

# ARTI-FACTS

Barbados  
Museum  
& Historical  
Society

BARBADOS MUSEUM & HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER



The new ICOM Executive Council (front centre: Alissandra Cummins) Missing from photo is Mr. George Abungu.

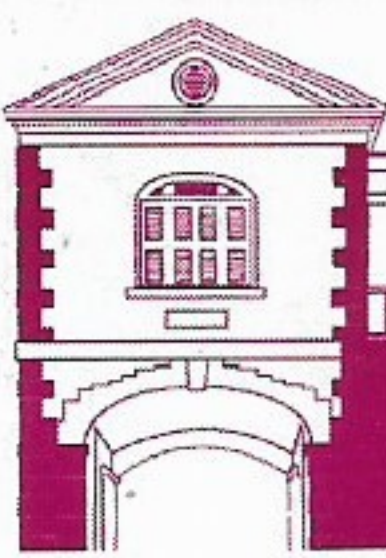
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Dear Member,

Welcome to the July-September issue of the *Arti-Facts* Newsletter! I trust it will be worth the wait.

The Barbados Museum and Historical Society has enjoyed many successes during this period of which it is justly proud. However, we have also been mourning the loss of two unforgettable individuals who were associated with activities at the Museum.

The Triennial Conference of the International Council of Museums (ICOM) took centre stage during this period, along with our own Annual General Meeting. Other major museum activities include the opening of the Cricket Exhibition and a visit from the Chief Executive Officer of a major group of South African museums.

As we draw closer to the end of 2007, we encourage you to submit memories of the Barbados Museum through the years towards selection of 75 outstanding memories in commemoration of next year's 75th anniversary of the BMHS.

As always, we invite you to forward your comments on Museum activities or the new-look *Arti-Facts* newsletter, by mail or Email: [musepr@barbmuse.org.bb](mailto:musepr@barbmuse.org.bb).

*Christine Skeete*

Christine Skeete  
Marketing Officer

## ICOM General Conference in Vienna



The military band at the Welcome Reception in Mariethersienplatz

The 21st International Council of Museums (ICOM) General Conference was convened in Vienna, Austria from 17th to 24th August 2007. This Triennial Conference also served as a meeting place for the International Committees that enable museum educators and curators, among other professionals, to be better equipped to have an impact on their societies.

By the end of the meeting, Alissandra Cummins, Director of the Barbados Museum and Historical Society (BMHS) had been re-elected for another three-year term in the post of President of the entire ICOM body.

Three members of the Barbados National Committee of ICOM, along with Ms. Cummins, managed to attend this meeting, making it one of the largest contingents ever to represent Barbados at an ICOM General Conference. Kevin Farmer was awarded a Special Projects Grant for young museum professionals and Peggy McGeary, Chairperson of the Barbados National Committee of ICOM, and Christine Skeete, ICOM Barbados Public Relations Officer, attended through the kind assistance of British Airways.

Gifts of inscribed signature bottles of rum were donated by St. Nicholas Abbey to be presented to the four past



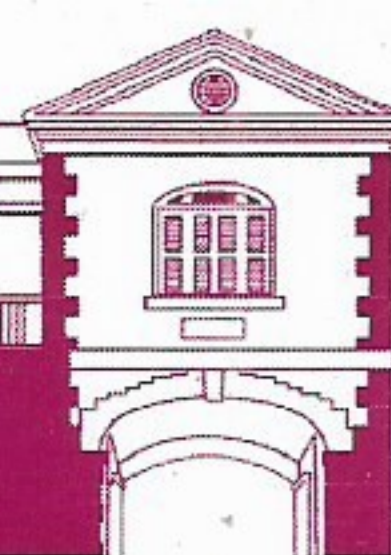
Left to right: Christine, Kevin, Peggy at the Barbados Consulate in Vienna

presidents of ICOM. Souvenir items were provided by the Barbados Tourism Authority and the Barbados Museum to be offered to ICOM Secretariat staff and members of the Executive Council.

The International Council of Museums (ICOM) was formed in 1946 as the international organisation of museums and museum professionals which is committed to the conservation, continuation and communication to society of the world's natural and cultural heritage, present and future, tangible and intangible.

For more information on becoming a member of ICOM, check out <http://icom.museum> or contact Peggy McGeary or Allison Callender at the Barbados Museum & Historical Society, Tel: 427-0201 or 436-1956 or Email: [museum@caribsurf.com](mailto:museum@caribsurf.com).





