

# Medieval Archaeology

NEWSLETTER OF THE SOCIETY FOR MEDIEVAL ARCHAEOLOGY

## Kings, Saints and Assemblies - Scottish Nation Building in the Early Middle Ages

Professor Stephen T Driscoll, University of Glasgow, will present  
The Society for Medieval Archaeology Annual Lecture, 2011

### Contents

Conference Reports .....	2
Society News .....	4
Grants/Awards .....	7
Group Reports .....	9
Media & Exhibitions .....	14
Forthcoming Events .....	16

With the imminent launch of our newly designed journal cover, we are happy to present the new look for the Society's Newsletter in full colour. It is a tribute to the membership that the quality and quantity of notices and articles received in recent years justifies this further improvement to our Society's outputs. The autumn issue tends to be reflective in tone and we are pleased to feature the various Group reports, as well as forthcoming publications. Please be sure to send in your notes and research notices for the Spring issue.

Niall Brady  
Newsletter Editor  
e-mail: [niall@discoveryprogramme.ie](mailto:niall@discoveryprogramme.ie)

*Left:  
Detail from the Govan sarcophagus  
showing a horseman and animals.  
© Crown Copyright reproduced  
courtesy of Historic Scotland.  
[www.historicscotlandimages.gov.uk](http://www.historicscotlandimages.gov.uk)*



Professor Driscoll's lecture will explore some of the most fundamental questions relating to the emergence of the kingdoms in Scotland, particularly those relating to the changes which occurred during the Viking Age. What was the nature of kingship? How did secular authorities interact with the Church? Where did the leaders engage with the wider community of the kingdom? At the heart of the lecture will be a consideration of the insights into these issues provided by recent investigation at Govan, the centre of the British kingdom of Strathclyde, and provided by the SERF project which is focused on Forteviot, the centre of the southern Pictish kingdom. Although on opposite sides of the country, these kingdoms shared significant dynastic connections and their archaeologies complement each other. It will be argued that the observations relating to these two sites are of value to understanding the wider Scottish and Northumbrian scene.

The lecture will take place on Monday 5th December at 6:15pm in the Lecture Theatre, Institute of Archaeology, University College London, 31-34 Gordon Square, London WC1H 0PY, following the Society's Annual General Meeting. A wine reception will follow and all are welcome.

The Society for Medieval Archaeology Student Colloquium will take place in association with the McDonald Institute for Archaeological Research at the University of Cambridge, 28-30 October. Contact [medieval.archaeology@googlemail.co.uk](mailto:medieval.archaeology@googlemail.co.uk)

# Early Medieval Archaeology Student Symposium:

Department of Archaeology, University of Glasgow, 24-26 April 2011

EMASS is now five years old, following a run of successful meetings in Cardiff, Exeter, Sheffield, Dublin and, most recently, Glasgow. Andy Seaman's vision of an open and supportive forum for the exchange of ideas and information remains at the heart of these events. The Glasgow meeting took the symposium north of the border for the first time and for many this was their first visit to that part of the British Isles. In that sense alone, the meeting introduced delegates not only to Glasgow's vibrant Department of Archaeology, but also to some of the most impressive Early Christian archaeology of the Northern World. After the first full day of papers, an evening reception at Govan Old Parish Church provided the opportunity to learn about the important community archaeology project directed by Glasgow's Professor Steve Driscoll, and the chance to inspect the very many early medieval sculptured stones on display inside the church – with a glass of Glenmorangie in hand, provided in the form of sponsorship by the distillery. Following a second day of papers, the final day comprised a long field trip northwards and eastwards from Glasgow, which gave delegates the chance to see early medieval sculpture in its landscape setting, notably at Dunning and Meikle.

The content of individual papers can be found on the EMASS website and there is not space here to discuss them individually. Overall, however, the standard of PowerPoint presentations was much better than that normally encountered at academic conferences, and the style and pitch of delivery was on the whole excellent. Questions and discussion were positive and engaging. Alison Kyle and her team at Glasgow are to be congratulated for their efficient organisation and convivial hosting of the event.

The value of EMASS is that it brings together new researchers doing interesting new things. My own experience as a postgraduate was of attending too many conferences and meetings and only occasionally finding someone not engaged in name-badge spotting who could be bothered to talk to a graduate student. Academics, both younger (often the worst) and longer in the tooth frequently possess the knack of patronising graduate students within an inch of their lives. EMASS is particularly enjoyable in that it is free of the inability to listen, and the bragging and shameless self-promotion encountered in many academic fora (from conferences to – particularly – Facebook). The environment provided by EMASS and its website allows a new generation of scholars to create their own networks and also to learn about the work of others across a range of fields in medieval archaeology and medieval studies more widely. Fifteen years ago, one relied on a very shaky mix of hearsay and chance conversations between supervisors to get a flavour of what graduate students elsewhere were up to. EMASS successfully overcomes this issue and it is becoming increasingly international in its outlook – delegates at Glasgow came from Austria, Holland, Italy, Spain and Switzerland – with a Spanish EMASS proposed for 2013. A further benefit of EMASS is that it crosses the long established boundaries that exist in medieval archaeology in the form of the various special interest groups. Long may it continue – and indeed it will, at the Institute of Archaeology, UCL on 14/15 May 2012.

**Andrew Reynolds**  
tcnrajr@ucl.ac.uk

## Space and Settlement Conference 2

Trinity College, Dublin, 27-28 May 2011

In this the second Space and Settlement Conference there were over 20 contributors from around Britain and Ireland giving papers in our iconic new Long Room Hub Building. The Arts and Social Science Benefaction Fund of Trinity College, Dublin also financially supported the proceedings. More than 90 people attended and, as with the first one, the present author will not attempt to cover every paper but will try to give a flavour of those two days. Several members of Council attended to give papers, as did our President.

The Conference was opened by Professor Brian McGing, Head of the School of Histories and Humanities, in which he stressed the importance of the inter-disciplinary nature of the papers to be given. The keynote lecture by Council member and recent Jope Prize winner Tomás Ó Carragáin of University College Cork on 'Recalling Rome, Recalling Jerusalem: the sacred topographies of major ecclesiastical sites in early medieval Ireland', showed how many of the early medieval Irish churches often reflected the ecclesiastical architecture of both Rome and the Holy Land.

There were six linked themes this time around: the first on Landscape and Environment. Lisa Coyle of the Queen's University, Belfast described how modern scientific methods are suggesting exciting results in matching up significant changes in land-use with the known archaeological record of the Early Medieval period. Francis Ludlow of Trinity College, Dublin in turn emphasised the importance of the extensive environmental record preserved in the medieval Irish Annals, while Fiona Beglane of Sligo Institute of Technology and NUI Galway presented the so far limited evidence for deer parks within the medieval landscape of Ireland.

The second theme covered 'Domestic Architecture' in which our President, Dr Mark Gardiner, gave a fascinating insight into how the chamber in English medieval houses evolved. He argued that this probably had its origin in 13th-century England, but it was difficult to find earlier evidence for it. There was also a superb lecture given by one of the architects of the Hub Building itself, Neil McCullough, on

Renaissance architecture in rural Ireland: a ground-breaking overview. His professional perspective on these structures fascinated an audience made up mostly of archaeologists, historians and historical geographers.

On Saturday morning, Dr Margaret Murphy of Carlow College, talked about her recent research with the Discovery Programme where her study of contemporary manorial documents helps to show how the capital city of the Lordship of Ireland was supplied by its close hinterland, both on land and sea.

This was followed in the afternoon by an important session on maritime settlement and trade chaired by your 'Newsletter' Editor, Dr Niall Brady. All four papers covered significant areas of Ireland and Britain, with the youngest contributor, Andy Woods of Cambridge University, investigating coinage, exchange and economy in Viking Age Dublin. The final session on castles in the landscape again had four well-integrated papers that covered this important settlement form within different historic landscapes, both rural and urban. Dr Kieran O'Connor of NUI Galway took us through his archaeological excavation of the remains of one of the most powerful castles in the Province of Leinster, that of Carlow. He was able to re-construct the early earth and timber castle that lay under the later stone keep, as well as showing how this caput fitted in with the close network of Norman castles within the region.

Your correspondent had the near impossible task of trying to sum up the two days and point a possible way forward. The organizational contribution of his research students was fully acknowledged. Our first Conference was a really useful event, but in many ways the papers fitted together even more satisfactorily this year, which was extremely rewarding for all concerned. It is planned to publish the proceedings of the First Conference with Four Courts Press early next year, for a launch at the next Conference.

**Terry Barry**  
tbarry@tcd.ie

# CONFERENCE / SEMINAR REPORTS

## The Tower and the Household

Dundee University, 6-8 August 2011

This international conference, organised jointly by the Universities of Dundee and Stirling, focused upon the use and living patterns of towers and their associated country houses, and featured some startling new research. Speakers from Holland, England, Poland, Ireland, England, Belgium and Scotland came from the disciplines of archaeology, and history, and architectural, cultural and social history. In opening, Richard Oram (with Charles McKean one of the two organisers) introduced the dominant theme – namely that the tower normally represented only a part of a larger complex, and the purpose was to find out how they were used, and how that use changed. So the focus was upon the domestic and the symbolic.

