

DACORUM AND CHILTERN POTTERS GUILD

NEWSLETTER

NO.7

SECRETARY:
MURRAY FIELDHOUSE
NORTHFIELDS STUDIO
TRING, HERTS.

TREASURER:
K.W. PLESSNER
LITTLE WINCH
CHIPPERFIELD
KINGS LANGLEY
HERTS

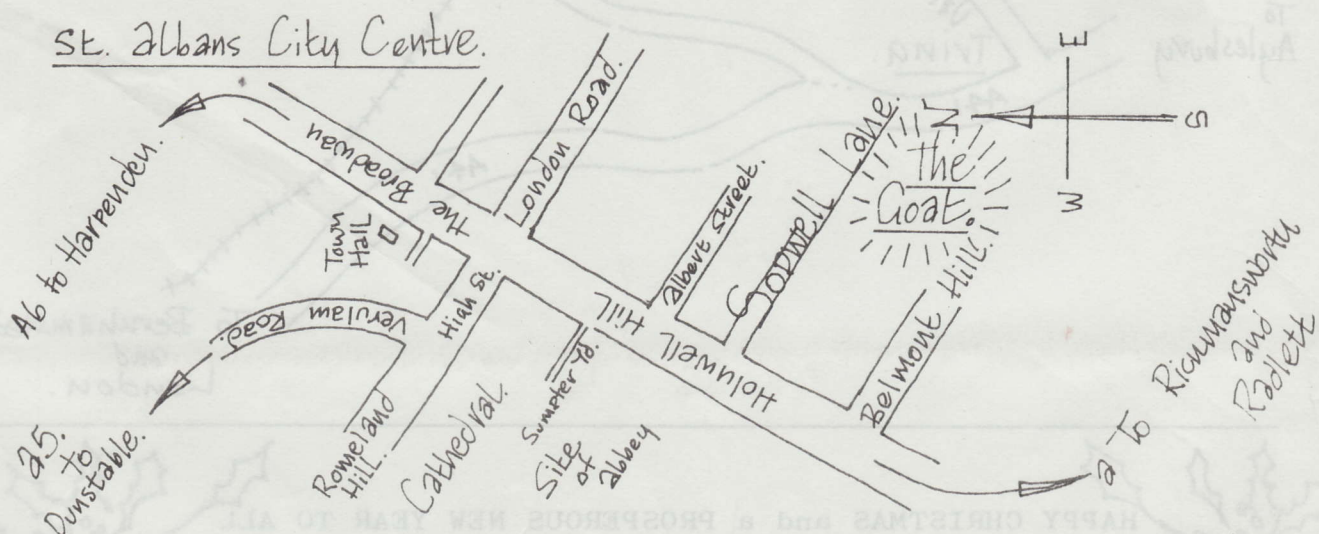
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CALENDAR

SOUNDS, SLIDES AND READINGS: A unique opportunity for those who have not heard these leading potters express both their philosophy and practical ideas. The recordings are from the archives of the Craftsman's Potters Association and are of their best public lectures. Potters included are Bernard Leach, Geoffrey Whiting, Michael Cardew, Daniel Rhodes and last, but not least, Harry Davis. Harry must surely be the most modern and retiring of potters and his integrity, philosophy and quality of work (both technical and aesthetic) is complete. This will be an organised evening during which there will be an opportunity for members to contribute readings. FRIDAY 28th NOVEMBER at THE VILLAGE INSTITUTE, WATLING STREET, RADLETT. 7.30 p.m.

INFORMAL EVENING: Exchange of ideas and summer visits. Bring any slides of interest (they don't have to be related to pottery). Coffee will be available. THURSDAY 4th DECEMBER at 18 THE HORSESHOE, LEVERSTOCK GREEN, NEAR HEMEL HEMPSTEAD. 7.30 p.m.

CHRISTMAS PARTY: To be held at THE GOAT, ST. ALBANS on SATURDAY 13th DECEMBER (See page 7). The Guild requests your full support of this event because Guild finances are involved. Tickets are now available from the Editor and all committee members - Price 50p.



