

The Basiliscoe Mercury 465

The Internet newsletter for the arms and armour community

The big news this week is the opening of the Samurai exhibition. Otherwise the Royal Armouries gain a new armour, fashion notes on Bridgerton, armour leggings and cravats. Just in time for Valentine's Day.

Ancient news

Iron spear found in Indian tomb

<https://greekreporter.com/2026/01/29/india-longest-iron-age-spear-tamil-nadu-burial/>

Rock art depicts Egyptian conquest and control of copper mines

<https://archaeologymag.com/2026/01/rock-art-in-sinai-shows-early-egyptian-conquest/>

Finding the extent of Roman marching camps in northern Europe

<https://www.popsci.com/science/roman-military-camps-germany>

And one found in Belgium

<https://www.brusselstimes.com/belgium/1942855/belgiums-largest-roman-military-camp-excavation-ends>

Rome's use of secret warfare

<https://www.labrujulaverde.com/en/2026/01/rome-did-not-expand-with-legions-alone-the-secret-weapon-was-rumors-and-misinformation/>

Short illustrated article on the Ribchester helmet

<https://www.livescience.com/archaeology/romans/ribchester-helmet-a-rare-face-mask-helmet-worn-by-a-roman-cavalry-officer-1-900-years-ago>

Anglo-Saxon grave finds go on view at Nottingham university

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/c75x90kql7ko?app-referrer=deep-link>

Beasts of assorted varieties...

Wearing the deer horns

<https://www.livescience.com/archaeology/7-500-year-old-deer-skull-headress-discovered-in-germany-indicates-hunter-gatherers-shared-sacred-items-and-ideas-with-regions-first-farmers>

Mammoth workshop discovered in Alaska

<https://www.sciencenewstoday.org/scientists-found-a-14000-year-old-mammoth-workshop-that-changes-everything>

Update on the discovery of Hannibal's elephants in Spain

<https://www.heritagedaily.com/2026/02/archaeologists-find-evidence-of-hannibals-war-elephants-in-spain/156943>

Grave stories

Teenager versus bear in Prehistoric Italy

<https://www.livescience.com/archaeology/stone-age-teenager-was-mauled-by-a-bear-28-000-years-ago-skeletal-analysis-confirms>

Crouzon syndrome in knight from Order of Calatrava killed in battle 600 years

<https://www.archaeology.wiki/blog/2026/01/23/crouzon-syndrome-in-a-knight-from-the-order-of-calatrava/>

Cambridge students accidentally uncover execution pit

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/science/archaeology/cambridge-university-execution-burial-pit-b2913196.html>

Where are they now? Lost tombs of famous people

<https://greekreporter.com/2026/01/29/lost-tombs-history-iconic-figures/>

In the lists

Royal Armouries acquire King's champion's armour

<https://www.atvtoday.co.uk/277586-london/>

Castles and cannon

Investigating Higham Ferrer's Castle

<https://www.northantstelegraph.co.uk/news/people/mystery-of-higham-ferrers-missing-medieval-castle-finally-revealed-5493814>

York's Monk Gate will smell nice in the future

https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/cd0y0mj423jo?at_format=image&at_link_type=web_link&at_campaign=Social_Flow&at_link_origin=BBC_Yorkshire&at_ptr_name=facebook_page&at_link_id=622C2158-05AF-11F1-9151-F711B3B47874&at_bbc_team=editorial&at_medium=social&at_campaign_type=owned&fbclid=IwY2xjawP3RndleHRuA2FibQlxMABicmlkETFoUU5SzfNWhwNUVabHdhc3J0YwZhcHBfaWQQMjlyMDM5MTc4ODIwMDg5MgABHsr-o6a2jES6FzhAC8LWflvSbJyD5TWqL3ed8Hiww1fYhdGyreBmXtG7O4RF_aem_7c3jLgXdsqWiLOOIKwmWyyw

The story of Lima's cannon

<https://www.limaohio.com/top-stories/2026/01/27/reminisce-cannon-last-fired-when-lima-celebrated-nations-100th/>

Miscellany

Record breaking year for treasure finds in UK

<https://artdaily.com/news/190592/2024-was-a-record-breaking-year-for-treasure-finds-in-Britain>

Bullet used in attempted assassination of Bonnie Prince Charlie found in bed board

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/c5y5nyl5k11o>

Don't forget to wear your cravat to the battle

<https://www.npr.org/2026/01/21/nx-s1-5682323/cravat-word-of-the-week>

Fascinating piece on studying the 19-20th century Japanese military maps, on the Great Mongolian caravan route:

<https://phys.org/news/2026-01-great-mongolian-road-japanese-imperial.html>

Café Basiliscoe

The Imperial Roman diet

<https://www.newstatesman.com/culture/food-drink/2026/01/what-did-the-romans-ever-do-for-food>

...washed down by Utah beer

<https://www.scrippsnews.com/life/food-and-drink/wild-west-booze-150-year-old-bottle-unearthed-in-historic-utah-mining-town>

... with olives

<https://phys.org/news/2026-02-olives-essential-life-italy-years.html>

Princesses and Amazons

Hawking for ladies

<https://phys.org/news/2026-02-medieval-women-falconry-subvert-gender.html>

Henry VIII's heart pendant acquired by the BM

<https://www.theartnewspaper.com/2026/02/10/british-museum-acquires-golden-pendant-linked-henry-viii-fundraising-campaign>

The hidden history of women samurai

<https://www.the-independent.com/asia/japan/british-museum-samurai-women-warrior-myth-b2913476.html>

World Heritage

Fascinating piece on studying the 19-20th century Japanese military maps, on the Great Mongolian caravan route:

<https://phys.org/news/2026-01-great-mongolian-road-japanese-imperial.html>

Nautical news

Sligo wants its Armada cannon back

<https://www.independent.ie/regionals/sligo/news/call-for-spanish-armada-cannons-to-be-brought-back-to-sligo-when-new-museum-is-completed/a445535035.html>

Bit of the Swash Channel wreck washed up on Dorset Beach

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/c0q3evz4yn4o>

Latest news from HMS *Coronation*

<https://www.cornwalllive.com/news/cornwall-news/gallery/rare-captains-chamber-pot-found-10785537>

New book on the search for the *San Jose*

<https://www.smithsonianmag.com/history/archaeologists-discovered-the-holy-grail-of-shipwrecks-a-decade-ago-now-theyre-finally-beginning-to-unravel-the-secrets-of-the-san-jose-180988050/>

Museum news and exhibitions

New museums

Inverness Castle opens for visitors

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/c80je4v1ljmo>

Securing the future for the National Museum Cardiff

<https://artdaily.com/news/190585/Plans-to-secure-future-of-National-Museum-Cardiff-take-a-step-forward>

Conservation corner

The importance of frames

<https://artdaily.com/news/190711/How-frames-influence-the-meaning-of-artwork>

Conserving Sainte Chappelle's windows- nearing completion

<https://www.theartnewspaper.com/2026/01/30/fifty-year-restoration-of-sainte-chapelles-monumental-stained-glass-inches-closer-to-completion>

Objects

Museum's knife collection examined

<https://arkeonews.net/archaeologists-uncover-little-known-rare-knife-collection-spanning-from-the-xiongnu-era-to-the-middle-ages/>

Powder flask from Jamaica National Museums

<https://jamaica-gleaner.com/article/art-leisure/20260201/packing-firepower-powderflask>

Antique firearm found in brewery

<https://www.msn.com/en-us/news/other/prohibition-era-gun-discovered-in-walls-of-distillery-linked-to-al-capone/ar-AA1UxVXe?apiversion=v2&domshim=1&noservercache=1&noservertelemetry=1&batchservertelemetry=1&renderwebcomponents=1&wcseo=1>

Indian weapons have a two-day show

<https://www.mid-day.com/mumbai-guide/things-to-do/article/a-new-exhibition-at-st-xaviers-college-in-mumbai-dives-into-indias-medieval-weaponry-23614010>

Louvre crown battered but whole

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/cn40ev200yjo>

Exhibitions

Samurai at the BM, London

<https://www.britishmuseum.org/exhibitions/samurai>

And review:

<https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2026/jan/29/samurai-review-british-museum-demonic-warrior>

Faking photos at the Rijksmuseum

<https://artdaily.com/news/190870/Rijksmuseum-unveils--FAKE-----A-history-of-early-photo-manipulation>

Exploration of Greenland and the Arctic in Toronto

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2026/feb/05/greenland-us-trump-history>

Stoy telling at the Morgan, NY

<https://artdaily.com/news/190628/3-000-years-of-narrative--The-Morgan-unveils-a-global-history-of-storytelling>

Louis XIV and his carpets at the Met

<https://www.metmuseum.org/exhibitions/a-kings-carpet-louis-xiv-and-the-savonnerie>

Books

Tobias Capwell: ***Armour of the English Knight: An Armourers' Album***

Illustrated by Robert Macpherson and Jeffrey Wasson

<https://www.olympiaauctions.com/about-us/publications/armour-of-the-english-knight-an-armourers-album/>

This month in Osprey

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

Online book

Marie Ødegaard, Stuart Brookes, and Thorsten Lemm: ***Beacons and Military Communication from Antiquity to the Early Modern Period***

<https://brill.com/display/title/73555?fbclid=IwY2xjawP1ZLVleHRuA2FibQIxMA BiclmlkETFoaUU5SzFnNWwhNUVabHdhc3J0YwZhcHBfaWQQMjlyMDM5MTc4ODlwMDg5MgABHvH4n7RcxfE37GJVkjtLs PE8 kbl15LrN5rThgfVpdTnw LXma ODqrYyiMu aem w5mq8beBw43qiZXOSrGu-w>

Popular culture

Armour-inspired leggings on sale

<https://www.cavdu.shop/?ggcid=3069748>

Heritage properties benefiting from the Bridgerton effect

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/cr4kg1nk25lo>

Or just buy something from Libertys

<https://www.theguardian.com/business/2026/feb/08/liberty-department-store-bridgerton-lydia-king-retail-managing-director>

Events

Workshop

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

Contact Natasja Peeters: natasja.peeters@warheritage.be

Sales, fairs and auctions

13 February 2026 New York

Irene Roosevelt Aitken: The Library, Bedrooms and Objects of Vertu

<https://www.christies.com/en/auction/irene-roosevelt-aitken-the-library-bedrooms-and-objects-of-vertu-31234/>

25 February 2026 Denver

Knives and edged weapons

<https://artdaily.com/news/190893/Outstanding-single-owner-collection-of-edged-weapons--armor-and-militaria-to-be-offered-at-Morphy-s->

Olympia's auctions

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

Websites and downloads

1066 etc: Battles, murders, military education

<https://www.medievalists.net/2026/02/the-battle-of-verneuil-1424/>

<https://www.medievalists.net/2026/02/assassination-conrad-montferrat/>

<https://www.medievalists.net/2026/02/military-education-in-early-medieval-europe-learning-from-books/>

Finally, St Valentine's Day

Medieval chivalry

<https://www.lifelong-learning.ox.ac.uk/courses/medieval-chivalry>

Or Bridgerton blue

<https://www.townandcountrymag.com/leisure/arts-and-culture/a69958295/bridgerton-blue-costume-design-interview-2026/...>

Compiled by Ruth Rhynas Brown – 11 February 2026

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<http://www.basiliscoe.com>