



CARDIFF ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY CYMDEITHAS ARCHEOLEGOL CAERDYDD

Registered Charity No. 225579

Oct 2025/Nov 2025 Issue

CAS Trips 2025 (3)

We conclude our CAS trips coverage in this issue with our final day out and a visit to the fine medieval town of Kidwelly.

Kidwelly Castle and Town
Saturday, August 2nd 2025

Led by Bill Zajac (Cadw).

The Quay

Kidwelly is dominated by its splendid medieval castle, founded in the early 12th Century. The river was key to the success of the medieval fortress and its town, as they could be re-supplied by sea in times of trouble. For centuries, river trade remained important to the town, and a quay and boatyard developed close to the town bridge.



Shifting sands at the mouth of the estuary made river passage difficult and a new quay was built downstream in 1768 by the industrialist

Thomas Kymer. It was linked by the famous Kymer's Canal to collieries in the Gwendraeth Fawr Valley. This was the first industrial canal of significant length built in Wales and made Kidwelly one of the most advanced coal ports of its day.



With time coal exports largely went through other Carmarthenshire ports, such as Burry Port and Llanelli. Kidwelly Quay still played an important role as an exporting port well into the 20th Century thanks to the local silica brick industry, which shipped fire-bricks used as furnace linings around the world.



FEATURES



Next we ventured into the centre of Kidwelly over the Town Bridge. The bridge consists of a double arched 19th century road bridge, over the Gwendraeth Fach estuary. Hidden beneath the present structure is an earlier medieval bridge of which a pointed arch is visible. Passing the old Mill we reached the Castle, perched high on the mound above us.



The Priory Church

The Priory was founded around 1130 following the building of the Castle and was annexed as a cell to Sherbourne Abbey, served by a prior and two monks. No remains exist of the original Benedictine order priory. Linked to the Castle, upon the Dissolution in 1544 the monastic church continued use as the Parish Church.



Prince Llywelyn destroyed the church in 1222, and probably the Normans dedicated the present church to St Mary. Sir Gilbert Scott stressed the need for restoration in 1854 and the spire was hit by lightning and fell down in 1884.

The tower is considered the most outstanding architectural feature of the structure. The church is in Decorated style, one of the best in the area. The two transepts are out of line with each other. There is an interesting domina sculpture and in 1903 a Sarcophagus, a stone coffin, was found when installing a heating system. This is probably the most ancient remains within the Church.

A 14th century effigy of the Madonna and infant in white alabaster, originally from the rood loft, has been placed on a corbel on the east wall of

the church. Close by is a richly moulded piscina and sedilia.

Also of interest is a squint or hagioscope discovered in the 1973 from within the vestry, which once may have been a Chantry chapel. A mural staircase may have led to an anchorite cell through the North wall.



Kidwelly has a number of interesting Blue plaques attached to the old houses in the town centre as follows:

THOMAS KYMER (1722-1784)

was born in Haverfordwest 17th July 1722. He exploited the mineral wealth of the area, and by 1759 he was a burgess of Kidwelly. In 1766 he opened the first canal in Wales linking Carway with the Port of Kidwelly. His meetings were held in this building, then known as the Pelican Hotel. He died in 1784 and is buried in St Mary's Churchyard.

Originally known as The Great House, Kidwelly. Later known as The Malt House, Kidwelly. The first record of transfer of title is in 1609. By 1676 it had been re-named the Malt House. In 1738 it was leased by ANTONY ROGERS who,

with CHARLES GWYNN, built the second Tinworks in the Kingdom at Broadford, Kidwelly.

JOHN RANDOLF ANTHONY (Jack) 1890-1954

was born in Cilfeithy, Kidwelly in 1890. Possibly the greatest ever Grand National jockey. He won the race on three occasions, 1911, 1915 and 1920. He was also second twice and third once, an unrivalled record. He then became a very successful trainer. He died in Wantage in 1954. His uncle, J G ANTHONY, ran a business from this property.

