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CHILTERN
POTTERS GUILD



NEWSLETTER

MAY

1994

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FRONT PAGE PHOTOGRAPH: Thrown and altered Stoneware Bowl by Ashley Howard.

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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 July issue is June 6th. Please mention DCPG when replying to advertisements in the Newsletter.

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EDITORIAL

At the time of writing, one of our next events will be the *Gazette* Leisure & Hobbies Show at the Pavilion, Hemel Hempstead. Our participation has been organised by our Publicity Officer, Linda Bryant, who was also the "Sacrificial Lamb" at the opening of Potters Restaurant (see article).

I believe that Linda & also Doug Jones both feel slightly embarrassed that their names turn up quite frequently in the Newsletter, although they have both been partly responsible for widening the scope of Guild activity & attracting more members to the Guild, with twelve joining since March.

If you want to see other names & events in the Newsletter, please write about your pottery activities. we will be glad to hear from you.

One person whose name does not usually appear really should be mentioned. Harry Karnac, our ever-faithful word processor handler, goes to great lengths to ensure that the Newsletter gets to you on time, including staying up into the late hours to finish late articles, and who designed our stylish poster for Open Day.

Mervyn Fitzwilliam

LETTERS

Dear Mervyn,

Once again, I would be grateful if you would pass on my thanks to the chairman and everyone in the Guild for inviting me.

Ashley Howard

PHYTOREMEDIATION & HYPERACCUMULATOR PLANTS

The problem of toxification of the land is increasing. This is especially so where factory emissions and other polluting conditions have rendered large areas of land completely useless for edible plants. But there are some plants which will not only grow under these conditions but will also improve the soil in which they are growing by absorbing the polluting toxic metal oxides in the topsoil. These plants are termed 'hyper-accumulators', and they work their natural processes by 'phyto-remediation' or 'green remediation'.

The natural habitat of these plants is mostly centred on Southern Europe. They act similarly to 'bio-remediation' plants which absorb organic pollutants in the soil. The mineral absorption gathers in the upper parts of the plant. Of the plant genus Brassicaceæ there are two species which have been found to absorb much larger concentrations of toxic metallic oxides than the other species. These two brassicas are 'Thiampi' and 'Alyssum' of which the particular species are 'Brassica napus' (Rape) and 'Raphanus sativus' (Radish).

After a series of just a few croppings of these plants, most of the toxic oxides were absorbed by them and thus eventually removed from the soil, making it suitable for growing edible crops. These toxic metal oxides were those of Zinc, Cadmium, Nickel, Copper, Lead, Chromium and Cobalt.

Incidentally, this method of contaminated 'Site Remediation' is by far cheaper than the expensive 'Physico-chemical' extraction or than by leaving the land fallow for many years. So what on earth (or IN earth) is this to do with pottery?

Well, in Imbe, Bizen Province, Honshu mainland of Japan, to the west of Kyōtō, starting probably during the 15th century, a hard, grey-bodied stoneware was produced. Sometimes, when the ware was being fired, seaweed was thrown into the kiln. This produced a yellowy *Gomagusuri* ('sesame-seed gloss'). The earliest wares were used mainly for holding grain, but later 'Tea Ceremony' wares were made.

Ko-Bizen ('Old Bizen') or *Imbe yaki* ('pottery of Imbe') was made much earlier and was unglazed ware referred to as *Hagi*, from whence it came in west Honshu, also called *Itsuba* ('altar ware' - 'presents to the gods').

Some years ago, Tōyō Kaneshige, a modern Bizen potter (78th generation!) revived some of the Old Bizen (*Sue*) traditions by the firing of closely-stacked wares in a salt-glaze kiln to cones 10 or 11 (a little over 1300°C) over about a seven-day period. He burned only pine-tree wood of which the fine ash produced is blown throughout the kiln by opening and closing the kiln dampers alternately. This ash, containing high proportions of Calcium Magnesium, Potassium and Sodium, settles on the pots and melts, fusing with the iron-rich clay, resulting in Iron-spot *Goma* ('Iron-spot sesame'). The Japanese call these results obtained by varying the kiln-fire conditions, *Hidasuki* ('fire-cord') decoration, from the Japanese *Hi* ('fire') and *Tasuki* (a kimono sleeve cord). The Sodium in the salt combines with the iron in the clay to form bright reddish streaks on the pot surface.

Now let us return to the first paragraph, about 'Phytoremediation'. If salt-impregnated cords or plants wrapped around pots and fired can produce red colours, what about Copper (green), Cobalt (blue), etc.?

