



# DACORUM AND CHILTERN POTTERS GUILD



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**NEWSLETTER**

**JANUARY**

**1993**





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FRONT PAGE PHOTOGRAPH;

"I want that one!" Members of the Guild viewing and purchasing work by Carol McNichol, at the Open Day, 14th Nov. '92

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Contributions to the Newsletter are always welcome. Opinions expressed in items published do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the Committee or the Guild Members as a whole. Advertising space is available for future issues, please contact the Editor for details. Closing date for items to go in the MARCH Newsletter is 10 FEBRUARY. Please mention DCPG when replying to Advertisements in the Newsletter.

EDITORIAL

May I start by wishing all of you a very Happy & Prosperous New Year, which I hope will include several interesting Guild activities. The Christmas Festivities have curtailed Newsletter production somewhat, but this issue should reach you by about 15th January, giving you plenty of time to;

- a) - join the Sculpture Workshop on 23rd. January.
- b) - send in your suggestions for Guild activities at the Hemel Pavilion on 27th March.

The Guild has increased in strength during 1992, with Membership growing steadily & we anticipate that this will continue during 1993.

Lesley Reeves took lots of Photographs, at the Open Day, without using any film, due to a camera malfunction. She has requested that anyone who has some reasonable photographs of the activities give her a ring, please.

My thanks, to those of you who contributed to the Newsletter & especially to Harry & Ruth Karnac for their continued strong support.

Mervyn Fitzwilliam





## FUTURE GUILD EVENTS

**SATURDAY 24 JANUARY** Sculpture Workshop with Doug Jones, at the Rudolph Steiner School, £15 Guild Members, £18 Guests. Please contact Brian Bicknell on 0494-530050 if you would like to join this group, we can take a few more.

**FRIDAY 12 FEBRUARY** Carolyn Genders will be giving us a demonstration of her work on hand built pots & sculpted pieces, at the Balmoral Centre, Watford at 8.00 pm.

**FRIDAY 12 MARCH** Gary Wornell will be giving us a slide show covering his work in Finland & for the Inax Corporation. Having trained originally at Stoke on Trent, Gary specialises in design & will be demonstrating a technique for producing solid clay castings. Balmoral Centre, 8.00 pm. ( Gary has fitted this evening into a rather busy schedule for us, since Kate Byrne had to cancel her demonstration ).

**SATURDAY 27 MARCH** The Guild have been invited to participate in the Leisure & Hobbies Show, at the Dacorum Pavilion, Hemel Hempstead, 10.00 a.m. to 6.00 p.m. An extract of the details sent to us follows, if you have any helpful suggestions please contact any committee member.

**The aim of the show is to:**

- Show the people of Dacorum what a vast range of clubs, societies and organisations there are in the leisure/hobbies field in the borough.
- Promote those clubs, societies, organisations, etc.
- Give the clubs, societies, organisations etc a town centre stage to recruit new members if they wish.
- To stage an interesting and enjoyable day for all those involved.

The show will be widely advertised in both The Gazette and The Express and we hope to feature as many as possible of the clubs etc taking part in the papers during the run-up to the show.

The Dacorum Pavilion will be available on the Friday (March 26) evening for clubs, etc to mount their displays on their stands.

Throughout the Saturday refreshments will be available to the public - and those taking part, of course - and Snooks bar will also be open.

Saturday is always a busy day in the town centre and we are confident many people will take the opportunity to visit the show and see the vast wealth of interest and talent in the Dacorum hobby and leisure field that is available to them.

## OTHER EVENTS

Members might like to know that the magnificently refurbished Oriental gallery at the British Museum has now re-opened after a period of two years and the Greek and Minoan collection is now displayed in a new and much more effective way on the ground floor. There are also refurbished and re-arranged galleries showing many pots and other antiquities from Cyprus and the Eastern Mediterranean regions on the second floor.





## OPEN DAY - 14TH NOVEMBER 1992

held at Rudolph Steiner School, Kings Langley

This account of the day is my personal view and represents a general impression. From talking to many in the theatre and the dining-room, I felt that the balance was right and enjoyed by all, even though the hall temperature was rather chilly at first.

The day started with each of our guests showing slides of their earlier work and what motivated them in the way of shape, form, texture and colour. This recent innovation has proved successful and it set the scene for what followed.

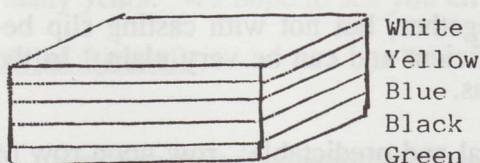
### FELICITY AYLIEFF

I enjoyed looking at and handling Felicity's work as the colours contrasted and complemented each other in a way I did not expect on a pot, but on a canvas. The vessels are coiled very finely using white earthenware clay, instead of porcelain with its attendant problems of firing supports and higher temperatures.

COLOUR: 15 parts colour - blue, yellow, etc.  
(or 20 parts for black to ensure a good strong colour)  
100 parts clay (dry weight)  
(100 parts = a standard egg in weight)

The colour is not added dry to the clay as a good mix is not possible. Add water to the body stain to give a thick paste. Wedge into the clay really well or the colour will streak in the clay.

