

DACORUM AND  
CHILTERN  
POTTERS GUILD



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NEWSLETTER  
MARCH/APRIL  
1996  
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Membership of the Guild is open to anyone having an interest in pottery & 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.

Membership Rates: Family - £16.50  
Single - £14.00  
Student - £ 7.50

Send your cheque to Victor Earl, Treasurer  
(address & phone number on p.12)

The Dacorum & Chiltern Potters Guild Newsletter is published bi-monthly in January, March, May, July, September & November, being distributed free to all members of the Guild, other craft groups & organisations. Contributions to the Newsletter are always welcome. (S.A.E. please with any items to be returned). Opinions expressed in items published do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the Committee or Guild Members as a whole.

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#### **Copy dates**

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#### **Publication dates**

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14th October	6th November

We can book space ahead of the copy date but, in general, need the final Artwork not later than **THREE** days after the copy date.

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**FRONT COVER PHOTOGRAPH**

Landscape Bowl by Sue Varley, approx. 20 cm. diam.

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**EDITORIAL**

In the formative years of the Dacorum & Chiltern Potters Guild, many other pottery groups were formed, often based on what was being done by our Guild. Some have continued, some have dwindled and others have been formed. Currently there have been moves towards "Networking" between the various groups of potters, both in this country and internationally.

Ray Phipps made some strenuous efforts in this direction many years ago, although a rather lethargic response was received from most and none from the C.P.A. at that time.

We have followed the principle that communication between the groups should be maintained and actively encouraged wherever possible. At present we send our Newsletters to the following:- London Potters, Scottish Potters, North Wales Potters, South Wales Potters, The Midland Potters Guild, Kent Potters, Bucks. Potters and various other groups.

Reciprocal Newsletters are received in some cases and can be accessed via our Secretary. The Guild also has reciprocal advertisements in *Studio Pottery* magazine and our Newsletters circulate in various educational establishments. We have our Newsletter on sale at Potclays South and also at PotteryCrafts; in addition, we send a copy to the Archive at the University of Wales, which holds the CPA archives. (This is actually a very "live" activity since the documents are available for study, on request).

We have had occasional visitors from other groups, particularly to our Workshops, and recently we have been approached by a member of Kent Potters regarding the possibility of a group visit, something which I hope the committee will be able to follow up at the next meeting. The moves to improve an interchange of ideas and the possibility of reciprocal visits should be encouraged and correspondence on this subject will be welcomed.

**Mervyn Fitzwilliam**

**GUILD EVENTS****Sat./Sun. March 9th & 10th - Elaine Coles Workshop**

We currently have sufficient people to run workshops on both days, but may have one or two spaces left. See the January Newsletter for more details and phone Victor Earl if you would like to attend. 01442 865661

**Friday March 15th 8 p.m. at Northchurch Social Centre**

**Dimitra Grivellis** works with porcelain clay and throws all her pieces, making mainly bowls, vases and plates. Decoration is done by using sandblasting techniques with resist marking and colours. Her inspirations come from wild animals and their habitat.

**Friday April 12th 8 p.m. at Northchurch Social Centre**

**Jonathan Keep** makes domestic ware using a semi-porcelain or a red clay decorated with coloured slips. He aims to produce well crafted, well designed pots that are pleasing to live with. He throws most of his work but also makes large sculptural pieces.

**Pottery Participation - 14th April**

Ruby Sharp (one of our newer members) has volunteered to give Chestnut Lane first school, Amersham, an introduction to pottery throwing on Sunday 14th April 2.15 to 4.30 p.m. Ruby would really appreciate some help, so will anyone who can assist please phone her on 01494 728364.

**Royal Society Soirée - 19th & 20th June**

Professor McGrath of Rothamsted Agricultural Research Centre has been experimenting with hyperaccumulator plants as a possible method of removing metal oxides from contaminated land.

Our own experiments came about, following a suggestion from Stan Romer, regarding the possible use of these contaminated plants as a method of decorating pots. Our first pottery experiment with hyperaccumulator plants took place last year. Some of the results were impressive, since the absorbed oxides show up clearly, particularly on the porcelain.

The pots were on show at our Guild exhibition in 1994. Sue Taylor is now continuing our work and we look forward to seeing the results.

We have received and accepted an invitation to exhibit this work in support of Professor McGrath's research at a Royal Society soirée to be attended by the President of the Royal Society, Ministers and Royalty.

Members of the public are invited to attend between (provisional) times of 10 a.m. & 5 p.m. on 19th & 20th June (John Beckley to confirm).



## OTHER EVENTS

CERAMICS BY PAUL TIERNEY - Saturday April 13th - Thursday April 25th. Uxbridge Library Centre. Details on 01895 250714.

OPEN DAY WITH MARGUERITE MOON - Sunday May 12th 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. All will be welcome at "The Willows", Church Lane, Colney Heath, St.Albans. 01727 823801.

WEST DEAN SUMMER SCHOOL - Various dates in August 1996. A whole range of creative activities including Sculptural Ceramics with Tessa Fuchs. See enclosed leaflet for details, or phone 01243 811301.

WEST HERTS. COLLEGE SUMMER SCHOOL - For confident potters to improve their throwing/production techniques. 15th July - Mon to Fri. Phone D. Pitcher 01923 221309.

### BUCKINGHAMSHIRE POTTERY & SCULPTURE SOCIETY EVENTS

Thursday March 14th 8 p.m. SUE VARLEY

Friday April 26th 7 p.m. A.G.M. & CAROLINE WHYMAN

both events at Bassetbury Manor, London Road, High Wycombe.

