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Artifacts

Barbados
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& Historical
Society

BARBADOS MUSEUM &
HISTORICAL SOCIETY MAGAZINE

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UPCOMING ACTIVITIES

May 02 to June 03, 2011 – Museums & Memory: Home Sweet Home

Memories of domestic life in Barbados of the 1930s to 1960s are brought to life through the recreations of some of the rooms of an ole time Bajan home and a display of household objects from this period and earlier.

May 06 to June 26, 2011 – Victorian Jewellery Mini-exhibition

This mini-exhibition showcases jewellery from the period 1840 to 1900, the era of Queen Victoria's reign. Examples of the precious stone cameos and intaglios that were popular during this period are also on display.

Turtle Watches (Members Only):

June 25, 2011

July 30, 2011

August 27, 2011

Location for all turtle watches:

Drill Hall Beach (Needham's Point), St. Michael

Time for all turtle watches: 7:00 p.m.

Call 427-0201 or Email: info@barbmuse.org.bb to reserve your space

Freedom Footprints Tours

The Freedom Footprints: The Barbados Story tours, which the Barbados Museum & Historical Society was contracted by the Ministry of Tourism to pilot, got off to a rousing start on January 8 with an overwhelming number of requests for bookings. Demand continued to be high for the other six tours. Spaces for the final tour in the pilot phase on April 2, were all booked weeks in advance. 12 buses were allotted within the funding received by the Ministry of Tourism and most tours consisted of two buses, therefore the duration of the pilot phase had to be reduced. Sites featured in the tour are "The Cage" in Bridgetown, Newton Slave Burial Ground, Bourne's Land, Sweet Bottom and Gun Hill Signal Station. The tour forms part of the Barbados Slave Route Signage Project, which is a contribution to a global UNESCO/ WTO Cultural Slave Route Signage Project. The Ministry of Tourism will inform the public of plans for the next phase of the project.

