



### Secretaries Notes

Council met at the British Museum on the 26th January and work continues on a number of projects. Two new Occasional Papers are due out shortly; Late-Medieval Reduced Wares is in press, Scottish Redwares is due out by the summer and the editorial committee are working on bringing another, Ipswich Wares by Paul Blinkhorn, to fruition in the near future. The online bibliography is now up and running with ADS (see below).

At this last meeting, Council voted to adopt a new Strategic Plan that has been developed by David Dawson and Duncan Brown; this is an important development in the work of Council as it will shape and focus Council's efforts to meet the stated aims and objectives of the Group and increase the impact that MPRG has in the wider archaeological community. Whilst on the surface it may appear that a Strategic Plan appears as just more 'management consultant speak' filtering in to the work of the Council, in fact in the current economic and political climate it sets the group on the right footing to tackle the increasing challenges that face us. It is particularly poignant that the timing of the completion of the Revised Research Strategy and Agenda for Post-Roman Ceramic Studies in Britain later this Spring should coincide with the finalisation of English Heritage's new National Heritage Protection Plan, which will seemingly pay no reference to the material culture resource and will shape English Heritage's work and funding priorities until beyond 2015. The plan continues to focus on the Groups primary aims; to inform the wider public and archaeological profession about the importance of post-Roman ceramic studies through the production of Medieval Ceramics, the Occasional Paper series, the newsletter and the website. We will also be working to revive the regional groups in those areas where they have become moribund, develop appropriate specialist and non-specialist training events, lobby to encourage good practice and work with a wider range of partner organisations to pursue our objectives.

In terms of ensuring good practice the task that still confronts us was brought home to me when after Christmas I received my copy of a local journal. A highlight was an excavation report of a significant urban site, rather less pleasing was the ten page pottery report that made no attempt to quantify the assemblage at any level! It would seem that we still have much to do in developing a broadly accepted minimum standard for the recording and publication of medieval ceramics.

Finally, contributions for the next newsletter should be sent to the assistant secretary by **Friday 15<sup>th</sup> July 2011**.

Andrew Sage Secretary

### Your Council Needs You!

There are currently four vacant positions for Ordinary Members of Council. These position offer an ideal opportunity if you want to have a more active part in the work of the Group but do not have the time to commit to an Executive officer role. The end of Duncan's first term as President also ends this year. Nominations for Ordinary Members or for President should be sent to the Secretary by the 18th April 2011.

The AGM will be held during this year's conference (see below). An agenda for the meeting will be emailed to members at least 21 days before the meeting; those who still receive their newsletter by post and wish to receive an agenda for the AGM should write or email the Secretary to request a copy, or supply a current email address. If there are any Group members who have items that they wish to be included in the agenda they should contact the Secretary by the 28th May.

Andrew Sage Secretary

### Desperately seeking ?Susan

This medallion is one of three identical ones on a Frechen stoneware Bartmann jug from a late 16th-century pit associated with a property just outside the precinct of the former Holywell Priory.

Like the film character, this figure seems to have dual aspect - apparently in female dress, but a rather male, evil-looking head. Is the object in the hand a lamp or a chalice/goblet? Do you think the image is satirical? Does it tempt the viewer to drink, or warn of its perils? If you have any ideas or any parallels, please contact Lyn (lblackmore@museumoflondon.org.uk) and you will be acknowledged in the final report!



Lyn Blackmore

## Obituaries

It is with great sadness that we report the death of three members of the group; Gareth Watkins, Geoff Egan and Jean le Patourel. Full obituaries will appear in Medieval Ceramics later this year.

### Gareth Watkins

Gareth 'Gaz' Watkins passed away in November. He is best known for his work in Hull, where he first worked as a medieval (and later) pottery researcher and then as Finds Officer for the Humberside Archaeological Unit from 1975-1996. He went on to become a genealogist, based at Hull Libraries until 2007.

Gaz made a considerable contribution to medieval and post-medieval studies during his time with the Humberside Unit, helping to significantly enhance the profile of Hull and to put it "on the map" for those outside of the region. One of his greatest, largely unsung, achievements, was to be the local organiser for the classic 1980 MPRG conference at Hull - which was not only a major coup for Hull, but also marked the coming of age of the MPRG as a more mature specialist interest group, which could have a genuinely international appeal, and not just a parochial group of, largely Southern English, pot researchers. Amongst his legacies are a pottery type series for Hull and associated publications, the 1979 BAR volume on clay tobacco pipes from Hull and reports on the pottery from Beverley.

