

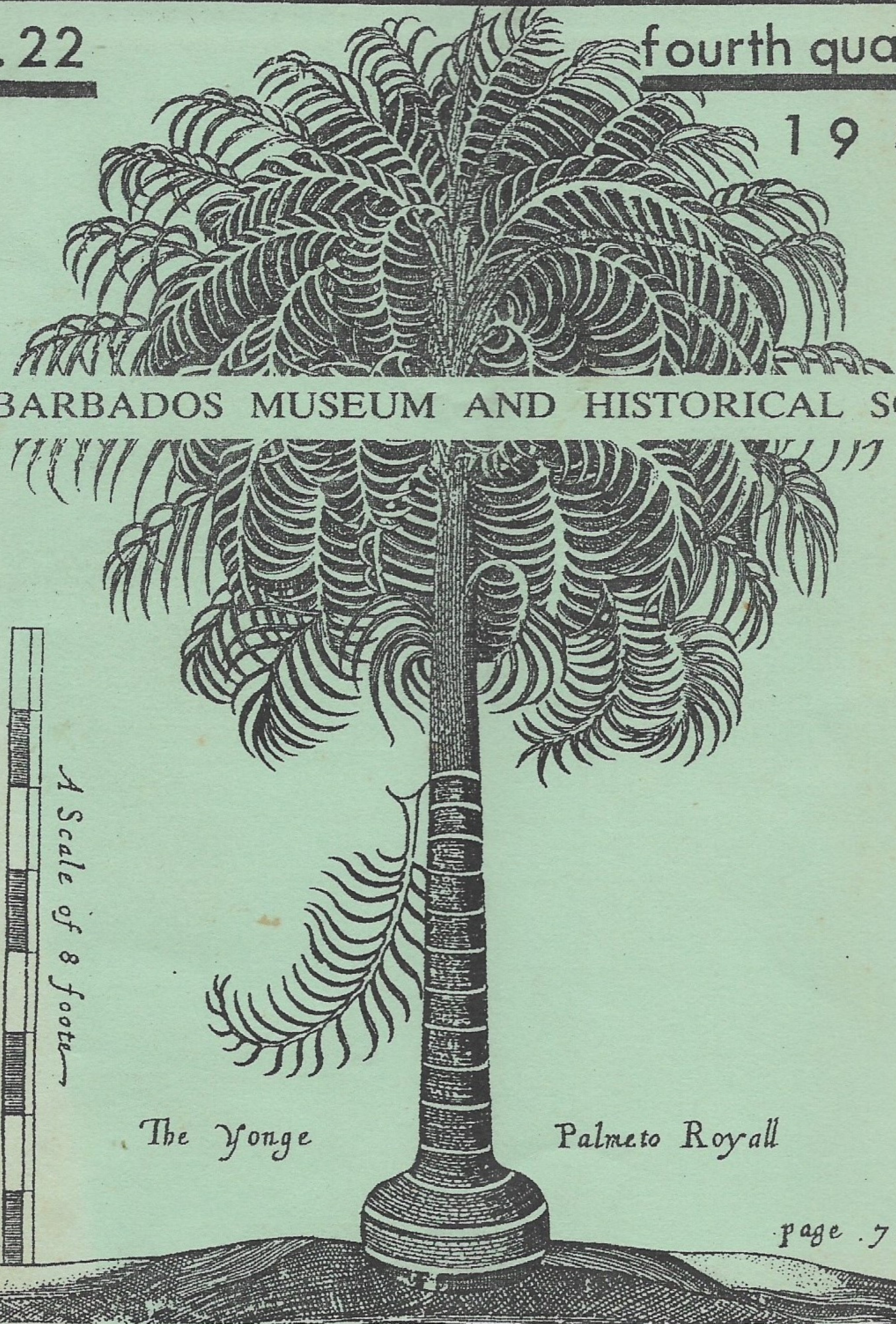
# NEWSLETTER

no. 22

fourth quarter

1987

THE BARBADOS MUSEUM AND HISTORICAL SOCIETY



The Yonge

Palmeto Royall

page 76.



