



Notes from the President

This newsletter contains a lot of information on membership and admin. matters including an update on subscription changes and the upcoming annual conference in Taunton as well as interesting news of pottery production sites in Pembrokeshire and Buckinghamshire.

Some of our projects will hopefully come to fruition this year; the Standard for Pottery Analysis in Archaeology produced jointly by MPRG and the Prehistoric and Roman pottery groups will be published in time for our conference, it sets out clear requirements for the retrieval, treatment, analysis and archiving of pottery and will be a standard to follow for those involved in carrying out and monitoring archaeological work. A programme of pottery training days is being planned for November in Bristol and it is hoped similar courses can be held elsewhere in the UK next year.

Medieval Ceramics 35 was published last month and thanks are due to Derek Hall our retired Co-Editor for seeing this through to completion; the Editorial Committee are busy working on no.36 due out later this year, contributions to the journal are always welcome so please see Ben's note in this newsletter. After many years service on the committee, initially as assistant editor and then Co-Editor, Chris Jarrett is standing down at the AGM. Chris has played a key role in producing the Occasional Paper series and Medieval Ceramics and MPRG is very grateful for all his time and hard work.

If you would like to become involved in helping run the Group and its activities please see the notes below from Alice and Andy. New members of Council will be elected at the AGM which will take place during the conference on Tuesday 21st June 12.30pm at the Brewhouse Centre in Taunton, we hope to see as many of you there as possible.

As always please let Alice know if you would like to contribute to our newsletter, she is always very pleased to receive news and features. The next newsletter will be in the summer and if people would like to include anything the deadline is the end of July.

Julie Edwards

Phil Jones

It was with great shock and sadness that we heard of the sudden death of Phil Jones at the end of January. Phil was a long-standing member of MPRG, and latterly had served as a Council member for several years. He was one of those rare specialists who covered all periods of pottery, but not only that, he was also a flint specialist, and an accomplished draughtsman, preparing all his own finds illustrations. A maverick in all the best senses of the word, Phil was single-minded in his pursuit of knowledge, and uncompromising in his belief that all archaeological work, including pottery analysis, should be done to the highest standards. In an era of commercialised archaeology and tight budgets, this inevitably brought him into conflict with others, and he could be blunt in his criticism of others whom he saw as failing the standard. But he was also unstinting in his advice and encouragement, and in sharing his knowledge, and his presence at meetings could always be guaranteed to enliven the discussion. The world is a poorer place for the loss of one who had such a passion for his subject, and a desire to share that passion with others. His passing, and the loss of his huge experience, will be most deeply felt.

Lorraine Mepham

Note from the Assistant Treasurer

Thank you to everyone who responded so quickly to the change in subscription fees to £30 from 2016/17. There have been one or two glitches regarding both under and over payment and I will be contacting people individually in the coming weeks to discuss these issues.

Since the subscription change mailout I have received a number of queries regarding membership. I am striving to resolve these as quickly as possible. If you have any questions regarding your membership, need to update your contact details or if you do not think you are paying the correct fee, please contact me at sian.iles@museumwales.ac.uk so that I may seek to resolve any problems you may be experiencing.

Medieval Ceramics 35 was sent out to the membership at the end of March. If you have not received your copy please contact me and I will be able to resolve this.

Sian Iles

MPRG Website Update and Appeal

We are planning on reviewing the way in which we manage the MPRG website and as part of this process we are also looking to update its current format. Having discussed the issue at the last council meeting in February it was agreed that we would send a call out to you all.

We are looking for someone to take on the job of re-designing the website and as part of this the person will be required to maintain and update content accordingly. As part of the role the person would be co-opted onto Council and required to attend council meetings which happen three times a year. If anyone is interested in taking on this role please send a letter/email of interest to me at: jeepsteralice@googlemail.com.

Alice Forward

Call for Council Members

The MPRG Council is subject to re-election at the AGM. This means that every year there is the opportunity for new (or old) faces to assist in managing the activities of the group. The work and time that Council members put in is invaluable to the success and survival of the Group. This year we have vacancies for an Editor, Assistant Editor and two Ordinary Members of Council. Nominations, including names of a proposer and seconder need to be received by the Secretary by Monday 25th April (andrew.sage@dunelm.org.uk).

