

# THE CHEPSTOW SOCIETY

Members Bulletin November 2020



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

## *Notes from the Chair*

The Society has now met twice via Zoom and a fair number of members joined us, though not as many as I had hoped. I suppose not all of us are technology minded and I realise that getting aboard the Zoom requirements is not that easy.

However, for the time being, this is the only way we can meet - but we do want to make these events as enjoyable as possible.

I wonder therefore if you could let us know if there are any ways that we can improve things. For example, some committee members have suggested that we start too early and maybe 7.30 would be better.

Also, I try to keep the meetings to one hour as I understand that staring at a computer screen for longer is tiring. It has also been suggested that we should meet more often – perhaps twice a month – with the extra meetings being informal non- structured meetings

**Please let us know what you think** either by email to the Secretary, Guy, at [ghmyrtle@gmail.com](mailto:ghmyrtle@gmail.com) or me at [geoffcesumner@gmail.com](mailto:geoffcesumner@gmail.com).

In the meantime, before the last meeting's talk, I rushed through the delayed Annual General Meeting.

There is a list of the current officers in this bulletin for reference, and, as Keith James mentioned at that meeting, we do have one or two people who may be interested in starting a group to look after the civic side of our brief, which has suffered since Henry Hodges has been unable to keep watch on the town as he used to. If anyone else is interested in helping with this, please contact us.

Finally, although we don't usually have a meeting in December, as this is a 'different' sort of year we thought we'd have a meeting on December 16<sup>th</sup>.

John Burrows will give a talk entitled "Chepstow in 20 photographs: its history as seen through the anniversary events of the 2010s". Should be very interesting.

Keep well and I'll be in touch again next month.

***Geoff Sumner***

## CIVIC AND AMENITY MATTERS

The Society would like to upgrade and improve its involvement in local amenity and civic matters affecting the town and its surroundings - including environmental, planning and transport matters.

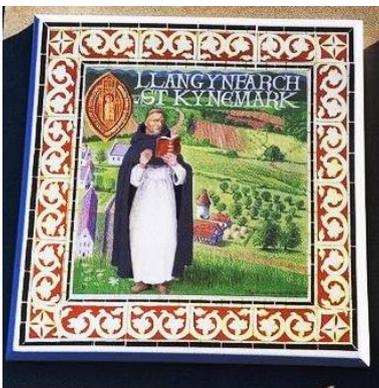
But, as we have said many times, in order to do that we need the help of existing - or new - members.

We are looking into arranging a Zoom session with a small number of town and county councillors, possibly in late November, to discuss where we are in relation to all the ongoing issues and consultation processes going on in Chepstow – both those currently paused, and those currently progressing, such as the WelTAG transport study.

The initial intention would NOT be to raise matters of policy, but simply to brief members of the Society, so as to help set up a sub-group of members willing and able to develop this involvement.

Would members who would like to take part in this Zoom meeting, please let either Guy Hamilton ([ghmyrtle@gmail.com](mailto:ghmyrtle@gmail.com)) or Geoff Sumner ([geoffcesumner@gmail.com](mailto:geoffcesumner@gmail.com)) know.

# St Kingsmark plaque unveiled



The new ceramic information plaque beside Kingsmark Lane, marking the site of the medieval Priory of St Kingsmark or Kynemark, was unveiled on Wednesday 7th October.

The small Augustinian Priory was founded before 1270, and functioned until Henry VIII's Dissolution of the Monasteries in 1534. Its stones were used in later farm buildings, and there is now nothing to be seen of it above ground. Excavations before the houses were built in the 1960s uncovered evidence of three of the Priory's monastic ranges, or living accommodation, but no church.

The plaque was designed by Keith Underwood, and made by Ned Heywood. It was unveiled by Geoff Sumner, Henry Hodges, and Ned Heywood, in the presence of the press and a number of Society members.

A few copies of a free information leaflet about the Priory, distributed to local residents adjoining the site, are available on request from Guy Hamilton. It can also be downloaded from the Society's website.

# Grant application to fund new plaques

As mentioned in the last bulletin, the Society is supporting a bid to the Heritage Fund, for a grant for Ned Heywood to prepare and install further plaques around the town (including outlying areas of the town, within Wales), to mark locations of historical importance.

