

## **Chard & District Museum**

The Chairman, Vince Lean, continues to provide leadership and direction for Chard & District Museum. 2018 is a year where Chard Museum have continued to consolidate & develop their position as one of the largest volunteer run museums in South Somerset. There have been ups & downs during 2018 but the following aims of the museum have always been delivered to the best of their ability:-

- To serve the local community by keeping a record of the social history of the town & its people
- To conserve, store & where possible display local artefacts, documents & photographs relating to the town
- To develop the museum as more of a venue for the use of the people of Chard.

During the closed season a huge amount of effort was put in by the volunteers to revitalise the displays in the Godworthy House. This produced an innovative co-ordinated display of the "Chard Famous Five", James Stringfellow, James Gillingham, Margaret Bondfield, Arthur Hull & James Gifford.

Chard Museum is entirely dependent on volunteers and is managed by a committee of trustees. Whilst always looking for ways to support the wider community, during 2018, they have been proactive in developing the museum as a venue where all people for Chard can collect to celebrate the history of this unique town. To accomplish this, free entry events have been held during the year to attract & interest people who would not normally have visited a museum.

An offshoot of the above aim is that the museum has purchased a number of portable audio devices which produce a pre-recorded story on a subject. Whilst at present this is just presented in English, during the closed season they aim to add both Polish & Portuguese translations to the device attracting & involving the foreign communities in the town.

Another truly successful strategy this year has been to involve the primary schools & youth organisations in Chard in understanding the depths of the town's heritage. In conjunction with Manor Court & Redstart schools, together with organisations like The Girls & Boys Brigade, Scouts & Guides over 400 pupils have visited the museum during the season.

One of the main concerns during 2018 has been the decrease in numbers of supporters of the museum, which has led the Trustees to introduce a plan to improve recruitment during 2019.

The other main development during 2018 has been the arrival of the Chard Regeneration Plan which, should it proceed, puts the museum in a position where it could be moving from its existing site to the Boden Mill in the centre of town. Whilst this is an exciting opportunity the impact of such a move will be enormous & potentially very costly. Irrespective of whether a move happens or not there is the impact of a lease renewal which is due in 2021.

Cllr. Amanda Broom