---

FROM THE DIRECTOR'S DESK

November 11th was the date of the 54th Annual General Meeting of the Barbados Museum and Historical Society. In his address our President, the Hon. J.S.B. Dear noted that over the past seven years the Museum has made steady - and perhaps even spectacular progress. The repairs and renovations to the Museum buildings have enhanced its appeal to the public and he noted specifically the generous support of the Sample Foundation through Mrs. Sally Aall, which made the upgrading of the Courtyard and the Aall Gallery possible.

The President further noted that relations between the Museum and the Government are harmonious, close and amiable and that the infusion of Government funds had made many of the improvements at the Museum possible. However he pointed out that "if the Society wants to maintain its integrity and its autonomy, it must exercise to the utmost the principle of self help." To this end he reminded the members that next year would be the 55th Anniversary of the Museum and the Society would be launching a vigorous fund raising campaign between May 1988 and May 1989. He hoped therefore that members would offer their enthusiastic support for this campaign.

Mr. Dear also raised the point that given the changes in the Society recently, Council felt that further change in the Constitution would be necessary in order to streamline the present cumbersome procedures; he noted particularly the present system of admission of membership to the Museum. Therefore the Council will be given the mandate to review the Constitution and bring to the member's notice any changes they feel necessary.

---



Finally, the President observed that "the vast improvements in the Museum, the position of excellence it has attained and the commendations it has earned from people both in and out of Barbados have been largely due to the high quality of the Museum Staff and their unqualified dedication to their work." Mr. Dear pledged that he would continue to support improvements in the Staff's conditions of employment as long as he occupied his present position.

Members were given the opportunity to hear a feature address by Mr. Michael King, Executive Director of the Caribbean Conservation Association. Mr. King gave an insightful and thought-provoking address on "The role of the Caribbean Conservation Association in the area of Conservation in the Caribbean."

My very best wishes at Christmas and I look forward to a New Year of exciting Museum events.

#### COMING EXHIBITIONS

La Nacion, an account of the Spanish and Portuguese Jewish communities in the Caribbean from the 17th century onwards, is opening 20th December. La Nacion is a travelling exhibition from the Museum of the Jewish Diaspora, Beth Hatefutsoth, in Tel Aviv. It is sponsored by the Bridgetown Synagogue Restoration Committee, and will run till the end of January.

Hearts, Diamonds & Flowers, a joint art exhibition of work by Stanley Greaves and Alison Chapman-Andrews Greaves, will be on display throughout March.

---



## VISITING TAXIDERMIST

Behind-the-scenes museum visitors may be startled by periodic outbursts of laughter, and puzzled that amidst the Bajan voices is a hearty Yorkshire dialect.

The voice belongs to David Weatherley, visiting taxidermist, now helping rebuild the museum's bird and fish collections. Virtually all the preserved biological specimens have decayed, and many of the deteriorating wax models are brittle beyond restoration.

It is amusing to contrast David's casual outgoing demeanour with the meticulous precision of his craftsmanship: He chats of football, politics, museums, while he delicately dissects out the tiny skull of the bananaquit in his left palm.

The procedure is almost surgical. The contents of the body cavity are removed through a careful incision in the bird's belly. Legs and wings are disarticulated; the skull is cleaned and left in. The whole feathered skin is washed in detergent, degreased with carbon tetrachloride, and gently tossed dry in powdered magnesium carbonate.

Prepared body armatures for the specimens perch above David's desk like a row of waiting cartoon birds. He constructs a body, custom fitted for each skin, of tow, balsa wood, fibre glass, woodwool and whatever else comes to hand. When the body is finally sewn into its skin, the end product is extraordinarily life-like.

But taxidermy was not David's original plan. Leaving school, he planned a professional football career. When a football injury sidelined him, he worked as a park warden and became involved in preserving specimens, where his talent for taxidermy emerged. "Qualifications don't matter in this area" he says, easing a delicate

---



---

legbone out of the specimen in hand. "Either you can do it or you can't. And past a certain point you can't really train someone without the gift".

David landed his present job at Northwestern Museum & Art Gallery Services over a host of other applicants. "It was the quality of my work they looked at." His institution employs five art conservators, three textile conservators, three archaeologists and two taxidermists. (And, one is tempted to ask, a partridge in a pear tree?). "Some very good people work there."

Behind him, a shelf gleams with translucent, green fibre-glass fish, not yet connected to their fins. David moulds fresh (not frozen) fish specimens in silicone rubber, then takes fibre glass replicas, which capture every scaly detail. Fins are cast separately.

