



DACORUM AND  
CHILTERN  
POTTERS GUILD



# THE NEWSPOT

NEWSLETTER

OCTOBER 1981

Nº 26

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THE  
DACORUM & CHILTERN POTTERS GUILD  
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## EDITOR'S COLUMN

Dear Readers,

Thrice already this column has been written. Circumstances and time overtook the first two efforts. Fate and the Post Office have overtaken the third.

It seems almost as though the Fates are determined not to allow a Newsletter to appear this year. Still, if Clotho, Lachesis and Atropos are opposed, I am sure that Pauline, Valerie and Jill are more than a match for them. And I, like Sophodes and Euripides, will merely tell the story.

After our longstanding arrangements for printing the Newsletter ended much effort has been expended towards obtaining an economical alternative. After a suitable arrangement had been agreed the Newsletter was typed and sent for duplication. The typescript has been "lost in transit".

With this Newsletter I have broken from the standard format. This is largely because it was possible to do so with the material at hand. There are two themes I have used. One is the Japanese Tea Ceremony. The other is Kiln Building. I hope you enjoy the result.

With October and November fast approaching there will not be time for another Newsletter before "Pendley". However, I hope to have another ready shortly.

DIGBY



## THE JAPANESE TEA CEREMONY

### 1. CHADO : THE WAY OF TEA

On Wednesday evening, 26th November 1980, at Northchurch Social Centre, Berkhamsted, the Guild members had the pleasure of a lecture and to participate in a demonstration of the tea ceremony of Japan. This was given by Mr. Michael Birch, the Resident Tea Master in the British Isles of the URASENKE Tradition of Chado. This was a very fitting evening following our day with John Dickerson firing the Raku kiln and his excellent lecture on Japan and its way of life.

When we arrived Mr. Birch had prepared a demonstration which looked like a stage set, the interior of a tea house, and he was sitting quietly at the side awaiting our arrival.

The tea ceremony, Mr. Birch explained, had become over the years a central philosophical and aesthetic way of life for the Japanese. The taking of tea had originated in China when the Buddhist monks greeted visitors to their temples with a dish of tea. The plant tea is a herb used medicinally and the monks also used it to assist in keeping them awake during meditation. The idea of taking tea was introduced into Japan when the Zen Buddhist monks returned from study in China during the 12th century. From this time on the tea masters developed the aesthetic ideals which established Chado as a means to convert life itself into a work of art.

The early tea master, Sen Rikyu (1522-1591) played a leading part in the tea ceremonies form when he set the pattern for following generations by his aesthetic ideals for arts and crafts and a way of life and it has become the basis of much that is carried on in Japan today.

The tea ceremony itself consists of a gathering of friends, two to three or five guests are asked, to whom is presented thick green frothed up tea and a light meal. There is a set ritual that takes place according to the school or tradition to which the host of the ceremony belongs. The gathering is generally held in a tea house that is very simple, made of bamboo and natural materials, situated in a quiet place in the host's garden. The aim is to take tea in such a way in a quiet setting with interesting contemplation of works of art or conversation and consideration of poems or literary works that one's spirit is at peace and uplifted.

Through the aesthetics set down by Sen Rikyu these tea houses are of set sizes, governed by the tatami mats that cover the floor. These are 6'-0" x 3'-0" and a house may be three to five or more mats in size. There are strict rules for their construction, together with the approach to the house and the architecture of the garden. The entrance door is small, 2'-6" high, and low down to create the feeling of humility. The walls and roof are made of bamboo and the windows are covered with paper only admitting a subdued light.

On one side is a special alcove called a Tokonoma in which is hung a scroll either of a poem or painting or writing which creates the atmosphere that the host wishes to evoke for this particular ceremony. Also, a single container with a few flowers may be on the floor of the Tokonoma or hung in a bamboo case.



There is a square hole in the floor to one side in which is placed a charcoal fire over which is hung a metal kettle for boiling the water for the Chado.

All necessary utensils for the tea ceremony are chosen very carefully for the particular occasion and are examples of extreme simplicity and beauty. They will be meticulously laid out by the tea master in his serving area and the whole house will have been scrupulously cleaned.

There are four principles laid down by Sen Rikyu that portray the purpose of the tea ceremony and they are represented by the words; WA, KEI, SEI and JAKU.

WA means harmony. This is harmony between people and people with nature. The harmony of the tea utensils and the thoughts and manner in which they are used. It is the most important aspect (harmony).

KEI means respect. Respect and sincere feelings paid to all things and gratitude for their being.

SEI means purity (both worldly and spiritual cleanliness).

JAKU means tranquility and peace of mind achieved by the realization of the preceding three principles. The tea ceremony in a way can be a form of meditation.

Mr. Birch had placed before us a three mat arrangement, two mats together and parallel to the audience and a third mat along their ends on the left. Along the back stood a screen with a Tokonoma alcove near the left end.

A scroll hung in the Tokonoma that was in quiet colours, fawns and greys, with black ink calligraphy on it. It read; "Here and Now" and the large character represented the word "Nothing". Mr. Birch explained the scroll signified NON ATTACHMENT.

In the right hand corner were the tea kettle, tea caddy, water pot and a Raku tea bowl, also a napkin, a bamboo spoon and a whisk (which is generally new for each important occasion, all laid out in order before Mr. Birch (the server).

Ceremonies are held at any time throughout the year and also may be early in the morning or late at night if there is to be a special moon viewing or some such occasion.

The utensils are chosen for the particular time of year. Blue and white in summer gives a feeling of coolness and water, with wide shallow open bowls. Yet in the winter warm colours predominate with closed shapes to keep the tea and one's hands warm. The tea rooms are never heated so their visual effects are very important. Raku bowls by the Raku family were favoured by Sen Rikyu so are very popular, also simple Korean rice bowls. There are many bowls which have special names because of their colour or texture and these are highly prized.

The tea itself is a green powder. It is prepared by picking the young leaves which are first steamed then dried and finally powdered. This is quite different to tea prepared for steeping in the Western manner.



The people who originally took part in the tea ceremony were the nobility, merchant families, and the fighting Samuri, the whole thing being an aesthetic activity.

Mr. Birch wore a long black kimono with a brown over-garment that was shorter. He wore white one-toed socks and sandals, but these were put neatly together at the side of the mat.

He invited three of the audience to be his guests and they approached the left end of the matting, removed their shoes and stepped on to the tatami that was at right angles to the audience. They knelt down and sat back on their feet facing Mr. Birch by the kettle.

The ceremony had begun.

With very deft and precise movements Mr. Birch used a long handled bamboo scoop to lift water from the hot kettle that was placed over a container of charcoal. A small amount of this hot water was poured into the tea bowl and rinsed round. Then this water was poured out into another container and the clean tea bowl was deftly dried with a napkin folded in a particular way.

Then the long thin bamboo spoon was taken up and two spoonsful of powdered green tea were taken out of the tea caddy and placed in the tea bowl. The ladle was lifted and water was taken again from the steaming kettle and poured into the tea bowl on top of the green tea. The whole was then whisked deftly with the bamboo whisk in several directions. Each of these actions was performed in a definite ritualistic manner and Mr. Birch said it can take ten years to learn to perform these actions correctly.

When the tea was prepared he rose carefully, knelt again before the first guest, bowl in hand, and offered it to them, placing it on the mat in a particular position. The bowl is always presented to the guest with the best side facing the guest and when the guest accepts it, it is turned round so that this special side (usually the decorated side) faces the tea master before the guest drinks from the back. When the tea has been tasted it is placed again on the tatami and is offered to the next guest on the right. Each guest drinks in turn, but the tea master will not participate. The bowl is admired and discussed during this tasting. The scroll and other aesthetic points are commented on.

