

NEWSLETTER

THE BARBADOS MUSEUM AND HISTORICAL SOCIETY



NO. 25

3RD QUARTER, 1988



Art Exhibitions as Educational Tools: the Hector Whistler Retrospective

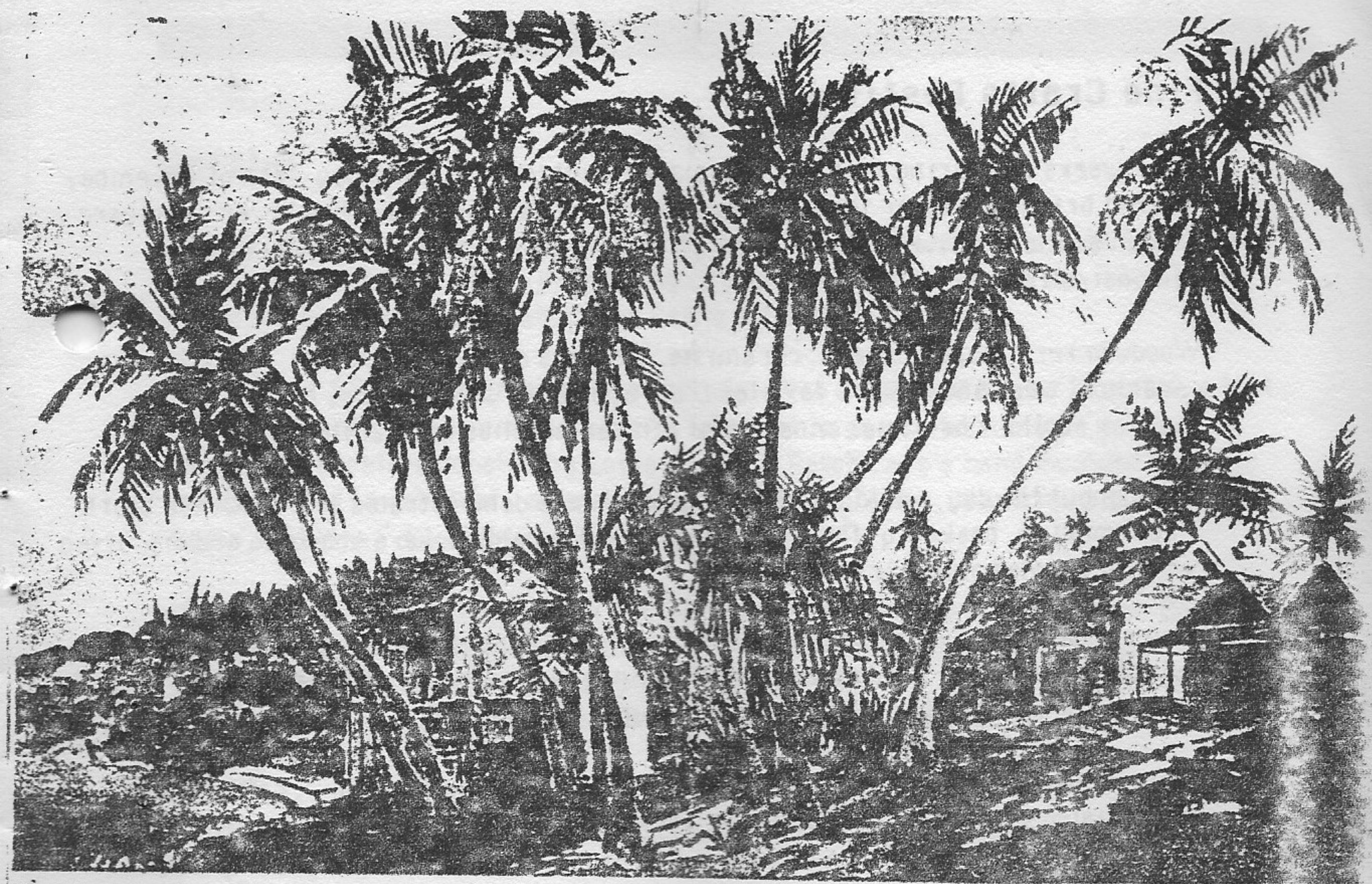
It is two years since the late Hector Whistler was selected as an artist meriting research for a retrospective exhibition. An artist long forgotten and unknown to many, Whistler was nonetheless influential in the development of Barbadian art.

