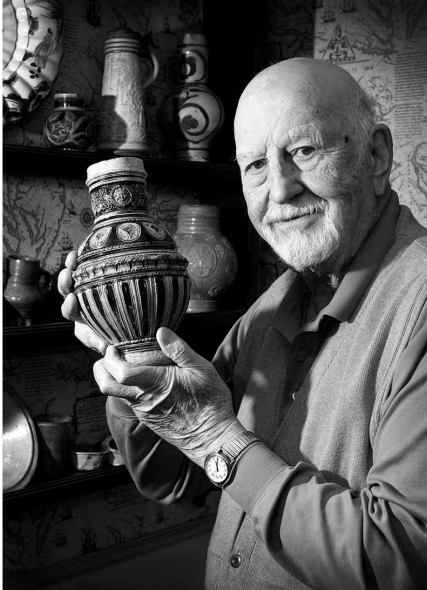


## Obituaries

Ivor Noël Hume, OBE

1927–2017



He preferred to be called “Noël” even though he was christened “Ivor,” a name hastily selected just before his baptism to replace the monikers “It” and “Tweezle.” According to Noël’s autobiographical *A Passion for the Past*, Ivor was the name of the hero in a best-selling romance novel of the time. His middle name was to be “Noël”, just as his father, but when filling out the birth certificate his rather eccentric mother placed both ‘Noël’ and “Hume” in the surname slot. He was thereby distinguished from birth by an unhyphenated and two-part last name.

But his name was not all that distinguished him. Noël was an imposing figure, physically as well as in his contributions to historical/post-medieval archaeology. He was tall and had noticeably large hands and thick fingers that could surprisingly twiddle small finds or sherds of pottery until they gave up their secrets. Noël published scores of books deciphering material culture as “signposts to the past” – *All the Best Rubbish*, *Here Lies Virginia*, *The Virginia Adventure*, *Martin’s Hundred*, to name a few. His style was witty, engaging, and approachable for a wide audience, yet his writings were based on rigorous scholarship. He had a remarkable memory for the smallest of details. Noël’s 1969 survey of the commonly-recovered archaeological finds in North America, published as *A Guide to Artifacts of Colonial America*, is still in print as a valuable resource and the starting point of artefact research for students, professionals, and armchair archaeologists alike.

Needless to say, Noël loved material culture, and most especially the types of ceramics archaeologically-

recovered from sites in the United Kingdom and in his new home in Virginia. He realized that pottery and porcelain had the richest stories to tell, not only in revealing where they were made and when, but also how they were used, traded, and lost. He called himself a “pot detective” and he demonstrated his prowess at giving well-studied voice to a range of pottery from the past in the more than a dozen articles published in the journal *Ceramics in America* since its inception in 2000. His valuable study of London-made tin-glazed wares found in Virginia was published in 1977 as *English Delftware from London and Virginia*. His aptly named book *If These Pots Could Talk: Collecting 2,000 Years of British Household Pottery* chronicled the foibles and triumphs shared with his first wife, Audrey, as they assembled a ceramic collection reflecting the sorts of pots coming out of the ground on both sides of the Atlantic.

Audrey, née Baines and trained at the Institute of Archaeology, met Noël in post-war London where, by a happy set of circumstances, he had been employed as the City of London’s chief archaeologist. His path there is the stuff of fairytales and involved a failed theatrical career, a mud-larking stint on the Thames, a visit to the Guildhall Museum with foreshore finds, and a meeting with the Guildhall’s keeper, an ailing Adrian Oswald who he soon replaced. Noël and Audrey married in 1950 and spent the next seven years excavating in the city and meticulously reconstructing the recovered vessels that were considered by most to be of too recent history to be of interest. These important objects now form part of the Museum of London’s Ceramic and Glass Collection.

In 1957, Noël and Audrey arrived in Williamsburg, Virginia as director and curator, respectively, of the Colonial Williamsburg’s newly established Department of Archaeology. Again, the stars had aligned for Noël, leading to his profound influence in America. His knowledge of post-medieval finds made him valuable to American archaeologists such as J.C. Harrington who was excavating 17th-century Jamestown, the first permanent English settlement in America. At the same time, funding from the philanthropist John D. Rockefeller, Jr., was enabling the restoration of the nearby town of Williamsburg to its eighteenth-century appearance. Excavations there were being conducted primarily to inform architectural historians as to the appearance of buildings. There was no comprehensive scholarship on the dates and provenance of objects and no thought that the interpretation of artifacts in context could lead to a rich understanding of past life. The study of historical archaeology was new to America just as post-medieval archaeology was new to Britain. But during Noël’s three decades leading archaeological research at the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation he changed opinions. He modernized archaeological methodology by introducing the concept of cross-fitting (crossmending) sherds of pottery to establish relationships between excavated

contexts. His major archaeological research projects extended beyond Williamsburg to other early Virginia sites, to North Carolina and the search for Sir Walter Raleigh's colonies, and to Bermuda where he delved into marine archaeology. He made films, wrote books, constructed stage plays, and lectured about the value of the everyday that put artifacts in context and made the past understandable to the public. Despite failing health and sight problems that frustrated his compositions, Noël was productive until the very end.