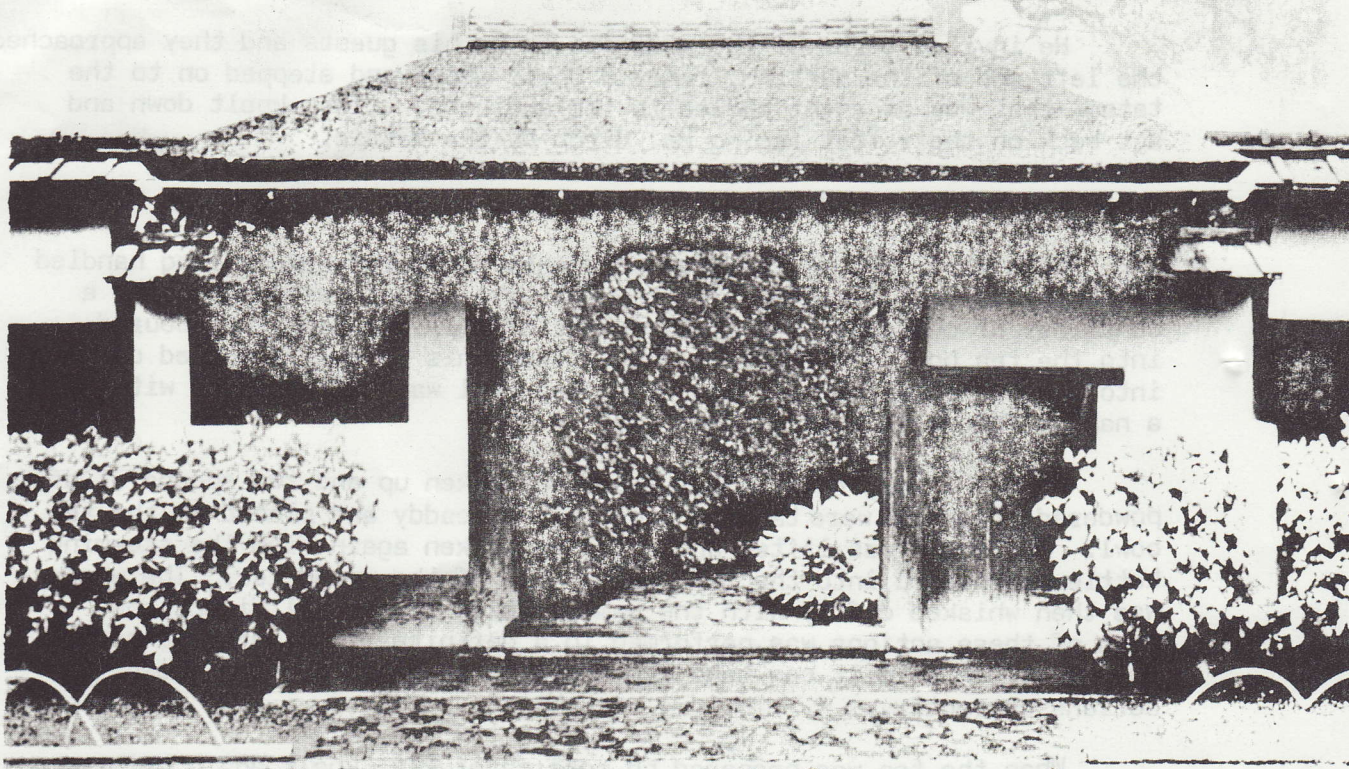
This first thick tea is called Choi Cha. It is followed by a small meal presented on a beautiful shaped dish. The meal may consist of rice, raw fish or baked fish named Kai Sek which has been cooked on small hot stones, or soya bean soup, or cakes and biscuits. Later a thinner tea may be offered. The ceremony proceeds at a leisurely pace and may continue for hours.

Finally, the ceremony concluded, the guests rise and put on their shoes outside the tea house and pad quietly away over the mossed stones or pine needles laid outside in the garden.

Mr. Birch concluded by showing us slides of Japan with modern cars on highways in the centre of rushing cities and pictures of waterfalls and the entrance to the URASENKE tea house foundation with all its modern administration.



## 2. THE URASENKE TRADITION OF CHADO



Kabutomon, the main gate to Urasenke

Offices of the Urasenke Foundation outside Japan are located in Austrailia, Brazil, Canada, France, Great Britain, Italy, Mexico, Peru, United States and West Germany. Persons interested in further information may either write to the Urasenke Foundation in Japan or the branch office listed below:

Urasenke London  
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The popularity of tea is worldwide, but nowhere in the world does tea contribute as much to the cultural milieu as in Japan. There the preparation and drinking of tea has acquired esthetic significance and has developed into a distinct artistic accomplishment.

In Japan, when people are invited to a gathering to drink tea they can anticipate sitting in a small room and enjoying each other's company in seclusion from the everyday world. The host will have cleaned the small room, perhaps hung a scroll, prepared a fire to heat the water for making tea as well as selected and prepared a small meal all in the hope of making the gathering as pleasurable as possible. This gathering is the outward manifestation of a distinctly inward sensibility that one acquires through the study and discipline of *Chado*, the Way of Tea. *Chado* is relatively recent term that has been given to the discipline of preparing and drinking tea that originated in the fifteenth century. The green powdered tea that is served at a tea gathering was originally brought to Japan by Zen monks returning from study in China during the twelfth century. At that time tea was used as a mild stimulant to aid their study and meditation and was also valued as a medicinal herb.

From this humble origin, tea masters, devotees of *Chado*, have developed an esthetic that has permeated Japanese culture. However there was one tea master who in the space of his lifetime fully realized this esthetic as a way of life and established *Chado* as a means to convert life itself into a work of art. This tea master was Sen Rikyu (1522-1591).



Soshitsu Sen XV

A leading figure in the arts as well as politics of his time, Sen Rikyu's esthetic ideals are at the core of the arts and crafts of Japan and the basis for the best of Japanese etiquette and taste. Sen Rikyu summarized the basic principles of *Chado* with these four characters; *wa*, *kei*, *sei* and *jaku*. *Wa* means harmony. The harmony between people, of people with nature, and the harmony of the tea utensils and the manner in which they used are all aspects of *wa*. *Kei* means respect. Respect is paid to all things and comes from sincere feelings of gratitude for their being. *Sei* means purity and implies both worldly and spiritual cleanliness. Lastly, *jaku* means tranquility or peace of mind and comes with the realization of the first three principles.

The Zen monks who brought tea to Japan laid the spiritual foundation for *Chado*. Based upon an intuitive search into the essence of reality, the precepts of Zen Buddhism gave tea masters great latitude to develop the esthetic of Tea. It has come to include not only the procedure for preparing and serving tea but also the manufacture of tea utensils, the connoisseurship of the fine and applied arts, the design and construction of tearooms, garden architecture, literature and more.

Almost four hundred years have past since Sen Rikyu walked the streets of Kyoto, but the city is still rich with his legacy. Today, about a fifteen minute walk from the Kyoto Imperial Palace are the estates of two branches of the Sen family. One of these estates is the residence of Soshitsu Sen XV, fifteenth-generation descendant of Sen Rikyu and present grand tea master of the Urasenke school of Tea.

The Urasenke house proper is composed of various styles of tearooms, almost all of which have been designated as Important Cultural Properties by the Japanese Government. One of these so designated is the tearoom called "Konnichian". This small tearoom was built by Sen Sotan, the grandson of Sen Rikyu, and has become the symbol of the Urasenke tradition of *Chado*. "Yu-in", "Mushikiken", and "Totsutotsusai" are the names of other tearooms in the Urasenke house where the spirit of Sen Rikyu continues to live.

Across the street from the main gate of Urasenke is the *Chado Kaikan* where most of the daily lessons are held and students young and old from all over the world gather to receive training in *Chado*. To the west rises a six-story building that features an exhibition gallery, auditorium, library and research facilities, a meditation hall, and offices of the Urasenke Foundation.

Now, when modern conveniences and mechanization relieves man from most labor, the time and energy required to prepare and serve a bowl of tea seems unnecessary. But a bowl of tea, when prepared according to the principles of *Chado*, is a ritual developed to meet man's need for inner tranquility. It is a ritual of simplicity and economy wherein all can find "peace in a bowl of tea."