## SAMP/ALAS Workshop

A workshop for the Exhibition Development Team within the SAMP/ALAS Network was held at the Barbados Museum over a five-day period from 28th September. The focus of the workshop was the completion of the project document "From Artifacts to Cultural Dialogues: Guidelines to Conceptualising Exhibitions in Museums in Collaboration with Children and Youth of our Community". In attendance were Mrs. Emilia Coco-Bassey, Ms. Comfort Messiah and Mr. Sunday S. Adaka from the National Museum in Calabar, Nigeria and from the Living Heritage Centre in India, Ms. Pujita Gadodia, Ms. Antara Kak and Ms. Deepti. Facilitators were Ms. Claudia del Fierro from Historico y Antropologico in Chile and Ms. Arlene Alvarez from Museo Arqueologico Regional Altos de Chavon in the Dominican Republic.

Mrs. Angela Boyce, Ms. Susan Boyce, Mrs. Allison Callender, Ms. Peggy McGeary and Mr. Kevin Farmer were the BMHS participants.

During the workshop, the team met with representatives of the identified target



India delegates at the workshop. Left to right: Ms. Deepti, Antara and Pujita.

group in the community to discuss how they may be involved in the process of developing and conceptualising exhibitions in museums. The age range of the target group is 14 to 25 years and it includes students from tertiary institutions and others from the community.

Leading up to the workshop, the BMHS team interviewed individuals from within the community surrounding the Museum using a questionnaire. Questionnaires were also distributed to the Pinelands Creative Workshop and Israel Lovell Foundation. A report on the community outreach activity will be provided at the end of the workshop.

The African-Swedish Museum Network (SAMP), and the Asia, Latin America, Africa Swedish Museums Network (ALAS) combine to form a network of museums working together in institutional partnership which facilitate the development of museums in a cross border approach, for the benefit of their communities. This is achieved through working together in twin ships, joint projects, capacity building and research. Barbados is the only English speaking country from the Latin American region participating in SAMP/ALAS projects. The Barbados Museum and Historical Society signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to participate in joint projects from May 2005 - May 2010.

## Marketing Intern

The BMHS continued its annual summer internship programme with another student from the University of the West Indies' Management Studies department. Jamie-Lee Crick was particularly interested in gaining practical experience in tourism marketing and event management. She was therefore attached mainly to the BMHS' Marketing Department but also learned about the operations of the Education, Library,

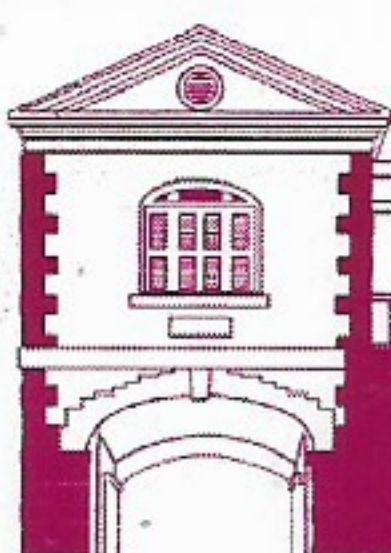
Curatorial, and Administration Departments.

She ably assisted with membership communications, analysis of Museum Shop inventory and reports on visitor comments. In addition, she handled special event bookings and logistics while the Event Coordinator was on leave. Like last year's intern Fabianna Alexander, Jamie-Lee plans to continue to be involved with the Museum through volunteering.



