



www.thedcpg.org.uk

Art in Clay Hatfield
Arthur Ball
Boxmoor Wood Firing
Guild Annual Exhibition
Kevin Millward part 2
Sandringham School
Soda Firing

Issue 22 Autumn 2016

£2



Arthur Ball 1917-2016

M & K SPARROW

Kiln Services
Kilns Supplied
Installed • Repaired
Serviced • Safety Checked

Elements and Controls

Commercial & Domestic
Schools • Colleges
Universities • Hospitals

M & K SPARROW
6 Frankland Road
Croxley Green
Rickmansworth
Hertfordshire, WD3 3AU
Tel/Fax: 01923 775059
Mob: 07836 361868

mksparrow@talktalk.net

Walter Brayford's
Acme Batt Co.

Specialist in manufacture and supply of kiln furniture to studio potters, hobby potters, colleges and schools.

- No minimum order
- Fast, friendly and efficient service
- Large stock of best quality refractories
- Immediate collection
- Overnight delivery if required
- Batts cut to any size, shape and thickness, perforated or plain
- Kiln shelves, props, tile cranks, stilts, pins, cements, batt washes etc

Contact Walter Brayford
Tel: 01782 505 405
Mobile: 07817 040971
email: walter@claylake.com

For the Beginner & Expert
In Ceramics & Pottery

POTTERYCRAFTS LIMITED

NEW AUTUMN OFFERS

ITEMS UNDER £5
ITEMS UNDER £10
ITEMS UNDER £20
ITEMS UNDER £50

FREE DELIVERY ON ORDERS OVER £100

FREE DELIVERY ON ALL KILNS

Tel: 01782 745000 Fax: 01782 746000
WWW.POTTERYCRAFTS.CO.UK sales@potterycrafts.co.uk

Respoise • Refuse • Front Loading • Pigment • Top Loading



Notes from the Chair Ros McGuirk



It has been a lovely long summer and a busy one for the potters. In fact we seem to have had more participation from members at all our events, from firings to have-a-go and art fairs and exhibitions. The wood firing in June, led by Ben Brierley, went very well. He is an experienced wood firer and an excellent teacher and we had good results from the kiln. Many thanks to Paul Rowbottom and Emily Good for their considerable preparation and organisation. We are on the search for a good supply of wood for the next one. If you know of a good regular source of timber, do let Paul and Emily know.

At Childwickbury art fair we were again one of the main attractions with good sales and lots of customers for the have-a-go. We split the income from the workshops and sent £225 to the 'Adopt a Potter' charity. This year we also took on the school parties who come on the Friday. These clay "experiences" turned out most successfully thanks to the hard working throwers who had barely five minutes to give each child a "go", and also to Beccy who demonstrated coiling to each of the four groups.

The Sandringham School ceramics day was well attended by our volunteers who helped the whole of year one to make the shields they had designed for their house groups. We have yet to see the finished results, but they looked most impressive when we last saw them. We also ran have-a-go with three of our wheels.

The long awaited soda firing in mid-August proved so popular, particularly with newer members that the applicants were divided into two groups with one firing as planned and a second group firing in October. The first group was blessed with the most perfect weather, warm and dry with a gentle breeze. On a site that is prone to wind, this was a dream. The kiln responded well on the Sunday and not only did we get up to temperature sooner than we thought,

but it seems we used noticeably less gas than usual. The pots came out well fired with plenty of interesting soda effects. Best of all, everyone enjoyed being together and getting stuck in. As every firing is different, we look forward to the October firing with relish!

Lastly, the Annual Exhibition is on as I write. The pots looked wonderful within the old medieval barn, especially in the evening by the soft lighting provided, strung up from ancient beams. And what a show, well done all. Our exhibition organisers, Audrey and Judi and their team of Jackie, Lynne and Nigel worked really hard to put it all together, even ensuring there was a car parking attendant to help with traffic flow in the narrow driveway. They get a huge round of applause on behalf of everyone involved.

The committee are planning more interesting activities for the coming season. John has got POD sorted – it will be fantastic. Put 4th March 2017 in your diary. Emily has a museum trip in mind and is looking out for workshops to organise. I am still working on the programme (sincere apologies) but it may well be done by the time you read this. The AGM comes next, with Steve Woodhead and all your teapots, it will be lively. And then there is the Conker Festival, so watch your emails as we will need helpers.

There are plenty of opportunities to join in so do not hesitate to offer up your ideas and do not be shy to offer to help. You do not need to be on the committee to help run our events. We are always appreciative of inputs from members outside the committee, and right now would love to hear from you if you have IT skills. Also, Judi wants to hand over her role running exhibitions after next year, I would like to help someone else to take on the programme, and Colin is looking for an understudy. Which job do you fancy?



How to glaze

Always brush your pots before glazing to remove any dust. Glaze will be affected by dust and handling, especially if any grease from hands is left on the pots. You could also wear latex gloves to handle pots when glazing.

When glazing pots it is normal to alter the consistency of the glaze during the session according to the porosity and size of the pots:

- Use your tongue to test how porous your pots are and separate them into lower and higher groups. The pull on the tongue is the first indication. You can memorise the pull on your tongue and when something changes you will notice a difference.

