



DACORUM AND CHILTERN POTTERS GUILD



MONTHLY BULLETIN

JUNE JULY AUGUST

83

JULY MEETING - GARDEN PARTY

9th @ 7.30

TONY PLESSNER has kindly offered his garden for a party for all members, would you please bring some food with you sufficient for yourself and one extra, the invitation is extended to husbands and wives. You will also need something to eat it with. Tony lives at 'Little Winch' Chipperfield Kings Langley HERTS. Tel: Kings Langley 64414 Details of how to get there will be available at the exhibition private view on 3rd July or from any committee member.

OPEN HOUSE

ROGER WINN - 15th July 7.30 onwards
4 Lycrome Lane, Chesham, Bucks. Tel: Chesham 782033
Wood fired kiln, stoneware, sundry odds and ends

OPEN HOUSE

RUTH BENTALL - Sat. 23rd July 2.30 - 6pm
7 Eleanor Crescent, Mill Hill, London N.W.7
Tel: 01 959 0124
Earthenware glazed wll plaques, garden abstracts.
This is a National Trust Garden open to the public usually on 21st July 1983.
PLEASE NOTE THIS IS A NEW DATE AND TIME

OPEN HOUSE

PAULINE ASHLEY - September 11th all day
Little Heath Cottage, Heath Farm Lane, Bernards Heath, St. Albans. Tel: St. Albans 62924
Outdoor Gas fired Kiln, stoneware

EXHIBITION

DACORUM AND CHILTERN POTTERS GUILD MEMBERS EXHIBITION
4th to 16th July 1983 at Cow Byre, Ruislip.
10am to 5pm daily including Sundays. Private View
3rd July 5 to 8pm.

EXHIBITION

SUE TROTMAN - 19th June - 10th July
Downstairs at the Printmakers Gallery, 7 Turnpin Lane (off Nelson Road) Greenwich. S.E.10
11am - 5pm daily except Mon and Thursday.
This is a combined exhibition with six members of the Kent Potters Guild, a group now called 'Ceramics 7'.

WRITE-UPS

Could I please have some write-ups from members who visited recent open houses - Arnold Bernhardt, Elsa Benatter and Sue Trotman. A few lines from anybody is all that is required. It is always interesting to hear what other members are doing, what they make, how they fire etc. and we hope to encourage other members to have open houses. The new list for dates from October is now being compiled by Roger Winn
Tel: Chesham 782033

THE WALES POTTERS CAMP - NEWPORT May 1983 by ARTHUR BALL

It was in one of those weak moments of which I am more vulnerable than most, that I sent £30 plus £2 for the barbecue to Molly Curley the Secretary of South Wales Potters. I picked up the phone at the most expensive time and asked for Molly, now the name Molly seems to make the conversation easy and before two minutes was over I had made up my mind to join the Potters Camp to be held at Newport over the Whitsun Holiday. "Were we bringing a tent or had we a caravan?" - "No we hadn't either of these but I hoped we could still come." "Oh yes, I will send you a list of hotels around Newport and if you would like to bring your wife that will be fine".

Being part geriatric (me, that is) it was possible to arrange the journey on Friday morning, meet a friend for lunch in Bristol and then on to Newport in time to sign in and collect our badges which would ensure that we were not man-handled by Welsh Potters as gatecrashers.

Molly promised that the way would be signposted - it was and we easily found our way to the tented office, but only after we had changed shoes for gum boots and coats for oil skins and waded through 3" water at the shallow end and 4" of squelch at the deep end.

We were quickly made welcome - a hand shake, the badges and information given on where to find B & B. It seemed to us that we could travel 20 miles in 30 mins without too much trouble and found ourselves in Abergavenny at the farm of Mrs. Jones at £6.50 per night including Welsh breakfast.

A beautiful room which had about the same area as my house with 2 single beds and a double bed all with Welsh bedspreads - better than any motel I've stayed at for three times the price with continental breakfast.

Be patient - I'm coming to the pots.

We all assembled at 8 o/c sharp and Mick Casson introduced the lecturers who were invited to talk for a few minutes on "Why I pot like I do" or something equally frivolous.

The rain drummed incessantly on the marquee which made it very pleasant, though rather like a well maintained 'damp cupboard'. I forgot to tell you that the very first person I saw was Marigold and I must say she didn't seem surprised to see me, then Sue, Gill, Jenny, Mary and Valerie, there were other Dacorum Potters but I only know them as "Hello".

Goodness, the next day, Saturday went quickly (and so did Sunday come to think of it).

It started on time at 9.30 with Mick Casson introducing Derek Emms and invited him to start the demonstrations. Derek had a wonderful array of brushes and showed us how he used them to decorate his teapots and bowls. David Frith who had entranced us with his plate decoration at Pendley did it again at Newport but this time I made sure that I could remember how he did it. The more experienced people like Marigold made volumes of notes and no doubt she will tell us all about it soon.

I started to make notes on the second day then lost both my notebook and my glasses and my will to remember, so I sat back to enjoy the feast of potters potting.

Alongside David Frith was Dave Roberts, a big man with gentle manners who had a thousand, or so it seemed, extrusions with which he was making a large coil pot for Raku using St. Thomas white stoneware. Now if you think that Dave makes large coil pots like you make Raku pots then I invite you to see the one that I bought. Mine had been fired five or six times and is about 14" diameter and 14" high - it's a 'second' along with the other 80% of his pots. We had the joy of seeing him fire a pot in the large oil drum which had been specially adapted for the job. While this was going on Mary Rich was busily engaged putting on gold lustre onto her tiny porcelain bottles and teapots.