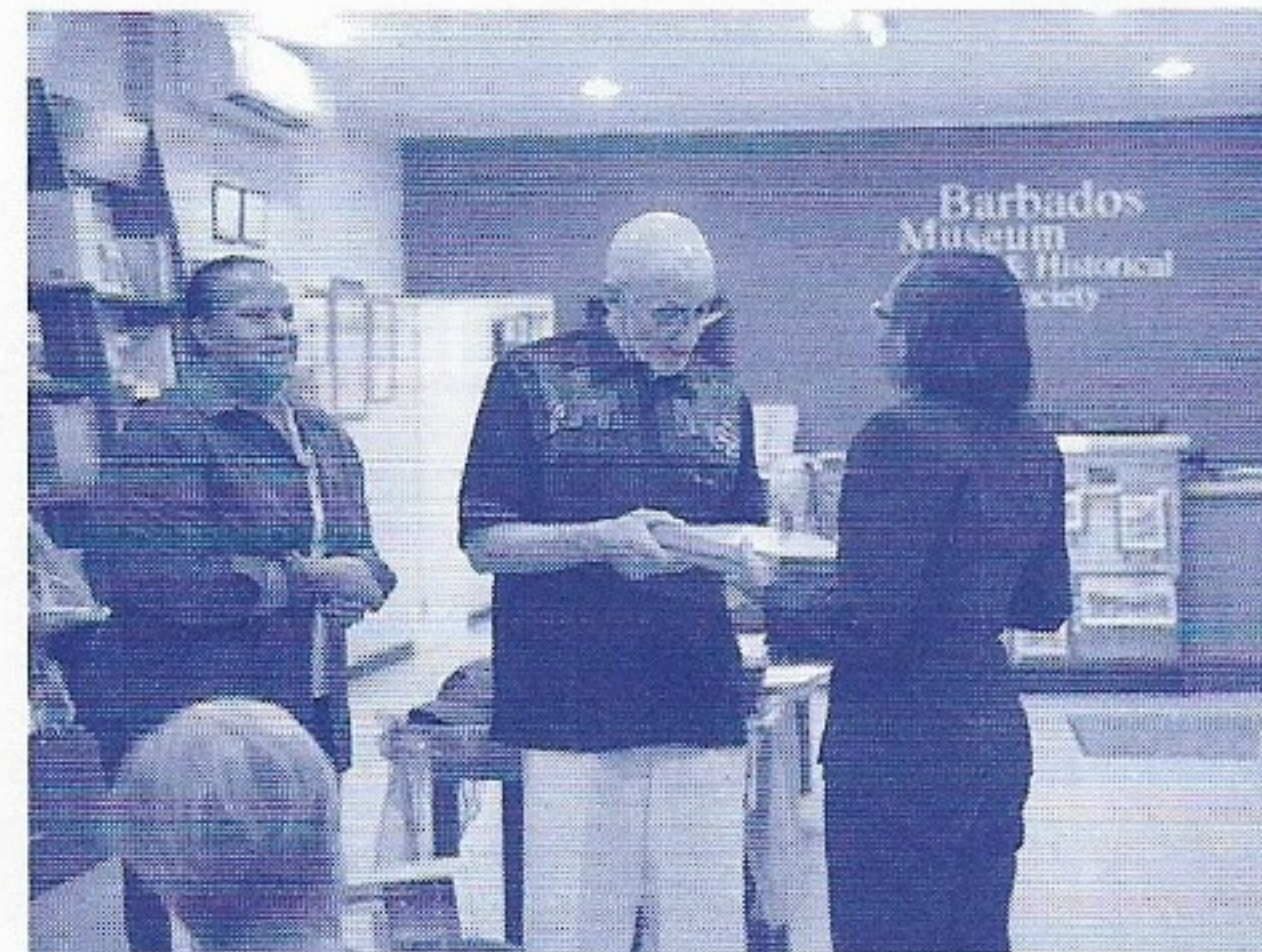
2011 Lecture Series Launch

The 2011 Lecture Series under the theme A Leg Up or a Hand-out: Philanthropy in Barbados was launched on February 18 at the Museum. The series started on March 1 and continues through to May 24, as outlined in the previous Artifacts. Representatives of some of the sponsors of the series were present. From First Citizens Investment Services, Elizabeth Morgan, Country Manager, Sharon Small, Administrative and Marketing Officer and Ricardo Davis, Senior Trader spoke on behalf of the company. Brenda Brathwaite, Marketing Assistant at LIME and Roger Spencer, Sagacor General Insurance

Inc.'s Assistant Vice President of Marketing also gave remarks. The Central Bank of Barbados and the University of the West Indies are title sponsors of the series. Other sponsors are Barbados National Bank, Barbados Public Worker's Cooperative Credit Union, Insurance Corporation of Barbados Ltd.

English Rustics in Black Skin

The book *English Rustics in Black Skin: A Story of Modern Family Forms in a Pre-Industrialized Society* was reprinted by the BMHS and was re-introduced by author Prof. Sidney Greenfield to an intimate group of Museum members on March 3. Prof. Greenfield regaled his audience with fond memories of lasting friendships his wife, Eleanor, formed with women from Workman's in St. George when they lived among the villagers from 1956 to 1957, as part of an anthropological study. He also revealed chats he had with Errol Barrow when he was a young politician. The publication was first printed in 1966 and it continues to be a valuable record of family systems in Barbados in the 1950s as the country was nearing independence.



Prof. Sidney Greenfield (centre), presents Harriet Pierce, BMHS Librarian (right), with notes of his anthropological study. Looking on is BMHS Director, Alissandra Cummins (left).

Portraits of a Head-Tie Exhibition

To mark International Women's Day, an exhibition entitled *Portraits of a Head-tie: A Celebration of Caribbean Women* conceptualised by Ali Sandiford was mounted at the Museum, with the assistance of Allison Callender, BMHS Curator – Art and Art History. On that day specially invited women from across the island were given a private view of the exhibition. The well-received exhibition continued through to March 31, and a play on the same theme, produced by Ali Sandiford, was also scheduled to be held at the Museum on April 2.



