

Early 1975

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DACORUM AND CHILTERN POTTERS GUILD  
NEWSLETTER NUMBER 2

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PROGRESS REPORT

The Guild now has 160 paid up members and a mailing list of 400. In view of present costs of typing, duplicating and postages we would be grateful if those who have not yet had an opportunity to pay their subscription would do so by post to The Secretary, Northfields Studio, Tring, Herts if they wish to continue to be circularised with information about Guild events which we hope they do.

Your steering Committee met on 3 January. It was felt important that further thought should be given to venue and size of meetings. Tony Plessner the Treasurer produced a useful scatter graph of the distribution of membership. Consideration was given to restriction of attendance at meetings by tickets obtained in advance, but it was felt better to risk crowded meetings for the time being rather than dampen enthusiasm. It was agreed that the Sub Committees, especially the three most important ones, the Fund Committee, the Programme Committee and the Newsletter Committee should be convened as a matter of urgency.

We would be grateful if those willing to put their names forward for service on these Committees would contact the Secretary.

The rest of the discussion was of a planning nature for events already in the pipe line.

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VENUES FOR MEETINGS

We would welcome members' offers and suggestions. We prefer our meeting places not to be institutional if possible. With the larger membership it will no longer be possible to have 'full' meetings of the Guild with the exception of outdoor events at members' houses as in the past, but we naturally do not wish to deplete our funds more than necessary by paying large rents for halls. Would members with suggestions provide the following information: Location. Description of room. Numbers accommodated (seated/standing). Facilities e.g. pottery equipment if any, stage, screen, visual equipment etc. Ancillary facilities, bar, coffee, car parking, adjacent room for entertaining lecturers etc. and charges if any.

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THE NEXT MEETING 21 FEBRUARY, THE SCHOOL HOUSE, MENTMORE

A Symposium of Techniques

Danny Killick assisted by Roger Cochrane, Suzanne Winter and David Guiver.

Go to Cheddington and drive into Lord Rosebery's Mentmore Estate. At The Stag turn right. The School House is on the left.

As this is likely to be a crowded and popular meeting we regret we can only admit those showing their membership card at the door. To those being provided with transport by a spouse we can recommend 'The Stag' across the road where we will join you after the meeting.

Leave a space of five feet around the demonstrators or only the front two rows will see.

If any member can offer an electric wheel for the use of the big ware thrower contact the Secretary by telephone, Aldbury Common 229.

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I Danny Killick He came out of Epping Forest to be one of the first victims of comprehensive education in Harlow New Town. He probably gained some 'O's' and 'A's' but beat the system by enjoying Art. He owes his salvation to the Art Mistress at Harlow. Later he went to Walthamstow Art School to paint but became more interested in the work of the pottery. He became Technical Assistant in the pottery of Harlow Technical College which had the good fortune to be run by Sally Anderson until he went to Harrow in 1965/1967 he found time for sikhing and acted with the Moat House players. On leaving Harrow he used Murray's workshop at Pitstone Hill where he found conditions had not changed much since the occupation of the Belgae. He has taught part time in many Art Schools, some of them futile. After a short period at the Briglin Pottery he set up in the deserted School House of Lord Rosebery's Mentmore Estate. He works with one assistant. If you get bored with his pottery demonstration he will play the ukulele.

David Guive Began as a painter, began potting with Bill Marno in The Towey Community. Now working with Danny Killick and hopes to go to Harrow next year. He will decorate.

Suzanne Winter Is from the U.S.A. and lived in Holland for some years. She was assistant to Danny Killick and is at present in her final year at Harrow. She will make tableware.

Roger Cochrane Good all round traditional potter, kiln builder, raw glazer and big ware thrower. Is in his final year at Harrow.

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#### VISIT TO THE GLADSTONE POTTERY WEDNESDAY 9 APRIL

This visit has been arranged in the Easter vacation so that members can make it a family trip if they wish. The coach will leave Hemel Hempstead bus station at 9 a.m. There is plenty of free car parking.

Please make your booking enclosing £2 per head. Those booking first will be given the places.

The Gladstone Pottery is a Victorian Potbank conserved as a working Museum to give a unique insight into the techniques and way of life of Staffordshire potters of the past. Four spectacular bottle ovens stand in the yard. The engine house and ip house are restored to working order, and in the low ceiling workshops a riety of pottery is being made.

