



DACORUM AND CHILTERN POTTERS GUILD



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A QUICK BITE WITH TOFF

MILLWAY

SOUTHERN POTTERY &

CERAMICS SHOW



**NEWSLETTER
SPRING 1999
£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. Exhibitions, visits and workshops are also organised at various times.

Membership Rates:(as from Oct.1 '98) Family - £18.50
Single - £15.50
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 quarterly in February, May, August and September, being distributed free to all members of the Guild, other craft groups & organisations. Contributions to the Newsletter are always welcome. (s.a.e. please with any items to be returned). Opinions expressed in items published do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the Committee or Guild members as a whole.

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FRONT COVER PHOTOGRAPH

Setting up the tables for Open Day

Photograph by Caroline Hughes

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EDITORIAL

With a bout of influenza for myself and all of the family, plus a whole range of recent commitments, my attention to the Guild Newsletter has been somewhat curtailed. Fortunately, our ever-faithful sub-editor, Harry Karnac has continued to keep the pot boiling so that our members will not be disappointed, in spite of postal irregularities. Under the circumstances some items have been held over for the next issue.

Mervyn Fitzwilliam

FUTURE GUILD EVENTS

THE CHILTERN OPEN AIR MUSEUM, CHALFONT ST. GILES, BUCKS.- 1st, 2nd, 3rd MAY 1999.

I write this while recovering from the beginning of the New Year - yes, it is January 1, 1999 and I wish you all a **HAPPY NEW YEAR**. Not only that, I now have to think about the rest of the year, which includes thinking as far ahead as May Bank Holiday and our participation in **LIVE CRAFTS** at the Chiltern Open Air Museum over that weekend. We will have our own marquee.

Many of you will already be familiar with this event and can recall some interesting times from years past. I hope you are willing once again to come along and help. It creates a great team spirit and everyone gets something from talking to and helping the visitors enjoy themselves as well as selling pots and showing a little of how pots are made - teaching on the 'Have a Go' throwing sessions.

You don't throw pots? Then come along to help sell pots and talk about the Guild. Or help assist those who are teaching and take the money. Come and help set up or clear up. Any little help is a great contribution and we really look forward to

getting to know each other and sharing experiences.

For those of you who are intending to sell your pots at the Fair, I will be sending you further information when I receive your reply form and, at the same time, will include a form for listing your pots with other necessary details. You don't have to be a well-established potter or ceramic sculptor to sell; if it is for the first time, you will be more than welcome. The organisers ask us to pay a percentage of the sales and the rest is yours.

Enclosed in this Newsletter is a form for completion to let me know when you are available and what you would be happy doing. Please add any comments or give me a phone call to discuss any ideas. I look forward to hearing from you, my address is on the form for return by post and my telephone number is 01494 728364.

When I have all the replies, I will then send a table showing when you will be helping and what you will be doing. Again, please phone me if you have any questions. I look forward to hearing from you all.

Ruby Sharp

Guild meetings are held at Kings Langley Methodist Church Hall unless otherwise stated

Friday Feb. 12th at 8 p.m.

Nick Membery makes reduction fired stoneware. His work is functional and of a traditional nature, but the style is modern and is suitable for both traditional and contemporary homes.

Nick throws most of his work and then alters it when firm. He also makes some items by press moulding, extruding and slab building techniques. He fires in a 35 cu.ft. gas kiln to 1280°-90°C.

Nick will be doing some throwing and will demonstrate his methods of altering pots and press moulding.

STOP PRESS !! CHANGE OF PROGRAMME !!

Marta Donaghy is now transferring to May 14th and we are lucky enough to be getting **John Dawson** instead for **Friday March 12th at 8 p.m.**

He makes jugs, bowls large and small, mugs and boxes all in porcelain with a celadon glaze. This should be a really exciting evening so note it down in your diary.

WEDNESDAY March 24th at 8 p.m.

Jane Cox makes earthenware tableware ranging from bowls, mugs, jugs to vases and platters. She will demonstrate her method of decoration using layers of slip brushed over paper resist.

She uses different consistencies of slip and will explain her method of mixing these. She uses a white earthenware clay body and applies coloured transparent glazes to enhance the slip.

Friday April 9th at 8 p.m.

Paul Priest will show how he makes his stylised animal forms. He is mainly concerned with texture & movement rather than an exact reproduction of the animal. Paul says that as his work is purely ornamental, it must evoke something by way of a reaction from the observer.

PITSTONE OPEN DAYS 1999

The Pitstone Farm Museum's Open Days for the coming year have been confirmed as: Sunday June 13th, Sunday July 11th, Sunday August 8th & Sunday Sept. 12th.

These are our 'rent days' when we are expected to demonstrate pottery techniques to the Museum's visitors. Over the last year we had members demonstrating hand building and throwing on both electric and kick wheels and also 'have a go' raku decorating and firing.

These days are great fun for all concerned, but I am sorry to say we only have a few regular supporters among our members. Come on folks, how about having a go this year !!

Even if you can't make it to the open days, it would be a great help if people could donate small biscuit fired items in raku clay for use in the 'have a go' raku decorating. Small moulded animal shapes are very popular with the children, but anything else, bowls, dishes, vases, etc. would be much appreciated. They don't need to be anything fancy.

