



The Study Group for Roman Pottery

NEWSLETTER AUTUMN 2019

S.G.R.P. Website - www.romanpotterystudy.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

Ed Biddulph Email: edward.biddulph@oxfordarch.co.uk

Other Contacts:

Treasurer and Membership Secretary : Diana Briscoe,

Email: treasurer@romanpotterystudy.org.uk or archive@asps.org.uk

Newsletter Editor: Andrew Peachey

E-mail: newsletter@romanpotterystudy.org.uk or ajpeachey@yahoo.co.uk



News from the Committee



✓ Introduction, and continued inspiration from our members

Welcome to the Study Group for Roman Pottery Autumn 2019 newsletter, where it feels wholly appropriate to salute the continuing contributions and work of our members. A particular inspiration in this has been Jane Evans and Jane Faiers, for whom we offer gratuitous thanks for organising and co-ordinating the recent very successful SGRP annual conference in Atherstone, with a focus on important regional centre of Mancetter-Hartshill.



SGRP President Rob Perrin and the Mayor of Atherstone, Councillor Carl Gurney welcome delegates to the conference (Photo: Jane Evans)

Such a contribution (and massive investment of time and work) presents a beacon for what can be achieved, and serves to highlight all the smaller contributions, from those who contribute talks, those who attend to discuss and listen, and those that contribute to the newsletter and spread their research, discoveries and opinions, to contacts and discussions that can occur throughout the year as we work through projects, and to those that are simply interested in Roman pottery.



Sometimes the pottery comes with wine: enjoyable discussions between SGRP members at the annual conference (Photos: Jane Evans)

The level of dialogue and interest between our members provides a constant source of reaffirmation over what we have contributed to wider archaeology and the potential for future work... so please stay in touch and let us know what you are involved with.

Finally, an advance warning that the next conference will be on Saturday 6th June 2020 at the University of Leicester, organised by Nick Cooper. It will be a one day conference and in addition to presentations there will an opportunity to view some nice early Roman groups of pottery from Leicester, as well as the Richard III Centre and cathedral. A call for papers will go out after Christmas.

THE JOURNAL FOR ROMAN POTTERY STUDIES

I would also like to highlight that the Honorary Editor would welcome contributions for JRPS 18 and 19. The Journals are currently being assembled but there is space for further contributions. Enquiries over potential contributions are likewise welcomed. Please contact journal@romanpotterystudy.org.uk or S.Willis@kent.ac.uk

POST-GRADUATE RESEARCH

If you are undertaking or have recently completed an MA, MSc or PhD that is either focussed or related to the study of Roman pottery, we would be very interested in collating your research so that it may find a wider readership amongst other pottery specialists and archaeologists.

Please contact secretary@romanpotterystudy.org.uk

✓ **The Committee and new e-mail addresses**

Following the 2019 AGM during the annual conference, the SGRP committee comprises the following members; and following an update to the website facilities, we also have new e-mail addresses for the principal positions:

President	Rob Perrin	president@romanpotterystudy.org.uk
Treasurer	Diana Briscoe	treasurer@romanpotterystudy.org.uk
Secretary	Jane Timby	secretary@romanpotterystudy.org.uk
JRPS Editor	Steve Willis	journal@romanpotterystudy.org.uk
Ordinary Members	Jane Evans, Isobel Thompson, Adam Sutton	
Website	Ed Biddulph	edward.biddulph@oxfordarch.co.uk
Ordinary Member (Newsletter Editor)	Andrew Peachey	newsletter@romanpotterystudy.org.uk

✓ **Subscriptions and Gift Aid**

Subscriptions will be due on 1st January 2020. Annual subscription £15 (overseas £20). Cheques should be made payable to the Study Group for Roman pottery. Payments by Standing Order would be preferred. Please contact Diana Briscoe (Hon Treasurer). Email: archive@asps.org.uk Address: 117 Cholmley Gardens, Fortune Green Road, London, NW6 1UP. Individuals who are not up to date will be removed from the circulation list. Please contact Diana if in doubt.



**CHARITY COMMISSION
FOR ENGLAND AND WALES**

The Committee is delighted to announce that our application to become a charity has been successful and that, as of 30 September 2019, we have been entered onto the Register of Charities with the

Registered Charity Number 1185560. The Committee is delighted to announce that our application to become a charity has been successful and that, as of 30 September 2019, we have been entered onto the Register of Charities with the Registered Charity Number 1185560. You can check out our entry by going to the Charity Commission website and typing in the above number.

If you are a tax payer, the SGRP can now claim Gift Aid from the government (25p for every £1 donated). Diana Briscoe has sent you a Gift Aid Form, via MailChimp, so that you can formalise your donation. Please do fill it out and return it to her, as the extra money will help towards funding a couple of important projects.

✓ **A fix to the Study Group for Roman Pottery website**

Edward Biddulph

Anyone clicking a Google link to get to the SGRP website over the summer will have been taken to the website of a pharmaceutical company instead. This is because, unbeknown to us, hackers had inserted code to search engine indexing to create a redirect. The website itself wasn't affected – if you typed the address into the search bar, you will have reached the website with no indication that it had been hacked – but the index to every page had the malicious code. I worked with Giles Carey, who built our website, to diagnose the problem, and once we had found out what had happened, we were able to remove the coding with some technical trickery. However, the hackers struck again, and this exposed the fact that our website host was providing some very poor security. What's more, our website was using outdated software that we couldn't update.

A more radical approach was needed. We set up a new account with a different host and a new website address (<https://romanpotterystudy.org.uk/>). The host provides a lot of security and so we have made the new website about as secure as we possibly can.

All content, including customised content (the National Roman Fabric Reference Collection and the archive of samian pottery rubbings) from the old website was migrated to the new website. We created a redirect of our own to make sure any links to the old website went to the new one.

Finally, the change of address was reported to Google, the new site was fully backed up, and the old hosting account was closed down.

This was a challenge to say the least, but the good news is that we now have much more robust website. From a user's perspective, you won't notice any difference between the old and new websites. I suggest you update your bookmarks with the new address, but old bookmarks will still work.

Thanks to everyone who alerted me to the problem. For any other website notifications, or if you have any news or stories or information for the website, email me at website@romanpotterystudy.org.uk.

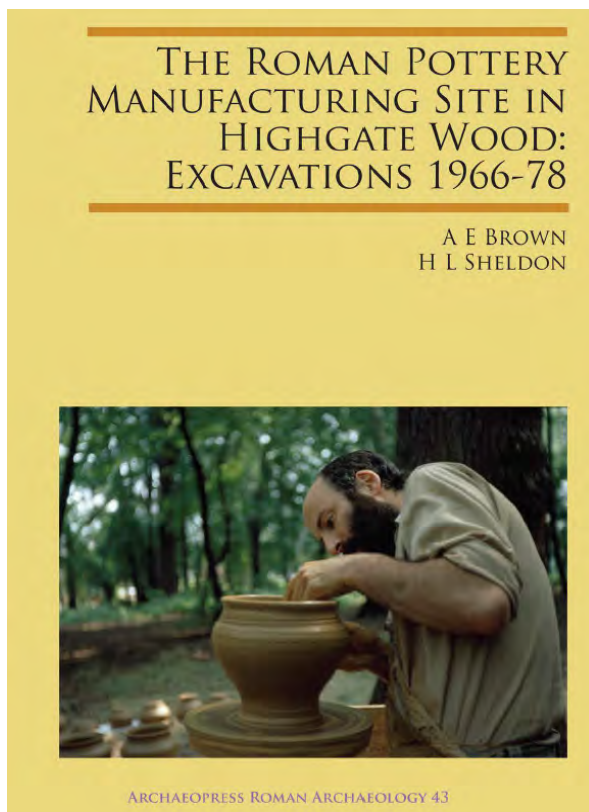
✓ Update to Roman Kilns Website

We are very pleased to announce that the data on the Pottery Kilns of Roman Britain has been updated to include entries recorded on the various Historic Environment Records of the counties of England, Wales and Scotland up to 2018. A total of 51 new kiln sites have been added to the database. There are always more kilns being recorded (see below), and many HERs have backlogs of recent work, so we will continue to monitor data as it becomes available, and update again when we get to an appropriate juncture. Many thanks to all who have co-operated and contributed, and please visit: <https://romankilns.net/>



✓ The John Gillam Prize

We are constantly looking for nominations of articles or reports for the 2019 John Gillam prize. Please send your nominations to the Gillam Committee, consisting of the President and Publication Committee at robperin@ntlworld.com. A wide range of work on pottery found in Roman Britain is eligible, so long as it was completed within the last two years. Nominations can include pottery reports (both published and grey literature), synthetic studies, websites, student dissertations, and theses etc. These contributions can range from day-to-day pottery or site reports to monographs and digital projects, as long as they highlight specific aspects of Roman pottery from a technological, regional or thematic perspective.



