

STUDY GROUP FOR ROMAN POTTERY

NEWSLETTER 43

April 2007



S.G.R.P. Website - www.sgrp.org

Remember to use our website for information and queries. If you would like to add an item, or suggest how the website may be developed, please contact

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Secretary's news (secretary@sgrp.org)

Welcome to the Easter 2007 SGRP Newsletter. The bulk of this newsletter is given over to the conference details, in Cardiff in July –and the booking form for it – please fill it in as soon as possible! The committee is also looking for two new ordinary members to fill the spaces left by Andrew Peachy and Chris Lydamore, who are stepping down at the end of their terms of office. I have also included a small note summarising some of the experiments with digital data collection and dissemination I have been carrying out over the last few years. I am always interested in hearing other people's experiences in this field. Finally the IFA Finds group is going ahead with hosting a list of specialists who are working in the UK (whether in the IFA or not) – which members of the study group are welcome to use.

ANNUAL S.G.R.P. CONFERENCE 2007

The SGRP 2007 conference will take place on the weekend of July 13th-15th in Cardiff. We will be staying at Aberdare Hall, a university hall of residence in Cathays Park, the attractive civic centre of Cardiff, only 10 minutes walk from the National Museum of Wales.

CARDIFF CONFERENCE PROGRAMME

Friday 13th

Samian seminar

12.00 - 13.00 Samian seminar: Geoffrey Dannell and Allard Mees (Mainz). All interested SGRP members invited to this event.

Venue: Room **E2.25** at The Cardiff University, **Centre for Lifelong Learning, Senghennydd Rd**, Cardiff. **NB.** This is a separate venue to the main conference.

Could those intending to attend please email Geoffrey Dannell (geoffrey.dannell@btinternet.com) or Peter Webster (WebsterPVI@cardiff.ac.uk)

Start of conference

Chair: Roberta Tomber

- 14.00 - 14.15 Roberta Tomber/ Peter Webster: Welcome
- 14.15 - 14.35 Jane Evans: 'Plus ça change? Pottery studies in the West Midlands Region'
- 14.35 - 14.40 Questions
- 14.45 - 15.10 Transfer to National Museum of Wales
- 15.10 Tea
- 15.30 - 16.30 Pottery viewing at the National Museum of Wales accompanied by Richard Brewer and Peter Webster
- 16.30 - 16.50 Transfer back to University
- 17.00 - 17.45 Bill Manning: 'Roman Wales - A very brief history'
- 19.00 Friday dinner
- 20.15 – 20.45 Andrew Marvell (Chief Executive, Gwent Glamorgan Archaeological Trust Ltd): 'Great Bulmore and the manufacture of 'Caerleon Ware'

Saturday 14th July

Chair: Vivien Swan

- 9.00 - 9.05 Introduction
- 9.05 - 9.25 Alan Jacobs (Worcestershire Archaeology Service): 'Pottery from the West Midlands' (provisional title)
- 9.25 - 9.45 Ian Rowlandson (Community Archaeologist, N. Lincs Museum): 'Roman pottery from South Ferriby Brickyard, N.Lincs'
- 9.45 -10.00 Ray McBride (Tyne and Wear Museums): 'The pottery from the Roman auxiliary tiler at Brampton, Cumbria'
- 10.00 - 10.20 Jane Timby: 'What happens in the temple precinct? Recent work at Higham Ferrers, Northants'
- 10.20 - 10.30 Questions

- 10.30 - 10.50 Tea
- 10.50 - 11.00 Geoffrey Dannell: Update on 'samian-on-line project'
- 11.00 - 12.15 AGM
- 12.15 - 13.15 Lunch
- 13.30 Coach leaves for trip to Caerleon and Caerwent
- 19.30 Return to Cardiff and dinner at restaurant

