

THE CHEPSTOW SOCIETY

Members Bulletin December 2020

www.chepstowsociety.co.uk



Notes from the Chair

As we approach the end of 2020 (hurrah!) I am relieved that the Society has managed to keep going thanks to the wonders of Zoom.

Although it has its disadvantages and many members are unable to use it, it does at least mean that we can hear from speakers who normally would not be able to get to us, and that members who might not be able to get to the Drill Hall so easily can still participate in our meetings. Indeed, when we get back to normality, our scope will be more limited because of the cost of bringing speakers to Chepstow.

Members will see that this year we are unusually holding meetings in December. I have mentioned the photographic presentation on Chepstow which is on Wednesday 16th December and for the first time we are organising a Civic meeting on 2nd December.

We are conscious that, with our President Henry Hodges being able to spend less time

investigating what is happening in and around Chepstow, this side of our activities has decreased somewhat.

Consequently this meeting is intended to fill that gap and I personally would like to see regular additional meetings devoted to things that our members feel concerned about regarding Chepstow.

We start next year's talks programme on January 20 with a talk on H.M.Coastguard, followed on February 17 with David Scaysbrook talking about a secret plane crash in the Forest of Dean in 1942. On March 17 we will hear Dr Rhian Morgan talking about the DNA which helped to identify the bones of Richard III in a car park in Leicester.

Until then, have as good a Christmas as possible. Let's hope for a better 2021, and please all keep safe.

Geoff Sumner

Civic and Amenity Meeting, 2nd December

The Society has arranged a special Zoom meeting for members on civic and amenity matters - on Thursday 2nd December, at 7 pm.

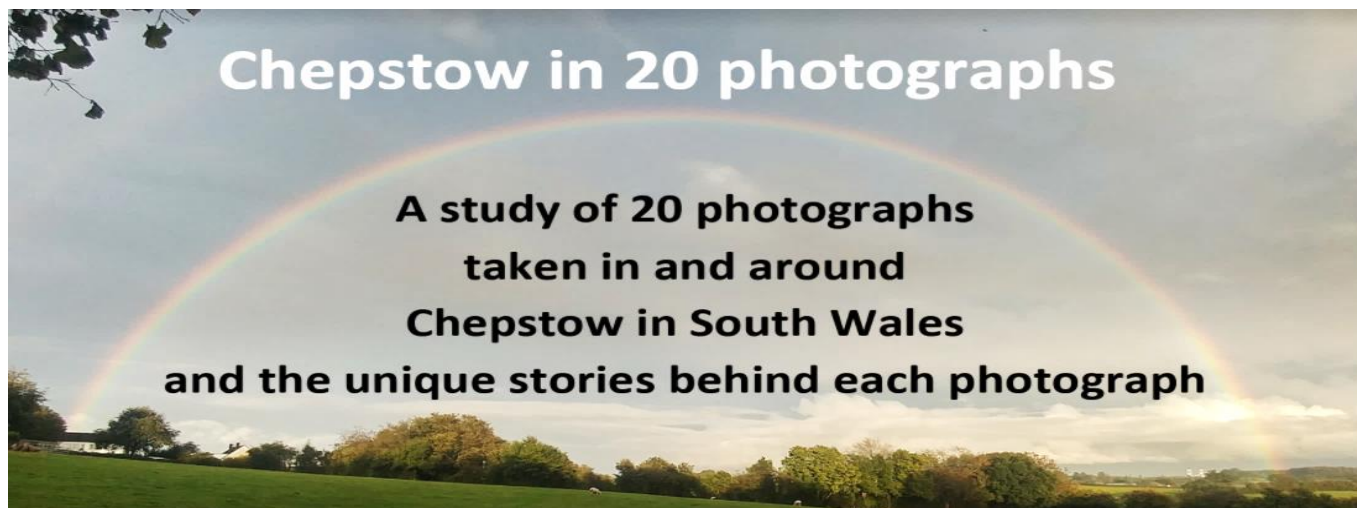
Arrangements are the same as for our usual meetings – log on to Zoom, and the meeting details are 562 383 2571, and password Waters.

We hope this will be the start of a closer involvement with the Town Council and County Council on current issues affecting the town.

Several Chepstow town councillors – and also one or two from Tidenham, over the river – have said that they will be involved.

This is very much the start of a new approach, so we will need to see how it goes – but, if you are interested in what is happening in the town (or what should be happening...) and surrounding areas, please join us for the Zoom session.