The 2019 John Gillam prize was awarded to:

Anthony Brown and Harvey Sheldon, for:
The Roman Pottery Manufacturing Site in Highgate Wood: Excavations 1966-78

The authors kindly sent the following words:

"Just a quick note to thank you for the information about the award and for your kind words. It's nice to learn that the Group considered the Highgate report worthy of the John Gillam prize. I remember how indispensable Gillam's study of vessels found on the frontier was when I was first trying to learn more about the Roman pottery being found on London sites back in the 1960's. My 1970 3rd Edition - with the misty beaker on the cover - still has a prominent place on the relevant book shelf!

You and your colleagues might like to know that another project, which springs from the Highgate Wood investigation, is currently underway. Kiln 2 was removed from the site subsequent to the 1968 season by the Horniman Museum and conserved. More recently it's been in Tottenham's Bruce Castle Museum. There are now plans to bring the kiln back to the Wood, set it in an enlarged information centre and make it the central feature of a long-lasting educational project related to a range of historical and environmental themes. The Wood, though situated in a wealthy part of North London is close to many less affluent areas where educational under-achievement is a marked characteristic. The project is actively supported by the City of London, who manage the Wood, Haringey Council as well as a range of other institutions. Nick Peacey, who worked on the 1971 kiln and pottery experiment in the Wood, is Secretary of the Trust established to achieve our aims and objectives. We would of course be happy to update you with further information."



SGRP 2018 conference



Friday 5th June – Sunday 7th July

Roman pottery specialists gathered at the Red Lion Hotel, Atherstone, Warwickshire for the annual conference; and we were delighted with a programme that focussed on the major industry at Mancetter Hartshill, including its organisation, recent finds and an unparalleled opportunity to handle its wide range of products (below left); as well as talks spanning Roman pottery research across Britain, and a visit to the remains of the settlement at Wall (below right).



SGRP members handling pottery from Mancetter Hartshill
Photo: Amy Thorp



Kay Hartley and Mike Hodder in discussion at Mancetter
Photo: Jane Evans

For those who could not attend the conference, and those who would like a reminder, summaries from a selection of papers are included below....

✓ Finding Roman Mancetter

Martin D. Wilson

This was an illustrative chronological overview of the discovery of Roman Mancetter in north Warwickshire, from the 17th century until the present day. It looked at the four key components of the known Roman archaeological landscape and their spatial and chronological relationships, namely: the 1st century military installations of *Manduessedum* and later 1st century extra-mural activity; the renowned 2nd to 4th century pottery manufacturies adjacent to Watling Street; a 1st-2nd century settlement cum 3rd century *mansio* through which the highway passes; and an extensive winged corridor villa complex that co-existed adjacent to the *mortaria* industry.



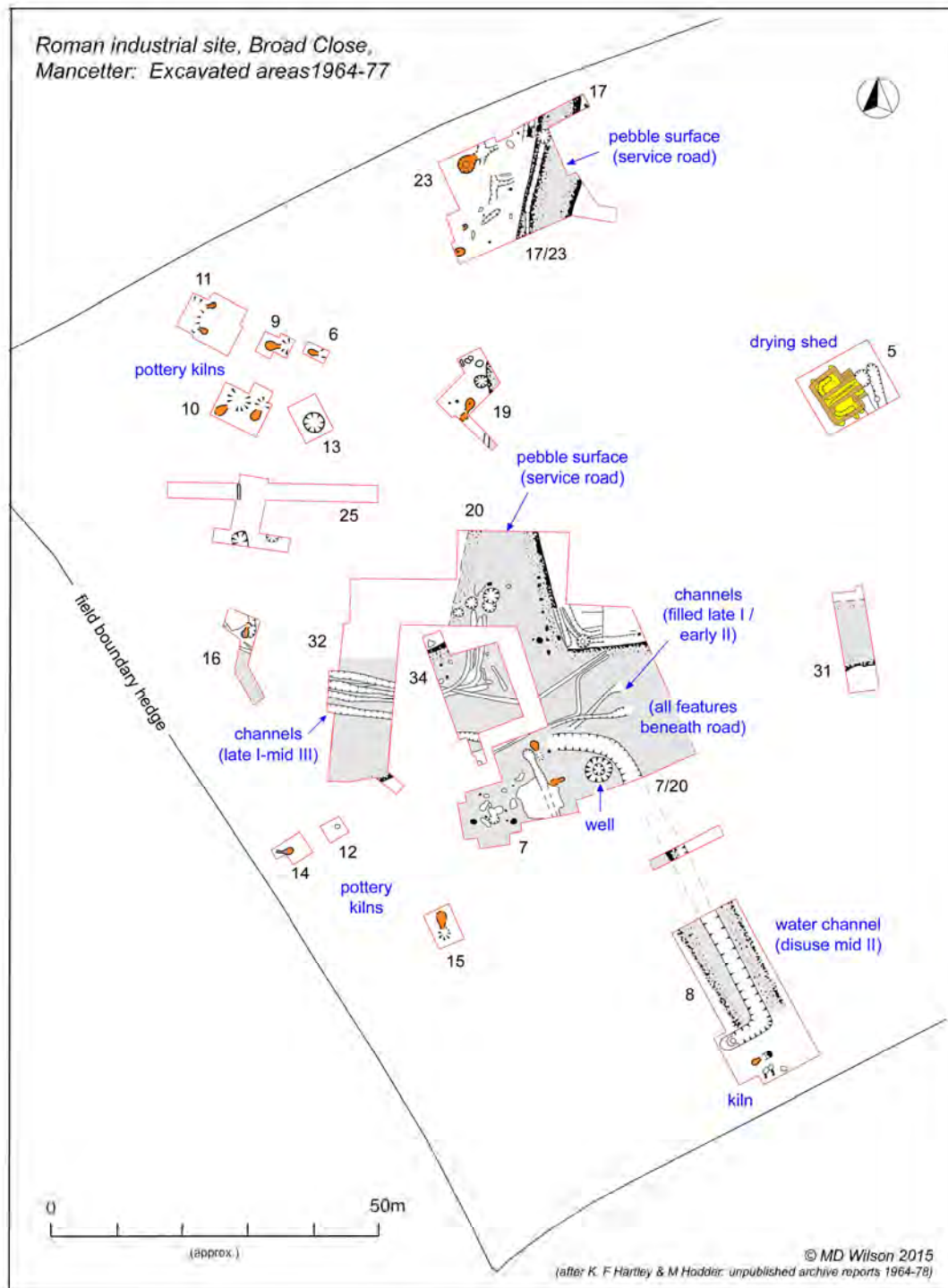
First century beaker from the extra-mural excavations at Mill Lane, Mancetter, 1996. (photo: K.Scott)

The talk elucidated how our knowledge of Roman Mancetter has been acquired through an amalgam of research initiatives (in particular the work of the former Atherstone Archaeological Society, 1970s-90s), rescue excavations (such as Kay Hartley's work on the mortarium kilns in the 1960-70s), and relatively small scale excavations arising from planning considerations, 1991 onwards.



*Kay and Martin Wilson discuss Mancetter-Hartshill
(Photo: Jane Evans)*

A primary aim of the talk was to stimulate the listener's imagination for the succeeding day's guided walk through a rather pleasant stretch of rural north Warwickshire that is somewhat scantily endowed with visual surface phenomena of the Roman period. And apparently, it did help!



This picture was very much relevant to the Conference - an annotated plan of Kay Hartley's excavation areas 1964-77, showing the locations of the mortarium kilns. There hasn't been a plan published before - this is actually the first geo-referenced attempt.

✓ **Two Warwickshire Sites: Excavations at Southam Road, Kineton and Westham Lane, Barford**

Ed McSloy

Cotswold Archaeology undertook these two excavations in central Warwickshire in 2014-2015. Both sites can be characterised as smaller rural settlements very likely of lower status and occupied in the 1st to 2nd or earlier 3rd centuries AD. They were productive of modest-sized pottery assemblages which demonstrate similar patterns of pottery supply reflective of the sites location at the confluence of 'competing' (or at least different) potting traditions

The site at Southam Road, Barford lies in an area of concentrated archaeological activity spanning the Iron Age and Roman periods located within the Warwickshire Avon valley. It lies close to the excavated sites at Park Farm, Barford and Wasperton. The excavations at Wesham Lane, Barford revealed a pattern of small and larger ditched enclosures some containing post-built or sill beam structures with associated pits and wells. Some evidence for small-scale metalworking was also revealed, although the primary activity was agriculture.

Approximately 2000 sherds of Iron Age and Roman pottery were recovered. Small quantities of handmade Middle Iron Age pottery were associated with clusters of pits from which C14 samples confirmed dating in the 4th to mid 2nd centuries BC range. A Late Iron Age/'transitional' phase consisted of a series of small penannular or oval enclosures. Pottery from these features falls within the 'Belgic' tradition and represents among the most westerly known. Some of the grog-tempered and shell-tempered types closely resemble pottery of similar date from Northamptonshire and may come from this source. Also from this phase, which probably continues into the later 1st century AD were quantities of Severn Valley ware from production sites probably in Worcestershire or Gloucestershire.

