



THE WEST INDIA COMMITTEE CIRCULAR

THE OFFICIAL ORGAN OF THE WEST INDIA COMMITTEE. ESTAB: CIRCA A.D. 1735

AUTUMN 2019

PUBLISHED EVERY QUARTER



The West India Committee Circular



Table of Contents

Leading articles - 1
Notes of Interest - 4
The West India Committee report - 5
100 years ago - 6
From the Library - 7
Cooking Caribbean - 9

Leading articles

Anguilla's economic recovery

Following the devastating effects of Hurricane Irma in late 2017, the British Overseas Territory of Anguilla has been working to rebuild its economy and was the fastest growing economy of the Caribbean last year at 10.9%, followed by Antigua and Barbuda at 7.4%. This is compared to Anguilla's growth in 2018, where the economy shrank by 2.86% in real terms, even though it recognised a 2.67% growth in Gross Domestic Product. The Anguillian Government is still working towards the full recovery of the territory's economy and to better prepare it for the future.

Premier Victor Banks' budget speech for 2019 was titled *Building Pathways to Resilience in Development*. In his address, Premier Banks outlined that one lesson that was learned from 2018 was the need for a "*deliberate strategy for ensuring that (Anguilla builds) the capacity to bounce back quickly after any form of setbacks or disasters, natural or manmade*". The Premier recognised that Anguilla needed to reduce its reliance on Tourism, as hurricanes

could easily cause severe damage to the industry's infrastructure, as was the case during Hurricane Irma. The Tourism sector recovered at a slower pace than expected throughout 2018, further demonstrating that Anguilla needed to diversify its economy, although it was still the most profitable sector, producing EC\$102.73 million.

Other measures that Anguilla has taken this year, to aid their recovery and future resilience, include a ban on single use plastics, such as bags and cutlery, and Styrofoam due to the damage that these items can do to the environment and to relieve pressure on Anguilla's waste management status.

Anguilla had recorded a surplus of EC\$3.39 million before amortisation. EC\$40.23 million was borrowed from the Caribbean Development Bank in order to finance recurrent expenditure. Recurrent expenditure in the 2019 financial year is to be part funded with a loan of EC\$15 million, as outlined in Her Majesty's Government of Anguilla's Medium Term Economic and Fiscal Plan. The total Recurrent Expenditure cost for 2019 is estimated to be EC\$213.48 million, excluding amortisation of EC\$28.50 million.

The recurrent revenue estimate for 2019 is EC\$208.36 million, which is a 17.39% increase over the 2018 recurrent revenue estimate of EC\$177.50 million and the actual takings of EC\$199.53 million. This projection is based on economic growth expectations as well as improvements in tax administration and compliance.

Other developments taking place this year include the building of new campuses for some of Anguilla's schools, including a new campus for the Albena Lake-Hodge Comprehensive

School, the island's only secondary school which was damaged beyond repair by Hurricane Irma.

Although Anguilla has made excellent progress in its recovery, it remains to be seen how Brexit will affect its economy. In the event of a no-deal Brexit, the French Government has confirmed it will introduce work visas for Anguillians in St. Martin as well as imposing more stringent border controls, despite earlier claims from the UK Foreign Office that nothing will change. The Foreign Office has now issued guidance stating "*The Crown Dependencies and Overseas Territories, including Gibraltar, are responsible for their own contingency planning and implementation in relation to the UK leaving the EU, whether that is with a deal or without.*"

The change will not only result in difficulties for those Anguillians that work in neighbouring St. Martin, but will likely interfere with the flow of both imports and exports to and from Anguilla, negatively impacting on the economy and people's welfare. The Government of Anguilla and the West India Committee, home of Anguilla's representative office to both the UK Government and the European Union, continue to work with all parties to ensure that Anguilla faces minimal disruption from the Brexit process.

Jane Austen's Sanditon

ITV has produced an adaptation of Jane Austen's last, unfinished novel, *Sanditon*, that aired at the end of August. The work is notable for featuring Austen's only character of black heritage: Miss Lambe, who is described as a "*half mulatto*", presumably meaning, in the language of the day, that she was a Quadroon, the daughter of a white parent and someone who was the child of a black and a white person. Her presence in the

novel is, in part, representative of West Indians as a stock character in British literature of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century.

