

DACORUM AND CHILTERN POTTERS GUILD



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ANNE KARI RAMBERG MARSHALL EVENING

WALTER MOORCROFT – OBITUARY

SARA ROBERTSON DEMONSTRATION

LISA HAMMOND VISIT

GUILD GARDEN PARTY



NEWSLETTER
WINTER 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.

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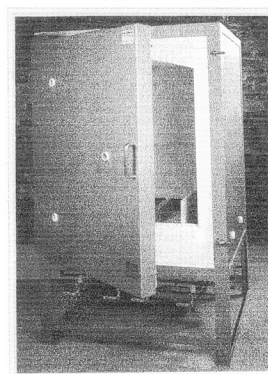
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Front Cover Photograph

Dish entitled "Dilemma of the Girl in the Moon" by Sara Robertson. *Photograph by Anita Cheasty*

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EDITORIAL

With our AGM taking place this evening, I have just been putting together my "Chairman's report". One thing that continues to arise is the fact that the committee work very hard to arrange events and activities, yet these are sometimes not well attended. We usually find that we have to phone around to get support for some things.

I know that some people are keen on workshops, but we rarely meet the number of attendees to make them economic. Pitstone is a great opportunity, but the organisers of the museum do not put our activity into their leaflet, since "we are never sure that anyone will turn up". Are we missing something, if so what? Perhaps you would write in and express your views

Mervyn Fitzwilliam

GUILD EVENTS

Guild meetings are usually held at Kings Langley Methodist Church Hall

Friday Dec.6th at 8 p.m. JO CONNELL

Jo specialises in the use of coloured clays assembled into slabs and press moulded or wrapped into 3-dimensional forms. She will explain and demonstrate the making and using of press moulds, staining clays and working with them in her individual style – marbling and laminating patterns, colours and textures.

Friday Jan.10th '03 at 8 p.m. FRAN TRISTRAM

Fran set up the Lady Bay Pottery in Nottingham in '92 where she produces a standard range of single-fired domestic stoneware and also some individual sculptural forms which are wheel-thrown and later altered.

She organised the recent Open Studio event in the Lady Bay area involving 26 local artists working in a wide range of media. She is also the author of *Single Firing*

published by A & C Black. This meeting promised to be both informative and inspiring.

Friday Feb.14th'03 PAUL McALLISTER

An exciting young ceramicist, Paul McAllister's work is moving away from predominantly functional and traditional forms to more instinctive pieces, e.g. using found objects to explore the cultural and ritual aspects of teapots,

OTHER EVENTS

BUCKS POTTERY & SCULPTURE SOCIETY

Friday 1st Nov. at 8 pm at Chorley Wood Arts Centre

John Mathieson – Potter CPA Member

John is a full time potter and makes individual pieces on a slow kick wheel to produce stoneware and porcelain which are fired with ash glazes. John will be demonstrating his throwing and giving us an insight of his glaze techniques.

Friday 20th Dec. at 8 pm at Little Kingshill

Doug Jones – Potter plus mince pies & mulled wine

Local potter Doug will join us for this Christmas special. He will be demonstrating various hand-building techniques and the secret of a special slip. So come along, have mince pies, mulled wine and maybe pull a cracker! Doug will be doing a presentation and demonstrating his work.

POTS & PIECES – Oct.27 – Nov.9.

Exhibition of mixed crafts at the Cow Byre Gallery, Ruislip

Flame Paths – Oct.28 – Nov.15

Exhibition of wood fired stoneware (including Paul McAllister) at Loughborough University. Tel. 01509 228955

6TH SOUTHERN POTTERY & CERAMICS SHOW –

16-17Nov.10a.m-5p.m. The Maltings, Farnham Surrey

EXHIBITION OF VIETNAMESE CERAMICS from the Hoi An shipwreck. At the British Museum until 1st Dec.

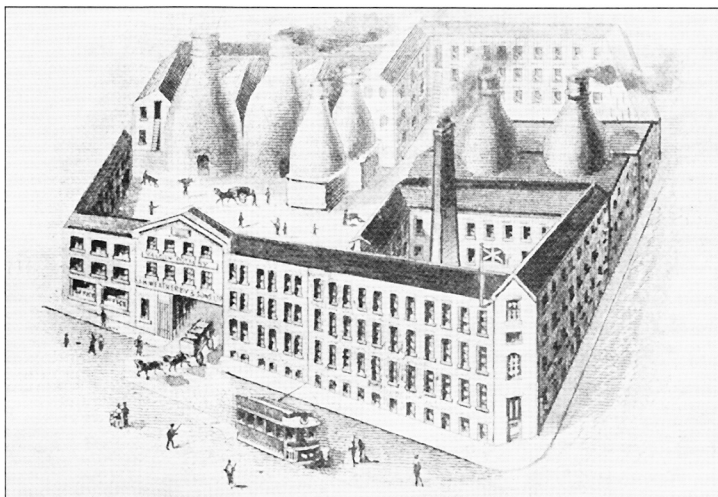
MEMBERSHIP NEWS

In a sudden change of direction, Ian Williams has sold up and is moving to the Isle of Skye. Ian has been a member of the Guild for about a year and ran the Finlandia Gallery at Gerrards Cross for a while. He is now planning to continue developing his pottery and also his paintings

New members: David Thorne of Newbury has joined us. David is an entrepreneur having a strong interest in terracotta, with a particular liking for slabbing techniques. Anthony Witton of St.Albans is interested in Tudor, Mediæval and Stuart pottery as well as the various techniques of throwing.

