

Medieval Archaeology

NEWSLETTER OF THE SOCIETY FOR MEDIEVAL ARCHAEOLOGY

People and place: the making of the Kingdom of Northumbria AD 300-800

A new project at Durham University, funded by the Leverhulme Trust



Charting the emergence, size and longevity of the early state has challenged many anthropologists and archaeologists; the scope, duration and ethnic composition often proving elusive because of the lack of appropriate data. The kingdom of Northumbria AD 300-800 was a powerful, contested territory and a linguistic and cultural melting pot. It provides an ideal laboratory in which archaeologists can explore the processes of early political formation, through the analysis of populations who lived through the significant social transformations of this time.

A new project at Durham University, funded by the Leverhulme Trust (2015-2018), is set to carry out an ambitious

and comprehensive reassessment of the burial data relating to the ancient kingdom of Northumbria. Building on a decade of dramatic advances in early medieval cemetery studies, *People and place*, exploits an aggregate of social and scientific approaches to the burial record for Northumbria AD 300-800. It engages in a full reassessment of all known funerary evidence from the kingdom at its greatest extent, from the Humber to the Firth of Forth and the North Sea to the Irish Sea. The fourth to eighth centuries AD witnessed enormous variation in terms of burial traditions across Britain. The living commemorated the dead in regionally distinctive ways, in terms of grave goods and funerary dress and the types of location chosen for cemeteries

Contents

Research.....	1
Society News.....	5
Other News.....	8
Group Reports.....	9
New Titles.....	11
Forthcoming Events.....	12

The Autumn Newsletter typically includes reports from the research groups the Society retains close ties with and in the present issue we have two reports, but much of the Newsletter is given over to notifications of events and proceedings occurring within the SMA. In addition to the Annual Conference, which will take place in Preston in December, we want to bring members' attention to changes in *Medieval Archaeology* which, since it was first published in 1957, is now to grow from a single-volume issue annually to a two-volume journal. The work required to make the change efficiently and seamlessly has been managed carefully by the editors but we should all recognize the considerable voluntary labour this requires by the team and the skill with which these changes are being made. Congratulations to all.

Niall Brady
Newsletter Editor
e-mail: niallbrady100@gmail.com

Left:
Anglo-Saxon cemetery at Street House,
Loftus, North Yorkshire under excavation.
Copyright Stephen Sherlock.

and burials. Material culture and landscape were powerful media, which emergent groups used to create and construct social and political identities. Recent advances in early medieval cemetery studies have also now yielded enhanced chronologies; new applications that inform on mobility and migration; and the ability to chart the health, diet and well-being of populations, offering new opportunities to expand and develop existing approaches. Such applications provide us with a means of transforming our understanding of the social and political changes of the era.

Our scope is ambitious. The project will chart the burial record for an entire kingdom, interrogating surviving data in

terms of identity and wealth, health, ethnicity and lifestyle. It aims to situate and explore burials and cemeteries in their landscape setting over time, to achieve a new and enhanced understanding of the populations and the processes that underpinned the transformation of this frontier region in the period AD 300-800.

Sarah Semple, Rebecca Gowland, Janet Montgomery, Andrew Millard, Brian Buchanan and Sue Harrington

communicated by
s.j.semple@durham.ac.uk

A pair of unfinished early Anglo-Saxon wrist clasps from Sutton, Suffolk

In spring 2015 an unfinished and apparently miscast pair of copper-alloy early Anglo-Saxon wrist clasps, with both halves attached to one another as cast, was discovered by Mr Michael King. He was metal-detecting on a new site in the parish of Sutton in south-east Suffolk (PAS SF-66EDD6). The pair make a valuable addition to the existing corpus of clasps (Hines 1993, 120), and provide a rare insight into metalworking techniques.

If finished, the clasps would have been sewn to the garment via perforated lugs and are therefore of Hines Form B12 T-shaped bar sub-group (*ibid.*, 46–7). This group is concentrated in Suffolk and Cambridgeshire with a scatter further north and west. In addition to the 12 examples listed by Hines, a further two have now been recorded by the PAS: one from Suffolk (SF-A57D84) and one from Norfolk (NMS-1EE325). Form B12 appears to be a development of the T-shaped Forms B4 and B11 (*ibid.*, 46), which are sewn directly onto the garment and have downward curving tails that follow the profile of the wrist. Hines (*pers. comm.*) has commented that the pair discussed here are closer in design to the small group of B4 and B11 clasps than any of the other T-shaped Form B12 examples and may, therefore, represent a transitional form. Penn and Brugmann's re-evaluation of evidence from four cemeteries in East Anglia placed Form B12 clasps within their Phase FA1 (*c.* AD 450–480) (Penn and Brugmann 2007, 29, 58, fig. 5.9), but as a transitional form this pair should be a particularly early example.

The clasp-halves consist of a hook-piece and a catch-piece and were presumably cast together with the intention of being worn as a pair when finished. They appear to have been made in a two-piece mould with copper alloy poured in above the hook-element. The pair sit at a 70-degree angle to each other, with one of the lateral terminals and the terminals of the central bars of each clasp almost touching and joined by casting sprues. This arrangement initially appears careless, but was intended perhaps to minimise the distance in between and maximise the efficiency of the casting. The clasp-halves are also attached to each other by a rough, thin sheet of metal in between. This flashing could be the product of the two parts of the mould separating during the casting