Activity continued at Southam Road into the 2nd and probably early 3rd centuries, this characterised by a series of rectilinear enclosures and with evidence for rectangular post-built buildings. The pottery from the early and Middle Roman phases is predominantly local, largely comprising greywares from the Central Warwickshire kilns. Severn Valley wares continue to occur, but in decreasing quantities and with supply probably ceasing after c. AD 150. Some pottery also continues to be supplied from the east in the form of 'developed' grog-tempered wares of types common from the Upper Nene Valley of Northamptonshire including distinctive channel-rimmed jars. The pottery is largely utilitarian, with few tablewares or specialist wares. Very little samian was used (c. 0.5% of the total by sherd count) and comprising plain forms only.

The site at Kineton lies approximately 15km to the southwest of Barford on a spur overlooking the river Dene and in an area less well-known archaeologically. There were two phases of activity characterised by small annular or oval and larger rectilinear enclosures. Only 860 sherds of pottery were recovered and it appears occupation was relatively short-lived, spanning the mid 1st to early or mid 2nd centuries AD. Pottery from the earliest phase probably dated to about the time of the conquest to c. AD 75. In common with the Barford group pottery from this phase was dominated by wheelthrown sandy, grog-tempered and shell-tempered types, similar to material from Northamptonshire and including channel-rim jars. Severn Valley wares were absent from the early phase but common from the later, occurring in the form of carinated bowls/cups and necked jars and alongside reduced coarsewares. Again imported wares, flagons or mortaria were largely absent suggesting 'low status'.

✓ A Mancetter-Hartshill Pottery Exhibition... plus Boudica

Margaret Hughes

Margaret came to tell the conference that a project group led by Atherstone Civic Society (A.C.S.), along with St Peter's Church and others, is delighted that the Roman Mancetter & Boudica Heritage Centre will open formally on the 26th November this year, in the Church at Mancetter. It will be fully open to the public early in the New Year.

Through information boards, artefacts and cabinet displays, the exhibition tells the story of the Roman fort which sat where St Peter's Church is now, and the burgus around today's Bull Inn, across the Watling Street.

A significant central section comprises replica finds from the Mancetter/Hartshill kilns, complemented by explanatory and narrative information boards. It is hoped that in time funds will become available to provide the necessary conditions to bring home the actual finds.

The centre will be open 3 days per week. It will also offer opportunities for booked group visits, which can include catering available through booking. More information can be found at: <http://www.romanmancetter.org.uk/>.

Any recognition of Mancetter's Roman history must confront the claim that it is the site of Boudica's last battle. This exhibition embraces that challenge, with a sequence of boards evaluating how historical accounts, the terrain and place-name etymology combine to offer credible support to the hypothesis.

The book *Boudica at Mancetter* is aimed for publication around the time of the opening of the Centre. As its author, Margaret shared with the conference her ideas on the question of this contested site.

She referred to the A.C.S. Boudica conference in 2013, which gave a platform to seven other battle site candidates, since when at least two others have come forward. All, including Mancetter, know their evidence must include the necessary features for a any battle site: water, fodder, food supplies, look-out points, roads to get there - and get away. And all claimants do refer to the historic description of the Boudican site: woods, with a plain in front of them, and a narrow defile.

But *Boudica at Mancetter* presents interesting evidence from three new angles which could prove to outweigh any other claims:

- New analysis of certain vocabulary from the earliest account of the battle
- New ideas about Hartshill Ridge with regard to that narrow defile
- New research into the meaning of the Roman name *Manduessedum*.

Margaret recalled Bosworth Battlefield Centre, some 4 miles from Mancetter, which opened long before that battle-site's confirmation was found via the King in the Car Park, prompting her to speculate whether Mancetter could one day follow suit. This area could yet become known as home of "Two Battles, One Place".

✓ Thinking outside the boxes: The Mancetter-Hartshill archive project.

Jane Evans

The paper reported on progress to date with the Historic England funded 'Mancetter-Hartshill Roman pottery kilns excavation archive' project. The project aims to make the unpublished archive more widely accessible online; signposting the contents and digitising key elements. A great deal of work had already been achieved when, in the 1980s, post-excavation came to a standstill (work by Kay Hartley, Yvonne Boutwood, Rowan Fergusson, Paul Booth amongst others). The aim at that point was a traditional publication which, given the costs involved, is no longer practical. However, innovative approaches to online dissemination, particularly through ADS, have opened up new possibilities for the archive.



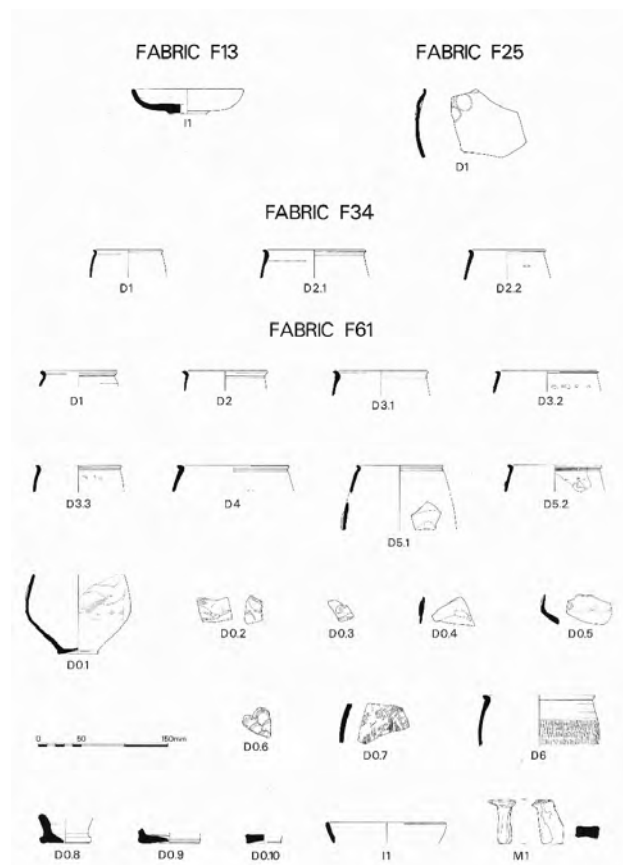
The first stage of the project involved an audit of the archive and the production of the project design. The finds archive comprises 901 boxes: 226 boxes from Kay Hartley's excavations at Hartshill; 401 boxes from her excavations at Mancetter Broadclose (Witherley); 224 boxes from Warwickshire museum's excavations at Mancetter Cherry Tree Farm; and 50 boxes that are more mixed, for example boxes of illustrated coarse wares from all these sites. The boxes include 537 boxes of mortaria, including separately boxed stamps, spouts, fabrics and non-local wares (recorded by Kay Hartley, Yvonne Boutwood, and Rowan Fergusson), 117 boxes of pottery coarse wares (recorded by Paul Booth), and a single box of coarse ware fabric samples, sent to David Williams for thin section. Other finds include glass and glass furnace lining (included in Caroline Jackson's PhD), samian, ceramic building material, kiln furniture, animal bone, coins and other small finds. The finds are currently housed in two sections of the existing Warwickshire museum store, but the store is due to move to new premises later in the year. The archive has not yet been accessioned.

All the boxes were labelled and most could be matched to existing box lists; the exception was a batch of boxes that had become damp and required re-boxing, some of which were amalgamated.



The paper archive includes pottery records and descriptions of recording systems, draft reports, correspondence, site books and photographs. In addition, there is a vertical plan chest full of site and finds drawings, many ranging in size from A1 to A0. These provide a reminder of the challenges working with old archives; their scale makes them harder to handle, let alone digitise. They include publication standard drawings on permatrace, working drawings on permatrace/tracing paper and die line copies of drawings. Photo Mechanical Transfers (PMT's) had been produced of some of the drawings intended for publication, and these will be quicker and easier to digitise. The pottery drawings include mortaria, stratified pottery groups, and a form typology by fabric for the coarse wares.

The coarse ware form typology was shared with Nick Cooper and Liz Johnson at ULAS. It became clear that this type series held a key to understanding patterns of supply to Roman Leicester. Thanks to a small grant from SGRP, high definition photographs have now been taken of the fabric type sherds, and since the conference, the petrological report on these sherds has also been located.



There is a lot more work to do before the project is completed. While the conference was not a part of the Historic England funded project, my intention was that it would publicise and enhance work on the archive. I certainly felt that this was achieved. It is intended that many of the papers, some drawing on the archive, will be published in JRPS vol 19. The HE funded project would not exist without the enthusiasm and commitment of the local community. It was great to see so many representatives of local groups taking part and sharing information with Study Group members. Discussions at the conference have resulted in new information. For example, it was thought that the computerised pottery records were lost but following the conference Paul Booth has tracked these down, with the help of Archaeology Warwickshire. This takes the coarse wares another step nearer to publication. There is so much that could be done with the mortaria records, which include carefully documented details of the recording systems used and many drawings of form types, stamps and decorative motifs. It is hoped that making the archive accessible will inspire further work, and hopefully bring on a young mortaria specialist to take on the baton from Kay.



