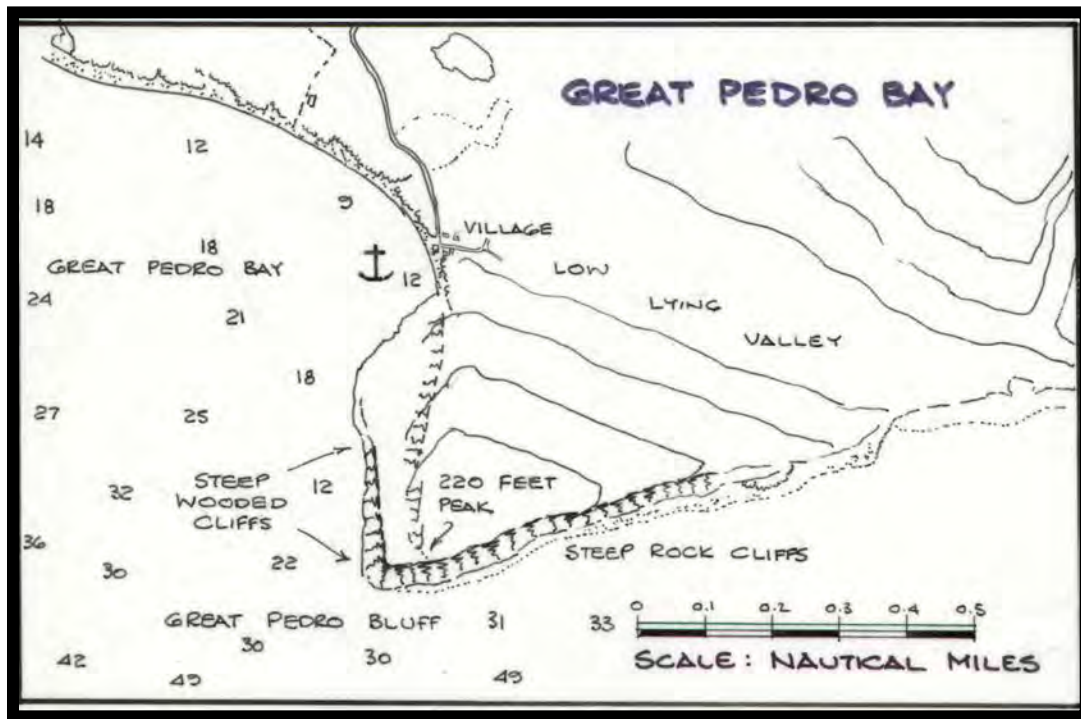


Figure 33. Great Pedro Bay

Great Pedro Bay is an easy in/easy out affair. The bluff is the outstanding landmark here and easy to recognize. The anchorage is good but not quite snug. Sometimes there is a swell that can roll the boat. The anchorage is in 15' of water and the holding is good although the water has poor visibility to the bottom. Ashore there is a fishermen's cooperative where you can get something basic in a pinch.

This is a "get out of the wind" anchorage if you are going east and want to stop. Going west there are better choices.

PORT KAISER

17°51.76N 077°36.37W at anchorage basin



Figure 34. Port Kaiser

Port Kaiser is an *industrial* port. They process bauxite here to make aluminum. *The anchorage is the small craft harbor; it is not for cruising yachts.* In an emergency you could anchor here and get help. You can contact Port Kaiser Security on VHF channel 16. There is high security in this area so if you do not contact them, they will most assuredly contact you.



This is *not* the place to stop and anchor for the night -- **avoid it.**

ALLIGATOR REEF

17°49.30N 77°32.25W just north of the reef

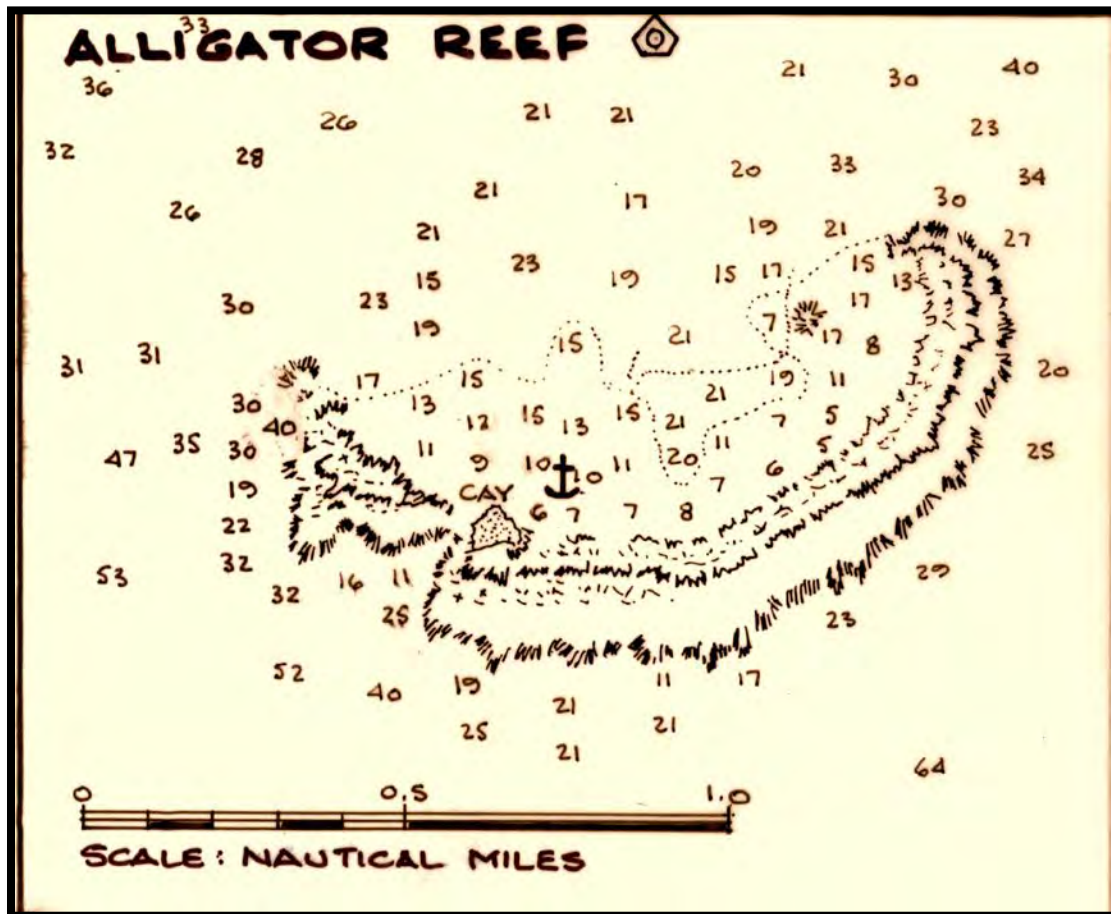


Figure 35. Alligator Reef chartlet

Alligator Reef is one of those places that, if you do not visit, in hindsight you will wish you had. It was very early afternoon as we were making our easting, when we came upon the reef. We anchored in the southwest corner in 10ft of water and made lunch. The water is crystal clear and swimming was a delight. At the west end is a small sandy beach. Be careful of fishpots for there are many in the area. The anchorage is open to the wind but well protected from the sea.

If you do not plan to stop at the reef and are sailing at night, be careful to avoid it. While it is easy to see in the day as the reef breaks, at night there is nothing to give it away.

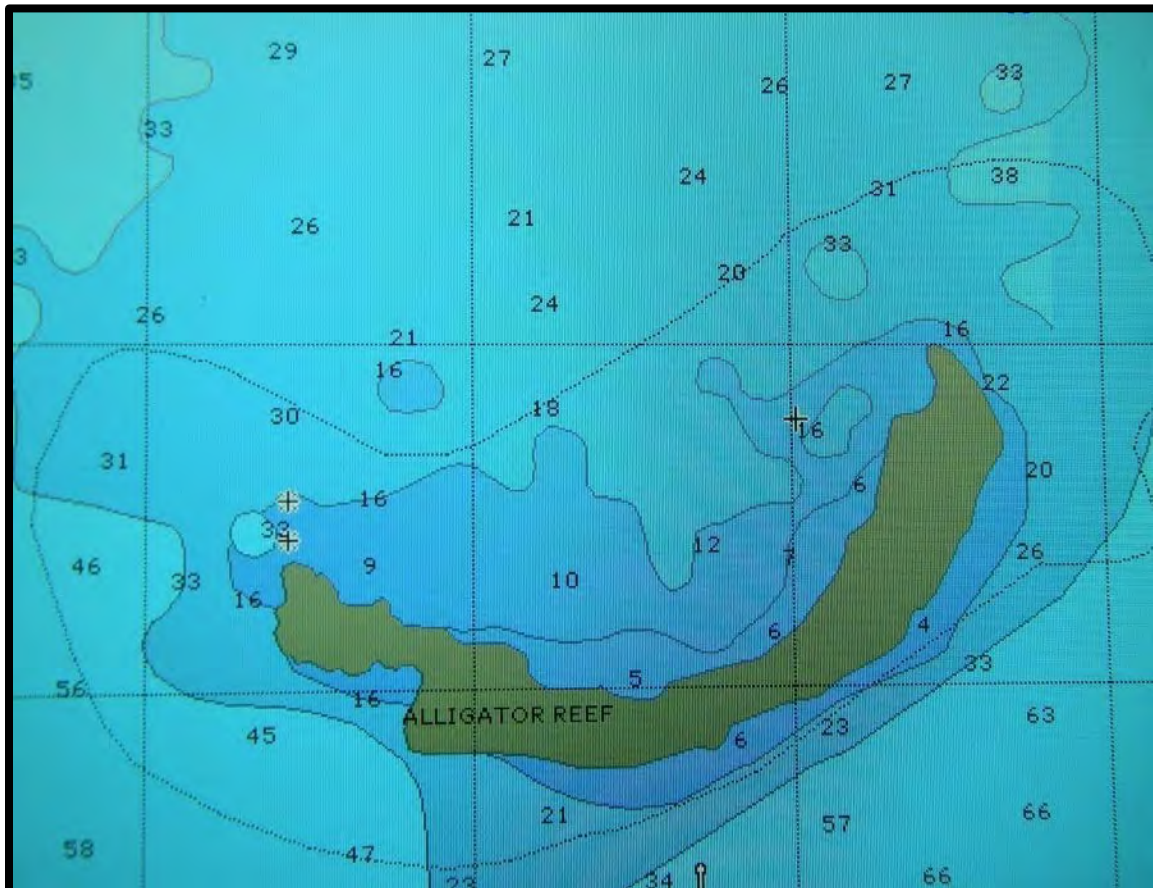


Figure 36. Alligator Reef

If you choose not to stop here you will miss something special! The reef is alive and appears to be doing well. Treat it gently. Good snorkeling.

