

Issue no. 24



DACORUM AND CHILTERN POTTERS GUILD



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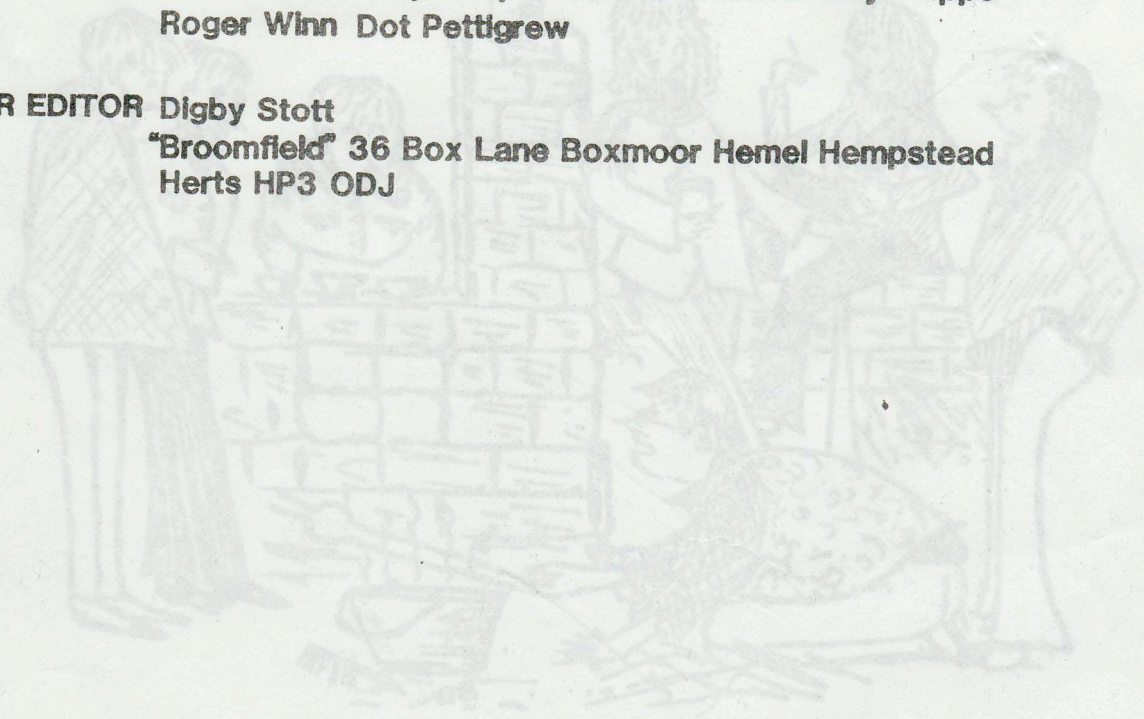
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**DACORUM AND
CHILTERN
POTTERS GUILD**



THE
DACORUM AND CHILTERN POTTERS GUILD
NEWSLETTER

ISSUE NO. 24

AUGUST 1980

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EDITOR'S COLUMN

Dear Readers,

Once again my apologies for the long, long delay in producing the Newsletter. This time no one to blame but myself.

Times are hectic and work; you know, the sort that pays a salary; has been pressing hard even in the so-called leisure hours.

Finding time to put Newsletters together is going to be difficult for me for some time to come. So, if you would like to try your hand at being an Editor please write to our Chairman, Pauline Ashley.

I don't know why I am writing this because I suspect that nobody ever reads the "Editor's Column". Certainly nobody ever writes to me about it.

Perhaps if I called you all nasty names! I wonder??
Hmmm!!!

THOUGHT PROVOKING ISN'T IT?

DIGBY

PAST EVENTS

1.1 PUZZLE MUGS

A Demonstration Evening by Margot and Derek Andrews Radlett - 27th March 1980

From Mother Earth I claim my birth
I am made a joke for man
Now I stand here filled with good cheer
Come taste me if you can

So reads the traditional verse on some of the puzzle mugs made by Margot and Derek Andrews of Prickwillow Pottery. (See Newsletter No. 21, page 11)

The examples of puzzle mugs that many of us saw during our visit to the Fitzwilliam Museum might suggest that they originated as 18th century English slipware, but Derek informed us that there were also examples from Germany from about the same time.

Derek gave a most interesting demonstration making a puzzle mug using about 3 lbs of a mixture of Moira Buffard ball clay which he fires to either earthenware or stoneware temperatures.

The mug was thrown slightly closed in at the top which made the hole at the base of the handle more difficult to see.

The rim was rolled over in order to make the hollow tube (closed gallery) round the top of the mug. The secret of the hollow handle is that waxed string runs through it and into the pot at the base and the closed gallery at the top. The string burns out during the firing to leave a continuous channel up through the handle and round the rim. Derek demonstrated this by pulling two strips which were placed on either side of the string and were pulled again, together, to form the handle with the string inside. The spouts were then attached to the gallery with string through them and into the gallery (matchsticks could be used instead). Some blind spouts, with no holes, can also be hidden beneath the top of the handle as in the Isaac Button mug that Margot and Derek Andrews brought with them.

Derek then pierced the sides of the puzzle mug. This is, of course, essential to prevent the drinker from using the mug in the conventional way.

Finally, the traditional verses, of which there are many versions, are slip trailed on to the side of the mug using a plastic washing up liquid bottle as a slip trailer.

To end a highly interesting and enjoyable evening, Derek demonstrated making a "bird whistle" using the pinched pebble-pot method.

JOHN CAPES

PAST EVENTS

1.2 PUZZLE JUGS

Margot and Derek Andrews

Derek Andrews gave us a fascinating demonstration of how to make a puzzle jug. He told us he gets his inspiration from 18th century slip ware in the Victoria and Albert and the Fitzwilliam Museum in Cambridge.

A puzzle jug usually has several holes pierced through the top of the jug below the rim and a hole through the handle to the inside of the jug about 2" from the bottom. Often the rim is pierced as well.

He began by making a jug body and recommended that the neck should be fairly narrow so that you cannot see the hole inside, and should be of an even thickness for the decorative piercing later. He made a ridge on the outside 1½" from the top, then he turned the clay over and out until it just rested on the ridge.

He pulled two handles which he allowed to stiffen a little. He then got a piece of string which should not be hair as even small hairs can create air leaks - window cord is probably best, but he suggested that we should experiment. The string was coated with hot wax. One of the handle pieces was made slightly "U" shaped, the string used double was inserted, the extra handle piece placed on top and the handle joined and re-pulled. If you make the handle too bulky you give the game away! He then cut off the end of the handle, but left the string projecting. He made a hole in the rim about ¼" across, scratched round it in the usual way, pushed the string both ways into the airway in the rim and blended the clay in.

