



FINGER RINGS – A Typology

After enjoying a lecture by Jane Clark the PAS Finds Liaison Officer for Sussex on the subject of "An exploration of the form and function of finger rings from Prehistory to the Post Medieval period" I decided it may be interesting to apply her typology of Finger rings to the context of Wales and the South West, to see if we conformed with her national norm and illustrating it with photos taken from the Portable Antiquities Scheme's comprehensive website, with the following results.

Bronze Age Spiral Rings



A copper-alloy spiral ring - Denbighshire. Most finds of these items are of individual losses.

Roman Silver Snake Rings



A white metal ring in the shape of a coiled snake. May be Late Medieval - Wrexham. Snakes were often associated with regeneration and renewal and were seen as symbols of power, wisdom, and protection. Beyond their aesthetic appeal, Roman snake rings were also believed to have protective and magical properties. It was believed that the serpents coiled around the finger would act as guardians against evil spirits and bad luck, making these rings not just beautiful adornments, but also powerful talismans.

Roman Key Rings



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A Roman copper alloy finger ring of Guiraud's type 5 ('ring-key'), probably dating to c. AD 200-410. - Devon. Each ring featured a round loop and a notched protruding key. Keys themselves were considered a symbol of status due to the owner implying they had valuable assets to protect by wearing them. Such rings are also believed to have symbolised marriage or betrothal, and were worn by Roman brides to signify their role in household management. The keys could be used to open chests, boxes, or caskets.

Viking/Anglo-Scandinavian Rings



A gilded copper alloy finger ring of early Medieval (Anglo-Scandinavian) date. - Wiltshire.

This example is of the braided type and can be found with up to four stands of woven metal rods plaited together to form a braided band.

Gold Medieval Finger Rings



A cast gold finger ring with dark red cabochon stone setting. - Swansea

Gold or Silver Stirrup Rings



A Decorative gold stirrup-shaped ring with a small bezel for an opaque light blue cabochon stone or glass - Carmarthenshire. The stirrup ring, with its distinctive form that suggests both a horse stirrup and a gothic arch, was in fashion from the twelfth century well into the fourteenth century. They were most commonly

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set with a sapphire or similar stone and could be worn by both clergy and laymen.

Gold Medieval Inscribed Rings



A gold ring in the form of a band decorated with two raised pelleted ridges framing three engraved words, spaced with flowers: *de bon cuer* (in Black Letter script) 'in/of good heart'. - Wrexham

Silver Medieval Signet Finger Rings



This signet ring has a circular bezel engraved with a capital letter *W* surrounded by three sprigs, within a single row pellet border. - Ceredigion

Medieval Iconographic Finger Rings



A Gold iconographic finger-ring of late medieval or very early post-medieval date. It has a flat oval longitudinal bezel, engraved with the images of St Catherine holding a sword in her right hand. A wheel (symbol of her martyrdom) protrudes from behind her left side. The hoop is decorated on the shoulders and sides with sprigs. The inside of the hoop bears the legend *·en·boen·eure·* ('In Good Hour') in black-letter script, between sprigs. - Pembrokeshire

Medieval Fede Finger Rings



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An almost complete gold iconographic or 'fede' type finger ring, probably 15th-early 16th century date. The fields are decorated with an incised motif which appears to be robed figures, possibly St Catherine and St Barbara. - Wrexham.

A fede ring is a ring in which two hands clasp, as if in friendship, love or betrothal. The design was used in Ancient Rome, maybe earlier. It became prominent in the Middle Ages, from the 12th century onward. The name "fede" is from the Italian phrase mani in fede ("hands clasped in faith").

Gold Enamelled Finger Rings



A gold ring in the form of a band decorated with white enamelled pentafoils and green enamel inlaid sprigs separating letters in the legend (in Black Letter script). There are traces of white enamel in some of the engraved letters. - Denbighshire

Copper Alloy Rosary Rings



This curious novelty object is a late medieval (15th century) copper alloy iconographic finger-ring of 'rosary' type, with 11 projecting knobs all the way around the circumference. The bezel has a raised rim within which is a raised design depicting a seated, crowned figure facing left but head to front, draped and wearing a sash across the chest, and holding a possible sword vertically downwards in the left hand. To the left of this figure is a head in profile facing right. - Wiltshire.