The support and love of his second wife, Carol Grazier, whom he married upon Audrey's death in 1993, were largely responsible for his continuing creativity in his later years.

Noël had no formal university training and although at times that seemed to bother him in a profession that esteems academe, he accrued accolades during his career that recognized his profound influence in

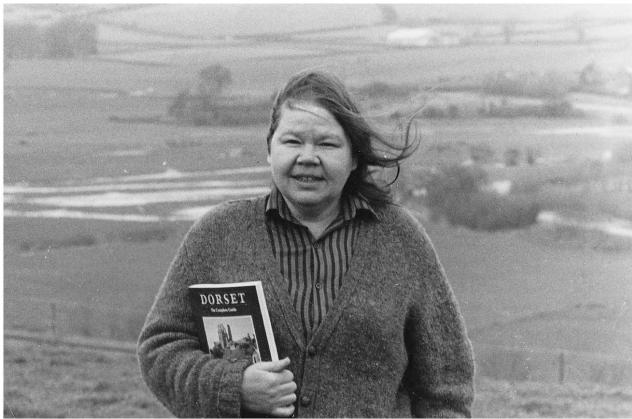
the field. He received honorary doctorates from the University of Pennsylvania (1976) and the College of William and Mary (1983). In 1992, Queen Elizabeth II awarded Noël with an OBE for his contributions to British cultural interests. He was truly a giant in our field. Those of us lucky enough to regularly meet with the man realized that we had greatness in our midst. We all strove to keep him current with the most recent archaeological finds and to converse with him about their meanings. But how do you hold on to that intellectual energy that made such a difference in the study of historical material culture? He will be greatly missed. Among other things, Ivor Noël Hume has shown us that, indeed, pots *do* talk if only we can understand their language.

*Bly Straube*

## Jo Draper

1949–2017

*This is a brief appreciation given at a meeting of the Medieval Pottery Research Group (South-West Group), County Hall, Dorchester, 20 October 2018*



Today it is fitting to remember Jo, as pottery was one of the many academic strands in her fruitful life. Brought up in south Hampshire, she helped on Barry Cunliffe's excavations at Portchester Castle and then at Fishbourne Palace. When Barry moved from Bristol University to become professor at Southampton, Jo became his assistant. I first met her at the HM Prison, Dorchester, where with her husband Christopher Chaplin, to whom she was married for 48 years, she carried out excavations for the Dorchester Excavation Committee, of which Cunliffe was Director. I think that Jo would not have been happy being here today because, in my experience, she never talked publicly, preferring to share her phenomenal knowledge without any formality, as long as she was able to smoke, in the museum library, and even in committee meetings.

Today, bringing some stamped Saxo-Norman sherds from the excavations in Wollaston Field, I looked up the pottery report in the Dorset Natural and Archaeological Society's monograph on Greyhound Yard (Draper 1993), where similar pottery had been found. Here, Jo's report shows the enormous extent of her knowledge. But in every Dorset excavation report, Jo wrote about the pottery, of whatever date. She shared her wisdom and would give her views, consulted or not. Her published work is fundamental to continuing pottery studies in Dorset. Especially, I would cite her work with Penny Copland-Griffiths, on Verwood (Draper 2002a; 2002b).

After moving to Dorchester, Jo's contributions to the Dorset Natural History and Archaeological Society were phenomenal: she was editor of the *Proceedings* for 15 years and oversaw the publication of many monographs. Despite her private demeanour, Jo was a brilliant organizer: with Roger Peers, then Curator of the Museum and Secretary of the Society, she orchestrated fairs in Dorchester's Corn Exchange to raise funds for the Society's purchase of properties to enlarge its premises, with enormous success.

Jo's bibliography is extraordinary, for its extensive range and the diversity of subjects. Her *Dorset: the complete guide*, for the Dovecote Press, first published in 1986, has been reprinted and revised; it is for many 'the new Pevsner'. However, it shows, like her equivalent volume for Hampshire, her attention to detail, which was always a mark of her pottery studies. Indeed, her keen eye was demonstrated in her *petit point* tapestry work; she made many exquisite coverings for the seats of late 18<sup>th</sup>-century chairs formerly in the Victorian Gallery of the Dorset County Museum.

