

NEWSLETTER

NO. 51

1st QUARTER, 1995

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.

PATRON

Dame Nita Barrow,
G.C.M.G., D.A.
Governor-General of Barbados.

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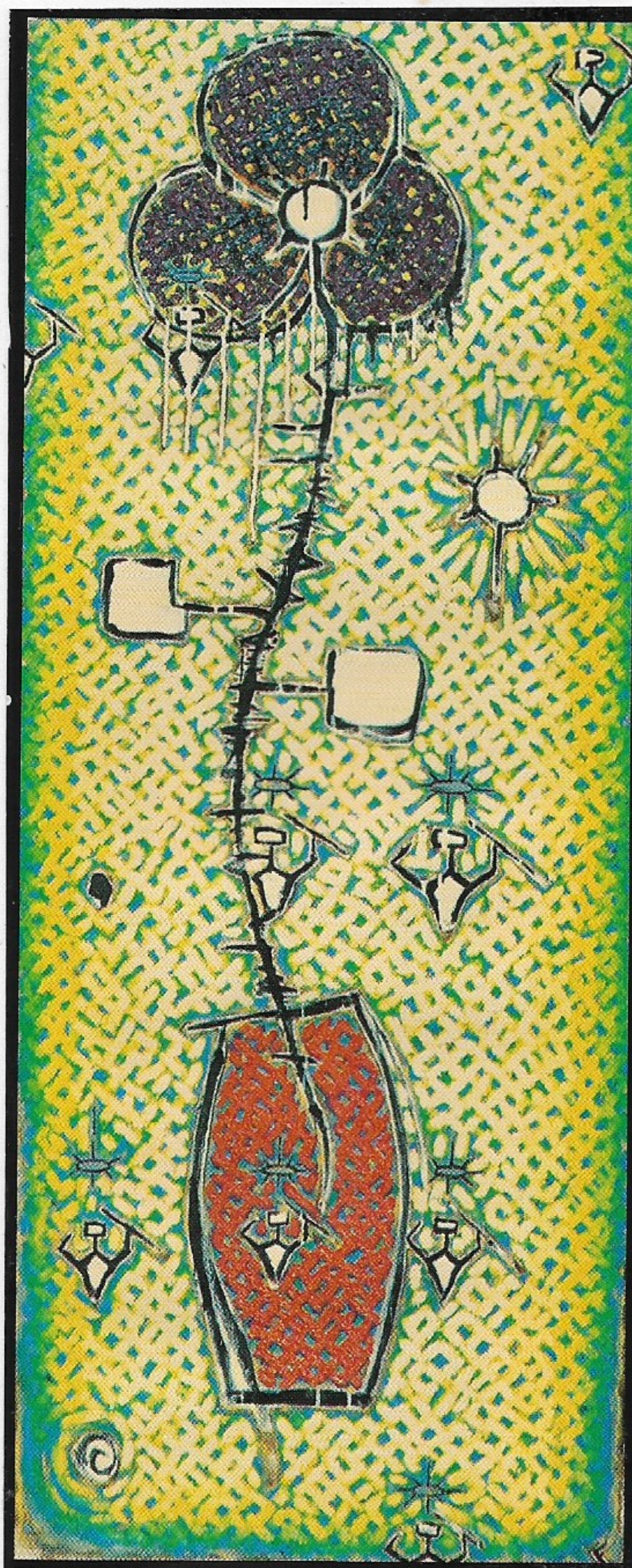
Miss Camilita Archer
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IMMEDIATE PAST PRESIDENT

Mr. Jack Dear, Q.C., C.H.B.

EX-OFFICIO :

Director of the Museum
Ms. Alissandra Cummins



One panel from "Black Roses A & I"
by Ras Ishi

RAS ISHI EXHIBITION

"ISOLATION"

Powerful, rich, disturbing, painterly - how else to describe the dynamic creativity of Ras Ishi's first solo exhibition?

Curated by Mervyn Awon, the exhibit shows the impressive growth and development of this talented young painter's work. In this show he has clearly reached a new stage of maturity. As art historian Allison Thompson says:

"He has not abandoned his familiar vocabulary. Fields are still rendered in brilliant colours and sensuous textures, but they are more maps than landscapes. Symbols receive and reaffirm. The compositions.... are intuitive, reflective and cosmic. Images appear like antiquated hieroglyphics containing secret meanings and fantasies".

Art teachers should make sure their students don't miss Ishi's exhibit, while the colourful catalogue/poster by Allison Thompson is a valuable document for both teachers and student.

The exhibit closes on May 7th.

**Cultural
Heritage
Week**

14 - 20 May

THE GREENLAND ISSUE

Museum members have been expressing interest in the Museum's position on the proposed siting of a landfill at Greenland, St. Andrew.

