



### President's Notes

The newly elected Assistant Secretary Alice Forward has asked me, the newly elected President, to introduce her first newsletter as editor. This is a good opportunity to thank those members of Council who retired at the AGM: Duncan Brown, George Haggarty, Ben Jervis, Lyn Blackmore and Anne Irving, for their hard work and commitment to MPRG; they have left their successors a firm foundation from which to continue furthering MPRG's aim of promoting and encouraging the study of medieval and later ceramics. In his six years as President, Duncan has

ensured that MPRG remains focused on this aim. He has actively sought ways of achieving this in a time that has been difficult for all archaeologists.

In addition to Alice and me the new officers elected at the AGM are Sian Iles as Assistant Treasurer, Gareth Perry as Regional Groups Officer and Andy Sage who reaching the end of his five year term as Secretary has volunteered for a second term. No one had come forward by the AGM to take on the role of Meetings Secretary from George Haggarty but hopefully the post will soon be filled.

In collaboration with Tania Casimiro, George took the Group to Lisbon for his final conference as Meetings Secretary and there is agreement amongst everyone who attended that they had a great time, saw some fascinating pots, listened to stimulating talks and were made very welcome by Tania and her team in the beautiful surroundings of the Museu Nacional de Arte Antiga. Thank you George, Tania and the staff of the Museum.

You can read a bit more about the conference below, as well as the forthcoming conference in memory of the much missed Paul Courtney, at which members of the Group will be speaking; another late member of MPRG Yann Hollevoet will also be remembered at a conference in Bruges in September.

As always, if you have any matters you wish the Council to address please contact the Secretary.

Finally, please do support Alice as newsletter editor by sending her items of news, notices of meetings, exhibitions and conferences and anything that is of ceramic interest.

Julie Edwards President

### E-Publication of Medieval Ceramics

A number of out of print editions of Medieval Ceramics are now available to download as PDFs. They can be found at <http://www.medievalceramics.wordpress.com>

We are hopeful of uploading further editions in due course, as volumes are sold. We are also keen to publish other out of print publications for which members of the group hold copyright. If you have a publication that you think might benefit from dissemination in this way, please get in touch.

Ben Jervis  
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### Medieval Pottery Research Group Conference: Lisbon 2014

From 19<sup>th</sup>-21<sup>st</sup> June MPRG members, and a number of new friends from Portugal, gathered at the Museu Nacional de Arte Antiga in Lisbon for the group's annual conference, entitled 'Medieval and later ceramic development, production and trade along the Atlantic seaboard'. We were presented with a diverse range of studies, although with a Euro-centric perspective. The conference kicked off with a pottery handling session (which unfortunately I was unable to attend, but which I gather was a great success) and, in true MPRG fashion, an excellently catered for wine reception. The first full day's proceedings began with a

focus on consumption, with Chris Jarrett considering the significance of imported pottery around the Thames estuary and Duncan Brown (filling in for Mark Redknap) presenting the Iberian ceramics from the Newport Ship. We then received a thoroughly informative crash course in Iberian ceramics from Tania Casimiro and her colleagues who presented a wide range of material from excavations across Portugal and beyond. Perhaps the most memorable moment of the (academic side) of the conference came when Sarah Newstead presented an exploration of the sensory experience of Portuguese redware pottery, including a surprising discussion of its ingestion! The day closed with a series of papers focussed on issues of characterisation, including a fascinating paper on medieval pottery imports found in Lisbon.



MPRG Members enjoy the fieldtrip (Chris Jarrett)

The second day began with a further set of papers exploring Portuguese redwares. It became clear (certainly to the UK contingent!) that these are a complex set of products and examples from England and elsewhere require much further research when they are encountered if we are to fully understand their socio-economic and chronological significance. In my view, the afternoon session was the most interesting and informative of the conference, as we heard about Chinese porcelain imports into Europe from Sebastien Oskamp, ceramics from Gothenberg (Tom Wennberg) and Christop Kuhne's work on stoneware imports into colonial Virginia. The final morning saw a focus on tiles, including an interesting discussion of new scientific analyses and a fascinating paper on devotional tiles from Lisbon erected following the devastating earthquake of 1755. Indeed, many of us spent the afternoon walking tour of Lisbon trying to spot some of these. The walking tour took in a number of important sites around Lisbon's old town and was followed by an excellent conference dinner.

