

STUDY GROUP FOR ROMAN POTTERY

NEWSLETTER 35

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Remember to use our Web site for information and queries:
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Welcome to the 35th SGRP newsletter and apologies for the long gap since the last one. As you can see, it's a bumper edition, with rather a lot of news to catch up on.

The Membership

The group presently constitutes 144 people: Contact details of current members are attached. Please let me know if any of the details have changed, in particular if you now have an email address.

Committee News

Following elections at the AGM, the new committee looks like this:

President: Steve Willis
Hon. Treasurer: vacant
Hon. Secretary: Jane Evans
Hon. Editor: Jude Plouviez
Production Manager: Pam Irving
Reviews Manager: Vivien Swan
Ordinary Member: Bernard Barr
Ordinary Member: Ed Biddulph
Ordinary Member: Roy Friendship Taylor
Ordinary Member: Geoff Dannell
Ordinary Member: Charlotte Thompson
Ordinary Member: Laura Griffin
Co-opted Member: Fiona Seeley

The new Committee met at the Museum of London on the 1st November. During a long meeting many areas were discussed. One outcome was the decision to draw up a questionnaire for the membership relating to conferences, etc. (see below). The organization and content of the future volumes of JRPS were discussed: Vol. 11 was reported to be now with David Brown for typesetting, with a projected publication date of Feb/March 2004; work with volumes 12-14 is advanced thanks particularly to Jude Plouviez and Pam Irving. Various Group projects were discussed, including the future role of the National Fabric Collection, online resources and 'grey literature'; some initiatives are pending prior to the appointment of a new Treasurer. It was decided that the Group would benefit from producing a leaflet advertising the SGRP, its resources and aims, with the prospect of raising the profile of the Group and potentially attracting new members. Plans for future meetings were considered,

particularly for the conference in London next summer, being organized by Fiona Seeley and her colleagues.

Your Study Group Needs YOU!

Since the meeting the committee has approached a number of people regarding Ted's replacement as Treasurer, but have so far been unsuccessful in filling the post. The group cannot function without a Treasurer, and a volunteer from the membership is urgently needed. Please don't assume someone else will come forward. If you think you may be able to help please contact Steve Willis or Jane Evans.

Annual Conference 2003

The annual conference of the Group took place at the striking venue of *Segedunum*, Wallsend, over the weekend of 4th–6th of July. The conference was organized by Alex Croom with assistance from Paul Bidwell and Ray McBride. A series of strong papers were delivered ranging from a study of tazze to a contribution on the experimental use of samian. Nick Hodgson and Bill Griffiths helped to place the fort, with its award winning Museum and display, within its regional setting; we learnt that Sting as a child had lived in a house overlying the site of the fort complex. Paul Bidwell lead a tour of the fort, reconstructed baths, the wall and early minehead; he described the profound process of taking a Roman bath from first hand experience as the baths are occasionally fired up. On Saturday afternoon a trip to *Arbeia*, with an evening spent at the reconstructed Commanding Officer's house, proved very popular. The conference was a great success and the Group thanks Alex, Paul and Ray accordingly. Summaries of the conference papers are presented below.

Experimental use of samian: preliminary results by Edward Biddulph

At the SGRP Liverpool conference in 2001 I suggested that wear patterns observed on samian vessels, particularly f27 and f33 cups, were caused through repeated actions of grinding or use of cutlery, such as a spoon. In order to test these ideas, I have been attempting to replicate the wear patterns by using reproduction samian cups (supplied by Gilbert Burroughs) for a variety of functions. The objective is to match function with wear pattern in order to infer specific uses. Potentially the results could inform wider questions: how were samian vessels regarded in Roman Britain? Did the inhabitants of Roman Britain adopt Roman dining traditions, as well as samian pottery forms? Were coarse ware copies used in the same ways? Wear patterns are beginning to emerge through the experimental use, and the interim results are encouraging.