During the last year, volunteers Joyce Gale and Margaret Goddard initiated research, tracking down contacts, soliciting letters and photographs, following up owners, dealers, collectors and the artist's acquaintances for leads. Arrangements were made for loans by correspondence to England, Jamaica and Canada. The volunteers' efforts were collated by the main researcher, Director Alissandra Cummins, who also drafted the text for the catalogue.

Whistler, an Englishman, settled, lived and worked in the Caribbean from the 1950's till the 1970's, painting and sketching both the familiar and famous. The findings now published in the show's catalogue tell of his education in British art schools; his work as a muralist and restorer alongside his more famous cousin Rex Whistler; his introduction to colonial society in the Caribbean of that period; and his eventual decline in body and spirit.

The Whistler exhibition is just one in a series of exhibitions produced annually by the museum staff and volunteers. These exhibitions take time and money, but they are worth their weight in gold. Through their interpretive power they generate immediate response and awareness in the community, and the visual material and documentation produced, along with the catalogue, provide a permanent and invaluable record for the students, scholars and enthusiasts of Caribbean history.

The exhibition ran from mid November to mid December. Funding was made possible through the generous involvement of Barclays Bank PLC.



'East Coast Landscape'
Watercolour, 1960

Guided Tours

Tour-guide training, which began in September, will continue throughout Jan. for a small but committed group of trainees. By February, well-informed guides will be offering regular tours to the public. What more effortless and enjoyable way to expand your cultural education?

Interested members can ring the museum early February for the tour schedule.

Fine Crafts Festival

After weeks of pouring rain and organizers' nightmares, Saturday 26th of November dawned bright and clear for the museum's Fine Craft Festival. The lower courtyard was an exotic and lively scene, with 30 of Barbados' finest artisans exhibiting, demonstrating and selling their work.

Woodworkers, papermakers, ceramists, weavers and basketmakers, jewellers in ceramics, wood and silver; textiles from appliqued wallhangings to silk batik scarves, dolls, Christmas ornaments, African headties and cut flowers.

Throughout the day, various craft processes were demonstrated at a showcase booth. Papermaking, basketry, flower arranging and ceramics were shown to and discussed with interested onlookers.

Several galleries were open, so visitors enjoyed browsing after they shopped. A tuk band and a steel band added to the festivity, as did mouthwatering goodies from food and drink stalls and wine bar in the upper courtyard.

Many visitors did all their Christmas shopping in one fell swoop, craftpersons appreciated both the outlet for their work and the chance to socialize with one another. The festival was, in a sense, a living exhibition of contemporary creative artisans, and the museum was both gallery and market, bringing their work to the public.

The only disappointment lay in the number of visitors, around 1000, about half of what we had hoped and planned for. There was competition with other independence events; even so, we were disappointed not to see more of our members supporting this important fundraising event.

The door prize, a crystal waterjug donated by Star Discount, was won by Ms M. Hutchinson.

Raffle!

Our raffle tickets, which, like the Fine Crafts Festival, were to aid the Children's Gallery Fund, did not meet fundraising expectations by the day of the fair. It has therefore been decided to extend the raffle sales until February.

The raffle's \$5000 worth of prizes includes Diza's sterling silver bracelet, a lost-wax replica of a 19th century Ashanti bracelet in our collections; a gold and chrysophe necklace donated by Louis Bayley; Peter Cave's hand moulded ceramic pot decorated in gold leaf; a work of art by Norma Talma; a weekend at Grand Barbados, and other delectable prizes.

If you can help by selling a book (of 20 tickets) please contact librarian Betty Carillo-Shannon (427-0201 or 436-1956). If you can't sell, please at least buy a ticket (from the office, or phone Betty). Your \$5, if each member bought just one ticket, would make the Children's Gallery dream that much closer to a reality.

