

# Somerset Heritage Service Newsletter

AUGUST 2011

SPECIAL ISSUE

Welcome to a special edition of the Somerset Heritage Newsletter, which is focusing on the much-anticipated opening of the Museum of Somerset. There is also exciting news from our museum in Glastonbury, the Somerset Rural Life Museum.

Our regular newsletter will return later this year with a special feature on the opening of the Museum of Somerset.

## The Museum Of Somerset

### Countdown to Opening!

After years of planning, and untold hours of work by hundreds of people, we are very pleased to announce that the new Museum of Somerset at Taunton Castle will open at midday on 29 September 2011.

With many new galleries to explore, and extraordinary objects to discover, the Museum of Somerset is destined to become a must-see visitor attraction for people of all ages from Somerset and beyond.

Among the treasures going on display for the first time will be the Frome Hoard, the second largest collection of Roman coins ever discovered in Britain. The hoard was recently saved for the nation following a national fundraising appeal.

The museum will be open from 10am to 5pm on Tuesdays to Saturdays and on Bank Holiday Mondays. For more information visit our website: [www.somerset.gov.uk/museums](http://www.somerset.gov.uk/museums)

There's still a great deal left to do before we're ready to throw open the doors to visitors. Read on to find out more...



## Construction Works

The vast majority of the construction works are now complete. The final weeks will be focused on completing the installation and mounting of objects, object numbering, signage, and display lighting, as well as on the fit-out of the learning centre, café, shop and Welcome Building.

Outside, the new courtyard landscaping scheme is nearing completion. This work has been carried out by our in-house Historic Environment Team using their specialist skills in conservation and archaeology. The Friends of the Museum of Somerset have kindly donated £500 towards refitting the almshouse, which has been re-positioned in the courtyard as part of the landscaping works.

Then there is the not-insignificant matter of cleaning. Imagine spring cleaning on an industrial scale and you'll have some idea of the challenge that lies ahead in the next few weeks. With hundreds of square metres of floors, walls and glass to dust, vacuum and polish, the pre-opening 'deep clean' is going to be a major undertaking for our dedicated team of staff, volunteers and contractors.

## Visitor Services

We have nearly finished recruiting for the museum's Visitor Services Team. The team will be led by the Visitor Services Manager, Susie Simmons. Susie has extensive experience of managing heritage properties, having previously worked as a National Trust site manager for six years. More recently, Susie worked in our Learning Team as the Formal Learning Officer.

Various preview visits will take place in September to help us test the museum's systems and visitor routes, and to assist with training.



(L) Sam Hunt Senior Visitor Services Assistant  
(R) Susie Simmons Visitor Services Manager

## Volunteering

We are seeking volunteers to join our Visitor Services Team to help with:

- Welcoming visitors to the museum
- Gallery guiding
- Care and security of the museum and its collections

Volunteering offers you the chance to learn new skills, make new friends and be part of a team caring for one of Somerset's most important historic places.

Over forty enthusiastic volunteers have signed up already. If you too are interested in volunteering at the museum, call 01823 255088 or email [heritagevolunteers@somerset.gov.uk](mailto:heritagevolunteers@somerset.gov.uk)

## Making the Museum

The first temporary exhibition at the Museum of Somerset will tell the story of how the museum has been created. It will also explore the origins of the museum during the 19th century when Taunton Castle became the headquarters of Somerset Archaeological & Natural History Society.

# MAKING

The MUSEUM of SOMERSET



The story of the new museum with photographs by Pauline Rook

29 September 2011 - 10 March 2012

The MUSEUM of SOMERSET, Taunton

Free Entry

Open 10am - 5pm Tuesday to Saturday & Bank Holiday Mondays  
01823 255070 [www.somerset.gov.uk/museums](http://www.somerset.gov.uk/museums)



The star attraction at the exhibition will be the Frome Hoard, which will be displayed for the

first time since its discovery last year. But don't worry – the hoard will remain on permanent display once the exhibition ends early next year.



*Frome Hoard*

## Publicity

We have been out in the community letting people know that the museum will soon be open. Public interest is very great. A major PR campaign will take place in September, so keep a look out in the local and regional media. You can also do your bit by telling all your friends and family about Somerset's wonderful new museum!



*Children at Lyngford Park open day learning about Somerset's heritage*

## Opening Arrangements

The 'People's Opening' of the Museum of Somerset will take place at midday on Thursday 29 September, and among our special guests will be Professor Mick Aston of Channel 4's Time Team.

