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Paul Draper says Hello from Rodrigues



Well, the winter holidays here are now over and the children in our GPL Special Needs School are now back in school for the third and last term of the scholastic year.

As a Registered Special Education Needs School with the Rodrigues Regional Assembly Commission for Education, and also with SENA (Special Education Needs Authority) in Mauritius, we follow and observe all the same school calendars as any other Primary School in the Republic.

We are thrilled when, for instance, one or other of our students gets re-integrated into Primary school, and we hear that they have passed the CPE Exams.

We also heard that one of our former students is now a police officer and another is an assistant teacher.

We have all kinds of 'special needs' in our school. Some of those who attend are quite severely disabled, but some are slow learners or have been recommended to us from a Primary school on the Island because they have not done well in school, and then after some time with us, have gone back to primary school, or even to a college.

Each child is individually assessed by our staff, and Susan, who has taken up the challenge again of being our Director of School is always on the lookout for each individual child, and assessing their needs.

We also have a very important scheme called Parental Guidance, and teams of our teachers go out regularly to visit the homes and families of the children to assess the home conditions and give the parents guidance as to the needs of their children and how they can make the most at home of the learning they have had at our Centre. After all the children spend much more time at home than they do at School, and this helps them to practice at home, with their families, the things they have learned at school.

This Programme has been funded generously by the MAU-BANK of Mauritius, and is a very important part of our Programme and we thank MAUBANK for their support.

More support from the school (apart from the support received from government, which although we are most thankful for, does not meet 100% of our needs.) has come from an organization called Small Step Matters. (www.smallstepmatters.org)

Our contacts there, Marie-Laure and Janice are the coordinators of this 'crowd-funding' organization and have brought in crucial funds for the GPL Centre in terms of General support and special items to improve the class rooms and general refurbishing.

Birgit and Care-Co have also received support from SSM in order to purchase much needed wood working machines for the Beekeeping Department who make beehives for our own

use and also for sale. We have also received funds from Mauritius Telecom for the school and also from the State Bank (SBM)

To all donors and organizations who contribute to our financial health and keep us operational we extend our warm thanks.

Charles and our team of beekeepers have been busy improving and extending our bee colonies, and through the EN-SAMN project, Birgit and team have been able to spread this assistance to other institutions and individuals on the island who find the bee-keeping a helpful and interesting activity. I hope to be able to be present at this years National Honey Show in the UK in October and bring a sample of Care-Co's Rodrigues Honey for Exhibition.

The team of craft makers in the Care-Co. workshop for the disabled are also busy making crafts from coconuts and Donald and team are making soap for sale in our shops and also to sell in the Duty-Free Shop at the Plaine Corail airport in Rodrigues.

So, that's the main news for the moment. Please excuse the printed News. All personal messages coming in will receive a personal acknowledgement.

Paul

Minister Gunness effects site visits to assess infrastructure projects implementation

The Minister of National Infrastructure, Mr Govindranath Gunness, conducted two site visits on 27 August 2025 to assess preparations for forthcoming infrastructure development projects and review the progress of ongoing ones.

The first visit was at Bigara in Curepipe where the Minister examined plans for the construction of a culvert along Impasse Tuyau, a shortcut widely used by pedestrians to access Sir Edgar Laurent street and Route du Jardin. The project involves replacing two existing footbridges, which are old, narrow, and inconvenient for local residents. Estimated at around Rs 3 million, works are scheduled to begin shortly and are expected to be completed by January 2026.

Minister Gunness also visited the construction site of a link road along Sir Edgar Laurent Street, a project with a cost esti-

mate of Rs 18 million. The new road aims to upgrade the Bigara road network and reduce travel time by allowing road users to avoid lengthy detours.

The second site visit covered the Flic-en-Flac bypass, stretching from Pierrefonds through Cascavelle to Flic-en-Flac. Minister Gunness was accompanied by the Member of the National Assembly, Mr Balkrishna Babajee.

In a statement Minister Gunness pointed out the importance of the two site visits, noting that the Bigara project was particularly significant for local residents, who had long awaited its implementation. According to him, these initiatives demonstrate Government's ongoing efforts to enhance the road network and ensure that both projects progress efficiently.

Regarding the Flic-en-Flac bypass, he reassured that all con-



straints affecting its completion have been identified, including a Central Electricity Board utility pole, for which a meeting will be held to explore relocation options. He also highlighted road surfacing issues, which will be addressed promptly.

Minister Gunness further added that another road project is concurrently underway near the Maradiva Villas Resort and Spa, linking it to the Tamarina Golf & Spa Boutique Hotel.

GIS

MOG's Comments

It's great that the National Infrastructure Minister, Ajay Gunness, has been visiting areas in Mauritius which are prone to flooding during heavy rainfalls and during the cyclonic seasons.