He then made two holes in the side of the jug, threaded the string through and joined on the other end of the handle.

The holes on the rim can simply be pierced or small pieces of clay pressed on and pierced. A little bit of waxed string should be pushed into each hole to keep it clear. Sometimes he uses matchsticks to keep the channel open. More elaborate projections can be made opposite the handle, perhaps in the form of an animal's head. The final hole is often under the handle and is very difficult to see.

The decorative piercing was done with a "Lancashire" type potato peeler or apple corer with the end opened out. With this Derek made several three-lobed shapes. The edges of the holes should be softened with a tool.

His earthenware pots are slip trailed directly onto the leather hard body. His slip trailer is a Squeezy bottle fitted with a jet from a gas kiln and a rubber bicycle valve or piece of flex inside. He finds he can store his slip in the trailer as long as he shakes it well before use.

The other type of jug he makes in stoneware with a thin black slip applied when the pot is more than leather hard. He sgraffito's through this and it is glazed with a thin white glaze.

PAST EVENTS

1.2 PUZZLE JUGS (contd.)

The earthenware jug is fired to 1000°C. He then blows the ash out of the holes, waxes all the holes so that no glaze gets in, glazes, fires to 1130° then hopes and prays!

When asked why he makes these jugs Margot told us it was a challenge thrown at him to make something to present to a publican who was leaving the village. They said, "We have collected £15, what can you make that is different?"

Two typical rhymes found on puzzle jugs are:-

From Mother Earth I claim my birth
I am made a joke for man
Now I am here filled with good cheer
Come taste me if you can

Here gentlemen come try your skill
I'll hold a wager if you will
That you'll not drink this liquor all
Without you spill or let some fall

As a bonus to a most enjoyable evening, Derek also showed us how to make an ocarina or bird whistle, which someone in the audience explained gets its meaning from the Italian word for a little gosling.

Margot and Derek Andrews also brought their dolls' heads and body kits with period costumes, photographs of their work, puzzle jugs and owl mugs, all of which were much admired.

VIVIENNE FORWOOD

1.3 PUZZLE MUGS

Demonstration by Derek Andrews of Prickwillow Pottery, Ely

"Puzzle Jug"

A popular tavern joke jug of the 17th and 19th century in Europe. The handle was hollow and the ale drunk by sucking it up through one of the spouts. To make the suction work, all the other holes both obvious and secret, had to be covered."

The above explanation is from The Potter's Dictionary of Materials and Techniques by Frank Hamer; I had read this just before the meeting and looked forward to finding out how they were made.

When I arrived at the hall I found that Derek had set up a wonderful display of puzzle jugs; they were mostly earthenware with slip trailed lettering; the one or two stoneware examples had lettering incised through black slip. The lettering on the jugs took the form of a verse, the two examples I noted are as follows:-

PAST EVENTS

1.3 PUZZLE JUGS (contd.)

From Mother Earth I claim my birth
I am made a joke for man
Now I am here filled with good cheer
Come ~~taste~~ me if you can

Come gentlemen now try your skill
I'll hold a wager if you will
That you'll not drink this liquor all
Without you spill or let some fall

When everyone had admired the display Derek began to tell and show us the secrets of making puzzle jugs; the methods he uses have been devised, revised (and revised) by himself.

Firstly, he makes a jug using approximately 3 lbs clay (his own mix 50% Moira + 50% ball clay), throwing it with a fairly narrow neck and a thinner wall at the top; he then forms a ridge of clay $1\frac{1}{2}$ " from the top of the jug, the top is then rolled over to the ridge and air is trapped in this section; the jug is then collared. Derek then makes two handles and while they are still soft sandwiches wax coated string between them leaving 2" of string showing either end, the handle is formed and left to harden. Applying the handle is very tricky - a hole $\frac{1}{4}$ " diameter is opened in the top rim and the string in the handle is wiggled into the hole, hopefully finding its way into the airways. Care has to be taken when attaching the handle to ensure airways are kept clear. The handle is attached at top and bottom, making sure that the string in the handle is pulled through the hole made near the bottom of the jug.

Various small nozzles or spouts are made and holes made through them using waxed string (some spouts are left without a hole right the way through - this is done to trick the drinker). The spouts are attached to the hollow rim and once again care must be taken to ensure there are no blockages. The airways may be tested by blowing through the spouts. Secret holes are usually made, especially under the handle.

Derek then makes a pierced pattern in the top half of the jug, and slip trails the verse on to the jug using thick slip in a Squeezy bottle and a fine nozzle (brass tube, flex).

He biscuit fires the jugs to 1000°C, blows through the holes to remove the ash (from the string), seals the holes with wax, glazes with Podmore's clear 2105 + iron and fires to 1130°C.

When Derek had finished unravelling the mysteries, and had guided us with charm and obvious expertise through the various pitfalls one might encounter in making a puzzle jug (if one had the courage to try), the sustained and enthusiastic applause demonstrated how much the audience had enjoyed the evening.

JENNY TEMPLETON

PAST EVENTS

2.1 PRACTICAL KILN FIRING SESSION

John Dickerson

Pitstone Green Farm - 26th April 1980

After a concentrated study of the map of Pitstone we finally arrived at our destination. I was surprised at the number of people there on such a cold day, but despite the weather everybody seemed to enjoy themselves.

