

DACORUM & CHILTERN POTTERS GUILD

* NEWSLETTER *

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SECRETARY

Murray Fieldhouse
Northfields Studio
Tring
Herts

TREASURER

K.W. Plessner
Little Winch
Chipperfield
Kings Langley
Herts

MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY

Jennifer Bourne
10 Hilltop Road
Kings Langley
Herts

CALENDAR FOR 1976 *

Friday 26th March: Teapot Making by Murray Fieldhouse at Northfields Studio (See Newsletter No. 7 for map). This is another of our open meetings and will not be structured. 7 for 7.30 p.m. Bring teapots of special interest for discussion. The evening will be devoted to the teapot and will be illustrated with slides and demonstrations.

Tuesday 6th April: Tea Ceremony at Bletchley College of Further Education. A live performance of the tea ceremony by the Japanese Embassy using Raku pots and traditional dress. This meeting is a must for those who wish to understand the way in which the tea ceremony has influenced the development of Japanese pottery. The Technical College is situated opposite Bletchley Station. 7 for 7.30 p.m. Demonstration by Mme. Keishu Careless. Car Park at rear of college.

Tuesday 13th April: Technique Meeting. Venue at Chesham High School. This meeting has been arranged as a follow-up to the toolmaking session which was held last year and provides an opportunity for members to show the tools in use. Chesham High School stands at the top of a hill at Whitehill crossroads. This is approached from Amersham by travelling through Chesham High Street and taking the road to the right to Hemel Hempstead. At the five crossways - Whitehill - the school is on the right. From Berkhamsted, take the road to the left (to Hemel Hempstead) just before entering Chesham High Street. Approaching from Hemel Hempstead the school is on the left at the top of the hill before descending to Chesham.

Sunday 23rd May: Visit to Salix Gallery, Windsor in the afternoon. Visit consisting of Ploughman's Lunch then a visit to the gallery. This will be the last day of the Gordon Baldwin exhibition. Following the visit to the Gallery, Reggie Hines, one of the owners, will entertain us to tea at his home by the river. Reggie Hines also has a superb collection of craft pottery.

Monday 23rd June: Celebrity Lecture on Glazes. Details to be fixed.

Saturday 3rd July: Summer Garden Party. A main Guild meeting. Details to be fixed.

June/July. A Sectional Event - Saltglazing. This is to be worked out to finish during June/July and might take two or three weekends. Will those who are interested please write to Mary Ann Spilman at Bedmond Hill House, Bedmond Hill, Pimlico, Near Hemel Hempstead, Herts.

October: Annual General Meeting. A main Guild meeting including a Celebrity Lecture.

October 15 - 17th: Weekend Conference at Pendley Residential Centre for Adult Education, Tring. Friday evening to Sunday tea-time. Pendley is a very pleasant Manor House set in a large park. It presents the ideal setting for a pottery conference. The weekend will consist of several demonstrations and it is hoped to include lectures and demonstrations covering the following topics: slipware techniques; decoration; finishing off wares; slab building; English Traditional Country Potters; using Geology to find materials.

There will be 55 places available, 38 of which can be filled by Guild members. The remaining 17 are to be open places. Applications should be made to Murray with a £3 deposit. If we have filled our 38 then you will be immediately advised so that you can apply for one of the open places at Pendley. Total Cost will be £15 per head + VAT at 8% = £16.20.

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KOREAN & CHINESE CERAMICS, CAMBRIDGE.

Whenever I visit the Fitzwilliam Museum I am tempted to wander around the permanent exhibition which is of particular interest to the potter. Thus I spent a morning 'lost' in the basement. The permanent collection is certainly very impressive and well-displayed. The presentation of the exhibition of Korean and Chinese ceramics is such that one is immediately reminded of the fact that the exhibition is a temporary one. This is probably due to a reduction in the museum's budget for exhibitions. Presentation is sadly lacking in imagination and the hessian backing the space is not terribly sympathetic to the pots comprising the exhibition. Immediate impressions are of an exhibition which has been hastily thrown together. Cases with shelving are not balanced against one another and the use of different levels is not properly exploited.

