

Medieval Settlement Research Group

April 2021 | Newsletter 3



Membership Fee Reminder

Membership fees are due annually on **February 1st**. If you still pay by cheque please consider swapping to Direct Debit via our website <https://medieval-settlement.com/> or send your cheque to:

Dr Helen Fenwick, Department of History, University of Hull, Hull HU6 7RX

h.fenwick@hull.ac.uk

Please see the message from the Treasurer on Page 5.

Student members

The MSRG would like to encourage students to become an active part of the medieval settlement research community. We have created a section of our website to showcase research within the field of medieval settlement undertaken by students:

<https://medieval-settlement.com/student-research/>

Please send bios to Dr Paul Shaw at:
shawhq@btinternet.com

Introduction

Newsletter 2 landed in your inboxes in March 2020 as the UK entered lockdown. We had taken the decision at that point to postpone the Spring 2020 conference the situation was looking uncertain for other events. In the end, whilst most planned events were postponed, we decided to hold the John Hurst Memorial Prize online as our first foray into the world of digital conferencing. A summary of that competition can be found within the newsletter. As we are slowly moving forward we look towards times when we can meet gain face-to-face but while the vaccines are rolled out and we adapt to the new normal, this year we are moving the Spring event online – see page 2. We hope that many of you have managed to cultivate your interest in medieval settlement in the time we have been given during the last year, even if it has been from the arm chair rather than in the field or archive.

AGM 2020 Report

As with many groups our AGM was held virtually during which members elected several new officers: Our new President is Prof. Carenza Lewis; our new Editor Dr Mark McKerracher; and our new Community Archaeology Officer is Dr David Oates. We welcome them all onto the committee. Our thanks to our outgoing President Dr Stuart Wrathmell for the clear leadership for the last 3 years, ending during a global pandemic. Thanks also go to our former editor Dr Letty ten Harkel for all the hard work in growing our journal *Medieval Settlement Research* and leaving it in a very healthy place after the publication of volume 35 in November 2020. Below is an outline of the current committee:

President: Professor Carenza Lewis

Hon. Secretary: Dr Susan Kilby

Treasurer: Dr Andrew Seaman

Editor: Dr Mark McKerracher

Membership Secretary: Dr Helen Fenwick

Community Archaeology Officer: Dr David Oates

Committee members:

Dr Rebecca Gregory

Dr Mark Forrest

Dr Gareth Davies

Student Rep: Dr Paul Shaw

MSRG Bibliography

In our journal, *Medieval Settlement Research*, we provide a list of works published the previous year on the topic of medieval settlement research – if you have recently published in this area and would like it adding to the bibliography please email Wanda Machin: 18019935@uhi.ac.uk



A process of elimination? Reviewing the fragmented settlement record of early medieval Scotland

Vanessa Reid

Department of Archaeology
Durham University

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Opening slide of Vanessa Reid's presentation - one of the finalists in 2020 John Hurst Memorial Prize (see page 3)

Dates for the Diary Medieval Settlement and Infrastructure Archaeology - Seminar Series 2021

Seminar 1: Saturday 24th April
10:00-13:00

Seminar 2: Saturday 2nd
October 10:00-13:00

Both will be held online via Teams

The event is free but you need to register: [click here to register](#)

Back Issues of Medieval Settlement Research

A reminder that back issues of *Medieval Settlement Research*, along with predecessor publications - the Annual Reports of: Deserted Village Research Group; Moated Site Research Group; Medieval Village Research Group; and Medieval Settlement Research Group, are all available open access through the Archaeology Data Service. See here for further details:

<https://doi.org/10.5284/1017430>

Medieval Settlement and Infrastructure Archaeology - Seminar Series 2021

We are delighted to announce a two-seminar series, to be held online in spring and autumn of 2021. Our first seminar will focus on the UK and Ireland, and the programme is outlined below:

Seminar One: Medieval Settlement and Infrastructure Archaeology in the UK and Ireland, Saturday 24th April 2021, 1000-1300