CARLISLE BAY/ROCKY POINT

17°45.96N 77°16.61W entrance to anchorage

This is an easy in anchorage in 10ft of water, to get out of the wind when going west to Kingston. However, because of its proximity over land to Spanish town, one of the areas in Jamaica known for violence, it should be avoided. The fishing village at the point has had its share of violence in recent times as well.

DO NOT ANCHOR HERE----AVOID.



Figure 37. Carlisle Bay/Rocky Point



Fishing village at Rocky Point

AVOID THIS ANCHORAGE!



PORTLAND BIGHT AND CAYS

17°41.84N 77°07.45W SW of Portland Cays

17°45.62N 77°00.95W SE of Bare Bush Cays

17°50.34N 76°54.05W SE of Wreck Reef

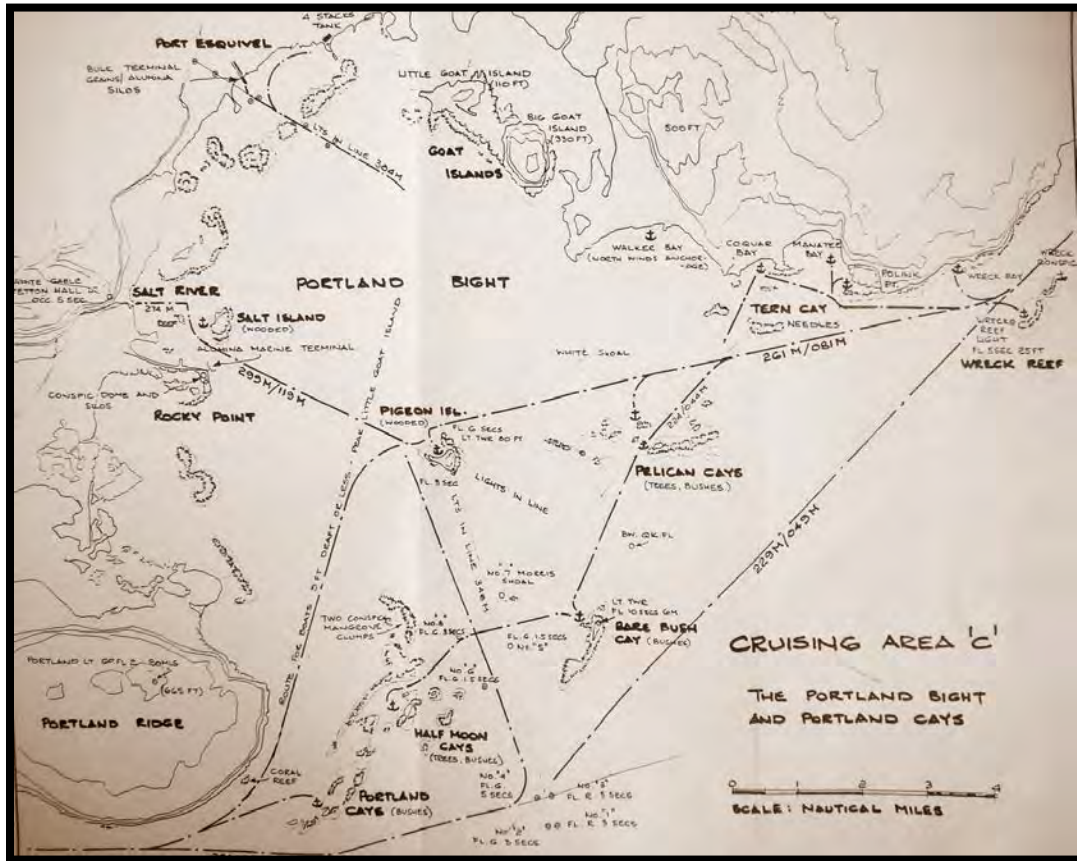


Figure 38. Portland Bight and Portland Cays

This cruising area is one of the best in all of Jamaica. This “bay” has numerous anchoring opportunities depending on how much time one has and how adventurous you feel. Very often you will meet members of the Royal Jamaica Yacht Club out of Kingston Bay cruising in this area. The highlight of the area is Pigeon Island; by far the most popular. It has the largest anchoring area of any of the cays in the bight. The area on the northwest part of the bight is commercial; Port Esquivel. The various cays in the area can be summarized as follows:

BIG and LITTLE PELICAN CAYS

Big Pelican is heavily wooded; Little Pelican is covered with a few bushes. The Pelican reefs extend more than one mile to the east of Big Pelican Cay. They break heavily in strong conditions and are thus very visible. They are among the most attractive cays in the bight and provide very good protection in prevailing conditions. Not good in northerlies.

The anchorage at Big Pelican is in 10ft of water with good holding. Anchor at the west end for best protection. Little Pelican has a beautiful little beach.

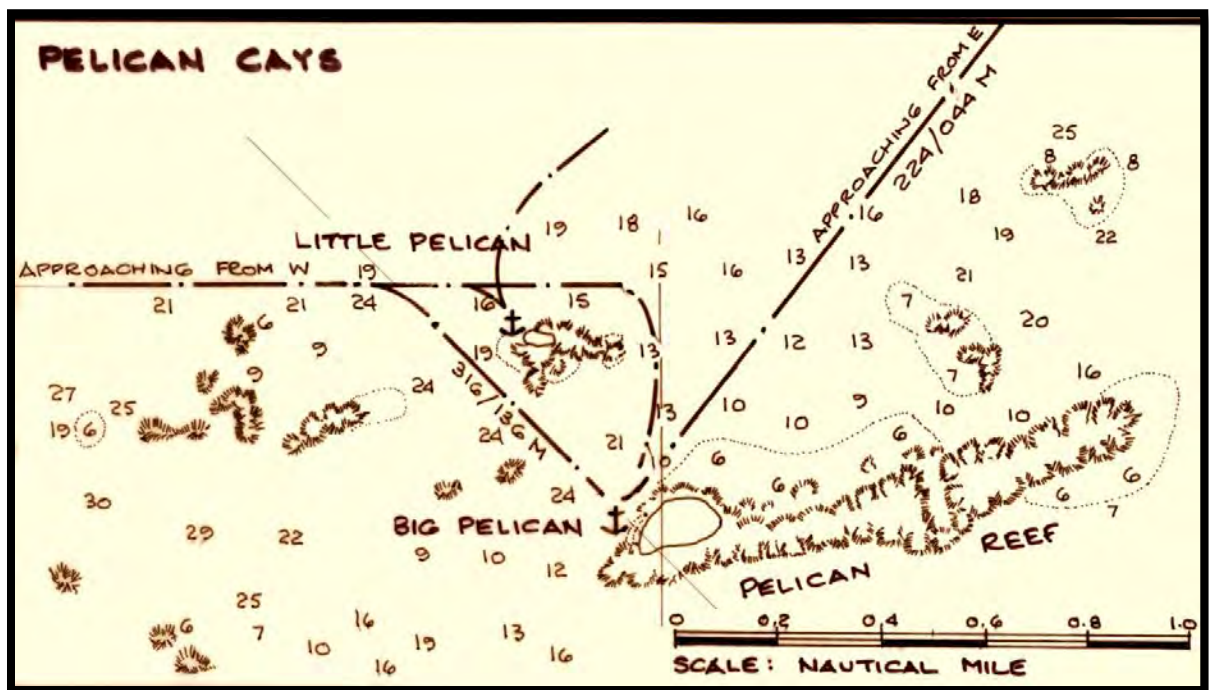


Figure 39. Pelican Cays

PIGEON ISLAND

17°48.17N 77°04.43W just east of Pigeon Island

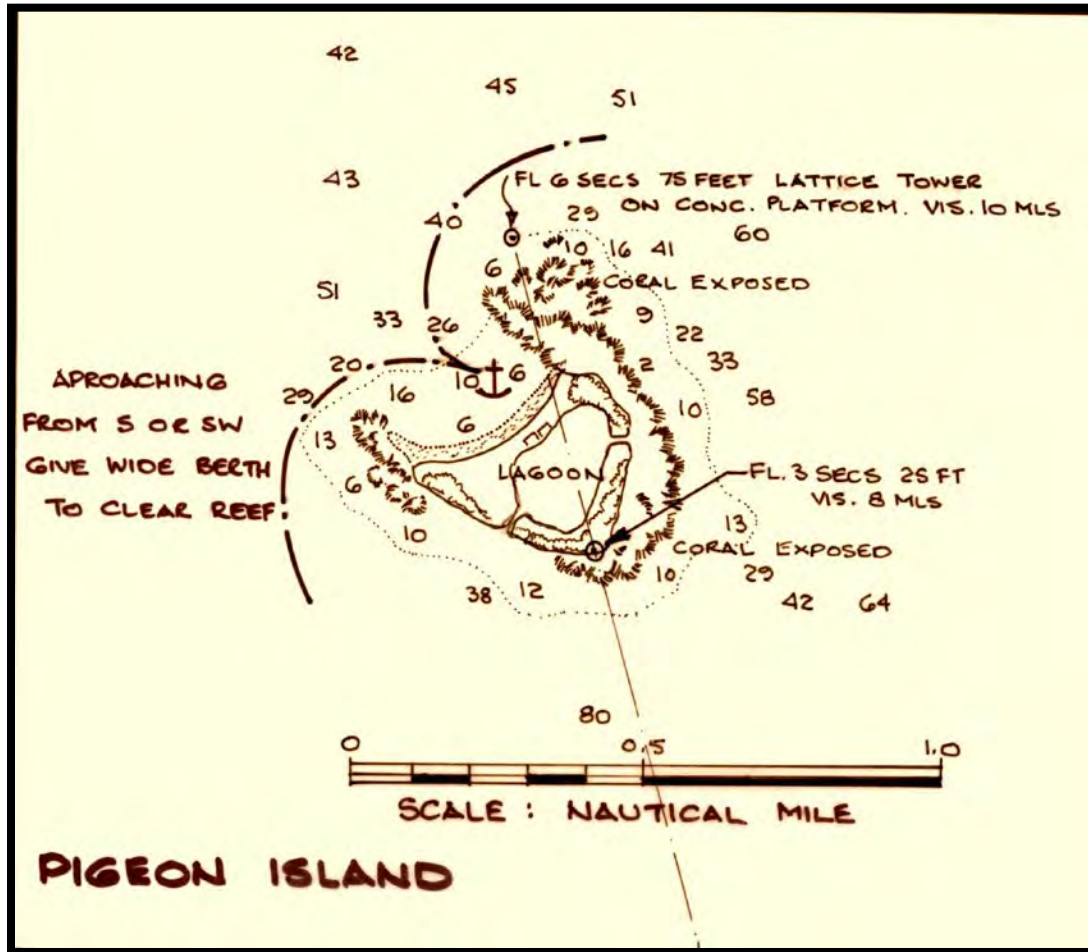


Figure 40. Pigeon Island

This is the largest cay on the south coast of Jamaica. The island is horse shoe shaped and has a stagnant salt water lagoon in the center.