The particular aim of the exhibition would not, I am sure, be clear to the casual museum goer. At £1, the catalogue is very good value (lots of nice photos), and is certainly a necessary aid to viewing. The introduction by Margaret Medley, Curator of the Percival David Foundation, is of particular interest.

In the exhibition it is possible to trace the influence of Chinese work on the Korean. The reverse of this is harder to see. One would not expect the same kind of dramatic effect which Korean pottery had on the Japanese but I am sure that there was some cross-fertilization. The Chinese influence on Korean pottery was such that it is often hard to differentiate between the two. This is especially true of some Celadon pieces, of which there are some fine specimens.

The pots on display are prime examples of the pottery art. The fact that both Korean and Chinese pots may be seen in one room is doubly interesting. Perhaps the most disappointing aspect of the exhibition is that it is so small. However, the quality of the exhibits is beyond doubt and amply makes up for the lacking quantity.

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THE CRAFT OF THE POTTER.

A Series of 5 BBC Broadcasts

The programmes offer practical help for making pottery. They are aimed primarily at the amateur potter, whether a total beginner or someone with a certain amount of experience. They should also appeal to the increasing number of people who enjoy, and often collect, all kinds of pottery and want to know more about how it is made. They will help the practitioner make a better pot, and at the same time stimulate an appreciation and awareness of the medium through the work and ideas of a number of leading professional British potters - who are among the best in the world.

The series is presented and linked by Michael Casson, one-time Chairman of the Craftsmen Potters Association, and a well-known practising potter. In each programme he will introduce different guest potters to demonstrate personal techniques. This is done in the craftsmen's own workshop.

Throughout the series there will be a strong historical perspective, and Michael Casson will relate present techniques to pottery from the best traditions of the past, using exhibits loaned by the Victoria and Albert Museum and the Horniman Museum, Forest Hill.

Programme One - Handbuilding

Monday 12th April

Location: Mary Rogers' workshop at Loughborough.

Guest: Mary Rogers who has specialised in hand modelled ways of making pottery for the last 15 years and has recently held a very successful one-woman procelain exhibition at the British Crafts Centre.

Contents: Clay - its properties - different types of clay body - preparing clay - hand-building pots: coiling, slabbing, pinching - every way of making pots without a wheel.

Programme Two - Throwing

Monday 19th April

Location: Michael Casson's workshop, Prestwood.

Guest: David Leach (son of Bernard Leach who was mainly responsible for the revival of pottery in Britain) who runs a very successful pottery in Devon, and has had several one-man shows in England and USA.

Contents: The wheel - different types - hand, kick and power - how to throw - different clay bodies on the wheel - Michael prepares and throws in stoneware and David throws procelain, using a variety of shapes, side by side.

Programme Three - Decorating

Monday 26th April

Location: Alan Caiger-Smith's workshop, Aldermaston.

Guests: Alan Caiger-Smith and Eileen Nisbet. Alan Caiger-Smith is well-known for his beautiful brush-decorated goblets, mugs, bowls and vases. Eileen Nisbet specialises in incised and inlaid dishes and tiles, and pierced individual pieces. She teaches part-time at the Central School of Art and Design.

Contents: Michael Casson and Eileen Nisbet will demonstrate all the things one can do to decorate a pot - applied clay - using slip - texturing - incised work - stamping - etc. Alan Caiger-Smith will demonstrate painting techniques and the use of brushes. Alan and Michael will demonstrate wax-resist.

Programme Four - Glaze and Fire

Monday 3rd May

Location: Harrow College of Technology and Art.

Guests: Walter Keeler and Lynne Reeve. Walter Keeler teaches part-time at Harrow, and has designed many of their kilns. In his own workshop he is known for his saltglaze and domestic stoneware. Lynne Reeve has worked in Holland and is now doing glaze research at the Royal College of Art.

Contents: Glazes - what they are - how they work - how to make your own glazes - how to alter colour and transparency. Different types of kiln, principles of packing, firing and unpacking a kiln - glaze and fire working together.

