

Historical and Archaeological Society The Museum of Antigua and Barbuda

“Knowledge to be of any Value must be Communicated”

HAS Newsletter No. 167

October, November December 2024



In This Issue...

90 and Counting

By Barbara Arrindell
Page 1,2

Cultural Heritage Preserved: First-ever Local Seed work

Manual launches
Daily Observer
Newspaper Article
by Samantha Simon
Page 2,3

Preserving Legacies Workshop Experience

By Desley Gardner
Page 4

Fort Berkeley and Pillars of Hercules

By MAB
Page 5

Muse News

Page 6

Stay Connected

Page 7

90 and Counting

By Barbara Arrindell

Forty children, probably all Roman Catholics would have been given careful instructions by their parents in preparation for September 18th 1933. Some may have been just five or six years old while others had completed primary school and might not have otherwise had the opportunity to attend secondary school. Their uniforms were probably starched and ironed in advance. Parents may have said a silent prayer that this school would remain open.



**The Former Convent High School
Corner of High and Cross Street.**

They would have heard that this was the third attempt to establish a Catholic School in Antigua. As the Catholic Community in Antigua marks the 90th anniversary of the school, it may be safe to say that their prayers were answered and their children would go down in history as the “First Forty”. They were the first forty students to attend The Antigua Convent School; an educational institution dedicated from its inception to "Christ the King".

Then there were the “First Four”, the four nuns who would welcome the students and become their teachers at the building on the corner of High & Cross Streets. They were members of an Order that (as of 1963) would be referred to as the Immaculate Heart of Mary (ICM) Sisters.

(Continued on page 2)

90 and Counting

(Continued from page 1)

When they arrived here in 1933, they were members of the Missionary Canonesses of St. Augustine. The Antigua Convent School of Christ the King's first teachers were Sister John Mary Demets, Superior Sr Maria Philippa, Sister Marie Firming and Sr Marie Emmauella. The First Forty simply referred to the First Four all as "Mother".

Cultural Heritage Preserved: First-ever Local Seed Work Manual Launches

Extracted from Daily Observer Newspaper dated December 18th 2024 - Article by Samantha Simon

Michelle Donawa has authored the first comprehensive instructional manual dedicated to the traditional Antiguan craft of seedwork called "Seedwork Made Easy", which was launched Sunday afternoon at the historic Copper & Lumber Store Hotel in English Harbour.

The manual, inspired by Donawa's grandmother and the women of the English Harbour community, provides detailed instructions from seed collection through to creating finished pieces.



"This book was born out of a strong desire to preserve and celebrate the art of seedwork, a cherished tradition in Antiguan culture," Donawa said during her emotional response at the launch. "It serves as my tribute to my grandmother's legacy."

Seedwork, a traditional Antiguan craft using natural seeds instead of beads, is used to create necklaces, bracelets, coasters, and other jewelry items.

(Continued on page 3)

Board of Directors

Walter Berridge
Chairman

Reg Murphy
President

Avril Hector
Susan Lowes
Janice O'Keiffe
Desley Gardner
Chris Waters

Members
Dame Louise Lake-Tack
Honourable Member

Museum Staff

Michele Henry
Curator

Debbie Joseph
Gift Shop/ Museum Attendant

Lisa Francis
Gift Shop/Museum Attendant

Myra Piper
Library Researcher
Data Entry Clerk

Rebecca Gomes
Assistant Library Research
Attendant

Lisa Charles
Assistant Library Researcher

Mary Johnson
Heritage Education Educator

Suzanne Henry
Isabel Carbon
Leuwana Maynard
Custodians

Mark Philip

Alex Stewart

Digital Collection

Management Technicians

Cultural heritage preserved: First-ever local Seed work manual launches

(Continued from page 3)

With only four or five artisans currently practicing this craft, Donawa's book arrives at a crucial time for preserving this cultural heritage by teaching others the craft.

"It's very comprehensive," Donawa explained. "It has everything from collecting to creating designs, with basic patterns that beginners can follow just by going through the instructions."

The event, attended by His Excellency Sir Rodney Williams, Governor General of Antigua and Barbuda, and St Paul representative The Honourable Chet Greene, included a poignant moment of silence to remember the seedwork artisans of the past who helped build and sustain their communities through this traditional craft.

The craft has deep roots in the English Harbour community, where artisans like "Aunt Christy" spent decades creating and selling seedwork at the dockyard.

