



DACORUM AND CHILTERN POTTERS GUILD



www.dcpng.org.uk

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Issue 30 September 2019 £2



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Notes from the chair



Ros McGuirk.

Welcome to issue number 30 of your newsletter. The season of meetings and activities in 2018/19 has been immensely busy and most rewarding. There has been a bumper crop of demonstrators with three of our own members taking the stage. In this issue you will find reviews of the earlier activities starting in September with our annual exhibition at Kingsbury Barn and running through until February. In this period there were five meetings including the AGM and Fitzwilliam competition and also the demolition of the wood kiln at Boxmoor. At the same time we were also preparing for our Open Day and looking ahead to exciting new projects in St Albans. These will all be reviewed in the next issue.

Your committee have worked hard behind the scenes to pull off the three new hand building community projects. Our thanks go to them and especially to Jackie for leading the clay days with such gusto and inspiration, to Judi for her cheerful support and careful organisation, to John for pugging half a ton of clay and recycling a cathedral by hand, and to all the members who lent support and got stuck in. We have had great feedback from the public who took part and from the St Albans Museum & Gallery Museum, St Albans City & District Council and the Cathedral & Abbey Church of St Alban with whom we worked.

This kind of community project seems to be an excellent way of

engaging with people and offers exciting possibilities for the near future.

Currently the committee are in the process of reorganising for the next season and would like to offer members the chance to come to our committee meeting on the evening of September 17th with a view to finding out if they would like to join in and help. Among the jobs on offer will be secretary, an assistant exhibition organiser and a place on the editorial team. Other posts are available such as Facebook rep and membership secretary. Amanda and Audrey, are both doing a great job and both are willing to continue or to hand on the post to another.

Those who would like to help but who do not wish to be on the committee must not feel excluded. Our social media team take it in turns to attend meetings. Let me know if you are interested. All offers will be considered!

NB Some of our committee members are also our trustees. Being a trustee is simply a legal requirement as we are a charitable incorporated organisation (CIO). Committee members work together whether or not they are also trustees.

Below: The Cathedral project





DCPG Secretary Report July 2019



Mary Anne Bonney.

Dacorum and Chiltern Potters Guild - Secretary's Report on Committee Meetings
Those of you who come to Friday meetings will know that we are doing our best to cut down on disposable cups and the committee is keen to explore other ways in which potters can minimise the harmful impact of their activities on the environment. We would love to hear from anyone who has researched sustainability in ceramics.

We have made plans for a meeting to look at the options for our wood kiln, currently in several neat piles of bricks at the Box Moor Trust's Overbourne site. Wood firers and potential wood firers who would like to be involved, please get in touch.

As part of our ongoing commitment to data protection and security, we are conducting an audit of the information we hold. If you have any concerns or if there is any information from the Guild that you would prefer not to receive, please contact me: secretary@thedcp.org.uk.

Reviews of Guild policies have been timetabled throughout the year so that we can ensure that they are kept up to date. The Guild's safeguarding policy exists to guide helpers at outreach activities which bring us into contact with the young and the vulnerable. It is available on the Guild website and essential reading for all who help with our external events. If you would like a copy please ask.

The meeting reviewed the big build events held at the Cathedral & Abbey of St Alban and in the Market Place in St Albans as part of the City & Town Council's Roman Street Festival: feedback from both days was overwhelmingly positive from the public and Guild helpers alike.

The committee will see some changes after the AGM and we will be looking for a new secretary

– another opportunity for a volunteer to come forward and play an active part in the Guild at this exciting time.



Kingsbury Barn Exhibition 2019



Jackie Harrop

The annual Guild members' exhibition will again be held at Kingsbury Barn, St Albans from Thursday September 12th to Sunday 15th September. This will again coincide with the St Albans Heritage Weekend and Herts Open Studios which gives us an opportunity to capitalise on the additional publicity.

The Guild Members' Social and Private View is on the evening of Friday 13th

September, so you can come and enjoy the work of your colleagues in the beautiful barn surroundings.

Even if you are not planning to exhibit, or join one of the have-a-go teams, you are welcome to come to assist on set up and dismantling days, (10th and 17th September) or in organising the Friday night member's social, or any other involvement before or throughout the event. Come and join the fun.



Robert Cooper at DCPG AGM October 2018



Charlotte Anstey.



Robert Cooper made his way to our AGM via a workshop in Italy. He was still buzzing from the delights of Genoa but rallied to the occasion first by assessing the Totem ceramic pieces for the Fitzwilliam Competition and then by explaining his journey through the ceramic world and offering a demonstration of some techniques. His discussion of the totem submissions provided a sense of what interests and attracts his eye, he connects with explorations and engagements with surfaces and our efforts to decorate and construct with courage and imagination.

Robert spoke about his childhood: as a sickly child he developed an interest in archaeology, Stonehenge, Northern Celtic, Lord of the Rings and Tarot all influenced and fired his imagination into constructing miniature theatres and presumably storytelling. He was supported by his father who helped him dig up local clay and encouraged early model making by firing his pieces next to the front room stove. His father was a glass making apprentice for 7

years so knew about firing and kilns and Robert felt he would have been an artist if there had been opportunities. Mr Cooper Snr. clearly understood that his son's artistic leanings deserved encouragement as Robert made Etruscan figures and bizarre objects which were placed under trees and buried in the garden. At college Robert studied interior design but his quirky enthusiasms for making continued to flourish; he made joss stick holders (this was the 60's!) and developed ideas by constructing models from paper, cardboard and styrofoam. It was not really clear how he made the transition from interior design to the Royal College of Art ceramics department but he described attending a last minute interview with suitcases of material and wisely was given a place on the applied MA.

It seems the RCA provided a large well stocked space for Robert's playful imagination. He pursued his childhood enthusiasm for theatres using a range of techniques to create and design performing spaces populated by clay and fabric actors. His final show piece was a 6 ft square wall piece based on a kimono. Robert interweaves fabric, and surface forms from nature, into his ceramic practice in a unique style. Juxtaposed patterns create surfaces of richness and complexity which contribute to the form and style of the finished pieces.

