



# News

## Spring 2023

News 🌿 Meetings 🌿 Reports 🌿 Diary  
Dates 🌿 Travellers' Tales

---

## Contents

|  |    |
|--|----|
| Editorial .....  | 3  |
| Au revoir from Steve.....  | 4  |
| Hello from Kate .....  | 5  |
| The HART volunteers and Archaeology at<br>National Trust Hinton Ampner ..... | 5  |
| Merdon Castle Visit by the Fieldwork<br>(Formerly Dig) committee .....       | 12 |
| Duke of Wellington:<br>From Waterloo to Winchester.....                      | 19 |
| Around the world .....   | 26 |
| Book Review .....  | 46 |
| WARG talks .....   | 49 |
| WARG Committee .....   | 49 |



This newsletter provides reports on the activities of WARG, the Society for Winchester archaeology and local history. It also carries information of interest to the WARG membership. For more information on WARG or to join, email [membership@warg.org.uk](mailto:membership@warg.org.uk) or visit [www.warg.org.uk](http://www.warg.org.uk)

© 2023 WARG, The Society for Winchester archaeology and local history

Printed by The Sarsen Press, Winchester

## **Editorial**

It seems only a few days ago I was writing the editorial for the Autumn WARG News and here we are in March 2023.

First, I want to echo Kate's words in her message below and say a personal thank you to Steve Old who has led WARG through interesting times, especially in his Outreach work. I have worked with him on a number of occasions, in and out of doors and in all weathers and shall remember them with pleasure, even his dreadful joke about the 'Lead Zeppelin' artefact. He has worked tirelessly behind the scenes and we shall miss his leadership. I am however, very pleased to say that Steve has agreed to continue as a committee member and make the hand over to Kate as seamless as possible. We send our thanks and best wishes to Steve and his family.

And so to pastures new. As you are aware we have been seeking someone to take on this, not inconsiderable, role, and at the committee meeting at the end of February, Kate Robinson offered her services. She was nominated, proposed, and accepted unanimously by the committee members at the meeting on February 27<sup>th</sup>, and has taken on the Acting Chairship of WARG pro tem. The process now, as stated by the Constitution, is that Kate will hold the post until the AGM in October.

Prior to that, further nominations will be sought. At the AGM an election will be held, and if no other nominees are

proposed, Kate will automatically be confirmed in post.

Janet.



### **And it's farewell from me.....or is it?**

As many of you may have already read, due to my ongoing and increasing care responsibilities, looking after my wife and others, I decided to pull back from being Chair of WARG as I no longer had the spare time and energy to devote to the role. This has been a big step and one I did not take lightly. The time I have been chair has been very rewarding, but, as I seemed to take on more and more with the time and energy available continually diminishing, I had to take the ultimate decision. I have really enjoyed the challenges that this role has set me and I will look back at this time with many fond memories of the role and of the WARG members.

This is not a total withdrawal from serving WARG as I will continue to be a member of the main committee. I am also open to returning to the role of chair, should the opportunity arise, once my other responsibilities ease. In the meantime, I fully support Kate as the new chair and wish her well. One last thing, WARG is a membership-led society and it is the members who are the beating heart, but it needs the members to step up now and again to help keep WARG so vibrant and relevant.

Steve Old, Ex-Chair



---

## And it's hello to Kate

I have taken on the role of Acting Chairman. Firstly, on behalf of all the committee, I would like to thank Steve very much for all he has done for WARG during his time as chairman, particularly with the outreach activities.

I have always had an interest in archaeology, going on my first excavation for my work experience at school. I went on to spend summers digging at a variety of sites in the UK. I also loved the sciences, so studied chemistry and then spent several years in the field of archaeometry, while funding allowed it. With a switch of career to computing and family life, it meant archaeology went on the back burner until I joined WARG nearly 10 years ago.

If you have any thoughts on how you would like to see WARG develop in the future, please email me at [chair@warg.org.uk](mailto:chair@warg.org.uk).

Kate Robinson



## The HART volunteers and Archaeology at National Trust Hinton Ampner - Geoff Buss - 9<sup>th</sup> January 2023 – Steve Taylor

About eight miles east of Winchester lies the National Trust (NT) property of Hinton Ampner. The twentieth century house (a successor to several earlier buildings dating back at least to the 16<sup>th</sup> century) is located on a ridge with fine views across much of the surrounding countryside. More than a thousand acres of this forms the NT estate.

In 2018 the NT started the HART (Heritage and Archaeology Rangers Team) initiative in the South-East of England. The speaker Geoff Buss volunteered for a training course at Hindhead NT as part of the launch of this initiative and has been involved since then at Hinton Ampner.



*Aerial view of Hinton Ampner estate and surrounding area ©  
[https://satellites.pro/Google/Hinton\\_Ampner\\_map#51.040825,-1.148628,14](https://satellites.pro/Google/Hinton_Ampner_map#51.040825,-1.148628,14)*



*View across Hinton Ampner estate to the house ©National Trust Images*

The purpose of HART is to improve the understanding of the archaeological sites in the care of the NT. It is mostly composed of volunteers who monitor and record the condition of these sites. Geoff is the coordinator of all HART activities at this NT location and currently leads a team of eight volunteers, although another eight are expected to join this year.

The HART initiative (planned to be rolled out across the NT) had the misfortune to run into the COVID pandemic soon after work got under way. This had the double impact of reducing funding and delaying the work that survived. Despite these obstacles, much work has been initiated and further work is planned for the coming years.

One of the first jobs was in the extensive woodland that exists on the estate. The volunteers were required to locate the archaeological sites and mark their location with clearly visible coloured posts so that NT contractors would not

damage these sites. Fortunately, the HART teams had an existing database of sites arising from an archaeological survey by Wessex Archaeology commissioned by the NT in 2007 which located 164 visible features.

In those early days the local team also set about generating procedures and standardised records to use in their work. They used the National Trust Heritage Records online both as a source of existing information and a deposit of new or updated information gathered in the course of their work.