The stock West Indian, or creole, character, developed due to the large number of West Indian planters who came 'home', as they always viewed it, even though most were born in the West Indies, to Britain. Amazingly affluent for the most part, they came to associate with British High Society, in which they succeeded to an extent, coming to occupy some very powerful positions, such as Members of Parliament and in one instance Lord Mayor of London. Many brought their children with them to be educated, including some of mixed race.

The West Indian as a stock literary character was thus also found to be fabulously wealthy and quite generous, although fairly frequently living beyond their means, with no thought to future income. In addition, such characters were generally lacking in energy in both body and mind yet with the occasional fit of passion or energy, prone to sentimentality yet with a haughty streak and cruel to their subordinates (born out of the treatment of slaves on the plantations), and possessed of a certain exotic grace, especially the females.

They were often also depicted as sickly, with an unhealthy yellowish complexion. This may have influenced Austen to depict Miss Lambe as being of poor constitution with a physician in constant attendance.

West Indian heiresses can be found in the literature of the period, such as Miss Priscilla in Bickerstaff's *Love in the City* (1767) and such women were indeed desirable matches for member of British High Society who wished to marry money. *Sanditon's* Miss Lambe is no exception, with

Lady Denham being desirous to marry her nephew Sir Edward to the young lady.

The characters of Sanditon also engage in other stereotypes of the stock character, such as their riches and lavish spending habits, by assuming that the West Indians that they were expecting to arrive would be very rich, rather liberal with their money and seeking to establish themselves in British high society. Mr. Parker comments in discussion with Lady Denham that *“No people spend more freely, I believe, than West Indians,”* to which her Ladyship replies *“Aye, so I have heard; and because they have full purses fancy themselves equal, may be, to your old country families.”*

Due to the unfinished nature of Sanditon, which Austen only began writing a few months before her death at the age of 41, there is no chance for the reader to meet Miss Lambe directly and to know the way in which Austen planned to develop the character. Throughout her works, Austen frequently parodied the literary conventions of her time, so it may be theorised that when Miss Lambe appeared directly in the novel, she would have been quite different from the customary stock character of the West Indian.

Hurricane Dorian

In late August, Hurricane Dorian developed in the Atlantic Ocean and proceeded through the Caribbean, causing some damage and disruption to electricity and water supplies in islands such as Barbados, Martinique, Dominica, St. Lucia, Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands.

Most notably, Dorian make landfall in the Bahamas on 1st September at Elbow Cay on the Abaco Islands, reaching Grand Bahama the following day. A Category 5 hurricane on the Saffir-Simpson Scale, it is the strongest

hurricane to have ever struck the Bahamas, with recorded sustained wind speeds of 185mph, as well as one of the strongest ever recorded in the Caribbean, and has left significant damage in its wake. It was notable for the very slow speed at which moved over the islands, sometimes proceeding at only 1mph. This slow speed meant that the Bahamas were exposed to the Hurricane for 48 hours, resulting in significant damage from storm surges and extreme winds.

The devastation caused to the islands means that recovery work is slow and 2,500 were said to be missing in the aftermath of the disaster. The official death toll is currently over 60, but this number is expected to increase in the coming weeks and months, particularly as several hundred people are still missing. In the aftermath of the disaster, the damage was so severe that several bodies were buried beneath debris and could not be retrieved for some weeks.

The physical damage has been extensive as at least 70,000 homes have been destroyed and electricity supplies are still limited as is fresh drinking water, as resources were contaminated by salt water from the large storm surge. Dorian was estimated to have caused approximately USD\$ 7 billion worth of damage to the country. On 21st October, the Bahamian Prime Minister, Dr. Hubert Minnis, announced that hundreds of Government personnel would be deployed to aid in recovery and reconstruction, the largest deployment of Government workers in Bahamian history.

Following its devastation of the Bahamas, Hurricane Dorian proceeded up the eastern coast of north America, causing disruption with heavy winds and rainfall, although never actually making landfall, before proceeding into the Atlantic and dissipating south of Greenland.

Notes of Interest

The Jamaican Government has asked for the return of many historic artefacts originally from the island that are now held in collections in the UK. These include two items of Taino origin in the British Museum, wooden statues of a birdman and a rain deity, that were first discovered in a cave in 1792. They were first displayed in London in 1799 and were acquired by the British Museum in the early twentieth century.

In light of the recent drought afflicting Jamaica, the Jamaican Ministry of Industry, Commerce, Agriculture and Fisheries, is spending \$15 million to aid farmers at this difficult time for the agricultural sector.

