

# Augustus Pitt Rivers

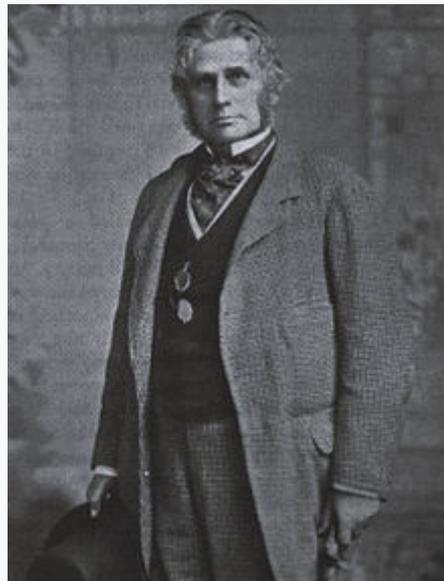
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**Augustus Henry Lane-Fox Pitt Rivers** (14 April 1827 – 4 May 1900) was an English army officer, ethnologist, and archaeologist.<sup>[1]</sup> He was noted for innovations in archaeological methodology, and in the museum display of archaeological and ethnological collections. His international collection of about 22,000 objects was the founding collection of the Pitt Rivers Museum at the University of Oxford<sup>[2]</sup> while his collection of English archaeology from the area around Stonehenge forms the basis of the collection at The Salisbury Museum in Wiltshire.<sup>[3]</sup> Throughout most of his life he used the surname Lane Fox, under which his early archaeological reports are published. In 1880 he adopted the Pitt Rivers name on inheriting from Lord Rivers an estate of more than 32,000 acres in Cranborne Chase.<sup>[4]</sup>

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**Augustus Pitt Rivers**



<b>Born</b>	Augustus Henry Lane-Fox 14 April 1827 Bramham cum Oglethorpe, Wetherby, Yorkshire
<b>Died</b>	4 May 1900 (aged 73) Rushmore Estate, Wiltshire
<b>Nationality</b>	English
<b>Fields</b>	Ethnology, archaeology

## Early life and family

Born **Augustus Henry Lane-Fox** at Bramham cum Oglethorpe near Wetherby in Yorkshire,<sup>[5]</sup> he was the son of William Lane-Fox and Lady Caroline Douglas, sister of George Douglas, 17th Earl of Morton. The politicians George Lane-Fox and Sackville Lane-Fox were his uncles.

In 1880, Lane-Fox inherited the estates of his cousin, Horace Pitt-Rivers, 6th Baron Rivers and with it the remainder of the Richard Rigby fortune. It was "an event that transformed his life."<sup>[2]</sup> He was required to adopt the surname Pitt-Rivers as part of the bequest.<sup>[2]</sup> In Q1, 1853,<sup>[6]</sup> Pitt-Rivers (still under the surname Fox) married The Honourable Alice Margaret Stanley (1828–1910), daughter of the politician Edward Stanley, 2nd Baron Stanley of Alderley and of the women's education campaigner Henrietta Stanley, Baroness Stanley of Alderley.

Pitt-Rivers and Alice had nine children who reached adulthood; they were born between 1855 and 1866.<sup>[7]</sup> As they were all born before Augustus took the new surname in 1880, their births are registered under the name of Fox (or Lane-Fox):-

- Alexander Edward Lane Fox-Pitt-Rivers, 2 November 1855 - 19 August 1927.
- William Augustus Lane Fox-Pitt, 9 January 1858 - 1945?.
- Ursula Katharine Lane Fox-Pitt, 1859? - 1942.

4. Lionel Charles Lane Fox-Pitt, 5 November 1860 - 1937?.
5. Alice Augusta Laurentia Lane Fox-Pitt, circa 1862 - 11 March 1947.
6. Agnes Geraldine Fox-Pitt, 1863 - 7 December 1926.
7. Douglas Henry Lane Fox-Pitt, 17 December 1864 - 19 September 1922.
8. Arthur Algernon Lane Fox-Pitt, 12 April 1866 - 6 November 1895.