The projections around the circumference of the hoop were used as a way of assisting in the saying of the 10 prayers or the Hail Marys that make up the Rosary in the Catholic Christian tradition. The central bezel represents the pater nostra, the Lord's Prayer. These rings were considered more discreet than Rosemary beads, so they became quite popular during times of religious persecution, particularly during the 16th Century when recusing Roman Catholics were heavily penalised by the Law.

Gold Posie Rings



Gold decorative ring with central spine of very fine raised pellets, between two raised plain borders. Similar to that of some fifteenth-century gold posy rings which have pelleted bands enclosing mottoes or poesies - Wrexham.

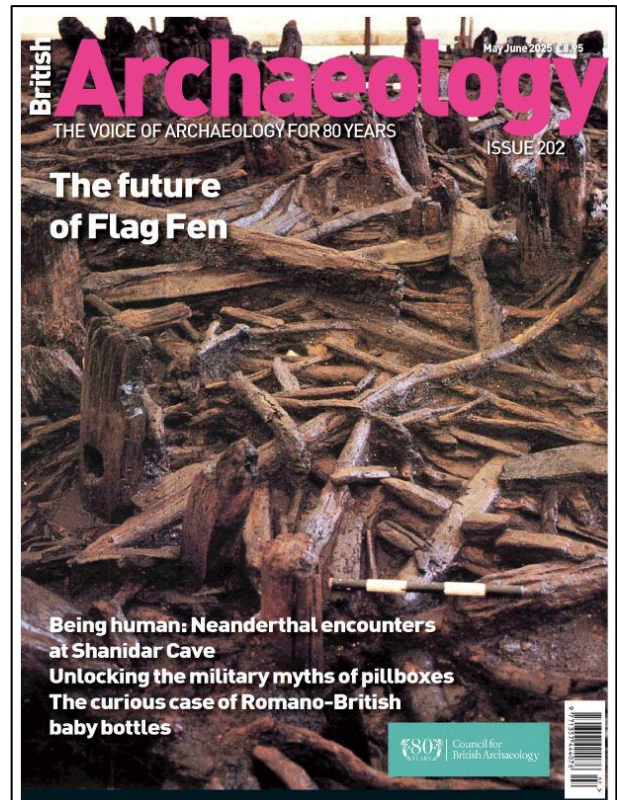
The Posey ring was one of the most common types recorded from the later medieval period. In the 16th century the rings became far simpler, just plain gold hoops. Earlier examples tended to be quite vague and generic, but later rings often tended to become a little more personal. On the internal side of the hoop there were often personal messages rather than the earlier public statements and were really for the wearer only.

Interestingly, in the 16th century, to prevent loss, especially if the ring was inherited, so they didn't fit so well, they were secured to the finger so that you didn't lose them. Rings could be worn around the neck on cord, or attached to bracelets on the arms or the wrist. In the 17th century a ring could even be attached to a cord around the wrist and worn on the finger with some black cord attached between the two to stop the ring falling off.

All photos courtesy of the Portable Antiquities Scheme.

