COLYTON
HERITAGE CENTRE

a. Merchant's House
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16 March 2025

Colyton Parish History Society Newsletter

This month exciting news about the medieval tiles found at Newenham Abbey nearly fifty years ago, an update on research into the evacuee Lesley Jarman and crosses on signposts. Also notification of a special exhibition to commemorate the Monmouth Rebellion. .

1. News –

a. Newenham Abbey medieval tiles

In farmhouse wall, ex grave fill 1977, photo 2022 - by kind permission of John Allan

A year ago I described here how I visited a farm built on the site near Axminster where Newenham Abbey once stood. The farmer Lisle Burrough kindly showed us around pointing out vestiges of the fine old Cistercian building now incorporated into the walls of the farmhouse and outbuildings. Founded in 1246 by Reginald de Mohun, Earl of Somerset, it dominated the landscape for three hundred years until in 1538 it was destroyed during the Dissolution of the Monasteries by King Henry VIIIth. It then became a quarry for dressed stone with which to build many houses in the Axminster area.

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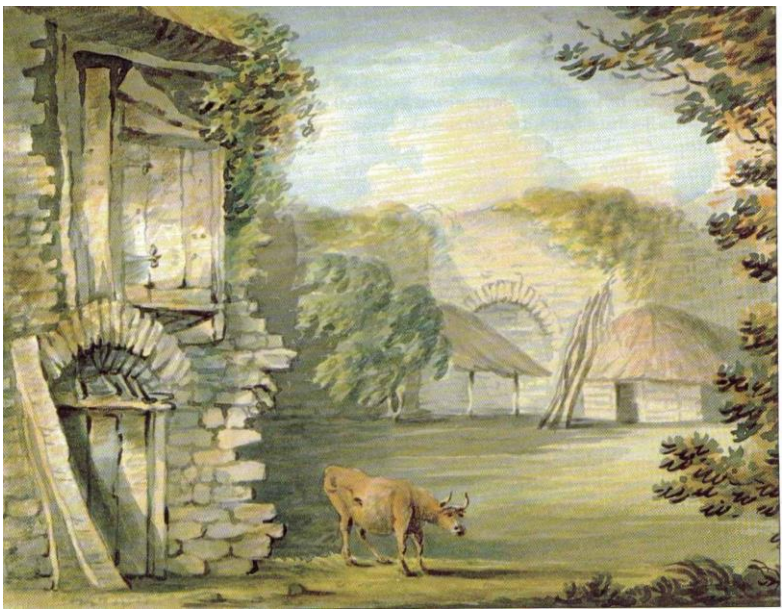
The Cistercian Abbey of Newenham, now virtually invisible, would once have dominated the landscape of the Axe Valley in medieval times with wealthy members of influential local families paying to be buried beneath the choir and cloisters. The Abbey site housed a thriving community of monks and farmers.

An archaeological survey conducted here in the 1970s unearthed some medieval tiles and seals. Some were subsequently put on display in the Museum at Axminster Heritage Centre and others were sent to another Museum in Exeter. In the intervening years that Museum closed down. I set about trying to find what happened to the tiles sent there. After some digging - no pun intended - I tracked them down to RAMM.

I requested to be able to see them. On a fine spring morning last year a small group of us visited RAMM's discretely anonymous storage facility and were duly signed in. Brown cardboard boxes lined with tissue paper were produced and opened to reveal both coloured fragments and ceramic tiles decorated with coats of arms and fleur de lys.

The History Society is very pleased to announce today that RAMM has kindly agreed to loan us some of the best tile pieces to be displayed here in Colyton Heritage Centre during our summer 2025 season. We are also delighted to welcome as our speaker in April Dr John Allan who as a young archaeologist conducted the survey at the Newenham Abbey site almost fifty years ago. John will be speaking to Colyton History Society on 22 April about the tiles and what they reveal about the Abbey and the period in which it was built. Today John is the chief archaeologist at Exeter Cathedral. To accompany the tile exhibit in the Heritage Centre we will also have a display about Newenham Abbey.



