



The Medieval Settlement Research Group in 2009

The *Medieval Settlement Research Group* (MSRG) continues to be proactive in its activities, offering informative conferences and seminars, and promoting fieldwork and student input. Below we summarise the main events and outputs of the Group in 2009.

The MSRG Spring meeting was held at Leicester on the 4th-5th April, 2009 on the theme of 'Monks in the Midlands. Medieval Monasteries in Town and landscape in the Midlands', organised by Deirdre O'Sullivan and Neil Christie (University of Leicester). This was well attended and received; nine excellent papers were presented, exploring recent archaeological and documentary investigations and analyses on sites and settings. Case studies of urban abbeys and friaries were on Leicester, Coventry and Chester; and of rural seats, cells and priories, papers centred on Barlings, Bordesley, Coton, Thorney and Lincolnshire; we were also highly appreciative of the summing up by James Bond. Excellent weather blessed the Sunday fieldtrip which included site visits to Grace Dieu and Breedon-on-the-Hill; we were grateful to Pete Liddle for his very knowledgeable guiding.

The Group's 2009 Winter Seminar was held on 12th December at the Institute of Historical Research, University of London, and was organised by Chris Thornton on the theme of 'Marshland Landscapes, Settlement and Economy'. Papers presented explored Pre-Domesday farming on the Thames (*Ros Faith*); Early medieval fish weirs in Britain and Ireland (*Aidan O'Sullivan*); Medieval reclamation and settlement on Romney Marsh (*Luke Barber*); Late medieval flooding of the Thames marshes (*Jim Galloway*).

As a follow-up to this seminar, the 2010 theme is on medieval bridges and rivers – the event to be held in Leicester on Saturday, 4th December.

Core to the 89 page volume 23 of the MSRG journal – now renamed as *Medieval Settlement Research* – published in October 2009, were a set of research papers exploring a series of topical themes, such as Anglo-Saxon reuse of prehistoric monuments (*Vicky Crewe*), estates and landscape control (papers by *Ros Faith* and by *Angus Winchester*, exploring NW England), and archaeologies of occupied medieval rural sites (*John Thomas*, considering Leics and Rutland; and *Carenza Lewis* on the HEFA CORS project results); and outside of UK landscapes, two papers offered summaries of recent research in Boeotia, Greece (*Athanasios Vionis*) and Sweden (*Eva Svensson* et al). We are keen to expand the coverage of the journal and to encourage debate and thus want to encourage potential contributors of research papers especially to contact the editor, Dr Sam Turner (sam.turner@ncl.ac.uk) with their ideas and proposals.

For the John Hurst MA Dissertation Prize for 2009, there was a joint award of the prize shared between Patrick Gleeson and Niamh Arthur (respectively from MA programmes at the University of York and University College Dublin), each of whom had written on Irish themes (early medieval kingship and landscape; and the nature and placing of Viking Longphorts) and summaries of these dissertations will be included in this year's journal.

This year the Group initiated student membership – at a mere £6 per annum (half cost of the full membership) this is a bargain to MA and PhD students pursuing work in the fields explored by the MSRG. Please see the webpages for the membership form. As well as a copy of the journal, members are eligible to apply for fieldwork grants and conference bursaries – see details in the journal of how to apply to the various awards.

MSRG Hon. Secretary: Dr. Neil Christie, School of Archaeology & Ancient History, University of Leicester, Leicester LE1 7RH *E-mail:* njc10@le.ac.uk *MSRG website:* <http://www.britarch.ac.uk/msrg/>