

# THE CHEPSTOW SOCIETY

Members Bulletin

August 2020



[www.chepstowsociety.co.uk](http://www.chepstowsociety.co.uk)

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## Notes from the Chair

It is ironic that this year, 2020, is the 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary of what was, effectively, the birth of tourism in Britain, for in 1770 William Gilpin made the first Wye Tour by river from Ross-on-Wye to Monmouth and then on to Chepstow..

It had been customary, for those who could afford it, to make the Grand Tour of the Continent, but after the start of the Napoleonic Wars in 1803 this became impossible and so the Wye Tour became hugely popular in its place.

It became popular after William Gilpin published a book, catchily entitled 'Observations on the River Wye and Several parts of South Wales etc. relative chiefly to Picturesque Beauty made in the summer of the year 1770'.

Thousands of tourists descended on Ross-on-Wye each summer to take a 'Picturesque' Tour. At the height of the season 8 to 10 pleasure boats departed from Ross each day, equipped with drawing tables at which the travellers could sit and sketch Picturesque views. The cost was 3 guineas per day.

The notion of 'Picturesque' was Gilpin's concept and quite complicated, but basically was the appreciation of natural beauty as opposed to the formal beauty of classical times.

The first day the boats left Ross, passed Goodrich Castle, the ironworks at New Weir, Symond's Yat and the tourists spent the night at an inn in Monmouth.

The highlight of the next day, and of the whole trip, was Tintern Abbey, followed by the Lovers' Leap cliff and the gardens of Piercefield House. The final spectacle was the ruin of Chepstow Castle.

It was intended to commemorate the Gilpin Tour with a festival – Gilpin2020 – which was launched by the Prince of Wales in November last year but, unfortunately, for obvious reasons, it has had to be postponed.

It is now hoped to restage it in 2021 under the heading Gilpin 2020+1, and details can be found on their website [www.gilpin2020.org](http://www.gilpin2020.org).

We will try and devote one of our meetings in the near future to the Wye Tour.

*Geoff Sumner*



# MEETINGS

The Drill Hall committee is considering how best to reopen the venue for film shows, in line with Welsh Government guidance and the need for social distancing and other changes.

However, there is no timetable for being able to hold meetings in the Drill Hall.

The Chepstow Society meetings in September and October will take place via Zoom.

The Society's committee will keep monitoring the situation, in the hope that we will be able to return to the Drill Hall in 2021.

**Wednesday 16<sup>th</sup> September  
Dr. Sarah Barber –  
The Life of Henry Marten**

**Wednesday 21<sup>st</sup> October  
Paul Barnett –  
The Mulberry harbours**



## A GUIDE TO TECHNOLOGY

### ZOOM

*Staying connected during COVID-19 isolation*

#### What is Zoom?

- Zoom is a 1-1 and group video and voice calling service.
- You can have group video calls with up to 100 people, lasting up to 40 minutes.
- You can have 1-1 video calls with no time limit.
- Zoom is an online service, so you don't need to install anything onto your computer.
- Zoom works best on computers, chromebooks and tablets.

#### How do I make a Zoom account?

1. On a computer, go to this website:  
<https://zoom.us/signup>  
On a tablet or mobile, go to the Play Store or Apple Store and download the Zoom App.
2. Enter your email address.
3. Go to your email inbox and click on the button in the zoom confirmation email.
4. Fill in all your information.
5. When asked to provide colleague's emails, select 'Skip this step'.
6. Click 'Go to My Account'
7. Write down your Personal Meeting ID

#### How do I join a meeting?

##### *On a computer*

1. About 5 minutes before the meeting is due to start, go to this website:  
<https://zoom.us/join>
2. Enter the Personal Meeting ID of whoever is hosting the meeting and press 'Join Meeting'.
3. Select "Join by Computer Audio".
4. To leave the meeting, click the screen then press 'Leave Meeting'.

##### *On a tablet*

1. Load the Zoom App
2. Enter the Personal Meeting ID of whoever is hosting the meeting and press 'Join Meeting'.
3. Click on the words 'Call via Device Audio' in the bottom left. (You must click on the actual words, not the button below)
4. To leave the meeting, tap on the screen then press 'Leave Meeting'.

