



The Antigua and Barbuda High Commission

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Time is Ripe!

PM calls for more investment

Prime Minister Hon. Baldwin Spencer has called for more investment from the US. The nation's leader made this call while addressing participants of New York Conference of the Caribbean. The conference was geared towards strengthening relations with the Diaspora and exploring investment opportunities in the US.

The Prime Minister said "The moment is opportune for us as a region to engage in this interface with existing and prospective investment and trade partners. CARICOM is undergoing significant development and transformation. The positive developments in our investment environment will provide an attractive climate and framework for fruitful discussions."

He also told the gathering "I am pleased that many of the region's trade, investment and financial experts and practitioners have been able to join us and will have an opportunity during the Conference to engage in discussions with some of New York's leading investors, stockbrokers, economists and other representatives of the financial sector.

"These sessions, we anticipate, will open up the doors for further dialogue and concrete initiatives to spur economic growth in the Caribbean Community through collaboration in trade and investment".

Education was also an issue down for discussion during the Conference. In recognising the importance of education to the economic growth and development of the region, the Prime Minister said "It is no secret that many of our best and brightest leave our shores – a significant number of them are here in the US, many of them are in New York, and I dare say, a number of them are right here in this room!

"It is therefore imperative that the Caribbean strengthens its education institutions in order to provide for regional as well as international demand in critical areas".



A Proud Antiguan Painter

Antiguan painter Glory Charles (pictured right) explains the meaning behind his paintings to H.E Dr. Carl Roberts (pictured left) at a recent art exhibition sponsored by the Antigua and Barbuda High Commission (see story on page 3)

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A MESSAGE FROM HIS EXCELLENCY DR CARL ROBERTS, HIGH COMMISSIONER



How Fair is Fair Trade through the WTO System and other Global Systems? by H.E. Dr Carl Roberts

In talks at the WTO over the last few months, much effort has been exerted as a last ditch attempt to broker a deal which rescues the Doha Round. Several comments however should be of significant concern to developing member states especially the small Islands and sometimes the forgotten ones. One particular comment caught my attention: "All nations must meet the basic and primary goal of a global trade round, which is to achieve significant commercial gain for all WTO members in all markets through meaningful reduction of tariffs." * This was the view of a group of major businesses from the United States, Europe, China, Japan, South Korea, Canada, Australia and New Zealand.

The second comment from the same group: "Our support is conditional on the

basis of an outcome that provides commercially meaningful new market access for industrial goods by reducing substantially or eliminating tariffs."

The intent of the larger and more industrious members of this International Trading Organisation is crystal clear. They need to grow their markets and that growth is expected to be in the nascent markets of the developing countries.

It has for sometime now been argued that the present round being negotiated should be a development round. We might ask development for whom!

For a number of years developing countries in the Africa, Pacific and Caribbean regions have seen the overseas markets for their agricultural products contract under new rules at the WTO. Sugar production has virtually disappeared in the Caribbean. The banana industry is on its knees. We have no big muscles to flex, and no money to subsidise our farmers against these life-altering aspects of existing in global economy.

In the paraphrased words of the Australian Minister of Trade "a successful outcome to the Doha Round would mean more jobs for Australia's agriculture industries, manufacturing and our fast-growing services export sector." *1

This is the view of the Caribbean members of WTO but the reality on the ground is quite the opposite. If we look at the consequences of the Caribbean's participation in global trade over the last 15 years, we see more negative effects on the livelihood of the citizens than positive.

I will focus on two industries (1) the sugar and (2) the banana then make a few comments on the automotive industry.

First, let me take a look at sugar. In the 18th and 19th centuries, plantations in the Caribbean produced over 80% of the sugar consumed in Western Europe.

The Sugar Industry enabled the economies of many of these colonies of Britain to deliver enhanced profits, a better quality of life and prospects for development to many of those owners of the land in the colonies. The sugar factory in Antigua and Barbuda was constructed early 1900s and decommissioned in 1970s.

In St Kitts and Nevis, the government closed the sugar factory in 2005 after incurring huge losses over the last 5 to 10 years of production. The entire production of the CARICOM region pales in comparison to that of the main producers of Latin America, India and China. The demise has been brought about by many factors including falling prices on the world market, a shift to beet sugar and the age and poor performance of many of the factories across the region.

But could it have been different. With our climates suitable for sugar cane growth and sugar production could not this economic activity be brought into the modern world, assistance given to modernise planting, cutting sugar canes and the production of quality sugar.

In St Kitts and Nevis as well as Antigua and Barbuda, many acres still lie fallow. There is neither the money nor human resources to shift into alternate crops. The Caribbean appears to have shifted from being producers of something, which flourished within its boundaries to importers at the whims of the global producers.

I would now take a brief glimpse of the banana industry. The benefits of this industry to the Caribbean, especially the Windward Islands cannot be glossed over. Banana production grew from 68 thousand tonnes in 1980 to 131 thousand by 1999.*2 By 1998 there were

Continued on page 9

Source: * - WTO World Trade News, 27th June 2008

Source: *1 - WTO World Trade News, 27th June 2007

Source: *2 - <http://www.wibdeco.org>



(Left) Nick Gammage accepts plaque from H.E Dr Carl Roberts and Mrs Pauline Roberts, (Centre) Scouts listen attentively to H.E Dr. Roberts (Right) The Scouts cycled in from Amersham

Scouts Given 'Warm' Sendoff

A contingent of 25 Explorer Scouts from the Amersham Common Group planning an educational trip to Antigua has gotten a taste of the country's hospitality.

The group who will be touching down in the Gem of the Caribbean this summer to undertake conservation work, were hosted by the Antigua and Barbuda High Commission in London on Sunday 11 May, 2008.

The group rode in from Amersham on their bicycles as part of a fundraising drive. The Scouts are aiming to raise

£25, 000 for the trip to Antigua in July. year.

Antigua and Barbuda's High Commissioner H.E Dr. Carl Roberts was happy to give the Scouts a brief talk about what could be expected during their trip in Antigua. Dr. Roberts also presented the delegation with several information packets and a plaque.

Nick Gammage one of the organisers of the fundraising drive was full of praise for the staff of the High Commission for hosting the group.

He said "The Explorer Scouts will never forget the warm welcome which Dr Roberts and his staff had arranged for them at the end of a gruelling 35 mile cycle ride on the hottest day of the

"They were honoured that Dr Roberts had made time to meet them, and his kind words gave them a great taste of the hospitality that awaits them on their journey to Antigua and Barbuda."

During their stay in Antigua the Scouts "will be planting sapling from a Government nursery in areas where planting is badly needed; for example the site of coastal erosion, mangroves or areas which have suffered severe hurricane damage," Gammage said.

"The project is designed to be of significant benefit to the island as well as an excellent self-development project for the Scouts," he added.

Lovell: World is Too Dependent on Oil

Environment Minister the Hon. Harold Lovell said the increasing dependence on oil needs to be addressed, if the international community is to tackle global warming.

The minister made this statement to commemorate World Environment Day on June 5th.

According to the Minister "In Antigua and Barbuda, like the rest of the world, we are suffering from quite possibly the worst addiction in human existence; the uncontrolled dependence on fossil fuels. We turn on the radio and we hear it; we switch on the television and we see it; we open a newspaper and we read it."

