

# A HAVEN THROUGH TIME

HERITAGE INTERPRETATION  
FRAMEWORK FOR TORBAY



Image: Learning at Torbay Museum  
with thanks to ERUGGp

**TORBAY COUNCIL**

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Culture  
Recovery Fund  
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National Lottery  
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Historic  
England

  
Department for  
Digital, Culture,  
Media & Sport

“

*I am very pleased to support this new framework for heritage interpretation in Torbay. It will help organisations, staff, and volunteers make the most of the fascinating stories that the English Riviera has to share. It is a positive example of how the Culture Recovery Fund for Heritage has supported strategic development and recovery, in a very practical way.*

”

**Stuart McLeod**

Director, England, London & South  
National Lottery Heritage Fund



The  
National Lottery  
Heritage Fund

Historic  
England



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# FOREWORD

***A Haven Through Time*** is an interpretation framework for partners to use in Torbay, produced as part of the *Torbay Heritage Strategy 2021-26*.

Throughout 2020, Katherine Findlay, lead consultant from Heritage Arts and People (HAP), worked with Torbay Council and Torbay Culture at TDA, to develop a new heritage strategy. That document was formally adopted by Torbay Council towards the end of 2020. Since then, with support from the government's Culture Recovery Fund grant to Torbay Culture, we commissioned HAP to implement the strategy, with a detailed action plan, including this framework. Torbay's story is multi-layered and complex. A place of different towns and villages that interconnect, and that are distinctive.

This framework is intended to help people and organisations share our local histories and heritage. It is based on the eight key stories that feature in the strategy, which were identified through local consultation as being particularly special to Torbay. The framework is for anyone who communicates with audiences about Torbay's past, particularly people working in the heritage and tourism sectors, including staff, freelancers, and volunteers. The ideas and principles in the framework apply to all kinds of heritage interpretation, including temporary and permanent exhibitions, on-site installations, digital media, live interpretation, and creative responses. Importantly, this framework is a tool to help the heritage and tourism sectors tell clear, engaging stories across multiple sites. It is intended to inspire, rather than to set down strict guidelines.

Imaginative, high-quality heritage experiences improve quality of life for local people and can help drive economic recovery by reinvigorating Torbay's tourism offer. This place is a famous natural haven. Few places can claim to be such a rich haven of heritage – 12 scheduled ancient monuments, over 860 listed buildings, 24 conservation areas, six Registered Parks and Gardens, a dozen SSSIs, a National Nature Reserve, Marine Conservation Zone, three Accredited museums and a nationally designated collection. All within the setting of a UNESCO designated Global Geopark. And that is before we even mention the intangible heritage... Our hope is this framework can provide heritage sector partners and organisations with inspiration and ideas to make the most of this special part of the world.



**Dr Kevin Dixon**, Local historian and member of the Board of Torbay Culture  
**Martin Thomas**, Executive Director, Torbay Culture

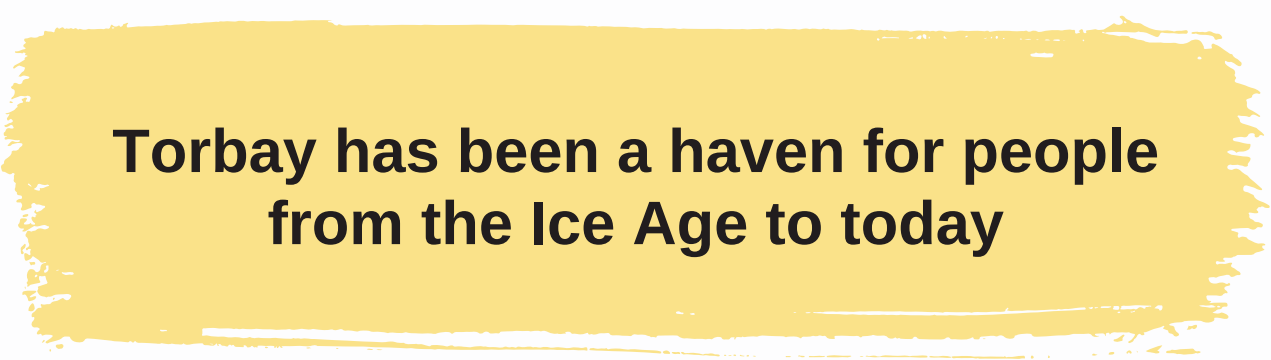
# THEMES FOR TORBAY

## USING THEMES

A theme is a lens through which to view our stories. It is a statement that encapsulates the 'big idea' that we want to present. Most topics will have a main theme and supporting themes that help to tell the story. You could use your themes as text - for example as opening sentences on interpretation panels. Or you might use them simply as guiding principles that help you decide what information you include and what you leave out. All your different forms of interpretation should in some way support your theme(s).

Here you will find a main theme for Torbay and a supporting theme for each of our key stories. These are tools to help everyone in Torbay's heritage sector tell our stories in a distinctive, clear and coherent way. You may also want to create a related theme that is specific to your site, collection or activity.

## MAIN THEME



**Torbay has been a haven for people  
from the Ice Age to today**

The thread which runs throughout Torbay's human history is our connection with the rich soil and sea, the shape of the land and the mild climate. Torbay has provided shelter, food and beauty in abundance for millennia, and farming, fishing and tourism were all built on these natural advantages. The main theme encapsulates this idea while also complementing the English Riviera BID's work on active/outdoor tourism and Torbay's status as a UNESCO Global Geopark.

On the next page you will find supporting themes that flow from the main them and link to our key stories.

