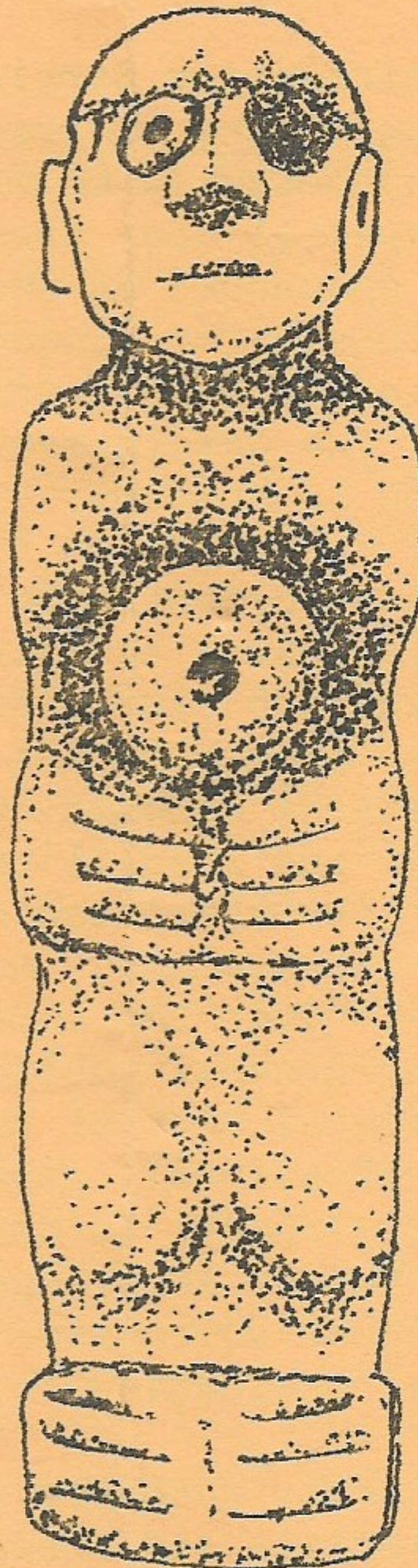


NO: 16

2nd Quarter, 1986

Newsletter



**The Barbados Museum
& Historical Society**

FROM THE DIRECTOR'S DESK

I returned home to the exciting news of a marvellous success for the Museum during its Open Day on International Museums Day. Barbadians of all walks of life enjoyed the opportunity to be a part of the Museum for the day and participated enthusiastically in all of the activities which had been planned. Many enjoyed the 'Spirit World' exhibition which was on display.

The United States Information Service has been generous in its support of the Museum during the year and I was fortunate in being afforded the opportunity to visit Museums across the United States on a special tour organised for the International Visitors Programme, sponsored by the United States Government. Five Museum professionals from Indonesia, the United Kingdom, Egypt, Papua New Guinea and of course, Barbados were invited to see at first hand the developments which had been made in the area of education in Museums. The experience was invaluable.

The group received some orientation on its arrival in Washington and then proceeded to travel to Pittsburgh, Indianapolis, San Antonio, San Francisco with a final leg in New York. In each city an action packed programme had been organised in which we participated in intensive discussion with our museum colleagues, observed new exhibits and special children's classes and activities, reviewed specialist literature and generally shared the joys and woes of dedicated professionals. Museums all over the United States were in despair over the lack of knowledge and understanding abounding amongst the general public, puzzled about ways in which to become a more integral part of the community, decried the lack of resources i.e. professional, physical and of course financial which impeded our development in the field of museology. And yet above all they rose to the challenge, performed feats of imagination and resourcefulness which made our group all the more aware of their professional dedication.

Along the way we hungrily absorbed all that was offered us in the way of published materials and visual stimuli and looked at ways to work closer with teachers, students and family groups and develop programmes to suit their special needs.

For myself the tour offered deep insights into the way the Museum professional thinks, the ways these institutions develop and the ways in which an audience responds. This will be invaluable to us in helping to develop our own educational programmes at the Museum.

INTERNATIONAL MUSEUMS DAY

In recognition of world-wide efforts to preserve, promote and share our cultural heritage, Sunday May 18th was declared International Museums Day.

