

The Old School Report

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Merimbula –Imlay
Historical Society

February 2026

No one is born hating another person because of the colour of his skin, or his background, or his religion. People must learn to hate, and if they can learn to hate, they can be taught to love...

[Nelson Mandela 1918 - 2013: *Long Walk to Freedom* (1984)]

From the Editor -

Not much in the way of Society news this time but an informative report from curator Angela is showing the way forward for the Museum. Thanks to Kevin Mulcahy for the article from Canberra Times with his remarkable photos of Canberra in the forties. You can see more of Kevin's photos on his website at <https://vk2ce.com/Canberra.html>. Congratulations to the Pitts for surviving 70 wedding anniversaries and 90 birthdays! Learn more about member Ian Battersby's life and works. Good man!

There are two bus tours booked for the museum in March and 2 classes from Merimbula Public school want to have a visit. Please take photos of these events for the next newsletter plus a report. Also I have asked for photos and report from any SEHGI excursions but none are forthcoming. Beverley has none for the February meeting. **OM**

Committee Report -

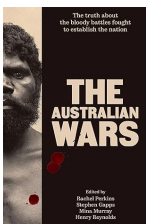
There have been 2 formal meetings of the Committee since the November edition of the OSR, as well as numerous informal discussions. Angela has presented detailed plans for the exhibitions to be mounted after the 150 th display closes at the end of April and work is continuing on the Strategic Plan. The goals for the next 3 years and the action plan to implement them are being finalised, with emphasis on what can be achieved in 2026. Angela will be submitting applications for 2 grants that open in February and the timetable for some projects, like the installation of the Alma Gray and the expanded oyster industry displays, will be dependant on the success of these submissions.

The urgent need for more volunteers continues to dominate discussions and this is an area where all members can help in recruiting people to act as museum guides and/or to work behind the scenes. All ideas for attracting new members and increasing public awareness of and visitation to the museum are welcome, even those that could be regarded as coming from left field. We are looking at options for night events at the museum with the aim of attracting people from different community groups who might then decide to join our ranks.

Merimbula Old School Museum Committee

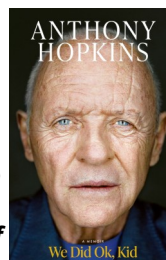
Books -

Top of my Christmas list is always books and this year I received a history book and two memoirs.

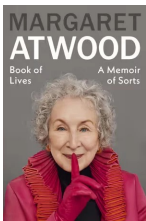


The Australian Wars is based on the excellent television series shown on SBS and is an essential read for anyone interested in truth-telling. The Australian frontier was as much a battlefield as those in Turkey and France and should be recognized as such. The dead, on both sides, should be remembered and honoured, and should hold a prominent place in the National War Memorial.

We Did OK, Kid is actor, Anthony Hopkins's memoirs which I wanted to read because he is Welsh and was born in Port Talbot, not far from Swansea and the Gower Peninsula where I grew up. Anthony was an anxious child who struggled at school and was deemed to be a failure in life. Of course he proved everyone wrong when he became a successful actor playing many parts on stage and screen. The book illustrates his journey to stardom, which also included his destruction of two marriages, an addiction to alcohol and a near death experience.



My favourite book at the moment though is Margaret Attwood's **Book of Lives: a Memoir of Sorts**. Always a favourite author of mine,



Attwood's memoir is an autobiographical account of her 85 years - she must have kept journals since the age of around three years old! She had an unconventional upbringing in the Canadian wilderness, with a father who was an academic entomologist and a dietician mother. Her style is conversational, meandering & witty and leads from her childhood to her academic life at university, with personal anecdotes including her time with partner Graeme Gibson. Margaret Attwood has written more than 50 books of fiction, poetry and essays one of the most well-known being *The Handmaid's Tale*. **OM**

Diary -

No dates for the diary - keep reading Notes to Members when issued.

Next General Meeting at RSL to be announced - hopefully in next Notes to Members.