# Torbay has been a haven for people from the Ice Age to today

MAIN THEME



Geology has drawn people to Torbay for millennia

Ice Age humans found sanctuary in Torbay's caves and left traces of their lives here

Monks came to Torbay in search of tranquility and the medieval Church prospered here

Torbay's rich land and sea and mild climate have produced an abundance of food throughout history

Tourists and Naval families discovered Torbay's charms during the Napoleonic era

Brixham harboured innovations that transformed deep sea fishing in Northern Europe

Fashionable and wealthy visitors flocked to Torbay for its beauty, climate and entertainments

Agatha Christie was among many writers who have found inspiration and rejuvenation in Torbay

SUPPORTING THEMES

# KEY STORIES

The next section of this framework looks at each of our key stories in turn and provides some tools to help you develop:

- images that tell your story
- narratives that speak to your audiences
- the voices and perspectives that are heard
- media and activities to successfully engage people

For each key story, you will find:

## Images

These are here to inspire, to spark ideas and to prompt you to think about how you could better use images to communicate your story. Consider how you could generate new, high-quality images that show off your site, collection or activities and reflect diverse audiences, perhaps in collaboration with partners.

## Voices and viewpoints

This section suggests perspectives from the past and the present that could feature in how the story is told. These may include previously unheard voices that can enrich and reinvigorate familiar narratives.

## Supporting theme and ideas for sub-themes

Under the supporting theme, you will find some ideas for sub-themes. These are branches that all contribute to the bigger story. The sub-themes shown here are just suggestions - you will have many more ideas.

## Ways to engage

Each story features a table that suggests ways to engage with your audience at four different levels:



Moving from left to right, the levels are increasingly participatory, enabling your audiences to become actively involved in how heritage is cared for and how the story is told.