Sunday 15th July

Chair: tba

- 9.00 - 9.10 Introduction
- 9.10 - 9.25 Rochelle Murphy (Reading University): 'Trade and distribution of mortaria in first-century Londinium'
- 9.30 - 10.50 Lucy Cramp (Bristol University): 'Identity and foodways in Roman Britain: investigations using lipid residue analysis of mortaria'
- 10.50-11.00 Questions
- 11.00-11.25 Tea/coffee
- 11.25-11.45 Alex Croom (Tyne and Wear Museum): 'Pottery from the hospital building at Wallsend Roman Fort'
- 11.45-12.15 Edward Biddulph (Oxford Archaeology): 'The cost of pottery: an approach to estimating funeral expenditure'
- 12.15-12.35 Dan Stansbie (Oxford Archaeology): 'The Grateful Dead: a comparison of funerary and domestic pottery in Roman Britain'
- 12.35-12.50 Mihaela Ciausescu (Birkbeck, University of University): 'Regional amphorae from Dacia'
- 12.50-13.00 Questions / close of conference

NB No lunch served Sunday

Booking form

Booking Form for SGRP Conference 2008

Aberdare Hall, Cardiff University, Cardiff

Friday 13th July to Sunday 15th July 2007

Please note that as this is a campus-based conference the deadline for residential bookings is **Tuesday 12th June 2007**. The deadline for non-residential booking is **Monday 25th June**.

This year's annual conference meal is being held on the Saturday evening at a local Italian restaurant

There is no parking at the hall itself, but arrangements have been made to have free parking at Colum Drive, approximately 5-10 minutes walk away. These spaces need to be booked in advance

The full price for the conference is **£125**. This includes conference fee, Friday night dinner, accommodation and breakfast for two nights, refreshments on all days, lunch on Saturday, coach trip to Caerleon and Caerwent on Saturday and the restaurant meal on Saturday night. Accommodation is in single rooms only.

The daily rate for the conference is **£20** to cover the conference fee and refreshments. Lunch on Saturday will be an additional **£8** and the conference dinner on Saturday **£20**

Please reply to

Roberta Tomber,

Department of Conservation, Documentation and science, The British Museum, London, WC1B 3DG.

For enquiries rtomber@thebritishmuseum.ac.uk

Cheques should be made payable to SGRP. Please ask for a receipt if you require one.

Name: _____

Address: _____

Telephone No: _____ Email: _____

I would like:

All Inclusive for £125

Daily Rate for Friday £20

Daily Rate for Saturday £20

Daily Rate for Sunday £20

Lunch for Saturday £8

Saturday evening conference meal £20 Dietary requirements: Vegetarian/ Vegan/ Other: _____

Please advise of any special access requirements _____

I require a parking space at Colum Drive

Committee News

At last years AGM no one put themselves forward to be elected secretary. Phil Mills was co-opted for the year 2006-7. He will be standing formally at this years' AGM. There is also a space opening up for 2 ordinary members as Chris Lydamore and Andrew Peachy is reaching the end of his term of office. Many thanks to Chris and Andrew for all their hard work over the last few years. Nomination forms for anyone wanting to stand for these places are at the end of this newsletter.

The John Gillam Prize

In 2004 the Study Group for Roman Pottery established the John Gillam Prize for an outstanding item of work in the field of Roman pottery studies. This prize honours John Gillam, one of the key founders of our Group, for his tremendous contribution to the subject. A wide range of work is eligible for consideration, including pottery reports (both published and grey literature), synthetic studies, student dissertations, theses etc that were completed within the last two years. If you know of any such work that you would like to nominate, please contact the Group's Secretary, Phil Mills, at CBMPhil@aol.com, who will forward the nomination on to a sub-committee of the SGRP Committee for consideration. Nominations are open until the 14 June and the winner will be announced at our annual Conference at Cardiff, between the 13 and 15 of July 2007. The award carries a small financial prize.

Graham Webster Conference Bursaries

In commemoration of the substantial contributions to Roman pottery of one of our founder members, Graham Webster, a conference bursary is available to those who would otherwise be unable to attend.

