

REGIONAL GROUP REPORTS 1994–5

London Area Medieval Pottery Research Group

The London Area Group held a joint meeting with SEMPER in October 1994 at the British Museum, on the subject of 'Unpublished Kilns'. A series of talks surveyed kilns in each area, including London, Essex, Buckinghamshire, Bedfordshire, East Anglia, Northamptonshire, and Oxfordshire, and was followed by a chance to see pottery from many of the sites discussed, including samples in the National Reference Collection of Medieval Pottery. Another joint London-SEMPER meeting is being planned for May 1995, at Bedford Museum.

Contact me for further details at: Department of Medieval and Later Antiquities, British Museum, London WC1B 3DG.

Beverley Nenck

South Central Medieval Pottery Research Group

After a hiatus of three years, the Group met at Salisbury in April 1994, with the theme of 'Recent work on medieval ceramics in South Central England', which provided an opportunity to catch up with recent developments in the region. A discussion session was also held to consider the future of the group. Future meetings hope to incorporate the planned programme of English Heritage-sponsored training sessions.

For further details of the Group please contact me at Wessex Archaeology, Portway House, Old Sarum Park, Salisbury SP4 6EB.

Lorraine Mepham

South-East Midlands Pottery Research Group

The SEMPER, SE and E England pottery Groups held a joint meeting at the British Museum in November 1994, on the theme of kilns from the region. This meeting was inspired by the annual MPRG conference on 'Unpublished kilns' held in Nottingham in the spring, and took advantage of the data collected for that meeting. The morning consisted of a general survey of unpublished kilns in the region, on a county-by-county basis; the afternoon was spent examining samples from the kiln sites discussed. It is intended to put together a list of these kilns, with basic information about the pottery, for future circulation. About 25 people attended and a very fruitful day was had by all.

The Spring meeting, another joint venture by the above-mentioned groups, will be held in Bedford Museum at the end of May.

For further information contact me at Bedfordshire County Archaeology Service, St Mary's Church Archaeology Centre, St Mary's Street, Bedford, MK42 0AS (tel: 01234 270009).

Anna Slowikowski

East Midlands Pottery Research Group

No official meetings were held in 1994 although members continued to exchange information on an informal basis. Contact me for further details of the group at: City of Lincoln Archaeology Unit, Charlotte House, The Lawn, Union Road, Lincoln LN1 3BL (tel: 01522 545326).

Judy Wilkinson

West Midlands Pottery Research Group

The Group held a meeting in March 1994 at the Stoke-on-Trent City Museum and Art Gallery on late medieval and early post-medieval pottery. The meeting was hosted by David Barker and Debbie Ford, who talked on the Sneyd Green kilns, and local pottery-making sites of the 17th to 18th century. In the afternoon material from the National Reference Collection of Post-medieval Pottery was made available for viewing and handling, with the emphasis being on Staffordshire wares.

Another meeting was held in October 1994 at the Department of Medieval and Later Antiquities at the British Museum, and hosted by Beverley Nenck. Here members of the Group were guided through a wide variety of stonewares of medieval and post-medieval date. In the afternoon there was a tour around the new gallery 'Europe in the 15th–18th centuries'.

A meeting at Cirencester Museum is being planned for May 1995 on the subject of medieval pottery in the Cotswolds.

For further details of the Group contact me at Hereford and Worcester County Archaeological Service, Tetbury Drive, Warndon, Worcester.

Derek Hurst

Welsh Medieval Pottery Research Group

The Welsh Group held no meetings in 1994, but the 14th volume of *Medieval and Later Pottery in Wales* (for 1993–4) is currently in preparation, and should appear in 1995. Contents will include articles on ceramics from the 17th to 19th centuries from excavations in Caernarvon, pottery from excavations in three burgage plots in the town of Newport, Dyfed, and medieval pottery from Llanelen in the Gower.

Enquiries about subscriptions should be addressed to: Steve Sell, WMPRG, Glamorgan-Gwent Archaeological Trust Ltd, Ferryside Warehouse, Bath Lane, Swansea SA1 1RD (tel: 01792 655208).

Mark Redknap

South-West Region Pottery Research Group

The annual Bickley Experimental Kiln Project, organised by David Dawson and Ollie Kent, took place in early August.

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The group has been concerned with progressing some of the conclusions in Maureen Mellor's draft report, now published as *Medieval Ceramic Studies in England: A review for English Heritage*. Some experimental work has been conducted by Somerset County Museum Service on documenting pottery types and this will continue. On another issue highlighted by the report, the shortage of full-time professional pottery researchers has meant that less time can be spent on such studies and on meetings than we would like.

For further details of the group, please contact me at: 12 Seymour Road, Bishopstone, Bristol BS7 9HR.

Michael Ponsford

Swedish Pottery Group

Proper pottery studies in Sweden started when Dagmar Selling wrote her thesis "Wikingertidens och Frühmittelalterliche Keramik in Schweden" in 1955. Although some small modifications have been made, Selling's fundamental discoveries on firing techniques and her division of the wares into types A, B and C are still used as the basis for all routine work on pottery. Since 1955 very few books or articles on the subject have been published. Per-Kristian Madsen's article, "A Survey of the Research of Danish Medieval Pottery" in *Medieval Ceramics* Vol. 10 1986 also contains some examples of what has happened on the other side of the Sound.

Recently, a growing interest in pottery as source material has emerged among archaeologists both in archaeological units and in universities. There was an immediate need for deeper knowledge of the empirical and theoretical situations. Discussions on how to advance the present state of knowledge started within a small group of PhD students at the University of Lund. Inspired by the MPRG, the Danish Pottery Group and Hartwig Lüdtkes' seminars in Schleswig, a modest first meeting was held in Uppsala in June 1994. Twenty archaeologists from different museums, units and departments took part, and a second meeting was held in Lund in October. The lectures from Uppsala will be published in 1995 (in Swedish but with abstracts in English) in *META*, a periodical which deals with medieval archaeology. The lectures covered the background to the establishment of the Pottery Group, early red wares from Uppsala, and imported pottery in Birka.

At the second meeting, Alan Vince gave a lecture on contacts between England and Scandinavia during the Middle Ages, as seen through the pottery. This contribution stands as a sign of closer future connections between MPRG and its younger sibling in Sweden.

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