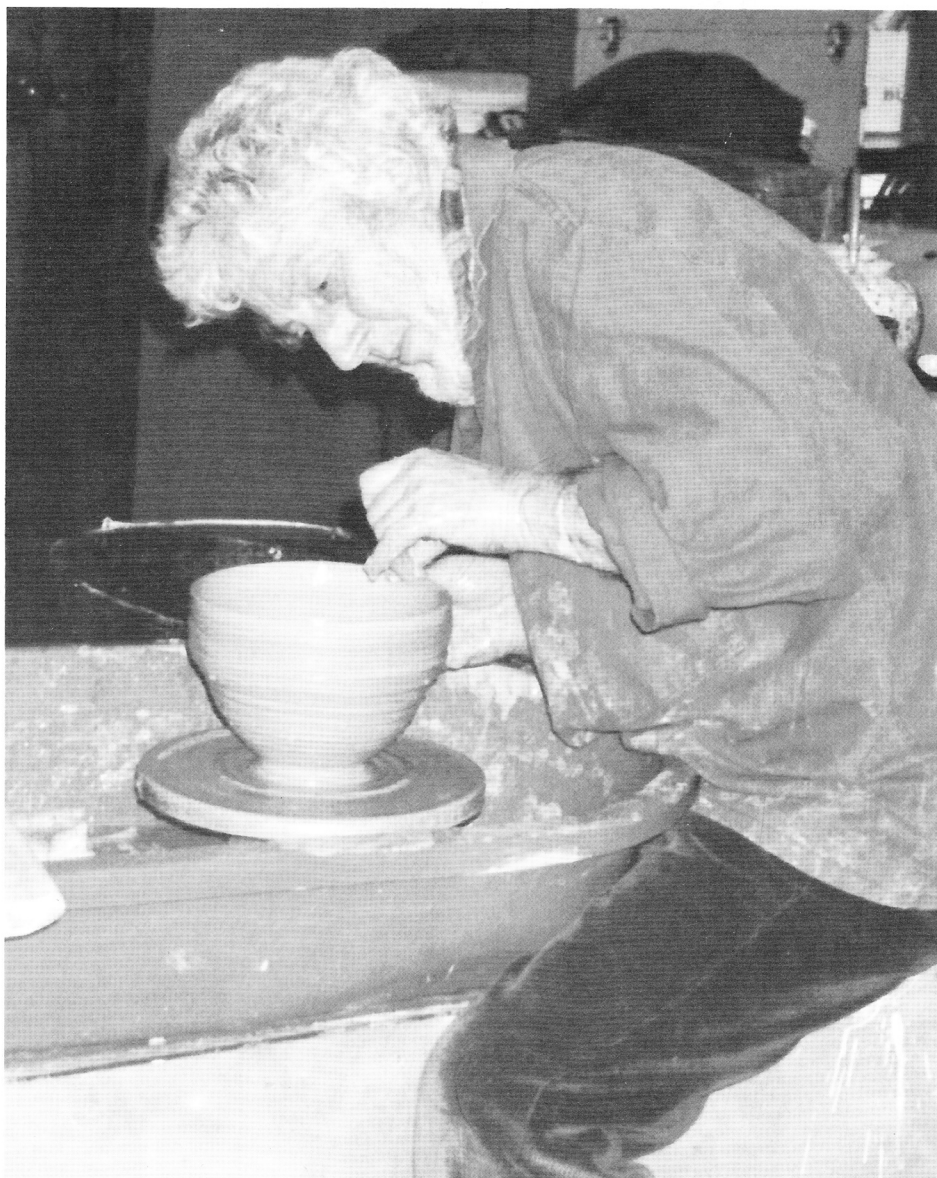




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# **DACORUM AND CHILTERN POTTERS GUILD**



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**NEWSLETTER**  
**May/June 1998**  
**£ 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 - £17.00  
Single - £14.50  
Student - £ 7.50

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.

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

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### Copy dates

(latest receipt of material for typing)

12th December

15th February

14th April

16th June

16th August

14th October

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

### Publication dates

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6th March

3rd May

6th July

4th September

6th November

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Hobby ceramics, pottery materials and equipment  
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*The Clay Cellar*

**! NEWS !**

*We are now the sole importer of  
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*When visiting the German factory recently,  
we were highly impressed by the  
absence of ceramic fibre in these kilns,  
and by the very high quality of  
manufacture.*

*We now stock the 45 litre top loading  
KITTEC stoneware kiln, coupled with  
a single programme electronic controller.*

*At present an exceptionally good buy  
thanks to the strength of Sterling!*

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High quality top and front loading stoneware  
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and Cromartie Hobbytech for the hobby  
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All major credit cards accepted. Mail order service.*

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## FRONT COVER PHOTOGRAPH

**Murray Fieldhouse Throwing demonstration, on  
12 th December 1997**

**Photograph by Mervyn Fitzwilliam**

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## EDITORIAL

We have lost the services of our printer of the past 6 years. The trauma of finding another reliable and inexpensive printer is not to be taken lightly. Aghast at the impossible prices quoted by possible alternatives, I enlisted the help of a good friend to produce this issue for us.

Depending on how things turn out, we may have to move to a quarterly Newsletter. Part of the reason for this is the cost and, in addition, the sheer volume of work that is needed to put each issue together. The fact is that no sooner have we finished one issue than it is time to start on the next. The important advantage to you all is that we do keep everyone well informed and (I hope) interested.

An alternative would be no Newsletter in future, just mail shots to cover events as deemed necessary by your committee. This would mean that the editorial pen would be almost stationary and we would not have to endlessly press-gang some of you to obtain articles, book reviews, etc. The disadvantage would be - no Newsletter. **THINK ABOUT IT, THEN LET THE COMMITTEE KNOW WHAT YOU THINK.**

**Mervyn Fitzwilliam**

## FUTURE GUILD EVENTS

### May 8th 8.00 p.m. - JOHN NUTTGENS

John makes Raku type pots using various decorating techniques with Terra Sigillata. The pots are removed from the hot kiln and placed in sawdust to obtain carbonisation of the Terra Sigillata. The different colours of black, grey, orange, red and pink are obtained by careful manipulation of the firing temperature and timing.

John will talk about his decorating techniques and will demonstrate his methods of throwing and altering his pots, including his thick hollow-walled bowls. He will bring some pots to sell.