A high-speed dental drill is used to polish and assemble the parts. The finished model is airbrushed, working from photos and colour notes, a painstaking and timeconsuming task. David reckons on a week to complete a single model.

He hopes to finish painting two of the replicas and to mount a dozen birds before he goes. He is taking the moulds back to England to cast more fish, the resin being temperamental in our humidity.

His two month visit, funded by the Commonwealth Foundation, makes us the lucky recipients of superior quality taxidermy. Personal altruism is involved too; David has used his holidays and taken leave without pay to come here.

All the more tantalizing that his stay is such a short one. "There's so much to be done", he says with two weeks of his stay remaining. "And we're just getting started."

---



---

ANY SPARE MECHANICAL GENIUSES ?

The recent drive to increase and streamline our volunteer training has been a resounding success. Several new people are involved in research, library work, education and construction of the Natural History exhibit. In most areas, training is provided by the curators.

However, there are a few unusual, highly specialized skills that have not been easy to find. Perhaps members can help in the search for this one:

We're looking for a skilled and patient modelmaker to restore an elaborate, 50 year old sheet metal, scale model of a sugar factory to its original working condition.

The entire model (about 28" x 34") is in an advanced stage of corrosion. It will need to be dismantled piece by piece, cleaned, stripped, painted and reassembled. Some parts have disintegrated so badly replacements will have to be made by hand.

This is a job for a highly skilled artisan willing to take on a long term labour of love. The reward will be the satisfaction of having rescued an exquisite artifact that will soon be beyond repair. The restored model will be a centrepiece in the future children's gallery.

So if you know any retired engineers or watchmakers who build boats in bottles and are looking for a challenge, tell them you've got just the job for them, and direct them to the Education Officer (427-0201).

---



---

### LIBRARY NEWS

Our lucky Librarian, Betty Carillo-Shannon, spent her vacation leave in Paris and London, and revelled in visits to the Louvre, Christies and Sothebys. Volunteer Beryl Birch held the fort during the interim.

Recent gifts to the Library include Jill Shepherd's autographed and very readable Marryshow of Grenada, Timothy Callender's Independence & Freedom, Peter Drewett's Archaeological Survey of Barbados and Denis Williams' Ancient Guyana. Books on furniture, African art and credit unions were purchased. The Library depends upon donations for the excellence of its collections, so we ask members to keep us in mind.

We answered over 160 research queries during this period, from specialists as well as laymen. Research subjects included The Crane, Barbadian folklore, the railway, the West India Regiment, Slavery and the Panama Canal. Fifteen genealogical queries researched.

---

### JUNIOR MEMBERS' NATURE SERIES NO. 3

Beginning January 23, the third of the museum's popular nature programmes for 8-12 year olds will run for four consecutive Saturdays.

