

STUDY GROUP FOR ROMAN POTTERY

NEWSLETTER 37

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Remember to use our Web site for information and queries:

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Treasurer and Subscriptions

Please remember that all subscriptions, requests or queries regarding membership should now go to Louise Rayner, Flat 2 121 Church Road, Teddington, Middlesex TW11 8QH or email l.rayner@bbk.ac.uk

Committee News

The last committee meeting was held in London on 20th March, and was well attended. A range of topics was discussed, many of which will be raised at the AGM in July. These included a proposed leaflet for the Group, the conference survey (the results of which are included below), the need for electronic publication, arrangements for SGRP conferences and forthcoming volumes of the Journal of Roman Pottery Studies.

This summer two members of the committee (Laura and Bernard) complete their term of office on the committee. New members will be elected at the AGM, so it's time to consider whether you would like a turn at guiding the Group forward! Nomination slips are enclosed, and new members will be elected at the AGM. The slips can be handed to me at the conference, or returned by post. If you are not attending the conference and want to nominate someone could you also please telephone (01684 567131) or email me with the details by the end of Thursday. My apologies that you have received such short notice.

The Membership

The Group would like to welcome the following new members: Dave Applegate, David Cudmore, Gordon Hayden and Jane Laskey. Our thoughts in this newsletter, however, turn particularly to members we have lost.

This week we received the sad news that John Samuels, a long standing member of the Group, has died. John started in archaeology as a school boy, working with Jeffrey May at Dragonby. He was later involved in writing up the pottery from Dragonby, Rossington Bridge (with Paul Buckland) and a variety of rural sites in Nottinghamshire and South Yorkshire. More recently he has been better known as director of John Samuels Archaeological Consultants.

In 2002 we were saddened by the news of Joyce Pullinger's sudden death. The committee would like to record Joyce's enormous contribution to the Group by placing an obituary for her

in JRPS 14. Below is an obituary for Joyce, written by John Alexander on behalf of the Cambridge Antiquarian Society; together with short contributions from Colin Wallace and Steve Willis. If you have any memories/anecdotes or photographs of Joyce that could be included please let us know.

OBITUARY: JOYCE PULLINGER 1929-2002

By John Alexander

Joyce Pullinger will be long remembered in Cambridge Antiquarian Society. She was active in its affairs for 26 years and, almost single-handedly over that period maintained its reputation for carrying out and publishing field research in and around Cambridge. In the days before full-time archaeologists were employed in local units she saved and published much evidence that would otherwise have been destroyed. She may well prove to have been the last of those who, troubled by the wholesale destruction of archaeological sites equipped themselves to locate, excavate and publish unrestricted by governmental restrictions or the need for formal qualifications.

She was born at Middleton St. George Co. Durham, the youngest of the four children. At the outbreak of war she went first to relations in Kelso and then to the Hunmanby Hall School. Allergies forced her to abandon a proposed career in nursing, and in 1948 she married John Pullinger, withdrawing from a course of study at the Froebel College, in Bedford.

It was only after 1960 that the care of a large family (she had eight children) allowed her to develop a career in archaeology. The skills she developed and the results she obtained show it to have been much more than a hobby or part-time interest. Her achievements fall into two periods, between 1961 and '87 in and around Cambridge and 1987-2002 in Gwent. When living at Orwell and in Cambridge she was an active member of the Society, attending courses on Landscape Studies and showing, in the University's Field Archaeology Training Excavations, a marked aptitude for fieldwork. This was especially noted in the 1960-65 excavations between Castle Street and Shelly Row inside the walled Roman settlement. Here she made a major contribution by organising around her other members of the Society and excavating the 2nd-3rd century shrine. She found herself especially attracted to ceramics and under the guidance of Rex Hull, Curator of Colchester Museum and a leading authority on Roman pottery, she became adept at its interpretation and dating. Her outstanding achievement however came when development east of Castle Street, still within the Roman walls, took place. Here only limited research had been possible before the destruction of the existing buildings and the construction of the new. Voluntarily for over two years Joyce carried out the essential daily watching brief and the negotiating with building contractors which enabled her to locate and test-evaluate, with the help of the Society's field group, evidence of Roman occupation. The results were published by the Society in 2000 in our joint volume on Roman Cambridge. In the years before 1987 she became increasingly involved in the affairs of the Society, serving on its council and as a vice-president. She also undertook various local projects, most notably at Teversham with Pat White, and on sites to be destroyed by the M11 motorway. Nationally she was elected to the Council for British Archaeology and was active in the Roman Pottery Research Group.