A British Women, Natalie Crichlow, was attacked in Barbados where she had moved to look after her disabled brother. She died in hospital on 6th August of an infection related to burns sustained in a fire. Her family, including her son Romoney Crichlow-Noble, a professional footballer for Huddersfield Town and Hartlepool United, raised money to bring her body home.

Ms. Crichlow's family are concerned that the Royal Barbados Police are not treating the incident as a murder enquiry. Earlier reports stated that an assailant broke into her brother's house, strangled her and then proceeded to set her alight. Barbados police, however, said that the fire started in the kitchen and spread throughout the house and that there was no indication of any form of accelerant on Ms. Crichlow's body. They also pointed toward CCTV footage from a nearby camera that did not indicate that anyone had entered the property.

The Law Reform Commission for the Cayman Islands has released a paper that recommends that suicide be decriminalised in the territory. The Cayman Islands, along with the Bahamas, are among the few remaining nations where suicide remains illegal.

Developments continue in the case of the death of Anguillian Hotel worker Kenny Mitchel after an altercation with American banker Scott Hapgood at the Malliouhana resort on Anguilla on 13th April this year, when Mr. Mitchel is said to have burst into the Hapgood family's room and attempted to rob them at knife-point.

Initial reports said that Mr. Mitchel died from asphyxiation and blunt force trauma, but a more recent report raises the possibility that Mr. Mitchel died from a drugs overdose, as more than twice a lethal dose of cocaine was found in his blood stream. Mr. Hapgood is charged with manslaughter for his part in the incident and is currently released on bond. The trial is now adjourned until 11th November.

Prime Minister Gaston Browne of Antigua and Barbuda made a speech at the United Nations General Assembly, calling on the USA to respect a ruling made twelve years ago in Antigua and Barbuda's favour, when the USA attempted to prosecute foreign-based suppliers of online gambling services, which Antigua and Barbuda felt violated a previous commitment to free trade in recreational services.

The World Trade Organisation ruled that the Caribbean nation was entitled to compensation of USD\$21 million a year. Antigua opted for a financial settlement, rather than recouping losses through the use of trade sanctions, but the USA has yet to pay.

On 26th September, The Federation of St. Kitts

and Nevis, Dominica, Grenada, and the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago signed the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, coinciding with the International Day of Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons, in a ceremony at the United Nations. The Treaty aims for the global elimination of nuclear weapons.

Haitian Senator Jean-Marie Ralph Féthière opened fire with a handgun outside the Haitian Parliament building in Port-au-Prince. Two men, press photographer Chery Dieu-Nalio and security guard Leon Leblanc, were wounded in the incident. The senator later claimed he was defending himself from protesters. Anti-government protests have been widespread in Haiti in recent weeks, due to fuel shortages, allegations of corruption and rising inflation, and there are concerns that they are becoming more violent.

The collapse of package tour company Thomas Cook, will have consequences for the Caribbean tourism industry, particularly as the Caribbean is such a popular destination for British tourists. The collapse led to several holidaymakers being stranded in the region, until alternative flights could be arranged by the UK Civil Aviation Authority. Some hotels in Cuba were reported as refusing to allow Thomas Cook holidaymakers to leave until they had been paid, due to confusion over whether Atol insurance was valid in the country. The hotels were later ordered to let the visitors depart.

The West India Committee Report

The Committee has now formally entered into a partnership with the National Army Museum to undertake a project on the West Indian Soldier. This will result in an exhibition on the role of West Indians in the British Army at the National Army Museum in 2021, a series

of public lectures and workshops, a short film or documentary and a popular history on the subject. The unique records held in the West India Committee Collection will be invaluable in carrying out this endeavour.

The Hanton family have very kindly donated more of their collection to the West India Committee, including an excellent selection of prints of Trinidad, St. Vincent's and the West India Regiments. It joins the earlier donations as part of the Maureen Hanton Collection.

David Wells, the Committee's Research and Training Manager and resident Research Fellow, has recently given a talk on the history of the Thames River Police, founded by the West India Committee in 1798, to the Little Chalfont branch of the Inland Waterways Association. The Association very kindly made a donation to the West India Committee in thanks.

David will be giving talks on the historic links between Britain and the West Indies to other branches of the Inland Waterways Association and local history societies in the coming months and would be happy to consider any further requests to do so.

Mrs Blondel Cluff CBE, the West India Committee's Chief Executive, has been asked to participate in the Home Office's discussions on the ongoing Windrush scandal.

