

Secretary's Notes



The MPRG's one day conference and AGM was held on the 9th June in York at the House of Laymen. The conference, titled Method, Meaning and the Distribution of Medieval Pottery featured eight papers examining this topic. The day ended in a pottery viewing at YAT, hosted by Anne Jenner and Ailsa Mainman. Many thanks are due to Duncan Brown for organising the event, and to all of those who assisted in its preparation, gave papers and attended the meeting.

The AGM reported that the group's income has increased on the previous year, helped by a ten percent rise in publication sales and the emailed version of the newsletter, which saves £500 per year. It is projected that the costs of the group for 2007/08 will be covered. The editorial committee were pleased to report that volume 28 of Medieval Ceramics was ready and copies were released at the conference. The aim is to have a volume ready each year for release at this time. Work continues on issue 29 of Medieval Ceramics as well as on the other publications the group has been involved with.

The next conference will be a three day event held at Siena, Italy. The provisional dates for this are the 7th to the 9th July 2008. This has been organised by Duncan Brown and Marta Caroscio. More details will be forthcoming in future newsletters and on the website. The regional groups in the South-West, South East Midlands and Scotland have held meetings this year and the pottery training days held in April and May around the country proved very popular. In an effort to revive the regional groups that are currently inactive, Anna Slowikowski has sent a questionnaire to members with the aim of assessing the current state of the regional groups and to identify initiatives that would be of interest to members.

At the AGM several members stood down from council: Jane Holdsworth and Mark Redknap retired as Treasurer and Vice President, with Jenny Vaughan and Julie Edwards taking over these roles. Anna Slowikowski, Berni Sudds, David Dawson and John Hudson were elected as ordinary members. The group extended many thanks to these members for their time and effort. Special thanks are also extended to Sue Anderson for her maintenance of the website. Next year a number of council positions become vacant, these are: President, Meetings Secretary, Regional Groups Officer and Assistant Treasurer. Any nominations for these positions should be sent to the secretary in plenty of time so candidates can be approached. The next council meeting is due to be held at the British Museum in September, any issues for the agenda should be submitted to the secretary by the end of August.

Anne Boyle Secretary

SPMA Conference - Reminder

The SPMA conference "West Country Households 1500 – 1700" will be held in Exeter and Taunton from Friday 14th to Monday 17th September this year.

The first part of the conference will be based in Exeter, the South-West's largest urban centre throughout the 16th and 17th centuries. The second session will take place in Taunton, Somerset, the home of a fine collection of household goods of this period, including the recently-acquired Butler Collection of early modern cast metal vessels (cauldrons, skillets, etc), which is the most important in its field in Britain, and an excellent

assemblages of post-medieval pottery, including the important Kenneth Barton Collection of everyday ceramics.

On the Monday of the conference delegates will have the opportunity to view the nationally important assemblages of early modern artefacts from Exeter, with a large selection of the famous Plymouth collection of imported ceramics, local pottery from the North Devon kilns, etc. It should be emphasised that much of this material has not previously been displayed, and that it is unlikely that the opportunity to view it will be repeated in the foreseeable future. For more details of how to attend visit www.spma.org.uk

www.medievalpottery.org.uk

Excavations at New Carron Road, Stenhousemuir

SUAT Ltd have just recently completed excavations on a site directly adjacent to the late medieval pottery production centre of Stenhouse near Falkirk. Doreen Hunter's excavations of the



1950's located upwards of 11 kilns and a very large assemblage of Scottish Redware pottery during sand quarrying by the Carron Iron Works (published in Medieval Ceramics Volume XLV 2001).



SUAT located a Musty Type 2 kiln (see image) and a group of features which may relate to workshop activity in the vicinity. Curiously the kiln showed no signs of having ever been fired and one of its flues had been deliberately blocked (see image). A further watching brief on ground reduction for house building is still to take place in the near future.

Derek Hall

Medieval Pottery Research Group Training Days, May and June 2007

In May and June this year MPRG held a very successful series of training days for non-specialists interested in finding out more about their local medieval and post-medieval pottery. Four events took place covering the pottery of:-

Somerset, Bristol and West Dorset – David Dawson

Scotland – Derek Hall and George Haggarty

Wiltshire – Lorraine Mepham

Worcestershire – Victoria Bryant and Derek Hurst



Training Day at Worcester

We all know that the study of medieval and post-medieval pottery is a vital part of our understanding of past societies – but are we alone? The idea behind the training days was test the waters. We wanted to identify what kind of people would be interested in learning more about the subject and also to see if the format of small groups and lots of hands on work with ceramics would be the best way to enthuse them. Given that MPRG is not yet in a position to fund such events we also needed to find out if they would be prepared to pay.

The feed back from all the days was extremely positive both from the trainers and from the participants. The events attracted a good range of people including archaeology students, museum staff, field archaeologists and members of local archaeology groups and no-one complained about the price! At its next meeting Council will discuss the issues raised by this pilot project and decide if and how to extend it to cover more of the country. If you are interested in running a training day next year please contact Victoria Bryant vbryant@worcestershire.gov.uk to find out more.

