

Artifacts

BARBADOS MUSEUM &
HISTORICAL SOCIETY MAGAZINE

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Dear Member,

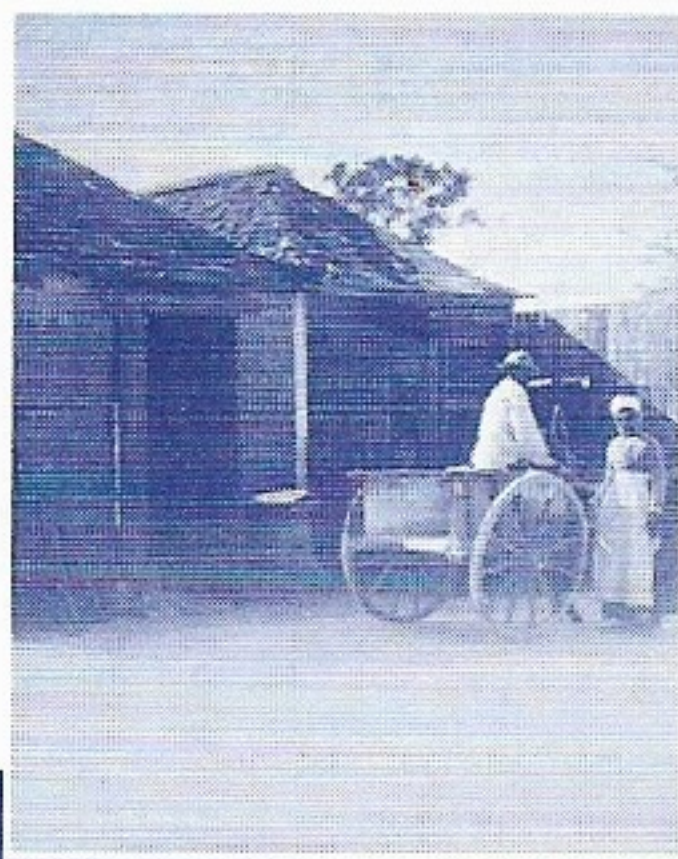
The collections of Barbados Museum & Historical Society hold a treasure-trove of fascinating information and in this issue we share the history of a group of beautiful objects from the fine art collection. Glass paperweights are not seen very often in our galleries so you're in for a rare treat later in the year. On page five, we offer a prelude to what you will see if you have the opportunity to visit us then.

In recent months, we have had two well-received exhibitions and several public programmes. These include Museum Open Day which was held to mark International Museum Day. It is celebrated on or around May 18 each year, and was first marked by The International Council of Museums (ICOM) in 1977 to raise awareness of the role of museums in the development of society. Locally, the Barbados National Committee of the International Council of Museums (ICOM) commemorates International Museum Day with an entire week of activities during Cultural Heritage Week.

The Museum continues to strengthen its relationship with a variety of audiences and this is evident in this issue of Artifacts. Enjoy!