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### 3. THE JAPANESE TEA BOWL - CHAWAN

This is the most important utensil used in the tea ceremony. Although the other utensils are made with care and follow distinct rules as to decoration, it is the tea bowl that is inspected and admired by the guests, and consequently great artistic efforts have been made by Japanese potters to make the truly aesthetic tea bowl, and for tea masters (Chajin) to collect these.

Tea bowls were made long before the 'Tea Ceremony', e.g. Old Seto 'Mountain' tea bowl 11th century, the Gaki earthenware vessel of the 10th century, and the ash glaze tea bowl of the 7th century Sui Dynasty. But the spread of Zen (Chan) Buddhism and the trade with China (Southern Sung) brought about the tea ceremony and the use of Chinese porcelain tea bowls from T'ien mu shan mountain (Japanese, Mt. Tenmoku). However, as artistic culture overcame much of the aristocratic society, the simple ware originating in Korea swept through Japan, and every aspect of the 'rustic' tea bowl came under close scrutiny.

The 'Ido' bowl was made by an unknown potter in Korea during the 15th century, only about ten now existing, the most famous being presented to 'Generalissimo' Hideyoshi, but breaking, by Tsutsui Junkei. The five (Itsutsu) pieces were joined and the vessel was then called 'Tsutsu-I-Zutsu'. The shape of the vessel is praised by viewers; the detailed grain and skin on the fleshy body - caused by the calm grooves of the wheel and the rough 'wrinkle' - the strong point of Ido tea bowls - represents the broken feeling of the crazing of the glaze and the sea-shell effect. The Muromachi period (1392-1572) when the Ido bowls were made, and only during which time were flat wide mouthed tea bowls made, gave way to the warlike but decorative and creative art Momoyama period (1573-1599).

At Mino, the Shino and Oribe ware blossomed, particularly with tea bowls. Shino ware is not placed on a wheel, it is carved and incised and then these designs are painted with iron and the whole glazed with local feldspathic rock. A thick glaze produces off-white Shino; a thin glaze oxidised, Red Shino and Crimson Shino. Oribe ware, named after Furuta Oribe (1544-1615) shows how distorted shapes and 'clashing' designs and shapes can match beautifully. Karatsu ware and Hagi ware were particularly decorative tea ceremony vessels. But the ware classed as first is undoubtedly Raku.

The appreciation of ceramics (and of Raku specifically) comes from the experience of using the five senses. The sound of the vessels, the touch as we turn the bowl in our hands, the taste and smell jointly with the tea and lastly the sight of the shape, colour and shadows, all go together to make that individual aesthetic appreciation. Words are useless to describe this appreciation. Oribe deliberately used asymmetry to beautify his tea bowls and other vessels. Every shape or variation of any part of the bowl has a meaning and often will show where the bowl was made.

And then there are the Six Aspects of the Tea Bowl:-



### Quiet Taste

"How fine to tie a grand horse to a simple straw hut" to show the beauty of discontinuity, to be plain and inconspicuous.

### Weathered Simplicity

Uncontrived elegance without particularly posing, and without vulgarity.

### Dignity

A personal true sincerity, not nobility.

### Volume

The clay has quality and urges on us a feeling of mass.

### Vigour

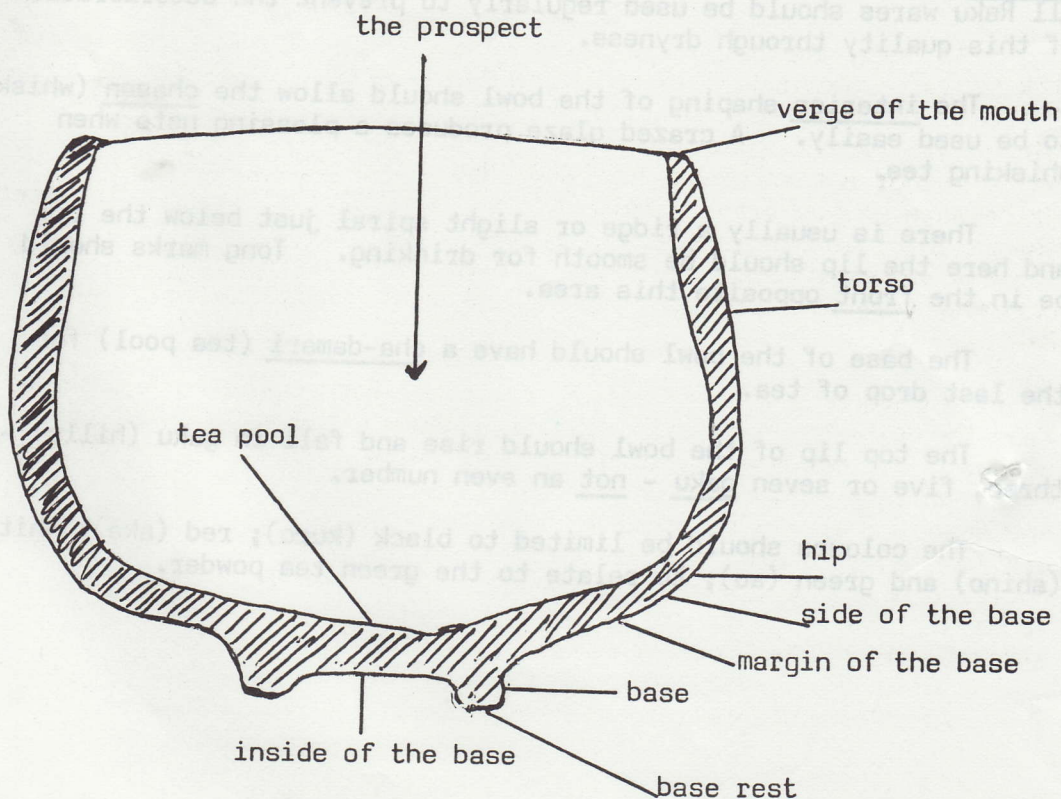
Dynamic, clean cut carving.

### Purity

Undeified beauty; the Lotus rising from the mud; Purity is something fresh and cheerful.

Thanks are given to Hideo Tagai for explaining these aspects.

### THE PARTS OF THE TEA BOWL





John Dickerson writes about the aesthetics of Raku tea bowls. Here are a few notes:-

Wabi-n-Cha-no-yu (Austere Tea-ism).

Wabi - the perception of beauty in things quiet, simple and imperfect.

Sabi - the mellowing and beautifying due to age and use.

The tea bowl is made of poor heat conducting material in order to retain heat in the tea and impart a pleasant slow warmth to the hands.

The Winter tea bowl is high-walled and the Summer one wide and shallow - according to the ambient temperature of the season.

The base must be firm to allow the bowl to stand firmly on the Tatami (floor matting).

The bowl must fit comfortably in the left hand.

The front (opposite the drinking lip) is facing the guest when the host presents it.

Zangurishita - the slight roughness of the agreeable tactile quality of the bowl and the textural variation within it.

Tedori - the expression of the relationship between actual and perceived qualities, i.e. a heavy looking bowl should be heavy, although moderate weight is best for Raku.

Keshiki - the wish for dampness or softness of the glaze and colours. All Raku wares should be used regularly to prevent the deterioration of this quality through dryness.

The interior shaping of the bowl should allow the chasen (whisk) to be used easily. A crazed glaze produces a pleasing note when whisking tea.

There is usually a ridge or slight spiral just below the rim and here the lip should be smooth for drinking. Tong marks should be in the front opposite this area.

