



# NEWSLETTER

The Antigua and Barbuda High Commission

ISSUE No.98 April 2005



*Sailing Week  
2005  
-  
Locals and visitors  
alike enjoy the  
festivities (below)  
at Dickenson  
Bay*



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*Digital Photos by Maurice F. Merchant*

# HIGH COMMISSIONER'S MESSAGE

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*Greetings!*

*The 38th Antigua Sailing Week began on 24th April and culminated on 30th April. This great event is considered by many sailing enthusiasts to be one of the top five regattas in the world.*

*Over the years Sailing Week has evolved from a regatta for local yachtsmen to an international event that spans five days. It attracts an average of 200 yachts, over 1500 participants, 5000 spectators and some of the biggest, fastest and most impressive sailing yachts in the world. ([sailingweek.com](http://sailingweek.com))*

*Additionally, the Tourism Industry has recorded a 1.2% increase for visitor arrivals for the period January through March 2005. This augurs well for the industry and gives rise to the hope that this trend will continue in the ensuing months.*

## **BOTANICAL GARDEN**

*It is indeed gratifying to see that The Botanical Garden Board has received Government's support as was evidenced by Cabinet's tour of the Botanical Garden in early April.*

*Prime Minister Baldwin Spencer confirmed that the presence of Cabinet signalled the importance that the government places on the restoration of the garden as it related to the overall enhancement of the city.*

*I believe that we can all agree with Peter Harker, the Chairman of the Botanical Garden Board, and the government that the garden would also become a tourist attraction and "a monument that signifies that the people of Antigua and Barbuda appreciate that a thing of beauty is a joy forever".*

*Just to refresh your memory: The Botanical Garden is located in Victoria Park at the top of St. John's in the "greenbelt" area of the city. It borders the Queen Elizabeth Highway and Independence Avenue. The Garden is just to the east of the National Archives and the site for the new Public Library building.*

## **INAUGURATION OF THE CARIBBEAN COURT OF JUSTICE (CCJ)**

*As is the tradition with most High courts, the Caribbean Court of Justice (CCJ) marked its inauguration with much pomp and ceremony on Saturday, April 16, at the refurbished Queens Hall in Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago.*

*The ceremony which was preceded by an Inter-Faith Service, included speeches from the President of Suriname and Chairman of CARICOM, Ronald Veneetian, Prime Ministers Patrick Manning and Dr. Kenny Anthony, Secretary General of CARICOM Dr. Edwin Carrington and President of the CCJ, Michael de la Bastide.*

*Prime Minister Baldwin Spencer attended the inauguration accompanied by Attorney General, and Minister of Legal Affairs, Justin Simon, Q.C., Justice Minister Colin Derrick and Registrar at the High Court, Joanne Freeland-Roberts.*

**Dr Carl Roberts  
High Commissioner**



*Prime Minister Baldwin Spencer (left) addressing the gathering*

**PM Spencer urges closer relations with Brazil**

Prime Minister of Antigua and Barbuda Baldwin Spencer has predicted that the Antigua-Brazil connection will swiftly become a major marketplace for Brazil/Caribbean trade.

The Prime Minister was speaking at the opening of the First Antigua-Brazil Trade Fair organized by the ABI Financial Group.

“I expect that in very short order, the Antigua-Brazil Trade Fair will transform this island into a major hub for trade between Brazil and the sub-region, and the wider Caribbean. This could eventually lead to a central role for Antigua as the hub for trade between the Caribbean Islands and Latin America, and the wider world,” he said.

The country’s leader noted that the vision of the ABI Financial Group, its aggressive investment posture, and its

outstanding record for success, would make it possible. It was also pointed out that it would mean direct economic benefits, significant entrepreneurial opportunities and increasing job options for the Antiguan and Barbudan people.