Opportunities to work and exhibit in the USA led to sales of large vessels to major US based collectors and the development of techniques using silk screens and stencilling. He has produced a steady line of Chawans (Japanese tea cups) and tea caddies: booted with playful feet, suited with layers of patterns and colours and lidded by various inspirations. Robert's archeological enthusiasms have



become bedded down in mudlarking on the Thames where he finds fragments of objects made of glass, metal, and clay which are transformed into candlesticks.

A demonstration of his working methods showed a range of techniques: highlights included his preference for imprinting clay with textured reliefs, which are then slapped and stretched and further imprinted to develop textural interest and depth. His style embodies a 'Wabi Sabi' approach which is supported by his gift for creating appealing forms. Using silk screens and improvised use of various materials (e.g. draft excluder, plastic grid forms etc) coloured slips are printed onto clay at the earliest stages of making and the clay is

distended by working with fingers from inside. As layers were built up Robert commented that the skill is knowing when to stop!

Once a piece has been created there are many opportunities for further decoration during the firing process where Robert's playful approach continues as glazes and lustres are used for adornment. Robert finished by making an impressive slab built jug with a handle and expressed his preference for 'outsider art' made without concern for the rules and emphasised the urban roots in his making.





DCPG November Meeting Vivienne Rodwell-Davies

 by Julie Marsh

On a miserable, wet evening in November, we were treated to a wonderfully interesting and informative demonstration by member, Vivienne Rodwell-Davies, who shared her wealth of knowledge on decorating techniques using all sorts of printing methods. It was fascinating to see how she achieves her fine pieces. Everything is based on her beautiful, detailed original artwork, which she manages to reproduce onto clay tiles. Printing involves anything rolled into or onto clay and we were shown how to use lino cuts, letterpress, block printing and intaglio as well as fantastic examples of silk screen printing and mono printing.

Vivienne prefers porcelain paper clay and uses various mediums such as water-based inks, under glazes and slips to transfer her designs onto the leather hard clay tiles and also uses underglaze crayons to draw directly onto the mesh of the silk screen, sometimes

combined with sgraffito for added interest. We were also shown methods using stencils and learned about monoprinting. Vivienne uses a combination of all of these techniques and even brought along detailed notes and illustrations of all of her methods, with lots of tips and handy hints to boot! Very generous to share her knowledge in that way. For a complete novice to printing techniques, the evening was a real eye-opener and it was fantastic to see Vivienne's natural artistic talent so skillfully demonstrated before our very eyes! It's even inspired the least artistic thrower to have a go at using some of the more simple techniques!! Thank you for a fascinating display Vivienne.

This guild is so great precisely because we get to learn about such a wide variety of techniques and styles and potters are so good at sharing!! Long may it continue!





Wendy Peters - Flowers and Claws

 Judi Tribe

Wendy Peters gave a wonderful evening demonstration showing us how she makes her beautiful flowers and an individual claw of one of her characterful animals.

While she was creating her sculptures, Wendy talked about her inspirations and showed us her precise and skillful sculptural techniques.

She came to make her flowers in a rather curious way as, a few years ago, she had a new puppy who liked to eat all her flowers in her garden and therefore she decided to make some indestructible clay ones ! Wendy also admired the amazing spectacle of 1st World War commemoration ceramic poppies at The Tower of London and these two influences started her journey of making her ceramic garden flowers. At the start she only made six or seven for family and friends however their popularity grew and gradually Wendy began her journey of designing and creating her special garden features and she has spent years developing her technique and glazes for her poppies, using all kinds of stoneware clay however she rather likes Earthstone Scarva grogged clay as it is easy to model and very stable throughout all her processes.

Wendy's flowers are made in three pieces, using carefully measured out pieces of clay for each elements. She used a plaster batt

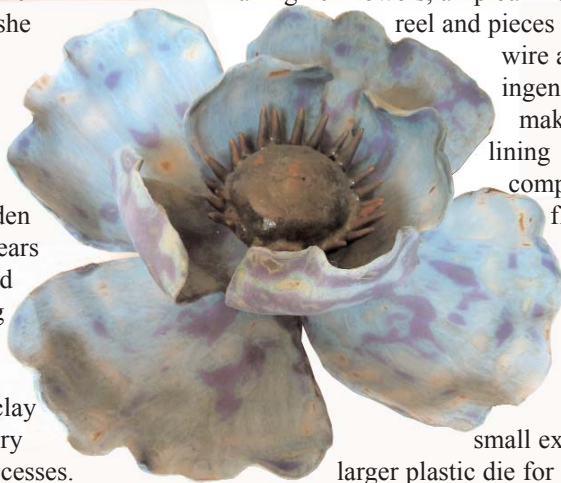
covered with plastic, quickly rolling out her weighed clay and placing the cardboard templates on the slabbed pieces of clay, a pastry cutter was then used to cut around each part of her flower.

Usually these petal components are left for a few hours to firm up however for the evening demonstration she continued with earlier made pieces which were just right to mould by hand. The outer and middle groups

of petals were smoothed and placed gently into circular bowls to create the upward curve of the flower, for the outer feathered edges of the petals, she carefully used the tips of her fingers.

Wendy uses all sorts of intriguing everyday items to solve technical problems when making her flowers, a lip balm cap, a cotton reel and pieces of nichrome wire all play their ingenious part for making holes or lining up the main components. The flower centre is made in a variety of ways, a scrubbing brush for texture, a small extruder and a

larger plastic die for larger sized stamens. These are carefully placed and added to the central area whereby the small pieces are fused together when glaze fired.





Once all the elements of the flower are made and biscuit fired, the glaze is either dipped or poured. Wendy develops her own glaze recipes to achieve all her individual colours. At the moment she is trying to develop brighter colours of reds and oranges but she is finding this a challenge to achieve the colour richness. Wendy mentioned that Michael Bailey's Book of Glazes Cone 6 is a good source of reference. In preparation for the glaze firing, each flower is carefully placed on homemade stilts with 4 prongs of nichrome wire and flat circles of biscuit clay are placed underneath to protect the kiln shelves. Wendy's electric kiln temperatures are 1000C for biscuit and 1240C for her glaze firings.

