

# DACORUM AND CHILTERN POTTERS GUILD



IN THIS ISSUE —

*\* MORE FREE BOOKS!*

*\* GUILD EXHIBITION*

*\* OPEN DAY REPORTS*

*\* PROFILE —  
VERONICA POWELL*

*\* DEREK EMMS AT QPC*



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NEWSLETTER  
JANUARY/FEB.  
1998  
£1.50

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.

Send your cheque, made payable to D.C.P.G., to Digby Stott (if joining after March, please phone for a reduced introductory rate) "Broomfield", 36 Box Lane, Boxmoor, Herts. HP3 0DJ. tel: 01442 250540.

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Telephone 01332 705951

- *Developing glazes and the Computer*

## FRONT COVER PHOTOGRAPH

Jim Robison using his mangle, assisted by Murray  
- photograph by Marion Franses

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## EDITORIAL

Over the past weekend (13/14 Dec.) we ran the Steve Harrison workshops organised by Caroline Hughes. They were a great success from any point of view. Our President, Murray Fieldhouse and his wife Dorley attended on the Saturday and everyone had an enjoyable time, with good results from the kiln. During the workshops, with enthusiasm high, some talked of the possibility of further workshops, perhaps salt glazing, perhaps something else. Some years ago, the Guild built an Olsen salt glazing kiln at Northfield studio and fired it twice, after which no-one had enough willpower to follow up and that kiln was left to become derelict. Guild workshops and any other activity need dedicated effort if they are going to happen. Followers only become leaders by stepping forward. Where are you? Speak up!

Mervyn Fitzwilliam

## FUTURE GUILD EVENTS

9th Jan.'98 8 p.m. at the Methodist Church Hall, Kings Langley. CAROL GREENAWAY makes slab-built textured stoneware vessels, glazed with a pure ash glaze. They are sometimes purely sculptural, having their origins in the clothed female form, or they are practical in the form of teapots, boxes and jugs. Carol studies ceramics and painting in the 1960s and set up her own workshop in the '70s making "anything anyone would buy" and gradually finding her own style in thrown domestic stoneware. In 1990 Carol returned to study at Goldsmiths College and also returned to hand-built pottery.

Carol will show slides of the pots she has made over the years and of pots that have influenced her. She will discuss her glazing methods, how her textures are achieved and will demonstrate the making of one of her slab-built

teapots. This evening should be of interest to many of us, with ash glazes, slab-building and texturing being discussed.

13th Feb.'98 8 p.m. at the Methodist Church Hall, Kings Langley. KENNETH CLARK: Tiles and Ceramics - 50 Satisfying Years. Ken will be talking about his work over the 50 years he has been in ceramics. He has spent a lot of time researching for the many commissions he has done and is always looking for something different to try and to learn about. His work is in many public places and foreign countries. We will learn something of the history of tiles and where they started. Ken will also bring some samples with him and show some examples of different techniques.

The D.C.P.G. will be at the Chiltern Open Air Museum on Sat/Sun/Mon (Bank Holiday) May 3/4/5 '98. Make a note in your diaries to take part and help us in selling your pots, 'have-a-go' and general activities. More details in next Newsletter.

## OTHER EVENTS - 1998

Exhibition - BERNARD LEACH at the Craft Council Gallery, 44A Pentonville Rd. London N.1. Until March 29th (closed Mondays)

Missenden Abbey Craft Fair: June 20/21/22. To take a stand, phone 01494 450504

Craft Potters' Association: 'Earth and Fire' at Rufford, Notts. June 27th & 28th.

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## FREE BOOK COMPETITION

A & C Black, the well-known publishers of many books on pottery have very generously given TWO FREE COPIES of "The Potters Dictionary" by Frank & Janet Hamer to be won in a Guild draw. This book is a superb and essential reference work for anyone involved with pottery activities (recommended retail price £39.99).

The books will be given away ABSOLUTELY FREE to the winners of a simple draw; just send a POSTCARD, with your name and address on it to FREE BOOKS OFFER, Charlotte Burrows, A & C Black (Publishers) Ltd., 35 Bedford Row, London WC1R 4JH.

The rules of the competition are very simple: Your entry will ONLY be accepted if you are a paid-up member or family member of the Dacorum and Chiltern Potters Guild. Only one postcard per person is allowed. Your postcard must be received at the office of A & C Black by not later than 5.30 p.m. on 2nd February 1998.

The names of the winners will be announced in the March Newsletter.

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## **CORRESPONDENCE**

Earlier this year my family and I visited Chiltern Open Air Museum Craft fair. My daughters were lucky enough to make clay pots with the help of your potters' wheels and all the potters on hand to help. It was great fun.

The reason for my letter is to ask if you would be able to attend our school fair next year? The date is Sunday June 7th from 11.00 a.m. We are going back fifty years to celebrate 50 years of south Oxhey. We are hoping to have Custom cars, swing boats, wooden roundabouts, pie & mash, etc., etc. As the "Potters Wheel" was shown on early television broadcasts as the intermission, we thought we would ask you to come, too.

Unfortunately, we wouldn't be able to pay you for coming, but any money you make on the day would be all yours. I can appreciate that you are very busy people and no doubt in constant demand. In fact you may already have a booking for this date.

Thank you for taking the time to read this letter.

Yours sincerely,  
(Signed) Susan Reed,  
Vice-Chair, Friends of Woodhall.  
0181 428 4371

Woodhall J.M., I. & Nursery School.  
Woodhall Lane, South Oxhey,  
Watford, Herts. 0181 428 3447.  
(Head Teacher: Mr. Paul Pearson)

*Would any Guild member like to respond to this?*

## **EXHIBITION AT THE COW BYRE - 1997**

We did not have an exhibition at all in 1996 so we had great hopes of this one. We had many good pots entered and the display was really attractive. We did fairly well in the first week and then it went absolutely flat in the second week until the very last day when it suddenly went into overdrive and we took as much on that last Saturday as in the whole of the first week. Even as we were packing up the pots, they came in to buy.