A classic Mancetter-Hartshill mortaria, as featured in Kay Hartley's talk on re-visiting pottery production, mortaria and the makers of that major industry

✓ Taking Stock: organic residue analysis (ORA) of Iron Age and Roman vessels from northern Lincolnshire

Dunne, J., Rowlandson, I., Cavanagh, N., Rowland, S., Cavanagh, N., Banecki, B., Gillard, T. and Evershed, R.P.

Julie Dunne presented her results on organic residue analysis of some Late Iron Age and Roman pottery from two sites recently excavated (by Oxford and Network Archaeology) at Goxhill and the A160/A180 Port of Immingham Improvement Scheme, north Lincolnshire.



Lipid recovery from both assemblages was exceptional (c. 90%) with many vessels containing

Partial vessel from Goxhill.

extremely high concentrations of lipids, particularly at Immingham, suggesting they were subjected to sustained use in the processing of high lipid-yielding commodities. Processing of ruminant carcass products was the dominant feature of both assemblages. Interestingly, the abundant lipids in Immingham vessels, together with the presence of significant amounts of domesticated animal bones at the site, dominated by cattle, sheep and goat, together with possible animal pens/enclosures, may suggest some form of specialised activity at this site. The further presence of strainer vessels might indicate that this activity related to rendering fat, possibly to use in cooking, as an illuminant or to soften animal skins, likely on a large scale. There is evidence for minor amounts of dairy processing at both sites, although, at Goxhill, it is found in Late Iron Age and mid-late 1st century to 2nd century vessels, in contrast to Immingham, where it does not appear until the 3rd Century AD. The lipid residue results also showed some interesting relationships between vessel fabric, type of vessel and commodities processed in vessels.



News



✓ Discovery of a major early Roman pottery industry near Brampton, Cambridgeshire

Adam Sutton (asutton@mola.org.uk)

Excavations by MOLA-Headland Infrastructure (MHI) on the A14 Road Improvement Scheme between Cambridge and Huntingdon, commissioned by Highways England and completed in 2018, produced evidence for as many as 40 Romano-British pottery kilns at sites along the c.30-kilometre length of the scheme. During the rapid assessment of the 219,000-sherd pottery assemblage from the scheme (conducted between April 2018 and February 2019 by a team of specialists based not only with MHI, but also with freelancers and units such as Oxford Archaeology East, Cotswold Archaeology, and Pre-Construct Archaeology), it became clear that up to 36 of these kilns could be associated with one another based upon similarities in the range of fabrics and vessel types being produced. In excess of 120kg of pottery was recovered from

these kilns and related 'waster dumps' filling associated features. This represents one of the most significant finds of Roman pottery production evidence - and, indeed, of Romano-British craft industry in general - to have been made in recent years.

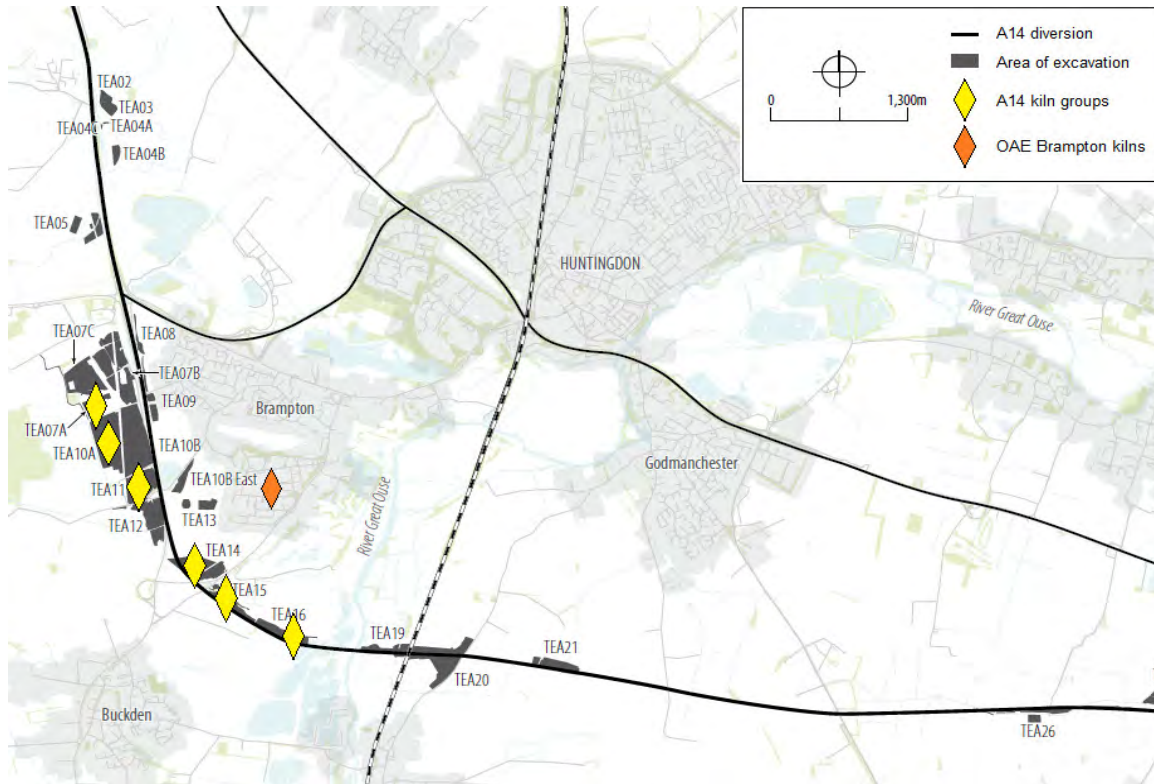


Figure 1. Map of the western part of the A14 diversion, showing the locations of kiln sites, including that excavated by Oxford Archaeology East.

The kilns in question were found within c.5 kilometres of one another in the western part of the scheme in Cambridgeshire, where the line of the new A14 runs immediately west of Brampton and north-east of Buckden as it curves sharply north towards Alconbury (Fig.1). The area is characterised by intense late Iron Age and early Roman rural settlement, with which it seems likely that the evidence for industry will prove to be contemporary. The pottery itself is exclusively coarseware, specifically in greyware fabrics (although there are many examples of blackwares and oxidised wares, notionally the results of misfirings). Characteristic forms include lid-seated jars, necked jar/bowls, reeded-rim bowls and internally-moulded dishes derived from the Gallo-Belgic (i.e. Cam.27/30) tradition (Fig.2). Dates within the later first and/or possibly earlier second century seem likely based on these forms. In addition to the 34 kilns found on the A14, eight kilns producing closely comparable pottery were discovered at Brampton by Oxford Archaeology East in 2016 (Lyons & Blackburn 2016). The common repertoire of forms and fabrics found in all of these kilns, combined with the likelihood of close dating between kiln groups and the geographical proximity of the production sites to one-another strongly suggests that these kilns were all part of the same 'tradition', likely also justifying classification as part of the same, hitherto little-known, pottery industry.



Figure 2. Greyware forms recovered from kiln fills. Top left: combed lid-seated jar; bottom left: cordoned necked jar; top right: lattice-decorated Cam.27-derived dish; bottom right: reeded-rim bowl.

In recent years Cambridgeshire has produced extensive evidence for small-scale pottery production of mid-first century dates; for example at Greenhouse Farm (Gibson & Lucas 2002), Addenbrookes (Evans et al 2008, 57-75) and Duxford (Anderson & Woolhouse 2016). In many cases, pre-Flavian dates have been put forward for these sites. The Oxford Archaeology East Brampton kilns were dated to c.AD 60-80, and if these dates stand for the industry at large the implication is that this new production complex may have developed subsequently to the earlier, more dispersed, production sites. The question of local economy is crucial. There may have been a fort at Godmanchester only a few kilometres away, activity at which may have catalysed the development of specialist pottery production in this area. The kilns are also sited within a densely-occupied agricultural landscape, and there is of course the question of how pottery production worked within this broader socioeconomic background. Were potters here specialists within their communities, possibly itinerant within this primarily agricultural setting? Or were they in fact farmers, seasonally occupied in potting in order to supplement their productive output? We can also question where their influences - technological, stylistic and otherwise - came from, and indeed what processes prompted the nucleation of industry in this part of Cambridgeshire at this particular time. The results have implications for how we understand the industrial history of Roman Britain, and in particular the processes behind how and why the technological and organisational changes we see in the first century AD took hold as they did. These discoveries also offer the chance to consider how pottery production was embedded as a feature of peoples' working lives: how such crafts were situated in relation to the wider rural economy; how skills may have been transferred between members of local communities (and what this tells us about local connectivity); and the extent to which people relied on incomes generated by crafts.

The A14 post-excavation work is still ongoing, with 2020 seeing the start of a three-year phase of recording and analysis of which work on the pottery production evidence is a key component. A team of local specialists from varying commercial backgrounds will be part of a collaborative effort to analyse and contextualise the evidence, including full recording of the kiln and other waster groups and a programme of scientific analysis. Away from the pottery itself, the kiln structures, site layouts and all associated finds and environmental evidence will be scrutinised as potential artefacts of the industry.

