MEDIEVAL AND LATER POTTERY RESEARCH GROUP

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Newsletter **96** **December 2022**

Notes from the President

Council last met in July 2022. As well as the usual business, our main point of discussion was the MLPRG website. Members have probably noticed that this has not been updated recently, and essentially it is not functioning as we would wish. We also need to think about rebranding, following our recent name change. We have therefore taken the decision to completely revamp the website and to rebrand it with a new logo that will bring together website, journal and newsletter in a single style. Work has already begun on the process, which we hope will be finished by the end of the year. The new website will allow us to sell publications online and will also help us to maintain subscription records. Hopefully it should also be easier to keep up-to-date. If we wish to be taken seriously as a body which supports specialists and draws in other interested parties, holds useful resources, sets standards and conducts advocacy for the profession, we need a functioning and accessible website.

Since the last newsletter we have held our annual conference most enjoyably in Chester (see report below) but have had to defer our AGM until later in the year (see notice below). In the meantime we welcome Katie Marsden who has been co-opted as our new Meetings Secretary (huge thanks to Katie for her organization of the Chester conference).

Lorraine Mepham

MLPRG AGM 2022

Due to low turn-out at the annual conference, we took the decision to defer the AGM to a later date and to hold it online, to maximise attendance. It has now been scheduled for 15 December, 7 – 9 pm, and the event will include a repeat of Clare McCutcheon's talk given at the recent annual conference: 'From townhouse to tenement: 19th century pottery from Dublin'. This event is free to attend; please contact our Meetings Secretary, Katie Marsden, to register for the event: katie.marsden@wessexarch.co.uk

Appeal for Photographs

We are currently in the process of revamping the MLPRG website, and would like to appeal to members for any good quality photographs that they feel able to share on the new website (ie without any copyright issues). Images should be of as high a resolution as you can manage. Please send any to the Secretary, Gareth Perry: Gareth.perry@york.ac.uk

MLPRG Annual Conference 2022, Chester

It was a small but select group that met in Chester for the MLPRG Annual Conference. Entitled 'The Late Show – Exploring Pottery of the Early Modern and Later Periods', we attracted a very diverse range of papers, from the local (pottery from Rainford, Liverpool and Ticknall) to the exotic (17th-century Ukraine, Ottoman smoking habits, Tang ceramics).

One of the themes that ran through the conference was technology – our first paper, by Richard Carlton, introduced us to contemporary pottery making in the western Balkans, and was full of fascinating details of the way in which traditional manufacturing techniques had been preserved there, despite the availability of factory-produced ceramics. Richard explained the differences between hand-building, hand-wheel and foot-wheel technologies and introduced us to the concept of coil-throwing, which was new to many of us – this was all illustrated by copious photographs and video clips. The survival of traditional techniques into the 20th century

was also discussed by Tania Casimiro, in relation to pottery production in Lisbon. Oksana Kovalenko looked at decoration on 17th-century pots in Ukraine, and how this developed to include different techniques, while Yun Zhang considered a symbiotic relationship between the Tang dynasty of China and the Middle East, in which the latter area supplied the cobalt for the decoration of Tang ceramics, which were then exported westwards along the Silk Road back to the Middle East. Porcelain manufacture in Worcester was the subject of Helen Loney's paper, which used fieldwalking data to examine trends in fabrics, forms, manufacturing and consumption of porcelain.

The fine surroundings of the Grosvenor Museum's lecture theatre, with Sue Brown describing Martincamp-type flask production waste from Ticknall

Production sites were also included: Chris Jarrett spoke about the Isleworth pottery in London, active c.1756 – 1830, which produced wasters of porcelain and pottery types that are associated more with Staffordshire than with London – yellow slipwares and mottled wares – as well as porcelain. Dan Garner described the mid-18th-century production of tin-glazed earthenwares at the Tithebarn Street Pottery in Liverpool and drew comparisons between this assemblage and that from a recently excavated (and published) kiln site in Lancaster. Other local production was covered by Sam Rowe, who spoke about the kiln waste recovered from Rainford, near St Helens, Merseyside (earthenwares, including blackwares), and by David Budge who looked at an early 18th-century kiln belonging to the Tetley family at Ticknall, Derbyshire, which was producing earthenwares (again including blackwares), slipwares and mottled wares. The Tetleys appear to have used an interesting mixture of traditional and new production techniques, sometimes in the same kiln load, indicating that they were part of information networks that spread beyond Ticknall itself. Sue Brown and Janet Spavold then introduced some further findings from Ticknall, possibly of a challenging nature, as they indicate that the distinctive bottle form known as a 'Martincamp flask' (a.k.a. a 'Ticknall bottle') was produced there, and had a Midlands-wide distribution. Although the Martincamp flask has hitherto been exclusively linked to a possible production area in northern France, this is the first production site for this vessel form to be identified – it would be interesting to see a programme of compositional analysis to compare the Midlands flasks with others from the UK and France.

