



FAQs: Broadfield House Glass Museum and the White House Glassworks Project **By Kari Moodie, Keeper of Glass & Fine Art, Dudley Council**

The following is a straightforward guide to the future of the borough's glass collections based on the most common questions received from the public. If you have any further questions, please contact us via glass.museum@dudley.gov.uk and we will do our best to provide the information.

When is Broadfield House Glass Museum closing?

The Museum will close to the public at 4pm on Wednesday 30th September 2015. Pre-arranged group bookings, including the monthly meetings held by The Friends of BHGM, will be held on site up until Christmas.

Where is the museum going to go?

A new museum is being developed on the site of the White House Cone, opposite the Red House Glass Cone, on the main road to Stourbridge. The site was formerly the home of Stuart Crystal. Part of the site will become the museum, part will be commercial units rented to businesses and part will be residential. The site is owned by and being developed by Complex Development Projects. It is hoped that bringing the museum closer to the Cone and the Glass Quarter in general, will increase visitor numbers and offer more opportunities for partnership working.

Why is the Museum closing?

Broadfield House has been earmarked for closure since 2009 as part of the huge financial savings that Dudley MBC, like all other local authorities, is having to find. However, it was agreed at the time that the museum would not close until a new home had been found for the glass collection. As an ERDF grant has now been awarded for renovating the White House site, and further grants and income streams are in the pipeline, the Council is confident that the future of the collection is now secure and work can proceed on preparing and moving the collections. In order for staff to have the time to do this work, it is necessary to have a period of closure before the new museum opens.

When will the new museum open?

There is not a fixed date yet, and a completion date will depend on the schedules set by funding bodies, but it is hoped that the new site will be open by December 2016.

What will the new museum be called?

A name has not yet been decided, but watch out for more information being announced soon.

Who is going to run the new museum?

The new museum will be run by the British Glass Foundation, a charitable trust – visit www.britishglassfoundation.org.uk for more information about the BGF. You can also sign up to receive their free monthly e-newsletter *Glass Cuts*.

Is the Red House Glass Cone also going to be run by the BGF?

No. In the long-term it is planned that the BGF could also take over running the Cone so that both sites will operate as a cohesive whole, but this will take several years to plan and fund. In the meantime the BGF will concentrate on opening and developing the glass museum and Dudley MBC will continue to manage the Cone and both parties will work together to provide a complementary visitor experience and programme of events and exhibitions.

Can I apply for a job at the new museum?

Any vacancies will be advertised by the BGF, but there is likely to be only around three paid positions available. The BGF will be looking for volunteers to help run the museum and work with the public, so if you are interested in volunteering, please contact the BGF directly (see previous). The '27 jobs' that have been repeatedly mentioned in local press refers to the expected number of jobs that will be based on the site, including people working in the businesses renting the commercial units, and not the number of people employed by the museum.

Will any of the existing museum staff be transferred to the new museum?

Yes. The Keeper of Glass & Fine Art position will continue to work for the Museums Service as the Council needs to ensure the collections are being maintained to Museum Accreditation standards.

Will we be able to see anything from the collection while the museum is closed?

Yes. A selection of items from the collection will go on show at Dudley Museum & Art Gallery as part of their exhibition programme for 2016. Throughout the closure period, researchers and members of the public who wish to view specific material can make an appointment by contacting the Keeper of Glass on 01384 812749. A large part of the collection is also available to view online at www.blackcountryhistory.org and using the Advanced Search option to look at Dudley's material.

Will everything go on show at the new museum?

No. Between 20% and 25% of the glass collection has been on show at Broadfield House at any one time, which is in line with the national average for museum displays. The display areas at the new museum will be similar in size to the combined size of the galleries at BHGM. However, the different configuration of the space along with new cabinets will allow for more items to be on show than ever before and will allow for better access. Anything not on show will be stored off-site at the Council's high security museums store. Collections will also continue to be rotated and items not on show will be available to view by appointment (see above).

Can I buy glass from the museum collection? Will anything be sold if it is not going on display?

No. Broadfield House Glass Museum is an Accredited Museum and the new museum will also be assessed for Accreditation, which is the national standard for museums. Accredited museums have to comply with the Museums Association's Code of Ethics which states that museums are not permitted to sell items from their collection except under extremely exceptional circumstances. Financial motivation and simply not being on display do not count as exceptional circumstances.

Is the Council giving the collection to the BGF?

No. The collection is going to be leased long-term to the BGF, but will continue to be owned by Dudley MBC or the individual lenders who have items on long-term loan to the museum.

What will happen to Broadfield House?

The house and adjoining land will be sold and the proceeds will go towards the cost of fitting out the new museum. Broadfield House is Grade II Listed so it cannot be knocked down or substantially altered, but we do not know yet what it will be used for in the future or who will own it.

Will the new museum have a hot glass studio?

Yes. It is hoped that the current artist in residence, Allister Malcolm, will be able to move to the new studio early next year. In the meantime, customers can make an appointment to visit Allister by contacting him directly at www.allistermalcolm.com or 07961 867206. Being able to watch glass being made has always been an important part of the visitor experience and the BGF wanted to ensure that this would continue to be part of the new museum.

Will the new museum have a cafe?

No. Unfortunately due to particular criteria within the ERDF funding, the new museum will not be able to offer a cafe. However, visitors will be able to use the Red House Coffee Shop at the Red House Cone across the road.

Will the new museum have a lift?

Yes. It was not viable to install a lift at Broadfield House so this is one of the reasons the collection needs a new home. The new museum will have two floors, the upper floor being accessible via a lift. The new displays will also be more accessible and have better interpretation, making use of new technologies which has not been possible before.

Will the new museum have temporary exhibitions?

Yes. Temporary exhibitions at BHGM have always been popular and the new museum will have the facilities to offer an interesting exhibition programme within a dedicated space.

Who do I contact if I have more questions or if I want to get involved with the new museum?

You can contact the BGF by email bgf@britishglassfoundation.org.uk or phone 01384 239019.

You can contact the Keeper of Glass & Fine Art by email glass.museum@dudley.gov.uk or phone 01384 812749 (please leave a message).