On the domestic front, Przemyslaw Nocun analysed how towers without fireplaces in Silesia were heated by hypocausts and warm air, or by stoves; Kate Buchanan considered what inventories revealed about how guests were treated; Gillian Eadie explained the professionalization of staff within the household and suggested a gender division; Taco Hermans described what excavations were revealing about an early-abandoned island castle and associated buildings in the Netherlands; Paul Naessens examined what excavation revealed about riparian towers as part of larger working complexes; and Eric Matthews described what excavations were revealing about the apartments and towers – and the wider estate – at Hornby Castle.

On the symbolic front, Pamela Marshall identified a ‘viewing door’ in both Fulk Nerra’s donjons and later ones in Britain such as Chepstow, concluding that the donjon was not a reasonable place to live in; whereas Richard Oram’s analysis of the layout of the Bishop’s Palace of Spynie indicated that the great tower within it was fine for a bishop; Niall Brady emphasised the continuity of ancient forts and sites, and raised the question of whether the sites changed only when

towers arrived; Arnaud de Volder examined the distinctive towers built by ecclesiastics on their granges; Rory Sherlock examined dense groups of native Irish towers in Cos. Mayo and Clare, how they were split up and how, eventually, they became owned by multiple proprietors, and thus poorly maintained; and Charles McKean described how the Scottish tower was never solitary, was added to the inner court primarily as family and household lodgings (often no kitchen), was extended as social fashion required larger rooms, but was abandoned in the 16th century for the more spacious chambers of the inner court and relegated, although surviving within later buildings.

Penny Dransart suggested that the *Five Wounds of Christ* was possibly used symbolically to ward the house against Protestants (confirmed by Przemyslaw Nocun in Poland); and Julie Danskin considered the retrospective perception of towers in the 18th century, claiming that the Enlightenment’s predilection for the picturesque saved them from destruction.

It was a conference marked by great interchange and excellent discussion. Two issues, however, stick in the mind. Rory Sherlock’s multiple Mayo towers all appear to have been abandoned rather than adapted for contemporary use, and thus remain relatively complete; whereas the vast bulk of the Scottish towers were adapted to continuing use even if losing their identity in so doing. Had the Irish turned their back on the sites and images of the past more than the Scots?

The organisers were much indebted to Julie Danskin and Kate Buchanan for making all the arrangements.

**Charles McKean and Richard Oram**

c.a.mckean@dundee.ac.uk

*Speakers on the fieldtrip, photo by Charles McKean*

L-R: Paul Naessens, Erik Matthews, Niall Brady, Gillian Eadie, Taco Hermans, Przemyslaw Nocun, Pamela Marshall, Richard Oram, Kate Buchanan, Penelope Dransart



## Website

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

## Apply for a Grant

For information on how to apply for a  
Society grant/award, see our website  
www.medievalarchaeology.org

## Current Officers

President: . . . . . Mark Gardiner  
Secretary: . . . . . Dawn Hadley  
Treasurer: . . . . . Stephen Rippon  
Journal Editor: . . . . . Sally Foster  
Asst. Editor: . . . . . Oliver Creighton  
Reviews Editor: . . . . . Neil Christie  
Monographs Editor: . . . . . Chris Gerrard  
Newsletter Editor: . . . . . Niall Brady  
Website Editor: . . . . . Amanda Forster

## Recent titles from the Monograph Series:

Guy Beresford (2009)

*Caldecote: The Development and  
Desertion of a Hertfordshire Village*,  
Monograph 28

Nancy Edwards (ed.)  
(2009) *The Archaeology of the Early  
Medieval Celtic Churches*, Monograph 29

Roberta Gilchrist and  
Andrew Reynolds (eds)  
(2009) *Reflections: 50 Years of Medieval  
Archaeology, 1957-2007*, Monograph 30

# Society News

## Notice of Annual General Meeting

To be held at 6pm on Monday 5th December 2011 in the Lecture  
Theatre, Institute of Archaeology, University College London, 31-34  
Gordon Square, London WC1H 0PY

### Agenda

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

The following nominations have been received:

For re-election:	Hon. Editor	Dr Sally Foster
	Hon. Secretary	Prof. Dawn Hadley
	Hon. Treasurer	Prof. Stephen Rippon
For election:	Hon. Vice President	Prof. Chris Dyer
	Vice President	Prof. Nancy Edwards
	Members of Council	Dr Aleks McClain
		Dr Karen Milek
		Dr Barney Sloane

3. Election of Auditors Bronsens 267 Banbury Road, Oxford
4. Treasurer's Report
5. Editor's Report
6. Secretary's Report
7. Prizes
8. Any Other Business
9. Date of next meeting

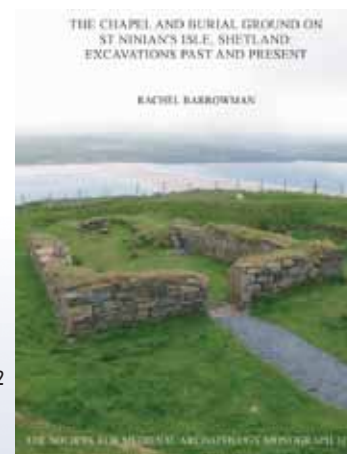
*Tea, coffee, biscuits will be served from 5:15pm in the A.G. Leventis Gallery*

Tube stations: Euston Square, Warren Street, Goodge Street

## Forthcoming Monographs, 2011/12



Monograph 31



Monograph 32

## News & Views

Excavation and research projects are always exploring ways in which to highlight their achievements in up-to-the-minute news. Blogging and social networks are being employed on a very active basis, and we have seen examples of live video-streaming for conference events and other meetings. The actual world of academe seems so prescient and almost interactive. Members may be interested to check out the 2011 excavations at Bective Abbey, Co. Meath, Ireland where Geraldine and Matthew

Stout have been exploring the precinct of one of Ireland's finest Cistercian monasteries. Their research is moving the focus away from the primary claustral buildings, to explore what remains of the work areas and associated structures and features in the immediate vicinity. In addition to conversations with the excavation directors and team members, the project's blog includes interviews with visiting archaeologists and specialists who may be able to share some particular insight from the results emerging. Check

it out on: <http://bective.wordpress.com> The iTunes podcast 'A day in the life of...' even includes a 5-minute account on the importance of plough pebbles in Ireland, perhaps the single most striking material representation of the High Farming period, courtesy of your Editor, who visited the project as part of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland summer fieldtrip.

## Obituaries, Jean le Patourel 1915-2011



*Jean le Patourel, photograph kindly provided by Julian le Patourel*

**J**ean le Patourel who died on the 20th January was a member of the Society from its beginning, and will be remembered for her lasting contributions to the study of medieval pottery and moated sites in both Britain and Europe.

Her interest in medieval pottery began in Leeds after her husband, Professor John le Patourel, was appointed to the Chair of Medieval History at the university, which brought her into contact with archaeologists there and more widely in Yorkshire. Jean's keen eye for fabric, decoration and shape soon made her a discerning expert able to produce contributions on the subject to reports on the excavations at Kirkstall Abbey and Pontefract

Priory, and classifying the Cistercian wares found at both these monuments and secular sites in Yorkshire. Her abilities in documentary research also gave her a different perspective, one anxious to understand the economic and social backgrounds of the communities whose buildings, structures and artefacts we study. This led into excavations and reports with other colleagues on pottery kilns in Yorkshire and, taken together with her other contributions, laid the basis for medieval pottery studies in Northern England. Her papers on medieval ceramics, potters and pottery in our journal (1968) and *Medieval Ceramics* (1986) demonstrate this ability to blend the archaeological and historical

evidence to provide the wider understanding our disciplines seek.

Throughout this period Jean worked closely with John Hurst at Wharram Percy, with whom she shared a common interest in ceramics. Her wide continental contacts made with the help of John le Patourel at the many conferences they attended together, was another activity where with John Hurst, Ken Barton and others she represented researchers from Britain. Her publications in the *Transactions Societee Guernasaise*, the *Brygen Papers* and the Festschrift dedicated to John Hurst are the product of her wide ranging interests.

The collaboration at Wharram led to Jean undertaking excavations herself at Knaresborough Castle for the Department of the Environment, and then at a succession of medieval manors and moated sites. These investigations at West Haddlesey, Newstead and other manorial sites resulted in her survey and classification of moated sites in Yorkshire, which extended that produced by the RCHM England for Cambridgeshire and was published as one of our early monographs that still retains a permanent value. Her research was the inspiration for the formation in 1972 of the Moated Sites Research Group of which she was the first Chairman, and after this group merged with the Deserted Medieval Village Group she became appropriately a Honorary Vice President of the new Medieval Settlement Research Group.

In 1967 Jean was appointed a Lecturer in the Department of Extra-Mural studies at Leeds University, and served as an inspiring teacher until her retirement in 1981. In this role she edited, and published in, a monograph on Yorkshire Boundaries which contains many contributions from her students, and then turned her attention to research on medieval dog-collars, rapidly making herself an expert. One of my many happy experiences with Jean was a determined charge across Liège seeking churches holding funeral effigies that might provide European parallels. Sadly we were disappointed since successive armies had wrought their worst leaving only the buildings.

