

BAA Study Day: Abergavenny Priory

Saturday, 20th May 2017

The present church of St Mary in Abergavenny survives from a Benedictine Priory which was founded in the early 12th century as a cell to the abbey of St Vincent at Le Mans. It was spared destruction at the Reformation to become the parish church for its local community. It is home to a wealth of fascinating sculpture in wood and alabaster. Rightly famous are its numerous tomb sculptures and the well-preserved choir stalls, both of which will be the focus of the study day. The effigies begin chronologically with the important 14th century wooden image of John Hastings; however, the fame of the Priory's monuments are predominantly associated with the later alabasters of the Herbert family. The church also houses a fragment from what would have been a large Tree of Jesse.

We will also be visiting the Gunter Mansion, a grade 2* listed town house very close to St Mary's, which was recently acquired by the Welsh Georgian Trust. It has a particularly fine 17th Century plaster ceiling and a recusant chapel with wall paintings, all in need of much restoration.

Provisional Programme:

10-10.30 Coffee in the Priory Centre

10.30-12pm – Dr George Nash (University of Bristol) – Understanding the Archaeology

12-1pm – Dr Charles Tracy (Church furniture specialist) – The Choir Stalls

1-2.15pm – LUNCH / Viewing of the Gunter Mansion

2.15-4.30pm – Dr Kim Woods (Open University) – The monuments and sculpture

4.30pm – A prompt end (particularly for people visiting from London to catch train home)

The cost of the day will be £30 for members. This fee includes tea, coffee and lunch at the Priory. The event is free for students, for whom travel grants (to a maximum of £50) are also available.

Places are limited to 20, of which up to 10 are reserved for students.

To apply please e-mail Jana Gajdosova at jg744@cam.ac.uk – by Saturday 30th April. Please state in the email whether you are a member of the BAA or a student. All names will be entered into a ballot for the study day and the successful applicants will be notified on the 4th of May.