Programme Five - Talking about Pots

Monday 10th May

Location: The British Crafts Centre, London.

Guests: Michael Cardew, Victor Margrie, Pan Henry, John Catleugh. Michael Cardew is one of our most eminent potters. He used to work with Bernard Leach and has been a potter since 1923. He had numerous exhibitions in many countries. Wrote "Pioneer Pottery". Worked in Africa for some years with local potters. Victor Margrie is Secretary of the Crafts Advisory Committee. Pan Henry runs the Casson Gallery, London. John Catleugh is a collector of "art" pottery.

Contents: Michael Casson will chair a discussion which will centre on the appraisal of individual pieces of work by some of our best potters, in which the themes of the past 4 programmes will be drawn together. Why does a pot "succeed"? How do clay, shape, decoration, line of handle, foot or lip, glaze, texture and firing work together to good effect? The programme will include recordings of Bernard Leach, Shoji Hamada, Michael Cardew and Elizabeth Fritsch at work.

A series of free leaflets produced in association with the Crafts Advisory Committee will include information and technical points from the programmes.

An exhibition is being held at The British Crafts Centre, London, to coincide with the transmission of the series, to run from 13th April to 14th May. It will show pottery in different stages of making, glazing, etc. and will illustrate points made during the programmes, with stills from the series and finished work by our guest contributors. On some days the contributors will carry out live demonstrations of their work.

Transmission Times: 5 weeks beginning 12th April, 1976. Monday evenings, 1905 on BBC-2.

Director: Anna Jackson

Producer: David Hargreaves

HANDLEMAKING.

18th February at Chorley Wood Art Centre

The meeting was postponed from 21st February and was eagerly awaited and well attended by about 100 Guild members. An opportunity was given during the meeting to settle outstanding membership subs.

Murray Fieldhouse opened the meeting and thanked those who had responded to his request for demonstrators: Danny Killick, Mike Hardy, Diggery Kempton, Mildred Slatter and Roger Wynn. Holding up a variety made by Michael Casson, Bernard Leach, Michael Cardew and Danny Killick, he suggested that handles should be pulled for practice on already fired pots like these and he had several to show.

Danny Killick presented the slippery subject of pulling handles with precision. He loaded the exercise with sound advice to separate the first stage - wet hands and stub-pulling, from the second stage - where relatively dry hands are needed to shape and fix the handles. He talked about the invitation a handle should give to be picked up and that it should be held and released comfortably. He quickly pulled a row of stubs uniform in thickness and oval in section, taking care to snip the end of each before laying them on a wooden board and cutting them about four inches long. Without delay he applied them to the pots after scratching the pot and giving it a lick. Having formed one end, he joined it at a pre-determined angle. With dry hands, he pulled the stub, not too thinly, before allowing it to form its own curve and secured it at its base with his thumbs. He said that it is good to remember that each progressive process in pottery loses definition and that handles should be slightly overstated at this stage. Three members persuaded by Murray volunteered to be coached by Danny and those who had brought pots were invited to put handles on them. Danny discussed the stiffness of the clay and its influence on the spring or tension or flowing qualities of handles. He illustrated this with examples by other famous potters.

Diggery Kempton was unfortunately delayed by the underground and arrived too late to demonstrate the immediate process of pulling handles on pots while they are still on the wheel. He restrained our curiosity by explaining that this delicate process can only be performed by throwing with the minimum amount of water in the first place.

Mike Hardy had brought a selection of tools to demonstrate cut-wire and extruded handles. He asked us to consider the practical function of handles with the accent on strength, hot liquids and oven gloves in mind and the aesthetic approach with the relationship of handle to form. Reference was made to Medieval wares and the way in which handles follow the forms. He quickly made us see how a delicately modelled wire, run through a stiff block of well-wedged clay can produce a number of identical handles - shapes that would be impossible to pull. He pointed out that while the pulled handle is ideally suited to the thrown pot, extruded handles are well suited to thrown and turned ware.

Mildred Slatter was persuaded to demonstrate two ways of applying lugs to large pots or casseroles. With little ceremony, she pulled a full section, divided it in two and applied them to the shoulder of a pot with a nimble 'twist and stick'. Finishing was done with a dry thumb.