Swete, vol 2, 1795

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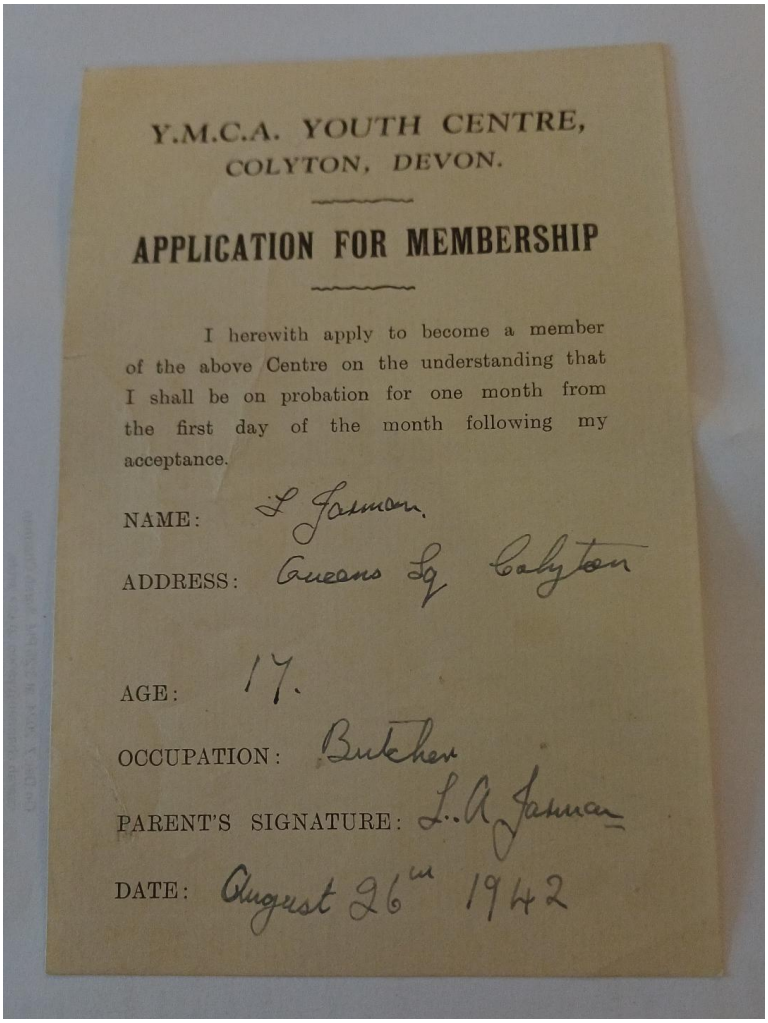
b. **Family enquiries – Update on Lesley Jarman story**

Last month we reported on the request from Leslie Jarman's daughters for information about the time he spent here in Colyton 80 years ago. At that time evacuees were encouraged to join the youth club in Colyton as a way of helping them integrate in the community. The other day I was doing some research on this and other matters in the Heritage Centre and while going through the papers in our evacuees file I retrieved Lesley Jarman's youth club membership application dated August 1942 when he was 17 years old and bearing his signature. I have forwarded a copy to his family who were delighted.



Y.M.C.A. YOUTH CENTRE,
COLYTON, DEVON.

APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP

I herewith apply to become a member of the above Centre on the understanding that I shall be on probation for one month from the first day of the month following my acceptance.

NAME: L Jarman.

ADDRESS: Queens Sq Colyton

AGE: 17.

OCCUPATION: Butcher

PARENT'S SIGNATURE: L.A Jarman

DATE: August 26th 1942

A copy of Lesley Jarman's youth club application - courtesy Colyton Heritage Centre

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Lesley's address at the time is given as Queens Square which may imply that he was billeted with the Rendell family whom I understand was the third butcher in town with a shop on the corner of Queens Square and Church Street? If anyone recalls the Rendell family at that time or their evacuee 'butcher boy' and can offer Lesley's family some information or reminiscences please do let me know.

c. <u>A further family history request for information about Eva McBain from her granddaughter Jill Stewart</u>

We have also been contacted by Jill Stewart who is seeking to find information about her grandmother whom she says was evacuated to Colyton around 1940/41. Her name was Eva McBain. She may have been accompanied by her elderly mother and two young sons (a toddler and a baby). They were from the Willesden area. She recalls her grandmother mentioning an old pub in Colyton which was made into a home for the children, and picking primroses.

Does anyone recall Eva? If you do have any information please let me know.

d. <u>Pottlelake cross symbols</u>

Has anyone discovered what these symbols mean since Tony Robinson asked last month? I've looked at hundreds of map symbols – I'd no idea there were so many - since he raised the issue but none of them look like this although there are some like the Maltese Cross which are similar?

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2. History Society News

a. Ever thought about volunteering in the Heritage Centre?