# GEOLOGY



Image: Neptunian Dykes, with thanks to ERUGGp

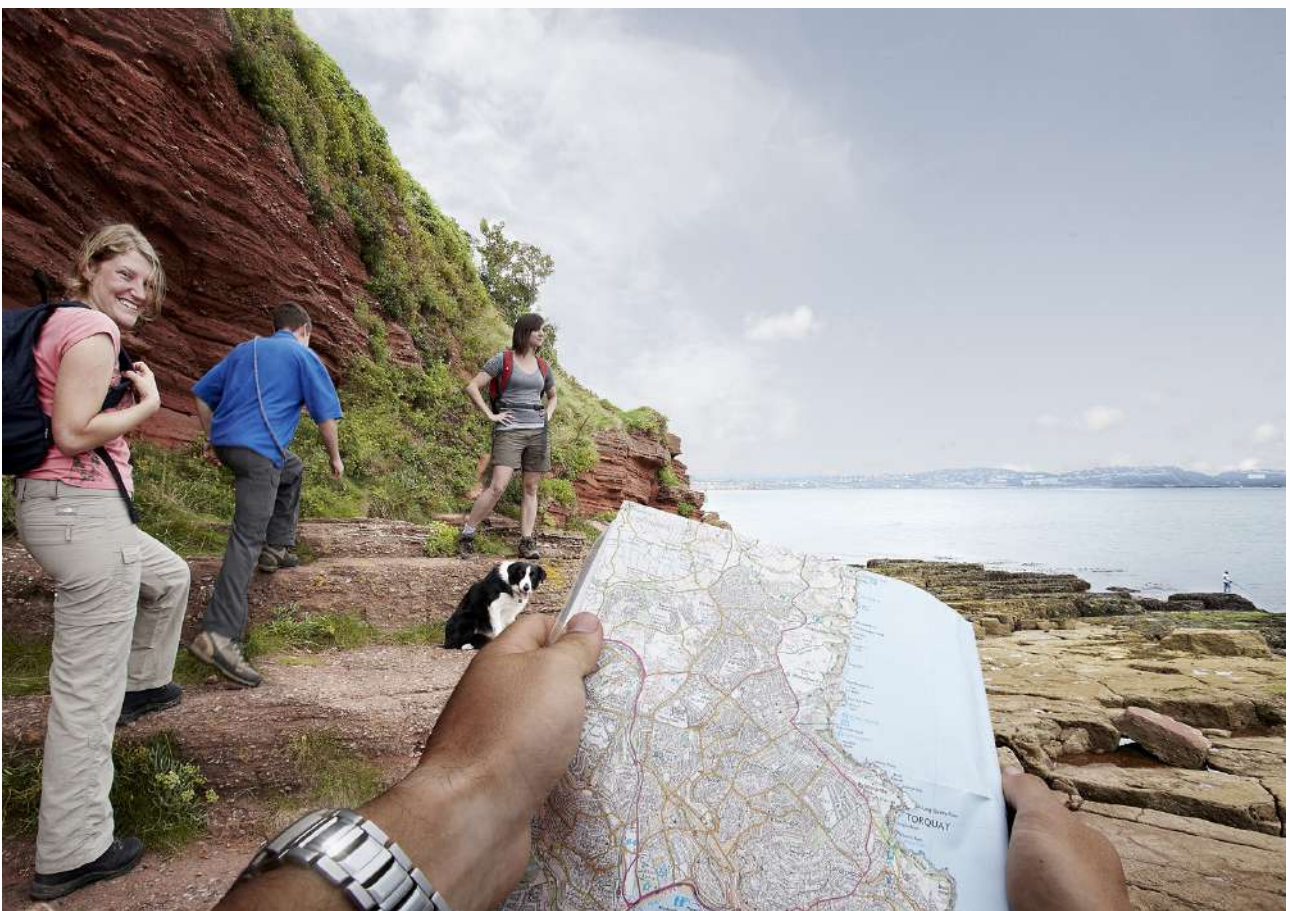


Image: Walkers at Roundham, with thanks to ERUGGp





Image: Neptunian Dykes, with thanks to ERUGGp

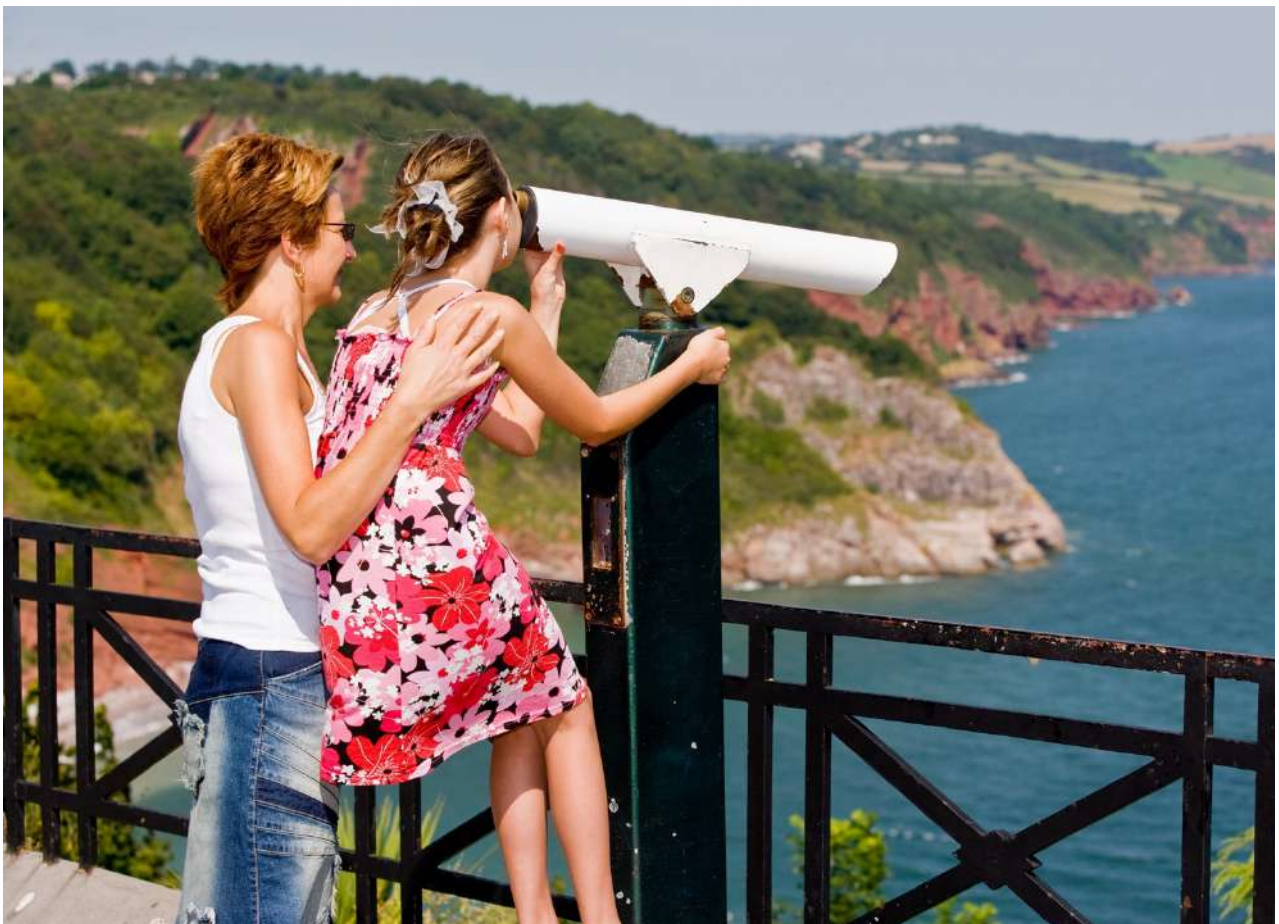


Image: Child using telescope, with thanks to ERUGGp

## USING THE THEME

# Geology has drawn people to Torbay for millennia

Countless generations of sailors have found safe harbour in the natural shape of the Bay

Tourists have been attracted to Torbay's stunning coastline since the 18th century

Pioneering geologists were fascinated by Torbay and named the Devonian period after discoveries made here

What can you add ?





## VOICES AND VIEWPOINTS

Roderick Murchison,  
Adam Sedgwick and their  
colleagues

Generations of local people and  
visitors affected and influenced in  
myriad ways by Torbay's topography,  
soils, building materials, landscape  
and climate

Present geologists who are  
influenced by and continue to  
build on the work of early  
pioneers in Torbay

## WAYS TO ENGAGE

SEE 	FIND OUT 	EXPERIENCE 	SHARE 
<p>Exposed rock formations in natural settings</p> <p>Historic buildings made of local stone</p> <p>Stone and marble features and objects</p>	<p>On site interpretation boards/signs</p> <p>Online information</p> <p>Talks</p> <p>Object labels</p>	<p>Walks with live guide or online/paper route</p> <p>Handling objects</p> <p>STEM events and activities that highlight scientific heritage</p>	<p>Opportunities to create and show artistic responses eg art, photography</p> <p>STEM challenges, sharing winning entries</p>

## GEOLOGY IN EVERY STORY

There is a geological aspect to all our stories, as the landscape has shaped all human history in Torbay to some extent. How does it link to your story?

All heritage organisations in Torbay can benefit from engagement with and promotion of our UNESCO Global Geopark status. Find out more on the English Riviera UNESCO Global Geopark website.

# EARLY HUMANS



Image: KC4 maxilla at Torquay Museum, with thanks to the Natural History Museum



Image: Archaeologist Phil Harding and Curator Barry Chandler with the jawbone, with thanks to Torquay Museum



