



The Medieval Settlement Research Group in 2019

It has been another busy year for the MSR.G. Over the last few years it has been a central aim to provide a wider range of benefits to members, and to forge closer links with those involved in community archaeology. To that end, we have created two new Officer roles: a Membership Secretary, and a Community Archaeology Officer. Happily, two of our current committee members – Dr Helen Fenwick and Dr Peter Allen – agreed to take on these roles respectively. Helen’s remit includes welcoming new members, managing our membership database and producing our new newsletter (launched in spring 2019, and still available on our website: <https://medieval-settlement.com/newsletter/>). Peter has many years’ experience with the Council for British Archaeology in the East Midlands, and since joining the committee, he has been active in promoting the Group’s interests within this community, and in acting as a conduit between community-led groups and the academic world. In addition to these new roles, I am also delighted to welcome Dr Rebecca Gregory (University of Nottingham) to the committee. Becca is an interdisciplinary place-names scholar, and her work focuses on the Scandinavian influence on naming vocabulary in the East Midlands. Following the successful completion of his PhD, we are sad to lose Dr Eddie Procter as our Student Representative, but happy to welcome Paul Shaw, who has just started his PhD research at Leicester.

In December 2018, following the re-launch of the John Hurst competition for students, we held a full-day Winter Seminar, with the morning session focusing on four student finalists offering a range of papers which took us from Bedfordshire to Leicestershire, via Wales, Flanders and Iceland! It was a close competition, but the deserving winner was Gerben Verbrugghe from Ghent University who showcased his PhD research on tracing Flemish identity through planted settlement landscapes in Wales and Flanders. A synopsis of Gerben’s work will be published in this year’s edition of *Medieval Settlement Research*. The competition is now open to entries for 2019, and we warmly encourage students to apply – full details are on our website (<https://medieval-settlement.com/grants-awards/dissertation-award/>). Over the course of the afternoon, a record-busting 103 delegates enjoyed papers on the theme of *Settlement in the Danelaw* from a stellar line-up of speakers, including Prof. Dawn Hadley, Prof. Julian Richards, Prof. David Stocker and our very own Dr Stuart Wrathmell and Dr Rebecca Gregory.

In March this year, 80 delegates braved the roadworks on Cambridgeshire's A14 to enjoy a one-day conference organised by Stuart Wrathmell on *New Discoveries in the Cambridge Region: Medieval Settlement in the A14 Corridor and its Wider Context* at Lucy Cavendish College, Cambridge. For the second time in just under four months, the event sold out, and we very sadly had to turn away a number of people in the last two weeks before the event. The moral of the story is, of course: book early for MSRSG conferences! The reason for this rush for places was that once again, we managed to attract an outstanding group of speakers, including our own Prof. Chris Dyer, alongside Prof. John Blair (Oxford), Prof. Carenza Lewis (Lincoln) and Dr Sam Lucy (Cambridge). These scholars put into context the preliminary findings outlined by speakers from CGMS, Mola and Headland Archaeology during the morning session. This year's Winter Seminar returns once again to Leicester, where Prof. Stephen Rippon (Exeter) will lead the way on *New Directions in Settlement and Landscape Studies*. Alongside Benjamin Morton (Newcastle), Stephen has been working on the latest 'MSRSG Review of Medieval Settlement Research', which is due to be published in the 2020 edition of *Medieval Settlement Research*, and focuses on the ten year-period 2007-2016. This brings us up-to-date following Mark Gardiner's previous review, published in the MSRSG's Annual Report (21) in 2006. In addition to Prof. Rippon, December speakers will include Prof. Naomi Sykes (Exeter), Dr Duncan Wright (Bishop Grosseteste, Lincoln) and Dr Ben Jervis (Cardiff). Book early to secure your place! This event will of course be preceded in the morning by the John Hurst student competition, providing a packed programme for medieval landscape and settlement enthusiasts.

This was also the first year of our newly-revised grants scheme, which attracted a number of applications. Currently underway are projects on a medieval corn drier in Wales (Dr Rhiannon Comeau, UCL); and a community archaeology project focusing on Randall manor in Kent (Andrew Mayfield, Community Archaeologist, Kent County Council). The latter was the focus for a recent MSRSG field-trip, following our 2018 Spring Conference in Canterbury. We can look forward to reading updates on these projects in forthcoming editions of our newsletter, and in due course in *Medieval Settlement Research*. Finally, following the launch of our newsletter, Helen Fenwick is always happy to receive content for future editions – if you have ideas for submissions, please contact her by email at h.fenwick@hull.ac.uk.

Dr Susan Kilby
Hon. Secretary, MSRSG