



### Secretary's Notes

Pipkins are red,  
Stonewares are blue,  
**Your MPRG Council really needs you!**

Rather than write the usual set of Secretary's Notes that goes out in advance of an impending MPRG AGM, this time round I thought I would keep it short and sweet and instead direct you to a separate mailing, coming hot on the heels of this Newsletter, which will shed some light on what drives the Secretary to start penning very bad verse!

Council met again at the end of January to discuss and drive on the work of the group. These days there is a great deal to cover in meetings with the wide range of work that the Group is involved in, from managing the John Hurst Travel Fund (see this issue for more information) and liaising with the British Museum over improving access to the Alan Vince Archive, through arranging a new set of Specialist Training Courses for 2015 and developing an online type-series database, to producing the next volume of Medieval Ceramics and making out of print copies of Medieval Ceramics available online via Scribe over the next few months (please check the website for updates).

This list doesn't even cover the work to produce a new Occasional Paper on Medieval Roof Furniture and of course the efforts going into arranging this year's three-day conference in Lisbon (also see this issue for more information). Sadly these days, with the challenges that we face in funding the work we do for the benefit, not only of the membership, but for the whole of the archaeological community, much of our more recent meetings have focused on reducing costs, maximising funds and finding new ways of doing more with less. I hope that when given the opportunity that many of you will feel that the work being done by Council is something exciting that you would like to be part of come the AGM!

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.'

A full programme will follow, but a list of confirmed speakers accompanies the newsletter, along with a registration form and list of hotels in Lisbon. Note that on Sunday 22<sup>nd</sup> June there will be a fieldtrip to medieval sites in the Lisbon area.

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### John Hurst Travel Fund: Siegburg Stoneware in the economic zone of the German Hanseatic League

Christoph Kühne, a PdD student at Göttingen University is the latest recipient of the John Hurst travel fund. He used the grant to assist with his research comparing the ceramic material culture of selected inland and coastal Hansa cities.

Siegburg Stoneware is one of the most well known indicators of late medieval urban material culture. Before 1500 no other product was so widely distributed. Whilst the Hanseatic network is widely recognized as one of the catalysts for the spread of this ware, less often considered are the broader socio-economic trends which underpinned its development, for example how the plagues of the 14<sup>th</sup>-15<sup>th</sup> centuries provided the opportunities for plague survivors to promote craft and develop long distance trade

routes. Of course, pottery was just a small part of the wares traded in late medieval Europe. Siegburg Stoneware is rarely mentioned in written sources. In the Lubeck toll books, which provide important details about the goods coming in and out of the East Sea region, Siegburg Stoneware is not mentioned at all. Nevertheless, it provides an important indicator of socio-economic relationships central to this important medieval city. Starting from the heart of the Hanseatic economy, the Rhenish-Westphalian cities with its significant production centers, I was able to identify, catalog and map the distribution of Siegburg Stoneware from this heartland to the periphery, where it is an important component of assemblages from the merchant towns of Klaipeda (formerly Memel) in Lithuania, Riga in Latvia and Tallinn (formerly Reval) in Estonia. Research on this scale has not been undertaken before. The project will be completed in 2015, with a last stay in Visby on Gotland, the first center of Hansa trade in the East Sea region. The selection of cities is led by excavation activities and the accessibility of finds, which are surprisingly better in Eastern Europe than in Germany itself.

One result of my project could be the realization that although this pottery is present across the widely unified Hansa area, that there are subtleties in its distribution, but that it is present in all parts of the late medieval city, across all social classes. This phenomenon, the democratization of table culture by a cheap and everywhere available good which had obviously the same relevance for people living thousands of kilometers away from each other, is unique in this time.



**Picture 1: Funnel beaker, late 15<sup>th</sup> century, site CS15 (MOLAS)**

London was an important trading partner of Hansa merchants. The "Stalhof" (now Cannon Street Station), a branch office of the Hanseatic League in England which was in possession of German Hansa cities until 1853, was the successor of an older building complex: the Guildhall. Trading activities of Westphalian merchants are verifiable since the 11<sup>th</sup> century, therefore many years before Hansa occurred officially (there is no date of formation). With the help of a grant from the John Hurst Fund, I was also able to focus on the important stoneware collections of the Museum of London. On the 10<sup>th</sup> of December 2013 Lyn Blackmore guided me through the stores at Mortimer Wheeler House and provided me with database information to estimate the amount of Siegburg Stoneware entering the City of London in the Late Middle Ages. According to that an estimated number of 779 Siegburg Stoneware vessels from the timeframe 1300 - 1550 were found in London (picture 1). But the definition of Siegburg Stoneware varies from country to country and so this ware is, as in many other collections too, accompanied with pre- and proto-stoneware from earlier and contemporary periods in Siegburg and also by so called "German Stoneware" from other production places. This problem occurs regularly in big collections where not all processors have the same skills, experience or reference materials. I catalogued Siegburg Stoneware from 25 sites of important transition periods (1300-1350 and 1450-1500) (picture 2) but, as previous investigations in Southampton have highlighted (thanks to Duncan Brown for showing me his material), Siegburg Stoneware did not play the same role in England as it did in Western Germany and the East Sea region. On the contrary the proximity to France was more important. French material is not present at all in Western Germany and just in small numbers in the Baltic (a few sherds of Saintonge wares have been found in Tallinn). Siegburg Stoneware is present in the bigger English cities, but not in significant numbers.