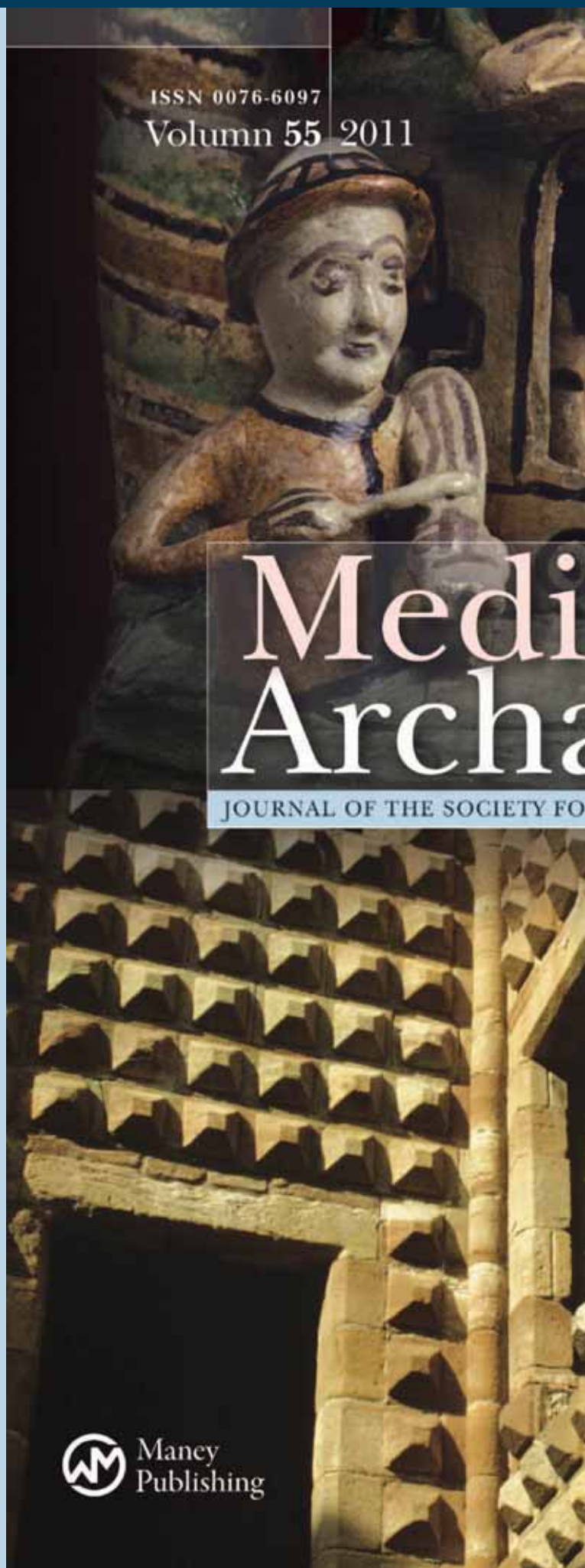
Among her published contributions to medieval archaeology one should not overlook Jean's many reviews in our journal, *Yorkshire Archaeological Journal*, *Antiquaries Journal* and others. She served on the Council of our Society, the Society of Antiquaries of London and the Yorkshire Archaeological Society, and was a member of the Ancient Monuments Board for England. She also contributed as a delegate to Ruralia, the colloquium on Medieval Settlement in Europe, and Chateau Gaillard, the conference on castle studies. To all these she brought a sharp and discerning intellect, happy to share her knowledge and encourage others, and a kind and generous hostess especially at home in Ilkley and Leeds.

#### Alan Aberg

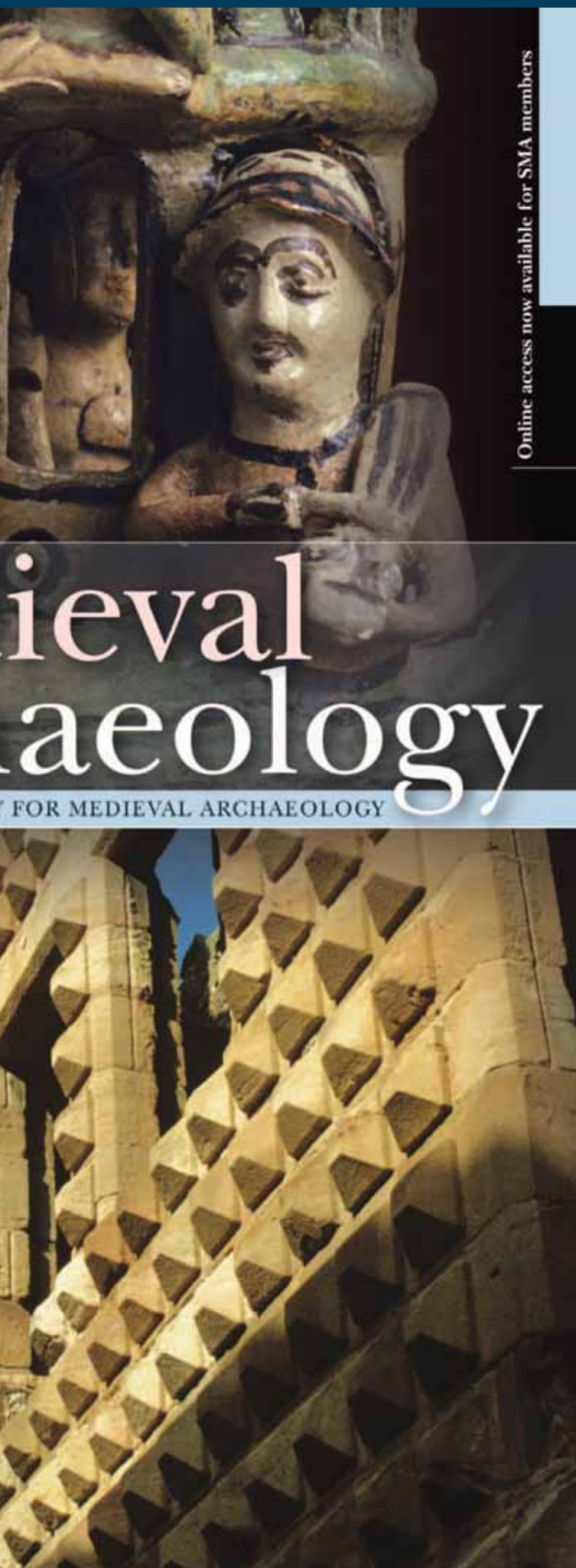
alan.aberg@btinternet.com

You will notice some differences when you receive volume 55 (2011) of the Society's journal later this year. Most obviously, we have our first cover redesign (reproduced on the right). It coincides with the introduction of all-colour contents and some improvements to the format of the articles and notes. The title page of the journal retains Eva Wilson's 1957 drawing of the Alfred Jewel (our logo). The cover of the journal is one of the key ways in which as a Society we project and communicate an image of ourselves. Council's aspiration has been to present an image of a 21st-century, dynamic Society, with a modern and strong design. The result is a template that can we can opt to change periodically (certainly not annually), allowing us to continue to reflect through time different aspects of medieval archaeology.

**Sally Foster**, Hon Editor  
ableminds@btinternet.com



Maney  
Publishing



Online access now available for SMA members

# Medieval Archaeology

FOR MEDIEVAL ARCHAEOLOGY

## Grants & Awards

In March, Rewley House in Oxford hosted 'Anglo-Saxon Places of Power, Governance and Authority' – organised by the collaborative 'Landscapes of Governance' research project. It provided an opportunity to synthesize and share the latest research undertaken into the form and function of Early Medieval sites of assembly, and their influence upon power and authority. The themes matched perfectly with my own undergraduate research into locating Early Medieval assembly with reference to Thingwall in Wirral, which has long been assumed to be a Viking-age Thing site, but based on little more than place-name conjecture.

Such sites are enigmatic in nature, and as such, a multidisciplinary approach will always be necessary in order to gain a broader perspective of their physical forms, social functions and wider metaphysical significance. With this in mind, conference organisers Dr Sarah Semple and Prof. Andrew Reynolds proved adept at ensuring speakers delivered a wide spectrum of research, encompassing fresh ideas from across Northern Europe. Indeed, the breadth of themes highlighted to all the wide-ranging problems in trying to thematically encompass Early Medieval assembly, but also the sheer depth of material available, and the potential for long-term investigation.

Research themes ranged from the excavation of single sites such as Saltwood, Kent (Andrew Reynolds) to digitising entire 'landscapes' of assembly (Dr Stuart Brookes). Place-names played a key role in almost all of the studies, and Dr John Baker's discussion on the influence of assembly related place-names gave a much needed overview, as well as much lunch-time debate.

