

Society for Medieval Archaeology Newsletter

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EDITORIAL

The seemingly ever-growing size of the Newsletter is testimony to the continued growth of medieval archaeology, despite the present climate. I am particularly delighted to have the opportunity to profile research projects from across Ireland and Britain and, as the Society increases its efforts to engage with colleagues beyond 'these islands', we look forward to receiving more notices of research from further afield. Members will find a lot in the present issue that is of interest, and the conference reports and research sections provide very useful overviews of new studies. There are interesting observations in the discussion section, and the Society also seeks your feedback on our activities and publications. Preliminary details are presented for a fieldtrip to Rome in 2011, reminding us that it is never too early to plan ahead. Mark Hall once again brings the Newsletter to its conclusion with a marvellous reflection on a series of events that he has attended over the past number of months. Please continue to send me your pieces by e-mail, and thanks to all contributors of the present issue.



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CONFERENCES & EVENTS, forthcoming

NOVEMBER: The University of Cambridge's Institute for Continuing Education is hosting a number of research conferences with medieval themes in 2009 and 2010. Held at the McDonald Institute for Archaeological Research, Department of Archaeology, University of Cambridge, the first

event is on **14 November: The Origins of Medieval Field Systems**. See www.cont-ed.cam.ac.uk/research/conferences.

The Institute of Archaeology, UCL on **14–15 November** will host a seminar on **Trees, Timber and Woodland in the Anglo-Saxon World**. Contact Michael G Shapland, m.shapland@ucl.ac.uk

27–28 November an International Symposium will be held in University College Dublin, and will focus on the **INSTAR Early Medieval projects**. Full details of the programme will be available at: www.mappingdeath.ie

A conference entitled **Roots of Nationhood** will be held at the University of Glasgow on **28–29 November**. Key questions to be addressed include: how have accounts of Scotland's past informed the ongoing political debate over devolution and independence? Does archaeology and history reveal the roots of nationhood, or are other themes of diversity, discontinuity and far-flung connections and allegiances just as compelling? See www.gla.ac.uk/media/media_123544_en.pdf

DECEMBER: The Society's AGM will take place in London on **7 December 2009**. Prof.dr.em. Frans Verhaeghe (Vrije Universiteit Brussel) will present a lecture entitled, *Highly Decorated Pottery in the Medieval Low Countries: The Dynamics and Context of a Quality Product*. See News and Views below.

The 31st **Theoretical Archaeology Group (TAG) Annual Meeting** will be held at the Department of Archaeology, Durham University, **17–19 December**. Among the many sessions that might be of interest to medievalists are: Archaeology and Englishness; Developing Landscape Historical Ecologies: Integrating Theory with Applied Approaches; Medieval Sensory Perceptions: Beyond the Classical Senses; and Theorising Early Medieval 'Towns' (c. 700–1200 AD). See www.dur.ac.uk/tag.2009/

www.medievalarchaeology.org

2010

FEBRUARY: The University of Cambridge's Institute for Continuing Education will host its second event on **13 February: Medieval Parks: Recent Research**, which is being held in association with the Medieval Settlement Research Group. See www.cont-ed.cam.ac.uk/research/conferences

The **Society for Medieval Archaeology** is planning a **post-graduate colloquium** at the University of Birmingham, **19–20 February**. The conference will be free to all members of the Society currently registered on a post-graduate programme. For details and to submit proposals, check the website and facebook, or contact Amanda Forster, a.f.forster@bham.ac.uk or Jill Campbell, jcampbell66@qub.ac.uk

APRIL: The 24th Annual Conference of the **Castle Studies Group** will take place on **8–11 April**. Based in Taunton, the theme is Castles of West Wessex – Somerset and parts of Dorset/Wiltshire. Details of connections, costs and further information will be supplied with the Castle Studies Group Journal mailing in December/January. See the CSG website at: www.castlestudiesgroup.org.uk/

The University of Cambridge's Institute for Continuing Education third event is on **24 April: Vernacular Architecture in the Fens**. See www.cont-ed.cam.ac.uk/research/conferences

MAY: The **Society for Medieval Archaeology** is sponsoring a session at the 2010 International Congress on Medieval Studies at Western Michigan University, USA, **13–16 May**. Following the SMA's successful session at the 2009 Congress, next year's session is entitled **New Directions in European Castle Research** and will seek to highlight the vibrant and interdisciplinary nature of castle research in the 21st century. Attracting over 3,000 scholars annually, the ICMS is one of the world's largest gatherings of medievalists. See www.wmich.edu/medieval/congress/

JUNE: Perceptions of Place: English Place-Name Study and Regional Variety

is the topic of an international conference of the Institute for Name-Studies at University of Nottingham on **23–27 June 2010**. Topics will include: differences in naming practices in different regions of England; relations with place-names in neighbouring countries; place-names and dialectal variation; and reassessments of varying methodological and disciplinary approaches to place-names. See www.nottingham.ac.uk/english/ins

JULY: The **International Medieval Congress (IMC)** at the University of Leeds will take place on **12–15 July**. The largest conference of its kind in Europe, the event will feature over 1,000 papers and 375 academic sessions. For the call for papers and information about organising sessions, see www.leeds.ac.uk/ims/imc/imc2010_call

SEPTEMBER: The Society for Post-Medieval Archaeology will hold a conference at the University of Glasgow from **3–5 September**. The theme will be: **Engaging the Recent Past: Public, Political, Post-Medieval Archaeology**. The conference will focus on the contemporary context of post-medieval archaeology – the archaeology of the period from *c.*1500 to the present in Britain and Ireland, Europe and countries affected by European colonialism and imperialism. See www.spma.org.uk/

CONFERENCE REPORTS

The Early Medieval Wales Archaeology Research Group held its twenty-fifth anniversary colloquium at the university in Bangor, Gwynedd, on **25–26 April 2009**. Its aim was, above all, to put the archaeology of early medieval Wales in context: there was strong representation from Scotland and Ireland, with particularly useful comparative material from both, and some from England and Denmark too. This was an unusually rich conference, with 18 papers and plenty of good discussion, and it was exceptionally well planned.



The cross at Llanfihangel Tre'r Beirdd, Anglesey, a new discovery made by Nancy Edwards during fieldwork for Corpus 3

Firstly we considered places. Alan Lane talked about one of the three key sites that has emerged in Wales in the course of the last 25 years – Llan-gors crannog – summarizing the history of excavations, drawing attention to its Irish links, and focussing on explanations for its construction in the 890s; Aidan O'Sullivan, remarking that his colleagues have too much rather than too little early medieval material, sketched the context and outcomes of the phenomenal number of excavations in Ireland since 1995 and the issues that now confront Irish archaeologists, not least the need for research on the data recovered. Issues also emerged from Tomás Ó Carragáin's description of the 'Making Christian Landscapes' project in Ireland (highlighted in issue 41 of the Society's Newsletter), designed to explore some of the new data in selected areas in detail; he emphasized the high density of churches, including many on secular estates, and the clustering of non-ecclesiastical burials, and called the recognition of a new type of site (the cemetery settlement) the 'great revelation' of the last decade. Nancy Edwards took the sculptured stone of Anglesey as a way into understanding

not only the Christian landscape but also the complexities of the political landscape in north Wales, observing that the single stone source of these monuments carries implications for the control of resources as well as for their distribution. Kristján Ahronson and Karen Pollock then drew attention to the unrecognized potential of cave sites in Wales, and the need to contextualize their early medieval occupation, while Marion Dowd showed how important cave occupation could be in Ireland in the early middle ages – with 26 early medieval of the 100 or so archaeologically significant sites, her analysis emphasized how wrong we are to think of cave-dwellers as 'primitive'.

Bodies and bones, both human and animal, were the subject of four equally enlightening papers. Janet Montgomery, taking examples from the Scottish Isles, talked about isotope analysis and its value, particularly when applied to tooth enamel, for identifying immigrants in a community. Mick Wysocki and Andrew Davidson summarized analysis of the 122 stone cist and (later) dug burials at Tywyn y Capel on Holy Island off the west coast of Anglesey, noting the indicators of metabolic stress in elements of the dug burial population, as also of an increase in the number of deaths in the 24–45 year old range – hints, perhaps, of increasingly hard times. Both animal bone papers (Jacqui Mulville on the 35,000 fragments of animal bone from Llan-gors, Finbar McCormick on the significance of understanding cows) showed the enormous importance of animal bone studies for our understanding of social context and economic change. Interestingly, there is far more evidence of pig at Llan-gors than is usual at early medieval sites in Britain, and there is a relatively high incidence of hunted animals. It was good to have a succinct summary of McCormick's views on the changing role of cattle in the early Irish economy and a lively discussion probed the origin of ringforts and the significance for humans of age and place of butchering.

Trees are important too, as Mark Redknapp demonstrated in his unravelling of techniques for working with wood in the early middle ages – the re-use of

planks at Llan-gors, and the summer felling of new wood, as well as the combination of building techniques (round and rectangular) in use in the early phases of the third of the key Welsh sites, Llanbedrgoch. Ann Crone gave us a detailed examination of woodworking techniques at the Scottish sites of Buiston and Loch Glashan. Both papers, and ensuing discussion, demonstrated the high level of technical skill necessary for woodworking at this time, as well as the implications for labour and woodland management.