Committee members -

President - Peter Clancy
Vice-President - Nancy Richards
Secretary - Andrew McManus
Treasurer - Adrian Pitt
Committee member - Shirley Bazley
Curator/Collections Manager - Angela George
Non-committee position - **Old School Report** - Olwen Morris

News -

It is an especially big year for Pam and George Pitt this year as they will be celebrating 1/4 century!! Both turn 90 during the year, George in April and Pam in October, and on 31st March they will celebrate their 70th wedding anniversary, so all that adds up to 250 years. Quite an achievement.

On 14 March there will be a family celebratory dinner at the RSL with 36 family members present - their own children + partners, 11 grandchildren, 9 great-grandchildren & 1 great-great-grandchild! On 21 March Pam & George will set off on a month's cruise around Australia, celebrating their wedding anniversary & George's birthday while on the high seas!



The happy, smiling couple on their big day! They are still smiling 70 years later!

What Canberra looked like in the 1940s - from the camera of a 10-year-old

When Kevin Mulcahy received his Box Brownie camera for Christmas in 1947, he was like most 10-year-olds with a camera.

Everything was worth a photo. The difference is: he could reach everything on his pushbike. Canberra, in 1947, was a very different place.

“Quite frankly, it was like growing up in any other ordinary little old town,” he says.

“The only thing that made it look like a capital was the big white building – now Old Parliament House – in the middle of a sheep paddock.”

Civic was little more than the Sydney Building and half the Melbourne Building. Northbourne Avenue beyond Haig Park was corrugated dirt. Ice, bread and milk were delivered by horse and cart.

But on his pushbike – and with the local chemist on hand to develop the photos later – Kevin recorded everything.

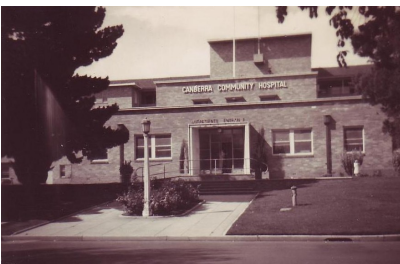
And now, decades later, he’s published the results on his own website so that others can relive Canberra in the 1940s and ’50s, too.

What a 1940s Canberra was like

Kevin is now living out retirement in Merimbula on NSW’s South Coast, aged 88.

He was born in 1937 at Canberra’s first hospital – a small building on today’s Australian National University campus – and was the city’s first caesarean delivery.

“It was quite an interesting entry into the world, because the doctor, who was also our next-door neighbour, had to do a caesarean, and it was the first one he’d ever done. He had to do it by phone with a gynaecologist in Sydney.”



Royal Canberra Hospital, Lennox Rd entrance 1948

Kevin’s father had moved to Canberra in the early 1930s as part of the gradual relocation of Commonwealth public servants.

“Back then, all that existed in Civic was the Sydney Building and half the Melbourne Building. Nothing else around City Hill was there – it was just grass and trees and pine trees.

“It used to take me half a day to get out to Crace. It’s hard to imagine, but Northbourne Avenue from Haig Park out was dirt.”

The population hovered around 8000, with about 60 per cent of the population being public servants. The city was basically divided into three main centres: Kingston, Manuka and Civic.

“There’d be a shop in each of them that wasn’t in the other two, like Cussack’s in Kingston, where you could get furniture and bedding, but Civic was still the main

shopping centre. There was a fruit and vegetable shop, a butcher shop, and a chemist.

“Anything you needed was basically on East Row. My mum used to park on East Row, and go into the grocery store, and she’d just plonk me on the counter.”

Milk, bread and ice, however, were delivered by horse and cart.

“We lived in a house on Torrens Street, Braddon, and the delivery man would start down the bottom end near Civic, and clip clop up the street, dropping off ice, or bread or milk.

“I used to climb into the back of the bread cart and pick up all the crumbs that had fallen off the high loaves. They tasted really nice.”

