COLYTON
HERITAGE CENTRE

a. Merchant's House
Market Place
Colyton
Devon
EX24 6JR
e. info@colytonheritagecentre.org
w. www.colytonheritagecentre.org

Colyton History Society Newsletter

11 April 2025

Spring has finally burst upon us bringing with it some glorious sunny days and opportunities to get out and about. So do come along to the Heritage Centre which reopens this week for the 2025 Summer Season with some exciting new displays.

This month in the Newsletter we also have news of another family connection successfully established with Colyton and a notable reference to a Colytonian in the new Monmouth Rebellion exhibition at Taunton museum.

1. News –

a. Heritage Centre reopens for Summer 2025 season

Tom Cadbury, RAMM delivering some medieval tiles from Newenham Abbey.

COLYTON
HERITAGE CENTRE

a. Merchant's House
Market Place
Colyton
Devon
EX24 6JR
e. info@colytonheritagecentre.org
w. www.colytonheritagecentre.org

We are delighted to have two new displays in the Heritage Centre this year. To coincide with our new exhibition about the history of Newenham Abbey, RAMM has kindly loaned us some medieval tiles which were found during the archaeological survey undertaken at Little Abbey Farm near Axminster nearly 50 years ago in 1977 by Dr John Allan, now consultant archaeologist to Exeter Cathedral who will be speaking to the History Society on Tuesday 22 April 2025.

We also have a new lace display kindly supplied by All Hallows Lace Museum in Honiton including an exquisite lace embroidered net veil.

Lace samples from Honiton lace museum

COLYTON
HERITAGE CENTRE

a. Merchant's House
Market Place
Colyton
Devon
EX24 6JR
e. info@colytonheritagecentre.org
w. www.colytonheritagecentre.org

b. History Society Talk – April 2025

COLYTON
HERITAGE CENTRE

a. Merchant's House
Market Place
Colyton
Devon
EX24 6JR
e. info@colytonheritagecentre.org
w. www.colytonheritagecentre.org

c. Family history enquiries

During the winter Ginny Waller from the United States contacted me asking for help with tracking down an ancestor from Colyton. Ginny said she was a lineal descendant of Roger Conant, one of the Founders of Salem in Massachusetts, USA in 1626. Roger Conant was born and baptized in East Budleigh in Devon in 1592. He left England around 1623. For the record, Sir Walter Raleigh was also born and raised in East Budleigh.

Ginny said that a long established story within her family was that they also had connections with a John Clarke of Colyton. She asked for help in confirming this. Having been through our copies of the Parish Registers which began recording births, marriages and deaths here in Colyton from 1538 I have now been able to confirm to Ginny that John Clarke was indeed the father in law of Rychard Connett – son of John Connett of East Budleye - who married Agnes (Annes) John Clarke's daughter (she had been baptized in St Andrew's Church in Colyton on 16 May 1548), on 4 February 1578/79. Their son and John Clarke's grandson Roger Conant was baptized 13 years later in East Budleigh in 1592. NB The spelling of names was not standardised at that time.

Moreover, we can take the story back further. John Clarke was a wealthy Colytonian merchant who was one of the worthy Colytonians who in 1546 went to King Henry VIII and petitioned him to allow them to buy back some of the estates formerly belonging to his cousin Henry Courtenay, Marquis of Exeter which the King had seized when he had Henry executed for treason in 1539. This included the Parish of Colyton. King Henry agreed to their request for the sum of 1000 marks and granted the group a Royal Charter which led to the establishment of the Colyton Chamber of Feoffees in 1546. John Clarke became one of the first Feoffees.

His death in 1585 is recorded thus: "*John Clarke, the elder, of Coliton, merchant, was buried the IX of Aprill, who in his lyfe time was the cheffest traviler of the purchas of the manor of Coliton, and the markets, with other lyberties pertaining the same, as aperieth by the patent – and deceased the VI day of Aprill*."

References

https://www.exmouthjournal.co.uk/news/23024040.review-east-budleighs-roger-conant-founder-salem-massachusetts/ accessed online 07.04.25

The History of the Feoffees of Colyton 1546-2016, Reg White, Colin Pady

https://historyofmassachusetts.org/roger-conant-salem/ accessed online 07.04.25

History of Salem, Massachusetts accessed online 07.04.25

COLYTON
HERITAGE CENTRE

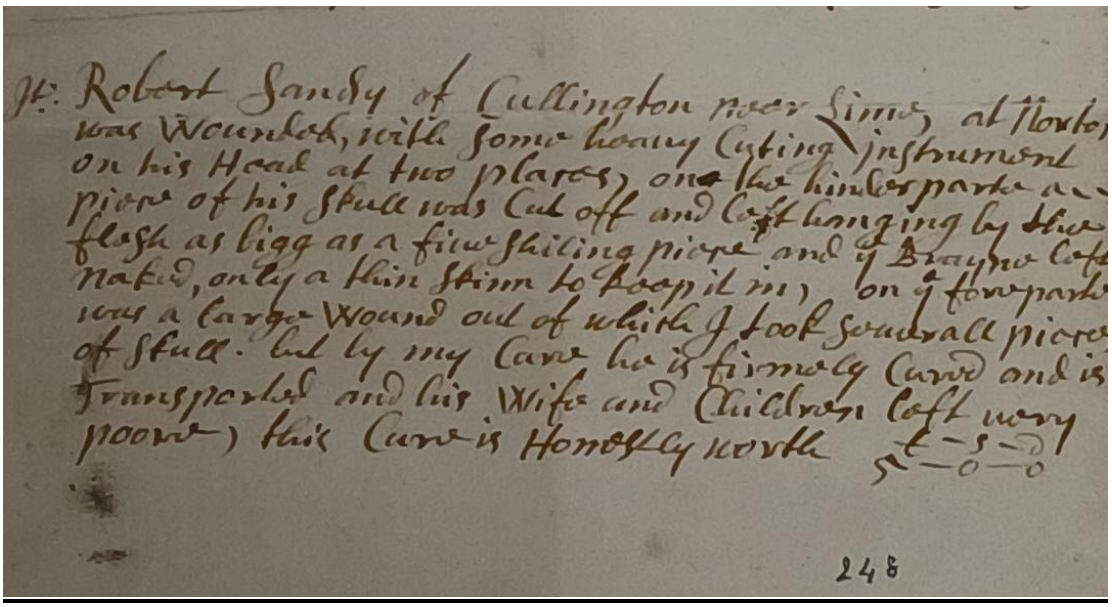
a. Merchant's House
Market Place
Colyton
Devon
EX24 6JR
e. info@colytonheritagecentre.org
w. www.colytonheritagecentre.org

