

## TORQUAY MUSEUM SOCIETY

### President, David G Norman BSc

Torquay Museum Society was formed in 1844 as the Torquay Natural History Society. By 1875 it had raised enough money to build the Natural History Society Museum – the iconic building that houses the Museum's internationally important collections, where the Society is still based and holds its varied and entertaining lectures.

There are two Public Lecture Seasons each year: the Autumn/Winter Season which runs from early October until December, and the Spring Season which runs from January until mid-April. Most lectures take place on Tuesdays or Wednesdays, from 10.45am – 12 noon. Admission is generally free to Torquay Museum Society members, but is also open to the public for a cost of £5 per lecture, payable on the door. There are also occasional Saturday afternoon lectures (1.30pm – 3pm) for which a small entry charge may apply.

Throughout the summer months the Society hosts weekly free and informal gatherings – *conversazione* – at which attendees enjoy short talks, discussion and light refreshments. The hallmark of the *conversazione* is informality and variety.

## BECOME A MEMBER

Membership of the Society opens up a host of potential pursuits and opportunities to become active within the Society. As a Member, you are entitled to free admission to all of the weekday Public Lectures, except as noted for fund-raising events. The Torquay Museum Society membership year runs from October until the following September. Individual membership is £60 per annum and joint membership is £100 per annum. Pick up a Membership form from Torquay Museum or download it from the Museum's website.

## THE LECTURES TEAM



Literature & Arts  
**Ken Beevers**



History  
**Christine Meredith**



Natural History  
**Maggi Douglas Dunbar**



Science  
**David Norman**



Lecture Reception  
**Ann Shaw**

To identify who has organised a lecture, match the colour codes above with the colour-coded lecture information inside. **Humanities (blue)** and **Saturday (green)** highlighted lectures are organised by the team, who welcome your comments and suggestions.

## ESSENTIAL INFORMATION

### HOW TO FIND US



**Torquay Museum** 529 Babbacombe Road, TQ1 1HG  
Tel 01803 293975 [www.torquaymuseum.org](http://www.torquaymuseum.org)

**WALKING:** The Museum is a couple of hundred metres up Babbacombe Road from the Mallock Clock Tower.

**BY BUS:** No 22 bus stops directly outside the Museum.

**PARKING:** Pay-and-display opposite the Museum or at the Harbour Car Park (access via Museum Road). Two hours free parking on some nearby streets.

### THE MUSEUM GIFT SHOP

A number of our lectures conclude with book-signings in the Museum Gift Shop. The shop carries books and many other items relating to current exhibitions and local history. We also sell an array of Agatha Christie merchandise, including DVDs, rare and out-of-print editions of her novels, and high-quality photographs taken from the Museum's 'Mistress of Crime' archive.

### THE MUSEUM CAFÉ

Open from 10am to 2pm. The cafe serves hot and cold drinks, cakes and lunch. A great place to relax before and after lectures.

### ACCESS

There are lifts, disabled facilities and step-free access throughout the Museum.

### FURTHER ENQUIRIES

[membership@torquaymuseum.org](mailto:membership@torquaymuseum.org)



Torquay Museum Society is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO). Registered Charity Number 1161126.

## TORQUAY MUSEUM SOCIETY PUBLIC LECTURES JANUARY - MARCH 2024



*Recent Wildlife Highlights*  
See inside for further details of this lecture on  
13th March

**Every Tuesday and Wednesday**  
**10.45am - 12 noon**  
**and selected Saturdays**  
**1.30pm - 3pm**

Torquay Museum Society Members Free of Charge  
Non-members £5, payable on the door  
Charges apply to some specified lectures

## JANUARY 2024

### TUESDAY 9th

#### SPLENDOURS OF THE SOLAR SYSTEM

##### Dr David Wilton (Plymouth Astronomical Society)

Recent space exploration has revealed worlds of extreme heat and intense cold, planets with storms the size of the Earth, moons with ice-covered oceans where life may exist, and much more! This talk tours our tiny, but fascinating, corner of the Universe.