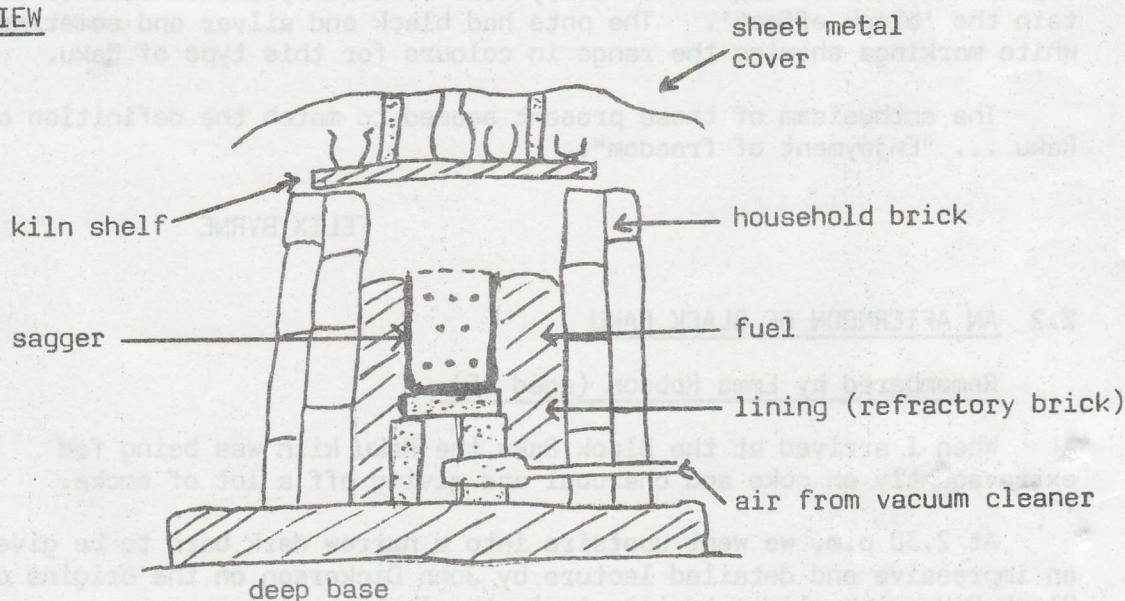
The firing of the kiln had been started at 2.00 p.m. and by the time we got there the kiln was billowing great clouds of thick white smoke enveloping anyone who got too close. The kiln was the updraught type with coalite and charcoal for fuel. It was constructed of refractory brick and household brick, the former being the lining. Air from a vacuum cleaner was passed through tubes to the furnace. This is how the high temperature was obtained (1200°C). As the sagger was already in the kiln another one was warming on the bricks about this; unfortunately this broke during the warming-up period.

The session was continued with a talk by John Dickerson on the history of Raku. It was given in a storeroom where sacks of fertilizer were kept. The lecture dealt with the Raku family and the tea ceremony in which Raku plays a large part. Slides were also shown providing us with a comprehensive look into the world of Raku.

We returned to the firing where the kiln was burning merrily and the smoke was reduced to small whispers.

Below is a diagram of the kiln used in the firing:-

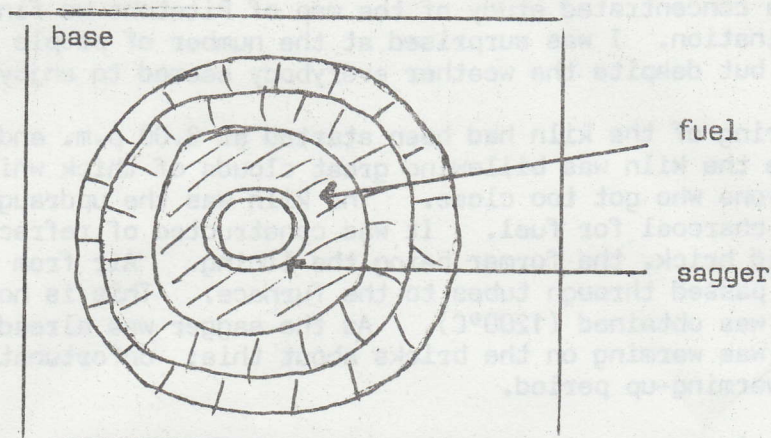
SIDE VIEW



PAST EVENTS

2.1 PRACTICAL KILN FIRING SESSION (contd.)

TOP VIEW



Pots were already being warmed on a kiln shelf which acted as a cover to the kiln. I was told that the temperature was guessed by the colour, as cones or other means of temperature gauge would give the firing a mechanical nature. The pots were placed in the sagger when it was orange-red. They were left in for five or ten minutes until the glazes glistened. A barrow, full of fine sawdust was nearby with a bucket of cold water. There is a combination of cooling and reducing methods; some pots were left to cool slightly and either placed in the water or completely immersed in sawdust depending on the texture and colour required. They were reduced by the sawdust to obtain the 'black effect'. The pots had black and silver and sometimes white markings showing the range in colours for this type of Raku.

The enthusiasm of those present seemed to match the definition of Raku ... "Enjoyment of freedom".

FELIX BYRNE

2.2 AN AFTERNOON OF BLACK RAKU

Remembered by Emma Robson (aged 15)

When I arrived at the Black Raku the Raku kiln was being fed extravagantly on coke and charcoal and giving off a lot of smoke.

At 2.30 p.m. we went upstairs into a narrow dark barn to be given an impressive and detailed lecture by John Dickerson on the origins of Black Raku with slides to illustrate the lecture.

PAST EVENTS

2.2 AN AFTERNOON OF BLACK RAKU (contd.)

Black Raku all started in the 16th century in Japan when tea ceremonies were increasingly popular and tea masters were employed to prepare the tea. The tea bowls - unlike in the west countries - gain beauty and honour by how old they are and cracks and scratches increase the beauty and wisdom to the bowls.

Each tea bowl has 13 special points about it, but the Japanese do not make it an even number of points because even numbers are perfect and so they have an odd number. This fact of not being perfect is illustrated in the making of the pots - uneven rims or some other defect is put into the making of the bowls.

One of the 13 points in the bowls is a slight inlet at the base of the bowl to give a rounder shape for whisking the tea to take place. A small hard whisk gives the tea a foam which is correct. Unlike our tea, their tea is a green foam of the whisked tea leaves.

In the summer the bowls are of a more open shape to keep the tea cool, unlike the winter bowls that are closed at the mouth to keep the tea hot and to keep the hands warmed that are wrapped round the bowl. Also the summer bowls are lightly and brightly glazed whilst the winter bowls are glazed in a darker colour.

Every detail of the whole ceremony must be completely traditional, plain and simple, but not perfect.

EMMA ROBSON

2.3 BLACK RAKU

Lecture and Practical Kiln Firing Session given by John Dickerson
Pitstone Green Farm, Pitstone, Tring - Saturday 26th April 1980

This was a memorable occasion. It started with the heating up of the Raku kiln built from plans sent by John Dickerson. The kiln was a circular drum of bricks filled with coke and charcoal. A hand built small lidded sagger, with holes in its walls, was supported on bricks in the centre and the whole kiln was brought up to temperature (1200°C) with forced air, pulsating through enumerable old water pipes and angles attached to a faithful old vacuum cleaner. Later, glazed and decorated pots were warmed on the edge of the kiln and then put into the sagger with tongs. 30 minutes later they were lifted out again when the glaze had melted and placed in a bucket of sawdust to add a reduced effect.