He added "So why should we in Antigua and Barbuda pay attention to this issue. Our small size and state of development has already determined

that the green house gas emissions that we give off are so insignificant that they have little or no impact in the achievement of any global target.

"This is a scientifically correct statement but in reality our impact as a nation and a people is far more than our contributions to the global emissions count. "

The Minister also stated that Climate change is a global problem caused by everyday living habits and thus requires a 'global' solution.

He said "Solving the problems caused by global climate change will require every person on this planet making the necessary choices and taking the right steps to reduce each of our carbon footprints."

The minister also stated that the Baldwin Spencer administration has been putting policies in place to tackle some of the causes of global warming,

He said "As a government we have been taking part in important negotiations in setting global targets and in identifying global actions to effectively address climate change.

"Our commitment to the principles of energy efficiency is evident in the efforts to explore various renewable energy options for Antigua and Barbuda."



Lovell: 'Dependence on fossil fuels is worst addiction in human existence'

On the Road to Success

With the background rhythmic music of the steel band, Antiguan painter Glory Charles beamed with confidence as art lovers and critics admired the paintings exhibited during his first major solo show.

The exhibition was sponsored by the Antigua and Barbuda High Commission.

Entitled 'Radiant View' the selection included an eclectic mix of colour, subject and imagination that showcased the young artist's diverse range.

Glory Charles was born in Antigua in 1984 and at the age of two, moved to London.

His career began in 1999 when he attended the City College of Art in London. From there he went on to the Slade School of Art where he won a scholarship Award in Fine Art. In 2003 he joined Middlesex University in London and graduated with a First B.A. Honours in Fine Art.

Over the last four years, he has exhibited his work at over a dozen leading shows in London and Austria.

Highlighting Glory Charles' work as extraordinarily talented, His Excellency Dr. Carl Roberts paid tribute to the artist's hard work, saying "Glory's solo showing here tonight is a celebration of this young man's dedication to his craft and of the growing talent of artists from Antigua and Barbuda. He is a rising star and we are proud of his success."

Many well wishers including new Commonwealth Secretary General Kamallesh Sharma, and Glory's family

were on hand to share in Glory's moment.

Glory was full of praise for the staff of the High Commission for assisting in putting on the exhibition.

He added "It was well attended. The atmosphere was good and there were people from different walks of life."

The artist said "I was proud when I heard the High Commissioner's speech. My mum was also there and that also made me proud. It was the proudest moment of my life."

He was also grateful for the assistance of Dr. Helga Fox, his mentor.

After having his first major art exhibition, Glory now has his eyes set on participating in some of the major art shows in the world including an upcoming event in Abu Dhabi.



(Top Left) Glory's pictured with H.E Dr. Carl Roberts (left) and the Commonwealth Secretary General (right) (Top Right) Glory chats with his mentor, Dr Fox (left) and HE Dr Roberts (centre) (Bottom Left) A proud Glory looks on as his paintings are being admired by guests (Centre Left) Many well wishers turned out to see Glory's work (Centre Right) Glory greets HE Mr Paul Farguaron, H.C for Bahamas (Bottom) Glory chats with well wishers

Scholarship Fund for Students



Education is central plank of government's agenda

Education Minister the Hon. Bertrand Joseph has commended the government for launching the National Student Loan Fund (NSLF), which he said will assist "young people in realizing their dream of tertiary education."

The NSLF, which was announced during the 2008 budget presentation, was launched in June with 2 million EC dollars initially injected into the fund, and will give prospective students and current students an opportunity to apply for scholarships through low interest loans.

Speaking at the launch, Minister Joseph said tertiary education

continues to pose a challenge to a number of people, due to lack of finance, but the launching of the student loan fund will now make it a bit easier for individuals wishing to further their studies

The Minister said "I think this is a vision, which will ensure we create an intelligent nation and a knowledge based society, which we spoke about so eloquently some five years ago. Students whose families are not able to finance their education, will now be able to do so, compliments the government of Antigua and Barbuda."

He added "I know that in the recent past, a number of families who have not had the opportunity to educate their children at the tertiary level have been able to do so through the expanded scholarship opportunities through Cuba, through our deepening relationship with China, Turkey, Greece, Malaysia, and institutions such as the Polytechnic Institute in New York.

"We are now providing this additional opportunity so that our children in Antigua and Barbuda can become competitive, nationally, regionally and globally, which the global community now demand from all of its citizens that they be competitive."

The Antigua and Barbuda Development Bank will be responsible for administering the loans, while a student loan advisory committee to be named shortly, will review and approve applications only from citizens of Antigua and Barbuda 18 years and older, wishing to pursue undergraduate studies, graduate studies, and post secondary/technical and vocational education. \$50,000 will be the maximum loan amount to any applicant, at an interest rate of 3%.

The loans will be repaid in monthly instalments over a period of not more than ten years. There are flexible repayment options, which include: *the student making interest and principal payments while studying, interest payments only while studying or deferring payment of interest and principal until after completion of his/her studies.*

Applications for the NSLF is now available and can be obtained from the government's website at www.ab.gov.ag, the Ministries of Education, Finance and Labour.

Forms must be completed and submitted no later than July 15th. According to Finance and Economy Minister Dr. The Hon. Errol Cort, the 2 million dollars is just for the initial start of the student loan fund, and will be increased from next year.

Williams: Climate Changed Action Needed

Amidst dire warnings that climate change poses "a clear and present danger to every country of this hemisphere," Antigua and Barbuda's Sports and Youth Affairs Minister, Winston Williams, argued — at the Organization of American States (OAS) General Assembly in Medellín, Colombia—for urgent and strong collective action to cut green house gas emissions in the atmosphere.

Addressing the fourth plenary session on the final day of the 38th General Assembly on June 3rd, the Antigua and Barbuda minister further underscored a "quite grim" outlook for the Caribbean region, failing urgent steps to address "the seemingly irreversible upward trend of global warming."

"The region could see extensive droughts that could affect the agricultural base of Caribbean

economies, and water shortage could spell trouble for the region's tourism, agriculture, infrastructure and development, he warned.

"Inaction is no longer an option," Williams declared to the annual meeting of the hemisphere's foreign ministers, convened by the OAS and chaired this year by Colombia's foreign minister, Fernando Araújo.

Calling for technologies that allow emission of clean air into the atmosphere, he made the case for widespread use of renewable energy sources, adding that additional resources must be made available to help poorer countries address poverty and those environmental challenges that drive disasters.

"We, collectively, can determine our future and we owe future generations the opportunity to experience all that earth's bounty hath in store," the Antigua and Barbuda Minister told the OAS General Assembly.

Source: Organisation of American States

We want to hear from you!

Maybe you are an Antiguan or Barbudan living in the UK with an interesting story to tell

Or perhaps you want to share your opinion on some of the most important issues facing your homeland.

Do not be shy. We are always happy to take Newsletter submissions from the Diaspora.

So take out the pen or computer, and let your fingers get to work!

Painting for Charity



Glory is giving back to society by raising funds through his art.

Antiguan and Barbudan artist Glory Charles has been using his skills to raise money for teenagers living with cancer.

The 23 year old agreed to paint a pair

of trainers that are being auctioned on Ebay.

Glory was one of many artists who participated in Teenage Kicks 2008 - a live charity event featuring live bands, painters and other artists.

