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The Importance of Being Explicit

Metadata for Data Reuse and Preservation

28 September 2022

CIfA Archaeological Archives Group

Dr Katie Green, MCIfA

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Why talk about metadata?

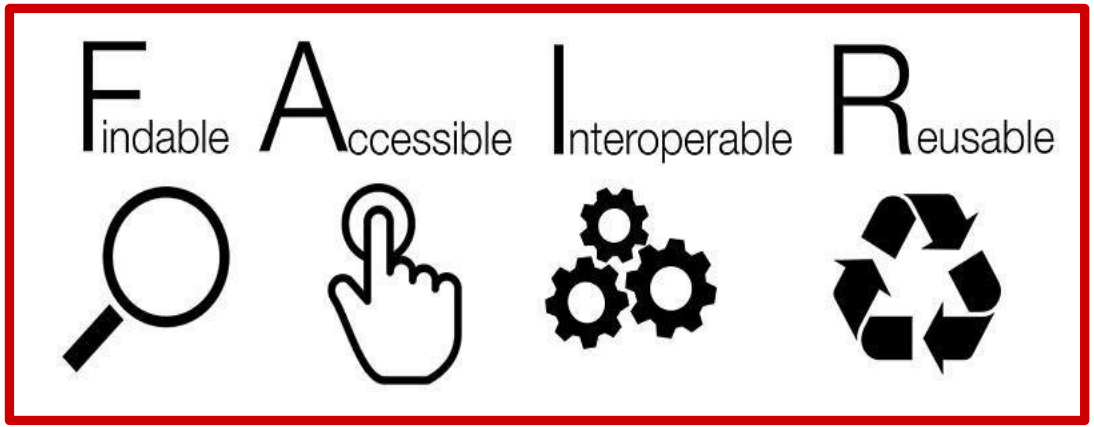

Image © https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:FAIR_data_principles.jpg

High quality **explicit** metadata is integral for effective data **reuse** and **preservation**, enabling a digital archive to achieve its greatest **public value** in the future.

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What does Metadata even mean?

- Data About Data

  ~~Data about Data~~

- Documentation - Information

- Context

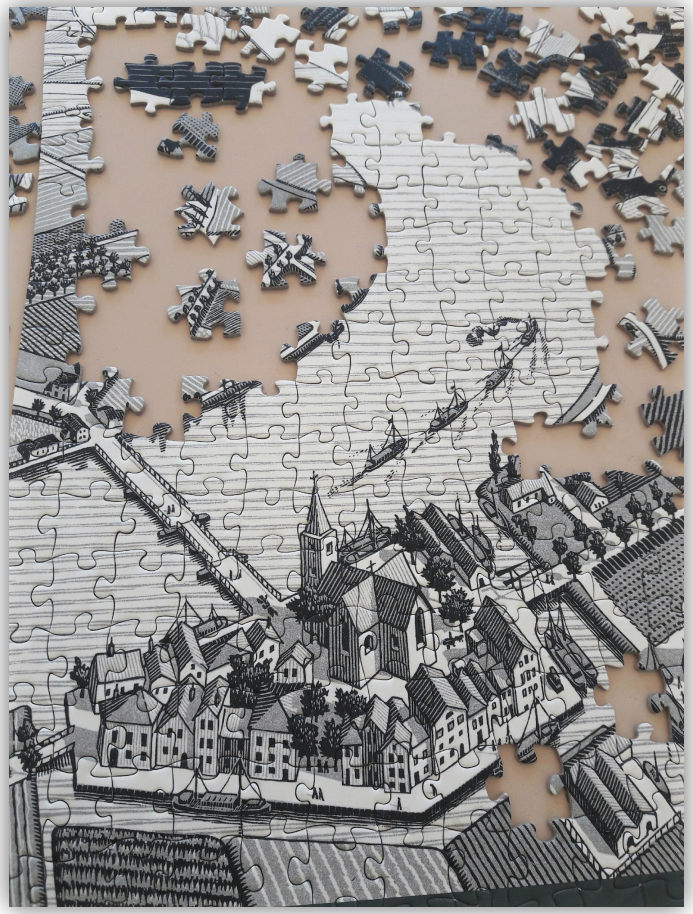

Photo by Wonderlane on Unsplash

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Why is metadata important?