The temporary events team of Tamara Griffith and Jamie-Lee Crick





### Museum Highlights

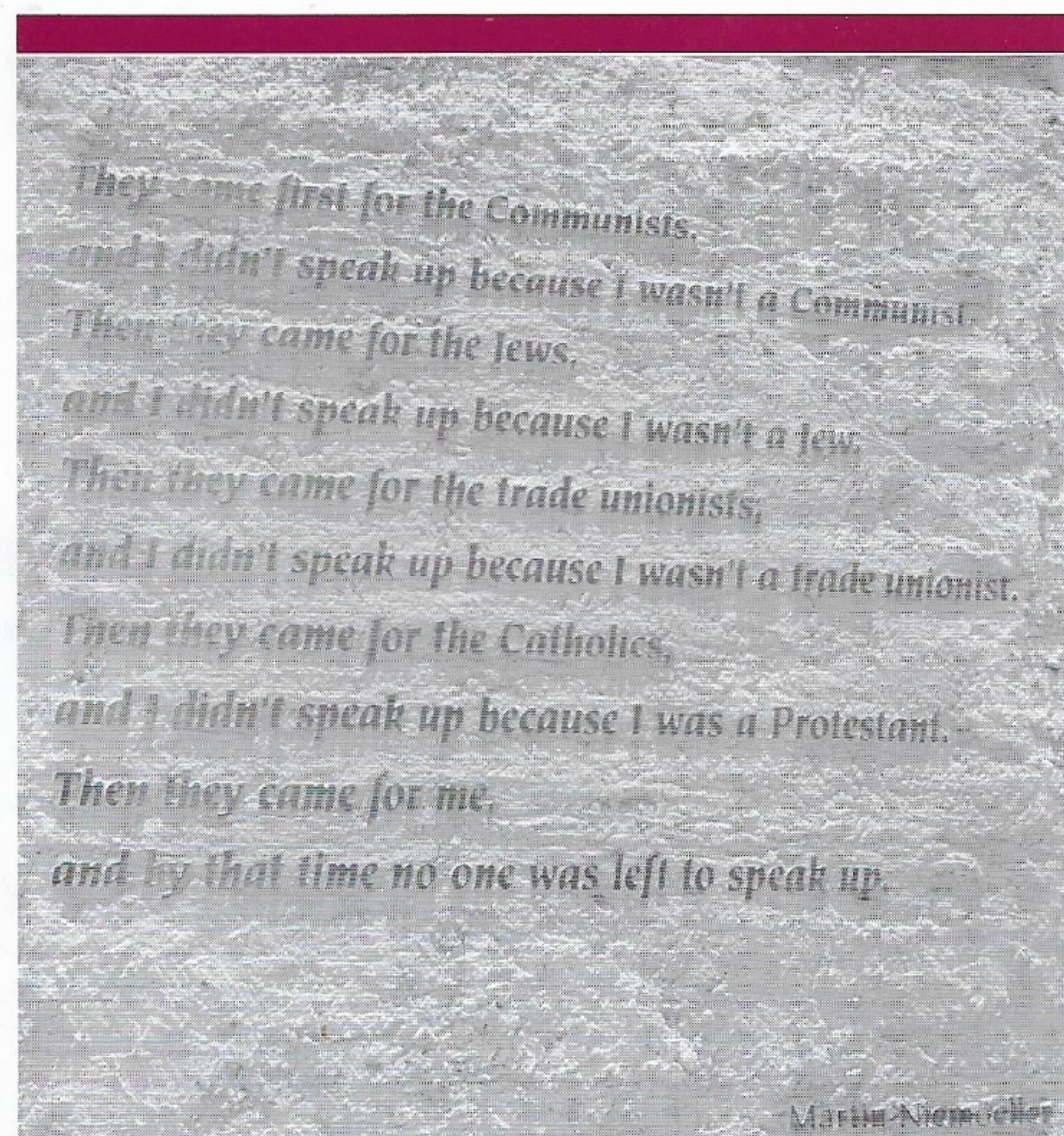
#### Annual General Meeting

The Annual General Meeting of the Barbados Museum and Historical Society was held on 30th August 2007.

Following elections, there were only a few changes to the Council Members. The Museum staff and community of members thank Mr. Adrian Deane for his years of service as a Council member and former Chair of the Finance Committee, and we welcome Ms. Susan Mahon on her return to the Council of the Museum.

#### ICOM Activity at Jewish Museum

Members of the Barbados National Committee of ICOM toured the Jewish Museum on 18th September and benefited from presentation by Paul Altman, a founder of the museum. A meeting of the Committee followed the tour.



Tablet outside the Jewish Museum

#### Cricket Exhibition Private Viewing

On 31st August, a private viewing was held for donors and individuals who loaned objects or in any other way contributed to the Cricket Exhibition "Beyond a Boundary: An Introduction to Barbadian Cricket and the Art of Cricket." The exhibition was curated by the Barbados Museum and was on display in the West Wing of Parliament over a two-month period.

