



DACORUM AND CHILTERN POTTERS GUILD



IN THIS ISSUE -

Demonstrations by:

CAROLINE WHYMAN

MARCIO MATTOS

SARA ROBERTSON WORKSHOP

TO CHINA WITH THE FITZWILLIAMS

ABERYSTWYTH 2003



NEWSLETTER
AUTUMN 2003
£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: Family £21.00

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Send your cheque, made payable to D.C.P.G., to Digby Stott, "Broomfield", 36 Box Lane, Boxmoor, Herts., HP3 0DJ tel: 01442 404122. (If joining after March, please phone for a reduced introductory rate).

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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Copy dates Publication dates

(latest receipt of material for typing)

6th January February

6th April May

6th July August

5th October November

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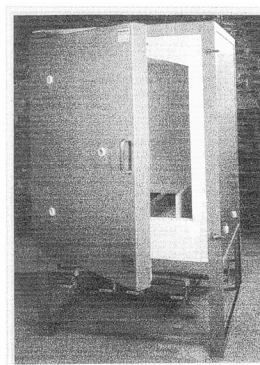
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FRONT COVER PHOTOGRAPH

Tureen in the form of a cockerel: Tail feather ladle, Ht.42 cm. Handbuilt earthenware with relief modelling and underglaze decoration by Anna Lambert

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EDITORIAL

All editors make mistakes sometimes. I was horrified to find my own name had been assigned to a company other than my own in the *Ceramic Review*, following an article in which I had been mentioned by Ruthanne Tudball (*Ceramic Review* issue 202 July/Aug '03). Emmanuel Cooper, the editor, has apologised to me profusely for the mistake and will publish an apology in the next issue of the *Ceramic Review*.

Talking of editorial mistakes, the Stan Romer Award application form sent out with the previous newsletter showed the date of the AGM as Friday 11th October. The date should, of course, have been Friday 10th October. If you want to enter the competition, you must complete an application form beforehand. Should you be unable to find your form please phone me and I will send you one.

Mervyn Fitzwilliam

GUILD EVENTS

Sept 20th & 21st ~ ~ ~ ~ POTCRAWL

For itinerary with maps and how to get to venues please see pages 5 to 8 of this issue.

Friday Oct.10th at 7.30 p.m. (PLEASE NOTE EARLIER TIME) ~ ~ A.G.M. & DEMONSTRATION BY ANNA LAMBERT WHO WILL ALSO JUDGE ENTRIES IN THE STAN ROMER COMPETITION at the Kings Langley Methodist Church Hall.

After graduating from Bath Academy of Arts in 1980, ANNA LAMBERT set up a workshop, first in Gloucestershire and since 1989 in Yorkshire. Her work is all handbuilt earthenware. Methods of coiling, pinching and relief modelling are used to slowly build a variety of domestic forms – candlesticks, egg cups, jugs and large celebratory

plates. These are painted with underglaze and lead or lead-free glazes and reflect in colour and form, land and seascape, the weather and seasons. Anna aims to combine function with evocative and observed images of country life to produce joyful individual pieces. Her work is sold and exhibited throughout Britain and in Europe and USA, or by commission.

Reminder: Entrants to the Stan Romer Competition must submit a completed application form, which was included with Summer '03 issue of the Newsletter, to arrive no later than October 1st

POTTERS OPEN DAY

8TH NOVEMBER 2003

Rudolf Steiner School

Kings Langley Herts

We listened to your comments

Changes have been made in this year's Open Day in response to the questionnaire completed at last year's event.

This year we will be having two demonstrators in place of the usual three. The two renowned potters at this year's event are

RUSSELL COLLINS who has a reputation both in the UK and worldwide for his classic shaped range of stoneware and will demonstrate making his big cider jugs. **STEVE HARRISON** who makes salt glazed faceted teapots and tea bowls in an unpredictable way.

So come along and find out more

Catering arrangements will be as before. Each guest will be responsible for organising their own lunch or sharing with friends. For those of you that would prefer a pub lunch, there will be an opportunity to do so. A copy of the menu will be published in the October issue of the Newsletter. Morning coffee and afternoon tea will be available, as usual.

We look forward to seeing you there on the day.

AN APPLICATION FORM IS ENCLOSED

OTHER EVENTS

BUCKS POTTERY & SCULPTURE SOCIETY

Wed. 17th Sept 8pm at Chorley Wood Arts Centre

JIM BASSET – POTTER: Traditional slipware, demonstration of slip decorating techniques on the wheel.

Fri. 24th Oct 8pm at Little Kingsmill

GINA MARTIN – SCULPTOR: Mixed media sculpture demo. Of wood construction and carving plus using willow

Aug.22-31: Kiln building workshop with Nic Collins, The Barn Pottery, Pound St. Moretonhampstead, Devon. Tel: 01647 441198

Until Aug.30: Summer show incl. Work by Mark Pedro de la Torre, Sotis Filippides. Nick Allen Shop, 27 Battersea Bridge Rd SW11 3BA. 020 7738 1313 www.nick-allen.co.uk

Sept.1-7: Brian Dewbury at Mall Galleries, The Mall, London SW1. 020 7930 6844 www.mallgalleries.org.uk

Until Sept.14:Treat Yourself – incl sculptures by Shelley Wilson The Science Museum, Exhibition Rd. London SW7 0870 870 4868

Sept.20: Jean Nicholas Gerard talk & walk – to coincide with the exhibition of Contemporary Ceramics. From 2pm at the Univ. of Westminster, Regent St. CPA MAAC event. Booking essential – contact Don Hudson 01297 444633

MEMBERS' EXHIBITION AT OLNEY – April 29th to June 1st '03

We had a good response from the membership when it was proposed that we hold an exhibition at a new venue, the New Studio at Olney. The gallery is about five years old and is becoming increasingly popular among makers and customers. It provides a fine space in a converted old barn in a pretty courtyard just off the market square. Olney, an attractive small town with many fine 18th century houses has developed into something of a honey pot for tourism, particularly of tours on the "Princess Di Trail". Despite the effects of "9/11", this trip still enjoys an American season in April-May and the gallery benefits from the custom this brings, especially for small desirable items.

This was the first exhibition I have had a hand in organising, and I welcomed the experience as there would be a lot to learn. It would also contribute to the diploma course*** I was on. In the event, it was far more enjoyable and rewarding than I'd thought likely.

On the way there were a few glitches and five members had to back out due to trips to Australia or delays in college firings, or whatever. That left us with 19 exhibitors offering over 150 pots and about 20 pictures.

Handling this lot was quite a challenge. Selection of pieces by paperwork and photos proved impossible. However, the team that arrived to help put up the exhibition was excellent. Between us we got most of the work out on show and it looked pretty good. It was a bit crowded in parts and we could have used more plinths had they been available, but everyone was well represented and there was plenty to interest the punters. Sabine's horse caught the eye immediately and then Paul's large finely burnished pots and Vivienne's elegant raku figures, Jola's magnificent canvases made with roofing felt, Rachael's intriguing, soft porcelain forms and Dorothea's delightful cats and the superb water carrier, and lots and lots of lovely pots.

All this fine work undoubtedly produced much enjoyment and satisfaction both in the viewing and in the making. Lots of people came to see the show, thanks partly to the invitations handed out by the participants.

Also the gallery has a loyal following who like to see each new exhibition, coming from as far afield as Kent. One customer kept coming back to see it again.

Altogether we sold 25 pieces in five weeks, netting nearly £650 between 9 makers. This is a lot better than last year's display at the now defunct Finlandia gallery. Considering the present state of recession in the market, perhaps one must not be too dissatisfied with the result.

Finally, a big *THANK YOU* to all who took part, including the team who put it up and to Bipin who designed and produced those eye-catching invitations.