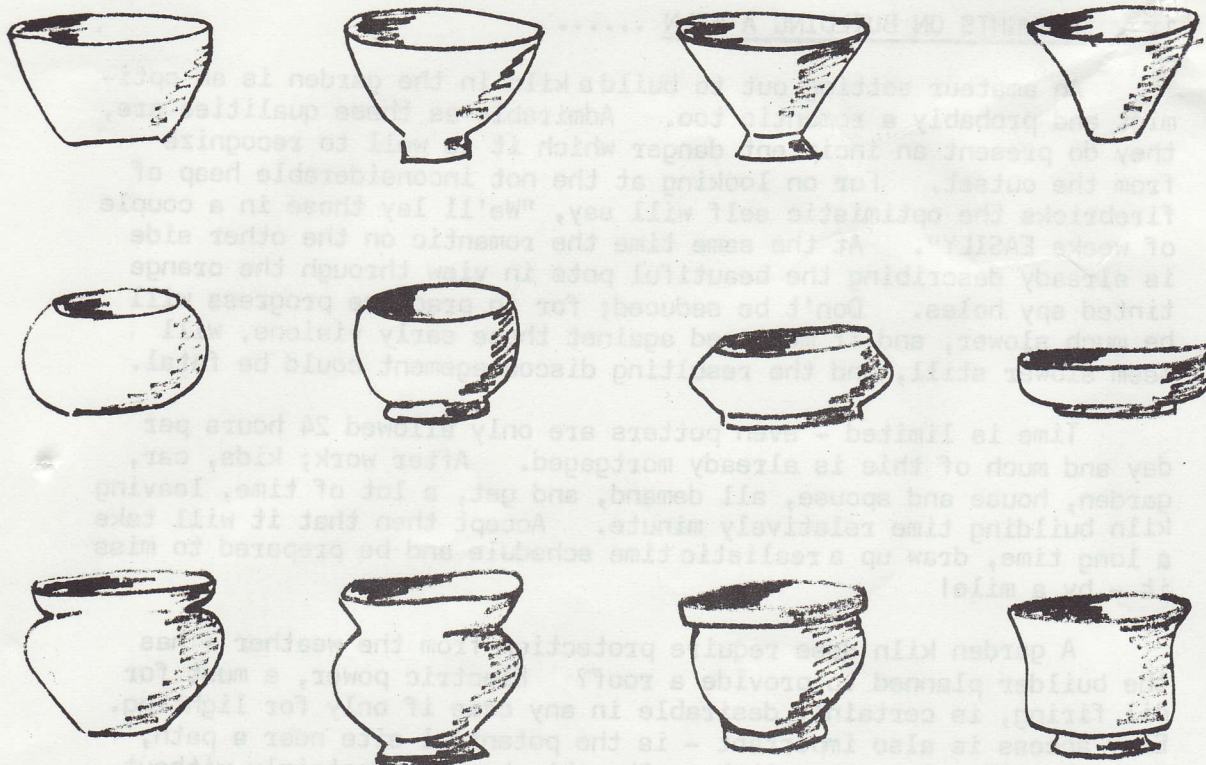
The base of the bowl should have a cha-damari (tea pool) for the last drop of tea.

The top lip of the bowl should rise and fall in gaku (hills) - three, five or seven gaku - not an even number.

The colours should be limited to black (kuro); red (aka); white (shino) and green (ao); to relate to the green tea powder.



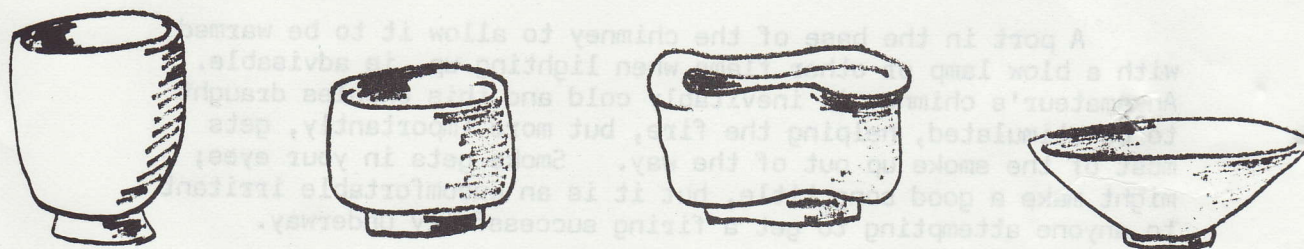
# SOME TRADITIONAL JAPANESE BOWL SHAPES.



## TRADITIONAL TEA-BOWL SHAPES.



'GO' Stone box type. Split base type. Cylinder type. 'GOKI' type. Curving lip  
Gokezoko-gata. Warikōdai-gata. Tsutsu-gata. Goki-gata. Hatazori-gata.



Wooden bowl type. Low cylinder type. Shoe type. Flat type.  
Wan-gata. Hantsutsu-gata. Kutsu-gata. Natsu jawan.  
(Summer Teabowl).



## BUILDING A KILN

### 1. THOUGHTS ON BUILDING A KILN .....

An amateur setting out to build a kiln in the garden is an optimist and probably a romantic too. Admirable as these qualities are, they do present an incipient danger which it is well to recognize from the outset. For on looking at the not inconsiderable heap of firebricks the optimistic self will say, "We'll lay those in a couple of weeks EASILY". At the same time the romantic on the other side is already describing the beautiful pots in view through the orange tinted spy holes. Don't be seduced; for in practice progress will be much slower, and if measured against these early visions, will seem slower still, and the resulting discouragement could be fatal.

Time is limited - even potters are only allowed 24 hours per day and much of this is already mortgaged. After work; kids, car, garden, house and spouse, all demand, and get, a lot of time, leaving kiln building time relatively minute. Accept then that it will take a long time, draw up a realistic time schedule and be prepared to miss it - by a mile!

A garden kiln does require protection from the weather - has the builder planned to provide a roof? Electric power, a must for oil firing, is certainly desirable in any case if only for lighting. Easy access is also important - is the potential site near a path, is one on the plan - has it been thought about? Certainly without one, "Mud in your eye" will become the understatement of a lifetime.

Information on the design and construction can be sought from several authors, Rhodes, Leach, contributors to Ceramic Review, and others. Many tend to share a common weakness from the amateur's viewpoint in not being too specific; strong on proportion, short on dimension. But for practical down to earth constructional guidance, Cardew's Pioneer Pottery cannot be beaten. Here the explanations are so good that anyone who can read is able to build arches, domes and tapering stacks, etc., by following the practical hints given. Not mentioned in Cardew but worth noting, fire clay has more natural suction than ordinary cement mortar - which puts considerable strain upon the trowel. Only buy a forged trowel where the handle tang and blade are one and the same piece of metal. Trowels with welded handles soon part company from them, when used with clay.

A port in the base of the chimney to allow it to be warmed with a blow lamp or other flame when lighting up, is advisable. An amateur's chimney is inevitably cold and this enables draught to be stimulated, helping the fire, but more importantly, gets most of the smoke up out of the way. Smoke gets in your eyes; might make a good song title, but it is an uncomfortable irritant to anyone attempting to get a firing successfully underway.

At last the kiln is complete and the troubles are over, or are they? True, the construction skills can be put to one side, but they must be replaced by operating skills which will be equally difficult to acquire. The situation might be likened to building a car and having to teach yourself to drive. Inevitably, not everything will go right first time, but having got this far the







