

## Colyton Parish History Society Newsletter 13 December 2021

With best wishes to you all for a Happy Christmas and a brighter and happier New Year. This month's newsletter takes a look at the contribution the Feoffees have historically played in Colyton at Christmas time.



*Lighting up day in Colyton – Wednesday 1 December, 2021*

. Sarah Charman, Editor

### 1. News

#### **The Feoffees' contribution at Christmas**

Following its creation in 1546, the Chamber of Feoffees was for centuries responsible for providing effective local public administration for Colyton. The Feoffees organised a variety of public services such as delivering a clean water supply into the town, facilitating a fire service and installing street lighting and providing a system of 'on the spot' justice. However, there was no national welfare state back then and there were many poor and needy people in the Parish. The Chamber of Feoffees worked closely with the "overseers of the poor" and at Christmas time they provided special disbursements to the needy.

An official Report into the work of local charities, prepared by the Charity Commissioners for the House of Commons and published in 1820, described how: *"The Feoffees and Twenty Men meet at the Chamber in Colyton on the day before Christmas-day and Lady-day, and occasionally at other times..... The poor of Colyton, who do not receive constant relief from the Parish, are very numerous. One shilling is given at Christmas to each member of those families who do not receive such relief. And at the other distributions, a smaller number of persons receive 1s (shilling) each. In addition to these payments, donations to the amount of 4 l(£) or 5 l(£) are sometimes given to decayed tradesmen or other persons in great distress; and a portion of the funds is applied in paying house rent for the poor."* (1)

Turning at random to December 24 1858, we can see that it was once again formally recorded in the Feoffees' Minute book that:

*"the sum of £24. 5s was given to those persons whose names are inserted in the Treasurers book kept for that purpose."*

Move on again to the 14 December 1920 and the Minutes of the Feoffees' monthly Chamber meeting reveal that in addition to approving that the "*Christmas gifts be distributed as usual*", they also voted for "*soup*" to be provided for the needy in case the "*weather continued severe*".

Roll forward yet another hundred years to the present day, and a national welfare state now exists to ensure basic needs are met. However the Chamber of Feoffees continue to offer support and financial assistance to those members of the local community who need it.

(1) [https://www.google.co.uk/books/edition/\\_/vzBbAAAAQAAJ?hl=en&qbpv=1&pg=PA51&dq=Christmas+Colyton+Commissioners+Report](https://www.google.co.uk/books/edition/_/vzBbAAAAQAAJ?hl=en&qbpv=1&pg=PA51&dq=Christmas+Colyton+Commissioners+Report)

## 2. CPHS News

### a. Membership Subscriptions

Annual subscriptions to Colyton Parish History Society fall due in January each year. The majority of members normally pay by cash at our January meeting. Please note that there is no scheduled meeting in January 2022 – so payment at the February meeting will be fine.

Alternative methods of paying are:-

- By cheque payable to Colyton Parish History Society. Please write the member(s) names and "Subs" on the back (or in a separate note), pop in an envelope and either:-
  - Post your envelope marked "Colyton Parish History Society" through the door of the Heritage Centre in Colyton or
  - Post to Colyton Heritage Centre, Merchant's House, Market Place, Colyton, EX24 6JR
- By bank transfer to:
  - Account name: Colyton Parish History Society
  - Sort Code: 30-90-37
  - Account number: 00992240

The membership fee remains at **£8 single or £12 joint** (a couple living at the same address). Please note that no membership subscriptions were collected in 2021 in view of the membership benefits being necessarily somewhat curtailed. Any members who paid in 2021 your payment will be carried forward to 2022 so there is no need to pay again. This applies, for example, to members who made a standing order payment at the start of 2021; and to those who joined and paid a subscription during the year.

For those who pay by standing order, if you do not wish to bother stopping your 2022 payment with your bank, then rather than try to refund payments (with all the admin it

entails) we propose to accept such payments as donations – we hope this is acceptable.

If you have any questions regarding your subscription then please email the Treasurer, Brian Lowing, at [treasurer@colytonheritagecentre.org](mailto:treasurer@colytonheritagecentre.org)

### **3. Other Organisations Events in December**

#### **a. East Devon AONB**

#### **Big rake off - Calling locals in Kilminster Shute area**

David and Judith Simpson have kindly been in touch with more details about the planned meadow improvement work at Kilminster Common

We've decided on **Wed 15 December at 1.00pm** for the **Big Rake off**. Please bring along sturdy gloves and cutting tools, if you have them. If you need further info contact David and Judith [dts63always@outlook.com](mailto:dts63always@outlook.com)

Kilminster Common - A valuable remnant of the former widespread Shute Hill – Kilminster common where the rare Heath Lobelia was once widespread. To increase biodiversity from bugs to bats and more ... grass arising from meadow cuts must be removed! – this is incredibly rare heathland habitat – with some good heath species represented here. Thanks to advice from our local ecologist Phil Wilson and also ecologist Craig Dunton, land management advisor for the Grey Long-eared bat project to Kilminster Parish Council. Meadow habitat is valuable forage for the Grey Long-eared

### **4. Items you may have missed**

#### **a. How a 500 year old Tudor house was shifted up the road in Exeter**

<https://www.devonlive.com/news/history/how-500-year-old-tudor-6335111> b.

#### **The Dramatic tale of Blays timber yard at Honiton**

[https://www.midweekherald.co.uk/news/story-of-blays-timber-yard-honiton-8545342?utm\\_source=Newsletter&utm\\_medium=Email&utm\\_campaign=DM51043](https://www.midweekherald.co.uk/news/story-of-blays-timber-yard-honiton-8545342?utm_source=Newsletter&utm_medium=Email&utm_campaign=DM51043)

#### **c. Royal Clarence Hotel fire – future development**

<https://www.devonlive.com/news/devon-news/exeters-fire-hit-royal-clarence>

#### **d. Royal Lacemaker**

<https://www.midweekherald.co.uk/news/honiton-museum-story-of-a-royal-lacemaker->