

# Dacorum and Chiltern Potters Guild Newsletter 9

## SECRETARY

Murray Fieldhouse  
Northfields Stuido  
Tring  
Herts

## TREASURER

K.W. Plessner  
Little Winch  
Chipperfield  
Kings Langley  
Herts

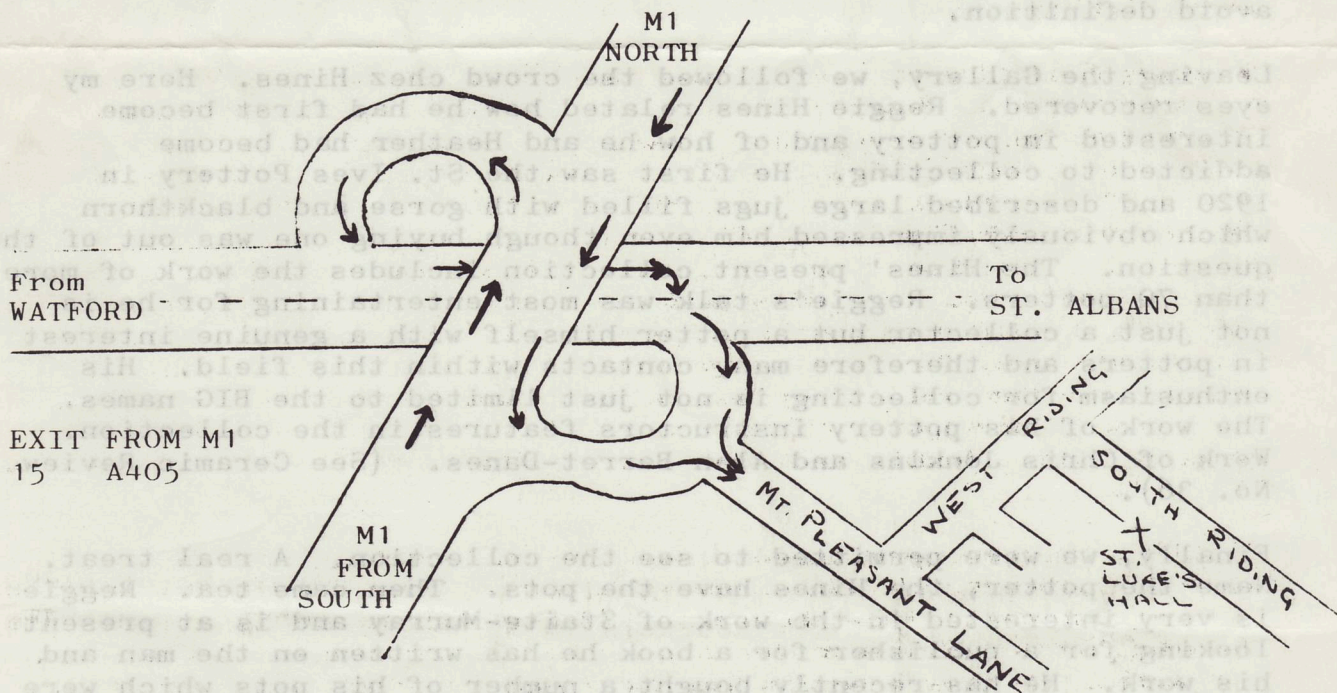
## MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY

Jennifer Bourne  
10 Hilltop Road  
Kings Langley  
Herts

## CALENDAR

Saturday 12th and Sunday 13th June: Salt Glazing. First meeting for this project. To be held at Bedmond Hill House, Bedmond Hill, Pimlico, Hemel Hempstead. 2 p.m. See page 6 for map.

Tuesday 22nd June: Celebrity Lecture - Speaker: Geoffrey Whiting  
At St. Luke's Halls, South Riding, Bricket Wood, Near Watford.  
7.30 p.m. for 8 p.m. See map below.



Saturday 3rd July: Summer Garden Party. Meeting at Chartist Cottage, Nottingham Road South, Heronsgate, Rickmansworth, Herts. 7.30 p.m. See page 9.

October 15th/17th: Weekend Conference at Pendley Residential Centre

October 29th: Annual General Meeting including Celebrity Lecture



## SALIX

Forty-one Guild members assembled on the 'doorstep' of Salix Gallery, Windsor, on a gloriously sunny, summer afternoon, with the intention of inspecting the Gordon Baldwin exhibition.

