

Paul Priest and Gaynor Ostinelli

Liz Teall

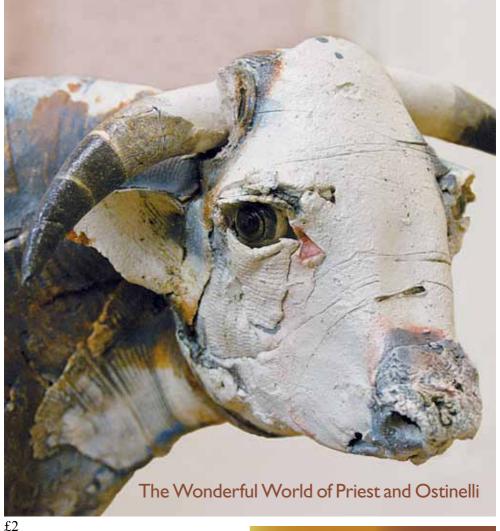
Adrienne Baba

Glaze Workshop with Vivienne Rodwell-Davies

Aylesbury Museum

www.thedcpg.org.uk

Issue 5 Spring 2012



Membership of the Guild is open to anyone having an interest in pottery and sculpture and offers members many opportunities each year to see top potters and sculptors demonstrating their skills. In addition, an annual Open Day is held with demonstrations. Exhibitions, visits and workshops are also organised at various times.

Membership Rates

Single £22, Family (one address) £27, Student (full time) £11. Newsletter only: £10 per annum.

Make your cheque payable to DCPG, and please send to Ingrid Thorstad, 3 Church Lane, Chearsley, Bucks HP18 0DH. Tel: 01844 208 702.

If joining after March, please phone for a reduced introductory rate.

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Lynne McGechie

Firstly I must apologise for the delay in the publication of this Newsletter.

Unfortunately both Bipin and I have had some personal distractions (including a family wedding in my case) but at last we're back in harness and able to produce this edition. As our season runs to a close we can reflect on a series of varied demonstrations by highly skilled ceramists.

From Liz Teall to Caroline Gittings, taking in Adrienne Baba, Paul Priest, the Friths and Carolyn Genders, whatever your particular interest, I hope like me, you've found much to inspire you and new techniques to try.

Ros is busy organising the programme for next year which will kick off with the AGM and Stan Romer Competition on Friday 12 October with guest demonstrator Dylan Bowen. Many of you will be familiar with Dylan's modern slipware and it will be exciting to see how he approaches his work.

Ronnie has been busy organising the next Potters Open Day (POD) which will take place on Saturday 10 November and feature Toff Millway and Roger Cockram.

And lastly don't forget the Stan Romer Competition, the theme this year is 'Flight'. Happy Potting!



DCPG Future Events 2012



Members' Exhibition

Two years ago we had a very successful November show at the Letchworth Arts Centre with exhibitors selling over £1,000 worth of work. This year with our second exhibition we hope to repeat and build on that success.

The exhibition is open to all Guild members and will be set up on Monday 29th October and taken down two weeks later on Monday 12th November. Entry fee is £15.

If there is sufficient interest we hope to

Lynne McGechie

hold a 'meet the artist' event there on the morning of Saturday 3rd November.

Places are limited. Please complete the application form included with this newsletter and return it with your fee ASAP (cheques made payable to DCPG) and a large SAE to Sue Lines, 78 Bedford Road, Letchworth, Herts SG6 4DU.

NB: the terms and conditions and the application form can also be found on the Guild website.

POD 2012

Toff Millway and Roger Cockram will be our ceramicists for the Potters Open Day on Saturday 10th November. Roger is also bringing his wife Ros. She is a very talented artist who will be selling her paintings on

Ronnie Powell

the day. Please look at their websites to see the outstanding work that both Toff and Roger produce.

We are extremely lucky to have them on board for our biggest event of the year.

