

Medieval Archaeology

NEWSLETTER OF THE SOCIETY FOR MEDIEVAL ARCHAEOLOGY

Fire, Flood and Famine: the archaeology of natural disasters in Early Medieval Europe



In keeping with the theme of this year's ISMA conference, the annual lecture considers what archaeology can tell us about the response of early medieval communities to natural disasters such as fire, flooding and famine as well as epidemics and other crises. Some of the archaeological evidence for such disasters for the period from c. 400-1000 will be presented along with a consideration of how communities managed the risk of such disasters and their aftermath. The

question of why archaeological evidence of such disasters – for example, mass graves during times of documented plagues – is comparatively rare, even when written sources leave us in no doubt about their scale and impact, will also be considered. The lecture will conclude with a consideration of how future research – in particular increasing use of biomolecular approaches – promises to provide much new information.

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The Society's Annual Conference is set to be an exciting and thoughtful gathering, and all members are encouraged to make the journey to Oxford to revel in the observations. It is also when our current President, Helena Hamerow, stands down, but the bitter-sweet moment is tempered by delivery of her presidential address, to open the conference. She has managed the challenging task of re-invigourating the Society with meetings and site visits for members, among the many unseen actions that her office requires and for which we are all very grateful.

As ever, there is a lot in the Newsletter to appeal to the wide church that is the Society, and we hope that it continues to whet appetites and alert members to new and exciting research and notices across these islands and further afield.

Niall Brady
Newsletter Editor
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Left:
Anglo-Saxon cemetery at Street House, J. Tipper 2012, Experimental Archaeology and Fire. East Anglian Archaeology, 146.

Research

Early medieval discoveries on Lindisfarne



Aerial view of two investigation trenches both of which produced early medieval finds. Photograph by Aerial-Cam. © DigVentures/Durham University.



Newly discovered name stone; mid-7th to mid-8th century, the name probably reads *yþfrīð. Photograph by Aerial-Cam. © DigVentures/Durham University.

Despite its importance as a major Northumbrian monastic centre, there has been surprisingly little recent archaeological exploration in the immediate vicinity of the medieval priory at Lindisfarne, the most likely location of the earlier Anglo-Saxon ecclesiastical site. However, a team led by David Petts (Durham University) and Brendon Wilkins (DigVentures) excavated a series of evaluation trenches in this area in 2016, in order to ground-truth a number of intriguing targets identified in a previous geophysical survey by Durham University. After an exceptionally successful crowd-funding campaign, we were able to investigate three trenches: two between the priory ruins and the former edge of the island's main harbour, much of which has been reclaimed since the 18th century, and a further trench to the west of the main village in a field that overlooks the mainland.

Our two eastern trenches both located material of a clearly Anglo-Saxon date. Trench 1 revealed a small area of paving, along with a small quantity of metal-working slag, a large polished hone-stone and a silver *sceatta* of King Eadberht (AD 737/8-758). Trench 2 uncovered a substantial deposit of rubble, containing spreads of human skeletal material from both adults and children. Within the rubble were two fragments of Anglo-Saxon sculpture. One was part of a name stone bearing the name *yþfrīð (identification thanks to Elisabeth Okasha), the other was part of a relatively

simple stone cross, possibly flanked by two smaller crosses. A number of short alignments of vertically set stones were also identified; it is possible these may turn out to be traces of stone-lined graves but further work is required. The rubble also contained numerous white quartz pebbles of the type often associated with early medieval burials in Northern Britain. Crucially, in neither trench was there any later pottery, suggesting that all the features recovered were of broadly early medieval date.

The third trench revealed substantial evidence of later medieval settlement, attesting to major changes in the layout of Holy Island village since the 16th century. As well as the usual range of ceramics, a number of iron fish hooks, large quantities of fish bone and a sawn plaque of whale bone were recovered, along with a number of clench bolts presumably from boats. No clearly early medieval material was found in this trench, but a fragment of bone comb of 9th-11th century date suggests there may be earlier material in the area. Given the success of the project in identifying Anglo-Saxon material, the team will return to the island for further work in the summer of 2017.

David Petts

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New radiocarbon dating evidence suggests human remains were added to a medieval charnel chapel at Rothwell over a period of more than 700 years

A project based at the Department of Archaeology, University of Sheffield, is seeking to throw new light on a medieval charnel chapel. Holy Trinity Church in Rothwell, Northamptonshire, has a subterranean charnel chapel with human bones *in situ*, one of only two such survivals in England (the other being at Hythe, Kent). The chapel appears to have been constructed during the late 13th century and was sealed during the Protestant Reformation, when the practice of charnelling ceased. Indeed, the chapel appears to have been closed up at this time, only being rediscovered in 1700 according to an antiquarian account. There have been many theories presented concerning both the date of the human remains and general site chronology, but reliable evidence has been unavailable so far.