We have been offered an old kiln which we hope to convert for gas firing if we can get it over to Pitstone. I need to organise a team of around four reasonably able bodied lifters to get it out of the garage it is in at the moment and into a van and then to unload it again and set it up on the Pitstone site. Any volunteers? Please get in touch with me if you would like to help, it should only take a couple of hours (address and telephone number on p.12).

It has also been suggested that we should try to arrange a raku demonstration for one weekend at Pitstone, perhaps with Keith Ashley. Would anyone be interested in attending? If so please let me know and if there is enough interest I will try to arrange it.

Jan Kent

Qualified pottery teacher wanted for summer term at the Rudolf Steiner School, Kings Langley. Contact Mr. John Wells 01923 265031 (home) or 01923 262 305 (school)

OTHER EVENTS

FARNHAM MALTINGS FESTIVAL OF CRAFTS

There will be two festivals during 1999. The first will take place MAY 22nd/23rd and the second OCTOBER 23rd/24th. For further information contact Terry Bridger (Visual Arts Officer) on 01252 713637 or write to her at The Maltings, Bridge Sq., Farnham, Surrey GU9 7QR.

BOOK COMPETITION WINNERS

The winners of our book competition were: Winifred Mitchell, Anita Cheasty and Caroline Hughes (see following article).

All three received a copy of "Paper Clay" by Rosette Gault. We are very grateful to Charlotte Burrows of A.& C. Black for running the competition. Forty-five members of the Guild entered the competition on this occasion.

THE POSTAL LEAGUE WINNERS

C.HUGHES	3 POST OFFICE	2
PARCEL FORCE	1 M.FITZWILLIAM	0

Yes, Caroline Hughes - our own Vice-Chair - showed the way by beating the Post Office at their own game !!

Caroline sent in a postcard for the book competition, but back it came, delivered to her home address. Not to be beaten she simply posted it again but, guess what, back it came for a second time. At this point most people would have said something unprintable and chucked the thing in the bin, but not our Caroline. "I will not give in" she said, putting the card in an envelope to hide her address, paid for the postage a second time and sent her card a third time.

Not only was the card delivered to A. & C. Black, but Caroline won one of the books. Caroline also receives a bouquet for persistence in the face of adversity.

I was not so lucky. In a moment of haste and stupidity I posted a parcel of 5 special bats to a customer, using parcel post. Cutting a very long story short, The customer did not receive the parcel. Many phone calls were met with a lack of any help whatever from Parcelforce and, even worse, promises were given to do things which they then did not do. Eventually after 14 days I re-made the order and sent it by private carrier on overnight service and, naturally, it arrived the next morning.

The original cost of postage was £7.55 and the private carrier charged £11.40. The original parcel was delivered to the customer twenty-three days after posting & between us the customer & I had to arrange for it to be returned to me.

Naturally, I protested in writing to the Managing Director of Parcelforce Worldwide, Mr. Kevin Williams. He received my letter, did not reply but had his minion, the "Customer Service Unit Manager", Margaret Leith write an infuriating and fruitless explanatory letter.

Apparently, I was not entitled to ANY compensation, **NOT EVEN A REFUND OF THE POSTAGE THAT I**

HAD PAID, in spite of having a receipt! This whole episode caused my customer and me to waste a disproportionate amount of time and a very substantial sum of money, leaving me resolved to think before I post.

Editor

THE SAGA CONTINUES

We rely on the Post Office for the safe arrival of items for the Newsletter. Manuscripts sent by first class post to Harry Karnac in early January were returned to sender, after several days, with Harry's name and address crossed through in blue pencil. The cryptic message "not known at this address" will be something that Harry may want to discuss with the Post Office management (YES, INDEED - H.) since he is not aware that he has moved.

Editor

THE CRACKPOTS



NOTEBOOK

* With the engagement of Sophie Rhys Jones and Prince Edward, the flagging pottery business immediately seized on the manufacture of "engagement plates" and other memorabilia with open arms.

This is not surprising since thousands of redundancies were announced in Stoke-on-Trent before Christmas. A representative of Doulton explained that our habits in relation to pottery are constantly changing and, currently, people do not purchase dinner services of bone china as previously.

That which we do purchase is mostly cheap, brightly coloured earthenware made abroad, you know the kind of thing: four mugs for £5.30, six dinner plates £4.50 (what have you got in your cupboard?)

Even the larger pottery companies now have much of the pottery that used to be made here, made abroad, where labour rates and overheads are much lower.

Burger King is planning to open 300 new outlets this year and the "Double Mac" two-for-one offer is apparently completely sold out. None of this helps a single potter. (Should it ?)

*** POTTERY CAFÉS**

Yes, there are now craft-type follow-ons to the Cyber Cafés, with the recent announcement of the opening of such a unit in north London. More are certain to follow.

*** JOHNNY VEGAS HITS TELEVISION**

Do you know about Johnny Vegas? Doug Jones and I planned to see him at the Hemel 'Old Town Hall' some while ago, but the performance was sold out and we could not get tickets. Johnny claims to be making more money out of pottery than most people that he trained with, since he has turned it into a stage performance with jokes thrown in. With his T.V. debut now over, Johnny is being claimed as a new craft guru/comedian.

*** THE QUESTION**

Does any of the above affect any of you? Or are you interested? You could always make your feelings known through the pages of the Newsletter.

