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Dylan Bowen Demonstration
Stan Romer Competition
Box Moor Conker Festival
POD 2012 - Roger Cockram
DCPG Exhibition Letchworth
Arthur Ball Tile Workshop
Slip and Smoke - Wychford Pottery

Issue 7 Winter 2012



Potters Open Day 2012

Part Two: Roger Cockram

About the Guild & the Newsletter

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 for 2012/2013

Single £27, Family (one address) £35, Student (full time) £19. 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.

The Dacorum and Chiltern Potters Guild Newsletter is published quarterly and distributed free to all members of the Guild, other craft groups and organisations. Contributions to the Newsletter are always welcome (s.a.e. please with any items to be returned).

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Editorial

Lynne McGechie

The first thing I must do in this edition is say a big thank you to Ronnie Powell and Kirsteen Holuj for all the work they have done for the Guild over the past several years as Potters Open Day (POD) Organiser and Publicity Secretary respectively.

Since becoming a member of the Guild I have enjoyed every POD I have attended. The demonstrators have been excellent, the event well attended and the day has run smoothly. This last POD was no exception, with Toff Milway and Roger Cockram demonstrating their consummate skills, a joy to see.

And we've had some excellent publicity organised by Kirsteen. Most recently the poster she designed for the Guild's exhibition

at Letchworth Arts Centre, which was extremely professional and appealing.

Ronnie and Kirsteen's departure leaves a gap in the guild. We need to replace them as soon as possible. Could you help?

See the item: Your Guild Needs You! for more information and if you're at all interested, please give it a go.

Our 2012-13 season has got off to a tremendous start with Dylan Bowen and POD and we have more to look forward to with a series of excellent demonstrators over the following months.

I think it just remains for me to wish you all season's greetings. Merry Christmas and a happy and healthy New Year!

News from your Committee

Mary Anne Bonney

The Committee is investigating the advantages of seeking Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) status for the guild and has begun work on a new draft constitution, pending the government's official launch of this new and simplified form of charity.

The Committee's aim to build up a reserve fund to cover the development and eventual replacement of the Guild's assets has highlighted the need for Guild activities to cover costs and, where possible, make a surplus to contribute to the reserve.

The committee discussed how to make sure our excellent newsletter and website continue to attract advertising revenue.

Negotiations continue with the Box Moor

Trust over the construction of a shelter for the wood fired kiln on their site and work has been undertaken to reinforce the kiln and improve its insulation.

Response to the appeal at the AGM for members to take over as POD organiser and publicity officer and to act as workshop & visits co-ordinators was disappointing, but it's not too late to come forward: If you would like to find out more about what the roles entail (without obligation), please contact a committee member.

The committee's next meeting is at 7 pm, prior to the demonstration meeting on 7th December and will be a short one to review POD and any matters arising from the day.



Dylan Bowen comes from a family of traditional potters with grandfather, father and uncle having been in the business. He started working for his father, but found that functional ware was not his thing, which was demonstrated in a couple of his slides! At Art School he became interested in painters such as Jackson Pollock, Japanese lettering and what he called 'marks' on walls, graffiti etc.

His slide show presentation showed his progress from a ceramic Juke Box made at Art School to his current work.

Fired in an electric kiln, most of his work is in terracotta clay from Valentines or Spencroft and slipped in a limited range of colours; mainly white using ball clay and black using terracotta, manganese and iron. Big and bold would be the description of his pieces but the process is one of uncertainty, 'planned' accidentals and basic technique.

The first large plate he threw flat with a roughly formed upstand which he textured using a castellated ceramic adhesive spreader.

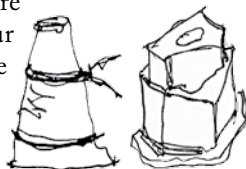
He then formed a mould using rolled up corrugated cardboard in three tubes bent to form a circle. The thrown plate cut from the bat was then dropped into it and left to dry untouched. The second plate was thrown in a similar manner but the outside edges of the rim were sliced with a knife to form lines.