Prof. Barbara Yorke provided 'food for thought' by reminding the attendees that the first mention of a Thing in Britain can be found on a Roman inscription from Housesteads – a dedication to Mars-Thincsus. While this highlighted the benefits of looking back further in time, a meander into the folklore of assembly by Jeremy Harte revealed that echoes of Early Medieval assembly were present in British country traditions as late as the 19th century.

The conference was hugely positive for my own research, and opened up a number of different options to re-address the data I had already gathered in relation to Thingwall. I would like to thank the conference organisers for a stimulating weekend. I am hugely grateful to the Society of Medieval Archaeology for their generosity in awarding me a grant to attend this conference.

**Dean Paton**

0816788@chester.ac.uk

*Our future journal cover, designed by Kevin Hicks of CFA Archaeology Ltd.*

# Excavations 2011

## at Hornby Castle, Yorkshire



*A cast fleam recovered from Hornby Castle, used as a surgical instrument to undertake bleeding*

Following on from last year's work in which the fragmentary remains of a Late Medieval aristocratic garden were discovered beneath a substantial overburden associated with 18th-century landscaping works, a further trench was opened this year in April a short distance away to the northwest, close to the site of the Medieval Church, some 450 m southwest of the main castle building. The trench initially yielded evidence of the 18th-century garden works in the form of a well constructed gravel path with the remains of an embossed glass jar ground into the surface. Beneath and rising to the north side of the gravel path, a well built stone wall soon became apparent, measuring 1.5 m wide and bedded in mortar.

Associated with the stone wall was a large deposit of Later Medieval pottery dating from the early 14th through into the early 16th centuries including imports from southwest France and southeast Spain. Over the remainder of the trench evidence has been revealed of a large and possibly two-storied stone building continuing on beyond the sides of the trench to the north and east. Removal of a decayed tree directly to the north east of the trench has produced evidence of timber panelling preserved within the root ball and a number of metal artefacts have been recovered directly beneath, including a dagger blade and two belt buckles dating from the mid-15th century. In addition to

the pottery large quantities of food bone have been discovered associated with hunting and elite entertainment including venison, wild boar, veal calf, rabbit, peacock and both coarse and deep sea fish. Other small finds have included a whale bone dice and a rowel spur from the mid-15th century, and a surgical instrument called a fleam used for blood-letting.

The building with the preponderance of high-status food bone and pottery vessels associated with entertainment, which includes upwards of 60 handles from "disposable" pottery wine jugs so far recovered, indicates something akin to the "pleasaunce" suggested at Bodiam Castle in Sussex and associated with its builder Sir Edward Dalyngrigge. The owner of Hornby Castle in the mid 1400s was Sir John Conyers KG. As well as being a major political and military figure on the national stage, Conyers was also one of the richest men in the north of England at the time of his death in 1490, with ample reason for developing an area for the entertainment of important and honoured guests.

Work at Hornby is on-going and will focus on identifying the precise extent of the building and nature of its association with the main Castle building.

**Erik Matthews**

[rubyna.matthews@btinternet.com](mailto:rubyna.matthews@btinternet.com)

*Excavation at Hornby Castle in 2011, general view of Trench 2 showing partially robbed walling of late-14th century date*



# Group Reports 2010

## Castle Studies Group Report

In April 2010 the 24th AGM and Annual Conference of the Castle Studies Group (CSG) took place in Taunton with around 70 members present. The conference was organised by David Bartlett and Beryl Coe and its theme, Castles of Somerset, nevertheless allowed sorties into Dorset and Wiltshire. Lectures were given by Robert Dunning and Stuart Prior. The varied field itinerary included castles at Taunton, Mere, Old Wardour, Farleigh Hungerford, Nunney, Corfe, Old Sherborne, Montacute, Castle Neroche, Over Stowey, Nether Stowey, Stogursey and Dunster as well as the Bishop's Palace at Wells.

In August, 26 CSG members took a week-long tour of Castles of the Teutonic Knights in Poland. The trip was organised by Pamela Marshall and Richard Eales and ably led by Dr. Robert Bubczyk of Marie Curie University, Lublin. In addition to time spent in Gdansk, members became well acquainted with the architecture of the Teutonic Order after visiting sites, many impressively situated, at Gniew, Grudziadz (where the medieval granaries were more impressive than the vanished castle), Swiecie, Chelmno, Torun, Golub-Dobrzyn, Redzyn Chelminski, Szymbark, Malbork,

Kwidzyn and the particularly stunningly set Frombork. The itinerary also took in many associated medieval churches, hospitals and cathedrals.

Details of CSG activities, members' interests and updates on castle research can be found in the CSG Journal (latest vol. 24), edited and produced by Neil Guy and by visiting our website, where members of the committee can be contacted by email. Castle-related publications for the year are listed and reviewed in CSG Bibliography No. 22, compiled by John Kenyon. An interim Bulletin was distributed in August, edited and compiled by Peter Burton.

Readers are reminded that undergraduate and post-graduate students who are writing dissertations or theses on a castle-related theme may qualify to attend the Annual Conference at half price. CSG also awards small grants to group projects involving castle research. Details of these awards and application forms can be found on the CSG website or by contacting the Hon. Secretary,

### Pamela Marshall

secretary@castlestudiesgroup.org.uk  
[www.castlestudiesgroup.org.uk](http://www.castlestudiesgroup.org.uk)



*Left:*  
The castle at  
Old Wardour

*Right:*  
The castle at Corfe

*Photos by P Marshall  
during the CSG's 2010  
conference*



## Finds Research Group Report

This year Finds Research Group (FRG) members gathered first in London for 'Displaying the Medieval World' and then visited Hereford to explore the topic 'From millstones to gemstones: objects of stone', both meetings were very well attended. As an extra bonus some members went to Nuremberg for the Museums and Christmas Markets. Summaries below by Jane Cowgill, Teresa Gilmour, Jackie Keily and Quita Mould.

The spring meeting, 'Displaying the Medieval World', was divided between the British Museum and the Victoria and Albert Museum, providing the opportunity to appreciate, compare and contrast their recently re-vamped medieval galleries. Our day started with a lecture by James Robinson, BM Curator of the Medieval Collections entitled 'Masterpieces of the Paul and Jill Ruddock Gallery of Medieval Europe'. He described the themes addressed in the exhibition and some of the difficulties in the selection of the exhibits. Inevitably just what to put in and what to leave out had caused much debate and soul searching, some items did not make the cut this time round but many 'old friends' are back. The gallery is an intimate space, which suits many of the objects that demand study of the intricate workmanship. The lighting brings out the object highlights with colourful blue and red backdrops. The astonishing Royal Gold Cup tempts you into the gallery, an important issue when many of the visitors will only be visiting the BM for a day. The comic-script like 'Tring tiles' show a young Christ at work and play, including some wonderful details of agricultural and domestic life. There is nothing cheap and tacky here!

We then decamped to the V&A where Glyn Davies, Curator of the Medieval and Renaissance Galleries, and Caroline Bulloch, Exhibition Assistant in the Exhibitions Department, introduced their medieval gallery. Let loose we wandered round the new spacious galleries which display 2000 objects over three floors, but here subtle marble-coloured backdrops were used in contrast to the brighter colours employed at the BM. Again difficult decisions were made in terms of what and how to display the material, but each room has been given its own character. The scope of the exhibits varies widely with, amongst the many 'eye poppers', possibly the strongest collection of Italian sculpture outside Italy and a remarkable collection of 13th-14th century English embroideries.

In October we gathered in Hereford for 'From millstones to gemstones: objects of stone', where we were welcomed by our host Judy Stevenson, Collections and Access Officer at Hereford Museum. Martin Watts kicked off with an introduction. He covered the basics: that millstones operated horizontally in pairs, are generally larger than 60 cm in diameter, and if solitary it can be hard to determine what it was originally used for. The style of the dressing indicated the last use of the millstone, but not that of all of its useful life. Martin finished with a lovely slide of a pair of millstones reused as grave markers for a wheelwright and his wife in All Saints Churchyard in Hertford.

Susan Watts followed with 'The Rotary Quern, c. 700 to c. 1700' (FRG Datasheet 38). Querns or handmills are generally smaller than millstones but often made from similar stones. Their main use was for grinding grain into flour, but can equally be used for non-foodstuffs such as paint ores or pot temper. Seigniorial requirements necessitated that grain be ground in the Lord's mill, but documentary evidence suggests that some tenants were allowed to pay rent to mill their own. The structured deposition of used querns can be significant and may represent confiscated examples.

Aleksandra McClain presented 'Carving out Identities: Stone Grave Monuments in Northern England', focussing on the several different types of grave monument and exploring the continuity of decoration and motifs through the centuries from

the 8th to the 15th century.

Geoff Egan talked briefly on two subjects. First was hone-making workshops, and then on the popular childhood game, marbles. Few marbles have been confidently identified in the medieval archaeological record, the only known examples are green-glazed ceramic ones found at Old Sarum, Wiltshire, of 13th -14th century date. It is only from 1650 that we start getting more items that we can identify as marbles.

