

#### A MESSAGE FROM OUR SPONSOR

Said Alan O'Dell
'I've a trick and a spell
To transform the Guild magazine.
The recipe's fine,
Yarns, facts and a rhyme,
But ingredients scarce to be seen.

So here's a caper; Come put pen to paper And tell Al your tips, trips and doings. No time to delay, Let's do it today, And make our mag. well worth the viewing.

## Thanks Bob Sedgeley!

Contributions for the next Newsletter should be with me by June 27th.

#### GUILD RVENTS

# Summer surprise

Sat. July 14th at Arthur Ball's from 4.30pm

Our Summer garden party with a practical tool making workshop.

Details in next Newsletter.

### Guild exhibition

2nd-7th July at The Cow Byre Gallery, Ruislip. 10.30am-4.30pm

Private view Sunday 1st July 11.00am-2.00pm

no

#### La Borne en Feu

# June 29-July 8 at La Borne, France

'Third International Ceramic Meeting'. There is a possibility that a Guild trip will be organised. See elsewhere in the Newsletter.

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# OTHER EVENTS

### Jewellery and pots

 $\frac{25 \, \text{th} - 30 \, \text{th} \ \text{June}}{10.30 \, \text{am} - 4.30 \, \text{pm}} \quad \text{at the Cow Byre Gallery, Ruislip.} \\ \frac{10.30 \, \text{am} - 4.30 \, \text{pm}}{\text{closed Wednesday}}$ 

An exhibition by Ruth Karnac, Nikki Lidstone and Carol Behr.

#### Art-Week-90

# 16th 24th June through out Buckinghamshire

Visual Images Group is an association of artists and craftspeople living or working in the county. They will be throwing open their studios during the week to anyone who wishes to visit.

Co-ordinator: Anne Wilson (0296-89620)

## Art and Craft Sale and Exhibition

Sat. Sept 8th at St Pauls School, Langleybury. 10-30am - 4-30pm

Would be exhibitors should contact:
Mary and Jock Scholefield,
28 Herga Court, Stratford Road,
Watford WD1 3PA (watford 226051)

#### LA BORNE EN FEU

'The La Borne village and its surroundings is one of France's pottery centres where, since the sixteenth century, traditional stoneware has been fired in wood-fired kilns, giving inspiration and growth to La Borne ceramicists of today.'

During the 'Third International Ceramic Meeting' from June 29th to July 8th 'every day and every night la Borne will be ablaze!'. All the wood-fired kilns in the village and its surroundings will be fired during the week.

Also in the programme will be:

- an exhibition of 9 guest artists (including Svend Bayer from the UK);
- an exhibition about kilns and kiln building;
- talks, slide shows, discussions and workshops;
- a pottery market;
- entertainment and music.

Appetite whetted? Murray has further details for anyone interested.

It has been suggested that a minibus could take up to 10 Guild members. If you are interested in being included in the party contact:

Pauline Ashley (0582-461969),
Arthur Ball (07072-60471) or
Murray Fieldhouse (044285-229),
but HURRY ....time to organise this is short!

#### PHOTOGRAPHS VANTED

The Guild publicity boards, which we use at exhibitions and circulate round public libraries in the area, are beginning to look a bit dated. The photographs were assembled 3 or 4 years ago and really ought to be replaced.

If you have any photographs of recent Guild events which you are prepared to lend to the Guild (for 3 to 4 years it seems), could you please send them to:

Alan O'Dell, 35 Pondfield Crescent,

St. Albans, AL4 9PE.

The Newsletter could also use photographs, but for these to reproduce well they really ought to be 'black and white'.

#### VICTORIAN MINERAL WATER BOTTLES

John Capes

In my very small collection of salt glazed pots I have three 'Victorian' mineral water bottles. They are tall narrow slabbed stoneware cylinders, with small looped handles beside narrow moulded necks, and were the equivalent of today's throw-away glass or plastic bottles.

The two larger bottles are 11.5 inches high by 3.5 inches diameter, and the smaller one is 9.5 inches by 2.75 inches.

One of the large ones has the trade mark 'APOLLINARIS' (see sketch), and is stamped GEORG KREUZBERG AHRWEILER RHEINPREUSSEN. The mark 'No 16K' is on the other side of the pot under the handle. The small bottle has similar numerical marks but no trade mark or lettering. The third pot has no markings.

It is very difficult to date these pots. Many examples can be found at boot fairs (priced £1 to £1.50) at bric-a-brac and antique markets (£5 and above) and at a number of museums (eg St Albans City Museum), and are nearly always described as 'Victorian'.