Until recently (c.1988), the knowledge of these hyperaccumulator plants was not realised. But now they are being grown at Rothamsted Experimental Station, in Harpenden, for testing suitability for use as phytoremediators. It is thought that, by cropping many hectares of these plants and reducing them to ash, quite considerable quantities of recycled metals could be achieved. Not only would this relieve the cost of, alternative, land fill disposal but would also aid financial recovery of the cost of the plant husbandry.

But here is a wonderful chance for the potter to experiment with *hidasuki* or 'colour-streaking glazing' methods. If we can obtain a few of these plants and wrap them around suitable pots for firing - who knows what results could be achieved? And some plants should be available about this summertime from nearby Rothamsted. Dr. Roger Atkin, PR manager of Rothamsted, has written to me saying that he looks forward to providing some plants for the purpose of our experimentation. This, indeed, is a marvellous chance to attempt to produce a new version of an old tradition! I have more information as necessary.

Stan Romer

Editorial Note

The above letter was discussed by the Committee at a recent meeting and it was agreed that we would solicit ideas from our membership on this subject. Stan went on to say that the use of these plants could be for a stoneware or possibly a raku firing and that he has more information on the subject, with reports from various experts, also some further details of Rothamsted Station.

Perhaps we can arrange a firing using a kiln owned by one of our members, with others bringing pots to try out their ideas? Does anyone want to follow up on this interesting suggestion? Who knows, a whole new area of possibilities could be available for the trying!! If you feel interested in this opportunity, give Stan Romer a ring on 081-860-4570, or contact Brian Bicknell, our Workshop Organiser, on 0494-530050

The Spanish Connection

Many of our members will remember Robert & Jean Sedgley who moved to Sagra in Spain some two years ago. Alan O'Dell has a four-page newsletter from them (which can be borrowed by request) giving details of the very enjoyable lifestyle that they seem to have out there.

FUTURE GUILD EVENTS

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

Jane Waller will demonstrate the *Millefiore* technique, constructing earthenware pots, using coloured clays and moulds.

Friday 10th June, 8 p.m. at the Orbital Community Centre, North Orbital Way, Watford (a map is on page 14 of the March Newsletter). Susan Nemeth will be demonstrating her methods of using slipped and laminated clays.

EXTRAORDINARY GENERAL MEETING

Following the explanation by our treasurer, Victor Earl, in the last Newsletter of his reasons for wanting to change his accounting date, we now give notice to members that the necessary Extraordinary General Meeting will be a small part of the June 10th event. The change is just a formality which **WILL NOT AFFECT MEMBERS' SUBSCRIPTION DATE**, and is just to give Victor more time to finalise the Guild's accounts before the Annual General Meeting. We will simply be asking you to agree this.

FUTURE WORKSHOP ACTIVITIES

The recent Guild activities have included various Workshops at the Rudolf Steiner School, mostly run by Doug Jones, at the request of the Guild Committee. We are very grateful to Doug, who has worked hard on this activity and will continue to run his own Workshops which he will advertise in the Newsletter.

We believe that the workshops fulfil a need for the more active members of the Guild. For this reason, we have provisionally booked the pottery at the Rudolf Steiner School for Saturday June 11th.

Our two meetings before that, on 13th May with Jane Waller and on 10th June with Susan Nemeth will cover differing aspects of the technique of joining or laminating coloured clays to make a vessel.

Guild members and friends who would like to try out either of these techniques can come to the workshop and we will provide the materials.

It will start at 10 a.m. and will cost about £12 for the day.

It will be organised by Ruth Karnac.

The closing date for applications is Saturday 4th June.

Contact either Mervyn on 0442 242332 or Ruth on 0895 631738.

Anyone just turning up on the day may be unlucky. Nos.144 & 145 of *Ceramic Review* have detailed articles by Jane Waller which you may like to read in advance.

Anyone else who would like the opportunity to organise and run a workshop at a future date, please contact a committee member well in advance.

POTTERS OPEN DAY - Saturday 2nd July '94
with Walter Keeler and Jill Fanshawe Kato

Here is your second opportunity within one year to attend our ever-popular Open Day. This is because for 1994 we have moved it to the summer and the annual exhibition will take place in the autumn.

We are retaining the same basic format for the day, although we will be having two demonstrators this year. In recent years it has proved difficult to keep to the programme timetable and give three demonstrators adequate time, whilst still fitting in lunch, sales of pots and ceramic supplies, the raffle, etc.....

We are very fortunate, this time, that we have been able to get Walter Keeler, one of the most eminent, original and sought after potters of our day. He will be demonstrating his techniques of throwing, altering and assemblage, leading to the final unique, salt-glazed forms we all know and admire.

