

MEDIEVAL POTTERY RESEARCH GROUP

newsletter **77**

December 2013



Secretary's Notes

By now all members should have received their copies of Volume 33 of Medieval Ceramics. If any members have not please contact the Assistant Treasurer. Many thanks to the Editorial Committee for their work in getting this volume completed and published despite the difficulties encountered along the way. Its arrival is a timely reminder that all the work to produce the journal and to organise the Group's activities is all done by volunteers and that the Group is only as capable and as energetic as it is through their efforts. This brings me round again to the need to find new Members who would like to contribute to the work of the

Group by standing for a position on Council. This summer Duncan is due to stand down as President after an extremely productive tenure along with Ben Jervis as Assistant Secretary, Lyn Blackmore as Assistant Treasurer and George Haggarty as Meetings Secretary. It is important that those who feel they can offer the time to join Council should contact either myself or the relevant office holder in order to find out more.

Mention of the work of the Meetings Secretary inevitably brings up memories of the excellent conferences that George has taken the lead in organising over the last 5 years or so and I am in no doubt that the Group's conference in Lisbon next year will be no different. Please make sure you read the announcement in this newsletter for more details. George also took a hand in helping to organise the group from the MPRG that went to Sweden at the start of October to help work on the imported pottery in the assemblages from Lödöse. There is a more detailed report from Derek Hall elsewhere in the newsletter but I feel it incumbent upon me to publicly thank Sonja Jeffery for inviting the group and organising everything so well, resulting in a week that I hope was extremely beneficial for all those involved. The week highlighted for me how much more communication is needed between not only those studying ceramics in the UK and in the North Sea/Baltic littoral, but also between specialists in neighbouring regions of the UK, in order to improve our understanding of even major potting traditions. It seems clear that not only is the study of ceramics at risk of becoming restricted in its own silo of archaeological specialities but that with the increasing burdens placed on ceramic specialists as part of keeping up with the pace of commercial archaeology there is a very real risk of regional specialists becoming disconnected with those working in neighbouring regions.

At least with a number of posts coming up on Council there is one way in which members might feel they can make a contribution to efforts to improve dissemination, discussion and communication of ceramic studies between specialists and non-specialists alike.

Andrew Sage Secretary

MPRG Conference 2014

The 2014 annual conference will be held in Lisbon, at the Museu Nacional de Arte Antiga, from 19th-21st June. The theme of the conference is 'Medieval and later ceramic development, production and trade along the Atlantic seaboard.'

Anyone interested in presenting a paper should contact George Haggarty with a title and short abstract for consideration. **PLEASE NOTE: George has recently had a computer virus, so if you have previously contacted him, please re-send your title/abstract as it may have been lost.**

Further information about the conference will be available in the new year.

George Haggarty
haggartyg@aol.com

E-Publication of Medieval Ceramics

For some time it has been our intention to make back issues of Medieval Ceramics available in a digital format through the MPRG website. We believe that it will be of great advantage to the group for out of print and older editions of the journal to be freely available through Open Access. Whilst it is now current practice for authors to sign a

copyright form (which allows for reproduction of papers by the group) when publishing in the journal, this has not always been the case and permission has not always been sought to obtain electronic rights, as such a form of publishing was never conceived. It would exceed the resources available to the group to identify all the authors who have previously contributed to Medieval Ceramics and obtain their (or their Estate executor where an author is deceased) permission to republish their work electronically. In any case, we are very doubtful that the addresses we had at the time of publication are still current.

We are therefore writing this notice to ask for any authors who object to the proposed policy to let us know as soon as possible. If permission is withdrawn, we will agree to omit the relevant work from the scanned back archive, though we would naturally regret losing any past contribution to the journal from the digital record.

We expect this notice will be seen and read by most people involved in the activities of the Medieval Pottery Research Group, and we would be grateful if you could draw it to the attention of all your colleagues. We will be proceeding with this project from 1st March 2014, and need to ensure that notice of our intentions is disseminated widely.

David Dawson (Vice President and chair, editorial committee)
davidp@dawsonheritage.co.uk

Conference in Honour of Hilary Healey

Hilary Healey's Lincolnshire Saturday 14th June 2014 Venue to be confirmed

The Society for Lincolnshire History and Archaeology and the Heritage Trust of Lincolnshire are putting together an event celebrating the life and interests of the late Hilary Healey. The day will include illustrated talks on some of Hilary's many topics of Lincolnshire interest and an exhibition of her art works, her display boards and general items of Hilary memorabilia.

