

THE CHEPSTOW SOCIETY

Members Bulletin September 2022



www.chepstowsociety.co.uk



Wednesday 21st September, 7:15 pm

William FitzOsbern, Earl of Hereford

The founder of Chepstow Castle

Talk by Rebecca Tyson

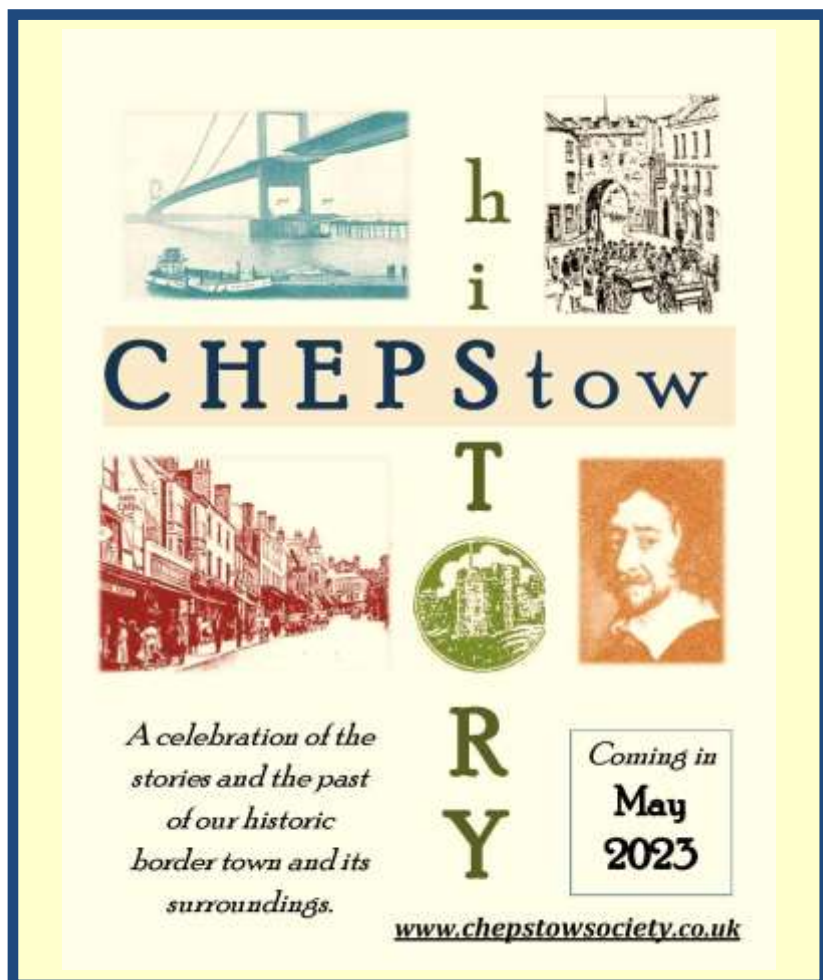
The Drill Hall, Lower Church Street, Chepstow NP16 5HJ

All welcome - Refreshments available

Members £1 - Non-members £3

The meeting will also be streamed via Zoom <https://zoom.us/join>

Meeting ID: 513 005 1668 Passcode: Waters



A celebration of the stories and the past of our historic border town and its surroundings.

CHEPSTOW HISTORY

Coming in May 2023

www.chepstowsociety.co.uk

Forthcoming meetings in the Drill Hall

***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!

We also hope to arrange a Zoom meeting on civic and amenity issues with local councillors and others in October – details will be circulated in due course to members.

MOVING FORWARD

As we emerge from our long, hot and dry summer - and from the pandemic - our thoughts are again turning to how the Society can best develop its role – not only as a social group for its members, but more importantly as a charity that is committed to promoting, among our wider community, interest in the history and heritage of the town and its surroundings.

Chepstow is fortunate in already having a number of popular and well-organised public festivals throughout the year – the Arts Festival, the Castell Roc promotions in the castle, the Walkers are Welcome week, regular events at the Racecourse and in the Drill Hall, the street markets, and so on.

