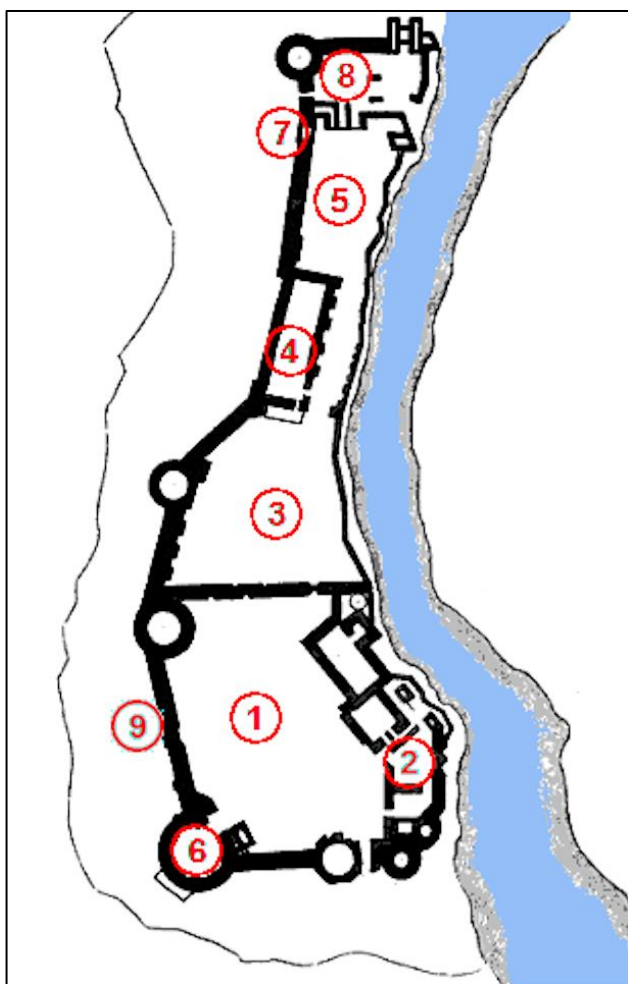




Chepstow Castle



1. Lower Bailey 2. Kitchen 3. Middle Bailey 4. Great Tower 5. Upper Bailey 6. Marten's Tower 7. Marshal's Tower 8. Upper Barbican 9. Gunport

Chepstow Castle is one of the earliest dateable Norman stone castles in Britain. From its foundation before 1070 until its final dismantling in 1690 it underwent constant change.

Period 1 - 1067-1115: The castle was founded by William fitz Osbern (died 1071) and possibly modified by King William I (the Conqueror). The first stone structure was the *Great Tower*.

Period 2 - 1189-1245: William Marshall (died 1119) updated the defences by adding a Lower Bailey with its gatehouse. He also refortified the Middle Bailey with a new curtain wall and projecting circular towers, and he rebuilt the wall of the upper bailey with a rectangular tower. His sons substantially modified the existing *Great Tower*, heightening part of it and added the upper barbican.

Period 3 - 1270-1300: Roger Bigod improved the defences and accommodation. In the Upper Barbican he built a *Gatehouse*. In the Lower Bailey he added the *Residential Block* and *Marten's Tower*. He also extended the upper storey of the *Great Tower*.

Later work: Windows and fireplaces indicate Tudor alterations at various points. In 1662 the entire south curtain wall was widened as protection against cannon.



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The Gatehouse

This was the main point of entry into Chepstow Castle. Built soon after 1189, it may be the earliest twin-towered gatehouse in Britain.



On the left-hand tower, there are traces of a protecting barbican to defend the entrance; the right hand tower contained a ground-floor prison.

