



DACORUM AND
CHILTERN
POTTERS GUILD



NEWSLETTER

JANUARY

1992

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Next meeting: Friday Feb. 7th at 8 o'clock at Oddfellows Hall, Kings Langley. Entrance down passageway to left of opticians almost opposite Langley Hill.
Car Parking 1st left up Langley Hill or in main road.

EDITORIAL

This Edition was in danger of being late from the very first day, however, with some luck and a few more late nights it might just be on time.

We have received Three articles on demonstrations at the Open Day & they are in this issue. Do you have any suggestions for activities at this event? Contact Leslie Reeves, your Open Day Organiser, if there is someone you would like to see demonstrating at the next Open Day.

My thanks to Elizabeth Mayhew, for some rapid typing. Special thanks to Ruth Brown, for her fast response on the article about Ruthanne Tudball & supplying the Crossword.

Stan Romer would like a few more responses to his Competition, which was printed in the November 91 Newsletter, so please do have a go at it, you have nothing to lose & stand a good chance of winning an excellent book, valued at £39.99 .

Mervyn Fitzwilliam January 1992

FRONT PAGE PHOTOGRAPH Ruthanne Tudball holding one of her larger pieces of work. See article in this Newsletter.

OPEN DAY 1991

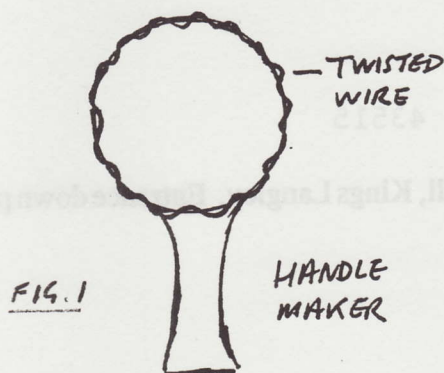
The day started with a slide show from each of our guests, in which they covered some of their previous work. This gave us a flavour of the demonstrations to come.

JOHN CALVER

John Calver was our first guest to appear on the stage. It seems to be an ordeal to open the day in front of a discerning audience. John confessed that his hand was shaking & that on a previous occasion that had lasted for two days - a likely story !

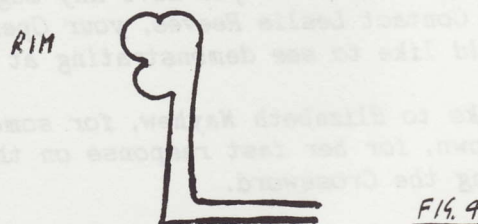
TOOLS & TECHNIQUES

John views the tools he uses as extensions between himself & the pots he is working on. Some of the tools used are shown below;



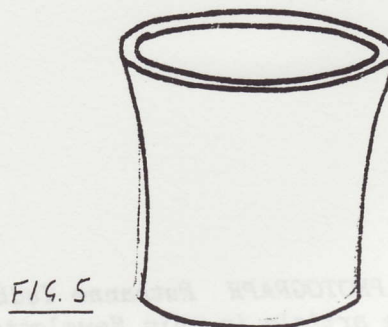
Handle cut out of a block of clay with irregular lines using the loop.

Handles can be made by cutting through a block of clay with this Wire Loop tool, Fig.1, to give a decoration of irregular lines, Fig.2.



A shape cut into the edge of a piece of bamboo, FIG.3, can be used to form rims, Fig.4.

Chuck made from wet clay, Fig.5. A plate is placed face down on top of the chuck & the foot of the plate can then be trimmed with a wire in one revolution. The idea is to save a lot of turning in the usual way.



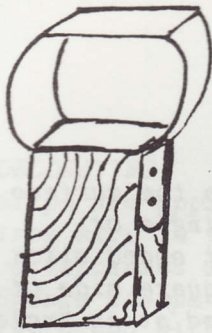


FIG. 6

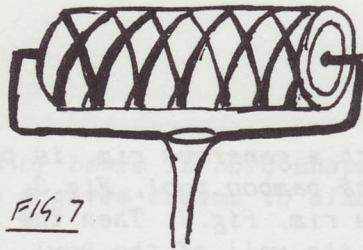


FIG. 7



FIG. 8

The trimming tool shown, Fig. 6, is made from a piece of wood & a piece of steel packing strap.