The members of the Royal Jamaica Yacht Club out of Kingston frequent this Cay and on weekends you will normally see at least a few boats. The Club holds a number of events each year that utilize this cay. I found the members of the club to be a very engaging group. If you see them anchored here, I am sure you will enjoy your visit.

For prevailing trade winds the anchorage is reasonably well protected; however if the wind veers to the north as happens during the early part of the trade wind season, this anchorage becomes uncomfortable.

Whether you approach from the East or from the West, you must give the reefs at the northeast side of the island and the northwest side of the island a wide berth.

If approaching from the south or west, keep well away from the reef at the west end of Pigeon.

The cay offers great protection in prevailing conditions. However, when the northerlies blow early in the trade wind season the wind can swing around to the north at night. During this time frame unless you are sure of the weather, it is best to seek a more protected spot. Holding in the anchorage is very good with the typical Jamaican sand bottom with turtle grass.

BARE BUSH CAY

This cay may be a good day time stop but offers poor protection as an overnight anchorage and ought not be considered for such. Its reef structure is very visible above water.

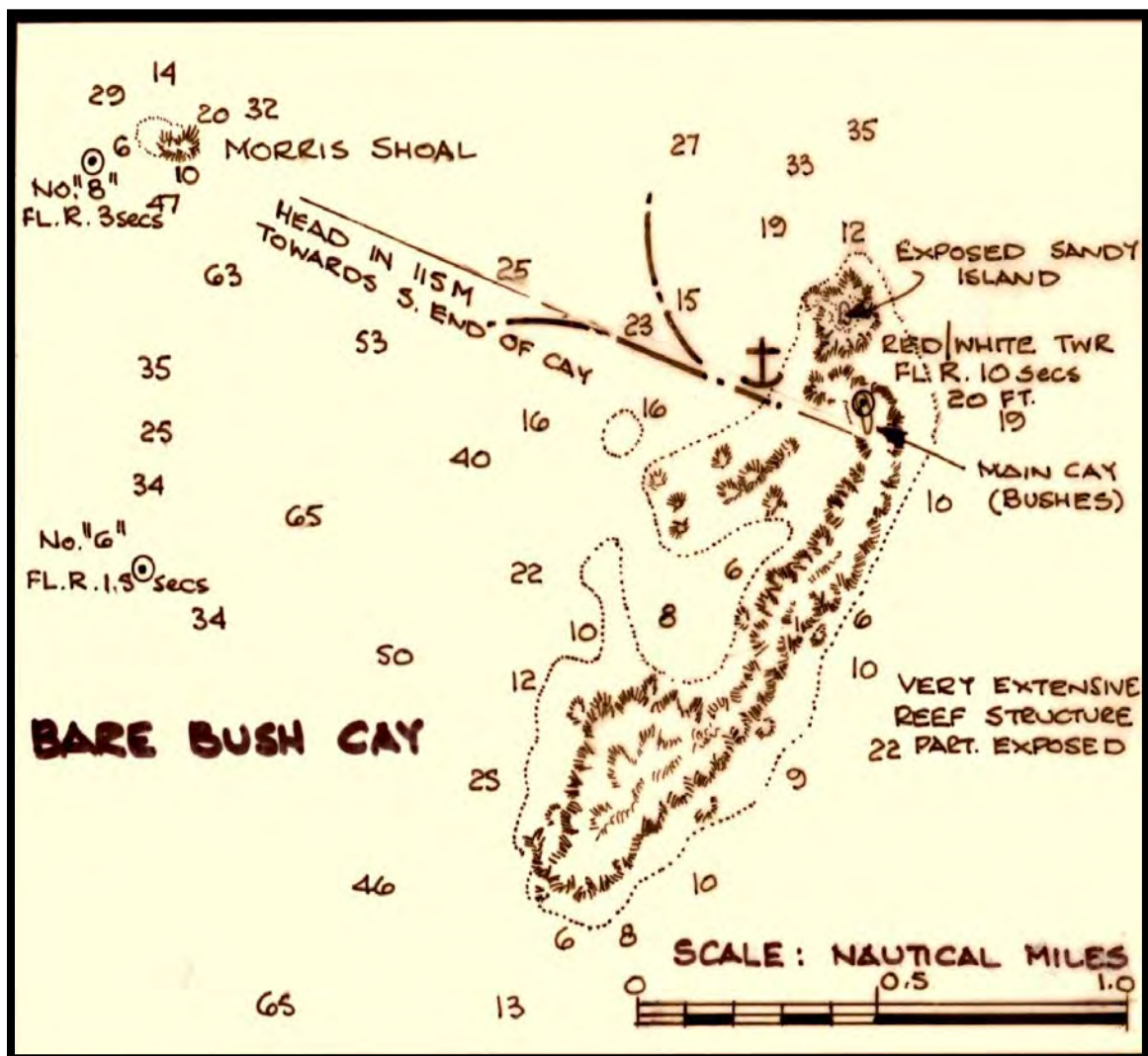


Figure 41. Bare Bush Cay

BIG and LITTLE HALF MOON CAYS

They are located at the southwest corner of the bight and are heavily wooded. Since there are reefs to the north and west of the Cays, they can be considered to be a good overnight anchorage at those times when the wind shifts to north at night. The anchorage is at the northwest side of Big Half Moon Cay in 8ft of water with good holding. Do not anchor too close to the beach, as if the wind does veer north, when you swing you will be in shoal water.



Figure 42. The Half Moon and Portland Cays

PORTLAND CAYS

The Portland Cays are really four small islands spread out over more than one mile. Coming from the west, one can tuck in behind the reef and anchor near the western most cay. The anchorage is in 8ft of water with good holding. The reefs to the northwest provide protection at night should the wind go north. For a cruising sailor making his easting, I found these cays to be most convenient as the anchorage was available just after passing Portland Point. We were able to anchor with no fuss and the next morning get under way with ease. The swimming and snorkeling are excellent here.

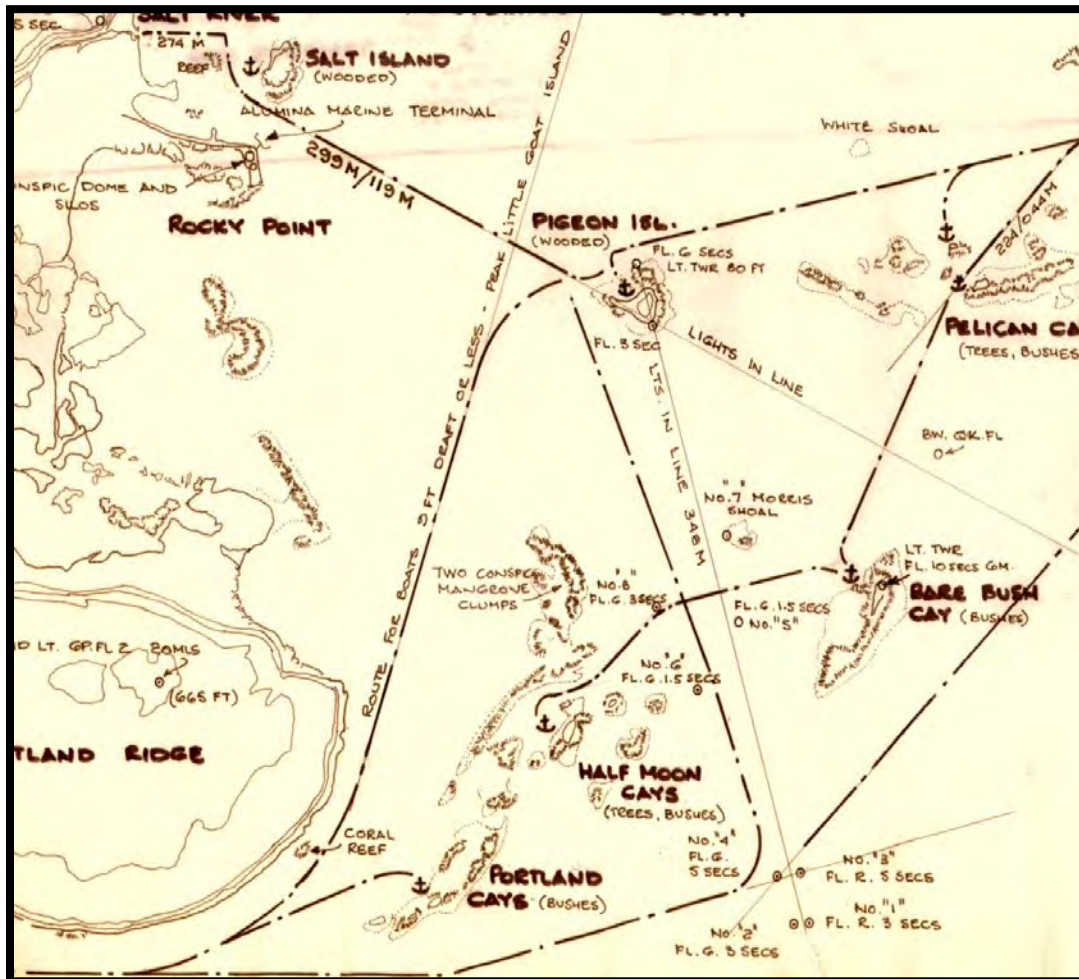


Figure 43. Bird's eye view -- Pigeon, Half Moons, and Portland Cays

SALT RIVER HARBOR

Because the water is 5' in depth in Salt River and given the harbor's location at the NW corner of the bight, I do not recommend this area for the cruising sailor. This area of the bight is not often used. It is remote and given its proximity to the mainland, I would consider it to have the same risks as Rocky Point/Carlisle Bay. **Avoid.**

PORT ESQUIVEL

This is an industrial area in the far NW corner of the bight and is of no interest to the cruising sailor. **Avoid.**



Port Esquivel

17°50.04N 77°00.83W due south of Walker Bay

MANATEE AND COQUAR BAYS

36 M ON MID-POINT OF BEACH CLEARS SHOAL PATCHES

REMAINS OF OLD JETTY

EAST END OF BEACH

MANATEE BAY

COQUAR BAY

EXPOSED REEF

REEF

DENSE MANGROVES

REEF

004 M CLEARS REEF

275 M

120 M

TERN CAY

NEEDLES REEF

THATCHED SHELTER

NAUTICAL MILES

0 0.5 1.0

Coquar Bay and Manatee Bay: These bays are adjacent to each other. Both are wonderful anchorages frequently used by local yachtsmen. You will see local fishermen in the area as evidenced by their canoes. The bays are relatively easy to enter as can be seen on the chartlet above.