### PITSTONE - The Soap (Jan.28th 1996).

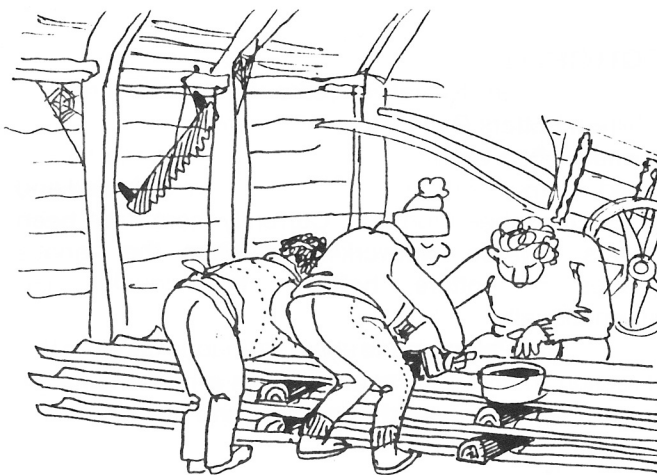
The roof beams are all in place waiting to be creosoted by Alan Baughan & Victor & Freda Earl on Tuesday. Today's job was to paint with bitumen paint ten 5m. long sheets of corrugated iron ready for the roof next week. Then it is time to move the kilns so that the sawyers' workshop can be set up on our old site. Seven helpers, Sue Taylor, Jean Halsey, Mark Wiggins, George Bateson, Alan, Freda & Victor, came all dressed up against the cold.



All dressed up  
against the cold



The Bitu-persons (politically correct) paint was nearly solid with the cold & ran very slowly indeed into the paint pots.



Once the bitumen paint had been softened by standing in front of a fan heater, it was all hands to apply it before it solidified again.

I shall be bringing books and pots to the Guild meetings to give you an idea what amazing things are being done with Raku, smoking & other post-firing techniques. Please phone me on 01442 865661 if you want to help at Pitstone.

Freda Earl

### COMPETITION WINNERS

The free book draw, run for us by Charlotte Burrows of A. & C. Black had a good response. The 3 winners, who will each receive a copy of Ruthanne Tudball's definitive book on Soda Glazing are: Jacqueline Wilshire, Jane Kilvington and Patsy Geraghty.

Our thanks to Charlotte for arranging the draw and to A. & C. Black for donating the books. Keep an eye on the Newsletter, since Charlotte is planning another book draw later in the year!



## THE LEFT-HANDED POTTER



*(Hugh Watson trained as a scientist and had a career in that profession before he became a full time potter 12 years ago. He works in a large thatched barn in Shripney, a village between Chichester and Bognor Regis. Selling most of his work directly, with a few pots in local galleries, he has set out to be the 'Local Potter', trying to meet the requirements of his immediate area. Hugh has given various seminars on pottery and he also teaches part-time at Chichester and Bognor colleges, porcelain modelling being his subject at the latter. Ed.)*

Approximately one in ten of potters must be left-handed: this short article briefly describes the experiences of a 'lefty' and, in passing, introduces a few tips which might be of interest to all throwing potters.

Potters in the West use an anti-clockwise wheel direction. The right hand is outside the pot and the balance of the body is slightly towards the right side. Throwing feels controlled and comfortable. (In 'A Potter's Book', Bernard Leach explains why a clockwise wheel is used in Japan, where the potter prefers to have his stronger right arm more available to power his wheel by the stick and notch method).

I am dominantly left-handed, truly dominantly - I suspect that I would walk and talk left-handed if that were possible. During my first attempts at throwing, with a normal electric wheel, it was quite natural to

have my right hand inside the pot and my balance directed towards my left. This went well until I wanted to make taller pots, and I was urged to knuckle rather than rely on strong fingers for applying pressure. All very well, but one cannot knuckle if the wheel is going in the wrong direction because the knuckle ploughs into the clay. For a period I tried twisting my wrists so that the wall was squeezed with the inside of the knuckle, but this does not give a good result and, particularly, it is uncomfortable.

The answer was to change to a clockwise motion and I reluctantly took to a kick-wheel, where I re-learned my throwing with the wheel going clockwise. The first dozen or so pots were a true battle, because previous natural actions could mean that the fingers would snatch at, or even dig into, the clay. Once this awkward period had passed, my throwing progressed fluently and clearly the clockwise direction was the correct one for the future. (There was an unexpected bonus: I had always found turning rather difficult and had not realised how unnatural it is to swing the dominant arm across the body, as had been necessary on an anti-clockwise wheel. Now with the tool on my left-hand side, its natural sweep across the clay surface became apparent and for the first time I actually enjoyed turning).

That is all history of over twenty years ago. In 1976, I asked Mervyn Fitzwilliam to build me a Rayefco wheel with reversing capability. This wheel is exactly as standard, with the addition of a reversing switch below the control panel. One simply actuates the switch (with no power to the motor at the time!) and the wheel turns in the opposite direction.

The wheel has behaved perfectly. As an indication of usage, it has made pots approaching a total value of £100,000 - it is interesting to tot up the financial value of an item of equipment. The pots have ranged from porcelain to a norm of stoneware, and included in the earlier days of my full-time pottery, a high proportion of terracotta garden pots.

Whereas I use the wheel clockwise, students have used it for hundreds of hours in the anti-clockwise mode. Viewed in a mirror, my throwing would appear to be totally conventional. The only point of comment might be - and I add this as a tip - my frequent use of mini-batts on a pegged wheel-head. I have made about 120 batts of 6" diameter and they have proved most valuable, because they allow a light and neat mug, small jug, or lidded pot to be thrown so as to need no subsequent trimming whatsoever; ten fit conveniently on to a standard board.

