

NEWSLETTER

NO. 48

2nd QUARTER, 1994

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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G.C.M.G., D.A.
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M IS FOR MUSEUM

If you haven't yet seen our Artifact Alphabet, bring your family and learn to "read" your heritage. The exhibit, designed by Education Curator Wendy Donawa, has several agendas.

The first, of course, is to provide *fun*. At children's eye-level, a whole set of easy-read labels for youngsters provide child-friendly information. (The sensible, factual stuff, in the adult labels, is at *our* eye-level.) Much of the exhibit is hands-on and multi-sensory (play the *mbira*, sniff the nutmeg, dress-up, take apart and re-assemble the rocking chair).

An activity centre provides drawing materials, quiz sheets for the under and over-eights, masks, even a crossword puzzle for grown-ups who want to play.

At a more serious level, the exhibit explores what we mean by *literacy* in the modern world. Literacy is no longer just the ability to scrawl the alphabet, if indeed it ever was. How do we encourage the skills of critical observation and analytical thinking, and the capacity to participate in a literate culture?

Though light-hearted, this exhibit uses a number of techniques to stimulate curiosity and encourage divergent thinking, and not only for children.

On June 25, the exhibit will be the focus of a workshop in Adult Literacy. In fact, we have for years been using the museum as an

informal "classroom" for learning, but this is its most ambitious effort so far, to assist adult learners. (Similar workshops can be planned for teachers and parents of dyslexic and special-needs learners: contact the Education Curator).

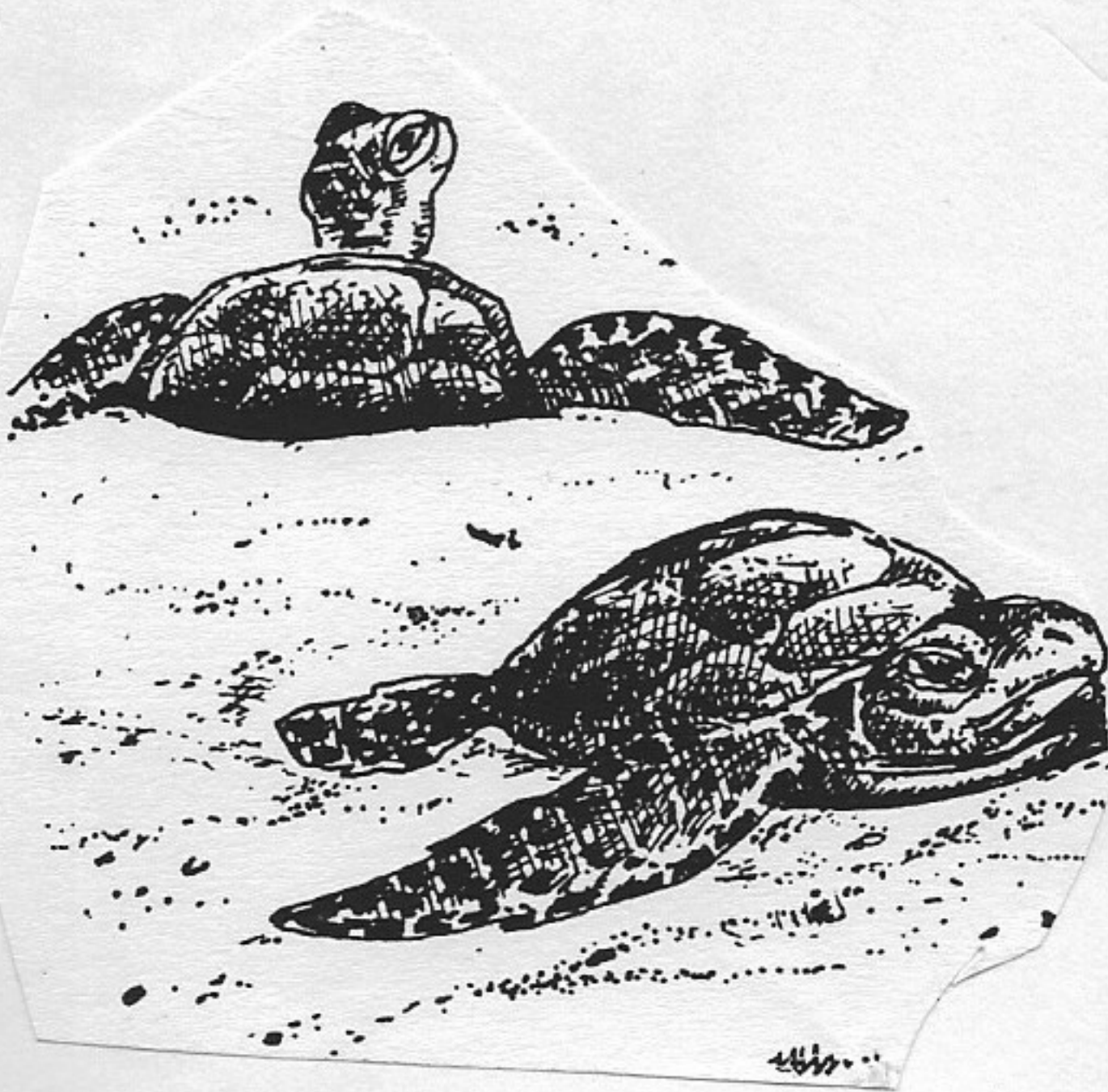
Other literacy initiatives will be linked to *M is for Museum*. (see *Summer Programs*). Meanwhile, the exhibit, which is beside our permanent Children's Gallery, provides the visiting family with a whole wing of children's activities for the summer.