When she and her husband moved in 1987 to Stroat near Chepstow there was no diminution in her concern for archaeological rescue work. She and John, whose surveying and photographic skills had long supported her, were founder-members of the (Forest of) Dean Archaeological Group, and located, excavated and arranged the scheduling and preservation of a previously unknown megalithic tomb and other sites.

As one with whom she worked closely for many years I had many opportunities to observe her ability and dedication. She continued the tradition of those who, like Cyril Fox forty years earlier, demonstrated when they came to be field archaeologists in their thirties and forties that they could contribute as much if not more than those with longer service but less local knowledge. Her achievements should long be an inspiration to those, who like the present Cambridge Archaeological Field Group, wish to carry out field research in ways and in areas beyond the remit of professional units.

Colin Wallace and Steve Willis have contributed the following personal memories of Joyce:

Colin Wallace: Joyce attended many Study Group and Regional Group meetings in the 1980s and 1990s, keeping us up to date with the progress of the reports on the Cambridge Roman town excavations, published after some difficulties in 2000. Those of us working in East Anglia know of her other reports, like that on the Harston Obelisk kiln [excavated in advance of the M11) and on the site at Cottenham, illustrated in her own distinctive style. Harston Obelisk, with its evidence for the transfer of an Oxfordshire potter into East Anglia, is her other claim to an enduring contribution to the literature on Roman British archaeology alongside Cambridge. Her move to the Forest of Dean saw her crisply completing a report on the long-neglected amateur excavations of the Boughspring villa, amongst other contributions. For me, she was a friendly presence, offering a link back to some of the great names of the past, like M R Hull, while reminding me that the achievements of the rescue pioneers of the 1970s (on whom we rely for so much) were not gained without great struggle. It was good to see at the Writtle meeting in 2000 a pile of copies of the Roman Cambridge volume for sale at last.

Steve Willis: The Study Group has been profoundly saddened by the loss of Joyce Pullinger who was for years one of our core members. Joyce will be remembered by the Group with great affection and respect. She was a tremendous enthusiast, and a warm and easy conversationalist on many topics from Roman pottery, archaeology and beyond. Joyce always had time and encouragement for new and younger members of the Group and perhaps her background engendered an air of approachability and practicality that were indeed demonstrated in her actions and work. Reflecting back on the Annual Group Conferences through the 1980s and 1990s, and upon the many regional meetings of the East Anglia and East of England Regional Group, that were so popular either side of 1990, one remembers Joyce as always in attendance, often in the company of John; reference to attendance lists confirms her admirable year on year presence around the venues, contributing and, like us all, learning.

Joyce gave so much to archaeology and in particular to Roman pottery studies, beginning at a time when both were in most marked need of advocates and dedicated practitioners. Joyce published a considerable amount. She was driven by her commitment to archaeology and pottery, to which she gave up so much of her time, in what was, by any standards, a busy life. It is recorded in our Journal, some years ago now, that without Mrs Pullinger's efforts we would know little of the Roman pottery of the Cambridge area. The recent appearance of the volume on Roman Cambridge confirms both the importance of this site and of Joyce's research. Fittingly, in the mid 1990s Joyce helped to draft of the Group's Research Framework document for the Study of Roman pottery in the East Midlands and East Anglia.

It is appropriate that Joyce should have developed a distinct career in Roman archaeology given her origins. Born at Middleton St. George one wonders whether, if she had stayed in the village, she would have transformed our knowledge of this archaeologically promising but little researched area of the middle Tees valley as she had done in the case of Cambridge and its hinterland. The village is located by the point where the Roman road known as Cade's Road (the only other known Roman road north in the North Yorkshire - County Durham region other than Dere Street) crosses the Tees and where Joyce's combination of observation, recording, field-walking and study, would doubtless have been substantively rewarding.

Joyce was such a familiar presence among us at so many meetings that we cannot be other than diminished by her passing. Likewise her drive, and her commitment to fieldwork, pottery study and report preparation, often in the face of limited resources, were exemplary, and, it should be stressed, were so needed in the subject.

On the move.....

Our congratulations to Steve Willis who, on August 1st, starts a new job as Lecturer in Archaeology at the University of Kent. Steve - we look forward to some enthusiastic young students coming into pottery studies (no pressure!). Steve will let us know his new contact details when they become available, and they will be included in the next membership list. If any other members are 'on the move' please let me know.

