



# DACORUM AND CHILTERN POTTERS GUILD



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POTTERS OPEN DAY REPORTS

RUTHANE TUDBALL EVENING

SUSAN BRUCE MEETING

THE JERWOOD PRIZE



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NEWSLETTER  
SPRING 2002  
£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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## Front Cover Photograph

*Effortless throwing by Ruthanne Tudball*

*Photograph by David Dennis*

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## EDITORIAL

It is always a great pleasure when a successful event is the outcome of a lot of hard work. Our congratulations go to Joy Wills, who organised a very successful and enjoyable Potters Open Day, held on 17<sup>th</sup> November. Naturally, Joy did not organise the whole thing single-handed, and there was a lot of work put in by Ruth Karnac and other members of the committee, who should also be thanked for their effort. The details of the three demonstrations are included in this Newsletter and another bouquet goes to the authors of those and other articles contributed.

The day ended with a musical contribution from Roger Cockram. During his performance we collected £80.60 from the audience, as a donation to the Children in Need appeal. Our thanks to Roger for the songs and to our audience for that generous donation.

The teething troubles with using a new venue are being addressed and we have made a provisional booking at the Green Park Centre for next year.

Mervyn Fitzwilliam

## GUILD EVENTS

Guild meetings are usually held at Kings Langley Methodist Church Hall.

**Friday 8<sup>th</sup> Feb. at 8 p.m. GARETH MASON**

Gareth is an energetic and enthusiastic potter who enjoys demonstrating and teaching as much as making. His career in ceramics includes working as a production potter, lecturing at Surrey University, film making and writing. His views on potting were recently published in *Ceramic Review* (see 'Style Matters' in #192). He has recently established a new studio in Alton, Hants., from

whence he'll be coming to meet us to demonstrate his flair for throwing large pots in porcelain, and to give us an insight into his use of intensely coloured fluid reduction glazes. Come and join us for what promises to be an inspiring and enjoyable evening.



**Friday 8<sup>th</sup> March at 8 p.m.**

**ANNE KARI RAMBERG MARSHALL**

Anne Kari produces beautiful thrown tableware in porcelain and also makes delightful figures which were shown in an exhibition at Contemporary Ceramics last spring. She will describe how she developed these two different approaches to ceramics and will demonstrate some of her techniques. A popular teacher, who you may have met on a short course at Brunel, Anne Kari is concentrating more on production these days. We are delighted she is coming to us and that we are to meet the other half of the Marshall 'team'.



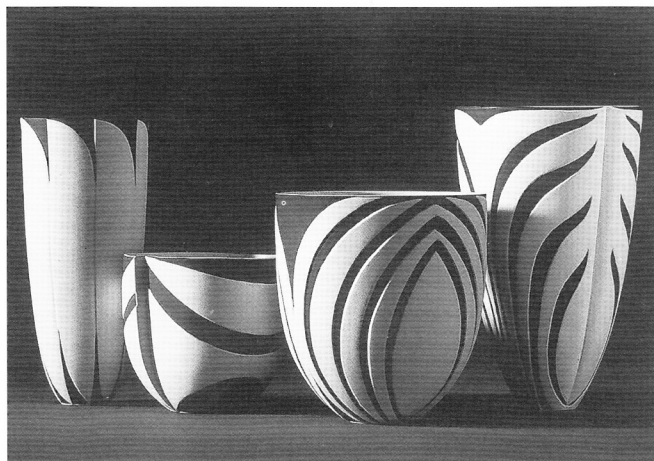
Friday April 12<sup>th</sup> at 8 p.m. **SARA ROBERTSON**

Sara makes unique, collectable wall dishes that combine her love of story telling with that of picture making. She draws on a multitude of ideas, images and memories garnered from her sketchbooks and paintings, and then makes use of a variety of techniques from drawing and painting to printing and texturing, to create her pieces. Those familiar with the work and writings of Paul Scott will trace the developments in slipware from the traditional to the contemporary. If you miss this meeting, you can find Sara in May at the V & A in their programme of events celebrating the new British Galleries.



Friday 10<sup>th</sup> May at 8 p.m. **PENNY FOWLER**

Penny obligingly threw open her tiny studio on our last Potcrawl in London, so we are delighted she is to return our call. Using bone china and porcelain clays, she will demonstrate how she layers slip in moulds & then carves into them to produce such delicate, translucent forms.



## OTHER EVENTS

Jan.29<sup>th</sup>-Feb.9<sup>th</sup> **SETTING OUT 2002:** Exhibition of new potters' work. Craft Potters Shop & Gallery 7 Marshall St London W.1.

Mar.5<sup>th</sup> -16<sup>th</sup> **ANNA LAMBERT** at the Craft Potters Shop & Gallery.

Mar.14<sup>th</sup>- 7<sup>th</sup> July **EARTH & FIRE:** Italian Teracotta Sculpture - Donatello to Canova. V & A Exhib.Courts

## POSH POTTING

I was chatting to one of our members and his wife on Open Day :-

Me: "Are you still potting?"

Him: "Yes, when I can find time"

Me: "What clay do you use?"

Him: "I get my clay from Harrods"

Me: (Gulp) "That's amazing!"

His wife: "In a green bag, of course"

Me: (light dawning) "I see".

I remembered that he is an engineer engaged in excavations to do with London underground, digging a tube extension under Harrods building. What an anticlimax after imagining a smart special Harrods department with obsequious assistants condescending to sell clay. We had a good laugh though!

Ruth Karnac

## NOTEBOOK

### Parking during meetings

The demonstration given by Ruthanne Tudball on 9<sup>th</sup> Nov. was a very enjoyable evening marred somewhat by a mobile phone. Well, the phone was not at fault, but the driver using it crashed into two cars parked in the main road outside the Methodist Church Hall. The cars were owned by two Guild members attending the meeting. Most people are sensible enough not to use a phone when driving, but the number of near misses I have recently seen or been involved in, with drivers using hand-held mobile phones, is hair-raising. Serious legislation is required. We know that a Christmas crack-down is expected on drink drivers, but how many will be killed or injured due to driver inattention because of mobile phones? Astonishingly, accident statistics relating to the use of mobile phones do not seem to be collected.

When attending meetings at the Kings Langley Methodist Church Hall, please do not leave cars on the main road if the car park is full. Either park in Rectory Lane opposite, or use the restaurant car park next door. This is a very large car park, often used by Church/Hall visitors.



### Book Offer

The recent book offer, giving members and friends a 20% discount on pottery titles published by A.& C. Black was very well received, with books to the value of £1,600 being ordered. This was planned as a simple, tidy, one-off transaction: one payment – one delivery of books. However, that well-known universal law came into play and there has been much to-ing and fro-ing so far, since some books were not available, some payments incorrect, late, etc. I remain undaunted and hope to arrange a similar offer at about the same time next year.

### Library

Our Librarian, Janet Collings, has been checking the records to find out which books are popular in our excellent library. Those which are not popular will be replaced with others from our substantial store of books, which are still in the capable hands of Jan Kent.