The roller, Fig. 7, is made by cutting designs into the surface of a sponge sleeve, on a wallpaper seam roller.

Packing strap is again used to make the "chattering tool" shown in Fig. 8

CHATTER MARKS

FIG. 9

Fig. 9.

The chattering tool is used by holding it against the rotating pot to produce chatter marks as the steel bounces against the clay. Afterwards, the chatter marks can be filled by coating the pot in slip & then removing the surplus slip with a metal rib. The roller can also be used to produce a design on the surface of the pot.

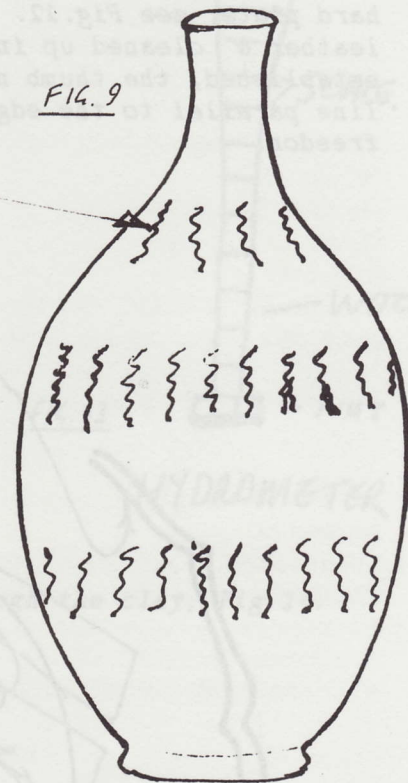
GROOVED BLOCK

FIG. 10

CLAY ROLLED
OVER BLOCK
ONCECLAY ROLLED
OVER BLOCK
TWICE.ROLLED
HANDLE OR
FOOT.

Clay can be rolled over a grooved block to produce a decorated surface, as shown in Fig. 10.

FIG. 11

A block of wood with 4 screws Fig. 11, can be used to roll various handle diameters, by setting the screws to alternative heights.



SQUARE BOWLS

A shallow bowl, with a generous rim, is produced working on the surface of a square bat. The bamboo tool, Fig.3, is used to form single or double lines on the rim, Fig.4. Then the fun begins! A flat ended stick is used to distort the wall of the bowl, parallel to the square side of the bat. Timing is all important, since the pressure applied at an angle to the pot, is made whilst the wheelhead is slowly rotating. The rim becomes distorted due to the shaping & changed support. (good luck to all who wish to tread this path!).

PLATES

John starts by cutting curved shapes out of the edge of a near leather hard plate, see Fig.12. The Cut edges are then rounded off using a leather & cleaned up in the process. Once a good edge has been established, the thumb nail is used inside the leather to press an inner line parallel to the edge. This is done with a certain degree of freedom.