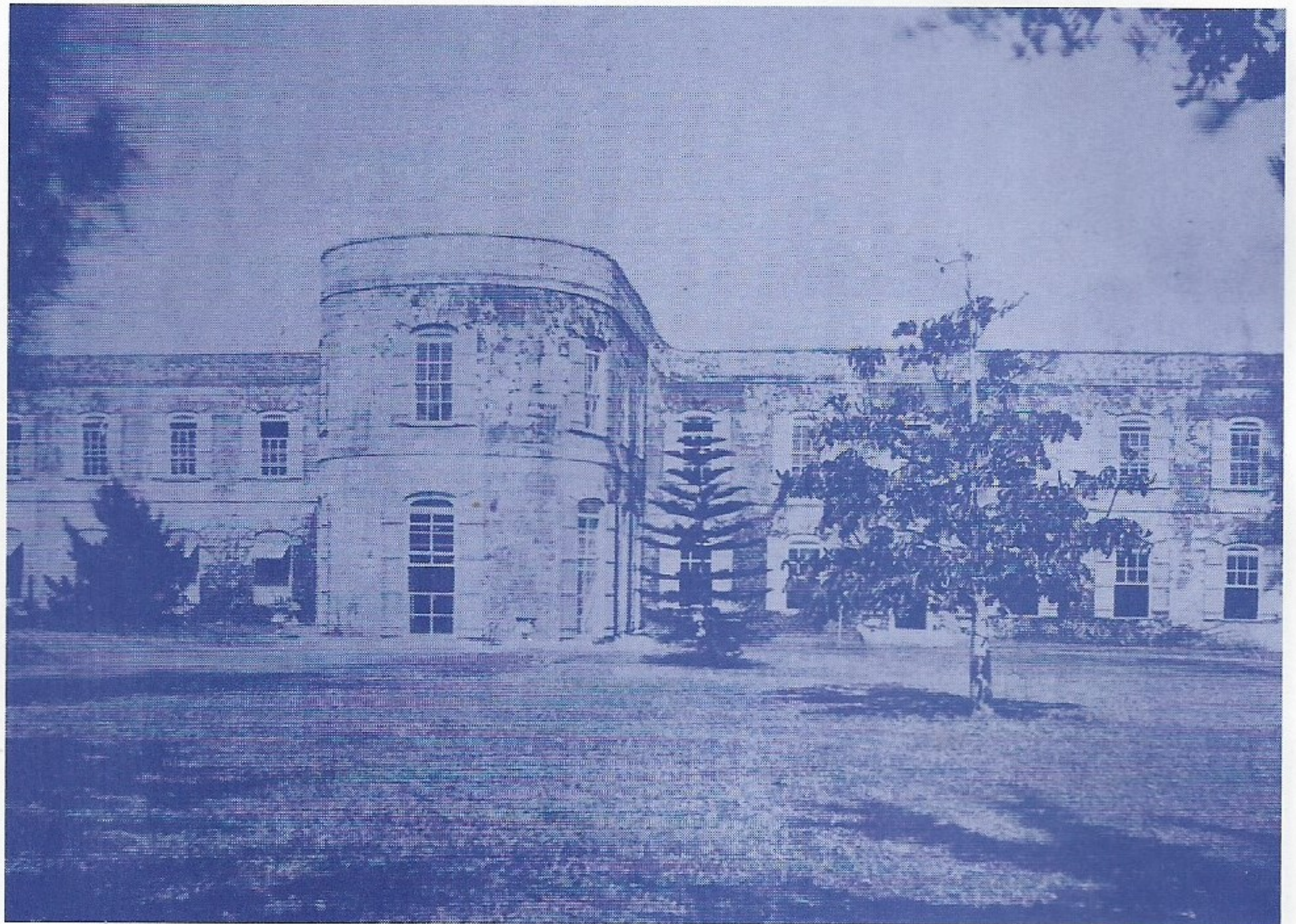
Christine Skeete

Christine Skeete
Marketing Officer



On Cover:
Corner of Eagle Hall, c. 1900, from
the 'Exposed: Images of Yesteryear'
exhibition

Exposed: Images of Yesteryear



Farley Hill Great House

The exhibition Exposed: Images of Yesteryear revealed landscape images, portraits and even family albums from as early as the 19th century.

From April 12 to June 11, these selections from the museum's collection allowed visitors to examine the earliest commercially available photographic processes such as daguerreotype, tin type, albumen, glass plate negatives, callotype and the early twentieth century use of photographic gel images. It provided a unique opportunity to see the changing views of Barbados through the photographic lens shortly after the invention of photography in 1832.

"The photographic collection at the museum is a treasure that needs to be shared with the general public," said the museum's History & Archaeology Curator, Kevin Farmer. "This led to the exhibition Exposed: Images of Yesteryear, and 'exposed' is a pun on the photographic process. The images on display take you on a journey into our past, illustrating the importance of photography in allowing us insight into what was seen as contemporary at that time. A photograph is a slice of captured time, and now the museum has exposed scenes of landscapes and lifestyles in Barbados a hundred years ago."

This exhibition received financial support from the Barbados Light & Power Company Limited and the Insurance Corporation of Barbados Limited.

On May 08, acclaimed photographer, Bob Kiss, led a seminar that offered members of the public a unique opportunity to witness the making of a salt print and learn about the processes used in 19th century photography.