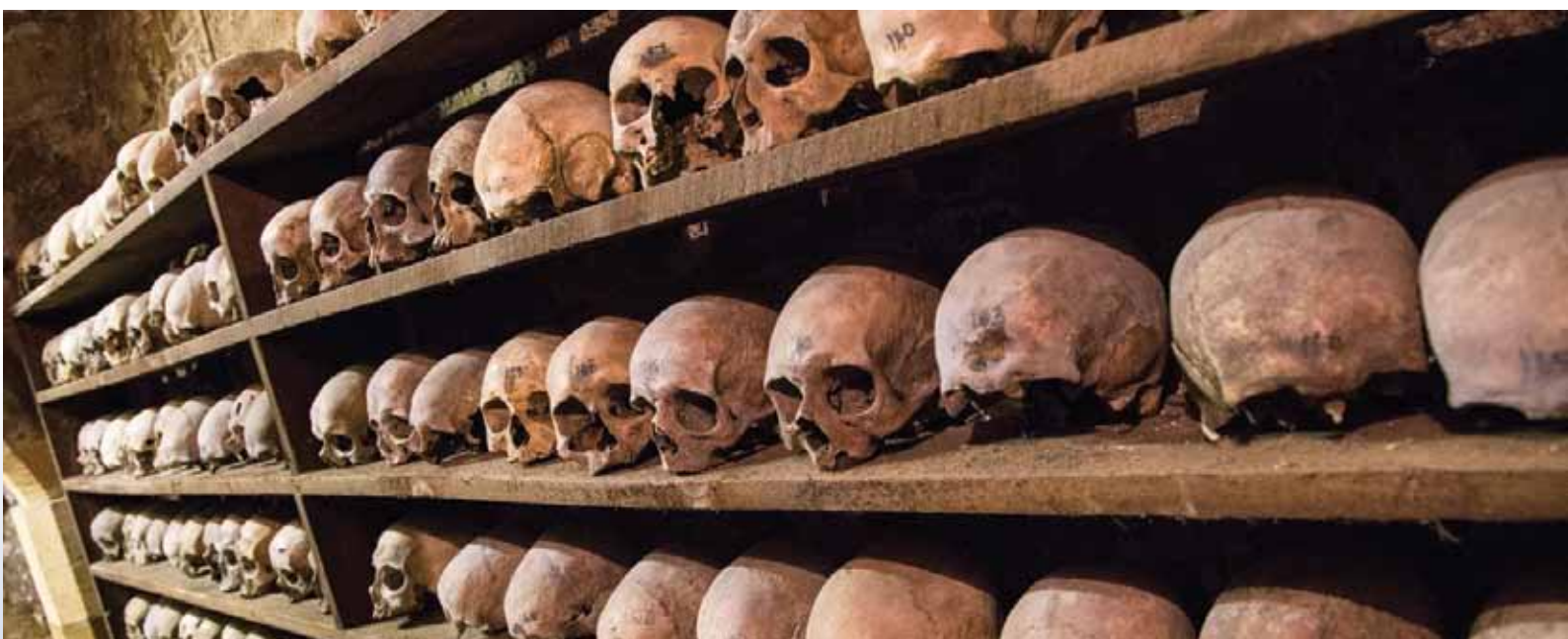
Antiquarians attributed the bones to catastrophic mortality events such as the Black Death, the Wars of the Roses and the English Civil War (Busk 1872; Cypher 1869; Wallis 1888). The human remains are, however, unlikely to represent battle dead as they represent at least 2,500 males and females of all ages, including children. Moreover, the remains are fully decomposed, disarticulated and show staining consistent with being buried for considerable time. This evidence could equally be consistent with their gradual exhumation and accumulation over a long period of time, and does not necessitate a single, catastrophic cause of death.

More recent evaluations have suggested the remains derived from disturbed graves in the adjacent medieval cemetery. This pragmatic interpretation builds upon recent discussions of medieval charnelling practice, which suggest that ossuaries provided storage for accidentally exhumed

bones (Orme 1991; Gilchrist 2005). Our research has questioned the suggestion that chapels served a primarily practical rather than liturgical role. At Rothwell, the existence of a permanent staircase, the remains of a wall painting and large windows all suggest a room that was intended to be visited. Moreover, the coincidence of the origins of charnelling during the 13th century at a time when belief in Purgatory and the requirement for intercessory prayer was growing, supports a liturgical purpose for charnel chapels as places for the focus of prayers for the dead.

In order to help resolve the chronology of charnelling activity at Rothwell, the Rothwell Charnel Chapel Project has carried out a radiocarbon dating programme of five crania from within the charnel chapel. Three provided dates from the late 13th to the early 15th centuries (AD1300-1368 or 1381-1411; AD1305-1364 or 1384-1428; and AD1257-1300, all to 2 sigma). These individuals would have been alive during the period between the chapel's construction and the Reformation, and it is likely they were buried, exhumed and placed in the chapel during the medieval period. In contrast, two further crania provided post-medieval dates which, due to fluctuations in the calibration curves, range from AD 1669-1945 and AD1649-1950 at 2 sigma, respectively. These crania are most likely of 18th or 19th century date. One shows evidence for anatomisation, probably from an autopsy, which also points to a post-medieval date. Nonetheless, that two of the five samples submitted for radiocarbon analysis provided such recent dates was unexpected given the previous assumptions that all charnelling activity pre-dated the Reformation. The later crania raise questions about more recent interactions with

Skull Wall, Rothwell.



the chapel, which have gone unremarked despite the plethora of antiquarian commentary on the Rothwell charnel chapel. While the anatomised skull may be a medical specimen added to the charnel by a local medic in search of a suitable place to dispose of it, the fact that another cranium with no evidence of medical intervention was also post-medieval suggests the need to consider other explanations.

The dating evidence obtained from the crania at Rothwell helps refine the chronology of the site, and allows us to evaluate more confidently the various theories about the origins of the bones and role of the chapel. The long sequence of dates obtained span more than 700 years and indicates a long-term engagement with the site and emphasises the complex and significant role of charnel chapels in England.

The dating evidence, along with further research from the Rothwell Charnel Chapel Project, will be published more fully in the near future. More information about the project can be found at: <http://www.rothwellcharnelchapel.group.shef.ac.uk/>

Acknowledgements

Funding was provided by the University of Sheffield. Many thanks to those who provided permissions and support: Revd.

Under the volcano: excavating in the Azores

The islands of the Azores, far out in the middle of the North Atlantic, are subject to frequent seismic and volcanic activity because of their location at the junction of three tectonic plates. On the night of 22 October 1522 the settlement of *Vila Franca do Campo*, the early capital of the archipelago on *São Miguel*, was almost completely destroyed by a powerful earthquake and then by a huge landslide, which followed a few minutes later. Between 2,000 and 3,000 people are thought to have died when a massive debris flow swept through the houses and streets and out into the sea.

In 2015 and 2016 a team from the University of Durham, led by Paolo Forlin, Chris Gerrard and Alejandra Gutierrez, together with Portuguese colleagues from the universities of Nova de Lisboa and dos Açores, and landslide specialists from the University of East Anglia, started to document the archaeology of the disaster. The work began by analysing the unpublished diaries and archaeological materials left by a previous investigator, Manuel de Sousa d'Oliveira, together with data from recent geological cores. The

team excavated 26 trenches in all. Evidence of the pre-disaster settlement was identified in detail. Quantities of stratified glass and pottery, including finewares from Spain (such as lustrewares), Italy and France, locally-produced redwares, as well as animal, shellfish and fish bone represent some of the earliest and best dated assemblages to be recovered from the Azores, which were first colonised permanently in the 15th century.

