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September 1 Commemoration Day for Kendal Train Crash - Grange

Kingston, August 31 - The Minister of Culture, Gender, Entertainment and Sport, the Honourable Olivia Grange has announced that from this year, September 1 will be observed as the date on which the nation officially commemorates the Kendal Train Crash.

September 1, 2017 marks the 60th Anniversary of the Kendal Crash which happened at Kendal in Manchester in central Jamaica on Sunday, September 1, 1957.

“This Friday, September 1, we will as a nation officially recall the circumstances of the horrendous train accident which claimed close to 200 hundred lives,” Minister Grange said.

Miss Grange said the decision was taken after discussions which included Beverley East, author of the book, *Reaper of Souls*. *Reaper of Souls* gives an account of the Kendal Crash using fictional characters.

The Minister said among the activities this year to commemorate the Kendal Crash, “The National Library of Jamaica will be putting on an exhibition which will include general historical information on the train crash which was the worst rail disaster in the world at the time. It will also display newspaper headlines and photographs of the scene of the crash.”

She said that consideration was also being given to the NLJ going into partnership with the Jamaica Library Service to have the exhibition placed in all parish libraries, starting with the one on Manchester.

The Minister said St. Anne’s Catholic Church in Kingston was also commemorating the Kendal Crash with a memorial Service on September 3. Many of those who died in the accident were members of St. Anne’s who had gone on an excursion to Montego Bay and were returning to Kingston on the ill-fated train.

The Kingston bound train with its two diesel engines leading 12 overcrowded wooden coaches, had been transporting some 1, 600 people when it ran off the rail at Kendal, resulting in the deaths of some 186 people and injury to many more.

The cause of the crash was narrowed down to a failure of the train's braking system but there were those who felt vandals interfered with the brakes.

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