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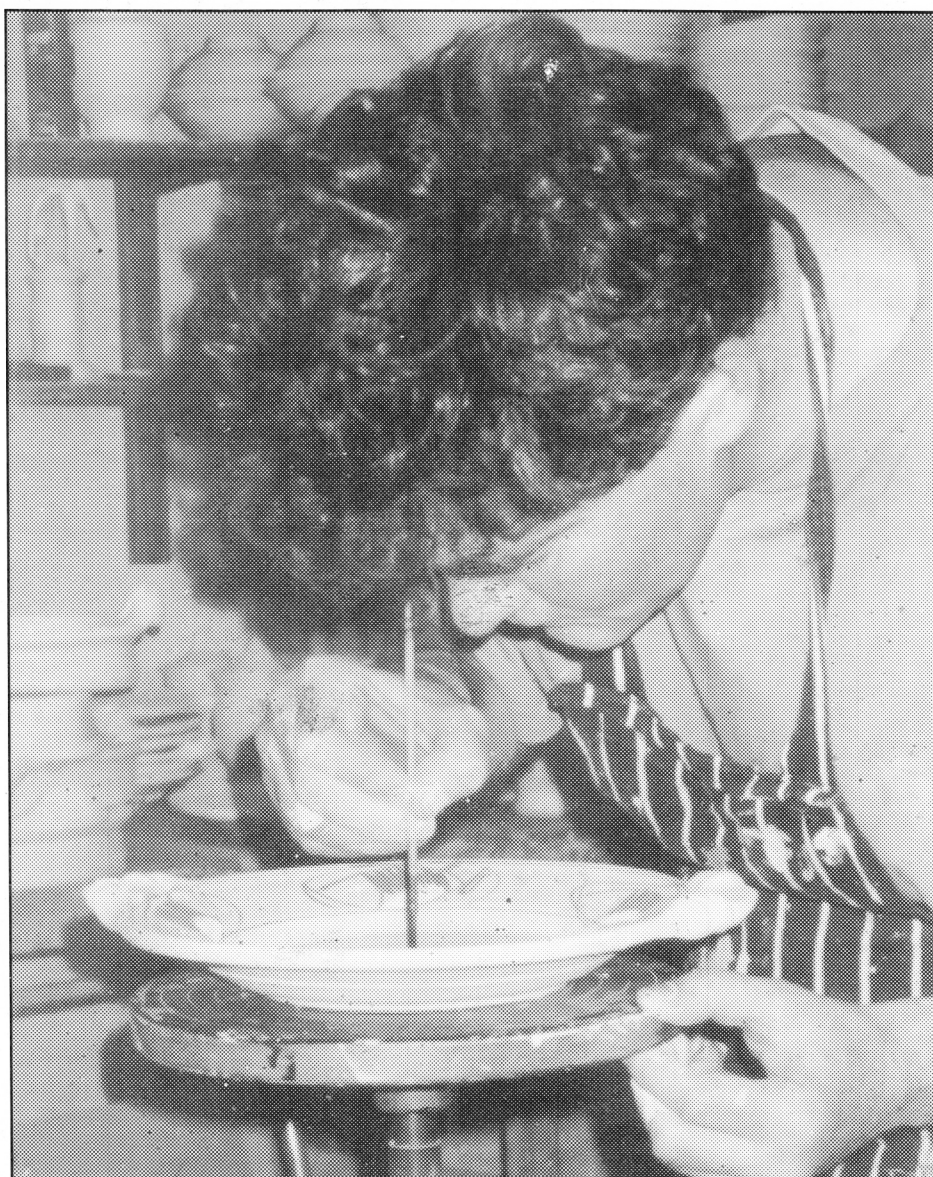
**\*ISNICK OTTOMAN  
CERAMICS**

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**DACORUM AND  
CHILTERN  
POTTERS GUILD**



**NEWSLETTER**

**SEPT. /OCTOBER**

**1996**

**£1.50**

## ABOUT THE GUILD & THE NEWSLETTER

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, made payable to D.C.P.G., to Victor Earl, Treasurer (if joining after March, please phone our treasurer for a reduced introductory rate; address & phone number on p.12)

The Dacorum & Chiltern Potters Guild Newsletter is published bi-monthly in January, March, May, July, September & December, 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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## FRONT COVER PHOTOGRAPH

Willy Carter decorating a dish during our Pot Crawl this year.

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## EDITORIAL

I am very grateful to Harry Karnac for taking over most of the production of this issue of the Newsletter, with assistance from Ruth.

My thanks also to those of you who responded so well to the call for articles to publish.

Mervyn Fitzwilliam

### GUILD EVENTS

Friday 13 Sept., 8.00 p.m. at Northchurch Social Centre  
ANDY CORDY will demonstrate various making techniques.

**ANDY CORDY** has sent us the following notes about his background and his demonstration.

Born 1957 Bristol. Secondary education in boys' comprehensive where rugby was the only subject the teachers were expected to know well. I hated team sports. Pottery teacher sacked in my first year, pottery becomes a form room. My dad still has my first pot! With no formal design training I eventually ended up designing for a German furniture manufacturer. Moved to London 1987 and dropped out. Started pottery classes in Brixton and fell hopelessly in love with it. Technician work there with, amongst others, Kate Mellors and the late Ian Godfrey teaching.

**Harrow 1990 - 1993 B.A. Workshop Ceramics**

**UEL 1994 - 1995 M.A. Art in Architecture**

Since 1987 I have shared a studio and worked with Keith King. I have worked as a technician for various artists,

including Kate Mellors, Tessa Wolf-Murray, Grenville Davie and Richard Deacon. I like to challenge the accepted notions of what my rôle as artist\potter\sculptor might be.

I will be showing a few slides - not more than, say, 12. I will need some time to talk about the evolution of my work, though I promise to condense this as much as possible.