The agate is made by layering various colours in the manner of liquorice allsorts. Each layer is pressed onto each other, cut into sections and placed in a stack. Cut pieces off the end and place between sheets of paper to avoid sticking.

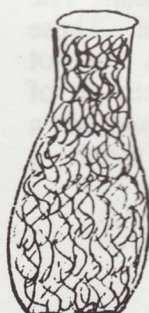


Roll very thinly and cut out shape with a template - if you roll soft agate onto soft clay, the image distorts. Soft agate rolled onto leather hard clay retains its shape better. To inlay, cut out the shape in the vessel to approx. 1/8th" deep. Press agate into the dampened site. Scrape down when leather hard. Use a hand extruder for a fine inlay. Twist two or three extruded colours together for colour variation.

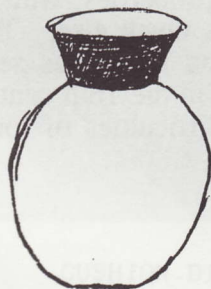
Alternatively, small pieces of agate can be detached from the block and placed on to the vessel according to colour. The body of the pot may be coloured and may be revealed by carefully scraping away the agate additions.

Another beautiful method was shown on two tall coiled pots. These had fine lines in the form of a mesh of scribbles incised into the clay. These were filled with black clay and later scraped. When fired, the pots are rubbed down with wet and dry and a coat of liquid applied to the surface. This is ten parts turps to 1 part polyurethane.

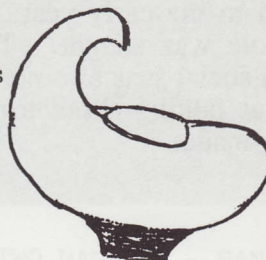
Pots are once fired to 1220°C.



Incised  
Black  
Lines



Agated  
Surfaces



Incised  
and  
Inlaid



Inlays have a habit of shrinking and falling out. This is circumvented by wrapping the pot up in plastic and allowing it to dry in a controlled manner for a week. The dampness of the pot and the inlay equalizes and a union is maintained between the various parts.

If I had not seen all the pieces together, I would have hesitated about whether they were thrown on a wheel or coiled. The finished surfaces were a pleasure to handle and to see, particularly as I had struggled for the same effect before I mastered the wheel.

### CAROL McNICOL

Carol explained that she was not a thrower of pots in any way, though she was at one with Felicity in the use of colours, derived from many sources, including textiles.

Before us were some very uneven lumps of plaster that were two and three piece moulds and a plastic container of casting slip. The slip is one that remains pliable longer and comes from a small supplier in Northern Ireland.

All the work on the display table was made up of different cast sections. Changes of colour altered the outlines, varying surfaces added ripple effects and overall decoration was completely free.

### Decoration

Remove dust etc. from a dry spot with a damp sponge. Apply Universal Stain or Underglaze thinly. If applying to leather hard vessels, the colour becomes very thin and more than one coating is required. Decoration is loosely planned, spontaneous elements creep in. Glazes can be added later as a corrective.

The edges of the vessels are treated as an element of the design and not obscured or lost. Colour was not just wrapped around the edge, but made its own statement.

By applying a base colour, for instance black, and building up colour upon it, a richness can be obtained. Careful scraping then gives a depth of colour in a more controlled way.

Segments that made up the finished pieces were luted together, but not with casting slip because of deflocculation. Casting is simple, quick and efficient and can be very plain. In the hands of an artist, it can also be a three-dimensional canvas.

Casting, in whatever form, can seem somewhat mechanical and predictable; row upon row of the same, however well made. It cannot be said that Carol's work falls into this group, as it is colourful and somewhat eccentric in a very pleasant way and completely different from the other two speakers.

### TAKESHI YASUDA

Takeshi is such a rounded person as a potter and thinker, that writing a few lines is impossible. It appears that his trade mark of lifting a pot from the wheel was a device for expediency and time saving. It took many years for the potential to be recognised. It appears that all pots are cylinders, be they jugs, buckets or plates. A plate is just a shallow cylinder ! The so called cake-stand is an inverted bucket construction. How simple !

During the making of a shallow bowl, the subject of function arose. What is it for ? Tradition usually determines function. He cited the tea ceremony in Japan; at first the master used rice bowls (*TENMOKU*) from China. These were expensive and beyond the means of most. The Koreans used a cheap coarse clay, that had good thermal properties, with a lead glaze. These were adapted and perfected in the early years along with much else. The function was not questioned, a pleasing whole was sought. Tradition and ritual has set initial freedom of thought and rightness into a social structure not envisaged in the 16th century. This was but a digression, for while he was talking about tea and the difficulties of long English words, a variety of vessels was being made.



An interesting point that he made was the value of getting used to using soft clay. It is easier to work, better on the structure of the body and more rewarding. He acknowledged that harder clay has its place in certain forms.

Glazing - (see the following technical information supplied to me).

Some of the glazes are very runny and can spoil the kiln shelves. Place little drip trays on the shelves to catch any excess glaze. Plates are placed on props (rectangular blocks) which avoids warping and holds the feet off the shelf. The glaze is scraped but not washed away at the points of contact. I presume plenty of bat wash is used to save adhesion.

