



DACORUM AND
CHILTERN
POTTERS GUILD



NEWSLETTER

MARCH

1994

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March 9th 1994

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David Pitcher. Tel: 0923-255533

FRONT PAGE PHOTOGRAPH: A nest of three lettered bowls, by Deborah Hopson Wolpe.

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ABOUT THE GUILD & THE NEWSLETTER

Membership of the Guild is open to anyone having an interest in pottery and offers the members many opportunities each year to see the top potters demonstrating their skills. In addition, an annual Open Day is held with demonstrations. A members' pottery exhibition, visits and 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 0DJ. The Dacorum & Chilterns 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. 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. Closing date for items to go in the May issue is April 6th. Please mention DCPG when replying to advertisements in the Newsletter.

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ADVERTISEMENTS

Advertising space is available for future issues; please refer to the back pages of the Newsletter.

EDITORIAL.

Referring to the Letters Section, you will see that 1994 is our unofficial 20th birthday, 1995 our unofficial 21st birthday, with 1996 seeming to be our official 21st birthday, so hold on for those celebrations & the souvenir Newsletter !

Your committee continues to give dedicated attention to Open Day, Workshops & other matters. At the committee meeting on 4th February it was agreed, following suggestions from some members, that we would distribute the Newsletter for sale through any appropriate outlets, hence the price on the front cover. If you can help with distribution, or if you have any suggestions on this or any other Guild activity, please do take the opportunity to discuss such matters with any member of the committee.

Mervyn Fitzwilliam

LETTERS.

Dear Alan,

I am enclosing an update from Project Ploughshare on progress at the women's pottery project at Gondar in Ethiopia. I feel sure that your members would like to be kept informed of how things are coming along as it was their generosity and effort that was in part responsible for what has been achieved so far. I would be very grateful if you could publish the enclosed in your next newsletter along with my sincere thanks.

Should anyone also wish to contribute to the project then cheques should be made payable to Project Ploughshare and sent to me at: MARSTON POTTERY, LOWER CEFN FAES, RHAYADER, POWYS, LD6 5LT.

With best wishes for 1994,

Phil Rogers
8th January 1994

GONDAR POTTERY PROJECT.

This is a brief report on the progress of the Gondar Pottery Project during 1993 and is also a way for us to say thank you to all who have contributed time and money to make the project a reality.

Although some preliminary work had been done last year, the Gondar Pottery really got off the ground in 1993. The project was conceived as a response to the needs of women who for one reason or another had been reduced to supporting their children by prostitution or begging. The city of Gondar in Northern Ethiopia had once been a centre for craft pottery, but the emigration of the area's Jewish community to Israel destroyed the tradition.

Phil and Lynne Rogers and Peter Beard, craft potters from Britain, went to Gondar in February 1993 and produced a feasibility study - and, at the same time, formal permission for the project to go ahead was given by local government authorities. The first trainees were recruited in June and have been instructed in indigenous pottery making by a local craft teacher. A building has been rented in Gondar City, and meanwhile construction and reconstruction at the traditional pottery village of Wolleka was put in hand in August. The building work is scheduled for completion in January 1994.

The women trainees have just now reached the stage of being able to produce marketable pottery of traditional design and firing. They have been much encouraged by making actual sales in the local market. During November a graduate instructor from Addis Ababa visited, and gave a course in throwing and the use of the pottery wheel.

Fund raising for the project has been a real challenge in a difficult year for the British economy. We have received a number of very generous donations, but we have also experienced disappointments in applications to major charities, who are all short of cash!

But we go on and will eventually reach our target! We are most grateful for the help received this year from so many people. Thank you, all of you.

Charles Sherlock - Director
Project Ploughshare.

MEMBERSHIP NEWS

We welcome the following new members to the Guild:

Chris Spellen, Tracie Heffernan & Jan Parrott. Jan joined us through our Workshops; she & her husband Alan are both involved actively in a very well-known business of Beekeeping at 5 Hamilton Rd., Hunton Bridge, Herts. (Perhaps Alan is hoping that Jan will follow the example of Russell Collins, the potter who founded his business on the production of honey-pots? - Ed.) Tracie has joined us following an introduction to our Workshops & is now thoroughly hooked on sculpture.

Obituary: We are sorry to report the sad death of Martin Silber who had been a Guild member for many years.

Dear Mervyn,

I have prepared a rough copy regarding the history of the Newsletter. It would seem that I was mistaken as regards to 21 years. The Guild started some time in 1974 and the first Newsletter(?) or communication was sent to a few people at the end of that year, with a much larger circulated letter in January 1975. This latter letter stated that the Guild had been formed but there needed a meeting to inaugurate it. Possibly you could check with Murray about this.

So we have plenty of time to prepare for 21 years! As well as the general history of the Newsletter, I can write about some of the more important functions which have taken place over the years. This in itself will take some time - of which there is plenty.

Stan Romer

Dear Mervyn,

Stan has a better memory than me. Yes I suppose we did informally start the Guild some time before the Inaugural Meeting, but it had no official status until the Inaugural Meeting 31st January 1975, so it is 21 in 1996.

That is unless Ray Phipps has the date of the day he called in for a drink after a day's hard work at Electrolux, when I said to him "I am fed up with those bloody people who are supposed to be providing proper pottery education around here. I am going to start a potters Guild to shame them. You are the Chairman, I am the Secretary and Tony Plessner is the Treasurer". They did not protest, so the Guild was formed!

