

# The Christmas Basiliscoe Mercury 374

## The Internet newsletter for the arms and armour community

As I compile this, the shutters are going up round the world again and the outlook is bleak. Here, to cheer you up, is the annual Christmas Bazzy, complete with enough baubles to get you through the festive season - ancient leather armour, mammoths, & Viking swords. And the Bazzy Christmas stocking to last into 2022; let's hope things are better next year and we will return, hopefully, in 2022.

## Arms and armour in the news

### Beasts of assorted varieties (actually all-mammoths...)

The perfect Neolithic Christmas gift- mammoth pendant  
<http://www.thehistoryblog.com/archives/62783>

Mammoths in Mexico

<https://www.heritagedaily.com/2021/12/mammoth-discovery-in-mexico-during-grave-excavations/142206>

When mammoths roamed the Cotswolds

<https://www.theguardian.com/science/2021/dec/19/five-ice-age-mammoths-unearthed-in-cotswolds-after-220000-years>

### Ancient arms and forts

Investigating 2,500 years old Chinese leather armour

<https://www.heritagedaily.com/2021/12/leather-scale-armour-proves-technology-transfer-occurred-in-antiquity/142195>  
<https://phys.org/news/2021-12-year-old-leather-armor-technology-antiquity.html>

Nice feature on Coventina's Well, near Hadrian's Wall

<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2021/nov/29/country-diary-the-underground-secret-by-hadrians-wall>

1900 years on Hadrian's Wall

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-59712769>

War and peace in medieval Iceland

<https://www.worldhistory.org/article/1905/wealth--power-in-medieval-iceland/>

### Grave stories

Fascinating study of Blair Atholl man

<https://www.livescience.com/blair-atholl-man-scotland>

Surgery in Byzantine times - dealing with trauma

<https://greekreporter.com/2021/12/07/byzantine-era-skeletons-greece-complex-surgery/>

### **Walls, forts and battles**

How good was the Great Wall of China?

<https://www.livescience.com/did-great-wall-china-work>

Short feature on the knights Templar

<https://www.livescience.com/knights-templar.html>

Fall of Constantinople

<https://www.heritagedaily.com/2021/12/the-fall-of-constantinople/142293>

Interesting story of a fort in Hawaii

<https://www.atlasobscura.com/articles/hawaiian-history-russian-fort-elizabeth>

Investigating a military hospital site in Canada

<https://www.niagarafallsreview.ca/local-niagara-falls/life/2021/12/04/archeologists-in-niagara-on-the-lake-dig-up-possible-remains-of-military-hospital.html>

Biak's WW2 legacy

<https://artdaily.com/news/141694/-Call-Me-Dog-Tag-Man---Pacific-Island-Is-Full-of-War-Relics-and-Human-Remains>

### **Cannons to the left, cannon to the right**

Civil war cannon gets hit again – the car comes off worse

<https://eu.goerie.com/story/news/local/2021/12/06/civil-war-cannon-girard-driver-strikes-union-army-big-gun-destroys-base/8886505002/>

Cannons as memorial

<https://www.latimes.com/socal/daily-pilot/opinion/story/2021-12-15/commentary-wwi-cannon-serves-as-a-reminder-of-war-and-community-service>

Australia: Restoring Werribee's 1859 Armstrong Gun

<https://wyndham.starweekly.com.au/news/historic-werribee-gun-restored/>

### **Café Basiliscoe - open during Christmas holidays...**

Ostrich omelette

<https://www.inverse.com/science/ancient-humans-origins>

Neolithic mince pies

<https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2021/dec/01/stonehenge-builders-may-have-enjoyed-mince-pies>

Olive oil for the Caesar salad

<https://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/anatolias-largest-olive-oil-factory-uneearthed-169868>

All in a 13<sup>th</sup> century cooking pot

<http://www.jordantimes.com/news/local/century-old-cooking-pot-tells-mediaeval-%E2%80%98kitchen-culture%E2%80%99-levant>

