



# William MABLE 1821 – 1879

## Founder of Weston Museum

William MABLE was born in London in 1821

No. 1028.	William	William	Mable	Father	Leather	R. Kern
22	son	Mary		Lane	Dresser	
No. 1029.	William					
1821						

This is his christening at St Dunstan in the West showing his date of birth, 19<sup>th</sup> March 1821, as well as his baptism, 22<sup>nd</sup> August 1821. His parents were William and Mary MABLE and his father was a leather dresser when he was born. William senior, on later baptisms and censuses is variously described as a Turncock and/or Plumber. He lived until 1880 and married three or possibly four times!

William MABLE junior was William's eldest son and there were 5 more children before his mother Mary, died in 1831.

By the 1841 Census our William was living with a Bootmaker and his family in White Hart Street, St Paul Covent Garden, Strand, London and 2 years later he married Louisa SIMMONS in Lambeth, describing himself as a salesman (presumably of shoes?)

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1843. Marriage solemnized at <i>St John the Evangelist</i> in the <i>Parish of Lambeth</i> in the County of <i>Surrey</i> .								
No.	When Married.	Name and Surname.	Age.	Condition.	Rank or Profession.	Residence at the Time of Marriage.	Father's Name and Surname.	Rank or Profession of Father.
53	May 24 1843	William Mable	full	Bachelor	Salesman	Charles Street	William Mable	Leather Dresser
		Louisa Simmons		Spinster			Edward Jordan	Smith
Married in the <i>Parish Church</i> according to the Rites and Ceremonies of the Established Church, after banns <i>after banns</i> by me, <i>R. Irvine</i>								
This Marriage was solemnized between us,		<i>William Mable</i>		in the Presence of us,		<i>James Green</i> <i>Robt Brown</i>		

His marriage in 1843 at St John the Evangelist, Lambeth.

Their first child was a girl, registered in the June quarter of 1844 in London, Louisa Emily MABLE, but she died aged 4, in 1848 – and was buried at St John the Baptist, Windsor

By the 1851 census William & Louisa were in Weston living at Milton with their young family

### 1851 England, Wales & Scotland Census Transcription

First name(s)	Last name	Relation-ship	Marital status	Age	Occupation	Birth place
William	Mable	Head	Married	30	Cord wainer	London, Middlesex,
Louisa	Mable	Wife	Married	28	-	Henbury, Glos,
William C	Mable	Son		5	-	Salisbury, Wiltshire
Benjamin I	Mable	Son		2	-	Windsor, Berkshire,
Esther	Mable	Daughter		6 mths	-	Weston-s-Mare, Som

Although his sons William and Benjamin were born in Wiltshire and Windsor, they were both christened in Emmanuel Church on the 3<sup>rd</sup> July 1853, along with their younger sisters, Esther and Louisa Brown MABLE who were born in Weston.

In 1851 and 1852 the Rev R WARRE instigated an archaeological investigation of the camp of the Ancient Britons on Worlebury Hill which intrigued William MABLE. He is said to have visited the diggings and was disappointed that the findings were transported to the Museum at Taunton thereby not allowing local people the opportunity to see them.

1853 was not an easy year for William MABLE.

- His wife, Louisa died in April 1853, leaving him with 4 young children, aged, 8, 4, 3 and 1
- He was married again in August 1853 to Agnes Taylor VALENTINE (who already had a daughter, Georgiana, who was born in 1841 in Bristol).
- In September 1853, his daughter Kate Esther, aged 3, (Esther on the 1851 Census) died and a couple of months later in November the youngest child, Louisa, aged 16 months died (both were buried in Emmanuel Churchyard).

His 2<sup>nd</sup> marriage – to Agnes Taylor VALENTINE in August 1853 at Emmanuel Church. Seems quite soon after the death of Louisa!