I think the first thing we did was have a Raku firing. Someone's husband who was not a potter stoked the kiln and next day had to seek medical treatment for burnt knees. Another husband was sent by his wife into the wood to collect fuel; he bumped into a girl in the dark and later left his wife for her. A goat clambered up on top of a brand new Jag to get a better view of the firing and browse on some otherwise unreachable verdure. To pacify the owner we put her pots in the next re-charging. Of course we destroyed as many pots as we could in the firing because communal adversity was required to create a bond of membership in the Guild.

Murray Fieldhouse

FUTURE GUILD EVENTS.

Friday 11th March, 8 p.m. at Northchurch Social Centre.

Jane Perryman who slips, burnishes and smokes her hand-built vessels, will be demonstrating and discussing her work.

Friday 15th April, 8 p.m. at Northchurch Social Centre.

Audrey Richardson will demonstrate the various stages in the production of her hand-built stoneware pieces.

Friday 13th May, 8 p.m. at Northchurch Social Centre.

Jane Waller uses the *Millefiore* technique with coloured clays and moulds to construct her earthenware pots. She will demonstrate and discuss the intricacies of the methods she has developed.

Saturday 2nd July, POTTERS OPEN DAY.

Please note that the date has been brought forward by two weeks. The original date clashed with Art in Action, in which a number of our members are actively involved, and many others would also be planning to visit.

Saturday 9th April, WORKSHOP: TEAPOTS (WHEEL & SLAB) WITH DOUG JONES & BRIAN BICKNELL.

The venue will be at the Rudolf Steiner School, Langley Hill, Kings Langley, Herts., with a start at 10.00 a.m. So as to give variety of subject & to attract a wider range of members, we are making teapots.

As we have six wheels & some members will not want to use the wheels, we are dividing the members into two sections for convenience. Doug Jones will demonstrate making teapots on the wheel & I will be demonstrating the same by slab building & possibly press moulds. It is up to you which section you join & you can interchange should you wish.

Please bring your own tools if possible, food if you wish, with cup, knife, fork, etc. If you want a pub lunch, there is the Palace Public House across the road.

Please indicate which option you wish to take up as Mervyn will supplement the wheels with two of his own, if required. Cost will be £15. for members & £18. for visitors. Send your cheque payable to Dacorum & Chiltern Potters Guild direct to me (see Committee List for address)

Brian Bicknell

Saturday 23rd April. The second Gazette & Express Leisure & Hobbies Show is to be held at Dacorum Pavilion - the Guild will have a stand intended to attract more people to join us. Anyone willing to help 'man' the stand should contact Linda Bryant, 0442 233521 - the more the merrier!

WORKSHOP/PRACTICE OPPORTUNITY.

Doug Jones has approached the Rudolf Steiner School on our behalf, regarding the possibility of using the studio for Guild members to practice pottery at their own pace during weekends. This means that about 12 to 14 Guild members could arrange their own pottery sessions or workshops at a very nominal cost indeed. Please contact Doug Jones, in the first instance, if you are interested. Phone 0923 770913.

OTHER EVENTS

17th-25th September. Hertfordshire Artists Open Studio Week

This is the 4th Open Studio Week organised by Herts. Visual Arts Forum & is open to all artists living or working in Hertfordshire. Applications need to be in by 15th April '94, For more information, please phone 0442 - 864400

"CERAMICS & POTTERY PLUS" Exhibition at Pipers Corner School, Great Kingshill, nr. High Wycombe, Bucks., Sat.16th & Sun.17th April (possibly until Thurs). Phone Jenny Templeton for more details - 0494 727243

EQUINOX OPEN DAY; Doug Jones - Open day to celebrate the arrival of Spring, on Sunday 20th March, 10 a.m. until last person leaves. Tea/coffee free, bring own food, wine. Riverside Cottage, 114 Norfolk Rd., Rickmansworth. 0923 770913

Slide show and talk by Deborah Hopson Wolpe (10th Dec.'93)

Deborah has many more uses for her credit card than the issuers ever dreamt of! I feel sure that all of us who watched her demonstration picked up some useful hints about decorating pots with these flexible friends.

Deborah had been introduced to the potter's wheel as a child at her grandparents' house and has obviously never looked back since. She took us through a fascinating slide show covering the wide range of pottery she has produced over the years. There were many influences on her work. A major one was the five years she spent in Japan, where she had eventually set up her own studio. She had also got inspiration for decorating her ware from mediæval, Anglo-Saxon, Roman and Romano-British pots, and she showed us slides of an impressive range of pots she had made using these ideas. For example, some had protruding ribs either thrown or pushed out from inside, others had stamped medallion type decoration. Some of her decoration featuring natural forms such as flowers or fish and crabs was particularly attractive. She had used paper resist patterns for these forms and then applied coloured slips over them on wet clay.



Photography by William Shaw

Deborah set up her pottery in Olney in 1975 at her house, which had originally been built as a shoe factory. Her father was a lettering designer who had produced designs for printers' types. She uses printers' type to impress letters, and thus appropriate wording, on a range of bowls and plates which are often used for presentations to commemorate a particular event. When she glazes these pots she generally applies the glaze over the wording and then cleans the glaze back to the natural biscuit fired clay surface in a band containing the indented script, so that the glaze in that band only remains in the impressed letters.

In her demonstration, Deborah showed us how she applied wet paper resist patterns, cut from a low grade paper, to the wet clay which she then covered with stiff coloured slips, using a sponge. She also used a sponge to apply slips in a repetitive pattern on some of her work. She showed us how she made different geometric designs on pots by applying a design on to a pot with the edge of a credit card, sometimes to produce an impressed design, sometimes with the edge curved to fit the curve of the pot, and sometimes with slip along the edge of the card, applying what we learned is called a *barbotine design* on to the surface of the pot.