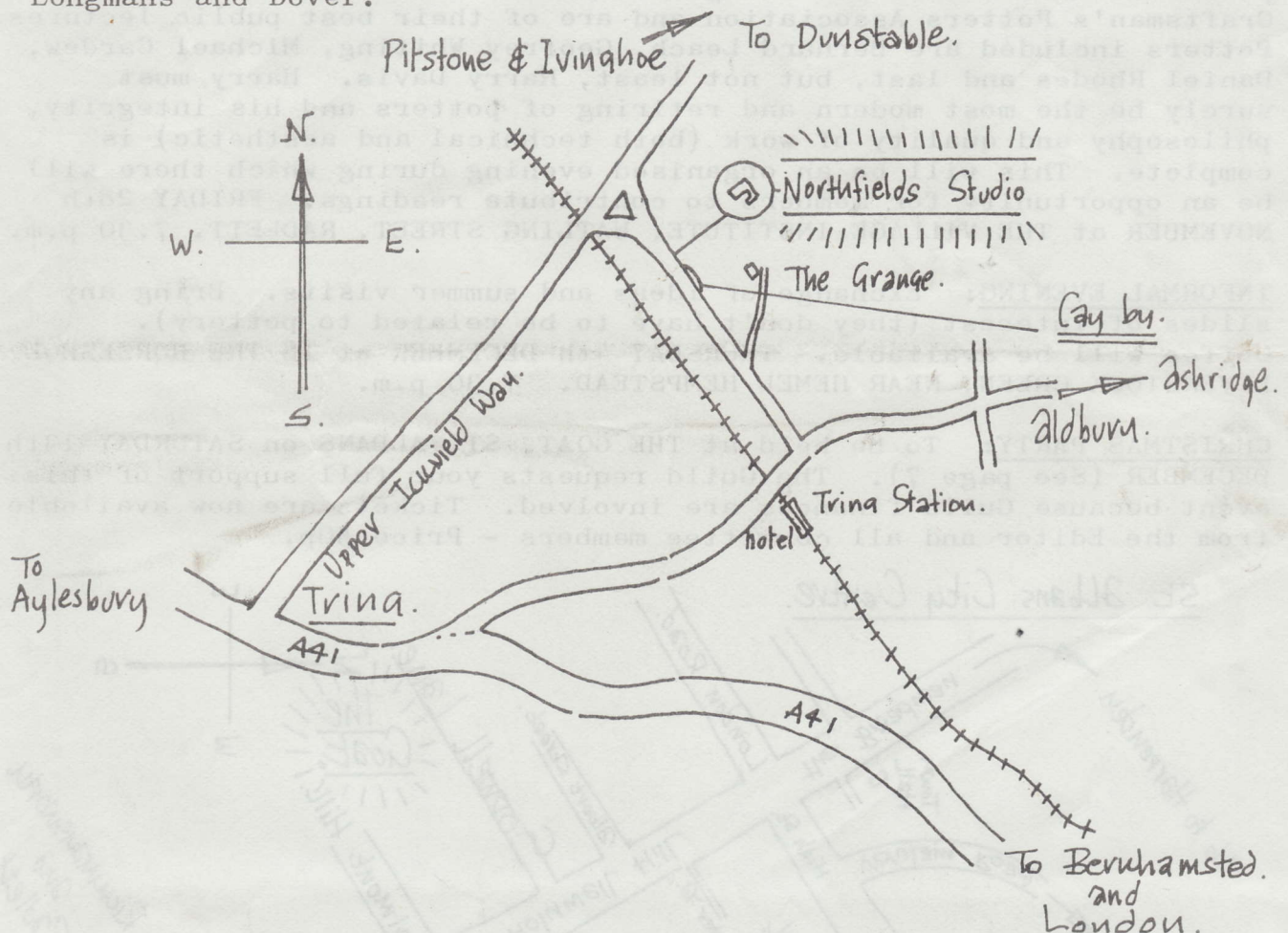
CHRISTMAS DISPLAY OF POTTERY BOOKS AND POTTERY: At P.Q. BOOKS, NORTHFIELDS STUDIO, TRING. On 19th, 20th and 21st DECEMBER. 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. (See page 2).

