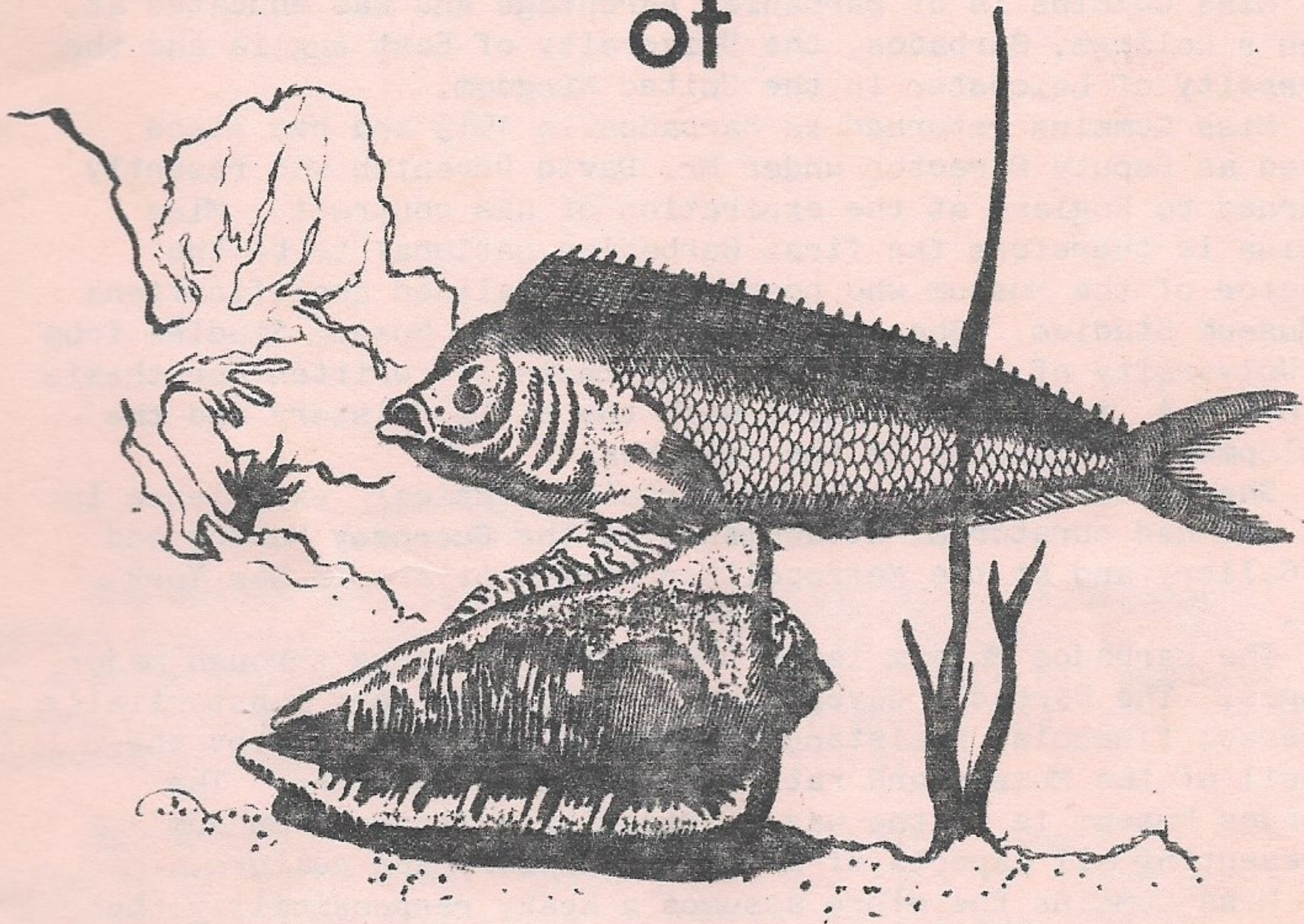


NO: 11

1st Quarter 1985

# Newsletter of



## The Barbados Museum & Historical Society



NEW MUSEUM DIRECTOR*From the Desk of the President*

The Council of the Barbados Museum and Historical Society met on 20th March 1985 and confirmed the appointment of Miss Hyacinth Alissandra Cummins as Director of the Museum with effect from March 1st, 1985.