Accompanied by an ancient cup of tea

<https://news.cgtn.com/news/2021-12-02/Archaeological-finding-traces-Chinese-tea-culture-back-to-400-BC-15F607k9E5i/index.html>

or beer of the Pharaohs

<https://vinepair.com/booze-news/ancient-egyptian-beer-discovered/>

## **Princesses and Amazons**

Queens of Nubia

<https://www.atlasobscura.com/articles/ancient-africa-queens-nubia>

Africa's warrior women

<https://www.medievalists.net/2021/12/african-warrior-women/>

What the Valkyries are

<https://www.archaeology.org/issues/453-2201/digs/10209-digs-denmark-viking-figurines>

Mary Queen of scot's last letter

<https://www.theguardian.com/books/2021/dec/10/mary-queen-of-scots-locked-final-letter-using-paper-folding-research-finds>

## **Swords - they're not just for Christmas**

X-raying Viking sword from Orkney

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-scotland-north-east-orkney-shetland-59563721>

Early medieval Norwegian knife hilt

<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/sciencetech/article-10308821/Norwegian-13th-century-knife-Oslo-shows-royal-figure-partaking-falconry.html>

Sword from the Thames

<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-10304467/Sword-shore-River-Thames-mudlarker-Lara-Maiklem-dates-16th-century.html>

## **Nautical news**

Update from the site of the Gjellestad ship

<https://norwaytoday.info/news/scientists-discover-one-of-the-largest-longhouses-in-scandinavia-near-the-gjellestad-viking-ship/>

And some finds from there

<https://sciencenorway.no/archaeology-history-iron-age/the-12-most-exciting-finds-from-the-gjellestad-viking-ship-dig/1948461>

Feature on the Goodwin Sands and its wrecks

<https://www.kentonline.co.uk/deal/news/why-have-so-many-ships-sunk-off-kent-sandbank-259250/>

Update on the wreck of Elgin's *Mentor*

<https://greekreporter.com/2021/12/03/lord-elgins-shipwreck-yields-impressive-discoveries/>

## **Museum news and exhibitions**

### **News**

Museum round up for 2021

<https://www.theartnewspaper.com/2021/12/10/museums-and-heritage-year-in-review-2021>

Afghanistan's National Museum re-opens

<https://artdaily.com/news/142170/Afghanistan-s-National-Museum-begins-life-under-the-Taliban>

New restrictions on selling ivory

<https://www.theartnewspaper.com/2021/12/17/european-commission-clamps-down-further-on-ivory-trade>

US museums get their guns back

<https://artdaily.com/news/142160/FBI-returns-stolen-artifacts-to-six-local-museums>

### **New museums**

Pictures from the new Red Cross Museum

<https://www.theguardian.com/culture/gallery/2021/dec/03/the-british-red-cross-a-history-in-objects-in-pictures>

### **Museum musings**

Statue of Robert E Lee to be melted down

<https://artdaily.com/news/141857/Charlottesville-s-statue-of-Robert-E--Lee-will-be-melted-down>

## **Conservation corner**

Feature on Damascus steel

<https://www.zmescience.com/science/what-is-damascus-steel/>

Gilding in the middle ages

<https://www.medievalists.net/2021/12/medieval-nanotechnology/>

Conserving wall painting in Malta

<https://timesofmalta.com/articles/view/knights-era-painting-found-behind-bricked-up-arch-at-museum-of.918082>

Under the Night Watch

<https://artdaily.com/news/141893/Preparatory-sketch-discovered-beneath-Rembrandt-s-Night-Watch>

Suggestion that the use of lead in the British Civil Wars lead to changes in Dutch white paint...

<https://www.npr.org/2021/12/10/1062525515/scientists-uncover-clues-about-rembrandt-rubens-paintings-through-lead-analysis?t=1639733002428>

Restoring Hampton Court's gates

<https://www.theartnewspaper.com/2021/12/16/hampton-court-palace-tijou-screens>

## **Objects**

Civil war tag for Maryland museum

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/history/2021/12/17/civil-war-id-dog-tag/>

Custer's holster sold

<https://artdaily.com/news/141670/Custer-s-Civil-War-gun-holster-rig-brings--37-500-at-Holabird-s-Nov--18-22-auction>