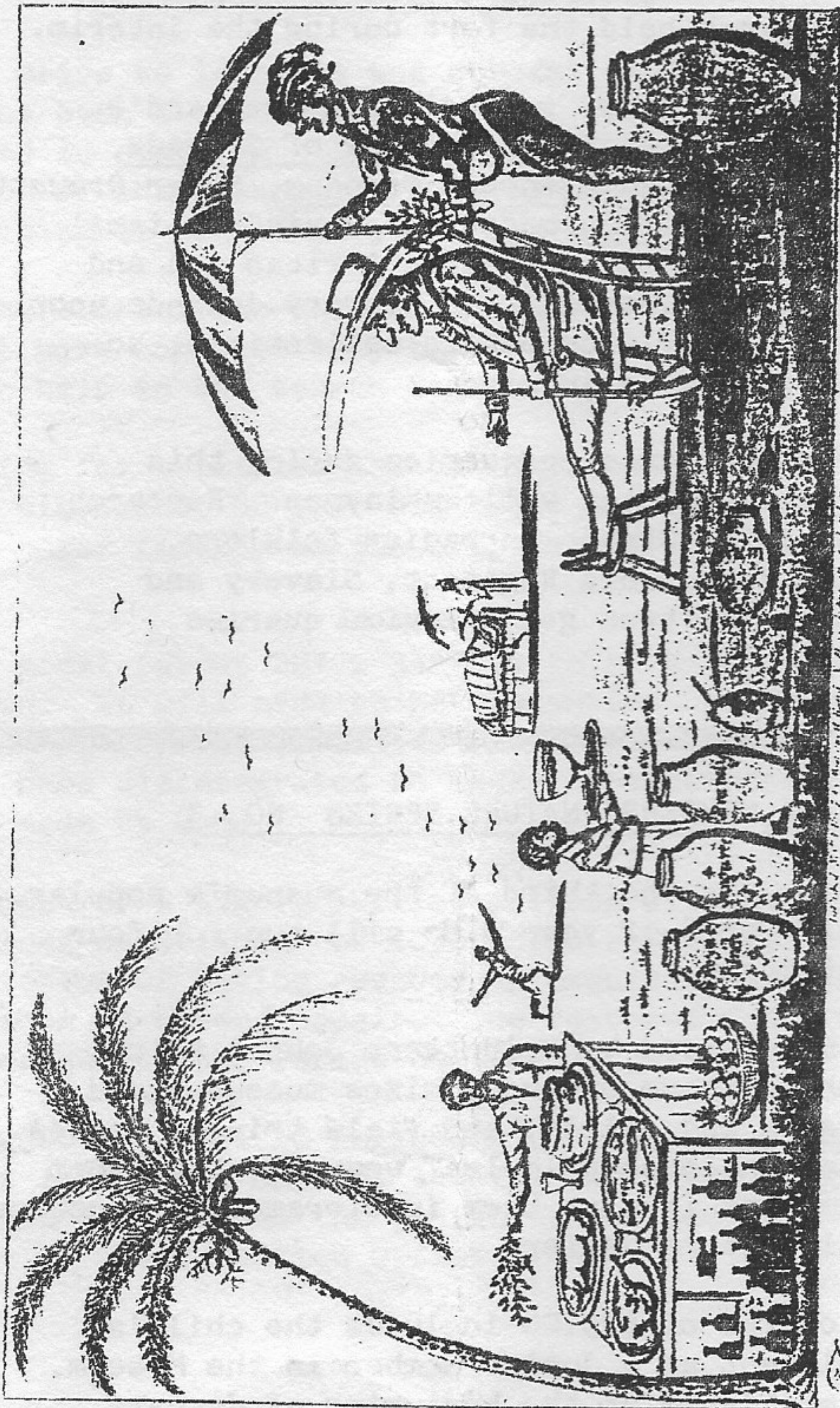
Organized and supervised by volunteers John & Alice Lamoureux, each of those programs mixes museum-based activities, crafts and skills, and field trips. Series No. 3 will teach children palm-leaf weaving, take them to visit a farm, and involve them in diorama construction for the Natural History Gallery.

The registration fee of \$25.00 includes the child's automatic enrollment as a Junior Member in the Museum. Forms will be available at the beginning of January.

---



A WEST INDIA SPORTSMAN.



*Put Wots buste with the Sanguary, Quashie, and tell Cunnore to drive the Birds up to me — I'm ready.*



### RECENT EXHIBITS

A travelling photographic exhibition of exceptional beauty and diversity, Beauties of the Coral Reef visited the Museum Oct. 17 - Nov. 7. The exhibition was produced by SITES (Smithsonian Institution Travelling Exhibition Services) and was accompanied by specimens and a National Geographic film.

School were a target audience. Many science teachers attended the opening, and 14 school groups visited. The film was a great success, despite initial horror stories with the projector (do film projectors have evil spirits in them?), and was shown 22 times to a total of 425 visitors.

Independence Week saw an historical exhibit of Barbadian cartoons, 1796 - 1987 Every skin teet' ent a Laugh. Over 50 cartoons depicted issues and attitudes prevalent in Barbadian society over a period of 200 years. The panel format of this exhibit will enable it to circulate as a travelling exhibition.