Mervyn Fitzwilliam

POTTERS TIPS

When plaster is mixed in a bucket, it becomes virtually impossible to remove the residue from the bucket when it goes hard. To overcome this, just use a bin-liner inside the bucket, mix the plaster in this and discard the liner after use. The bucket will remain completely clean.

Arthur Ball

SOUTHERN POTTERY AND CERAMICS SHOW

The second Southern Pottery and Ceramics show in November at the Maltings, Farnham (not to be confused with the Southern Ceramics Group) was better attended than last year which cheered many of the exhibitors and bodes well for the future.

Most craftsmen who retail in this manner are used to the fact that it can take a while to establish the reputation of a new show and venue, so return to reap the rewards of the previous years' gamble.

Like all specialist shows, the exhibitors are also some of the most avid collectors, consequently with around 70 stands there were about 80 captive customers before the doors were open. This reminds me of the story of three antique dealers marooned on a desert island with an old chair; they lived happily ever after. Andy and Di McInnes who organise this show for the Exhibition Team, as well as the Hatfield House Festival in August, bring a feeling of warmth and friendship to the proceedings in spite of being rushed off their feet solving the problems, big or small, that inevitably occur at such events. With a two-way radio in one hand and quite often a pot in the other, one begins to understand why they take on so much work as they both have an insatiable appetite for ceramics. If they ever win the Lottery, I suspect they would continue to organise such shows, but would only let the public in once they had had the first choice of all on display.

Several new faces were around this year, including two potters from the Netherlands, Willy Van Bussel with his exquisite crystalline glazes and Toon Thijs whose work was quite surreal and often humorous. I suspect that a fair proportion of their sales were to other potters as there were always several around their very professional display.

Some of the artists, more used to selling via galleries, seem to be lost when displaying their work or relating directly to the public, but with each show some of them learn a little more and begin to understand why exhibitions such as this widens the audience for their craft to a greater degree than grant-aided organisations.

One exhibitor reminds me of the Ancient Mariner's teacher. I say teacher because this particular person stops two out of three people in order that they may appreciate his work all the more and explains why they cannot live without a piece!

I find that these shows are so encouraging to the younger artists as it gives them a chance to exhibit alongside the more established, and learn from them in a way that no college course could teach. Conversely, their fresh approach can teach the older generation a thing or two.

Emma Rogers, an ex-Wolverhampton M.A. graduate, had some wonderfully modelled chimpanzees and female figures that were so typically clay yet would work very

well in bronze. Jennifer Hall's earthenware functional pots continue the English tradition, whilst setting an even higher standard for those skilled enough to follow. Kent Potters, as usual, put on a very good display in a room of their own. Moving Clay, representing twelve artists, reminded me of the old days in the basement of the C.P.A. in Lowndes Court with shelf after shelf of a vast range of work.

With so many exhibitors it is impossible to review all, but I must make a note of Brian Dickinson, who due to unforeseen circumstances could not exhibit, though booked in, but he did come all the way from the North to give the demonstration he had promised.

On the whole, the majority had a successful show and for those who did not, I wish them good fortune in the future and not to despair as I have been there several times!

The downside of the Maltings are the facilities for the disabled or rather I should say, the complete lack of them. I think that this is a good case for a lottery grant to a venue that has proved to be an excellent art and craft showcase over the years.

Doug Jones

A QUICK BITE WITH TOFF MILLWAY

I'm feeling the weight of responsibility on my shoulders as I write, people so enjoyed Toff's talk in December that I'm sure they are expecting an exceptional article stuffed with potters tips, recipes (edible and glaze) and witty comments about Toff's long suffering wife. I'll do my best....

Toff was introduced by Mervyn as "an accomplished potter"; Toff soon proved him right with a whole series of skilled demonstrations that spanned the entire evening. Unusually many of these demonstrations were not prepared in advance but were produced to answer questions from the audience. It takes a craftsman who really knows his subject to be able to do this with the expertise and confidence that Toff showed.

Making: So what did he show us? Firstly how to make a pie dish (first think of your favourite recipe, then make the pot! I think this one was the fish pie.)

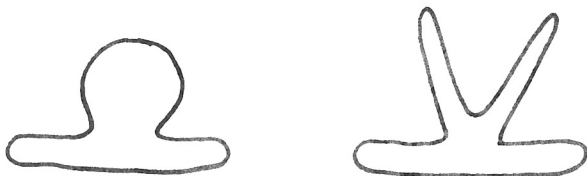
The dish was made in stages, initially he threw a free-standing wall onto a batt; this had a gentle outward curve and a rounded top for ease of use. Just inside the rim he inscribed a line over which the glaze would break, emphasising the form. This wall was then cut off (while the wheel was turning) and then allowed to firm up before it was confidently given a couple of taps to create an oval form. (Maybe it was a lasagna dish). The oval was then slipped onto a generous base that had been rolled out on hessian to give it a pattern. Simple.