M is for Museum closes on August 5.



SEA HORSES AND MORE

Have you ever seen a living sea horse? Have you ever watched an anemone gently open its tentacles at dawn? Even if you are unable to go diving, you may now enjoy such delights at the Folkestone Visitor Centre. The Centre opened early in May and represents the culmination of a cooperative exercise between the National Conservation Commission and the Barbados Museum.



The Museum's interest in the Folkestone project goes way back to almost four years ago when Curator of Natural History, Philippa King assisted the government's Environmental Unit in developing a proposal for submission to the International Centre for Ocean Development. One aim of the project was to upgrade the old Marine Museum.

While the project was being considered, the building which housed the Marine Museum was put into use accommodating government offices affected by the new construction at Holetown. When finally the project was funded through the Caribbean Marine Parks and Protected Areas Management Network Programme, which is supported by CIDA and administered by the Caribbean Conservation Association, the NCC

decided to locate the displays in another building at Folkestone. This presented many challenges, but eventually a new centre was designed and offices built for the new staff.

The Barbados Museum had been contracted primarily to coordinate the design and installation of the exhibits, but Philippa also assisted the NCC project coordinator, Alwyn Brathwaite in developing some of the other new features at the Folkestone Marine Park. The park is now well sign-posted and is undergoing new landscaping. We hope that eventually the landscaping will reflect the marine environment; featuring seaside vegetation. A Gift Shop and a facility which rents snorkelling equipment will soon be fully operational.

The exhibition team spent many weary hours in search of just the right specimens, photographs and artifacts to stress the importance and fragility of the marine environment. The displays highlight the social and economic benefits derived from this natural resource, and also illustrate the diversity of marine life.

During the whole process, the Museum benefitted through interaction with our colleagues at Folkestone. Philippa is appreciative of the team spirit exhibited by the NCC's staff in making the project a reality. Such cooperation continues to promote the establishment of sites to support the island's growing heritage tourism industry.

The Folkestone Visitor Centre is open 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday to Friday.



SHOP MANAGEMENT 15 YEARS OF CHANGE AND DEVELOPMENT

This year marks the 15th year of museum work for Shop Manager Anita King. Her connection



began in 1979, when the shop opened, and when she worked as combination receptionist and shop attendant. Readers may remember the little shop, squeezed into what is now the reception area. It sold cards, prints, a few books: of necessity, a limited selection.

