



The Medieval Settlement Research Group in 2025

Between late 2024 and the summer of 2025, the MSRG held a Winter Seminar and AGM in December and a 'Spring' Conference in June, with both events taking place in Leicester. The December AGM marked the end of the tenure of Susan Kilby, the long-standing Hon Secretary of MSRG. She had supported the MSRG in this role since 2017 and contributed very effectively in many ways to the successful functioning of the group. At the same time, the Treasurer of MSRG, Andy Seaman, also in this role since 2017, stepped down. We are immensely grateful for the work of both Susan and Andy and look forward to seeing them at future MSRG events. The new Hon Secretary and Treasurer of MSRG are Hajnalka Herold and Benjamin Morton, respectively. Committee members Claudia Theune, David Stone, and Aidan O'Sullivan came to the end of their terms, as new Committee members John Baker, Tomáš Klír, and Marion Shiner were elected. The new Student Rep for the MSRG is Rob Hedge (University of Leicester), replacing Stephen Lonsdale (University of York).

The Winter Seminar's theme was *Post-Pandemic Settlement: New Perspectives on Plague, Perturbation, Persistence and Place in the Medieval Countryside*. Attendees were able to follow a set of excellent papers with a mainly late medieval focus, including from David Stone (MSRG) on 14th- and early 15th-century settlement on the Bishop of Exeter's estate, Mark Bailey (East Anglia) on the period after the Black Death, Benjamin Morton and Ben Jervis (Leicester) on English small towns of the 13th to 15th centuries, Craig Cessford (Cambridge) on Clopton deserted medieval village in Cambridgeshire, and Eljas Oksanen (Helsinki and Reading) on computational approaches to persistent places and diachronic change based on artefact scatters. The Winter Seminar also included the John Hurst Prize competition for students with four great papers, representing the Universities of Vienna, Nottingham, York, and Durham. The winner of the 2024 John Hurst Prize was Nora Siegmeth (Vienna) with a paper on the medieval elite landscape of Merkenstein in Austria.

The Spring Conference focused on *Adaptations: Medieval Responses to Environmental Change*, with nine papers presented on a wide range of chronologies, from late Roman to late medieval. Papers focused on various regions of England: Tudur Davies (Cardiff) on ecological pressures in the Peak

District, Paul Shaw (Leicester) on Scandinavian migrants in the East Midlands, Susan Kilby (Nottingham) on the landscape of Alrewas in Staffordshire, Louise Kennedy (East Anglia) on coastal change in Easton Bavents, Suffolk, Thomas Lucking (East Anglia) on settlement and land use change in the East Anglian Breckland, Carezza Lewis (Lincoln) on the impact of climate change on medieval settlement location, Michael Gilbert (Leicester) on siltlands of the Isle of Ely, and David Oates (Histon and Impington) on the Upper Fen Edge in Cambridgeshire, while Sam Turner (Newcastle) presented a paper on agricultural terraces in the Mediterranean. The day of lectures was followed by a field trip on the Sunday to East Leicestershire, the Wreake Valley, and Charnwood Forest (see photos, courtesy of Tomáš Klír). We are very grateful to both Susan Kilby and Richard Jones (Leicester) for organising this conference.

We continue to support a range of exciting projects through our grants scheme, and once again this year we attracted a number of high-quality applications. The panel chose to support two projects, fieldwork in both the Yeavinger Environs Project and the Bodiam 100 project. We encourage researchers to apply for funding – the deadline is 31st January each year, and full details are available on our website: <https://medieval-settlement.com/grants-awards/research-grants/>.

Looking ahead, on Saturday 6th December 2025 we will return to Leicester for our Winter Seminar, where this year's programme will focus on *The margins of society in medieval rural settlements*. The Seminar will also include our John Hurst Memorial Prize competition, with the finalists' papers during the morning session. Plans are underway for a Spring Conference in 2026 on *The contribution of community archaeology to settlement studies*. Keep an eye on our website in the autumn as we finalise both event programmes: <https://medieval-settlement.com/events/upcoming-events/>.

Dr Hajnalka Herold
Hon Secretary, MSRG