Mervyn Fitzwilliam

A VISIT TO STOKE – 7th September 2002



A few weeks ago when Murray and I visited our friends Chris and Johnathan Weatherby in Alsagar, they asked if we would like to see the Weatherby pottery before it was sold and converted into flats. The pottery was started in 1891 by Chris Weatherby's great-grandfather and has been a family business for 100 years. Two years ago the pottery closed down. Like so many other family businesses in Stoke, it became impossible to compete with imported ware undercutting the British makers relentlessly. We were completely overwhelmed and saddened that so much seemed suddenly to have come to an end.

Since closure, the pottery has been empty, the two hundred employees gone to find other work. For a hundred years it has been the centre of thriving activity and developing skills. It had a capacity to meet the demands of the market, and the firm's own high standards, which claimed with confidence that the Weatherby ware was guaranteed not to craze, lived up to its back stamp "DURABILITY". Now the great building stands empty overlooking Hanley, waiting for its change in direction.

When Chris mentioned that equipment throughout the pottery would probably end up in a skip, it seemed a pity that so much that could be useful to studio potters should be thrown away and, hoping for a good solution, we put Chris in touch with Mervyn. As a result Chris and his brother Johnathan very kindly agreed to meet members of the Guild who were interested, show them around the pottery and sell any equipment they might want to buy.

We all met outside the gates and set off in two organised parties through the slip house, past the filter press, still with clay in the filter cloths. Past neat rolls of clay fresh from the pugmill, past the blungers. Deep under the floor were arks still full of slip as it had been left two years ago. Past the ball mill and bags of frit and the frit kiln – obsolete since about 1930. The chimney, now demolished, rose way above the factory building and the

six bottle kilns that used to be there (now only one remains).

The machinery is huge, and Chris explained that the whole factory depended on the quality of the work in the slip house, so much so that only a member of the family was allowed to carry out certain procedures and calculations in mixing bodies and slips. Once through the slip house, we went into the main factory building. It looked quite simple on the outside, but inside was a maze of rooms, steep stairs and large equipment. Higher up the building, piles of ware, biscuit going back over years, some the original shapes when the pottery first started. Huge rooms full of bays where ware had been stacked and broken pottery everywhere.

The trolley kilns were stacked and ready to fire, all around were boxes of kiln furniture, shelves, props, boards, banding wheels, moulds and transfers. Quite soon the organised parties seemed to disintegrate and people started to decide what would be useful to buy. It was difficult! Pottery equipment is very heavy. The factory was so big and easy to get lost in, and all the time the reminders of the workers who had spent their working lives here and made little spaces their own. Their pin-ups on a door, little collections of personal tools, an apron and a pair of shoes. We could imagine them filling this vast space on a busy day.

Members of the Guild collected a great variety of equipment and gradually assembled in the yard. The bottle kiln dominated this area and has a muffle kiln alongside for glazed ware and so far has escaped the vandals that are a constant worry in such a large unused building. Hoping that everyone was out, Chris began to lock up and settle up with individuals.

Looking back at the pottery, now showing signs of dereliction and vandalism – every window along the front has been broken – one wonders what new life it will take on, and mixed with this, a feeling of regret for the passing into history of so much.

Dorley Fieldhouse

GUILD GARDEN PARTY

Mervyn and Sylvia Fitzwilliam very kindly invited all members of the Guild and other members of their families to the garden party which was held in their garden in Felden on Sunday 1st September.

It had been a rather overcast morning with some rather dark clouds around, but good fortune shone on us for the party, and we enjoyed a fine sunny afternoon.

Mervyn and Sylvia have a large and attractive garden and in one part of it party-goers could test their skills to see how far they could fly one of a series of model aeroplanes. Near the end of the afternoon, and just before he went home, John Powell was awarded the official prize for flying his aircraft further than anyone else. After John had left, however, Linda Bryant tried her hand in the contest and with great skill managed to fly her aeroplane some seven or eight feet further than John Powell. Her achievement could not go unrecognised and she was therefore awarded a supplementary prize. Those who wanted could play croquet in another part of the garden.

Members had brought their own bottles and, as a result, there was a wide variety of alcoholic and non-alcoholic drinks available. Our hosts had prepared an excellent selection of savoury dishes including a variety of salads, baked potatoes, quiches, cheeses and many other delicacies. Participants had brought a wide variety of desserts and we were invited to come back for further helpings from an attractive array of different dishes. A well-chosen selection of music was played during the afternoon.