## The St Lawrence Hospital Site

In 1924 the Chepstow Urban District Council (CUDC) purchased some 7 acres of land off Mounon Road opposite St Lawrence House for £550. This comprised Enclosure numbers 71 and 72 of the 1921 OS 6" map.

The purpose was to establish allotments for people of the district. This must have been quite an active site, and by 1939 there were 38 allotment holders from the town and around, growing vegetables on 42 plots.

However, on 8th Sept 1939 - 5 days after WWII was declared - the Clerk to CUDC, Arthur Gill, received a formal notice of the need to take immediate possession of the site "in the national interest", under the Defence of the Realm Act.

It is not clear if the dispossessed allotment holders were barred from their vegetables, but thanks to CUDC a formal valuation of their crops was made on 2nd Oct 1939 by Mr Briscoe of Tutshill which totalled £40, 6 shillings and 9 pence.

Every item had a set value and the value of the standing crop of each individual was totalled down to the last leek, and recompensed accordingly. There was a strong bias towards greens, including purple sprouting, savoys, kale (mixed and Scotch); roots were leek, parsnips, swedes and turnips and rhubarb. Sage bushes, but no other herbs. Some of the quantities that were being grown were quite large. Mr Park had three quarters of a hundred weight of parsnips while Mr Cooper had 412 broccoli.

The land wasn't acquired for the vegetables, but for a proposed Emergency Hospital.

A letter of 13th Oct by NE Holloway Consulting Engineer, Cardiff, indicated that this would have 600 beds. This was duly built as a dispersed layout along with "deepening of the sewer".

According to Tom Martin, Gentlemen's Hairdresser, the first occupant was a TB ward, followed by POWs.

It continued as a military site until June 1948 when it was sold by CUDC as "Allotment Land" to the Ministry of Works for £713.

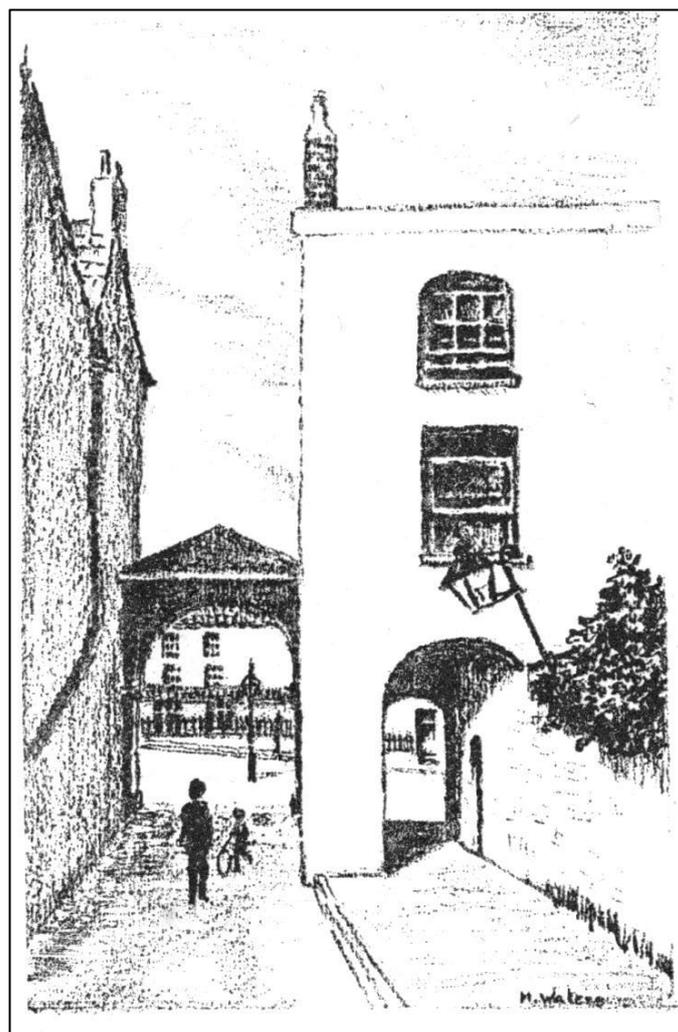
In July of that year it became part of the newly emerging NHS. In 1951 it housed the newly formed Burns Unit, following the work of Sir Archibald McIndoe, and because of the nature of much of its pioneering skin-graft surgery became known as the Plastic Hospital.