Dave Evans

### Geoff Egan

Geoff Egan died at home over Christmas 2010. He is, of course, best known for his work on the medieval and later archaeology of London in relation to finds, with much of his major work relating to finds from the London waterfront sites. Geoff also worked with finds collected by the mudlarks on the Thames foreshore. He gained a part-time PhD from University College London for his work on medieval and post-medieval cloth seals. For some years he had worked part-time for the Portable Antiquities Scheme (PAS) as an advisor recording the finds of metal detectorists on a national database. Only a few months before his death, he moved from the Museum of London Archaeology service (MOLA) to work full-time for the PAS scheme in the BM as a specialist on medieval and later finds. Geoff was a vice-president and recent president of the Society for Post-Medieval Archaeology. He was also very active with the Finds Research Group and organised many conferences and foreign trips for them. He also served as master for a year in the newly formed guild of art scholars, dealers and collectors - a reflection of his fascination about all things relating to the London craft guilds. It was typical of Geoff's wide interests that he was also a member of the MPRG and he attended a number of conferences including that in Siena in 2008. In 1997, Medieval Ceramics published his paper from the Worcester Conference: 'Medieval Vessels of Other Materials - A Non Ceramic View'. Geoff will be fondly remembered, as a committed archaeologist, always generous with his time and knowledge and will be sadly missed.

Paul Courtenay

### Jean le Patourel

The sad news has reached us of the death, on 20 January 2011, of Mrs. H.E. Jean le Patourel, at the age of 95. Her name will always be linked with the medieval ceramics of Yorkshire and in particular the kilns which produced them. This interest in medieval culture began when her husband, John, was appointed to the Chair of Medieval History at Leeds, in 1945. Little was known

about medieval ceramics at the time and Jean le Patourel soon established herself as the regional expert, publishing specialist reports in archaeological journals which defined the main types and began to establish their distributions. She was one of the few academics to recognise the value of ceramics as part of medieval history.

But her interest in the medieval period did not begin and end with ceramics. She carried out excavations in her own right, including Knaresborough Castle, conducting documentary research and publishing on many subjects, including the moated sites and boundaries of Yorkshire. She was a Lecturer in the Department of Archaeology at Leeds University, and is remembered as an inspiring teacher by the students of her Extra-Mural and WEA classes.

A founder member of MPRG, she continued to regularly attend regional group meetings long after she had retired. Her collaboration with John Hurst led to her involvement at the deserted medieval village of Wharram Percy, where for many years she reported on the ceramic finds from the excavation.

Outwardly serious and somewhat reserved, she was a kind and generous person, who would sometimes display a wicked sense of humour. On a personal note, I can still picture her, already in her 80s, arriving at Wharram Percy in her little white camper-van. She was always very generous with her time, sharing her wide knowledge and enthusiasm for medieval history and ceramics with a mere novice. I will remember her with great admiration and gratitude.

Anna Slowikowski

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## A New Dawn for Pottery Studies in Wales

The Welsh Medieval Pottery Research group was recently revived through the 'Stoking the Kiln' conference held at the National Museum in Cardiff from 19<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup> March. The conference was exceptionally well attended, both by members of the group and members from other local societies and professional bodies. The conference kicked off with a paper by Mark Redknap reviewing the questions surrounding Vale Ware and presenting finds of stove tiles and a Cistercian Ware salt from Cardiff. Alice Forward then presented her work in to the post medieval trade across the Bristol Channel, before Peter Webster informed us about pottery from Nevern. The conference continued with an entertaining paper by Stephen Clarke which considered the evidence for itinerant potters around the Welsh borders and with Alison Kyle providing insight into questions surrounding food cultures and the adoption of pottery in early medieval Wales. Finally Paul Courtenay and Julie Edwards summarised pottery from a number of projects in Wales before Sian Iles presented an overview of the national pottery reference collection and Stephen Clarke presented another entertaining paper, this time suggesting that the characters on anthropomorphic jugs may have been suffering from toothache! The day served to demonstrate the vibrancy and variety of pottery studies in Wales, with research being presented by established old hands but also new scholars. The second day took the form of a discussion of the future for Welsh pottery studies, with discussions of topics such as training and communication dominating proceedings. The conference was a remarkably positive event and Alice Forward and Sian Iles are to be congratulated for putting together an excellent event.

