



The Medieval Settlement Research Group in 2026

Between late 2025 and the summer of 2026, the MSRG held a Winter Seminar and AGM in Leicester in December, and a Spring Conference in Lincoln in April. The AGM marked the end of the tenure of Mark McKerracher as Editor for the MSRG's journal *Medieval Settlement Research*. We are very grateful for his work and look forward to seeing him at future MSRG events. Marion Shiner was elected as new Editor. Committee member Elaine Jamieson came to the end of her term, as new Committee members Sarah Jane Gibbon and Roland Filzwieser were elected.

The Winter Seminar's theme was *The margins of society in medieval rural settlements*. Attendees were able to follow four excellent papers: 'Marginal People and their Houses: History and Archaeology' from Christopher Dyer (Leicester), 'Place-names, language and status in the medieval lordship of Oswestry' by David Parsons (Aberystwyth), 'Life and death in rural settlements: can marginal status in early medieval society be identified in the burial record?' by Marion Shiner (Cardiff), and 'How Do "Portable Antiquities" Contribute to Our Understanding of the Margins of Society in Medieval Rural Settlements?' by Michael Lewis (London). Overall, it was a successful event and there was a good level of discussion. The Winter Seminar also included the John Hurst Prize competition for students, this time representing the Universities of Oxford and Nottingham. The 2025 John Hurst Prize winner was Christo Leventis (Oxford) with a paper entitled 'Settlement by numbers: a study of factors affecting morphology in south-west Norfolk'.

The Spring Conference focused on *New insights into medieval rural settlements in eastern England: the contribution of public and community archaeology*, with eleven papers presented on a wide range of public and community archaeology projects from Lincolnshire, Nottinghamshire, Leicestershire, Norfolk, Hertfordshire, County Durham, and Cambridgeshire, followed by an overview paper on 'The value of community-generated research for advancing knowledge of rural settlement development' as well as a discussion session entitled 'Strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats: the future of community archaeology and medieval rural settlement studies'. The day of lectures was followed by a field trip on the Sunday to medieval settlements in Lincolnshire. We are

very grateful to both Sarah Talks (Cambridge) and Carenza Lewis (Lincoln) 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 three projects: CwmFfwrn site investigation, Upper Cwmhir Valley, Abbey Cwmhir, Radnorshire, Powys; Saintbury, Gloucestershire: directly dating England's early medieval settlement and landscape transformation; and Tracing animal husbandry and mobility in Early Medieval Wales: Challenging the perceived theories using stable isotope analysis. The three recipients are an academic, a student and a representative of a community heritage group. 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 5th December 2026 we will return to Leicester for our Winter Seminar, where this year's programme will focus on *Medieval Agriculture: animals, crops and land*. The Seminar will also include our John Hurst Memorial Prize competition, with the finalists' papers during the morning session. Plans are also underway for a Spring Conference in 2027. Keep an eye on our website in the autumn as we finalise both event programmes: <https://medieval-settlement.com/events/upcoming-events/>.

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