Other techniques she used included scoring stoneware pots with a hacksaw blade and subsequently decorating them only with oxides and porcelain slips.

We are indebted to Deborah for a fascinating and enjoyable evening. We all learned something. Her enthusiasm for the unorthodox use of a credit card or flexible membership card does her credit. As Deborah told us, she would never go anywhere without her A.A. card.

John Beckley

YOU CAN ADVERTISE YOUR "AT HOME" SALE, THE CRAFT FAIR, YOUR EXHIBITION, POTTERY MATERIALS, YOUR SHOP, etc. to our 145 (& growing) membership, their families & friends & other craft groups. USE THIS NEWSLETTER, phone Tony Stevens - 0442 863146.

A DEMONSTRATION BY ANTHONY PHILLIPS

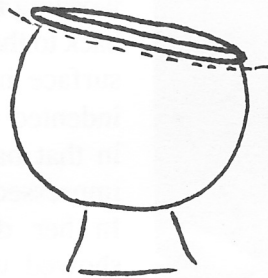
Anthony Phillips came to pottery in his thirties after studying engineering and computer science. Whilst at Harrow School of Art, he explored many different techniques of making and decorating, including working with coloured clays rolled on white earthenware and with white slip stained with body and glaze stains. He set up his first workshop in 1981.

Most of Anthony's work is thrown and slip-decorated table-ware made in either terra-cotta or white earthenware (both from Potteryworks). He spent some time showing us all the "tricks" he employs to give his pots the characteristic appearance with tilted galleries, long beak-like spouts, high foot rings and very long handles. I shall try to explain some of them with the help of diagrams.

tilted gallery of teapot thrown

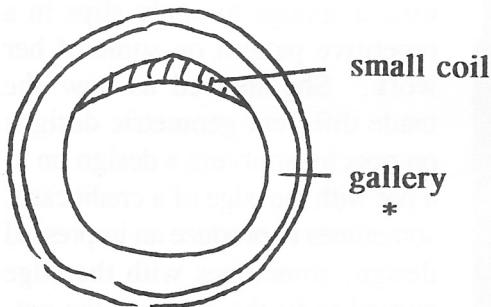
separately, cut and put on when

leather hard by scoring & slipping



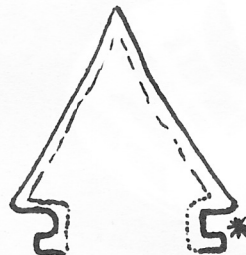
Top view of teapot

Lid



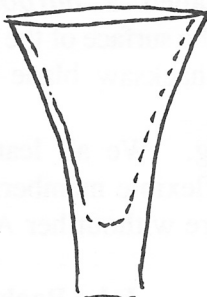
small coil

gallery *



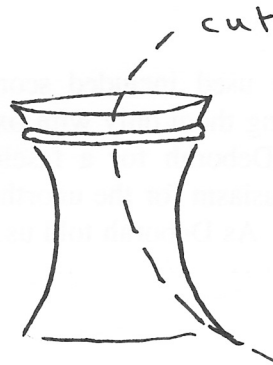
lid has groove *
which fits into
ridge made by
adding small coil
to gallery

Foot ring



thrown upside-
down with the
shaft left solid

Spout

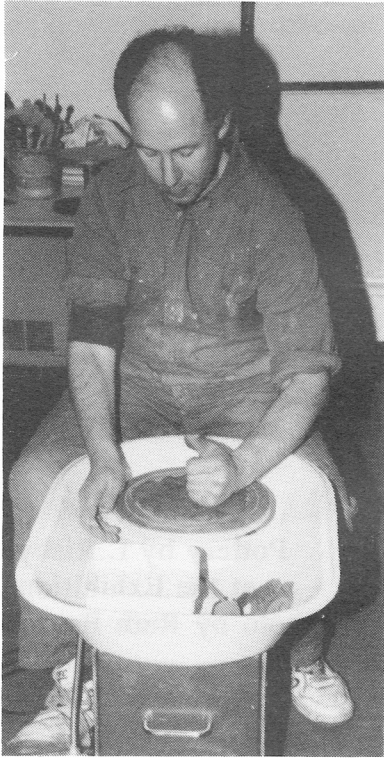


thrown upside-
down with ridge
and cut leather
hard

Rim



rims for jugs are extruded with
a 90° angle cut-out as
part of the extrusion, allowing
snug fitting over the top
of the pot.



**Anthony prepares the
clay on the wheel head**



**Some of
Anthony's work**

Photographs by Elaine Hudson

Anthony surforms all the edges to tidy them up. Long handles are all extruded. Joins are finished off with a delightful sprig made from pressing clay into a piece of plaster carved with a scallop shell pattern.

Until recently, he decorated his work by dipping it in coloured slip, letting it dry a little and then trailing more slip on the surface. The state of the first slip layer is crucial - too wet and the trailed slip runs, too dry and it cracks off. When dipping pots in slip, he first waxes the bases by dipping them in ¼"-deep hot wax so that the shell pattern on the base is not damaged. After dipping in slips, he has to blow dry the pots so that they don't collapse and the handles have to be propped up. More recently, he has started applying layers of slip with cut sponges, gradually building up the depth of pattern which he likes. He finishes the pot off with a few deft marks with trailed slip. Anthony often uses the same colour of slips at different strengths. He uses both commercial colours and oxides for his slips. Just a few are listed below:

Dark green slip contained 4% chrome and 2% cobalt oxide

Yellow slip contained 2½% egg yellow and 2½% canary yellow

Cherry red slip was bought ready mixed from Reward Clayglaze.