**SUNDAY MAY 10th**  
**PITSTONE FARM MUSEUM**  
**10.30 a.m. - 4.00 p.m. (approx.)**

**Phone Tina Hall if you are interested**  
**- all welcome - 01442 826-223**

### **Saturday July 11th - GARDEN PARTY AT NORTHFIELD STUDIO, TRING WITH FIRST FIRING OF THE NEW SALT GLAZE KILN**

### **Sept.11th 8.00 p.m. - WILL LEVI MARSHALL**

Will makes brightly coloured, individually decorated, oxidised stoneware. His pots are glazed by painting, dipping and pouring, using wax resist to define patterns. After glaze firing to 1280°C, they are painted with lustre and fired again to 750°C. This is a rare opportunity to see this very special potter. He lives in Scotland, so this is a not-to-be-missed occasion.

## Volunteers required

*Are there any members willing to do a short talk and/or demonstration for a Friday evening meeting? This will comprise several members discussing their work on a subject relating to pottery that interests them. Duration - about 15 to 20 minutes. Please contact Val Barnes.*

## THE NEXT MEMBERS' EXHIBITION

We now have an exciting new venue for our exhibition to be held the first two weeks in October. It will not take place at the library as mistakenly stated in the last Newsletter but at the Radlett Centre, a new building built for exhibitions and theatre, and bang in the middle of Radlett town next to the library. We are hoping to hire exhibition stands from the Barnet Collection or, possibly, even make our own, but for that there is a snag. We would need transport and storage - anybody got any ideas? The stands dismantle and pack flat, and when assembled look very professional and I am sure enhance the look of one's work. The dates to remember are 5th October to 19th. Don't worry if you can't get to Radlett yourself, we can set up collection points for pots.

This will be a great opportunity for all members to sell pots, as it has been an excellent selling venue since it opened. We particularly welcome new or newish members

who would like to dip a toe in the water, even if you have only a very few pots.

Now is the time to think about it both for this event and for "Art in Clay" at Hatfield House in August. If you are making pots now, you won't have that last minute cliff-hanging feeling while you wait to see what comes out of the kiln. Further details will be in later Newsletters and Shirley Bell will be your contact for this exhibition.

### **For your diary: Pitstone Green Farm Museum**

A group from the Guild will be on site to do Raku firing and other activities involving the public on the following dates. We need your help so do turn up on at least one of the occasions.

Sundays 11 a.m. - 5 p.m.

June 14th

July 12th

Aug. 9th? to be confirmed

Sep. 13th

The August day is a first and will have to be confirmed nearer the time. All members are welcome - bring your biscuit pots and enjoy a day out.

Tina Hall (01442 826 223)

### **OTHER EVENTS**

### **BALLS POND STUDIO CERAMICS - 30th May to 2nd June**

There are currently 12 members including our own Paul Rowbottom. On the first 2 days, the studio will be open to the public and students for a free exhibition and demonstrations. The following 2 days are reserved for group visits and evening lectures. For details of events, prices and bookings, ring 0171 923 4736.

**UNIT 2 GALLERY's** '98 season of exhibitions features artists/makers working in the medium of paperclay. There will be 4 exhibitions between April and September and more information can be obtained from Tony Eeles, The Rural Workshops, Station Rd. Docking, Norfolk PE31 8LT Tel: 01485 518817.

**EARTH & FIRE 4 - The CPA at Rufford 27/28th June**  
at the Rufford Craft Centre, Rufford Country Park, Near Ollerton, Newark, Notts.

### **EXHIBITIONS AT THE OXFORD GALLERY**

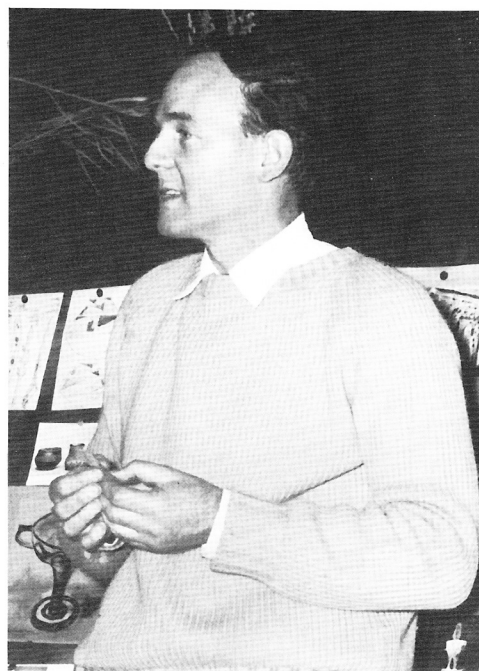
27th April to 27th May - **JIM MALONE**

6th July to 5th August - **RUPERT SPIRA**

### **BUCKS POTTERY AND SCULPTURE SOCIETY**

Friday 22nd May 7.00 p.m. at Little Kingshill Village Hall, Great Missenden - **PETER LANE**

### **KEN CLARK, 13TH FEBRUARY '98.** **Tiles and Ceramics: 50 Satisfying Years**



**Kenneth Clark lecturing at the 1958 Potters' Conference at Pendley Manor.**

50 years of achievement. So much to tell and so little time to tell it. Kenneth Clark is a contemporary which is why Mervyn felt I should be the one to report on this extraordinary event.

Nostalgia is inevitable. I remember Ken about town in the 50s. Poets, film makers, folk and jazz people, playwrights and of course potters and other crafts workers all meeting each other at common venues. Later, each went their own ways into their specialised activities. It had been a post-war ex-service reunion of comradeship of those involved in the arts and some of those with whom we rubbed shoulders became enormously significant in theatre, film, music and the media etc.

Kenneth Clark never sought self promotion. His reputation within our fraternity was based entirely on his immense capability and his vigour. Perhaps it is an inherited New Zealand characteristic reinforced by his wartime service in the Navy. Beginning at the Slade, he moved to the pottery department at the Central School of Art and Crafts then presided over by Dora Billington, a rather autocratic but empathic lady, the pottery equivalent of Dame Ninette de Valois in ballet circles.

Pottery at the time was dominated by the standards of Bernard Leach. Clark, Newland and Vergette were influenced by their wartime experience of the more colourful and exuberant Southern European wares. The way in which they used colours was also influenced by the Leach values of quality of fabric, so the outcome was the better for this. Bernard Leach seemed not to understand and referred to them as Picassoettes. It was not that he



was not an admirer of the turn of the century innovative work of Picasso. He at the same time deplored Picasso in his exploitive dotage battenning on to the awful tawdry, touristic Vallauris commercialism.