- Similarly, the size of the ware must be taken into account. A mug can be glazed very quickly by dipping and pouring, as it is small. It simply takes longer to pour glaze in and out of a larger item such as a jug, and it will absorb more glaze in that time.

Pots should be segregated on a board ready for glazing from more porous to less

porous and consideration should be given to:

1. Porosity of wear, which determines how much glaze goes on to the pot.
2. The type of glaze and how it is set up.
3. The size of the pot.

The less porous and smaller pots will need slightly thicker glaze, so start the glazing session with those. Then dilute the glaze as you get to the larger and more porous pots.

Kevin explained that porosity is not essential in order to apply glazes, but you need to know what to add to the glaze mix. To prove this he poured glaze over a finished glazed pot, and, impressively, it stayed on the pot!

How to dip a mug into glaze

Kevin demonstrated how to dip a mug to glaze the inside and outside at the same time

1. Hold the mug between two fingers and thumb.
2. Dip the mug to the base of the pot
3. Bring the pot out of the glaze and as you do this, flick the pot upwards. This will create a vacuum and the glaze will be pushed into the pot, hopefully glazing the inside completely.
4. To clean off the bottom of the pot you can use a flat sponge called a Bench Sponge. This type of sponge is more rigid than a normal sponge and gives a cleaner finish when wiping off glaze.

To avoid drips and finger marks when glazing a pot, Calcium Chloride or Magnesium Sulphate (Epsom Salts) can be added to the glaze bucket. This thickens the glaze but does not affect the pint weight. It slows down the application of the glaze and allows you to pull your fingers away from the pot without leaving finger marks.

Firing, Heat-work and Porosity

Whilst in the process of making, you need to think about how you are going to glaze the pot. Firing, heat work and porosity are critical factors in how a glaze will adhere to a pot. To measure the heat, use a pyrometer, a thermocouple and a cone together, to get an accurate measurement of how much heat work is going on inside the kiln. You can fire at a lower temperature for a longer time and achieve the same result as firing to a higher temperature for a shorter time. Kevin gave the following analogy to explain:

Just because the water is boiling does not mean the potatoes are cooked. It is the length of time the potatoes are in the boiling water that means the potatoes are cooked. The longer you leave them in the more they cook.

The maturing point of the body is one factor and the maturing point of the glaze is another factor. For example, the body maturing point of white earthenware is between 1100 and 1140 but the maturing point of the glaze might be 1050, so porosity is lost for the glaze to stick to the pot.

It was Josiah Wedgwood who defined the principle of 'heat work'. He pioneered the use of Buller's rings, which are still used today to give an accurate picture of the temperatures achieved in different parts of the kiln. Wedgwood introduced 'biscuit firing' to vitrify the pots followed by a glaze firing at a lower temperature. Kevin reminded us that lower-fired pots tend still to be porous and this may need to be counteracted by glazing the base. Firing to stoneware temperatures will make the pots non-porous.

The Committee met on Tuesday 6th September, in time to hear that arrangements for the Kingsbury Barn exhibition in St Albans were on track, more of which elsewhere in the Newsletter.

We now have new Guild flyers for circulation at events or to potter friends. Please ask Ros for a supply.

Arrangements for the AGM were discussed, particularly a list of roles which we would like to fill: Treasurer's understudy, Vice-chair, support on the technical side of marketing, trainee Programme Organiser, Pot crawl and Visits organiser.

The exhibition team is also likely to have a vacancy. If you would like to take a more active part in your Guild, please let one of the Committee know.

DCPG finances are in good health, thanks largely to the success of POD 2016.

An equally starry line up is planned for 2017: Felicity Aylieff will talk, Christopher Taylor and Walter Keeler will demonstrate. Put 4th March 2017 in your diaries now if you have not already done so!

Please also note a slight change to Friday meeting times. You are welcome to come to the hall at 7.30 pm to catch up with other members before the presentation starts at 8 pm. We hope to add raku firings to the list of activities for next year along with visits, possible destinations being the Bucks Museum and Stoke. We are also planning some workshops. Keep an eye on your emails for further information.

The next committee meeting is on 15th November.

Copy deadline for the Winter edition of the newsletter is Sunday 11 December. Please send articles and high resolution images to **Bipin** at bipin@thedcpg.org.uk and also to **Helen Whitbread** at dcpgnewsletter2@gmail.com

Arthur Ball, born in 1917, had a life well lived. He sat on the original committee which helped form the NHS. He was involved with the International Brigade and was one of the last remaining holders of the Burma Star having served with the Fleet Air arm in the Pacific and Far East. As an engineer he worked for Dehavilland on the proto-types for the Mosquito and Comet.

He could regale you with stories of growing up in Grimsby: his family's involvement in fishing the North Sea; his father's adventures as the Chief Pilot on the Humber; and losing track of time when returning home a week late after a 2 week fly-fishing trip to the Republic of Ireland, not forgetting legendary tales of his safe-blowing exploits as a locksmith in peacetime.