Nothing is ever *that* simple, but Toff's top tips were illuminating and encouraging, a few of these are given below:

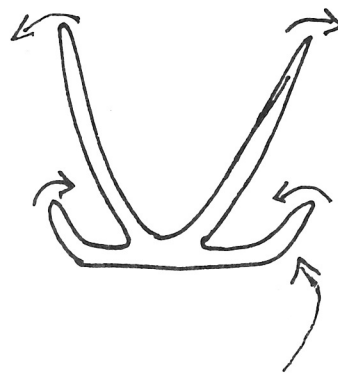
1. We should all practice till we can do an action right first time; to illustrate the point, he told us of people who with constant practice could throw mugs at the rate of 120 per hour (30 seconds each!!!).
2. Use an old can filled with sand to practice centring a pot, placing it on the wheel head and tapping it into the centre.
3. Bend up the two ends of an oval dish while it is damp, then when the ends drop as the clay first dries and is later fired, you end up with a flat-bottomed dish and not a rocking pot.
4. When making a squared dish, form the corners when the clay is still wet, keep the corners tight and readjust the sides as necessary later when they have firmed up.
5. You don't have to score clay before joining pieces if you take care to slip it well and then agitate the two pieces of clay until you can feel them getting sticky, then go over the joints with thumb or finger to ensure a seal.
6. Use calcium silicate bats for throwing as these are very durable and warp resistant.
7. ***Eat plenty and often.***

Toff also showed us how to make a squared dish, a jug and a wall planter, puzzle jug handles, a teapot and non-drip lips for jugs and teapots - what a feast! It would take too long to describe them all here and the food advice that accompanied them, so suffice it to say we learned a lot.

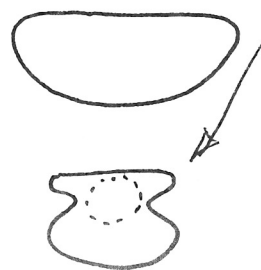
Throwing a wall planter



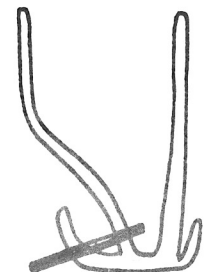
1. Centred clay divided into base and vessel
2. Open and lift up clay for the main pot



- 4a. Throw tray up last
- 4b. Pull top vessel outwards to create a flattened back and rounded front.



Pinch in sides of the tray.



5. Put the drainage hole through both the vessel and tray, then cover the outer hole with a sprig or stamp.

Slipping and Glazing: All Toff's pots are salt glazed and, surprisingly, are once fired. He likes to keep his materials simple and so sticks to a very plastic clay body (mixed specially for him) which has a very fine grog and just two basic slips.

Blue slip: Feldspar 33.3%, silicon dioxide 33.3%, china clay 33.3% and adds 1.5% cobalt oxide, 0.5% iron oxide and 0.5% manganese dioxide.

Brown slip: China clay 45%, Fire clay 45% and silicon dioxide 10%.

Subtle manipulation of these basic ingredients gives Toff a high degree of control over the results; for example if he wants more 'orange peel' he adds a little extra sand. Wiping the pot with a sponge to expose more of the grog can also produce extra 'orange peel'.

Adding coloured slips is an important part of the process, to avoid problems he recommends using quite a liquid slip as the thin layer that stays on the pot won't have enough water to soften the pot. In contrast a thick layer of a thicker slip may hold enough water to dangerously soften a pot.

I could go on and on as Toff's informative enthusiasm, like his appetite for food seems endless, but I'll leave you to digest what you already have here.

My thanks again to Toff for an enjoyable and illuminating evening and to his wife for allowing him out of the studio just this once to come and talk to us.

Sue Taylor

Footnote

Toff Millway gave a sparkling performance as Sue explained and the truisms that he delivered with his patter were worth noting...

I was talking to my accountant, well, you know he is my financial adviser, and he said "well, what sort of pots sell best?" "Oh thats easy" I said, "good pots always sell well". "O.K." he said, "that's it then, just make sure that you only make good pots". "Well crumbs" I thought "it's really easy then, all I need to do is make good pots!"

"...when making a pot, you need to analyse your thoughts because we all have a certain level of expertise. Think to yourself: is this the best I can do? If you find you are thinking oh well, this will do, or this is good enough, then you must think again because you are not making the pot to the best of your ability. You need to be able to say - that's the best I can make".

Toff sold pots to a value in excess of £500 and gave us all a very memorable evening. As previously said, a sparkling performance.

Editor

POTTERS OPEN DAY - NOV.14th 1998

(i) TONY WHITE



Tony White working on the beak of his Indian Runner duck.

Photograph by Caroline Hughes

Tony White was born in Leicestershire in 1948. It took him 25 years to discover clay, he then progressed to becoming a ceramic technician, then a lecturer at his local college. In 1983 he moved to Wales.

In 1990 his wife showed him a humorous postcard of a duck and suggested he might try making similar clay figurines. These duck figures have now become his 'geese that lay the golden eggs'.

His speciality is raku figurines of ducks, seals, puffins, penguins and chickens. Some are press moulded, others slab built using templates. Initially the templates are made from cardboard (cornflake packets), but when he is satisfied with the shape, he transfers the templates to perspex. He described his templates as 'Quick & Easy' and not greatly detailed.

He showed how he makes his duck figures. Having tried various materials, he now uses 'T' material exclusively, this being the only one to survive the stresses of a Raku firing. First he rolled out a 1cm. thick slab from which he cut two mirror imaged shapes using his template. He then dished out the head, then the body. Then, after scoring and slightly chamfering the edges, he places extra clay inside the head before joining the two halves together. He scores and wets the edges but with the coarse 'T' material does not consider the use of slip to be necessary. He is very careful with all joints. All joints, front and rear, are reinforced with rolls of clay, and then beaten with a wooden lather to strengthen and consolidate. Odd 'Lumps and Bumps' are smoothed the following day, again by being beaten by the wooden lathe. The feet are formed from two pieces of 3/4" thick slab with thumb marks pressed in to indicate the toes and small clay pads under the heels to avoid rocking. The beak is formed by first carving with a downwards slanting cut the top of the beak. He then rolled out a 4-5" tapered roll of clay, thicker in the middle and tapering down at each end.

