Notes from the President
Season's greetings everyone. In 2018 MPRG is looking forward to the publication of two volumes of Medieval Ceramics, a long standing invitation to the Low Countries will be taken up with our conference in Brussels and a joint publication with the Association for the History of Glass in honour of Sarah Jennings will come to fruition. Following on from comments at the AGM plans are in hand to enable A Guide to the Classification of Medieval Ceramic Forms to be made available as an on-line resource and Council is looking at proposals for a new website.

None of the above is possible without members prepared to serve on Council to help run projects and the Group's administration and to offer their advice and experience to Council meetings. If you are able to give some time to MPRG please consider the request for nominations to Council below; if you would like more information about Council roles please contact me or the Secretary Andrew Sage. This newsletter also includes news of the publication of papers from the 2006 Livorno conference many written by members of MPRG, a conference in Tallinn and the updated Worcestershire ceramics on-line database. Alice Forward always welcomes contributions to the Newsletter please contact her with news of publications, new ceramic discoveries, conferences, meetings and other ceramic initiatives. MPRG Council next meets early in February if there is anything you would like to be discussed please contact the Secretary.

Julie Edwards

MPRG conference 2018, 1st–4th June, University of Brussels: Call for Papers

In June 2018 the Medieval Pottery Research Group will hold its annual conference at the University of Brussels, on the subject of ‘Ceramics in Circulation’.

The examination of patterns of pottery distribution forms a major part of ceramic studies. For the medieval and post-medieval periods, pottery distribution has informed discussion of trade and production, the transmission of cultural influences and technical knowledge, and patterns of discard.

This conference aims to move beyond dots on maps and the enumeration of imported goods to explore the dynamics behind the movement of pottery. How and why do pots end up where they are found? And what does that tell us about the societies in which they were circulating? The committee invites 20-minute papers addressing any aspect of the circulation of ceramics in north-west Europe and beyond, in the medieval and post-medieval periods.

Possible themes include:
- The movement of ceramics between Britain and the Continent
- The means of distribution both by sea (ports, emporia, coastal redistribution, marine trading networks, etc) and by land (transport, marketing, etc)
- Non-trade-related means of distribution (gifts, souvenirs, personal possessions, etc)
- The impact of patterns of discard on spatial distribution
- Distribution of ceramic technologies and fashions (e.g. the influence of imported ceramics on indigenous wares, and how technology is learnt and passed on)
- The historical evidence for pottery distribution
- The circulation of pottery within and between households, related to behaviour and use

Please submit an abstract of no more than 150 words to Lorraine Mepham, MPRG Meetings Secretary, by 1st February 2018 (l.mepham@wessexarch.co.uk).

Lorraine Mepham

Council Elections

At our AGM in June 2018 a large number of our officers will be required by our Constitution to retire or so far have not indicated that they are willing to stand for re-election these are the Secretary and Assistant Secretary, Treasurer and Assistant Treasurer, Vice-President, Regional Groups Secretary and two Ordinary Members. If
you would like to ensure that MPRG can keep running and are willing to take a hand in the administration of the Group by serving on the MPRG Council please contact the Secretary. Please note all nominations to Council must be proposed and seconded and submitted in writing to the Secretary not less than six weeks before the AGM.

Medieval Ceramics

The Editorial Committee has been working hard to prepare MC36 and double volume MC37/38 for publication. They are both ready to go to the printers and we are in the process of preparing proofs to send out to the authors for the final check. We are aiming for the volumes to be sent out to the membership March. Thanks for your patience for these two publications.

Editorial Committee

New website for Mediterranean ceramics http://aiecm3.com/fr/accueil/

The Association Internationale pour l’Étude des Céramiques Médéévales en Méditerranée AIECM2 (since 2012 the Association Internationale pour l’Étude des Céramiques Médéévales et Modernes en Méditerranée [AIECM3]) was founded in 1992 on the initiative of a group of researchers, and in particular by Gabrielle Démians d’Archimbaud, who had organised regular congresses on the study of Mediterranean ceramics since 1978.