Takeshi's skill in handling clay and his complete mastery of form and subtle colour was appreciated by all. I cannot detail the throwing methods used as they seemed so simple and perfect. The only way was to see and learn from that. The clay just seemed to do as it was told in expert hands. The rim was on the thick side, somewhat like a collar. This was divided by a strong incised line with a tool.

Before lifting off the bat, the plate was wired at the base. Using the fingers and thumbs on the inside or outside of the rim (dictated by the eventual shape of the rim), lift so as to stretch the rim and the walls. The thickness is able to withstand the lift and supports the new extended shape without collapse. The need for working in soft clay then becomes obvious. Feet and handles have a reptilian look about them. Clay is rolled over a perforated piece of metal, giving a spotted look. The foot or handle is so folded as to give an impression of a knee on either side. My second impression is that of a modified, warted toad. This may be unfair as the balance with the rim is completely in harmony.

One last observation: the simple glazing of the work for *Sansai* effect relies on the flow of the greens and browns into the bowl or down the vertical side into a flow of colour - no other extraneous decoration needed.

We had an excellent day with three remarkable speakers in the same tradition established for many years. We hope to see you all again next year.

Brian Bicknell



CUSHION DISH WITH TWO HANDLES - SANSAI GLAZE



# TAKESHI YASUDA: TECHNICAL INFORMATION

## CLAY

Ball Clay (Hy+71, Shredded)	89
Grog 30 - 85	5
60 - Dust	5
Red Iron Oxide (Synthetic)	1

## SLIP

Ball Clay (Hy+71, Powder)	10
China Clay (W.B.B. No.50)	4
Zirconium Silicate	1

## TRAILING SLIP

Ball Clay (Hy+71, Powder)	2
China Clay (W.B.B. No.50)	3

## COLOURS FOR OXIDIZED FIRING

(These are applied thickly on top of base glaze for *Sansai* effect. Very runny).

Glaze above except Manganese & Iron 100

Copper Carbonate 4 for green

Manganese Dioxide 8 for brown

## GLAZE

Feldspar (FFF)	20
Nepheline Syenite (North Cape)	15
Whiting	20
Talc (Chinese)	10
China Clay (W.B.B. No.50)	15
Quartz	15
Bone Ash	2
Manganese Dioxide	0.15
Red Iron Dioxide (Synthetic)	0.8

08.12.1992 RECIPE 3.D



Guild Members studying pots made by Takeshi Yasuda.

Photograph by Linda Cannon



**FELICITY AYLIEFF**

Felicity gave a comprehensive demonstration of handbuilding smooth, bulbous, oval structures using the technique of coiling with stained clay. Rather than extruding coils, she rolls them by hand using a firm earthenware body, assembling two coils at a time



The above photograph shows how Agate areas are added by scooping out marked places & inserting the agate with slip.



Left; incised & inlaid vase

Centre; two pots with agated surfaces

Right; two tall pots, incised & filled decoration





FELICITY AYLIEFF

PHOTOGRAPHS BY LINDA CANNON

Felicity's pots are essentially fragile and smooth in appearance. Because of her other work commitments related to teaching, she is only able to make about 30 pieces a year.

Linda Cannon and Ruth Ruby

#### **CAROL McNICOLL**

Carol started her presentation with a slide show of her work ranging from casts of cabbage leaves to tea sets. Throughout her presentation, she conveyed a strong sense of humour and lightheartedness, a theme reflected directly in her work.