It continued to provide reconstructive care and surgery, initially for war burned patients but latterly for injuries incurred in heavy industry and mining across South Wales.

It also housed a notable Orthodontics unit under Mr Gibson. (I know 'cos I was there).

And then in 1994 the clinical services all moved to Morriston - and Chepstow lost a significant part of the life of the area.

*Ivor Cavill, June 2020*



***Where in Chepstow was this?***

*Answer next month*

## **CHEPSTOW MUSEUM**

We look forward to welcoming you back to the museums soon, and with that in mind we would like your opinions on reopening the museums in the best way.

To help with this, please fill in this short survey:

[www.visitmonmouthshire.com/museums-survey](http://www.visitmonmouthshire.com/museums-survey)

**Rachael Rogers**  
Museums and Arts Manager  
Monmouthshire County Council

## **Monmouthshire Replacement Local Development Plan - Update**

Consultations on the Monmouthshire Replacement Local Development Plan Preferred Strategy have been put on hold because of the pandemic.

The evidence base, strategy and policies will now be reviewed by the County Council, to determine whether they remain “relevant and appropriate to address the County’s issues, or whether any amendments/ updates are required as a consequence of the pandemic.”

A revised Delivery Agreement will be reported to the Council in September, along with the assessment of the evidence base, strategy and policies.

There will then be a revised consultation process for a minimum of six weeks on the Preferred Strategy.

If you have any queries regarding the Replacement Local Development Plan, please contact the Planning Policy Team on

01633 644429

or email [planningpolicy@monmouthshire.gov.uk](mailto:planningpolicy@monmouthshire.gov.uk)

## **DONATED BOOKS FOR SALE** ***DISCOUNTS!***

The Chepstow Society has received a number of donations of books and pamphlets of local interest. If you would like to buy any of these or any other Society books, please contact **Guy Hamilton, [ghmyrtle@gmail.com](mailto:ghmyrtle@gmail.com)** or **07786 500609**

~~£30~~ **£25**

- Ivor Waters (ed.): Severn & Wye Review (complete set of 8 issues of journal, Chepstow Society, 1970-72)

~~£15~~ **£12**

- Nathan Rogers: Memoirs of Monmouth-shire (1978 reprint of 1708 booklet, Chepstow Society)

~~£12 each~~ **£10 each**

- Ivor Waters: Chepstow Parish Records (Chepstow Society, 1955)
- Ivor Waters: Chepstow Miscellany (Chepstow Society, 1958)
- Ivor Waters: The Unfortunate Valentine Morris (Chepstow Society, 1964)
- Ivor Waters: Impressions and Versions (poems, Chepstow, 1973)
- Ivor Waters: There was a young lady from Gwent (poem, Chepstow, 1976)
- Thomas Birbeck: Sword and Ploughshare: the Story of the de Bohuns and Caldicot (Chepstow Society, 1973)
- Fred Hando: Out and About in Monmouthshire (1958, reprinted 1974)

~~£10 each~~ **£8 each**

- Ivor Waters: Chepstow Printers and Newspapers (Chepstow Society, 1970)
- Ivor Waters: Chepstow Clock and Watch Makers (Chepstow Society, 1972)
- Ivor Waters (trans.): Sunlight and Scarlet: selected poems by Antonio Machado (1973)
- Mercedes Waters: Changing Chepstow (Chepstow Society, 1970)
- Eric Wiles: Chepstow and the Chartists (Chepstow Society, 1985)
- F H & M Keyte: Tidenham Parish Registers Part 1 (Chepstow Society, 1970) pamphlet)
- S B Rogers: An Early Victorian Severn Bridge (Merlin Bookshop, 1974 reprint of 1845 pamphlet)
- Tales of the People of Old St Arvans (ed. Joyce Edmonds, 1990)
- Whitebrook: a community brought to life through images and recollections (ed. Bevan and Rees, 2005)