The SGRP Committee invites those of limited means to apply for a grant to cover 50% of the conference fee and half of the travel costs. The refund will be made at the conference in Cardiff. Applications may be submitted by members and non-members of the Group. Preference may be given to applicants wishing to attend most or all of the conference. A sub-committee of the Group will consider the applications with discretion. Applications should be made via a brief statement verifying the limited

means of the applicant and their wish to attend the conference. Applications should be submitted by email or letter to the Hon. Secretary of the Group (Phil Mills, cbmPhil@aol.com), who will pass the applications on to the sub-committee of the Group for consideration. The closing date for receipt of applications is 4th June. Applicants will be informed of the decision within a week of that date.

Obituary

Grace Simpson

Dr Grace Simpson, FSA, who died at Oxford on 8 February 2007, was best known in Roman pottery circles for her contribution to samian studies, above all as the joint author with Joseph Stanfield of *Central Gaulish potters*, published in 1958 and still an essential work for samian specialists.

Grace was born at Boston Spa, near Leeds, on 12 November 1920, the younger daughter of F. Gerald Simpson, a noted archaeologist particularly associated with the study and excavation of Hadrian's Wall. Her early years were spent in Newcastle, where her father was Director of Archaeological Field Research, and she was educated at Penrhos College in Colwyn Bay, a girls' school with a strong academic tradition. During the war she trained and served as a nurse, but she wished ultimately to follow her father into archaeology. In September 1945, learning that courses were about to restart at the Institute of Archaeology in London, in her own words 'I hurried to London, was interviewed, paid a fee of two guineas ... and I was in!' She studied at the Institute for three years, receiving the Diploma in European Archaeology in 1948, and her memories of those days were published in the Institute's periodical.¹

Between 1950 and 1954 Grace held an appointment as Research Assistant to Eric Birley in her father's old department at Durham; she was also appointed Honorary Curator of the Clayton Collection at Chesters Museum, a post she held until 1972.² It was during her period at Durham that she began to establish her reputation as a specialist in samian ware, taking on the completion of Joseph Stanfield's study of the Central Gaulish potters (with the illustrator, Wilf Dodds) which had been left unfinished at his death. She contributed the bulk of the text to what became

universally known as ‘Stanfield and Simpson’,³ a book of such significance that in 1978 Howard Comfort considered it ‘the outstanding single achievement’ of British samian studies.⁴ It is still essential to anyone studying samian ware, and because of its present scarcity a French edition, with some updating by Grace, was published in 1990.⁵

From the 1950s onwards, Grace regularly contributed specialist reports on samian ware to excavation reports. At around the same time she also began her tours of museums in Britain and France, acquiring an extensive collection of rubbings of decorated samian which gave her the basis from which she could study excavation finds with such authority. She was a founder member of the *Rei Cretariae Romanae Fautores*, established in 1957, and regularly attended the biennial conferences. These meetings extended her friendships and acquaintance with scholars in other countries, and enabled her to add further rubbings to her collection from the museums and sites visited. They also led to a prolific correspondence with colleagues in Britain and abroad, much of which survives among her papers, notably with the samian specialists George Rogers and Bernard Hofmann, and to a valuable exchange of notes and offprints with many other scholars and students.

In addition to more than eighty samian reports, Grace published a number of papers which had a wider relevance to samian studies. Among these are two papers on black-slipped samian ware which showed the relationship between these wares and the fine colour-coated wares made at the same sites,⁶ and an early paper showing the probable presence of a second British samian workshop which has subsequently proved to lie in the Pulborough area of Sussex.⁷ Grace’s study of decorated ware from Montans, initially presented in the last volume of the Richborough reports, was of great value, and led to further separate articles,⁸ while an important joint paper with George Rogers began to untangle the complexities of the Cinnamus workshop at Lezoux.⁹ She was always open to new research, and Mavis Bimson, who had published an analysis and discussion of samian clays in 1956, was promptly invited to contribute a note to Central Gaulish potters.¹⁰ Grace also provided a new preface, with some additions and corrections, to the 1966 reprint of ‘Oswald and Pryce’ which had long been virtually unobtainable.¹¹