A complete bibliography will appear in the Dorset *Proceedings*, appended to an obituary by David and Linda Viner (vol 139 [2018], 223–26). For me, I delight in *Dorset Food* (1988) and *Dorset Barns* (2010) – these illustrate the wide range of Jo’s interests. Today, we must remember her with admiration and enormous respect, regretting that she died, aged only 68, on 24 June 2017.

Laurence Keen

## Kenneth J Barton

1924–2018



Ken Barton died peacefully on 28th August 2018 shortly after his 94th birthday. He is greatly missed, not least by the many members of the MPRG who have been inspired by his immense enthusiasm for our subject, his knowledge, support and friendship.

He was born in Liverpool on 7th August 1924. It was not until 1949, after leaving school at the age of 14 and taking a variety of jobs including war service with the Irish Guards, when he realised that his life-long passion would be archaeology. He remembers the precise moment, 2.30pm on Thursday 7th September, when he volunteered to work on an archaeological site at Goss Street, Chester, under the direction of Graham Webster who was to guide his career for the next ten years. Under Webster’s tutelage, Kenneth progressed from learning his trade as a digger to constructing model Roman buildings for a new gallery at the Grosvenor Museum and to the conservation of the small finds from the excavations (Ken recalls this story in his contribution to the collectively authored piece ‘The Medieval Pottery Research Group at twenty-five’, published in *Medieval Ceramics* 24). From then on he also strove to obtain the educational

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qualifications he would need to further his ambition.

On the basis of this experience and the excellent impression he had made with his diligence and eagerness to learn, in 1954 he accepted a post as Technician at the Ministry of Works archaeological conservation laboratory at Lambeth Bridge House under Leo Biek. From there in 1956 he was appointed Assistant Curator (Technical) at Bristol City Museum and Art Gallery to set up and run the new conservation laboratory. In 1961 he moved to be Assistant Curator at Worthing Museum and Art Gallery. His exceptional managerial and organisational abilities came to the fore when he was appointed Keeper and then Director in 1963 to supervise the establishment of a museum based on the Tickenhill collection at the former bishop’s palace at Hartlebury Castle. This opened in May 1966 and then he developed it as the hub of the Worcestershire County Museums Service. He took the concept of providing a comprehensive museums service to the community further when he moved to be Director at Portsmouth City Museums in 1967, then briefly at Tyne and Wear in 1975 and lastly at Hampshire in 1976. Here he developed, through partnerships between the County Council and local district councils, a network of eleven museums across the county and a schools education service supported from a new headquarters at Chilcomb House, just outside Winchester. He retired from the museum profession in July 1988 and two years later moved with his young family to Franquetot in the commune of Cretteville in Normandy – a larger garden being one of the attractions.

Kenneth qualified for the Diploma of the Museums Association in 1963 and soon made his mark in the profession. He served as a professional councillor in 1971–4 and 1976–9, was elected a Fellow in 1974, President of the South Eastern Federation of Museums and Art Galleries 1977–80 and a Vice-President of the Museums Association in 1982–4. The *Museums*

*Journal* records his championing of volunteer archaeological ‘correspondents’ and small museums like that at Axbridge (Somerset), and most of all the recognition and training of technical staff. He chaired the Museums Association’s Technical Training Subcommittee which reviewed the whole issue and led to the initiation of the Technical Certificate and ultimately access to the award of the Diploma itself. He was also a regular contributor of reviews on new publications on pottery, giving fulsome praise where due but blunt when pointing out the shortcomings of the author. It is not surprising that at a point in 1977 when the Association was unable to cope with the growing pressures on museums from changes in the way that archaeology was done in Britain, he helped give voice to the concerns of archaeologists working in museums by being a founder and first chair of the Society of Museum Archaeologists.

It should be remembered that then museums were wholly involved in the archaeological fieldwork being carried out in their community. It was seen as an essential method of acquisition, developing the collections and understanding the archaeology of the locality, initiating new research and involving the public in the process. It was also entirely understood that a good curator or museum director was a respected practitioner of their chosen discipline. This not only directly benefitted the quality of service provided to the public but lent to the esteem in which the public held a museum.

