

Medieval Archaeology

NEWSLETTER OF THE SOCIETY FOR MEDIEVAL ARCHAEOLOGY

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The present issue is packed with useful things and readers cannot but share in the keen current interest in matters-Viking. There are some important game-changing publications emerging and in press, as well as exhibitions, to say nothing of the Viking theme that leads the Society's Annual Conference in December. The Group Reports remind members that the medieval world is indeed bigger, while the editor brings us back to earth with some cautious observations about the 'quiet invasion' of Guidelines. Although shorter than usual, we look forward to the next issue being the full 16 pages, when we can expect submissions about current research and discoveries.

Niall Brady
Newsletter Editor
e-mail: niall@discoveryprogramme.ie

Left:
Geophysical survey at Torksey helps to construct the context for the individual artefacts recovered from the winter camp area.

The Viking winter camp of 872-873 at Torskey, Lincolnshire

new archaeological discoveries

The annual lecture will be delivered this year as part of the Society's conference, which takes place in Rewley House, Oxford (5th-7th December) (p. 5 of this newsletter), and will be delivered by the Society's Honorary Secretary, Prof. Dawn Hadley (University of Sheffield), and Prof. Julian Richards (University of York), who will be talking about their fieldwork on the site of a winter camp of the Viking 'Great Army'.

The entry in the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* for the year 872 records that the Great Army

(*micel here*) spent the winter at Torksey (Lincolnshire). This brief annal tells us little about the events that unfolded, other than revealing that peace was made with the Mercians, and even the precise location of the Viking encampment has remained a mystery until recently. Over the last twenty years or so, the activities of metal-detectorists have seen the recovery of a remarkable concentration of early medieval metalwork, currently numbering over 2,000 items, including c. 300 Anglo-Saxon coins,

over 100 Arabic dirhams, silver and gold ingots and an array of hack metal (silver, gold and copper alloy). The research project led by Professors Hadley and Richards has involved systematic recording of the metal finds, the use of GPS to produce distribution maps of finds recovered by on-going metal-detecting, and examination of the landscape setting of the winter camp. The annual lecture will report on the findings of this project, which has employed geophysical survey,

excavation and geomorphological techniques to characterize the site, and which reveals the extensive archaeological signal of what was unquestionably a very short moment of occupation.

Dawn Hadley and Julian Richards
d.m.hadley@sheffield.ac.uk

The Bullion Economy of Viking England

introducing a British Academy research project

Despite documentary evidence for large-scale Viking conquest in England, historical sources are silent on the nature and impact of subsequent settlement. By contrast, recent archaeological discoveries have enormous potential for revealing core aspects of Scandinavian society in England. Archaeological examination of the Viking bullion economy, in which weighed silver and gold was used as a means of exchange, offers one palpable means of understanding Scandinavian settlement. It can provide new insights into fundamental questions, such as: what were the sources of Viking wealth? How did the Vikings pay for goods and to what extent did they maintain a separate economic model from the (coin-using) Anglo-Saxons?

A three-year British Academy-funded research project currently underway at University College London is conducting a national archaeological study of the precious metal and weights used within this Scandinavian-style economic system. Past study of Viking bullion has been dominated by the evidence of silver hoards, found in England in large numbers from the early 10th century. Yet material selected and deliberately deposited in hoards may not be typical of items used in daily exchange. The current project breaks from this traditional focus by harnessing an altogether different category of evidence, namely finds from settlements and single finds discovered over the last two decades as a result of metal-detecting. As accidental losses, these represent the

Kirkdale's rooflines. Photograph courtesy of Peter Ryder.

scale and use of bullion more accurately, providing novel insights into Viking economic practice.

The new finds are extensive and extraordinary, comprising over 200 individual items of precious metal and weights, all of which find ready parallels with material from specialised central- and market-place sites within Scandinavia. By examining the composition, weight and findspots of the bullion-related finds, the project will reveal the nature and scale of silver-weight transactions, as well as the potential locations of bullion users. It is hoped that XRF analysis of the gold-in-silver ratio observed in bullion finds will also provide insights into the likely source(s) of Viking silver. These approaches help to reveal Viking economic practice and wealth resources in one particular Scandinavian overseas settlement, but they also feed into wider historical issues. A key contribution of the project will be to relate the evidence for bullion exchange to themes such as Anglo-Scandinavian interaction, the connections between the Scandinavian homelands and the Danelaw, and the longevity of Scandinavian rule in England.

Jane Kershaw
j.kershaw@ucl.ac.uk

A deliberately cut fragment from a bossed penannular brooch found in 2007 in Snape with Thorpe, North Yorkshire. 10 mm diameter. Scandinavian ornaments such as brooches and rings were frequently cut to generate pieces of hack-silver used as payment.

Photograph courtesy of the PAS.



RESEARCH

Kirkdale emerges

Archaeological work can take a long time to come to publication, not least because of the vagaries of human life-spans. At Kirkdale work is nonetheless continuing towards a good conclusion.

