



Historic view of Torquay Museum

Promoting natural and human history

In these difficult times it's reassuring to know that there are organisations and people that are still dedicated to preserving and promoting Torbay's rich natural, historical and cultural heritage - which more than ever is of great importance to large numbers of people in this beautiful part of the world.

One such organisation is Torquay Museum Society, which since 1844 - when it was originally founded as Torquay Natural History Society - has been at the forefront of efforts to promote understanding, research, and debate of Torbay's natural and human history.

Within 32 years of its founding, the society had raised enough money to construct a museum housed in a beautiful, purpose-built Venetian-Gothic building on Babbacombe Road, where it still stands today.

The museum has survived and prospered over the last 175 years, despite many challenges, and is now the guardian of more than 330,000 artefacts from across the globe, some of international importance and many simply beautiful and fascinating.

Torquay Museum Society has evolved over almost two centuries, until today it is a registered charity with hundreds of members, dedicated to promoting a wider understanding of the history, natural environment and cultural heritage of Devon.

CARL SMITH
Torquay Museum

The society organises an annual lecture programme of around 40 talks on a huge range of topics, including science, natural history, art and literature, local history and humanities, presented in Torquay Museum's purpose-built lecture theatre.

All of the lectures are free of charge to Museum Society members, with a small charge to non-members who wish to attend.

Unfortunately, the spring 2021 lectures are accessible only to members as numbers are limited in order to comply with Covid social distancing restrictions. It is hoped to open up lectures to the public once again later in the year.

But the Museum Society does more than organise lectures. It also provides voluntary support to the work of the museum, helping with many different aspects of running it. The society is the custodian of an

historic book collection begun at the founding of the Torquay Natural History Society in 1844.

This collection is a key resource for specialist researchers from far afield, as well as local people interested in exploring aspects of our common heritage.

The society also has special interest sections, including archaeology, geology, astronomy, literature and arts, local history, natural history, botany and horticulture, zoology and ornithology, and a very active and friendly ramblers group.

New members are always welcome to join the friendly, sociable Torquay Museum Society.

Prices for a year's membership are £60 for singles and £100 for couples, which includes entry to all lectures, membership of special interest groups and free entry to the museum.

For details about how to become a member, email: carl.smith@torquaymuseum.org, download an application form from the museum's website, or call 01803 293975.



Museum Society members in the museum Pictures: JAMES MILLAR



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