“I envisage even greater opportunity accruing to Antigua and Barbuda from this event. It would be in the interest of Brazilian suppliers for Antigua and Barbuda to become a more affluent and therefore a more lucrative market. To this end, a tiny fraction of the upper end of Brazil’s 182 million people would provide a tremendous boost to Antigua and Barbuda’s tourism fortunes,” Prime Minister Spencer said.

Prime Minister Spencer outlined that this can be achieved by direct air services between the major cities of Brazil and Antigua and Barbuda. He challenged the ABI Executive team and their Brazilian counterparts to explore the possibility of direct airline connections between the two countries.

“A logical option for and outcome from the Antigua-Brazil Trade Fair would be expanding air traffic, and, ultimately, direct, scheduled airlift between our two countries,” the country’s leader concluded.



*Prime Minister Baldwin Spencer pose for a photo opportunity with Brazilian businessmen and women and ABI Executives*



*Ambassador Underwood with Vice Ministers Bolivar and Contreras*

Arrangements are currently being made for a high level delegation to travel to Venezuela to advance the discussions ahead of a meeting of fuel ministers scheduled to be held in Caracas at the end of April.

In addition to the fuel initiative, the Venezuelan Government has offered to assist Antigua and Barbuda by providing medical services. Such services may provide an affordable, high quality alternative to similar services provided by medical institutions in North America.

## Ambassador Underwood presents credentials to President Chavez

The President of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, Hugo Chávez Frías received the credentials of Ambassador Joan H. Underwood at a ceremony that took place at the presidential palace Miraflores. Also present at the ceremony was Eustoquio Contreras, Vice Minister in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs with responsibility for Latin America and the Caribbean.

While in Caracas, Ambassador Underwood also held discussions with Government officials about the possibility of Antigua and Barbuda accessing fuel at discounted prices under President Chávez's Petro Caribe initiative. Since assuming office in 2004 the UPP Administration has subsidized the cost of fuel at the pump thereby shielding consumers from the escalating prices on the international market. The contemplated agreement with Venezuela would represent a more sustainable approach to the management of the cost of fuel in Antigua and Barbuda.

In the upcoming months Ambassador Underwood will be facilitating dialogue between the relevant healthcare authorities in Venezuela and Antigua and Barbuda.

In addition to Venezuela Ambassador Underwood also has responsibility for diplomatic relations with Brazil, Chile, Mexico, Argentina and Colombia.

## Antigua and Barbuda and Chile to further strengthen relations

On 25th April, Antigua and Barbuda and Chile highlighted the need for both countries to move towards further strengthening their relations.

During a meeting with Prime Minister of Antigua and Barbuda Baldwin Spencer, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of Chile, Christian Barros stated that both countries had developed strong political links. He presented Prime Minister Spencer with a letter from President Ricardo Lagos of Chile, outlining the strong relations which already exist between the two countries.

He also pointed out that the strong relations can be improved in the areas of tourism and commended the role being played by Ambassador Joan Underwood in opening up relations with South America. He stated that Ambassador Underwood will play a pivotal role in firming up the relations between Chile and Antigua and Barbuda.

The meeting was also attended by Ambassador of Chile to Antigua and Barbuda, Alfonso Silva, who earlier in the day presented his credentials to Governor General Sir James Carlisle.

Prime Minister Spencer, who received another invitation to officially visit Chile from Deputy Minister Barros, informed the



*Prime Minister Baldwin Spencer greeting Deputy foreign Minister Christian Barros*

delegation that he is pleased that Chilean experts would shortly visit Antigua and Barbuda to assist the country in the development of its agricultural sector by establishing a number of model farms.

The Prime Minister also outlined that his government is willing to pursue the further development of relations with Chile, which has been a friend to Antigua and Barbuda.

Earlier in the day, the Chilean Minister presented computers to the Ministry of Agriculture, Lands, Fisheries, Marine Resources and Agro Industries.

On May 2, CARICOM's choice for Secretary-General of the Organization of American States (OAS), Chile's candidate José Miguel Insulza was elected to head the Organisation.