Image: Family at Kents Cavern, with thanks to ERBID

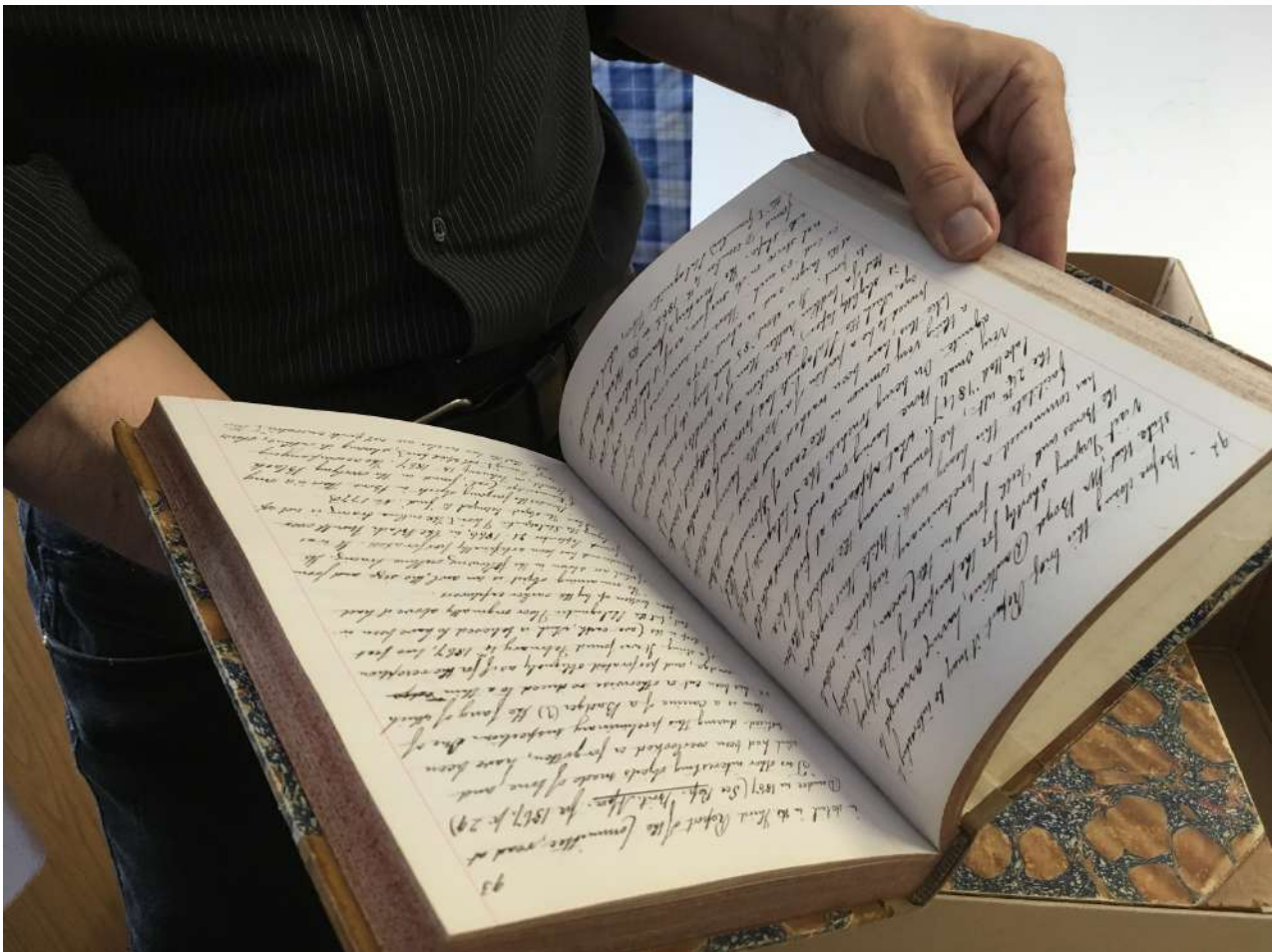


Image: Pengelly's notebooks at Torquay Museum, with thanks to ERUGGP

## Ice Age humans found sanctuary in Torbay's caves and left traces of their lives here

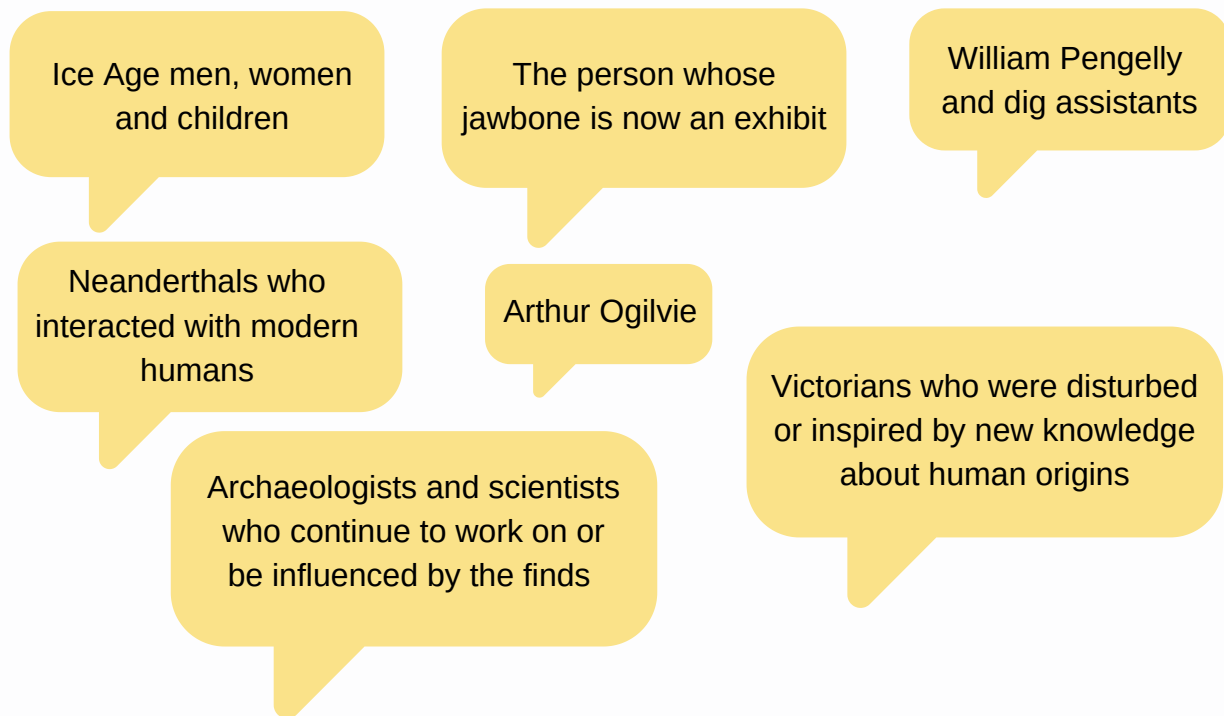
The evidence left here by ancient people includes the oldest human remains in Northern Europe

Ice Age humans found food and shelter on the very edge of the habitable world





Arthur Ogilvie, William Pengelly and others made discoveries in Torbay's caves that changed our understanding of the Ice Age and transformed archaeology

What can you add ?