OUR MONTHLY ZOOM MEETING



Chepstow in 20 photographs

**A study of 20 photographs
taken in and around
Chepstow in South Wales
and the unique stories behind each photograph**

A talk by John Burrows

Wednesday 16th December at 7.00 pm

<https://zoom.us/join> Meeting ID: 562 383 2571 Password: Waters

The 2010s had the anniversaries of a number of key events in Chepstow's past - from the founding of the Castle, Priory, and the Norman town 950 years ago; the 800th anniversary of the death of William Marshal; the 375th anniversary of the Civil War siege of Chepstow Castle; the 200th anniversary of the opening

of Chepstow Bridge; the 100th anniversary of WW1 and in particular the Battle of Frezenberg Ridge; the 75th anniversary of Garden City's involvement in the Dambusters Raid of WW2; and the 50th anniversary of the end of the ferries and the opening of the Severn Bridge - all of which have been photographed.

Information plaques – no Lottery grant, but not all bad news.

Unfortunately, our bid for funds from the Heritage Lottery Fund to install plaques in locations of historic interest around the town was not successful.

We don't know exactly why, other than that the process was over-subscribed.

However, the Society's committee has now agreed a budget figure of £3000 over two years, to

commission Ned Heywood to prepare and install some plaques – though not as many as we would have had if the bid had succeeded.

This process is at a very early stage – we don't yet know how many, or where they will be - so there will be more information in due course.

On similar matters, I'm in touch with the county council regarding the need to replace the information plaque in Bulwark, beside the Iron Age camp on the Coast Path, which was vandalised and smashed. The council has also been asked to reposition the George V Jubilee memorial stone in the Dell, which had become dislodged by tree roots and falling branches.

Guy Hamilton



CHRISTMAS QUIZ

1. Before becoming connected with Christmas, what was Yule?
2. What Roman holiday, held from December 17th to 23rd, had a large influence on how Christmas was celebrated?
3. In which century was the first written use of the word 'Xmas' ?
4. The modern Santa Claus is mainly a mix of which two figures?
5. With whom did the German Nazi regime replace Santa Claus?
6. In which country did 'Silent Night' originate?
7. Which popular holiday song was written during the Cuban missile crisis and was a plea for peace?
8. From what animal parts were the first artificial Christmas trees made?
9. Which is the native country of the Poinsettia plant?
10. Which old Christmas tradition signals to people that householders are Christian?
11. How many wise men (Magi) does the bible say visited the baby Jesus?
12. In which European country are gifts given by St Basil on January 1st?
13. In which European country might you find money under the table-cloth when you sit down to eat the traditional Christmas Eve supper?
14. Which cartoon character is a Christmas Eve staple on television in Sweden?
15. Among Christians who lived in the east, when was Christmas originally celebrated?

ANSWERS NEXT MONTH



BONUS QUESTION..... When was this photo taken?

HENRY VIII AND THE FIELD OF THE CLOTH OF GOLD



On 18th November, distinguished historian Dr. Gillian White gave the Society an illustrated Zoom talk on ‘Henry VIII and the Field of Cloth of Gold’.

This summit meeting took place 500 years ago, in June 1520, near Calais – part of the English kingdom at the time.

It was organised by Cardinal Wolsey, with the intention of increasing the bond of friendship between England’s Henry VIII and France’s Francois I, who were both in their late 20s.

No expense was spared. Each king tried to outshine the other, with dazzling tents and clothes, huge feasts, music, jousting and games.

The tents and the costumes displayed so much “cloth of gold”, an expensive fabric woven with silk and gold thread, that it gave its name to the entire event.

There were about 6,000 horsemen, servants, and servants on each side – and the event involved much feasting, jousting tournaments, and dancing, lasting over a period of some three weeks.

Henry brought with him a temporary, prefabricated palace, largely made of timber and canvas. Political betrothals were agreed, between the young children of one side and those of the other.

But the event had little lasting political significance.

Within a couple of years, England and France were back at war again, as they had been for centuries, and would continue to be for the next few hundred years.

We are seeking volunteers – one each month - to write up a brief summary of the talks at our meetings – whether they take place via Zoom, or in the future, we hope, as real meetings. Many members can’t attend every meeting, so a brief report (200-250 words) on each talk helps to keep everyone informed as to what they have missed.

Any volunteers are encouraged to put their names forward to Guy Hamilton – ghmyrtle@gmail.com.

Chepstow Transport Study (WelTAG Stage 2)

A reminder.....

The consultants Arup are undertaking a 6-week series of consultation events in November and December on transport options emerging for the Chepstow area through the joint cross-border WelTAG study.

The consultation period ends on 13th December.

Information can be accessed, and comments made, at <https://virtualengage.arup.com/chepstow-transport-study>

There will also be live webchats with the project team at these dates and times:

Thurs. 3 December, 5-7pm
Tues. 8 December, 5-7pm

Merry Christmas