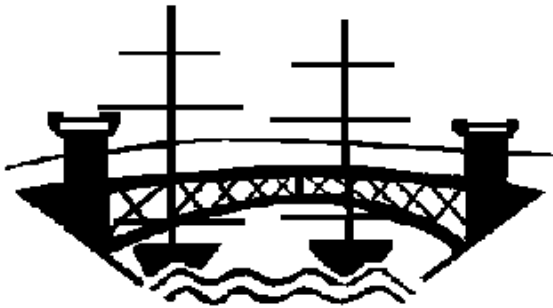


# BRIDGWATER & DISTRICT CIVIC SOCIETY

*(Established 1972)*

**Patron: The Rt. Hon The Lord King  
of Bridgwater C.H.**



Registered Charity No. 265031

## NEWSLETTER

**Edition 13**

*(July - Sept 2010)*

Society website: [www.bridgwatcivic.org.uk](http://www.bridgwatcivic.org.uk)  
Newsletter email: [newsletter@bridgwatcivic.org.uk](mailto:newsletter@bridgwatcivic.org.uk)

1<sup>st</sup> July, 2010

### Editorial

Welcome to the summer edition. Let's hope for a summer of good weather and good health to enjoy it. On this note we send our very good wishes to Jack Napthine and to June. Jack is recovering well from a hip replacement operation. He is not yet ready to pick up his former social life, but is making good progress with TLC from June and his family. To any other of our members who may not be in the best of health at present we also send our good wishes.

The last edition had plenty of news, reflecting how busy the committee has been on your behalf. Readers, please remember your contributions are most welcome by way of article or letter.

The trip to Somerton was very interesting - old town, plenty to see, and the church roof was a revelation (best seen by lying on the church floor we were told!), enjoyed by one and all. The trip was successfully completed by a call at the local tea (and cake) shop, through the initiative and perseverance of Peter Cattermole.

We are now receiving copies of newsletters from other like minded Societies within the area, namely Wiveliscombe, Glastonbury and Taunton. It is interesting to note the common challenges, and other matters that relate to specific communities. Never enough money, planning issues, and reports on miscellaneous activities within the area of influence. It is hoped that by exchanging newsletters, ideas can be borrowed and developed to the benefit of all.

### Obituary

It was with sadness we learned of the death of member Mr Herman Engel who passed away peacefully at Musgrove Park Hospital, aged 86. Our sympathy goes to his family as this sad time.

### Planning Matters

President Derek Gibson has kept a cursory eye on planning applications, and after selecting a limited few in the town and nearby villages, which have not been discussed with Peter Cattermole, has found no matter of concern requiring representation letters of concern to the Planning Authority.

### Bridgwater Heritage Regeneration Partnership

Derek Gibson as Chairman, attended a meeting & AGM held on 22nd June. He reports that Planning Permission and Listed Building Consent have both now been received from the Planning Authority for the Durleigh Brook Project. This encompasses the formation of the proposed walkway along the line of the Durleigh Brook between St. Mary Street and Blake Street. In particular, the Local Authority Members need to agree which Council is to accept responsibility for ownership and upkeep of the facility once built. Legal agreements also need to be drawn up with the riparian owners of property alongside the Brook, and Derek is more than disappointed that the Sedgemoor District Council solicitor will not even agree to meet him in order merely to advise if his assessment of what is required is appropriately correct! *So much for that Council's attitude to genuine partnership!*

### A 15<sup>th</sup> century building in the Town Hall

Behind the Town Clerk's office in the eastern end of the Town Hall, there are some lavatories. These have deeply



carved beams, which probably are never noticed. The room above is the Members' Room: of 1960s vintage, with fibreboard ceiling and walls, and a uPVC window.

During the recent external renovations, the Civic Society was telephoned and invited to take a look at an interesting structure found in the roof above this room. Two crucks were displayed, around which had been built at least two later roofs, though some original rafters also remained, complete with their wooden pegs. The crucks appeared to be raised upon the stonework of the ground floor building, a structure common in Bridgwater.