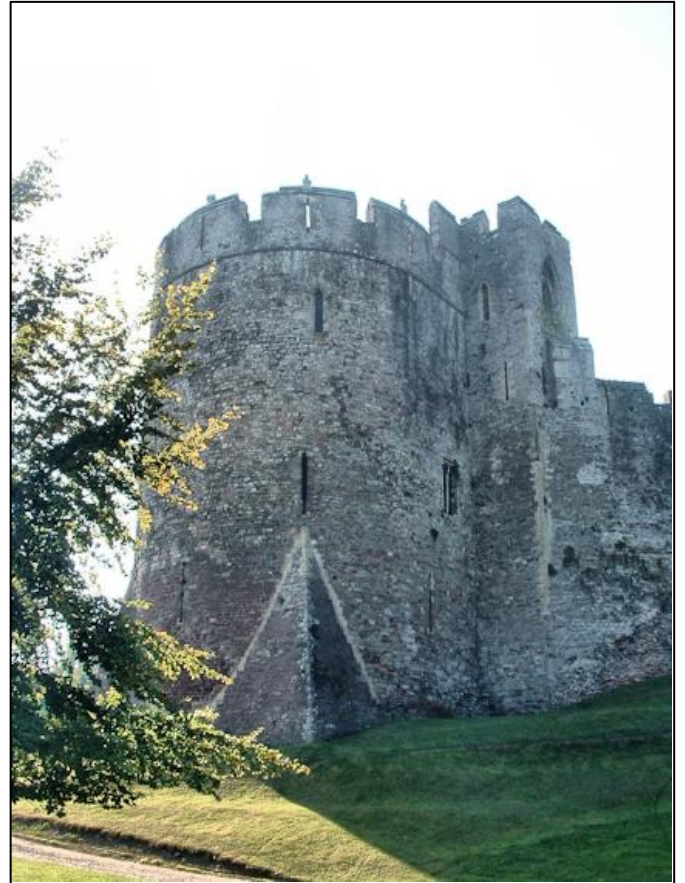
Arrow-loops controlled the approach, whilst the gate passage itself was protected by two portcullises, stout ironclad doors and by murder holes in its roof. Later alterations involved the insertion of larger windows in the 15th and 16th centuries; the battlements were modified for cannon in 1662.

Marten's Tower

A splendid tower was built between 1288 and 1293 by Roger Bigod, probably to replace an earlier tower. It contained a suite of grand private rooms on three floors and a private chapel.

All three access doorways had a portcullis, allowing the tower to be isolated from the rest of the castle. The large windows onto the courtyard and the fireplaces were later replacements.

Sumptuously appointed with ornate battlements and painted plaster decoration, the tower was possibly intended by Bigod as a guest suite for the king.



The Great Tower

The great tower is the earliest stone structure in the castle and one of the earliest stone defences in Britain. This secure stronghold had windows only on the riverside. Three building phases can be distinguished.

Norman 1067-1115: Originally a two-storey tower with a gloomy lower room, lit only by three small windows, reached either by door or by an outside stairway through the main tower doorway. A wall stair led up to the main ceremonial chamber above, this having larger windows and decorative arcading around the other walls.

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The Marshalls 1219-1245: The younger Marshalls modified the first floor, inserting fine new windows and creating private apartments at the far end. They also heightened that end of the tower, supporting its gable on a splendidly decorated arcade.

Roger Bigod 1293-1300: Roger Bigod extended the upper story over the remainder of the tower. A gallery was built on the riverside effectively separating the two baileys.



The extraordinary great tower, even in ruin, still bears evidence of unusual and extremely high quality decoration.

In its earliest form, the Norman upper chamber was lined on three sides by a series of round-arched recesses. Those on the end wall still retain traces of criss-cross pattern made in different coloured plasters. Dating from the late 11th century, this is the oldest surviving secular decoration in Britain and has been carefully reproduced in one bay to show its original appearance.

Also at the end of the tower can be seen the remains of a pair of extraordinarily ornate arches with Purbeck marble shafts, mouldings and carved decoration of the very highest quality. Inserted into the Norman tower by the Marshal brothers in the 1230s, this arcade divided the upper room in two and supported the gable of the new second-floor bedchamber which they erected over that end.

The Great Hall

The once grand hall was built around 1280 by Roger Bigod for entertaining and ceremonial events. Finely carved windows and painted plasterwork enriched its interior and its floor was paved with decorated tiles.

At the high end, the lord and his guests sat at a table on a dais overlooking the rest of the household. At the lower end were three elegant service doorways and the hall's main entrance, reached through an elaborate porch from the courtyard. The blocked upper door led to Bigod's private chamber.



The Kitchen

The kitchen served a range of elegant domestic buildings in the castle's lower ward, all erected between 1272 and 1284 by Earl Roger Bigou. Its great size and unusually fine windows reflect the importance of hospitality in the earl's

FEATURES

household and it was presumably in use for the visit of King Edward I and Queen Eleanor in December 1284.

