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Buckinghamshire Studio Pottery  
Collection

Childwickbury Art Fair

Guild Summer Party

International Ceramics Festival,  
Aberystwyth

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Issue 18 Autumn 2015

£2



DCPG 40 years old, Arthur Ball 97 <sup>8</sup>/<sub>12</sub>

## 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 2015/16

**Single £28, Family (one address) £37, Student (full time) £20. Newsletter only: £10 per annum.**

Make your cheque payable to DCPG, and please send to **Audrey Hammett, Pear Tree Cottage, The Green, Sarratt, Hertfordshire, WD3 6BL.**

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).

Opinions expressed in items published do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the Committee or Guild members as a whole; nor is the Guild responsible for the content of individual advertisements printed in the Newsletter.

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## Editorial

High summer is over and the sun is lower in the sky. With its cool mornings and warm afternoons this time of year always brings back memories of new beginnings; returning to school or college and the anxious excitement that always came with it. So we too begin a new Guild year with a fresh season of meetings, community and educational activities.

## Welcome to our new members

**Jan Few** I have been making pots for a number of years, learning mainly through evening and part time courses. I am currently working on large pieces influenced by the Hellenic and Ancient Roman period.

**Julie Leaming** I have been interested in visual arts for many years, have just completed a Fine Arts Degree which has fed a recent interest in both sculpture and ceramics.

**Karin Tang** Beginner since July 2014. Attending classes at West Herts College. Member of pottery group at Chorleywood Community Arts Centre.

**Kate Windibank** I am a VFX artist, working on films in Soho. I have been learning and working with ceramics for

We also welcome many new members who bring with them a variety of skills, energy and insights.

As the Guild looks back at its first 40 years we go forward with strength and optimism carrying on and communicating our enthusiasm and love of clay.

Wishing you all a good year making!

**Audrey Hammett**

6 months. I attend classes at Artshed, Ware and have a studio at home. (08 April 2015)

**Rod Sandy** I have been making pots for about 15 years, but over the last 2 years since I retired I have been taking it more seriously. I have a workshop in my garden.

**Rosemary Franklin** For 18 years interested in art, painting, sculpture, pottery and drawing. Published poet and illustrator, qualified Art Therapist, aromatherapist, and reflexologist.

**Sarah Evans** I started classes in November 2014. I want to learn to throw and become proficient at slipware.

**David Denton** Interested in developing sculpture skills.

## Find us on

The guild now has its very own Facebook page, so please look us up and like us! Just search for 'Dacorum and Chiltern Potters Guild'. It is a forum for us to promote upcoming public events and exhibitions, connect with other organisations and potters as well as share news, photos and ideas. If you would like to contribute a photo to a members' gallery, please email one to [emilyhbgood@googlemail.com](mailto:emilyhbgood@googlemail.com).



**Emily Good**





## Notes from the Chair



As I write this we are about to start another new season of meetings, workshops, firings, exhibitions and we also are planning a trip to the V&A. Our annual exhibition is about to open in the famous old courthouse in St Albans, (I am sure it will be a treat.) And... we are about to have our 40th AGM. YES – we are officially 40 years old!

Thinking that a significant anniversary might be close, your committee began digging around in the archives and we found that we were constituted at the first AGM in October 1975.

The founders included Murray Fieldhouse and they led a group of over 100 pottery enthusiasts who were disgruntled at the closure of classes and wanted to learn more.

It was a protest movement according to Dorley. Plus ça change! Well, they hit a rich vein of desire to keep alive this craft which is both ancient and modern, and we are still here – and so are many of them.

Our oldest member is Arthur Ball, and at 97 has only recently decided to sort out his workshop. Anyone taking up his offer of free clay is guaranteed a good number of tales from those early years. He still has a few teapots to make before he can fire his kiln. Arthur, where you lead, I follow...

