



INSTITUTE OF  
HISTORICAL  
RESEARCH

SCHOOL OF  
ADVANCED STUDY  
UNIVERSITY  
OF LONDON



# Remembering Susan Reynolds

19 April 2023

Institute of Historical Research



**Susan Reynolds** (1929-2021) was one of the leading figures in medieval history over the past forty years. Susan changed the way historians think about the middle ages. She believed the typical description taught in primary schools – a vertical diagram descending from king to barons to knights to peasants – was misleading.

This symposium event will bring together a diverse range of scholars to reflect upon Susan's career as a historian, her impact upon medieval history. Her most famous book, *Fiefs and Vassals: the Medieval Evidence Reinterpreted* (1994) influenced the teaching of medieval history, and academic discussions of 'Feudalism' (or the 'F' word, as her colleagues came to call it, and countless students came to think of it),

punctuated a varied career. This career began with the Victoria County History of Middlesex and encompassed secondary school teaching, research and teaching at Oxford, as well as a key role in the life of the Institute of Historical Research following her early retirement from Oxford in 1986.

There will be three roundtable panels through the afternoon, with discussants focusing on different aspects of Susan as a colleague, teacher, and friend through her long and varied career; her attachment to the IHR and finally, her legacy, together with words from Susan herself. We hope to welcome everyone, whether you have personal memories of Susan, or simply found her work inspiring.

The afternoon symposium will be followed by a reception, hosted by the IHR.

You can read articles relating to Susan on the IHR Blog: On History

**[blog.history.ac.uk/2021/08/remembering-susan-reynolds/](https://blog.history.ac.uk/2021/08/remembering-susan-reynolds/)**

**[blog.history.ac.uk/2021/09/pauline-stafford-on-the-social-media-response-to-susan-reynolds-death/](https://blog.history.ac.uk/2021/09/pauline-stafford-on-the-social-media-response-to-susan-reynolds-death/)**

You can read the interview transcript from 27 March 2008 (played in session 3)

**[archives.history.ac.uk/makinghistory/resources/interviews/Reynolds\\_Susan.html](https://archives.history.ac.uk/makinghistory/resources/interviews/Reynolds_Susan.html)**

# Wednesday 19 April 2023

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## 13.45–14.00 Registration

Outside the Wolfson Conference Suite, IHR

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## 14.00–14.05 Welcome

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## 14.05–15.00 Session 1: Susan Reynolds: Teacher, Colleague, Friend

**Chair:** Adam Chapman (IHR)

- **Pauline Stafford** (Liverpool, recorded)
  - **Frances Lannon** (Lady Margaret Hall)
  - **Janet Loengard** (Moravian College – via Zoom)
  - **Gene Garthwaite** (Dartmouth College – via Zoom)
  - **Elizabeth AR (Peggy) Brown** (Brooklyn College and the Graduate School, CUNY–via Zoom)
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## 15.00–15.30 Break

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## 15.30–16.30 Session 2: The London Years

**Chair:** Claire Langhamer (IHR)

- Susan and the IHR: A Reflection from **David Bates**
  - Susan Reynolds and the VCH: **Adam Chapman** (IHR)
  - The Early Medieval Seminar: **Alice Rio** (KCL), **Paul Fouracre** (Manchester) and **Alan Thacker** (IHR)
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## 16.30–17.00 Break

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## 17.00–18.15 Session 3: Susan Reynolds: Work and Legacy

**Chair:** Simon Trafford (IHR)

- **Susan Reynolds** – In her own words (recorded)
  - **John Gillingham** (LSE)
  - **Alice Taylor** (KCL)
  - **David D'Avray** (UCL) - Addendum
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## 18.15–18.30 Closing remarks

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## 18.30–19.30 Reception (IHR Common Room)

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