

THE CHEPSTOW SOCIETY

Members Bulletin April 2022



www.chepstowsociety.co.uk



**Wednesday 20th April
7.15 p.m.**



Titanic Effort !

The story of *RMS Carpathia's*
dash to save the stricken liner

A talk by Paul Barnett

Paul Barnett is a maritime historian. He will discuss the facts about the loss of the *Titanic* and *RMS Carpathia's* race to reach the stricken liner and to save lives.

**The Drill Hall, Lower Church Street,
Chepstow NP16 5HJ**

**All welcome
Members £1
Non-members £3**

The meeting will also be streamed via
Zoom

<https://zoom.us/join>

Meeting ID: **562 383 2571**

Passcode: **Waters**



We are mourning the death of
Chris Penrose, our vice-president
and past Chairman of the Society,
who passed away on 27th March.
A fuller tribute will follow next month.

Notes from the Chair

Members,

We are now approaching our Annual General Meeting on 18th May, at which time we review the position of the Society and plan its future.

I have therefore reluctantly come to the conclusion that I should step down as your Chairperson.

There are two reasons for this.

My diagnosis with Parkinson's disease, causing impairment with my mobility, has meant that I cannot be involved with the Society's activities as I would wish. Attendance at the Drill Hall is very difficult for me, and I was very upset that I could not be at the retirement presentations to David Barber, Marian Thomas and Henry Hodges.

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Also I have now been in post for 12 years. Many Clubs and Societies are now finding things very difficult after Covid, and although your Society seems to be very healthy at the moment, it may well be that changes will be necessary for the future. I think that a fresh face is necessary for such changes as may be inevitable.

I am not walking away however and I hope that the Executive Committee may find something for me to do

In the meantime the show goes on, and in April we have a talk by an old friend of the Society, Paul Barnett. It is the 110th anniversary of the sinking of the Titanic, but Paul's talk is about the ship which rushed to her rescue - *RMS Carpathia*.

Geoff Sumner

PS: Since writing the above I have learnt of the sad death of our Vice-President Chris Penrose. I only got to know Chris when I joined this Society, but I found him a most delightful person, hard-working and connected with many Chepstow matters including the Drill Hall management and, with his wife Rosemary who we sadly lost two years ago, involved with this Society, acting as our representatives on the Gwent Local History Council. He will be greatly missed.

MEMBERSHIP REMINDER

RENEWALS FOR 2022/23 ARE NOW DUE

Our membership year runs from April to April. Sadly, after many years, and as with all things, membership has had to increase to £12.00 per person.

This can be paid either by BAC's to the Chepstow Society account:

sort code 30-98-90

account number 18173668

(don't forget to include your name as a reference)

or by cheque payable to Chepstow Society and sent to me:

**Angela Middleditch, Pen y Morfa, Mathern.
NP16 6JD**

If you joined with a new membership during or after December 2021, your membership will run until April 2023.

If you have any questions, please email chepsocmemb@gmail.com

Angela Middleditch

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Notice is hereby given that the Annual General Meeting of the Society will be held on Wednesday 18th May at 7:15 pm.

Nominations for officers of the Society may be given at the Annual General Meeting, but nominations for the honorary positions of President and Vice- President must be given to the Secretary – secretary@chepstowsociety.co.uk – at least 21 days before the AGM- that is, by Wednesday 27th April.

The Society increasingly needs willing volunteers to share in carrying out our activities and pursue our aims of stimulating interest in the history and environment of the Chepstow area, organising meetings, initiatives and events, and advancing our knowledge. There are many things we would like to do – if only we had more people to do it !

If you have ideas, time, and would like to help the Society in some capacity, please contact the Secretary, Guy Hamilton, for a friendly and no-obligation chat!

07786 500609

**secretary@chepstowsociety.co.uk
or speak to any committee member.**



BACK TO THE DRILL HALL!

On 16th March, about 30 members sat – suitably spaced at tables – in the Drill Hall, for our first meeting there this year. We heard a fascinating talk by Nancy Cavill on the remarkable life of Martha Gellhorn – the highly respected war correspondent who spent the years between 1980 and 1994 living in a modest house at Kilgwrrwg near Devauden, just a few miles from Chepstow.

Martha was born in Missouri in 1908, and first became a journalist in Europe in 1930. After meeting Ernest Hemingway in Florida (they later married, and divorced), she became a war correspondent in Spain in 1936. In the Second World War she reported from all over the world on the conflict, and how it affected ordinary people. Later, she covered wars in Vietnam, Israel, and central America, to great acclaim.

She enjoyed her years in retirement in Monmouthshire (she died in 1998 when living in London) and had many local connections. A Purple Plaque in memory of her time at “Cat’s Cradle” was unveiled at the house in 2021.

Nancy would love to hear from anyone who remembers Martha, and has any memories of her to share. Please contact her at nancy.cavill@gmail.com

Unfortunately – but for reasons we now understand – the link between the talk in the hall, and those accessing it remotely via Zoom, was unsatisfactory and meant that those using Zoom did not see all of Nancy’s presentation. We are confident that the technical challenges of doing this will now be overcome and the problems will not be repeated – but, we are sorry about those who were disappointed. Hopefully, we will see many of you in the Drill Hall next time!

Forthcoming meetings

Wednesday 18th May, 7.15 pm

Annual General Meeting

and talk by Guy Hamilton on

James Stephens - Chepstow’s Chartist

Wednesday 15th June, 7.15 pm

Peter Strong

Crossing the Severn

Wednesday 20th July, 7.15 pm

Brigadier Robert Aitken CBE

The Lord Lieutenant of Gwent: my role

Wednesday 21st September, 7.15 pm

Rebecca Tyson

William fitzOsbern –

founder of Chepstow Castle and Priory

***Further meetings to be arranged –
watch this space!***