

papers, written for a 'Symposium On Scarborough Ware', and published in *Medieval Ceramics 6*. These were *The Dating of the Scarborough Ware Pottery Industry and The Summary and Conclusions*, the articles in which Peter and Nita brought the results from all the other papers together and re-analysed them.

It would be fair to say that despite all this work the inherent problems with the dating of Scarborough ware were never resolved, and today it is still a subject at the forefront of European medieval ceramic studies. It had always been Peter's wish that he could find time to write up his unpublished work and carry out further research on the subject. When he found out that he was ill and that his time was limited he started to make plans. It was to check on the dating evidence from Ireland and to renew old acquaintances that he went to the Medieval Pottery Conference in Dublin, in 2002, a trip which he later said was one of the most enjoyable of his life.

Sitting at Dublin Airport was the last time I spoke to Peter face to face. And it was there that he told me that as a child he had often wandered around Scarborough with his grandfather, who he said had been the most important influence on his upbringing. On these walks he had been encouraged to look into workmen's trenches and from that simple beginning had sprung his desire to study the medieval ceramics of Scarborough, and without doubt it will be for his work on this hugely important medieval pottery industry that he will be best remembered.

Only weeks before he died Ann Jenner circulated, on Peter's behalf, an e-mail asking for information on any new Scarborough ware finds spots and any new dating evidence. Work on this paper must continue, as there could be no more fitting memorial to Peter, and nothing that he would have liked better than to have published, in his honour, a re-evaluation paper of the important medieval Scarborough pottery kilns which he did so much to elucidate.

It was Peter's wish that his ashes be interred on the small island in the centre of the Clowance Estate, in Cornwall. This was been done, with his ashes being placed in a copy of a Scarborough ware knight jug, superbly potted by John Hudson.

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George Haggarty

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## John Hurst

1927 – 2003



### John Hurst and the study of medieval pottery

John Hurst, one of the founding members of the Medieval Pottery Research Group, died on 29th April 2003 having been the victim of an unprovoked attack at Great Casterton, Lincolnshire, where he had lived since his retirement from English Heritage.

John's role in the development of the discipline of Medieval Archaeology and the study of medieval settlements will be, for many, the lasting achievements of his career but for students of medieval ceramics it is the unrivalled and irreplaceable position he occupied in the study of medieval pottery for which we will remember him best and miss him most.

John seems to have come to medieval pottery studies initially because of his interest in deserted medieval villages (he was a founding member of the Deserted Medieval Village Research Group in 1952) and the need to be able to date pottery in order to provide a framework for excavations (such as that at Northolt, Middlesex, which he started to excavate in his second undergraduate year at Cambridge). Within a couple of years, however, John had embarked on his survey of Saxo-Norman pottery in East Anglia which resulted in three papers in the Proceedings of the Cambridge Antiquarian Society which set out a classification and chronology for these wares which was quickly accepted and form the basis for virtually all subsequent work on these wares (Hurst 1955, Hurst 1956 and Hurst 1957).

John's interests were also extending back to the middle

Saxon period, stimulated perhaps by the discovery of the Ipswich ware kilns at Cox Lane and the need to understand the ceramic landscape into which the late Saxon industries were introduced and the recognition of pre-Viking continental imports such as Badorf and Tating wares on sites in the British Isles.

Having sketched out the main features of the locally produced pottery of mid and late Saxon pottery, John's interests seem to have shifted towards the later medieval and post-medieval periods, and in particular the recognition and study of imported wares, unusual forms and English finewares. This interest is shown in print by 1963 with short notes on curfews, stoneware and lobed cups in the report on the Hangleton DMV, Sussex, and continued almost to the end of his life. John kept his records on index cards and a familiar site at MPRG meetings was to see John diligently recording these exotica. As information accumulated he would then publish synthetic accounts, such as his work on the later products of the Saintonge (Hurst 1974), Langerwehe stoneware (Hurst 1977a) and Spanish imports (Hurst 1977b). The landmark publication of the van Beuningen collection catalogue brought together and updated most of these strands of research, providing an accessible and lavishly produced, yet scholarly, work which is essential reading for anyone studying later medieval pottery in the field (1986).

John was quick to recognise the value of scientific techniques for the study of medieval pottery, both for dating (such as the archaeomagnetic dating of kilns) and for characterisation. He was particularly excited by the possibilities of thin section and chemical analysis and took a major role in the selection of samples for the British Museum's programme of Neutron Activation Analysis of Netherlandish and Italian maiolicas carried out by Mike Hughes.

For those of us lucky enough to be taught by John, formally or informally, it is that aspect of his life which be most sorely missed. For many years he ran evening classes in medieval pottery at Goldsmiths' College, attended by several members of the MPRG, and anyone who received a JGH site visit will know that he was generous to a fault with his knowledge, both face to face and through his inimitable typed letters in which ideas were so compressed that, as someone recently remarked, John could lay claim to have invented TXT shorthand long before the advent of the mobile phone.

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Alan Vince

#### John Hurst – a personal tribute

I first met the very shy and unassuming John Hurst back in the late 1970's when I was working on Scotland's first stratified group of 12th-century pottery. It was at the suggestion of the then assistant inspector of ancient monuments, Chris Tabraham, that we ask John, the well known pottery expert, to come to Scotland to view our material and identify the imports. That first encounter was memorable as John had asked Chris if he could see any other pottery that had been excavated over the last few years. I laid out what I could find in the store and followed him around with my note book as John filled out his white cards. To this day I remember being amazed that he could tell that a single sherd in a pile was French. It was from a Saintonge Chaffing Dish, which because of my ignorance John had to sketch.

For the next two decades, or so, I would generally only meet John once or twice a year at conferences and this was often only to show him my problem sherds and exchange pleasantries. As years passed as I worked on more pottery like many others I would wrap up my small bags of ceramic imports and send them down to John's office in London. Usually I would get them back a couple of weeks later with a badly typed and at times almost unreadable note. To one of the worlds worst spellers these notes were a source of pleasure as I thought if John can get to the top with spelling like that maybe there was hope for me.

Slowly as the years passed and as I got to know John better I found that we could talk for longer and he seemed to be more comfortable in my company. Firstly with Steve Moorhouse and subsequently alone when he was in Scotland he would stay with my wife and myself and I soon learned that in the evening after a good meal John liked nothing better than for us to sit at the window talking about pottery while he watched the sea.

In 2001, when we in Scotland began to survey all of our ceramic imports and I began to look at the French material,

I found myself talking regularly to John on the phone and when he was out Stephen would answer and we would often chat. In 2002 Historic Scotland paid for John to come to Scotland for five days as part of our Survey and it was on one of these evenings as we talked, that John told me 'although I have been unwell I am happy, life is good to me, I am well looked after at home and I have two daughters that I am proud of.' On the Friday when I saw him on to the train for the last time his last words to me were 'now that you have finished the French wares you must take on the German material, your work is for Scotland as important as John Allan's is for England.' That gave me a real lift as only the night before he had told me at some length how much

he admired John's work. It was only a few weeks later when I phoned, Stephen told me the terrible news. When my wife said I will send some flowers to your friend I realised she was right, after all these years that was just what the shy and modest man had become.

The utter futility of John's death came to me as it did to all his friends in the world of medieval ceramics as a great shock and he has left a void that will be very hard to fill. My one regret is that at John's Funeral I never got to meet Stephen and thank him for keeping me informed about John's condition during the long weeks that he was in hospital.

*George Haggarty*

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