Anthony fires his terra-cotta to 1000° C. biscuit and his white earthenware to 1110° C. biscuit so that it is strong and the glaze doesn't craze. He glaze fires at 1110° C. in an oxidising electric kiln with a transparent glaze containing lead bisilicate, borax frit, china clay, flint and bentonite. The recipe is in the CPA handbook (not in mine - it must be an old edition).

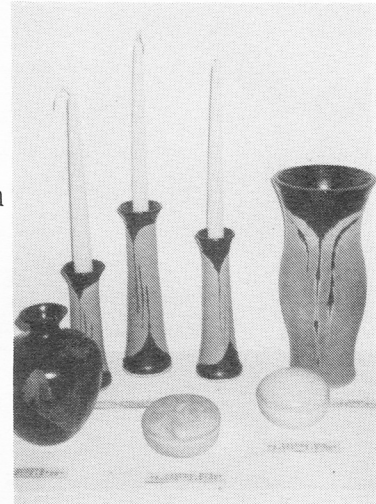
It proved to be a most enjoyable evening in the company of a highly skilled craftsman who was extremely generous in sharing his expertise with us.

Elaine Hudson.

GUILD EXHIBITION AT WATFORD MUSEUM - DEC. '93-JAN. '94

I would like to thank all those who contributed pots for this exhibition and I am pleased to say that there was a very varied collection of styles. I would particularly like to thank the professional potters for their support. Sales were steady but disappointingly low, though great interest was shown by those who managed to find the museum and saw the work. Unfortunately for us, the room in which the exhibition was held was badly in need of re-decoration and was not easily accessible from the street, so a better venue would certainly have helped.

A great many invitations to the private view were sent out, but the response from our membership, as well as from those invited by the museum, was poor. The museum curator, who arranged the display, considered it a success.



**Pottery by L. Risby
at the Exhibition
Photo by Ruth Brown**

GUILD EXHIBITION 1994

Now is the time to be thinking about this year's Guild exhibition. It is being held in late November for a fortnight at the Cow Byre, Ruislip.

The Cow Byre is the best venue for selling for miles around; there is a teasop next door, an art shop not far away and activities usually going on around the whole complex. Consequently a gratifyingly large number of visitors can be expected. Choosing the pre-Christmas period, we hope to maximise sales for those who wish to sell their pots.

However, it would be nice to make this the year when the Guild showed a pot for every member who makes them. Please start now & we shall have a truly fabulous show in November.

Marguerite Moon

PROFILE - Wendy Fowler



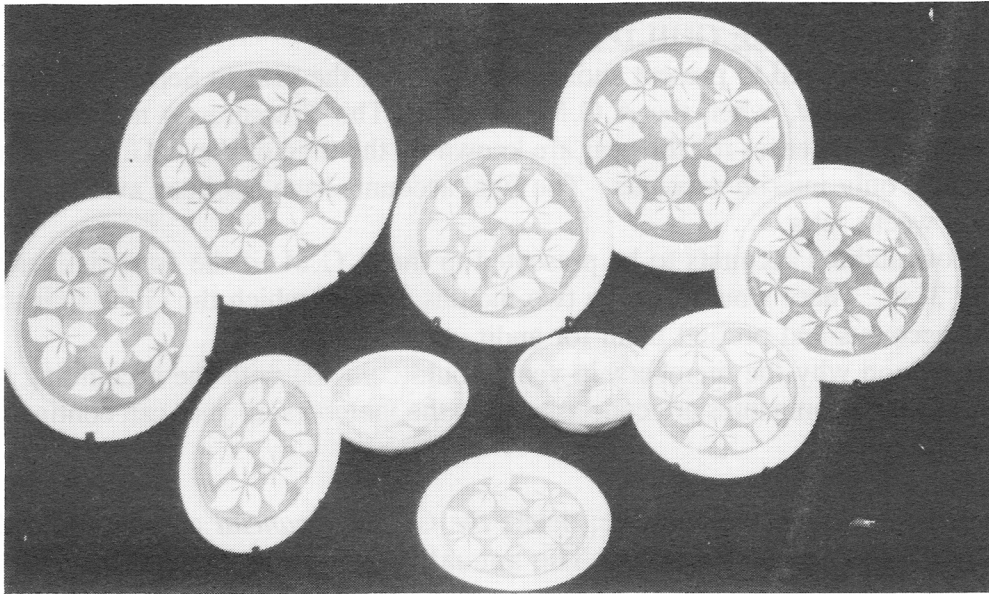
I started pottery about 15 years ago in an evening class with Christine Bull in High Wycombe. I soon realised how much I enjoyed working with clay - mostly fascinated by the wheel. I bought a kick-wheel and practiced in my garage at home but, as often happens, I began to produce too many pots to have fired at evening class. I then bought a top-loading Duncan kiln which I have been using ever since.

After moving house, we had room in the garden to build a purpose-built workshop; this has all the facilities - hot water, shelving and plenty of space for all the glazes and raw materials that you seem to collect. What a joy it is to be able to walk out and close the door on it all after spending a day making pots or glazing!

I now teach 12 adults a week in two classes and 8 children on a Saturday morning. I also work one day a week at Haleacre, Amersham Hospital in the psychiatric unit, teaching pottery for Occupational Therapy.

At the moment, I am on the Studio Potters course with John Lomas which I am enjoying - it is good to work with other potters. I mainly make functional pots such as vases, jugs, bowls, plates goblets, candlesticks and oil burners and fire them in my gas or electric kilns. I use a turquoise glaze or a white glaze sponged with colours. I sell to several local shops and take part in exhibitions locally. I am hoping to have my workshop open this year for Bucks. Art Week.