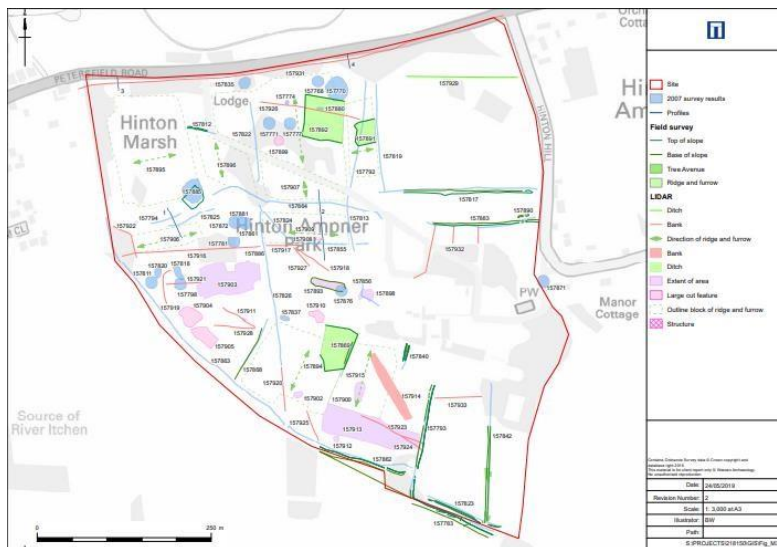
They had otherwise to start from scratch without any existing equipment to help them. Naturally, other existing sources were used such as the Historical Environment Record (HER) and surviving early maps of the area. Modern technology is also proving invaluable whether it is increasing availability of LIDAR surveys (detailing topography from aircraft) or smartphone Apps such as one from the Ordnance Survey giving accurate locations or “Spyglass” which provides distance measurements over short distances without needing tapes. Often the results are produced by combining these data sources and techniques such as the work done in monitoring estate changes in the existing landscape when compared with the early OS mapping of 1860.

There are many changes underway at present which present a formidable amount of work for HART volunteers. One major task has been created by a planned change to the estate in reducing the proportion which has been used for arable farming and returning this land to woodland. This project, termed by NT as “Reimaging a Hampshire



Landscape,” will rewind the environment and minimise further damage to the archaeology of the estate.

Surveys, past, present, and future, form a major part of HART’s work. Already it is evident that there are many more archaeological sites than the 164 identified in 2007. They include Bronze Age Barrows, an Anglo-Saxon(AS) boundary, a possible Iron Age univallate Hill Fort and a great number of pits. These latter features have been a bit of a mystery to explain, but there is a recent suggestion that past landowners sold the rights for extraction of useful materials, e.g., clay and chalk, which after removal left sunken pits across the landscape. They seem to have then been allowed to weather as nature dictated.



**Archaeology at Hinton Ampner**

©[https://heritagerecords.nationaltrust.org.uk/LibraryLinkWS/LFiles/188542/original\\_188542.pdf](https://heritagerecords.nationaltrust.org.uk/LibraryLinkWS/LFiles/188542/original_188542.pdf)

Some features have been investigated by formal excavation or enthusiastic exploration including Barrows and in one case a WWII aircraft, a Fairey Barracuda, where the macabre remains of the pilot's foot, shoe, and all, were located and removed. Work has also been undertaken on the AS estate boundary. This boundary, which survives as a distinct bank along the modern boundary between Kilmeston and Hinton Ampner, needed removal to create a passage for stock. The work was done rather hastily but HART was able to measure and record some of the relevant features and recover some artefacts which included a Roman coin, a nineteenth century beer bottle and a .303 rifle cartridge case.

Elsewhere there is evidence that some of the demolition rubble from earlier houses has been used to provide a hardcore foundation for old tracks.



*Site of  
Tumulus  
in  
Hinton  
Park*

[https://www.megalithic.co.uk/le\\_megalith\\_map\\_os.html#8/51.046/-1.156](https://www.megalithic.co.uk/le_megalith_map_os.html#8/51.046/-1.156)

Before enclosure, roads often had no boundaries and as a result the tracks became broader and broader as users avoided the deep, muddy ruts. The house demolition of 1793 seems to have been a particular source for this ancient road restoration. Stray finds are, not surprisingly, often located near the former routes of old roads which traversed the estate. One exception to this was the inhumation found when Esso were working on the line of the replacement pipeline from Southampton to London.

The work ahead is considerable. HART is already planning to work with WARG as well as archaeology groups from Liss and Meon Valley. All this work is overseen by James Brown who is the NT archaeologist responsible for this activity in London and the SE. Volunteers are needed to be involved in a range of tasks including fieldwalking, geophysical surveys and test pits.

WARG members are encouraged to get involved in this work which offers an excellent opportunity to engage in practical archaeology with like-minded amateurs. The NT website for Hinton Ampner has a link for applicants, or WARG member Stuart Rippon who would welcome applications.

Contact Stuart at [stuart\\_rippon@btconnect.com](mailto:stuart_rippon@btconnect.com)

**Ref:** <https://heritagerecords.nationaltrust.org.uk/volunteer>  
[https://heritagerecords.nationaltrust.org.uk/LibraryLinkWS/LLFiles/31996/original\\_31996.pdf](https://heritagerecords.nationaltrust.org.uk/LibraryLinkWS/LLFiles/31996/original_31996.pdf)



## **Merdon Castle – Visit by Fieldwork (formerly Dig) Committee December 2022 – Jane & Andy King**

Members of the Fieldwork Committee of WARG were given a rare opportunity to visit Merdon Castle before Christmas at the invitation of Historic England, who are currently carrying out consolidation work. This work is focused on the only three areas of extant stonework, the well, the tower and a section of enclosure wall.

The well is reported to be 400 feet (over 120 metres) deep and was originally covered by a domed chamber. It was assumed to have been backfilled, but after some tangled metal was removed, this was found not to be the case and in its current condition is clearly a threat to life. Historic England will therefore be capping it, whilst leaving a manhole cover for access should it be required.

The tower is currently undergoing consolidation having been encased in ivy for decades, if not centuries. To enable this work, there were various levels of scaffold platform within and around it, to which we were privileged to have access. Apart from a few very small areas there is no facing stone remaining.

There is a small opening in the northern face of the tower which led Williams-Freeman to identify it as a gatehouse. However, some have argued against this idea because a bridge of monumental proportions would be required to span the ramparts at this point and there is very little space for a bridge abutment in front of the tower. In addition to this there is no major routeway approaching from the north,

so it may be no more than a postern gate, aka sallyport.  
(From Latin saltus porta i.e. a jump door)



*The Well Head*  
©Kate Robinson

All that is left is the mortared flint core work which gives the impression of a strong square tower with walls more than two metres thick in places. The tower had two main rectangular chambers, at least one of which had a large window facing south over the bailey and deer park beyond. Between the two chambers an archway has remained miraculously intact, and other preserved details include a recess that has been interpreted as a cupboard.