Volunteers: Natural History Assistant wanted

Now that the mammoth task of installing the Natural History gallery is substantially completed, Natural History Curator Philippa Newton is embarking on an equally ambitious but less dramatic project: building up the museum's study collections.

This creates an interesting volunteer position for the right person. Philippa needs an assistant, a responsible person with her/his own transportation, able to give regular help at least once a week. The assistant will work in the field with Philippa, collecting and transporting specimens. Times need not be within regular working hours; in fact, for some field work Philippa prefers very early hours.

Interested? Phone Philippa Newton 427-0201 or 436-1956.

6 MUSEUM MYTHOLOGY

The Museum's Annual General Meeting of October 19 was the scene of unfortunate acrimony and dispute.

Amendments had been proposed to streamline a cumbersome administrative structure. Many valuable and well-intentioned members had been distressed by wild speculation about the effect the proposed amendments would have on the museum's future.

These speculations have done a great deal of damage to the museum's standing, both among a concerned membership and in the public eye. To set the record straight, the following myths need to be separated from fact so that members can make well-informed decisions in the museum's interest.

Myth #1: Government will "take over" the museum if we accept its subsidy.

Fact:

The museum is apolitical, and our relationship with government is an "arm's length" one of mutual respect. The annual subsidy pays salaries and some capital works, and is the government's recognition of the museum's cultural importance in the community. There are no strings beyond those which govern any agency's misuse of funds.

The government wouldn't **want** the museum it would be too expensive to find pensions and medical benefits, and of course make up all the funding that would no longer come from some major developmental funding agencies.

The government also appoints five of the 14 member council. Museum's requests in this area are taken into consideration, and appointees includes scholars and historians.

Myth #2: The staff is overpaid and underworked.

Fact:

The staff has a 40 hour work week. Council has attempted to bring salaries into line with those of the government sector. However, there is no pension or medical scheme. Professional staff is not paid for overtime, though 10-12 hour days are routine in the weeks preceding an exhibit opening.

In fact, with 7 degrees among four professional staff, and with each member embarking on some stage of post-graduate work, all are ~~qualified to find more highly paid work.~~

Myth #3: The present staff or council can sell off the collections

Fact: The collections are protected by collections policies and by the complicated processes of acquisition and de-acquisition. This means: an artifact is acquired after curatorial staff recommend and council approve its acquisition. The council asks: does this artifact fulfill the museum's mandate? Can we care for it properly? Does it come from an ethical source?

If an article ceases to have value in the collection, after careful consideration it can be disposed of by (1) returning it to the donor, (2) placing it on long-term loan to another museum, or trade or transfer with another museum. (3) As a last resort it may be sold at public auction, the money received going to the Collections Fund. It cannot be given or sold privately to a museum or government employee. Full disposal records must be kept.

Myth # 4: The museum is subverting the intentions of the founders

Fact: On the contrary, the effort to streamline some of the museum's more outmoded procedures are in the innovative spirit of its founders

Mr Shilstone, first Honorary Secretary of the museum, was a scholar of tremendous intellectual curiosity, an eminent solicitor, and a founding member of the museum. At its opening in 1935, he said "we intend that it shall offer facilities for observing and studying the life of birds, animals, insects, fish, etc, but also every other desirable object identified with the life, habits, customs of the people of Barbados "

Mr Shilstone used the most advanced museum techniques of his time. But the spirit of inquiry is an expansive quality, and takes different forms as it evolves. Modern technology and developments in history, sociology and archeology have brought new dimensions of the past

to light. We feel Mr. Shilstone would be delighted that Amerindian artifacts can now be accurately carbon dated; that skeletal analysis can tell us of diet, health and lifespan; that the computer makes so much information so accessible; that new techniques can link past and present.

Mr. Shilstone would be the last person to adhere to the dead letter of procedures that have outlived their usefulness

An Appreciation: Iris Branch Bannochie

The museum mourns the loss of a most unusual lady, one whose life was marked by a number of unusual and substantial successes.