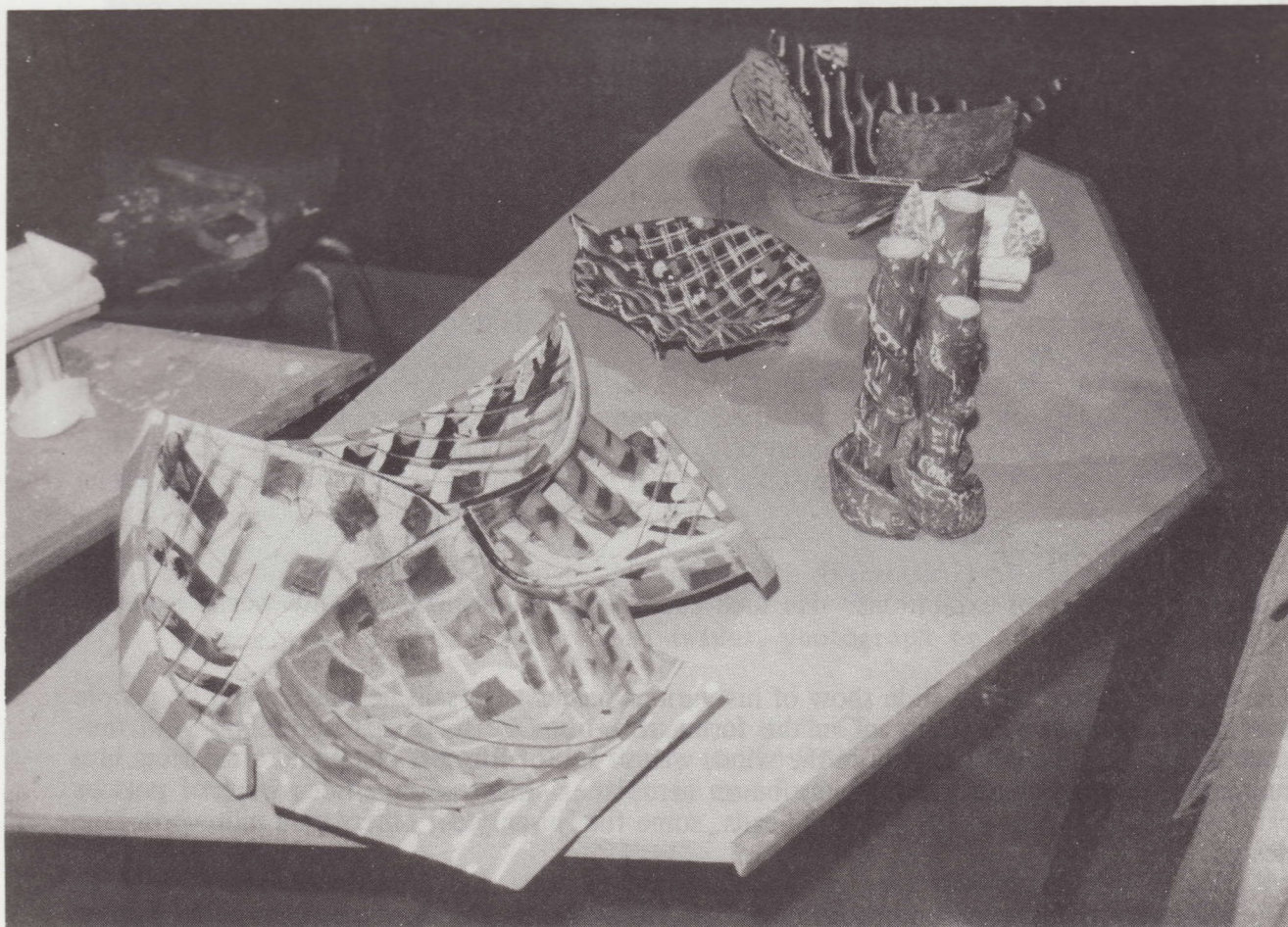
Carol is another handbuilder. Interestingly, she never learned to 'throw' and, seemingly, has not yet had any desire to move away from the technique of handbuilding. She like to cast identical forms from a single mould, which are then decorated differently. In this way, she is able to produce affordable yet still unique pottery.

Carol is interested in the concept that clay can mirror objects in real life. This, intertwined with the fact that she likes to produce pottery which entertains her and makes other people laugh, make her pottery bold and lively. There is little to no subtlety in her work ! The lively nature of her pots is evident in both their form and their surface decoration, being influenced by African and Japanese textiles. Consequently, her surface decoration deals largely with contrast and richness of colour.

During her demonstration, Carol showed how she made moulds. These are quite complex templates which often have three or more interlocking parts to them. Once she has created a satisfactory mould to work from, slip is poured in and the whole mould is held tightly together with inner tubing stretched around. Her castings usually take about a day to dry within a cold, damp environment. Once dry enough to be taken out of the mould, they are then biscuit fired to 1180 °C.

Carol decorates with manufactured underglaze colours and enamels. She enjoys being creative, with colour combinations put onto the outside of the pot without planning. It is all done by eye and the excitement of serendipity. Carol applies the underglaze colours in layers which she scratches through to reveal colour schemes below. She also dribbles colour over the surface. Once decoration is completed, Carol applies a clear glaze and fires her work to 1080 °C.





CAROL McNICHOLL, LEFT &  
ABOVE: SOME OF HER WORK

PHOTOGRAPHS BY LINDA CANNON

Carol's work is immediate in nature. It is sharp-edged, often crude looking and slightly unfinished. This is a direct result of the 'surprise' element that she like to create in her work.

Linda Cannon and Ruth Ruby





## CHRIS BRAMBLE

Chris Bramble was born in London in 1958, but moved to Ipswich three years later. At 19, he was living in Hastings and attended the Hastings College of Further Education where he took a course in Exhibition Design. Clay formed only a very small part of the work, but it was enough to convince Chris that this was his chosen medium. He got together a portfolio and in 1981 he was accepted by the Glasgow School of Art where, after three years, he gained a B.A. Hons. Degree in Ceramic Art and Design.

He freelanced for the next two years, developing his very distinctive design. Initially he concentrated on figure work, but latterly tended more towards thrown pot forms.

In 1985, using his experience in exhibition design, he took up the post of Exhibition Officer in the National Gallery of Zimbabwe. For the next two years his work was greatly influenced by the local stone sculptures, and he gained skills in carving serpentine and verdite. During this time his style was refined to his unmistakable Afro figures, often incorporated into utilitarian vessels.

In 1986 he returned to Glasgow for 18 months where he established himself as a ceramic sculptor in a series of exhibitions. He then came to London where he now works from his Kilburn studio.