*The 'Cupboard'*  
©Kate Robinson

The section of enclosure wall on the west side of

the inner ward is likewise devoid of facing stones, but the flint core shows interesting details of the way it was constructed. This is due to be consolidated soon.

However, it is neither the depth of the well, nor the imposing nature of the tower which impress the most, but the massive ramparts which define the ringwork. These are in places more than 17 metres from the top of the rampart to the bottom of the ditch. These ramparts are only exceeded in height in England at Old Sarum (Wilts) and Castle Rising (Norfolk).

### **Background to the site**

The site on which the castle stands has a history going back much further in time. Part of the castle sits within a univallate enclosure which may date to the Late Bronze Age or Early Iron Age. It has also been suggested that there was a royal residence of the West Saxon kings here where Cynewulf was murdered in 757 and Aethelred and Alfred fought against the Danes in 871, as reported in the Anglo Saxon Chronicle. The locations in question are spelled variously as *Meretune*, *Merantun*, *Maeredun* and *Meredun*. Sadly, there has been no archaeological investigation to either confirm the date of the original earthwork, or provide evidence for a Saxon antecedent.

The castle was built by Henry de Blois, Bishop of Winchester, in 1138, perhaps in response to the uncertainty and insecurity arising from the civil war between Stephen and Matilda. When Henry II ascended the throne, he

ordered the slighting of the defences and from then onwards Merdon was a residence/palace of the Bishops of Winchester.



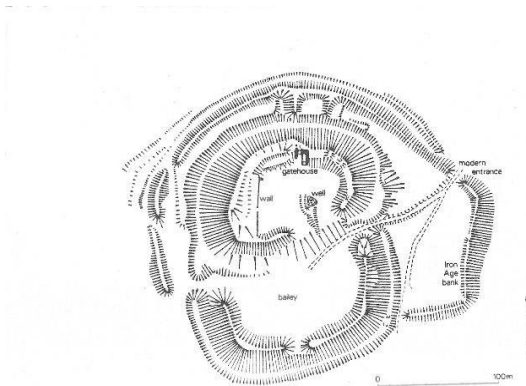
*The Enclosure wall and The Ramparts*  
©Kate Robinson

Merdon is the largest of all the Norman ringworks in Hampshire with a diameter of approximately 100 metres. It consists of an inner ward and an outer bailey. Apart from the tower and the well, the pipe rolls tell us that the inner ward contained a hall, the bishop's private chamber, a chapel, a clerk's room, a kitchen, a larder, a bakehouse, a granary, and a dovecote. Between the inner ward and the bailey was the 'middle gate' with the bailiff's quarters above. The bailey contained timber buildings including stables, a cowshed, a pigsty, a barn, and the park warden's house.

It was the park warden's job to maintain the extensive deer park spreading southwards from the castle, which occupies its northern apex. The enclosing park pale can still be traced in places and is a scheduled ancient monument in its own

right. Like the defensive ramparts, the bank and ditch of the pale were of huge proportions. Documentary sources tell us that the deer park was operating in the very early years of

the thirteenth century so it seems likely that it was the creation of Henry de Blois and that the origins of the park are coeval with the castle. The park consisted of two sections, the Out Park and the Inner Park, which together comprised c. 800 acres (over 320 hectares). The presence of the deer park would no doubt have given the bishops good reason to stay at Merdon, but there is a sense of its decline during the fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries.



©C J Webster,  
*Archaeology in  
Hampshire,  
Annual Report  
for 1988.*

In 1413 a carpenter was employed to build a new 'Logge' in the park, and in 1441 facing stone from the castle was 'mined' for use at Cardinal Beaufort's residence at Wolvesey. On the estate map of 1588 five buildings remain at Merdon, called 'Marden farme' and these may have been a survival of the buildings associated with the castle.



It is of course at this point that we enter the story told partly by WARG's excavations at Hursley Park, but the conclusions from that will have to wait until after the final season in June of this year.

### **The Future**

As part of the restoration work, Historic England are keen to see increased use of the site for purposes such as education and community engagement. In discussion with the architect WARG expressed an interest in becoming involved in future activities at Merdon. The University of Winchester are also exploring the possibility of using the castle in the teaching of some of their courses.

At a subsequent meeting between Historic England, the University, WARG and the owners of the site, ways of developing research at the castle were explored. Plans are in the very early stages of formulation, but ideas for a number of potential activities that WARG members might engage with are beginning to emerge. Amongst these are:

- i) Opportunities to conduct fieldwalking and/or geophysical survey in the vicinity of the castle to determine whether there was any activity associated with the original earthwork or around the castle itself.
- ii) An intensive survey of the deer park, including a condition survey of the park pale which might add detail and depth to the history of the site and give context to our excavations.

- iii) This may be a catalyst to launch a broader landscape survey of the area surrounding the castle and park including both archaeological and historical research over a wider area.
- iv) Targeted small scale excavation to answer specific questions about the site are a possibility in the future, but there is a great deal of background work to be done before that might happen.
- v) For those members who like fresh air and exercise in a fascinating historic environment there is the possibility of activities such as scrub clearance, general maintenance and overall management to help preserve the site in its current condition.

The opening up of opportunities for practical archaeological work beyond a two-week excavation every year is one of the reasons why the Dig Committee has decided to officially change its name to the Fieldwork Committee. We hope that in the future we will be able to offer members more opportunities to engage in practical archaeology, either by highlighting activities that WARG members can engage with, such as those run by Historic England in the South Downs National Park, and the National Trust at Hinton Ampner which you will already be aware of, or by organizing our own projects.

*Please note*

Although it is a scheduled ancient monument, Merdon Castle is in private ownership and there is no public access unless previously agreed with the owner. Sadly, the

planned WARG walk in 2021 had to be cancelled but as you see there are future possibilities of seeing the castle.

Further Reading

Crawford, O G S 1953 *Archaeology in the Field* London

Garmonsway, G N (ed) 1972 *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* London

Hughes, M 1989 Hampshire castles and the landscape:1066 – 1216, *Landscape History* **11** 27–60.