Review of the Conference Questionnaire

by Jane Evans

Only 18 members replied to the conference questionnaire that went out in December last year, however those that replied provided many useful comments and suggestions. The majority (15) wanted the conference to remain an annual event, though opinions on the timing of the conference within that were less clear cut. 9 preferred to keep it in the summer, as it is now, while 6 preferred an Easter conference, as held formerly. Others expressed a range of views: that the conference date should avoid school holidays and summer excavation seasons; that winter or autumn would be good. Another suggestion was that the conference should be held in the week, rather than at a weekend.

There was no clear bias for the regional location of the conference, and some felt it was important that the conference should keep moving around. Finances were raised as determining factor by some. Unsurprisingly, this seemed to reflect the professional circumstances of respondents: freelancers funding themselves from 'shoe-string' budgets; those working in units with a regional bias, who had to justify attendance by the conference covering a region relevant to their work; those working in units with a wide geographical coverage who felt almost anywhere was relevant to their work. The need for a willing, able local organiser was considered a crucial factor, and in relation to this the decline in unit/area based specialists was raised as a problem. Good transport links were also felt to be important, and the accessibility of the SE to researchers from the continent was noted. From the other end of the country came the mournful plea that, 'I suppose Scotland would be too remote??'

A range of more specific conference locations in Britain were suggested: Cambridge, London, Norfolk, Dorset, Bath, Vindolanda, York, Shropshire, Worcester/The Malverns, Gloucester, Warwickshire, Staffordshire, Cardiff, Herefordshire, 'Scotland or Wales!'. The more adventurous suggested a range of venues abroad: France, Belgium, The Netherlands, Germany and 'Trier!' Others made more general suggestions: anywhere with pottery that requires attention, and anywhere with late Roman pottery.

Meeting other specialists, hearing papers, and viewing pottery (in that order) ranked highest amongst the reasons for attending the conference. The opportunity to meet other specialists was considered particularly important for freelance researchers and non-specialists who feel more confident asking questions in an informal setting outside of the talks. The trips received fewer votes (though the 'fun' element was thought to be important, the barbecue in the commanders house last year being cited as a good example). The AGM received the fewest votes – one respondent even citing a particularly 'bloody' AGM as a reason for no longer attending!

Conference costs were raised again amongst 'additional comments': the difficulties of getting Units to pay for attendance, and the even greater difficulty of freelancers paying for themselves. One suggestion was that the conference should be cut to 2 days, another that conference fees should be waived for students.

Various suggestions were made for improving the format of the conference, some feeling that this was very necessary. One suggestion was that the Group have joint meetings/days with other ceramic groups to discuss common themes, such as aspects of training, professional accreditation, electronic publication/dissemination etc. Another that days be set aside for in depth discussion of major ceramic groups, types, and themes such as dating, firing techniques and terms, general terminology etc. The need for training was noted by another respondent, who felt that having a clearer learning element, such as more targeted handling sessions, might make finances for attending more forthcoming. Other suggestions included having more variability, combining academic papers, short fun contributions and sessions with closely defined themes (fine wares, pottery from villas etc.).

The JRPS also featured under 'additional comments.' There was a call for the Journal to move away from monographs and single excavation reports, to an 'article' based journal with more theoretical and policy/practice contributions. Other suggestions included publishing the conference proceedings and including high quality synthetic topics of interest to all researchers.

One of the main aims of the survey was to provide an opportunity for all the membership (not just those who regularly attend the conferences) to have a say in what the conference should be. This has been achieved, although the level of response was low (13% of the membership!). One respondent noted:

'Perhaps if all the participants were more dynamically involved in, and actively contributing to, the conference, we could recreate whatever it was that made us interested in pottery in the first place, and thus the Study Group.'

The committee now has lots of suggestions to take on board when planning future conferences. Ideas, and offers to host the conference/present papers, are welcomed, as always, by the committee and can be submitted via the SGRP secretary. If you do want to become 'more dynamically involved,' remember that nomination papers for committee are enclosed!

