



NEWSLETTER

The Antigua and Barbuda High Commission

ISSUE No. 113 August 2006

On 24th August the Government of Antigua and Barbuda launched its Silver Jubilee Independence celebrations at Independence Drive. Prime Minister the Honourable Baldwin Spencer delivered the feature address at the function. Below is the Prime Minister's address:

"The Most Rev. Bishop Donald J. Reece
Hon. Eleston Adams – Chairman of the Independence Implementing Committee
Hon. Trevor Walker – Representative for Barbuda and other members of the Cabinet of Antigua and Barbuda
Members of the Diplomatic Corps
Members of the Independence Oversight and Implementing Committees
Specially invited Guests
Ladies and Gentlemen:



PM Spencer and 2005 Independence Queen cutting ribbon to launch activities

Good Morning!

On November 1, 1981, Antigua and Barbuda opened a new page in its history. It was a new page in history that meant our twin island nation was prepared to work towards improving the lot of its people. It called for every citizen to accept their role to work towards avoiding what has kept us back. It meant having pride in our nation.

Today, we launch the celebrations marking the 25th year since that great moment in our nation's history which was championed by the late father of our nation V.C. Bird Sr.

The lowering of the union jack and the hoisting of the national flag of Antigua and Barbuda during the early hours of November 1, 1981 a few hundred feet away from where we are today blossomed in all Antiguans and Barbudans a great sense of pride. Pride in freedom and Pride of ownership of our destiny.

Over a number of years since 1981, the luster we had in our great nation dwindled. Today, we can be proud of

the fact that as a calypsonian sang this year, "People are walking holding their heads high in the streets – the Pride is back."

As we launch the celebrations today, let it be a motivator to reinforce in us the commitment to self-determination. Let it encourage us to look forward to

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A MESSAGE FROM HIS EXCELLENCY DR CARL ROBERTS, HIGH COMMISSIONER



Dear Readers,

This month draws us closer to that day when we commemorate the birth of the Independent Nation of Antigua and Barbuda. In my message for this issue of the Newsletter I turn the spotlight on one aspect of nationhood which is often overlooked - i.e the Diplomatic representation of our country in other countries and at meetings of many International Institutions around the world.

In his article "Who Needs Diplomats" Paul Sharp highlights some of the problems which today's diplomats face. What really is the role of the diplomat? When asked many would readily respond saying "We represent our governments and countries".

Representation has come to encompass at least three elements: the sovereign, the ambassador as a person; and the ambassador in his representative capacity as the "Sovereign". For Antigua and Barbuda the Sovereign is our Head of State,

HRH Queen Elizabeth II whose representative in Antigua and Barbuda is our Governor General, HE Sir James B Carlisle. The Ambassador could be male or female and may reside in the country in which he holds credential or non-resident, i.e. living in another country or at home.

The Ambassador (or High Commissioner in a member state of the Commonwealth) holds his status and receives his appointment through a Letter of Credence which is a formal letter sent by one head of state to another formally accrediting him as Ambassador in the country of the head of state receiving the Letter of Credence. Until a head of state formally accepts a Letter of Credence, an ambassador-designate does not formally assume diplomatic status, including the possession of diplomatic immunity.

Antigua and Barbuda, as a small developing state, is not in a position to have diplomatic representation in every independent country. It, however, has resident or non-resident ambassadors for the major locations, viz China, Africa, south America, USA, UK and Europe. It shares representation at OECS level in some other locations, e.g. Canada.

The role of the ambassador is constantly changing and in today's high risk environment the security of the ambassador and his family is of paramount interest to the government of the host country.

As a young nation, we have to from time to time review the policy our representatives articulate as they fulfill their role in the international arena (I will leave this for another article). Let me close by wishing all who represent our State in whatever forum God's blessings as they convey the image and position of our Nation to the rest of the world.

Dr Carl Roberts
High Commissioner

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a better tomorrow and teach us about the hurdles Antigua and Barbuda had to overcome in attaining sovereignty.

Our silver jubilee celebration is the opportunity for us to revisit and revitalize that pride that overwhelmed our nation on November 1, 1981.

Today, we can be proud that Antigua and Barbuda was the first country in the Leeward and Windward Islands of the Commonwealth Caribbean to achieve Associated Statehood.

We can be proud that V.C. Bird Sr. made that journey to Lancaster House in London in 1980 which led to our full independence.