The Wonderful World of Priest and Ostinelli

report by Ros McGuirk

photography by Lutz Krainhöfner illustrations by Vivienne Rodwell-Davies

naul has long been one of our favourite **I** demonstrators, his workshops are always well subscribed and lots of fun too. It is some time since he last visited the Guild, so it was interesting to see how well he is doing right now. He has obviously flourished since he linked up with Gaynor, his working partner who was also present,

but took a back seat role during the evening.

Modelling an "Orse"

Paul began his demonstration by discussing the armature he had made as part of his preparation for modelling a horse. It was made of bubble wrap and masking tape all wrapped around hardboard templates of the horse's rump and back legs.

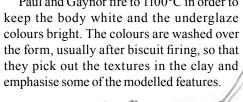
The elongated bundle, about 18 inches long, was held by a wooden post about 8 inches above a flat wooden base. Paul used to scrunch up newspaper to fill his armatures. but found it not entirely friendly, especially when running workshops in schools. As he usually leaves the armature to burn off in the kiln, he caused too many embarrassments with smoke alarms and fire brigades.

So he changed to bubble wrap which burns well and leaves no residue.

Using a twisted wire, Paul took thin slices off a bag of Scarva Earthstone ES40. This is a white clay that is well grogged with malachite. It is a great clay to use both for sculpting and throwing large forms and is versatile as regards firing.



Paul and Gaynor fire to 1100°C in order to



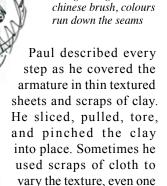
Fold at

neck

Cover a piece 🥕

of doweling with

clay for leg



Using a long haired

piece with chunks of dried clay stuck onto the fibres. He also gathered up unused scraps, rolling them together to leave the seams in view, and used this as well.

He does not aim for anatomical accuracy. but to give a good impression of the living creature. However, as with all the best of caricatures, the details that matter are correct and emphasised. So a striking figure of a hound that he exhibited had long floppy ears, beautiful soft eyes brightened by a spot of glaze, and a proud muzzle.

Joie de vivre

If you missed this demonstration, you will have gathered that Paul and Gaynor make lively and appealing animal figures. They create a sense of 'joie do vivre' through the use of heightened colour, often splashed liberally over the form.

Paul was formerly a model maker working in the film industry, so he has a creative way with finishing off his pieces and mending breakages from the firings, should they occur. Super glue, car filler, metallic paint and polystyrene foam, all have their uses. For example, a spot of Araldite on the eyes can be heated gently until it fluxes and forms a clear glaze.

He works within the parameters of his shed and his kiln. Really big pieces can be fired propped against the side of his top loader electric kiln. Bigger pieces have to be made in two parts and glued together.

After an hour we stopped for the break and Paul's horse was close to completion. It had a great profile, especially along the spine from the rump to the raised head. Paul went on to show us his approach to making smaller pieces. He turned a carrot sized bundle of

bubble wrap into a rabbit. This time some of the texture in the clay was made by rolling on a piece of rubber matting. A broken barbeque stick was used to secure the ears. Two small balls of clay became eveballs inserted into sockets and impressed with appropriated bits of tube such as the remains of a biro, a piece of copper piping and a plastic straw.

I would like to thank Gaynor and Paul for coming over on a cold and frosty night and giving us an entertaining and informative evening. It was a great start to the New Year.

I managed to get the "orse" home in one piece and placed it on the kitchen table to dry. Watching it slowly shrink and rise in the air is a wonder to behold...



Caution!

I must add a note of caution on firing bubble wrap. It is a plastic and will produce highly toxic dioxins when burned.

A very practical and inspiring demonstration



reeling, a while back, that her work was ready for something new, Liz Teall set out to experiment. After a year of trials, she came up with the method of slip decoration that she very generously shared with us.

Distinctly zoomorphic and full of life

Liz began by showing how she constructs her exceptionally characterful teapots. They are formed of a bottle with a long slender neck, thrown using red earthenware to which she adds fine grog. The base of the pot is rounded by turning and the whole pot then tilted until the bottle neck reaches a suitable angle to form the spout. Three stubby legs, finished with a shell impression are added, two at the front and one at the back.

