

The Legal System of Jamaica

May 2002

NOTE

This pamphlet includes the following:

a brief description of the legal system in Jamaica

a chart showing the court system in Jamaica

a print-out of the Supreme Court's homepage on its' website and its' links to the world.

THE LEGAL SYSTEM OF JAMAICA : IN BRIEF

The Judicial System:

(1) The Inferior Courts

Under the provisions of the Justices of Peace Jurisdiction Act, Justices of the Peace sit in petty sessions to determine a number of major causes summarily. Under the Judicature (Resident Magistrate's Court) Act, the Resident Magistrate, that is a qualified Attorney-at-Law of at least 5 years standing, presides over an inferior court of record which occupies an important field in the administration of justice. There is a Resident Magistrate's court in each of the 14 parishes in the island with wide jurisdiction in the trial of many criminal offences as well as in certain civil matters, for which there is a maximum monetary limit that can be litigated in that court. The Traffic Court and Family Courts are two important branches of the Resident Magistrate's Court. Appeals generally speaking go to the Court of Appeal.

(2) The Superior Courts - The Supreme Court

The Supreme Court has unlimited jurisdiction in civil and criminal matters and it consists of the Chief Justice, who is head of the judiciary, a Senior Puisne Judge and at least 19 other Puisne Judges. A Puisne Judge must be an Attorney-at-Law of at least 10 years standing. In addition there is a Master attached to the Court who exercises such of the jurisdiction of a Puisne Judge in Chambers

as may be assigned to him by rules of court. The court has unlimited original jurisdiction in the whole range of criminal cases, common law, equity, divorce and matrimonial causes, bankruptcy and admiralty matters. In addition, under the Constitution a full court of the Supreme Court has original jurisdiction to hear and determine applications by persons who allege contravention in relation to them of the human rights provisions of the Constitution. Two special branches of the Supreme Court are the Revenue Court, established in 1971 for the purpose of dealing specifically with appeals from administrative bodies on revenue and related matters, and the Gun Court, established in 1974 to deal primarily with the offence of illegal possession of firearms. All appeals from the Supreme Court are to the Court of Appeal.

The Court of Appeal

The Court of Appeal consists of a President and 6 Judges of Appeal. Additionally, the Chief Justice is declared by the Constitution to be a member by virtue of his office as head of the judiciary. However, he may only sit in the Court of Appeal upon the invitation of the President in a matter in which a full court is sitting. This is a provision that is rarely invoked. The court generally sits in two divisions of three judges each to hear and determine appeals from the Supreme Court and the inferior courts and also from the decisions of certain statutory quasi-judicial bodies, such as the Disciplinary Committee of the General Legal Council.

