

Bromsgrove Museum
Business Plan
September 2008

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The Business Plan is presented on behalf of 'The Friends of the Museum';

A Brief History of the Museum

Dennis Norton first became interested in collecting in 1949 when he was fifteen years old; his first artefact was a 1905 Carbide Cycle Lamp. He continued to collect but in 1970 the collection had outgrown his home so he bought the village school at Upton Warren and opened the first 'Norton Collection Museum'.

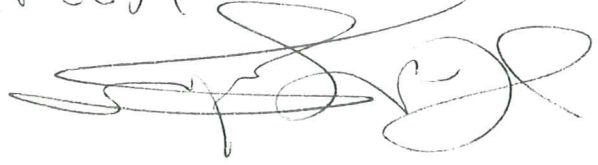
The collection continued to grow and in 1977 he bought Davenal House in Bromsgrove. The house was in a bad state of repair and he started a programme of restoration and in 1979 he was able to open the Bromsgrove Town Centre Museum.

Over the next fifteen years with the help of 'The Friends' the museum became successful; it had 10,000 visitors p.a. and won three awards including one for the Best Small Museum. There were three or four exhibitions a year, fund raising functions, school visits, evening events and it opened at weekends.

To help support the museum financially four small craft workshops were built which, when let, brought in an income of £30 per unit per week.

Dennis Norton offered the museum to the Council in the hope that its future would be secure. In 1993 he set up a Trust and handed the Museum over to Bromsgrove Council for education and the benefit of the people of Bromsgrove in the expectation that the requirement stated in the Deed of Trust would ensure its future development.

The Museum closed, January 1st 2008. The reason given was the falling visitor numbers and running costs said to be £70,000 p.a. but it is unclear if these costs include the Information Centre which occupies the same building and has been kept open.



DENNIS NORTON

B. Savage
2008

John and
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A vision for the Bromsgrove Museum

The Museum Association definition of a museum is: 'Museums enable people to explore collections for inspiration, learning and enjoyment. They are institutions that collect, safeguard and make accessible artefacts and specimens, which they hold in trust for society'. The Trust will embrace this definition in its mission statement and seeks to provide a welcoming, inclusive and vibrant community space to house this remarkable collection of artefacts and displays in order to educate, enthuse and entertain visitors of all ages about the social history and ongoing life of the small market town of Bromsgrove.

Management by Trust

It is proposed that the Friends of Bromsgrove Museum will set up a charitable trust comprising of 3 to 5 local people from the community and this body would meet 3 or 4 times a year. A smaller management group would meet more frequently to take responsibility for the day-to-day running of the museum.

A part-time administrator would be appointed to co-ordinate volunteers.

To date thirty people have volunteered to be 'Friends of the Museum' and will be responsible for the day to day running of the Museum such as manning the reception area, acting as guides, providing refreshments and general maintenance. The volunteers have a range of skills to offer for work at the front of house as well as curatorial work behind the scenes.

Collection

The museum houses a wide-ranging collection of artefacts relating to the social history of the town. Some further work will be carried out on storage and packaging as part of the conservation programme.

The current position regarding the cataloguing and the list of accessions and donations since the Museum was handed over is unknown but the Trust would plan to adopt a documentation system in line with the requirements of the Accreditation scheme (that has now replaced the Registration scheme).

The reserve collection is stored at the Depot and will require reorganisation and rationalisation. Some of these artefacts will be used to refresh some of the displays and for temporary exhibitions to generate repeat visits to the museum. The Trust will appoint a curatorial advisor to guide the Trust's efforts to achieve Accreditation status as a medium term priority following discussions with relevant professionals.

The existing displays relate to the various Bromsgrove trades and High Street shops and would be expanded with upgraded labelling. The provision of an audio guide is envisaged in the future.

Education

See report from Ms J Edginton.

Since this Business Plan had to be prepared at short notice and without information on the current running costs, the Trust reserves the right to submit updated financial information when this additional information becomes available.