- Context
- Meaning
- Marketing

- Providing Access
  - But this means different things to different people

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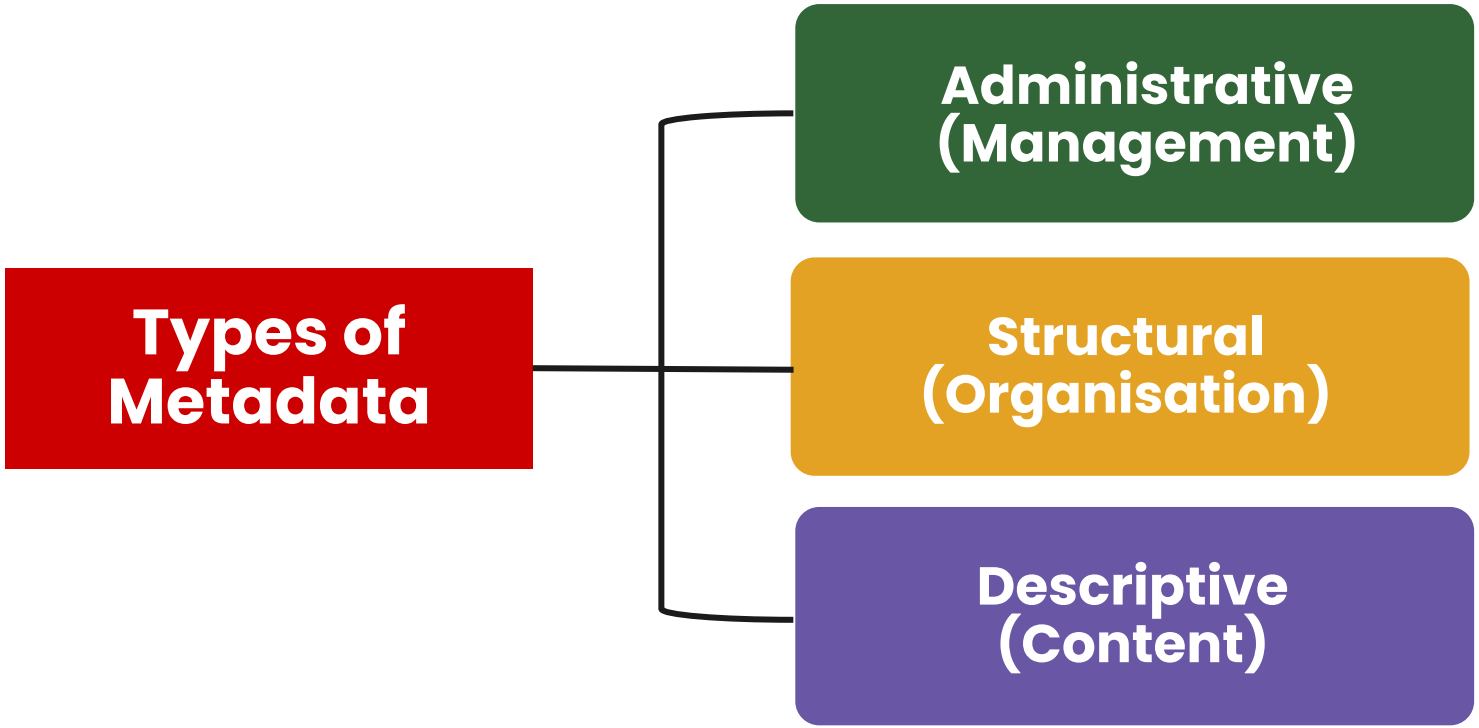

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Administrative Metadata

Created date	2018-03-01
Copyright	MOLA
Creator	MOLA (AC photographer)

Sitecode	EX-PRO03
Accession Number	44

File Type	JPEG File Interchange Format 1.01
Checksum	663a5d5cb9b1091ebf8d8e53494063a4

Structural Metadata

Collection	The Prittlewell princely burial

Related Documentation	Prittlewell image metadata (ADS_raster_metadata.csv). Prittlewell image registry 02 (EX-PRO03_image_reg02.csv). Pg 57 of 'The Anglo-Saxon Princely Burial at Prittlewell, Southend-on-Sea.