I use the wheel in the conventional anti-clockwise mode for two purposes. One is to correct a twist/ripple in tall pots, and the other is to smooth down grog. For all I know, there are kick-wheel potters who use these wheel reversals, but I will describe them because, on the occasions I need them, they prove invaluable.

For Twists: When the twist is noticed, reverse the wheel and take out some of the angle of the twist by applying pressure near the rim; this give a force which opposes the direction of the twist. On a good day all that remains is a slight vertical ripple, but on a normal day the original fault remains, although much reduced.

With the wheel still reversed. give the wall a full but gentle pull. This will remove the ripple. Finally, for surety and neatness, clean the area with a flat or flattish rib, with its edge held at about 20° to the axis of the pot.

Then change wheel direction and proceed. The correcting process takes no longer than two or three minutes; it is so quick that I normally apply the procedure if I am lucky enough to spot that slight flicker of a rotating wall which often portends incipient twisting.

To Smooth Grog: Even an ungrogged clay - my norm for a turned pot - will contain the occasional particle which is caught by the turning tool to form a score mark, and a grogged clay can of course give a thoroughly scoured affect. The remedy which is normally advised is to polish the grog down with a turning tool or kidney or somesuch. I find that this procedure is not wholly effective. Certainly the grog goes down well, but often at the expense of additional scoring, with the grog particle ploughing further through the clay surface, and the score marks can be very difficult to remove, even after dampening the surface a little.

Reversing the wheel allows a much more effective treatment. One can observe that the grog particles roll back, as it were, into their channels rather than ploughing further, and - I don't understand why - the score marks polish out more effectively.

A tip for those who do not already do it. I have experienced directly, or have seen, so many instances of a change of glaze behaviour on passing from the unturned to the turned portion of a pot, that as a matter of course I set out to avoid it. When the change is small, it may be no more than a hint of change of glaze surface, but at its worst, it can show as pin-holing or even crawling on the turned portion. Polishing is not the answer, because this can introduce other problems based on slow take-up of glaze. Nor is sponging, because this raises the grog. The remedy is simple, and with every turned pot I quickly wipe the turned area with a cloth dampened with a little fine slip, using the motion of the wheel. The turned surface is now indistinguishable from the as-thrown surface, and fortunately it dries almost immediately, causing no delay in subsequent handling. (The cloth is cotton, with its frayed edges hidden by appropriate folding. The thick non-woven fabrics which are sold for use as dishcloths are just as effective and probably more convenient). I suspect we have been seduced away from cloth by the cheapness of synthetic sponge; I use

it for a variety of purposes, especially for the rims of large pots when a chamois leather feels too slippery in the hands. Finally, if anyone who has recently started throwing, or is even a well-practiced thrower, would like to try my wheel, then they would be most welcome to do so. I can be contacted through the Newsletter.

**Hugh Watson - October 1995**

An invitation to participate in a festival at St.Albans Cathedral on Wed.2nd- Sun.6th Oct. '96. 10-7 daily, 12-7 Sunday. No charge for exhibition space. Extensive publicity but no sales allowed on premises. Craftspeople encouraged to discuss their work with visitors & display publicity material. Inclusion in a comprehensive catalogue. Offers to demonstrate gladly accepted.

The closing date for entry is stated as Jan.31st but if you are interested contact **Alban in Glory, Gorhambury, St.Albans, Herts. AL3 6AH** - they may accept latecomers.

*(I apologise for not putting this in the previous Newsletter, having mislaid the original notice - R.K.)*

## **MEMBERSHIP NEWS**

Wendy Fowler has just completed a commission for a Japanese couple, making 20 tea bowls to be exported to Japan, for use in the tea ceremony. When collecting the bowls, the customers introduced Wendy to the tea ceremony, something she had not participated in before. Wendy is pleased to have her work given such approval; Who knows, she may become a major exporter!

Lynn Brunt has joined the Guild. Lynn is currently in her final year of a City & Guilds pottery course at West Herts College & was working on a sculpture over 5 feet tall when I spoke to her. She is very keen on smoke firing & Raku variants, so is hoping to be involved with the Guild activities at Pitstone.

Caroline Hughes is a teacher with an interest in all aspects of pottery and joins us as a new member.

Dorothy Saxby has had a stay in hospital recently, but is now back on her feet, so we hope to see her at our meetings again. Dorothy makes thrown porcelain, stoneware & Raku & has a strong interest in decoration techniques.

## **POT CRAWL**

**This year's proposed visit to some Cheshire and Denbigh Potters - 15/16th June 1996.**

Building on what I believe was a successful pot crawl last year, I have been a little more adventurous by going further afield. By using the motorways, the travelling time will be no longer than to Rufford last year, providing major roadworks are not in operation. There will be a 'comfort' stop between Hemel Hempstead and Denbigh, but no food or drink, so you may like to bring a flask and a snack as lunch will be rather late.

We will visit **David Frith** and also the local museum to see some excellent murals made by **Criag Bragdy Tile Company** before visiting them on a local industrial estate. I have finally got confirmation, to visit **Norman Makinson** who makes figures in porcelain. All this will be on the Saturday on a rotation basis. All the venues are within a 1½ mile radius. Lunch will be at the **Brookside Mill Tavern, Denbigh**. Due to the football international, we have had to change the original hotel arrangements and we will now go to the excellent **Castle Hotel, Ruthin**. The evening meal will be at either the Brookhouse Mill or the Castle Hotel.

Sunday will be more leisurely; we will again rotate as groups between **Willy Carter** at the Farm Pottery, Farndon, Chester and **Brian Dickenson**, who you will all remember for his entertaining and highly skilled demonstration on Open Day, at Curdland Farm, Harthill Road, Burwardsley, Tattenhall, Chester.