The flower poppies are attached to metal 6mm rounded rods, Wendy discovered that the best way of achieving a gentle bend at the top, was by using garden roller! The attachment of each stalk to the flower is individual fitted securely with a piece of hose and a washer and then ready to be place in the garden.

Wendy finished her demonstration with showing us how she constructs an animal's claw. Her birds and animals are very intricately made and she says that she enjoys playing with the clay to create these individual, quirky characters. With a very small piece of clay she carefully moulded the tiny joints of the foot, then a claw and finally taking a piece of lace she gently squeezed it into the clay to create the texture of skin, suddenly a creature's clawed foot was formed.

Wendy's clear and well prepared demonstration was a real treat and a delight to watch as well as showing off her amazing skill and inventiveness that she brings to all her ceramic work.



Joy Trpkovic - Risk Taker

 by Nicole Lyster

With a Fine Arts Degree, but no formal education in ceramics, Joy came to love pottery by having to teach it. Always a risk taker, she took her porcelain sculptures to a gallery, who promptly sold every one. She applied for an art competition with a piece that she had already sold, and had to replicate a similar piece at short notice and get it to Spain.

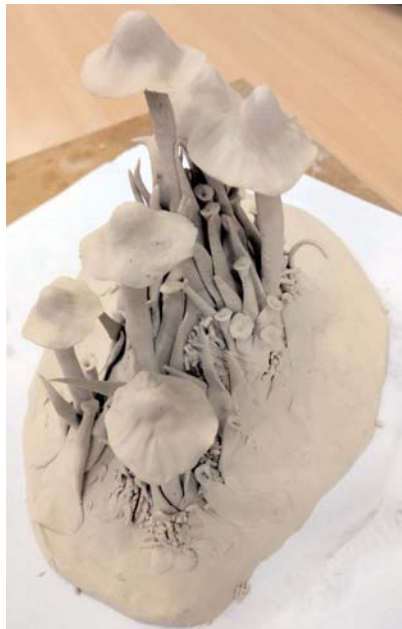


Joy takes her inspiration from nature, but is not constrained by it. Her work is all hand built with minimal use of tools. She likes to take her clay to its limits in fragility, and use whatever techniques are needed to mount and join work together in its final display. If this means the loss of many fragile elements in the final sculpture she is happy to accommodate this loss in the number of pieces she makes. For her Museu de Ceramica de L'Alcora, Spain sculpture 'Shoal of Angels', she made over 400 Rays of ½ millimetre thickness about 50 of which were set on individual Perspex plinths within a Perspex frame of her making. Joy's work is sculptural, she is proud that she 'makes nothing useful' and enjoys applying to competitions as a launch for new ideas.

Joy's work uses the colours of lustre and

fired to 720C after the pieces are high fired. She also uses delicate watercolour effect washes as well as incorporating glass in some of her pieces which is either used as a glue to attach the delicate tentacles into her shells or as a pool in the bottom of her pinch pots.

Joy had to take a break from ceramics to care for her husband, and as a self proclaimed 'clumsy person' has been forced to stop on occasions due to accidents that have left her with limited dexterity in her hands. She is a celebration in tenacity and perseverance and uses clay as her therapy to sustain a 'normal'



life. She talked of the generosity of potters and how clay has a calming and centring effect on people when they use it. Her Art Therapy with teenage neurological patients at Guys and St. Thomas' Hospital, London, enabled them to remain focused for far longer than their doctors expected and

produce work that helped the group bond.

During her demonstration Joy was open about her risk taking, lack of formal planning for a piece and the mistakes that she has made. She is currently working in Parian Porcelain Clay and showed her first failed attempt at firing a piece, which stuck to the kiln and sagged in places. Her subsequent piece was inspiring in its delicacy, intricacy and size.

To help with her demonstration Joy was using her 'vintage porcelain' which she has kept in a bucket in the garden for nearly 40 years and was now well mature and 'beautiful to work with'. She also came prepared with an old halogen cooker to dry out her mushroom stems for assembly. She had a pre-prepared porcelain mound over newspaper which she populated with hand built mushrooms, grass and extruded moss (using a tea strainer). Every piece was attached with the deft use of a quick score, application of slip and a stroke of the finger.

Joy explained that the closer together the flora is, the less likely it is to wilt in the firing,



and that the use of her rolling and compressing the clay gave the delicate pieces added strength to withstand the kiln. She emphasised the need not to make each mushroom too top heavy. In her generosity she asked us if we would like to add to her creation and 'help her out', but we were all too respectful of her work to attempt to replicate it. Joy's final words to us were 'apply for everything, you've got nothing to lose, there are great opportunities out there', in other words 'take risks'.





Gin Durham - Celebrating A Story Through Clay



Nicole Lyster

Gin began her presentation with an explanation of her background in Graphic Design, working for the toy company Hasbro and PlaySkool. Each toy has a carefully crafted background story and is meticulously planned before it is manufactured. From Graphic Design, Gin went on to form her own design company and to develop her fine art paintings and drawing, doing equestrian commissions, champions for Crufts and refining her skills in watercolour and pen and ink drawing. She was always interested in creating anatomically

correct renditions of animals in her drawings but began to look at mixed media to enhance her work. It was apparent from her talk that she was interested in understanding the use of materials at a high level, and developing her skill as a craftsperson, rather than just exploring artistic concepts in clay.

Her first body of clay work explored the darker emotions in her life, but she found this less than satisfactory as a commercial success and as a person, finding that she 'was doing more counselling than selling' at art fairs. This led her to develop her current body of work, that looks to celebrate the happier times in life, the sharing of stories as an entertainment and an enhancement of spending time with loved ones.

The basis of all of Gin's sculptures is the



anatomically correct rendition of her creatures in drawings. She is meticulous in developing her understanding of how the animal is constructed in real life, before she manipulates and exaggerates her creatures in clay. In this way, she can create creatures with story-like personalities, that still inhabit the natural world. As someone in the audience said 'you have really captured the essence of what a hare is'.