Ken Clark loved colour, rich colour, but he discovered that the earthenware glazes he loved did not behave well on pots and so he turned to the flat surfaces of tiles. At the time, commercial tiles were of the boring public lavatory rutilite and sanitary mode. The Festival of Britain and coffee bar culture gave him an opportunity to develop a mural use for his work which has been a continuing development in public works, perhaps culminating in his 300 ft. underpass in Plymouth.

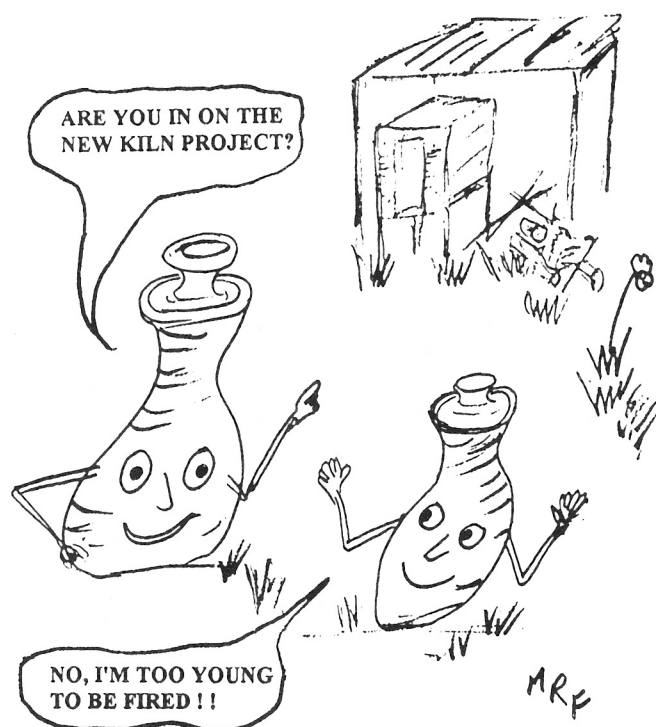
Kenneth Clark married an exceptionally talented student, Anne Wynn Reeves, and much of the work of the Kenneth Clark pottery is dependent upon her genius combined with the organisation ability and technical development and energy of Ken. He will take on the most demanding and difficult commissions that most potters would give up at the outset. "It can be done and it will be done". He may have been an expatriate New Zealander for almost 50 years but he retains the optimistic practicality of his native origins.

In the course of his lecture, Kenneth explained a variety of the techniques he has developed over the years and is still developing. Personally it was too much and too complex for me to take in. Perhaps another attendee would oblige.

**Murray Fieldhouse**

*[Another attendee has now obliged - see page 11]*  
Ed.

## THE CRACKPOTS



## PAPER CLAY

*Since some members of the Guild are taking a strong interest in "Paper Clay" I thought they would be interested in the following notes which appeared in the April issue of the Midland Potters Newsletter - MPA news. They are reproduced here without further editing and with the editorial note that accompanied them - Ed.]*

### A 'NEW' MATERIAL ?

Having just assembled information for a teaching project on paper clay, I thought fellow potters may be interested in trying its properties. This information was obtained from experimenting myself and from different articles. I feel it could be a material for the future.

### Paper Clay

Mixing paper pulp into clay (of any type) increases strength and reduces weight considerably and gives plasticity and bulk to the mixture from the clay. Paper clay is fired as for the parent clay but needs plenty of ventilation during the early stages of firing.

### Paper Pulp

This is made of cellulose fibres which are hollow tube-like structures with a remarkable ability to syphon moisture into itself. Pure cotton and linen papers are excellent due to the absence of lignin (a cell wall stiffener which is water resistant). Also tissue (toilet rolls), blotting paper or paper egg boxes are excellent. In fact papers which tear easily are likely to be best. Other materials like wood pulp, cardboard (which contains glue), shiny paper (contains kaolin), sawdust, fibre glass and nylon have been tried, but nothing compares to paper.

### Clay Particles

These are comparatively tiny and rounded. When cellulose and clay slips are mixed, clay platelets easily syphon into the fibre tubes, thus immensely increasing its unfired strength.

### MAKING PAPERCLAY

#### Preparing pulp

Tear up egg boxes or toilet tissue etc. into small pieces, soak overnight in hot water, liquidise or thoroughly mix small amounts of paper pieces in plenty of water to separate fibres. Pour through a sieve to remove most of the water.

#### Preparing clay

Clay slips of any type (from a reclaiming bucket or casting slip) is also sieved to break down lumps. Porcelain, earthenware, raku or stoneware clay can be used.

#### Paperclay formula

Paper pulp and clay slip of similar consistencies are mixed in required proportions (by volume). For general use and experimentation try: 25% paper pulp, 75% clay slip. Any proportions from 10% paper to 90% clay or 50/50

can be tried to assess the comparative strengths and consistencies of the material.

Once thoroughly mixed, paper clay is spread out on slabs to dry to required consistency or poured into a dish mould for a simple form - natural texture can be left, or changed later.

Flat sheets can be torn, cut, rolled and impressed. It can also be used for modelling and coiling. Large cracks are almost impossible to develop as it dries and shrinkage is within 1% of parent clay. Paperclay is ideal for large sculptural pieces (Ian Godfery uses it for most of his pieces).

N.B. One of the few disadvantages of paperclay is that the paper pulp does smell as it deteriorates, as it is plant matter; however pulp could be stored until needed in polythene bags in a freezer.

**Bridget Aldridge**

*Bridget has experimented intensively with paperclay and has taught about it locally. She tells me that it is excellent for carving in the leather hard state, being exceptionally strong before firing, and that throwing with it is possible although difficult.*

*More and more potters, particularly in the United States, are exploring ways in which the qualities of this material can be exploited. If any other members of the MPA has tried working with paperclay, perhaps they would consider sharing their experiences with others through the newsletter.*

*John Lockett (Editor MPA News)*

### **'PAPER' POTS & PIECES**

As I write, the members of Pots & Pieces are in the throes of getting ready for our two big events this year - the first one at the Cow Byre in early July is our present concern. Six of our potters (Rachel is a student at Harrow these days) are busy mixing paper and cellulose fibre into clay and using it for experimental work and this is done gradually as and when we want to use it, but it is a bit daunting realising that we each need to mix a whole 25k. bag in this way.

Incidentally, we had a Raku experiment day with Shirley's Raku kiln and we found that paper opens up the clay to resist thermal shock pretty well, although it seems best to use slightly grogged clay in the first place - a belt and braces approach, one might say. We have also found that it is alright to throw with although it can be a bit lumpy, but it does have a lot of advantages for modelling, with Jane and Shirley doing most of this. So far, we have stuck to an 'Alice in Wonderland' theme but I expect the finished display to be much wider than this.

