

THE CHEPSTOW SOCIETY

Members Bulletin May 2023



www.chepstowsociety.co.uk



THE CHEPSTOW SOCIETY

CHEPSTOW

HISTORY FESTIVAL



SCAN ME

The Chepstow Society is marking its 75th birthday with events and activities to celebrate the stories and the past of our historic border town.

www.chepstowsociety.co.uk



17 - 21
MAY 23

PROGRAMME

17 - 21 MAY 23

The Chepstow Society was formed 75 years ago, and since then has sought to educate, inspire and inform residents and visitors, and protect the town's historic environment. To mark the occasion, the Society is hosting and co-ordinating a special series of events and activities, including re-enactments and special film showings.

WEDNESDAY 17TH MAY

Drill Hall, 6:30 pm

Chepstow Society Annual General Meeting.

Drill Hall, Lower Church Street 7:30 pm

(Doors open at 7 pm. Entry £1 for Chepstow Society members, £3 for non-members).

Tales of the Riverbank

Local tales of riverside activities presented by Tim Ryan

"Forest Life - The River Severn" – a rare showing of the 1981 film by Melville Watts, introduced by John Thurston.

THURSDAY 18TH MAY

Palmer Centre, Place de Cormeilles (off the High Street), from 12 noon

Display of old photographs of the town, hosted by Tim Ryan.

Drill Hall, 7.30 pm

(Doors open 7 pm.)

"Novello and Son" – a musical entertainment celebrating the Cardiff-born dramatist and entertainer, and his mother, in a one-woman show by Rosamund Shelley, supported by the Arts Council of Wales Night Out scheme. Tickets £7 from:

<https://dhmc-101417.square.site/>,
or on the door. Bar available.

FRIDAY 19TH MAY

Drill Hall, 7 pm Film night

Two films of the local son et lumière events, "Echoes in the Stones" (2000) and "Most Loyal Knight" (2002), together with a documentary about their making. Introduced by the shows' producer, Ned Heywood. Tickets £4 from: <https://dhmc-101417.square.site/> or on the door. Bar available.

SATURDAY 20TH MAY

Drill Hall, 11 am – 4 pm

Free admission

Opening by Dame Claire Clancy, Deputy Lord-Lieutenant of Gwent. Stalls by local history and memorabilia groups. Displays of "Then and now" photos of the town. Refreshments available.

Chepstow Castle, from 11 am

"The Household" - Anglo-Norman living history encampment, with tents, armoury, crafts, displays, talks, and costumed performers. Cadw entrance charges to the Castle will apply. Cadw Monument Passes will be accepted.

Castle Green, from 11 am

Free admission

The Guild, a 17th century re-enactment group, will be setting up camp. Come along to find out

what it was like to be a soldier and live in a military encampment.

Chepstow Methodist Church Hall, Albion Square 2 pm

Free admission

Gwent County History Association AGM and talk by Tony Hopkins, "The Commonplace Book of John Gwin of Llangwm".

Town Walk - meet at the Tourist Information Centre, Castle Car Park 6 pm

A walk around "The old inns and taverns of Chepstow". £3 per person, bookable in advance – 07786 500609 (text preferred).

SUNDAY 21ST MAY

Drill Hall, 11 am – 4 pm

Free admission

Displays of old photographs and "then and now" photographs of the town, to start the process of capturing stories and memories of Chepstow as it was in the 1950s, 60s and 70s. Refreshments available.

Chepstow Castle, from 11 am

"The Household" - Anglo-Norman living history encampment, with tents, armoury, crafts, displays, talks, and costumed performers. Cadw entrance charges to the Castle will apply. Cadw Monument Passes will be accepted.

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED!

The Chepstow Society was set up in 1948, and our History Festival celebrates 75 years of our existence.

Our aim is to get more people – both local residents and visitors - interested in, and involved in promoting, the history of the town. For our festival, **we will need volunteers** at different times over those few days - particularly early on Saturday morning, 20th May, to prepare the displays in the Drill Hall.

Please contact Keith or Sallie James on 01594 529713, or Guy Hamilton on 07786 500609, if you are able to help in any way - with that, or with other parts of our programme - for example, if you are able to contribute reminiscences or old pictures to our workshop event on Sunday 21st.

P.S.

Our Annual General Meeting will be held in the Drill Hall on Wednesday 17th May at **6 30 pm** (please note the start time). This will briefly review our activities over the past year (including finances!), and make decisions affecting the coming year.

Members should have received the formal AGM notice, and an agenda will be sent out separately.

As always, we would welcome new people with the time, interest and skills to contribute to our activities. This could be as a committee member, or in some other way, such as coming up with ideas to develop and expand our work, or simply helping out at meetings.

Please contact Sallie, Keith or Guy – or come forward at the AGM itself - if you are interested in helping the Society function effectively.

MEMBERSHIP RENEWALS

If you have not yet renewed your membership for 2023/24, your annual payment is now overdue.

The cost is £12 per person.

You can pay by the following methods:

Standing Order (please check the amount is correct)

BACS payment:

Account Name: Chepstow Society

Sort Code: 30-98-90

Account Number: 18173668

Reference: Your membership name

Cheque to the Chepstow Society, by post to:

**Angela Middleditch, Pen y Morfa,
Mathern, Chepstow NP16 6J**

Payment can be made at one of our meetings, with cash, card or cheque (please put the exact cash amount in an envelope with your name on it).