We have written to the Prime Minister expressing our concerns; copies were sent to the Ministry of Health and to the Ministry of Education and Culture. We indicated that Greenland is considered to be the single most significant prehistoric site located inland in Barbados. The site is worthy of indepth archaeological investigation, due to the largely undisturbed nature of the site and the discovery of some human burials.

We expressed our concern about potential conflicts in using the area for solid waste management in light of the fact that the area is within a proposed Barbados National Park. We recommended that a comprehensive environmental impact assessment, including an archaeological survey of the site, should take place as soon as possible, before any major excavation is initiated.

Unfortunately, so far we have received no response from the government agencies. We have though, received a visit from Mr. Bruce Thompson representing Stanley Associates Engineering Ltd who are now conducting the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) for the project. He spoke to us at some length and we will be compiling as much information as we can about the Greenland site.

The Museum also hosted a lecture on Barbados' geology by Prof. Robert Speed on 15 February. Members of the audience, which included representatives of the local media were able to question Prof.

Speed about the feasibility of siting a landfill at Greenland. Prof. Speed cautioned that in siting a landfill at Greenland, there would always be the risk of land slippage and that this could cause a significant pollution problem extending to the coast.

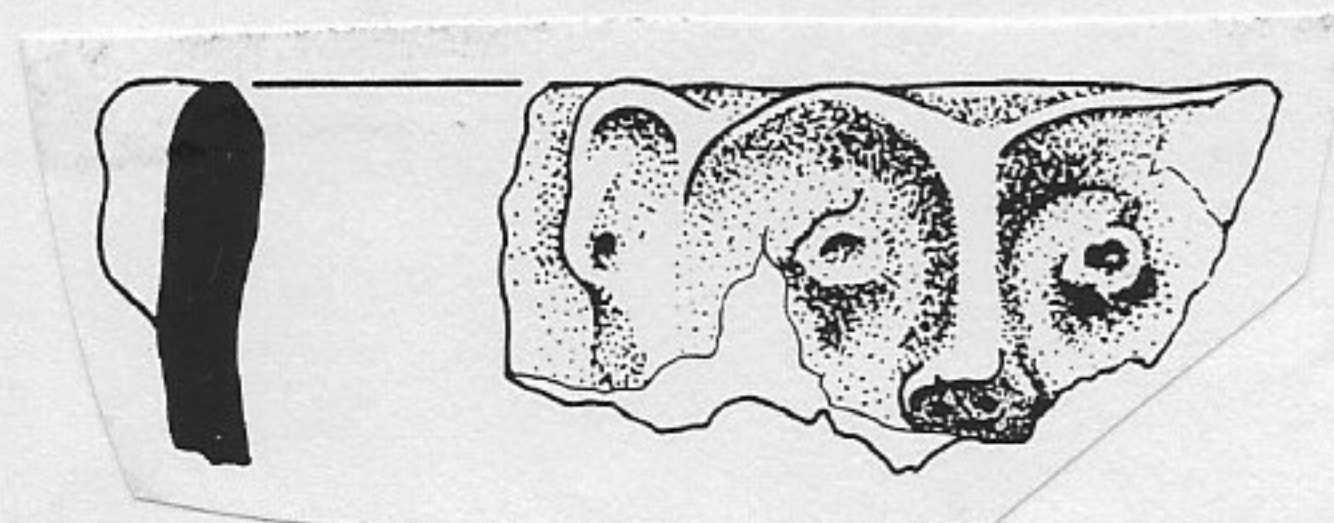
The Museum has always been committed to the preservation of the island's natural environment and to the retention of adequate recreational spaces for Barbadians and visitors. Recognising that the development process in small island states is constrained because of limited land resources, we will continue to work with government and non-governmental agencies to promote a better lifestyle for all.

ARCHAEOLOGY NEWS

Dr. Peter Drewett of the Institute of Archaeology, University College London is now making plans to be in the island from May to July. However at this time we are unable to confirm excavation dates. Dr. Drewett is proposing to continue investigation into Barbados' prehistory by conducting further excavations at Chancery Lane.

Chancery Lane is one of the best known Amerindian sites on the island and we are monitoring development plans there closely. We have submitted several documents to the Environment Division outlining our findings about the Amerindian occupation at Chancery Lane.