Carenza Lewis (University of Lincoln), Welcome and Introduction 'Medieval settlement: routes and roots'

Aidan O'Sullivan (University College Dublin), 'What have we learned about early medieval settlement archaeology in Ireland (RoI, NI) from large infrastructural developments? Insights from the Early Medieval Archaeology Project (EMAP)'

John Atkinson (Guard Archaeology), 'Medieval rural settlement, infrastructure projects and commercial development: the Scottish experience'

Paul Belford (Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust), 'The impact of development-driven archaeology on understanding medieval settlements in Wales'

Richard Newman (Humber Archaeology Partnership), 'Assess, Dig, Avoid: reflections on the contribution of linear infrastructure projects on advancing an understanding of medieval settlement in England, 2000-2021'

These will be followed by a discussion panel led by Prof. Carenza Lewis and the panelists will include: Alison Dickens, Prof. Helena Hamerow, Prof. Chris Dyer & Prof. John Blair. This is a free event, but you need to register at: <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/medieval-settlement-and-infrastructure-archaeology-in-the-uk-and-ireland-tickets-147088627043>

Our second seminar, exploring the same theme but focusing on continental Europe, will take place on Saturday 2nd October 2021 – further details will be available soon, but please save the date in your diary! For further information please contact Dr Susan Kilby at sk565@le.ac.uk

MSRG Grants

MSRG can make grants for the support of research by members within its field of interest. Grants can cover fieldwork and associated analysis, documentary research and other appropriate forms of assistance towards publication.

A maximum of £5,000 is available annually until 2023, and applications for sums up to this amount are invited.

Deadline **31st January** each year

Maurice Beresford Memorial Bursaries

In memory of Maurice Beresford, the MSRG awards small student bursaries annually to help defray the expenses of attending a conference within the field of the Group's interests, including the Group's own seminars and conferences. Applications are invited throughout the year. See our website for details

John Hurst Memorial Prize for Students

The John Hurst Memorial Prize comprises a competition for up to four students (postgraduate or advanced level) to present a fifteen-minute paper on any theme related to medieval landscape and rural settlement in the British Isles or Europe during the morning session at the MSRG Winter Seminar. The best paper will win £200 and the opportunity to publish a paper in our journal. **Deadline 1st October 2021.**

For further details of all these awards see:

<https://medieval-settlement.com/grants-awards/>

John Hurst Memorial Prize review 2020

The John Hurst Memorial Prize was held online with over 40 people attending the competition on Saturday 12th December which consisted of three presentations from this year's finalists:

- Alexander Thomas (University of Bristol): 'The curious case of the Danelaw boundary landscapes'
- Vanessa Reid (Durham University): 'A process of elimination? Reviewing the fragmented settlement record of early medieval Scotland'
- Anne Coyne (University of Leicester): 'Newark in the fourteenth century. A religious settlement?'

The finalists were given the option of pre-recording their presentations or presenting live, with two opting for the pre-recording. A strict time limit of 15 minutes was enforced and the judging panel consisted of Chris Dyer, Paul Everson, Mark McKerracher and Stuart Wrathmell.

First up was **Vanessa Reid**, Durham University. Her presentation covered the search for early medieval settlements in Scotland and the move away from the idea that they consist only of defended settlements. The issues hindering locating the settlements were discussed with poor preservation of the wattle and turf structures being one of the challenges faced. Her research is trying to establish the factors affecting this preservation so that in the future there will be wider analysis and that perhaps sites with the potential for high levels of preservation can be pinpointed.

Next was **Anne Coyne**, University of Leicester who was exploring a wealth of different sources to plot the influence of religious institutions in Newark through the fourteenth century. There are a large number of chantries recorded in Newark in the period and clusters of foundations between 1320-1330, 1345-1351 and 1364-1365. The Feet of Fines show religious migrants from areas in Nottinghamshire, Derbyshire and Leicestershire, but also show outbound movement to other areas in the second half of the century. The evidence points to Newark having a strong religious focus in the fourteenth century.