We have had a few new members on the textile side, so I am not sure what some of them are planning, but I have seen some interesting work using paper with embroidery, some silk-covered origami boxes, and Diana is planning some paper pulp leaves and other constructions as soon as

she manages to get her commission for the Royal College of Physicians out of the way.

I do hope we will see some of the Guild members (those who are not on the pot crawl) at our private view on 28th June. The exhibition is open from 29th June to 11th July.

**Marguerite Moon**

### **PROFILE - GEOFF HARDING**



Pottery came into my life in 1970; I had just got this exciting job at Reuters in Fleet Street to teach their staff about computers. Very high tech stuff, but I have always believed that one should create a balance in one's life so I enrolled at the local evening institute to do pottery. I found that pottery proved to be a pleasant relaxation from the competitive hassle of the lecture room.

My home quickly became cluttered up with my immediate masterpieces. Two pots deserve a mention here: the first is what I call my self-portrait. Spontaneous self-expression got hold of me and I had made a hand-built figure of myself overburdened, pulling a huge wheelbarrow (plant pot) representing my problems.

The other was a large oriental-like six sided slab pot with a regular pattern on each side and overmodelled with a large Chinese dragon encircling the pot, which has been exhibited on a few occasions.

Life has moved on quite a bit since then and potting is now an occasional activity taking second place to Hatha Yoga teaching, gardening, philosophy and, of course, a magic show on special occasions.

### **BOOK REVIEW**

**Iznik Pottery - John Carswell. 128 pp. paperback.**

**British Museum Press 1998. £10.99**

This is a beautiful, medium sized paperback with many coloured plates as well as monochrome ones and as far as I can tell, it keeps up with the high standard of scholarship and production we expect from the British Museum and at a very reasonable price. It is written for the knowledgeable layman & does not go deeply into technicalities.

However, the photographs are first class and many individual designs on tiles are clearly shown in drawings.

The book is mostly based on the superb Godman collection in the British Museum - one of the finest in the world. It describes the history and the development of Iznik wares and the influences on them from Persia and China until the peak in the late 16thC. It covers both pots and architectural tiles for mosques.

It explains the patronage of the Sultans and the Islamic architects under the Seljuk Turks and the Ottoman Empire and how, as this declined, the export trade increased.

The origins of the exquisite stylised floral designs are described and illustrated - the wild originals of many of our garden flowers are there.

Some of the pots have mounts of precious metal both as decoration and to extend the life of the pots which enhances their value. The affinity with the designs on Turkish and Persian carpets is plain to see. I enjoyed this book and am sure that others will too.

**Ruth Karnac**

#### **LETTER FROM SPAIN - Sagra Nov.'97 (Continued)**

I met my little art group as a result of a rather disastrous 'craft fair' held last December in an old schoolhouse, organised, but given no publicity by S.P.A.P. (or is it S.P.A.M.?) the local expat-run, animal protection society. Hence the only public who turned up were a few friends of the stallholders. We sold one small item to another stallholder, Elizabeth, and were asked for a donation.

However, Elizabeth, who is Swedish and lives with her Dutch husband close by the schoolhouse, asked me if I would teach a group which gathers at their house each week to paint. So it is not always what we sell at craft fairs that is the real profit, but the people we meet.

Another, I hope promising, contact I made was in the long summer craft fair in Calpe old town, to which we went three and sometimes five evenings a week, arriving about 1.30 in the morning. Our flat in Calpe, being let for the summer, we were not able to stay there. One evening a very charming Saudi Arabian lady came to our stall with her family and bought four small watercolours. She commissioned four larger ones and it turned out that she runs a gallery in Riyadh. I gave her what I thought to be a very good price as it is unusual to find a gallery owner willing to speculate and buy work outright. Ohoud was quick to tell me, however, that contrary to popular belief in the West, not everybody in Saudi was wealthy! Quite true, I thought later, I don't suppose the foreign servants are rolling in rials. If my watercolours appeal to the tastes of all rich collectors she will send for more. However, we are just testing the waters at the moment, so everyone who reads this - cross your fingers, please!

Our craft stall is looking quite diverse these days with - in addition to watercolours and pots - hats, prints and drawings, notelets and photocards, pot-pourri bags, and a range of T-shirts and linen bags with my designs on them. I also occasionally offer portrait drawings. Jean has been making hats now for about 20 months and they have proved successful, selling steadily. We were told that the Spanish never wear hats but quite a lot have been bought by young Spanish women, although it is true that most of her customers are foreigners. We were very pleased to see that at the recent wedding in Barcelona of the Infanta Cristina there were very few women without hats, and hope that this has created a fashion. At Calpe, during the summer she sold 33.

In May we took time off to go on a 3-week, 6 countries tour (well 8 actually) with our travel club. After the first night's stop in Figueras, home of the Salvador Dali museum, we had a day in San Remo with its fascinating old town. Built on a hill, its warren of little streets and steep flights of steps literally burrow under the houses for long sections.

Two days in magical Venice provides a lifetime of memorable vistas. The hotel was in Lido di Jesselo, a resort on a long spit of land on the seaward side of the lagoon. Crossing the lagoon on a waterbus was a wonderful and romantic way to enter Venice each morning and has convinced us that that is where we want our summer residence to be.... unfortunately property prices mean that it must inevitably remain a dream!

Crossing the border into Hungary - our passports closely checked and stamped. I think that the guard found the idea of a Spanish coach full of English a bit taxing to his official mind. We stopped at a roadside cafe and discovered a very enjoyable white wine for about 20p. a glass.

It was quite late when we arrived in Budapest which was beautiful at night with spotlit memorials and illuminated chain bridge.



**Matthew Church, Buda.**

It is rumoured that with the wine supplemented by gin and tonics, some members were as lit up as the city by the time we arrived! We loved Budapest - although a little run down with a lot of poverty, there is very little traffic and easy to get about, but we barely scratched the surface in two days. The small Liszt museum is worth a visit but unfortunately we did not get to the Bartok museum. We met a student collecting money to help feed the homeless. She had just come back from a stay in Watford! - where she had been improving her already excellent English.

Asking where we could eat a reasonably priced lunch, it turned out that she was also a vegetarian and directed us to Gorindas - the Hara Krishna restaurant. We were amazed and delighted as we often go to Gorindas, Soho Street branch when in London.