What we would like to do is introduce our own history-based festival – which for the time being I am calling **ChepStory** – with the first event being held next May.

Although 2023 will mark the Society's own 75th anniversary – itself a reason to celebrate – we would like our mini-festival to be outward- rather than inward-looking.

THE WILLIAM MARSHAL STATUE

Members may remember that, before I stepped down as Society Chairman, I started a project to commission a statue of William Marshal ('the Greatest Knight') to be placed before his base – Chepstow Castle.

I was delighted to learn that John Burrows was as keen as I was to commission such a statue. However I decided that perhaps this was not the time to be raising funds for a statue in view of the problems people are now facing with the unexpected and unprecedented rise in the cost of living.

I have not given up on the project however, and thought that I should take a few minutes to remind members of the legend that was William Marshal.

He first came to prominence in the events leading up to the sealing of Magna Carta in 1215. Such was his reputation, even at that time, that he was a trusted intermediary between King John and the Barons and helped to secure that 1215 agreement. Unfortunately King John, having suffered military reverses on the Continent, had been compelled to become a vassal of the Pope who immediately nullified Magna Carta as it had been

We hope that our events will be of wide interest – not only talks, walks, and displays, but events for families and children, and perhaps workshops to try to capture the memories of those of us who have lived in the town over the decades.

We have started talking with Cadw, the custodians of the castle, about how we can work with them, and we will now start talking with other local groups, schools, the town council and others on possible activities. We will also, of course, involve our town museum in all the plans.

We need your ideas as to what we should do! How do you think we could best generate interest in local history and heritage?

We are (as ever!) looking for help – particularly from those who have been involved in organising other events locally.

In due course we will also be looking for volunteers to help at the time – which we plan to be between 17th and 21st May 2023.

Please let me, our secretary Sallie James, or any of our committee members, have your thoughts, suggestions... and offers to help!

Guy Hamilton, Chair 2022/23
secretary@gmail.com

sealed by King John under duress. At this point it is likely that Magna Carta would have vanished into the mists of time.

Fortunately King John died the following year and, on his deathbed, begged the 70 year old William Marshal to become guardian to his 9 year old son Henry III and, in effect, Regent of the Kingdom. William accepted and one of his first acts was to reissue Magna Carta albeit in a modified form. As a result, the idea that the King was still subject to the law became established and the Magna Carta achieved almost mythical status in the world, especially in the United States of America.

Apart from leading the British force the following year at the Battle of Lincoln when an invading French army was defeated, William's claims to fame ended, but the importance of his revival of the Magna Carta, which still remains the cornerstone of our system of justice by establishing the principles that no-one is above the law and that no-one shall be punished without due process of law, cannot be overstated.

Because of that one fact alone I still think that he deserves a statue at his base – Chepstow Castle. Hopefully when circumstances improve, we can resume the quest!

Geoff Sumner

A MEMORY

"Stand up!"... The seats clanked as we sprang to our feet. The Headmaster, W.E. Stephens BA – "Pommy" to us – had appeared from behind the blackboard, and we knew better than to mess with him. But he wasn't alone; a stocky youngish man in a grey suit, with black hair brushed back from the forehead and a warm smile, was with him. "This gentleman is to be your new class teacher: his name is Mr Ivor Waters. See that you behave yourselves for him!" "Yes, sir" we made haste to reply.

So began our relationship with Ivor Waters, founder of the Chepstow Society. We soon realised that this was a teacher who really cared – not only for his professional task, but for each lad as an individual. He spoke very quietly, and he went out of his way to encourage us, and to broaden our horizons into new and interesting topics, such as play-acting, trawlers, bookbinding, and coal mining.

This was a time when the "whack-whack" of the cane could frequently be heard through the moveable screens that separated the classrooms at the Boys' School, but I never knew Ivor Waters cane. He had a knack of making the lads feel at home, of wanting us to do well. Fifty years later, an ex-pupil of his told me: "He taught me more than all the others put together".

My debt to Ivor Waters was very great. As a child I suffered very poor health and as a result missed many weeks of school, which led to failure in the 11+ examinations and in the Monmouth School entrance. Ivor Waters arranged to have my work shown to the Head at Monmouth, Rev. C.H.D. Cullingford, who responded by giving me a place.