In all the conference was a great success and our thanks should be extended to Tania Casimiro and George Haggarty for their hard work in organising it. George's spell as meetings secretary has now come to an end, and I would like to thank him for his hard work not only in organising this conference, but also our successful meetings in Perth, London, Douglas and Portsmouth.



**MPRG delegates at conference in Lisbon (Lucy Whittingham)**

Ben Jervis

## Big Heritage

Discovering Bromborough is a community archaeology project based on the Wirral in Merseyside. It is funded by HLF and led by Big Heritage C.I.C. Last year the community of Bromborough excavated 27 test pits throughout the village. We taught the volunteers the skills they needed to successfully excavate, record and process the finds. This year we have continued the project and we will also be excavating a local scheduled monument on the Heritage at Risk Register. With this in mind we wanted to build on the skills acquired by our volunteers last year by providing training in various areas, including pottery identification and dating.

Big Heritage felt that developing our volunteer's knowledge of what pottery can tell us and the skills to actually recognise and date local pottery was essential, as this was the most important material recovered from the test pitting last year. The project recovered the first ever Roman and early medieval pottery found in Bromborough. The pottery assemblage was also able to demonstrate

that the village grew from the 13<sup>th</sup>-15<sup>th</sup> century, as we had a large collection of Midlands Purple Ware and Ewloe Ware.

We asked pottery specialist, Julie Edwards, to visit us in Bromborough, providing a hands-on session where our volunteers could learn the many aspects of pottery dating and identification. The session was well attended and the volunteers appreciated the opportunity to see first-hand a wide variety of locally manufactured and/or discovered ceramic sherds and complete vessels. Julie was also able to provide some spot identifications of pottery found this season. Julie followed up the session with an onsite visit during test pitting the next week, where she was able to sit with the volunteers and talk them through what they were finding. The two sessions combined allowed the volunteers to learn the basics and then see how this information could be put into practice.



**Training session led by Julie Edwards in ceramic identification and analysis with the Discovering Bromborough community group**

The feedback has been wholly positive and Big Heritage feel that the combination of a hands-on session and onsite training is the best way to convey information to a group with mixed experience and abilities. We will certainly be recommending similar sessions in the future.



**Julie Edwards providing on-site advice on the ceramic material**

Joanne Kirton  
Big Heritage: [bigheritage.co.uk](http://bigheritage.co.uk)

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## Conference in Memory of Paul Courtney

On 18<sup>th</sup> October The Society for Post Medieval Archaeology and the Finds Research Group are holding a conference in memory of Paul Courtney, a long standing member of MPRG who sadly passed away last year. The conference is being held at the University of Leicester and papers will cover a range of topics representing Paul's broad interests. Further details and booking information can be found at <http://www.spma.org.uk/events/paul-courtney-memorial-conference/>

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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.

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## A Smashing Bargain...

Thanks to the people at Oxbow, MPRG members have been given the opportunity to purchase Ben Jervis' new book with a generous discount. Use the code **MPRG20** at the checkout to obtain the discount. For further details click on the advert below or visit: <http://www.oxbowbooks.com/oxbow/pottery-and-social-life-in-medieval-england.html>

The advertisement is split into two vertical panels. The left panel has a dark green background and features the title 'POTTERY AND SOCIAL LIFE IN MEDIEVAL ENGLAND' in white serif font at the top. Below the title is a photograph of a medieval ceramic pitcher with a handle and a spout, decorated with dark green and black patterns. The author's name 'BEN JERVIS' is printed at the bottom of the panel. The right panel has a light yellow background. At the top is the Oxbow Books logo, a stylized blue 'O' with a hook. Below the logo, the text 'OXBOW books' is written in a bold, blue, sans-serif font. A yellow starburst contains the price information: '£45.00' in black and '£36.00' in red. Below the starburst, the text 'MPRG discount with code MPRG20 at checkout' is written in a blue, italicized serif font. At the bottom of the panel, the website 'www.oxbowbooks.com' is written in a blue, sans-serif font.

## 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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