And somewhere, recorded in his note books, are his famous recipes for Victoria Sponge and Bakewell tart! Here is Arthur's own 'Obituary', published in the DCPG Newsletter when he was 80.

Russia 1917, seizure of power by Lenin and his Bolsheviks. Grimsby, 1917, Arthur Ball was born at a very early age. The Bolsheviks lost their revolution; I am still revolting.

When Mervyn and Sylvia came to visit my pottery, Mervyn asked that I review a book and, additionally, let him have a 'Profile' of me.

It sounded very easy at the time but I have now found its all about me and being a very modest bloke its embarrassing. The easy way put was to ask my children what I should tell you.

"Remember dad its a profile; a sideways glance, not an autobiography". Don't tell them the 'no boots and shoes' routine, the



tar which burned your feet, going to school or about your sisters' knickers. War stories are certainly out: no kami-kazi dive bombers and bobbing up and down in the ocean blue.

1923 was, I am told, the hardest year in the history of British industry. Ships were rusting away in the Humber by the dozen. This was the year I joined 48 other children with a cloth drawstring bag around my neck containing my 'dinner' - two slices of bread and dripping with lots of salt; it was great and I was a very happy boy.

Happier still when the General Strike came in 1926. I enjoyed the shouting and pushing, collecting coal from the seashore and fishing in our trout stream. Playing games which are no longer seen: marbles, faggots and leapfrog until it was too dark to see. These were desperately poor days, but I remember them with happy thoughts.

A new and more terrifying time came when at 13¾ years, I 'gained' an apprenticeship (slave) in the shipyard where I learned a 'trade' (pushed a handcart and carried tools) but, more importantly, I learned that life is not fair. Some boys went to work, to sea, some hung about round the corners (that is what I wanted to do). Others went to grammar schools even though they were no brighter than we urchins, some very quickly to Borstal and the rest in the Army.

Eventually the big war came which was great for many young men who had been placed on the scrap heap. Eventually, the

Navy said they could not manage to fight the Japanese without me - well, they didn't exactly say that, but I understood.

Pacific ocean; a carrier; engine room artificer; Okinawa and no pots and a very big bomb saw me homeward bound a year after the street parties were over and all the heroes had gone back to work.

Setting up home with Margaret (who I still miss greatly) and learning that we had both changed but happily had grown closer together in so many ways. Two children, ten years on the housing list, food rationing and a shortage of dosh made us enjoy the many crafts we shared. Margaret wove, painted, sculpted, bronze cast, cooked and scrubbed. For a living, I messed about with safes and spent the next 40 years learning 'woodwork'.

Pottery came late into the frame and then only because the country had a surfeit of my bedside tables and toothbrush racks. Surely, I thought, a big bag of clay could be recycled and would be far cheaper than planks of oak which were prone to expensive 'off-cuts'.

Dropped 'woodwork' and joined the Art school "Ceramics for beginners". It was like playing mud pies again and I enjoyed that.

Margaret and I decided that at 65 we would spend our savings on building a Studio - D.I.Y. you understand.

Two thousand bricks, windows, roof tiles, tons of sand, big foundation holes and MOST importantly HOT running water.

The pottery/weaving 'Studio' was now in commission but Margaret found that clay and weaving looms were not compatible and I had it all to myself - she took the house!

Cheaper than woodwork, did I say? Two electric kilns, one gas kiln, a wheel, damp cupboards, racking and all the small tools;

sieves, dustbins full of glazes, with all the glaze materials, brushes, sponges and "most important", said Mick Casson, a pug mill. It cost a fortune.

Twenty-five years have gone by since the beginners' class are making more than sixty years of evening classes, summer schools, combined with working at home in my studio, which has now become a 'workshop'.

In the meantime Maurice Clark, an architect and member of the Guild, asked me to make tiles for the Watford Mosque; its a long story, it did get done but after much heartache and joy at the end.

This year I have given up pottery classes in favour of gourmet cooking and making a commemorative stained glass window along with pots at home.

All this said, I still have hopes that the next time Linda goes to David Frith's summer school, she will take me.





Mark Compton, Angela Bowen, Chris Stent, Ros McGuirk, Judi Tribe, Mary Anne Bonney, Colin Hazelwood and Helen Whitbread

Day One started about 10 am, unloading the equipment and preparing everything we were going to need for the weekend. Colin and Mark had already checked and linked up the four gas cylinders, plus one in reserve in case we started to run low.

Four of us were completely new to soda firing and propane gas, though we had been involved with the wood firing at Boxmoor. It was therefore very much the teachers and the taught! The idea was that other Guild members would become proficient, and confident enough, to fire the soda kiln in future.

Ros had expertly collected together the glazes we would need and the glazing equipment you would normally find in a ceramics studio. The glazes - various soda slips, shino and celadon glazes - were all made ready for use. Ros used a wide brush for applying slips to the outside of her pots and a smaller, more refined, brush for applying slip to edges and rims. Others

preferred a more robust approach, dipping or pouring. Mark had brought some of his mugs for re-firing and had applied wood ash to the top surface of his larger pots. We used ordinary glazes on the insides of the pots (shinos, celadons) as the soda vapour would not reach there. Colin chose to use no glazes at all and relied on the soda and textural surface of his pots to get an interesting result.

