

The Basiliscoe Mercury 441

The Internet newsletter for the arms and armour community

Unusually it is helmets rather than swords that feature in a number of stories. Otherwise a quiet week, with the medieval flail, Teutonic knights and 250 years of Turner – except for blowing up a Dutch museum to get your hands on a golden helmet.

Arms and armour in the news

Ancient arms

Fragments of iron age helmet found in Norfolk

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/cx2n2vj7neyo>

Roman statue of Athena goes on display in Chicago

<https://artdaily.com/news/177301/Chicago-s-Halsted-A-A-Foundation-acquires-important-Roman-statue-of-goddess-Athena>

Roman gaming pieces found in Turkey

<https://arkeonews.net/game-bone-stones-from-a-roman-military-strategy-game-found-in-hadrianopolis-ancient-city-turkiye/>

Researching Essex' s gladiator helmet

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/science/archaeology/hawkedon-helmet-latest-gladiator-exhibition-b2681504.html>

Fragments of pre-Viking helmet found in Denmark

<https://www.heritagedaily.com/2025/01/pre-viking-fragment-from-one-of-scandinavias-most-magnificent-helmets-discovered-in-lejre/154346>

More - including x-rays - on the Anglo-Saxon sword from Kent

<https://www.smithsonianmag.com/smart-news/archaeologists-unearth-early-medieval-sword-engraved-with-mysterious-runes-in-a-cemetery-in-england-180985768/>

Battles, towers and forts

3000-year-old fort found in the Caucasus

<https://phys.org/news/2025-01-drone-unveils-year-fortress-reshaping.html>

Round the world

Latest finds from the Terracotta army

<https://arkeonews.net/archaeologists-uncovered-a-terracotta-commander-and-warriors-at-the-mausoleum-of-chinas-first-emperor/>

How to make poisoned arrows

<https://phys.org/news/2025-01-discovery-south-africa-oldest-evidence.html>

Grave stories

Scandinavian gladiator in Roman York?

<https://arkeonews.net/a-scandinavian-roman-gladiator-in-york-research-reveals-unknown-migrations-before-the-viking-age/>

Forts and cannon

Hidden tunnels under Sforza fortress <https://www.newsweek.com/secret-military-tunnels-revealed-under-575-year-old-castle-2015323>

Iron cannon found in the Maldives

https://en.mmtv.mv/1569?fbclid=IwY2xjawHzTORIeHRuA2FibQIxMQABHTihH5_riaPXj66CLV5gEfsHWyrkZv-2E4MhLcFZeT40F8xKKPCzGFNMsq_aem_HanccgeyBmnbLPqCMZPGAQ

Miscellany

The medieval flail - fact or fiction?

<https://www.medievalists.net/2025/01/myth-medieval-flail/>

Royal treasures hidden in WW2 found in Vilnius

<https://greekreporter.com/2025/01/12/wwii-royal-treasure-cathedral-lithuania/>

The Magi and the crusading kings

<https://www.medievalists.net/2025/01/magi-crusader-kings/>

Café Basiliscope

Oil and wine from ancient Isreal

<https://arkeonews.net/a-unique-structure-discovered-in-the-city-of-david-ancient-jerusalem-the-only-one-of-its-kind/>

or the Germanic neolithic diet

<https://cosmosmagazine.com/history/archaeology/scandinavia-neolithic-farmers-diet/>

Princesses and Amazons

Were Celtic societies lead by women?

<https://cosmosmagazine.com/history/archaeology/ancient-celtic-women/>

English queens podcast

<https://www.medievalists.net/2025/01/early-english-queens-with-matthew-firth/>

Black Agnes and the siege of Dunbar

<https://blogs.bl.uk/digitisedmanuscripts/2025/01/black-agnes-and-the-siege-of-dunbar.html>

Nautical news

Remembering finding the Salcombe cannon wreck

<https://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/2025/jan/10/experience-i-found-treasures-in-a-shipwreck>

It was not just Vikings who pulled ships overland: Charles XII did too

<https://partner.sciencenorway.no/archaeology-niku-radar/swedish-king-charles-xii-transported-massive-ships-overland-to-attack-a-norwegian-fortress-researchers-have-now-uncovered-the-forgotten-route/2454903>