One slightly more unusual task is to name this new industry - Norfolk already has its own Brampton industry, on the toes of which we wouldn't want to tread. The 'Lower Ouse Valley' industry has already been mooted as a name, but the input of members is welcome in suggesting some slightly more elegant nomenclature!

Bibliography

Anderson K & Woolhouse T (2016) 'Continental Potters? First-century Roman flagon production at Duxford, Cambridgeshire' *Britannia* 47, 43-69.

Evans C (2008) *Borderlands: The Archaeology of the Addenbrooke's Environs, South Cambridge*, CAU Landscape Archives: New Archaeologies of the Cambridge Region 1. Cambridge

Gibson D & Lucas G (2002) 'Pre-Flavian kilns at Greenhouse Farm and the social context of early Roman pottery production in Cambridgeshire', *Britannia* 33, 95-127.

Lyons A & Blackburn K (2017) 'Early Roman Pottery Production at Brampton, Cambridgeshire', *Proceedings of the Cambridge Antiquarian Society* CVI, 23-48.

✓ Cooking ware as an Indicator for Regional Trade: a View from 4th-1st C BC Central Mediterranean

Barbara Borgers, Department of Classical Archaeology, University of Vienna)

Cooking ware was used in a wide variety of social contexts, including eating, feasting and burial (Spataro and Villing, 2015), and constitutes the largest surviving group of pottery on archaeological sites. Recent studies, combining mineralogical and chemical analysis, indicate the lively movement of cooking ware in the Central Mediterranean (Olcese, 1991; Thierrin-Michael, 2003). These studies also show that their mobility increased from the 2nd c. BC towards the dawn of the new era. Building upon this, my preliminary work on 4th-1st c. BC cooking ware (Figs. 1, 2) from the Pontine region in southern Lazio (Fig. 3) has highlighted the value of such a multi-analytical approach as a means of tracing and mapping local and regional networks, and identifying changes therein during that time (Borgers *et al.* 2017, 2018). The results indicate that the study region was integrated in more regional and supra-regional networks between the 2nd and 1st c. BC compared to the 4th and 3rd c. BC, suggesting that pre-existing socio-political and economic relations, wherein those networks were embedded, changed. These new relations were either realigned to older ones, or they were set up from scratch at new trading centres (Tol and Borgers, 2016).

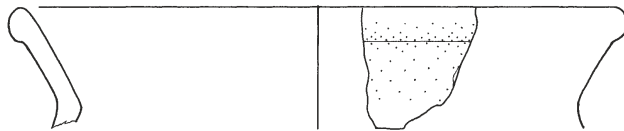


Figure 1: Olla type 2 (Olcese, 2003) cooking vessel with outstanding rim (Reproduced from Borgers *et al.*, 2017, fig. 1, p. 316)



Figure 2: Olla type 3a (Olcese, 2003) cooking vessel, with outstanding almond-shaped rim (Reproduced from Borgers *et al.*, 2017, fig. 2, p. 316)

Further work is needed before we can understand the nature of regional trade networks of cooking ware in the Pontine region. Moreover, it is likely that micro-regional differences in these networks existed. For instance, one might expect to find that the coastal area of the study region tapped into overseas networks, while the mountainous area may have had stronger links with networks from Rome or Campania (Fig. 3).

This is what my project sets out to do: it will examine a large dataset of 4th to 1st c. BC cooking ware (Figs. 1, 2) from different micro-regions compositionally, using a multi-analytical method, with the aim of tracking the movement of local and regional products, as well as those from more distant sources. This will lead to a more nuanced understanding of the underlying power relations and inequality, and will illuminate whether and how broader changes during the 4th to 1st c. BC Republic affected people's everyday life in Rome's hinterland.

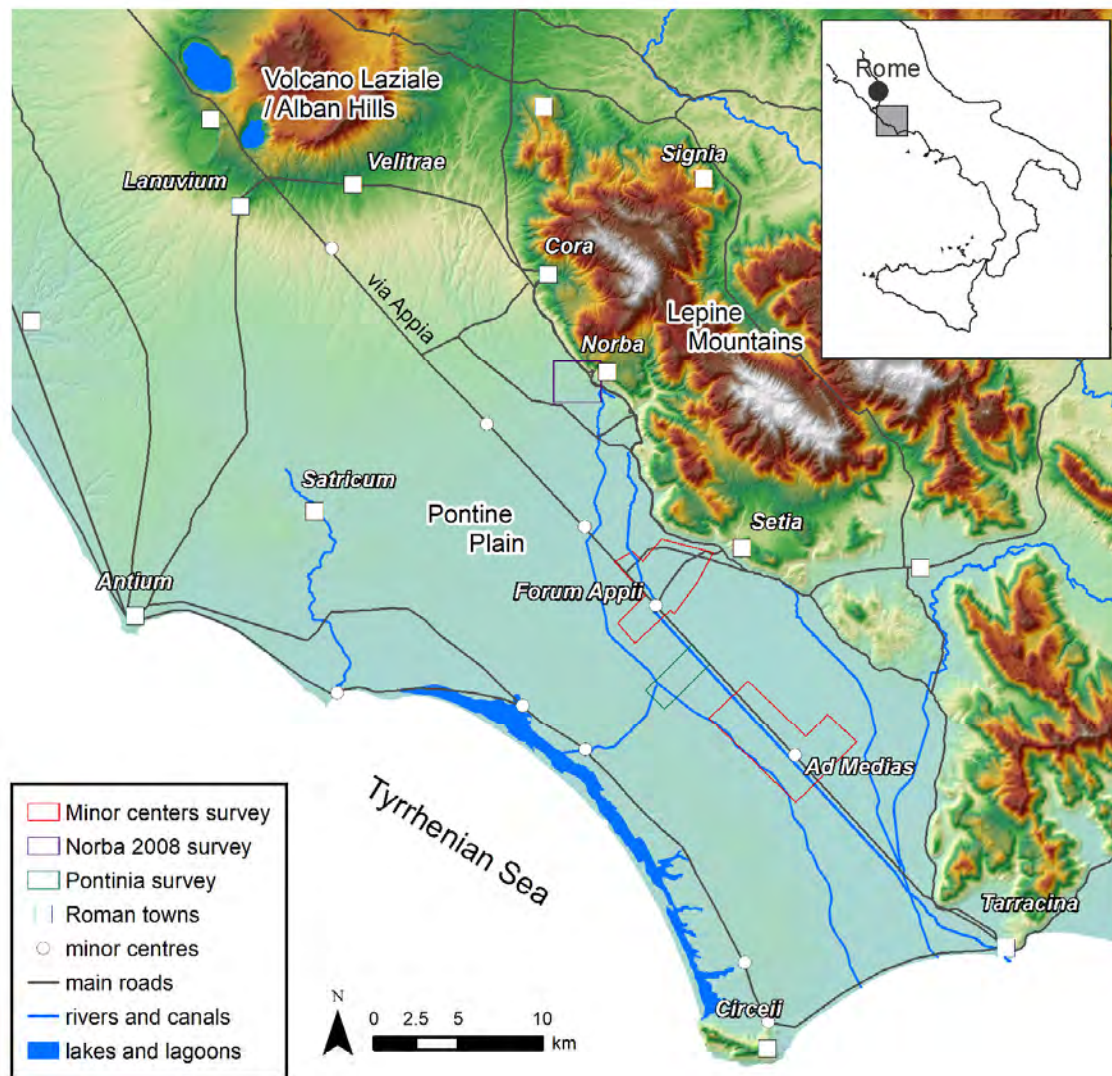


Figure 3: Map of the Pontine region, Central Italy, situated c. 60 km south of Rome, with indication of the three surveys (Minor Centres, Norba and Pontinia) from which cooking vessels of types olla 2 and 3a were selected and analysed (Map: Tymon de Haas ©)

Acknowledgements

The project 'Cooking Ware as Indicator for Regional Trade. A View from 4th-1st. c. BC Central Mediterranean' has been funded by the Austrian Science Fund (FWF Project T-1085 G), and is carried out in collaboration with Verena Gassner from the Department of Classical Archaeology, University of Vienna.

References

Borgers, B., Tol, G., De Haas, T. (2018). Reconstructing Production Technology and Consumption Patterns, Using Thin Section Petrography: A Pilot Study of Roman Pottery Production in the Pontine region, Central Italy. *Journal of Archaeological Science Reports*, 740, 1064-1072.

Borgers, B., Tol, G., De Haas, T. (2017). Roman cooking vessels (ollae): a preliminary study of the material from the Pontine region, Central Italy. *Science and Technology of Archaeological Research*, International Symposium on Archaeometry 2016 (Kalamata, Greece), 3 (2), 314-325.

Olcese, G. (2003). *Ceramiche comuni a Roma e in area romana: produzione, circolazione e tecnologia (tarda età repubblicana – prima età imperiale)*. Mantova, Documenti di Archeologia, 28.

Olcese, G. (1991). Roman Coarse Ceramics from Albintimilium (Italy): an example of archaeometric and archaeological studies. In E. Pernicka and G.A. Wagner (eds.), *International Symposium in Archaeometry*. Heidelberg, 495-504.