Mrs King recalls with some nostalgia the upgrading of grounds and buildings that took place in her early years, remembering with special fondness the lush and beautifully attended gardens.

Changes in galleries and exhibits followed: Mrs King laughs, remembering how one could walk through the jail cell straight into the exhibits of silver and antiques.

It was as Shop Manager that she presided over the move into the present quarters, under the Library, in 1988. She enjoyed the challenge of greater space and an expanded line of books, crafts, prints and other heritage momentos. However, the present shop premises are once again too crowded for further product development, and she longs for a larger area with the potential for more storage, shelving, and display areas.

When she travels, Mrs King always checks out the museum shops, and talks, somewhat wistfully, of the beautiful shop displays in Ottawa's National Galleries, or of the ROM in

Toronto. Her interest in display goes beyond the shop, and extends to the overall display techniques of the exhibits.

When the Children's Gallery was in the last stages of its construction, she crocheted replica Victorian socks for the little boy in the "swing" diorama; and in the 1930's kitchen, her grandmother's little cream jug, and its old-time crocheted fly-cover reside in the traditional larder.

It's been 15 years of changes, but she says, overall, "I'm pleased with the progress".

SUMMER PROGRAMS

Celebrate children
Celebrate friends and families
Celebrate cultural heritage

Celebrate is the mood of our summer program, and cultural literacy is its themes, set by the Museum's new children's exhibit: **M is for Museum: an artifact alphabet.**

Throughout July, two exhibits are bound to please the young: the permanent Children's Gallery exhibit, **Yesterday's Children**, and **M is for Museum**, which will be open until August. And of course, all the other galleries are open.

The open galleries are the setting for our summer events: a trio of cultural offerings in song, dance, literature and performance to enrich your Sunday afternoons.

On Sunday, July 10, enjoy **STEEL AND SONG**. After browsing the galleries, enjoy the sweet sounds of pan, by the *St. Lucy Secondary School Steelband*. This is followed by the lilting Caribbean songs of *Allegro*, the folksinging group.

Sunday, July 17 brings **STILTS AND STORIES**. Families can explore the

galleries, browse through displays of children's literature from the Barbados Public Library, and enjoy storytelling by Librarian Paula Taylor.

A dramatic change in mood will then be provided by stiltman Gordon Ashby and his Tuk Band: several distinct ways of introducing children to heritage.

SONG AND DANCE, on Sunday July 24, includes entertainment by the children of the *Barbados Dance Theatre Company*. The Director, John Hunt, has choreographed a dance especially for this occasion: a dance that interprets our children's exhibits.

Tuneful folksongs by the *Allegro Singers* conclude our summer **Celebrate!** programs.

The Sunday afternoon programs will include the Museum's galleries, open 2:00-6:00, and the performances, commencing approximately 2:30 p.m.

Tell your friends!
Bring a picnic if you like.

Admissions by donation to all events.

JUNIOR CURATORS

This summer's Junior Curators have been selected, and began their training June 18. The program, now in its third year, has proved its worth on many levels.

On the first level, the JC program is a youth skills-training opportunity for unemployed young adults with heritage interests. The Junior Curators are trained as tour guides, and take over from the docents, running our busy summer tour program. They are also trained to assist in research and documentation.

So on the second level, they provide

an invaluable level of assistance to the curators, helping with research, exhibit maintenance, and program administration.

On the third level, they provide tours for upwards of 2000 summer visitors: schoolchildren, community and institutional groups, special-needs groups, and overseas visitors.

This summer's JC's are "veterans": Sheila Grazettes, Malissa Porter, Erica Hewitt and Catherine Williams. Volunteer backup will be provided by Steve Greenidge and Nicole Kennedy, who may well be next year's Junior Curators.

Two of our "Graduates", who have also volunteered for the Museum for years, are moving on to larger cultural pastures in September. Melanie Springer hopes to begin cinema studies in Cuba, while Cheryl Mapp begins graduate studies in speech pathology at Penn State University.