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Descriptive Metadata

Title	A pair of wooden bottles with elaborate decorative metal rim mounts placed to the north of the coffin

Location	England, East of England, Southend-on-Sea, Prittlewell
Subject(s)	COMPOSITE (Material), VESSEL (Object)
Period	EARLY MEDIEVAL (England)

But what is it?

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Types of Descriptive Metadata

- **What** — What type of resource is it, and what is it about? What topics or themes does it cover?
- **Where** — Is the resource about a specific place?
- **Who** — Is the resource about a specific person?
- **When** — What time period does the resource cover?

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What is this Digital Resource?

- What is it about?
- The Type of Resource
- The Subject or Content

Five photographs of trenches excavated during archaeological field evaluations from the following ADS Collections:
Trench 1: East Street, Olney, Milton Keynes.
Trench 2: Proposed Solar Development, Mill Farm, Grantham, LincolnshireTrench 3:A380
Trench 3: South Devon Link Road, Kingskerswell, Devon
Trench 4: Abberton to Wormingford Pipeline route: Colchester Borough.
Trench 5: Land off Tatenhill Lane, Branston Archaeological Evaluation Report

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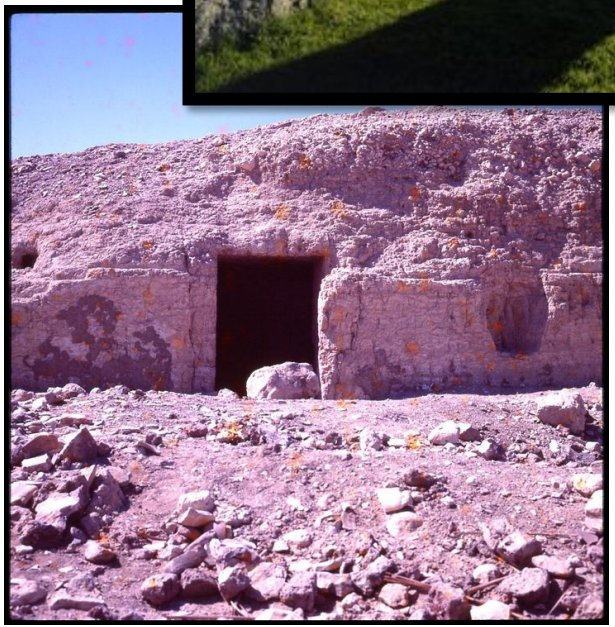
Where is this place?

- A place might be known by different names
- Place names are not unique
- Place names come and go
- Is the place historical, contemporary, current, mythological, or even fictional.



Top Image: View of the outer sarsen circle at Stonehenge (copyright James Davies / English Heritage).
Bottom image: Doorway of one of the New Kingdom rock-cut tombs located to the W of Nubt at Naqada

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Who is it about?

- Alternative names
- The type of person
- Name preferences
- Name changes
- Any background information

Clockwise from the top left:
Fresco portrait of experimental Archaeologist Peter Reynolds (from the Butser archive © Christine Shaw, Roger Hedge),
Roman Coin depicting Emporer Constantine I (from the Cottam B archive © J Richards),
A depiction of Apollo from a 2,000-year-old mosaic in Rome (© Day of Archaeology Archive), and
A Black and White photograph of pottery specialist Alan Vince (from the Alan Vince archive © Joanna Vince).