Another bat was placed on top of the plate and the 'sandwich' was turned over. Pushing his fingers into the side of the plate he started

to pull the original bat away from what was the base of the plate. He repeated this on the other side and removed the second bat entirely leaving two finger grab impressions on the edges and the 'pull' texture on the surfaces of the clay. What was the base of the thrown plate sinks on to the new bat around the previous upstand. Basically an upside down thrown plate!



Dylan next formed a rough cone with a flat top approximately 200mm high which he hollowed out using a rod shoved in from the top. Two collars (one a third down and the other near the bottom) were formed using rolled up cloth tied round the cone and tightened. With a wire cutter he roughly cut four sides to the top of the cone and repeated the process between the collars to complete the piece.



All the work to this stage is reliant on his processes and techniques to give the pieces an unskilled look that has an immediacy and a truly hand built quality.

After coffee Dylan demonstrated his slip techniques with a series of small plates and one large one. The slip is first poured over half the plate and then repeated on the other half, sometimes leaving a gap between the two pours for further decoration.

The bases are left unfinished, leaving any slip where ever it has run. The slip covers and smooths out some of the rough edges of the piece like a thin coating of snow on the ground. Using quite a wet black slip he makes his 'marks' on the plate in a quick movement with a slip trailer and/ or brushes.

The decoration is then sometimes finished off with odd spots of white slip with copper oxide added. The piece is bisque fired and then finished with a clear gloss sequestrate glaze.



This all sounds very simple but involves huge uncertainty on his part as to where to place his marks. All the time he was talking about how to be spontaneous in the application whilst conscious of previous patterns that worked. The marks will vary according to the distance from the plate, the pressure applied to the slip trailer, the speed of the movement and the wetness of the receiving slip on the plate.

For him it had to be fun but serious and certainly the audience thought so too, we gained much pleasure from taking part in his decision making.

The whole evening was enjoyable: his presentation and chat; his interesting making techniques; and his involvement of the audience in the mark making. As Dylan says spontaneity is very hard work, and I was left wondering how a man at times so seemingly indecisive could make such bold and confident ceramic statements.

Leave it as it is, we all cried!

Dylan sold in excess of £400 of his pots so he was well loved!

Dylan's words were very thoughtful during the course of his demonstration. They were relevant to all creative potters so here are a few: thoughts from past experiences; hesitancy; fluidity of line; bolder; thickness; movement and spontaneity.

We have all been there with these words and Dylan made us help him come to

decisions during the course of the evening.

He used interesting original forms in the construction of his plates and platters.

Each one took on its own character as he took the basic construction off the wheel head. He used his slip trailer in different ways.

Shall I put more slip on or do I leave it as it is? Leave it as it is, we all cried!

He loves terracotta! It is messy and dirty and he thrives on it!

Ronnie Powell



Stan Romer Competition 2012



1st prize went to Kirsteen Holuj (£85) who made a ceramic and wire dandelion seed. Dylan's comment was that "it looked like it was about to fly away."



2nd prize (£35) went to Ronnie Powell who made a 3D painting with a ceramic gull flying down to eat real chips! Dylan said the piece made him smile.

by Kirsteen Holuj



3rd prize (£20) went to Vivienne Rodwell-Davies who made a textured black dish form with little birds around one side, Dylan really liked her interpretation of 'flight'.



Box Moor Trust Conker Festival



Ronnie Powell
Mervyn Fitzwilliam

On Sunday 21st October members of the Guild were busy at the annual Box Moor Trust Conker Festival. It was not too cold and luckily it did not rain. We were very busy over the period of two and a half hours. The "Have a Go" on the wheel or at hand building encouraged 60 people to participate at our stand. Three wheels were in constant use!

And two of our helpers decided to enter the Conker Festival.

Sarah Heafield (Mervyn's grand daughter) made it to the quarter final and Susan Eglington reached the Final and was the runner-up!