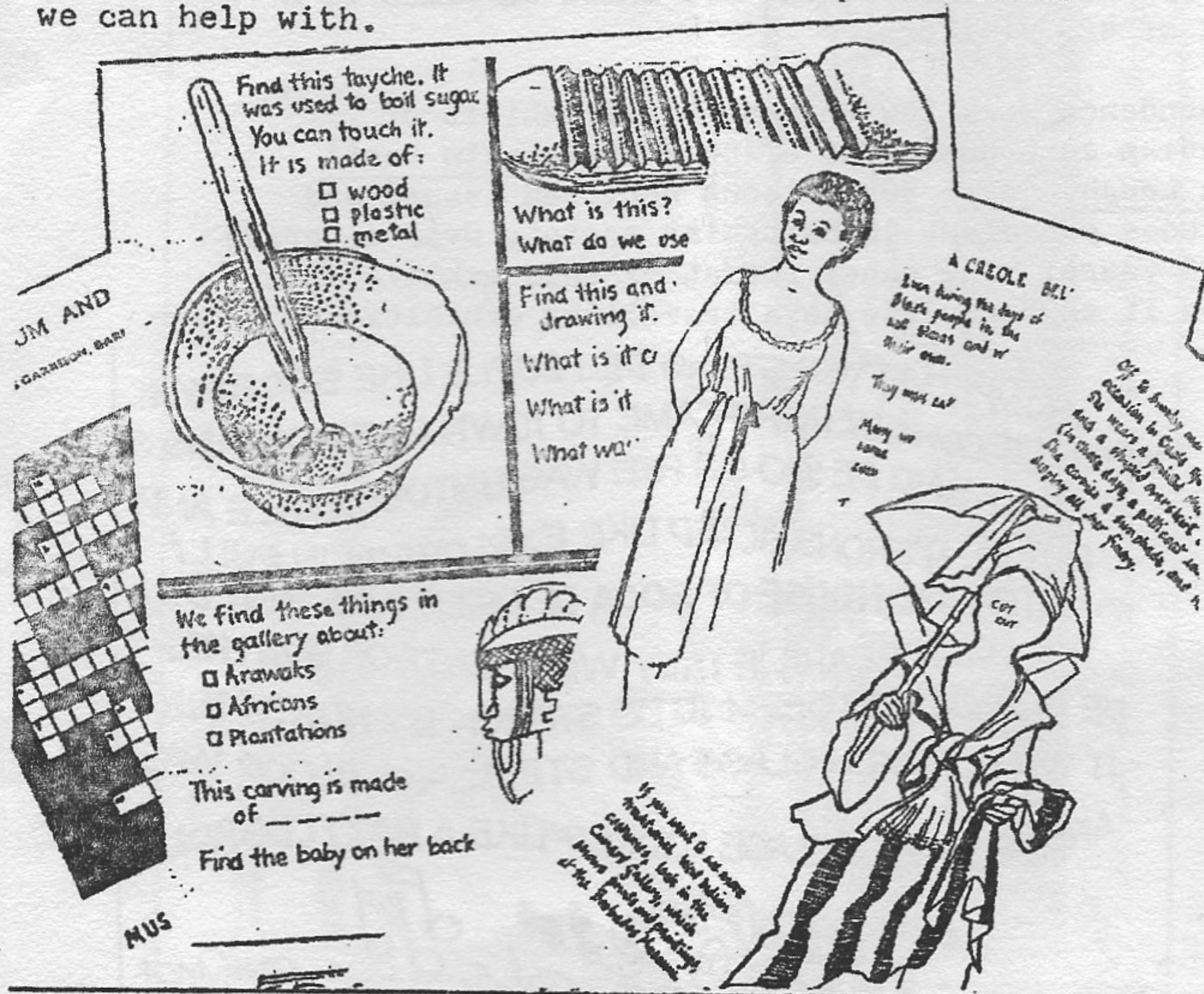
CALYPSO FEVER STUNG DE PEOPLE LIKE SCORPION  
WHEN DE CONQUERORS CAME TO TOWN LIKE ROMANS!  
THEY SAID DE \$10.00 FEE WAS UNTOUCHABLE AND  
BUT DE PATRONS ACTED LIKE EXPLORERS IN FULL!  
TO ENTER DE HOUSE OF SOCA DE PRICE WAS HIGH BY!  
THEY DIDN'T CARE IF THEY WERE EAST OR SOUTHE!  
DE GLASS DOOR SEEM TO BE STRUCK BY NORTH TOR  
IT WAS BROKEN GLASS AND STEEL, AND BLOOD WAS  
AND DE WHOLE PLACE LOOKED LIKE A BATTLEGROUND





Have you been left with a young visitor to entertain? Or a child doing a history project? Members are welcome to use the history worksheets that have been developed for just-barely-readers to CXC. Also available are a Self-Guide tour booklet and fun things: Treasure Hunt, Brunias cut-out paper dolls, a crosswork puzzle.