The whole situation seems to have been largely influenced by what was going on in the Great Barn (across the green from us) and other events in the district, of which there were many. During the first week, the two events at the Barn were a flea market and a jumble sale. The people attending these came over to the Cow Byre and apparently expected to see pots at 50p. each. The last Saturday, when we did so well, there was a Craft Fair and people with a different kind of attitude attended and that benefitted us.

Years ago, our Private Views were very good for sales because enthusiastic members brought groups of their friends along who bought pots. I understand that it can

be embarrassing to imply that one's friends and family should buy your pots, but often these people bought other members' pots. Very few of our members attended the Private View this year and it was a great let down for those who had worked for the exhibition.

Nowadays there is a plethora of craft fairs everywhere and all the year round, but they definitely can still be successful. We cannot afford a lot of expensive advertising - in fact I know of one event which did this and still made a loss. We made a little money and apart from that were only rewarded by the amount of the handling fee. It is possible that we might do better under the umbrellas of other organisations (such as Hatfield House or the Chiltern Open Air Museum) who do widespread advertising from which we benefit, but it is not the same as an exhibition.

Some venues, such as the new library in Radlett, are very good but we would have to provide our own display facilities. Should we invest in our own tables or stands? If so, who will store and transport them?

We really need someone with a good head for business and for public relations to take on the task of organising our exhibitions.

In the end, in spite of it being such a nail-biting event, I think that those of us taking part found it very enjoyable.

**Ruth Karnac**

P.S. Please write to the Newsletter saying what you think. Don't be shy and don't pull your punches!

**MEMBERSHIP NEWS:** The following have joined us:

**Susan Adams** is from Amersham and is interested in throwing and decorating of stoneware, earthenware and also has an interest in Raku.

**Sally Carpenter Werter** lives at Quanton and is interested in hand building and throwing stoneware and earthenware. She is currently taking a City & Guilds course at Aylesbury College.

**Nicola Preston** from Tring is interested in most aspects of pottery, including Raku.

**Brian Usher** of Amersham is a professional potter, working on thrown stoneware and porcelain.

**Elizabeth Wheeler** lives at Burnham and has a very wide interest in every aspect of pottery, including kiln building, salt glazing, sculpting and throwing. Elizabeth also has an interest in business management, so we may be calling on her for some advice.

We are delighted to welcome you all and look forward to your company and participation at Guild events and activities. By way of introduction, I would say that we are an "Unincorporated Voluntary body" or putting this another way, the more you participate in Guild activities the more you will get out of what we offer.

**Editor**



## **GLEN ETTIENNE - OCTOBER 10th**

Glen Ettienne, a young man who comes originally from Africa, is blessed with a warm, wide smile. He had us in fits of laughter as he described his first encounter with plaster. With the book of instructions propped before him he had immersed his hand in a bowl of plaster. It had dried solid and he had had a terrible time trying to crack the block to release his hand. In fact, this seems to have been a decisive experience for him as he continued to use the human body as inspiration for his work. He showed us a plaster mould made from what he jokingly referred to as a 'former' friend's face. It had two holes for straw so that the friend could continue to breathe as the plaster set. He told us that, unlike his first experience, he had coated the face with Vaseline to protect the eyebrows. More recently, he has cast a body of a young man wearing swimming trunks and a bathing hat. He explained that he had done this in segments using the front of the body.

His approach to plaster is relaxed, confident and experimental. He uses fine grained potters' plaster and told us that this can be changed and given texture by the addition of molochite or polystyrene beads. These give a honeycomb texture. When he was at Harrow, he found that they used dental plaster, which sets harder than potters' plaster. He warned us that dental plaster becomes hotter than potters' plaster and can cause burns.

For mixing, Glen adds the plaster to tepid water. He stressed the virtue of having the water close to one's body temperature. For the demonstration he added the plaster to the water, sifting it gently through his fingers into an ice cream container until there was just a little layer of water on the top. He did not give a fixed ratio of how much water to plaster, but told us to choose a container which is big enough to cover the whole item. Then he used his fingers as a whisk so all the air bubbles came to the surface. He stressed that, for health and safety reasons, one should always wear a mask when mixing plaster.

He showed us how to make a mould from an egg-shaped ball of clay. He had chosen as a container a plastic ice cream box because it was sufficiently large to cover the whole item. The first thing he did was to make some sausages of soft clay and build them up about an inch from the item to be moulded. He said it would be a good idea to do this part on a whirler. Then he placed more clay outside the smoothed sausages of clay to act as a reinforcement. There was some discussion at this point and other people suggested that high density PVC or ABS could be used instead. These outer walls, whatever they are made from, have to be at least one inch above the item to be cast. He then poured the plaster into the gap between the egg-shaped inner part and the outer walls of clay. He told us to be very careful at this point and the need to pour the plaster away from the form, so that one does not trap air bubbles, was stressed. The plaster was then left to set. A big mould would take between one

and two weeks to dry completely, but this small one set in about fifteen minutes. The second half of the mould was done after the first had set. Here he made three or four notches using a knife with a rounded blade. This served as registration marks for putting the two halves together. This was done when the mould was still soft. He then trimmed off any uneven-ness in the plaster and told us of the need to avoid undercuts. He then painted the top of the mould with soft soap and we heard that Boots supply this product and that you can use ordinary household soap. Then sausages of clay were added round the first plaster mould as a wall for the second lot of plaster. We were told that the wall should be neat and smooth. The plaster was then poured in and left to set.

Another aspect of Glen's work is his use of plaster as it hardens. The plaster sets from the base of the container upwards. We were shown how to cast objects without borders. Glen took a handful of mud-textured plaster and, with evident glee, covered almost everything in sight. He told us how you can squeeze plaster which is hardening, in order to soften it again. He uses this type of plaster for casting textures. He pressed slabs of plaster on to strongly-textured items like a studded leather strap or buttons. He so enjoyed this part of plaster work that he had also cast a human eye, a closed one!