In conclusion, the Trust considers the best way forward in retaining this valuable resource for Bromsgrove is for Bromsgrove District Council to grant this Trust a minimum 20 year lease at a peppercorn rent for the building, with the option to buy the building in the future, and a minimum sum of £20,000 p.a. for five years and £15,000 p.a. for the following five years to provide a robust financial base for running and developing the Museum. This represents a considerable saving based on the Bromsgrove District Council suggested historical running costs and would ensure that the collection is retained and administered for the benefit of the community.

Conclusion

See attached forecast income and expenditure account. Certain information concerning the detailed running costs is still awaited from Bromsgrove District Council but these figures have been compiled using best estimates.

The Trust will seek grants from a wide variety of sources including Heritage Lottery Fund, trust and foundations, businesses and individual supporters to develop the museum and its works; the particular sources will be determined by the nature of the project.

Financial Management

Our priority aim is for the Museum to achieve Accreditation status. There is considerable work required but the Trust is determined to ensure the Museum functions in a professional manner. The Trust plans to provide an education area and to improve access for visitors with disabilities; grants will be sought for both these initiatives.

The aim is for the Museum to be a vibrant centre for Bromsgrove's heritage and focal point for the community and visitors to Bromsgrove.

How do we see the Museum in the future?

The Trust will improve signage to the front of the Museum. Alterations to the entrance would be proposed if a sponsor can be found for this project— see attached sketch. Enhancements to the Brown Sign scheme will be pursued with the appropriate department in the County Council.

The Trust will seek to increase awareness of the museum and the services it offers. Taking opportunities to promote the museum will be an important task for the Trust.

Marketing

Bromsgrove Museum Educational Potential

For some years schools have used this charming and highly informative museum. It is central to the town and, as it is within walking distance for several schools, can be used across a wide age range. Over recent years outside educational visits have become fewer due to perceived risks, costs and also because the huge educational potential of this museum has been almost ignored.

The National Curriculum which schools follow has been seen as subject based (i.e. Science, English, History etc. studied in isolation) and a museum visit has been a 'one-off' experience in each key stage. This is now changing and schools are increasingly working in a cross-curricular way, studying topics which cross subject boundaries and being actively encouraged to widen the scope of school-based experiences.

This collection also crosses boundaries. A group of 8 year olds looking at a collection of toys and household equipment are unlikely to appreciate that they are studying history, science and design technology (all of which are required) or that they are developing their language, literacy, art and other skills in discussing and recording what they see, but the benefits to them are immense. For example:

The National Curriculum requires schools to teach the topic of 'Forces' in Key Stage 2 before the SATS tests for children aged 11. In isolation this is difficult for children to understand but the display about motorbikes, bicycles etc. provides an excellent starting point. This same case can be used when 6 and 7 year olds study 'Materials and their Uses'. Work on 'Sound' is revisited at different ages and the superb collection of phonographs, radios and gramophones can provide stimulus and excitement for children across a wide age range and for subjects as diverse as science, art, history and technology.

A one-off visit to 'the museum', although enjoyable, is not the best way to use this amazing resource. The visit is important as a whole experience but even more in its details to enable adults and children to be enthused to find out more about particular areas of study. Rather than an overall experience where much is seen superficially there is a need for seeing the museum as a seed bed of information to further develop learning. Use of the button collection, researching the life of Benjamin Sanders and considering changes in occupations in the town can be part of a history topic helped by the library and local people whether by very young children or by A level students.

