

Colyton Parish History Society Newsletter

7 February 2026

1. News

In Memoriam



Mrs Marian Sydenham, Chairman of Colyton Parish History Society said today: "It is with great sadness that we announce the passing of one of our longstanding members, Cathy Ilsley.

"We remember Cathy's support and contribution to the Colyton Parish History Society with great appreciation. Cathy was an active member for many years, as well as being Secretary 2004–2007, and a committee member. Her extensive research into local businesses and trades within Colyton over the centuries is an important resource held in our archive at the Heritage Centre. It is consulted on a regular basis both by researchers and visitors alike seeking to trace family history.

"On behalf of the Colyton Parish History Society, the Committee would like to convey their condolences to Mike Ilsley and their families. **A service will be held in St Andrew's Church on Friday, 13 February at 1.30pm.** "



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

b. Colyton Houses Through Time community project

We have had an amazing response to this project since we launched it in January and now have over 50 members researching the history of some forty houses in Colyton, Colyford and Seaton! Thank you to everyone who has joined up – your enthusiasm is inspiring! We are really looking forward to seeing the results of everyone's labours and to learning more about the history and community of Colyton.

If anyone else thinks they would like to research the history of their house or is happy to help someone else do so then please do speak to Claire Ross (clairehross61@gmail.com), Sarah Humphries (cloamcrazy@gmail.com), or me - Sarah Charman (sarah.charman@yahoo.co.uk).

Sarah Humphries is running regular sessions in the Heritage Centre on Saturday mornings (10.30 am to 12.30 pm) for researchers to drop in with any questions they may have and Claire Ross is happy to help people get to grips with online sources such as Ancestry.com I am happy to help with any general queries and particularly about the Feoffees.

Our next **Houses Through Time project** monthly meeting is at **10.00 am to 12 noon Saturday 14 February** in the Sunday School Building where John Forrester Addie will be available to answer questions. (PLEASE NOTE This means Sarah Humphries will not be in the Heritage Centre next Saturday morning as she will be at the project meeting in the Sunday School building.)

Reference - [BBC Two - A House Through Time](#)

Colyton Ghosts?

If anyone is interested in helping with more general historical research we are curious to know about Colyton ghosts! Do you know of any? Is there a story of ghostly activity which has come down through your family? Has anyone in your family experienced a ghostly sitting or odd goings on in their home or the town? If so – please do tell us we'd love to know! Send any stories or photos to me sarah.charman@yahoo.co.uk Attached is an article from the *Midweek Herald* written in 2017 which contains a helpful resume of a number of local Colyton ghost stories. Do you know more?


Reference - [East Devon's ghostly residents | Midweek Herald](#)



COLYTON
HERITAGE CENTRE

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c. **First CPHS Talk of 2026**



Colyton Parish History Society

Includes Quiz,
Tea & Cake

All Welcome

Please Come and
Join Us and
Support Your
Local Library

An illustrated
talk on the
humble origins
of Colyton
Library and the
evolution over
the past 101
years to the
important place
it holds in
today's local
community

Flame from the original sign for the County Library

**COLYTON LIBRARY
Celebrates 101 Years**

A Talk by William Mearns | Libraries Unlimited

2026



Tuesday 24th February | 2.30pm
Colyton Town Hall
Members £2 | Visitors £4





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2. Other Society News

a. Membership – Reminder Annual Subscription due in January 2026

A reminder that annual membership fees for 2026 are due from the beginning of January. 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) NB There is also an opportunity to Gift Aid your contribution.

3. Other organisations events

a. South West Heritage Trust

Explore the History of A Building - Saturday, 11th April 2026, 10:00–12:00

Ever wondered about the story behind a building—your house, a workplace, a school, a shop, or a landmark in your community? Start uncovering those interesting histories at this Discovery Saturday. Join us at the Somerset Heritage Centre for a display showcasing the archival and library resources that can help you investigate all kinds of buildings. There will be: A curated display of documents and books, Guidance on researching building history, staff available to answer questions about your own research or ideas and a relaxed, welcoming environment for beginners and experienced researchers alike. This gathering is part of Discovery Saturdays, where attendees can also [book a searchroom session](#) for their research.

LOCATION - Somerset Heritage Centre, Brunel Way, Norton Fitzwarren, Taunton TA2 6SF

Reference

[Discovery Saturday: Building History – South West Heritage Trust](#)

b. **RAMM - Seaton Down Hoard**



Did you know that one of the most significant collections of Roman coins ever found in Britain was unearthed by metal detectorist Laurence Egerton a decade ago not far from Colyton and is now on display at RAMM in Exeter? Dating mostly from the 4th century during the reign of Emperor Constantine I there are 22,888 coins made of copper alloy. Would you like the chance to touch some of these coins and see the images on them and learn about the history of those times? Well now you can.



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RAMM is organising regular sessions for people to go and have the opportunity to handle and examine some of these coins. Keep an eye on the RAMM website for details of when these sessions are taking place – you will probably need to book in advance.