John Hurst (left) at the first meeting at Valbonne, France

Following the first meeting at Valbonne (France), others took place in Toledo (Spain) in 1981, Siena and Faenza (Italy) in 1984, Lisbon (Portugal) in 1987, and in Rabat (Morocco) in 1991, where it was decided to formalise the meetings by creating an International Association before the following meeting at Aix-en-Provence (again in France) in 1995. Subsequently, the AIECM2 (and recently as AIECM3) has organised congresses in Thessaloniki (Greece) in 1999, Ciudad Real (Spain) in 2006, Venice (Italy) in 2009, Silvès and Mertola (Portugal) in 2012, and Antalya (Turkey) in 2015. Recently it has also promoted thematic conferences, one in Montpellier (France) in 2014 another at Faenza (Italy) in 2015 and Rome in November 2017. The next congress will be in Athens, 21-27 October, 2018.

Today the Association has more than 175 members from almost all the countries bordering the Mediterranean, as well as from northern Europe, Asia and North America. It is run by an International Committee, elected from the national committees representing European countries (France, Italy, Portugal and Spain) or other groups of Mediterranean countries and cultural areas (the Maghreb, the Byzantine world and the Middle East).

Earlier this year the AIECM3 launched a new website, where they have also posted the proceedings of the first five congresses. Those of the later congresses and the new thematic conferences are still in print.

John Hurst Travel Fund

Applications to the John Hurst Travel Fund are due on 23 March 2018. Each year we are able to grant up to £200. You can find the application form and further details on our website. Applications should be sent to the President, at the address on the last page of this newsletter.

Enhancement of the Worcestershire ceramics on-line database

An updated and enhanced version of the Worcestershire Ceramics On-line Database is now available thanks to financial support from Historic England as part of their ‘Improving Sector Reference Resources’ initiative. (www.worcestershireceramics.org)

New features include the addition of detailed form information for locally produced medieval wares, as well as fabric and form information for the most commonly identified later post-medieval and modern fabrics. All medieval forms have been cross-referenced to the MPRG form series. In addition, the inclusion of concordance data for medieval and later fabrics allows cross-referencing to other fabric series for surrounding counties and is the first step towards creating a regional rather than a purely county-based type series. In addition, a software upgrade
means that not only is data more accessible but the site is now also optimised for use on mobile devices.

The website retains its high-definition photographs of sherd sections, as well as detailed written fabric descriptions to aid identification, and bibliographic references, which are all also available, as before, for prehistoric and Roman fabrics. And now the latest enhancement also offers a possible template for future wider development.

Screen shot showing the layout of the updated Worcestershire Ceramics website

Although aimed primarily at aiding consistent and high quality recording of pottery fabrics by ceramic specialists and students, the database is also easily accessible to anyone interested in the study of pottery, and is known to be used widely, indeed internationally, as a source of ceramic data.

Laura Griffin and Derek Hurst, Worcestershire Archive & Archaeology Service

BNPG Tallinn conference 2018

The second meeting of the Baltic and North Atlantic Pottery Research Group will be held in Tallinn, Estonia 12-13 April 2018. The conference aims to bring together specialists to meet and exchange knowledge on medieval and later pottery from the Nordic regions. The venue will be Seaplane Harbour part of the Estonian Maritime Museum. The conference fee is 30 EUR, this covers coffee and sundries but not lunches or the conference dinner which will be in the Old Town on the 12th April. To register for the conference email bnpg@bnpg.eu by 15th January 2018. For further information contact Erki Russow: erki.russow@tlu.ee

MPRG Leicester conference 2017 review

The MPRG held a two-day conference in collaboration with the Centre for Historical Archaeology at Leicester University in June this year. The theme of the conference was the ‘Ceramics of Drink’. The papers covered a wide geographical area with pottery from Vilnius, Lithuania to Chester, UK and provided an informative range of material with early medieval brewing jars from Tintagel to 18th-century teaware in the Low Countries.

The conference began with an introduction and paper from Dr Ian Whitbread looking at Leicester and associated images of drinking and ceramics, using the history of breweries and bottled drinks manufacture in the city. This very much set the tone for the rest of the conference.