The final flourish of the evening came from Danny and was executed with dexterity and considerable panache. Take a pulled round handle, score it with a tool, miraculously in mid-air, twist it a little too much and PRESTO you have a twisted cruet handle.

ADS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS.

A one-day seminar is to be held in Rickmansworth on 8th May for advanced potters. Lecturers - Danny Killick and Harry Fraser. For further details of this contact 'Clayglaze', High Street, Rickmansworth.

Ruth Karnac is able to do kiln repairs. Her 'phone number is Rickmansworth 73249.

Mrs. S. Gavin of 10 Rook Tree Lane, Stotfold, Beds, has a Cromartie Studio 5 Kiln and a Rayefco Wheel which she is willing to share with anyone who can provide working space.

Wanted Urgently. One wad box (coil extruding machine). Complete or otherwise in any condition. Ed Broadbridge, 231 Leagrave High Street, Luton, Beds.

Cambridge. Fitzwilliam Museum. Korean and Chinese Ceramics 24th February - 28th March. A loan exhibition mounted jointly by the Fitzwilliam Museum and the Percival David Foundation of Chinese Art, University of London. Weekdays 10 - 17.00. Sundays 14.15 - 17.00.

Hitchin Museum and Art Gallery. 'Staffordshire Blue and White' 7th - 21st March. A travelling exhibition of pottery from the Victoria and Albert Museum. Hitchin 4476.

Introduce a new member to the Guild

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

Postcode

Profession

I enclose a remittance of £2.00 membership subscription.

SALT GLAZE * PROJECT '76.

German bellarmine, Dutch gin bottles, French drug jars, Portuguese wine bottles, Staffordshire teapots, Staffordshire figure groups, Doulton domestic ware, Sewage pipes, Ink pots, Diploma pots - the list could go on. The ware itself is generally utilitarian, basic and beautiful, resulting from expedient, simple, practical methods and motives.

Salt is of course toxic and corrosive. Poisonous chlorine and sodium vapours are given off as it volatilises, sodium oxide reacting with silica to form a glaze; sodium silicate. This glaze spreads over all exposed surfaces welding together any that touch, impregnating the kiln interior and furniture thus making it unsuitable for any other form of firing and significantly decreasing its life. However, the results can be magnificently rewarding.

Refer to Pottery Quarterlies 40 and 42, Ceramic Reviews 33 and 34 for more specific and detailed information. There are numerous handsome examples in Museum collections particularly the Hanley Museum, Stoke on Trent.

ISN'T IT ABOUT TIME WE TRIED IT?

Interested able bodies, with or without experience, ready to help and or with offers of, or suggestions about where we might obtain cheaply, the necessary materials and equipment, please contact one of us:

June Waite, Hemel Hempstead 3768
Mary Ann Spilman, Kings Langley 63723
Derek Tattersall, Hemel Hempstead 67131

We need: concrete, refractory bricks, house bricks, fire clay, catenary arch former, kiln shelves and supports, burners, oil, etc. etc.....

A planning meeting can be arranged as soon as the support is forthcoming and we can build the kiln and pollute the air at Bedmond Hill.

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RAKU FIRING IN BERKHAMSTED.

After high winds and rain had destroyed any chance of a Saturday afternoon's raku firing, a whole Sunday was devoted to this some weeks later. The high winds obviously weren't ill because the extra hours allowed on the Sunday were very useful.

By 11 a.m. a small area in Ray Phipps' arboreal garden had been cleared and level paving slabs had replaced grass; brick clay and sand were wet-mixed and the first course of house bricks had been laid on the mixture. Four in line each side with two across the end. See fig. 1.

The second course started with half-bricks so that a good bond was made. Fig. 2. All the bricks were well grouted-in with the clay and

sand. Attention was paid all the time to assure a good level. The mild steel firebars were placed across the bricks on top of the two courses. Flat bars 16" to 18" long and about $\frac{1}{8}$ " thick by 1" wide used.