Lastly words. Was there a Welsh dreamtime, asked Jerry Hunter, what was the past that was remembered in literature, and what was its archaeology? Is the material culture described in literary texts a memory or just some wishful thinking? An interest in topography and landscape, rather than in artefacts, characterizes early Welsh literature (in contrast, for example, to *Beowulf*), so John Hines argued – hence, we cannot recover the totality of practical life from such works although we could benefit from thinking about the material and experiential contexts in which words have meaning and about literature as active performance. So too place-names: Hywel Wyn Owen indicated how the meaning of names can take us back to medieval people and how, for example, names can reveal imposed colonization; and, despite the limited interest in Wales by Norse saga writers, there are tantalizing references to a place called Jarlsnes in two sagas, said Peder Gammeltoft, suggesting there may have been two Scandinavian earldoms in south Wales. In looking at the textual references to Welsh kings Alex Woolf raised many questions, among them the possibility of monastic towns at places like Llantwit Major and Margam – perhaps with kings resident there for some parts of the year. Anne Connon, in describing some of her work for the (Irish) Discovery Programme, demonstrated that meticulous attention to text, even of much later periods, can solve early medieval topographic problems. The clear message from this range of sessions, all of which explored the interaction of words and archaeology in some way, was that text *can* be helpful,

of whatever date, if used judiciously. But judiciously is the point; each class of text needs assessment on its own terms and it is important to differentiate between texts that are securely dated and those that are not.

What had changed in the (remarkably rapid) passage of 26 years since the Gregynog meeting of 1983 which gave rise to the birth of EMWARG the following year, was the subject of my summing up. At Gregynog there had been much stress on how little we knew about the early middle ages; much argument about whether there should be research strategies or not; concern about problems of dating and also about the need for co-ordination between the many bodies involved in Welsh archaeology. Since then, there has been much greater use of radio-carbon dating and significant collaboration between the National Museums of Wales, universities, the archaeological Trusts and the state through its relevant body CADW (the historic environment service of the Welsh Assembly Government); there have been strategic surveys, major research on, and publication of, inscribed and sculptured stones by Nancy Edwards, John Lewis and Mark Redknap, and new material discovered through the Portable Antiquities Scheme; while the key sites have transformed the way we think about early medieval Wales. So things have certainly changed.

I also drew attention to some consistent themes which had emerged from the colloquium: Ireland, of course, and the great value of setting a large quantity of Irish material, as well as a good deal of Scottish, beside the Welsh. The contrast in the volume of early medieval Welsh and Irish material is partly to be explained by the low level of construction programmes and by the fact that the state (be it UK government or Welsh Assembly) does not focus on the early middle ages as the defining phase of Welsh heritage. But it does raise questions about whether it is right to expect Ireland and Wales to be the same. Then there is the impact of Christianity, a theme that comes strongly out of the Irish material. The density of churches in lowland Wales must be comparable to

the densities that Tomás Ó Carragáin has been finding. And Alex Woolf's point on monastic towns was well made – perhaps not as many, nor as big as the Irish, but the dozen or so major monasteries in Wales before the Norman Conquest must have been sites of nucleation, multiple activities and exchange.

The conference ended with some shared thoughts on what next. Others suggested the need to raise funding levels, systematic work on bogs, the need for dated pollen cores. And are we sure that there are no water mills? There remains much to do. The conference ended with a heartfelt show of appreciation for Nancy Edwards: it is her energy, commitment and tenacity that has made the work continue.

Wendy Davies

Message from the Dark Side of the Moon (or Europe, at any rate). I am unashamedly borrowing this title from Leslie Alcock (who, in turn, had borrowed it from a certain pop group). Leslie once used it for a paper on Celtic Britain given at an Anglo-Saxon conference. There are, however, 'darker' sides of medieval Europe, foremost among them the nomadic societies on the western reaches of the Eurasian steppe belt: Huns, Avars, Bulgars, Magyars (Hungarians), Mongols and others. Even though they had a marked impact on the history and archaeology of Eastern and Central Europe, they do not really form part of our standard concept of medieval Europe.

Some of those who study medieval societies of the Eurasian steppes meet every other year for a small conference held at varying locations in Hungary (surely a form of academic nomadism). Traditionally, Hungarian scholars have made themselves the mediators between Eurasian steppes and western Europe. For historical and geographical reasons, this is, of course, not a huge surprise, but beyond academia, too, it is noticeable to what extent the Huns and the Magyars, in particular, play a significant role in the identity of modern Hungary: depending upon circumstances and context, Hungary sees itself as the eastern outlier of steppe culture looking west, or

the western outpost of Christian culture facing east.



Conference participants at the monument to the Battle of Mohi (AD 1241)

This year, some 30 scholars from the host country, Germany, Russia, the Ukraine and Spain followed the invitation of Professor Mihaly Dobrovits to Miskolc (pronounced Mishkolts), in the northeastern corner of Hungary, where a small university founded after the Second World War continues the tradition of an 18th century mining college. The subjects of the conference papers ranged from linguistics to history and archaeology, from Mongolia and India to the Carpathian Basin, and from 5th century Huns to 19th century Kirgiz. Aspects which I (as a relative newcomer to this field) found particularly interesting included the interrelation of nomadic societies with the neighbouring civilizations of Byzantium, Iran and China, located at opposite ends and on the southern flank of the steppe belt, and the built-in trend of successful nomad societies to create powerful military alliances and tribal confederations. As Professor Istvan Zimonyi (Hungary) put it in his paper: "No survival is possible on the steppes without political organisation."

The nearby wine-growing region of Tokaj was the setting of a very liquid excursion. Its first stop was at the impressive and moving monument to the disastrous defeat of the Hungarian army against the Mongols in the battle of Mohi (or Sajo River) in 1241. The Latin inscription, written 750 years later, interprets this as a last stand for freedom – a significant statement in the political context of the early 1990s, and another proof (if one were needed) of how the past and the

present are inextricably linked. On the final day, conference participants were escorted by train to Budapest where they were given a guided tour (by Professor Istvan Fodor) of the National Hungarian Museum's outstanding temporary exhibition on the Scythians, the late prehistoric predecessors of the societies discussed over the previous three days. The next conference in this series will be held at Budapest in 2011.

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Kalamazoo. The Society sponsored its first session at the International Congress of Medieval Studies, Kalamazoo, MI, on **7–10 May**. Leslie Webster organized the panel on **Archaeology and the Artifact**, which aimed to demonstrate the breadth of the Society's interest across the disciplines. Niall Brady, session president, provides an overview based on the presenters' abstracts.

Elaine Treharne, Florida State University, began with a paper entitled, 'The Archaeotextuality of the book', in which she sought to rehabilitate the whole book, the 'archaeotextuality of the book', by working against the common trend in Book History, when that discipline talks about the 'archaeology' of the book—a focus that depends for success on various, rather dexterous but reductive analogies between excavational archaeology and codicology. Rather than unpacking the individual strata of the book, her paper insisted on the book as architecturally constituted, indivisible, above ground. Treharne sought to work with archaeological, architectural, codicological and art historical elements of the book to illustrate how effectively we can reconstruct the medieval book from the self-authenticating clues it presents us with as a whole object. The overarching objective is to introduce the medieval manuscript as an **Edifice of Letters**—a three-dimensional artefact, with more similarities to the buildings attended to by historical architects and archaeologists than differences. The evidence for this is found in depictions of books within medieval books that illustrate unequivocally the 'wholeness'

of the manuscript to contemporary compilers, scribes, illustrators, and readers. Such evidence suggests a need for modern-day book historians and cultural materialists to reconceptualise the manuscript book as fully constitutive rather than the sum of disparate parts, the chief of which is predominantly and restrictively, merely writing on the page.

In 'Carolingian gifts to St. Peter 'the Shepherd', Joanna Story, University of Leicester, considered the intriguing problem of learning in the medieval period. Her study of manuscript sylloges focused on a poem that is preserved in a manuscript whose origins lie in the abbey of Lorsch. The poem considers an altar-cloth given by Charlemagne's queen Hildegard. Story's contribution is to consider such pieces from the perspective of how they might have been seen by contemporary pilgrims, suggesting a reinterpretation of such royal gifts is possible within their liturgical context, in relationship to the furniture of the oratory and the wider architecture of the Constantinian basilica of Old St. Peter's. The sense to which the artefact, as it survives or as it is remembered, provides a vital and unique trace to undocumented aspects of daily life, is inescapable.

In 'Through text and artefacts to virtual communities: Beyond the Tribal Hidge (A Leverhulme Trust Research Project)', Sue Harrington, UCL Institute of Archaeology, changed the pace a little and demonstrated the importance of GIS-based databases to studies that consider large volumes of artefacts and burials from many different landscapes and contexts. Her paper focused on the Anglo-Saxon kingdoms of Kent, Sussex and Wessex to reveal a clear and nuanced picture of the changing economic and social interactions of the discrete communities that formed the basis of the early kingdoms. Readers can expect a detailed overview of this research project in the 2010 Spring Newsletter.

For details relating to the Society's 2010, session, see above, Conference events.

Ruralia VIII. The Eighth International Medieval Rural Settlement Conference took place in Lorca in the region of Murcia in S.E. Spain, from 7–12

September. All together over 60 people attended this discussion on 'Food in the Medieval Rural Environment', many of whom are members of the Society. Both your Newsletter editor, Dr Niall Brady, and myself made up the Irish delegation. All 34 papers given over two and a half days encompassed a wide chronological and geographical spread, and they all were of a consistently high standard both in content and in their presentation from both younger and more established scholars. Many of the presentations were given in a different language to their mother tongue, which was impressive to us native English speakers.

Because of the untimely death of the organisation's President, Professor Dr Johnny De Meulemeester, the present author gave a short eulogy on his life, with especial reference to Ireland, whilst Alan Aberg introduced the Conference by discussing the origins and development of the *Ruralia* organisation, and Johnny's major role in this.

The Conference proper started on a high note, with an intellectually thought-provoking and challenging paper by Thomas Meier of the University of Heidelberg on the stresses that drove economic change in the rural societies east of the Rhine during the Carolingian period. His approach was echoed by a later paper from another German scholar, Rainer Scherg, who investigated elements of 'Chaos Theory' and its usefulness when studying medieval societies, to show whether the economic systems of medieval rural settlements were either in the 'resilient' or 'destabilised' phase of their cycles.