Highlights from the Magazines

British Archaeology May-June 2025



The Fall and Rise of Flag Fen

Being Human - Neanderthal Encounters at Shanidar Cave

Pillboxes - Unlocking the Military Myths of Britain's Field Defences

The Curious Case of Romano-British Baby Bottles

Locus Maponi - The Clochmaben Stone

Dr Greg Bailey on Broadcasting

Understanding the Impact of Casework

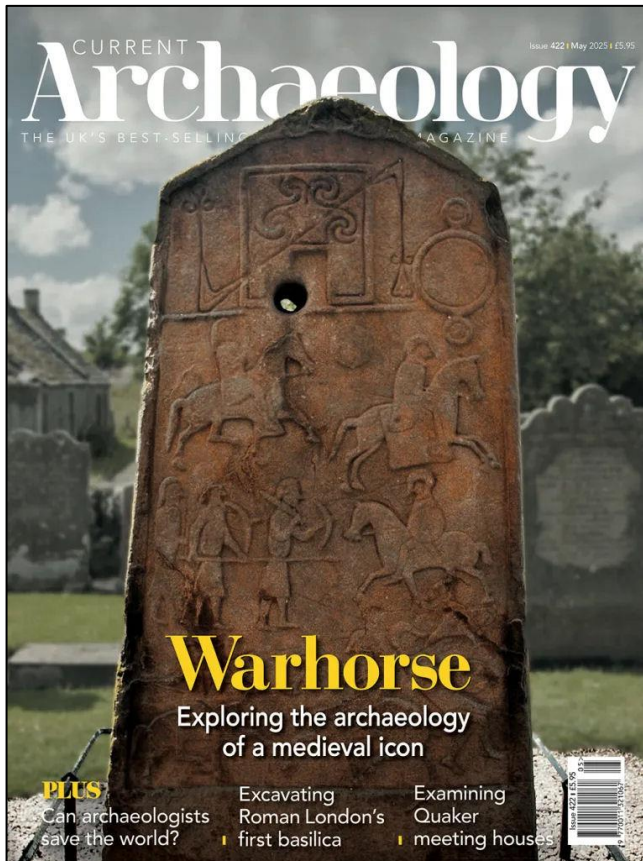
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Out and About Archaeology

Petrosphere

Can we Trust our Concepts of Progress

Current Archaeology May 2025



Science Notes - Concocting a Solution - New Method to identify Preservation Fluids in Natural History Collections

Milestone Discoveries - Revealing Highlights from Record Years for Portable Antiquities Scheme and Treasure Finds

Digitising Doggerland

Warhorse - Discovering the Archaeology of a Medieval Revolution

The Basilica in the Basement - Rediscovering the Heart of Roman London

Quakers and Their Meeting Houses

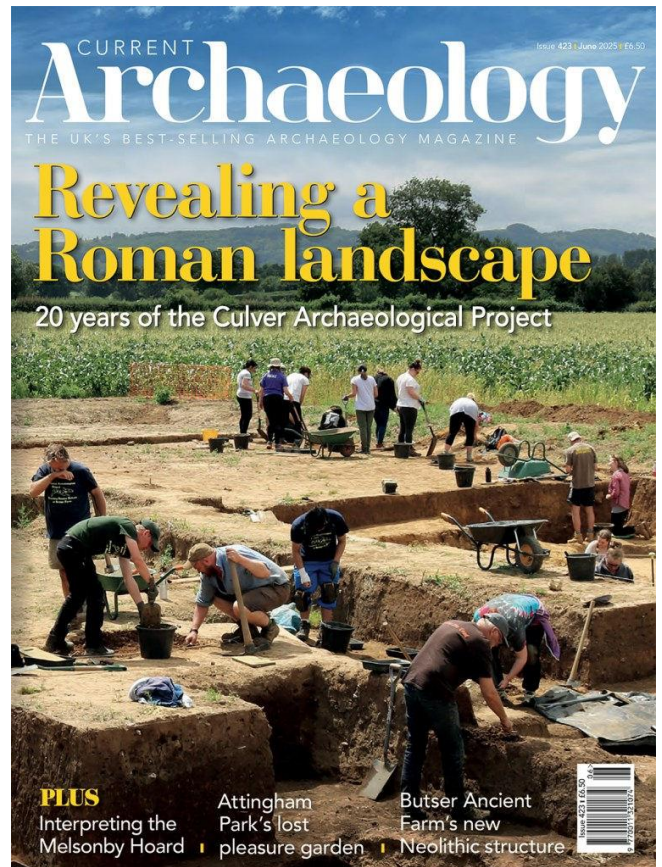
Can Archaeology Save the World?

