



## Editorial

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The last year has seen many changes in archaeology, both positive and negative. Few could have predicted in March 1990, as we went to press with volume 13, that the changing economic climate would have had quite such rapid and severe repercussions on archaeological fieldwork, post-excavation analysis and research. This has been most noticeable in the capital, where until recently the numbers of archaeologists were maintained by a constant stream of new development projects of a scale rarely found in other parts of the country, but the same effects may be seen across the land. The loss of considerable expertise as specialists are forced to seek alternative employment can only be deplored, and we would take this opportunity to extend our sympathy to all who have recently found themselves in such a situation.

What then is the future for pottery studies? Since finds analysis depends so much on developer monies for rescue archaeology, is there a future? Contract archaeology may be attractive to the developer, but what are the implications for pottery (or other finds) research in the longer term? Is this to become the sole domain of research students, while those in employment are relegated to the status of technicians unable (financially speaking) to do more than produce basic catalogues, possibly of material from various parts of the country? Economy must not be at the expense of accuracy, quality and continuity. Similar problems are also being experienced in museums, with their increased emphasis on leisure management and dwindling resources for publication programmes.

The need for syntheses to provide a working tool for post-excavation research may be addressed by the current debate on Regional Research Centres. The newly founded Finds Special Interest Group of the I.F.A., an umbrella group formed to represent the interests of the dispersed community of post-excavation finds specialists, may play an important rôle in maintaining and improving standards in finds processing and reporting. The MPRG clearly has a role to play in promoting professionalism in ceramic research. We should remember the 1987 recommendation from the Society of Medieval Archaeology to HBMC(E) to recognise the need for post-excavation research that goes beyond the level of primary sorting and cataloguing towards deductions

about medieval society, its economies and technologies. The recent wastage of training and specialist knowledge is of no benefit to this prime objective.

Doubtless many others will be able to contribute more fully to this debate than we who seek merely to stimulate it. The contents of this volume, however, serve to remind us of the vast amount of work that has been done, and which still needs to be done. In accordance with the aims stated last year, the different papers have a broad scope which includes science-based, interpretive and continental material; in different ways each expresses the concerns voiced above. In contrast to the last issue, these papers are ordered geographically rather than chronologically.

A new departure in this issue is the creation of a section for shorter contributions under the heading '*Compendiario*', which we hope will become a regular feature. The purpose of this is to present or debate new ideas, to provide interim statements on research projects, and to publish short notes on ceramic finds of particular significance. We will consider any note, however brief, on material likely to be of interest to others. This year's items include an introduction to a major project which has been gathering momentum over the last few months — the national survey of medieval pottery studies funded by English Heritage. We also present a summary of the results of an exciting computer project which promises benefits to all those having to deal with statistical data.

The book reviews, bibliography and final sections follow a similar format to those of last year. Again we would like to offer our thanks to all those who have contributed to the easily underestimated task of compiling the bibliography, to Agnès Shepherd and to Charlotte Behr for the summaries in French and German, and to Anne Jenner for once again producing a beautiful cover design.

On behalf of the membership of the Group, we should like to express our thanks to the retiring President, John Lewis, for his significant contribution to the development of the Group in recent years, and to welcome Hugo Blake as our new President.

Finally, we wish to extend our gratitude to the Board of Celtic Studies and the Scottish Urban Archaeological Trust for their generous grants towards the cost of this publication.