Andrew Sage

A one-day conference at Doncaster Museum

14th May 2016 11.00am to 3.45pm

Following successful meetings in 2013 and 2014, another short conference on pottery will be at Doncaster Museum on 14th May 2016. The format will be similar to previous years; twenty-minute papers followed by discussion and the opportunity to view and handle material from the museum's unique reserve collections. In response to popular demand, the scope of the papers has been widened this year to include prehistoric and Roman material. To date, the following speakers have confirmed their attendance:

- *Dr Kevin Cootes : Ceramic Production, Distribution and Prehistoric Society in the Peak District National Park*
- *Ian Rowlandson (Freelance): Recent work on Roman pottery in South Yorkshire*
- *Anne Jenner (YAT): Eighteenth century pottery from Rutson Hospital, Northallerton*

The list will be updated as and when other speakers confirm.

Travel, car parking and other details can be found on the Doncaster Museum website

www.doncaster.gov.uk/services/culture-leisure-tourism/doncaster-museum-and-art-gallery.

Tea and coffee will be served during the day and the nearby town centre offers numerous options for lunch.

Chris Cumberpatch

MPRG Conference: Taunton 2016

This year's conference will be held in Taunton from Monday 20th to Wednesday 22nd June, on the subject of 'Production and Consumption of Medieval and Post-medieval Pottery from South-West Britain'. The first two days will be devoted to speakers and pottery viewing, and will include a session on methods of characterising pottery using various scientific techniques. The third day will feature a coach trip to Barnstaple Museum to view the slipware collection. There are still slots available for speakers, so do please send in a title and short abstract (preferably no longer than 20 minutes, but we can accommodate some 30 minute papers).

As the conference will take place immediately before the Glastonbury festival, accommodation in Taunton may get booked up, so we advise members to book early if they intend to attend the conference www.visitsomerset.co.uk/taunton/accommodation.

Lorraine Mepham
l.mepham@wessexarch.co.uk

Medieval Ceramics 36: Call for Papers

Do you have some research that you would like to publish in Medieval Ceramics? If so we are always looking for contributions and the next deadline is approaching. We welcome papers on medieval and early modern pottery from anywhere in the world of around 3000-6000 words. We publish extended pottery reports, analyses of scientific data and broader research articles on ceramic themes. The next deadline for submission is June 2016 and papers are to be sent to the Assistant Editor, Ben Jervis, at jervisb@cardiff.ac.uk

Ben Jervis

Regional Groups

But for a few isolated meetings, the MPRG regional groups have been relatively quiet in recent years. The MPRG committee would like to reawaken interest in them. Group meetings are a fantastic opportunity for members to get together to discuss and present findings of research in the region and to handle pottery from recent excavations and museum collections.

As the Regional Groups Officer I would like to hear from anyone who would be interested in attending a regional meeting. Please drop me a short email stating which Regional Group's meetings you would be interested in and I will collate and forward the details to the relevant organiser.

The groups are: East Midlands and North-East Region; South and East Midlands and East Anglia; North-West Region; South-West Region; South-Central England; London Area; Wales; Scotland; and the West Midlands.

Gareth Perry
gareth.perry@sheffield.ac.uk

Buckinghamshire Potteries

Members may be interested to learn of a paper, 'Buckinghamshire pots, potters and potteries 1200-1910', recently published in the *Records of Buckinghamshire* (2015), 161-234. The article lists all of Buckinghamshire's known and likely production sites, utilising a range of sources both published and unpublished including field names. For later periods trade directories and censuses have also been searched. Where products are known they are briefly noted but the article's principal focus is on location.



Photo of a highly decorated Brill jug

The long-lived and widely distributed products of the Brill-Boarstall industry are well-known; less well known is the occurrence of waster vessel sherds at Penn that are of the same period as the hugely-productive decorated floor-tile industry. It is suggested that some later country potteries, such as those of the Coleshill-Winchmore Hill area also in the Chilterns, and which had a considerable post-medieval output first recorded in 1615, may well have had antecedents.