HANDLEMAKING: At CHORLEY WOODS ART CENTRE. WEDNESDAY 21st JANUARY at 7.30 p.m. More about this on page 6.

There will be a Christmas display of pottery books at P.Q. Books, Northfields Studio, Tring on 19th, 20th and 21st December from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. on each day. Also there will be an exhibition and sale of pottery by Murray Fieldhouse, Mary Ann Spilman and Ed Broadbridge.

It is hoped that most of the popular book titles will be in stock besides the specialised ones. It is difficult to anticipate sales at this time of year so if you have a particular title in mind it is perhaps advisable to let P.Q. Books know in good time so that a copy may be reserved.

Although P.Q. Books stock chiefly pottery titles they can also obtain any arts and crafts title. (Three weeks for British titles not in stock; three months for USA and Japanese titles.) They are also agents for all titles, general as well as art and craft, under the imprint of Faber and Faber, Cassell, Collier and McMillan, Kodanshe, Pitman, Studio Vista, Batsford, Phaidon, Weatherhill Von Nostrand, Nelson, Academy Editions, Thames and Hudson, Barrie and Jackson, Longmans and Dover.



HAPPY CHRISTMAS and a PROSPEROUS NEW YEAR TO ALL

GUILD MEMBERS



Members of the Guild may be interested to hear of a printing service run by a Guild member - Cherry May of 19 Foxholes Avenue, Hertford, Herts. (Hertford 52065). She can supply business cards, notepaper, etc. at competitive rates. Business cards are about £1.25 per 100. Special discount for 500 or more.

*** * creamware * ***

The importation of Chinese porcelain into Europe at the turn of the 18th century stimulated potters everywhere to either discover its secrets or to produce a substitute which would be both practical and cheap. In 1725 John Astbury produced a body by mixing marl (a calcined clay) with ground flint, which acquired a deep, cream colour when fired. Before this time, potters had whitened their wares by mixing flint with the lead ore (galena) used for glazing. By 1750, the Staffordshire pot-makers had evolved a fine, white earthenware with a rich yellow glaze called creamware. Its light body and clean glaze made it ideal for the manufacture of household wares though the cream colour was considered by many to be a serious defect. Josiah Wedgwood probably did more than any other potter to improve the quality of this ware. Eventually, Queensware, as it became known, superseded nearly all other types of pottery including salt-glazed wares and threatened the sales of porcelain. The colour of early creamwares varied considerably because the colour itself was due to the presence of iron as an impurity in the lead ore. Glaze was often uneven in quality. Enoch Booth is credited with having introduced into the potteries at this time the technique of twice firing. (The ware by this method was fired once to the biscuit state, then dipped in a suspended solution of galena, flint and pipeclay, and then fired again.)

Although creamware was developed mainly as a material for useful wares, many fine vases and figures were made in it. Often vases were left undecorated but enamel overglaze decoration and gilding were both used extensively. The most common style in creamware vases is that which may be described as marbled or crystalline. The colours were applied by splashing and then combed or sponged together to simulate the patterns of natural polished stones. Cream coloured wares may be produced by a variety of means. The body may provide one source of colour or an opaque glaze may be employed. Semi-transparent glazes and coloured clays may enhance each other. Some remarkable cream colours may be formed by adding small quantities of glaze stain to a tin glaze. 18th century creamwares were warm in colour and light in weight, their soft forms blending perfectly with the colour and quality of their glazes. They were a truly healthy development; vigorous, unself-conscious and reflecting the real needs of people.

Anne and David Hale

David Hale gave a lecture to members of the Guild earlier this year. David Hale lectured at Tohoku University in Japan from 1966 - 1972 and during that time he and his wife learned pottery at various folk kilns.