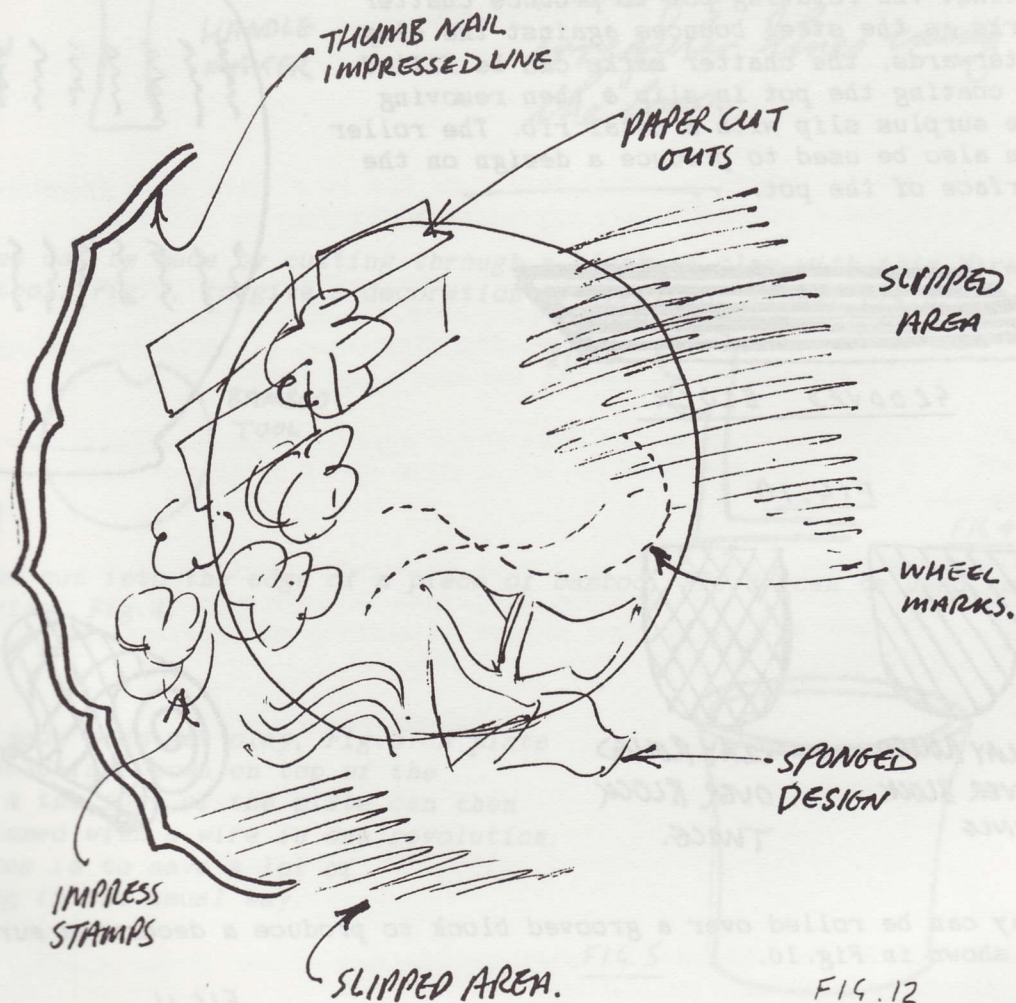


FIG.12

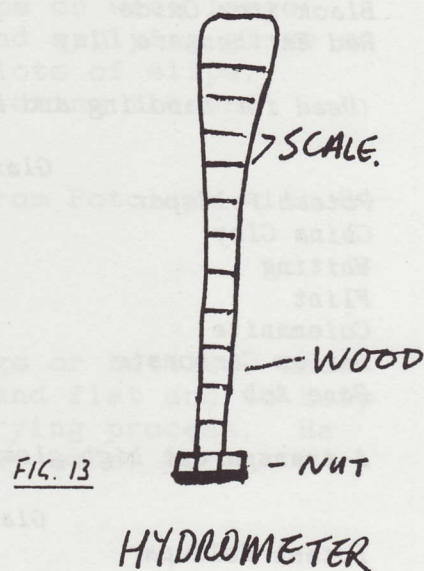
DECORATING

Slips are applied across plates or bowls in bold shapes. John feels that iron slip is the most versatile & gives creams to almost black depending on thickness & strength.

Sponge stamps of leaves flowers or other shapes are used, or the clay is impressed with plaster or clay stamps. Lines or dots are impressed using leather working tools. Another alternative is paper cut-outs, wax resist or pearling with slip trailers, (Fairy liquid bottles).

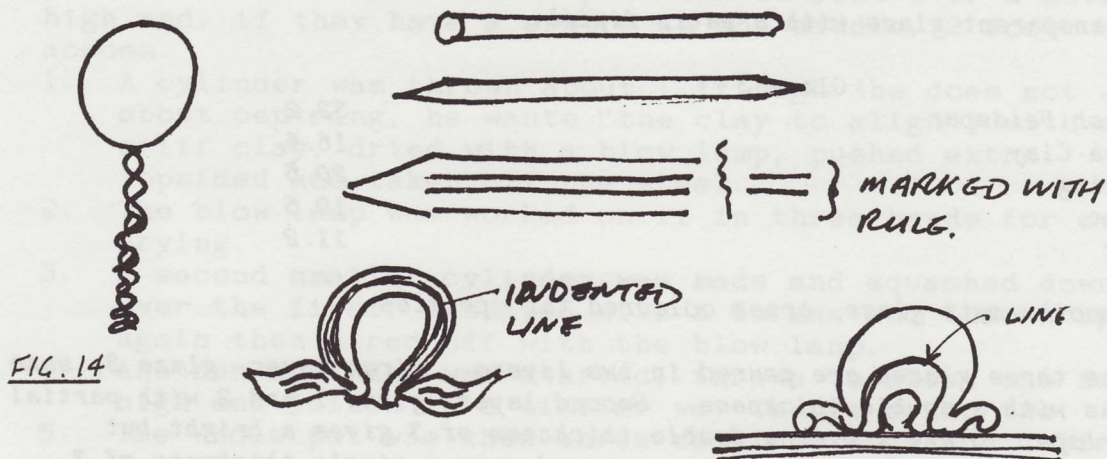
After biscuit firing, matt & translucent coloured glazes are applied. Glazes are poured quickly and shaken into one another to avoid hard lines.