A lid is sliced from the top of the pot with a sharpened hacksaw blade. Liz has found that a heart shaped lid looks good, sits neatly and stays in place while pouring once a thrown and shaped flange has been added. The handle for the lid is pulled and applied as an asymmetrical loop and the main handle, also pulled, arches from in front of the lid right across to the back of the pot. The result is

distinctly zoomorphic and full of life, the spout reaching up from the rounded belly. Liz uses a similar tilted bottle for oil drizzlers and creates "salt piglets" by tipping near spherical jars so that the opening is at a practical angle. Both these forms sit on a base created by flattening the belly of the pot. The piglets are finished off with loop handles and tiny pottery spoons.

Liz decorates with slips made from powdered white earthenware clay, coloured, in the main, with oxides, and black slip based on the clay she throws with. She finds that mixing rather than sieving slips gives a slight speckle when they are fired, adding life to the finished surface. To decorate the teapot she selected fern fronds from the collection of real leaves she had brought with her - she preserves them in water during the winter.



Using one of her collection of much loved hake brushes, she laid a stroke of turquoise slip, coloured with copper oxide and cobalt and the consistency of thick yoghurt, on the sides of the leather hard pot where she planned to apply the ferns, growing up on one side and down on the other, curving them round to follow the flow of the shape.

To be sure that the tips were covered, she dabbed turquoise slip on them too. Having gently pressed the leaf in place, she carefully sponged off the slip from around it. Next she brushed a slightly more liquid black slip loosely all over the pot (having inserted a paper mask between the lid and the pot, to stop the former sticking) and, when that had dried slightly, highlighted the areas where the fern were with bold strokes of white.

Once this had "set" but was still damp, she delicately removed the fern. Tweezers and cocktail sticks come in handy both for placing and removing leaves.

The fine particle size of the slip means that the leaf impressions are amazingly detailed, showing both leaf structure and any imperfections - leaves are placed vein side down onto the pot so that the skeleton breaks through to the red clay and the wash of black slip picks up the leaf outline against the final sweep of white. One of the most intriguing examples was a guelder rose leaf which had been attacked by a leaf miner, the tiny round holes giving additional texture and pattern to the print. Liz has a long standing interest in botany and enjoys being able to combine it with her pottery.

Liz also showed how to build up leaves and coloured slips, cleaning off with each

new addition and again finishing with an all over layer of black. The first leaf placed will emerge "on top" of the decoration.

The pots are twice fired and Liz uses a clear glaze which enhances the richness and depth of the decoration. Liz had brought plenty of pots so that we were able to appreciate (and purchase) the finished work with its lively interplay of precise leaf shapes and sweeping brush strokes, of saturated colour and more muted shades with speckles breaking through the layers.





by Ros McGuirk



Adrienne Baba makes tableware for Japanese restaurants. Her dainty bowls, dishes, platters, cups and bottles are glazed in soft matt white and greys and satin-matt black. These subdued colours and simple forms are designed to display the colour and texture of a multitude of foodstuffs to perfection.

Adrienne's journey began with a contract to teach English in Japan for one year. Two months after her arrival she met and fell in love with one Togo Igawa. They married and so her stay extended to six years.

A friend took her to a pottery class and she was instantly hooked. She trained with a local potter, who was very well regarded, so all her techniques are Japanese, including her throwing style.

Adrienne and Togo brought up their young family in Japan, but eventually they moved back to the UK. Here Adrienne set up a workshop at home and began to sell pots.

She was spotted by a restaurant owner at an open studio event, and one useful contract was followed by another. Currently she supplies five restaurants with tableware. Just keeping up with the orders for replacements keeps her busy enough.

The art of presenting food

To explain how pottery is used in Japan, Adrienne gave us a power point presentation of photographs of Japanese dishes, all containing food. And what colourful food, what textures! It all looked so fresh and tasty.

