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22 November 2024

Colyton Parish History Society Newsletter

It is with great sadness that we record the death of one of this community's great characters Colin Pady.

1. In Memoriam - Colin Pady

Chairman of Colyton Parish History Society Mrs Marian Sydenham, speaking at the Society's AGM on 29 October said: "It is with great sadness and regret that I have to announce Colin Pady has passed away. Colin was the main founder of the Society in 1987 when 80 people attended the inaugural meeting. In 2012 we celebrated 25 years." Mrs Sydenham said that Colin, speaking to the *View from Colyton* on that occasion had explained how the original aim had been to set up a Museum to display Colyton's historical artefacts and documents and to encourage research into the Parish's history. He said then that the Society "… fulfilled a need in the Parish and has been a great success socially. It is still fulfilling the purpose for which it was founded.""

Colin and Val at the Goose Fayre in September

The last photo I took of Colin was of him and Val sitting relaxing outside the tea tent at the Colyford Goose Fayre at the end of September. He loved this annual event which he had helped regenerate and worked tirelessly to make it a success.

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A Parish Councillor and a Feoffee for well over 50 years, his generosity of spirit and passionate interest in everything from local history to farming and the environment made him a force to be reckoned with. His untimely passing leaves a big hole in this community.

Colin celebrating with Val his 50 years as a Feoffee after being presented with a commemorative certificate by his fellow Feoffees in 2020

Colin Pady was involved in so many local organisations and projects. In many ways he was a Renaissance man who enjoyed art, music and literature. In addition to his many other interests Colin also painted and wrote poetry. Colin loved history and enjoyed talking to people about the long history of Colyton Parish as recorded in the Feoffees Archive. During the Coronation festivities in May 2023 he organised a fascinating environmental exhibition in the Town Hall where he spoke about the ancient practice of salt harvesting in the area. He would also happily - stand in when necessary for the Town Crier!

(Town Crier during Coronation celebrations in May 2023)

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Seven years ago Colin updated *the History of the Feoffees of Colyton* - first written by Reg White to mark the 400th anniversary in 1946 of the founding of the Chamber of Feoffees in 1546. Colin researched and wrote a new chapter covering the next 70 years to 2016.

Colin signing copies of the second edition of the History of the Feoffees in which he wrote a new chapter covering the years 1946 - 2016

Colin led many walks around the local countryside explaining how to participants how to interpret the signs in the landscape which revealed its history or the significance of the ancient trade routes which passed through this area.

Colin leading a 'landscape detectives' walk

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Just a couple of months ago I accompanied him to an evening lecture at Exeter Cathedral about the ancient books in their library. Right to the very end of his life he was passionately pursuing support for his latest project - locating the historic sites of St Calixtus Fayre and the St Calixtus Chapel. An abiding memory of Colin will be a small expedition he took me on a few years ago to show me the location of an historic local well. Sliding down through the steep muddy field and despite being in pain from his leg he nevertheless enthusiastically insisted we scramble under a fence to reach it! Once there he pulled back the tree branches and vegetation covering the well and proceeded to explain its relevance in great detail.

Sarah Charman
Editor

Brian Carpenter, Archivist and Community Outreach Officer at the Devon Heritage Centre also has some long standing memories of Colin. He remembers:
"I began coming to Colyton in March 1995, when I took over responsibility for the Colyton Service Point. The Service Point was then based at Colyford Memorial Hall, before later moving to the Sunday School Room, the Town Hall and the 'History Hut' in the car park before the establishment of the Heritage Centre in 2014. Along with John Cochrane, Don Thomas, Shirley Brown and later John Forrester-Addie, Colin Pady was one of the people who always seemed to be around. He was unfailingly cheerful, welcoming and helpful, with his wide range of interests and peerless knowledge of the history of Colyton.
Over recent years I've been a less frequent visitor to Colyton, but I usually saw Colin at the annual gathering of representatives of East Devon local history societies in Sidmouth and I met him for the last time when I came to speak to the CPHS in April of this year. At Colin's request I brought Richard Kittle's account book to display, and, following the talk, I arranged to have it digitised for him.
Colin is someone I will always associate with my visits to Colyton. He will be sadly missed."

2. News - Colyton Town Band – by Claire Ross

In a recent study by Eammon O'Keefe, the Colyton Brass Band is found to be the first identifiable, civilian brass band in Britain or Ireland. It performed in November 1828 at the laying of the first stone in a wall in Colyton: they played "God save the King" as Mr Pole's health was drunk! This reference supports O'Keefe's contention that brass bands did not develop in northern industrial locations but from military bands returning from the Napoleonic Wars. Indeed the East Devon Yeomanry Cavalry is described as having a "beautiful brass band" in September 1831.