The Castle

In 1106 Henry I granted the estate to Roger, Bishop of Salisbury, who built a castle to protect the mouth of the Gwendraeth Fach. This castle was first mentioned in 1115, but the Lord Rhys built a new castle in 1190 which fell into the hands of the English by 1201. Rhys Grug captured and burnt the castle in 1215, occupy it again during the Welsh rising of 1231. By 1242 it was held by Meredith, his son. The last of the de Londres line ended with Hawise, whose first husband Walter de Braose died in 1233 fighting the welsh, and then married Patrick de Chaworth, who also later in 1258 died fighting the Welsh. However in 1257 he held out against a Welsh attack on the Castle although the town was burnt.



FEATURES

The Inner ward of the present castle was built by Payn de Chaworth 1274-1279 on his return from the Crusades. In 1283 ownership of the castle fell to Henry, Earl of Lancaster, the brother of Edward I, through marriage to Matilda. Henry built the Outer ward. The estate merged with the Crown in 1399. By 1401 King Henry had spent £100 on work to the incomplete outer gate. Owain Glyndwr's attack of 1403 however set the gatehouse on fire. Between 1408 and 1422 a further £500 was spent on works at the Castle. Henry VII granted the castle to Sir Rhys ap Tudor, and finally the neglected castle was passed on to the Earls of Cawdor, eventually placing it into State care in 1927.



The castle consists of a D-shaped outer ward with a steep drop to the estuary. The castle was probably built of stone by 1200. Most of the outer curtain wall dates from 1320. Three open-gorged towers flanked the north gateway consisting of twin U-shaped towers. There is a large gatehouse on the south side providing the main entrance. It has twin D-shaped towers with a rectangular and a round-projection behind each. Of interest a medieval hand print has been left on a wall leading to a lower room and another room with access only from above may have stored documents.



The inner ward is square plan with four massive drum towers at the corners with a simple gateway arch. A passageway from the north-east tower led to the Chapel, overlooking the estuary. A rib-vaulted sacristy lies in a square turret next to this.

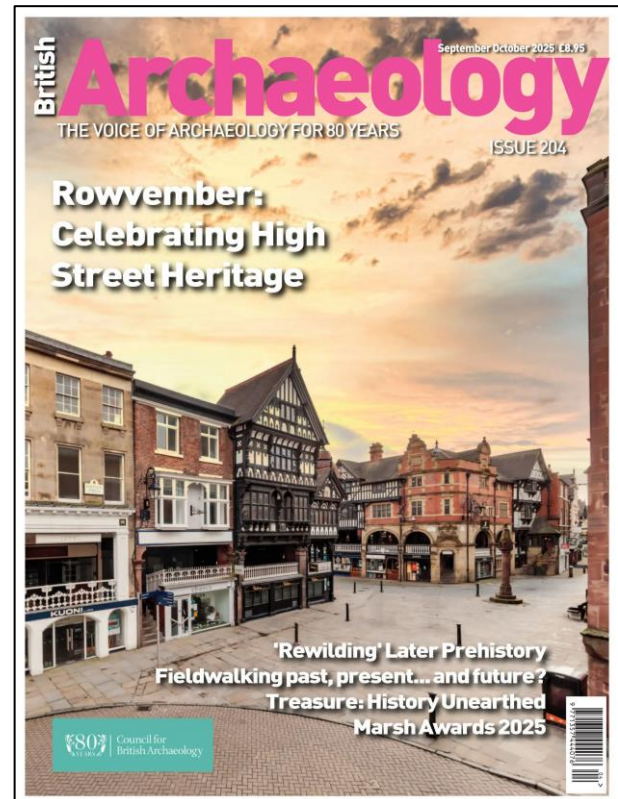


We concluded the visit with an amble around the outside of the outer ward. A lovely visit to one of the great castle, thank you Bill.

The Town Defences

The town walls date from the 1280s, and the best section is that on the north, running west from the castle. The ruined rectangular gatehouse at the south end of the small town consists of two towers and a central gate-

passage. It had at least one portcullis, although the slot for this was later blocked. The building was described in the sixteenth century as having a town hall on the upper floor, with a prison beneath. We concluded the warm day with a traditional visit to the local hostelry.



