



Notes from the Chair

Members,

As I write this we are approaching the time when we hold our Annual General Meeting. For most of you this is a date to be avoided as it is fairly boring (!) while for us on the Executive Committee it is a time to take stock and see how the Society is progressing.

On the plus side, most of you seem to find our monthly meetings interesting as our audience figures are very healthy as are our membership figures. Also our tours are doing well thanks to Keith and Sallie James.

On the minus side, we on the Committee also get a bit bored looking at the same faces at committee meetings and again, we do ask if one or two of you would like to join us. It only means attending a meeting three or four times a year and giving us your views on how we should proceed. This is particularly relevant as next year the Society celebrates its 70th anniversary. I realise that it's nothing compared with Chepstow's 950th anniversary but it's still a considerable period.

All the more reason to get some fresh ideas and see how the Society should proceed for the future. Please think about it.

As an incentive to get you to come to this year's AGM, I am hoping to show a half-hour travelogue made by Japanese television, mainly about Bristol, but with a ten minute segment on Chepstow.. The only downside is that it is, naturally, in Japanese, so if anyone can speak Japanese or knows someone who can, it would make it more interesting to find out what they are saying about us!

Geoff Sumner

Honorary Secretary's Report

The proposals contained in the long-awaited WAG report on the traffic "blackspot" at the A466/M48 Newhouse roundabout Junction are the more obvious ones. They propose the closure of the laybys currently used for car-sharing or lorry rest-ups and/or to put a physical barrier between the lanes of traffic etc .

The Society has however always held to the view, and this does not get a mention; that the best solution would be to stop all parking at the roadside in this area and instead to provide facilities nearby on the Newhouse trading/ industrial estate for sharers and lorries etc to use, away from the dangers of this lethal junction where three fatalities have already occurred.

Another set of blackspots although of a different kind are the growing number of derelict sites in the town. We have one in Lower Church Street once the ATC hut, since demolished and now abandoned. In Hardwick Avenue the burned out cottage which, although application has been made to develop it, is still left to deteriorate as it has been for many years. More visible still is the former bungalow "The Studio" on Garden City Way next to the Port Wall; derelict, boarded up and an eyesore. Can we hope for action on any of these problems soon?

Henry Hodges

MEETINGS AND SPEAKERS

Weds. 19 April

Saving the Severn Princess – Tim Ryan

Weds. 17 May – Annual General Meeting

Weds. 21 June –

"Boil a Mouse in Urine": Children in Tudor and Stuart Times – Malcolm Watkins

Weds. 19 July –

The British Honours System - Ashley Jones

All at 7.15 p.m. in the Drill Hall

Membership subscriptions for
2017/18 are due from April 1st.
They remain at £10 per person.



EXCURSIONS

We are looking forward to our holiday to Llandudno and by now everybody should have received their itinerary and pickup details.

For the autumn we have had to rule out Hull, as it is too expensive this year, but something we could consider for next year. Manchester, London or WW1 Battlefields are other options, but we are open to any other suggestions.

We would like to organise a few day trips, but our numbers are too small for a coach, so it would need to be own transport, again we welcome ideas and comments.

**Please contact us to book a place
or for more information.**

Keith and Sallie James

01594 529713 or kp.james@btinternet.com

The Society is looking for members to run the day excursions. If you are interested in taking on this role please contact a member of the committee.

- **Tourist Information Centre update**

Monmouthshire County Council have agreed to fund it for another year, but after that it will not continue in its present form.

Chepstow 950 – the anniversary of the arrival of the Normans and the founding of the castle.

There will be lots of events to commemorate this, including a Norman re-enactment group in front of the castle, complete with siege engine, on **Saturday and Sunday, 15/16 July.**

The Society is sponsoring a town quiz for children, compiled by Angela Middleditch.

Another centenary

August 2017 marks the centenary of the takeover of Chepstow's shipyards by the government, to form National Shipyard No.1. At the same time, work had already started on developing the "Garden Cities" of new housing at Hardwick and Bulwark,

and the government also took over the Beachley peninsula for its second National Shipyard. **The Society is hoping to publish a short booklet covering the developments in Chepstow, within the next few months.**