Our second demonstrator, Jill Fanshawe Kato, trained in Japan, where she lived and worked for some years. Her main inspiration is nature, using flora and fauna of the rain forest as the mainspring of her work.

These two demonstrators, with their different methods of production and final form, should complement each other well, leading to a very satisfying and enjoyable day.

Apart from the demonstrators, we will also have Steve Rafferty from Ceramatech bringing a large selection of ceramic supplies for you to purchase. As usual, you can place orders in advance with Steve, which he will bring along on the day.

All in all, this will be another Potters Open Day that you cannot afford to miss. An order form is enclosed with this Newsletter, so don't delay - send for tickets for yourself and your friends, now!

IMPORTANT NOTE FOR YOUR DIARY

The dates for the Guild Exhibition have been finalised at 27th Nov.-10th Dec.'94 at the Cow Byre Gallery, Ruislip. (This is one week later than previously stated).

It should be an excellent time for pre-Christmas sales and it gives everyone plenty of time to organise their entries.

Let's make it the best show ever - and please note that this time every guild member can have at least one pot on show.

Marguerite Moon

OTHER EVENTS

WATFORD FESTIVAL

The Guild have been asked if they can help with the Watford Festival. The location is Cassiobury Park on Monday 29th Aug. '94. The outline proposal is that we have 1 or 2 wheels and give brief instruction on throwing and/or handbuilding, combined with a stall selling pottery. This is planned as a joint fund-raising event, so a charge would be made for the lessons, with a small percentage of pottery sales also being donated to the funds, which would be divided between the Guild and a designated charity.

A very large number of people are expected, no charge will be made for the stall and the potential for sales is excellent. For more details, contact Linda Bryant 0442 233521.

14th-17th July: ART IN ACTION at Waterperry House, near Wheatley, Oxfordshire. One of the biggest Arts & Crafts Festivals around - well worth a visit.

SUMMER SOLSTICE OPEN DAY: (near as dammit) on Sun. 19th June with Doug Jones 10 a.m. until last person leaves. tea & coffee free, bring own food & wine or charity donation snack - lunch available. Riverside Cottage, 114 Norfolk Rd. Rickmansworth. 0923 770913

POTS & PIECES: AN EXHIBITION OF CERAMICS, PAINTING & EMBROIDERY AT UXBRIDGE LIBRARY, 20th MAY - 3rd JUNE. ENQ: 0727 823801. MON., TUES., THURS. 9.30-8.00; WED., FRI. 9.30-5.30; SAT. 9.30-4.00.

POTTERY WORKSHOP & ACCOMMODATION AT ALDEBURGH, SUFFOLK TO RENT DURING JULY, AUG. & SEPT. '94. WELL EQUIPPED WITH ALSAGER WHEEL, BLUNGER, 2 COMPUTER-CONTROLLED ELECTRIC KILNS, SLAB ROLLER. PHONE/FAX 0728 453315

MEMBERSHIP NEWS

Our membership has again taken a positive leap and we are very pleased indeed to welcome the following new members, who have joined the Guild since March:

Tina Hall, Paul & Davine Hodgson, Alan Judge, Hugh & Maggie Marks, Dawn Meadows, Barbara Meeking, Kenneth Morrice, Victoria North, Deepak Raval & Lynne Taylor.

OBITUARY: JOHN CAPES.

We first met John in 1984 when a group of new Guild members were volunteered into rebuilding the salt glaze kiln at Murray's. He turned out to be a tireless, energetic worker whose enthusiasm burned on whilst ours was fading fast.

John was one of those deceptively quiet people who are often mistakenly assumed to be shy. Not he! He had a dry and vivid sense of humour and a totally generous nature - he always had time for other people.

When the kiln project was over, we saw him only at meetings and pot crawls. In 1992 he told us of his cancer which had been cured - he spoke of it with his usual philosophical acceptance.

Last year, he didn't turn up at the P.O.D. - he had never missed it before - and we learned of a new cancer which was inoperable.

John died in February and all of us who knew him have only happy memories of him. We'll miss him.

Pauline O'Dell

AN EVENING WITH ASHLEY HOWARD

German history and the love of Japanese ceramics, coupled with tuition from Peter Beard and Colin Pearson, have given this young man much to think about in his present work.

His prime concern with form is centred around the idea of the vessel and he enjoys exploring the clay for its soft, squashy qualities. Non-functional pieces he prefers to produce fully inspired by the effects of distortion in the way of wobbles, sharp edges, deep ridges and ribbed protruding undulations; his combined techniques of thrown, cut and reassembled pots highlight this definition. Holes in the finished article and broken handles all add to the appeal and effect he is trying to create.