Further details will be released in early 2014. Enquires can be directed to Heritage Trust of Lincolnshire (01529) 461499.

Would you like some slipware with that? Sweden witnesses the birth of a ceramic posse.

Thanks to the kind invitations of Sonia Jeffrey and Tjorbjorn Brorsson and the organisation of George Haggarty a group of pottery specialists from England and Scotland visited Sweden in early October. Starting with a visit to Stockholm City museum stores and then the wonders of the Vasa shipwreck we were spoilt rotten from a ceramic point of view! The sliding shelves of the City museum were crammed full of slipwares, stonewares and lots and lots of stove tiles I found it a perfect introduction as to what we could expect to see over the coming week. The following day we paid our first visit to the Vasa museum to marvel at the size and scale of the ship and to peer at pottery in the exhibition cases. This has to be one of the best museum displays I have ever seen and successfully introduces you to the story of the demise of that ill-fated warship and those members of its crew who were not able to escape. Our second visit to the museum allowed us the chance to literally get behind the scenes and have a proper viewing of the ceramic assemblage. Intriguingly the assemblage also included ceramics that are of a later date than the Vasa and were presumably deposited in the wreck whilst it still lay on the bottom of Stockholm harbour.



The MPRG delegation at work in Lodose Museum

From Stockholm we caught the train across Sweden to Gothenburg where we were collected and driven north to our accommodation at Praessbo by Lodose. The following day we were then introduced to the Lodose museum and its collections and given some background to the remarkable assemblages of artefacts from the excavations of the deserted medieval town (it was moved downstream towards Gothenburg in 1470). Lodose's archaeological deposits are anaerobic and up to 5m deep which means that there are remarkable survivals from medieval everyday life in this part of Sweden. We then spent four days assessing the pottery assemblage which numbers up to 50,000 sherds. This involved us all taking up positions around a table in the museum library and passing around trays of sherds which were identified to possible provenance. Labels were written to accompany each piece on its return to storage. In summary we managed to identify a local Redware production which in terms of decoration and vessel form is highly influenced by imported fabrics. There was a very large German stoneware component to the assemblage including some material that some of us from northern Britain are not used to seeing from the production sites of Northern Saxony. We also identified a small component of Yorkshire Type Wares and a much greater preponderance of Stamford Type whitewares. There is considerable potential for a programme of chemical sourcing of this assemblage and it is to be hoped that this will take place in the near future. At the end of the week we presented our findings to a small group of Swedish archaeologists and gave them a short introduction to the Medieval Pottery Research Group.



An example of locally produced Slipware

On our final day in Sweden we started with a visit to the ongoing excavations at the site of New Lodose (where the old town moved to) where we were looked after by Christina Karlsson and Jeanette Gustavsson. Then to top everything off Tom Wennberg introduced us to the ceramics in the stores of Gothenburg museum and a tin glazed frenzy soon took over! There was so much potential for the study of a remarkable collection of virtually complete vessels that it became difficult to convince some members of the party that it was time to leave to fly back to the UK!

So all in all a fantastic week getting to grips with Swedish ceramics and on behalf of the posse I would like to thank everyone in Sweden for looking after us so well. I highly recommend a visit and suggest that anyone who is at all interested in the medieval archaeology of Europe needs to know about the remarkable material from Lodose. The posse now awaits further invitations.....

Derek Hall

Contributions to Medieval Ceramics

Contributions are always welcome to Medieval Ceramics, on a range of topics relating to the aims and scope of the group. Traditionally, the journal has included a short section of 'notes and comprendario', which has been absent for some years. We are keen to re-instate this section, for short notes on interesting pieces or particular issues and contributions are welcome. Contributions should be sent to Derek Hall (co-editor) at derek.hall1@blueyonder.co.uk.

We have also received a number of titles for review in the book review section. These are as follows:

Transforming townscapes. From burh to borough: the archaeology of Wallingford, AD 800-1400, by N. Christie, O. Creighton, M. Edgeworth and H. Hamerow. Society for Medieval Archaeology Monograph Vol 35, 2013

Pottery in Archaeology 2nd edition, Cambridge Manuals in Archaeology 2013, C. Orton and M. Hughes.