The landslide, which was up to 2.5m thick in places and affected about 4.5km², contains human and animal remains as well as brick, roof tile, mortar and masonry fragments. The archaeological evidence suggests that the reconstruction process got under way almost immediately and the excavations reveal the houses, industries and the rubbish pits of the new town; the Franciscan convent, destroyed in 1522, had been rebuilt on a new site by 1525. Further updates can be found at <https://armedea.wordpress.com/>

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Canon John Westwood, Quinton Carrol, the Diocese of Peterborough and the enthusiastic people of Rothwell.

Elizabeth Craig-Atkins, Jennifer Crangle, Dawn Hadley
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Above: Location map from Google Earth.

Below: The 1522 landslide deposit with boulders at its base. The pre-1522 buried soil is clearly visible below.



Website

www.medievalarchaeology.co.uk

The website continues to improve.

Send us your comments:

medievalarchaeology@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.co.uk

Current Officers

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SMA Annual Conference, 2nd-4th December

Waiting for the End of the World: Perceptions of Disaster and Risk in Medieval Europe

Accommodation at the conference venue, Rewley House, is filling up quickly. Sign up sooner rather than later! **Society members are entitled to a 10% discount** on the tuition fee. To apply the discount when booking your place, please use the following promotional code: **SMA16**.

Questions? Email us at: medieval.disasters@durham.ac.uk

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Society News

Notice of the Annual General Meeting

The 2016 AGM of the Society will be held at 19:30 hrs on Friday 2nd December at Rewley House, Department 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:

President	Prof. Carenza Lewis
Vice President	Prof. Dries Tys
Members of Council	Dr Patrick Gleeson
	Dr Sarah Kerr
	Dr Rosie Weetch

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 20:15) by **Professor Helena Hamerow** (University of Oxford), 'Fire, Flood and Famine: the archaeology of natural disasters in Early Medieval Europe'.

The annual lecture will be followed by a wine reception

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. Attendance at the Annual Lecture is free for members.

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

News from the Journal Editor

Annual Accounts

In May 2016, the Council for the Society agreed that the Annual Report and Accounts of the Society will no longer appear in the journal, but will be published on-line on the Society's website ahead of the Annual General Meeting in December. This allows the Treasurer several more months to prepare the accounts and also releases some additional page length in the journal for publications. From this year onwards, members should visit the Society's webpage at <http://www.medievalarchaeology.co.uk/> to view the annual accounts.

Call for Fieldwork Highlights

A brief reminder to all those excavating this year that the Medieval Britain and Ireland – Fieldwork Highlights section in the journal offers an ideal location to highlight new projects and discoveries. There is scope to profile findings from ongoing or completed field projects (whether excavation, landscape or buildings archaeology). Projects and findings should be of regional or national significance in medieval archaeology. Extended summaries of up to 2000 words are welcome and should include a short supporting bibliography and good quality b&w or colour plates and figures to a maximum of four.

The deadline for submissions for consideration is the 1st March each year. Potential submissions should be sent to:

British sites: Tiziana Vitali, Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd, Unit 54, Brockley Cross Business Centre, 96 Endwell Road, Brockley, London SE4 2PD, tvitali@pre-construct.com

Irish sites: Patrick Gleeson, School of History, Classics and Archaeology, Newcastle University, Patrick.Gleeson@newcastle.ac.uk, with Tomás Ó Carragáin, Department of Archaeology, University College Cork, Ireland, T.Ocarragain@ucc.ie



Purchase back issues of **Medieval Archaeology**!

As a member of the Society for Medieval Archaeology you have a special opportunity to purchase printed back volumes of *Medieval Archaeology* and *Medieval Archaeology Indexes* at a reduced price. This is a limited time offer and will be available **until the 30th November 2016**. It will also be your final chance to purchase print copies as the entire back archive is now available online to members via the journal website www.tandfonline.co.uk/ymed

All volumes are £3.50 each, including postage and packing.

The following volumes of *Medieval Archaeology* are available:

5, 6/7, 8, 9, 10, 13, 14, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 34, 35, 36, 37, 49, 52, 53, 54, 55, 56, 57, 58.

And *Medieval Archaeology Indexes*:

Vols 1-5, Vols 6-10, Vols 11-15, Vols 16-20, Vols 21-25, Vols 26-30, Vols 31-35, Vols 36-40, Vols 41-45, Vols 46-50.

Be sure to order early as we have low numbers of some volumes and allocations will be made on a strictly first-come, first-served basis. Subject to availability, there are no restrictions on the number of copies of each volume that can be ordered.

Contact Jacqui Tearle with details of which volumes you would like: jacqui.society@tandf.co.uk, or by post:

Membership Account Executive, Customer Services, Taylor & Francis Group, 4 Park Square, Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon OX14 4RN, UK. Telephone: +44 (0)20 7017 6351.

Grants

The Society for Medieval Archaeology's Eric Fletcher Fund permitted me to travel to the 30th Irish Conference of Medievalists, and present findings from my PhD dissertation on **key pattern**, a geometric design of straight-sided spirals dating from AD 600 to 1100. The conference was held at NUI Maynooth, and is the annual gathering of experts on medieval Ireland. I presented a new approach to key pattern study, that is focused on specific artworks in order to analyze how artists manipulated the pattern's structures to fulfill design programmes or correct mistakes, thereby uncovering new information about the process of creating complex decorated artefacts. It was a great opportunity to meet a wide range of Irish scholars, and to receive feedback.

