

Medieval Archaeology

NEWSLETTER OF THE SOCIETY FOR MEDIEVAL ARCHAEOLOGY

Public Medieval Archaeology in 2018



The 60th issue of this newsletter is something to be celebrated for its achievement in keeping members of the Society for Medieval Archaeology up-to-date and in touch with news and views about medieval archaeology across the UK and Ireland. There is certainly plenty of this, and one thing that is particularly exciting is the volume of community archaeology, which is giving members of the wider public the chance to take part in excavations focused on medieval sites. I have managed to visit three of these in recent weeks, all very different but all giving people a profound experience of the past while also making important new discoveries.

Dundonald Castle in south Ayrshire (<http://www.dundonaldcastle.org.uk/>) is on a stunning hilltop site, visible for miles around and commanding views over every bit of the settlement below. The importance of the site to the local community is demonstrated by the

presence of a lively combined community-and-visitor centre and a café, ensuring the perfect combination of cake and archaeology is available to visitors and locals alike. The earliest dated standing remains have been dated to the 14th century, when it was held by Robert II of Scotland (grandson of Robert the Bruce and founder of the royal House of Stuart), but the presence of earlier remains has long been suspected. This summer, a community excavation sought to explore the area around the foot of the keep, starting with a feature identified by geophysical survey.

When I visited on 22 August, a very enthusiastic team of local volunteers supervised by CFA Archaeology had only just started tickling the surface: one of the trenches was still firmly modern, but even the 19th-century coins and 20th-century concrete were adding to knowledge about the use of this medieval site as a tourist attraction, complemented by large amounts

Contents

Public Medieval Archaeology	1
Grants	3
Society News	5
Group Reports	9
Media and Exhibition	12
New Titles	14
Information Gathering	15
Forthcoming Events	16

Issue 60 leads with a report from our President on examples of community archaeology across the UK. The impact of **Time Team** has been profound, and a positive outcome of the recession has, arguably, been the uptake of 'bottom-up' approaches that engage amateurs and communities with our profession. This in turn correctly challenges us to create narratives that explain our cultural heritages to the many rather than to the few. It remains a most interesting time to be an archaeologist whether in the UK, Ireland or further afield, and the SMA continues to be at the forefront.

Niall Brady
Newsletter Editor
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Left:
Julian Richards speaking at Lindisfarne, with
Mick Aston surely approving.



Volunteer excavators working in Trench 2, Dundonald Castle, Ayrshire.

of blue-and-white transfer printed wares in a second trench that could be directly connected with local use for community picnics in the days before Tupperware. But other trenches, no deeper, were already revealing new medieval walls and within a week more had appeared snaking past the concrete in Trench 1. Post-excitation is still underway, but these new discoveries may help unravel the development of this site, whose unusual above-ground complexities have so far defied any attempt at explanation.

Another castle, another community dig, seems to have been the theme of summer 2018, but Clare Castle in Suffolk (<http://clarecastlecountrypark.co.uk/>) is very different from Dundonald. Although both had a heyday in the 14th century and boast upstanding masonry remains perched way above the local town, in the case of Clare the massive eminence the castle keep sits on top of is a motte of human origin, and the riverside valley bottom site has a documented history dating back to the 1090s. Excavations in 2013 took this story back into the pre-Norman period, and included the discovery of in situ human remains of 11th century AD date within one of the two castle baileys (<https://www.access.arch.cam.ac.uk/reports/suffolk/clare-castle/2013>), as well as residual finds from the Mesolithic to the Roman period. The discovery that intact archaeological features including burials and an associated building had survived the 19th-century construction of a railway across the castle site supported a successful bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund to develop the educational potential of the site, including a further three seasons of excavation that began in September.

This first year of the new phase of excavations, directed by Suffolk Archaeology (@SCCArchaeology), saw around 100 local volunteers completing more than 300 days digging in the outer bailey, where no modern excavations have ever

taken place in a part of the site rather perplexingly often dismissed as of little interest, despite being furnished by substantial bailey earthworks and lying immediately adjacent to both the town and the inner bailey of the castle. The 2018 excavations revealed the flint footings for a 19x9.5m building, along with an extensive spread of flint hardstanding and two deep deposits of daub and mortar with wattle impressions, which suggest a large oven and/or chimney that may be part of the documented bakery and brewhouse. Other aspects of castle life are reflected in medieval metal finds, including horseshoes and horseshoe nails as well as other high-status finds including somewhat enigmatic items thought to be specialised pre-14th century military arrowheads. Perhaps most intriguingly, sherds of Middle Anglo-Saxon pottery as well as a copper-alloy penannular brooch and 7th-century bone pin represent the first archaeological evidence to indicate that the medieval use of the site of Clare Castle extends back before the 10th century. This is helping to answer one of the key research questions about the site and will contribute to wider understanding of the long-term development of elite sites in the medieval period.

Most of the volunteers at Dundonald and Clare are local to the sites they were excavating, but the dig at Lindisfarne was very different. Here, crowd-sourcing was used to supplement HLF funding for the excavation, which has been underway since 2016 in a collaboration between Durham University and DigVentures (<https://digventures.com/lindisfarne/>) and has attracted volunteers from as far away as the United States. In 2012, a major geophysical survey identified the possible remains of a second cloister but other evidence relating to the monastic precinct was more ambiguous. Excavation by hundreds of volunteers since 2016 has revealed structures associated with the infirmary cloister, and human remains



dated by radiocarbon to the 8th–10th centuries AD, including some in situ burials and the extremely rare find of ‘name stone’ burial markers.

As one highlight of this year’s excavations at Lindisfarne, a public conference commemorating and celebrating Mick Aston featured a weekend of talks by archaeologists from across the UK who had worked with Mick. This gave me the opportunity to visit the excavations and participate in the conference, which included other scions of the Society for Medieval Archaeology and many former members of *Time Team*. Focussed on Mick’s main research interests on medieval settlement and monasteries, the conference was dominated by medieval papers, including the Society’s Monographs Editor Chris Gerrard’s reflective look back at the Shapwick project that foreshadowed so much subsequent

work in inhabited villages, and Theresa Hall’s latest insights from the continuing work she and Mick started in their home village of Winscombe. My paper was on the Black Death as revealed by test pitting, a technique Mick and Chris pioneered at Shapwick. Helen Geake spoke on Anglo-Saxon finds and, of course, David Petts talked about the Lindisfarne excavations.

While the conference was a one-off, the excavations will all continue in 2019, but what is really clear from the social media buzz around the 2018 digs is how exciting members of the wider public find medieval archaeology, especially when they have the chance to explore this for themselves.

