

# BLAKE NEWS



## Summer 2019

### SUBSCRIPTION NOTICE and AGM

Lesley Withers, Membership Secretary writes:

*We have to thank you for your continued support you have given us and hope that you will continue to do so. Much of the extraordinary work which is being carried out at the Museum is only made possible by your membership subscription*

Please note that membership starts on 1st September 2019 with the AGM on Tuesday 8th October 2019 at 7.30pm

Please submit your payment to:

The Hon Treasurer, FOBM,  
5 Blake Street Bridgwater, Somerset  
TA6 3NB.

**(Cheques payable to The Friends of Blake Museum or FOBM)**

**Membership subscription (2019 - 2020)**

Volunteer Friend - Nil Cost ; Individual £14.00

Family £20.00 ; Institution £20.00

Youth £5 ; Corporate £30.

*Edited extract from Stewart Richards's report to the committee of the FOBM. 16/07/2019*

### Living History Days and College Initiatives

We now have a definite commitment for Bridgwater College to get involved in this project and meetings will take place in September.

It is planned that students will be involved in projects videoing objects in the Museum that can be placed online to enhance our appeal.

I am still intent on improving our promotional reach for the museum with emphasis on local people in the 20-50 age group.

### The Quayside Festival

This was a very successful day, and as Blake Gardens was full of events we opened the back gate as well as the front door. We had 513 visitors and took £200+ serving tea, coffee and biscuits, £15 in the shop plus £49 in donations. Four custodians wore C17 costume, which added to the gaiety of the occasion



Activity in Blake Gardens during the Quayside Festival  
Photograph: Mike Searle

### The Sunday Band Concerts

As we go to press four have taken place and the very pleasing sum of £508 was raised. Clearly we will raise more by the end of this series.

### Coffee Mornings

The monthly coffee mornings continue to raise £70-80 a session, with the one on 25 July being £107!

### An Appeal

All these events rely very heavily on the commitment of a small handful of members. More people are required to help, in particular, we need more bakers. Please assist us.

### Visitors increase

We have had an increase in visitors in each of the first 3 months of opening this year – long may it continue. April 432, May 485, June 350. Currently we are 28% above the numbers that we achieved in the first 3 months of 2018 and 92% higher than the same period 2017. If we continue with the current increase in numbers, we can expect 3300 visitors and increase of over 700 visitors.

School visits play an important part, with 120 from St Mary's, 10 from Eastover, and 27 from Willowdown, who arrived by double-decker coach! Hamp Academy plan to bring 200 of year 7 early next year.

Patsy Robinson has been co-opted to the Committee as Schools and Group Visits co-ordinator



Willowdown's coach waiting in Blake Street

Photograph: Mike Searle

### Town Mill Project

*Edited extract from Stewart Richards's report to the committee of the FOBM. 16/07/2019*

The main items for the ownership plan are

1. Submit a possessory title claim for the room to the south of the wheel room and the bridge at the entry to the rear of the mill into the current archaeology store.
2. Transfer the ownership of the stable area to the town council.
3. Amalgamate the separate land registry titles for the museum and the mill into one title.

This is now in progress and we expect that we will have the necessary documentation for the above actions in the next 3 to 4 months.

Initial investigation is taking place into the Architectural Heritage Fund which will be a possible source of initial funds for the project. They can provide grants for feasibility studies, architects, structural survey, quantity surveyors and options assessment.

I will shortly be compiling a document that will allow the Friends the opportunity to state what they would like the mill to be used for and the facilities that should be provided for the museum and the visiting public.

An historical investigation into the Mill was done and found that:

- It featured in the Domesday Book, 1086.
- It was mentioned in medieval deeds, C14/15.
- It was mentioned in the Royal Charter of Elizabeth 1, 1586. *All corn to be ground at ye Queen's Mills.*
- For most of the C18 it was the town's waterworks.
- It was put up for sale in 1804.
- For most of the C19 it was a corn mill.
- Converted to steam power 1858.
- 1860s onwards it was used as a saw mill.
- From c1900 it was used by a builder. Then by a wicker furniture maker.
- 1986, bought by Sedgemoor District Council as a museum extension. Project begun.
- 1995, Arson damage. Project in abeyance
- 2009, Museum and mill taken over by the Town Council.
- 2017, The Town Council authorised the restoration.

The Wikipedia page, *Bridgwater Town Mill*, has been updated with the new information, and this will continue to be done as the project progresses.

## THIS YEAR'S EXHIBITIONS

6th Aug - 14th Sept.

Douglas Allen photographs, 1963-1966

17th Sept - 26th Blake Art Group



Douglas Allan's display of all the shops on both sides of the High Street  
Photograph: Mike Searle

## OBITUARY

### Cllr John Turner 1928 – 2019



John Turner was born in Bridgwater, in 1928. After National Service in the Navy he started working for British

Cellophane, where he was a process worker and became involved in the Trade Union, becoming branch secretary for The Transport & General Workers Union. In 1961 he was elected as a Labour councillor representing Sydenham on Bridgwater Borough Council. The Borough Council was abolished in 1974 and replaced with Sedgemoor District Council. John opted to continue and soon became leader of the Labour group there. In 2003 the Town Council was re-established. In 2012 John stood down as a district councillor but continued as a town councillor and that same year was made Honorary Freeman of the Borough. John was elected for the last time in 2015 at the age of 86 but very quickly became unwell and was soon in a care home.

John's funeral was held at St Mary's church on 13 July, and afterwards the cortège drove slowly up the High Street, where it paused by the Town Hall and was applauded by the congregation which by that time lined the pavements on both sides of the road.

When the Town Council took back the museum from the District Council in 2008/9, John was chairman of the finance committee and played a decisive part in the negotiations. He served on the Museum sub-committee for a number of years from the beginning, where he played a major role in deciding how the museum was to develop. He donated to the Museum memorabilia of his father's time in the town fire brigade in the 1930s, much of which is on permanent exhibition. He would sometimes call in for a chat and a cup of tea and was always a welcome visitor.

## PROGRAMME OF TALKS 2019

Tues 13th August – No talk

Tues 10th September – Stewart Richards, – *The Town Mill*

Tues 8th October – AGM

Tues 12th November – Hannah West, – *The Friary*

Tues 10th December – No talk

## NOTE

All talks will be held in the Blake Museum, starting at 7.30pm unless otherwise stated. Any variation to the programme will be announced on the News page of the Friends' web site, [www.blakeuseumfriends.org.uk](http://www.blakeuseumfriends.org.uk), and if possible will be published in the *Bridgwater Mercury*.

Visitors' charge £3.00

**Please bring a small item to the talks for the Raffle**

**COFFEE MORNINGS IN AID OF FOBM FUNDS**

**LAST THURSDAY OF EVERY MONTH**

**10.30-12 NOON**

**Next one 29 August**

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## Websites:

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

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

Resources: [www.bridgwatermuseum.info](http://www.bridgwatermuseum.info)