Gin began her demonstration with a 'former' made from paper and brown parcel tape. She wrapped this in Scarva Earthstone ES40, stoneware clay; her preferred this clay to work with as it is incredible strong and versatile. On smaller pieces Gin likes to start with a pinch pot and add to this. Gin continued with her demonstration and added the back

legs to the main body, using no slip, as the clay was fresh from the bag. She created the hare's knees by cutting the knee shape out of the main body and pushing it outward, then adding a small slab of clay over the gap and smoothing the clay together with her thumb. She worked quickly on forming the shape of the hare, but it was apparent in how she manipulated the clay that she had a proper understanding of the anatomically correct shape of the animal she was forming. Whilst the main body and back legs were drying, Gin worked on the head of the hare, using a solid shape to which she added nose, mouth and eyes, this was then hollowed out and left, whilst the ears were constructed from slabs of clay. On all surfaces Gin used lace to create texture, which she burnished into the form, helping to compress the clay and form the structure of her animal in equal measure. For the purpose of the demonstration Gin used a hot air gun to firm up the ears, before attaching them as a pair to the back of the Hare's head.

When the main body was firmed up (with the aid of the hot air gun) the front legs were rolled and attached with a little slipping and scoring (as the legs and body had different moisture content). Gin then carved the legs to create the correct shape, explaining that it was better to have too much clay and take some off, than not enough and have to add to it.

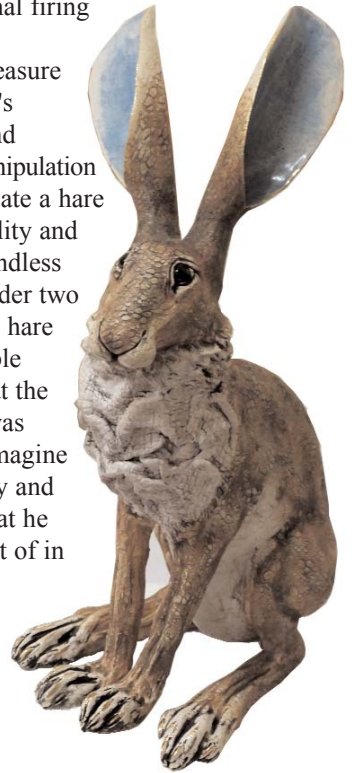
Gin added thin slabs of textured clay, which she rucked up to form the chest and neck.



She then slipped and scored the neck and head and attached the head to the body. Hare completed.

When working in her studio Gin explained that after the piece has firmed up, the former is removed, it is bisque fired to 1000°C. Pieces are underglazed with Contem Underglaze, which is watered down at a ratio of 2:1. Iron Oxide solution is flicked onto the creature to create more texture definition and sponged back. Gin also underglazes the white areas first before applying the colour as it is easier to blend the white into the colour to avoid a definite line. A clear glaze is applied to the eyes and inside the ears, and to the areas that she wants to apply gold lustre. The piece is then fired to 1240°C. Gold lustre is added before the final firing to 750°C.

It was a pleasure to watch Gin's competent and confident manipulation of clay to create a hare with personality and seeming boundless energy, in under two hours. As the hare sat on the table looking out at the audience it was possible to imagine his back story and the stories that he would be part of in the future.





Colin Hazelwood 'Glazes'. December 2018.

 Sue Lines.

Like many DCPG members Colin came to pottery as a leisure pursuit after what he claimed was the tedium of a day doing experiments in the chemistry lab. Colin learnt to throw quite quickly and was satisfied with the buckets of prepared glazes. It was only later that Colin began to be frustrated with what his class offered him.

Finding a kick wheel going spare in a local school and a friend disposing of his kiln set Colin off, setting up his own studio. After a period of getting familiar with firing cycles in his own kiln, the time came when Colin became keen to make his own glazes.

Where to start? The CPA book "Clay and Glazes" contains thousands of recipes kindly contributed by CPA members, with the drawback that, unless updated, there are no illustrations, meaning that one might need to carry out a lot of experiments to get results one was pleased with. On the other hand "The Potter's Palette" by Christine Constant and Stephen Ogden takes a few tried and tested recipes requiring relatively few ingredients AND has over 700 illustrations showing the effect of adding various coloured oxides. This book is in the Guild library.

We then moved onto the three important constituents of a glaze; the glassmaker, the flux and what I'm calling the stabiliser.

Silica for example might make a fine glassy coating on a piece of ceramic if it didn't need to reach 1720 degrees to melt!



The stoneware body would have slumped and something pretty awful would have happened to the kiln elements well before that point!

However, fluxes bring down the temperature of any material that are intimate to them, infiltrating their strong crystalline structure. Like salt melting snow!

The oxides of sodium, potassium, lithium and calcium are fluxes, but unfortunately they are not available in their simple forms and require a judicious selection of powdered minerals that contain these elements. e.g. the feldspars which are often ingredients we commonly use.

The element that stabilises the glaze and prevents it running off the pot is aluminium. It is provided by the addition of some clay to the recipe which is a combination of aluminium, silicon and oxygen.

If you remember Colin's exhibition stand

you may recall that he is keen on a matt white dolomite glaze but he has explored many others and they tend to employ iron and result from his attempts to produce the characteristic read break of tenmoko in his electric kiln.. He has found other interesting effects can be obtained by applying one glaze on top of another.

There is a glaze called Tenmoko Oil Spot to which he was attracted because it was said to work in the oxidising atmosphere of an electric kiln. Michael Bailey gives formulas for a single glaze but this didn't work for Colin; however, he found that he could produce an oil spot tenmoko by applying a tenmoko on top of khaki. It was also possible to vary the size of the spots!