I have five cups: three f27s and two f33s. I eat yoghurt from one f27. In another, I'm grinding herbs and spices with a marble pestle. In the third f27, I have the dregs of red wine. The wine is refreshed periodically. In an f33, I stir milkshake powder into milk, a non-alcoholic equivalent to wine, using a replica Roman spoon. Dregs of wine sit in the bottom of the second f33 cup. The yoghurt, mortar and stirring cups are washed after each use with water and a non-abrasive sponge and without detergent.

In the yoghurt cup, wear is emerging around the name stamp and stamp-ring, particularly where there is a small step or break in the surface. In the mortar, the central stamp is showing good signs of wear. The slip covering the potter's name is almost entirely worn. The stamp-ring is also worn. Smooth surfaces are as yet unaffected. The profile of the f27 wine cup base means that the wine pools in the centre of the cup, although the wine is unlikely to degrade the slip any time soon.

No wear seems to be appearing in the f33 stirring cup. I usually stir milk drink powder into milk, but I've also stirred the cup 'dry'. This, in fact, wears the spoon down more than the slip and leaves a trail of particles from the silver plate, which marks out the movement of the spoon. Assuming that the resulting pattern is identical to the projected wear marks, then we can see that a ring forms both on the base and a little way up the wall. Initially, an ellipse pattern is formed on the base, but with repeated stirring and turning of the vessel, a perfect circle is created. The centre of f33 wine cup rises very slightly, so wine pools at the edges.

Experiments are ongoing and expanding: an f38 bowl has now been added to the project. I have set up a website with more details, plus pictures: www.samianwear.com.

Mediterranean Pottery from Bantham Sands, South Devon by Paul Bidwell

The coastal site at Bantham Sands has produced the largest assemblage of later fifth- and sixth-century Mediterranean pottery from Britain apart from Tintagel. The assemblage is the only one of any size from the southerly coasts of Devon and Cornwall and represents the easternmost find-spot on those coasts, apart from High Peak, Sidmouth. The pottery is of great significance in the study of links between western Britain and the Mediterranean in the post-Roman period, raising questions about the date, duration and character of trading patterns, and about their late Roman antecedents.

Most of the pottery consists of amphorae from the Eastern Mediterranean, North Africa and perhaps Iberia, but there are also a few sherds of Phocaeen red-slipped ware and E ware. The composition of the assemblage is quite different from that of the other major finds in Britain, possibly because the Bantham amphorae belong to an earlier stage in trade with the Mediterranean. The pottery also includes gabbroic ware from West Cornwall, which confirms that the industry continued after the end of Roman Britain, but local South-Devon pottery was absent.

Buried pots by Alex Croom

There are at least 27 pots at Arbeia that have been deliberately buried. The largest group are pots that have been buried under the floors of barrack rooms so that their rims are level with the floor, sometimes covered with a stone lid. The majority are BB2 cooking pots, but at least one storage jar is also known. The second group are pots buried for ritual reasons, frequently small cooking pots and drinking pots. These can be sub-divided between those fully buried in the make-up of floors and those built into walls.

Function and ownership of pottery vessels at Arbeia Roman Fort by Alex Croom

Excavations at Arbeia have produced 500 vessels (by EVEs). The different strata in military society would have different vessel requirements. For a soldier cooking and eating in his barrack room there would be little distinction between kitchen and table ware as they were cooking and eating in the same room. The soldiers' rations, perhaps given in three day cycles, would need to be stored in the same rooms until required.

Seven vessel categories were studied: flagon, storage jar, cooking pot, bowls, beaker, mortarium and lid. Flagons and storage jars, probably both used for storing liquids, each made up less than 5% of the assemblage in any period, and lids only 1%. Cooking pots were the most common vessel type, with four cooking pots for every beaker found. Bowls were the second most common type, although this is a category with mixed functions, as some bowls were very clearly used in cooking and others just as clearly not. Samian made up between half and a fifth of all drinking vessels.

Some vessels, such as mortaria, may have been the communal property of the *contubernia*, as suggested by graffiti from other sites. At Arbeia, 58 vessels have ownership marks, the majority (63%) on bowls, even though the cooking pot is the most common vessel type. Samian is more commonly marked than coarse wares, but this is almost exclusively on plain samian vessels, perhaps because the template-produced vessel forms were easier to confuse.