The small white gallery, flashed with chrome-tin pinks and 'new' underglaze colours, soon became athrong with people creating an intimate atmosphere for G.B.'s latest objets d'art. G.B. himself made a special star appearance and answered questions from Guild members - mostly of a technical nature. He explained that he was using a stock Podmore buff clay and a porcelainous body for casting, firing to cone 7.

Gordon Baldwin's 'way of working' has been steadily gaining acceptance over the years. To witness the influence his 'outrageous and unconventional' work has had, one only needs to visit a Ceramics Diploma Show. Gordon says, 'technique should be taken for granted anyway.' A perfectionist craftsman, as Gordon is, can get down to the nitty-gritty of ideas without the limitations which pottery techniques usually impose. Even his accidents are non-accidents as in 'Green Crack'. Ideas precede execution. He breaks the rules time and time again, the referees have stepped aside. Probably the most striking thing about this exhibition was the way in which colour has been used. Nice colours manipulated with the freedom with which the canvases have also been controlled. But for all this, I remain suspicious of objects which avoid definition.

Leaving the Gallery, we followed the crowd chez Hines. Here my eyes recovered. Reggie Hines related how he had first become interested in pottery and of how he and Heather had become addicted to collecting. He first saw the St. Ives Pottery in 1920 and described large jugs filled with gorse and blackthorn which obviously impressed him even though buying one was out of the question. The Hines' present collection includes the work of more than 70 potters. Reggie's talk was most entertaining for he is not just a collector but a potter himself with a genuine interest in potters and therefore many contacts within this field. His enthusiasm for collecting is not just limited to the BIG names. The work of his pottery instructors features in the collection. Work of Chris Jenkins and Alan Barret-Danes. (See Ceramic Review No. 36).

Finally, we were permitted to see the collection. A real treat. Name the potter, the Hines have the pots. Then came tea. Reggie is very interested in the work of Staite-Murray and is at present looking for a publisher for a book he has written on the man and his work. He has recently bought a number of his pots which were there for all to see. Heather's special interest is in miniatures of which she has some exquisite examples, including a miniature 'pot within a pot' made by Gordon Baldwin.

The afternoon ended with Ray, our Chairman, thanking Reggie and Heather, on behalf of the Guild, for their hospitality.



# BOOK REVIEW

'CERAMIC FORMULAS: THE COMPLETE COMPENDIUM. A GUIDE TO CLAY, GLAZE, ENAMEL, GLASS AND THEIR COLORS'

by John W. Conrad. Collier Macmillan £6.60 310 pp. 5 $\frac{3}{4}$ " x 8 $\frac{1}{2}$ "

I found this volume very useful. Apart from the few pages of explanations, it is composed of recipes for all kinds of clays, glazes and enamels. There is also a chapter on glass. All the 'formulas' (recipes) in the book, over seven hundred of them, were tested thoroughly and in like manner. The author is a specialist in his subject, a Professor of Fine Arts at Mesa College, San Diego, California, as well as a Ceramic research consultant for a leading manufacturer.

The book begins with a short introduction and after a description of how the testing was carried out and for what observations on the clay (e.g. fusion, glaze retention, surface quality, shrinkage, plasticity, temperature of reduced or oxidised firing) and on the glaze (e.g. fusion, surface translucency, bubbling or cracking, colouring) - we are told that numerical scales have been ascertained as to each quality.

The different uses to which clays and glazes are put have formed the sections into which the formulas have been placed. Thus, we can find a formula for 'Large Coil Construction Stoneware' or a 'White Engobe for Application onto Bisque Ware'. Or again, perhaps, a 'Casting Slip' or a 'Good Throwing Earthenware'. In each instance the formula is explained characteristically, following the example given early in the book, so that one soon becomes practised in understanding fully the related data accompanying the formula. The reader can thus work out simply and readily exactly what he needs for a specific material.

This is claimed to be the only source book available with many of the formulas previously secretly known to only individual potters. The formulas are written as a dry weight percentage and are thus as easy to read as recipes in a cookery book. All are given a colour and code which can be seen on the four central pages showing 160 colours.

As can be realised from the title, this is an American book with American spelling. The reader should become used to this quite quickly, however, but there are several explanations required to facilitate the use of some of these formulas outside America. For example - it would be most helpful if near equivalents were given for the numbered Frits in different recipes. Perhaps a page or two giving the frit compositions would suffice.

