



DACORUM AND
CHILTERN
POTTERS GUILD



NEWSLETTER

MAY

1993



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FRONT PAGE PHOTOGRAPH: Teapot by Gary Wornell

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ABOUT THE GUILD

The Dacorum & Chiltern Potters Guild Newsletter is published bi-monthly, in January, March, May, July, September & November, being distributed to all members of the Guild, other craft groups & organisations. Membership of the Guild is open to anyone having an interest in pottery & offers the members several opportunities each year to see top potters demonstrating their skills. In addition, an Annual Open Day is held, with demonstrations. A Members' pottery Exhibition, visits & workshops are organised at various times during the year.

Family membership is £15/year, single £12.50, Full-time Student £6. Send your cheque to our Membership Secretary, D. Stott, "Broomfield", 36 Box Lane, Boxmoor, Herts HP3 ODJ. 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, or a leaflet distribution service is offered. Please contact the Editor for details. Closing date for items to go in the JULY issue is 12th JUNE. Please mention DCPG when replying to Advertisements in the Newsletter.

EDITORIAL

From discussions with some participants it was apparent that the recent "Hands On" Sculpture Workshop was regarded as a success and working in a group was obviously enjoyed by those who attended. I have also had comments to the effect that we should increase the scope of such activities if possible, getting our hands into the clay more often.

Doug Jones has willingly agreed to give us another workshop and details are given in the Future Events column in this issue.

Perhaps we could have other workshops with groups studying, say, Slab building techniques, or throwing, decoration methods, etc. Alternatively, we could attend an established weekend workshop as a group. Please take the time to let me, or any committee member, know your views.

We do have many talented people in the Guild and your contributions to the Newsletter are always welcome. In this issue we have the first of a series on glazes, from Tony Stevens.



FUTURE GUILD EVENTS

FRIDAY 14TH MAY - Sophie McCarthy will be at the Balmoral Centre at 8.00 p.m. Sophie will be giving us a demonstration of layered decoration on pots which have been dried, also wax and latex resist and stencil decoration on both earthenware and stoneware.

15TH MAY - SCULPTURE WORKSHOP with Doug Jones - The Sculpture Workshop which was held by Doug at the Rudolph Steiner School, Kings Langley in January was a great success. We have had requests for another similar workshop from members of the Guild, so Doug has arranged this for us on SATURDAY 15th May- short notice, so do apply **AT ONCE** if you want to come, since we may have to allocate places on a "first come" basis.

Guests will be very welcome to attend this Workshop, so if you have friends who would be interested then do please let them know.

Send your cheque for £15 (or £18 if not a Guild member) made payable to Dacorum and Chiltern Potters Guild, to BRIAN BICKNELL, 41 COATES LANE, HIGH WYCOMBE, BUCKS. HP13 5ET, together with your name and address, plus details of any guests attending.

SATURDAY 12TH JUNE - The POT CRAWL will be held in the Oxford area this year and is being arranged by Brian Bicknell; please see the form enclosed with this Newsletter for details and application slip.

OTHER EVENTS

THE BARNET COLLECTION - Organise various events throughout the year; most information received seem to miss our publication date for the Newsletter, but to be put on the mailing list phone 081 449 4314 or 081 441 0904.

9TH MAY - "There must be an easier way to make a living" - Jon Mills, Metalworker, at the Crafts Council, Pentonville Road.

4TH-22ND MAY - Festival Exhibition at the Terrace Gallery, Worthing. Phone 0903 212926.



THIRD YEAR

Would I be accepted again for the CPA associate exhibition ? I had also persuaded Paul Priest to apply, you may remember his sculptural pieces from the Guild exhibition in Ruislip.

