



# DACORUM AND CHILTERN POTTERS GUILD



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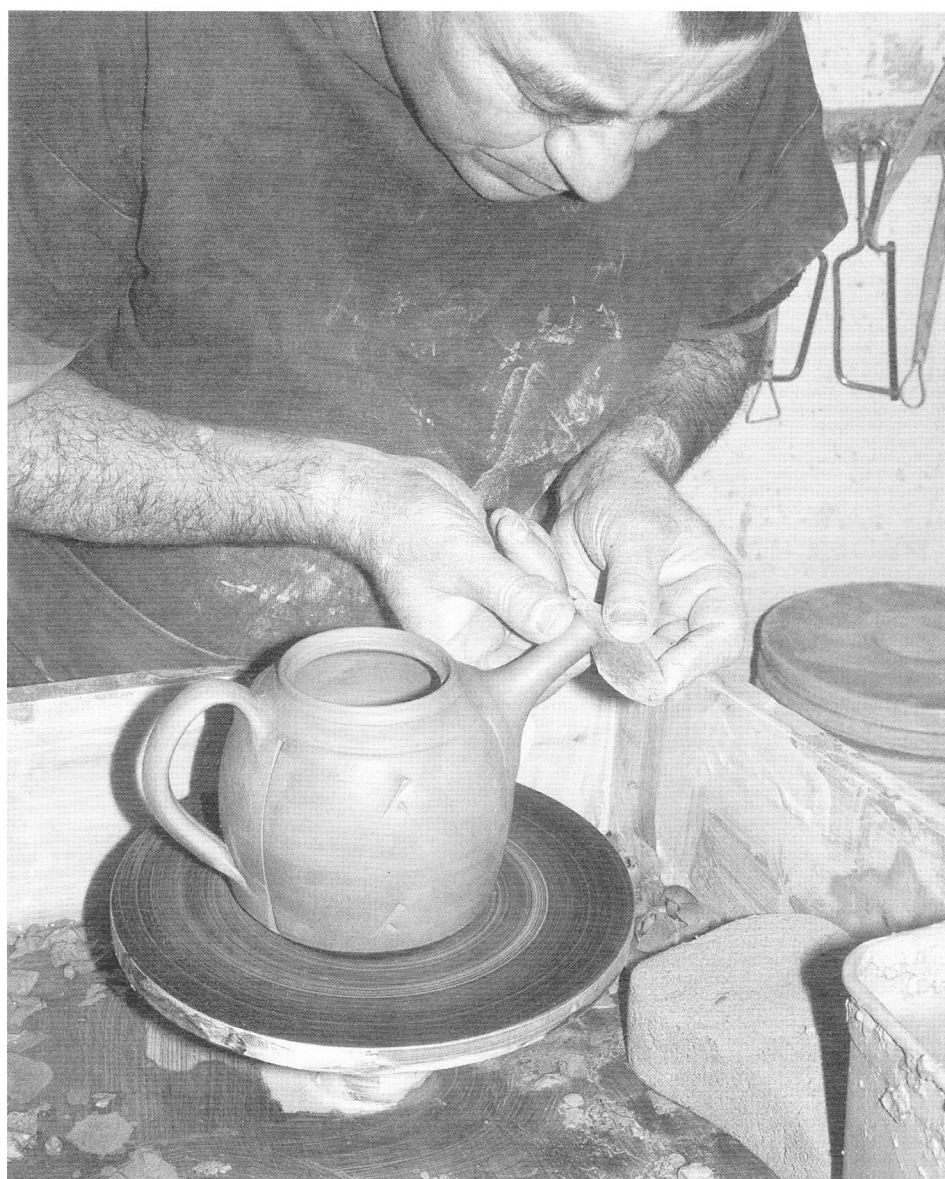
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**JOHN & JUDE JELFS EVENING**

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**NEWSLETTER  
SUMMER 2000  
£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  
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Student - £7.50

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The Dacorum & Chiltern Potters Guild Newsletter is published quarterly in February, May, August and 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; nor is the Guild responsible for the content of individual advertisements printed in the Newsletter.

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## FRONT COVER PHOTOGRAPH

John Jelfs works on the spout of a teapot

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## EDITORIAL

We made a mistake in the Spring Newsletter, well not really, or did we? Under the 'Guild Events' column there was a statement that the Guild would take part in the Chiltern Open Air event on April 29/30 & May 1. The mistake was that there was virtually no response from Guild members after two appeals, so we simply could not attend. I had the sad task of writing to cancel our activity. Why? Anyone care to write to the Newsletter and tell us?

At the other end of the scale, the Potcrawl is over-subscribed with in excess of 30 people wishing to attend, some applying after the deadline. Disappointed members would be well advised, in future, to make their bookings earlier. Who would be an organiser or committee member? If the answer is that **you** would, then please phone me.

Mervyn Fitzwilliam

## FUTURE GUILD EVENTS

Meetings are held at Kings Langley Methodist Church Hall.

**Friday 12th May, 8 p.m.**

**JONATHAN SWITZMAN** will be talking about Health and Safety and glazes, to include raw materials.

**Friday 8th September, 8 p.m.**

**STEVE WOODHEAD** makes individual stoneware and will demonstrate the making of his "Polo" teapot.

## GUILD EXHIBITION - 11th-24th June

This will be a showcase for what our members can do. There will be a wide scope of interesting work, so please give us your enthusiastic support by photocopying the invitation enclosed with this Newsletter and distributing the copies to everyone you know.

## OTHER EVENTS

### Bucks Pottery & Sculpture Society events

10th May, 8 p.m. Sheila Seepersaud-Jones at Chorley Wood Arts Centre.