Notice Board

ROMAN KILN FIRING AT MILL FARM BARN, SHOTLEY, SUFFOLK 29th July - 1st August 2004

Beryl Hines has sent an invitation to all SGRP members to attend The East Anglian Potters Association (EAPA) 'Potters Camp' at the end of July:

The EAPA hold a Potter's Camp every summer at Shotley. About four years ago they built an 'Oxford' style kiln which has been fired twice, once to get black ware and once to get reduced cream-coloured ware. This summer they plan to fire it again and would be very pleased to welcome any members of the SGRP who would like to come and join them. The event provides the opportunity to see how this type of kiln works in practice, perhaps to try out a theory, do some experimental work or just experience the fun and hard work involved in the firing process! The camp runs from 29th July until 1st August, though the first day will be spent setting up. They expect to pack the Roman kiln on Friday and plan to fire it over Saturday. These kilns cool down very slowly so unfortunately they won't be able to open it until the following weekend. Other kilns will be packed and fired over the course of the camp so there will be a lot going on - a great group of people and a good party is promised! Participants can come for the whole four days or just for a day or two. Many come with their tents but some people use the B and B's in the area. Previous camps have been extremely popular so participation by potters is limited to **50** this year.

The range of other activities includes: soda firing, salt firing, wood firing, smoke firing, gas fired reduction, Raku firings, 'crazy experimental firings,' the opportunity to use a jigger and jolley and slab roller, try Impact Moulding or learn how to throw pots.

The fee for participating potters, including all materials, will be £40, and for students and non potting partners £20. With so much pressure on kiln space, they are unable to accept single day bookings this year, but visitors are welcome to attend free, as observers at any time.

For more details contact Beryl Hines by email (bphines@burgh437.fsnet.co.uk) or telephone (01473 735437).

TREASURES OF TUSCANY: THE ETRUSCAN LEGACY edited by Elizabeth Goring

Members may be interested to hear about the publication of a book accompanying the exhibition 'Treasures from Tuscany: the Etruscan Legacy' which opens on 13th July at the Royal Museum, Edinburgh (cost £25). Shown for the first time in the UK, the exhibition gathers almost 500 objects from the finest collections in Tuscany, depicting Etruscan life and death. The objects include: Ceramics (both imported and locally made); life-size sarcophagi and cinerary urns; rich and exotic tomb finds of bronze, amber, gold; silver and ivory; objects from temples and sanctuaries, including architectural reliefs and beautiful bronze figures. The editor, Elizabeth Goring is curator of the modern jewellery collection at the National Museums of Scotland.

VIDEOS DEMONSTRATING THE MANUFACTURE OF POTTERY

The SGRP still has copies of the following two videos, available for members in the U.K. to borrow, for just the cost of package and posting:

Manufacturing Techniques in the Production of Samian Pottery

A video (in English) produced by Freie Universität Berlin in 1988/93; demonstrating the techniques used to mass produce samian. There are two short films of 30 minutes each on one tape. One shows the reconstruction of a large kiln for firing samian, in a chamber of 64 cubic metres. More than 30,000 individual vessels could be fired at once - thanks to a clever combination of pipes and inserts – confirming the quantities recorded on pottery platters excavated near kilns. The film focuses on the most delicate phase of production: preparations for loading the kilns. The other film demonstrates how the decorations on relief bowls were made. It covers the main steps in the manufacturing process: the creation of picture stamps and their use in decorating the mould from which the bowls are made.

Traditional pottery making in the West Balkans

This film, made by Richard Carlton of Newcastle University, comprises excerpts of footage of potters in Bosnia, Croatia and Serbia. Most were taken just before the Croatian and Bosnian wars, though some date from during and after that period. The video was taken mostly on Super VHS format, with some on 16mm, and some on VHS. The video shows a selection from about 20 hours of footage, covering the broadest range of techniques and the greatest number of potters. Although there are aspects that unite most of the potters in the region (use of hand-wheel, preference for calcite temper) it is the differences that in many ways are most interesting and significant. The video moves from south Croatia, north and eastwards into Bosnia and Serbia. Each segment focuses on different processes or techniques, although there is inevitably some cross over.

If you would like to borrow either video please contact Jane or Ted for further details.

BLOOD AND SANDALS

"Jason Foss" fans will be pleased to hear that a fifth novel, "Blood & Sandals" is published this week...including a Roman headpot scene. See www.docmonaghan.com for details!

CONFERENCES

SGRP CONFERENCE

Bookings for the 2004 conference are now closed as all places are filled. The programme is looking very tight and promises to provide an enjoyable, and educational, weekend.

PREHISTORIC CERAMIC RESEARCH GROUP AND PREHISTORIC SOCIETY joint conference, University of Bradford, 22nd-24th October

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.