After lunch Hazel Forsyth discussed the 'Gemstones from the London Cheapside Hoard', a fantastic assemblage of 16th to mid-17th century jewellery, consisting of both finished and unfinished items. Hazel took an interesting approach and spelled out 'FINDS RESEARCH GROUP' using the first letter of the different gemstones. We all gained a good insight into the wide variety of gemstones present and their very diverse origins.

Nicky Rogers read Ian Panter's paper on 'Amber: Source, Manufacture and Products'. The fossilised tree resin, whose major source was in the Baltic is easy to work either by knife or by lathe and examples of over 400 fragments of waste from all stages and finished items were recovered from two York sites, over 70% of which dated to the 11th century.

Amanda Forster gave us a double act starting with a short note on a recently excavated 15th-century pit in Birmingham filled with jet working waste: from the initial blanks, through to partially finished and polished beads, but no finished beads. Amanda would like to hear of any similar assemblages. (a.k.forster@bham.ac.uk). In 'New Analysis on Old Rocks: Anglo-Scandinavian objects made from Steatite' (FRG Datasheet 34), she reported on some new scientific testing to identify the original quarry source of the steatite vessels. In the UK steatite appears with the first Norse settlers who used it instead of pottery.

Jackie Keily's talk 'Starry Lamps and Blazing cressets: Medieval stone lamps', discussed her research of the Museum of London collection. Glass and ceramic lamps are common finds but stone lamps appear more frequently than was originally thought.

On Sunday we explored the Hereford School of Churches under the guidance of Tim Bridges. First was Abbey Dore Church, originally a Cistercian abbey but the main phase of construction was in the Early English style. The convoy then moved to St Michael's Church, Rowlestone, a much smaller church but equally full of surprises, including the tympanum of Christ in Majesty as we entered the church and the beautifully carved chancel arch. Kilpeck is widely regarded as England's most perfect Norman Church. Especially impressive is the large number of Hereford School carvings. Tim encouraged us to re- think the Church with its original brightly coloured wall paintings, both inside and outside the building. After lunch, our last church at St David's in Much Dewchurch was larger than both Kilpeck and Rowlestone and a real admixture of styles. The final stop was the Black Mountains Quarry shop, with displays of local and imported stone types.

In December a small group embarked on a trip to Nuremberg. As with other such trips, this was the brainchild of Geoff Egan, who had been enthralled by the medieval collections and the Christmas market when travelling there some years ago. On Friday we enjoyed a visit to the Germanisches National Museum, the largest museum of cultural history in the German-speaking region. On Saturday we gathered at the Albrecht Dürer House Museum, and in the afternoon had a look at the delights of the Christmas Market. Amidst stalls hung with iced gingerbread hearts and special Nuremberger spiced biscuits, were stalls filled with glass tree ornaments of every conceivable design - from fish to fruit and from Santa Claus to cheese! On the last day, we had to make our choice of which glass bauble to buy - Geoff went for

the French cheeses and bought a glass Camembert!

Geoff Egan was a valued committee member and an inspirational meeting organiser for the Group. He organised a range of FRG 'trippettes', as they came to be known, to Amsterdam, Paris, twice to Bruges, not to mention locations in this country, to visit special exhibitions and generally see the sights. They were greatly enjoyed by all who joined them, combining the perfect mix of objects, architecture, food and a lot of fun. He is sorely missed.

Datasheets on particular categories of objects are produced regularly and new Datasheets are sent out free to members. Datasheet 41 'Viking-Age Scandinavian art styles and their appearance in the British Isles. Part 1: Early Viking-Age art styles' by Jane Kershaw was published this year, edited by Steve Ashby. Copies of the Datasheets and Datasheet Books I and II are available from Katey Goodwin (email jandkgoodwin@

talktalk.net), for details see our website.

Annual membership of the Group costs £6 (£10 or €15 for overseas members), members receive two mailings a year and we have two annual (usually free) day conferences. The Group is in a healthy financial position and membership is currently around 350.

Our next meeting is on Monday 17th October at Merchant Adventurers Hall, York, on the theme 'Non-ferrous metals: how they were made and decorated'. In 2012 we hope to visit Dublin and Edinburgh. All are welcome to attend.

**Jane Cowgill**, Hon Secretary  
25 Main Street, South Rauceby  
Sleaford, Lincolnshire NG34 8QG  
jane.cowgill@e-a-c.co.uk  
[www.findsresearchgroup700-1700.org.uk](http://www.findsresearchgroup700-1700.org.uk)

## Medieval Pottery Research Group Report

The last year has been a particularly significant and successful year for the Medieval Pottery Research Group. Last summer the group gathered together in Perth for its bi-annual three-day conference: 'Dating and Deposits' was very well attended – demonstrating the healthy membership of the Group. The range and quality of the papers revealed how actively the study of medieval and post-medieval pottery is being studied both by professionals working within the commercial sector and by researchers within the university sector. That one of the key discussions focused around new evidence for the dating of London Sandy Shelly Ware and the implications of this for the dating of archaeological sequences right across Western Europe was a strong reminder of the importance of ceramic studies to Medieval Archaeology as a whole.

The major focus for the group over the last year has been the development and publication of *A Research Framework for Post-Roman Ceramic Studies in Britain*, authored by the Group's former Secretary, Anne Irving (see below). This important publication supersedes the Mellor Report of 1994. The project reviewed what had been achieved since 1994, assessed the current state of the discipline and presented a revised research agenda and strategy. The resulting document will be a critical reference document for all archaeologists dealing with post-Roman ceramics, ceramic researchers, curators and managers.

Alongside the various Research Framework meetings there were two Regional Group meetings. The South Central group met in Winchester to discuss Late Saxon pottery - although there were also contributions on a medieval kiln from Egham, Surrey, and a group of floor tiles from Winchester. The Welsh group met again after a twenty-year hiatus! A two-day conference was organised

by Alice Forward and Sian Iles at the National Museum of Wales in Cardiff. Attended by 24 people the first day focussed on work conducted in the last 20 years and the second day, focussed on discussion of the Research Framework and the future of Welsh ceramic studies.

The Group's Editorial Committee has had a busy year which has seen the MPRG Online Bibliography, which had been down for some time, re-homed with ADS and is now available for use again. In addition to publishing Volume 31 of *Medieval Ceramics* last year, two Occasional Papers have been brought to a conclusion. The first of these, *Sourcing Scottish Redwares* by Derek Hall, George Haggarty and Simon Chenery was very recently published and even received coverage on the BBC. The second, *Late Medieval Reduced Wares* by Anna Slowikowski is imminent (both noted on pp 13-14).

In 2010 the Group awarded the John Hurst Travel Grant to Micaela Sinibaldi, a PhD student at Cardiff University in order to help fund her travel to Jordan to study 12th century pottery production associated with a fortified Crusader site. The John Hurst Travel Fund honours the contribution made by John Hurst to the study of medieval and post-medieval pottery in the UK and Europe. It offers travel grants of up to £200 each to MPRG members who need financial support to carry out their research. For more information please visit the Group's website.

**Andrew Sage**, Hon. Secretary  
23 Mill Plat Avenue,  
Isleworth, Middlesex, TW7 6RD  
secretary@medievalpottery.org.uk  
[www.medievalpottery.org.uk/](http://www.medievalpottery.org.uk/)



The MPRG *Research Framework for Post-Roman Ceramic Studies* will inform the research of ceramics for the next five years. Production was supported by grants from English Heritage and CADW and includes an assessment of the state of the discipline in England, Scotland and Wales. The review exercise supports the research agenda that forms Part Two of the document, while Part Three outlines the strategy for achieving that agenda. The research agenda covers both national and local requirements, based on consultation with a wide range of interested parties and has given the MPRG a series of recommendations that include producing best practice guidance, developing regional reference collections and promoting training in ceramic studies. It represents quite a challenge in these economically straitened times but the MPRG is working on ways to further those aims. Anne Irving is to be congratulated on producing such a concise, well-presented and informative piece of work. The Research Framework should be an essential tool in the development of national, regional and local research programmes for the period from the 5th to the 20th centuries, and is aimed at all archaeologists working in planning authorities, museums and universities or as contractors. Find it here at <http://www.mprgframework.info/> and enjoy.

**Duncan H. Brown**, President, Medieval Pottery Research Group

## The Medieval Settlement Research Group Report

The Medieval Settlement Research Group (MSRG) continues its regular round of conferences and seminars to encourage the work, research and interests of its members. For its Spring gathering, the MSRG was pleased to link up with the Institute of Continuing Education of the University of Cambridge for the day programme on 13th February 2010 centred on the currently very popular theme of 'Medieval Parks'; this was well attended with excellent papers by some of the leading lights in park studies, such as Stephen Miles, Naomi Sykes (with an archaeozoological perspective), Tom Beaumont James (on Clarendon Park) and Rob Liddiard (on the afterlives of deer parks). It was in fact just one of a set of three Historic Environment Research Conferences organised by former MSRG committee member Sue Oosthuizen for the Institute.