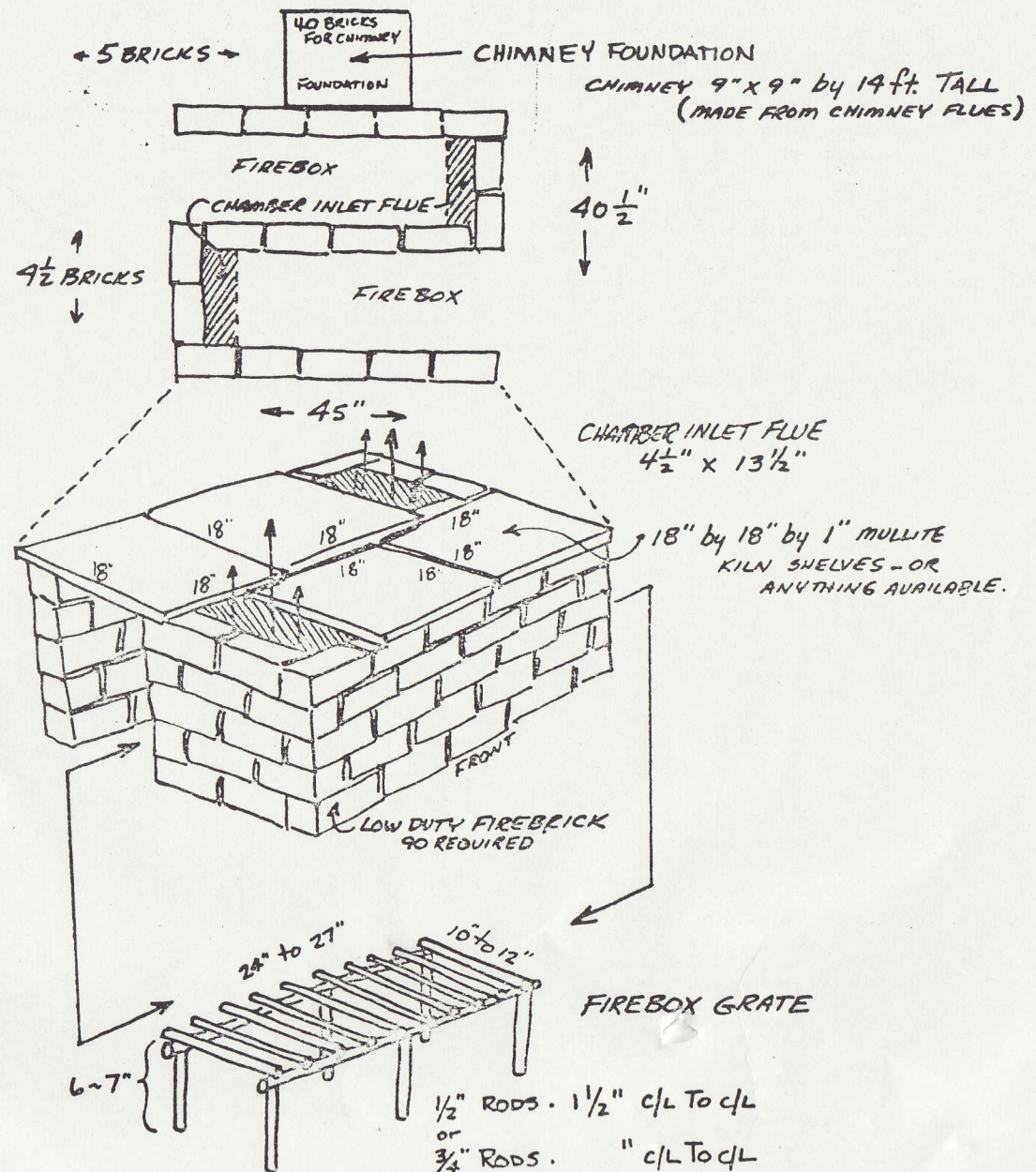
# FASTFIRE WOOD

by F. L. Olsen

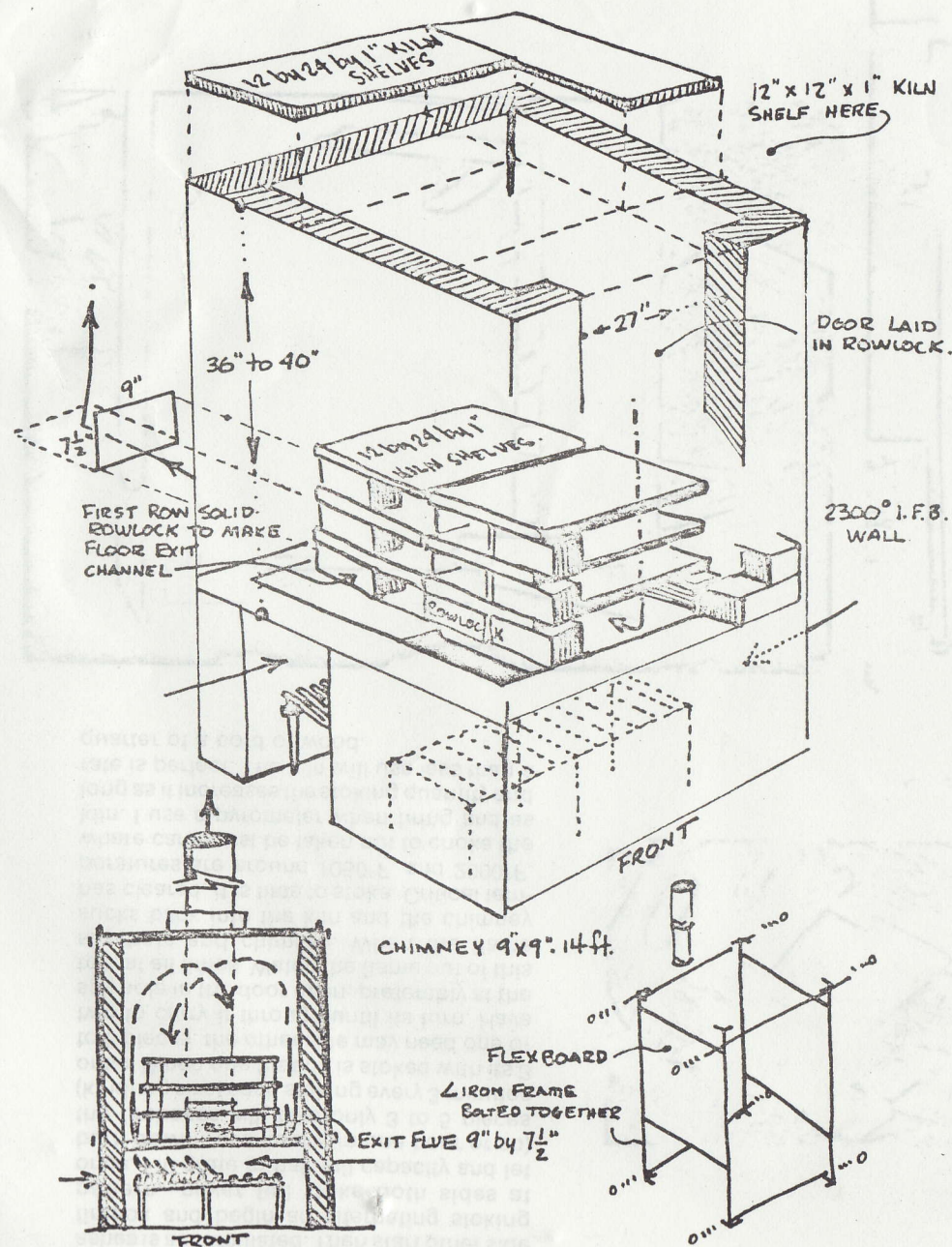
Over a year ago Bruce Dedmon and I began to experiment with an extremely fast firing and cooling cycle, using a 300 cubic foot insulation blanket hood envelope gas updraft kiln. The normal firing/cooling cycle was 24 hours. We decreased the firing cycle and started to fire 2000 slip cast greenware planters to cone 10 in 8 hours and cooled in 8 hours. This cycle worked fine but we still needed more production. The only way was to fire the kiln twice a day. We went to an 8 hour firing/cooling cycle—4 to 5 hours to cone 10, 3 hours for cooling. Then we pop the hood and move to the second pad. Thus we fire 4000 greenware planters to cone 10 in two 8 hour cycles with one hood and two pads.

Through Ray Grimm (of Portland, Oregon) I met George Wright, a clay and material supplier for Portland area potters. George, an old-time wood kiln fireman in the brick and tile kilns, built himself and his wife a small 8 to 10 cubic foot stacking wood fired kiln which fires beautifully and fast. This lead me to thinking about a small wood kiln kit that I could put together. It could fit in my pick-up truck; could be built in 2 or 3 hours; fired to cone 10 in 4 to 6 hours with no fuel cost involved; cooled in 4 to 6 hours; and taken down in an hour and moved to a new area. So I built myself a 20 cubic foot downdraft woodfired prototype. I call this knockdown portable kiln kit—"FASTFIRE WOOD."