To commemorate this occasion the Museum opened its doors free of charge to the public on Sunday May 18th from 9.00 a.m. until 4.00 p.m.

Daily radio spots, and newspaper announcements went out to encourage people to attend the open day. The highlight of our promotion however was a televised address by the previous Minister of Education Miss Billie Miller, on the role of education as a primary function of the Museum.

About 1500 people came, some from early morning church service, others stopping by on the way to or from the beach or as part of a leisurely afternoon's drive. At some points of the day, the Jubilee Gallery (which highlights Barbados' history from Amerindian settlement up until the early 20th century) was jammed packed as people gleefully recognised familiar images stopping to read labels and compare experiences with friends. There were children everywhere; the younger ones toddling away from their keepers to discover new spaces and curiosities.

At closing time crowds of people had to be turned back at the gates by our staff since the Museum was committed to another activity later that evening. In any event numerous requests have since come in for us to host another open day.

We are flattered with the interest our Museum has generated, but we have to take into account the necessary financial support of entrance fees needed to run the Museum to our financial welfare, and, over-exposure to an alert but numerically limited market.

Hopefully the Museum will have another open day in the future, at which time we will look forward to seeing a greater attendance and support from the members of this Society.

During the morning period a Tuk Band with stiltman entertained visitors young and old.

In another area of the courtyard two 'faceless' panels with costumed figures were provided so people could pose for 'fun' photographers and make orders for prints. Unfortunately not many people were prepared to pay the price inspite of their interest. Drinks were organised and sold by young volunteers of the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme who also were on hand as photographers for the 'Fun Photo' service.

A quiz based on items or information in the Museum's displays was conducted, with selected items from the Museum's Shop as prizes.

SHOP TALK

Now in stock!

CARIBBEAN PIRATES by Warren Alleyne

The author explores facts and fiction surrounding the pirates who once roamed the Spanish Main.

Price: \$15.30 BDS

LIBRARY NEWS

During the period April - June the Librarian has received over fifteen (15) letters requesting not only research on family connections but on general subjects. Those research letters take a while to answer, as sometimes the information is not easily obtained and takes a good deal of research. Time costs money and therefore overseas researchers will have to be prepared for some delay in replying to their letters and cost factor will be necessary for such information.

Additions to the Library which might be of interest:

Bonham C. Richardson - Panama Money in Barbados
Michael J. Chandler - Subject Index to the Barbados Museum and Historical Society Journal.

Brief history of the Jewish settlement in Barbados.

Rex Waites - Windmills and Steam Power in Barbados.
Sothebys - World Guide to Antiques and their prices.
Roger Norman Buckley - Haitian Journal
Warren Alleyne - Caribbean Pirates

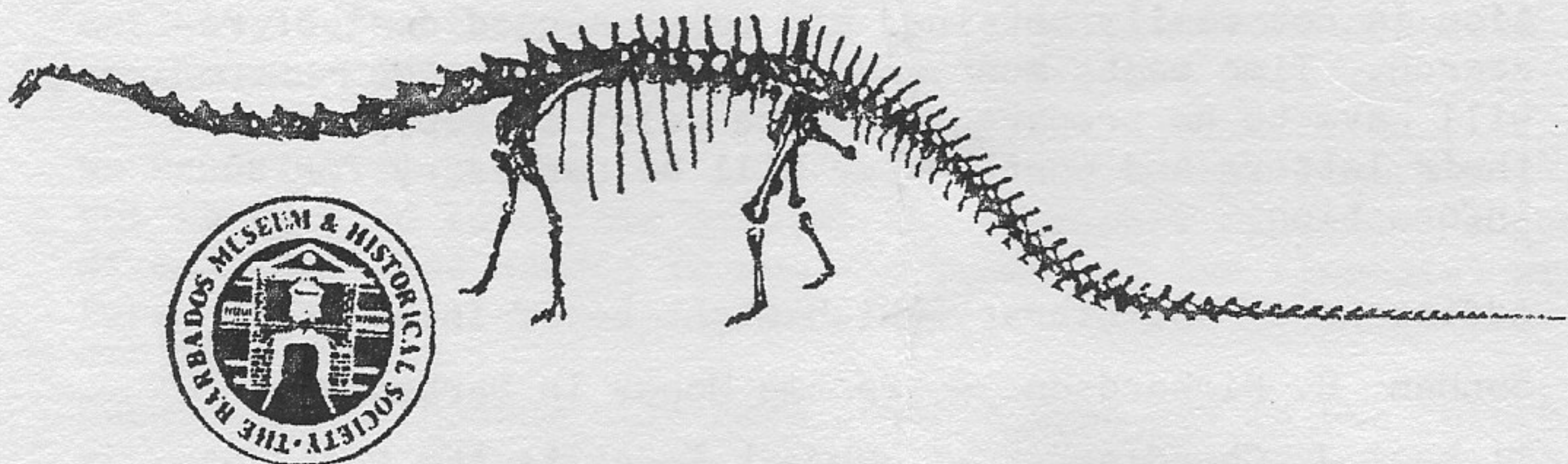
Sixtieth Birthday of Her Majesty the Queen - 21st April 86.

