



Medieval & Later Pottery Research Group

Newsletter **102**

September 2026

Notes from the President

Welcome to our latest newsletter! This issue is packed with news about recent conferences and new research. Please also see below for the details of our annual conference, to be held in September in Colchester. I look forward to seeing many of you there.

This is my last Newsletter introduction as President, as I'm stepping down at the AGM. My successor is Paul Spoerry, and I know I'll leave the Group in good hands. I'd like to register my thanks here to all Council members who have helped to achieve so much over my term of office, not least the website revamp and the strategic involvement of MLPRG in type series projects across England – the latest news is that having completed the pilot stage of the type series database of imports, Kate Berlewen and her project team have been successful in winning funds for the main stage of work, which will start in September. We look forward to hearing details of the project in due course.

Lorraine Mephram

REGISTER: MLPRG Annual Conference 2026

This year's annual conference will be a one-day event at the **Charles Grey Room in Colchester Castle** on **Saturday 26th of September**. The conference focuses on recent ceramic research, with a particular emphasis on the early medieval period (c AD500–1000).

You can register for the conference via the MLPRG website: <https://www.medandlaterpottery.org.uk/event/the-mlprg-annual-conference-25th-september-2026/>

The general admission is £40 and includes refreshments but not lunch, so please bring your own or purchase it from nearby shops.

The programme of the conference includes eight talks on recent research on early medieval pottery as well as the AGM of the Medieval and Later Pottery Research Group. Also note that the conference will conclude with a talk by Ben Paites, the Senior Curator of Colchester Castle, who will also lead us on a tour.



David Dawson and Ollie Kent discussing the pottery kilns of Barnstaple. Photo: Lorraine Mephram

from the Beauvais industry of northern France, but the Beauvais kilns are quite different in form. Some features of the kilns can be seen in tin-glazed earthenware kilns, or in tile kilns, and the conclusion drawn by David and Ollie is that the Barnstaple potters were using blended technologies common to other industries, at a time of major social and cultural change.

Lorraine Mephram

BNPG Conference, Enkhuizen, 22–25 April 2026

The Baltic and North Atlantic Pottery Research Group (BNPG) was established in 2016 with the aim of bringing together archaeologists and other specialists with an interest in pottery made and traded in Northern Europe. Meetings are held every two years in April. In 2026 the venue was De

Dommedaris (The Dromedary) a defensive tower overlooking the harbour at Enkhuizen – a spectacular venue in an attractive, Dutch historic city of the Golden Age. This year also saw the first joint conference with Assembled Articles, a research group of Dutch and Flemish specialists in medieval and post-medieval ceramics.

In total there were 83 attendees and 25 presentations from 12 different countries. The papers examined a variety of topics about ceramics from the 11th to the 19th centuries. In addition, there was an excellent handling session of Dutch and imported late medieval and early modern pottery from Enkhuizen, guided by Wytze Stellingwerf, ceramic specialist of the province of North-Holland.

The conference began with presentations about the Deventer System of pottery (and glass) classification, highlighting its research potential both within the Netherlands and



Handling session of Dutch and imported pottery from Enkhuizen guided by Wytze Stellingwerf. Photo: Arno Verhoeven

in terms of better understanding imported pottery and its distribution. Papers on Dutch ceramics examined their presence on a wreck in the Bay of Cadiz, Dutch pottery in south-west Norway, and 15th-century red- and grey-firing wares.

Papers were given on specific functional types of pottery such as chemical apparatus from Bruges, the contents of an apothecary's cesspit in Gothenburg, lighting devices from Riga, stove tiles from Zaandam, and milk bowls and holy water basins, the products of a 19th-century German earthenware potter in Bedburg-Königshoven. A presentation on repair and re-use of pottery in Turku (Finland) also included further consideration of the large quantity of sugar refining ceramics from the Market Square.

Decorative items were represented by papers on pipe clay figurines and plaques from the Baltic and their provenance, and Chinese porcelain figurines from

Copenhagen recovered from an on-going extensive excavation at Amaliegade. An astonishing 4,300 cubic metres of soil have been removed from this site for careful, systematic examination. It is expected that more than 250,000 sherds from local, national and international kiln sites will be identified and catalogued.

Pottery with culinary associations was the subject of papers on the double bowl and its use in Europe, everyday Dutch and Danish pottery in cross-border culinary practice, and ceramic vessels from the construction phase of the Teutonic Castle in Czluchów (Pomerelia, Poland).

Other papers discussed regional types of pottery and regional assemblages from Lödöse (Sweden), Lund (Sweden), The Glencoe Archaeology Project (Scotland), Düsseldorf (Germany), Nordhausen in Thuringia (Germany) and Enkhuizen (NL).

There were also presentations on scientific themes, such as 3D Modelling of medieval pottery, archaeometric evidence for the provenance of Bartmann jugs (an off-shoot of the Bartmann Goes Global Project), geochemical provenancing of Werra ware which followed a paper reassessing Hesse Wanfried as the assumed central production site for Werra ware.

As can be seen above there was a wide variety of thoughtful and thought-provoking presentations made over the two days in the Drommedaris.

On the final day, there was an excursion to The Batavialand Museum, Lelystad, a museum dedicated to maritime history and the reclamation of Flevoland from the Zuiderzee. There were small group tours, guided by Joran Smale (Curator of the Rijks Maritme Collection at the Nationaal Scheepsarcheologisch Depot), of the truly amazing stores, with floor to ceiling shelving

containing pottery and other artefacts retrieved from numerous shipwrecks, stored by individual wreck. Following this, the excursion continued to the Depot of the Archaeological Service of the Municipality of Amsterdam (Archeologisch Depot gemeente Amsterdam). Here, the build-up of archaeological deposits and the expansion of Amsterdam were explained and the Depot stores explored.

Details of the conference programme and information about the group can be found on the BNPG website: www.bnpg.eu. The next meeting next meeting will take place in Gdańsk, April 20-21, 2028.

Thanks are due to the organising committee who made the conference such a success: Michiel Bartels (Hoorn), Torbjörn Brorsson (Lund), Erki Russow (Tallinn), Arno Verhoeven (Amsterdam).

Stephanie Rátkai



Participants exploring the depot of the Archaeological Service of the Municipality of Amsterdam (Archeologisch Depot gemeente Amsterdam). Photo: Arno Verhoeven