My demonstration will consist of various making techniques (my work has evolved considerably since you first saw it in 1993 and now incorporates a much wider range of making techniques).

Working Upside-down. Structure and "Heat Work" - thinking about your bottom and your feet.

The Benefits of a Good Beating. Handy hints for disciplined handbuilding\assembly work.

Enjoying a Joint. Successful examples will be passed around the group, to include - Glue ... the final heresy.

Hot and Waxy. Quick multiple press mould. Sprigging.

First Aid Tent. Wrapping the whole thing up.

The Miracle Vessel. A thought to struggle with on the way home.

Friday October 11th at **7.30 p.m.** at Northwood Social Centre following the A.G.M.,  
JOHN HIGGINS will demonstrate surface texture and colour on sculptural pots

Sat.5th & Sun.6th October at "The Making Place"  
**BRIAN DICKENSON WORKSHOP**

This will be a two day weekend activity for 12 people, with the option of attending on one or both days. There will be a price concession for those attending both days.

Those who came to our Open Day last year will certainly remember Brian, who impressed us all with his decorating technique. We saw him again on the Pot Crawl this June.

The Saturday is planned as a throwing workshop. Brian is a skilful and precise thrower, so this is a superb opportunity to learn new skills or polish up those you already have.

On Sunday Brian will be demonstrating and teaching his methods of decoration, using a range of techniques, including his methods of decorating using the wheel.

IF YOU WANT TO COME TO THE WORKSHOP, PLEASE APPLY TO VICTOR EARL, ON THE ENCLOSED FORM.

**MEMBERSHIP SUBSCRIPTIONS ARE DUE ON 1st OCTOBER. PAY EARLY TO ENSURE THAT YOU RECEIVE YOUR NEXT NEWSLETTER.**



**POTTERS OPEN DAY  
SATURDAY 16TH NOVEMBER 1996**

POTTERS OPEN DAY IS FAST APPROACHING.  
IT IS **NOW** TIME TO BOOK YOUR PLACE ON  
THE ENCLOSED APPLICATION FORM.

WE HAVE AN EXCITING PROGRAMME FOR  
YOU THIS YEAR - GUEST SPEAKERS ARE:

**PHIL ROGERS:** Thrown and altered ash-  
glazed stoneware

**SUSAN HALLS:** Paper clay sculpture

**BENNETT COOPER:** Decorative high-fired  
earthenware

This year we'll have a delicious lunch provided by a  
very reliable professional caterer.

DON'T MISS THIS OPPORTUNITY TO PICK UP  
MAKING TIPS FROM THE EXPERTS AND TO BUY OR  
EVEN WIN ONE OF THEIR POTS.

**OTHER EVENTS**

13th October: Glass and Ceramics Fair. Commonwealth  
Institute, Kensington High St., London, W.8.

15th-20th and 22nd-27th October: Chelsea Craft Fair.

7th and 8th December: Studio Art Fair. Commonwealth  
Institute, Kensington High St., London, W.8.

**JOSIE WALTERS' WORKSHOP  
28TH SEPT. 9.45 a.m.- 4 p.m.**

Ewing Hall, Wood St., Barnet.

**£16 INCLUDING LUNCH**

Contact Toby 0181 204 6279.

Tony Moody is planning to give throwing lessons at  
"the Making Place" on Friday Evenings.  
01442 865661

**DOUG JONES WILL BE WITH  
"LIVE CRAFTS" AT THE  
CHILTERN OPEN AIR MUSEUM  
29th, 30th Nov. and 1st Dec.**

**Also at: R.Steiner School,  
Kings Langley on 7th Dec.**

*Visitors welcome on other days up to  
Christmas at: Norfolk Rd. Studio,  
Rickmansworth. Please ring first  
01923 770 913.*

**MEMBERSHIP NEWS**

We welcome a number of new members to the Guild:

**Maurice Clarke** is an architect from St. Albans who is  
working on his City and Guilds at Oaklands College. Like  
many of us, Maurice has been attending evening classes  
for many years. His interests include throwing, raku and  
handbuilding. Maurice and his wife **Asiya** joined after  
visiting us at Pitstone Farm Museum during Bucks Arts  
week.

**Michelle Green** from Winslow, Bucks. joins us and tells  
me her interests span all aspects of ceramics. With the  
variety of workshops and demonstration I'm sure we'll  
have plenty to interest her.

**Dr. and Mrs. Zuberi** from Northwood join us, also with  
an expressed interest in all aspects of craft pottery, plus  
painting as a hobby.

**Wendy Norman** from Long Marston, Tring is half way  
through a City and Guilds Ceramics course at Amersham  
College. She feels that DCPG activities will provide her  
with a great deal of interest.

From the Hatfield House event, we gained 7 new  
members and lots of other interest:

**Jeannette Therrier** from Marlborough is a full-time  
student at High Wycombe doing a course in Ceramics and  
Glass.

**Ian Cliffe** is also a full-time student at High Wycombe  
doing a Ceramics and Glass course - he comes from South  
London.

**Geoff Weiss** from Stapleford is interested in throwing,  
stoneware, decorating and glazing. Geoff has thought  
about joining us for some time - at Hatfield he finally took  
the plunge!



**Faith Seymour** from Kingston is an amateur potter working on her own.

**Carolyn Bevan**, an administrator from St. Albans, is interested in everything. Carolyn has offered to help us with any sort of admin., typing, etc. Thanks Carolyn, we'll be knocking on your door!

**Susan Busse** from Welwyn Garden City, who came to the Elaine Coles workshop, has now joined us. She is interested in throwing and decorating.

**Hitomi Shin**, a translator from St. Albans, is a hobby potter interested in throwing.

We look forward to meeting you all at our next meeting in September.

**Linda Bryant**

### **LARK IN THE PARK - JUNE 30th**

For the 5th year DCPG have taken part in this fun family event in Gadebridge Park, Hemel Hempstead. It really is a hugely successful event for us, as we have an opportunity of introducing many people - children and their parents - to the joys of throwing.