7th June, 8 p.m. Tim Rawlins at Chorley Wood Arts Centre.

**V & A Museum** April 6th to July 30th (late evenings Wednesday). ART NOUVEAU Entry £7.50, £2.50 concessions.

**Crafts Council** Open until June 11th. 'TECH-TONICS'- about the relationship between crafts and technology. Free entry.

**ART IN ACTION** Waterperry House, nr.Oxford July 20th-23rd. Adults £11 Pensioners £8.50 Students £7.50 Children 9-17 £5.50 under 9 years free. Further information 020 7381 3192

## "PLAIN AND FANCY"

An exhibition of ceramics in Stoneware  
by

**RENA GREEN Dip.AD**

Saturday 13 May - Thursday 1 June 2000

**Atrium Gallery**

**Central Library, High St. Uxbridge**

**Mon, Tues, Thurs: 9.30 am - 8.00 pm**

**Wednesday: 9.30 am - 5.30 pm**

**Friday: 10.00 am - 5.30 pm**

**Saturday: 9.30 am - 4.00 pm**

## CRAFT POTTERIES PIONEER NEW NVQs

An initiative designed to attract more people into craft pottery has been piloted in five potteries throughout Britain.

National Vocation Qualifications in craft pottery have been developed by the Stoke-based Association for Ceramic Training and Development in conjunction with the Craft Potters Association, Dartington Pottery in Devon, Whichford Pottery in Warwickshire, Pembrige Terracotta and Eastnor Pottery in Herefordshire, and Snowdon Mill in Gwynedd.

Keith Marsh, director of ACTD, said: "The aim of the NVQs is to encourage creative people of all ages into craft pottery. They will also enable craft potteries to access high-quality national training initiatives, such as national traineeships and modern apprenticeships".

Jim Keeling, of Whichford Pottery, said: "To achieve better quality, craft potteries need to make in-house training more effective. We already have a two-year apprenticeship at Whichford and we intend to take the new NVQs as our training standards. The benefits are

that they provide clear aims and a structured learning programme which trainees can follow at their own pace to achieve a nationally-recognised qualification".

Whichford apprentice Rollo Dunford-Wood, who achieved all the NVQ criteria even before the award was officially accredited, said: "I was impressed by the thoroughness of the NVQ course; it encouraged me to look at every part of the job in great detail"

The techniques covered by the NVQs include processing raw materials, throwing on the wheel, hand-building, slip casting, decorating and firing. The NVQs were officially launched at the Crafts Council in London by representatives of ACTD, the Craft Potters Association, the potteries involved in the pilot scheme and Steve Henderson from the Department of Education and Employment, which has supported the project.

Details of the NVQs can be obtained from ACTD, St. James House, Webberley Lane, Longton, Stoke-on-Trent ST3 1RJ.

Note: For further information contact Keith Marsh at the Association for Ceramic Training and Development. Telephone 01782 597016.

**LAUNCH OF THE CRAFT POTTERY NATIONAL VOCATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS HOSTED BY THE LONDON CRAFTS COUNCIL ON WEDNESDAY JAN.19th 2000**

Murray Fieldhouse attended this event and has written the following introduction for us. (Editor)

*Let him learn to make a straight shaving of a plank or draw a fine curve without faltering or lay a true brick in its mortar and he has learnt a multitude of things that no lips of man could ever teach him. - John Ruskin*

The initial sobering thought that I was expected to report this event to Mervyn and the Newsletter was soon dissolved in the general bonhomie of greeting old friends and the lavish distribution of drinks served on arrival. The latter especially lavish in my case. When my glass was filled to the brim, I remarked "this is better than the new People's Covent Garden where half a glass of red wine costs £3". Thereafter I was followed around the room and my glass was refilled to the brim after every sip. The rest was a haze.

Education as a true expression - which is rare these days - "is dear to me" as it was to Aristotle, but current educational administration and its examination system - the intention of which is suspect - engenders cynicism. I did not attend this meeting with an open mind. The repetition of ugly abbreviations ACTD, NVQS, SVQS are unlikely to appeal to the aspirant potter, however well-meaning the intentioned reality which it seems, was something to do with assessing training in the workshop and funding or partially funding the exercise which ends with a qualification.

Some potters believe in qualifications despite how daft and irrelevant they are. Take the student who empties a bucket of slip over the head of the Principal of his art school because he was not awarded what was called a first.

I suppose there may be a case for qualifications as an ego boost, an incentive to learn, contact with finer minds of intellects superior to one's own, as a finishing school or as a base career move. However, it remains a fact that the so-called qualified ultimately have to learn their job by a form of apprenticeship **after** they have qualified.

This new training system takes those with a vocation to be potters direct into apprenticeship, which is good for those with a definite vocation and good for the taxpayer, because it avoids three possibly wasted years or more at Art School. The notion that potential potters should study for a BA was always ludicrous, and as for an MA .... well! It all began with the Coldstream Report, before which art schools were more informal and easily accessible to all. On his deathbed Sir William apologised, saying "I had no choice". It would be interesting to investigate why this was the case. The Crafts Identity and what it stood for was eliminated under the new system. Art in a normal state (which are the crafts) were virtually undermined in favour of the extremes of Art or Design. Students who believed in the Crafts Identity could still survive the system, but with difficulty.

Jonathan Chiswell Jones, an old friend, who at one time was consistently writing to me complaining that he could not get competent assistants for his workshop despite the vast number of graduates coming out of the art schools, was at the meeting and supporting the new approach.

