

NEWS RELEASE

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For Immediate Release

Torre Abbey unveils a few surprises

Torre Abbey's journey towards a bigger, brighter future has started and already there have been a few unexpected "finds".

The initial works by Bosence and Co have started 6 weeks ahead of schedule with the aim of preparing the building ready for the main contractor who is due to start in October this year.

Over the next few weeks, Bosence and Co will be removing some early 19th Century additions to the rear of the mansion house. This will clear the way for an archaeological excavation on the west side of the cloister, which needs to take place before the main scaffolding is erected.

The work has uncovered an array of fascinating, historical finds many of which were unexpected, they include:

a magnificent and near complete early 17th Century window frame

an early 17th Century decorative plaster frieze

part of a medieval wall painting

a huge lintol of a 14th or 15th Century fireplace

two medieval window splays and medieval wall plaster in the same room

a huge void of unknown date and function

a blocked up doorway, that once provided access for servants to take food from the kitchen to the Georgian dining room

striped hand painted wallpaper of around 1900

medieval stone tracery, found among rocks in the fishpond

Councillor Chris Lomas, Executive Member for Community, said: "It is a very exciting time for those people involved in the refurbishment of the Abbey. Not only is the project one of the largest heritage projects ever in the South West but as the work continues we are uncovering more and more of its fascinating history.

"Following its refurbishment, Torre Abbey will continue to play a significant role in promoting tourism, contributing to Torbay's economic wealth in creating a sense of local identity."

The work follows the allocation of a £4.9 million grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund to restore Torre Abbey. Further contributions will be made from the council's capital fund, English Heritage and money raised by the Friends of Torre Abbey. The remainder is being sought from external funding sources.

Ends

Photo Opportunity

There is a photo or film opportunity of the "finds" at the Abbey please contact Nicola Moorhouse on 01803 208850 to arrange.