The main road from Budapest was 'decorated' for some kilometres by young ladies in short skirts trying to flag down the bus. Jeni was looking for a suitable restaurant to stop for a break but was reluctant to stop and ask directions of these beauties for fear of losing some of her gentlemen passengers. A spirit of youthful free enterprise is undoubtably sweeping over the former communist bloc!

Vienna is a cornucopia of artistic delights and I threw myself at it like a starving beggar at a banquet, but in five days we could only pick out a few choice morsels. The (reconstructed) secession building, powerhouse of Viennese Art Nouveau, was a must; so was the wonderful collection of Klimts in the Belvedere, but the pièce de résistance among the moderns must be the astonishing Hundertwasserhaus, with its kaleidoscope of colours tracing the jigsaw assemblage of flats, its roof gardens and trees growing from specially constructed balconies ('tree tenants'), and rich ornamentation, defies all rules of conventional architecture.

Hundertwasser, a committed 'green', is now in his late sixties. For the full flavour of this diverse and controversial artist who subverts all pigeon-holing and nationalistic assumptions and berates architects for their 'tyranny of straight lines', a visit to his museum is recommended. Here, jigsaw colours, tiles, trees thrusting through windows and uneven floors - like walking over little hillocks. Here are his architectural projects, fragments of his philosophy stuck to the walls and, of course, many of his extraordinarily energetic paintings: spirals, circles and wobbly lines conjure up images of hills, strange plants, exotic creatures and faces, mixed up together in colours that seem to glow and fluoresce. I particularly liked his redesigned Israeli/Palestinian flag combining a white crescent with the star of David.

I must confess that only having seen reproductions I had never previously felt much enthusiasm for these paintings, which I thought looked too much like colourful bodies, but the originals have quite a different impact and I am now a thoroughgoing 'convert'! The most public demonstration of Hundertwasser's art, and a highly imaginative solution to urban living, is his remodelling of the city incinerator. Once a blot on the rich architectural

landscape, it is now a welter of colour and writhing shapes and its chimney, like a tall blue and gold fanciful minaret, shimmering in the sunshine, can be glimpsed from many parts of the city. But he is not universally popular and the modernist - 'form follows function' - school of architects regard his buildings as over-decorated kitsch, And I am not sure that living in a flat with creaking wooden floors, uneven walls and ceilings, with hordes of tourists outside the oddly spaced windows, would be my ideal.



**Hundertwasserhaus - Vienna 1985**



**Gorgons from the Beethoven Frieze.  
Secession Building, Gustav Klimt - 1902.**

After Vienna, Prague was a complete contrast with its grandiose castle seeming to dominate the many distinctive quarters and ancient town centre from its hill across the river. It is a city of contrasts and surprises and just round the corner from the Old Town Square with its famous clock, we found a wide bustling shopping street and a branch of Tesco's which provided a group of us with a



very nice lunch from their pizza and salad bar.

I was fascinated to discover, in the old gold-workers' street built into the castle walls, the house where Kafka lived for some years with his sister. Painted blue, it is the smallest of these tiny cottages, which are now mostly shops but preserve most of their original character. His humble dwelling, crouching in an alleyway, is a footstep yet an insurmountable distance from the world of the mighty, corridor buildings of "The Castle", with their steely blue ranks of lofty windows. A perfect symbol of the bureaucratic authority that he felt oppressed and condemned him, and which must have dictated the theme of the novel of the same name.



Golden Lane, Prague Castle - Kafka's house on the left.

On the way to Innsbruck for one night, we stopped for lunch in Luxembourg, so giving us an extra country. We only had an hour or so to look round the wonderful mediæval streets of Innsbruck, but more entertainment was provided by the man running the hotel: head (and only) waiter-cum-chief receptionist and husband of the manageress, he was so anxious to please, but served us with an (expensive) bottle of white wine instead of red (it was very good so we didn't mind); nearly dropped Jean's pudding off the plate; scattered money all over the floor as he bounded out of the kitchen ("oh.... my purse was too fast for me!"); when one lady asked for a light for her room, took her a box of matches (she is a keen smoker - perhaps he had noticed); and entering another room in the dark to fix a light bulb, stepped on the bed and disturbed the couple occupying it! Naturally he was soon rechristened Basil.

The last city on our trip was Geneva, although we actually stayed a short distance across the border in France, much cheaper and only a tram ride from the centre, Geneva is home to the Barbier-Muller collection, one of the world's largest private collections of art and artefacts of all periods including African art. Unfortunately it is now the policy of the foundation now in charge of it to keep most of it in store and only show selected items in temporary exhibitions. Fine for the citizens but hard luck on the visitors. I wonder if this implies a parochial attitude of mind on the part of the Swiss. However, I think I had visited 13 museums and galleries during the 3 weeks and it was a wonderful trip, so we were well satisfied - there is plenty to go back for. We spent the last night at the same hotel in Figueras, where we knew the food was good and rounded everything off beautifully.

Robert and Jean Sedgley

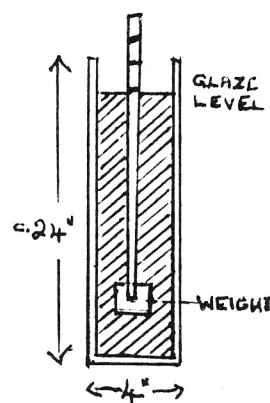
## POTTERY TIPS - 1

### A Comparative Hydrometer

*Further to Arthur's 'Pottery Tips' in the last Newsletter, he has sent us this one to help keep a glaze at the same thickness (or viscosity as intellectuals like him would say) each time you use it.*

It is always a job to remember the viscosity by dipping your finger in the bucket and wondering whether the last time you used the glaze, your finger was covered or clean.

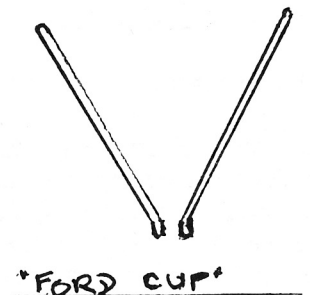
You need a piece of plastic tubing about 2 ft. in length and 4" diameter from the same source described in the March/April Newsletter, but this one should have a bottom to it.



Fill the tube nearly to the top with the prepared glaze. Then make yourself a 'fishing' type float from a thin bamboo cane about 12" long, weighted to stabilise it so that it is suspended short of the bottom. Then mark the position that the 'float' assumes above the surface. These marks will indicate the viscosity of the various glazes used in your pottery. I use split cane bought from the garden centre.

As an alternative to the plastic tubing method shown in the last Newsletter, you could make a "Ford Cup" about 6" in diameter and 6" deep with a 3/8ths hole in the bottom.