I spoke to the lady from City and Guilds and asked if there was a 70% drop-out of adult part-time students from their courses because so much of their curriculum was irrelevant. She replied that it was a matter of funding. So .... they can only get funding if a large part of their curriculum is irrelevant!

I spoke to the civil servant from the Department of Education and asked how the examination was funded. "By industry" he said. How very philanthropic, especially as industry support for the arts get no tax concessions, unlike in the USA. EDUCATION, EDUCATION, EDUCATION - BORING, BORING, BORING. A good time was had by all in an atmosphere of self congratulation, rather like one of those management conferences, and we then gave our attention to the sumptuous buffet.

Murray Fieldhouse

**OPENING ADDRESS BY JIM KEELING**

First of all I would like to say that I feel we potters have been very lucky having such a dedicated and professional team working on our behalf - Liz Monk who has done most of the work, well supported by Carol Clifton and Keith Marsh. So thanks! Also, thank you for asking me to speak.



I got my pottery training 25 years ago at Wrecclesham Pottery, Farnham, which was then run by Reg Harris and Fred Whitbread, the fourth generation of settled potters (before that they were itinerant in the Hampshire area).

The workshop I run now at Whichford, South Warwickshire is closely modelled on the late 19th century country potteries like Wrecclesham and the techniques we use would all be recognised by any wheel-based pottery for the last 5000 years.

We have a team of about 35 people which, I think, makes it the largest pottery in Europe using solely hand-making techniques (no jigger/jolly, slipcasting ...). We have a core of 9 throwers and take between 5 and 7 tons of clay a week through all the processes from refining the clay, making and decorating, firing and marketing, to packing and despatch. Our speciality is large thrown terracotta garden pots, either made in one piece (up to ½ cwt) or in sections joined and reformed over several days. We have a wide range of markets led by strong direct sales in this country. Historically, we export between a quarter and a third of our production - two years ago we won the Export Award for the Coventry area.

In recent years, as competition in the gardening sector has become more intense, we have had to become increasingly sophisticated, not only in our marketing strategies, but also in the quality of our design and product. To achieve better quality, we had to make our in-house training more effective. Our basic problem was that we were unable to find new employees with the skills necessary for our job, or to find courses that would significantly increase the skills of our existing employees in the way we wanted. Our response was to set up a two-year apprenticeship scheme to try and fill the gap left by art schools, where training in the sort of skills we need is often poor, with some notable exceptions.

An additional reason for keeping training in-house in a large workshop is that being responsible for passing on knowledge to those less experienced than yourself is a major stimulus to the development of your own craft.

The latest trainee to finish his apprenticeship, Rollo Dunford-Wood, was the first person to achieve NVQ level II in Craft Pottery when he completed his apprenticeship in October last year.

I am one of a small group of potters who have worked with ACTD to prepare the criteria for Craft Pottery NVQs (although they have done most of the work!) At Whichford we decided to take NVQs as our structure for training, and were involved in piloting various parts of the course. The main disadvantage of NVQs and the point which the consultative group of potters was at first quite alarmed about, was the lack of absolutes inherent in them - they are only a framework to standardise methods of assessment. You can either see this as relativism at its most mushy, or you can say, well this means that each individual workshop has to take responsibility for defining its own standards of workmanship, etc. I have come

round to thinking that this approach is not such a bad idea, as one of the challenges of being a craftsman is having to take responsibility for all aspects of one's own work. Also, the realities of trying to establish absolutes for a craft as varied as pottery are very complicated - just take the differences in approach to clay of different temperatures - porcelain, stoneware or terracotta.

The benefits of the NVQ system to Rollo, was that the training he was given had clear aims with a structured learning programme. He could follow this at his own pace in consultation with his trainers and at the end of it he achieved a nationally-recognised qualification, which is important in many ways, not least psychologically, as recognition for a lot of hard work.

So, that is Whichford Pottery. You could say that we represent a dinosaur, miraculously survived in good financial health, a workshop community where traditional skills and the the social context of the craft - a locally-based and supportive working community - are valued equally, or even more than, the precise beauty or design flair inherent in the pots we make. Also, we produce functional objects for everyday, year-round use. They may be beautiful, but they are also good at what they do, and that's what gets us customers. There is a good pedigree for these attitudes in the Arts and Crafts Movement, but it is a model of craftsmanship that is in danger of being forgotten.

I am not suprised that I didn't get my setting-up grant when I applied to the Crafts Council for it 23 years ago, although at the time I was very hurt, because it seems to me that the Crafts Council have chosen almost exclusively to represent a different aspect of craftsmanship - the individual rather than the communal, the avant-garde rather than the traditional, and the objects they show are often pushed to an æsthetic pitch where they become useless. If this perceived difference in defining what a craftsman is is real, the split does the craft world an enormous disservice, as either side without the other starts to look either hollow or silly. Also, in terms of marketing, I feel it is disastrous.

A productive craft workshop of my type needs a lot of customers, more than will be interested in the latest trends in fine art. Indeed, dare I say it, many of them will not take the crafts seriously if they are seen to be aligned solely with what they see as esoteric design "per se", but you are out on a limb if this is your main marketing message, and without markets there are no jobs. I also worry about recruitment in my craft, as there are obviously so few jobs along that path, so you scare people off.

The main problem with NVQ's is funding. For an employer to undertake structured training is expensive, and they won't do it without a contribution from the public purse. There is some funding available. For those under 25, you can get up to £2000 for a NVQ Level III.