Tin Glazed Earthenware production waste from Liverpool with Ticknall bottles in the background

There were other more specific contributions. Nolwenn Guedeau presented a comparative study of smoking in the Ottoman Empire and Europe (the first paper on clay pipes I can remember from a MLPRG conference), using an assemblage from Algiers, where Western, Ottoman and local pipes were all used and where questions of identity within the Ottoman Empire could be examined. Jeff Speakman drew our attention to a single vessel, a 17th-century sgraffito slipware dish from Rainford, which may contain religious, specifically Catholic imagery – Jeff sketched out for us a persuasive scenario which linked this dish, which may well be a Continental import, to

persecuted Catholic clergy, and invited audience opinion (we agreed it was probably an import but there was no real consensus on its possible religious connotations; it is nevertheless a very interesting vessel).

Clare McCutcheon gave us an entertaining tour through a group of children's pottery from Dublin – these mugs and plates depict nursery rhymes and also include learning aids ('A is for Apple', etc) and were often billed as 'gifts for good children'. Meanwhile their production was aided by the employment of other children who were not so lucky. More gruesomely, Clare also introduced us to the Victorian game of Snapdragon, which involved fishing for raisins in a bowl of flaming brandy and which could prove fatal (children, don't try this at home).

Julie Edwards (third from right) with some of the impressive range of post-medieval ceramics from Chester during the handling sessions

David Barker brought us back to the late 19th and early 20th century with a fascinating examination of the UK market for ceramics through contemporary advertisements. These reveal a picture of a huge range of ceramic types, many of which were supplied more cheaply by Germany prior to the First World War (David has elsewhere discussed the effects of the war on British pottery manufacture), but which also included explicit references to cheap pottery of lesser quality – not just 'seconds' but of even lower grades.

We should not forget Julie Edwards who gave this year's Gerald Dunning lecture in which she examined a series of pit groups from Chester to illustrate the range of pottery in use during the early post-medieval period (including both locally made and imported wares), and the documentary evidence that can be linked to some of them and which allow the exploration of the role which pottery may have played in households.

All this richness and a handling session as well – Ticknall bottles, Liverpool delftware and porcelain, and Julie's Chester pit groups (grateful thanks to Julie for organizing the laying out of pottery for our delight). Together with the evening socializing, we all agreed that this had been a valuable opportunity to meet again after a gap of three years. Online meetings still have their place in drawing in a wider audience, but there's really no substitute for making long journeys across the country (in particularly adverse circumstances this time, due to the rail strike) in order to talk pots with our fellow specialists. Long may we be spared to carry on doing so.

Lorraine Mepham

The Caen Workshop on Imported Ceramics in French Atlantic Ports

On the 7th of October 2022 at the University of Caen, Normandy, a one-day workshop took place. About 50 attendees, scholars, students and specialists were gathered. Sebastian Pauly and Anne Bocquet-Lienard organized and hosted the sessions that were also to be followed digitally by a Zoom channel. The conference was fully in French.

The theme was theoretically introduced by Luc Bourgeois showing the voyage pots can take around the world, starting in Saintonge and ending up with Bartman jugs in Nagasaki Japan. The main theme was the cross-pollination of ceramics all around the world in the 17th century.

The nine lectures of each harbour were structured from south to north, starting the Basque town of Bayonne and ending up north in Dunkirk. Bayonne was introduced by Armelle Gueriteau. Ceramic types like stoneware from Beauvais and Boullion and production centres like Barbezieux-Lamerac were discussed. Many types I'd never heard of or seen before.