Carenza Lewis
President

Society Grants

Viking-Age Steatite and status in household objects

Riiia M. Chmielowski, a part-time, long-distance postgraduate research student at Durham University, was a recipient of a grant from this year’s Eric Fletcher Fund. She used the funds to attend the *SMA Grave Concerns Conference* in Durham, 13–15 July, where she submitted the award-winning (2nd place) poster: ‘Viking-Age Steatite: Do Every-Day Household Objects Reveal Differences in Status?’ Her PhD project aims to gain a broader understanding of the movement and trade of steatite within Scandinavia and the Scandinavian colonies during the Viking Age. Steatite, an easily carved stone, appears in the form of vessels and other household objects in many Scandinavian graves from the Viking Age. She plans to use LA-ICP-MS analysis to

determine and compare the provenance of steatite objects from both high- and low-status grave sites to test the hypothesis that status is an important factor in what trade goods families and communities had access to, even for basic household objects. While she enjoyed all of the talks, she especially appreciated the first paper on Friday morning, in which Gareth Perry described the application of a ceramic ‘catchment area’, that region where the urns in the cemeteries all came from the same source. She hopes to use this concept in her own steatite provenance study.

Riia Chmielowski
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Left: Anthropomorphic figurine from Dalsland. Centre: Map of steatite quarry sites. Right: Map of steatite artefacts.



Other Grants

Castle Studies Trust Increases Maximum Grant Award to £10,000

The big news this autumn from the Castle Studies Trust is that it is increasing the maximum amount it can award to £10,000. The Trust will still be happy to fund smaller projects, however, the 33% increase in the maximum it can award will give it the capacity to fund larger and potentially more complex projects.

The other change of note for potential applicants is the closing date for applications has been brought forward by two weeks to 1 December. For full grant-giving criteria please see: <http://castlestudiestrust.org/Grants.html> Early indications suggest there will be a number of very interesting projects coming in.

Of the six projects the Castle Studies Trust funded early this year all are progressing well. Two have already finished their survey work and reported, while the work on Bolingbroke and Pembroke have been completed and are ready to report.

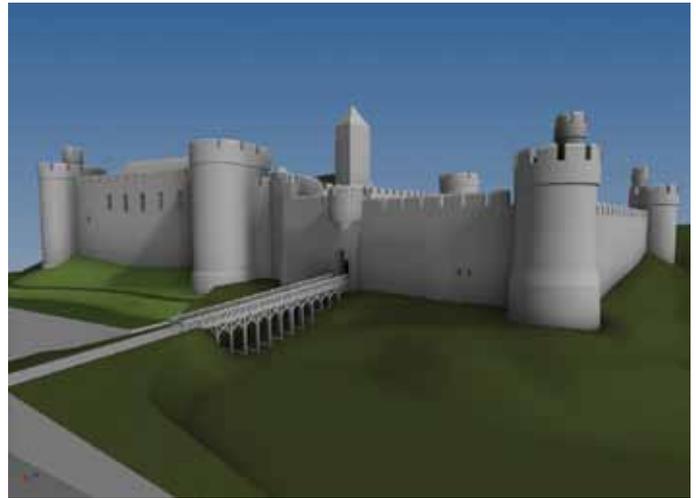
- **Pembroke, Wales** – The excavations and topographical survey took place between 3–16 September this year. The two trenches were to confirm the site of a late medieval structure found during the geophysical survey that we funded in 2016. At time of writing the results were being processed but for an indication of the what happened you can look at the dig diary at <http://www.dyfedarchaeology.org.uk/digdiaries2017/stishmael2017.html>

- **Laughton-en-le-Morthen, England** – the archaeological investigation of the motte and bailey castle has been completed. Its results can be found at <http://castlestudiestrust.org/Laughton-en-le-Morthen.html> The investigation suggests that the Normans placed their castle right in the middle of an Anglo-Saxon lordly residence. Equally importantly, the methodology used in this will influence how archaeologists approach other sites. A detailed paper by the project lead, Duncan Wright will appear shortly in a peer-reviewed journal.

- **Keith Marischal, Scotland** – geophysical survey at Keith Marischal House, in search of a lost medieval castle and renaissance palace. The survey unfortunately proved to be inconclusive.

- **Bolingbroke, England** – The work in the Route Yard and on Dewy Hill was completed in mid-August, with results being processed at the time of writing.

- **Dig It! 2017 Castles of South Scotland** – The team has filmed most of the short videos about Dundonald, MacDuff's, Neidpath, Ravenscraig, Crichton and Borthwick. The first



Preliminary reconstruction model of Ruthin Castle, Wales.

video was released at the end of August on Dundonald. You can see the films at <http://www.digitScotland.com/dig-it-tv-youtube/>

- **Ruthin, Wales** – The team is working on this at the moment, pulling together what little information there is to work out what the castle looked like and how the various parts fitted together.

Donate to attend exclusive site visits

None of this could be done without the generous help of our supporters. By making a substantial one-off donation or setting up a standing order you can join them and help to advance castle studies. You also get the opportunity to:

- Visit sites not accessible to the general public. Four out of the five projects this year are on private land.
- Get exclusive previews and insight on the projects from the project teams before everyone else.

You can donate:

- By credit or debit card by going to <https://mydonate.bt.com/charities/castlestudiestrust>
- By cheque (made payable to the Castle Studies Trust) or standing order – complete the attached form and return either along with the Gift Aid form if applicable to the address on the forms at <http://castlestudiestrust.org/Donate.html>

To find out more about all the projects we have funded this year and the Pembroke and Caus reports, please visit our website <http://www.castlestudiestrust.org> or contact the chair of trustees, Jeremy Cunnington.

Help the Castle Studies Trust Fund More Projects

With many high quality applications on important sites anticipated this year we need your help to fund as many as possible. Donors of significant amounts will be able to attend exclusive site visits. To find out more, please visit <http://castlestudiestrust.org/Donate.html> for the different ways of supporting the Trust and help us fund more exciting work. If you have any questions about the CST, please contact us.

Jeremy Cunnington, Chair of Trustees
admin@castlestudiestrust.org

Website

www.medievalarchaeology.co.uk

The website continues to improve.

Send us your comments:

medievalarchaeology@googlemail.com

Apply for a Grant

The Society is in the happy position of being able to offer grants for research and for travel. For information on how to apply for a Society grant/award, see our website,

www.medievalarchaeology.co.uk

Current Officers

President: Carenza Lewis

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& Gabor Thomas

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Be sure to check out our website and facebook pages for updates on members' events that fall between Newsletter dates

SMA Members are entitled to discounts on ALL Routledge books

Society members are entitled to a 20% discount on all Routledge books. To apply the discount, please go online to the Routledge website, <https://www.routledge.com/>, and use the following promotional code: MA20.