As for named American clays, there are possibly no direct English substitutes, but it would be helpful if the various characteristics of these clays were outlined so that British Potters could experiment with the nearest substitute clays. Albany slip is mentioned on occasions, and this is made from Albany clay - a surface clay from the River Hudson, mined near Albany, New York State - and containing many impurities including iron. It melts from about 1260°C and gives a bright smooth brownish glaze at 1315°C. Some local British clays may act similarly.



The vast majority of the materials given are universally named and easily available, and so this book will clearly be of great use to the solitary potter, the industrial ceramist and the serious student and lecturer alike. I can recommend it.

Stan Romer

## MAKING A TEAPOT

### The Main Pot

This should have a firm base to avoid easy overturning, and a narrowed neck to help keep the contents hot, wide enough for easy cleaning, and with a gallery or rim for firm seating of the lid.

### The Lid

\*Two lids for each pot should be made in case of any mishap and these should be made at the same time as the pot to ensure the same rate of shrinkage. Accurate measurements of the neck of the pot should be taken with calipers, and the lid made about 2mms smaller to allow some 'play' which will be taken up by two layers of glaze, on the pot and lid. Throwing the lid uppermost or upside-down will depend on the design chosen. If thrown upside-down, the flange and rim should be large enough to ensure a good seating on the gallery of the pot, and avoid the lid slipping off the pot when tipped. A knob may be thrown or turned on to the top side after turning the lid, and should be made large enough for a good easy grip. A steam hole may be pierced in the lid as the last stage before sponging.

### The Spout

Two spouts for each pot should be made, slightly varied to give a choice when fitting. At the leather hard stage, the spout can be cut at an angle both ends and positioned on the side of the pot, checking the balance and then marking this position on to the pot giving a guide as to the area for the holes. These should be fairly small but large enough to avoid clogging with glaze, and may be pierced in a neat pattern well within the area marked, with a pen nib reversed in the holder. The spout can then be firmly fixed in place with slip and the join well sponged. The holes inside the pot may also be sponged at this stage.

### The Handle

Pulled Handles, or Lugs: These should be made before the pot and lid is turned and the spout fixed on, and two or three for each pot pulled in case of mishap. When suitably firm, the main handle should be carefully lined up directly opposite the spout and on a line with the end of the spout when viewed side on, and firmly fixed in place. Similarly, lugs for a cane or rope handle should be lined up carefully and made large enough to allow for shrinkage. Holes may be pierced in the rim of the neck for a cane handle to be fixed, and these should also be made large enough to allow for shrinkage. A kettle type handle, pulled and fitted over the pot may also be used but this type tends to be very vulnerable to breakage. A second handle placed about the spout sideways, may be necessary on a large pot.

ANN MURPHY



\*This is a bad practice to get into. It is time wasting. It can also foster the attitude that 'if this one isn't good enough then the next one will do'. Get it right, first time .....ED

TEAPOT MAKING by Murray Fieldhouse, Friday 26th March at his delightful studio at Northfields. Report by Gill Godschalk.

This was an evening to remember, being both visually interesting and very informative. The slides were both clear and of good variety, showing many different aspects, all enhanced by Murray's discussion of each one, its origin, purpose and method of a wide range from Mick Casson, Bernard Leach, Gwyn Hanson, Geoffrey Whiting, Victor Margrie, Natali Crebb, Lucy Rie, Derek Emms, and the ancient examples; South American, Japanese and Chinese and even Neolithic? Tracing back the teapot, shape of spout, basic pot and handles and lids.

The highlight was the demonstration by Murray. Using Pike's C.Y. Ball Clay, he began with the body of the teapot and explored other potters' techniques by copying a familiar workable teapot made by Geoffrey Whiting, a straight commercial design by the Harrow students and a comfortable squatter shape by Harry Davis, and one more spherical. Some dried differently. Geoff Whiting's shoulder tended to shrink faster and more.

He made us aware of the problems of galleries for lids to sit on. These had to be made before taking the pot off the wheel. He also showed with great competence and skill how to throw lids from a hump, making them upside down, the top turned after they are dry again. Then he demonstrated how to make the drop over lids with inset lids, simple shallow dishes in fact, turned upside down.

I was interested in Murray's method of making a chuck or as he called it, a ???? Chum. This is a ring of dry clay so centred that the pot fits in the middle depression to hold it firmly but not so as to damage it. If the clay is damp, in order to stop the pot adhering, Murray sprinkled it generously with powdered flint.