Finally **Alexander Thomas**, University of Bristol, looked at the boundaries of the Danelaw and asked if it was a reused and/or long-lived boundary. Using a variety of sources such as the Treaty of Alfred and Guthrum from AD 886-890 which dictates the boundary he is starting to piece together activity by combining manuscript evidence with the landscape and material culture. The evidence shows that parishes aligned with the boundary and Thomas suggests that HER records provide evidence for activity close to the boundary.

After the presentations each speaker answered questions from the panel. The event was brought to a close, and the panel later deliberated. The prize of £200 pounds and the opportunity to publish a precis of their work in a future edition of our journal was awarded to Vanessa Reid. Congratulations to Vanessa and all our finalists on their excellent presentations. Current research students should look out for the call for the 2021 prize.



Alexander Thomas one of the finalists in 2020 John Hurst Memorial Prize

Report from recent grant holder: Randall Manor, Gravesend, Kent

Andrew Mayfield, Kent County Council community archaeologist (andrew.mayfield@kent.gov.uk).

The whole team involved in the Randall Manor project is incredibly grateful for the grant and looks forward to sharing updates from the site with the Group over coming years.

Randall Manor was the focus of an ambitious lottery-funded community archaeology excavation programme between 2006 and 2015. Hundreds of local volunteers, school groups, young archaeologist club members, students and families took part in fieldwork at the site, deep within Shorne Woods Country Park. A legacy of this project has seen the formation of the Shorne Woods Archaeology Group, that continues to work on heritage projects at the Park. Excavations revealed an exceptionally well-preserved medieval building complex sealed beneath extensive demolition deposits, carefully uncovered, and recorded over ten years. The site is centred around an aisled hall and stone cross wing, with detached kitchen and brewhouse. Initial pottery analysis suggests the site reached its zenith in the first half of the fourteenth century. An extensive finds assemblage was painstakingly recorded, alongside environmental samples taken from across the site. The manor sits within a complex of earthworks, including hollow ways and field banks, alongside a series of fishponds (all visible on LiDAR). These large ponds, which were remarked upon during the Spring 2018 MSRG field trip, are now thought to pre-date the manor. We believe they formed part of a project undertaken by the Priory of La Grava in Bedfordshire, an alien priory of the Order of Fontevrault in Anjou. Under a charter of Richard I, nuns from La Grava and their servants worked on the site from 1191 to 1195 and created a series of lakes for a fresh-water fish farm.

The site is perhaps the most comprehensively excavated medieval manor complex in Kent within the last twenty years. When the demolition deposits were removed, intact floor surfaces were revealed. The extensive pottery assemblage covers the lifespan of the site from mid-twelfth century inception to late 16th century demolition. Soil conditions meant that animal bone, shell and environmental assemblages were all in an excellent state of preservation. The pottery assemblage will form part of a planned Kent Archaeological Society teaching collection for NW Kent and elements of it have contributed to an MA dissertation. The animal bone assemblage has also formed part of an MA dissertation. A large lead flask, from a foundation deposit, is currently without parallel and an Islamic glass vessel fragment (identified by Sarah Paynter from English Heritage and Dr Rachel Tyson) is of national importance. Two complete floor tiles have been added to Laurence Keen's corpus of medieval floor tiles.



The Manor Dig in 2013



Aerial View of the excavations in 2013

The grant will enable Kent County Council's community archaeologist to drive the post-excavation work forward towards full publication of the site report. Publication is essential not only for the archaeological reasons outlined above, but as a testament to the hard work of the community of individuals who came together to excavate the site. Lottery funding enabled the excavations and initiated the post-excavation work, with much of the processing and cataloguing completed by volunteers. The samples, for example, have been processed and sorted at the Park by the volunteer team, using a self-built flotation tank. The objective of the grant is to fund time towards a post-excavation assessment for the site. This will quantify the excavated assemblages and the work completed on them to date. An updated project design will detail what remaining specialist work is needed, whether funded or unfunded and map out the publication programme for this important medieval site. A narrative will draw together all the work completed on the stratigraphic sequence to date. This will inform remaining specialist work and future publication.