HMS *Unicorn*, Dundee, gets grant to help it move to a new dock

https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/c77r17zkipzno?fbclid=IwY2xjawIA095leHRuA2FibQlxMQABHXUcmixvIWloh5Jb0Ygerwi8vLuXRNiWyfHp6ll0tCTYf5bLm7LShheV9w_aem_brdjKtr09S07UZGP3YlcOg

Museum news and exhibitions

News

Explosives used to steal important exhibits from Dutch museum

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

Update on the fate of Ripley castle and its collections

https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/cpwxzx9dq1qo?fbclid=IwY2xjawH8hWJleHRuA2FibQlxMQABHR9sRSJqNQWannV3Jz9XJJ65nLbX6ZUN9KxK-WPoiTpoiF-NNiMiL2XoQ_aem_GuJqQ1gQybV8a8zW1ia_MA

Museum musings

Long piece about the current problems at the British Museum

<https://www.theguardian.com/culture/2025/jan/16/the-ghosts-are-everywhere-can-the-british-museum-survive-its-omni-crisis>

(And more recent problems...

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/cd9qjde4wnqo>)

Conservation corner

New work on the Alexander mosaic

<https://www.livescience.com/archaeology/romans/secrets-of-alexander-the-great-mosaic-revealed-after-1st-of-its-kind-analysis>

Admiral Othón P. Blanco's uniform conserved in Mexico

<https://artdaily.com/news/177154/Threads-of-history--Admiral-Oth-n-P--Blanco-s-uniform-undergoing-restoration-in-Quintana-Roo>

Exhibitions

Newly returned miniature to Strawberry Hill

<https://www.theartnewspaper.com/2025/01/24/newly-attributed-lavinia-fontana-painting-discovered-auction-on-display-london>

Turner 250 - a whole year of celebrated artist JMW Turner

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/ce9nvl42x2go>

Books

Laurence W. Marvin: ***The Damietta Crusade, 1217-1221***

<https://www.medievalists.net/2025/01/new-medieval-books-the-damietta-crusade-1217-1221/>

Aleksander Pluskowski: ***The Teutonic Knights: Rise and Fall of a Religious Corporation***

<https://www.medievalists.net/2025/01/new-medieval-books-the-teutonic-knights/>

Latest from Osprey

<https://www.ospreypublishing.com/uk/discover/available-this-month/>

Frick re-opens with new publications

<https://artdaily.com/news/177178/Full-slate-of-new-publications-announced-to-celebrate-the-Frick-s-grand-reopening>

Online Book

Latest ICOMAM Magazine

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1vU1qla-c6wEdGI0Ns0xMDpB2Qt-jxwSg/view>

Tay and Fife Archaeological Journal goes online

<https://www.tafac.org.uk/category/publications/>

Popular culture

Is Sophocles on the button

<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2025/jan/25/sophocles-west-end-extreme-times-plays-say-unsayable>

Royal Armouries in stamps...

<https://www.independent.co.uk/business/new-stamps-celebrate-magnificent-items-in-royal-armouries-collection-b2684681.html>

Hull's Henrician block house inspires play

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/c93qglwr6yzo>

Winston Churchill back in favour in the White House

<https://www.theartnewspaper.com/2025/01/21/controversial-bust-winston-churchill-oval-office-trump>

Events

9 March Southend

Discover the London: Southend's Time Capsule

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/discover-the-london-shipwreck-southends-time-capsule-tickets-1190587050919?aff=oddttdcreator>

Sales, fairs and auctions

27 January 2025 Denmark

Paintings, furniture and varia

<https://bruun-rasmussen.dk/m/auctions/1008125>

13 March 2025 New York

Important Japanese Swords and Armour from the Paul L. Davidson Collection

<https://www.sothebys.com/en/buy/auction/2025/important-japanese-swords-and-armour-from-the-paul-l-davidson-collection?locale=en>

Websites and downloads

1066 etc: Battles & Templars

<https://www.medievalists.net/2025/01/battle-patay-1429/>

<https://www.medievalists.net/2025/01/crusader-states-battles/>

<https://www.medievalists.net/2025/01/knights-templar-betray-christendom/>

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