Post-excavation work by the late Philip Rahtz and Lorna Watts at Kirkdale, Yorkshire, using a wide-range of archaeological and historical techniques on and around the isolated church (Watts, Grenville and Rahtz 1996-97, Rahtz and Watts 1998-99, Watts et al 1997) can now propose that the 19th-century plan of Kirkdale Church embodied two plans on different orientations, as do the excavated burials.

'Received opinion' on the Anglo-Saxon structural elements at Kirkdale, embodied in the Taylors' pioneering account of the church (Taylor and Taylor 1965, 357-361), highlights the immediately recognisable 11th-century work in the nave west wall and the nave-chancel crossing. This has led to neglect of the north aisle, especially the NE end, which is usually regarded as the latest medieval extension. An earlier structure can now be proposed within the existing church, represented by the chancel and the north aisle. The nave, assigned to the mid-11th century structure referred to in the *Orm Gamalson* inscription above the sundial, represents the other. It is the long-term re-evaluation of the entire building that has clarified that the NE part of the present north aisle contains probably pre-11th century masonry *in situ*, which in turn correlates with other evidence from excavation; from observation of the fabric side and out; and from 19th-century documentation, including the reliable drawings made by Charles Tudor, the architect-son of the then incumbent (Tudor 1876). It also allows for the better integration of excavation data into a proposed sequence.

Peter Ryder has identified the vestigial remains of a hagioscope in the north aisle (on Tudor's 1876 plan, unnamed). The identification explains what appeared to be a pilaster in the NE part of the church. Peter's discernment recognised that the east side of the north pier of the nave-chancel crossing had been reduced in order to accommodate the line of sight from the north aisle through the later hagioscope into the chancel. It suggests that considerable monies continued to be spent on Kirkdale until the later medieval period. Was such a feature only to view the altar, or was it, as the name suggests, also intended to view relics?

What is the date of the proposed earlier structure? Comparative data is lacking, especially locally. Immediately, it has points in common with 10th-century Deerhurst, not

least in its height (in proportion to its size); and such a date might make sense in terms of the contemporary politics. However, if this marked the date of construction, then it must be presumed that a further building housed Kirkdale's major monumental graveslabs, assigned to the late 8th-early 9th centuries (Lang 1991, 162, 163). The date of the excavated lead plaque is likely to appertain to its use at Kirkdale, and it could be similar to the graveslabs, although it has much wider outer limits (from c. 675–c. 950, Watts *et al* 1997, 75). The date of the coloured twisted glass (currently 9th century, Watts *et al* 1997, 52) could be argued to provide a *terminus post quem* because the object it was likely part of was eminently suitable as a gift, either at the time of its manufacture or long afterwards. Its findspot close to the lead plaque may indicated that it got to Kirkdale at a similar time. These objects could all belong to a pre-10th century church; was this as early as the late 8th-early 9th centuries?

Recognition of what can be proposed to have been a pre-mid 11th-century church at Kirkdale and built on quite a grand scale will help understanding of why a 'completely ruined and collapsed' building, referred to in the sundial inscription, was thought worth celebrating: something of its earlier history was, it would seem, still appreciated at that time. A fuller account is on the way (Rahtz and Watts in prep).

Lorna Watts

lwattsrahtz@gmail.com

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Website

www.medievalarchaeology.org
The website continues to improve.
Send us your comments:
medieval.archaeology@ gmail.com.

Apply for a Grant

The Society is in the happy position of being able to offer grants for research and for travel. For information on how to apply for a Society grant/award, see our website www.medievalarchaeology.org.

Current Officers

President: Helena Hamerow
Secretary: Dawn Hadley
Treasurer: Stephen Rippon
Journal Editor: Oliver Creighton
Asst. Editor: Sarah Semple
Reviews Editor: Neil Christie
Monographs Editor: Chris Gerrard
Newsletter Editor: Niall Brady
Website Editor: Rory Sherlock

2014 titles from the Monograph series

Rosemary Cramp deserves great praise for bringing *Hirsel* to completion in 2014, and we look forward to a launch at the AGM in Oxford in December.

Hirsel, Monograph 36.

Society Links



Society News

a word from our President



It is an honour to have been elected President of the Society for Medieval Archaeology, and I am enormously grateful to have had, in the past few months, the support and guidance of an exceptionally able group of Officers and Council members, who give generously of their time on the Society's behalf. For over fifty years, our Society has championed and fostered the study of medieval archaeology. Its journal continues to lead the field and is attracting growing international interest. Recent years have seen many of our activities and resources – conferences, grants, newsletters, etc. – become available to all, which is a very welcome development. Indeed, I recently learned that our Facebook page has over 900 followers (most of whom, however, are not-yet-members)! It is important

to ensure that the Society also confers a diverse and attractive range of benefits exclusively to its members – it is, after all, they (you) who make all of these activities possible. To this end, you will find in this Newsletter discounted offers available to members only; further offers, fieldtrips and other events are planned for the coming years – watch this space.

I very much look forward to meeting as many SMA members as possible at our AGM and Annual Conference in December, and to hearing your views on what the Society might offer its members in future years.