The painter said "I am concerned about children's cancer. I was approached to participate and I was happy to do so."

Glory painted two fish on the sides of the trainers.

"The two fish are old Christian sign of health. They symbolise people in need of help," he added.

Glory said his interest in helping people with cancer is partly due to death of a family member who was diagnosed with cancer

"My uncle Felix died of cancer 6 years ago ...he was in and out of hospital.

It was a late diagnosis. It came out of nowhere." he said.

Glory said that he wants to help raise funds for other charities by donating paintings.

"I've approached many charities, hopefully as time goes by we'll see. I am awaiting response from some of these charities," he said



The organisers are hoping to raise funds by selling donated 'designed' shoes on Ebay

US\$20, 000 Up for Grabs

Antiguan born Rosemarie V. McMaster is in the running for a top Poetry award. She has been nominated for the Poet of the Year Award by the International Society of Poets.

A letter from the Society said " I would like to inform you of your nomination... and to personally invite you to

Read your poetry at the single largest gathering of poets in history, where you will be formally inducted as an International Poet of Merit and Honoured Member of our Society for 2008-2009."

Her induction is slated to take place in Las Vegas during the 2008 International Society of Poets Summer Convention and Symposium in July.

The Society has also informed McMasters that "First, to honour and

commemorate your poetic accomplishments, after you read your poetry in front of fellow poets from over 50 nations around the world, you will be presented with your very own International Outstanding Achievement in Poetry Crystal Award Trophy.

If McMaster wins the competition, she will receive a US\$20,000.00 and a \$10,000.00 book publishing contract.

Happy Birthday Molly



Mrs Molly Richards (above) celebrated her birthday on 5th June Molly contributes Antiguan sugar cakes, fudge etc. to the fairs.

ISS FAIR



Mrs Roberts and the High Commission staff at the ISS Fair held at the Kensington Town Hall on 13th May 2008.

ANTIGUA AND BARBUDA'S INAUGURAL MUSIC FESTIVAL PROVES TO BE HIGHLIGHT OF CARIBBEAN CALENDAR



A rapturous audience at the Sir Vivian Richards Stadium

The inaugural Romantic Rhythms Music Festival in Antigua and Barbuda, held June 13 -15, proved to be a huge success and a highlight of the Eastern Caribbean calendar with over 5,000 attending the three day event. Visitors and locals sang along with El A Kru and the classic ballads from headline acts, Lionel Richie, Kenny Rogers and Brian McKnight; they danced the night away with Tizzy and Destra Garcia and were united in their delight of Damian

Marley, Bob Marley's equally talented son. Set in the dramatic Sir Vivian Richards Stadium under starry skies, the audience was treated to a feast of musical talent that exemplified all that the islands of Antigua and Barbuda represent: romance, soul, beauty and talent.

The Honourable Harold Lovell, Minister of Tourism for Antigua and Barbuda summed up the event by saying,

"We've been delighted with the response; from the artistes wanting to perform, from the support of the local community and from our visitors, both new and repeat guests. Everyone had a great time and the event's success has set the stage for repeat Festivals in the years ahead and is indicative of what we've always said, *The Beach Is Just The Beginning!*"

UK Cruise Convention

Joyce Fyfe, Tourism Officer at the Antigua and Barbuda Tourist Office in London attended the UK Cruise Convention held in Southampton from 19th to 21st May, co-sharing with Esther Smith of ANTOR (Association of National Tourist Office Representatives).

Attendance was extremely high - 25 cruise partners, 28 participating cruise lines and around 400 travel agents present. Antigua and Barbuda Tourist Office sponsored the Goody Bags which contained a copy of the Antiguian and a destination DVD. We also supplied two other prizes of a bottle of English Harbour Rum and an I-pod Shuffle.

Along with other events, each day there was allotted time for a trade show. Travel agents came to our stand to gather information on the availability of activities for passengers when passing through on



cruise for a day, to general holiday enquiries.

There were many interesting presentations and ships visits during the Convention. The sponsors got the opportunity to visit both the Queen Victoria and the Independence of the Seas in order to see the contrast

a between the old and the new; the Independence of the Seas being the newest and biggest cruise ship in the world - this was simply breath-taking.



Joyce Fyfe (centre) with her colleagues at the UK Cruise Convention

There were lots of opportunities for networking as other functions included a Sail Away Party, Gala Dinner and lunches on board both cruise ships.

After the closing ceremony every delegate was presented with a Goody Bag which ensured that our promotional material was given to everyone.

This was a very worthwhile venture for Antigua and Barbuda's Cruise Tourism as there was such a great opportunity to

Football



“My Way of Giving Back”



“It’s important for footballers to have something to fall back on. Too many footballers put their eggs in on basket. When I left there was nothing there for me. My dad was keen on education. I always saw myself as being a footballer...but on education side. I let myself down on the education side.

“I regret that I did not fulfil my real potential. What I’ve tried to do is to look back, and see how I can help others where I went wrong, I have been helping others to stay on right track.”

It may be several years before he returns to Antigua with wife Sonia

The unexpected tackle!

The excruciating pain!

The stretcher rushed onto the field, with a sense of urgency!

Over 20 years ago Stephen Browne’s leg was broken during a match. It was an injury that would change his life forever.

“We were playing a cup game. I remember it very well. It was the last minute of game. I was tackled and my leg was broken in 2 places and I had dislocation of my ankle,” he recalled.

This young Antiguan was on his way to playing professional football in the UK. But the injury ended those dreams “I was 24 at the time. I was out of football for some time. After being out for 9 months, it took me about 9 months to get back to a proper fitness, level. By that time I was 26 and it was too late to get into professional league.”

The leg is healed and this 48 year old no longer limps. After spending the last 20 years in non-league and coaching, he is almost ready to return to the place he calls home.

Besides drinking coconut water on the sundrenched beaches, Stephen has another idea in mind; he wants to establish a football academy, to nurture the young. The idea of him supporting local football has been on his mind since he met football officials during a recent trip to Antigua.

“When I was out there I spoke to them about development the football skills of the kids, in terms of skills in training and coaching and passing on advice. I have been having discussions with Colin Kazim (an Antiguan professional footballer, who plays for Turkey’s national side)...to set up our own coaching school.”

Stephen may live in a different time zone and is thousands of miles away from Antigua. But that has not stopped him from lending a hand. He has been busy, helping to find Antiguan in UK to play for the Antiguan and Barbuda’s national squad. Through his efforts, the national squad this year had the benefit of using the skills and expertise of at least one Antiguan football player living in the UK, as the team prepared for World Cup Qualifiers.

In recent times Stephen has managed a number of football teams including Potters Bar FC. This job has allowed him to nurture young potential. And he is desperately hoping that the skills and experiences gained can be transferred to his homeland.

The dream of playing in the premier league may not have materialised, but his injury taught him one important lesson: the importance of education



Stephen Browne spends a lot of time coaching Potters Bar FC



Eager football supporters of Stephen Browne’s Potters Bar FC

and his children, but he knows he will get there some day. “I miss the freshness I miss the natural beauty. I feel more relaxed when I’m there. The pressures of living here is not there.”