Just ring before you come if there are special needs we can help with.





---

### LECTURE ON PREHISTORIC BARBADOS

Dr. Peter Drewett will be giving his third annual lecture at the Barbados Museum on January 6th at 7.00 p.m.

Dr. Drewett of the Institute of Archaeology, University College, London, will be describing the work of the Barbados Archaeological Survey. This survey, a joint project with the Barbados Museum, is studying all aspects of the prehistory of Barbados. Following a general field survey, archaeological excavations have taken place at Chancery Lane, Hillcrest and Heywoods. Currently excavations are taking place for a second season at Hillcrest and also at Greenland.

Dr. Drewett will describe the analysis of economic data from Chancery Lane, where over thirty species of shell fish were recovered, and Heywoods, where the first remains of flying fish associated with Suazoid pottery have been located.

The lecture, which will be illustrated with colour slides, will also illustrate the wide range of prehistoric artifacts excavated over the last three seasons.

Volunteers are welcome to join the current excavations at Hillcrest (December) and Greenland (January).

---

### JUNIOR NEWSLETTER

October saw the launching of our Junior Newsletter, to come out twice a year for junior members.

The newsletter, aimed at pre-teens, discussed archaeological finds at Kensington, explained how a taxidermist moulds fish (more of that for you in this issue) and notified them of coming programs for children.

We enclosed a Treasure Hunt activity sheet and young people's Museum Guide which we hope will encourage more visits.

---



---

MONEY! MONEY! MONEY!

At the request of Alissandra Cummins and Jack Dear, Betty Little, a Volunteer Executive with the International Executive Service Corps, came from the United States to work at the Museum from November 3rd to December 1st, 1987. Together with Council, Staff Members and Volunteers she has been developing plans which will enhance the fund raising capability of the Museum.

Many of the revenue generating activities which will be carried out will occur initially during "Gala 55", and from then on most of these events will be continued on an annual basis. An increased emphasis on membership and publicity will provide a needed base from which to raise funds successfully.

As Chairman of the Board of Trustees of the Bruce Museum in Greenwich for the past five years, Betty has been seriously involved in fund raising for that institution, and the Bruce Museum has tripled its income from the private sector during this time.

Betty says "The Barbados Museum has a good product to sell: Exhibits which are of high quality, are professionally and excitingly displayed, and in an unusual and attractive setting. We just need to alert the Bajans and the tourist to the treasure in their midst - loud and clear."

---

MEA CULPA

Our faces are red! We must have run out of fingers and toes to count on; our last issue should have read 21, not 20. And yes, this is the 22nd issue.