d. Robert Sandy, Colytonian Rebel in the Monmouth Rebellion

An interesting new exhibition commemorating the 340th anniversary of the Monmouth Rebellion in 1585 and depicting its tragic consequences for many of the rebels has gone on display at Taunton Museum. Among the exhibits is a bill submitted to the government by Joseph Winter a local surgeon, dated January 1686, who treated some of the wounded rebels at Ilchester gaol. Among his patients was a Robert Sandy (Sands) from Cullington (Colyton) near Lime.

The bill provides a graphic description of Robert's injuries. He had 'some heavy cutting with an instrument on his head' at two places. 'The hinder part of his skull was cut off and pieces of flesh as big as a five shilling piece left hanging' his brains exposed and 'only a thin skin to keep it in'. Joseph Winter took several pieces of skull from the open wound. Remarkably, Robert Sands recovered and Winter charged £5 for 'curing' him – a considerable sum in those days. The exhibit label states that Sands was transported leaving his wife and children very poor.

Back in Colyton, I found further confirmation in Colin Haynes book *The Most Rebellious Town in Devon** that Sands suffered two sabre cuts to the head in fighting at Norton St Philip, stood trial at Dorchester and was sentenced to transportation to Barbados on the *Betty* in January 1686 where he was sold into servitude to a John Goddingham.



Ref: *The Most Rebellious Town in Devon, The Monmouth Rebellion of 1685 and the Citizens of Colyton by Colin Haynes, available at Colyton Heritage Centre Price £9.50*.

COLYTON
HERITAGE CENTRE
a. Merchant's House
Market Place
Colyton
Devon
EX24 6JR
e. info@colytonheritagecentre.org
w. www.colytonheritagecentre.org

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.

2. History Society News

a. **VE Day 80** – On Thursday 8 May 1945 VE Day – Victory in Europe Day - was celebrated to mark Germany's surrender and the end of the war in Europe. VJ day, celebrated several weeks later in August 1945, would mark the end of the 2nd World War around the globe.

As we approach the 80th anniversary does anyone have any family memories of VE Day here in Colyton or around East Devon - such as photos or diary accounts - which they would like to share for next month's anniversary? If so, please let me know and we will feature them in the May Newsletter. Sarah.charman@yahoo.co.uk

b. **History Society talks 2025** - The autumn session of History Society talks will begin on Tuesday **September 23rd at 2.30 pm with Jane Austen in Devon** by Hazel Jones from the Jane Austen Society.

c. **Membership – Reminder Annual Subscriptions are due**
Reminder for anyone who has not yet paid their annual subscription for 2025. 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)

d. **Colyton Town walks -** Reminder: Colyton's guided Town History walks/strolls start 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.

COLYTON
HERITAGE CENTRE

a. Merchant's House
Market Place
Colyton
Devon
EX24 6JR
e. info@colytonheritagecentre.org
w. www.colytonheritagecentre.org

3. Other organisations news and events

COLYTON
HERITAGE CENTRE
a. Merchant's House
Market Place
Colyton
Devon
EX24 6JR
e. info@colytonheritagecentre.org
w. www.colytonheritagecentre.org

4. Items you may have missed

a) Exhibition of noted photographer James Ravilious' work
Honiton exhibition to highlight work of James Ravilious | Midweek Herald

b) Work begins at Royal Clarence site to rebuild the fire hit landmark
https://www.midweekherald.co.uk/news/25058529.exeter-work-begins-project-rebuild-fire-hit-landmark/?ref=eb&nid=2397&block=article_block_a&u=26e309a1465491fa9108b8530c3bc91f&date=030425

c) Beaminster Museum to display rare bronze age gold fragment
https://www.bridportnews.co.uk/news/25059017.beaminster-museum-display-rare-bronze-age-gold-fragment/

d) NT walks through Branscombe launched
National Trust walks through Branscombe village launched | Midweek Herald

e) Totnes Castle
Devon castle that's a 'must on any visitor list' under threat - Devon Live

f) Spring activities at NT properties
National Trust Devon spring activities including Easter | Sidmouth Herald

g) Branscombe Mill
National Trust's Branscombe Manor Mill to reopen in April | Midweek Herald

h) Colyford 800th anniversary
Colyford 800th anniversary celebrated with special event | Midweek Herald

i) Royal Navy medals sold at auction
https://www.sidmouthherald.co.uk/news/25041500.royal-navy-medals-bought-auction-hmt-sidmouth/?ref=eb&nid=2405&block=article_block_a&u=26e309a1465491fa9108b8530c3bc91f&date=280325

S**arah Charman**
Editor – CPHS Newsletter
sarah.charman@yahoo.co.uk