

OCTOBER
1989

DACORUM AND CHILTERN POTTERS GUILD



Back to the 'good old days'?

From time to time Guild members have lamented the passing of the 'good old days', when every month a thick package of fascinating reading - the Guild Newsletter - fell on the door mat. Could those days return?

Tony Plessner has soldiered on for some years editing and producing the newsletter (with typing assistance from Liz Mayhew), as well as managing the Guild's finances. In a general swap around of responsibilities on your committee (of which more next time), Tony is passing on the editorship of the Newsletter to me, while continuing to handle its production.

With the burden shared in this way there should be more opportunity to enlarge the scope of the Newsletter once again. But (and here comes the headmaster bit) this will depend on its contributors. Like anyone coming to a new job I am enthusiastic to make a go of it, but like many people I easily run out of steam. So if you want to go back to those 'good old days' you will have to do your bit and do it soon. There is no shortage of members with something to say - as is obvious from our monthly meetings. All that is required is the little extra effort to put it down on paper.

This does not mean that your contribution has to be a polished article - although it certainly will not be rejected if it is! It could be a 'Letter to the Editor', which will enable you, with the minimum of effort, to get that burning issue off your chest while it is still hot.

The Newsletter should reflect the views and interests of its members so news of Guild activities or of the activities of individual members will be welcome, as will specialist articles, reviews of books or exhibitions, technical information or tips, and news cuttings about pots, potters or potting (or to follow the CPA, ceramics, ceramicists and ceramicing).

And while we are about it why not introduce some controversy. We are not all nice, shy, retiring people. And we can't all believe that the guild is moving in the right direction. If we did the recent Guild exhibition would have had more exhibits and a greater attendance. So what do you want from your Guild? Let us all know.

Send your contributions to

Alan O'Dell, 35 Pondfield Crescent, St Albans, AL4 9PE. (0727-69383)

Copy for the next issue should be with me by 2nd November.

MO JUPP

Mo Jupp was born in London and spent many years in the Forest of Dean and Symonds Yat. He now lives in Bermondsey, London. He teaches four days a week; one day each at Bath, Bristol, Harrow and the Royal College. At Camberwell while a student his tutors included such illustrious names as Lucy Rie and Hans Coper. By instinct he is a sculptor who has adopted the medium of clay as a vehicle to explore his ideas. The plastic nature of clay (any clay it seems) suits his developing style. Glazes and decoration as normally understood by these words are not used.

In his slide show and talk on 15th September Mo described some of the many themes which make up his work. The quality that was paramount in all we saw was the relentless way each theme is developed from simple beginnings. One theme - helmets - started from an idea suggested by the head covering, with a slit for the eyes and a coarsely woven patch for the mouth, worn by the Moslem ladies in Iran. Slowly the early forms evolved into expressions of military might and absolute power, only to change again to representations of the skull, nature's helmet to the brain.

Here was the public face of power, as helmets or robes set the wearer apart. The private side of life was treated in the next subject. There were small shrines with doors, holding within, like some sacrificial offering, male genitalia. Phallic symbolism apart, the aim was the same, unprettified simplicity of expression.

After overhearing some young men discussing their need for love and physical contact, Mo discovered that the expression 'Put a bag over her head' was indeed very old. The experience resulted in the making of a torso, copied from a magazine, with a sack firmly tied with a coil of rope around the neck. It was a sad relection in clay of what young men say in thoughtless jest. Similar small figures were shown in other guises. 'She is a bird' was a figure with a puffin's head complete with a colourful beak: likewise a 'bitch' was an Egyptian jackal headed figure and so on.

Many other forms were shown. To include them all would be to catalogue a life's work without explaining a thing about the person. Mo has tried to translate simple shapes and objects into clay in a way that expresses his need for creativity. Some are very strange and are the outpourings of reality as he sees it. Classical shapes underlay the pots and figures: but all the adornment is stripped away, leaving the bones alone.

This was clearly seen in the last group of slides he showed. They were of tall figures in the style of Giacometti. Most were made in three or four sections, thin bonelike sections held together with staples similar to Victorian china restorers clips. By making the clips a feature the joins became less noticeable. The figures were made on their backs giving a very upright stance. The construction was of tubes of different lengths and diameters assembled to make legs and bodies. No attempt was made towards naturalism, and the simplicity of line reduced the arms and heads to mere appendages in many instances. The standing attitude was effected by setting the soles of the feet in concrete, wood, or more recently, a ceramic base.