This was laid horizontally on the top half of the beak, instantly transfiguring a rough figurine into an immediately recognisable duck. The surface finish is produced by smoothing down with a rubber kidney, then drying the greenware with an electric paint stripper. He uses a mixture of Raku and non Raku glazes. As some of his glazes contain lead, he is very careful with their disposal. When he has a considerable amount of such residues, he fires them all together in a solid frit that can be safely disposed of as a solid lump. On a 'Good Day' he can make five ducks. He fires twice a week, four firings in the morning and another four in the afternoon. With this firing schedule he uses one metric tonne of clay a year.

His gas fired kiln reaches 1000°C in 50-60 minutes. When his pots have attained the full temperature, he allows them to soak with the kiln turned off for another 10 minutes before removing them. He uses Kevlar gloves to handle the hot pottery, which last him about a year.

In addition he removed the pots from the kiln using ceramic fibre pads wrapped in aluminium foil. They are then transferred to a tub containing good dry pine sawdust, he never uses water to avoid excessive thermal shock.

His ducks are about 15" high, their tail being about 2-3" from the ground. There is a 3" high 'V'-shaped opening in front representing the penguins' legs. As with master potters he made the process of transfiguring inanimate balls of clay into a very appealing duck figure appear ridiculously easy, until one tries it oneself.

G.A.Stevens

(ii) DEBORAH BAYNES



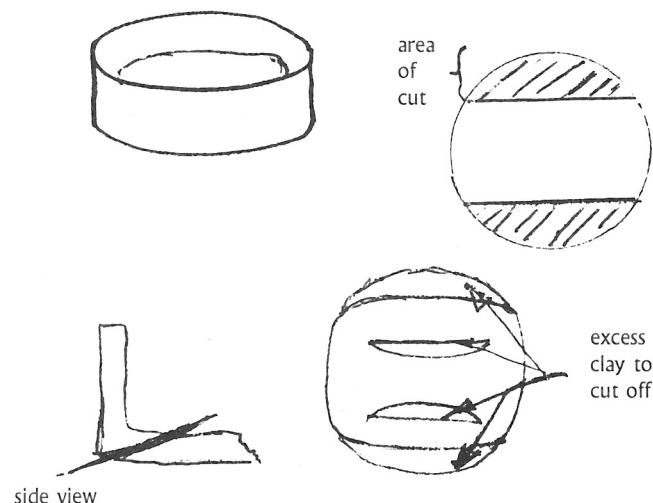
"I could make it really big, maybe"
Deborah Baynes throwing demonstration

Photograph by Anita Cheasty

Deborah was a graphic engineer before she joined a pottery class by chance with friends. She is mainly self-taught although she did a degree at Middlesex University. She showed us many beautiful slides of bottles, some salt glazed and sprigged also slides of waves effects and nature. All these provide stimulus for her work which is primarily salt glazed high fired stoneware.

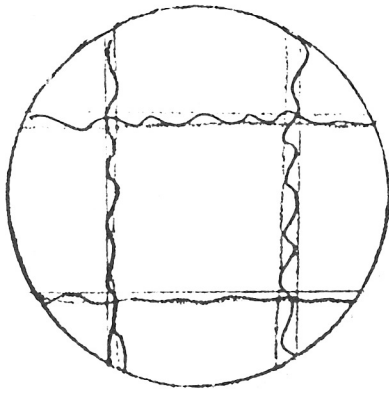
Deborah is an enthusiastic lady who demonstrated making and decorating an oblong casserole dish, a flat altered platter and a sprigged flowerpot. I am sure a lot of people went home that evening and searched the children's play bins, their jewellery boxes and the garage for possible sprigging materials. I certainly did. Goodness knows what I did with the WD40.

For a square dish Deborah used 44lb. of Valentine B17C clay that she coned several times, reducing the time spent wedging. When she opened up the form she compressed the base well to eliminate the possibility of 'S' cracks. A credit card was used as a throwing rib. When Deborah was happy with dimensions she used a wire to cut from the base of a segment obliquely up until the wire could be seen inside the base and then she reversed the process. Part of the wall was then pushed in to give one straight edge. The procedure was repeated at the other end of the dish. Excess clay was then either removed or smoothed into the base.



Slip (made from Hyplas 81 ball clay) was painted around the outside of the pot and then handles added and pressed tightly onto the side with a stamp. The work on the base was disguised by using small biscuit stamps with a pattern, e.g. spiral. This impressed decoration would give added interest in the salt firing and also help to consolidate the joins on the base.

Deborah noticed that the bottoms of pots where the wire had cut through were often very interesting and exciting. To utilise this quality Deborah throws a plate, cuts it through, lets it dry a little and then turns it over and puts it back on the wheel. A coil of clay is then added to form a rim. Slip was applied from the edge in towards the centre. A Turk's head knot had been stuck on to a small roller. This was used to create an interesting pattern across the plate. By inserting a credit card gently at an angle under the edge of the platter, the base can be lifted slightly and the platter be changed into a shallow dish.



