



THE CHEPSTOW SOCIETY

Members Bulletin

July 2024



www.chepstowsociety.co.uk

Wednesday 17th July

Talk by Professor Ronald Hutton



The Druids

Wednesday

18th September

Talk by Garry Attacombe

The Bristol Riots of 1831



Our meetings and talks are held on the third Wednesday of each month at

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

Tea and coffee from 7 pm. Talk from 7 30 pm

All welcome - Members £1 - Non-members £4

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

Meeting ID: 513 005 1668 Passcode: Waters



ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2024

The Society's 76th A.G.M. took place in the Drill Hall on 15th May, and was well attended. The main decisions taken were:

- Keith James was re-elected unopposed as President. Geoff Sumner, our past Chairman and more recently our Vice-President, has now stood down from the Society's committee.
- John Burrows was elected as Chairman, in place of Guy Hamilton, who stood down but remains on the committee.
- Sallie James has been elected as Vice-Chair, and Marion Huckle has taken over as Secretary.
- The audited financial reports prepared by the Treasurer, Dave Nicholls, were approved.

The meeting was followed by a fascinating talk by Anne Rainsbury of Chepstow Museum, on the work done by local Red Cross nurses in tending for injured servicemen during the First World War.

In other committee news:

- The meeting entrance charge for **non-members** has risen from £3 to £4. If you are a member, the charge is still £1.
- On behalf of the Society, Guy gave a presentation to the Chepstow Schools Cluster training session in May, attended by about 180 local teachers. This summarised interesting aspects of Chepstow's history, and we hope that this will allow more awareness and knowledge of local history to be incorporated into Chepstow schools' curriculum.

FINAL REMINDER

A reminder that annual subscriptions to the Chepstow Society for 2024/25 are now overdue.

If you intend renewing but haven't already done so, please do so as soon as possible.

The annual membership rate 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** by post, sent to Angela Middleditch, Pen y Morfa, Mathern, Chepstow NP16 6J
- **Card** payments are possible at monthly meetings

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

Thank you

Angela



Tudor Day

18th May 2024

This was a very successful event, largely organised by Chepstow Town Council but based on our suggestion and with our close involvement. It involved hundreds of people, many dressed in an approximation of Tudor costume, to celebrate the 500th anniversary of the town's charter given by the last Marcher Lord, and the building of the Town Gate in its present form. Thanks to all those involved in making it such a success!



Photos by Richard Clammer

DAVID BARBER

1935 – 2024



Keith Underwood writes:

David and Janet had been stalwart members of the Society for many years, having saved our bacon on one occasion when he took on the difficult post of Treasurer, a position he took on successfully and valiantly. He and his gentle supportive wife Janet rarely failed to attend the Society's functions.

At the time when in September we hosted the local European Heritage weekends, he was soon learning to guide and often took town tours. Then, alongside now sorely missed Henry Hodges as a Puritan preacher and me, as a Cavalier, he had himself kitted out as a Puritan merchant.

It is not the first time that members donned historical costume. At the "George and the Gate" weekend, at which Anna Tribe (Somerset) and a socialist aristocratic daughter (a descendant of Margaret Cleyton!) appeared, Marjorie Evans, Henry Hodges also appeared resplendent in Jacobean costume!

David and Janet were faithful adherents of the astonishing excursion programme organised by Eileen Grassby, with my help.

They were always on the coach, and went on all the holidays. They were both keen walkers, often with the U3A, and themselves planning routes.

David Barber passed away in April at the age of 88.

David was a greatly respected member of the Society. A past Chairman (2005-2009), and later our (somewhat reluctant) Treasurer for a number of years, he was an active participant in meetings and excursions, and led many town walks, often dressed in appropriately historical garb!

He was born in Sussex, and became a brickmaker and later a senior manager in the construction industry. At one time he was national President of the Institute of Construction Management before moving to live in Sedbury.

Local history and heritage were a keen part of their life.

Living at the Stables in Sedbury, Warren Arden's new development, they were keen members of the Tidenham Historical Group, for which David prepared an in-depth paper on the Tallards Marsh and Elmdale brickyards. He had been in the building profession in the South East, and was an expert on bricks.