I love making pots and could not imagine life without mucky hands!



Plates & dishes by Wendy Fowler, decoration using resist techniques

The Last Potters; Open Day ?

Members with long memories have said that last year's Potters' Open Day was one of the best ever. But it was nearly a financial disaster. Members, excluding those on the Committee, bought 63 tickets, five fewer than in 1992. Non-members bought only 48 tickets, 14 fewer than in 1992. This was a disappointing outcome, the more so because such excellent demonstrators had been booked.

If costs run as in previous years, the POD would have lost over £350. But the Secretary had negotiated a reduction of £40 in the charge for hiring the rooms. Committee members collected and returned the screen, saving £30. The biggest saving of all, though, came from having members who volunteered to miss much of the POD in order to provide at cost and serve the refreshments, the bill for which was only £840, against £1280 in 1992. The result was a surplus, excluding the raffle, of £141, a little more than in 1992.

A member complained that there were not enough raffle prizes. Certainly, there were not as many as in previous years. There is a good explanation for that. Most people still buy a strip of 5 tickets for £1, as they did several years ago. But the cost of prizes has been rising (no, they are not all donated). So the number of prizes on offer was reduced and the demonstrators were asked to provide modestly priced pots. These measures were spot on. The raffle made £79, only £4 less than in 1992, despite the fall in attendance.

The main problem for financial planning for the POD is that the costs are fixed. Room, three demonstrators, insurance and equipment hire come to about £1000. Then add the cost of catering; professional caterers have quoted for a minimum of 129 lunches. At £8.50 a head, that is a fixed cost of £1020. At last year's ticket prices, that means 112 tickets must be sold just to break even. In 1993 things turned out well enough in the end. But, with three weeks to go to the event, it looked as if we would be lucky to sell 80 tickets. Even though the cost of refreshments had been reduced, a massive loss seemed inevitable.

To make a small loss on the POD is tolerable for one year. In the longer run, though, the event must at least pay its way, unless the membership subscription is raised to subsidise it. In planning this year's POD the Committee has assumed that attendance will show a further fall and that costs, especially for lunch and refreshments, must be kept at or below their 1993 level. But it intends, while making some changes, to maintain the attraction of the event: top quality demonstrators in a pleasant ambience. If the 1994 event does not work financially, the future of the POD, certainly in its present form, will be in doubt.

AMENDMENTS TO THE GUILD CONSTITUTION

The Treasurer is required to present audited accounts for the year to September 30th by the first Friday in October, when the A.G.M. is held. The Treasurer is not able to do so, because not all the expenses for the year are known by the time of the A.G.M. He has been able to produce only interim accounts. The final accounts have not been available for audit until several weeks later.

It would allow audited accounts to be presented to the A.G.M. if the financial year was to end on July 31st. There would then be two months, during which the Guild is inactive, to prepare the accounts and present them for audit.

There is no reason why the membership year should coincide with the accounting year - it never does as far as companies are concerned. So the membership year can continue to start on October 1st.

The changes:

Clause 4, first paragraph, second line: delete *the Guild's financial* and substitute *October each*. [The sentence would then read: **The annual subscription shall be payable on the first day of October each year**].

Clause 4, second paragraph: delete ALL. [The second paragraph at present reads: *The financial year of the Guild shall commence on 1 October in each year*].

Clause 7, first paragraph, item (a): in the second line (i) add after *accounts*, **for the twelve months (in 1994 10 months)** and (ii) delete *year* at the end and substitute **July**. [The item would then read: **To receive and, if approved, to adopt a statement of the Guild's accounts for the 12 months (in 1994, 10 months) to the end of the preceeding July**].

Victor Earl

GLAZES - Part 5.

So far, only the theoretical aspects of glazes have been considered. In this issue of the Newsletter a practical glaze is examined to show the part that individual constituents take in the overall formula.

The glaze is a stoneware clear glaze (it is a modified version of glaze #152 from Cooper's "Book of Glaze Recipes" 1987 edition). It is my favourite clear stoneware glaze, that I fire to 1230°C., although it matures over the range 1200-1260.

The formula I use is as follows:-

Nepheline Syenite	R1016	1500 gms.
Whiting	R1012	750 gms.
Talc	R1068	250 gms.
Zinc Oxide	R1023	250 gms.
Ball Clay (Hexafil)	R1076	500 gms.
Quartz	R1018	1750 gms.
Dextrin		50 gms.
CMC		25 gms.
Water		125 Fluid ozs.

This differs from the original in that I have substituted, weight for weight, Flint for Quartz. Chemically, they are virtually the same - Silica; Flint, though, is more hazardous. It is a finer powder and can cause silicosis. Consequently, it is supplied damp to reduce dust hazards which, in turn, makes mixing more difficult. I have also added Dextrin and Carboxy Methyl Cellulose (CMC) for the reasons previously given.

The function of the first four ingredients is mainly to supply the fluxing agents. Nepheline Syenite is a mineral containing high proportions of Sodium and Potassium, both powerful fluxes. It also contains, in common with nearly all rocks, a considerable quantity of Silica and Alumina, the other two components needed in a glaze! Whiting, or Chalk, is a very pure form of Calcium which, in addition to being a strong high-temperature flux, produces a much

harder acid-resistant surface to the glaze. It also reduces the tendency for the glaze to craze on cooling, which it would do if Sodium and Potassium were the sole fluxing agents. The Zinc Oxide imparts very similar benefits to the Whiting, and additionally heightens the brilliance of the colours produced by Copper and Cobalt. The action of Talc in a glaze is dependent on the temperature. At low temperatures it has little effect, but above 1170°C. it is very active, forming a very runny glaze. Providing it is controlled, this tendency can produce a very attractive shine to the glaze. With higher proportions of Talc, a 'Buttery' surface develops. Like the previous ingredients, it reduces any tendency to craze.