Tohoku no Yakimono, (Yuzan Kaku, Tokyo), his book on both old and contemporary pottery and techniques in the north part of Honshu, the main island of Japan, was published there last year, in Japanese and with a preface by Professor Fujio Koyama.

The Hales appeared several times on Japanese television in connection with their ceramic researches and their own pottery which was successfully exhibited in Japan. Since 1972, David has been lecturer in English at Harrow College of Technology and Art. In August they returned to Japan, where David is lecturing at Kyoto University and they will continue their studies.

David's book is an important publication because it is the first history and research work about ceramics in the Tohoku region starting as far back as the Jomon period; it contains a minute record mainly of technical aspects of design, of how clay is prepared, of the designs of various kinds of Kiln which can be found scattered throughout the wide area of the Tohoku region and descriptions of tools and implements.

David says that their interest in ceramics was awakened when in Sendai and went through a series of phases. "We could find nothing in books, nothing in Japanese on the subject of Tohoku ceramics. We made a list of potteries in the region and travelled around all the kilns and kiln sites in outlying and outlandish places. Then came the historic period, learning how the demand for tea ceremony utensils lead to the daimyo protectorate. Nobody had written of these sequences. We studied the techniques."

The Hale's exhibition at Salis, Windsor last July showed some 130 items in a setting with a Japanese air created by such accessories as a fan and small Ikebana type flower arrangements. Pride of place amongst the exhibits went to the two lidded jars to contain water for the tea ceremony. These are called Mizu-sashi. Other tea ceremony wares were cake-plates, green tea cups with oil-spot effects or splashed glazes. There were many vases both large and small, slabbed with brush glaze decoration, splash glazed and ash glazed. Some were decorated with oxide in lovely freely-painted brushwork. Typically Japanese were the Sake sets, comprising two flasks and two or more cups, an incense container and lovely freely-thrown, large bowls.

The atmosphere thus created was one of intense enjoyment which emanated from the Hale's themselves. Their children's clay models also reflected this. I look forward to their book's publication in English complete with its superb illustrations of Japanese ceramic techniques and bamboo tools.

HH

NB: There will be an article by David Hale in Pottery Quarterly No. 45.

Before leaving for Kyoto, David gave the bulk of his collection to the Victoria and Albert Museum, Kensington.

What Happens Inside Your Kiln??????

With business hastily pushed aside, the Annual General Meeting of the Guild was followed by an extremely informative and entertaining lecture. Frank Hamer provided an enlightening experience for the hundred or so members who attended at Abbots Langley (though a few people had a glazed look of confusion afterwards.) Mr. Hamer's technique of delivery bore the mark of years of perfection without being dull or too formal or assuming that thickies like myself understood the complexities of molecular structure and pyroplasticity. In $1\frac{1}{2}$ hours Frank whisked through his material explaining carefully and in very simple terms the changes which your clays and glazes are subject to during the firing processes. His three dimensional models and diagrams were particularly useful. It is a pity that there wasn't sufficient time for question, discussion and inspection of Frank's examples but time was moving on and certain members of the Guild who shall remain nameless (though I don't know why) were craving for alcoholic stimulus. The meeting ended with the Hon. Sec. thanking Frank for his performance. The audience showed their appreciation in the normal way. Unfortunately it was past closing time and most members departed for home. For the rest, the evening had a happy ending, as they descended on Mary Ann's and consumed vast quantities of coffee (without alcohol).

The very first meeting in the New Year is to be a 'seminar' on handlemaking. It is intended that all should come dressed in their oldest clobber. This will ensure that any reluctance to join in for fear of getting dirty will be removed. No smarties will be admitted. If you can't make handles then here is the chance of a lifetime.

Beginners will be coached by the more accomplished members of the Guild. At this meeting, you will be able to learn the finer points of this elusive skill. There is also to be an exhibition of pots with interesting handles. Bring your pots or photographs and clay to show us how you make handles.