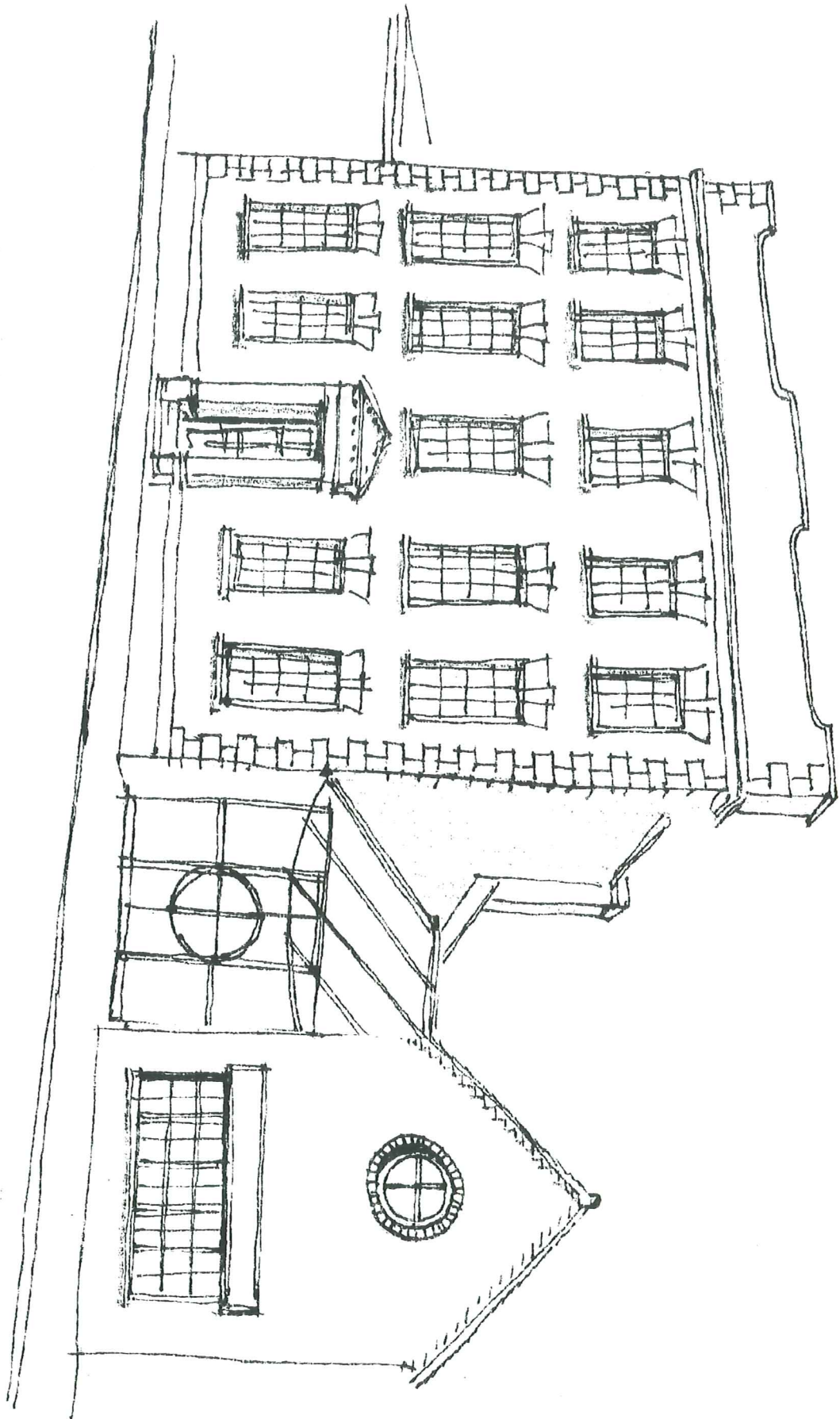
This little museum is ideally suited to helping schools to develop their teaching and learning experiences. Whilst the main museum provides a good general experience the beauty is in the reserve collections and limited access to these and the help of a facilitator in a suitable space (possibly one of the craft units) is essential. There is the potential to hold courses for teachers and become a wide ranging resource centre for both National Curriculum studies and for developing amongst local people a love for, and awareness of, the history and needs of their town. This is the opportunity for Bromsgrove Museum to become a small-scale centre of excellence for innovative use of artefacts in education.

Children are our future. If we show them quality we will elicit a quality response and so secure the future. The quality of this museum is something that can help quality learning and add to the future of Bromsgrove.