#### Visit from South African Museum CEO

From 29th to 31st August, Prof. Henry Bredekamp, CEO of Iziko Museums in South Africa, was hosted by the Barbados Museum & Historical Society. He was led by the BMHS Assistant Curator – History and Archaeology on a tour of sites relevant to Barbados' proposal for World Heritage nomination. He also visited new museums such as National Heroes Gallery & Museum of Parliament, the Jewish Museum, Concorde Experience, and met with members of the BMHS management team. The Turning the Tables project on which we are partners formed part of the discussions. The BMHS helped to coordinate a lecture by Prof. Bredekamp entitled "The Making of Iziko museums in Capetown from the UN International Decade of the Struggle Against Slavery to the Present." It was held at George Washington House with Barbados National Committee ICOM members in attendance.

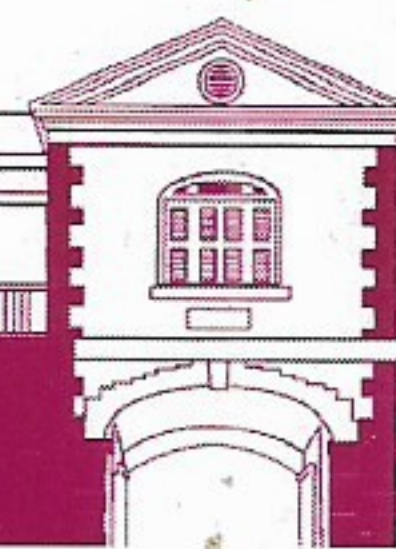
#### Visit from UK Museum Director

During a short visit to Barbados, Mr. David Spence, Director of Museum in the Docklands, came to the Museum on 18th September to meet with the BMHS management team and discuss possible joint initiatives, along with the current partnership on the Turning the Tables project.

#### Hosting of Playwright

In September the focus was definitely on the Turning the Tables project as the Museum hosted Mr. John Matshikiza, who was commissioned by the Museum of London group to write the Turning the Tables play. It was essential for Mr. Matshikiza to make this first trip ever to Barbados before finalizing plans for the play. His impressions during the visit led to some new perspectives on certain aspects of the play.





# BICENTENARY OF THE ABOLITION OF THE SLAVE TRADE

## Museum in the Docklands – London, Sugar and Slavery

A look what one of our global partners is doing to commemorate this year's Bicentenary of the Abolition of the Slave Trade:

London, Sugar and Slavery is Museum in Docklands' new permanent gallery exploring the capital's dark past – and its role in the transatlantic slave trade.

Museum in Docklands has opened London's first permanent exhibition about the transatlantic slave trade. The story of 'London, Sugar and Slavery', as the new space is called, is literally in the very bricks and mortar of this four storey museum, a former sugar warehouse built to store produce from the Caribbean.

The West India Dock, where the museum is situated was built in 1802 and paid for by sugar merchants, plantation owners and slave traders.

Now this ambitious gallery, funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund (£506,500) and Renaissance in the Regions (£230,000), puts the 'trade' firmly back into 'slave trade'. Through 140 objects, art, film, a sound and light installation, traditional exhibition panels and interactive screens the visitor is left in no doubt of the economic importance of sugar and the slave trade to London, once the fourth largest slaving port in the world.

The high-tech gallery opens with an

understated black and white chart. The column headings are self-explanatory: name of ship, tons, captain, principal owner, cleared port of London, embarked African slaves, number of enslaved Africans, destination.

This simple list speaks volumes: the ships listed from a single decade fill the wall, giving the visitor an immediate sense of the scale of the trade. In the 'number of enslaved Africans' column, 960 is recorded for one ship. The destination, Demerera, in this context, is almost poetic.

Ships sailed from London to West Africa, where they bought enslaved Africans, travelled onto the Caribbean to sell them and buy sugar before returning to London. This broad global history is consistently balanced against the small, domestic, local one.

As Professor Catherine Hall, advisor on the gallery says, "London, Sugar & Slavery' has helped me to think about my city; how the fruits of slavery are built into the environment in which we live; and how relationships between people, right into the present, have been shaped by that history. The gallery is a must for all Londoners."

Delicate abolitionist sugar bowls, glass trading beads made in Hammersmith and clay tobacco pipes in the form of African heads sit alongside maps, timelines and highly crafted 1,000-year-old West African artefacts.

Bit by bit, the seemingly incomprehensible crime against humanity is made comprehensible. It is at once Afro-centric and London-centric.