## Antigua and Barbuda to establish closer Cultural Cooperation with Cuba

Antigua and Barbuda and Cuba has established closer cooperation in the field of culture.

At the recently held meeting of an Antigua/Barbuda/Cuba Joint Commission during the official visit to Cuba of Prime Minister Spencer, it was agreed that Cuba will provide training in the areas of dance, visual arts and the production of handicraft for the tourism market.

The Ministry is expected to identify an individual to be the counterpart for all cultural collaboration purposes with Cuba.

Meanwhile, the construction of the Sir Vivian Richards monument will resume with the arrival of Cuban sculptor Andres Gonzalez to initiate the execution of the project. Andres Gonzalez was



*The Antigua and Barbuda delegation during the Cuban talks*

responsible for the construction of the Sir V.C. Bird bust at the West Bus Station.

During the Joint Commission Meeting invitations were extended to the Minister of Culture to attend the IV International Congress "Culture and Development" to be held in Havana, Cuba from June 6 to 9 and the 25<sup>th</sup> Edition of the Caribbean Festival to be held in Santiago de Cuba from July 3 to 9.

The Cuban cultural division also expressed their willingness to evaluate any project in the different artistic manifestations, which may result from interest by Antigua and Barbuda.

## Cuban Officials on follow-up visit to Antigua and Barbuda

On 25<sup>th</sup> April two Cuban Government officials paid a visit on Prime Minister Baldwin Spencer as part of an assessment and planning programme which will lead to the implementation of a number of projects agreed upon by Prime Minister Spencer and Cuban Leader Fidel Castro recently.

Cuban Ambassador to Antigua and Barbuda, His Excellency Jose Jaoquin Alvarez Portela and Roberto Lepez, Senior Advisor to the Cuban Vice President Carlos Lage visited Antigua and Barbuda on direct orders from President Fidel Castro to move ahead with implementation of the agreements signed with Antigua and Barbuda.

Prime Minister Spencer, who handed a letter to Mr. Lepez for delivery to President Fidel Castro, said that the Cuban officials' visit shows the political commitment of Cuba to implement the agreements reached with that country.

The Prime Minister also highlighted the need to fast track the LIAT initiative which he developed in Cuba for the airline to start flights to Havana from St. John's. He requested that the Cuban officials meet as soon as possible with senior management of LIAT.

It was also disclosed during the meeting that Cuba will send within one week two experts relating to the establishing of a polyclinic and

other areas of cooperation. Antigua and Barbuda also promised to provide information before July on the 50 scholarship applicants, which was agreed to by Cuba.

The Cuban team also held meetings with Finance Minister Dr. Errol Cort and Health Minister John Maginley. Antigua and Barbuda's Ambassador Designate to Cuba Bruce Goodwin, who attended the meetings, informed Prime Minister Spencer of their outcomes and advised that the need exists for additional economic and other data to be provided to the Cubans in order for further analysis to be made of the various sectors being assisted by Cuba.



*Mr Harker speaks to members of the Cabinet*

**Cabinet tours Botanical Garden in preparation for planned makeover**

The Botanical Garden Board has received the government backing as the full component of Cabinet toured the Botanical Garden to get a first-hand view of planned makeover of the garden into a multi-functional park.

Speaking to the press after the tour, Prime Minister Baldwin Spencer said, "It is an integral part of this government's effort to make Antigua and Barbuda a garden of the Caribbean and in order to do that we have to start with the Botanical Garden," Mr. Spencer said.

He also highly commended the quick work of the Botanical Garden Board in cleaning the area readying it for the major changes planned, and pledged the government's support. Chairman of the Botanical Garden Board Peter Harker added that it was government's intent that the Garden would also become a tourist attraction and "a monument that signifies that the people of Antigua and Barbuda appreciate that a thing of beauty is a joy forever."