FUNDING FOR CONSERVATION PROJECT

With a total of approximately 50,000 objects in its collections, the Museum possesses significant Caribbean examples of 17th, 18th and 19th century fine and decorative arts, as well as pre-Columbian archaeological objects and African artifacts.

The importance of these objects is that they were either created, used, or collected by members of the various ethnic groups who have inhabited the island over the centuries.

The Museum has long recognized the need for a survey and conservation assessment, to protect and maintain our diverse collections and to identify specific conservation problems. The arrival in 1992 of conservator Connie Stromberg allowed us to prepare

plans, the objective being to survey and assess the Museum's decorative arts and archaeological collections.

A generous grant from the Getty Grant Program has made this project possible. The Getty Grant Program is part of the J. Paul Getty Trust, a private foundation related to visual arts and the Humanities. The grant will cover the acquisition of essential equipment, the services of 3 consultant conservators, and the hiring of a young Barbadian as a conservator's assistant.

The Museum is now better able to plan and implement a conservation plan in the near future.

DOCENT ACTIVITIES

This year's docent program ends with the school term, and our docents will enjoy a well-earned rest over the summer. During the school year, this dedicated group has given thematic tours to 5000 schoolchildren.

A falling-off in our usually packed third term is a sad economic symptom; many teachers say their classes simply cannot afford the cost of the bus (another vote for our own school bus).

In May, the Museum said goodbye to docent Audrey Taylor, who has left to take up residence in the U.S. Audrey is the last-but-one remaining docent of the original small group who helped launch our Schools Program in 1986. (Daisy Frost is the other). As the Program grew over the years, one could scarcely imagine it without Audrey's enthusiasm, interest and good humour. We will miss her.

A farewell function hosted chez docent Sidi Streetly, was attended by oldtimers and new comers, and was immortalized in Keens-Douglas-type poetry composed and rendered by the

irrepressible Daisy Frost.

LIBRARY NEWS

The Museum's Library continues to assist researchers, students, genealogists and browsers. The problem is, the library's work expands, but its space does not!