My Jewellery, My Story at Charnwood Museum

Newhaven Fort

Odd Socs - The Carriage Foundation

Current Archaeology June 2025



Science Notes - Let the Sunshine in - Analysing Levels of Vitamin D in Past Populations

Norman Arch Art - St Drostan's Church, Markinch

A Roman Landscape Revealed - Celebrating 20 Years of the Culver Archaeological Project, Bridge Farm

FEATURES

The Melsonby Hoard - Exploring Unprecedented Insights into Iron Age Yorkshire

Paradise Lost - Rediscovering a Forgotten Pleasure Garden at Attingham Park

From Gasholders to Chic Apartments - Tracing the History of the Most Prominent Landmarks in the Gasworks Industry

Building the Past - Reconstructing a Late Neolithic House from Wyke Down

Secrets of the Thames - Mudlarking London's Lost Treasures

Tutankhamun - the Immersive Exhibition

Odd Socs - Fortress Study Group

World Archaeology Apr-May 2025



A Bishop's Palace in Bahrain?

Ancient Theatre of Aptera

Forgotten Voices of Conflict - Examining the Fate of First World War Graffiti, France

Unusual Gallic Burials - Excavating Bodies Seated in Pits

Spoils of War? - An Extraordinary Roman Hoard from Utrecht

What can we Learn from Trafficked Finds? - Revealing the Results of Neutron Tomography of Iranian Swords

Master of Actium, Greece

The Viking Sorceress - National Museum of Denmark Exhibition

The Human Race

Mobility in Mortuary Contexts

Object - A Byzantine Coin-Balance

Ancient Egypt May-June 2025

The Israel Stela of Merenptah

The Surprise Discovery of the Tomb of Thutmose II

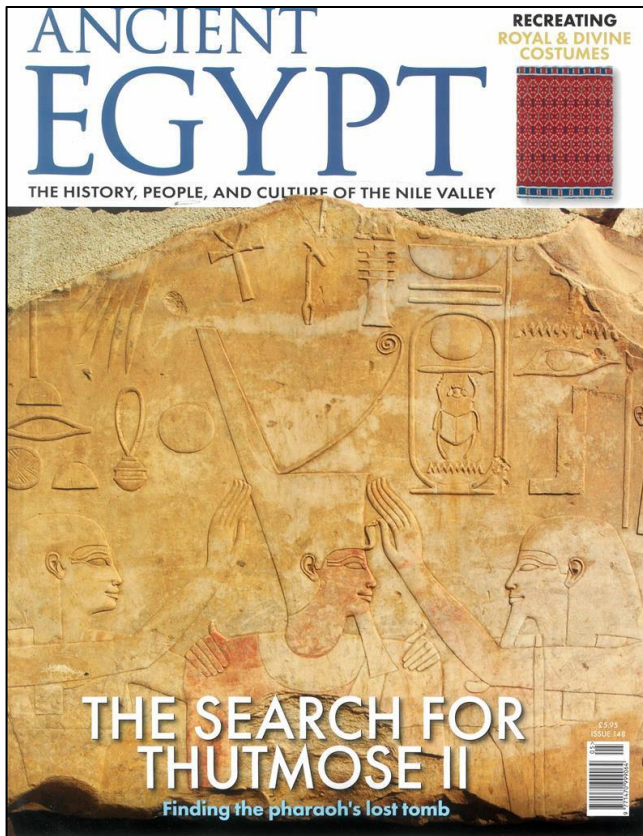
Who was Thutmose II?

Colourful Costumes - Clothing of Goddesses, Gods, Kings, and Queens

The Lost Egyptian Labyrinth

Ani's Life After Death - In the Field of Reeds

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What can Ancient Skulls Tell us?