The recipe: equal amounts of grog with smooth stoneware clay are used. Chopped polyester (cut into 12 mm lengths) is worked into the clay by hand; this technique gives a much stronger base for the method in which the clay is manipulated. The polyester has no adverse effects on kiln firing.

Quantity: 1 gramme polyester to 2 kg. clay

Supplier of polyester: Penine Fibres, Bradford.

Supplier of clay - Spencrofts, Stoke-on-Trent

Glazing surface treatment: The mottled look that is achieved is down to the different thicknesses of the oxide slips. Ashley enjoys experimenting with the raw materials such as feldspar by sprinkling it on or pushing it into the glaze surface. Ball clay produces fine cracks, which gives that "sponged-look" effect that everyone admired.

Colours: Mainly blue and green streaked matt.

Ashley studied with and took extra lessons from John Pollex, and this helped him to perfect the appearance of his work.

Firing temperatures: Electric kiln - typically 1260°C at stoneware firing - although 1240°C produces a greater variety of colour. A second glaze firing is often used to alter the surface appearance.

Ashley's desire to continue and develop his work based on current designs has now inspired him to investigate a new range of orange red glazes.

Rona Smith

A DEMONSTRATION BY JANE PERRYMAN

The pots that Jane had brought with her were of various forms but the decorative technique used was the same for all, burnished slip which was then fired in sawdust. Paper resist was used on many of them.

Jane's slides showed how it is quite possible to pursue several different avenues before arriving at the one particular method that is the one to follow which satisfies the maker and pleases the customer.

Her interest in clay began many years ago. At Hornsey, she had learned to make moulds for slip casting and though she would have preferred to make pots by other means she was not allowed to move between disciplines. She continued to use slip casting as a basic means of producing forms on which she then worked with a variety of decorative ideas including burnishing and smoking.

In the state of New Hampshire, U.S.A., she hired a studio and rented an electric kiln. Using her mould-making skills, she cast forms from rocks and made sculptural pieces. She then showed us a clean pair of heels: white porcelain with lustre decoration - very funky West Coast America !

Back to England and in Cambridge she changed to a gas kiln and continued to work on slip cast forms. She was much influenced by Elspeth Owen and Siddig el Ngoumi, admiring the burnished subtle effects obtained by smoking the biscuited form.

Using the same techniques, trial and error finally led her to gain skills and to achieve success with even more subtle finishes, with some very detailed designs. Her work covered a variety of styles, still life and ceramic relief pictures in porcelain. She was also influenced by forms seen at the British Museum. Early English and French Celtic pots became a focus for her work. She began to make pots with a pronounced shoulder, and this style has continued to the present time.

Jane's pots are made in a mixture of T. material with porcelain, stoneware or earthenware. They are made in one of two ways, either all hand built or press moulded with slabs or coils added. Her methods are very precise and great pains are taken to be sure that all joins are filled in with coils or overlapped and well joined.

Great care is taken to refine pots and thin them down equally. They are slipped when leather hard, three layers are applied first to the inside, then when dried, to the outside. Left to harden, they are burnished using spoons, stones and a sponge wrapped in plastic. Firm and repeated strokes are made over each facet compressing the slip.

Decoration is made using paper resist covered with a further coating of a resist slip which, when fired, assists the blackening of the resisted areas. The pots for second firing are stacked in a simple brick-built kiln filled with sawdust between the pots which nestle one inside the other, thus allowing a greater number of pots to be fired in a small space.

There are many variations that can be tried and I hope to explain or describe some for the next Newsletter.

Ruth Brown

WHAT CONSTITUTES A GOOD POT ?

1. Mashiko Sankohkan

益子参考館

Mashi - ko San - koh - kan

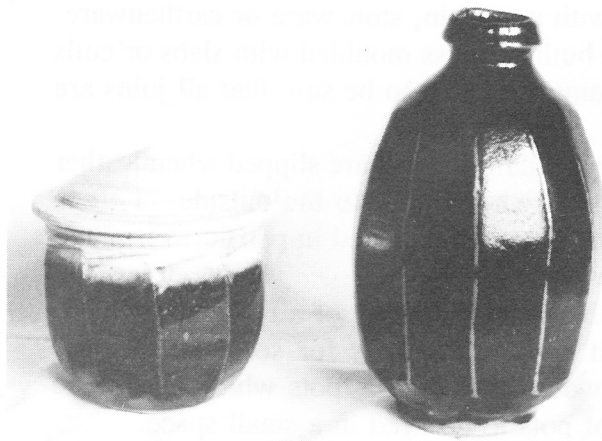
Although I was born in the country, in Japan, not far from famous Mashiko, to my regret I never had a chance to meet 'The Potter' Hamada Shoji. When I visited his place, a few years after his death, I was only greeted by his dog, still alive and barking. 'Mashiko Sankohkan' is Hamada's museum which opened in 1977, where visitors can see a great number of his best works and his private collection. Not only was he well-known as a great potter, but also as a keen collector. I loved some of his pots, particularly the very large dishes (*Ohzara*), but I found his personal collection was more fascinating