Kevin attended seven schools in Canberra, starting at the Girls’ Grammar School because it was the only preschool available.

He moved through Ainslie Primary, St Patrick’s, St Christopher’s, Canberra Grammar, and finally St Edmund’s College as a foundation pupil in 1954.

“While I was at the grammar school, my father asked the area’s Catholic administrator when they were planning to build a Catholic school here, because he got into trouble with the priest for sending me to a Church of England grammar school,” Kevin recalls.

“In fact, he was refused the Sacraments for a while.”

The quest to immortalise it in film

Whenever he could, and especially on weekends, Kevin would be out on his pushbike. So when he received that Box Brownie camera for Christmas, that would go out with him.

“I took it with me on all my rides around the place and took all sorts of photos.”

He’d then take the film to the local chemist to develop, and stash the small prints away in photo albums.

About 20 years ago, he decided to begin scanning what survived and uploading them to a website.

“I just did it as something to fill in the time,” he says.

The result is a website stocked with tens of images showing empty streets, half-built suburbs, and paddocks where roads now run.

The best was yet to come

Kevin followed the traditional Canberra calling and spent most of his working life in the public service, including 18 years with the National Capital Development Commission (NCDC).

He and his wife raised their three children in Canberra in the 1960s and into the ’70s, which he describes as a golden era for the city.

“That was really the best time to live in Canberra, I believe. The friendliness of the people, the lack of crime, and the fact that no one was in a hurry to get anywhere.

“Canberra has certainly gone through many different phases, but it was interesting as soon as self-government came in – they got stuck into building apartments and townhouses, and that really took off, and it’s been going ever since.”

Now living on the South Coast, he rarely visits.

“The central Parliamentary Triangle area still looks beautiful, but it’s lost its capital charisma,” he says.

“So yes, I consider myself very fortunate to have grown up in that period – at the same time as Canberra was growing, I was growing. It’s only sort of hit me in the last couple of years, actually.”



Kevin’s Box Brownie



Snow’s Corner Clothing Store corner Northbourne Ave & London Circuit, 1948

Curator's Report -

An update on curatorial work at the Merimbula Old School Museum

Over the past several months, curatorial work at the Merimbula Old School Museum has focused on strengthening the way we tell our district's stories, both indoors and out. From exhibition development to outdoor planning, collections documentation to grant preparation, the emphasis has been to deepen interpretation, elevate presentation, and reinforce our role as a community storytelling hub.

Exhibition development

One of the most visible achievements has been the production and installation of Lessons for Life, marking the anniversary of completion of the Old Merimbula School building. This exhibition has allowed us to reflect not only on the building itself, but on education, aspiration and community formation in the district. Beyond this exhibition, considerable time has been devoted to drafting and refining exhibition text and display panels for the old schoolroom space. The focus has been on developing broader contextual panels that connect community, identity and place, ensuring that our displays move beyond objects alone and instead present cohesive, engaging narratives. Planning has also begun for future 2026 exhibitions, including the centenary of construction of the Merimbula Wharf and a local medical and health history narrative. These projects position the Museum to continue building a layered and interconnected interpretation of district history. Throughout all of this work, there has been a careful balancing act between historical rigour, accessibility, emotional engagement, and a sense of local pride.

Introductory audiovisual project: A new visitor experience

Work has commenced on production of a structured 15 to 20-minute introductory audiovisual presentation exploring the history and development of the Pambula–Merimbula district. This has included:

- A detailed storyboard framework
- Thematic structuring of district history
- Draft voice-over scripting
- Identification of image and artefact pairings
- Development of a cohesive narrative voice

The aim is simple but important: to provide visitors, especially school groups and first-time guests, with a meaningful orientation to the district's history. It will create a stronger emotional and thematic introduction to the Museum experience and help

knit together the diverse stories told across the site.