This was typical of the adventurous, joyous spirit of Glen Ettienne. His relaxed, warm manner and many sotto voce jokes meant that this was not only an informative evening, but also an extremely enjoyable one.

**Margaret Aanonson (Tatton-Brown)**

### **POTTERS TIPS**

#### **1. Bats and Pads**

During a recent discussion about bats, I was given the following tip by Stanley Field. Stanley usually puts bats onto the wheelhead by throwing a clay pad and pressing bats onto this to hold them onto the head. When finished with the pad of clay, he plans his work so that he can leave this until the next day, when it has become leather hard. He then uses the pad as a chuck for turning his smaller bowls, by turning a recess in it and fitting the rim of the bowls into that.

**Editor**

#### **2. From the Derek Emms Seminar**

Using white pigment on porcelain creates an effect whereby the porcelain appears to be translucent.

Dip pot into tenmoku glaze. When dry and powdery, scrape off some of the glaze with a pointed wooden tool. When fired, the glaze will break into a rust line.

Derek uses a copper-red glaze which he wipes off the rim of bowls. He uses a watered-down version of the same glaze on the rim to give a white glazed rim against the red body.

Derek covers a board with canvas in order to wedge clay. This ensures that it doesn't stick.

To remove pots from the wheel, he uses a pot lifter and no water.



The pot is wired through and the perspex tapered edge pushed under the pot and the pot lifted off the wheel. By not using extra water the pot remains easy to lift off any surface upon which it is placed.

When collaring in, slightly increase the speed of the wheel which makes it easier.

Teapots - flatten the section of teapot where the spout is to be placed - mark position of spout. With a pencil, mark in the ring and draw straight lines along which the holes will be placed - customers always look inside teapots and complain if the pattern isn't even. Cut 19 holes - not too small. The area of holes needs to be much greater than the spout to provide a good pour.

Don't forget, the holes will shrink in drying and firing, plus they'll have glaze in them, so they need to be made a reasonable size.

**Linda Bryant**

### **DEREK EMMS AT THE QUEENS PARK CENTRE, AYLESBURY.**

On a cold and foggy Sunday (2nd November), a group of about 50 keen potters met at the Queens Park Centre in Aylesbury for a talk and demonstration by Derek Emms - a whole day with one potter! He must have been exhausted by the end.

Derek Emms studied at Accrington, Burnley and Leeds Colleges of Art, and worked at the Leach Pottery under Bernard and David Leach. From 1955 to 1985 he was a full-time lecturer at North Staffs. Polytechnic, from where he retired to devote more time to making pots. He produces a variety of domestic and 'one-off' pieces in stoneware and porcelain, decorated by engraving in the leather-hard clay or by brush decoration on the bisque-ware with oxide pigments; glazes include transparent, celadons, tenmoku, chun and copper red.

The seminar started with a slide show; Derek gave us a 'potted' history of his life and the main influences on his work, which seem to be flowers and nature.

His demonstration began with wedging showing us both spiral wedging and cut and slam. With his 50 years of potting behind him, it all looked so easy. No excess movements or pressure needed.

The throwing demonstration followed, with Derek demonstrating throwing a jug, two plates, a bowl and a teapot. There were numerous hints and tips along the way - too numerous to mention here (however, I'll pass some of them on to Mervyn for his 'Potters Tips' column).

After a really nice lunch, Derek took us through his turning techniques, adding knobs to lids, handles to jugs and lugs to dishes.

Having been on the two-week course with David Frith last year, it was fascinating to listen to Derek and see his techniques. Derek taught David and Margaret Frith at North Staffs. Poly many years ago.

The day spent with Derek Emms was very enjoyable, instructional and provided us all with inspiration to continue potting - altogether a very worthwhile day.

**Linda Bryant**

### **COMMITTEE NEWS**

As those of you who attended the A.G.M. in October will probably know, two of our most active and valued members have left the committee after many years.

Elaine Hudson was responsible for organising the annual Open Day. Each year she found demonstrators to make up a varied and balanced programme, arranged their accommodation where necessary and organised the timing and requirements for their demonstrations. She also found for us, at long last, a good caterer at a reasonable price, who we hope will continue to attend on future occasions.

She has recently moved house, so is no longer sure if she can continue as a member, but we sincerely hope she will come and see us occasionally. We, on the committee, will very much miss her friendliness and quiet efficiency. Good luck and happiness in your new house, Elaine.

Linda Bryant is the second one and we shall miss her too; however, we are very happy that she will still be around. She has a way of giving her whole enthusiasm to everything she does and we as a guild have benefitted greatly from her efforts. She is fun to be with and full of energy. Now she wants to have time to do more potting and make the most of her City and Guilds course - she has certainly earned it.

Two new members are taking their places - Shirley Bell, a long time member who many of you will already know and Ruby Sharp-Newson, both practising potters. On behalf of the rest of the committee, I welcome them both and hope that they will enjoy working with us.

**Ruth Karnac**

#### **FOR SALE**

**Cobalt Oxide, only £45.00 per kg. 01732 462445**

## PROFILE

"A profile, Mervyn? What is special about me?" I'm just Head of Art, Craft and Design at a preparatory school in Gerards Cross in Bucks called Maltman's Green.

I adore teaching and am the founder of art meetings for preparatory schools in my area, providing a forum for ideas with like minded teachers who are striving to achieve the best from their pupils, often on their own.

My association with clay came to the fore when I was given a kiln in 1990, complete with a purpose built room located in a new teaching block. Knowing this information a year beforehand, I knew I had to get to grips with this subject .... and so my association with Sally Routh, my Guru, started.

Sally is a marvellous Adult Education lecturer in pottery at Amersham Community Centre, with over 20 years of teaching and potting behind her, who brings the best out of all of her pupils. A wide, friendly and very helpful person .... gosh! that sounded like a school report! I've just completed 80 of those whilst making props for the school production at Christmas!