Highlights from the Magazines

British Archaeology Sept-Oct 2025

Rowvember - Calibrating High Street Heritage

Rewilding Later Prehistory - Investigating what Archaeological Wildlife is, and why this Matters now

Fieldwalking - Past, Present, and Future

Treasure - History Unearthed

The Marsh Community Archaeology Awards

The Glenelg Brochs, Lochalsh, Highlands

Restoring Old Mills to Engines of Prosperity

Gwreiddiau at Bryn Celli Ddu

Co-creating the New and Improved YAC Website

Woven Braids

Archaeology and the Academy

Current Archaeology September 2025

Science Notes - Unlocking the Past using Brain Power

Finds Tray - Iron Age Horse Harness Toggie

From Warship to Whaler - Solving the Mystery of a Sanday Shipwreck

Researching Wrest Park, Silsoe, Bedfordshire

A Game of Tombs? - Rethinking what the Dead can tell us about Neolithic Society in Ireland

FEATURES



Viking North - Tracing Scandinavian Influences in Early Medieval England

Cathedrals of Commerce - A Guide through the Golden Age of the British High Street

Languages without Words - Exploring Art from the Last Ice Age

Ancient India: Living Traditions - British Museum Exhibition

Gladiators - Heroes of the Colosseum and Gladiators of Britain - Exhibition at the Royal Armouries

The World of King James VI & I at National Galleries of Scotland - Portrait

Odd Socs - The Great War Aviation Society

Current Archaeology October 2025

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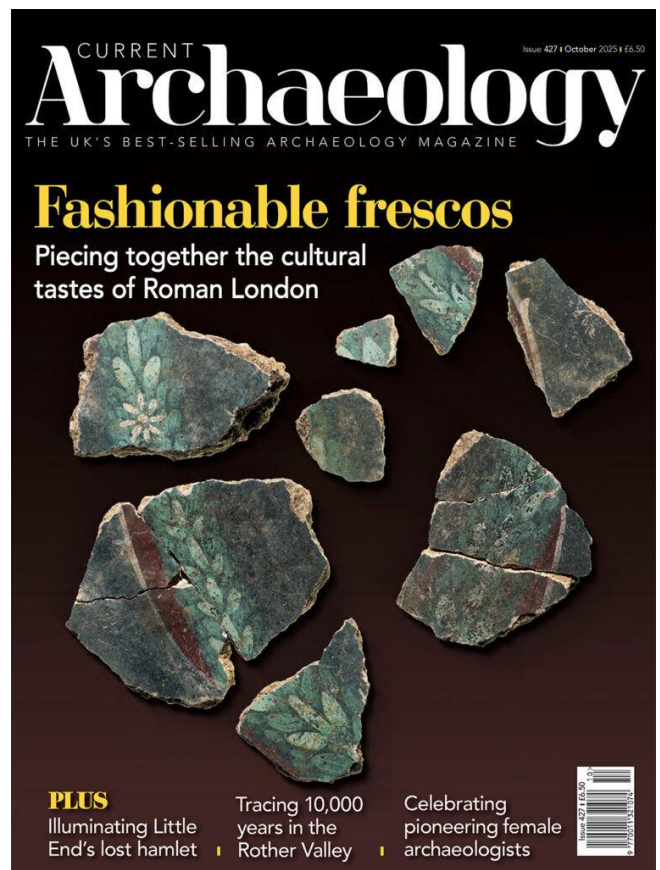
Science Notes - Tracing the Origins of the Bedale Hoard

Finds Tray - Small Samian Ware Bowl Base

Surveying Verulamium, St Albans, Hertfordshire

If Walls could Talk - Reconstructing Roman London's Fashionable Frescos

Little End - Tracing the Archaeology and Social History of a long-vanished Community



Riverine Reflections - Visiting the Natural and Cultural Heritage of the Rother Valley

Expanding Frontiers - Celebrating the Mothers of Romano-British Studies

The Trimontium Experience - a Virtual Reality Roman Assault on a Hillfort Community