Born in Grenada in 1914, Iris Bannochie was educated in Barbados. In 1935 she married Harry Bailey, to this day remembered as a diagnostician of exceptional ability, and a pathologist who introduced new techniques to Barbados. With his brother-in-law he established Bailey's Clinic, which continues to function as the Diagnostic Clinic. Iris threw herself wholeheartedly into this work, and became in fact, if not de jure, the Clinic's Matron and manager.

At an early age, in 1958, Harry Bailey was felled by a heart attack. Iris, left with their four daughters, was devastated. She turned increasingly to the St. Joseph cottage Harry had built as an escape from the demands of a busy practice.

Thus Andromeda Gardens was born, as Iris indulged her love of flowers. The years passed in the development of Andromeda Gardens and seeing the girls through school and to a life of their own. In 1964 she embarked on a second happy marriage, to John Mackie Bannochie.

Since that time Iris became the undisputed leader of horticulture in Barbados. She became four times President of the Barbados Orchid Circle, and was for some years President of the Barbados Horticultural Society.

In 1970 she was appointed Deputy Chairman of the newly created Parks and Beaches Commission, and in 1976 became its Chairman. She was also a member of the Cave Authority, and when Harrison's Cave was nearing completion she became Chairman of the National Conservation Commission. She was a founder life member of the Barbados National Trust and a member of its Council. She gave unstinting support to the Barbados Museum and Historical Society. Welchman Hall Gully, Farley Hill, Harrison's Cave and the landscaped area of the East Coast Road all bear the imprint of her indefatigable green fingers.

This remarkable woman appeared to have ^{had} inexhaustible reserves of energy and enthusiasm. She awoke before dawn each day and attended to a voluminous, world-wide horticultural correspondence.

She represented Barbados on numerous occasions at the Chelsea Flower Show, consistently winning medals and awards. She took award-winning part in the world-wide Orchid Conference, and in the 1984 International Garden Festival in Liverpool.

In 1980 she was awarded the Silver Crown of Merit in recognition of her services to the National Conservation Commission and to the general development of Barbados.

In 1984 tragedy interrupted the march of her successes and growing fame with the death of her eldest daughter, Anne, who as a doctor had followed in the distinguished footsteps of her father. In her tragedy as in her successes she was sustained by the unfailing love and support of her husband, John Bannochie.

Her love of beauty, her keen cultivation of all kinds of flowers, her belief that we must preserve and conserve the natural beauty of this island were not abstractions but concrete goals to which she dedicated her vast energies and enthusiasms without limit.

We are all the richer for her life. May she rest in peace.

From an appreciation by Mr. Jack Dear

The Amerindian Presence

On Dec. 7, an audience of keen archeology buffs heard Dr. Peter Drewett give an overview of the prehistoric cultures that have left material evidence in Barbados.

Over the past four years, archeology teams from London University have excavated sites, mainly coastal, in various parts of the island. This year, a team of experts is studying the previous years' artifacts.