Then when Lutz Krainhoffer was with us he introduced Colin to a book by Daniel de Montmollin, one of the brothers with Lutz at Taize. It is a very erudite book, full of phase diagrams for all manners of glaze formulations. However Colin was attracted to an illustration of a white semi matt globular pot with what he can only describe as dark eruptions. This set Colin off on a most interesting exploration. He found that he could achieve this sort of effect by applying a white glaze on top of his iron bearing khaki glaze. Colin thinks the underlying chemistry is this: the

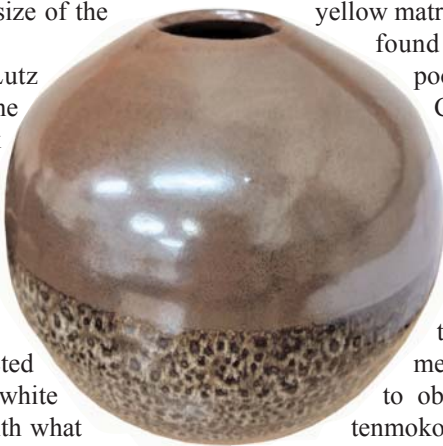
khaki glaze derives its colour from ferric oxide Fe_2O_3 . At about 1210 degrees this oxide begins to lose some of its oxygen, which then bubbles, for the want of a better word, through the overlying white glaze. Even more remarkable is the effect of temperature. At 1270 the effect was similar but beginning to smooth out while at 1280 the glaze was smooth with spots like leopard skin.

Another interesting discovery was the use of ilmenite (iron titanate). Colin was simply using it following the guidance of the Potters Palette at 10% in the dolomitic glaze. The result was much more interesting than the book led Colin to expect. Orange crystals began to grow in the cooling yellow matrix. Even more exciting he found that where the glaze pooled it was a shiny black.

Colin can't explain this without sophisticated analytical equipment, but ilmenite is black. But who cares; it isn't necessary to know!

When Ros advertised this evening's session she mentioned Colin's attempts to obtain a red break on his tenmoko glaze, when using an electric kiln.

The conventional wisdom is that you get the black by firing in a reducing atmosphere. However, a reducing atmosphere is not necessary to get the black. Colin gets it every time in his electric kiln because the red fer-



oxide he uses to make the glaze spontaneously decomposes at high temperature to produce the black ferrosoferic oxide regardless of kiln atmosphere. Montmollin on the other hand says that the black colour is due to calcium ferrite and is certainly the case that all Tenmoko recipes include Whiting.

Convention says that reduction should be followed by a short period of oxidation to achieve the red colour on the sharp edges where the glaze is thin. So why shouldn't you get the red break on the sharp edges in the presumably oxidising atmosphere of an electric kiln? This won't happen at the elevated temperature because as we have seen it is not stable but it could happen as the glaze cools. Possibly there is not enough oxygen in the closed environment of an electric kiln. To this end Colin did try and experimented, bleeding pure oxygen into his test kiln but without success. Why does Colin's khaki glaze which also uses 10% of ferric oxide stay red while his Tenmoko which uses 10% of ferric oxide produce a black? John Britt in his splendid book (which incidentally does not appear to be in our library) lists 10 recipes for khaki and they also have a slightly unusual constituent, namely bone ash.

It looks as if the phosphorus in the bone ash somehow stabilises the red iron and inhibits the loss of oxygen, or possibly catalyses the re-oxidation of the black oxide as it cools. Unfortunately we can't see what is happening in the closed kiln! Montmollin has done extensive work in this area, confirming the effect of phosphorus but

without publishing any conclusions about the mechanism.

Lastly Colin showed a pot which demonstrated success in his electric kiln, by extending the firing cycle. But he said he was still troubled because

he didn't understand the mechanism. Of course you don't have to understand to enjoy the result. He ended by concluding that that's the penalty of being a chemist!





DCPG Website - Social media links and Gallery for members work



The DCPG website is the place to find out what the Guild has been up to and all the latest information about the Friday meetings, the Potters Open Day as well as using the links to the DCPG Facebook page and DCPG Instagram which give you even more photographs and reviews of Guild events as well as all the current exhibitions which Guild members are participating in.

These DCPG social media links can be viewed very easily and without signing up to Facebook or Instagram, just click on either of the icon links at the bottom of the DCPG website Home Page, and then you will be able to view the latest Guild and local and national craft events.

Please contact Amanda Toms - a.r.t.ceramics@hotmail.com for any DCPG Facebook posts and to Nicole Lyster - nicole1lyster@gmail.com for anything about DCPG Instagram. See the website for details on DCPG Instagram procedures.

A reminder that the DCPG Instagram account is @thedcpg, they need to use the

'the' or they will find their way to some USA wedding photography site (slightly different to ceramics).

Also take a look at The Gallery page on the DCPG website - this area is for all members to showcase their pottery and ceramic work to a wider audience. Every member can use this opportunity, so please send in good quality hi-res photographs of your work with a small paragraph describing your approach and inspirations of your work to Emily Good, the DCPG website co-ordinator - dcpggallery@gmail.com



DCPG monthly Friday meetings - venue and time details



Talks and Demonstrations

8.00pm - 10.00pm held at :

Kings Langley Methodist Church
Hempstead Road
Kings Langley
WD4 8BR

Tea/ Coffee and biscuits from 7.30pm
Please bring your own mug to save using throwaway cups - discount for using your own mug.

Stan Romer Pottery Book Library for members

ALL WELCOME.
Members FREE. Guests £5.00



Boxmoor kiln and Overbourne



Ros McGuirk

On a fine September morning I met up with Mark Compton at the Boxmoor kiln site with the intention of organising a raku firing there. However, we found that things were not looking good.

A number of trees sheltering the site had been cleared and part of the fence had been removed so that the whole site was on view to the public car park. Although the place had been left reasonably tidy a few months previously, wind and weather had shredded the tarpaulins covering the kiln and wood store and the whole area looked dishevelled and derelict.

It was plain that remedial action was required so we sought out Peter Sampson, the estate manager, to discuss the matter. He explained that the Box Moor Trust were looking to develop more facilities for visitors, particularly to find a safe place near the car park for children. The kiln site was their best option. From our point of view, moving the kiln to another site would give us the opportunity to build a better model, one that would be more efficient and reliable.