Left to right: Ali Sandiford (artist and coordinator), Peggy McGeary (BMHS Education Officer), and the other featured artists Oshun Blackett, Adrii Holder, Richard J. Alleyne, Hartley Alleyne, Coral Bernadine. Missing is Akyem-I-Ramsay.



On Cover: *Portrait of a Headtie* by Richard J. Alleyne

Fans Fit for a Queen

by Allison Callender, BMHS Curator
– Art & Art History

Six 19th century handpainted ladies fans were recently on display in the second mini-exhibition for this year.

Hand-held fans are shaped like a sector of a circle and usually made of a thin material like paper or feathers, mounted on slats which revolve around a pivot so that it can be closed when not in use.

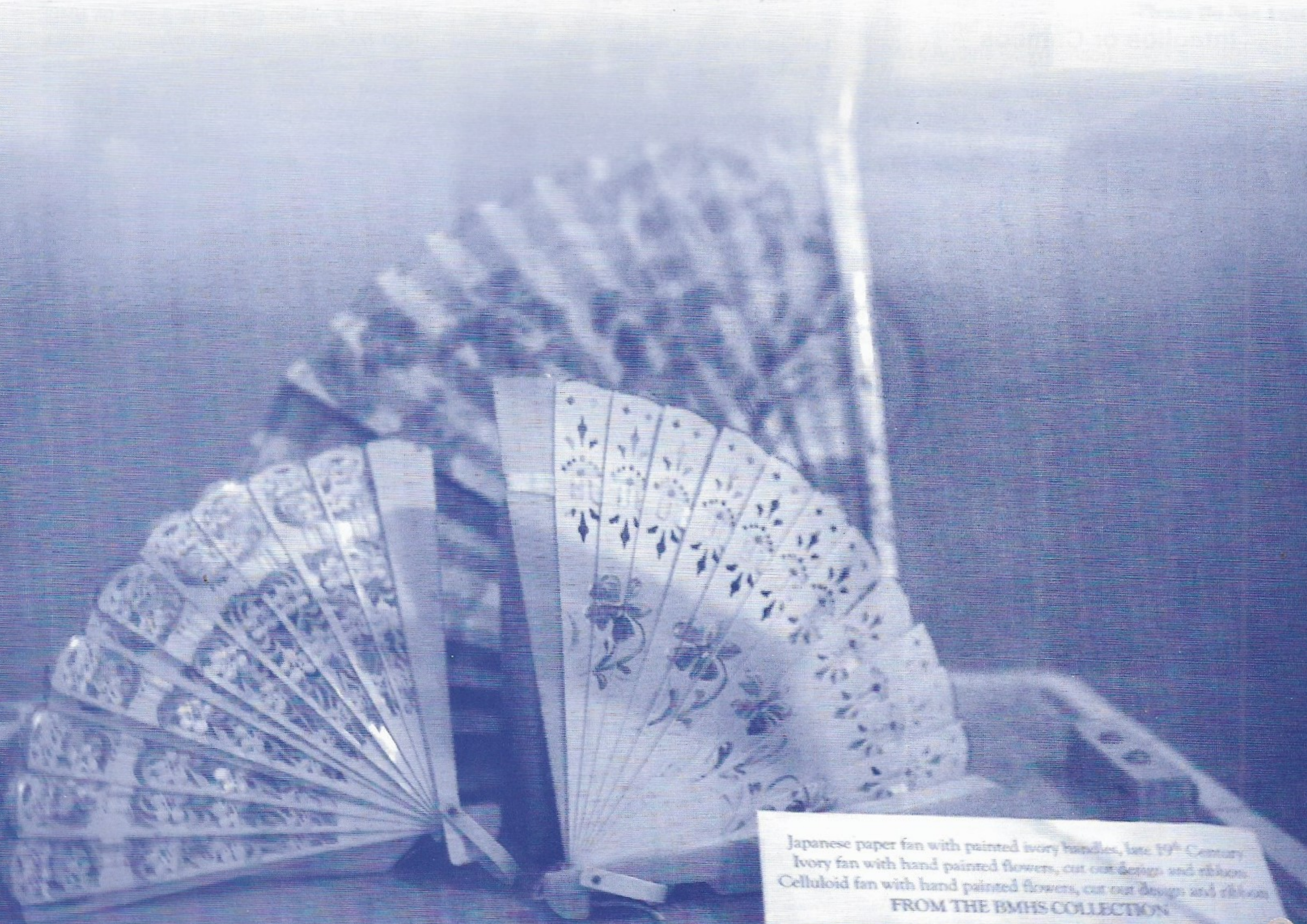
It is recorded that the folding fan was invented in Japan around the 6th to 8th century. Japanese fans are made of paper on a bamboo frame, usually with a design painted on them. In addition to folding fans, the non-bending fans (*uchiwa*) are popular and commonplace. The fan symbolizes friendship, respect and good wishes,