According to Harker, the complete makeover of the Botanical Garden - which will include an amphitheatre, playground, gazebos, renovated bathroom facilities, fencing of the entire gardens, ice-cream parlour and confectionary area plus proper utilities - would take approximately two years on an initial budget of \$500,000.

It is also anticipated that the building that houses Citizens Welfare Division will be reverted to the park and utilised for arts and craft. It is also anticipated that the Prison Rehabilitation Centre, in the vicinity of the Garden will also be relocated.

Harker is also seeking to have the Botanical Garden taken out of the hands of government and the private sector and placed in a trust so it is more permanent.

The legal requirements of such a trust are being researched.



**The 46th International Social Service Spring Fair**  
 on  
**Wednesday 11th May 2005**  
 at  
**Kensington Town Hall**  
 Hornton Street  
 London W8  
 11am to 7pm

**Admission £5**  
**Stalls from around the world brought to your doorstep by the diplomatic missions of over 100 countries**

Don't miss **London's largest, most colourful Charity Fair.**  
 Sample the best of **global cuisine**; choose from an inspiring selection of **ceramics, jewellery and glass**; adorn yourself with **scarves, hats and shoes**; give the house a **make-over with exotic flowers, textiles and rugs**; dance to the **beat of live world music**; unwind at the **all-day licensed bar.**



*Deputy Prime Minister Wilmoth Daniel (2nd from right) at the United Nations*

## Minister Daniel addresses the Ministerial Segment of the Commission on Sustainable Development

In his first address to Ministers attending the High Level Segment of the United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development, Antigua and Barbuda's Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Public Works, Transportation and Environment, Wilmoth Daniel, underscored his government's commitment to the environment and to greater involvement with the important issues which are considered by United Nations system.

"Our environment is a prime resource that Antigua and Barbuda gladly shares with the rest of the world," the Minister said, adding further that, "the environment powers the economies of the Caribbean, which are dependent on tourism [particularly] so in the case of Antigua and Barbuda."

Echoing some of themes that were the focus of the Commission's discussions, Minister Daniel proudly observed "Antigua and Barbuda is committed to achieving the goal [of water for all] well ahead of the United Nation's

Millennium Development target in 2015[and to] the installation of the first and long overdue sewage system in our capital city, St. John's."

The Minister also cited the relatively high ranking of Antigua and Barbuda of 55 among 77 countries on the Human Development Index, which is published annually by the United Nations Development Programme, but cautioned that "despite this high ranking, Antigua and Barbuda retains all the vulnerabilities of a small island developing State."

The Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD) is composed of 53 members elected for terms of office of three years, meets annually for a period of two to three weeks. The Commission serves as a high level forum on sustainable development that reviews progress at the international, regional and national levels in the implementation of recommendations and commitments contained in the final documents of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED), namely: Agenda 21; and the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development. The Commission elaborates policy guidance and options for future activities to follow up the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation to achieve sustainable development, and promotes dialogue and build partnerships

for sustainable development with governments, the international community and the major groups identified in Agenda 21 as key actors outside the central government who have a major role to play in the transition towards sustainable development.

During his visit to the United Nations, Minister Daniel used the opportunity to hold a series of bilateral meetings with his counterparts to discuss initiatives in areas of sanitation and clean energy. Minister Daniel held bilateral meetings with Ms Connie Hedegaard, Minister of Environment of Denmark; Lord Whitty, Minister of Farming, Food and Energy of the United Kingdom; and Mr. Stavros Dimas, European Commissioner for Environment.

On Friday, April 22, Minister Daniel participated in a town hall-style meeting with Antiguan and Barbudans residing in the tri-State area of New York, New Jersey and Connecticut, on his government plans to develop the infrastructure of Antigua and Barbuda.

## Government to continue to meet the water needs of Antiguan and Barbudans

Antigua and Barbuda's Minister of Finance and the Economy, Dr. Errol Cort, underlined his Government's commitment to the delivery of basic water services to the citizens of Antigua and Barbuda during a panel discussion at the United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD) for Ministers of Finance and Development Cooperation. Chairman of the UN commission on sustainable Development, Dr John Ashe, chaired the panel discussions.