Research: Thirty persons used the Library service on topics ranging from family history, coins, Shilstone Journals, Business in Barbados, Codrington College, drying of flying fish, rum, small traders, water, sewerage and electricity of Barbados. Barbados New England Trade 1630-1640, Ivan Payne, Regimental History and the Caribs. Several appreciative letters have been received from users, even books have been sent back in appreciation of information received.

There were a number of overseas calls, one from England on Cricket and United States of America - the Elcock Story. Information was also sought on the following houses, The Eyrie, Stephney House, Villa Franca and Goslings House.

Lastly a research borrower has asked if anyone is interested in forming a group to discuss the tracing of family history, if interested please contact the Librarian at 427-0201.

TEAMWORK: The Carnegie Museum and Us.



Bat Hunting

Could you be persuaded to leave your home just as the sun sets one evening, to journey to one of the many caves in our island to collect bats?

While many of you might possibly squirm at such a thought, Museum staff members Philippa Newton and David Clarke along with some of the island's young biologists, rose to the recent challenge.

Early in June, Hugh Genoways who is the Curator of Mammals at the Carnegie Museum of Natural History, Pittsburgh; and Dorothy Pumo and Carleton Phillips of Hofstra University, Long Island, arrived in Barbados to continue research on the bats of the Caribbean. To accomplish this, they needed a few specimens to take back to the U.S.A.

So, armed with lights, nets, bags and gloves the team made its way for three nights, to caves and streams. On these occasions only two genera of bats were netted.

By studying various features of the genetic composition of these bats, the research team hopes to be able to determine relationships between the bats of the Caribbean and possibly their origin. Other islands visited included St. Vincent, Grenada and Mustique.

Internship

Philippa Newton will be starting a three-month internship at the Carnegie Museum in mid July.

This will afford her the opportunity to work in quite a few of the Museum's departments, while being primarily attached to the division of life sciences and the division of exhibit design and production.

While there she will mainly concentrate on the techniques involved in the production of large dioramas. This should go a long way in realising our Museum's goal of including at least three such dioramas in the total redesign of the Harewood Gallery, scheduled for early 1987. We hope to include dioramas depicting a coral reef, mangrove swamp and wooded area.

This visit to the Carnegie Museum is made possible through their International Program for Resident Museum Specialists.

BARBADOS FIRST FARMERS - AGRO-TECH 86

Lesley Whatley co-ordinated and mounted the Museum's display "Barbados' First Farmers", at the Barbados Agriculture Society's annual exhibition at the Grotto. Steven Hackenberger designed the exhibit and its text, and Philippa Newton assisted with research and graphic design. The display focussed on diversification of agriculture and the contributions of Caribbean Amerindians to today's domestic agriculture, the export industry and produce for import substitution. Amerindian plant crops were listed along with their food values and the sophisticated nature of their farming was shown through the seasonal calendars that governed their planting and harvesting of many different fruits and vegetables. Amerindian artifacts from Guyana and Dominica were displayed to show how cassava was processed and prepared for beverages, porridges, and breads. Cotton planting and weaving was also highlighted.

Kay Donawa and Keith Laurie of the Barbados Agriculture Society are thanked for their interest and assistance. The exhibit is one example of educational outreach in which the Museum engages; and as such it received the praise of several officials in agricultural development areas.