While the kiln was being heated the assembled company was directed to the upper floor of a marvellous old timber barn, part of the Farm Museum at Pitstone, to hear John Dickerson set the stage on the Raku scene. His slides and talk were so fascinating we quite forgot the odd seats we were sitting on and the chilly, draughty barn, while he transported us off to another world.

PAST EVENTS

2.3 BLACK RAKU (contd.)

The world of Zen Buddhism and the varied aesthetic appreciation of the Japanese Tea Ceremony, and the different way and approach to life that exists in the Far East, in particular in Japan.

The historical background to the making and firing of Raku pots is intimately connected to the development of the drinking of tea. This first arose in China in the Tang Dynasty where tea was made in the Russian style. It was a thin tea taken with a cake. In the Sung Dynasty tea was in the form of a green powder that was then whipped up with hot water into a hot frothy green liquid. While in the Ming Dynasty the advent of steeping tea, as in the West today, was evolved. It is the green frothy whipped up tea that is the tea used in the Japanese Tea Ceremony for which Raku pots have been developed.

The tea ceremony is a gathering of friends who wish to join in an aesthetic, perceptive, and intuitive environmental 'happening'. The whole ceremony has evolved over a long period of time from the quiet contemplation of Zen Buddhist monks whose lives concentrated on a peaceful simple life which was in complete contrast to the aggressive Samurai fighting soldiers of the day. The essence of Raku ware is simplicity. The highest appreciation of beauty is the perception of beauty in the simple things of every day. The Zen Buddhist taught the perception of essence and totality, and the understanding of intuitive learning through direct experience. So, the first Tea Master, Sen-No-Rikyu, sought after simple every day objects that could be used to portray the essence of life in the tea ceremony. He thus used local folk pottery. The ceremony then developed into an art form of great aesthetic quality.

The setting for such a 'happening' is usually in a tea house (rather like a garden summer house) situated in a quiet part of a garden. The approach is often over stepping stones in a highly organised garden. On the way one passes a basin of running water in which one washes one's hands for symbolic cleansing. The tea house is of simple construction of wood and bamboo, of certain mat size, having a square hearth sunk in the centre of the floor, and an alcove in one wall, called a 'toconoma', in which is hung an appropriate calligraphic painting with a flower arrangement at its foot. The door is low down so that one stoops to enter it, thus creating the feeling of humility. (Illustration 1) Incense is used to lift the thoughts, and the tea is specially prepared, accompanied with cakes or biscuits. There is a ritual set of actions performed by the visitors and by the host of the gathering, the Tea Master, who gives tea to his guests.

The utensils are chosen with care to portray the time of year that the ceremony is taking place. They consist of a water container, a kettle to heat the water, the tea caddy, bowls for the tea, a dish or container for the light cakes or biscuits. The whisk for frothing the tea is of bamboo, also the tea spoon. A knapkin folded in a special way is also used by the Tea Master. Thus, the four main objects made in clay are the tea bowl, the caddy, the dishes and the water container.

PAST EVENTS

2.3 BLACK RAKU (contd.)

John Dickerson stressed that the essence of making Raku is in the full involvement of the potter. Pots are of quality and balanced throughout. The potter should dig and prepare his own clay by hand, mix his glazes from raw materials that if possible he has found and prepared himself, then the pot is completed by him from the ground up. The frit for the glaze is based on red lead, quartz and borax, with other fluxes added if necessary. (Illustration 2)

The bowls reflect the sober aesthetic austere culture of Zen Buddhism and are not perfect or symmetrical in shape. The idea that nothing is perfect is reflected in their varied forms and 'the sense of the moment'. They are made from a rugged heavily grogged clay that when fired is very open and porous. This means that when it is cupped in the hands for drinking it is not too hot to hold. The feel of the surface texture in the hand is very important. Colours reflect the time of year that they are being used. Light colours, white and green, and gay colours for summer and spring. Sombre dark blacks and reds for autumn and winter. They are often glazed with several glazes which are put on rich and thick. It is preferred that they craze to create a soft sound and feel. Painted patterns of flowers or grasses, or landscapes such as mountains rising out of mist, or atmospheric effect such as snow or rain are greatly used.

The shape of the bowls is very important and is related to the season of use. Open and shallow bowls are liked in summer when the tea will not need to be kept hot, but in winter when the weather in Japan is intensely cold the shape curves in and wraps over the tea keeping it hot.

There are 13 points to be fulfilled by the potter when making a bowl. (Illustration 3) They may be thrown but by the Raku family they are generally made by hollowing out a ball of clay in the hand like a very thick thumb pot allowing a thick base out of which the base is cut. They are allowed to stiffen and then they are cut and carved into the desired shape. Both the inside and outside are cut into shape. There is a front which is decorated and a back where the rim is slightly lower for drinking from and has to be comfortable for the mouth. The rim may wave as hills, with three or five or seven ridges. The front receives the main decoration and where no specific decoration is used the front is where the tongs have marked the soft glaze. The sides have a spiral ridge part of the way up to fit neatly into the hands for holding and to help when the bowl is received from the Tea Master. It is presented to the guest with the front facing the guest so to drink, it has to be turned round. The ridge ceases under the mouth part to enable the tea to flow smoothly from the base to the mouth.

The lower part of the bowl on the inside is curved to fit the bamboo whisk which froths up the tea and there is a spiral in the bottom of the bowl so that the remaining tea will drain into it like a natural pool in a rock after drinking. The foot is of such a size that the bowl will be steady when put down. Stability is essential when the bowl is placed on the tatami matting. The whole concept and feel of the bowl must be pleasing and emanate a quite austere quality.

2.3 BLACK RAKU (contd.)

The beauty of the old used pot is considered of great value, cracked bowls are lovingly repaired with lacquer and this adds to the aesthetic quality. The water buckets are also made of clay and not of perfect form. The tea caddies are small and generally have carved ivory or wooden tops. They too are glazed and decorated in seasonal colours. The dishes for cakes and biscuits may be square or round and have handles. We were shown a basket dish that the pattern of glaze looked like a snow storm (Illustration 4). The kettles are of iron and hang on a type of trivet. The last item was the flower container. They may be of clay or often of bamboo with the minimum of flowers arranged with an unusual branch, etc.

The name Raku means "Ease, Pleasure, Enjoyment" and was given to a Kyoto family of sculptor-potters who originally made roof tiles. They also made tea bowls and together with Sen-No-Rikyu evolved the highly developed forms of bowls that were used at that time. This family has carried on the tradition to this day and it was with this family that John Dickerson worked in Japan.

