

## **Old and New Beliefs in Medieval Scandinavia**

**Dr Alaric Hall**

Scandinavia was one of the last parts of Europe to convert to Christianity, and the Scandinavians knew it. The cultural tension between Christianity and traditional beliefs was a driving force behind Iceland's production of one of Europe's most remarkable bodies of poetry and prose. Literate, Christian Icelanders bequeathed us our main body of evidence for the reconstruction of northern Europe's pagan past, presenting a rich world of gods, heroes, monsters and supernatural women. But for whom were these texts originally composed, and why? How did their meanings change in the hands of the Christian Scandinavians who preserved them? Meanwhile, Icelanders wrote Christian texts which challenge mainstream ideas of modern Christian orthodoxy, and their medieval beliefs have continued to be reworked in modern literature. No prior experience of historical study is required or expected.

**Start date:** Monday 3 June and running every Monday for six weeks

**End date:** Monday 8 July

**Time:** 6.00 – 8.00pm

For full details of fees and how to register, please visit the Lifelong Learning Centre's website: <http://www.llc.leeds.ac.uk/public-engagement/spring-into-summer>.