I do not recommend the anchorage on the west side of Manatee Bay behind the reef except for local yachtsmen. It is kind of a “feel your way in” anchorage and there is shoal water on the south side of the entrance.

WRECK BAY and WRECK REEF

The second of the anchorages is further east, comprising Wreck Bay and Wreck Reef.

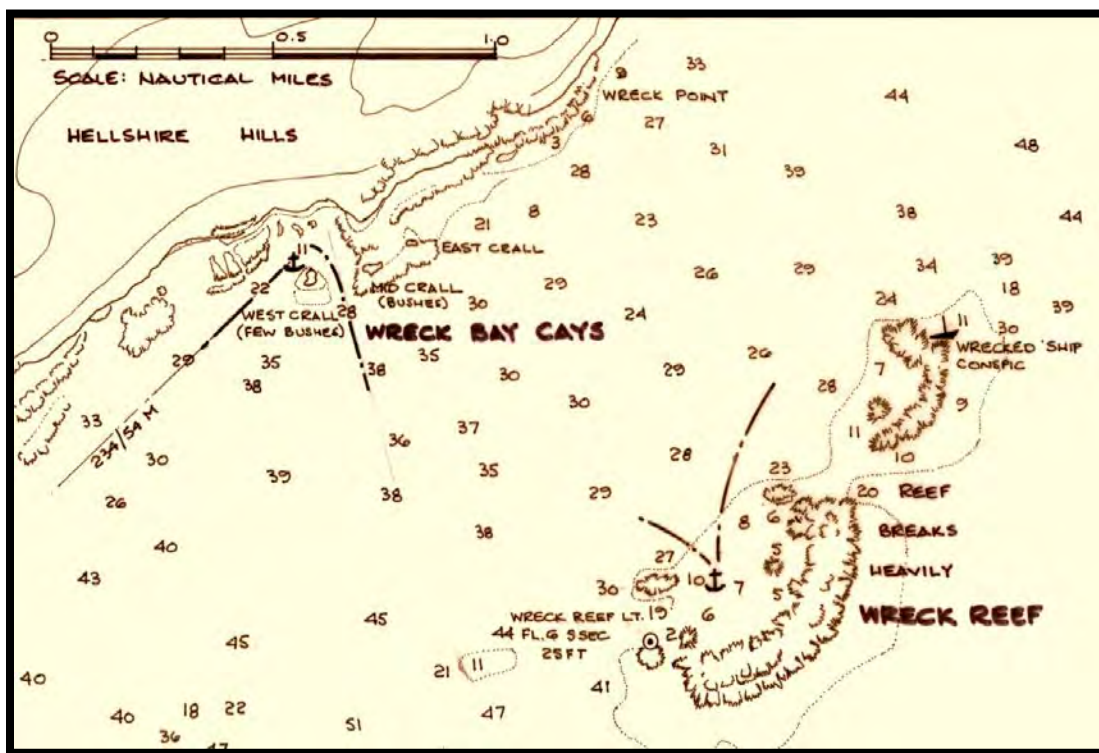


Figure 45. Wreck Bay Cays and Wreck Reef

The Wreck Bay Cays are three small islands. Locally they are called “cralls.” They are not difficult to enter and are secure as to holding. However, in heavy trade wind conditions the anchorage is not tranquil. Since the fetch to the mainland is so small, the anchorage is more than acceptable in northerly conditions. The Wreck Bay Reef is a nice “lunch stop” but not advisable early in the trade wind season when winds can veer to the north.

KINGSTON HARBOR AND PORT ROYAL CAYS

17°54.29N 076°44.16W entrance to Kingston Harbor

Kingston Harbor is the seventh largest harbor in the world. It is very easy to enter but one must watch for the relentless bustle of commercial traffic. This is not a case of who has the right of way. It is a case of a mouse among a herd of elephants. There is more than ample room to stay out of the way.

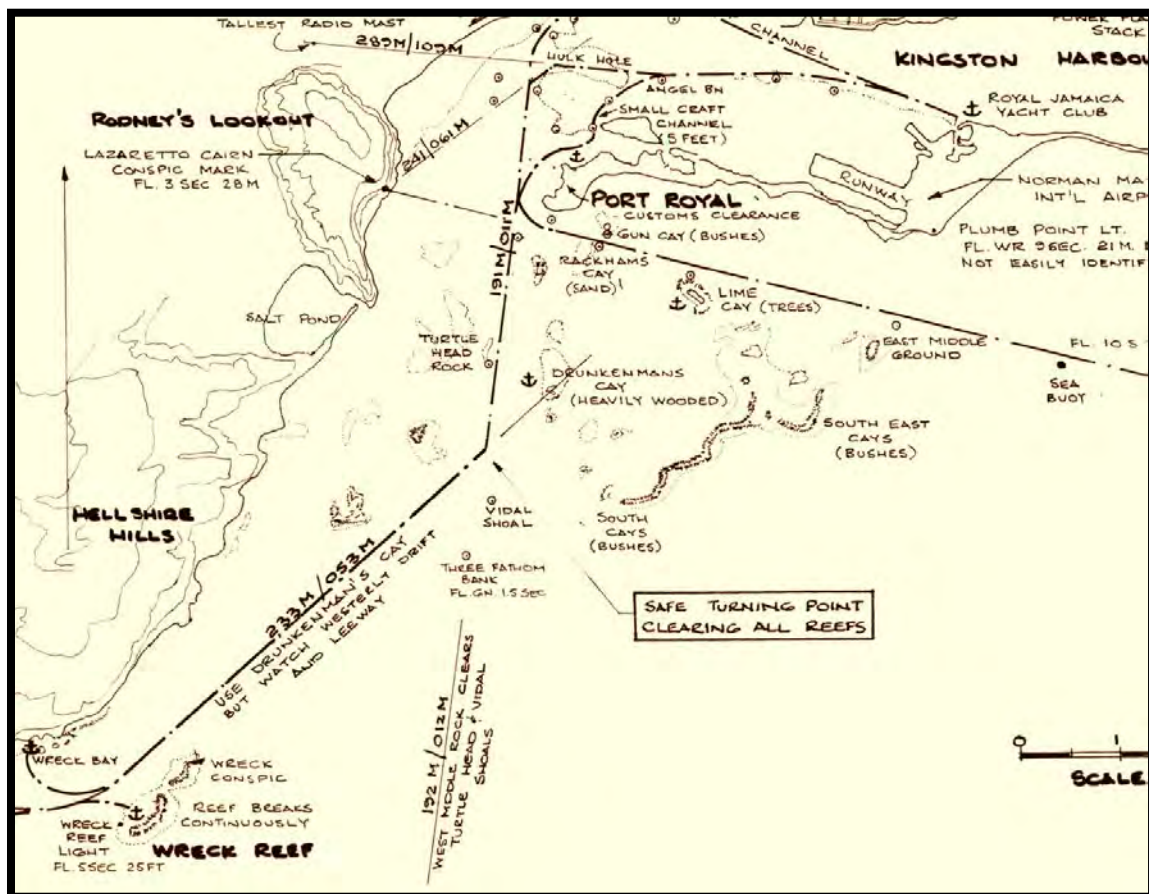


Figure 46. Kingston Harbor and Port Royal/Port Royal Cays

Beginning from the west side you can see Wreck Reef and Wreck Bay at Polink Point which is the extreme east end of Portland Bight. Port Royal is clearly shown as are what are known as the Port Royal Cays to the south of Port Royal, in the lower part of the bay.

Among the Port Royal Cays in the lower portion of Kingston Harbor are: Maiden Cay, Eric's Hole, Lime Cay, Drunkenman Cay, and Rackham's Cay. All are more or less used by local yachtsmen, in particular on the weekend.



Figure 47. Kingston Harbor and the Port Royal Cays

For the cruising sailor proceeding up harbor toward either Port Royal or to the Royal Jamaica Yacht Club, the cay I believe is most noteworthy is Lime Cay. It is about 2 miles up harbor and easy to access, a beautiful little cay with a sand beach and a colorful shack. On weekends this cay comes alive with local yachtsmen as well as boats bringing tourists out for the day. The anchorage is located at: **17°55.05N 76°49.22W**

If you are heading up bay and have lost the light or encountered strong seas or headwinds, tuck in behind Lime Cay. It is a pleasant and safe anchorage. Once the wind lets up or you have daylight, you can proceed to Port Royal or the Royal Jamaica Yacht Club. You can anchor at the other cays mentioned above, but by far the easiest for the cruising yachtsman is Lime Cay.