The above four ingredients provide a well-balanced 'cocktail' of fluxes together with additional Alumina and Silica. The Ball Clay 'tops up' the amount of Alumina, and the Quartz does the same for the Silica. So the three required ingredients of a glaze, Flux, Alumina and Silica are all provided in the correct proportions to produce a well-balanced glaze.

The 'R' numbers after the ingredients are the Reward-Clayglaze catalogue numbers. This does not mean that other suppliers' products are not equally as good, but anything dug up out of the ground can vary from one site to another. Ingredients from other suppliers may work equally well, but they may not! Always remember this when copying someone else's formula.

MIXING THE GLAZE

I have given the weights of dry ingredients in grams, while the water is in fluid ounces. This is purely for my convenience, I have metric scales, but Imperial fluid measures. If you want to remember 3537 ml. instead of 125 fl.ozs. - good luck!

It is often thought that sieving is only to remove large particles from the glaze. This is so, nothing is more infuriating than to find unmelted specks on the glazed surface, but if this was the only reason a single sieving would be all that is needed. However, it serves the important rôle of thoroughly mixing the components.

If you buy a ready-mixed glaze, it should have been very well sieved already, but although each particle will be very small, some will be much smaller than others, e.g. talc, and on storage will tend to separate out. Very careful mixing is essential, especially if only part of a batch is being made up.

When making up a formula, there is the additional problem that the raw ingredients will have a proportion of larger particles amongst them. I leave a final sieving through an 80-100 mesh sieve until all the mineral contents have been completely incorporated.

I sieve the individual minerals in turn, using a standard 8" kitchen sieve. The Dextrin and CMC are ignored at this stage. Next, the whole mass is stirred and re-sieved several times until completely mixed. Any larger particles retained by the sieve should be set aside. **DO NOT ATTEMPT TO FORCE THEM THROUGH THE MESH.** All of these larger elements should be ground in a pestle and mortar and be re-sieved. Any then remaining should be discarded.

The final dry sieving through a fine mesh is followed by the addition of the Dextrin and CMC. The reason for this is that the CMC is granular and would not pass through a fine mesh if added previously.

Most books advocate gradually adding the dry mixture to an excess of water then, after standing, decanting the unwanted water. The addition of the CMC produces a thick creamy glaze that does not separate out. Also the amount of water required in a normal glaze depends on the amount of clay present so will vary from glaze to glaze. With the addition of CMC the water content is far less dependent on the basic formula. As a result of all this, I find it far easier to add the correct quantity of water to the dry components.

Since the CMC does not immediately dissolve, I let the glaze stand for 24 hours before the final, wet, sieving. Once any bubbles formed have risen and disappeared, the glaze is ready for use.

Tony Stevens

BOOK REVIEWS

TIN-GLAZED EARTHENWARE: from Maiolica, Faience & Delftware to the Contemporary

Daphne Carnegie. A. & C. Black. 1993. Hardback. 176pp. £19.99

There is something about tin-glazed decoration that has a great appeal to many people. Possibly it is the 'Turner' effect of painting upon the whiteness of the background. But certainly the bright multifariousness of the painted designs on the plates, bowls, dishes, jars and vases produced in many countries for hundreds of years have enamoured masses of people around much of the world to this specific craft.

Daphne Carnegie has studied and worked with tin-glazed earthenware for several years and has compiled her knowledge of the craft into her interesting and enlightening book.

The introduction gets straight to the point: what is tin-glazed earthenware? After reading merely the first paragraph, one learns precisely the answer. The origins, the styles and the different nomenclatures given to the decoration, and the successful aesthetic appeal are all explained in the same clear style.

After this engaging and descriptive preamble, the reader will find that the following sections of the book are written in similar lucid manner. Each aspect of the subject is broached in turn. There are three sections. The first starts with the history. We start with the Islamic love of colour and pattern; and with the spread of Islam the style travelled too, across north Africa, Spain, Italy and then eastwards. In the following years the whole of European pottery was permeated with wares based upon this decorative style, which lasted well into the 18th century. But during the last 200 years "New Visions" have been aroused, it is explained, and these have been brought forth by the modern potters of today.

The text and illustrations throughout the book, many of these photographs printed in colour, ably show the delightful manufactures and their traditional decorations.

Section II is apportioned to the materials and techniques of the craft, and is based upon the legacy of Piccolpasso, 'The Three Books of the Potter's Art'. Whilst modern factories produce ready-made materials, the author rightly expresses the need for the potter to know what substance causes what result, and she explains quite fully the uses of all the materials which affect the final outcome of the wares.

Every action of decoration is detailed. The shapes and sizes of brushes; the intimate intricacies of the painting technique; wax resist; the mixing of glazes; the use of slips and on-glaze enamels; all are expounded and illustrated. And if one should meet up with difficulties, these problems have their solutions ready to hand. Toxicity is appraised in some detail.

Section III is called 'Contemporary Perspective', and heralds the "New Look" in English studio pottery, illustrating particularly the work of William Newland and Margaret Hind. The bold, clear painting of Alan Caiger-Smith is well exemplified, as also is that of the American potter, Andrea Gill. Many other potters including the author have samples of their work aptly described and attractively illustrated.