Accordingly I first met this quiet man on one of our outings to Malmesbury, as we turned off the riverbank path up a lane, on the corner of which stood a curious triangular brick house. He had stopped short and had gathered a group who were eagerly listening to his talking of the way each brick was shaped individually to allow the structure to be built. Memorable!

We shall greatly miss him, but hope that Janet will still come to meetings. Perhaps someone could pick her up? Our warmest love and wishes to her and her family.

Keith is 90!

For those who don't know, Keith Underwood is a longstanding member of the Society, who organised our excursions for many years. He is also a well-known artist whose works have decorated much of Chepstow for decades – including the mural of the town's historical figures which members see every time they visit the Drill Hall.

Angela Middleditch writes:

It was a privilege to be invited to share the special birthday celebrations of one of our longest serving members, Keith Underwood. In the week of June 20th, Keith celebrated his 90th birthday.

He regaled us with tales of his childhood in Sedbury. Growing up in a time of freedom and exploration he reminisced about his school days, including escapades with rival groups of children, which shed a new light on gang violence! These together with tales of past teachers and their foibles painted a



Photo by Richard Clammer

vivid and insightful view of a delightful childhood. Some of his contemporaries corroborated these tales and the mischievous adventures in which the young Keith participated.

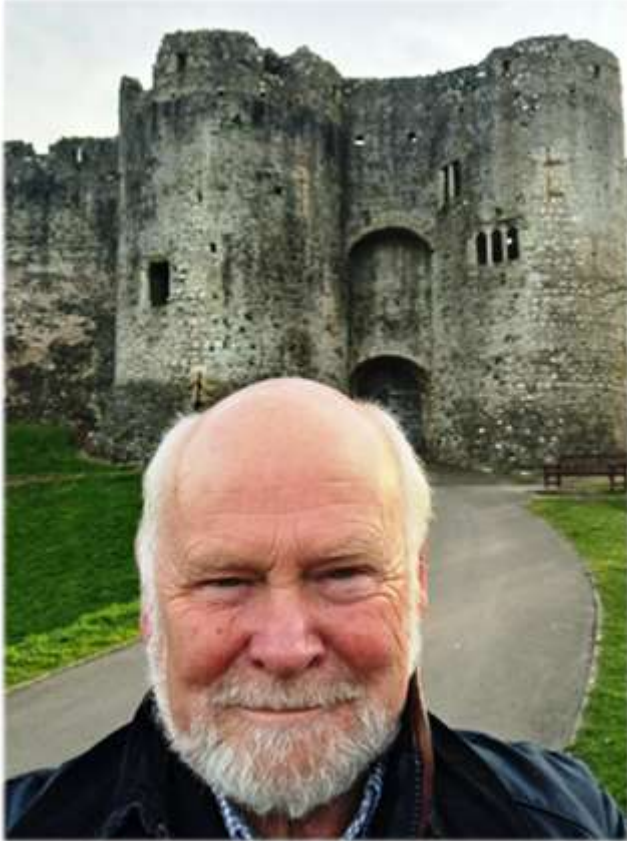
A time for meeting old friends and acquaintances and reminiscing about events, including art classes, Brother Thomas, son et lumiere, and the Chepstow Garrison provoked many long forgotten memories.

A joyful afternoon remembering happy past times.

I am sure that you will all join with me in wishing Keith a very happy birthday, and our best wishes for many many happy returns.



Introducing the Chepstow Society's new Chairman John Burrows



John has lived near Chepstow for 25 years. As well as giving several talks to the Chepstow Society, he has been a member of the Society's committee since 2022.

John researched and prepared various information leaflets for the town council: on Chepstow's tides; the historic 1816 bridge and co-organising its 200th anniversary celebration in 2016; the Severn Bridge; Chepstow's six Grade 1 Listed Structures; and most recently research on Chepstow's most famous resident, William Marshal, who gave the world the Magna Carta in the 13th century.