Egyptian Ginger Cats - Honorary Soldiers of Rome

Horned Beasts 2

The Grand Egyptian Museum - Visiting the Main Galleries

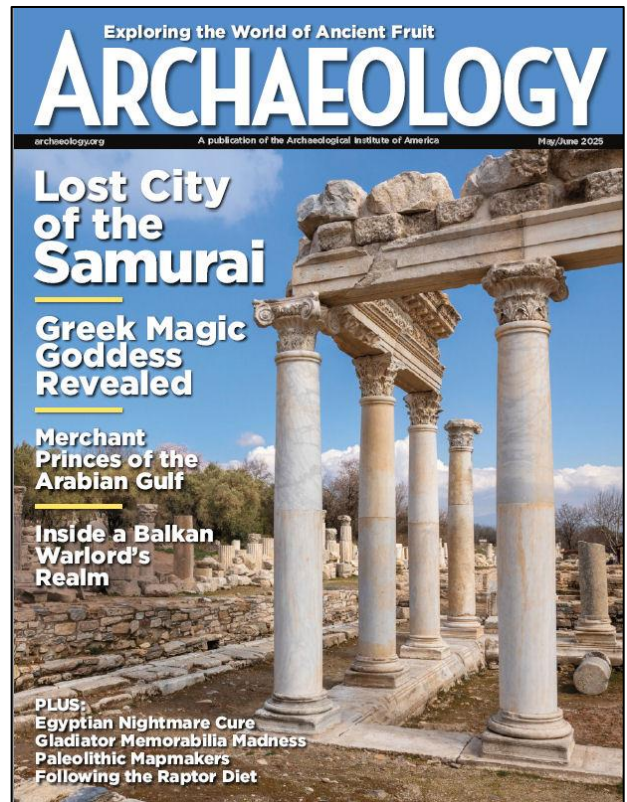
Object - Ptah-Sokar-Osiris Figurine

And in America:

Archaeology Mar-Apr 2025

Bulow Plantation Ruins, Florida

Goddess at the Crossroads - Why a city Put Its Trust in a Greek Deity feared throughout the Mediterranean



Lost City of the Samurai - Archaeologists rediscover Ichijodani, a Formidable stronghold that Flourished amid Medieval Japan's Brutal Power Struggles

Desert Paradise Found - How a Tiny, Water-rich Kingdom came to Dominate Vital Trade Routes in the Arabian Gulf 4,000 years Ago

A Passion for Fruit - Exploring the Surprisingly Rich Archaeological record of Berries, Melons

Peru's Timeless Threads - More than 1,000 Years Ago, Master Weavers kept the Ancient Traditions of the Moche Culture alive

The Many Fortresses of Ali Pasha, Albania

Artifact - An Etruscan Carved Gemstone

Claire Capelin.

May 31st 1957 - March 13th 2025.

Claire had worked in various departments of the Welsh Assembly, including for Cadw which she enjoyed most as it reflected her personal interest in history. Her husband Paul died suddenly in 2010, and afterwards she threw herself into a variety of activities, many of them history orientated, and joined the Cardiff Archaeological Society where she would become an active and enthusiastic member.



So much so that she was co-opted onto the committee in 2017, being elected as a full committee member in 2018. By 2020 she had taken on the task of managing our old failing website, completely renewing and modernising it, and subsequently continued to update it even though her health was beginning to suffer. Regular dialysis sessions meant that she could

not join us for activities as often as she would have liked, but with the help of her daughter Helen, she was still able to continue in her role as website manager. Very recently, as bouts of hospitalisation made this even more awkward for her, she reluctantly shared these duties with her fellow committee member Kim Iannucci.

Claire's absence at the Society's AGM on March 13th was noted with anxiety and subsequent investigations revealed that she had sadly passed away on that very day. Her Memorial Service was held at Ararat Baptist Chapel on April 8th 2025, where she was an active member, and can be viewed on :

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ls-d_36JI8s&ab_channel=araratbaptistchurch

She will be greatly missed by the CAS committee and members, not just for the cheerful and enthusiastic way that she approached her activities in the society, but also for the exemplar inspiration she provided in the manner that she overcame her later health issues.

Thank you, Claire.