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When: Describing time

Administrative: Photograph, taken in **2013** and deposited as part of The Newport Medieval Ship Digital Archive.

Descriptive: Image shows a **15th-century** ship, post-excavation, when the assemblage of ship's timbers and associated artefacts was systematically cleaned, recorded, and analysed.

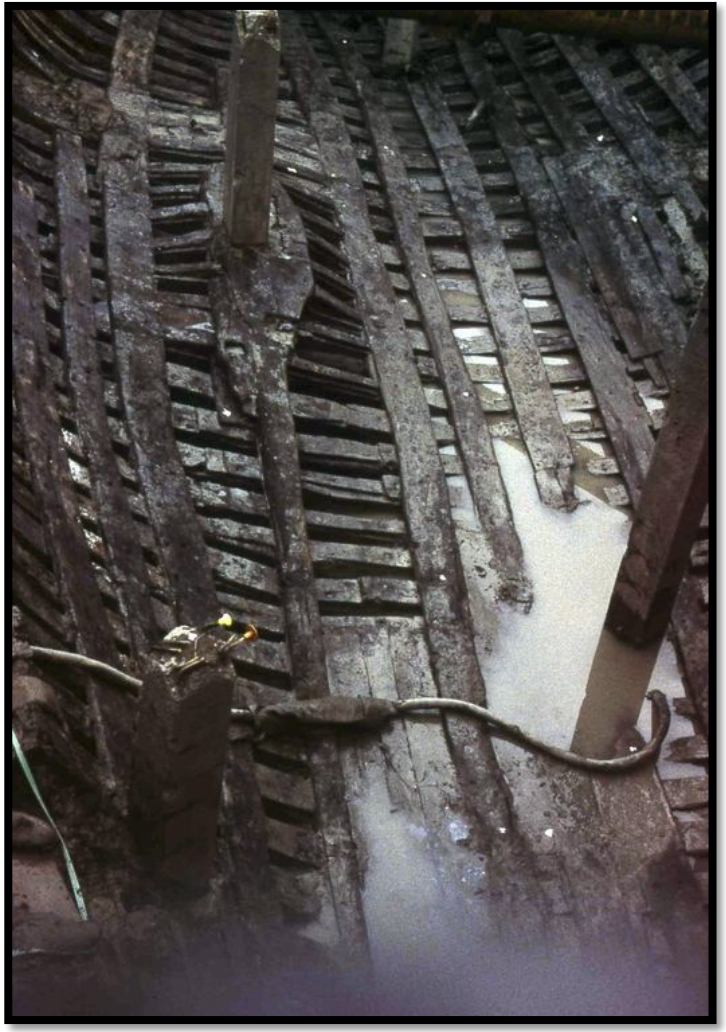

Image 467-25-036 taken 25/02/2013
© Newport Museums and Heritage Service.

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Semantic Metadata

Photo by Miltiadis Fragkidis on Unsplash

- Defining
- Building Trust
  - Using standards
  - Being consistent
- Connecting
- Sharing

