

# 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 FAYRE



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

**The Museum**

**5 Blake Street, Bridgwater**

**FRIDAY 22 NOVEMBER**

**12 noon – 4.00pm**

Home-made cakes and bread

Bric-a-brac and books

Tombola and plants

Refreshments and Museum Shop

Charity stalls

Items for the Fayre may be delivered to the Museum on Thursday 21 November 10am – 3pm or on the morning of the 22<sup>nd</sup>. Cakes especially welcome.

### Shut-down arrangements

The Museum is now on shut-down, and will re-open in April 2014. Working parties will be in each Monday and Thursday, and the Museum will close completely between 16 Dec and 6 January, though duty key-holders will inspect the building daily when it is shut.

The work planned this year will be routine maintenance – painting and electrical work etc, and also refreshing a number of the displays. John Bodiley has cleaned and

## Winter 2013



painted the cast iron Borough Council crest that came from the Coalbrookdale-made iron bridge, (1797), and which used to be bolted to the wall in the garden: it will be in the Bridgwater room.

The textiles in the Bygones room will be changed, and we are planning to display some of the Museum's art collection in the Gallery.

### World War 1

A year ago we reported on a plan to make an index to all the news stories in the Museum's collection of WW1 newspaper cuttings. These are for every week of the war (1914-1918) and are the 'Bridgwater and the War' columns from the *Bridgwater Mercury*, and a handful of cuttings from the *Bridgwater Independent*. The project is pretty well complete, and once the final editing has been done will be posted on the Web. The information will be invaluable to family historians and will be used to inform the design of an exhibition we shall be holding next August. Thanks are due to Diana Russell, Val Webb, Cora Scott, Joyce Hurford, Jane Taunton and Tony Woolrich. Also to Jane Woolrich for proof-reading the indices.

### The Museum Garden

There has been much favourable comment about the Museum's garden, and thanks are due to Paul Besley, Alison Cook and John Bodiley for all the work they have done over the year. In the summer we have had crops of apples and grapes. The new bed in the upper garden has recently been planted with stock ready for next spring, as well as a dwarf magnolia to replace the remains of the big one which were removed last year.

### Programme of Talks 2014

10 March . 2.30pm - John Dando

**The Magic of Somerset Carnival NB EARLY START**

14 April. 2.30pm - Dennis Warren with Merle Gardner

**Old Gramophones NB EARLY START**

13 May. 7.30pm - Sarah Villiers

**Life in 19th Century Village Classrooms**

10 June. 7.30pm - Brian Phelps

**Gypsy Caravans**

8 July. 7.30pm – Phillip Holland

**Benefits, Brass and the Girttest Grandest Day – Village Friendly Societies**

**August – No meeting**

19 September. 7.30pm - Sue Virgin

### **The Land Army**

7 October. 7.30pm **AGM**

10 November. 2.30pm Bob Musgrove

### **The Story behind Inn Signs NB EARLY START**

#### **2012 –2013 Report for the Learning Team**

(This is the report that Lyn Tyrrell gave at the AGM, and is printed here for the interest of those FOBM members who did not attend.)

The Learning Team has had a very successful year, we have been inspired to instigate some new ideas which have been well received.

In the Spring I was invited to support Dementia Awareness Week, I visited two residential homes one in Cheddar and Sydenham House. I talked about WW2 using our resource box and we looked at photographs of shop fronts in Bridgwater in the 1950's. The residents and their families in Cheddar could relate to the items for sale. At Sydenham House people became very animated and reminisced for a long time, we sang wartime songs and with a glass of sherry it was a rewarding outreach for the museum, and good advertising!

In July The Sedgemoor Stitchers put up a display of their work which complemented our Textile display, during the month some members gave demonstrations of their skills. We concluded with an evening visit for members who were particularly interested in our exhibits, the rigorous environmental conditions put in place to mount the display without damage to the items and the fact that we have a large collection of such items, some quite rare.

During the school holidays we ran 'Time Team Thursdays' for five weeks focusing on a different aspect of the history of Bridgwater as displayed in the museum. Mike created an eye catching tri-fold leaflet (very professional). We covered Archaeology, the docks, the Battle of Sedgemoor, Bridgwater Fair and The Castle. Children attended with their parents and we walked to the Castle remains, had a guided tour of the docks and made models. Members of the Garrison joined us with animated stories and a display of weaponry.

We have supported three students in their studies, they worked with enthusiasm setting up displays, cataloguing and assisting with the children's activities.

The French exchange students visited again, we are now a regular part of their cultural exchange.

St George's School at Wembdon have had two morning visits with ninety pupils each time looking at the museum, town and docks and on the second visit The

Battle of Sedgemoor with The Garrison supporting us.

I would like to give my sincere thanks to Kirsty and Brenda my right hand ladies! Jane Woolrich for her Rag Rug and help with the textiles. David Baker for his town walk. Geoff Harding for his docks tours and creative skills with model making for The Time Team activities. Mike and Tony who support me, keep me on track and encourage me to do more! The Key Holders especially Roger who often have to turn up early or late to open up for visitors and the custodians who seem to enjoy the light entertainment our activities provide. If I missed you, thank you and apologies.

#### **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.

#### **Visitors' Book and Publicity**

The Museum visitors book is well worth looking at, for 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.

#### **The new Committee 2013-14**

Chairman - Vacant

Vice Chairman - Graham Newton

Secretary - Mike Searle (Hon Deputy Museum Curator)

Treasurer - Lesley Withers

Shop Manager - Rob Gardner

Fundraising - Roger Blackburn

Co-opted Member and Learning Co-Ordinator - Lyn Tyrrell

Committee Member – Catherine Beaton

Committee Member - Tony Woolrich (Hon Museum Curator)

Committee Member - Brian Withers

Co-opted Member Talks and Friends Publicity - Val Bannister

**A VOLUNTEER TO FILL THE VACANCY WILL BE WELCOME**

Published by the Friends of Blake Museum

5 Blake Street, Bridgwater, TA6 3NB

Registered Charity No 1099815

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#### **Websites:**

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

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

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

Photographs: [www.bridgwaterphotos.org.uk/index.php](http://www.bridgwaterphotos.org.uk/index.php)