Miss Cummins is of Barbadian parentage and was educated at Queen's College, Barbados, the University of East Anglia and the University of Leicester in the United Kingdom.

Miss Cummins returned to Barbados in 1983 and has since served as Deputy Director under Mr. David Devenish who recently returned to England at the expiration of his contract. Miss Cummins is therefore the first Barbadian national to be the Director of the Museum who possesses specialised qualifications in Museum Studies. She completed a course in Museum Studies from the University of Leicester, and has recently written her thesis for her M.A. in Museum Studies with the title "History and the Development of Museums in the Caribbean".

She has had the benefit of certain practical experience in that she had curatorial attachments at the **Guernsey** Museum and Art Gallery and at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City.

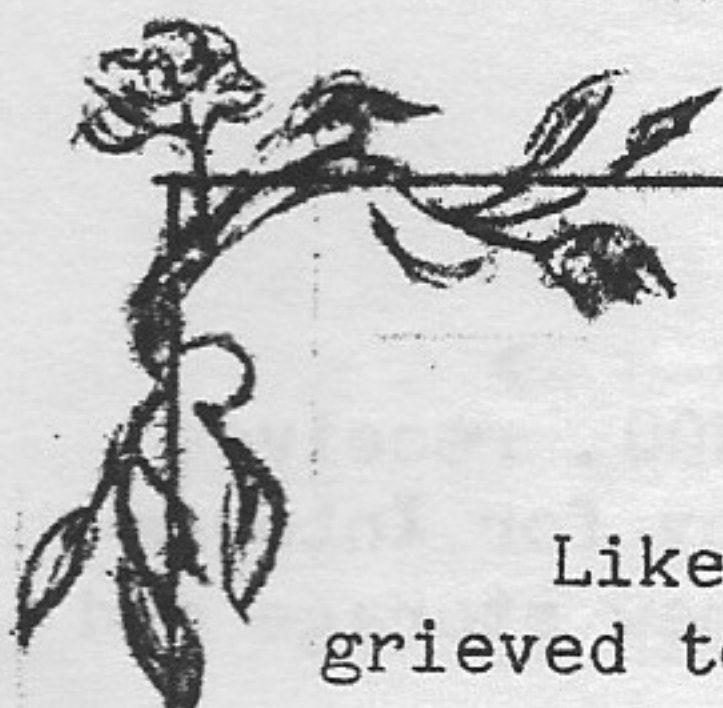
The Barbados Museum is in the course of going through major changes. The Barbados Government is providing very substantially increased financial assistance which has been accepted by the Council of the Museum and ratified in General Meeting. The Barbados Museum is on the way to becoming a National Museum representing all aspects of Barbadian history and culture.

Miss Cummins therefore assumes a heavy responsibility, but it is at an exciting stage of development. She will have the complete support and total backing of the Council in effecting the changes and improvements which are essential for the creation of a Museum which reflects more accurately than in the past the different strands in Barbadian history.

Miss Cummins' appointment was warmly greeted by the members of the Council, for her academic qualifications are substantial, and she has a pleasant personality which it is believed will serve the Museum in good stead in the fields of public relations and fund raising.

All wish her well in the difficult and exacting task which she has undertaken.





A TEACHER'S MEMORIES - E.C. Queree

Like everybody else, I was shocked and deeply grieved to hear of the Prime Minister's death.

I knew him as a schoolboy at Harrison College, where I taught him Maths in the 6th Form. Up to 1948 there was only one Barbados Scholarship a year, and in 1950 he won the first Maths Scholarship, which gave me great joy - incidently I may say that the Maths Sixth has always had a special place in my heart.

He had one of those brilliant minds to whom learning came easily and he was versatile - he could have won scholarships in Classics or Modern Studies if he had so wished. Nor did he spend all his time studying, not by any means - I remember one of my ex-pupils who is now head of a large firm, telling me "I learnt a lot in the Maths 6th, Tom Adams taught me Bridge & Poker".

