

Museums Week, Culture Society and Innovation

June 13 to 19 is International Museums Week. Since 2014, it has grown to include 60,000 participants in more than 100 countries – it's a worldwide cultural event promoted through the many platforms of social media.

In a hyper-connected, hyper-globalised world, in which consciousness and hopes are being forged more often online, and in a rapidly changing world where humanity is facing major challenges, we believe that museums and other cultural organisations have a fundamental role to play.

They can accompany audiences in these changes, help to prepare and structure minds creating societies more able to face the changes brought by digital technology.

In 2022, Museums Week focuses on the theme of 'Culture Society and Innovation'.

The problems facing societies across the world and in the UK also threaten the museum here in Torquay.

Rising prices, rapidly-changing technology, changing our

Barry Chandler,
collections and
engagement manager
at Torquay Museum

environmental impact and staying relevant to younger generations are a constant challenge.

This is especially so when money is incredibly tight.

Innovation is particularly important in facing these challenges and while to some people the museum may appear quite static, we are always looking at new ways to present information.

In recent years, we have introduced additional layers of interpretation through QR codes for trails and exhibitions, we have trialled virtual reality with our LEGO exhibition and even dabbled with augmented reality with our Egyptian mummy being part of the BBC Civilisations project.

To highlight our most important Ice



Ann Bonny's and Jack Rackham's costumes from the TV series Black Sails, Ann Bonny is now part of our LGBTQ+ trail. Credit: TORQUAY MUSEUM

Age collections we have joined a pan-European project which will look at creating a virtual Ice Age environment called 'A Land of Giants'.

This will mix the worlds of games design and museum interpretation. We have our fingers crossed that it will win a major funding award.

If you are thinking of visiting our Titanic exhibition, which opened on June 11, bring your mobile device and a pair of headphones and you can engage with an audio tour of the displays.

During Museums Week, two more themes that are promoted are 'Freedom' and 'Sexuality'. Closely linked together, we try to promote these themes through our exhibitions, interpretation, and social media.

Returning to past global events which effected Torbay, such as D-Day, is an ideal way to reflect on current events.

The sacrifices of previous generations, that we told through the story of Bill Neilson only last week, make us appreciate the fragility of our freedoms.

War, pandemics, and economic decline can erode these at alarming rates.

Looking at the past can make us appreciate the struggle communities have endured to preserve them.

In International Pride Month our LGBTQ+ History Trail also highlights these struggles and why it is important that we remember that sometimes freedom of expression should not be



QR codes in use in the Titanic Exhibition as part of an audio tour. Credit: TORQUAY MUSEUM

taken for granted.

Museums Week will also encourage us to look at the environment.

The museum is already looking very hard at our practices and programming to improve not only the museum's sustainability but also how we encourage change.

The promotion of public transport, the use of recycled and recyclable materials, limiting our waste and use of plastics, and exploring ways we can heat the building and maintain the collections for the future without a reliance on fossil fuels are all ways we can inspire others to do the same.

If you are planning a visit soon and you have a ticket for public transport or you use your bicycle you can get a free yearly pass to the museum, while they are available.

Bring your mobile phone which will help you interact with our LGBTQ+ history trail and new Titanic exhibition.

Things are constantly changing at the Museum, follow our social media for even more events and exhibitions later in the year.

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