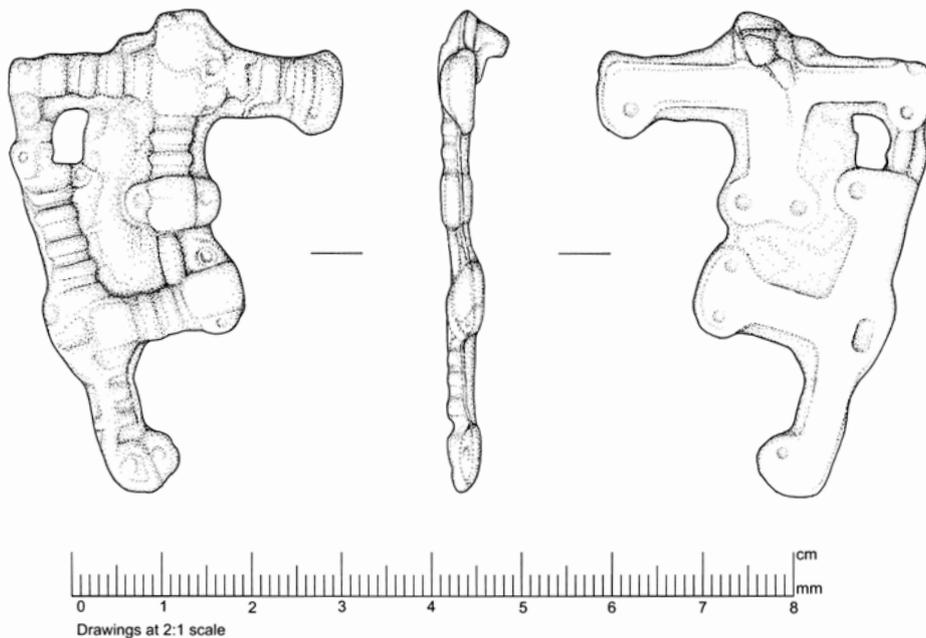
process. It may be why the clasps were discarded, although it would have been possible to remove the excess metal during finishing.

Unfinished features of the pair include the unpierced catch-element and attachment lugs. On the central arm of each clasp-half the lugs unusually take the form of an opposing pair of D-shaped protrusions either side of the terminal. Both faces of the unfinished lugs have small circular depressions in their centres, intended as a guide for piercing.

Information about metalwork techniques during the fifth and sixth centuries is limited and it is likely that several production techniques were used simultaneously (Mortimer 1990, 226). Single unfinished wrist clasps, which have flashing and casting seams and are also likely to have been made in two-piece moulds, are known. Examples include a Form B12 from Quidenham, Norfolk (PAS NMS-1EE325), a Form B20 from Wortham, Suffolk (PAS SF-15D384) and a Form B4 clasp from Castle Acre, Norfolk (Hines 1993, 37).

There is also a small amount of evidence for the use of two-piece moulds in the production of other contemporary artefacts. Mortimer (1990, 204) lists a miscast small-long brooch with evidence of flashing from Winterton, North Lincolnshire, and two fitting fragments of a two-piece mould for a square-headed brooch were found at Mucking, Essex (Jones 1975). Martin (2015, 144) lists an unfinished cruciform brooch from Dunbar Road, Leicester, but points out that the most substantial evidence for the manufacture of cruciform brooches is the growing number of lead brooches, now totalling 12 (*ibid.*, 145–6). Recent excavations of an early Anglo-Saxon settlement site with evidence of metalworking at Eye, Suffolk, have also recovered a lead florid cruciform. These are believed to be models, which were roughly finished before being pressed into two-piece clay moulds used to cast copper-alloy brooches (*ibid.*, 145).

If cruciform brooches were being manufactured in this way it is likely that other contemporary objects were as well, presumably made by the same smiths. There is evidence of possible lead models for wrist clasps. The PAS database records a lead fragment of a Hines Form B12 clasp from Freckenham, Suffolk (SF-FC2215), and a crude lead clasp-



The newly discovered pair of unfinished early Anglo-Saxon wrist clasps from Sutton, Suffolk.
 Drawn by Donna Wreathall,
 © Suffolk County Council

half of Hines Form B18c from Norfolk (NMS-F3494). There is also a lead girdle hanger fragment from Lincolnshire (LIN-968382).

Mr King's discovery is the only known example of a pair of clasps cast together. Whether the method of casting wrist clasps in pairs was standard is not known. With regard to cruciform brooches, Martin (2015, 146) found that although lead models could permit the creation of identical runs of brooches this was not done and uniqueness was therefore desirable. He considers it more likely that lead models occasionally produced pairs of brooches or perhaps small runs and that their main use was to reduce the risk of miscasting. The practice of casting a single pair of wrist clasps would fit with this desire for uniqueness and also suggests production on a small scale, perhaps by an itinerant smith commissioned by an individual.

Anna Booth (Suffolk Finds Recording Officer)

Anna.Booth@suffolk.gov.uk

Faye Minter (Suffolk Senior Archaeological Officer)

Faye.Minter@suffolk.gov.uk

References

- Hines, J 1993, *Clasps HektespennerAgraften: Anglo Scandinavian Clasps of Classes A-C of the 3rd to 6th centuries A D: typology, diffusion and function*, Stockholm, Kungl Vitterhets Historieoch Antikvitets Akademien.
- Jones, M U 1975, 'A clay piece-mould of the Migration Period from Mucking, Essex', *Antiquaries Journal* 55, 407-8.
- Martin, T F 2015, *The cruciform Brooch and Anglo-Saxon England*, Woodbridge, Boydell Press.
- Mortimer, C 1990, *Some aspects of early medieval copper-alloy technology, as illustrated by a study of the Anglian cruciform brooch*, unpublished DPhil thesis, University of Oxford.
- Penn, K and Brugmann, B 2007, *Aspects of Anglo-Saxon Inhumation Burial: Morningthorpe, Spong Hill, Bergh Apton and Westgarth Gardens*, East Anglian Archaeology Report No. 119, Norfolk, Historic Environment.

An early Anglo-Saxon cemetery at Etal, Northumberland?

