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MEDIEVAL SETTLEMENT RESEARCH GROUP

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EDITORIAL

This is a special issue of *Medieval Settlement Research*, as it celebrates the 30th anniversary of the Medieval Settlement Research Group (MSRG) (Fig. 1). Thirty years is a respectable age, but in fact the MSRG's origins can be traced back even further, all the way back to 1952, when its precursor, the Deserted Medieval Village Research Group (DMVRG), was founded. As such, the MSRG has a claim to be the oldest research group in the UK with a specialist focus on the medieval period, even predating the Society for Medieval Archaeology, founded in 1957 with input from members of the DMVRG.

To acknowledge the Group's 30th anniversary, this issue of *MSR* starts with a paper on the origin and development of the MSRG, written by Chris Dyer, one of the Group's Honorary Vice-Presidents whose active involvement has spanned several decades. As Dyer points out eloquently, one of the main strengths of the MSRG (and its precursors) has always been the pursuit of multi-disciplinary and interdisciplinary research, and in many ways the current issue of *MSR* is a microcosm of the Group's interests and development. The papers included here range from place-name and settlement-plan analysis (e.g. Lane†; Seaman; Simmons; Wrathmell) to scientific method (e.g. Jansma *et al.*; Mays), and include a report of a conference held in 2015 that was jointly organised by the MSRG and the Society for Church Archaeology (Everson and Stocker). Amongst the papers is also what one might consider a 'traditional' excavation report on a Deserted Medieval Village (DMV) (Gerrard and Agate), followed by Carenza Lewis's now-familiar annual report on test pit excavations in Currently Occupied Rural Settlements (CORS), representing a different era in the Group's history, which was marked by the transition of its name from DMVRG to MVRG (see Dyer). Appropriately, this issue includes a return to Wharram Percy, the Group's flagship excavation, as well, but this time to shed new light on old finds using new scientific methods, getting us one step closer to the beliefs, fears and superstitions of the people who lived there. These days, not all contributing authors are members of the MSRG, bearing witness to the important impact on landscape and settlement studies that the MSRG, through its journal *MSR*, continues to make within the British Isles and Ireland and also further afield.

This issue celebrates the MSRG's history, but it also looks forward. Continuing a long-standing tradition of supporting early career researchers, also included here is an excellent paper by last year's John Hurst Dissertation Prize winner, Norma Oldfield, on the relationship between authority and parish church foundation in the Danelaw, and a report on an early medieval postgraduate conference, organised by several Oxford-based DPhil students and part-funded by the MSRG (Mallet *et al.*). In addition, several new exciting projects are announced, such as the FeedSax project, which deploys new scientific methodologies to improve understanding of Anglo-Saxon farming practices (Hamerow), and a project looking at the material culture of later medieval households (Forward and Jervis). Finally, we are delighted to announce that – thanks to the dedicated efforts of Andy Ford – the Annual Bibliography has returned, both for 2015 and 2016, bringing the sequence again up to date.

The last year has seen much change, with some long-serving committee members standing down and new ones coming in, including a new Secretary (Susan Kilby), a new Treasurer (Andy Seaman) and a new Editor (Letty ten Harkel). Standing on the shoulders of veritable giants, there are undoubtedly many challenges ahead, but we hope to continue the MSRG's pivotal role in the development of medieval settlement and landscape studies in Britain and abroad.

One of the initiatives to keep us moving into the 21st century whilst preserving our illustrious past has been a digitisation project to make all the back issues of reports of the DMVRG, the MVRG and the Moated Sites Research



Figure 1 Photograph of the MSRG's 30th anniversary cake, expertly cut by its past and present Presidents, from left to right: Mark Gardiner, Paul Stamper, Chris Dyer, Paul Everson, and Bob Silvester (current President) (photograph by Carenza Lewis).

Group freely available on-line, through the Archaeological Data Service (ADS) (<https://doi.org/10.5284/1017430>). For this, a special thank you must be extended to Sarah Mallet, who painstakingly unstapled, scanned and re-stapled several boxes of paper reports, and rendered the scans into searchable PDF documents; to Helen Worrell, the librarian who let us take the boxes out of Oxford's Sackler Library, one of the few places that still holds a complete run; and to Louisa Matthews of the ADS, for her support and assistance.

Hand-in-hand with this went the decision to create the possibility to publish Open Access with immediate effect, a requirement of many academic funding bodies nowadays. All issues of *MSR* will be added to the ADS archive after an embargo of 2 years anyway, but authors can now also request to have their paper freely available from the moment of publication (for a fee). For more information, please do not hesitate to contact the Editor (medieval.settlement.research@gmail.com).

One of the most important assets of the MSRSG has always been the fact that it brings together people of different walks of life and different generations, united in a shared interest in the settlements and landscapes of the medieval past. Whether excavating or surveying, meeting at conferences or in the pub, in addition to research, much fun has traditionally also been had. Let us therefore end on a slightly lighter note, and draw your attention to the *Ode to the MSRSG*, composed for the occasion of the MSRSG's 30th anniversary by the Group's previous Secretary, Neil Christie, which can also be found on our website:

