

# Enjoy our July - a Festival of Archaeology

The last two weeks of July mark the CBA's (Council for British Archaeology) Festival of Archaeology.

The festival incorporates hundreds of in-person and virtual events delivered by community groups, heritage organisations, universities, commercial units, and more. It promotes involvement in archaeology through flagship days such as 'A Day in Archaeology' and 'Youth Day' and allows individuals to get involved from wherever they are, all year round, through a wide range of downloadable resources.

Through the Festival, the CBA helps over half a million people to participate in archaeology, explore stories of place, and connect with the environment around them. Each year the festival has a dynamic and engaging theme. The theme for 2022 is Journeys.

Journeys happen at every scale, through space, time and personal experience. Journeys include daily commutes, trade routes and migrations. Journeys cross land and sea or take place within yourself as a personal journey. The Museum's stores and galleries are full of examples of

## Barry Chandler, of Torquay Museum

archaeological journeys. It could be Col. Fawcett's journey into the Amazon in search of a lost city inspired on little more than fragments of pottery. Or William Pengelly's extraordinary excavations of Windmill Hill Cave in Brixham where he became the first to prove he had journeyed into distant archaeological time far beyond the biblical estimates of human activity in Britain. Perhaps the most exceptional personal journey of discovery held in the Museum's archaeological archive is that of Father John MacEnery. The chaplain to the Cary Family at Torre Abbey embarked on a costly personal journey of discovery. Working in the 1820s when academic reputations were tied to theories of a universal flood recorded in the Bible, MacEnery saw evidence in Kents Cavern that would support new theories of the extreme age of human activity. His explorations

of the local cave would see him unearth extraordinary finds of extinct animals, some unknown to science at that time, alongside stone tools made by extinct forms of humans, yet to be described.

MacEnery took risks, both physically and spiritually in these journeys of exploration. In August 1828 he broke through a stalagmite floor deep in the cave, the foul air extinguished his light and he was lost in total darkness. He believed he would die, entombed in the cavern, but was eventually rescued by his fellow labourer. He also challenged the views of the establishment, those of the Oxford academic William Buckland who did not support the conclusions of his work. Despite recording his findings in detail in over 100 hand written pages preserved in the Museum's archives, MacEnery did not publish his work, his findings were too far removed from the creationist views of the day. His premature death aged only 43 brought on from the hardships endured in the cave meant he did not have the chance to revisit his work as Darwinist thought progressed.

The work to establish MacEnery's rightful place as a pioneer in British prehistory would be left to Edward Vivian and William Pengelly who continued his extraordinary journey.

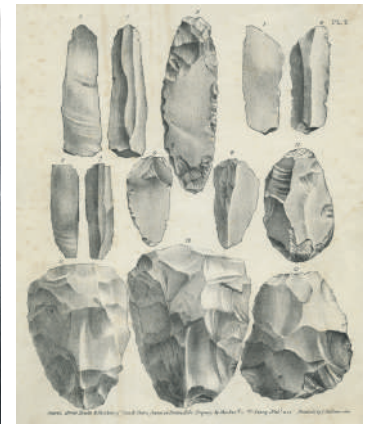
Find out more about our exceptional local archaeology and paleontology by visiting the Museum's Ancestors Gallery, and combine it with a visit of Kents Cavern or explore Torre Abbey and make your own journey of archaeological discovery! Do not forget if you journey to the Museum by public transport or bike, you can get a FREE yearly pass, but hurry this offer is running out.



Ancestors' Gallery at Torquay Museum



Father John MacEnery



MacEnery's unpublished illustration of stone tools from Kents Cavern

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