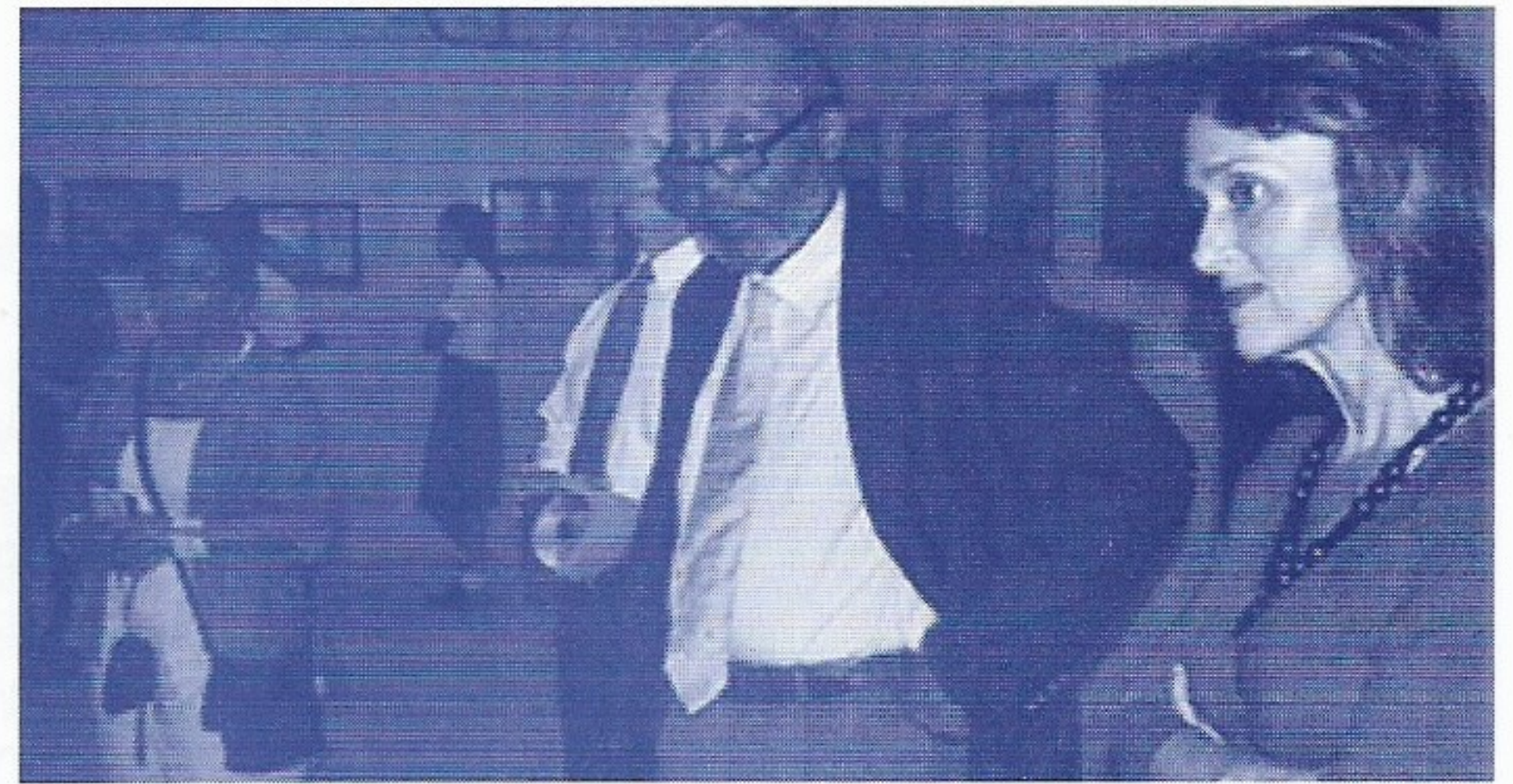
This well-received activity was followed by a lecture, delivered on May 10 by Harclyde Walcott on Early Photographers in Barbados: A Look at Images from the Pioneering Period. The audience, which included delegates attending the Association of Caribbean Historians conference, learned about the significance of pioneering photographers in Barbados between 1841 and the 1920s.

Waterworks: A Visual Expedition of Barbados

From May 14 to the end of June, the exhibition *Waterworks: A Visual Expedition of Barbados* featured a selection of the best photographs taken by the 20 Barbadian young people who had the opportunity to document their environment during the recent National Geographic Photo Camp Barbados.

The students from nine public schools photographed, edited and designed a portrait of water conservation efforts with the assistance of National Geographic photographers Sam Abell and Matt Moyer. The 40 photographs on display in the exhibition explored issues of water scarcity, conservation, the beauty of water and how its forces have shaped the island.

The photo camp was held in partnership with the US Embassy Bridgetown in Barbados and the Barbados Museum & Historical Society, and it received financial assistance from Breakwater Management Services, Goldcorp Insurance Company, Chancery Chambers and Allstate International Assignments Limited.



In the centre: Dr. Trevor Carmichael, BMHS Council President, & John Roberts, Public Affairs Officer of the US Embassy, among guests in the gallery

Museum Open Day

Museum Open Day was held on May 15 under the theme *Museums for Social Harmony* to mark International Museum Day. The Barbados Museum & Historical Society threw its doors open for everyone, both locals and visitors to the island, to enjoy free entry all day.

Representatives of several countries made presentations, including Israeli, the United States, Sweden, China, Venezuela, and Sri Lanka. There was even a bonsai demonstration and entertainment by a parang group.

On sale were local food, European and North American beer, locally made natural wines, jellies, seasonings and marinades, jewellery, and a range of plants.