*Minister of Finance and The Economy, Dr Errol Cort*

In response to the question on what roles do Governments see for the private sector – whether large-scale or small scale – and for public-private partnerships in meeting water supply and sanitation needs, Minister Cort told his colleague Ministers that “while the role of public-private partnerships is very important, the onus for ensuring that water is supplied to all sectors of society, especially to the less fortunate, must rest with Governments.”

On the subject of human settlements/slums, Minister Cort told the panel that his Government supported:

- (a) micro-credit and micro-financing that can both target low-income people and increase their access to housing, thereby reducing slum dwellings;
- (b) Public-private partnerships to provide low-cost financing for housing is necessary to tackle the problem of slum dwellings;
- (c) the need for international financial support for community-based projects in slum areas and the provision of

- unused public lands for low-cost housing as vehicles for achieving the developmental goals on human settlements; and
- (d) actions and policy decisions to create alternatives to new or expanded slum formations, including providing gainful employment for youth, improving the system of land tenure and the inclusion of community based groups in urban planning.

Minister Cort attended and participated in the first ever panel for Finance and Development Corporation Ministers convened by the United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD). He also held a series of bilateral meetings with his counterparts.

Other members of the discussion panel included: H.E. Ms. Carin Jämtin, Minister for International Development Cooperation, Sweden; Mr. Len Good, Chairman and CEO, Global Environment Facility; Mr. Suma Chakrabarti, Permanent Secretary, Department for International Development, UK; and Mr. Adolfo A. Franco, USAID Assistant Administrator for Latin America and the Caribbean.

Opening presentations were made by: Mr. Ian Johnson, Vice President, Environmentally and Socially Sustainable Development, World Bank; and Mr. Carlos Fortin, OIC, United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD).

The panel was inaugurated by the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Mr. Kofi Annan, who delivered the opening remarks and was co-moderated by the Minister of Finance of South Africa, Trevor Manuel and the Minister for International Cooperation of Norway, Ms. Hilde Johnson.

The CSD, which ended on Friday, April 22, adopted a series of policy decisions on practical measures and options on water, sanitation and human settlements.

## Antigua and Barbuda to receive twenty community centres

While commenting on his recent visit to Nairobi, Kenya in Africa to attend the 20th Session of the Governing Council of UN Habitat, Minister of Housing, Culture & Social Transformation, Hilson Baptiste stated that Antigua and Barbuda is to be the recipient of 20 community centres, which will be constructed at strategic points around the island.

The Governing Council of UN Habitat is seeking to eradicate slums in parts of the world by the year 2010.

Minister Baptiste said that after much investigation and touring of one of Africa’s major slums, he believes that Antigua and Barbuda does not really have any slum areas and those areas that require development, like Booby Ally, can be rectified.

“When I saw the living conditions of Africa’s slums, I thought it best that UN Habitat should spend the money on persons who are more in need, therefore, I changed my approach from housing allowance to community centres,” the Minister explained.

The Minister said the centres will provide an avenue for community development and he hopes that the community centres will feature day care facilities, learning centres, gym and libraries. He said with the new facilities, the community would be further enhanced.

The Minister said that due diligence is yet to be done, and the locations are yet to be decided.

## Government take steps in making Antigua and Barbuda a Multilingual Society

The Government of Antigua and Barbuda has moved closer towards implementing its educational policy of making the entire nation multilingual.

During his official visit to the Republic of Cuba, Prime Minister Baldwin Spencer requested assistance from the Cuban government in the provision of tutors in the area of Spanish, the second official language of the Caribbean.

The Prime Minister also expressed the government's interest in short courses in Spanish, including the possibility of teaching that language on radio and television.

The Cuban government agreed to collaborate in the teaching of Spanish Language both for primary education and for professors.