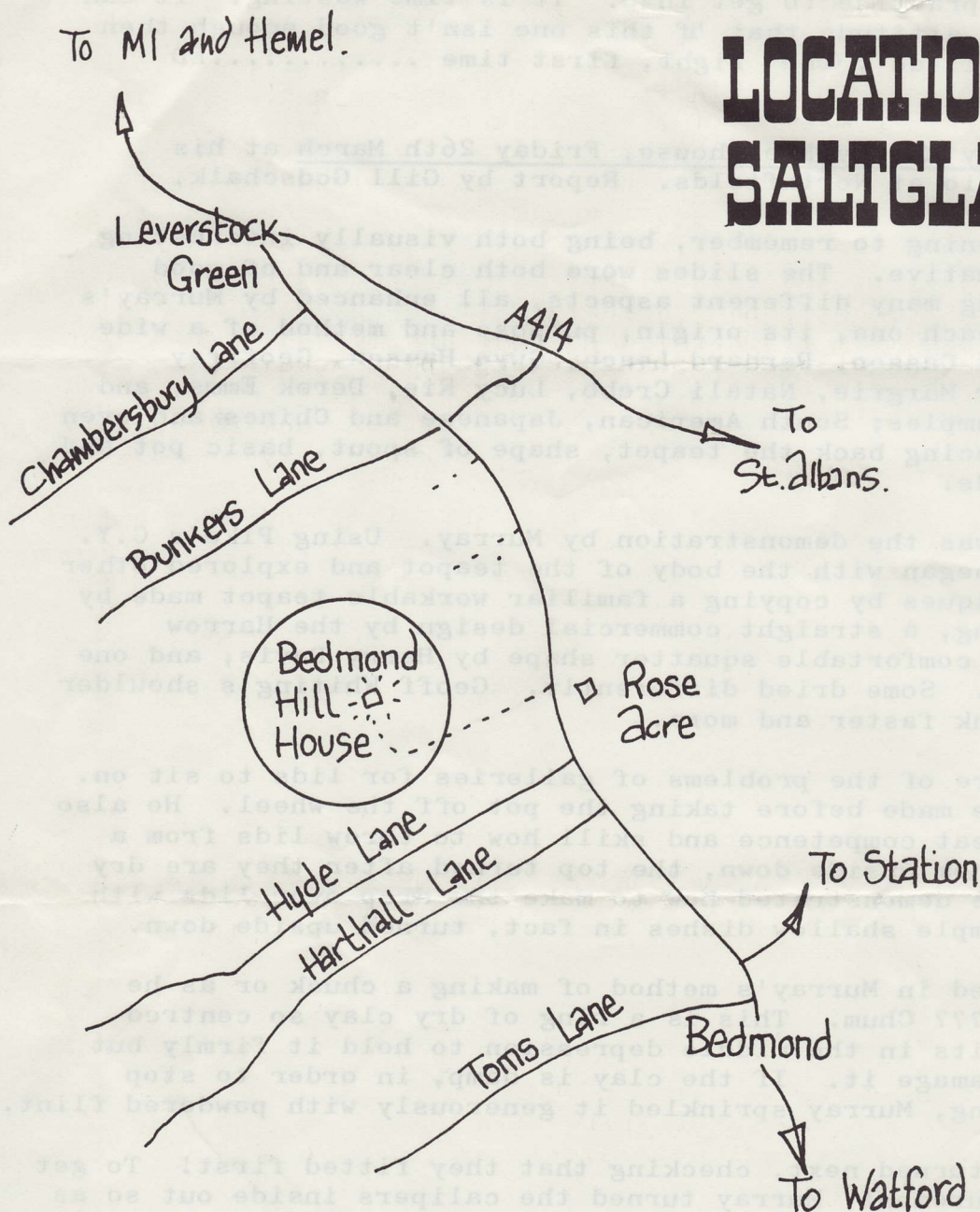
The lids were turned next, checking that they fitted first! To get a correct measurement, Murray turned the calipers inside out so as to measure the inside of the neck accurately.