L to R: Murray, Digby, Pauline, Jan, Dorley & Arthur
Photograph by Dorothy Stott

In the house, our hosts had set out a Treasure Hunt on a Treasure Island, so that we could register our guess as to where the treasure was buried. Marguerite Moon successfully staked her claim on the location of the treasure and won her prize, a pile of edible gold coins.

In another room, there were forty or so pieces of pottery laid out on a table with the names of the makers or the makers' stamps on the ware, carefully covered. Many of us recognised the style of a maker but couldn't remember the maker's name. Congratulations to Dorley Fieldhouse who won the prize for the member who correctly identified the largest number of potters whose work was on display.

The Garden Party was a pleasant social event on a nice summer afternoon, with congenial company in pleasant surroundings. The crowd of those who came to the party thoroughly enjoyed the afternoon, and we hope that even more members will join us on similar occasions in the future.

John Beckley

Pitstone September 2002

Our final Open Day of 2002 saw good weather and plenty of visitors, in the afternoon we had a reasonably good trade in have-a-go youngsters and sold quite a few of the pots donated by members. Paul Tierney came along for a refresher in Raku techniques and fired a few pieces. Tina tried firing some pieces she had acquired from the Weatherby's sale, but they were a mixed success. They seemed to have been high fired, so they didn't take a good layer of glaze and also they were quite delicate, so some of them cracked.

We are running low on biscuited pots to glaze in the have-a-go, so any donations would be gratefully received. The donated glazed pots for sale are going well, raising funds for the Museum and the Guild, so again, any donations will be welcomed.

Over the winter we would like to make a start on tidying up the site, removing the old bricks and wheel and, if possible, we would like to level the ground and put down paving slabs. The Museum have said they may be able to donate slabs, if we can provide the labour to do the levelling and laying, so any volunteers, please contact me. (*see committee list on page 1 for address & tel.no.*)

Jan Kent

SARA ROBERTSON DEMONSTRATION

English decorative slipware with a strong narrative element



Sara has exhibited widely and her work can be found in many prestigious galleries – V&A, Crafts Council, Contemporary Ceramics, - to name a few. She has also received two awards from Chelsea Craft Fair, been featured in magazines and has demonstrated at the V&A the British Museum as well as universities, colleges and schools.

Sara's dish and plate forms are very striking, nostalgic and thoughtful. These young ladies with their bobs, fringes and sad eyes are often lost in contemplating the right decision. The many drawing lines cause us to look and look again pondering the cause of the sadness.

However when Sara came to visit us on that Friday night she was bubbly and cheerful, willing to explain and show her passage from art to ceramics. Sara trained in Fine Art at Goldsmiths' – she developed skills in printmaking and made many large painted hand built forms, which were very time consuming but very collectable in this and other countries. A chance encounter with a friend propelled her on to an M.A. in ceramics and glass at the Royal College of Art. This enabled her to explore many different techniques and further develop her own skills and ideas. The death of Sara's mother caused her to reflect on her childhood and this became part of the progression that is seen in her current work. Sara works in London in a historic 'Dickensian' part of Elephant and Castle.

Sara likes traditional pots and now makes decorated wall dishes by hand. Her equipment includes a slab roller

and extruder. Sara uses 'S' material – cheaper than 'T' material & fires in an electrical kiln with a computerised timer – biscuit firing to 1100°C, glaze to 1060°C with a clear Pottery craft standard lead glaze.

Sara loves drawing and has many sketchbooks. We had the privilege of seeing these, which were fascinating, full of pen and ink and pastel drawings. The sketchbooks formed a library of ideas which overflow on to her dishes.

Sarah uses newspaper as a medium on which to paint her clay slips (these are made by adding oxides, underglaze colours or body stains to a white slip – 50% white ball clay Hyplas from Pottery craft and 50% china clay (Harrow slip recipe). Normally a white background is produced by applying 2 or 3 layers of white slip with a hake brush so the printing on the newspaper cannot be seen. Depending on design, many layers of coloured slip may be added. She then inscribes her designs into the slip and then covers with more slip, often black. The result when transferred to a plate is in reverse and can resemble etchings. More images may be added like a collage. The necessary mirror writing adds charm to the plate. Larger plates can take 8 hours to make. To convert the slab to a plate, the slab is draped over a hump mould and then eased into a press mould, therefore reducing possible damage to the design.

Influences include work by American ceramicists, cutout dolls, Goya etchings, Charlotte Farnaman, English slipware, Liechtenstein and surrealism.

Sara demonstrated some of her techniques; everyone was fascinated and hopefully this will be followed by a workshop.