Money raised

• Throwing lessons	£196.60
• Sale of donated ceramics	£21.50
• Re-sale of unused clay	£6.00
• Total	£224.10

The total to be shared between the Guild (£150) and Hospice of St Francis (£74.10)





*Drowned colour there, but black to hues,
As death to living, decomposes –
Red darkness of the heart of roses,
Blue brilliant from dead starless skies,
And gold that lies behind the eyes,
The unknown unnameable sightless white
That is the essential flame of night,
Lustreless purple, hooded green,
The myriad hues that lie between
Darkness and darkness!...*

Taken from *The Fish* by Rupert Brooke

Reopened his session by speaking very passionately about how his education had put him in a box which left him with strong feelings about rigid educational policy. As he said, when society puts us in boxes it limits the way people see us and also quoted Albert Einstein: 'All imagination and observation are more important than knowledge.'

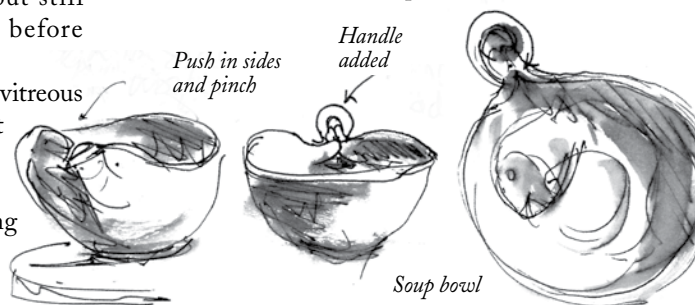
Wanting to do a variety of subjects at 'A' level that crossed the usual Arts /Sciences boundary, Roger asked to study the arts but was forced to study three sciences which in time became a career as a marine ecologist and science lecturer. It was quite a lot later that Roger discovered pottery as a self-taught hobby, which he followed up by going to Harrow where he was taught by Mick Casson.

Roger moved to Devon where his career took off. He has since acquired much experience of kiln building and of making huge pots such as 10 gallon cider jars with

slip trailed designs, work that taught him valuable skills used to this day. Alongside stoneware Roger has experimented with porcelain and has always looked out for the happy accidents such as finding the wood ash from his kiln had glazed the work he had forgotten to glaze in the first place!

Talking about clay and technique, Roger told us that he mixes his body in a 1909 cake making machine. To make a body that works well with 'once firing', he uses 80% ball clay, 20% of what Dobles call their fireclay (but Roger said it isn't really a fireclay!) and 2% Bentonite. He glazes the inside when the pot is firm but still damp, then waits until it is dry before glazing the outside.

Roger uses a slip recipe to make his vitreous slips based on ball clay because it shrinks at the same rate as the clay body underneath; these vitreous slips contain a small percentage of fluxing agent to make them commence the process of melting just a little.



As an example of a glaze - if the original recipe had 30% of a single flux - he would put 15% of bone ash and 15% whiting. "There are many things possible with experiment!"

Roger spoke about using a variety of oxides to bring out the different colours and surfaces. He applies colour with tiny sponges, using lots of little pots of glaze. He sometimes waxes over or uses Copydex which he can peel off, to create the overall effect.

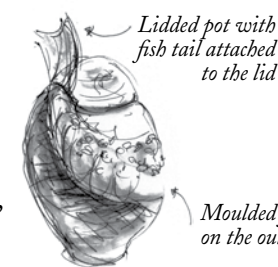
Roger gave a short demonstration on the wheel, answering the question on how to centre a large piece of clay, with "whatever works," but went on to talk about the stages of throwing with the useful mnemonic of 'CHOP'. C- centre, H - make a hole, O - open it up and P- pull it up. 'All the tools present are in your hands.'

Previously I had believed that Roger's glazes and subject matter were all about fish but he insisted that fish are in his work because: "fish cannot but help show movement." He said his interest and love is primarily about water which he has studied, walking on the beach, watching the behaviour of the water as it comes in and eddies into the shoreline, gazing into rock pools, studying sea creatures, watching how fish move in shoals and watching the moods that dictate their patterns of movement.

