

Marble industry is often undeservedly overlooked

At its peak, Torbay's decorative stone industry had the glory of a gold medal at the Great Exhibition and there is still an active industry to this day using the same skills, if not the same stones, however you could be forgiven for not having heard of it.

Unlike the much-lauded potteries, little had been written about it until a few years ago.

The industry developed due to the local geology.

The limestones found in cliffs and quarries of South Devon show a huge variety of colours and textures formed by fossils of extinct sea creatures and corals.

This gave both interest and colour to the items made and by the time of the Great Exhibition in 1851, there was an established industry making a variety of item from large architectural fittings to jewellery and paperweights.

The growing tourist trade in Torbay brought customers and soon there were numerous marble works ranging from small domestic workshops to large companies employing 100 or more staff. These were mainly based in Babbacombe and St Marychurch,

CLARE HOWE
Torquay Museum

with much of the stone coming from the costal quarry at Petit Tor.

Many of the items produced went on sale in specialist shops and showrooms both locally and in London, as well as being exported around the world.

Items were even bought by Queen Victoria after a visit by Prince Albert in 1852; one of which, an intricate goldfinch platter, is now part of Torquay Museum's collections.

The Devon marble industry is often undeservedly overlooked. Although it is possible to see Devon marble everywhere, from the plinth of Grand National trophy to Salisbury Cathedral, there is still a lack of recognition of the industry.

Items are regularly misidentified as having been made in Derbyshire or Italy, where there were better known decorative stone industries.

Perhaps one of the reasons for the lack of recognition is the difficulty in identifying Devon items; there are not many items



An inkwell made of South Devon stones in a style known as scrapwork



Redgate beach in August, 1962 (PR7207)



Torquay's oldest hotel - The Royal Hotel in 1909 (PR4802)

identified in museum collections and marked items are incredibly rare. The only public collection of any size is held by Torquay

Museum and a selection of the collection is on permanent display.

It is also possible to see the

architectural uses of the stone in buildings across the country, All Saint's Church in Babbacombe being an excellent example.

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columnist

Life is a work in progress - and the timeline of life

For years I've puzzled 'What I should do with my life?' as if there is some defined life purpose or answer that will solve all of life's problems.

Often without realising it, I am searching for a silver bullet. One activity that can numb me of my pain, one more product to excite myself with, one person to solve me of all my problems and insecurities.

The unfortunate truth of life is that all things suck... eventually. We can never get rid of our insecurities, fears and anxieties - nothing will ever liberate us permanently from the more vulgar aspects of our minds.

Though somewhat depressing and bitter to the tongue, this message

Teen Talk

William Arthur
South Devon College



can free us in a surprising way. Accepting where we are failing, learning to live with our unique set of baggage, feeling free to express our more unappealing qualities, we can energise ourselves and dare to fail, dare to fall over and over!

Sometimes, it seems like I'm walking on eggshells, trying to say the perfect thing, to look as successful and important as I can to those I want to impress.

Mark Manson says how humans are wired to be dissatisfied in all we have

and do, in that dissatisfaction gives us the incentive to continue moving forward.

There will never be a single, once-and-for-all moment of supreme happiness which alleviates us from all of our struggles.

Thus, when we see the movie star, travel luxury lifestyle of the modern media, understanding that we don't have to mirror all that we see can help to take some of the pressure of us.

Life seems to be a never-ending stream of problems and uncomfortable experiences which make us question ourselves constantly. Don't feel pressured to tick the boxes of life as if it is a game to be won. You write your story in your own way.