



IN PERSON... *Neil Oliver*

The historian delves deep into Europe's past in a new series with Alice Roberts

THE CELTS: BLOOD, IRON & SACRIFICE

BBC2 • Monday

In the Russell Crowe movie *Gladiator*, the Romans are confronted by these shaggy-haired, rag-wearing barbarians who come howling out of the trees, and that's the view of the Celts which

many people still have. In fact they were sophisticated, with beautiful artwork and jewellery. We filmed across Europe over four months. We went to an Austrian salt mine, which was like a time capsule – the salt stops decomposition, whether it's a leather shoe or excrement. The thrill of visiting places like that never goes away. In my

whole career, I think the highlight is being in the same room as the remains of Boxgrove Man. It's two pieces of shin bone and two teeth, maybe 500,000 years old, from a heavily built person about 6ft tall. If it was Boxgrove Woman, she wasn't the sort you'd want to come home to smelling of drink!