Peach, L 1995 *Merdone – the history of Hursley Park* Hursley.  
(See book review)

Roberts, E 1988 The Bishop of Winchester's deer parks in Hampshire, 1200-1400 *Proc Hampsh Field Club Archaeol Soc* **44** 67-86

Williams-Freeman, J P 1915 *Field Archaeology as Illustrated by Hampshire* London



**The Duke of Wellington: From Waterloo to Winchester – Geraldine Buchanan – February 13<sup>th</sup> 2023 – Chris Sellen**

After thanking the attendees for coming Geraldine Buchanan explained why she, as a Winchester Blue Badge Guide, had become interested in Wellington, blaming it on the television programme Sharpe. Then whilst reading the Bernard Cornwell novels she realised that one of the things she most admired about Wellington (aside from his less admirable traits) was his grasp of military 'logistics'.

But for this talk, his logistical skills in the success at Waterloo and other battlegrounds takes a back seat to his later fame and activities. His connection with Winchester is as Lord Lieutenant of Hampshire in 1821, living in an unprepossessing mansion on the Stratfield Saye estate. This post would obviously entail his coming to the county town often. This connection with the town was Geraldine's starting point, and during her research she came across the Hampshire Paper X which proved invaluable as a source document.

How many times did he visit? It was usually in winter. Autumn and spring were normally London-based for parliamentary sessions and there was always the lure of Walmer Castle once he had become Warden of the Cinque Ports in 1829.



*Field Marshal His Grace The 1<sup>st</sup> Duke of Wellington KG GCB*

*GCH PC FRS Portrait by Thomas Lawrence c 1815-16*

He was very important in national politics – a high Tory and by 1818 a government minister. Soon after Waterloo he was the leader of the Tories in the House of Lords, a post he retained for the rest of his life. Post-Waterloo he was considered by most a hero, the saviour of England, but there were harsher attitudes as he was in the increasingly unpopular government under Lord Liverpool.

Wellington also had an eye for the ladies and a number of scandals and illegitimate children were often represented in the satirical press. Records in the convent school (Royal Hotel) show he paid the fees of an 11-year-old girl in 1807, one of his children? It could possibly have been one of his brother's, Lord Wellesley.



*Stratfield Saye House © Visit Hampshire*

And so, to Winchester, the important county town of Hampshire, with its many institutions, hospital, College, St. John's Meeting Rooms, coaching inns and so forth.

When Wellington came to Winchester, he would hold Lord Lieutenant's meetings and magistrates' courts in the Grand Jury Chamber next to the Great Hall. As Lord Lieutenant he was responsible for law and order. There was at this time no police force but a county militia. He appointed magistrates for courts, and would meet them in quarter sessions – though they did most of the work, he rarely interfered. The great Hall was used for meetings to discuss important issues raised by the populace.

At the Peterlee massacre, a radical, but peaceful public meeting was disrupted by the yeomanry with 11 killed and 400 wounded. Lord Liverpool's support of the magistrates there was heavily criticised, especially in Hampshire. There was also outcry over the 'great divorce' when the Prince Regent was crowned. These two issues ignited satire and outcry in Hampshire – much of it aimed at Wellington by the 'three-headed-hog'.

On the happier occasions when Wellington visited Winchester the visits were characterised by pomp and an animated crowd, with the accompanying gatherings to conduct business and hear petitions. Wellington's appointment as Lord Lieutenant in March 1821 was marked by a visit to Winchester, when he received the freedom of the city. After meeting army pensioners, he proceeded to the Guildhall (now Lloyds Bank) then the White Hart Hotel next door (a favourite place for dining). This was followed

by a 200-person meal at St. John's House. The occasion was accompanied by some jeering while the band played 'See the Conquering Hero Comes'.

The next day was a visit to the Cathedral followed by the college – which provided a day off for the boys, and remuneration for the teachers. Attendance at the Assizes was followed by a ball and supper for 500 (including ladies).

The third day allowed a measure of leisure with a hunting party to the south of the city. Then to Hyde Abbey House for more business, followed by dinner with the High Sheriff at the George Inn (now Barclay's Bank).

When travelling Wellington would often ride, though the railway with his own private carriage was becoming the norm. His horse Copenhagen would be stabled at the White Horse Hotel (once JJB Sports) which was a coaching inn.

A major role for Wellington now (despite his political life) was head of the militia.

The continuing threat of French invasion had lessened and Wellington was a figurehead Colonel-in-Chief to Lt. Col. Peter Hawker, headquartered in Searles House – which then had its entrance in Garr Street.

The militia was based and exercised in the barracks at the incomplete King's Palace (if it had been completed, the Great Hall was to have been demolished). This was before the great fire of which there is still evidence of smoke damage, along with the great pediment above the Green Jackets Museum.

The most famous business in Winchester concerned the prosecution of the Captain Swing protests. Wellington was against reforms, so the riots, which fomented in Kent and spread to Hampshire, especially Micheldever and Itchen Abbas. Determined to oppose change in Hampshire, and fearing that the riots were preliminaries to the 'English Revolution', 375 miscreants were brought to trial, which lasted 10 days with a 2-day break for Christmas. The prisoners were initially held in the Jewry Street gaol (now the Old Gaolhouse pub): 101 were sentenced to death (though only 3 were executed); 36 deported to Australia; 65 given hard labour and 67 acquitted.



*Excerpt from a black and white print engraving: 'The Meet of The Vine Hounds' by W H Simmons after an original painting by Henry Calvert. The print shows a hunt with the Vyne hounds. A carriage drawn by two horses is in the foreground. Arthur Wellesley, 1st Duke of Wellington (1769-1852) is portrayed speaking to the occupants of the carriage.*



Wellington's final visit to Winchester was in August 1852. He arrived by train and held his Lord Lieutenant's court in the Grand Jury Room. Now a beloved 'elder statesman' he died in September 1852 and was buried in St. Paul's Cathedral. Winchester bells tolled on the day of his funeral. *Wellington's tomb, in St. Paul's cathedral* © London Wikipedia



Winchester has no statue to Wellington, but there are mentions in the Cathedral and the Rifles Museum (Hampshire Regiment). There were also pubs named for him: The Waterloo and the Wellington Arms. A bust in the Coroner's Court building in Castle Street is a small, and possibly not fitting, tribute to this nationally important and locally significant, man of his time.

