

THE CHEPSTOW SOCIETY

Members Bulletin June 2022



www.chepstowsociety.co.uk



Wednesday 15th June

7:15 pm

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

**Talk by Peter Strong on
Crossing the Severn**



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

The meeting will also be streamed
via Zoom

<https://zoom.us/join>

Meeting ID: 513 005 1668

Passcode: Waters

MOVING FORWARD

Following the AGM in May, the Society's committee met via Zoom on 1st June to consider the way forward on various issues.

Among the matters discussed were:

- Issues arising from the AGM, including the Zoom arrangements
- The need for more volunteers to help run the Society, including organising excursions such as day trips
- Arrangements for future monthly meetings, as well as for the town walks in July and August, and for future civic and amenity Zoom meetings.
- Whether or not to proceed with the William Marshal statue idea – and, if so, what form it should take.
- The idea of holding a "History Day" in the Drill Hall in May 2023, to promote interest in the town's history and mark the Society's 75th anniversary. Various options, themes and formats are being considered – including talks, stalls and displays.

Your committee would love to have the views of the Society's members (and, indeed, others) on these ideas!

We will report back in due course.

Guy Hamilton, Chair 2022/23

ghmyrtle@gmail.com 07786 500609

TOWN WALKS

Our summer evening town walks will start again on 4th July – on Monday evenings in July and Wednesday evenings in August.

Details to follow.

Notes from the Annual General Meeting

The Annual General Meeting of the Society took place on 18th May. Unfortunately, the Zoom connection to those members not physically present in the Drill Hall did not work as anticipated, for which we apologise – the reasons are understood (they were different to those experienced previously!), and we hope will not be repeated.

We also received some comments that the business was conducted somewhat more informally than before – again, we will learn lessons from that. The duly examined accounts were presented and approved, as were the nominations for committee members for 2022/23.

Apologia

Just a few lines to say how sorry I am that I could not attend at the AGM either in person (for health reasons) or via Zoom (for technical reasons).

I had wanted to thank you all for allowing me to be your Chair for the past 13 years and to say how much I have enjoyed it.

There were many highlights but one I shall remember was the re-enactment of the siege of Chepstow Castle, organised by Keith James, and of the speakers, probably hearing Paul Taylor of the Gloucestershire Cave Rescue Group telling us about the rescue of the youngsters in Thailand.

I hope to continue to help Sallie James finding speakers for the future but I feel that the William Marshal statue project should be shelved for the time being.

At a time when families are finding it difficult to afford heating or even food, I do not think that to try and raise funds for a statue is appropriate. I shall put this to the Executive Committee at the next meeting and hope they agree.

Again many thanks for your support over the years.

Geoff Sumner

The officers and committee members listed below were elected unopposed at the A.G.M.

President: Henry Hodges

Vice-President: Geoff Sumner

Chair: Guy Hamilton

Vice-Chair: Keith James

Secretary: Sallie James

Treasurer: David Nicholls

Examiner of Accounts: David Phillips

Membership Secretary: Angela Middleditch

Programme Secretary:

Geoff Sumner / Sallie James

Civic and Amenities Secretary: Simon Maddison

Excursions Secretary: Vacant

Natural Environment Secretary: Vacant

Publications, Press and Media: Guy Hamilton

Other members of the Executive Committee:

Nicky Bailey, Harry Middleditch,

Anne Rainsbury

Although Geoff Sumner, our outgoing Chairman, was not able to be present, he was thanked for his efforts over the last 13 years, and I'm sure the Society will have other opportunities to show its appreciation.

We also thanked Keith and Sallie James for their work in organising holidays and excursions, including the recent Kent trip. Hopefully, one or more volunteers will come forward, to continue to run our excursions. Keith and Sallie will of course remain closely involved with the Society – Sallie as Secretary, and Keith as Vice-Chair.