Every time I went back to the museum, I discovered something new and really interesting. The more I saw the very old pots he collected, including Chinese, Korean, Persian, Peruvian, German, Dutch and English work, the more I understood his mind and his work. My favourite of Sankohkan is an old *Tamba* storage jar about 3 feet high with beautiful glaze on it. I always spent a long time looking at this 18th century pot and it made me very happy. I believe that I have learned a great deal from Hamada's pots.

2. Murray Fieldhouse

I have been rather lucky to collect many Japanese pots, old and new. When I moved from Tokyo to London 8 years ago, I couldn't leave my pots behind, so I had to ship them to England. I spent a couple of months waiting and worrying but fortunately all the pots arrived safely without any damage. The next big problem was a place to store them. At that time, my wife, Sara, and I were in a small bedsitter and our two cats from Japan were in quarantine, so there was insufficient room for more than 60 large boxes full of pots. I managed to find a bigger flat in time and we had a small reunion party with our cats and pots. Even though I sacrificed one bedroom for the pots, there were too many of them for our place, so I decided to get rid of some.

The following year I had an exhibition sale in Highgate, and there I met Murray for the first time; I still remember that day vividly. After we were introduced, Murray went straight through 12 volumes of my Japanese ceramic books. Then he walked around and inspected about 2000 pots on display. He asked me quite a few questions, but I don't remember what they were and I don't think I understood them well either. Since then we have been good friends and I have been introduced, by Murray, to many potters, including David Leach, Ray Finch, John Leach, Mike Dodd, Takeshi Yasuda and Phil Rogers.



Left - Richard Batterham:

Faceted Pot with Lid. H.5.5" W.5"

Right - Mike Dodd: Faceted Bottle. H.9"



Left - Mashiko: Tea Cup (*Yunomi*). H.2.6"

Centre - Grey Shino (*Nezumi*) Tea Cup. H.3";

Right - Tobe: Teacup. H.2.7"



Shino Tea Bowl (*Chawan*). H.4" W.4.5"



Left - Bag for the tea caddy (*Shifuku*)

Right Mino-Iga: Tea Caddy (*Chaire*) H.4.6"

To be honest, I didn't know anything about modern English potters until I was taught by Murray; I didn't even know that he was such a prominent figure among English potters. He used to criticise my Japanese chauvinism, but now I know that there are some very good potters in this country making beautiful pots. I have been collecting good English pots for a few years and Murray and I talk about good and awful pots a lot, every time we meet. He has the keenest eye on English and Japanese pots and his tongue is also sharper than that of anyone else I know. His remarks are always clear-cut and his judgement is impartial, I value them very much. Still, I hope that Murray will stop calling me a Japanese chauvinist. I am only trying to say there is something good or better, somewhere we don't know. Sometimes it happens to be Japanese and I just don't want to lose my identity.

3. Enigma of Tea Bowls

I often have a puzzling moment when I am listening to someone talking about Japanese tea bowls. Sometimes I wonder whether the tea bowl which is the subject of our conversation is *Machawan* for powdered green tea (*Macha*) or *Yunomi Chawan* for ordinary green tea (*Sencha*). This confusion is mainly caused by the word and *Chawan* and *Tea Bowl*. I suggest that we should distinguish tea bowls from teacups clearly. Because *Macha* and *Sencha* have quite different taste, and *Macha* powder and hot water are directly whisked in a bowl with a bamboo whisk, but *Sencha* leaves are brewed in a teapot just like English tea. This is why I hope *Yunomi Chawan* a.k.a. *Senchawan* should be called *Teacup*. Most *Yunomi Chawan* are smaller than *Machawan* anyway. There is another big mystery to be solved. "Why do they still make tea bowls?"

GasKimishima

PROFILE - Elaine Hudson

I think that my love of Natural History came from time spent in childhood in the Derbyshire Dales. I studied Zoology at Imperial College, London University. I then went on to specialise in Parasitology for my Ph.D. thesis and spent some years researching biological control of insect pests using parasitic nematodes. After a two-year stay in Switzerland (which was excellent for my husband's career prospects but abysmal for mine), I gave up research and was fully occupied with the family.