## VOICES AND VIEWPOINTS



## WAYS TO ENGAGE

SEE 	FIND OUT 	EXPERIENCE 	SHARE 
<p>Caves</p> <p>Ice Age artefacts</p> <p>Dig records</p>	<p>On-site text / audio-visual</p> <p>Permanent &amp; temporary exhibitions</p> <p>Online information</p> <p>Talks</p> <p>Labels</p>	<p>Cave sleepover</p> <p>Ice Age survival games - digital</p> <p>Handling objects</p> <p>Making activities: clothes, jewellery, cooking, tools, art</p> <p>Archaeology skills - events/interactives</p> <p>Life-size depictions: animals, human species</p> <p>Guided walks at closed cave sites</p>	<p>Social media sharing - visual opportunities</p> <p>Opportunities to create and show artistic responses - eg writing, sculpture, audio</p> <p>Volunteering - specific roles to support Ice Age heritage</p>

# MONASTIC AND MEDIEVAL



Image: Family at Torre Abbey



Image: Dressing up at Torre Abbey





Image: Coverdale Tower at the Bishop's Palace, Paignton



Image: Kirkham House Best Chamber. Creative Commons credit: ianmacm

## USING THE THEME

**Monks came to Torbay in search of tranquility and the medieval Church prospered here**

Monks at Torre Abbey made the most of the area's natural resources and even built the first fishing quay, giving Torquay its name

Torre Abbey became wealthy and powerful and controlled much of the rich land in Torbay





The Bishops of Exeter enjoyed stays at their luxurious country residence at Paignton for over 500 years

What can you add ?

# VOICES AND VIEWPOINTS



# WAYS TO ENGAGE

SEE 	FIND OUT 	EXPERIENCE 	SHARE 
<p>Medieval buildings</p> <p>Medieval features and artefacts</p> <p>Archive material</p>	<p>On-site text / audio-visual</p> <p>Permanent &amp; temp exhibitions</p> <p>Online information</p> <p>Talks</p> <p>Labels</p>	<p>Dress up</p> <p>Monastic life activities eg cooking, growing, calligraphy</p> <p>Tranquility/ wellbeing events - outdoors, quiet times</p> <p>Walk with map guide to buildings and features</p> <p>On-site live medieval/choral music</p>	<p>Volunteering - building care, gardening, archive research</p> <p>Live music making</p> <p>Social media sharing - visual opportunities</p>

# AGRICULTURAL LIFE



Image: Cottage in Torbay, with thanks to ERBID



Image: Agricultural scene, with thanks to Torbay Coast and Countryside Trust



Image: Torbay landscape, with thanks to Tom Smith

## USING THE THEME

**Torbay's rich land and sea and mild climate have produced an abundance of food throughout history**

The Dumnonii people farmed the land in an ancient way that can still be glimpsed at Walls Hill

Most people in Torbay depended on farming and fishing for thousands of years

Farmers helped Torbay's ports to thrive by producing abundant food supplies for passing ships

What can you add ?

## VOICES AND VIEWPOINTS





Individuals who worked the land and sea over thousands of years

Agricultural and fishing communities that adapted to changes including invasions, enclosures, railways, motorised machinery, wars, and tourism

Present day farmers, fishers and their families who have a relationship with the legacies and traditions of the past

People drawn to romantic ideas of Devonian agricultural life as artists, tourists or residents

## WAYS TO ENGAGE

SEE 	FIND OUT 	EXPERIENCE 	SHARE 
<p>Farm and village buildings</p> <p>Landscape features: hedges, lanes, orchards</p> <p>Agricultural artefacts</p> <p>Old photographs</p> <p>Archive material</p> <p>Depictions in art</p>	<p>Signage in the landscape</p> <p>Permanent &amp; temp exhibitions</p> <p>Online information</p> <p>Talks</p> <p>Labels</p>	<p>Open Farm Sunday activities</p> <p>Walking and cycling</p> <p>Organised outdoor activities with access support</p> <p>Community activities at times of year, eg wassail, harvest, dawn chorus, country shows.</p>	<p>Opportunities to create and show artistic responses eg visual art</p> <p>Volunteering eg habitat restoration, community growing, wildlife recording</p> <p>Oral history recording</p> <p>Social media sharing</p>

# NAPOLEONIC ERA



Image: The Exile's Departure by Thomas Luny (1759–1837)

