



DACORUM AND CHILTERN POTTERS GUILD



IN THIS ISSUE -
ANAGAMA KILN BUILDING AND
FIRING WITH NIC COLLINS
PITSTONE 2003
POTCRAWL REPORT



NEWSLETTER
WINTER 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
Single £17.50
Student £9.00

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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<u>Copy dates</u>	<u>Publication dates</u>
(latest receipt of material for typing)	

6 th January	February
6 th April	May
6 th July	August
5 th October	November

We can book space ahead of the copy date but, in general, need the final artwork not later than **THREE DAYS** after the copy date.

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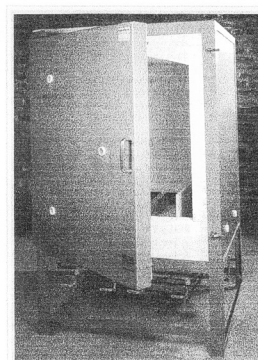
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FRONT COVER PHOTOGRAPH

Thrown salt glazed stoneware by Vivienne Rodwell-Davies

CONTENTS

Editorial.....	1
Guild Events	1
Other Events	2
Membership News	2
Pitstone 2003 – Jan Kent	2
Potcrawl Report – Ros McGuirk	2
Potters Tips – Mervyn Fitzwilliam.....	3
Notebook – Editor	4
Committee List	5
Anagama Kiln Building – Paul Rowbottom	6

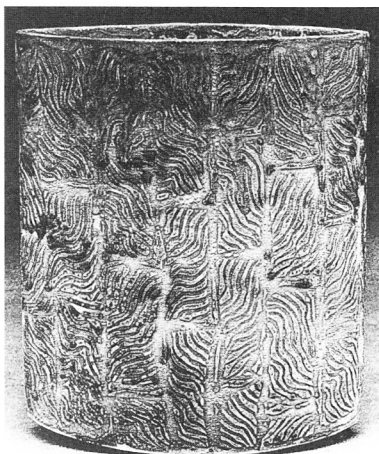
EDITORIAL

The Potters Open Day is almost upon us, have you sent in your application form? Forgive the question – of course you have – but just in case you have not, please do so without delay, it will help to reduce the anxiety of your committee, who never know whether we will have enough applicants to cover the cost of the day until the last minute. Since we have rather less than 30 applicants at the time of writing, including most of the committee, the anxiety level is quite high!

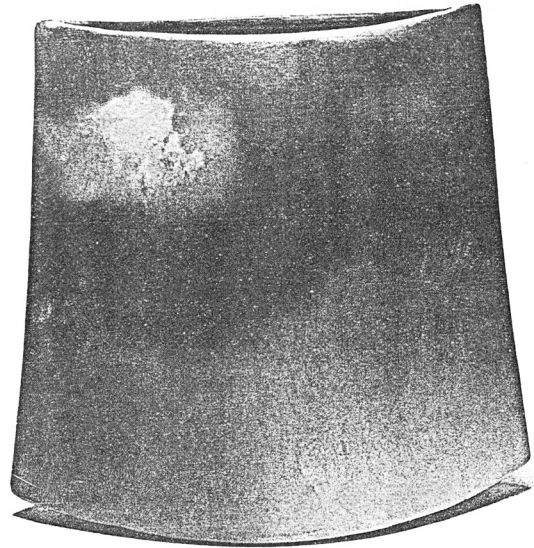
GUILD EVENTS

Meetings are held at Kings Langley Methodist Church Hall

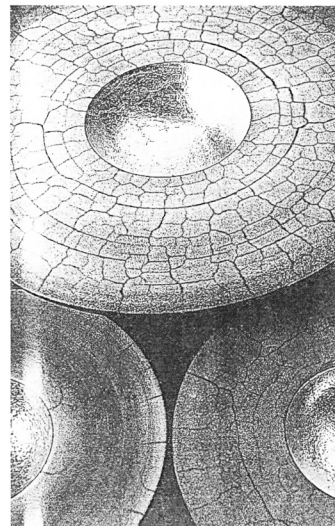
Fri 5th Dec. 8 p.m. PETER BEARD has been experimenting with glaze effects for years, and it shows in the beautiful and often subtle patterns he creates on his fire-sculpted forms. He has recently developed a method of sandblasting to enhance the textural patterns on his ceramic surfaces. His work is featured in *Ceramic Review* Oct. edtn. (No.203) and he is a popular lecturer both in the U.K. and overseas. He is the author of *Resist and Masking Techniques* (Black) and is a fellow of the C.P.A.