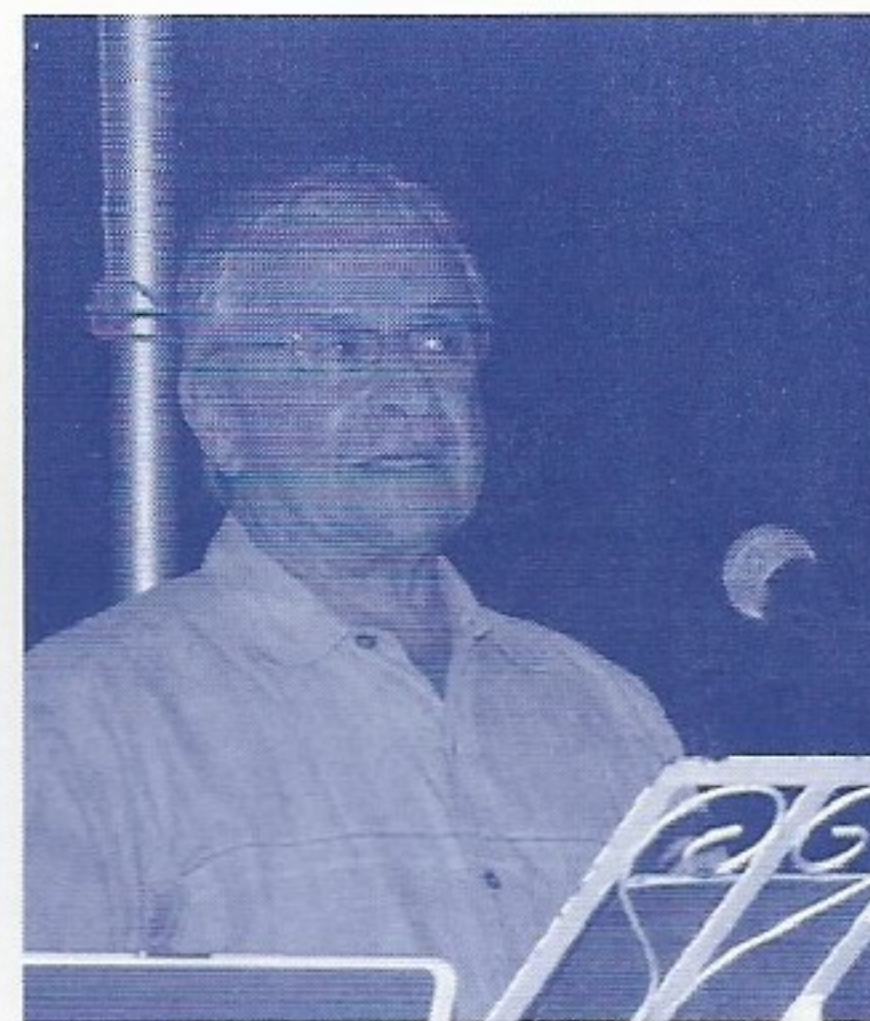
Used books were sold by the BMHS Librarian, Joan Brathwaite, and Library volunteers Hilary Marshall and Maria Adotey, with assistance from Friends of the Museum Jenny and Adrian Randall, Frank McCaughey and Doug Williams

A Founding Father

Dr. Pat Stafford made a presentation entitled *A Barbados Museum Founding Father: James Challenor Lynch and His Fascinating Family History* during the June 24th meeting of the BMHS History Group.

This family history revealed valuable information about Barbados' elite black middle class during the colonial period.

Chalky Mount Potteries



Anthropologist, Professor Jerome Handler, gave a slide-illustrated talk entitled *Chalky Mount Potteries: A Unique Barbadian Craft Industry*. He discussed the history of pottery at Chalky Mount from its beginnings in the late 1600s, but focused on the period 1960 to 1962.

Professor Handler has been doing research on Barbadian history and culture for close to 50 years. In the early 1960s,

he and his family lived in Chalky Mount for about thirteen months while he did research for his doctoral dissertation.

He is currently a Senior Scholar at the Virginia Foundation for the Humanities in Charlottesville, Virginia.

Unsung Nightingales

Anyone interested in the history of health care in Barbados can now find a new resource in the Shilstone Memorial Library. Lifelong nurse and nursing educator Eleanore Hunte recently presented to the museum's library an autographed copy of the book *The Unsung Nightingales – The Development of Nursing in Barbados 1844 – 2000*. The Museum's Librarian, Joan Brathwaite, accepted the publication.

"This is a welcome addition to the collection because we don't have a lot of information on nursing," said Brathwaite.

The book relates the story of nursing and its development as a profession in Barbados. It covers the period from 1844, when the first local public hospital was opened, through to the end of the twentieth century.

News from the Shilstone Memorial Library

by Joan Brathwaite, Librarian



Library Volunteers

The Library has welcomed two new volunteers in recent months. Mrs. Hilary Marshall joined us in April 2010. Hilary is a British resident, and worked for several years with the Marie Curie Care Centre in the UK.

Mr. Orley Jones started with us on June 18. He is a professional librarian, and a returning national. His main interest is in library automation, so he will be a tremendous asset to the Library as it continues its digitization programme, and as it seeks to offer access to library materials and information through the Museum's website. Orley worked at the Met Museum (Metropolitan Museum of Art), New York City, as well as at the New York University Library.