Visit to Hackney Caribbean Elderly Organisation

His Excellency Dr Carl Roberts visited the Hackney Caribbean Elderly Organisation (HCEO) on the 24th June 2008, where he gave an address to the elderly, some of whom were Antiguans and Barbudans. Following is a thank you letter from the Centre Manager of the HCEO:

"I write on behalf of all members, staff and volunteers here at HCEO. Your visit to our centre for lunch on Tuesday 24th June was a very enjoyable occasion. Everybody involved has asked me to express their gratitude for you taking the time to visit us.

We enjoyed listening to you after lunch and many members said they felt lifted by your spiritual message. Please pass on our thanks to the members of your team that made this possible. We

would like to extend an open invitation to you to come and see us again whenever you are in the area. I shall also keep you informed of any events we are holding that may be of particular interest."



Photographs shown on the right are of His Excellency with members, staff and volunteers of the Hackney Elderly Organisation (HCEO) on Tuesday 24th June



Antigua and Barbuda's Carnival - July 26th to August 5th
Do not miss it!!

Continued from page 2
 thousand acres of productive agricultural land. Because of the high cost of production per tonne of banana, US\$500 in the Windward Islands compared to \$179 in Costa Rica, and \$162 in Ecuador*³ the industry needed some level of "protection and assistance".

This level of assistance ran afoul of the rules of global trade. I cannot hide the fact that other issues of quality or high logistics cost made the problems for this industry more acute. My focus here is the tremendous impact on the quality of life of many of the citizens of these islands brought about by the demise of the banana industry. Surely, some special concessions could or should have been extended to these citizens and owners of the family farms. What of the other jobs lost, the lives wrecked and the economic crises which resulted from the absence of the major contribution which the banana industry had been making. Examples of this contribution for Dominica range from \$3m in 1980 to

some \$15.3m in 1997. Wasn't this a unique opportunity of assured developmental assistance: jobs for Dominicans and the ability of government to provide many services with such a level of contribution. How much current day aid would have to be given to achieve the same result!

The last area to be examined within the scope of this article relates to the importation of vehicles and the handling of waste disposal. One of the factors being discussed within the arena of the WTO is the reduction of import duties/tariffs. One likely consequence of the move is an increase in the import of automobiles (I hasten to add that the same analysis and critique can be done for several other manufactures).

The concern discussed here relates to the increased requirement for more fuel, the resulting increase in emitted carbon gases and the added increase in the number of discarded vehicles which seem to fill our land spaces. Even though there are a number of initiatives

in developed countries, which tackle these issues, the problem is not being fully addressed in many developing countries. Should free trade and fairer trading impose some of the responsibilities in handling these problems on the big manufacturers of vehicles? There can only be so many artificial reefs create but are we ensuring that the cost of other environmental issues associated with this trade in vehicles are borne by the right entities.

It would appear that being small is really dangerous in this world of mega blocs. Even if all the OECS stay together as a region, their population counts a mere 550,000. For CARICOM the figure is on 6 million. Yet the impact of global trade rules creates a burden in some cases much more than the average citizen in any of my opening paragraph. Is this fair? Are we to fold our arms in readiness for the demise of the next industry? Could it be Services or Tourism?

Source: *³ - JR Mandle, June 22, 1999 "The Crisis in and Future of the Windward Island Banana Industry"



I am mas, I am music, I am culture.

i am carnival

JULY 26TH - AUG 5TH

26TH JULY	OPENING CARNIVAL
27TH JULY	JUNIOR CARNIVAL
28TH JULY	TEEN SPLASH
29TH JULY	QUEEN OF CARNIVAL
30TH JULY	PANDRAMA
31ST JULY	CARIBBEAN MELTING POT
2ND AUG	PARTY MONARCH
3RD AUG	CALYPSO MONARCH FINALS
4-5TH AUG	PARADE OF BANDS



Carnival
2008

Commentary: Solidarity in combating the global food crisis

The global food crisis precipitated by the steep rise in food prices and consequent inaccessibility of food, which has led to explosions of violence in over 30 countries, some of them in our Region, poses a threat to the progress in health, as well as in environmental protection and poverty reduction, achieved within the framework of the Millennium Development Goals.

This crisis is occurring at a critical time in Latin America and the Caribbean, when efforts are concentrating on eradicating malnutrition and developing strategies to combat both the causes and the most visible effects of this chronic problem that undermines the populations' potential for current and future development.

Food assistance is urgent, as Secretary-General of the United Nations Ban Ki-moon has stated. At the same time, however, we must take care to ensure that the response to the emergency does not undo the efforts of governments, civil society, and communities to consolidate their organizational and logistical capabilities, local development strategies based on primary health care, and the intersectoral activities that impact health determinants and promote synergies with the education, water and sanitation, labor, agriculture, and production sectors.

The structural factors responsible for the nutrition and development problem in the Region amplify this crisis. Thus, the United Nations agencies in the Region have formed the Pan American Alliance for Nutrition and Development to

coordinate and integrate activities and guarantee that investments have a greater impact.

I call upon our partners in the international community, financial institutions, religious groups, business and civil society organizations, NGOs, and international agencies to:

Swiftly allocate assistance commensurate with the complexity and magnitude of the problem and facilitate the creation of mechanisms for its timely delivery.

Also, in each specific place, tend to the indispensable complementary needs in nutrition, such as safe drinking water, fuel, local infrastructure, basic health services, and education, since only the synergy among them guarantees adequate nutrition.

Respect the social and institutional capital that has arduously been constructed over decades, so that the assistance provided during the crisis strengthens, rather than weakens, the countries' own capacity to overcome historical obstacles; and guarantees definitively that the scourge of chronic malnutrition in Latin America and the Caribbean will be eliminated.

It is also necessary for the countries of the Region to: Show their solidarity by reconsidering their policies on humanitarian assistance and the export of food staples, especially in countries suffering from greater inflationary



Governments concerned about rising food prices

pressures, promoting extraordinary cooperation mechanisms among the countries that will contribute to self-production of food and food sovereignty. Improve surveillance, down to the local level, of social and nutritional aspects, with active participation by the health and social services, to ensure the early detection of inequities or acute shortages that can be relieved.

Protect populations, especially the most vulnerable, and address their legitimate concerns, guaranteeing attention to the problem and equitably allocating the resources mobilized.

All of this will enable us to turn this crisis into an opportunity to speed up progress in improving the health and integrated development of our peoples.

By Dr. Mirta Roses Periago, Director Pan American Health Organisation

Food Crisis Solutions

Assistant Secretary-General of the Organization of American States (OAS) Ambassador Albert Ramdin said the Caribbean can safeguard itself from food security threats by establishing an internal supply net on the back of already established political and community relations.

Ramdin spoke to the media following the opening of the 11th meeting of the CARICOM Council for Foreign and Community Relations (COFCOR) last week Wednesday.

As it stands, Ramdin said the Caribbean imports nearly US\$3 billion of food supplies, which when looked at in the context of increased prices, can be considered a burden to national budgets.

Such spending would require member

states to prioritise where they spend money, said Ramdin.

"I think CARICOM nations need to work in three areas at the same time," he said. He said as a short term solution, it will be important to put mechanisms in place, whether that is subsidies, fixing prices at certain levels or tax exemptions on certain products to bridge this period of increasing prices.

The government of Antigua and Barbuda has implemented many measures to curtail the rising cost of food and the resultant effects on the costs of living over the past months. At the same time, he said the populations need to be taught how to prioritise and budget in times of crises.