Society News

Notice of the Annual General Meeting

The 2018 AGM of the Society will be held at 18:00 on Monday 3 December 2018 in the Philip Rahtz Lecture Theatre (K/133), The King's Manor, University of York, YO1 7EP.

Agenda

1. Minutes of last Annual General Meeting
2. Elections of Officers and Council

The following nominations have been received for election:

Honorary Secretary Dr Karen Milek

Members of Council Dr Alice Blackwell

Dr Stuart Brookes

Dr Catriona McKenzie

3. Election of auditors
Bronsens, 267 Banbury Road, Oxford
4. President's Report
5. Treasurer's report
6. Editor's report
7. Secretary's report
8. Prizes
9. Any other business
10. Date of next meeting

The AGM will be followed by three short lectures on recent archaeological discoveries (at around 18:30):

Dr Sarah Croix: **Revisiting a 'Northern Emporium' – about recent excavations in Viking-Age Ribe**

Dr Adrián Maldonado: **Rethinking the early medieval monastery of Iona**

Dr Gabor Thomas: **Building early medieval identities: Lyminge and the agency of post-Roman elite centres**

(see back page for abstracts of these short presentations)

The lectures will be followed by a wine reception at around 19.30. The event and wine reception are free to attend for members of the Society. It would help planning of the event if members of the Society could indicate their intention to attend through the Eventbrite site that has been set up and is accessible from the Society's webpage: <http://www.medievalarchaeology.co.uk/>

Dawn Hadley, Hon. Secretary

Dawn.Hadley@York.ac.uk

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Announcing the SMA's 2019 Annual Conference

The Society's Annual Conference in 2019 will be on the 5–6 July at King's Manor in York, and will be on *New perspectives on the 'long' Black Death*. It will bring together researchers from a range of disciplines to explore how new research is advancing our understanding of the origins and impact of the 14th-century epidemic of plague that swept across the old world. The Black Death is a topic which was until recently somewhat neglected as an area of serious study, but this situation has been transformed in the 21st century by new approaches that are rapidly advancing knowledge of the eruption and devastation of an epidemic that may have lessons for today's world. The keynote speaker will be Monica Green, Arizona State University, who will discuss: 'The historian, the archaeologist and the geneticist: Pandemic Thinking'. For more information, see <http://www.medievalarchaeology.co.uk/index.php/events/conferences/>



Grave Concerns: Death, Landscape and Locality in Medieval Society. SMA's 2018 Annual Conference report

This year's Society for Medieval Archaeology annual conference took place at Durham University between the 13th and 15th July 2018. The conference, a collaboration between the Society and a Leverhulme-funded project hosted at Durham called *People and Place: Creating the Kingdom of Northumbria*, addressed the topic of death and burial in early to late medieval Britain and Europe.

Since 1990 a series of major conferences and publications have investigated aspects of death and burial in medieval societies in Europe and beyond. Some have delivered state-of-the-art research on early medieval and medieval funerary rites; others have profiled new advances in scientific research. The proceedings of the last SMA conference that dealt with burial were of course published in 2002 in the Society monograph series by Sam Lucy and Andrew Reynolds in the seminal volume *Burial in Early Medieval England and Wales*, which captured some of the major changes in thinking at the time on identity, community and belief. Since then spatial consideration has developed as a significant research strand in medieval archaeology, relevant to understanding settlement patterns, land use and travel and the experiential nature of monuments, places and landscapes. From exploring the distribution patterns of grave types and the use of antecedent landscape features for burial and charting the rise of commemorative markers in stone, to identifying patterns of diseases and health in medieval populations and their mobility; the location of the grave has become a rich stepping-off point, stimulating and facilitating new research directions.

With this in mind, the 2018 conference brought together established and early career researchers working on aspects of death, landscape and locality from AD 300–1500 in Britain and Europe. A key concern of the event was to promote new dialogues bridging early medieval, medieval and late medieval funerary archaeology and to initiate a broader transnational and comparative debate on methods, theories and approaches relevant to mortuary archaeology in the Middle Ages. The content delivered by our 21 speakers did not disappoint and it was particularly pleasing to listen to wide-ranging sessions that juxtaposed perspectives from Dalmatia and Pictland, or the Low Countries and Ireland, mixed scientific and social approaches and dissolved chronological divisions.

We were fortunate in having three exceptional and thought-provoking keynote papers. We started with a review of the treatment and exploration of Merovingian mortuary archaeology in past and present from Bonnie Effros on Friday evening in Durham Cathedral. Despite the imposing venue of the Cathedral Chapter House, our speaker kept the audience fully engaged in a critical reflection on the relevance of considering mortuary archaeology in context and a reception followed in the late evening light in the medieval cloister. On Saturday evening the audience heard an inspiring exploration of experiential and individual approaches to understanding human interactions with death in the medieval era from Roberta Gilchrist followed by another sunshine-filled reception at the poster evening in the Calman Centre with views over the historic Durham peninsula. Finally we closed on Sunday with a rich exploration of the architecture



Our President, Professor Carenza Lewis addresses the Society at the opening event in the Chapter House of Durham Cathedral.

and grammar of mortuary archaeology in early Anglo-Saxon England from the Society's Honorary Treasurer Duncan Sayer, leaving the audience with considerable food for thought on their journey home. In between, our speakers provided new insights to cremation in Britain and the near Continent; explored the rich evidence for monument reuse in Scotland, Dalmatia and Francia; and charted the experiential nature of sculpture, burial and travel as elements of Norse tradition and in the context of Irish and western Christianity. Papers highlighted some recent seminal cemetery excavations such as Vicq in France and Lakenheath in Suffolk, while other speakers drew on the material evidence of the grave contents to explore aspects of ritual practice such as the use of gold coins, or the bioarchaeological contribution of skeletal assemblages. Important themes to emerge included the intersection of domestic and funerary spheres, the idea of resilient traditions during times of change, the importance of experiential approaches to graves, cemeteries and funerary landscapes and the need to individualise and anthropologise death and understand medieval experience.

We were also fortunate in receiving a broad range of poster presentations. Some 20 posters covered research topics including funerary practice in Normandy, the fifth-

century Thames Valley, bioarchaeological perspectives on Anglo-Saxon bed burials, life and death in Ipswich, and micromorphological exploration of the Pictish grave fills at Rhynie, in Aberdeenshire, Scotland. The Society awarded prizes to two researchers for their posters: Riia M. Chmielowski for 'Viking-Age Steatite: Do Every-Day Household Objects Reveal Differences in Status?' (see page 3 above) and Celia Orsini for 'Monument reuse: localised identity, regional diversity'. A poster by Elizabeth O'Brien and her team on the *Mapping Death project in Ireland: People, Boundaries and Territories in Ireland, 1st to the 8th centuries AD* was highly commended by the judges.