Dismantling the kiln would be hard work, but it could give us the impetus to make the big step forward required to successful wood firings. Earlier in the year we had formed a wood firing group led by Jerry Seaborn, in order to develop our skills and improve the kiln. Now we had to change tack and organise a dismantling and a move. Other members stepped forward to help us take down the kiln and clear the site.

Dismantling a kiln feels like a form of archaeology. The inner form is revealed and wondered at. (Why was it so difficult to get an even firing? Was the flue too large?) It also takes a lot of time, especially with handling all the bricks. These were stacked

on pallets placed on a large trailer kindly organised by Peter. It took about five days spread out over a number of weekends to clear the entire site. There was a lot of rubbish to deal with as well, and we kept finding more piles of bricks half buried by detritus from the trees and overgrown with moss. We made many trips to the tip.

The Box Moor Trust kindly offered us a couple of alternative plots of land and eventually we ended up with a corner of a working area at Overbourne. This is a beautiful spot at the top of a hill close to a private school and about 200m from the Old Barn which has been restored to make a small classroom, used mainly for craft lessons for children. The Old Barn has electricity, water, and toilets.

Our small corner of Overbourne is now almost entirely covered in piles of bricks, far more than went into the kiln. They are protected by tarpaulins or wound in plastic.

As I write this we have a lull in the proceedings at Overbourne for we must focus on other matters. Later on this year we will return to the prospect of building a new kiln but we will have to find somewhere else to put it. There are too many restrictions at this site for wood firings.

Space is minimal and we would not be allowed to build a roof structure to shelter the kiln.

So the hunt is on to find a site for another wood kiln. Let us know if you have any good ideas. It is also a good time to discuss the whole issue of whether we want to do this and what best use we can make of all those bricks.

Almost last but not least, we must thank the Box Moor Trust wholeheartedly. They provided us with a kiln site, rent free, for eight years.

Then they continued to support us as best they could despite having to face big changes in the way they organise and run the land in order to stay solvent. We will continue to support them with our big 'have a go' event at their Autumn (Conker) Festival, as we have done for many years.

The last word must go to the wood kiln. Despite only one good firing out of half a dozen, we enjoyed learning about how to build and handle it. The building project driven by Paul Rowbottom and Danielle Bunker with Joe Finch as master builder, the glaze workshop with Steve Parry, the best firing with Ben Brierley and finally with Jerry Seaborn and Amanda Toms, the hard

work put in by all the participants gave many of us a lot of fun and a great deal of satisfaction. What will we do next?



A welcome to all New Members



Audrey Hammett

Jackie Ward

I'm an amateur potter of 5 years and I share a studio in my back garden with 2 others in Ealing. I love having such an engaging hobby and who knows I may get good enough to start a small business one day.

Joy Trpkovic

I handbuild and my training was a degree in Fine Art so my ceramic work is self taught and is partly driven by risk and trying to control porcelain when it is always full of surprises.

Michael Scott

I'm a 76 year old student! I've been attending a pottery leisure class at Oakland College for 8 years, enjoying attempting to make small sculptural pieces using coiling and slab techniques.

Deirdre McGuirk

Having first tried pottery classes in the old Oaklands college and then doing nothing with clay for many years, I started classes again last year and have really enjoyed it.

Katherine Osmond

I have been going to leisure classes at Oakland College for around 3 years. Main interest is hand building and sculpting. Fascinated by smoke firing and have done some of this in my garden. Would love to explore raku.

Ray Toms

Peter Davies

Andrew Lewin

Eva Samuelsson

Jill Gleeso

Alondene Phillips

Mandy English

Amanda Westbury



Jim Newbould - Making pots on lard laden oak wheels

 Judi Tribe, Les Parrott and Angela Bowen (see our cover picture)

When I arrived in the car park at the Guild's Friday night meeting hall, I saw a yellow van park up with its back doors open and inside the huge dark rather empty interior there were some strange looking wooden forms, crates and large flat boards. I was wondering what sort of talk and demonstration we were going to have however the whole evening was enthralling. Jim Newbould had his audience so engaged by his amazing knowledge, skill and enthusiasm and about how and why pots were developed and made throughout history.

Jim and his wife Emma have been producing replica ceramics for over 20 years, supplying museums, film, television, re-enactment groups and educational resource centres across the United Kingdom, Europe and the United States. They produce ceramics from the Iron Age through to the 18th century, specializing mainly on the Roman and Medieval periods as well as Italian Majolica and English Delft. He uses authentic methods and glazes appropriate for each of these periods.

Jim set up his two simple wooden wheels and a host of buckets, and other replica tools as well as a huge collection of replica pots making the church hall into a medieval pottery. He talked about the origin of pot making and demonstrated the simple thumb pot as he explained how clays were dug from local sources. Initially it was farmers who would produce pots in between the seasons of harvest. This process was time consuming and when a simple potter's wheel was developed, the

speed of making pots increased. Jim explained that the invading Romans brought the throwing wheel to Britain and potters would travel with the Roman Legion armies making quick thrown pots for those in the encampments. As the Romans retreated from Britain so did the skill of using these wheels disappeared until the Medieval times. First of all, Jim demonstrated on a small oak wheel, which he had built himself. The joints between the wheel head and the stand were greased with a large amount of lard and once all was freely moving, Jim knelt down on one knee to throw a pot. He kept the wheel turning with one hand while forming a small bowl with the other hand; each hand swing of the wheel barely turned more than six revolutions. Although the whole action looked very uncomfortable to use, Jim said that this simple wheel was really good at making larger pots because the extra weight of clay in fact helped to maintain impetus of the wheel head.

Jim then showed how a Pill 'Crockerne' potter's wheel worked. This again was a wooden wheel but taller and thinner than before, enabling the thrower to stand upright to make pots. For the making of larger pots, boys would be employed to hand turn the wheel for the potter thereby creating a faster production. Throughout the evening Jim demonstrated a number of pots including the making of a pilgrim flask, a watering pot, and a jug. While making these pots he also described what the origins and meaning of



pots, a curfew being one as fire covers used to smother fires at night and potholes another, originally made from potters digging up clay at the side of roads to make their ware !

