

BLAKE NEWS

Winter 2025



CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

by
Stewart Richards

As we approach the end of 2025, I reflect on what has been a highly successful and pleasing year for the Friends.

Both the Fairs have been extremely successful with good funds being raised and with very good attendances a big thank you to all those that have contributed to their success. The recent Christmas Fair defied the foul weather, and takings were well over £800, with the refreshment stall doing a roaring trade. It was kindly opened by the town Mayor Kathy Pearce

Bridgwater Town Council had several events in Blake Gardens during the summer, these also enhanced visitor numbers as well as contributing funds to the Friends through the sale of refreshments, one event was so successful, we sold out of ice creams. Many thanks to the team that looks after the catering and set up for these events.

So, what are our visitor numbers this year? Well up until the end of October, with the numbers for 2025 having exceeded those of 2024 by 11% and in fact the numbers to the end of October 2025 are more than the whole of 2024, my thanks to the custodians and keyholders that do such a fine job by opening the museum to the public. The plaudits that these people get from the public either in the visitor book or on social media are very well deserved.

Financially the Friends are in a strong position and our membership numbers although not increasing are holding steady. The Friends have supported a number of initiatives and projects during the year and have already earmarked funds for future projects. The garden although colourful was not quite as good this year due to the exceptional heat during the summer months, that being said, we still got many compliments from visitors. A large number of

spring bulbs have been planted for a colourful spring show in 2026. My thanks to all the gardeners who get involved to provide such a pleasant oasis of calm.



Photographs by Mike Searle

One project that was recently completed was the restoration of donated piece of cast iron rail from the Somerset and Dorset Railway originating from Bawdrip. The rail was shot blasted locally and powder coated to prevent further corrosion; a picture is included.



I am pleased to let you know that I attended a meeting with Bridgwater Town Council on 1st December which discussed how we can provide some impetus to the mill restoration project and get the project moving. I will give you all an update in due course.

There is a lot to do and look forward to in 2026 including but not limited to events to celebrate the centenary of the opening of the museum in 1926, with a major event scheduled for 30th May 2026. More information will be provided on the events as and when they are finalised.

Finally I would like to wish you all as well as your families and friends a merry Christmas with a peaceful New Year.

Blake Museum Centenary 1926~2026 CURATOR'S CORNER

by
Mike Searle

Museum Opening 2025/26

The museum closes up for Christmas at close of play on Sat. 20 Dec. The museum will then reopen on Sat. 10th Jan. 2026. If you are planning a visit, please note that the museum is only open on Saturdays during the Winter period. Hours are 11.00 - 3.00 . Last entry is at 2.00.

Update on Re-Accreditation.

All the required documentation has now

been completed and will be submitted to the Arts Council by 1st December 2025.

Museum Repairs.

A new Fire Exit door has been fitted upstairs. This leads out from the Archaeology Room onto the spiral staircase. The old door was rotten and twisted and only secured by one catch instead of two.

IMPORTANT

Please note that the Friends' site no longer exists. Instead there is now a page on the museum's site

www.bridgwatermuseum.org.uk/friends

**COFFEE MORNINGS IN AID OF
FOBM FUNDS
FIRST TUESDAY OF EVERY
MONTH
10.30-12 NOON
PLEASE BRING A SMALL ITEM TO
THE COFFEE MORNING FOR THE
RAFFLE**

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Websites:

Friends:

www.bridgwatermuseum.org.uk/friends

Museum: www.bridgwatermuseum.org.uk

Bridgwater Heritage Group:

[www https://bridgwaterheritage.com](http://www.https://bridgwaterheritage.com)