Between 2003 and 2009, discoveries of 5 incomplete cruciform and small-long brooches of late fifth-sixth century date were found in fields close to the settlement of Etal, Northumberland, by hobby metal-detectorists (Collins 2010). These objects and further discoveries have continued to be reported to the local PAS officer, with a total of 11 Anglo-Saxon brooches, or parts of brooches now recorded from the close vicinity. The concentration of brooches suggests an early Anglo-Saxon cemetery positioned on high ground overlooking a bend in the River Till.

A joint field project by Newcastle and Durham Universities was initiated in 2013 with the support of the Society of Medieval Archaeology and the Society of

Antiquaries of London. Geophysical survey was conducted by Archaeological Services Durham University (ASDU) in 2009 over the northwest corner of Etal Mains field, and was supplemented by Alex Turner of Newcastle University. The two surveys identified a series of large ditches, notably a North-South curvilinear enclosure and what appeared to be a length of parallel ditches leading roughly East-West to the enclosure. Trial excavations in 2013 tested some of these features and areas where clusters of metal-detected finds had been recovered.

Significantly, little material related to the evidence for early Anglo-Saxon activity was found at the west end of the fields. The work instead identified ditches and glacial



Brooch fragments recovered from fields south of Etal, Northumberland.

features as well as later field boundaries. LiDAR data has, however, revealed the presence of an extensively excavated knoll or mound at the apex under a plantation. The knoll has suffered heavily from badger action and this may account for a proximal cluster of metalwork.

There remain areas of potential – around the knoll and in the dips where downslope-erosion has sealed features of post-medieval and therefore likely medieval depositions. Preservation of pre-medieval archaeological features has been confirmed in the eastern half of the field. Three possible grave cuts have been located, although no remains were identified within the fills. In addition, a partial structure was recovered sealed by old cultivation soils containing medieval pottery, demonstrating its likely pre-medieval date. Future

investigations are planned and will likely concentrate on the features to the east.

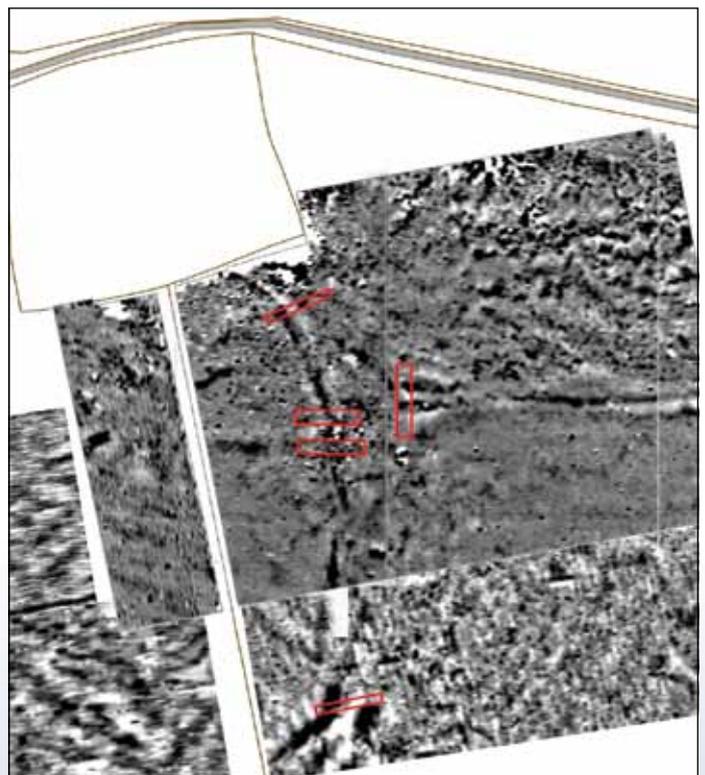
Rob Collins, Sarah Semple, Sam Turner, and Alex Turner

communicated by
s.j.semple@durham.ac.uk

References

ASDU 2010, 'Land South of Etal Ford & Etal Estates, Northumberland Geophysical Survey', Report No. 2501.

Collins, R 2010, 'Recent discoveries of early Anglian material culture in the North East', *Medieval Archaeology* 54, 386-390.



LiDAR (left) and geophysical (above) surveys with excavation trench locations highlighted.

Website

www.medievalarchaeology.org

The website continues to improve.

Send us your comments:

medieval.archaeology@googlemail.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: Duncan Sayers
 Journal Editor: Oliver Creighton
 Asst. Editor: Sarah Semple
 Reviews Editor: Neil Christie
 Monographs Editors: Chris Gerrard
 & Gabor Thomas
 Newsletter Editor: Niall Brady
 Website Editor: Rory Sherlock

2015 titles from the Monograph series

The much anticipated *Maritime Societies* volume edited by James Barrett and Sarah Gibbon has just appeared and is now available for purchase.

Maritime Societies of the Viking and Medieval World, Monograph 37 see page 11 for more detail.

facebook

twitter

Society News

Notice of the Annual General Meeting

The 2015 AGM of the Society will be held at 19:30 hrs on Friday 4th December in the Foster Lecture Theatre 1, University of Central Lancashire, Preston, PR1 2HE.

Agenda

1. Minutes of last Annual General Meeting
2. Elections of Officers and Council

The following nominations have been received for election:

Vice President	Prof. Grenville Astill
Hon. Editor	Dr Sarah Semple
Members of Council	Dr Hajnalka Herold
	Dr Aleks Pluskowski
	Dr Andrew Woods

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 20:00) by **Professor Heinrich Härke** (Universität Tübingen), 'Experiencing the "other" Middle Ages: urbanization and state formation east of the Aral Sea'.

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

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 the AGM and annual lecture but are not attending the conference MUST book a place with the Hon. Secretary by 1st December at the latest.