A lot has been written lately about our impending fuel crisis, and we are all aware of the coming problems. Solutions are harder to come by. Perhaps an intermediate solution is to have kilns capable of extremely fast firings and efficient fuel consumption. Four hours to cone 10 in the hood kiln with an even firing is one solution. The illustrated FASTFIRE WOOD kiln proves that it is also possible with wood as a fuel.







The last few kiln building workshops I have done have concentrated on the FASTFIRE WOOD kilns that are extremely efficient and time saving. At the Casa Del Sol workshop in Ashland, Oregon (John Connors) a number of workshopers took off for the swimming hole after the kiln had been built, stacked and ignited. They returned three hours later only to find that the firing was almost done. I have received a letter recently (Oct. 1975) from Chuck Hinds concerning the FASTFIRE WOOD kilns built during a workshop I did at the University of Iowa: "We have put sprung arches on both kilns. Both of them fire very well, Bunny's class (head ceramic professor Bunny McBride) fired the downdraft to cone 10 in 4 hours. Can you believe that?"

## FASTFIRE WOOD

Three important design principles which set the minimum standard for wood are:

- 1.) The firebox area should be 10 times the horizontal cross-section of the chimney. For fastfire increase firebox area by 20%.
- 2.) More than 1/2 the firebox volume should be below the grate bars—thus basically 1/2 plus for the ash pit and 1/2 minus for the combustion area.
- 3.) Chimney height—three times the height of the kiln's chamber plus the height of the firebox and then add 1 foot of chimney for every 3 feet of horizontal travel of the flue gases. For altitudes over 4,000 feet an additional 3 feet of chimney or more may be needed.



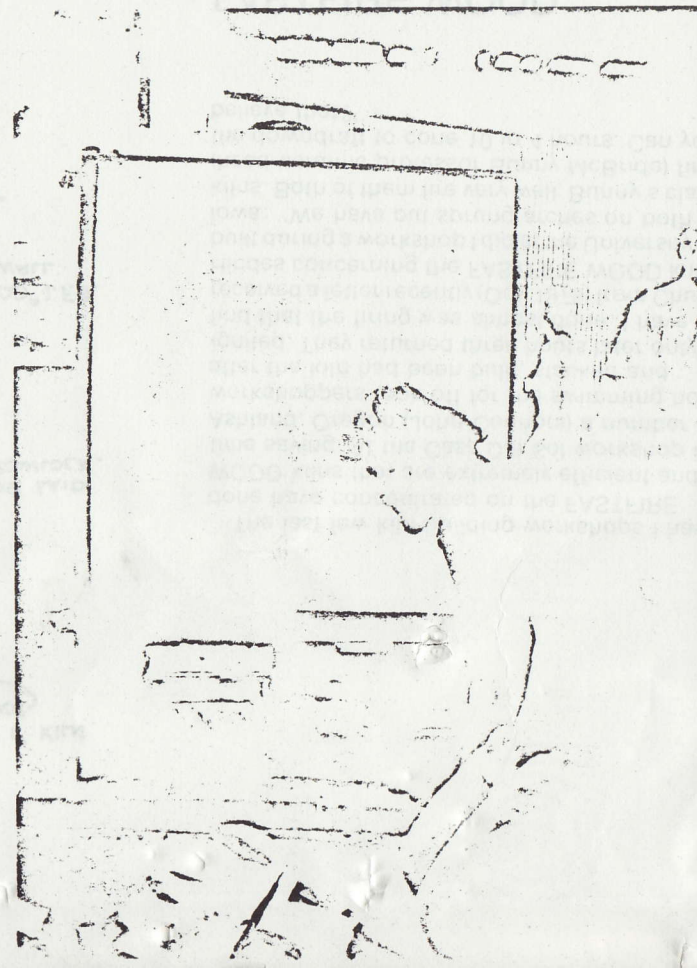
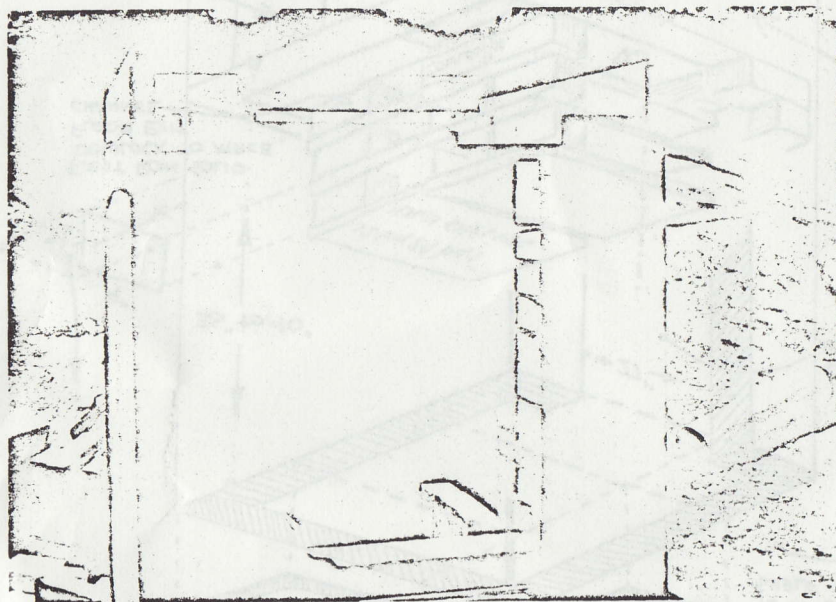


## FIRING

Start one firebox and fire until a bed of ashes is accumulated. Then start other side firebox and begin an alternating stoking pattern—never full stoke both sides at once. Fill grate to half full capacity and let burn down—eventually (in one hour or so) the fireboxes will take only 3 to 5 pieces (kindling size) each stoking every 3 minutes or so. When one firebox is stoked with its 3 to 5 pieces, the other side may need one or two to carry it through until its turn. Have spy hole in the door open, preferably at the top, at all times. Watch the flame out of this spy hole and chimney. When the flame sucks back into the kiln and the chimney has cleared, it is time to stoke. Critical temperatures are around 1050°F. and 2000°F. where care must be taken not to choke the kiln. I use a pyrometer when firing and as long as it increases the stoking quantity and rate is perfect. The kiln will use less than a quarter of a cord of wood.



Fred Olsen apprenticed in Japan for two years, worked in Denmark, Royal Copenhagen, and taught on the West Coast. He runs his own production studio, the Pinion Crest Pottery, at Mt. Center, California. He is the author of *The Kiln Book*.





### 3. BOOKS ON KILNS

- (a) "The Kiln Book"  
Frederick L. Olsen

Keramos Books, California \$9.50

In the foreword by F. Carlton Ball there is one sentence of paramount importance - "Frederick Olsen's Kiln Book explains everything you need to know to start the process of understanding the firing of pottery". With this sentence constantly in mind I decided to test the contents of the book in order to check the level of this import.

First the refractory materials - a deal of very useful information is given about all the 'high temperature' materials - and it is pleasing to see both Centigrade and Fahrenheit values given. Unfortunately some of the oxides are given somewhat confusingly to a beginner, e.g. 'Magnesia Oxide', which should really be 'Magnesia or Magnesium Oxide, and how 'Thoria' came to be printed 'Thores' even the printer might be unable to explain. But, overcoming these mistakes, the reader can work out easily what bricks (shapes, sizes, materials) to use for building any kiln. And having obtained the bricks how to lay them, whether for a light construction or a large heavy kiln, is very adequately explained, with many diagrams. Arches of all kinds, corners and expansion joints, doors, and frames are shown in their variety. The use of ceramic fibre is discussed.

Having shown very clearly what materials the kiln builder would be using and how to use them, the main part of the book delves into the design of kilns under nine important principles. These principles have been applied from the analyses of many kilns in history to the building of modern kilns with the earlier mentioned materials. On these pages there are many excellent diagrams and several good photographs to give full understanding to every process.