Photo showing the excavated remains of the Ley Hill Kiln

Several early volumes of *Records* are on line at www.bucksas.org.uk. Copies of more recent volumes such as the above, are available from the Buckinghamshire Archaeological Society, County Museum, Church Street, Aylesbury HP20 2QP (£18.50 including p&p, cheques payable to: Buckinghamshire Archaeological Society). The potteries article will be made available as a PDF on the Society's website during June.

Barbara Hurman and Mike Farley

The Medieval Pottery Kiln in Newport, Pembrokeshire

David Dawson and I were invited to visit Newport in Pembrokeshire recently to see the Newport Medieval Kiln. This extraordinary survivor is remarkably complete and has been hidden in plain sight under the Memorial Hall in Newport since 1920. It is now the subject of an appeal for funds to conserve and present it to the public.

In 1920, during construction of the hall, builders uncovered two pottery kilns one of which was very well preserved. The kilns were published in note form with a sketch plan of the more complete one drawn by Mortimer Wheeler and a medieval date suggested. The limited knowledge of kilns, especially post-Roman ones, in the early 20th century meant that the potential for interpretation was limited. It was presented as a drum-shaped structure with a single firebox.

The continued preservation of the kiln is remarkable. The people of Newport were clearly pleased with this addition to their history and decided to preserve the more complete kiln within the basement of the building. It would have been the only site of its kind in Wales and one of a handful in Britain as a whole. It remains amongst a very small number of historic pottery kilns recorded in Wales. Added to this is the exceptional level of preservation that rivals anything else in Britain.

MEDIAEVAL POTTERY KILN
AT NEWPORT PEMBROKE SHIRE

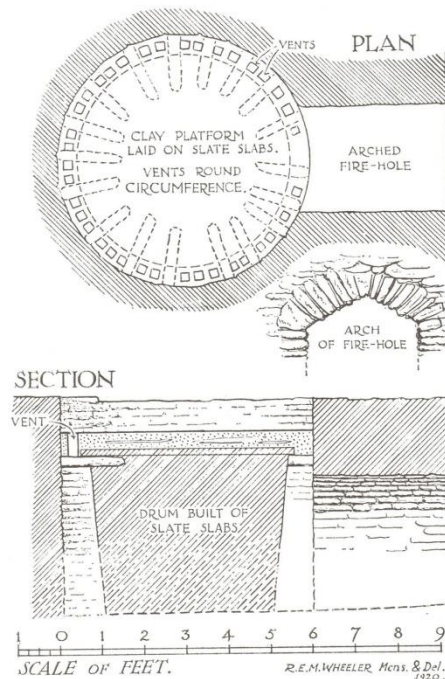


FIG. 50

(Reproduced by kind permission of Sir Mortimer Wheeler and the National Museum of Wales.)

Plan published in Talbot (1968)

The kiln sits within the foundations of the stage area of the hall. The excavated area covers the complete firebox, the whole of the combustion chamber and the ware-chamber floor. It is built of shale and consists of a circular outer wall cut into by the firebox and containing a central drum. Around the drum is a flue bridged by ceramic bars supporting the floor. An internal examination by potter Karen Slade in 2013 drew attention to the presence of an unrecorded internal wall cutting off the flue at the mid-line of the combustion chamber, dividing it in half at right-angles to the firebox. This seems to have the first time anyone had compared Wheeler's drawings with the kiln itself. Karen suggests (and we agree) that this implies a second firebox under the unexcavated part of the undercroft.

Eric Talbot and John Musty republished Wheeler's drawing in *Post-Med Arch* (1968) as part of a review of post-Roman pottery production in Wales. They suggested a late 14th/15th century date. It is a pity Musty did not actually visit the site because he might have questioned Wheeler's drawings. Closely related kilns include 17th-century ones from Donyatt in Somerset (Coleman-Smith and Pearson 1988), one excavated at Bridge Farm Nurseries, Ewenny (Lewis 1982), the 18th-century kiln at Dunster (Dawson and Kent 2007) and the 19th-century Ewenny kiln at St Fagans.

www.museumwales.ac.uk/stfagans/buildings/pottery

Given these parallels for Newport and the pottery associated with it, it seems Talbot's date is a bit early and that a late 15th/early 16th century date is more likely.