Thirty-three potters of the seventy-three that applied were accepted

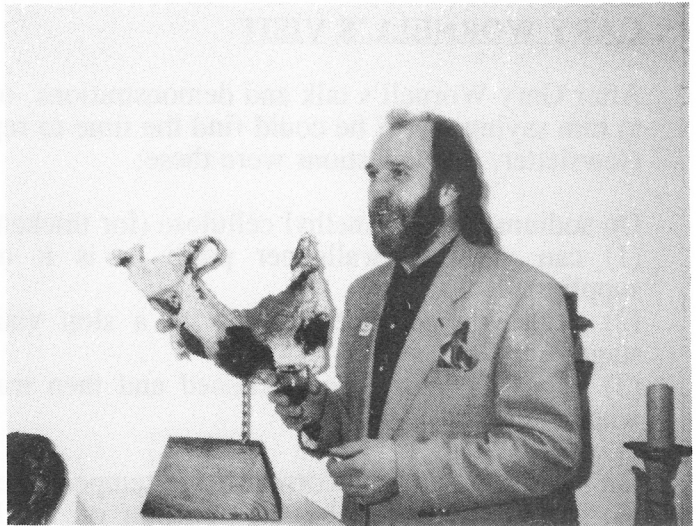
We took our work to London on Saturday 20th February.

The private view was on the Monday evening, our party including our supportive and patient other halves arrived to a very full gallery. The work, as always, was of a very high standard and so varied.

The prizes were given and, to our delight, the Clayman prize was presented to Paul. For once he was speechless !!

It was a good, lively exhibition.

Chris Bull



Paul Priest celebrating his prize (Above)

Candlesticks by Christine Bull (Left)

Photographs by Christine Bull.



SCULPTURE WORKSHOP - AFTER THE FIRING

It was a beautiful morning when I hurried over to meet Doug at his studio on the bank of the river Chess at Rickmansworth. Junko was already there with her daughter Adele Tamae. The kiln was open when I arrived; Doug, Junko and Adele were watching the river wildlife, having emptied part of the kiln. My piece of sculpture was still waiting in the kiln for me to remove it, which I did with that certain mixture of feelings that all potters know. I was, and still am, very pleased with my first attempt at sculpture of this type and grateful to Doug for his care in the firing.

After clearing the kiln, studying the contents, having coffee and taking a few photographs, it was time to leave Doug to his making. He certainly lives in a very nice spot.

Mervyn Fitzwilliam



(Left) Junko Tobin, with two of her productions, the one on the right being her daughter, Adele Tamae. (Right) The assembled sculpture, awaiting appraisal and collection.



GARY WORNELL'S VISIT

After Gary Wornell's talk and demonstrations. one or two questions occurred to me, so I wrote to him saying that if he could find the time to reply briefly, I would pass the answer on for the Newsletter. My questions were these:

On sodium carboxy methyl cellulose (for thickening glaze to a trailing consistency,

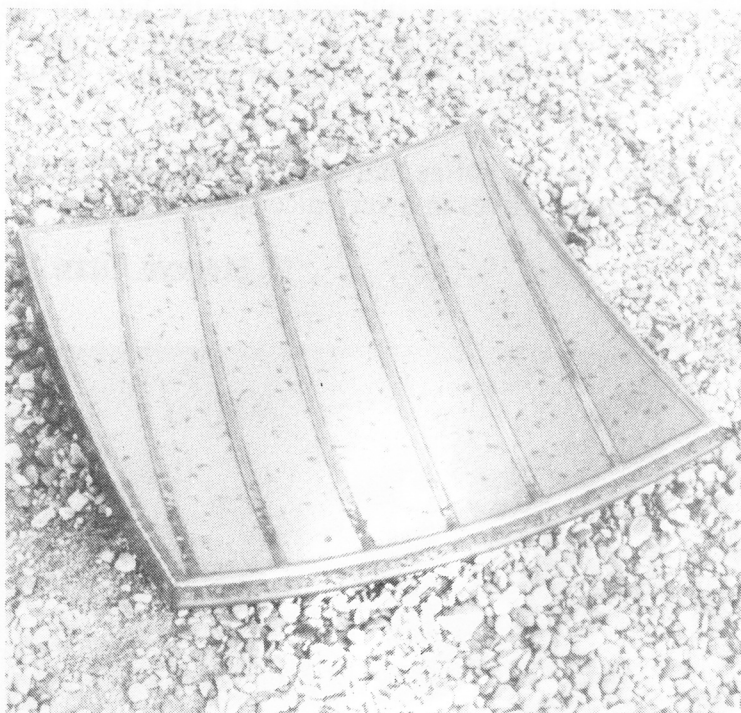
- (1) can you use wallpaper paste or is it necessary to buy the material from pottery suppliers ?
- (2) can you add the material to a slop glaze or must it be done at the dry materials stage ?
- (3) does the glaze, so thickened and then trailed onto the pot, tend to spread out or run when fired ?

