

REGIONAL GROUP REPORTS 1997–9

Compiled by CHRISTOPHER CUMBERPATCH

The London Area Medieval Pottery Research Group

The London Area Group has not held any meetings since April 1996 although some members did attend the recent SEMPER meeting on Shelly Wares in Aylesbury. After a number of years work, Beverley Nenck's mantle as co-ordinator of the London Group has been now been passed to Nigel Jeffries. The group thanks her for the sterling work she has done.

A meeting is planned for the group in October 14th 2000 at the Museum of London, the details of which will be circulated to all members in the August 2000 edition M.P.R.G. newsletter.

Enquiries about the activities of the group or membership can be addressed to:

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The North-West Region Medieval Pottery Research Group

There was no meeting of the N.W.R.M.P.R.G. in 1998. The group met in July 1999 at the Maritime Museum, Lancaster. Pottery from kiln sites at Silverdale, Ellel and Bilsborrow (18th-century) as well as excavated medieval assemblages from Lancaster (Mitchell's Brewery site) and Kendal were on display. The day consisted of short talks about the groups of pottery; Alan Vince, as guest speaker, spoke about his work on whitewares from the north with particular reference to the scientific analysis he has been employing for the study. The day's talks were preceded by a discussion on the possibility of setting up a regional reference collection, this was in response to a letter from the M.P.R.G. regional groups officer regarding recommendation 8.3 in the Mellor survey.

If you would like to be placed on the group's mailing please contact:

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The South East Midlands Pottery Research Group

The South East Midlands Pottery Research Group (SEMPER) met twice since the last report. There was a meeting in June 1998 at Kyngston House, St. Albans, to look at recent work on Hertfordshire Greywares. The day was hosted by Alison Turner-Rugg and twenty-one people attended. Short presentations were given by members who had recently worked on this pottery in their areas. There were several assemblages laid out from around the region, as well as examples from St. Albans. The talks and examination of the pottery led to a fruitful discussion of the definition and distribution of this ware.

The second meeting was a joint meeting with SEMPER and the East Midlands and Anglia Roman Pottery Group, held at Aylesbury Museum, with an astonishing attendance of forty-two! The theme of the day was an exploration of areas of common interests and practice. The speakers ranged widely: case studies of Roman pottery analysis in both urban and rural contexts; medieval (and other!) pottery analysis within the constraints of competitive tendering; a case study of pottery analysis in Hungary; publication and, finally, monitoring and policing of standards. Once the Romanists could be drawn away from the topic of quantification, a very useful discussion was held about minimum standards — what they should be, how they should be disseminated and who should police them.

If anyone would like details of future meetings please contact:

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The West Midlands Pottery Research Group

The group has not met this year but your local contact is:

Stephanie Rátkai
7 Pinehurst Drive
Kings Norton
Birmingham B38 8TH

The South-West Region Medieval Pottery Research Group

Meetings were held at Somerset County Museum and at Bickley Ceramics Project's site at Cleeve, North Somerset. These looked at the local range of imported ceramics and at the Barton Collection of vernacular ceramics presented to the Somerset County Museum in 1998.

The annual Bickley Ceramics Project organised by Oliver Kent and David Dawson took place between the 3rd and 15th August 1998 and the 2nd and 14th August 1999. The following reports (by Dawson and Kent) on the work of the project were published in 1998; 'Wood-fired low temperature reduction' (*Ceramics Technical* 7; 58-64), 'Reduction fired earthenware' (*Medieval Archaeology* 42, 45-53). The latter paper emerged from a project carried out in October 1998 in conjunction with English Heritage and the Somerset County Museums Service to build and fire a tile kiln at Cleve Abbey in west Somerset. The project also worked with Sophie Wolf of the University of Fribourg, Switzerland, to provide data for her paper 'Organic trace compounds in ceramics as fingerprints' presented at the *5th European Meeting on Ancient Ceramics* in Athens in October 1999. The paper explored the potential for using organic compound traces in fired ceramics to indicate the character of both the clay and the fuel used for firings.

The regional group has been closely involved in plans to write up and publish the extensive archive resulting from the 1988-9 excavations of the medieval and post-medieval potteries in Potters Lane, Barnstaple. This is, in part, a response to the findings of the Mellor report.

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The South Central Medieval Pottery Research Group

There were no meetings of the Regional Group this year but if anyone is interested in joining (or reviving!) the group, or has any ideas for future meetings, please contact:

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Wessex Archaeology
Portway House
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The East Midlands Pottery Research Group

The Regional Group does not exist at present, because very few members are working in the region, but you can contact:

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The Welsh Medieval Pottery Research Group

No meetings were held in 1997-1999, although it is hoped to organise some for the future. Readers are invited to offer to Mark Redknap papers for publication in the journal *Medieval and Later Pottery in Wales* on ceramics from Wales and the Marches. Copies of the journal and back numbers, and enquiries about subscriptions, should be addressed to: Steve Sell, WMPRG, Glamorgan-Gwent Archaeological Trust, Ferryside Warehouse, Bath Lane, Swansea SA1 1RD (Tel: 01792 655208).

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