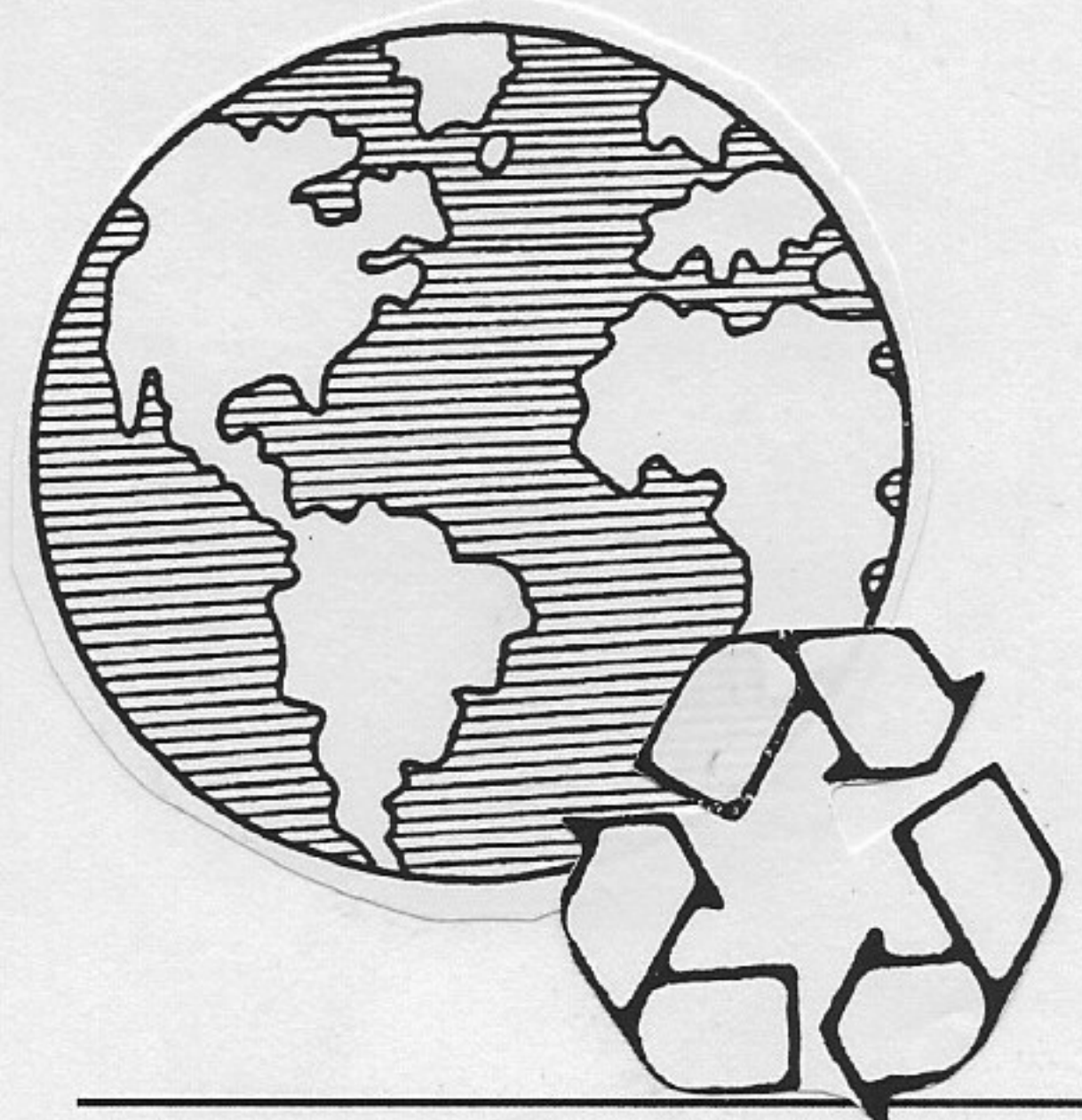
Dr. Drewett will also present a lecture on "Prehistoric Settlement in Barbados and other Caribbean Islands" at 7.30 p.m. on Wednesday, 14 June at the Museum.



LET'S RECYCLE

It should be apparent to everyone that Barbados' problems relating to the management of solid waste cannot be solved by the government alone. Everyone must join in the fight to reduce the amount of waste generated, and to recycle as much as possible.

In an effort to assist you in your recycling efforts, the Museum is now a collection point for Enviro Tech Inc. Members of the public are therefore invited to bring us all types of glass as well as PET bottles. You should enter the front entrance since the containers for their collection are located in our Lower Courtyard.



APOLOGIES

Our apologies for the extreme lateness, of the last newsletter. Due to technical and printing difficulties, we were almost a full quarter behind, sending out the December '94 newsletter in March.

To catch up, we've produced this first quarter's newsletter in the subsequent 5 weeks, bringing us in much closer to schedule. So our June Newsletter will be right on time.

OF EXHIBITS AND "PERMANANCE"

A "permanent" exhibit is something of a misnomer. It is generally hoped that the quality and quantity of research and investment will justify an exhibit that stands, substantially as designed, for 10-20 years. And so it has been for our major history exhibit *In Search of Bim*.