and is given on special occasions. Fans are also an important stage prop in Japanese dance, and used by actors and dancers for performances. They were also used in the military as a method of sending signals on the field of battle.

In the 17th century the folding fan, introduced from East Asia, became popular in Europe. These fans are particularly well displayed in the portraits of the high-born women of the era, and Queen Elizabeth I of England can be seen carrying both folding fans decorated with pom poms on their guard sticks as well as the older style rigid fan, usually decorated with feathers and jewels. These rigid style fans often hung from the skirts of ladies, but of the fans of this era it is only the more exotic folding ones that have survived. The folding fans of the 15th century found in museums today have either leather leaves with cut-out designs forming a

lace-like design or a more rigid leaf with inlays of more exotic materials like mica. One of the characteristics of these fans is the rather crude bone or ivory sticks and the way the leather leaves are often slotted onto the sticks rather than glued as with later folding fans. Fans made entirely of decorated sticks without a fan "leaf" were known as *brisé fans*.

Printed fan leaves and painted fans are done on a paper ground. The paper was originally handmade and displayed the characteristic watermarks. Machine-made paper fans, introduced in the 19th century, are smoother with an even texture. However, regardless of the material or origins, the main use of fans still remains today, for social activities, and to keep oneself cool in our hot weather.



Japanese paper fan with painted ivory handles, late 19th Century
Ivory fan with hand painted flowers, cut out design and ribbon.
Celluloid fan with hand painted flowers, cut out design and ribbon
FROM THE BMHS COLLECTION

Victorian Jewellery

by Allison Callender, BMHS Curator – Art & Art History

From May 06 to June 26, visitors the Museum will be able to view a mini-exhibition of Victorian jewellery.

Jewellery has been worn for thousands of years, and its main function is to adorn oneself. Most people might not be aware that the jewelry they are wearing might have been designed for a specific reason during a particular era or perhaps during a specific period.

Intaglios or Cameos

At the beginning of the 1800s a single handcarved semi-precious gem Intaglio or Cameo was an extremely rare and treasured possession. Around 1807, shell cameos experienced a resurgence.

Conch shell cameos were still carved by hand, mostly by artisans along the Italian coast. They grew in popularity partially because the relative ease of carving shell over stone opened up a whole new level of artistry. It also allowed for production carving, which was faster, more formulaic. The result was a cameo that was both affordable and beautiful.

It became the perfect token of that Victorian tradition of the “Grand Tour” a trip often taken by the upper classes of the Northern climes of Europe to experience the art and culture and mild climate of Italy and Greece. They would return from their journey with Italian carved shell cameo necklaces, rings, and earrings, or the even more highly coveted lava stone cameos, carved out of the earthy coloured lava from the base of Mt. Vesuvius.