The book offer also meant that the Guild could purchase some new books for the library, so watch out for all those new titles which will be on the shelves in January 2002.

### Stan Romer Award for 2002

After various suggestions and deliberations, the subject for the 2002 award is to be "The Human Form". The subject may be interpreted as a sculpture, decoration, vessel, etc. in any pottery/ceramic method, i.e. Raku, earthenware, stoneware, glazed or not, etc. Please note this competition is only open to Guild Members, only one piece of work may be submitted per member and the work must have been made by the applicant between now and the date of the competition. All members intending to enter must complete an application form.

### Members Evening and Book Auction

Following on from our very successful book auction and members evening in 2001, it is proposed that we have a similar event in 2002. The outline plan is that we will have a 50/50 auction of books (i.e. proceeds go half to the owner and half to Guild funds), followed by a discussion about pots that members have brought to the meeting. The suggestion is that each member brings one or two pots and briefly tell us why they find that pot or pots of interest. The pots could be made by any potter, not just by the member bringing them.

Harking back to the books, two people have already committed to the idea, but we need several more. Please turf out those pottery or art/craft/antique/special interest, etc. books, make a list of them with suggested (reserve) price for each – then send me the list. Please note that I need these lists in time for publication in the next Newsletter, so GET CRACKING, START NOW!

Mervyn Fitzwilliam

### THE JERWOOD PRIZE

As many people know, the Jerwood prize is given annually for crafts. I believe it rotates year by year between ceramics, jewellery and textiles. This year it is ceramics and the 'shortlist' exhibition was at the Craft Council Gallery in Pentonville Road, and it will later tour the regions. I went there recently and was gratified to see the variety of individual styles; it made me think that ceramics must be in a very healthy state, as everything seemed to be made to a very high standard of craftsmanship.

My personal preference lies with re-interpretations of traditions and for this, Walter Keeler is my choice. I particularly enjoyed the inventiveness in the foot of a blue salt-glazed bowl. The piece was large and strong without looking heavy and the foot/base looked to me to be both structurally sound and delightfully inventive.

Definitely my take-home choice given the chance. His luscious, richly coloured teapots are also very beautiful and I coveted them too.

Edmund de Waal's porcelain irregular cylinders are also desirable, each one with a tiny touch of red, but I did not care for the way they were displayed – a very long shelf crammed with them was a bit off-putting. There are also two approx. 3ft. lidded cylinders with the same beautiful glaze but unfortunately I found myself thinking of the twin towers of the World Trade Centre, so compelling had been the T.V. pictures. He wasn't to know, of course, when he made them.

Alison Britton's work I do not find attractive. It seems to me to be free in its shapes and brushwork, but somehow lacking coherence. It is difficult to know what is wrong, but perhaps part of the reason lies in the 'deadness' of the surfaces. The shapes seem a little uncertain too.

Carol McNichol's work I have always found to be either pure 'kitsch' or just plain ugly. Perhaps I should say no more. Personal opinions are just that.

Elizabeth Fritsch has a large showing which was a pleasure to see, though too densely displayed. On the whole her work is very architectural and she still plays intriguingly with perspective. She has almost given up using pattern, but the very clearly defined shapes don't need it. The contrasting colour on the insides of pots with white edging is very effective, especially with the black ones. There are ziggurats, round and oval and some leaning. All are hand-built and slip decorated and the black ones look very chic. She seems to share a predilection for leaning shapes with Walter Keeler. With the ziggurats and a small Noah's Ark, I sense the bible as inspiration.

Felicity Ayliff showed large, roundish sculptural forms in plain, speckled matt glazes of various warm, earthy colours. I liked best those with the most clearly defined shapes. Her tall monolithic form was very impressive and could look wonderful in the open air.

James Evans work made me want to walk quickly past. He has produced smooth, fat, glossy, bright pink amorphous shapes. Why?

Lubra Chowdhary presented a large floor-level installation of hundreds of small brightly coloured objects laid out with regular spaces between each one. All were approximately 4" in size and in great variety, all unrelated in subject matter as far as I could tell. Nevertheless they displayed a sense of fun rather like a plethora of toys for adults. For example there were – a spinning top, a grand piano, a lap-top, a factory building, a radio and anything else you can bring to mind, all similar size and nicely coloured and well made. It was a fascinating collection of objects, organic and inorganic and sometimes both. Its fascination lay, I suppose, in its great variety and endless detail.

Nicholas Rena was a great contrast. His work is pure sculpture in clay – varied and powerful with rich semi-matt surfaces in strong colours. I particularly liked his 'Reclining Bowl' – a splendid idea carried out in deep crimson shading to brown. It seems that the finished surface was obtained by wet and dry sanding onto the bisqued piece which was then stained with coloured inks and polished with beeswax. There is an in-depth article about him in *Ceramic Review* no.192 which I have just seen.

Richard Slee was the winner of the Jerwood prize. He uses the present day popular high gloss glazes more sensitively than most. I was very taken with the tiny, realistic jade green horses in choreographed positions on a curvaceous 'field' of grass and backed with greatly simplified trees. The colours shaded into each other beautifully and looked right for the horses. In another piece, there was also a group of costumed figures, male and female, each one standing alone in a bath/boat. Rather mysterious I thought, perhaps even sinister. Most of the things he makes derive from nature, but he often plays with scale and also joins unrelated forms, organic and geometric, in quirky ways. There is a touch of the fairground. If you wanted a label I suppose you could call them modern Baroque.

All in all it was a very enjoyable and interesting exhibition and I was glad to have gone, but I do wish I had taken a camera with me. The colour was so important that drawings would not have helped. The Jerwood Prize exhibition was at the Crafts Council Gallery in Pentonville Road in September/October. It

will be shown from 2<sup>nd</sup> Mar.–28<sup>th</sup> Apr. in the Burton Gallery, Bideford, Devon (01237 471455) & at the Norwich Castle Museum from 6<sup>th</sup> May–30<sup>th</sup> June (01603 493625).

Ruth Karnac

### SUSAN BRUCE EVENING OCT. 12<sup>TH</sup> 01

Susan was training as a teacher in Cheltenham when she got the 'pot bug'. She worked full-time in a school while teaching pottery at evening classes. Presently she began to hanker after making and selling her own work, so she bought a kick wheel and practiced throwing in her garden shed. Since she had no electricity none of her pots were fired, just re-wedged and thrown again.

When Susan and her family moved, she invested in a bigger shed and a Wenger front-loading kiln. She began making a range of tableware, selling it at craft fairs. She needed to gain knowledge but due to her family commitments she couldn't do a degree and so attended a couple of courses including summer schools at Loughborough university.

At the beginning of the 1980s Susan was working as a pottery teacher in a boys school. She decided to give up her secure job to do a full-time course in Lowestoft. The course proved a bit of a disappointment, but Susan was determined to make it worth her while. By using the skills of as good technician, Susan gained a good knowledge of glazes and built up a good network of gallery owners and other contacts.