One marvels at a potter's patience in making teapots! Next the spouts, the shape is vital, they must pour, they must look right and be aesthetically and practically pleasing. The arrangements of holes in the body of the pot was discussed and demonstrated. Murray making it look so easy to make a perfectly spherical arrangement of a circle surrounded by equi-distant circles! The spout is better thrown on the hump as the height of the spout can be judged more accurately. There are two shapes for spouts - the convex (being negative) and concave (positive) - depending on your pot shape. Either is acceptable. The positive curve can be achieved by the finger but to get a good convex curve, a negative, Murray used a metal profile tool. Murray pointed out that it was always best when throwing to keep the spout level by using a metal pin. The spout, if not too soggy, can be applied straight away to the prepared surface. But first, the pot should be coated with slurry in the region of the join.

Handlemaking was demonstrated at the previous Guild meeting so most members should now be experts in this field.



# LOCATION SALTGLAZE



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## Introduce a new member to the Guild

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

Address .....

.....

Postcode .....

Profession .....

I enclose a remittance of £2.00 membership subscription.

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BLETCHLEY TEA CEREMONY at the College of Further Education

The simple introduction by Madame Kaishu Careless was followed by a tape-recorded commentary with traditional Japanese music. The guest, in this case a member of the audience, was instructed in this noble art. Roles of both host and guest have to be learned carefully. There are schools of tea in Japan just as in Europe we have schools of painting, and there are variations according to the type of tea used and the number of guests. The tea is much finer than the tea we are used to and is not "mashed" with water at 100c. The critical temperature for a tea Master is 80c. This is usually gauged by the correct singing of the water in the kettle which is likened to the sound of wind rushing between pine needles.

Water is ladled from the kettle into a bowl to wash and presumably to pre-heat it. When emptied, the bowl is meticulously dried with a wad of paper produced from a kimono sleeve. Tea is taken from a caddy. This item is nearly always a pottery item and is usually remarkable for its associations. The guests usually ask to inspect the tea utensils. An elegant bamboo spoon is used to transfer tea from caddy to bowl. Hot water is ladled onto the tea and the lot is whisked with a bamboo whisk. The bowl is carefully passed with its finest aspect showing to the guest. The guest then drinks from the bowl having turned the favoured side away from himself and towards his host. Utensils are gathered and removed in reverse order to that in which they were assembled. It is a rule that any food left over has to be taken away by the guests.

Unfortunately, the tea ceremony utensils were not available for inspection as the film followed almost immediately. The film, about Japanese crafts was extremely interesting. It featured Hamada using a 'stick' wheel and Tomimoto decorating with a fluency and speed unique to him.

DEREK TATTERSALL

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Some members of the Guild and others who have booked for the Conference have offered to participate with casual unprogrammed talks and demonstrations as required. We expect more offers between now and October.

Cottie Burland F.R.A.I. A well-known anthropologist and author of many books on primitive art, a specialist on ancient America who will probably talk about American Indian pottery and magic.

Clifford Wyndham A painter whose work can be seen exhibited at The Royal Academy almost every year. He has taught pottery for many years at the Central London Institute in Fleet Street. He will probably talk about decoration.

Danny Killick is our very professional local potter.

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OPEN DAY at the Museum of Rural Bygones, Pitstone Green Farm  
Sunday May 2nd.

On May Day, I was out doing the weekend shopping with Dorothy. While D. went to the market, I was despatched back to the car with the shopping bags. On the way, I found my path obstructed by none other than Derek Tattersall. From the glint in his eye I could see that it was no use pretending that I hadn't seen him so I prepared for the worst and stopped for a chat. This turned out to be a bit of arm twisting! The result being that Dorothy and I rose early on Sunday morning, prepared dinner for the family and then left them to it.

On arriving at P.G.F. we found Stan Romer already slaving away, cleaning out the old stable and rummaging around old farm buildings for anything likely to be of any use. Murray's old kick wheel was there, looking dilapidated, but servicable. Stan located some axle grease and proceeded to apply this in liberal portions to the 'so-called' bearings. This had the desired result and the wheel became operable.

Mary Ann set up brick-making on a bench against the side-wall. Stan solved the problem of mixing clay by locating a large stoneware sink which we dragged into the back of the stable. A steady stream of visitors came. Derek and Stan coached a few eager tiny hands in the art of flower pot making whilst Dorothy kept a few more occupied with the well-known rural craft of making hedgehogs with thumb-pots. Mary Ann's line in hand-made bricks invited suitable comments from the knowledgable but there were not many volunteers to try what looks and is hard work. Amongst the many visitors was Ray Phipps, a bit shaky on his feet but he had a go at flower-potting. Murray came and cast a jaundiced eye on the proceedings and left with some comment about going to look at something really interesting.