I have an insatiable appetite for ideas. I teach just over 200 girls a week in 14 classes and handwriting with six classes a week (aged between 7 and 12); this all helps to keep me out of mischief, as you can imagine. Keeping to the National Curriculum and tying in with all other subjects is a real challenge. I'm closely linked naturally to history and try to cover all aspects of the History of Art.

I recently went on a course at the V & A and discovered the delights of Maths in Islamic Art. I try to cover all aspects of this vast subject, but my real love is clay. It really gets to you! I'm only really happy when I see 7 and 8 year olds diving into an enormous plastic dustbin trying to get clay (to be recycled) and wedging it. The delight on their faces, eager to have a go at their latest challenge, exploring the medium using both hands, improving their dexterity, achieving goals and then being proud of their results.

I love to tell them they are individuals, yes - they are allowed to think differently from others, and yes - every end result should be different from the next person's. I encourage individual ideas and especially with those who attend Pottery Club, where there is time to listen to the girls talk, with confidence, using the vocabulary of potters.

As I say to the children when they say "has my pot come out of the kiln yet?" "...no, but but when cool enough I will open the door to see presents - it's just like Christmas, a joy every time".

On one final note, anyone who says that an art teacher working with clay doesn't have to be as fit as a P.E. teacher when working with clay, has got it wrong.

**Veronica (Ronnie) Powell**

## Postscript - Potters Open Day

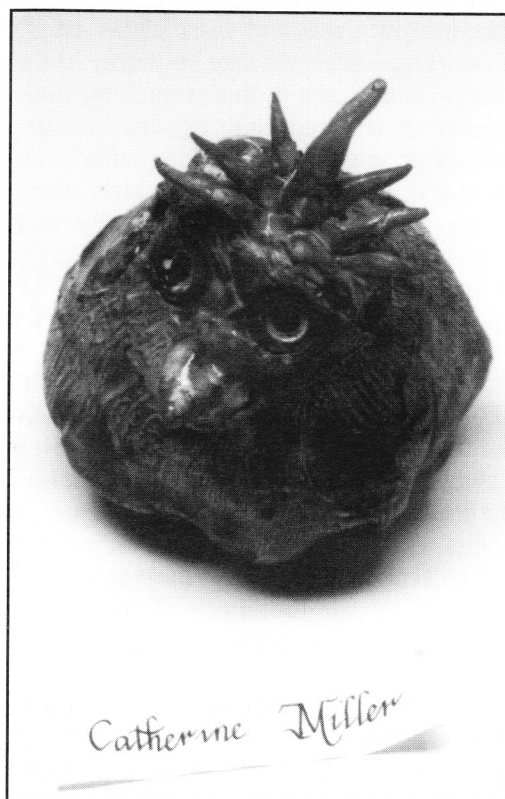
My insatiable appetite was satisfied when, with my husband John, who has also attended Sally's evening classes, we attended our first meeting of the Guild, the Potters Open Day. Both of us enjoyed that marvellous day.

Michael Eden captured the audience's attention when we had to stand up to see his technique of changing a round slab into an oval by throwing his slab onto plywood on the floor - in his words - "like a plane coming into land". Victoria Eden's demonstration of deftly drawing onto slip with her finger is a technique I will surely use with the children.

Emily Myers showed us how she makes her precision works including throwing off the hump! I particularly enjoyed the Islamic connection. I could not use some of her glazes though, as they would be unsuitable for use by children. Yes, I thought to myself, my COSH documents are up-to-date and in use.

Intrigued by Jim Robison's stories of working with children in creating his masterpieces, I bought his book. The idea of clay moulds to repeat and use again will be used by me to enhance the field of techniques in use at school. I would dearly love to own an old mangle to achieve slab structures, but will have to be content with rolling pins and guides (the children have to put all their body weight onto the clay to achieve a slab). Jim's use of textures from the kitchen and his application of slips to create totally original work with every pressing was brilliant.

**V.P.**



Catherine Miller (aged 7) An Owl  
Two thumb pots together. White opaque glaze & oxides



**POTTERS OPEN DAY - NOVEMBER '97****JIM ROBISON**

In the last issue of the Newsletter, Jim Robison's book on large scale ceramics was reviewed. Since then he has ably demonstrated his techniques at the P.O.D.

He started the demonstration by stressing the importance of thoroughly wedging the clay. He then proceeded by thumping an unopened bag of clay on the bench three times. Then, laughing, he pronounced it fully wedged! He opened the bag and cut up its contents into one inch slabs.

If for nothing else, anyone who has watched Jim Robison at work will remember his mangle. This is a 1930s wooden roller domestic clothes mangle. He admitted that he chose it originally in preference to a custom clay roller for reasons of economy, but what was once a convenience has now become a way of life. The rollers are spaced about 1 1/2 inches apart. The clay slabs are fed through on various boards whose thickness controls the ultimate thickness of the clay. The upper and lower surfaces of the clay are covered by cloths that are loosened at each rolling to prevent wrinkles being formed on the clay on subsequent passes through the mangle.

Jim's preferred clay is Potclays Craft Crank, but he has experienced problems in the past with lime nodules causing 'popping' on the surface of the clay.

He obtains his effects by criss-crossing various pieces of clay often with the prior addition of slip or stains, then rolling them together to produce his highly stylised forms. He dislikes straight edges and tears pieces off slabs to generate the ragged edges he likes so much; the heavily cranked body he uses aids in this extent. He also rolled various pieces of textured cloth as well as a sheet of perforated plastic into the clay. Then, after rolling the clay once more, applied coloured porcelain slips to the surface, then removed the imbedded cloths in stages, between applying further slip layers. By this process he produces highly textured, highly coloured slabs. He then laid the slab on a convex cylindrical frame to dry. Interestingly, he then lowered a similar convex frame on top, so avoiding the possibility of uneven drying pulling the piece out of shape. He repeated the process with another slab to form the other side on the sculpture. He joined the two pieces at the edges by using an onion holder to scarify the joints which he moistened with water, (never slip), applied with a toothbrush. His use of an onion holder is typical of his use of household implements; he admitted that if his wife found any of her kitchen tools missing, he was always the prime suspect.