But during those 10-20 years, new research comes to light, staff develop more exhibit skills, funding becomes available - or all of the above. And parts of the "permanent" exhibit are revised, upgraded, or added to. A good example is the display of Barbadian domestic architecture which concludes *Bim*, and which was developed in 1993.

Despite the dearth of exhibit funding, we are attempting low-cost, in-house upgrading of facets of the *Bim* exhibit. Education Curator Wendy Donawa is at present researching, revising and redesigning the Education and Religion components, which she expects to complete by June.

MAC/OAS WORKSHOP

DISASTER MITIGATION IN CARIBBEAN MUSEUMS

While we don't like to think of Museums as a 'disaster waiting to happen', many of our regional institutions are quite simply that, in that little or no preparation has been made to protect valuable collections in times of emergency. March 18th saw a Museums Association of the Caribbean (MAC) workshop organised on 'Disaster Mitigation in Caribbean Museums', held at the Barbados Museum and Barbados National Trust.

Six representatives from the Museum's security, administrative and curatorial staff joined 16 colleagues from national and regional institutions to benefit from the expertise of OAS sponsored consultants George Tyson and Barbara Roberts. Tyson introduced and discussed a model emergency preparedness plan, distributed to assist participants in creating their own 'fill in the spaces' plan by adapting this for their own needs. This is a crucial first step for museums to take in protecting their collections and incorporating them into the national emergency plans. (This will be the 4th year that the Barbados Museum will campaign for CERO to include us in Barbados' Emergency plan!).

Storage and conservation of works of art, ceramics and archaeological artifacts were the highlight of Ms. Roberts' presentation since most Caribbean Museums contain collections of these. Recently returned from Kobe, Japan, Roberts graphically illustrated the need simply for 'better housekeeping' on a daily basis to keep the basic infrastructure needed up to date, effective and in readiness. Her pungent remarks on the lack of preparation, and general lack of awareness were a credible indictment of a country which prides itself on its earthquake readiness, and rang warning bells to wake us all from complacency, because as she says large and small disasters happen every day!

Careful strapping of objects on storage shelves and correct supports for paintings would have taken little time or money but would have saved the cultural community much heartache. Using plastic, stacking storage cases lined with pre-cut foam could hasten the packing process and avoid the risk of the bottom dropping out of soggy cardboard boxes.

Other concerns addressed included:

protecting Museum buildings from being commandeered by unaware authorities for other purposes; protection from looting after the emergency; recognition of the stress factor and poor stress management for staff; the glories of emergency generators; water is everything; food and rest are essential for staff.

Participants also had a chance to show slides and photos of their Museums and collections for group discussion and advice. During the tours of the Museum and National Trust properties the Consultants provided valuable nuggets of information on practical solutions to enhance the preparedness of the institutions. All in all, despite the cramped conditions and chaotic schedule, participants generally expressed appreciation for the programme and were able to make their own contributions to the cause.

MUSEUM CAFÉ

Now open in our
Upper Courtyard

Operated by
The Island Inn

Dine in our delightful
setting under the
sandbox trees

Daily lunch specials

Snacks & Drinks

All at affordable prices

Mon - Fri
10 a.m. - 4 p.m.

A CONSERVATION PERSPECTIVE

Kevin Farmer writes of his nine months as Curatorial Assistant, with the Museum.

My 9 months at the Barbados Museum have exposed me to work in both conservation, under the guidance of Conservator Connie Stromberg, and curatorship. It has been an invaluable practical experience intermingled with some theory, showing me the day to day running of a cultural institution, and its responsibilities.

The Museum's responsibility is to preserve cultural resources through continued maintenance and conservation. Some eye-openers:

- store-bought bleach, wiped on a ceiling or wall, can remove dangerous mold and prevent further growth;
- painting wood with acrylic paint, prevents damaging gas emissions from the wood.

The need for continual maintenance and implementation is ongoing. I was involved with the installation of environmental monitoring equipment, the conservation assessment of 10% of the museum's artifacts, and the cataloguing and improved storage facility in the furniture store.

These are but the tip of the conservation iceberg.

Research into a given artifact reveals its history and brings it to life, and it is transformed from an inanimate object to a live one. e.g. those three bats in the Main Store, which turned out to belong to Atkinson, Depeiza and Sobers, the final one that of Sobers' 365 at Sabina.

I leave the Museum with a new environmental monitoring system, improved furniture storage and conservation database. I look forward to its continual growth, and will have good memories of working at the Museum and of its entire staff.



