

Red House Museum Opened For Festival

"Must Become Living Centre For Study" —Sir Donald Bailey

FRIDAY, JUNE 1, 1951

AT last Christchurch has a museum which promises to be one of the finest in the Wessex area. It was opened at the Red House, Quay Road, on Wednesday afternoon, but it is doubtful whether many of the large number of people who attended the ceremony were really aware of the tremendous transformation which the premises and grounds had undergone during the past six months.

In that short time a building which was rapidly becoming derelict and a garden which was nothing more than a rubbish dump have been made into what must be recognised as one of the most pleasant corners of Christchurch.

The seventeenth century Red House has been restored and at the back there is a delightful sunken walled garden which gets the full benefit of the sun.

In the words of Sir Donald Bailey, who is one of the museum's trustees, Wednesday's ceremony was the culmination of a lifetime's effort on the part of the late Mr. Herbert Druitt and of the work of those who recognised the importance of his archeological and literary collections.

The Red House, however, is going to be something more than just a museum. Eventually an art gallery is to be added and it has been announced that a gift of £1,000 is being made towards the cost of this by the executors of a former well-known artist, Graham Robertson.

TO HELP MEET REPAIRS

Already the museum trustees have received £1,000 from Mrs. Barbara Blair, a sister of the late Mr. Herbert Druitt. This sum was to help meet the cost of repairs, improvements, and redecoration of the building.

The opening ceremony was performed by Sir Donald Bailey, and as part of the town's Festival of Britain celebrations the museum will be open to the public free until June 16th. It will then be closed for about 6 weeks for further work to be carried out and will be re-opened on July 30th. At the end of September it is to be closed again so that further work on the collections can be undertaken.

Before asking Sir Donald to open the museum, Ald. E. J. Slinn, chairman of the museum managers, spoke of how fortunate Christchurch was in having members of the Druitt family in its midst. Their interest in the welfare of the town was well known, and their name would long be remembered in many aspects of the borough's life. Their influence would remain even after they had all passed on.

SOMEWHERE NEW TO GO.

Festival Year will long be remembered as the date of an important addition to the attractions of the town. I refer to the gardens of the Red House Museum open free to the public during the coming fortnight and thereafter at the price of 6d. admission to the museum.

What was hidden behind a curtain almost as repellent as an iron one, and just as impenetrable, now provides Christchurch with a new and most attractive place to go and sit and think—or just sit.