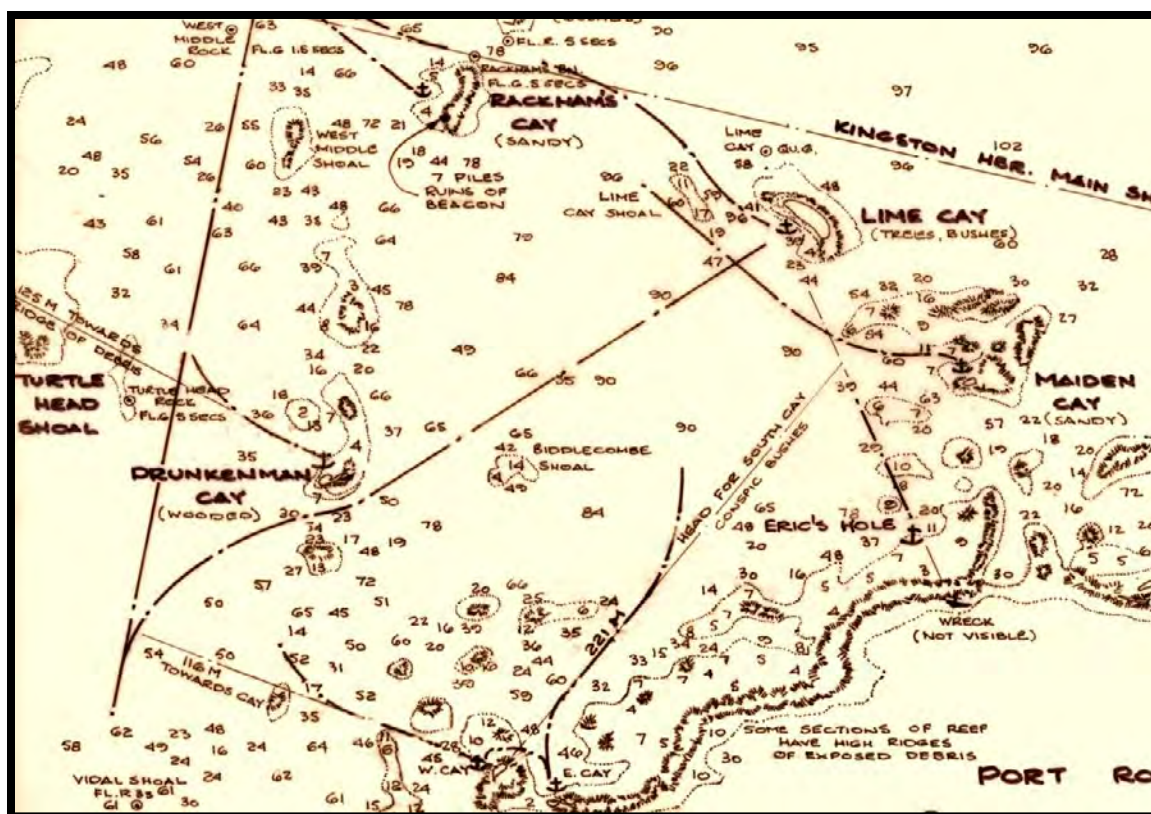


Figure 48. Lime Cay Anchorage

What makes Kingston Harbor so windy is its location under the foothills of the Blue Mountain Range. The heat that the plain generates rises up the slopes of the mountains and draws in air from offshore. As a result, normal winds are increased to the 20-30 knot range almost daily and especially between the hours of late morning to late afternoon. The winds raise a steep chop. There are a number of channels that lead to Port Royal and the RJYC depending on your draft, however I recommend you follow the ship channel and leave the others for the local yachtsmen.

I wanted to cut out of the ship channel markers and pass over 8ft of water when a local fisherman nearby called and told me to bear off. As I bore off, I asked him what the problem was as I did not need more than 8ft of water. He indicated that the area had filled in and that the chart was incorrect; there was only 4-5ft of water in the spot now. I do not know if he was correct, for I did not go back to check. However, fools rush in where angels fear to tread! I was following my chart plotter instead of my head and eyes and a local Jamaican fisherman in a canoe woke me up.



Lime Cay anchorage

When you pass between Rackham's Cay and Gun Cay (if you are approaching from the west via Lime Cay), OR you have passed between Drunkenman's Cay and Turtle Head Rock, you are ready to turn to starboard and Port Royal will be on your starboard side.

PORT ROYAL

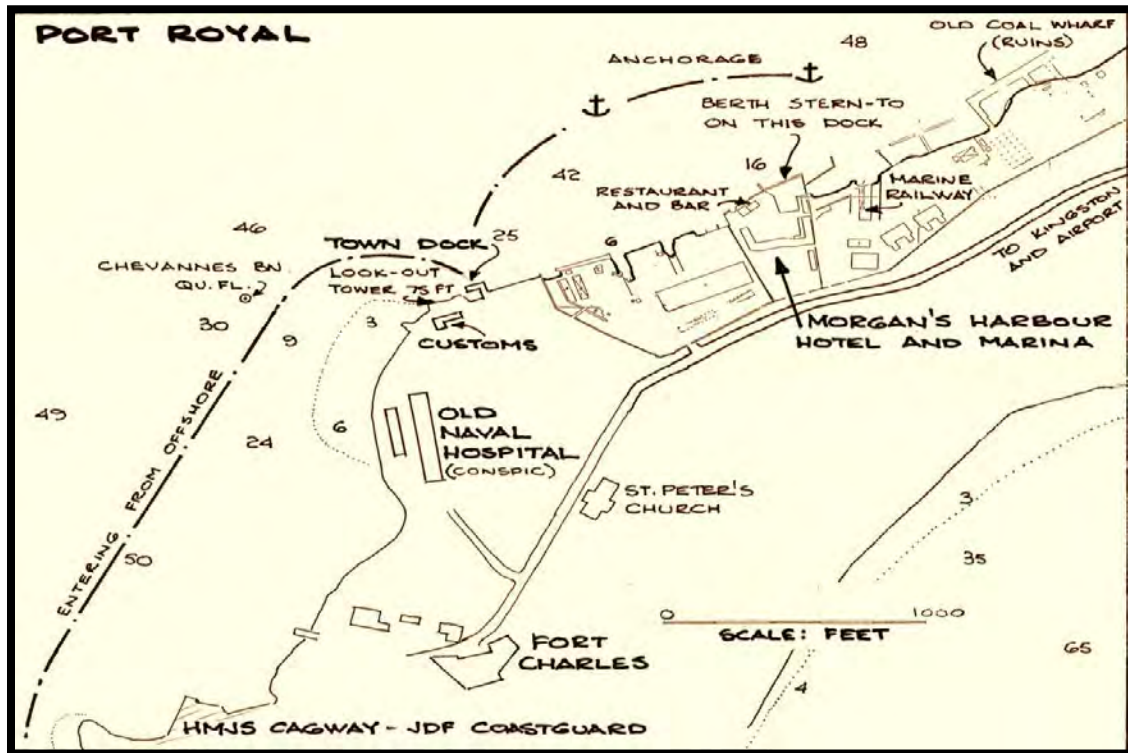


Figure 49. Port Royal

Aside from the “town dock” Port Royal has two facilities that can provide docking opportunities.

MORGAN’S HARBOR HOTEL AND YACHT MARINA is a nice facility where you can tie up stern to, using your anchor off the bow. Be sure your anchor is well set, for when the wind comes out of the north, the area is exposed and due to the fetch a sizable chop can kick up. The docking fees are average and there are water and electrical connections available. The facility is secure and not far from the International airport, with a nice bar and a good restaurant. You will find yourself located in the center of Port Royal.

Peter Black’s Dry Dock and Marina is just to the east by a few feet of Morgan’s Marina. It is a small T head that can accommodate a limited number of boats.

Today you can walk around Port Royal safely. During the time of Calico Jack this was a pirates' haven. A visit to Fort Charles, Victoria and Albert Battery, St. Peter's Church, and the old Naval Hospital are all in order.



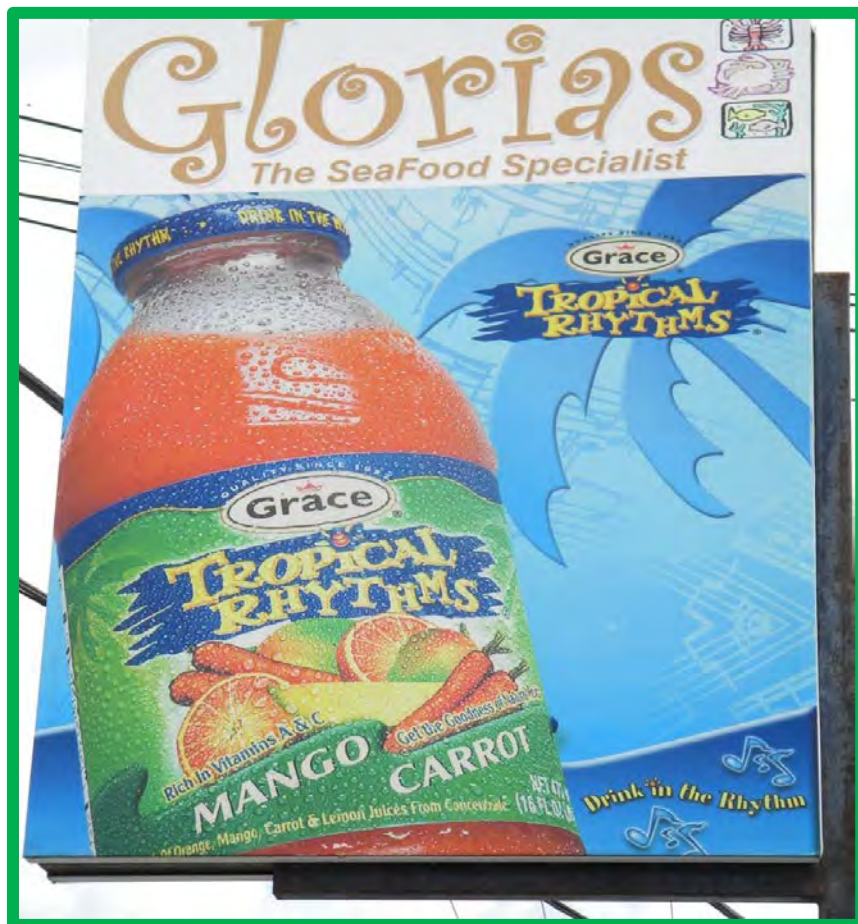
Morgan's Harbor Hotel and Yacht Marina



Fort Charles

A visit to Fort Charles is very worthwhile and not just because it is an interesting fort with a great deal of history. The grounds are lovely and the small museum is worthwhile. You can also enter the “Giddy House” which was built as an ammunition bunker to support the Albert and Victoria Battery. In 1907 an earthquake damaged it. It both sank 5 degrees and is off its vertical axis by 15 degrees. Because it is structurally sound you can walk inside and just like a fun house, you will feel *giddy*.

Port Royal has a strong night and weekend following and in particular many come for a fish dinner at the famous “Glorias.”



She must be the seafood specialist because the restaurant is always crowded with people eating and enjoying plates of seafood!

In the late 17th century, Port Royal was the largest English town in the Americas (Boston was the close second). The economic center of the Caribbean, Port Royal was also called the wickedest city in the world for its accommodation of privateers, pirates, gambling houses and brothels. Every pirate known and some not so well known called at Port Royal. It was a “modern day” Sodom and Gomorrah! Call it a geological correction or the hand of God, but the good times were about to end. On June 7, 1692 at 20 minutes before noon, an earthquake destroyed two-thirds of the city, killing approximately 2000 people (an estimated 3000 more died of injury and disease in the following days).



Port Royal, Jamaica -- June 7, 1692

MORAL OF THE STORY: All good things and sometimes not so good things, do come to an end!

