

EARLY ANGLO-SAXON POTTERY GROUP

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The Early Anglo-Saxon Pottery Group was founded by Chris Arnold in November 1980 with the aim of bringing together the growing number of specialists working on Early Anglo-Saxon pottery. There were nine founder members, working on various aspects of the material.

Chris Arnold was then researching the Sancton-Baston pot group, including textural analysis of the fabric and microscopic analysis of the stamp impressions. He was also studying ceramic material from the Isle of Wight cemeteries. Mark Brisbane was performing fabric analyses of vessels from Spong Hill, researching its mode of production. Mary Gryspeertd was analysing Saxon pottery in her work for the Northamptonshire Development Corporation, including characterisation. Catherine Hills was examining material from her excavations at Spong Hill, with particular emphasis on social patterns and religious practices. Gavin Kinsley was being funded by the D.O.E. to write up the Newark excavations and Nicholas Reynolds was investigating the cemetery at Sancton. Ailsa Mainman was researching the Canterbury pottery and Julian Richards was performing a computer-aided analysis of the form and decoration of Anglo-Saxon cremation vessels, with the aim of gaining some understanding of its significance. Andrew Russel was researching pottery from domestic sites in Eastern England, incorporating textural analysis. He was especially concerned with the economics of pottery distribution and the technology of manufacture and firing.

Three years and ten meetings later, the original aim of the Group, to act as a forum for the discussion of the particular problems of aims and methodology involved with Early Anglo-Saxon ceramics, has been well justified. The Group now has a mailing list of over thirty and has held meetings in a variety of venues throughout the country. It has examined museum collections in Peterborough, York, Lincoln, Hull and Oxford. Margaret Jones and the Mucking Post-Excavation team have discussed the pottery from Mucking, Nigel Kerr has talked about Loveden Hill, Gavin Kinsley about Newark, Nicholas Reynolds about Sancton, Sonia Hawkes about Finglesham, and Freda Berisford and Chris Knowles have described their work on Elsham. Ailsa Mainman spoke about her work on the pottery from the Marlowe excavations, Canterbury, and the Group has discussed potters' stamps with Teresa Briscoe. In addition, computer analysis and characterisation has been discussed.

Most recently, the Group has completed discussions on a document on Principles of Publication of Anglo-Saxon Cremation Cemeteries, which will appear in early 1984. Meetings planned for the current year include an examination of the Baginton and Wasperton ceramics, a meeting on thin-sectioning and a site visit to a cemetery excavation. Members of the Medieval Pottery Research Group are always welcome at meetings and Ailsa Mainman has details of our activities. Anyone currently engaged in work on Early Anglo-Saxon pottery is invited to contact Julian Richards, Department of Archaeology, University of Leeds, Leeds LS2 9JT, for further information.