We can be proud that Antigua and Barbuda now has a strong voice in the International Community with our creditors smiling with us again

We can be proud that our nation has a government of the



A section of the National Youth Steel Orchestra and OECS Youth Steelband champions performing



The Sunnydale dancers during the ceremony

people, for the people and by the people.

We can be proud that we are free to publicly air our views without fear.

We can be proud that our nation's economy is on the rebound.

We can be proud that Antiguans and Barbudans lead good lives compared to many in other Caribbean countries and further afield.

We can be proud that our nation's young people have a more secure and brighter future.

Ladies and Gentlemen, Fellow and Antiguans and Barbudans:

Despite some of the negatives we have been

hearing, many of our young people are also symbols of pride for our nation.

Many of our young people hold top positions in government and the private sector. They continue to make us proud through the many successes in the field of education.

Never before, in the history of Antigua and Barbuda have we had so many young Antiguans and Barbudans studying in universities abroad and via online universities.

The government of Antigua and Barbuda recognizes that in order to maintain the "pride is back" philosophy which is once again becoming common place among Antiguans and Barbudans, we must invest heavily in our young people.

Investing in our young people creates a culture of excellence that uplifts our nation and positions us to take advantage

of the many opportunities that exist. Simply put, the pride of the people twinned with a government for the people, results in economic growth and development.

On January 1, I announced that a major aspect of our silver jubilee celebrations will be the awarding of twenty five scholarships to deserving and qualified young Antiguans and Barbudans.

Through the hard work of our Permanent Representative at the United Nations Ambassador Dr. John Ashe, we have secured 15 scholarships from the Government of Malaysia and 3 scholarships from the Government of Greece.

Recently we announced that through the work of Ambassador David Shoul, the People's Republic of China donated ten scholarships to study any discipline in that country.

In addition, a few days ago, my government graciously accepted as a contribution to our Silver Jubilee Celebrations, two full scholarships for two Antiguan and Barbudan students to study towards a Bachelors degree in mechanical and electrical engineering at the University of the West Indies from the Antigua Power Company Limited.

We are also receiving indications that others are preparing to share their pride in our nation and join with the government to invest in our young people.

So you can see, as it was with the floating of the Treasury Bills and Bonds, our scholarship drive for young nationals, have been



PM Spencer with three Silver Jubilee Scholarship winners

oversubscribed. Not only the pride is back, but confidence in the government and people of Antigua and Barbuda is strong.

The Government expresses its heartfelt appreciation to Ambassadors Ashe and Shoul and Mr. Francis Hadeed of Antigua Power Company Limited for their hard work and generous contributions, as we work towards securing and embracing the future together.

Today, Ladies and Gentlemen, I am pleased to announce the individuals who have been successful in their application for the three scholarships to study in Greece.

- The first successful student is Ms. Sandrena Martin. She is a former student of the Ottos Comprehensive School and the Antigua State College. This week Sandrena also learnt that she was successful in passing five A'Level subjects. Sandrena has chosen to

study Agriculture and Veterinary Medicine.

- Our second scholarship recipient is Damien Barnes. He is a former student of the Antigua Grammar School and the Antigua State College. Damien was also successful in passing the three A'Level subjects he sat a few months ago. Damien has opted to study Computer Science.

- Our final Greek scholarship awardee is Devin Jeffrey of Barbuda. Devin is a former student of the Holy Trinity School in Barbuda and the Antigua State College. He was also successful in attaining passes for the three A'Level subjects he sat a few months ago. Devin will pursue studies in Medicine and Information Technology.

Please join me in congratulating the first group of Silver Jubilee Scholarship recipients!!

All three students will commence their studies in Greece in October. The scholarships for studies in Malaysia and China commencing in 2007 will be publicized in the media commencing next month.

Ladies and Gentlemen:

Another symbol of pride in our nation which exhibits the strength of our democracy is our House of Parliament. It is a representation of all Antiguans and Barbudans by birth and by choice.

Since its opening in 1981, our current House of Parliament has served this nation well. Sadly today it does not possess the ability to meet the requirements of a legislative facility that meets the challenges of the technological era.

On November 30, as part of our Silver Jubilee Celebrations, we will open and hold a Joint Sitting of our newly constructed House Parliament on Queen Elizabeth Highway.

The Joint Sitting of Parliament will be a representation of our history and the uniqueness of Antigua and Barbuda. We will welcome a Royal Representative of Her Majesty the Queen along with the newly appointed Prime Minister of Jamaica Mrs Portia Simpson-Miller.