We had two wheels on site which were on the go from 12 noon until nearly 6.30. Luckily we ran out of clay at that point otherwise, I'm sure, we would have continued until very late. They wouldn't let us go!

For many, this is the only chance they have to experience pottery - so many schools and evening classes no longer offer pottery. We really are keeping it alive in this area.

Luckily the weather was kind to us again and we earned more than ever before at this event - £117 has been added to Guild funds, allowing us to offer members more varied activities.

Many thanks go to the stalwarts who helped out at the event: Shirley Bell, Sue Taylor, Mervyn Fitzwilliam, John and Pierette Beckley, Tony Stevens, George Bateson (forgive me if I've forgotten anyone). Your help is always appreciated, thanks.

If any other member would like to help at any event, please contact any committee member (see list at the back of the Newsletter), especially myself on 01442 233521, you will be most welcome at any or all events.

**Linda Bryant**

### **ART IN CLAY, HATFIELD HOUSE (9, 10 & 11 August)**

The second National Pottery and Ceramic Festival at Hatfield House lived up to the promise of the first one in '95. It was stupendous!! I was, again, amazed to see so many and varied potters, styles, techniques and approaches amassed in one place.

This year there seemed to be more activity than last, with demonstrations of raku firing, throwing, decorating and handbuilding in evidence in (and outside) every tent. What was even more wonderful was the invitation from many stallholders to touch, pick up and fondle many of the pots. Who can stop themselves and walk away? I can't.

Personal favourites included: Alison Wolfe Patrick's torso-like smoked forms were particularly lovely; Brian Dickenson (of course) with fabulous bowls and plates decorated above and below with such skill - although my favourites are those that he made six years ago and are now in Brian Bicknell's craft museum.

Bridget Drakeford's pots are beautifully elegant and very collectable. Chris Bramble somehow makes his pots live. I loved the mask hanging on the tent wall and the enormous head displayed on the ground. Floating World, Doug Jones; I've finally chosen one of Doug's plates - the decision which to buy always proves difficult.

Kent Potters, like us, had several members' work on display, although my favourites were the smoked and raku fired pots. Light Ceramics' beautiful oil lamps severely tempted me. The combination of fire and water is intriguing.

Lisa Hawkes' mural tile pattern of Ariel was stunning (reminding me of the Pot Crawl visit to Denbigh in North Wales). Mark de la Torre, on the stand next to ours, had some really unusual and exquisite terracotta pots that were so perfect as to be impossible! Tessa Oates makes wonderful, raku fired birds, really capturing the essence of the creatures.

Tim Andrews' pots had me transfixed for ages at his stand whilst I ran my hands over burnished and smoked bowls and wonderfully smooth raku fired pots. Unfortunately my bank balance wouldn't stretch enough for me to buy one.

Three days (working) at the Festival wasn't long enough to see and take in all that was happening there. I think what made it so very worthwhile and enjoyable was the fact that 29 of our members gave up their valuable time to put in sterling efforts to make the event successful for the Guild.

We sold pots of 14 members to the value of ca. £950, raised over £400 on 'Have a Go'; encouraged 7 people to join as members and numerous others to show interest in joining later, the Making Place and Brian Dickenson's throwing and decorating workshop. Above all, we are recognised by other Guilds, Associations and Potters as being an active, vibrant Guild worthy of note.

Many thanks to everyone (too numerous to mention) who helped out over the three days of the Festival, setting up beforehand, cleaning up afterwards, and to Sylvia Fitzwilliam who organised an after-event indoor barbecue for us - it was great fun, thanks.

(Next year I'd like to have a rest - would any other member be willing to take on organising this event, please? Contact Ruth Karnac, Chair of the Committee on 01895 631738 or me on 01442 233521).

**Linda Bryant**

## **PITSTONE**

We are all set up and ready for the Sept.8th rent day. Wood is chopped and the site tidy, thanks to Pierette. What we need next is a display board explaining to the public what we are doing and a little of the background of pottery. We have a large yellow sheet of perspex. Is there a member with an interest in display who could do the wording of it for us? I would supply the text if you prefer.

On Sept 8th we shall be firing the wood kiln and possibly a propane one as well. Bring your pots - ready biscuit and of a suitable raku clay.

The museum is very pleased with our presence. They tell me that their visitors enjoy our antics (my word not theirs) and we are attracting people in.

In return for all the help we have had from them, I gave a talk on August 15th to an event organised in the Great Barn for members of the Pitstone and Tring History Societies, which attracted about 50 people. Some of them expressed intentions of coming to classes at the Making Place - and perhaps later becoming Guild members.

**Freda Earl**

## **TORSO WORKSHOP.**

On Saturday May 11th, it was time for Doug Jones to give his Torso workshop at Rudolf Steiner School in Kings Langley. Doug is an expert on Torsos, so of course I was nervous and wondered whether I would accomplish anything at all.

I spotted some familiar faces from my pottery course in Watford which made me feel more at ease, and the model was a delightful young German girl. Doug started by telling us that we should make a sketch of the model, which felt strange because I had never, as far as I know, drawn a living object. However, it did seem to be very useful to draw and study the shapes before we began with the clay.

We started sculpture with a small piece of clay - it was difficult to get the 'thing' to look like the drawing. I realised that I didn't give her enough bodily shape. After a while it looked more like a mix between a woman and a man, I hadn't managed to fill out her hips properly.

The final position of the model was lying on a mattress huddled up with a pillow. This time, I skipped the sketching which I later realised was NOT a bright move. It was certainly funny to see all of us crawling around on

the floor in order to get a good view. One thing I learned was that you will spend more time watching the model than you will working with the clay.

At 1 o'clock we had a delicious home-cooked lunch and it was a nice break to share one's experiences with the group. Back at work, I could see that the body still wasn't shapely enough, so the only solution was to add more clay. Then suddenly Doug said "let's take a ten minute break and do something different".