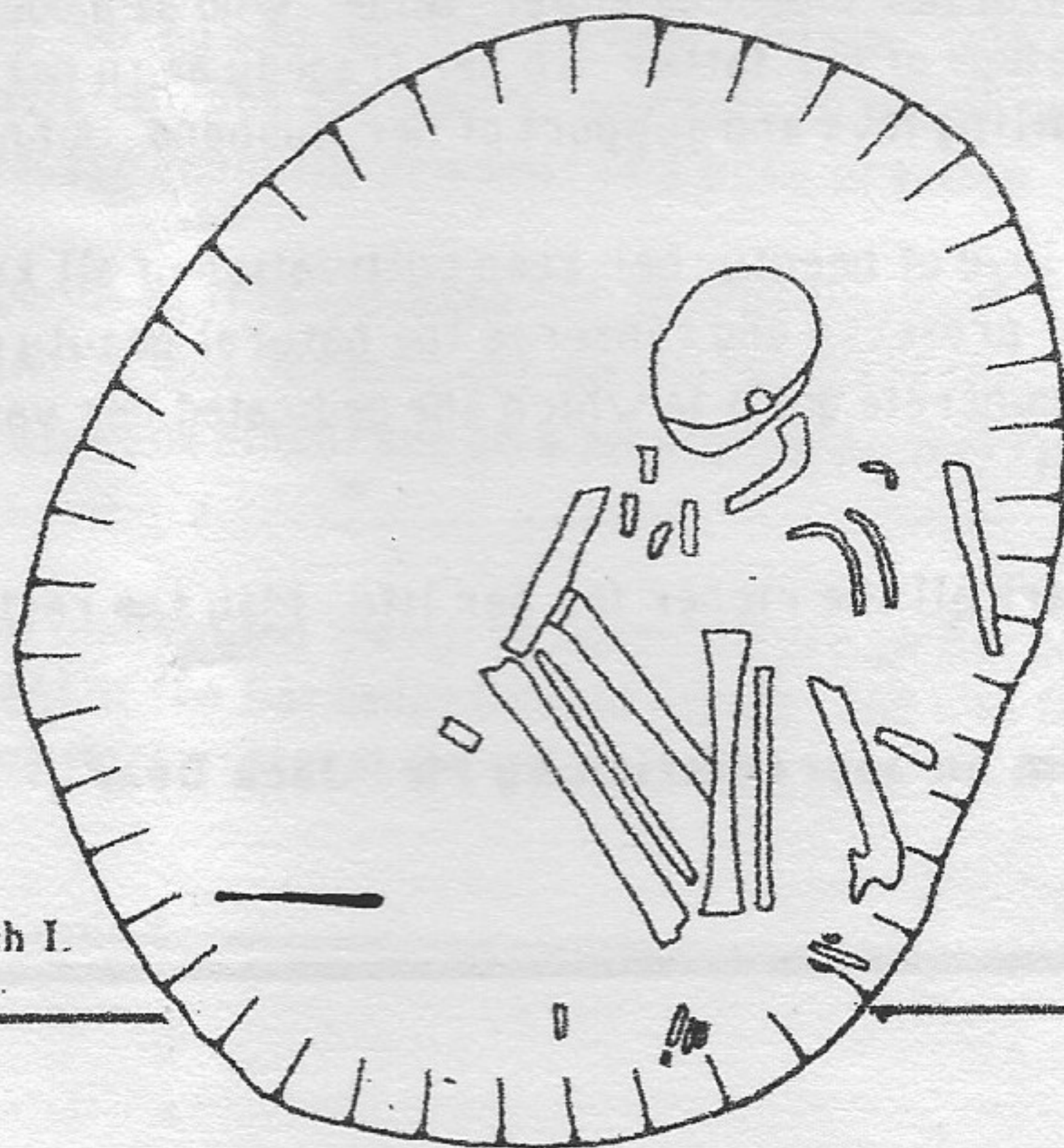
Among other intriguing insights, Dr. Drewett illustrated how migration patterns can be deduced from stylistic changes in pottery; how diets can be deduced from analysis of midden debris. Parrot fish skeletons, urchin and conch shells, turtle bones point to a protein-rich diet. Analysis of the 19 burials found give clues to health, life-span and cultural practices.

Disposing of various prejudices and preconceptions, Dr. Drewett reminded listeners that artificial labels dividing Amerindians into the "good, peaceful" Arawaks and the "bad, warlike" Caribs are over-simplifications invented by Europeans, and are unsupported by archeological evidence (though these distinctions are still taught in the schools). Also disappointing for those who like gory drama: no evidence of cannibalism!

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Chancery Lane Excavations 1987

Plan of flexed burial 4 in Trench I.



DRAW-IN at the Museum

The museum should bubble over with teenaged creativity at our Feb 25 DRAW-IN. Throughout the day, secondary school youngsters will use the museum and its environment as an extensive art studio. Artists and art teachers will circulate to encourage young artists and give pointers.

There will be door prizes of art supplies /books (these will be door prizes, not competitive awards) for the following groups:

Forms I, II, and III

Forms IV and V

Form VI

If a young artist in your family is not coming with a school group, she/he may enter individually. Phone for details at beginning of February.