Other pieces of jewellery also became increasingly available. As the use of semi-precious stones combined with gold became

more affordable, jewellery more accessible to everyone. In addition, manufacturing techniques such as chain-making machines, cast or stamped metal for settings, and pressed glass for glass intaglios streamlined production and made it possible for people from all walks of life to enjoy their own pieces of jewellery.

The History of Victorian Jewellery

Let's take a look at the history and significance of Victorian jewellery.

An exploration of the history of Victorian jewellery would not be possible without mentioning the longest ruling monarch of Great Britain, Queen Victoria herself. The Victorian era, so named because of her rule in Britain during a period of economic and colonial development, officially started in 1837 with the coronation of a young Queen Victoria, and ended with her death at the age of 82, in 1901.

Her coronation took place on June 28, 1838. That same year, Victoria fell in love with her first cousin Albert Edward when he came to London. She proposed to him, when they were both twenty, and they married on February 10, 1840. How's that for a Valentine's gift? This union produced their first child, a daughter named Victoria, in November 1840, and a son, Edward, Prince of Wales, in 1841. Three more sons and four more daughters followed. After just over twenty years of marriage, Albert, known as the Prince Consort, contracted typhoid fever and died on December 14, 1861, at the young age of 42.

According to Kate Dwyer, “This woman LOVED jewellery. She designed it, wore it, and gave it as gifts through the rise of the British Global

Empire, the inception of the industrial revolution, and the reaction to mass production that gave birth to the Arts and Crafts Movement (1870-1914). Her passion and preferences fueled the talents of the jewellery trade of London her whole life, most markedly upon the death of her beloved husband, Albert.” But before we delve into mourning jewellery let's examine what constitutes Victorian jewellery.

Victorian jewellery spans the period of 1840-1900, and has a strong focus on figurative motifs, and on sentimental subject matter, and uses unusual materials, techniques, non-precious stones, and the production manufactured metal work. Victorian charms and jewellery are from the era of Queen Victoria's reign.

When her beloved Albert died, Queen Victoria influenced the direction of jewellery design and production. She went into permanent mourning, only wearing black clothing and jewellery for the rest of her life. For several years, all of England followed her example, and jet, a fossilized driftwood, the most common mourning jewellery material, became the material of choice for jewellery, and was carved into chains, crosses, pins and earrings. Almost all black materials were used – even hair that was plaited, braided, or twisted until it became thread-like and hard enough to be used for jewellery! Additionally, every style of jewelry that was produced in colourful gems, glass and metal, was produced at this time in jet.

The next time you visit the Barbados Museum, you may want to spend a little extra time in the Children's Gallery pulling out the drawers there and seeing what you discover, or in the Jubilee Gallery, where you will find mourning jewellery on display.

Donor Acknowledgements April 01, 2010 to March 31, 2011

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Outgoing Librarian, Joan Brathwaite



Joan Brathwaite (left) at her retirement luncheon, with Betty Shannon, former BMHS Librarian, and Dr. Pat Stafford, BMHS Library volunteer

BMHS Marketing Officer, Christine Franklyn, spoke to outgoing Librarian, Joan Brathwaite, about her two-year stint at the helm of the Shilstone Memorial Library.

Joan summed up her time with the Museum as a total learning experience. She said, “The clientele [in the Library] was varied, and although many, particularly the overseas persons, were interested mostly in genealogical research, and plantations – the local patrons, many of them parents seeking information for their children, were interested in early Barbadian history and culture, agriculture, transport, and some archaeology.”

Joan added, “I thought, too, that the staff did not visit the Library very often (old perceptions of its being a very cold room), but they did begin to request information from time to time. Some of the Council Members, too, requested information for themselves or other members, or did research, but I thought that the general membership of the Museum could have made much more use of the Library.”