He said he often dried his hollow structures by burning pieces of paper inside. However, he confessed that once in a misguided fit of enthusiasm he put too much paper inside. This caused heavy internal condensation which was absorbed by the lower levels of the green clay. This, in turn, weakened the whole structure so much that it finally

collapsed.

The entire demonstration was clearly delivered in a witty and informative style and I, for one, was left with many new ideas to try in the near future.

**Tony Stevems**

**EMILY MYERS**

Emily began by showing slides of a startlingly bright orange rusty tractor exhaust pipe which looked almost like a ceramic art work. This was the inspiration for her work as a student at Camberwell. The work was thrown and used extrusions and was much influenced by Wally Keeler, her tutor. Later she turned to taking impressions of manhole covers and used scrap metal and rugged things as her inspiration. The work was not commercial so Emily began making dishes with extruded rims made ragged by adding molochite to the clay. She used a lithium/barium/copper glaze based on Colin Pearson's but she does vary the recipe somewhat: Barium 40, Nepheline Syenite 19, China Clay 19, Flint 10, Lithium 5, Copper 3.5. BEWARE this is a very toxic glaze and rubber gloves and a mask must be worn. Sprinkling extra lithium on the glaze before firing causes flashes of colour. Originally, Emily used porcelain but it cracked so she turned to white stoneware. The pieces are food safe but purely decorative. After college, Emily sold this production work through the Conran Shop and Heals.

Later came the influence from Iranian architecture and mediæval fairgrounds. She began to use masking tape and wax resist and double dipping to achieve the varying thicknesses of glaze that she wanted. All the glazing is done by dipping because lithium clogs the sprayer. The clay she used for this work was Keuper Red from Potclays. It is very versatile and can be used for earthenware - biscuit at 1100°C, glazed at 1000°C - or low stoneware at 1200°C. The same glaze is used throughout, producing totally different colours depending on the firing temperature and thickness of the glaze. The beige coloured glaze is achieved by taking out the copper and substituting rutile. The proportions 'tent-like' pieces are very carefully considered.

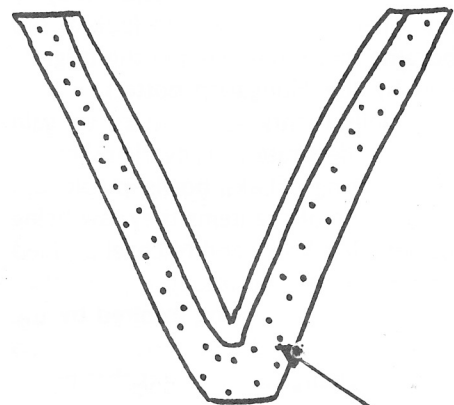
**EMILY'S DEMONSTRATION****"TENT POT"**

Emily throws on bats and opens the clay with the lower part of the thumb because it is strong and can deal with the stiff clay which she uses. The base is compressed to stop cracking and plenty of clay is left at the top to allow splitting to make a gallery. An old credit card was cut with a hole punch to make a profile for the base of the pot. The centred lump is opened only half way down and thrown using most pressure on the outside so that it doesn't open out too much. Emily uses a set square as a guide tool during throwing and as a tool to dig deep into the bottom of the lid to take out excess clay and give a very smooth surface.

Much of the excess clay both inside and out is taken away

during throwing and the rest removed by turning at the leather-hard stage. The lid is not wired off so that it can be altered if it proves the wrong size on drying.

LID

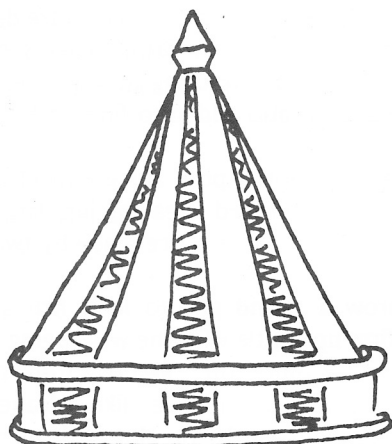


KNOB

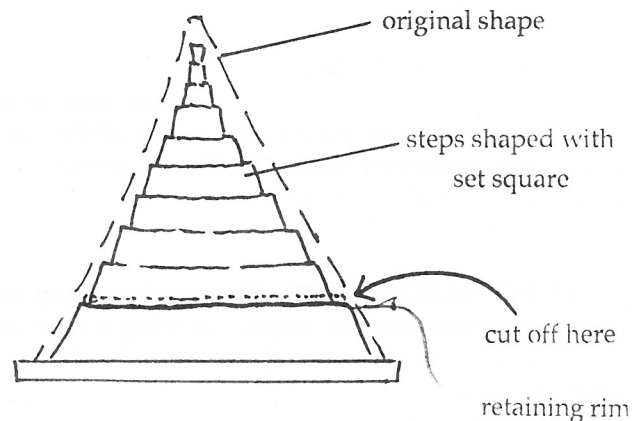


clay turned away

FINISHED POT

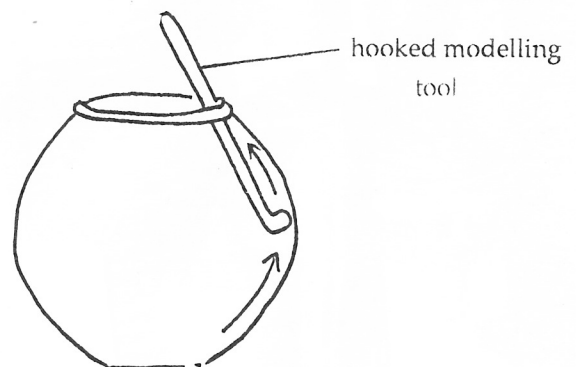


Emily has a meticulous approach to all her work and is very careful about the shape and contour which is then put in using the set square. Firstly the stop positions are marked out roughly by putting lines around the pot, the lower ones having bigger spaces between them. The set square is used to push into shape rather than pare off any clay. These pots have thicker walls than her other pots. Considerable time is taken in refining the shape and finally a hole is pierced in the top to release the air during drying. At leather hard the shape is refined further.