Valery Marache spoke about Bordeaux where Paterna wares and special grey wares were found. On the mouth of the Gironde river a wide variety of objects from the production centre of Saintonge were excavated, like chafing dishes with colourful face masks. Pots from the kilns of Cox-Lomagne were found. Staffordshire slipware, Gouda tobacco pipes and Lower Rhine redware were among the imports found at the port.

Fabienne Cheron discussed the material from the rather special fortified late 16th century town of Brouage, still well kept. This centre for salt production and trade produced relatively more imported ceramics than any other town discussed. The well-known types from Beauvais and regional products from Normandy and Brittany were found. Stoneware from Cologne and Raeren were present as well as red wares from the Low Countries. Portuguese 18th century faience and red micaceous wares came to light. It is one of the few spots where the blue-blue Ligurian wares were discovered.

The large harbour town of La Rochelle was presented by Brigitte Vequaud. The town centre and harbours of La Rochelle saw over 30 excavations in the last decades, so substantial work has been done. White wares from Cox-Lomage, butter pots from Laval and imports from Barbezieux were represented among the often-found Saintonge material. Spanish faience from Valencia and Seville, together with Portuguese blue and white faience made up the southern imports. Possible Evora red wares were found. From the Low Countries came redware cooking pots and slip decorated wares. La Rochelle proved to have a substantial amount of imported ceramics in the 17th and 18th centuries.

Nantes was presented by Yves Heningfeld. He discussed the Spanish reflechio metallico sherds, and early Portuguese and Tuscan loop handled amphoras found there. Like in other French ports, only rarely do Chinese porcelains show up. The odd Bartman jug was found here.

Elisabeth Lecler-Huby spoke about finds from Dieppe. Much Saintonge material was found, as well as Flemish redware, and a fruit dish from Faenza. Uncommon highly and geometrically decorated products from Beauvais were new to me.

The northernmost harbour of Dunkirk (Duinkerken) was the last one to be discussed. Vaiana Vincent gave an earlier version of her paper at the BNPG conference in Bergen, Norway in the spring of 2022. The port of Dunkirk in the 16th-17th century was not just a harbour for trade but also a pirate's nest to seize Dutch and English vessels for the Spanish crown. A wide variety of imports was found here. The first sight of marbled Pisa wares, among other Italian majolica, was shown. Also a large amount of Dutch majolica was excavated. A rare sherd of Rhineland Hafnerware showed up. The Beauvais wares were present, also the rare ones with a tulip décor.

For lunch a substantial meal was served in the canteen of the University. Some participants brought small boxes of sherds to be examined by others. The

Two Saintonge figures from a shipwreck dating c.1625, found near Texel, Netherlands. Image courtesy of Michiel Bartels

conference ended in the laboratory of the department of Ceramology where the archeometric equipment was stored.

View of the harbour and port of St Malo. c.1770. Source gallica.bnf.fr / Bibliothèque nationale de France

The conference was reminiscent of the famous Ceramics & Trade volume by Peter Davey and Richard Hodges (1983) where the first steps were made to determine, compare and explain the appearance of certain ceramics at certain places. Since then the discussion started in the North Sea basin has been extended to the Baltic. Now the French specialist colleagues took this important step to look for the materiality of historic trade ties from the French Atlantic ports. Let's hope this initiative will followed by more. The question at the conference was the problem of the low accessibility of English, Dutch and German publications in this field, because they are not written in French. As English is the *lingua franca* in ceramics, this makes it difficult for non-English speakers. The other way around, French language reports and literature are hard to access from Holland and England, where the most substantial French ceramic imports in the 15th to 18th century appear. Therefore it is time to integrate more on a European harbour level for Golden Age material culture. For this we need conferences like those in Bergen and Caen this year, an open window for studies at a European level of material culture in the time of global expansion.

Michiel Bartels, Archeologie West-Friesland, Hoorn, Holland

Digging for Delftware: An International Symposium (27-28 February 2023)

Comprising over 2000 pieces, Bristol Museum has one of the largest and most important collections of delftware in the UK. For over 100 years, Bristol was a leading manufacturer of delftware, producing objects that were exported across the globe.

Bristol Museum has been working for two years on a project funded by Arts Council England to research and re-display its collection of English delftware. In celebration of the project, this two-day symposium will bring together specialists from around the world. They will share insights into delftware from Bristol and beyond and explore the latest international research in the field of delftware studies.