The Maremont Collection

The museum has recently become the fortunate recipient of the Maremont Collection. Over the years, Mrs. Eileen Maremont and her late husband Arnold have been members and active supporters of the society. This generous gift of over 20 pieces of shellwork continues their tradition of donating important artifacts to the collections.

The collection, which will be on exhibit from January 7-23 in the Cunard Gallery, includes many unique specimens from the 18th, 19th, and 20th centuries. These comprise exquisite bouquets of shell flowers, delicate pictures in seaweed and shell and dramatic arrangements in coral and shell. They are displayed under glass domes recalling the Victorian era. The collection is a tribute to those craftsmen of an earlier period, and should be of interest to anyone with an appreciation for exotic design and skilled, detailed, decorative art.

Exhibition: Barbados Labour Party 50th Anniversary

On Oct. 19th, members and supporters of the BLP, one of Barbados' major political parties, gathered at the party's headquarters to celebrate 50 years of political activity.

The main feature of the evening was an extensive display of photographs and memorabilia from key personalities and events relating to the party's interesting history. The museum had been approached by Ms. June Clarke, the party's coordinator, for advice and assistance in planning, designing and installing the display.

Of particular interest to viewers were the personal items of Sir Grantley Adams including his "red box" from the Federal days when he served as PM of the defunct West Indian Federation.

Photographs of the party's founding members and newspaper blow-ups of the 1930's were also among the interesting items on view.

The exhibition was mounted for two weeks, however it is hoped that the information will be condensed and produced in a more useable form.

Library News

Ninety five researchers used the library during the last quarter of '88. Numerous overseas phone callers also researched everything from cricket to steam engines. There was the usual range of geneological requests, mainly from overseas. The library was also used by a visiting BBC team from London, and by librarians from the National Library Service.

Seventeen new titles have been acquired, including some interesting material on the St. Pierre eruption in Martinique.

Women's Writing in the Caribbean

Both newcomers to Caribbean literature and seasoned enthusiasts will enjoy Jeanette Springer's lecture-discussion, "Women's Writing in the Caribbean"

Fans of Jean Rhys will welcome Ms. Springer's insights into Wide Sargasso Sea - if you have a paperback copy, bring it along! (Did you know that the heroine of Rhys' novel is the mad Creole heiress of Jane Eyre?) The work of two brilliant younger woman writers, Jamaica Kincaid and Merle Hodge, will also be introduced.

The evening will serve a double purpose: if there is sufficient interest, we will launch a Caribbean reading circle, with the aim of reading 4-6 Caribbean novels a year.

Coffee will be served. We look forward to meeting fellow bookworms Tuesday, January 24th at 7:30 pm.

In Memoriam: the Hon. Janet Kidd

The museum acknowledges with regret the death of the Hon. Janet Kidd. The daughter of Lord Beaverbrook, Mrs. Kidd was a strong personality, and made several generous gifts and donations to the museum. An Englishwoman, she had a home in Barbados, where she was known as an active horse breeder, farmer, artist and author. The museum extends its sympathy to her family.

Cover: Lifeguard with Aloe by Hector Whistler 1971 See article p. 2

The museum staff would like to express their sincere thanks to the hardworking volunteers who gave time and energy to the Fine Craft Festival. In particular:

Carol Belle	Elaine Hewitt	Ronald Ramsey
Beryl Birch	Martha Harris	Patrick Newton
Cathy Carter	Ron Hinds	Angela MacGeoch
Cynthia Cave	Alicia Hinds	Elizabeth Riley
Philip Clarke	Ian Holligan	Erskine Rose
Ellice Collymore	A. Hope	Laura Rudder
Francine Cox	Keith Inniss	Cyril Shannon
Frances Cummings	Mary Johnson	Gwen Shoy
Vere Deane	Andre King	Paula Skeete
Bill Donawa	Alice Lamoureux	Jennifer Small
Derek Durant	John Lamoureux	Fitzroy Smith
Daisy Frost	Jennifer Lewis	Jo Sorhaindo
Joyce Gale	Cheryl Mapp	Sidi Streetly
Margaret Goddard	Marilyn Mapp	Nicky Williams
Kathleen Goddard	Winston Mottley	Nancy Yaeger
Mary Greene	George Pilgrim	Connie Younglao
Anthony Griffith	Olivia Price	Charlie Pilgrim
Leonore Harney	Marlena Ramsey	