Making a large bowl, throw a 'trumpet' shape

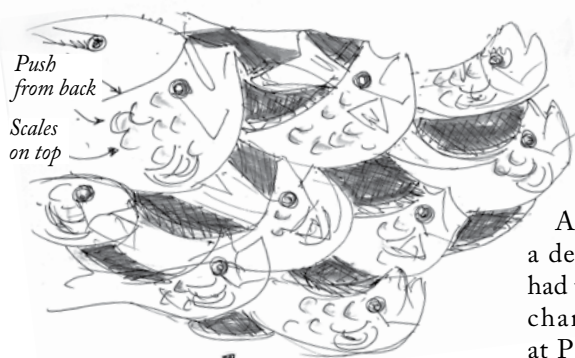


Little water on the inside before using kidney from bottom to top



Potters Open Day

Photography by Lutz Krainhöfner
Illustrations by Vivienne Rodwell-Davies



Glaze the inside of the pot before cutting out shapes

When drawing on the pot, using the curve of a bent needle stops lines from blurring



Attending POD, listening attentively to a demonstrator and watching what they had to offer my view of Roger's work totally changed. I remember this happening at POD with Nick Collins - when I had listened and watched him, I began to really appreciate his work. I had seen Roger's work at potfests but hadn't been drawn to it!

Now, listening to what he had to say and watching him work I am a committed disciple! The sumptuous deep turquoise colours plus tiny flashes of pinks and greens, the texturing against the oxide-rich metallic finish, the subtleties and contrasts have won me over.

Perhaps my conversion was also assisted by Roger rounding off his afternoon with his heart warming songs...

Brilliant!



Earth and Fire Letchworth Arts Centre 30 Oct - 10 Nov Report by Lynne McGeachie

*"Interesting diverse exhibition - very enjoyable!
A very high standard and all very different.
Stunning variety! - esp. Clayscapes and Fantastic Fish...
Super, dupe, great show..."*

Just some of the comments we received at the Guild members exhibition held at the Letchworth Arts Centre in November. Most exhibitors sold something and the total takings were £1270.75.

In terms of sales, decorative pieces proved more popular than functional work. The feedback from Arts Centre staff and visitors was all very positive.

I think we were helped by Kirsteen's great poster, which we hung round and about town; articles in the two local papers; and Nigel Carrick and my appearance on Radio Three Counties Radio programme Treasure Quest on the morning of Sunday 4 November, which was also a lot of fun.

I'd encourage all Guild members who want to show their work to get involved in the next group exhibition. It's good experience, I learnt a lot about showing my own work, and it's very enjoyable working and spending time with other guild members.





Tile Workshop Tessellating tiles with Arthur Ball Visit to Watford Mosque

The visit of Arthur Ball to West Herts College (WHC) on 7th November followed on from Arthur kindly giving his time to the National Ceramic Week initiative at the college in April this year. He gave wheel-thrown pottery demonstrations including discussing his interest in the finer points of tea-pot making.

This event was documented by film students from WHC which we hope to edit together with Arthur's most recent visit.

The topics covered were extensive but not exhaustive and included: the application of tools fashioned to solve specific problems such as the accurate production & repetition of tessellating tiles; the preparation of clay: the drying of tiles and the control of shrinkage and warpage prior to bisque-fire: the use of templates for extruded moulding and tile sections; and the formulation of coloured glazes. Some discussion of the commissioning process regarding the role of the Architect, the Imam and Watford Mosque community was also covered.

Arthur recounted his relief on seeing the finished tiles go out the front door to be installed at the Mosque after months of work and endless setting out of panel sections on the living-room carpet for want of a setting out floor.



After lunch in the training restaurant at WHC a group of us made our way to the Mosque to see the results of Arthur's endeavour and view the magnificent panels still looking fresh and vivid 25 years after the installation as Lutz's photos are able to record.