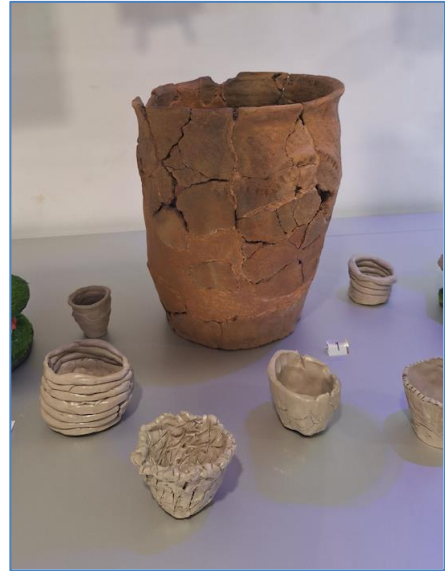
Quiz

1. Opponent of Greece at the Battles of Thermopylae and Salamis
2. Margaret ..., Irish Archaeologist, author of "The High Crosses of Ireland"
3. ... Hoo, ship burial site in Suffolk
4. God of the sun in Greek Mythology
5. The Name of Boudicca's tribe
6. Mediterranean island, location of the Minoan Palace of Knossos
7. Phoenician city-state destroyed by Rome in 146 BC
8. South American civilisation whose capital was Cuzco
9. European Country, location of Rila Monastery
10. Wood used to construct Thor Heyerdahl's Kon-Tiki

CAS Trips 2025 (1)

CAER Heritage Centre

The start of the CAS Evening visits always causes quite a buzz and this year was no exception as we were visiting the CAER Heritage Centre situated on Church Road, Caerau and located near one of the largest Neolithic enclosures in Britain. We were greeted by Tom Hicks of the CAER Heritage Project who offered everyone a welcoming cup of tea or coffee.



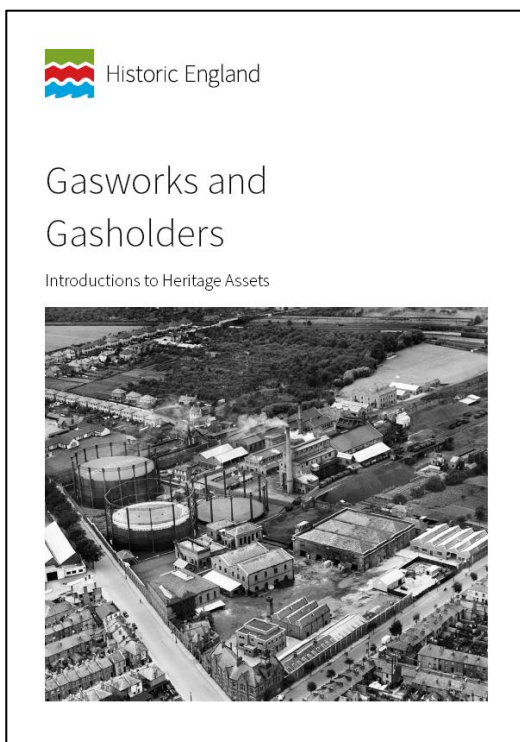
After an introductory talk and a look at some of the finds from previous digs at Trelai Park and replicas that Tom had put out on display in the main hall at the centre, we ventured outside for a demonstration of bronze casting in the garden. Tom, an avid supporter of experimental archaeology, cast a bronze palstave axe-head for us, making the difficult skilled task look so easy. A lovely evening in the sunshine and well worth the visit.





Link to Free Booklet

Gas works, or sites where gas was manufactured by thermally decomposing fossil fuels and stored in gasholders, were one of the most ubiquitous and widely distributed industrial complexes of the 19th and 20th centuries.



<https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/iha-gasworks-gasholders/heag296-gasworks-gasholders>

Frequently constructed on the edges of urban areas, close to their customers and adjacent to rivers, canals and railways - reflecting both the inability of the early works to transmit gas over large distances and the reliance on a supply of coal - meant that gasworks and gasholders had a considerable visual impact on the landscape.

Beginning with the formation of the Gas Light and Coke Company in London in 1812, coal gas manufactured at gasworks in towns, cities and on private estates was transmitted via England's first energy networks before first nationalisation (1949) and the conversion to natural gas (from 1967), brought about the end of the industry and the clearance of many sites of gas manufacture.

In 2020, the physical remains of the manufactured gas industry again face the threat of clearance as the gas networks' programme of gasholder decommissioning and demolition releases former gasworks sites for residential and commercial redevelopment.

This document provides an overview of our understanding of coal gasworks and their attendant low-pressure gasholders, with a particular focus on the building types which survive in part or in full across the country. It provides a brief historical background and chronology of the development of the manufactured gas industry from its origins in the 1790s, through the formation of the industry (1800-1820), its subsequent expansion (1820-1860), regulation (1860-1890), modernisation and rationalisation (1890-1949), nationalisation (1949) and adoption of natural gas (1949-1967).