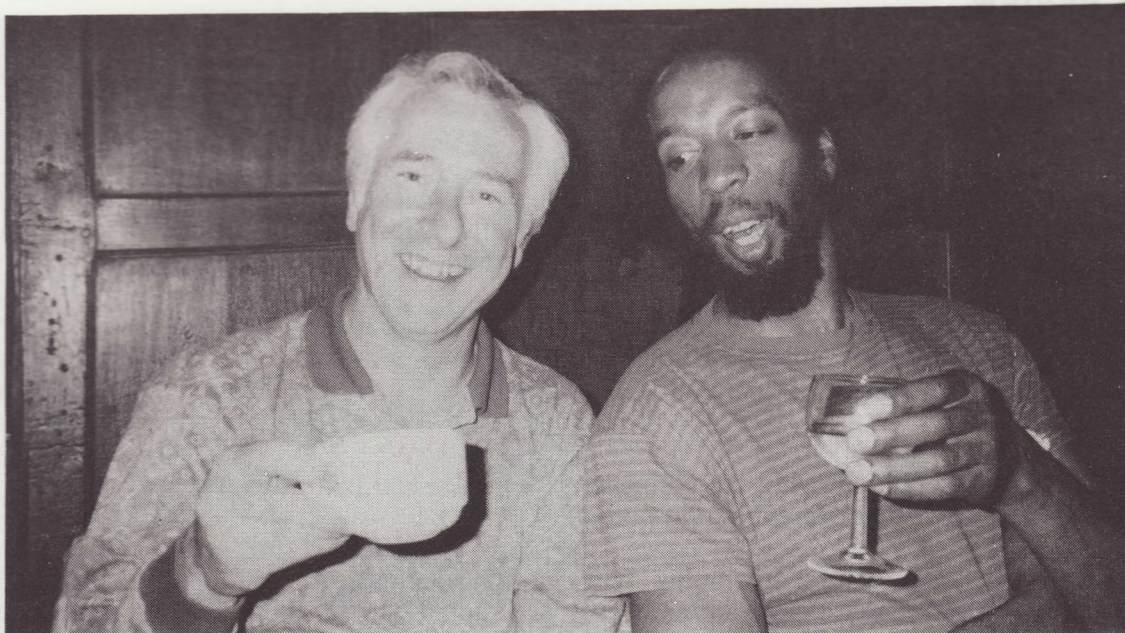
The evening started with a slide show of his various pieces. He said he was excited by people and spirits and this was apparent in the forms shown. One in particular, a boy with outstretched arms, his hair blowing in the wind, was so full of life that one could almost see him running along the street pretending to be an aeroplane. Most of the slides were of pots or carafes, usually incorporating African heads, some finely sculpted, others of a more primitive design.

The pieces are reduction fired in a 20 cu.ft. gas kiln, often unglazed, the colours being formed by rubbing in raw oxides on the greenware. He is very attracted by crackle and ash glazes. For the latter, he leaves the throwing rings on the pots, but if he wishes to draw on the surface, he removes them.



BOY WITH OUTSTRETCHED ARMS,  
BY CHRIS BRAMBLE





The Editor (tea), with Chris Bramble (wine), photograph by Antonia Salmon

A 50/50% mixture of C8 material and 'C' material (both Clayglaze) gives him the body that best suits his techniques. This he fires slowly to 985-990 °C. and, for finishing, he prefers using a strip of polythene to chamois, since he can form incised bands by pushing his nail against the thin plastic film when turning.

He gave a very interesting talk and demonstration of his very distinctive pieces, with the consummate skill of an artist who knows exactly what he wants to convey.

G.A. Stevens



### SHOPSHARE FOR POTTERS

I do most of my selling at craft fairs. It would be nice just to deliver to a shop and return to potting. But shops have to mark up so much to cover rent, rates and wages that buyers are put off, certainly when the economy has been in the doldrums, as it has been for over two years. So last September I became a shopkeeper ! With a dozen or so others, I share an outbuilding in the Kings Langley Garden Centre. We each pay a small rent for a few square feet and share the shopkeeping between us. The shop is hardly in a prime position but then we do not have to pay much for it. And a path from a free car park to the High Street goes right past the door, which helps to get us known in the village.

So far, sales have gone quite well but the real test will come after Christmas. Will customers buy enough to cover the rent ? Will members of the co-operative pull out, leaving each of the stayers with a bigger share of the landlord's bill ? There are worries, of course. But, if things become too difficult, the whole operation can be wound up at about a month's notice. In the meantime, it is nice not having to load up the car with stock and stall fittings, drive for up to two hours to an event and then spend two hours unloading and setting up. And that awful business of packing up at the end of an eight-hour day ! Shopkeeping has its attractions, provided it leaves enough time for making.

Freda Earl



### WE ARE DELIGHTED TO WELCOME THE FOLLOWING NEW MEMBER

Alex Carruthers 1 Mimram Rd., Old Welwyn, Herts. AL6 9HA





BOOK REVIEW.

"THE COMPLETE POTTER: DECORATED EARTHENWARE" Mike Levy; Hardback.  
92pp. Batsford, 1992; £14.99

In recent years many potters have turned to working in Stoneware and Porcelain to fulfil their ambitions of producing satisfying and artistic results. However, there are some potters who work mainly, or only, in Earthenware. And these potters show that this softer clay medium is one that is capable of being made into excellent and attractively-decorated ceramic ware.

One such potter is Mike Levy, who not only make colourful earthenwares but also has formulated this new book on the subject. He uses examples of his own and of many other potters, and numerous such works are illustrated in black and white photographs and with ornamented examples in colour.

