

flood gates are sometimes used to block off St Saviour's Avenue.



The demolished summerhouse by the riverside walk



The surviving summerhouse

A feature of the Gardens is the riverside walk with mature trees, clearly from Binford House times.



The riverside walk and the trees

From 1974 the gardens became the responsibility of Sedgemoor District Council. Today it is widely used as a short cut from the south of the town on the west side of the river. But it is also used by people wanting to take a break, or let their children let off steam

During the summer months, Sunday afternoon band concerts are held, sponsored by the Town Council, with refreshments available in the Blake Museum garden, provided by Museum Friends.



Blake Museum is owned by Bridgwater Town Council and managed by volunteers from the Friends of Blake Museum. (Registered Charity 1099815)

www.bridgwatermuseum.org.uk
Version 1: 27 June 2018

Bridgwater Town Council



Blake Museum

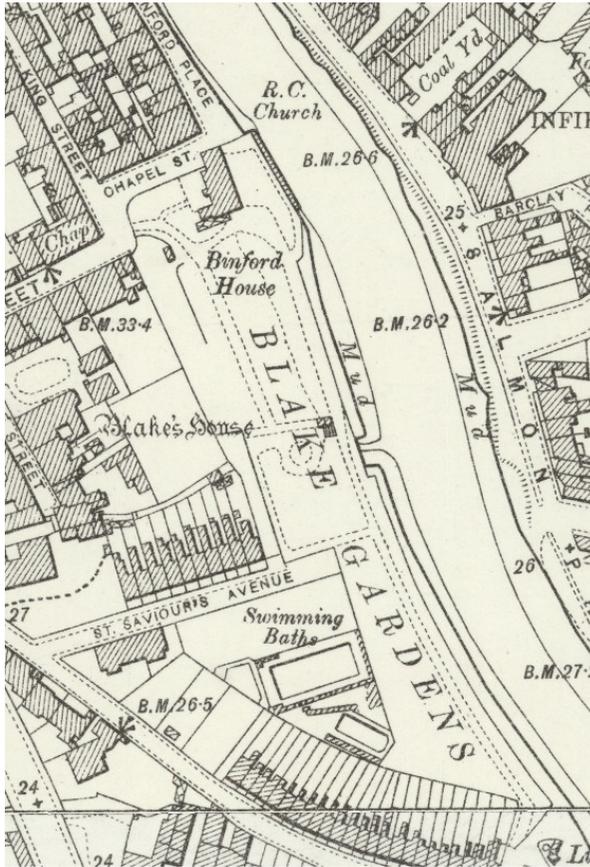


The Riverside walk, c1910

Blake Gardens

Blake Gardens were established in the grounds of Binford House, which had been purchased by the Borough Council from Mr Richard Else, in 1898. It is a typical Edwardian municipal public garden, covering some two and a half acres and extending along the west bank of the Parrett to the south. The gardens were officially opened by the Mayoress, Mrs T. W. Manchip in August 1902.

Bridgwater Public Library was built at the Binford Place end on the site of Binford House, with a grant by Mr Andrew Carnegie, and was opened in September 1906 by the Mayor, H. W. Pollard.



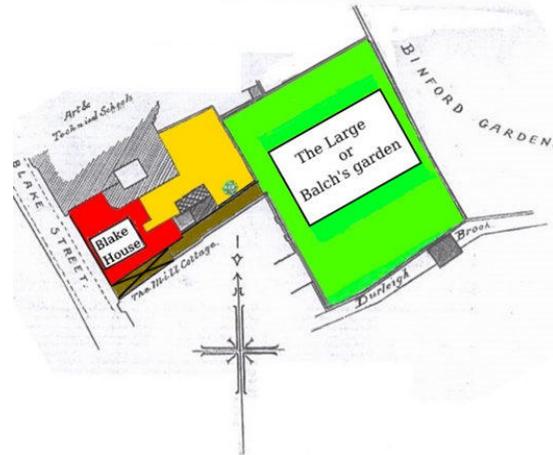
Blake Gardens before the Library was built, 1905-6
The swimming baths, off St Saviour's Avenue
were opened in 1893



The Bandstand and flower beds

The bandstand was opened by the Mayoress, Mrs Frank Wills, in July 1908.

Blake House and garden, in Blake Street, adjoining, was purchased by the Borough Council in 1924, and in April 1926 was opened as the Blake Museum by the Mayor, Alderman Walter Deacon. The gardens were added to Blake Gardens and part was used as a nursery, by the park staff, with greenhouses. Part was turned into an elaborate rose garden.



Blake House garden, 1926

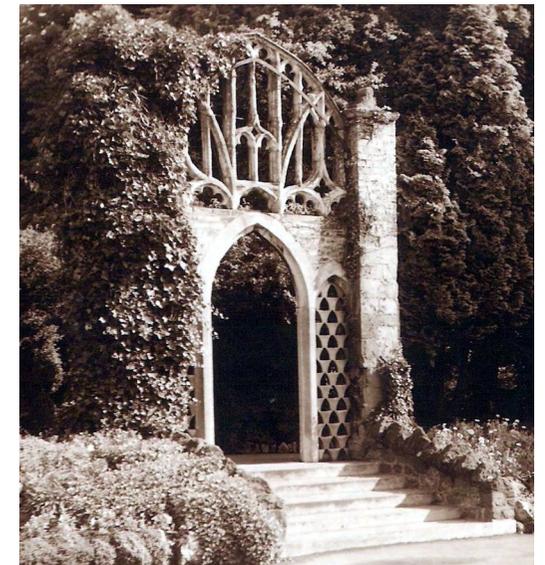


The Rose-Garden adjoining the Museum

When the Broadway was built, in 1956, it cut through Blake Gardens, the two halves being

connected by a pedestrian underpass on the riverside walk.

A feature of the garden was a number of historic structures: An elaborate archway, which features in early photographs, is thought to contain masonry salvaged from Saint Mary's Church when it was restored in the 1850s. By the riverside walk was a summer house, with windows. Both are now demolished. A smaller summer house, dating perhaps from the eighteenth century can be seen near the Library, and a brick shed, perhaps for gardener's tools, is built bridging the Durleigh Brook.



The Archway

The Durleigh Brook crosses Blake Gardens to the Parrett, partly in a culvert. At the riverside is a short length of brick wall, with an inscribed stone recording the opening of the gardens. At time of very high tide, coupled with much rainwater in the brook, this part of the gardens is liable to flood for a short while. Temporary