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FEATURES

Norwich Castle & Art Gallery

Jewry Wall Museum - A Real Roman Experience,
Leicester

Odd Socs - Friends of Highgate Cemetery
Trust

World Archaeology Aug-Sept 2025



Apollonia Pontica - The Rise and Fall of a Greek
City in Bulgaria

The Power of Nature - Seeking the Origins of
Hindu, Buddhist, and Jain Devotional Art

Polio in medieval Sweden - Three Burials and a
Dangerous Disease

The Golden Fields of Denmark - Uncovering the
Power and Prestige of the Vindelev Hoard

The Sanno Shrine

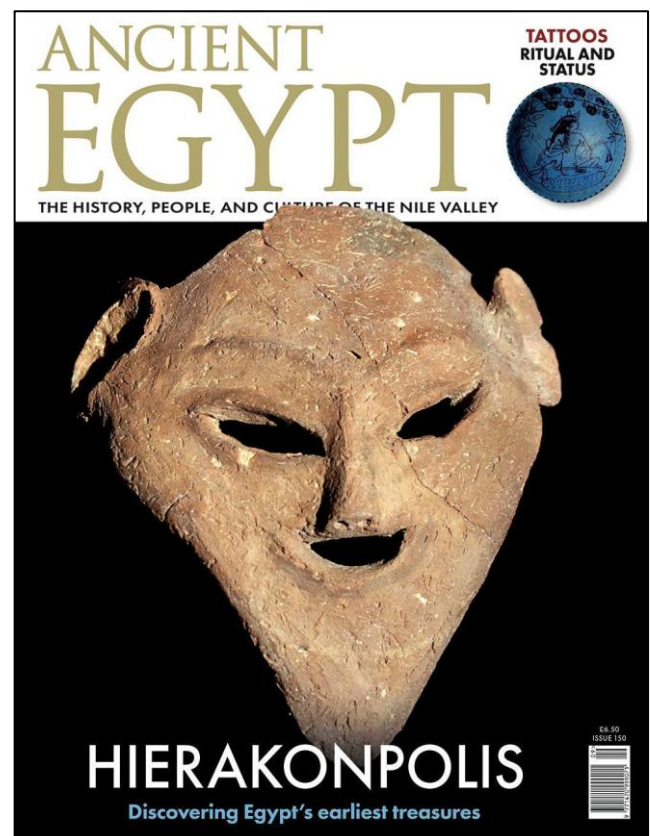
Cosmic Psychopomps and Apotropaic Pentagrams
- A Pot with a Difference

Above Ground Level - 25 Years of Dutch
Archaeology at the Rijksmuseum

Studying Ancient Tattoos

Object - Metal Stamping Die, 550-625 AD

Ancient Egypt Sept-Oct 2025



Hierakonpolis - The Excavation History of the
Predynastic "City of the Falcon God"

Tattooing in the Ancient Nile Valley (2)

