



TORQUAY MUSEUM SOCIETY CIO

*~Established in 1844 as the Torquay Natural History
Society~*

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TRUSTEES' REPORT for 2024/2025 AGM on 10 DECEMBER 2025

SOCIETY STRUCTURE & MANAGEMENT 2024/2025

David Norman (President)

David J Wills (Vice-President)

Simon Crabtree (Treasurer)

Maggi Douglas-Dunbar (Secretary)

Christine Meredith (Trustee)

Suzanne Thomas (Trustee)

Andrew Underhay (Trustee)

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Torquay Museum Society (TMS, formerly *Torquay Natural History Society*) is one of the oldest learned societies in the United Kingdom and can claim continuous existence since 1844. We are a distinct entity from Torquay Museum (itself represented under the Torbay Museums Trust, TMT) but remain a partner organization with a separate constitution. Since registration in March 2015, Torquay Museum Society has been granted the status of a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO), as defined and conferred by the Charity Commission.

Our Reserves Policy is available to all members and is reviewed annually. It serves to strengthen our resilience against reductions in income and considers our contractual liabilities and potential financial threats. For the year ending 30 September 2025, the value of reserves the trustees have agreed to keep (which may encompass a number of months fixed costs) is £10,000.

Our Trustees currently represent around one hundred and seventy-five members. We continue to take this responsibility very seriously and staunchly represent our Membership and its interests to the best of our expertise.

As a charitable organisation we are fully dedicated and committed to promoting a broad understanding of history, natural environment and cultural heritage. Our primary geographic focus is upon Devon within the UK, but it also encompasses the ever-more highly interrelated world far beyond. To this end we organise an extensive Annual Lecture Programme and provide regular voluntary support and financial help towards the work of the Museum itself.

Preparation of the main lecture programme (from October to April) is achieved by a purely volunteer-based system, with considerable ongoing benefit to our operational costs. These lectures attract both high-profile external speakers and local personalities with in-depth and often unique regional knowledge. They are consistently well-attended, often approaching full capacity of the Pengelly Theatre.

Our programme plan has included Saturday afternoon activity alongside the more traditional Tuesday and Wednesday morning events. This is aimed at widening the lecture attendance demographic to include more families and working individuals not normally able to attend our weekday lectures. We are also giving opportunities for member feedback at open forum sessions and will be conducting occasional guided tours of the museum storeroom.

As ever, we have run Tuesday morning *Conversazione* (conversation) sessions during the April-September summer months, involving more informal and interactive talks and discussion around a wide variety of topics. *Conversazione* complements our lecture programme and continues a tradition dating back to our early days as a learned society. Held primarily in the upstairs Forbes-Julian committee room, they give members an informal opportunity to socialize and discuss topics of interest. These often turn into more formal talks given in Pengelly within a future lecture programme.

Alongside its learned lecture role, Torquay Museum Society is also dedicated to the financial and operational support of the Museum itself, in return for the use of its facilities. The primary asset to which we have extensive (free!) access outside the summer exhibition months is the excellent Pengelly lecture theatre. As a valuable asset of the museum for both exhibitions and events, maximum utilization of Pengelly for income-generation throughout each year is paramount.

Regarding our Annual Accounts, 2024/2025 was quite a challenging year for TMS. Our income fell by around 25% due in no small measure to the disappointing decision of a sizeable proportion of the Rambles Section to "go it alone" as a rambling group and to not renew their TMS memberships.

Lecture income also fell, partly because our first six weeks of Winter 2024 lectures could not be held in our splendid Pengelly Lecture Theatre due to an extended Summer 2024 exhibition, moving instead to the Home (formerly Riviera Life) Church's hall next door. Although that venue worked reasonably well, the church hall's smaller capacity required ticketed entry to limit attendees. The audio and video projection facilities there performed adequately but cannot be expected to compete with those in Pengelly. We also incurred the extra cost of hall hire. Our thanks go to the Home Church for their excellent support during our off-site lectures and, of course, to all members for putting up with the inconvenience.

Happily, we were able to control our costs and even registered a small surplus at year end. A challenging year, but a manageable one. We do run the danger though of facing potentially existential problems if we are not able to maintain and build membership levels, and develop a more sustainable operating model for TMS.

Sadly, we also have to report that in recent (late 2025) months three of our long-standing members have passed away. Joan Nott, Joan Deeley and Mary Drummond are remembered with fondness and respect, all three having played differing but significant parts in the life of TMS. They will be very deeply missed.

The Society is custodian of an extensive and unique library and book collection for our members. This is also a key resource for specialist researchers from far afield, as well as for local people interested in exploring aspects of our local heritage. We had earlier commenced further work around the detailed cataloguing of the book collection, based upon initial work performed a few years ago, and other activities related to preserving and restoring the physical condition of some items.

However, that early work revealed a major issue around the presence of mould on the Local Studies library books and shelving. Having now obtained detailed professional advice as to the necessary remedial action (which will cost upward of £20k to fully treat!), applications regarding possible grant funding for this have been undertaken with the much appreciated assistance of Torquay Museum CEO, Alexandra Hemming. Although yet to be confirmed, we are currently hopeful that work on addressing the mould issues may commence within the first half of 2026.