Our former Librarian noted that the most exciting occasions for her were those when clients came in with the vaguest piece of information, and were able to find something to expand their research. In some cases, the exact information individuals needed was found with the help of other colleagues, such as staff at the Archives Department, National Library Service, the Supreme Court Registry, the UWI staff, Mrs. Mary Gleadall with her website, Mr. Warren Alleyne, Prof. Woodville Marshall, and BMHS staff members. She also noted that it was refreshing to meet people of varying interests seeking to discover information about their families, about the pre-history and culture of Barbados, about slaves and how they were treated, and even in at least one case, someone who had purchased a plantation and wanted

to compensate the families for atrocities meted out to their ancestors!

Indeed, Joan observed that the Shilstone Memorial Library is a small Library, but that it possesses a wealth of information on Barbadiana. “The Journals of the BMHS, The Bajan, 1953-1992, early Barbados Agricultural Reports (1890s), and a number of rare book materials on early Barbadian history, including early Directories and Almanacs, as well as the Shilstone Notebooks Collection, the C.P. Clarke Notebooks, and a variety of donated newspaper clippings collections from as early as the 1900s, covering over 420 subject areas. In addition, there are Warren Alleyne’s “It So Happened” columns from 1983-2002, and Edward Stoute’s columns and a published book by Mr. Stoute. The Library also holds early Laws of Barbados, the Blue Books, Official Gazettes, and copies and abstracts of early newspapers, as well as many archival records, such as Family Trees (materials researched by various families and donated by them to the Library), early Maps of Barbados, plantation records (account books, etc.), and many other useful materials, including periodical literature, and a few audio-visual materials.

She also mentioned that it was hoped that the Library’s Catalogue would soon be available on the Museum’s website, along with digitized rare materials, compliments of funding from the US Embassy (Barbados), and the New England Historic Genealogical Society.

Joan is looking forward to being involved with the Museum as a volunteer, especially as she knows firsthand that volunteers form a dedicated group of people whom the Library has had to depend on for most of its existence, since the Museum’s finances can only undertake to employ one full-time staff member in the Library.

New Librarian

Harriet Pierce joined the BMHS on January 3 as Librarian; taking over from Joan Brathwaite who retired at the end of 2010.

Harriet, who has been involved in libraries for her entire professional career, holds a Bachelor of Arts (Hons.) in History and Sociology, a Master's Degree in Library Studies from UWI, Mona and a Master of Philosophy in History from the UWI, Cave Hill.

The new Librarian looks forward to building on the foundation laid by former Librarians and developing the Library into the premiere heritage resource centre in Barbados - a centre which uses the power of technology to broaden access to its rich resources.

Library News

A Digital Collection, comprising over 30,000 images, is now available to researchers using the Shilstone Memorial Library. This collection, made possible through the afore-mentioned grants from the US Embassy and the New England Historic Genealogical Society, forms part of an ongoing campaign aimed at providing access to intellectual content while preserving original documents, which are under threat because of heavy use and physical deterioration.

This digital collection currently includes the Shilstone Notebooks made up of 208 hand-written documents compiled by Eustace Maxwell Shilstone. The Notebooks cover a range of Barbadian subjects including genealogy, Jewish, Quaker, plantation and House of Assembly records and church history and are unique to the BMHS. A selection of rare books, documents, periodicals and some manuscript material, relating to the early history of Barbados and the West Indies, is also available.

A total of 29 new items were added to the Library's collection; the most interesting of these being a collection of papers donated by Prof. Sidney Greenfield. This collection of four folders of manuscript and typed documents comprising letters, journal entries and interview transcripts, was compiled by Prof. Greenfield during the period 1957 to 1962 after he conducted anthropological research on the Barbadian family for his book, *English Rustics in Black Skin*, which was first published in 1966.

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Call For Library Volunteers

The Shilstone Memorial Library is in need of committed volunteers who have an interest in historical research and in the preparation of materials to facilitate such research. If you are such a person, and you have some free time, contact the Librarian, Harriet Pierce, at 427-0201 or library@barbmuse.org.bb to make a valuable contribution to the preservation of Barbadian heritage.

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