A smallish piece of newspaper was placed on a plaster bat and then 2 or 3 coats of white slip were applied until the print could not be seen. With a needle, a design was inscribed through the white slip and then a coat of black slip was added. (When reversed this would be a black design on a white background). As the black slip became satin-like, Sara carefully used a rolling-pin to lift newspaper/slip over to a large dish shape and carefully placed it in position so the newspaper was face up. The newspaper was gently rolled so that the slip adhered to the plate and then, very gently with a needle, the newspaper was removed with the now firm slip.

The above technique can be used with different colours and shapes can also be cut out of the slip layers. Sara suggests probably not more than 5 layers. The collage effects that can be achieved are endless. Anaglypta paper can be used as a stencil or pressed in to produce a texture, netting can be used, etc. etc.
[see diagrams on this page]

Useful comments included:

Use wet and dry sandpaper at biscuit stage to get some interesting effects as some of the slip layers can be rubbed off

Use tissue to absorb excess slurry

Place plate on bubblewrap – limits damage to rim

Hairdryer useful to speed up drying

Use of Duncan velvet underglazes and concept-transparent colour

Use of biscuit slips at greenware

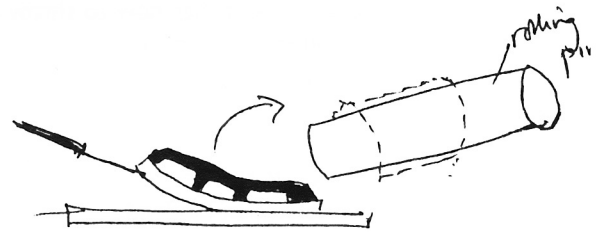
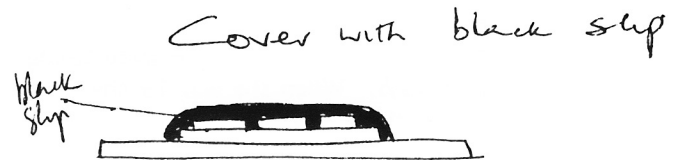
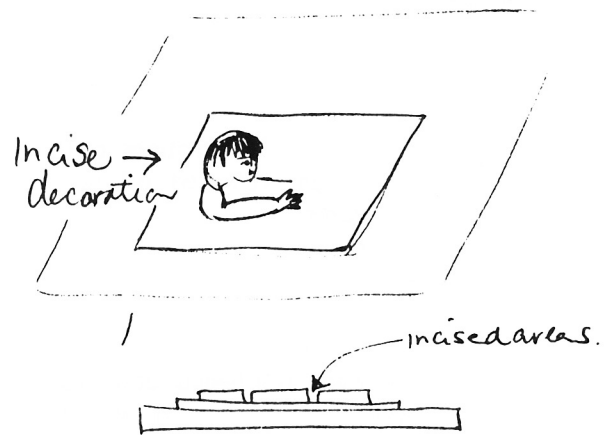
Use red before white slip

Can use fabric to transfer slip

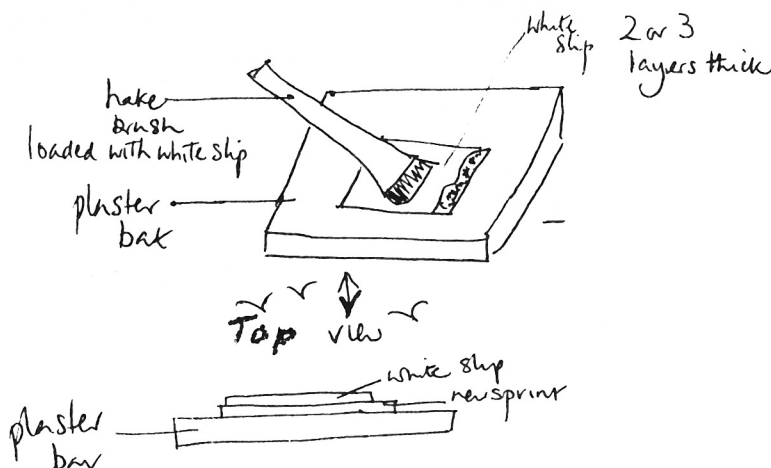
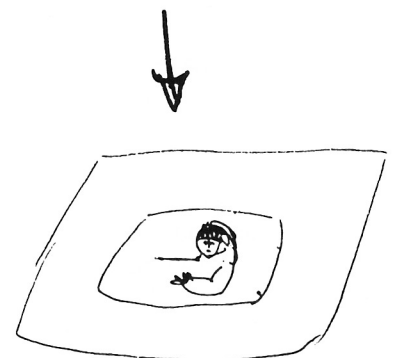
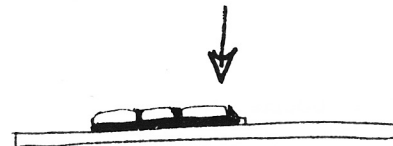
Thin layer of lead transparent glaze – good colour response.

This was a very interesting and exciting evening and a great deal of interest was generated. Thank you Sara.