Dawn Hadley, Hon. Secretary
D.M.Hadley@Sheffield.ac.uk

Important Membership News

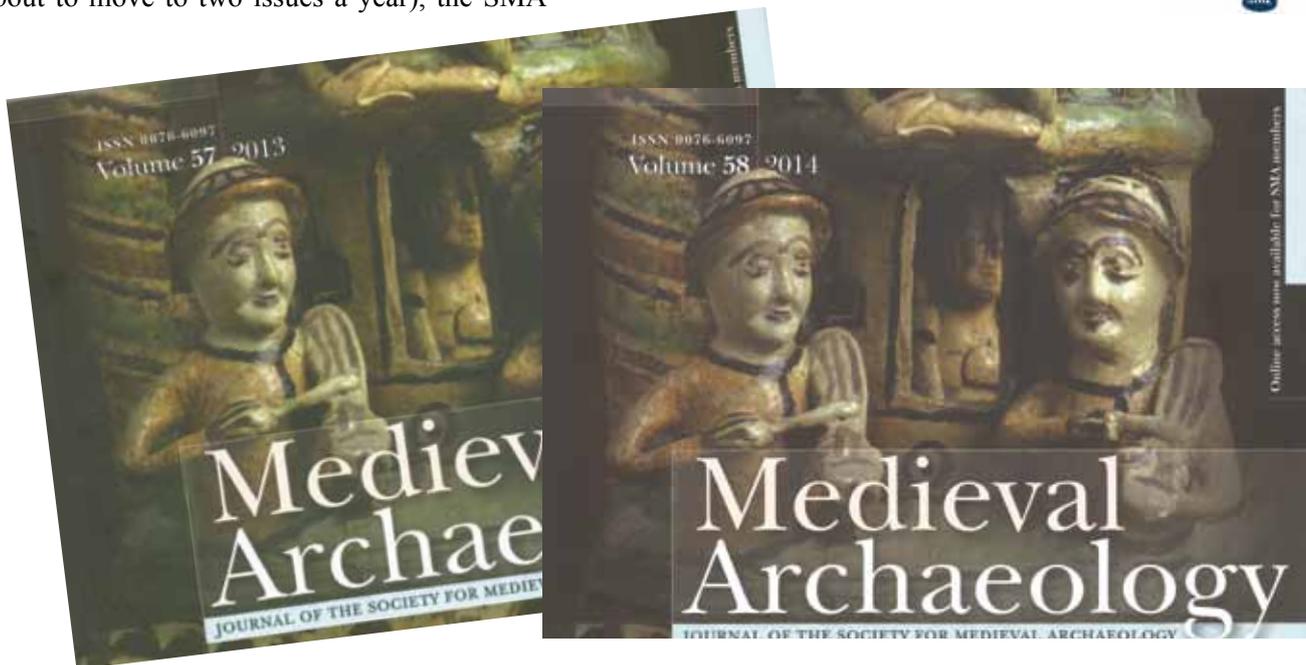
You will recently have received a letter from our publishers Maney regarding the need to complete a new Direct Debit for their SMA subscription. This is due to the recent transfer of Maney to the Taylor and Francis publishing group, and the result of data protection requirements. Members will receive further information (and forms) shortly.

Newsletter, and other Membership benefits. Despite the minor inconvenience posed by the need to complete a new form, the Society is convinced that the move to Taylor and Francis – a major international publishing house – represents a positive and exciting new development for the Society's future. Please don't miss out!



PLEASE COMPLETE THE NEW D/D FORM. This is the only way to ensure that you will continue to receive *Medieval Archaeology* (about to move to two issues a year), the SMA

Helena Hamerow
President



Changes to *Medieval Archaeology*

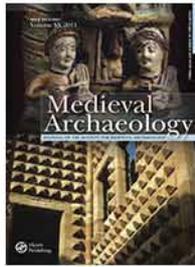
The launch of *Medieval Archaeology* in 1957 by the new **Society for Medieval Archaeology** provided a dedicated journal on medieval subject matter for the very first time. The journal was conceived as a central element of the Society's activities, providing a showcase for major British and Irish discoveries and highlighting new relevant research from the British Isles and European neighbours. As the Society's first Secretary, David Wilson said of the founding of the Society and the launch of its journal, '[t]he Society would survive or fall on the contents of the Journal...' Even today, no change to the journal is undertaken lightly or without considerable discussion.

In 2015, the Society had the opportunity to renegotiate its publishing agreement with Maney Publishing. This offered the chance to reconsider the form and content of the journal. With the interests of the Society's members very much in mind, the Editors and Editorial Committee were keen to explore ways of expanding and improving content to provide more to members for their annual subscription. The negotiations

were completed in April 2015 and a new 6-year contract is now in place. Subsequently, in June 2015 Maney Publishing was acquired by the Routledge, Taylor and Francis group. The publication of *Medieval Archaeology* will now fall within Taylor and Francis' archaeology portfolio, and the Editors are delighted to know that we will continue for the foreseeable future to work with our usual team, who have provided such solid support over the years. The move to Taylor and Francis – a major international publishing house – represents a positive and exciting new development for the Society's future. In light of these negotiations, this short note offers an advance notice for members of planned changes to *Medieval Archaeology* in the months to come.

Members and Subscribers

The first and most significant change is a move to two issues of the journal annually. From 2016, members will receive two hard copy issues of *Medieval Archaeology*, Volume 60.1 in May and Volume 60.2 in November. These issues will appear



Editor:
Oliver Creighton,
University of Exeter, UK
[View full editorial board](#)

Published by Maney on
behalf of:

Society for Medieval
Archaeology

Welcome to the manuscript submission system for Medieval Archaeology

The [Society for Medieval Archaeology](#) exists to further the study of the period from the 5th to the 16th century A.D. by publishing a journal of international standing dealing primarily with the archaeological evidence, and by other means such as by holding regular meetings and arranging conferences. It aims to serve as a medium for co-ordinating the work of archaeologists with that of historians and scholars in any other discipline relevant to this field.

While maintaining a special concern for the medieval archaeology of Britain and Ireland, the Society seeks to support and advance the international study of this period. The journal provides a forum for the discussion of important finds and developments within this period from anywhere in the world.