Niall Brady in his paper looked at the challenges facing agricultural history in Ireland, and demonstrated where settlement studies can make important inroads. He highlighted the research of the Discovery Programme, and featured the Dublin Hinterland study, which is now ready for publication and should show how Ireland's capital was supplied with food in the medieval period, while Mark Gardiner gave the paper for Natascha Mehler on their

research project on the diet of medieval Iceland. Other speakers who have been active in the Society included Naomi Sykes, who considered 'Meat and the Creation of Communities in Medieval Rural England', Richard Jones, on 'The Medieval Dunghill: the processing, storage and distribution of food waste', and Piers Dixon, 'Of bannocks and ale: cereal processing in Scotland, c.1100-1750'.



Jorge Eiroa Rodríguez presenting the excavations of the Mezquita [Mosque] del Cortijo del Centeno

There were also two excellent field trips that took place during the Conference helped by the sunny, warm weather, as well as an additional one to Eastern Andalusia immediately after the Conference's end. The all day trip focussed on the medieval irrigation system of the Ricote valley, which included a visit to Blanca castle that Jorge Eiroa Rodríguez had excavated a few years previously. The second field trip, which was only half a day in length, took us to the excavation of a small rural mosque and finished up with a tour around the impressively sited castle of Lorca that still dominates the present day town. Your author also had to try to summarise the main conclusions of the Conference in a final presentation, a job made harder by the consistently high standard of all the contributions.

The Conference was yet another triumph for *Ruralia*, and the organisational skills of Jorge A. Eiroa Rodríguez, and his assistants in Lorca. All the participants are very much looking forward to the imminent publication of the proceedings of the Seventh Conference by Brepols, and to the next meeting in September

2011 in Götzis, Austria, where the theme will consider 'Hierarchy in rural settlements'. For further information about Rurality, contact Mark Gardiner (national representative for the UK) or Niall Brady (Ireland). Rurality's website is <http://www.rurality.cz/index.html>

Terry Barry

SPOTLIGHT ON RESEARCH

The Fields of Britannia: Landscape Transition in the Roman to Medieval Periods. The Leverhulme Trust has awarded Professor Stephen Rippon, of the Archaeology Department, University of Exeter, a major research grant to look at the relationship between the Romano-British and the medieval landscapes. One of the most distinctive features of the British landscape is its countryside characterised by an intricate pattern of agricultural fields. Archaeological and historical research has shown that in many areas the field systems of today were in existence by the late medieval period, but when and how these fields came into being is less clear. The 'Fields of Britannia' project will use a range of techniques to systematically explore for the first time how far these landscapes originated in the Roman period. This will form an important and innovative contribution to the current debate over one of the major formative periods in British history: the nature of the transition from Roman Britain to medieval England.

The contribution that the landscape of Roman Britain made to the medieval and modern countryside will be explored through a number of themes. The first will be to examine the relationship between Romano-British field systems (that have been dated through excavation) and the overlying medieval and later field systems. In the far west of Cornwall, for example, we know that the present pattern of fields has remained in use since the Roman period, while elsewhere in Britain the Romano-British landscape was clearly abandoned in the early medieval period with later, medieval, field systems overlying their Roman predecessors unconformably. This project will explore which of these

landscape histories was more common, and whether this varies in different parts of the country. Another theme will be to explore the date of a distinctive type of modern field system whose clearly planned layout has led to the term 'co-axial' being used to describe them. Circumstantial evidence suggests that some at least may be Roman in date, and this hypothesis will be tested in the 'Fields of Britannia' project. In addition to these possible examples of Romano-British field systems that have survived in use, the project will also look at whether there was continuity or discontinuity in patterns of land-use using 'palaeoenvironmental' evidence (plant and animal remains) preserved on archaeological sites and in natural deposits such as peat bogs. Overall, at the end of the project we hope to have a far better idea of the extent to which the character of the British landscapes has its roots in the Roman period.

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The Glenmorangie Early Historic Scotland Project is the core element in a developing relationship between National Museums Scotland and The Glenmorangie Company. The Hilton of Cadboll sculptured stone has proved central to the development of this unprecedented partnership. While the major part of the stone is now exhibited in the Early People displays in the National Museum of Scotland, the site of its discovery is close to Glenmorangie's distillery at Tain, and very close to Glenmorangie House. The intricate panel of spiral decoration on the Hilton of Cadboll slab provided a natural source of inspiration for the new Glenmorangie brand insignia.

The project was launched in December 2007 and runs until December 2010. Glenmorangie's financial support has enabled National Museums Scotland to appoint a Research Officer to work full time on the project. Alice Blackwell took up this post in July 2008. She joins a small team from the Department of Archaeology, National Museums Scotland consisting of Martin Goldberg, the newly appointed Early Historic

Curator and David Clarke, Keeper of Archaeology.

The central feature of the project is the production of a book covering Early Historic Scotland, AD 300 to AD 900. The book is intended to be an accessible but scholarly-based review of the archaeological evidence. It will be rooted in the surviving material culture of the period and will cover the whole of the country. Within the book we are adopting a thematic structure, moving from sections considering the individual, towards topics that focus on groups of people and society as a whole.



Hilton of Cadboll slab

Glenmorangie's support is also facilitating new academic research on specific topics. To date we have concentrated on looking at the form, function and construction of objects, and particularly composite objects. Like so many major pieces from Early Historic Scotland, the Monymusk Reliquary is a well-known object that regularly features in discussion of the period but lacks a detailed and definitive description. We are currently preparing such an account, aided by CT scans undertaken by the SIMBIOS Centre, University of Abertay. The scans will enable us to investigate

construction techniques through a fully manipulable, 3D model and give us the ability to examine sections at any angle across, or point on, the Reliquary. The study is to be augmented by radiocarbon dates from samples taken from the inner wooden box and lid.



The Monymusk reliquary

The other strand of the project made possible by Glenmorangie's support is based on building relationships with modern craftspeople. Through these collaborations we are commissioning versions of Early Historic objects that are not replicas but which never the less inform and enhance our understanding of how those early pieces might have been made. We have almost completed a project to make a 'Pictish' throne based on images on the sculptured stone from Fowls Wester, Perthshire. Dialogue between Adrian McCurdy, the craftsman who is making the throne, and ourselves has thrown up a number of issues that would not have arisen had the study of these thrones been limited to an academic exercise. Trying to resolve these issues constantly requires a return to the available evidence in order to extract more information as knowledge of the processes grows.

Our collaboration with Glenmorangie is based on an enthusiastic desire on both sides to better understand and communicate Scotland's Early Historic archaeology. Their support for a research project on this scale is enlightened and unprecedented, and the project's success will, we hope, encourage others to engage in comparable ventures.

David Clarke
Alice Blackwell



INSTAR Funding in Ireland – the Irish National Strategic Archaeological Research programme 2008

Two further research projects funded by the Heritage Council in 2009 are reported below under its INSTAR programme. The Council remains a leading funder of archaeological research in Ireland.

An Chomhairle Oidhreachta
The Heritage Council



Mapping Death: People, Boundaries and Territories in Ireland 1st to 8th Centuries AD. This project, funded by the Heritage Council for the period May to December 2008, and for the period June to December 2009, is a collaborative, inter-disciplinary project involving the UCD Mícheál Ó Cléirigh Institute for the Study of Irish History and Civilisation, the UCD School of History and Archives, and the Discovery Programme. One of the objectives of the project is to document within an online database all published and unpublished burials in Ireland dating from the 1st to the 8th centuries AD. Using the information gathered, detailed studies are being produced based on archaeological observations, and, as a significant element of the project is concerned with the wider interpretation of burial practices, the archaeological study is being supported by a thorough analysis of the extensive corpus of primary historical sources available from Ireland, Britain and Continental Europe. In order to maximise the potential outcome of the project, contacts are being established with national and international colleagues in the disciplines of anthropology, archaeology, science (especially with regard to strontium/isotopic analysis, DNA, and c14 dating of skeletal material), osteo-archaeology, history, and place-names specialists.

A major objective of the project is the dissemination of outcomes to the archaeological community, scholars in other disciplines, and to the wider public. To this end a website describing the project has been constructed and can be accessed at www.mappingdeath.ie.

The website provides details of the aims of the project, personnel involved, and past and future events. A further method of dissemination of information is the involvement of project personnel in 3rd level and graduate teaching, and in the presentation of papers at conferences, seminars, and to local historical societies.



*Burial B4 Ballymacaward, Co. Donegal.
© EO'Brien*

In November 2008 a most successful Symposium entitled 'Mapping Death: People, Boundaries and Territories in Ireland 1st to 8th centuries AD' was organised by the Project team, under the aegis of the UCD Mícheál Ó Cléirigh Institute, at which papers were delivered by project members and invited speakers, covering topics which included; Dr Elizabeth O'Brien 'The Mapping Death Project'; Dr Edel Bhreathnach 'Royal tombs, kingdoms and boundaries: literary sources for mapping death'; Mr Ian Doyle 'Imported pottery in Ireland from 5th to 7th centuries AD'; Ms Elizabeth Dawson 'Waves of conversion: bishops in Ireland from 5th to 7th centuries AD'; Ms Maeve Sikora 'Burial in Ireland from 1st to 8th centuries AD: recent research in the archives of the National Museum of Ireland'; Mr Fintan

Walsh/Ms Yvonne Whitty/Ms Maeve Tobin 'Mapping death and the private sector'; Dr Elva Johnston 'Palladius and conversion: the historical context'; Dr. Michael Potterton 'Mapping death project: potential directions for the future'.



Burial enclosures Holdenstown (1), Co. Kilkenny. © Gavin Duffy, AirShots

On 27–28 November 2009 a two-day International Symposium will be held in UCD, and will include papers by project team members covering the range of collaborative and inter-disciplinary aspects of the Project, papers by members of other INSTAR Early Medieval projects which are already in progress; papers incorporating wider international collaboration; papers by members of the scientific community especially with regard to the use of isotopic/strontium analysis and c14 dating; papers from osteo-archaeologists. Full details of the programme will be available soon on the 'Mapping Death' website. It is envisaged that the proceedings of this Symposium will be published.

