

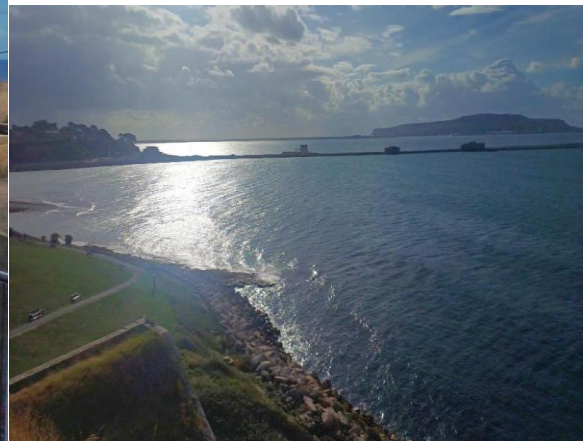
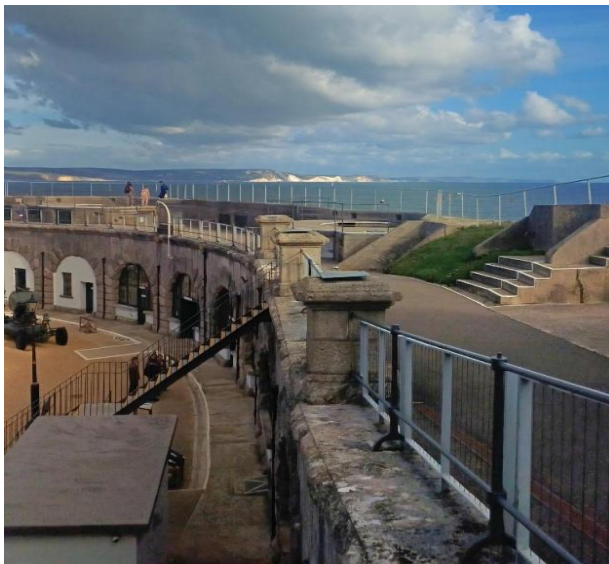
Colyton Parish History Society Newsletter

24 October 2026

1. News

Nothe Fort, Weymouth – by Sarah Charman

I first became aware of Nothe Fort in 2012 when I visited Weymouth to watch the sailing during the Olympics, for which it provided a commanding backdrop. But this is the first time I've visited. Built in the mid nineteenth century it is constructed snugly within the landscape and commands a fantastic 360 degree view over the town of Weymouth and out across the broad expanse of the bay and the breakwater southwards towards Portland.



Three floors contain displays highlighting the fort's role in Victorian times, during WW2 and the D Day landings and finally descending into the bowels - a nuclear bunker used up until the 1990s during the Cold War.

Begun in 1869 as a defence against France, the Victorian gun deck, which surrounds the parade ground, housed 12 muzzle loading coastal defence guns, some of which are on display. Two 6 inch breech loading guns were added on the ramparts in 1903 and it was used again during the early part of WW1.



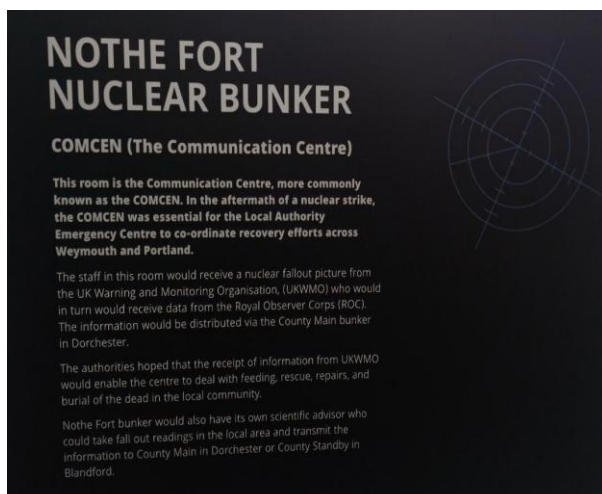
Victorian era gun deck



WW2

In World War 2 an anti-aircraft (AA) gun was added on a tower by the gatehouse, with four more heavy AA guns just outside the fort in what is now the carpark. The fort was a key part of the local defences when a German invasion was feared in 1940 and later in the war protected American forces in the build-up to the D-Day Normandy landings. It was also used as an AA ammunition storage and distribution centre for South-West England.

By 1970 there was no longer a military need for the fort and ownership was transferred to Weymouth and Portland Council. The fort soon became derelict. After much refurbishment work by volunteers it opened to the public as a museum in 1980. In 1984 the Council converted part of the underground magazine area into an emergency Civil Defence Nuclear Bunker – hiding in plain sight - which functioned for six years during the Cold War until it was decommissioned in 1990 after the collapse of the Soviet Union. Today it continues as a fascinating museum – well worth a visit.



Refs.

<https://share.google/5vuGAp1f1sqA0T2qF>



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

2. CPHS events

A reminder that our October talk by Nigel Daniel on the maritime history of Axmouth harbour is this coming **Tuesday 27 October at 2.30 pm in Colyton Town Hall**. Members £2 Non Members £4. All our welcome. Do come along. It will be followed for Members by our AGM.