Medieval Archaeology welcomes original submissions of international significance, or national significance and of international interest, which match the objectives of the Society. We seek to support and advance the international study of the period from the 5th to the 16th century AD. While we maintain a special concern for the medieval archaeology of Britain and Ireland, we also provide a forum for the discussion of important finds and developments within this period from anywhere in the world, serving as a medium for co-ordinating the work of archaeologists and that of historians and scholars in any other discipline relevant to this field. All contributions are subject to peer review.

Login

[Send Username/Password](#)
[Register Now](#)
[Login Help](#)

JOURNAL INFORMATION ▾

AUTHOR INFORMATION ▾

EDITOR INFORMATION ▾

REVIEWER INFORMATION ▾

CONTACT US ▾

This journal is a member of the following
organisation.



This journal publishes open access
papers. View further information.



Sign up for
Archaeology E-alerts



Snapshot of the front page of the new Editorial Manager.

with full colour. An additional page length will allow us to increase our content with no additional cost to members. The cover, typeface and layout will remain the same, but there will be changes to the content. Research papers and reviews will appear in both issues although fieldwork highlights will now feature in Issue 2 each year. This means our members will receive news on current and cutting-edge research and fieldwork in medieval archaeology four times a year via two journal issues and two newsletters. The cycle for the *Newsletter* will remain the same.

Members will also recently have been contacted by Maney regarding the need to complete a new Direct Debit for their SMA subscription. This is due to the recent transfer of Maney to the Taylor and Francis publishing group, and the result of data protection requirements. Members will receive further information (and forms) shortly and should complete the new D/D form to ensure continued access to *Medieval Archaeology*, the SMA *Newsletter*, and other Membership benefits.

Authors and Contributors

There are changes for those who are considering submitting research papers for publication. The Reviews section and the Medieval Britain and Ireland fieldwork highlights will remain the same and will continue to be managed by Dr Neil Christie from the University of Leicester.

Contributors planning to submit research papers of any length should continue to discuss their proposals with the Editors at an early stage. The submission of research papers will, however, now be made via a new online Editorial Manager. The Editorial Manager allows the Editors to manage prospective content more effectively and manage its review and consideration more speedily. The system will allow

potential contributors to upload papers at any point in the year. The submissions will be considered by the Editors and, if promising, sent out to referees immediately. The ultimate result will be the potential for papers to appear earlier online in a digital format, providing authors the opportunity of early release. We value our relationships with potential contributors, authors and referees greatly and are keen to ensure the system allows us to retain personal e-mail contact with all our contributors. The system will also be as simple as we can make it and we will retain the ability to handle submissions within the system on behalf of authors. The Editorial Manager is live since mid-September 2015 at www.editorialmanager.com/med.

The Future for the Journal

We hope the move to two issues, increased content and full colour will prove popular with our members alongside enhanced and free access to 60 back issues. We also hope a faster publication cycle will continue to encourage the breadth and depth of papers, allowing us to advance the international study of the period. At the end of 2015, Professor Oliver Creighton will have served his term as Editor and with approval of Council and the Society members, the Deputy Editor Dr Sarah Semple will take on the role until the end of 2018. Dr Aleksandra McClain will join Council from January 2016 as the new Deputy Editor. All correspondence regarding changes to the journal and submission system should therefore be directed to Dr Semple, s.j.semple@durham.ac.uk.

Sarah Semple and Oliver Creighton

Hon. Editors

Photo Competition

The late Mick Aston was a skilled photographer and a talented draughtsman. Mick's camera was never from his side and he took every opportunity to record archaeological sites whenever the opportunity arose. Over a career spanning more than 40 years he built up a unique collection of images which charted the development of medieval archaeology throughout Britain. In honour of his contribution to the discipline and his role in public engagement, the Society for Medieval Archaeology announces an annual photographic competition in Mick's honour. Each year entries will be requested on a particular theme related to medieval archaeology. The choice of images is wide and might include excavations, aerial photographs, objects or buildings in Britain. Creative images are not

excluded either in black and white or in colour but must sent to the Hon. Secretary to arrive by the end of June each year. We can only accept digital images, and high resolution .jpg and .tiff files are requested as email attachments. A maximum of two entries will be accepted per entrant and the photo must be taken by the person entering within the past 12 months. The annual theme will be announced in January each year on the Society's website and will be judged by a panel of Council members for relevance, composition and overall quality. The SMA reserves the right to use any entry in publications, its website and promotional materials. The winning entry will receive £200.

Other News



Our fantastic colleagues at the Weald & Downland Open Air Museum are currently reconstructing an Anglo-Saxon building. The building is based on Building A from the excavation led by Mark Gardiner at Market Field in Steyning, West Sussex, i.e. late 1980s. The project is being led by **Lucy Hockley**, Schools Service and Project Manager (Education3@wealddown.co.uk) and there is an interesting agenda around the new focus on the Anglo-Saxons in the curriculum, but also lots to reflect on in terms of developing understanding of early construction techniques (Damian Goodburn has also been closely involved in the project). There's a brilliant blog developing and lots of activities/opportunities to see it in construction: www.wealddown.co.uk/saxon-building-update-1-wood-trees/

Kate Giles
kate.giles@york.ac.uk

Internationally important Ipswich excavation archive is made publically available

Between 1974 and 1990 there were 36 excavations within the historic core of Ipswich. The results of these excavations are of international importance due to the early origins of the town. Middle Saxon Ipswich was one of only a handful of English trading settlements displaying urban characteristics in the 700s, alongside London, Southampton and York. The excavations were archived and carried out by the Suffolk Archaeological Unit (subsequently Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service) under the direction of Keith Wade but never fully published. The results are now publicly accessible as a web-based resource on the Archaeology Data Service; http://archaeologydataservice.ac.uk/archives/view/ipswich_parent_2015/. The distribution of excavated sites is shown in an 'Interactive Map'. There are also summary narrative reports describing the chronological sequence and the range of features and activities identified for each site. It is hoped that the data will be the basis of new research into the development of Ipswich. The consolidation of the 1974-90 archive and the preparation of the digital archive by Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service has been funded by English Heritage (now Historic England) between 2009 and 2015.

