

Dr Chris Callow BA, PhD (Birmingham)

Lecturer in Medieval History

[Department of History \(/schools/historycultures/departments/history/index.aspx\)](/schools/historycultures/departments/history/index.aspx)

Contact details

Telephone [+44 \(0\)121 41 45934](tel:+441214145934) (tel: [+44 121 41 45934](tel:+441214145934))

Email c.p.callow@bham.ac.uk (mailto: c.p.callow@bham.ac.uk)

Twitter [@farmerviking](http://twitter.com/@farmerviking) (<http://twitter.com/@farmerviking>)

Arts Building
University of Birmingham
Edgbaston
Birmingham
B15 2TT
UK



About

I have research interests in the early middle ages with particular specialisms in Iceland and the Vikings.

Biography

I have been in my current post since 2005. Before that I held temporary positions in the Institute of Archaeology and Antiquity at Birmingham – including at the Ironbridge Institute – and at Birkbeck College and UCL. I have been a member of the Council of the **Viking Society for Northern Research** (<http://www.le.ac.uk/ee/viking/>) (2009-12). I was a founder member of Birmingham's medieval studies research centre, **Centre for the Study of the Middle Ages (CeSMA)**. (<http://www.cesma.bham.ac.uk/>)

CeSMA offers an **MA in Medieval Studies** (<http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/students/courses/postgraduate/taught/history/medieval-studies.aspx>) which offers a variety of pathways

From 2005-8 I was the University of Birmingham's research champion for its Collaborative Research Network in Heritage, Cultural Production and Interpretation which fostered new interdisciplinary research projects in the arts and humanities. My first book, *Landscape, Tradition and Power in Medieval Iceland* is under contract with Brill. I am currently writing a second book, *The Viking Diaspora* (OUP) will present a new view of the viking phenomenon.

Teaching

Undergraduate

First year

- Discovering the Middle Ages
- Living in the Middle Ages
- Practising History (Heroes and Villains: Medieval Outlaws)
- Old Norse (available as an undergraduate Module Outside the Main Discipline (MOMD) and as part of the MA in Medieval Studies)

Second year

- Option: Marriage, Sex and Death: the family 300-900
- Group Research: Ethnicity and Identity in the early medieval world
- Ancient and Medieval History in Theory and Practice

Third year

- Special Subject: Viking Age and Later Medieval Iceland
- Option: The Viking World

Postgraduate

- Approaches to Medieval History
- Approaches to Medieval Studies
- Conquest, Colonisation and Identity: Eurasian Frontiers in Texts and Material Culture
- Vikings in the North Atlantic

Postgraduate supervision

I would welcome research students on a wide range of issues in the history and archaeology of early medieval western Europe, the Vikings and medieval Iceland and Scandinavia. Research proposals on the social, cultural or economic history within particular medieval regions or communities would also be possible. I have published on the writing of history in the middle ages would be interested in supervising similar topics on medieval narratives.

Current doctoral research topics:

- pre-industrial farming practices in Iceland (Bernadette McCooey)
- literate culture in medieval Scandinavia (Ryder Patzuk-Russell)

Past students: Dr Emma Southon (The early medieval family), viva passed without corrections, December 2012. Co-supervised with Dr Mary Harlow.

Research

Adobe Flash Player or QuickTime is required for video playback. [Get the latest Flash Player](#) [Get the latest version of QuickTime](#)

[Transcript \(accessibility/transcripts/artsandlaw/history/chris-callow.aspx\)](http://www.bham.ac.uk/accessibility/transcripts/artsandlaw/history/chris-callow.aspx)

My central research interest is the society and economy of Iceland, especially of the medieval period and wider issues which stem more or less directly from this including:

- interdisciplinary approaches to early medieval European economic and social history
- narratives; saga literature, including Sagas of Icelanders and Sturlunga saga
- aspects of cultural resource management and the reception of the Vikings and the middle ages generally
- history and man-made climate change

I was a member of the AHRC-funded **Viking Identities Network** (<http://vin.nottingham.ac.uk/>) (2006-9) led by Prof. Judith Jesch (School of English, University of Nottingham) and as part of this I organised the research seminar on modern perceptions of vikings which was held in Birmingham in December 2007.

