

The Basiliscope Mercury 468

The Internet newsletter for the arms and armour community

A number of exhibitions, with a distinctly Italian flavour, new books on the Mendelsham Armoury, lots of grave stories and the hoo-ha over Stamford Bridge

Arms and armour in the news

Ancient arms

Palaeolithic axes in the middle East

<https://www.jpost.com/archaeology/article-891083>

Dating the use of bows and arrows in North America

<https://phys.org/news/2026-03-arrow-years-western-north-america.html>

Bronze-age shield from Ayrshire returns to Scotland for exhibit

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/clyx5nkdkxlo>

Feature on the Golden Helmet of Leiro (not really a helmet)

<https://arkeonews.net/the-golden-helmet-of-leiro-a-bronze-age-masterpiece-hidden-for-millennia-on-spains-atlantic-coast/>

The iron trade and ancient warfare in the Middle East

<https://www.timesofisrael.com/iron-from-a-2600-year-old-shipwreck-off-israeli-coast-may-rewrite-the-history-of-war/>

Sending a message by sling-shot

<https://www.sciencenewstoday.org/the-ancient-greek-hate-mail-discovered-on-a-2nd-century-battlefield>

New thoughts on the Melsonby Iron Age hoard

<https://www.durham.ac.uk/departments/academic/archaeology/melsonby-hoard/news/the-melsonby-hoards-rerouting-the-evidence-for-vehicles-in-iron-age-britain/>

Investigating the statue of Marcus Aurelius and its afterlife

<https://www.livescience.com/archaeology/romans/equestrian-statue-of-marcus-aurelius-the-only-surviving-larger-than-life-size-statue-of-a-pagan-roman-emperor-a-rarity-that-michelangelo-refurbished>

Recent finds from Hadrian's Wall go on show

<https://www.hexham-courant.co.uk/news/25970742.rare-roman-objects-hadrians-wall-northumberland-site/>

Battles, towers and forts

Thermopylae to have a makeover

<https://greekreporter.com/2026/03/27/greece-thermopylae-restore-spartans-persians/>

Investigating the damage to Pompeii's walls

<https://phys.org/news/2026-03-pompeii-scars-linked-ancient-machine.html>

Beasts of assorted varieties...

How to paint your cave

<https://www.smithsonianmag.com/smart-news/these-mesmerizing-cave-paintings-were-discovered-in-1901-now-archaeologists-finally-know-when-some-of-them-were-created-180988355/>

Dog and humans - pals for thousands of years

<https://connectsci.au/news/news-parent/8098/Oldest-dog-DNA-pushes-back-domestication-thousands?searchresult=1>

Grave stories

Chinese cemetery with "killed" weapon deposits

<https://www.globaltimes.cn/page/202603/1357188.shtml>

Otto I in Magdeburg

<https://www.dw.com/en/skeleton-in-magdeburg-cathedral-is-almost-certainly-otto-i/a-76417501>

Update on Winchester's mortuary chests

<https://www.medievalists.net/2026/03/who-lies-in-winchesters-medieval-mortuary-chests/>

Spanish knight with a deformed skull

<https://www.medievalists.net/2026/03/medieval-knight-with-rare-genetic-disorder-identified-in-spain/>

Is this really the body of the fourth Musketeer?

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/cm2rew2dgzzo>

On the frontlines

New thoughts on the Norman invasion

<https://www.medievalists.net/2026/03/did-king-harold-sail-to-hastings-new-study-sparks-debate-among-historians/>
<https://www.theguardian.com/culture/2026/mar/21/battle-of-hastings-discovery-research-england-history>

And why many disagree...

<http://www.marcmorris.org.uk/2026/03/did-king-harold-really-sail-to-battle.html?m=1>

<http://www.marcmorris.org.uk/2026/03/king-harolds-fleet-another-major-problem.html?m=1>

18th century camp from 1708 found outside Ghent

<https://www.vrt.be/vrtnws/en/2026/03/25/archaeologists-discover-traces-of-18th-century-military-camp-dat/>

Fortifications

Repairs begin to the important medieval walls of Great Yarmouth

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/ce8ldnq3l17o>

Preserving Haiti's Citadelle Laferrière

<https://www.theartnewspaper.com/2026/03/27/haiti-citadelle-laferriere-preservation-comment>

Cannons to the left, cannon to the right

Cache of stone grenades recovered from the Great wall of China

https://www.futura-sciences.com/en/a-600-year-old-weapons-cache-discovered-along-the-great-wall-of-china_28311/

Durer's cannon

https://jpstonard.substack.com/p/durers-canonical-cannon?r=24qfxn&utm_medium=ios&triedRedirect=true

Studying three royal Vietnamese cannon

<https://vietnamnet.vn/en/three-national-treasure-cannons-and-an-unsolved-maritime-mystery-2499548.html>

Round shot from the Alamo identified (maybe)

<https://www.fox7austin.com/news/i-have-chills-archaeologists-find-intact-battle-alamo-cannonball>

Miscellany

Iceland's medieval sulphur trade

<https://www.medievalists.net/2026/03/medieval-icelands-most-unusual-export-sulphur/>

18th century colonial artefacts found in North American community

https://www.wfmz.com/news/area/southeastern-pa/central-bucks-county/revolutionary-war-artifacts-unearthed-by-bucks-county-community-college-archaeology-students/article_9949ee31-1837-4caa-bb8c-ee5de3df576b.html

Café Basiliscoe

How big do you want your Easter Egg?