Ros McGuirk

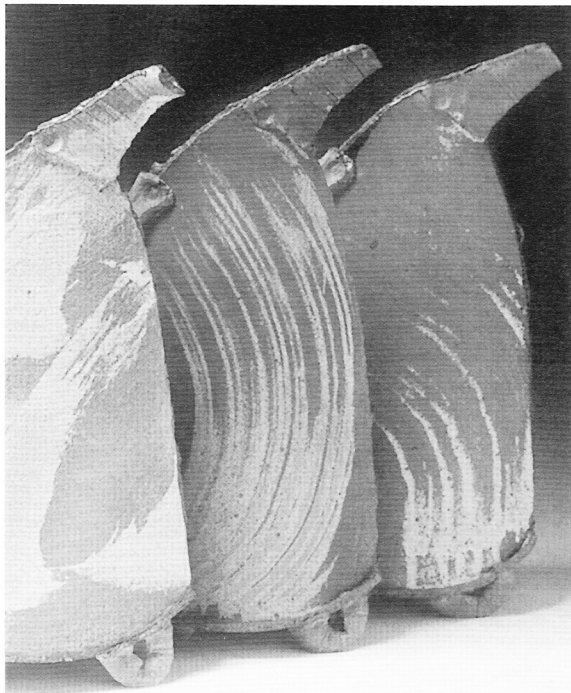
*** The course I went on is the Professional Development Diploma at W.Herts. It takes one day a week over two years. I found it very useful and would recommend it particularly for non-graduates who wish to have a more professional approach.

MEMBERS' TRIP TO ABERYSTWYTH

Imagine an event like our Open Day with its three demonstrators and a hundred or so participants, the atmosphere of happy companionship and anticipation, coupled with the pleasure of meeting up with old friends and making new ones. Now multiply it to a two day event including fifteen ceramic experts from around the world and eight hundred participants, with six hours of double demonstrations a day and the choice of alternative talks in two other venues, plus four kilns to be built, fired and opened, five exhibitions and two marquees of miscellaneous bookstalls and suppliers, plus two areas of workshops and the opportunity to join in the making of an enormous mural. Not to mention the bar serving thirty different real ales and, given a short drive, the chance to take a stroll along the promenade with its fine views along the coast and splendid sunsets. And there you have Aberystwyth 2003! See page 11 for Margaret's report on this exciting, exhausting, enjoyable and utterly memorable trip.

Ros McGuirk

Marcio Mattos- 9th May 2003



MARCIO MATTOS: "JUGS"- stoneware 48x21x13 cm.

Marcio is now a fellow of the CPA and works from the former chocolate factory in Hackney. He originally trained as a musician but later took an MA in ceramics at Goldsmith's. While in Brazil prior to his final year, he found the inspiration for the style which appears to have stayed with him for a lifetime; the rusting steel plates of a run down barge with its orange colour and flaking surface.

Originally he worked in stoneware clays making smaller functional pieces-jugs, teapots, etc from slabs gloss glazed in the inside and decorated on the outside with very dry glazes sprayed on and decorated with broad brush strokes. However, never quite satisfied with the surface texture of these glazes, he began to experiment with the use of paper clay and discovered that this body conferred on his glazes the rougher texture that he was seeking.

He found that paper clay had a number of somewhat unusual but useful properties: leather hard slabs can be cut and assembled without breaking. Bone dry slabs can be assembled provided that they require no further shaping simply using paper clay slip, this due to the bridging effect of the cellulose fibres. Bone dry sheets can be rewetted and moulded. With this product he was able to construct pieces 60cm or more in height.

Marcio illustrated these capabilities of paper clay by showing us numerous slides of his work. A more technical and practical account of his process followed after the break. The cellulose fibres from

which paper is made are hollow and can become filled with clay. Any paper can be used as a source of fibre as long as it has not been coated. He has found that newsprint which has quite short fibres is a very satisfactory and cheap starting point. The paper is reduced to 1.5 inch squares, added to boiling water in a bucket, allowed to stand for 24 hr then disintegrated by stirring with a paint mixing 'bit' on an electric drill. The product is sieved to remove most of the water and is then ready to mix with clay. Marcio uses two principal clays: one is a dark stoneware to which has been added some brick clay, the other is a mixture of china clay, ball clay, and molochite. The clay is made into a thick slip and fibre is added until there is a 50% increase in volume so giving approximately 30% fibre content. This mixture is stirred with the paint mixer and should be the consistency of thick cream. It is poured/spread onto a plaster slab to absorb water and produce the sheet for cutting and building. If a shallow bowl or plate is to be made a plaster mould is coated with several layers using a rubber kidney to spread the thick slip until the required thickness has been built up. Shrinkage is not significantly different from unfilled clay but drying takes longer and should not be accelerated (although he did heat the demonstration bowl until it was loose enough and stiff enough to be removed from the mould!). It was this process that he was able to demonstrate to us.

Handles and feet for his pots are extruded and made from standard clay because paper fibres tend to drag in the extruder die.

His rough glaze is made from an undisclosed mixture of china clay, whiting, feldspar and dolomite. The large sculptural pieces are single fired. No smoke is observed as the fibres combust but a smell of burning paper can be detected. His jugs and teapots made from conventional clay have a conventional biscuit firing prior to glazing.

It was unfortunate that time did not allow a demonstration of the assembly of a piece from slab elements, because the ability of slip to attach pieces together so soundly must surely be the most remarkable feature of this material.

Jan Kent

Marcio Mattos Recipes

Paper clay body:

Hyplas 71 ball clay	50
Grolleg china clay	10
Molochite 120's	8
Molochite 80's	4
Molochite 18-30's	8

This is an off-white body firing to light grey in reduction. For paperclay I omit the 16-30's grog and add around

25-35% BY VOLUME wet paper pulp to the slip and mix well.

High Alumna Glaze:

Potash Feldspar	46.01
China Clay	23.47
Dolomite	20.66
Whiting	3.29
Borax Frit	6.57

This is a matt stoneware glaze suitable for the inside of pots. I usually add a black stain to it.

Dry Decorative Glaze:

Potash Feldspar	13.88
Whiting	27.77
China Clay	55.55
Colemanite	2.77

To this I add a variety of glaze stains and colouring oxides for various colour effects. This glaze is unsuitable for domestic ware.

PITSTONE 2003

We have been very lucky so far with the weather on our Pitstone days, a few showers here and there but nothing worse. Our first event of the year was "Tidy Up Day" and unfortunately not many members were able to make it. Mervyn, Tony Milsom, Ruby and I arrived very early and began by clearing the working area and then scraping and digging at the surface to smooth the ground, removing large quantities of grass, sand dust and flint. Once the bumps and dips had been levelled, the cement mixing began and soon the paving slabs were going down.



Silhouettes in the bright sun
Mervyn (left) mixing and laying cement, Ruby Sharp (centre) with paving slab at the ready and Tony Milsom (right) positioning a slab

At lunchtime Sylvia arrived with sandwiches and John Powell dropped in to help for a while and take photos for the web-site. After lunch, we set to again and finished the job by mid-afternoon, a lot earlier than we expected at the start.

Many thanks to those who turned up and worked so hard. The area looks a lot better with its new flooring, which soon got its first test as the following Sunday was our first Open Day of the year.



Lunch break. From left: Tony, Ruby, Mervyn & Jan
Photographs by Sylvia Fitzwilliam

The Museum had a good flow of visitors and Barbara, Dorothea, Lip and I dealt with 19 "have-a-go" pieces, as well as firing a lot of Lip's work for his degree course. (We are running low on biscuited pieces for the "have-a-go" so any spares you have will be welcome). The new floor proved very much more comfortable to work on than the old rough dirt floor.

Another two weeks and on 22nd June we had our Raku Party Day. Seven members turned up with various quantities of pots to fire and I believe they all got done, with various degrees of success. At lunchtime, I fired up the barbecue and John Powell and I cooked our lunches, but no-one else had brought food for cooking. Mervyn and I had no pots to fire, so while I was busy adding bricks to the flywheel of the old kickwheel to give it more momentum, Mervyn was painting the window frames of the hut. They now match the official Museum site colours and, with the new flooring, make our work area look a lot tidier.

