



The Museum garden, maintained by the Friends

More volunteers and Friends are always welcome. Call at the Museum to pick up a leaflet, or see the Downloads page on the Friends' web site (next column).

Programme Of Talks 2016

8 March: Richard Filler.

Bridgwater's Workhouse.

12 April :Steve Mewes.

Bridgwater Bay Tidal Lagoon – Bridgwater's Next Chapter.

10 May: Richard Raynsford.

An Illustrated Tour of Churches and Chapels in Somerset.

14 June: Kay Wych.

How I became a 16th Century Kitchen Maid.

12 July: Vicky Garnett

Language Use and Somerset.

13 September: Dennis Warren

The Gramophone Sequel: Bing, Swing and Rock 'n' Roll.

11 October. **AGM.**

8 November: Rhian Childs

Sea Trials and Tribulations – Restoring Historic Boats.

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Websites:

Friends: www.blakemuseumfriends.org.uk

Museum: www.bridgwatermuseum.org.uk

The Museum opens for the next season on Tuesday 29 March, with a temporary exhibition about its history and new permanent displays include the Siege of Bridgwater in the Civil War, in 1645, and the return of the Diorama of the Battle of Sedgemoor, which since 2010 was on loan to Westonzoyland Church.

Exhibitions for 2016

From 19 March – Museum's 90th
Anniversary

From 3 May – S & D Railway Trust

From 4 June – Bridgwater old
photographs

From 4 July – Sedgemoor Stitchers

From 2 August – WW 1 Centenary, 1916

From 6 September – Gramophone history

From 4 October – Baptist Art Group

Opening Times

The Museum is open Tuesdays to
Saturday 10.00 am – 4.00 pm (last entry
3.00 pm) and entry is free, though
donations are always welcome.



Bridgwater Town Council

BLAKE MUSEUM CELEBRATES IT'S 90TH BIRTHDAY THIS YEAR.



The Mayor, Alderman Walter Deacon, speaking at the opening of the Museum, 15 April 1926.

The museum was opened by Col M. Locke-Blake, a co-lateral descendent of Admiral Robert Blake, 1599-1657, on 15 April, 1926, and was owned by the Borough Council. The first Curators, Gerald Cuzner, followed by Angus Dunn, were also the Borough Librarians. The early displays largely concentrated on Admiral Blake and the Battle of Sedgemoor. Over the years the Museum expanded to include a cottage, adjoining the Mill.

In 1974, the Museum became the responsibility of Sedgemoor District Council, and was managed by John St John Earl and then Nick Nicholson, with assistance from volunteers of the Museum Society. Later, the District Council appointed Museum Officers – Sarah Harbige, succeeded by Jessica Vale.

The Town Mill, at the end of Blake Street, was acquired through the efforts of the Bridgwater Museum Association Trust, with the aim of expanding the Museum into it, but the Mill was damaged by fire in 1995, and the plans came to nothing.



The Mill mid-20th century

The Friends of Blake Museum began in March 2000, with the aim of supporting the museum practically and financially.

In 2007 the District Council announced that funding for the museum would cease in March 2008. After protracted negotiations it was handed over to the Town Council, in 2009, which now funds it, and from then on the Friends have run the museum guided by the honorary curators, helped by the Museum Mentor, Liz Neathey, of the South West Heritage Trust.

An ambitious programme of refurbishment, under the direction of the late Dr. Peter Cattermole, began in 2009 (with funding in part contributed in the first four years by the District Council and topped up by the Town Council) and has continued during annual winter shut-downs ever since, so the Museum has been completely overhauled. It has been re-decorated and re-wired throughout. Most galleries have modern display cases with low-energy LED lighting. The Museum is fully networked with computer access in most rooms. The gardens have been transformed. Several displays are changed annually.



Moving a cheese press in 2009

The Museum Friends

Some hundred Friends and volunteers are involved, ranging from front of house custodians, welcoming visitors and running the shop, to cataloguing objects, cleaning, gardening, painting and decorating, electrical work, a learning team, web-site management, display design, fund-raising and business management. Overall control is in the hands of the Museum Sub-Committee of the Town Council.



The re-opening 2009

L-R – Cllr Graham Granter, Mayor, Mrs Kaye Granter, Mayoress, Mr David Sebborn

The Friends donate several thousand pounds a year to the Museum towards running costs, raised by membership fees, coffee mornings, two fairs, a series of winter book sales and teas sold at the summer band concerts in Blake Gardens.