



Arthur Ogilvie with some of his finds from Kents Cavern



Civa, or breast ornament, collected by Ogilvie on display in the Explorer's Gallery

Pictures: TORQUAY MUSEUM

# Why we have Arthur Ogilvie to thank for Torquay Museum's huge variety of items

**When we think of Torquay Museum's collectors we always remember William Pengelly first for his incredible contribution to archaeology and paleontology during his excavations at Kents Cavern.**

However, it was not Pengelly but Arthur Ogilvie that discovered KC4, the oldest evidence of modern humans in the whole of north west Europe, and it is largely Ogilvie we have to thank for the huge variety of items contained within the museum.

Ogilvie was born at Chirton Hill, Northumberland, in 1863.

He showed an interest in natural history from a young age and initially started a profession in medicine attending London Hospital Medical College, but abandoned his study for something more adventurous.

He left England in 1887 for Macay in Queensland, Australia, and entered the sugar industry.

The Pacific economy was unpredictable and, by 1889, he had joined the London Chartered Bank of Australia and had moved to Townsville.

In 1892, he was transferred to Sydney to fill a position at head office, but following a crisis in the bank in 1894, he left the service for a new life in Fiji.

Ogilvie established himself as a successful indent and commission agent at Suva and was joined in

## Barry Chandler from Torquay Museum

1896 by Mr S.G. Sturt and founded the firm Sturt, Ogilvie & Company.

Since his arrival in Suva, Ogilvie had taken an interest in all public, religious and social movements.

In 1899, he married Mary Catherine Armstrong, daughter of one of the early planters in Fiji, and settled into his busy working and social life in Suva.

Here, he would acquire a great interest and collection in the culture of pre-contact Fiji and delivered a paper on this to the Fijian Society in 1909.

He returned to England with his wife in 1920 and settled in Torquay, a town in which he had always wanted to live.

His retirement was to be no less energetic than his working life in Suva.

In 1922, he became curator of Torquay Museum, and immediately started work on continuing excavations at Kents Cavern.

Record keeping was not one of Ogilvie's strengths, not surprising when he was involved with so many projects, and despite being

curator from 1922 to 1934, he kept few records.

He left no notes about where or when he collected many of his pieces, and although he became president of the Torquay Natural History Society upon his retirement as curator and visited the museum almost daily until his death in January 1950, very little is currently known about the origin of many of his artefacts.

Ogilvie's collections in the museum are second only in

importance to those of William Pengelly.

They include tropical shells, many hundreds from the Fijian Islands, insects including tropical beetles, minerals from all over the world, many items of ceramics and social history, books and ethnographic items from Asia and the Pacific.

Ogilvie's Fijian artefacts items include tattooing needles, sail needles, shell bangles and ornaments, a half coconut shell

kava cup and a collection of polished stone tools.

The most important item in the Fijian collections was obtained through Ogilvie: a superbly crafted civa, breast ornament which would have belonged to a high-ranking Fijian chief.

You can find out more about Ogilvie's life and see some of his Fijian Collections in Torquay Museum's current temporary exhibition, Far Side of the World: Torquay's Fijian Connection.

Ogilvie's Fijian shell collection on display in Far Side of the World