On burnishing and the correct firing temperatures for this -

- (4) I was surprised by the mention of 1200 C. (as one of Gary's firing temperatures). I have up till now understood that you run the risk of destroying the burnished finish if the firing temperature is too high. Reference books are strangely silent on this.

Here are Gary's replies:

- (1) I use the material called binder, £10. per kilo
- (2) 1 - 1.5% dry weight, mix all dry materials and binder together, then add warm water and leave to work for an hour or so. Then mix thoroughly and sieve as normal. To 4 kilos. dry, I add 2.5 kilos. water.
- (3) The spreading of the glaze depends on the following :-
 - (a) the natural tendency to spread
 - (b) the proximity to other glaze or fluxing agents adjacent to the piped glaze
 - (c) the weight of piped glaze and melt properties on vertical surfaces during firing
 - (d) reducing % binder will minimise tendency to crawl.



(Left) Fruit Slice



(Right) Bowl by Gary Wornell

(4) As far as burnishing and firing terra sigillata is concerned, it is best to drop the name in favour of discovery. I conducted exhaustive tests over the years and accidentally programmed the kiln to 1200 instead of 1100 one day. Beautiful result. Obviously, I started firing at around 950, but was looking for a durable surface. My sister moved to France a few years ago and packed a pot in styrene chips. The rubbing and chafing that took place was noticeable, so I started firing to at least 1080. This produced a much tougher surface.

The surface is not vitreous and therefore prone to staining if used for fruit, etc. I treat with scotch guard which acts as a moisture repellent and does not introduce its own shine. Avoid thick applications as it will turn white.

Hope this has been a help - I enjoyed meeting you all (Gary).

P.S. Gary Wornell grinds his slip to produce a fine particle product. It may well have slightly different properties from a traditionally produced terra sigillata. I guess there is no substitute for doing your own testing !



Shirley Woods-McConville

LEISURE AND HOBBIES SHOW

The Pavillion, Hemel Hempstead hosted the first Leisure and Hobbies Show in conjunction with *Gazette* Newspapers.

Saturday 27th March dawned - would anyone turn up ? Many of the programmes hadn't been distributed in the papers as planned. We need not have worried. The Mayor said a few words to open the show followed by high-stepping drum majorettes strutting their stuff. About 50 young girls (and one tiny boy) from ages 3 to 13 grappled on stage with red and blue pom-poms and marched through their routines whilst the rest of us braced ourselves for the onslaught of the public - and onslaught they did ! The morning was extremely busy, the afternoon less so.

The Guild shared a stand with Dacorum College pottery classes which turned out to be a good thing. Freda Earl was a crowd-puller, demonstrating on the wheel and producing rolled clay figures. Whilst fascinated by her demonstration, they effectively became a captive audience. Freda and I - and later, Victor and Mervyn - talked to them about pottery, pottery classes and, of course, the Guild: who we are, what we do, where we meet, etc.

Several people, already keen on pottery, left their names and addresses and will be contacted for the next Guild event. Mervyn enthused about the Sculpture Workshop and several would be interested in taking part in another one.

We may be able to recruit one or two for the Guild from this group. Others may join pottery classes and become interested in us from that angle. The next step for us is to ensure that we produce interesting leaflets to go to pottery classes, inviting people to join.