For the over 25s, the picture is bleaker. You might be able to squeeze £550 out of the system for an employee achieving "A" level. This is assuming that you can manage to register a Direct Contract with the relevant body and that the rules don't change while you are doing it, and that you can find someone who understands the system sufficiently well to explain it to you. In addition, there might well be European money available, but you have to be a very skilled bureaucrat to try that one! Most craftsmen are not natural bureaucrats, and ensuring the funding for NVQs is adequate and straightforward to obtain, would be a fine job for the Crafts Council to undertake.

But future trainees will only be needed in any number if there is an expanding market for the crafts. The top priority of everyone involved - the Crafts Council, CPA and all craftsmen must be to educate the public and explain to them why it is worth buying a hand-made object, be the reason aesthetic beauty, ease of function, or help supporting sustainable and skilled working communities. To do this, we must first of all stop being ashamed of being craftsmen, trying to pass ourselves off as also-ran artists. Skilled manual work has its own value and could provide good, honest jobs for many more than it does at present. So I hope you will all see the development of these NVQs for Craft Pottery in this context.

## **CORRESPONDENCE**

Extract of letter received by Victor Earl from "Project Ploughshare".

Dear Friends,

We are most grateful to all our supporters who have raised funds for us in a number of ways over the last 7 years. The purpose, you will recall, was to support the creation of a pottery in the northern part of Ethiopia in the city of Gondar, which is about 300 miles north of the capital, Addis Ababa. During the last 2 years, Charles Sherlock and his family have been living in Addis whilst he has been working as the Bursar to the Hamlin Fistula Hospital. During this period we have been planning to hand over the project (which was originally formed in 1992) to a local charity.

The pottery continues to be more or less self-sufficient for most of the year, and the Project subsidises the Addis Ababa sales operation. We have trained about 60 people over 5 years and about 28 trained potters are with us full time and another 7 part time. Our products are marketed in supermarkets and craft shops in Addis Ababa and elsewhere and have improved beyond recognition from the early days.

We are grateful for the support you have given us over the last 7 years.

**Dugdale Bradley**  
Director

Dear Mervyn,

Nice to hear your voice again and to know that all thrives with the Guild. I will be glad to receive those newsletters. I enclose details of the kiln which is for sale and is about two years old.

My time since leaving the Guild has been varied. For a year, about 1994, I was a potter and teacher at Camphill, which is a Steiner organisation that deals specifically with the severely handicapped. Afterwards I went on a sailing spree being involved both as crew and skipper in successive voyages in different parts of the world.

Meanwhile I kept a small studio going in Frimley, Surrey and on return would involve myself with different activities related to pottery. I also travelled extensively during the winter months, visiting different parts of the world as the fancy saw fit. In slums such as Marseilles, Bangkok, Paris and even in London's Peckham, I was responsible for introducing sawdust methods of firing among the very poor in order to give them an experience which might enhance their self esteem. Some success - but not as good as I would have liked.

At present, I am intending to spend time in South East Asia and shall be working as a volunteer for three to four month stretches with a French based organisation near the Laos border. In between, I will travel around.

All best wishes to you and others in the Guild that I knew.

May prosperous and exciting times be ahead for all.  
Happy potting.

**Roger Winn**

### **For sale:**

**Four cubic foot laser gas kiln, together with shelves, props, pyrometer and gas cylinders**  
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## **OBITUARY - IAN AULD**

*(Reprinted with their permission from the Guardian, March 14th '00)*

Ian Auld, who has died aged 74, was a member of the postwar generation of innovative potters who came to prominence in the 1960s. He also created one of the most successful and happiest ceramics departments in London and was a major collector of African culture material.

Born in Hove, Sussex to a businessman father and a part-American mother, Auld spent the early years of the

second world war in Devon. As a schoolboy he was drawn to country life, and for a while wanted to be a farmer. A period painting theatrical scenery and cinema hoardings was followed by wartime service as a naval radar operator. After the war, rather against his father's wishes, he decided to become an artist, spending a fruitful year at Brighton school of art. From 1948-51 he was at the Slade in London, where he felt lonely but won a prize for his lino and woodblock prints.

Everything changed when, as an insurance policy, he took a teacher's certificate at the Institute of Education. There he encountered William Newland: "For the first time, I found a teacher who was friendly and wanted to help".

In 1952, Auld worked at John Bew's Odney Pottery at Cookham, Berkshire "wheeling barrows of coke and packing things in straw", subsequently becoming the technician in the stimulating atmosphere of the Central School's ceramics department. He spent 1954-57 in Baghdad starting up a pottery department at the city's art school and travelling to India, Turkey and Iran to study early and traditional work in clay, metal and glass.

On his return to England, he settled with his first wife, the weaver Ruth Harris, at Wimbish, near Saffron Waldron where he built an oil-fired kiln. He taught at both the Central School and the Camberwell School of Art, where he worked alongside Hans Coper. At this time he made some of his most impressive work, mostly powerfully slab-built pots inspired by Middle Eastern architecture. Most were ash-glazed in subdued colours, and some were impressed with plaster of Paris seals incised with a private language of abstract signs. Others were remarkable for their rough surfaces, inspired by such painters as Antoni Tàpies.

By 1966, Auld was living in Chippenham, Wiltshire, sharing a studio with fellow ceramist Gillian Lowndes, who was to become his life's partner. He also taught at Bath Academy of Art and Bristol Polytechnic.

In 1969, a year after the birth of his son Ben, he opened a small shop in Camden Passage, Islington. In 1970 he showed some East African pots there, and that year took leave of absence from Bristol to become a research fellow in the department of African studies at Ife University, Nigeria. This, too, was to prove a transformative experience and Auld, Gillian and Ben travelled round Nigeria in a camper van, immersing themselves in the visual culture and, in particular, studying Yoruba carving and shrine paintings.