Other treats to look forward to include the pottery version of 'Bake Off'. If it is as entertaining as the original, it will keep

our craft in the public eye and encourage more to come and join us. Perhaps the tide is turning even now.

Meanwhile your committee are learning about being a charity. Our presence online has been enhanced by Facebook – you will find a link on our website.

Your POD organiser, John Higgins, has found another school to replace Long Dean which is being rebuilt over the next few years.

Paul Rowbottom will soon be able to get back to Boxmoor and build the wood store for the kiln there. We therefore anticipate a few firings next year.

We are starting to plan the next annual exhibition, looking forward to doing outreach work in two schools, continuing with our teaching and demonstrations at Pitstone and participating in more art fairs where there is a strong element of education, as well as entertainment. The next year is looking most promising.

Just remember that none of this could happen without an enthusiastic and hardworking committee, a number of talented and committed Guild officers and, above all, support from you.

Thank you very much.

Ros McGuirk



## Buckinghamshire Studio Pottery Collection



Marshall Colman



Every museum and art gallery has dozens of pieces of work in store, and some have most of their collection tucked away, but curators are always pleased to bring them out for anyone seriously interested. In June I went with the Craft Potters Association to Buckinghamshire County Council's store of studio pottery in Halton, where Mel Czapski, the Collections Officer for Art and Ceramics, introduced us to their collection.

In the picture you can see, at the top, a large lustre bowl by Sutton Taylor being admired by one of our party, and, following clockwise, a stoneware jar by Michael Cardew, an oblong dish by Ray Finch, an oval dish by William Newland, in the centre and out of focus a white vessel by Ruth Duckworth, a black jar by Delan Cookson and a conical bowl with painted decoration by Staite Murray. The county council have listed and illustrated the entire collection of over 300 pieces on their website.

The collection is difficult to find, in the middle of RAF Halton, a huge military camp, in an anonymous old school building unhelpfully labelled "Resource Centre". It wasn't until I was inside and warmly welcomed by Mel that I knew I was in the right place.

The collection dates from the 1960s when then curator, Christopher Gowing, decided to buy current studio pottery for display and for circulation to schools. In those days a bowl by Lucie Rie could be picked up for £3. An older member of our party said he was only earning £6 a week then – but a Rie pot now would cost £3,000. In the post-war decades it was common for local authorities to buy pottery to send round schools. The most active were the West Riding of Yorkshire, Leicestershire and Hertfordshire. Pottery was a particularly tactile art form that children could relate to directly and without prejudice or fear, and it was part of the school curriculum. At the London Institute of Education, where William Newland worked, all art teachers had to do pottery. Newland said that in the fifties and sixties he had a thousand students who wanted to pot. No longer, and it's not much taught in schools either. So the county collections now have a different function, as a resource for specialists and pottery aficionados.

School pottery has been squeezed by the national curriculum, cost cutting, health-and-safety and lack of knowledge among teachers. The decline of school pottery is part of a general trend away from materials-based teaching and it is consistent with the elevation of concept over material in the visual arts generally – which perhaps can't even be called "visual" any more. But these collections remain in out of the way places for anyone who wants to see them, with curators who know about them and who are enthusiastic about ceramics.

Copy deadline for the Winter edition of the newsletter is Sunday 6 December.

Please send articles accompanied with high resolution images to [lynn.mcgechie@btinternet.com](mailto:lynn.mcgechie@btinternet.com) and to [bipin@thedcpg.org.uk](mailto:bipin@thedcpg.org.uk)



# International Ceramics Festival Aberystwyth 2015



This year I decided to head for talks about the work of various notables from the world of ceramics. I tried to be present as much as I could so my notes may be a bit hazy. Apologies!

## Lisa Hammond

*"Each Lisa Hammond pot has a life of its own, its own sense of renewal.*

*They all offer their own pleasures, an intimacy that adds another dimension to the way we eat and drink, to the ceremonies of the everyday, to the space we occupy.*

*In short, to the way we live our lives."*

**David Whiting**

At the age of 17 Lisa knew she wanted to be a potter; she started the hard way. Nine months of slip trailing for Kenneth Clark failed to deter her. She followed with four years studying ceramics at Medway College.