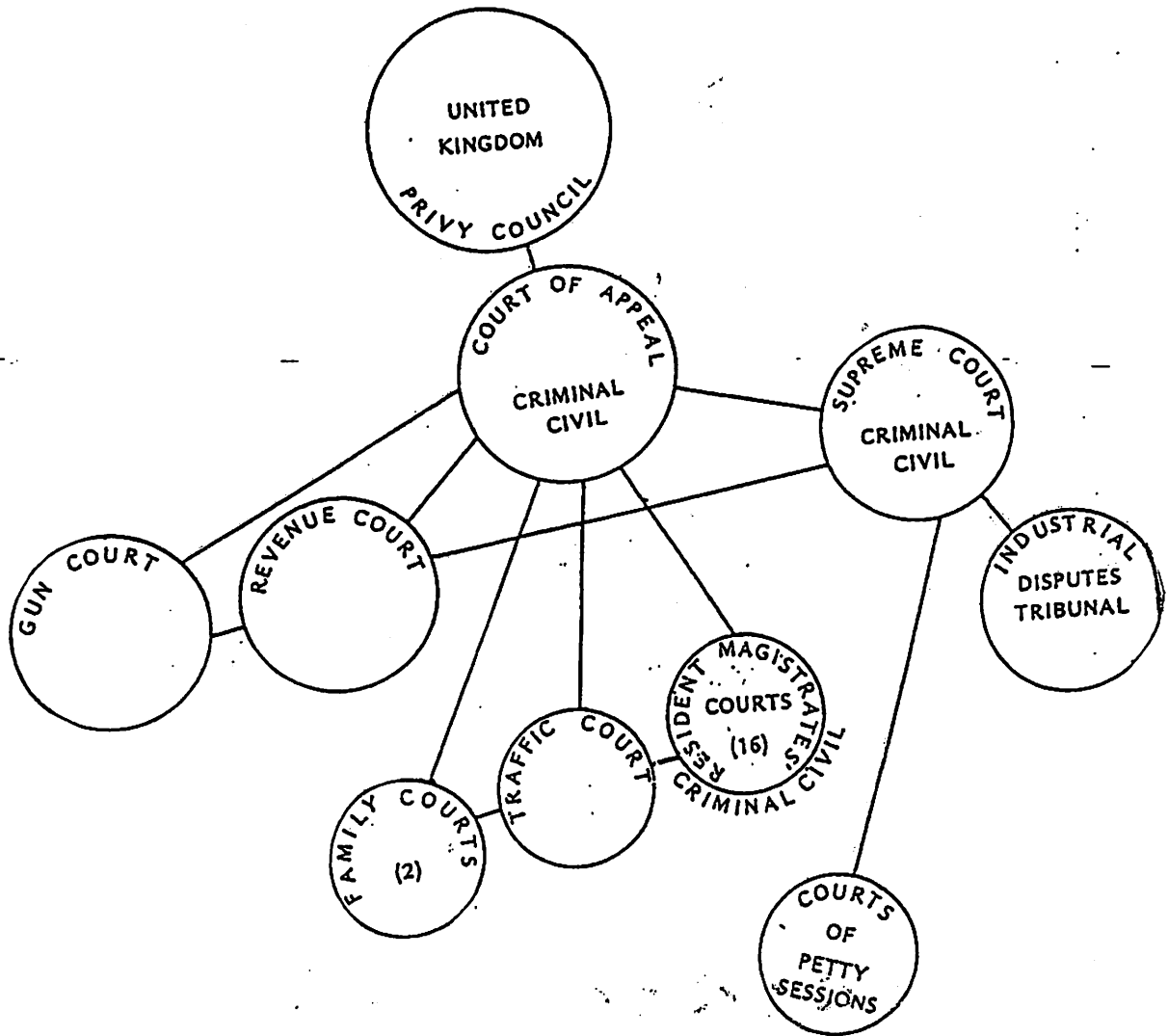
The Judicial Committee of the Privy Council

Appeals lie from the Court of Appeal to Her Majesty in Council in important civil and criminal cases which involve, among other things, questions of great general or public importance.

The Legal Profession

Prior to 1971, the legal profession was organised along the lines of the English profession. There were barristers and solicitors, the former invariably trained at one of the Inns of Court and the latter usually qualified locally after a period of training as articled clerks. In 1971 the Legal Profession Act fused the two branches of the profession and all practitioners are now known as Attorneys-at-Law. The Act establishes a General Legal Council which is responsible for regulating admission to practice, discipline and professional matters generally.

The Court System in Jamaica





The Supreme Court of Jamaica



Timely delivery of a High Standard of Justice for all

[Court Computerisation Project](#) [Home](#) [Laws of Jamaica](#) [Caribbean Court of Justice](#)

[Useful Links](#)

[Court Reporting Programme](#)

[Judgments](#) [NEW DRAFT CIVIL PROCEDURE RULES Updated February 7th 2002](#)

Our Judges are now
online



The Supreme Court of Jamaica
Judges Seminars

Term List

Speedy Trial List

Recent Powerpoint
Presentation to legal
fraternity regarding
Court Computerisation

You are visitor no.



to our site

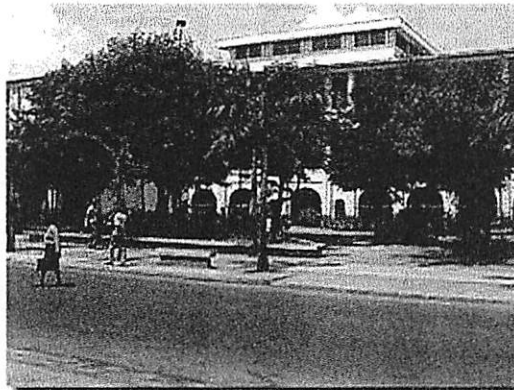
Court of Appeal List 2001

Court of Appeal List for week
of 15th April 2002

Court of Appeal List for week
of 22nd April 2002

Supreme Court Term List
2000 -2001

Term list for the date fixing for
the Michaelmas Term 2001



Supreme Court Term
List
Easter 2001

Date Fixing Session,
Speedy Trial and Term
List for Michaelmas
Term 2002

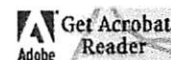
Supreme Court List for
week of 27th May 2002

This page was last updated on
Friday, May 24, 2002 01:28:26
PM

The Supreme Court of Jamaica
Public Building E
134 Tower Street
Kingston
Jamaica

Tel: 876-922-8300, 922-5606, 967-4859
Pager 876-936-0869
Email: webmaster@sc.gov.jm

You will need Adobe
Acrobat Reader to view
many documents on this
site. It is freely
available at the
following link.