You fill it with the mixed glaze while keeping your finger over the hole. You remove your finger and time the flow until it is empty. This might give a time of say 3 mins. which would then be adjusted according to whether it is, say, a Tenmoku glaze or a Celadon.

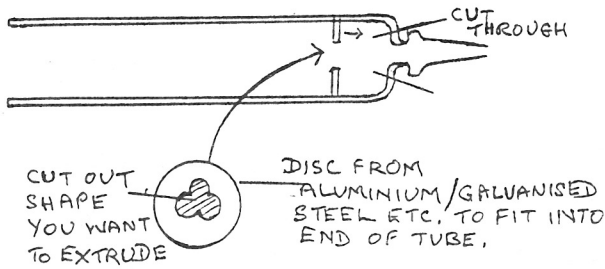


Arthur Ball

## POTTERY TIPS - 2. Extruding Handles

During our meeting with Chris Barnes, we were discussing methods of extruding handles. Reg Milner suggested a simple extruder for those without a pug-mill or wad-box.

Cut the end off an empty mastic tube and fabricate a die plate to fit into the end.



Put the die into the end of the tube, fill with a roll of clay and then extrude the clay through the die, using the usual mastic gun assembly.

### **SKILLS TRAINING WORKSHOP FOR POTTERS**

For complex reasons, which all of us are aware of, present students of ceramics courses are not acquiring a broad range of skills to equip them to set up workshops of their own - if they wish to make functional pottery. There are also few opportunities to work as apprentices in existing potteries. The potter Joe Finch has taken the initiative to address this issue by setting the wheels in motion to develop a Skills Training Workshop for Potters. It can be seen that the present healthy studio and workshop pottery economy in England and Wales needs a corresponding healthy influx of skilled young (and mature) potters if it is to continue and flourish in to the next century.

The initiative was started in 1997 by Joe Finch. The Skills Training Workshop has been set up as a Trust, with a board of six trustees which includes him. The Trust is aiming for charitable status. Since receiving funding from the Arts Council of Wales Lottery Unit and from other sources, the project has been moving forward at a rapid pace; a consultant was appointed last autumn and a Feasibility Study completed. The Feasibility Study includes an assessment of the demand for workshop training from prospective trainees, art schools and pottery businesses. It has sought a response on course requirements from these above sources, prepared a financial projection and a business plan for the project and targeted key geographic areas in England and Wales where such a scheme might be successfully located. There has been much input from the trustees in forging a meticulous and realistic plan which will be submitted for Arts Council Lottery and other major funding this year.

It is envisaged that the Training Workshop will take 12 full-time trainees, chosen from a range of backgrounds, including school leavers and college graduates. The course content will cover two main areas: Production Skills and Workshop Management/Administration. It would also offer refresher courses. The structure of the course will have much in common with the highly successful Thomastown Pottery Skills course in Ireland. It will be a demanding course which will reward trainees with a thorough training in production pottery. The Workshop

will be open to visitors and trainees' work will be available for sale.

At present a site in Denbigh in North Wales is being investigated. The site plan includes lavish workshop space, a gallery/shop, café, study and library. It is a grand plan - an 'ideal' with much to recommend it. The project is still open to suggestions from interested potters, potential trainees, etc. - concerning suitable site locations in Wales and any other useful and relevant ideas.

Joe Finch tel: 01239 810 265

**Anna Hale**

### **HELLO! HELLO! HELLO!** **1998 POTCRAWL - JUNE 27/28th**

Once again we are at crunch point for joining this year's Potcrawl. If you haven't already booked your place, this is decision time ---

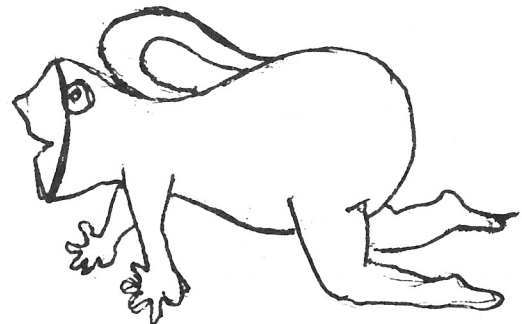
**DO IT RIGHT NOW** and send your cheque with the form from the March/April Newsletter to Caroline Hughes.

The finalised itinerary is as follows:-

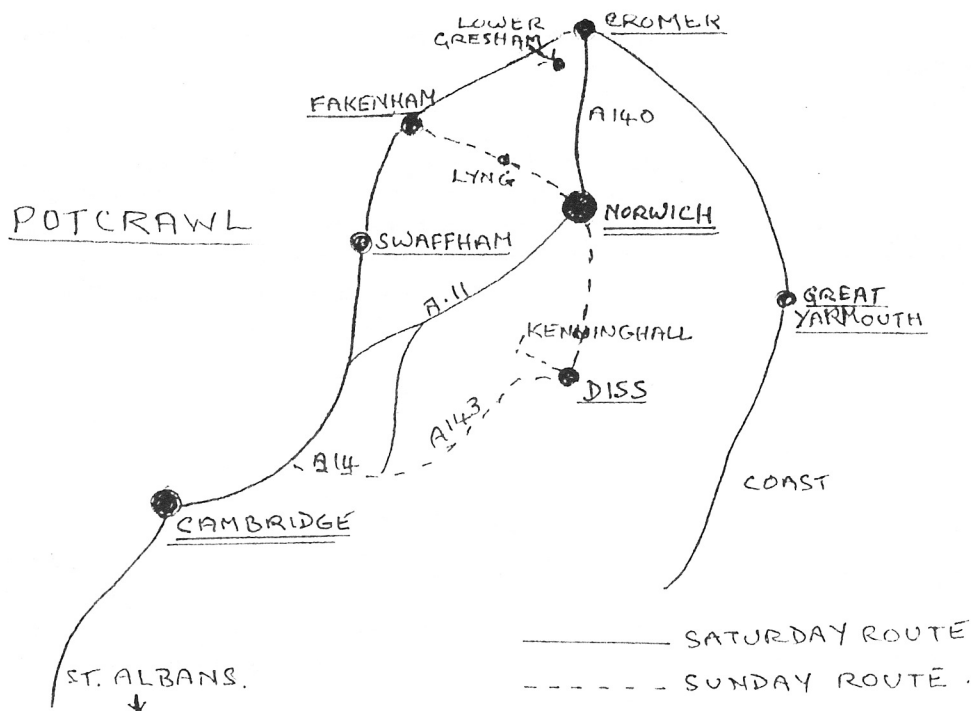
Additional pick-up point **8.15 a.m.** at St.Albans, corner of London Rd. and Marlborough Rd.

