

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



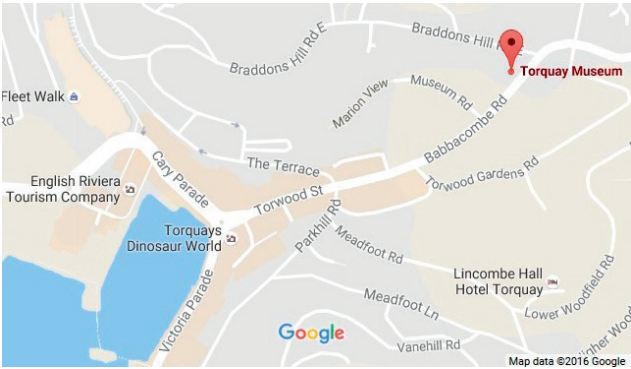
Science & Technology
David Norman

Earth Science (*position open*)

General Interest (*position open*)

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 the Terrace). 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 2026 - JANUARY 2027



“Ugbrooke House”
See inside for further details of this lecture on 11th November

**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 2026

TUESDAY 6th

ARSENIC
Tim Freeman
Arsenic was a common poison for centuries and we will meet some notorious murderers from the past. There are also some surprising Devonian connections to be explored.

WEDNESDAY 7th

THEY BUILT THE SILENT CITIES
John Ellis
The creation and work of the Imperial/Commonwealth Wargraves Commission on the Western Front during and after the Great War 1914-1919.

TUESDAY 13th

THE DEVONSHIRE DIALECT AND SONGS OF CHARLES HEY LAYCOCK
Bill Murray
Charles Hey Laycock, a great benefactor of the Torquay Natural History Society was born in Yorkshire, he came to live in Newton Abbot in 1895 at the age of 16 years. After Newton College and Oxford University, he set aside his Yorkshire roots and whilst living the life of a gentleman in Torquay and London, he became Old Charlie Laycock, singer and old Devon Boy, in Moretonhampstead and around Dartmoor.

WEDNESDAY 14th

TAI CHI AND QIGONG
Conrad Robinson
Conrad started training in Lee Family Style Tai Chi in January 1993 and is a Senior Instructor with the Tai Chi and Qigong Union for Great Britain, combining over 25 years of teaching experience. In this lecture he explains the history and philosophy of these ancient arts, along with a look at some of the ways western and oriental sword technologies differ.

TUESDAY 20th

THE TEIGN PROJECT
Neil Yeandle
A talk by a member of the Teign Angling and Conservation Association on the restoration project and salmon fisheries on the River Teign.

WEDNESDAY 21st

LESSONS TO BE LEARNED FROM THE GOLLY 1895-2026
Todd Gray
An historical look at the Black fictional character now considered a symbol of racism.

TUESDAY 27th

COLIN VOSPER MEMORIAL LECTURE
THE HISTORY OF SHALDON AND LABRADOR BAY
A talk originally compiled and presented by the late Colin Vosper
Phil Badcott
Learn about the history of Shaldon by following a trail from the old Toll House on the Shaldon Bridge, through the village to The Ness and on to the site of the now almost forgotten Labrador Bay Hotel.

WEDNESDAY 28th

DESIGNING A GARDEN FOR THE DEVON CLIMATE
Jacqui Felix-Mitchell
Design ideas for a South Devon garden in a changing climate.

NOVEMBER

TUESDAY 3rd

RAF EXETER
Chris Wiseman
Chris presents the compelling story of how Exeter became a frontline Battle of Britain airfield during WW2. He covers the station's rapid construction, the operations of the three fighter squadrons based there and the international pilots who so bravely defended the south-west of England.

WEDNESDAY 4th

SUPERVOLCANOES
Peter Lewis
Peter explores the history, geology and existential dangers posed by some of Nature's most awesome but often hidden features... 'supervolcanoes'!

TUESDAY 10th

WOMEN ARTISTS AND THE STRUGGLE FOR RECOGNITION
Dr Chris Davies
Throughout the history of art women artists have struggled for recognition, partly due to misogyny. This talk challenges this viewpoint and will demonstrate that an eclectic range of females, from 18th century Angelica Kauffman to contemporary artists including Barbara Walker have made major contributions to the continuing development of art.

WEDNESDAY 11th

UGBROOKE HOUSE AND THE CLIFFORDS
Helen Turnbull
Helen traces the history of Ugbrooke from the Norman conquest, focusing on some of the fascinating members of the Clifford family who lived there.

TUESDAY 17th

PRICKLES IN A PICKLE HEDGEHOG RESCUE AND REHABILITATION
Judy Thomson
Prickles in a Pickle, how we started, where we are now and what we do. The bigger picture of rewilding, habitat and issues caused by mankind, what we can do to help?