All in all a very pleasant day and one that I hope we will repeat in future years.

Jan Kent

POTCRAWL SEPTEMBER '03

September is the month of Open Studios in Hertfordshire and, for a special treat, we are going to visit several of our members who are taking part, and one or two who aren't. It will be rather like orienteering, with maps provided, and tea and cakes for those who complete the course!

Our potcrawl will take place on Saturday 20th and Sunday 21st September, and we hope that lots of you and your friends will join us. Young children will enjoy Sunday with the picnic at Ruby's. They will love Doug's place, too, though they'll need watching by the river.

Timetable – details below

Sat. 20/9

9.30 a.m. Arthur Ball
11 a.m. Marilyn Andreetti and friends.
12.30 p.m. Lunch
3 p.m. Vivienne Rodwell-Davies. Tea & cake

Sun. 21/9

11 a.m. Paul Rowbottom and John Blackwell
12.30 p.m. Picnic at Ruby's
3 p.m. Doug Jones. Tea and cake

Please note This is a self-drive event. Numbers are not critical, but it would help our hosts to have some idea of how many might come. Please phone me (Ros) on 01727 834326 during the week before, and leave a message to say if you are intending to come and how many with you. Car sharing is recommended, so let me know if you can offer lifts or need one.

Cake: please bring some

Picnics: optional on Saturday; obligatory on Sunday

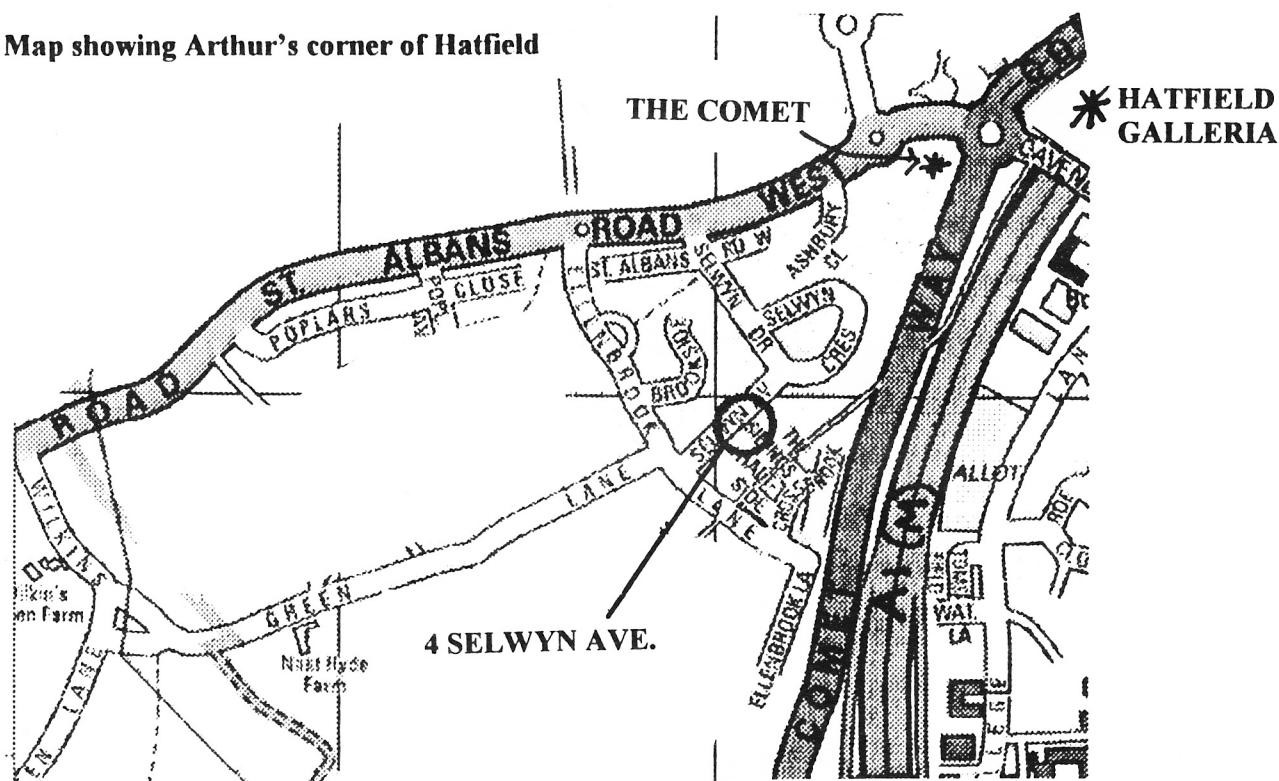
Other artists: You may wish to visit other studios in the area. For further information on Herts Open Day Studios phone 07813 100651 or visit website [www:hvaf.org.uk](http://www.hvaf.org.uk)

Sat. starting 9.30-10 a.m.

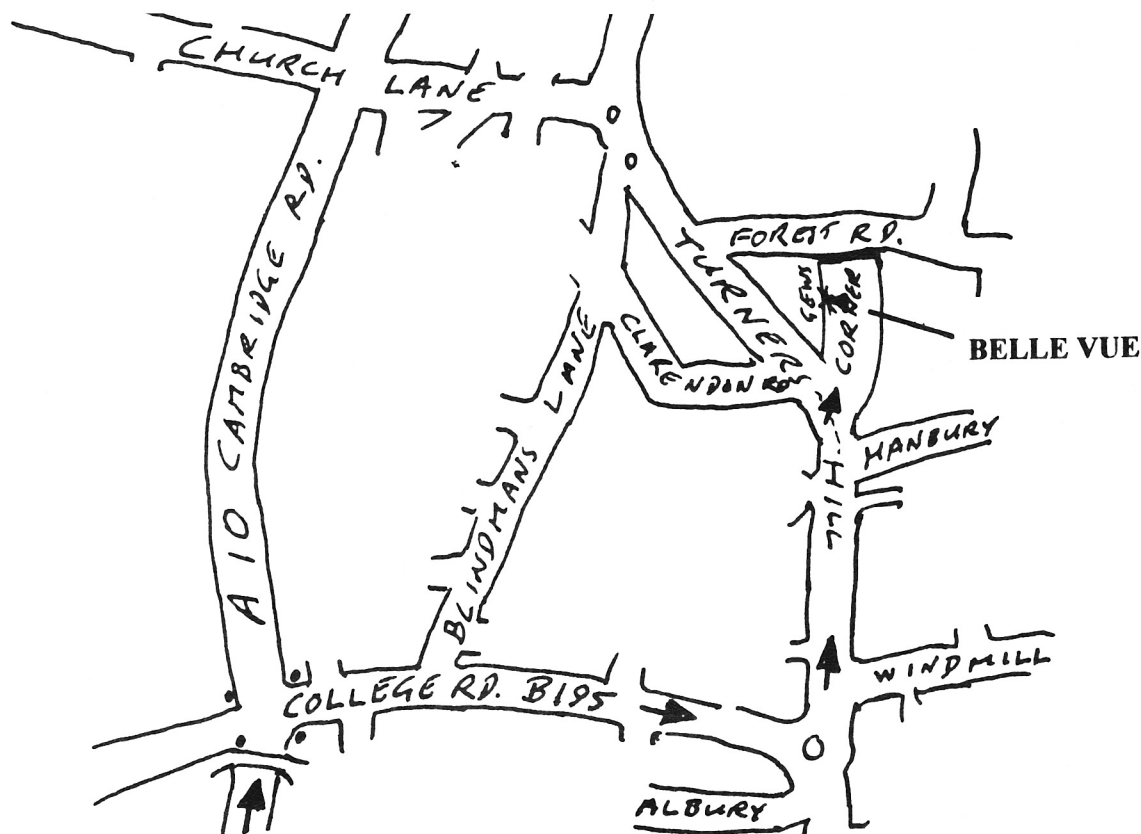
Arthur Ball, 4 Selwyn Ave. Hatfield 01707 260471. *For directions see map below*

Arthur has kindly offered to open his workshop especially for us. He is a fine craftsman and a keen potter with plenty of tips to pass on. He makes reduction-fired stoneware. If you arrive late, do not worry. Space is limited in the pottery, so a staggered start may work best.