Auld became head of ceramics at Camberwell in 1974, swiftly broadening the interests of a department best known for its concentration on clay bodies. Inspired by the ethos at Bath Academy, he invited (and retained) the best practising ceramicists to teach at Camberwell on a part-time basis. The quality of students who graduated at this period - including Henry Pim, Sara Radstone, Sarah Scampton, Julian Stair and the late Angus Suttie - testify to this golden age.

But running a department took its toll, though he made some of his most tender work on his return from West Africa - inspired by sources as varied as Ashanti weights and the cowrie jackets worn by Yoruba Ibeji figures.

Auld had always been a keen and discerning purchaser of objects, buying English slipware, William and Mary plates and 16th & 17th century furniture. His tastes were broad, and informed by the standards both of early modernism and of the authentic vernacular, included fine early Cypriot, Chinese and pre-Columbian ceramics, Samoan bark cloths and Roman glass.

But the glory of his collection was its African art, in which he brought together the finest group of Yoruba carvings and metalwork to be found anywhere in the world. Auld bought with the discerning eye of a modern artist and his taste was remarkable for its focus and formal sensitivity.

His manner was direct and candid. He hated pretension and was modest about his remarkable knowledge. After retirement from Camberwell in 1985, he was to be found holding court in his shop in Islington (a meeting place for all serious collectors of African art) or planting vegetables and tending his bees in a windy garden full of chickens, handsome cockerels and speckled guinea fowl.

Gillian and Ben survive him.

Tanya Harrod

## BOOK REVIEWS

CERAMICS FOR GARDENS AND LANDSCAPES - KARIN HESSENBERG  
150 pp. Clothbound. pub'd. A & C Black £25

Just as the title suggests, this book tells you everything about outdoor ceramics: urns, wall decorations, fountains, all put together in a delightful 150 pages with the addition of useful practical considerations (weather resistance, safety, transport).

As I was agreeing to review the book, a friend teased me and said "Now you will have to read the text as well as look at the pictures". Funnily enough, that is only partly true, for the lavish photographs do say a very great deal and the text, while interesting and informative, only contributes to and enhances the interest which the illustrations evoke.

It certainly is an inspirational book. The author elicited from about fifty potters a résumé of who they are and how they came to make al fresco ceramics. They each explain their methods of working, their ambitions, their motives and their problems.

Having received all this information, Karin Hesselberg has very subtly arranged the ideas into ten groups and each group is introduced by examples from the past. Thus, an Italianate fountain in the recreated garden leading to the zoo in Regent's Park is reflected in the fountains made by David Frith and Robin Welch. You recognise the Gaudi

benches from Barcelona? Will Levi Marshall makes stoneware furniture with coloured glazes and geometrical patterns, and John Cliffs makes mosaic planters packed with colour, both of which remind us of Gaudi's work.

Or, if you admire 18th century terracotta garden pots, Jim Keeling will give you a replica at Whichford Pottery. If you remember with pleasure the Lion Fountain in the Alhambra with its surrounding exquisite Moorish colonnade, see how Sally Arnup and Ian Gregory create their contemporary animals and Su Lupascu creates a ceramic arch.

Its all there and you get carried away! Well ... yes ... A word of warning. I was carried away and, with no previous experience, made a huge garden pot. *If you don't want to be similarly caught, look away now.*

Jane Kilvington

RAKU - Investigations into fire. DAVID JONES  
Clothbound - £25. Pub'd. by The Crowood Press.

Despite the large red letters of "Raku" on the cover, this book is, as its subtitle suggests, a wide ranging investigation into many techniques involving low temperature firing and post-firing modification to the surface of ceramic pieces.

The book begins with a short history of the origins of Raku itself and its intimate relationship with the aesthetics of the Japanese tea ceremony. The role of Bernard Leach in bringing the attention of Raku to the West in the early part of the 20th century is discussed, and also its subsequent revival at the hands of the Americans in the 70s. In a book that is otherwise profusely and thoughtfully illustrated, I was rather disappointed that there were only three pictures of early Japanese pieces in this chapter. More illustrations here would have provided an interesting historical base against which to contrast the modern pieces.

The next two chapters are more technical, providing an introduction to the materials, making techniques, firing techniques and kiln designs used in the production of Raku and its modern day descendants. These chapters are then followed by a discussion of - "the search for ideas" - the processes involved in research and design in any artistic field.

All of these techniques and processes are then illustrated, in chapter 5, by an examination of the work of almost 50 potters working in the field of low fired pottery. This is very well illustrated and covers an enormous range of work, giving a fascinating view of the many and diverse directions in which the 'descendants' of Raku have evolved. I don't suppose a wolf would recognise its relationship to either the St Bernard or the Chihuahua but, however tenuous the link, it is still there.

The final chapter, with a mild dig at Bernard Leach in its title, summarises the way in which experimentation and cross fertilisation with other cultures have fuelled this evolution from the restrained aesthetics of Japan into the vibrant and unruly explosion of pieces, good and bad, that are very loosely covered by the title of Raku today.

I thoroughly enjoyed the book and I hope to buy myself a copy shortly.