Having completed a casserole and shallow dish, Deborah demonstrated making sprigs and applying them to a leather hard flowerpot. If an item to be copied is made of thin pressed metal (e.g. lizard brooch), the inside can be sprayed with WD40 and used as a direct mould - the clay pressed in and then carefully extracted. The more usual method to reproduce the item (e.g. glow in the dark frog), was to spray a toothbrush with WD40 and brush the frog with this toothbrush (preventing frog sticking to clay) and then press into a lump of very grogged clay which would be fire to 960°-1000°C. This would make a resilient but absorbent mould. A piece of clay is then pressed into the mould, the excess clay scraped from the middle to the outside with a credit card. A small ball of clay is then dampened and stuck to the sprig. This acts as a handle to take the sprig out of the mould. Any reticent limbs can be encouraged out using very small balls of clay. Line up the clay sprigs on damp newspaper until needed.

Deborah also showed us how to make an impressing tool. Draw with a scalpel on plaster and then press clay into plaster. When the clay firms up, cut away excess clay so design stands proud. When fired this can be used to impress a design into leather hard clay. Deborah decorated her flowerpot and impressed irises, impressed frogs and lizards, impressed dragonflies (earrings) and sweeping waves - credit card. January is Deborah's favourite month for making sprig moulds. I thoroughly enjoyed Deborah's demonstration and will now view the contents of a nephew's toy box with considerable interest.

Anita Cheasty

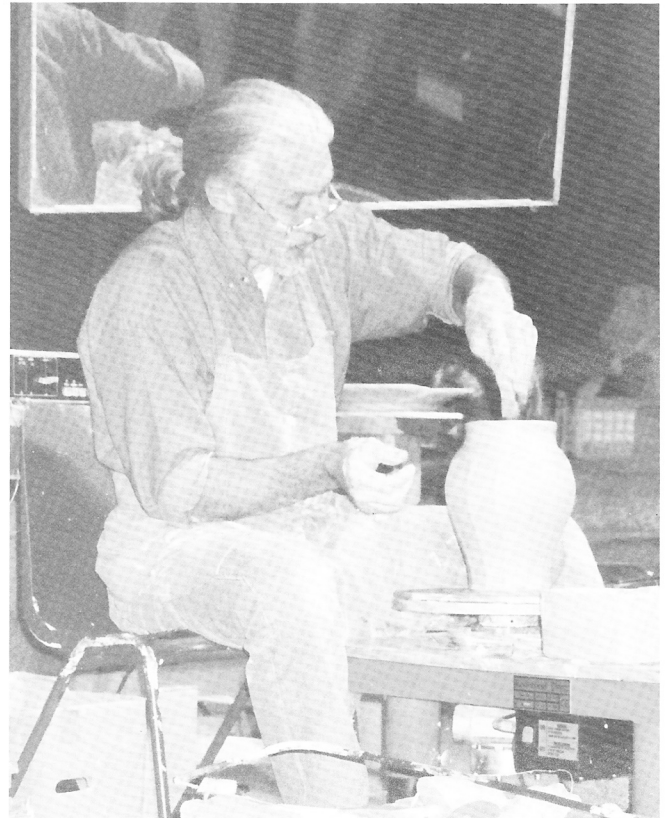
OPEN DAY WITH DOUG JONES

SUNDAY 21st MARCH

**11 a.m. start at 114 Norfolk Rd.,
Rickmansworth, Herts. WD3 1LA.**

Further information: 01923 770913

(iii) DAVID FRITH (and Sam came too!)



David Frith explains his faceting methods

Photograph by Caroline Hughes

What a pleasure it was to meet up again with David and Margaret Frith (and their dog Sam).

The pots David brought along for sale were particularly stunning - especially the very large aquare dish with its bright red splash of colour. I would have bought, if only I'd had £190 to spare.

Throughout the day David, like other potters, talked to us about his roots, his influences and the way he and Margaret work. Between them they divide the work - David making the clay and tools with Margaret looking after the showroom and the business side.

Having attended college in Wimbledon being taught by Dickie Bateson, David moved on to Langton to be taught by Derek Emms. The influence on both are still apparent in his work. His professional life began with slipware followed by slabware decorated with slip trailing. Other early influences included the potters of Buckleigh.

Generally David spends approximately 4 days throwing, 12 days glazing and decorating and throughout spends about 4 days cleaning the studio. Having spent two weeks on a course with David, I can testify to his concern for cleanliness in the studio. We all became very thorough cleaning up after a day's potting.

For the demonstration, David showed us his techniques for producing a large platter made in two parts, a platter with petal edges, a platter with wavy edges, a faceted jug, a pot with rounded facets, a large two piece pot and some plant pots.

Large two part platter: The base is left approx. $\frac{3}{4}$ " thick to allow for a deep foot ring to be turned. A large coil is added to the base and made into the flange creating a platter approx. 2 ft. across from 15-18 lbs. of clay. David fires his platters (biscuit) standing on their rims to prevent cracking in from the edges - and to allow even heat distribution across the platters.

Petal-edged platter: When the one piece platter is finished, David makes diagonal cuts in the rim and one section is tucked under the other and pressed in place.