The glaze density is measured using a simple hydrometer or density meter shown in Fig. 13. The density meter is floated upright in the glaze, after it has been well stirred and a reading is taken against the horizontal marks. If the glaze is too dense, more water is added to correct it & if too thin then some water is poured off after the glaze settles.



HANDLES

Coils are made by passing a plain wire loop through the clay, Fig. 14. Handles can then be formed as shown.



CLAY

White St. Thomas is used, fired to 1300 degrees C in an oil or gas kiln, with reduction over a period of 12 hours.

BRIAN BICKNELL

Reduction Fired Slip and Glaze Recipes (from Ceramic Review, with the permission of John Calver).

Rutile Slip

Rutile	30
Red Earthenware Clay	30
Black Iron Oxide	10
Potash Feldspar	40
(Used with sponge stamps and over paper decoration.)	

Iron Slip

Black Iron Oxide	50
Red Earthenware Clay	50

(Used for handling and over paper resist decoration.)

Glaze 1

Potash Feldspar	30.4
China Clay	20.9
Whiting	10.4
Flint	23.5
Colemanite	4.4
Barium Carbonate	5.2
Bone Ash	5.2

A transparent high gloss glaze.

Glaze 2

Potash Feldspar	29.2
Dolomite	16.7
China Clay	25.0
Whiting	4.1
Flint	25.0

A transparent glaze with a satin finish.

Glaze 3

Potash Feldspar	32.2
China Clay	16.6
Whiting	20.5
Flint	19.5
Talc	11.2

A smooth, matt glaze, cream coloured tan speckles.

These three glazes are poured in two layers. First layer, glaze 3, some areas with a double thickness. Second layer, glaze 1 and 2 with partial overlaps. Glaze 1 over a double thickness of 3 gives a bright but opaque titanium blue. If white is used over a single thickness of 3, the result is a transparent glossy amber glaze, which highlights compressed patterns and reacts well with slips. Glaze 2 with a single thickness of 3 gives a translucent mottled dark grey which blends well with the other surfaces.

COLIN GORRY

The first slides of his early work resembled that of Colin Pearson, although evidently he had not seen any at that time. Later he became a student of Pearson and then his assistant.

Colin had gone to some trouble to plan his talk, and taken a special series of slides in his workshop to illustrate his methods. He says he works full-time at two jobs so his activity in the community workshop in Camberwell has to be used to best advantage. He uses two electric kilns, now glazing his work up to about 1260°C. He likes dry textured surfaces, applying layers of slips to dry pots, some with glaze mixed in them. He paints the slips on with large brushes, drying them with a blow lamp and applying glaze on top. He uses two or three glazes, and lots of slips, laminating the layers, never quite predicting the end result.

His clay is a stoneware throwing body from Potclays with 30-40% of 30s-60s grog wedged in.

His present work is mostly tall thin jugs or bottles, made in three parts. The handles are broad and flat and to help attach them a blow lamp speeds up the drying process. He brought some smaller tea bowls, specially made, to illustrate various surface applications.

Demonstration

Colin worked fast to show us how he makes his tall thin jugs using a blow torch to speed up the process. He uses this a lot in his workshop to avoid distortion, capture a shape, or join sections. His tallest pots can be just over a metre high and, if they have a sphere in the middle, 2 foot across.

1. A cylinder was thrown about 1 ft high (he does not worry about centring, he wants "the clay to align") with quite stiff clay, dried with a blow lamp, pushed extra lopsided and taken off the wheel.
2. The blow lamp was worked on it in three bands for even drying.
3. A second smaller cylinder was made and squashed down over the first, reshaped with a former and thrown up again then dired off with the blow lamp.
4. Another cylinder was started, thrown to about one foot high and joined in a similar way to the other two.
5. The whole pot was then three sections high and Colin spent some time deciding which should be the front of the jug. He then pushed the pot out of line again so that it leant the way he wanted, dried it a bit more with the blow lamp and started on the handle.
6. Long flat pieces of clay were pressed out, textured and dried.
7. Two indents were made on the body of the jug to hold the lugs which stuck out about two inches from the body. The handle was hung on the lugs using slurry to help the join, the only time it is ever used.

