

Museum keeps busy during lockdown

AMIE SCHOFIELD
Torquay Museum.

Gene Hackman once said: "Like a duck on the pond. On the surface everything looks calm, but beneath the water those little feet are churning a mile a minute."

Despite Torquay Museum being currently closed to the public due to the lockdown, staff and volunteers are still being kept very busy.

There are plenty of jobs to do and this is an ideal time to tick off those tasks that are difficult to do when we are open, alongside all the day-to-day maintenance that a grand old Victorian building and museum requires.

Torquay Museum encompasses four floors and requires an ongoing program of maintenance and monitoring.



A newly catalogued lantern slide

With more than 330,000 items here, objects have to be kept at the correct temperature and humidity to preserve them.

The curatorial team are also working on the museum's 175th anniversary exhibition and guidebook which they hope to display in the coming summer months.

Facilities manager Philip and his volunteer team of Anthony, Gus and Steve have made sure the roof and gutters are all in shipshape fashion after the recent bad weather.



The museum is weekly posting a selection of lantern slides on its social media.

They are also putting the finishing touches to the wi-fi cabling that has been fitted around the museum allowing visitors to access the internet from anywhere in the building.

The next job is to replace the old halogen lighting with energy-efficient LED, and the deep cleaning of the galleries.

Many staff are working from home. Education officer Heather has been posting activities for schools and families on Facebook which help keep children, and adults, busy.

Carl, the marketing manager, has been working on transforming the usual face-to-face Museum Society lectures to an online format that can reach out to people in their homes and on virtual

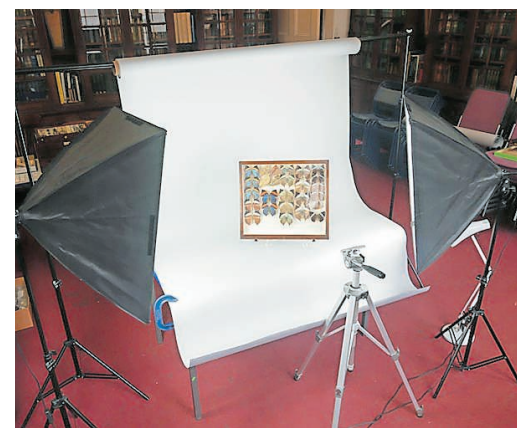
events for half-term holidays.

As the finance officer, I have been claiming all the gift-aid donations the museum receives from entrance tickets.

Although the public are currently unable to visit, this does not mean the museum is not still accessible.

Staff are regularly putting out social media posts on diverse topics from our volunteer Finn's 'Object of the Week' choice to local historical images from the museum's archive.

Staff hope that these are interesting, entertaining and informative. Even those of that work at the museum are continually surprised by the incredible stories behind the objects and archives the museum



Object photography for the exhibition guidebook

holds, many of which have a connection to Torbay.

The museum internet shop will never be a threat to the likes of Amazon but the front of house team were busy, pre-furlough, putting goods online on the Devon Museums website.

The orders will all put money in the coffers while the museum is closed.

Overseeing all of this - sometimes akin to herding cats - and keeping a keen eye on the finances is museum director Basil.

The museum is looking forward to re-opening in the spring with renewed vim and vigour.

So next time you walk past the museum on your daily exercise, don't be fooled by the calm exterior!

Based on a BBC Programme

COUNTRYFILE

A Picture of Britain

John Craven & Matt Baker
A Stunning Collection of Viewers' Photography

Countryfile
by John Craven

From the southern tip of the Scilly Isles to the far north of the Shetland Islands, this book is a stunning collection of Countryfile viewers nature and wildlife photography, published to raise money for BBC Children in Need.

RRP £25.00
Our price
£17.50

99p
UK
Postage

Plus!

Browse our website for even more brilliant offers

Order at
www.enjoybooksmore.co.uk
or call 020 3176 2934

for a limited time,
SAVE 30% on
the best new books

Fantastic books from our favourite authors, plus titles on wellbeing that will help us feel healthy and happy, inside and out.