During our festivities marking our Silver Jubilee of Independence, we will host some of the region's literary champions for the Inaugural Caribbean Literary Arts Festival and hundreds of medical practitioners for

American University of Antigua Medical Symposium.

Ladies and Gentlemen:

As the national flags waved during the carnival celebrations, may our national flag be flown from today throughout our nation – signifying that we are proud to be citizens and residents of Antigua and Barbuda.

Proud to be called an Antiguan and Barbudan.

Proud to say that we love our country

Proud to say, like the Irish Literary critic George Bernard Shaw, that we are patriotic because our country is superior to all others because we were born here or we belong here.

Let us all proudly fly our national flag as a symbol of our past, our future and the strength of our people to embrace the future together.

May our Silver Jubilee Independence celebrations be a joyous and historic reunion celebrating the traditions, the essences and the aspirations that make Antigua and Barbuda a truly unique microcosm of the Caribbean.

May we celebrate a new dawn for a nation in re-birth, proclaiming that "Antigua and Barbuda - One Family embraces all of us facing our future together.

May we all embrace the celebrations as an all-inclusive effort that reaches out to every person,

every section and every community in our two island nation.

I urge every citizen and resident, individual and corporate, to participate to the fullest extent possible and give God thanks for bringing us this far.

Let us all demonstrate pride in our nation Antigua and Barbuda.

May God Bless us all.

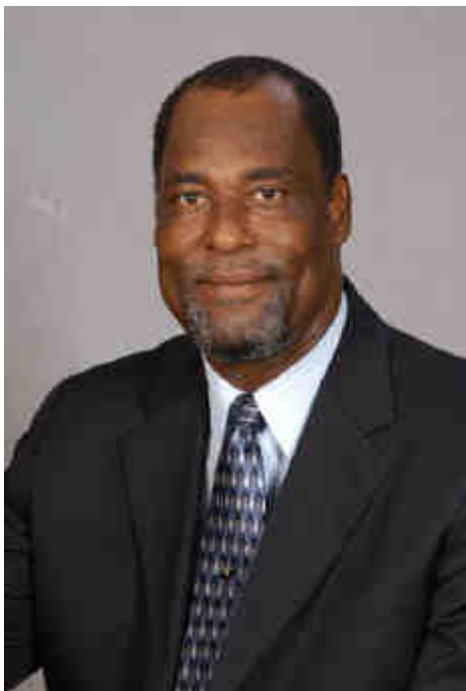
May God Bless Antigua and Barbuda.

Thank you very much."



Environment Minister says country will continue to benefit from US \$3.3 billion for Global Environment Facility

The world's largest environmental funding body, the Global Environment Facility (GEF), received its biggest ever financial boost when the 32 governments of its governing body, the GEF Council, agreed to contribute US\$ 3.13 billion to finance environmental projects over the next four years. The agreement was subsequently approved by the [GEF Assembly](#), which consists of the 176 countries that are members of the GEF. The Assembly meets once every four years to review the policies and operations of the GEF.



Environment Minister and Deputy Prime Minister Wilmot Daniel

The GEF, established in 1991, helps developing countries fund projects and programs that protect the global environment. GEF grants support projects related to biodiversity, climate change, international waters, land degradation, the ozone layer, and persistent organic pollutants. Since 1991, the GEF has provided \$6.2 billion in grants and generated over \$20 billion in co-financing from other sources to support over 1,800 projects that produce global environmental benefits in 140 developing countries and countries with economies in transition. GEF funds are contributed by donor countries. In 2002, 32 donor countries pledged \$3 billion to fund operations between 2002 and 2006.

"It is no coincidence that the Assembly is meeting in Africa for the first time. This magnificent country is a fitting locale," said the head of the

Antigua and Barbuda's delegation to the Assembly, the Honourable Wilmot Daniel, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Work, Transportation and Environment. In addition to the Minister, who was attending in his capacity as the highest political authority on environmental matters, the delegation also consisted of Senator the Honourable Lenworth Johnson, Chairman of St John's Development Cooperation; Ambassador Dr. John W. Ashe, who played a leading role in the establishment of the GEF and in the subsequent development of its policies; and Mr. John Bradshaw, Water Manager, APUA.