Thus in a friendly setting, the conference delivered state-of-the-art research and outlined new agendas in the field of medieval funerary rites. It also gave a voice to a range of new early career researchers alongside more established academics, providing attendees with a privileged insight into the up-and-coming new work that will no doubt change how we think about and use burial and cemetery evidence in medieval research in the decade to come.

Sarah Semple, Celia Orsini and Kate Mees
Durham University, UK

another conference: **the 2018 EAA**

The 60th issue of the Newsletter seems an appropriate moment to celebrate further - and I do feel there is much to feel positive about in the world of medieval archaeology. Having recently returned from the **European Archaeological Association** conference in Barcelona, it was striking how many sessions explored medieval topics – in a conference that a few years ago was dominated by earlier periods. Dozens of sessions run concurrently, at the EAA, so it is only ever possible to attend a tiny number of the papers on offer of course, but these do provide a chance to explore new work in a diverse range of areas (geographical and thematic). On day 1, a session on early medieval transitions explored continuity and discontinuity from late classical period to the 5th–9th centuries, including my presentation inviting comment on the curious lack of Romano-British material from excavations in currently occupied rural settlements, as well as several papers by early career researchers showing how academically dynamic this period is. The following day, a day-long session on medieval small finds ranged across Europe from the Atlantic to Russia, with the latter including a thought-provoking paper by Anastasia Fedorina on the significance of an increase in the number and spread of fragments of locks and keys recovered from deserted rural settlements around

Suzdal, near Moscow. On the final day, a session on elite settlements provided an opportunity to consider how we as archaeologists identify 'elite' sites and what (if anything) the term really means – piqued by Trine Borake's paper on reinterpreting settlement plans from Denmark including Tiss from an anarchist perspective. That afternoon, a session on bio-social perspectives on medieval pestilence highlighted the amount of research across a range of specialisms that is now focussing on this topic. One unexpected new insight came from Ptolomaïos Paxinos, whose work is suggesting that an increase in the proportion of cats may be one marker of post-Black Death faunal assemblages. This session also showed how interesting and timely the Society for Medieval Archaeology's conference in 2019 (5–6 July, York), on the 'Long' Black Death, is going to be. On Sunday, the post-conference tour of medieval sites across rural Catalonia included the stunningly sited excavated settlement of L'Esquerda, whose Iberian hillfort remains are overlain by a medieval hilltop village and church with associated rock-cut medieval graves. At Sant Pere de Terrassa, three successive medieval episcopal churches from the see of Egara, dating from the 5th century are still standing on top of the remains of a Roman villa, over whose mosaic floors we tiptoed as we looked at medieval wall paintings, a crypt and excavated burials.

Carenza Lewis
 President

Money, economy and society in Late Saxon England: The Lenborough Hoard and the monetary impact of Anglo-Danish rule, invitations to apply for a Collaborative Doctoral Award

The AHRC-funded **Midlands4Cities Doctoral Training Partnership** (M4C) brings together eight leading universities across the Midlands to support the professional and personal development of the next generation of arts and humanities doctoral researchers. M4C is a partnership between the University of Birmingham, Birmingham City University, University of Warwick, Coventry University, University of Leicester, De Montfort University, Nottingham Trent University and The University of Nottingham. M4C is awarding up to 80 doctoral studentships for UK/EU applicants for 2019 through an open competition, and 11 Collaborative Doctoral Awards (CDA) through a linked competition with a range of partner organisations in the cultural, creative and heritage sector.

The Department of History, Politics and International Relations at the University of Leicester is inviting applications from students with research interests in the field of Early Medieval History and Archaeology, for a project funded through a Collaborative Doctoral Award.

Project partners:
 The Bucks County Museum Trust and the British Museum.

University supervisors:
 Professor Jo Story (History, University of Leicester) and Professor Chris Loveluck (Classics and Archaeology, University of Nottingham).

Project Partner supervisors:
 Brett Thorn (BCMT) and Dr Gareth Williams (BM)

Project details:
<https://www.midlands4cities.ac.uk/documents/cda/2019-start/uol-bucks-county-museum-trust.pdf>

Project contact and enquiries:
 Jo Story – js73@le.ac.uk

The deadline for M4C funding applications is 14 January 2019 (noon), by which time students must have applied for a place to study and have ensured that two academic references are submitted using the Midlands4Cities online reference form.

For full details of eligibility, funding, research supervision areas and CDA projects, please visit <https://www.midlands4cities.ac.uk> or contact.enquiries@midlands4cities.ac.uk

Informal note: While experience of numismatics is desirable, it is certainly not an essential selection criterion. We are looking for a student who has an aptitude for using material culture to understand broad historical questions.

Group Reports 2017



mid-15th century wall paintings in the Church of St Peter and St Paul, Pickering.

Castle Studies Group

In April 2017 our Castles Studies Group members spent the weekend at the Cedar Court Hotel in Harrogate for the Annual Conference and 31st AGM. The conference was organised by Peter Burton with the helpful assistance of a number of our members for logistics, the guide book, and site introductions. The conference was focused on the castles of North Yorkshire, show-casing the architectural diversity of the castles of the region, as well as a good date-range in terms of the original establishment of the castles and later alterations to them. The conference followed the usual CSG format of mainly site visits, but benefited from two evening lectures delivered by local experts. The first, by David Mercer, took a new look at the castles of the North Riding, whilst the second, by Shaun Richardson, focused on the 14th-century castles of the region. As usual their lectures put the sites that we were to visit into context, but crucially they also brought members up-to-date with the current thinking about the sites, posing questions that we could ponder, debate, and reflect upon, both during the visits and in the bar later on! As is usual for CSG, the visits included some privately owned sites for which we were granted special access. The sites visited were Skipton, Middleham, Bolton, Richmond (including Scolland's Hall recently featured in *Medieval Archaeology* 175), Sheriff Hutton, Helmsley, Cropton, Pickering, Markenfield Hall and Harewood. Our guides included John Kenyon, Malcolm Hislop, Erik Matthews, Shaun Richardson, Ed Dennison and estate staff at Harewood. Not content with this stunning line-up of castles, some members also took the opportunity to visit the Church of St Peter and St Paul in Pickering to view its fabulous display of mid-15th century wall paintings; a real highlight. Accessing Harewood was a personal highlight for me, as was the visit to Castle Bolton, designed by John Lewyn of Durham. It is truly a study in late 14th-century domestic planning, where lines of communication between chambers are carefully contrived on both the vertical and horizontal planes to allow or restrict access depending on the function of the chamber and the status of its occupants. All of this would have been considered by Lewyn from the very start, and the end result is remarkable.