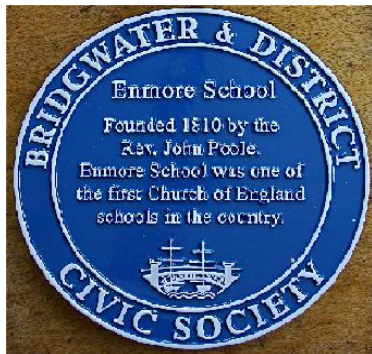
On a later visit, the wall had been stripped to reveal a central post, chamfered on both sides, shown adjacent, having been temporarily removed. On the south wall, wattle-and-daub infill had been found, together with another cruck, and some framing, disturbed at the eastern end when the staircase had been inserted.



George Allen, who is managing the project, said he “was amazed at the survival”. Work has commenced under his direction to repair the damaged timber with new elm. Two (Polish) joiners have been engaged to construct new posts (opposite) and to make repairs. The majority of the timber will be exposed, as will the rafters and purlins. It is intended that the principal post will be painted in a red ochre (that is its original colour). There's no doubt that when the room is finished it will be absolutely splendid. We'll bring you some pictures in the next Newsletter.

### Enmore School Plaque

The Society was pleased to be approached by the Governors of the Enmore Church of England School to erect a blue plaque. Installation and unveiling will take place later in the summer.



### Civic Voice

It was agreed at the AGM by members that we would not renew our membership with the new organisation which has emerged from the former Civic Trust. We were not quite convinced at this early stage that the organisation could demonstrate stronger effectiveness than that of the previous body. Our decision was also influenced by the cost, per member, of subscription renewal. For smaller Societies such as ours this is not affordable. We continue to receive information which will be monitored. Keeping an ‘open mind’ on the matter we will advise members should the situation change.

### Wembdon Road Cemetery

We are pleased to report that a *Friends of Wembdon Road Cemetery, Bridgwater* group was formed at a meeting held on Friday 18 June at the Blake Museum. Invited guests Councillor Bill Monteith, the Mayor of Bridgwater; Councillor Mike Cresswell Deputy Chairman of SDC; Mr. Derek Gibson our Society's President and Mr. Bryan Gillard Chairman of the Friends of Blake Museum were present to give their support. Written messages of support were also received from Mr. Ian Liddell-Grainger M.P.; Councillor Mrs. Jane Moreton Chairman of SDC and Mrs. Eleanor Dixon retired Lay Pastor of Christ Church Unitarian Chapel, Dampiet Street.

The Mayor expressed his wish to become the group's Honorary President and the formal letter of invitation is already on its way to the Mayor's Parlour!

This excellent initiative, started by Miles Peterson and encouraged by the Civic Society almost two years ago, will now make its own way in the world. We wish it every success and will keep you informed as work progresses.

### Improvements to Blake Gardens

For some time the Society has been concerned about the ever increasing decline of this once beautiful Garden in the centre of town. To revive ‘Civic Pride’ the Society will do all it can to encourage a return to some of its former state. Sedgemoor District Council currently maintain the Garden, albeit it in a very basic manner.

Costings have been obtained for such upkeep which the Society is currently studying. Philip Smeed will be arranging a meeting with SDC in due course and will also talk to Bridgwater Town Council to establish what affordable improvements can be made and how.

### Exhibition at Blake Museum

The ‘Quiz’ organised by John Stuckey at our Christmas gathering will form the basis of an exhibition to be mounted at the Blake Museum in August – details will eventually be given in the local press and we hope you will go along to see it.

### Dates for your Diary

- 12/07/10 10.00am:** Meet at St Mary's Church for a guided tour of Bridgwater, followed by refreshments.
- 22/08/10 2.30pm:** Meet at St Mary's Church for a guided tour of Wedmore, followed by refreshments.
- 01/09/10 7.30pm:** “A glimpse of the past” based on the photographic collections of the Black Museum and presented by Society Member, Joyce Hurford.

**Note:** All Talks take place in the Meeting Room, Black Museum, Blake Street, Bridgwater

For further information about meetings/events visit the Society's website or call Bernice on 01278 459659.

### Band Concerts in Blake Gardens

These will take place at 2.00pm on Sundays: 11<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> July, 8<sup>th</sup> August and 26<sup>th</sup> September. Thanks again to Bridgwater Town Council for sponsorship.

### Newsletter

Our next issue is due on 1<sup>st</sup> October 2010. Members are kindly requested to email their contributions to [newsletter@bridgwatercivic.org.uk](mailto:newsletter@bridgwatercivic.org.uk) by the 20<sup>th</sup> September.