



M.S.R.G. The Medieval Settlement Research Group in 2018

Once again, it has been an interesting and productive year for the Medieval Settlement Research Group. At the end of 2017, Bob Silvester stood down as President after three years in the role, and Stuart Wrathmell was welcomed as his successor at our December AGM. The committee recorded its thanks to Bob for steering us so ably through the last three years, and in particular for overseeing the Group's revised constitution, which was approved by members at the AGM. Stuart continues his strong association with the Group, having been a valued committee member since 2016.

As usual, our two main events have been the Winter Seminar, held at the University of Leicester in December, and our Spring Conference, hosted by Canterbury Christ Church University. The Winter Seminar theme was *Animals in Medieval Settlements*, and more than eighty delegates were warmly welcomed to Leicester on what was a very cold winter's morning by our hosts, the Centre for English Local History. Both the inclement weather and an untimely rail strike meant some last-minute changes to the programme, and so we should give special thanks to Richard Jones for stepping into the breach with a fantastic paper on dogs in royal forest settlements; and to Becca Gregory, for reading Kishli Laister-Scott's paper on her behalf. Top marks also to our intrepid delegates, most of whom still managed to get to Leicester! We also heard excellent papers from Chris Dyer on housing medieval livestock, Sheila Sweetinburgh on seasonal settlers, and Zoe Knapp on human-animal relationships in Lyminge. Our Spring Conference was organised by Andy Seaman on the theme of *Forest, Woodland and Settlement*, and was attended by almost sixty delegates, who enjoyed a walking tour of Canterbury and a field-trip to Randall manor in addition to a packed programme. Speakers included Della Hooke on the resources of the Wealden woodlands, Paul Everill on hunting lodges in the New Forest, and Michael Bintley on timber buildings.

Once again, we will return to Leicester for this year's Winter Seminar, which will be on the theme of *Settlement in the Danelaw*, organised by Stuart Wrathmell. We already have a first-class line-up of speakers, including Dawn Hadley, Julian Richards and David Stocker. Full details of this event are available on our website: <https://medieval-settlement.com/events/> and registration will open in the autumn. We have recently re-launched the John Hurst Memorial Prize as a competition for the best student paper on any theme on medieval landscape and settlement. The shortlisted papers will be presented at a new morning session of the Winter Seminar, and the winner will

receive £200, and the opportunity to have an edited version of their paper published in our journal, *Medieval Settlement Research*. This competition is open to students at Diploma, MA or PhD level study, enrolled in landscape archaeology, history, geography and other cognate subject areas. Applications are currently being accepted, and again, details can be found online: <https://medieval-settlement.com/grants-awards/dissertation-award/>. Further details can be obtained from the Hon. Secretary by email at sk565@le.ac.uk.

We have a new Student Representative, Eddie Procter, who is working hard to improve the benefits of membership for our student members (although student membership is already a bargain at just £6!). We now have student pages on our website, and we are encouraging students to send in short biographies detailing their research, that we can promote online. Eddie (alongside Duncan Berryman) also organised three MSRG-sponsored sessions at the International Medieval Congress in Leeds again this year. The sessions, on the theme of *Memory, Settlement and Landscape*, were lively and well attended, and took us from the sleepy Huntingdonshire village of Elton to Galicia, via Charnwood Forest, Yeavinger, Armenia, and Wales. It was especially noteworthy that two of our speakers, Gerben Verbrugghe and Aurora Camaño – both students – travelled from overseas to join us in Leeds. Duncan and Gerben were live tweeting from all of the sessions, keeping members and interested followers up to date with MSRG ‘on the road’! Our twitter army is ever-expanding, and we now have almost 400 followers. If you’d like to join them, you can do so by following us @MedSettRG.

We continue to offer grants for researchers, and this year awarded small grants to two excellent projects. The first was to Prof. Helena Hamerow at the University of Oxford, who is examining an early medieval great hall complex at Long Wittenham in Oxfordshire; the second grant was awarded to Marcus Jecock, on behalf of the Hanging Grimston Community Archaeology project in the Yorkshire Wolds. During 2017, we also awarded a special grant to Stephen Davis at University College Dublin, who will be creating a LiDAR-informed database of ridge and furrow in Ireland. We can all look forward to hearing how these projects progress in *Medieval Settlement Research* in due course. As I write, the latest edition of *Medieval Settlement Research* is being prepared for publication, and as usual, it will be packed full of landscape and settlement-related articles and reports. Once again this year, Andy Ford has compiled a bibliography of British and Irish publications, and this edition will also feature a bibliography of Italian work, produced for us by Maily Serra.

Finally, our membership charges have remained at the bargain rate of £12 for full members and £6 for students. It is now possible to sign up and pay for your subscription online, and I do hope that you will consider joining us!

Dr Susan Kilby
Hon. Secretary, MSRG

Images from the Randall Manor field-trip (with grateful thanks to Sheila Sweetinburgh)