The essence of John Dickerson's lecture was the fact that through the tea ceremony and all its aesthetic attachments the Japanese have a sense and awareness of beauty in every day things that we in the West have forgotten about, or never had, and we are, as people, the poorer for it.

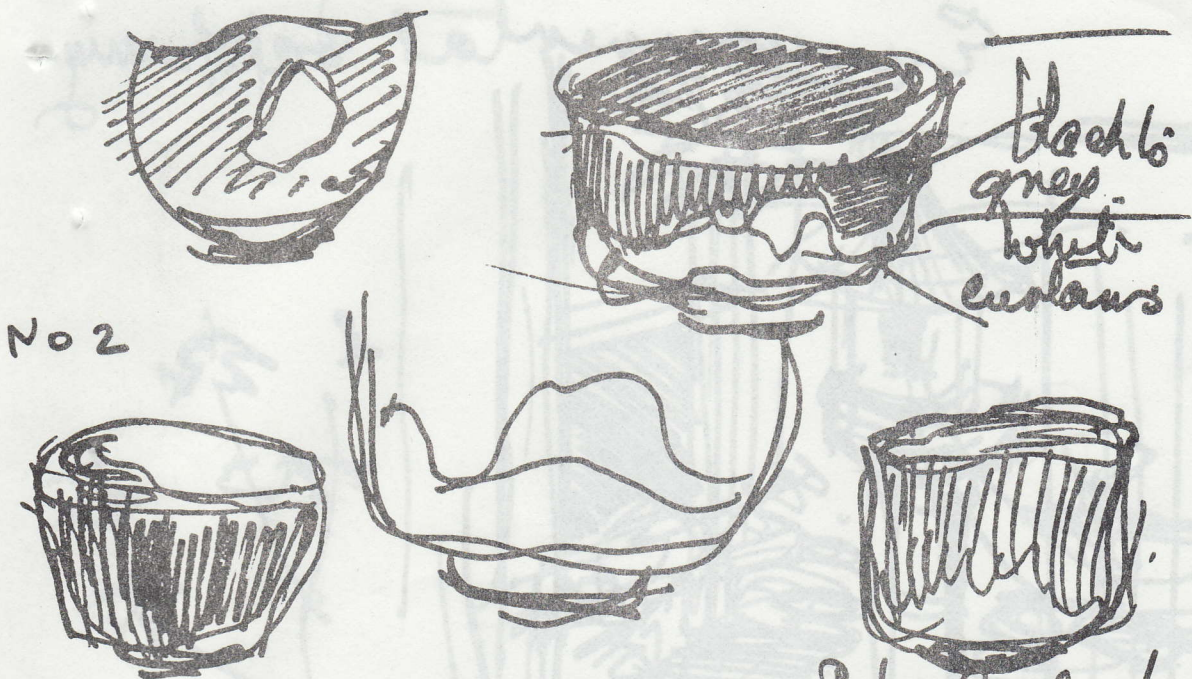
We all came out of the lecture rather dazed, not quite knowing where we were, having been transported to another way of life. We then went and glazed and fired some pots in the now heated kiln and finished the afternoon with tea and cake.

K. E. MARIGOLD AUSTIN

2.3 BLACK RAKU (contd)



2.3 BLACK RAKU (contd.)



No 2

Black to
grey
white
curious

Raku can be for

5 min on edge of
Raku bowl.

Frit { Red lead
Quartz &
Borax } addition of
fluxes.

2.3 BLACK RAKU (contd.)

No 3.



pink



Wrote
tall.
Rup Wan.



Radia means
Pleasure

On chertation of radu.



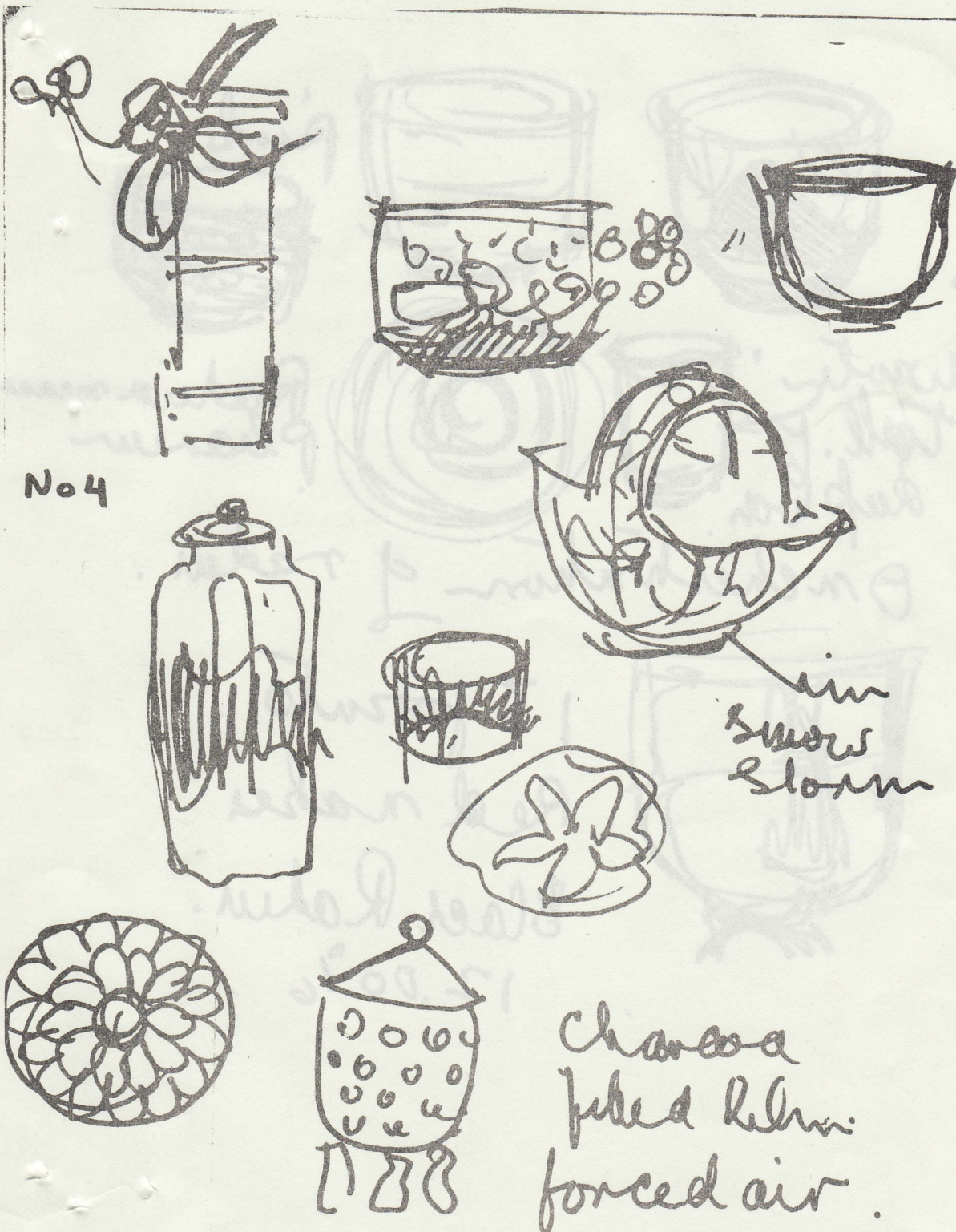
13 points.