The Group's 2010 Winter Seminar was held on 4th December at the Centre for English Local History, University of Leicester, and was organised by Neil Christie. Its theme of 'Medieval Rivers and Bridges' was in part a follow-up to the 2009 'Marshland Landscapes' seminar. A strong audience was treated to papers exploring ways of reading watercourses and spaces alongside these at Bedford (Matt Edgeworth); on burhs, bridges and rivers (Jeremy Haslam); and medieval fortified urban bridges (Bruce Watson). Unfortunately illness prevented the attendance of two speakers, but we were grateful for an additional talk by Matt Edgeworth, and the summariser, David Harrison was able to offer an extended piece on medieval bridges – sources, types, studies and needs. It is hoped that a number of these papers will be published in the Group's journal, *Medieval Settlement Research*.

The 99-page volume 24 of *Medieval Settlement Research* was published in November 2010, and featured a set of research papers exploring themes such as documents and archaeology at Caldecote (Chris Dyer), deserted medieval sites in Cambridgeshire (Sue Oosthuizen), and a French perspective on settlement and landscape in English historical studies (Magali Watteaux); plus results of new fieldwork at sites like Dalton in Cumbria, and in the Gower Peninsula. We are keen to expand the coverage of the journal and to encourage debate, and we especially wish to encourage potential contributors of research papers to contact the editor, Dr Sam Turner (sam.turner@ncl.ac.uk) with their ideas and proposals.

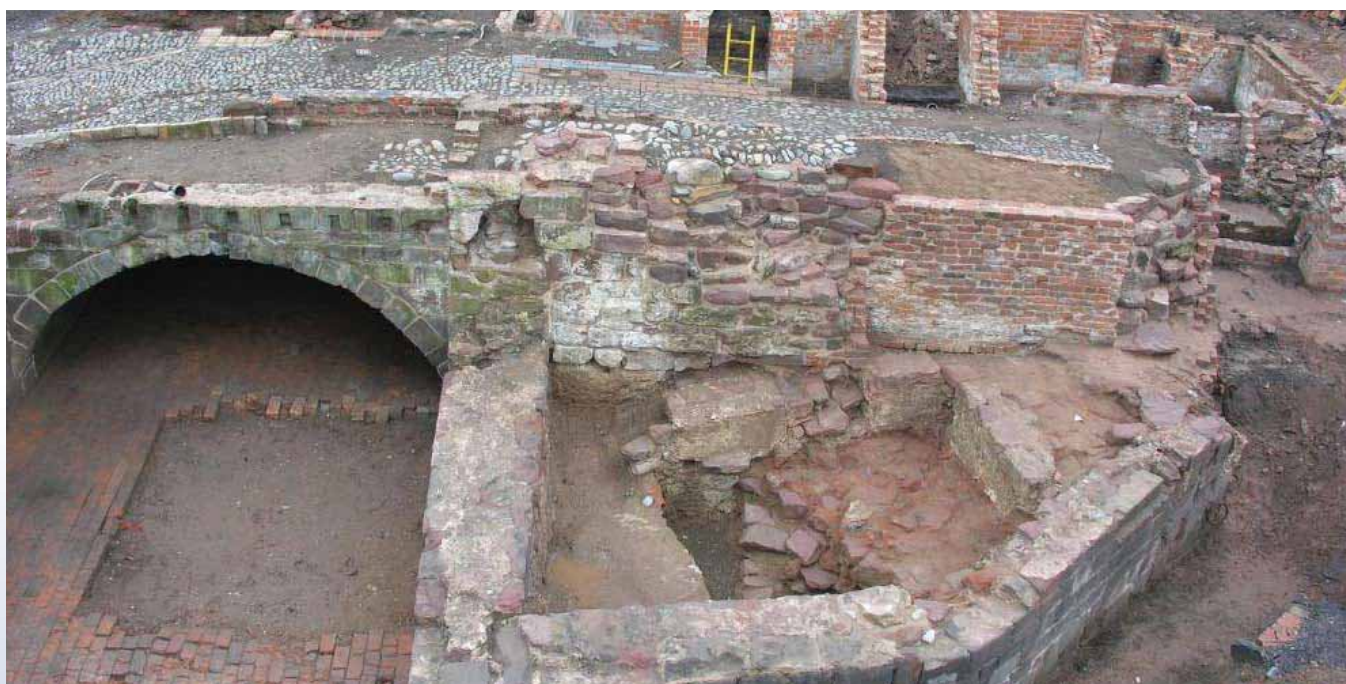
The winner of the John Hurst MA Dissertation Prize for 2010 was Susan Kilby (MA in English Local History at the University of Leicester; now underway on a PhD, also at Leicester), whose thesis explored peasant perceptions of the landscape using the case study of Elton village and manor (Cambridgeshire). A summary of the dissertation will be included in this year's journal.

It is important to flag initiatives on the part of the Group: firstly, the MSRG has started the process of digitising past Annual Reports to make these available as searchable pdfs via the website; secondly, the website itself is in the process of major updating thanks to a new web-manager, Tara-Jane Sutcliffe; and thirdly, current and past Committee members have combined in a substantial volume on *Medieval Rural Settlement: Britain and Ireland, AD 800-1600*, edited by the current Secretary and President (Paul Stamper), to be published by Oxbow/Windgather in autumn 2011. In addition, a volume of papers in honour of Harold Fox, *Life in Medieval Landscapes: People and Places in the Middle Ages* edited by Sam Turner and Bob Silvester, sponsored by the Group in conjunction with the Society for Landscape Studies, is due in Summer 2011 also from Oxbow. Both publications will show not just key evidence and themes but also some of the next steps needed in our research of medieval rural settlement and landscapes.

MSRG membership stands at c. 475. It was pleasing to observe that a good number of students had taken up the £6 per annum student membership (half cost of the full membership) – a bargain to MA and PhD students pursuing work in the various fields explored by the MSRG. Please see the web pages for the membership form. Note that as well as a copy of the journal, any member is eligible to apply for fieldwork grants (awards of up to £500) and students can apply for the Beresford conference bursaries – see details in the journal of how to apply to the various awards.

**Neil Christie** Hon. Secretary  
School of Archaeology & Ancient History  
University of Leicester, Leicester LE1 7RH  
njc10@le.ac.uk  
[www.britarch.ac.uk/msrg/](http://www.britarch.ac.uk/msrg/)

*The Shrewsbury Bridgehead*



# Other useful publications 2011

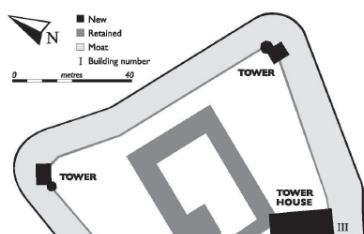
*A list of new and forthcoming publications has been received from members and reflects a UK focus. The Newsletter is happy to post a selection of similar relevant work from across medieval Europe in future issues.*



A series of publications by Rob Poulton comes from Surrey. See [www.surreycc.gov.uk/scau](http://www.surreycc.gov.uk/scau) and look for the SpoilHeap Publications page, call 01483 518779 or e-mail [scau.archaeology@surreycc.gov.uk](mailto:scau.archaeology@surreycc.gov.uk). *A medieval royal complex at Guildford: excavations at the palace and castle* by Rob Poulton, a Surrey Archaeological Society Research Volume. The good hunting grounds of Surrey, located around a day's journey from London, attracted Royal builders at a number of periods. At Guildford, a palace was created in the later 12th and 13th centuries within the bailey of the Norman castle. It was wholly demolished before 1400, and its excavation in the 1990s provided a unique insight into the character of the medieval royal household, with an array of sophisticated apartments in a loosely rectilinear plan.



*Woking Palace: excavating the moated manor* by Rob Poulton with Giles Pattison. Recent work at Woking Palace has shown that before 1326 the Despencers had a house built on an equal, if not greater, scale. Excavation has shown that at nearby Oatlands Palace (Weybridge) the immensely wealthy London goldsmith, Bartholomew Read, constructed a (mock) fortified manor, with towers at three corners of the moated island, and a tower house at the fourth in the late 15th century. The house, wholly unknown before the archaeological work began, would have compared favourably with the likes of Kirby Muxloe, Leicestershire.



*Excavations at Oatlands Palace* by Rob Poulton, with Alan Cook and Simon Thurley, SpoilHeap Monograph no 3. The archaeological work at both Oatlands and Woking revealed that the Tudor palaces established at these sites owed far more to their predecessors than generally thought. Oatlands was created as a full scale palace by Henry VIII, but its little altered core was Read's mansion. The indications from Woking suggest that in 1503 Henry VII took over a fully equipped establishment, with a new great hall his only major construction, while Henry VIII made no additions to the core buildings. A new orientation for the great hall, combined with other alterations, offer important insights to the first Tudor monarch's ideas on the planning of a royal palace.