Until the 1600s sugar was regarded as a luxury commodity only available to the wealthy. After 1700 drinking coffee became increasingly popular in England and the demand for sugar increased.

Imports to Britain expanded by 800 per cent and merchants quickly realised that

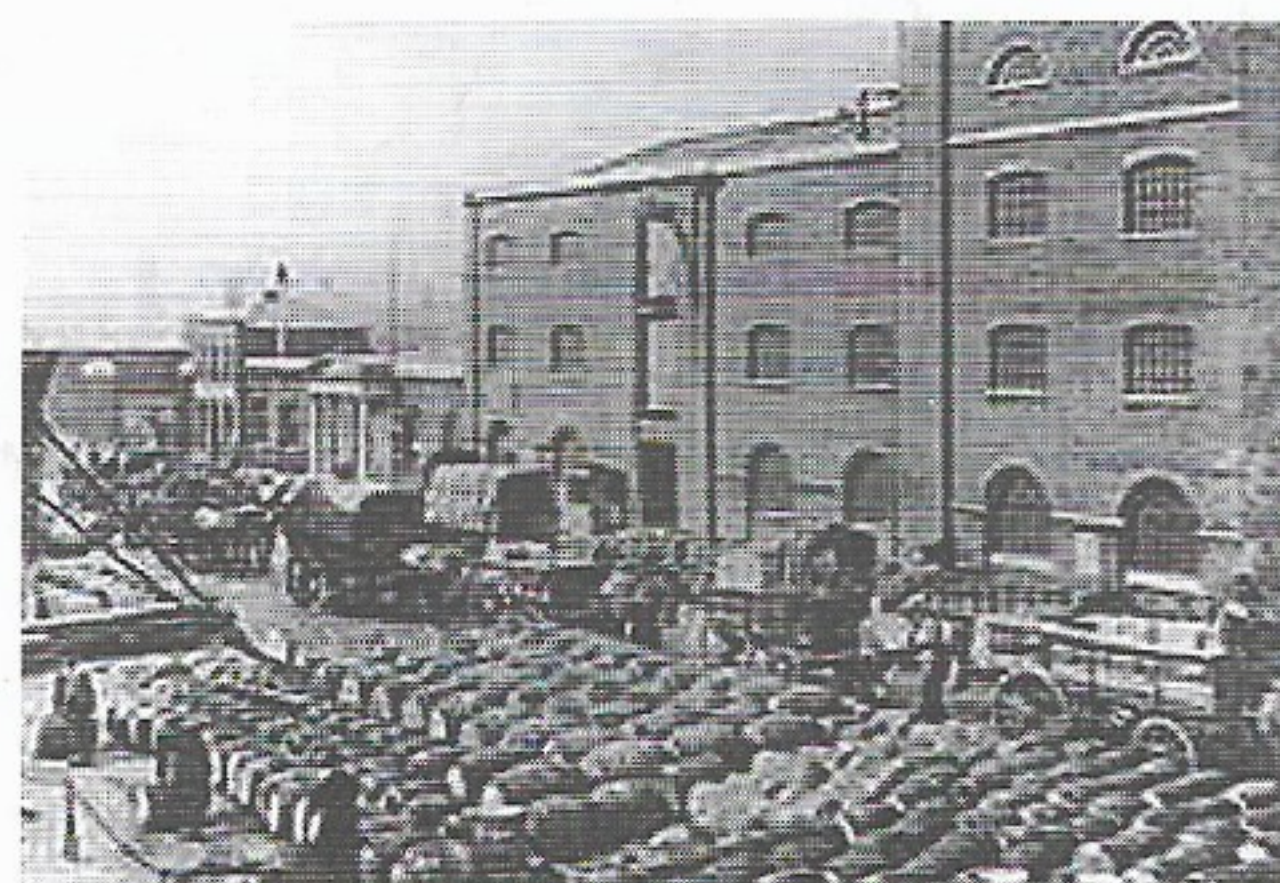
fantastic profits could be made from sugar production. But it required a mass supply of cheap labour.

By the late 1600s London's slave trade activity on the west coast of Africa was organised by the Royal Africa Company and after 1750 by the Company of Merchants Trading to Africa. Over 3,100 ships departed from London to carry nearly a million Africans into slavery. Learning this history while standing in the very dock from where slave ships set sail does shift your sense of the city.