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#### CALENDAR

Details of vanue and other events being planned etc. will be circularised later.

February 21	75 Planning Meeting (see Roman project)
March 6	Visit Verulamium Museum (see Roman project) (day) 10?
March 21	Film Night 7.30
April 16	Lecture Demonstration (see Roman project)
April 20	Pot Crawl
May 23	Illustrated Lecture Roman Kilns
May 24/25	Roman Kiln Building
June 21/22	Packing and Firing Roman Kilns
July 5	Garden Party. We are open to offers of a venue for this event. No catering is asked of the host. Each guest brings a bottle or bottles for the bar and a dish for the table.

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#### PAST MEETINGS

There will be a full report of the Inaugural Meeting for those who are unable to attend in the next Newsletter.

100 Potters wheels Murray Fieldhouse showed slides to about 35 people at Little Winch, Chipperfield. Wheels from ancient Crete and Egypt to the present day: Hand wheels, band wheels, stick wheels, lever wheels, bevel wheels, cranked wheels, fixed shaft wheels, archimedean wheels, primitive wheels, sophisticated sheels,



boy wheels and girl wheels, wheels from steering columns, wheels from locomotives, you name it, Murray had a slide of it. He apologised for only having 93 slides when he had promised 100, but just as we thought we were to be spared, he produced a box of photographs to fill in the gaps. When it came to the more complicated mechanical wheels he began to flounder a little but was brought through to the end by the able assistance of Mervyn Fitzwilliam and Mr Stott who he had cunningly put in the front row. Eyes began to glaze under this final attack of advanced technology. Another technical session on wheels with a smaller group able to take it would seem to be called for. We had hoped to see wood fired raku by Joan and June but they had to leave before the end of the meeting. Another time perhaps.

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#### LOCAL COURSES

"Survey of pottery in the Area" will give details of all regular Courses in the area when published. This column is reserved for information about casual one off Courses especially Summer Schools. Please send us information if you are running one in the locality.

Three Pottery Seminars will be held in Rickmansworth March 8, May 17 and October 11. The Lecturer is Harry Fraser, Author of "Glazes for the Craft Potter". Details from Clay Glaze, 1 High Street, Rickmansworth, Herts.

Patrick Rentions, the well known stained glass worker runs pottery classes for children at Burleighfield House, Loudwater, Bucks. Write direct for the dates for 1975.

Dacorum and Chiltern Potters Guild. The Guild does not yet have a workshop for its own Courses. Practical projects are conducted by people making their pots at home or in Colleges with the Guild providing supplementary interest lectures and demonstrations on a particular theme, such as the wood fired raku project last year and the Roman pottery project 1975. Both these events have been Spring/Summer, but now that the Guild is larger there may be a sufficient number of people who are not going away Summer/Autumn to make the consideration of a second project worth while. We would be pleased to have views and suggestions from members.

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#### SIAMIAN WARE

It is hoped that as many members as possible, not only those actually taking part in the practical project on Roman pottery, will make tests for Siamesian ware and bring the samples of their results, successful or not, for discussion at the Lecture on Roman kiln building 23 May.

The early Greek and Roman potters frequently employed Terra Sigillata (Siamesian Ware), a thin opaque glossy finish on their wares. Although the body was porous the coating was dense, impervious with a low or high gloss and resistant to chemical attack.

The material used for making Terra Sigillata is either a clay or a shale. It is prepared as follows:

Clay material	20%	Clay	400 grams
Water	80%	Water	1000 millilitres
Soda Ash	.5%	Soda Ash	4 grams

Ideally this mixture should be ballmilled for 4 hours, but if this is not possible put it through the finest sieve you have. When sieved and/or ballmilled pour the liquid into tall containers preferably glass so that you can see the sections as it settles between 20 hours to 3 days. The top will be clear water, the middle will be fine clay particles and the lower heavier particles. Carefully syphon the water from the top without disturbing the suspension, then pour off a third of the middle suspension. This is your Terra Sigillata. Discard the rest.

Terra Sigillata pottery should be smoothly finished and the slip put on thinly 1.15 specific gravity if you are scientific. Colouring oxides can be used but must be ballmilled.