He said that there are a lot of countries where money is spent on non-food issues – telephone bills, cars, vehicles, electronic etc. He suggested even

having home gardens put in place to supply personal food needs.

The last method is a structural approach, which is developing the agricultural sector in the Caribbean to provide food security. He said the Caribbean, in light of CARICOM and the Caribbean Single Market, already has a mechanism in place to facilitate the process of internal supply.

He said there are member states such as Suriname, Guyana and Belize that have an agricultural tradition, which could be utilised to supply the region's needs.

"I am convinced that if we have a plan, which can be implemented with investments from the Caribbean private sector in those countries a lot of the supply that is now being imported can be provided through these means," he said.

(Reprinted from Antigua Sun)

Information on New UK Immigration Rules for Family and Friends visiting from Antigua and Barbuda

There are three main agencies in the UK, which deal with migration to the United Kingdom: – UK Visa (overseas arm part of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office), the Home Office and the Border and Immigration Agency. The main objective of these agencies is to ensure that the majority of people who visit Britain are *bona fide* visitors.

With the introduction of the New Points Based System, the British have renewed their energies to curtail illegal travellers to the UK. In general, the aim of the new Points Based System is to allow entry only to those visitors who will boost the economy and contribute to the growth and productivity of the United Kingdom. The Points Based System consists of five tiers of people: highly skilled workers, persons who can fill skill gaps in the labour force, persons who fill specific temporary labour shortages (low skilled workers), students and the visitors coming to the UK for non-economic reasons.

It means that, for passport holders/nationals of Antigua and Barbuda who, to date, do not require a visa for entry into the United Kingdom while holidaying, a series of rigorous questions at the ports of entry will be asked. These questions are devised to establish the reasons for the visit to the UK, to determine whether the above criteria have been satisfied and whether the purpose of the visit is true. Further, visitors will

have to demonstrate that they have the financial means to maintain themselves while visiting the UK. It is also essential that the reasons stated for visiting, are genuine and supported by appropriate documentation (e.g. letter of invitation from the UK sponsor i.e. family or friend). Nationals who wish to stay longer than six months (for whatever reasons) will need to apply for the appropriate entry clearance/visa prior to travelling to the UK.

Visitors must also prove to UK Immigration that there are strong reasons to return to Antigua and Barbuda. For example, if in employment at home, a letter from the employer stating that leave has been granted and a specific date to report to work, family in Antigua (e.g. husband, children), financial statements, a home etc. In essence, visitors must demonstrate to UK Immigration that the visit is for no more than six months, intend to leave the UK at the end of the visit, and have enough money to stay in the UK without working or needing any help from public funds.

Any visitors who attempt to visit the UK without the appropriate entry clearance and financial means to support themselves for the duration of their stay are likely to be returned immediately to Antigua. In some cases, if there is no flight to Antigua on that day, the person is held in a *Detention Centre* until the next available flight. That could be two days later.

In the last six months, the High Commission received reports of six nationals who were returned to Antigua. The reasons stated for them being denied entry were, what UK Immigration termed as a 'credibility' issue, that is, our national did not tell

the truth about the purpose of the visit. One national came on holiday and brought certificates of school/college qualifications and therefore UK Immigration felt that he came either seek employment or to study (he did not have a student visa or work permit). In fact, he was denied a students' visa two months earlier. Another national came to England stating that she will be staying six months with family but did not have sufficient funds (under £500) to cover the six-month period. Another national came to visit his girlfriend whom he stated he knew for one year. When questioned by Immigration he only knew her for seven months, was visiting for three weeks, had under US\$200 and no more funds to access in Antigua even though he originally said that he did and he had no job. He was returned to Antigua on the same day based on a 'credibility' issue (he lied) insufficient funds and in addition, Immigration felt that he would stay in the UK to work since he had no family or a job in Antigua to which to return. The above cases have been 'single' males and 'single' females (travelled on their own not married).

Finally remember to check the appropriate authorities of the country to obtain information on entry/visa requirements before travelling. There is a British Representative (limited services and mainly for UK nationals) based in Antigua, Telephone (268) 462 0008, British High Commission (full representational services for Eastern Caribbean countries) based in Barbados, Telephone, (246) 430 7800, Websites:

www.ind.homeoffice.gov.uk,
www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk,
www.ukvisas.gov.uk,
www.britishhighcommission.gov.uk

**FAMILIES AND FRIENDS OF
 NATIONALS/PASSPORT HOLDERS OF
 ANTIGUA AND BARBUDA TAKE NOTE AND
 PASS ON THIS INFORMATION.**

OECS Secretariat Launches OECS TV Online



OECS TV On Line reaches the global internet community via the popular YouTube site, putting the OECS Secretariat in the company of other major institutions - including the World Bank and the Commonwealth Secretariat, and several well known international political figures.

The TV Service provides viewers with a series of five and ten minute Features on the work of the Secretariat on behalf of the OECS member countries. New features are added to the site each week.

the regional Film and Music industries; and a review of an earlier conference on a new development paradigm for the OECS.

The OECS TV On-line is a joint effort of the Secretariat's Communications and IT Departments. It can be accessed via the OECS website at www.oecs.org/oecstv or at www.youtube.com/oecstv.

The OECS Member countries are Antigua and Barbuda, Dominica, Grenada, Montserrat, St. Kitts and Nevis, St. Lucia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Anguilla and the British Virgin Islands.

The OECS Secretariat has launched OECS TV Online as part of efforts to share images of OECS events throughout the region and the international community.

The Features currently on site focus on the recent launch of a regional public awareness exercise on OECS Economic Union held in Dominica; a preview of an OECS Conference on

Caribbean High Commissioners visit Scottish Parliament

Caribbean High Commissioners to the UK paid a historic visit to Scotland on June 12 and 13. They were invited by Lord Foulkes MSP, who sits in the UK Parliament. Lord Foulkes is the President of the Caribbean-Britain Business Council and is well known for championing Caribbean interests in said Parliament.

Dean of the Caribbean Diplomatic Corps, High Commissioner for Guyana, Laleshwar Singh, speaking on behalf of the visiting diplomats said: "We believe this visit marks an important step towards closer relations between the Caribbean and Scotland and we would like to thank the First Minister and the Scottish Parliament for the warm welcome which they have given us.

"The visit has been very fruitful and has given rise to discussion about a number of possible means to increase future cooperation including the creation of a Cross Party Group on the Caribbean in the Scottish Parliament. We also discussed the possible appointment of Caribbean honorary consuls in Edinburgh to better represent the Caribbean, and a regular annual meeting between the Caribbean High Commissioners and the members of the Scottish



Caribbean High Commissioners and their wives on their historic visit to Scotland

Parliament. "We were delighted during our visit to meet Alex Salmond MSP, the First Minister, Linda Fabiani MSP, Minister of Europe and External Affairs and to learn more from Parliamentarians and officials about the work and role of the Scottish Parliament."

Lord Foulkes said: "The Caribbean is one of the regions in the world with which the UK shares the closest of historical ties, and I am delighted that the High Commissioners have been able to visit Scotland and the Scottish Parliament to strengthen the links we already have."

US Government Hands Over New Disaster Management facility to Government

The National Office of Disaster Services now has a new facility from where disasters can be managed, thanks to the US Government.