The Nile Mosaic at Palestrina

Senusret II - King of the Twelfth Dynasty

FEATURES

Aquila Dodgson 1829-1919 - Collector and Polymath

The Oxyrhynchus Papyri - From Ancient Trash to Historical Treasure

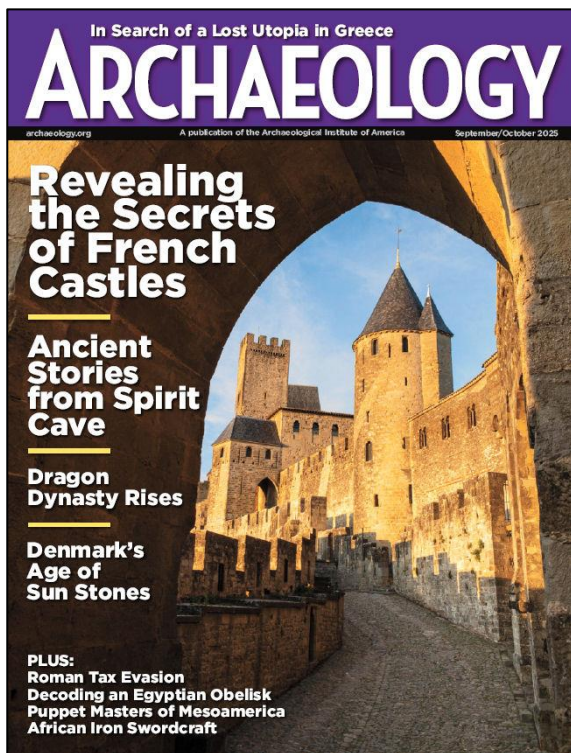
Hands in Wall Paintings and Sculpture

The Temple of Qasr El-Sagha - An Isolated Temple in the Desert North of the Fayum

Object - Sphinx of Hatshepsut (Cairo)

And in America:

Archaeology September-October 2025



Spirit Cave Connection - The world's oldest mummified person is the ancestor of Nevada's Northern Paiute people

Here Comes the Sun - On a small Danish island 5,000 years ago, farmers crafted tokens to bring the sun out of the shadows

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How to Build a Medieval Castle - Why are archaeologists constructing a thirteenth century fortress in the forests of France?

Myth of the Golden Dragon - Eclectic artefacts from tombs in north-eastern China tell the story of a little-known dynasty

Remote Sanctuary at the Crossroads of Empire - Ancient Bactrians invented distinct ways to worship their gods 2,300 years ago in Tajikistan

Searching for Washingtonia - How archaeologists located a forgotten nineteenth-century utopian community

Artefact: Anglo-Saxon Gold Shilling coin, or thrymsa

And finally from Italy:

Archeologia Viva September-October 2025



The Pharaoh's Arsenals - The New Kingdom was a period of intense military activity.

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The Camino De Santiago - Memories from the "Milky Way"

The "Superba" in Crimea - Genoese Colonists on the Black Sea

A Man, a Woman - Portraits for Eternity in Pompeii

White Shelter - It Happened on Mount Circeo...

Medicines - In Search of Ancient Remedies

Archaeology and Theatre: Down with the Mask!

Castrum Novum - A Fortress from the First Punic War

Quiz

1. First name of ... Africanus, the Roman general who destroyed Carthage in 146 BC

2. The Iron Age culture of eastern Yorkshire

3. First name of ... Camp, British archaeologist, author of Studies in Anglo-Saxon Sculpture (1992)

4. White marble quarried on the island of Paros, Greece

5. The Timber circle on the Norfolk Coast discovered in 1998

6. Roman infantry unit comprising about 480 soldiers

7. Item of riding equipment originating in China roughly 2,000 years ago

8. Legendary ruler associated with South Cadbury hillfort

9. Blue-green glazed coloured Egyptian earthenware

10. First name of explorer, born in Florence in 1451, who voyaged to the New World

Lecture Programme 2025/2026

Our meetings will be held in the same room as last year, Lecture Theatre 2.03 in the John Percival Building, Column Road in person and hybrid **Zoom facilities** will be broadcast from this location. All meetings are on start at 7:15pm.

Thursday 2nd October 2025

Julian Thomas

Professor of Archaeology, University of Manchester

Arthur's Stone, Herefordshire: A Chambered Tomb in its Context

Since 2010, the Beneath Hay Bluff project has been exploring prehistoric activity in southwest Herefordshire, on the border between England and Wales. Excavations at Dorstone Hill have revealed a remarkable complex of Neolithic timber buildings, replaced on the same location by funerary long mounds, and a causewayed enclosure. These results have prompted the investigation of Arthur's Stone, a chambered long cairn on the next hilltop, overlooking the Golden Valley. This is a well-known monument in national ownership, but its character has previously been poorly understood. Three seasons of excavations have revealed a complex structural sequence and unusual mortuary practices.

Thursday 16th October 2025

Dr Ken Griffin

Curator, The Egypt Centre, Swansea University.

EVENTS & LINKS

The Coffin of Ankhpakhered: A Story of Burial, Usurpation, and Conservation.