### WEDNESDAY 10th

#### THE HISTORY AND USE OF DOWSING

##### Nigel Twinn

Dowsing is an age-old craft that has survived from at least the Neolithic into the era of complex technology and modern science. Today it is used across the globe, and in a wide range of situations, from locating fresh water, to archaeology, and even in the promotion of well-being.

### TUESDAY 16th

#### GLOBAL WARMING AND THE ICE AGES

##### Peter Lewis

Peter explores the ever-more important issues around human-induced warming of our atmosphere and oceans, looking back to past Ice Ages to help portray their effects.

### WEDNESDAY 17th

#### THE LOBB BROTHERS AND THEIR FAMOUS PLANTS

##### Caradoc Doy

Cornish brothers William and Thomas Lobb were two of the most important plant hunters in British gardening history in the 19th Century. Caradoc is a Devon based horticulturist and is an authority on the history of plants introduced during the Victorian period – particularly relating to the Veitch Nurseries of Exeter and Chelsea.

### TUESDAY 23rd

#### COCKINGTON – A VICTORIAN VIGNETTE

##### John Risdon

Inspired by the Diaries of Arthur Mudge, brother-in-law to Richard Mallock, Squire of Cockington, during the period 1878 – 1880, a broad swathe of the Victorian era is brought to life. With extracts from the diaries, you will hear and see a Cockington that is certain to surprise you!

### WEDNESDAY 24th

#### THE HEALING GARDEN

##### Sue Minter

Sue covers the involvement of plants in the production of both pharmaceutical drugs and herbal preparations .. along with the associated conservation issues affecting human health, drawing on her previous experience as Curator of the Chelsea Physic Garden.

### SATURDAY 27th

#### THE FOLKLORE OF DEVON

##### Jim Causley and Mark Norman

Folk songs, legends and customs with award winning singer/song writer Jim Causley and folklorist Mark Norman. This is a ticketed event to raise funds for Torquay Museum.

### TUESDAY 30th

#### A PECULIAR PERCEPTION

##### Dave Norman

A light-hearted 'look' at the many ways our eyes, ears and minds can play perceptive tricks on the sights and sounds that seemingly surround us.

### WEDNESDAY 31st

#### THE GLENN MILLER STORY

##### Paul Scott

Paul tells us about the life of famed band leader Glenn Miller, with a saxophone accompaniment!

## FEBRUARY

### TUESDAY 6th

#### NOTICING NEWTON ABBOT

##### Tess Walker

An illustrated 'tour' of some of Newton Abbot's buildings. An invitation by local author Tess Walker to Notice Newton Abbot. A kerbside view often of the town's most admirable buildings.

### WEDNESDAY 7th

#### A CURIOUS LOOK AT DEVON'S CHURCHES

##### Robert Hesketh

In most Devon Communities the parish church is the oldest extant building, rich in architectural beauty and historic interest. There's a wealth of artistic and historic treasures to discover, especially if you look carefully. This talk ranges from the splendid wrought iron door at Dartmouth to the quarter jacks at St Mary Steps in Exeter, taking in green men, "tinnners' rabbits", humourous moments, a murder, some impish gargoyles and a lot more on the way!

### TUESDAY 13th

#### THE SEAL PROJECT

##### Sarah Greenslade

An insight into The Seal Project and some of the seals we know well from around the South Devon Coastline, including both the globally rare Grey Seals and the actually less common 'Common' Seals.

### WEDNESDAY 14th

#### THE ANTIKYTHERA MECHANISM

##### Roger Saunders

The Antikythera mechanism is a wonder, a mechanism of genius, a window into the ancient world, a severe shock to students of that world and a definite warning as to the fragility of knowledge. It is also an example of modern research and technology.

### TUESDAY 20th

#### MURDER, MYSTERY & MAYHEM

##### Brenda Loosemore

Stories of Murder, Mystery & Mayhem from a local actress with over 25 years experience of 'murdering'.

### WEDNESDAY 21st

#### DEVON RE-IMAGINED

##### Dr Chris Davies

How resident and visiting artists re-imagined and interpreted the county of Devon during the early decades of the nineteenth century and beyond.