Cooking was probably done on open hearths, with smoke escaping through a louvre in the roof. To the right where there is now a wide open archway, were serving hatches for food to be taken upstairs to the hall.

To the left is a drain in the floor and a doorway out over the river cliff, which allowed items to be winched up from boats below. A vanished wall separated the kitchen from a larder, where the ticket office is now situated, and two chambers above it.

The Service Passage

The cold and draughty corridor was once full of noise, bustling servants and the smell of cooking. It linked the provision stores, kitchen and dining hall.

Stairs lead down to a magnificent wine cellar with direct access to the river below.

The stairs leading up to the Great Hall are on the left and to either side are two pairs of service rooms, one above another. The upper pair was a Pantry and buttery for storing food and drink.

The Cellar

Just off the stairs leading down to the cellar is a small enclosed platform - possibly a tiny garden for the lord and his guests to admire the river views - its high status reinforced architecturally by the fine vaulted ceiling over the entrance.

The finely vaulted cellar was used to store barrels of the lord's wine and locally brewed ale. These would be winched up from the boats

beached in the river cave down below by a stout pulley arm projecting out from the doorway.

The Tudor Great Court

In the early 16th century, the medieval curtain wall, originally built by William Marshal around 1200, was utterly transformed when grand new buildings were erected against either side of it. Sir Charles Somerset, first earl of Worcester, transformed the lower bailey into a great court by relocating his private apartments which were over 200 years old, from the service end of the hall range to a splendid new complex of buildings on either side of the wall. Now long gone, the older walls still bear traces of their fireplaces and roofs.

Marshal's Tower

This rectangular tower was built around 1215 by William Marshal, but its inner walls were demolished in 1662, when the castle's defences were breached, to make a continuous wall walk.



The finely carved windows show that the tower was built mainly for domestic use. It may have been the Camera Comitesse recorded in 1271 - a private sitting room for the countess. The main room on the upper floor was evidently well decorated and traces of its painted plaster still remain inside the window.

The Great Gun Port

Chepstow Castle suffered badly in the Civil War, being besieged and bombarded in 1645 and again in 1648, with breaches made in the south wall on both occasions.

After the restoration of the monarchy the castle was maintained and Lord Herbert was appointed its governor. In 1662 he adapted the entire south side of the castle to withstand cannon fire, by building a new inner wall and filling the gap with earth. In the archway he built an impressive gun port equipped with its own powder magazine and operation chambers.

The Barbican



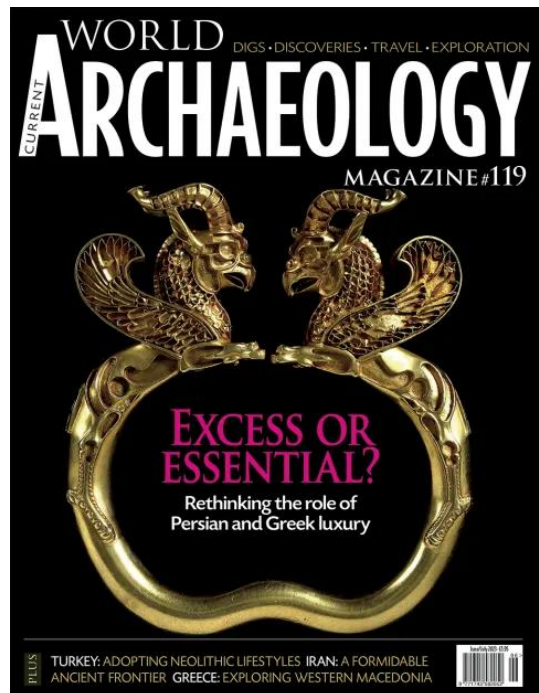
This outer defence work was added to the castle by the younger Marshals in the 1230s. Its purpose was to strengthen control of the higher ground on the vulnerable westward side.

A small postern gate was located in the ditch. The exposed south-west angle was protected by a strongly built tower, probably open-backed, with all-round fire from four levels. The rectangular gatehouse was built around 1298 to replace an earlier simple gateway when the ground level had previously been higher.