A few years ago bottles of identical shape and similar markings were salvaged from a 150 year old wreck off the coast of Malta, and this seems to confirm the description of 'Victorian'. However, the Ashmolean Museum places its examples in an eighteenth century display. I raised the

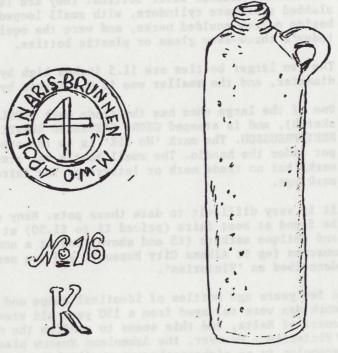
question of dating these pots with the curator who spoke to us during the 1986 Guild visit, but she could give no further information.

Mass produced glass bottles, made with metal moulds and automatic equipment, came into use in 1903, but I have yet to discover whether the Victorian type of ceramic bottles were still in use up to that date.

The earliest date of manufacture is even more difficult to determine, but it is possible that this design continued to be produced for a period of 150 years.

Do any members have any further information?

[Most bottles on antique stalls originate from domestic waste tips and these are usually readily dateable - often to the Victorian period. I guess this is where the labelling comes from - Ed]

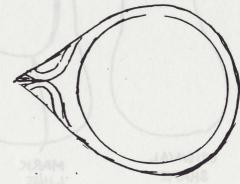


Antonia Salmon's talk began with a tour of the world in slides. This started with scenes of Dartmoor and its standing stones which have defied man and nature for thousands of years. The simple outlines of the tors and stones contrasted with the sky of muted blues and greys. Next we saw a model of a female figure, pared down to the simplest form and leaving to the imagination the task of completing the image: and then a head, comprising a rough oval with just a uniform shaped nose. Both of these pieces were found in the Cyclades, and are possibly 5000 years old, yet surprisingly modern in appearance.

On we went to Turkey and India to view the geometric shapes of latticed windows and the screens crafted out of single sheets of marble.

The pictures showed the influences on forms which have been evolving subconciously over the years. The standing stones of Dartmoor, wedded to the moors and sky; the small figures from Greece and the cool simple geometric shapes and absolute logic of the Islamic designs; all have combined in a union of delicacy and imagination to become Antonia's pots.

PLATE PROM FORMS FROM INDIA

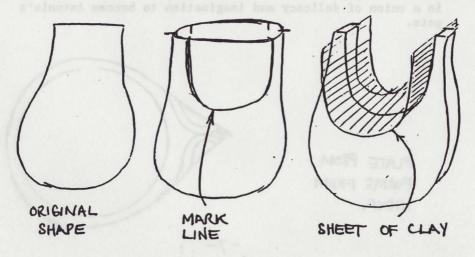


Her latest style of decoration and glazing has required a move away from the rich Islamic turquoise and black to the subtle browns, greys and creams of sawdust firing. And after coffee when the screen had been moved aside, Antonia showed us how it is done.

One example will serve to show her method of working.

The thrown pot was about 9" high and 4" across. When leather hard, it is distorted to an oval by pressing the lower part against the table: this is then repeated with the opposite side to establish the basic shape. With a wooden spoon and a flat stick the pot is beaten into an even shape. When the desired outline has been established, small lines are marked on the top edge, at the centres of the smaller curves of the ovals. Descending half circles on the two flattened sides are cut out with a scalpel. (Steady hands and a good eye are essential for this operation: if there is any doubt a template should be used.)

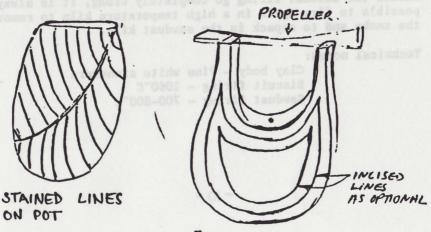
All the rough edges are trimmed away and a pre-rolled piece of clay fitted on to the prepared cut semicircle. The whole is then cleaned up with a Surform blade.



The surface is burnished with a spoon or any other suitable tool. This is where the real work begins, as getting the shine and the perfect surface requires experience and patience. Only the maker knows when to stop. Antonia has a love of geometric shapes and she uses incised lines to enhance her basic form. The lines have to be cut cleanly and sharply, before the surface is burnished yet again.