We were warmly welcomed by members of the Mosque, including the Imam and the manager, who greeted Arthur remembering the installation some 25 years ago in 1985. The Imam gave our group a very instructive tour of the Mosque describing its central role serving the Islamic community in Watford observing daily rituals and celebrating Islamic festivals.



by Paul Rowbottom
Photography by Lutz Krainhöfner

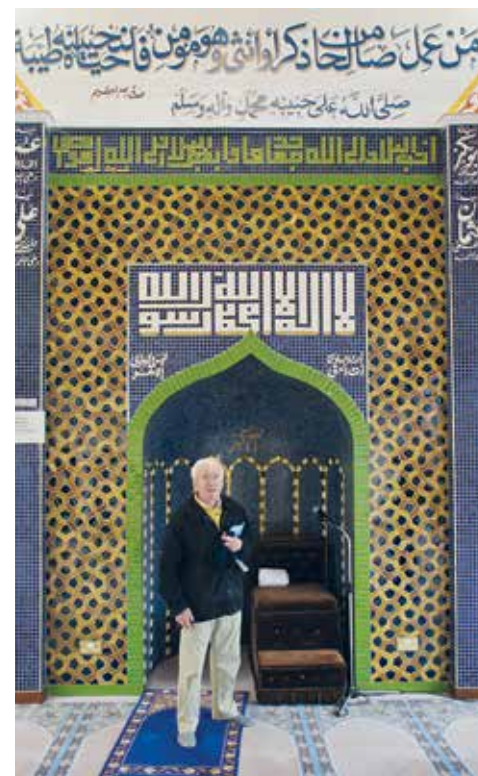


Arthur provided us with an excellent insight into his unique problem solving approach to ceramics, combined with wit and humour drawn from a life-time of experience.



All this rounded off with the privilege of seeing his tiles in-situ at the Watford Mosque.

Many thanks Arthur!



If you have never visited Jim and Dominique's pottery in the Cotswolds it is well worth doing so. This is a very well organised business. There is a stunning gallery called the Octagon with a courtyard garden leading up to it. This as you might expect is planted in a variety of pots made in the workshops. This garden is tended by a dedicated lady gardener. Unusual coloured vegetables are dotted between broad and narrow succulents; pendulous flowers hang from woven willow frames. The colours and shapes are magnificent and the whole effect is like a tapestry. Now back to the course.

Jim Keeling

Throwing traditional forms - plates and jugs with pulled handles decorated with slip.

Adam Keeling

Throwing very large flower pots in three pieces and decorated with poured slips whilst standing on a ladder with Jim Newly turning the wheel - a 'stage performance'.

Antonia Salmon

Cycladic type forms meticulously made and burnished with a pebble then smoked. We all built a variety of kilns to show all the different techniques she had demonstrated - pit firing, resist, mini-saggars, and sustain and paper. All great fun with good results.

John Weeldon Raku and terra sigillata.

John demonstrated many techniques from burnishing with a sponge on a stick covered with polythene, to cutting rubber to make stamps and gluing to an old paintbrush handle and slip trailing using Copydex as a resist.

He fired his pots in a 'flat pack' square kiln made from fibre, tin foil and mesh held together at the sides with bulldog clips. He showed us various methods to obtain a lustrous finish and his 'fuming' effect.