After the last election, I wrote to congratulate him and I was very touched to receive a nice letter from him immediately, though he must have been extremely busy at the time.

May I finish by saying how grateful I have always been to Lady Adams. Many parents have been kind enough to thank me for helping their sons, but she is the only parent who phoned me the very day the scholarship results arrived, though the family must have been busy celebrating.

Mr. E.C. Queree, author of this piece, was the Museum's Librarian for five years, 1978 - 1984.



### USAID GRANT PROJECT FINISHED

The Museum's grant - in - aid of U.S.\$14,400. received a year ago February from the United States Agency for International Development has been used to implement new storage and conservation facilities.

We now have an air-conditioned storeroom with proper shelving and acid free containers for our precious collections. The staff is in the process of rematting and mounting the Museum's print collection on protective board which should add many years to its life.

The advantage of these new professional materials will help us to protect artifacts given to our museum and entice the loan of important special exhibits. The recent loan of six valuable Brunias paintings from the Peter Moores Foundation for five years is an example of the kind of objects outside groups will lend us. The reason is that we have the proper facilities and trained staff to properly take care of them.

The Barbados Museum and Historical Society is grateful to the U.S.A.I.D. for their support of our quest for the finest possible professional Museum for all Barbadians.

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### ART FROM MUSEUM COLLECTION

Paintings created between 1940-1984 are now being displayed in the exhibition hall. Some of these, including two by Oliver Messel, have never been exhibited. Two by Geoffrey Holder are part of the group and there are several by Caro Gill. The art of Oscar Walkes, a self taught Barbadian, is represented by two acrylics of local views.

Several island scenes created by visitors have been given to the museum and these are shown along with two purchases from the Barbados Arts Council 1984 show - one by Alison Chapman-Andrews and another by Margaret Trotman.



## BITS OF NATURAL HISTORY

The Harewood Gallery of Natural History is in the process of acquiring a much-needed face lift. Along with the structural re-decoration of the gallery which included painting of the ceiling and walls and new lighting, considerable remedial work has been carried out on the exhibits. Many of our fish models, which have been in the collection from 1939, have been repaired and remounted.

While much of the remounting of the exhibits in the gallery has been completed and the gallery is again open to visitors, work continues on the relabelling of the exhibits. These new labels will make the displays much more informative.

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The future of GRAEME HALL SWAMP has been hanging in the balance recently and the Caribbean Conservation Association has coordinated a committee aimed at studying management alternatives for the swamp.

Several organisations and schools interested in the preservation of this valuable ecological resource are represented on the committee. The Museum's Assistant Curator for Natural History, Miss Philippa Newton, will coordinate an exhibition on GRAEME HALL SWAMP based on the findings of the committee. Much of the research and collection of data on the area is presently being undertaken by students of the schools involved.

It is projected that the exhibition will initially travel around the island's schools and then form part of a permanent exhibit at the Museum.

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On March 24, Mr. and Mrs. Jean Baulu opened the BARBADOS WILDLIFE RESERVE across from Farley Hill National Park. Mr. Baulu has supplied the Museum's Natural History Department with a great deal of research material especially on the Barbados Green Monkey (Cercopithecus aethiops sabaeus). The Museum staff wishes Mr & Mrs Baulu every success in this venture.





## THE BRUNIAS EXHIBITION OPENS APRIL 10

Although generally regarded as a minor English painter in various contemporary art historical texts, AGOSTINO BRUNIAS (c. 1730-1796) the Roman-born painter, has within recent years taken on a new significance for the art-historian in the Caribbean.

Brunias' work seems to encompass every aspect of the social and economic life of various levels of the community including the creole plantocracy, the mulattoes and free natives, the slaves, the caribs and the maroons. These paintings are a particularly valuable record of 18th century life in the Caribbean and an important research tool for both the artist and the historian seeking to document a way of life now lost.

An important part of his early training was the work he did between 1756 and 1758 in assisting the famous architects, Robert Adam and Charles Clerisseau, in measuring and sketching the Palace of Diocletian in Dalmatia. This early work clearly influenced the classical aspect of his painting especially in the decorative panels and ceilings which he was doing at the time.

