

NEWSLETTER

NO. 44

2nd QUARTER, 1993

MISSION STATEMENT

The Barbados Museum is a non-profit institution. Its mandate is to collect, document and conserve evidence of Barbados' cultural, historical and environmental heritage; and to interpret and present this evidence for all sectors of society.

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Governor-General of Barbados.

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Ms. Alissandra Cummins

NEWTON PLANTATION CEREMONY

An exciting ceremony on July 19 at 5.00 will launch our 60th Anniversary campaign. President Trevor Carmichael invites the Museum's members to participate in a significant historical event: the official handing over of Newton Plantation's slave cemetery.

Present Managing Director, Mr. Lionel Ward, long a sympathetic protector of the site, is confident the transfer of ownership to the Barbados Museum will ensure its preservation in the years to come.

A patch of rab land shaded by whispering casuarinas, the site does not easily reveal its importance to Barbadian history. Yet as the earliest and largest undisturbed slave cemetery known in the Caribbean, and the only one known in Barbados, this land undoubtedly holds the key to a rich storehouse of knowledge about the nation's African heritage.

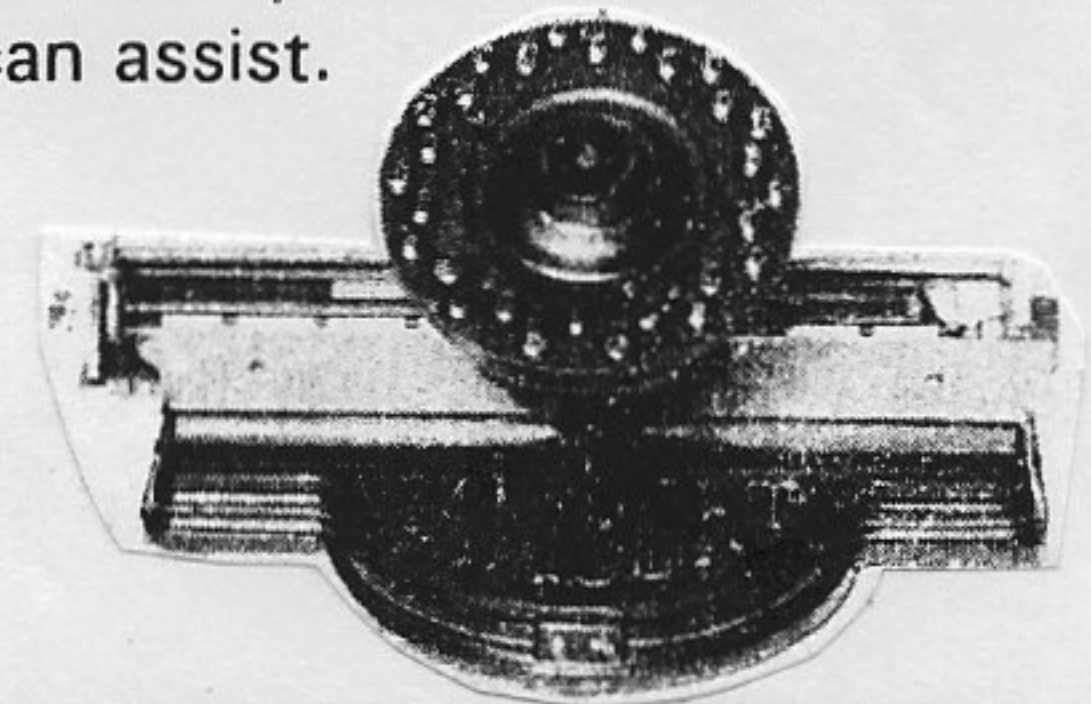
Partial excavations in the early 1970's by Professor Jerome Handler's group revealed important artifacts and data on cultural and biological issues, religious beliefs and the sociocultural life of Barbadian slaves between the 1660's and 1820's (see *Plantation Slavery in Barbados*, Jerome Handler and Frederick W. Lange). Data which

is nowhere else documented shows how plantation slaves adapted to their lives in a new land, and created the Creole culture which is the Barbadian heritage. The BMHS has for the past 10 years sought ways to extend its existing cultural programs. Newton's slave cemetery may afford the opportunity to do just this. The Museum has chosen its 60th Anniversary year to highlight and affirm Barbados' African heritage through the July 19th ceremony. We hope you will join us, and in reclaiming the past, enhance the future.