References

[Roman and Seaton Down Hoard Gallery Handling - RAMM](#)


[Seaton Down Hoard - Royal Albert Memorial Museum & Art Gallery](#)

b) Exeter Local History Society

A celebration of recently-published research on Exeter

EXETER

EXETER LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY



HISTORY BOOK FESTIVAL

SATURDAY 21 FEBRUARY 2026

Mint Methodist Church Centre, Fore Street, Exeter EX4 3AT
Tickets: £10 (+ booking fee), available from Exeter Corn Exchange
<https://www.exetercornexchange.co.uk/whats-on/exeter-history-book-festival>

9.30 Registration & Coffee
10.25 Welcome

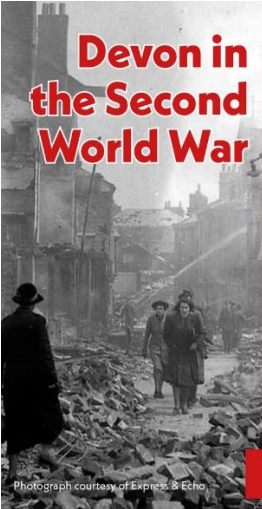
10.30 Dr John Pamment
Salvatore 'An untimely departure?
The role of the Roman Second
Legion Augusta whilst at Exeter'

11.30 Dr Todd Gray MBE 'Exeter
In Mass Observation, the Home
Front diaries of 1937 to 1945'
12.30 Lunch

1.30 Dr Andrew Thrush
'Exeter and Parliament, 1559-1629'

2.30 Tracey Norman &
Mark Norman 'Devon's Forgotten
Witches 1860-1910'
3.30 Tea

Devon in the Second World War



Photograph courtesy of Express & Echo

Saturday, 14 March 2026
Mint Methodist Church Centre,
Fore Street, Exeter EX4 3AT

9.30 Registration 10.30 Welcome

10.40 **Dr Harry Bennett**
'The War for Devon's Shore: Devon and
the Battle of the Atlantic, 1939 to 1945'

11.40 **Dr Todd Gray**
'Mass Observation & Devon, 1937 to 1945'

12.40 - 1.45 Lunch Break

1.45 **Chris Robinson** 'It Came To Our Door:
Plymouth, 1939 to 1945'

2.45 **Dr Todd Gray** 'Exeter, 1939 to 1945'

3.15 **Michael Parrott** 'Exeter's Guardian
Angel: The Story of the Polish 307 Squadron'

3.45 End

Tickets: £12 available from
www.stevensbooks.co.uk and tel 07900 915469



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c. Branscombe Project Talks

THE BRANSCOMBE PROJECT WINTER TALKS - BOOK LAUNCH - EXHIBITION

January 26 Monday 7.30

VINDOLANDA

Gary Calland

Recent Work and Discoveries and the Problem of Climate Change
We had a brilliant talk on Vindolanda last year but it was blowing a hooley that night and so the audience was small. We have asked for another talk, including a discussion of how they're tackling, in the face of climate change, the fact that peat is drying out and the Roman artefacts are disappearing.

February 23 Monday 7:30

STONEHENGE

Yet More Amazing Discoveries

Mike Parker-Pearson

Mike promises that, yet again, we will be amongst the first to hear of new discoveries at Stonehenge and further afield

March 23 Monday 7.30

THE BURNT HOUSE AT WESTON

Winners and Losers in an Eighteenth-century Devon Landscape

Launch of Barbara Farquharson and John Torrance's book
A bit of a talk, by Barbara, and, if things go according to plan, a bit of a drama doc

March 28 & March 29

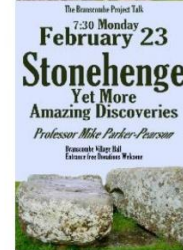
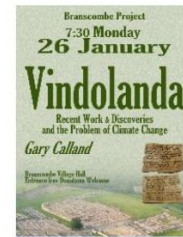
Saturday & Sunday 10am - 5 pm

EXHIBITION

JOIN US TO CELEBRATE

THIRTY YEARS OF THE BRANSCOMBE PROJECT

Exhibition Boards; Interactive Favourite Places; WW2 Video; Talking Head Video; Cream Teas





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4. Items you may have missed

- a) WW2 Women Codebreakers
[Talk shines light on secret Second World War women codebreakers](#)

- b) Sidmouth teacher seeking stories of WWII fallen servicemen
[Sidmouth teacher seeks stories of WWII fallen servicemen | Sidmouth Herald](#)

- c) Target to buy land around Cerne Abbas giant reached
<https://www.msn.com/en-gb/money/other/appeal-supported-by-actor-to-buy-land-surrounding-famous-dorset-landmark-hits-target/ar-AA1VwVS1?ocid=msedgntp&pc=HCTS&cvid=6981f0ebf7444a658cfa0263ffd1bfa0&ei=15>

- d) Rare Tudor map of Kingsbridge acquired
https://www.devonlive.com/news/devon-news/rare-tudor-map-devon-town-10773499?utm_source=devon_live_newsletter&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=auto_westernmorning_newsletter&utm_content=&utm_term=&uid=0f3b0370-2d82-4801-be9a-21ee0af0fd15&hx=c2c794ed89df6602f4e82633c343d96d68a5399027490d09d0ed370ddee48065