Ref:<https://www.visit-hampshire.co.uk/things-to-do/stratfieldsaye-house-p681>

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arthur\\_Wellesley,\\_1st\\_Duke\\_of\\_Wellington](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arthur_Wellesley,_1st_Duke_of_Wellington)



**Around the world in seven short summaries – *There are so many exciting new discoveries, I could have made it seventy if only I had the space.***

### **Europe**

#### **England - What the Romans left for us.**

Some beautiful examples of Roman artistry and craftsmanship have come to light in Carlisle



*Three of the semi-precious stones discovered by archaeologists near Hadrian's Wall. Photograph © Anna Giecco*

Around 30 of these incredible gemstones were found in the drains of a bathhouse, near Hadrian's wall, having been lost by their owners around 2000 years ago.

This was in an opulent settlement with links to the Imperial court, so the wearing of precious gems is, to some extent, to be expected.

Unlike modern stone settings these were set using vegetable glue which was affected by the heat of the baths, causing the stones to detach and fall into the water to be flushed into the drains. Anyone who has lost a precious item can imagine how the owners must have felt on discovering they were wearing a piece of jewellery which no longer contained a gemstone.

The skill of the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> century craftsman who fashioned the stones is amazing, some of the intaglios are minuscule, between 5 and 16 mms. They are carved with images of deities, mythical creatures, and animals. The gems were not only decorative but had symbolic imagery. Intaglios include military and fertility themes, such as the god Mars holding a spear, and a mouse nibbling a branch – Romans saw mice as symbols of rebirth or fertility. Religious imagery includes an amethyst depicting Venus, holding either a flower or a mirror, and there is a red-brown jasper featuring a satyr seated on rocks next to a sacred column.

These were valuable items with likely sentimental, as well as financial, value. We may think that the owners should have taken more care, but unless they had a slave to look after the jewellery as they bathed, there was a high risk of it being stolen whilst they were in the water.

Other artefacts discovered in the bathhouse include more than 40 hairpins and 35 glass beads, probably from a necklace.

<https://www.theguardian.com/uk->

[news/2023/jan/28/roman-bathers-gems-carved-stonesarchaeologists-hadrians-wall](https://www.wargnews.com/news/2023/jan/28/roman-bathers-gems-carved-stonesarchaeologists-hadrians-wall) 29/1/2023

## **Also in England - The earliest human remains 11,000-year-old discovered in northern Britain**

An international team of archaeologists at the University of Central Lancashire has discovered 11,000-year-old human remains in the Heaning Wood Bone Cave in Cumbria, England. The discovery is the oldest human remains ever found in northern Britain.



*Photo: Heaning  
Wood Bone Cave*

It appears that at least eight different people were buried in the cave along with artifacts which indicate the likelihood of them being deliberate burials.

The cave was explored in 1958 revealing the remains of three adults and a juvenile, with radioactive dating placing them as Early Bronze Age. In 2016, bones of cattle, pigs and dogs were found, together with stone tools, prehistoric pottery, and beads made from shells.



*Photo:*

© *Cumbriacrack*

A recent excavation uncovered the shell of a periwinkle fashioned into a bead, dating back 11,000 years to the Early

Mesolithic, when *Homo sapiens*, or modern humans, were the only hominid species still surviving in the British Isles. The results show the cave was used for burials at three different periods in the prehistoric past: around 4,000-years ago in the Early Bronze Age; approximately 5,500-years-ago in the Early Neolithic; and around 11,000-years-ago during the very early part of the Mesolithic period.

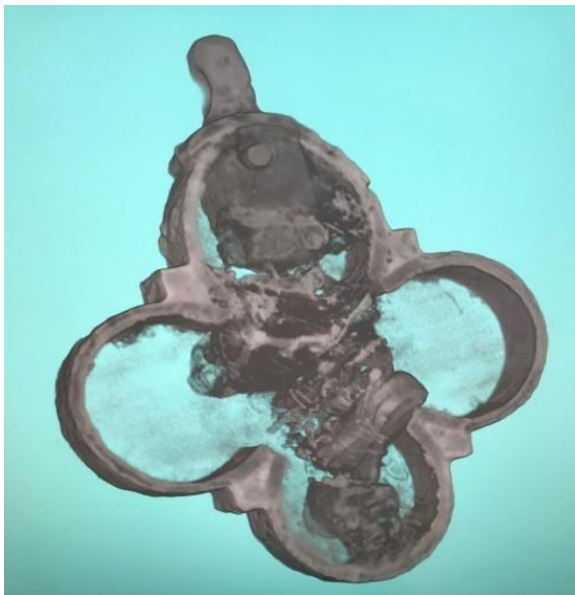
Whilst earlier human remains are known from the south, the destructive effect of past glaciations means that such finds are rare in northern Britain. Before this discovery, the 'earliest northerner' was a 10,000-year-old burial from the nearby Kent's Bank Cavern discovered in 2013.

<https://arkeonews.net/the-earliest-human-remains-11000-year-old-discovered-in-northern-britain/> online  
30/1/23

**On to Germany** - To continue with technological archaeology, how about a peek inside of an 800-year-old medieval pendant?

Using neutron imaging technology, researchers have detected the contents of a medieval pendant, discovered in 2008. Researchers have glimpsed inside an 800-year-old pendant, discovered in 2008 in a medieval refuse pit in the Old City section of Mainz, Germany. Yet another example of non-intrusive archaeology enabled by modern technology, in this instance, neutron imaging. The study was carried out by a team from the Leibniz Centre for

Archaeology (LEIZA).



*Neutron tomography showing the interior of the pendant.*  
Photo: ©Burkhard Schillinger / MLZ.

LEIZA restorer Matthias Heinzl said, *“Opening the pendant would have meant destroying it beyond all hope of repair. Centuries of corrosion have heavily damaged the object as a whole and especially the lock mechanism”*

The pendant is made of copper in the shape of a quatrefoil, decorated with images of Jesus, Mary, four disciples and four female saints. It has been dated to the late 12th century and is one of four such objects attributed to a workshop in Hildesheim, a city in Lower Saxony.