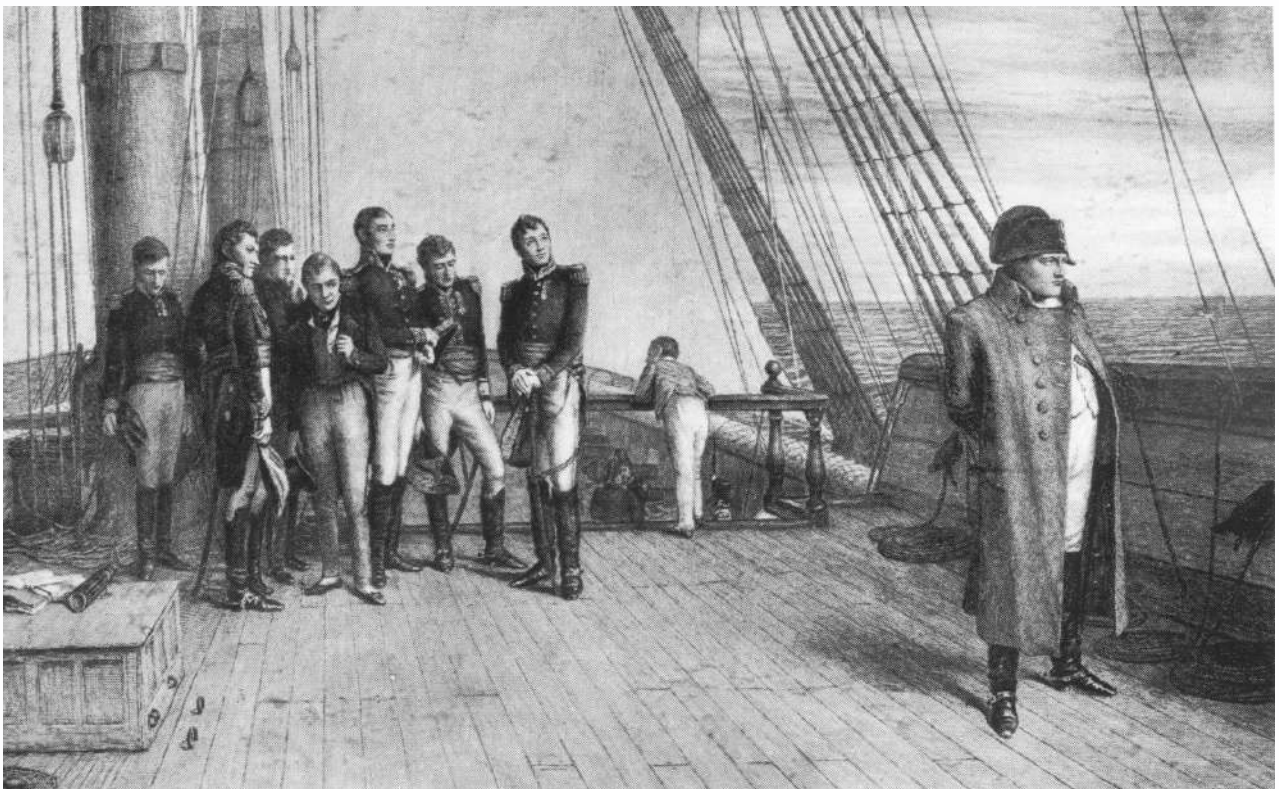


Image: Napoleon on Board the Bellerophon by Sir William Quiller Orchardson (1832–1910), with thanks to Torquay Museum





Image: Napoleonic reconstruction, with thanks to ERUGGp



Image: Berry Head, with thanks to ERUGGp

## USING THE THEME

# Tourists and Naval families discovered Torbay's charms during the Napoleonic era

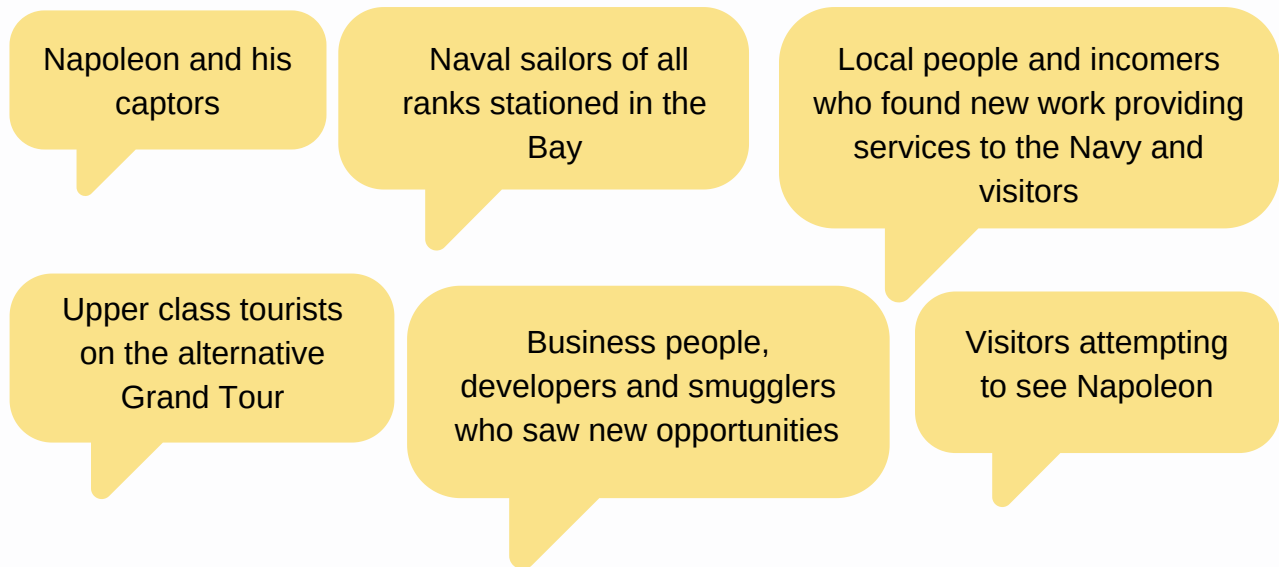
Napoleon Bonaparte became Torbay's first star attraction when he was held prisoner in the Bay

Tourists who could not visit mainland Europe during the Napoleonic Wars visited Torbay instead

Torbay's beauty and tranquility made an impression on Naval officers anchored in the Bay to defend the south coast

What can you add ?

# VOICES AND VIEWPOINTS



# WAYS TO ENGAGE

SEE 	FIND OUT 	EXPERIENCE 	SHARE 
<p>Fortification remains</p> <p>Built historic environment - buildings and harbour infrastructure</p> <p>Napoleonic artefacts</p> <p>Depictions in art</p>	<p>Interpretation at sites</p> <p>Permanent &amp; temp exhibitions</p> <p>Online information</p> <p>Talks</p> <p>Labels</p>	<p>Walking and cycling in historic environment</p> <p>Guided tours</p> <p>Arts installations/ events in historic environment</p>	<p>Participation in living history events</p> <p>Volunteering eg landscape conservation</p> <p>Social media sharing</p>