The Torquay Museum Society continues to be widely recognized as a cultural hub, a learned society and an institution with a substantial pedigree in multiple disciplines. Some of these fields are reflected in the structure of the lecture programme, with trustees and other members covering arrangements for subjects best suited to their skills, knowledge and interests. The lecture programme is *the*

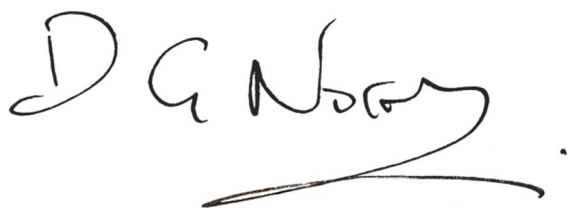
single most important activity of the Society, so we always welcome the assistance of members in this. We also invite the active participation of members in the creation and operation of groups dedicated to diverse areas of study.

The operational work of Torquay Museum Society is largely but far from exclusively driven by its board of Trustees. We invite any members who wish to actively support this very rewarding work to consider forwarding themselves for service as Trustees, for which a few additional places are currently possible. We thank Suzanne Thomas for completing her first full year on the trustee team, charged with the renewed preparation of a quarterly newsletter. Trustee Maggi Douglas-Dunbar has progressed the major task of preparing the %Transactions+reports suspended by Covid, with the 2021/2022 issue now published.

We build on the historic work of William Pengelly, our most famous past member and a co-founder, in 1844, of the original Torquay Natural History Society (TNHS) from which the TMS draws its foundation. Pengelly led pioneering excavations at Kents Cavern between 1865 and 1880. Torquay Museum now holds these scientifically and culturally invaluable finds as an outstanding Designated Status Collection. As its direct descendent, the Torquay Museum Society is privileged indeed to uphold the traditions and precepts of the TNHS.

Torquay Museum Society stands ready to support Torquay Museum itself as we strive together to face the challenges and take the opportunities open to us in the difficult conditions of recent years. Ongoing societal changes demand our vigilance in continuing to meet the requirements of our members, while staying true to the values imbued since our foundation. The Society looks forward to the future with determination to adapt to changing times where necessary and to continue the excellent work of more than 180 years past.

On behalf of TMS Trustees

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'D G Norman', with a long horizontal flourish extending from the end of the name.

David Geoffrey Norman

President, Torquay Museum Society

Dated: 23 November 2025

Torquay Museum Society – 1161126**RECEIPTS AND PAYMENTS ACCOUNT****YEAR TO 30TH SEPTEMBER 2025****RECEIPTS**

	30/09/2025	30/09/2024
Membership Subscriptions	5,500	7,120
Lecture Fee Income	2,984	4,604
Fund Raising Income	0	118
Donations	114	500
Misc. Income	<u>757</u>	<u>0</u>
Total Income	<u>9,355</u>	<u>12,342</u>

PAYMENTS

Staff Costs	0	0
Speaker Costs	2,577	3,144
Lecture Promotion Costs	704	834
Payments to Support TMT	430	0
“Transactions” Costs	298	0
TMS Projects	582	1,380
Equipment	0	300
Membership Mailing Costs	69	77
Rental Payment to TMT (% of Subs)	1,430	1,765
Programme Printing Costs	404	1,433
Newsletter Costs	0	0
Photo-copying etc Costs	65	17
Phone/Internet Costs	0	0
Publications	0	70
Insurance	1,768	1,744
Accountant’s Fees	312	600
Donation	0	250
Miscellaneous	<u>114</u>	<u>118</u>
Total Payments	<u>8,753</u>	<u>11,731</u>

Surplus/Deficit of Receipts over Payments	<u>602</u>	<u>611</u>
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Bank and Cash Brought Forward	13,232	12,621
Bank and Cash Carried Forward	13,834	13,232

Torquay Museum Society-1161126
Statement of Assets and Liabilities
AS AT 30th SEPTEMBER 2025

	30 September 2025	30 September 2024
	£	£
Cash Funds		
Cash at bank	13,809	13,207
Cash in hand	<u>25</u>	<u>25</u>
	<u>13,834</u>	<u>13,232</u>
Other Assets		
Heritage assets (books)	<u>25,000</u>	<u>25,000</u>
 Notes:		
<i>Total membership numbers</i>		
Annual members	112	128
Life members	<u>63</u>	<u>65</u>
	<u>175</u>	<u>193</u>

The trustees confirm, in accordance with the Charitable Incorporated Organisations (General) Regulations 2012, that at the year end the CIO did not have any outstanding guarantees to third parties nor any debts secured on the assets of the CIO.

Approved by the Trustees on 30 September 2025,
and signed on their behalf by Simon Crabtree, TMS Treasurer

**Independent Examiner's Report to the Trustees of Torquay Museum Society
Charity (CIO) number 1161126**

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of Torquay Museum Society for the period ended 30th September 2025.

Responsibilities and basis of report

As the charity trustees you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011 ("the Act").

I report in respect of my examination of the Charity's accounts carried out under section 145 of the 2011 Act and in carrying out my examination I have followed all the applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the Act.

Independent examiner's statement

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no material matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination giving me cause to believe that in any material respect:

- (1) Accounting records were not kept in respect of the Charity as required by section 130 of the Act; or
- (2) The accounts do not accord with those records.

I have no concerns and have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn in this report in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

Ian Barrett FCA FCIE
Barretts Chartered Accountants and Chartered Tax Advisers
22 Union Street
Newton Abbot TQ12 2JS

Dated: 4th December 2025