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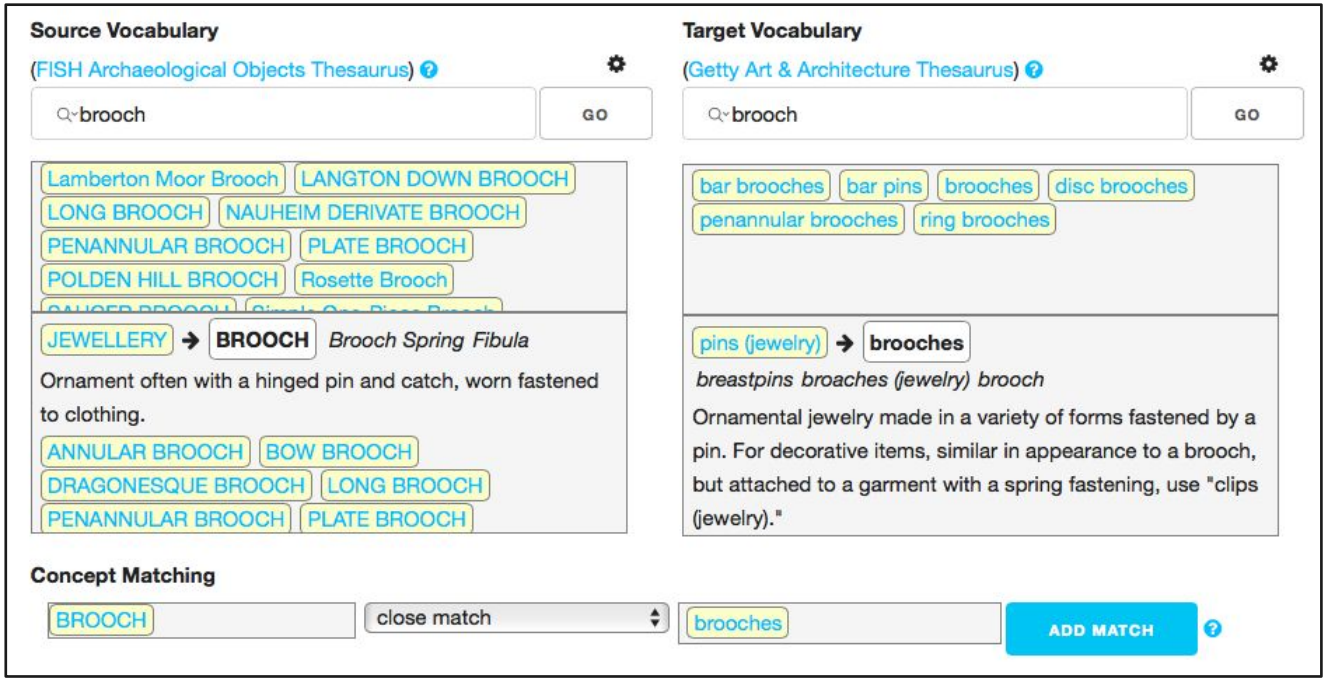
Vocabulary Matching Tool



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Site Data from an Archaeological Watching Brief at Moorhouses Farm, Bransdale, North Yorkshire 2019

Charlie Morris, Matt Walker, Rebecca Jarosz-Blackburn, 2021. https://doi.org/10.5284/1085028. How to cite using this DOI

Introduction
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Data copyright © Stephen Potten unless otherwise stated

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National Trust

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Send e-mail enquiry

Resource identifiers

ADS Collection: 3913
DOI:https://doi.org/10.5284/1085028
How to cite using this DOI

AOC Archaeology Group

Introduction

This collection comprises the Digital Archive (images, a report and site records) from an archaeological watching brief commissioned by the National Trust and undertaken by AOC Archaeology Group at Moorhouses Farm, North Yorkshire. The watching brief was conducted during groundworks in December 2019.

A service trench was monitored but no archaeological features were encountered. Within the Farmhouse, the wall between the kitchen and ground floor living room was inspected after the removal of plaster. Two wooden blocks were observed which filled rectangular holes in the masonry wall; the holes extended the full width of the wall between the two rooms.

View of house, barn and trench looking south-east

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- 3559 - Archaeology Data Service
- 1004080 - Fieldwork Archives
- This record (browse from here by hierarchy)

Catalogue description

Site Data from an Archaeological Watching Brief at Moorhouses Farm, Bransdale, North Yorkshire 2019

Reference:	1003913
Title:	Site Data from an Archaeological Watching Brief at Moorhouses Farm, Bransdale, North Yorkshire 2019
Description:	This collection comprises a report, 66 images and 7 site records from an archaeological watching brief commissioned by the National Trust and undertaken by AOC Archaeology Group at Moorhouses Farm, North Yorkshire. The watching brief was conducted during grou… encountered.
Note:	Persistent Identifier:
Date:	2020
Held by:	Archaeology Data Servi…
Language:	English
Creator:	Charlie Morris Matt Walker

This record is held by Archaeology Data Service

See contact details

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Site Data from an Archaeological Watching Brief at Moorhouses Farm, Bransdale, North Yorkshire 2019

Description

This collection comprises a report, 66 images and 7 site records from an archaeological watching brief commissioned by the National Trust and undertaken by AOC Archaeology Group at Moorhouses Farm, North Yorkshire. The watching brief was conducted during groundworks in December 2019 and no archaeological features were encountered.