He regularly gives talks on all of these subjects. John was involved in Chepstow's 950th anniversary

celebrations in 2017 and the 500th anniversary of the Town Arch and 1524 Charter.

His wife, Sandra Bushell, was the Town Clerk from 2000 to 2015, and John became involved in helping out at, and/or photographing, many civic events throughout that time.

For the past ten years he has been the Treasurer of the Drill Hall arts and community centre.

John is a geographer and urban development specialist, with degrees from Oxford University and University College London. He has worked as a Director or Chief Executive of a number of organisations including local authorities, government and regional development agencies and companies, and as a development consultant for the World Bank in Asia.

He has led and chaired international development conference sessions in China, Vietnam, Indonesia and South Korea. Much of his career was based in London but he also worked in Glasgow, the North West, the Midlands, South West England, Wales, and abroad.

In Wales, he was Director of Development for the Welsh Development Agency, which included leading the final negotiations and development of the Wales Millennium Centre in Cardiff Bay; and was Chief Executive of the 'Newport Unlimited' urban regeneration company from 2006 to 2010.

CHEPSTOW MUSEUM



On 9th April, Chepstow Museum – first set up by the Society in 1949 - celebrated its 75th anniversary with a reception attended by dozens of friends, staff, volunteers and dignitaries - and with a cake!



Photos by MonLife Heritage Museums

A colorful poster for the Newport Medieval Ship Summer Fayre 2024. The poster features a large illustration of a medieval ship on the water. Text on the poster includes: "NEWPORT MEDIEVAL SHIP SUMMER FAYRE 2024", "SATURDAY 27TH JULY 10AM - 4PM", "FREE ENTRY!", "CRAFTS!", "FAMILY ACTIVITIES!", "DEMONSTRATIONS!", "REFRESHMENTS!", and the address "UNIT 20, ESTUARY ROAD QUEENSWAY MEADOWS INDUSTRIAL ESTATE NEWPORT NP19 4SP". Contact information for Newport Ship is also provided: "FOR INFORMATION CONTACT: NEWPORT.SHIP@NEWPORT.GOV.UK 01633 274167 @newportship". A QR code is also present.

Gwent County History Association

Gwent County History Association promotes study of the history of the area covering Monmouthshire, Newport, Torfaen and Blaenau Gwent.

It publishes a journal twice a year; organises day schools; and presents awards for services to local history.

Membership is open to anyone interested.

Members receive:

- Two copies per year of *Gwent Local History*. With articles from a wide range of local historians, it gives an unparalleled insight into the history of the area.
- An occasional newsletter
- Discounts on publications
- An invitation to an annual lecture and day school

Annual membership fees are £15, for an individual or couple at same address.

To join, complete the form at

<https://gwenthistory.org.uk/> and return it with a cheque made out to Gwent County History Association (full name, not GCHA) to Peter Strong (Membership Secretary), 8 Deepweir, Caldicot, NP26 5JG.



THE CHEPSTOW SOCIETY

www.chepstowsociety.co.uk

TOWN WALKS 2024

Come and find out about the fascinating history of Chepstow over 950+ years, on a gentle and informative walk around the old town, led by members of the town's civic and historical society.

Numbers are limited – please book ahead. We cannot guarantee to accept people who turn up without prior booking.

To book places,
please text 07786 500609

£3 per person
Cash only – payable at start

Well-behaved children and dogs
welcome!

Meet outside the Tourist
Information Centre in Bridge
Street, opposite the Castle
entrance– NP16 5EY
(*except 21 August*).

The walks should take about
60-80 minutes.

Monday 8 July – 7.00 pm

Monday 15 July – 7.00 pm

Monday 22 July – 7.00 pm

Monday 29 July – 7.00 pm

*Tim Ryan's Hidden Chepstow –
what the guidebooks don't tell you!*

Weds. 7 August – 6.30 pm

Weds. 14 August – 6.30 pm

Weds. 21 August – 6.30 pm

*Walk around Bulwark -
meet at the Warren (Bulwarks Camp),
Alpha Road, NP16 5QX*

Weds. 28 August – 6.30 pm