After Durham, Grace moved to Oxford to undertake postgraduate research at Lady Margaret Hall, and in later years did some teaching at Rewley House, Oxford, and as a visiting fellow at Howard Comfort's Haverford College, Pennsylvania. She was awarded her doctorate in 1960,¹² and her thesis formed the basis of her book *Britons and the Roman army*, published in 1964, which substantially revised the chronology of Roman Wales. Following her father's death in 1955, she devoted much of her time and energy to completing the publication of his work. She was fiercely protective of his reputation: in particular, the publication in 1976 of *Watermills and military works on Hadrian's Wall*, an account of Gerald Simpson's early excavations, drew her into a memorable dispute with Charles Daniels, who reviewed the work critically.¹³ Fidelity to her father's reputation unfortunately estranged her from a number of scholars of Wall studies, who were concerned with more recent archaeological evidence.

In addition to her specialist work on samian ware, Grace made a considerable study of small finds, and her corpus of the metalwork from excavations at Neuss was published in 2000.¹⁴ She had a particular interest in brooches, on which she published important papers,¹⁵ and virtually single-handedly salvaged and set on the path to publication M. R. Hull's great corpus of Iron Age and Roman brooches from Britain. This work had to be rescued and scanned from a fast-disintegrating set of enormous old-fashioned galley-proofs, and has now passed for completion to Nina Crummy, who assisted Grace in the work for several years.

Grace never suffered fools gladly, and George Rogers recounted ruefully that he once received a sharp blow on the head, with Larousse Gastronomique (no light volume), when, working with her. His sin was to have confused one of the many Antiochs in a reference. But, she had a softer side. Visitors to her house would remember the beautiful walled garden, Grace's famous hospitality and her collection of doll houses. After she moved from the house in Beechcroft Road, she declared that her archaeological work was complete, and spent her days rereading her favourite detective fiction – particularly that of Agatha Christie and Dorothy L. Sayers. She was always amused by the idea of Agatha Christie working on her novels while accompanying her husband on his archaeological digs in the Middle East.

In her later years Grace suffered from a painful and crippling illness, which she endured with great courage, not letting it dim her interest in her chosen field, or in the friends and colleagues who visited and corresponded with her. A year or so before her illness forced her to move into a nursing home, Grace ensured that her most valued records, including her precious samian books and her incomparable collection of rubbings, passed into the hands of colleagues who would make good use of them. Her rubbings of South Gaulish samian in particular have already contributed significantly to the ongoing corpus of the ware. She also left a significant personal archive of letters and diaries.

Joanna Bird, with information from Geoffrey Dannell, John Simpson and Colin Wallace

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Digital images of fabrics

There are now a number of ways in which digital images of fabrics can be made and disseminated. This note is a summary of my experiments with the cheaper of these techniques.

My first experiments were with a flat bed scanner using material that we had in Carthage. We were initially using the scanner to produce record shorts of all the small finds, following a methodology developed by Ann Jones of Nottingham University for the excavations at Dichin, Bulgaria. It was quickly realised that record shots of fresh breaks of pottery and stone objects could be used to produce a visual record of fabrics (the method is also discussed on Paul Tyre's website <http://www.potsherd.uklinux.net/atlas/tools/scanning.php>). The problems with this method include the difficulty of getting some finds onto a flat bed scanner, the difficulty of blocking extra light entering the sides of the scanner effecting the image, the high probability of damage occurring to the scanner used in this manner, and finally the length of time it can take to scan the image and for it to be processed through the chosen computer system.

A subsequent development has been the increasing availability of digital cameras. This did produce useful images, although the problems with this method are much the same for traditional photography. Despite the usefulness of various zoom functions, the best results would still require the use of a macro lens and a copy stand.



