

Exhibitions create an ever-changing museum

Exhibitions are in many ways the lifeblood of Torquay Museum.

While we have many much loved exhibits on permanent display in our galleries, it is the constantly changing exhibitions and their associated events that keep both local people and tourists returning to the museum year after year.

It is perhaps not obvious to our visitors but our program of around three temporary exhibitions per year normally follows a pattern which the Covid restrictions have forced us to break.

In the spring we normally have special interest exhibitions usually based on our extensive collections, these sometimes cover local themes like the Romans and the excavations at Ipplepen but also general themes such as Claws! A Human History of Cats, or Flu and the Threat of Pandemic.

These exhibitions allow the museum to showcase its incredibly broad collections in fun and imaginative ways picking up themes that are educational and

BARRY CHANDLER
Torquay Museum

popular to many people. Museum staff had planned an exhibition on our extensive and internationally important Fijian collections for January but this is currently on hold.

In the summer the museum usually stages a large exhibition on quite populist themes to appeal to the broadest audience possible.

Sometimes these have a local connection like our Titanic exhibition or pirates.

The museum also aims to bring some of the largest nationally touring exhibitions to Torbay and have staged large scale shows on Ancient Egypt with objects from the British Museum, science fiction with spectacular props from the Prop Store of London and even LEGO which has seen a huge surge in popularity in recent years.

Income from summer shows is vital to the survival of the museum as its council grant has been reduced. This year, it will

break from this pattern with its 'Secret Museum' exhibition celebrating 175 years of collecting. It will be partially curated by local people and contain many items never or rarely seen on display.

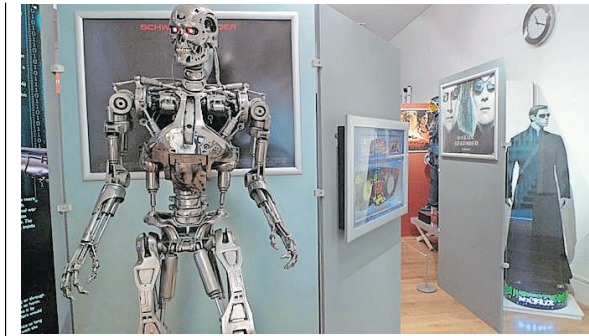
In the autumn it covers local heritage themes and have staged many object rich exhibitions on local people, places and events.

These have included the Torquay explorer Percy Harrison Fawcett, the local marble Industry, Britain's first humans, D-Day and Torquay United football club to name just a few.

The research work that goes into these exhibitions is enormous and often adds to our understanding of the local area and its rich heritage.

These exhibitions can have legacy: Torquay United is now displayed at the club's ground at Plainmoor, D-Day continues to expand the museum collections and inspires new publications on World War Two, and the marble exhibition resulted in the first comprehensive books published on the subject and a small permanent display at the museum.

Exhibitions also help the museum to build relationships



The Terminator and Neo's costume from The Matrix Reloaded sci-fi exhibition in 2012



Coins from the British Museum on display in the Ipplepen exhibition of 2018



The Torquay United exhibition in 2016

with much larger institutions such as the Natural History Museum or the University of Exeter which supply objects and much-needed specialist knowledge that make these exhibitions possible.

While Torquay Museum is closed again, staff are working behind the scenes on new and exciting exhibitions to keep this program rolling - and hope to see you soon.

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