During that ten minutes we had to create a small torso. We started by rolling out the clay and cut it into long strips and then had to make a torso of the lying model. I twisted and bent the arms and within ten minutes it was done! That was a lot of fun and not as difficult as I thought. I have now fired that piece and I'm very pleased with the result.

Back to the main 'object' and it slowly started to look fairly good. Time flies when one is having fun and suddenly it was 4 o'clock and the workshop was ending. When I arrived home and showed all my final 'things' to my husband, we talked and laughed about my thoughts, impressions and all the hard work. He was very impressed with what I had done and, to tell the truth, so was I ....

It has been a long time since I'd felt so good after a long, hard day's work. There isn't enough money in the world that I would accept for the torsos I made at that workshop.

**Anneli Mohlin**

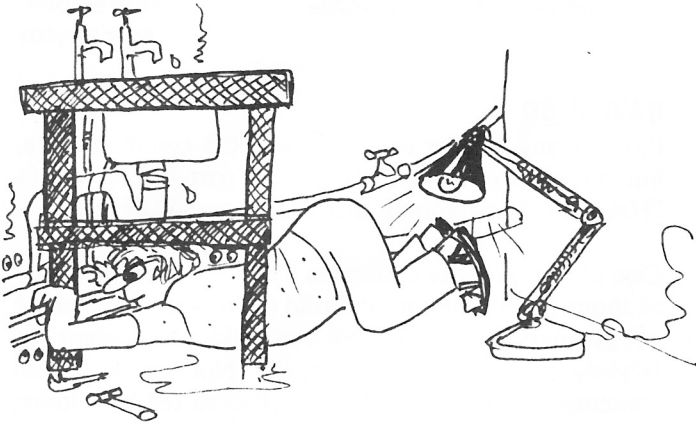
## **THE MAKING PLACE**

In September, the West Herts. College (Dacorum Campus) pottery classes will be held in an entirely new pottery and craft centre being set up in Berkhamsted by Freda Earl and Frances Levy. It is to be called 'The Making Place' which is exactly what it is. Later, other college classes will follow and we shall be offering our own range of pottery and other craft courses for adults and children. The Making Place will operate all year and at weekends. It will be possible for people to hire the rooms for private work when there are no classes and we shall have at least one exhibition a year as well as a showcase.

The Making Place is part of a listed building owned by the Berkhamsted Town Hall Trust and will consist of a large working room with a kiln room, glazing room and clay store. There is a walled garden which we can use.

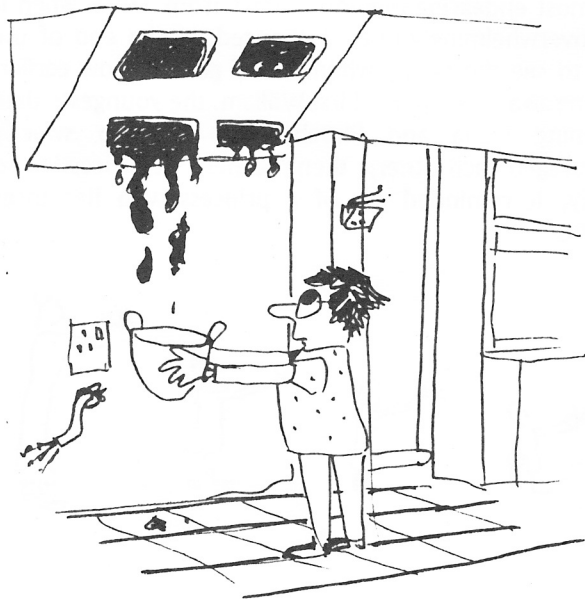
Many years of intermittent restaurant use have taken their toll of the interior which ended up deep purple and dark blue, heavily encrusted with grease from a mis-used extractor system. A party of us has been working on the place for the last ten days (it is now July 28th) and have cleaned off a lot of the dirt, evicted some nasty things from the drains and changed the colour to white to give more light and space. Today there were more people painting in every corner and a man checking the electric

wiring with a growing look of horror on his face.



#### **Pam learning new words under the sink**

Pam Bishop was crawling under the sink sorting out a tangle of leaky plumbing and practising some new words. The place is looking splendid now and has a good feel to it. We hope the Guild will have some workshops there in the future and members can see it for themselves.



**Freda and the extractor system: catching the stale fat as it dripped out. We have since removed the system as it was totally uncleanable.**

We shall publish our programme in the autumn and in the meantime we shall be collecting names of people who are interested in using the centre. If you are interested, please contact me on 01442 865661.

We shall be having two days a week of drop-in workshop where potters, sculptors, print-makers and other mucky craftspeople can come in by the hour (2 hours minimum) and, if they wish, have a straight run of two days without having to put everything away. This is likely to be Sunday and Monday.

**Freda Earl**

#### **CORRESPONDENCE**

Dear Mervyn,

I wonder if you could pass on my thanks and appreciation to all the Guild members and friends who helped me make my first 'Bucks. Art Week' open studio such a success. Their encouragement and interest were very much appreciated. I'm looking forward to next year, already.

Good news seems to come in threes!! Whiteleys, on the Bayswater Road, has offered me an 'Artist in Residence' slot during August as part of their Arts and Crafts promotion. Also, I thought that some Guild members would be interested to know that I'll be taking part in the 'Setting Out' exhibition at the C.P.A. in August/September. It's an encouraging start to someone who found clay as a mature student.

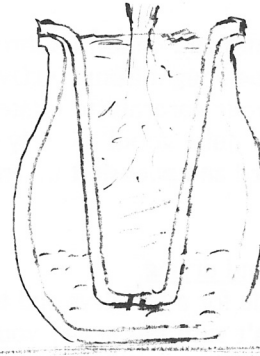
All the best .... see you at Hatfield House.

