COLYTON
HERITAGE CENTRE

a. Merchant's House
Market Place
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EX24 6JR
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27 January 2025

Colyton Parish History Society Newsletter

Happy New Year everyone. Lots to look forward to this year.

1. News –

Recollections of Colyton from wartime evacuee Leslie Jarman

Leslie Jarman, a student at St Judes's school in Southwark was evacuated to Colyton at the beginning of WW2. Leslie died at the age of 94 in 2019 and the following notes – kindly written up by his daughters Katherine and Philippa from conversations while he was alive – record his memories of life in Colyton.

Do you remember Leslie? If so his daughters would love to hear your memories of him. Please let me know (sarah.charman@yahoo.co.uk) and I will put you in touch with them. Leslie features in several of the photos of Leslie in the St Jude's Evacuees scrapbook at Colyton Heritage Centre.

Leslie (far left) in a pageant the evacuees put on - his part was labelled 'Dude Tourist' in the programme and the sketch was called 'Harbour Lights'.

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Leslie a few months before he died aged 94 in 2019

- We don't know the exact date Leslie was evacuated, but presume it was either autumn 1939 or early in 1940 – he was a pupil at St Jude's School in Southwark, though older than primary age, as he was 14 in 1939. Dad's family lived in Gaywood Street at the Elephant and Castle, nowadays a road of expensive Georgian properties, but then a very poor area with run-down buildings divided into small flats.

- Leslie was sent to Colyton with his younger sister Maisie (their older brother Bob was presumably judged too old, at 16). He was billeted with one of the butchers in the town (possibly White's?), but Maisie was sent to Colyton House.

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- Although Dad was supposed to be receiving education at least some of the time, he was also required to work as the butcher's delivery boy, and seems to have spent most of his time travelling round the district on a bike with a huge basket on the front, delivering meat orders to customers.

- He subsequently upgraded to a motorbike for meat deliveries, but it kept catching fire. One time he had to drive it into a pond as flames were shooting out the back!

- Dad was very thin so suffered badly from the cold, and told us he had never known cold like it.

- However overall he seems to have really enjoyed his work and life at the butchers, although he was distressed by having to break the necks of rabbits. He said that at least in rural Devon, they didn't go as hungry as in many parts of Britain while rationing was in place, with the abundance of rabbits and pheasants in the surrounding countryside.

- Dad also had access to dairy products from local farms, and recounted how on the few occasions when he travelled back to his family in London (perhaps at Christmas?), he was able to take on the train a large container of cream and pats of butter, which delighted his family as both were subject to rationing.

- As a London boy, Dad said that he loved going to nearby beaches such as Seaton and Beer, but that of course these became steadily more fortified as the war went on, until eventually I think there was no access at all.

- He told us about the Luftwaffe pilots on their way to and from Exeter who would fly over Colyton, spraying the main street with machine-gun fire.

- He gained a real love of walking and hiking from his years in Colyton

Leslie loved life in Colyton so much that he didn't come straight back at the end of the war! He only returned in 1946 or 7 because his father had died and he had to look after his mother, our grandmother. However, he never returned to the Elephant and Castle, as his family had been bombed out during the war and had moved to suburban Ealing, a big change from inner-city Southwark.

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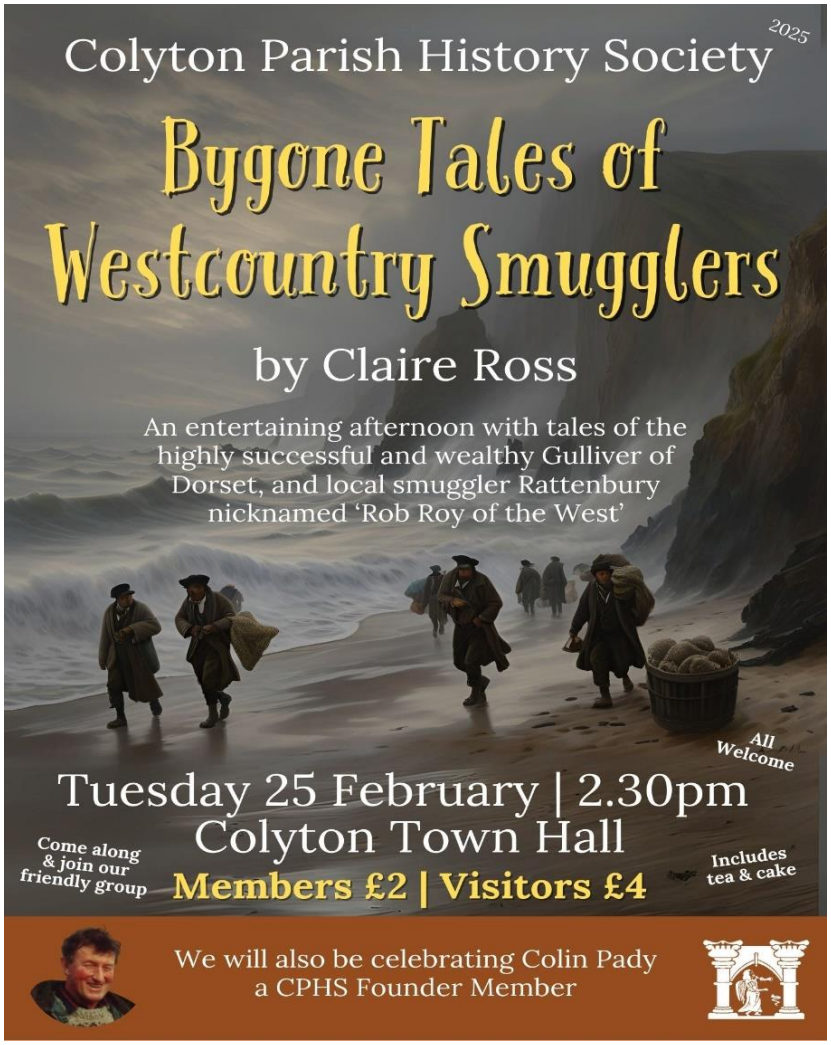
2. History Society News

a. First History Society talk of 2025



Note for your diary - the first History Society talk of the season will take place at **2.30 pm on Tuesday 25 February 2025** in the Town Hall. Claire Ross will entertain us with tales of local smugglers!