La Graufesenque: an overview by Geoff Dannell

The lecture was a simplified version of my paper in 'Céramiques de La Graufesenque et autres Productions d'époque romaine, Nouvelles recherches: Hommages à Bettina Hoffman, Montagnac, 2002. It covered:

- The topographical features of the site, which lays at the confluence of the rivers Tarn and Dourbie (Aveyron, France)
- The pre-samian production phase at La Graufesenque, which was responsible for imitation Campanian black-ware vessels
- The influence of Italian potteries on La Graufesenque, like that of Ateius, and the expansion of Italian industries to Gaul
- The style and dating of samian stamps, including the use and purpose of two-line stamps

- The social and technical relationships between the workers who produced samian pottery based upon the 'Graffiti' fired in the kilns, which recorded the name of the potter putting work in for a particular firing; the type of vessel and its size; the numbers put in for firing, and the total fired
- The description of individual firings recorded on the 'Graffiti', in terms of the supervisors, the dates and series numbers of particular firings
- Other legal documents, including the record of a sale of slave, and a record of the work of the slaves of Atelia, a putative estate owner
- The life-span of workshops based upon demographic factors
- The description of probable uses of particular vessel types based upon their descriptions in the 'Graffiti'
- Trade and Distribution of the products, including the mode of transport, the routes and points of sale

Pottery from King Street by Jeremy Evans (No summary)

Recent work on the Dark Age site of Mothecombe by James Gerrard

This paper highlighted the importance of a so-called fifth-sixth century 'beach market' site at Mothecombe, Devon. The nearby site of Bantham has attracted a great deal of attention as a possible importation site for 'Dark Age' Mediterranean amphora and commodities. Mothecombe, the next bay to the west of Bantham, has also produced evidence of fifth and sixth century activity. In the 1950s a number of amphora sherds of types Bi, Bii and Bmisc were recovered from eroding beach deposits. Evidence of occupation, in the form of hearths and a stakehole, was also noted. The paper drew attention to the results of recent work. This highlighted the severe erosion this site is undergoing, and the rich archaeobotanical deposits that are present. A small collection of 'Dark Age' imported Mediterranean pottery was discussed. Mothecombe could be of critical importance to our understanding of the transition from Late Roman to 'Dark Age' in Devon, given its geographical proximity to Bantham, and the possibility that excavations may take place there in the near future (should funding become available).

What's in a name? by Chris Lydamore

The title of my talk was born out of a discussion held over Sunday lunch at the Winchester conference last year following Fiona Sealy's very interesting talk "The Roman pottery industry at Moorgate: an update" in which she mentioned evidence of Verulamium Region White Wares being made in London. Our discussion centred on the question "*how far distracted from the centre of an industry, either temporally or physically, does a kiln and its products need to be, to be held as a discrete entity.*" At the back of my mind as we debated this question was the implication that the answer might have for the currently used definitions of Hadham Ware, which place the source of Hadham Ware at Much Hadham, Hertfordshire.

I have heard many references made to "new Hadham forms" being identified; presumably "new" being forms not represented in the original range of vessels excavated from Much Hadham, forms which may, in some cases, be outside the date range originally suggested for the kilns so far discovered. I assume that these new forms are therefore being ascribed to Hadham on the basis of their fabric. However, it can sometimes be very difficult to differentiate between the clays found in different locations across the south Essex/Herts border region.

In this situation it is possible for a vessel to be ascribed to the Hadham industry when its form does not feature in the original excavated repertoire, and the clay may, or may not, have come from Much Hadham. This is a situation which I believe needs to be questioned. By accepting this on face value, we may be misinterpreting the nature of the industry itself. Given the increasing range of dates and variety of forms that are being grouped under the Hadham Ware umbrella, are we now looking at an industry so diverse that the term Hadham Ware, meaning an industry based specifically at Much Hadham, is no longer applicable? In this case should we be looking at either;

- Adopting a regional title for the industry. One already suggested by Bernard Barr, presupposing the discovery of additional kiln clusters, is that of Stort Valley ware,

which may then be further categorised according to find site i.e. Stort Valley (Hadham) ware,

or

- No longer describing classes of vessels outside the repertoire of the known Hadham kiln products as 'Hadham ware', possibly referring to them as Hadham region wares, Hadham type wares or Stort Valley wares.