COLYTON PARISH HISTORY SOCIETY

The Story of
**AXMOUTH
HARBOUR**
— Nigel Daniel —
Local Historian & Author

The fascinating maritime history
of this ancient haven
The long forgotten story of the
late medieval port
And on into the 1800s

Come
along
& join our
friendly
group
All Welcome

Tuesday, 27th October 2.30pm
Colyton Town Hall
Members £2 | Visitors £4

Includes
Tea & Cake



2026

3. Colyton Houses Through Time Project

A further reminder that we are holding a small exhibition in Colyton in the **Sunday School Building** to reveal the fascinating findings of our project volunteers about the history of selected houses in Colyton. The exhibition will take place on **Thursday 29 October from 2.00 til 4.00 pm, Friday and Saturday 30 and 31 October from 10 am to 4.00 pm and Sunday 1 November from 10 am to 1.00 pm** and is free to enter. We do hope you will come along.

4. Other CPHS News

a. Tea Time – help needed!

Our volunteer tea lady Jane, who you all know and enjoy her lovely homemade cakes, would like some help to serve tea and cake at our meetings.

Just pouring and serving, no washing up!!

Your offer to help at our meeting on Tuesday would be appreciated, thank you.



b. Heritage Centre Closes for the winter

A reminder that the Heritage Centre closes for the winter at the end of this month and will reopen in the Spring.

5. Other organisations events

a. Devon Heritage Centre

Following last year's very successful display, **Devon Heritage Centre** will be staging another exhibition of old maps on **Saturday 21st November, between 10 and 12.30**. If you wish to attend you can book via the link below: <https://swheritage.org.uk/archives-reopening-information/>

b. Axe Vale Heritage Association



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THE AXE VALLEY HERITAGE ASSOCIATION PRESENTS

STONEHENGE:

THE STORY SO FAR

— A JOURNEY THROUGH 5,000 YEARS —
OF HUMAN INGENUITY, MYSTERY
AND DISCOVERY

THE WORLD'S MOST FAMOUS STONE CIRCLE.
The story continues...

WITH **JULIAN RICHARDS**
ARCHAEOLOGIST, FILMMAKER
& FORMER BBC PRESENTER

AN AFTERNOON TALK NOT TO BE MISSED!
→ BOOK YOUR TICKETS NOW ←

Monday 2nd November, 2 - 4pm
At The Gateway Theatre
Fore Street, Seaton

Tickets are available from Paperchain in
Marine Place or by scanning this QR code
AVHA members £3 Non members £5
Includes tea or coffee and biscuits & cake.
There will also be a raffle.



5. Items you may have missed

- [Southampton trade historians teach AI to read handwriting - BBC News](#)
- [Nonconformist family history: The best websites | Who Do You Think You Are Magazine](#)
- [Jurassic Coast fossil records made available in digital catalogue - BBC News](#)



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- d) [Ottery St Mary church wins Lottery backing for £1.3m project | Sidmouth Herald](#)
- e) [The 1600s pioneer from Wiltshire who challenged earth's origins - BBC News](#)
- f) [How to visit National Trust INTO Places on holiday - Which?](#)
- g) [National Trust to restore trail closed by 2024 landslide | Devon Live](#)
- h) [Hydrographer Greenville Collins changed the course of history | Great British Life](#)
- i) [\[https://www.sidmouthherald.co.uk/news/26559002.know-east-budleigh-worth-visiting/?ref=eb&nid=2405&block=article_block_a&u=26e309a1465491fa9108b8530c3bc91f&date=210926\]\(https://www.sidmouthherald.co.uk/news/26559002.know-east-budleigh-worth-visiting/?ref=eb&nid=2405&block=article_block_a&u=26e309a1465491fa9108b8530c3bc91f&date=210926\)](#)
- j) [Nearly 4m records of enslaved people in 20 former British colonies now searchable online | National Archives | The Guardian](#)
- k) [Mary Browne's legacy honoured with talk and quilt | Sidmouth Herald](#)
- l) [\[https://plymouthpost.uk/plymouth-enterprise-the-ships-project-uncovering-plymouths-history-beneath-the-waves/?fbclid=IwdGRzaAU_p_fjibGNrBSn95GV4dG4DYWVtAjExAHBkb2YBc3J0YwZhcHBfaWQMMzUwNjg1NTMxNzI4AAEe3e71cIYtcQEpnKX6VYI7bp19CwKqofWBf1RVqbxePTZDo9BNQqdlErCpwQ_aem_FIVd6rSTtAaJnCmnAsMOgg&sfnsn=scwspmo\]\(https://plymouthpost.uk/plymouth-enterprise-the-ships-project-uncovering-plymouths-history-beneath-the-waves/?fbclid=IwdGRzaAU_p_fjibGNrBSn95GV4dG4DYWVtAjExAHBkb2YBc3J0YwZhcHBfaWQMMzUwNjg1NTMxNzI4AAEe3e71cIYtcQEpnKX6VYI7bp19CwKqofWBf1RVqbxePTZDo9BNQqdlErCpwQ_aem_FIVd6rSTtAaJnCmnAsMOgg&sfnsn=scwspmo\)](#)
- m) [The Peopling of North Devon – Museum of Barnstaple and North Devon](#)

Sarah Charman
Editor