Anyone following Antonia's method will need some nerve to go on to the final but optional step. A brush is loaded with oxide, the pot is held on its base and rocked back so that the incised lines may be clearly seen. The brush is placed at the top of the line and, God willing, the oxide will run down into the groove. This takes practice and a steady hand, and should the oxide get on to the surface, it is necessary to wipe it off and reburnish the area. Sawdust firing is uncompromising and all changed surfaces will reflect differently when the pot is finally waxed.

Antonia's intention is to have a pot or sculpted form which appears to float, or to sit very lightly. To achieve this, she places what appears to be a propeller blade (without the central housing) across the top of the pot so that the pot acts as a base or pedestal. The whole lot can be rocked gently without danger. To achieve this the base has to be thicker than would be normal to a standard pot to act as a counter balance to the blade mounted on top. The whole assemblage is a delicate balance in both a physical and a visual sense.



Firing is done in the conventional manner. The kiln is five bricks high (just house bricks) with two courses below ground level. 2" to 3" of sawdust is put in the base. The pots are set with space around them and with the heavy items at the bottom. Antonia used to use fine sawdust when living in London. Now she has to use dust and shavings together. This is a bit problematical as the pots are subject to varying temperatures.

The whole is packed firmly. Chicken wire is used as a support across the kiln to stop pieces falling down. For textural and colour variations, pieces are laid on their sides. One side becomes darker than the other as the smoke is absorbed by one side more than the reverse. Antonia does not use sand to exclude reduction as this this gives too much contrast, but uses clay with a little paper under it to give local areas of interest. Salt is not used, due to the proximity of neighbours and the possibility of annoying them.

A lid is placed on the top of the kiln as burning has to be slow. The kiln is not touched until the fire embers are cold to avoid cracked pots.

Should the sawdust firing go completely wrong, it is always possible to fire again in a high temperature kiln to remove the smoke and to repack in the sawdust kiln.

Technical notes:

Clay body - Fine white stoneware Biscuit firing - 1060°C Sawdust firing - 700-800°c

Ruth Brown

A quiet gentleman with a mischievous sense of humour and an ability to inspire; Derek taught to earn a living. Now long retired, he pots for pleasure.

About two years ago on a visit to the Craftsman Potters Shop, I asked why there were no translucent pots on show. The assistant went into the back room and returned with a small footed bowl about 4.5" in diameter. It was translucent, and it was exquisite. I was told it was by Derek Clarkson.

Still trying myself to obtain translucency, I avidly read his article in 'Ceramic Review 109'. It was presented as a double page spread in notebook form. I followed this method and it works.

Now I know how he makes pots; he throws thick, then turns. "Willie Carter weighs, Derek doesn't." Pots are cut off with a fine wire which lessens distortion - at this stage he does not handle at all! The rims of pots are inclined to flare out to provide a bigger area to stick to the wheel. When turning he will turn, wait, then turn again and again to the required thickness. To achieve the translucency he requires, a bowl may be returned to the wheel many times until it is very thin indeed. As he says, you use a bag of clay and are left with two bags of turnings. These are immediately damped down and kept damp by spraying.

The clays he uses are H Fraser, David Leach and Audrey Blackman porcelains. Latterly he has used Audrey Blackman Porcelain Body, and finds that it is translucent at the slightly lower temperature of 1275°C. He also thinks that it is whiter than the others!

Not all his pots are translucent and not all are in porcelain, but all receive the same meticulous attention to form and decoration.

He likes to use firm claymfor bottle forms, ensuring that the base is well compressed, and paying attention to the inside shape. The outside can be changed. He feels that he is not a thrower but a turner; however he throws with great care, quite slowly raising a cylinder, narrow at the top; then he begins to widen the form at the base, keeping the neck narrow. Sufficient clay must be kept at the top to form shoulder, neck and rim. The shoulder is the weakest area and should not be too narrow, just wide enough to allow the hand in. He lifts from the base again, shaping the richness of the form, before collaring again, reforming and collaring to a finger thickness, coaxing the clay narrower and taller. He forms the rim and lengthens the neck. A long time is spent perfecting the shape. He likes a rich form at the shoulder. "Think Dolly Parton, not Jean Shrimpton!" he says.

Derek claims to be a sloppy worker but he cleans up each night and starts afresh in the morning.

One day's throwing, perhaps 15 pots, will require a week of turning. He does not wear a mask - he prefers nothing to get between him and the work he is doing. He works alone with Radio 3 for company.