A few years teaching Biology and Science in schools followed. It was during this time (1980) that I went to my first once-a-week pottery evening class. I enjoyed it so much that I took more and more classes (at Beckenham Arts Centre) until I was making pots 2½ days a week! At this time, I decided that the only way I could acquire the knowledge and skills I needed was to join a full-time course. Living in Beckenham, the nearest was Croydon College where I began in 1987. They specialised in slip-casting, so I learnt to make models and moulds from plaster.... VERY MESSY. Then in 1988 my husband's job moved to Bucks. I had done only two terms of the course and was very disappointed. BUT... all was not lost because Chalfont St. Peter is not very far from Harrow, so that's where I went next. I completed their exhausting but very enlightening course in 1990.



After leaving Harrow, I started teaching evening classes at Wellesbourne School and Evreham Centre, Iver and later at East Berkshire College, Windsor and Brunel University, Uxbridge, where I still teach. Combined with teaching, I spend every spare minute in my workshop. I need to because my rate of making is very slow. I sell through exhibitions, one of which comprises group of potters & embroiderers called "Pots and Pieces". Our next exhibition is on May 20th at Uxbridge Library. I joined the committee in 1993 & am helping Lesley Risby organise the Potters Open Day in July.

SLAB BUILDING 'À LA DOUG'.

A faithful band of Guild Members gathered on Saturday 22nd Jan. at the Balmoral Centre to benefit from the advice and guidance provided by Doug on slab building.

The first excitement of the day was the return of the fired heads from the previous workshop; mine, thankfully, was not as bad as I had remembered, possibly because having shrunk in the kiln there was rather less of it! Doug had coloured the heads with a coating of iron oxide which gave them a very pleasant colour/texture.

Mervyn then produced some modelling boards for working on either with clay or for painting. They were very nice for clay as they do not require a paper lining and they do not warp. Several purchases were made and I am sure if you are interested Mervyn will supply details of sizes and prices.

We were then put to work by Doug who gave us a lightning demonstration on the making of a Sushi dish and other items. Great improvisation took place as he confessed to leaving his things scattered around Hertfordshire. But improvisation is one of the skills essential to a potter, so this in itself was a lesson.

Much kneading, rolling, beating and manhandling of clay followed and, like the phoenix arising from the ashes, a myriad of pots of all shapes and different sizes appeared on the benches.

Encouraged by Doug to think 'Free Form' and to "widen our horizons", most of us made pots and dishes alien to our own kind of work. It certainly was an experience if only to appreciate the frustration and difficulty of thinking in a different way.

Benefit, as always, was gained by members of the group discussing and resolving difficulties by tips provided by the others.

One task we all completed before the day was out was the making of a box with a lid - I was full of admiration for those skilful enough and with enough patience to complete a precision job.

Discussions took place during the day on future venues for the 'day sessions' and it was decided that the Rudolph Steiner School had much more to offer than the Watford Centre. Plans are to go ahead to meet there in future.

Thank you, Doug, from all of your students; I am sure I can say with confidence that your efforts were appreciated and that we all learned something from the day, in addition to enjoying the fun and friendship.

Anne Hepworth Cammack

A DAY TO REMEMBER !

The reputation of Doug Jones' sculpture workshops has spread far and wide as witnessed recently by no less than 18 people arriving at the Rudolf Steiner School pottery for the latest sculpture workshop, on Saturday 26th Feb.

The level of experience and expertise varied across the group from relative novices to a professional sculptor - so no-one need ever feel awkward or out of place.

Doug initially spoke to us about different planes - vertical, horizontal and diagonal - and how they vary depending on where they are viewed from. Where was this leading us? - we thought. Our instructions were to quickly produce three forms demonstrating each plane.

The variation in interpretation were amazing - there were tree stumps, suckling pigs, dinosaurs, ducks and some very angular forms, all in some way depicting vertical, horizontal or diagonal. At times, the silence was deafening with everyone thoroughly engrossed in producing a sculpture; other times, 18 voices chattering away produced a similar deafening effect! Never boring, always challenging, we worked towards a very well earned lunch in the pub down the road in Kings Langley.

The afternoon was spent working on new sculptures - in the Picasso style. Again, the subjects were varied from heads to roosters, to cats, to pregnant female torsos, to masks. Everyone left with a finished or part-finished sculpture.

The intensity of concentration, the amazing level of thought required and the sheer hard work of it, left us all in an euphoric state of near-exhaustion. I think we all felt, though, that it was a day well spent, very well worth the agony. Thanks Doug - keep the workshops coming; not only are they great fun, but we also learn a great deal from them.

Linda Bryant



Linda Bryant with some of her sculpture (photo by the *Gazette* photographer)



**From left: Geoff Harding, Junko Tobin, Dave Boag & Kim Bramley
(photo by the *Gazette* photographer)**

EQUINOX OPEN DAY

The weather was superb, the pots and the company were interesting, the food and wine were good. What else is there to say ?