Unfortunately, also in June, the Library lost the services of Library Volunteer, Mrs. Maria Adotey, as with her busy schedule, she was unable to commit any longer. Mrs. Adotey gave yeoman service, particularly with the newspaper clippings, and we are very sorry that she could not continue to assist us. She, however, remains a Friend of the Museum, and will assist with special events, whenever possible".

New Publications in the Library

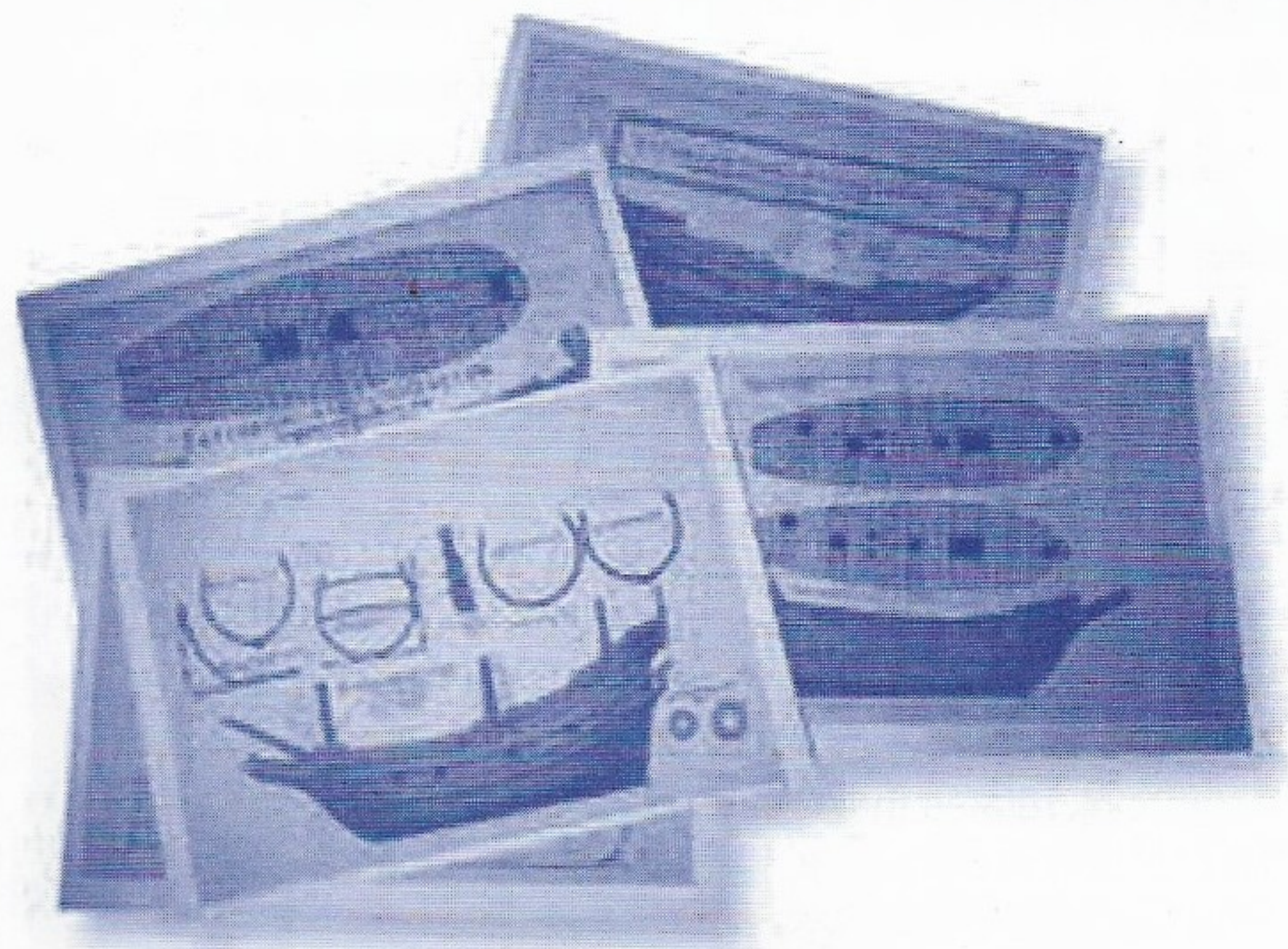
Among the 17 books, gifts and purchases, received in the Shilstone Memorial Library between April and June, I would like to mention briefly two of them. These are, firstly, a 1616 publication,

republished in 1989 in Lisbon, which the Library kindly received as a gift from Dr. Karl Watson, on behalf of Mr. Steven Farmer. This is an extraordinary and exceptional publication, entitled *Livro de Tracas de Carpintaria*, by Manoel Fernandez. This is a huge volume, a tome, 46 cm. x 38 cm., 140 leaves, and beautifully bound. What is even more interesting is that it is handwritten, in excellent calligraphy. It is about a subject that researchers claim there is scanty information. This manuscript is about naval architecture, and describes more than two dozen ships, with drawings, of various kinds. Unfortunately, it is not written in English, but in Portuguese, but as the Introductory Note, written in English, states, "it is a manuscript which is a veritable treatise on the shipbuilding of the time, and of greater archaeological value than the best contemporary foreign works". And, of course, drawings represent a universal language. This is, indeed, an exquisite document to bolster the Library's collection.