VISUAL ART AND THE LAW

Cultural Heritage Week at the Museum will find not only Francis Griffith's exhibition, but also a timely examination of **Visual Art and the Law**, hosted by the Barbados National Committee of ICOM. This Night Workshop will be held on Monday, 8 May starting at 7:00 p.m.

The concerns which the art community has frequently expressed about the confusing terrain of copyright law will be explained and clarified by a distinguished panel of legal experts.

Please collect registration forms at the Museum to confirm participation. There is a registration fee of \$5.00

PROGRAM

- | | |
|-------|--|
| 7:00 | Opening.
Hon. Ms. Mia Mottley
Minister of Education & Culture* |
| 7:15 | The Legal and Business Relation
between the Artist and Dealer.
Mr. Bruce Zagaris |
| 7:45 | The Right of the Artist in his work.
Ms. Carol Hanschell |
| 8:15 | Insuring Works of Art.
Dr. Trevor Carmichael, Q.C. |
| 8:45 | Coffee/Tea/Dessert Break |
| 9.15 | Tax Aspects of Works of
Art.
Ms. Yolande Bannister, Q.C. |
| 9.45 | Lending Works of Art.
Ms. Gillian Clarke |
| 10:15 | Sessions End |

* To be confirmed.

DOCENT NEWS

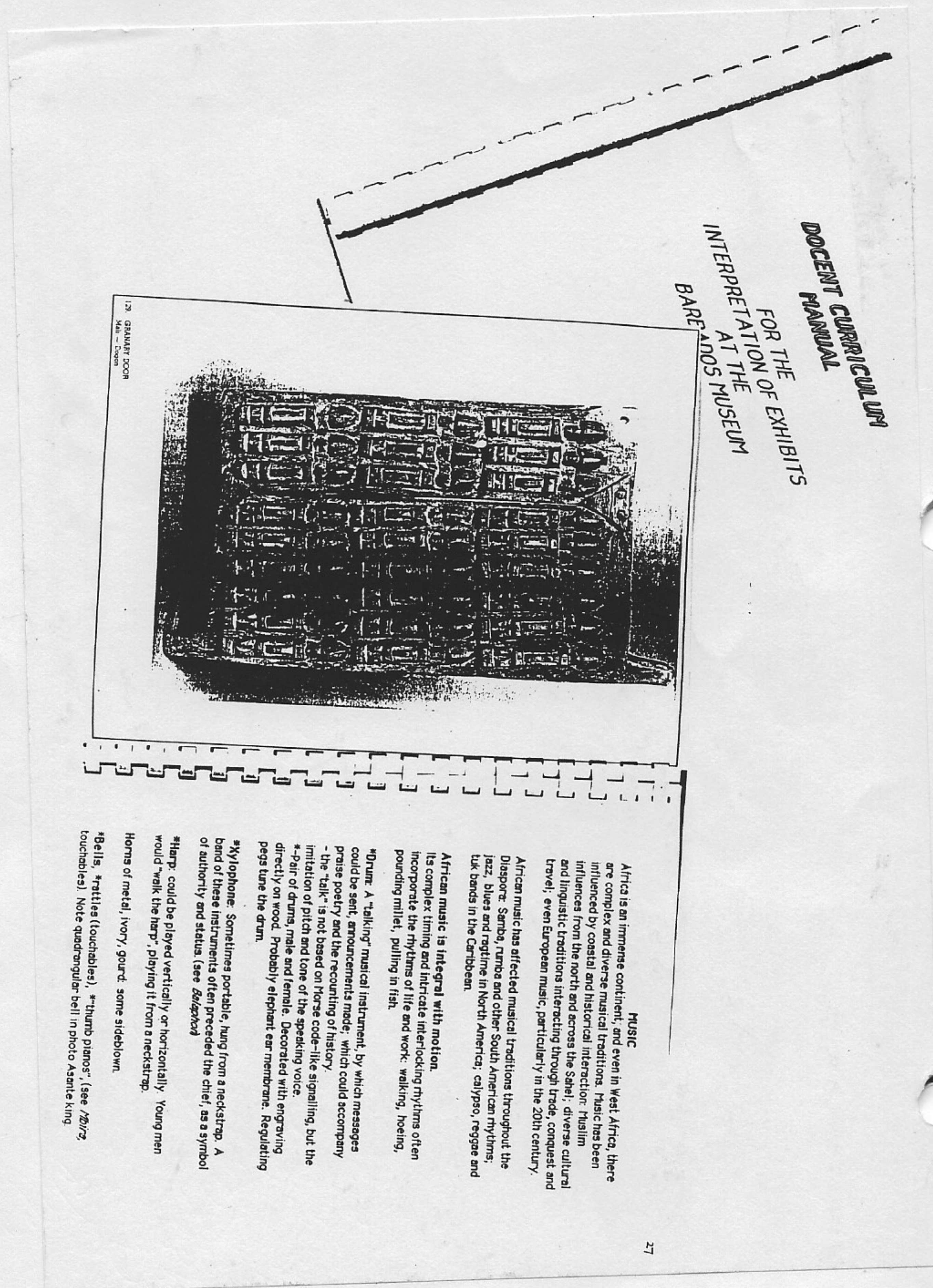
The Museum's 13 docents (11 active, 2 on leave) have been joined by trainees Rukaiya Pandor and Marion Holder during this busy first term.

