

# CHEPSTOW

## TOWN MAP AND TOWN TRAILS



**Chepstow is the gateway to Wales - a picturesque border town situated at the southern end of the Wye Valley in an area of outstanding natural beauty. The town is steeped in history and here you will find quaint cobbled streets, buildings that date back 1000 years, alleyways and hidden gems.**

**The word Chepstow derives from the old English *chepe stowe*, meaning a market place, and today the town boasts a wide variety of independent shops, cafés, restaurants and pubs, offering unique products and personal attention. In fact, something to suit all tastes.**



**Chepstow, *Cas-gwent* in the Welsh language, has been an important place for many reasons.** Just one year after the Norman invasion in 1066, the foundations of the town's impressive castle were laid down by William FitzOsbern, Knight of Cormeilles, and it is now the oldest surviving stone castle in Britain. In 1975, Chepstow became twinned with Cormeilles, a pretty, rural town in Normandy.

In the Middle Ages, imported wine was off-loaded on Chepstow's quayside and by the 18th century it was a major centre for the export of timber and bark from the Wye Valley and Forest of Dean. During World War I, it played a vital role in ship-building for the navy.

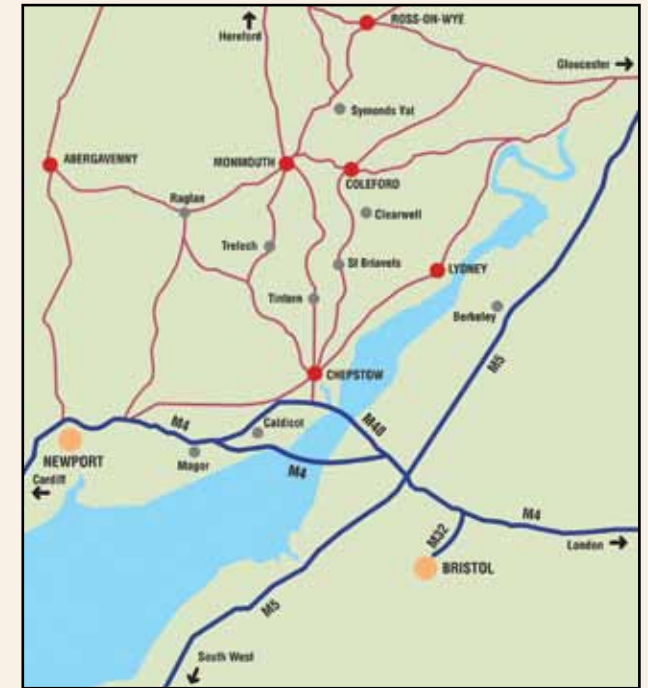


**Chepstow Racecourse** hosts the Coral Welsh Grand National and there has been horse-racing here since the 1920s. **St. Pierre Marriott Hotel & Country Club** has one of the finest and most picturesque golf courses in the country and for many years was host to the British (formerly Dunlop) Masters tournament. Just a couple of miles outside Chepstow, at Tidenham, is **The National Diving and Activity Centre**, a popular inland scuba diving site with depths up to 80 metres.

Chepstow stages the **Castell Roc** live music festival within the grounds of Chepstow Castle during the summer and, in January, the **Wassail and Mari Lwyd**. This unusual border festival features ancient Welsh traditions that involve the blessing of apple trees, decorated and shrouded horse skulls and border morris-dancing.



As well as shopping, history and sports, Chepstow is an accredited Walkers Are Welcome town, home to many beautiful walks to suit a wide range of abilities. Of national importance, is the **Wales Coast Path** which starts and finishes at the riverfront. If combined with **Offa's Dyke Path**, this allows you to walk the whole coast of Wales. The **Wye Valley Walk** to Plynlimon starts/finishes at the Castle. The **Gloucestershire Way** to Tewkesbury and the **Monmouthshire Way** also start/finish at Chepstow.



**CHEPSTOW makes a great centre for exploration.**

The **Wye Valley** is an area of outstanding natural beauty. **Tintern Abbey** is world-famous and a little further on are the pretty villages of Brockweir, Llandogo and Redbrook before you arrive at **Monmouth**, with its iconic Monnow Bridge and the castle that was the birthplace of Henry V.

To the west of Chepstow are medieval **Caldicot Castle** and the Roman towns of Venta Silurum at **Caerwent** and Isca at **Caerleon**.

To the east of Chepstow, head for the magical **Royal Forest of Dean** and discover ancient iron workings, a king's hunting lodge and maybe a deer or wild boar.