"South Africa is home to some of the world's most treasured environmental assets, from the legendary beauty of the fynbos biome in the Cape floral region, to the beauty of its natural landscapes, abundant wild life, and picturesque seascapes. In addition, South Africa is playing a leadership role in the global effort to achieve sustainable development, combining economic growth and conservation priorities," said the Minister.

Since the Assembly provides a strategic opportunity for GEF stakeholders to take stock and collectively strengthen strategies and actions for protecting the global environment and achieving sustainable development, and is intended to attract the highest-level of representation from each of its 176 member countries, I would think that it would be incumbent upon me as Minister to lead our delegation to this august gathering," he said.

While in Cape Town, the Minister was able to witness firsthand the approval by the GEF Council of US\$3 million in GEF funds for a national project aimed at developing a sustainable island resource management approach for Antigua and Barbuda.

"This project will enable us to consider the whole island ecosystem and its marine and terrestrial resources as a capital asset which, if properly managed and protected, will continue to yield a flow of vital goods and services (water, productivity, physical shelter, adaptive capacity and resilience, and aesthetics) necessary for sustainable economic development and livelihood options, and for biodiversity protection," said the Minister.

"This project will also allow us to demonstrate how the longer term benefits accrued by the shifts in priority toward maintenance of ecosystem functions, sustainability of natural resources, properly planned economic growth, and the protection and diversification of livelihoods will ultimately result in positive trade-offs in comparison to a business-as-usual scenario," he added.

The Minister also used the opportunity presented by the Assembly to undertake a number of bilateral discussions with his counterpart from South Africa and with senior officials from the Ministries of Development Cooperation and Finance from Finland, Norway and Japan.

At the invitation of the Minister of Environment of South Africa, Senator Johnson paid an official visit to the ultra-modern treated effluent plant that has been launched by the City of Cape Town to alleviate the growing water shortage in the metropole. The Potsdam Waste Water Treatment Plant, one of South Africa's most technologically advanced waste water recycling facilities, was built at a cost of 19 million South African Rand (US \$1 = 6.43 Rand), is expected to generate an additional 38 million litres (mega litres) of non-potable water per day for a suburb of Cape Town.

"Despite being several times our size, it is interesting to see that Cape Town faces many of the same problems as Antigua and Barbuda, including rising demand for water that will soon outstrip supply which in turn has forced the municipal authorities to explore alternative water resources, consider measures to reduce water consumption, contemplate desalination of sea water, undertake exploration of deep aquifers, and enhance facilities for recycling of waste water and sewage," said the Senator.

At the invitation of Cape Town officials, the Senator also visited the Darling Wind Farm, South Africa's first commercial wind farm venture. The Darling Wind Farm is the product of an innovative partnership between local and foreign investors, the government and the local community. The City of Cape Town aims to source about 10% of its energy from renewable sources - which could include solar and other forms of energy - by 2020.

"Given the importance of renewable energy and the growing concern over the global warming caused by the burning of fossil fuels such as oil, this wind farm, which will start operating in 2007, uses four giant wind turbines to generate an estimated 13.2 gigawatt-hours per year of "clean" electricity that feeds into the national power grid," said the Senator.



Hon. Justin L. Simon Q.C. Attorney General and Minister of Legal Affairs Statement Asian Village Antigua Limited vs The Government of Antigua and Barbuda

25th August, 2006

"At the last sitting of the House of Representatives on Tuesday August 1 2007, I advised the nation of the arbitration claim filed by Asian Village Antigua Limited against the Government of Antigua and Barbuda in the sum of US \$49, 152, 762.11. In that very day I had a letter addressed to Mr. Lester Bird hand delivered to the Chambers of Rika Bird and Associates inviting him in the interest of the state to join with the Government in its efforts to defend and defeat that claim. His response is a matter of history.