At 23 Lisa started her first pottery in Greenwich, had her daughter and a trip to Australia, and then in 1995 moved to set up Maze Hill Pottery in the old ticket office to the station. This is where she runs her famed apprenticeships, evening and weekend courses and makes her own distinctive soda ware, all made to celebrate the art of making, presenting and eating good food.

In 2002 Lisa had a chance meeting with Takahashi, from Hokaido. Lisa took the opportunity of an invitation to work in Japan for three months and came back having learnt how to use a wood fired soda kiln. Raw glazing most of her work, Lisa glaze fires her Shino ware because *"it needs to suck up the glaze really fast"* and bisque enables her to do this. She loves the contrasts of black clay and white Shino.

## Report by Sue Lines

For the pyro maniacs among you, Lisa reduces at 1000 degrees for the rest of the firing. She adds soda between 1260 -1280 and then at 1300 reduces the fuel. (As a mere electric kiln firer I have no idea what this is all about but I wish I did!)

Lisa makes her ware the way she does because *"it succeeds in being strong, un-fussy and fluid and retains a suggestion of the soft plasticity of clay."* Functionally, it is strong, durable and dishwasher proof.

## Helen Walsh, Curator

Helen has had the immense job of setting up the new ceramic galleries at York Art Gallery; now called CoCA - Centre of Ceramic Art and she filled in the background to this immense development.

The 1877 'Art Exhibition Building' was decorated in part, but the money ran out so the result was not as intended. The building suffered 'Baedeker Bombing' which flattened the wooden half of the building that had been put up as a cheap option. Hence became gardens behind the Art Gallery.

In the 1890's, notables of the day such as Doctor Evelyn gave works to the York Gallery and from then onwards, a stream of well-known makers such as Hamada and Leach gave their work.

W.A. Ismay, a librarian in Wakefield, buying on a low budget collected obsessively between 1955 and 2001, documenting everything meticulously. He would travel third class by train and even sleep out in order to be at private views. He could be very persuasive with potters whose work he liked; taking their pots and paying for them when he could. His amazing gift of 2000 pots contributed to a head of steam.

Exalted gifts by Henry Rothschild followed. A major retrospective of Gordon Baldwin's work, 'Gordon Baldwin: Objects for a Landscape' in 2012 helped to decide Anthony Shaw to lend his major collection to York for fifteen years.

His collection alone consists of 100 Gillian Lowndes and 100 Gordon Baldwin's as starters and he had a superb 'totem' piece by Ewan Henderson, because I remember seeing it in the Fulham pocket handkerchief garden! York was becoming one of the most prestigious ceramics centres in the UK.

Back to the story of the York Art Gallery: In 2012 all the collections were removed with a big public drawing event. At this time, fortuitously a local builder left the Art Gallery the sum of £2.2 million, which contributed to the £8 million + estimate for the project.

Once emptied, a false ceiling that had been put in years before was removed and revealed greater height and an attractive barrel shaped ceiling with enough height to provide a lower floor which could use artificial lighting for sensitive paintings and an upper floor that could be designed to cater for Anthony Shaw's stipulation that his collection should have 'a domestic aesthetic' that relates back to the homely and unpretentious interior of the house in Fulham that previously housed his collection. It also allowed the Milner-White specialist collection of Japanese work was to be displayed in their correct historical periods.

A new gallery space was provided for changing exhibitions and Clare Twomey produced 10,000 bowls to represent the 10,000 hours some people estimate it takes





## International Ceramics Festival Continued



to develop throwing skills or any other complex skill. All very exciting display ideas but do they work? What will we think? With all that money, has York succeeded in providing for such disparate needs and found a unity? I can't wait to find out for myself.