In the long term, the Baldwin Spencer administration plans to make available language instruction in well-equipped language laboratories, to the nation's young people and interested adults.

## PM Spencer at Inauguration of Caribbean Court of Justice CCJ

On 16th April Prime Minister Baldwin Spencer joined regional Heads, members of the judiciary and diplomats at the inauguration of the Caribbean Court of Justice (CCJ) at Queen's Hall, St Ann's, Trinidad and Tobago.



*Prime Minister Baldwin Spencer flanked by Justice Minister Colin Derrick on his right and Registrar of the High Court Joanne Freeland-Roberts and Attorney General and Minister of Legal Affairs, Justin Simon Q.C. on his left*

The event saw Prime Ministers from 10 Caribbean countries, several Attorneys General and other distinguished guests from the Commonwealth arriving at the Hall that was specially decorated for the occasion.

Following the ceremony, Prime Minister Spencer said that the inauguration of the CCJ marked a significant milestone in the history of CARICOM. "This signals our intent to truly unify the nations of the region. Although Antigua and Barbuda will only for the time being participate in the Court in its Original jurisdiction, we see this as a significant event," Prime Minister Spencer noted.

The CCJ will function as a court of original jurisdiction for most of the Caricom countries under the Revised Treaty of Chaguaramas in the operation of the Caricom Single Market and Economy (CSME).

President of the CCJ, Michael de la Bastide, introduced the justices to the audience, following which Justice Adrian Saunders of St Vincent and the Grenadines and Justice Desiree Bernard of Guyana took the oath before President Richards of Trinidad and Tobago. Professor David Hayton of Britain and Justice Jacob Wit of the Netherlands Antilles will be administered the Oath of Office in July. Justice Rolston Nelson of Trinidad and Tobago and Justice Duke Pollard of Guyana took the Oath of Office earlier this year.

Also attending the Ceremony representing Antigua and Barbuda were the country's Attorney General and Minister of Legal Affairs, Justin Simon, Q.C., Justice Minister Colin Derrick and Registrar at the High Court Joanne Freeland-Roberts.



## Education Minister attends CARICOM Education Ministers Retreat

On 2nd and 3rd May Education Minister Bertrand Joseph joined his regional counterparts at a Caribbean Community (CARICOM) Retreat of Ministers with responsibility for Education in Georgetown, Guyana.

The gathering discussed issues related to Secondary Education and the Rationalization of Tertiary Education in the Region.

At a conference of Heads of Government in 1997, a vision was outlined for Education and Human Resource Development in the region and several specific targets were set for various levels of education. Among these were:

- 15% enrolment of the post-secondary age cohort in tertiary level education by the year 2005
- Universal quality secondary education be targeted for the year 2005 with attendant annual targets set

In response to this mandate, Member States have put in place measures for ensuring increased access to tertiary education for their citizens and some Member States have already achieved and surpassed the enrolment targets.

The measures have included the establishment of new institutions and the expansion of offerings and remit of others, e.g. in the upgrading of Community Colleges to offer degree programmes, franchising of year 1 and 2 University of the West Indies (UWI)

programmes in specific areas to Community Colleges e.g. in Antigua and Barbuda, St. Lucia and St. Kitts and Nevis. In addition, there has been increased employment of Distance Education modalities for the delivery of tertiary level programmes.

The Meeting is also expected to discuss issues related to the agenda of the Fourth Meeting of Ministers of Education of Latin America and the Caribbean to be convened in Trinidad and Tobago from August 10<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> 2005.

## Social Transformation plans survey of Living conditions

A two-man team from Kairi Consultants Limited of Trinidad and Tobago, recently concluded a familiarization trip ahead of a Survey of Living Conditions in Antigua and Barbuda set to begin shortly.

The survey is a collaborative effort between the Caribbean Development Bank, CDB and the Ministry of Housing, Culture & Social Transformation.

