

medieval ceramics **News**

Obituaries

Mike Stokes 11 May 1952 – 22 February 2005

Mike Stokes was a great advocate for the study of medieval pottery and a great believer in the importance of working with local people on local archaeology. Between 1989 and 1993 he served on MPRG Council as Regional Groups Officer and as a member of the Editorial Committee but long before that Mike had been working to develop pottery studies in the West Midlands and in 1984 he was a founder member of the West Midlands Region Medieval Pottery Research Group. It was in this capacity and about this time that I first met Mike. What I noticed then but what I now, with the benefit of hindsight, fully appreciate, was that Mike was so considerate and helpful to those of us who were just starting out in pottery studies. No matter how obvious the question or naive the assumption Mike was never bored or superior but always enthusiastic and supportive.

Medieval pottery studies was just one part of Mike's career in archaeology. He was also a field archaeologist, a museum curator, a teacher and a contributor to local radio and in all his roles he was an enthusiastic interpreter and communicator of knowledge about the past. For 25 years and up until his last illness Mike played a prominent part in the work of the CBA in the West Midlands organising and speaking at day schools and conferences. For twenty years he was a committee member of the West Midlands Group and latterly Chair and Secretary.

Mike went to school in Evesham where the late Peter Reynolds was his teacher and friend and the inspiration for a lifelong enthusiasm for experimental archaeology, particularly in ceramics. Mike read Ancient History and Archaeology at Birmingham University and then went to work as a Field Archaeologist in Coventry. It was during this time that Mike began to work with Warwick University on their adult and continuing education programme. After Coventry Mike became Museum's Archaeologist at Rowley's House Museum in Shrewsbury creating, amongst other projects, the excellent galleries featuring medieval Shrewsbury and Roman Wroxeter.

As I later learned my earliest impressions of Mike were not unusual. He was a mentor to many and a friend to many more. He was generally acknowledged to be a dedicated and knowledgeable archaeologist, hardworking, inspiring and good humoured. He achieved a great deal but was always self effacing. He will be sadly missed.

Victoria Bryant, with thanks to Dr John Hunt