Saturday: 10 a.m.-11.45 a.m. Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge  
12 noon-1.30 p.m. Browns Restaurant  
2.45 p.m.-5 p.m. A. and J. Young  
6.30 p.m.(dining at 7.45 p.m.) Post House Forte, Ipswich Rd. Norwich for overnight stay

Sunday: 11 a.m.-12.45 p.m. Sainsbury Centre, Norwich  
1 p.m.-2.15 p.m. Split into 2 groups for lunch, alternating with visit to Peter Reynolds  
2.30 p.m.-4 p.m. Stephen Parry  
5 p.m.-7 p.m. Clive Davies  
8.45 p.m. approx. Arrive St.Albans.



**POTCRAWLING**  
**R.K.**



- Peter Reynolds: Lustre Glazes
- Stephen Parry: Woodfired Stoneware
- A & J. Young: Salt-glazed Ware
- Clive Davies: High fired reduced stoneware
- Fitzwilliam Museum: Oriental
- Sainsbury Centre: Modern Ceramics & much else

A. & J. Young Pottery, Common Farm, Sustead Rd., Lower Gresham.  
 Peter Reynolds, Balaclava Pottery, The Street, Lyng, Norfolk.  
 Stephen Parry, Ryburgh Pottery, May Green, Fakenham, Norfolk.  
 Clive Davies, Valley Barn, Homersfield, Harleston, Norfolk.  
 Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge.  
 Sainsbury Centre, Ipswich Rd., Norwich.

## NOTEBOOK

### To Breathe in or Not?

Caroline Hughes has sent me a note from *Ceramic Review* letters, in which questions were asked regarding which type of mask one should use for dust protection.

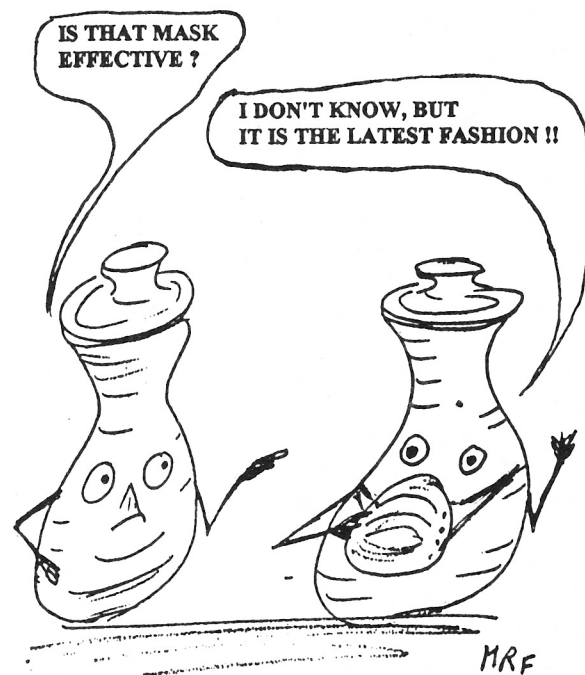
I asked our Chief Environmental Health Officer about this and he outlined the situation for me as follows:-

Any supplier selling glazes, clay in powder form, oxides, etc. should be supplying the COSE (control of substances hazardous to health) documents with that material. The protection needed should be specified on that document and if a face mask is needed, the details of the type of mask should be given. In a class situation, anyone likely to be exposed **MUST** be protected.

What you cannot do, is go along to your local DIY store and buy any mask you fancy, in the hope that it will protect you from, say, glaze dust, without clearly understanding what the mask is for.

For further details call the Health and Safety Executive information line: 0541 545 500.

## THE CRACKPOTS



## **NOTEBOOK (Continued)**

### **New Salt Glaze Kiln Project.**

We are planning to build a new salt glaze kiln. Murray has allocated us space for this exciting project at Northfield Studio and Paul Rowbottom is our enthusiastic group co-ordinator for this activity.

Sufficient bricks were brought to the site by Paul, Caroline Hughes and Tina Hall as reported in the March Newsletter. Our plan is to build a wood-fired kiln along the lines of the 'Stubbs-Schloessing' kiln built at Aberystwyth last year. Details are given in the March issue of the *Ceramic Review*.

Looking ahead, we are intending to fire the kiln as part of the Garden Party activities on Saturday 11th July this year. Before that date there will be plenty for Paul and his team of enthusiasts to do and a range of skills will be needed including site clearance, metalwork, welding, shelter building, collecting and preparing fuel, bricklaying, etc.

To join the team call Paul on 01923 263 032 or write to 97 Breakspere Rd, Abbots Langley, Herts. WD5 0ER. We need to start kiln building early in June, so talk to Paul as soon as you can. Remember that those who help with building work will get their pots in the kiln.

**Editor**



## **MEMBERSHIP NEWS**

**Christine Richards** and her husband **Terry** have joined us. They both have a strong interest in pottery and Terry is currently producing both thrown ware and sculpture.

**Linda and Peter Ablett** have been with us on our Potcrawl for the last two years and have now joined the Guild. They both have very busy jobs, so do not often have time to join us at Guild events. However, they are planning to participate in the Chiltern Museum event in May.

**Paul Rowbottom** has recently joined the group of Potters and Ceramists working at Balls Pond Studios. Paul is an enthusiastic, adventurous potter and is going to be our co-ordinator for our new kiln building project at Northfield Studio.

**James Whitman** is from Flaunden and has an interest in porcelain, particularly thrown ware. He is also interested in various decorating methods.

**Jean Bowles** of Quanton has joined us. Jean has been a potter for some time and is currently involved in hand building techniques

**Mr. and Mrs. I.Cullum** have also joined us. They have interests in earthenware and stoneware, mostly thrown work.

**Jack Lewis** from Dunstable is interested in most aspects of pottery, with throwing being his main interest. Jack combines the careers of being both a potter and also a psychotherapist.

**Linda Ives** is based in Acton and is a teacher.

We are delighted to welcome all our new members and look forward to seeing you at our events and evening meetings.

**Mervyn Fitzwilliam**

## **ART IN CLAY AT HATFIELD HOUSE AUG.     ? ? ?**

For the last two years we have happily and successfully taken an active part in this important ceramic festival. As those of you who have attended as visitors or Guild members will know, it is a glorious feast for pot lovers with almost every kind of clay activity displayed - including kilns and firing and pottery materials, sculptural work, domestic pots and everything in between by the great and the good in the pottery world.