**Tony James Moody**

#### **POTTERS TIPS**

##### **Double Plant Pots**

Arthur Ball wrote some while ago with details of a 'double plant pot'. Many people will have plants on the window sill, in ordinary terracotta (or even plastic) pots, simply standing in a saucer. Arthur's idea is a double pot which is attractive to look at and contains the water.



The sketch is almost self-explanatory, with a pot containing the plant fitting within another pot.



### **Throwing Jig**

A simple jig helps enormously with repetition work, I use a whole range of jigs when building wheels. I do not make throwing gauges now, since I found the time involved was too great for the expected selling price. (This is a tip worth noting: if you find that when you calculate your earnings per hour, on a particular line and the answer is £0.35/hour, it is really time to consider an alternative line!!).

Back to the Throwing Jig - this can be made with a piece of hardboard or even cardboard. Cut a piece of board, with a mark to show the wheelhead centre, or make it fit over the head by cutting it to do so. As you determine your own repertoire of pots, mark the height and diameter of each pot on your jig. (You can add additional information, i.e. weight and type of clay, as a reference). Use your throwing gauge to mark your jig, so that the next time you want to produce that type of pot, you simply position the jig on your wheelhead, then set your throwing gauge against the appropriate spot on the jig. Next, make up clay balls of the appropriate weight and throw the pot to suit your gauge. Assuming that the consistency of the clay is the same, you should be repeating your pots as originally planned.

**Editor**

### **Finding an d preparing clay (or new uses for old Pop socks)**

I've had a lot of fun collecting and preparing my own local clay, here is what I've discovered with 'Ashridge Clay'.

#### Step 1 - Collecting

The best time to collect is in the winter after a frost. Simply find a recently fallen tree and collect the exposed clay by crumbling it into a plastic bag. Collecting this way means clean clay, no effort and, most importantly, you won't disturb anything else in the woods.

#### Step 2 - Cleaning

If the frost has done its work, sieve the clay first through a garden sieve, then put the clay in a bucket with water to make a thin slurry.

#### Step 3 - Grading

Remove small stones and impurities through a fine mesh sieve. These can be bought from Potclays - prices start at £12 or dive into your wardrobe to locate an old pop sock - I find 70 denier quite good! Simply fill up the sock, twist the end closed and swoosh it up and down to force the slurry out.

#### Step 4 - Settling and drying

Let the slurry settle for a few days and then pour off the clear water. Don't rush this stage, you need the finest particles. Getting the rest of the water out is the slowest bit; I used a plaster of paris mould and to accelerate the drying put this on a tea towel in a warm oven.

### Step 5 - Using the clay

Ashridge clay biscuit fires to a warm orange terracotta and at earthenware is a warm red. The clay is not highly plastic and is only suitable for hand building.

I'd like to hear from anyone else who has played with Ashridge or other "home made" clays to compare notes.

**Sue Taylor**

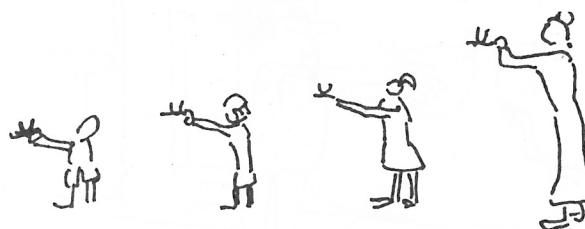
### **HAVE A GO**

I'm sure any teacher would tell me it is common sense, but my chief reflection after taking part in the Guild's "Have a Go" operation is that people are so DIFFERENT.

One of my favourite customers was a solemn French boy of about 12. Communication did not exactly flow, but he got the message and proceeded to make a competent pot (slightly to his own amazement). Not so his English contemporary who broke off so often to tell his adoring family "I am the greatest" that his pot (inevitably) wobbled and then collapsed and we (I, in fact) made another to satisfy his inordinate boast.

I developed my own strategies. The child who was bothered about the mud on his forearm and looked mostly at the camera, I dispatched fairly fast with a tutor-styled pot. But the serious little girl, all fingers and thumbs, who really WANTED to master the technique, was someone for whom I had plenty of time. And for the middle-aged lady "who had done it in her youth". She concentrated like mad - too much almost. Then there was the grey-haired gentleman from Cambridge who had the fattest fingers I had ever seen. Our small ration of clay did seem very puny in his hands; but he got a pot together and took it away with him, raw and wet, accompanied by an admiring wife. I hope it travelled 40 miles.

My most endearing memory comes from 1995 when it was overwhelmingly hot. I chanced, at the end of the day, to see the family whom I had got to know earlier, bearing away their pots. First William, the youngest; then charming Fiona and Phoebe who had so sweetly encouraged each other; then mother. A procession so stately, it reminded me of a princess with her three acolytes.



Never did so little clay give so much pleasure - or make so much mess. It was worth all the trouble, but there was a lot of washing up.

**Jane Kilvington**

## **THE POT CRAWL, JUNE 1996**

The 2nd January was a freezing cold day, one of those on which only the intrepid or the foolhardy would set foot out of doors. I had a map and one name, that of Brian Dickenson, on my rather bare list. So started a day that laid the shape of our pot crawl and its successful conclusion.

As the planner, I find it difficult to pick the best parts, as I had to think on my feet and adjust the day according to the circumstance of the moment and refer to the tachometer and driving hours constantly. I appreciate the need for the so-called 'spy in the cab' as on two occasions we got there with less than five minutes to spare.

I didn't see David Frith demonstrate throwing or decorating much to my sorrow, as it was one of the things I most wanted to see.