Figure 1 A digital shot of a sherd of G01 calcite gritted ware (Tomber and Dore 1998 HUN CG) using Canon EOS 400D.

A further device that I have been testing recently is the digiscope - <http://www.handheldmicroscopes.co.uk/about-the-scope.html>. This plugs straight into the computer, making it an ideal addition for my straight to computer way of recording assemblages, where instead of checking each fragment under the microscope, the sherd can be put against the 'lens' of the digiscope and the image displayed at x 50 on the computer screen. A snapshot (or even a movie) of this image can then be saved to the laptop.



Figure 2 Image of G01 using Scalar USB Shot at x50, scale is 6mm along width of picture.

The current disadvantage with this method is that the default image I have is x 50, which can create a lot of small fabric groups for ‘splitters’ and could make it difficult to compare results with x 20 descriptions. The other big problem is that the model I have been road testing has a resolution of 75 dots per inch (dpi) which makes the images too coarse for paper publication (recommended at 300 dpi). These images can be distributed over the web, and I have been experimenting in putting up CBM fabrics on Flickr. <http://www.flickr.com/photos/cbmphil/>. For people particularly interested in the possibilities of using the web to distribute such information, I have developed a Google Earth file (<http://earth.google.com/>) with Roman tile kilns plotted for the UK, <http://bbs.keyhole.com/ubb/showthreaded.php/Cat/0/Number/866894/an/0/page/0#866894> with links to the ADS records, and where possible links to the fabric images on my Flickr account. I hope to migrate this to Google maps where it should be more accessible over the next few months.

<http://maps.google.co.uk/maps/ms?ie=UTF8&hl=en&msa=0&msid=106377687039107877834.00000111d2a9efc3df7e0&om=1&z=17>.

There is now a new generation of devices that can be attached to microscopes and be used to feed the data into a suitable connected computer, with better resolutions available at the higher ends of the market that I hope to be road testing over the next year.

Phil Mills

The IFA FG Register of Specialists

The IFA Finds group is compiling a list of finds specialists. Entry onto the list is voluntary and open to members of the IFA finds group, the IFA and non-members of the IFA equally. The compiled list will be linked to the IFA Find Groups website (<http://www.archaeologists.net/modules/icontent/index.php?page=23>) and will be regularly updated to add new specialists, and remove names as required. This list is intended as a service to anyone looking for specialists covering specific periods, subjects and regions. It does not constitute any form of accreditation or endorsement by the IFA FG of any individual on the list. The information provided will be only used to compile an on-site list of specialists; the IFA FG will not use this information for any other purpose.

If you would like to be on the list please fill in the attached form and send the details to Phil Mills CBMPhil@aol.com. 28 Park Road, Anstey, Leicester LE7 7AX. Please feel free to forward a copy to anyone you think may be interested.

The following fields are available for entry:

Name: Enter your full name here.

Organisational affiliation: Enter here if you work for any relevant organisation – such as a contracting archaeological unit – if you work on your own please put in ‘freelance’.

Email: Please put in a contact email address.

Phone no: Please put in a contact phone number, if desired.

Address: Please put in a contact phone number, if desired.

Specialism: Please enter your specialism(s) here.

Period: Please enter which period(s) you cover here.

Geographical area: Please enter the region(s) you cover (not necessarily where you live).

IFA Grade: Please enter your IFA grade here. If you are not in the IFA please enter 'non-member.'

Three publications: Please enter up to three references of relevant work you have carried out. This can include grey literature as well as formally published work.

Other Information: Please enter any other information you think may be relevant here.

SGRP COMMITTEE NOMINATION PAPERS

2007

Ordinary Member (Chris Lydamore term of office expired)

Nomination.....

Proposed by

.....

Seconded by

.....

Ordinary Member (Andrew Peachey term of office expired)

Nomination.....

Proposed by

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Seconded by

.....

Please complete and return, with the nominee's permission, to Phil Mills, Hon
Secretary 28 Park Road, Anstey, Leicester LE7 7AX