When firing the pot has to lean in the kiln so that it will bend the correct way. Bubbles on the surface are caused by bone ash, zinc and titanium. He will fire several times to get certain effects up to 1250°-1260°, Cone 8 flat down. The kiln is put on low overnight, reaching about 200°, sometimes given a soak at this stage. The last 800° are fired in two hours with no later soaking.

Colin will make a batch of pots at a time, about five tall bottles and five jugs. He will save 30% of these and fire them. After firing only about half the work is kept, the rest is smashed up. He considers himself to be a potter, not a sculptor, and that his work is concerned with line and form, taking the clay to its limits, creating ridges and breaks for glaze and tension in the finished pieces.

DORLEY FIELDHOUSE

IMOGEN MARGRIE

The large animals on Imogen Margrie's table had an air of oppression and ill-use. The angular striations on the bodies resembled bones and it was hard to connect their disturbing presence with that of their small, cheerful creator clad in orange like the sun.

Imogen's slides showed mainly bird and animal studies and she bought books full of lively drawings made at London Zoo.

However, because of the very slow coiling and pinching process used to build the creatures, her demonstration was totally lacking in surprise and information and there was little to captivate the attention of the audience.

It would have been better if Imogen had brought more partly (or almost) finished pieces rather than the two small beginnings of animals which she was unable to complete.

I think that this points to the need for some sort of guidance for less experienced demonstrators. A 'theatrical performance' is really what's needed. An audience is looking for information, advice, explanation of new ideas, but, above all, entertainment in a situation like the Potters' Open Day.

PAULINE O'DELL

FOR SALE;

9 Cubic Feet Propane Gas Kiln, excellent condition with "Consultant" gas burner, Shelves & props. Complete with change - over unit, 4 gas bottles, pipework & spare bricks £800 O.N.O. Kiln log & demonstration given to purchaser if required.

Phone 0728 453315.

FOR SALE:

Alsager Wheel with new bearings & control transformer £350.00. also, a new cast - iron flywheel & shaft for a kick wheel only £45.

Phone 0442 242332



Sodium Glazed Lidded Pot By Ruthanne Tudball

Ruthanne began her visit to Dacorum by showing slides. The first led us through the work produced by children of varying ages - Clowns, a Monster tea party and a project with food. Each idea began with discussion; ideas put forward were enlarged by the children and work eventually began upon them. We saw a very large project in which two 8' x 4' panels were used by the children to develop the given idea of 'The Garden of Eden'.