The talk in May was on an interesting local figure – James Stephens, born in the original Davis Court in Chepstow in 1821, a stonemason who was caught up in the Newport Rising and later emigrated to Melbourne in Australia, where he helped establish the groundbreaking Eight Hour Day for workers – later widely adopted around the world. If anyone who was not able to hear the talk would like to see the PowerPoint presentation, or a recording of the talk itself on YouTube, please let me know, and I can forward the appropriate link

Guy Hamilton - ghmyrtle@gmail.com



Holiday to Kent 2022

Thirty-nine members enjoyed a fabulous trip to Kent in May.

These are just a few photographs that give an example of the variety and scope of the excursions taken over the week.

Highlights included a visit to Sissinghurst Gardens, a trip on the Kent and East Sussex Railway, and a guided tour of Sandwich.

We have decided to retire from being excursions organisers, and hope that someone else will take on this fulfilling role.

We would offer any help and advice required.

Keith and Sallie James

sallie_james@btinternet.com



Forthcoming meetings in the Drill Hall

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**

Wednesday 19th October, 7.15 pm

Kevin Walker

The Nature of the Brecon Beacons

Wednesday 16th November, 7.15 pm

Mark Horton

Elizabethans on the Severn Estuary

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

IVOR WATERS BOOKS

The Chepstow School library has been clearing out cupboards.... with the result that the Society has been given several boxes of books and booklets on local (and Wales) history - including many that must have been donated to the school many years ago.

In particular, we now have multiple copies of those listed below. They are all in good condition, but have school library markings on them - so, not perfect.

Because of their condition (and because I already have too many boxes of old books!) we are selling them to members at **less than half the price we would normally charge.**

Ivor Waters – About Chepstow (1952)	£4
– Chepstow Parish Records (1955)	£4
– Chepstow Miscellany (1958)	£4
Arthur Clark – Chepstow, Its Castle and Lordship (1958)	£3

If you would like to buy any of these, please contact Guy Hamilton, ghmyrtle@gmail.com or 07786 500609

There is a list of other donated books currently for sale, on our website at

www.chepstowsociety.co.uk/publications

New Society Chair

Guy Hamilton was elected to chair the Society at the AGM.

Guy worked in local government as a planning and strategy coordinator in Exeter and Bristol. He has lived in Chepstow since 1993, and has been involved in the Chepstow Society since 2010.



As publications officer, he revised our booklets on the town trail and local walks, and wrote new booklets on the First World War shipyard and the war memorial. As secretary since 2020, he has kept members informed during the lockdown with monthly bulletins, maintained our website and Facebook page, and set up the successful Zoom meetings with councillors and others on civic and amenity matters.

MEMBERSHIP FOR 2022/23

**Our membership year ended in April.
Membership is £12 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
**Angela Middleditch, Pen y Morfa, Mathern.
NP16 6JD**

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

Personal observations from a hospital bed....

An opinion piece by Keith Underwood

Being in hospital for eight weeks certainly broadens the mind, and removes any pretensions one might previously have been subject to. The Bristol riot and the sad removal of the Colston statue were not caused by decent black people, but hardened activists who don't want to listen to reason.

Understandably, reservations about the slave trade have awakened deep hatred and frustration about what to do about it today - so many years and an entirely different world ago. We all know about the lovable Valentine Morris, but few care to mention that his wealth came from sugar plantations. Nathaniel Wells of course muddies the waters, since he was a black slave owner much admired.

But here in hospital I find I am now very much a part of a multi-ethnic society whose members, doctors, nurses and workers, have no racial agenda but to get on with the job and work together. Relationships are natural and unassumed, stemming from working together. Sometimes it's like Babel and all the different accents seem to clash together, but everyone seems to understand each other. Key of course is the Newport accent, adopted or absorbed by all ethnic groups, helping to iron out the situation. Youngsters, clearly newly arrived, retain their native African voices, which is a delight.