Three courses laid alternately were then laid over the firebars. On top of these were placed batts for the base of the kiln chamber, allowing sufficient opening for the flames to traverse the chamber. See Fig. 3.

Bernard Leach gives dimensions. Grate area cross section to kiln floor area should be in the ratio of 1:8. For obvious reasons grate openings are better too large than too small. Stack diameter should be about $\frac{1}{4}$ of kiln diameter or less. Since the stack was made by alternating four bricks in a swastika sequence, they were easy to move apart slightly to increase the flue diameter if needed. Figs. 4 & 5.

Five courses of stack were built making it approximately a foot high. A stoneware pipe 4' long and 4" diameter was securely filleted to the top.

The kiln chamber was built on top of the batts similar to the flue chamber except for the bag wall, the doorway and the chimney entrance. See Fig. 6.

The bag wall was made one brick width from the inside end of the kiln and was one brick less in height than the three courses making up the chamber. One criticism of the kiln was that since the flames were not seen to curve over the bag wall and down sufficiently, it was estimated that a higher bag wall and consequently a higher kiln chamber would suffice to increase turbulence to carry the flames over the wall and well down among the pots. See Figs. 7 & 8.

As the finishing touches were being made to the structure, Murray brought his deadly, portable, gas flame thrower to bear and two hours after the first sod had been cut firing commenced. Dry-stored pieces of wood were fed into the kiln chamber and after a while the gas was withdrawn. A note here: smoke in the kiln should be avoided and there are at least two good ways of ensuring that no smoke is produced.

1. Place long, thin pieces of dry wood at the entrance to the flue and parallel to it and feed these into the kiln chamber slowly.
2. Throw into the flue chamber small pieces of wood at regular intervals. Do not feed too many pieces of wood in too short a time and do not let the fire burn too low.

At 3.15 the first of the pots were placed in the kiln with tongs and 23 minutes later the first were withdrawn, plunged into sawdust, then water, and inspected.

The replacement pots put into the kiln included one made of an ungrogged stoneware body. This split into many pieces almost immediately. The first pots were marred by immature glaze and so a decision was made to add 15 - 20% more frit to the glaze.

More pots, having been dried, were placed inside the kiln and regular stoking brought the kiln temperature up to 900°C. Later in the evening when all parts of the kiln were really hot the temperature might have reached 1000°C.

Gill Godschalk, doing her "A" level Pottery, had made a sort of cocktail with 'T' Frit, Copper, Manganese and Cobalt and used a tin glaze on top of this. These came out with metallic lustres of copper, irridescent silver-whites and lots of reds, golds and greens.

More pots were fired, many of them pleasing and satisfying their makers. As the evening wore on and became night the scene was one of considerable devilish activity. Firing continued by lamplight, with tongues of smoke-tinged flame arising like St. Elmo's fire from the chimney head.

Firing continued at an unheard of pace. There seemed no end to the supply of pots.

Someone brought potatoes which were roasted (sacrificed?) under the fire grate. Liquid and solid refreshment appeared from time to time - and then came the symbolic last firing of the day when Ray Phipps (our magnificent host) brought a box of wood shavings which burned so brightly that I could write notes easily by the light of the flames.

Finally, the survivors surveyed the scene as the last pots were cooled and scrubbed, the kiln already cooling after 12 hours of activity.

About 50 members attended for all or part of the day. All went away with something: the spirit of "wabi", the inner feeling of the Rakuist.

1. Wally Keelers Raku Glazes. Wally teaches at Harrow and has experimented considerably in Raku.

<u>Glaze:</u>	T. Frit (Podmores)	P2250	85
	Whiting	"	15
	Ball Clay	"	10

- (a) Colouring add 2 - 3% copper carbonate. Try also black copper oxide. This tends to give more speckled turquoise/green than the carbonate.
- (b) Add 0.5% cobalt oxide for vivid turquoise blue.
- (c) Add 1 - 2% manganese purple/plum colour. With a little cobalt may give a deep violet.
- (d) 4% tin oxide for opaque white.

All the above may be applied direct with a brush.