The West India Committee's support of the efforts to restore Government House, Antigua continue and Mrs Cluff has recently completed a guidebook to the building, edited and designed by David Wells, which it is hoped can be sold both at Government House and the National Museum of Antigua and Barbuda to help raise funds for its continued upkeep.

In its capacity as the representative office of HM Government of Anguilla to the UK and the EU, the West India Committee has prepared a document to advise the people of Anguilla what they may be required to do in the event of a no-deal Brexit. This includes such points as the likely need for visas for both study and work in European territories, such as St. Martin and St. Barts, and the probable requirement for customs documentation for exported goods.

Mrs. Cluff addressed the United Nations' Special Political and Decolonization Committee in New York, on behalf of the island of Anguilla. Footage of Mrs. Cluff's speech can be found approximately 15 minutes into the video available through the link below.

<http://webtv.un.org/meetings-events/general-assembly/main-committees/4th-committee/watch/fourth-committee-3rd-meeting-general-assembly-74th-session/6093293384001/?term=>

100 Years ago

In August 1919, a boll-weevil infestation had caused great damage to the U.S.A.'s cotton crop. The West India Committee hoped that the gap in the market could be filled by Sea Island cotton from the British West Indies, which had previously been bought during the First World War by the British Government for a variety of purposes, but the market had since collapsed.

The West India Committee was also looking for solutions to British Guiana's desire for new colonists. One aim was to encourage India to remove its ban on emigration in the belief that British Guiana would be attractive to Indian families, but attention was also called to the large number of Jamaicans that were migrating to Cuba, with the hope that some of the flow

could be diverted to other British colonies that were hoping to encourage migrants. The British Guiana Colonisation Deputation visited the UK to meet with various committees and individuals, including Lord Milner, the Secretary of State for the Colonies, in order to build support for the colony. The visit was brought to a close by a Banquet on August 29th held by the West India Committee.

The Circular examined the role of electricity in the sugar refining process, pointing out that, whilst electricity was now used to power many parts of the process, such as the pumps and hoists, it was still unsuitable for operating the mills themselves, which were reliant on steam power. However the Circular felt that electricity was nevertheless the future, pointing out that using electricity would help save space compared to a sizeable steam engine. Maintaining a smaller steam engine to power the mills and utilising electricity to run everything else resulted in a net improvement of "*economy and gain of power*".

Mr. R. Popham Lobb, the Administrator of St. Vincent, submitted a report to the Colonial Office showing the deficiencies of educational establishments in the West Indies and proposed that a West Indian University should be created.

From 1st September, Imperial Preference was enacted and goods from the West Indies, such as sugar and coffee, were admitted into Britain with a reduction of a sixth of the import duties required. The Committee had campaigned for such a system for many years.

The West India Committee successfully petitioned the Government to forward £50 towards the maintenance of the graves of 300 soldiers of the British West Indies regiment in Italy, with permanent headstones to be erected.

There was widespread discontent within the Caribbean at the continuing issues with the cables and the telegraphic service that relied upon them, resulting in delays in transmitting messages that could last days, weeks or, in one instance, months. The West India Committee made “*forcible representations*” to the Colonial Office to encourage their efforts on the situation. Many urged the creation of an ‘all-British’ cable system that would allow for better communication between the various colonies of the British West Indies, “*a service free from foreign control, and direct communication with England.*”

A number of enquiries to the West India Committee indicated a rise in interest in the West Indies as a winter holiday destination. However, it was feared that at the time there was not sufficient accommodation to meet the rising demand.

At the end of October, the West India Committee began to search for new offices in which to house itself, to aid in its increasing workload and the rising membership.

From the Library

In this issue we look at a pamphlet produced in 1774, *A description of the mangostan and the bread-fruit* by John Ellis. This work relates to one of the more interesting episodes in WIC history, the Committee’s attempts to bring breadfruit and mango plants to the West Indies.

In the eighteenth century, the agriculture of the West Indies was largely geared towards the production of cash crops, such as sugar and cotton, on plantations by slave labour. This focus meant, however, that the region was not able to produce the food it needed to feed itself. Most

food was imported from the North American Colonies, but this was not only expensive but was also threatened by the prospect of those colonies seeking independence. To that end, the West India Committee and other interested parties began to look for alternative foodstuffs that could be grown easily and cheaply within the region, thus not impacting on its economy.