The other publication is *Imaging the Caribbean: Culture and Visual Translation* by Patricia Mohammed (2009). This is another fascinating document, filled with images of the Caribbean. Indeed, the List of Illustrations, in the preliminary pages, takes up 18 pages (p. ix-xxvii). The book itself, with a very attractive cover, taken from an 1844 print 'Negro Figuranti', is 187 pages, plus 27 preliminary pages. The blurb says it all, "This ground-breaking study of the region's iconography explores how a Caribbean sensibility has been shaped. It circles the Caribbean while focusing on Haiti, Jamaica, Trinidad and Barbados, tracing the indelible parameters drawn on each society by the colonial encounter, crossing the boundaries of disciplines and the methodologies and material of history, literature, art, gender and cultural studies".

Patricia Mohammed is Professor of Gender and Cultural Studies at the University of the West Indies, St. Augustine, Trinidad, and has written several publications in that field, some of which we have in our Library, but she has now successfully entered the field of filmmaking.

We hope you'll come by in the near future and benefit from the wealth of resources in The Shilstone Memorial Library. Opening hours are 9.00 a.m. to 1.00 p.m., Monday to Friday.



Drawings from the publication *Livro de Tracas de Carpintaria*

Crown Jewels for Collectors

by Allison Callender, Curator – Art & Art History

In an effort to give you a sneak peak into our vast collections in storage, there will be mini-exhibitions of exquisite objects “From the Collection” displayed at specified times throughout the year in the galleries. The first mini exhibition will feature the exquisite glass paper weights from the Fine Art collection.

A paperweight is a small glass object containing colourful canes in complex designs, or graceful flowers, bouquets, or even animals that are encased in crystal. Fine glass paperweights were made by glass artists who were also master craftsmen. Whether or not they were ever used to hold down paper is immaterial. It is said that less than half of 1% are ever used for this purpose, instead, they are prized for their beauty, grace, and, in some cases, rarity, and many collectors buy them because of their love for and fascination with these objects.

Paperweights originated in Europe. They were exhibited by the French Clichy glass factory and were awarded top honours at the Great Exhibition of 1851 in London which lasted five months, had 100,000 exhibits, and over six million visitors from around the world.

The postal service had just begun, and, in England, the repeal of the Paper Tax made stationery and envelopes more affordable. Correspondence by letters to family and friends became very fashionable, and a strong market developed for desk sets of writing equipment, accessories, and associated novelties. This is where paperweights made their initial entry into the marketplace.

Paperweights were first shown by Venetian glassmakers at an Industrial Exhibition in Vienna in 1845, where their potential was quickly recognized by the French trade representatives. The most popular description of a paperweight is given by Pietro Bigaglia. This paperweight was made with scrambled bits of millefiori canes, encased in a dome of glass, which gave it a magical quality. Millefiori, which translates from Italian as thousand flowers, was first developed around 100 to 200 BC, when the technique was used to decorate bowls and vases with colourful canes.

Paperweights carried this technique a step further by encasing the canes in a magnifying glass dome. Artistically, the clear glass dome that surrounds a paperweight serves many of the same functions as the canvas painted on by an artist. This combination provided the breakthrough for paperweight techniques. Flowers in paper weights appear realistic, but are actually sculpted from colored glass rods, and then encased in molten glass at temperatures of 1500-2000 degrees Fahrenheit.

Amidst the decorative excess that typified Victorian times, paperweights provided a respite of exquisite craftsmanship and conservative artistry. They became a popular gift item to be given to family or loved ones. They were sold in stationery stores and fine glass shops throughout Europe and Great