CAS last visited Chepstow in 2000

Highlights from the Magazines

Current World Archaeology Jun 2023-Jul 2023



Human, House and Regional Biographies in the Neolithic - Investigating the transition & Farming Lifestyles on the Konya Plain, Turkey

The Ancient World's Largest Fortresses - Persia's northern Defences in Late Antiquity

Power or Decadence? - Luxury under the Achaemenids, Athenians & Alexander the Great

FEATURES

The West Cemetery of Meroe

Western Macedonia - Forgotten Highlands of Greece

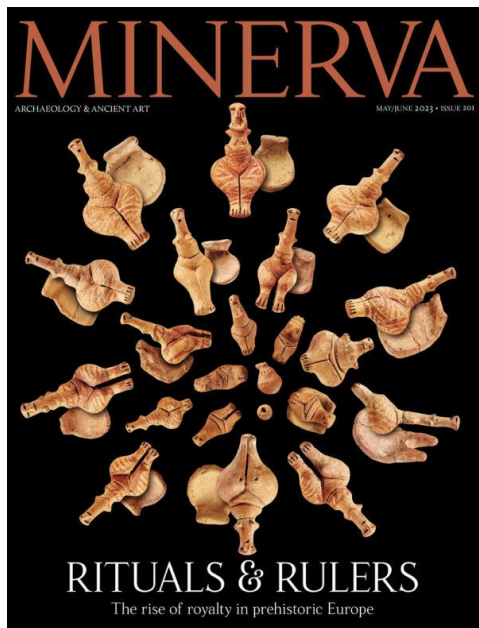
Gramma Bay, Albania - Where the Ionian Blue Begins

Anyang - China's Ancient City of Kings

Sinuses and Human Evolution

Object - Vietnamese Stringed Instrument

Minerva - Archaeology & Art May-Jun 2023



The Rise of the Rulers - Burials discovered in south-eastern Prehistoric Europe

Face to Face - The Fayum mummy portraits of Graeco-Roman Egypt

Wooden Wonders - Roman Wood at Herculaneum

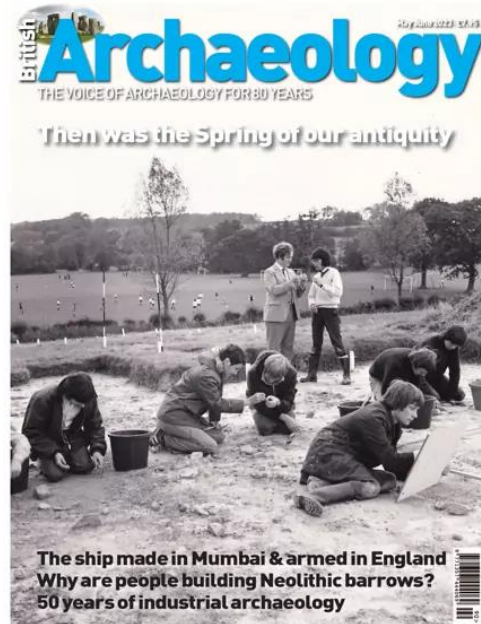
In the Lap of Luxury - A British Museum exhibition of luxury in ancient Persia & Greece

Siena - A Tour of its Medieval Monuments

Divine Intervention - Brigit : Irish Goddess turned Christian Saint

The Antiquarian - Margaret Alice Murray (1863-1963)

British Archaeology May-Jun 2023



Understanding Industrialisation - 50 Years of Threats, Conservation & Research

HMS Trincomalee - shipwrights on a Georgian Warship

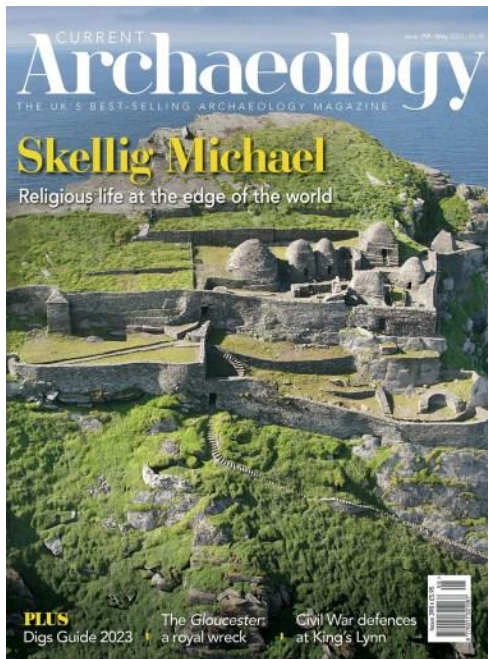
In the Shadow of Saints: the Sacred Christian Heritage of Lyminge