Helena Hamerow
helena.hamerow@arch.ox.ac.uk



Don't forget the SMA 2014 Conference
From Viking Camps to Saxon Assemblies:
Temporary and Seasonal Sites and Settlement in Medieval Europe
5-7 December, Rewley House, Oxford
book now

Notice of the Annual General Meeting

The 2015 Annual General Meeting of the Society will be held at 19:30
on Friday 5th December 2014
in the Lecture Theatre, Rewley House, Dept. for Continuing Education,
University of Oxford, 1 Wellington Square, Oxford OX1 2JA

Agenda

1 Minutes of last Annual General Meeting

2 Elections of Officers and Council

The following nominations have been received:

For election:

Hon. Treasurer Dr Duncan Sayer

Members of Council Dr Elizabeth Craig-Atkins

 Dr Stephen Harrison

 Dr John Naylor

3 Election of auditors Bronsens, 267 Banbury Road, Oxford

4 President's Report

5 Treasurer's report

6 Editor's report

7 Secretary's report

8 Prizes

9 Any other business

10 Date of next meeting.

The AGM will be followed by the Annual Lecture (at 20:30) by

Professor Dawn Hadley (University of Sheffield) and Professor Julian Richards (University of York)

'The Viking winter camp of 872-3 at Torksey, Lincolnshire: new archaeological discoveries'

The annual lecture will be followed by a wine reception and the launch of the Society's latest monograph.

Please note that the timing and venue of this year's AGM and annual lecture have been chosen to coincide with the Society's annual conference. Members of the Society who wish to attend both but are not attending the conference **MUST** book a place with the Hon. Secretary by 3rd December at the latest, D.M.Hadley@Sheffield.ac.uk. Places are free but booking is essential.

Dawn Hadley, Hon. Secretary

Oxford Archaeology and SMA Book Discount

Oxford Archaeology is pleased to offer a discount to all SMA members on its monograph series. This will comprise a 25% discount on all titles (plus P&P). To make an order or for further details, please contact Magdalena Wachnik at Oxford

Archaeology South, magdalena.wachnik@oxfordarch.co.uk
or Elizabeth Popescu at Oxford Archaeology East, elizabeth.popescu@oxfordarch.co.uk.

News & Views

We should be concerned about Guidelines

The emergence of the Guideline principle seems to have passed unnoticed and unchallenged. Archaeology has shared in the bounty of documents that circulate as a secondary body of preferred regulations to govern a given practice or discipline. There is merit behind the brief of a guidance document, as they strive to bring order to what are considered to be areas that require order. Within Archaeology, guidance notes or protocols seem to govern many aspects of work as opposed to research. They help to set standards for the 'industry', and many are concerned with assisting planning authorities and archaeologists who work in the private sector, as they try to simplify the intellectual process while dealing specifically with the development sector. They are present fundamentally to protect our cultural heritage, which is a very good thing. If you were to pick up an Environmental Impact Statement, you will find the archaeological issues addressed in Cultural Heritage, and somewhere in that chapter, close to the beginning, you will see a list of the guidance notes consulted for the project, along with the relevant Heritage Acts and other governance. The use of these documents underwrites the legitimacy of the chapter or study. Such lists may typically run on over an entire page of the report, and will often form the bulk of the bibliography, where readers may observe a corresponding small number of entries that deal with published archaeological and related research consulted for the study area. Guidance notes are also bound as user-friendly attractive publications, where electronic publishing has gone a great way in using full-colour and good design to make them easily downloadable from the internet.

So far so good. What is worrying is the lack of professional discussion of these documents. It is the case that each guidance note will identify the discussions and panel consultations that have taken place between the policy makers and the strategic partners in open and transparent means. In many instances this is clearly the best way forward and has resulted in excellent guidance. There is however a worrying trend in the micro-world of Marine Archaeology which, as one who works in that sector, has come to my attention. Archaeologists have worked long and hard to establish the principle that archaeologists are the professionals responsible for monitoring disturbance activities that might result in the discovery of new archaeological material during development. This principle is unquestioned in a terrestrial context (or indeed in any other professional

context where an expert presence is required), and has helped profoundly in the process of new discovery and proper resolution. Archaeological monitoring is present in the marine sector, and in certain jurisdictions is present with a force that is equal to that in the terrestrial sector. It is therefore surprising and disappointing to see new guidance notes relating to the Offshore Renewables sector, published by the Crown Estate as a *Protocol for archaeological discoveries: offshore renewable projects*, 2014 (www.thecrownestate.co.uk/media/148964/ei-protocol-for-archaeological-discoveries-offshore-renewables-projects.pdf). Based on a revised document of 2010, its stated aim is to satisfy anticipated conditions relating to the reporting of archaeological discoveries across the offshore renewable energy industry, if followed correctly, where an archaeologist is not present on site. The protocol requires developers to nominate a 'site champion', who is not an archaeologist, but who is 'usually the senior person on site' (p. 6) – i.e. the vessel skipper or senior engineer, who is tasked with identifying material of potential archaeological interest and reporting it up the line, to the archaeological regulator and/or consultant, both of whom are far removed from the project area.