I would like to repeat my appeal, made at the end of my talk, for someone to take up the challenge of publishing a full assessment of Hadham ware and the industry that produced it so that these issues may be addressed and a more comprehensive definition developed. In closing I would like to thank Bernard Barr for his great help, patience and support over many hours of questioning on this subject. With the exception of the wilder theories, the talk and the information contained in it were Bernard's.

When the kiln's not hot by Chris Lydamore (No summary)

Tazza: An Overview by Ray M. McBride

This paper presented initial thoughts from an ongoing study of the *tazza*, a small carinated bowl easily recognizable by the frill or piecrust decoration around the rim and on the carination. The vessel sits on a pedestal, which can take a variety of forms from long, wide, hollow and decorated. I considered past theories of function, demonstrating that lamps or incense burners were their most likely purpose. As to why the incense is being burnt, we can best assume it is for ritual reasons. The *tazze* appears in Britain in the Claudian period, with the Roman army. It seems to have formed an integral, if small, part of the repertoire of ceramic vessels, made and used by the military. The manufacturing of *tazze* clearly took place at the legionary kilns of the fortresses of Holt, Caerleon and York. This form follows the military on their campaigns throughout Britannia and into Caledonia. Its use passed from the military to the civilian population until the demise of its use in the third century.

Pottery from recent excavations at Head Street, Colchester by Jane Timby

The assemblage of pottery recovered from the excavations carried out at Head Street, Colchester in 2000 has provided a valuable opportunity to record a body of material associated with the early military occupation and the immediately succeeding horizons. The focus of the work on the pottery has been very much on characterising the earlier material. This has highlighted some interesting patterns and contrasts with pre-existing material in the area which may have far wider implications both within Colchester itself and in the larger arena of military supply and trade contacts. It has established that the traditional premise of the imported and local 'Belgic' pottery associated with Sheepen equating with the military/early *colonia* is incorrect and that the Sheepen assemblage should not be used as a benchmark for comparing against other military, or indeed Claudio-Neronian assemblages in Britain. Instead potters were being brought in from the Rhineland/ Rhone Valley presumably by the army, bringing with them new potting traditions. From the start they started making Romanised forms such as flagons, mortaria, roughcast beakers and cups, Pompeian Red ware and *terra-nigra*-like platters to be used alongside local indigenous wares thus meeting the full demands of a military establishment. This marks the starting point for the widespread technological and typological changes seen in the British pottery industry from this time and probably reflects a wider pattern of craftsmen with new ideas, traditions and technology moving into the new province.

The workshop of Docius at Carlisle – Great stuff, Bad timing by Colin Wallace

Recent developer-funded excavations in Carlisle (Fisher Street) by CfA Archaeology Ltd. revealed a Roman stone-lined well, pits and other early contexts, buildings, surfaces and a ditch, plus two pottery kilns and associated contexts. Fisher Street lies in an under-studied area of Roman Carlisle, east of the fort and annexe, but not as far to the east as the 'official' area of the Northern Lanes or the baths under the modern Market. Initial scanning showed that the bulk of the contexts contain pottery of the mid Roman period (that is, of early/mid Second-mid Third century AD date): local coarse wares, traded wares and imported fine wares and amphoras (cf. contemporary published groups like Blackfriars Street Building 2 Period 8 and Castle Street Periods 8 and 9).