Jan Kent

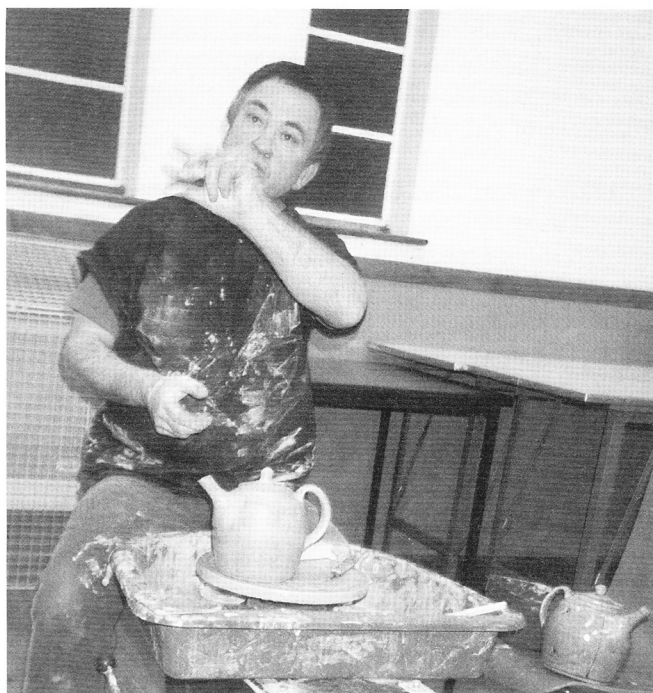
## JOHN AND JUDE JELFS Evening demonstration 10th March 2000

After an introduction by Ruth Karnac, John started the evening meeting by explaining that he was mainly a 'domestic' potter with a predilection for making teapots. He reduction fires with a gas fired kiln to 1300°C using a pyrometer to give him a general idea of progress, but uses two cones to give him indications of critical intermediate and final temperatures.

He uses mainly a clay comprising a mixture of Hyplas 71, AT ball clay and fine sand. His most commonly used glazes are tenmoku, shino, a dry iron ochre ash glaze and various other ash glazes with which he is continually experimenting. He has two Fitzwilliam wheels about which he was very complimentary.

John makes about 24 teapots a week and had decided to make a teapot for his evening demonstration. He said that there are three golden rules when making a teapot:

- (1) it shouldn't drip when poured
- (2) the lid shouldn't fall off
- (3) the spout outlet should be higher than the body of the pot.



John discussing teapot technique with the audience  
(photograph by J. Wilshire)

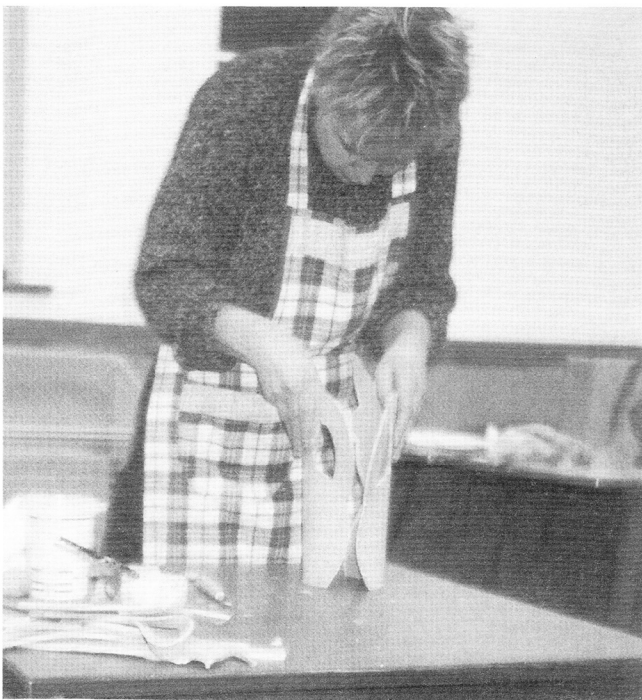


The first aim could often be aided when using ash glazes by the glaze running off the spout opening leaving a sharper edge. The second, by forming a good deep 'skirt' to the lid.

John started the split in the pot's gallery with a pin and then finished off forming the gallery with a wooden tool. He often refines the shape of the 'belly' of the pot after the gallery is formed.

His lid was made by folding the side of a thrown bowl to form a flange. the top of the lid was turned later. He took care that no air was trapped in the fold.

The spout was fixed to the body without scoring or slip and John said that this was not necessary as the clay was in perfect condition for simply moulding the parts together. He did however score and slip when fixing the handle to the body and the knob thrown onto the lid. John finished his excellent demonstration just in time for refreshments.



**Jude fitting the two halves of a sculpture together**  
(photograph by J. Wilshire)

After the break, Jude took over to demonstrate her own methods of making. Admitting to not being a great lover of throwing she developed her approach at "the same time as making clothes"!

She starts by making life drawings of female and male nudes on paper which she then cuts off at suitable points or distorts to produce the outline of her pots.

She began her work with two ready prepared sheets of clay (previously rolled with a rolling pin and two wooden

battens to act as thickness guides). Using newspaper cut to shape as templates, she cut the two pots sides with a knife held at an angle so as to produce a sharp bevelled edge on the finished pot. Having cut the two identical sides, the sides were joined at both vertical edges with a suitable sized cardboard roll (e.g. toilet or kitchen roll core) between to help shape the pot and keep the centre of the two sides apart. The edges were joined by scoring and slipping. Finally, the bottom was put on the pot also by scoring and slipping.

Jude used a small piece of surform blade to sharpen the vertical edges of the pot and then further sharpened and smoothed the edges with a metal rib. The inside surfaces of the vertical joints were reinforced with thin sausages of clay as far down inside the pot as it was possible to reach.

