

WE HERITAGE ON DISPLAY



We Gatherin'
2025

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We Gatherin' in Barbados... to Celebrate who we are!

ST. ANDREW

This northeastern parish of St. Andrew is the most unique of Barbadian parishes. Blessed with a long and easily traversable beach that stretches from St. Joseph to St. Peter, this is the fifth largest of the island's 11 parishes, but its population has never reflected its size and it retains the lowest population density of all parishes.

Topography of St. Andrew

The striking topography of the parish explains the geophysical differences which are portrayed in the parish. Chalk, clay, and sandstone created Chalky Mount. Spectacular rock formations where the coral and chalk caps eroded, tower over the Ermy Bourne Highway, leaving exposed the older Eocene shale and sandstone outcrops with their broken ridges. These vistas starkly resemble parts of Scotland. Further north, millennial accretion of the Walkers sand hills designate that as much as 50% of the parish's land mass is unsuited to agriculture. Added to that, the instability of soils, giving rise to massive land slips, has always triggered the exodus of parishioners to safer spaces in Barbados.

Further north at Morgan Lewis and Boscobel, the otherwise spectacular hilly terrain, coupled with unstable soils, led to major landslides – notably on 1st October 1901, when the 'Boscobel Landslip' completely rearranged the physical features of the area. This and other climatic events prompted government to initiate the Soil Conservation Department 70 years ago. **Edward St. John Cumberbatch**, a native of St. Peter, was the pioneer leader in this largely successful attempt at stabilizing the wayward soils of the north east.

Parish Name and Patronage

Its naming is succinct: the former addition of "Overhills" to the parish name reflects the early association to its mother parish. St. Andrew is indeed, over the hills (Four Hills, Farley Hill, Cherry Tree Hill) from St. Peter. Also, **St. Andrew**, the Apostle of Christ and brother of **Simon Peter**, the Rock of the Christian faith, was declared patron saint of Scotland as late as the 14th century. The parish is contiguous to the parish of St. Peter, which was named for Andrew's brother, **Simon Peter**. **King James I** of England was also **James VI** of Scotland. He was the

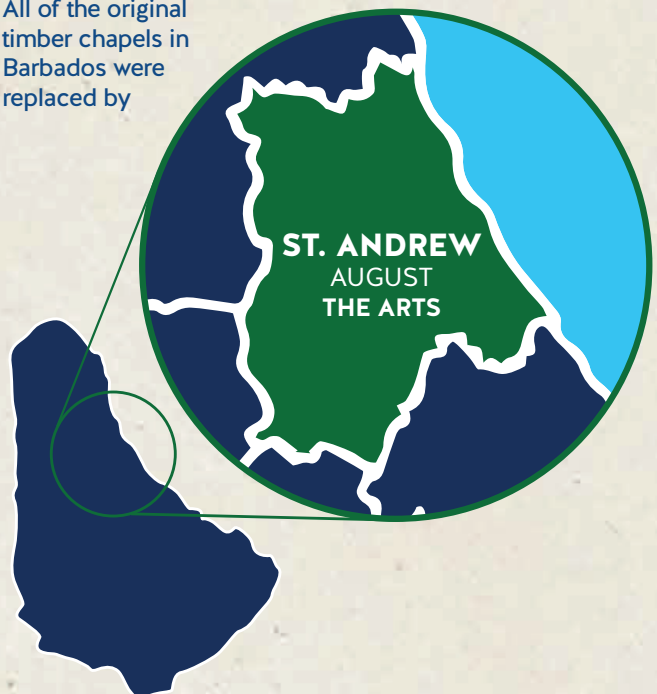
British monarch when the **William Courteen** discovery expedition, which was blown towards Barbados in 1625, left England in 1624. There is little doubt that the "crag of Scotland" came to mind at the sight of the hilly local terrain. **St. Andrew** the Apostle is reputed to have hung on a Saltire Cross (the shape of an X) at his own request because he felt unworthy to die on the same type of cross as his Master. This Cross - in the form of the crossed sugar cane – appears on our Coat of Arms.

When Barbados became Independent, we selected 30th November 1966 (St. Andrew's Day) and Barbados thus became one of several nations to adopt St. Andrew as Patron. For many years, the island's highest general honour was KA/DA – Knight/Dame of St. Andrew.