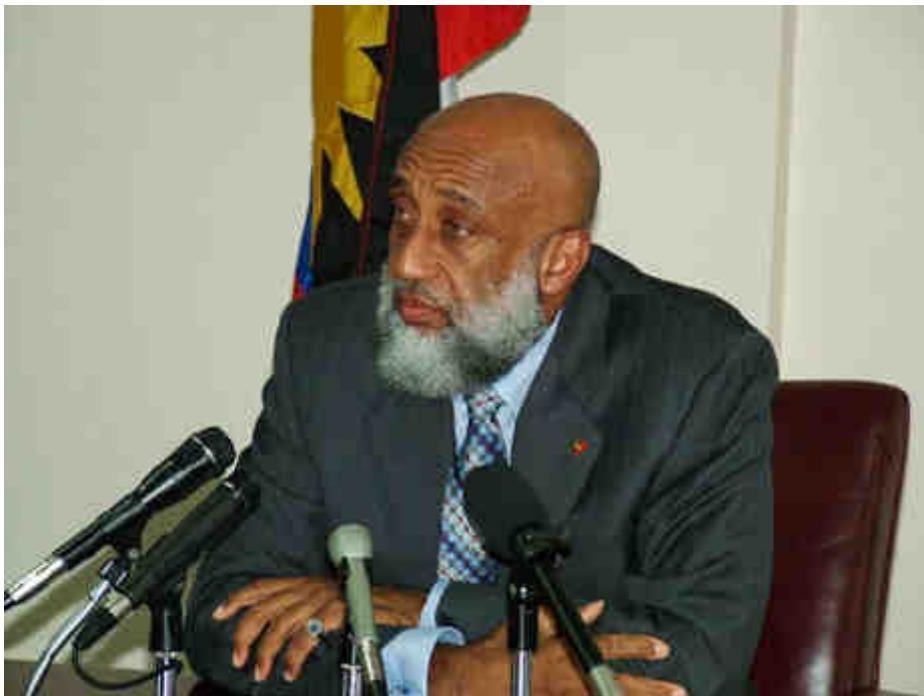
Asian Village's claim is being strongly defended and a counterclaim

is being pursued against it for loss of taxation and other revenue streams as projected by Asian Village.

During the week of August 7 2006, I was in London with Government's London Counsel John Powell Q.C. preparing a very detailed defence and counterclaim which were filed and served on Asian Village and the Arbitrator on August 14, 2006. Leading international solicitors Clifford Chance and forensic accountants Grant Thornton have been contracted to represent our interests and advise on the claim.

Asian Village has provided invoices in support of their claim which dates from April 1996 – some ten months prior to the execution of their Agreement with Government which is dated February 18, 1997. Of the total claim of US\$49,152,762. 11, almost half is allocated to interest: US\$22,885,983.77; one-quarter is for Management and Directors fees: US\$12,310,000.10; travel expenses amount to US\$2,086,280.05; staff payroll and staff accommodation amount to US\$2,518,692.23; office expenses: US\$713,682.14; motor vehicle expenses: US\$353,630.86; capital expenditure: US\$3, 193,063.16; and miscellaneous expenses: US\$589, 873.90.

Asian Village's claim is based in the main on allegations that Government failed from the very start of the Project to grant to them and to implement various important concessions, rights, privileges, and licences.



*Attorney General and Minister of Legal Affairs,
Hon. Justin L. Simon Q.C.*

all the finance necessary to design, construct, operate, manage and maintain the project. The simple truth is that they failed to obtain the finance. Having paid an amount of US\$2,044,744.00 in April 1998, Asian Village even failed to pay the balance of the US \$15,500,000.00 purchase price that they were to pay for the 1541.5 acres of Crown Land.

A KPMG Peat Marwick Report in late 1998 had indicated that costs overrun could be as high as US\$100 M for Phase One only. The Meggonatte feasibility report of March 2003 advised that since 1998, the project has been in a holding pattern. The correspondence is replete with the former Prime Minister's expression of concern over the delay in moving the project forward and his failed attempts to assist Asian Village to obtain finance up to July 2003.

It was within that context of failure and disappointment that the former Prime Minister issued a Notice of Default and Termination on November 12, 2003 to Asian Village.

The hearing of the arbitration is set for June 2007. Following on the detailed analysis of the invoices presented by Asian Village (some 5,000 pages in 15 folder volumes) our solicitors will be seeking further and better particulars of the claim particularly as a large number of the invoices have been discovered to be intra-company billings.

Should there be further developments, I will advise in due course.

Thank You."

The Inland Revenue Department mounts a vigorous registration drive for the Antigua and Barbuda Sales Tax

The Antigua and Barbuda Sales Tax Bill 2006 and the [ABST - \(Transitional Provisions and Consequential Amendments\) Bill 2006](#) having received approval in Parliament recently, the Inland Revenue Department (IRD) is intensifying its Registration Drive.

According to Communications Officer in the Ministry of Finance and the Economy, Karen Challenger-George, IRD officers have embarked on a vigorous registration exercise to ensure that all potential registrants are registered.