A good deal of the preliminary turning is done with the pot the right way up. The bottle may need to be centred two or three times. On a clean wheelhead, using clean water - not slip, he taps the pot to centre, turns the rim and neck down to the shoulder, then to the change of direction and finally down to the foot and base. If he turns in a chuck, he makes sure that the base is level before starting, bearing in mind the interior shape.

If the bottle is to have flat facets, he divides the circumference into 3, 5 or 7. He places a disc thus divided over the neck and uses a ruler to mark the diagonal line between shoulder and base. He then beats with a batten of wood (painted on one side to reduce absorbency) and gently creates a facet top to bottom, repeating around the pot to achieve positive though not too crisply defined areas.

Pots are biscuited to 960°C. They are glazed by dipping from the bottom up to the neck. Then the neck is dipped into a small <u>full</u> bucket, whilst he is observing in a strategically placed <u>mirror</u> to be sure that no area is double dipped. He places the pot on its base <u>one</u> Formica, moving it over the surface to remove excess glaze. Then, when dry, he wipes the base with a sponge.

Once glazed his pots are decorated with cobalt and iron pigment and fired to 1275°C. He may refire if decorating with gold lustre.

In decorating, "Learn", Derek says, "to make the stroke and turn the banding wheel in opposite directions; the stroke will flow more easily. Learn to stop and reverse the wheel whilst still using the brush. All other decoration should follow the first line; it cannot be patched up though you may scratch a little to refine. Blow off the dust frequently, but do take care (he wears no mask). Space between strokes are important; it is vital to watch the negative areas."

The variety of Derek's pots is not great, but each is meticulously and lovingly completed, no matter if it is 2" or 10". Whether aiming for translucency in bowls or richness in form, great attention is paid to each object.

# Technical notes

iron pigment - iron oxide with china clay blue pigment - 16 parts cobalt carbonate 6 parts red iron oxide 1 part china clay



### PAM TAMES - STILL OUT AND ABOUT

epal,

## **Fakes**

I recently visited the 'Fake' exhibition which is on at the British Museum until September. You can see the real things for free, but it will cost you £3 to see the fakes!

There sat the three forged Bernard Leach pots, made by two prisoners whilst working in Fetherstone Prison, Wolverhampton in 1980, signed with the seal mark of the Leach Pottery and the monogram of Bernard Leach. They were subsequently accepted for sale by leading auctioneers. Within three months they were recognised as fakes by Mr Richard Dennis and the makers were successfully prosecuted. They now reside in the Metropolitan Police Museum.

Exhibit 246 was a fake ancient Persian bowl copied from an illustration in Arthur Lane's standard work 'Early Islamic Pottery' (1947). Since he was working from a small black and white illustration the faker guessed the colours - wrongly.

An artist working in the gallery had spent 800 hours producing a Vermeer - only he used some white lead oxide (which shows up well under X-rays) to write 'John Lewis' under the carpet, and a telephone number under the tablecloth!

## Mary Rich

I went to a private viewing (super food) of 20 of this potter's porcelain pots displayed with two artists' flower paintings at the Medici Gallery. Mary rich was born in Cornwall and started her own studio there in 1962.

tron pigment - iron oxide with chine, a

Her pots are all made in porcelain with gold and various lustres over pigments especially made for decoration. Initially Mary studied painting but the making of pots became totally absorbing to her and her work developed into a combination of both. All the pieces are hand thrown, glazed and then fired. They are then decorated by hand using very fine brushes. Each pot is fired at least three times.

Mary has travelled to Nepal, China, Australia, Thailand and Egypt.

#### RESULTS OF CHRISTMAS COMPETITIONS - AT LAST!

#### FIND THE POTTER

Shirley Woods-McConville wins the prize. She found 20 of the 37 possible names.

The full list of hidden potters (excluding any unintentional names) is:-

Barry Beard Bowen Brock Burr Casson Clarkson Cooke Cooper Coper Daly Dick Eeles Emms Feibleman Frith Hamlyn Ions Jupp Keeler Koch Lane Leach Maltby Nisbet Odundo Rich Rie Roberts Roger Starkey Tower White Wood Wren Young

Aren't you kicking yourself now?

#### MY FAVOURITE POT

Only 5 entries arrived, but they made very interesting reading. It is clear that different characteristics of a pot - form, decoration, the technique of the maker, the story it tells - have particular appeal to different people. What does not differ is the love lavished on the pot.

The judges - Chris and Duncan Bull, and Gill Brown - decided to award the prize, a ticket for this year's Potters Open Day, to Shirley Woods-McConville (This is not a fix, I swear!). Congratulations to her and thanks to the other contributors.

