

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 and Wednesdays, from 10.45am – 12 noon. Admission is free to Torquay Museum Society members, but is also open to the public for a cost of £5 per lecture, payable on the door.

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 the museum and 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

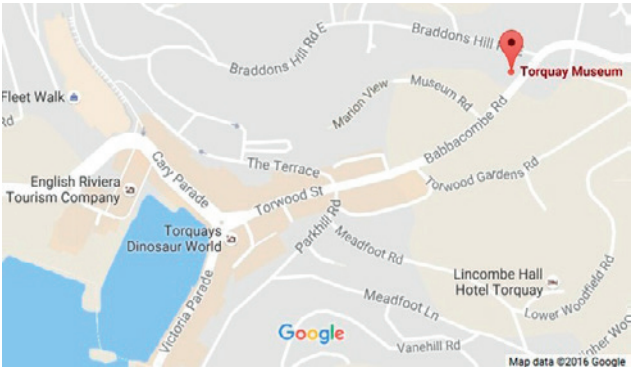


Science
David Norman

To identify who has organised a lecture, match the colour codes above with the colour-coded lecture information inside. The (green) ‘General’ 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

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

BY BUS: Nos 11 and 22 buses stop 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 SHOP

The museum shop stocks an array of books and merchandise, some of which relate to the museum’s exhibitions and local history. There is also a good stock of Agatha Christie memorabilia and books (both new and older editions).

THE MUSEUM CAFÉ





The museum cafe is open all day with a self-service coffee facility and nibbles on offer.

ACCESS

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

FURTHER ENQUIRIES

membership@torquaymuseum.org

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

TORQUAY MUSEUM SOCIETY PUBLIC LECTURES OCTOBER 2025 – JANUARY 2026



“The Life and Tides of the Moon”
See inside for further details of this lecture on 15th October

**Every Tuesday and Wednesday
10.45am - 12 noon
in the Pengelly Theatre**
Torquay Museum Society Members Free of Charge
Non-members £5 payable on the door
(for the lecture only).

OCTOBER 2025

TUESDAY 7th

DARTMOOR PAST AND PRESENT
John Risdon
We commence the 2025 Autumn Programme with the ever-popular John Risdon, as he explores Dartmoor’s History up to the present day.

WEDNESDAY 8th

KELLY MINE
Peter Wade
Devon had an extensive iron mining industry with micaceous haematite being mined in the Wray Valley. Kelly Mine closed in 1951 but was saved by KMPS and is now a volunteer led site showing what life was like in mines such as these in the 1920s?

TUESDAY 14th

THE SOCIETY OF WILDLIFE ARTISTS
Julia Manning
Julia Manning, an artist and printmaker based in Somerset, talks about her work and the Society of Wildlife Artists, of which she is a member.

WEDNESDAY 15th

THE LIFE AND TIDES OF THE MOON
Dave Norman
Our Moon has had a fundamental effect on the evolution and continued progress of Life on Earth and we would not be here without it. This lecture explores how the Moon came to be and how it enables the flourishing of Nature around us.

TUESDAY 21st

LIZARDS AROUND THE WORLD
Roger Avery
Roger has studied the ecology and thermoregulatory behaviour of lizards over a 45-year period in more than 10 countries on 5 continents and he pioneered the use of infra-red thermography in biology when this was a newly-emerging technology. The talk describes some of this work with anecdotes about lizards, people and places.

WEDNESDAY 22nd

CO2 AND YOU
Roger Saunders
We examine the unexpected severe effects of high CO2 concentrations. The carbonate - bicarbonate reaction and its importance in diverse fields including:- your domestic water systems, the operation of steam engines and marine yacht toilets.

TUESDAY 28th

The Colin Vosper Memorial Lecture: THE SALTWAY
Phil Badcott
In honour of Colin Vosper, Phil delivers a fascinating talk about an ancient road, thought to be a salt track from Coombe Cellars on the River Teign to Totnes. Along the way we will find out the history of places en route and about the process of salt production.

WEDNESDAY 29th

WESSEX - AN ANCIENT LANDSCAPE
Dr Chris Davies
Wessex – an ancient landscape. Devon, Dorset, Wiltshire, and Cornwall (Thomas Hardy’s Wessex) as portrayed by artists.