The above print is in the museum at Fort Charles. Wayne Prawl, the Curatorial Assistant on duty the day I visited, graciously assisted me in obtaining a copy. He is really up on his work; you can write him at wayneprawl@yahoo.com.

A little over 2 miles to the east is the ROYAL JAMAICA YACHT CLUB.

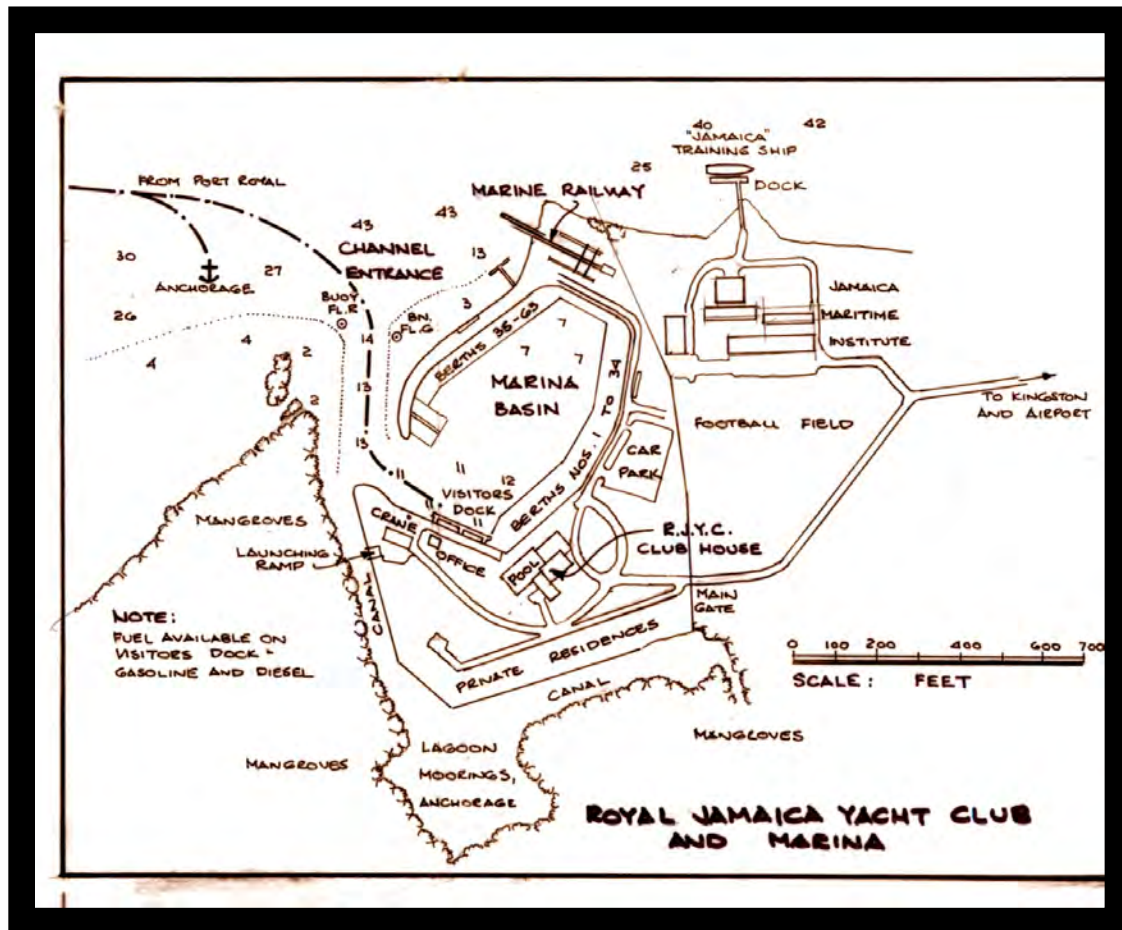


Figure 50. Royal Jamaica Yacht Club and Marina

You can anchor just outside the club or enter the channel and dock at the visitors' dock. It is best to call them on VHF channel 16 to check on space availability as the only space available for transients is the visitors' dock. It can accommodate 2 or 3 average size sailboats. If you draw more than 7ft feet, be careful, as the basin of the club does not carry more than that.

The Royal Jamaica Yacht Club is superb. It is within walking distance of the Norman Manley International Airport and thus dropping off or picking up guests is a simple matter. The club and its members are very welcoming. There is a first rate bar as well as a restaurant plus a swimming pool and free Wi-Fi. Club security is first-rate and both you and your boat will be secure here.



Figure 51. Royal Jamaica Yacht Club next to Norman Manley International Airport



Royal Jamaican Yacht Club



**The club staff could not have been nicer. L to R: Maxine(ass't manager),
Buff (marina manager) and Patricia (club manager)**

Let me not forget Winston. If he were *just* the bartender at the club that would be sufficient; however, he also is the maître d'. Just before we left offshore on a windward route that would take 3 or 4 days, we asked him to cook some meals that we could take out daily, defrost and eat without much preparation. In his unassuming way, he took our choices (jerk chicken, jerk pork and stewed beef with various sides) and on departure day gave us a box full of frozen dinners. Each was individually wrapped in a carton that could be used to reheat. And each dinner could have fed 2 hungry adults or 5 children. The quality was superb and the price so reasonable as to be embarrassed to disclose it here. Don't miss Winston!



For your boat, a variety of repairs can be made at the club. There is a small marine railway as well as a marine hoist. Additionally, reprovisioning is very easy because there is a Mega Market close by.

I usually avoid recommending anyone, but Walton (69) Johnson was our taxi driver. Walton's van is very modern and his prices were very much in line. He was polite and kept an eye on us during our excursions to the market, Port Royal, and the town of Kingston. He can be reached at 876 848 4007. He was always on time.

KINGSTON

Kingston is the capital of Jamaica and has more than 1,000,000 residents. Kingston also gets a great deal of bad press as being extremely dangerous. The truth is, if you avoid those areas that have a bad history, namely inner city neighborhoods of deep poverty and desperation, Kingston is like any other big city in the World.

There are many sites worth visiting, but most noteworthy for me was the Bob Marley Museum. The taxi driver had us there in no time and waited for us. The museum tour is one hour and ends with a brief movie presentation. The museum is the story of Bob Marley's life but on a larger scale it is the story of Jamaican Reggae. In my opinion, it should not be missed.

IMPORTANT NOTE on EXITING KINGSTON HARBOR:

South and east of Kingston Harbor are two small bays called Cow Bay and Bull Bay. They are approximately 6 and 8 miles southeast as the crow flies. The GPS for the approximate location of Cow Bay is: **17°54.16N 76°37.97W** and for Bull Bay: **17°55.99N 76°40.31.**

DO NOT ANCHOR IN THESE AREAS; if you are transiting eastbound, give them a wide berth. These areas are extremely poor and there have been attacks against cruising yachts anchored there. **AVOID**



ENTRANCE TO BOB MARLEY MUSEUM



HAND PAINTED WALL MURAL AT THE BOB MARLEY MUSEUM

Reggae music may not be your cup of tea but understanding it goes a long way in understanding a part of Jamaican culture

PORT MORANT/BOWDEN HARBOR

17°51.66N 76°19.55W just south of the Lee Reef Buoy

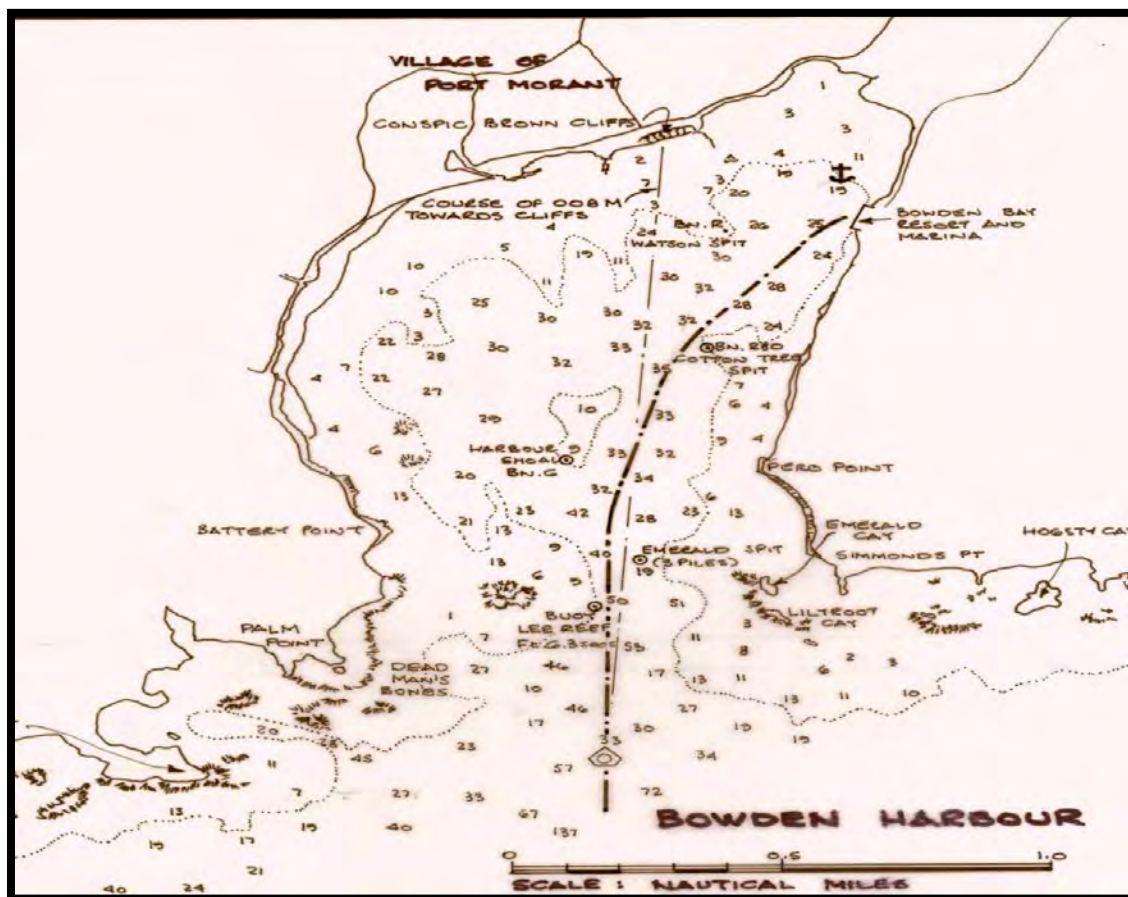


Figure 52. Bowden Harbour

Bowden Harbor is probably the most attractive and safest harbor in Jamaica and yet so many yachts who clear in at Port Antonio and go west miss it completely as it is located at the SE corner of the island and Port Antonio is at the NE corner.