The aim of this exercise is to ensure that businesses that are conducting taxable activities with an annual turn over of 300,000 EC dollars or more are registered as outlined in the ABST Legislation.

In recent weeks, the ABST officers have been engaged in a number of training sessions as the Inland Revenue Department readies itself to deal with the soon to come on stream Antigua and Barbuda Sales Tax (ABST).

Challenger-George says to date, the IRD has also conducted a number of presentations geared towards business owners and consumers and during the coming weeks, the IRD will be hosting

several such sessions since the aim of the Department is to ensure that all stakeholders are adequately informed about the Antigua and Barbuda Sales Tax.

January 2007 is the implementation date for the Antigua and Barbuda Sales Tax.

ABDF celebrates 25th Anniversary

In commemoration of its silver jubilee of service to the Nation of Antigua and Barbuda the ABDF held a service of commemoration at the St John's Anglican Cathedral on Sunday August 27th.

The members of the force were joined in their celebration by His Excellency Sir James B Carlisle and Lady Carlisle, the Prime Minister the Honourable Winston B Spencer and Mrs. Spencer. In addition there were other members of parliament, cabinet and the diplomatic corps in attendance.

The service included pieces of music by the ABDF Band, the ABDF Choir, Ex-Servicemen Association and the Cathedral Youth Choir. The sermon was presented by Dean of the Cathedral the Very Reverend Rudolph Smithen. Reverend Smithen implored the men to remain motivated and to avoid mediocrity and at the same time maintain a high degree of maturity in their approach to their vocation.

Commander ABDF Trevor A. Thomas also reported on the presence and performance of the



(front pew) His Excellency Sir James B Carlisle and Lady Carlisle,
(second pew) Honourable Baldwin Spencer, Prime Minister,
(third pew) Commander ABDF Trevor A. Thomas

Force in the Country and Regionally. He outlined the Force's origins from 1897 as a volunteer element to its transformation as a Regular, Professional unit on 1 September 1981. The commander charged his troops to be cognizant of the Force's core values of Loyalty, Discipline, Integrity, Courage and Team work. In so doing he reminded them of their oath to the institution and the need to remain faithful to their task, (Paratus Ad Serviendum) Ready to Serve.

The service also marked the commencement of a week of activities and celebration. Tuesday 29th was an open day at the St. John's Cricket Grounds from 10:00 am. During the open day the units of the Force displayed different pieces of work as well as equipment used on a daily basis and the public visited with the troops and had questions about the Force answered.

The day concluded with a Guard Mounting Parade at 17:30 (5:30 pm) in the afternoon.

The week culminated on Saturday 2nd September with a formal dinner at the Grand Royal Antigua Beach Resort in the Crystal Ballroom. This event was held under the patronage of His Excellency Sir James B. Carlisle GCMG Governor General and Commander In Chief.

*Antigua and Barbuda
One Family
Embracing
The future together
2006
25 years
Of
Independence*



Rain stops play but celebrations continue for bmi and Antigua and Barbuda Cricket Week!

With next year's Caribbean based Cricket World Cup fast approaching, bmi was delighted to support Antigua and Barbuda Cricket Week (21–27 August) coming on

for key media and travel trade contacts.

After an official launch at One Aldwych in London where journalists, cricketers and VIPs learned more about the campaign and heard a few words from bmi's Julie Jones as to why we got involved, the party headed north for Bowdon Cricket Club close to Manchester Airport.

A 20/20 match was planned against a mix of media guests, travel agents, bmi representatives including Brian Quinn, bmi airport manager, and tourist board representatives. However, after the boys had changed, pictures and speeches were completed and lunch proceedings out of the way, the clouds opened and the unreliable British weather put a stop to the cricket match!!