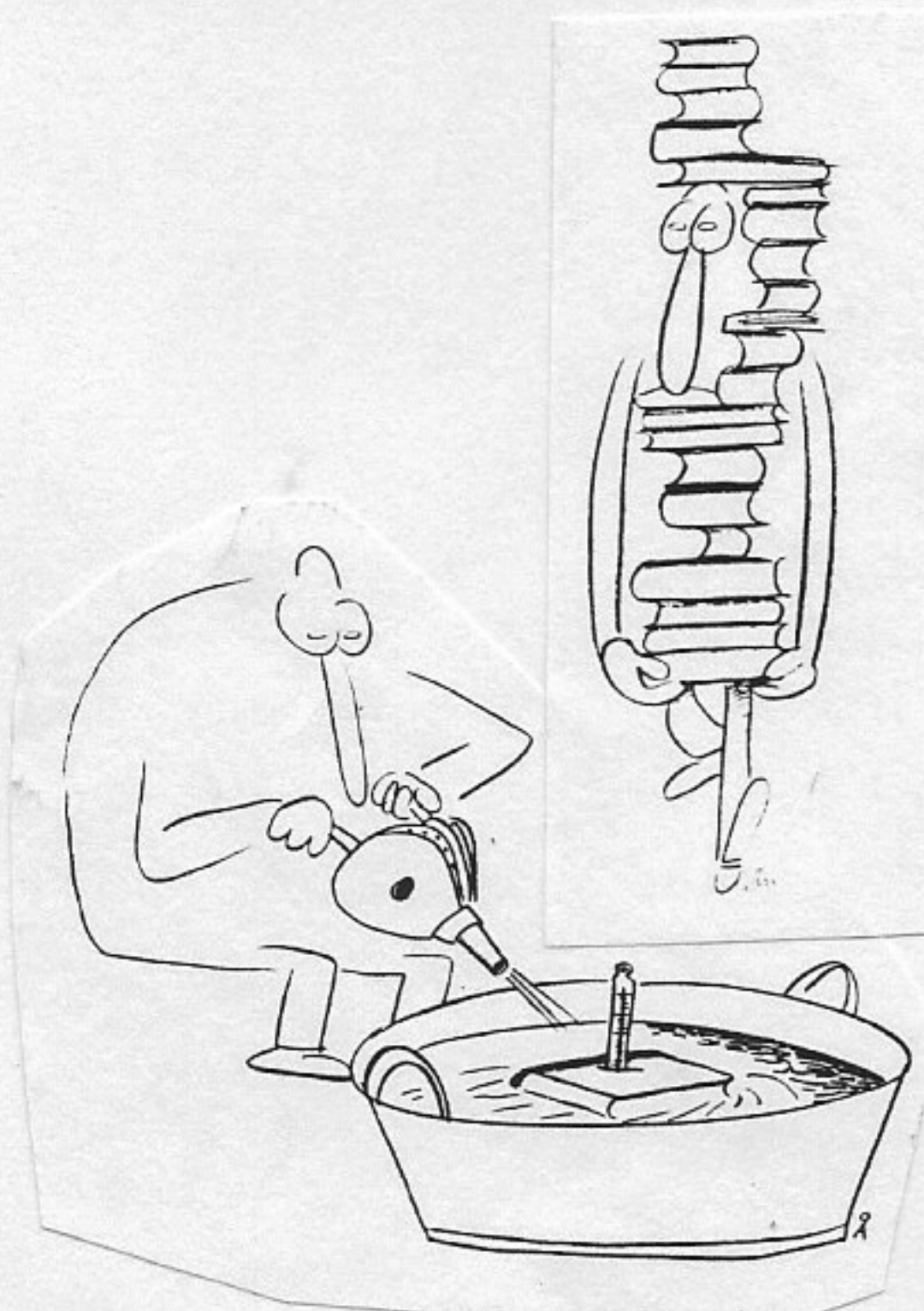
Librarian Betty Carrillo-Shannon grows desperate for filing space. She would be very grateful if reader(s) would donate file boxes or filing cabinets in good condition.

MUSEUM CLOSED FOR DISASTER PREPAREDNESS EXERCISE

The Barbados Museum has developed a plan aimed at safeguarding museum staff, visitors, collections and physical facilities in the event of natural or other disasters.

Accordingly, Museum staff perform an annual exercise in disaster preparedness near the beginning of the hurricane season.

This year, the Museum will be closed to the public during its exercise on Friday, July 1 and Saturday, July 2.



AFRICAN CERAMIC TRADITIONS IN THE NEW WORLD

This intriguing lecture is also part of our summer program. Dr. Thomas Loftfield will explore the different patterns of interaction among Africans, European and Amerindians, as revealed by the pottery they produced.

In particular, he will discuss why the pottery traditions of Africans in Barbados were uniquely different from those of other New World cultures. Dr. Loftfield will describe the archaeological work that has been done in Barbados, and the audience will have an opportunity to see many examples of pottery made by Africans in Barbados in the 17th and 18th centuries.

This lecture will appeal to artists and craftspeople, students and teachers, historians and the general public.

Wednesday, July 20, 7:30 pm. Free to the public.

NEW STAFF

Regular visitors to the Museum will notice two new faces, both belonging to security guards.

Royston Sargeant has spent his career in security. He is a retired policeman, with service in Barbados and St. Kitts and Nevis, and spent 13 years as Chief of Security at the Transport Board.

So he brings valuable security skills and experience. He is keenly interested in the Museum, and has already provided some research information for curators. In fact, he made several of the traditional children's toys in *M is for Museum*, and on Open Day could be seen

demonstrating the "holy jig" to groups of interested schoolchildren.

Rudolph Beckles' career has also been in security, though mainly in hotels. When in Canada, he was intrigued by an eco-system he observed, and finds museum work interesting - "you can learn so much history" he says. A one-time cricketer, he now takes his spare time more easily.