Map showing Arthur's corner of Hatfield



On leaving Arthur's take the A1(M) southbound and join the M25 at junction 23 for Dartford. Leave it at junction 25 and take the A10 towards Cheshunt. Keep straight on for more than a mile. At a footbridge you will reach the first set of lights. Turn right onto College Road and then left at the end onto Turners Hill. Gews Corner is a right fork where the road bends left.

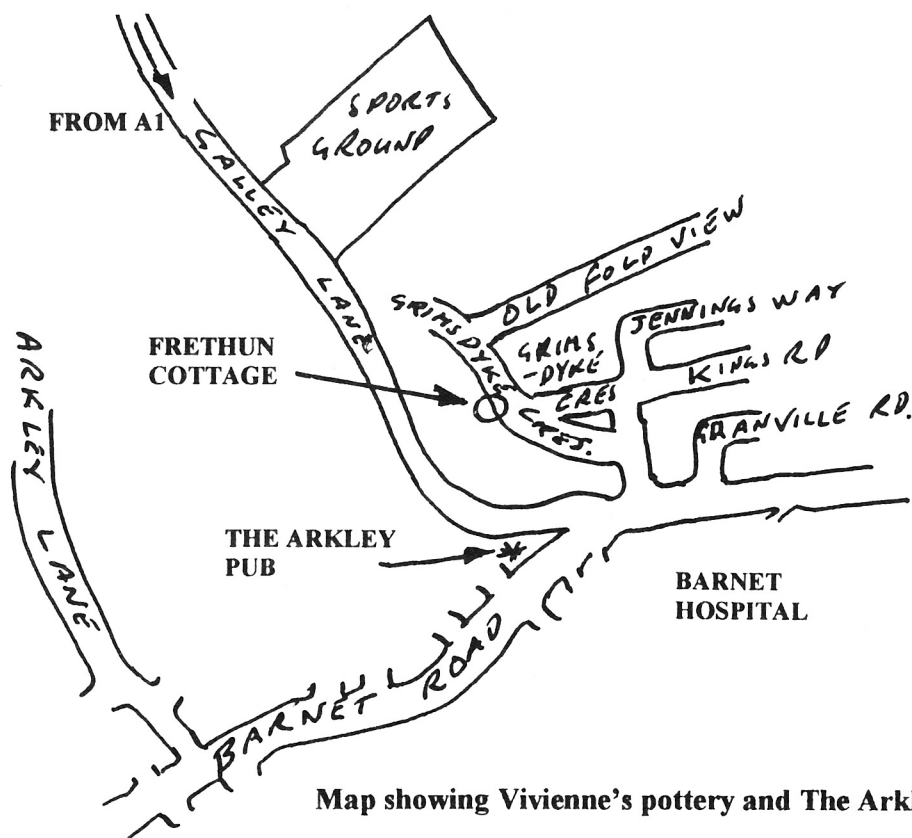


11 a.m. Marilyn Andreetti "Belle-vue" 16 Gews Corner Cheshunt 01992 639969

Marilyn is a member of the CPA and is well known for her colourful red earthenware. She will be joined by several other artists working in various media including glass, water colour, textiles, jewellery and cards.

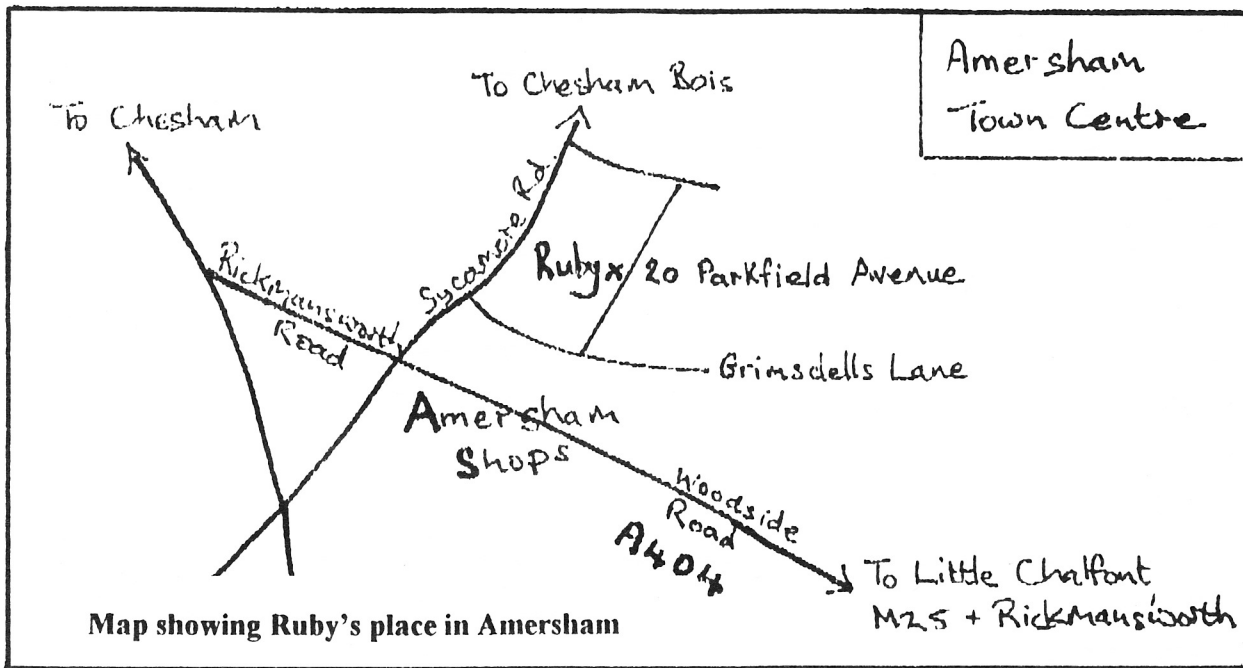
12.30 p.m. Lunch You are welcome to eat a packed lunch in Marilyn's spacious garden, or conservatory, with tea and coffee provided. This would give you more time for fitting in visits to other artists before Vivienne. There are lots in Barnet, including Annegret Ostberg whose rich blue stoneware is much admired. Annegret is a Guild member and is happy to have visitors in small numbers. Her details can be found in the Herts Open Studios brochure.

For those who prefer a pub lunch, the Arkley in Barnet is highly recommended and has the advantage of being just round the corner from Vivienne. You could leave your car at the pub and walk round to the pottery. Directions to both follow below. They can also be found on the map provided.