Matthew Blakely

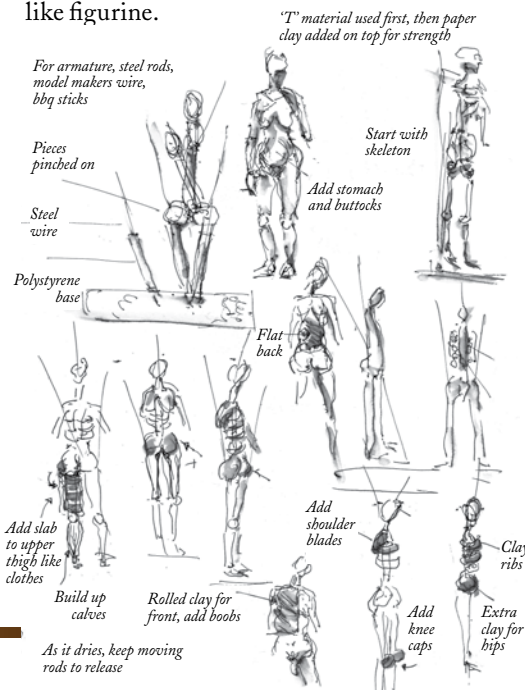
Matthew talked about his love of finding his own materials to mix with his clay and glazes. He heats the rocks first and then crushes them before making the glaze or adding different quantities to his clay body which react with the ash glazes he uses.

It was a non-stop weekend punctuated by delicious homemade cakes at tea times served in a marquee in the grounds. Saturday night we were treated to a medieval style banquet set on trestle tables running the length of the big barn, wine and beer served in Jim's beautiful pitchers and food fit for a king.

I recommend anyone to go the next time he runs a course.

Jude Jelfs

Jude constructed a figurine using model maker's wire and BBQ sticks. She makes the skeleton first and then adds the muscles and then the flesh. This resulted in a very life like figurine.



Potters Open Day (POD) Organiser(s)

The Guild is looking for two enthusiastic and keen people to take on the organisation of POD 2013. As POD organisers you would choose and agree arrangements with the guest potters and liaise with the Longdean School ready for the big day.

Preparations for the event itself begin with setting up on the Friday evening ready for the two ceramicists to take centre stage on the Saturday. The programme for the day normally runs itself and the clearing up is always an easy affair with many helpful hands available.

The concluding activity to be coordinated is the help we give to the school as a return favour for letting us use their premises. It is a rewarding day when Guild members help pupils learn about using clay; they have access to our skills and expertise and have an opportunity to experiment and practice new skills associated with a bag of clay!

As POD organisers you will also become members of the Guild committee. Your membership will ensure continuity, good communication and help achieve the best outcome for all those involved in making POD a success.

The Guild needs new ideas and people to give just a little more of their time. Will it be you?

For more information about POD please contact Ronnie: ronnie.powell@btinternet.com

Publicity Secretary

The Guild also needs a new Publicity Secretary. The role is to promote the guild and find ways to attract new members. Some of the activities of the Publicity Secretary include:

- Designing invitations and posters for various events and exhibitions
- Putting ads in Ceramic Review and updating Studio Potter website with events
- Emailing out the events programme to relevant organisations and teaching establishments where there are no Guild members present.
- Generally promoting and informing people about the guild as much as possible

The role provides lots of opportunity to implement your own ideas e.g. you could create a Facebook page linked to the website where photos of meetings and events can be displayed and advertised; or create a blog; or develop any other ideas you may have to promote the Guild.

For more information about the role contact Kirsteen Holuj: kirsteenholuj@hotmail.com



Japanese Craft

Erskine, Hall & Coe Ltd (Formerly Gallerie Besson) Until 10 Jan 2013
15 Royal Arcade, 28 Old Bond Street, London W1S 4SP

Carving in Britain - From 1910 to Now

Fine Art Society Until 12 Jan 2013
Gaudier-Brzeska, Gill, Hepworth, Moore.
148 New Bond St, W1

Pre-Raphaelites:

Victorian Avant-Garde

Tate Britain Until 13 Jan 2013
Over 150 works including painting, sculpture, photography and the applied arts.

Flame and water pots: prehistoric ceramic art from Japan

The British Museum

Until 20 Jan 2013
A display of three pots made by the Jomon people, between 5,000 and 7,000 years old from one of the oldest ceramic cultures in the world.