NEW MEMBERS

Joint Annual

Mr. & Mrs. Robert Bourque
Mr. & Mrs. H.S.L. Moseley
Mr. & Mrs. Desmond Tudor
Dr. & Mrs. Peter Warner

Annual

Mrs. Andree Beauregard
Mr. John M. Lewis
Ms. Nancy Schatken
Miss Joan Claudette Waithe

Life

Mr. C.D. Seale

Firm & Company

International Yarn SMRS

Student

Ms. Leah Broome

A murder mystery dinner show, a production of "Trouble in Paradise" will be taking over the slot left vacant by "1627 and all That". The show will be held weekly on Thursday, starting June 30th 1994, and will most likely be Sundays as well in the winter tourist season. The Museum welcomes Mr. Brian Smith (the producer of the show) and his team and wishes them every success in their new venture. Reservations for the show can be made by calling: 420-3409 or 230-2016.



'NEW LOOK' SUGAR MUSEUM OPENS AT PORTVALE

Last year, the Barbados Museum was contracted by the Barbados National Trust to revamp all the exhibits of the Sir Frank Hutson Sugar Machinery Museum at Portvale.

Curator Lesley Barrow-Whatley was assigned the challenge of designing and installing the new displays in such a way that would give more meaning to the technology and history related to sugar production on the island.

The project took approximately 8 months to complete and included research, text and label development and production, design and installation. Lesley recommended to the Trust, the services of Ms. Connie

Stromberg - an object conservator presently living in Barbados. Ms. Stromberg and her able team of young assistants (including Junior Curator Melanie Springer) worked diligently to restore the tayches, as well as to clean the other machinery on display.

The storyline and exhibit text had to be written from scratch, taking into consideration the effects of agronomical, environmental, social, economic and political factors which affected the industry since its inception in the 1640's.

While the previous exhibit made mention of the men who have been recognised as pioneers and innovators in the industry's history, the new display also highlights the role of female labourers, as well as the skilled artisans such as the coopers and blacksmiths of yesteryear.

The use of large murals, mostly from images in our museum's photograph collection, were incorporated to bring the historical information to life.