VOLUNTEER NEWS

Any friends of the Museum willing to share clerical skills?

Librarian Betty Shannon needs a typist to help catch up her backlog, and would appreciate help for one or more morning sessions. Secretary Angela Boyce is disappearing under the paperwork, and would be grateful for a regular session of filing or any other clerical help. Please phone the Museum if you can assist.



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SUMMER PROGRAMMES

The end of the school year and the dog days of summer encourage a more leisurely pace, and surely the Museum's summer programs will have something to suit everyone.

Relaxed and informal is the keynote. Share the vision of our regional Nobel Laureate at **Omeros**. Jeanette Springer and Alfred Pragnell will give readings from Derek Walcott's masterwork, and provide an entertaining introduction for the general reader. The Museum galleries will be open from 7.00 for browsers, and a self-service bar will be available.

Omeros: Monday July 12, 7.30.

A literary event for the other end of the spectrum is **Storyline**, for 3-7 year olds and their families. A short video for parents and teachers, **Read to Me**, describes how reading to children from infancy helps them become enthusiastic, active readers. "Aunties" will read stories from 10:00 to 11:00, and join them for a fruitjuice-and-snack picnic. Children and their families are welcome to explore the Children's Gallery (or any other gallery) as long as they like until closing time. **Storytime Saturday July 17, 10:00.**

Perhaps we should have called **Starlight Serenade** "some enchanted evening". Starlight and candlelight in the cool of the evening provide a perfect introduction to (or re-acquaintance with) the Museum. All the galleries will be open for browsing; the period rooms will be candlelit, and give a sense of their original nighttime ambience.

As a delightful backdrop, guitarists Pam Frost and Dallas Regret, and flautist Wayne Thorne will offer an intimate recital of light classical/popular music.

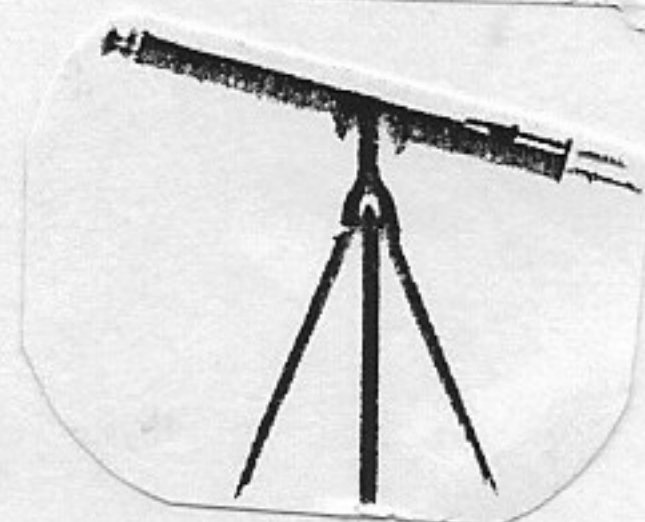
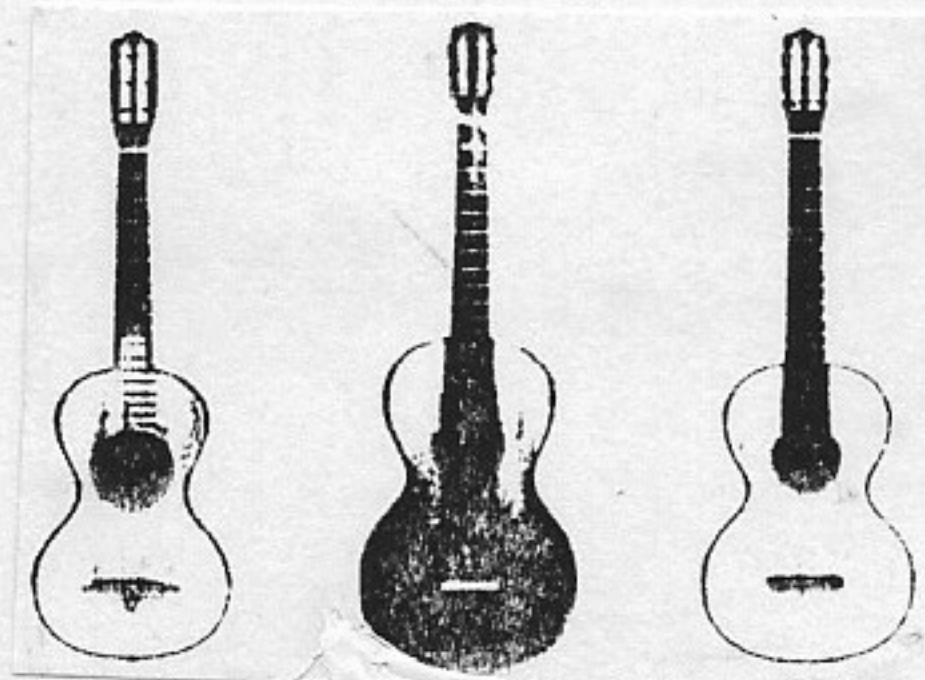
And that's not all. For stargazers, Leo Branch will set up his 10" telescope in the courtyard. Leo's enthusiasm is truly "astronomical", and he will gladly provide visitors with a tour of the night sky. A self-serve bar will also be available.