Celebrations will start at 11.00 am when the bells of St Mary's Church in Taunton will be rung for an hour.

We want to keep some surprises for the day – but it's just possible we'll be remembering the dramatic moment during the Civil War when the Parliamentary commander, Robert Blake, seized Taunton Castle from the forces of the king. Why not find out for yourself and be one of the first people to see the new museum?

## The Museum Café

One of the highlights of the Museum of Somerset will be the new café, where the accent will be on serving food and drink produced right here in Somerset. Much of what's on offer will be home-made by our catering provider, Food On The Level. Run by Andy Croker, who is as passionate about Somerset history as he is about baking cakes, the Museum Café will be the perfect place to enjoy delicious locally-produced food and drink.

## Retail Therapy

Our much-extended museum shop will stock a selection of gifts, books, toys and souvenirs. The Made in Somerset range will showcase a tempting display of food, drinks and gifts all made right here in Somerset. Shop early for Christmas!

## Guided Tours and Venue Hire

Bookings are now being taken for guided tours, private views and venue hire. Call 01823 255088 or email [museumofsomerset@somerset.gov.uk](mailto:museumofsomerset@somerset.gov.uk) for further details.

## Supporting Tourism and Somerset's Economy

The new museum will play a crucial role in attracting more visitors and tourists to Taunton and Somerset, which in turn will provide significant benefits to the county's economy.

We are holding an exclusive preview event for Somerset's tourism and visitor attraction sectors on 14 September to publicise what the museum has to offer. If you are in the tourism/visitor attraction sector, and would like to come to this special trade event, please call 01823 255088 or email [museumofsomerset@somerset.gov.uk](mailto:museumofsomerset@somerset.gov.uk)

## Somerset Rural Life Museum

As if one major museum redevelopment wasn't enough...

We are delighted to report the success of our Round One application to the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) to redevelop the Rural Life Museum in Glastonbury. The £625,000 bid, which was in competition with many strong applications, has been approved by the HLF's Regional Committee.

The redevelopment proposals include a dedicated learning space, opening up more of the farmhouse for new and improved exhibitions, enhancements to the setting of the wonderful 14th-century Abbey Barn, a redeveloped temporary exhibition gallery and a year-round café.

These works will enable us to improve our visitor offer and income generation potential, which in turn will help to secure the museum's future.

We have also been successful in securing grants of £51,000 from the HLF and £8,000 from the Friends of the Rural Life Museum to develop the project to the next stage. We are very grateful to both for their support in enabling us to take forward this exciting new project.

The deadline for submission of our Round Two HLF application is June 2013. If this application is successful, and we secure the remaining match-funding that is needed, works are likely to start on site in 2014.

Discussions with other external funders are also taking place.



## YOUR VIEWS

We welcome your comments on this newsletter and ideas for future editions.

Please contact Carrie Blogg

**Call:** 01823 278805 or

**Email:** [chblogg@somerset.gov.uk](mailto:chblogg@somerset.gov.uk)

## What's On at The Museum of Somerset

### Events

29 September 2011

Grand Opening of The Museum of Somerset  
From midday

1 & 2 October 2011

Opening Weekend Extravaganza  
Saturday 1 October - family activities all day  
Sunday 2 October - Jazz at the Castle with the  
Lazy River Jazz Band 2 - 4pm.

15 October 2011

BBC History Festival  
Family learning activities and historical re-  
enactments. Details to follow.  
FREE entry

### Talks

The Discovery of the Frome Hoard  
Thursday 24 November at 7pm

A talk by Sam Moorhead and Roger Bland of the British Museum on the discovery of the Frome Hoard, the second largest collection of Roman coins ever discovered in Britain. Also featuring Dave Crisp, the metal detectorist who uncovered the hoard in a field near Frome in 2010.

Café open from 6.00 pm for light refreshments.

Tickets: £6.50 adults; £2.50 children.

### Activities

There will be regular activities on offer at The Museum of Somerset for people of all ages. Contact the Heritage Learning Team on 01823 278805 ([heritagelearning@somerset.gov.uk](mailto:heritagelearning@somerset.gov.uk)) for details.

## Contact Us

### The Museum of Somerset

**Call:** 01823 255088

**Email:** [museumofsomerset@somerset.gov.uk](mailto:museumofsomerset@somerset.gov.uk)

**Click @:** [www.somerset.gov.uk/museums](http://www.somerset.gov.uk/museums)