Her main influence is African art and textiles. This, and her interest in surface decoration, began during her time at college where she managed to fit in a lot of personal work around the set curriculum. Susan's other influences include Alison Britton's early work, Anna Lambert's candlesticks and any weird teapots!

Her final year show consisted mainly of pouring vessels. Since throwing tends to dictate the form of the piece, she found various ways to combine throwing and hand-building techniques by adding slabbed sections and handles.

On leaving college, Susan had a stand at a trade fair in Harrogate. She didn't sell much but she learned a great deal and decided to approach galleries directly. She joined the CPA and the Suffolk Crafts Society and from there things began to pick up. Susan is now a member of the East Anglian Potters Association and still shows at Harrogate (which is very good for wholesale orders from gallery owners).

Recently, Susan's work has changed, though in a way, she is still using the same ideas she started with at college. She uses soft slabbing and treats the clay like

fabric, decorating it flat and cutting out templates before making it into forms, using a hot air gun to fix the pots in partially sagged positions (she doesn't like straight lines!).

Susan's current work includes ornamental – not functional – teapots, plates, jugs and bowls. Her pieces are press moulded and slabbed with highly textured surfaces made by inlaying pieces of clay slip trailed onto newspaper and allowed to harden off. Also pressing in various objects and filling the depressions with slip, rolling the whole lot into a flat slab. Into this are rolled dishcloths, netting, pieces of metal and home-made rollers (one made from an empty lychee).

Susan uses white earthenware clay, primarily for economic reasons – lower firing temperature and lower toxic emissions. The clay is sourced from “Arterial engineering” in Norfolk and is called Superwhite earthenware AW23. It is very good for hand building and throwing and is probably available through Valentines.

Susan's slabs are hand rolled (no thickness control) to about 1 cm thick on pieces of old oilcloth. All the textures and surface decoration are made with the aid of WD-40 as a release agent. All the component pieces are cut out using templates and then stacked, with paper spacers in between, overnight to firm up. Curved pieces are left over rolling pins. Pieces are then joined without slip-scoring and rubbing with a wet toothbrush instead. Reinforcing coils from a mini extruder are added on the inside of joins. Susan makes a feature of joins – embellishing them with extruded coils of clay, laid one over the other to frame the textured areas.

When Susan is making her teapots she adds a small upturned, press moulded bowl to the top of the form, then another slab is added as a base, decorating again with extrusions. Spouts are again made from templates, this time cut from credit cards. Handles are added – a sausage of clay rolled on a car mat for texture as well as a “fake” lid and stopper which are purely for decoration.

The pieces are dried slowly and bisque fired to 1000°C. Both the inside and outside of the pots are highly textured and Susan likes the contrast of using different finishes on the same pot. The outside is painted with very dilute solution of blue velvet underglaze. The insides are painted with a basic transparent glaze:

62 grams lead bisilicate

30 grams Cornish stone

5 grams whiting

3 grams china clay

with the addition of:

1 gram red iron oxide

½ gram cobalt carbonate for a blue glaze

and:

4 grams copper oxide

1 gram cobalt carbonate for a green glaze

The pots are fired to between 1120° and 1140°C with no soak. The pots are fired for a third time to 730°C after some gold and mother of pearl lustres have been added.

In the future, Susan would like to introduce more colours and experiment with the use of strongly coloured slips as a background to her textures.

Sarah Hall

## **CORRESPONDENCE**

Der Mervn

I red viz gret interest ze artikl on “Euro-English” in ze vintr’01 isu. Ze chang to zis usage wil klerly mak lif much esier for zos of involvd in ritn komunikashn. I zerfor propos zat, komensing viz ze next isu of ze Newsletr, al kontribushons be submitted in zis form. Yors etc.

Hari Karnak

P.S. If evn one singl entry is produsd in zis form, it vil result in my imediat resignashun as sub-editr.

## **POTTERS OPEN DAY**

### **(i) Daphne Carnegie**

#### **Development as a Potter**

Daphne Carnegie started potting as an apprentice in France, where she worked for no money – wedging, wiping glazed bottoms and making handles. She learned a great deal from this experience, but eventually wanted a broader base of knowledge. Aged 30 she began a diploma coursed at Harrow. At college she “did a bit of everything”, but perhaps it was her historical project – copying 15<sup>th</sup> century pots from the V & A Museum – which was most relevant to her professional work. These projects started an avid interest in tin glaze (white glaze based on lead and borax with tin oxide as an opacifier). Tin glazing is a very old technique originating in 9<sup>th</sup> century Iraq, where artisans were attempting to copy Chinese porcelain work – without white clay!

A couple of years after leaving college, Daphne set up in business making mainly functional jars, but also plates, jugs, mugs and bowls. At this time there was a gap in the market for bright earthenware domestic pots and the work sold very well. Daphne is a fan of William Newland who championed earthenware techniques when most potters were following Leach. In 1984, Daphne became a member of the C.P.A.

Initially the jar forms were straight sided with very defined changes of direction at the shoulder and rim,

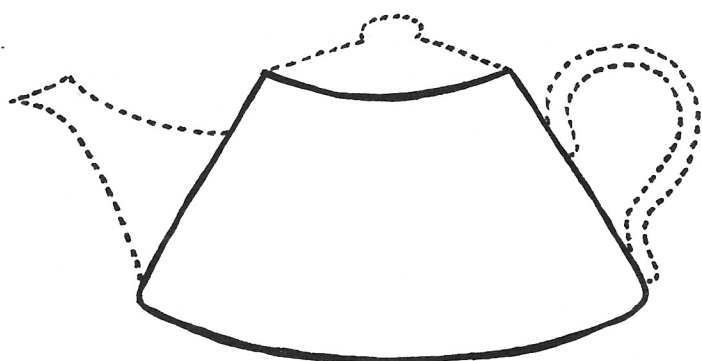
creating natural borders for decoration. Later, Daphne began to fill less of the pot with decoration and her very classic teapots became broader based (making them very strong and functional), allowing her patterns to 'grow' from the bottom of the pot. At the same time her jars became rounder, smoother forms, as have her jugs which are inspired by Tuscan big-bellied jugs. There is a duality in Daphne's decoration – some of her work is pure pattern, while some is figurative, depicting, leaves, flowers and fruit. Daphne often works with cut fruit in front of her so that she can portray them accurately.

Presently, Daphne is experimenting with black and white decoration which means that greater attention is paid to tone and line. This has also influenced her colour work which now has very dark backgrounds and a more subdued palette, inspired by early Dutch still-lives. Other pieces have a green slip underneath the glaze (applied at leather hard stage), once fired a hint of colour shows through the white.

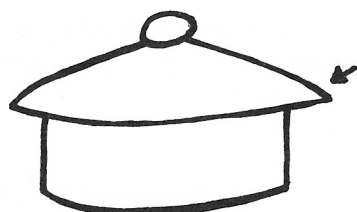
#### Demonstration

Daphne uses Valentine's standard red earthenware which is very tolerant, cheap and takes glaze well. In addition, if necessary, it can fire to stoneware and be used in reduction.