b. 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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3. Other organisations news and events

a. Axminster Heritage Centre

Women on the Home Front - The Second World War

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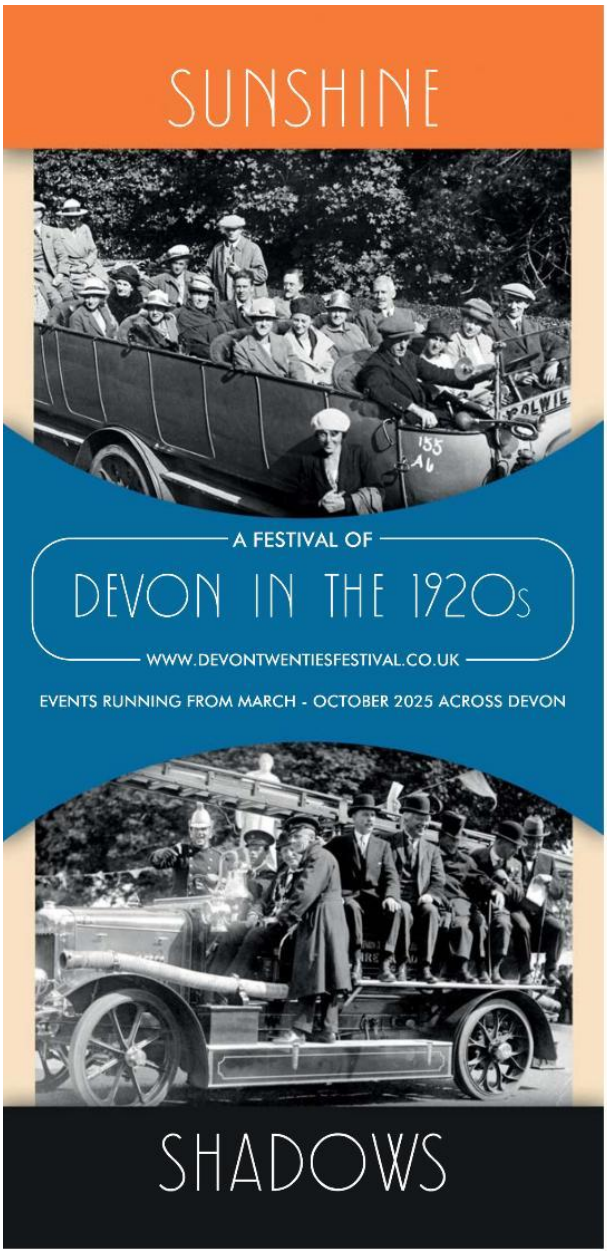
b. Devon History Society

This year Devon History Society, together with partners Devon Family History Society and the two county archives services, is presenting a Festival of Devon in the 1920s in venues across the county, showcasing the research done as part of the Devon in the 1920s project and by local groups and other organizations like the National Trust. We hope many of you will take the chance to explore life in Devon 100 years ago.



Devon Twenties Festival - Exploring life in 1920s Devon

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4. Items you may have missed

a. Historical Transformation of Exeter in 24,000 images
https://www.msn.com/en-gb/travel/news/exeter-s-historical-transformation-to-be-shared-in-24-000-fascinating-images/ar-AA1xWJN5?ocid=msedgntp&pc=U531&cvid=fd956fd8564747c8ae9220df0e6924aa&ei=14

b. Mol's House - Exeter home named as top property sale for 2025
East Devon home named as top property for sale in 2025 | Midweek Herald

c. Lyme Regis seafront sculpture trail
https://www.midweekherald.co.uk/news/24876362.lyme-regis-town-council-enhance-seafront-sculpture-trail/?ref=eb&nid=2397&block=article_block_a&u=26e309a1465491fa9108b8530c3bc91f&date=230125

d. Ottery Hospital
COLUMN: "Why the Ottery hospital can never disappear" | Sidmouth Herald

e. St Michael the Archangel Chapel of Ease Colyford
Devon church celebrates 800 years by remaking first service | Midweek Herald

f. Bones of 1500 found below Barnstaple street
Bones of 1,500 people stuffed inches below Devon high street - Devon Live

g. Stonehenge
https://www.bbc.com/future/article/20241220-the-archaeological-mystery-of-stonehenges-long-lost-megaliths

h. Paddington Station to showcase scenes from the South West
Paddington Station to showcase GWR exhibition in spring 2025 | Midweek Herald

i. Lost Devon coastal village
https://www.devonlive.com/news/history/devons-lost-coastal-village-loved-9832666?utm_source=devon_live_newsletter&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=auto_westernmorning_newsletter&utm_content=&utm_term=&ruid=0f3b0370-2d82-4801-be9a-21ee0af0fd15&hx=c2c794ed89df6602f4e82633c343d96d68a5399027490d09d0ed370ddee48065

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