



Secretary's Notes

The Group met at the start of June for what was a very well attended one-day conference that included a wide range of excellent and interesting papers as a chance for those attending to view the new Mary Rose Museum and see the excellent range of artefacts displayed as well as the ongoing process of preservation of the ship itself.

The Group's AGM was held during the conference and I am pleased to announce that Jane Young and Dr Brynmor Morris were elected onto Council as Ordinary Members on Council and that David Dawson was elected as Vice-President, replacing Julie Edwards who stood down after 6 years of excellent work leading the Editorial Committee. Council presented her with a gift of a pot from Beauvais in recognition of all her hard work. The Treasurer reported that income from membership had dropped significantly during 2012 whilst the Groups costs had risen. I will hopefully have news later in the year about how we intend to tackle this issue but it is clear that we are going to have to find ways to do more with less over the coming years.

There is one significant element of the Group's work which relies on the combined efforts of as many of its members as possible and this is the MPRG bibliography. In the past this has been an excellent resource for researchers that has played an important role in helping inform non-specialists about the importance of ceramics in the archaeological record. Finds research is being done under ever decreasing budgets whilst being side-lined in research agendas and the bibliography is a resource which if comprehensively maintained is a resource to both help time-limited researchers and to allow easier access to reports by non-specialists. Unfortunately over the past decade this has not received the input required but over the last year concerted efforts have been made to remedy this and compilers are currently working on an update for 2009/10. This will still leave a significant backlog to be searched and we need still more compilers to make the process possible. The current search being undertaken is kindly being done by a relatively small number of people who regularly volunteer their services however going forward I would hope that we can have sufficient volunteers that compilers would only need to be searching three or four volumes per year.

In the coming months lists of periodicals which we require searching will be published on the Group's website. It is my hope that members who are members of their local archaeology societies will feel able to volunteer to search those volumes which they receive as members or may have in their own collection. For any enquiries or offers of help please contact the Secretary.

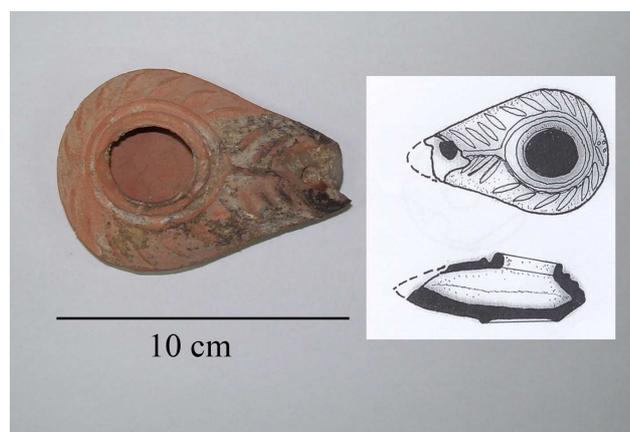
Andrew Sage Secretary

The study of the pottery of Khirbet Beit Bassa, Bethlehem, Palestine

Khirbet Beit Bassa is a site located in the town of Beit Sahour, in the district of Bethlehem (Palestine). The site has been the subject of 2 archaeological salvage excavations, one by the Israeli Antiquities Authority in 1994 (before the Oslo agreements between Palestinians and Israelis) and the other by the Palestine Ministry of Culture and Tourism in 2008. In 2009, 2010 and 2013 the first systematic excavations campaigns of the site were been carried out under the direction of Dr Ibrahim Abu Aemar, director of the High Institute of Archaeology at the University of al-Quds. In June 2013 Dr Abu Aemar and Dr Jose C. Carvajal, (University of Sheffield) collaborated in the excavations campaign and in the study of the 2009 finds of pottery.

The 2009 pottery come from two areas of the excavation, areas A and B. The trench opened in area A revealed the remains of at least two houses and surrounding streets. In Area B the wall surrounding the site was investigated. Both elements were tentatively dated to the Byzantine period (ca.300-640 AD) by the excavators. The study of the pottery has yielded more useful information. The pottery used by the inhabitants of Beit Bassa was typical

of the region in the first millenium AD, and therefore can be easily dated, particularly against the Jodi Magness' Jerusalem ceramic chronology.



Magness 3A type oil lamp, dated mid-6th to early 8th century found in the Area A of Khirbet Beit Bassa.