After two successful days, the Medieval and Later pottery in Wales group has re-established connections between those working with Welsh material. Sunday's discussion provided much food for thought and the maintenance of the group as well as encouragement of future meetings was agreed to be necessary. With this in mind it was decided that over the next year a couple of regional meetings will be organised, bringing together those who attended the weekend as well as providing a session for people who were unable to make the conference, enabling wider access to the group. It is hoped that these sessions will lead to the establishing of training days as well as creating better contact with the Welsh Trusts. The Sunday also enabled a revision of the research strategies set and discussed in August. With the benefit of a larger group, a broadening as well as more detailed revision has been made in time for the publication of the MPRG's new regional research framework.

For further details contact Alice Forward:  
forwarda1@cardiff.ac.uk

Ben Jervis and Alice Forward

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## MPRG Forward Plan

A while ago my Presidential predecessor, Victoria Bryant, proposed a Forward Plan for the MPRG Council. This was to provide the basis for our discussions and initiatives over the next three to five years but it was never formally adopted before I became President in her place. At that point our focus shifted towards the new Research Framework as we set about re-defining wider priorities. It is time now, however, with the Research Framework becoming clearer, to look again at how Council operates and what our main activities are.

Last year, David Dawson produced a new version of the Plan and in January it was formally adopted by Council. One immediate effect has been the revising of the Council agenda, so that instead of receiving reports from Officers, we will discuss the aims of the Group. The Plan identifies five aims for the MPRG as a whole, which it is the Council's responsibility to pursue and develop. In brief, these are Dissemination (e.g. Medieval Ceramics), Education (e.g. training days), Research (e.g. European database of production centres), Discussion (e.g. the conference) and Communication (e.g. contributing to national consultation). These aims form the core of the new Council agenda.

It is our intention to post the Forward Plan on the MPRG website. One reason for doing this is because it will enable prospective Council members to see how they could contribute to the future of the MPRG. We have our AGM in June and a new Council will form thereafter, so have a look at the Plan and join in.

Duncan H. Brown President

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## North East England Medieval Pottery Project

The North East England Medieval Pottery Project was started in 2007 by Andy Sage, in association with David Heslop at Newcastle City Council. Its core purpose is to develop a regional synthesis of the nature and role of pottery in the medieval North-East.

The project sets out to address several issues which face pottery studies throughout the country:

- To address key strategic and infrastructure issues that hamper the study of medieval ceramics in the study area and provide the long-term foundation for future synthesis work on medieval pottery from Northumberland and Tyne & Wear.
- To provide a resource which researchers and specialists from outside the region can use to identify products of the study area in their own assemblages and provide the basis for inter-regional studies.
- To develop mechanisms by which the improvements made to the research infrastructure for Northumberland and Tyne & Wear can be expanded to benefit the remainder of the North East region.

It was decided to adopt a staged approach, tackling the infrastructure deficit first before developing any thematic projects and to divide the study area into two. An assessment of the resource for Northumberland was completed in early 2009 and in late summer 2010 work commenced on the detailed survey of medieval pottery from Northumberland and Tyne & Wear. It is planned for the project to be completed in the summer of 2012.

The aims of the project are to produce:

- An online Type- and Form-Series of Medieval Pottery (1050 – 1550) from Northumberland and Tyne & Wear which will become part of the HER. The type-series will be fully searchable and will be supported by photo-micrographs of major fabrics and illustrated with photographs of section breaks. The form-series will also be supported by illustrations and photographs.
- A physical Fabric Reference Collection hosted by the Great North Museum. The Fabric Reference collection will also curate the thin-sections created by the projects and act as a depository for those created by subsequent ceramic research projects in the region.

The project is holding a regional handling session on Saturday June 25th for all those interested in the project to see the initial results of the project and to get a chance to look at and discuss the proposed fabric groupings. Currently a venue is yet to be arranged as it is not clear how many people would wish to attend. If you are interested in attending could you please contact the Project Officer; Andy Sage at [andrew.sage@dunelm.org.uk](mailto:andrew.sage@dunelm.org.uk) by the end of April.