*Perth High Street. Archaeological Excavation 1975-1977* The Tayside and Fife Archaeology Committee (TAFAC) announces the long awaited publication of Nicholas Bogdan's Perth High Street (Marks and Spencer) excavations in a series of four fascicules. 'It was in Perth in the mid 1970s that we saw, for the first time in Scotland, just how rich the urban archaeological resource might be. Perth is still the jewel in our urban archaeological crown, unique amongst Scottish towns for the depth, importance and consistently high quality of its archaeological remains'; Olwyn Owen's opening sentences in the Foreword to Fascicule 1. Publication timetable:

Fascicule 1 Excavation, history and excavated buildings (September 2011); Fascicule 2 Ceramics, metalwork religious and wooden objects (late 2011); Fascicule 3 Leather and textiles (mid 2012); Fascicule 4 Environmental remains and miscellaneous finds (September 2011). Pre-publication orders welcomed. Orders to Derek Hall, TAFAC Asst Editor, 34 Glenfarg Terrace, Perth, PH2 0AP.

Email [derek.hall1@blueyonder.co.uk](mailto:derek.hall1@blueyonder.co.uk)

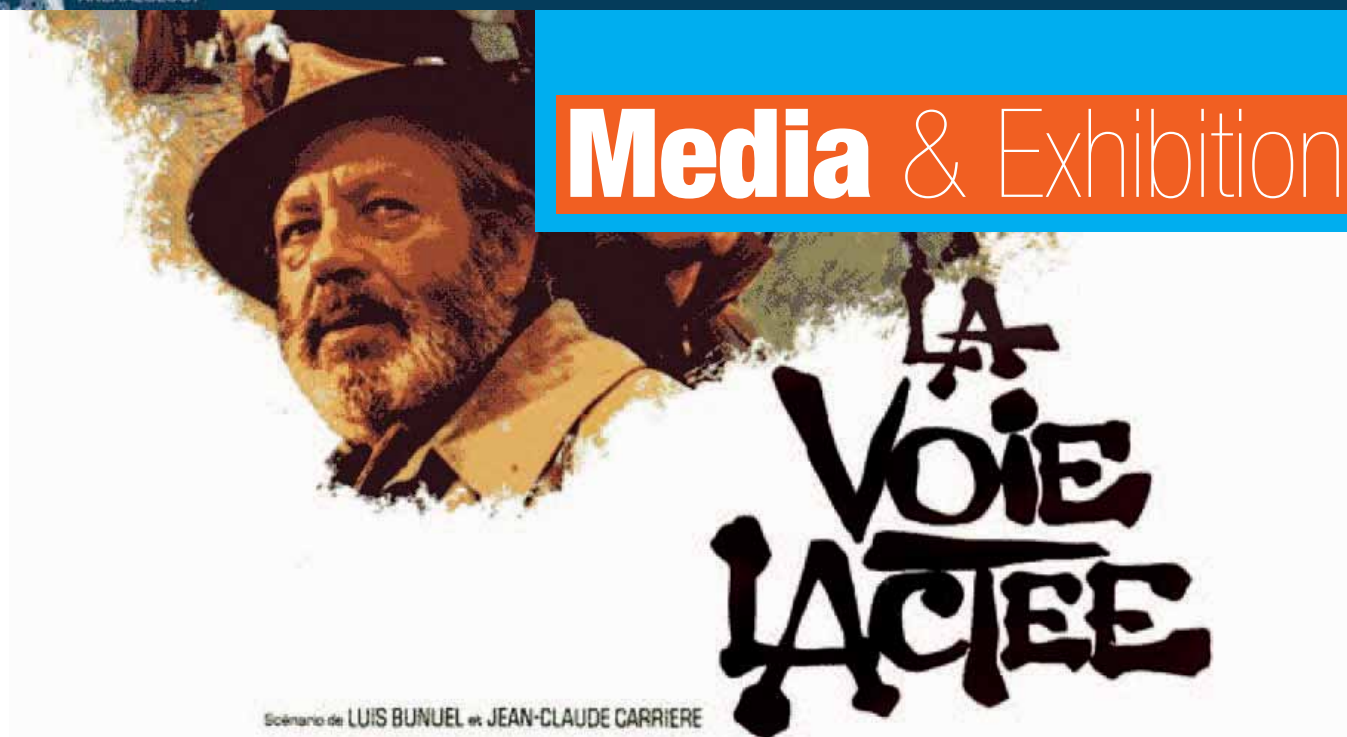


*'Genius in a Cracked Pot'. Late medieval reduced ware: a regional synthesis* by A.M. Slowikowski. Petrological analysis by Alan Vince, illustrated by C.A. Marshall, Medieval Pottery Research Group Occasional Paper 4. Funded by English Heritage the regional synthesis of Late Medieval Reduced ware draws together research on pottery from six production sites in the south-east Midlands. Detailed characterisation of the pottery, supported by petrological and chemical analyses, has shown that it is possible to distinguish the products from each site, both by fabric and form. Varying manufacturing techniques were identified and using archaeomagnetic dating, documentary evidence and the characteristics of the pottery a chronological sequence is suggested for the study sites.



*Sourcing Scottish Redwares* by George Haggarty, Derek Hall and Simon Chenery, Medieval Pottery Research Group Occasional Paper 5. From the mid-13th century, many of Scotland's extensive iron-rich clay sources were exploited for the production of pottery, tiles and, later, bricks. A draft Scottish redware vessel typology and research strategy was created which included medieval, post-medieval, and industrial pottery, as well as floor and roof tiles. Some 613 samples have now been analysed using (ICP-MS), including four groups of 12th-century or earlier Border redwares. This Occasional Paper details the results of this ground-breaking study and also includes an important discussion of Scotland's medieval and later redware pottery industries.

## Media & Exhibition



### Yggdrasil and the Tree of Jesse: The Way to Asgardrosses:

I have two excursions into movie medievalism for you this issue, *Thor* and *The Way*. *Thor* is the latest directorial project of Kenneth Branagh, and is an adaptation of the Marvel Comics take on the Norse God of Thunder. In the Marvel Universe, Asgard is a distant planet and the Aesir not so much Gods as super-beings given to intervening in human affairs. *Thor*, after an act of hubris is stripped of his powers and banished to Earth by Odin, there to learn humility. His sojourn there reveals to him the treachery of Loki, and, fuelled by his newly acquired humility, saves both Earth and Asgard. Of course the film, like the comic book (which commenced its run in the 1960s, see Julia March (ed.) *The Marvel Comics Encyclopaedia* [2006]) is a radical departure from the Norse myths as they have come down to us. It is an interstellar re-imagining, which retains spirituality, and magic but makes them surrogates for science (using the latter to make the former more credible and believable somehow). Here space is heaven and the Gods extra-terrestrial life-forms with powerful weapons, including *Thor's* hammer *Mjölnir*, which derives its power from being forged in the heat of a dying star. Ultimately such contrivances are drawn from the well of Arthur C Clarke's pronouncement that magic is simply science we don't understand as yet. Indeed the comment is directly acknowledged in the film when the scientists (played by Natalie Portman and Stellan Skarsgård) argue about the notion. Skarsgård's character retorts that Clarke is talking about science fiction and Portman's character replies that science fiction comes before science fact. At one point *Thor* informs the scientists that he comes from a place where magic and science are one and the same thing. Thus the mythical world tree *Yggdrasil* is now the inter-galactic worlds tree, connecting the nine realms (or worlds). The film is peppered with this pseudo-scientific veneer, most explicitly expressed in its equation: Einstein-Rosen bridge = worm-hole = Bifrost, the Rainbow Bridge. This science = magic trope is a common sub-theme within medievalism, which in its

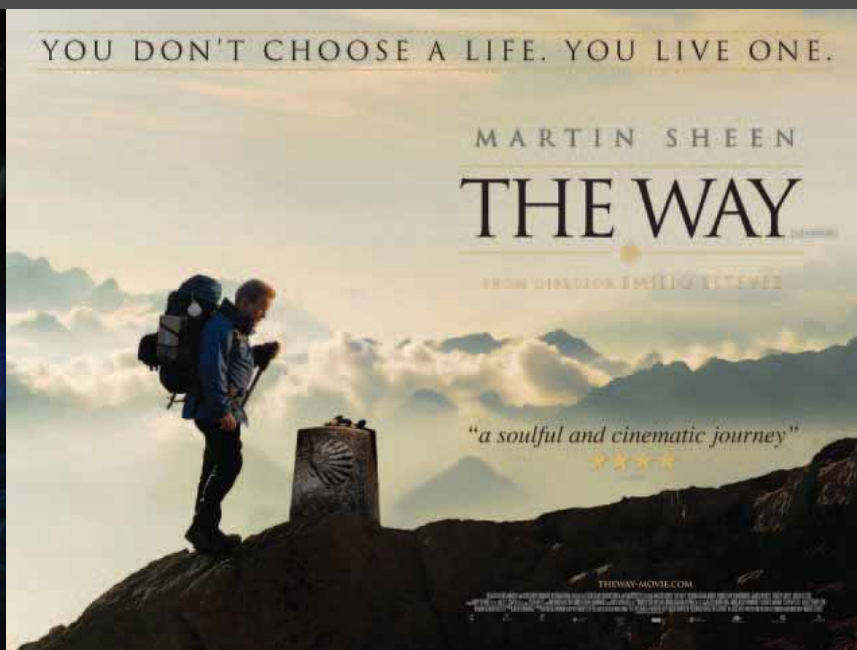
pulp manifestation is at its most engaging in the detective stories by Randall Garrett, penned in the 1960s and 1970s, and based on the conceit that Richard the Lionheart did not die in 1199 but went on to establish the 'mightiest and most stable empire in history. Where the laws of extra-sensory perception have been codified but those of physics remain unsuspected. Where magic is science and science is an art.'