Left - The larger gas kiln is opened



Above: Dave Boag shows his skill at juggling with the Indian clubs & the Diabolo.

The best "line" of the day came from Geoff Harding, who watched Dave with interest &, at what seemed an appropriate moment, asked "can you ride a unicycle?". The answer was affirmative, so Geoff then followed up with "well can you show me how it's done? I've got one in the boot of my car". He then collected the said machine and was promptly given a lesson !!



Left: No, not a pot from the Catenery Arch Kiln; this one, held by Marion Hicks, is actually Chinese 12th Century.

Centre: Murray Fieldhouse risks his life, with a disorderly crew on the ferry (photo by Leonie Jones). Right: Doug chose (and photographed) this pot with a copper red glaze as the pick of the kiln.

We all enjoyed the day. Doug was delighted that there was such a large attendance and expressed his thanks to the Guild.

Notes and other photographs by Mervyn Fitzwilliam.

POTTERS RESTAURANT OPENING.

Sometimes you realise that you've been well and truly caught! This was the feeling I had, recently, when I had a telephone conversation with Mervyn about the opening of the Potters Restaurant in the New Travel Inn at Bourne End, Hemel Hempstead.

The P.R. company, Bugsgang Associates (what a name to conjure with!), wanted a potter working on a wheel to be photographed at the launch along with the Chairman of Whitbreads, Sir Michael Angus, and the Managing Director of their Hotels Division, Alan Parker.

Mervyn phoned to ask did I know anyone who would be suitable - every suggestion was deftly turned down. Then came the bombshell (ever so gently, of course. "Don't you throw, Linda?". "After a fashion, yes I do, but I'm not the best person to do it" said I. And from then on, there was no hiding place.

So on March 10th I was escorted to the Travel Inn, given a couple of glasses of rather wonderful champagne, sat at a wheel and photographed with said important chaps. They then video-ed me working for their annual conference film and, finally, fed me. Mervyn, of course, came along for moral support, champagne and food.

I wasn't allowed to make any mess while on the wheel, so everything was made in advance and 'set-up' on the day. The photo and article appeared in the Hemel Gazette giving the Guild a really good plug - so, along with the champagne, the day was well worth while. Now you see what we get up to, to publicise the D.C.P.G.!

Linda Bryant



Left: That "all important" photograph of Linda, with Sir William Angus [left] & Alan Parker [right]. (Photo by the official Whitbread photographer).

Above: Linda discusses some Guild members' pots with Lady Angus, who did attend pottery classes at Tring when she lived in the area. (photograph by Mervyn Fitzwilliam)

GLAZES - PART 6

In the last Newsletter a practical glaze formula was described. This time I will look at the practical aspects in greater detail.

Why make up your own glazes anyway? There are hundreds of proprietary glazes literally waiting on the shelf of every pottery supplier, so why go to all the trouble oneself?

First there is the cost. A typical transparent stoneware glaze (Reward-Clayglaze R4205) is currently priced at £1.43 for 500 gms., i.e. £2.86 a kilo. The glaze detailed in quantities costing between £5-£10 per lot up to an individual maximum of 10 Kg. for any single ingredient.

The CMC/Dextrin mixture was priced the same as the nearest equivalent commercial substitute (Reward-Clayglaze 'Suspendit' R1036 at £7.40 for 500 gms.), all the above prices being less VAT.

This demonstrates the advantages in making up your own materials, particularly if the use of fritted materials can be avoided, a standard frit costs about £5 per kilo, whereas Nepheline Syenite costs 56p., Whiting 20p. and even the relatively expensive Zinc Oxide is only £3.88 per kilo.

The cost differentiation in avoiding frits, if possible, is shown in the case of Boro-Calcite glazes. A standard Calcium Borate frit (R1121) costs £39.36 for 10 kilos. Colmanite, which can be substituted weight for weight, costs £13.15. Colmanite is a mineral mined mainly in America and Canada, and also in Turkey. The American one can tend to cause bubbles in lower temperature glazes, and so its use is often deprecated in USA literature. The Turkish one that is imported in the UK does not suffer from this effect, and so entirely suitable as a substitute.

The savings in 'Home Brew' glazes are not as great for more advanced glazes. Colourants, notoriously Cobalt, can easily double the cost of a basic glaze. Every 1% of Cobalt Oxide added to a kilo of glaze adds £1.22 to the cost. Tin Oxide, Zirconium and Lithium compounds are all expensive. Luckily, most of these are minority ingredients, modifying the colour, texture or opacity of the glaze. Nonetheless, commercial glazes are also more expensive, and so it is still worthwhile to Do It Yourself.