# TRAWLING



Image: Brixham harbour with trawlers, with thanks to Torquay Museum



Image: Fishing fleet at Brixham harbour, with thanks to ERUGGp



Image: *Vigilance*, with thanks to Friends of the Vigilance

## Brixham harboured innovations that transformed deep sea fishing in Northern Europe

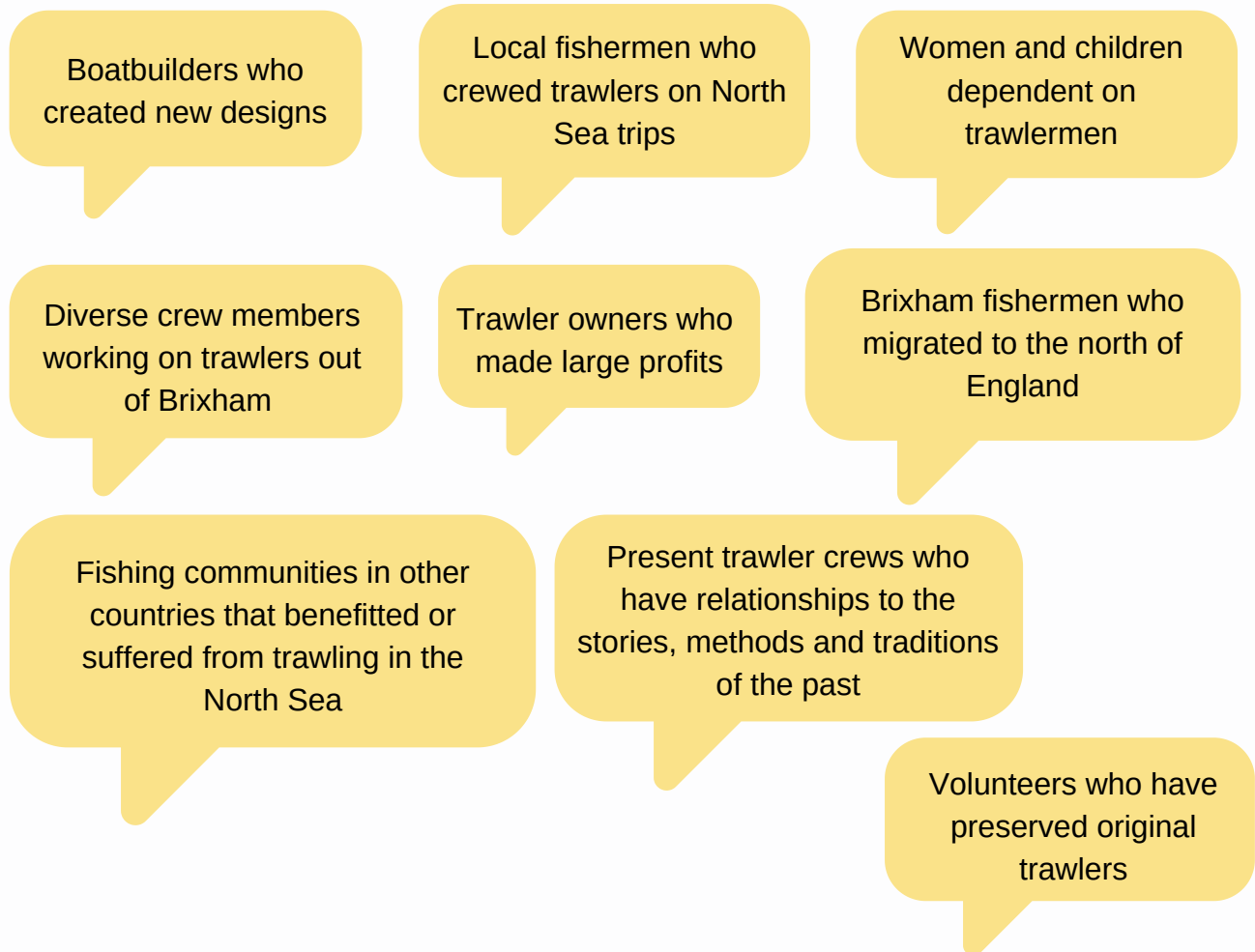
Brixham boat builders developed a new design in the 19th century that could go faster and further in a single trip than ever before

Fishermen all around the North Sea bought or copied the technology developed in Brixham





Many Brixham fishermen migrated to Hull and Grimsby where they helped the deep-sea fishing industry to boom

What can you add ?

## VOICES AND VIEWPOINTS



## WAYS TO ENGAGE

SEE 	FIND OUT 	EXPERIENCE 	SHARE 
<p>Historic vessels</p> <p>Fishing artefacts</p> <p>Old photographs</p> <p>Archive material</p>	<p>Interpretation and signage in harbour area</p> <p>Permanent &amp; temp exhibitions</p> <p>Online information</p> <p>Talks</p>	<p>Seafood - festivals and restaurants</p> <p>Trips and visits on board historic vessels at sea and in harbour</p> <p>Heritage skills or other learning (eg wildlife) on board</p> <p>Arts installations/ events</p>	<p>Opportunities to create and show artistic responses</p> <p>Volunteering eg boat crew</p> <p>Oral history recording</p> <p>Social media sharing</p>

# GOLDEN AGE OF THE RESORTS



Image: Torbay view, with thanks to ERBID



Image: Oldway Mansion





Image: Torquay, the English Riviera, poster by William Sennett

## USING THE THEME

### **Fashionable and wealthy visitors flocked to Torbay for its beauty, climate and entertainments**

Wealthy patrons and their designers  
took inspiration from Italy as they built  
grand new homes, hotels, theatres  
and gardens.

Visitors believed that the  
mild climate and sea air  
helped them to recover from  
illness and stress





Famous musicians, actors and dancers  
came to Torbay every summer to star in  
extravagant productions

What can  
you add ?

## VOICES AND VIEWPOINTS



## WAYS TO ENGAGE

SEE 	FIND OUT 	EXPERIENCE 	SHARE 
<p>Individual buildings - grand houses, theatres</p> <p>Wider built environment - streets, public gardens</p> <p>Artefacts and art</p> <p>Historic photographs</p> <p>Archive material</p>	<p>Interpretation and signage in historic areas</p> <p>Interpretation within individual buildings</p> <p>Permanent &amp; temp exhibitions</p> <p>Online information</p> <p>Talks</p>	<p>Walking and cycling in historic environment</p> <p>Entertainments/ refreshments at historic venues</p> <p>Guided tours</p> <p>Arts installations/ events in historic environment</p>	<p>Opportunities to create and show artistic responses eg performance</p> <p>Participation in living history/ vintage events</p> <p>Volunteering eg gardening, guiding</p> <p>Social media sharing</p>

## WEALTH, EMPIRE AND CLASS

Much of the wealth which fuelled Torbay's growth in the 18th and 19th centuries was generated by the economic structures of the British Empire, including businesses which relied on the labour of enslaved or subjugated people around the world and their descendants.