The Supreme Court of Jamaica



Timely delivery of a High Standard of Justice for all

[Court Computerisation Project](#) [Home](#) [Laws of Jamaica](#) [Caribbean Court of Justice](#)

[Useful Links](#)

[Court Reporting Programme](#)

[Judgments](#) **[NEW DRAFT CIVIL PROCEDURE RULES Updated February 7th 2002](#)**

The Supreme Court of Jamaica

The links below have been found very useful by the webmaster. Hopefully they are useful to visitors to this site.

If you are a visitor to this site and have found a site which may be of use to the Supreme Court of Jamaica's site please email the [Webmaster](#) the link.


Local Government Related Links

Ministry of National Security and Justice	Jamaica's Ministry of National Security and Justice. This is the Ministry which the Supreme Court falls under.
Jamaica Constabulary Force	The Website for the Police Force of Jamaica
Jamaica Defence Force	The Website of the Military of Jamaica
Ministry of Health	The Ministry of Health in Jamaica
Ministry of Commerce and Technology	
Ministry of Labour	
Ministry of Finance	
Ministry of Transport and Works	
STATIN	
Jampro	
Jamaica Stock Exchange	
Bank of Jamaica	
Cabinet Office of Jamaica	
Office of the Contractor General of Jamaica	

Office of Utilities Regulation	
Our Executive Agencies	
Registrar Generals Department	
Administrator Generals Department	
MIND	
Registrar of Companies	
Jamaica Information Service	
Our Universities	
Northern Caribbean University	
University of the West Indies	
University of Technology	
Law Related links in Jamaica	
Smithfield Digest	Notes and Indices of Jamaican cases decided by the Supreme Court, the Court of Appeal and the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council
Law Related Links overseas	
Lawcrawler	Highly recommended by the Chief Justice
Access to Law	British and Commonwealth law material
Court Service	The Court Service is an executive agency of the Lord Chancellor's Department, providing administrative support to a number of courts and tribunals in England and Wales, including the High Court, the Crown Court and the county courts.
Law Reports	The incorporated council of law reporting for England and Wales.
Faculty of Law University of Cambridge	As the name suggests, and an excellent law site
British and Irish Legal Information Institute	Comprehensive Access to Freely Available British and Irish Public Legal Information

Butterworths	The new look Butterworths LEXIS Direct website which combines the global reach of LEXIS-NEXIS Professional with the quality information contained in Butterworths UK focused services.
The Ontario Integrated Justice Project	This is arguably the most ambitious project in terms of Court Technology as it applies technology to the Courts and integrates this with the Police as well as Corrections. This is a must see site which Jamaica will benchmark against.
The High Court of Australia	This is a very advanced Court in terms of technology which is also in the Commonwealth
The Supreme Court of Singapore	This is one of the the most advanced Supreme Courts in terms of technology
The Supreme Court of India	Another very technologically advanced Court management project in the Commonwealth
The United States department of Justice	The main site for all to do with Justice in the USA
U.K Legal	An excellent index of websites specialising in the U.K but not limited to the U.K as it has links all over the world.
The Supreme Court of Trinidad and Tobago	The website of another Caribbean Supreme Court in Trinidad and Tobago
LawLinks	This is one of the webmasters favourite links to all that is law related anywhere in the world. It is all due to Sarah Carter at Kent Law School. If anything on law is not here it is safe to say it does not exist.
The Lord Chancellors of the UK	The Lord Chancellor's main departmental role is to secure the efficient administration of justice in England and Wales.
The Court of Justice in Europe	As the Link suggests
Hieros Gamos	Another major portal for Law related sites. The "Yahoo" for Law sites.
Other useful local links	
Jamaica Gleaner	The largest selling newspaper in Jamaica

Useful Documents

Useful Documents	
<u>Electronic Case Files in the Federal Courts: A Preliminary Examination of Goals, Issues and the Road Ahead</u>	One of the best documents on Electronic Court Filing around. You will need Adobe PDF Reader to view this document. Download a free copy from  or get a copy from the Supreme Court Registry on CD.

Cambourne - Larkin Kienow / all xcluding public
Re: bilvaane Conference: Ocho Rios
May 2002.