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Colyton Brass Band 1925

The next naming of the Colyton Brass Band is not until 1850 but there are 2 mentions of a brass band attending events at Shute in 1835 and 1836. In January 1835 The Western Times reports that "as the carriage moved slowly along the winding avenue, it was accompanied by the brass band from the lodge, playing in triumphant strains "Ye Scots who hae wi Wallace bled" and other characteristic national airs". It is possible that this was also the Colyton Brass Band.

The Colyton Brass Band is not mentioned again explicitly until June 1850 when it is reported "After tea both [Mutual Provident] Societies, headed by the Colyton brass band, proceeded to Willhayne House… where dancing was kept up for a considerable time." This implies that the brass band has now increased its repertoire to include less martial tunes, although they are often reported heading various processions and parades throughout the rest of the century.

Throughout the second half of the 19th century, the newspapers seem to use the terms "Colyton Brass Band" and "Colyton Town Band" interchangeably – or were there really two bands? In June 1867 the Colyton Town Band is reported as being "under Mr Wm Smith". By 1892 the Colyton Brass Band is under the leadership of Bandmaster G West, who continues to be in charge until at least 1901.

But in 1903 the Band was in financial trouble and had to be helped by Captain Cosens, who encourages the band to take on some learners. The report in the Devon & Exeter Gazette on 27 Jan 1904 implies that the Band was generally (but

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not legally) associated with G Company of the 27th Devonshire Rifle Volunteer Corps which formed in 1860. There had also been a change of Bandmaster; J Spurway is now the leader of the Band.

However, this re-boot of the Colyton Town Band seems to have been short-lived as a December 1912 report in the Western Times comments that Colyton had "had to rely on outside help for a band" to mark the Coronation of King George V on 22 June 1911. This time the Band is re-formed through subscription funding and a grant of £5 5s from the Feoffees. In March 1913 the Devon & Exeter Gazette reports that the "Colyton Town Band (mainly old members of the late 3rd Volunteer Batt. Devon regiment), under the command of Colr-Sergt Spurway, played to and from church" as part of the Easter Sunday parade of veterans. This close association of the Town Band with the military is further borne out in the obituary for Sir Frederick de la Pole in February 1926 Western Morning News where the Town Band is referred to as "the Ex-Service Men's Band".

Interestingly, no Band is mentioned at the laying of the foundation stone of the Feoffees Town Hall in Jan 1927, but the official opening in December 1927 describes a "musical programme arranged by Mr E Brokenshire" and "the Town Band played in the hall". Mr Brokenshire seems to be a professional musician based in Barnstaple as newspaper reports frequently mention Mr Brokenshire's Orchestral or String Band in the early 20th century.

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By June 1934, the Colyton Town Band seems to be in trouble again. Although a new committee was elected, it had disbanded by the November. Their instruments and uniforms were given to the Colyton Memorial Institute as the representative of "Colyton Town". In April 1936 the Colyton Town Band was again up and running! But yet again, 2 years later, it was in trouble with the Committee of Management being dissolved with the running of the band to be the responsibility of the bandsmen themselves in March 1936. This arrangement does not appear to have lasted long as by 1938 the Colyton Parish Council is discussing whether the drums can be lent to Seaton Army Cadet Force on condition they are kept in good condition. The instruments are in poor condition and the uniforms are sold to help pay for their repair.

In 1949 the Colyton Excelsior Silver Band under Bandmaster J Isaacs is reported heading a parade at Remembrance Sunday. This incarnation of the Town Band includes women – one of whom is Mrs Isaacs (who is also a composer). An old photograph is the Colyton Heritage Centre suggests the other lady player is Marie Beales and that there are 3 young boys too. Unfortunately Mr and Mrs Isaacs move to Barnstaple in June 1950 and the Colyton Excelsior Band seems to cease. A Town Band did re-group for the Coronation in 1953 with help from two old bandsmen, Messrs Fahey and Dunn - but I don't know how long it lasted: do you?

References:

- Newpaper archives available on newspapers.com
- O'Keefe "British Military Music and the Legacy of the Napoleonic Wars" published 30 october 2024 in The Historical Journal https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/historical-journal/article/british-military-music-and-the-legacy-of-the-napoleonic-wars/5DE306A0F29E872429D1F726730BDC62#fn137
- CPHS Newsletter March 2023

3. Other History Society News

a. Membership – Reminder Annual Subscription due in January 2025

A reminder that annual membership fees for 2025 are due from the beginning of January next year. The rate is unchanged at £8 for a single membership or £12 for a couple.