Lunch will be locally at the Pheasant Inn, Burwardsley. I have visited all these places myself to arrange things and I believe that you will find that it is a very varied pot crawl with interests for everyone. Even in January, the countryside of England and of North Wales is surely among the best to be seen anywhere in the U.K. In addition, the whole Dee Estuary, the Wirral and the mountains of Wales were visible.

I am sure I can fill a coach easily, so please send in your applications at your earliest convenience - form enclosed in this Newsletter. The hotel is large by local standards, but small compared to city ones, motels, etc. There are some family rooms, some twin and a few single, so book early to get the room you want. I look forward to seeing a good crowd of you.

**Brian Bicknell**

## **NEWS FROM OTHER POTTERY GROUPS**

### **Kent Potters Association**

Janet Jackson writes in the Jan/Feb issue of the Newsletter that the KPA Gallery is holding its own and has had several complimentary comments in the Visitors Book. I wonder if we should contemplate a gallery for

DCPG ? (Perhaps one of our members would like to arrange a visit; please talk to Val Barnes if so).

Jenny Mowatt visited me to collect a wheel-head and some bats recently and was keen to arrange a later visit with more members of the KPA. This set me thinking about the possibility of reciprocal "Open House" visits between the groups- anyone out there wish to organise this?

### **Midland Potters Association**

News of other Galleries! The MPA arranged the use of an empty shop as a gallery, for the south west area in the run up to Christmas. Currently there is a privately-owned gallery on the eastern side of the region, which the owner regards as the MPA outlet for the south Leicester area, with the work of 15 potters represented. Our members may not all know that the MPA is divided into several regional groups, due to the extensive area covered (approx. 10,000 square miles). This regional division can lead to some surprising situations; e.g. in the Dec.'95 Newsletter, Nick Williams indicated that the Stoke area had only 3 active members.

### **North Wales Potters**

In the excellent Newsletter from NWP for Autumn '95. it was reported that "Potters at the Pictures" (showings of videos & films) is their most profitable event, with an admission fee of £2 members, £3 non-members.

Marion Whybrow is writing a book about the Leach Pottery & wishes to hear from anyone who worked at St.Ives, or who has information that could be included in the book. Phone 01736 795939.

### **Scottish Potters Association**

In their Winter '95 Newsletter, the SPA report the results of a survey designed to understand Members' views on Association exhibitions. Of those replying, 69% were professional potters, 19% non-professional potters and 12% were teachers/lecturers. The results showed that 85% of returns were in favour of selective exhibitions & 74% were in favour of working with other associations in Britain & abroad; 67% were prepared to contribute to the costs of exhibiting.

The SPA have joined the Studio Potters Network - an association of worldwide potters with 15,000 members. This organisation has a twice-yearly newsletter & also has an exchange bed and breakfast directory for potters. (Your Committee will discuss this at a future meeting, if sufficient people are interested).

### **Footnote**

I hope that you find the above notes of interest. As usual, I am spending far more time than I can possibly afford on producing this Newsletter, so I am handing this feature over to Harry Karnac for the next issue.

**Editor**



## **SUE VARLEY - AT NORTHCHURCH, JANUARY 12TH '96.**

Sue Varley has an approach to ceramics that is closely allied to nature - earth, rocks, pebbles and landscape. Her handbuilt pinched pots are gently rounded, thoughtfully textured and coloured. These colours are subtle and warm, and glaze is used very sparingly. They are sometimes fired to stoneware temperature, but often to earthenware and then smoked in a sawdust kiln.

Small amounts of oxides are sometimes mixed with the body or occasionally applied on the surface with a wash over wax resist. The resulting pots are quietly beautiful.

Sue gets her inspiration and refreshes her ideas by sketching in the Welsh landscape whenever possible, though she says she may try and find inspiration nearer 'home' in the Chilterns.

Wearing her other hat, Sue showed slides and talked to us about her work teaching girls at the North London Collegiate School in Edgware. She explained how she and the two others in the art department construct the children's approach to the subject. They always work to a theme, which will usually last a term. They draw and talk about objects connected to the theme before starting to work with the clay.

She was most emphatic about teaching technique too - in particular, the technique of joining clay to clay. As she so rightly said, it is discouraging for a child (or anyone else) to make something which falls to pieces. They obviously have the balance right between creative freedom and good technique, as we saw from the slides. What lucky pupils !

The 'masterpiece' of the whole department's work, which took 4 years to complete, was a mural now in situ on a sheltered outside wall of the school. This mural is in two adjacent parts, the sea and the land. The sea, of course, consists of hundreds of separate pieces made by the children of shells, fish, crabs, pebbles, seaweed, etc. in low relief. The earth and sky part was of animals, birds, trees, buildings and people. Small interstices were filled with tiny tesserae and the whole thing surrounded by decorated tiles. The work involved was tremendous, but the results truly inspiring.

Those guild members who teach will have gained much from this valuable talk and the rest of us were greatly entertained by the whole evening.

Sue has exhibited widely and has had a great deal of teaching experience. She will be talking about her work and demonstrating at Bassetbury Manor, High Wycombe on March 14th this year.