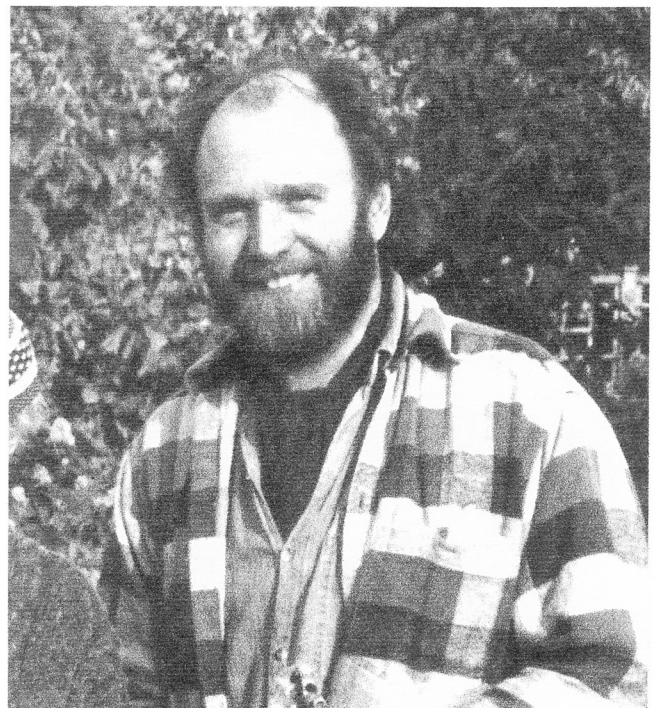
The outside of the pots are dipped in slip and burnished. The slip is a 50-50 ball clay and china clay mix with a 20-25% borax frit added to aid adhesion to the pot. Stains are added to the slip mix as desired and the pot is sgraffito decorated, one side with the female or male figure and the other side with generally a more abstract decoration. Only the outsides of the pots are burnished, the insides are glazed to make them watertight.

Jude uses a standard white earthenware clay from Medcol (Cornwall). The clay is very plastic and ideal for her work. She biscuit fires at 1000°C and glaze fires at 1095°C.

Many thanks to John and Jude who are a charming husband and wife team who gave us a very interesting and informative evening.

**Geoff Parr**

### **PAUL PRIEST DEMONSTRATION**

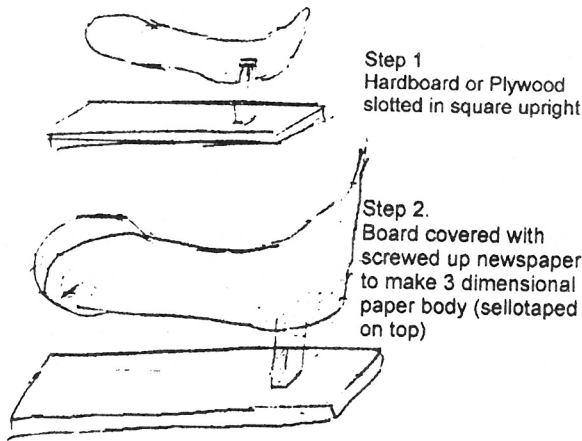


**Paul Priest**

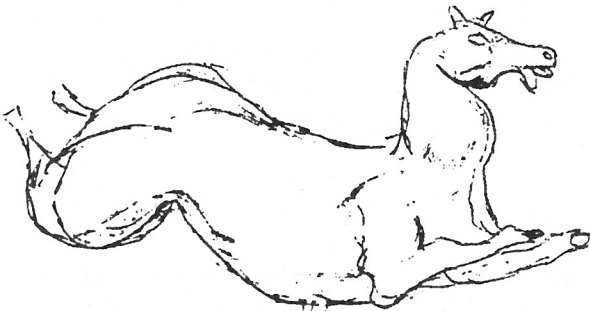
Paul was introduced to clay at an evening class where he went to make Bonsai dishes. He soon found the softness of clay would yield to the most interesting shapes and take on surface texture from towelling and scrunched paper. He soon developed his own style of animal form to which we were introduced at this demonstration.

Many thanks to John Beckley who took detailed notes and sketches which we reproduce here.

Paul started his evening's work by showing how he builds animal forms. He uses photographs of reference and used the horse as an example. Firstly a hardboard or plywood former is cut and slotted onto a square upright.



The former is then covered in screwed up newspaper to produce a 3-dimensional form of the animal. The next stage is to cover the form with clay. Paul uses Potterycrafts Scarva 1480 Earthstone clay and prefers this to "T" or "C" material. It contains coarse grog and fires very white. He rolls out a slab of clay, first on newspaper and then on towelling. The rolled out clay is then draped over the 3-D news-paper to form the body. He then adds further pieces of clay to form the head. He works very quickly (with "no regard for anatomical accuracy"). Pressing an old towel into the surfact of the finished structure gives as irregular texture to the clay which, in turn, helps to give good glaze effects.



For the legs, he uses sticks about the size of a pencil, stuck into the body and covered in clay to give the proper leg shape and proportions. The sticks burn away in the kiln.

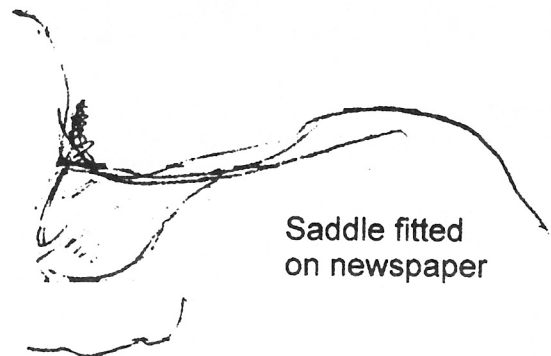
Paul mentioned that where his animal legs are likely to be extremely thin and hence fragile, he uses Isopon type epoxy resin car filler and mixes Humbrol colour mixed in it to give the desired effect (obtainable from Morelli's, Short Street, High Wycombe).