Perhaps Society members will share my surprise at this development, which has been gathering momentum in the UK in recent years. It begs the question whether any new substantive discoveries will be forthcoming during the implementation phases of such development projects. Marine Archaeology is a fledgling sub-discipline, and one that is filled with excitement as it finds its feet and makes valuable contributions to the wider narratives. Yet such a protocol appears to give it a secondary importance which, if established, may invite its extension to terrestrial archaeology. It is ironic that the offshore sector has some of the most sophisticated recovery technology at its disposal, to say nothing of the resources to resolve archaeological discoveries, but it is likely that any new material will come as a result of the more traditional routes, via reports from fishermen and from sports divers. The guidance notes in this instance at least appear to be encouraging a backwards step, and do not appear to be in the interests of Archaeology.

Niall Brady
Newsletter Editor

The **Castle Studies Trust** is a UK-based charity, founded in 2012 with the aim of increasing the understanding of castles both in the UK and abroad. The Trust is currently offering grants of up to £5,000 to fund new pieces of research on castle sites. Suitable projects might include surveys (such as geophysical, architectural, historical, topographical or LIDAR); testing (such as Radiocarbon dating); or projects that increase public understanding of castle sites (such as reconstruction drawings).

Applications will be accepted from Monday 1 September 2014 with the closing date of Monday 15 December 2014.

The work of the Castle Studies Trust is endorsed by patrons Edward Impey and John Goodall. Grants are entirely funded by public donations.

For further information about applying for a grant, including the grant-giving criteria and an application form, please visit www.castlestudiestrust.org or contact Jeremy Cunningham at admin@castlestudiestrust.org or Flat 3, Ferme Park Road, London N4 4ED.



Group Reports 2013

Castle Studies Group

In April 2013, 50 members attended the 27th AGM of the **Castle Studies Group** (CSG) for its Annual Conference, in Stirling. Organised by Norman Hall, Alan Welsh, John Wright and Muriel and Ivan Draper, the conference theme was 'Castles and Palaces of the Stewards', and followed the usual CSG format of mainly site visits, with three evening lectures, given by Richard Oram, Penny Dransart and Geoffrey Stell. There was a mix of 13 palaces, tower houses and later fortifications of the 15th through to the 17th centuries, including Castle Campbell, Falkland Palace, St Andrews, Doune, Alloa, Linlithgow, Blackness and the privately owned Balgonie. A particular highlight was the newly refurbished interiors of James V Palace at Stirling Castle. The conference dinner was a very special occasion held at Plane Castle, the 15th-century tower house with adjoining 16th-century range owned and restored by CSG members John and Nancy Wright. Sadly, following the conference we lost John this year after a spell of ill health. He was a larger than life character who will be sorely missed. His passing makes the memories of that magnificent night all the more poignant. The group also felt the loss of

Professor Charles McKean and one of its founding members, Dennis Turner, last year.

There was no Autumn Day Conference, but a study tour looking at Cathar Castles was organised in September by Richard Eales and Pamela Marshall. It was the second such tour of Cathar Castles, following the first five years ago. This time the tour was based at Carcassonne and focused on the central region of Ariège. The 22-strong group visited Toulouse, Foix, Ax-les-Thermes, Miglos, Lordat, Roquefixade, Mirepix, Lagrde and Querigut, Usson, Montailou and Montégur, and was a very successful and memorable trip.

In July several members contributed to the 4th Towers Conference at Amersfoort in The Netherlands with the theme of 'The Problematical Tower House', which also included a speaker's outing to towers in the region.

The CSG *Journal*, edited by Neil Guy, includes news of CSG activities, members' interests and updates on castle research. Castle-related publications for the year are listed and reviewed in CSG *Bibliography* No. 26, compiled by Gillian Eadie. CSG interim *E-Bulletins* are distributed in Spring and August, and are edited by



View of Doune Castle, introduced by Richard Oram. A major re-interpretation of the site is underway involving structural analysis and excavation following the discovery from 2008 onward of potentially 13th-century fabric in the lower portions of this essentially late 14th/early 15th-century castle.

Peter Burton. Committee members can be contacted by email via www.castlestudiesgroup.org.uk.

Undergraduates and post-graduates who are writing a dissertation or thesis on a castle-related theme may qualify to attend the Annual Conference at half price. CSG also awards small grants to group projects involving castle research, details for which are on the website.

Gillian Eadie, Hon. Secretary
secretary@castlestudiesgroup.org.uk
www.castlestudiesgroup.org.uk

Medieval Pottery Research Group



Humberware Jug
 from Ladose, Sweden.

The MPRG organised a weekend visit to Stockholm, to visit the ceramic collections from the city and those from the *Vasa*, and a small number were hosted by the Ladose Museum, to study the imports from the excavations

of the town. It provided an excellent opportunity to identify medieval English ceramics (including Scarborough Ware, Humber Ware and Toynton-type ware) in a European context.

In June our conference was in

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Finds Research Group



The **Finds Research Group** (FRG) organised three gatherings for members and colleagues in 2013. In March we revisited Leiden (and Amsterdam) with our wonderful host Annemarieke Willemsen, and in April tackled the subject of “‘You Can’t Take It With You’: Artefacts in burials from Post-Roman to Early-Modern’. In October we joined up with the Portable Antiquities Scheme (PAS) to consider ‘The Forgotten Past: Post-Medieval Small Finds and their contribution to our understanding of the Past’. Meanwhile we were redesigning our website (do please visit www.findsresearchgroup.com) and republishing *Volume I (Datasheets 1–24)*.

