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NEWS AND REPORTS

MSRG Spring Conference (Cambridge 2010) Medieval Parks: Recent Research

By Susan Oosthuizen

On 13th February 2010 MSRG and the University of Cambridge Institute of Continuing Education held a joint conference in Cambridge on ‘Medieval Parks: Recent Research’. The role of the MSRG in the conference was highlighted, there were MSRG fliers and posters in the exhibition area and Dr Dawn Hadley, representing the Group, chaired the afternoon session. The programme (attached) included leading scholars from a wide range of disciplines, and it was generally agreed to be a most successful day. About 90 people enrolled, with attendees coming from outside the UK (e.g. Poland, Hungary and the Irish Republic) and from across the UK (Scotland, Devon, Wales...). People travelled a long way for what was, in the end, a one-day event. The diversity of the audience was not simply geographic - participants included members of the general public alongside professional colleagues (e.g. English Heritage, RCAHMW, the British Deer Society, English Nature) and colleagues from other universities. I have received more (unsolicited) feedback after that event than from any other, and it has all been positive.

The field visit planned for the following day did not, however, recruit well and it was cancelled. There was no loss as costs were not incurred.

Papers delivered

‘Parks and communities in medieval England’, Dr Stephen Miles, University of Oxford

‘The origin, purpose and meaning of parks: evidence from animal bones’, Dr Naomi Sykes, University of Nottingham

‘Medieval parks and shadow woods as links to Vera’s “primeval landscape”’, Dr Ian Rotherham, University of Sheffield

‘Clarendon Park, Wiltshire: laboratory, larder or leisure centre?’, Professor Tom Beaumont James, University of Winchester

‘Putting the ‘royal’ back into forests: the role of medieval hunting landscapes in constructions of kingship – and queenship’, Dr Amanda Richardson, University of Chichester

‘The afterlife of medieval deer parks: adaptation and decline’, Dr Rob Liddiard, University of East Anglia