Memories are notoriously fickle, but there are some which seem to spark off vivid pictures in the mind and linger there with a truth to themselves that defies the passage of time. One such was an afternoon when Ivor Waters showed us his Spanish typewriter, with a separate key for the ñ that fascinated us.

Another was the day he brought into class a model of the Chepstow area, about a yard square. The contours of the land were laid out, in greens, in three dimensions, with roads, woods and streams faithfully



Ivor Waters, 1907-1992

painted onto the hills and fields. I believe that model was for years in the window of the old Chepstow museum, under the Arch.

Years later, one summer evening when the Boys' School was in course of demolition, I found a gap in the builders' corrugated iron barriers, and I went in to the classroom where Ivor Waters taught me. It was empty, dusty and smaller than I recalled. I stood quietly for many minutes, and it seemed as though Ivor

Waters and the boys of my class reappeared in my imagination... and I reflected sadly that I would never see that dear classroom again.

Ben Thomas - Boys' School, 1944-48

Ivor's son, John Waters, adds this comment:

I liked that little pen sketch from Ben Thomas. In particular, one paragraph struck a strong memory: "Another was the day he brought into class a model of the Chepstow area... I believe that model was for years in the window of the old Chepstow museum, under the Arch."

It was also in our house for many years after that, on a wall in the outbuilding where The Moss Rose Press printing took place. Unfortunately, being made from window-putty coated in gloss paint, it eventually disintegrated beyond all hope of repair, the putty crumbling to a sort of dust under the flaking paint.

He seems to have experimented with a number of approaches to making relief maps, including layered cardboard, but the only surviving example is my favourite - a relief map of Spain made from layers of thin wood, each cut with a jigsaw after carefully tracing the contours from a 2D map. I particularly love the way it was painted not to show political boundaries but to display bioregional variations. It suggests that even in the early 1960 he understood something of the way the world is going to have to reorganize itself.

DONATED BOOKS

The Chepstow Society has received a number of donations of books and booklets of local interest.

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

Some of the books have come from storage in the Chepstow School library, and so contain some library marks and are in “Fair” rather than “Good” (or better) condition. **The ex-library books are marked * below, and the prices reflect their condition.** We have multiple copies of some of them (shown in **bold**).

£40

- Ivor Waters: Inns and Taverns of the Chepstow District (hardback, 1949)

£30

- Ivor Waters: Inns and Taverns of Chepstow and the Lower Wye Valley (complete set of 5 booklets, 1976)

£25 each

- Ivor Waters: Chepstow Street Literature and Ephemera (hardback, 1979)
- Ivor Waters: Chepstow Printers and Newspapers (hardback, 1981 – revised version)

£20

- * John Newman: The Buildings of Wales: Gwent/Monmouthshire (2000)

£18 each

- * Ivor Waters: The Unfortunate Valentine Morris (Chepstow Society, hardback, 1964)
- * Thomas Birbeck: Sword and Ploughshare, the Story of the de Bohuns and Caldicot (Chepstow Society, hardback, 1973)

£15

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

£12 each

- Ivor Waters: Henry Marten and the Long Parliament (paperback, 1973)
- Mercedes Waters: Chepstow Sketches (1973)

£10 each

- Ivor Waters: Chepstow Clock and Watch Makers (1972)
- Ivor Waters (trans.): Sunlight and Scarlet: selected poems by Antonio Machado (1973)
- Ivor Waters: Inns and Taverns of Chepstow and the Lower Wye Valley, Part 1 (inc. map, 1976)
- Ivor Waters: Inns and Taverns of Chepstow and the Lower Wye Valley, Part 3 (1976)
- Brunel's Tubular Suspension Bridge over the River Wye (1970 reprint of 1856 pamphlet)
- S B Rogers: An Early Victorian Severn Bridge (Merlin Bookshop, 1974 reprint of 1845 pamphlet)
- * Chepstow Society: Reflections, 1948 to 1998 (Chepstow Society, 1998)
- Fred Hando: Out and About in Monmouthshire (1958, reprinted 1974)
- Whitebrook: a community brought to life... (ed. Bevan and Rees, 2005)