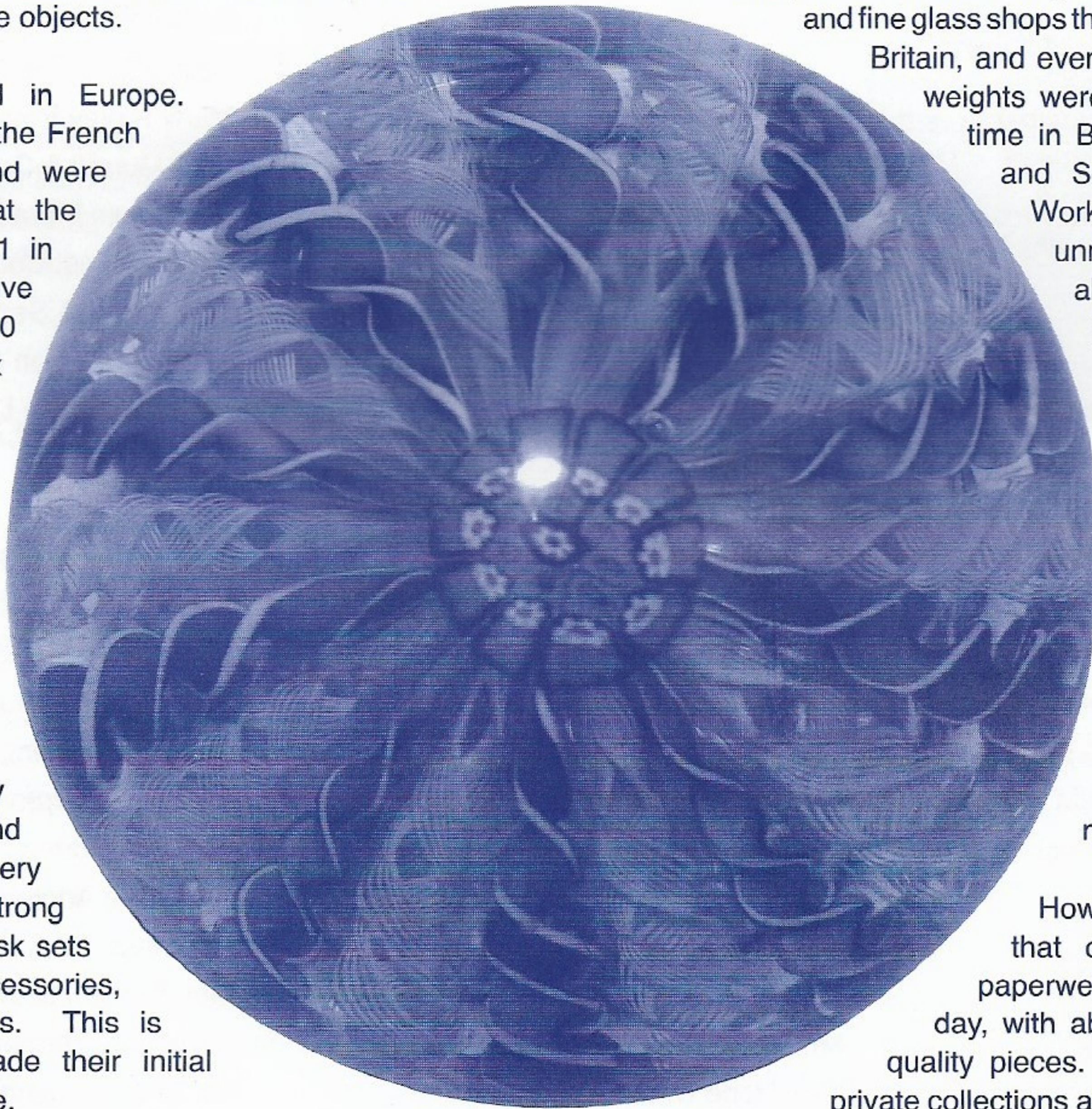
Britain, and eventually in America. Quality

weights were also being made at this time in Britain by George Bacchus and Sons, and Islington Glass Works in Birmingham. Many unnamed makers in Bohemia also created impressive paperweights. Production peaked in Europe about 1851, and then sharply declined from 1855 to 1860. During the 15 years of the Classic Period (1845-60), it is estimated that about 50,000 to 100,000 fine paperweights were made. This is a difficult number to confirm, since production figures were not retained.

However, it is estimated that only about 20,000 glass paperweights have survived to this day, with about 6,000 of those being quality pieces. They are tightly held in private collections and museums, and a limited number are available for sale by specialty dealers and through auctions. The combination of their quality, their beauty, and their rarity makes them

all the more collectable. They are the most sought after works of 19th century glass. These works of art are true gems, and have been described as the crown jewels for collectors.

The Barbados Museum is fortunate to have a small collection of these precious gems, which will be on display later in the year.