### Alan Caiger-Smith A Life Time in Pottery

A delightful elderly gentleman, still full of the love of making that has filled his entire life. Growing up in the war years, Alan was fed up with washing up the wartime white utility pots, and highly affected by the few pieces of French coloured faience in his family home.

Hard for us these days, saturated with colour as we are to remember the lack of colour in the war years. So Alan's work was always going to be colourful, but it would also need to have a lightness of touch and pass his aesthetic criteria for the resulting tableware to be "convivial".

Alan wood fired because he found that he could get wonderful richness and an extended palette of colours with successive reductions. (Something about ferric oxide and manganese?!) When Pearl Insurance

commissioned Alan to make six large pots, he was asked to use lustres - I imagine to get a pearly appearance... because (real) lustre needs reduction, the wood-fired kiln gave him what he needed to complete the commission and the characteristic Caiger-Smith Lustre was born.

Alan said the forms he designed were intended to make the most of the decoration, which I gathered was the part of the process he most enjoyed. He spoke of how his tall goblets and smooth wide surfaced bowls were designed to take his sweeping brush strokes. It was actually Henry Rothschild who suggested Alan should use large brushes and it was his calligraphy and quasi calligraphic shapes that became the hall mark one recognises immediately.

### Jonathan Keep

I remember my first view of a 3D printer-designed pot several years ago... possibly at Aber. The outline was jerky, with skeletal outlines and looked as if it had been made from Lego. The technology has come a very long way as it can now produce a gun that can be discharged and which has caused the authorities to ban the publication of the design.

Jonathan describes himself as a potter and has made his living as one; developing the programmes that control 3D printing has become an interest since 1999 and one that now takes him to art colleges all over the world that are keen to offer this technology to their students.

The 3D printer uses an open source Dutch programme, 'Blender', using maths where the fingers would normally do the work. It sounds so deceptively easy. You set the desired length by breadth by height on

## Photographs supplied by André Hess and Jonathan Keep



*Photograph by Jonathan Dayman*

a programme creating a virtual mesh, even on a desk top computer.

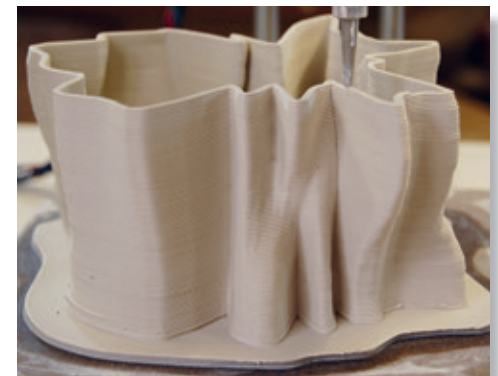
We had in front of us, a table top structure that provided a scaffold for the emerging vessel. Jonathan first rolled out a piece of clay onto a batt and positioned it where liquid clay (a mix similar to tooth paste) inside 'a toothpaste tube', was extruded through a nozzle building tiny coils following the messages from an arm linked to the computer. These coils remain visible when the work dries and at present, would need huge refinement to the programme to produce clean walls. An image would have shown this so much more easily!

I was interested to see how the 3D printer built detailed and complex shapes and cavities that would be difficult but not impossible with hand coiling. However, any comparison of benefits should be, not with coiling but with the sophisticated use potters make of moulds (as many pieces as you require) - with little finishing needed. The walls the extruded clay produces were very thin and revealed tiny outer contours due to the process. How much further will the 3D printer programme have to develop

for ceramicists to turn to this technology when multi part moulds exist and have been refined so that little finishing is required?

Side by side on the stage with Jonathan was Canadian, traditional potter, Tony Clennell who kept up an amusing banter with Jonathan, comparing and contrasting his traditional throwing with Jonathan's process and possible future technology.