Linda Bryant

Linda discusses the Guild activities with two visitors



Freda Earl
demonstrating
pottery
techniques



IN A CLOUD OF DUST

With a kiln to pack and fire to meet a deadline, I was very short on time and still exhausted after my last show, but I was determined to take a couple of hours off and see the paintings of someone I regard as one of the most exciting and perceptive draughtsmen of this century. I didn't even have time to change from my glaze-spattered jeans, so it was in a cloud of dust that I caught the evening train to South Ken and the gallery of J.K. Hill of Old Brompton Road, next to Christies. This gallery specialises in British studio ceramics but, on this occasion, is showing the paintings and drawings in pastel (also etchings) of the artist Sally Scott alongside the recent work of Emmanuel Cooper.

I will resist the temptation to describe the various paintings and drawings except to say that they range from landscapes of the Massif Central, where the artist spends part of each year, to domestic still lives of someone's ordinary objects which, in fact, are anything but ordinary, as well as portraits of flowers. The whole experience for me is one of colour - colour which is delicious, uplifting, even joyous. These are inadequate words to describe anything that has to be experienced which includes some paintings that feature Emmanuel Cooper's pots.

I will be honest - I would not have made the trip to see Mr. Cooper's pots as I have a personal thing about what I regard as "funky" jugs or domestic ware. In Sally Scott's paintings, these jugs worked, since the colours as well as the forms had an empathy with her palette which made me turn with a fresh eye to the actual jugs, but I still didn't like them. The other pots though, as well as exhibiting a timeless classic form that invites handling, appeared to share the palette of Ms Scott and I live in the vain hope that my clients, who regard me as the one with the exciting glazes, are not able to attend this show which ends on April 17th.

The following evening I had managed to finish the firing in time to catch yet another train into town to see the private view of the London Potters Spring Exhibition at St. Martin's Gallery under St. Martin in the Fields. The gallery was so crowded that it was difficult to see the work on show so I allowed this handicap to be a part of my way of assessing the pots. Generally, it was a riot of colour but this could have been as a reaction on my or the artists' part to their last exhibition on the theme of Black and White. In spite of this, the cats of Mary Lambert still caught my eye and I intend to own one soon. I could not possibly write about everything and yet it is difficult not to mention some, so a quick gut reaction as I wandered through the crowds gave me these notes. Small but powerful black and white porcelain pieces by Jane Melrose which held their own adjacent to the polychrome dishes of Nevena Simovil. I would like to see some sculpture by the latter, as I felt that working within the confines of the idea of "pottery" could be choking a very inventive mind.

I dashed past the excellent work of Chris Bramble in case I bought one of his pots when he hasn't even started the commission I gave him last year, and stumbled on the bold domestic ware of Karen Bunting. In spite of the colour all around, it was the dichroic work which held the eye, but it was the Lapis blue of Sarah Perry's bowls with bronze exteriors which made me hold my breath.

Amongst some good work was stuff which first saw light of day as paintings sixty or seventy years ago and others which are decorative versions of old studio pots. Some were far better to have than the elephant-foot umbrella stand I think they were meant to replace; but enough of pots, as the important part of any private view are the people and it was rewarding to see again the manager of a major supplier of clay and glazes patronising the exhibitions of his clients. It is this attitude which keeps poor potters faithful to one company and makes it worthwhile to carry on the struggle to survive.

I would like to finish with a couple of observations from the safety of my home somewhere inside the M.25. First, I would like to recommend that all potters who only look at other pots start to look at the whole history of art which includes that which is contemporary.

The second recommendation is that galleries adopt a sliding scale of charges. Pottery is my living and I cannot afford to drop my prices even if it means I will no longer be asked the question "Am I right in assuming that you do not wish to sell this piece?" or "Is this price tag a mistake?" Do you realise that a gallery can make a far greater profit margin from selling a pot or a painting than most retailers of new cars? I am not a business man, as most are aware, but as a suggestion why not try the 100% mark-up to £10., 90% for £11 - £20., 80% for £21 - £40., 70% for £41 - £60., 60% for £61 - £80., 50% for £81 - £100., 40% for £101 - £150., 20% for £151 - £200. and anything over £200. at 10%? This is very simplistic and leads to prices on the border-line being a bit cheaper to the public than something that is more expensive but gives the artist less money. Ultimately, if adopted, any wholesale price may never again end in an eight or a nine.