We soon began to appreciate that even simple Japanese cuisine is an art form. Colour, texture, shape and presentation are all as important as taste. Food is presented in small quantities. It is designed to appeal



to the senses, to be enjoyed and appreciated. Moreover, if food is an art, then so is the tableware on which it is displayed.

In this food culture there are as many cooking styles as there are pottery styles, and the table is often set with a multitude of pots. The art of presenting the food includes choosing the best dish in which to place it and so no one uses the large sets of tableware that is our tradition.

Adrienne showed us photographs of her range of work and also brought with her a number of pots, including long narrow slab dishes with small bowls to match. The long dishes could be used for sushi or whole fish and the small bowls for dips and sauces.

There were also teacups, soup bowls and rice bowls, which are the only ones that are designed to be held in the hand during a meal. This explains the lovely out-turned rim on the rice bowls. The different functions of

Japanese pots were becoming clearer. It was all beginning to make sense.

The demonstration

Adrienne showed us the methods she uses to make her different types of slab dishes. It began with a discussion about her clay - she uses a well grogged white stoneware clay, ES20, and adds varying amounts of terracotta (from 10 to 50%) when she wants to give it some colour. She then kneads it using the 'bull-head' method before spiralling. She prefers to make it up in small amounts when preparing for slab pots, to reduce the pressure on her wrists. Adrienne rolled out her clay on a cloth placed on a wooden board. Rolling clay is tough on the wrists but Adrienne makes a lot of small pieces very easily and quickly, and providing the clay is soft she finds it no problem.

She cuts clay off the block with an impressive wire fashioned from fishing line and two 5 yen coins which are sufficiently weighty and have a hole in the centre. She has a number of different sized batons to ensure consistency when rolling sheets. She uses a variety of cloths to create different textures that can be picked out later by brushing slip over.

During the evening Adrienne made five different slab dishes. The first had a coarse woven cloth rolled into it to give texture. It was trimmed to shape and the cut edges covered by a cloth before she ran a finger over to smooth them. Then it was placed over a block of wood, approximately 2"x 2".



It flopped slightly all round. Adrienne gently smoothed the base. All her efforts with kneading meant that the clay was properly prepared and thus able to flop evenly all around the simple former. When firmed up, it would be safe to remove from the block and if the base had deformed during the early stages of drying, Adrienne would grind it off on the work bench. She leaves these dishes to dry with clay wedges under the edges to prevent the dish opening out. It is best to dry them slowly, out of the way of draughts. Normally she does not cover them. It would make a good fish dish.

Delicious dishes of sushi

During tea time Adrienne served us dishes of sushi with a soy sauce dip. Once the last delicious morsel was consumed we settled back for the second half of the demonstration.

For the second slab dish Adrienne demonstrated how she uses slip. This is mixed with half smooth white stoneware clay and half terracotta. It was brushed over a textured slab and then a strip was scraped back with a metal hooped tool so that a pattern remained, showing off the texture. She also showed how effective sgraffito can be. Using different tools, including a comb, she made a variety of lines. The slab was then left on a cloth on a board with the edges propped up all round with small wedges of biscuit fired clay. Another simple dish quickly made.

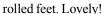
The third slab was heavily textured with a coarse cloth and placed on a board textured side down. Two narrow rolling pins were placed in parallel about a third in from the edge. The outside edges were carefully turned up and over the pins. Another board

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photography by Lutz Krainhöfner illustrations by Vivienne Rodwell-Davies

was placed on top and the whole lot inverted. The pins were cautiously removed and the centre of the slab was pushed down a little. Hey presto, a self-supporting slab dish with





Remove wooden dowels and turn over

The fourth slab was of white clay with a coil of dark clay rolled into it. The dark clay was rich in terracotta. Adrienne showed us how you get an interesting wavy border between the different clays by rolling across the border rather than along the grain. Again a cloth and a rolling pin were used to texture the surface.