Three notable descendants of Augustus are his grandson, the anthropologist, eugenicist, anti-Semite and detainee in 1940 under Defence Regulation 18B George Pitt-Rivers,<sup>[8]</sup> his great-grandson, the anthropologist and ethnographer, Julian A. Pitt-Rivers, and his great-great-grandson, William Fox-Pitt, the equestrian. Another grandson was Michael Pitt-Rivers who gained notoriety in Britain in the 1950s when he was put on trial charged with "buggery".<sup>[9]</sup>

## Military career

Lane-Fox had a long and successful military career as a staff officer. He was educated at the Royal Military College, Sandhurst, for six months at the age of fourteen and was commissioned into the Grenadier Guards on 16 May 1845 as an ensign.<sup>[10]</sup> In the course of a thirty-two year military career, albeit much interrupted by leave, he only once saw major front line action, at the Battle of Alma in 1854. In 1851 he became a member of the committee to experiment and report on the respective merits of the army's smoothbore muskets. He was appointed to Woolwich to instruct in the use of the new Minié rifle in 1852. Subsequently, he was largely responsible for founding the Hythe school of Musketry in Kent and became its principal instructor, revising its *Instruction of Musketry* manual. The remainder of his service career revolved around musketry instruction and in 1858 he published a paper *On the improvement of the rifle as a weapon for general use*.<sup>[11][12]</sup> He bought a promotion to Captain on 2 August 1850.<sup>[13]</sup> He was promoted to the brevet rank of lieutenant-colonel of the army "for distinguished Service in the Field" during the Crimean War.<sup>[14]</sup> On 15 May 1857, he bought the rank of lieutenant-colonel in the Grenadier Guards.<sup>[15]</sup> The then Brevet-Major Lane-Fox, was appointed a member of the Fifth Class of the Order of the Medjidie in 1858 for "distinguished services before the enemy during the [Crimean War]".<sup>[16]</sup> He was promoted to colonel on 22 January 1867.<sup>[17]</sup> Pitt Rivers retired in 1882 and was accorded the honorary rank of Lt General.

## Archaeological career

Pitt Rivers' interests in archaeology and ethnology began in the 1850s, during postings overseas, and he became a noted scientist while he was a serving military officer. He was elected, in the space of five years, to the Ethnological Society of London (1861), the Society of Antiquaries of London (1864) and the Anthropological Society of London (1865). By the time he retired he had amassed ethnographic collections numbering tens of thousands of items from all over the world. Influenced by the evolutionary writings of Charles Darwin and Herbert Spencer, he arranged them typologically and (within types) chronologically. He viewed archaeology as an extension of anthropology and, as consequence, built up matching collections of archaeological and ethnographic objects to show longer developmental sequences – to support his views on cultural evolution.<sup>[18]</sup> This style of arrangement, designed to highlight evolutionary trends in human artefacts, was a revolutionary innovation in museum design. Pitt Rivers' ethnological collections form the basis of the Pitt Rivers Museum which is still one of Oxford's attractions. His researches and collections cover periods from the Lower Paleolithic to Roman and Medieval times, and extend all over the world.<sup>[19]</sup> The Pitt Rivers Museum curates more than half a million ethnographic and archaeological artifacts, photographic and manuscript collections from all parts of the world. The museum was founded in 1884 when the university accepted the gift of more than 20,000 artifacts from Pitt Rivers. The collections continue to grow, and the museum has been described as one of the "six great ethnological museums of the world".<sup>[20]</sup> Pitt Rivers' Wessex Collection is housed in The Salisbury Museum in the city of Salisbury near Stonehenge. The new Wessex Gallery of archaeology opened there in 2014, funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund, and other sources. Pitt Rivers and other early archaeologists such as William Stukeley who first investigated the prehistory of Wiltshire, Cranborne Chase, Avebury and Stonehenge, are celebrated in the new Wessex Gallery.

The estates Pitt Rivers inherited in 1880 contained a wealth of archaeological material from the Roman and Saxon periods. He excavated these over seventeen seasons, from the mid-1880s until his death. His approach was highly methodical by the standards of the time, and he is widely regarded as the first scientific archaeologist to work in Britain. His most important methodological innovation was his insistence that *all* artefacts, not just beautiful or unique ones, be collected and catalogued. This focus on everyday objects as the key to understanding the past broke decisively with past archaeological practice, which verged on treasure hunting. It is Pitt Rivers' most important, and most lasting, scientific legacy. His work inspired Mortimer Wheeler among others to add to the scientific approach of archaeological excavation techniques.

Pitt Rivers created the Larmer Tree Gardens, a public pleasure garden, on the Rushmore estate near Tollard Royal in Wiltshire.

From 1882 Pitt Rivers was Britain's first Inspector of Ancient Monuments: a post created by anthropologist and parliamentarian John Lubbock who married Pitt Rivers' daughter, Alice. Charged with cataloguing archaeological sites and protecting them from destruction, he worked with his customary methodical zeal but was hampered by the limitations of the law, which gave him little real power over the landowners on whose property the sites stood.