In addition to this, we are hoping to demonstrate the following: pressed and cast techniques; Wad box handles; thrown handles; sledged handles; coiled handles; wire-cut handles and any other type which you may be able to think of.

Remember the success of the Guild depends on your participation! Don't let your committee down.

ED.

Toolmaking

22nd October - Kings Langley School

Murray arrived armed with a huge box of interesting tools. Spreading out his collection, he immediately regaled the assembled members with a mine of information and advice. He pointed out that through the advent of claywork in schools, pottery equipment specialists began to look at the design and production of tools which previously potters had had to invent or adapt from everyday items. Members were invited to comment and contribute at regular intervals throughout the two-hour meeting. Every possible tool and piece of equipment relating to the actual techniques involved in working with clay must have been shown, illustrated and discussed. An American book "Building Pottery Equipment" and "The Heritage of Japanese Ceramics" were referred to. Reginald Newman's toolmaking activities for Wengers and Podmores were examined. The Potteries Industry supplied the first useful hint in the form of the use of filter clothes for bench surfaces. A discussion arose over the use of Asbestolux, said to be absorbant, for wedging benches and wheelhead bats.

Bamboo appeared to be one of the most universal materials for handles and shaped tools. Bamboo can be bent with the application of heat from a blow lamp. Cane handles were described but perhaps their popularity has led to new ideas for handles being worked out at art colleges by way of reaction. Bamboo poles from carpet shops can be used a variety of ways including all manner of ribs but perhaps the most aesthetically pleasing tool is the Tomba (Japanese for Dragonfly) which describes the shape of this bamboo strip, internal dimension measuring device. It is made from three strips of bamboo shaped and fixed by means of holes.

A number of household items can be found in any studio including a washing up brush, flour sieve, an old knife and fork, meat scewer, Kirbigrips in form of loops, strips of loofah for scraping up dry clay, polythene strips or chamois leather pieces, and even steel corset bones! Specialist fields such as bakeries provide bench scrapers, wire cutters and forcing bags for slip decoration. Chicken stickers from Smithfields and rosewood handled surgical needles from medical shops have much to recommend them.

Slip decoration may be accomplished with an old-fashioned baby's bottle and quill spout, a cow horn or forcing bag. Feathering is not as some imagined done with the white feather but with a trimmed back fine quill point. A half tube can be used with a twist motion to make holes at the base of the tea-pot spout. A boxwood ruler can be notched to give various regulated rim shapes. Natural sponges were universally recognised for their absorbancy but a number of methods were suggested for fixing them to sticks to be used in the throwing process. A split stick with bound thread, a strongly glued sponge or a clothes-peg attachment might recommend itself. Turning tools are a matter of personal choice and many forms are marketed such as angled metal, hoop iron shapes and stem tools. Ribs for a variety of purposes can be made from almost any material including wood, bamboo, metal and perspex.

Contd.....

Slab cutting techniques varied from the use of a harp with one level or several to two pieces of wood with wire stretched between to a simple method of built-up battens which can be removed after each layer of clay is cut. A hack-saw and "y" shaped tool with wire stretched across may be used for trimming. Coil cutters were compared.

The meeting included a collection of photographs and pots from the Roman Kiln firing at Wall Hall and a demonstration by Ed of sharpening turning tools. Many members had brought their own tried and tested tools and a close inspection followed the main part of the evening.

Heather Howard

If you have been to an exhibition, display, demonstration, museum, then we want to know. Not necessarily for a full write-up (though these are very welcome) but for a few comments, opinion, description of the work/technique employed, ideas/inspiration/sources. If you can't write them down, then dictate over the 'phone. It is possible for the committee to write the Newsletter in addition to their other Guild activities but the Newsletter should be your medium for contacting other potters; a means of expressing your ideas and opinions to an audience of over 220. Don't be shy, pick up a Bic and drop me a line. Copy date for Newsletter No. 8 is January 1st.

Advertisements from members of the Guild will be placed free of charge.