Wavy-edged platter: David threw a thick-walled cylinder, cut facets with a cheese cutter and then continued to throw the platter ignoring the unevenness of the clay. The resulting rim has a wavy edge. Using a piece of electric bread knife blade attached to a galvanised steel handle, he incised wavy lines around the rim.

Rounded facets: Having thrown a thick-walled cylinder, David cut facets with a cheese slicer. He finished off the neck and continued to throw with one hand only on the inside of the pot. Using a sponge, David gradually created a bellied pot. The facets are rounded rather than flat using this method.

The demonstration was fascinating and thoroughly appreciated by all in the audience. Our warm applause showed our appreciation and Sam barked at us all like mad. I'm sure she thought we were attacking David.

Linda Bryant

EUROPEAN SLIPWARE AND FOLK POTTERY **by SEAN MILLER - 8th January**

Sean opened his talk by explaining that the slides he would show were taken at various local museums which he visited on his holidays. The slides were taken with a handheld camera in poor light conditions and he apologised that as a result some were blurred. Well, the quality of the slides shown was a tribute to his steady hands and their number and variety was a tribute to his wife's patience.

He opened with slides from the Haut Savoie region of France, some taken in the local museum at Mentier near Annecy and others from the catalogue of the private museum of Jean-Christophe Hermann, the light in the museum itself being too dim. The pottery covered a variety of decorating techniques, predominantly the local speciality "Jaspe" ware, a marbling technique, but also slip trailing with simple patterns of lines and dots and some brushwork of flowers and birds. Slides of pots from the Alsace region showed related decorations of birds, flowers and also marbling. Most of the work was from the 19th

and early 20th centuries, but the pots of Jean-Christophe Hermann carried on developing from the traditional styles.

The fruits of several visits to Hungary came next with slides from the Zsigmund Kun Folk Art collection and the Ethnographic Museum. These covered a lively range of decorative plates, designed for wall mounting and traditionally given as wedding presents. Pottery was widely produced in Hungary and the regions of Roumania under Hungarian control and once again flowers and birds were much in evidence. However, from the Murames region, there were examples of decoration drawn from the local ornate metal grave markers.

Exuberant Spanish pots from Palma, Majorca and Greek pots decorated with spirals and marbling followed next and finally, from the Fitzwilliam Museum, examples of English slipware decoration and feathering surviving from the 16th century.

After the tea break, Sean demonstrated slip decorating techniques using a trailer developed from a Roumanian design. This is based on a small narrow necked thrown bottle. Into the neck is inserted a spout cut from a large feather, the size of the quill and the hole in the end giving control of the size of lines and dots produced.

The pots to be decorated are thrown from Fremingtons red clay and when they are leather hard, they are slipped inside and round the rim with a lightly coloured slip. This is made from a white clay similar to the Fremingtons red, which reduces the likelihood of the decoration peeling off. Once the pot has dried again, the rim can be handled without damage while the outside is decorated, a process which begins with dipping into the base slip.

For a pattern of dots, the wet pot was vigorously shaken to remove excess slip and then with deceptive ease Sean produced a pattern of dots from a slow, steady stream of drops of darker slip. Once the dots have dried, further decoration can be added with lines and zigzags.

For a pattern of vertical lines, the pot was not shaken so hard, leaving a wetter surface, which allowed gravity to assist in running the decoration down the side of the pot. Sean also adds a spray pattern of manganese, using a toothbrush, to give extra texture and interest.

This was followed by two demonstrations of spiral decorations on the outside of bowls, the first was apparently not up to Sean's standards, and then as a final item, the call went out for a volunteer to "have a go". Freda Earl rose to the occasion and rapidly produced a creditable cat. She commented that because the trailer doesn't have to be squeezed, it is easier to concentrate on producing the decoration.

Jan Kent

MEMBERSHIP NEWS

Patricia Calder lives in Bucks. She has recently joined us, having a particular interest in mosaics and oriental pottery.

Zalina Dewan is a company director who has always had an interest in pottery; she likes throwing and hand building and has a strong interest in decorating techniques. Zalina lives in Harrow Weald.

Rosemary Dwight is an art shop assistant living in Amersham. Rosemary has a wide interest in all aspects of pottery, being particularly interested in the different surface textures which can be obtained with glaze techniques.

Susan Fong lives at Waterperry, so is well placed for visits to Art in Action. Susan has an interest in anything made out of clay.

Mrs. R. McGuirk of St. Albans is a housewife who, like Susan Fong, claims a strong interest in anything and everything made out of clay.

Margaret Montgomery lives at Bushey and is a freelance editor/researcher (hmm, thinks - possible recruit for help with Newsletter, ed.). Margaret is currently in her third term at West Herts. In the evening class, she has an excellent teacher, by the name of Caroline Hughes.

Ruth Sulke is lucky enough to be retired. She lives at Stanmore and works on sculptural forms in stoneware.

Edwina Wilks is an art teacher from Berkhamsted. Edwina is interested in hand building in porcelain and also raku, so I hope she will be in touch with our Pitstone organiser, Jan Kent (01908 674051).

My apologies to **Sally Madden**, her name was incorrectly spelt in the last Newsletter.

As always, it is a pleasure to welcome our new members. I would ask that you all make the effort to talk with any committee members about the Guild and what you want and expect from it. Your committee members are always willing to help, but are often left baffled by the reluctance of members to discuss their interests or explain why they do not support events that are organised.