On the advice of Pitt-Rivers, Kit's Coty House and Little Kit's Coty House were among the first ancient British remains to be protected by the state. Railings were erected around the stones to prevent vandalism.<sup>[21]</sup>

In 1884 he served as High Sheriff of Dorset.<sup>[22]</sup>

## Advocate for cremation

Pitt Rivers was an advocate for cremation at a time when such a practice was illegal in England.<sup>[23]</sup> Even though many people believed that it was immoral to destroy a corpse, the cremation movement favored a practical way to dispose of bodies. Pitt Rivers was cremated after his death in 1900.



Memorial to Augustus Pitt Rivers in St Peter's Church at Tollard Royal.

## Publications

- Excavations on Cranborne Chase (4 volumes)
- Excavations on Bokerly and Wansdyke.

## Notes

1. "Excavating Pitt-Rivers project"(<http://excavatingpittrivers.blogspot.co.uk/>)Pitt Rivers Museum, University of Oxford Retrieved 2 August 2016.
2. Hicks, Dan (2013). Hicks, Dan; Stevenson, Alice, eds."Characterizing the World Archaeology Collections of the Pitt-Rivers Museum" ([http://www.academia.edu/2232385/Characterizing\\_the\\_World\\_Archaeology\\_Collections\\_of\\_the\\_Pitt\\_Rivers\\_Museum](http://www.academia.edu/2232385/Characterizing_the_World_Archaeology_Collections_of_the_Pitt_Rivers_Museum)) *World Archaeology at the Pitt Rivers Museum a characterization* Oxford: Archaeopress: 1–15."It was founded in 1884 with a donation of a collection of c.22,092 archaeological and ethnological objects, which had been assembled between c.1851 and the early 1880s by General Augustus Henry Lane Fox Pitt-Rivers (1827-1900) – who was known until 1880 simply as Augustus Henry Lane Fox....The PRM founding collection was donated to the University four years after Pitt-Rivers had inherited a large estate (and his new surname): an event that transformed his life."
3. <http://www.maneyonline.com/doi/full/10.1179/1936981614Z.00000000033>
4. Bowden, Mark (1991). "Pitt Rivers. The life and Archaeological work of Lieutenant General Augustus Henry Lane Fox Pitt Rivers". Cambridge University: 64 ISBN 0 521 400775 JSTOR 529871 (<https://www.jstor.org/stable/529871>)
5. "Pitt Rivers and Yorkshire" (<https://web.archive.org/web/20160120045110/http://excavatingpittrivers.blogspot.co.uk/2012/12/pitt-rivers-and-yorkshire.html>)Pitt Rivers Museum, University of Oxford. Archived from the original (<http://excavatingpittrivers.blogspot.co.uk/2012/12/pitt-rivers-and-yorkshire.html>) on 20 January 2016 Retrieved 19 October 2012.

