

Torpoint Archives & Heritage Centre
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Torpoint Organisation of the Year 2013-2014
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TAHC REPORT December 2025

Dear Members,

The dedicated Team of Volunteers is taking a hard earned rest from Friday December 19th until Monday January 5th when the Library and Community Hub also reopens. Looking back over the last 11 reports, much of 2025 has been about our role as a Community Archives.

The year started with the great honour of being nominated for a King's Award for Voluntary Service (KAVS) This was followed up with the reception at County Hall in September. The KAVS award winners were notified on November 14th, the birthday of King Charles 3rd. The following day a handwritten consolatory letter was received from Colonel Sir Edward Bolitho KBE, Lord Lieutenant of Cornwall. Sir Edward regretted that TAHC had not reached the final selection, but he thanked us for all for preserving Torpoint's Heritage. Last week a similar letter of thanks was received from Sir Martin Lewis CBE, the Chairman of the KAVS selection Committee.

It is gratifying that all TAHC voluntary efforts are appreciated and acknowledged. 4,174 voluntary hours have been recorded both in the premises and at home this year. That will be an underestimate, as volunteers often fail to record the hours spent on preparing accounts, charity commission reports, administering Facebook, preparing MP3 displays, 2 D displays, recording interviews and attending outside events etc. There are also several outworker volunteers. Their contribution to the Archives is invaluable, but the time they spend is not recorded.

A record number of visitors, 1,545 have been greeted his year. Numbers were boosted because of the 80th Anniversary of VE and VJ Days and the launch of another book "Meeting the Ferry".



This month, the beautiful angel created by 2 Archives volunteers is on display, with other angels at St James Church.



Andy Campfield shared the photographs that he took at the Civic Carol Services held in Cornerstone Church on Tuesday December 16th.



On the night of the concert, the Evening Herald had a full page article announcing that the National Churches Trust would be offering £10,000 towards repair work, that is desperately needed, if the Chapel is to continue its role as a place of worship and an additional Community Hub.



Members of the church have been working so hard to raise the necessary funds for the repairs. Donations have been received from Torpoint Town Council and several other groups in Torpoint. There is still a large amount of money needed to give the chapel its third lease of life. The picture of the chapel on the left, taken by archivist, Pat Manning in 1993, reminds us that it nearly didn't have a second lease of life!

We are so grateful to all the groups that donate to support Torpoint voluntary groups such as the Chapel and the Archives.

You may be interested to know that in 1787, eighty three year old John Wesley visited Torpoint twice. The journals of his travels have been preserved. On his second visit, Sept 11th he wrote, "the house(this would have been someone's home) could hardly contain the congregation in the evening, and a joyful meeting it was" He described the people of Torpoint as "an earnest, affectionate people" In that respect little has changed in 238 years!

The original chapel built on the Fore Street site in 1795, was the earliest purpose built place of worship in a very new town. There was a Bethel alongside the current Conservative and Unionist Club, but this transferred to become the United Reform Church in Rowe Street, built in 1811. St James was completed in 1819. Torpoint did not become a parish until 1875.

The Methodist Chapel building was extended several time to accommodate very large congregations. A school was built behind the original building. In the early 1900s this was attended by 450 children. The National School in Nelson Street (now St James Road) was also well attended. In 1905 a new Wesleyan school was built in Macey Street. This building was still used as an overflow for the Council School built in Albion Road 1910 and Carbeile School built 1953, right up to the 1970s. It is now used by CHAT Link, another Torpoint Charity that supports the Community.

There are already two projects being discussed that may involve the Archives Team in 2026. Nev Meek, the President of the Federation of Old Cornwall Societies has applied for funding from the Plymouth Sound National Marine Park Blue Sparks Grant programme.

If successful, the Federation will be working with Old Cornwall Societies and other partners, on stories and activities to connect people with the River Tamar.

The Archives volunteers would of course be happy to work with members of Torpoint and Rame Old Cornwall Society volunteers.

The second project would connect Torpoint Archives to the 2027 Headline Exhibition of the National Maritime Museum.

The subject is "Smugglers and Smuggling" More details and guidance will be available from Annie Lucas, The Museum Development Officer for Cornwall.

It is no surprise that 3 TAHC volunteers are already gathering information for the latter project!

I would like to express my thanks for all the hard work put in by the volunteers and to thank the Members for their support.

I wish you all

A Happy Christmas
&
A peaceful New Year

Mike Pearn MBE, Chairman



The next Volunteers' Get Together will be at 11am on Thursday Feb 12th 2026
The next Committee meeting will be at 4pm on Thursday Feb 26th 2026