We returned to Leiden to view the ‘Medieval Chic’ exhibition, but Annemarieke kindly and meticulously arranged a whole lot more besides. The exhibition included a huge variety of metal mounts displayed alongside belts, purses and other items to which they had been attached. So many belt fittings will hardly be gathered together in one place again! As Quita Moulds recounts, we travelled to Amsterdam Museum for a guided visit to ‘The Golden Age, Gateway to our World’ exhibition, followed by a visit to the Archaeological Service of Amsterdam. Sunday found us all taking coffee (and huge slices of apple pie) at the Zijlpoort before setting off on a walk to the Groenesteeg, a wonderfully atmospheric Leiden cemetery filled with snow drops and blue anemones with green parakeets in the tree tops.

The Spring meeting provided a chance to look at new and varied approaches to one of the oldest archaeological questions, the interpretation and analysis of grave goods. Papers presented at the Institute of Archaeology, London, covered the full range of the group’s interests from the Early Medieval period up until the 19th century and the onset of mass-produced material culture. As with the Anglo-Saxon graves, the question of whether objects were personally meaningful rather than culturally specific was one that was continually raised and, for the finds specialist, it was intriguing how many of the techniques and methodologies used could work across all these periods. The range of questions asked during the meeting, potential answers (often questioning) given, just revealed what a demanding and exciting area of research this is. We received two reviews of this meeting by Stuart Campbell and Teresa Gilmore that are both equally worthy of consideration and are available through our website. Overall it was an excellent day that ended with an *impromptu* wine reception where we caught up on gossip and discussed all the ideas and problem finds presented during the day.

Once given little consideration by most archaeologists,

post-medieval material was the ‘stuff machined through’ to get to the ‘interesting layers’ below. However, thanks to changing attitudes there is increasing awareness of the importance of post-medieval finds for understanding the past. It was this interest, and research into such finds, that was highlighted at this conference convened at the British Museum in October.

Those who gave papers were asked to consider a range of questions. Why record post-medieval material, and are there aspects that can be disregarded or studied selectively? What types were once thought of as rare, but are now considered quite common, and does that change how we feel about what we record? What have we discovered that is new, and does this help with future research agendas? Post-medieval finds have a greater potential to link objects to specific people or occasions, so does that make certain objects more interesting or important? How does the recording of post-medieval finds advance research? The conference was very well attended and the papers engendered some lively and enthusiastic debate. We are in debt to Janina Parol and her colleagues at PAS for organising an enjoyable and successful day.

The Geoff Egan Prize for Finds Research will once again be awarded to an individual in recognition of great potential in the field of finds research (post-Roman to modern periods). For details regarding applications, submission dates and the prize see our website. Following two winners in 2012, we were delighted to announce Megan von Ackerman as the prize-winner of 2013, for her doctoral research into Viking Age keys.

Annual Membership is a very affordable £6 (£10 or €15 for overseas members). Members receive two mailings a year and we usually have at least two annual day-conferences. The Group is in a healthy financial position and the membership of c. 410 is expanding. The group’s Datasheets on particular categories of objects are sent out free to members. Copies of the *Datasheet Volumes I and II* are available from Stuart Campbell (s.campbell@nms.ac.uk), or via our website.

Looking ahead to 2015 we are planning a trip to the Isle of Man, Friday to Sunday 24–26 April, and a visit to see Glasgow in September/October (the Kelvingrove, Burrell Collection plus a cuppa in tea rooms designed by Rennie MacIntosh of course). As always we are working on ideas for future meetings and details will be published in newsletters and posted online.

Jane Cowgill, Hon. Secretary
jane.cowgill@e-a-c.co.uk



Medieval Settlement Research Group

Dendrochronology indicates that the timbers for the moated manor house at Lower Brockhampton above were felled between 1414 and 1441, when the house was built next to a 12th-century chapel. The medieval hall sports a late example of a base cruck roof, and was built at the same time or shortly before construction of the cross wing. It was designed to be seen and appreciated within a ring-fenced farming landscape. The visit sparked discussion amongst delegates which focused on how the house was an integral part of a designed landscape with small lakes and an island also linked to the moat. Photograph © Alan Wadsworth.

Beneath the exterior below is a cruck-framed barn that forms part of a moated farmstead at Bromsberrow to the south of the medieval hunting chase in the Malverns. The late medieval barn is unlisted and was designed to have animals stalled at one end and retains rare surviving boarding and open wattlework. Photograph © Alan Wadsworth.

Across 2013 and the first half of 2014, the **Medieval Settlement Research Group (MSRG)** held two Spring conferences and a Winter Seminar, and generated the latest issue of its journal (Volume 24).