In general, the dating of the different pottery products of the area confirms a Late Roman and Byzantine occupation that can be placed roughly between the 3rd and the 4th centuries AD. Numerous Late Roman 5 and Late Roman 6 amphora sherds (known in the typology of the area as

Storage Jars) were recovered. It is thought that these vessels are related to the production of wine. A wine press was found in the 2008 excavations, which is nowadays integrated in the landscape of the site.

There is another concentration of pottery products from the mid-6th to at least the early 8th centuries AD that suggests a more intense occupation of the site. Immediately after a scarcely documented period, the mid-8th century, we find another concentration of pottery products in the late 8th century. The site became more densely occupied in the Justinianean period and continued to grow through the Islamic conquest. Although the site seems to have been little disturbed by this event, the transition between the Umayyad and the Abbasid periods seems to have effected the lives of the sites inhabitants. In these later periods the main type of pottery found is tableware (Rouletted Red Slip wares and Fine Byzantine wares). Although storage jars are also found, it is not currently possible to know if they were locally produced, or brought to the site as containers.

In general terms, the study of the pottery confirms the initial dating of the excavators, but also presents a more detailed picture that will contribute to future research on the site of Beit Bassa. In future studies of the pottery we expect to be able to address the question of other types, such as cooking wares and amphorae, for which so little evidence has been found in the 2009 season.

Ibrahim Abu Aemar and Jose C. Carvajal

A weekend in Stockholm

As mentioned in previous newsletters, we are planning an autumn trip to Stockholm, where Torbjorn Brorsson has kindly arranged a viewing of the pottery from the wreck of the Vasa. He has also organised a visit to see some of the material from excavations in Stockholm, so we can promise a full and instructive weekend.

It is not possible to visit the stores of the Vasa museum at the weekend, so that part of the trip will take place on the Monday. The programme of events therefore looks like this.

Friday 4 th October	Arrive in Stockholm
Saturday 5 th October	View pottery in Stockholm Museum stores
Sunday 6 th October	Visit to Vasa Museum
Monday 7 th October	Viewing of pottery from the Vasa (AM) and depart (PM)

One of the cheapest ways of getting there is to fly with Norwegian Air, who offer a good schedule of flights.

A wide range of hotels is available in Stockholm, from cheap hostels with shared facilities to very expensive riverside establishments. The Best Western Kom Hotel offers single rooms at £75 a night, using a hotel booking website, and we can provide further information on that if you get in touch.

We will be arranging a gathering of some sort on Friday evening for all those arriving then. Details will be sent out to all those who sign up.

Please notify us of your intention to join this trip, e-mailing both Duncan Brown at Duncan.brown2@english-heritage.org.uk and also George Haggarty at haggartyg@aol.com

Mystery Object

Help is sought in identifying this ceramic object, reported to the Portable Antiquities Scheme in West Sussex. Please send any thoughts to David Williams - david.williams@surreycc.gov.uk



Medieval Flower Pots from Trellech

Excavations have taken place at Trellech, South Wales since 2004 under the auspices of the Universities of Cardiff and Newport and the Monmouth Archaeological Society. Substantial medieval remains have been recovered, including some sherds of flower pot from the courtyard of the manor house. It has been dated by Steve Clark to the late medieval or early post-medieval period. This means that Trellech is the only site in Wales to have found a piece of medieval flowerpot and is one of only a small number of examples from England and Wales.

The flowerpot was recovered from a deposit of stone and slag, beneath a rubble layer in the courtyard of the manor house. The rubble is thought to relate to the abandonment of the building, around AD 1500. At the same time the main hall ceased to be used as a dwelling and was turned into a metal working site (Wilson, 2012, 1). The stone slag surface is on top of an earlier medieval solid slag surface. This surface was earlier than the courtyard and manor house. (Wilson 2012, 1). Stuart Wilson (2012, 1) the site director, believes that the manor house's role was to deal with the administration of the town. The flowerpots were used for displaying plants and were used and moved to a particular area of the garden when in full flower (Landsberg, 2003, 99).

In England, the known distribution of medieval flower pots is centered on Yorkshire. In total four flowerpots were found in Yorkshire (Moorehouse 1984), mostly from monastic sites, although one came from the royal manor of Cowick Canter. A production site is known at Cowick (Moorhouse, 1991, 104). Despite finding sites where there are medieval flowerpots in use, a production centre has not been found.