## **Exhibitions**

Donatello exhibition promised for 2022

<https://www.theartnewspaper.com/2021/11/30/first-major-donatello-exhibition-in-nearly-40-years-to-open-in-florence>

Anglo-Dutch relations in Oxford

<https://artdaily.com/news/141713/New-exhibition-explores-the-long-history-of-Anglo-Dutch-relations-from-1066-to-1688->

Tudor Portraits at Bath

<https://museumcrush.org/portraits-of-tudor-superstars-head-to-the-holburne/>

Textiles and paintings of 17<sup>th</sup> century Iran in DC

<https://artdaily.com/news/142192/Smithsonian-s-National-Museum-of-Asian-Art-opens-an-exhibition-on-textiles-and-paintings-from-17th-century-Iran>

## Books

### ***Cadets de Gascogne***

<https://www.editions-du-patrimoine.fr/Librairie/Regards/Cadets-de-Gascogne>

Wallace Collection's selection of arms and armour books

<https://wallacecollectionshop.org/collections/arms-armour-books>

Selection of this year's medieval books

<https://www.medievalists.net/2021/12/best-medieval-books-2021/>

New book on the history of Low Moor, near Bradford - a gunfounding works

<https://www.thetelegraphandargus.co.uk/news/19781725.getting-low-bradford-village/>

## Online Book

A whole library of virtual books

<https://www.bl.uk/virtual-books>

## Events

### Sales Fairs and auctions

Round up of the last Hermann Historica sale

<https://artdaily.com/news/142022/Crowds-of-bidders-paid-homage-to-the-first-class-showstoppers>

### Finally the Bazy Christmas stocking!

Medieval gift giving

<https://www.medievalists.net/2021/12/holiday-gifts-middle-ages/>

Roman dolls

<https://www.haaretz.com/archaeology/before-barbie-why-girls-played-with-dolls-in-the-roman-empire-1.10459455>

Definitely the best Christmas tree decoration!

<https://reading-museum-shop.myshopify.com/products/harold-decoration>

Runner up

<https://shop.royalarmouries.org/collections/henry-viii-tudor-power-and-glory/products/henry-viii-in-armour-decoration>

Christmas traditions from Scotland

<https://www.nts.org.uk/stories/scottish-christmas-traditions>

Build your own Christmas castle

<https://kottke.org/21/12/how-to-build-the-perfect-medieval-castle>

Build your own trebuchet

<https://www.nine.com.au/entertainment/latest/worlds-biggest-trebuchet-car-slingshot-you-have-been-warned-show/47bbe22a-3694-45f6-9b29-0d1bc4c5e163>

A simple origami samurai helmet

<https://www.origami-fun.com/origami-samurai-hat.html>

Next stop - origami knight

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jvsugt8htRI>

Hour long radio programme on the tradition of Sheffield carols, home of steel-making and blade manufacture (spoiler alert - a lot of While Shepherds watch...)

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/sounds/play/m0012pd8>

And more about the tradition here

<http://www.localcarols.org.uk/index.php>

Singalong to Lady Hamilton and Admiral Nelson

<https://artdaily.com/news/142087/Museum-of-London-releases-first-recording-of-rediscovered-music-for-Nelson>

A round of sea shanties

<https://www.wshu.org/2021-12-16/folk-songs-sea-shanties-are-the-sound-of-new-englands-nautical-history>

Watch a lecture on Suesenhofer

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ol8YfCraE1o>

Something to read: Charlotte M Yonge, *The Armourer's Apprentice*

<https://archive.org/details/armourersprentic00yong>

Gown for the Christmas party

<https://www.nts.org.uk/stories/grand-silk-dress-at-house-of-dun>

Less highbrow - dress your princess for the party

<https://www.gamesgames.com/game/princess-party-at-the-castle>

Mr. Men Adventure with Knights

<https://www.english-heritageshop.org.uk/mr-men-adventure-with-knights>

Sadly ten years too late to buy this delicious sleigh

<https://www.sothebys.com/en/auctions/ecatalogue/2011/property-from-the-collection-of-dodie-rosekrans-n08818/lot.390.html>

Best wishes for the festive season and the New Year

**Compiled by Ruth Rhynas Brown – 20 December 2021**

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