Constable, Gainsborough, Turner and the Making of Landscape

Royal Academy of Arts

8 Dec 2012 - 17 Feb 2013.
The development of the British school of landscape painting.



David Nash at Kew: A Natural Gallery

Until April 2013. Sculptures, installations, drawings and film in place throughout the Gardens, glasshouses and exhibition spaces. Nash is also working at Kew on a 'wood quarry', creating new pieces for the exhibition using trees from the Gardens that have come to the end of their natural life.

Manet: Portraying Life

Royal Academy of Arts

26 Jan - 14 April 2013.
First ever retrospective devoted to the portraiture of Edouard Manet.

Man Ray Portraits

National Portrait Gallery

07 Feb 2013 - 27 May 2013

Roy Lichtenstein

Tate Modern

21 Feb 2013 - 27 May 2013.
Major exhibition of artwork but also many later works which he is less known for.

David Bowie is

Royal College of Art

23 Mar - 28 July 2013.
Retrospective of the career of David Bowie featuring lyrics, original costumes, fashion, photography, film, music videos, set designs and Bowie's own instruments.

Apologies

The article about Carolyn Genders published in the previous edition of the newsletter Issue 6, was in fact written by Sue Lines and not by Ros McGuirk. My sincerest apologies to Ros and especially to Sue.

Bipin

Fri 11 Jan: Dr David S Neal

Dr Neal is the retired Senior Archaeologist for English Heritage and will be talking about his life's work excavating pottery, Roman mosaics et al. He has excavated widely in Hertfordshire and has many tales to tell. Moreover there will be real Roman and Medieval pots to handle.

Fri 8 Feb: Lutz Krainhöfner

Lutz is well known among members for his beautiful burnished vessels, his artfully decorated stoneware, talent for photography and his enthusiasm for firing kilns. You will be kept busy in this meeting, so come prepared to get stuck in playing with slip.

Fri 8 Mar: Jonathan Chiswell Jones - Decorating with lustres

Jonathan makes beautiful Art Deco pots to his own designs.

Fri 12 Apr: Joy Bosworth

CPA member with a number of specialties including raku, extruded vessels, jewellery, and teaching. The author of two books on ceramics, mixed media and jewellery, Joy will demonstrate ceramic jewellery.

Fri 10 May: Sun Kim

Exploring form & volume across three continents. A Korean potter raised in Brazil who has her own unique style.

Fri 10 Sep: Stephen Parry

A 'September Special' on large pots with a master potter.

Copy date for the next newsletter is Thursday 28th February. Please ensure articles are accompanied by good quality high resolution images. Please send to lynne.mcgechie@btopenworld and to bipin@thedcpg.org.uk

We're very pleased to welcome several new members to the Guild.

Nicki Greenham, from Hitchin, interested in stoneware, porcelain and slab work. **Pauline Josephs**, from St. Albans, enjoys making functional items on the wheel. She is also interested in firing techniques such as smoke/pit firing and salt glazing.

Sarah Crickmore, from Rickmansworth, is interested in experimenting with Raku techniques.

Audrey Hammett, from Sarratt, is still studying and exploring the world of clay.

Members' News

Visit to Granada & Cordova

Paul Rowbottom is organising a visit to Granada & Cordova on the 4th-7th March. Please indicate your intention to join this group visit asap. The price tbc will be around £450.00 including flights. A deposit of £200.00 will be required to confirm your place on this visit, payable to West Herts College. Contact Paul on 01923 263032 or email sculpt1956@hotmail.com

Sculpture Workshop from the life model

Vivienne Rodwell-Davies is running a clay sculpture and drawing workshop on Saturday 19th January 10am - 4pm. Cost £45 includes all materials and refreshments, except lunch. Whalebones Studio, Wood Street, Barnet.

Rambling With A Sketchbook on the Isle of Wight. Join Vivienne Rodwell-Davies on her annual drawing and painting course on the Isle of Wight, staying in a late 18th Century tide mill over looking the Yar estuary. Mon 24th - Sat 29th June 2013. Contact 0208 441 0904 or email viviennerodwell@msn.com

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