Ruth Karnac

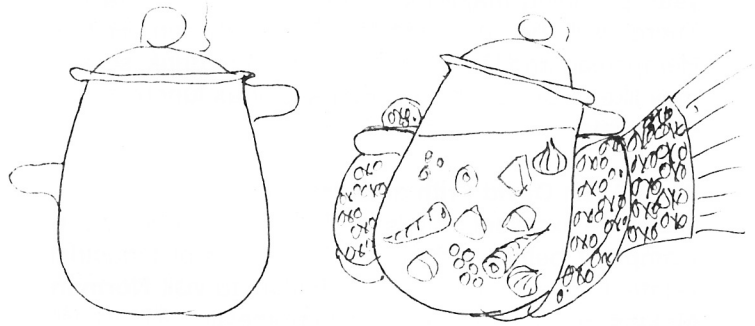
### **POTTERS TIPS**

#### **DOMESTIC POTTERY**

Before embarking on a career in making domestic pottery, read Elizabeth David, Len Deighton (*Ou est le Garlic ?*) or Delia Smith & improve your cooking skills. N.B. I am available to test results.

Doug Jones

For those with arthritis, having one hand weaker than the other, you can make deep casseroles & soup bowls easier to carry by mounting one handle higher than the other. The casserole is then carried with the handles level, which tips a lot of the weight from the low-handle side to the high-handle side. It also tips the soup out if you over-fill - so a glazed level indicator inside would be useful.



weaker hand

stronger hand

(There is no doubt that the pot looks odd)

Freda Earl

#### **RE-BIRTH OF THE TYG**

Pam Bishop was practising making handles by adding more than one to each pot. She wound up with some three-handled mugs, which seemed good enough to fire. The net result is that she has a mug which always has a handle at the front when the microwave stops. (With thanks to Freda for the sketch).



## THE GRAPEVINE WORKS!

*(Doug Jones phoned me on Jan.29th '96 to pass on this tip - Editor)*

Simone (Doug's wife) holds Yoga classes. One of her students knows (of?) a potter in Aberdeen who uses a redundant chest freezer to store his clay, to prevent it freezing.

This works because freezers are well insulated to stop the frozen items from thawing, which also means that relatively warm items stored in an old freezer, which is not switched on, will stay relatively warm.

Doug was excited about this idea since, in common with many potters, his workshop is abandoned to the elements at night & only heated when he is at work. The consequence of this is that with the sub-zero temperatures presently prevailing, clay becomes frozen & unworkable overnight. (Simone only allows a limited use of the Aga to heat clay - see previous Newsletter).

Please phone Doug on 01923 770913 if you have an unwanted freezer !

As a footnote to this idea, I am informed that a redundant freezer also makes an excellent apple store to over-winter Bramley apples, maintaining a fairly even temperature & being-mouse-proof - perhaps we need more than one.

M.F.

## **BOOK REVIEWS**

**Art Deco and Modernist Ceramics.** Karen McCready. Hardback. 192 pp. Thames & Hudson 1995 £28.00

This book has been printed with Art Deco style chapter headings in distinctive heavy and light stroke capitals, easily recognisable from seeing the posters of the 20s and 30s. Smart, clear, readily readable, a 'sharpening' of the beautiful curvaceous line of the earlier Art Nouveau style, setting the whole tone of the book.

The work deals with ceramics, about which the average layman's knowledge may stop at the name Susie Cooper and Clarice Cliff, if indeed the uninitiated artist is aware even of these.

In other words, not very much seems to be known generally about ceramics made during the period between 1919 and 1939. Let us, therefore, repair this gap in the historic framework. First the name: in 1925 the International Exhibition of Decorative Arts gave the name 'Art Deco'. But this also refers to the styles extant from 1910 and including 'Modernism' right up to the 1960s. 'Post Modernism' then began to supersede all these styles.

'Art Deco' could be seen in all designs and decorations. 'Modernism' and 'Art Moderne' were mainly offshoots of 'Art Deco' and tended to be more

severe and somewhat cold. Nevertheless 'Art Moderne' became very popular, noticeably in clothes, architecture and furniture.

Here, McCready delves into the various camps, especially of course, those of the ceramists. Influences go back to the 1880s - of William Morris & Christopher Dresser - to the beginnings of Art Deco, through Art Nouveau with its sensual curves and patterns, to the starker, simpler, livelier, 'Jazz Age'-Deco.

The various styles of Art Deco ceramics (particularly) reflect and react with the political and economic state of the world- as indeed all art must do at all times! The British Art and Craft Movement crossed the Channel and spread through France, Belgium, Holland, Austria, etc. A dormant period occurred during the first world war but, afterwards, in Russia, the porcelain designs changed rapidly. The Bauhaus in Germany soon followed with Modernism and Walter Gropius, and 'Craft' became the 'in' word.

The French 1925 Exhibition gave Art Deco its peak production with its numerous ceramists across Europe, from Scandinavia to Italy. In Britain the style became extremely popular and fashionable with hundreds of 'paintresses' (no P.C. then!) employed in the large numbers of factories. All the wares were stark, brightly coloured, and often representative of other objects. Art Deco and Modernism merged; but as the economic depression slumped heavily in the 1930s, the art market dwindled away.

Art Moderne was, to an extent, reborn in the USA. but never to the range of the early European styles. New kitchens, with refrigerators, encouraged new designs of vessels for containing perishable foods, often suitably decorated by renowned artists.

The names of these artists/crafts people are included in the introductory chapter of the book, not only of the Europeans, but also of the Americans. In 1939 the World's Fair opened in New York, but despite its many millions of visitors, events of 1939, as in 1914, brought the production of decorative wares to a standstill.

Here, then, in this book we have a clear dissertation on the background of Art Deco styles. What follows is almost a hundred pages of beautifully coloured photographs of the wares from 13 countries, made during the period.

The following chapter contains a full, alphabetical list of the designers and factories of these wares giving dates, descriptions, logos and further illustrations in black and white. To conclude, there are a glossary, a bibliography and an index.