MSRSG ODE

MSRSG's 30 That's a good ol' age to be Young enough to challenge Matured to nod sagely	Conferences and seminars Both Spring and in Winter Plus field visits by keen members Whom mud will ne'er deter
A group of many members Some active others merely there Some with fieldwork blisters And others with less hair	From scrutinising sites of Mid Ages Like moat or monastery, Hedges or field systems or A passing DMV
A Group that's made a big mark In a variety of fields Erudite and vocal In intellectual yields	And from early modes of publishing To inform the members wide So grew the Group's Annual Report With staples down the side
We've generated knowledge We've nurtured some great minds We've encouraged younger scholars We've published lots of times	First typed up by young Dyer On those photostatted sheets Plus record cards and indexes To put Group on its feet
From Beresford to John Hurst Those lords of Wha' Percy To the famous C C Taylor And even Gardiner and Christie	But now of course it's grander Research reports, reviews, A journal of high standard Thanks to Lewis, Turner and – you.
There's Presidents aplenty Have shone out a beacon From Dyer, Stamper, Rippon To Silvester, Everson	So there's so much here to celebrate As this fine Group hits 30 Not just names past and present But the future ones plenty
Many names awash with knowledge And with greying locks as well Still knocking round the corridors To cast their worldly spell	To keep the Group in fine fettle To nurture knowledge new To build on these three decades Yet with so much still to do
Plus figureheads of wisdom – Hey, please, pray, do not mock – Editors and Treasurers Like Turner and Glasscock	So, happy birthday, MSRSG From groupies everywhere, Keep on going, flourish, Be bold and get out there!
Or Prof Carezza Lewis And Alan Aberg too - This MSRSG's been mighty, A truly rich Who's Who!	<i>By Neil Christie, December 2016</i>

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ANNOUNCEMENTS

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The MSRG AGM and Winter Seminar 2017

The Winter Seminar will take place on 9 December 2017, hosted by the Centre for English Local History at the University of Leicester. The seminar will be preceded by the AGM from 11.30 am. Papers will be presented on the theme of 'Animals in Medieval Settlements'. For details of how to register see: <http://medieval-settlement.com/events>.

OTHER MSRG EVENTS

The 2018 Spring Conference will be on the theme of 'Forest and Settlement' and will take place at Canterbury Christ Church University between 20 and 22 April. The programme and registration information will be made available via the MSRG website.

The MSRG will be sponsoring a number of sessions and a Round Table discussion at the 2018 Leeds International Medieval Congress, following on from successful sessions at the 2017 congress. The theme for 2018 is 'Memory', and our sessions will explore how settlement and landscapes reveal memories of past habitation and how the landscape was used as a repository for memory for people in the Middle Ages. For further information, see the website and social media.

RESEARCH GRANTS

The group can make grants up to a maximum of £500 annually for the support of research by members of the Group within its field of interest. Preference will normally be given to field survey, documentary research and preparation of graphics rather than to excavation and the preparation of reports for publication. A summary report of the work will be required within a year and, subject to editorial consideration, may be published in *Medieval Settlement Research*. Applicants should apply by letter (4 copies) summarising the proposed research and the costs involved. Mention should be made of other applications for funding. The names of two referees should be included. Applications should be addressed to the Secretary, Dr Susan Kilby, to be received by 1 June or 1 December, six months before work is due to be carried out. Applicants will normally be notified of the outcome within three months.

MEMORIAL PRIZES AND BURSARIES

John Hurst Memorial Prize

The Medieval Settlement Research Group is dedicated to enhancing our understanding of the rural landscape and its settlement in the period *c.* AD 400–1600. The late John Hurst was a major figure in the development of the Group and in his honour, and to encourage new and young scholars, an annual prize of £200 is offered for the best Masters dissertation on any theme in the field of medieval settlement and landscape exploitation in Britain and Ireland. MA directors in Archaeology, English Local History, Landscape Studies or related fields are encouraged to submit high quality, complete dissertations by students in the academic year 2016–17 to the MSRG Secretary by 31 December 2017. A panel will judge the entries and an award will be made at the end of March 2018. A summary of the winning entry may also be published in *Medieval Settlement Research*.

Maurice Beresford Memorial Bursaries

In accordance with its aims and in memory of Maurice Beresford, pioneer in medieval settlement studies and a founder member, the Group awards as many as four bursaries annually up to the value of £100 to help to defray the expenses of attending a conference within the field of the Group's interests. Applicants must be registered as full-time or part-time students. Applications, including full details of the venue, topic and costs of the conference and its relevance to the applicant's interests, together with the name of a referee, should be submitted in writing to the MSRG Secretary by 1 June or 1 December. A panel appointed by the Committee of the Group will decide on the awards. Successful applicants should note that cheques will be sent only after attendance at the conference and after verification of the costs involved.

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Next year's journal will once again include refereed research articles and reports on fieldwork, excavation and other work undertaken during 2017. All submissions should be focused on topics relevant to the core interests of the MSRG, which is medieval settlement and landscape in Britain, Ireland and the rest of Europe (*c.* 5th to 16th centuries AD). Please submit all copy to the MSRG Editor by **1 April 2018**. Please note:

- **Research Articles** should be 3,000–6,000 words in length. All submissions to this section are fully peer-reviewed by *at least* one external reviewer *and* one member of the MSRG committee.
- Short items for **Reports** summarising fieldwork or projects should be kept concise, generally no more than 1,000–2,000 words plus one or two illustrations (unless the work is of a scale that necessitates a longer article – for example reports on major projects).
- Submissions should adhere to the **journal's guidelines**, which can be downloaded from <https://medieval-settlement.com/publications/journal/>. Alternatively, a hard copy can be obtained from the journal's Editor.
- Please do not hesitate to contact the Editor on medieval.settlement.research@gmail.com at an early stage for advice on your submission.