Map showing Vivienne's pottery and The Arkley Pub

Ruby has invited us to join her in celebrating the opening of her new pottery. Please bring your own picnic with a dessert to share, and something to sit on (If it rains, Ruby will provide a gazebo for cover). Tea and coffee will be provided



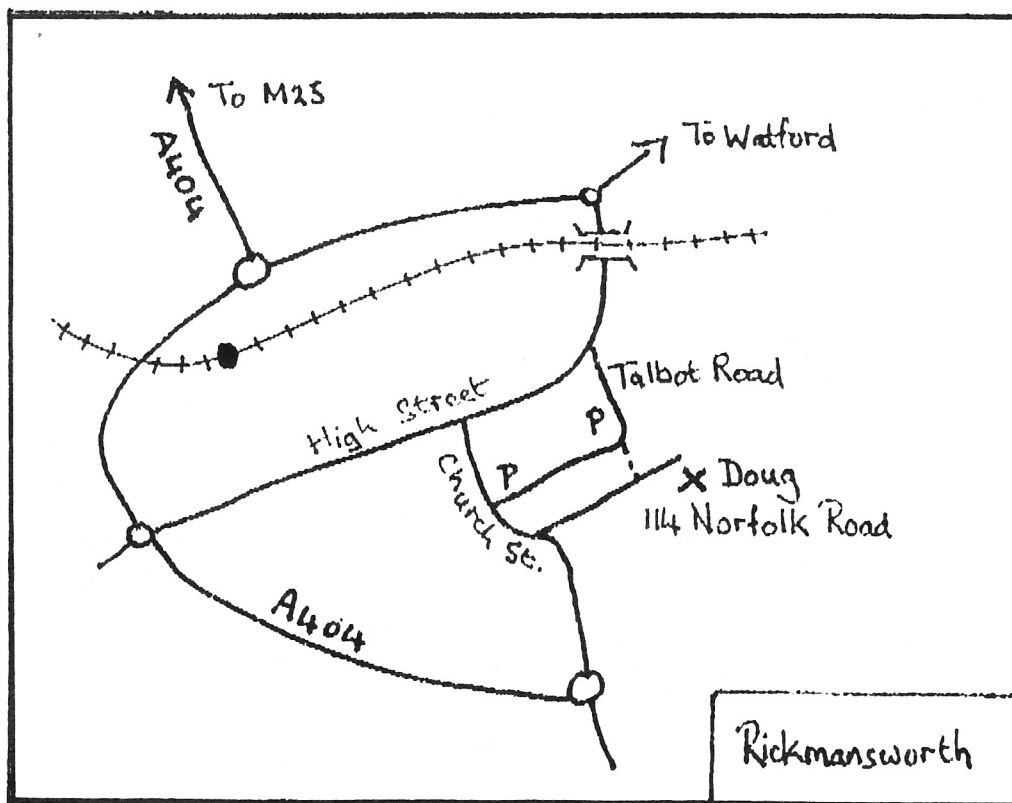
There is one last treat in store --- don't miss it !

3p.m. Doug Jones 114 Norfolk Rd. Rickmansworth O1923 770913

Doug makes reduction-fired stoneware in a light and airy studio beside a river. To reach his pottery you must first cross the river, but there is no bridge ... Doug's open days are unforgettable. If you have never been before, put the date in your diary NOW. Tea and cake for all survivors.

Ros McGuirk

Map of Rickmansworth



CAROLINE WHYMAN DEMONSTRATION

At the Guild's evening meeting on 11th April, we were privileged to have a lively talk and demonstration by Caroline Whyman.

Caroline works almost entirely in porcelain, a difficult medium in which she admitted, even with all her experience, does not always produce the results she wants.

She has recently spent a period in Poland where she and a number of other specialist porcelain potters had enjoyed the facilities of an enormous commercial porcelain factory. There they were able to make use of huge amounts of high quality porcelain clay and were given a free hand to make whatever item inspired them at the time.

Caroline's output during this period was largely based on leaf and fruit slip cast shapes set out on horizontal slabs of porcelain. These were very successful and attractive and many of the pieces are now in various museums abroad including Poland.

Caroline trained at Camberwell School of Art, her tutors being Lucie Rie, Hans Coper and Colin Pearson.

She spent the first part of the evening showing a large selection of slides she had taken of her work and of the many interesting artefacts, geographical and architectural features that had appealed to her on her extensive travels. These images were not taken specifically to provide inspiration for her pots but because she liked them, though many later provided the basis of the wide variety of shapes and decoration used on her pots.

Much of Caroline's work is decorated by incising lines on the pot and then filling these lines with coloured slip to show the design. The designs are inspired by geometric shapes which later evolve to shapes based on nature such as leaves. It was this process of design, incising and filling with slip that she demonstrated in the second part of the evening.

First she lays out a framework of her decoration, usually starting with a grid on the pot which is then adjusted and modified to the final design. She uses food colourings to work out and develop the patterns on the pot using different colours as the design develops. The initial grid pattern is set out in green; if this needs some adjustment, this is done in blue which is stronger than the green and will clearly show the alterations. When the decoration is complete it is emphasised in red which darkens the final pattern and reduces the chance of cutting out the pattern in the wrong place.

Before starting to cut out the pattern, she uses a broad brush to paint blue all over the pot, this obliterates previous green and blue lines and not only makes the final pattern clearer but shows later clearly where lines have already been cut.

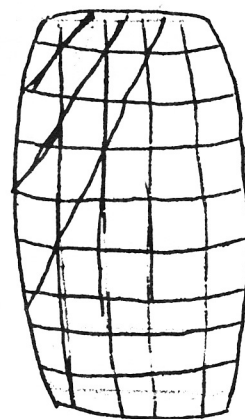
When the setting out process is complete, lines are cut into the clay using a tool shaped a little like a heart with a sharp lower point. These grooves are then filled with a coloured slip compound of the body porcelain clay with 10% stain and a few drops of Diopex which helps keep the slip liquid. When a metal oxide is added, the slip boils when fired and slightly raises itself above the surface of the pot at the same time bubbling a little and thereby giving the decorative lines an interesting textured appearance.

In order to fill the grooves with the coloured slip, Caroline stipples slip into the grooves with a brush two or three times, each time allowing the slip to dry. When this is satisfactorily completed, she puts the pot on the wheel slowly and removes the all over layer of slip with a surform blade; this exposes the porcelain body of the pot whilst leaving the line decoration with clear crisp edges.

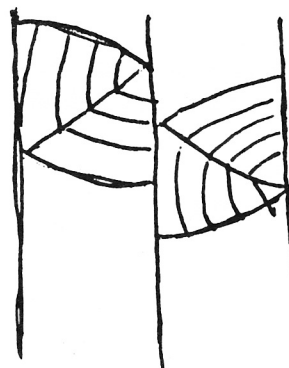
My copy of the *Illustrated Directory of the Craft Potters Association* (11th edtn) shows a very typical finished example of the technique demonstrated by Caroline (page 275).



Incising tool



Initial laying out



Adaption of overall geometric pattern to more natural shapes

I enjoyed the evening very much as, I am sure, did the other members present on the evening. I also learned a great deal.

Geoff Parr

BOOK REVIEWS

Ten Thousand Years of Pottery Emmanuel Cooper
pub. The British Museum Press Softback £19.99

I found this a very hard book to review, mainly because I found it a very hard book to read. It seems to me that to produce a book covering the total span of the history of pottery would require one of two approaches.

One approach would be to provide immense detail and to produce a massive, scholarly tome covering absolutely everything. The other would be to try to give a lighter broad brush overview, with just enough detail to anchor the picture in reality.

Unfortunately this book seems to fall between the two, with a valiant attempt to give an overall picture, but with too much detail to let it flow. On the other hand there is not really enough detail for it to be an in-depth reference work. I suppose the level at which it could be said to work is as an introductory encyclopaedia of pottery. If, for instance, you had an interest in the pottery of ancient Egypt, dipping into the appropriate section would give a useful summary of what was going on there and in neighbouring regions, but to pursue the interest in depth, you would need to go elsewhere.

Jan Kent

Raku John Mathieson pub. A&C Black Softback £12.99

As seems to be the standard with such books, this begins with chapters on materials, tools and making methods. These chapters are clear and concise, with plenty of photos illustrating the techniques. They cover all the usual things you would expect in a book on Raku.

This is followed by profiles of 28 Raku practitioners, covering a wide range of styles. These show some lovely work, but unfortunately each artist only gets a couple of pictures and a page or so of text, which seems a little skimpy.

This is a great little book as an introduction to Raku, but I would love to have seen it filled out to twice the size.

One other interesting item is in the Acknowledgements, which include a well deserved dedication to "National Living Treasure Doug Jones, for being himself".