The kiln would be fired to about 1220°C before the soda was squirted in. We would also be putting in salt and we had a Gail Nichols recipe for applying a soda paste, but unfortunately were unable to use this on the day.

Northfields is the home of Dorley and Murray Fieldhouse and the kiln site is in the grounds. We were surrounded by trees and the sun shone.

We got to work. Mark and Chris opened up the front of the kiln, carefully laying the bricks in the order they are removed. The kiln was last fired about 3 years ago and the inside was mottled with soda from previous firings. Mark removed some of the larger conglomerations to stop it melting and dripping onto the pots - referred to as 'porridge'! As the tallest, Chris was delegated to remove the frying pan from the top of the chimney, used to keep unwanted inhabitants out of the kiln.

The lower half of the kiln was made up of hard or heavy bricks. These were not affected by the salt, but took longer to heat up and were therefore more expensive to fire (depending on the fuel source).

The upper bricks were HTIs - High Temperature Insulators. These were damaged by the firing process, though less so with soda than with salt.

Colin checked the gas cylinders and prepared the burners for use. The gas comes from all 4 cylinders, to prevent any loss of time and temperature should one become empty. The pressure was controlled through a valve on the pipe. The pipe then split in two - one to the front of the kiln and one to the back, in opposite corners.

There was a damper in the back of the kiln - an old kiln shelf inside the flue, used to pump air in by slowly removing and pushing back in. This caused turbulence inside and helped move the soda fumes around. It was also key to getting the air/gas mix right for maximising combustion, as we discovered later!

The pots on the outside of the stack would get more soda than those inside. Some of the slips required only a little soda to make them change, others more. The kiln shelves were batt washed and the process of loading begun. Angela and Judi prepared 'wadding', 50% alumina/50% china clay, to stand the pots on and to separate lids from pots where necessary. At the front were placed the cones



(6,8,9,10) and 5 draw rings dipped in slip.

The double-skinned front door was rebuilt leaving space for the thermocouple and viewing hole (brick 15). We tested the burners and checked the cut out mechanism. The kiln was heated for about 30 minutes, to make sure the equipment was working and to dry out the pots.

We finished about 6.30 pm.

At 7 am on the Sunday morning the burners were lit in earnest. Colin and Mark drew the short straw and started the early shift.

A graph was maintained showing the pressure in psi, the time and the temperature. The temperature had risen very quickly to begin with, 500°C in an hour. It had then maintained a steadyish rise of about 100°C an hour. It was important to make the most efficient use of our expensive fuel.

To do this we had to balance the propane gas pressure and the air intake so that the propane had just the right amount of oxygen to achieve complete combustion. Air was drawn in at the venturies in the burner body and at the burner ports in the kiln wall. If necessary more air could be drawn in by removing a brick low down in the kiln wall.

The damper in the chimney could also have an effect by throttling the rate of throughput. Although optimal combustion could be controlled by measuring the difference between the oxygen content of the chimney and that of the surrounding air, previous attempts to do this had been tried but failed. So a bit of trial and error was used to balance the gas/oxygen intake.

We were kept company by a buzzard flying overhead and Dorley's four resident brown and white sheep which, although skittish, were incredibly nosy!

Soda Firing **Continued**

A lovely picnic lunch of roast chicken and salad rounded off by Ros's homemade rhubarb crumble and washed down with Angela's elder flower sparkling wine, revived spirits somewhat for the afternoon shift!

Despite the warm day, the gas cylinders formed ice on the outside. The liquid gas drew in heat from the outside as it formed into gas within the cylinder. This showed where the level of liquid gas was within the cylinder.

At 1pm the kiln reached 1000°C. The damper was pushed in to reduce airflow and the temperature continued to climb. But the temperature gain stopped at around 1160°C. After several attempts to get it going again, we finally checked the cones. Cone 8 was down, cone 9 had started to bend, which indicated a temperature of over 1250°C. The team decided to start preparing to put in the soda. It was c5 pm.

Sodium bicarbonate was dissolved in boiling water on a primer stove. This was sieved as it was poured into a spray bottle. The soda solution was sprayed through the gap and into the kiln. The first delivery went in satisfactorily and was followed by 50g of salt delivered via an angle bracket. This process was repeated at the rear of the kiln.

Unfortunately we started having problems with the bottles. It became harder to get them to spray and some started to melt as they were too near the kiln. We kept adding soda and salt for about 2 hours until c2kg of soda and 800g of salt had been put into the kiln. The burners were kept on throughout this process and the temperature continued to climb.

At 6pm the first draw ring removed showed very little sheen and not much colour.

The other draw rings were pulled out at 7pm and this time there was more sheen and some darkening where blue or green slip had been used.

The burners were maintained until about 7.45pm, at which point everything was switched off. The kiln was then 'crash cooled' to help improve the gloss finish. Subsequently the kiln was sealed up and we left about 8.30pm.