The following is an example of just some of the interesting themes which are currently emerging from the project and are being pursued:

- The process of religious conversion in Ireland AD 400–700.
- The terminology of burial in early medieval Irish and Hiberno-Latin sources.
- The interpretation of external influences known from documentary and archaeological sources.
- The implications of early imported pottery for economic or religious trade into Ireland.

- The anthropological significance of the occurrence of female ancestral burials dateable to the 4th to 6th centuries which are often accompanied by animal bones.
- A site-specific study of a number of *ferta*-type burial mounds (ancestral graves/cemeteries) on possible early medieval territorial boundaries.

The Mapping Death INSTAR Project team consists of: Dr Edel Bhreathnach, UCD Mícheál Ó Cléirigh Institute, Principal Investigator, and expert on the interpretation of early Irish texts with regard to landscapes, monuments, boundaries, peoples and kingdoms of early medieval Ireland; Dr Elizabeth O'Brien, Post Doctoral Fellow UCD Mícheál Ó Cléirigh Institute, and specialist in burial practices in late prehistoric and early medieval Ireland, and in late Roman Britain and Anglo-Saxon England; Dr Elva Johnston, UCD School of History and Archive, and a leading authority on religious conversion and society, literacy, cultural identity and on Ireland's relations with Late Roman Britain, Anglo-Saxon England and the Continent; Dr Michael Potterton, The Discovery Programme, experienced in combining archaeological data with documentary and cartographic information with particular reference to medieval settlement and society; Mr Anthony Corns, The Discovery Programme, expert in surveying and mapping archaeological monuments and landscapes, and in designing related computer databases.

As the inter-disciplinary research being undertaken by the INSTAR 'Mapping Death' team progresses, customs and practices which appear in the archaeological burial record and in historical and literary records will be identified, and our understanding will be informed by the different perspectives of the various disciplines. The objectives of the project are to comprehend the beliefs of a society in relation to that fundamental reality of being human, death, and to see what the rites associated with that reality tell us about late prehistoric and early medieval society in Ireland.

Betty O'Brien

Medieval Dublin: an archaeological research framework. A new research tool for the medieval city of Dublin is coming on stream under the Heritage Council's INSTAR programme. Under the theme 'Landscape and settlement', the report is entitled 'The archaeological remains of Viking and Medieval Dublin: a research framework' and was written by Linzi Simpson, of Margaret Gowen and Co. Ltd, the Principal Investigator, in conjunction with a series of project participants including Donncha Ó Dúlaing (formerly of Dublin City Council), Dr Ruth Johnson (Dublin City Council), Dr Seán Duffy (Trinity College, Dublin), O'Connor Sutton Cronin Consulting Civil and Structural Engineers and Anthony Reddy Associates Architects, Planning Consultants and Urban Design. The referees for the project are Prof. Anngret Simms (Emerita, UCD) and Prof. Michael Ryan, Director of the Chester Beatty Library

The aims and objectives of the Research Framework are to promote research of Medieval Dublin, not only the walled city, but also the immediate and adjacent suburbs. Specifically, the document formulates an archaeological research framework for this historic area, which summarizes our knowledge to date, both archaeological and historical, and more critically, identifies research questions, which the resource can be called on to answer in the future. The report also addresses key issues in current archaeological practices, identifies current and past mistakes and attempts to promote a consistency of approach to archaeological mitigation and best archaeological practice by the provision of basic guidelines. The final objective is the provision of a body of information, which can be used by the relevant heritage authorities to inform future decisions in planning and management of the heritage resource in a systematic way. Most important is the creation of a proactive data collection, which can be updated and reviewed on an ongoing basis.

The report is divided into three main sections: 1.) Resource Assessment: Introduction; Understanding the

past; the archaeological resource; 2.) Research Agenda: Gaps in knowledge; Research questions and the potential of the resource; Study Areas; 3.) Research Strategy: Policies and guidelines; Implementation, policy and review of the Research Framework.

For the purposes of the research strategy the medieval city has been divided into eight sections or Study Areas, which creates a spatial framework for specific research questions, focusing on the area within the city walls but extending into the adjoining suburbs. This approach has its limitations as the sections are simply divisions on paper and bear no relationship to the chronological development of Dublin. However, the research questions within each Study Area are grouped chronologically (from the early medieval period onwards) to allow for cross reference, especially where a research question potentially spans several areas, for example, 'Where is the *longphort*? This approach was favoured as it permits the future insertion of research questions where appropriate and allows the Research Framework to be used in specific areas, where re-development might be pending.

This Research Framework represents the first such overreaching exercise in the provision of a comprehensive strategy, the aim of which is to promote research and aid the formulation of policy for the archaeology of medieval Dublin.

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GROUP REPORTS, 2008

THE FINDS RESEARCH GROUP AD 700–1700 (FRG) assembled at two great venues in 2008: the glorious Palace of Hampton Court and amongst the misty mounds of Sutton Hoo. The theme for the weekend conference at Hampton Court (17–18 May) was *Life in Fragments. A Two Day Conference looking at Assemblages, their Stories, and the Stories they tell.* The claim that archaeologists spend their careers rooting about in other people's rubbish

must have lost any claim to merit or wit shortly after first utterance, yet the perennial popularity of the phrase suggests it contains a grain of truth. If such material is indeed rubbish then how do we interpret the decisions and processes which led to the formation of assemblages or the values placed on the material by those who discarded it? Conversely, should we view the absence of certain classes of material in the archaeological record as indicating their continuing value to their users? The FRG gathering at Hampton Court Palace, ably hosted by Marc Meltonville and his colleagues in the Historic Royal Palaces, gave scope to dwell upon such issues.

The first paper saw Graham Keevill's overview of excavations at the Tower of London: excavation campaigns over 50 years provided little in the way of artefacts from within the site itself, yet the moat and foreshore were both rich in finds – thus raising important points about how one should interpret a site when the artefactual record is not where one might reasonably suppose it to be. Maria Hayward's discussion of the inventories of Henry VIII usefully examined values placed on various classes of object; frustratingly these inventories ignore those low status objects which tend to comprise the bulk of archaeological material, yet it is an illustration of contemporary value judgments of both a cultural and fiscal nature. Geoff Egan concentrated on finds from the Rose and Globe theatres; like the Tower of London – or indeed Hampton Court – the loss, discard and subsequent integration into the archaeological record of these artefacts appeared dependent on factors and attitudes unique to each particular site.

Marc Meltonville and his colleagues generously provided talks and demonstrations on the stewardship and interpretation of the Palace, and the original research which makes public interpretation possible. The re-colourisation of the tapestries of Henry VIII by the projection of a tinted overlay was a notable example of both conservation and interpretation, but pride of place must go to the reconstruction of the 16th-century kitchens based on a wealth of

experimental work and documentary research.

On 24 October a large group of FRG members attended the meeting *Wealth and Circumstance: Anglo-Saxon burials in the East of England* held at Sutton Hoo. The venue was the house previously owned by Mrs Edith Pretty, who had commissioned the excavations that revealed the now famous ship burial back in the 1930s. The first speaker was Angus Wainwright, National Trust Archaeologist for the East of England, who explained the detailed research that had gone into the design of the visitor centre. (He also acted as the excellent guide for the site tour at lunch). He explained how visits to Birka had proven to be particularly useful, because, as at Sutton Hoo, most of the famous artefacts are displayed in other institutions. As at Birka, many of the treasures, and the burial layout itself, are displayed as reconstructions and in creating these pieces new conclusions have emerged about the materials and technology required for the originals. Tim Pestell spoke next about the then current exhibition, *The Life and Death of a Kingdom: East Anglia 500–869 AD*. His talk explored the wider distribution of cemeteries and grave goods in East Anglia. Angela Evans then guided us through the details of some of the discoveries made during Martin Carver's excavations of the mounds, and the excavation of a cremation and inhumation cemetery discovered nearby at Bromeswell.

In the afternoon, Ian Blair of Museum of London Archaeology Service discussed the prestigious grave at Prittlewell (published as the 'Bling King' in *The Sun!*), with finds including a large hanging bowl, a folding stool, an iron candelabra stand and a lyre, all of which had been carefully placed either on the floor or hanging from the walls of the funerary chamber. At the head end, two gold sheet Latin crosses were found, suggesting that despite the Pagan splendour of his tomb the deceased had presumably adopted Christianity. Helen Geake considered horse-harness mounts and pendants in the 6th and 7th centuries. The rivets on the reverse distinguish them

from brooch fragments and strap ends and more, as yet unparalleled mounts recorded by the Portable Antiquities Scheme, may turn out to be from horse harness. Further research is needed to increase our understanding, but some patterns are emerging already. Graves such as those at Lakenheath show that mounts are deliberately reused in female costume, with some female burials including single strap pendant mounts, when they are used in pairs on harnesses. Interestingly, there appears to have been a close relationship between women and horse, rather than men and horse.

Two meetings were planned for 2009: *Finding the Familiar: Dealing with Artefacts of the Modern Age* which was being hosted by ARCUS in Sheffield on 9 May, and *A Celebration of Irons!* to be held in Lincoln on 24 October. No Datasheets were published by the FRG this year as our editor was busy preparing a consolidated reprint of *Datasheets 25–40* in book format. This, alongside the book *Datasheets 1–24*, are available to members for £5 or £7.50 to non-members (plus p+p).

Annual membership of the Group costs £6 (£10 or €15 for overseas members) for which members receive two mailings a year and are invited to attend the two – usually free – day conferences. Datasheets on particular categories of objects are produced regularly and new Datasheets are sent out free to members. The Group is in a healthy financial position and membership is currently around 400.