<https://www.jpost.com/archaeology/article-891504>

Princesses and Amazon

Women gladiators back in the news

<https://greekreporter.com/2026/03/27/women-gladiators-beasts-roman-arenas-evidence/>

New thoughts on Morgan le Fey

<https://theconversation.com/morgan-le-fay-was-king-arthurs-sister-but-also-a-healer-mathematician-and-murderer-275927>

Into the 20th century

Cache of WW1 and WW2 objects found in museum basement in SE Poland

<https://www.heritagedaily.com/2026/03/cache-of-wartime-objects-discovered-in-krosno-basement/157585>

Ashford ponders the future of its WWI tank

<https://www.kentonline.co.uk/ashford/news/iconic-kent-town-centre-tank-could-be-moved-to-dorset-338124/>

Letters from the Korean War

<https://vtdigger.org/2026/03/15/then-again-a-23-year-old-vermonters-last-letters-from-the-korean-war/>

Nautical news

Identifying one of the Mongol invasion vessels off Japan

<https://www.popularmechanics.com/science/archaeology/a70760723/archaeologists-found-a-745-year-old-shipwreck-from-a-famous-failed-invasion/>

Update on the *Rooswijk*

<https://dailygalaxy.com/2026/03/rooswijk-shipwreck-sealed-chest-silver-bones-dutch-treasure-ship/>

Investigating *Aminas de la Victoria*, lost off the Yucatan in the 18th century

<https://www.labrujulaverde.com/en/2026/03/the-mystery-of-the-strange-shipwreck-of-animas-de-la-victoria-on-the-mexican-coast-in-the-18th-century-solved-a-ship-sailing-where-it-should-not-have-been/>

Identifying ship from 1812 Bermuda to Newfoundland expedition

<https://www.smithsonianmag.com/smart-news/archaeologists-just-uncovered-a-shipwreck-that-ran-aground-on-a-remote-island-during-the-war-of-1812-180988346/>

Museum news and exhibitions

Bad news

Latest museum heist from a villa outside Parma

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/cn4vw2xmpzzo>

Conservation corner

Restoring Alloa's paintings

<https://www.nts.org.uk/stories/conservation-in-action-at-alloa-tower>

Recreating a Viking high chair

<https://www.medievalists.net/2026/03/viking-high-seat-recreated-in-norway-for-new-exhibition/>

Exhibitions - a distinctly Italian flavour

Conserving Longthorpe at the Courthald

https://courtauld.ac.uk/whats-on/exh-the-painted-tower-conservation-in-context-at-longthorpe/?fbclid=IwY2xjawQyWXleHRuA2FibQIxMABicmlkETFoaUU5SzFnNWhwNUVabHdhc3J0YwZhcHBfaWQQMjlyMDM5MTc4ODlwMDg5MgABHvBrFb3JpHEXIN2E3kbK8UmRtIE-9jmGa3BddMWPZz5AaLubzUkZAYPq0Bc0_aem_iO-b76jUcAVFVZUIVMdNA

The Marquise de Seignelay tours England

<https://artdaily.com/news/194008/The-Marquise-de-Seignelay-by-Pierre-Mignard-to-travel-the-UK->

Hokusai in Rome

<https://artdaily.com/news/194324/Hokusai-s-everyday-Japan-takes-center-stage-in-major-Rome-retrospective>

Van Dyck in Genoa

<https://artdaily.com/news/194100/Van-Dyck--The-European---Genoa-unveils-the-century-s-largest-tribute-to-the-Flemish-master>

Vasari in Rome

<https://artdaily.com/news/194066/Vasari-and-Rome--A-Renaissance-master-returns-to-the-Eternal-City>

Medieval tarot cards in Bergamo

<https://artdaily.com/news/194157/15th-century-Colleoni-tarot-cards-reunited-after-100-years>

Cherokee perspective on the American Wars of Independence

<https://artdaily.com/news/193972/Tribal-museum-shares-Cherokee-perspectives-on-the-American-Revolution>

Raphael at the Met

<https://artdaily.com/news/183563/The-Met-showcases-Italian-Renaissance-genius-Raphael>

Books

Two new publications on the Mendlesham Armoury, available through the rather convoluted form on the parish website:

Shona Rutherford-Edge *et al*: ***Transcriptions of the Mendlesham Armoury Archives***

Mendlesham Armoury Research Group: ***Mendlesham Armoury Revisited - Revelations from the Parish Archives***

<https://www.stmarysmendlesham.org.uk/armoury-project.html>

Darrell Markewitz: ***Basics of Bloomery Iron Smelting: Experimental Iron Smelting – Part One***

<https://www.medievalists.net/2026/03/new-medieval-books-basics-of-bloomery-iron-smelting/>

Popular culture

You can now buy the Culloden tartan

<https://www.nts.org.uk/stories/spirit-of-culloden>

Events

Easter at the Royal Armouries, Leeds

<https://royalarmouries.org/leeds/whats-on/international-jousting-tournament>

<https://royalarmouries.org/leeds/whats-on/medieval-easter>

9 June 2026 Society of Antiquaries, London

Lunchtime talk on the *Gribshunden*

<https://www.sal.org.uk/event/gribshunden/>

Conferences

International Workshop 'Army of Flanders' (Brussels, 15–16 May 2026)

Contact Natasja Peeters: natasja.peeters@warheritage.be

ICOMAM conference 2 – 6 November 2026, Lisbon, Portugal

<https://icom-arms-military.mini.icom.museum/>

Sales, fairs and auctions

Olympia's auctions

<https://www.olympiaauctions.com/auctions-valuations/auction-calendar/>

Websites and downloads

1066 etc: Armies

<https://www.medievalists.net/2026/03/size-armies-early-medieval-warfare/>

Finally, a reminder that it is time to think about contributions to the next ICOMAM magazine- exhibitions, news, publications, personal, and general research pieces all welcome. Have a look at the website to see past issues

Compiled by Ruth Rhynas Brown – 31 March 2026

Check out our publications

<http://www.basiliscoe.com>