WEDNESDAY 18th

THE NATIONAL COASTWATCH INSTITUTION
NCI – Chris Hill, Julie Rainbow & Prof David Hodson
What goes on in that tower on Daddyhole Plain? The history, work and the eyes along the coast of the National Coastwatch Institution.

TUESDAY 24th

CORNISH MINING TECHNOLOGY
Klaas Peter van der Wielen
Klaas Peter (known to friends as 'KP'!) discusses the history of and technological developments involved in the Cornish mining industry over the centuries.

WEDNESDAY 25th

A TUDOR CHRISTMAS
Rosemary Griggs
Appearing in full period costume as Katherine Raleigh, mother to Sir Walter Raleigh, speaker and author Rosemary Griggs brings the festivities, feasting and fun of a Tudor Christmas to life in a lively presentation interspersed with songs from the peasant David. Travel back in time and discover the etiquette, the menu and the customs of a sixteenth-century Christmas.

DECEMBER

TUESDAY 1st

THE FATAL SHORE - THE TRANSPORTATION OF DEVON CONVICTS TO TASMANIA
Phil Badcott
Hear the shocking story of the transportation of Devon convicts to Tasmania in the early 19th century, with insights into the terror inflicted on the 65,000 convicts shipped across the ocean to Tasmania.

WEDNESDAY 2nd

THE RAT PACK
Paul Scott & Phil Evans
The lives and music of Frank Sinatra, Dean Martin & Sammy Davis Jnr. A musical and audio visual presentation by sax and base duo Blue Bossa.

TUESDAY 8th

BRITAIN'S TEMPERATE RAINFOREST & RECOVERY
Bruni Frampton
Discover the beauty and value of Britain's ancient 'temperate rainforest' woodlands. Find out why they are unique and what the Woodland Trust is doing to restore and extend these magical forests right here in Devon.

WEDNESDAY 9th

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 15th

LANDSCAPE AND SOCIETY IN DUMNONIA
Prof Steve Rippon
Vice-Chairman of the Torquay Museum board, Professor Stephen Rippon talks about his team's excavations at Dainton Elms Cross, Ipplepen from 2011 to 2019.

WEDNESDAY 16th

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

JANUARY 2027

TUESDAY 5th

PRESIDENT'S LECTURE
TO THE MOON AND BEYOND
Dave Norman
For his President's lecture, Dave explains and illustrates the latest plans for the return of humanity to the Moon... ultimately to stay!

WEDNESDAY 6th

Details to be given in the Spring leaflet.

TUESDAY 12th

THE CHASTER DIARY
Bob Mann
From 1836 to 1841 John Webber Chaster, a young Totnes businessman (who later became Mayor and a leading citizen), kept a diary recording much of the community's gossip. He describes a dramatic escape from the town gaol, unseasonable weather, entertainments, political machinations, drownings in the River Dart and a visit to London for Queen Victoria's coronation, bringing everything vividly to life.

WEDNESDAY 13th

A HISTORY OF THE VIOLIN
Tim Trewin
The history of the violin, from the Middle Ages through to the 21st century. A talk by professional Violinist Tim Trewin, including short recitals on both authentic and replica instruments and more.

TUESDAY 19th

THE NOWZAD CHARITY
Pen Farthing
Nowzad is a British-based animal welfare charity founded in 2007 by ex Royal Marine Pen Farthing following his return from Afghanistan with his rescued dog Nowzad named for the Afghan Town. One of the aims being to reunite on their return home service personnel with the animals that befriended them while on active service.

WEDNESDAY 20th

HIGHLIGHTS OF 2026
John Walters
Recent Wildlife Highlights, including Rainbow Sea Slugs, Giant Earwigs, Swifts, Cuckoos and their Meadow Pipit foster parents.

TUESDAY 26th

THAT HOUSE IS MOVING AT 20MPH AND TURNING ROUND!
Roger Saunders
The topic is the strange landslides that occur in Scandinavia where land liquifies, moves down very slight slopes and carries away houses, buildings roads etc. on and in a suddenly liquified clay layer.

WEDNESDAY 27th

STILL DIGGING: 200 YEARS OF DISCOVERY AT KENTS CAVERN
Dr Helen Fewlass
An enigmatic leaf-shaped stone tool was discovered at Kents Cavern 200 years ago by John McEnery. Who made these tools has long been a subject of debate - the final Neanderthals to live in Europe, or the first Homo sapiens to arrive? A new project, ARRIVAL, is aiming to resolve this question by exploring key sites across Europe, including returning to excavate at Kents Cavern, 200 years after the first leaf tool was found. In this talk, Helen gives an update on their first field season.