Red makes

Black Raku.

12.00% .

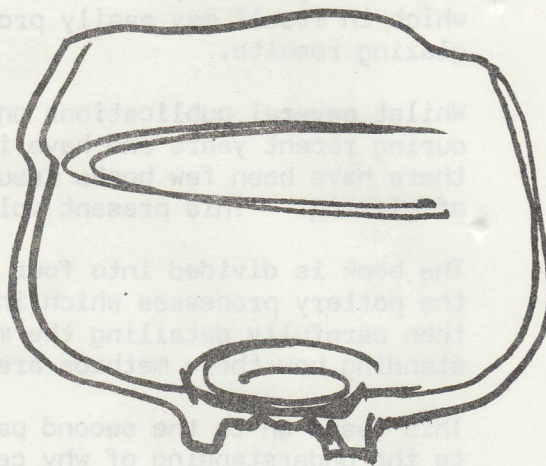
2.3 BLACK RAKU (contd.)



2.3 BLACK RAKU (contd.)



Whisk fitting shape
of bowl.



Ridge on side
& bottom spiral.

1. "GLAZES FOR THE STUDIO POTTER"
by Emmanuel Cooper and Derek Royle

B. T. Batsford Ltd. 184 pp Hardback £6.95

There are many home potters and college class students who are quite satisfied to use commercial, made-up glazes, generally because good standard results occur with each firing. Several of the would-be experimenters are often deterred from making up their own glazes by an entire lack of understanding of glazes, which in itself may easily produce unsatisfactory or disastrous glazing results.

Whilst several publications on pottery making have been produced during recent years and have included a chapter or two on glazes, there have been few books issued dealing entirely with the subject of glazing. This present volume does precisely this latter.

The book is divided into four main parts; the first introducing the pottery processes which incorporate the use of glazes and then carefully detailing the methods of making glazes and understanding how these methods are used.

This leads on to the second part with the many materials used and to the understanding of why certain results are obtained, as well as curing faults preventing these results from occurring. Part three explains the mixing and application of glazes and the firing processes, whilst part four starts off with a short history of glazes and a long list of appendices giving health hazards, ceramic materials used, recipes for glazes and slips, compositions of many industrial frits used in Britain - and the USA (something the Americans have seemed loath to do) as well as conversion tables for pyrometric cones, and lists of suppliers.

There is a good specialist bibliography, should the reader require further information on this vast subject, and the book finishes with specimen glaze calculation charts and an adequate index.

Some of the many clear photographs are in colour to show specifically various resultant effects, and the text is easily readable, the layout having been designed effectively. One example is that of the explanation of the point about using sufficiently large weighing scales, seen in both text and photograph. But manufacturers do not seem to make mortars as large as they used to - as can be seen from the photograph (and current catalogues).

The two authors are certainly no newcomers to pottery, research or writing; and have thus produced a most interesting, informative and hence useful volume - and it is at quite a reasonable price too.

S. R. ROMER

2. "WORKING WITH PORCELAIN"
by Alison Sandeman

Pitman Publishing Ltd. 96pp Cased £3.95 Paperback £2.50

This is the latest of the Ceramic Skillbooks series and maintains the previous high standards of writing and production. The author has spent several years making stoneware and porcelain ware, and she knows the various difficulties which porcelain clays can offer. Of the seven chapters, the first two tell us of the history of porcelain, and the different porcelain bodies which can be made to facilitate their working.

Methods of hand building, and useful tools are systematically explained as are the problems of support for flaccid clay. Several ideas from nature are given to make shapes and designs, but the imagination is not stifled since there is ample scope for the reader's own research into new shapes.

With thrown porcelain more difficulties arise, and these are mentioned, together with remedies for faults which may arise.

Glazing and firing, including the care needed in packing, are adequately explained and several modern and ancient examples are shown. The last chapter describes the work of two successful porcelain-using potters; Audrey Blackman and Colin Pearson. The usual English and American suppliers, and a short bibliography are given, together with quite a good index.

This book, clearly not for the beginner, sets out to explain how to use porcelain - and it succeeds. The explanations are simple and understandable, especially to someone who has already worked with less 'delicate' clayware. The book is worth buying (and keeping) if merely to have the various body and glaze recipes.

In general, initials and names of materials are clearly described, with one apparent exception, that being TWVD ballclay (p74). Is it surprising that there are many potters who are not aware of all materials by code letters or numbers?

However, if you contemplate working with porcelain, this is one of the first books you will definitely need to buy.

S. R. ROMER

3. "POTTERY IN ENGLAND - FROM 3500 BC - AD 1730"
by K. J. Barton

David & Charles, (1980) 150pp £1.95

This book, one of the few giving much of the story of the English potter throughout history to the 18th century, was first published in 1975. It has now been reissued as a cheap edition without alteration.

Beginning with the earliest known English potters, the author, a museum director and archaeologist, explains in a most interesting way the technological development of pottery in the country. He shows how the Romans and, to lesser degrees, other cultures influenced the indigenous potters. The particular decorations; incised, applied, coloured and glazed; the effects of working manually or with the wheel; the cultural exchange of ideas; all these add up to produce a most readable account of the development of English craftsmanship. A main aspect is the variation over the years in the construction of the kiln, from which considerable insight may be gained as to the traditions and economics of the changing society.

On turning to the second and larger part of the book, the Ceramic development, we read about the differing examples of pottery made during the archaeological periods, the comparisons with those of other lands, and the lasting effect of some of the beautiful designs produced under all kinds of conditions.