Kiln 113 contexts (and associated kiln-dump 112) contain the evidence for mid-late Second century pottery production in Roman Carlisle: mortaria, lid and ring-necked flagon wasters. One of the mortaria forms – they all have a prominent bead and a tight curving flange – occurring in 113 was encased in a lump of kiln fabric. Another, from 112, featured a stamp of the potter Docius (a.k.a. Doccius or Docilus, C. Doceilis or Docelis). Kay Hartley had previously argued – on fabric grounds alone – that the Hadrianic-Antonine mortarium potter 'Docius' had moved from Wilderspool in Cheshire to the Carlisle region. The present site has produced a second stamp of this potter, not on a waster sherd but on an example of her 'NW England or Carlisle' fabric grouping, Carlisle fabric 607 (identical to one published from Castle Street).

On the other side of the present city centre, a watching brief in Borough Street (aka English Damside) had already produced waster material from pottery production including 'raetian' mortaria. The English Damside site was noted by the SGRP Research Frameworks document as a publication priority (but was anyone listening?), when it was the only known evidence of pottery production in Roman Carlisle. Now, the better-preserved Fisher Street site has waster material in close association with pottery kilns. The paper ends with some thoughts on working in a historic town which now has no local unit but where there are no less than three competing fabric series.

Old Samian? by Colin Wallace

Residual samian in later contexts is commonplace. Reasons for this seem under-explored. Some may be due to variations in dating methods. There remains the possibility that some samian remained available and/or in circulation for quite some time. The study of closed groups, especially grave-assemblages, seems a useful starting point for examining this possibility. My review suggests that it is reasonable to expect some complete first-century samian vessels to have survived into the second century and some second-century vessels to have survived into the fourth century at least throughout Roman Britain. One by-product of this is to make a fourth-century date for the Corbridge 'Pottery Shop' seem more acceptable than it did in 1907.

AGM 2003

The AGM was held during the conference at Wallsend. The Group took the opportunity to warmly thank the retiring President (Rob Perrin), Secretary (Alice Lyons) and Treasurer (Ted Connell) for their tremendous contributions. The Editorial team reported good progress, with Vol. 11 of JRPS substantially complete and with quite a number of contributions to Vols 12 and 13 also in. Colin Wallace has prepared further blocks of Bibliography which will be published soon. There was discussion regarding making this important resource available online. Plans for future annual conferences were clarified.

SGRP Annual Conference 2004 (2-4th July)

Next year's conference is to be hosted by the Roman pottery team from the Museum of London Specialist Services. The theme will be '**Trade, Supply and Romanisation**'. This is to be held at the London Archaeological Archive & Research Centre (LAARC) with accommodation at the Metropolitan University. The conference will include tours of the archive and the newly refurbished pot and glass store which contains many of the complete vessels from the Museum's collections.

We will be having the usual SGRP's pottery viewing sessions. However, these will be different in that we would like members of the Study Group to choose what they would like to see from the Museum's vast archive. Therefore, as well as a call for papers in January's newsletter, we will also be asking for your viewing requests. As a guide to what is available in the archive you may wish to visit the on-line catalogue, though bear in mind that work on this is still in progress so it does not yet claim to be fully comprehensive. To find this go to www.museumoflondon.org.uk then click on archaeology and then on London Archaeological Archive and Resource Centre.

Notice Board

SGRP LEAFLET: REQUEST FOR IMAGES

At the last committee meeting it was agreed that the SGRP should have a publicity leaflet, along the lines of the leaflet recently produced by the Medieval Pottery Research Group. Do you have any attractive colour images that would look good on such a leaflet? If so, could you send the committee details (if you can email a digital copy of the image, all the better) so that we can discuss suggestions at the next committee meeting.

GALLO-BELGIC POTTERY IN BRITAIN

Announcement and request for information by Jane Timby

The Institute of Archaeology, Oxford University is hosting a project on Gallo-Belgic pottery funded through the Leverhulme Trust. The work is being carried out by Jane Timby and Val Rigby on a part time basis over the next 3 years.

The aim of the research is to look at the nature and degree of social, political and economic change in Britain in the Late Pre-Roman Iron Age (LPRIA) and early Roman periods using a distinctive artefact type, whilst at the same time producing a definitive account of the Gallo-Belgic industry and the distribution of its products to Britain. Part of the work will include a catalogue of all known potters' stamps.

