

# The Courtrai Chest

The newly-enlarged Ashmolean Museum in Oxford provides a chance to see the so-called Courtrai chest which was previously at New College. Fred Roe refers to the chest front being found in a farm belonging to the college in the 19th century. It

is now mounted within a chest. The two boards are hinged so that the upper one falls forward, and they bear four horizontal bands of carving which are said to portray the battle of Courtrai in 1302. Dendro-dating has established a felling date for the front boards of

around 1270 but Robert Didier has argued that the scenes are taken from mid-19th century Belgian books of engravings. The label rightly describes the object as 'controversial'; a torch is recommended.



*Chris Pickvance*