Activating the grounds: Outdoor exhibition planning

Perhaps the most ambitious but potentially worthwhile area of development has been planning for a structured outdoor interpretive exhibition zone. The goal is to activate underutilised external spaces and better interpret the significant large objects already displayed in our grounds. Key themes and narratives under development include:

Oystering

Anchored by the Cole and Brown punts, interpretation is being developed around the Pambula-Merimbula oyster farming industry, exploring aspects such as punt design, oyster leases, family operations, and the deep links between estuarine ecology and local identity.

Commercial fishing

With the Alma Gray as a hero object, interpretive concepts are being developed to tell the story of the Pambula-Merimbula district's commercial fishing heritage, highlighting fishing families, industry transitions, and the evolving maritime economy.

The Museum building

The Museum building itself is being framed as both artefact and symbol, a tangible reminder of civic ambition and the centrality of education to community life. Plans include external explanatory panels and photographic displays to better communicate the importance of the old school building.

Dairying

Dairy farming and the story of the Pambula Co-operative Creamery and Dairy Company, anchored by the ammonia refrigeration plant machinery, is planned to highlight the cooperative movement and its transformative impact on rural economic development.

Baddeley's Tannery

Interpretive planning is underway to explore the bark crushing plant machinery and the broader tannery story, focusing on labour history, environmental context, and the district's industrial resilience.

Collectively, this outdoor planning represents a strategic shift towards site-responsive storytelling, improved visitor flow, and expanded interpretation beyond the limited interior gallery space.

Collections and documentation

Behind the scenes, ongoing collections work continues, including the preparation of object files and Statements of Significance using Burra Charter and Significance 2.0 frameworks, along with eHive-compatible entries. This work strengthens both internal documentation standards and public-facing interpretation.

Infrastructure planning: Boat display shed

Concept development has begun for a proposed open-fronted shed to house the Brown oyster punt and the Alma Gray. Detailed drafting has been undertaken for submission to Bega Valley Shire Council, with careful consideration of heritage-appropriate materials, design features, and planning pathways. This proactive planning directly supports preservation goals while further enhancing outdoor exhibition potential.

Grant preparation and funding readiness

Work has also included researching and identifying relevant grant streams aligned with heritage interpretation, infrastructure improvement, collection preservation and digital engagement. Supporting documentation has been prepared to clearly articulate community value, educational impact, and conservation outcomes. This groundwork ensures the Museum is well positioned to respond when funding opportunities arise.

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A clear strategic direction

Across all activity since September/October 2025, there has been a strong and consistent focus on:

- Elevating interpretive standards
- Strengthening narrative cohesion
- Activating outdoor spaces
- Linking industry stories to identity and place
- Preparing for milestone anniversaries
- Supporting volunteer-led sustainability

The overarching aim is to position the Museum not simply as a repository of objects, but as an active storyteller of district identity, labour, enterprise and resilience.

The work of recent months reflects a steady and purposeful strengthening of the Museum's interpretive framework. It honours our past, enhances our present displays, and lays thoughtful groundwork for future development, ensuring that the

Merimbula Old School Museum continues to serve as a place where community memory is preserved, shared and celebrated.

Angela George

St David's Day -

The Feast Day of St David or Dydd Gŵyl Dewi Sant falls on 1st March and celebrates the saint's death in 589AD. Saint David is the patron saint of Wales and his feast has been regularly celebrated since his canonisation by Pope Callixtus II in 12C.

Although not an official public holiday many organisations hold ceremonies on the day. I remember being in junior school with my sisters every St David's Day, dressed in traditional Welsh costume and wearing or carrying daffodils and leeks, looking forward to the afternoon off school. At home my mother would be preparing cawl, a Welsh soup made with lamb, potatoes, swede, carrots and lots of leeks. Afterwards we'd demolish a plate of Welshcakes, hot from the griddle.

Saint David is said to have been born to Saint Non who, according to Rhigyfarch in his *Life of Saint David*, was a nun at Tŷ Gwyn (White House) near Whitesands bay in Pembrokeshire.

He grew to be a wise teacher living a life of abstinence from worldly pleasures and became well-known as the founder of around 1200 Christian communities.