Jim had a host of other intriguing stories to tell about the creations and uses of pots through historic times. His wealth of knowledge and enthusiasm was totally absorbing and the two hours sped by leaving the whole audience wanting more.

"During the weekend of 22nd / 23rd June, Jim Newbould and the Guild took part in two major community events. On Saturday as part of the Alban Festival organised by St Albans Cathedral, Jim Newbould was in his own tent demonstrating on his Roman potters wheel, showing off his replica pots and captivating the public with his unique storytelling. Meanwhile the members of the Guild were encouraging both children and adults to hand build with clay all the fine details to form a spectacular clay model of St Albans Cathedral.

The St Albans Roman Street Festival in the market square on Sunday again saw Jim



demonstrate his amazing throwing of pots on his Roman wheel and sharing his immense knowledge and enthusiasm with the public. The Guild was involved too by giving a hands on Roman Clay Day experience where everybody of all ages had the opportunity to make their own version of Roman artifacts and add clay details to Roman buildings. More about all these exciting community events will be in the next issue of the newsletter. "





The Fitzwilliam Competition 2018



Janice Eastman.

There were nine entries and two withdrawn the last minute, the theme was "Totem Pole", the rules as is usual were that the piece had to be mainly ceramic, built after the announcement of the theme and fired. Also every person entering has to be a member of the club.

They were outstanding, and all entries were ambitious, colourful and each very different in style and finish. The judge, Robert Cooper who was our demonstrator after the AGM on the same morning, agreed to assess the work and took his time during the AGM to look carefully. He was very detailed in his critique, reminding me of Art School crits. It then became apparent that he taught Art and Ceramic students.

1st place was awarded with everyone's pleasure to Wendy Peters, her table top totem was dedicated to nature and wildlife, her flora and fauna were a delight to behold, and beautifully formed and glazed, and fitted together perfectly. Floor standing and tall was Sarah Evans', a totem reflecting emotion and inner peace, and she was placed second. Third was Carol Read, an owl on a trumpet, small and compact, and beautifully made, much like a maquette for a larger project. Melvyn Esterman made a floor standing 'Tree Spirits' totem in the style of Green men and women, very scary eyes, painterly and colourful. Jerry Seaborn perfectly crafted what will be a tall grand chimney on his wood burning kiln - Tomoko glazed, art deco-ish, with a birdlike helmet, great. Andrew Gardner made a timely political statement with an American theme,

matt glazes, brightly coloured with witty motifs, made in America Trump hands, very clever.

Vivienne Rodwell Davies made a very unusual horizontal table top piece with graduated sized turquoise

birds, raku fired and mounted on a marble base.

Richard Ballantyne had a totem of chickens, piled up with character and humour, also raku fired with crackle glaze.

We were honoured to have Sylvia Fitzwilliam graciously and kindly donate the prizes and award the Bison trophy to Wendy.

Thank you to all who entered and we look forward to the next theme, which is BIRDS and BIRDBATHS as chosen by you at POD. Good luck everyone.





Ceramic Trip to South Korea

 Fiona Wilcock

At Easter 2019 a group of 21 potters and non potting partners covered hundreds of miles touring South Korea. The trip took in museums celebrating celadon and onggi (pots where kimchi is fermented), Royal burial mounds and Buddhist shrines, ancient palaces and pottery villages, accompanied by a feast of different flavours and textures, and with a backdrop of cherry blossom.

As a pottery newbie I confess I was grossly ignorant about the revered nature and history of Korean pottery but with the aid of an excellent translator and a trip put together by Geoff Kenward of the London Potters Guild, I am now a little more conversant with these ancient treasures.

I'm including just a few of the highlights of the trip here, as I learned so much. We visited many potters and the range of work varied from rustic to unimaginable perfection. The Buddhist potter working in the countryside by himself, as his mentor, in her 80's had recently died, lovingly regarded each pot as a piece of organic creation, so was loath to



discard anything. His showroom was therefore brimming with 'happy-shaped' pots and a number of damaged pots and it took me a while to find a little teapot whose lid was not fired to the base. His kiln, with some 8 chambers was awaiting a firing the next day, having been filled with 6 months' worth of

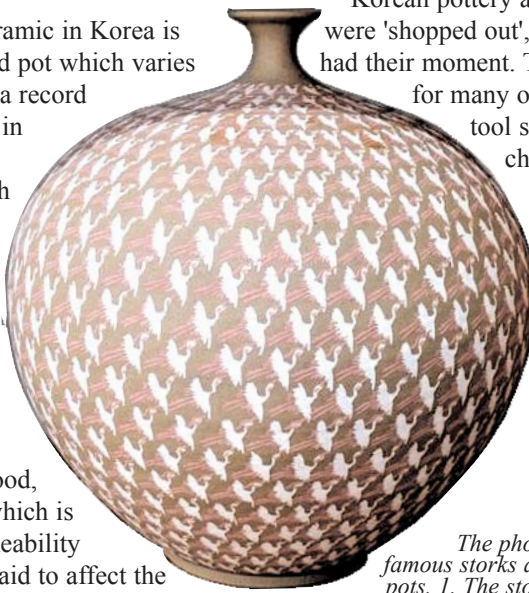


work. This was the only time he looked for help as the firing was 3 days and 4 nights. His wood pile, nearly cut into identical size pieces was vast, and the result of hours of collection and trimming.

We saw many examples of the famous Goryeo celadon, and as you'd expect we wanted to know how the techniques were done. At the Goryeo Celadon Museum where we had a brief talk with the director in the studio, we were able to take a sneak at the tools and techniques.

The main methods described to us were intaglio (pattern seen below surface), embossing (in relief), carving out, inlay (intaglio then filled with slip), iron-painting (to achieve black in firing), clay painting (embossing with dots of slip) and impressing (which appears to be like inlaying but of patterns and letters and a brush may be used). The incising tools, were usually self-made by the potters in the studio attached to the museum, and featured well-filed broken umbrella spokes.