Karen McCready of New York, a well-known author and curator of ceramics, has completed an enormous task of collating and explaining details of the ceramics of the Art Deco and Modernist period.

There is much to study in this remarkable book, with a multitude of varied designs. The information contained in it exceeds most of the publications on the design of all comprehensive modern arts and crafts. It gives the reader a great insight to the Art Deco ceramics from all around the world.

© Stan Romer

**Border Wares.** Jacqueline Pearce. Paperback. 140 pp. HMSO. 1992 £30.00

Sixteenth and seventeenth centuries England constituted a time of economic growth, and this was noted particularly in the ceramics industries. New methods of manufacture, due principally to improved communications, influenced fashions, especially in pottery, for which the increased demand by all sections of society caused a great expansion of industrialisation. This was noticeably so in London, supplied largely from the Surrey and Hampshire borders. This book, the first volume on the study of post-mediaeval pottery in London, gives the reader a very detailed description of the vast archaeological discoveries made in this area, mainly during the last twenty years or so.

The term 'Border Wares' covers the various products of the site of north-east Hampshire across to west Surrey, made during the 16th & 17th centuries. These products were made from local white and red clays, used separately or mixed. Lead (galena) glazes were used, sometimes coloured green with copper or brown with manganese. There were many shapes and sizes from dishes and bowls, including colanders and porringers, through cooking vessels such as tripod pipkins, skillets, saucepans and chafing dishes, to drinking vessels, cups, mugs, goblets and jugs. Other forms consisted of variously shaped costrels, chamber pots, bedpans, candlesticks of various types, lanterns, pedestal dishes, money boxes, condiment dishes, jars, whistles, fuming pots, bottles and miscellaneous objects of specific or ambiguous uses.

There are illustrated, in black and white, hundreds of examples of these wares, together with eleven coloured plates of excellent photographs of many types. For the student or studio potter, clay types, preparation and manufacture are all detailed with care and photographs of sherds show how the different wares were thrown, attached, cut, finished, decorated and glazed. The methods of firing have been determined by a thorough study of all the products.

The author delves into historical aspect to determine the chronological perspective of the Border ware industry and to follow the life-styles of the customers in the London market. The interactive influences between English and Continental potteries, especially of those potters of the Netherlands, are well noted.

A map of the City of London is given, showing all the various excavation sites where the numerous wares have been discovered. All these sites are meticulously described. The illustrated vessels, shown in the book and catalogues in the appendices can be seen at the Museum of London. A useful, comprehensive bibliography is supplied, as is also a clear, tabulated index.

For the archaeology student, art historian, collector and the practical potter this is an invaluable book, beautifully produced; one which could provide more than the basis of a thesis; or interest a studio potter to create the bold, rustic forms which were produced after the long mediaeval period of artistic and

industrial inactivity.

For the impecunious student, a visit to the County Library may bring recompense: it would be well worth any effort to encourage the librarian to purchase.

© Stan Romer

## **SOCIAL EVENING & TALK BY ALAN PARROTT** **- BEEKEEPER ON 8TH DEC.'97.**

Traditionally, the December Guild meeting has been regarded as a social evening and the speaker has not necessarily been a potter. Some beekeepers have, however, become potters in order to make honeypots.

Alan Parrott, our speaker for the evening, is a beekeeper and his wife is a potter and a member of the Guild. Alan answered a great many questions asked by our members (a curious and enquiring audience) and revealed some fascinating facts about bees and beekeeping. He brought to the meeting an observation hive with a live colony of bees complete with queen - fortunately, none escaped amongst us.

Some of the interesting facts Alan told us about were:-

A commercial hive will hold up to 100,000 bees. At a peak period in the spring, a hive can produce 25 lbs. of honey a week for a period of 4 or 5 weeks. The mainflow of nectar starts in July; in our area, blackberries and lime trees are important sources of this nectar.

A queen bee lays an average of 2,000 eggs a day, but can be capable of laying up to 4,500 a day. The eggs turn into grubs which the 'nurse bees' feed with 'bee milk'. Nurse bees graduate to become guard bees. The mature worker bees go outside to collect nectar and only live for a further two weeks. Only female worker bees have stings. A typical hive produces eight queen cells. The queen bee lays a normal egg in these queen cells and the grubs feed on royal jelly to become queen bees. Bees are active throughout the winter, they do not hibernate.

A swarm of bees consists of a queen bee together with up to 30,000 other bees, who cluster around the queen bee to keep warm. A swarm needs a total of 10,000 bees to survive. Swarms typically start after the nectar flow stops temporarily in May.

Beekeepers, contrary to popular belief, do not want swarms of bees which householders sometimes find in their gardens. These swarms might be carrying the Veroa mite which came into the U.K. some years ago.

Bees collect nectar from flowers and swallow it. The enzymes in their guts work on the sugars in the nectar which is then regurgitated along with the stomach contents. It is then eaten and regurgitated by other bees. After being through this process a number of times, the resulting unripe honey is put into the cones. Bees then blow air over the open cones with their wings and moisture is removed from the honey which is then capped.



To produce 1 lb. of wax, bees consume 10 lbs. of honey. The wax is produced by glands on the bee's abdomen. Pollen is collected by bees only to feed the young bees. It does, however, get mixed with all the honey, but is filtered out of most honey produced by large scale producers.

Pollen is collected by commercial beekeepers and is sold for medicinal purposes. Propolis is a tree resin found on buds; it is a component part of beeswax and gives it its strong smell. It is sold for medicinal use.