He often puts pieces of thin copper wire into various parts of the figure - this can give some lovely green effects. However, he warned that this can be very destructive to kiln furniture and tends to split the model too. The tail and ears are put on at the last minute. The tail is stuck on with a stick, like the legs. Having dried and fired the piece to 1220°C, he glazes using Dave Roberts white Raku glaze, adding copper oxide mixed into some of the Raku glaze.



Paul then moved to the slide projector and illustrated the development of his work from slab-built pots, through relief tiles (with rough faces) to wall sculptures. He described how he experimented with different techniques and how he finds his inspiration. For example, he used prints of charging bulls for his 3-D sculptures. He has experimented with jugs, in the shape of a face. For these he uses White St. Thomas's body with spots of manganese.

He then discussed how the horse he produced earlier could be embellished - for example, a rider could be added. The horse would be made the same way as before, but a saddle added, fitted on newspaper.

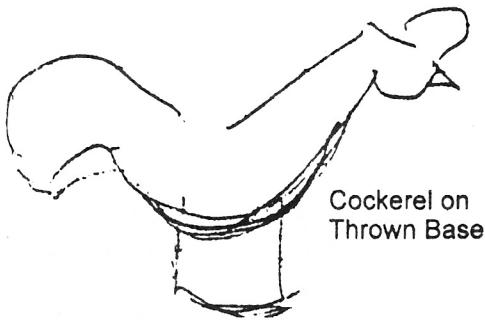


The rider is made the same way as the horse, with screwed up newspaper for the basic form. A slab of rolled clay is placed over the paper former to make the torso and legs in one piece. This then mounted on the saddle in situ on the horse.

The arms are made from rolled newspaper (about the diameter of a pencil) with thin slab clay formed round it to make the arms. The horse and rider are biscuit fired as one, and decorated as before.

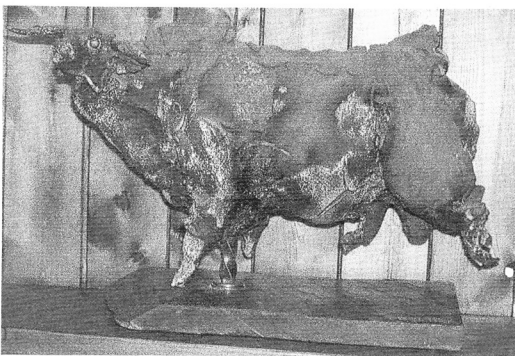


Smaller sculptures are mounted on a thrown base.



Cockerel on  
Thrown Base

Larger pieces are fitted onto purpose-made bases in slate or timber. Gomme's Forge (Geoff Baker) at Loosely Row provides the metalwork for these.



This brought to a conclusion a very interesting and informative evening. Paul sells his work through a number of galleries and contemporary auction houses. There is an opportunity to join a workshop with Paul in September, please 'phone Jane Kilvington for details 01727 853156

Christine Bull

## MEMBERSHIP NEWS

The following new members have joined us:

**Melaine Kotecha** lives at Stoke Poges and is interested in throwing in earthenware and also in decorating techniques.

**Lesley Paton** of Bucks. is interested in most types of

pottery. Both of the above have joined as family members, but we do not have the names of their respective partners.

**Anne Gascoine** lives at Stanstead in Essex. She works on coiled pots and sculpture in paper clay. Anne also has an interest in Raku. **Sue Varley** is from Uxbridge and is particularly interested in handbuilding and Raku work.

We are delighted to welcome our new members. With most having an interest in Raku. I would remind you all that we have a Raku and smoke firing activity quite regularly at Pitstone. Please phone our organiser, Jan Kent, for details. His number is 01908 674051 (see committee list).

Mervyn Fitzwilliam

## FULL CIRCLE

In 1994, I opened a gallery "Art Benattar Craft" in Crewkerne, Somerset. It made perfect sense to live, work and sell my pots under the same roof. The opening of the gallery coincided with Somerset's first Art Week, ensuring a huge circulation of like-minded customers and artists, giving the gallery a fantastic head start.

By 1996, when the second bi-annual Art Week came around, the pottery situated in the office behind the gallery had given way to a café. A conservatory café had also been built linking two back galleries and a kitchen to the whole set-up.

"Art Benattar Craft" was now established as the place to to get that very special hand-made designer garment, jewellery, tapestry, candles, cards, metalwork, or simply provide inspiration to the 100 or so makers now supplying the gallery.

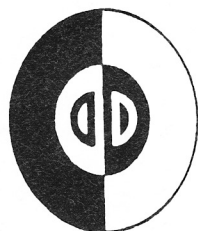
In 1997, Celine Mathews joined as a business partner. By profession a Chartered Accountant, as well as being a very gifted artist, she set about streamlining the administration and advertising, establishing a monthly programme of exhibitions, changing first Monday of each month thus ensuring an ever-changing exciting venue for customers and artists alike.

Workshops in weaving, papier maché, etc. often coincided with the exhibitions demanding more and more time and effort. Needless to say, my pottery by now situated in the basement had not been touched for years. I now feel that I have come full circle and would like to pass on the hard work establishing "Art Benattar Craft" to somebody with lots of energy and enthusiasm to enable me to continue my potting career with my partner in Hertfordshire.

Elsa Benattar

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Mervyn Fitzwilliam

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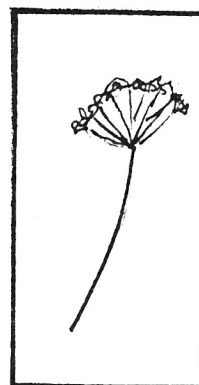
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