**The outcome of the bid will be known in mid-November.**

A successful bid would support six "blue plaques" to mark sites occupied or used by notable individuals – plus six ceramic wall tiles with information on sites and buildings of historic interest. They would supplement the existing plaques around the town.

As the bid document says, *"The historic town of Chepstow has many untold stories, with many nearly forgotten extraordinary individuals. This project aims to reveal some of them and permanently place them in the public eye."*

Although we already have some ideas as to possible sites – and thank you to those members who have made suggestions - we would welcome more ideas.

In due course, if the bid succeeds, there will be a process of consultation on the final plaque locations.

**If you have any suggestions, please email Guy Hamilton, [ghmyrtle@gmail.com](mailto:ghmyrtle@gmail.com)**

# **CHEPSTOW SOCIETY COMMITTEE 2020/21**

<b>President</b>	<b>Henry Hodges</b>
<b>Vice-President</b>	<b>Chris Penrose</b>
<b>Chairman</b>	<b>Geoffrey Sumner</b>
<b>Vice-Chairman</b>	<b>Keith James</b>
<b>Secretary</b>	<b>Guy Hamilton</b>
<b>Treasurer</b>	<b>David Nicholls</b>
<b>Membership</b>	<b>Marian Thomas</b>
<b>Excursions</b>	<b>Sallie and Keith James</b>
<b>Publications</b>	<b>Guy Hamilton</b>
<b>Museum</b>	<b>Anne Rainsbury</b>
<b>Gwent CHA representative</b>	<b>Chris Penrose</b>
<b>Additional committee members</b>	<b>Angela and Harry Middleditch</b>

The Society's delayed **Annual General Meeting** was held via Zoom on 21<sup>st</sup> October. About 30 members took part in this new, and hopefully temporary, format.

The reports and finances for the year 2019/20 were approved. Most of the Society's officers remain in place, with a couple of changes.

As our founder member and longstanding President, Trevor Evans MBE, is no longer able to take part in meetings, Henry Hodges has become our new President. As most of you know, Henry has been the Society's Secretary for well over 30 years. Trevor is now our honorary "President Emeritus".

Henry's replacement as Secretary is Guy Hamilton, who will also keep running this bulletin, the website and publications duties (unless anyone else wants to take over!).

Finally, David Barber has now stood down as Treasurer, and his replacement is David Nicholls.

## **NEXT ZOOM MEETING**

***Dr Gillian White***

# **HENRY VIII AND THE FIELD OF THE CLOTH OF GOLD**

**500 years  
1520  
2020**

**Wednesday 18<sup>th</sup> November at 7.00 pm - via Zoom**

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



# **SPECIAL ZOOM MEETING**

**Wednesday 16<sup>th</sup> December**

***John Burrows***



## **The Mulberry Harbours**

The Society's Zoom meeting on 21<sup>st</sup> October heard from Paul Barnett of the Friends of Purton, about the development and history of the prefabricated Mulberry Harbours – some parts of which were made at the Fairfield shipyard in Chepstow.

The huge steel-reinforced concrete caissons, as well as redundant ships, were required so as to provide breakwaters, harbour walls and roadways for the amphibious Allied invasion of Normandy in 1944, Operation Overlord. They were hollow, so as to float and then be submerged by being filled by sea water when in place.

They were successful in enabling the invasion – and afterwards, many were re-used elsewhere. Some ended up as part of the canal and shoreline protection at Purton on the Severn.

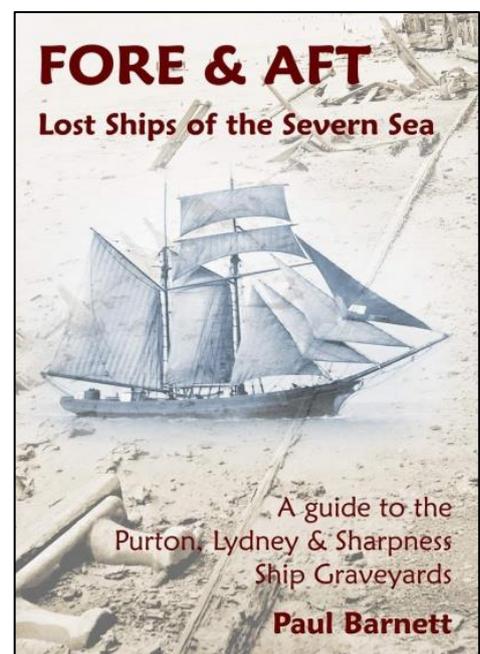
For those interested in the Purton "ship's graveyard", his recent book "*Fore & Aft*" is available from Paul Barnett at [Barnadillo@aol.com](mailto:Barnadillo@aol.com)