The anthropoid coffin of Ankhpakhered, a key piece in the Egypt Centre's collection at Swansea University, reveals a compelling narrative of ancient Egyptian funerary practice and later usurpation. This talk will trace its journey from its original use as a burial receptacle to its subsequent adaptation for a man named Djedher during the Ptolemaic Period. Furthermore, it will showcase the significant collaborative project with Cardiff University, where students dedicated over 1,000 hours to the cleaning, conservation, and detailed analysis of this remarkable artefact.

Thursday 30th October 2025

Prof Michael Edmunds

Emeritus Professor, School of Physics and Astronomy, Cardiff University.

The Antikythera Mechanism Revisited.

It is now twenty years since the Antikythera Mechanism Research Project established the basic workings of this remarkable machine. Its structure and astronomical functions will be briefly summarised. The talk will examine what we have learnt since, and show how the Mechanism fits almost perfectly into the historical and literary context of the first century BCE. We will argue that it marks a real shift in human thought about the Universe, and try and discover what happened to its technology - which appears almost to vanish for a Millennium.

Thursday 13th November 2025

Nick Wells

Independent Archaeologist.

Three Emperors at Trelai - Coin Use in Wales and Beyond in the 5th Century.

Recent coin finds from excavations at Trelai have placed it and the adjacent villa firmly within the narrative of 5th century Roman Britain. This paper examines late Roman coinage in Britain, its use and what it says about the nature of the Roman withdrawal.

Thursday 27th November 2025

Dr Adelle Bricking

Finds Officer, Department of History & Archaeology, Museum of Wales, Cardiff.

Patterns in the Paucity: Mortuary Practices in the Iron Age of Southwest Britain.

This presentation examines the varied and enigmatic burial practices of the Iron Age in Southwest Britain, a region often overlooked due to poor skeletal preservation and the prevalence of 'invisible' funerary rites that leave behind little or no archaeological trace. Through a combination of histological light microscopy of bone diagenesis, taphonomic analysis, and a large-scale review of burial data, this study investigates how the dead were treated across multiple stages of post-mortem processing and final deposition.

The results suggest that mortuary practices in the region were complex and multi-staged, with exhumation, rather than excarnation, emerging as the most common driver of skeletal disarticulation. This study provides new insights into the diverse funerary traditions of Iron Age peoples, highlights their nuanced approaches to death and commemoration, and demonstrates that there is more than meets the eye when it comes to burial evidence.

Links to VR Websites

Framlingham Castle



Photo: Squezyboy

Framlingham Castle sits above the town of Framlingham in Suffolk, England. It was built by the Bigod family in the late 12th century and was home to the earls and dukes of Norfolk for over 400 years. From the 14th century through the 16th centuries it was held successively by the Brotherton family, the Mowbrays, the Howards, and briefly, Mary Tudor, daughter of Henry VIII. In this expedition, we will explore the castle and examine some of its many features.

<https://artsandculture.google.com/story/PQXxWlxlLaC4KQ>

Jaigarh fort, India



Photo: Matthew Laird Acred

Welcome to Jaigarh Fort, a marvel of Rajput engineering perched atop the Hill of Eagles, where history and Innovation intertwine. As you explore this virtual experience, immerse yourself in the fort's ingenious water Systems, hidden stories, and expert insights that reveal its enduring legacy of strength and sustainability.

<https://tapestry.cyark.org/content/jaigarh-fort>

Links to Recorded Lectures

Council for
British Archaeology

This is Archaeology - Bronze, beer and boats

With James Dilley, Nadia Norman, and Aiden Phillips

At Stanwick Lakes in Northamptonshire, an ambitious heritage project brought the past to life through the construction of replica Bronze Age log boats using traditional tools and techniques. Led by Dr James Dilley of Ancient Craft, The Big Bronze Age Boat Build invited volunteers a rare, hands-on insight into prehistoric craftsmanship and ancient waterway exploration.