The Chinese (Singapore?) and Filipinos also retain their native tones. These are dedicated disciplined nurses. Night shifts replace day shifts and a completely new melange appears. Lying close to the action, a captive listener, I have the firm impression that they have all become deeply integrated. Nurses talk a lot, loudly, but since the patients are mostly very elderly and deaf, it is not surprising. They discuss the minutiae of their daily lives, but are politically motivated where the administration is concerned, holding meetings elsewhere.

Coming from a different generation in the pre-war years it is unavoidable not to think of Empire! We as a country are still benefitting from its effects, and these doctors, nurses and workers are shining examples of how a new, integrated world is developing, looking forward, not back.

Forestry and land management in the Wye Valley

Natural Resources Wales (NRW) would like to invite you to a community drop-in session in June, to find out more about how we manage the Northern and Southern Wye woodlands in Monmouthshire.

The drop in event for the Southern Wye woodland will be held on Wednesday 15 June at The Hood Memorial Hall, Devauden, between 2:00pm – 7:00pm.

The drop-in event for the Northern Wye woodland will be held on Thursday 16 June at The North Village Hall between 2:00pm – 7:00pm.

The purpose of these sessions is to share understanding of some of the scheduled forestry operations we will be undertaking, including removing approximately 133ha of trees that have been infected with larch disease and managing Himalayan balsam.

This will be a chance to share the challenges and opportunities that this work might have for our partners, neighbours and the people who use these woodlands on a regular basis.

Our teams will also be available to talk to people about the Wye Valley Forest Resource Plans, which set out the future vision for the woodland and answer any questions they may have.

This is a chance to ask us anything about your local woodlands, please come along and share what's important to you.

More information is available on the [NRW project page](#)

South East Forest Operations
on behalf of **Natural Resources Wales**

Summer of Art with Monmouthshire Museums

MonLife Heritage Museums are delighted to bring you some one-off special lectures this summer with our popular lecturer Eleanor Bird, in June, July and early September. There is the option to enjoy these talks in person at the Drill Hall Chepstow on Tuesday evenings, or online on Monday afternoons (with a limited period of recorded availability).

All the lectures, live on line, or live in person can be booked by going

to: www.visitmonmouthshire.com/arthistory

Raphael: Renaissance Man

One of the giants of the Renaissance, the artist Raphael began receiving major commissions in his teens. Famed for his gentle Madonna and Child paintings, his work encompasses so much more – everything from heart-stopping portraits to giant altarpieces, tapestry designs to powerful frescos for the Vatican and a fascination for Rome's ancient buildings which influenced his own development as an architect. Explore Raphael's art in our first Summer Talk with lecturer Eleanor Bird which marks the recent 500th anniversary of Raphael's death and a major exhibition at the National Gallery.

Monday 13th June, 2 – 3.45pm online via Zoom (with short tea break). **Book online now:**

www.visitmonmouthshire.com/raphael-online

Tuesday 14th June, 7.30 – 9.30pm live in person at the Drill Hall, Chepstow (with break). **Book online now:** www.visitmonmouthshire.com/raphael-live

£10 fee for each event, per person



Pissarro: Father of Impressionism

Tuesday 7 June 7.30pm

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

Tickets £10

Book online now

at www.drillhallchepstow.co.uk

or at the door on the night from 6.45pm

Brought to the Drill Hall by, and in support of MonLife Heritage Museums

Pissarro, Father of Impressionism is a new Exhibition on Screen film about this passionate, political, courageous and radical artist without whom there would have been no Impressionists.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Rubens and the Drama of the Baroque

Diplomat, businessman and the quintessential baroque artist, Peter Paul Rubens dominated the development of art in the earlier 17th century.

Monday 11th July, 2pm online.

Tuesday 12th July, 7.30pm at The Drill Hall, Chepstow.

£10 per person

Thomas Cole and the Great American Landscape

Discover the art of Thomas Cole, father of American landscape painting.

Monday 5th September, 2pm, online.

Tuesday 6th September, 7.30pm at The Drill Hall, Chepstow.

£10 per person