The final third of the book explains about fuels: woods, coals, gases, and oils. These are all in the plural and each one (e.g. of five gases) is detailed as to composition and methods of feeding and mixing with air and controlling. Flow charts, burner sizes, regulators, safety devices, ventilation and, for electric kilns, all necessary element statistics are tabled and discussed. And should one think about weights of materials, or melting points of metals, or the estimation of fibrebrick arches, or pyrometric cone equivalents and decimal equivalents, then these are all given in a large appendix at the end, just before the index.

Yes, I do believe this book explains everything needed to start the process of understanding the firing of pottery. So it is really 'a must' for the kiln builder.

S. R. ROMER



(b) "Electric Kilns and Firing"  
H. Fraser Ceramic Skillbooks

Pitman Publishing Limited 1980 Cased £3.95 Paper £2.50

This is the latest in the Skillbook series and, uniform with the others, is written by an authority on the subject who has already composed considerable work on many aspects of ceramics especially including that of kilns.

The book is directed mainly at the small studio potter, the teacher and the technician, all of whom will be responsible for good firings. It is also a most useful book for anyone who does not know the full details of how pottery is set in a kiln and what happens as the temperature rises.

Being but a small book, although holding a deal of information, it does not attempt to tell the reader how to build a kiln; but it does show the general design, and the usefulness of the accessories which can be used to help to make a successful firing.

Nowadays these accessories may cost more than a small kiln and hence it is very important to know which is the best instrument to apply in any given situation.

The latter part of the book takes us through a firing to learn the effects at given temperatures for both biscuit and glaze.

There are three appendixes; a colour, temperature and effect, relationship; safety recommendations and a full list of British kiln suppliers. These are followed by a comprehensive index, all of which end off a well written, interesting and valuable book for the not so knowledgeable potter - and there are many of us.

S. R. ROMER



## POTTERS DIGEST

### 1. SPECIALIST DAY POTTERY CLASSES

#### Handbuilding - Throwing

If response is sufficient there will be day classes held on Mondays in blocks of six, beginning in September. Classes will be run by Trisch Phillips at The Pottery, School House, The Green, Mentmore. Six students only can be accommodated at £6.00 per day.

If anybody is interested telephone Cheddington 668463.

### 2. CONTINENTAL KICK WHEEL FOR SALE

Home made on Guild summer project. Eminently usable. £40.00.

Tony Plessner - Kings Langley 64414.

### 3. USE OF AN ELECTRIC WHEEL AND KILN SPACE

Offered by potter in Woburn area. Tuition and guidance possible for a serious student.

J. H. Evans - Woburn 239.

### 4. LETTERS

From:

Audrey Andrews, 28 Sharps Lane, Ruislip (Ruislip 32596)

I have found the ceramic fibre kiln I bought from Ray Scott very efficient for Raku work and would be pleased to loan it out plus bottle gas and gun to anyone wishing to have a firing, providing that I can be assured no harm may ensue by either being at the firing or personally instructing the borrower in its use. Only a small fee to Guild members would be charged to cover costs of transport and gas etc. This scheme would help to make good use of a piece of equipment which might otherwise only gather dust in my pottery.

From:

Margaret Godschalk, 61 Seymour Road, St. Albans (St. Albans 50693)

As one member who did not go on the Henry Moore outing I can confirm that it was an unqualified success! At least from the point of view of a patient sitting in hospital receiving an enormous sheath of the most beautiful flowers, enjoying and basking in Dot's, Elsa's and Pauline's lively company and thinking how perfectly timed it all was! How very kind of all the coach party and how I appreciated it.

I apologize for dropping you all like hot cakes at the last moment but gather the day was successful.



# **POTTERS OPEN DAY AT PENDLEY ARTS THEATRE TRING**

**Neil Ions**  
Musical Instruments

**John Pollex**  
Slipware

**Colin Pearson**  
Winged pots

**Charles Forster**  
Sculpture

**9.30am - 6.30pm**

**Saturday 7th November 1981**



**DACORUM AND  
CHILTERN  
POTTERS GUILD**

**£12.00 including good lunch  
Bookings to Mrs Jill Kitchener  
10 Taywood Close, Stevenage**





AN OPEN POTTERS DAY  
SATURDAY 7TH NOVEMBER 1981  
PENDLEY ARTS THEATRE  
TRING, HERTS

SPONSORS: Dacorum and Chiltern Potters Guild and Pendley Arts Trust

PROGRAMME:

- 9.30 a.m. COLIN PEARSON  
Demonstrating techniques in his own style - winged pots
- 10.45 a.m. COFFEE
- 11.15 a.m. NEIL IONS  
Musical instruments
- 12.30 p.m. BAR OPEN BUFFET LUNCH  
BOOK AND POTTERY EXHIBITION OF DEMONSTRATORS' WORK  
COLLECTION OF GOODS FROM 'CLAYGLAZE'
- 2.00 p.m. JOHN POLLEX  
Slipware decoration
- 3.15 p.m. TEA BREAK
- 3.45 p.m. CHARLES FORSTER  
Sculptural
- 5.00 p.m. COLIN PEARSON
- 6.00 p.m. BAR OPEN  
FRATERNISATION AND POTTERY DISCOURSE  
BRAINS TRUST OF DEMONSTRATORS AND OTHERS FOR YOUR QUESTIONS

BOOK EARLY TO ENSURE A PLACE

FEE FOR THE DAY : £10.00 members : £12.00 non-members

Includes coffee, buffet lunch, tea, guaranteed seat  
and entertainment

Please reserve place(s) I enclose £.....

NAME

ADDRESS

Cheques payable to "Dacorum and Chiltern Potters Guild"

BOOKINGS TO : Jill Kitchener, 10 Taywood Close, Stevenage, Herts.



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### COLIN PEARSON

Colin Pearson is perhaps best known as the past maestro and anchorman of the Harrow Studio Pottery Course. After working with Ray Finch and David Leach he ran his own pottery at Aylesford and also the Aylesford Priory Pottery for some years. More recently his work has been of a more personal nature and this has won many international prizes. He has the distinction of being the only British potter to be awarded the first prize at Faenza. He recently took a break from his teaching at Camberwell to visit Japan.

### NEIL IONS

After leaving the Royal College of Art he became Founder Member of Fosseway House Workshops at Stow-on-the-Wold. His work arises out of his fascination for American Indian artifacts, musical curiosity and a certain Mayan ocarina in the British Museum. Besides his musical instruments he produces vessels and sculpture in earthenware with painted slip surfaces, burnished and polished, plus a limited use of glaze.

### JOHN POLLEX

Began potting in evening classes at Sir John Cass where they made chiefly red earthenware, so his beginnings were in this fabric, but he is virtually self taught as a slipware potter. In the winter he painted theatrical scenery and in the summer worked for a catering firm travelling all over the country. A friend who had been Technical Assistant at Harrow and was leaving got him the job. He came under the influence of Colin Pearson who he regards as his mentor. On leaving Harrow he worked with Brian Newman and his friend Les Sharp making stoneware. He began making earthenware again when he found himself in an urban workshop in the Barbican, Plymouth, which had only an electric kiln. Although he had never had a slip trailer in his hand before seeing R. G. Cooper's book on Staffordshire Slipware Dishes, his reputation for the medium developed rapidly. He was soon invited to demonstrate at a number of colleges and this year gave a series of workshops throughout New Zealand. In 1979 he produced a book for the Pitman Skill Book series on his techniques.