Parish Church

The first timber chapel may have been constructed as early as 1631, likely a chapel of ease to St. Peter's parish, before the Overhills region was accorded parish status. Even though the area may have functioned as a revenue contributor, its parish contract was not formalized until after the arrival of **Governor Phillip Bell** in 1641.

All of the original timber chapels in Barbados were replaced by



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stone during the booming Sugar Revolution (1655-70). St. Andrew, on the exposed eastern coastline could have been no exception, although no surviving record defines this. The 1780 hurricane severely damaged the first stone structure and it was repaired. Spared by the 1831 Hurricane, the chapel soon fell into grave disrepair and was demolished and rebuilt by 1846.

Other Anglican chapels are St. Simon's, first completed in 1840, demolished and rebuilt in 1855, then rebuilt again in 1948. St. Saviour's, near the Scotland River, was first consecrated on the steep hillside in 1857, abandoned in 1982, rebuilt and reconsecrated on flat lands nearby in 1993. The Methodists started an early mission, circa 1800, but an exact Overhill location has not yet been identified.

Belleplaine

Long accepted as the parish centre, Belleplaine was home to the police station, gas station, banking, shopping marts, primary and secondary schools, private and public medical facilities, a playing field, restaurants, the Egg Shell Bridge and the turntable which, from 1884, was the turnaround point at which the Barbados railway started its return journey to the Bridgetown Terminus. Belleplaine is within shouting distance of the parish church.

Opinion remains divided as to the origin of its name. Either **Alexander Bell**, an early landowner, had his name affixed to the area, or it is named for Barbados **Governor Phillip Bell** who, after he assumed office in 1641, formally executed the instruments to allow this former borough of St. Peter to become the proclaimed parish of St. Andrew.

Only in St. Andrew

Only in this parish will one find **Turner's Hall Woods**, the last surviving remnant of Barbados' prehistoric forest cover. Turner's Hall contains its own mini ecosystem of flora, fauna, and the boiling spring which likely led to the earliest efforts at oil and gas exploration. The fifty-acre tropical rain forest is located between Gregg Farm/Mose Bottom and Rock Hall/Swanns.

Chalky Mount Potteries, now vastly reduced in output, have been in existence since the 1600's. Chalk is not a large constituent of the hills, but clay is, and so is some sandstone. The potteries render the village the longest standing industrial area of Barbados, though some may term it a cottage industry.

Morgan Lewis Sugar Mill is the last remaining wind-driven sugar mill of its type in Barbados. Located at the plantation which **Mr. Morgan Lewis** established east of Cherry Tree Hill in the 17th century, it ceased operation in 1947 and was donated to the Barbados National Trust by then plantation owner, **Egbert Lawrence Bannister**. Restored by the Trust, it is listed in the 1996 World Monuments Watch.

Magnetic Hill is best experienced on the public road a few metres north of the Morgan Lewis Mill. It has been described as an optical illusion which gives the impression of "reverse gravity". For many years Barbadian motorists have had their cars impelled uphill without the use of the engine. Some, especially in the days of the all-iron cars, exclaimed "Eureka!" They found the exact spot. Others are still trying.

Mount Hillaby, south east of Apes Hill/Gregg Farm, south of Mose Bottom, and north of Airy Cot/Carrington Village, has been surveyed at 1,116 feet above sea level. This summit stands alone as the highest point in Barbados. It eclipses Chimborazo (1,105) by a mere 11 feet. Like the other named attractions, it welcomes hikers, bikers and the young of heart for tours.



Crab Night, catch



Walkers Reserve

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disappearing before our very eyes. The area has since been regenerated into Walker's Reserve as a way to increase biodiversity and foster a self sustaining ecosystem.

Ancient and Modern (familial names)

Some names have existed for centuries, with enduring connections to the parish.

Sir John Gay Alleyne, Speaker of the House for over 30 years and representative of this parish, lived at nearby

St. Nicholas Abbey almost his entire adult life. The Alleyne family also had interests in several St. Andrew sugar plantations. In 1785, **Sir John Gay** founded The Seminary, a school for children of the parish. It is now known as Alleyne School.

John Turner married the widow of **Col. Reynold Alleyne** who was killed in the 1651 Cromwellian Battle of Battally, near Speightstown. This stepfather of **the Alleyne** progeny established Turner's Hall Plantation by 1668. At his death it passed into the hands of **Col. Alleyne's** son **Abel**. It was sometimes called "Mount Alleyne".