*The restored pendant ©Sabine Steidl /LEIZA*

Scientists spent 500 hours removing corrosion deposits from the relic's surface before using neutron tomography, a technique that creates three dimensional images by detecting the absorption of neutrons in a source. Micro X-rays and Raman spectroscopy were used in an initial analysis, and the advanced neutron tomography and radiography experimental system (ANTARES) at the Technical University of Munich was deployed to pick up organic matter within the pendant.

The object contained five textile packets, of which neutron imaging allowed exact measurements. Further analysis found these packages held miniscule bone fragments, part of a thin silk cord, and a small dab of wax, later identified as beeswax. The LEIZA researchers have published their findings which can be read at this web site. <https://impulse.mlz-garching.de/record/226368>

The pendant may have been worn around the neck on a silk cord, and is thought to be a phylactery, from the Greek *phylakterion* ('protectant'), an amulet, or reliquary housing religious relics believed to offer protection. During the Middle Ages, such objects were installed in religious houses as part of an altar, or worn by their owners as a sign of devotion. This could possibly explain the presence of the bone particles.

*"We can't say whether or not these bone splinters are from a saint and, if so, which one," said Heinzl. "Usually, relic packages contain a strip of parchment indicating the name of the saint. In this case, however, we unfortunately can't see one. The non-destructive investigation with neutrons was particularly useful, since we couldn't simply open the pendant and look inside," added Heinzl. "As an archaeological research institute of the Leibniz Association, we consider it our duty to preserve the object in its historical authenticity as completely as possible for future generations."*

Ref: <https://news.artnet.com/art-world/leiza-neutronimaging-medieval-pendant-germany->  
online 15/1/23



**Africa - And where else but Egypt - a little farther afield, meet golden boy, a wealthy Egyptian teenager.**

Two thousand years ago, this young man was embalmed, wrapped, and encased in an elaborate sarcophagus, to await the curiosity of Egyptian scientists who were investigating the contents of his burial container.



*The four phases of mummy unwrapping in the CT scan. Credit: Egyptian Museum*

His coffin had been discovered a hundred years ago in a cemetery south of Cairo. To avoid disturbing his rest, they utilised a CAT scanner and made a valuable discovery.

Clearly, he came from a wealthy Late Ptolemaic family as his body was decorated with dozen of, mainly gold, amulets, on or within his body, including a golden heart

scarab on his chest and a golden tongue in his mouth. This probably to aid his argument asking Osiris to open the door to the Afterlife.

While his heart remained in situ, most of his other internal organs were removed. His heart being protected – as described in the Book of the Dead – by a scarab, intended to quell the heart when it was judged. Researchers suggest this finding indicates ancient Egyptians valued their children and sought to protect them as they passed into the afterlife. He was also wearing a golden mask and white sandals which may have been to allow him to walk out of the coffin into the afterlife.

*Golden Boy goes in for his scan. © Egyptian Museum.*

The detail of the scan even detected a two-finger amulet – exclusively given to the Egyptian dead – next to his uncircumcised penis, which may indicate his ethnic and cultural heritage. Bouquets of plants and flowers were placed beside the deceased, a known practice with the mummies of the New Kingdom kings, Ahmose, Amenhotep I, and Ramesses the Great.”



Dr Sahar Saleem from Cairo University leading the study says this mummy is an important example of burial rituals practised by the ancient Egyptians. *“This mummy’s body*

*was extensively decorated with 49 amulets, beautifully stylised in a unique arrangement of three columns between the folds of the wrappings and inside the body cavity," Saleem says. These include the Eye of Horus, the scarab, the akhet amulet of the horizon, the placenta, the Knot of Isis, and others. Many were made of gold, while some were made of semiprecious stones, fired clay, or faience. Their purpose was to protect the body and give it vitality in the afterlife."*

Other information determined is that at death he was aged around 14-15, about 128 cms tall and, according to the researchers, the possessor of an impressive dental record: no cavities, tooth loss or disease. After two millennia of peaceful rest, Golden Boy is now set for a noisier future as part of the main display upstairs. But, if his Ka is enjoying a contented afterlife, he may not be disturbed by the fate of his physical remains.

Ref: <https://cosmosmagazine.com/history/2000-year-old-mummycat-scan/> online 25/01/23

### **The Middle East - Nineveh (Mosul) in Iraq – yet more discoveries from a rich but fragile source.**

The 2,700-year-old rock carvings from when Nineveh was the most dazzling city in the world.

Seen by Julia Sandison – as Julia comments these finds are beautiful, but with what we already have from this City they are not surprising.

Archaeologists in northern Iraq, working on the Mashki and Adad gate sites in Mosul that were destroyed by Islamic State in 2016, have uncovered 2,700-year-old Assyrian reliefs. Featuring rock carvings of war scenes and trees, which add to the bounty of detailed stone panels excavated from the 1840s onwards, many of which are currently held in the British Museum. They stem from the ancient city of Nineveh which, for a time, was likely the most dazzling city in the world. They are very beautiful but not really a surprise as Art was well advanced by then.

There is evidence of occupation at the site already by 3,000 BC, an era known as the late Uruk period. But it was under King Sennacherib (705-681 BC), that Nineveh became the capital of Assyria, the greatest power of its day.



*Enemies hiding in the reeds during a marshland battle. ©British Museum, [CC BY-NC-SA](#)*

Such an initiative as moving the location of the capital city, displayed the authority of the monarch, making a clear claim to a new order of things. It also served to move the centre and influence of power.

But this created a problem when Sennacherib's father died on the battlefield and his corpse was never recovered. This was presumably a major factor that led Sennacherib to abandon the newly founded city, and create his power base elsewhere.



*The King's horses* ©Steven Zucker Smarthistory flickr, CC BY-NC-SA

When Nineveh fell to a coalition of Babylonians and Medes in 612 BC, the Israelite prophets, whose societies had suffered greatly under Assyrian aggression, could not contain their joy.

The book of Jonah, meanwhile, recounts that Jonah was sent to that city in order to warn the inhabitants of the dire consequences of their depravity. Most of the carvings we have known to date stem from earlier 19th-century excavations of the royal palace at Nineveh.

©Steven Zucker Smarthistory | flickr, CC BY-NC-SA



*Detail from a stone wall relief from Ashurbanipal's palace, depicting a royal hunt. British Museum, CC BY-NC-SA*

Sennacherib set about making his city magnificent, surrounding it with a huge wall, the outline of which can still be seen from the air. There are *two* walls, inner and outer, enclosing City limits enclosing an area of over seven square kilometres.