Daphne starts with 900 gr. of clay for a large teapot. She throws the wide base first and spends some time compressing it well, as it is prone to cracking. The sides are collared and thrown in, finishing with a metal kidney to give a very sharp, smooth surface for decorating. It is important to leave no sharp edges when using a tin glaze as it will run off of them, leaving an unsightly brown line; additionally, sharp edges chip easily. The edges of the base of the teapot are undercut for lift and the form is left on the bat overnight.

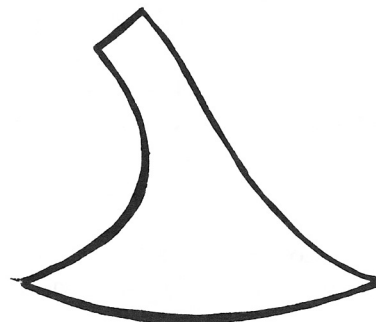


250 gm. of clay is used to throw a simple "sit-in" lid. There is no gallery in the teapot. The lid is thrown upside down and left thick for turning.



This edge is angled slightly down so that the lid doesn't look like it is "lifting" when it is on the pot.

Spouts are thrown off of the hump, collaring in and pulling up from a wide base; again they are "cleaned" using a metal kidney. The spout is then cut off of the hump with a pin and the top is bent over so that it dries with a curve.



Handles are pulled up from fairly hard clay and left to firm up. At the leather hard stage everything is turned using a very small loop tool. A small amount of soft clay is added, by scoring and slipping, to the turned lid. It is thrown and shaped at this stage to form a knob. The spout is cut down with a wire and then trimmed with a Stanley knife to angle the joining edge so that the contact point will be firm and flat. Holes are cut in the teapot body and the spout is joined in the normal way, with the addition of a supporting coil over the top of the join. The pouring end of the spout is cut, allowing for a slight un-twisting in the kiln. The handle is eased into shape, trimmed and joined. The teapots are assembled at eye level for accuracy – this ensures that everything is lined up.

Daphne's pots are bisque fired to 975°C . They are later glaze fired to 1080°C with a 30 minute soak (1000°C - 1160°C is O.K. for tin glaze).

#### Decoration

In general, tin glaze needs to be applied thicker than other glazes and should be mixed at least 24 hours in advance to get the thickness right. All pieces are dipped in glaze the day before decorating, after the bottoms have been waxed with candle wax, thinned down with paraffin. This mixture resists colour better, goes on easier and dries quicker than commercial wax emulsion. Glaze drips must be kept to a minimum as any fettling will cause a dusty surface which doesn't take painting well. Pieces are then painted with colour pigments, which must be thin, so that they don't drag. Additionally, adding 2% bentonite to the glaze allows a good crust to form so that painting is easier.

Daphne mixes her oxides with water ready for painting. Other colours are made using underglazes which are mixed with water, glaze (for extra flux) and oxides



which are added to make colours less predictable and bland. Daphne draws on the designs with a very soft pencil – 6B.

Large areas of colour are painted first using watercolour brushes. These areas are then outlined using a mixture of 50% copper and 50% cobalt oxide in long fluid strokes. The dark background colour is added using 50% midnight blue stain and 50% cobalt plus small amounts of copper, manganese and iron. To make the designs stand out more, Daphne leaves a white border around everything. The pieces should be touched as little as possible before firing.

#### Top – Tip !

Daphne said that Cornellisons' artist colours are good for mixing into slips (particularly the reds) as a cheap alternative to using oxides and stains. Cornellisons are based on Long Acre in Covent Garden.

Sarah Hall

#### (ii) JAN BEENY

From the moment I saw Jan's amazing creatures-with-attitude, I knew we were in for a treat!

During the slide show Jan told us about her background. Originally from the outskirts of Rochdale in the Pennines, Jan now lives in Cardiff with a workshop in Cardiff Bay from where she has worked full-time since 1997. Her work has been influenced by both places – open fields/textures, standing stones, animals, and colours, as well as 16<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> century textiles and embroidery effects.

Jan trained at the University of Wales Institute, graduating in 1986. She spent a year at the Cardiff City farm – not as a potter but as an illustrator making signs and drawing the animals. It was a useful experience as she was able to capture the essence of the animals on the farm. Following this period she returned to University to do her MA where she made large-scale vessels based on nature and that was when sheep came to the fore. This lead onto the wonderful creatures she now makes.

#### Demonstration

Jan showed us how she makes her sheep. I'm sure others thoughts were similar to my own – "how on earth will that look like a sheep?" But, it did!

Jan starts by rolling out manageable-sized slabs of clay which she joins together to form a much larger slab which is divided into triangular shapes, textured, distorted and rejoined to form a larger slab again. She creates her texture using the edges of wooden battens, pieces of lace doily, stones from the beach, the end of paintbrushes and anything else she can find to create texture with. Parts of the texture are stroked and pushed

out from the inside, adding to the overall effect. Once leather hard (or as Roger Cockram explained later – cheddar cheese-that's-been-left-out-for-a-day hard), she began to create her sheep using the idea of a welsh standing stone as the basis for the body shape.

Jan doesn't use standard templates but creates the shapes as she works, judging size and shape according to her experience and mood. Using this method Jan can guarantee that even though she may make many sheep, none will be identical to any other.

Having spent quite a lot of time creating and texturing the slabs Jan began to construct her sheep pretty rapidly. She has a straightforward approach to her work, spending most time on the preparation of the slabs and the finishing off.

All edges are chamfered, scratched and slipped and beaten into place with a wooden batten. She doesn't strike you as being a violent person but the sheep was soon beaten into submission and the shape rapidly took hold. To alleviate stress across the body during firing, Jan cuts narrow wedges from the lower edges before the base is added. It made the creature rock slightly but Jan assured us the end product is perfectly stable.

Whilst creating the tail, I had a few problems reconciling the shape of the tail with that of a sheep. Although somewhat straight and dog-like the end result worked, giving the sheep definite attitude. It was curved and attached at the top of the body and lower down, slightly across the body front, creating an effect which looked like the sheep had an arm akimbo.

I was fascinated watching her create the sheep head from a bowed, triangular slab, cutting eyes and stroking out the bone structure from the inside, catching the very essence of a sheep. We were all surprised as Jan moved the head about rapidly to determine the best position for the head on this particular sheep - she had obviously done this many times before! The ears – simple tear drop shapes stroked and folded into shape gave the final touch.

We didn't see how Jan colours the finished product but she described it for us. She fires to 1120° - high earthenware. Her colours are created by using various oxides, a base wash of iron oxide, and pale slips poured over the body or painted on with a large dry flat brush or trailed from a slip trailer, all of which are picked up by the texture.

The pictures show various stages of the production – really complex but wonderfully simple - which culminates in the lovely, whimsical creatures which have such personality and above all ATTITUDE!