Docents are the teaching guides who provide interpretive tours for school and community groups. During the January - March quarter, they served 48 visiting groups, 1705 visitors in all. About half the groups were from primary schools, with the remainder from church and community organizations, seniors, special needs groups and secondary schools.

A rigorous term of 12 "refresher" training seminars honed the docents' varied teaching skills and historical knowledge. The seminars were augmented by a Graeme Hall Swamp Field trip led by Natural History Curator Philippa King. Here, unscheduled drama was provided by docent Joyce Gale's disappearance into a deep mud hole. Docents also enjoyed a guest presentation on the learning process in young children, by Early Childhood Education expert Jackie Banfield.

Education Curator Wendy Donawa produced a 93 page *Docent Curriculum Manual*, of which the Museum Library and each docent have a reference copy.

The docents expanded their repertoire (most of which is linked to the primary school and CXC history curricula) to include gallery interpretations linked to art and literature.



MEMBERSHIP

The Barbados Museum is pleased to welcome the following new members to our Society:

Joint Annual

Mr. & Mrs Sidney Berman
Mr. & Mrs Ralph Dungan

Annual

Mrs. C.J.C. Blades
Mr. Eustace Burnett
Mr. Robert J.B. Bynoe
Mr. Joseph F. Caddle
Mr. Peter Carr
Mr. Manuel De Casas
Mr. Robert Foster
Dr. Mike Weale
Ms. Janice Millington-Robertson
Mr. Hamish Watson

Junior

Shane Moore
Miles Robertson
Matthew Tulip

Student

Ryan DeGale
Andrew Edghill
Robert Edghill
Kristopher Kong



MUSEUM FUNDRAISER

The comedy theatre company, **Trouble in Paradise**, is generously donating the proceeds of their June 3 performance to the Museum. We hope to see a full turnout of members, friends and supporters.

The comedy theatre show, "Now Museum, Now You Don't" depicts the murder of a fictional character in St. Ann's Garrison.

Come guess who done it!

One night only with limited seating.
Admission Bds \$30.00.

Cocktails on sale and a fully stock bar awaits!

Tickets will be available soon.



COOLING OUT

Moving ahead with our work on upgrading that faceless monster - collection storage - the Museum was delighted to be the recipient of a generous donation towards the purchase of a much needed new split system for efficiently air conditioning the space. Through the good offices of our President Dr. Trevor Carmichael, an unexpected fairy godfather was identified to supply much needed funds. Kevin Walton, Managing Director of Johnson and Higgins of Primex Limited graciously handed over the cheque on March 29th.