Subscriptions can be paid at any Society meeting. Or they can be paid by standing order or BACS transfer using the following details: Colyton Parish History Society,Sort Code: 30-90-37, A/c no 00992240 (Lloyds Bank)

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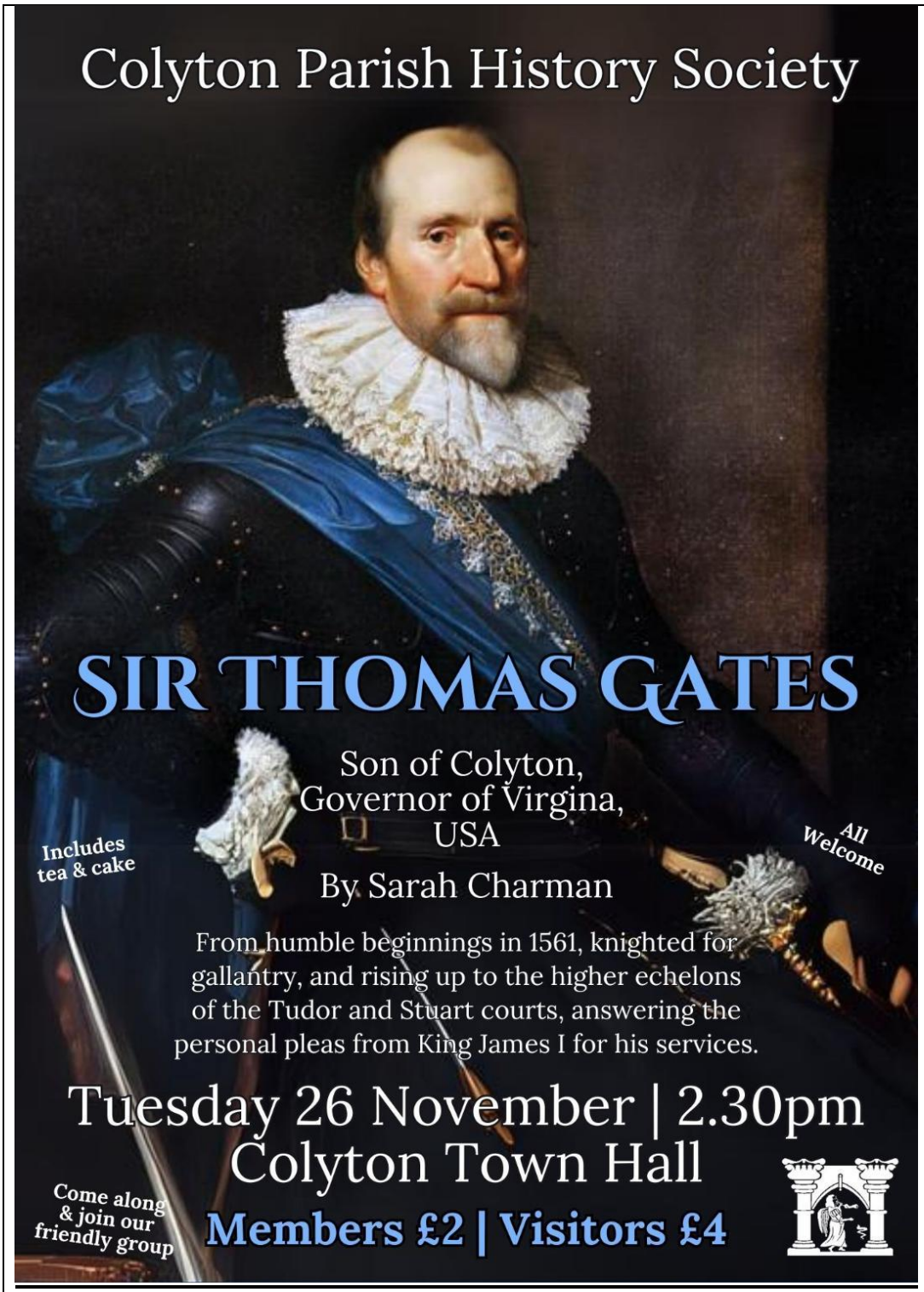
b. CPHS November talk



