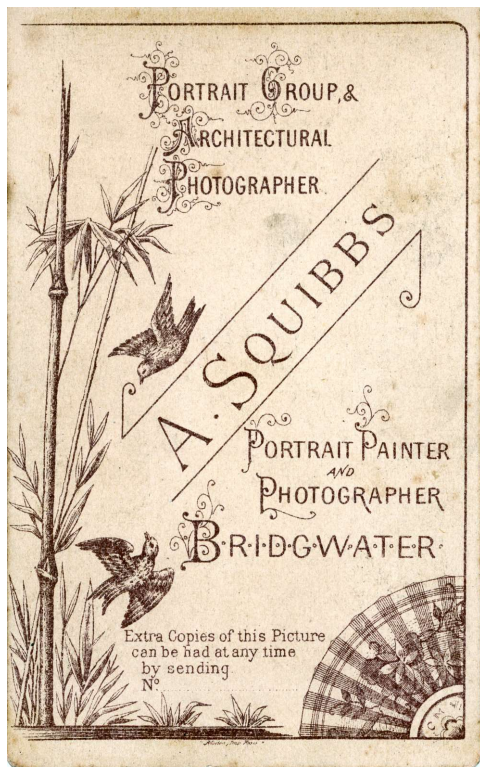


BRIDGWATER TOWN COUNCIL

BLAKE MUSEUM



BRIDGWATER PHOTOGRAPHY



The photographs used here are part of a collection of 20 family photographs assembled by the donor's grandmother. There is no identification on any of them, as is also the case with the majority of the portrait photographs in the Museum's collection.

From the mid nineteenth century Bridgwater was the base of a succession of photographers, most are now forgotten, but a few, Gillo, Squibbs, & Palfrey, are known locally to this day. The Blake Museum possesses a fine photograph collection. based on these early pioneers, but modern photographs form the largest part.

The Douglas Allen – Don Smith Collection covers 1954-1999 and the catalogue runs to 11,791 jobs. Each job usually has multiple negatives, and it is estimated these run to around 150,000 in all.

Scope of the collection

The area covered was Somerset, Dorset, Wiltshire and Gloucestershire, so is of regional importance.

The firm worked for local concerns such as Autobar, Bairdwear, Bigwood & Staple, Bridgwater Firearms Ltd, Bridgwater Motor Co, British Cellophane Ltd, C & J Clark, Coates Fencing, Courtaulds, Colthurst Symonds, Crypton, EDC, Herb Royal, Kellands, Kraft, Leffmans, Quantock Preserving, Sealed Motors, Smedegaard Pumps, Somerset Milking Parlours, Wills Engineering, Wellworthy. They also undertook work for commercial firms in the town, such as all the large banks, local lawyers and estate agents, They also photographed window displays for local shops. They did much for the motor trade.

Outside of the town they worked for The Somerset Farm Institute and Brymore School, Shell Mex, Showerings, Somerset Rivers Authority, South Western Co-Operative Housing Society, Wessex Water and the nuclear industry at Hinkley Point, Oldbury and Wylfa. Other clients were Peter Lord shoe shops and Easi Find Directories

They also worked for building contractors and civil engineers on construction projects in the region. The firm also did private work, including numerous weddings to 1980, parties, and much copying work.

A number of negatives are now missing from the collection, and others are damaged by acetification. Some may be restored by a conservator, at unknown cost.



Other Negative Collections in the Museum

1) Wills collection BWRAB : 1986/186/1-34

Glass – plate negatives illustrating the Wills engineering works. Edwardian?

Digitised

2) SDC Planning Dept Negatives

Collection of files of 35mm slides showing shop fronts in St John Street, 1970s.
Not digitised.

3) Squibbs Collection BWRAB : 2001/18 (:L) and BWRAB : 2001/17. Glass – plate negatives of Bridgwater. Many are those of Gillo (1818 - 81). Abraham Squibbs wasn't born until 1893

Digitised There is also an album of prints from these, purchased at auction by the Town Council. **Digitised**

4) Millennium Collection BWRAB : 2001/12

402 colour photos illustrating the town at the Millennium. NB Only a few found catalogued separately. **Not digitised**

5) Clarke collection BWRAB : 1999/28/1-70. etc

Various scenes around Bridgwater. **Not digitised**

6) Sparkes collection ?Edwardian. Digitised

PHOTOGRAPHIC PRINTS

There is an extensive collection of prints housed in boxes in the Library. These are classified by place and topic. As far as we know most are catalogued.

1) Don Smith photographs – V series 843 entries in the catalogue. Negatives in the Museum store.

2) Palfrey prints Album. Digitised.

Museum prints

As well as prints of the early displays, there are 28 wallets of 35mm negatives and Enprints of the activities of the Museum Friends (precursor of the FOBM) in the filing cabinet in room 28. In addition, in the library desk drawer are a further 23 wallets of 35mm negatives and Enprints. They appear to be of Museum objects such as various Chubb pictures.

Miscellaneous albums

There are various albums of prints in the library. These include

a) Hedley Barry collection, 1950 and 60s. b&w 6 albums BWRAB : 1999/20/1-6

b) Royal Visit 1987 BWRAB : 2001/23

c) Examples of Mr Loder's work. Signwriter BWRAB : 2000/10/3

d) 21 Bridgwater sailing ships BWRAB : 1966/6

e) Performances of the Operatic Society BWRAB : 2011/4/2

f) Marks & Spencer's store. 3 Albums BWRAB : 2011/4/52-54

g) Lt W. H. Pollard. WW1 pix BWRAB : 2014/1/47

h) Ashford Water Works 1930s BWRAB: 2014/1/66

i) 2 albums of b&w prints from Douglas Allen negatives, 1950s

j) 1 album of b&w prints from Douglas Allen negatives, 1950s?

k) 3 albums of colour prints showing the erection of the B & Q store building, 2000

l) 1 album of colour prints showing advertising hoardings around town. 2000s?

m) 2 albums of high quality colour prints of scenes around town, commissioned by SDC for an advertising project. 1990s?



Philip Squibbs published three volumes of Victorian photographs. These were duplicated by hand.

Bridgwater in Victorian Days (1957)

A Bridgwater Diary, (1969)

More Pictures of Old Bridgwater (1971)

These were published in a collected edition, edited by John F. Lawrence: *Squibbs' History of Bridgwater* (1982)

A selection of the Douglas Allen – Don Smith photographs was published in 2 volumes:

Sarah Harbige, ed. *The Archive Photographs Series :Bridgwater*, 1998.

Sarah Harbige, ed. *The Archive Photographs Series :Bridgwater, the second selection*, 2001

T. Beet, *Around Bridgwater: Photographic Memories*, 2010

Volunteers from the Museum have embarked on a programme of digitising the Douglas Allen Don Smith Collection. This

will take several years to complete.

Blake Museum is owned by Bridgwater Town Council

and managed by volunteers from The Friends of Blake Museum
(Registered Charity 1099815)

www.bridgwatermuseum.org.uk/

Version 1: 5 June 2016