For 25-26 April 2013, Graham Fairclough and Peter Herring kindly organised a meeting in Penryn-Falmouth with the Landscape Research Group (LRG) on 'Medieval Perceptions of Landscape'. The event featured a set of very informative papers, much appreciated by the 40+ delegates who were drawn from both the LRG and MSRG, and not only from Devon and Cornwall; talks considered explorations of non-élite perceptions of landscape and space; discussion of Reformation-period perceptions of coastlands; the Branscombe Project, and medieval and post-medieval concepts of prehistory in the Cornish landscape. An excursion was well attended to Godolphin House and park, courtesy of the National Trust and without charge.

The Winter Seminar took place in conjunction with the AGM in December, at St Edmund's Hall, University of Oxford. Organised by Jeremy Lake, the seminar debated aspects of the 'Futures of Medieval Settlement', drawing on work by English Heritage on designation, mapping the survival and historic character of traditional farmsteads, Historic Landscape Characterisation and the National Mapping Programme, and exploring through case studies various work and issues on farmsteads, bastles and shielings in the Pennines, and contrasting landscapes in Suffolk, Worcestershire, Warwickshire and SE England.

The 2014 Spring Conference, 'Medieval Rural Houses, Farmsteads and their Landscapes', was held at The Hive, Worcester on 22-23 March, and was organised by Jeremy Lake of English Heritage and held in conjunction with the Vernacular Buildings Group (VBG). Over 50 delegates assembled, including members of the Historic Farm Buildings Group, who listened keenly to an array of experts consider patterns of building survival in their landscapes and questions that arise for future research. An overview of national issues; consideration of the longhouses of Dartmoor; evidence for capital-based farming on the chalk downlands; the dating of medieval houses in the southern Midlands; and the robustness of medieval settlement as a key factor in shaping new patterns of development in England were among the topics raised. The Sunday excursion focussed on surviving medieval farmsteads

and landscapes in Worcestershire and southern Warwickshire, namely Bromesberrow, Castlemorton and the Brockhampton estate.

MSRG Student Committee Member, Dr Susan Kilby, has organised a student-led Winter Seminar for 2014 which will feature eight student papers as well as posters on themes attached to settlement and landscape, to be held in the Centre for English Local History at the University of Leicester on 13 December. See the web pages for the programme.

The MSRG's John Hurst MA Dissertation Prize was awarded in 2013 to Anna Katerina Fotaki, for her 'Brief Lives: The non-adults from two neighbouring Anglo-Saxon cemeteries in Norton, Cleveland', MSc dissertation at the University of York. In April 2014 the award went to Krissy Moore for research related to her MA in Landscape Archaeology at the University of Sheffield, 'A Reassessment of the Archaeology of Caistor, West Lindsey, Lincs., from the 4th to the 11th Centuries'. Prize winners are encouraged to submit an extended summary of their work to the MSRG journal –often representing the very first publication for these budding new academics. Relevant MA programme directors are reminded of the 31 December deadline for submission to the MSRG Secretary of entries of high quality dissertations (20,000 words maximum) on a medieval rural or landscape theme submitted and passed in the last academic year.

MSRG membership stands well at c. 475 members. Annual membership remains affordable at £12 (£6 for students). Members receive the journal, *Medieval Settlement Research*. There is open access to the archived issues of the journal (formerly the *Annual Report*) at: http://archaeologydataservice.ac.uk/archives/view/msrg_2012/. The Society has hard copy back-issues, which can be bought at minimal cost (a near full run costs £45 including postage within the UK), please contact Dr Robin Glasscock at St John's College, Cambridge CB2 1TP. Any member is eligible to apply for fieldwork grants (awards up to £500), and students can apply for bursaries to attend the Group's conferences, detail of which are in the journal and on the web pages.

Neil Christie, Hon. Secretary

njc10@le.ac.uk

www.britarch.ac.uk/msrg/



continued from page 7.

Lisbon, hosted by the *Museu Nacional de Arte Antiga*, exploring medieval and later ceramic development, production and trade along the Atlantic seaboard.

President Duncan Brown's term of office ended, and we acknowledge his sterling work over 6 years to drive the ambition of the MPRG, reaching out to new audiences and partners. Council welcomes our new President, Julie Edwards.

The pressures facing those working in archaeology are increasingly apparent, forcing our Regional Groups' Officer to step down, while time constraints on members of council has slowed progress on our projects. Yet Chris Cumberpatch and Peter Robinson followed up on last year's joint meeting of the North East and East Midlands groups with another meeting in Doncaster in May.

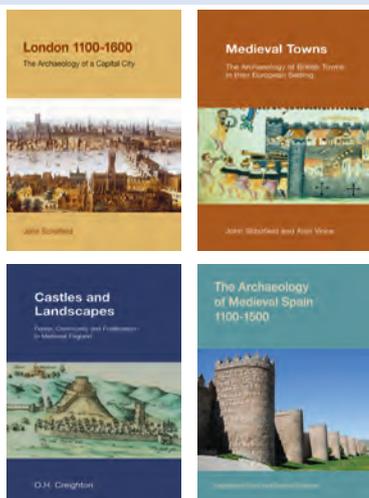
Financially the Group is secure, but the journal *Medieval Ceramics* is ever more dependent on grant aid. Out of print copies of the Journal are available online.