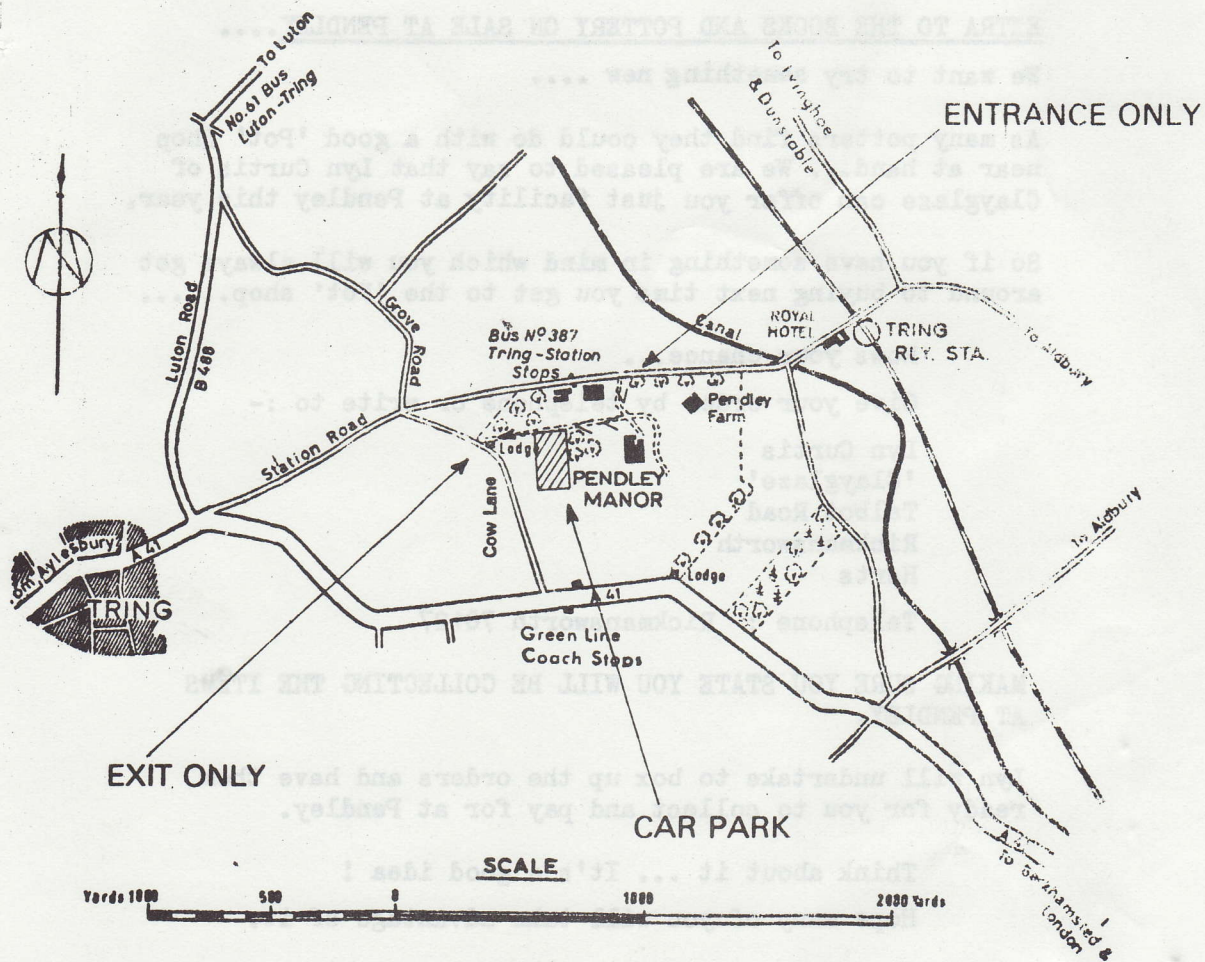
### CHARLES FORSTER

Was Head of the Art Department at Chaddesdon School for 19 years and it was not until his first exhibition with other teachers from the school at The Playhouse in Derby that his work began to be noticed and was introduced to the wider world of potters through the special Derbyshire Number 49 of Pottery Quarterly. As a result of the illustrations of his work in Pottery Quarterly he received an eight year commission from a national transport company to mark its centenary in 1978. He is now a full time potter in modelling, gives two days a week to the commission and the rest of the week working for private customers, shops and galleries. He has always been fascinated by old photographs and his models of the Edwardian era, old cars, bicycles, public houses and tram cars decorated with animated people that give humour, colour and life to his models. He first began modelling in plasticine little things such as animals to amuse his daughter at weekends.

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# MAP OF PENDLEY







# DACORUM AND CHILTERN POTTERS GUILD



## EXTRA TO THE BOOKS AND POTTERY ON SALE AT PENDLEY....

We want to try something new ....

As many potters find they could do with a good 'Pot' Shop near at hand... We are pleased to say that Lyn Curtis of Clayglaze can offer you just facility at Pendley this year.

So if you have something in mind which you will always get around to buying next time you get to the 'Pot' shop.....

Now's your chance...

Give your order by telephone or write to :-

Lyn Curtis  
'Clayglaze'  
Talbot Road  
Rickmansworth  
Herts

Telephone : Rickmansworth 70127

MAKING SURE YOU STATE YOU WILL BE COLLECTING THE ITEMS  
AT PENDLEY.

Lyn will undertake to box up the orders and have them  
ready for you to collect and pay for at Pendley.

Think about it ... It's a good idea !

Hope many of you will take advantage of it.



# Dacorum and Chiltern Potters Guild PROGRAMME for 1981/1982

<b>September</b> 18th Friday 8.00 p.m.	Bring a pot St Nicholas Hall, Harpenden
<b>October</b> 9th Friday 8.00 p.m.	AGM – Wally Keeler Northchurch Social Centre, Berkhamstead
<b>October</b> 24th Saturday 10.30 a.m.	Visit to Percival David Foundation Gordon Sq., London WC1 Margaret Medley and Nigel Wood
<b>November</b> 7th Saturday 9.30 a.m. – 6.30 p.m.	Pendley Open Day Tring
<b>December</b> 11th Friday	Christmas event Pendley Manor, Tring
<b>January</b> 15th Friday 8.00 p.m.	Film night St. Stephens and St. Albans Church Hall, St. Albans
<b>February</b> 12th Friday 8.00 p.m.	2nd 'Problem Pot' evening St. Nicholas Hall, Harpenden
<b>March</b> 19th Friday 8.00 p.m.	Handles and Spouts – Danny Killick Northchurch Social Centre, Berkhamstead
<b>April</b> 16th Friday 8.00 p.m.	Suzy Cree Potten End Village Hall, Nr Berkhamstead
<b>May</b> 21st Friday 8.00 p.m.	Humour in clay (Venue to be notified)
<b>June</b> 18th Friday 8.00 p.m.	3rd 'Problem Pot' evening St. Nicholas Hall, Harpenden
<b>July</b> July	MEMBERS EXHIBITION Narrow boat trip – Hertfordshire



**DACORUM AND  
CHILTERN  
POTTERS GUILD**

Visitors welcome  
Further enquiries  
contact: Secretary Mrs V Williams  
1 Parkway, Stevenage  
Tel: Stevenage 65233





## DACORUM AND CHILTERN POTTERS GUILD

The Guild is an established organisation representing both full time and part time potters within the Dacorum District and the surrounding areas. The aims of the Guild are:-

- (A) To promote increasing awareness of the values of craft pottery in the area.
- (B) To hold lectures, discussions, practical demonstrations and other activities to further object (A).
- (C) To represent within the area the interests of craft potters, pottery teachers and their students, and to encourage the establishment of serious part time vocational courses.
- (D) To co-operate with other specialised and general crafts organisations to ensure that the need of the community for living work is not neglected by public lack of contact with crafts and craftsmen.
- (E) To make a regular survey of all pottery activity in the area and to issue a report to members, interested bodies and individuals.
- (F) To issue a Newsletter of the activities of the Guild.

Membership is open to all persons with an interest in pottery. Payment of the current subscription entitles members to a free copy of the Newsletter and to other benefits. Further details may be obtained from:-

Mrs. V. Williams  
Secretary  
Dacorum and Chiltern Potters Guild  
1 Parkway  
Roebuck  
Stevenage  
Hertfordshire



DACORUM AND  
CHILTERN  
POTTERS GUILD

