



Berry Head, Brixham

Picture: TORQUAY MUSEUM

# Interest in Bay's geology goes right back to 1844

**Torbay has an outstanding geological story to tell, from tropical coral seas to hot red deserts and icy landscapes inhabited by mammoths and early humans.**

The whole of Torbay is now internationally recognised as a UNESCO Global Geopark, but interest in the area's geology has a much longer history.

From its inception in 1844, the founders of Torquay Natural History Society were interested in the geology of the area.

This is long before it became a geopark in 2007 which went on to be recognised by UNESCO in 2015.

William Pengelly, a founder member, was an eminent geologist and wrote papers on wide ranging topics linked to the geology of the area including Devonian fossils and the red sandstones as well as many papers on excavations he led at local caves.

The society also encouraged others in their research and set up Torquay Museum to house their library and the specimens they were collecting.

Torquay Museum now holds a large geological collection including samples collected by W.A.E. Ussher who worked on creating the Geological map of the area.

It also holds hundreds of samples collected by A.J. Jukes-Browne who also worked for the Geological Survey, including a large collection of fossil corals from Torbay.

The most significant collection is the Quaternary Cave Collection which has designated status and contains items excavated from Kents Cavern and other local caves.

These finds feature in two of the museum's permanent galleries and the thousands of items in store are always available for research and are used in temporary exhibitions.

The museum's historic

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Torquay Museum

collection of geology books is also a valuable resource as many are difficult to find anywhere else locally.

One which has been of particular use is the 'Monograph of the Devonian Fauna of the South of England' by Rev G.F. Whidbourne which was chosen for the community curated The Secret Museum exhibition by Melanie Border, coordinator of the English Riviera UNESCO Global Geopark.

Melanie said: "I came down to the museum on the recommendation of Kevin Page searching for the Monograph back in 2006, just at the point that we were preparing the application to become a geopark."

"It records some of the Lummaton shell bed fossils and as soon as I saw it, I was captivated.

Beauty is in the eye of the beholder as they say.

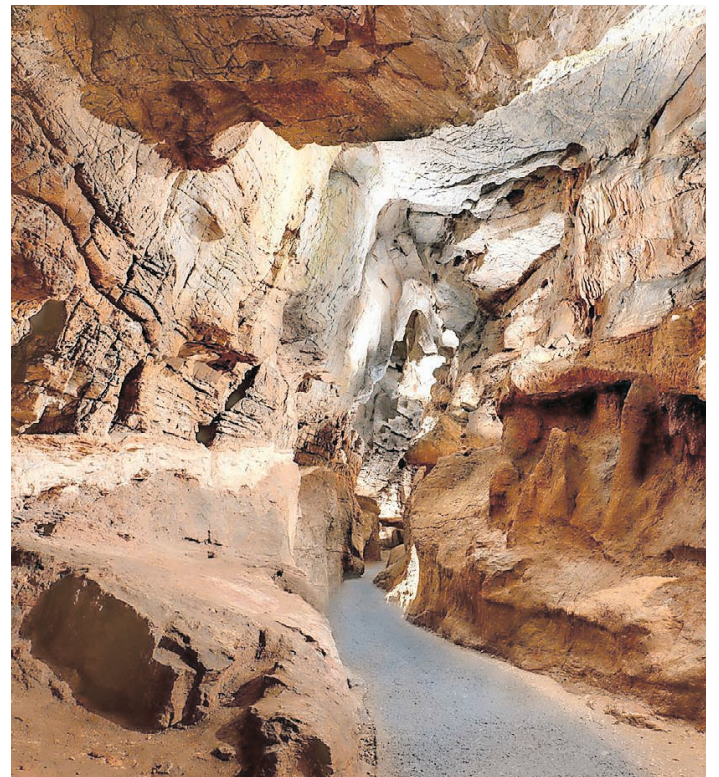
"We then used the Monograph as part of the evidence to support the international significance of the area's geology."

The awarding of geopark status gave added recognition to the importance of both the local geology and the geological collections at Torquay Museum.

The museum now works with the geopark and other partners to explain and promote the fascinating geology of the local area.

The story of Torbay is bound in with its amazing geology, from the industries that used its clay and stone to its red beaches, beautiful coastline, fascinating environment, heritage and culture, the stories of which the geopark helps to unlock.

To find out more, why not visit Torquay Museum or discover some of the local geosites by visiting [www.englishriviera.geopark.org.uk](http://www.englishriviera.geopark.org.uk)



The Long Arcade at Kents Cavern

Picture: CADLE DESIGN PARTNERSHIP



The Ancestors Gallery in Torquay Museum

Picture: TORQUAY MUSEUM



From Hope's Nose, a Site of Special Scientific Interest, towards Orestone  
Picture: TORQUAY MUSEUM