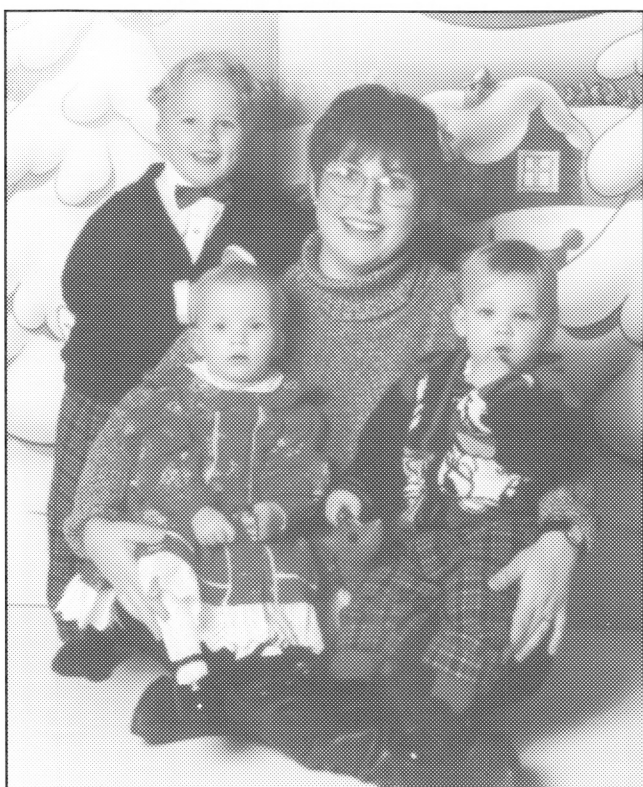
Wasps, swifts and house martins eat bees on the wing, but wasps feed on grey aphids and serve a very useful purpose. A woodpecker can eat a whole colony of bees in some three days, if unchecked.

Guild members very much enjoyed the excellent presentation by Alan, who was a mine of information. Many of those present, including me, went home with some of the wide range of honey and honey-flavoured preserves that Alan produces.

**John Beckley**

## **PROFILES.**

### **(i) How I ended up in Rickmansworth**



**Anneli with her three children**

It all started two years ago when I attended an evening course at the studio of a famous Swedish potter, Jeannette Andersson. I was really hit by the excitement of working with clay so I hired a place at the studio to work more than the normal 'one evening a week'. I was mainly experimenting with stoneware. During the spring of 1995, my husband started to talk about moving to England and I said to myself "Oh no", now that I started to enjoy my time in the studio.

However, my husband promised that I could have my own studio when we moved, so I said "No problems".

We moved by the end of May and, of course, with all the work related to the move, my pottery studio was not the first thing that happened. I bought the Craft magazine and found the ad for the National Pottery and Ceramics Festival in Hatfield. After 30 minutes at the Festival, I realised that this was heaven for a potter. I bought my wheel and a LOT of small things for my studio and I even signed up as a member of the Guild. On the way home, I convinced my husband to start the work fixing my own studio now that I had bought my wheel. We enjoyed the Festival so much, so we went back the next day with the whole family (3 children). We had to rebuild the garage to get my studio, it took another couple of weeks before we had everything in place and I could, finally, start my own work in my own studio.

Unfortunately, with 3 children, I don't have much time to spend in the studio, but I love every minute of it. It sure is nice to escape and have a break from the daily routines.

**Anneli Mohlin**

### **(ii) STAN ROMER**

Mervyn coerced me (pleasantly) to write this! So here goes.

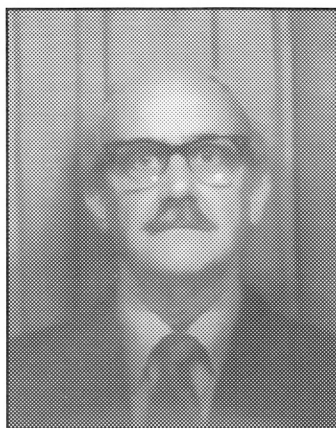
"If anyone can convince me that I do not think aright, yet gladly will I alter <sup>FOR A SEARCH AFTER TRUTH</sup> - by which no man yet was ever harmed". Marcus Aurelius, Roman Emperor 161-180 A.D., wrote this (in Latin).

When I was at school - the same one at which the Prime Minister, much later, had the honour to attend - a fellow student and I, despite the Head's obstructions, inaugurated a Biology class of two. My friend became a doctor, I wanted to become a vet. I was also very interested in anthropology, archaeology, handcraft, etc. I read books, but found that handling old pots from many civilisations was even more interesting. They describe people so well!

Having been drafted into the army in July 1939, I spent most of my free time wandering round foreign parts, ruins etc. When I was finally released in 1946, I entered Training College.

From time to time, I visited museums and other places of learning. I took my nephew, John, to the Egyptian rooms at the British Museum, and look where he's landed up! (*John Romer is a well-known Egyptologist who has been published; some of you have probably seen some of his T.V. programmes such as 'Valley of the Kings', etc. - Ed.*)

Then I met dear Dora Billington who, probably because she knew the Polish Foreign Minister-in-exile and bearing the same name as mine, decided I could join the pottery classes at the Central School, although they were all full. I had already met Kenneth Clark (not the Lord or the Chancellor) and Louise Wilson at Goldsmiths on a pottery course, and got stuck in at the Central under the eagle eye of Gilbert Harding-Green and his various cohorts.



I had initiated pottery classes at two schools in London, and continued in Bucks. and Beds. finishing up at a College, teaching pottery. However, when the 'powers' considered that Business Studies etc. were more important than 'playing around with clay', I deemed it was time to retire, a little early. This was beneficial to my health.

The Guild had formed a few years before this, and I participated from the inaugural meeting.