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THE MEDIEVAL POTTERY RESEARCH GROUP (MPRG) 2008 conference was a three-day event held at the Collegio Santa Chiara, Università degli Studi di Siena, Siena, Italy between the 7–9 July. Organised by Duncan Brown (Meetings Secretary) and Marta Caroscio (Continental Representative), the conference aimed

to consider developments in pottery making, methods of distribution and patterns of trade, comparing and contrasting pottery traditions of the European Mediterranean states. Speakers from all over Europe addressed these themes and participated in wide-ranging discussions, with Graziella Berti presenting the Gerald Dunning Memorial Lecture on technical devices in sgraffito-ware production in Tuscany. The event was well attended, with over 50 attendees from the UK alone. The Group is in a secure financial position and has funds to cover the publication schedule for the near future. Volume 29 of *Medieval Ceramics* was released in 2008, which includes articles on pottery and identity in Saxon Sussex, ceramic use in monasteries in Liguria and Eastern Flanders, whitewares from Clarence Street, York and Rolandsons Wharf, Leith and an unexpected ‘catch’ for the Brixham trawler, Catear. The next volume of *Medieval Ceramics* is due for release at the 2009 conference. Work is ongoing on the online bibliography, which gives details of published reports and is updated annually (<ntserver002.liv.ac.uk/mprg/>).

The MPRG website, which contains a range of news items and useful links, continues to attract visitors. Our paid-up membership currently stands at around 300; the MPRG continues to attract new members, both individual and institutional.

This year our President, Duncan Brown, has focused the group on the creation of a research framework, based on an appraisal of the state of pottery studies across England, Scotland and Wales. This would aim to reassess the state of medieval pottery studies in light of the review carried out by Mellor in 1984 ‘*Medieval Ceramic Studies in England. A Review for English Heritage*’, which was published on behalf of the MPRG. Based on questionnaires and group discussions, this was a comprehensive survey of the state of the discipline at that time. It considered the importance of medieval ceramic studies in archaeology as a whole, issues around pottery processing methods, publication, the requirements of the profession and the future. All these

areas alone require a fresh examination in the light of subsequent developments within professional archaeology in the UK, most notably the introduction of PPG16 and the emphasis on commercial, competitive practice. It is hoped funding can be secured to take the project forward and that work can commence on the research strategy in 2009.

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THE MEDIEVAL SETTLEMENT RESEARCH GROUP (MSRG)

continues to be a well supported and highly active body, offering both informative conferences and seminars and outputs. The MSRG Spring meeting was held on 29 March at the McDonald Institute, Downing Street, University of Cambridge, and was entitled *The Multiple Estate Revisited: Territories, Resources and Society in Early Medieval Britain*. Glanville Jones developed the concept of the multiple estate in a series of papers during the 1960s and 1970s, arguing that there was a basic form of land structure which could be found in many parts of Britain. The multiple estate combined the arable areas of the lowlands with the pastoral uplands into an administrative and economically integrated region. As this idea developed, Jones concluded that the estate structure must have Celtic origins and that it survived in its purest form in the west of Britain where it was recorded in early Welsh laws. This wide-ranging and influential model was not without its critics, however. This MSRG seminar re-visited Glanville Jones' original ideas and explored how far the multiple estate still provides a useful way of thinking about territories, society and resource exploitation. In this well-attended day conference, the model and idea of the multiple estate were cleverly discussed by both Mark Gardiner and Dawn Hadley, and new angles explored by Ros Faith and Alex Woolf; in the afternoon, Stuart Brooks and Angus Winchester considered evidence from diverse zones

– Kent and Cumbria and Lancashire respectively. All was brought together in an excellent summing up by Chris Lewis.

The Group's 2008 Winter Seminar, jointly run at Leicester University with the Society for Landscape Studies, was held on 6 December, and was in memory of former MSRG President, Harold Fox, who died in August 2007. A series of papers on themes centred around the landscape and economy were assembled under the seminar banner *Fishing, Transhumance and Woodland in Medieval Britain*. Stimulating papers by Andrew Fleming, Della Hooke and Nicola Bannister explored in particular trees and wood pasture from Wales to the Weald; issues of transhumance – its visibility, the bases of the shepherds, its modes of practice – were discussed by Peter Herring, Angus Winchester and Mark Gardiner, with coverage from south-west and northern England to Northern Ireland; and James Barrett opened up the much-understudied world of medieval sea-fishing. Publication is planned of papers from both this seminar and a separate conference also held in Leicester in summer 2008 centred on Harold's research interests.

Core to the 80 page *Annual Report* no.22 published in October 2008 were the extended summaries of papers and discussions from POMLAS – '*Perceptions of medieval landscapes and settlements*' – the innovative programme of workshops engineered and promoted by MSRG Vice-President Professor Chris Dyer (Centre for English Local History, University of Leicester) and funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) from its 'Landscape and Environment Programme'. Workshops on themes such as 'Planning and meaning', 'Working and sharing' 'New people, new farms' succeeded greatly in stimulating discussion and raising extra issues and debates, which we hope will be the prompt for new projects and meetings. The *Annual Report* also included summaries of recent fieldwork activities, such as at Hazleton and in the Mendips; Carena Lewis, meanwhile, reported on test-pitting work in East Anglian villages; and there was an extended summary of

the 2007 John Hurst MA Dissertation Prize winning thesis by Michael Busby on 14th-century poll tax records for medieval Leicestershire.

The MSRG Annual General Meeting in December (framed between the Winter Seminar morning papers and the enticing lunch!) – overseen by new President Paul Stamper – saw the re-election of the Committee officers, the election of three new Committee members, and reported on a new venture, a projected edited volume on medieval rural settlement in Britain, drawing on the expertise of past and present Committee and other members.

Whilst no John Hurst MA Dissertation Prize (initiated in 2004 to honour the memory of John Hurst and his achievements with the MSRG) was awarded for 2008, the Group funded two fieldwork grants; the Group has also introduced a bursary fund, linked to the name of Maurice Beresford, for younger scholars to apply to for conference or related attendance. Please see the web pages or *Annual Report* for details of how to apply to the various awards. Finally, the MSRG editor, Dr Sam Turner, is overseeing a redevelopment of the *Annual Report*, with the aim of attracting fuller research articles on the Group's core interest area of medieval rural settlement. Potential contributors should contact the editor with ideas of papers.

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NEWS & VIEWS

Salford Hundred. Stuart Mendelsohn has created a blog that focuses on the medieval resources surviving in this part of the country. For further information, readers are directed to <http://salfordhundred.wordpress.com/>

The **Society's AGM** will take place in the Meeting Room of the Society of Antiquaries of London, Burlington House, Piccadilly, London W1J 0BE

on **7 December 2009**, at 5:30pm. Tea and biscuits will be served from 5:00pm in the Council Room. The AGM will be followed by the **Annual Lecture** (at approximately 5:45pm). **Prof.dr.em. Frans Verhaeghe** (Vrije Universiteit Brussel) will present a lecture entitled, ***Highly Decorated Pottery in the Medieval Low Countries: The Dynamics and Context of a Quality Product***

In the (late) 12th century, a new commodity appeared in Flanders, today commonly called highly decorated pottery. Resulting from the adoption of a few foreign models, new fashions and a few technical innovations, combined with a number of older potters' traditions, it rapidly became fairly widespread throughout the Low Countries. Produced by local potters in workshops which normally also made common objects such as cooking wares and storage vessels, the group consisted mainly of tablewares. Jugs of different types were by far the most common kind of product and they were linked to new table manners and preferences. But the range of highly decorated wares was soon expanded with other types of objects.

A variety of decoration patterns can be identified, but in some ways the range is rather limited and this raises interesting questions related to traditions, tastes and even economic strategies. It also seems that many of these highly decorated goods were quality objects rather than luxury items in the full sense of the word.

By the early to mid-14th century, however, the group was superseded by new products, more particularly the German (Rhenish) stonewares. The Low Countries potters did not, however, forget some of their acquired skills: the decoration techniques continued to be used and adapted and this led to the development of later types of pottery and other ceramic products.

The lecture presents an overview of these medieval highly decorated goods but also looks at the factors which influenced the emergence, success and decline of the group and at its economic, cultural and social meanings.

The Staffordshire Hoard. News abounds of the remarkable discovery of Anglo-Saxon period metalwork close to the Mercian capital of Tamworth. The pros and cons associated with such find circumstances generate very different responses, both within the profession and outside it. Perhaps it is time to re-engage in some discussion. The Newsletter may be a useful forum for views on the Portable Antiquities Scheme, its absence in Ireland, and whether there is merit in considering appropriate responses to these issues over the next decade. Please send comments to the Newsletter editor.

DISCUSSION BOARD

On Re-thinking Licences to Crenellate and the Moated Site. Readers already familiar with the *war v. status* debate (*Medieval Archaeology* 51 & 52) may be interested to learn of the timely analysis of licences to crenellate published by Philip Davis in *The Castle Studies Group Journal* (2006:226–45). As things stand, Charles Coulson has insisted over the years that licences to crenellate were ‘sought most usually by lesser men in order to enhance their own social status’ (1979:78); that such licences ‘are almost the trademark of the medieval English *arriviste*’ (1982:70); that ‘the danger-response theory is simplistic . . . (and) numbers of licences and of buildings correlate more with peaceful prosperity at home’ (1994:111); and that even in the Scottish Marches and other threatened areas, ‘fortification was chiefly an expression of status, and the architectural programme was predominantly residential’ (2003:353). Coulson, however, has never seen the need to count his licences, even when claiming that ‘the manor-houses and homestead moats of the lay and ecclesiastical gentry class comprise *about three-quarters of the total* over the whole era’ (1994:93). And in turning his spotlight on Coulson’s numbers for the first time, Davis has made a significant contribution to castle studies.

Davis, curiously, has not revised his opinion that ‘Charles Coulson’s wealth of supporting evidence and profound understanding (of licences to crenellate) make him the most credible author on the subject’ (2006:227). And he claims

to be persuaded even now that ‘Charles Coulson has proved his case beyond reasonable question . . . (that) display of lordly status was the prime function of licences to crenellate’ (2008:250). Yet in everything Davis touches – whether in mapping the licences, in ranking the applicants, or in counting the licences by decade – his work flatly contradicts Coulson’s thesis. Thus the licences cluster especially on the coasts and in the marches, leaving other less threatened areas substantially licence-free. They were awarded overwhelmingly to high-status applicants: to noblemen, leading churchmen, and successful office-holders. And over the period as a whole – i.e. from 1199 (the first recorded licence) to 1567 (the last) – applications surged at irregular intervals, which would hardly have been the case had the licences been regarded throughout as fashion statements.