Thanks also to the Canadian Women's Club, The Syrian-Lebanese Womens Association, and Ms. Cheryl Roach for running food stalls, and to the generous local businesses and individuals who donated gifts or covered expenses, especially:

Louis Bayley and Sons Ltd.	Ocean View Hotel
Barbados Bottling Co. Ltd.	Mr. Carlton Proute
Barbados Commercial Insurance Co. Ltd.	Roberts Stationery Ltd.
Carter and Co. Ltd.	R. L. Seale and Co. Ltd.
Mr. Peter Cave	Star Discount Ltd.-Worthing
Coffee and Cream Gallery	Star Discount Ltd. -Fontabelle
Flambouyant Restaurant	Mrs. Norma Talma
Goddard's Enterprises Ltd.	Visual Arts Ltd.
Grand Barbados Beach Resort	Waterfront Cafe
Letchworth Press Ltd.	Barbados National Trust
Nation Publishing Co. Ltd	Royal Bank of Canada
	C I B C

Coming Exhibitions

An interesting variety of temporary exhibitions will be shown this quarter. Beginning the new year is a two-woman show of portrait paintings by Carolyn Barrow and sculpture by Gladys Lewis, running approximately three weeks from Dec. 21. The Eileen Maremont Shell Collection (see p. 15) will be exhibited from Jan. 7-23. Jan. 28- Feb. 4 will see a solo exhibition of paintings, largely abstract and symbolic, by Denise Menard-Greenidge. And Feb. 4-24 will showcase *Caribbeana II*, a collection of historical West Indian prints and paintings. Manuscripts and objets d'art may also be included.

Museum Adventures: the Annual Tour

Elated by the success of past tours, the museum is considering a week/ 10 day members tour to Santo Domingo in June 1989. Among the intriguing destinations will be:

The Cathedral of Santa Maria la Menor: oldest cathedral (1514) in the Americas

The Alcazar: palace built for Diego, son of Columbus

La Ataranza: a restored historic site housing many art galleries featuring Haitian and Dominican art.

Museo de las Casas Reales: a museum of colonial arts tracing early Santo Domingo history.

Museo del Hombre Dominicano: houses one of the most important collections of Caribbean pre-Columbian artifacts.

Interested members are asked to notify Angela 436-1956 as soon as possible. This does not commit you to participating, but allows us to estimate numbers and costs. More news in the next newsletter.

The Museum Welcomes the Following New Members

Mr and Mrs Geoffrey Badley

Mr John Bagot

Rev. William Beckles

Mr and Mrs Darcy Boyce

Miss Breanne Boyce

Dr and Mrs G T Cummins

Mr Vernon Fenty

Miss Laura-Lynn Goodridge

Mr Keith King

Mr and Mrs Robert Kirby

Mr and Mrs Douglas Martindale

Ms Daphne Reece

Miss Heather-Dawn Scott

Dr and Mrs Mark Tanny

Ms Abbas Tanny

Miss Ava Tanny

Dr Josep Llokerá

Mr and Mrs Patrick Watson

Calendar
Open to Public
Mon-Sat 9.00-6.00

Jan 1 Bank Holiday
Dec 21-Jan 11 (approx) Exhibition
Carolyn Barrow and Gladys Lewis
Jan 7-23 Exhibition
Eileen Marenmont Shell Collection
Jan 24 7:30 Lecture
Jeanette Springer. "Women's
Writing in the Caribbean"
Jan 28-Feb 4 Exhibition
Denise Menard-Greenidge
Feb Regular guided tours begin
Phone museum for schedule
Feb 4-24 Exhibition
Caribbeana 11
Feb 25 1.30-5.00
DRAW-IN

Monthly Meetings

Philatelic Society: every 2nd
Wednesday 7.30
Archaeological Society: every
3rd Wednesday 7.30