I closed the door to the studio silently and crept away. The nonsensical numbers that I continued to mumble faded from my ears.....

Fifteen minutes later, I was approaching the chaos of the motorways near Heathrow and, suddenly, random figures and sums bubbled like champagne to the surface of my mind.



Doug Jones

GLAZES - PART I

Introduction

This series of articles is intended to initiate newcomers to various aspects of glazes and glazing. As such, I hope experienced potters will bear with me if I labour some points that are obvious to more experienced potters (them, surely).

A glaze is a thin coating of glass (silica) covering the surface of any pottery item. This glassy coating provides many advantages over an unglazed pot :-

1. It can provide a waterproof coating at earthenware temperatures.
2. A smooth glaze is easier to keep clean & is more hygienic than an unglazed surface.
3. Various surface textures enhance other decorative aspects.
4. Glazing allows for the application of a wide variety of colours.

5. The choice of transparent or opaque glazes double the range of decorative effects available.
6. Multiple layers of differing glazes can produce 'breakthrough' reactive effects.
7. Special effect glazes, as a group, can produce spectacular effects, totally impossible by other means.

What is a Glaze ?

In a normal glaze formula the constituents fall into four main groups (although a few deviate from this general rule).

These four groups are as follows: a source of silica; a flux to lower the melting point of the silica; alumina to stabilise the glaze and to modify the 'fit' of the glaze. Finally, a group of substances to modify the physical aspects of the glaze.

Many glazes contain constituents that fall into more than one of the above categories. For example, salt glazes, as their name suggests, have only the one constituent ... common salt. This reacts with the surface of the pot to form a glaze.

The effects of each group are more easily understood if they are examined individually.

Silica

Silica is the actual glass-forming constituent. It may be provided in a pure form as flint, quartz or sand. Usually, however, silica is present in the other components and the addition of additional (extra ?) pure silica is only needed as a topping-up exercise.

Fluxes

Pure silica melts at 1710°C. It is necessary to reduce this otherwise the clay pot, not to mention the kiln, would melt first. Fluxes consist of compounds of various metallic elements, the commonest being sodium, potassium, calcium, boron, lead and zinc. It is rare for a single flux to be used, combinations usually provide enhanced performance.

Alumina

Alumina is a very refractory (high melting point) substance. Its presence decides how runny the molten glaze is. It is also one of the main constituents of clays and its addition to glazes allows their rate of expansion to match that of the underlying clay body. This avoids the cooling glaze not (not?) adhering to the pot due to differing expansion rates. When the expansion rates do match the glaze, it is said to 'fit' the pot.

Modifiers

These are a miscellaneous group of substances. The main ones are colouring agents. These, like fluxes, are compounds of other metallic elements, notably iron, copper, cobalt, manganese, nickel and chromium. In addition to colouring the glaze, many colourants also act as fluxes and their addition can affect the melting point of a glaze.

Additionally, other substances may be included to enhance the properties of the raw glaze and assist its application.

In the next issue, the glaze constituents will be examined in greater detail.



Tony Stevens

MEMBERSHIP NEWS

One of our long-term members is reluctantly leaving the Guild Shirley Woods-McConville has now completed arrangements to move North and feels that she will be out of the range of most Guild meetings, although she may return for our next Open Day. Shirley has been an active member and will be missed. Keep in touch Shirley.

Lesley Reeves, who organised our Open Day so well, has been forced to resign from the committee due to ill health. I am sure all members join our Chairman in thanking Lesley for the magnificent efforts she made on behalf of the Guild and in wishing her a speedy recovery.



BOOK REVIEW

"THROWING" Richard Phethean; Hardback, 92 pp. Batsford, 1993; £14.99

This is the latest volume in the series, *The Complete Potter* edited by Emmanuel Cooper. There have been previous publications on the subject, and the reader might tend to think "Why bring out another?"

The answers are several and simple. In a series which already has covered items such as "Raku" and "Decorated Earthenware", the basics of 'throwing' is an obvious topic; and in this handsomely produced volume every aspect of this craft is explained fully, both in text and illustration.