1853. Marriage solemnized at Emmanuel Church in the Parish of Weston-s-Mare in the County of Somerset

No.	When Married.	Name and Surname.	Age.	Condition.	Rank or Profession.	Residence at the Time of Marriage.	Father's Name and Surname.	Rank or Profession of Father.
70	August 13	William Mable	34 yrs	widower	Shovermaker	Weston s. Mare	William Mable	Plumber
		Agnes Taylor Valentine	34 yrs	Spinster	-	Weston s. Mare	Thomas Valentine	Clay & Pattern Maker

Married in the Church of Emmanuel according to the Rites and Ceremonies of the Established Church, after Banns by me, John Rowley Minister

This Marriage was solemnized between us, William Mable and Agnes Taylor Valentine in the Presence of us, James Porter & Esther Brown + her mother

His first marriage had been witnessed by a Robert BROWN, this second marriage was witnessed by an Esther BROWN and as the last child of William and Louisa was christened Emily Brown MABLE, I am wondering whether the use of the name BROWN is just a coincidence?



William MABLE with his second wife, Agnes

In 1859, following concern about the ill-educated donkey boys in Weston William MABLE supported by a Miss SALTER opened a night school in rooms in Carlton Street where the boys could receive education and other support. This became so successful and popular that he started to offer day classes supplemented with lunches during the winter months when the boys and their donkeys were unemployed.

He also set about making a collection of suitable exhibits from interested people which in 1861 he gave to the president and committee of the Night School with the ostensible object of it becoming the museum of the town, and conditionally that a proper place was provided for it.

### 1861 England, Wales & Scotland Census Transcription

Reeves Cottages, Carlton Street, Weston Super Mare, Axbridge, Somerset, England

First name(s)	Last name	Relationship	Marital status	Age	Occupation	Birth place
William	Mable	Head	Married	40	Bootmaker & Superintendent of the Industrial School	London, Middlesex, England
Agness T	Mable	Wife	Married	45	-	Bristol, Glos,
G Fanny V	Mable	Daughter	Single	20	-	-
William C	Mable	Son	Single	13	-	Salisbury, Wiltshire,
Benjamin I	Mable	Son	Single	12	-	Windsor, Hampshire,
Mary Ann	Mable	Daughter	Single	6	-	Weston-s-Mare, Som,
Alfred	Nichols	Apprentice	Single	15	-	Weston-s-Mare, Som,
Sophia	Parker	Boarder	Single	11	-	Weston-s-Mare, Som,
John	Parker	Boarder	Single	6	-	Weston-s-Mare, Som

In 1871 he is living in Main Square – surely the name which should be given to the redesigned Dophin Square - and it is interesting to note that he is no longer listed as a bootmaker, simply the Superintendent of the Night School but that Mary Ann, his daughter, (by Agnes) is a pupil teacher at the National School.

Several mentions in the local paper demonstrate his continued concern to those less well off as this letter in the Weston Mercury - Saturday 20 December 1879 shows:

#### EMMANUEL DAY SCHOOL AND CHILDREN'S DINNER

*Sir.- Will you favour me with a few lines in the interest the dinner movement, now being carried out for the twelfth winter, the Albert Memorial Night School Room. There are a considerable number of the children at home unwell; those attending have had dinners occasionally, and if the frost continues, there will greater need for help than is usual; there great slackness of work amongst labourers at the present time, which is clearly indicated by the sunken eyes and wan look of some children. The dinners consist of a pint of soup procured from the soup kitchen. Orchard-street, and the quarter of a half-quartern loaf - it never varies, and is always given in the schoolroom.*

*Yours, William Mable.*

*December 18,1879.*

In 1881 William is described as Schoolmaster and curator of the Museum.

Failing health apparently took William back to the London area where he died in 1887 but he was not forgotten in Weston-super-Mare when in 1904 there was talk of erecting a brass plaque to commemorate his work in setting up the original museum. Was that ever done?

The Museum moved from the Albert Memorial Hall to the first floor of the purpose-built library and museum in the Boulevard designed by Hans Price in 1900. In 1975 the Museum took over the former Gas Company Offices in Burlington Street and added Clara's Cottage 1987.