I was also able to visit the medieval monastic site of Clonmacnoise, Co. Offaly, where I tested my approach

to key pattern in close study of the Irish high crosses and grave monuments there. In particular, the South Cross at Clonmacnoise contains an unusual, skilled effect: the 'interpenetration of motifs', or the transformation of key pattern into another pattern type altogether (here interlace). Close examination of the original cross revealed details that are otherwise invisible in photographs or reconstructions. I was therefore able to diversify my understanding of how Insular artists handled key pattern, and ultimately to compose a case study dissertation chapter on the South Cross

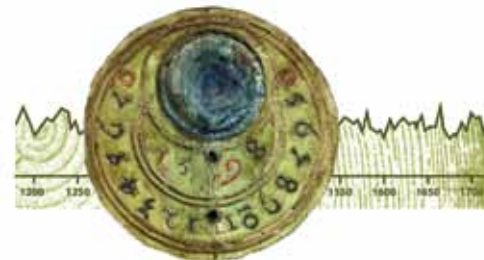
Cynthia Thickpenny

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Other News

The ÖGM, a sister society in Austria

The Österreichische Gesellschaft für Mittelalterarchäologie, a sister organization to the SMA, holds a conference every two years that is most enjoyable and interesting. The 2016 conference on *Laufzeit/Zeitlauf*, or **Time**, was held in Graz. Niall Brady presented one of the keynote addresses, on 'Time and space in the medieval world. Some Irish perspectives'. The conference attracts 60 or so archaeologists, mostly from Austria and the neighbouring countries, and is an excellent forum for understanding current discussions across Central and Western Europe. There are also several fieldtrips and the heartiest of food. The next conference will deal with burial customs and practices in medieval and early modern times, and will be held in 2018 in St.Pölten in Lower Austria; keep an eye on the website for information: www.univie.ac.at/oegm/



Stamped pot from Great Chesterford, A 5di.

Med Arch Newsletter Appeal

The Archive of Anglo-Saxon Pottery Stamps (AASPS) would be most grateful for any information about finds of stamped pottery from anywhere in Britain and dated between AD 400 and c. 850 (by which stage it will probably be Ipswich Ware). News of Roman stamped pottery (for the Archive of Roman Stamped Pottery – ARPS) is also most welcome. Reports will be prepared on request. Please send any information to Diana Briscoe at archive@asps.org.uk. Many thanks for your help.

Diana Briscoe

archive@asps.org.uk



Castle Studies Trust increases its maximum award per grant to £7,500



Left: Geophysical survey within Pembroke Castle.
Right: Caus Castle.



The big news for the Castle Studies Trust is that thanks to the generous support of donors, we have been able to increase the maximum amount we can award per grant by 50%, to £7,500 for our next round of grants, which are open now and close on 15th December.

We have also broadened our criteria for sites for which we will award grants to include sites managed by major heritage bodies, subject to caveats. For further information, please view our grant-giving criteria at: <http://castlestudiestrust.org/Grants.html>

The increased grant size will allow us to fund a lot more diverse and bigger projects, and is part of our long-term aim to increase continuously the maximum amount we can award per grant to the point where we can consider funding a full-scale research excavation.

We already have a number of very interesting possible applications for the next round, and include sites such as Fotheringhay, Dinas Bran and Clifford, and we are looking forward to receiving more. If anyone would be interested in applying, please do not hesitate to contact the chair of trustees whose details are presented below.

2016 Grant Awards update

Both projects are likely to finish well within the time limits set by the Trust.

Pembroke Castle – geophysical survey of the castle's interior. All the survey work has been carried out and the draft report was finished at the end of August and is now being checked by one of our expert assessors.

Caus Castle—earthwork, geophysical and photogrammetric survey of the castle. As with Pembroke castle, the survey work is complete and the results are being processed and analysed.

2015 Grant Awards update

Photographic survey of the standing remains of **Gleaston Castle, Cumbria**. The work has been completed and the report is now available on the CST website (www.castlestudiestrust.org). Funding the work has led to a flurry of extra interest in the site, with a geophysical survey being carried out in May, and Historic England stepping-up their efforts to save the seriously-at-risk site from further damage. As Louise Martin, the project co-ordinator has said, "I would like to take

this opportunity to thank the trustees and supporters of the Castle Studies Trust for funding this first phase of vital work at such an important site. It's fabulous to see the enthusiasm and re-ignition of interest for the site that has come from this project".

All those who have kindly donated to the Trust in the past couple of years can feel proud that they have not just improved the understanding of castles but are also helping in the conservation of them too.

Pleshey Castle, Essex. This project has been delayed by a family bereavement and illness of the project manager. However, the manager is now back and it is expected that the work will finish by the end of 2016.

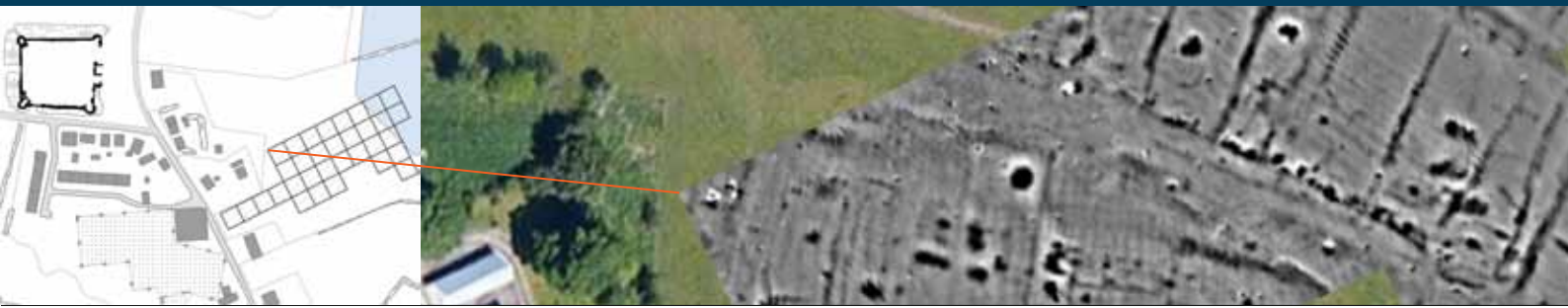
2014 Grant Awards update

Niall Brady continues to deliver on his ambitious plan set out in his CSG grant, to use the 2014 survey of **Ballintober Castle, Co. Roscommon**, as a basis on which to develop new phases of archaeological research at the site. He has been instrumental in working with the local community to win a Heritage Council grant for a Conservation Management Plan (2016), which will provide a road-map to the conservation and preservation of the standing remains. He has also developed an archaeological and anthropological research fieldschool project with US-based colleagues, which includes excavation and more survey within the castle and its adjacent area. A Deserted Settlement was found in 2016 just east of the standing castle, with spectacular results, and is set to establish this location as an important type-site in medieval settlement studies in Ireland. See www.foothill.edu/anthropology/ireland.php, and visit the field project in July 2017.

