



THE WEST INDIA COMMITTEE CIRCULAR

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Border from our historic circulars

The West India

Committee Circular



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Leading articles

The COVID-19 pandemic in the Caribbean

The ongoing global pandemic continues to affect the daily lives of the people of the Caribbean as well as having profound economic consequences. Although, over the past two months, the islands have begun to end their lockdowns and restart their local economies, the collapse of the important tourist industry has led to widespread job losses, with localities, such as the Cayman Islands, opening a registration scheme to provide assistance to those workers who now find themselves unemployed. Some islands, however, after bringing their local situations under control and implementing stringent new measures, have been reopening their doors to visitors, with Antigua and Barbuda, St. Lucia and the US Virgin Islands reopening in the first week of June, Jamaica on the 15th and Aruba, the Bahamas, Dominican Republic and the Turks and Caicos Islands in July. Health screening, including temperature checks, is being conducted for new arrivals, who are also encouraged to wear face masks in public places. Some nations are conducting coronavirus tests on arrival, whilst others are requiring that visitors have a negative test result from within 48-hours of departure of their home country.

Some countries, such as St. Lucia, are also conducting phased re-openings; they are keeping tourist sites closed during the first phase and only permitting seated service at restaurants in resorts.

Some countries have allowed visitors from the rest of the Caribbean before permitting those from further afield, notably the USA and Europe. With each country and territory taking different approaches, it is advisable to check before travelling.

Grenada has adopted a three-tiered strategy that began on 1st August, dividing countries into Low, Medium and High risk, with all visitors being required to complete a Health Declaration Form and download and register the local Contact Tracing App. Other restrictions apply, based on a visitor's country of origin, with those from High risk countries requiring a two-week quarantine at an approved Grenadian state facility. The Cayman Islands will not reopen their borders to international visitors until 1st October, when visitors will be required to take a Covid test 72 hours before entering the territory and then self-isolate for five days on arrival. They will then require another Covid test and, if negative, they will be permitted to leave with a monitoring device, known as a 'BioButton'. This initial phase will be aimed at residents and those who own second homes on Cayman, rather than tourists. Anguilla will not reopen its borders for regular income travel until at least 31st October, although commercial outbound flights are permitted. Entry is currently restricted to Anguillan nationals, residents and those with work permits, and a two-week quarantine is required upon arrival.

It is hoped that, given the widespread success of lockdowns and other measures in the Caribbean to limit the spread of the disease, the islands will appeal to potential visitors as a safe place to visit. Despite the high rates of infection in the USA, there was no initial attempt to limit the number of American visitors, as in recent years they have amounted to over half of visitors to the Caribbean. However, the ongoing situation may see this change, with the Bahamas already preventing flights arriving from anywhere but Canada, the UK and the EU, thus excluding, although not specifically, the American market which in recent years has provided, over 78% of visitors who stay in the country. Given the continuing situation in America, it is likely that other countries may impose restrictions on travellers from the USA.

Other developments linked to the ongoing Global Pandemic include Barbados' efforts to encourage foreign remote workers to relocate to the island. The Barbadian Government has launched the Barbados Welcome Stamp programme, which

allows visitors to remain on the island for a year without a visa, and is marketing Barbados as a great place for remote working, which has become much more widespread as a result of lockdowns in countries throughout the world. It is to be hoped that, despite the continuing difficulties, the tourism industry recovers soon. One regional airline, LIAT, owned by a consortium of 11 different Caribbean Governments, has already been forced into liquidation as a result of the situation. It will be reformed in due course into a new entity to provide connections between different Caribbean countries.

Notes of Interest

In an address to the World Health Organisation’s annual assembly on 18th May, Prime Minister Mia Mottley of Barbados stated that the states of CARICOM required a restructuring of their debts or a moratorium in order “*to provide certainty to both borrower and lender*” and avoid a crisis within the global financial system.

Jamaica, the Bahamas, Barbados and Panama were placed on a blacklist by the European Union in May due to strategic deficiencies in their regime regarding anti-money laundering and countering terrorist financing and the threat that the EU believes that this presents to its own financial system. This decision was condemned at coming at a difficult time, as the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic began to show in the economies of many Caribbean states.

A large dust cloud from the Sahara passed over the Caribbean in the week beginning 22nd June. Thrown up by large thunderstorms, it is believed to have been the densest dust plume for decades.

The dust plume had the effect of settling red dust across several islands, as well as causing changes in the colour of the sky and reducing the amount of sunlight. There were concerns that the density of the plume meant that conditions were dangerous in many islands and there were fears for those who suffer from respiratory ailments.

Such dust plumes are, however, useful for the environment, in helping to reduce temperatures by blocking sunlight, as well as the dust carrying much needed phosphorous to the Amazon in

South America, which helps to fertilise the soil. The reduction of temperatures in the Caribbean Sea helps to prevent hurricanes from forming.

