



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

Colyton Parish History Society Newsletter

17 March 2026

Lots of interesting talks this month being offered by local organisations. Plus a possible explanation for the Gerrard Arms name and a request for any information you may have about the Greek key design which appears on so many local buildings.

1. News

a. The Gerrard Arms – is this the explanation for its name?

Sylvia Jopson who contacted the Heritage Centre last year and visited Colyton in the summer when she was exploring her family background has kindly contacted me to share some information she found during her researches into the Strawbridge family.

1848. Marriage solemnized in the Church in the Parish of Colyton in the County of Devon								
No.	When Married.	Name and Surname.	Age.	Condition.	Rank or Profession.	Residence at the Time of Marriage.	Father's Name and Surname.	Rank or Profession of Father.
176	Nov 30	John Potter Elizabeth Strawbridge	Male Male	Bachelor Spinster	Bookeller .	Islington Middlesex Colyton	Thomas Potter George Strawbridge	Bookkeeper Bookkeeper
Married in the Church according to the Rites and Ceremonies of the Church by Licence by me, J. Clarke								
This Marriage was solemnized between us,		John Potter Elizabeth Strawbridge		in the Presence of us,		John Smith Elizabeth Smith		

“In 1851 ‘The Gerrard Arms’ in Islington was in the hands of John Potter and his wife Elizabeth nee Strawbridge. Elizabeth returned to Colyton and died in July 1853, while living with her Father in Law.

13

Parish or Township of	Ecclsiastical District of	City or Borough of	House of	Village of			
Minstons	St Peter's	Exmouth					
Name of Street, Place, or Road, and Name or No. of House	Name and Surname of each Person who abode in the house, on the Night of the 30th March, 1851	Relation to Head of Family	Condition	Age of Male	Rank, Profession, or Occupation	Where Born	Whether Married or Single
68 Gerrard's	John Richard	Serv	U	18	General Serv	Staffordsh. Walsingham	
68 Gerrard's	John Savage	Head	Mar	46	Gentleman	England parish	
	Martha do	Wife	Mar	36		do do	
	Annia Sney	Serv	U	12	General serv	Staffordsh. Lichfield	
69 Gerrard's	Empty House						
69 Gerrard's	John Sedley	Head	Mar	36	Licensed Victualler	Staffordsh. Lichfield	
	Elizabeth do	Wife	Mar	30		do do	
70 Gerrard's	Empty House						
70 Gerrard's	Thomas Barrett	Head	Mar	58	Woollen Warehouseman	Wiltshire Leeds	
	Ann do	Wife	Mar	29		London	
	Charles do	Serv	U	13	Employed in a Woollen Warehouse	Staffordsh. Leeds	
	George do	Serv	U	11	Employed in a Woollen Warehouse	do do	
	Elizabeth do	Serv	U	24	Domestic servant	Staffordsh. Lichfield	
71 Gerrard's	John Richard	Head	U	58	Accountant	Staffordsh. Lichfield	
	Elizabeth do	Wife	U	39		Staffordsh. Lichfield	
	Ann do	Serv	U	11	Early Servant	Staffordsh. Lichfield	
	John do	Serv	U	10	do	Staffordsh. Lichfield	
	John do	Serv	U	14	do	Staffordsh. Lichfield	
	Ann do	Serv	U	34	Accountant	Staffordsh. Lichfield	
	Ann do	Serv	U	14	Servant	Staffordsh. Lichfield	
Total of Males				14			
Total of Females				60			

Sylvia writes:

"I remember on my Guided Tour that the tour guide made a comment about the Gerrard Arms and she said nobody seemed to know why it was so named. I know the Strawbridge Family had connections with the " Old George " in Lower Church Street and I wondered if they may at sometime have had the " Gerrard Arms " (as is now) and if the name was possibly a tribute to his daughter.

"Her husband John, remarried in 1855, and died in 1859."

No.	When Died.	Name and Surname.	Sex.	Age.	Rank or Profession.	Cause of Death.	Signature, Description, and Residence of Informant.	When Registered.	Signature of Registrar.
347	16th month July 1853	Elizabeth Potter	Female	31 years	Wife of John Potter Inn Keeper	Phthisis Typhus 4 days continued	Lydia Cooper present at the death Colyton	16th month July 1853	Wm. Carr Registrar



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

b. CPHS News

i) **CPHS March Talk**

Includes
Tea & Cake

All
Welcome

Colyton Parish History Society

FOR THE LOVE OF A RAILWAY

BY BARRIE HEDGES

An illustrated talk on the

Old Axminster to Lyme Regis Railway

Just 62 years of service but transformed
the fortunes of Axminster & Lyme Regis

2026

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

*Come
along
& join our
friendly
group*



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

II) CPHS 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.

III) Colyton Houses Through Time community project

'A House Through Time'

Colyton Community Project

'Researching Family & Social History'

By Local Historian David Knapman

**Wednesday, 25 March
7.30pm at Colyton Town Hall**

David will talk about a mixture of key information sources (both on-line and in hard copy), and how to use them for social history research, as well as pointing towards some more specialised sources for those who are trying to push their researches back into the 18th century and beyond.

Free Entry, all welcome

For further details contact Sarah Humphries

Email: cloamcrazy@gmail.com

ii) Greek key symbol – what does it mean? by Sarah Charman

Several buildings in Colyton and Colyford have a stylised Greek key design painted on them. Does anyone know why and what, if anything, it implies? Did it mean the owners at one time were indicating they shared a common belief or political/religious interest? Does it mean anything? Or was it simply an attractive design feature which became trendy among the nouveau riche as a way of signifying their success in the presentation of their houses?