Speaking at the event, Kim Burdon noted that the manual is unique in teaching the specific art of stitching seeds together, rather than just placing seeds on substrate material.

Parks Commissioner Ann Marie Martin recalled several of these artisans by name, including Rosal, Charlotte, and Larina, who were instrumental in establishing seedwork as a vital economic force in the community.

"They built beautiful houses with this trade," Martin shared, remembering when tourists would pay premium prices for seedwork pieces.

MP Greene, who is also the Minister of Foreign Affairs, pledged governmental support to promote the work internationally and presented a congratulatory token to the author.

"Far too often we see elements of our history go down the drain," Greene noted.

The book is available for purchase on Amazon and locally at the Best of Books store and other locations.

The launch event concluded with a book signing session and a special "Sip 'n Sew" engagement with attendees.

Donawa, who holds a BA in Health Studies and operates WeBeStitching Embroidery & Print, plans to introduce "Sip n Sew" workshops to a wider audience following the book launch, ensuring this traditional craft continues to thrive in modern Antigua and Barbuda.

Museum Humour



Preserving Legacies Workshop Experience

By Desley Gardner (HAS Board Member)

I am grateful for my experience with Preserving Legacies as I received the opportunity to witness Climate Change ACTION in Cartagena, Columbia.



This experience improved my understanding of heritage management with special focus on the impacts of climate change and developing resilience. Through Preserving Legacies, heritage managers and stakeholders form a community whilst battling this very real threat to our countries, our livelihoods and our cultural heritage.



We are all facing the very real impacts of climate change. This is our chance to join this international community.



Applications are open! Join the 2025 Preserving Legacies Leadership Cohort to protect heritage in a changing climate! Applications open until January 3, 2025.

As a Climate Heritage Hero, you'll:

- Receive a no-cost 12-month training program tailored for heritage professionals.
 - Travel for an in-person experiential workshop.
 - Share your site's story globally.
 - Lead climate risk assessments with team, financial, and scientific support.
 - Present your work on national and international platforms.
- Ready to make an impact? Apply today and



safeguard your community's heritage for future generations! Visit www.heritageadapts.org to learn more.

Ready to apply? Submit a Nomination Now at: <https://lnkd.in/etfPhjWT>
[#HeritageHeroes](#) [#ClimateAction](#) [#Preserving-Legacies](#) [#ICOMOS](#) [#ClimateHeritage](#)

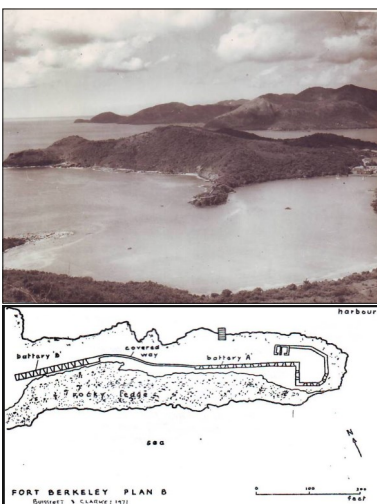
Images by Michael O. Snyder

Fort Berkeley and Pillars of Hercules

By Museum of Antigua and Barbuda

FORT BERKELEY

Fort Berkeley is placed on the peninsula forming the west entrance to English Harbour. The fort was started in 1704, or 21 years before the Dockyard was built. Its defences were later extended in the 1740's. In this strategic position, the fort commanded the entrance to the anchorage, where naval captains careened their ships and sheltered from hurricanes.



On approaching the peninsula from a footpath starting at the Dockyard dinghy wharf, a stone quarry may be seen on the right. It was here that the building material for the fort was mined. Further on, to the right, is the fortified line known once as the "Charles Line". The Navy added to it in 1745, when the fort was extended. On the left, is a bombproof powder magazine, built in 1811 to hold 300 barrels of gunpowder. It also contained a cooperage and shifting room for packing explosives. The next building was the guardhouse. There is an amusing 18th century reference to this building:

"The guard is in great distress, the allowance of 9 pence a day not being sufficient at such a cold post to buy more than warm liquor".

In 1989, the building was re-roofed by the National Park as a pilot restoration-training project funded by Canada. The restoration is accurate to the point that the stonework shows smaller stones were used to extend the wall height. In 1751, the roof had been blown off by a hurricane. Therefore added height to the walls was needed to accommodate extra beams to strengthen the roof against future hurricanes.

The restored mechanics of the inside structure are very interesting.