There was a time when this harbor was a commercial port dominated by the United Fruit Company. Bowden is an official port of Entry.

What makes Bowden/Port Morant so safe and so exceptional?

The harbor itself is well protected from wind and sea. In addition you see the John Crow and Blue Mountains from your anchorage and they are a very attractive view indeed.

If that were not enough, here's a bonus: After commercial activities ceased in the harbor a small marina was built which subsequently went out of business. The marina and its building now house the Jamaica Coast Guard and the Jamaican Marine Police. We anchored directly in front of their building and after a brief time, they came out by boat and asked us why we did not go alongside their dock. They will let you use the dock which is large enough to sidetie any number of boats easily, and they will let you use it **FREE!** There is also water available dockside.



BOWDEN HARBOR COAST GUARD AND MARINE POLICE FACILITY

We chose to stay anchored because I prefer it to being at a dock, but the hospitality of these men is noteworthy. Just across from the facility is the town of Morant Bay. It can be accessed by dinghy but the water is very shoal and you will have to pull your dinghy with the engine up the last few hundred feet. Since the town is on the other side of the harbor, if you do leave your dinghy be sure to have it watched.



**PORT MORANT/BOWDEN HARBOR MARINE
POLICE OFFICER**

The Coast Guard commander was nice enough to have a young coast guardsman accompany us. The town is small and rustic and was great to walk through. There is even a small local restaurant serving local meals.



TOWN OF MORANT BAY~FRUIT AND VEGETABLE STAND

EAST COAST

MANCHIONEAL HARBOR

18°02.00 076°16.24W just E of harbor entrance

The harbor's name translates as "little apple," for the poisonous fruit of the manchineel tree. *If you find them, do not eat or even touch them. Unlike Snow White, you may not recover from a bite of this poison apple.*

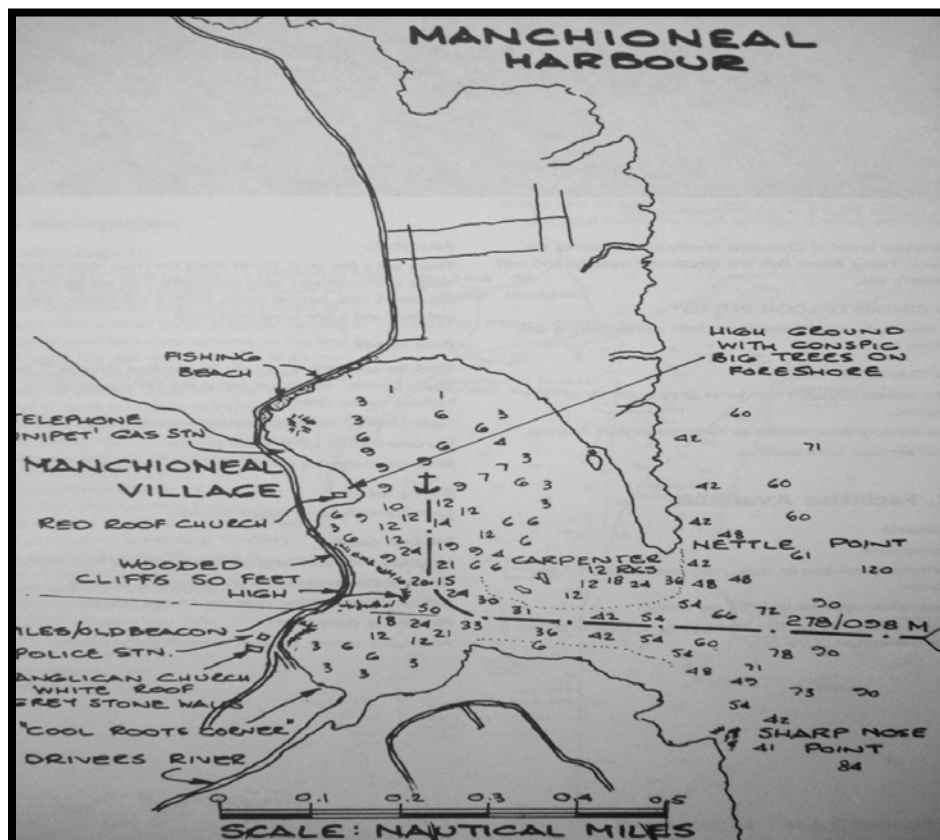


Figure 53. Manchioneal Harbor

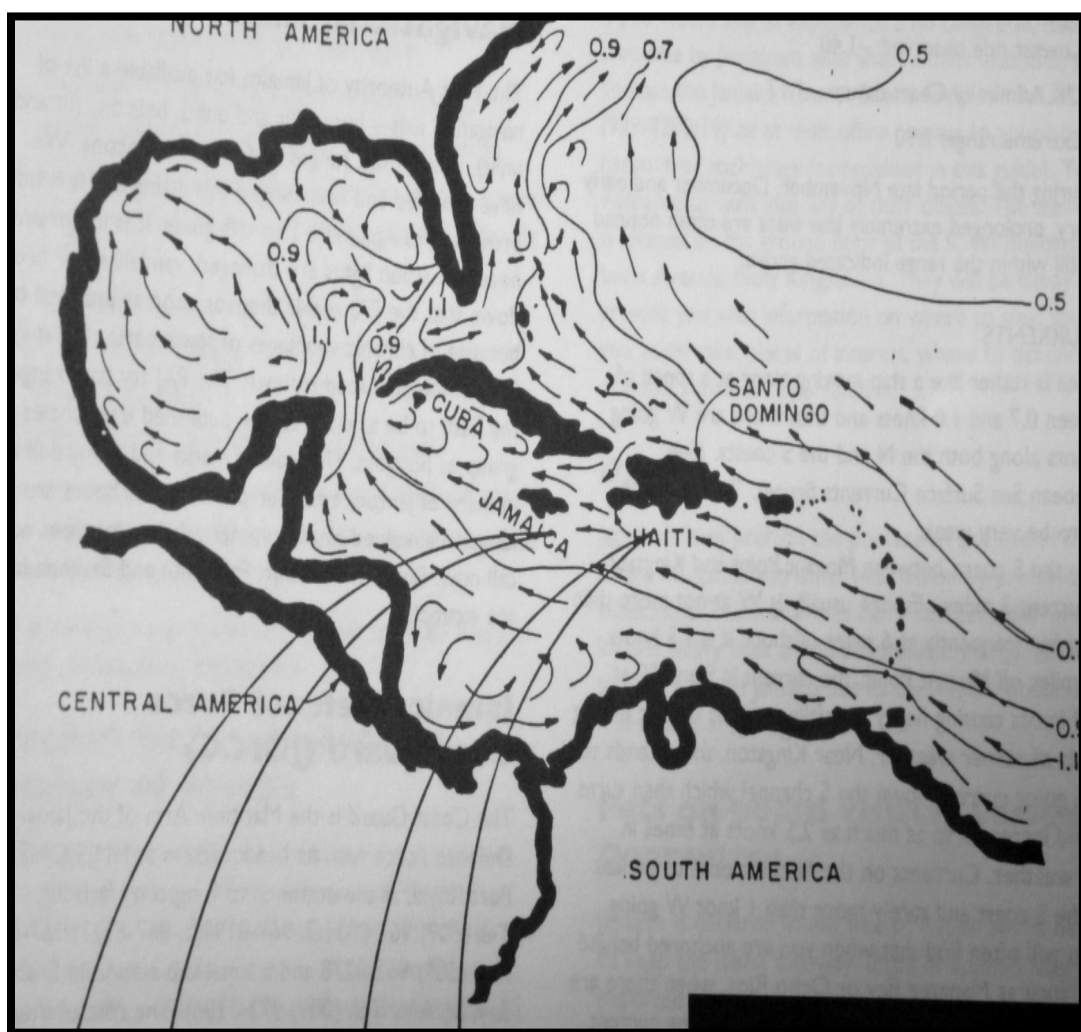
Formerly a banana export harbor, Manchioneal Harbor is unused today except by local fishermen. In mild trade wind conditions this harbor is tenable; however, as the wind pipes up, the harbor becomes less and less secure. It faces directly east and the trades enter without resistance.

The entrance is straight in; the anchorage favors the north side of the harbor in 10ft of depth. For the cruising sailor, this harbor offers little.