I'm not a thrower so my attention was directed to Jonathan, but I was interested in some of the comments Tony made. He said that he started his career thinking he would be the second Isaac Button, but realised, as he said, there was more money to be made in the dining room than in the kitchen! *"What's the difference between a jug and a vase?"* he quipped. Answer: *"100 dollars."* The less functional an object is, the higher the price it commands. Is that right? Tony may have been king of the quick quip on the stage, but what he said about himself in the programme notes went straight to the difference between Tony's process and Jonathan's and why so many of us turn to the hand-made mug rather than the sheer sided perfect porcelain one at a fraction of the price.



## Jonathan Keep continued

*"My work is about a love of process. The marks of the maker and the fire are what I love to leave in the work. The biggest compliment I have ever received about my work is 'this doesn't look like pottery'. Whatever that means! I like to think my work could be enjoyed by the blind. Their hands would be able to examine and enjoy the work on a tactile and textural level."*

I also attended a talk by Liz Rothschild about her father Henry, who as an avid collector and patron started Primavera in Sloane Street. Liz had much to say that was of great interest so if you ever get the chance to hear her talk, do! I can't tell you more because sadly on that occasion, I forgot my notebook.

The Biennale was as ever stimulating and fun and I was sad when it came to an end. Two whole days of lively debate, great demonstrations and the food in the cafe, always good even with a long queue. Rotten Welsh weather most of the time. Always a mistake to compare with former years, I just love being immersed in this world.



## John Higgins and...

The remarkable and lasting memory of this showcase demonstration in the Great Hall was how different the approach and outcomes to the material of clay can be while at the same time using very similar methods. Both artists manipulate slab forms; both artists incorporate wheel-thrown and altered forms: yet the outcomes could not be more different or contrasting.

John Higgin's physical involvement and energy is tangible in the flourish of material and the spontaneous gestural surface decoration using slips, stains and oxides. The resulting works are bold expansive and a joyous celebration of the clay.



## Vineet Kacker Aberystwyth 2015

Paul Rowbottom  
Photographs supplied by André Hess, Vineet Kacker and Bipin



Vineet Kacker's work can be viewed as quiet and self-contained works yet powerful meditations on landscape and human intervention. He samples visual iconography from many Eastern traditions – in the same way as a musician might sample/'cut and paste' existing sounds. There are a multitude of narratives running through his work.

While Vineet came to the stage with a carefully managed and choreographed set of breath-taking skill, John had us on the edge of our seats with his palpable risk-taking, redolent of Miles Davis and his Zen dictum to bring 'beginners mind' to the bandstand. John's encounter with the material and processes of clay, as if for the first time, enables an openness to the moment and a sense of the act of creation itself.

This showcase demonstration was a clever juxtaposition by the organisers bringing together these two artists whose range of accomplishments are manifest, sharing similar methods and bringing an encyclopaedic range of forms, content and emotion simultaneously.







## Guild Summer Garden Party 5 September 2015

Ros McGuirk



Beccy Boxer kindly offered to host the garden party this year. This was a generous offer as she is about to leave the lovely old water mill where she has raised her family.

Sopwell Mill is on a stretch of the River Ver owned by the Gorhambury Estate, so there is no public access. It is thus little known despite lying within a mile of St Albans town centre and close to the watercress beds which are now a nature reserve. It requires little imagination to understand that this feels a rather special kind of place...

We were planning a barbeque at first, during that three day summer we had in the

middle of August. The change of plan was a really good decision, as the day turned out distinctly cool. So we retreated indoors and Beccy laid out all her tables in the room which had once been the loading area below the three mill stones. Only about twenty people turned up which was disappointing, but we had a grand time. Home-made cakes, tea, ale, and wine were consumed while Lynne Watkins and I supplied the music. Lynne plays the harp and getting the chance to play mandolin with her is a rare treat.