*Thor* is pretty much set in the re-imagined present but it does root this in a re-imagined past as a means of explaining Asgard as a human myth, or rather as a Viking one. As part of Odin's scene-setting back-story told to the youthful *Thor* and *Loki*, we see a scene set in Tonsberg, Norway, in 935 AD, when the Aesir come to Earth (perceived as elements of Nature) to defend mankind against the Frost Giants, bent on planetary conquest. Despite their galactic scale the Aesir still behave as Viking kings of old with a treasury of captured weapons and relics. Twists, of course, are added and with *Thor's* exile to Earth, *Mjölnir* (complete with triskele and interlace patterns) becomes a surrogate *Excalibur*, set in rock until its rightful wielder can lift it. The Lady *Sif* appears as a heroine and friend of *Thor's* rather than as his lover (as in the comics) or his wife (as in the 13th-century Prose Edda). The film boasts a deliciously full-scale performance by Anthony Hopkins as Odin, (his second outing as the All-Father, the first being in the 2005 turkey *Son of the Mask*) but the centre of attention is clearly *Thor* (played with muscular appeal by Australian actor Chris Hemsworth). He is a *Thor* fully in-line with the reinterpretation of ON religion that has been on going since the 19th century (and on which see, for example, Margaret Clunies-Ross's contribution to the 2006 *Old Norse Religion in Long-term Perspective* volume). The film is about a heroic, humanised *Thor* and about the Americanization of the Norse myths (an aspect of the cultural colonisation of Old Europe). It is no accident that in coming to Earth *Thor* does not do so in Scandinavia but in the United States of America. America

becomes his adopted homeland on Earth and it is from there that, either singly or in concert with his fellow superheroes that make up the Avengers, he stands in the vanguard of the promotion of US cultural and political values. Clunies-Ross quotes a typical poster of the early 20th century, which links a re-invented Odinism with heathen Neo-Nazi movements, including in America: 'The new pagan trend is ... Odinism! Now learn how you can follow in the Norse traditions with this authoritative factual book. Are you of Scandinavian descent? You may be familiar then with Odin, the bearded patriarch of the ancient Norse religion. Now you can join in Odinist worship and discover your heritage with a new book!' No one could ever accuse Marvel of being Neo-Nazi but it inevitably shared the same spectrum.

In many respects *The Way* could not be further from the fantasy-medievalism of *Thor*. Also set in the here and now, the film tells of a father's quest to complete the Camino to Santiago on behalf of his son who had a fatal accident attempting it. Father and son are played by father and son Martin Sheen and Emilio Estevez (who wrote and directed the film). It is a quiet, introspective film, which avoids sentimentality and any false sense of the Camino as an overtly life-changing excursion. It does not

over-eulogise either the scenery or the cultural context. Several of the fabulous churches on the route (including Burgos and Leon) are only glimpsed and we are given, through the character of the writer on pilgrimage, an expository account of the medieval way of walking the Camino. We see more of Santiago Cathedral, both externally and internally, including the pilgrims completing their vows and touching the Tree of Jesse beneath the statue of St James in the Portico of Glory; praying before the reliquary shrine and witnessing the swinging of the great censer or 'Botafumeiro' (which takes 8 men to swing and which also put in an appearance in the 1992 film *1492 Conquest of Paradise*) beneath the Gothic dome of the transept crossing. None of this is travelogue sight-seeing but geared to the experiences of the characters and their stories of acceptance of self and acceptance of each other. This is done with subtlety, eschewing both the over-blown symbolism and metaphor of Paulo Coelho's *The Pilgrimage* (1999) and the extended hilarity of Tim Moore's travelogue, *Spanish Steps, Travels with my Donkey* (2005) (though there are one or two echoes of this wonderful book in the film's more gentle humour and both, of course, are rooted in the reality of the pilgrimage). In the end the film is essentially about two things: that the key



change we can bring about in ourselves is of self-acceptance and that we all need friendship. For all that the walking of the Camino (which I really hope to do) must have had and must still have its downsides and failures (including inhospitality, illness and theft; see for example James Hogarth's *Pilgrim's Guide*, 1992 edition, p.87-88), equally it gives rise to friendship, and must always have done so. It is friendship that holds together the two main characters in Luis Buñuel's 1969 surreal filmatic excursion along the Camino, *The Milky Way*, which has no truck with the religious value of the pilgrimage, tracking its protagonists from Paris to Santiago in a series of medieval-infused set pieces seeking to expose Catholic teaching through dramatising its heresies.

I suggested earlier that the two films could be seen as linked beneath their surface differences. I suggest there are at least three ways in which they demonstrate their links. They

are both about the relationship between sons and fathers; they are both contemporary set medievalisms that re-imagine a set of cultural values that have been continually re-imagined since their medieval inceptions (see for example *The Pilgrim's Guide* and the *Prose Edda*) and they both share the value of friendships, explicitly now and implicitly in the medieval period. Most fun perhaps is a fourth link: St. James (and his brother John) earned the nick-name Son of Thunder or 'Boanerges', from the time they wished to call down lightning on the inhabitants of Samaria for refusing hospitality to Jesus and his disciples, as quoted (p. 9) in the 2007 guide, *The Roads to Santiago*, by Julie Roux and others.

**Mark A Hall**  
MAHall@pkc.gov.uk

# Conferences & Events

## — FORTHCOMING —

To advertise conferences/events in the Newsletter contact:

Dr Oliver Creighton,  
Dept. of Archaeology,  
Laver Building,  
North Park Road,  
Exeter, Devon,  
UK EX4 4QE,

or email  
o.h.creighton@exeter.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.

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

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

### NOVEMBER:

**5 November**  
University of Cambridge,  
Historic Environment  
Research Conference,  
**Landscapes of Anglo-Saxon Christianity**, [www.mcdonald.cam.ac.uk](http://www.mcdonald.cam.ac.uk)

**10-12 November**  
UCL Institute of  
Archaeology, London,  
**Power and Place in Later Roman and Early Medieval Europe**, [www.ucl.ac.uk/archaeology/calendar/articles/20111110](http://www.ucl.ac.uk/archaeology/calendar/articles/20111110)

### DECEMBER:

**2-4 December**  
Department for Continuing  
Education, Rewley House,  
Oxford, **New Light on the Ancient Celts**, [www.conted.ox.ac.uk/](http://www.conted.ox.ac.uk/)

**3-4 December**  
University of Nottingham,  
**5th Annual Interdisciplinary Workshop on Disease, Disability and Medicine in Medieval Europe AD 400-1200**, [www.disease.nottingham.ac.uk/](http://www.disease.nottingham.ac.uk/)

**14-16 December**  
Institute of Archaeology  
and Antiquity, University of  
Birmingham, **Theoretical Archaeology Group 2011**, [www.centraltag.wordpress.com/](http://www.centraltag.wordpress.com/)

### JANUARY 2012:

No notices submitted

### FEBRUARY:

**10-12 February**  
Department for Continuing  
Education, Rewley House,  
Oxford, **Shaping Anglo-Saxon England: Settlement and Landscape AD 400 - 1100**, [www.conted.ox.ac.uk/](http://www.conted.ox.ac.uk/)

**25 February**  
University of Cambridge,  
Historic Environment  
Research Conference,  
**Recent research in vernacular architecture: rural buildings of 'the poorest sort', 1600-1900**, [www.mcdonald.cam.ac.uk](http://www.mcdonald.cam.ac.uk)

### MARCH:

**10-12 March**  
Department for Continuing  
Education, Rewley House,  
Oxford, **Medieval and Later Ceramics**, [www.conted.ox.ac.uk/](http://www.conted.ox.ac.uk/)

### APRIL:

**20 April**  
Institute of Continuing  
Education at the University  
of Cambridge, **The Landscape of Monastic estates**, [www.ice.cam.ac.uk/courses/weekend-courses](http://www.ice.cam.ac.uk/courses/weekend-courses)

**23-24 April**  
Aarhus University,  
Department of Language,  
Literature and Culture:  
Section for Medieval and  
Renaissance Archaeology.  
Call for papers: **Acts of Belief as Symbolic Communication in the Late Medieval and Renaissance Period**. An international interdisciplinary colloquium examining the nature of prayer as performance in late medieval and early modern culture, [www.prayerandperformance.au.dk/](http://www.prayerandperformance.au.dk/)



*Credits: The Newsletter template is designed by Kevin Hicks, using Adobe InDesign™; the current issue typesetting and layout is by Niall Brady; use of Alfred Jewel detail in title banner is reproduced with the permission of the Ashmolean Museum, University of Oxford; the line drawing of the Alfred Jewel line-drawing is from Eva Wilson's drawing of 1957 and used since by the Society for Medieval Archaeology as its logo. The copyright for individual images is the responsibility of the individual contributors.*