The walls were given names – “**The wall whose fearsomeness covers the enemy**” and “**The wall that terrifies evil**” – in Sumerian. They were pierced by 18 monumental entrances, including the Mashki and Adad gateways.

Kuyunjik is where Ashurbanipal, king of the Neo-Assyrian Empire from 669 BCE to his death in 631, assembled his library of cuneiform tablets which is arguably our most important source of understanding of ancient Mesopotamian culture.

A lot of the old lower city is under modern Mosul, and there remains a huge amount to rediscover.

Ref: <https://theconversation.com/the-2-700-year-old-rockcarvings-from-when-nineveh-was-the-most-dazzling-cityin-the-world-196435>

**Asia - China - Why Archaeologists are scared to open the tomb of China's first Emperor - another example of the potential for non-invasive archaeology.**

*If you have never watched an Indiana Jones film this item may seem a little 'far-fetched' but maybe real life (IRL) is not so different from that of Indiana.*

***Booby traps and mercury poisoning are just some of the concerns around opening the tomb of Qin Shi Huang. Not only the Terracotta Army guard the soul of the Emperor.***

In 1974, farmers stumbled across one of the most important archaeological discoveries of all time in the Shaanxi province of China. They uncovered clay fragments of a human figure. What came next was astonishing. The field was sitting above several pits that were packed with thousands of life size terracotta models of soldiers, war horses, acrobats, important officials, and animals. It is said that each one of these exquisite figures is individually cast.



*19<sup>th</sup> century posthumous depiction of Qin Shi Huang – self-styled First Emperor*

秦始皇  
Tomb  
seal characters  
秦始皇

While large parts of the necropolis have been explored, the emperor's tomb has never been opened in over 2,000 years, when the feared emperor was sealed inside. This is because of the concern that invasive archaeology may irreparably damage vital historic information. Archaeologists liken the risks to the damage wrought by Heinrich Schliemann who literally drove cart and horses through the precious site of Troy.



Scientists are considering the use of on-invasive techniques to look inside the tomb. One to utilize muons, the subatomic product of cosmic rays colliding with atoms in the Earth's atmosphere, that act like advanced X-rays. But, as yet, this has not been an undertaking.

This 'army' was guarding the mausoleum of Qin Shi Huang, the formidable first emperor of the Qin dynasty who ruled from 221 to 210 BCE.



*Four faces of different terracotta warriors, Tomb of the First Emperor of Qin, Lintong, China, Qin dynasty, c. 210 B.C.E., painted*

*terracotta (photo A: David Castor, CC0 1.0); B: Maia C, CC BY-NC 2.0; C: Gary Todd, CC0 1.0; and D: James H., CC BY-NC 2.0)*



*View of Pit 1, Army of the First Emperor of Qin, Lintong, China, Qin dynasty, c. 210 B.C.E., painted terracotta (photo: Tym, CC BY-NC-ND 2.0)*

But here is the Indiana moment - opening the tomb could come with deadly dangers. An account written by ancient Chinese historian Sima Qian around 100 years after Qin Shi Huang's death, explains the tomb is essentially 'booby trapped' to kill intruders. The army would be sufficient to frighten me away.

He wrote **"Palaces and scenic towers for a hundred officials were constructed, and the tomb was filled with rare artifacts and wonderful treasure. Craftsmen were ordered to make crossbows and arrows primed to shoot at anyone who enters the tomb. Mercury was used to simulate the hundred rivers, the Yangtze and Yellow River, and the great sea, and set to flow mechanically."**

Even if the 2,000-year-old bow weapons fail, this account suggests a flood of toxic liquid mercury wash across the grave diggers. That might sound like an empty threat, but scientific studies have looked at mercury concentrations around the tomb and found significantly higher levels than they would expect in a typical piece of land.

*“Highly volatile mercury may be escaping through cracks, which developed in the structure over time, and our investigation supports ancient chronicle records on the tomb, which is believed never to have been opened/looted,”* authors of one paper in 2020 concluded.



*Recreated figures of an archer and an officer, showing how they would have looked when painted*

©Wikipedia

For the time being, the tomb of Qin Shi Huang remains sealed and unseen, but not forgotten. When the time is right, however, it is possible that scientific advancements could

finally delve into the secrets that have been lying here undisturbed for some 2,200 years.



<https://www.iflscience.com/why-archeologists-are-too-scared-to-open-the-tomb-of-china-s-first-emperor67019>  
online 11/01/23

*Ref: Alexandra Nachescu, "The Terracotta Warriors," in Smarthistory August 15, 2021, accessed February 16, 2023, .*

***Europe - And back home again - An ancient Roman Sarcophagus has been found at a London building site.***

Such treasures from many eras are to be found in the London Borough of Southwark.

A 1,600-year-old coffin which has been found in Swan Street, near Borough Market and is thought to have contained the remains of a member of nobility. It was

several metres underground and as the lid had been displaced it is thought to have been robbed by 18th century thieves.



*Lifting the lid* ©BBC News 29/0/23

©BBC news

Gillian King, senior planner for archaeology at Southwark Council, said she hoped the grave robbers *"have left the things that were of small value to them but great value to us as archaeologists. The grave owner must have been very wealthy and have had a lot of social status to be honoured with not just a sarcophagus, but one that was built into the walls of a mausoleum"*. *We always knew this site had the potential for a Roman cemetery, but we never knew there would be a sarcophagus."*

Prior to the development of the site, Southwark council required the construction company to fund an archaeological dig. As often happens, researchers discovered the coffin six months into the dig as they were

due to finish their search. I wonder if the new flats will receive a name with a nod to the archaeology.

Experts at the Museum of London will test and date the bones and soil inside.

Source: <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-england-london>



## **Book Review**

**Merdone, the history of Hursley Park (second edition) – compiled by D Len Peach Edited by Nick Goodall Pub IBM UK – Janet Backhouse**

The histories of Merdon(e) and Hursley Park are inextricably interwoven. With occupation since pre-history, through invasion, Royal gift and commercial transaction, this stunning area of Hampshire has changed hands and fortunes numerous times, from small settlement, to Iron age fort, Royal gift, episcopal hunting lodge, and its current identity as large farming estate and an international business location.