EU Members can now pay online

We have now set-up our online payment system so that EU members can pay through this service. Current (until 30th Jan 2022) membership fees are:

Full Members €19 click [here](#)

Student Members €13 click [here](#)

Or see our website here:

<https://medieval-settlement.com/membership/>

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Newsletter Editor

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News items welcome

Next Deadline: 1st September 2021

Message from the Treasurer

Fee Increase

The Committee decided to delay the increase in subscription fee that was due to take effect in 2020. This was because of the short-term impacts of COVID-19 on the running costs of the Group. The Group's long-term financial situation remains the same however, and it is expected that expenditure will again outstrip income as we resume normal activities. The increase is therefore needed to ensure the long-term sustainability of the Group and its ability to offer benefits to its membership. The new subscription fees will be as follows:

UK Full membership: £20

UK Student membership: £10

UK Joint membership (two individuals living at the same address): £25

EU Full membership: €30

EU Student membership: €15

USA Full membership: \$35

The changes will come into effect on 31st January 2022. Members who pay with Direct Debit via the GoCardless system will be automatically transferred to the updated payment plans. Members who pay via Standing Order **must update their mandates directly with their bank.** This can usually be done through online banking. Please contact the Treasurer, andy.seaman@canterbury.ac.uk if you have any questions.

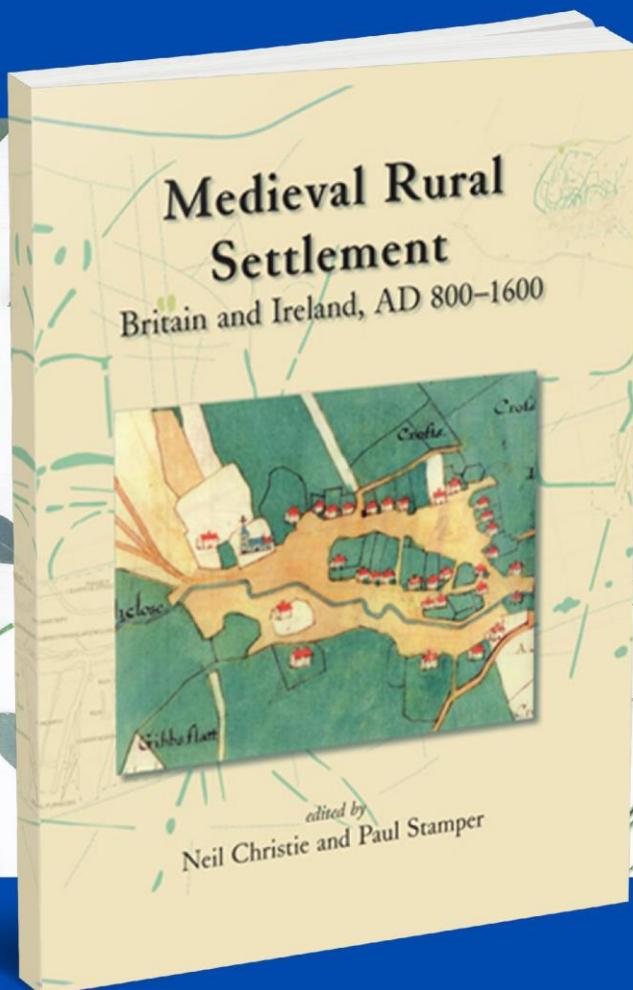
Gift Aid

Following advice from HMRC, the Committee has decided that it will no longer claim **Gift Aid** on the subscription fee paid by members of the Group. Members may want to make a note of this if they declare Gift Aid donations in their tax return. The Group will continue to claim Gift Aid on one-off donations.



Anne Coyne's presentation as a finalist for the John Hurst Memorial Prize.

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