Another famous ceramic in Korea is the Onggi. This lidded pot which varies in size from 20cm to a record breaking 2.23 metres in height is said to be a "breathing pot, though its permeability to air whilst preventing the movement of water molecules". The pots are fired only once with glaze applied to leather-hard ware. Onggi are used to preserve fermented food, the most famous of which is kimchi. It is the permeability of the clay which is said to affect the behaviour of microorganisms and support fermentation. There was much debate amongst the UK potters of the claim that this glazed pot was 'eco-friendly' and would indeed return to nature as the aficionados'



of the Onggi village and museum claimed.

The trip also incorporated fascinating museums and visits to what we believe are government supported pottery villages, allowing individual potters to have studios in proximity to others

working in the same field. The best of these was in the town of Icheon, in Gyeonggi-do province east of Seoul, which has been famous for pottery for millennia. This village supported potters who demonstrated traditional as well as more contemporary

Korean pottery and having thought we were 'shopped out', credit cards suddenly had their moment.

The other major spend for many of us was at the potters tool shop. It was rather like children in a sweet shop or teens in an app store as we fell on stamps, incising tools, stains, and ore.

So potter or not, if you have the chance to visit South Korea I'd highly recommend it.

The photo above shows how the famous storks are incised and inlaid on pots. 1. The stork body is incised in the green ware.

2. The body is covered with white slip.
3. The slip is scraped off.
4. The legs and beak are incised on the pot
5. The legs and beak are covered with black slip then scraped back.
6. The pot is fired and glazed.



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The Guild and 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 Potters Open Day is held with demonstrations. Exhibitions, visits and workshops are also organised at various times.

Membership rates

Single £30, Family (one address) £42, Student (full time) £22.

Green* Single £25, Green* Family (one address) £37. Green members will receive the newsletter by email rather than a paper copy. Please make your cheque payable to DCPG and send to Audrey Hammett at the address indicated in the application form which can be downloaded from our website dcpg.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 item to be returned).

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Nadine Blackmore - A Beginners Guide to Instagram

 Jerry Seaborn.

Nadine gave the Guild a very detailed and intensive primer about using Instagram to gather information about, and to market, pottery and ceramic products. Hopefully, this provided an interesting insight to those who have never used this app, and fleshed out a few details for those who are regulars.

She gave her presentation using a Powerpoint slide show and then opened up the app, and walked us through the details of how to make a post. She introduced herself, she is German with a background in Civil Engineering, but has worked with clay, both self taught and doing a City Lit Course, for 30 years. She has now given up Civil Engineering to concentrate on the pottery. She explained that Instagram is the fastest growing social media platform and has radically changed the way marketing works. Mostly everything is online now, with information available instantly. She gave the example of when Harry married Meghan, her dress, tagging the designer, was posted on Instagram, and the designers website crashed, due to the immediate vast number of hits on the site.

Nadine explained that Instagram was ideal for keeping in touch with makers you are interested in, by following their account so that you got their latest posts and ideas. Also you can post your own work, and by using hashtags and your location, you can connect with people you want to target. You can show them work in progress and the final item when complete, this helps you make a story to connect with them, and makes it more likely they will follow and buy from you.

She then showed the audience how to use the functions in Instagram, what her profile or bio looked like on the site and who she was following and who was following her.

She also showed how to search out other accounts and looked at the DCPG and Florian Gadsby accounts. Florian is the most interesting, currently he has 190,000 followers, and this has grown from about 10,000 when I started following him in 2016. He posts every day which are very detailed and quite lengthy. A comment was made by an audience member that "how did he get time to make pots if he was doing that". Florian has become very successful in a quite a short space of time, he was Lisa Hammonds apprentice, spent time in Japan at the workshop of Ken Matsusaki, appearing in Ceramic Review, demonstrating at Clay College, etc. His website sells out as soon as he opens up any new batch, such that people were complaining after his last sale, that they put an item in their basket, and before they could pay for it, it was sold to someone else, effectively gazumped. Therefore in reply to the above comment, if you want to really market successfully these days, this is what need to you do.

Nadine showed us how to start and set up a profile and bio, commented on what to post and when. She felt it important to note your location on your post and she demonstrated this. Finally she gave tips on how to take your Instagram profile further. Commenting on others work, messaging them, tagging others that you work with, all help to grow your profile. She went on to explain about hashtags and how important they are. These allow you to target your post beyond your followers, as they act as collectors, so by clicking on them, you can see all the posts that have that hashtag allocated to them. They tend to provide a description of your work eg #shino or #potteryglaze. Note that tags have to be one continuous word, without any gaps.



DCPG Coffee Morning Socials



Judi Tribe.

Here are the dates and venues for the Guild's coffee social mornings. Please come and join us, where you can meet and chat to other members about pots and lots more. Reminders will be sent by email each month. Please contact Judi Tribe to confirm that you will be coming along.
juditribe0@gmail.com
(0 is zero).



Coffee morning at Sunnyside Cafe, Hemel Hempstead

September - Monday - 30th 11.00am - 1.00pm
Woodlands Cafe,
Leavesden Country Park,
1 College Road, Leavesden, WD5 0NX
<http://www.woodlandscave.co.uk/>
<https://www.threerivers.gov.uk/egcl-page/leavesden-country-park>

October - Thursday - 24th
11.00am - 1.00pm Cafe on the Corner,
39 Catherine Street, St Albans AL3 5BJ
<https://www.camphillvillagetrust.org.uk/>

November - Wednesday - 13th 11.00am - 1.00pm
The Rose and Crown,
60 High Street,
Kings Langley Herts WD4 9HT
<https://www.roseandcrownkingslangley.co.uk/>

December - Tuesday 10th 11.00am - 1.00pm
Burston Garden Centre,
North Orbital, Chiswell Green,
St Albans, Herts AL2 2DS
<https://www.burston.co.uk/>

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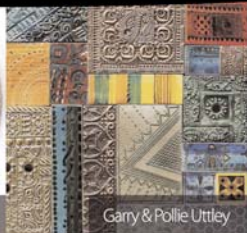
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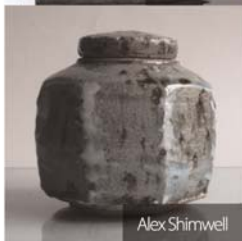
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