You will need a membership card to claim your Cadw discount. These will be available at Society meetings, or by post from Angela on receipt of a stamped self-addressed envelope.

If you are not planning to renew, it would be very helpful if you could email to let me know, so that I can remove your name from our lists.

Angela Middleditch

membership@chepstowsociety.co.uk

THE FIRST CHEPSTOW SOCIETY EXCURSION OF 2023



On 28th March, Worcester was the destination for the first Chepstow Society outing of 2023, accompanied by our new Excursions organiser Patrick Gale.

The first stop was the Museum of Royal Worcester, home to the world's largest collection of Royal Worcester Porcelain. Production ceased in 2008, when the company went into administration. Thanks to the foresight of a number of people, including Henry and John Sandon, a fantastic collection of porcelain and other objects was saved and protected in the Museum, for us to admire. Henry even delved into skips to rescue items that are now on permanent display!

The Museum Archivist brought to life the story of porcelain making on a number of sites across the city, from 1751, along with recordings of people whose skill and artistry created a fabulous range of objects from the (relatively) everyday, to the absolutely fabulous.

The company was a caring and enlightened employer, providing health, schooling and leisure activities for employees and their families. At its peak the factory employed over 2000 people across all the departments, all of whom played their part in the production and distribution process. We were able to handle a number of exhibits, including porcelain made for Queen Elizabeth II and the last commission from a very wealthy but anonymous sheikh.

The Archivist's advice to anybody with fine china, is to use it and enjoy it and don't save it for high days and holidays - it's tougher than you think. We held our breath as she demonstrated the strength of a tea-cup... by standing on it.

After the talk we were free to look around the exhibitions and to admire the marvellous and decorative artistry showcased in works created from the 18th century up until the factory's closure. Then we headed across the courtyard to the Café where we enjoyed excellent food (and cake!) to set us up for a visit to Worcester Cathedral.

Worcester Cathedral, on the bank of the River Sever, was founded by St. Oswald in 680: a monastery was a much later addition. The present building was started by St. Wulfstan in 1084 and was one of a number of important centres of learning across England that survived for hundreds of years. Some of the most priceless treasures of the Cathedral are the medieval texts that still survive in the Cathedral Library today.

The long life of the Cathedral was clear in the different architectural styles, from Norman through to the late 14th Century Perpendicular style. The Cathedral sustained considerable damage during the Dissolution of the Monasteries and again during the Civil War, but serious restoration did not commence until the mid-19th century. The most recent restoration work was completed in 2012 but there is still plenty to keep 7 full-time stone masons occupied.

Worcester's famous musical tradition also started in Victorian times. Sir Edward Elgar performed in the Cathedral at many of the world famous Three Choirs Festival concerts.

Our tour took in many of the Cathedral's most important attractions including the tomb of King John (was he as bad as history would have us believe?), Prince Arthur's Chantry, and some fabulous Victorian stained glass, which featured a number of improbable animals including a pink giraffe!

We also visited the medieval cloisters with its simple but effective spy hole sequence whereby the monk-in-charge could ensure none of the brothers was shirking in his duty of transcribing the gospels: a beautiful but drafty 'office'. Last stop was the magnificent 12th Century Chapter House, a haven of warmth on a cold and drizzly day.

Patrick's first excursion was well-planned and highly enjoyable, and we are looking forward to finding out about the next trip.

Marion Huckle

FUTURE MEETING DATES

Wednesday 21st June

Owen Gower

***Dr Jenner of Berkeley –
pioneer of vaccination***

Chepstow Society monthly meetings take place on the third Wednesday of the month, at the Drill Hall, Lower Church St., Chepstow NP16 5HJ

Wednesday 19th July

Janet Karn - *Chepstow Notables*

Meetings start at 7 30 pm but all are welcome to join us for tea and coffee from 7 00 pm.

Wednesday 20th September

John Burrows -

William Marshal in Ireland

All welcome

Members £1 Non-members £3

Wednesday 18th October

Jeff Grosvenor

The Newport Transporter Bridge

When possible, the meetings are also streamed via Zoom - <https://zoom.us/join>

Meeting ID: 513 005 1668

Passcode: Waters

More to follow...

WHAT'S ON AT CHEPSTOW PRIORY

All events free unless otherwise stated – donations welcome



Saturday 20 th May 11.00-4.00	AT THE DRILL HALL	Chepstow Priory Friends Stall at an event organised by the Chepstow Society
Saturday June 10 th	7.30pm	Concert with Chepstow Male Voice Choir
Saturday 24 th June	7.30pm	Alex Kirk and students - piano recital evening
Wednesday 12 th July	at 1pm	Lunchtime concert - USA recorder group
Saturday 15 th July	at 9.30am all day	Artisan Market
Friday August 4 th		Visiting bellringers ring a peel
Wednesday 9 th August	1pm - lunchtime concert	Classical singers and a piano with Jayne Thomas
Saturday 30 th September,	7.30pm	Chepstow Singing Club, Chepstow Male Voice Choir and others in memory of Karl Diamond



Chepstow Priory Friends