THE CHRISTMAS PARTY

Final arrangements are now being made for the Christmas Party. We require volunteers to entertain on the evening - monologues, conjuring, operatic renderings, acrobatics, hypnotism, belly dancing, striptease - if any of these happens to be your speciality, then please let us know.

The Goat Ceilidh Band, which emerged from St. Albans Folk Music Club, are to play for 2 half-hour sessions. They will provide a caller and teach any of the potters to country dance. There will not be any compulsion to participate!

To keep the costs at a reasonable level (if only to allow more money for drinking) we are asking each member to bring a dish! We would like you to provide for approximately 3 - 4 people and suggestions for the buffet are: Salads; Savoury - Meat balls, Cheese, Cold Meats, Sausage Rolls, Pate; Sweets - Trifles, Flans, Gateaux, Fresh Fruit, Biscuits; Butter, Crisps, etc. You may have other, more interesting, ideas which would be fine. All we ask is that you let us know by not later than 3rd December what you are going to bring by making a note of it on the acceptance slip below. Drinks will be available from the bar.

Money will be payable at the Goat - 50p per head. Since we have to be certain of covering costs, the communication of your intention to come means that you are committed to paying 50p. Remember that friends as well as members are welcome at the Party and we look forward to a super evening.

To: Ray Phipps (Tel: 4139)
23 Hall Park
Berkhamsted
Herts.

I shall be coming to the Christmas Party and I am bringing friends.

I shall be supplying the following food.....

Name Tel:

Bucks Pottery and Sculpture Society

Annual Exhibition

The Dacorum and Chiltern Potters Guild and the Bucks Pottery and Sculpture Society overlap their activities to some extent geographically and therefore enjoy some members in common. The Bucks Pottery and Sculpture Society is long-established and has for some years exhibited at Amersham Town Hall. But both societies emanate from dissatisfaction with the local authority provision for serious part-time students of pottery and the neglect for adult needs in education generally. A predominant influence in the pottery community of this area during the last few years has been Mildred Slatter to whom the Society owes its conception and enjoys her continuing support.

Murray Fieldhouse opened this year's exhibition which displayed a well-balanced mixture of pottery and sculpture in several mediums. The hanging pots of various shapes and sizes were particularly pleasing and dispersed throughout the hall a feeling of lightness, in contrast to the large sculpted garden-style shapes and the life-size busts. The many exhibits covered a wide range of techniques of making and methods of firing. In his opening address Murray applauded the success of the society and the democratic spirit of amateur and professional exhibiting together both for their mutual benefit and that of the community.

The citizens of Amersham have always supported crafts activity and have had at least one craft shop since the twenties. The areas towards Beaconsfield have traditionally supported communities of a Quakerly nature and have drawn to themselves men with a vision for the crafts such as D. H. Lawrence and Herbert Read. There is an undoubted cultural identity in the locality, unusual north of London, and this was confirmed again this year. Two days after opening, the exhibition was sold out.

FOR SALE - 500 Glass Pottery Slides $3\frac{1}{4}$ " x $3\frac{1}{4}$ " in twelve-drawer wooden cabinet plus wooden carrying case. No longer required by retired lecturer! Price: £25. Murray Fieldhouse, Northfields Studio, Tring, Herts.