NEW ARCHAEOLOGICAL FINDS

In late April, Steven Hackenberger, Peace Corps Curator, examined soil being excavated for laying a concrete foundation (40x40m) and several pipe lines at the Shell Oil Bulk Depot off the Spring Garden Highway near Fresh Water Bay. Here numerous Amerindian artifacts were discovered in dirt piles left by bulldozers. Also, pottery, shell and bones were visible in trench walls buried to a depth of 60cm. With assistance from executives of Shell Antilles and Guianas Ltd, including Mr. Richard Jones, Depot Manager, the construction site was revisited on several Saturday mornings for the purpose of collecting artifacts exposed in dirt piles from the foundation excavations that were leveled and spread over the depot yard. Six Boys Scouts and their leader from the James Street Church Troop participated in the artifact collecting as a preliminary step to achieving their Scout badges in archaeology.

Given the abundance and significance of finds, volunteers from the newly formed Archaeological Group of Barbados were enlisted to dig test pits to begin determining the full depth and areal extent of the site, while some volunteers continued to comb the bulldozer soil for artifacts. Three 1x1 m pits were excavated (spaced ten meters apart) on a North-South line originating near a section of trench where a heavy concentration of pottery fragments were observed.

Excavations revealed a beach at 1m below the original ground surface (before bulldozers added additional soil to the site). On top of the beach 40 to 50 cm of loose gray sandy soil developed. On top of this layer 30 to 40 cm of compacted sandy clay occurs. Historic artifacts are found in the sandy clay layer to a depth of 30 or 40 cm below the sites original surface. The heaviest concentration of Amerindian pottery fragments and shell occur at 40 to 60 cm in depth in the top of the loose gray sandy soil.

At this level in pit 2 the right knee (distal femur and proximal tibia and fibula) of a semi-flexed burial was discovered. Consequently the east and north walls of the test trench were each expanded by 50 cm. The burial was unearthed by following down the leg bones to the feet. In the north wall fragments of arms and hands were discovered. In the northeast corner of the expanded test pit ribs, collarbones and finally the jaw and skull were located. The burial rested immediately on top of the white sands and coral gravel of an ancient beach. No evidence of a pit could be found in which the burial may have occurred. Most probably the loose sand was pulled away to form a shallow depression and more sand was added to cover the deceased.

Few back bones (vertebrae) were located other than those belonging to the neck, and most of the ribs, shoulder and pelvic bones were not present. The lower jaw contained three teeth and the areas of missing teeth were healed over with bone. This suggests the remains belong to a late middle aged individual. An exact age estimate will require more detailed examination. Also, it appears the forehead, area of the skull (frontal bone) has been flattened by pressure applied to the skull during infancy, a cultural practice known among Caribbean Amerindians termed "Cranial deformation".

Fragments of thin walled pottery vessels with high narrow flanges are found with some painted and some incised sherds at the site. Thin walled pottery is also found cemented in coral, suggesting that thin pottery dates to the earliest occupation at the site. In test pits 1 and 2 similar finds came from the lowest levels of the loose sand in which the burial was found. Therefore the first site occupation and the burial may date to AD 800+/-200 years, the period of time in which pottery is dated on other Eastern Caribbean Islands.

The majority of pottery fragments of more utilitarian types of vessels may date to early or late times. However, legged vessels, some finger decorated rims, and scratched decorations also suggest late occupations of AD 1300+/-200 years.

Laboratory dating of the site is possible for charcoal samples recovered at two different levels and for samples of "diagnostic" pottery types. Dating might be possible at Shell Laboratories, or, if sufficient funds can be raised, at an archaeological dating lab at a University in England or the United States.

Among the most unique finds at the site were a small thumb-sized spouted bowl, a painted flat platter or griddle rim, a fragment of a small dish with legs, a clay figurine with an excised abstract design of a face (possible a body stamp), and a conch shell carving in the form of a man with ear spools and eyes inlaid with mother of pearl. The latter object is the most elaborate example of Amerindian shell carving yet discovered on Barbados.