J. Edginton
25/08/08

Relevant background

Headteacher of a primary school - Last inspection report graded 'Outstanding'
Previously LEA Advisory teacher - Schools Museum.
Member of Partnership Grants Committee - The Royal Society - develops and funds
links between schools and outside bodies.



Fairfield Glass



Bromsgrove Photographs & Documents

Lemon Stainglass

Bromsgrove Guild

John Corbett Saltworks

Benjamin Sanders Button Making

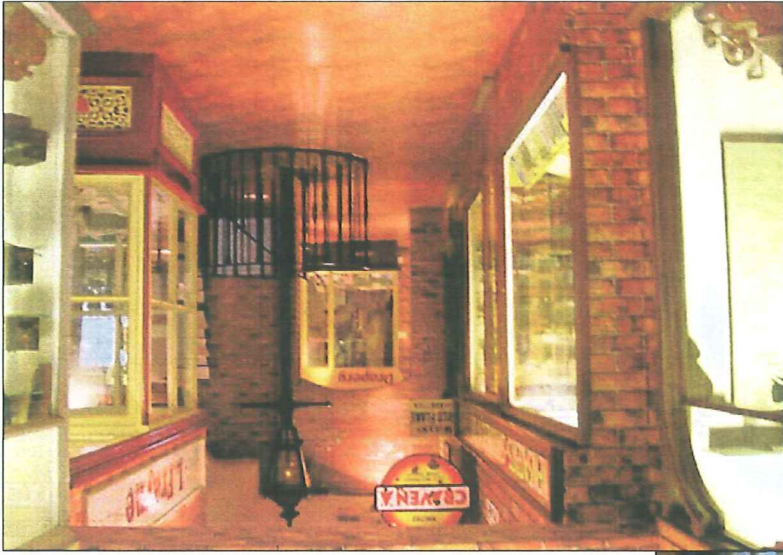