So....meet your friends, - browse through the galleries, listen, sip a glass of wine, stargaze.

Starlight Serenade: Friday July 23, 7.30

An environmental **Children's Green Camp**, still in the planning stage, will be held in August 9-13. Interested readers should phone the Museum for detailed information and registration details July 19-23.

At the time of printing, all details have not been finalized, and some substitutions may occur. Phone to check. Adult events \$7, students \$5. **Storytime:** Adults \$5, children \$1, family group of any number of children and their adults \$10.



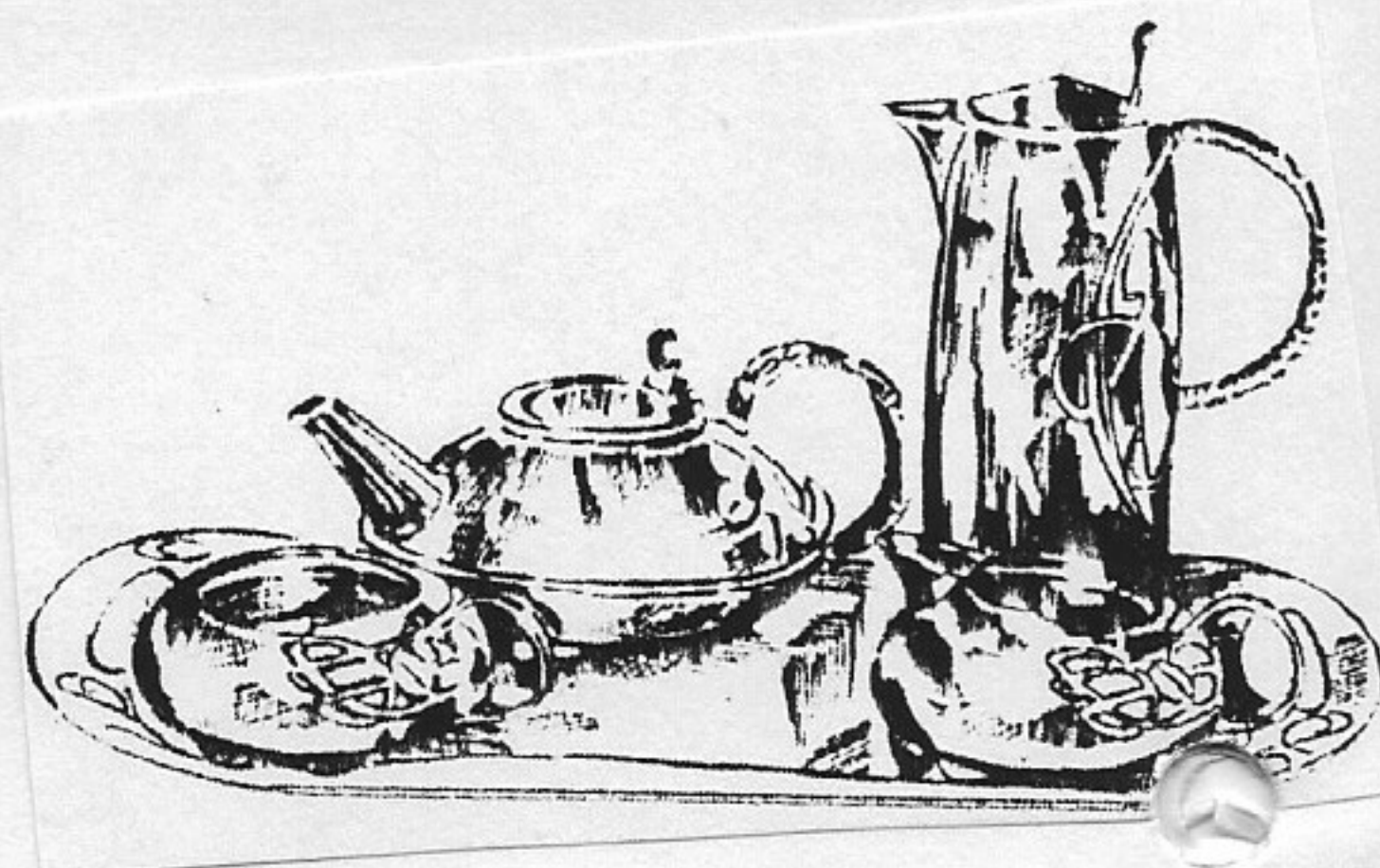
COURTYARD CAFE

Visitors suffering from museum fatigue will be pleasantly surprised to come upon the Museum's new courtyard cafe.

Edible Arts, managed by Judy Lashley, is open from 10 - 5 Monday to Saturday. Staff are winsomely costumed à la Rachel à Pringle, and offer a traditional ambience and menu. Their big frosty glasses of fresh fruit juice are deservedly popular: tamarind, ginger, Bajan gooseberry, guava, golden apple, passionfruit and various seasonal fruit punches.

Light lunches - soups, salads, sandwiches- and a daily special make a great midday pick-me-up. The ice creams and baked goodies are a treat anytime, and especially for afternoon tea.

Edible Arts caters for groups, too. Contact them at the Museum to arrange that special meeting.



MUSEUM OPEN DAY

We were all very pleased by the response to our June 18 **Open Day** (which also marked International Museums Day). Staff and volunteers, "uniformed" in Museum T-Shirts, welcomed 460 visitors.

It was gratifying to see how many

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Barbadians, many of them elderly, turned out, and stayed for long visits. Docents gave hourly tours, staff mingled and chatted, and the new cafe was well patronized. A steady all-day stream of visitors turned to a torrent after work, and the Museum stayed open till 7.00 to accommodate them.

Dr. Karl Watson's lecture on the Amerindian presence in Barbados was attended by a large appreciative audience, and brought a successful day of outreach to a close.