Davis sees those sudden ups and downs as ‘fairly random’ (2008:247). Yet random is just what they were not. In practice, the first surge in applications coincides with the Baronial Revolt (1263-5); the second with the collapse of the general eyre in the late thirteenth century; the third with the famines and murrains of 1315-22; the fourth with extreme population pressure in the 1330s and 1340s; the fifth with post-plague tenant militancy and the Peasants’ Revolt (1381); the sixth with currency depreciation and Jack Cade’s Revolt (1450); and the last with the Wars of the Roses (1455-85). On each of those occasions private property was at risk, and the wealthy built walls to keep out criminals.

They also dug moats and planted thorn hedges. And it follows that the very general phenomenon of the homestead moat has more to do with violence than with status or any other cause. It was Oliver Creighton, the landscape archaeologist, who wrote of those moats that ‘a further indication of the prestige inherent in castle-building is the competitive emulation of castle moats and associated features by slightly lower ranking members of the medieval rural elite’ (2002:195). And I heard it said just recently that another archaeology

lecturer, better left nameless, is in the habit of categorizing the medieval homestead moat as 'thirteenth-century bling'. Yet most datable moats belong, as I pointed out long ago, to the same lawless decades – roughly 1270 to 1350 – when acute land shortages caused a crisis in public order, and when applications to crenellate reached their peak (1978:111–115). Consequently, given the well-documented evidence of soaring crime at this period, how satisfactory are drainage *or* fishing *or* even 'competitive emulation' as primary explanations for moat-digging before the Black Death (1348-9)? And why did moats cease to be popular after the plague, at just that time when the lesser gentry, the franklins, and the principal villein families were at their most prosperous and self-assertive? Could it be that they felt less threatened when there was land to spare, when Robin Hood and his fellow outlaws came out of the green forest, and when the Sheriff of Nottingham was replaced by the JP?

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Getting Things Right about Lejre — and the *Beowulf* Connection, Too. Readers of *Medieval Archaeology* should note that a significant misapprehension underlies Richard Hodges' review, in *Medieval Archaeology* 52 (2008): 479, of a collaborative book, *Beowulf and Lejre*, edited by myself and Marijane Osborn, with contributions by Tom Christensen, and published under my name in 2007. Hodges' review is a positive one (the book 'must be warmly welcomed... We must hope that [it] starts a trend for compendiums of studies pertaining to archaeological sites with convincing literary connections'), and so any complaint on my part might seem merely churlish. Still, the review fosters a misunderstanding about chronology, and those with a professional interest in the topic addressed by the book will want to get the dates straight.

Hodges writes that Lejre, on the island of Zealand, is 'a quintessential Danish Viking centre which ... belongs to the rise of Danish kingship partly in response to the Carolingian revolution and its zenith in the Ottonian age'. This statement accurately reflects what was known about Lejre until about five years ago. During 2004–05, however, a dramatic discovery was made by the Danish archaeologist Tom Christensen, the director of excavations undertaken in 1986–88 that had revealed the existence of a great Viking-Age hall site located just outside the village of Gammel Lejre. The 2004–05 excavations revealed the existence of a second hall site located about 500m north of the one discovered earlier. On archaeological grounds as well as by radiocarbon dating, the newly-discovered settlement site is ascribed a date in the mid-sixth century. The great Migration Age hall that stood at that spot was in use for somewhat under a hundred years. Not long after it was taken down, a new hall of comparable size, only somewhat wider (and hence potentially taller), was erected (in *c.* 680) slightly to the south. The later settlement site continued to be used (with much additional building and

rebuilding) for another three hundred years, until close to the year 1000. Perhaps not by coincidence, it was also in the mid-seventh century, at roughly the same time as the shift was made from the earlier settlement site to the later one, that the great cremation mound known as Grydehøj was built up on a prominence just across the Lejre River. Like the Lejre cremation mound, the two great halls at Lejre (each of which measured about 48m in length) were the largest structures of their kind that are known from this period of southern Scandinavian prehistory, with the exception only of a hall built at Tissø, Zealand, in the second half of the tenth century.

In other words, it is misleading to speak of Lejre as ‘a quintessential Danish Viking centre’. It was that, and it was also a major centre of power long before the Viking Age, and also long before Carolingian and Ottonian models of kingship became available for emulation. Lejre seems to have remained a major regional centre (surely a royal one) until close to the year 1000, when it was effectively dismantled at about the same time as the kings of Denmark (Harald Bluetooth, d. 986, and/or Svein Forkbeard, r. 987–1014) established their capital on the coast of Zealand at Roskilde, less than 10 km away.

The question of dating to which I call attention is not a trivial one, then. The leading purpose of *Beowulf and Lejre* was to draw attention to what the complete set of excavations at Lejre has revealed, with secondary attention to the significant, though often wildly inventive, legendary history of Lejre from the Middle Ages to the present day. Chapter Two of the book (pp. 109–26) consists of Christensen’s report on the post-1988 excavations at Lejre — the first detailed account to be published. My own main contribution to the book (pp. 169–233) analyzes the bearing of all these discoveries on the scholarly understanding of the Old English epic poem *Beowulf*. As is well known, the main part of *Beowulf* is set in the period of roughly the early sixth century AD at a hall, here called ‘Heorot’, that the poet identifies with the seat of power of the

Danish royal line, the Scyldingas. The Scyldingas of *Beowulf* correspond to the Skjöldingar of Danish tradition, of course, and all the early Scandinavian authorities, whether reporting legend or supposed history, agree in locating the seat of Skjölding power at Lejre.

Since Hodges’ review takes no explicit notice of the excavations undertaken at Lejre in 2004–05, it ignores the significance of Lejre at the end of the Migration Age. As a consequence, it misrepresents the impact of the Lejre excavations on the scholarly understanding of *Beowulf*. ‘Associating Lejre — undeniably a major royal centre — and the poem involves some licence as they belong to different periods’, Hodges writes. Granted, some licence is involved in any attempt to link literary sources and archaeology. And yet the action of *Beowulf* is set in the late Migration Age, very close to the time when a great hall, as we now know, was indeed a feature of the landscape at Lejre. And the only extant manuscript copy of *Beowulf* was written out at about the turn of the first millennium, right at the end of the period of Lejre’s greatness. So in a meaningful sense (regardless of the disputed matter of just when *Beowulf* was composed), the poem and the hall complex at Lejre pertain to the same period of time, and so they can justly be ‘read’ together.

With characteristic generosity (for which I am grateful), Hodges praises *Beowulf and Lejre* as a ‘timely’, ‘apposite’, ‘rich’, ‘relevant’, and ‘useful’ publication. But a reviewer should also get the chronology right, hence the need for the present note.

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Reference:

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SOCIETY NEWS

Feedback. It is time to have your say! The Society for Medieval Archaeology is seeking feedback from members regarding our activities and publications.

We are looking for ideas and comments which will help guide us into 2010 and beyond, and which will contribute to the continuing growth of the Society's journal, *Medieval Archaeology*, our website, publications and day-schools. We are keen to provide value for money to our members by delivering a high quality product across all our pursuits, and your feedback will put the spotlight on what we have been doing so far and how you feel we should be looking to develop in the future. The range of questions being asked is presented at the end of this Newsletter. A link to the online questionnaire is being posted on the website. If you are interested in providing feedback but would prefer a hard copy form to complete, please ring Wendy Hollingsworth 0121 414 5513 and request the Medieval Archaeology Feedback form, or email us at medievalarchaeology@googlemail.com with your address and we will send one out to you.

Keeping you updated. Over recent months the Society has been adding to our methods of communicating to our members, and this includes setting up a mailing list. If you are interested in joining our email-based mailing list, please contact us at medievalarchaeology@googlemail.com with MAILING LIST in the Subject Header. We will provide details of any forthcoming events, conferences and general organisational information. In addition, we have a student email-based discussion group and mailing list. To register on this, please go to the following url: <http://lists.shef.ac.uk/sympa/info/sma-students>

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LOOKING AHEAD TO 2011

Excursion to Rome, September 2011
Explore medieval Rome with Professor Éamonn Ó Carragáin. The Society is delighted to announce that Professor Éamonn Ó Carragáin of University College Cork has agreed to lead a tour of Rome for Society members. Participants will be able to benefit from Éamonn's personal knowledge of the

city, its history, art and archaeology. The itinerary, which will concentrate on Medieval Rome, will include special admissions to important medieval sites. It is hoped to include in the programme visits to Castel Sant'Angelo; the Crypta Balbi museum of Medieval Rome; St Peter's Basilica (especially the fragments of Old St Peter's in the Crypt of the Popes, and the Vatican necropolis); the Vatican galleries and the Sistine Chapel; the excavations under the basilicas of San Clemente, Santi Giovanni e Paolo, San Crisogono and Santa Cecilia; the frescoes recently found in the excavations at Santa Susanna; Santa Maria Antiqua and the Chapel of the Forty Martyrs in the Roman Forum; the Sancta Sanctorum chapel at the Lateran; the catacomb of Priscilla, and many other sites.

Participants will be accommodated in the British School at Rome which offers good, set evening meals, included in the price. Participants will also have the opportunity to meet Roman scholars based at the British School at Rome, and will enjoy access to the School's excellent Roman archaeological library.

The excursion fee per person ranges from €605 to €880 and includes bed, breakfast, and a four course dinner each night except Saturday, metro/bus tickets and admission to a number of museums and sites. Participants will make their own travel arrangements to Rome, the price of which is not included in the fee. Please note that places are limited to 26, and it is recommended to express an interest as soon as possible.

Provisional dates for this excursion are *16–23 September 2011*. These dates are not yet finalised and may change.