At the time, Europeans were exploring the South Seas on the other side of the world to the West Indies, coming into contact with the local peoples and encountering unfamiliar plants, whose properties caught their interest. Ellis’ pamphlet recounts how some of these plants, the breadfruit and the mangostan (mango) were first encountered by Europeans and how the local Polynesians cooked them or used them as an ingredient in their dishes.

Ellis’ pamphlet was hugely influential at the time and some believe he sourced his information directly from Sir Joseph Banks, the noted botanist and President of the Royal Society, who had visited Polynesia with Captain Cook and observed these plants firsthand in their natural environment.

The breadfruit was of particular interest, as it grew with minimal need for care, produced a crop three times a year and was resistant to high winds, an especially desirable quality in light of the hurricanes that wreak devastation on crops and trees in the West Indies. Thus, in theory, it was the answer to the potential food crisis that threatened the Caribbean.

Ellis’ aim was to encourage an enterprising soul to bring samples of the fruits to the West Indies, so that they could be cultivated and serve as a new food source. To aid such a volunteer in this endeavour, he included designs for boxes that the plants could be transported in.

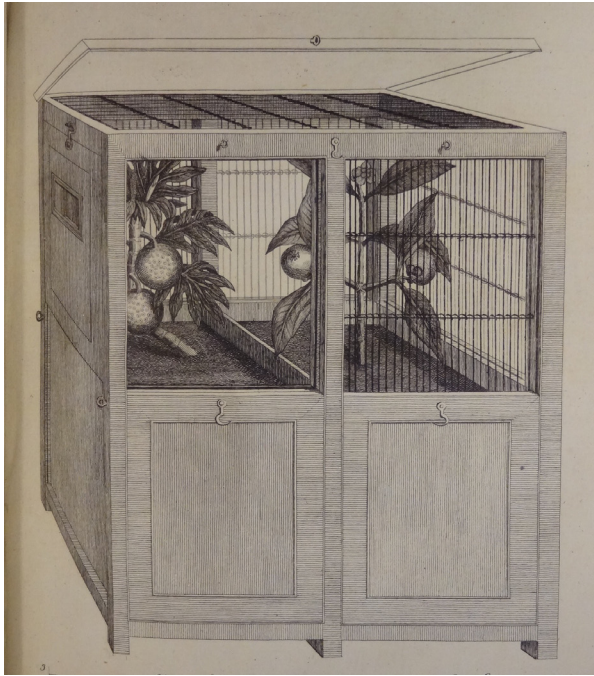


Figure 1

These boxes, seen on this page and the next, were designed to protect the plants from the rigours of a lengthy sea voyage. The design in Figure 1 is a wired cage to protect the plant during travel, yet still allow for the plant to have light and be watered and otherwise cared for with ease. The box labelled No.1 in Figure 2 was designed to carry the seeds, whilst No.2 was designed to carry young saplings.

Ellis concluded his pamphlet by stating that the West India Committee were shortly about to offer a reward to anyone who successfully transported the plants. However, the year after Ellis' pamphlet was published, 1775, saw the thirteen colonies of North America declare their independence and the American Revolution begin.

As predicted, the American Revolution had dire consequences for the British Islands of the Caribbean with famine and starvation on many islands. The war prevented any an attempt being made to transport the plants, particularly with

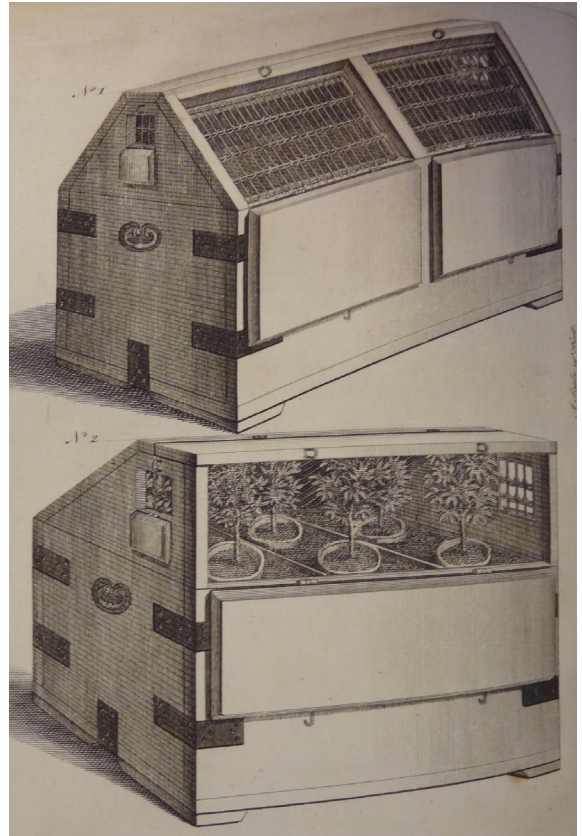


Figure 2

the threat of the French and Spanish Navies that harried the British West Indies until their defeat by Admiral Rodney.