This is such a worthwhile project. It is extraordinary that a site excavated in the 1920s is still intact and available for study. The emergence of the ceramic technology of the Industrial Revolution was on the back of earlier innovations that are hard to trace. To have an early kiln with its firebox, flue and floor structures intact is a valuable tool to develop useful interpretations of much less complete archaeology.

Website:

<http://www.newportmemorialhall.co.uk/medieval-kiln/>.

For more information contact Siobhan Ashe - Siobhan@newportmemorialhall.co.uk.

See also my blog: <http://tinyurl.com/grkckkas>

Bibliography

Coleman-Smith, R., and T. Pearson, (1988) *Excavations in the Donyatt Potteries*. Chichester: Phillimore.

Dawson, D., and O. Kent (2007) 'Animated Prospect - An 18th-century Kiln at the Pottery House in the Old Park, Dunster, Somerset.' In Finch, J.C. & K. Giles, (eds) *Estate Landscapes: Design, Improvement and Power in the Post-medieval Landscape* 4.

Lewis, J. M., (1982) *The Ewenny Potteries*. Cardiff.

Talbot, E. J., (1968) 'Welsh ceramics: a documentary and archaeological survey' *Post-Medieval Archaeology* 2.

Oliver Kent

English Ceramic Circle / MOLA

From Aldgate to Vauxhall

The production, consumption
and identification of tin-glazed
earthenware from London



London played a crucial role in the development and production of tin-glazed earthenware or delftware from the late 16th until the mid 19th century. This study day, jointly organized by MOLA and the ECC, will take a fresh look at the production, consumption and attribution of delftware, combining opportunities to examine excavated sherds and extant pieces with lectures from leading experts, including Ian Betts, Lyn Blackmore, Graham Dawson, Julie Edwards, Mike Hughes, Chris Jarrett, Nigel Jeffries, Roger Massey, Jacqui Pearce, Roy Stephenson and Rodney Woolley.

Saturday 16 April 2016 9.30am to 5.30pm

Mortimer Wheeler House, 46 Eagle Wharf Road, London N1 7ED

A sandwich lunch will be provided.

Cost: £55 per head

Spaces are limited – advance booking only: for online booking see ECC homepage,

or contact Patricia Macleod at 2 Revell Road, Cheam, Sutton SM1 2ED;

e-mail macleod.patricia@gmail.com; mobile: 07711 626472



MPRG Publications

Details of MPRG publications can be found on the MPRG website <http://www.medievalpottery.org.uk/publi.htm>

Occasional Paper 1: A Guide to the Classification of Medieval Ceramic forms (UK £27.75 excl. P&P)

Occasional Paper 2: Minimum Standards for the Processing, Recording, Analysis and Publication of Post-Roman Ceramics (UK £4.50 excl. P&P)

Occasional Paper 3: *The Harlow Pottery Industries*, by Helen Walker and Wally Davey (UK £16; Europe £18; USA £21: All include P&P)

Occasional Paper 4: *'Genius in a Cracked Pot' - Late Medieval Reduced Wares: A Regional Synthesis*, by Anna Slowikowski (UK £12; Europe £14: All include P&P)

Occasional Paper 5: *Sourcing Scottish Redwares*, by Derek Hall, George Haggarty and Simon Chenerey (UK £22.50; Europe: £24: All include P&P)

Occasional Paper 7: *The Ipswich Ware Project. Ceramics, Trade and Society in Middle Saxon England*, by Paul Blinkhornet *al.* (UK £16; Europe £20: All include P&P)

Back issues of Medieval Ceramics up to volume 32 and still in stock are available at £1; out of print volumes are free to download from: www.medievalceramics.wordpress.com currently 11 volumes are available and more will be added soon. For further information please contact Sian Iles.

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