---





### TEAMWORK ON SATURDAYS

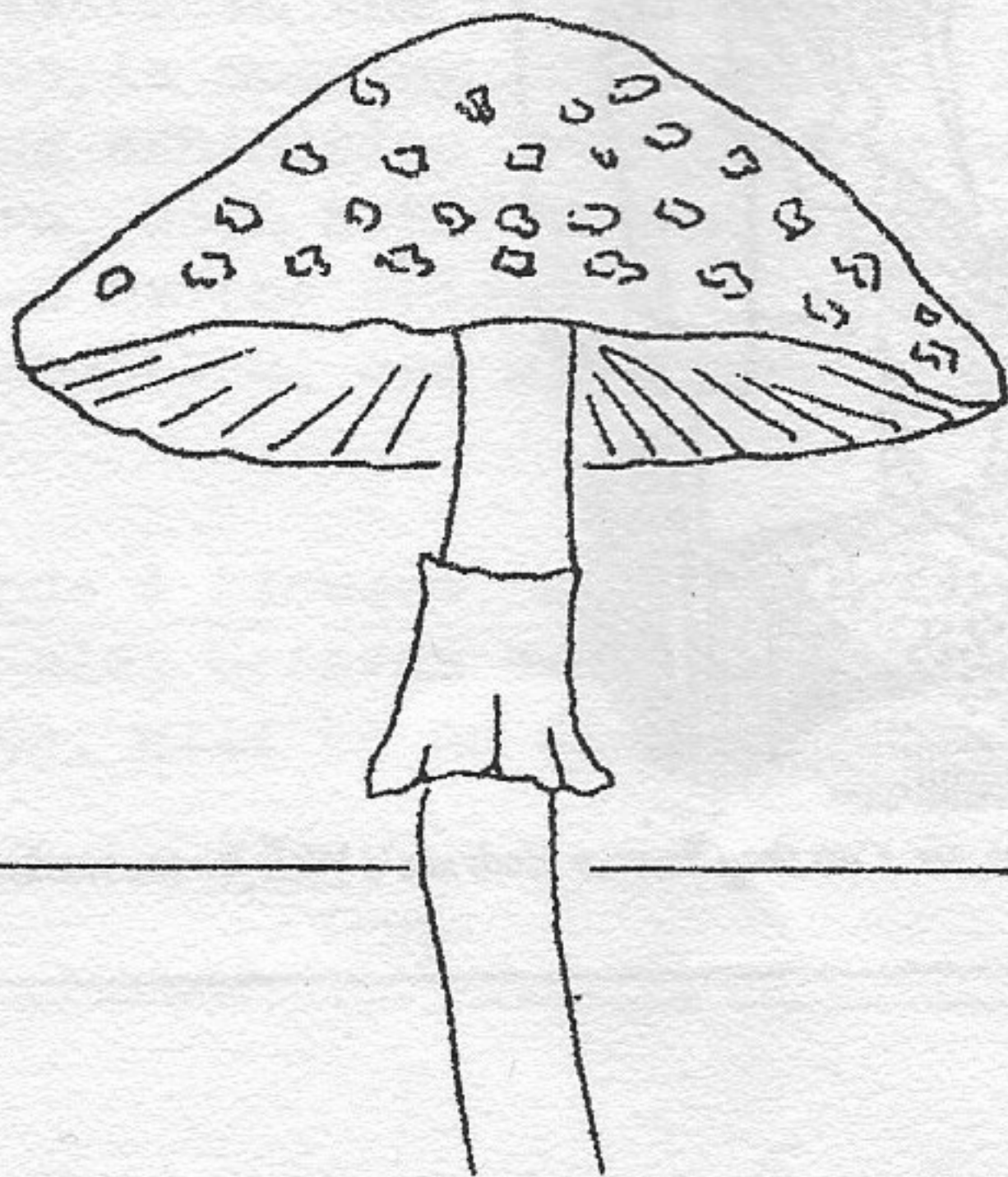
The Museum is building up a team of natural history volunteers which helps to prepare for the mounting of our new natural history exhibition.

These volunteers have been learning techniques utilising silicone rubbers, fibreglass and embedding plastics which will allow us to create environmentally realistic "dioramas". We are creating a mangrove swamp, coral reef and cave amongst other interesting habitats.

Should you suddenly feel the urge to delve into the mysteries of these fascinating techniques please give us a call at 427-0201 or 436-1956.

Most of the volunteers work with Philippa Newton, Natural History Curator, on Saturdays between 9 a.m. and 4 p.m.. We shall be on a short holiday until 9 January, 1988, but will be happy to have you join our team after that time.

We look forward to having you with us on collecting field trips and when we prepare both animal and plant specimens and model those difficult-to-preserve ones. Our main requirement for you joining our team is dedication!!





---

### MUSEUM GROUP

On the 3rd and 4th December, museum professionals well known in their field came together from Jamaica, Trinidad, Nevis, Martinique, Antigua, Dominica and of course Barbados. For two hectic days they discussed guidelines for the establishment and implementation of a body devoted to Regional Museum Development. Such an association is vitally needed given the limited human, physical and financial resources available. It is hoped that further discussion and research over the coming year will lead to the institution of a viable Caribbean Museums Association in the near future.



*"It's the Italian Government, sir. Can they borrow Hadrian's Wall for the weekend?"*

---



## PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Education Officer Wendy Donawa has just returned from a challenging four week study leave at the University of Victoria. During this time, a dedicated core of Education Volunteers and Docents gave regular school tours and gallery classes.

Two major museum functions were examined. Curatorial Care of Artifacts dealt with conservation and environmental control, the curatorial storage, handling and exhibition of artifacts, and curatorial ethics. Collections Management covered the legal and ethical concerns attendant on acquiring, documenting and maintaining collections, and in developing museum policies.

Given in a concentrated immersion format, the courses are two of a series leading to a Diploma in Cultural Resource Management.

A stimulating and educational bonus of the course was the interaction of the 15 participants, colleagues from museums, art galleries, archives and archaeological sites as far apart as the Yukon, Oregon and Toronto (and, of course, Barbados!)