Faye Minter and Abby Antrobus
abby.antrobus@suffolk.gov.uk

Group Reports 2014

Castle Studies Group



Clough Motte-and-Bailey castle, Co. Down.

In April 2014, around 60 members attended the 28th AGM of the **Castle Studies Group** (CSG) during its Annual Conference which was based this year at The Ramada Plaza Hotel, Belfast. The AGM saw Dr Pamela Marshall stand down from the post of Chair/Secretary of the group after a record-breaking 14 years of service. Her contribution to the group over these years is immeasurable and she leaves some very large shoes for me to fill. I was elected as the new chair of the group after having joined in 2006, at the beginning of my doctoral studies, and having become a member of the committee in 2011. I can only hope to do half as much for the group as Pamela has done during her tenure.

The 2014 annual conference was organised by Dr Tom McNeill and myself, with the assistance of Dr Colm Donnelly for Plantation era sites. The conference was focused on the ‘Castles of Ulster’ and aimed to showcase both the well-known, well-understood, castles of Ulster, as well as some of the more peculiar, and lesser-known, enigmatic examples in the corpus. The conference followed the usual CSG format of mainly site visits with three short introductory lectures given on the first evening by each of the organisers and one longer evening lecture by Dr Kare McManama-Kearin on ‘Visibility Studies on Ulster Castles’. This was drawn from her recent thesis on the use of GIS to determine the role of visibility in siting of early Irish stone castles. The site visits consisted of a varied mix of 18 sites ranging from the potentially pre-Norman enclosure at Downpatrick, through the motte-and-bailey castles of Dromore and Clough, to the major stone castles of Carrickfergus, Dundrum and Dunluce. Later tower houses and Plantation era castles were also a focus, with site visits to the towers at Kilclief, Strangford and Audley’s and the Planation era sites at Castle Caulfield, Castle Balfour and Tully. The conference illustrated the rich and varied nature of the castles of Ulster, but also highlighted the quantity of recent

research work that has been carried out at these sites, both in terms of academic research and archaeological investigation. Excavations have been focused on castles in the guardianship of the Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA) and we were treated to a run-through of the recent excavations at Dundrum and Carrickfergus by members of the NIEA who were with us for the whole weekend offering insights and facilitating our visits.

There was no Autumn Day Conference in 2014, however in July several members contributed to the 5th Towers Conference at Newcastle upon Tyne with the theme of ‘Antiquity and Lineage’, and in August several members also contributed to the *Chateau Gaillard* conference held at Bad Neustadt an der Saale, Germany, on the theme of ‘Castles and Commerce’. Both conferences included tours of the castles of the region.

The *CSG Journal* includes news of CSG activities, members’ interests and updates on castle research. Castle-related publications for the year are listed and reviewed in the *CSG Bibliography* No. 27. The Journal is distributed to all members each December and is edited and produced by Neil Guy. In Spring and August CSG interim E-Bulletins are distributed, compiled and edited by 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 of up to £1,000 to group projects involving castle research, details for which are on the website.

Gillian Scott (née Eadie), Hon. Secretary
secretary@castlestudiesgroup.org.uk
www.castlestudiesgroup.org.uk

Medieval Settlement Research Group

Across late 2014 and the first half of 2015, the **Medieval Settlement Research Group** (MSRG) held a Winter Seminar and generated the latest issue (29) of its journal, *Medieval Settlement Research*.

The Winter Seminar was held in the Department of Museum Studies at the University of Leicester. Organised by Dr Susan Kilby, the seminar talks formed the theme ‘Medieval Settlement and Landscape: new work and new themes’, drawing on research by current post-graduate students from the UK, Ireland and USA. There was a diverse range of papers exploring topics including place-names, markets and wealth, elite and peasant landscapes and architecture, and anthropological approaches to excavation data. Several posters were also displayed.

The Spring seminar for 2015 took place jointly with the Society for Church Archaeology (SCA) at the University of Leicester, 4-6 September. Organised by the SCA’s Anne Sassin it featured a day of lectures around the theme ‘Church and settlement: rural churches and the medieval landscape’, alongside field trips to local churches and Leicester cathedral. Over 50 delegates attended.

The MSRG’s John Hurst MA Dissertation Prize was awarded in 2015 to Lindsey Stirling, whose University of Aberdeen MSc dissertation was entitled, ‘The land beneath the sand: contextualising the early medieval shell middens at Sands of Forvie’. It is valuable to note that winners are encouraged to submit an extended summary of their work to the Group’s journal – this often forming, therefore, the very first publication for these budding young (or sometimes mature!) academics. Relevant MA/MSc programme directors are reminded of the 31 December deadline for submission to the MSRG Secretary for entries of high quality dissertations (of maximum 20,000 words) on a medieval rural or landscape theme submitted and passed in the last academic year.

A single award was made for the MSRG’s 2014 Research Grant, to Dr Letty ten Harkel (University of Oxford) for her project, ‘Special deposits of human remains in early medieval settlement contexts? A case study from Domburg, SW Netherlands’. A summary of her research will appear

in a forthcoming volume of *Medieval Settlement Research*. All members of the MSRG are eligible to apply for grants to undertake relevant research up to a value of £500. Deadlines for submission to the MSRG secretary are 1 June and 31 December each year.

MSRG Committee Member Dr Paul Cavill has organised the Winter Seminar for 2015 which will feature five papers on the theme of *Place-names and medieval settlement*; the event will take place at the University of Nottingham on 12 December: <http://medieval-settlement.com/winter2015/>.