David died on 1 March 589 and was laid to rest in St David's Cathedral near Pembroke, which became an important shrine and site of pilgrimage.

There are at least two stories relating to why the leek is a national emblem of Wales. Although both stories concern battles, one is more likely than the other.

At one time, Wales was divided into kingdoms. Cadwaladr ruled the kingdom of Gwynedd in North Wales in the seventh century and during one of frequent battles against the Saxons, St David advised his soldiers to wear a leek in their helmets so they could differentiate themselves from the enemy. Welsh bards embellished this legend in their poetry, however there is little legitimacy to the story as Cadwaladr's reign was particularly uneventful. Apparently he was a peaceful and pious leader who founded churches, including St Cadwaladr's Church in Llangadwaladr, Anglesey. He supposedly died of plague in ?664. Also St David was a pacifist, so a story relating to battle is unlikely to be proven in fact.

A more likely story dates to 1346 and the Battle of Crecy fought between French and English during the 100 Years War.

The English army included Welsh longbowmen and the battle was said to have been fought in a field of leeks. Under the command of Edward the Black Prince the skilled Welsh archers, (with some help from the English!) routed the French army which was finished off by hand-to-hand combat. The French have never forgiven us!

To remember the bravery of those soldiers, the leek has been worn in the caps of

Welsh people on 1 March ever since. Henry Tudor, later to become Henry VII, the first Tudor King of England, was born in

1457 in Pembroke Castle in south-west Wales. As a reflection of their pride in their Welsh heritage the Tudors instructed the household guard to wear a leek in their helmets on St David's Day. Today the Welsh Guards wear a leek as their distinctive cap badge and carry their Welsh heritage proudly. The leek has also been featured on the reverse of the £1 coin as well as Queen Elizabeth II coronation gown. The leek has even been referenced by Shakespeare in his play *Henry V* Act V Scene 1 during a confrontation between Fluellen, a Welsh soldier, and Pistol, an English soldier.

The daffodil is a more recent emblem of Wales, introduced by Lloyd George in 1911. He advocated their use in the investiture of Edward VIII as Prince of Wales which took place in Caernarfon Castle, North Wales. Daffodils bloom prolifically all around Wales around 1 March.

Olwen Morris



Stained glass depiction of St David designed by William Burges, Castell Coch, Cardiff



Reverse of English pound coin



Welsh Guard's cap



This is.....

Ian John Battersby

Ian is well-known in Merimbula. His favourite catchphrase is "I can do that!" and he can indeed put his talents to fixing anything from computers, mobile phones to vacuum cleaners! But that's only a hobby. His real work has always been in audio, joining ABC television in Melbourne in 1961, and since retiring has taken casual work with BAI Communications (formerly Broadcast Australia) troubleshooting signal interruptions around the area.



Ian aged 10 with his self-built wireless

Ian comes from a long line of 'tinkerers'. His grandfather built the engine you see in the photo and his father also created various engines. Ian himself, at the age of 10yrs, put together a wireless.

Following a 'technological' education Ian commenced work aged 17 at the ABC TV studios based at Ripponlea, Victoria. After training in roles of vision switcher cameraman, boom operator, camera control he settled in sound operation. By 1970 Ian had reached the position of senior sound engineer, working on all studio programmes and some outside broadcast specials such as Australia Day live in 1981 & 82.

When in the studio Ian was part of a crew of about 20.

The audio control room, where Ian worked for many years, was adjacent to the main control room containing the director, lighting director and camera control operators. Action in the studio below was overseen through windows in the control rooms. Ian worked on the long-running rock series, *Countdown*, during this time.

In the eighties Ian worked on the popular series, *Kath & Kim* and *Seachange*. The ABC is re-running the complete series of *Kath & Kim* on iView and you can see Ian's name on the credits in the early series!