The Anguillan General Election on 29th June saw a loss for the incumbent Anguilla United Front, with the Anguilla Progressive Movement, formerly the Anguilla United Movement, securing over 51% of the final vote. The new makeup of the Anguillan Assembly sees the Anguilla Progressive Movement holding 7 seats, whereas previously they held none and the Anguilla United Front at 4, down from their previous 7. Dr. Ellis Webster has now been elected Premier, winning the Island Harbour seat, whilst former premier Mr. Victor Banks lost his seat in Valley South to Dee-Ann Kentish-Rogers, a former UK representative for the Miss Universe beauty pageant.

<u>Seat</u>	<u>Candidate</u>	<u>Party</u>
Island Harbour	Ellis Lorenzo Webster	Anguilla Progressive
Sandy Hill	Cora Richardson-Hodge	Anguilla United Front
Valley North	Evans McNeil Rogers	Anguilla United Front
Valley South	Dee-Ann Kentish-Rogers	Anguilla Progressive Movement
Road North	Merrick Richardson	Anguilla Progressive
Road South	Haydn Hughes	Anguilla Progressive
West End	Cardigan Connor	Anguilla United Front
At-large	Kyle Hodge	Anguilla Progressive Movement
	Jose Vanterpool	Anguilla United Front
	Kenneth Hodge	Anguilla Progressive Movement
	Quincia Gumbs-Marie	Anguilla Progressive Movement

The new territorial regiments of the British Army in the Caribbean continue to develop, with the first five officers of the new Cayman Regiment receiving training at the Royal Military Academy at Sandhurst, whilst Lieutenant Colonel Ennis Grant was appointed as the first commander of the Turks & Caicos Regiment at the beginning of June. It is hoped that both of these regiments will be able to offer support to their home territories in the event of natural disasters, such as hurricanes, mirroring the work carried out in the aftermath of similar disasters by the regular British armed forces.

The Cayman Islands Athletics Association has been banned from participating in athletic competitions by the North American, Central American and Caribbean Athletic Association due to money owed by Cayman's local organising committee for the Caribbean Free Trade Association Games held in April 2019 to the athletics federations of several other countries. This ban includes World Athletics competitions and extends to the Olympic Games.

Twins, Darrell and Darren Roberts, 24, who were born in the UK to parents from Dominica and Grenada, have been issued with deportation notices by the UK Government whilst serving custodial sentences for separate instances of Grievous Bodily Harm. Darrell has been threatened with deportation to the Dominican Republic, whilst Darren may be sent to Grenada at the end of his sentence. Both have never visited these countries and, in the case of the Dominican Republic, have no connection to it. Family members have launched petitions for the men to be allowed to remain in the UK and have criticised Ealing Council, who took the brothers into care aged 13, for not doing enough to register them as British citizens. Ealing Council denies these claims, saying that they engaged the brothers repeatedly in this process, but neither of them signed the requisite paperwork to progress matters.

The West India Committee Report

The West India Committee is pleased to announce that, following the meeting of the Trustees in May, David Rankin Hunt has been unanimously elected to the position of President of the West

India Committee.

The West India Committee is pleased to announce that Sir Rodney Williams KGN GCMG has been appointed to the board of Trustees.

As part of *The West Indian Soldier*, our ongoing heritage project in partnership with the National Army Museum and the National Lottery Heritage Fund, the West India Committee are producing a series of short online lectures that can be viewed on our YouTube channel. The first of these covers the conquest of Jamaica by the English Army in 1655 and the Nine Years War (1689-1697) in the Caribbean [here](#)

West India Committee CEO, Mrs. Blondel Cluff has been appointed chair of the Subgroup of the Windrush Cross-Government Working Group that is linked to the Government's new Commission on Race and Ethnic Disparities, to which Mrs. Cluff has also been co-opted to focus on education. The Windrush Working Group is charged with collaborating with the Commission for the purpose of co-designing and delivering the responses to cross-government issues to provide wider support to the Windrush generation and their descendants, and to '*support the design of practical solutions to address the wider challenges that disproportionately affect people from BAME backgrounds.*' In tandem, the West India Committee will undertake preliminary work for our *Caribbean Chamber of Britain* project, to establish a permanent, policy literate representative body for the Caribbean community in the UK akin to those utilised by the Jewish and Muslim communities with great effect, providing a precedent for other Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) groups that may similarly benefit from improved engagement with government, and the public and private sectors.

The West India Committee has decided to step down from its role as the Government of Anguilla London Office. The Committee is proud of its record over the last four years, which includes raising relief funds in the aftermath of Hurricane Irma, the construction of the Cluff Maternity Unit at the Princess Alexandra Hospital, successfully negotiating a financial package with the UK Government of over £220 million for Anguilla's

recovery, facilitating work on revisions to Anguilla's constitution, representing Anguilla in work with both the UK Government and the EU Commission, serving as the secretariat of the Anguilla All Party Parliamentary Group in Westminster, producing White papers addressing Anguilla's situation concerning Brexit, arranging for the Tottenham Hotspur Foundation to provide a year-long education and training programme and arranging for Anguilla to receive a Coat of Arms from her Majesty Queen Elizabeth in commemoration of the 50th anniversary of the Anguilla Revolution in which Anguillan successfully fought the UK Government to remain British.

The Committee's focus will now involve working with the UK government on addressing the issues arising from the continuing Windrush debacle, whilst working to secure greater public representation for the West Indian community and its heritage work.