The story may be about sugar, but sugar-coated it is not. Manacles and graphic images of torture produced by the abolitionist movement are on display. For the accidental or casual visitor this is a clear, responsible and engaging introduction to a potentially overwhelming history.

But even an informed visitor should find something new. For instance the 1814 engraving by JR Smith shows a highly unusual depiction of an African slave trader.

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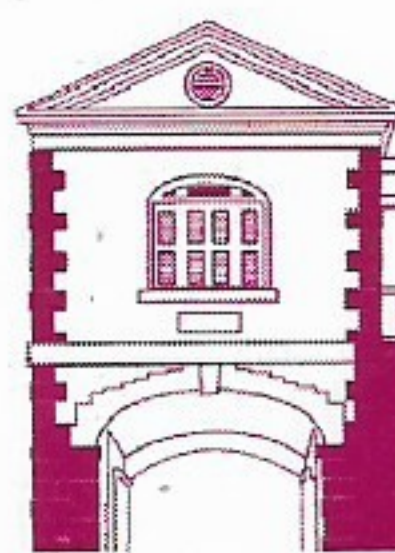


No. 1 Warehouse West India Quay in 1910



Museum in the Docklands at West India Quay today





## ANNOUNCEMENTS

continued from page 5

Interpretive devices such as the specially commissioned short film by director Stephen Rudder which shows Londoners reciting the words of abolitionist Olaudah Equiano help emphasise that African people were the prime agents of resistance to slavery.

In fact, it is now estimated that as many as one in four slave

ships experienced a revolt.

Adapted from [www.24hourmuseum.org.uk](http://www.24hourmuseum.org.uk).

**Don't miss the Barbados Museum's 'Ending the Trade' Exhibition, open to the public from 16th November.**

### Passing of Dr. Fitz Baptiste

The Barbados Museum & Historical Society regrets to announce the passing of well-known friend to the Museum Dr. Fitz Baptiste, during the period under review. His most recent contribution to the Museum was delivering a lecture as part of the 2007 Lecture Series. Dr. Baptiste will be missed by many.

### Tribute to Melanie Holford

The management and staff of the Museum sincerely regret the passing of one of our young volunteers, Melanie Holford.

Melanie's engaging smile will always be remembered as she met and toured visitors through our galleries. Her contagious laughter will no longer echo in the courtyard as she shared jokes and stories with her colleagues.

We will miss the ever changing glow of colours which emanated from her hair as she moved from style to style depending on the latest fashion trend or on her own personal moods.

Melanie was a good person with a deep love for her family, and especially for her young daughter Niasha. She was warm-hearted, friendly, extremely affable, always ready to lend a helping hand or go the extra mile. She spoke from the heart, always stating frankly how she felt about an issue. She had an enquiring mind and an insatiable appetite for knowledge.

Melanie will always be remembered and missed by those with whom she worked, especially her fellow Junior Curators and the Education Officer, who was one of her former teachers.

May she rest in peace.

Submitted by Peggy McGear, BMHS Education Officer

### Seeking 75 Outstanding Museum Memories

2008 marks the 75th anniversary of the establishment of the Barbados Museum and Historical Society. We are calling on Museum members to submit fond or amusing anecdotes about the BMHS through the years towards selection and publishing of 75 outstanding memories.

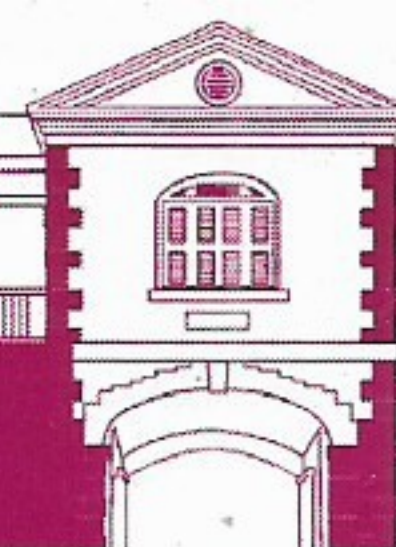
### Classic Card 2007

Get your Classic cards now in time for Christmas or any occasion.



Broad Street, Bridgetown. C. 1920s





## Bundle of Joy

The Museum family welcomed into its fold a newborn addition. On 11th July 2007 at 10:30 p.m., Event Coordinator, Cindy Corbin, gave birth to Caela Amaia Arianna Corbin who bears the exact likeness of her mother. We look forward to giving our support to Cindy as she enters the realm of motherhood.