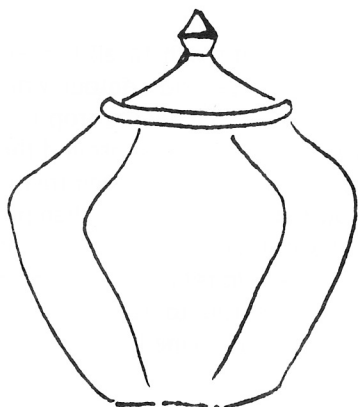
The pot is then placed back on the wheel and a lid is made by cutting through at one of the steps. Emily likes to cut it well down so that the lid is surprisingly tall compared to the base so that the piece has very little function. The audience suggested that it might make a good walnut whip storage pot! A retaining rim is made by scoring and slipping on a coil of clay which is then thrown.

**GOURD POT** - The basic rounded shape is thrown with a gallery at the top, then the gourd shape is made simply by pushing vertical grooves from base to top inside the pot using a hook-shaped modelling tool. The rim is then refined and the teapot-like lid thrown upside down off the hump.



**The knob** is thrown off the hump. Many knobs are thrown so that the best can be picked for the final piece. The set square is used to shape them and it has to be held firmly in two hands with the wheel at fast speed so that the knob does not go off centre.

**PYRAMID POT** - Once again stiff clay is used so it is opened using the wrist and palm. Here the outside hand does all the work and the inside one is just a guide. For the final thinning, Emily throws standing up. The shape is achieved by throwing at an angle not by collaring and the pot is then sealed at the top by collaring. The shape is then refined and surplus clay cut from the base.



**TALL FACETED POT** - The form is thrown thicker than usual and the bottom marked to give eight sides to the pot. The pot has to be dried evenly so that all the clay is at the same consistency before faceting. A cheese cutter is used to cut small facets, or a potato peeler is used to cut larger ones.

**APPLYING MASKING TAPE** - The tape is stuck on to a melamine surface and the shapes cut using a ruler and Stanley knife. Once stuck on, the pot must be glazed the same day so that the glue doesn't stay on the pot. The strips are peeled off over a bucket of water to reduce the problems with toxic dust.

In summation, Emily gave us a very detailed and generous account on the making of her many shapes and glazing techniques. The degree of care and attention to detail and finish was admirable.

**Elaine Hudson**



Pots by Emily Myers

Photograph by Marion Franses

## **VICTORIA AND MICHAEL EDEN**

Victoria and Michael make slip decorated earthenware. The pots are bold, simple forms with restrained decoration and strong colours. Their inspiration comes from Old English slipware and from Hungarian slipware.

In 1993 Vicky and Michael spent six weeks studying pottery in Hungary. Their intention was to look at slip trailing, but they became more interested in the brightly coloured glazes used by the Hungarian potters. They visited educational establishments and potters to gain knowledge of making and decorating Hungarian slipware and also looked at wood firing. Flasks, bowls, puzzle jugs and water bottles were some of the items they saw being made. It was at this time that Vicky and Michael decided to decorate their own work with the coloured glazes they had seen in Hungary. As well as being inspired by the colours they liked the effect created when one colour ran into another resulting in a change of colour at that point.

Vicky and Michael demonstrated the making and decorating of their pots together, alternating from one to the other, with Vicky decorating bowls while Michael was throwing. To make a face decoration on a shallow bowl Vicky pours white slip onto the inside of the leather hard bowl allowing it to run off at once, creating a white oval area. The pouring is done with a small jug using slip the consistency of single cream. After allowing a few minutes for drying, Vicky pulls her finger through the soft slip drawing the eyes, nose and mouth. The glaze decoration is painted on when the slip is firm. Layers of different coloured glazes are built up using latex as a resist. A little trailed decoration is also added to finish off.

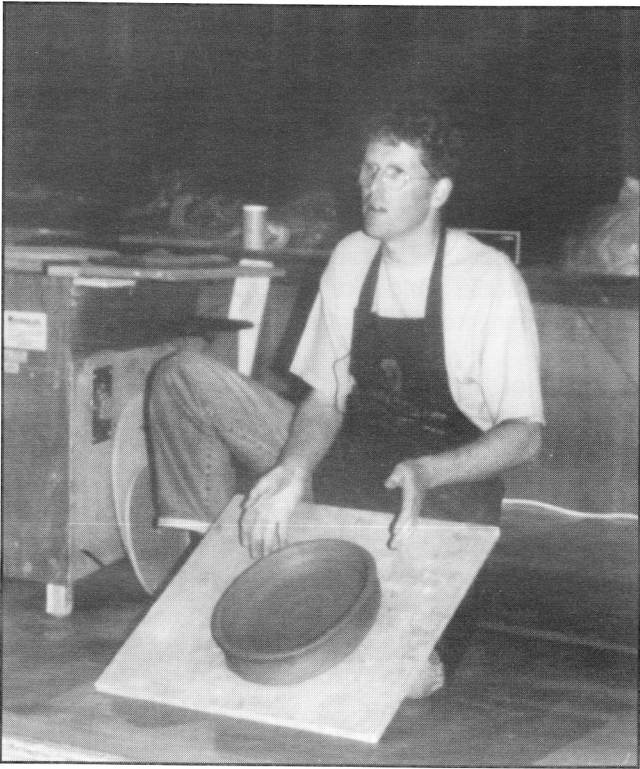
Mike made a succession of pots, apparently effortlessly, on the wheel. These included a leaning jug, large plate and an oval dish. The oval dishes are made by two methods:

1. Throw a round pot to look like a flan dish. Allow it to firm up a little with the walls being firmer than the base, which is quite soft. Remove from the bat and throw onto the floor at an angle "like a plane coming in to land", throwing towards you almost through your legs (remember to stand with your feet apart). Turn the pot around and do the same again and there you have an oval dish - just like that!