Linda Bryant

Jan Beeny 17/11/01  
Slab built

Animals.

Illustrations by:  
Vivienne Rodwell-Davies

very textured  
& distressed slabs  
of clay.  
Stretched  
& pulled.  
They  
evolve into  
the shapes.



the glaze is  
a matt G/W.  
Brushed on  
thinly -  
Lead bi-silicate &  
China Clay.

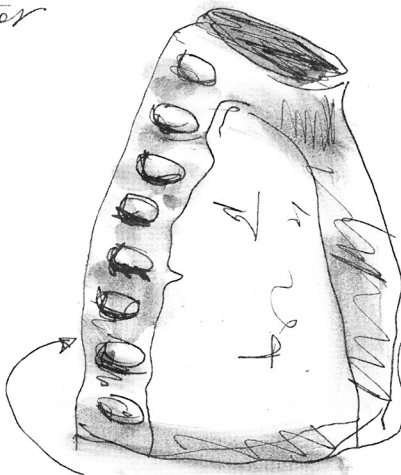
After 'bisque' firing  
a selection of 'washes' are  
put on using oxides &  
vanadium which reacts  
with the air.

To make a dog:-

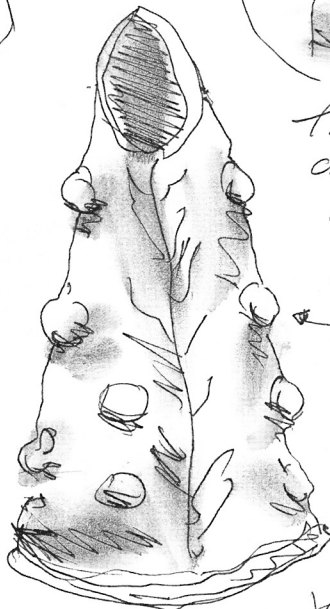
Textured slabs are rolled  
out & joined together



\* circles are  
marked  
out



the circle marks  
are then pushed  
out from the inside  
to produce 'bosses'



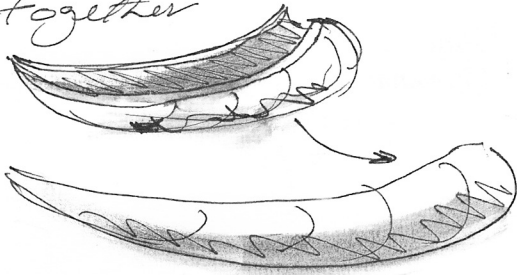
roll out base



Join base slab  
to body

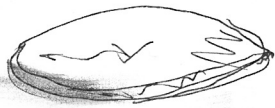
put air  
holes in

The tail is a curved slab & is beaten together

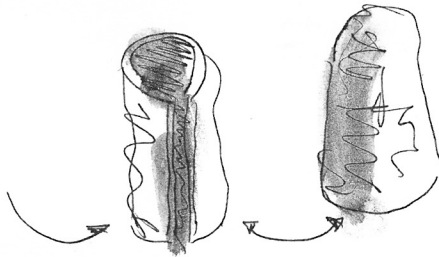


& rolled on the table

For the head :-

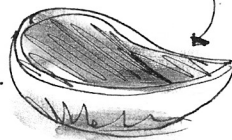


Roll out a flat slab



bend round.

Make a pot shape

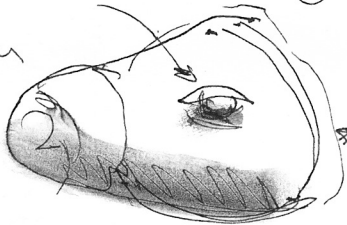


insert into the folded clay head. concave side uppermost & beat.

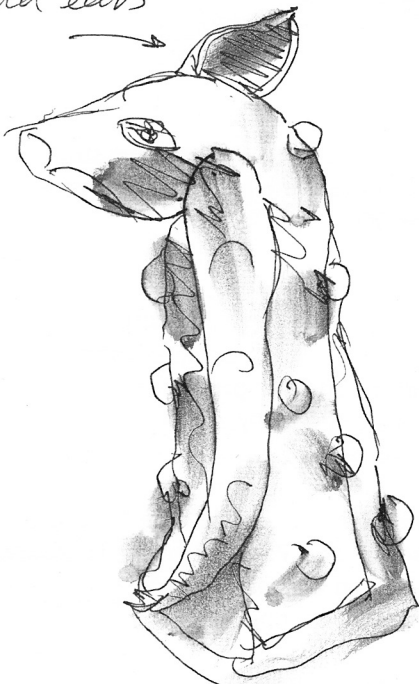


Make a slit for the eye

& push from the inside

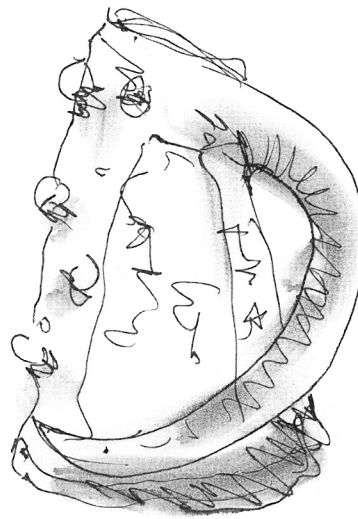


add ears



Three views of finished dog.

Join tail to body



### (iii) Roger Cockram

Roger first came to talk and demonstrate to the Guild in 1986, and we were delighted to welcome him back again at this year's Potters Open Day. This year's demonstration had a very special bonus at the end, but more of that anon.

Roger originally trained as a zoologist and did post-graduate work in marine ecology. His keen interest in marine and freshwater themes is still with him. He gets inspired by the colours and forms in rock pools, and a number of the ceramic pieces he brought with him echo this theme. There were bowls showing a three-dimensional fish emerging from a shoal of fish. There were other ceramic pieces showing his interest in frogs and their relationship with water and the way they swim in it or emerge from it. He is also interested in the way human beings swim and move in water.

Roger had studied under Mick Casson (a founder member of our Guild) at Harrow, where he was very well trained as a thrower, and most of his subsequent work has been thrown, mainly on Mervyn's wheels. He originally threw with earthenware clay but when he discovered wood firing and the warm toasted 'country feel' he could get with wood ash and reduction firing, he made a change and started to work with stoneware clay instead

Many potters make their pots BEFORE deciding how they will be decorated. Roger makes his forms AFTER deciding what the overall effect, and therefore the decoration, will be. It follows that the decoration of his forms is of paramount importance to him. His glazes are all about water and rhythm and colour and depth. He succeeds in getting some excellent organic effects with his glazes, some of which are runny glazes. To ensure that his glazes fit his clay, he makes sure that his glazes or vitreous slips have a quantity of clay in them that match the clay from which the pots are made.