At our AGM, Therron Welstead was elected as our new Bulletin Editor and committee member following the retirement

of Peter Burton from this post. Peter had been instrumental in getting the bulletin to its current quality and format, as a readable and reliable resource for members with useful news items, short articles, diary dates and fun castle tidbits. Peter's tenure also saw the bulletin move to e-publication from hard copy. Peter was presented with a copy of Rob Liddiard's *Late Medieval Castles* as a parting gift. Therron's tenure promises to continue Peter's good work and move the bulletin to three issues per year.

In October members attended a site study day at Hornby Castle, organised by Peter Burton and Erik Matthews. Erik has been researching and excavating at Hornby for a number of years as the fieldwork co-ordinator for the Architectural and Archaeological Society of Durham and Northumberland. The day began with two lectures outlining the history of the castle and its designed landscape, before allowing members to visit the grounds of the 15th-century courtyard castle and the ongoing excavation of an earlier moated structure. The day concluded with a visit to the associated church at St Mary's with Erik as our lead. The study days are proving popular with members and are something that the group is keen to continue.

The CSG Journal includes news of CSG activities, members' interests and updates on castle research. Castle-related publications for the year are listed and reviewed in the CSG Bibliography No. 29. The Journal is distributed to all members each December and is edited and produced by Neil Guy. The Spring and August CSG interim E-Bulletins are due to increase in number to three per year and will be compiled, edited and distributed by Therron Welstead. Committee members can be contacted by email via the contacts page at www.castlestudiesgroup.org.uk.

Undergraduates and post-graduates who are writing a dissertation or thesis on a castle-related theme may qualify to attend the Annual Conference at half price. CSG also awards small grants of up to £1,000 to group projects involving castle research, details for which are on the website.

Gillian Scott, Hon. Secretary
secretary@castlestudiesgroup.org.uk
www.castlestudiesgroup.org.uk

Finds Research Group



FRG members outside the Durham University Museum of Archaeology. Photo: FRG.

It has been another busy year for the Finds Research Group, with a meeting and conference in Durham, committee meetings in London and York, and the publication of our 50th Datasheet.

In April we visited Durham during the most glorious spring weather for ‘Archaeology and the small finds of North-East England’, a conference jointly hosted by ourselves and the Department of Archaeology (Durham University) Material and Visual Culture Research Group, the Architectural and Archaeological Society of Durham and Northumberland, and CBA North. It was led by Gary Bankhead, Honorary Associate in the Department of Archaeology, and the man responsible for retrieving a remarkable collection of artefacts from the River Wear. FRG members had an opportunity to look at some of the hundreds of objects Gary has found so far as well as a private tour of the Durham University Museum of Archaeology.

We published two Datasheets – number 49 on ‘Late 13th and early 14th-century copper-alloy jetton hooks’ by Alex Bliss and our special 50th edition on ‘Copper-alloy Purse Components: a new classification using finds from England and Wales recorded by the Portable Antiquities Scheme’ by

David Williams. Our Datasheets now feature full colour and we’re very proud of them. Visit our website for information on how to submit a proposal for a Datasheet, and for a free download of some of the earlier publications.

Our annual Geoff Egan Prize was this year awarded to two researchers: Rik Lettany (the Zeebrugge wreck) and Kevin Claxton (Battle of Cheriton), after perhaps the stiffest competition to date. The panel noted with satisfaction the high quality and originality of new artefact-work being undertaken by students and less established scholars. This year’s bumper crop is no doubt the result of increased awareness emerging from our targeted social-media campaign, but we suspect there is still more excellent artefacts research out there going unacknowledged. If you know of someone who may like to submit a piece of recent research, do put them in touch with us.

For further information regarding membership and meetings, please visit www.findsresearchgroup.com

Nicola Powell, FRG Editor in Chief
nicola_helen@hotmail.co.uk

The MSRG's Randall manor field-trip, with grateful thanks to Sheila Sweetinburgh.



Medieval Settlement Research Group

Once again, it has been an interesting and productive year for the Medieval Settlement Research Group. At the end of 2017, Bob Silvester stood down as President after three years in the role, and Stuart Wrathmell was welcomed as his successor at our December AGM. The committee recorded its thanks to Bob for steering us so ably through the last three years, and in particular for overseeing the Group's revised constitution, which was approved by members at the AGM. Stuart continues his strong association with the Group, having been a valued committee member since 2016.

As usual, our two main events have been the Winter Seminar, held at the University of Leicester in December, and our Spring Conference, hosted by Canterbury Christ Church University. The Winter Seminar theme was Animals in Medieval Settlements, and more than 80 delegates were warmly welcomed to Leicester on what was a very cold winter's morning by our hosts, the Centre for English Local History. Both the inclement weather and an untimely rail strike meant some last-minute changes to the programme and give special thanks to Richard Jones for stepping into the breach with a fantastic paper on dogs in royal forest settlements; and to Becca Gregory, for reading Kishli Laister-Scott's paper on her behalf. Top marks also to our intrepid delegates, most of whom still managed to get to Leicester! We also heard excellent papers from Chris Dyer on housing medieval livestock, Sheila Sweetinburgh on seasonal settlers, and Zoe Knapp on human-animal relationships in Lyminge. Our Spring Conference was organised by Andy Seaman on the theme of Forest, Woodland and Settlement, and was attended by almost 60 delegates, who enjoyed a walking tour of Canterbury and a field-trip to Randall manor in addition to a packed programme. Speakers included Della Hooke on the resources of the Wealden woodlands, Paul Everill on hunting lodges in the New Forest, and Michael Bintley on timber buildings.

Once again, we will return to Leicester for this year's Winter Seminar, which will be on the theme of Settlement in the Danelaw, organised by Stuart Wrathmell. We already have a first-class line-up of speakers, including Dawn Hadley, Julian Richards and David Stocker. Full details of this event are available on our website: <https://medieval-settlement.com/events/> and registration will open in the autumn. We have recently re-launched the John Hurst Memorial Prize as a competition for the best student paper on any theme on medieval landscape and settlement. The shortlisted papers will be presented at a new morning session of the Winter Seminar, and the winner will receive £200 and the opportunity to have an edited version of their paper published in our journal, *Medieval Settlement Research*. This competition is open to students at Diploma, MA or PhD level study, enrolled in

landscape archaeology, history, geography and other cognate subject areas. Applications are currently being accepted, and again, details can be found online: <https://medieval-settlement.com/grants-awards/dissertation-award/>. Further details can be obtained from the Hon. Secretary.