The author divided his work into four main categories: 1) preparation, 2) throwing, 3) turning and 4) detailing, and explains all these in nine full chapters.

He begins with equipment and materials, moving rapidly from the stone turntables in history to the modern electric wheel, and all the different tools needed at various stages of throwing.

An example of his consideration is shown by his comments on protective clothing, and the lists of 'starter' tools as well as those which can be made at home.

As with all practices, preparation is most important, and here he explains the various processes of clay wedging, kneading, centring and the initial work in throwing cylinders of all types and sizes. Accompanying the clear text are many pages of black-and-white photographs showing unobscured particulars for each process.

Anticipating problems for the beginner, any faults - and tips to prevent or cure them - are explained and shown as each process is intricately unveiled.

Not only do the black-and-white photographs and illustrations encourage the lone potter to understand each action, but also there are some two dozen attractively displayed coloured photographs of the work of some top modern potters. These pictures alone make this book a brilliant guide to the beautiful pottery of today.

There is a small bibliography and an adequate index. The wealth of this tome lies in the clear instructions given so that the individual student can learn to make some considerable headway on his/her own, augmenting the personal instructor. It is also a most useful book for the modeller, sculptor, handbuilder, etc. who wishes to take up or improve upon the craft of 'throwing'.



Stan Romer

PROFILE

I took up pottery six years ago. I was looking for a way to relax after the stresses and strains of a full time job as the Occupational Therapist in a busy Social Services department. Pottery evening classes at the local school seemed to fit the bill. I have always been interested in crafts, sewing and tapestry weaving in particular, but pottery seemed to offer something more. I enrolled for more advanced classes at Brunel University and it was only after contact with the excellent teachers there that pottery became an obsession.

Summer Schools, evening and weekend classes at Brunel gave me enough experience and confidence to begin to set up a small workshop at home, where I now have an electric kiln and wheel. I'm able to spend quite a lot of time there as I now only work part-time.

It was through Brunel that I was introduced to the Guild. I attended one of George Wilson's demonstrations just over a year ago and have been a Guild member since. I'm fascinated by all the different aspects of pottery and find the Guild's activities stimulating and informative. I'm torn between wanting to experiment with different techniques and the feeling that I ought to specialise in a particular area. At the moment, I make mostly thrown domestic stoneware and larger coiled garden pots, in stoneware and terracotta. There is certainly no chance of me getting bored with pottery - every firing is still just as exciting as the first.

Lesley Risby.



Lesley Risby - A committee member and our exhibition organiser, captured here in a tranquil moment, away from her pottery.



BLACK DOG POTTERY - AFLOAT

It was on the Grand Union Canal that I discovered a sign, on top of a narrow boat, only one word - "Pottery".

Bob Pepper has been potting on the canal for 2 years and seems to be enjoying what he does. He is absolutely "legit." since he has a licence from British Waterways Board to run his pottery and sell from his boat. Insuring the boat is another matter, premiums being high, since he has a propane fired kiln on board.

Bob constructed the 4.5 cubic feet kiln to his own design, with ceramic fibre, enclosed within a heavyweight Dexion framework. Materials were from A.P.G. Green, Isle of Dogs, London. The burners were from Aeromatic Barter on the North Circular Road, Edmonton. Bob recommended the burner suppliers very highly, since they designed the burners with considerable care.

Having been a pottery teacher for approximately 15 years, Bob is amused by not having sufficient qualifications to be accepted as a pottery student today. In 1980 Bob was teaching at Millfield House Arts Centre, Edmonton; in 1985 he purchased a shop in Silver Street and opened his "Black Dog" Pottery - named after his German Shepherd- Zec.



Bob with one of his jugs



The Showroom, with pots on display, visible from both sides of the boat



Pots on display, some traditional stoneware
& some humorous pieces to appeal to a wide audience

The Pottery with kiln, wheel, Zec & Bob.

A familiar story of rising business rates. consequent depression of the area and other difficulties finally rendered the pottery unviable. Bob already had experience with boats, so selling the shop and potting on board became a natural progression for him, with the added advantage of taking the boat straight to Valentines Wharf in Stoke to collect clay and materials.