2. White Lead (Note Memo 517 Ministry of Education Poison!)

Flint	55
Felspar	25
Ball Clay	10
Whiting	5
	5

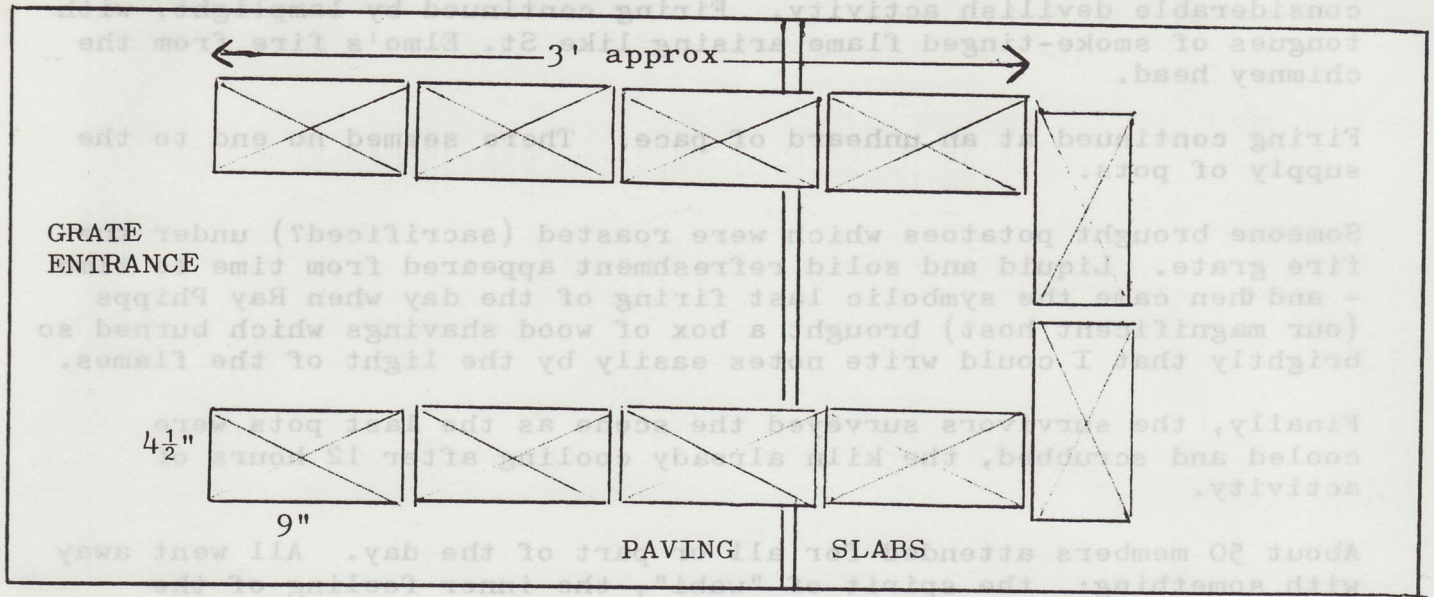


FIG. 1 1st Course Bricks (Plan)