We would like to repeat the experience this year, but your committee and organisers have serious doubts as to whether we can drum up sufficient support from our membership. I say this because the event at the Open Air Museum at Chalfont-St.-Giles is in 2 weeks time as I write and we are desperately short of helpers to cover these three days. We have a membership of over 150 and yet most seem to fight shy of active participation.

From past experience, I know that when approached directly, people say - 'Oh, but I've never done anything like that before' or '..... my work is not good enough'. This modesty is rather sad, because the Guild has much to offer if you give it a chance. Just another pair of hands to relieve others whilst they have a cup of tea or answer a call of nature is a great help. Wrapping up pots or taking the money is also helpful. Why not give it a try?

As a Guild, I feel that we cannot let down our reputation by putting on a half-hearted show. We either do it properly or not at all, so I am finding it necessary to make a cut-off date of June 13th to decide whether we have the requisite number of helpers to carry out the project. You have the dates and the form from the March/April Newsletter, now we need a response from you - please do this **AS SOON AS POSSIBLE** so that we know where we stand and can make our detailed plans.

**Ruth Karnac - Chair**



## **KENNETH CLARK'S TALK ON TILE MAKING**

After showing us an excellent set of slides illustrating some of the range of tiles he has made and some of his major tile installations, Kenneth described some of the techniques he has used in making and decorating tiles, as follows:

Machine made tiles: He always uses machine made tile blanks when he can.

Hand made tiles: When he makes his own tiles, he uses a clay with plenty of grog in it (40's to 80's molochite can be used). He uses T material for his most important work. The clay is rolled out, cut into tiles and put under a sheet of plastic and allowed to dry very slowly.

The traditional way of making tiles is to push the clay into a wooden frame with metal all round the top and hard-board underneath. The excess on top is cut off to make the top flat. The wood is then removed and the clay is dried slowly.

Tube lined slip: Apply tube lining slip from a rubber or plastic bulb through a narrow tube to form a line pattern on the unfired clay tile. The pattern includes areas surrounded by the tube lining which can later filled in with underglaze colours before the tile is glazed.

Sand cast: Make a design in wet sand. Put casting slip over the design. Let it dry, then use the casting slip pattern to make a plaster mould. The plaster mould is then used to cast tiles.

Pen drawn design: Draw a design with a pen filled with ceramic colour on to a hardened white raw glaze surface.

Relief design: This is a technique to make tiles for a design covering several (or many) tiles. Do a sketch of the complete design, covering a number of tiles. Make the sketch larger as necessary, by photographic techniques. Place a sheet of transparent foil over the enlarged design and then put coloured lines on the transparent foil to show where the individual tiles will be. Then make individual tiles as required to reproduce the design. Then make the tiles in relief and make a little wall round each area on a tile to hold its colour.

Engobe tiles: Use a biscuit tile. Make an engobe from flint, ball clay, China clay and a flux (with a body stain if required). Put a coating of the engobe on the biscuit tile and allow it to dry. After applying the engobe, put a clear high alkaline glaze over the top. The alkaline in the glaze reacts with the engobe to give special effects.

Flower designs: These are generally made by drawing the design on to biscuit ware directly from the flowers themselves using ceramic pencils. The design can then be completed using underglaze colours, engobes or brush-on glazes if required.

Painting with coloured glazes: Kenneth said that this method works well where the design does not have to be exact, as in flower petals.

Painting with a stencil: He uses a squeegee to squeeze on a glaze through a stencil.

Silk screen printing: Using a special camera, photograph the subject through a fine mesh to get a half-tone negative. This can then be enlarged or reduced photographically to produce a half-tone print on a transparency. The transparency can then be used to reproduce the design on a silk screen.

The silk screen can then be used with a squeegee to print with a 'silk screen painting glaze'. (This can be an on-glaze enamel mixed with a silk screen printing medium).

Alternatively, the silk screen can be used to print an outline in an underglaze colour on hardened raw glaze or on bisc ware. The outlines can then be filled in with underglaze colours using a paintbrush. A different effect can be obtained using a wide mesh silk screen.

Pebble effect: Make balls of clay, press them flat, glaze them and set them in cement.

Stencil designs using sprayed glaze: A stencil is stuck on the tile using blue tack. Glaze is then sprayed on the stencil, in different colours if that is required.

Crushed coloured glass: Some of his early tiles were decorated by crushing coloured glass and letting it melt on the surface of the tile.

Raised patterns: Take a slab of plaster. Scratch the design into the plaster. Then press the clay into it to obtain a raised pattern on the tiles. Take care not to contaminate the clay with particles of plaster.

**John Beckley**

# **DCPG COMMITTEE LIST**

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Northfields Studio, Tring, Herts. HP23 5QW  
**Ruth Karnac** (Chair) 01895-631 738  
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**Mervyn Fitzwilliam** (Vice-Chair & Newsletter)  
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**Digby Stott** (Advertising/Membership) 01442-250 540  
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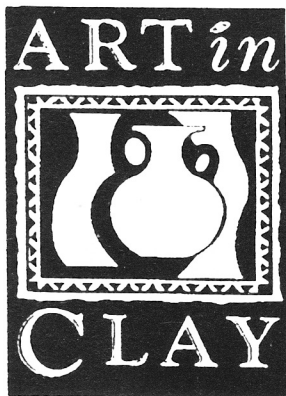
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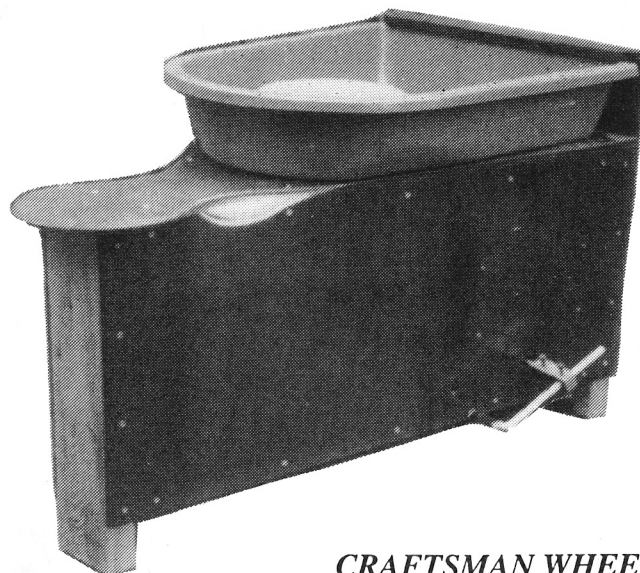
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