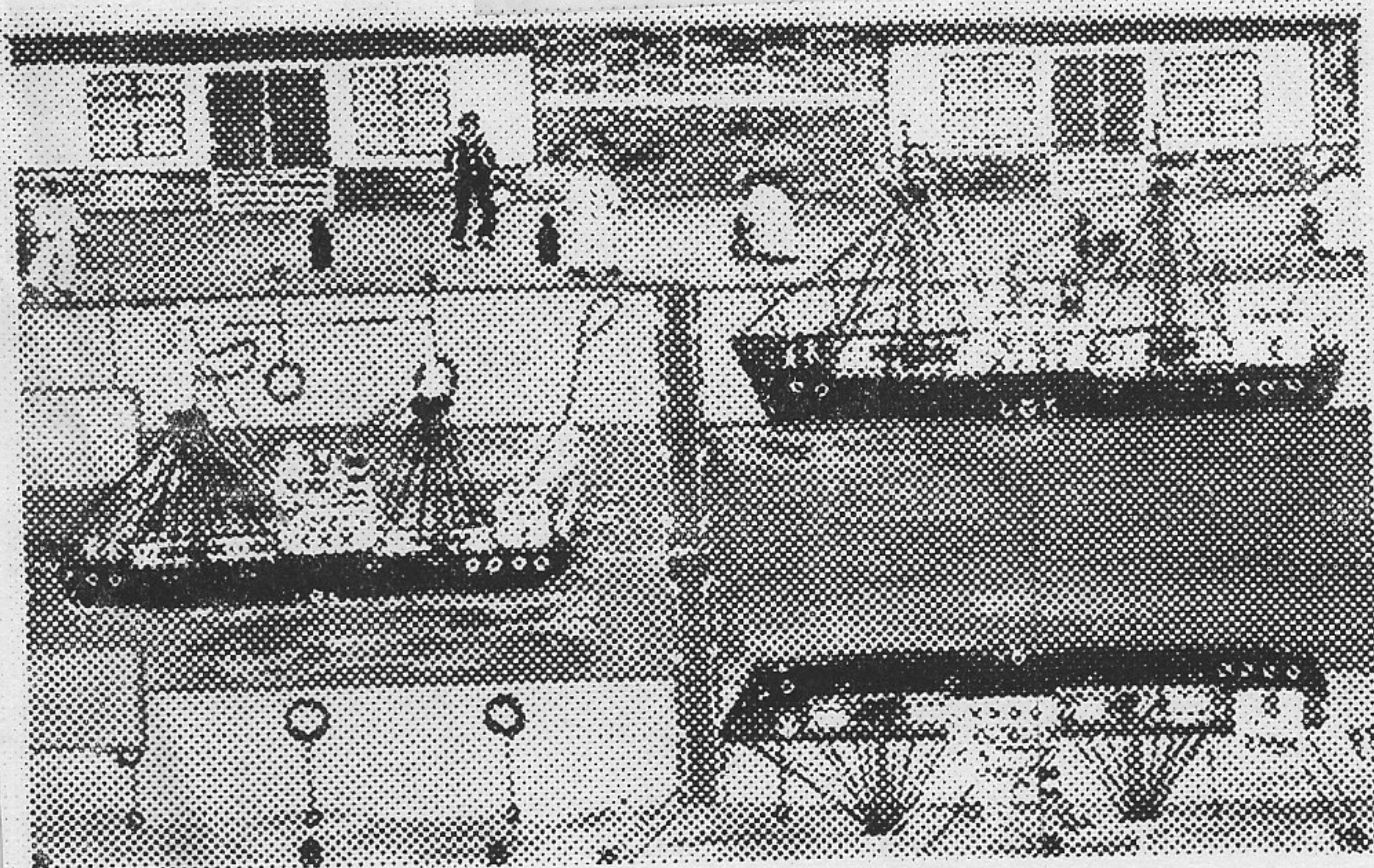
Primex, Limited was incorporated in Barbados on April 14, 1986, and operates under the provisions of the Exempt Insurance Act of Barbados. The Company provides claims-made excess liability coverage to its shareholders, a group of companies in chemical and chemical related manufacturing industries. Since its inception, the company has been managed by Johnson & Higgins (Barbados) Limited, which is celebrating its 150th anniversary this year.

FRANCIS GRIFFITH

"SON OF THE LIGHT"

As Barbadian folk artist Francis Griffith approaches his 80th year, the Museum is honoured to present his first solo exhibition, opening May 19th.

Griffith's unique, intuitive work has garnered considerable attention, and recognition in the form of two Art Collection Foundation purchase awards. The show will include approximately 30 paintings from the arts and other private collections.



As a seaman Griffith visited Ethiopia, Egypt, Denmark and Russia and his travels had a profound effect on his earlier artistic vision. Many later paintings reflect Barbadian experiences.

Accompanying the exhibit, a documentary brochure assesses the exhibit and Griffith's contribution to the larger art scene. It is fitting that Francis Griffith's exhibit marks Cultural Heritage Week, and is the Museum's showpiece for its annual Open Day on May 20.

**MUSEUM
OPEN DAY
SAT, 20 MAY**

LIBRARY NEWS

We were happy to welcome back Librarian Betty Shannon on March 1st, recovered from her injuries.

And we were grateful for the able professional assistance provided by Librarian Paulette Gooding during Betty's convalescence.

Genealogy remains a topic of enduring interest in the Library. The much-appreciated Library Volunteers now include newcomers Harriet Burke, Maris Corbin and Derek Gale.

Fourteen new publications have been added during this period, including **Carib Art: Contemporary Art of the Caribbean**. Research generated by Museum staff includes **Proceedings of the Fourteenth Congress of the International Association for Caribbean Archaeology** edited by

Alissandra Cummins and Philippa King, and **Docent Curriculum Manual: The Interpretation of Exhibits at the Barbados Museum** by Wendy Donawa.

VOLUNTEER NEEDED

Do you have a few hours a week, the urge to volunteer, and an interest in seeing administrative work go smoothly?

The Museum's amiable, efficient and overworked admin staff, Angela and Marcia, would be very grateful for a little assistance in almost any clerical area. Computer skills or typing would be a big plus, but a willingness to help photocopy, collate or file would also be very welcome.