A compelling reason to make your own glazes is the ability to modify them and so produce a new glaze. There are hundreds of glaze recipe books published. These can be the starting point in making a 'New' glaze. Why try to re-invent the wheel? Start with the nearest to your requirements, fire it, then modify it in the light of the results. If you buy an unknown mixture from a supplier, and it does what you want ... fine. But if it needs modifying, what then? There is no base to start from to change it to match your needs, particularly since some ingredients could well be incompatible with others you might wish to add, and of course, whilst new ingredients may be added, existing ones cannot be removed.

Admittedly, making up your own mixtures is a chore. One needs to wear a dust mask, then clear up afterwards. Mixing and sieving are tedious and there is inevitable wastage as potentially good glaze is washed down the sink as the sieves and other implements are cleaned. However, the wastage is the same whether you are making up a 250 gm. test or ten kilos, and since one can afford to make bigger batches, they need to be made up less frequently. Another advantage is that a large batch of a basic glaze can be weighed out. Then it can be sub-divided and different colouring oxides added to each individual lot, so providing a batch of colours, whilst effectively having only to mix up a single batch. Care must be taken however to make sure that the colouring oxides are thoroughly mixed into the bulk of the mixtures.

Initially, it may seem that one is forever buying ingredients from the suppliers. But it is surprising how few are really needed, a dozen or so comprise the majority of the ingredients of most formulas, and the rest are usually needed in relatively small quantities.

Personally, and I realise that this may not apply to everyone (or even anyone else!), I find that I get a 'kick' out of trying an unknown recipe. When the kiln is opened, not knowing what will be there. Will it be some patchy underfired monstrosity, destined for the dustbin before anyone else sees it? Or will it be some beautifully glazed pot fit for boring any of my friends? This, to me, is one of the greatest reasons for making and experimentation with glazes, it's the initial uncertainty that appeals, and it's cheaper than gambling on horses!

Tony Stevens

BOOK REVIEW.

CHINA, KOREA & JAPAN - The Rise of Civilization in East Asia.

Gina L. Barnes. Thames & Hudson. 1993. Hardback. 288 pp. £32.00

"The East Asian countries of China, Japan and the Koreas are of ever-increasing importance in today's world. This is the opening sentence of the Preface to this book.

The author, a senior researcher and lecturer in East Asian archaeology, has written this interesting and detailed volume based upon her many studies of the early history of the societies of these countries, dating from over a million years ago until the eighth century of our current era.

The bones remaining from the hunted prey of mankind, and the later agricultural remnants, tell us many details of the human groups around the world. The burials of these early hunters, the variations in their bone sizes and structures tell us more. But it was the living flesh that held these bones together which struck off sharp flints, and which carved rocks and wood, and produced the enormous quantities of clayware, which enable us to learn more about the rise of civilization, especially in East Asia.

Palaeolithic art there from about 30,000 years ago slowly developed into the Neolithic crafts which included some of the earliest domestic pottery wares. Sherds dating to about 12,000 years ago have been discovered in the south-western Japanese islands, although there are examples of earlier clay figurines from eastern Europe.

It is thus to mainly pottery styles and types that we turn in order to study early mankind. In fact, culture periods are generally explained mostly by the study of the pottery named from these periods. Pottery styles, shapes, decorations, and the uses of claywares, because these objects have been well preserved for so many years, can tell us a multitude of facts about their makers and their users. And this book abounds with detailed descriptions and clear illustrations of all the vast array of cultures in this area of the world.

The prehistorian or archaeologist reader will not become bored with the contents; also the raw student will be able to follow the reasoned arguments based upon excavation and study. The sculptor and metalworker each will find much of great interest here.

However, it is mainly to pottery that we turn; to the domestic storing and cooking wares - the objects of everyday life, and to the tombwares - the objects of afterlife, to learn about the rise of civilization in East Asia.

Having read this absorbing book, I now know more about the early people of East Asia: where and how they lived, what they ate, what they were like, how they worshipped the dead and governed the living, the methods they used to express themselves in art forms. There are many more intriguing particulars included, making this an extremely interesting and informative volume.

If you can't afford to buy the book, I would recommend you to arrange for your local library to include it on their shelves, but you may have to queue up for it; it won't rest on the shelves for long.

Stan Romer

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July 18-22 Mouldmaking/Slipcasting - *David Cowley*
July 25-30 Understanding Glazes & Materials - *Harry Horlock-Stringer*
July 25-29 Throwing - *Brian Dewbury*
July 30/31 Surface Pattern & Decorative Techniques - *Paula Gray*

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ART

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