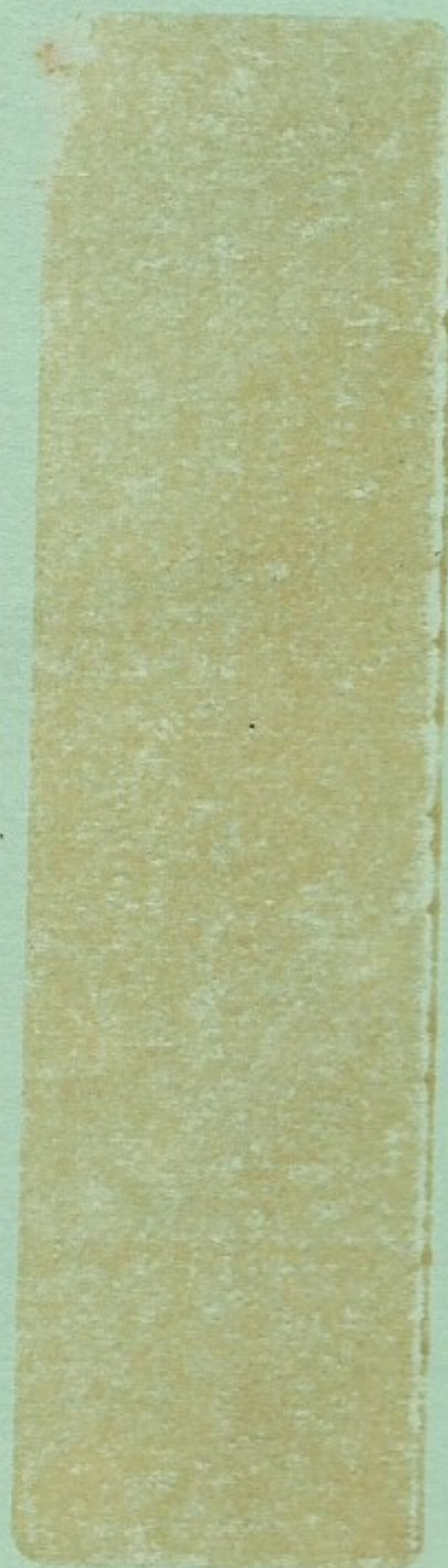
Starting tomorrow I don't want you to wash the 5,000 year old jugs!"



# THE BARBADOS MUSEUM AND HISTORICAL SOCIETY

ST. ANN'S GARRISON, BARBADOS, W.I.

ON SERVICE



BARBADOS MUSEUM &  
HISTORICAL SOCIETY

## NEW MEMBERS

The Barbados Museum and Historical Society is very pleased to welcome so many 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.

Miss Veronica Curry	Barbados	Annual
Ms. Elaine Hewitt	"	"
Mr. Mark Krakowski	"	"
Miss Marilyn Whitney	U.S.A.	U.S.A.
Mr. Delisle Worrell	Barbados	"
Mr. & Mrs. Victor Coggin.	"	Joint Annual
Mr. & Mrs. Christopher deCaires	"	" "
Mr. & Mrs. Elwin M. Kleihauer	"	" "
Mrs. Cynthia Wilson	"	"
Miss Nara Watson	"	Junior

## MUSEUM HOURS

### AND EVENTS

Museum Staff Hours	January 23rd
Monday - Friday	Lecture
8.30 a.m. - 4.30 p.m.	Topic: Prehistoric Barbados
*****	Time: 7.00 p.m.
Open for Visitors	Dr. Peter Drewett
Monday - Saturday	*****
9.00 a.m. - 6.00 p.m.	January 23rd
*****	Junior Members
December 5th - 19th	Nature Series
Exhibition	No: 3
Barbados Arts	*****
Council	December 20
*****	throughout
Museum Closed	January
December 24th, 25th, 26th	<u>La Nacion</u>
January 1st	*****
*****	March
Philatelic Society	<u>Hearts, Diamonds</u>
Meeting	<u>&amp; Flowers</u>
Every 2nd Wednesday of the month	
Time: 7.30 p.m.	
*****	
Archaeological Group	
Meeting	
Every 3rd Wednesday of the month	
Time: 7.30 p.m.	
*****	