Lead Casting

Fairfield Glass

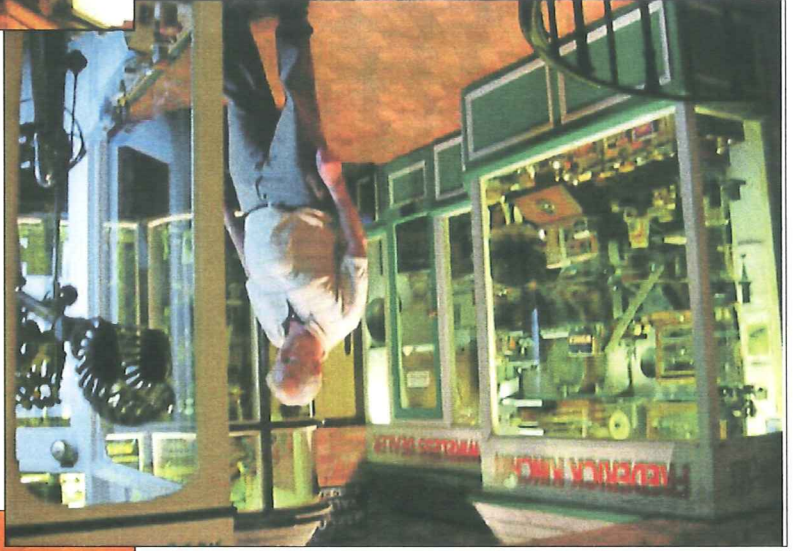
Nailmaking

Bromsgrove Room Artefacts

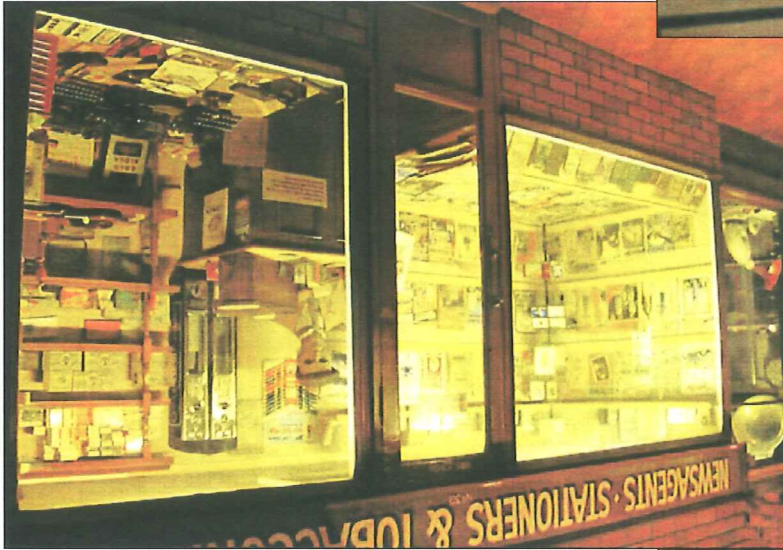




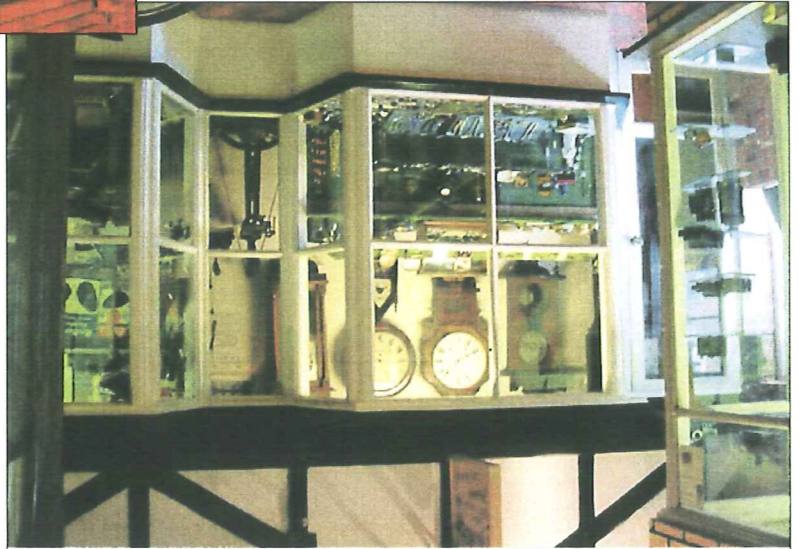
Bromsgrove Street Scene



Bromsgrove Street Scene



Bromsgrove Street Scene



Bromsgrove Shops
in Street Scene



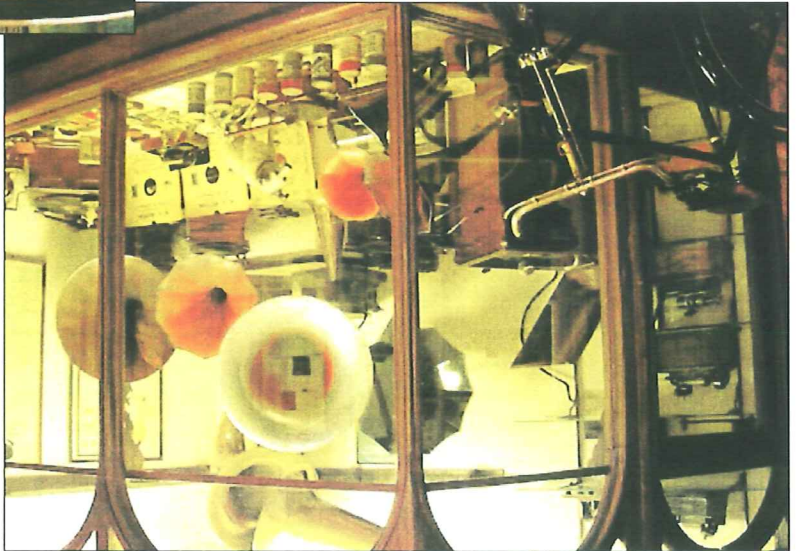
Sanders Button Making



Bromsgrove Guild



Bromsgrove Street Scene



Bromsgrove Street Scene