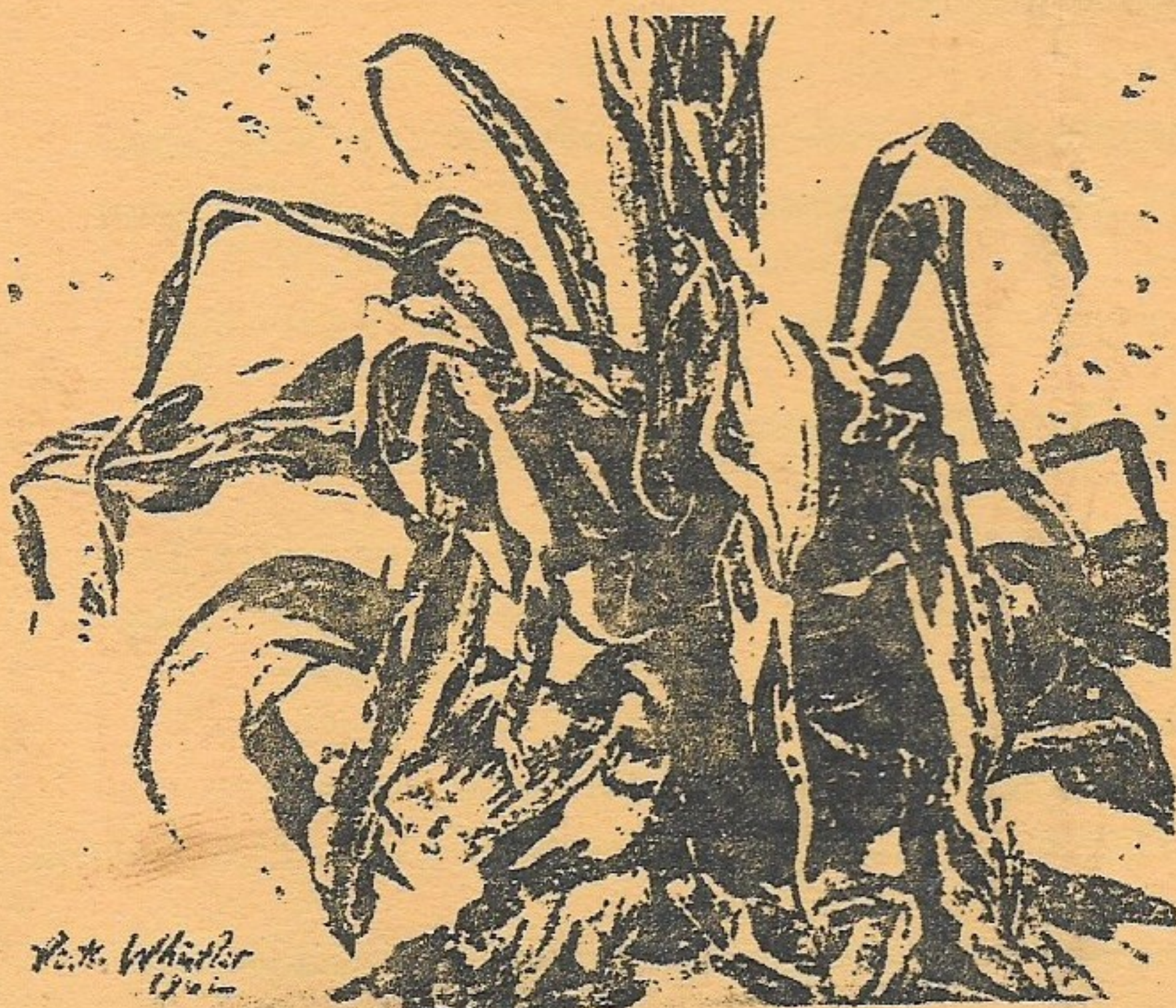
BARBADOS MUSEUM &
HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Telephone 427-0201
436-1956

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

ON SERVICE

Mr. & Mrs. Lester Thompson
No. 96 Rock Dundo Park
Cave Hill
St. Michael



'Cactus'
Watercolour, 1962