Anita Cheasty



Place onto clay slab
black side down



ANNE KARI RAMBERG MARSHALL

Anne Kari began her talk by treating us to a short sound and light show of stunning photographs taken around the Norwegian coast. There were fishing boats against a deep blue sky, smooth round rock formations casting sharp curvaceous shadows, light reflected off water, misty sunsets, patterns, textures, the human figure and snow. All this was accompanied by a violin solo (Garbarek's 'Peace') which spoke of a restless spirit searching with increasing urgency through the various themes presented rather than the resolution craved for. Then Anne told us her story and as it begins rather like a fairy tale. This is the way I will tell it. Let us call it "How Anne found her Voice".

Once upon a time, not so long ago, there lived in Norway a pretty little girl called Anne Kari. She had rosy cheeks and masses of fair curls and she loved telling stories and acting in plays. When she was 19 she went to drama school and there she found a secret place where she could go when she needed a break. It was a pottery studio that nobody used any more where there was clay and a wheel and a kiln. She loved the place and soon found a friend to teach her how to throw pots. Then she went to art college to learn more but was only allowed to work with clay one day a week, so she took some home to practice in her room, which rather upset her mother. Her college tutor advised her that there was only one place to go if she really wanted to study throwing and that was Harrow in England.

Anne's three years in Harrow were wonderful but also confusing. She learned to question everything, so life became very difficult. She felt very frustrated because she was not sure where throwing would take her. She was trying so hard to 'find her voice'. As a form of relief she began to develop a series of figures which were slightly abstract but full of emotion and tenderness. She just wanted to make beautiful pots but nothing she made seemed either original or lovely. Then she was advised to try porcelain and something special happened. The clay was smooth as double cream and preserved all marks beautifully. When glazed and fired it looked like snow. She was hooked. Working with porcelain awakened the memories of skiing on new snow. She had found her voice at last.

Anne Kari now makes porcelain domestic ware that is both elegant and practical. It is mostly glazed with a soft satin white on the outside and with a shiny near-white glaze such as a celadon on the inside. So, like snow, there are many different shades of white on the inside. The vase, mug and jug forms are generally tall and slender and the small bowls sit well in the hand. Most have a gentle spiral within the wall that emphasises the smooth rounded forms. Recently she has developed a raindrop motif that you may find inside or underneath a piece.

The figures are quite different, being made of stoneware paper clay. These are painted with porcelain slip to help develop and emphasise the texture. In the making, they are supported by metal modelling rods stuck into polystyrene. Drinking straws are slipped over the rods and these are left to fire away when the rods are removed.

The demonstration

Anne Kari uses Limoges special porcelain which she softens by soaking it down. She fires to 1290°C for the glaze firing. She makes in batches of 12.

Throwing cylindrical forms in porcelain

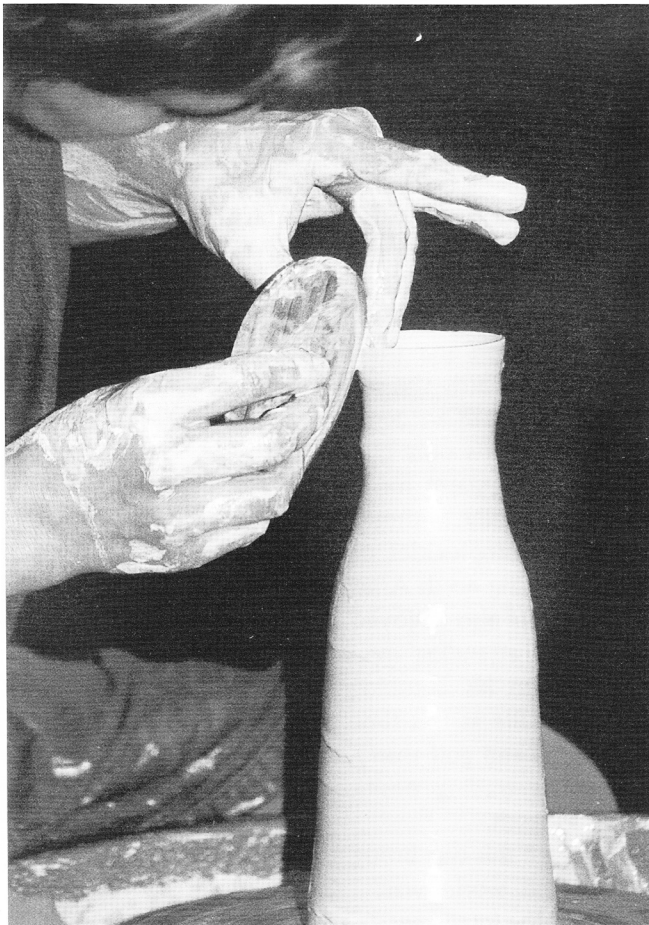
1. Take your time
2. Open up making the internal diameter that of the finished pot



3. Lift several times. As the clay comes up from the outside, the walls thin rapidly. Keep the throwing rings fine. Use delicate fingertips.