Whilst the book is written basically from an archaeological view point, the practical potter should find every page of considerable use. The many clear drawings of kilns and pottery, and good photographs are almost self explanatory.

The story ends with the coming of a new era in the history of English ceramics; the decline of traditional earthenware, delftware and stoneware, and the rise of porcelain.

For further reading a comprehensive bibliography is given as is a glossary of terms applicable through the time-scale. The index itself is most informative.

The book, then, gives the reader a clear background of English pottery, which sets the tradition for the modern studio potter. And at this price it should be snapped up for the bargain it obviously is.

S. R. ROMER

1. AN ENGLISH 'RAKU' KILN AT PITSTONE

When the Guild was asked by Jeff Hawkins, of the Pitstone Local History Society, to represent 'Pottery' amongst various rural crafts on annual exhibition, several members staunchly supported the idea.

Brickmaking, led by Mary-Ann, throwing pots on an old wheel, as shown by Derek, traditional English 'Hedgehog' modelling by 'Do-Do' and handbuilding, discussing, explaining and etc., etc., by a number of members, managed to keep the visitors' interest alive. But a really exciting attraction appeared to be missing.

A year or two ago, the idea of a kiln was mooted, chewed over and partially digested. The 'partially' qualification applied because of the difficulty (or impossibility?) of firing pots for the visitors to take home on the day. Hence the eventual absorption of the substance of an 'instant' or Raku kiln took place.

We had organised a Raku firing on Sunday, 18th September 1975, (Newsletter No.8) in Ray Phipps' garden, and other Raku firings by members at different times, but the Guild had not a permanent site which we could visit at a moment's notice. So it was agreed to build a Raku kiln at Pitstone which could be used by arrangement whenever desired.

The first kiln to be built was the forced air, high temperature, Black Raku (John Dickerson's) example - a write-up of which is elsewhere in this Newsletter. Then came the two 'Open Days' when the 'Red' Raku kiln (low temperature) was built and fired.

Visitors could purchase a biscuited tea-bowl style pot, glaze it themselves (with guidance) and see it going into the kiln, then glowing red hot, "Like the sun or ice" (B. Leach) and being taken out, reduced in sawdust (amidst acrid choking fumes!) and plunged into water. They were all delighted with the multi-coloured results - and went home, proud of the pot they had made (glazed). This part of the pottery show was very successful. Most of the sightseers entered the pottery hut, but seeing only two old wheels, a box or two and a few brick moulds, they soon emerged looking disappointed.

We do need large pictures of pots, potters and potteries; particularly if they refer directly to the Guild. So can you please bring some to help us make a permanent exhibition, which not only the summer visitors but also the occasional parties during the year can see and enjoy, and also learn about our activities. And the really interested ones will probably want to join the Guild.

Below are some notes from the Pitstone event to remind us of some key points about the kiln which remains at Pendley for all to use. Sketches of the kiln are included in the article on 'Black Raku'.

1. Use old firebricks etc. for dry base - on firm ground.
Ordinary 'house' bricks for the kiln.
2. Bond the bricks Header and Stretcher (long and across)
alternately; do NOT use 'mortar' between.

1. AN ENGLISH 'RAKU' KILN AT PITSTONE (contd.)

3. Use strong flat or round steel bars for fire. Fill in thickness with mortar (old clay and sand sawdust, etc.).
4. Opening; Firemouth -- Chamber entrance -- Flue -- Chimney -- should decrease slightly each in turn for good draught.
5. Approximately 15 feet draught from firemouth to top of chimney, but horizontal measurements equal $\frac{1}{3}$ of vertical, e.g. length of kiln = 4 feet equivalent to $1\frac{1}{3}$ feet vertical.
6. Wood fuel should be about 2 feet long, and thin.
7. Do not feed more than one piece at a time - avoid smoke, which cools kiln.
8. The four bricks for door should be projecting - staggered for easy and quick removal (with gloves!).
9. When loading and unloading place door bricks neatly to avoid lifting wrong end!
10. Dry the glazed pots on the kiln top before loading.

S. R. ROMER

2. K. E. MARIGOLD AUSTIN (Calendular Potter)

Marigold Austin became interested in pottery when first entering Art School in Bournemouth, Dorset. She also studied pottery in Poole and Hammersmith Schools of Art and greatly benefited by five years in London at the Bartlett School of Architecture, University College London studying interior decoration.

She taught for six years at Farnham School of Art, Surrey, with Henry Hammond and Paul Barren. During this time she started her first pottery with Anne Stannard.

She has worked in four studio potteries up and down the country, including Marianne de Trey at Shinnars Bridge, Darlington, and WellBrae Pottery, Errol, Perthshire, Scotland.

On coming south she has taught pottery in Balls Park College of Higher Education, Hertford, Hertfordshire since 1966, also in two other P E colleges in the area.

Marigold Austin now has her own pottery in operation in Hertford where she concentrates on thrown pots, mainly domestic stoneware decorated with banded and painted slips. She is now moving into the exciting field of large decorative plates and pots with cut and sgraffitto slips with rich ash and other glaze effects. At the moment she fires in an electric kiln between 1260C°-1280C° using Moira Clay with added sand or crank.

3. COLIN PEARSON

Colin Pearson has been well known in the pottery world for some time, first as a maker of domestic ware and more recently with his 'winged' pots. After starting his own workshop at Aylesford he worked for a number of years with assistants making a range of domestic ware based on the cylindrical form. His recent work has been of a more personal nature. Made in white porcelain or a black firing clay, the strong classical forms are still predominantly cylindrical, with decorative additions. The mastery of his craft, built up over the years, has allowed Colin Pearson a freedom of approach that evokes a variety of responses from the viewer, not least of which is the feeling of being in the presence of ceramic work of importance.

Colin Pearson was born in Hertfordshire in 1923, studied painting at Goldsmiths College, and now teaches in the Ceramic Department of Camberwell School of Art, the Medway College of Design and on the Pottery Workshop course at Harrow College of Art. He has worked with Ray Finch and David Leach, and started his own pottery at Aylesford in 1961.

His work has been shown since 1961 in very many exhibitions in Britain and all over the world, including:- 'Contemporary Ceramic Art', Kyoto, Japan, 1970; 'British Potters', Crafts Advisory Committee exhibition toured in Europe, 1972; Europalia 1973, Brussels; 'The Craftsman's Art', Victoria & Albert Museum, 1973; 'World Craft Council International Exhibition', Toronto, 1974; 'Porcelain', Munchen Gladbach, West Germany, 1976; 'British Ceramics & Textiles Today', British Council touring exhibition, 1977. He won the British award at the International Ceramics exhibition, Victoria & Albert Museum in 1972, and the first prize at the 33rd Premio Faenza, Italy, in 1975, being the first British potter to do so.