The official opening of the centre was held several weeks ago and Prime Minister Hon. Baldwin Spencer and US Ambassador, Her Excellency Mary Ourisman cut the ribbon to declare the building officially open.

In addressing the gathering, Ambassador Ourisman said, "The United States has built six of these seven facilities, at a cost of over USD \$6.5 million dollars.

This centre, costing USD \$1.2 million, completes our programme in the region, ensuring that the emergency services are available to the citizens of the

Eastern Caribbean when they need them most."

The new facility will not only serve Antigua and Barbuda, but will also be used to provide coordination in response to natural disasters cross the northern islands of the Eastern Caribbean.

According to the US Ambassador, "The United States is dedicated to sharing our resources with our partners in the Eastern Caribbean to ensure this region is prepared to help its citizens in the event of natural disasters".

The facility contains two major conference rooms, kitchen, storeroom, communication room and office space



PM Spencer, HE Mary Ourisman and staff of Disaster Preparedness

and was built to withstand the highest category of hurricane.

Ambassador Ourisman said that the United States has been there for Caribbean nations throughout history and the new facility is further demonstration and proof of their commitment to their Caribbean partners.

Technology Access for Physically and Visually Challenged

Physically and visually and challenged individuals are set to receive direct benefits from the deployment of new technologies in a number of schools and institutions.

The announcement came from the Hon. Dr. Edmond Mansoor, Minister of State in the Office of the Prime Minister with responsibility for Information Technology, Broadcasting and Telecommunications.

Minister Mansoor says that the Government recognizes the special requirements of persons with

"Persons with disabilities will not be left behind in the ICT revolution currently underway. As Antigua and Barbuda observes this day on Thursday under the theme: *Connecting Persons with Disabilities: ICT Opportunities*", the Ministry is ensuring that everyone has the opportunity to participate in the digital age. No one should be denied the potential benefits of new technologies," Minister Mansoor declared.

Under the **Connect Antigua and Barbuda Initiative**, a multi-component programme that represents Government's commitment to making substantial investments in equipping citizens and residents with ICT skills, schools and facilities that provide services to persons with disabilities will be equipped with high speed computers and printers, access

to broadband technology as well as specialized software.

The Adele School as well as the Centre for the Visually Challenged at the T N Kirnon School have begun receiving new technologies under the "Technology for the Physically and Visually Challenged" component of the **Connect Antigua and Barbuda Initiative**.

According to Minister Mansoor, the School for the Blind, the School for the Hearing Impaired as well as the Antigua and Barbuda Association of Persons with Disabilities will benefit from this initiative.

Over \$150,000 has been earmarked for the deployment of new technologies in these and similar facilities.

Education Officials Hopeful Exam Results

The Education Officer responsible for Measurements and Evaluation within the Ministry of Education is hoping for an improvement in the results of this year's Common Entrance and Junior Secondary examinations, when compared to previous years.

Mrs. Patricia Collins was at the time giving an update on preparations for both examinations.

Asked about her expectations this time around, she said: "I'm hoping we'll see

some sort of improvement in the overall passes this year, and I think come next year, having done the grade four assessment in November of 2007 with the students of grade five, we think that with them being in grade six come September, we should have better results."

One of the major findings of last year's assessment was that some students were experiencing great difficulties reading, but Collins is optimistic that since the problem has been identified, key players are working out corrective measures to deal with the situation.

"Teachers and Principals are aware

that some of the students have a serious reading problem, and I think principals and zone officers are making an attempt to remedy the situation, and we're just hoping for the best because we can only get better from hereon."

Results for both Common Entrance and Post Primary examinations will be available by the end of July.

**Christian Valley Mango Festival 2008 • Christian Valley Agricultural Station
Jennings Village,
Antigua and Barbuda**



August 16 & 17, 2008 • 9:00 AM – 5:00 PM



For further information please contact: Caudley George Ministry of Tourism 268 462 0028/9

MANGOFEST 2008

The Annual mango festival for this year was officially launched on the 22nd May at the Heritage Hotel in St Johns.

The Opening ceremony was attended by the Governor General, Her Excellency Dame Louise Lake-Tack, patron of the Christian Valley Mango Festival, and to signify the importance of this annual event, which has now become part of the National calendar of events, members of the Government including the Prime Minister, Minister of Tourism and Minister of Agriculture and other officials also attended the launch. Mangofest will serve to highlight the move towards furthering the linkages between Tourism and Agriculture.

Professional chefs and bartenders from all the hotels and restaurants will be invited to compete with each other for 1st 2nd and 3rd prize and a special prize for the most innovative dish or drink. The Competition will form part of the Mangofest programme entitled Magic Mango Menu 2008 and will take place on the 26th July. It is envisaged that the various chefs in Antigua and Barbuda will create appealing dishes with an emphasis on locally produced fruits and vegetables, thereby increasing the production of our farmers and making a significant contribution to the National economy.

Manager of the Christian Valley Agricultural Station Mr Dandridge Joseph says that the expected mango crop this year will be significant. According to indications an abundance of mango will be available and we have to find creative ways of utilising them.

The Festival will take place over a two day period starting Saturday 16 August and concluding on Sunday 17th August.

The Event will be a fun filled family affair. Many plants will be on sale and there will be a grand cultural extravaganza. We look forward to seeing everyone there.

Police Appeal for Crime Fighting Tools

The Royal Police Force of Antigua and Barbuda has taken its plea for assistance online, with the launch of a Web site which highlights the areas where they most need support. The Web site: www.helpusprotectyou.com was set up to inform the public about the equipment needed by the police force and provide those interested in helping with a way to donate the equipment.

Police Commissioner Gary Nelson recently revealed that the force needs hundreds of guns and bullet proof vests, among other equipment, to properly carry out its duties.

Senior Sergeant William Holder, the police public relations officer, explained that the online initiative sprung from a recent workshop on international media relations, facilitated by media relations expert Chris Ryan. Ryan funded the Web site for a year.

Holder, who took part in the training programme, said the officers in one

class came up with the idea after the need for adequate tools was highlighted.

"We felt that one of the ways that we could assist is by asking the public to help us as we seek to protect them, because of the fact that we do not have the necessary tools to do the job that they expect," he said.

Holder indicated the current effort is meant to supplement the official supplies provided by the government. "We recognise that government has a responsibility to provide, but we also look at the bureaucracy and the time it takes for us to get what we need," the police spokesman said. "We're seeing an escalation in crime on a daily bases and gun related crime. I don't think the public expects us to go out there unprepared. They want us to catch the perpetrators; we want to do it also, but we are limited with equipment."

The Web site contains a list of equipment needed by the police,

including guns, holsters, body armour, handcuffs and tasers. For the Fire Department, donors can supply fire gear, including boots, helmets and fire resistant suits.

With the Web site in its early stages of development, those interested in making donations are directed to contact police via email addresses or by phone. Holder said, however, that in the future police want to give donors the option of purchasing the needed equipment online, with the distributors shipping directly to the police.

The PRO made it clear that police do not want individuals buying sensitive equipment like guns or handcuffs directly, since these should not be in the possession of unauthorised people. In other cases, such as where a person or company wants to donate a vehicle or fire equipment, the option of making the purchase remains open.

(Reprinted from the Antigua Sun)



In an effort to stimulate your 'Carnival Mind,' in the last edition of the Newsletter, we posed a few questions relating to Carnival that should have helped to get you in the mood for this year's festivities. The questions and answers are below.