Brunias is first recorded in England as a landscape and figure painter and engraver, he exhibited work in London at the Free Society in 1763 and 1764 and later in 1770 two drawings 'after nature' are recorded as being shown at the Society of Artists.

The date of the artist's first appearance in the West Indies is 1771. Brunias arrived in Dominica as travelling artist with Sir William Young, Bart. who was the island's first Governor. From there, Brunias accompanied Young on periodic trips to the



neighbouring islands of St. Lucia, Grenada, Barbados and St. Vincent.

It was while in St. Vincent that Brunias made ninety-five watercolour drawings of botanical specimens, most of which were growing in the Gardens in Kingstown. However the main body of the work was the small genre paintings depicting scenes of local, domestic life in the islands.

Between 1773 and 1777 Brunias returned to London and continued to work. It was at this point that a number of his small oil sketches which were done on the spot, were translated into larger, more elaborate pieces, probably produced to suit his patrons' taste. These were much more 'finished' works produced in the studio piecing together the small vignettes of life which appear in his unassuming and charming sketches.

In 1779 the artist's painting "Sunday Negro Market in the Island of Dominica" was exhibited at the Royal Academy. During this period Brunias also transformed a number of his paintings into print engravings for an eager European market and the Museum holds a complete collection of these in its permanent collections.

Brunias later returned to Dominica and finally made his home there, however not much is known about this period and none of his paintings have as yet been identified as being extant from this period. He died in Dominica in 1796 having left an important legacy to the West Indian peoples. His work recorded vital elements of our culture including the costumes and customs, the recreational and economic activities of our ancestors. In effect, he tells us how we became what we are today.

#### THE PETER MOORES FOUNDATION

The Brunias exhibition was made possible with the loan of six of the artist's paintings to the Barbados Museum and Historical Society. These, in fact, form the nucleus of the exhibition and give new emphasis to the Museum's collection of Brunias prints.

Cont'd



Mr. Peter Moores has a home in Barbados and visits the island regularly each year. The Foundation has been active in promoting educational and cultural opportunities for the young in Barbados. Peter Moores is a trustee of the Tate Gallery in London and a Director of merchant bankers, Singer and Friedlander.

#### MUSEUM IMPROVES ITS FACILITIES

Through a generous Government capital works grant the museum is gradually restoring and improving its buildings and galleries.

During the past year the entire facility has been rewired and new light fixtures appear in all galleries. The new lighting has improved visibility of all displays and enhanced their appearance.

The Office, Library, the Jubilee, Harewood and Connell galleries have been completely repainted, thus giving them a fresh new look. The new restrooms, long needed, have been placed in the upper South cell block. Connected with this was the renovation of the South garden facilities that house 1627 and other special performances. A new building and all-weather cover have been built and landscaping done for a projected new office and storage building.

Another project underway is restoration of the Museum's front facade. All of the brick and stone work is being cleaned, and then will be painted in areas where it was painted before.

The Coronation Gallery is being completely remodeled to accommodate the Museum's fine map collection of Barbados and the Caribbean. It will be air-conditioned and be similar to the Cunard Gallery in interior design.

During the next financial year April 1985 - March 1986 we expect to repaint all museum roofs, complete the library renovations with proper lighting and carpeting, build new



exhibit cases and panels for the Harewood and Jubilee Galleries and install a new security system. All Barbadians and members of the Museum and Historical Society can be proud of the Museum's appearance - the finest facility of its kind in the Caribbean.

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NEW MEMBERS B.M.H.S. -

Angela Bailey - Christ Church  
 Carrington & Sealy - Bridgetown  
 Sharon Oran - Christ Church  
 Mona Watson - Surrey, England  
 T.L.A. Roberts - Bridgetown  
 Joseph Payne - St. Peter  
 Island Inn Hotel - Aquatic Gap  
 George Wilfred Holder - Christ Church  
 Dr. Mark and Sharon Crawford - St. Michael  
 Handicraft Department - Barbados Industrial Development  
 Corporation  
 Andrew and Margaret Tainsh - St. Philip

We have enclosed in each Newsletter a MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION and encourage YOU as a Member of the B.M.H.S. to solicit a new member.