Spataro, M. and Villing, A. (2015). *Ceramics, Cuisine and Culture*. Oxford, Oxbow Books.

Thierrin-Michael, G. (2003). Petrographische Charakterisierung und Differenzierung der "römischen Produktion. In G. Olcese (ed.), *Ceramiche Comuni a Roma e in area romana: produzione, circolazione e tecnologia (tarda età repubblicana – prima età imperiale)*, Documenti di Archeologia, 28, 55-59.

Tol, G. and Borgers, B. (2016). An Integrated Approach to the study of local production and exchange in the lower Pontine Plain. *Journal of Roman Archaeology*, 29, 349-370.

✓ Well-preserved pottery groups from a burial ground and town in Kent

Recent investigations at Newington, close to the modern A2 (and the Roman road to Canterbury) have revealed significant areas of an 18-acre settlement, including a 7m wide road, a postulated temple and numerous burial groups that include highly significant funerary pottery vessels.

Dean Coles, chair of the Newington History Group, said: "The scale of this site, with the huge number and quality of finds, changes our knowledge of Newington's development. We already had evidence of a Roman burial ground and Roman occupation in the immediate vicinity and this excavation shows there was a thriving manufacturing site in the heart of our village. The temple and major road are massive discoveries. It proves the A2 wasn't the only Roman road through the village"



Dr Paul Wilkinson, archaeological director at Swale and Thames Archaeological Survey, said: "This is one of the most important discoveries of a Roman small town in Kent for many years with the preservation of Roman buildings and artefacts exceptional." The buried town was found during the development of 124 new homes, and post-excavation processing and analysis is now underway.

✓ **A well-stacked coarse ware kiln at Lavenham, Suffolk and an archaeomagnetic dating project**

Andrew Peachey and Dr. John Summers

Recent excavations by Archaeological Solutions in the heart of the historic medieval town of Lavenham, Suffolk have revealed a collapsed early Roman coarse ware kiln; all the more surprising for the virtual absence of any previous Roman remains in the local area. The kiln chamber included a very high number of near complete or reconstructible vessels that may represent a failed load, or a final dump of waster vessels (right).



The bulk were situated on top and around a pedestal, but it is clear that some were utilised to support an arch or parts of the structure, and investigations continue to see if these vessels were recycled from a previous firing or an intentional component of the failed kiln load.



Cleaning around vessels to reveal the kiln pedestal and collapsed plinth/arch (to right of picture)



A plinth/arch that appears to have been supported by inverted pottery vessels during firing

Ann Wilkinson and Dr Cathy Batt (University of Bradford) visited the excavations at to take samples from the collapsed pottery kiln for archaeomagnetic dating. This was carried out in order to provide an additional line of scientific dating to complement other methods (i.e. pottery chronology and AMS radiocarbon dating). Archaeomagnetic dating by direction requires a material to be *in situ*, and it must not have been disturbed since the magnetic signal was obtained.

The aim of sample collection is to remove material from a feature in a way that does not damage the record of the Earth's magnetic field within the material. The samples must also be oriented with respect to true north. At Lavenham, this was achieved by attaching plastic buttons to the surface, which were levelled and marked with north. Once set, a block of material was removed with the button and packaged for transport to the laboratory. The laboratory measurements of the samples are usually carried out using a spinner magnetometer, which determines the direction of the magnetic field recorded within the material. The data recovered are then calibrated to produce a calendar date (the results of this and the pottery analysis are all pending).



*Images:
Sample collection at
Lavenham: top left;
attaching buttons: top
right;
marking buttons with
orientation; bottom
left
buttons in position on
kiln pedestals; bottom
right*

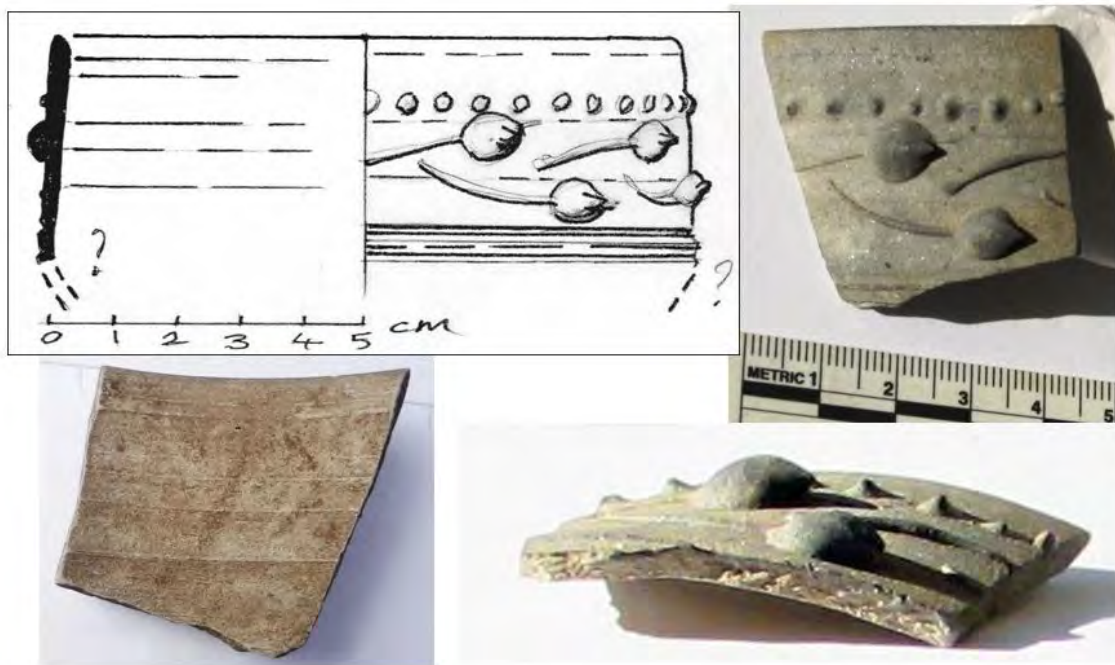
The dating of the Lavenham kiln, while being of great value to the project, will also form part of Ann Wilkinson's ongoing PhD project, which is concentrating on refining archaeomagnetic dating of features from the 1st Millennium AD.

✓ A Barbotine Decorated Cup from Ancaster: a revised identification

Kevin Greene

This note follows on from Shirley Priest's item 'Roman pottery from Ancaster, Lincolnshire' in SGRP Newsletter 66 (Autumn 2018), and an update to the identification suggested in Newsletter 67 (Spring 2019).

Thanks to Jim and Shirley Priest, and loan of the sherd by Richard Tyndall, I recently had an opportunity to examine the larger of two sherds from the cup that had been found at Ancaster. This provided a cautionary lesson in making identifications from photographs, as it was smaller and finer than I had imagined, and predominantly grey rather than brown. The fabric is hard and finely granular, and there is little sign that the cup ever had a surface coating. Very fine sparkling mica(?) visible on the exterior appears to be integral, and probably became aligned with the surface when the potter smoothed it. The barbotine decoration was very well executed, by trailing thin curved lines and then adding a bud-shaped blob at one end. It is difficult to see from a photograph how expertly the tip of each bud has been drawn to a point, as much as 3 mm from the surface of the cup.



Ancaster cup (drawing by Kevin Greene, and photographs by Kevin Greene (bottom left) and Jim Priest. Rim diameter 10 cm)

I suggested in Newsletter 67 – wrongly, I now know – that the cup had an 80% likelihood of coming from Spain. This identification was made on the strength of the apparent colour of the sherds, and possible remains of a shiny slip, in the photographs in Newsletter 66. But after inspecting the sherd it is now my opinion that the cup is most likely to be from North Italy. I will set out my reasons for this identification in terms of knowns and unknowns.

Knowns:

1. In North Italy, small hemispherical cups were predominantly fired in a reducing atmosphere, resulting in a grey to black fabric and finish (Greene 1979: 75-6). In 1975

Eleni Schindler-Kaudelka published a comprehensive study of fine wares from the Magdalensberg in southern Austria, a significant trading centre on a route from north Italy to the Danube valley. Schindler-Kaudelka's form 80, dating to the early first-century AD (see photograph below) shares many similarities with the Ancaster cup.

2. The grey fabric contrasts strongly with the oxidised honey-coloured fabrics of Baetican vessels, and with the reds and browns of most Balearic or South Italian products, and also with the very fine cream and white fabrics of cups and beakers made in Lyon and the Rhineland.
3. In the north-west provinces of the Roman Empire, decorated hemispherical cups are most common from 40 to 70 AD, but in Italy, Spain and some areas, production continued, even extending into the early second century.
4. The use of stem-and-bud barbotine decoration is not diagnostic, as it is found very widely in the western provinces and elsewhere in the Mediterranean basin, and also over a considerable time span.