Whilst this is not a book showing the elements of drawing and painting, it does exemplify the methods of these used by different studio potters.

It is a well-produced volume beginning with an introductory explanation of the immense personal satisfaction which can be obtained in the production of decorated pottery, and then leading on to a short but informative history of all kinds of painted ware around the world.

The author explains that before an artist can paint a pot successfully, he/she must need to ascertain the style and subject of the design in order to produce the finished decoration in a satisfying perspective. He then proceeds to describe the development of the decoration, and divides this into six stages; from the basic research to the finishing borders. Varying examples are shown of each.

Then, dealing with all the various materials and techniques which can be used, he describes and illustrates many works of present and past potters using paints and also coloured slips. These are given in some detail.

The ware finally can be burnished before firing or further decorated by glazing after the biscuit firing. Tiles as well as pots are portrayed, from the making and painting to the assembling as the finished representation.

With a brief account of some recipes of clays, slips and glazes, and the colouring effects of metal oxides, the whole gamut of decorating pottery is enunciated in a simple, pleasant and interesting manner able to help even the fledgling student to produce some most decorative earthenware. This is a book also for the established potter, and one which can be used over and over again with great satisfaction.

Stan Romer.

PROFILERuth Karnac

I came late to pottery, going to my first evening classes at Watford, at the age of about 40, with an inspiring teacher, Alicia Pisc. I was immediately "hooked" and was sorry not to have enrolled for 2 classes rather than one class per week. Later I taught pottery as therapy at Napsbury Hospital for two years. I was extremely nervous at first at the idea of mental patients. However, once I got to know them and found that they were actually human beings (!), I settled down and found it very interesting.

Nevertheless, I still wanted to learn a great deal more about pottery and my job was really about people, not pottery, so I applied and was accepted on the Harrow Studio Potters' course. It was run by Mick Casson and Victor Margrie at that time and we had to work very hard indeed, but it was fascinating and I loved it. Among our tutors were Colin Pearson, Wally Keeler and Russell Collins. Many well-known potters did 3 or 6-week stints with us which was a great privilege.

Afterwards, I set up a studio at home making domestic stoneware and selling fairly successfully. I had to have an electric kiln because I couldn't do reduction firing in a residential area. I always regretted this and never really found satisfaction with oxidised glazes.

I taught part-time for 15 years at Hatch End, Watford and Pinkwell in Hayes. At first, I loved teaching but eventually got weary of starting again each September with new students whose attendances were often very irregular and which made their progress so uneven and difficult to cope with.





Ruth Karnac

Photograph by R. Moon

I went to the inaugural meeting of the D.C.P.G. and have been a member ever since. The Guild has been great fun and although I am no longer a potter, having changed over to making jewellery, the Guild still keeps me in touch with pots and potters.



LONDON POTTERS GUILD, 6TH ANNUAL EXHIBITION - THEME; BLACK & WHITE

The challenge to make a piece of work using only black and white was, I suspect, far more demanding than most would have thought on first hearing of the idea.

The majority of pots and sculptures on show had either a black and cream finish or white and dark brown (some veering towards blue) finish. The few that successfully came within the confines of the brief were unglazed which is a bit easy and, although not cheating, could be considered a bit of a cop-out. The fact that my own "technicolour" masterpiece had been rejected has freed me to write this totally unbiased review of the show which I suspect was dreamed up by the likes of John Berry who, in the 1960s, used to make small sculptures in fired clay that were bright white and black black with no line of another tone where the two met.

**Dimitra Grivellis** exhibited a small porcelain bowl which had a zebra design, produced by shot-blasting or sgraffito. This work was skilfully executed, although the image was more powerful than the technique.

Other pieces of work that I felt drawn to included **Alan Sexton's** 12" dish with sgraffito decoration of flowers and butterflies. **Claire Ireland** had produced a set of nine framed sculptures, grouped together to form three rows of three, like a window. **Catrina Ballie** showed a Wave-Form in burnished black with white lines and red earth at the edges. **Penny Fowler** exhibited some crisp vase forms, again possibly shot-blasted, with some unglazed areas on the exterior. **Mary Lambert's** cat bowls were delightful.

It was a pleasure to see a show where amateur and professional could exhibit alongside each other, where the quality of the work is up to the individual (colour deviants excepted) and not a judging panel.

An occasion like this is of greater value to any pottery group than lectures, demonstrations, etc., as each person exhibiting is also participating rather than listening or watching from a safe distance. Self criticism should lead to more shows of high quality. This is preferable to those where the professional refuses to exhibit alongside the amateur in case he/she is out-classed.

Doug Jones - December '92



## OBITUARY

Weeks before his death aged 62, the Californian sculptor **Robert Carsten Arneson** (4.9.1930 - 2.11.1992) wrote directions for his cremation in typically irreverent terms, dedicated as always to the ceramicist's work, a lowly form in the art hierarchy before he raised it up.

He asked that his body be coated in ceramic casting material and baked at 2000°, the ashes to be used in a glaze of bright colour on a chimney rising from his body. Unfortunately his widow, the sculptress Sandra Shannonhouse, discovered that unorthodox cremation is against the law. But his ashes will still be used in a larger-than-life mould of his head.