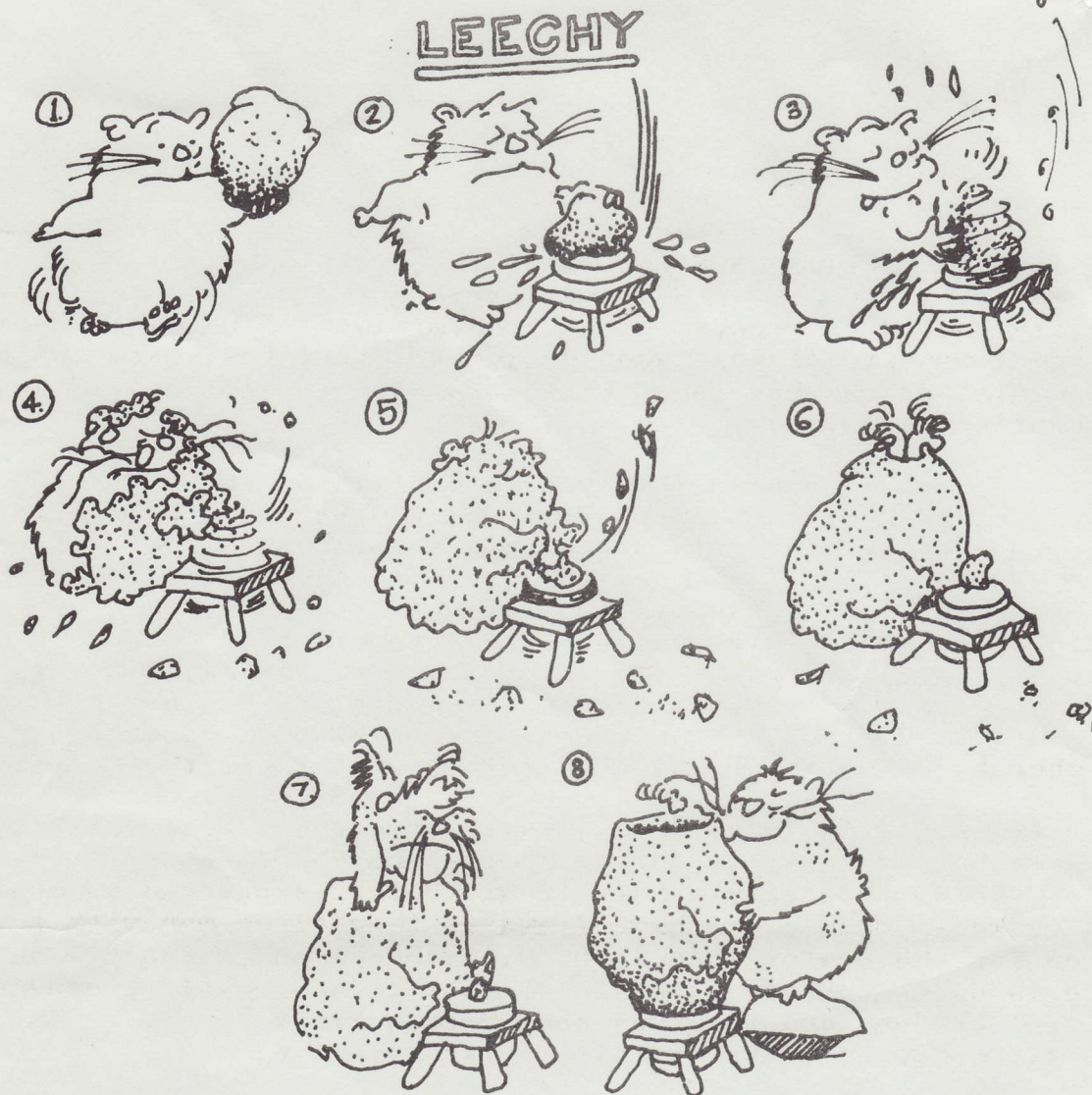
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The Guild are negotiating with Pendley Adult Education Centre for a weekend conference in October or November 1976. The course is expected to be residential.

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While visiting the David Hale exhibition, Murray received a parking ticket and will be going to court - because he believes that the spirit of the traffic act has been abused by the local authority in this instance.

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HAVE YOU RENEWED YOUR MEMBERSHIP YET? IF YOU PAID YOUR SUB.
BEFORE THE RATE WAS INCREASED TO £2, THEN IT IS DUE!
MEMBERS WHO JOINED AFTER APRIL NEED ONLY PAY £1. THE
SUBSCRIPTION IS NOW RENEWABLE ANNUALLY IN OCTOBER.

Introduce a new member to the Guild.

Name

Address

Postcode

Profession

I enclose remittance of £2.

To: The Membership Secretary
Dacorum & Chiltern
Potters Guild
10 Hilltop Road
Kings Langley
Herts.