If such a ministerial visit to all the affected area should take place following the occurrence of the bad weather, the

minister would get a better understanding of the problems, and of unhygienic conditions that residents have to face until the flood water is pumped away.

In the above press release, plus picture, it is noticed that the minister's visit occurred during the dry season.

The Ministry has men-

tioned Péreybère among the localities which are subject to flooding.

We have published on the right two pictures of severe flooding in Péreybère, off the coastal road, at Flamant Lane and at the Rose Lane.

The attention of the authorities was drawn to this unhealthy condition when late Dayal was Environ-

mental Minister over 10 years ago. Some two years ago, an appeal was made to the Citizens Support Unit when Diana Rangansamy was in charge of its roadshow. They were fruitless demarches.

Hopefully, the ministry's programme under Ajay Gunness does include the Flamant Lane area for attention.

S. Coonjee Beeharry



London Festival

Notting Hill Carnival 2025

Mauritius Musical Group participates in Notting Hill Carnival 1983



The Notting Hill Carnival was, as in previous years, held on the last Sunday of August and Bank Holiday Monday.

But with the difference that this year for the first time a Mauritian musical group - The Zoil Brothers - participated in the Carnival. Unfortunately, they did so not for Mauritius but for DOMINICA on whose float they performed. The Mauritius Association (GB) hopes to be able, next year, to have Mauritians herself represented in the Notting Hill Carnival. Members of the Association are being encouraged to organise a float with at least two Mauritian musical groups and performing and Mauritian participants dancing in front and behind the float. It will be the Mauritian saga all the way for two days in London. Such participation will make the saga known to the British and give Mauritius wide publicity. The Carnival receives considerable media coverage, T.V. Radio and the Press, before, during and after the event.

The Notting Hill Carnival is no longer just a restricted West-Indian affair. It has over the years taken an international character with Greek, Cypriot, Spanish and others residing in Britain taking part, not to forget the English themselves. It certainly is now a Black & White affair. The Carnival is no longer frowned upon by the Whites as it used to be in its earlier days. On the contrary, the Carnival offers the opportunity for a good day out to the British public, and for the tourists it is an attraction not to be missed while visiting London during that period.

The London Festival started in the 1960s as an annual gathering of West Indian immigrants in the Notting Hill - Ladbroke Grove areas for a festival their own music.

As a matter of fact, a large section of the West Indian community had chosen to settle in those parts of West London on arrival from their homeland in the 1950s.

It was really tough on the well-off residents of the aristocratic Borough of Kensington which encompasses, those neighbourhoods like Notting Hill, Bayswater, Westbourne Road, Ladbroke Grove etc which had over by the taken over by the West Indians. They were forced to sell cheap to move away.

Actually, Notting Hill is a locality of the Borough of Kensington. The local residents eyed those new migrants with much contempt, and one may recall the race riot that took in Notting Hill in 1958. It was in that sort of environment that the first London West Indian festival took place in 1966.

Incidentally, in spite of the riot of 1958 in Notting Hill, the annual festival is officially known as the Notting Hill Carnival, which is **now** proudly celebrated by white English participants as well, with several floats of their own.

The UK August Bank holiday (end of month) has always been blessed with sunshine attracting a multitude of visitors and participants to the street parties. This year, the bank holiday fell on Monday 25th. As customarily, the festival began on the Sunday before, i.e. on 24 August, to culminate on the Bank Holiday Monday.

This year, a temperature of some 30°C was registered on Sunday and Monday. An attendance of nearly 3 million people are reported to have attended the Carnival on the two days of the Carnival and Some 52 floats had applied to the local authorities for funding to decorate and operate chariots in the streets of the locality.

Mauritius has had its own float participating in the Notting Hill

for many years, as put up by the Voice of Mauritians, a charity set up by late Georges Lauricourt in Woolwich.

As an activist connected with the local administration, Georges could manage to obtain funding from the local Council.

Georges sadly passed away a few years ago and today his children and grandchildren carry on the tradition to give Mauritian a presence in the Notting Hill Carnival.

The presence of the Mauritian community at the Notting Hill Carnival was reported in Mauritius News (MN) in its first edition that appeared in November 1983. A copy of the paper's report is reproduced in the column of the left of this page.

In those days it was the Zoil Brothers who provided the musical entertainment and sega dancing, the folklore of the island on the Mauritius float.

K. Lingen

Carnival 2025 snapshots from the net



More carnival pictures on Page 3

The Voice of Mauritius of Greenwich, South London,
in the Notting Hill Carnival 2025
Sega Pictures from Michel Marain



The Mauritian Sega all the way in West London