## Staff Member Takes Up New Challenge

Finance Officer, Jacqueline Stephenson said goodbye to her colleagues in September as she prepared to leave these shores to begin a PhD programme at the University of Nottingham for which she received a full scholarship. In a short time, Jackie made an indelible mark on the institution and we wish her well in her endeavours.

## Curator Returns

While one staff member departed for England in September, another returned from study leave spent in the same country. The Museum staff welcomed Kevin Farmer, Curator - Archaeology and History, back into its fold upon completion of the first phase of his doctoral programme.

## Council & Staff Update

### MUSEUM COUNCIL

Patron  
His Excellency Sir Clifford  
Husbands G.C.M.G. K.A.  
Governor General of Barbados

### Council

President  
Dr. Trevor Carmichael, Q.C.  
Senior Vice President  
Prof. Woodville Marshall  
Junior Vice President  
Mrs. Kathleen Drayton

### Ordinary Members

Mrs. Joyce Gayle  
Mr. Richard Goddard  
Mr. Humphrey Metzgen  
Mr. Peter Simpson  
Stella Lady St. John  
Mrs. Susan Mahon

### Government Appointees

Mrs. Andrea Wells  
Dr. Richard Goodridge  
Mr. Andre Hoyte  
Ms. Sharon Trotman  
Mrs. Celia Toppin

### MUSEUM STAFF

Director  
Alistair Cummins  
Deputy Director  
Dr. Thomas Loftfield  
Development Officer  
Linda Branch  
Education Officer  
Peggy McGearry  
Marketing Officer  
Christine Skeete  
Librarian  
Greta Payne  
Administrative Officer  
Susan Boyce

Administrative  
Assistant - Accounts  
Marina Ward

Administration  
Assistant - Merchandising  
Marcia Griffith

Event Coordinator  
Cindy Corbin

Receptionist & Shop Assistant  
Kandace Rollock

### Curatorial

Archaeology and History  
Kevin Farmer  
Art and Art History  
Allison Callender  
Registrar  
Angela Boyce  
Researcher  
Miguel Pena

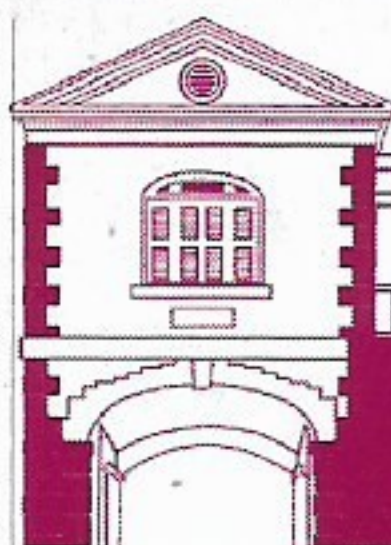
### Technical and Maintenance

Stephen Layne  
Reginald Riley  
Pauline Stuart  
Merna Bryan

### Security

Peter Graham  
Cecilia Payne  
Grantley Yarde  
Roslyn Alleyne  
Vinroy Charles





## MEMBERSHIP

### ENCOURAGE YOUR FRIENDS OR COLLEAGUES TO JOIN THE BARBADOS MUSEUM – *WE VALUE YOUR SUPPORT!*

Member privileges when they join:

- A year's subscription to the Arti-facts Newsletter
- Free admission to the Museum
- Free use of Museum Library services
- Members discount in the Museum shop and more!

Title & Name \_\_\_\_\_

Occupation \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Tel \_\_\_\_\_ Fax \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

- Life \$690.00 • Firm / Company \$230.00 • Annual \$51.75
- Joint Annual (husband & wife) \$69.00 • Student \$5.75
- Junior (18 years & under) \$5.75

#### PAYMENT DETAILS

To join friends or colleagues need to complete details above, and payment detail below.

- A cheque or money order made payable to: Barbados Museum & Historical Society
- Payment by credit card: VISA/AMEX /MASTERCARD

Credit card number:

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Expiry date:

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Month      Year

- Send your cheque or money order to: Barbados Museum & Historical Society, St. Ann's Garrison, St. Michael, Barbados.
- Credit card payment can be faxed to the Museum on 429 5946.