I would like to thank Mo for the entertaining evening and the many helpful suggestions so freely given. His talk illustrated once again how the diversity of speakers invited by the Guild has enriched our understanding of the wide range of possibilities in the handling of clay.

Brian Bicknell

FORTHCOMING GUILD EVENTS

AGM and Abdo Nagi

Friday 13th October at Northchurch Social Centre,
Bell Lane, Northchurch, Berkhamsted.

Note the earlier time of 7-30 pm

The AGM is the occasion for members to make their presence known. If you would like to become more involved in Guild activities you are welcome to stand for election to the committee (ring Chris Bull on 08444-3515 if this appeals). But if you do not want to go this far, please come to the meeting and have your say.

After the formal business of the AGM, Abdo Nagi, a long-time Guild member will give an illustrated talk on his work and what inspires it. If you do not know Abdo you may remember his beautiful, large, brilliantly coloured, African looking pots in our exhibitions.

Potters Open Day

Saturday 18th November at the Rudolf Steiner School,
All day Kings Langley.

Invited potters this year are Peter Beard, Derek Clarkson, Willy Carter and Gordon Cooke. Further information enclosed.

Dacorum and Chiltern P G Tips

Brian Bicknell has suggested we publish tips or recipes in the newsletter and has offered to collect and compile these. So if you have any ideas send them to:

Brian Bicknell, 41 Coates Lane, High Wycombe, HP13 5ET.

To start the ball rolling he has come up with some ideas gleaned from Brian Ashley at our 1988 Open Day.

Making clay slabs

Use a carpenter's square or tee-square when cutting slabs of clay to make boxes or rectangular forms: the use of an ordinary rule cannot ensure squareness.

And then use a rolling pin when lifting the slabs to minimise distortion and stretching of the clay: simply roll the slab around the pin before lifting.

To keep the platelets of clay aligned in one direction, it is necessary to reduce the amount of rolling. Rolling can be avoided altogether by cutting the required thickness from a block using a harp or, if you do not have one, a wire bearing on to wooden strips.

OTHER EVENTS

CPA Associate Members Open Meeting

Saturday 14th October at the Crafts Council Committee Room,
2-00 pm 12 Waterloo Place, London SW1Y 4AU

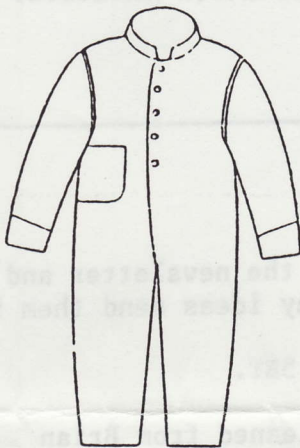
Barclay Price will talk and lead a discussion on 'Grants and services available to craftspeople through the Crafts Council'. The meeting is open to non-members of CPA at a cost of #2-50. Contact Elizabeth Smith, Publicity, Milhead House, Bampton, Devon, as early as possible.

Exhibition by 'CLAYWORK'

8th October to 24th December at Trading Places, 11 New Road,
12-30 - 6 pm Tuesday-Saturday Ware, Herts. SG12 7BS
2 - 5 pm Sundays
closed Mondays and Wednesdays

'Claywork', a group of Hertfordshire potters are holding this major exhibition in conjunction with the Society of Designer Craftsmen.

Fig. 310.
Men's, S 137.



OVERALLS.

Fig. 311.
Women's S 139.



Fig. 312. Men's Smocks.
S 138

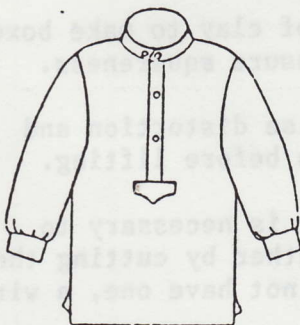


Fig. 314
Women's Bonnets.
S 141.



Fig. 313
Women's Caps.
S 140.



POTTERS' CLOTHING AS ADVERTISED
IN A WENGER'S CATALOGUE OF 1926

*As seen on
Blue Peter!*

Norwich Arts Centre (0603) 660352
September 5 to October 31 Crafts Case
Show: Time for Tea - teapots and teacups
inc. work by Jonathan Keep and Jaqueline
Ogelesby Time: 10.00-18.00