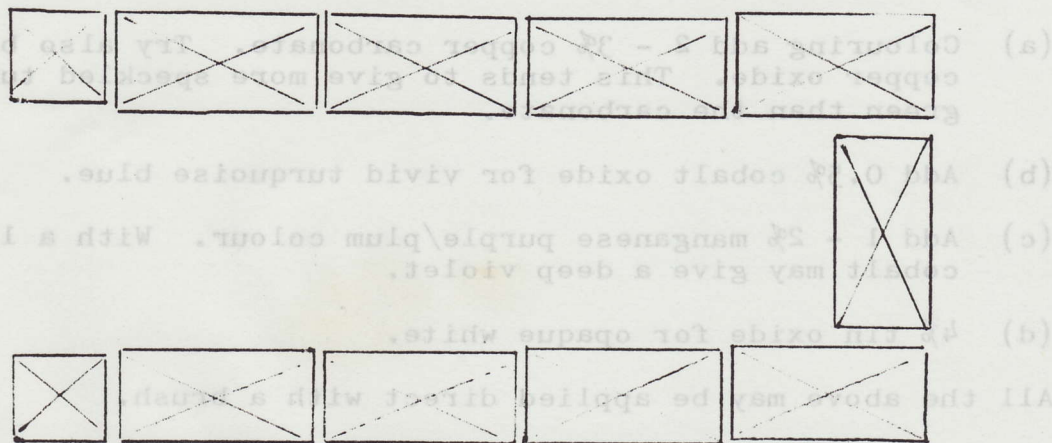


FIG. 2 2nd Course Bricks (Plan)

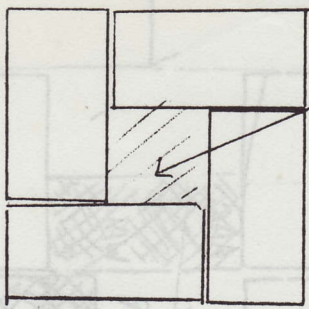


FIG. 4

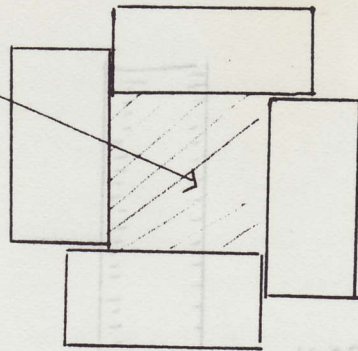
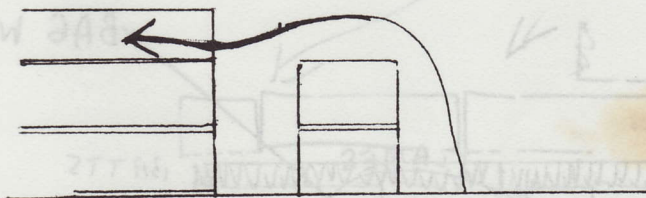


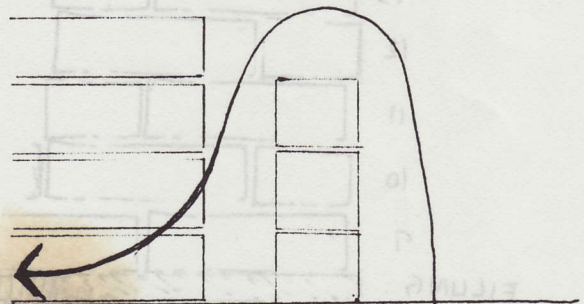
FIG. 5



3 Courses
Kiln Height

2 Courses
Bag Wall

FIG. 7



4 Courses
Kiln Height

3 Courses
Bag Wall

FIG. 8

(AN IMPROVEMENT ?)

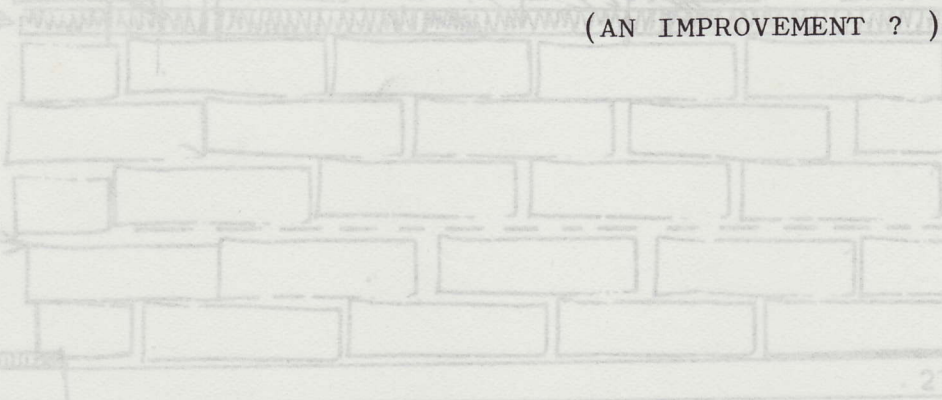


FIG. 3 -

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