The Survey of Living Conditions will seek to obtain baseline data to help the Ministry of Social Transformation plan programmes and policies aimed at improving the livelihood of the general population, while at the same time unearth shortcomings in the Government social services.

The two-man team comprising Dr Ralph Henry and Edwin St. Catherine met stakeholders of the project, outlined the necessity for the survey and explained how the information obtained should help the Government develop its social structure.

Dr. Henry, speaking to the National Assessment Team, which was appointed by Cabinet and included members from the private and public

sectors, said the project is very important to the development of any country. He said with the information provided, Government can then make the necessary appeal to the CDB for grants or assistance to further strengthen its services. Dr Henry said if Government does not know the areas of deficiency then they cannot adequately meet the needs of their residents, as projects may be directed into the wrong areas.

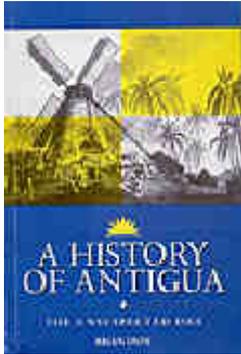
Minister of Housing, Culture & Social Transformation, Hilson Baptiste said this new survey would help the Government meet its mandate and provide continued improvement in the standard of living through its social services programmes. He added that if persons co-operate fully with the survey, it should help the Government understand the real problems nationals face daily. He continued, "Once we know the needs and concerns of our people then we will be in a better position to help, thereby further improving their standard of living."

He added that his Ministry has as its motto "*The social consciousness of Antigua and Barbuda*" and his Government believes that every 'pocket' of poverty must be reduced or totally eradicated, adding that no one should be left out from advancing up the 'ladder of success'.

Preparatory work has commenced and the entire survey is expected to last approximately one year and will include fieldwork, data collection and analysis.



## NATIONALS' CORNER



### A HISTORY OF ANTIGUA: THE UNSUSPECTED ISLE.

This book, written by Brian Dyde and published by Macmillan Education in 2000, not only covers the history of Antigua from pre-Columbian days until the achievement of Independence in 1981 but also deals with events over the same period in both Barbuda and Redonda.

The author is an Englishman who, having known the island for over 40 years and being married to an Antiguan, has taken great care to treat what could be thought of as potentially dry historical material from a balanced cultural perspective and to write for the widest possible readership.

His 360-page book covers the pre-Columbian migrations, colonialism, slavery and the plantation economy, the rise of the trade union movement, Associated Statehood, Independence, and the transition from an agricultural to a tourist economy in an interesting and highly-readable manner. As well as being illustrated with maps, reproductions of paintings and prints, and many photographs, the text also contains numerous apt contemporary quotations from each significant period of Antigua's history. It is a book which will appeal to anyone with any connection with Antigua, or with an interest in West Indian history.

The author has also written the definitive visitor's guide to Antigua (now in its third edition) as well as a history of the West India Regiments.

His book, ISBN number 0 333 75169 8, is available from any good bookshop, priced at £17.95

## TOURISM NEWS

### New Air Services Agreement established between Antigua and Barbuda and The Netherlands Antilles

Representatives of the Governments of Antigua and Barbuda and The Netherlands Antilles recently concluded discussions in Curacao for a new air services agreement aimed at liberalizing air transport between the two countries.

The new agreement will replace one agreed to in 1994 that limited the number of flights that could be operated between the two countries and also contained a number of other restrictive practices relating to pricing and capacity.

Under the terms of the new agreement, airlines designated by Antigua and Barbuda and the Netherlands Antilles, will be able to operate under an Open Skies regime allowing almost unrestricted access to each other's markets, and will allow for market driven flexibility in relation to pricing and other commercial arrangements.

The new agreement also seeks to strengthen cooperation between the two countries in relation to aviation security and safety by incorporating requirements reflecting current international legal obligations in these areas. This follows recent reductions in air service by carriers from The Netherlands Antilles and other

regional carriers, and is expected to result in increased commercial, tourism, cultural, and trading relations between the Eastern Caribbean and the territories of the Netherlands Antilles. The agreement will come into effect once government authorities in both countries have completed the various legal requirements.