A New Neolithic - England's Barrow Columbaria

Casting Clouts at Munlochry Well, Black Isle

Coney Street, York

Current Archaeology May 2023



At the Edge of the World - Exploring Early Medieval Asceticism on the Skelligs

The Gloucester - Piecing together the Story of a Royal Wreck

Standing in the Presence of a Saint - Reconstructing the Shrine of Thomas Becket at Trinity Chapel, Canterbury

Kings Lynn under Siege - How a small Field illuminated Civil War Fortress Engineering

Re-imagining the Govan Stones - Placing Archaeology at the Heart of a Glasgow Community

Spring Cleaning at Fishbourne Roman Palace

Odd Socs - Wealden Iron Research Group

Current Archaeology June 2023



Rural Romanitas - Rethinking the Role of Villas

Ponteland's Prehistoric Past - Tracing Life & Death on the Edge of the Northumberland Coastal Plain

Gateway to Britannia - Reimagining Richborough Roman Fort

Found and Lost - Tracing a Later Prehistoric Engraved Stone from Shropshire - The Whixall Stone

Scent back in Time - How Ancient Odours can bring the Past to Life

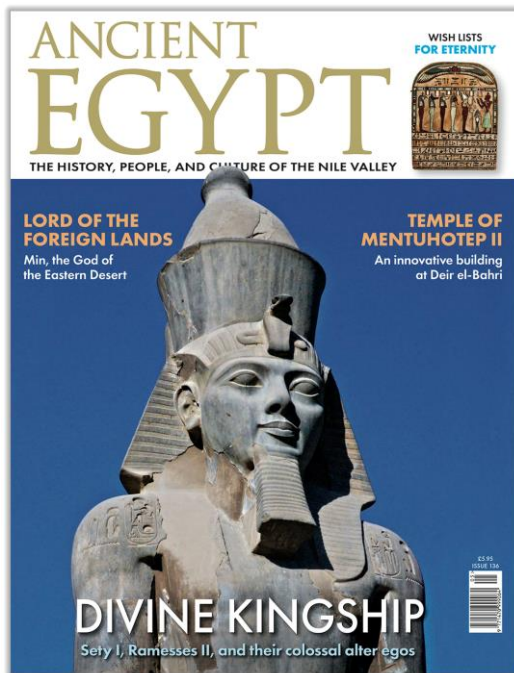
Deciphering the Stone of Destiny - The Engine Shed, Stirling

Rendlesham Revealed Exhibition - the Heart of a Kingdom AD400-800

Odd Socs - Wren 300

FEATURES

Ancient Egypt May-Jun 2023



A Family of God-Kings - Sety I & Ramesses II and their colossal avatars

Min - the Most Popular Deity in the Eastern Desert

Horemkhauf of Hierakonpolis - First Inspector of the Priests at Nekhen during the Second Intermediate Period

Pharaoh's Chariot Wheel - The Power behind the Throne

Tomb Distribution in Upper Qurna

Margaret Murray's Pioneering Investigation in 1908

A Wish List for Eternity

The Temple of Mentuhotep II at Deir El-Bahri

Object Highlight - Terracotta Female Figurine from El Ma'mariya

Quiz

1. A dendrochronologist would study these rings
2. Roman coin, quarter of a denarius
3. Extinct East German Language
4. Egyptian Site of the Great Pyramids and the Sphinx
5. Legendary Irish Gaelic bard and warrior
6. King of the East Angles linked to the ship burial at Sutton Hoo
7. Horizontal band of decoration on a wall
8. Country containing the UNESCO World Heritage Site of Erbil Citadel
9. Legendary king of Crete
10. Companions to Jason in Greek mythology