We have a new Student Representative, Eddie Procter, who is working hard to improve the benefits of membership for our student members (although student membership is already a bargain at just £6!). We now have student pages on our website, and we are encouraging students to send in short biographies detailing their research, which we can promote online. Eddie (alongside Duncan Berryman) also organised three MSRSG-sponsored sessions at the International Medieval Congress in Leeds again this year. The sessions, on the theme of Memory, Settlement and Landscape, were lively and well attended, and took us from the sleepy Huntingdonshire village of Elton to Galicia, via Charnwood Forest, Yeavinger, Armenia, and Wales. It was especially noteworthy that two of our speakers, Gerben Verbrugghe and Aurora Camaño – both students – travelled from overseas to join us in Leeds. Duncan and Gerben were live-tweeting from all of the sessions, keeping members and interested followers up to date with MSRSG 'on the road'! Our twitter army is ever-expanding, and we now have almost 400 followers. If you'd like to join them, you can do so by following us @MedSettRG.

We continue to offer grants for researchers, and this year awarded small grants to two excellent projects. The first was to Prof. Helena Hamerow at the University of Oxford, who is examining an early medieval great hall complex at Long Wittenham in Oxfordshire; the second grant was awarded to Marcus Jecock, on behalf of the Hanging Grimston Community Archaeology project in the Yorkshire Wolds. During 2017, we also awarded a special grant to Stephen Davis at University College Dublin, who will be creating a LiDAR-informed database of ridge and furrow in Ireland. We can all look forward to hearing how these projects progress in Medieval Settlement Research in due course. The latest edition of *Medieval Settlement Research* is being prepared for publication and, as usual, it will be packed full of landscape and settlement-related articles and reports. Andy Ford has once again compiled a bibliography of British and Irish publications, and this edition will also feature a bibliography of Italian work, produced for us by Maily Serra.

Finally, our membership charges have remained at the bargain rate of £12 for full members and £6 for students. It is now possible to sign up and pay for your subscription online, and I do hope that you will consider joining us!

Susan Kilby, Hon. Secretary
sk565@leicester.ac.uk

Media & Exhibition

From Moesgaard to Middle-Earth: medieval & medievalism entangled

This issue's musing from the shadowlands between the medieval and medievalisms draws its inspiration from the newly completed Moesgaard Museum, Aarhus, Denmark and the Bodleian Library's, Oxford, current exhibition about J. R. R. Tolkien.

The new museum at Moesgaard has been in a semi-permanent state of opening since 2014 – a three-year period of new, permanent-gallery openings between then and October 2017, a cycle of openings that has seen five galleries open, spanning the Palaeolithic to the Middle Ages. The whole process was book-ended by the openings of its two medieval galleries: *Viking Adventures: The Viking Age 800–1066* (in 2014) and *Deliver Us From Evil: The Middle Ages 1050–1536* (late 2017). The biggest difference between the two is the greater theatrical emphasis of *Viking Adventures*, in the sense that it has a much bigger scale and most of its space is consumed with sets and backdrops, a viable ploy through which to seek to immerse visitors in an experience, but one in which the relatively small-scale original objects struggle to be seen. The space allotted to this gallery is much greater than that allocated to *Deliver Us From Evil*, despite the much greater time span of the latter, some 500 years as against 200. Ironically this leads to some counter-intuitive settings, particularly the metaphorical evocation of being

aboard a longship, which seemed far too roomy. The gallery has two contrasting halves – an exploration of Aarhus ('Aros'), its craft base, religion and belief and funerary rituals from where the visitor leaves the town gates to enter a series of sub-galleries evoking journeys to York, Kaupang, Byzans, Mecklenburg, Ingelheim and along the Volga. The experience is atmospheric and contextualised, seeking to give the visitor a sense of Viking entanglements across the whole of Northern and Eastern Europe, with an array of political and trading relationships (including the slave trade, with a useful reminder that this trade in human beings was so prolific that the ethnic population of the Russian lands became synonymous with the word 'slave': they are still referred to today as 'Slavic peoples' or 'Slavs'). The synthesis of interpretative techniques is nowhere better signalled than in the re-telling of what might have happened to account for the discovery of a human skull with a fatal sword injury from a 10th-century well in Aros. It shows the skull along with a late 9th-century sword and fuses them with an animated digital film that invents a plausible story of robbery and murder.

Deliver Us From Evil creates a series of cells or pods in which themes are explored that tell Denmark's medieval story, primarily through the local scale of Aros and



Reversibly repainted Romanesque gravestone from Aros in Moesgaard Museum.

its region. It ranges over the rural economy, town life, political relations (including with the Wends, the conquest of Estonia and the myth of the Danish flag, the Dannebrog – surely at some level inspired by Constantine’s vision before Milvian Bridge), and aristocratic castle life, all suffused with a sense of an all-pervasive Christianity. Community experience is emphasised and a theatricality of presentation helps to reinforce this aspect of past living with its immersive scenarios. In the town, for example, a communal latrine is recreated and, sitting on its three-seater, the visitor hears a dialogue between three women musing on how easy it is for the devil to do his work. This was slightly marred in the English version by having the conversation recounted by a male voice, taking away female agency. The farming/rural life section revolves around the terrific centrepiece of a scaled-down version of a wooden mill/water-wheel, on the spokes of which are projected images of rural life and community on one side. On the opposite face, reality turns neatly on the medieval symbolism of the Wheel of Fortune and unavoidable death. The whole ensemble is an inspired borrowing from Brueghel, particularly his ‘miller in the sky’ motif (see my review in the Society’s *Newsletter* 55 (2016), pp 14–15). Inspiration from medieval artists and their world-view continues in the concluding section of the exhibition, which has a recreation of Notke’s Lübeck ‘Dance of Death’ and evokes purgatory through the visuality of Bosch, especially his ‘Ascent of the Blessed’ scene from his *Paradise and Hell* panels, which playfully marks the exit from the gallery.

What links the two galleries (indeed all five galleries) are three key things: place (Jutland and its widespread, international connectivity); ritual behaviour across time and space to affirm a supernatural existence and to invoke its aid against the troubles of living in the world; and a design articulation of the Danish legend of elvish hills opening to reveal their treasures (hence the new galleries are all underground within the hill slope of the museum).