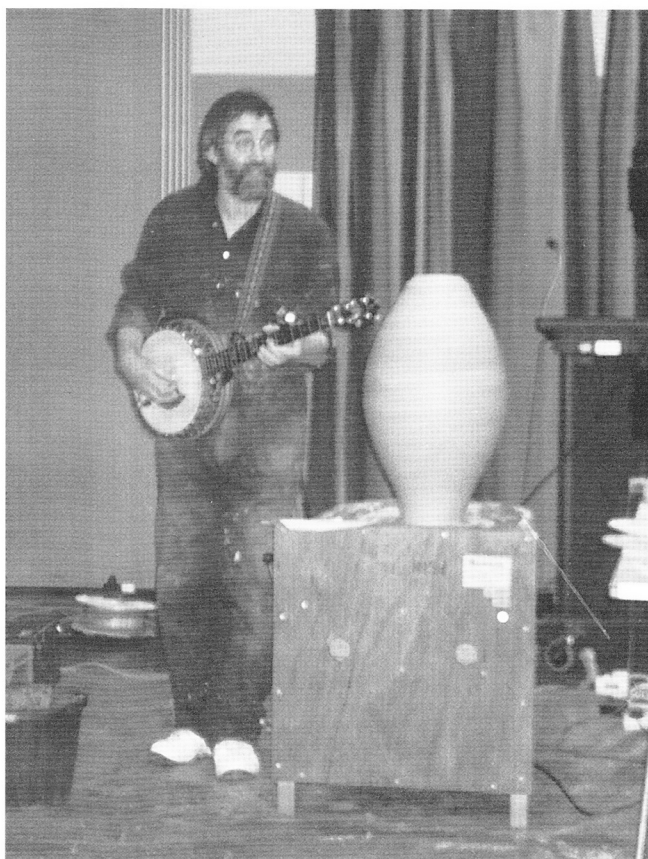
His pieces are never biscuit fired, they only have one firing. They are glazed on the inside when the clay is leather-hard. He either dips his pot in the glaze or sponges them on the outside, maybe with two or three different glazes.

Roger demonstrated throwing a number of different pots, many of which he altered by squeezing or pinching afterwards to create more interesting shapes.

The surprise at the end of his talk and demonstration was to learn that he had another talent – that of an accomplished Country and Western singer and banjo player. The audience was delighted that Mervyn had persuaded Roger to play his banjo and sing one of the

excellent songs he had written, and a traditional folk song. Roger succeeded in getting most of his audience singing with him. It was a very enjoyable and polished performance on Roger's part and led to unanimous requests for encores from the enthusiastic audience. It made a wonderful grand finale to a very good demonstration and a great day.

John Beckley



*Roger ends with a pot, a song, & a smile*  
Photograph by Mervyn Fitzwilliam

### MEMBERSHIP NEWS

We are delighted to welcome the following new members:

Douglas Craik of Twickenham, who is particularly interested in reduction fired thrown stoneware.

Sharon Goodman who lives in Berkhamsted, Herts., Joyce Hill from Winslow, Bucks. and Anne Champion from Aylesbury, Bucks. These three members are interested in all aspects of ceramics.

Yolanda Fawsitt of Haddenham, Bucks. has a strong interest in decoration techniques applied to thrown pots. Gill Sandford and her partner from Haddenham, Bucks. are interested in raku fired hand built ware.

Imogen Semken, who lives in London, works with thrown and hand built earthenware.

Tricia Smith of Sandridge, Herts. classes herself as a hobby potter and Pat Jenkin of Aylesbury, Bucks. has recently retired and enjoys hand building, sculpture and raku firing at every opportunity.

Mervyn Fitzwilliam



## RUTHANNE TUDBALL

### A demonstration with slides held on Fri. 9<sup>th</sup> Nov.

Ruthanne made my favourite mug. I was not the only one looking forward with keen anticipation to this meeting. By the time I arrived the hall was nearly full and a dozen other late-comers were to follow.

Ruthanne began by describing how she got started. Her story is both encouraging and inspiring, and elements of it are rather familiar.

An American graduate in English, now living in Reading, she taught herself to throw in a tiny cellar using a hired wheel with Mick Casson's book at her elbow. After two years she sought him out to thank him for "teaching me" and to ask his advice on what to do next. A full-time course at college was out of the question, she had two young children and lacked the usual training. Something unconventional was required. A post-graduate course at Goldsmiths' College proved just the job, though it must have taken a lot of courage and a heap of faith to apply. In the event she is profoundly grateful, for it gave her time to experiment and enjoy herself playing with clay. It can be difficult maintaining momentum when you are part-time, so Ruthanne decided to make her pots all in one day, assembling the pieces while still wet. Thus she developed her own unique style.

This history was illustrated with stunning slides of the Mojave desert, beach features along the Gower Peninsular, rocks on Vancouver Island and her old home in the hills of California, all interspersed with photographs of her pots and life drawing sketches. She is currently studying for a City & Guilds in photography, and it shows. For Ruthanne, life is one glorious learning experience.

Midway through this discourse, we were brought back to the present with an unpleasant jolt. A traffic accident on the main road had left a parked car completely smashed up and another damaged, hit by a driver using a mobile phone. Sadly, the mangled vehicles belonged to Guild members in the audience, who crept out looking shaken.

Ruthanne picked up the threads of her talk and we continued on our journey on the exploration of patterns and shaped which so inspire this potter with her own soft, fluid flowing forms.

One of the consequences of Ruthanne's quest in clay is her speed and dexterity. To learn from her, one must watch like a hawk, for to blink at the wrong moment is to miss a trick or two. In one hour at the wheel she made a bottle figure, a teapot, a square dish and a pouring bowl. As she worked, she gave out quite a lot

of technical information which is included in the end of this account, together with recipes which she recently published in *Ceramic Review* (#190, July/Aug.2001).

Ruthanne mixes her own clay (see end for recipe) and keeps it very soft, for then she can throw with very little water. Thus the pots can be assembled wet, for the clay has not been much weakened by the addition of water.

Ruthanne finished off her display by making a pouring bowl. It was made, displayed and re-cycled so quickly that one could only watch in admiration. Throughout the demonstration there were small gasps and sighs and spontaneous applause from the audience. Thank you Ruthanne, for a lovely evening.

Further notes;

Tools: The small hoop has a cutting edge made from a thin bamboo. The throwing stick is carved from wood.

Also uses shells and pieces of bamboo.