£8 each

- Ivor Waters: Impressions and Versions (poems, Chepstow, 1973)
- Ivor Waters: There was a young lady from Gwent (poem, Chepstow, 1976)

£8 each

- * Ivor Waters : A Chepstow and District Anthology (Chep Soc, 1948)
- Rev. K M Denison: Mathern – History from the Parish Registers (Chep Soc, 1977)
- F H & M Keyte: Tidenham Parish Registers Part 1 (1970)
- F H & M Keyte: Tidenham Parish Registers Part 2 (1971)
- Arthur Clark: Chepstow – Its Castle and Lordship (1958)
- Arthur Clark: The Story of Monmouthshire Vol.1 (1962)
- Arthur Clark: The Story of Monmouthshire Vol.2 (1979)
- Ray Howell: Fedw Villages: A Lower Wye Valley History (1985)
- Robert Thompson: Images of Itton: The story of a rural parish (2000)
- Chepstow and the River Wye in Old Photographs (2000 edition)

£6 each

- Ivor Waters: Chepstow Town Gate and Museum (1953)
- Ivor Waters: The Wine Trade of the Port of Chepstow (1967)
- Ivor Waters: Chepstow Churchwardens (1967)
- Ivor Waters: The Town of Chepstow Part 1 – Riverside (1972)
- Ivor Waters: The Town of Chepstow Part 3 – Lower Town (1973)
- Ivor Waters: The Town of Chepstow Part 6 – High Street (1974)
- Ivor Waters: A List of Vicars of Chepstow (1975)
- Ivor Waters: Inns and Taverns of Chepstow and the Lower Wye Valley, Part 4 (1976)
- Ivor Waters: Inns and Taverns of Chepstow and the Lower Wye Valley, Part 5 (1976)
 - **NOTE:** Parts 4 and 5 can be packaged together, with a scanned copy of the map of Chepstow Inns (from Part 1), for **£11**
- * Ivor Waters : **About Chepstow** (1952)
- * Ivor Waters : **Chepstow Parish Records** (1955)

£6 each

- * Ivor Waters : **Chepstow Miscellany** (1958)
- * Ivor Waters : Mounton Valley Paper Mills (1958)
- * Henry Marten: The Independency of England, 1648 (Moss Rose Press reprint, 1977)
- * Rev. K M Denison: Mathern - History from the Parish Registers (Chep Soc, 1977)
- Selections from “Chepstow: A Poem” by Edward Davies 1718-1789 (Chep Soc, 1967)
- W H Greene: Jack o’ Kent and the Devil (Chep Soc, 1974)
- Historical Assn., Monms. & Newport: Visit of the Council of the Historical Assn., 1938
- Arthur Clark: The Castle of St Briavels (1949)
- John Guy & Ewart Smith: Ancient Gwent Churches (1979)
- Jeremy Knight: Civil War & Restoration in Monmouthshire (2005)

£5 each

- * The Sweet Days (schoolchildren’s poems, Monmouthshire C.C., 1961)
- * Alan Roderick: The Folklore of Gwent (1983)
- * Alan Roderick: Haunted Gwent (1995)
- * Alan Roderick: The Gwent Christmas Book (1995)

£4 each

- Thomas Birbeck: Caldicot Old Houses and Families (Chepstow Society, 1978)
- * Ivor Waters: Leather and Oak Bark at Chepstow (Chepstow Society, 1970)
- * Ivor Waters: The Wine Trade of the Port of Chepstow (Chepstow Society, 1967)
- * Ivor Waters: Chepstow Churchwardens (Chepstow Society, 1967)
- * Arthur Clark: **Chepstow, Its Castle and Lordship** (1958)
- * Arthur Clark: The Story of Monmouthshire Vol.1 (1962)
- * Ray Howell: A History of Gwent (1988)
- F R Rowbotham: Brief Guide to the Severn and its Bore (1967)
- The Birds of Gwent (Gwent Ornith. Soc., 1977)
- Tintern’s Story (ed. Judith Russell, 1991)