Dried Terra Sigillata 30%, Oxides 3%, Water 70%.

Polishing or burnishing after applying the slip will give a hither gloss. The size and shape of the clay particles influences the result and the fine plate like particles of illite in the clay influence good results.

The sedimentation process separates quartz from the clay and the coating would generally have less expansion and contraction than the body and such coatings fit most bodies. The firing temperature will depend on the clay used, 1050°C to 1150°C being usual.

Terra Sigillata is now made commercially in Stoke-on-Trent by Johnsons Tiles who we have asked to vet the data above! Would anyone who has any experience to offer please send it immediately in time for the next Newsletter.

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#### ROMAN POTTERY

A Practical Project conducted by Christine Rowe assisted by Mary Ann Spillman, Murray Fieldhouse, Mike Hardy, the Walhall students, and the Manshead Archaeological Society.

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The dates for this have been altered as below to permit any new members interested to take part. There are 10 places left for people who wish to participate in the practical work. The sessions marked with \*\* will be open to all members of the Guild.

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Potters and pottery teachers are increasingly interested in unglazed pottery. The phenomenal success of the recent Exhibition of Elizabeth Frisch both with potters and the general public has confirmed this interest.

The aim of the project is to develop the 'seeing eye' for unglazed pottery using those historical models closest to us and most readily available for study in the locality. A three month focus on Roman wares will inevitably bring increased sensibility to form and a new dimension to the work of those participating.

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Christone Rowe works at Holland Park School but is widely known for her work at the Open Air Museum at Singleton, near Chichester, where she has built and successfully fired Roman and Medieval kilns.

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#### PROGRAMME

February 21 Planning Meeting

March 6 Visit to the Verulamium Museum at St Albans in the company of Brian Adams to handle wares, discuss technical and historical points and location of kilns in the area. From A 414 into St Albans, Verulamium is well signposted. The Museum is opposite the ancient site and there is plenty of free car parking beside the Museum. \*\*

Brian Adams His postgraduate research has been on Anglo Saxon collections. He was associated with the excavations of the Roman kilns at Radlet and has worked at Verulamium since he left College.

April 16 The aesthetic of Roman pottery. Copious slides and examples of excavations in the Dunstable area. Murray Fieldhouse assisted by Mr Matthews of the Manshead Archaeological Society. Venue to be arranged - probably Dunstable. \*\*

APRIL/MAY Those participating in practical work to get on with it; Winning clay and making pots at home or in Colleges. Those without facilities can come to Northfields Studio on Thursdays by arrangement.



- May 23            Building Roman kilns. A lecture with slides.            \*\*  
Christine Rowe assisted by Murray Fieldhouse and a member of  
the Manshead Archaeological Society.
- May 24/25        Commence building Roman kilns at Northfields Studio.  
Arrangements for the continuation of building kilns to be  
made between the kiln building group.
- June 21           Packing and firing of Roman kilns.
- June 22           Continuation of firing. Open Day. The stokers will            \*\*  
accept drinks from visitors!
- June 28           Opening of Roman kilns            \*\*

Various other specialists will be brought in to participate as the project proceeds.

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I would like to apply for one of the 10 places available for taking part in the  
practical work of the Roman project:-

Name .....

Address .....

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#### STOP PRESS

The Welfare Department of the Bucks County Council would like  
to know if we have a member who digs Buckinghamshire Blue Vein  
Clay. They have a lady of 85 who is blind and has a recipe for  
a cure using an eye pack of the clay mixed with vinegar that  
she wants to try.

Mrs Marion Jones of Leighton Buzzard has a daughter in Whitby  
who gave her some enamels for decorating industrial blanks.  
In Whitby the local crafts shop provides the blanks and the  
enamels and fires the ware for clients after they have painted  
them. Can anyone provide such a service in this area.

Please inform the Secretary of any sequel to these requests.

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I would like to continue to receive information  
about the activities of the Guild

PLEASE ENROL ME AS A MEMBER OF THE GUILD

NAME.....

ADDRESS.....

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I enclose remittance of £1

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#### LOCAL AUTHORITIES AT A DISTANCE

We shall not obtain any directly in these hard times but there  
are various ways in which we can get help indirectly. This

Newsletter co-  
rean we would

If every teacher member brought us one  
ough for a year.