Since the majority of the flowerpots have been found in East Yorkshire, it can be argued that there was a link between the De Clares, who owned the manor house Trellech, and this region. One possible link is that Gilbert and Joan De Claire had a descendant named Ursula Hildyard of Yorkshire, who married Sir Richard Jackson near Beverley in the East Riding. The De Clares founded Trellech as an iron working site. The flowerpots that were found at York were mostly likely used for ornamental plants (ie. Plants other than herbs or native herbaceous plants) (Moorhouse, 1984, 199), as part of an ornamental, rather than a herb, garden.



Photograph of the flower pot fragments from Trellech

The flowerpots in East Yorkshire are not the only ones to have been found. There is an example from northern Lincolnshire, recovered from a mid fourteenth century deposit. This flowerpot is essentially a large bowl with straight sloping sides, flat base, and a basket handle with face terminals on the rim (Moorhouse, 1984, 201). This shows that some medieval flowerpots existed as "they were in common use" (Moorhouse, 1991, 101.). It is likely that there are more, but these often go undetected (Moorhouse, 1991, 101).

The Trellech flowerpot seems to be decorated with a motif depicting flying birds at the top and plant stems down the side. This may have been intended to emphasise the plant stems and make a bold statement about their users. Unfortunately we do not have the bottom of the flowerpot yet, so we are unable to see what the base looks like. It could be plain, with some decoration on the side. This flowerpot has been estimated to be of late medieval or early post medieval date by Steve Clark.

My interpretation of the flowerpot found at Trellech is that Trellech would have been a wealthy site, and that a trade link existed with another place, maybe Yorkshire. This is because there is a manor house at Trellech and it is mainly seen as a wealthy place to live especially in a medieval village. It is possible that further flower pots remain to be discovered. Only by finding these can we further explore the relationship between this vessel and those from East Yorkshire and Lincolnshire, particularly to see if they match the flowerpots from Trellech. There is not a production centre near to Trellech that I am aware of, but this might not have stopped the De Clares, who were a powerful merchant family from Gloucester, from buying in the flowerpots. (Aslet 2000, 511). The manor house belonged to a wealthy family, where there would be enough space to have flowerpots on the windowsill or even in an area of the garden. There is no evidence yet that the manor house had a garden, although it may be underneath the road. Another possibility is that there is no evidence of the garden remaining or that we are not digging in the right place in the field to find the garden.

By having the flowerpot found on site it proves that, there was some space to be able to grow some plants or herbs on the windowsills as there were 378 burgages or medieval houses in 1244. In 1349 there were only 44 houses that were vacant. Forty years later after the second plague struck they were still empty (Aslet, 2000, 511). This shows that once the village got into decline there was no use in having a manor house as people did not want to live there anymore. Consequently all the wealth of the settlement went with the last De Clare who got killed in battle in the 1300s. (Aslet, 2000, 511). This was due to nobody being in charge to manage the iron

production, which was the main factor in bringing wealth into the settlement. This shows how influential a family can be on a small isolated area in Wales. Since the 1300s the towns of Cardiff and Newport became more important, overtook the village of Trellech and became influential even to this day. Today Trellech is just a little village.

The flowerpot from Trellech is a significant find. This is because it is the only flowerpot found in Wales and possibly outside eastern England. There are various reasons why flowerpots have not been found elsewhere in Wales. This is not due to a lack of similar sites or wealthy families in the area however; at the same time in South Wales, Cardiff and Newport were beginning as towns and were a rival to Trellech, even though they were owned by the same family – the De Clares. There were various other wealthy families in Wales who were known as the Da Brose in the twelve and thirteenth centuries (Walker, 1990, 51). It is likely that if similar pieces are present that their significance has not been recognised.

Bibliography:

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- Walker, A. 1990. *Medieval Wales*. Cambridge. Cambridge University Press.
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Kathryn Ward kath_ward2@fsmail.net

Obituaries

It is great sadness that we report the loss of 4 colleagues, David Whitehouse, Paul Courtney, Graziella Berti and Hillary Healy, in the past few months. An obituary for Hilary can be found here http://www.slha.org.uk/news/index.php?year=2013&type=OB#apm1_1