The LPRIA was a period of considerable change in Britain reflected in all aspects of the archaeological record, settlement, domestic architecture, material culture, tribal territories, burial customs, the emergence of a wealthy elite and the emergence of political figures. Some of these changes are reflected in the appearance of traded goods demonstrating wide ranging contact with Gaul and the Mediterranean both for visible goods such as pottery and metalwork and for non-visible items such as foodstuffs and wine.

Gallo-Belgic pottery was one such import to appear in Britain from the last two decades of the 1st century BC and 1st century AD. Made in workshops spread across northern Gaul it represents the first mass produced fine ware to be made in Northern Europe. The products are mainly tablewares: cups, beakers and platters, often bearing the potters name stamp, usually in a black ware (*terra nigra*) or a red ware (*terra rubra*). These vessels represent a completely new repertoire of forms and a technology not previously known in Britain. The new forms became widely copied by the indigenous potters, even using illiterate copies of the name stamps. The appearance of such imports into Britain thus had great significance for economic, social, cultural, technological and symbolic reasons. They show a great increase in cross-channel trade; their presence serves as a useful chronological indicator; they reflect social stratification and communicate changes in eating and drinking habits, not only in content but in practice.

The detailed data will be available in electronic format accompanied by a book. In order that the data remains a viable academic resource a copy will be lodged with the Archaeological Data Service for long term curation and for active updating in the future.

The authors would be keen to hear of any recent discoveries of imported Gallo-Belgic pottery from sites in Britain, particularly that which may be currently unpublished or relegated to grey literature. Initial contact can be made either by email or by phone (see details below). A downloadable form detailing required information will be available on the SGRP website, or can be made available on request.

Jane Timby

Email: jane@jrtimby.freeserve.co.uk, Telephone: 01453 882851.

POTTERY SPECIALIST TRAINEE PROJECT

by Phil Mills

This project began in June of this year, and concludes in July 2004. It is funded by English Heritage and located at the University of Cambridge and has two aspects. The first involves training a new specialist in Romano-British pottery by Professor Martin Millett and Dr Jeremy Evans. The second, the development of an Access 2000 database for the pottery coding, facilitating a digital publication (complementary to the traditional paper report) and the deposition of a digital archive at the archaeological data service (ADS). It is the digital aspects of the project which are discussed here.

The aim is to produce a robust database in Access 2000 which will be freely available to all pottery specialists. It is intended that the final product will enable the rapid coding of pottery from excavation, provide the basic analysis of that data suitable for assessment and final reports, and allow the easy export of data for transfer to a digital archive. The transfer of data into other databases for more complex analysis and research, as well as the importing of data from other projects, will also be facilitated.

The Database

The current database design is modelled on how data are collected and used at present. It has been based largely on the *proforma* and system developed by Warwickshire Museum and Oxford Archaeology and coding amendments developed by Dr Evans during the course of his professional career. It is recognised that not all specialists use this system, so a brief survey of different systems used around the country is being carried out. If anyone would like to send copies of *proformas* that they use, and coding conventions to the project at the address below, it should enable the database to be tested with other methodologies. A number of fields have been added to the main pottery data entry table that would also allow the recoding of samian data – so that ultimately data from this source can be used together with that of the rest of the ceramic assemblage.

The data entry screen has been designed to look like the pottery proforma. This is good practice if data were to be copied from paper record sheets into the database. However the nature of the current project has enabled a direct to computer data entry system, using a cheap second hand laptop, to be developed. This data is then transferred to a PC at a separate location for further work. The cost and efficiency of this system compares well with the cost of data entry from paper records and the checking of the computer record against the paper record. A further advantage is that a number of error trapping routines and look up lists reduce the potential of data input errors, whichever means of data entry is used.

Currently the database has facilities to link, by hypertext, to photos of fabric types, and to have digital images of drawings pasted into the database. This allows the display of form data in a manner similar to a paper card index system – with a picture of a form type, and data relating to it shown. The form images within the database should allow the extraction of catalogue information in a variety of ways (i.e. by fabric, by form, by phase etc.)