There is plenty of technical information: clay, glaze, pigment recipes; empirical and molecular formulas are detailed; firing temperatures with Orton cone references are all tabulated. Particular attention has been paid to the effect of the various colouring oxides, valuable information for the student decorator. A colour chart is shown, to be read in conjunction with a 'mixtures table'.

It is commendable to record that the small 'd' for English delftware is used in the book - and the capital 'D' for Dutch Delftware. Such great care has been taken in the production of this book that it seems rather a pity that there appear to be some minor questionable terms, one photograph has been left uncaptioned, and one photograph has been captioned 'left' when it should be 'right'. Guadix is mentioned in one picture caption but there is no text explaining that this is a Spanish town near Granada, still making some 'folk' earthenware. Also, I believe, the conventional modern spelling of 'feldspar' should not omit the letter 'd', and 'bisque' is often used in parts of the book to refer to 'earthenware biscuit'. 'Bisque' is customarily used by most potters generally to mean 'porcelain or higher-fired biscuit' and also I do not think this word should be used as a verb. However, these minor details do not detract value from this excellent publication.

With a list of UK & USA suppliers, and Museums around the world where tin-glazed collections may be seen, a good bibliography, a map of Europe showing historical centres of tin-glazed earthenware, and an index enabling the reader to pin-point any relevant subject, this volume is an extremely useful and fascinating addition to any potter's (and collector's) library.

At the bottom of the book's dust jacket at the front fold is printed - " 'Tin-glazed Earthenware' has been designed as an introduction and practical handbook to the subject. It is also intended as an inspiration for other potters & a source of delight for all those interested in ceramics".

This is just what impressed me !

Stan Romer

"Modelling in Clay - and other materials" Dorothy Arthur. A. & C.Black. 1994
Paperback. 128 pp. £14.99

In picking up this book, one can feel associated immediately with the subject. It is a well-produced publication with many black & white illustrative photographs & line drawings, & the beholder will thumb through these pages with considerable expectation.

The introduction announces in its earliest lines: "Modelling from life is really not as difficult as many might think & the interest & the pleasure that can be obtained, even with a first attempt, can enthral a sculptor for life". The author states clearly that her aim "... is to provide the student with a step-by-step guide..." & this aim has obviously been reached.

There are four main sections: Modelling in Clay; Modelling in Terracotta; Other materials for casting & moulding; & recipes, with further examples of her work, a list of suppliers & an index.

A word or two of explanation may be needed here to differentiate between the first two sections. Modelling in clay details making the armature, the core, finishing the form, making plaster moulds & casting from these moulds, with final finishing & mock bronzing of the cast. There are three examples each very carefully expounded & illustrated throughout. Modelling in terracotta illustrates the making of a model using red (iron oxide) clay admixture around a paper core held on an armature which are both removed from the whole clay figure to be kiln-fired. There are also three examples of this fully described. A red mixture clay can give a much warmer surface texture than buff clay, & terracotta (baked earth) generally is considered to be a reddish or tan colour.

Other materials are designated for similar use as for clay modelling. These materials are Ciment fondu (trade name), glass fibre (called by the trade name, Fibreglass), silicones & vinyls. These latter may be melted by gentle heat, but there are also some materials known as RTV (room temperature vulcanising) which aptly describes their usage.

Included on the later pages of the book are several interesting photographs of other work by the author which clearly show her high degree of artistry. Any student who finds the present cost of art classes prohibitive would do well to study this book to achieve some good results.