If you're in between jobs, we will be happy to provide you with a reference for your volunteer work when you move on to paid employment.

The coffee's great, too! So if you've got a little time you can share with us, please phone us at 427-0201 or 436-1956.

INFORMATION NEEDED

From Martinique, a researcher is surveying Caribbean visual artists, past and present, using the **assemblage** process. **Assemblage** is the juxtaposing, overlapping or stacking of materials to create a particular object. The parts can be rough, transformed or painted. Artists with this information are asked to contact:

Dominique Brebion
Regional Art Advisor
Director Regional des Affaires Culturelles
Martinique

Documents (slides or catalogues) would be welcome, with name and birth date of artist; title, size, media, date and "up-down" direction of artwork.

MUSEUM STAFF

ADMINISTRATION

Director
Alissandra Cummins

Special Events Manager
Christopher Chandler

Shop Manager
Anita King

Administrative Assistant
Marcia Griffith

Executive Secretary
Angela Boyce

CURATORS

Curator (Art & History)
Lesley Whatley

Curator (Natural History)
Philippa King

Curator (Education)
Wendy Donawa

LIBRARY

Librarian
Betty Shannon

TECHNICAL STAFF

Shawn Rowe
Reginald Riley
Pauline Stuart
Merna Bryan

RECEPTION & SALES

Sylvia Barker
Sylvia Charles-Dolcy
Michelle Durant
Hester St. Rose

SECURITY

Rudolph Beckles
Beresford Nurse
Royston Sargeant
Grantley Yarde

UPCOMING EVENTS

Date and Time	Event	Location
11th April - 7th May	RAS ISHI EXHIBITION "Isolation"	Temporary Exhibitions Gallery
1st May	MUSEUM CLOSED Public Holiday	
8th May 7.00 - 10.15 p.m.	A NIGHT WORKSHOP: Visual Art and The Law	Temporary Exhibitions Gallery
19th May - 23rd June	FRANCIS GRIFFITH EXHIBITION: "Son of The Light"	Temporary Exhibitions Gallery
20th May 9.00 a.m. - 5.00 p.m.	MUSEUM OPEN DAY	
3rd June 7.00 p.m.	FUNDRAISING SHOW: 'Now Museum, Now you Don't'	Museum Courtyard
5th June	MUSEUM CLOSED Public Holiday	
14th June 7.30 p.m.	LECTURE: "Prehistoric Settlement in Barbados and Other Caribbean Islands" by Dr. Peter Drewett	Temporary Exhibitions Gallery
21st July - 14th Aug	RAS AKYEM EXHIBITION	Temporary Exhibitions Gallery

Getting to know

THE BARBADOS MUSEUM

The Barbados Museum and Historical Society is housed in the former military prison of St. Ann's Garrison; the oldest part of the buildings was constructed in about 1820. Visitors will find an extensive and varied collection, appealing to a wide range of interests.

Our **EXHIBITION GALLERIES** hold displays on:

✧ Natural History ✧ Amerindian Culture ✧ Barbadian History ✧ African and European Decorative Arts ✧ Antique Maps and Prints. ✧ Caribbean Art.

Visitors are invited to browse in the **MUSEUM SHOP** for unusual Caribbeana to suit every budget. You will find a varied selection of West Indian books, reproductions of maps, prints and other Museum specimens, as well as a splendid array of Barbadian craft and jewellery.

Our **CAFÉ** is located in the delightful setting of the upper courtyard amongst enormous sandbox trees. The Café offers lunches, teas or a quick snack.

The Museum **RESEARCH LIBRARY** holds materials dating back to the 17th century. A researcher's delight, the library collection includes books, maps, photographs, genealogical records and archival documents.

HOURS

We are open every day except public holidays.

✧ GALLERIES AND SHOP:

Monday to Saturday	9 a.m. - 5 p.m.
Sunday	2 p.m. - 6 p.m.

✧ OFFICES:

Monday to Friday	8:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.
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✧ LIBRARY:

Monday to Friday	10 a.m. - 1 p.m.
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ADMISSION

Adults	Bds. \$ 10.00
Children	Bds. \$ 5.00
Family	Bds. \$ 15.00 (Sundays Only)

TOURS AND GROUP RATES

We offer special rates for groups and a special educational programme for schools. Please call 427-0201 or 436-1956 for information.

FACILITIES FOR DISABLED VISITORS

We particularly welcome disabled visitors. Specially installed ramps make our facilities accessible to persons in wheelchairs. We offer special tours to persons with hearing and vision disabilities. Please call to book.

Barbados Museum and Historical Society
St. Ann's Garrison, St. Michael, Barbados, W.I.
Tel: (809) 427-0201 or 436-1956, Fax: (809) 429-5946