1. When was the 50th anniversary of Carnival celebrated?
Answer: 2007
2. Who is the only calypsonian to have won the crown 4 times in a row?
Answer: King Onyan
3. What was the name of the Road March hit in 1998?
Answer: Sweet Song by Burning Flames

4. King Progress won his only calypso title in what year?
Answer: 1984
5. What was theme of 2007 Carnival competition?
Answer: "Music, Mas, Fantasy: Come Celebrate Our Golden Jubilee"
6. Who won Miss Teenage in 1993?
Answer: Keisha Browne
7. Which calypso monarchs are undefeated?
Answer: King Onyan and King Obstinate
8. Who won the steel band competition in 1968?
Answer: Harmonites

CARICOM Heads Meeting Opens in Antigua and Barbuda

The Opening Ceremony of Twenty-ninth meeting of the Conference of Heads of Government was held at the historic Dickenson Bay where 43 years ago the Caribbean Free Trade Agreement (CARIFTA), the forerunner of the Caribbean Community and Common Market in 1973 and its resultant CARICOM Single Market and Economy was signed. The return to this venue is a fitting prelude to the impending celebrations of the Thirty-fifth Anniversary of the Signing of the Treaty of Chaguaramas, which established the Caribbean Community.

The Honourable Baldwin Spencer, Prime Minister of Antigua and Barbuda and incoming Chairman of the Conference of Heads of Government of CARICOM in his opening address extended a special welcome to Awardees for the Order of the Caribbean Community and the CARICOM Triennial Award for Women. He said, "As we honour the OCC Awardees today, I want to make bold and suggest two persons who, in my view, are eminently deserving of the Order of the Caribbean Community.

"I speak of the Right Honourable Percival Patterson, former Prime Minister of Jamaica; and the former President of the Republic of Cuba, His Excellency Dr Fidel Castro-Ruiz.

"Both these leaders have made great contributions to the cause of Caribbean development and their recognition will light the path for others to follow."

After forty-three years some are questioning the relevance of CARICOM to which the Prime Minister said, "there is manifest need for deep introspection on the issue of reengineering CARICOM.

"Within this framework we must move immediately to engage the Bureau Heads in the vital function of driving the implementation of key decisions between regular meetings and Inter-Sessionals.

"Now more than ever CARICOM is required to act as one. There is no

doubt that the external world treats us as one", the Prime Minister said after describing the challenging conditions that the region and the world is undergoing at this time, such as high energy prices, rising food prices, rampant crime and violence, the horrors of drug use, human trafficking and a host of tribulations confronting all of us on this planet.

On the history of our integration he said, "We are just a stone's throw away from the historic Dickenson Bay, where the initial steps in the formation of CARICOM were taken forty-three years ago, with the Agreement establishing the Caribbean Free Trade Association, CARIFTA.

"Not far from this spot, Antigua's V.C. Bird, Guyana's Forbes Burnham and Barbados' Errol Barrow signed the Dickenson Bay Agreement.

"The mid sixties were not the best of times for the regional integration movement.

"The ten member West Indies Federation had collapsed in 1962 after Jamaica voted by referendum to pull out rather than pay federal tax.

"This prompted the memorable equation from the then Trinidad and Tobago Premier, Dr. Eric Williams, that one from ten left nought.

"Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago lost no time in moving on to Independence.

"The remaining eight territories attempted to hold it together for a while with a new federal structure, but the effort of the 'Little 8' was abandoned in 1965, and Barbados proceeded to independence the following year as did Guyana.

"Fortunately, for all of us, for the region, and for world history, the Caribbean then, as now, was blessed with visionary leaders who believed in



Honourable Baldwin Spencer
Prime Minister of Antigua and Barbuda

the dream of West Indian unity beyond the boundaries of cricket.

"The vision and boldness of Antigua's V.C. Bird, Guyana's Forbes Burnham and Barbados' Errol Barrow led to the establishment of CARIFTA in 1968, with Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, Guyana, and Trinidad and Tobago the founding members.

"CARIFTA evolved into the Caribbean Community, which was established by the Treaty of Chaguaramas, which was signed on July 4th 1973.

"By July 1974 all the member states of CARIFTA had signed the Treaty to become full members of CARICOM.

"At the completion of CARICOM's first thirty five years, we can count many blessings.

"CARICOM has delivered distinct benefits to the Caribbean people.

If CARICOM did not exist we would have had to invent it."

(For the full text of Prime Minister's speech please go to www.antigua-barbuda.com)

The Road to England and Back



(Left) Triumphant Antigua and Barbuda team - (Right) Team gets half time pep talk

Goals and near misses! Tackles! Loud cheers! The medic running on field to attend to the unexpected tackled football victim! These are the scenes from one of the most exciting sports in the world.

And when the Antigua and Barbuda football team took on Ipswich Wanderers in June, these scenes were ever present. In preparation for their world Cup qualifiers the national squad embarked on an England tour, to sharpen up their skills ahead of crucial world cup qualifiers against Cuba.

The home side got off to a rough start, going down 4-2 and 5-4 to other local clubs. But in the final match a persistent and organised team national squad, beat Ipswich Wanderers 2-0.

Forward Kerry Skepple and midfielder Justin Cochrane, who plays for Millwall in English League One, scored for the home side.

If the national squad thought the warm Caribbean weather was going to be replicated in Great Britain they were wrong. The warm weather that greeted them on their arrival, quickly turned cold.

"It's been a good experience. However the ..climate change was a challenge.. It was the first time guys are playing in these conditions..," recounted Head Coach Derrick Edwards.

He added "Back home it's hot. Here it's at least three different climates. In the morning you get up its nice ...By 12 it changes, and in the evening it changes again... We talk to the players about toughening it out. You always have to be prepared mentally and physically."

And the harsh weather conditions, according to Captain Garfield Gonsalves hampered the players on the field. However, he says the experience was invaluable.

"Its been a good experience ...apart from the weather.. And that's what we're here for. And to play against a team like Cuba you need to be at top level," he said

"The style of play here is different.. the English system is very different ...in the Caribbean we are very much laid

back, so we like to knock the ball around ...and if we get up front we may score a goal ... but we don't really play defence this systemyou get up ...and you got to get back running all the while...

The road to England was not a smooth one however. According to the Head Coach getting funding was a problem.

Hesaid."(funding was an issue over the years ...over the years we never got to go on tour. You have to talk about finance, one of the most important things in sport. (Also) the guys have to work. It takes a lot from the Guys. The employers are gracious for giving the guys time off. I am hoping they can give them more time off in the future."



L-R Captain Garfield Gonsalves and Head Coach Der-rick Edwards talk about the team's upcoming World Cup qualifiers

Apart from winning their final match, the national squad has secured a relationship with the Ipswich Wanderers Football Club.

Chairman of the Club Ed Nicholls said "We've really enjoyed itit's been a pleasure to help you with your preparations ...I believe it's the first international side we've hosted. I would really love to strengthen this relationship."

He added "we've got very strong Caribbean connection.

The Antiguan conducted themselves credibly. They are very friendly people. Hopefully we can do something in the future again."

National Football Squad gets Support

The Antigua and Barbuda National Football squad is getting a donation of tracksuits compliments Antiguans living in the UK.