**Heritage Centre**  
**Now open to visitors**  
**Wednesdays 11am - 3pm**  
**Saturdays 11am - 3pm**

**Next to the Old Gate to Beachley Barracks**  
**Everybody welcome**  
**Come and enjoy a significant piece**  
**of local history**

**Contact Telephone: 07501 237052**



# DRILL HALL REFURBISHED !

During this long pause, the Drill Hall elves have been busy transforming what was a rather depressing kitchen into a light, airy space.

The kitchen has been painted, the floor has been scrubbed, rewiring has taken place, tiles have been stuck on walls, and the plumbing sorted.

The "new" kitchen units were found and installed by Cymru Kitchens free of charge, and a new range cooker was partially paid for with donations from Drill Hall users.

The contents of the kitchen obviously had to be removed whilst this was going on, and have now been sanitised and replaced. Anything surplus to requirements has been found a new home.

This has hopefully made the kitchen a much easier and more pleasant space to work in.

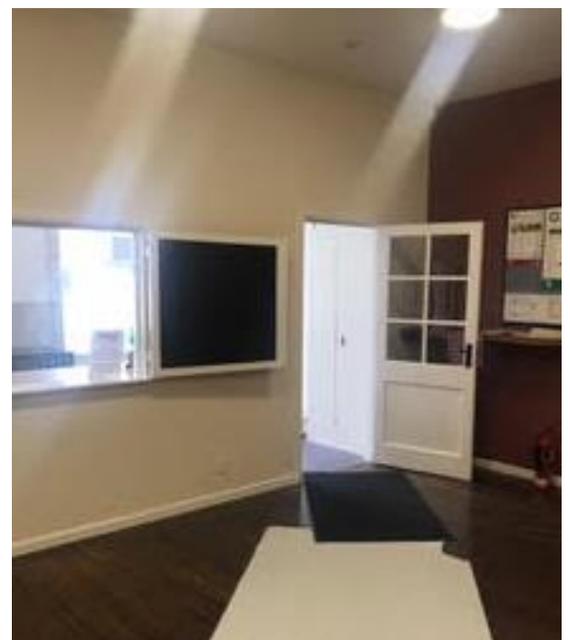
Alongside these works the main hall has been thoroughly cleaned and sanitised, the parachute things in the roof have been cleaned, and all the chairs scrubbed.

A variety of systems have been put in place along current COVID-19 guidelines.

The space is presently being used as a distribution point for the Wye Valley Producers.

We all look forward to welcoming you back to enjoy all the improved facilities - the toilets have also been updated - at a variety of events, as soon as it is safe to do so.

*Angela Middleditch*



## **DON'T FORGET OUR WEBSITE**

**We regularly update our website –  
[www.chepstowsociety.co.uk](http://www.chepstowsociety.co.uk)**

**All the recent newsletters are on the site and can be downloaded, and in the "Civic and Amenity" section there are links to current consultations and council documents on COVID-19, the town centre, planning, and transport policy.**

**Please feel free to suggest other changes that can be made to the site.**

*Guy Hamilton*

# **Chepstow Transport Study (WelTAG Stage 2)**

The consultants Ove 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 is from 2 November until 13 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 5 November, 5-7 pm**  
**Sat. 14 November, 10 am-12 noon**  
**Thurs. 19 November, 5-7pm**  
**Sat. 28 November, 10 am-12 noon**  
**Thurs. 3 December, 5-7pm**  
**Tues. 8 December, 5-7pm**

## **WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS!**

*New members joining between now and April 2021 can join for free.*

*Although we cannot welcome you in person at the moment - except via Zoom - we hope you find interest and enjoyment in what you see here and on our website, and hopefully you will join us in person when the Society is able to function in a less restricted way.*

*If you have any questions about the Society or its activities, please contact Guy (ghmyrtle@gmail.com), Geoff (geoffcesumner@gmail.com) or Keith (kp.james@btinternet.com) - or leave a message on our website or Facebook page.*