The John Hurst Travel Fund was awarded in 2013 to Christoph Khune to help his work on Seigburg Stoneware. In 2014 the award was given to Heather Crowley from Cardiff University to support her work in Israel working on ceramic material from 12th to 13th-century settlement sites. The Travel Fund provides financial support for those needing to travel to study ceramic collections as part of their research. Applications are welcome from any member via our website.

Andrew Sage, Hon. Secretary
www.medievalpottery.org.uk

New Titles

Equinox Books, www.equinoxpub.com



Studies in the Archaeology of Medieval Europe was set up under John Schofield with the aim of giving fuller voice to the medieval period and encouraging synthetic assessments in the light of increased excavation (rescue and research), landscape studies, architectural studies, and enhanced studies of the period's material cultures. The series, published by Equinox, aims to show connections, differences and transitions between regions, to question identities and to reveal qualities of the evidence. The series is now under the editorial guidance of Dr Neil Christie – well known to SMA members – and is being redirected to explore three main strands: **Territories** – to include studies of modern countries; **Great Towns** – to examine the archaeology of key towns and cities that shaped kingdoms, trade and religion; **Themes** – where pan-European topics will be explored, such as monastic expressions, rural life, health, pilgrimage, metalworking. Interested authors should contact the editor to discuss ideas and proposals. Present titles are shown. New to the series in 2014 is Magdalena Valor and Avelino Gutiérrez (eds), *The archaeology of Medieval Spain, 1100-1600*. A title in press is Jan Klápště, *The archaeology of Prague and the Czech Lands, 1100-1600*. For further information, go to www.equinoxpub.com/home/books/series/studies-in-the-archaeology-of-medieval-europe/

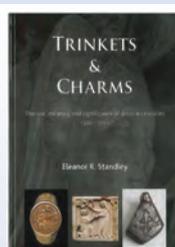
Four Courts Press, www.fourcourtspress.ie



In what was a controversial discovery, the archaeology associated with **Woodstown, Co. Waterford**, describes and discusses the Viking landing site on the River Suir, close to Waterford City in Ireland's southeast. The new book heralds the imminent publication from Four Courts Press in association with the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland of Howard Clarke and Ruth Johnston (eds), *Before and after the battle of Clontarf*, which promises to set a new baseline on Viking studies in Ireland. **Tales of Medieval Dublin** presents a series of lunchtime lectures by eminent scholars, who describe various aspects of daily life in Ireland's medieval capital city in an accessible tone to specialist and non-specialist alike.

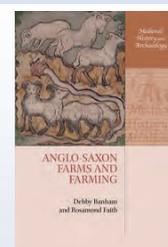
University of Oxford School of Archaeology, www.oxbowbooks.com

Oxford University Press, www.oup.com/uk/history



Eleanor Standley's *Trinket and Charms* is the School of Archaeology's 78th Monograph, and looks in an interdisciplinary way at dress accessories from two regions of Britain dating from c. 1300 to 1700, revealing how these personal possessions were used by people in their daily lives.

An exciting and long-awaited new volume from two savvy thinkers in Anglo-Saxon studies promises to excite and challenge archaeologists and historians in their pursuit of insight to the workings of the countryside in Anglo-Saxon England.



Media & Exhibition

Medieval violence displayed:

Vikings, Visby, Veronese and Bannockburn

Joanne Harris's *The Gospel of Loki*, *Runemarks* and *Runelight* is an inventive and engaging retelling of the Norse myths, which filled me with anticipation for some equally stimulating Revisionism at the British Museum's recent, international partnership exhibition, 'Vikings: life and legend'. However, I approached the exhibition with an air of trepidation in the light of some generally negative reviews. The exhibition was large in scale but placed in an awkward-seeming, gloomy space, unduly cramped to begin with (perhaps to emphasise the opening-up of the space around the reconstructed ship, Roskilde 6). The story was built around ten themes, the first six dealing with the extent of the Viking world, particularly as a trading network, and the display of power and status in the homelands. Around Roskilde 6 were placed the remaining themes, dealing with violence (including that inflicted upon Vikings), warfare and beliefs. An epilogue briefly considered the Viking legacy in Britain.

Over-crowded exhibitions always add an element of frustration but a disappointment was engendered by the general gloominess, poor object inter-spatiality and some poor labelling that sometimes lacked numbering to link it to an object, and seemed to prefer to focus on what an object was made of rather than what it actually was. As a consequence some visitors were interpreting a bone-weaving baton as a sword. Useful context was provided by photographs of some of the places as they are today, along with maps and Saga and other text quotes placed on the walls. Good use was made of sound – at strategic points a voice-over reading Saga extracts in Old Norse; the sound of waves lapping a shore and a Shetlandic voice-over describing boat technology. Haptically

there were various elements of raw materials that could be touched. It was great to see many examples of Islamic coins recycled as jewellery and many imitations of such coins and others. The exhibition was hugely popular by numbers and it cannot be denied that it distilled a lot of information on Viking discoveries over the last four decades to tell a very different story from the one told by the BM back in the 1980s. The accompanying publication is a very good example of its type, being lavishly illustrated and packed with cogent essays supporting five key themes: contacts, warfare, elite power, beliefs and ships. I was struck by Kleingärtner's contribution on the 'Reuse of foreign objects' and Price's extended essay on 'Belief & Ritual', which navigates the pagan-Christian transition, finding time for a stimulating speculation on a possible failed Islamic 'mission' in the North.