In 1976 Ian was included in the television crew that went to Montreal for the Olympic Games and later the controversial Commonwealth Games in Edinburgh 1986. 32 countries boycotted these games because of the Thatcher government's policy of keeping Britain's sporting links with apartheid South Africa.



At work mixing sound in post-production

Ian progressed to specialise in audio post production in the 1990s, working mainly alone in a new facility which he designed himself. Post-production involves editing sound such as inserting music and effects like Foley. Foley, named after sound-effects artist, Jack Foley, is the reproduction of sound effects such as footsteps, squeaky floors and breaking glass among many others. An example of Foley was during an episode of *Kath & Kim*. On Kath's wedding day she was worried her shoes might slip while she was walking down the aisle so to fix it she stuck Velcro on her soles! Ian, in post-production, created the sound of her footsteps by peeling apart strips of masking tape. Remember that when you watch the episode!

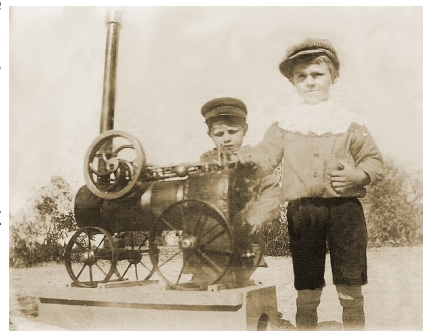
Ian retired in 2006 after 45 long years with the ABC during which time he saw many changes in production. In the late 60s and early 70s television was either live-to-air or from film. As technology progressed film was replaced by video tape which made the process more immediate. The television mini-series *I can jump puddles* (1981) was produced on video, and audio post-production was first introduced using a 16 track audio tape recorder running in synchronism with the video. This way music and sound effects could be added.



*Technical Services
Public Officer
Lawrence B Bear*

Ian was presented with two awards for his work; a Penguin Award from the Television Society of Australian, a prominent industry body, active from at least the 1960s, that promoted excellence in Australian broadcasting. It is best known for founding the Penguin Awards in 1954, which honored outstanding achievements in television production. On his retirement Ian was presented with an award in recognition of 45 years of outstanding service to the ABC.

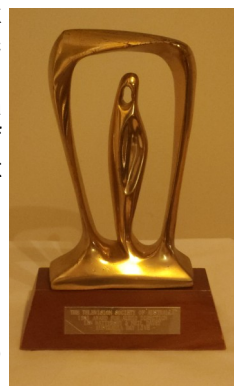
These days Ian spends his days, questionably assisted by Lawrence B Bear, helping people in strife with their technology, fixing broadcasting signals, recording concerts for the Jazz Club and is currently transcribing oral histories for the Merimbula Old School Museum. He has no spare time! **OM (with help from Lawrence!)**



Ian's father & uncle with his grandfather's engine



Ian at work in Studio 31 audio control room in mid 70s



The Television Society of Australia 1981 award for Audio Direction Australia Day Live



ABC award of appreciation for 45 years outstanding service

5 weird armours from history -

For the medieval knight armour was essential. It provided protection on the battlefield and signified status and rank. As the medieval period came to a close, Renaissance ideals of peace and diplomacy prevailed and the need for battle-hardened knights disappeared. But armour remained an important symbol of elite masculinity, thanks to its association with chivalry, honour and knighthood. Ceremonial armour became a requisite for noblemen and was worn at events such as tournaments and parade entries. Master craftsmen used techniques such as embossing, engraving and gilding to fashion pieces that wowed audiences and allowed the wearers to transform into heroic and divine beings. Thankfully, many of these pieces survive – and their stories offer a glimpse into Renaissance society. Spoiler alert: it was a little weird.

Henry VIII's horned helmet (circa 1512–14)

Of all the armour that survives from the Renaissance period, Henry VIII's horned helmet is arguably the weirdest. This helmet was a diplomatic gift from the Emperor Maximilian I in 1514. Its strange features – including a ram's horns, a grotesque face and gold spectacles – have perplexed historians for centuries.