In the late 1780s after the American Revolution had ended, the West India Committee and Joseph Banks succeeded in convincing King George III to launch an expedition, which resulted in a young officer called William Bligh commanding *HMS Bounty* on a voyage to Tahiti to retrieve breadfruit plants and take them to the West Indies. This engendered the Mutiny on the *Bounty*, the settlement of Pitcairn Island and Bligh's famous voyage in an open boat with his loyalists over several hundred miles of ocean to Timor. Sadly, Bligh did not use the boxes suggested by Ellis either on *HMS Bounty* or on his later command *HMS Providence*. It was the latter's voyage that finally succeeded in bringing breadfruit to

the region, as well as greatly expanding Kew Gardens' collection of plants on Bligh's return to England in 1793.

Despite the hopes of the Committee and all others who had worked to bring breadfruit to the region, it did not prove immediately popular. Many refused to eat it and for fifty years it was primarily fed to livestock. However, today it is firmly recognised as a Caribbean staple.

Cooking Caribbean

On occasion we will publish some traditional Caribbean recipes that you may like to try at home. To tie in with our library feature this issue, we will look at Breadfruit, which has become an integral part of Caribbean cookery and is now recognised as a 'superfood' due to being low in fat, high in protein, carbohydrates, vitamins and minerals, and gluten-free.

Breadfruit can be prepared in a variety of ways, the simplest is arguably on the grill. Remove the skin and cut it into thin strips before grilling until they are golden brown. Eat whilst hot with butter. Alternatively, they can be fried in oil as chips.

In order to roast breadfruit, first remove the stem, give the skin a light covering of oil and cut a cross into the bottom. It can be roasted for about an hour to an hour and a half in a preheated oven at 190 centigrade. You will undoubtedly notice the smell of freshly baked bread, which gives the plant its name. When the skin has turned to a dark brown, it should be ready. Once removed from the oven, wait for it to cool enough for the skin to be scraped off. Cut in half to remove the core. Then cut it into wedges and eat with butter.

Breadfruit can also be boiled, and thus prepared



A cross-section of the Breadfruit

makes an excellent replacement for potatoes and sweet potatoes. Remove the skin and cut the breadfruit in half and remove the core. Boil for 45 minutes and then mash it and serve with whatever seasonings you want. It also makes a good addition to a wide variety of other dishes such as curries, soups and stews.

Traditional Caribbean cooking usually uses ripe breadfruit but other cultures who cook with it in Southeast Asia, such as in Thailand, have been known to use unripened fruit in their recipes. One instance where unripened breadfruit was used in Caribbean cuisine was in a historically popular breakfast. The fruit would be cut into slices and then dried. Once dried, it would be then pounded into flour and sifted. This flour would be boiled into pap, which would be sweetened and then eaten.

Breadfruit is not readily available in most UK supermarkets, but it is carried in some stores in areas with a large Caribbean community, or in specialist Caribbean food stores.

THE WEST INDIA COMMITTEE

The West India Committee is a UK registered charity that works to improve the welfare of the people of the Caribbean and the societies in which they live and work, both domestically and globally. Please complete this form by hand and post it to The West India Committee, Suite 53, 4 Whitehall Court, Westminster, London, SW1A 2EL.

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Please only give us your telephone number/e-mail address if you are happy for us to contact you this way with updates about how your gifts are helping and how you can donate and help in other ways.

I enclose a cheque made payable to 'The West India Committee' of £



Gift Aid allows us to claim back 25p of tax for every £1 you give

I am a UK taxpayer and I would like The West India Committee to reclaim the tax on all qualifying donations I have made, as well as any future donations, until I notify them otherwise (please tick).

I understand that if I pay less income / capital gains tax than the amount of gift aid claimed on all my donations in the tax year in which they are received, it is my responsibility to pay any difference.

Please remember to let us know of any changes to your tax status including changes to your name or address or if you need to cancel this agreement