At home, the lifestyle of Torbay's elite was supported by class inequality that ensured a supply of poorly paid servants and other workers.

The sources of the wealth that built Torbay's grand houses and gardens may be difficult to trace as this was not usually the main base for the businesses concerned. However, it is important that we investigate and tell truthfully the background to these sites as far as we can. Heritage interpretation should openly acknowledge injustices that allowed some people to live in luxury at the expense of others.

# AGATHA CHRISTIE AND WRITERS ON THE RIVIERA



Image: Agatha Christie rollerskating to Torquay, with thanks to Torquay Museum



Image: Greenway, with thanks to the National Trust



Image: The International Agatha Christie Festival, with thanks to Torbay Culture



Image: Paignton Picture House, with thanks to Torbay Culture

## USING THE THEME

# Agatha Christie was among many writers who have found inspiration and rejuvenation in Torbay

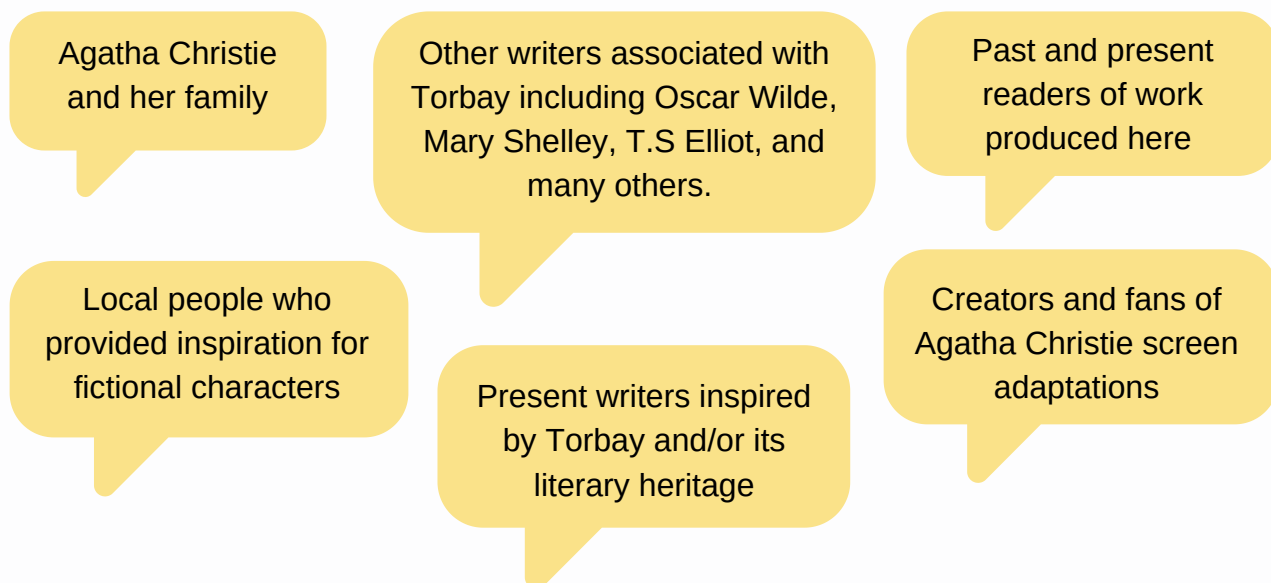
Young Agatha Christie drew inspiration from many people and places she observed growing up in Torbay

Agatha Christie loved being in nature, surfing and swimming here

Many of Britain and Ireland's best-known authors and poets came to Torbay to write in peace, surrounded by beauty

What can you add ?

## VOICES AND VIEWPOINTS



## WAYS TO ENGAGE

SEE 	FIND OUT 	EXPERIENCE 	SHARE 
<p>Places associated with individual writers</p> <p>Monuments or markers in the public realm</p> <p>Artefacts and archive material</p>	<p>Interpretation and signage at places associated with a writer</p> <p>Permanent &amp; temp exhibitions</p> <p>Online information</p> <p>Talks</p>	<p>Writers on the Riviera self-guided walk</p> <p>Guided walks</p> <p>Literary events eg festivals, readings</p> <p>Screen and stage adaptations</p> <p>Reliving local activities special to a writer, eg vintage surfing</p>	<p>Opportunities to create and present creative writing</p> <p>Sharing responses to literature through book clubs, fan events etc</p> <p>Volunteering eg guiding</p> <p>Social media sharing</p>

## EXETER UNESCO CITY OF LITERATURE

Torbay is included in the designation of Exeter as a UNESCO City of Literature. The potential for the status to boost local heritage and creativity should be fully explored.



# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This framework has been produced with support from the UK government's Culture Recovery Fund.

Thanks to the staff and volunteers of the following organisations who contributed their time and expertise to the consultation which informed this work:

**Brixham Town Council**  
**Devon Gardens Trust**  
**English Riviera UNESCO Global Geopark**  
**Friends of the Vigilance**  
**Historic England**  
**Kents Cavern**  
**Lupton Trust**  
**National Lottery Heritage Fund**  
**National Trust**  
**Paignton Heritage Society**

**South Devon Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) Partnership**  
**South West Coast Path**  
**South West Heritage Trust**  
**Torbay Civic Society**  
**Torbay Coast & Countryside Trust**  
**Torbay Community Development Trust**  
**Torbay Culture**  
**Torquay Museum**  
**Torre Abbey Museum**

**TORBAY COUNCIL**

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BECAUSE IT MATTERS | EST. 2015



The National Lottery Heritage Fund

Historic England

Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport



*A Haven Through Time* was produced on behalf of Torbay Council and Torbay Culture by Devon-based heritage consultancy Heritage Arts & People (HAP)

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