

# BLAKE NEWS

Those members receiving this newsletter by post will find their membership cards in the envelope the newsletter came in. Those members having the newsletter by e-mail will need to call at the Museum office to collect their cards.

FRIENDS OF BLAKE MUSEUM

## CHRISTMAS FAIR



**In aid of Museum funds – Free entry**

**The Museum  
5 Blake Street, Bridgwater**

**Saturday 26 NOVEMBER  
10.00am – 1.00pm**

Home-made cakes & bread

Bric-a-brac and books

Tombola & Raffles

Refreshments & Museum Shop

Charity stalls ~ Pickles & Preserves

Refreshments

Items for the Fair may be delivered to the Museum on Thursday 24 November 10am – 3pm or on the morning of the 26<sup>th</sup>. Cakes especially welcome.

### Shut-down arrangements

The Museum is now on shut-down, and will re-open on Tuesday 18 April 2017. Working parties will be in each Monday and Thursday. The Museum will close completely between 12 December and 9 January, though duty key-holders will inspect the building daily. The work planned this year will be routine maintenance –

## Winter 2016



painting and electrical work, cataloguing etc, and also refreshing a number of the displays.

It is planned to write and publish an illustrated catalogue of the Chubb Collection.

### Coffee mornings

November Coffee Morning is as normal on 24 November. 8 December will be a free coffee morning for all volunteers, key-holders and custodians. There is no other coffee morning in Dec. The next one will be on 26<sup>th</sup> January.

### Programme of Talks 2017

14th March - Sue Burn – *Publicans and Boatmen – The Storeys of Bridgwater and North Petherton*

1th April - Brian Wright -- *Easter Customs*

9th May - Guy Belshaw – *Bridgwater Fair*

13th June - Roger Evans – *Tales of Old Bridgwater*

11th July - John Dando

*Privies – A Walk up the Garden Path*

12th September - David Hawkings

*Transportation to Australia*

10th October – AGM

14th November - Ashley Jones

*The British Honours System*

### Historical Research.

[www.bridgwaterarchives.org.uk](http://www.bridgwaterarchives.org.uk) has published a research paper, *Bridgwater Public Health and Water Supply*. It describes the living conditions and epidemics in the C19 and the history of the Bridgwater Water Works, established in the 1870s by the Borough Council.

The site also has an updated version of Edmund Porter's *Bridgwater Industries, Past and Present* (1971)

### Exhibitions next year

*Douglas Allen Photographs* – 18 April - 20 May

*Sedgemoor Stitches* – 23 May - 24 June

*Battle of Sedgemoor* – 27 June - 24 July

*WW1 Commemoration 1917* – 1 August - 2 September

*T.B.C.* 5 September - 30 September

*T.B.C.* 3 October - 28 October

### Visitors' Book and Publicity

The Museum visitors' book is well worth looking at, for it has comments praising what we do from world-wide visitors. As well as the British Isles, people have come from Europe, North and South America, as well as Africa, Australia and New Zealand.

Our general leaflet is now online and attracts numerous hits, so advertising the Museum much more widely than we used to. Local radio and TV have also carried news items about us.

All the trifolds about Bridgwater's history are online on the downloads page of the Museum's website – [www.bridgwatermuseum.org.uk](http://www.bridgwatermuseum.org.uk)

## Friends of Blake Museum Committee for 2016/17

Hon Chairman - Nick Wallace  
Hon Vice Chairman - Rob Gardner  
Hon Secretary - Mike Searle (Hon Deputy Curator)  
Hon Treasurer - Lesley Withers  
Hon Committee Member and Fundraising Co-ordinator  
- Roger Blackburn  
Hon Committee Member - Tony Woolrich (Hon Curator)  
Hon Committee Member - Brian Withers  
Hon Committee Member - Tony Aspey  
Hon Co-opted Member and Learning Co-ordinator  
- Ruth Winson  
Hon Talks Programme Secretary - Victoria Underwood

### Douglas Allen Negatives

1954, 1955 and 1956 have been digitised – several hundred negatives. More to come.

## Bridgwater History Day

*Saturday 12 November. 10.00am – 4.00pm*

at the Arts Centre, Castle Street

*An event to mark the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Arts Centre*

The event is sponsored by *Bridgwater Town Council*.  
Free entry - You are welcome to drop in and out, pick and choose your speakers or stay for the whole day.

During the event, the Museum will have a display, and a stall with items from the Museum shop.



10.30 – Welcome by **Cllr Kathy Pearce**, Deputy Leader of Bridgwater Town Council.

10.35-11.15 Joyce Hurford, Blake Museum  
**Bridgwater's lesser known historic personalities**

11.15-12.00; Archaeologist Bob Croft – **Recent archaeology in and around Bridgwater**

12.00-12.45 Dr Miles Kerr-Peterson, Glasgow University: --**Bridgwater's Medieval Masterpiece: a ceiling in Glasgow**'.

12.45-13.30 **Lunch break**. Snacks, café and bar will be available

13.30-14.15 Bristol historian, Eugene Byrne - **Stolen Paradise: Civilian squatters in military camps in postwar Bristol and Somerset**. The movement was mostly headed by ex-servicemen and quickly forced the government to back down and designate the camps as council houses.

14.00-14.45 Bridgwater postman Dave Chapple – **A self-contained town: Bridgwater in the 1950's**. The 1950's is a decade that brings back specific memories for those Bridgwater people who remember it. A38 traffic jams; "Rock around the Clock"; the first motor car, TV, or Hi-Fi on your street; clearing the slum Courts; brand-new, but dimly-lit, council estates; more pubs than you could shake a stick at; Bridgwater's first ever Labour Council; "Productivity" and, of course, the coming of Hinkley Point.

14.45-15.30 Cllr Brian Smedley,  
Leader Bridgwater Town Council  
– **From Punk Rock to Poll Tax -The Sheep Worrying Story**.

Bridgwater in the 1970s and 80s was the setting for a DIY punk rock revolution in the country's first arts centre and in a town famed for its carnival traditions, rebel stirrings and general bloody mindedness. Today Brian is the leader of Bridgwater Town Council but in the 1970s and 80s was a punk rocker with the bands the Dangerous Brothers, the Sedgemorons and Red Smed and the Hot Trot Smash the System Boogie band. He formed Sheep Worrying Enterprises, wrote and presented several local history plays and was editor of Sheep Worrying Magazine.

1530-1600 Open discussion led by **Glen Burrows**, Secretary of the Bridgwater Senior Citizens forum  
– **Is Bridgwater History?**

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### Websites:

Friends: [www.blakemuseumfriends.org.uk](http://www.blakemuseumfriends.org.uk)

Museum: [www.bridgwatermuseum.org](http://www.bridgwatermuseum.org)

Museum history: [www.bridgwatermuseum.info](http://www.bridgwatermuseum.info)