Natural Resources

The parish shares with its neighbours some of the natural resources of eastern Barbados. There are at least seven dormant, but still oozing, deposits of manjak, a bitumen product which was mined and exported as far as Russia. This is no longer economically feasible. Likewise, crude oil which, in the 18th century, was scooped by hand in shallow pits but was never found in commercially viable quantities. In the early 1950's Gulf Oil Co. embarked upon extensive exploration at Gregg Farm and Turner's Hall, again without commercial success. Natural gas has, however, been in constant and commercial supply from the parish since circa 1955.

The sand of Walkers Quarry has been used as Barbados' most natural and valuable construction asset for over 70 years. The legendary sand hills are now

The **Cumberbatch/Cave** family owned and lived at St. Nicholas Abbey for centuries until **Lt. Col. Stephen Cave**, last of his line, died there in 2003. This family also owned Cleland Plantation from 1728 until nearly 1900. The influence and succession of the **Cumberbatch** name was brought into recent focus when **Benedict Cumberbatch**, a direct descendant, played the leading role in the movie *Twelve Years a Slave*.

Religious Leaders

The parish has produced several outstanding religious personalities including:

Monsignor Vincent Harcourt Blackett of the Roman Catholic Church; the late **Venerable James Springer** and **The Reverend Canon George Knight** of the Anglican Church.

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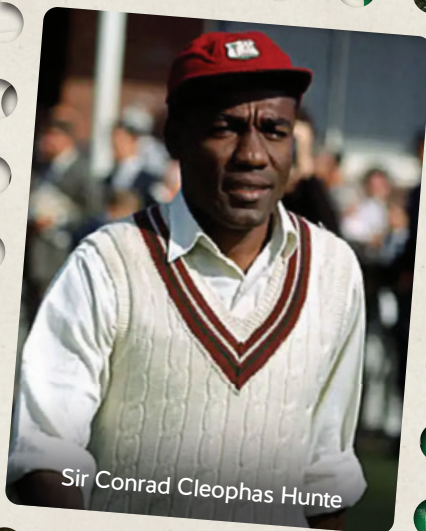
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Sports Personalities

None surpass **Sir Conrad Cleophas Hunte** of Shorey Village who became, arguably West Indies most outstanding opening batsman, and vice-captain to the legendary **Frank Worrell** (1958-67). **John Shepherd** became a 1969-71 West Indies player. **Elvis Forde**, peerless as a pioneer track athlete, reached the finals at the 1984 Olympics, then became a US college coach. He is followed by Ambassador **Ryan Brathwaite**, World Champion 110m hurdler in Berlin 2009. **Anna Licorish Shepherd** holds the parish's most outstanding position as an international netball player and coach.

Personalities in National Development

Dame Ermytrude Bourne DA, first elected female to Barbados' Parliament, heads our list. She is followed by **McDonald Smith**, senior civil servant and insurance executive; **Jonathan Graham**, in public health and local cricket administration; **Ms. Erma Rock**, owner of the Rocklyn Bus Co.; **Arlington DaCosta Edwards**, educator and Government Minister; **Luther Bourne**, Chief Town Planner; **J. W. Homie Corbin**, businessman and parliamentarian; **Deighton Best**, Chief Meteorologist; the Foster family of public servants; entrepreneurs, the **Benjamin family**, and the **Shorey family** near whose home, British boxer **Nigel Benn** still has relatives.



Sir Conrad Cleophas Hunte

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Teaching Giants and Centenarians

Our outstanding parish teachers include Lester, Elbert and Osbert Vaughan, Rufus Dottin, Cleon Lynch, Carl Springer, Florence Springer, Ivan Bourne, George Beckles, Kenneth Doughlin and Winston Sandiford.

They all must pay tribute to our revered centenarians including Edna Harris, Eileen Meta Walkes, Ethel Small, Gwendolyn Maynard, Inez Lewis, John Foster, Lilian Hackett, Ursula Mayers and Winston Catline – the absolute best of St. Andrew.



Highland Pottery

Ye lofty crags of Scotland's hills, look down on Ermy's verdant way.

From Hillaby and Chalky Mounts of clay we see yon Morgan's Mill and Shorey's Bay.

Sail Greenland's narrow stream or wide Bruce Vale

and float to Walker's Plain for sand or shale



From North to South, East to West

St. Andrew's best; for we are blest!

WE GATHERIN' EVENTS AUGUST



Scan the QR code to see the full calendar of events for St. Andrew

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