It will make a fitting memorial, for Arneson himself seemed larger than life, and many of his most provocative works featured his own bust, often as wry or humorous comments on the world and its politics. A critic compared his caricature or cartoon style to a sculptor's version of the writings of Kurt Vonnegut.

His most controversial - though not best - work was a bust in 1981 of the assassinated mayor of San Francisco, George Moscone. It was intended to grace the city's new Moscone Convention Centre, but was rejected by the municipal art commission.

They were offended not so much by the depiction of a grinning Moscone, but by the pedestal. This contained a mixture of affectionate references to the liberal and popular mayor, and cutting reminders of his death from the pistol of a disgruntled right-wing local politician. As so often with censorship, the work gained a wider audience as a result, touring for several years before being placed in a San Francisco art museum last February.

Arneson, who was born in the Bay area, learned ceramics at a local college where it was regarded as an industrial technique. "As a ceramicist I wasn't a fine artist. We had to sit in the last three rows of the bus and never got involved in philosophical issues," he recalled. But as his stature increased, his works could fetch \$60,000.

Among his self-portraits his bearded face appeared in guises ranging from a drowning man, a Clever Old Dog, supporting a crazily balanced pile of bricks, and as a kiln in which smaller, multi-coloured Arneson heads were baking. In recent years he turned his political irony on the arms race, the military establishment, and racism.





We offer our sincere condolences to Pam Tames, a long time member, whose husband died recently. We hope she will continue to enjoy the guild's activities as she has done in the past and send our good wishes for the New Year.



### ANOTHER CHINESE CERAMIC ARMY

Not so long ago (in 1990) the news broke of a second great archaeological find near the centre of China: a cluster of some twenty-four pits extending to the tomb of Han Dynasty Emperors. The site is just about 8 miles north of the ancient capital Changan, which itself just lies just on the northern limits of Xian.

The Han Emperors, who governed from approximately around 200 B.C. to 200 A.D., were comparatively enlightened rulers, and the dynasty ruled over a generally peaceful era. The tomb of the fifth Emperor, Jing Di, who lived about 60 A.D., was discovered whilst excavations were being made for a road from Xian to the new airport. Here some 700 ceramic soldiers, each about 2 feet tall, have been disinterred from fallen rotten wooden roofs and concreted sand, together with enough evidence as to their manufacture and material to enable the detailed describing of their construction.

One of the pre-Han Emperors, Qin Shi Huang Di, who died in 210 B.C., (he built the Great Wall of China), was a despotic dictator. He united China, having many learned opponents slaughtered, and burnt many books. Despite this 'trait' he progressed with the more humane practice of interring ceramic figures at his burial instead of using human beings.

Some 70 years after Qin Shi Huang, the whole of China was ruled by Jing 'Di' ('Emperor' Jing) who encouraged agriculture and the arts. Paper and silk were produced, and life among the rich was most lavish. Jing Di became a follower of Dao (Taoism), as opposed to Confucianism, which latter preached morality, discipline and rigid living. 'Dao', meaning 'the Way', was based upon natural harmony, simplicity and tolerance; and these gentle qualities can be seen in the calm faces and relaxed bodies of the ceramic soldiers.

These figures were mass-produced by many thousands of pottery workers. The prepared earthenware clay was pressed into four moulds for each complete body, stamped with a symbol of good fortune (a 'frog' - 'qingwo'), repaired, i.e. luted together, and set in a wood-fired kiln, where they were fired for about four days. Then, when cool, they were painted with a red lacquer, for the headbands and boots, dressed in silk uniformed robes, and fitted with moveable wooden arms holding spears and shields. Breakages, particularly in the legs, were restored by careful gluing. Finally the soldiers were crowded regimentally in order to defend the Emperor during his further life.

Ceramic and iron bowls, and lacquered boxes were included in the tomb. The boxes await opening to ascertain the possible contents as being weapons. All the figures and bowls have been made with a high degree of artistry.

Over the ten years taken for the construction of the sepulchre of Jing Di, not only did the Emperor's Treasury become exhausted, but the human exertion was responsible for the early death of thousands of workmen, who became crippled as a result of their tremendous labours.

Stan Romer. (From an article in *National Geographic Magazine*)



# Footnote

The previous discoveries of the groups of Chinese Warriors aroused such interest that some potters received commissions to make life-sized figures in a similar style. The figures shown here were made at Chorlton Pottery, Manchester, by Ian Ramsey.