Meanwhile, the National Gallery was staging the eponymously titled exhibition about the 16th-century artist *Veronese*. Fifty of his works told the story of his career, the first such exhibition in the UK. Interpretation was minimalist and supported by audio-guides and free booklets containing detailed labels for each painting. There is much medieval/early modern material culture and its social embeddedness to observe. His style conveys a magnificence of display and a theatricality of performance in which violence is a strong element within a range of subjects including tales from classical myth and history, Bible stories (notably Judith and Holofernes) and martyrdoms.

Revisionist in interpretation, strategy and technique is the new National Trust for Scotland's visitor centre for the Battle of Bannockburn. It is of course the ideal year in which



Conferences & Events

— FORTHCOMING —

To advertise conferences/events in the Newsletter contact:

Dr Karen Milek
Lecturer in Archaeology and
Honorary Curatorial Fellow to
University Museums
School of Geosciences
University of Aberdeen
St. Mary's
Elphinstone Road
Aberdeen, AB24 3UF
Scotland

or email
k.milek@abdn.ac.uk

To advertise on the website, email:
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googlemail.com](mailto:medieval.archaeology@googlemail.com)

Contribute to the Newsletter

We welcome submissions relating to current research projects in Ireland, the UK and on the continent, and ask that submissions do not exceed 800 words, with conference reports to be within 500 words.

Please do not embed pictures in Word/text files but do send pictures/plans as separate high quality JPEG files. The preferred format for site plans/maps is EPS, with layers clearly indicated and unlocked, and any linked files attached.

Send to Newsletter Editor, e-mail:
niall@discoveryprogramme.ie

The due dates for receipt of copy are:
Spring Newsletter: 15th February
Autumn Newsletter: 15th August

Credits

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December:

5-7 December

Society for Medieval Archaeology Annual Conference 2014. 'From Viking Camps to Saxon Assemblies: Temporary and Seasonal Sites and Settlements in Medieval Europe', Rewley House, Dept for Continuing Education, University of Oxford, 1 Wellington Square, Oxford. www.medievalarchaeology.co.uk/index.php/sma-annual-conference-2014/
www.wmich.edu/medieval/congress/

6-7 December

8th Annual Conference of Disease, Disability and Medicine in Medieval Europe', with a pre-conference workshop for post-graduate students on 5 December, University of Nottingham. www.nottingham.ac.uk/conference/fac-arts/disease-disability-medicine/index.aspx

January-February 2015:

it seems the academy is enjoying a winter's break

March:

21-22 March

North of England Saints, 600-1500, Lady Margaret Hall, Oxford. www.lmh.ox.ac.uk/Tutors/Academic-news/Northern-Saints.aspx

April:

25 April

11th Midlands Viking Symposium. University of Leeds. www.nottingham.ac.uk/csua/events/events/2014-15/midlands-viking-symposium.asp

May:

14-17 May

50th International Congress on Medieval Studies, Western Michigan University, Kalamazoo, Michigan. www.wmich.edu/medieval/congress/



the Knight's gallery at the NTS Battle of Bannockburn Visitor Centre.

to have revamped the displays on the Battle, both because 2014 represents the 700th anniversary of the Battle and is the year Scotland voted on Independence from the rest of the UK. The experience comprises three elements: a 3-D sensory experience that deploys ten life-size digital figures from the battle to tell their story (some of whom were very reluctant to speak the day I visited); an episodic account of the battle with the aid of live interpreters; a show in the circular battle-room in which the actual battle is explained and interpreted (including narration from Fiona Watson and Tony Pollard); and, also in the battle-room, a re-staging of the battle with visitors split into Scots and English who are able to move digital forces across a large-scale map, under the tutelage of a battle-master. These elements are book-ended by a prologue and epilogue 3-D digital puppet show that explores the causes and aftermath of the battle. I gave the command for the Scottish archers to take out Queen Edwina and so secured victory. The dialogue of the 'battle masters' is carefully chosen to avoid any political overtones and other potential

controversies are skirted (especially Edward II's sexuality and death).

At the Swedish Historical Museum, Stockholm, the full, bloody story of medieval warfare is evoked more harrowingly through its new exhibition *Medieval Massacre – the Battle of Gotland 1361*. It has the advantage over *Bannockburn* of its battlefield having been extensively excavated. The exhibition fuses conventional display (of weapons and skeletons) with a continuously repeating *son et lumière* slide show, playing images of the reconstructed battle across the entire gallery (by dedicated re-enactors), and with all the material accessible online. The battle, also known as the Battle of Visby, saw the forces of the Danish king massacre over 2,000 Gotland yeoman farmers and peasantry. *Bannockburn* by contrast celebrates a political rhetoric of freedom against the odds (as if the Gotland peasants had won) rather than meditating too obviously on the bloody cost.

Mark Hall

marcus.antonius@virgin.net