### **Criag Bragdy Tile Company**

Nick Powell of the tile company was very helpful as the original stipulation was no more than 8 persons at a time. By chance, England was playing Scotland in the Europa '96 football and winning 2-0. There was an incentive to take two groups in at once. We saw the most detailed drawings and artwork of projected work and pictures of the finished designs. I imagine the tiles are designed and laid in much the same way as a stained glass window. The lines flow around the design like waves, so as not to cut across features, but follow the contours. One such design looked like a great Persian carpet viewed from above that, by chance, had slipped away from the floor to the bottom of the swimming pool. One such pool was designed to go into the basement of a palace. It was only at this point that the artists were called in to transform a dark and stark structure into an Aladdin's cave, with an array of colour and form that visually melted away the concrete piers that supported the structure above. Marble clad the floor and, not the least fanciful, was the gold leaf which covered the supporting piers. This describes just one of many projects; perhaps the most fanciful was on a pedestrian underpass complete with horses and camels, as drawn by a local artist. David Frith is providing two large pots that will be incorporated in the motif design.

**On the floor:** The above design laid out on the floor in two parts, each 4 feet long. These were divided lengthways into two, so as to allow the designer to tread across without damage. From a small design, the entire layout is marked, cut and coloured with sprayed on slips, without an intermediary drawing. \*\*\*\*\*

This only touches on the delights and phantasies that money could buy, should there be enough.

**Willy Carter:** An amusing thing happened here. Holt is on the Welsh side of the Dee and Farndon is on the English, with a very narrow old bridge between. I missed the farm buildings which lay behind the Toccana restaurant, so we had to cross the bridge back into Wales.

On returning, the driver asked a young man whether we were in the High Street. Unfortunately, he was the only person in the street and he didn't understand English - London dialect, at least. A 5000-1 chance! We were only 25 yards from the farm. In January, it was covered in ice and snow and looked quite different.

Willy has a free style of throwing at considerable speed with an economy of effort which defies belief. It looks so easy, anyone can do it. Perhaps not! Handles were made like cricket bails, using a moulded bisque-fired clay slab, made when he was at Chesterfield as a student. These were stretched and pressed into shape so as to give a 'stuck-on' look when affixed to the mug, pot or jar. No attempt is made to smooth the handles into the walls of the pot. Since the same ideas stretch across all his work, one can see a family resemblance in Willy's pots.

**Decorating:** A shino glaze is used with much brushwork. This is very free and quickly applied to outline five fishes in an almost abstract manner and a duck in the centre of the plate. The areas between the fishes are filled with networks of cross-hatching, again in a fairly random manner. No large area is left undecorated. Oriental brushwork is still a major influence. His designs are very free flowing, yet still hold together due to the repeating patterns and scale. It is apparent that a sense of fun creeps into all the designs, whether on a mug or large jug.

### **Norman Makinson**

As with the tile company, another complete change. Here was the hidden garden behind just an ordinary façade. The treasures of the house included a pot of Lucie Rie's and work by a host of names that sounded like a roll-call of the famous and the great. Outside, is a Japanese-style garden of water, shading fig trees, slabs of squared slate and mossed gravels, set with plants. Norman's works are studies from nature, working from beautiful life drawings and water-colours.

His work included sheep, cows, ducks and many birds made from pressed porcelain in plaster moulds. These are fitted together with cones and other pieces. They are painted with ochre and other oxides. The white areas are scratched back to the porcelain body. The beauty of the work is its lifelike quality. Every detail, be it the bird's feathers or the cow's hide, has a feeling of reality. His workshop is an old stable with a tiled floor directly on the earth. In winter, it can get cold and rather damp, with a certain amount of heave in the floor as the water table rises and falls. Fine for a stable, not so good for a potter. Norman showed us a family group on a flat piece of clay stood upright on a small base. The animals and other decorations at the right angle with the base, had broken away during firing. The irregular shrinkage and warp caused too much strain as the figures had acted as buttresses. On another piece, a whole bird, rather than a half set into a pierced wall, still did not save the piece from cracking. There is a fine line between what is possible and what is not.

### **Brian Dickenson**

We had seen Brian work on a plate at our Open Day. This time he demonstrated his undoubted skill at throwing very precise pieces. Here is a potter who knows his materials and their limitations and how best to use them. His workshop is without dust, waste clay or anything that would betray the existence of anyone other than a dedicated craftsman. Row upon row of highly finished pots and plates at biscuit stage, ready for glazing in a naturalistic manner, using the wheel instead of a banding wheel.

Blessed with perfect weather, we had a scenic tour of North Wales over the Horseshoe Pass to Ruthin. I think it would be true to say that the weekend was made outstanding by the company, friendship and shared experiences. Who will forget the ever-deepening farce at the Pheasant Inn, with dinners going in all directions and the young staff gradually moving from composure to near panic as to who had ordered what? In the true sense of farce, all was happily resolved through humour.

May I thank you all for your help and for trusting me with a weekend that straddled the football bonanza and the terrible bomb blast in Manchester. Thankfully, I didn't know of it and the sadness of such action.

**Brian Bicknell**

### **ISNIK OTTOMAN CERAMICS - Gallery talk by EILEEN GRAHAM at the V. & A. Museum, July 24th.**

I went to this lecture after seeing it advertised in our Newsletter. The first part of the lecture covered the composition of the body:-

#### Body composed of

- 10% white clay, dug up near Isnik in Turkey
- 10% frit
- 80% quartz

thus producing a white rather brittle clay, but they particularly wanted a white background to show up coloured patterns.

Biscuit fired to an unknown temperature.

Glaze fired to about 1050°C in an up-draught kiln of the Iranian type, using pine wood. They put a tiny bit of tin into their clear glaze to opacify it.

History - On view were two 10th century moulded bowls from Mishapur about 8" in diameter in a dull white.

In 1504, there was a battle with the Persians at Ankara in Turkey. In those days, craftsmen and artists were taken as prized prisoners and made to work for their new masters - so letting in Persian influences.

In ancient times, many of the buildings were built mostly in wood which often went up in flames, destroying a lot of Isnik pottery. In 1557, Sultan Suleyman the Magnificent said that the owner of any wooden house which caught fire was to be executed. At least he said that until his own palace caught fire!