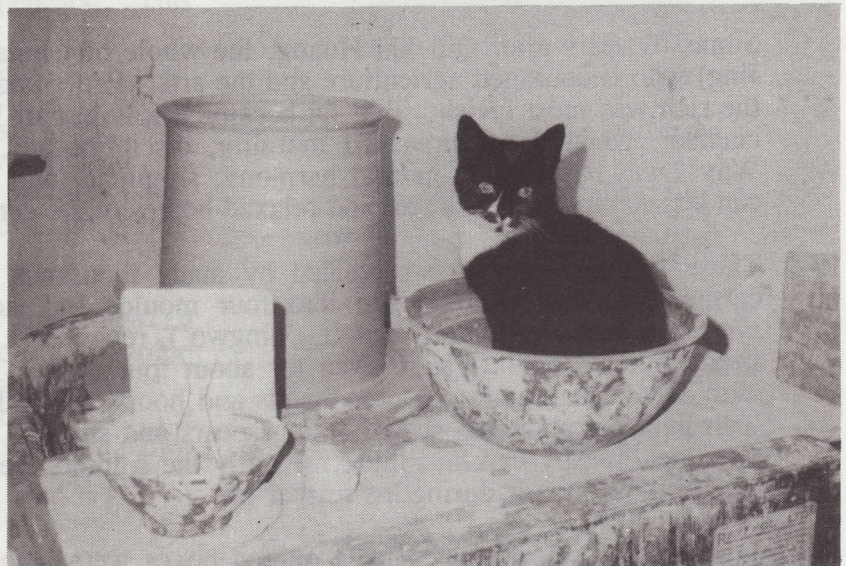


Photographs by courtesy of Ian Ramsey.

M. Fitzwilliam

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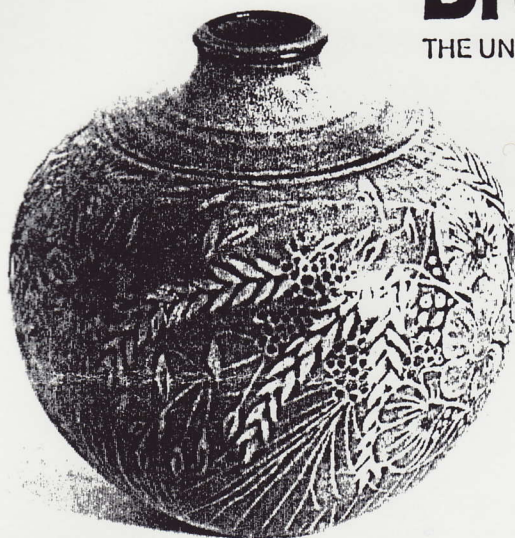
The above photograph, of her cat helping with the throwing was sent to me by Isobel Denyer

## OVERHEARD...

... at the Craft Fair...one elderly lady to another  
..."Of course, they learn all these thing when they  
are in prison"...  
... during a throwing lesson, young pupil to Tutor,  
in conspiratorial whisper...."My Mother does'nt ever  
let me get my hands dirty"...







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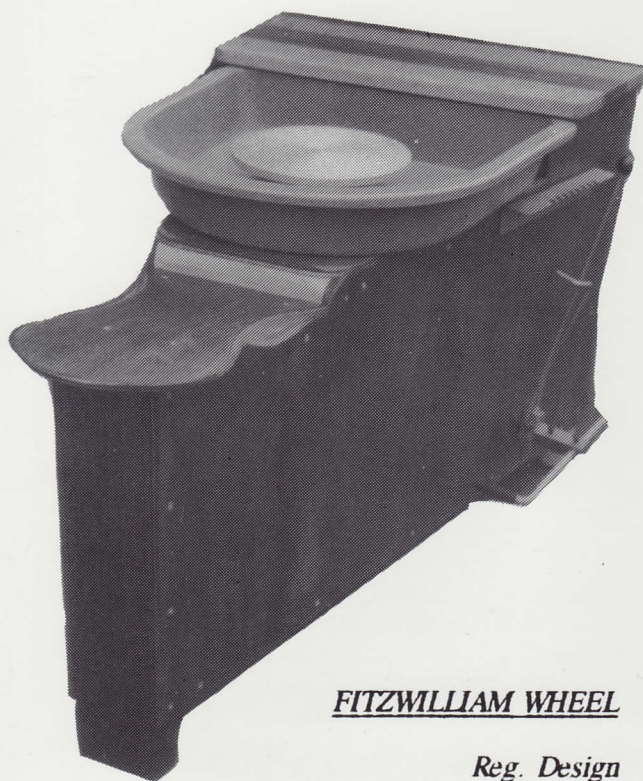
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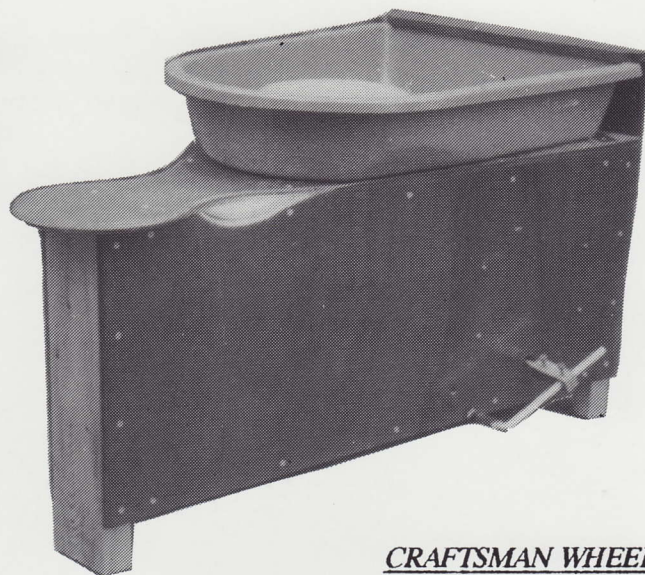
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