Holt Reconstruction in the news again

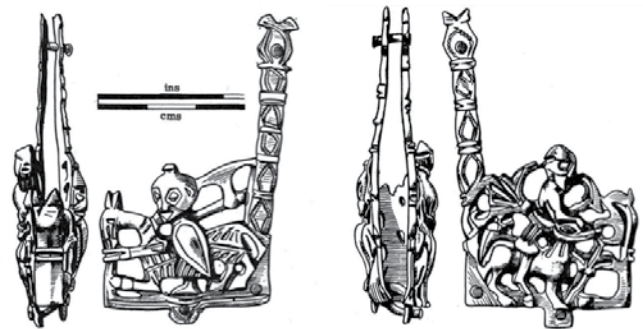
An article on Holt and its history appeared in *Country Life* on 18th May. As well as including some of the images we helped fund, there is a specially commissioned drawing by Chris Jones-Jenkins. You can see it at <https://twitter.com/CastleStudies>, www.facebook.com/CastleStudiesTrust, and www.linkedin.com/company/castle-studies-trust

If you have any questions about the Trust's work, please do not hesitate to contact the Chair of Trustees, **Jeremy Cunningham**, on admin@castlestudiestrust.org



Detail from 2016 gradiometry survey conducted east of Ballintober Castle, Co. Roscommon, showing part of the footprint for the Deserted Settlement revealed for the first time. CIC 2016.

An 11th- or 12th-century 'horse and rider' scabbard chape recently recorded with the PAS



Above: The complete scabbard chape found in Angel Court (after Spencer 1961, 216), acquired by the Museum of London in 1961. Permission for use granted by LAMAS.

Left: The Clapham chape. Photos by author, image editing by Chris Shepherd.

A recent find of some significance from the Portable Antiquities Scheme (object ID PUBLIC-3888AD) consists of a copper-alloy dagger or knife chape of probable Anglo-Norman derivation from Clapham, West Sussex. These objects are relatively rare finds in Britain, with around thirty examples of the type recorded in the database, and few known from archaeological contexts. Seldom preserved in anything but incomplete or fragmentary condition, the relatively intact nature of this example marks it as a find of regional and national importance.

Of one-piece construction, formed by bending a single piece of metal to create two distinct 'plates' that have then been riveted together at one end, the chape is decorated ornately. On one side a horse facing left carries a helmeted rider, who holds a battle-axe over his shoulder and a kite-shaped shield in his left hand that covers most of his body. On the opposing face, a second individual is depicted facing right, either riding on or grappling with an animal of uncertain attribution. The subject matter on this side of the chape is stylistically very different. The combination of the two motifs is a common denominator for this particular type of chape, occurring with only minor variations on all the examples recorded.

The exact significance of the images is not known, but the horseman bears resemblance to depictions on the Bayeux Tapestry. In contrast, the unidentified animal (sometimes attributed as a deer or lion) and human figure on the reverse face are more problematic, but it is not inconceivable that they represent folklore elements.

In his discussion of a complete example excavated from Angel Court, London, in the early 20th century, Brian Spencer (1961, 214) suggested these be classified as mounts

or the ends of combs or comb-cases. It is now generally accepted that they represent scabbard chapes for knives or daggers. Such an identification is in line with the martial elements depicted on them, including battle-axes, conical helmets, lances, kite-shaped shields and mounted individuals. Though appearing in various combinations, they support the suggested date range of these objects from c. AD 1050-1200. Furthermore, the intricate employment of various decorative devices, combining zoomorphic, anthropomorphic, openwork and incised motifs (in conjunction with their relative rarity) suggests that these artefacts were probably connected with relatively high-status individuals.

The distribution of this type of chape (based on PAS data) is primarily limited to eastern and southeastern England, with a few pieces pushing into the central and southwestern regions of the country. Examples have been recorded from Norfolk (5), Sussex (5), Suffolk (5), Oxfordshire (5), Kent (2), Hertfordshire (2), Wiltshire (2), Bedford (1), Buckinghamshire (1), Essex (1), London (1) and the Isle of Wight (1). However, whether the pattern represents a genuine trend or is the result of various recording biases is uncertain.

This new find is an important addition to the corpus of these objects, adding to our knowledge of the Conquest and early post-Conquest period in Britain. Special thanks to Robert Webley (PAS Explorers Project Officer) for his input to this short article, and to the finder for recording the object with me.

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Reference Spencer, B 1961, 'Two Additions to the London Museum', *Trans London and Middlesex Archaeological Society* Vol. 20, 214-217.

Group Reports 2015

Castle Studies Group

In April 2015, around 60 members attended the 29th AGM of the Castle Studies Group during its Annual Conference, at The Ramada Plaza Hotel, Wrexham. The conference was organised by Dr John Kenyon and Chris Jones-Jenkins, on 'The Castles of North-East Wales' and aimed to showcase lesser-frequented Welsh Baronial and Edwardian castles. The conference followed the usual CSG format of mainly site visits, but benefited from two evening lectures; the first by Will Davis, of Cadw, provided an introduction to the focus of the conference on The Castle of North-East Wales; and the second, by Rick Turner, provided an interesting account of geometric castles. The latter provided a great introduction to Holt Castle which has been the subject of a recent project undertaken with grant aid for the Castle Studies Trust. Site visits included a varied mix of sites, including Edwardian types at Rhuddlan, Denbigh, Holt, Ruthin and Flint; motte-and-bailey castles at Hawarden, Tomen y Rhodwydd and Rhuddlen Old Castle; and three castles with Welsh Origins, namely Caergwrle (Hope), Dinas Brân and Ewloe. One of the particular highlights was the showcasing of recent work reconstructing the internal arrangements of Holt Castle; work that allows for a better understanding of the intricacies of the site, which are difficult to appreciate from the standing remains. Added to this was the detailed explanation of the gatehouse at Denbigh, another intricate design brought to life through 3D-modelling by Chris Jones Jenkins.