CBM Stamps

In 2002, Archaeological Project Services conducted a field walk at Catley Priory, Walcott, Lincolnshire. The site of this Gilbertine establishment lies some sixteen miles south-east of Lincoln and was founded between 1146 and 1154. None of the Priory buildings remain standing, though aerial photographs reveal the layout and extent of the site. The field walking survey produced a large amount of material, the majority of which is an estimated 25,000 fragments of medieval tile. The pottery and ceramic building material are currently being recorded.



An interesting find from the site is a stamped fragment of tile. Unfortunately the decorated surface has flaked off, so it is not possible to identify the type of building material or coarse vessel that it came from. The stamp is clearly in the shape of a cross and reflects the religious nature of the site. Details of similar stamps on ceramic building material or coarse ware vessels would be gratefully received. Please email Anne Boyle at aboyle@apsarchaeology.co.uk.

Archaeological Ceramics: Understanding the Past through the Study of Pottery

Birkbeck College is running this new Post Diploma course in archaeology this coming academic year. The course is being taught by Rupert Featherby and Jacqui Pearce.

This course is focused on the study of ceramics in archaeology and aims to provide students with the basic knowledge and skills required to work on pottery assemblages. Through practical workshops and specialist tuition, you will be introduced to the main types of pottery found in south-east England, from the prehistoric through to post-medieval periods. All major aspects of ceramic study will be covered, with a view to introducing students to current methodologies and the principles of identification, recording and analysis of pottery from excavations, leading to publication. These include the following topics:

- The development of ceramic studies
- Fabric analysis
- The principles and use of ceramic typology
- Recording methods
- Quantification and the use of computer databases
- Production, technology and understanding kiln sites
- Form and function, styles and fashions
- Trade, distribution and marketing
- Non-vessel ceramics – figurines, clay tobacco pipes, building materials
- Pottery illustration
- Publishing ceramics, past and present approaches.

The course cost is £240 (£120 concessions) and starts Monday, 24 September 2007, 6.30-8.30pm. The course lasts for 24 meetings. For further information contact Natalie Ping by telephone on 020 7631 6627 or email at archaeology@fce.bbk.ac.uk

Bickley Ceramics Project 2007

The Bickley Project is running again this year. Unfortunately it is likely to have finished by the time this newsletter comes out. It is running until the 3rd of August. The focus of this years project is again on glazes and will involve the rebuilding of the Saltglaze kiln. Anyone interested in attending should oliver.kent@virgin.net

Barnard Castle Errata

Catherine Freeman would like to make this correction to the Barnard Castle pottery report in Austin, D, 2007 *Acts of Perception: A Study of Barnard Castle in Teesdale*. English Heritage and The Architectural and Archaeological Society of Durham and Northumberland Research Report 6. Volume II

Chapter 10 Examining the Fragments 1: Pot and Clay (p352-499)

Type 89 (p408) is a category created for the unclassified material (X) so that the charts could be complete. The dating from the stratigraphy given for Illustration 1201 (p408) should be mid, not later, 12th century (Phase III Group 15).

Conference announcement: The Archaeology of Medieval Lincolnshire

On 17th November 2007 a one day conference will be held at The Collection, Lincoln on the medieval archaeology of the county. This is one in a series meetings organised by Archaeological Project Services which aim to explore and promote Lincolnshire rich archaeological heritage. The organisers welcome any suggestions for papers and outlines can be sent to Anne Boyle (aboyle@apsarchaeology.co.uk) or Mark Williams (mawillia@apsarchaeology.co.uk). Further details of the event will be available on the MPRG website in the near future or by contacting the organisers.

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Advance Notice and Call for Papers: MPRG ANNUAL CONFERENCE

**POTTERY OF THE WESTERN MEDITERRANEAN
PRODUCTION, INFLUENCES, DISTRIBUTION AND
USE. A.D. 900 – 1600**

7th – 9th July 2008; UNIVERSITY OF SIENA, ITALY

The MPRG is delighted to announce that our 2008 conference will be held in Siena, Italy. The aim is to consider the development of pottery-making, means of distribution, patterns of trade and types of consumer, through archaeological and documentary evidence. This will be an opportunity to compare and contrast pottery traditions of the European Mediterranean states and also, it is hoped, those of North Africa. Many of those products were distributed beyond the Mediterranean, to the east and into northern Europe, and the mechanisms of that trade, and the significance of those pottery types, will also be examined. These themes reach beyond local and national boundaries, and should appeal to anyone interested in what pottery can tell us about economics, politics, culture and meaning.

We are inviting speakers from all over Europe, and western North Africa to address those themes and participate in a wide-ranging and fully representative discussion. At present we are asking for papers of about 30 minutes duration. Please send a title and short abstract or description to:

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