### SATURDAY 24th

#### JOHN TOMKINS INTERVIEWS SIMON TYTHERLEIGH

An afternoon with Award Winning special effects makeup artist and stop motion animator Simon Tytherleigh, talking about his pioneering work on BBC's "Casualty" and other programmes.

In the second part of the event Simon will talk about his adventures in stop motion animation and the making of his forthcoming film, "The Legend of Jan Tregagle", from which he will be showing clips, stills and puppets.

### TUESDAY 27th

#### CHARLES DARWIN: HIS LIFE AND IDEAS

##### Douglas Herdson

In 1831 a 22-year-old wastrel sailed off around the world and returned, 5 years later, an eminent scientist whose views would change the world forever. How did those ideas develop, and what is their importance today?

### WEDNESDAY 28th

#### BIRDS AND OTHER WILDLIFE OF THE EXE ESTUARY

##### Dave Smallshire

The wide range of natural habitats within the Exe Estuary will be described, with particular focus on their important wildlife, especially birds.

## MARCH

### TUESDAY 5th

#### AN INTRODUCTION TO AXOLOTLS

##### Sam Haywood

Join Sam of Devon Axolotls as he delves into the mysterious history of these fascinating creatures, from ancient Aztec myth to the challenges they face in our modern world, and learn more about their breeding, rearing and conservation.

### WEDNESDAY 6th

#### DARTMOOR PONY HERITAGE TRUST

##### Sue Greenaway

The Dartmoor Pony Heritage Trust's mission is to secure the native Dartmoor Pony by engaging and connecting people with local wildlife, landscape and heritage. Through education and working closely with key partners and Dartmoor farmers, they seek to secure the future of these national treasures for future generations.

### TUESDAY 12th

#### GROWING UP WITH THE SHADOW OF CHURCHILL

##### Bill Murray

Bill's father, Sgt. Edmund Murray, was a Metropolitan Police Special Branch officer. In 1950, the year that Bill was born, he became Sir Winston Churchill's bodyguard, a position that he held until the Great Man's death in 1965. Edmund was often referred to as "Churchill's Shadow", but Bill did not really appreciate the significance of that title until fifty years later.

### WEDNESDAY 13th

#### RECENT WILDLIFE HIGHLIGHTS

##### John Walters

Wildlife highlights from 2023... including Wallcreepers, Zombie Snails, Bluefin Tuna and Alpine Swifts.

### SATURDAY 16th

#### FRAZOO LIVE SHOW: REMARKABLE REPTILES AND COLOSSAL CREEPY-CRAWLIES

##### Frazie Hulbert

After her sell-out event in November, Frazie returns with some exotic creatures and fascinating facts in this interactive live show suitable for all the family, with opportunities to join in or ask questions.

### TUESDAY 19th

#### WILD AND ANCIENT SHETLAND

##### Peter Exley

The Shetland Islands are like no other place in Britain, their landscape carved by their sub-Arctic location and thousands of years of human influence. This talk will look at the Shetland landscape, its wildlife, heritage and communities, based upon the cultural tours that Peter leads to this remote archipelago.

### WEDNESDAY 20th

#### OPEN FORUM

Torquay Museum Society's second Open Forum of this season gives you an opportunity to provide feedback and suggestions for future speakers, groups, etc.

### TUESDAY 26th

#### 21 YEARS OF THE TOWER OF LONDON

##### John Keohane

John recently retired as Chief Yeoman Warder at the Tower of London, having spent 21 years escorting Royalty and numerous celebrities around its iconic corridors, collections and dungeons.

### WEDNESDAY 27th

#### DARTMOOR – A CELEBRATION OF ITS PEOPLE, PLACES AND WILDLIFE

##### Andrew Cooper

Based on a lavishly illustrated book of the same title, written and photographed by award-winning wildlife film maker, author, broadcaster, BBC TV presenter and Torbay Museums Trust Chairman Andrew Cooper, this fascinating story spans the sub-arctic wastes of the high moor in mid-winter to amazing people living in the most iconic wild and worked landscape in Britain.