We opened the kiln on Wednesday 17 August. Most were reasonably satisfied with their results - a range of orange colours, shiny surfaces and a little of the orange peel effect so prized by salt firers!



Get to know DCPG Potters: Jackie Harrop



teapots and I WILL do it soon....

Also want to do smoke/wood firing and am excited to be involved with the Boxmoor firing.

How do you decorate your pots and what glazes do you like?

I occasionally use sgraffito but mainly dipped, sprayed, poured or brushed glazes. I like Celadon and other reduction glazes, and honey glaze.

How are your pots fired?

Electric kiln.

How has your work developed over time?

Getting better at turning, throwing slightly less heavy, taller; and making lidded pots and teapots which necessitate a mixture of techniques.

Who are your favourite potters and why?

I love Ruth King's pots, beautiful simplicity but technically brilliant. Willy Van Bussel's pots - delicate, clean with vibrant colours, precise and simply elegant.

Do you have any favourite pots?

I made a tall slab pot when I was 18 which was the first to turn out exactly as I had envisaged - a rarity. It was inspired by algae on a wall and I textured the surface with a piece of stone which I still have. I used iron oxide for brown on the "wall" and copper carbonate for green on the "petals". It has been used as a vase, umbrella stand and made many house-moves on the passenger seat of my car (as befits the emotion I attach to it!)

Another potter?

Jitka Palmer's vase decorated at this year's Potters Open Day. Seeing Jitka decorate this pot was amazing and it signifies the POD which I worked with John and Fiona to organise.



Where do you do your potting?

Small studio in my garden.

Have you had any formal training?

Where and when? Teachers?

I have been to Harrow College evening classes for the last 3/4 years using their kiln and glazes prior to getting my own.

What is your favourite clay? Why?

White stoneware, because it is versatile for throwing and forms a nice surface base for earthenware or stoneware glazes. I also like throwing with grogged clay but only do so infrequently because of the effect on my hands.

How do you construct your pots?

Mainly throwing, but occasionally slab-ware or small sculptures.

What are your inspirations?

Exhibitions, other people's work, Japanese pottery (I visited Mashiko and also had a throwing class in Tokyo).

Raku work. I have a house in France and there are some inspirational potters in the area, eg Jean-Paul Azais.

I would like to throw more finely, taller, bigger and to work with porcelain. Hovering on doing a course in Amsterdam run by Willy Van Bussel and also want to make to make porcelain



2016 Annual Exhibition Kingsbury Barn, St Albans

by Audrey Hammett, Judi Tribe and Jackie Harrop



Kingsbury Barn provided a stunning setting for this year's Exhibition and a fortunate opportunity to coincide not only with Herts Open Studios, but also with the national Heritage celebrations taking place in St Albans.

We had a steady stream of visitors throughout the 3 days, even the poor weather on Saturday didn't dampen enthusiasm for the event. The turnout for Meet the Potters, Have-a-go and the pottery demonstrations exceeded expectations, overcoming pre-event concerns about ensuring sufficient awareness and attendance. Everyone agreed the barn provided a lovely environment to display work which, with some supplementary lighting, created a very welcoming and attractive exhibition space.

The range and standard of work from our 26 Guild members attracted many

complimentary comments and the Exhibition had a professional feel which was noted in the visitor book, a busy and social ambience throughout and an excellent sales record.

The Friday social was well attended and provided a relaxed opportunity for Guild members to enjoy their Exhibition. We also invited the local primary school to 'Have a go' on the Friday, which contributed to the important work of promoting pottery in the community, as well as a great deal of enjoyment for our young audience. They particularly enjoyed encouraging John Higgins to throw a pot as fast as he could!

Behind the scenes the Exhibition team, Jackie, Audrey and Judi, worked extremely hard to ensure the event ran smoothly. The time and effort required to achieve this level of success should not be underestimated!

Combining the Exhibition with demonstrations, Have a go and the Guild social event was a feat of organisation.

I'm sure all the Exhibitors will agree that they did a fantastic job and are to be congratulated. Many thanks also to the extra helpers who gave their time and energy to the event. The Team are keen to have more volunteers for next year's Exhibition and are ready to pass on their hard-won knowledge and expertise!

We must also thank the Barn owners, who were exceptionally supportive and have issued an invitation for us to come again. I don't think we will need much persuading!



DCPG Down draft wood fired kiln

Ben Brierley



Initially the kiln was pre warmed with propane.