Clay: (AT ball clay *or* ) + sand + 1/3<sup>rd</sup> part St. Hyplas 71 + (grolleg china clay) Amand de Pulsaye clay

Slips:

<u>Orange slip</u> –	Ball clay (with app.1.5% iron)	50)
	Grolleg china clay	50)

<u>White slip</u> -	SMD ball clay	50)
	Golleg china clay	50)

<u>Black slip</u> -	AT ball clay	33)
	Porcelain clay powder	33)
	Soda feldspar	33)
	+ Black stain	15)

<u>Black stain</u> -	Red iron oxide	55)
	Manganese dioxide	20)
	Cobalt oxide	17)
	Chromium oxide	8)

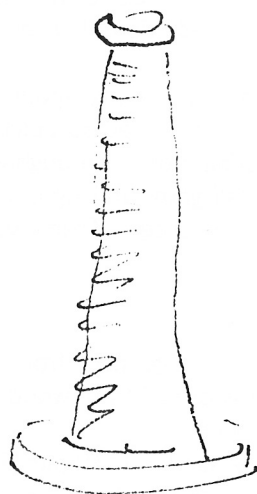
Firing: The pots are raw fired in a natural gas kiln. Bicarbonate of soda is used to glaze. 1 kg bicarb is mixed with boiling water to make a super-saturated solution which is then poured through a 200 mesh sieve and into a garden pump. Spraying begins at cone 8 and continues every 15 minutes up to cone 10, a little and often being the rule. The pots are lightly reduced, soaked up for 1 ½ hrs and then crash-cooled at 950°C. After that the kiln is bunged up for 2 days. All the pots are placed on wads made from aluminium hydrate – 3 parts : 1 part china clay.

For further details see *Ceramic Review* #190 and Ruthanne's book on Soda Glazing (in the series by A&C. Black) or look out for future information on the proposed workshops.

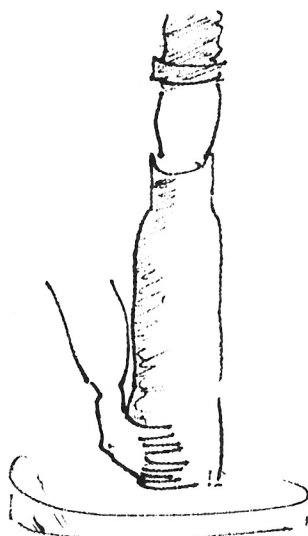
Ros McGuirk

# Making a bottle form

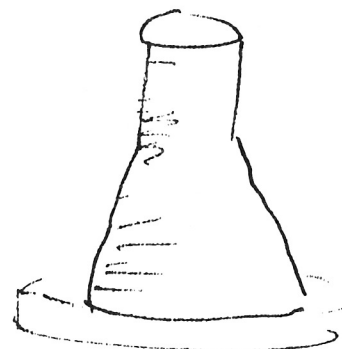
Throws a low cone



opens up to cylinder

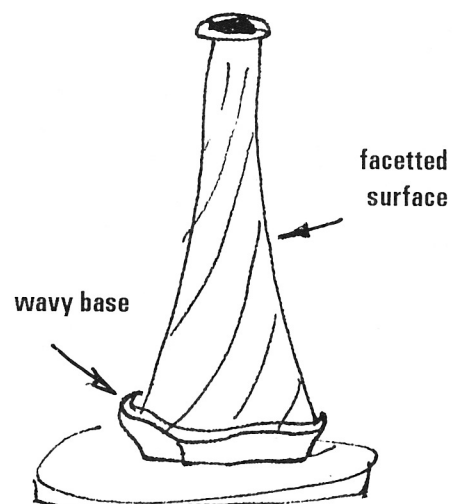


stands over the wheel head



with small harp works from top to bottom removing thin strips from the wall, as the wheel turns slowly

→ turns up the base using large curved rib of bamboo

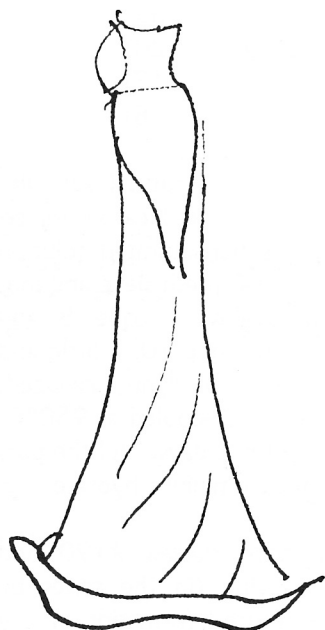


facetted surface

wavy base

spout made by deforming the lip

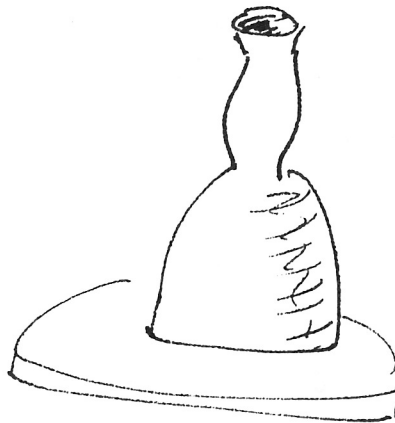
ribbon of clay draped over top. Bottle cut off The wheel



## Making a teapot

Spout - is thrown off the hump - in about 30 seconds.

-- is lifted off and laid on a sponge



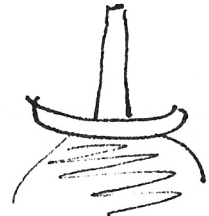
Lid - thrown



finger in thrown knob



pulling the knob



and attached to rim of lid



knob folded over



nip formed  
with thumb



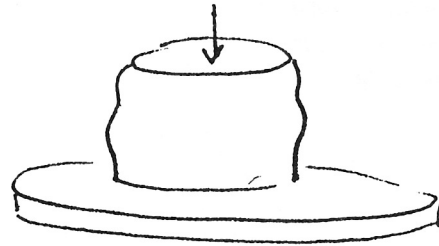
Handle - thrown and cut off hump



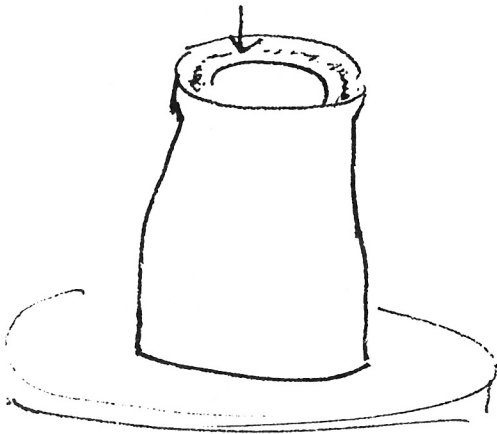
# Teapot

The hump is thrown :-

firm the base

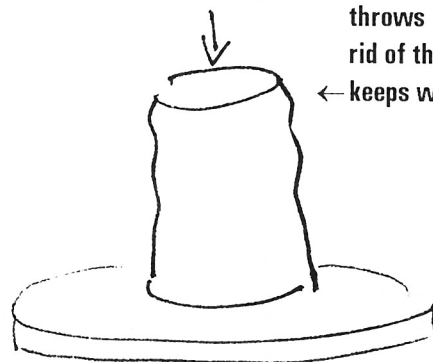


Makes gallery by splitting the rim :-  
uses thumb inside rim to push clay down

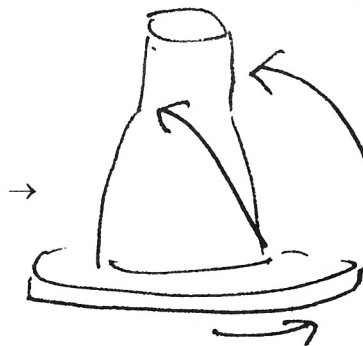


Keep the top narrow

throws ↑ & ↓ to get  
rid of thin patches &  
← keeps walls uniform



Facets the sides using small hoop  
as wheel turns slowly. Holds hoop  
in right hand and uses quick  
motion from down right to rim.