Simple tabular and graphical analysis of the data held in the database can then be generated for export to another document for the writing of the final report.

Digital Archive

As the requirement to deposit digital data into archive is an ever increasing part of project designs, the development of the database is being carried out at the same time that a deposition strategy is being developed with the ADS. The current plans are that the primary pottery data will be deposited along with form drawings and fabric photograph and information about the project and data being archived (the metadata). In addition to the availability of the full context based data files for download, the site catalogue, in the form of form images, and information about those forms, and the fabric catalogue and information about those fabrics should be available on line. This should mean that the full catalogue could be displayed and then printed from the site, with a variety of different data selected to go with the form drawings.

If there is a large enough take up of this database, the systems would be in place to allow the consistent archiving of pottery catalogues, and the downloading of different pottery archives

into a standard database, which would enable pottery specialists to keep up to date with the data generated in their own fields of interest.

Digital publication

It is conceived that the final report will be presented partly on paper and partly in digital form. This is for a number of reasons. Whilst the technology of the internet allows lots of exciting new ways of presenting data and is the way forward in presenting archaeological data in ways there is still a suspicion about the long term stability of the medium. The digital aspect of the report will develop ideas from previous examples of digital publication. As with the database, the final article will be based on the way specialists use current pottery reports, and any extra features available because of the new media will be developed from that premise.

Conclusion

The final product should allow the rapid and controlled collection of data. This will be used to generate the information required for the writing up of an assemblage. This information and original data would be also available for utilisation and direct comparison with pottery data collected for other projects

I hope that the final product will be attractive enough for other specialists to feel free to adapt to their own work. For this to happen it is important that the final product can be assimilated as easily as possible into the way in which specialists work at the moment. At present the database is going through design and testing at the data entry stage, initial information analysis is being developed and negotiation with ADS and Internet archaeology is ongoing. A session and workshop at the next meeting of RPSG is being arranged, where a more detailed report on this project can be presented, along with a demonstration of what has been achieved. This opportunity will also allow the pottery community to comment on what has been produced, as well as to fully test the database under extreme conditions to their own satisfaction. Feedback from these sessions can then be incorporated into the final product, which would then be available for dissemination and hopefully use by practitioners in this field.

Phil Mills AIFA

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"Whose find is it anyway?" Treasure, Metal detecting, Archaeology and Conservation - the life of detected finds after recovery

18 December 2003, Stevenson Lecture Theatre, The British Museum

This day meeting, organised by the United Kingdom Institute for Conservation (UKIC) Archaeology Section and the British Museum, aims to review the work of the Portable Antiquities Scheme and examine how well archaeologists, conservators and detectorists are working together to gather information and safeguard finds for the future. The meeting is open to conservators, archaeologists and detectorists. £35 for UKIC members, professional archaeological organisations or metal detecting clubs; Non- members £50; Student members of UKIC £25. For more details contact Kirsten Suenson-Taylor Tel 01295 720350, k.suenson@virgin.net.

After samian.....

Has anyone else followed the recent news on the Theatre Museum in Covent Garden? (The Guardian November 12th). "Geoffrey Marsh, a former archaeologist and exhibition designer, took over as director earlier this year, and has concluded that only gutting the building and starting again can save the museum."

And finally.....Downtrodden specialists?

'Romano-British archaeology needs a lot of highly specialised knowledge, often drawn from several disciplines. Where are these people to come from? So far we haven't the training, career structure or intellectual incentives to entice them into making the sort of personal investment the work needs. And the tyranny of the standard excavation report divorces them from interpretation of the site and can downgrade their contribution even more.'

Martin Millet in the spring edition of 'The Archaeologist' (Number 48)

If you would like to respond to this please send your comments to the secretary for inclusion in the next newsletter.

S.G.R.P. Website (www.sgrp.org)

Remember, If you would like to add an item to the Queries/Research section, or have any suggestions as to how the website may be developed, please contact
Ted Connell 01474 872763, ted.connell@btinternet.com

Please remember to keep your contact details up to date, including any new e-mail addresses. The secretary's contact details can be found at the beginning of the Newsletter.