

Museum celebrates £120,000 Culture Recovery funding boost

CARL SMITH
Torquay Museum

Torquay Museum is one of 1,385 cultural and creative organisations across the country receiving urgently-needed support from the Government.

It has been awarded £120,000 as part of the Culture Recovery Fund to help face the challenges of the coronavirus pandemic and to ensure it has a sustainable future.

“Like many other museums we have endured financial hardship during this very difficult year,” explains Basil Greenwood, Torquay Museum’s director.

“We have done remarkably well in attracting back visitors since we reopened to the public in July but we are very heavily reliant upon income from visitors in order to keep the doors open and care for our amazing collections.

“That income has fallen significantly, making the Museum’s position very precarious.

“This vital grant from the Culture Recovery Fund will help us to not only keep the doors open, but allow us to deliver some great new exhibitions and further strengthen our links with the local community, including new education outreach sessions.”

This year, Torquay Museum celebrates 175 years since its foundation. As the oldest museum in Devon, with extraordinary and internationally important objects in its care, there is plenty to celebrate.

The museum is home to around 330,000 amazing artefacts, with fascinating galleries exploring the history of Torbay and some of its most famous inhabitants.

The museum’s most important collections relate to the many caves found in the local area and are recognised as of international importance, finds on display include North West Europe’s oldest modern human fossil from nearby Kents Cavern.

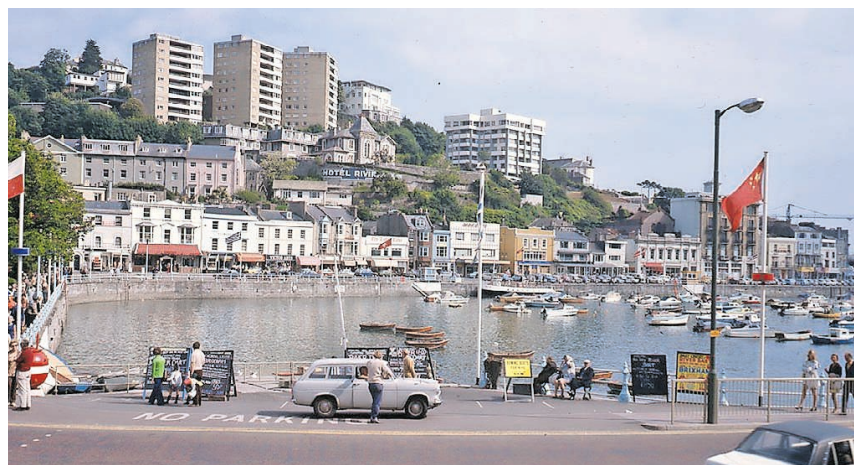
The museum also houses Britain’s only Agatha Christie gallery, dedicated to the life story of the Queen of Crime.

Its Explorers Gallery follows the incredible journeys made by Torquay’s famous explorers, from the frozen wastes of the Antarctic to the depths of the Brazilian rainforest, showcasing the fascinating artefacts they collected during their travels across the globe.

“Torquay Museum is the cultural heart of Torbay and is a vital part of the local community,” said Basil Greenwood.



Torquay Museum staff celebrate news of the £120,000 grant



An elevated view over the inner harbour with Victoria Parade in the background. From the collection of Ashton Reed. (PR16907)

“It’s enjoyed by thousands of school children each year, who find its collections an invaluable aid to learning.

“The museum is visited by a diverse array of local people and holidaymakers, who enjoy its fascinating, interactive galleries and wide variety of temporary exhibitions and events.

“It has a vibrant and friendly Museum Society, which organises around 40 talks per year on a bewildering variety of subjects.

“The museum is also a vital resource for vulnerable and disabled groups, who benefit from an accessible and wheelchair friendly environment.”



The Sailors' Rest at Nos 29-30 Victoria Parade. It was erected in the early 1900s and offered reasonably priced food and temperance accommodation for men of the Royal Navy (PR10994)

columnist

Strange happenings

Mysterious Torbay

Christine Donnelly



The historic fishing port of Brixham has more than its fair share of hauntings.

The theatre, museum and various private residences have reported strange things happening.

One of the more well known, allegedly haunted dwellings is the Smugglers Haunt Hotel.

The building was originally two cottages and is around 300 years old and is a very popular hotel.

Although its name might give the impression that it is haunted by a smuggler, the ghosts that reside there are anything but.

It is true, though, that a smuggler by the name of Bob Elliot, lived there in the mid-1800s.

The story goes, that he was the recipient of some stolen contraband and to move it safely from the area he faked his own death. He was a large man and so a large coffin was made in which to hide the contraband and get it on its way to Totnes.

After the coffin had left the building, Bob Elliot made his way furtively, along the highway but was spotted by the local coastguard.

They, having seen him and thinking him to be dead, thought they had seen a ghost, and from then on referred to him as ‘Resurrection Bob’.

After this time the cottages were reconstructed, and became known as the Smugglers Haunt Hotel.

Over the years strange things have been happening in the hotel. Around the 1920s, a girl was thought to have fallen to her death onto the street below from one of the bedroom windows.

Her ghost has been seen by many guests over the years. She is quite mischievous and has been known to pull the bedclothes off a bed while a guest was quietly sleeping there. She is referred to as ‘Aggie’.

Lights in the hotel have turned on and off, a strange knocking has been heard and a ghostly man has been seen sat at one of the tables.

If you have a story that you would like to share, I would like to hear from you, Contact me at: ghostwriter979@gmail.com



The Smugglers Haunt Hotel in Brixham