Stanwick Lakes is a 750-acre nature reserve and SSSI (Site of Special Scientific Interest), managed by the Rockingham Forest Trust. Archaeological discoveries in the 1980s revealed over 5,000 years of continuous human activity, inspiring a vibrant programme of community-led heritage projects, supported by The National Lottery Heritage Fund.

EVENTS & LINKS

This project was not only an archaeological endeavour but also a powerful wellbeing initiative. Rooted in shared learning, teamwork, and skill-building, it fostered a deep sense of connection and purpose among participants. Volunteers took ownership of the process, forming a supportive community where heritage and personal growth went hand in hand.

Launched alongside the build was Operation Phoenix, a pilot scheme sponsored by Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue Service to support staff wellbeing through archaeology-focused activities—further highlighting the therapeutic potential of hands-on heritage.

In this presentation, Dr James Dilley, Nadia Norman (Stanwick Lakes Heritage Coordinator), and Aidan Phillips (Boat Build volunteer and Operation Phoenix lead) reflect on how the project supported wellbeing, strengthened community, and brought heritage vividly to life.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AoYhy4A2eH8>

Basque Oak and Portuguese Wine: A Medieval Merchant Ship Reveals Her Secrets

Dr. Toby Jones, nautical archaeologist and curator of the Newport Medieval Ship Project

Discovered and raised in 2002-3, the well-preserved hull remains and numerous artefacts indicate that the ship was likely built in the Basque Country as a wine-trading vessel for Portuguese owners. Examination of the ship timbers has led to a greater understanding of Atlantic-Iberian ship design and ship building in the late medieval period. The recovery of such a unique find of unparalleled craftsmanship offers insights into technological innovation at the very beginning of the Age of Exploration while the hundreds of artefacts reveal the complexity of Anglo-Welsh /Iberian trading links and illuminate life on board the ship.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4XLbA4ZCP1A>



Time Team Official

Digging for Disney - TIME TEAM (Norton Disney) 2025

Time Team visit Norton Disney in rural Lincolnshire. On the hunt for a long lost medieval moated Manor House, Richard oversees the trenches, digging deep for dateable evidence; Carenza persuades the entire village to get involved, and manages a hundred volunteers test pitting up and down Main Street; Stewart spearheads the search for the moat in the wider landscape; and Gus follows in Walt's famous footsteps, marvelling at the Disney family's medieval history, as the origins of the village get pushed further and further back.

Day 1:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pYD3VOLd6_M

Day Two in Norton Disney, Lincolnshire, and the hunt for the lost medieval manor house continues! The team opens a second trench in the paddock, while test pits across the village reveal a wealth of finds. At the parish church, we explore Disney family tombs and heraldry that may have inspired Walt Disney himself. Meanwhile, new discoveries in Julia's garden and beyond suggest that the original manor may lie hidden beneath. Could we finally be closing in on the heart of the Disney estate? Join us to find out!

Day 2:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ACS-NV3xM8Q>

It's the final day in Norton Disney! As trenches and test pits continue across the village, the picture of the Disneys' ancestral home begins to emerge. Clues from the church, the landscape, and remarkable finds all build towards uncovering the true heart of the estate. Could this be the breakthrough we've been searching for? Join us for the final episode of Digging for Disney!

Day 3:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5f9AC5NPkog>

Bringing Home Little Boy Blue

In July 1944, an American B17 bomber aircraft, 'Little Boy Blue', crashed over the fields of Suffolk. Of the ten crew, just two survived, with three still officially unaccounted for. Time Team's Helen Geake joins an international team from Cotswold Archaeology and Operation Nightingale to investigate the scene of the crash, in hope of shedding new light on the events of that fateful day.

Working with the US government, in fulfilment of its ethos to 'leave no man behind', the mission aims to repatriate the missing airmen, and provide closure for their families.

In this moving feature-length episode, the team pay their respects to the 'Masters of the Air'.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w7o3fVYTafs>

Answers to Quiz

1. Scipio 2. Arras 3. Rosemary 4. Parian 5. Seahenge 6. Cohort 7. Stirrup 8. King Arthur 9. Amerigo