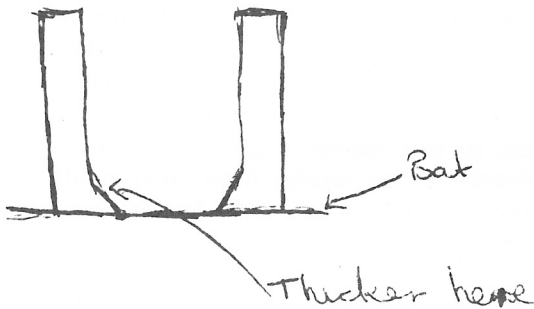
2. The other method Mike showed us was to throw a round disc of clay. When firm, throw onto the floor as in method 1 to make an oval. Throw a cylinder with no base but with a thick sloping wall at the bottom to enable better joining. Push to oval when firm. Score the base with a fork, apply slip and join oval to base.

Mike finished the outside of the base of the pot with one of his tools made from formica which wraps the edge of the base up around the bottom of the wall. When Mike throws large plates he leaves them to firm up a little before pushing the rim further down. This prevents collapsing and helps to stop the rim springing up as it dries.

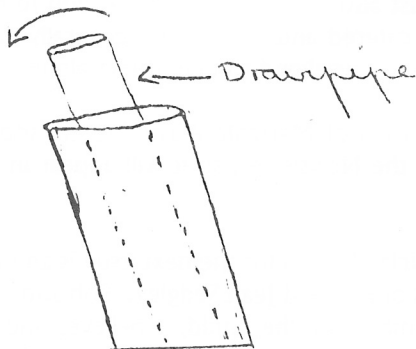




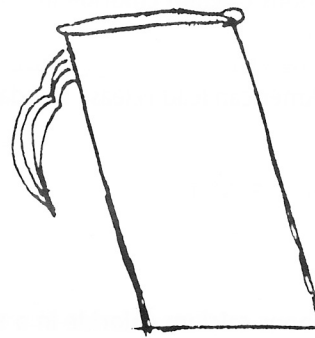
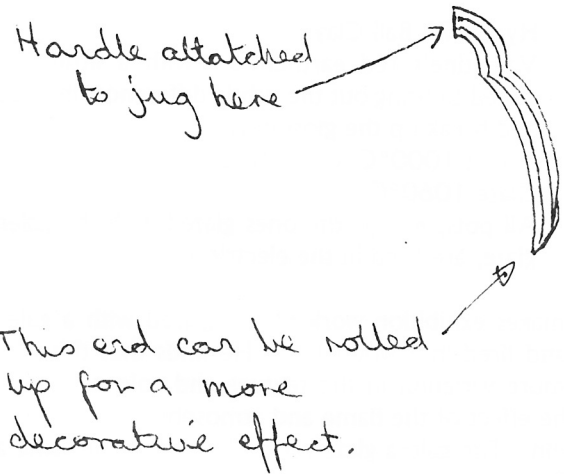
Michael Eden demonstrates one method of producing an oval dish  
- photograph by Marion Franses



Cylinder thrown without a base, then used to make an oval dish  
by fitting onto a distorted clay disc



To make his leaning jugs, Mike throws a cylinder and when  
firmed up a little puts a small drainpipe into the pot and pulls  
the top to bend the jug over.



Finished jug

Handles are made by pulling a wire coiling tool through a lump of clay. To make a flat handle, draw the tool through a slab of clay, varying the shape by moving from side to side as the clay is being cut.

Mike showed us several methods he uses to decorate slipped bowls and plates.

1. White slip is poured into the bowl and out again, coating the inside. The bowl is put on a banding wheel and lines are drawn around the pot in the wet slip with the fingers.

2. Use a rubber kidney cut to shape to comb through the wet slip making a wavy pattern.

3. Dab a natural sponge onto the wet slip to produce pattern or texture.

## Details of clay, firing, etc:

- Slip - Hyplas 71 Ball Clay  
 Clay - Valentine's red earthenware with a little grog added to bring out the subtle differences in glazes and break up the glossiness  
 Firing - Biscuit 1000°C to 1020°C  
 Glaze 1060°C  
 All pots, except the ones glazed with the galera glaze, are fired in the electric kiln.

Mike makes exhibition work that is glazed with a galera glaze and fired in a wood kiln. He finds that this glaze gives more variation in the texture and colour and also likes the effect of the flame and atmosphere of the wood fired kiln. The galera glaze recipe he uses is the same as Clive Bowen's.

## Glaze Recipes (given by Victoria and Michael Eden)

### Clear Glazes:

Lead Bisilicate	70 parts
Cornish Stone	20
China Clay	10

Fires 1080°-1115°C

Add approx. 2 teaspoons calcium chloride in a saturated solution per 45 litre (10 gallon) bucket.

This is an excellent raw glaze and is very craze resilient. It passes British and American lead release standards even over our copper slip.

Lead Sesquisilicate	5.00 kg
China Clay	1.20 kg
Flint	1.60 kg

Fires at 1060°C

Add approx. 2 teaspoons calcium chloride in a saturated solution per 45 litre (10 gallon) bucket.

This is a Mary Wandrausch glaze and has an excellent colour response, because of its lower firing temperature it produces much better browns and tans than the first glaze but is much more prone to crazing. This glaze can be used raw but needs great care as it tends to peel on edges. It also passes British and American lead release standards on all of our slips including the copper one. We use this glaze as the basis for our coloured Edey glazes with the following additions for colour:

- Green Glaze** add 2½% copper oxide  
**Blue Glaze** add 1% cobalt oxide  
**Orange Glaze** add 4% iron oxide  
**Turquoise Glaze** mix 25% green glaze, 25% blue glaze. 50% clear glaze  
**Honey Glaze** Lead Sesquisilicate - 2 kg  
 Red clay - 0.5 kg Fires at 1060°C

This glaze passes British and American lead release standards and works well raw.