**Picture 2: Drinking bowl for wine, 15<sup>th</sup> century, site SQU94 (MOLAS)**

In other places Siegburg Stoneware is particularly common. It is clearly visible that this correlates with the importance of the particular place for trade. To give a few examples: in Bergen, where the "Deutsche Brücke" (German Bridge) was situated, Siegburg Stoneware is the second most common ware in the 15<sup>th</sup> century. In Kaipeda (Memel) the pottery of the 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> century is "widely connect to Western European cities". For Western Estonia Erki Russow assesses that during the Late Middle Ages German Stoneware was the primary ceramic import and that Riga and Tallinn (Reval) served as central markets.

In Germany few city wide or regional syntheses exist, so we can only assess the situation in certain areas. In the East-Westphalian Hansa city of Paderborn Rhenish imported stoneware (including pre- and proto-stoneware of the 14<sup>th</sup>/15<sup>th</sup> century) accounts for 13% of the entire ceramic assemblage. Approximately 5% of this is fully sintered Siegburg Stoneware. Compared to other cities in this region these numbers are already high, although Siegburg Stoneware is present in almost every late medieval finds assemblage in North Rhine Westphalia. In Minden, another Westphalian city that was also Hansa member, Rhenish stoneware including Pre- and protostoneware account for 8% of the complete ceramic assemblage from a large excavation at the „Bäckerstraße" (Baker Street). Two percent of this material is fully sintered Siegburg Stoneware. In the Hansa City of Höxter quite high numbers of Stoneware finds are present: 20-30 % of all ceramic material listed in published reports, although precise distinctions between Siegburg pre- and fully sintered Stoneware were not made.

On my trips through museum stores I also recognize how little material is being studied and understood, although we store huge amounts of finds which grow daily. This seems to a European problem. To find out more about distribution patterns, a unified classification system in whole Northern and Central Europe would be necessary. It has to be recognized how detailed but separated ceramic studies in Europe often are. But a non-comparable work is very difficult to handle, not just for foreign colleagues but also for researchers from neighboring cities. This is a situation which is very marked in Germany and can just be solved by European networking which is done by the MPRG in a commendable way.

You can find out more about the John Hurst Travel Fund on the MPRG website: <http://www.medievalpottery.org.uk/fund.htm>

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## German Slipwares

Last year we discovered some strange highly decorated redware plates (see illustrations), which appear to be in the North Holland Slipware tradition. However, they date to the mid-17<sup>th</sup> century and, in fact, appear to have been produced at Husum (South Denmark, now Holstein

Germany). I would be interested to learn whether these have ever been discovered in Britain.



A book *Bemalte Teller im Garten* (Painted plates in the Garden) on the excavated kilns and wasters of the 17<sup>th</sup> century production centre at Husum will be published by Frauke Witte. Details can be found here.

[http://www.buecher.de/shop/fachbuecher/bemalte-teller-im-garten/witte-frauke/products\\_products/detail/prod\\_id/38621592](http://www.buecher.de/shop/fachbuecher/bemalte-teller-im-garten/witte-frauke/products_products/detail/prod_id/38621592)

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## Samples of Surrey Whiteware (Kingston type) available

A further group of pottery waster material in Kingston upon Thames Museum has been identified for disposal. This is plain body sherds of KINGSTON type ware excavated in 1982. Please note this is similar to the material advertised in the Nov 2012 Newsletter 74. The kiln was archaeomagnetically dated to 1345-75 (68%) and the pottery was analysed by Alan Vince in 1985 with an interim note published in *Popular Archaeology*, October 1985. If any Museum is interested in a sample of the material this may be obtained from Kingston Museum, Wheatfield Way, Kingston upon Thames, KT1 2PS

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## Marischal College, Aberdeen

Current work on the pottery assemblage from excavations by the Aberdeen City Archaeological Unit in 2009 in advance of the refurbishment of Marischal College is examining ceramics and tile from archaeological deposits and structures associated with the Franciscan friary which was founded on the site in 1469. Inside one of the friary

buildings a pit was discovered which contained a complete Low Countries Redware 'grape' three legged cooking vessel (photo). Standing 335mm high and with a rim diameter of 330mm this is one of the largest of these vessels that has ever been seen by the authors. There would seem to be a strong chance that this may represent a 'consecration' deposit associated with the foundation of the friary and we would be grateful for any parallels.



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## Society for Clay Pipe Research conference

20th-21st September 2014, Warwick

The 30th annual SCPR conference will be held this year at the Warwick Arms Hotel, Warwick, England. The Saturday programme of lectures will focus on the Warwickshire and Midlands clay tobacco pipe industries and will be complemented by displays. In the evening there will be the Conference Dinner (optional) at the venue. A guided tour of Warwick is to follow on the Sunday morning. There will be a small charge to cover the cost of the meeting and an additional fee for those who wish to join the guided walk. Non-members of the Society will be very welcome to attend on either day but are asked to contact the conference organiser in advance to book a place.

Further information is available on the Society website (<http://scpr.co>) or from Susie White ([SCPR@talktalk.net](mailto:SCPR@talktalk.net)). Susie can also be contacted should you be interested in giving a twenty minute talk or bringing tobacco pipes or other pipe clay objects for display at the conference.

## Thank you (and goodnight...)

This is my last newsletter as assistant secretary. I would just like to take this opportunity to thank everybody who has contributed over the last 5 years and hope that you will continue to support my successor by providing interesting pots, notices and other news items.

Ben Jervis

## 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](mailto:lblackmore@museumoflondon.org.uk))

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