Form 80 cup from Magdalensberg (Schindler-Kaudelka 1975: Tafel 16 80e. Rim diameter 10 cm)



Form 80 cup from Magdalensberg (Schindler-Kaudelka 1975: Tafel 16 80a. Rim diameter 8 cm)

Unknowns:

1. Finds from the Magdalensberg show that the manufacture of small hemispherical cups with barbotine decoration started much earlier in North Italy than in other regions, going back as far as the late first century BC. But as this site was abandoned by AD 50, it does not provide a full range of parallels for British finds, as it only overlaps with the Roman occupation of Britain by less than 10 years. More research on other sites in Italy and around the head of the Adriatic will be required to refine the parallels and dating of the Ancaster cup.
2. We know from the samian industry that a considerable interchange of ideas, forms, techniques - and even potters - took place between different production centres. For example potters in Cologne made fine high-shouldered grey beakers, with expertly executed barbotine decoration similar to that found in North Italy. But as far as I can determine, they did not make cups, which were readily available in the Rhineland in colour-coated fabrics, both local and imported.
3. Imported fine wares such as Lyon ware are first encountered in Britain *after* the Roman conquest of AD 43. Thus there is no reason to think that the Ancaster cup entered Britain before AD 43. It was most likely to have been used during the first-century military phase at Ancaster, and, as the only example from Britain known to me, the cup may have arrived in Britain as a personal possession, rather than through trade.

I have proposed a North Italian origin for the Ancaster cup in terms of high probability, not certainty. An interesting question is why it is the only one known from Britain, in contrast to North Italian black eggshell ware cups, which have been found on several sites. These extraordinarily fine cups survived the journey despite having walls less than 1 mm thick (Greene 1979: 80 fig 34 1-2). An updated distribution map of black eggshell ware published by van Enckevort has added several further findspots in North Italy (2009: 117 fig 1).

I hope to be able to say more about this fascinating cup from Ancaster at some point in the future if more information becomes available. My thanks to Jim and Shirley Priest, Richard Tyndall, Eleni Schindler-Kaudelka, and Julia Greene

I am always keen to hear of new discoveries of mid-first century AD fine ware cups and beakers, and to share whatever knowledge I have about them (kevin.greene@ncl.ac.uk).

Bibliography

Enckevort, van H. (2009) 'Hemispherical cups from the early Roman harbour Velsen 1 (NL). North Italian black eggshell ware and mould-decorated South Gaulish colour-coated Hermet 9 cups', in Enckevort, van H. (ed.) *Roman material culture - Studies in honour of Jan Thijssen*. Zwolle: SPA-uitgevers, 115-41.

Greene, K. (1979). *The pre-Flavian fine wares*. Cardiff: University of Wales Press

Schindler-Kaudelka, E. (1975) *Die dünnwandige Gebrauchskeramik vom Magdalensberg*. Klagenfurt: Kärnter Museumsschriften 58.

✓ I have measured out my life with... pottery sherds

Paul Booth

Having retired from Oxford Archaeology at the end of March a recent SGRP Newsletter appeal for accounts of 'individual experiences of why and what made you interested in Roman pottery...or what your career story is' struck a chord. How far what follows is of interest I am not sure. Parts of the story, at least, could be paralleled in the experience of many of our members, but just for the record

My early years were spent in Lincoln, where my father, a draughtsman by profession, was a keen amateur archaeologist who had worked with people like Graham Webster in the 1940s – indeed my parents met at one of Graham's evening classes, so he has a lot to answer for! Amongst other things the Webster connection had involved work on a Roman pottery kiln at Swanpool, and it was being allowed time off school at about the age of 7 to visit another such kiln that my father was excavating which forms my earliest specific (if now hazy) archaeological memory. Although I didn't know it, I was clearly doomed from that point on.

Schoolboy digging in Lincoln with people such as Ben Whitwell followed, but with the decline of heavy engineering there my parents left Lincoln in 1969 and moved to Shropshire. Here I was lucky to live within cycling distance of Wroxeter, and digging there in the summer holidays with Phil Barker (and for one season with Graham) was a fundamentally formative experience. Not only were Phil's excavation techniques revelatory and inspirational, but there were things to be learned from his impressive supervisory team (Clive Partridge, Kate Pretty, Charles Hill, Mike Corbishley etc etc), while amongst those working with Graham on 'the other side of the wall' was a frighteningly bright Shrewsbury schoolgirl called Mary Beard. From that time on I was no problem for the 6th form careers advisers – I knew I wanted to go to University and study archaeology, and that Romans were the thing, though beyond that there was no plan of any kind. After a rather unadventurous gap year (but with more Wroxeter, of course) I ended up at Birmingham studying Ancient History and Archaeology in a department staffed at that time mainly by Cambridge men. Key figures included John Wilkes (in Classics) who tried to teach us Roman history, Peter Gelling, a very old-fashioned excavator (though I spent five very happy seasons on his site in Orkney), but a remarkable polymath, and Philip Rahtz (in medieval history) who for all his (well-deserved) lecherous reputation was a particularly good teacher who made one think hard about the nature of evidence.

The upshot of this experience was a launch into post-graduate work focussed on the Romano-British 'small town' of Alcester in Warwickshire, conveniently just down the road from Birmingham, where the head of department, Richard Tomlinson, had undertaken excavations in the mid 1960s at about the same time as the very good larger scale work carried out by Christine Mahany. Sadly, Mahany's excavations were not published until some 30 years later, by which time the significant impact on 'small town' studies which they might have had had been largely lost. Meanwhile, what followed for me was a familiar story, I got sucked into further work in the town on behalf of Warwickshire Museum, directing my first excavation there in the blazing summer of 1976. I was then for a time de facto 'town archaeologist' for Alcester – in line with a trend seen at the same time in other places such as Droitwich and Hereford. The research was left on one side, though my particular interest in sites of this type has persisted up to the present day.

An inevitable consequence of the Alcester excavations was the recovery of large amounts of pottery. There was no specialist on hand, so dealing with the material was a do-it-yourself job. This meant working from scratch, in every sense, since while I knew in theory that one had to record the material in terms of fabric I had no practical experience of doing this and there was no local reference base of any kind. At this point in the late 1970s similar experiences were being shared in other places and the SGRP was a key forum within which to learn from those in similar situations, and from more established specialists. I'm not certain who first alerted me to the existence of SGRP, but it may have been Graham Webster, and the April 1979 conference in Norwich was probably the first that I attended. In the 'early days' I was otherwise working on my own – I remember getting helpful advice from Christopher Young and Rob Perrin, but there must have been others – and it is perhaps just as well that by the time it came to publication my first effort had been reworked by a colleague. Nevertheless, what had been put in place was the basis for a recording system for the County Museum which evolved through the 1980s (inter alia abandoning a single numerical sequence of fabrics for something more structured and workable) and remains in service today. This evolving system was used for recording of pottery from a series of substantial excavations, first the temple site at Coleshill, then Avon valley settlements at Tiddington and Wasperton and finally the non-mortarium component of Kay Hartley's Mancetter-Hartshill excavations. Funding in these pre-PPG16 times was limited, much of it coming from English Heritage, with all the bureaucracy entailed thereby, and completion of projects remained a rarity – of those important sites Coleshill is still the only one that has seen the light of day in print.



Paul discussing the illustration of some pottery with one of OA's illustrators.

Perhaps frustration at the incomplete state of so much work was a factor behind what followed, but in any case in 1990 my wife persuaded me to apply for a job at the Oxford Archaeological Unit, as it then was (I will use the current abbreviation OA for convenience hereafter). My appointment, reflecting my experience in Warwickshire, was to a post with two hats, pottery specialist (eventually extending beyond the Roman period to cover some later prehistoric and, from time to time, early Anglo-Saxon material) and field archaeologist. This dual role was maintained throughout my 29 years at OA, though with

inevitable changes in emphasis from time to time as circumstances demanded. With the passage of time came a shift towards management more specifically of post-excavation projects, which became my principal focus over the last 10-15 years.

My first major OA fieldwork project, in 1991, involved upgrading of the A421 around Alcester, and a pipeline job at Asthall followed two years later – I still hadn't progressed beyond A in the list of 'small towns'! Meanwhile I was setting up a unified recording system for later prehistoric and Roman pottery for Oxford. The Unit's approach up to that time had been piecemeal, and while much good work had been done by my old friend Sarah Green, whom I succeeded in the pottery role there, each new assemblage had been recorded using a site-specific fabric series; these were occasionally, but rarely, cross referenced when sites were closely adjacent. My relatively limited Warwickshire experience had already demonstrated, to me at least, the advantages of having a single fabric recording system for all sites in the region, an early by-product of which had been a first attempt at the use of fine and specialist wares to inform

questions of site status (published in JRPS 4), albeit with what now seems a woefully small data set. The basic shape of the Warwickshire system was developed for the Oxford version. This used a hierarchical approach to both fabric and form classification, and incorporated recording of vessel forms by EVE (strictly speaking REs) as standard, which had not been the case in Warwickshire.