Metadata

Original ID: 1003913

Landing page: https://doi.org/10.5284/1085028

Language: English

Resource type: Fieldwork archive

Resource links

View resource at provider

Json | Xml | Rdf | Cite | Report an issue

Resource is part of

ADS Archives

Thematically similar

Thematically similar resources based on terms in common of:

Subject & Time period

Catterwater Wreck Archive

Wearmouth and Jarrow: Northumbrian Monasteries in an Historic Landscape

Northamptonshire Historic Landscape Character Assessment

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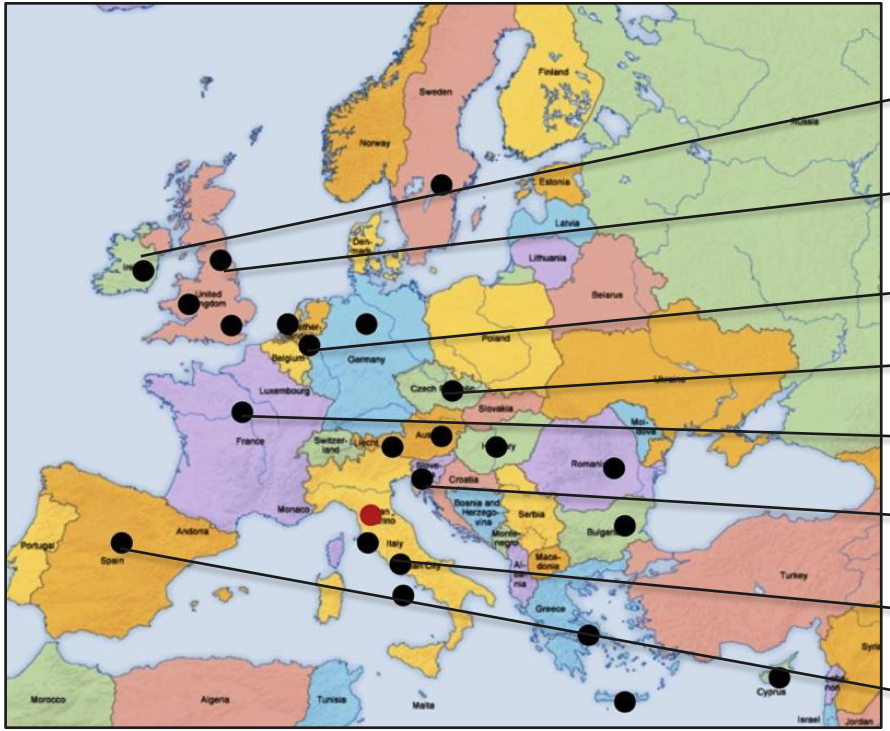
Our metadata to the world



ARIADNE

Archaeological Survey of Ireland, 141,000 records

ADS: 60,000 grey literature reports, over 2000 project archives; 1.4 million records

DANS – 40,000+ fieldwork reports and archives

ARUP (Czech Republic); 230,000 records

INRAP: 27,000 fieldwork reports

ZRC-SAZU (Slovenia), 11,000 site records

FASTI online: 12,000 excavation reports of 3300 sites in 14 countries

CENIEH: 1000 reports

Public Benefit
Legacy
Opportunity
Innovation
Image © Buch Edition

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What if?...

All that was left was the record

Image of empty cabinets at Lviv National Museum from BBC News at bbc.co.uk/news

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THANK YOU

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