PHOTOGRAPHY COLLECTION UPDATE

The Barbados Museum and Historical Society has a collection of photographs dating from the 1870's to the present. They have been donated or purchased by the Society over the years and now number in the thousands.

It has been recognised that a system of cataloguing and storage is badly needed in order to preserve the photographs and, at the same time, make them available for research. Late last year, work on such a system began and the process of cataloguing each individual photograph has been underway since April.

When the project is complete, the Library will have a card catalogue organised by subject. Each card will include a photograph's subject, its age, the photographer and other information as available, as well as a 35 mm contact print of the photograph. This system will allow access to photographs by subject area and will minimize the handling of original prints.

The cataloguing project is only one example of how committed Museum volunteers, museum members, scholars and staff are to working as a team. Volunteers Sylvia Hinson and Gayle Hallgarth work with the staff to record information about photographs which in many cases is known only because Museum members and researchers take the time to relate their knowledge for the record. We look forward to continuing this successful teamwork throughout the project.

New Acquisitions

Two albums of photographs taken in the last quarter of the 19th century have recently been purchased. One contains a variety of photos from Barbados, Jamaica, Trinidad, St. Lucia and St. Thomas. Some of these may be of particular interest to naturalists, as they focus on various plants and trees.

The photos of Barbados depict mercantile establishments in Bridgetown and are unique additions to our collection. The second album comes from the personal records of Professor J.B. Harrison, geologist who did research in British Guiana and Barbados during the 1880's. Numerous photographs of interior regions of Guyana are included, as well as scenes and monuments of Egypt Circa 1875.

These photograph albums are invaluable additions to a collection whose importance is only beginning to be appreciated.

NEW MEMBERS

The Barbados Museum and Historical Society is very pleased to welcome new members to our list. We are very much encouraged by your growing interest and involvement in the development of the Museum and for showing your support in this way.

Mrs. Patricia Forde	Barbados	Annual
Ms. Anne Hill	"	"
Ms. Audrie D. Manning	England	"
Ms. Gail Washchuck	Barbados	"
Mr & Mrs. Richard Bacharach	"	Joint Annual
Dr. & Mrs. John Webster	"	" "

CHAPTERS IN BARBADOS HISTORY

During the last 33 years the Society's Journal has included many articles of general interest which will be unknown to the majority of its present readership. It has therefore been decided to publish a book of about 150 pages with the above title consisting of articles from old issues of the Journal; most of them will have appeared more than 15 years ago.

The aim has been to select articles which will be of interest to the general reader, whether he be resident in Barbados, a visitor, or just interested in the island, and articles have therefore been edited to exclude footnotes, etc. In several cases, e.g. the article on St. Nicholas Abbey, the results of subsequent research are incorporated in an editorial note.

The book will be available at the Museum on 1st October, 1986. The price will be \$20. (US\$10), but until Christmas 1986 the price to members of the Society (for any number of copies) will be \$15 (US\$7.50) a copy. For copies which have to be sent abroad there will be an additional charge of \$2.50 (US\$1.25) per copy for postage. Orders, with the appropriate amount, should be sent to the Director, Barbados Museum, Garrison, St. Michael.

MUSEUM HOURS

& EVENTS

Museum Staff Hours

Monday - Friday

8.00 a.m. - 5.00 p.m.

Open for Visitors

Monday - Saturday

9.00 a.m. - 6.00 p.m.

June 27th - July 11th

Newcomer Art Group

Exhibition - A wide
selection of paintings
by Children and Adults

July 15th

Peace Corps Indepen-
dence Function

Time: 6.30 p.m.

July 14th

Royal Commonwealth Society
Lecture

Time: 6.00 p.m.

July 19th

Soroptomist Women's Club
Siesta

Time: 1.00 p.m. - 6.00 p.m.

Philatelic Society
Meeting

Every 2nd Wednesday
of the month

Time: 7.30 p.m.

Archaeology Group
Meeting

Every 3rd Wednesday
of the month

Time: 7.30 p.m.

July 16th Lecture
Topic: Marine

Archaeology. Time: 7.30 p.m.

September 12th

Annual General Meeting

Time: 5.00 p.m.

The Barbados Museum &
Historical Society
St. Ann's Garrison
ST. MICHAEL

St. Michael & Ridley
St. Thomas