The donation is being made by Colin Kazim Richards, a 21 year old professional football player who plays for Turkey's national side.

Stephen Browne an Antiguan who is living in London had been instrumental in securing the assistance from Richards.

According to Browne "Colin is making a contribution of 27 track suits and 20 football bags. The items were delivered to the players during their tour of England."

Browne said the donation is timely as the national squad is playing a number of World Cup qualifiers in the coming weeks.

The football manager says he has also been in talks with national squad Peter Abrahams relating to getting Antiguan players in the UK to play for the national squad

He added "We've been in dialogue about some players being involved in national side. I am really just trying to help them get the best players available. Actually my nephew had flown out today. I have recommended one or two others; one has been recommended to play with under 20s. One did not make the trip because of injury.



Colin Kazim Richards

He added "I had an email (from the national squad management) and they were pleased.

He noted "there is a lot of skill and talent available in the UK that the national squad can tap into ... there are few players here we can tap into squad. Some are professional and some are semi-professional.

Antigua and Barbuda Hopes Shattered

Antigua and Barbuda's hopes of advancing to the group stage of the 2010 World Cup Qualifiers were dashed on Sunday (22nd June) after they were defeated 4-0 by Cuba when they played the return leg of their CONCACAF zone at the Pedro Marrero Stadium.

The Antiguans, who lost 4-3 on home turf in the opening leg at the Sir Vivian Richards Cricket Ground, were two-nil down by the end of the first half following a double strike from Robert Linares who hit the back of the net in the 10th and 47th minutes. Linares added a third strike in the 53rd minute before Jeniel Marquez rounded off the scoring in the 69th minute.

The results would mean that Cuba will now advance to the three-group CONCACAF semi-final round of qualifiers for the 2010 World Cup

Finals in South Africa 8-3 on aggregate.

Reports also indicate that one member of the Antigua and Barbuda coaching staff, Derrick "Pretty Boy" Edwards, was evicted from the match after lashing out at match officials who allowed a "questionable" goal to stand. It is alleged that after receiving a free-kick in their half of the field that defender Marc Joseph attempted to make a quick pass to one of his team mates but had his pass blocked by a Cuban player who was standing directly over the ball.

It is alleged that that player, who did not move off the ball for the required 10 yards, stuck his foot out and allowed the ball to rebound to his striker who went on to net for Cuba – the goal was then allowed by the match referee.

Antigua and Barbuda needed to win by two clear goals if they were to make it into the third phase of the qualifiers for the first time but failed to even find the back of the net throughout the contest.

Many Antiguans would have hoped that, for the first time, Antigua and Barbuda would have made it into the group stage of the encounter but would still be somewhat proud of the team's efforts to get past the favoured Cubans.

Antigua and Barbuda will now turn their attention to the under-17 and under-19 national teams who will be playing in their respective youth World Cup Qualifiers. The under-17s will play their opening match in late July while the under-19 contest will start at the end of June.

HISTORY 101: FORT BERKELEY



Fort Berkeley is now a tourist attraction

English Harbour is the most historic part of Antigua. Time should be taken when visiting Nelson's Dockyard, to follow the path to Fort Berkeley. It is only a ten-minute stroll each way and the unfolding views of the harbour are spectacular.

The fort is placed on the peninsula forming the west entrance to English Harbour. It was started in 1704, or 21 years before the Dockyard was built. Its defences were later extended in the 1740's. In this strategic position, the fort commanded the entrance to the anchorage, where naval captains careened their ships and sheltered from hurricanes.

On approaching the battlements from a footpath starting at the Dockyard dinghy wharf, a stone quarry may be seen on the right.

It was here that the building material for the fort was taken. The fortified line, once known as the "Charles Line", is further to the right. It was named after

Commodore Charles Knowles, who once commanded at the Dockyard.

He added this line of battlements in 1745, when the fort was extended. On the left is a bombproof powder magazine, built in 1811 to hold three hundred barrels of gunpowder.

Inside the entrance is a cooperage and shifting room for packing explosives. The next building was the guardhouse, for which there is an amusing 18th century reference to this building:

"The Guard is in great distress, the allowance of 9 pence a day not being sufficient at such a cold post to buy more than warm liquor".

In 1989, the building was re-roofed by the National Park as a pilot restoration-training project funded by Canada. The restoration is accurate to the point that the stonework shows smaller stones were used to extend the wall height. In 1751, the roof had been blown off by a hurricane. Therefore added height to the walls was needed to accommodate extra beams to strengthen the roof against future hurricanes.

The restored mechanics of the inside structure demonstrates great strength, and it certainly survived the great hurricane 'Luis', experienced in 1995. At the end of the peninsula is the site of the first 1704 battery.

Peeping out of the battlements towards Guadeloupe is a twenty-four pound cannon, cast in Scotland during the reign of George III of England in

top of the cannon and the date will also be seen. The calibre of the gun is 5.5 inches and it weighs twenty-five tons, taking eleven men to handle it. Its range was one and a half miles with an eight pound charge of gunpowder.

Over the wall at the extreme end, is an upturned cannon cemented in the rock. A chain was once attached and extended across the harbour entrance forming a boom to discourage the entry of attacking ships. The chain was lashed to old condemned masts, preventing it from sinking to the bottom of the harbour.

With this gun in the round bastion in which you are now standing, and extending along the lines, were twenty other guns. Fortunately, English Harbour was not attacked so the fort was never used in earnest, though it must have been a deterrent against assault.

On the east side of the Harbour above the 'Pillars of Hercules' (q.v. under Natural Sites) it is just possible to see the walls of a half moon shaped battlement. This is the only remnant of Fort Charlotte built at the same time as Shirley Heights military complex visible high up overlooking English Harbour.

From this walk along the peninsula protecting the western side of English Harbour we can understand how well English Harbour with its vital naval dockyard was defended against attack, an attack that never happened as it was deemed too strong militarily.

(Source: Museum of Antigua and Barbuda)

Did You Know ?

All Saints - Four years after emancipation, in 1839, a chapel was built on Osborne's pasture. This chapel was named "All Saints", as it was built near the border of several parishes bearing the names of saints. Soon afterwards, as sugar workers began to leave the estates, houses began to appear near the chapel and All Saints village was born.

Bendals - This village is named after an estate owner. Bendals appears to have owned an estate in the 18th century. By 1750, Richard Oliver owned the estate. At the time of emancipation, it was in the possession of Messrs Hyndman, but it was not yet a village though since 1823 there had been a Moravian settlement on the estate. The village was properly settled as the ex-slaves gradually

Bethesda - A shipwright at the Dockyard, Charles Thwaites, was often invited to attend Wesleyan services at Lyon's estate. One Sunday he noticed an old black man by the name of Henry Cochrane, preaching and teaching to slave children. This gave Mr. Thwaites the idea of building a schoolroom half way between Lyon's and English harbour where he lived. Charles Thwaites chose the site on some gentle rising ground with green smooth grass open to the gentle breezes of Willoughby Bay. Vigo Blake the headman at Blake's with his fellow slaves built the schoolroom on this peaceful spot in 1813. It became the first schoolroom for slaves built in the West Indies. Soon houses began to be built around this school, so this is how Bethesda, "a place of mercy" came to be born. (Source: Museum of Antigua and Barbuda)