He lives simply and can keep his head (and boat) above water with a small income. Space is limited, but not quite as much as you might think. If you see the Pottery sign on a canal, call in - Bob Pepper will be glad to see you.



Mervyn Fitzwilliam

SMALL ADVERTISEMENTS

WANTED: An electric kiln to operate from 30 Amp supply. Phone Rod Sandy on 0923 254024

WANTED, A large top loading electric kiln for earthenware. Needed by Tony Clark, so that production can be increased at Bedford Pottery. 12 to 15 Cubic feet desirable. phone 0234 854892

FOOTNOTE

George Wilson remembers reciting this poem at Sunday School, during his childhood:

Inspiration

A curve in the road and a hillside
Clear cut against the sky,
A tall tree tossed by the autumn wind
And a white cloud riding high.
Ten men went along this road
And all but one passed by -
He saw the road, the tree and the sky
And he put them down on canvas
For the other nine to buy.

DCPG COMMITTEE LIST

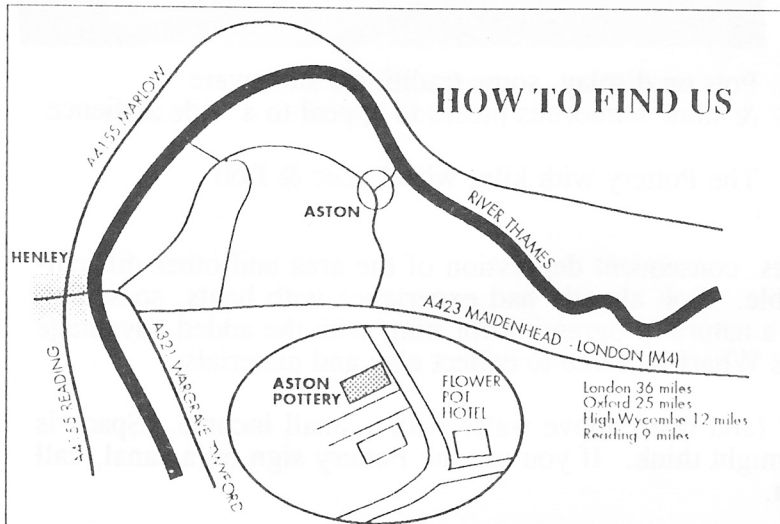
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Jack Doherty ^{SUMMER} WORKSHOPS

JULY 26th-31st AUGUST 2nd-7th 1993

Hook's Cottage, Lea Bailey, Ross-on-Wye, Herefordshire. HR9 5TY
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My summer workshops will offer a limited number of students an opportunity to develop their throwing skills, experiment with ways of altering thrown forms and an introduction to a fresh approach to decoration.

We will help to arrange your accommodation from the wide range available locally

The food will be home cooked and we will cater for both omnivores and vegetarians.



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28 June to 2 July
5 to 9 July
12 to 16 July
19 to 23 July
26 to 30 July
26 to 31 July

SCULPTURE

5 to 9 July

Basic Introduction to Pottery - *George Wilson*

Throwing - *Brian Dewbury*

Musical Earthenware - *Neil Ions*

Mouldmaking & Slipcasting - *David Cowley*

Surface Pattern & Decorative Techniques - *Paula Gray*

Understanding Glazes & Materials - *Harry Horlock-Stringer*

Terracotta Modelling from Life - *Jo Miller*

SPECIALIST WEEKEND WORKSHOPS

May to June 1993

CERAMICS

9 & 16 May

22/23 May

5/6 June

SCULPTURE

15/16 May

Raku - *Harry Horlock-Stringer*

Garden Pottery - *George Wilson*

Throwing Assemblage - *Brian Dewbury*

Terracotta Modelling from Life - *Jo Miller*

Further details from:

The Arts Centre, Brunel University, Uxbridge, Middx. UB8 3PH

Tel : 0895-273482 (or 0895-274000 extn 2053).

Nearest tube station : Uxbridge (Metropolitan & Picadilly lines)

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