- Small fire lit about 8am in one fire box. All fire mouth bricks in, apart from the bottom for small fire. Pyrometer read 120°C at 8.30
- 2nd fire box lit with small fire approx. 8.45
- Fires were gently built maintained under the upper fire bars. Stoking alternate fireboxes. No dark smoke visible from the chimney on stokes.
- Stoking moved to upper fire bars around 11am, wood also continued to be stoked under the fire bars to maintain the ash pit which was occasionally levelled to help the flow of air. No coals were removed.
- Two new air inlets were created in between the lower and upper fire bars; this was to ensure a good flow of air to the combusting wood. These were mainly kept in until around 1000°C and then opened as the coal pit maintained itself through stoking onto the upper fire bars; they were kept open for the duration of the firing.
- Kiln climbed easily till around 850°C then stuck for a while Saturday pm, due to firing with damp wood.
- Moved onto dryer wood maintaining stoking pattern if possible (sometimes difficult due to variations in size and moisture content of wood), persist to get a rhythm.
- Began stoking slightly larger amounts of fuel to produce dark smoke putting kiln into reduction.
- Kiln also stalled at around 1060 for a while again due to wet wood.
- Second pile of wood much better and the stoking pattern was maintained till finish with a steady climb.

- The kiln was kept in a cycle of reduction, heavier when stoked and re-stoked at the point of oxidation. The graph shows a pretty steady climb and clearly shows where the quality of the wood suppressed this.

Observations

- Give yourselves some point of reference for stoking. This could be dark smoke from the chimney or smoke/flame coming out of one of the spy holes etc.

Pattern

- Stoke firebox- flame visible from spy hole as wood ignites and burns (the kiln is in reduction), when the flame recedes back into the kiln, stoke again in alternate firebox.
- Dry wood! This is really important as most of the wood's energy will be lost converting water to steam not firing the work.
- Kiln site management is great. It was kept good and clean throughout.
- Risk assessment and Health and Safety provision was good.
- Body colour is generated in the reduction cycle which begins at around 1000°C, this is when iron in the body can be pulled out to the surface of the clay creating flashed colour.
- Glaze reduction begins when the glazes start to become molten, around 1220°C for most stoneware glazes, so, maintaining a good reduction gives good colour to celadon and tenmoku glazes.
- The firing teams worked well and exchange of information about the stage of firing was good at change over.
- I think that if a good supply of dry wood is to hand, the kiln should probably fire to stoneware in 12-18 hours.
- Good luck with the next one :-)

Wood Firing Glazes

Helen Whitbread



Celadon originated in China but production later spread to other regions in Asia, such as Japan, Korea and Thailand. Finer pieces are in porcelain, but both the colour and the glaze can be produced in earthenware.

The Celadon colour is classically produced by firing a glaze containing a little iron oxide at a high temperature in a reducing kiln. The materials must be refined, as other chemicals can alter the colour completely. Too little iron oxide causes a blue colour, too much olive and finally black. The right amount is between 0.75% and 2.5%.

The most famous shades range from a very pale green to a deep intense green, intended to mimic the shades of jade.



Shino glazes tend to range in colour from milky white to orange, sometimes with charcoal grey spotting. They are characterized by the use of soda ash and by a high ratio of alumina to silica. Under certain firing conditions, the soda ash

causes carbon to be trapped in the glaze, creating the characteristic grey spots or patches on the glaze surface.

Due to Shino glazes' low fluxing temperatures, they should be applied before any other glazes. If Shinos are applied on top of most glazes, the off-gassing from the under glaze will bubble through the Shino, resulting in undesirable pitting and other defects.

Tenmoku is made of feldspar, limestone and iron oxide. The more quickly a piece is cooled, the blacker the glaze will be. Tenmokus is known for its variability. During heating and cooling, several factors can influence the formation of iron crystals within the glaze.

A long firing process and a clay body which is also heavily coloured with iron will increase the opportunity for iron from the clay to be drawn into the glaze. While the glaze is molten, iron can migrate within the glaze to form surface crystals, as in the "oil spot" glaze, or remain in solution deeper within the glaze for a rich glossy colour.



Sandringham School POD payback day

Fiona Booy

It was an excellent morning! Around 50 secondary school children immersed in clay as part of the Annual Arts week celebrations.

The DCPG ran the throwing event - four wheels whirled away happily with kids being delighted by their first encounters with throwing. John Higgins provided the leading demonstrations.

Whilst not throwing, the students were involved in creating clay shields in terracotta

& white slip. These were to encapsulate their School House Groups: Darwin, Seacole, Boudicca, Van Gogh, Erikson and Knight.

The event went very well with students and teachers and Guild members very pleased with the outcome.

Attending: Jackie Harrop, Judi Tribe, Fiona Booy, Mary Anne Bonney, Ros McGuirk, John Higgins.

Boxmoor kiln firing experience

Jackie Harrop



When the Guild first asked for volunteers to help with the wood firing, I didn't even know where the Boxmoor Trust was!

I knew there had been several attempts to clear the site and make it safe, so as a Trustee, I felt I should go along and see for myself. After a couple of weekend forays with Emily Good, Judi Tribe, Paul Rowbottom, Jean and others involving some hard manual labour building the wood stores, making

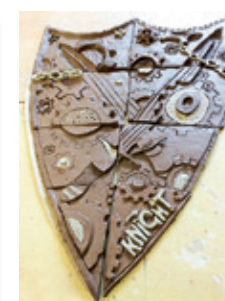
inventories of the glaze store, and moving, sorting and cutting wood, I looked forward to seeing the kiln itself in action. Opening it was a revelation, a bit like opening an Egyptian tomb, but without the mummy!