For those who like the bright lights of the city, **Bristol** provides masses of history, museums, art galleries and theatres. At the historic dockland of **Newport** is one of only ten operating transporter bridges worldwide.

**Cardiff**, the capital of Wales, offers world-class theatre, a beautiful waterfront and top level sporting fixtures.

For further information  
[www.visitmonmouthshire.com](http://www.visitmonmouthshire.com)

## TOWN TRAILS

Look out for plaques of information in pavements and walls along the way.

### CHEPSTOW HAS 3 TOWN TRAILS

All start/finish at the Tourist Information Centre (TIC) in the Castle Car Park but you can pick them up at any point in the town centre. The full trail takes approximately 90 minutes.

#### Town Centre (Red) Trail:

Turn right out of the car park, cross the road and walk up Bridge Street past the old Chepstow Board School and Cromwell House, reputed to be where Oliver Cromwell slept after taking the castle in 1648. Carry on up the road past Hollins Close Garden and bear left into Upper Church Street. You will pass the Sir Walter Montague Almshouses on your left. Continue to the end of the street where you will find yourself opposite St. Mary's Church, parts of which date from 1072.



Inside you will find the Jacobean tomb of Margaret Cleyton, with her two husbands and twelve children. Retrace your steps to the bottom of pedestrianised St. Mary Street, with its delightful mix of shops and walk up St. Mary's Arcade.

Towards the top of St. Mary Street, pass the Beaufort Hotel, previously a coaching inn, then enter the High Street and main shopping area. Continue up the hill to the Town Gate and adjacent Gatehouse, where an inscription carved in the wooden doorframe – "A.N.D.1609 M.C." – commemorates an early rebuilding of the Gatehouse by the wealthy widow, Margaret Cleyton, whose generosity greatly benefitted the town. From here either take a stroll through the Town Gate

and up Moor Street, where you will find more shops as well as in St. Thomas Arcade near the bus station, or cross over the High Street and walk down Bank Street – running parallel to the High Street.

From Bank Street, turn to the left through Manor Way shopping arcade and past the library into the car park. Here you can see remains of the Portwall, which was built at the end of the 13th Century and encircled the town. Walk along the Portwall until you reach a small doorway. From here, cross the car park and head down Rifleman's Way for another opportunity to browse independent shops.



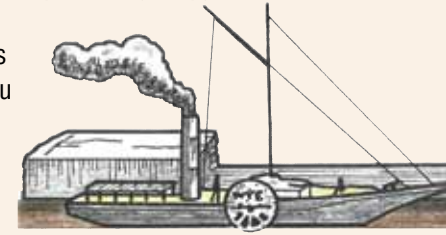
At the bottom of Rifleman's Way, cross over to see the 'Boatman' sculpture, then turn left and continue downhill. On the right, stop to look at the war memorial and the German U-boat gun. Opposite, on the left, is the Greenman Backpackers, previously the British Legion building, which has a Georgian iron canopy and bow window. The Moot Hall, in its basement is one of Chepstow's oldest buildings.

Keep to the left and continue downhill into a picturesque, steep cobbled street with a variety of 18th and 19th century buildings. Note the name 'Hawkers Hill' at the top but 'Hocker Hill' at the bottom. At the top you will find St. Maur House, where Nelson once stayed. At the bottom is the Five Ails public house.

From here it is a short walk back to your start point passing the Powis Almshouses and an impressive terrace of 15 bow-windowed houses, built between 1805 and 1823, which give the street its character.

**Riverside (Blue) Trail:** from the TIC turn left, walking towards the river, past picturesque 17th and 18th century cottages to the Old Wye Bridge, built in 1816. Its centre marks the boundary between England and Wales so you can stand with one foot in each country.

Retrace your steps to turn left along the riverbank to the riverside and port area, previously shipyards and docks and known as the Back, meaning a wharf. As you continue onwards, you will pass the bandstand and the start/finish of the Welsh Coast Path. Look across the river and you will see 'Gloucester Hole'. You may be lucky enough to spot one or more of the peregrines that live on the cliffs.



At the Boat Inn, turn right, walking across the area that used to be a dry dock, to the main road. On the opposite corner is the old Fire Station, dated 1938. Turn right, back along St. Anns Street. At the end of the street turn left, continuing up past the Museum before crossing the road back to the TIC.