The project management workload meant that having put a new recording system in place I wasn't always able to implement it myself, though it was usually possible to fit in work on small and medium sized assemblages. Being based in Oxford it was important to get a close grip on that industry, and I was lucky when a previously unknown production site came to light at Lower Farm, Nuneham Courtenay in 1991 – this was published in 1993. The experience at Blackbird Leys in the mid-late 1990s was less happy – work on several different sites in this area was carried out by a variety of contractors within the framework of an inadequate and under-resourced strategy. Not all the work was even published, and an indication of the resourcing restrictions is that in the part that did appear in print there was no provision for illustration of the Roman pottery apart from one unique vessel – a travesty if ever there was one (though this deficiency was later remedied by a resource that is now available on-line). Meanwhile, work on some of the larger pottery assemblages excavated in this decade went to others: Jerry Evans reported on the A421/Alchester material, Jane Timby on a variety of sites, and Malcolm Lyne on pottery from my excavation of the roadside settlement at Westhawk Farm, Ashford.

OA had been working in Kent for a while by the time that Westhawk Farm was excavated, and this excavation was concurrent with some of the main work on the Channel Tunnel Rail Link, now known as High Speed 1. Early stages of fieldwork on that project went back at least to 1990, and one of my first jobs at OA had been to look at pottery from fieldwalking along the route – a memorable characteristic of a couple of those sites was pottery distributions with one completely empty transect through the middle – walked by an individual who only ever saw flint! The archaeology of HS1 was undertaken as a joint venture; when it came to the post-

excavation I had the job of coordinating the pottery specialist work for all periods, which was quite a challenge, to say the least. Again, this role meant that although I had a good overview I didn't actually get to do any of the detailed work myself. The same was true of the next large JV project with which I was involved, the construction of M6 Toll around Birmingham. This presented different challenges, but an unmanageable quantity of Roman pottery was not one of them, as the route traversed a region with, for the most part, an interestingly very different tradition of use of material culture compared to the South-East. Joint venture projects, of which I have seen a fair variety, are almost always the most difficult to work in because there are typically unspoken cultural differences between the various partners which result in the same language being interpreted in subtly different ways, both in the field and in post-excavation.



Paul examining the pottery in situ from a high-status, mid-1st century grave group on the A2 in Kent.

(Photo: Oxford Archaeology)

There have been so many projects - far too many for it to be possible (or desirable) to mention them all – even some of the large ones. Having a particular interest in burials I was very pleased to take on the post-excavation of the Lankhills late-Roman cemetery – and to do the associated pottery work. This assemblage, though exciting, was considerably smaller than that from the HS1 cemetery at Pepper Hill, which was dealt with by Edward Biddulph, who had joined OA in 2001, bringing with him valuable expertise from working in the south-east. Apart from the benefits of having in-house colleagues (for a time Kayt Brown, then Dan Stansbie, and now Kate Brady, as well as Ed) to share the workload and also to bounce ideas and ceramic problems off, Ed and I collaborated directly on pottery work for some projects, such as another Winchester one, proving that it can be done. More recently, and moving completely away from pottery, I followed very closely, and was happy to support, the Roman Rural Settlement Project, which I think is a hugely important piece of work with very significant published outcomes. OA had as it were a personal commitment to this project, since Alex Smith left us to head up the research team, and at the end of the programme we were very lucky to take on Martyn Allen in our post-excavation department.

From a strictly ceramic point of view the project team came up against long-standing problems of lack of standardisation in recording (with resonances both from long ago, as in the Fulford and Huddleston report (1991) and much more recently, as in the Essex-based 'Alien Cities' (2013) project). The three pottery contributions in the second Roman Rural Settlement project volume usefully address a range of approaches to ceramic data on a regional basis, but are also required reading for pottery workers for the methodological issues that they raise. Perhaps the difficulties arising from inconsistencies in recording which are so obvious here will make the point about the need for more unified approaches more effectively than any idealised methodology or guidelines. At the same time, the issues of huge inter-regional variation in patterns of pottery supply and consumption already mentioned effectively preclude the use of a single unified recording system at a national level. Regional differences in assemblage character may justify implementation of different recording frameworks – devoted though I am to the approach underlying the current OA recording system, which I think serves the requirements of our region well, I would not like to suggest that it would necessarily work effectively in all other areas. Equally, however, any system should incorporate the capacity to be translated into wider terms, even if only at a broad level, and this is one reason why I think that a hierarchical approach to categorisation of fabrics and forms can be very useful. More straightforwardly, it seems to me that there is no excuse for inadequacies in quantification and, to take but one example, the recording of vessels by EVEs/REs should be universal.

A problem for all major contracting organisations is the wide geographical and chronological span of the sites that they have to cover. This problem is more acute for pottery analysts than for almost all other specialists – seeds, cows, coins and (up to a point) brooches are more or less the same from one end of Roman Britain to another, but as we know the pottery changes radically from region to region, and this puts a very substantial strain on specialists who have to work very hard to keep abreast of a huge range of information – something that is often forgotten by those who are tendering for work, and was completely missed in the context of the OA adventure (in my personal view fundamentally misguided) in France. A related point concerns the implications of dating, or misdating, the material recovered in evaluations – often very limited in quantity and not infrequently from unfamiliar areas, or of less familiar periods, since a specialist in one period might be the first (or only) port of call for a multi-period assemblage. Here the pressure to produce reliable identifications, usually within a tight time scale and with potentially significant implications for assessment of importance and therefore for programmes of further work, is substantial. At OA I have been lucky to work within a post-

excavation team that includes individuals with specialisms in prehistoric, Roman and post-Roman pottery, and with backgrounds in different parts of the country – between us we can cover a lot of ground, but if we don't always get it right (and we probably don't) how much more difficult is it for smaller organisations with much more limited (if any) in-house expertise?

These problems reflect the fact that in the contemporary commercial climate the tension between economics and standards is as high as it has ever been. SGRP has an important role to play in helping to set standards, in two different areas. General methodological issues have been addressed quite recently (2016) in a document produced for Historic England by the three period-based pottery research groups, and SGRP was represented in this process by Jane Evans and myself. More specifically, SGRP has set out research agendas and priorities on a regional basis, though how far these impact beyond the confines of the group itself is perhaps less clear. That SGRP performs a very important function both for its members and beyond is, however, certain. The Journal, the Newsletter and the range of excellent resources on the website are invaluable, and we are indebted to Steve Willis and Andy Peachey, amongst others, for the work which they put in to these areas. The annual conference, in whatever form, is another very important aspect of the group's activities, with the opportunities that it offers to see and learn about material from sometimes unfamiliar areas, and to meet colleagues. Memories (very selective) of conferences tend to focus on individuals – Tony Gregory and John Samuels from long ago, John Gillam behind the bar at Knuston Hall, John Dore, Donald Mackreth, Vivien Swan inevitably, and so on, though one owes debts of gratitude to so many colleagues in the group for help, encouragement and good company. I was honoured to be asked to be president of the group from 2012 to 2015, though I am painfully aware that I was not able to devote as much time to the post as it merited.

Amongst other things, full time engagement in running Oxford University's training excavation at Dorchester-on-Thames (what some of my colleagues tended to refer to as my 'annual holiday' – how wrong they were!) ruled out the possibility of any other activities in July over a ten-year period which only came to an end in 2018.

The Dorchester project represented a rare foray onto the fringes of research in the context of the day job. When it comes to other research, time is of course always the problem. Burial-related work has been one preoccupation. On the pottery front pink grogged ware, that I worked on with Sarah Green a long time ago, remains a particular interest, as does the question of understanding settlement socio-economic status from aspects of the composition of the related pottery assemblages.



*Paul pointing out recent discoveries to Sheppard Frere at the training excavation at Dorchester-on-Thames, run by Oxford Archaeology and the University of Oxford
(Photo: Oxford Archaeology)*

At least for this subject the data gathering process for the Oxford region is relatively straightforward, as I can access an ever-increasing body of information generated by myself and

by colleagues using the same recording system. This is a subject that I definitely hope to revisit. Every pottery report completed in our 'home' area represents not only a contribution to the publication (in whatever form) of the excavation generating the material, but has wider significance as a component of more far-reaching comparative analysis of social and economic aspects at a regional level. The Oxford region now has an exceptional body of evidence to work with in this regard, and helping a number of key publications through to completion has been an important part of my work over an extended period. The sites include the various Cotswold Water Park excavations undertaken by David Miles back in the 1980s, and more recent work at Horcott and Kempsford in the same area, Yarnton a bit closer to Oxford, and since then sites on the Bicester to Oxford railway upgrade, including important ones in the vicinity of Alchester. Most recently we were able to finalise the publication of 25 years of work in the gravel quarry at Gill Mill near Witney, mentioned in a recent Newsletter. This was major piece of work for me both in the field (I took over management from George Lambrick in the late '90s) and in post-excavation, and completion was particularly satisfying, though I would be the first to admit that, like any excavation report, the volume has its inadequacies, and one is always well aware of those aspects where more analysis could have been done had resources allowed. Moving forward, retirement project number one is the analysis and reporting of the Dorchester excavation – questions of resourcing are particularly pertinent in projects of this character, where funding the fieldwork is relatively straightforward, while that for post-excavation work is another matter. This is particularly pressing for Dorchester because while the excavation area was tiny (a mere 20m by 30m) the quantities of finds are frightening: 140 boxes of pottery await – that should keep me off the streets for a while!