The glazing day at West Herts started to build the excitement, with a huge range of pieces due to go to the firing. Packing it was a joy. When we saw the volume of pieces, we were anxious about whether they would all fit, and how we would decide which ones were in or out, but luckily everything fitted in and Paul even put a call out for extra pots to fill it. Paul showed Mary Anne and I how to make wadding to prevent pots sticking to the kiln shelves and which pots were likely to have glazes running close to the base, or with glaze underneath.

We were not 100% successful and we had a couple where drips fixed the base to the shelf, but nearly all were rescuable.

Sadly due to holidays, I missed the grand opening and was not there for the actual firing, but it was a great experience to be part of the group process and interesting to learn how the whole thing works.

I was delighted with most of the pots I fired and will definitely do it again. I am signed up for the soda firing in October and looking forward to learning yet another glazing technique!



DCPG at Art In Clay Hatfield

Bipin



*Back row standing: Doug Jones, Richard Ballantyne, Vivienne Rodwell-Davies, John Higgins, Judi Tribe, Bipin, Marshall Colman, Laurie Keck and Stephen Fitzwilliam.
Front row seated: Fiona Booy, Helen Halliday, Jenny Birch, Sylvia Fitzwilliam, Jackie Harrop, Donice Sousa and Danielle Bunker.*

This year the Guild was very strongly represented at Art In Clay, Hatfield. There were individual stands in the main marquees by Doug Jones, John Higgins, Marshall Colman, Vivienne Rodwell-Davies, the Fitzwilliam Family and West Herts College as well as stands in the 'Throw-a-pot' marquee by Richard Ballantyne, Carol Read and Bipin.

Other Guild members worked tirelessly as 'helpers' including Fiona Booy, Judi Tribe, Danielle Bunker and Jackie Harrop.



Setting up un petit studio in France Jackie Harrop

My little garden studio in St Albans has been a delight to me for the last couple of years. I get withdrawal symptoms when I can't "potter about" there when we go to our house near Ceret in southern France. There are lots of studio potters there - a raku artist, wood firing and exhibiting potters.

Although the village potter, Phillipe Gallo, has let me use his wheel from time to time, I was itching to have my own facilities. Finally I bit the bullet and bought a Shimpo table top wheel with a foot pedal (grossly expensive) and packed a bag each of porcelain and stoneware clay and a box of tools into the car. My husband was concerned that with heightened security at Dover/Calais, he might have to convince the customs officers the clay wasn't Semtex, however we got through that ok!

I spent a happy couple of weeks beginning to play with porcelain, but with temperatures of high 30's drying out was both a bonus and a hindrance. The village potter kindly agreed



to let me put my pots in his kiln and, amazingly, the village brick factory (Briquetterie) owner agreed to bisque fire my little sculptures on the understanding that when I've fired a few, he gets to choose one for himself!

The next step after buying shelving, and a few other pieces of equipment, was to talk to a local builder about creating a studio space with a sink and bench. This will be on a little veranda with a car port to give some more shade. A word of caution to potential Shimpo purchasers: after a second attempt to use the wheel, having tried to adjust the stiffness of the foot pedal, it wouldn't work, so we had to disassemble it completely and reconstruct. Hopefully it will still be working when I get back!

Also, I was able to attend a terrific pottery exhibition there recently and recommend in particular a Barcelona teapot maker with outstanding teapots with a real wow factor.

See www.es-therra.com





Book Review **China Rediscovered: The Benaki Museum**



Collection of Chinese Ceramics by George Manginis

This book provides us with a scholarly account of the story behind the donation of an important and historic collection of Chinese art, collected by George Eumorfopoulos and donated to the Benaki Museum in Athens.

George Eumorfopoulos was one of the first collectors to bring Chinese ceramics to a wider Western audience. His collection serves as a time capsule of items reflecting the Western preoccupation with the East, from the end of the nineteenth century to World War II.

From an early age, Eumorfopoulos became interested in collecting art, quickly developing a passion and intellectual expertise for Japanese, Korean, Islamic and Chinese pieces. He was a patron of many contemporary ceramic artists, mostly based in London, and a connoisseur of refined historic pieces. He died in December 1939 and the remainder of his collection was auctioned in 1944, following the death of his wife.

The collection contains 452 items of Chinese pottery, including porcelain and



stoneware figures; jars, bowls, cups, pots and vases from the 8th century Tang dynasty, 13th century Song Dynasty, late 15th century Ming to Qing dynasties; and ceramics from Jingdezhen and Jiangxi provinces.

Contemporary potters said to be inspired and influenced by the many artefacts in the collection include his neighbours Nell and Charles Vyse, Edmund De Waal, Barbara Hepworth, Bernard Leach and Hamada.

This new book, *China Rediscovered: The Benaki Museum Collection of Chinese Ceramics*, is packed with illustrations which catalogue the history of an amazing collection. It describes the role of this visionary collector and enthusiast, whose passion for ceramics played such an important role in changing the value and perceptions of Chinese culture in the West. The author is George Manginis, an archaeologist and former lecturer in Byzantine Islamic and Chinese Art History at SOAS and Edinburgh universities and Fellow at Princeton University.