The Antigua and Barbuda delegation consisted of Mr. Brian Challenger, Technical Coordinator in the Ministry of Tourism and Aviation; Mr. Leon Smith Acting Aerodrome Superintendent at the V.C. Bird International Airport; Mr. Edward Gilkes, Acting Chief Operations Officer of Caribbean Star Airlines; Mr. Wilbur Edwards, Director of Network and Sales at LIAT (1974) Ltd; and Mr. Sam Waithe, Aviation Consultant to Caribbean Star Airlines. Dr. Siegfried Francisco, Director of Civil Aviation of the Netherlands Antilles, led his country's delegation.

### Tourism figures show growth for the first quarter of 2005

Antigua and Barbuda is continuing to see growth in the tourism industry as indicated by visitor arrival figures to date for the year 2005.

A 1.2% increase has been recorded for the period January through March 2005, when compared to the same period in 2004, with March recording a healthy 9.5 % increase over last year. Tourist arrivals in January and February experienced an increase of 1.1% and a fall of 7.2% respectively.

According to the acting Director General within the Ministry of Tourism, Lorraine Headley, this pattern can be attributed to the increased presence of Antigua and Barbuda in trade fairs and expos such as the recently concluded ITB in Berlin, with a particular focus on attracting European visitors.

The country, which has a strong UK marketing drive, will continue its extensive campaign there later this year by participating in World Travel Market 2005.

“The success of Tourism Minister, Harold Lovell in securing the return of Condor to Antigua in November will contribute towards increased airlift, with expected increased visitor arrivals from Germany as well as surrounding European countries,” Miss Headley noted.

The Canadian market has also seen strong growth with a 15.1% increase experienced in 2005. A targeted public relations campaign being planned for the North American market within the next few months is expected to contribute to significant growth in the remaining months of 2005.

With activities such as the launch of the 2005 Carnival celebration, and Cricket just around the corner, a busy season for Tourism is anticipated. Plans are underway to improve the visitor experience during peak period.

With projections for this year’s tourist industry seemingly positive, all stakeholders are being urged to put their best foot forward in ensuring that this year continues to record positive results.

**Ministry of Tourism provides training for small hotel owners**

Recognising the role of small locally owned hotels in the

accommodation sector, the Ministry of Tourism in collaboration with the Organisation of American States (OAS) provided a special training opportunity for small hotel owner/ managers.

Focusing on the need for small hotel owners and managers to be proficient in all aspects of hotel operations, this comprehensive four day workshop, which began on Tuesday May 3 and ended on Friday May 6 at the Antigua and Barbuda Hospitality Training Institute, covered Hotel Management and Operations, and Food and Beverage Management with a view to providing existing and new owners with the necessary skills to assist in the smooth functioning of their properties.

The major objective of the programme was to improve techniques and approaches for hoteliers through which improved performance and profitability can be achieved.

Director of Product Development at the Ministry of Tourism, Lorraine Headley, sees the training as critical in improving the standards for the small hotel sector, “We are actively seeking to improve the operations of local hoteliers to ensure their continued viability within the industry. We recognise the important role that such accommodation will play in 2007 for Cricket World Cup and we will be ensuring that these and other stakeholders have the opportunity to train in order to benefit fully from increased opportunities in tourism.”

At the completion of the programme participants received their internationally recognised certification from the American Hotel & Lodging Association (AH&LA).

The training was conducted by OAS trainer, Bennett Brown.



*English Harbour  
Rum*

*Anyone wishing to  
purchase English  
Harbour Rum should  
contact the  
London distributors  
Petal Enterprise  
at*

*Tel: 07714 112 073*

*Tel./Fax: 020 8590 8784*

*e-mail:*

*petal1506@hotmail.com*