Jan Kent

Ash Glazes (2nd edtn) Phil Rogers
A&C Black Hardback £28

The 2nd edition of Phil Rogers' book on glazes is largely based on that of the 1st edition, but in addition to some minor alterations in the text, there is a larger section on potters who use ash glazes.

A major improvement is the fact that almost all the photographs in the new edition are in colour and

these make the book worth buying for that alone. Many of the photographs of the pots are accompanied by a recipe for the glaze used on the pot.

As with Phil Rogers' book *Throwing Pots* this book contains the perfect mix of aesthetic comment and technical information. The first part of the book contains sections on the history of the use of ash glazes, the function that ash plays in glazes and how to obtain and prepare wood ash.

There is a large comprehensive chapter on the making and testing of glazes and a chapter on making ash-like glazes without using ash. A large section showing the work of potters who use ash glazes is illustrated with many excellent coloured photographs and gives profiles of the individual potters.

Finally, there are twenty-five ash glaze recipes used by a number of named potters, chemical analyses of various wood ashes and other technical information.

A superb book worth buying, not just for its comprehensive technical information, but also for its mouth-watering photographs,

Geoff Parr

DO YOU IMPRESS YOUR POTS ? DO YOU MAKE A MARK ?

I have been asked to write a short article on the subject of my interest in pottery. I am not a potter !! Many years ago I began to collect ceramics. When realising that the different types of pottery, porcelain and stoneware each displayed a different mark, I was 'hooked' on the search to identify each maker. Styles can provide some clues, but marks are a better guide.

Reference books on studio marks in particular at that time seemed to be based on Geoffrey Godden's *Encyclopædia of British Pottery and Porcelain Marks*. A few years ago the Robert Fournier/Eric Yates Owen book *British Studio Potters' Marks* was published. Now I could, at last, determine whether my "JS" pot was by John Solly or June Sarene. Could my piece with a "B" in an oblong cartouche and "J29 on W4" in black ink alongside, really be by Paul Barron?

So many people who spent time at the Bernard Leach studio could use the mark as part of their own – could two of my small pieces be by the great man himself? They are his style and display the Leach mark but no other identification. Some signatures are easily identified but Nicholas Hurle took time to determine. Brian Newman (at Aller pottery, Langport) is shown under 'A' in the Fournier book. Indeed, one small piece I noticed was marked with the name of a Guild member – yes, she admitted, it was made by her a few years ago.

Much patience and a magnifying glass are the necessary tools plus a reliable reference book. What satisfaction when a potter is traced from their mark! How many dozens remain 'unknown'. So, please remember the marks enthusiast, even if I am the only one in the country! – when you impress your mark on your next piece – sticky labels can come unstuck!!

Janet Collings – Librarian

SARA ROBERTSON WORKSHOP – APRIL 12TH

There has been a certain amount of discussion, not to say disquiet, about why workshops promoted by the DCPG are not better supported. We said perhaps members were not drawn to a subject, did not have time or enough cash, did not want tuition, could not plan a day far ahead.

So it was a wonderful turn round to organise a workshop which was overbooked, popular, great fun and very instructive for those who came. One member even wanted to continue the next day.

Sara decorates in her own particular way. The principle is that three layers of slip are painted on pieces of newspaper and dried on a plaster bat. They are then used like a transfer and can be made with all sorts of variations to colour raw clay.

You can scratch fine lines and fill them with a second colour; you can back the paper with sculptured wall-paper and make a surface design; you can put multi-coloured shapes together; you can scratch and blend.

The interesting thing was that there were twelve people on the course and twelve entirely different pieces of work at the end of the day. Some people liked black outlines giving small vignettes, some made futuristic designs with blocks of colour, some built multiple shapes on top of each other, and so on.

Sara was very generous and helped everyone. She was nice enough to say that we were a receptive class and it seemed as if she had also enjoyed herself.

There are at least four people waiting to come to another workshop (£15) if it was arranged. Are there eight more?

Jane Kilvington

CHINA 2003

Mervyn spent his birthday this year on a China Airlines plane. Not exactly a party (remember the Air Canada advert some years ago – balloons, etc?) We had some anxiety about the trip since the SARS problem was beginning to emerge. We started out believing that Beijing, our first port of call, was clear of the disease. Well, when you've paid your money you take your choice. We did survive the trip with little trouble but with some worry. We are jolly glad that we travelled at the end of March and were not inconvenienced as later travellers were.

The whole experience was tremendous. It was hard to realise the size of the country. Every statistic is beyond our imagination. Population of Beijing being 13 million, is much the same as that of Shanghai. Number of bicycles in each of these cities is about 8/9 million. It seemed that they were all

out on the road at the same time as us. Cyclists have little regard for other larger more powerful traffic. This year is the year of the Goat and the qualities of this animal are warm-hearted, independently creative, vulnerable and disorganised and these seem appropriate from our experience of Chinese people. We were not able to make much contact with ordinary people since our organised tour was scheduled almost to the minute, but we were approached by Chinese people wanting to have their photographs taken with the "Big Noses", their nickname for westerners.

One prime reason for visiting China this year was to see the Yangtse river gorges before the flooding for the enormous dam. Again the statistics are unbelievable: flood level 180 metres higher, length of the reservoir 450 kms., something like 1.5 million people displaced. The great walls of the dam itself contain 26 generators which will produce 20% of the electrical supply of the whole of China. Five locks, big enough to allow sea-going and cargo ships to navigate through to Chongqing, 1000 miles upstream, have been built as well as a shiplift for smaller boats, which actually lifts them up/down to the different water levels.

Our 3-day cruise through the gorges was wonderful, the scenery really spectacular though somewhat misty (as in Chinese paintings).



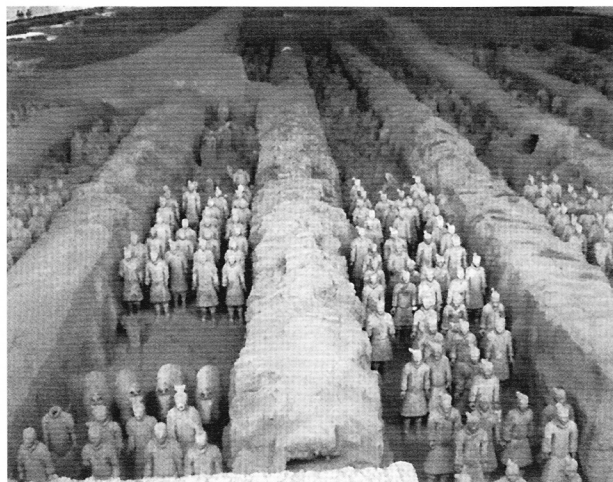
One of the lesser gorges on the Daning River

There was also some sadness. Along the cliffs were markers showing the new water level on completion of the project in 2009. It was very evident which cities, towns, villages, factories and farms would disappear beneath the waters. The saddest thing was to see the family tombs on the small farm terraces which would be covered. We could not confirm if these could be moved with the families. The people seem to be divided into two camps: the young accepting and even welcoming the change, a new flat with its own bathroom and kitchen being a big carrot. The older generation hate to leave their homes and land which their families had worked for generations. Something very clear to us was that a similar project could never happen on this scale in the U.K. It would take generations to obtain planning consent and overcome protests --- *Swampy and sons for ever !!*

We left the river cruise boat with some thoughts to mull over and we had enjoyed the sights and sounds of the river very much.

Another highlight of our trip was, of course, Xian and the terracotta army. Again, more stats: 6000 figures most being more than life size; the warriors and horses are over 2200 years old. These figures, now terracotta colour were originally highly coloured but once the pits were uncovered the colours flaked within a few hours. Work is ongoing to coat newly unearthed figures with a recently invented substance to prevent the flaking. Even so, the figures on show are awesome. No two figures have the same face, some are mounted, some standing and some kneeling. We have, of course, brought a memento home – a small kneeling archer, since we were travelling with Archers Direct holiday company. The site was discovered by a farmer intent on digging a well back in 1974. Imagine his surprise on finding this amazing collection. It has changed his life – he now spends his days signing the books bought by up to 1,500,000 visitors per year.

