How Torquay Museum found a home

When the Torquay Natural History Society was founded in 1844, its members soon realised the need for a museum in which to display their collections.

VERONIKA VALIGURSKÁ
torbayweekly@archant.co.uk

Before the society moved to its permanent premises in Torwood Street (now Babbacombe Road) its museum was relocated several times.

It first began life in Glen Cottage (now Parkmount) in Park Hill Road – the home of Dr Battersby (one of the founding members). However, this private residence was wholly inadequate. Subsequently the collections were housed in several locations including Torquay Club House in Higher Terrace, Commercial Hall in Park Lane and Freemasons Hall in Park Place.

By the early 1870s a building appeal fund had been started and in 1874 Reverend Stebbing (president of the society) laid the foundation stone.

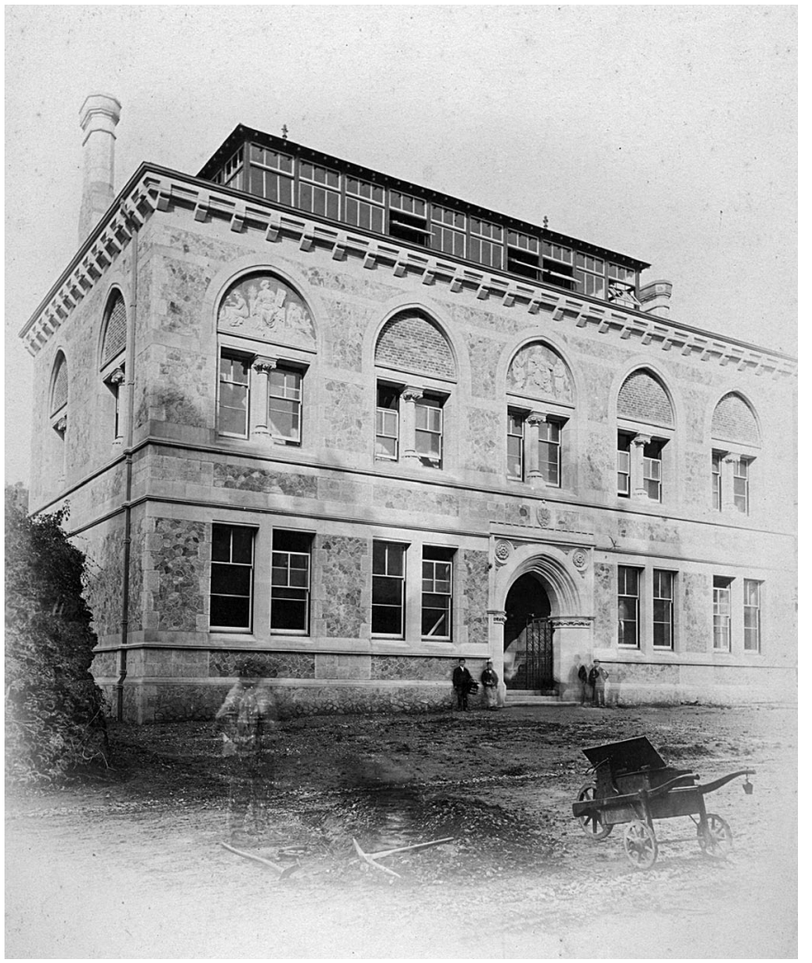
Below the stone a cavity was formed to hold a bottle containing a brief record of the society, a current issue of Nature magazine (with a portrait of Darwin) and two or three copies of the daily newspaper.

The land on which the new building was to be situated had been leased for 1,000 years from the Cary family with a rent of 1/- per year (which is still paid today).

• Photographs from the museum's archive can be bought by quoting their PR number to enquiries@torquaymuseum.org. The museum is a registered charity and the money raised from purchasing images goes to supporting vital work looking after the collections.

Mr and Mrs Denis Potts-Chatto outside their family mansion The Daison in 1900 (PR7787.1)

Watercolour of Daddy Hole Plain (PR5406)



Torquay Museum shortly after completion (PR6619)

Deller's Cafe in Paignton, 1936 (PR10190)

ADVERTISING > Andy Sexton 07710 431756 : andy.sexton@archant.co.uk