There will also be an opportunity to visit the new displays and to see a selection of objects from the museum's reserve collection.

Speakers will include Karin Walton, Matthew Winterbottom, Ian Betts, Dr Caroline McCaffrey-Howarth, Peter Francis, Femke Diercks, Roger Massey, David Dawson, Dr Oliver Kent and Amanda Lange.

Further details and booking information can be found here:
https://www.bristolmuseums.org.uk/bristol-museum-and-art-gallery/whats-on/digging-for-delftware-an-international-symposium/

Amber Turner

In Memoriam, Hemmy Clevis

The pacemaker of many studies into late- and post-medieval material culture in the Netherlands and elsewhere, Dr. Hemmy Clevis (1953), passed away on 3rd of October 2022. His interest in, and wide scope of knowledge of, material was stated in many (international) conferences and publications. His willingness to share meant that the expertise on ceramics, and also glass, leather, textile and metal finds became accessible for anyone. The invention of the so called 'Deventer-System' giving a fabric-shape-type mnemonic code to ceramic and glass objects set the standard 30 years ago and is now widely used in the Low Countries. Through his publishing house SPA he was also able to disclose 'orphaned' projects like leather shoes and Hanseatic cogs. After his retirement in 2020 he did not pause but carried on in ever more studies and publishing. His wit, dedication and endurance will be greatly missed.

Michiel Bartels

MPRG Publications

Occasional Paper 1: A Guide to the Classification of Medieval Ceramic forms (UK £27.75 excl. P&P)
Online digital version: https://medievalpottery.org.uk/publications/occasional-papers/a-guide-to-the-classification-of-medieval-ceramic-forms/

Occasional Paper 2: Minimum Standards for the Processing, Recording, Analysis and Publication of Post-Roman Ceramics (Free excl. P&P This publication has been replaced by **A Standard for Pottery Studies in Archaeology** see below)

Occasional Paper 3: *The Harlow Pottery Industries*, by Helen Walker and Wally Davey (UK £16; Europe £18; USA £21: All include P&P)

Occasional Paper 4: *'Genius in a Cracked Pot' - Late Medieval Reduced Wares: A Regional Synthesis*, by Anna Slowikowski (UK £12; Europe £14: All include P&P)

Occasional Paper 5: *Sourcing Scottish Redwares*, by Derek Hall, George Haggarty and Simon Chenerey (UK £22.50; Europe: £24: All include P&P)

Occasional Paper 6: A Research Framework for Post-Roman Ceramic Studies in Britain
https://medievalpottery.org.uk/publications/occasional-papers/occasional-paper-6-mprg-framework/

Occasional Paper 7: *The Ipswich Ware Project. Ceramics, Trade and Society in Middle Saxon England*, by Paul Blinkhorn *et al*. (UK £16; Europe £20: All include P&P)

Occasional Paper 8: *Ceramics and Glass: a tribute to Sarah Jennings.* Julie Edwards and Sarah Paynter (eds). (UK £20; Europe £26: All include P&P)

Occasional Paper 9: *Late Medieval Pottery Kilns at Newport, Pembrokeshire, and the Recording and Interpretation of Pottery Production Sites.* David Dawson and Oliver Kent. (Distributed *gratis* to MLPRG members)

A Standard for Pottery Studies in Archaeology - Online Digital Version:
https://medievalpottery.org.uk/home/a-standard-for-pottery-studies-in-archaeology/

Back issues of Medieval Ceramics up to volume 32 and still in stock are available at £1; please contact Lyn Blackmore lblackmore@mola.org.uk to order. Out of print volumes are free to download from: https://medievalpottery.org.uk/medieval-ceramics-online Currently volumes 1-25; 28-31 and 33 are available, and more will be added soon.

MPRG Contacts

Wondering who to contact regarding your enquiry?

- Membership enquiries or to notify of change of address: Membership Secretary
- Contributions to Medieval Ceramics: the Editors
- Contributions to the newsletter: Assistant Secretary
- Matters for consideration by the Council at Council meetings: Secretary
- Purchase of back issues and Occasional Papers - Lyn Blackmore (lblackmore@mola.org.uk)

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