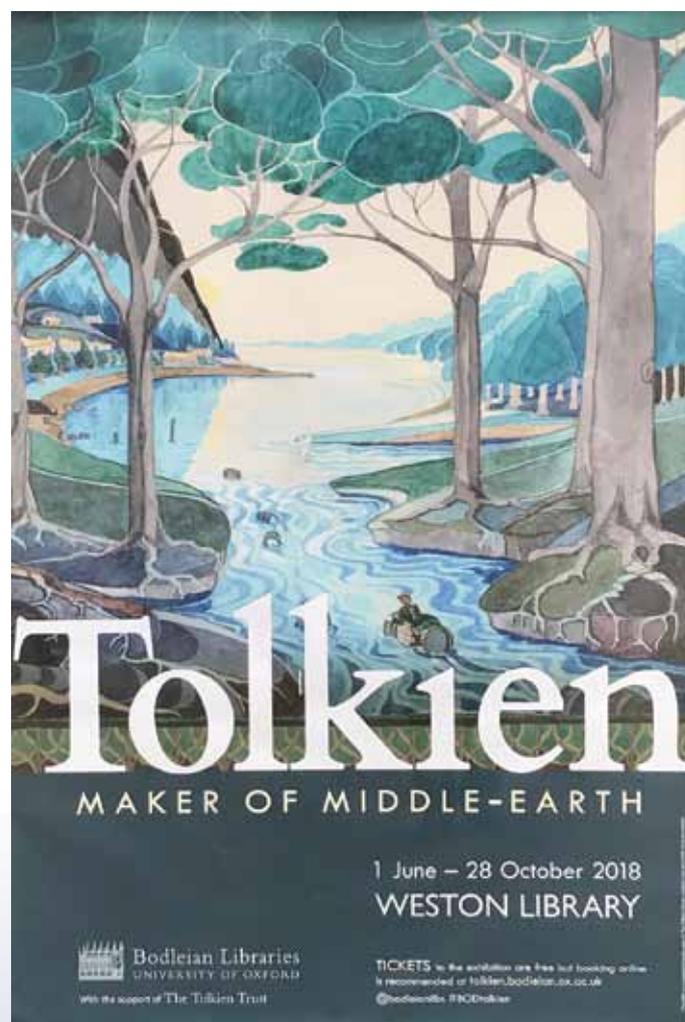
Treasure-hills and facing the troubles of a living world suffuse the writings of that great maker of medieval worlds, J. R. R. Tolkien. It is implicit in the Bodleian Library’s current exhibition about Tolkien – *Tolkien Maker of Middle Earth* (which ran from 01/06–28/10). For me, this exhibition was like being given privileged access to the mainframe of Tolkien’s creativity, above all rooted in language and creating stories to allow his languages to live and breath and grow. This philological outlook was complimented by a geographic visuality expressed through map-making. Both were underpinned by a rigorous attention to detail – I was fascinated to learn that Tolkien invented a system of measurement for hobbits based on a hobbit’s toe-nail, used to estimate the maximum distance a hobbit could walk in one day. The exhibition was full of such things that I wished to know; those that I thought I knew; as well as those I did know. Treebeard, for instance, was originally conceived as an enemy giant, and Hobbiton occupies the same latitude as Oxford. They underpin the exhibition’s ambition of showing how the creative juices of Tolkien flowed, also demonstrated in the way he seized the creativity of the moment so that it could be later amplified, including his re-purposing of school exercise books, the use of completed crosswords for inked designs and an exam-paper

scrawled marginalia ‘in a hole in the ground lived a hobbit’, that became the start of that book. In a relatively compact space, the exhibition outlines his Childhood, his Working & Home life, his Student Days, *the Hobbit*, *Lord of the Rings*, *Silmarillion*, Artworks and Fandom. One piece of material culture in particular stood out for me and wove together, in my mind, the myth-maker, the craftsman, the artist and the medievalist; namely, his cross-sectional sketch of Middle Earth set within the outline of a Viking longship, in touch with both the early Christian ‘navigatio’ tradition and the cosmological resonance of boats in Northern Europe that goes back at least to the Bronze Age.

On the face of it, the exhibitions in Moesgaard and in Oxford are very different from each other but both concern the long roots of North European culture and communications about the medieval past and its understanding, as medievalisms. They both show an awareness of wider popular idioms. Moesgaard has a battery of technological and visual interpretative approaches that have a visitor familiarity from people’s everyday lives. But Tolkien and the Northern past have also become entangled: the Moesgaard gallery that deals with the battle and sacrifice at Ilerup (AD 205) includes a theme exploring the warriors golden arm rings, under the heading ‘one ring to rule them all’, perhaps the most recognisable and metaphorically redolent quote from *Lord of the Rings*.

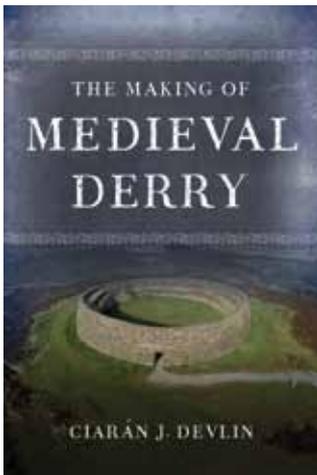
Mark Hall

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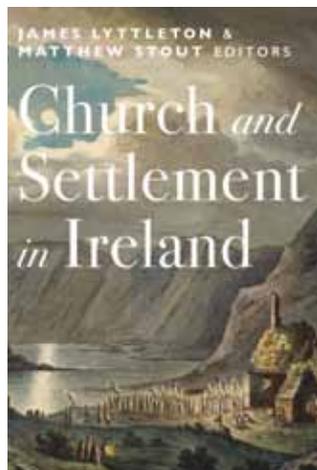


New Titles

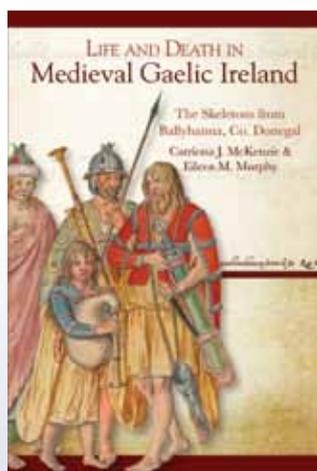
Four Courts Press, www.fourcourtspress.ie



A new paperback edition features an extensive range of indexes that did not feature in the hardback edition. The two most important indexes are of personal names and surnames, and of names of places and population-groups. In addition, there are a bibliographical index of authors and sources, and a general index. Derry was a sacred city, a frontier citadel, a royal capital and episcopal see.



Published in association with the Group for the Study of Irish Historic Settlement and the American Society for Irish Medieval Studies, there are 12 essays from an international panel of experts on religious landscapes that explore the dynamic relationship between settlement and the church, from earliest Christianity to the early modern period, highlighting the central role played by the Church in helping to create distinct cultural landscapes across Ireland.



In 2003, the skeletal remains of some 1,300 individuals were uncovered from Ballyhanna, near Ballyshannon in Co. Donegal. Radiocarbon dating indicates that the cemetery was in use for a prolonged period of time from the 7th to the 17th century. Detailed osteological and palaeopathological analysis of the assemblage is presented in a book that represents the first comprehensive study of a skeletal population from medieval Gaelic Ireland and provides detailed insights concerning the largely invisible lower class of Gaelic society.