As mentioned by ED in Newsletter No. 6, it is hoped that the country pottery will become a permanent feature of the collection and that the Guild will provide demonstrations on open days. Visits by school parties are a regular weekly feature and a more permanently laid out pottery could be a good advertisement for the Guild. Anyone willing to give a hand please contact Derek Tattersall at 165 Ebbw Road, Hemel Hempstead.

DIGBY STOTT

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We hear that Murray skived off to Rotterdam for the occasion of Michael Cardew's 75th Birthday Retrospective Exhibition at the Boymans Museum. A collection of essays on Michael Cardew published in conjunction with the exhibition is available from P.Q. Books!!! £1.75 limp cover. £3.00 hard back.



SALT-GLAZE PROJECT

About 25 or so have declared a definite interest - more are welcome. Planning and construction to get underway on 12th and 13th June. In the first instance, 2 p.m. at Bedmond Hill House, Pimlico, Hemel Hempstead (Tel: Kings Langley 63723). We hope to persuade Wally Keeler to come and give us some advice and practical tips for building the kiln and maybe firing too.

We should prepare foundations and begin building as soon as possible, so come prepared to 'navvy' and with a supply (no matter how meagre) of any likely materials and equipment you can lay your hands on: housebricks, refractory bricks, insulating bricks, sand, fireclay, sawdust, chopped straw, sump oil, etc. Warning! If we cannot scrounge or purchase cheaply enough, bricks of the various kinds, we may have to make them from clay mixed with sawdust.

Future organisation of work depends on the progress we make and the availability of supplies. It may be necessary to put in some evening overtime in order to have the kiln ready in time for a preliminary firing at the end of June.

Think about your pots for the first full-scale firing - probably in early July. Light coloured bodies (Stoneware) respond best. There will be a sheet of information about slips and glazes for interiors, to hand out at the first meeting.

All are welcome, plus family and weekend guests, if it makes things easier. There is plenty of room at Bedmond Hill so make a day or rather two days of it.

MARY ANN

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SUMMER GARDEN PARTY

On Saturday, 3rd July at 7.30 p.m. It is to be held at:

Chartist Cottage  
Nottingham Road South  
Heronsgate  
Rickmansworth  
Herts

Directions: from Chorleywood Station - down the hill, turn left under the bridge up Shire Lane. Turn left at Swillet, past "Land of Liberty" pub. Turn right at sign to Heronsgate down Nottingham Road South. When you see open fields with horses? The cottage is one the right (Whitegate).

Please bring: A DISH SWEET OR SAVOURY SUFFICIENT FOR 3-4 PEOPLE ALSO DRINK FOR SIMILAR NUMBER.

All members welcome plus spouse/friend!

P.S. If lost 'phone Chorleywood 2410!

(If too wet, we may have to cancel this event)



# 1976 Pendley Conference.

## Notes

Pendley Manor is delightfully situated in the pleasant Hertfordshire countryside near Tring, only 30 miles from London and within easy reach of Tring Station, the main A41 London-Aylesbury Road and Green Line Coach routes. There are spacious grounds with a well laid out park and carefully maintained gardens.

## Location

Pendley lies just off the A41 London-Aylesbury Road, approximately 1 mile on the London side of Tring. Green Line buses from London and from Aylesbury follow this route and there is a recognised stop at the junction of the A41 and Cow Lane. Walk down Cow Lane and the main drive to Pendley is on the right.

Tring Railway Station is on the Euston line to the North and 45 minutes' journey from London. Pendley is about 10 minutes' walk away from the station. There is a bus service (No. 387) between Tring Station and Tring, with a stop at the Pendley drive entrance.

There are also occasional coaches on cross-country routes, linking with Birmingham, Oxford, Cambridge, Ipswich, etc.

The Pendley Conference is now fully booked for residents BUT there are still some vacancies for non-residents' places. Please send your application with a £3 deposit to Murray as soon as possible.

## APPLICATION FOR DACORUM & CHILTERN POTTERS CONFERENCE AT PENDLEY MANOR - October 15th to 17th.

NON-RESIDENT MEAL BOOKING. Non-resident meals not available Friday night.

I enclose £3 (deposit). Cheque payable to Dacorum and Chiltern Potters Guild.

NAME .....

ADDRESS .....

To: THE SECRETARY, POTTERS CONFERENCE, NORTHFIELDS STUDIO, TRING, HERTS.