Mervyn Fitzwilliam

CORRESPONDENCE

From STUDIO POTTERY - CERAMICS IN SOCIETY.

Dear Editor,

Please find enclosed artwork to replace the current advertisement in your newsletter.

Unfortunately we have had to raise the concessionary subscription rate to £24 a year (for 4 quarterly issues)

due to the high cost of postage and printing the magazine in full colour. I hope that members will still appreciate the discount we are pleased to give members of U.K. potters' associations. The increase will apply to all new and renewal subscriptions received after February 1st.

We hope you have an active and rewarding 1999. With best wishes

(Paul Vincent) Editor.

#####

From POTTERS GUILD OF NIZHNI NOVGOROD

Dear Mr. Beckley,

Potters Guild of Nizhni Novgorod makes a request for you to send us information about Dacorum and Chiltern Potters Guild and conditions of our possible participation in your projects (Ceramics and Pottery Festivals, Workshops, Biennials, various ceramic programs, etc.). We would like to take part in these projects with the purpose of improving our professional skills, to make personal contact with colleagues on craft in United Kingdom and all the World, to become more proficient and to display our craftsmanship. Whether will you be kind to send us some information about your ceramists and potters, and their work.

Something about us. Potters Guild of Nizhni Novgorod was founded at the beginning of 1998 with the purpose of keeping the traditions of pottery art of Nizhni Novgorod region, their popularity, the supporting of potters, the learning (sic - teaching?) of children. The members of the Guild are the potters who work in the style of folk ceramics and the author's style - the style of decorative art.

We look forward to hearing from you.
Yours sincerely,

(Andrew Karmanov) Manager,
Potters Guild of Nizhni Novgorod,
P.O.Box 1,
603073 Nizhni Novgorod, Russia.

Footnote - We have written to Andrew and sent a copy of our Newsletter. We intend to exchange Newsletters on a regular basis.

Editor

**TILE PANELS - Brookside Infant School, Harold Hill,
Essex**

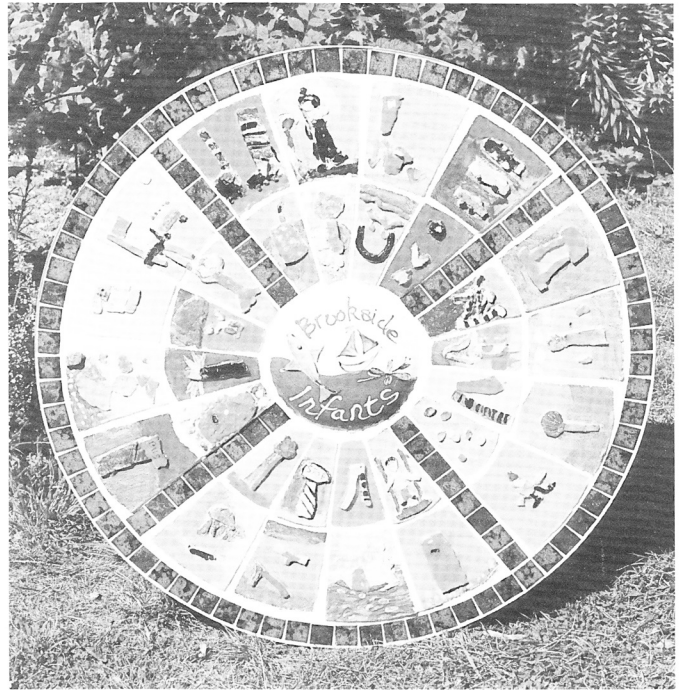
The project involved working with a year 1 primary class of 32 children mapping their local environment. From their illustrated maps, children created tile designs which were subsequently interpreted in clay. Their individual tiles were bisque-fired prior to applying underglaze colour and a final clear glaze firing.

The finished tiles were then cemented and grouted on a circular panel around a central boss plate featuring the school's name and motif.

The result: a pupil-centred interpretation of the school environment linked to the social and cultural issues of the community.

Paul Rowbottom

The team leader was Paul Rowbottom and he is always happy to discuss the details with anyone who wants him to run similar projects. You can contact Paul on 01923 263032



One of the completed circular tile panels

photograph by Paul Rowbottom

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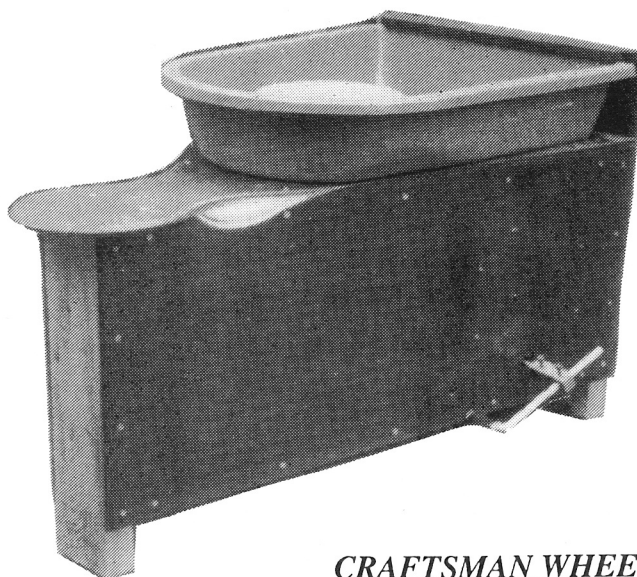
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