



The Medieval Settlement Research Group in 2017

2016 marked the 30th anniversary of the Medieval Settlement Research Group in its present incarnation, and our Winter seminar, held at the University of Leicester, celebrated this landmark event in the Group's history. Sixty attendees enjoyed papers from noted settlement scholars that looked both to the legacy of the Group's work, and to the future of settlement studies. Professor Chris Dyer (Leicester) traced the development of the 'new' MSRG, from its origins in 1986. Dr Gabor Thomas (Reading) reviewed recent advances in pre-Conquest settlement studies, whilst former Group President Dr Mark Gardiner (Belfast) assessed the last ten years of settlement study in the later medieval period, summarizing new scholarly directions. We turned toward the Mediterranean for an overview of exciting new techniques in the dating of landscape sediments from Professor Sam Turner (Newcastle). Finally, Professor Carenza Lewis (Lincoln) discussed what lies ahead for settlement studies, raising interesting questions about future research approaches. As is traditional, we celebrated with a delicious birthday cake, ably cut and served by no less than five Presidents (see photo). Professor Neil Christie even composed a birthday ode, which can be read on our website: <https://medieval-settlement.com/2017/02/05/winter-seminar-2016/#more-1008> – clearly, there are no limits to Neil's talent!

We travelled north for our Spring seminar, hosted by the School of History, Classics and Archaeology at Newcastle University, and organised by Ben Morton. Delegates enjoyed papers on *Power and Place in the Middle Ages*, alongside a walking tour of Newcastle, and trips to two deserted medieval villages. For this year's Winter seminar and AGM, we will return to Leicester on Saturday 9th December 2017, where we will be hosted by the Centre for English Local History. Our theme will be *Animals in Medieval Settlements*, and we are currently organising an exciting programme, which we very much hope will encourage high levels of attendance once again. Further details can be found on our website.

In addition to our traditional seminars, this year we sponsored sessions at the International Medieval Congress in Leeds in July 2017, organised by Duncan Berryman and Ben Morton. Session themes were *Landscapes on the Margin* and *New Perspectives on Rural Settlement*. Papers were presented by both PhD students and established scholars, including Susan Oosthuizen, Carenza Lewis and Duncan Wright. We now have a thriving student membership, and we're keen to

encourage new settlement scholars into the fold through initiatives like these. To that end, we are hoping to launch student pages on our website later this year, which will give new scholars the opportunity to publicise their work beyond their own institutions. On the theme of student participation, our John Hurst Prize offers an opportunity to celebrate outstanding MA dissertations focused on settlement studies. This year's winner is Norma Oldfield (York), and an edited version of her dissertation will appear in volume 32 of *Medieval Settlement Research* which we anticipate will appear in the autumn. Relevant MA programme directors are encouraged to enter high quality submitted and passed dissertations of no more than 20,000 words on the theme of rural settlement and/or landscape by 31 December 2017 to the MSRSG Secretary.

We continue to offer small research grants of up to £500, alongside student bursaries to assist with the cost of attending relevant conferences. This year, we are also offering two special seedcorn research grants, focusing on 'Medieval Field Systems', and 'Commons, Greens and Settlement'. Each award, worth up to £4,000, is designed to encourage researchers to conduct a pilot study that can then be used as the basis for a more substantial funding application, to be submitted to one of the major funding bodies. Full details of all our grants and bursaries, including detailed specifications for the special grants can be found on our website.

There have been a few changes to the Group's officers this year. Perhaps most significantly, Dr Robin Glasscock has stepped down as Treasurer after forty years in the role, passing the baton to Dr Andy Seaman (Canterbury Christchurch). We are delighted that Robin has accepted a Vice Presidency, so we will continue to benefit from his vast experience and wise counsel. Professor Sam Turner has handed over the editorial reins of *Medieval Settlement Research* to Dr Letty ten Harkel (Oxford) after ten years at the helm, during which time the journal has gone from strength to strength. Anyone wishing to submit articles can write to Dr ten Harkel at medieval.settlement.research@gmail.com; author guidelines are on our website. Also, Dr John Naylor has passed his secretarial duties on to Dr Susan Kilby (Leicester). Thanks to all our outgoing officers for their commitment and hard work!

Finally, it is now possible to join MSRSG online, and membership can be purchased at the bargain rate of £12.00 for full members, and £6.00 for registered students. We can also be found on Facebook, and on Twitter @MedSettRG, so do look out for us!

Dr Susan Kilby
Hon. Secretary. MSRSG