Kenneth’s development as an archaeologist and pottery specialist can be seen to run in parallel with his museum career but it was closely integral to it. His experience of running his own fieldwork started in 1954 with a special committee of the Flintshire Historical Society to investigate the recently closed Buckley potteries, then in London with the Thurrock Historical Society and in 1960 while at Bristol with the Axbridge Caving Group and Archaeological Society at Star Roman Villa followed by other sites in collaboration with Philip Rahtz. It was excavating in Bristol that was to deepen his interest in medieval and later pottery. If it was Webster who provided the inspiration to take up archaeology and conservation and kindled his interest in pottery, it was Gerald Dunning, Uncle Gerald as Kenneth affectionately remembered him, who encouraged his passion for ceramics. In the 1950s medieval and later pottery was as often as not discarded and disregarded. Gerald Dunning and Professor EM Jope showed how important it was as archaeological evidence. Kenneth published a group of medieval jugs from the Castle Well at Bristol in 1959. The excavations at Back Hall (1958) and at St Nicholas’s Almshouses (1960) demonstrated how important understanding the pottery would be to understanding the archaeology of Bristol and the city’s region. He went on to publish the evidence for the post-medieval manufacture of 18th-century yellow slipwares and salt-glazed

stonewares within the city and of the distinctive hand-built medieval pottery at Ham Green on the south bank of the Avon downstream of Bristol. The find of fine Saintonge ware from south-west France at Back Hall triggered further adventure. Kenneth relates, ‘At Gerald’s instigation I took my Vespa and went to Saintes – such revelations! Chester may have been my road to Damascus but Saintes was my Mecca’ (Barton 2000). Thereafter followed a stream of publications mostly resulting from fieldwork carried out locally to wherever he was working at the time but also including further visits to northern France to define the sources of many types of pottery imported into England in the medieval period. In all he published over 60 papers and three books: the first (1975) one of the most readable guides to *Pottery in England*; the second (1979), *Medieval Sussex Pottery*, the result of 12 years research and analysis for some of which he also received his MPhil at the University of Southampton in 1972; and the third (2003), *The Archaeology of Castle Cornet, St Peter Port, Guernsey*, the culmination of an association with the Channel Isles of Jersey and Guernsey that started in 1971. The latter is a reminder of his substantial contribution through excavation to our knowledge of military fortifications of the past 500 years. He was elected a Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries of London in 1967.

Kenneth always shared his knowledge with others. He usually worked in close collaboration with colleagues. He was a founder member of the Society for Medieval Archaeology in 1957 and in 1963 with John Hurst, another pioneer of medieval and later pottery studies, and with the encouragement of Alan Warhurst, then Director of Bristol City Museum, he was instrumental in founding the Post-Medieval Ceramic Research Group. The scope of this new group was widened in 1966 to become the Society for Post-medieval Archaeology, a society like the later Medieval Pottery Research Group, which always sought to draw together like-minded souls from Europe and wider afield. During his presidency of the SPMA in 1980 he organised in Bristol the first joint-conference of the Society for Post-medieval Archaeology and the Society for Historical Archaeology. When Andrew White (1980) wrote in the *Museum Archaeologist* of Kenneth’s contribution to the Society of Museum Archaeologists, ‘We all owe a great debt of gratitude ... especially to Kenneth Barton who has been one of the main formative forces behind the Society’s’ he could have been writing for the membership of all the societies in whose inauguration Kenneth was involved.

Not surprisingly in such a full career Kenneth developed a wide network of contacts, some like the late Bob Thompson and the late Rona Cole he counted among his close friends, but also many colleagues, friends and acquaintances who owe so much to him and his generosity of spirit for inspiration and encouragement. He has amply repaid the confidence placed in him by his early mentors.

There is one other legacy that Kenneth has left for our benefit and enjoyment – his collection of vernacular pottery from (mostly) western Europe. It was acquired piece by piece over many years as a conscious memorial ‘to show the end of products of a centuries-old tradition; they were kept together to record its passing and to marvel at its persistence and tenacity. We can see in these wares evidence of the remarkable skill, ability and intelligence of mankind faced with producing wares in often primitive conditions’ (Barton 1982). The collection was first exhibited in Guernsey Museum and Art Gallery in 1982 and later in 1996 at Somerset County Museum on the occasion of his gift of the collection to Somerset County Museums Service.

It is appropriate to end this commemoration with the view of the late Graham Webster, ‘Such a career [in museum curatorship] is quite astonishing when one thinks of the lowly academic base on which it was built. It was all achieved by sheer hard work and an iron determination. Inevitably Kenneth made enemies with his forthright manner, but he won friends as well and as the earliest of these I can but admire such gutsy will-power and capacity for work from first hand acquaintance at Chester. But he never ceased to work in medieval pottery. His major and lasting contribution has been to place it in its proper European setting through his work in France and its effect on British potteries’ (Webster 1991).

Kenneth is survived by his wife, Marilyn, and children, Oliver, Tabitha and Benjamin, with whom he shared his very happy retirement in Normandy, his children from his first and second marriages and his second wife. Marilyn remembers him as a devoted father, fully involved in the care and support of their children and the running of their home. Whether he was caving in the Mendips, diving on the *Mary Rose*, teaching his WEA classes, exploring the jungle in Brunei, cooking in the kitchen or tending his vegetable patch, he brought boundless energy to everything he did.

David Dawson

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