Instead a Caribbean style party took place after lunch with authentic Antigua rum punch flowing and funky reggae music performed live by Richie Richardson's and Curtley Ambrose's band - 'Dread and the Baldhead'.

bmi ambassador Michael

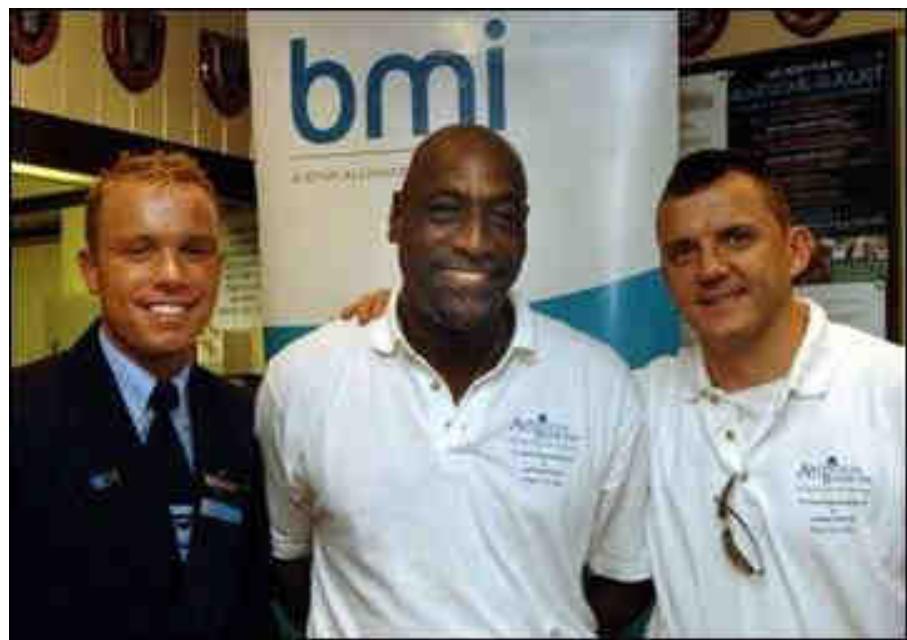


board as official airline partner. The activities, funded by the tourist board, saw bmi jointly hosting events

Attended by Sir Michael Bishop, who officially opened proceedings, and Antigua cricket legends Sir Viv Richards, Richie



Gray was also on hand to mingle with media and trade guests promoting our product and Antigua route.



Luckily bmi's Karen Butler was also present to escort the trade guests and wrap up proceedings with a few words about the Manchester weather and success of bmi flights to Antigua.

The weather might have stopped play – but it didn't dampen spirits and in true Caribbean-style, the party continued well into the evening.



(left)
Richie
Richardson's
and Curtley
Ambrose's band -
'Dread and the
Baldhead'
performed funky
reggae music

NEW VENUE IN VICTORIA

The 2006 Foods & Crafts of the Commonwealth

at the Commonwealth Fair

Royal Horticultural Society
Lawrence Hall, Greycoat St, London SW1

Saturday 4th November 2006
10:30am to 5pm

Admission:
Adults £5.00 Children: £3.00

www.ccl-int.org.uk

The CCL Raising funds for the CCLEF
(Registered Charity Number: 1048908)

Getting there:
Mainline Stations:
Victoria/Waterloo/Charing Cross
Underground:
Victoria, Westminster,
St James's, Pimlico
Buses: 11, 211, 24, 29

CCL

No Credit Card Facilities
Secure Cloakroom facilities
No Pushchairs or shopping trolley's allowed inside the hall

Request for support from the CCL

The charity has given more 2,000 bright and needy girls the opportunity to complete their secondary education in their own countries.

Without our support, the future for many is bleak - some are AIDS orphans, some from struggling families with little to spare for education, others are from cultures where boys are given priority.

Responding to a wide range of needs, as little as £50 a year can make all the difference. Progress is monitored and payments are made directly to the school ensuring funds are secure and used to best advantage.

Food & Crafts of the Commonwealth is our main fundraising event.

By coming you will change a life forever

We hope you will be able to join us on the 4th November. Whether or not, all donations, help needy girls.

Please send donations, making cheques payable to "CCL Fair Account", to:

CCL Fair Treasurer,
19 Sunnyfield,
Mill Hill,
London NW7 4RD

Official Independence Magazine Named

On 24th August Prime Minister Baldwin Spencer announced that Homegrown Publications, a locally owned and operated company, has been designated the publisher of the official magazine commemorating the nation's 25th anniversary of Independence from Great Britain.

According to Prime Minister Spencer, he was gratified to see that several other outfits are involved in marking the Silver Jubilee event; this he said indicates significant interest in the progress of the country by persons at home and abroad. Of necessity, however, only one publication can enjoy the Government's official endorsement.

To that end, Homegrown Publications has been officially appointed to represent the Government in documenting the milestone anniversary event.

Advertisers and interested parties should, therefore, be guided accordingly, and the cooperation of all relevant national agencies is solicited.