In Henry's time, ram's horns symbolised the devil or a cuckold (a man whose wife has slept with someone else). Grotesque faces and spectacles (or glasses) were associated with the appearance of a fool. Historians have not been able to explain why one monarch would gift such a piece to another.

However, my [recent research](#) shows that the strange features on Henry's helmet are reflective of the Greek myth, [Jason and the Golden Fleece](#), and the medieval chivalric order the myth inspired, [the Order of the Golden Fleece](#).

When viewed through the lens of chivalry and humanism, Henry's peculiar helmet goes from being something seemingly grotesque, to a highly valued object of kingly power and authority. Not so weird after all.

The Lion Sallet (circa 1475–80)

This [lion sallet](#) is the oldest surviving example of all'antica (antique style) armour from the Renaissance. It's interesting because it demonstrates the new trend of [zoomorphic or animalistic armour](#). These pieces depicted animals ranging from foxes, to roosters, to eagles, and dolphins. The wearer was given the opportunity to embody the virtues and power of the animal represented.

The lion was the most popular as it was associated with the Greek hero Hercules, and the virtues of courage, bravery and strength. When adorning the lion sallet, the wearer would figuratively transform into Hercules – the Renaissance version of “activating beast mode”.

The armour of Henry II's horse (circa 1490–1500)

Zoomorphic armours weren't just the preserve of warriors. Horses could also unlock beast mode with mystical armours such as [this dragon-shaped shaffron](#). Shaffrons were an integral part of a horse's armour and provided protection to their face and head.

Due to its symbolic significance, the dragon shaffron was likely used for tournaments or civic entries. Dragons were important creatures in Renaissance culture because they blended classical mythology with Christian theology. According to legend, St George famously defeated a dragon who was terrorising a town, before converting the townspeople to Christianity.

Dragons also held special value in French Renaissance literature with mythical creatures such as [Givre](#) and [Tarasque](#) said to have been tamed by early Christian saints. When worn, the dragon shaffron reflected the Henry II's commitment to defend the Christian church.

Elephant Armour (circa 1600–1700)

If you aren't from India or Asia, the idea of war elephants, or the “elephantry”, may seem strange. Yet elephants played an essential role in ancient and medieval [warfare on the Asian continent](#). The [elephant armour](#) currently held by the Royal Armouries in Leeds is a poignant reminder of this.

This 17th century piece originates from India but was procured by Henriette Clive, the [Countess of Powis](#), while her husband was Governor of Madras. The armour consists of a face and neck guard and body panels. It is also highly decorated (suggesting ceremonial use) with embossed lotus flowers, fish and peacocks – auspicious symbols in Indian culture.

Luckily for elephants, changes to warfare in the Early Modern Period meant their use in combat declined. Elephants were, however, still used by military forces as labour well into the 20th century, particularly during the first world war and the Vietnam War.

The Landsknecht costume armour (1523)

At first glance, this piece looks like a beautiful garment with puffed sleeves, slashed cloth and ornate embroidery. What makes it weird is that it's entirely made of steel.

Little is known about the motive or making of the [Landsknecht armour](#) (so-called because it mimics the style of dress worn by German landsknecht mercenaries). Historians do know it dates to 1523 and is attributed to [Kolman Helmschmid](#), a master armourer from Augsburg, in modern day Germany.

The armour itself tells us its owner, Austrian military commander Wilhelm von Rogendorf, must have been a giant. The suit fits someone well over 6 foot 3 inches which, in the 16th century, would have made him a formidable presence.

The piece is fashioned in the male style courtly dress, with Helmschmid skilfully emulating layers of voluminous textiles and tailoring techniques such as draping, slashing and embroidery, all from steel.

While peculiar to the modern eye, these pieces demonstrate the profound symbolic significance of armour in Renaissance society. Far from weird, armour was high culture, kingly power and fine art. **Grace Waye-Harris, Adelaide University** (Published in *The Conversation* Feb 18 2026. Photos from Metropolitan Museum & Royal Armouries)