His work has been purchased by the Victoria & Albert Museum, the Crafts Advisory Committee, the Museo Di Ceramica, Faenza, and other public collections in Britain and abroad. Colin Pearson was until recently a Council Member of the Craftsmen Potters Association, and was its Chairman in 1970-71.

4. ANDREW HOLDEN

Andrew Holden was born in 1944 and spent his early years in Radlett, with a short spell in St. Albans.

He trained in photography and worked in Scotland and in the West Country for 11 years.

He became a part time potter and attended a course at Pendley in 1960.

In 1970 he obtained a Diploma in Studio Ceramics at Harrow School of Art.

4. ANDREW HOLDEN (contd.)

Andrew Holden now owns South Tawton Pottery where he works with his wife and an apprentice. All work is once fired stoneware or porcelain mainly reduced. fired in either a wood fire or oil fired kiln, both fairly large.

He teaches at Medway School of Art for three weeks each year and has demonstrated at the Dartington Potters Camp twice.

He was with Brian Newman for a very short period.

Has written articles for Ceramic Review on Raw Glazing, Chun Tea Dust Glaze Chemistry, and a special interest of his, Metropolitan Slip Ware.

His book, shortly to be published by Pitmans, is to be called 'Alternative Pottery'.

5. LIZ FRITSCH

The pots of Liz Fritsch have featured prominently amongst the work of younger potters in recent years. Although in some degree functional, in that most are capable of containing, her pieces are personal statements rather than objects for practical use. The pots are made, by coiling out of a rather coarse clay, carefully worked on the surface to a fine texture and decorated with slips to give subtle changes of colour, sometimes exaggerating or complementing the forms, sometimes as if to disguise by optical illusion. The attention to detail of rims and lips and the relationship of the interior to the outside of the pot are of great importance to Liz Fritsch, whose appreciation of these aspects borders on the mystical.

Liz Fritsch was born in 1940, of Welsh parents, in Shropshire. She first studied the harp under Osian Ellis at the Royal Academy of Music, 1962; and later pottery with Hans Coper at the Royal College of Art, 1968-1970, where she was awarded a silver medal and the Herbert Read Memorial Prize in 1970. She spent the year 1972-1973 working in Denmark and since 1975, when the Digswell Arts Trust offered her a fellowship, she has been living and working in Welwyn Garden City.

Exhibitions in which Liz Fritsch's work has been shown include: Bing and Grondahl Porcelain Factory, Denmark (one-woman show) 1973; Design Centre, London, 1974; 'Ceramic Forms', Crafts Advisory Committee/British Council Exhibition toured in Europe, 1974; Crafts Advisory Committee Gallery, London (one-woman show) 1974; British Design Exhibition, Mexico City, 1976; British Crafts Centre (one-woman show) 1976; 'British Ceramics and Textiles Today', British Council touring exhibition, 1977. She won a major prize in the Royal Copenhagen Porcelain Jubilee Competition in 1972, and in 1976 won the gold medal at the International Exhibition of Ceramics, Sopot, Poland. Liz Fritsch's work has been purchased for the Victoria & Albert Museum, the Crafts Advisory Committee, and other public collections.

Liz Fritsch, Digswell House, Monks Rise, Welwyn Garden City, Herts.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

1. SPECIAL LECTURE BY DENNIS PARKS

On : Friday, 12th September 1980
At : The Terrapin Room, Pendley Manor, Tring
Time : 7.30 p.m. for 8.00 p.m.

Another "catch" for the Dacorum and Chiltern Potters Guild

You have read Stan Romer's glowing review of Dennis Parks' book "A Potter's Guide to Raw Glazing and Oil Firing". Dennis Parks is a living testimonial to that self sufficient independence of spirit to which all pottery workers worth their salt subscribe. He is the very antithesis of that pathetic creature who niddles about in pottery teaching for public administration. He flies out of his remote corner of North Eastern Nevada (from where he made his great step backward for mankind) at the beginning of the month.

He will speak to the Guild on the subject of his pottery school "In the Middle of Nowhere on Next to Nothing" - all ratepayers welcome. He will tell us how to build a dirt-cheap kiln, how to stalk wild materials. He will speak of the earnings of productive labour as a trust not to be squandered by predatory profligate clerks with fancy titles. He will show how a potter without a soft teaching job can live a good healthy life without jogging, yoga or giving up smoking and drinking.

2. VISIT

*To : The Store of the British Museum
On : Saturday, 20th September 1980
Time : 11.00 a.m.

Those of you who attended the Margaret Tuckson Lecture at Pendley in June, on Potters of Papua New Guinea, may remember that the Curator of Pitts River Museum, Oxford, Mr. Brian Transtone, and Assistant Keeper to the Museum of Mankind, Mrs. Dorotea Starzecka, joined our audience. Subsequently we have been invited to visit the private collection of Papua New Guinea pots housed in the Store of the British Museum.

A special visit has therefore been arranged for Saturday morning, 20th September, at 11.00 a.m., at B.M. Ethnography Store, 48-56 Orsman Road, London N.1. (Parking is no problem on Saturdays)

PLACES ARE LIMITED SO PLEASE BOOK EARLY. Telephone Pauline Ashley on Radlett 4268 to confirm your place by Saturday, 13th September.

*Cameras allowed.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

3. EXHIBITION - HEMEL HEMPSTEAD

October 1980

The Guild has been invited to exhibit works of pottery in the Festival this year. We are to be allocated some space in the glass display cabinets at the Dacorum College.

If you would like to exhibit there then please telephone Pauline Ashley on Radlett 4268 to book space, and be prepared to submit your pieces by the end of September for selection.

4. ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

On : Friday, 17th October 1980

At : Friends Meeting House, Welwyn Garden City.

Guest Speaker : Liz Fritsch

Newsletter no 24 August 1980 (missing pages)

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

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| 5. | Potters Open day – Pendley | 26 |
|----|----------------------------|----|

POTTERS DIGEST

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|----|-------------------------|----|
| 1. | Wanted – an old piano | 27 |
| 2. | White insulating Bricks | 28 |
| 3. | Pink Moler Solids | 29 |

HOW TO GET THERE

- | | | |
|----|---|----|
| 1. | Pendley Manor | 30 |
| 2. | British Museum, 48-56 Orsman Road. London N.1 | 31 |

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