The Institute of Classical Architecture and Art states that the design known as a Greek key has existed for at least two millennia:

“The terms Greek key, fret, and meander are all names for a decorative device employed on buildings and objects beginning in ancient Greece and continuing to modern times. [i] The device comes in a variety of forms. At its most basic, it is a band consisting of short horizontal and vertical fillets connected to each other at right angles. It has been called a Greek key because an individual section vaguely resembles a primitive key. The labelling

of it as a meander results from its continuous back and forth progression, recalling the winding course of the Meander River in Asia Minor, now present-day Turkey. The unbroken, interlocking pattern made it a symbol of both unity and infinity.”(1)

If you compare the designs on different buildings in the Colyton area they are not identical, displaying minor character variations, implying perhaps that the original meaning, if any, gradually became subsumed by personal taste and was taken up by local builders to impress their clientele?



If anyone knows why there was a particular interest in these artistic devices here in Colyton and Colyford and when they were first used then please do let me know! Also if your property has or you can still discern it had such designs.

Sarah.charman@yahoo.co.uk

Reference

[The Complex Greek Meander - Institute of Classical Architecture & Art](#)

iii) Visit to Exeter Heritage Centre

– Brian Carpenter has kindly offered to organise a tour of the Heritage Centre at Sowton in Exeter for us at **2.30 pm on Monday 30 March**. In addition to a tour of the Centre, Brian will also arrange for us a display of documents relating to Colyton and a selection of books and websites relating more generally to house history and he will give advice on researching the history of your house. Space means we are restricted to 15 people – there are still a few places left so if you are interested **please contact me asap!**

The Centre charges £50 for a tour so between 15 of us that will be £3.50 each please. I will take my own car and can offer a lift to 3 people. Can the rest of you please pair up and share cars. There is parking available. Please email me if you are interested. Sarah.charman@yahoo.co.uk

2. Other organisations events

i) National Archives - Researching your 20th century ancestors

You can register to get access to this free zoom talk by the NA by clicking on the link below.

[Researching your 20th century ancestors Tickets, Tuesday, Apr 14, 2026 at 7:30 pm GMT+1 | Eventbrite](#)



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

ii) Somerset Heritage Centre – Explore the History of a Building

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.

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

III) Kilmington History Group

“The Freemason and the Fortune Hunter”

William & Louisa Tucker of Coryton Park

A Presentation by The Kilmington History Group

Told by Alan Clarkson

The fascinating, intriguing and scandalous story of the last William Tucker of Kilmington's Coryton Park, and Louisa, his enigmatic and fortune hunting wife. Would this be the end for the Tucker empire?

Who knew such things happened in Kilmington?

Wednesday, 18 March 2026 at 7.00 p.m.

Kilmington Village Hall. Tickets £4 (cash only). Doors open 6.30 p.m.

To reserve tickets, contact alan-clarkson@hotmail.com or

07934 854615





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

IV) Lyme Regis U3A

Talk **Friday 10 April 2026 - Archaeology: Exmoor's Earliest Communities - Rob Wilson-North** at Woodmead Halls, Hill Road, Lyme Regis DT7 3PG where there is a paying car park. Refreshments are served between **10.15 and 10.45 am, and the talk starts at 11:00 am**. Non-members are welcome for a small charge. [Events - LR U3A](#)

V) Workshop on 'How to Get Your Book Published'

Saturday 11 April between 2- 4pm, Kennaway House,
Sidmouth www.mariamccarthypublishing.co.uk www.wegotickets.com/mariamccarthy .
<https://www.sidmouthherald.co.uk/news/25935280.publishing-workshop-coming-kennaway-house-sidmouth/>

3. Items you may have missed

- a. Elizabeth Pole's bible – she was born at Shute Barton
[Bible dating from 1615 to go under the hammer in Belfast – The Irish Times](#)

<https://newenglandhistoricalsociety.com/elizabeth-poole-first-woman-found-town-americas/>
- b. St Andrew's Church – Simon Jenkins
[Colyton](#)
- c. Police helping to protect historic shipwrecks in Devon
[Police helping to protect historic shipwrecks in Devon | Sidmouth Herald](#)
- d. Grade II listed Jacob's Ladder Steps closed until further notice
https://www.sidmouthherald.co.uk/news/25862809.sidmouths-jacobs-ladder-steps-closed-notice/?ref=eb&nid=2405&block=article_block_a&u=26e309a1465491fa9108b8530c3bc91f&date=180226
- e. The changing names of Ottery St Mary's streets
[OPINION: The changing names of Ottery St Mary's streets | Sidmouth Herald](#)
- f. Canadian millionaire's daffodil legacy to Sidmouth



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

https://www.sidmouthherald.co.uk/news/25897086.sidmouth-daffodils-bloom-canadian-millionaires-gift/?ref=eb&nid=2405&block=article_block_a&u=26e309a1465491fa9108b8530c3bc91f&date=020326

g. Devon historians uncover hidden history of women's work in Tudor England

[Devon historians uncover hidden history of women's work in Tudor England](#)

h. Killerton costume exhibition features slipper linked to King James II

[Centuries-old slipper linked to King James II at Killerton | Sidmouth Herald](#)

i. Walk a Roman road and explore Dorset's ancient landscape

[Walk a Roman road and explore Dorset's ancient landscape](#)

j. Ancient town mill in Lyme

[All you need to know about the ancient town mill in Lyme | Midweek Herald](#)

k. Historic Dorset wartime vessels secured for the future

[Historic Dorset wartime vessels secured for the future](#)

j. Beryl Cook exhibition Plymouth

[Beryl Cook: Pride and Joy exhibition at The Box Plymouth | Great British Life](#)

Sarah Charman
Editor