

BLAKE NEWS

Winter 2010



Postal recipients of this newsletter will receive the full AGM minutes and copies of the reports presented there, as well as a talks programme and a membership card for those who are up to date on their subscriptions.

Annual General Meeting 12 October

Election of Officers. The following Officers were elected to the FOBM Committee:

Mr. Nick Wallace - Chairman and Programme Secretary
Mr. Bryan Gillard - Vice-Chairman
Treasurer No nominations were received and the post remains vacant. Mr. Paul Berryman will continue only until 31 December.
Mrs. Bernice Lashbrook - Secretary
Mr. John Robins and Mr. Tony Woolrich - Hon. Deputy Curators
Mrs. Charlotte Edmonds - Shop Manager
Mrs. Sue Berryman - Catering Manager
Mrs Kay Robins – Learning coordinator
Mr. John Willcocks - FOBM Publicity Officer
Mr. Tony Woolrich - Webmaster & Newsletter Editor
Mr. Brian Withers - Committee member
Mr. Glen Woollan - Committee member

In his remarks, Mr Bryan Gillard, the retiring chairman, appealed for volunteers to take on the roles of Treasurer, Museum publicity officer, and someone to help in the Museum office.

The next AGM will take place in the Museum at 7.00 pm on Tuesday 11 October 2011

SHUT DOWN

Shut-down goes well. It is being done on Mondays, Wednesdays and Thursdays only. The Museum re-opens Tuesday 5 April 2011.

The Gallery store has been cleared for new shelving to go in. Some flagstones have been relaid in the hall. Both wooden display cases in the Blake Room have been demolished, and the first of some modern all-glass cases has been delivered.

Four paintings has gone off for cleaning, and two long-case clock cases have been delivered for the two Bridgwater-made mechanisms we have, that have never been displayed. They were made in the eighteenth century.

We have stripped the panels off the long case in the Bygones room. Doors will be fitted and the space used for more storage. Radiators will be fitted upstairs, and the lighting improved in the Maritime room.

The Museum is now licensed for up to 5 people to use the catalogue simultaneously.

The usual painting, decorating and general refurbishment is progressing.

Christmas Fayre

The Christmas Fayre is now on Saturday 11 December, not Sunday 12, as was originally planned.

We are in need of Tombola prizes, bottles, cans, etc. Also good quality bric-a-brac. Please ring 01278 456127 Monday, Wednesday or Thursday if you can help. Items to be delivered to the Museum by Friday 10 December at the latest.

FRIENDS OF BLAKE MUSEUM

CHRISTMAS FAYRE

**BLAKE MUSEUM
BRIDGWATER**

**SATURDAY 11TH
DECEMBER
10.30am - 3.00 pm**

**MODEL RAILWAY & DIE CAST CARS &
BUSES**

**BOO DESIGNS HANDCRAFTED
JEWELRY**

HOME MADE CAKES AND BREAD

POCKET MONEY GIFTS

CHRISTMAS CARDS & CONFECTIONERY

BRIC-A-BRAC

TOMBOLA & PLANTS

REFRESHMENTS & MUSEUM SHOP

Partnership Project with Somerset Skills & Learning

An exciting new project has just been agreed to bring some creative art into the museum. Working with the Arts & Craft Department of Somerset Skills & Learning, the museum is hoping

to run a series of artistic opportunities using the museum and its exhibits as the subjects.

Starting with a half day workshop as part of the new season launch in April 2011, these events will help people see your local history in a new light and hopefully help them engage in the museum in a new and fresh way.

It is hoped that the workshop will lead on to further partnership activities which could include creating stained glass projects, mosaics, drawing and paintings, all inspired by the rich history Bridgwater has to offer.

For further information on the new courses Somerset Skills & Learning has planned for the New Year, please visit www.learnsomerset.co.uk and look out for the new courses and workshops leaflet out from the 1st December. There will be more information on the workshop in the museum in the next issue of *Blake News*.

Model

An estimate has been sought for the manufacture of a scale model of Blake House as it was in Blake's time. It will be cut-away to show the rooms, which will be set out with models of furniture etc. The plans and reports by Chris Sidaway will be the basis of the design.

Library

We have taken delivery of the new book case for the library. Mrs Frances Pearce, of Durleigh Road, has kindly donated some 30 books about Bridgwater history, and the Archaeology Society has placed a number of volumes from their collection there, as have a number of volunteers from their personal collections. Once the collection has been listed, the gaps will be filled by purchase.

It is hoped that space can be found for modern plan chests to replace those in the Library.

Cataloguing

An important and on-going part of the work of the Museum is the cataloguing of the collection. As well as checking the previous catalogue, we have embarked on a program of adding new entries. There is the back-log of uncatalogued artefacts, as well as new items we are being given or have purchased.

In addition, the collection of scanned photographs has to be captioned in advance of their being put on the museum web-site.

Once the new storage areas, off the Gallery and in the Bygones room, become available we can rationalise the storage on a more sensible footing. For example, photographic negatives are stored in the room behind the shop, under cases in the Maritime and archaeology rooms and in the archaeology store. Once the artefacts have been moved, the catalogue will need to be revised to show the new locations.

A team from Bridgwater Carnival Committee has put in a lot of time cataloguing the Museum's Carnival collection. Eventually scans of images will be added to their online picture archive, so making it more comprehensive.

Displays

The opportunity will be taken to improve some of the displays. The Blake Room will see a modern glass illuminated cabinet for small

items. The illuminated stained-glass panel will be secured to a wall, and the model of Blake will come out of the cabin. It is hoped that the ceramic display about Blake can be moved from its hiding place in the Battle Room and taken downstairs.

The Maritime Room will have the lighting improved, and it is hoped to have push-button lights to demonstrate the docks model.

Some of the objects in the Bygones room will be retired to storage and replaced with artefacts about the Bridgwater police, and some of the Museum's silver collection. At least one of the new clocks will go here.

Learning

Next year we are repeating the hugely successful Take One Picture approach developed by the National Gallery.

This innovative scheme promotes the use of a single picture as a rich context for developing cross-curricular learning and demonstrates how effectively pictures can be used as a springboard for developing creative and critical thinking. This is the second year for the museum to be running the project, the teachers who joined us in 2010 are returning to take on the new subject of Bridgwater Castle.

The museum is inviting teachers from local schools to a seminar on Friday 21st January 2011. The training day will start at 9.30am and will be run by the museum volunteer staff. A resource pack will also be available.

As well as the usual Museum team of Dr Peter Cattermole, Kay Robins, Geoff Harding and Tony Woolrich, there will be specialist input from Miles Peterson and Chris Sidaway.

Further support to be offered by the museum to schools wishing to develop projects will be outlined at the training day. The museum will ultimately host a special exhibition in the summer of 2011 that will include a celebration of the project and display any work that the schools produce.

Temporary exhibitions 2011

April 5 - May 7 - Romans in Somerset

May 10 - June 18 Bridgwater Castle Take One Picture project, followed by children's artwork in the Gallery in July and August. Finish date could be extended if desired.

Date TBA We have the offer of the short-term loan of a model of the Black Bridge so we suggest having a display about railways in Bridgwater.

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Websites:

Friends: www.blakemuseum.org.uk

Museum: www.bridgwatermuseum.org.uk

Resources: www.bridgwatermuseum.info