4. When tall enough, rib off the outside to remove the throwing rings.



5. Finish off the basic shape with the rib on the outside and a hooked throwing stick inside
6. To make the deep spiral use a wooden rib on the outside. Hold it vertically and pull it slowly up the pot with the wheel turning slowly. When the rib is about half-way up, turn it a little and push it in slightly while using the left hand fingers on the inside to push out the form just above the rib.
7. Wire off and lift the pot off with dry hands cupped carefully around the base.

Turning

When the pots are ready, she places them on a damp towel to allow the bases to soften up a bit. A.K's pots are finely thrown and there is only a little spare clay to remove apart from that required for her shallow footings and rounded bases. Nevertheless she is always careful to match the base with the rest of the pot.

Making the 'falling raindrop' pattern

A small amount of porcelain slip is scooped up with a rubber kidney and swirled onto the base of a pot as the wheel turns slowly. This creates a soft curl.

Fettling

At this point she must fettle the rim and repair the damage caused by turning without a chuck. She uses a damp sponge and may actually work the rim, perhaps widening it a little.

Handles

Handles are pulled out and a "D" section is formed when the clay is still a little thick. Then 2 or 3 further pulls will get it right. The handles are stuck on the edge of a table. When all are done they are cut off with a wet metal kidney, placed on a damp towel, measured and cut to the same length. Each is bent to the required shape and the ends are pressed down onto the towel to flatten them. The pot (a mug in this case) is quickly scored at the two points of attachment using the edge of a serrated metal kidney and a good dollop of slip is applied at each point. The handles don't need scoring because of the texture left by the towel. They are carefully placed on the mug, firmed on, and the excess slip is wiped off.

Thrown bowl

A wide shallow bowl was made with straight, vertical walls.

1. A pad of clay was thrown to the correct diameter.
2. Opening up produced a relatively thick base. (A good foot ring will be required to enable the pot to shrink in the firing without the base cracking).

3. Work the base several times with the flat part of the finger pads, then rib it over to compress further.



4. Lift and cone in to keep control.
5. Continue lifting and gradually opening out.
6. To create a spiral in this wide form is tricky. Lubrication is required, but not too much or the thin walls will collapse.
7. Add slip to the centre to make the raindrop mark, as before.

Glazing

A.K. mixes her own (see earlier notes). The inside is glazed first by pouring. The pots are left to dry for about three hours before the outside is done. Being so thin, they would not otherwise be able to take up enough glaze.

Ros McGuirk

[Photographs by David Dennis]

OBITUARY

WALTER MOORCROFT Master potter who combined design and management skills

(Feb.12th 1917 – Sept.2nd 2002)

Published originally in The Guardian and reprinted here with their permission

Walter Moorcroft, who has died aged 85, enjoyed his status as the grand old man of the pottery industry. He was probably the last master potter in Britain, in the true meaning of the term – an artist and designer who could make pots, prepare glazes, fire a bottle oven, manage a factory, train paintresses, be his own sales manager, and look after the finances. The presence of pots, decorated with his designs, in museums and collections around the world is an enduring memorial to a man whose design philosophy was linked directly to the arts and craft movement.

Moorcroft was born into the pottery business. His father, William, had established the family firm in 1913 at Cobridge, near Burslem in the heart of the Potteries with financial help from the London store, Liberty's. His mother, Florence, was a factory inspector by profession, and a powerful figure.

He was educated at a preparatory school in Buxton, Derbyshire and at Rugby where he interspersed an interest in modern languages with plenty of sport, notably swimming, tennis and golf. Indeed, two lifelong passions, golf and crossword puzzles – he completed the Daily Telegraph crossword every day – were legacies of the Rugby years. In 1935, he declined a university place at Cambridge in favour of joining the family business, a decision prompted by the poor state of his father's health and finances.

William Moorcroft had developed a pottery style based on designs, hand-drawn in raised slip and hand-painted in colours, that captured the essence of both the arts and crafts movement and art nouveau. While the 1920s had been a decade of great success, culminating in his firm's appointment as potter to Queen Mary, the 1930s had seen a decline prompted by the global recession and the shift in taste from colour and ornament towards the modernist styles, pale tones and industrial ethic of art deco.

Walter's only qualifications for his new position were an enthusiasm for drawing and design. However, working initially without a salary, he learned quickly about the complexities of the business, from firing a kiln to entertaining north American representatives.

He also enjoyed himself playing sport, going skiing and attending innumerable dances – indeed, as described in his autobiography *Memories of Life and Living*, his life at this time seems to be have been more about girls and golf than glazes. Gradually however, the company's trading position improved and with it his father's health.

All this was brought to a halt by the outbreak of the second world war. Called up in 1943, Walter served in the intelligence corps, was posted to France 15

days after D-Day and was interrogating former Nazis in Germany in September 1945 when his father suffered a stroke and died. Walter found himself in charge of a pottery almost on its last legs.