Frequent battles produced influences on design from captured craftsmen, such as artichokes, grape hyacinths and tulips. Lotus and knot patterns are Buddhist elements, whilst Islam favours geometric patterns. Also there were patterns from borders of Turkish carpets and Chinese waves, clouds, lightning and lotus patterns. In fact, Ottoman collections contain lots of Chinese ceramics.

Some Isnik pottery has less flow in its shape, it may have sharp edges and banding at junctions because it is copied from metalwork.

If the Ottomans won a battle, they built a mosque to celebrate but as they went into decline, they just built a kiosk (a small pavillion in a garden) with luxurious furnishings. We were shown an octagonal table with a very large patterned octagonal tile in the middle.

Plates with ship designs were started in the 16th century. Tulip mania took hold in Turkey in the 17th century and spread to Europe. In the 17th century, Isnik pottery workshops began to go into decline and their exports practically stopped. This was because the Sultan found his pottery was not arriving on time so he fixed the price and time so that his work became a priority to the detriment of all other work.

**Pam Tames**

### **A PERSONAL VIEW OF THE WILLIAM MORRIS EXHIBITION**

On leaving this exhibition, I found it hard to believe that one man could accomplish so much in one lifetime. It also proved the lasting effect of a happy secure childhood. From his early days of riding his pony through Epping Forest sprang his love of nature and romantic thoughts of legendary knights in shining armour - both re-occurring themes in his designs for the rest of his life.

Being cushioned by wealth also helped greatly, although he also could have lost several fortunes with the risks he took in new enterprises and some of the artists he had as partners.

I particularly liked his two enormous Holy Grail tapestries based on the Arthurian legend and the calligraphy in some of his books.

Fortunately, this large comprehensive exhibition had plenty of space and thus avoided the claustrophobic feeling created in some of his rooms by such a profusion of patterns.

**Pam Tames**

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## BOOK REVIEW

**SINGLE FIRING - THE PROS AND CONS.** Fran Tristram. 128 pp. [Ceramics Handbooks Series] paperback. A. & C. Black £10.99

As an enthusiastic amateur potter, I am always intrigued by any "New" techniques I happen to come across. I then enjoy trying out those within my capacity.

Having read this book from cover to cover, I feel that this one definitely qualifies as an interesting new technique. I was unaware that single firing was so widespread, both from potters previously unknown to me, through to Lucie Rie, Jane Hamlyn and Armitage Shanks!

The advantages and disadvantages are carefully explained and faults examined in detail. There are tried and tested recipes included, together with instructions to assist you in adapting your own bisque glazes to fit raw glazed pots.

There are also many detailed illustrations to clarify the written text and examples of designs and decorative techniques - the latter being limited only by one's imagination and the tolerance of greenware. A good selection of photographs illustrate finished work.

Fran Tristram details the critical temperature phases during the firing process, but also mentions potters who fire from wet to 750°C in two hours!

I expect to try once firing as described so clearly and would recommend any potter considering the "Once Fired" method to read this book.

**Pam Bishop**

**THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE GUILD is on October 11th at Northchurch Social Centre at the earlier time of 7.30 p.m.**

As most of you will know, this is to allow plenty of time for the demonstration by John Higgins which follows the formal business of electing the officers and committee. A description of John's demonstration is elsewhere in this Newsletter.

We, on the current committee, greatly appreciate members who regularly turn up at AGMs to give us their support, but we would all be very happy to see a wider attendance. It would give newer members a chance to put names to faces, which would (hopefully) be a good thing.

The particular need at the moment is for someone to take over the job of providing the interval refreshments at our Friday evening meetings. Val Barnes has done this with unfailing regularity for years, but as she is now taking over programme arrangement from Hanna Christianson, she can't be expected to do both. The ideal solution is for two people who live fairly near each other to share the job. Even if you feel you can only do it for a while, do

please come forward otherwise you will all have to start bringing flasks or die of thirst during a long hot (or cold) evening. We could of course provide drinks of tap-water all round.

Phone Val before the the AGM. if possible, or another committee member, or volunteer at the next meeting in September. We wait to hear from you.

**Ruth Karnac**

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### GLAZING AND FIRING ... at Potclays South.

You may be aware that Potclays organise a number of seminars each year. Dorothea Patterson and I went to the seminar on glazing and firing - here are some personal thoughts on the day.

The course was aimed at teachers and technicians or professional potters, and so was squarely pitched at a technical level and was presented as a series of formal lectures complete with a set of notes and overhead projectors.

The lecturers were all clearly experts in their fields; Harry Fraser and John Beeston coming from an industrial potters background gave us a run down on what happens in the glazing and firing processes and how to achieve these safely. Pat George showed us the potential of the brush on speciality glazes aimed at the 'hobby potter'; hobby potters, I discovered, are a strange breed of people who do not make their own pots instead either buying greenware or slip casting from commercial moulds. Anthony Southwell, the fourth lecturer, talked on glazes and glazing techniques, enthusing and enjoying his subject.

Unfortunately for the amateur, while the lectures were packed with information, some of the lecturers tended to lack enthusiasm and there were too few real pots on show to be handled.

By the end of the day, I had received more information than I could easily take in, I suspect Dorothea felt the same as she produced some excellent portraits of the lecturers as we listened and struggled with new concepts.

Having said that, I did come back with some very useful information and a better understanding of what happens in the processes of glazing and firing which has given me more confidence to experiment.

I also came to realise how much I have learned at the DCPG meetings and from fellow Guild members who are, collectively, a mine of useful information.



**Anthony Southwell**

**John Beeston**

Here are a few of the most useful things I learned on the day:

1. Cones are more reliable than thermometers as they measure the joint effect of heat plus time on the glaze rather than measuring the temperature at a given time.