For further information, interested members should contact:
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Grants and Awards

The Early Medieval Archaeology Student Symposium (EMASS) took place on the 21–22 May at the University of Sheffield. The event was well attended by both students and established academics.

It included an extensive and diverse programme of twenty-five papers from current and recently-completed PhD students, primarily from UK institutions but also from further afield, including Spain and the Netherlands. A generous grant from the Society's Eric Fletcher Fund greatly assisted in the organisation of the conference.

Presentations highlighted the variety of PhD research currently underway on the subject of early medieval archaeology. Topics under discussion included the research potential of early Anglo-Saxon cremated bone, fourth- to seventh-century urban housing in Sicily, the sensory impact of early Norman castles in Shropshire, coin use in England in the fifth century, the geo-archaeological analysis of house use in Viking Orkney, economy and identity in coastal Flanders between AD 500–1000, and attitudes towards monastic space in early medieval northern Britain. The organisers are grateful to Dr Dawn Hadley, Dr Steve Ashby, Dr Aleksandra McClain and Prof Martin Carver for their efforts in chairing sessions, and particularly to Martin Carver for his summing up at the end of the conference.

The conference proceedings, including abstracts, will soon be available to download from the EMASS website (<http://emass.group.shef.ac.uk/home>). It was agreed that next year's EMASS will take place at University College Dublin, where it is hoped that the appeal and scope of the event, which is now in its third year, will continue to grow.

Vicky Crewe
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Summary Report for the Sudreys Fund
Erin McGuire and Elizabeth Pierce, both PhD students working with Dr Colleen Batey at the University of Glasgow, shared this year's award from the Sudreys Fund. Both students attended and presented posters at the 16th Viking Congress, held 16–24 August in Iceland. The Viking Congress is an invitation-only conference of Viking scholars from Europe and farther afield held once every four years.

Conference attendees heard nearly 60 papers over nine days by Viking

historians, archaeologists, numismatists, saga experts and other scholars. Postgraduate students presented posters throughout the conference, receiving valuable feedback from established scholars in the field. In addition, the delegation took field trips to visit sites such as the Viking-Age farm overrun by lava at Húshólmi and a tenth-century structure built by outlaws in a cave at Surtshellir.

Erin's PhD thesis examines changes in funerary practice as a result of migration, comparing Viking-Age burials in Norway, Scotland and Iceland. Her poster focused on one chapter of this work, analysing migrant identities and boat-burials. Elizabeth's research looks at changes in cultural identity in the Norse of the North Atlantic based on artefactual assemblages from the Faroe Islands, Iceland and Greenland. Her poster outlined some of the theoretical frameworks in her thesis and gave examples of these as applied to categories of artefacts. Both students would like to thank the Society for its support of their work.

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MEDIA AND EXHIBITION

Traprain Law, Rome and Dorestad: transforming treasures. Since the appearance of the March issue of the Newsletter three diverse experiences (in their medieval dimensions spanning the entire period) have reminded me of the fluidity of the concept of treasure and of the deep human desire to imagine and fantasise.

The first was a joint Society of Antiquaries of Scotland and National Museums of Scotland conference: *Roman Silver and the End of Empire – The Traprain Treasure in Context* (Edinburgh, 9 May). It was a wonderfully stimulating day that more than fulfilled its aim of demonstrating that the series of late Roman silver hoards from across Northern Europe are 'crucial to the debates about the end of the Roman period in the west and the emergence of early medieval Europe.

An international array of speakers addressed the hoard (discovered in 1919) under three headings, The Setting, The Treasure in Context, and Silver after Traprain. The first encompassed the present archaeological understanding of Traprain Law, the political geography of the Votadini, and the 5th century transition of the Hadrian's Wall garrison into war-bands. Two papers stood out, and they were James Fraser's compelling analysis of the rhetoric of St Patrick's letter to king Coroticus, and Simon Esmonde-Cleary's characterisation of the end of Roman Britain as state collapse by analogy with the effects of modern-day state collapse. The second theme encompassed the nature of late Roman silver, how it functioned before being hacked and it's functioning as hacksilver, primarily to make military payments. The standout paper was by Annemarie Kaufmann-Heinimann, a brilliant essay on the array of contexts in which the Treasure can be understood and how we go about detailing that understanding. The final session was the shortest and encompassed the post-discovery exploitation of the Treasure to make a range of replicas and Susan Youngs' analysis of the use of silver in post-Roman North Britain. The concluding discussion was wide-ranging and inevitably curtailed by time.

By the day's end my head was buzzing with new information and ideas about the many different ways to view such hoards and the way the meaning of such pieces both as particular objects and as signifiers of cultural capital are/were always open to change. With respect to the Traprain Treasure these meanings were clearly in a shifting balance between economic necessity and other forms of cultural (including ritual) value. From the speakers there came unanimity on down-playing A O Curle's notion of pirate treasure, which admittedly does seem a little fanciful now but we should still hold in mind the possibility that some of the treasure was seized by raiding across Hadrian's Wall, certainly in the context of a putative collapsing state. Equally that collapsing state could have seen refugees head north across the Wall, some of them with their family treasure, perhaps seeking

refuge at Traprain? It seems possible that the hoard may not have become the hoard we know until some final act of deposition – prior to that it is conceivable it comprised either several smaller hoards (of varying purposes?) or individual pieces. Could the final act of deposition have been in the late 5th/early 6th century to mark the formal abandonment of Traprain Law? Does the Christianity demonstrated by the iconography on some of the pieces, when taken with its condition, suggest a non-Christian owner in the end (or an earlier?) phase of its active use? There is clearly an element of economic necessity in the converting of ostentatious plate into hack-silver, and then using it to pay soldiers and/or give bribes/gifts. The plate as plate would surely have been hugely valuable in cultural terms to the elite class who owned them and to surrender the plate in tax would imply they had no other disposable income. Equally it was essentially people from the same social class who seized/taxed that plate for what the state perceived as a higher political/survival necessity. Another aspect of its subsequent use as hack-silver could have been to demonstrate a sort of negative cultural capital – acquiring Roman silver/wealth demonstrates attachment to Rome but by then changing its form you demonstrate non-subservience in that attachment. Indeed melting some of it down and refashioning it as something entirely new could make such a statement very powerfully. Such thoughts, for me, chimed with other indications of a complicated relationship to Romanitas north of the Wall. The possible influence of Roman brooch design on Pictish symbols (specifically the double-disc) suggested by Susan Youngs is one example. Another was the suggestion that the well known silver chains of Scotland could be late Roman but “Pictified” in the 6th/7th century by the addition of a symbol-marked penannular ring, as with the Whitecleugh example. Even if the chains are entirely Pictish they may still have been made from recycled Roman silver (an implication of Youngs' paper needing further investigation). Another possible influence struck me. The lay-out, or if you like the grammar, of some Pictish stones – the way the figures and objects occupy and relate in surface

space – does seem to echo some of the lay-outs on some of the British found silver plate (and indeed on some Roman stone sculpture, such as the Mithras Saecularis relief from Housesteads). Curle's publication of the Treasure in 1926 remains a landmark but, given the pending republication of the Treasure, re-excitation of the find-spot and its vicinity surely recommends itself?

My second experience was watching the film *Angels and Demons*. Still traumatised by the sheer awfulness of *The Da Vinci Code*, I galvanised my underwhelming enthusiasm to go and see this film sequel. Dan Brown's fictions are still generating noise and comment, most recently by David Aaronovitch (2009, 187–218), whose new book on conspiracy theory devotes an entire, withering chapter ('Holy Blood, Holy Grail, Holy Shit') to lambasting and explaining the nonsense. The treasure here is hidden knowledge, secrets and conspiracies, the unleashing of which can transform the world and overthrow established hegemonies. The secrets are of both religion (stored in the Vatican archive) and science (resolving around the deployment of CERN's Large Hadron Collider). The basic premise of the film is that in order to prevent an anti-matter bomb from destroying the Vatican, "symbolologist" Professor Robert Langdon has to uncover the secrets of the long-vanished and Vatican-persecuted secret society, the Illuminati, following clues in several of Rome's churches. That there was no Illuminati society before the 18th century is but one of a string of expected historical infidelities (the others including inaccuracies about Raphael's name and burial, the operation of coffin lids, the orientation of the Castel Sant' Angelo, the nature of the Vatican Archives, the writings of Galileo and the remit of the Vatican security forces). Many of these are par for the course of dramatic license. Perhaps its biggest failing is its presentation of the religion vs. science debate. Having portrayed the Catholic Church as a bunch of deranged, violent sociopaths, in *The Da Vinci Code*, here there is a certain amount of rowing back to a tolerant position. The clash between science and religion is still there and rooted in medieval violence and distrust (which permits all the Illuminati

tosh, though the film then pulls its own rug by tuning their reappearance into a concoction by a megalomaniac pope) but it tries to persuade us that they are the two sides of the one coin, each able to benefit from the other. Indeed with anti-matter becoming the "God particle" the two are conflated, an indication of how trite and mendacious is its depiction of both religion and science. Its central scientific premise is that the LHC could be used to harness anti-matter and use it as a bomb. The sheer ignorant lunacy of this, or rather the fact that it appears to have persuaded the US military that they could develop such a bomb, provoked physicist Frank Close to write a riposte, *Antimatter* (especially pp. 140–47), which debunks the feasibility of such an idea (as does the CERN website, set-up in the wake of the film's release to explain the reality of the science behind Brown's fantasy: <http://angelsanddemons.cern.ch/>).