Andrew Sage

## Meetings and Announcements

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### MPRG ANNUAL CONFERENCE

Please find registration details and the programme for the MPRG annual conference, which is to be held on June 11<sup>th</sup> in London. The conference will also see the launch of the MPRG regional framework.

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### EARLY MEDIEVAL ARCHAEOLOGY STUDENTS SYMPOSIUM

The fifth Early Medieval Archaeology Students Symposium will take place at The University of Glasgow between the 25<sup>th</sup>-27<sup>th</sup> May 2011. The conference offers an opportunity for graduate students and early career professionals to present their research in an informal setting. All are welcome to attend, and the conference is keen to attract those working in the commercial sector as well as overseas delegates. For further information visit <http://www.gla.ac.uk/departments/archaeology/newslinks/emass/> or email [emass2011@gmail.com](mailto:emass2011@gmail.com)

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### FIRST MEETING ON BYZANTINE AND OTTOMAN ARCHAEOLOGY

This free conference, entitled 'Fact and Fiction in Medieval and Post-Medieval Ceramics in the Eastern Mediterranean. Are we on the right track?' will be held from 21<sup>st</sup>-23<sup>rd</sup> October at the University of Amsterdam. The conference will be accompanied by excursions, including a trip to a Delft Ware factory and a guided tour of Amsterdam. For more details contact Joanita Vroom ([j.a.c.vroom@uva.nl](mailto:j.a.c.vroom@uva.nl)).

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### THE 27TH ANNUAL CONFERENCE OF THE ACADÉMIE INTERNAIONALE DE LA PIPE

The 27th annual conference of the Académie Internationnale de la Pipe will be held in Novi Sad, Serbia from the 5th to the 8th of October 2011. Its theme will be 'The Turks abroad: the production, distribution, iconography and influence of Ottoman pipes and pipe-makers in Europe and beyond (16th to 20th century)'. The conference will be held in the City Museum within the medieval fortress of Petrovaradin. There will an opportunity to study pipe collections from museums all over Serbia and to hear of finds from recent excavated sites in the region. Papers are also invited on the subject of the much wider area of Ottoman influence beyond the Empire both in Europe and further afield. For further details or offers of papers please get in touch with Divna Gačić ([divnagacic@gmail.com](mailto:divnagacic@gmail.com)).

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### SCOTTISH ARCHAEOLOGICAL FORUM

The Scottish Archaeological Forum conference on 'The Experience of Technology' will take place at the University of Glasgow from 22<sup>nd</sup>-23<sup>rd</sup> October. The main attraction is a keynote address from Prof. Olivier Gosselain. The call for papers is open until 30<sup>th</sup> April. For further details visit: <http://www.scottisharchaeologicalforum.org.uk/>

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### SUBSCRIPTIONS: REMINDER

The treasurer would like to remind members that subscriptions were due on February 1<sup>st</sup>. If you have not yet paid, please contact the treasurer.

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### MPRG BIBLIOGRAPHY

The MPRG's bibliography is now online and can be accessed through the Archaeology Data Service at [http://archaeologydataservice.ac.uk/archives/view/mprg\\_eh\\_2010/](http://archaeologydataservice.ac.uk/archives/view/mprg_eh_2010/). We are now seeking volunteers to act as regional compilers to update the bibliography annually. For further information contact the secretary.

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### NEW BOOKS

Two new books have recently been published which may be of interest to members of the group. The first is 'A dated type series of London medieval pottery: Part 5, Shelly-sandy ware and the greyware industries', (MOLA Monograph 49) by Lyn Blackmore and Jacqueline Pearce, which is an essential reference work for those working in the London area (and beyond). The book can be purchased from MOLA ([booksales@museumoflondon.org.uk](mailto:booksales@museumoflondon.org.uk))

The second, *Gezonken als een baksteen* by Michael Bartels, Henk Dessens, Christiaan Schrickx, Dieuwetje Dujin, Martin Sluis and Timo Perger documents the archaeology of shipwreck excavated from the Zuiderzee. The volume includes reports on a large quantity of building materials and ceramics associated with the wreck. The volume costs € 17,50 and can be purchased from: [www.spa-uitgevers.nl](http://www.spa-uitgevers.nl).

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