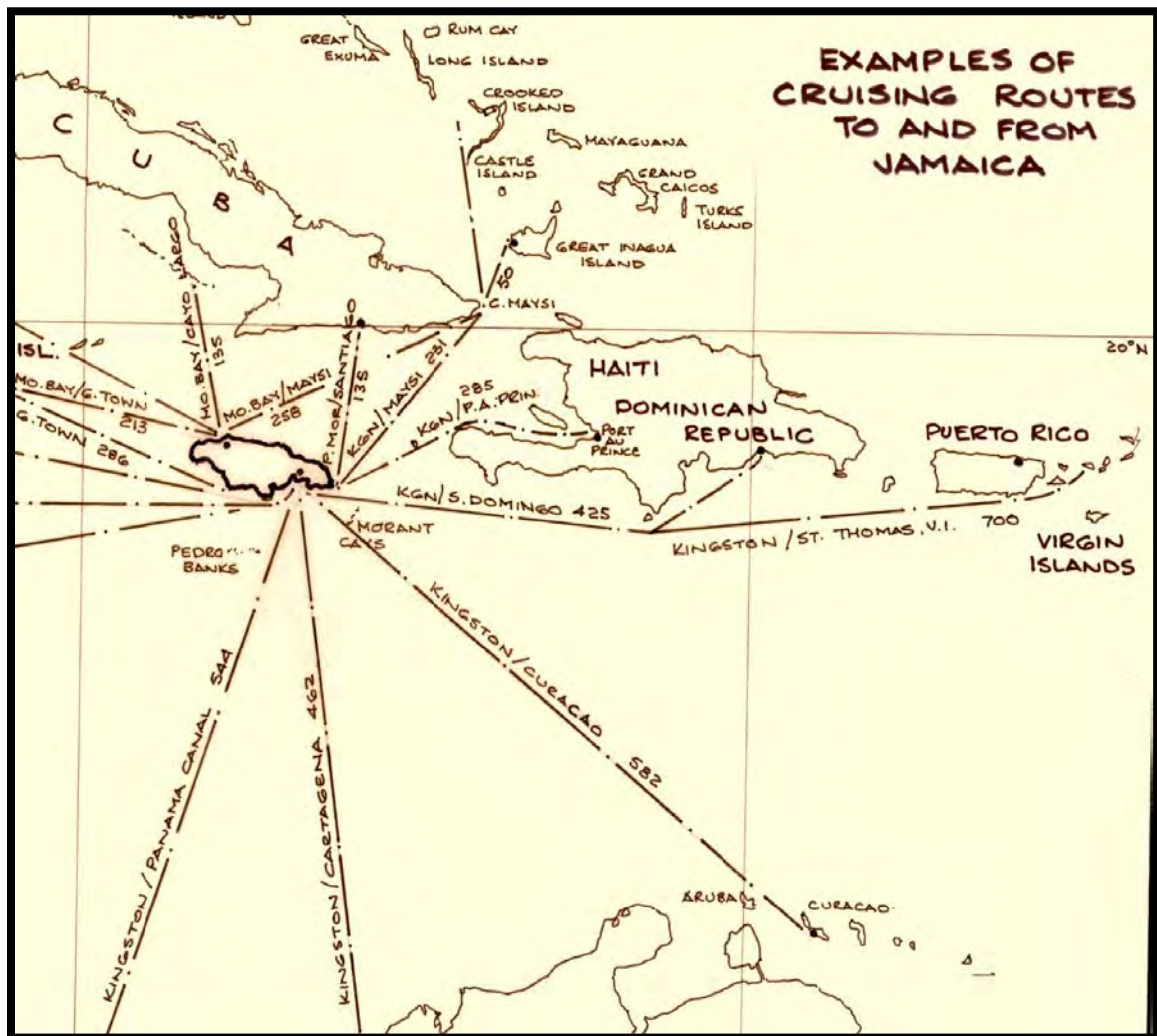
ADDENDA

from *The Yachtsman's Guide to Jamaica* by John Lethbridge

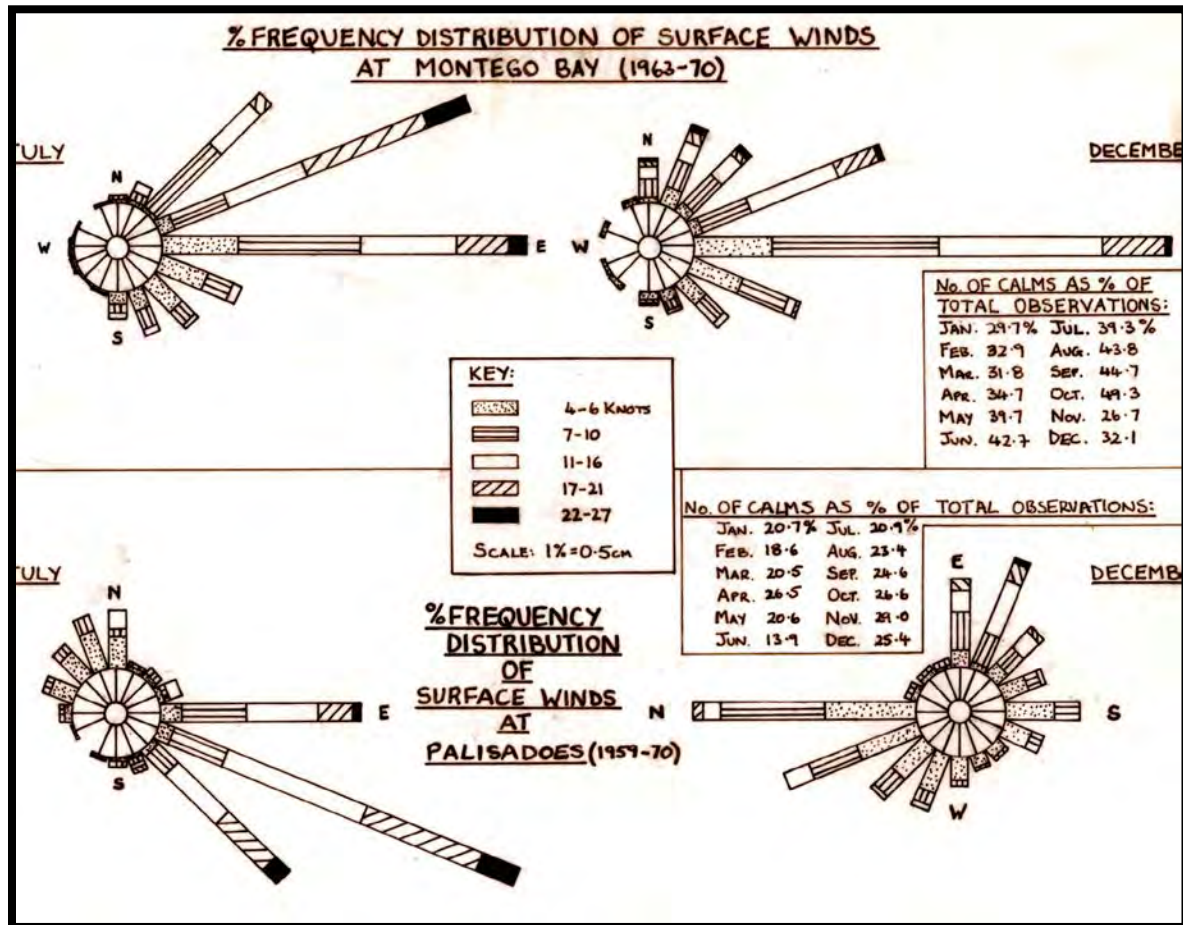
CURRENT FLOWS



CRUISING ROUTES TO AND FROM JAMAICA



SURFACE WINDS



SPONSORS AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Great thanks is given to **Rafael Baez**, president and owner of Marina ZarPar in Boca Chica, Dominican Republic for his unending support to the development of these guides.

Marjorie Seeberan, Samuel Samudy and Ludlow Brown, Jamaican friends without whose support and encouragement this guide would not have been possible.

Special thanks to **Monica McDonald and Clevense Charles** of Grenada for all their work to keep the boat underway and the crew fed and happy. They are the best of crew and were well received wherever they went.

I would like to express my sincere gratitude for the time and talent **Catherine Hebson, Director of FCG**, brought to the formatting of this guide to make its presentation first rate.

SPECIAL ACKNOWLEDGEMENT: The Lethbridges

Maurice Lethbridge, on behalf of the Lethbridge family for his help and support. He very much liked the idea of a new Jamaica Cruising Guide and helped secure his father's chartlets and other work contained in the original YACHTMAN'S GUIDE TO JAMICA by John LethBridge. Maurice has shared with me how proud he and his family are of his father's accomplishments. The following write up and summary were sent to me by Maurice and have been included here to honor his father, Mr. John Lethbridge. I would like to add my personal appreciation, for without the inclusion of the "chartlets" that were so carefully drawn by Commodore Lethbridge, this guide would be less useful.

COMMODORE JOHN LETHBRIDGE



John Lethbridge may have been born in South West London, but he was truly a Jamaican. Sailing was his passion. As a Jamaican citizen and marine civil engineer, he combined his love of the sea and passion for sailing. John's deep love for Jamaica began in 1957 when he was transferred to the island to be the Site Engineer for new airports in Montego Bay and Kingston. These two projects would be the beginning of a long relationship with the people of Jamaica and the country's developing infrastructure.

He is well known for his contribution to the design and development of: Kingston Harbor's piers, wharfs and jetties; the cruise ship terminal and resort at Ocho Rios; the bauxite pier at Discovery Bay; Montego Bay Freeport; and the Royal Jamaica Yacht Club (RJYC) marina. He is also

remembered for leading a 1988 United Nations and World Bank rescue effort to the island after it was devastated by Hurricane Gilbert.

After his graduation from Imperial College, London, in 1953 with a degree in civil engineering, he worked for: ESSO at Fawley, Southampton; Norman & Dawbarn in the Bahamas and Jamaica; British Petroleum in London and on an oil rig in the North Sea; Wallace Evans & Partners all across Jamaica; and at the World Bank in Washington DC. His commitment to and expertise in marine engineering led him to the far reaches of the globe. Wherever work and life took him, he sought opportunities to sail.

Following 17 years with the World Bank, in 1991 John retired home to Jamaica with his wife, Rosemary. They dropped back into Jamaican life as if they had been away on holiday.

As Commodore of the RJYC, John researched and published *The Yachtsman's Guide to Jamaica*. The guide reflects his love of the island and his knowledge of the country's history and culture. It is broadly recognized by yachtsmen for its detail of the island's anchorages, harbors and cays. After learning to sail on the river Thames in London as a college student, he shared his passion for the sport with both family and friends. He joined the Royal Ocean racing Club (RORC) in London and competed in the Admiral's Cup and the Fastnet Race. Later, as a member of the RJYC, he raced in Kingston Harbor and competed in ocean races, including the Pineapple Cup, the Nassau Race, and the Cayman Race. He taught his three boys how to sail on the Chesapeake Bay while living in Annapolis, Maryland.

The marina at the RJYC is a memorial to John and includes an anchor from an 18th century sailing ship that was dedicated in his memory by family and friends in 1999. He was admired for his attention to detail and commitment to safely anchor sailboats in any anchorage.

The old anchor at the RJYC and the chartlets of the island's anchorages that are included in this guide are legacies to a man who dearly loved Jamaica, his family, supporting his friends and sailing.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Frank Virgintino is a native New Yorker. His sailing background of over forty years covers the Canadian Maritimes, all of the eastern seaboard of the United States and the entire Caribbean, many times over. Aside from cruising he has spent the better part of his career building and administering marinas. In the process of writing this guide all of the harbors listed were personally researched; all of the information in the guide is a result of personal research and knowledge of Jamaica. It is hoped that the guide will make Jamaica easier to access and understand.



The author believes that the guide should be an excellent source of information for this beautiful island although it should not be used for navigation at any time. All charts, lat and long positions and inserts here should be used only as a frame of reference. Navigation should only be undertaken with the appropriate charts of the area.

Anchorage, harbors and facilities are dynamic and in a state of constant change. The cruising guide is a tool that provides for insight and research but should always be used as a “guide” only.

You can comment, ask questions or suggest changes right here on the website or by writing to fvirgintino@gmail.com

Fair Winds & Great Cruising!

Special Note

*Again, bear in mind that cruising guides are not intended for navigation. They are **GUIDES** to be used for reference. All the Latitudes and Longitudes here are given to the best of the author's ability. However, they should never be relied on and the skipper of the boat should remember that he/she has sole responsibility for proper navigation. Facts and circumstances related to statements made in this guide can change; sometimes facilities and services that existed during the writing of the guide may no longer be available.*

ALSO by FRANK VIRGINTINO

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