The first morning included papers from France, Vilnius, the Low Countries and London. Gaëlle Dieulefet prepared a paper discussing 13th to 15th-century vessels from the French Littoral, comparing assemblages and their possible social and economic connections with a maritime circulation apparent. Miglė Urbonaitė-Ubė Klaipėda spoke on assemblages excavated at Vilnius where not only do they have important ceramic groups but also waterlogging provides excellent evidence for wooden drinking vessels. At Vilnius, there are large numbers of imported wares which dominate assemblages and these are coming from across Europe. Additionally, local wares are being produced and these appear to emulate the imported high status wares. Yvonnne de Rue provided a paper on a group of material from a pit associated with a priests house. The assemblage was full of teawares including Chinese porcelain. The material appeared to represent tea sets with groups of similarly decorated cups and other tea accessories, which had what appeared to have short lifespans within the household. It was suggested that this could represent a rapidly changing household with new incomers to the house, bringing their own sets of teaware or that people were chasing fashions and renewing their sets on a regular basis. The first session was rounded off with a paper from Chris Jarrett who talked about drinking ware assemblages from London Inns and Taverns. He provided an excellent introduction to the range of hostelries and the different roles they played in providing food, drink and rooms for those crossing the bridge at Southwark in the Borough Market area. The paper used a number of excavations from across sites in this area of London looking at what constitutes a pub or inn assemblage and how they can vary depending upon their function as a hostelry.
The second day began with Craig Cessford who delivered a paper discussing a group of vessels from excavations in Cambridge. The introduction of hot chocolate and coffee and the vessels associated with these drinks is an interesting development in early-modern ceramics. Julie Edwards followed and talked about an unusual tin-glazed ware owl cup found in a pit in Chester. Parallels with other similar vessels were made and the vessel was discussed with regards to its context with feasting related material that also came from the pit. Stephanie Ratkai followed with a paper introducing an interesting assemblage from Dudley Castle, which included glass vessels as well as imported vessels from Germany and Italy. This paper was contrasted by Cameron Moffett, who provided a very different paper on an assemblage from Tintagel in which there was a discussion of the potential re-use of a group of post-Roman amphora. An argument for these vessels being used to brew mead was carefully developed and provided the earliest view on ceramic vessels associated with drinking at this conference. The conference was closed with a paper from Tania Casimiro and Sarah Newstead who provided a discussion of drinking vessels from Portugal from the 9th through to the 16th centuries.

On both days, John Hudson provided fantastic pottery throwing demonstrations. In addition, University of Leicester Archaeological Services made available a group of early modern drinking vessels excavated recently in Leicester from a pit. This material fitted neatly with many of the papers that were delivered over the 2 days.

The Leicester conference was a great success and thanks must go to Lorraine Mepham the MPRG Meetings Secretary and Alice Samson from the Centre for Historical Archaeology who organised the event and a wonderful reception at the Leicester Guildhall.

Italy and Britain, Between Mediterranean and Atlantic Worlds: Leghorn - 'An English Port' edited by Hugo Blake

Recently published this special volume of *Archaeologia Postmedievale* contains selected papers from the Society for Post-Medieval Archaeology's conference with the Medieval Pottery Research Group and *Archaeologia Postmedievale* at the Tuscan port of Livorno in Italy, 25-26 May 2006. For further information see: http://www.spma.org.uk/news/

Book Reviews

The Editorial Committee is looking for books to review in Medieval Ceramics as well as people who would be interested in reviewing books we receive. If you would like to contribute either a book or your time as a reviewer, please contact Kelly Green, Assistant Editor, who organises these for the Journal.
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 (Free excl. P&P This publication has been replaced by A Standard for Pottery Studies in Archaeology see below)

**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 Chenery (UK £22.50; Europe: £24: All include P&P)

**Occasional Paper 6:** A Research Framework for Post-Roman Ceramic Studies in Britain http://www.mprgframework.info/

**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 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 volumes 1-25 are available and more will be added soon. For further information, please contact Sian Iles.

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