The final slab was made into a boat shaped tempura dish. This time the whole slab was made from a 50:50 mix of the coarse white and terracotta clays. A circular hooped tool, guided by a ruler, was used to flute the surface in such a way as to leave parallel ridges.

A cloth was placed over the surface and Adrienne ran her fingers over the ridges to smooth any rough edges. Then she cut round a boat-shaped template, smoothed the edges as before, and turned up the edges with more of her fired clay wedges.

Then she turned over the dish and placed it on a supportive roll of cloth. Small feet made from balls of clay were pushed onto scored spots on the base.

It would be glazed with her matt white. After firing the ridges would be picked out in the darker clay beneath the soft slightly volcanic texture of the glaze.

She got her white glaze recipe from Bath Potters and it is very close to the one they sell. It contains potash, feldspar, quartz, china clay, dolomite, and titanium dioxide, with zirconium silicate added for extra texture. The satin black is a Scarva glaze.

The terracotta rich slip gives a variety of soft greys when it is covered in the white glaze. All her glazed work is fired to 1260°C in an electric kiln

An absorbing evening

On behalf of everyone there I would like to thank Adrienne for all the hard work she put into preparing for this event. Her talk was fascinating, the sushi was delicious and the methods she demonstrated were simple, yet effective, and appealing even to those who had little experience of clay. It was an absorbing evening that was enjoyed by all.

Adrienne teaches courses in Japanese cookery. It seems a winning combination.

Perhaps we could consider ourselves the Dacorum Cooking and Pottery Guild ...





Vivienne Rodwell-Davies Glaze Workshop



Lynne McGechie



To begin with Vivienne gave us a rundown of the constituent parts of a glaze: alumina; silica; flux; and colour and the part they each play in a successful finish.

We covered the typical ingredients in each of these categories and the qualities they bring to the final product. All supported by helpful hand outs and a glossary of terms.

Focussing on stoneware glazes (cone 6 - cone 8) we then went on to mix three line blends using:

- Potash Feldspar and Whiting
- Nephlene Syenite and Red Clay Powder
- Potash Feldspar, Dolomite and China Clay and three line blends of ash glazes using:
- Wood Ash and Red Clay Powder
- Wood Ash, Potash Feldspar, Red Clay Powder
- Wood Ash and Potash Feldspar

We covered the health and safety aspects of mixing glazes and the basic 'domestic hygiene' of being methodical, avoiding cross contamination of chemicals and labelling samples clearly. This was followed by a discussion of the appropriate consistency for a transparent and an opaque coloured glaze. We went on to apply the glazes to test pieces Vivienne had provided for us, this included a

Vivienne is a familiar figure at Guild meetings; she is also the Newsletter Production Assistant and Illustrator and a very experienced ceramist, artist and teacher so I was looking forward to her glaze workshop held on 24 March. I was not disappointed. We were blessed with a glorious sunny day and as a result we were able to do some work outside in Vivienne's beautiful garden and had full use of her large, well equipped studio.

single dip, a double dip and the application of a strip of various oxides to see how they would react with the glaze.

As a person with only a cursory knowledge of glaze chemistry, inexperienced in mixing glazes and only used to using readily available glazes in college this was an extremely useful workshop.

I now feel much more confident about mixing my own glazes, experimenting with ingredients and conducting line blends.

As well as an experienced and very knowledgeable teacher, Vivienne is also an excellent cook and host. With homemade cake and coffee at tea time and homemade bread served with cheese and fresh salad and fruit at lunch time we had an excellent time.

Thank you Vivienne!



10 Photograph by Bipin 1



Visit to the Aylesbury Museum

Sue Lines



www.buckscc.gov.uk



Sue Lines and Ingrid Thorstad

Thad visited the Aylesbury Museum some time ago, when the ceramics collection that belongs to Buckinghamshire County Council was displayed in its entirety, and I wondered what there was to gain from 'a handling session' which Ingrid Thorstad offered to arrange for March 21st.