The emperor Qin commissioned thousands of people to construct his mausoleum over a period of 40 years in order to continue his life underground after death, as it had been above. Talk about an ego trip !



Just a few members of the Terracotta Army

The figures are very detailed and from these details on the armour, face, hands, footwear and hair style it is possible to determine which is a general, which a lower officer and which an ordinary foot soldier. The kneeling archer even has a patterned tread on the sole of his boot. Over the centuries the tomb has been ravaged by marauders and also one or two earthquakes, so there is a lot of restoration going on. Limbs, heads and broken bodies litter some of the pits making them resemble a ferocious battlefield.

These victims are being slowly re-united with their broken pieces. Each figure can take 2/3 months to be reassembled. The museum is huge and, apart from the three pits with the terracotta

figures, there are also others enclosing bronze chariots and horses, as well as musical bells. Satellite pits contain human skeletons, bones of animals, birds, shellfish, as well as pottery, jade, gold, silver, bronze, silk and lacquer artefacts. All in all, it is an important record of life 2200 years ago in China. Fascinating !



4-year olds enjoying their dance class in Children's Palace (after school club) Shanghai

Our trip included a couple of days in Shanghai which is a contrast to Beijing. Beijing is quite busy but has an air of tradition and elegance whilst Shanghai is a bustling city of the 21st century. An area resembling Manhattan has been built over a period of ten years in what was previously marshy farmland. The Jin Mao Tower is the third highest building in the world. Its 88th floor is usually 'lost' in the clouds. Shanghai has an interesting museum where we were allowed 1½ hours to investigate – not nearly long enough. We spent most of it in the ceramics gallery. Tang horses and other polychrome pieces together with Song domestic wares in grey, black/yellow and ivory-white crackled glazes as well as Ming and Qing wares are all on display. We ought to have had a look at the furniture, jade and bronzes – mind, there's always next time !

Two weeks in China getting up at 6.30 a.m., sightseeing and eating until 10.30 p.m. was exhausting but an experience not to be missed. There is so much which could be included here: the many wonderful gardens with huge rocks reclaimed from river beds, temples, Tianamen Square, the Forbidden City, Wuhan museum with its huge 2500 year old bronze bells, the Peking Opera, Shanghai Acrobat show, the spectacular Tang Palace dinner show and the Great Wall all added up to a tremendous experience. I shall also remember with pleasure seeing the local *family* groups who gather on Sunday afternoons in the parks to play cards, sing and make music as well as fly kites and generally enjoy life. A few of the older generation still wear their Chairman Mao uniforms as Sunday best, though most were in western dress.

Sylvia Fitzwilliam

NOTEBOOK

Pitstone

Yesterday, Sunday 13th July, I had the pleasure of taking care of two of my grandchildren, Amy 8 and Sarah 5. We went to Pitstone museum for a raku experience which Jan Kent helped us with. (We also had ice creams, tractor rides and bought things from the stalls, etc). The girls really enjoyed this brush with the pottery world and the final results were pleasing. Jan was the only other Guild member at the site, since Tina Hall had been unable to attend and, sadly, no other members came to help.

Workshops

The sculpture workshop held at Kings Langley on 15th June was attended by 11 members and visitors. The plan was to use paper clay and for each student to sculpt a complete figure. I understand that those attending enjoyed the day and produced some good work. That makes two well received workshops in a row (see article by Jane Kilvington) – so what would you like to do next? Why not talk about this with any committee member? Whilst on the subject of workshops, I would like to thank Jane Kilvington for keeping the booking details under control, and Caroline and Martin Hughes for being on hand to manage the opening and use of the studio when needed.

Membership subscriptions

October 1st is the date that membership subscriptions are due. Currently the committee is reviewing the subscription rates which have remained the same for the past two years. The application form for Potters Open Day and also renewal of subscriptions is enclosed, with the rate being the same as last year. If the committee decides to increase the rates, those increases would come into effect on 1st October, so pay now and avoid the possible increase.

Website

If you have not found the Guild Website yet, pay a visit to www.thedcpg.org.uk. Our Website manager is John Powell. Please contact John if you have any snippets for the site. He can be contacted by e-mail on john.powell22@btinternet.com or use the address on the website feedback page.

The Soda Kiln

Paul Rowbottom and Vivienne Rodwell-Davies are obtaining some successful results from the kiln at Northfields Studio. If you want to use the kiln or get up-to-date on present developments please phone Paul on 01923 263032 or Vivienne on 02084 410904.

Ceramics in the City

I visited this event at the Geffrye Museum on 8th June. This is the second year it has been held and it was well attended. Many well-known potters were in the 50 who were exhibiting, including Jack Doherty, Jola Spykowska, Karin Hessenberg, Richard Phethean, Svend Bayer, to name only a few. Anna Lambert was also there, and I talked with her about her visit planned for the Guild AGM on 10th October, when she will judge the Stan Romer Award for us. Her work is very well made and attractive, so don't miss her demonstration.

P.O.D. Saturday 8th November

You should find an application form with this Newsletter. Don't miss this opportunity to see Steve Harrison in action. You will also be able to watch Russell Collins make his big cider jars, whilst telling us stories of the early days at Harrow Art School. There will be added attractions: those at the Open Day will have the opportunity to purchase books from A&C Black on the day at special discount prices. In addition, we hope to have a major supplier of pottery materials on site with a range of tools and materials for sale.

Editor



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ABERYSTWYTH 2003

Because there were very often three or more things taking place simultaneously at the festival, I have only been able to give a very partial account. It seemed to me that there were two major themes this year: one, how pottery cuts across cultural boundaries, which I have not covered and the other was the extensive use of plaster by almost all the potters.

On Friday the 4th of July 15 of us set off for the 9th Ceramics Festival at Aberystwyth. We were staying in student accommodation, the top floor of block F. After a quick meal of food that we had brought with us we went down to the Great Hall for an introductory side show. This gave us some idea of which demonstrations or lectures we would want to see over the weekend.

I tended to go for the demonstrations and joined a packed lecture theatre on the Saturday morning to see Billy Adams and Jane Jermyn. Billy Adams has a tremendous personality and his demonstrations were great fun. He makes his vessels out of three different types of clay, which he has rolled out and joined in three layers, which are stretched on the floor to make the surface break. His unusual texture is achieved by the difference in the shrinkage rate of each of his clays. The outer layer shrinks by 14% and the inner layer by 4%. The middle layer has an intermediate shrinkage rate. He takes strips of this clay and joins them with a quick and deft form of hand building, which leaves the outer texture undamaged by finger marks. The clay is then very carefully joined on the inside of the vessel and smoothed to an even thickness using a serrated kidney. The finished work has an attractive craggy broken texture, which he highlights by spraying on glazes and then rubbing them off, leaving only a vestige in the cracks. This process is repeated several times ending with a 795°C. lustre firing. A particularly attractive feature of his work is his inclusion of a piece of thrown work as a handle or a ring in his forms. This ring is often decorated with gold lustre.

Jane Jermyn's work is also made with an interesting, though entirely different texture. Her inspiration comes from the natural world and geological formations. She weaves formers from hazel twigs and other organic matter and places round them an adobe like mixture of clay and hay. She often finishes the pieces with a thick porcelain slip, which contrasts with the dark body underneath. After the first firing the resulting fissures are emphasised by rubbing in copper oxides before the second firing. There was some discussion about the merits of using perlite from garden centres to reinforce the clay and also about adding glass and copper wire to flat pieces.

Tavs Jorgsen from Denmark and Jeroen Bechtold from the Netherlands were the next to do a demonstration. Tavs Jorgensen is now based in Exeter where he works as a freelance shape designer, modeller and mould maker. He took us through the process of making a mould and gave much good advice. He stressed the importance of using soft soap and of having it the consistency of milk. He recommended British Gypsum plaster, Herculite 2 as being better than any pottery plaster because it is finer and has a longer setting time.