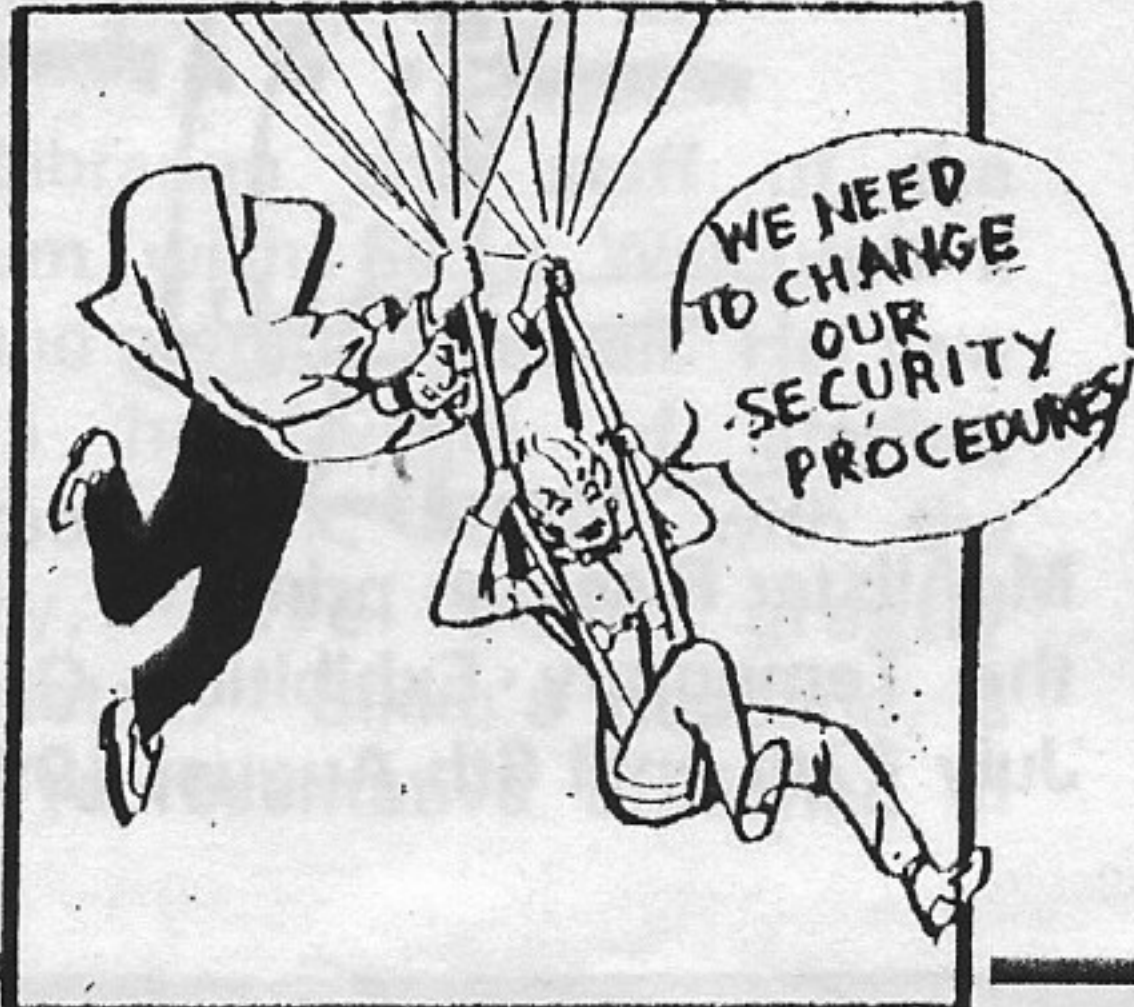
SECURITY PROCEDURES

It's a sad sign of the times that even the Museum is not safe from the threats of violence and vandalism found everywhere.

So, we have been overhauling our security system, preferring to prevent trouble rather than pick up the pieces afterwards.

Members can be a big help in co-operating with new procedures that enable us to know who is on the premises at all times. Members will be asked to identify themselves, and all visitors for meetings, visiting administration etc, will be asked to sign in and wear an identifying badge.

This will assist our security in distinguishing the legitimate visitor from the "dropper-in" up to no good.



THE AFRO-AMERICAN CONNECTION

Earlier this year, Fine Arts Curator Lesley Whatley-Barrow was awarded a five-week attachment with the NCAAA (National Center of Afro-American Artists). The attachment was part of the IPAM (International Partnership Among Museums) award scheme.

She thus had the opportunity to familiarize herself with African art in various private and institutional collections. Academic contacts included an anthropology course and research into Africa's rich and complex heritage. In particular, there was opportunity to examine issues that govern many of our perceptions about Africa, its art and artifacts.

Lesley hopes to integrate these experiences into dynamic educational experiences for museum visitors, and for the community at large.

A CARIBBEAN LEARNING ADVENTURE

April was an exciting month for learning, teaching and networking. The museum hosted two of UNESCO's [Caribbean Regional Museum Development Project] workshops, Museum Education and Cataloguing and Registration. Several workshops have already been held at other Caribbean locations, their object being to provide Caribbean museum workers with specific professional skills.