#### Castle/Dell (Green) Trail.

From the TIC, face the castle and take the well-used footpath up the hill alongside it, up into and through what is known as the Dell. Near the top you will find a stone seat and drinking fountain, erected for Queen Victoria's Jubilee. Leave the Dell through wrought iron gates which then brings you into Welsh Street. Turn left and walk towards the traffic lights ahead of you. At the traffic lights you can join the Town Centre Trail at the Town Gate.

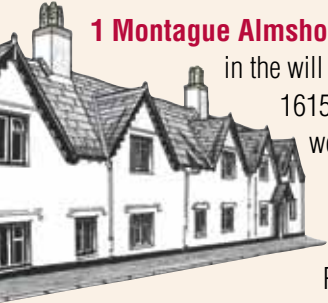


Town Map and trails are inside this leaflet

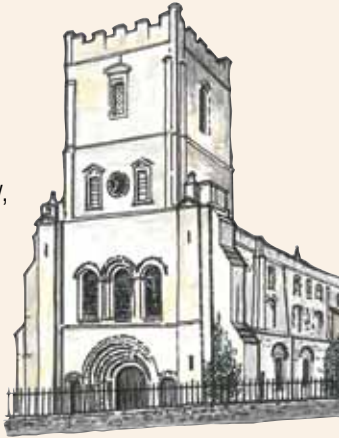


# SOME PLACES OF INTEREST THAT YOU CAN DISCOVER ALONG YOUR WALKS

Look out for plaques of information in pavements and walls along the way.



**1 Montague Almshouses** were built with money provided in the will of Sir Walter Montague, who died in 1615. The building housed 5 men and 5 women.



Parts of **2 St Mary's Church**, including its ornate west doorway, date from 1072 when it was founded as a Benedictine priory by William FitzOsbern and his son Roger de Breteuil, 2nd Earl of Hereford, making it contemporary with the nearby Norman castle.



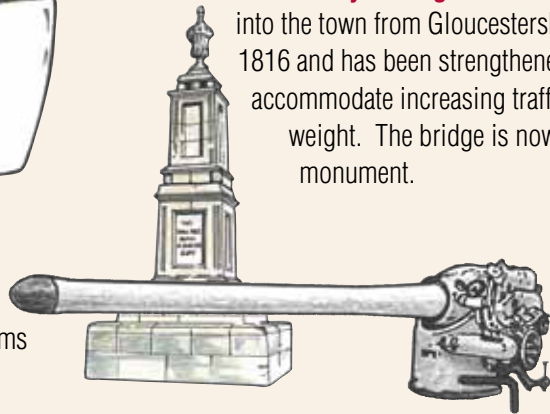
**3 The Town Gate**, built in the late 13th century at the same time as the Portwall, once had a gate, portcullis and guardroom. It was used as a collection point for tolls on cattle and goods on

their way to market and these were payable to the Lord of the Manor.



**4 'Boatman'** in Bank Street is a slightly larger than life bronze sculpture, made by sculptor Andre Wallace in 2004.

**5 Gun** next to the War Memorial, is from a captured German First World War submarine. King George V presented it to Chepstow in recognition of the gallantry of Able Seaman Williams V.C, a local man killed during the landings at Gallipoli.



**6 The Five Alls Inn**, built c.1849, at the bottom of Hocker Hill, has an unusual sign representing five characters: I rule for/govern/pray/fight for and pay for all.



**7 Powis Almshouses** were provided in 1721 by Thomas Powis, who was born in the town and prospered as a vintner in Enfield. There were rooms for 6 men and 6 women. An arched doorway, below the almshouses leads to a former wine cellar.



**8 The Old Wye Bridge** was the main road bridge into the town from Gloucestershire. It was built in 1816 and has been strengthened several times to accommodate increasing traffic volume and weight. The bridge is now a protected monument.

**9** Chepstow's beautiful **Riverside Gardens** with their ornate bandstand are the perfect setting to sit and contemplate the tranquil landscape or on summer Sunday afternoons to listen to live music.



the Railway Bridge and at other times it is reputed to have been used as a tea warehouse.

**10** The **'Gloucester Hole'** looks like a natural cave but it was in fact man-made. Legend has it that Brunel used it as a store for explosives during the building of

**11** **Chepstow Museum** is housed in elegant late 18th century Gwy House. Once the home of prosperous merchant families it has also been a school and a hospital.



**12** **Castle Dell** was opened to the public in 1886 when the Duke of Beaufort leased it to the town for one shilling a year. The four-sided stone seat half way up was erected for Queen Victoria's Jubilee, and the drinking fountain at the top originally stood just off the High Street.