Now tea-break came with the surprise exhibition of pots, goodness it was easy to spend a small fortune, but I was glad Elsa was not about because it enabled some of us less nippy souls to buy a few pots at leisure. I managed to buy a Jane Hamlyn teapot. There is no doubt that novice potters are the professionals best customers, but of course we get great joy from holding and seeing a good piece of work.

Whilst all this was going on a band of students under the guidance of Wally Keeler, John Atkinson, Jane Hamlyn and Peter Dick were making kilns. One for salt glaze, one wood fired and the other propane fired. The students also ran a childrens workshop which produced wonderful clay dragons, snails, gnomes etc.

Alan Barrett-Danes was quietly running a lustre workshop but I didn't get a chance to see it, it was an extra thirty bob but I understand very good value and all classes were fully booked.

So the week-end went on with as many as five potters on the go at any one time and questions being answered all the while.

Derek Emms lead a 'glaze forum' on the Sunday evening, which started at 8pm finished at 10pm. (just in time for a pint as he so thoughtfully suggested) - full information which I hope Marigold has written down. Our Master of Ceremonies Mick Casson was quietly guiding the meeting along, asking questions himself which he thought might be useful to the rest of us. We had a break in the potters camp during the afternoon for no less a reason than that the A.G.M. of the C.P.A. was held in the marquee - a great many posh potters attended. Whit-Monday was a brighter day but we had not noticed the rough weather and on reflection perhaps the dull weather was a blessing.

'Standing room only' was the order of the day on Monday morning, the last day. The atmosphere was electric, Wally Keeler, Jane Hamlyn, John Atkinson, Derek Emms, David Frith, Peter Dick, Dave Roberts, Mary Rich, Siddig and Mick Casson all before your very eyes, willing and anxious to tell us all - what a pleasure to see and hear these talented men and women, all competitors for business but so obviously the greatest of friends as potters. I noticed David Frith decorating a Derek Emms teapot - that's one for the experts in 50 years time.

Pots started earlier in the week were finished whilst they gave details of clay, glazes, brushes and pottery tools. So the workshops ended with much laughter encouraged by Mick with his "Just a little story about so and so" always funny, always kind and with great knowledge.

The kilns were opened and everybody was eager to see the results of the firings, the fast fired kiln, Andrew Holdens design, the wood fired kiln, salt glaze and gas fired kiln.

An auction took place to 'help balance the books' Mick joked but I suspect that the professionals worked the weekend for the joy of meeting their friends. It was interesting to see professional potters buying each others pots. For my pleasure I bought a beautiful Derek Emms teapot, three Peter Starkey jars a Peter Dick flower pot, some Mary Rich pots, to go with my Dave Roberts, David Frith pots - how's that Elsa?

It is unlikely that the South Wales Potters will see this letter but I am sure my colleagues in the Dacorum Guild who were fortunate enough to take part in this weekend would like to thank Molly Curley and George Crick, with their helpers, for the many hours they must have worked to provide us with such a happy time.

P.S. The Wales Potters Camp Newsletter at 70p will contain a great deal of technical information about kiln building and glaze receipts available from George Crick, 32 Anthony Drive, Caerleon, Nr. Newport GWENT.

BOOK REVIEW by STAN ROMER

"THE LORDS OF THE UNDERWORLD" - (Masterpieces of Classic Maya Ceramics). Michael D. Coe. 144pp. Princeton University Press, 1978. £25.70.

As you might expect from the above information, this is a top grade publication in every sense. It is a beautifully printed, illustrated and bound volume fit for any library shelf. Not that it would remain for long on the shelf! The author is possibly the greatest living authority on the art of the Pre-Columbian civilization - and the illustrations and photographs do justice to his highly explanatory text.

There is an appendix which explains the 'Photographic Roll-out' or method used of photographing a rotating object to show its complete circumference in one plane. These are pictures of Maya funerary vases dating between AD 600 and 900, and shown at an exhibition held at the University Art Museum in 1978. This 'Catalogue' (what an unimaginative word!) does really show the inner meaning of these beautifully painted figures. The care and dedication that have been exercised to finalise this study are clearly shown.

Its greatest use must be for the Anthropologist who wishes to further his study of the Maya, but in this review it is perhaps apt to dwell upon mainly the ceramic beauty of the funerary ware. To quote from the introduction - "Works of art so incredibly beautiful - - - to be buried away from human eyes for all time" - "For them (the Maya Indians) the honored dead would have seen these works forever".

For the Potter, who would study and, perhaps, try to reproduce, or be influenced by, the paintings, this book is invaluable. The black and white photographs show very clearly one side of each vase. These pictures are most impressive, but on opening up the folded sheet there can be seen the all-round (roll-out) view in the authentic rich colours; blacks, blues, browns, reds, yellows of all hues, tints and shades of the original vases.

This is an informative book and a most successful one. It is left to the reader to perform whatever techniques or arts following its aesthetic appreciation. It is a book which clearly leaves its mark on you, since you cannot fail to be impressed by such a complex and imaginative culture. Unfortunately the cost might debar much private ownership - but ask for it at your library - they should be able to purchase a copy.