To finish off, Beccy gave us a tour of her studio and let us help ourselves to the pots she could not take with her in the move. We snuck off clutching her gorgeous big burnished pots, feeling quite overwhelmed, as though Christmas had come early.

Bet you wished you were there!



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Please send articles accompanied with high resolution images to

[lynne.mcgechie@btinternet.com](mailto:lynne.mcgechie@btinternet.com) and to [bipin@thedcpg.org.uk](mailto:bipin@thedcpg.org.uk)



## Childwickbury Art Fair 3-5 July 2015

Ros McGuirk  
Photography by Bipin

Childwickbury lies on the north side of St Albans on the Harpenden Road. It is the home of Christianne Kubrick, artist and widow of the film director, Stanley, and hosts a biannual arts fair. Modelled on Art in Action, it is now well established as a venue for high quality arts and crafts, with a strong ethos of local involvement. Demonstrations and workshops are a central element and the first day is dominated by visits from local schools.

I have been involved for a while as part of a jewellery group and others in the DCPG have taken part over the years, alongside even better known potters. When I made enquiries on the Guild's behalf I was delighted with the enthusiastic response. For the last few years they had been lacking a local group of potters to run workshops and they often had enquiries about pottery classes.

My only remaining major concern was whether I could run a group workshop for the same three days as Art in Clay, barely four miles away at Hatfield House, with at least half a dozen of our most active members already committed to the bigger show.



Another few were gone to Aberystwyth (which sounds like a euphemism of some sort!). Happily, that fear proved unfounded as over a dozen potters stepped forward to help, bringing with them a multitude of attributes and skills.

I was able to hand over the setting up and running of the selling exhibition to Vivienne, Judi and Les, who did an admirable job. The hand building project was run by Beccy and the throwing workshop was managed by Fiona and Mary Anne. We used all our three wheels, two of which are kept by members and the third came from the church hall.





## Childwickbury continued



Others came forward to assist. Colin was on standby all weekend to help with the finances and came over daily to train us on the new card machine. Kate Radford brought her stand up kick wheel for demonstration purposes, which created considerable interest especially when her two daughters took it over.

Everyone worked hard to make it a success and over all we achieved far more than we had anticipated, including a lot of satisfied customers, but our success brought further challenges.

We were not prepared for the moments at the weekend when the sellers were run off their feet. We had to send customers over to the main entrance to pay when our card machine could not get a signal. The throwers found it impossible to take all the breaks they needed when faced with a long queue at the wheels.

In group shows where you are selling for a dozen makers there has to be a lot of careful cataloguing or the accounting cannot work. Standardising the catalogue lists would have made this a little easier. Two or three pieces could not be accounted for at the end.

So, lessons were learned which I hope will come in good stead next time.

We grossed nearly £2,000 in sales and took over £800 in the workshops. After allowing for expenses we were able to send £300 to Ocumel, our chosen charity.

A big Thank You to all who came and took part. I hope, like me, you are looking forward to doing it all over again next July!



## Exhibitions



**Vivienne  
Rodwell-Davies**

### Blue & White: British Printed

**Ceramics V & A Museum** 31 Jan 2015 - 3 Jan 2016 Blue-and-white printed ceramics in Britain from the 1750s to present day, in both industrial and art production

### Barnaby Barford: The Tower of Babel

**V & A Museum** 8 Sep - 1 Nov 3,000 individual bone china buildings, each measuring 10 - 13cm tall, depicting a real London shop

### Irish Potters and Sculptors

#### Oliver Sears Gallery

6 Fitzroy Sq, London W1

### Three artists explore natural world

#### Cambridge Contemporary Art

3 - 25 Oct.

6 Trinity Street, Cambridge, CB2 1SU

[cambridgegallery.co.uk](http://cambridgegallery.co.uk)

### Handmade at Kew

#### International Craft 8 - 11 Oct

Designer-makers working across all disciplines including: ceramics, jewellery, fashion and textiles, glass, paper, furniture, metalwork, sculpture and interior accessories.