Our Education Curator Wendy Donawa was the instructor for Museum Education. This is the first time UNESCO has chosen a workshop instructor from within the Caribbean.

The course offered practical and technical know-how, as well as a philosophical understanding of the education potential in museums. It was a true colloquium, whose 16 pan-Caribbean participants represented the whole region, from Belize to Guyana. Several representatives from Barbadian heritage organisations also attended.

Our Executive Secretary, Angela Boyce attended Cataloguing and Registration. For four challenging days, her group discussed methods of collections management. They examined criteria for deciding what information should be computerized, and what type of system fits a particular museum's needs.

In conclusion, Angela says, "with my interest in the Museum not only in the secretarial field, but the entire function of the Museum, the experience I gained in this workshop - I will be able to assist in other areas".

JUNIOR CURATORS' PROGRAMME

Our summer team of Junior Curators has nearly finished its training, and we look forward to a plentiful supply of youthful energy and enthusiasm to help us through the long hot summer.

The Junior Curator Programme, successfully launched last summer, is intended to function three ways. First, it is a skills-training programme, offering cultural experience, expertise and a small stipend to unemployed young adults interested in the heritage field.

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Secondly, it provides short-handed curators with assistance in research, exhibit maintenance, clerical and photography tasks.

Thirdly, Junior curators are also trained tour guides, and provide the public with interpretive tours. Children from summer camps and community groups pour in during vacation, 2000 of them last year! It is essential for the safety of both children and artifacts that visits be organized and supervised, and guided tours provide this in an enjoyable format.

This summer's Junior Curators, assisted by five teenaged volunteer tour guides, are Kathy Ann Bellamy (21) Alison Headly (19) and Catherine Williams (18).

LIBRARY NEWS

Librarian Betty Carrillo-Shannon attended the 25th Anniversary of the pilot project to promote reading to pre-school children on May 14.

From May 23-29, she attended the second ACURIL Conference, held in Barbados. Two hundred and sixty participants, mainly librarians, from 35 countries examined the theme **Information Horizons for the Caribbean**. The conference provided a fruitful opportunity to exchange views with colleagues, and keep abreast of new information developments.

The Librarian and staff of the Museum wish Sikku Walburgh a fond and grateful farewell. Her two and a half years of sterling volunteer work, mainly with the Library, have been greatly appreciated. Sikku's husband, a UNDP representative stationed in

Barbados, has been transferred to Estonia. We're sorry to see her go, and wish the very best of luck on her new horizons.

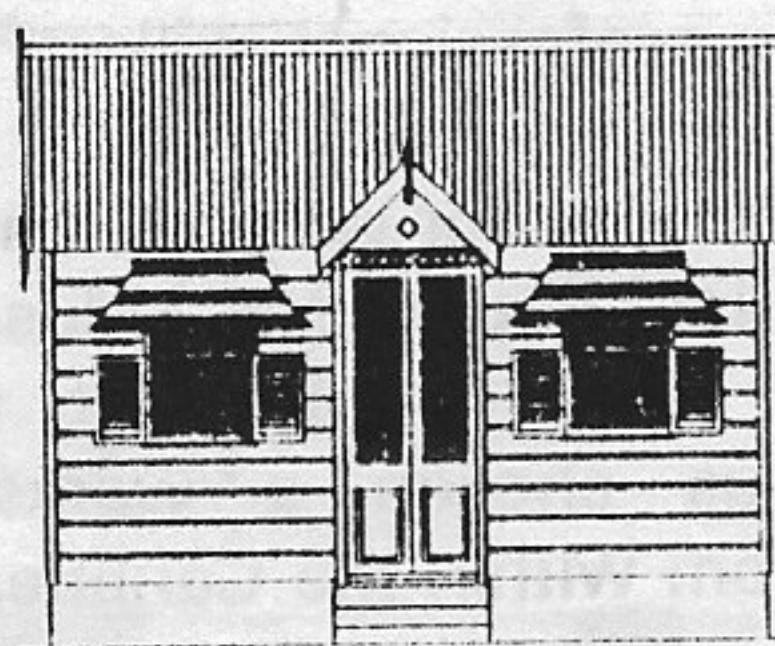
The Library will be closed from July 12 - August 3 while the Librarian is on vacation leave.