David Whitehouse

In January David died at his home in Corning, where he had directed the Museum of Glass. His achievements there in the last three decades have overshadowed his earlier pioneering work on medieval ceramics of the Mediterranean area and western Asia. After graduating in archaeology at Cambridge in 1963, he researched at the British School at Rome the medieval pottery of central and southern Italy, publishing precociously articles on early medieval glazed and red-painted pottery in *Medieval Archaeology* (9 [1965] and 10 [1966]), whose origin and diffusion were hot topics at that time (see the collection John Hurst coordinated in *Med. Arch.* 13 [1969]). His paper on Lazio, the region around Rome, was the first systematic archaeological study of a medieval ceramic sequence in Italy (*Papers of the British School at Rome* 35 [1967]). On completing his PhD on time in 1966 he was appointed to a fellowship at Oxford in order to excavate the medieval port of Siraf in the Persian Gulf. He maintained his interest in Italy presenting in 1971 a magisterial and wide-ranging survey of the sources of the imported pottery found in Liguria (*Atti del IV convegno del Centro ligure per la storia della ceramica*). A couple of years later his publication of the pit groups excavated at Tuscania to the north of Rome rewrote the traditional art-

historical account of Italian early renaissance pottery (Papers of the British School at Rome 40 [1973]). After a brief stint as the first director of the British Institute of Afghan Studies, he ran the British School of Rome from 1974 to 1984. This was a relatively difficult time in David's otherwise glittering career, when his capacities for systematic research and synthesis, carefully planning and pragmatism, were impeded by under resourcing and inappropriate institutional governance. Our loss became Corning's and glass history's gain.

Hugo Blake

Graziella Berti

It would be reductive to remember Graziella Berti (Maria Grazia Mariani Berti) as a pottery specialist. Graduating in pharmacology, she dedicated over forty years of research to ceramics studies, driving together scientific analyses and the study of archaeological contexts. As a pottery specialist she shed new light on early imports of Islamic ceramics in Italy, especially from al-Andalus, and on the local production of tin-glazed pottery in Tuscany. Her main focus of research was certainly Pisa. MPRG members will remember the Gerald Dunning memorial lecture at the Siena conference in 2008, when Graziella masterly summarised the major results of several decades of research, stressing the importance of a rigorous archaeological approach when undertaking research on ceramics. Those who have known Graziella in person will remember her generosity, straightforwardness and the enthusiasm for her research. These qualities made her the ideal mentor for two generations of archaeologists. She was never tired to repeat how to approach a new research, what were the most relevant methodological issues and to give advice. Sometime she was even surprised to ascertain how often she had been repeating the same things. Many of us will remember Graziella as a friend and for inspirational conversation, visiting her in Pisa and talking about life, research and ceramics.

Marta Caroscio

Paul Courtney

It is with great sadness that I have to report the death from cancer of our member and friend Paul Courtney. Paul and I go back a long way, to my first excavation in fact, in 1974. That was at West Whelpington, one of the most barren sites I've ever worked on and one that suited very well the fatalistic outlook that characterised Paul from the moment I met him. After graduating, he a year ahead of me, we spent a lot of time digging together and formed a solid friendship that allowed me to see beyond Paul's eccentric and seemingly distant exterior. He was in fact a very easy person to like, once you got to know him but apart from that he was a brilliant student of the past. Paul was that rare thing, an archaeologist who truly understood history and historical sources and he brought all those skills to a wide range of subjects. Those included medieval and later pottery in Wales, post-medieval glass

and the archaeology of small towns. At the time of his death, Paul was engaged in research on the potting industries of the Saintonge area and had in fact taught himself to read medieval French and Gascon as he worked through the documentary evidence. It is a tragedy that his work will not be completed but more tragic still that we have lost a brilliant mind, a great character and for some of us, a true friend. Our sympathies and thoughts are with his widow, Yolanda. A memorial event of some kind is being planned and further details will appear in the newsletter in due course.

Duncan Brown



Paul receiving a prize for his contribution to trans-Atlantic historical archaeology at the SHA Conference earlier this year.

Society for Clay Pipe Research conference

The 29th annual SCPR conference will be held from 21st-22nd September at the United Church Hall, 49-51 Charles Street Dorchester, Dorset, DT1 1EE. The Saturday programme of lectures will focus on the Dorset clay tobacco pipe industry and will be complemented by displays. In the evening there will be the optional conference dinner at a local restaurant. A guided tour of Dorchester is to follow on the Sunday morning. There will be a small charge to cover the cost of the meeting and/or 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 Robert Lancaster (robertlancaster123@yahoo.co.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: bpjervis@googlemail.com

General Medieval Pottery Research Group, c/o MoLA, Mortimer Wheeler House, 46 Eagle Wharf Road, London N1 7E

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