2. SCMC Carboxymethylcellulose can be used as a glaze suspender and when added at approx. 5% converts a glaze into a brush on glaze. A smaller percentage makes the dry glaze firm enough to decorate on. *(Anyone wishing to try this glaze, please contact me for further information).*

3. Never put lead and copper glazes in the same firing. At high temperatures both become volatile and can wander around the kiln as gases, copper makes the lead in glazes soluble, the result being that the pots in that firing are no longer foodsafe.



**Pat George**

**Harry Fraser**

4. Matt and crystalline glazes rely on crystal formation; for best results do not fire too high and let them cool slowly for the first 100° to allow crystals to form. Similarly, glossy glazes are best cooled more rapidly.

In conclusion, the day was worth the money and time but only if you are already keen; a chemistry A level will help, too. Otherwise there is a wealth of enthusiastic experience freely available at the Guild meetings and within the Guild.

Potclays run seminars on other subjects, too; has anybody been on one?

**Sue Taylor**

## **NOTEBOOK**

### **Exchange of Newsletters & of Newsletter Articles**

Most of you will know that Our Guild exchanges newsletters with several other pottery groups, including Midland Potters. Recently, Mike Bourne of Midland Potters suggested that the groups should allow sharing of Newsletter Articles, so that they could be reproduced by any group which is party to such agreement, without the need to ask for permission.

It would be a part of that agreement that the Author's name & the source document would always be stated when an Article is reproduced (except for such things as dates of events).

Your Committee have agreed to this idea in outline, but are aware that some contributors may wish to retain the copyright of the items sent for publication. (The late Stan Romer insisted on retaining the Copyright of any book review sent in for our Newsletter). They are also aware that the Guild may wish to retain the copyright on some Articles for later use.

We have recently published articles from other Newsletters, including various abstracts & a full article from Midland Potters, for which we had permission from the Editor. In general, anyone can write an abstract of any published article & no permission is required.

Well then, what is it all about? on the face of it an agreement would simply mean that any of the Editors could publish, in full, any item from any newsletter, unless the copyright was reserved.

Looking further, perhaps a national group could be formed, producing a Newsletter which amounted to a compendium of the regional newsletters. Perhaps this would lead to a "National Pottery Guild"- all just speculation, but would that be relevant? what do you think? how about sending in some correspondence on this? how about talking it over with a Committee member?

Currently, our procedure for the Newsletters that we receive, is to circulate them to the Committee & pass them to our Secretary, so that other members of the Guild can access them. At this point I must make it clear that this procedure has not been followed recently, due to the fact that your Editor has had insufficient time to go through the process & no helpers to sort it out.

When we get our library established, the newsletters will probably be available through our Librarian - Pam Bishop has volunteered for the job, but we are still searching for premises.

Mervyn Fitzwilliam

### **FOUND**

Following the "indoor Barbecue" I discovered that our wardrobe has been extended to the tune of one black jumper, with a coloured leaf design. Label "Simply Splendid" size XL. Anyone want to own up? if so phone 01442 242332

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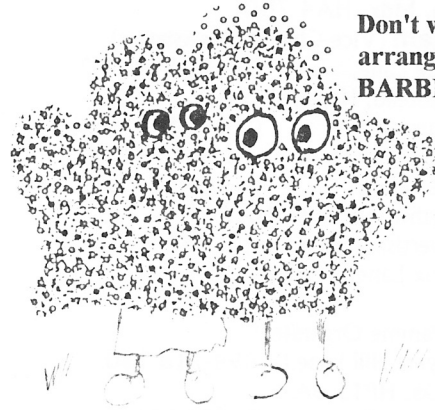
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### **The Guild at Art - in - Clay**

Pam Bishop (right) with Pirette Beckley selling a pot, at The Sales Table.





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#### GLAZING

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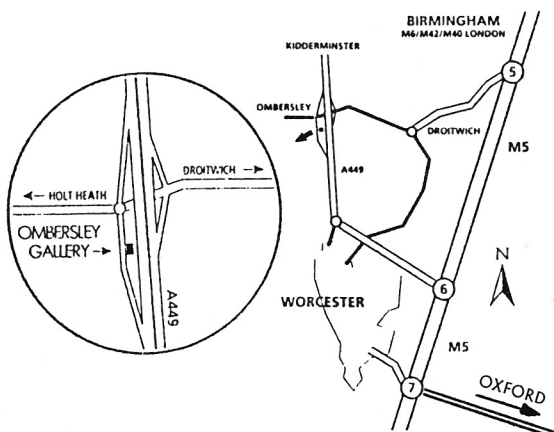
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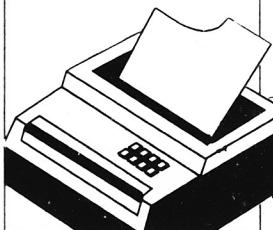
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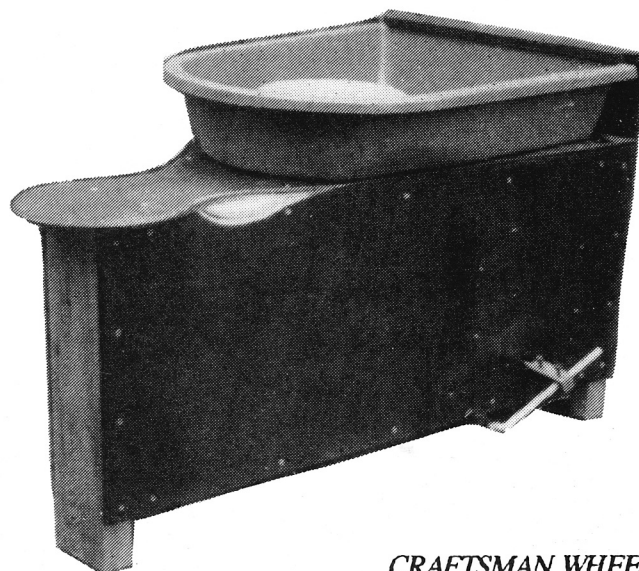
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