I have also worked on the family and childhood in the period c.300-c.1200CE partly in collaboration with **Dr Mary Harlow** (<http://www.arch-ant.bham.ac.uk/staff/harlow.htm>), in recent years giving papers on particular aspects of this at the Leeds International Congress, at the **Oikos-Familia conference in Göteborg** (<http://www.iaa.bham.ac.uk/news/conferences/oikosfamilia/index.shtml>) and the **Gender and Medieval Studies conference** (<http://www.medievalgender.co.uk/>).

Other activities

- AHRC Peer Review College member
- Fellow of the Royal Historical Society
- Friends of Birmingham Archives and Heritage (FOBAH) committee member
- co-organiser of the Midlands Viking Symposium, an annual spring conference run jointly with Leicester and Nottingham universities presenting the latest academic research to the public.
- organiser of 'An End to History?' a public conference which acted as a forum for academics and activists met to discuss action on man-made climate change in 2008 and which led to the publication an edited volume, **History at the End of the World?** (<http://rescue-history-from-climate-change.org/PDFs/HistoryAtTheEnd.pdf>). This conference has formed part of the ongoing activities of the **Rescue!History** (<http://rescue-history-from-climate-change.org/index.php>) network; another conference will take place in June 2014 at the Birmingham and Midland Institute. Further details to follow.

Publications

- *Landscape, Tradition and Power in Medieval Iceland c.870-c.1262* (Brill, in preparation)
- *The Viking Diaspora* (Oxford University Press, expected 2014)
- (with Emma Southon & Mary Harlow), 'The Family in the Late Antique West: A Historiographical Review' in S. Tougher & L. Brubaker (eds), *Approaches to the Byzantine Family* (2013), 109-130
- (with Mary Harlow) 'Left-Over Romans: The Life Course in the Late Antique West' in M. Harlow & L. Larsson Lovén (eds), *Families in the Roman and Late Antique World* (Continuum, 2012), pp.221-37.
- 'Putting women in their place? Gender, Landscape, and the Construction of Landnámabók', *Viking and Medieval Scandinavia* 7 (2011) 7-28.
- 'Iceland's medieval coastal market places: Dögurðarnes in its economic, social and political context' in Jan Brendalsmo, Terje Gansum and Finn-Einar Eliassen (eds), *Strandsteder, utvikinglingssteder og Småbyer i vikingtid, middelalder og tidlig nytid (ca. 800-ca.1800)* (Oslo, 2010), pp. 213-29.
- 'People, climate and landscape in medieval Iceland and beyond' in Mark Levene, Rob Johnson & Penny Roberts (eds), **History at the End of the World?** (<http://rescue-history-from-climate-change.org/PDFs/HistoryAtTheEnd.pdf>). (Humanities-Ebooks, LLP, Penrith, 2010), pp. 53-66.
- (with Jeff Mouhot) '**How big changes are made. What history can teach us about how we can cope with dramatic social and environmental change**', **BBC History Magazine 9.7 (July 2008), 42** (http://rescue-history-from-climate-change.org/PDFs/bbc_history_July2008.pdf), 9.7 (July 2008), 42
- 'Childhood in the Viking Age North Atlantic' in S. Crawford & G. Shepherd (eds), *Children, Childhood and Society* (Oxford, 2007), 45-55.
- 'Geography, communities and socio-political organisation in medieval northern Iceland' in Wendy Davies, Andrew Reynolds & Guy Halsall (eds), *People and Space in the Middle Ages* (Turnhout, 2006), pp. 65-86.
- 'First steps towards an archaeology of children in Iceland', *Archaeologia Islandica* 5 (2006), 55-74.
- 'Reconstructing the past in medieval Iceland', *Early Medieval Europe* 14.3 (2006), pp. 297-324.
- 'Narrative, Contact, Conflict and Co-existence: Norwegians in thirteenth century Iceland' in J. Adams & K. Holman (eds) *Scandinavians and Europe 800-1350: Contact, Conflict and Co-existence* (Turnhout, 2004), pp. 323-32.

Reviews

- In *Reviews in History*, *European Review of History*, *Early Medieval Europe*, *Saga-Book of the Viking Society*, *History*.

[Privacy](#) | [Legal](#) | [Cookies and cookie policy](#) | [Accessibility](#) | [Site map](#) | [Website feedback](#) | [Charitable information](#)

© University of Birmingham 2015