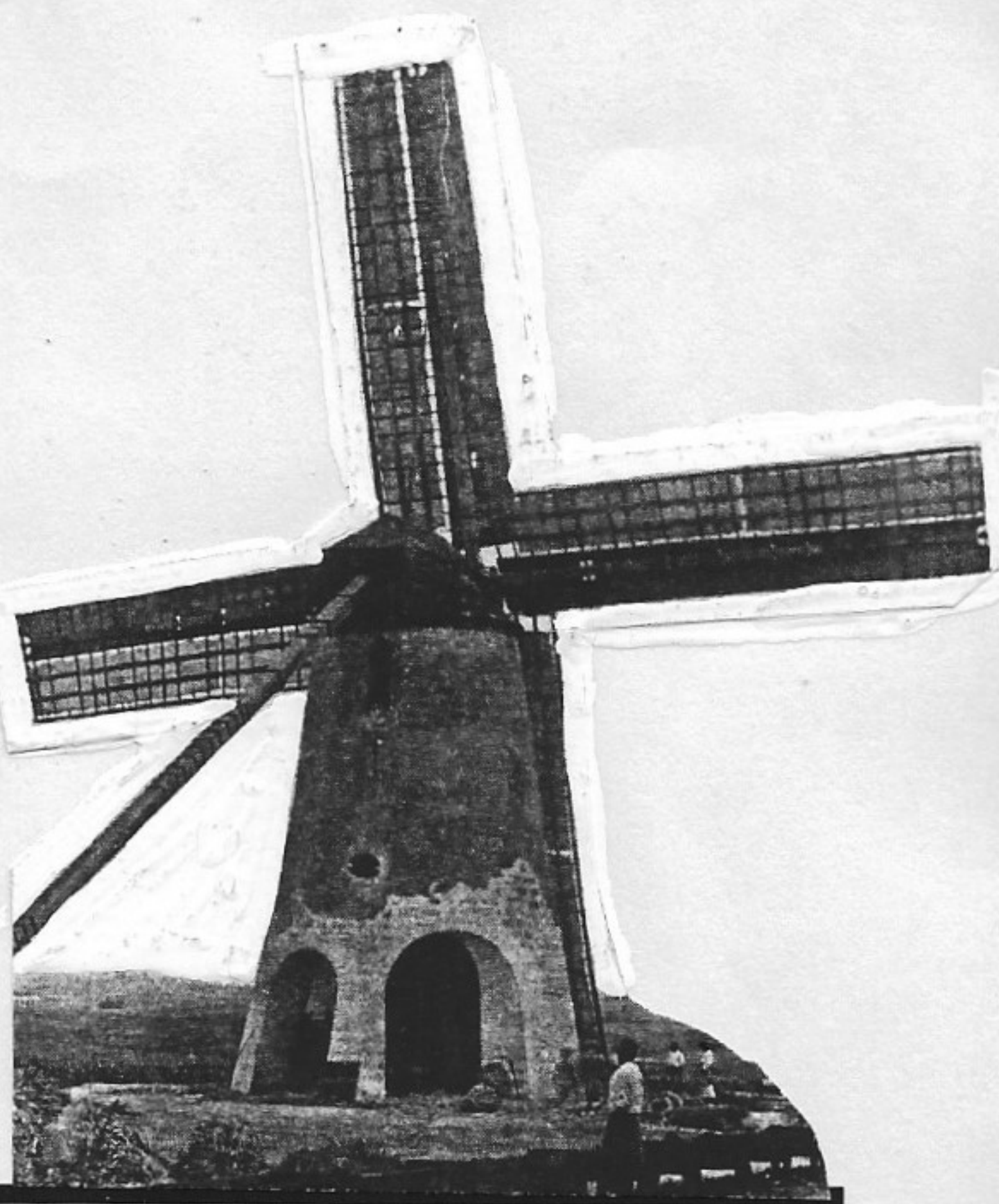
The Sugar Museum is open from Monday to Saturday, from 9 am to 5pm.

CHANGING OF THE GUARD

We say goodbye to - "1627 and All That"

In May 1994, the Museum saw the closing of the door of "1627 and All That", the dinner theatre show that was held in the Museum courtyard for over fifteen years. The show has had a long run and we wish Hotel Investors Limited all the very best for the future.

We say welcome to - "Now Museum, Now you don't"



UPCOMING EVENTS

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|----------------------------|---|-----------------------------------|
| Thursday 7:00 pm (ongoing) | Now Museum, Now you Dont - Murder Mystery dinner show. Dinner, show, drinks, transport - \$80 Show and drinks only - \$40 Reservations 420-3409/230-2016 | Museum Courtyard |
| July 1 - 2 | Museum Closed | Disaster Preparedness Exercise |
| July 10 2pm - 6pm | <i>Celebrate!</i> Summer Program STEEL AND SONG Steelband and folksingers Admission by donation | Galleries & Courtyards |
| July 17 2pm - 6pm | <i>Celebrate!</i> Summer Program STILTS AND STORIES Barbados Library children's literature storytelling, stiltman and tuk band Admission by donation | Galleries & Courtyards |
| July 20 7:30pm | <i>African Pottery Traditions in the New World</i> Lecture by Dr. Thomas Loftfield Free to the public | Cunard Gallery |
| July 24 2pm - 6pm | <i>Celebrate!</i> Summer Program SONG AND DANCE Barbados Dance Theatre Company Allegro Admission by donation | Galleries & Courtyards |
| August 1 | Museum Closed | Kadooment Day |
| August 5 | Last day M is for Museum | Temporary Exhibit Gallery |
| Mid - August | Songs of My People Fifty African Amerindian photographers capture the African American experience. Sponsored by USIS. | Temporary Exhibit Gallery |
| October 3 | Museum Closed | Bank Holiday |