Anglo-Saxon Graves and Grave Goods of the 6th and 7th Centuries AD: A Chronological Framework, A. Bayliss, Prof J. Hines, K Hoilund Nielsen, G. McCormac, C. Scull, Society for Medieval Archaeology Monograph Vol 33, 2013.

The Medieval Cook by Bridget Ann Henisch, Boydell and Brewer Ltd, 2013.

Medieval to Early Post-Medieval tenements and Middle Eastern imports: Excavations at Plantation Place, City of London. K. Pitt with L. Blackmore, T. Dyson and R. Tyson, MOLA Monograph Series 66, 2013

Anyone interested in reviewing these titles for the journal should contact Berni Seddon (bseddon@pre-construct.co.uk).

The Editorial Committee

MPRG Member Wins Dissertation Award

At the Society for Medieval Archaeology conference in September, Kelly Green was awarded the Phillip Rahtz prize for her MA dissertation (University of Sheffield) entitled *What can the production and consumption of face-jugs in later Medieval Scarborough and its region (1200-1350 AD) tell us about the construction of masculine identities in the context of dining and drinking?*

'Less is More?' Selection Strategies for Archaeological Archives

On 14th November, the IfA London group held an event at the London Archaeological Archives resource centre to explore solutions to the storage issues faced by many museums across the country. This is a national problem, which has been exacerbated by cuts to museum funding and the explosion in the amount of archaeological work being undertaken since the introduction of PPG16 and its successors.

The LAARC event was specifically focussed on exploring solutions in relation to London, although the discussions will clearly be of relevance elsewhere. A number of MPRG members participated in the event and 2 half-day discussion sessions were held on pottery.

The results of the day are still being synthesised and will be reported upon at a later date. The discussions were wide ranging, and focussed upon the need to consider archiving from the inception of a project, the need to ensure best practice is followed and wide ranging discussions about the criteria which should be used when making difficult decisions regarding the selection and discard of archaeological materials, including questioning what it is which makes an archaeological archive significant.

The event was attended by a broad cross-section of London's archaeological community, including specialists, local authority archaeological advisors, consultants, museum staff and consultants. The results will be synthesised into a report which will feed into the forward plan for the Museum of London and a paper will also be submitted to a suitable journal. Once the results have been synthesised a summary will also be published in this newsletter.

Ben Jervis
ben.jervis@english-heritage.org.uk

Richard Coleman-Smith

We are sad to report that Richard Coleman-Smith died last Wednesday morning (27th November) after a long illness. His work on the Somerset potteries particularly those at Donyatt, and elsewhere form part of the canon of pottery studies in southern England and the eastern seaboard of the New World.

His funeral is at Merriott on Thursday 5th December.

Conference Calendar

16th-19th December 2013: Theoretical Archaeology Group conference, Bournemouth University.

19th-21st June 2013. MPRG annual conference, Lisbon (details above).

26th-28th September 2014: Conflict in Context: Archaeologies of War 1618-1918. Society for Post-Medieval Archaeology annual conference <http://www.spma.org.uk/news/call-for-papers-conflict-in-context-archaeologies-of-war-1618-1918/>

MPRG Publications

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

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 Blinkhorn *et al.* (UK £16; Europe £20: All include P&P)

Back issues of Medieval Ceramics and copies of the guide to Medieval Ceramic Forms are also available. For further information on publication sales please contact Lyn Blackmore (lblackmore@museumoflondon.org.uk)

MPRG Contacts

President Duncan Brown

13 Southcliff Rd, Southampton
e-mail: duncan.brown2@english-heritage.org.uk
Telephone: 02380 915728

Treasurer Imogen Wood

e-mail: mprgtreasurer@gmail.com

Secretary Andrew Sage

e-mail: andrew.sage@dunelm.org.uk

Assistant Treasurer Lyn Blackmore

MoLA, Mortimer Wheeler House, 46 Eagle Wharf Road, London N1 7ED
e-mail: lblackmore@museumoflondon.org.uk
Telephone: 0207 566 9312

Assistant Secretary Ben Jervis

e-mail: ben.jervis@english-heritage.org.uk

General Medieval Pottery Research Group

c/o MoLA,
Mortimer Wheeler House, 46 Eagle Wharf Road,
London N1 7E

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