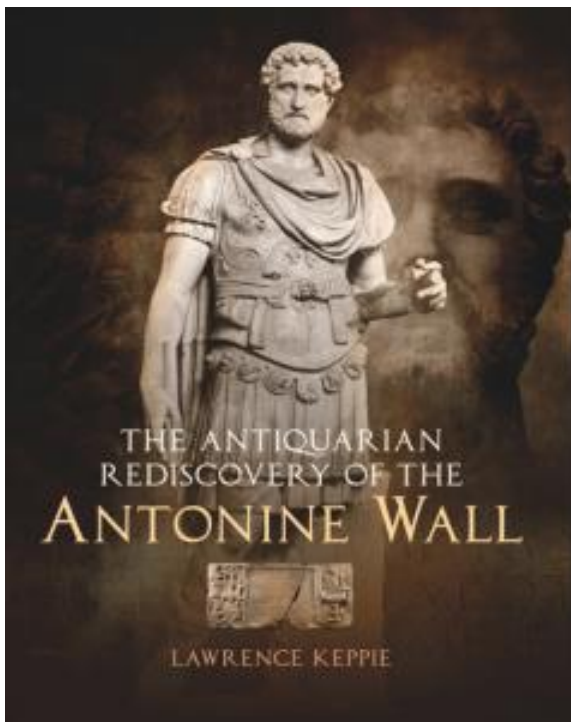
Future Events

Saturday Events

A finalised programme of Saturday Events is presently being worked on and will be sent out to Members shortly.

Links to Websites

Open Access eBooks :



The Antiquarian Rediscovery of the Antonine Wall - Society of Antiquaries of Scotland

The Antonine Wall has been visible as an upstanding earthwork across the central belt of Scotland since its construction by the Roman legions over 1,850 years ago, in the reign of the Roman emperor Antoninus Pius. This book takes up its story from the time of its abandonment in the reign of Marcus Aurelius and charts developments in our knowledge about it through the Middle Ages and after, up to the early years of the twentieth century, by which time

the earliest scientific excavations had taken place.

The book is profusely illustrated with maps, portraits of prominent antiquaries and nineteenth-century watercolours.

<http://books.socantscot.org/digital-books/catalog/book/13>

Recorded Previous Lectures:



Join exhibition curator Jamie Fraser and Keeper of the Department of the Middle East Paul Collins (Chair) as they discuss the context, scope, themes and highlights of this phenomenal exhibition.

Through dazzling objects from countries from Afghanistan to Greece, they explore a complex story about luxury as a political tool in the Middle East and southeast Europe from 550-30 BC. The royal Achaemenid court of Persia used precious objects in gold, silver and glass as markers of authority, defining a style of luxury that resonated across the empire from Egypt to India. Alexander the Great swept aside the Persian empire to usher in a new Hellenistic age, in which eastern and western styles of luxury were fused as part of an increasingly interconnected world.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7UCrX_jkaV0

EVENTS & LINKS



The Roman Caldicot Level & Roman Caerleon

Dr Mark Lewis, curator of the National Roman Legion Museum, Amgueddfa Cymru, describes the Roman legionary fortress at Caerleon and its impact on the development of the Gwent Levels. This talk features the premier of a new digital reconstruction of the Roman Levels and the Legionary Fortress.

<https://www.livinglevels.org.uk/online-talks-recordings/2023/3/24/roman-caerleon>



Ruthin Castle, Denbighshire, NE Wales: A Brief History and Recent Conservation Works

Ruthin Castle is a site built as part of Edward 1st campaign to take over Wales. In 1277 the area of Dyffryn Clwyd was given to Prince Dafydd but when he attacked Edward in 1282 it was granted to Reginald de Grey and was used militarily for several hundred years.

Its last use as a military site was during the Civil War in Britain. The site came into the ownership of the Myddleton family of Chirk castle in the 17th century and in the 19th century a mansion house was built along with extensive picturesque gardens. The ruins of the Medieval Castle were the perfect backdrop to these gardens. All this has meant that the important Medieval remains have been neglected.

The mansion house is now a hotel. In 2016 a Trust was set up to try to bring about some repairs to the Medieval remains and over the last year the first major campaign of repairs and reconsolidation has taken place. The talk will give a background to the history of the site and the recent work which has taken place.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gHduEIC8EQQ>



Re-approaching Celts - Rachel Pope

The lecture discusses newly published work by the author that provides an enhanced framework for our understanding of the European Iron Age on the Continent, via the development of new contextual method that works to combine archaeology (primarily status burial data) with Classical textual references, whilst also focusing on the distinctly regional nature of Iron Age social organisation.

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

Answers to Quiz

1. Tree 2. Sestertius 3. Gothic 4. Giza 5. Ossian 6. Raedwald 7. Frieze 8. Iraq 9. Minos 10. Argonauts