Paper weight

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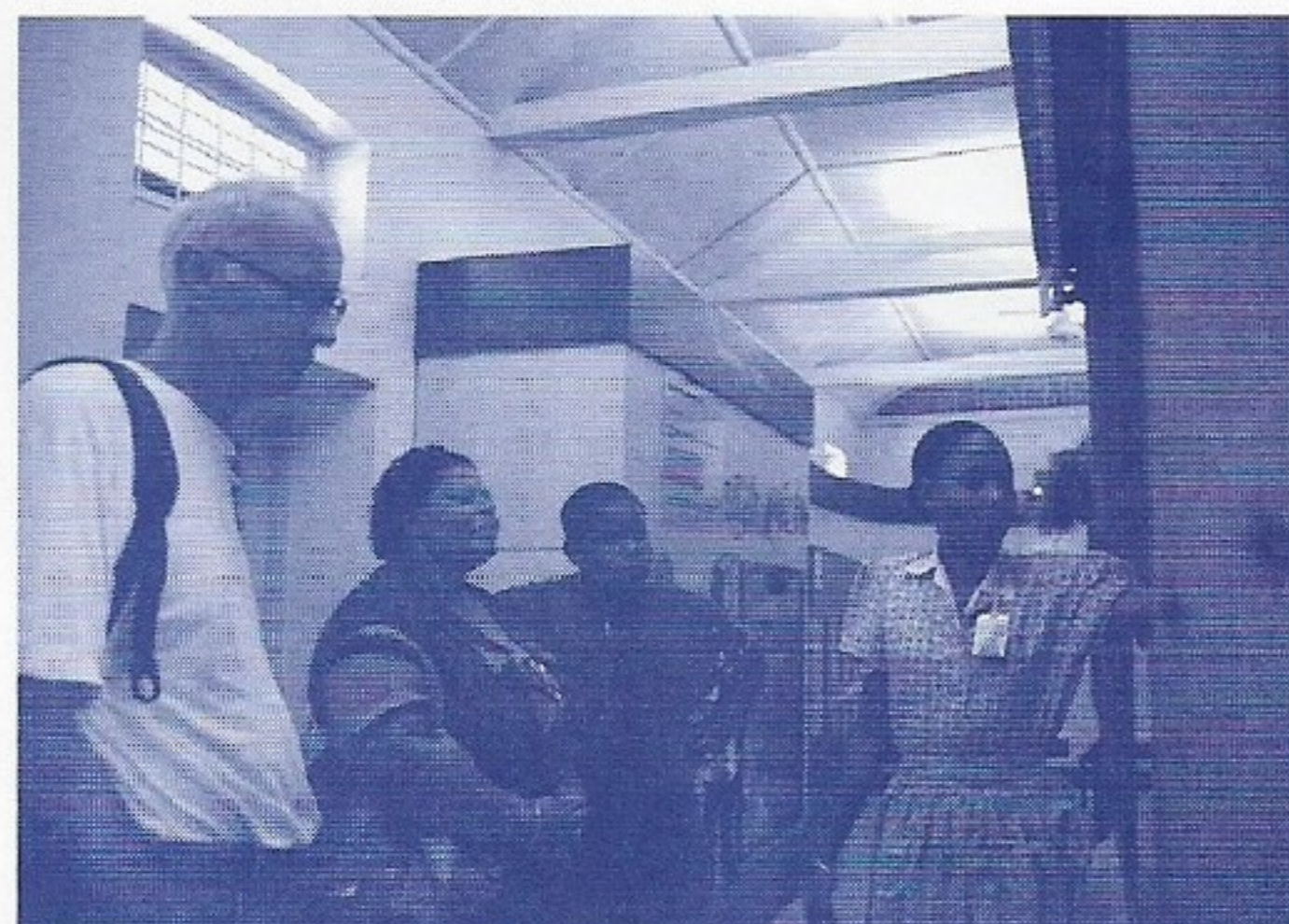
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The Galleries Come Alive

BMHS Education Officer, Peggy McGeary, worked with students of the Barbados Community College's Hospitality Institute, at the invitation of tutor Roxanne Waithe, over several Saturdays to train them in tour guiding. These sessions culminated in a practical exam on April 02 which took the form of guided tours for actual visitors to the Museum. These tour guides for the day were very well received and the students felt that the Museum could offer this type of "living experience", even if occasionally, to raise the level of interest and increase patronage.



Student tour guide (in costume) taking Donnett and Javron Dowers and another visitor through the Children's Gallery.

Higher Education

Congratulations to Allison Callender who recently received her M.A. in Museum Studies with Merit from Leicester University. Her dissertation analysed accessibility for hearing impaired visitors to museums through a study of four museums in Barbados. She has been promoted from Assistant Curator to Curator – Art & Art History.

New Exhibition

The Museum celebrates the International Year of Biodiversity with an innovative exhibition, now on through to December 06, 2010. The exhibition *2010: A Look at Biodiversity in Barbados* showcases examples of some of Barbados' native wildlife past and present – those species that were once here (extinct species), those species that are still present today and those which have been recently introduced. Come by today and see both preserved specimens and live creatures!

Members Only

See the work of your fellow Museum members on display in an exhibition entitled *Members Only* that runs from October 2010 to January 2011. Paintings, mosaics, ceramics, photography and more will be on show and on sale.

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Artifacts

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