

MEDIEVAL POTTERY RESEARCH GROUP

newsletter 57

April 2007

Secretary's Notes



Council met on the 18th January 2007 at the British Museum. The President was pleased to report that John Hurst's family have given their support to the Travel Fund and have most generously made a contribution toward it. Details on how the fund will be administered are currently in preparation. The John Hurst Archive arrived at the British Museum in September and work to assess the range and condition of the material within it is underway.

The President announced that members of the MPRG are organising a series of regional training days on medieval and post medieval pottery. These days are aimed at non-specialists and are hoped to attract both the general public as well as those working in archaeology and museums. Currently eight regions are planning to run the initial batch of training days in May. This is anticipated to cost about £25 per person with groups of around fifteen participants. It is hoped the days will not only raise the MPRG's profile, but also attract new members.

Nominations have been received for the upcoming council positions which will become vacant from the summer. Julie Edwards is nominated for the position of Vice President, Jenny Vaughan as Treasurer and Berni Sudds, Anna Slowikowski, John Hudson and David Dawson as Ordinary Members.

The next council meet is scheduled for the 24th May 2007 at the British Museum. Any comments or issues to be raised at that meeting should be directed to me by the 18th May for inclusion on the agenda.

Anne Boyle Secretary

NEW Look Newsletter

As is hopefully clear there is a new look to the Newsletter this month. In addition to the change in format it is hoped that in future issues more space will be available for short articles on a range of issues that do not typically get covered in within *Medieval Ceramics*. This may range from recording standards and best practice by specialists, managing relationships with excavation units (how exactly do you convince them what *washed* pottery is a far more useful resource), issues of funding within the profession, to new and contemporary research ideas and responses to previous articles. Additionally if you have any announcements, requests for help, events/conference or exhibitions that you would like promoted MPRG would be more than happy to help.

If you would like to contribute or have issues that you would like raising by the group please contact me (Andrew.sage@dunelm.org.uk) well in advance of the following copy deadlines; 23rd March, 23rd August and 23rd November.

Andrew Sage, Assistant Secretary

Kiln Found at Ticknall, South Derbyshire



Ticknall in South Derbyshire was a prolific potting centre, and documentary evidence suggests pots were produced in the village and surrounding area from the medieval to early modern periods. For several years, two intrepid local historians have been exploring the history and archaeology of the Ticknall potteries: Janet Spavold and Sue Brown have extensively fieldwalked Ticknall and the surrounding area, and have conducted extensive documentary research into the potters and their products. Their endeavours were so fruitful that they produced a book in 2005 called *Ticknall Pots and Potters* (Landmark Publishing). In 2006, whilst digging through a pot dump in the village, they discovered a kiln, which they excavated with the help of Derbyshire Archaeological Society and several professional archaeologists from Lincolnshire and Nottinghamshire. This is the first kiln to be excavated in the village. The pottery associated with

the kiln consists of Midlands Purple and Cistercian wares, and this kiln joins several others in the vicinity which Janet and Sue's research has shown were also producing these wares.



The pottery is currently being quantified by Anne Boyle and a site report is being produced by Janet Spavold, Sue Brown and Ian Rowlandson. Dr. Alan Vince has been granted money by the Derbyshire Archaeological Society to carry out chemical and thin section analysis on the Ticknall pottery, and this is currently in progress. The culmination of all this work will be an article and a conference (planned for October 2007 – details will be featured in the next newsletter). Further details on the Ticknall potteries can be found at www.ticknallpots.co.uk

Anne Boyle

Medieval Ceramics

We are pleased to announce that both Volume 28 (the Winchester Conference) and Volume 29 (Dublin) of *Medieval Ceramics* will be published in time to be distributed at the one-day conference in June. Copies for those not attending will be posted out. New printers and a new type-setter means that the journal also has a new colorful look inside and out, which we hope will be welcomed.

Funding has also been confirmed by English Heritage for the Harlow Monograph; *The Harlow Pottery Industries* by Walter Davey and Helen Walker and it is hoped that this will also be available sometime this year. Work also well advanced on Volume 30 for publication next year.

John Hurst Legacy

The **John Hurst archive** has kindly been given to the British Museum to curate. It arrived in the Museum in September, a room has been provided to house it and work is underway to conserve it and plans are being drawn up with regards as how best to manage the archive. The archive includes a type series of imported pottery, a type series of medieval and post-medieval sherds from the UK and an extensive paper archive, as well as books.

John Hurst Travel Fund

In recognition of the enormous contribution made by John Hurst to the study of medieval and post-medieval pottery MPRG has set up a fund to contribute to the travel expenses of students and researchers studying pottery in Britain and Europe. The fund has been created from donations by MPRG members and the family of John Hurst and is open to all MPRG members.

The first applications for money from the fund will be considered at the beginning of July this year. For details please contact Victoria Bryant:

vbryant@worcestershire.gov.uk

German Stoneware Website

A new website has been set up by 5 museums in the Rhineland which focus on the products of the Stoneware production centres. Whilst much of the site is in German the project will eventually result in a large databank of material being available online and maybe a valuable resource. The website is; www.rheinische-keramik.de

Pottery on the Move

MPRG One-Day conference at York, 9th June 2007

This years one day conference is to be held at the House of Laymen, St. William's College, York. The focus of the event is the method, meaning and distribution of medieval pottery. As is fitting for the location the majority of the papers concentrate on the north or east coast. Further details will be included with this mailing and are also available on the website. This will be Duncan Brown's penultimate conference and we will shortly need to find someone to take over and continue his excellent work. Further details will be available in the next newsletter.

Ceramic Plug Holes!

Recent excavations at the Tweeddale press Buildings in Berwick have uncovered the remains of what appears to be a friary or church. Amongst the pottery finds was a round perforated disc. Currently the writer is so far unaware of any similar examples. The disc does not have a broken edge outer edge so appears to have been fired as a disc. If anyone has seen similar items or wishes to make any wild suggestions about its use please feel free to contact me (Andrew.sage@dunelm.org.uk).



Recent Research on Byzantine Pottery

A two-day Conference to be held in the Stevenson Lecture Theatre, the Great Court, the British Museum on Thursday 14th June and the Main Lecture Theatre, Courtauld Institute, London, Friday June 15th 2007. Over seventeen papers will discuss a range of issues related to Byzantine pottery with sessions chaired by Ken Dark, David Peacock and Sam Moorhead. The conference fee will be £15. More information is available on the website and available from Chris Entwistle, Department of Prehistory and Europe, British Museum; centwistle@thebritishmuseum.ac.uk

SMA and Medieval Europe

The Society for Medieval Archaeology are sponsoring a major session at the Medieval Europe conference in Paris in September in order to celebrate their 50th anniversary. "Fifty Years of Medieval Archaeology" will include sessions on Medieval Landscapes, Buildings and Material Culture; Health and Diet; and Medieval People. Speakers will include Geoff Egan, Frans Verhaege and David Hinton. Further details can be found at; www.medievalarchaeology.org/conferences.htm

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