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# CÆR WENT HISTORIC TRVST

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## Notice of Annual General Meeting

This year's AGM has been postponed by two months: we are planning to hold it on Monday January 21<sup>st</sup> 2008. The venue will be Cadw's Westgate Barns, Caerwent.

## Subscriptions

We still don't have a Membership Secretary so if any members/supporters who have not yet paid a sub this year could give it to any Trustee we would be grateful. Household membership is £5 (£3 for single persons).

## Rev Hugh Trenchard

We are very sorry to hear of Hugh's death. He has been a good Vicar for the Community and an enthusiastic supporter of our efforts to draw attention to the local history. We offer our sincere condolences to his wife Gillian.

## Gwent County History

Volume II *The Age of the Marcher Lords 1070-1536* is due out in January @ £55. You may be able to order it now at the special pre-publication price of £45 inclusive of p+p (UK only) – write to University of Wales Press, Freepost (CF. 1529), Cardiff, CF10 4ZX or ring 02920 496108.

## Saint Tathan

Towards the end of December we ought to spare a thought for Caerwent Parish Church, whose Patronal Festivals fall at that time. Boxing Day is also St Stephen's Day and St Tathan's day is arguably the same day or within the next four days. In the fourteenth century the Church was referred to as Ecclesia Tathana. It's rather perplexing as to how it achieved the sole dedication to St Stephen by Victorian times, considering that Stephen never came here and Tathan definitely did!

St Tathan, a member of the Irish nobility, was summoned in a vision to evangelise Britain. According to the account of Vespasian he went down to the sea with his disciples and found an empty boat waiting, whereupon *"rejoicing they entered, and without rower and sail and oar, wherever the blowing of the winds directed them, they arrived by ship prosperously, God favouring them, in Britannia, at the Severn. At last along the length of the channel they approached Gwent, and landed at the haven called after the name of the people . . . ."* for which Venta Silurum would seem an ideal fit.

There's a lot more history to Caerwent still waiting to be uncovered: in the unlikely event of the present Church being demolished we may expect to find the remains of St Tathan, St Maches (from whom Llanvaches got its name) and other members of St Tathan's community buried beneath it . . . .

## *The Midwinter Sunrise*

*Saturday December 22<sup>nd</sup>*

We'll be up again to see the sun rise from the prehistoric alignment on Gray Hill, about ten past eight. The effect should be very similar on 21<sup>st</sup> or 23<sup>rd</sup>. Best footwear is wellies. Meet at the Standing Stones (or else the triangle on the south side of the hill at 7.50am, OS map reference is 442930). If you are not sure about the starting point or are not a good walker, ring for advice.

\*\*\* **HAPPY CHRISTMAS !** \*\*\*