Initially relying on his father's designs, and aware of the country's desperate need for exports, he gradually brought the pottery back to life. While retaining the traditional Moorcroft handcraft production techniques, he began to introduce his own designs. While his father had relied largely on native plants for inspiration, Walter took a more exotic route. Lilies, hibiscus and bougainvillea were soon decorating the pots, their bright colours heightened by Walter's revival of his father's famous flambé firing process. As a result, the pottery enjoyed several decades of prosperity during a period when many smaller family businesses closed.

From 1959, Walter was joined by his younger brother John, thus ensuring family continuity. The Moorcroft pottery was almost alone in maintaining traditional handcraft techniques to ensure the survival of the individually made pot in the commercial ceramic industry.

Almost as a result of this, the antique world began to appreciate the qualities of Moorcroft pottery. At first, the enthusiasm of collectors was directed towards William Moorcroft, but soon Walter's designs were also drawn into the net. Interest was encouraged by a major exhibition at the Victoria and Albert Museum in 1972 and other exhibitions and books followed.

Ironically, as Walter's fame spread, the pottery faced the recession of the early 1980s and in the mid-1980s passed out of the family control. Nonetheless, Walter remained at the helm as design director until his retirement in 1987; his influence was invaluable to the next generation of Moorcroft designers.

I first met him in 1967. At that time the Moorcroft name had been largely forgotten and there was a widespread belief that the pottery had closed. My visit was memorable for the courtesy extended to me by Walter and his employees, and for the unforgettable sight of piles of wonderful pots of all periods piled under every table and stacked high in every corner of the untidy and decrepit building. Amid apparent chaos, production was somehow maintained. Entertaining, outspoken and a great raconteur, Walter succeeded by force of personality, individuality and sheer ability.

His first wife Molly died in 1958. He is survived by his second wife Liz and his four daughters.

Paul Atterbury

BOOK REVIEW

Pioneer Pottery - Michael Cardew. A ceramic classic published by A & C Black hardback £30

Michael Cardew, a great potter and teacher, is generally considered one of the founder members of the studio pottery movement. Taught by the young Bernard Leach, he revived traditional English slipware and worked for a long period in Ghana.

This book is a distillation of the knowledge gained by the experience of many years of running potteries in both England and Africa. It was first published 33 years ago and the new edition is pretty much a reprint with some useful additions, including lots of good colour photographs.

The text is substantial and far more verbose than that found in modern pottery manuals, yet it is very clear and explanatory, and that is its strength and delight. Cardew writes as a scholarly old master whether he is exploring the finer points of geology, glazes or making pots. Don't be put off, for he writes very well and with the non-specialist in mind. I particularly enjoyed the chapter on geology – a subject I once loved but haven't thought about in years – and his explanations of glaze chemistry are superb (and very useful).

Towards the end of the book, in the section on costing and pricing, he becomes philosophical and rather quaint, but his advice that the potter has to create his own market is probably more relevant today than ever. This leads on to the last chapter which develops into a long and fascinating polemic on the philosophy of potting in the twentieth century. Then it is back to more practical matters in the appendices which form a hefty section at the back of the book, ranging from clay testing to brick making and ball mills.

All in all, this is a book packed with useful information and advice which is still applicable today. It is a book to dip into and treasure and would make a most useful gift for someone special.

Ros McGuirk

LISA HAMMOND VISIT during the evening of Friday 13th September

Lisa Hammond's present studio, Maze Hill Pottery, is a converted railway station ticket office in Greenwich, London. Her work is primarily functional for the preparation, cooking, serving and eating of food and is soda-glazed.

Lisa has always been fascinated by pots and was a student at Medway College in 1975-1978 where on a kiln building course she built an oil-fired salt kiln with Ian Gregory – this proved to be the start of an exciting and satisfying relationship with gas, salt and soda.

When Lisa left college she immediately converted an old shop into a pottery and set about building and using a 30 cu ft gas-fired salt kiln. Shortly after a visit by two fire engines and twelve firemen who wished to put out the fire in the kiln and a realisation that perhaps soda firings might be better for the environment Lisa gradually, with help from friends and students, successfully moved over to soda firings. By the time Lisa moved to Maze Hill she built, with the help of a good friend from Goldsmiths' a 90 cu ft trolley kiln which she fires about 12 times a year.

During Lisa's 20 years in pottery she has managed to lecture at Goldsmiths' for 13 years, go to Australia and experience wood-fired salt glazed ware, buy and sell kiln bricks, take apprentices from college, run classes, bring up 2 children, a dog and 4 cats. This takes considerable stamina and organisational skills. Lisa also sells to 20 or 30 galleries – no sale or return.