## LIBRARY NEWS - By B. Carrillo

The Museum Library has been undergoing renovations and repairs since January 30, 1985 and will be re-opened to members and the public on April 1st, 1985.

During the closure stocktaking and rearrangement of the shelves has taken place. I am now appealing to persons to check their book cases at home and see if they have inadvertently forgotten to return Museum materials. If found please return any books and no questions will be asked. We just want the list of "cannot be found" books eliminated.

The Museum Library is a special research library and all magazines and articles will now be indexed in order that readers can have access to materials readily. It is hoped that in time all periodicals housed in the library will be indexed.

New arrangements for consulting material will be in operation when the library re-opens. Borrowers will be requested to fill out cards stating what material they wish to consult and the librarian will research the material, hand it to the reader and reshelve the material when the researcher has finished. Library patrons will no longer have access to materials. This will eliminate the problems of pencil marks in books and cut out materials which were found during stocktaking.

Research queries during the month of January were: photographs of old Speightstown, the slave trade, Harbour Police, the Jewish Cemetery, history of the old Marine Hotel Ltd., the old pierhead location stone, railway history and photographs, the Monmouth Rebellion, Graeme Hall Swamp and Queen's Park in times past.

I received from overseas several geneological requests. These could not be processed due to repairs but information will be dispatched as soon as library routines are back to normal.

I am very grateful to Jean Blondin, interior decorator, who has given her services for the decoration and furniture arrangement of the library. Mary Greene, a trained librarian, worked continuously during stocktaking and subject indexing of



book materials. Angela Bailey, Audrey Taylor, Sofia Lea, Constance Younglao, Cheva Thompson, Sophia Martin, Portia Hall, and Nell Mayotte have given generously of their time toward improved library services.

#### SHOP TALK

The Museum Shop has THE QUIET REVOLUTIONARY, autobiography of Sir Alexander Hoyos. Hoyos, knighted by the Queen in 1980, is a noted Barbadian educator and author who wrote his autobiography to include fascinating childhood memories and interesting accounts of famous and unknown personalities.

The shop has received a new group of prints from THE ILLUSTRATED LONDON NEWS. These prints are over 100 years old and were done from drawings of Barbados and the West Indies.

Just off the press and on the book shelf in the shop is Hilary Beckles' BLACK REBELLION IN BARBADOS.

Soon to be on the card rack are reproductions of post cards showing scenes of old Barbados.



MUSEUM HOURS  
AND EVENTS

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Museum Staff Hours

8 a.m. - 5 p.m.

Monday - Friday

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Open for Visitors

9 a.m. - 6 p.m.

Monday - Saturday

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Museum Closed

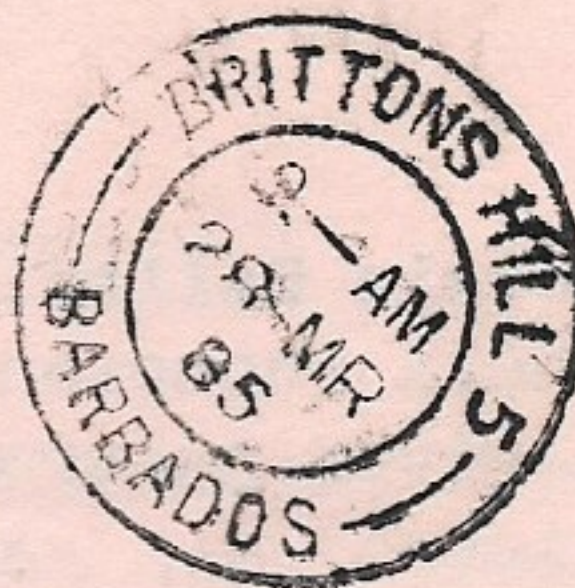
for Easter

April 5th thru 8th

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Brunias Exhibition

Opens - 10th April, 1985.



ON SERVICE

Barbados Museum and Historical Society  
St. Ann's Garrison  
St. Michael  
BARBADOS, West Indies