I don't know what else Marcus Aurelius said, but I do agree with the first part of the quotation. I was always taught 'never to accept things without question or explanation', but it seems to me that many people don't subscribe to this and hence feel slighted if one asks for reasons or proofs. Unfortunately I believe this can cause misunderstanding and possibly some harm even, if in some cases, I am right. I do like to know why --- this is so, - why this design is used, - or that method, or which clay is best. Hence I have delved deeply into much literature on pottery and similar studies; also gardening and the like.

This was so much so that I began to criticise some of the books, and to write reviews of them; several of these reviews were/are published in professional magazines.

If you have read many of the Guild's Newsletters, you will know that I am still writing reviews - I hope you appreciate them - and have made any of your purchases accordingly. It was nice to be told by a member "I've bought that book which you recommended, it is very good!"

Now I'm afraid that my health forbids me to travel, pot or be 'violently' active in any other way; so I spend much of my time reading, and reviewing books, mainly on pottery. I do hope you find this is useful work. And, yes (Arthur) the review books are free, I have hundreds; but with the time spent in reading, checking and writing, postage, materials etc., I may have spent the equivalent price of each book.

Starting some 25 years ago, I have completed a 'Ceramic Dictionary' which a publishing house began to produce but for reasons of their own (finance?), they reneged half-way through the deal. Maybe I'll bring it out in C.D. Rom?

More recently I've just completed (with some linguistic help) a Vade Mecum for the traveller to/from any Spanish speaking country, which I hope to have published fairly soon. This is a much smaller effort on

foods, plants, etc., but nothing to do with ceramics.

I'm interested in languages and I try my best to speak and write English correctly; I hope to learn from my earlier mistakes. Some of the books I have reviewed may have contained poor grammar & there's been a printer's error or two. I usually tell the publisher, but I've never had an acknowledgement of this. They still keep sending the books!

It is most pleasing to know that the Raku kiln, which I helped to build and fire at Pitstone for several years, is enjoying a new lease of life. Well done Freda and Co!. And I hope some good results will come again from firing with hyperaccumulator plants; like the colours attained on the ancient Japanese Potters' ware. I think we are going to hear much more about these plants in the near future.

If you've read this far, thank you and please note that I send my best wishes to all in the Guild, and would always be interested to know what you are doing. There are still a few pots to be fired and books waiting to be reviewed.

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## **STOP PRESS !!!**

### **PITSTONE**

The roof is now on at our Pitstone site, thanks to the hard work of all involved. The old kilns had to be removed from the original site, so were demolished, the bricks cleaned & moved to the new area, ready for the rebuilding to begin.

### **OPEN DAY 1996**

The date for the Open Day has been selected after background work by Elaine Hudson, being Saturday 16th November, so put it in your diary now!

### **A GUILD LIBRARY?**

We have talked around the possibility of having a guild Library & Ruth Karnac has volunteered to allow some of her books to be used to start us off. The details of how to run this have not been resolved & suggestions will be welcome. We would also welcome the offer of any pottery books that other members are willing to donate.

### **WORKSHOPS**

We want you to send in suggestions about possible future workshops & Events.

The application form in the last Newsletter had a section for suggestions, but the only replies received were from people applying for a place at the Elaine Coles Workshops.

The requests received were for workshops with;  
Tessa Fuchs - 3

Doug Jones - torso & life modelling - 3

Chris Bramble - 1

Brian Dickenson - 2

One request to vary the Open Day date from Nov.

One request for an extra Open Day in the Spring.

If you still have the application form, please refer to the bottom section & complete it with your ideas, then send it to Victor Earl.

### **FUTURE GUILD ACTIVITIES**

Linda Bryant has listed some future guild activities on a form enclosed with this Newsletter. If you want to sell your pottery at these events, or help with these activities, please complete the form & send it to Linda.

## **Exhibition of Jewellery, by Ruth Karnac**

**April 1st to May 11th, at Wylyotts Centre, Darkes Lane, Potters Bar.**

**Admission is free.**

**Monday to Friday 10.00 am. to 5.00 pm., Saturday 10.00am. to 4.00 pm.**

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**Mervyn Fitzwilliam** (Vice-Chair & Newsletter)  
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**Hanna Christianson** (Programme Organiser)  
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Brian Dewbury April 20/21  
**OVEN & TABLEWARE POTTERY**  
George Wilson April 27/28  
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Jo Miller April 27/28  
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Jo Miller & Julian Cooksey May 4/5  
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Harry Horlock-Stringer May 5 & 12  
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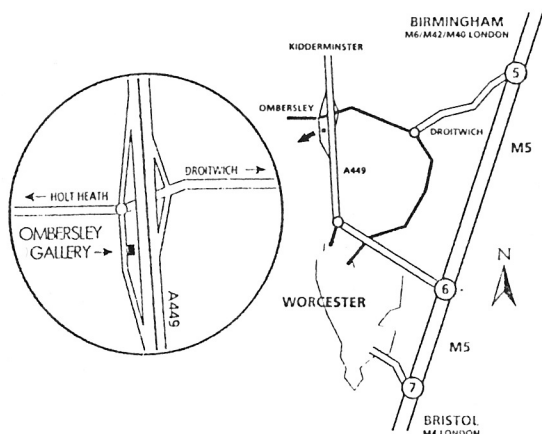


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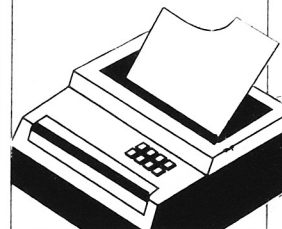
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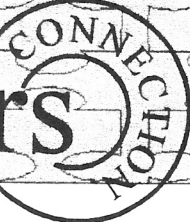
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