On the technical side – Lisa uses a mixture of 3 commercially made clays, which she wedges together with 10% buff sand. The pale orange slips used are mainly 50% ball clay and 50% china clay. The Shino slip glaze which gives a blue-black colour is AT ball clay 33%, Nepheline syenite 33% and Soda feldspar 33%.

The slip glaze is put on first and then a solution of black stain – 1 tsp and blue - ½ tsp in 1 pint water is sprayed over Shino glaze, hence the resulting blue colour after firing.

7 kilograms of sodium bicarbonate are put in a tea urn and heated to boiling. When the correct temperature has been reached, the boiling soda solution is sprayed into the kiln, not onto pots, using garden sprayers and this can take 3 hours. Lisa never has trouble getting the kiln up to temperature, but as the gas burners and gas supply were installed by someone who had dealings with burners in crematoriums, this will probably come as no surprise. Finally the pots are soaked for 2 hours at 1320°C. The kiln is left to cool for two days. Lisa pointed out that she likes simple unfussy pots that look strong and functional. It is useful to remember that they are raw glazed.

Lisa demonstrated how to make a jug form and an oval casserole. We then ran out of time. It was an excellent evening with a very talented potter who was more than willing to answer questions and whose work was of a very high standard.

Anita Cheasty

NOTEBOOK

POTTERS OPEN DAY

The POD is on 16th November, but as we go to press the number of applications for tickets is quite low.

This event is a highlight for the Guild, ***SO, COME ON NOW, IT IS TIME TO BUY THOSE TICKETS.***

This year, since there are no catering fees, the ticket price is lower than previously, and it is O.K. to bring a bottle of wine or whatever to go with your lunch (you must remember to remove the bottles at the end of the day to comply with school regulations). Joy Wills has volunteered to serve the traditional hot toddy for everyone as they arrive on the day and we are all set for an excellent event, so why not bring your friends!

PROGRAMME CHANGES

Fran Tristram was unable to be with us on 13th September owing to a family bereavement, as most of you will know. Fortunately, Lisa Hammond was able to give her slide show and demonstration on that evening at very short notice. Fran Tristram will be with us on 10th January 2003, effectively having swapped dates with Lisa Hammond. It was a committee decision to tell members about that change by phone, so most people were contacted by committee members to explain the situation. The decision to take that action has now been reviewed, and in future if a last minute programme change is necessary, we will probably not phone everyone, since it is very time consuming and costly. If members want to check that the programme has not been changed, they can always phone Ros McGuirk for details before coming to the meeting.

POT CRAWL: VISIT TO FALCON POTTERY

Our visit to Falcon Pottery with Chris and Johnathan Weatherby as our guides was an experience of mixed emotions, as Dorley discloses in her article. Personally, I found the scale of the place very extensive and also exhausting (having driven up very early in the day for a meeting with another company). The overall feeling that I had, seeing such a vast factory with so many tangible ghosts nearby, was one of great sadness. The loss of so much gave me a feeling that "we" should somehow have done something that would have saved it from the loss and dereliction that was all so obvious. However, Chris Weatherby was a delight, with amusing stories of past years and details of early employment history at the pottery. His cheerful nature and knowledge raised my spirits.

Sylvia and I went on to the pottery museum nearby, which we both found interesting, with a very well presented display giving a historical perspective on local and other pottery. In addition the museum has a W.W.II Spitfire, since Reginald Mitchell, the designer, was born locally.

Editor

THE STAN ROMER COMPETITION - Oct. 11th

We had a very full evening last Friday, There were the competition entries to be received, numbered and displayed, the business of the AGM to be carried out and also a most enjoyable demonstration and slide show by Chris Bramble. In addition he was the judge of the competition and took a lot of trouble over it, showing great interest in each individual entry and giving us his reasons for choosing the winners.

There were 12 pieces submitted and they showed very varied interpretations of the set subject, "The Human Form", as well as considerable differences of scale and style. The entrants were:

John Beckley	Jane Kilvington
Vivienne Rodwell Davies	Marguerite Moon
Mervyn Fitzwilliam	Lip Ong
Susan Fonge	Geoff Parr
Tina Hall	Ruby Sharp
Kirsteen Holuj	Joy Wills

The winners were:

Ruby Sharp	1 st prize ----- £75
Lip Ong	2 nd prize ----- £30
John Beckley	3 rd prize ----- £20

Stan Romer's son John and his wife Caroline were there as on previous occasions to present the cheques. We owe them a debt of gratitude for funding the competition and creating such an additional interest for the benefit of Guild members.

John also presented Ruby with the original winning piece (made by Jane Kilvington) to keep for one year before passing it on to the next winner.

It was a very lively and enjoyable evening with which to start off our Autumn programme.

Ruth Karnac

Membership

Membership renewal was due on 1st October. An application for renewal details was combined with the application for POD tickets, and was in the previous issue of the Newsletter.

ERRATUM

Please note that in the article on Moorcroft in the previous issue of the Newsletter, it was stated that the factory was at COLERIDGE, which should have been COBRIDGE.

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