This is followed by an introduction to the process of manufacturing gas and summaries of the development of the various buildings (including gasholders) which were historically associated with gasworks. These summaries detail their function, construction, materials,

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main components, architectural treatment and associated landscapes.



"A Tale of the Unexpected: The discovery of a Roman villa in Bristol's northern suburbs" with Tom Brindle and Marino Cardelli

This talk discusses excavations by Cotswold Archaeology (2016-2018) at the former Dings Crusaders RFC in Stoke Gifford. These excavations uncovered an incredibly well-preserved Romano-British courtyard villa. This rare find allowed us to study the villa's complete layout, revealing its evolution over four centuries. Through artefacts and environmental analysis, we've gained new insights into life in Roman Britain!

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nm1Otc6Hg08>



St Mary Undercroft, Palace of Westminster, 1790-1870: Misused, Rescued, and 'Bedizened in Gold' by Dr Elizabeth Hallam Smith FSA

In 1790 a leading Antiquary issued a clarion call to "rescue from destruction the most beautiful specimen of Gothic architecture which this country has to boast of". Known today as the chapel of St Mary Undercroft, Westminster, this 'crypt' of the former St Stephen's Chapel was divided between a boiler room and the 'grotto' - soon to become a grandiose dining room for the Commons Speaker. Although it survived the 1834 fire and the rebuilding of the

Palace of Westminster, its fragile fabric and surviving frescoes were further degraded as it housed Committee Rooms, a builder's store and even a gasometer. In 1852 there was a moment for antiquarian investigation before Charles Barry made major structural repairs to it. Finally, from 1860 to 1870 it was controversially adorned and "bedizened in gold" by Edward Barry, submerging its fabric beneath glittering neo-Byzantine marbles and frescoes. Do any of its medieval features survive?

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Bpney0hSZvE>



Festival of Archaeology - An Evening with National Trust Archaeologists 2025

A fantastic opportunity to hear about the rich and diverse archaeological sites cared for by the National Trust and the varied work of the National Trust's Archaeologists.

Hosted by CBA Trustee and archaeologist Clemency Cooper and Shannon Hogan, National Archaeologist at the National Trust, the event will feature three presentations followed by the opportunity for the audience to ask questions about the projects or archaeology at the National Trust.

Featuring 3 talks:

The Stonehenge Landscape: 10,000 Years in the Making - Dr Nick Snashall - In pursuit of saints in the North - Mark Newman

Attingham Estate: A Changing Landscape for People and Nature - Janine Young

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IIji8vHKVKM>



Investigating Rock Art in Kilmartin Glen: experiences and excavations

By Dr Aaron Watson

Neolithic and Bronze Age people carved abstract symbols into numerous rock outcrops throughout Kilmartin Glen and beyond. The meanings and significance of these cup and ring markings have long puzzled researchers, resulting in hundreds of diverse interpretations. Archaeological fieldwork has dramatically enhanced our knowledge. Almost twenty years ago, excavations at Torbhlaren and Ormaig uncovered substantial collections of worked stone associated with the creation of rock art. However, an important question remained: were these findings unique, or could similar evidence be discovered at other sites in the area? To explore this, Kilmartin Museum and Archaeology Scotland collaborated to excavate three additional rock art sites in Kilmartin Glen. This Evening Talk summarises the findings of this community archaeology project and reveals how they have further illuminated our understanding of these enigmatic places.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kkXXB_Z05CQ&t=91s



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Digging deeper: Initial results from the A428

By Simon Markus

Archaeological excavations conducted by MOLA ahead of The A428 Black Cat to Caxton Gibbet Improvement Scheme revealed evidence for Iron Age Pioneer Settlements in the Claylands of Bedfordshire and Cambridgeshire, as well as Roman development of infrastructure and food production. A portion of deserted Medieval Village was also excavated along with two 8th-9th century AD ovens and a post-medieval mill.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z8bL_7fT6Gk&t=3213s

Answers to Quiz

1. Persia 2. Stokes 3. Sutton 4. Apollo 5. Iceni 6. Crete 7. Carthage 8. Inca 9. Bulgaria 10. Balsa