At the end of the peninsula is the site of the first 1704 battery. Peeping out of the battlements towards Guadeloupe is a 24-pdr cannon, made in Scotland in 1805. The calibre of the gun is 5.5 ins. and it weighs 25 tons. It took 11 men to handle this gun and its range was 1.5 miles with an 8 lb. charge.



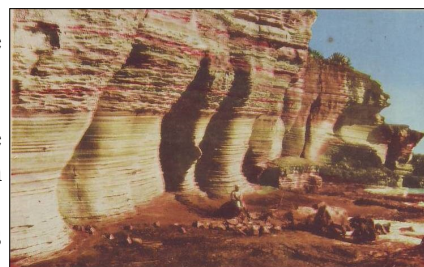
View SW over English Harbour toward Fort Berkeley from terrace of Clarence House 1958.

Over the wall at the extreme end, is an up-turned cannon placed in the rock. A chain attached to this gun once extended across the harbour entrance to prevent entry of any attacking ship.

PILLARS OF HERCULES

A part of this natural rock phenomenon, caused by wind erosion, may be seen from Fort Berkeley. Perhaps it is best seen from Snapper Point, or by approaching from the east side of the harbour.

The large pillar-like formation faces the hot western evening sun. It is sheltered from the constant easterly trade wind with its accompanying showers. Thus the soft sandstone rock becomes dry and crumbly. The wind eddies over



Pillar of Hercules 1911



the eons have eroded the rock into the spectacular formation seen today. Hawksbill Rock on the east coast, and the westerly sides of old ruins, are other examples of this geological action.

MUSENEWS

Dear Friends of the Museum,

This year has been a challenging one as we worked on upgrades and repairs to our facility. We remain hopeful for long-term solutions by 2025.

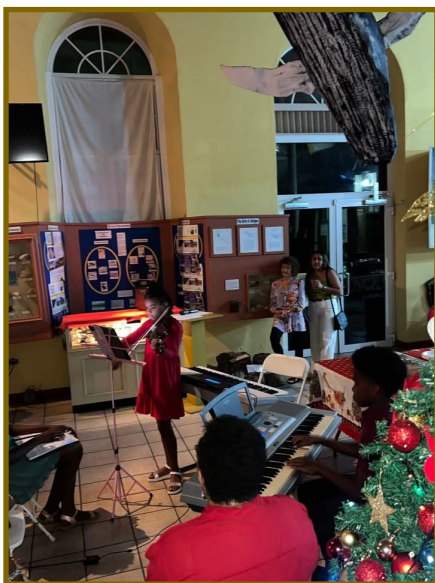
Thank you for your continued support, which has been invaluable to us. We look forward to your engagement in the coming year as we strive to preserve and enhance our shared cultural treasures.

Wishing you a wonderful New Year!

**Warm regards
The Board Management and Staff of the
Museum of Antigua and Barbuda Historical and Archaeological Society.**

Museum Christmas Party 2024

Snippets of performances by Mrs. Marion Byron who played the keyboard and other performers, Isabel Nicholas, Tristan Nicholas and Anniyah Azille. Staff member Debbie Joseph led the Caribbean Christmas Songs. Special thanks to those who performed and members and friends who attended and participated in our event. We appreciate your support.



The Historical & Archaeological Society Newsletter is published at the Museum quarterly in January, April, July and October. HAS encourages contribution of material relevant to the Society from the membership or other interested individuals.

Tel/Fax: 268-462-1469, 462-4930 E-mail: museum@candw.ag Website: www.antiguamuseums.net

Historical and Archaeological Society

OCTOBER, NOVEMBER, DECEMBER 2024 No. 167



Stay connected for further information by visiting our Facebook page, *The Museum of Antigua and Barbuda*. Also visit our website www.antiguamuseums.net

Join HAS! Discover & Preserve Antigua & Barbuda's Heritage

TO BECOME OR REMAIN A MEMBER OF THE SOCIETY, FILL IN & SNIP OFF. Mail to P.O. Box 2103, St. John's Antigua.

NAME:

ADDRESS:

TELEPHONE: (H)..... (W).....

E-MAIL:

SIGNATURE:

DATE:

CIRCLE MEMBERSHIP CATEGORY	
Individual	\$ 50 EC/\$ 25US (Mailing included)
Student	\$ 15 EC
Family	\$ 100 EC/\$ 45US (mailing included)
Life	\$ 500 EC/\$ 200US
Business Patron	\$ 500 EC