Congratulations to Mr. & Mrs Jean Baulu for the community spirit evident in the June 5th opening of Grenade Hall Signal Station.

Congratulations to the Art Collection Foundation for their launch of their Endowment fund and finding a home at last! We look forward to having them as neighbours 'across the way'.

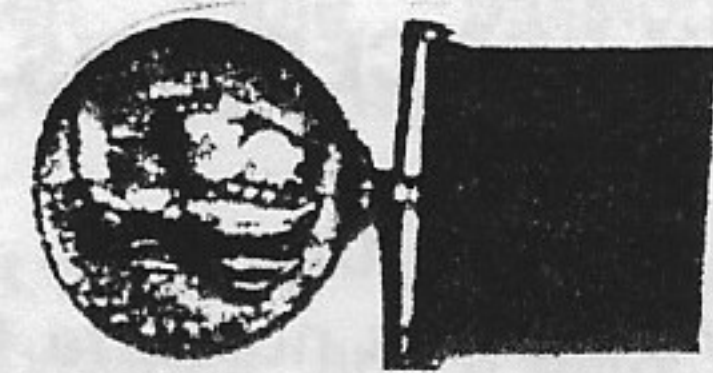
IN THE GALLERIES

Have you seen the new exhibit on Barbadian homes near the exit from the Jubilee? From the 19th century "trash hut" to the classic Bajan chattel house, and from the plantation great house to the merchant's townhouse, Barbadian domestic architecture has a style that distinguishes it from all other Caribbean homes. A focal point of the exhibit is the exquisitely detailed chattel house model constructed by our incomparable friend and member Funds for this permanent exhibit were made possible through the generosity of the Barbados Institute of Architects.



Apologies to military buffs! A conservation crisis has caused the temporary closure of the military gallery. Water from a lavatory pipe leaking into the adjoining wall rotted through the cases, and considerable damage was done by the time it was discovered.

For completely drying out these old walls, especially in this humid environment, takes its own time. Meanwhile, new cases have been constructed and repositioned, and we hope to re-open at the beginning of July.



A piece-by-piece redesign of the popular Amerindian exhibit is also taking place. Discovery that the large canvas mural was disintegrating meant a big salvage operation, with surviving portions of the mural re-mounted, text re-written and diorama reconstructed. Changes in the wall cases can also be expected over the coming months.



McAlister Freeman prints in the Temporary Exhibition Gallery July 17th until 6th August 1993.

UPCOMING EVENTS

JULY

| | | |
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| 9 - 10 July | Museum closed for Disaster Preparedness exercise | |
| 12 Jul - 3 Aug | Library Closed | |
| 12 Jul 7:30 p.m. | Summer Programme: OMEROS . Readings from Derek Walcott's work. | |
| 14 Jul 7.30 p.m. | Philatelic Society Meeting | Temporary Exhibition Gallery |
| 17 Jul 10:00 a.m. | Summer Programme: STORYTIME . Story telling and exploring for 3-7 year olds and their families. | |
| 18 Jul-6 Aug | McAlister Freeman Art Exhibition | Temporary Exhibition Gallery |
| 19 Jul 5.00 p.m. | Newton Plantation Handover ceremony | Newton Plantation |
| 19 -23 Jul | Registration for GREEN CAMP | |
| 23 Jul 7.30 p.m. | Summer Programme: STARLIGHT SERENADE . Gallery browsing, stargazing and light classical guitar. | |

AUGUST

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|-----------------|---|------------------------------|
| 2 Aug | Museum Closed | Kadooment Day |
| 9-13 Aug | CHILDRENS GREEN CAMP . An environmental camp for 8-11 year olds. | |
| 1 Aug 7:30 p.m. | Philatelic Society Meeting | Temporary Exhibition Gallery |

SEPTEMBER

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| 8 Sept 7:30 p.m. | Philatelic Society Meeting | Temporary Exhibition Gallery |
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OCTOBER

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| 3-15 Oct | Newcomers Art Exhibition | Temporary Exhibition Gallery |
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