

IN MEMORIAM



BRIAN VINCENT

(26 MARCH 1938 – 30 MARCH 2016)



Dr. Brian Vincent, Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries (FSA), died in 2016 just a few days after his 78th birthday. Brian came to archaeology in 1975. After a successful career as a builder, he enrolled in the Department of Anthropology at the University of Otago for his B.A. His deep interest in the discipline led to his undertaking doctoral research at the Thai Bronze and Iron Age site of Ban Na Di, where he analyzed ceramic artifacts. Following a period of study at Southampton with David Peacock FSA, he examined an assemblage of mortuary vessels and occupation ceramics, the first analysis of its kind in Southeast Asia. His identification of local and trade vessels

on the basis of temper variations contributed much to the overall social interpretation of the site.

In 1985, Brian Vincent spent many months as the ceramicist on the excavation of Khok Phanom Di. This estuarine settlement now behind the eastern shore of the Gulf of Siam was a major pottery-making community from 2000–1500 B.C. The pottery vessels found in the graves from seven mortuary phases were of exceptional quality. Many of the women had been interred with their anvils and burnishing stones. The occupation levels also yielded several tons of potsherds. Brian ran the on-site pottery-sorting workshop with masterful efficiency. His subsequent thin sectioning and detailed analyses were published by the Society of Antiquaries in a volume that had not until then been, and possibly never will be, matched in terms of its detail and insight into five centuries of development and change in a prehistoric Southeast Asian pottery-making center.

In 2006, Brian spent a couple of months working in East Sepik, Papua New Guinea, undertaking pottery-sourcing research. He was meticulous in obtaining potting clay samples and beach sands, and used petrographic analysis to source 2000-year-old pottery from Koil Island. Brian excelled in working in tropical conditions and earned the respect of all those with whom he worked. Brian was elected to the Society of Antiquaries on 29 November 2007.

Brian was an Honorary Fellow in the Department of Anthropology and Archaeology at the University of Otago until his unexpected and untimely death. His regular presence at conferences, and insightful papers on the importance of going beyond form and decoration to getting to grips with every aspect of pottery manufacture, will be sorely missed by his many friends and colleagues.

Charles Higham and Glenn Summerhayes