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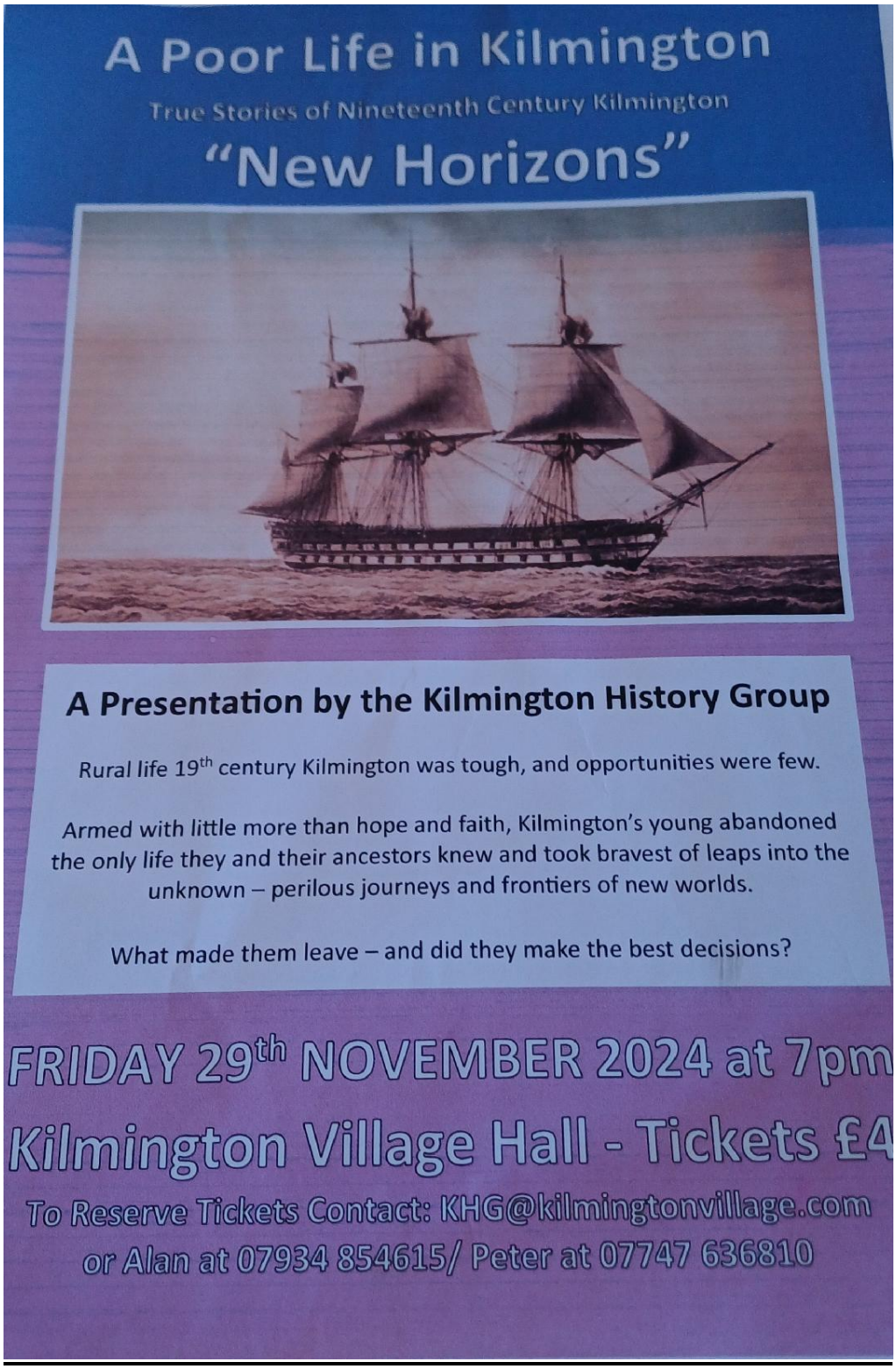
4. Other Organisations Events



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5. Items you may have missed

a. National Trust properties in Devon – winter wonderlands

https://www.msn.com/en-gb/travel/other/national-trust-estates-in-devon-transformed-into-winter-wonderlands/ar-AA1tOIwi?ocid=msedgntp&pc=HCTS&cvid=1f4265806a3546368927f38c961ffff6&ei=15

b. A trip on the last horse drawn barge in the West Country

https://www.greatbritishlife.co.uk/magazines/devon/24525686.trip-last-horse-drawn-barge-west-country/?ref=eb&nid=2374&block=article_block_a&u=26e309a1465491fa9108b8530c3bc91f&date=011024

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