There were several other CSG events through the year. In March, Neil Guy and Peter Burton organised an intensive site study day at Lancaster Castle, and in September the CSG visited Lincoln Castle and Cathedral for a study day with Jonathon Clark, David Stocker and Nigel Burn. The study days are something the CSG will continue, with a day organised for Pembroke Castle in October 2016. In July the group sponsored a session at the Leeds International Medieval Congress on a 'Stamp of Authority; Castles and Reinforcement of Social Hierarchies'. It was a successful session with papers presented by Audrey Thorstad, now a

lecturer at Bangor University, and Richard Nevell, currently studying for his doctorate at Exeter. It was the first time the CSG has been involved in the IMC and it likely will not be the last. In September our week-long European study tour was held in Gaston Febus, organised by Richard Eales and several of our members, including Tom McNeill and Geoff Stell contributed to the Island Castles Conference, held in Barra. Finally in October, we convened in Rochester for an Autumn Conference marking the 800th anniversary of the great siege that was so instrumental in the Civil War in 1215. The conference featured papers by our former chair, Pamela Marshall, our England representative, Richard Eales, and our treasurer, Peter Purton, who also organised the event. They were joined by James Petre, Jeremy Ashbee, Tim Tatton-Brown and Hugh Doherty. The following day the group visited the castle, with Jeremy Ashbee, and had a walk around the town to the cathedral with Tim-Tatton Brown. All-in-all a very busy and successful year for the CSG with some new, and resurrected initiatives that we are keen to continue.

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. 28*. 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. The 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, Hon. Secretary
secretary@castlestudiesgroup.org.uk



Medieval Settlement Research Group



An early evening field visit in the shadow of Lincoln cathedral at the MSRG Spring Conference, April 2016. Photograph: Bob Silvester.

Across late 2015 and the first half of 2016, the Medieval Settlement Research Group (MSRG) held a Winter Seminar and published the latest issue of its journal (*Medieval Settlement Research* 30), which included three research articles and five notes, as well as book reviews.

The Winter Seminar was held at the University of Nottingham in December 2015. Organised by our committee member Dr Paul Cavill, the seminar talks formed the theme ‘Place-names and medieval settlement’, consisting of five papers ranging across the medieval period. Several posters were also displayed.

The Spring seminar took place at the University of Lincoln in late April 2016. Organised by Prof Carenza Lewis, it featured a day-and-a-half of lectures around the theme of ‘Recent archaeological research on rural settlements in Eastern England’, alongside field trips around Lincoln and to a local DMV. Over 80 delegates were in attendance. A report on the conference can be found at <https://medieval-settlement.com/spring-2016-conference/>, and a report on the Nottingham seminar also appears in the same area of our website.

This year’s Winter Seminar will take place on 10 December at the University of Leicester. It will feature papers celebrating the 30th anniversary of the formation of the MSRG from the amalgamation of the Medieval Village Research Group and the Moated Sites Research Group in 1986. The seminar will also honour our out-going Treasurer Dr Robin Glasscock, who has overseen the Group’s finances throughout the last 30 years! Full details will be posted on the MSRG’s website (<http://medieval-settlement.com>) in due course.

Relevant MA/MSc programme directors are reminded of the 31 December deadline for submission of entries of high quality dissertations (of maximum 20,000 words) for the MSRG’s John Hurst MA Dissertation Prize. Eligible dissertations on a medieval rural or landscape theme submitted and passed in the last academic year should be sent to the MSRG Secretary. 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.

All members of MSRG are eligible to apply for our Research 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 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/>). Alongside research grants, students can apply for conference bursaries – see details in the journal or on the webpages.

John Naylor, Hon. Secretary (to December 2016):
john.naylor@ashmus.ox.ac.uk



Colin Platt

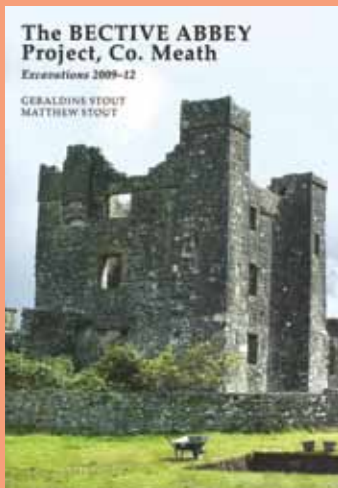
(1934-2015)

Born in Canton on 11 November 1934, Colin was the identical twin of the distinguished modern historian DCM (Christopher) Platt (d. 1989). After Balliol, where both took Firsts, Colin took up a post as Research Assistant at Leeds University in 1960. This led to his PhD, published in 1969 as *The Monastic Grange in Medieval England*, where already his integrated approach to the study of the Middle Ages could be seen. His investigation of granges had included excavations, and Colin went on to dig at Dartington Hall, and most notably at Southampton, written up in one of the best-designed reports of its time, *Excavations in Medieval Southampton* (1975). He had moved to Southampton with his wife Valerie and young family in 1966 to join the History Department, with which he remained for the rest of his career, latterly holding a personal chair. A stammer meant his teaching was conducted through supervisions and tutorials, and later field trips, and he rarely attended conferences. He was the most genial, stimulating and helpful of teachers – chilled white wine relaxed students and stimulated discussion – and warm tributes from many past students were paid in a *Festschrift* presented on his 80th birthday, *A Fresh Approach* (2014), edited by his second wife, Claire Donovan.

Throughout his university career, and beyond retirement in 1999, mornings were spent with unbending rigour on research and writing. Among his books that attracted particular notice were *The English Medieval Town* (1976), *Medieval England: A Social History and Archaeology from the Conquest to 1600* (1978), *The Parish Churches of Medieval England* (1981) and *The Great Rebuildings of Tudor and Stuart England: Revolutions in Architectural Taste* (1994). Colin's largest and most lavish book published in 1990, *The Architecture of Medieval Britain: A Social History*, won the Wolfson Prize. This was a collaboration with the eminent architectural photographer Anthony Kersting (d. 2008), and high-quality illustrations, notably redrawn plans and reconstruction drawings, were a consistent feature of Colin's publications. In his final topic of study, *King Death: the Black Death and*

its Aftermath in Late Medieval England (1996), he again drew equally on archaeology and history, but was always mindful of the personal tragedies of 1348-9. When one student pointed out that 'only' 30 % of the population had died, Colin responded instantly that for those it was nevertheless 'pretty bad news'.