STATEMENT
15 July 2020

Today, I say the fondest of farewells to my kinsmen in the British Overseas Territory of Anguilla where I have held the role of Overseas Representative and Special Adviser to the Premier during the past four years. This has been a tumultuous time for this little known British nation in which it has faced the dramatic challenges of climate change, global and domestic economic strife and two pandemics, all in the context of a new, and as yet unknown, era of British history. As an Anguillian, I have had the honour of serving both my nation of origin – Anguilla, and my country of birth – the UK, and believe that my colleagues and I at the West India Committee have succeeded in leaving some degree of improvement in the welfare of the people of one of the oldest members of the British family of nations.

Our work has exposed us to the good, the bad and the indifferent, and has also afforded us the pleasure of working with a myriad of intelligent, fair and forward thinking people in Anguilla and throughout the UK and wider world, including politicians in the current UK government and parliament and our colleagues in the former Government of Anguilla. We are extremely touched by the gratitude shown for our work by former Chief Minister Hubert Hughes, and Former Premier Victor Banks, together with Premier Dr Ellis Webster.

I wish the people of Anguilla the very best in the future, and trust that the changes that need to take place in the arena in which they find themselves may arise without undue delay or struggle in the best interests of us all. We leave you with one further gift, a full Coat of Arms that has now been approved by HM Queen Elizabeth II that portrays the spirit of the fine people of the place that I shall always call 'Home'.

Mrs Blondel B R Cluff
CBE, FKCL, FWIC, FRSA, LLB (HONS)

Caribbean Cooking

This issue we look at an all-time classic Caribbean dessert, Rum Cake. Ever popular, it is served

throughout the Caribbean at a wide range of events, ranging from weddings to Christmas.

The Rum Cake is believed to have developed from traditional English steamed puddings, first brought by settlers to the region in the 1600s, and changed over time, embracing the quintessentially Caribbean spirit first invented as a by-product of sugar production.. Most notably, the method of cooking changed from being steamed to being baked, possibly as the latter is arguably less effort. The inclusion of rum in these cakes may be linked to its use as a preservative, as colonial society sought ways to preserve their food supplies in the hot and humid climate of the region, allowing the cake to last longer and not require eating in one sitting. Another less popular theory involves sailors dipping their invariably stale ship's biscuits, or 'hard tack' in rum to make them palatable.

There are various forms of rum cake to be found all over the Caribbean, and popular variants add coconut, walnuts and fruit, the latter being marinated in rum before cooking.

Ingredients:

- 1 lemon, zested
- 10 fl oz/300 ml Dark Rum
- 8 oz/250 g Butter
- 8oz/225 g Dark Brown Sugar
- 1/2 Teaspoon Vanilla Extract
- 3 Eggs
- 9 oz/250 g Self raising Flour
- 1 Tablespoon Mixed Spice
- 1/2 Teaspoon All Spice
- 4 Tablespoons Brandy or Sherry



Instructions:

Firstly, preheat oven to 350F/ 180C and grease and line an 8 inch / 20 cm cake tin or bundt tin.

Then cream the butter, sugar and vanilla extract until light and fluffy. Lightly beat the eggs and then add them to the mixture, a little at a time, with some flour. Then add the remaining flour and spices and stir thoroughly. Pour the mixture into the cake tin and bake for 1 to 1 1/4 hours or until done. Test the centre with a skewer.

Allow the cake to cool on a rack, then pierce several holes on the top of the cake and pour the sherry or brandy over. Wrap the cake in foil and let it sit overnight or longer before eating.

From the Library

The Caribbean has possessed a tourist industry for centuries, long before the islands established their own tourism ministries, with George Washington famously visiting Barbados, with his elder brother Lawrence, on the future US President's only trip outside the North American mainland. With the advent of steamships in the nineteenth century serving to reduce travel times, winter cruises in the region became a popular option amongst those that were able to afford it; some advertisements for these are now in the West India Committee Collection. The early twentieth century saw sun bathing holidays on the regions' beaches, with over 100,000 visiting the region before the outbreak of the Second World War.

In the 1960s and 1970s, with the advent of cheap global flights, a journey to the Caribbean from Britain was reduced from several days voyage by sea to a few hours flying, opening up the possibility for affordable mass tourism. The West India Committee worked to promote and expand this growing industry. In the case of the Cayman Islands and the British Virgin Islands, the Committee actually served as their London tourist bureaux. To this end, the West India Committee possesses an excellent photographic collection, largely in black and white, that was used as advertisements for holiday destinations across the Caribbean, highlighting the beaches, hotels, facilities and more eclectic attractions, such as the Cayman Islands' turtle farm.

In light of the large-scale developments that have been built in the Caribbean over the last few decades, not only do these photographs serve as

an important record of the Caribbean's burgeoning mass tourist industry but also offer a snapshot into how the islands looked before many of these were developed.



*Britannia Beach Hotel and Paradise Island Hotel,
Nassau, Bahamas*



Big Game Fishing Club, Bimini, Bahamas



The Turtle Farm, Grand Cayman, Cayman Islands



Relaxing on the Beach, The Cayman Islands