We are a fun and welcoming group with a passion for exploring the fascinating history of Colyton Parish. Do come along and meet us.

b. Membership – Reminder Annual Subscriptions are due

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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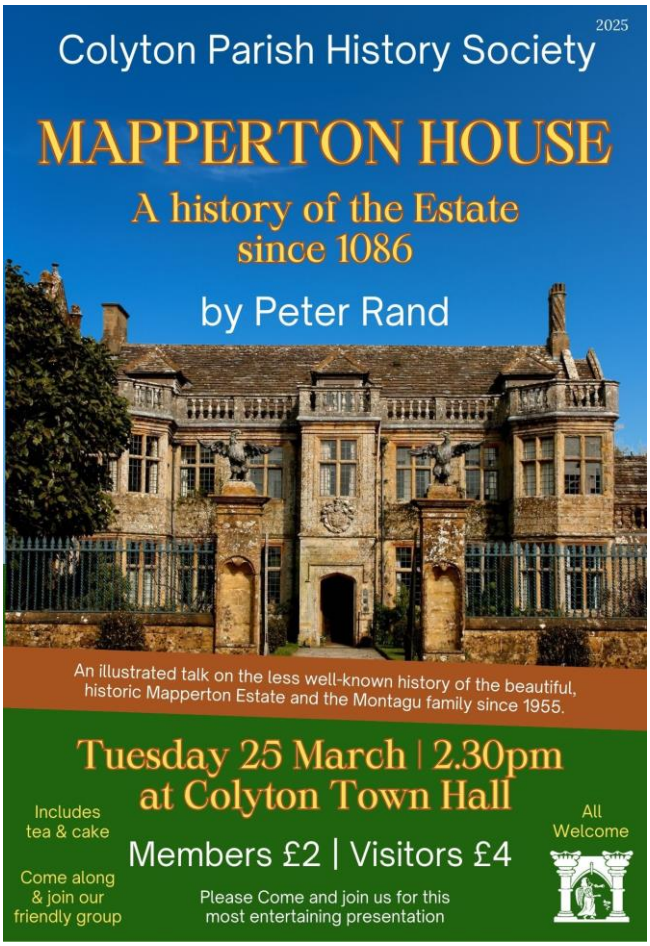
c. Colyton Town walks -

Reminder: Colyton's guided Town History walks/strolls will be starting again on **Thursday, April 10**, meeting in Dolphin Street carpark at 2.0pm, regardless of the weather. No booking required. £5.00 per person. As well as contributing to the CPHS funds, the walks help to keep Colyton on the map and spread the word of being a good place to visit. If you haven't been yet, do come and we are sure that you will learn something new about Colyton and its history. If you are interested in joining our merry band of guides please contact Jane Dauncey 01297 552514.

d. **History Society talks 2025**

i) **Reminder** Don't forget the next History Society talk. This one is about the history of the Mapperton House Estate since 1086 and is on **Tuesday, 25 March at 2.30 pm** at Colyton Town Hall.



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3. Other organisations news and events

Museum of Somerset, Taunton Castle – 29 March to 6 July 2025.

Special exhibition to mark the 340th anniversary of the Monmouth Rebellion in 1685 and its tragic consequences. Taunton Castle was the setting of Judge Jeffrey's Bloody Assizes.

For more details see:
Remembering the Monmouth Rebellion – South West Heritage Trust

4. Items you may have missed

a) Mapperton House
Montagu family and Mapperton House talk for Colyton society | Midweek Herald

b) Norman Lockyer Observatory
https://www.msn.com/en-gb/news/uknews/devon-observatory-with-links-to-brian-may-eyes-ownership-bid/ar-A1AlK14?ocid=msedgntp&pc=U531&cvid=063e779570a0478993549f0ea3ea2363&ei=19

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c) **Dorset burial site/Stonehenge**
https://www.theguardian.com/science/2025/mar/06/flagstones-monument-dorset-burial-site-stonehenge-age
Stonehenge long lost megaliths
https://www.bbc.com/future/article/20241220-the-archaeological-mystery-of-stonehenges-long-lost-megaliths

d) **Lydford Gorge**
https://www.msn.com/en-gb/lifestyle/travel/major-devon-attraction-submerged-after-mudslide/ar-AA1AvVYM?ocid=msedgntp&pc=U531&cvid=1881aca55dc44cc6a803f0be0d1ef9f4&ei=17

e) **The Secret History of Sharks**
Professor John Long to deliver talk at Lyme Regis Museum | Midweek Herald

f) **Killerton NT – 1920S Fashion Display**
Step into the roaring twenties with Killerton's stunning fashion exhibition - Devon Live

g) **Sir Walter Raleigh**
James May TV show filmed at pub by Exmouth now available to watch | Sidmouth Herald

h) **Volunteers help investigate Devons ancient past**
https://www.devon.gov.uk/news/volunteers-help-investigate-devons-ancient-past/

i) **Exploring Dorset's lost villages**
Exploring Dorset's lost villages and what is there now - Dorset Live

j) **Rare bible returned to Salisbury Cathedral after 700 years**
https://www.msn.com/en-gb/news/uknews/rare-medieval-bible-returned-to-salisbury-cathedral-after-700-years-with-help-of-independent-readers/ar-AA1zLUZE?ocid=msedgntp&pc=HCTS&cvid=b70ef6f9247f4f6b89eb182d5fa3e5c6&ei=9

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