Whilst it is all too easy to dismiss it all as vacuous, pseudo-everything mumbo-jumbo (made easier by its failure as a film due to its massively over-expository dialogue and consequently leaden performances) it nevertheless touches on a deeper human desire. In his discussion of the appeal of Brown's fiction Aaronovitch quotes (p. 217) Burnstein (2004) on how it resonates so much with many of its readers that it seems true: 'The modern American church concealed heinous cases of sexual abuse for years; the president of the United States may have launched an invasion of a foreign country based on concocted evidence of weapons of mass destruction; executives of companies like Enron and WorldCom deceived shareholders and regulators about billions ... of nonexistent value' [we could add UK MPs expenses claims to the list] 'One can't read *The Da Vinci Code* without hearing echoes of these contemporary incidents of lying and cover-up and truth coming out in the end.' Into this equation Aaronovitch adds a pinch of Eco and Mamet. Eco, in *Foucault's Pendulum*, observes that publishers give their book buyers 'anything that says the opposite of what they read in their books at school. That way when they have read this magical nonsense they will think that they know

more than those who instructed them' (p. 218). Playwright and screenwriter David Mamet describes this as anti-Stratfordianism – in reference to those who believe the hidden truth is that Shakespeare was not the author of his plays: 'The purpose of the writers and by extension ... of their readers, is somehow to make themselves greater than even the greatest poet, partly of course by making him lesser ... They are then lonely custodians of the truth and they got there through the quality of their minds – and by being brave enough to read a book' (p. 218). Some of this refashioning of the world has very clear medieval precedents, as implied by Mary Carruthers' (2000) analysis of medieval thinking processes (and which might also apply to the Pictish refashioning of Roman art discussed above). She quotes from both Augustine and Alcuin; the latter observes that 'one who sees Rome also fashions [an image of] Rome in his soul, and forms it as it actually is. When he may hear or remember "Rome" immediately its essence recurs to his memory, where he has stored its image. And it is more remarkable, that with respect to unknown things, if they come to our ears from reading or hearing something, the mind immediately fashions a figure of the unknown thing' (p. 119). How appropriate then that *Angels and Demons* careens around the medieval and baroque churches of Rome (but not Vatican city, which refused filming, and so a scale model of St Peter's and its square had to be doubled by a scale model in Hollywood). Carruthers goes on to write that 'Images for thinking are not primarily useful because of their objective truth content or their mimetic ability: they have none' unless 'incidentally. Nor are they useful because they "trace" some past experience in unaltered detail, for instance a previous visit to Rome. What one recalls, Alcuin says, is not the exact, verbatim copy of the raw experience, but its essence... For Alcuin to write that "human beings think in images" is a statement about cognitive process – people use these images to think with (and remember with). It makes no difference to its cognitive value whether my mental images of [Rome] is like yours or not. And it certainly doesn't matter whether or not either of our mental

images resembles the actual city' (p.120). Before leaving *Angels and Demons* it is also worth noting the film's fascinating, symbolic, seal-breaking (see Cherry 2002) opening in which we witness the seal-ring of the recently deceased pope ceremonially destroyed with chisel and hammer and its association with that (murdered) pope, oddly and unintentionally evokes Knüsel's (2006) discussion of the investiture contest as a model of funerary interpretation – in this film burial is very much about succession.

My third experience of treasure took me back to an authentic early medieval Europe, this time to what we now call the Netherlands – what was once the northern frontier of the Carolingian empire. I was able to do this by the compelling staging of the exhibition *Dorestad Een Wereldstad in de Middeleeuwen* ('Dorestad A World City in the Middle Ages'), from 17 April –1 November 2009, in the *Rijksmuseum van Oudheden* ('National Museum of Antiquities'), Leiden. The archaeological assemblage from various excavations of Dorestad is (after the Merovingian material from the cemetery of Rhenen) the largest component of the National Museum collections. I can think of no better contemporary definition of treasure or treasure-house. Some 1200 years after its first flourishing Dorestad flourishes again in this splendid exhibition and will continue to do so through the superbly illustrated catalogue (in Dutch, Willemsen 2009) and no doubt in the forthcoming proceedings (in English) of the conference – *Dorestad in an International Framework* – held in June 2009.

The exhibition seeks to give the visitor a sense of the Carolingian emporium of Dorestad (now the sleepy backwater of Wijk bij Duurstede) and how life was there in the 8th and 9th centuries. It does so through the deployment of a rich variety of artefacts displayed with bold, sympathetic imagination. The exhibition was laid out over two galleries and divided into two twin themes: Town/Winter and Harbour/Summer. The second emphasised the seasonal mainstay of its existence as an international port of trade on the

northern edge of the Carolingian empire, whilst the first emphasised that the town had an everyday reality, not confined to winter but usefully counterpoised against the seasonal work of the harbour. Within the Town/Winter gallery the exploration of life and death begins with the broadly modern discovery of Dorestad, initially by accident in 1840. It then addresses Death, imaginatively brought to life with its careful display of human and animal skeletons, grave-goods, a sarcophagus and the use of ghost-like silhouettes of adults and children projected over the display settings. The other themes are Daily life (encompassing agriculture, play, the role of the hearth, diet and crafts); Identity (encompassing horse-based elites and their equipment, royal hunting and the importance of the sword) and Treasury. This last theme set the famous Dorestad brooch ('an icon of Dutch archaeology') of c. 800 AD in context through comparison with manuscript art and other precious metalwork (both Merovingian and Carolingian) and by discussing the uses of such objects as clothing accessories and as liturgical furnishings for book covers and reliquaries. The gallery colour-coding of the sub-themes 'Household work', 'Writing' 'Dorestad's stone well', 'Everything locked' and 'Private houses' indicated that they too are part of the Treasury theme, the reasoning for which seems opaque – they surely would have more readily slotted into the Daily Life theme? The one serious omission, from the perspective of an international visitor, was the lack of a location map at the start of the exhibition.



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The imaginative design set traditional

glass cases within theme-signalling, colour-coded, gable-ended structures, evoking both small houses and (to a lesser degree) giant reliquaries. The lighting was subdued, with a hint of orange, and a continuous background soundscape of everyday life (snatches of conversation, animal noises, sounds of play and work) was surprisingly effective. The star object – the Dorestad brooch – was joined, for me, by the variety of play equipment (including some puzzling domino-like objects) and the luxury sword with a gilded hilt found in 1969 and especially conserved for the exhibition.



© M A Hall, courtesy Rijksmuseum van Oudheden

Harbour/Summer also sings with a soundscape, varying from the first by the inclusion of water-lapping, sea-bird and boat noises. The lighting also remains subdued, this time with a blue tone, in harmony with the superstructure of wooden jetties into which the cases were set. The focus was on the four themes of Water, Market, Trade and Confrontations. These themes dealt with the infrastructure and management of trade (the jetties, the boats, the coinage, weights and measures and language), the goods traded (amber, Tating jugs and other ceramics, millstones, glass wares and storage containers) and the confrontations between Frisians and Franks (concluding c. 700 AD) and between Vikings and Carolingians (commencing in 834 AD) that bracketed the establishment and demise of Dorestad as a flourishing emporium, explored through a selection of weapons and Frankish and

Scandinavian jewellery. Throughout this gallery several interactives appealed to children of all ages and included coin-minting, pot-fixing, ice-skating on bone skates, a jetties-and-boats jigsaw and a press-button screen allowing the recreation of trading journeys to and from Dorestad. The object highlights included the various coin hoards, the millstones, glass and beads (including a spectacular gold foil decorated beaker) and the rich variety of jewellery.



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The exhibition concluded with a short section called Imagery, exploring the afterlife of Dorestad, mainly in school texts and imagery from the early 20th century, drawing on a rich popular imagination about Dorestad (and in particular its sacking by Vikings). Linguistically challenged visitors like me can benefit from an English in-gallery guidebook, a translation of the exhibition text and labels. I certainly came away with a renewed and much firmer grip on Dorestad's Carolingian flourishing, its importance to the Dutch sense of the past and a true, contemporary meaning of treasure. Go and see it!



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Mark A Hall,
Perth Museum & Art Gallery

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FUTURE CONTRIBUTIONS

Images are welcome with your text, but *do not embed* pictures in Word/text files. Send pictures as separate high quality JPEG files.

Newsletter Editor niall@
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The Society for Medieval Archaeology is seeking feedback from you on your views on the Society, its activities and in particular the journal, Medieval Archaeology, and will be asking you to complete an online questionnaire in the near future to help guide us into 2010 and beyond.

The following is a sample of the questions you will be asked.

Please check out the website in the next two weeks and complete the Questionnaire on-line, at: <http://www.medievalarchaeology.org/>

Many thanks for your kind and helpful co-operation.

How long have you been a member of the Society for Medieval Archaeology?

What is your age range?

In what way are you involved in Archaeology?

What other Archaeology Groups are you involved with?

Why did you join the Society?

Have you attended one or more of the AGMs?

Have you attended one or more of the Society-sponsored conferences?

If not – why not?

Are there themes you would like for future conferences?

What do you like most about the Medieval Archaeology journal?

Tell us what you would like to see changed about the journal.

Would you support the Society to change to two volumes of the journal a year? The Society is considering the pros and cons, including feasibility, of bringing the journal out twice a year rather than annually. As a reader, what is your preference?

Have you used the Society's website?

What changes or additions might you like?

Have you applied for grants from the Society?

Do you find the Society membership good value for money (e.g. subscriptions, discount on monographs, etc)?

Any other comments?



Did You Know?

Volumes 1–50 of *Medieval Archaeology* are available online via the Archaeology Data Service (ADS).
http://ads.ahds.ac.uk/catalogue/library/med_arch/



The latest Society Monograph is about to be published: The volume celebrates the Society's 50th anniversary (established in 1957), and presents reflections on the history, development and future prospects of the discipline. <http://www.maney.co.uk/index.php/books/sma30/?back=1>

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

For information on how to apply for a Society grant/award, see our website www.medievalarchaeology.co.uk/awards.htm

Joining the Society is easy.

Download an Application Form and a Direct Debit Form from the website, and post the pages to the **Society for Medieval Archaeology, Maney Publishing, Suite 1C, Joseph's Well, Hanover Walk, Leeds, LS3 1AB, England.**

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Overseas members paying in sterling should add £5 to their annual subscription to cover the additional cost of postage

Members receive a copy of the journal and the Society's Newsletter, and subscriptions are valid for one year from 1st April, with the journal appearing in the Spring.