This is Shirley's winning entry.

WOU

My favourite pot? What to choose from all the accumulated work down the centuries? What a challenge! Shall it be a Ming vase, beautifully crafted, worth thousands at Christies? Or shall I choose something from this century perhaps a large Raku vase by David Roberts, dramatically striped with bands of lustre? Or a bowl by Maria Martinez, the Indian potter? Or shall it be ....? The head spins.

But none of this would really be true. For, of course, my favourite pot must be the one I love the most, humble though it is. This is the blue mug made by a potter called Clive from Helston - I don't know his second name. The mug is humble, but it is beautiful. It has a blue Chun glaze which lodges in the ridges of the throwing rings. Drifting blue snow. On various edges the predominant colour is nearer to brown. Occasionally there is an orange/brown spot. It holds a satisfyingly big drink, and the shape is very functional, being slightly 'waisted'. At night it stands on the bedside table. When I wake I can reach out and find it and pick it up securely. It fits my life, my favourite pot.

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Space for one more: the rest will be held over to the next issue. This is from John Capes:

I arrived early at the V&A for the preview of the 1983 CPA members show. The pot that I admired most by Magdalene Odundo was as yet unsold.

Magdalene burnishes her pots but seems to have no need of any other decorating techniques, as her work relies entirely on form for its appeal.

The coiled pot, a wonderful mexample of her art, was a bottle, a few inches high, beautifully rounded wit a perfect short neck and neat rim curving outwards. It was burnished

all over to a deep black and I would have had to suppress a desire to pick it up, had it not been protected by a glass case.

infted,

I found myself wondering how many potters, including the famous, could achieve such perfection on form alone.

I believe the price was £35, only a fraction of what her pots would fetch today. After almost seven years I am still asking myself the same question - why on earth did'nt I buy it?

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#### LIMERICKS COMPETITION

There was some flagrant cheating in this competition, with some entries not following the first lines given, and others disregarding the scanning and rhyming conventions of Limericks. But never mind; they all went under the scrutiny of the judges who picked the two joint winners printed below.

The first is by John Capes, and the second by Ruth Karnac.

When a potter from DCPG
Made a pot for brewing her tea,
She had twisted the spout,
So each time she poured out
She had hot tea all over her knee.

When a potter from DCPG 20 Made a pot for brewing her tea,
The spout twisted round
With an agonised sound,
Crying 'Freedom from clay memory'!'



#### Other entries were:

There once was a potter called Kit, Whose lids would never quite fit. He said 'I must try Not to measure by eye, But to sit till they fit - or I quit!'

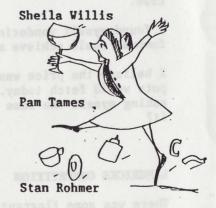
When a potter from DCPG
Made a pot for brewing her tea,
The spout was all twisted,
The handle 'off-lifted',
So she's taken to drinking brandy.

There once was a potter called Murray Who loaded his kiln in a hurry, And he fired it too early, But was then saved by Dorley When she smothered it with clay slurry.

There once was a potter named Murray, Who loaded his kiln in a hurry. The resulting explosion Caused widespread erosion, And turned all his garden to slurry.

There once was a potter called Murray Who loaded his kiln in a hurry. He opened the door and said "Blast! I did that a trifle too fast - I put in a pot full of curry".

When a potter from DCPG
Made a pot for brewing her tea,
Found the pot had too much silica,
So she painted it with acrylic or
Added some Al2 03.



Ruth Karnac

Shirley Woods-McConville

Stan Rohmer

There was a young potter called Dick, Whose pots were incredibly thick. He tried to throw thinner -He wanted a winner -But they ended up thick as a brick.

Sheila Willis

There once was a potter called Murray Who loaded his kiln in a hurry -Caught his foot in the door, Dropped a pot on the floor, And another right into some slurry.

John Capes

A potter named Ree one day, Let his dentures fall into the clay; He lost the whole set; But was left with one yet; And now he is called 1,2-3.

Stan Rohmer

Said a studio potter one day When his dentures fell into the clay, I want some advice, Or a clever device. Like a grant from the CPA.

Ruth Karnac

Thanks to Pauline O'Dell, and apologies to Edward Lear, for the drawings.

I rearly fargot -Don't you forget-

Thanks to Fauline O'Dell, and appingtes to Edward Lear, for

Pot Crawl Saturday 2rd June