Initially, Merdone was the dominant area. Palaeolithic hand axes and Bronze age 'beaker' pottery have been discovered, with 'tumuli' apparent in the landscape. Saxon artefacts have also been discovered over the years. Merdon Castle, (it is not apparent when the 'e' was dropped) was commissioned by Henry de Blois and 'slighted' on his orders when he retired to France, but it remained a Bishop's palace for another 300 years.



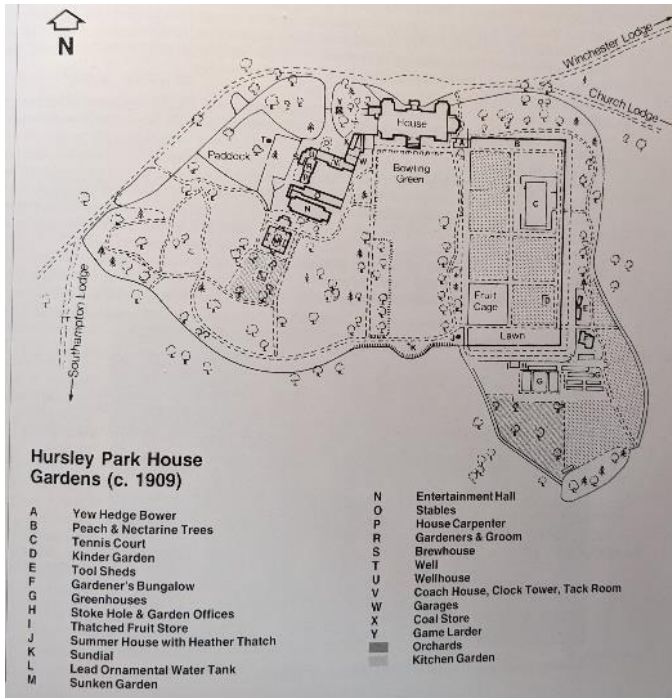
*Current geographic association between Hursley Park and Merdon Castle ©IBM*

Little can now be seen of its glory. Being Episcopal land, it is not recorded in the Domesday Book, but Manorial accounts are summarized in the King's Pipe Rolls.

Hursley Park House has a similar history of change. Along the way it has garnered famous occupants, the most famous of whom must be Richard Cromwell, Lord Protector during the interregnum of 1649-60. During his ownership the manorial rights were apparently transferred from Merdon to Hursley Park. Richard is buried in Hursley church, as is another, later, famous resident of the park, Rev. John Keble.

After the uncharitable Cromwells the Heathcote family bought the park and were benevolent landlords for the tenants who had previously been badly served. The Heathcotes and subsequently the Coopers were philanthropists, commissioning public-spirited work locally.

The house continued to evolve over the subsequent years and in 19<sup>th</sup> century was frequently described as 'unostentatious, warm and comfortable'.



The book has several photographs and prints which appear to support this description.

During the Great War, Hursley housed Lady Cooper's hospital for officers, Lady Cooper paid all expenses for the hospital including equipment which was later donated to the RHCH in Winchester.

In 1939 Sir George Cooper generously offered the house and park for use by the armed services and in 1940 it was requisitioned for use by Vickers Supermarine to develop aircraft design, including the legendary Spitfire. This effectively brought private residence to an end. The Royal Flying Corp, later RAF had an aerodrome in the grounds,



and the 8<sup>th</sup> Army division, was formed and is commemorated in the park. International troops were encamped in the grounds of Merdon Castle and when the troops marched out, the head of the column reached Southampton Docks whilst the tail end was still forming up at Hursley.

Subsequently Hursley Park was rented and then bought by IBM as an alternative to a new build at Baddesley. It might have undergone significant damage in becoming a commercial site, but IBM has expanded the accommodation very sympathetically and the new buildings blend organically into the landscape and Mansion.

If anyone has photographs or memories of Hursley's history please do contact WARG News.



### **Talks Programme**

**Please note the change of date for the April and May talks.**

17/04/23 Update on The Big Dig 2022 at Hursley Park –  
The WARG Dig Committee at HRO

15/05/23 The Mortuary Chest Project at Winchester  
Cathedral – Heidi Dawson Hobbis at HRO

**The new season will be announced in the summer  
newsletter.**



### **WARG Committee 2020**

**Kate Robinson (Acting in the Chair)** email:  
[chair@warg.org.uk](mailto:chair@warg.org.uk)

---

**Kim Batten (Secretary)** email: [secretary@warg.org.uk](mailto:secretary@warg.org.uk)

**Andy King (Hon. Treasurer)** 1, Wheatland Close,  
Winchester, SO22 4QL email: [treasurer@warg.org.uk](mailto:treasurer@warg.org.uk)

**Stuart Rippon** (Membership Sec.) email:  
[membership@warg.org.uk](mailto:membership@warg.org.uk)

**Janet Backhouse** (Publications & Newsletter Editor)  
email: [wargnews@gmail.com](mailto:wargnews@gmail.com)

**Dr. David Ashby** (University of Winchester) email:  
[david.ashby@winchester.ac.uk](mailto:david.ashby@winchester.ac.uk)

**Tracy Matthews** (WCC) email:  
[tmatthews@winchester.gov.uk](mailto:tmatthews@winchester.gov.uk)

**Maisie Marshall** email: [maisiemarshall@hotmail.com](mailto:maisiemarshall@hotmail.com)

**David Spurling** email: [david@pekingparismorgan.com](mailto:david@pekingparismorgan.com)

**Steve Old Chris Sellen Tracey Pontin**

**Amanuenses** for talks: Edwina Cole; Chris Sellen; Steve  
Taylor

**Webmaster** Chris Sellen

**Proof Readers:** Sue Adams, Tessa Smith,

For communication with the Newsletter Editor, Donkeydown, 16,  
Petersfield Rd, Cheriton, Alresford, Hampshire SO24 0NH. Text 07876  
597795 or email [wargnews@gmail.com](mailto:wargnews@gmail.com)



**Data Protection Regulations compliance** If you do not  
wish to receive mailings from WARG please let us know  
either by mailing [membership@warg.org.uk](mailto:membership@warg.org.uk) or  
[wargnews@gmail.com](mailto:wargnews@gmail.com), or writing to the newsletter editor  
at Donkeydown, 16, Petersfield Rd, Cheriton, Alresford, Hampshire  
SO24 0NH. Text 07876 597795