Colin had a long association with the Society, as a member from its early years and latterly as a contributor of elegant and substantial articles to *Medieval Archaeology*. These returned to themes he had explored earlier in his books, and were born in part by the evidence of archaeologists' all too frequent failure to read, engage with and give due weight to historical evidence (see for instance his exasperated footnote 99 on page 292 in volume 56), and by the preference, in universities, for academic theory over empirical research. In volume 51 (2007), 83-102, 'Revisionism in Castle Studies: a caution' attacked the view of Charles Coulson and others that castles were built 'chiefly as an expression of status'. Not so, Colin argued, rather 'it was defence that remained the first consideration of almost every castle-builder throughout the Middle Ages.' Then, in volume 56 (2012), 292-97, he looked again at the appalling agrarian crisis of 1315-22, and how medieval archaeologists have largely missed recent work by historians who 'now share a much bleaker view of a community overcrowded and increasingly under stress: lawless, divided and taxed to the bone, characterised by extreme poverty, starvation and violent crime'. The digging of homestead moats, Colin re-iterated, was a response to this: they were for protection from the desperate and lawless, not pretentious status symbols. His final article, to be published in a future volume, returns to the half-century before the Black Death, arguing an interconnection between the subsistence crisis including the Great Famine of 1315-17, the hyperactive peasant land market and the rise of an acquisitive 'kulak' class. It was these families, often living outside the security of a village in substantial houses on their newly enlarged holdings, Colin argues, who most often sought the security of a moat.



New from **Wordwell Books**

is a book that reports on the first large-scale research excavation conducted at a Cistercian Abbey in Ireland in recent years. Bective was founded in 1142 as the first daughter house of Mellifont Abbey. Charged with the task of understanding daily life at the abbey, the excavation project directed and published by **Geraldine and Matthew Stout** shifts the focus away from the traditional interest in architecture and moves it to the *curiae* and garden areas. It is a meticulous multi-disciplinary study of the wider precinct area and helps to redress an imbalance that is long overdue. This is a book that Colin Platt would surely have approved of.

To order your copy, go to <http://wordwellbooks.com/Bective>

Colin's legendary hospitality, since 2002 at his welcoming and elegant Old Rectory in Littlehempston, Devon, attracted many friends and former students, although his working routine remained unchanged with further publications including *Marks of Opulence* (2004) and *A Concise History of Jersey* (2009). His family had long had a house on that island, and lengthy summer stays led to an important defence of Mont Orgeuil Castle from inappropriate reconstruction, a contribution which was finally honoured by the *Société Jersiaise* with the award of *Membre d'Honneur*, a Life Membership. At Littlehempston he and Claire, a manuscript historian, became

hubs of an active parish. For the church next door Colin organised a successful fundraising drive which saw it transformed in an exemplary fashion with a galley kitchen, lavatories in the tower, underfloor heating and pews on castors to become a real multi-purpose space for everyone – just as it had been in the Middle Ages. This was a point which Colin well understood, and was fully demonstrated at his funeral following his death on 23 July 2015 – both church service, and a party to celebrate his life.

Paul Stamper
paul.stamper52@gmail.com

Conferences & Events

— FORTHCOMING —

December:

1-2 December

'Changing Senses of Sacrality. Objects, Beliefs and Performances from the Medieval to the Early Modern Era'. University of Helsinki. Email: changingsacrality@gmail.com

2-4 December

SMA's Annual Conference 2016, 'Waiting for the End of the World: the Archaeology of Risk and its Perception in the Middle Ages'. Rewley House, Oxford. <http://www.medievalarchaeology.co.uk/index.php/events/conferences/>

10 December

MSRG Winter Seminar, at the University of Leicester, and celebrating the Group's 30th anniversary. <http://medieval-settlement.com>

January 2017:

12-15 January

'Gender, Places, Spaces, Thresholds', Canterbury Christ Church University. <http://medievalgender.co.uk/2017-conference/>

February:

9-11 February

23rd Annual ACMRS Conference, Scottsdale, Arizona, 'Paradigm Shifts During the Global Middle Ages and Renaissance'. <https://acmrs.org/conferences/annual-acmrs-conference>

March:

3-4 March

Student and Early Career Researcher Focus, 'Encounters and Re-imaginings: Medieval Scandinavia and the World'. Email: scandgrads@gmail.com

25-27 March

50th Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies, 'Global Byzantium', Centre for Byzantine, Ottoman and Modern Greek Studies, University of Birmingham. <http://www.byzantium.ac.uk/events/spring-symposium-2017.html>

April:

3-6 April

'Objects and Possessions: Material Goods in a Changing World 1200-1800', University of Southampton. <http://www.southampton.ac.uk/objectsandpossessions2017/>

6-8 April

Medieval Academy of America Annual Meeting. University of Toronto. Threads include 'Visual and Material Cultures'. <http://medievalacademy.site-ym.com/events/EventDetails.aspx?id=863126&group>

11-12 April

'The material culture of religious change and continuity 1400-1600', University of Huddersfield. <https://www.hud.ac.uk/research/history/events/>

May:

11-14 May

52nd International Congress on Medieval Studies, WMU, Michigan USA. www.wmich.edu/medieval/congress

To advertise conferences/events in the Newsletter contact:

Dr Meggan Gondek
Reader in Archaeology
Dept. of History & Archaeology
University of Chester
Parkgate Rd
Chester CH1 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

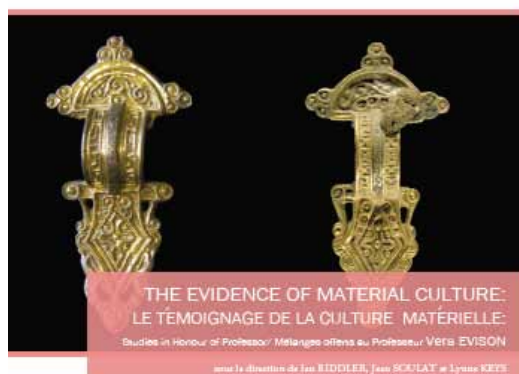
The due dates for receipt of copy are:

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

Credits

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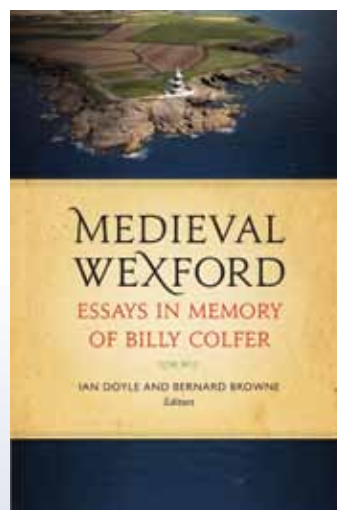
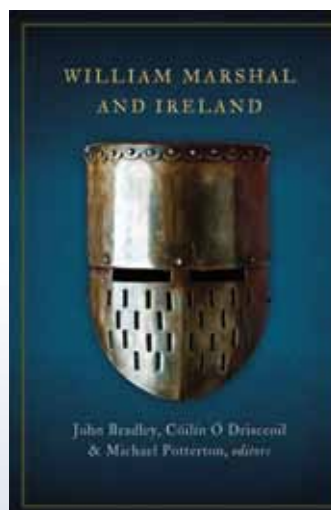
New Titles

Prof. Vera Ivy Evison (who turns 99 in January 2017) was for decades a lecturer in Anglo-Saxon Archaeology at Birkbeck College, London, where many who went on to become eminent themselves in that field attended her evening lectures or undertook PhDs under her supervision. Her fame, however, rests on the work she did and the contributions she made to the study of Early Anglo-Saxon cemeteries and to early medieval glass and pottery studies.

A Festschrift in her honour - *The Evidence of Material Culture/Le Témoignage de la Culture Matérielle*, edited by Ian Riddler, Jean Soulat and Lynne Keys, and published as *Europe Médiévale 10* (Autun, France) - is a recognition of the respect with which she is held in the UK and across Europe. With contributions from British, French and German scholars it contains not only papers on recent work here and abroad but, additionally, a small biography of a very private but quite remarkable woman who 'came up the hard way' (to quote Rupert Bruce-Mitford), having originally started her working life as a secretary. It places Anglo-Saxon material in a European framework, from Dover Buckland and other new-found Kent cemeteries, to the history and archaeology of the Franks in Belgica II, alongside ethnographic comparisons and funerary trends for cremation burials, studies of a variety of artefact types and a review of the potential for using radiocarbon dating and Bayesian chronological modelling for the early medieval period.

To order your copy, email: contact@editions-mergoil.com

Four Courts Press, www.fourcourtspress.ie



Ireland's Southeast region appears as a hub of research as two new and important volumes appear that celebrate its medieval archaeology and history as two edited volumes, produced by the ever-busy Four Courts Press team.

Waiting for the End of the World:
Perceptions of Disaster and Risk
in Medieval Europe

A weekend event to be held at Rewley
House, 1 Wellington Square, Oxford

What happened when natural disasters affected medieval European societies (AD 500-1550)? The roll-call of disasters during this period is lengthy and their effects were sometimes felt across the whole of Europe in a way that has not been observed in modern times. In 1258 the largest volcanic eruption of the last 7,000 years affected the entire continent, while in 1315-1321 the most serious famine in recorded European history was driven by a prolonged period of low temperatures and heavy summer rainfalls associated with abnormally warm North Atlantic sea temperatures. Other events such as the most powerful earthquake in central Europe in 1356, river floods, tsunamis in the Mediterranean and sea surges along north-western coastlines all affected specific regions so that responses by different communities can be usefully compared. How did hazards become disasters, how did societies perceive these events, and how did they react and evolve to reduce their vulnerability?

This weekend conference is the annual conference of the Society for Medieval Archaeology, but is open to all.

FRIDAY 2 DECEMBER 2016

- 6.15pm Registration
- 7.00pm Dinner
- 8.15pm-9.15pm Fire, flood and famine: the archaeology of natural disasters in early medieval Europe

HELENA HAMEROW

SATURDAY 3 DECEMBER 2016

- 8.15am Breakfast (residents only)
- 9.15am Social instability and coping with extremes of drought, wet and cold in medieval Ireland
- 10.00am Extreme winds and high tides: responses to storms in medieval England
- 11.00am Coffee/tea

FRANCIS LUDLOW

PETER BROWN

SUNDAY 4 DECEMBER 2016

- 11.30am Disaster or everyday risk? Perceiving, managing and memorizing floods in medieval Central Europe
- 12.15pm Drowning in sand: coastal change and crisis in medieval Britain
- 1.15pm Lunch
- 2.15pm Disaster recovery: new archaeological evidence for the long-term impact of the 'calamitous' fourteenth century
- 3.00pm Flooding and water management through the evidence of place names
- 4.00pm Tea/coffee
- 4.30pm Risk and adaptation at the edge of the world: Norse settlement of Greenland
- 5.30pm Break / free time
- 7.00pm Dinner
- 8.15pm-9.15pm Understanding historic risk: a key component of modern day risk assessment for natural hazards

ANDREW DUGMORE

DAVID PETLEY

PAOLO FORLIN

BRUNO FIGLIUOLO

- 11.00am Coffee/tea
- 11.30am The experience of disaster in late medieval England: resilience and recovery
- 12.15pm Fear and miracles: coping with disasters through material culture in the Middle Ages
- 1.15pm Lunch and course disperses

CHRIS DYER

ELEANOR STANDLEY

ENROLMENT FORM



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Fees will only be refunded in exceptional circumstances and all refunds will be subject to a £20 administration charge. Without exception, the cost of any meals booked will be retained if you cancel less than 7 days before the course begins. If you prefer to take up the option of a transfer or a credit note the catering policy above will be applied but no administrative charge will be made. Refund requests should be made, in writing, to the Manager of Public Programmes, OUDCE, 1 Wellington Square, Oxford, OX1 2JA, or by emailing ppdayweek@conted.ox.ac.uk. Please indicate in your application whether, if successful, which option you prefer. The Department reserves the right to cancel courses with insufficient enrolments and the decision to do so is usually made 2 weeks before a course is scheduled to run. In such cases students are refunded in full. **The Department cannot be held responsible for accommodation or travel booked in advance.**

WAITING FOR THE END OF THE WORLD: PERCEPTIONS OF DISASTER AND RISK IN MEDIEVAL EUROPE
O16P187AHR

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FRIDAY 2 - SUNDAY 4
DECEMBER 2016



The Society for Medieval
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