Jeroen Bechtold uses moulds to great effect. His moulds are like Russian dolls, each one fitted into the next size. He stressed that his moulds are deliberately light. He was an inspiring demonstrator saying things like "a mistake which can be repeated becomes a new technique". One of his techniques was to vary the thickness of the casting slip and then fill the indent with different coloured casting slip. He used Limoges porcelain casting slip. One of the delights of casting slip is that it can be joined easily as it doesn't need scoring because unlike thrown clay it has no plastic memory. Another technique that he showed us was the way he poured in the casting slip and then after it had dried he tore away part of a layer and then poured in some more slip leaving the layers uneven. This gives a beautiful effect when light is shone through the pot. More information on his techniques can be found in Ceramics Technical. On Sunday morning I went to his slide talk. I noticed that it was attended by the younger conference members. There was an impressive moment when his slides suddenly moved into film. He told us about his early work for Rosenthal and other commercial firms and ran through his production up to the present when he is producing cast pots with gold and lavish, elaborate decoration. It was a fascinating talk by an interesting and complex man.

Sandy Lockwood, from Australia, was another inspiring potter. She has developed two wood fired kilns, which she uses for salt glaze. One is a two-chambered kiln and the other a long trough like top loading kiln. During the festival Sandy packed and fired one of her trough salt kilns. It was unpacked on Sunday, showing what a very difficult process this is; quite a number of her pots were cracked. They were nevertheless interesting. Sandy has a cross draft kiln, as she wants to avoid uniformity. She sometimes uses slips made of kaolin and nepheline syenite or a mixture of grog and Limoges porcelain. Her pots are fired to cone 12 with reduction at 950°C. Some of her work is hand built and the rest thrown. When she is throwing, she uses Limoges porcelain not Southern Ice porcelain. Sandy later gave us a marvellous slide show of her time making water filters with the potters of East Timor. When she was there she helped set up a wood burning kiln for them as well as introducing many new methods to speed up production. Sandy was demonstrating at

the same time as another salt glaze potter, Walter Keeler.

However the jug he demonstrated at Aberystwyth was in his new earthenware range. He has the clay especially made for him at Commercial Clay. It is a mixture of earthenware and ball clay. He fires to 1140°C with a two hour soak for biscuit and then to 1040°C for the glaze firing. He tends to glaze the pots one day and then apply the oxides with a sponge the following day. He uses moulds to make the handles, feet and other parts and then wraps these up over night to equalize the moisture content.

Walter Keeler demonstrated again early on Sunday morning but this time the other potter was Martin Lungley. Martin produces two different types of work; large scale textural bowls and a range of thrown porcelain tableware and vases. We were treated to a virtuoso demonstration of throwing skills as Martin made a very tall, smooth porcelain vase which he decorated with one twist and then as we held our breath, with a second line from one finger running up the length of the vase and indenting the soft clay. He threw on a small plaster bat, which was already marked in such a way as to save him having to make a foot rim later. We also saw him making garden ware from red clay. These pots were decorated by impressing them with plaster blocks, which had patterns on them from Anaglypta wallpaper. He uses these plaster bats wet so that they don't stick to the freshly thrown pot. Another useful tip we learnt was the use of biscuit fired tiles placed on two wooden bats with the second bat having a square cut out. These tiles help dry the base and speed up production. Martin Lungley has written a book on Garden Pots.

Simon Carroll was the other great thrower of the festival. He made some truly enormous, thrown pots, which we saw later with a base made from a thrown pot folded in three. He was a magnificent demonstrator. He threw using red earthenware clay and then, whilst the pot was still on the wheel, he pressed two halves of a plaster mould round the pot. When the moulds had been strapped together, he continued throwing. The pots were impressed with the pattern on the moulds and then had some throwing rings above the geometrical patterns. It was an interesting technique.

We had a very happy time. It was much more fun going as a group. We went out on our last evening for a celebratory meal. We were very pleased that Murray Fieldhouse, our president, was able to join us. We thanked Ros McGuirk very warmly for the efficient and friendly way in which she had organised every thing. The kind people, who did the driving, as well as husbands, who lent their cars, also deserve thanks.

Margaret Tatton Brown

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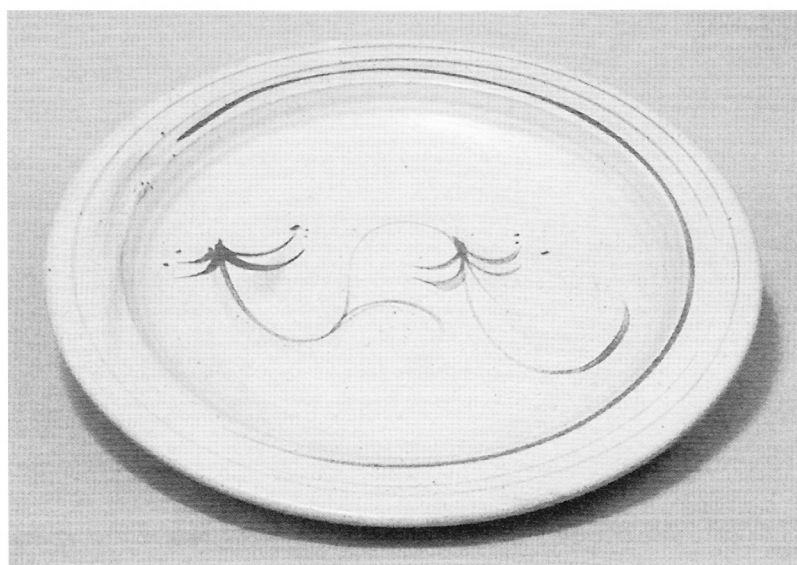
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TOP - Two salt glaze stoneware jugs both Approx. 4 ½" high, by Steve Harrison

BELOW LEFT - Decorated platter 16" diameter by Russell Collins

BELOW - Candlestick, one of a pair 22" high, made for Hook - Norton Church by Russell Collins



Steve Harrison

Steve Harrison has recently been working on faceted teapots, made by throwing and using plaster moulds as formers (see Ceramic Review issue 202 July/Aug. 2003). Steve will demonstrate some of his interesting techniques and talk about other exciting new developments that he is working on. Don't miss getting your infusion of inspiration and enthusiasm from Steve at this event.

Russell Collins

Russell Collins originally trained as a geography teacher but then taught woodwork at a Tottenham Secondary school in 1963-66. He moved on to attend Harrow Art School 1966-7 and then taught at Harrow part-time 1968-86. Russel worked for Mick Casson in 1968, setting up his own workshop in Oxfordshire at that time. He also taught at central, Camberwell and Bristol.

Russell has been a CPA member since 1967 and has exhibited his work widely in this country and also France, Japan, USA and Germany.

Currently, with five employees, and sub contracting to two factories in Stoke on Trent, Hook Norton Pottery produces a range of Catering Ware for restaurants and hotels. Catering clients include; Bass, Whitbread, Forte Hotels, Scottish and Newcastle, Holiday Inn, to name only a few!

Russell is a quietly dynamic man, with many a fascinating story to tell, and also a very skilled Potter who will enthral you with his positive approach to his work.



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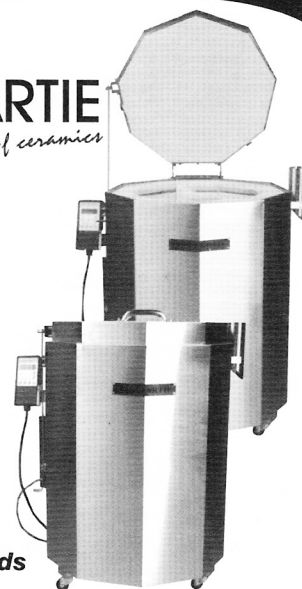
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