6. <http://www.freebmd.org.uk/> - search on Fox or Stanley
7. <http://web.prm.ox.ac.uk/rpr/index.php/pitt-rivers-life/10-biography-of-general-pitt-rivers/>
8. Griffiths, Richard (1998). *Patriotism Perverted: Captain Ramsay the Right Club and British Anti-Semitism 1939-40* Constable. pp. 54, 65.
9. "Michael Pitt-Rivers" ([https://web.archive.org/web/20130217181808/http://www.lgbthistoryuk.org/wiki/index.php?title=Michael\\_Pitt-Rivers](https://web.archive.org/web/20130217181808/http://www.lgbthistoryuk.org/wiki/index.php?title=Michael_Pitt-Rivers)) *LGBT History Project*. Archived from the original ([http://www.lgbthistoryuk.org/wiki/index.php?title=Michael\\_Pitt-Rivers](http://www.lgbthistoryuk.org/wiki/index.php?title=Michael_Pitt-Rivers)) on 17 February 2013.
10. "No. 20471" (<https://www.thegazette.co.uk/London/issue/20471/page/1472>) *The London Gazette* 16 May 1845. p. 1472.
11. Evans, Christopher (January 30, 2014). "Soldiering Archaeology: Pitt Rivers and 'Militarism'" (<http://www.archaeologybulletin.org/article/view/bha.244/595>) *Bulletin of the History of Archaeology*. **4** (24).
12. OCLC 85009924 (<https://www.worldcat.org/oclc/85009924>)
13. "No. 21123" (<https://www.thegazette.co.uk/London/issue/21123/page/2132>) *The London Gazette* 2 August 1850. p. 2132.
14. "No. 21640" (<https://www.thegazette.co.uk/London/issue/21640/page/4052>) *The London Gazette* 12 December 1854. p. 4052.
15. "No. 22002" (<https://www.thegazette.co.uk/London/issue/22002/page/1734>) *The London Gazette* 15 May 1857. p. 1734.
16. "No. 22107" (<https://www.thegazette.co.uk/London/issue/22107/page/1258>) *The London Gazette* 2 March 1858. p. 1258.
17. "No. 23223" (<https://www.thegazette.co.uk/London/issue/23223/page/1025>) *The London Gazette* 26 February 1867. p. 1025.
18. Bowden, Mark (1991). *Pitt Rivers. The life and archaeological work of Lieutenant General Augustus Henry Lane Fox Pitt Rivers*. (<http://www.jstor.org.libaccess.lib.mcmaster.ca/stable/40287168?seq=1&Search=yes&list=hide&searchUri=/action/doAdvancedSearch?c3%3DAND%26amp%3bc2%3DAND%26amp%3bc1%3DAND%26amp%3bc6%3DAND%26amp%3bc5%3DAND%26amp%3bc4%3DAND%26amp%3bf4%3Dall%26amp%3bq1%3D%26amp%3bf6%3D%26amp%3bf0%3Dall%26amp%3bf1%3Dall%26amp%3bf2%3Dall%26amp%3bf3%3Dall%26amp%3bq5%3D%26amp%3bq4%3D%26amp%3bq6%3D%26amp%3bisbn%3D%26amp%3bq0%3Dpitt%26amp%3bq3%3D%26amp%3bq2%3D%26amp%3bacc%3Don%26amp%3bla%3D%26amp%3bf5%3Dall%26amp%3bsd%3D%26amp%3D%26amp%3bwc%3Don%26amp%3bed%3D&prevSearch=&resultsServiceName=null&>) Cambridge University p. 65. ISBN 0 521 400775
19. Penniman, TK (Jul–Aug 1946). "General Pitt Rivers" *Man*. **46**: 73–74. JSTOR 2793146 (<https://www.jstor.org/stable/2793146>).
20. Petch, Alison (March 2007). "Notes and Queries and the Pitt Rivers Museum" (<http://onlinelibrarywiley.com.libaccess.lib.mcmaster.ca/doi/10.1525/mua.2007.30.1.21/pdf>) *Museum Anthropology*. **30** (1): 21–39. doi:10.1525/mua.2007.30.1.21 (<https://doi.org/10.1525/mua.2007.30.1.21>)
21. <http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/visit/places/kits-coty-house-and-little-kits-coty-house/history/>
22. "No. 25325" (<https://www.thegazette.co.uk/London/issue/25325/page/117>). *The London Gazette* 4 March 1884. p. 1117.
23. Bryson, Bill (2010). *At Home: A Short History of Private Life* New York: Doubleday. pp. 341–342. ISBN 978-0-7679-1938-8.

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-  Tylor, Edward Burnett (1901). "Pitt-Rivers, Augustus Henry Lane Fox". In Sidney Lee. *Dictionary of National Biography, 1901 supplement*. London: Smith, Elder & Co.

## Further reading

- Waterfield, Herminone; King, J. C. H. (2006). *Provenance: Twelve Collectors of Ethnographic Art in England 1760–1990*. Paris: Somogy éditions d'art. ISBN 978-1903470961.

## External links

-  Works written by or about Augustus Pitt Rivers at Wikisource
- The Pitt Rivers Museum, Oxford, with biography
- The Pitt Rivers Galleries at Salisbury and South Wiltshire Museum
- Augustus Pitt-Rivers on BBC Radio 4's *In Our Time*, with links and further reading
- Works by Augustus Henry Lane-Fox Pitt-Rivers at Project Gutenberg
- Works by or about Augustus Henry Lane-Fox Pitt-Rivers at Internet Archive



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Categories: People associated with the Pitt Rivers Museum | English archaeologists  
| Fellows of the Royal Society | Fellows of the Ethnological Society of London | Museum founders  
| British collectors | 1827 births | 1900 deaths | People from Wetherby  
| Graduates of the Royal Military College, Sandhurst | British Army personnel of the Crimean War  
| Grenadier Guards officers | British Army generals | Fellows of the Society of Antiquaries of London  
| High Sheriffs of Dorset

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