



Blake Museum

Blake Museum, Bridgwater Care and Conservation Plan

Name of museum: Blake Museum, Bridgwater

Name of Governing body: Bridgwater Town Council

Date on which this policy was approved by the governing body: 16 March 2015

Date on which this body is due for review: March 2018

Statement of Purpose

The Blake Museum Bridgwater is established:

- to rescue from loss and destruction the relics of our ancestors;
- to collect, preserve, conserve and to show relics of history relating (principally but not exclusively) to Bridgwater and its immediate surroundings;
- to show visitors that Bridgwater is not indifferent to its own history;
- to interest visitors in what has happened in Bridgwater since it was granted its first Royal Charter in the reign of King John;
- to give the townspeople of Bridgwater pride in their past;
- to reveal that great events have taken place within the town and adjacent areas and set them in the context of the history of England;
- to honour the lives of great men and women who have lived or been associated with the town, and, in particular but not exclusively, Robert Blake.

Introduction: This plan sets out the actions required to implement the Care and Conservation Policy. It should be read in conjunction with the Forward Plan, Building Plan and Emergency Plan and any other plans affecting the collection and the museum buildings.

The museum has access to conservation advice from the regional Conservation Development Officer and refers all concerns to an appropriate conservator.

1) The Collections

Details of the Collections are given in the Museum Acquisition and Disposal Policy.

2) Governing Body and purpose of Plan

Bridgwater Town Council (BTC), as the owners of the building and as Governing Body of the Museum recognise that they have a duty of care towards both the building and to the collections within it. The curators' have day-to-day responsibility for the collection.

This plan is intended to ensure that the objects in the collection are stored, displayed and handled in a way that promotes preservation by adopting:

- 1) The principles and practices set out in *The National Trust Manual Housekeeping*
- 2) Best practice as given in the Standards for Collections Care publications
- 3) Comprehensive review and monitoring strategies so as to identify accurately the interactions between the historic building and the collections

3) Preventive Conservation

The following preventative conservation measures are implemented to achieve a planned and controlled change to the environment and surroundings of the objects in order to reduce or to eliminate, as far as possible, the known aspects of the objects' deterioration.

3.1) Provision of suitable building conditions

The Governing Body is responsible for the provision and maintenance of suitable building conditions and works closely with volunteers and conservators to improve the conditions of storage and display for the collections.

3.2) Environmental monitoring and controls

The Museum stores and display collections in a managed environment that minimises their rate of deterioration.

The Museum seeks to continue to improve the environmental standards by which the collections are cared for by:

- A) Collecting environmental data from storage and display areas using wireless networked devices for RH and temperature linked to the museum's IT system and installed in rooms 2, 5, 21, 22, 23, 24 and 25
- B) Collating, utilising and acting upon data to provide stable and appropriate collection environments
- C) Monitoring, recording, managing and eradicating pests.

3.3) Control Ranges

These have determined in conjunction with the guidelines in the NT *Manual of Housekeeping* and published Standards for Collection Care. The performance characteristics of the building will continue to be monitored.

3.4) Control methods for relative humidity and temperature

The hot water electric boiler system has been linked with a Building Management System that minimises Relative Humidity shock.

4) Lighting

UV-free LED lighting has been installed throughout the Museum. All the windows have blinds which are kept down. Four of the downstairs windows have shutters. Vulnerable displays are regularly rotated to avoid possible UV damage.

5) **Display case construction**

Most of the museum has been equipped with modern metal-framed display cases fitted with LED lighting. Self-indicating silica gel is used, where appropriate, to maintain a stable RH. De-humidifying equipment has been located in two of the store-rooms .

6) **Storage**

Items are now on labelled shelves or in cupboards, stored in acid-free boxes and appropriately grouped. The location index has been updated. Researchers have access to a supervised study area.

7) **Housekeeping**

The advice provided in the NT *Manual of Housekeeping* is being used as a basis for training volunteers in appropriate cleaning techniques.

8) **Interventive Conservation**

The Blake Museum works in accordance with the following principles in respect of interventive conservation active treatment to stabilise the condition of objects.

- Advice will be obtained from the Curatorial Adviser and other Somerset Heritage Service Advisers
- Only appropriately qualified or experienced conservators will be employed to carry out conservation work.
- Conservation work will be underpinned by knowledge and understanding of the object. Critical to this is documentation of its condition and treatment, and a long term plan for the care of the object.
- Work undertaken by the Blake Museum's appointed conservators will conform to the standards set down in the code of ethics of the United Kingdom Institute for Conservation of Historic and Artistic Works (UKIC).
- All treatments will be photographed and documented and records will be maintained in accordance with SPECTRUM 3 standards.

9) **Self-Assessment and Review**

Performance during the lifetime of this Statement will be monitored by using the Benchmarks in Collection Care self-assessment checklist at six monthly intervals.

Signature: Graham Granter
Chair of MSC

Date: 16 March 2015

Certified: Alan Hurford
Town Clerk

Date: 16 March 2015