Slip: We always use 100% Hyplas 71 for white slip with additions of oxides or stains (up to 15%) for the coloured slips, it has a very good resistance to peeling although it is more buff than a true white.

**Val Barnes**

## THE STAN ROMER MEMORIAL LIBRARY

The Library has now been 'open' to members for three meetings and has attracted a reasonable amount of interest. The books currently on the shelves represent slightly over half of the titles available which are directly connected with pottery. These titles will be rotated with the others - which will not all fit on the shelves! There are even more books which are more loosely connected or totally unconnected with pottery.

A full list of the pottery titles should be available for distribution with the next newsletter - please keep it carefully for your future reference.

We have also had an additional book donated by a Guild member, for which I should like to extend our thanks. If any other members have books which need a new home, we will be very glad to receive them.

Thank you for your support so far; please continue to enjoy Stan's books in the New Year.

**Pam Bishop**

## NOTEBOOK

With all the rushing about that I was doing for our Christmas meeting with Murray, and then the Steve Harrison workshops, I forgot to give Pam Bishop the file of newsletters from other guilds and associations. The idea is that Pam will have that file with the Library bookcase, so that members get an opportunity to see those newsletters we receive from other guilds. I will make sure that she receives the file for our next meeting.

The Steve Harrison workshops on 13th and 14th Dec., were a great success and a full write-up will be in the next Newsletter. At this point I would like to express thanks to our organiser, Caroline Hughes, who kept the details under control and maintained a level head during the various issues that came up whilst we were arranging the event. I must also say a very big thank you to my wife, Sylvia, who catered and carried and generally gave up a large part of her weekend to help things along.

I received part 3 of Marigold Austin's story too late for this issue of the Newsletter, so it will appear in the next issue.

Another article planned for the next issue is an update on the activities of Bob and Jean Sedgley. Bob and Jean were founder members of the Guild, I believe, and left our shores for sunny Spain a few years ago. It is always a pleasure to hear from old friends.

**Mervyn Fitzwilliam**

## **MATERIAL PROBLEMS**

The following letter has been sent to our editor by the West Country Potter's Association:

*I am trying to contact all Potters' Association newsletter editors to ask you to publicise a WPA member's attempts to gather information from people having problems with faulty materials. His full article will appear in our next newsletter and we also hope to have it published in the next CPA newsletter. We would appreciate it if you could ask your members to send very specific information about problems experienced with faulty materials to: Michael Gaitskell, Mill Pottery, Wootton Courtenay, Minehead, Somerset, TA24 8RB. Tel 01643 841297.*

### **ARE YOU HAVING PROBLEMS?**

Bloated? Pinholed? Can raw materials be the cause? The answer is yes and this article is an appeal to anyone who has experienced bloating in their work to answer a few questions and to contact me as soon as possible at the address shown above.

As potters, ceramicists and sculptors, we have enough problems to overcome without suffering from faulty materials. We all depend on the suppliers of the materials we use, and we expect reliability and consistency to be able to make good work. Of course materials can change naturally and through deliberate intention, but I would expect suppliers to inform their agents and those who use their materials of such changes. Detailed specifications and recommendations for use are essential.

I have experienced bloating and pinholing which thankfully I have now cured. After careful analysis and elimination of all possible contributory causes, I discovered that a particular material was responsible. I am corresponding with the company concerned who I believe is keen to get to the root cause of the bloating. It would help to know that I am by no means alone in endeavouring to secure more reliable materials. Mark Donaldson referred in a previous newsletter to a "rumble in the ceramic jungle", and I know for sure a number of potters who have experienced bloating in their pots recently.

Our course will be much more effective if we act together and the rumble becomes a roar! If you think you can supply me with details of when your work has bloated, please include the following:

1. What clay were you using - exact ingredients and where purchased if possible and original supplier.
2. What type of work, especially thickness, do you make?
3. What was the nature of the firing: type of kiln, fuel used, reduced or oxidised, cycle and top temperature.

4. And, above all, did the bloating occur on work where only the clay or material in the clay body was changed whilst everything else you did was the same as with previous unbloated work?

Please don't hesitate to contact me. One of the visitors to our pottery recently, has a daughter who made pots for submission for examination at 'A' level, only to find that they were disastrously bloated and virtually unfit for a true assessment. Many educational establishments, hobby potters, as well as ourselves are at the mercy of unreliable materials. We will all benefit from concerted action!

**Michael Gaitskell**

P.S. Since writing this article, two separate sources have informed me of various other material problems not involving pinholing or bloating. It is probably opportune to widen my appeal for examples of faulty materials. But please be careful and specific: you must present accurate data and be sure that the problems relate to materials and not to mistakes or changes made on your part. If we can prepare a properly argued case with unambiguous evidence we shall have a better chance of attracting co-operative support from other potters elsewhere and thereby achieve the desired response from suppliers.

*This article reproduced from West Country Potters Association Newsletter of December '97).*

*Feb.22 - Mar.8 '98 at the Walter Rothschild  
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### **LOW COST CLAY**

The committee have negotiated with Potteryworks Ltd. (Talbot Rd., Rickmansworth) for the purchase by **GUILD MEMBERS ONLY** of clay at bulk prices. The system will operate as follows. There will be 3 designated clays (listed below). Each participant must contract to purchase a guaranteed quantity of their designated clay(s) and pay the Guild in advance. They can then go to Potteryworks and collect their clays as and when required, up to their total contracted limit.

The three clays are as follows:

1. White Earthenware P1240 -  
1120°-1180°C...£7.50/25kg
2. Casson Throwing Body P1420 - (oxidising or reduction)  
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3. Grogged Red Earthenware P1320 -  
1100°-1160°C...£4.50/25kg

Fuller details of the above are given in the current Potteryworks catalogue. No other types are available under this scheme! Prices are approx. half catalogue price.

Send your order to: Tony Stevens, 84 Kings Rd., Berkhamsted, Herts.HP1 3LH. Tel: 01442 384861



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