## **Keeping the** museum's archive alive

During the last year of lockdowns, **Torquay Museum has shifted** much of its engagement to social media and here in the Torbay Weekly.

But as we open up again we want to encourage our local community to connect with us again, to visit and to view our archive as an incredible asset to Torbay.

Torquay Museum has the largest and most accessible archive of images and documents related to Torbay in the local area.

Until a few years ago the museum didn't charge for access to its stored archives, there was just enough available staff time to be able to supervise researchers and members of the public who wanted access and search for free.

Unfortunately, with a reduction to our council support several years ago, we had to look at how this access could be maintained with a reduction in staff hours, and a system of charging was introduced to help fund the staff necessary to supervise access.

The museum's archive of around 70,000 items is its most heavily used collection and the one that can be the largest drain on

We currently have around 45,000 items documented on a database but the work to create this resource has spanned over 25 years and has involved many dedicated volunteers.

As examples, Hester Pengelly's autograph and letter collection took two volunteers around 13 years to record, partly due to the complex nature of cataloguing and deciphering original manuscripts.

In 1996, Peter Tully, a wellknown Paignton collector of local images, bequeathed more than

## BARRY CHANDLER

Torquay Museum

the museum's budget to maintain this work which requires staff to manage these valuable volunteers, but our collection and the work grows year on year.

As we reopen to the public and things return to some sort of normality we want to encourage you, our local community, to use this resource.

We currently provide images for TV companies, filmmakers, universities and local history researchers. We also have inquiries from local people researching family histories, building histories and their connections to local businesses.

We hold the memory of the local area but we really need support from our local community to look after these items and keep them

We are considering new ways of



doing this, including how we could make our images free and accessible to everyone, but creating and maintaining this would still require considerable investment.

There has never been a better time to visit the museum. There is

currently a 50 per cent discount for local residents with a TQ postcode, you can revisit as many times as you like for a year on this single ticket.

The booking system means the museum has a managed visitor flow and it's the perfect time to be ahead of the summer tourists.

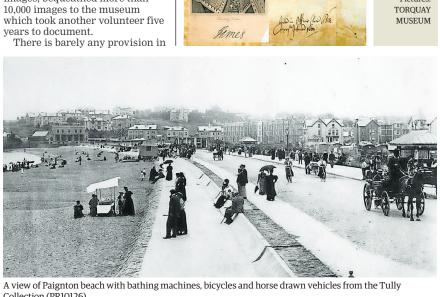
You can browse the shop, buy a print from the Windows in Time trail or discover our world famous local author, Agatha Christie.

The museum needs your support because it is our local community that give our heritage meaning.



This document (1686) from Hester's Collection is asking for a payment of £500 to be made for the Secret Service (AR956)

Pictures:



Collection (PR10126)