Lastly, Professor Stephen Rippon stood down in December as President after his three-year term. Stephen presided over a productive period for the Group including the availability of open access to archived issues of the journal (and former Annual Report) from 1986-2010 via http://archaeologydataservice.ac.uk/archives/view/msrg_2012/, an ongoing project in which we hope to also digitise all of the Group’s older publications. His successor, Dr Bob Silvester (Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust), was elected in December. Bob has worked extensively on medieval landscapes, including the study of medieval rural settlement in a Wales-wide programme initiated by Cadw, published in *Lost Farmsteads* (CBA, 2006). Dr Neil Christie, MSRG’s Secretary for the last nine years also stepped down in 2014, and his replacement, Dr John Naylor, was elected at the December meeting.

MSRG membership stands healthily at c. 475 members. Membership remains a very affordable £12 (and a mere £6 *per annum* for student membership) and includes the journal, *Medieval Settlement Research* (published in October/November each year). Please see the webpages for the Membership Form (<http://medieval-settlement.com/membership/>). Students can apply for research grants and for conference bursaries, details for which are in the journal and on the webpages.

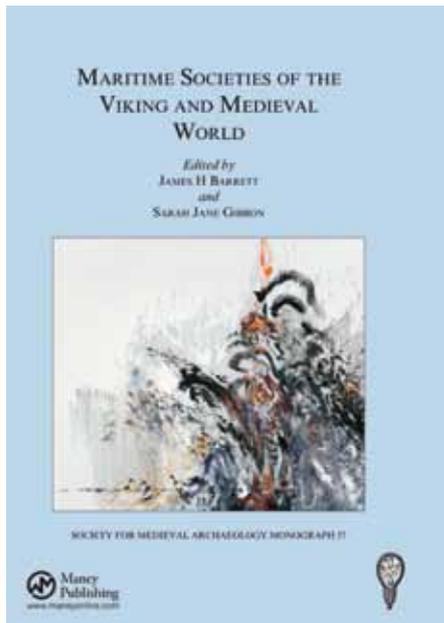
John Naylor, Hon. Secretary
john.naylor@ashmus.ox.ac.uk
www.medieval-settlement.com

MSRG Vice-President Paul Everson discusses the site at Kirby Bellars with delegates at the MSRG/SCA joint meeting, September 2015. Photograph by Anne Sassin.



New Titles

The Society for Medieval Archaeology, Monograph 37



The Society has once again produced another important volume that informs our insight to medieval society in new and challenging ways. Under the capable editorial oversight of Chris Gerrard and Gabor Thomas, the latest monograph comes to us through the work of volume editors James Barrett and Sarah Gibbon. The topic, Maritime Societies, is bound to fascinate members and wider readers. It highlights research that has been tipping away in a niche area that many of us relish but which remains an area pursued by all too few. The volume has 24 papers on a wide range of topics. It will appeal especially to those interested in the Viking period and readers may delight in the fact that the papers extend far beyond foci on ships and shipping. There is perhaps less on the wider medieval side, but the breadth of scope is provocative and this is set to be another quick-seller.

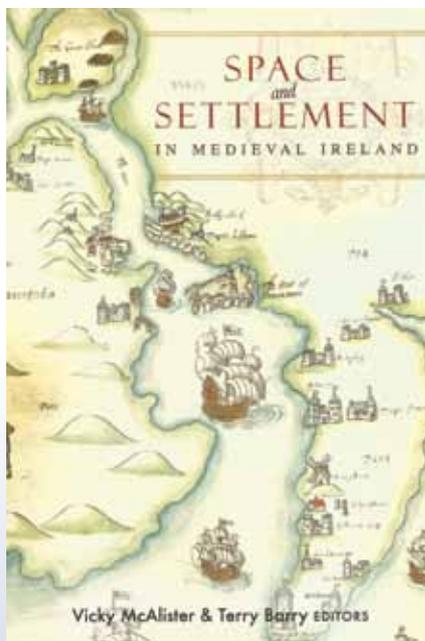
Order your copy now via <http://www.oxbowbooks.com/oxbow/maritime-societies-of-the-viking-and-medieval-world.html>

British Archaeological Reports, 621

Wallingford continues to deliver. The latest book arising from this multi-research project is a BAR volume that deals mainly with the castle and its documents, but reviews the archaeology too. *Wallingford: The Castle and the Town in Context* is edited Katharine Keats-Rohan, Neil Christie and David Roffe.

To order your copy, go to <http://www.barpublishing.com/wallingford-the-castle-and-the-town-in-context.html>

Four Courts Press, Space and Settlement



Space and Settlement is an edited volume arising from a series of seminars championed by Terry Barry that have taken place over the last number of years at Trinity College Dublin. He and Vicky McAlister have brought together eleven essays, showcasing some new voices as well as more accustomed researchers, with an emphasis on landscape approaches and multi-disciplinary approaches. The seminars are always well attended, and one hopes this may be the first in a series of outputs from what remains a useful and important forum for landscape discussions in Ireland.

Order your copy now via <http://www.fourcourtspress.ie/books/2015/space-and-settlement/>

Conferences & Events

— FORTHCOMING —

To advertise conferences/events in the Newsletter contact:

