

Drinking. At the Trailer Park Bar & Grill on West 23rd St, a distinguished impersonator is proving a regular draw for cocktail drinkers who don't take themselves too seriously. The Flatiron Lounge, on West 11th St, is a gleaming point to pre-Prohibition hangouts. **Its most celebrated cocktail is the 'Flight of the Day' - a trio of drinks evoking different destinations.** Further afield, cocktail chic is thriving in Brooklyn, where Atlantic Ave's Magnetic Field does cocktails amid pop-art meets Wild West decor. Meanwhile, *The Drinking Man's Diet*, which made author Robert Cameron a rich man on publication in 1964, has just been reissued on its 40th anniversary. The diet shuns stodge, but because spirits are such a low carb source, cocktails are always on the menu. It could take off again, of course - though surely cocktails would lose status if habitually consumed for breakfast, lunch and dinner. Cameron, still smiling four decades on, might disagree.

ALAN THOMPSON

ANTIGUA

BATTLING BACK: THE WINDIES MAKES THE BEST OF ENGLAND'S CRICKET TRIUMPH

The last time England beat the West Indies in a Caribbean series it was the 'Swinging Sixties', Nixon was yet to be president and the mini-skirt had just arrived. Going into the final test of the 2004 series in Antigua with home supporters already 3-0

down and facing a whitewash, that jinx was already history.

Across the region talk was hot, everyone had a theory and the cutlasses were out for the local team. Rum shop 'experts' proclaimed the "captain useless... too many egos... team not happy... Harmison bowl well, but seven for 12? Nah boy, nah." The Brit 'Barmy Army', meanwhile, intoxicated on copious amounts of disbelief, were plotting the festivities behind another sure victory.

"Not even sheep is be so docile," said the Antiguan gentleman sat next to me. **"How deh same team who mek 419 against Australia - and beat dem, lose dat talent already? All we cud do now is pray!"** Trying to be positive, but nonetheless stating the obvious, his friend replied: "If we're gonna win one, it's going to be now, here in Antigua!"

Then on the first day, in the midst of all the theories, celebrations and 'ole talk,' it rained. It never rains in Antigua - well, not on Easter

weekend with the West Indies playing. Could it be a sign? Locals certainly thought so and by 9am the next day the Antigua Recreation Ground was packed.

Even with the home team struggling on 33 for 1, local sentiment began rising. Latecomers arrived wearing T-shirts proclaiming "418 - too black to be whitewashed," and when Brian Lara's 380-world-record chase got close, a voice cried "deh sun beating dem outfielders like thief! Lara go mek it."

Now every ball bowled was an adventure for both sets of supporters and when the record tumbled, to a six and then a four, all sides of the ground erupted. In blind ecstasy home fans tried to jump the fence, while visiting fans, thankful for the best series in a generation, saluted the new King of the cricket bat and the draw that followed his stand.

In true Caribbean style, locals suddenly transformed the series from "the one we lost" to "the one we broke the record!" It was party time. Easter had worked its magic - damnation became resurrection, and in terms more familiar than Mel Gibson's *Passion* the faith of loyal Windies fans, who'd endured blow after blow was finally rewarded; their badly maimed Captain rising again from the ashes, carrying the team and eliminating a potential whitewash. The relief felt like winning the series. Though a similar last stand might not be enough to quell the complainers if it's the best that can be hoped for next time...

DYLAN KERRIGAN