Stan Romer

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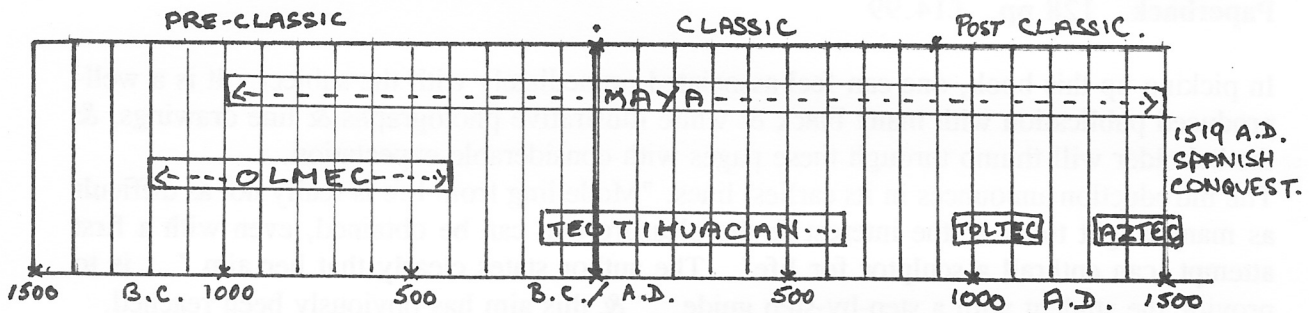
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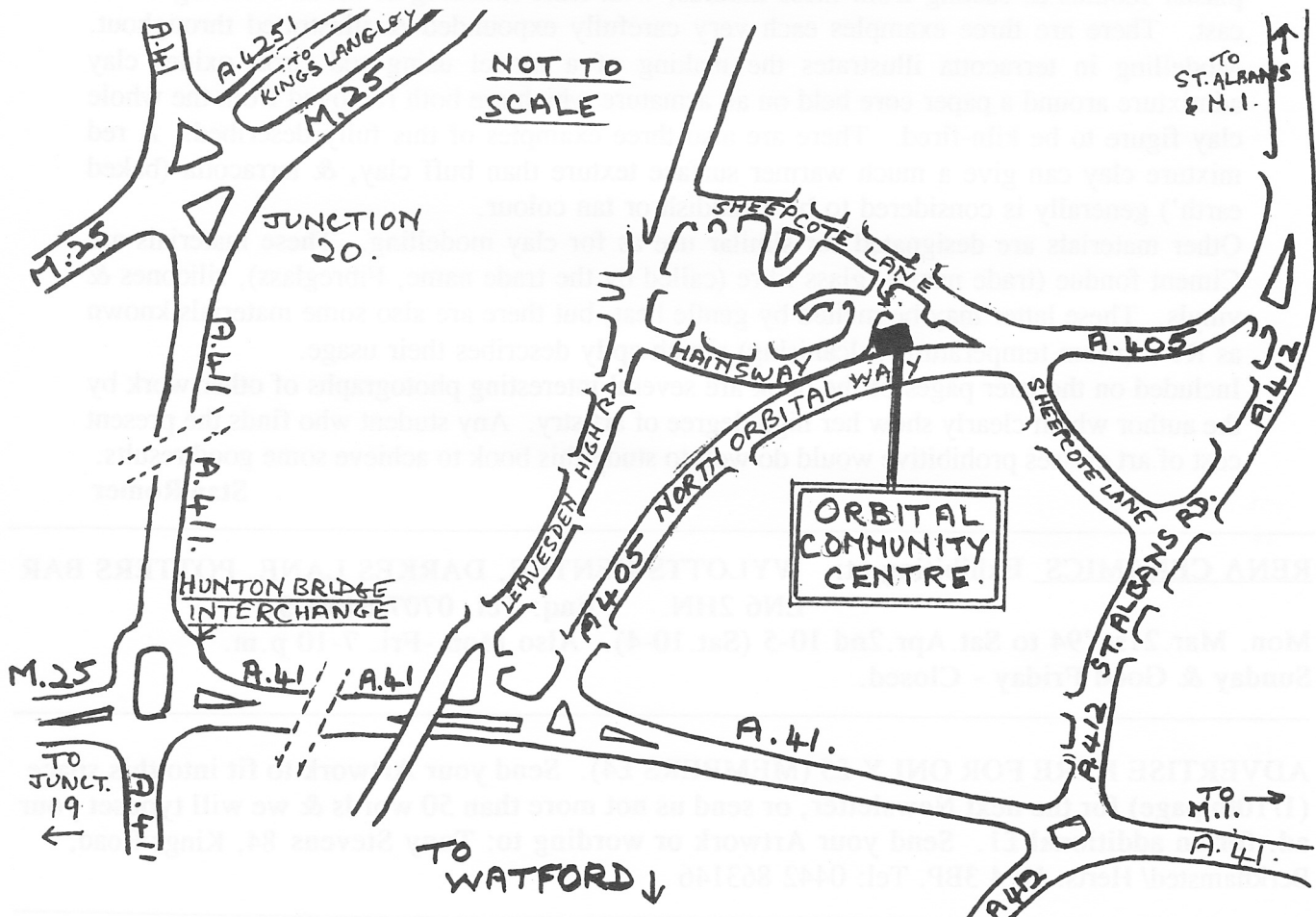
SOUTH AMERICAN POTTERY - A POST-SCRIPT

Diligent readers of the last Newsletter may have noticed that it was stated that the Olmec culture mysteriously appeared in Mexico about 1000 B.C. - & then disappeared about 2000 B.C. Clever stuff! I'm afraid that both my original statement of dates and my subsequent proof-reading were somewhat careless. However, all is not lost. The doctor's waiting-room provided me with a *National Geographical* Magazine in which I found a much simplified time chart which I now present you with. God bless America and the N.G. Magazine.

Ruth Karnac



This map shows the Orbital Community Centre which we would like to try out with a view to future use. It is booked for the June 10th event.



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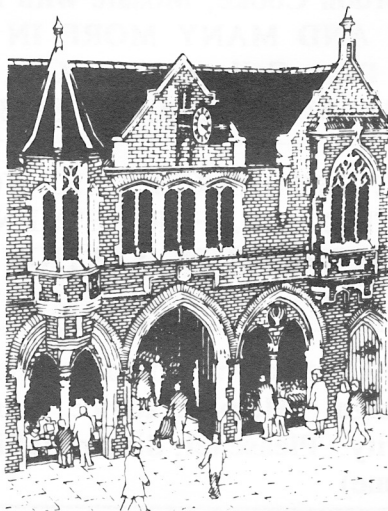
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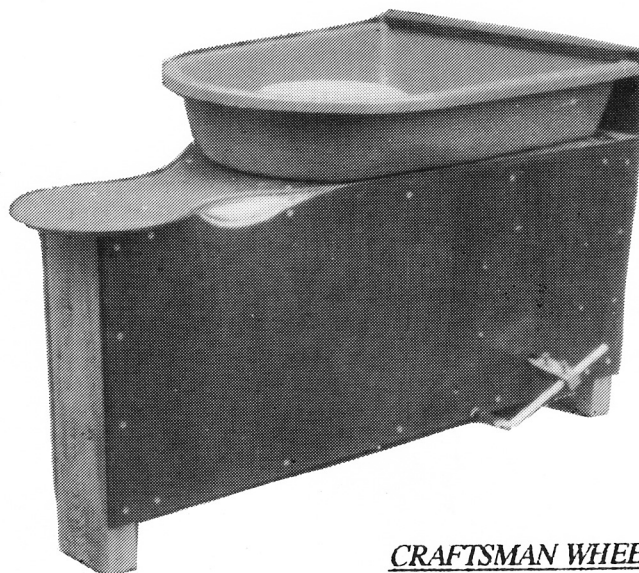
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