cutting motion  
creates an arc

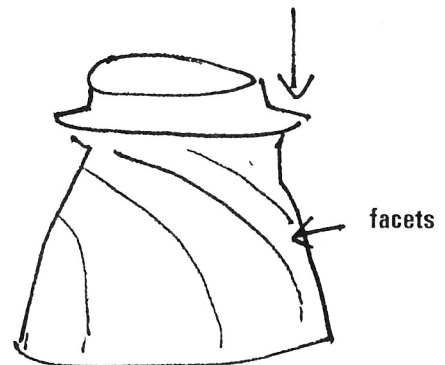
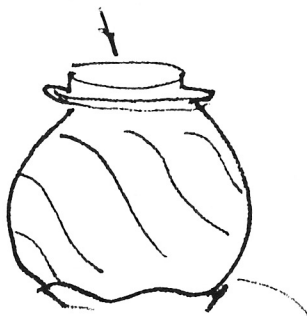
wheel turning very slowly

Throws rim down on outside

Using throwing stick and sometimes  
a finger throws the pot from the  
inside only.

And turns  
up the base  
with rib.

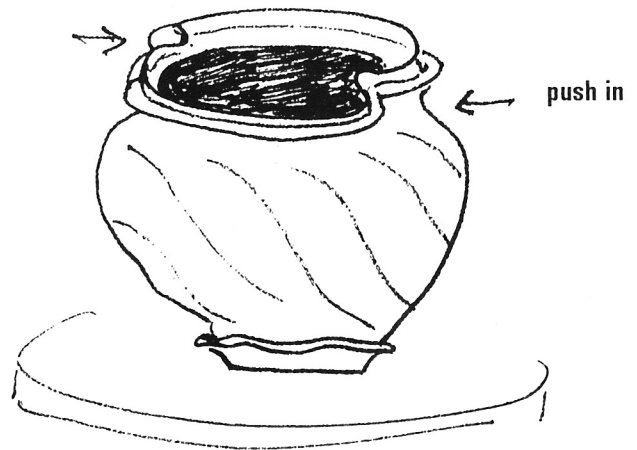
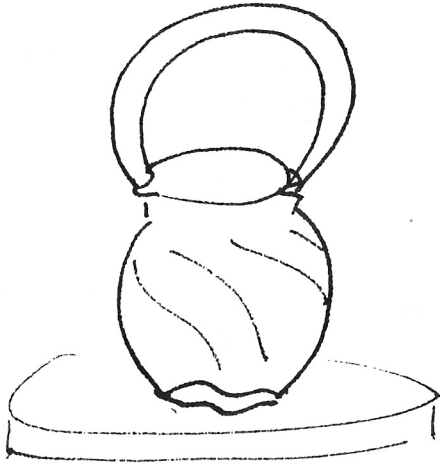
→





## Teapot (continued)

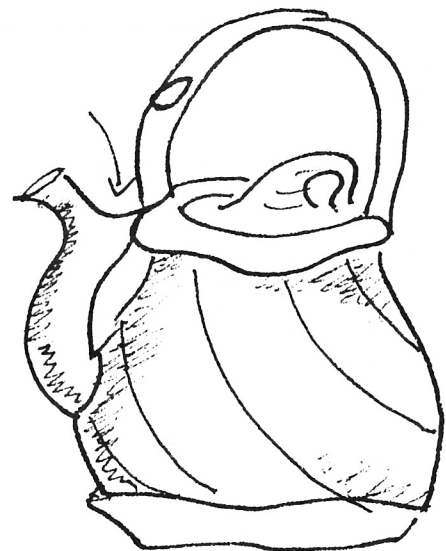
Pushes in the rim on opposite sides → attachment points for spout and handles



Handle attached to one side, pulled a few times and attached to other side. Impresses the joins with a shell

Attaches spout (just pushed on). Using a Victorian rug hook with a long handle as a boring tool, Ruthanne pushes it down the spout to make 7 holes in the pot. Leaves fettling till dry, then the bits are easily brushed off with nylon pan scrubber. Thins off the spout, widening the bell, then folds it over narrow spout and bridge. Removes excess clay from the spout. Adds a knob of clay to the handle.

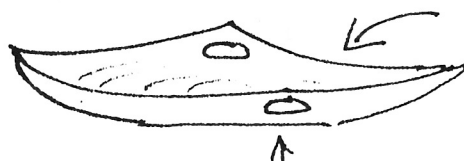
Spout folded to make bridge



"feet" made by placing the pot on wooden dowels on the work bench

## Throwing a square dish

Pat a pad of clay into a square shape 5-6" and approx. 1" thick. Place it on the wheel and throw into a shallow bowl.



Make holes in the opposite edges for handles

## NEW FINLANDIA GALLERY

Raising the level of awareness and the availability of ceramics and glass in the area is one of the issues I wish to address through the gallery. Other areas I will cover are children's art and hosting part one of the Bucks. college ceramics and glass degree assessment in February.

The gallery is for all – a warm and welcoming environment, a location where people will not feel intimidated by a complete blanket of white display and highbrow attitudes.

I would also be interested in hosting an exhibition of the fine works produced by the guild members, if this proposal is supported please make contact. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, I realise that the gallery can only survive with the support and interest of the area community, so come and visit, tell your friends, come and have a chat with me.

Ian Williams

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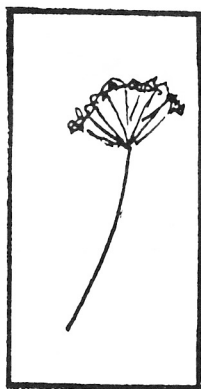
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2/3	Throwing lidded pots with porcelain	<i>Anne K R Marshall</i>
16/17	Sculpture and Drawing - Hands and Feet	<i>Jo Miller</i>
23/24	Mouldmaking and Slipcasting	<i>David Cowley</i>

### March

2/3	Improve Your Throwing Skills	<i>Paula Gray</i>
2/3	Water-based Silk Screen Printing	<i>Douglas Anderson</i>
9/10	Sculpture :Life Modelling in Plaster	<i>Julian Cooksey</i>
16/17	From Drawing to Fine Art Textiles	<i>Linda Austin</i>
16/17	Communicating with Photographs	<i>Carol Hudson</i>

### April

20/21	Ceramics : Glazing	<i>Brian Usher</i>
27/28	Ceramics : Contemporary Decoration	<i>Paula Gray</i>

### May

18/19	Ceramics : General Throwing	<i>Beryl Sedgwick</i>
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