However Ingrid had kindly arranged a visit to Halton Resource Centre not just to look at, but also to touch, and even handle some of the pieces in their care. We were met by Mel, one of the curatorial staff. She quickly disabused me of my belief that non potters could not be as informed as people who make the work, mix the glazes and fire the kiln!

A Lucie Rie pot bought for £3!

The collection was initiated as an educational service to go out to schools in about 1960. A member of staff, Christopher Gowing was given an annual budget of £300 to select pots for their tactile qualities. Because Gowing knew something about ceramics, what he usually bought cheaply,

gained in value and eventually it was decided that the collection should no longer go out to schools but become a resource for the museum service to take care of and to display from time to time. Gowing bought at least one pot by Lucie Rie for £3 and when given a bigger budget, bought more Leach, Cookson or whoever, and the collection grew helped by the occasional bequest.

The work varies from coil to slab build; from the quirky Carol McNicholas to the iconic pieces by Leach and the most exquisite billowing porcelain pieces by Mary Rodgers.

Room full of priceless pieces

We spent a good long time looking at the pots we had chosen to see and handle and then followed Mel down to a room full of even more priceless pieces.

What caught my eye were the cardboard boxes with neat labels showing that inside this box were some sixteenth century men's shoes or a seventeenth century lady's bonnet or a collapsible opera top hat!

Buckinghamshire County Council has decided to stick with 20th century work. Gaps in the collection will be plugged and work by local potters sought. As we are twenty first century potters, I'm sorry to say that our work will not be accepted!

The good news is that the collection is

safe; apparently it would be illegal to dispose of any of these wonderful pots.



www.buckscc.gov.uk



Book Review 'Lustre' by Greg Daly Published by A&C Black

Review by Ros McGuirk

Lustre is something really special. Its effects are beautiful, magical, and have been prized and sought after by the wealthy and powerful for over a thousand years.

The first lustres came from Egypt where they were used on glass and later on pottery. Clay mixed with iron, copper and mercury, applied to a fired glaze and re-fired could create a gold surface. No wonder that these recipes and techniques remained a closely guarded secret for so long.

Now there are no secrets, yet despite the advances in

science and easy dissemination of knowledge with the internet there are still relatively few makers of lustreware. There are far more articles on the science than on the techniques of this ancient art, this early form of alchemy.

Greg Daly explains why and at the same time opens up the subject to all. This is a fascinating read for anyone who wants to learn more about lustres at any level.

After a brief history of lustreware, the following four chapters are devoted to the four types of lustre, including how to source the materials, how to develop and test your own, with standard recipes, methods of decoration, kiln types and firing cycles.

Pigment lustres are applied to the surface of an earthenware glazed pot and fired until red-hot in heavy reduction. Examples illustrated include pieces by Jonathan Chiswell-Jones, Alan Caiger-Smith and the author, with earlier pioneers being Jerome and Clement Massier and Pilkingtons.

Lustre glazes incorporate the metallic salts within the glaze and create a different effect. The advantages of this technique is that if it does not work, the pots can be

re-fired in different conditions, either with more or less reduction, or even oxidation.

The photographs found here include two stunning pieces, one by Sutton Taylor and the other from the author

Resin lustres are applied over the glaze and are fired in oxidation. They can be obtained from manufacturers as 'commercial lustre'. You can also mix them yourself and

plenty of guidance is given for this.

Pots from the likes of Sutton Taylor, Catherine Bennett, Mary Rich, John Wheeldon and Geoffery Swindell are provided as examples.

Finally there is the technique of fuming which we came across at the Guild a couple of years ago when Margaret Gardiner came to a meeting. This is where the hot ware is sprayed with solutions of metallic salts.

As they are usually chlorides, nitrates or sulphates, it is a risky affair involving the production of toxic gases, as well as beautiful lustrous pots. Work by Janet Mansfield, John Dermer and, as ever, Greg Daly are shown.

This is an excellent guide to an intriguing area of ceramics, rich in detail, photography and explanation.

It is sure to become a standard text on the subject and will certainly be a popular work in our own library.



ceramics



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