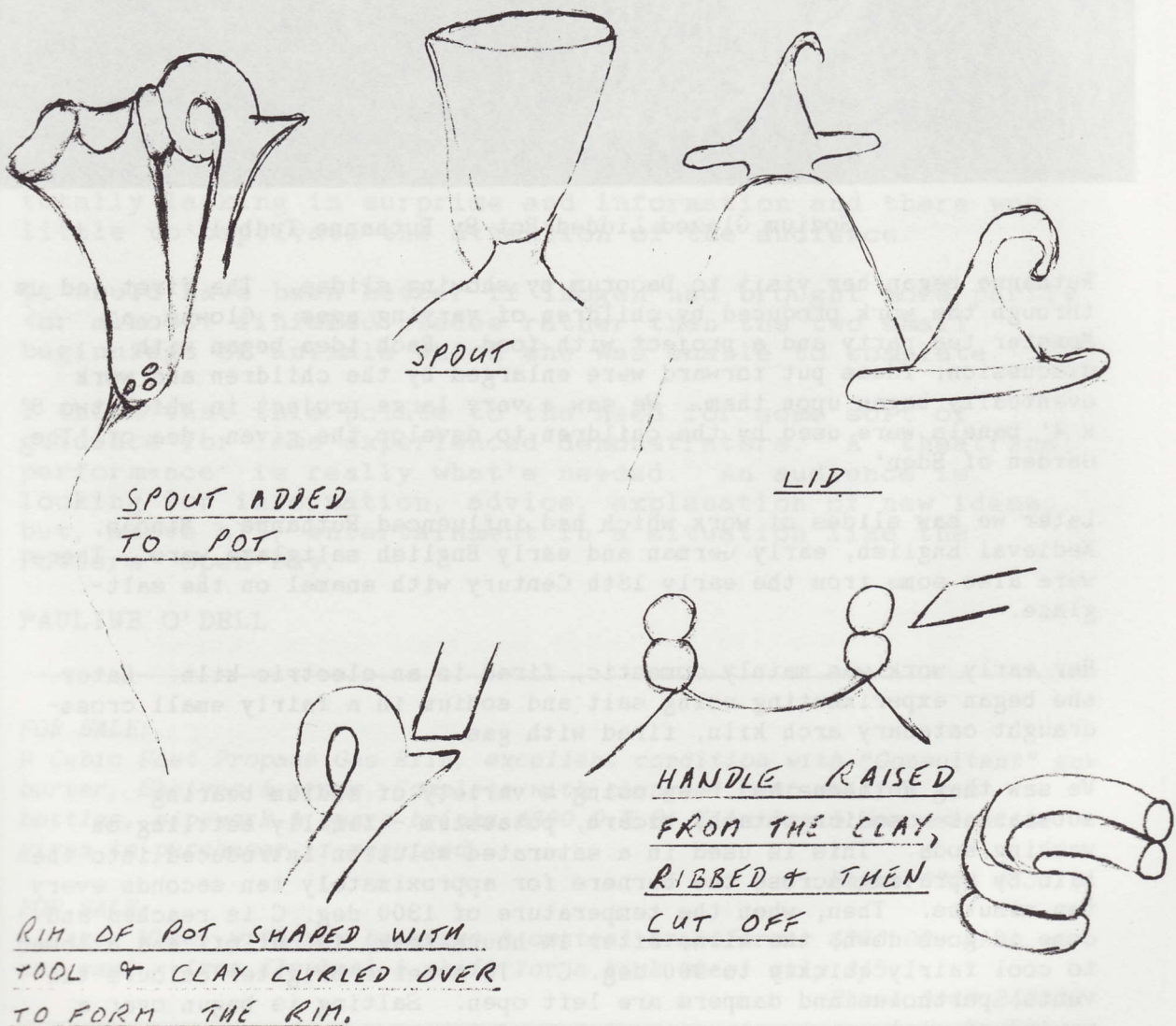
Later we saw slides of work which had influenced Ruthanne - Minoan, Medieval English, early German and early English saltglaze ware. There were also some from the early 18th Century with enamel on the saltglaze.

Her early work was mainly domestic, fired in an electric kiln. Later she began experimenting using salt and sodium in a fairly small cross-draught catenary arch kiln, fired with gas.

We saw that Ruthanne had been using a variety of sodium bearing substances - sodium potash, bicarb, potassium - finally settling on washing soda. This is used in a saturated solution introduced into the kiln by spraying across the burners for approximately ten seconds every ten minutes. Then, when the temperature of 1300 deg. C is reached and cone 10 goes down, the kiln, after 1½ hours soak, is cut off and allowed to cool fairly quickly to 900 deg. C. To achieve brighter colours the vents, portholes and dampers are left open. Salting is begun over a period of at least two hours, after cone 8 bends.

Some magic moments followed when Ruthanne demonstrated her skills on the wheel by creating a teapot. She told us she had come to love the plasticity of clay and wished to keep an immediacy in her work to celebrate this; so each piece of work is thrown and completed on the same day. She commenced with a 4lb lump of clay and split it into four. She threw the first of the four pieces which would make the teapot. The spout was an inverted cone shape, see diagrams, the lid also a cone and the tip was later pulled to form the knob. The remaining clay was opened and a wide neck thrown and lifted to a depth of 1½", it was then ribbed inside and out using a Bamboo tool. The neck was then removed and set aside, to later form the handle. The remainder of the clay was made into the body of the teapot and the foot was trimmed, neatened and rolled back. The teapot was then assembled, the spout, fresh and floppy, was applied and attached to the rising curve and rested on a blob of clay placed on the 'rolled' trim. Using a wet tool, the holes were pierced and the plug of clay easily removed. The 'fatness' of the spout was folded over and the pouring edge was flattened and curved. The handle was cut in half, pulled, extended and rounded then deftly cut to length and applied to the pot.