### Innovations in Ceramic Art

#### The Guildhall Cambridge

10 - 11 Oct

Market Square, Cambridge CB2 3QJ

[onlineceramics.com](http://onlineceramics.com)

### Jill Fanshaw Kato

#### The Barnet Collection 17 Oct

Demonstration 10am - 4pm.

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## DCPG Committee



### President John Higgins

32 Seaman Close, Park Street, St. Albans, Hertfordshire, UK, AL2 2NX 01727 874299

[johnceramics@aol.com](mailto:johnceramics@aol.com)

### Chairman and Programme Secretary

#### Ros McGuirk

13 The Park, St. Albans, Herts AL1 4RU

01727 834 326 [ros.mcguirk@gmail.com](mailto:ros.mcguirk@gmail.com)

### Secretary Mary Anne Bonney

56 Clarence Road, St. Albans, Herts AL1 4NG. 01727 860 787

[mabonney@btinternet.com](mailto:mabonney@btinternet.com)

### Treasurer Colin Hazelwood

14 Butterfield Road, Wheathampstead, Herts, AL4 8PU. 01582 833146

[woodhazel@waitrose.com](mailto:woodhazel@waitrose.com)

### Deputy Treasurer

Beccy Boxer: 07925 290040

[rebeccaboxer@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:rebeccaboxer@hotmail.co.uk)

Trustee Jackie Harrop: 07795464131

[jackieharrop1@gmail.com](mailto:jackieharrop1@gmail.com)

### Membership Secretary Audrey Hammett

Tel. 01923 265816

[audreyhammett1@btinternet.com](mailto:audreyhammett1@btinternet.com)

### Potter's Open Day Organiser John Higgins

### Exhibitions Organisers Audrey Hammett

[audreyhammett1@btinternet.com](mailto:audreyhammett1@btinternet.com)

### Judi Tribe: [judi.tribe@btinternet.com](mailto:judi.tribe@btinternet.com)

### Workshop Organiser Emily Good

[emilyhbgood@googlemail.com](mailto:emilyhbgood@googlemail.com)

### Property Manager Tony Baxter

[tonymbaxter@talktalk.net](mailto:tonymbaxter@talktalk.net)

### Webmaster and technical adviser John Powell

2 Abbots Place, Chesham, Bucks HP5 3HL

01494 774 398 [john@thedcpg.org.uk](mailto:john@thedcpg.org.uk)

### Pitstone Raku Organiser Ruby Sharp

01494 728 364 [ruby@rubyssharp pottery.co.uk](mailto:ruby@rubyssharp pottery.co.uk)

### Marketing Fiona Booy: 07818 060826

[fi.booy@stobbsfamily.com](mailto:fi.booy@stobbsfamily.com)

### Library and Exhibitions Sue Lines

78 Bedford Road, Letchworth, Herts SG6 4DU

[sue.lines@ntlworld.com](mailto:sue.lines@ntlworld.com)

### Newsletter Editor Lynne McGeachie

[lynne.mcgeachie@btopenworld.com](mailto:lynne.mcgeachie@btopenworld.com)

### Newsletter Design, Production and Advertising

Bipin: [bipin@thedcpg.org.uk](mailto:bipin@thedcpg.org.uk)

Newsletter Distributor Judi Tribe

Production Assistant and Illustrator Vivienne Rodwell-Davies

[viviennerodwell@msn.com](mailto:viviennerodwell@msn.com)

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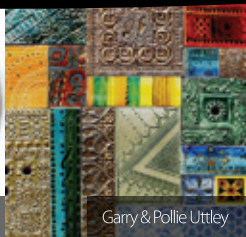
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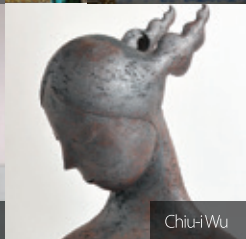
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