



Monmouthshire Antiquarian Association Winter Newsletter 2025



Penterry Church at Christmas, Jo MacCrum

Welcome to the winter newsletter. As we approach the turn of the year I prefer to look forward rather than back – perhaps surprising for an archaeologist - and so this newsletter is full of future plans, but first some news.

Trostrey – I am pleased to tell you that MAA has been successful in securing a grant that will enable us to commission an assessment of the material archive and records of work carried out by the Trostrey excavation group in the 1970s lead by the late Geoff Mein. The intention is to bring this work to publication in some form. The assessment will suggest a route for doing this ensuring that this body of work does not become lost to us. A generous grant from Cambrian Archaeological Association will cover 80% of the cost, however, we need to raise a further £500 to cover the complete cost of the work.

If you would like to help us with a donation for this purpose, please go to the website where you will find a donate button. Please put the reference “Trostrey”. Thank you.

The first event of 2026 is jointly organised by the Monmouthshire Antiquarian Association and Caerllion Rufeining - Roman Caerleon Gateway Partnership.

Friday 16th January 2026 7.30 pm at St Cadoc's Church, Caerleon, or online.

Speakers: Dr Peter Guest (in person) and Prof. Andrew Gardner (virtually)

A major excavation in Priory Field, carried out between 2007 and 2010, produced groundbreaking new evidence for Caerleon's rich Roman - and early 'post-Roman' - history. The excavation uncovered the front range of a large masonry courtyard store-building, which was the first building of its kind excavated to modern standards in the Roman Empire. Some of the exceptional finds recovered include a rare example of an elaborately decorated horse's headpiece and several sets of dismantled body armour. This talk by the excavation's directors will highlight some of the Priory Field project's most significant discoveries, describing when the courtyard building was built, what was stored in it, when it ceased to be used, and what happened to it in the years after the ending of Roman Britannia at the beginning of the 5th century.

The event is free but you will need to register for a ticket to gain entry.

There will be an opportunity to purchase Peter and Andrew's book "Excavations in the Roman Legionary Fortress at Caerleon: the Priory Field store building 2007-2010" on the evening from Archaeopress, who are bringing a book stall. The book has been shortlisted for Current Archaeology's Book of the Year

To attend **online** book your ticket using this link [Digging Roman Caerleon: The Priory Field Excavation, 2007-2010 at Online event tickets from TicketSource](#)

To attend **in person** please book your ticket here [Digging Roman Caerleon: The Priory Field Excavation, 2007-2010 at St Cadocs Church event tickets from TicketSource](#)

Membership renewals 2026

Its nearly time to renew your subscription for 2026. Many of you pay by standing order from your bank account, which is really helpful. Ahead of the renewal date, which is January 1st, please can you check that you are paying the correct amount. We are not able to change standing orders for you; you need to do this directly with your bank. Thank you.

Single membership which includes a copy of the journal The Monmouthshire Antiquary costs £20

Joint membership with two people at the same address sharing a copy of the journal costs £25

Local community groups cost £18. This includes a copy of the journal and allows group members to join MAA events at no extra cost.

Institutional membership can be purchased through EBSCO at £35.

(Please note new members who have joined since 1st September 2025 do not need to renew until January 2027)

If you are a tax payer please consider supporting us further by signing up for GiftAid. You can find a printable form on the website. Please fill it in and post it back to the secretary, or scan it and attach to an email – membership@maa.wales

You can also renew your membership and set up regular annual payments via PayPal through the MAA website www.maa.wales . Click on the “join us” tab and follow the instructions.

Recently you should have received your copy of the latest volume of the Monmouthshire Antiquary. If your copy has not arrived please can you let me know as a matter of urgency. It probably means that the mailing address we hold for you needs updating.

Book stall - If you are looking for a unique Christmas present, member Keith Underwood has recently published an illustrated book about the life and times of **Sir John ap Adam** (1260-1311) of Badams Court, Sedbury. Reasonably priced at £15 the book looks at the cultural influence of gentry families of the region during the time when Chepstow castle was under construction. You can purchase a copy at Chepstow Bookshop, St Mary Street, Chepstow (shop@chepstowbooks.co.uk or phone 01291 625011).

More good news from Chepstow

Simon Maddison, chair of Chepstow Archaeological Society writes “*It has been an exciting few weeks, first the digging at Tutshill and then the Geophysics last week in Castleford Meadows. The results from this are very interesting and as a follow up there will be excavations there from **Monday 4th to Friday 9th of January.***

There will be at least 3 trenches, with more likely, as shown below, namely the grave cuts, the junction of the putative Dyke and the (Roman?) road, and St David’s Chapel.

The investigation will be led by Marion Shiner, and is an ongoing part of the Leverhulme funded ‘Making the March’ project.”

If you would like to get involved, please contact Simon by email – simon.maddison@btinternet.com

Several years ago I was invited to **Llanarth** to find out about the **Village Alive Trust**. Pat Griffiths who is the secretary of the group has been in touch to tell us that a new local history group is soon to be set up to support the project, which aims to repurpose St Teilo’s church in the village. Pat writes

“After more than five years of research, consultation with potential user groups, the Church in Wales, and commissioning bat surveys, condition surveys and a business case with funding from the Architectural Heritage Fund and supporters, The Village Alive Trust is to submit an application to National Lottery Heritage Fund in early 2026. This is for development grant for an ambitious project to conserve and re-use the closed Grade II* landmark St Teilo’s Church, at Llanarth, near Raglan which closed in 2013.

As part of the project local heritage and family history will be promoted and a cafe opened. To kickstart a **Local History Group** an informal meeting will be held at **Llanarth Village Hall on Wednesday, January 7th from 4-6pm...tea and cake offered!** Details from Pat Griffiths, pjgriff100@aol.com.”

Please do support this event if you live in the Raglan area. I can totally recommend the cakes and the welcome!

We recently enjoyed a talk from committee member Gill Wakley who is leading the project in Abergavenny to restore **Plas Gunter**. We heard about the history of the house and were brought up to date with new developments that can be expected in the next few years. This includes setting out a garden, and continued restoration of this important town house that occupies a prominent position on the main road out of the town towards Monmouth and Newport. It has a twisting history of recusant priests, the middling merchant classes, political intrigue and years as a public house and meeting place. A permanent exhibition has been staged in the downstairs room of the building, and it is hoped that hard hat tours might be available later in 2026.

Photographic competition

You may remember prizes for this competition were awarded at the AGM. I have included both the winning entries for you to see in this newsletter. There will be another competition in Spring 2026. Details will follow in the next newsletter.

Save the date

Finally – looking ahead to next summer – our study day will be held with Pontypool Local History Society on Saturday June 27th. Please put the date in your diary. Booking details and the programme will be sent out in the new year.



Christmas at Tredegar House, Newport, Adrian Smith

May I take this opportunity to send you all good wishes for the Christmas season and health and happiness for 2026. Thank you for your continued support of Monmouthshire Antiquarian Association. It is greatly appreciated.



If you have an queries about renewing your membership please contact Cherry Lewis using the email membership@maa.wales Any other queries please contact me using secretary@maa.wales

Your secretary,

Jan

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