This teapot had been made very quickly, in less than 15 minutes. It had a loose, instant look to it which would later be enhanced with slips and ash applied freely to obtain the orange/blue effects. Slips are trailed over the body using three ball-point pens in the neck of a slip trailer.



Ruthanne prefers the 'rolled' rim and claims to have few losses in the kiln. These strong rims on her bowls are teased or pulled up from the base to make her distinctive handled pots. Feet are made in a similar manner if on a pedestal. Very little turning is done on any of her pots.

Her final demonstration was in throwing a cylinder, collaring the neck and then thinning and rolling the rim. Whilst the cylinder was still rotating, she fluted the side of the pot, finished the foot with a Bamboo tool then bellied the pot with one hand inside, for a fuller form.

Other pots on show and for sale were her Japanese style cups, her 'not-round' dishes and two teapots. Her lidded pots are thrown and faceted separately. There were no jugs because they were on show at the Oxford Gallery. I enjoyed her demonstration very much and felt determined to try some salt or sodium firing for myself.

All of these impressions were gained in a short space of time. For greater detail and further information I refer you to 'The Ceramic Review' of March and April 1991, No. 128.

RUTH BROWN

CROSSWORD No. 2 By Ruth Brown

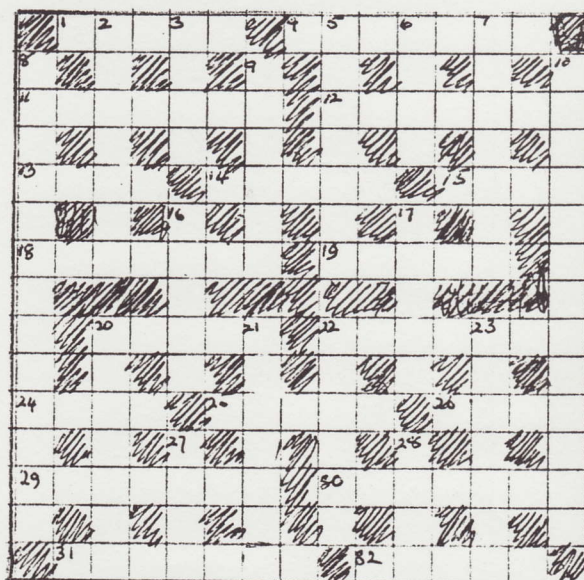
ACROSS

- 1 Japanese crazed ware (5)
- 4 Polish surface (7)
- 11 & 14 Naturally grown for surface interest (7 & 5)
- 12 Make notes (7)
- 13 Do you know Suzy ? (4)
- 15 Two opposing curves (4)
- 18 Criss-cross pattern (7)
- 19 Colours do when glazes are double dipped (5)
- 20 Rolls of clay (5)
- 22 Mixed with 5 down to produce the reds (7)
- 24 Icy in Alex ? (4)
- 25 One used to entice (1 & 4)
- 26 The topmost point (4)
- 29 Knotting (7)
- 30 Lead astray (7)
- 31 Chinese ware of Cio (7)
- 32 Copper & zinc alloy (5)

DOWN

- 2 Aim for this standard (7)
- 3 Not to be counted (4)
- 5 An oxide used to produce yellows/reds, though black in reduction (7)
- 6 Coloured gas light (4)
- 7 Sweet glitter (7)
- 8 Used to produce many fine quality pieces (9 & 4)
- 9 Accumulate (6)
- 10 If low fired & quickly cooled will produce red (8 & 5)
- 16 Bright & intense (5)
- 17 Lacking finish (5)
- 20 Corporation of scholars (7)
- 21 An element (7)
- 22 Oxide producing green (6)
- 23 Amaze or indent (7)
- 27 Used to colour or for 8 down (4)
- 28 One who employs (4)

(Answers in next Newsletter)



FUTURE EVENTS

On 14 February George Wilson will give a slide show at Northfield, Bring your cameras, this is a special "3 D" event!

On 8 May Chris Bramble will be giving a demonstration for us. Details of this event to be confirmed.

Sheena Davis will be giving 2 day courses on Chinese Brush painting throughout the year at Wroxton, Nr. Banbury. Oxon. Phone 0295 730328