Dr Meggan Gondek
Reader in Archaeology
Dept. of History & Archaeology
University of Chester
Parkgate Rd
Chester CHI 4BJ

or email
m.gondek@chester.ac.uk

To advertise on the website, email:
medieval.archaeology@googlemail.com

Contribute to the Newsletter

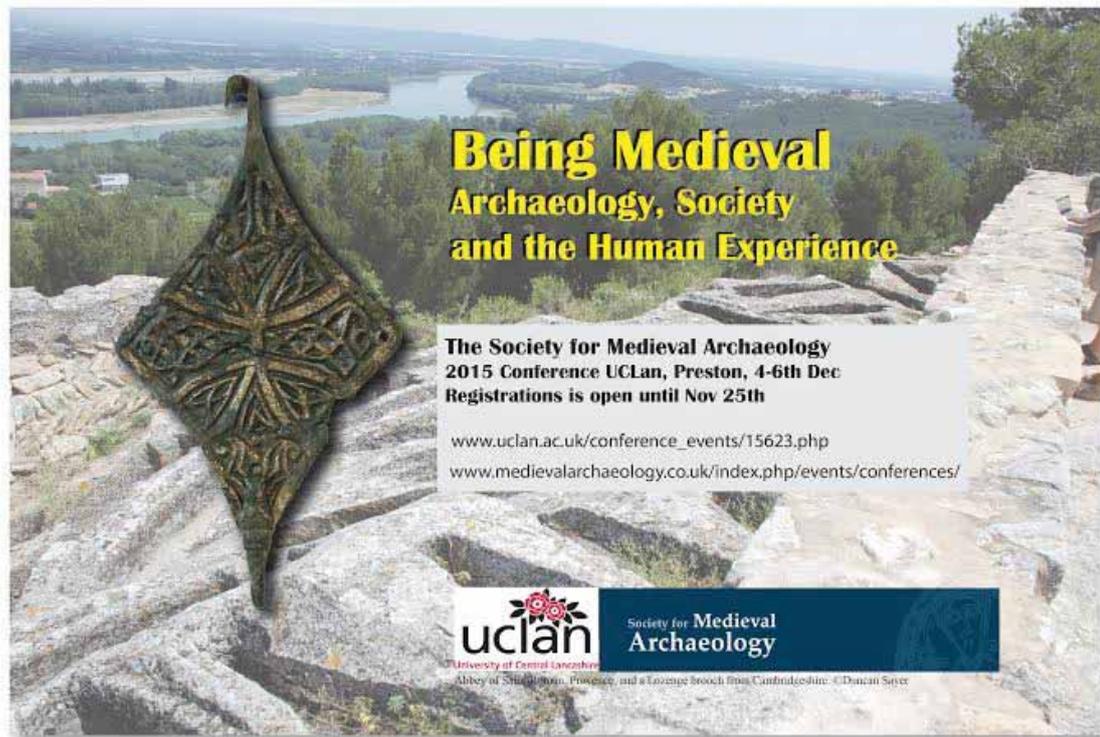
We welcome submissions relating to current research projects in Ireland, the UK and on the continent, and ask that submissions do not exceed 800 words, with conference reports to be within 500 words.

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 by e-mail:
niallbrady100@gmail.com

The due dates for receipt of copy are:

Spring Newsletter: 15th February
Autumn Newsletter: 15th August



**Being Medieval
Archaeology, Society
and the Human Experience**

The Society for Medieval Archaeology
2015 Conference UCLan, Preston, 4-6th Dec
Registrations is open until Nov 25th

www.uclan.ac.uk/conference_events/15623.php
www.medievalarchaeology.co.uk/index.php/events/conferences/

uclan Society for Medieval Archaeology
University of Central Lancashire
Abbey of St. John, Poulton, and a Lavigne brooch from Cambridgeshire. © Duncan Sayer

December:

4-6 December
SMA's Annual Conference 2015, 'Being Medieval', University of Central Lancashire, Preston www.uclan.ac.uk/conference_events/15623.php

4-6 December
'Seals and Status 800 – 1700', British Museum. www.sigillvm.net/newsandevents/conferences-and-lectures/

January 2016:

February:

21 February
'Lost Landscapes: 400-1100', the Richard Hall Symposium 2016. Jorvik Viking Centre
Email: earlymedieval@yorkat.co.uk

25-27 February
Medieval Academy of America Annual Meeting, Boston, MA, USA. Email: MAA2016@themedievalacademy.org

March:

it seems the academy is on vacation

April:

4-6 April
'Romanesque: Sainrs, Shrines, and Pilgrimage'. 4th biennial International Romanesque conference. Rewley House, Oxford. Email jsmneill@btinternet.com

May:

12-15 May
51st International Congress on Medieval Studies, WMU, Michigan USA. www.wmich.edu/medieval/congress

— JUST PASSED —

7-13 September

The **XI Rurallia Conference** was hosted in Luxembourg, and considered the theme 'Religious places, cults and rituals in the medieval rural environment', www.rurallia.cz/. As with the perspective of the Rurallia group, the 2015 conference was a bottoms-up look at medieval religious practices across Europe. Rather than focussing on ecclesiastical organization or monasticism — so fashionable at present — Rurallia's interests lay more in the archaeological representation of religious practice by the commoner. Over thirty papers and posters were presented from across Europe, dealing with aspects of votive offerings, sacred wells, ritual and belief. Invariably there was an emphasis on burial practices. In keeping with the structure of Rurallia's meetings, the main conference took place over five days and included two generous fieldtrips. Delegates were treated to a detailed tour of the northern half of Luxembourg with expert guides. It is a surprisingly extensive countryside, with deep clefts creating narrow ravines where even the September sunlight struggled to penetrate. Long and enjoyable hikes up hills to visit a hermitage were rewarded with extensive picnic tables festooned with local beer and cake, produced enthusiastically by the local communities and communes who delighted in having Rurallia in town. The next Rurallia meeting is to take place in September 2017, and will in all likelihood be in Ireland; watch this space and be sure to be around for it.

Rurallia on tour, Luxembourg. Photograph by Niall Brady.



Credits

The Newsletter template was designed by Kevin Hicks, using Adobe InDesign™. Typesetting and layout of the current issue is by Niall Brady. Use of the Alfred Jewel detail in the title banner is reproduced with the permission of the Ashmolean Museum, University of Oxford. The line drawing of the Alfred Jewel is from Eva Wilson's 1957 drawing, used since as a logo of the Society for Medieval Archaeology. Copyright for individual images is the responsibility of the individual contributors.