Information

Gathering

Find the Source, technological innovation in High Medieval Ireland

In Ireland at least, it is an uncommon occurrence to have a time-sensitive artefact from the High Medieval period. Of course there's pottery but even that assemblage is not without its challenges, and while imported wares can provide the type of insights needed, locally-made wares enjoy large time-spans. In addition, the non-Anglo-Norman areas – what we refer to as the Gaelic territories – were often aceramic, leaving the archaeologist without access to what is otherwise a most common and datable object type. There is however one artefact that has consistently been seen to date only to the 'long 13th century' and it is increasingly observed as a common occurrence on rural sites. I write of the humble plough pebble, which is a hard field stone used by ploughmen as part of an anti-wear device to reduce the speed with which the timber plough frames would be worn down by being pulled through the soil.

A small flint pebble, or basalt, even mudstone, would be fitted into a drilled hole in the base of the plough sole. Sufficient numbers would be used to create a studded shield-like face. Over time, the exposed surfaces of the stones would be worn down, creating a diagnostic wear pattern that distinguishes them. The worn surface is smooth and convex in profile, populated by many light scratches, or striae, that run parallel with each other in the same direction. The striae are scratched onto the pebble by the stone and clay in the ploughsoil as the plough is pulled through it.

Eventually the pebbles may fall out of the plough sole and come to rest in the furrows, awaiting discovery. On some occasions, groups of these pebbles can be discovered together, as occurred in Bective Abbey, Co. Meath, where they were found within a ruined building. In this instance, it is likely that the pebbles are all that remains of the plough that was stored there, and whose timber elements have rotted away.

The importance of these objects lies in the fact that they represent a very defined and short-lived period of economic expansion associated with High Farming. They are an integral

part of the 'John Deere Tractor' of their day, yet their origins remain obscure. They are associated with Cistercian sites, but not exclusively so, and they are associated with Anglo-Norman manors, but not entirely so. They also pop up in Gaelic territories. They do not occur in 14th-century contexts or later (post-crash), and so their presence on an excavation is a tell-tale indication of date and context. But where did they come from?

There is a wider history of plough pebbles, and excavations in Whithorn and more recently in Portmahomack recovered them from early medieval contexts, but their presence in Ireland is only from the High Medieval period. Much of the cultural influence of that period owes a lot to the Cheddar region of England and southeast Wales, and one might expect this to be the source for new agricultural equipment and management, to accompany the new settlers who arrive in Ireland as part of that piece of colonization. So it was a surprise to me when meeting the Whittlewood team over a cup of tea in the early 2000s that they had not picked up any examples. Despite intensive field survey over six parishes in the central midlands covering some 997ha, not a single plough pebble was noted.

The point of this note is to extend the call for plough pebble sightings, and I'd welcome observations and comments back. I extend the call far afield, not forgetting the continent, as Flemings were part and parcel of those bands of adventurous knights and their followers who came to Ireland. It would be really exciting to identify a source area for the plough pebble, and their elusive plough frames, as this could really help to inform a useful debate about origins and innovation that needs to develop in Ireland. I look forward to hearing from the membership.

Niall Brady
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Detailed view showing characteristic wear surface (far left) and general view (left) of a collection of plough pebbles from Bective Abbey, Ireland, excavated by Geraldine Stout.

To advertise conferences/events in the Newsletter contact:

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Contribute to the Newsletter

We welcome submissions relating to current research projects in Ireland, the UK and on the continent, and ask that submissions do not exceed 800 words, with conference reports to be within 500 words.

Please do not embed pictures in Word/text files but do send pictures/plans as separate high quality JPEG files. The preferred format for site plans/maps is EPS, with layers clearly indicated and unlocked, and any linked files attached.

Send to Newsletter Editor by e-mail:
niallbrady100@gmail.com

The due dates for receipt of copy are:
Spring Newsletter: 15th February
Autumn Newsletter: 15th August

Credits

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Conferences & Events

— FORTHCOMING —

8 December 2018:

Settlement in the Danelaw, Medieval Settlement Research Group Winter Seminar 2018, Centre for English Local History at the University of Leicester, Leicester.

11-13 April 2019:

Early Medieval Archaeology Student Symposium, Durham-Newcastle.

5-6 July 2019:

The Society's Annual Conference in 2019 will take place at King's Manor in York, and will be on **New perspectives on the 'long' Black Death** (see page 6).

9-15 September 2019:

RURALIA XIII will be the second occasion for the international group that studies rural landscapes to meet in the UK (the first time was in 2007 when they met in Cardiff). The XIIIth conference is being organised by Piers Dixon and Kirsty Owen of Historic Environment Scotland, so it is little surprise to see that the theme is to be **Seasonal settlement in the medieval and early modern countryside**. More than 40 presentations will take place over 5 days of the main conference hosted in Stirling, with presenters coming from across Europe and further afield. A must-attend event (and most enjoyable too) for anyone interested in the humbler side of rural life, and a clear draw for Society members and for MSRSG members. See <http://ruralia2.ff.cuni.cz/index.php/news/> and follow the links.

The three lectures on recent archaeological discoveries to be presented following the AGM on 3 December in York:

Dr Sarah Croix: **Revisiting a 'Northern Emporium' – about recent excavations in Viking-Age Ribe**

Since its archaeological discovery in the 1970s, the emporium of Ribe has occupied a special place in our understanding of the urbanization of Scandinavia in the Viking Age. While the finds made at the market-site attested long-distance trade and diverse and specialized craft production in the 8th and 9th century, the emergence and character of the site have remained difficult to disentangle. A grant from the Carlsberg Foundation has permitted Aarhus University and the Museums of South-West Jutland to conduct excavation at the heart of the market-site. I will present some of the many exciting finds and highlight the main results. New insights to the life of Ribe's inhabitants at the beginning of the Viking Age reveal how a little corner of Jutland became part of a much bigger world.

Dr Adrián Maldonado: **Rethinking the early medieval monastery of Iona**

A major re-dating and re-excavation programme on the early medieval monastery of Iona, Argyll and Bute, focused on the unpublished archive of excavations 1956–63 by the late Prof Charles Thomas, allows us to present newly detected structures, and a suite of radiocarbon dates revealing the nature of the 6th-century foundation, its gradual transformation into a pilgrimage destination, and continued vitality after a period of supposedly catastrophic Viking raids.

Dr Gabor Thomas: **Building early medieval identities: Lyminge and the agency of post-Roman elite centres**

Recent excavations at Lyminge, Kent, prompt us to reflect on the social meaning of the earliest generation of elite residences in Anglo-Saxon England and neighbouring regions. The central place functions of these sites and their significance as arenas for the assertion of power and political authority have been addressed already. This paper will shift the attention to a neglected dimension of these sites: their role in the creation, transformation and material expression of early medieval identities. This new perspective can be used to guide future study of Lyminge and advance related research agendas.