Jackie Harrop



DCPG Programme of meetings 2016-17



Ros McGuirk

Fri 4 Nov Richard Ballantyne and Carol Read: Fun with Raku fired animal sculptures

Fri 2 Dec TBA

Sat 14 Jan Sasha Wardell

Pioneer of decorative slip casting

Fri 10 Feb Jin Eui Kim

'From Korea to Cardiff': Carved bowls painted in 18 tones of grey

Sat 4 Mar POD

Felicity Aylieff will talk, Christopher Taylor and Walter Keeler will demonstrate

Fri 7 Apr Jo Connell

Decorative techniques for slab work

Fri 12 May Daphne Carnegie

Majoica expert maker and historian and former tutor at Harrow



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

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

Please make your cheque payable to DCPG and send to **Audrey Hammett** to the address indicated in the application form which can be downloaded from our website thedcpg.org.uk

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.

Reproduction of Newsletter Articles

Articles in the newsletter are the copyright of the Guild or the Author unless otherwise attributed and may not be reproduced, copied or used in any way without the permission of the Guild or the Author.

Advertising Rates

Quarter page £18, half page £25, whole page £50
Small ads: 25p per word (20 words free to members). Semi display £7 from your artwork or £10 for typesetting (maximum 50 words)
Covers: Back +20%, Inside +15%
Distribution of leaflets £35 for A5

For all advertising enquiries please contact:

Bipin Advertising Manager
bipin@thedcpg.org.uk



DCPG Committee



President John Higgins

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

Chairman and Programme Secretary

Ros McGuirk

13 The Park, St. Albans, Herts AL1 4RU
01727 834 326 ros.mcguirk@gmail.com

Secretary Mary Anne Bonney

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

mabonney@btinternet.com

Treasurer Colin Hazelwood

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

woodhazel@waitrose.com

Trustee Jackie Harrop: 07795464131

jackieharrop1@gmail.com

Membership Secretary Audrey Hammett

Tel. 01923 265816

dcpgmembership@gmail.com

Potter's Open Day Organiser John Higgins

Exhibitions Organisers Audrey Hammett

audreyhammett1@btinternet.com

Judi Tribe: judi.tribe@btinternet.com

Workshop Organiser Emily Good

emilyhbgood@googlemail.com

Property Manager Tony Baxter

tonymbaxter@talktalk.net

Webmaster and technical adviser John Powell

2 Abbotts Place, Chesham, Bucks HP5 3HL
01494 774 398 john@thedcpg.org.uk

Marketing Fiona Booy: 07818 060826

fionabooyceramics@gmail.com

Library and Exhibitions Sue Lines

78 Bedford Road, Letchworth, Herts SG6 4DU
sue.lines@ntlworld.com

Newsletter Editor Helen Whitbread

dcpgnewsletter2@gmail.com

Newsletter Design, Production and Advertising

Bipin: bipin@thedcpg.org.uk

Newsletter Distributor Judi Tribe

Production Assistant and Illustrator

Vivienne Rodwell-Davies

viviennerodwell@msn.com

Valentine Clays holds
the key ingredient. . .



Emma Rodgers

Valentine Clays Ltd

Manufactured in the Heart of the Potteries...

t: 01782 271 200 f: 01782 280 008

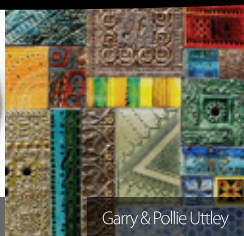
The Sliphouse, 18-20 Chell Street, Hanley,
Stoke on Trent, ST1 6BA

Email: sales@valentineclays.co.uk

Web: www.valentineclays.co.uk



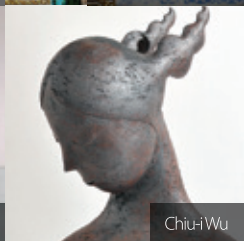
John Scott



Garry & Pollie Uttley



Alex Shimwell



Chi-iWu



visit our new online potters'
shop at
www.claymansupplies.co.uk

Enter **dacorum10** at the checkout to get
10% off your complete order

Distributors for
• Valentines • Spencrofts • Potclays • Potterycrefts •
• Chrysanthos Brush-on Glazes & Colours • Ferro •
• St Gobain Formula Plasters •
• Gladstone • Shimpo • Northstar • Kilns & Furnaces • Northern Kilns •
• Pyrotec • Rohde •

• No surcharge for the use of Credit Cards •
• Orders received by midday normally despatched the same day •

CLAYMAN

Morells Barn • Park Lane • Lower Bognor Road-
Leagues • Chichester • West Sussex • PO20 1LR
Telephone: 01243265845 • Fax: 01243267582 • info@claymansupplies.co.uk

5%
member discount

POTCLAYS
LIMITED
Since 1932

Committed to supporting
makers at every stage
of their ceramic practice



Clockwise: Geoffrey Swindell, Sue Pryke, Illyria Pottery

potclays.co.uk