NOVEMBER

TUESDAY 4th

BATS AND LADDERS
George Bemment
An introduction to British bats and an entertaining view of what it takes to be involved in wildlife conservation. It’s also a quirky perspective on what we see as we are surveying the homes and properties of other people.

WEDNESDAY 5th

THE HISTORY OF STOVER CANAL
John Ellis
This talk covers the construction, methods of operation and reasons for the decline and closure of the Stover Canal from 1790 to 1943.

TUESDAY 11th

DEVON’S GREAT WAR MEMORIALS
Todd Gray
Great War memorials were erected in a wave of public enthusiasm from 1919 until the start of the Second World War. Largely overlooked, each one tells a story of the village, town or city in which it is located.

WEDNESDAY 12th

JAMES BOND AND THE MUSIC OF THE BOND FILMS
Paul Scott and Philip Evans
A presentation with live music.

TUESDAY 18th

PRESIDENTS’ LECTURE : AI
Dave Norman
Artificial Intelligence is probably the most important and rapidly developing technology of recent years. This is an overview of some of the many aspects of our lives that are becoming ever more open to this new paradigm.

WEDNESDAY 19th

DEVON WITCHES AND CUNNING FOLK
Keith Wallis
Keith explores some of the history, customs and superstitions surrounding witchcraft in Devon over the centuries. Drawing upon a range of contemporary accounts, as well as the works of various writers and folklorists, he takes a closer look at individuals who were thought to be witches, what role they had to play in their community, and how we think they were perceived by those around them. From stories of alleged ‘white witches’ and ‘black witches’, to the concept of the ‘evil eye’, as well as charms and cures, he delves into a range of local beliefs and customs around magic, considering how many of these traditions still survive, and why they remain an important part of local history and heritage.

TUESDAY 25th

BRINGING TORBAY’S MUSIC HERITAGE TO DOCUMENTARY FILMS
John Tomkins
South West Film Producer John Tomkins talks about his last five years journey on bringing Torbay’s music heritage to documentary films and the collaborators on the films he has worked with.

WEDNESDAY 26th

TWO MOORS PINE MARTEN PROJECT AND UPDATE
Daniel Brown
Daniel is the Field Officer for Dartmoor and will provide a first-hand account of the process of translocating pine martens to Devon and Somerset. A review of the pine marten’s ecology will be given as well as insights into the behaviour of the animals that has been picked through radio tracking and wildlife camera analysis.

DECEMBER

TUESDAY 2nd

GUIDE DOGS: THE CHARITY AND THE DOGS
Catherine Fritz
Guide dogs have assisted sight-impaired people for more than 100 years in the modern era. This talk features key points in the history of Guide Dogs for the Blind, as well as highlights from the life and education of these very special dogs.

WEDNESDAY 3rd

FESTIVE FUN
Brenda Loosemore
Amusing anecdotes and humorous readings on a Christmas theme.

TUESDAY 9th

THE GREAT EXHIBITION OF 1851
Mike Crew
The planning and erection of the Crystal Palace, the exhibition there and its contribution to society.

WEDNESDAY 10th

AGM
Torquay Museum Society’s Annual General Meeting is your chance to elect the trustees and review the activities of the society over the past and coming year.

TUESDAY 16th

CHRISTMAS SOCIAL
Join us for a festive quiz and nibbles on this, the last day of our Autumn Programme.

JANUARY 2026

TUESDAY 13th

HISTORY OF THE POST OFFICE
Janet Choules
A look at how our postal system developed from pre-Tudor times to the present day, linking institutions, towns, villages and people across Great Britain and beyond.

WEDNESDAY 14th

BUTTERFLY CONSERVATION
Nathan Prescott
Butterfly Conservation in the UK: Landscape Change, Ecological Pressure, and Regional Action.

TUESDAY 20th

BENEATH OUR FEET
Grace Clifford
Based on her exhibition at the museum earlier this summer and using her Geopark home as a lens, Grace looks to shine a light on how the world of science is frequently home to objects and concepts that are undoubtedly works of art... and considers what this could mean for how we communicate and educate.

WEDNESDAY 21st

OPEN FORUM
Our first of two open forums this year gives you an opportunity to provide feedback to the trustees and suggestions for future speakers, groups, etc.

TUESDAY 27th

Details of this lecture will appear in the Spring programme.

WEDNESDAY 28th

THE HISTORY OF WINNER STREET, PAIGNTON
Nick Pannell
The story of Torbay’s oldest street from medieval times to the present day.