Fri.9th Jan. 8 p.m. GABRIELLE KOCH is also a fellow of the C.P.A. She hand builds vessel forms and then burnishes and smoke fires them. These finely coiled sculptural pots are widely exhibited in galleries and museums, including the V&A. You are guaranteed to want to start coiling once you have seen her work, so clear the kitchen table now.



Fri.3th Feb. 8 p.m. EMMA JOHNSTONE makes double-walled bowls that are raku fired to give a pronounced crackle in the glaze. The inner bowl is then gilded with a precious metal to produce a stunning contrast. Emma is a popular demonstrator at events such as Art in Action and will show us her special throwing technique.



MARCH MEETING Please note that this meeting will be held on Saturday March 13th from 10 a.m.- 4 p.m. Our guests will be MAY LING BEADSMOORE and ANDREW MASON. There will be a small charge to cover the extra costs of this special day. Further details will appear in our next issue.

OTHER EVENTS

9th Oct– 18th Jan. **V & A MUSEUM** Cromwell Rd SW7
Gothic Art for England 1400-1547. This exhibition brings together sumptuous objects including tapestries, paintings, sculpture and jewellery.

11th Nov. **BONHAMS**, New Bond St.
Contemporary Ceramics Auction

15th-16th Nov. **ART IN CLAY** at The Maltings,
Farnham, Surrey. For more info: 0115 987 3966

19th Nov – 3rd Dec. **JOANNA BIRD**, 19 Grove Park
Terrace, London, W4. Winter Show including work from Prue Cooper, Judith Rowe, Richard Batterham, Chris Keenan, Philip & Frannie Leach. There will also be work from Rie, Leach, Cardew, Hamada, Braden and Pleydell-Bouverie.

TRANSFORMING PORCELAIN Zelli Invites all porcelain artists to interpret one of eight extracts chosen from Ovid's *Metamorphoses*. Selected entries will be exhibited at Zelli Gallery before being judged by a panel of experts. £3,000 will be awarded to the winner. For more information and entry forms send SAE and £2.00 to Zelli Awards, 30a Dover St. London W1S 4NB. Deadline 20th October 2003.

MEMBERSHIP NEWS

We have 5 new members and we are delighted to welcome them: **Peter & Heather Nissan** – we have a note to say that Peter is an artist/designer/musician and that they are based in Mill Hill. **Susan Lumby** lives at Lemsford and her interest in pottery is "a bit of everything until I find the technique that really grabs me". **Edwina Wilkes**, a teacher from Berkhamsted is interested in raku, hand building and porcelain. **Avril Skinner** a student member, works in abstract and figurative hand built sculptures. In addition, she intends taking up throwing.

PITSTONE 2003

After a good start with our "tidy-up", the June Open Day and the Raku party, things went rapidly downhill in July. Tina couldn't make it because of a family illness, so I was on my own again. Fortunately it was a quiet day with only Mervyn and his grandchildren as have-a-go customers. To be honest, I can't remember the August Open Day at all so I suspect it was very quiet as well.

September, on the other hand, was anything but quiet. With help from Sylvia, Mervyn and Tina, we dealt with a steady stream of have-a-gos and Mervyn's deadly sales techniques moved a lot of the pots donated by members. By the end of a busy day we had raised almost £100, allowing us to make a substantial donation to the Museum and to top up the Raku funds.

On the whole it has been a mixed year but we now have a much improved working area, all that we need now are some more people to turn out to use it! As usual, we would welcome donations of biscuit pots for the have-a-go and also glazed pots to sell. They don't have to be masterpieces, so if you need to clear your shelves to make space for the wonderful work you will be making next year, we can take them off your hands.

Jan Kent

POTCRAWL REPORT

Happily, the Potcrawl coincided with the last of the long, glorious summer we enjoyed this year. I shall always remember it as a time of gentle sunshine in rampant gardens, the crisply brown lawns studded with fallen apples. There were also, of course, lots of desirable pots.

It all began with a trip to Arthur's. I set off expecting to find only two or three people had turned up, so it was a lovely surprise to find Arthur already busily entertaining a roomful of happy potcrawlers. Arthur had arranged a kiln opening especially for us, but he was worried that, distracted by a phone call, he had overfired the kiln to well over 1300°C. As the lid came up we all 'ooed' and 'ahhed' at the gorgeous pots in view. Well done Arthur. Phew!

With his engineering background, Arthur's workshop is well organised and he makes most of his tools. He explained how he keeps track of his glazes and how he records the firings; he also showed us a set of graduated formers for measuring pots and the excellent harps he designed and made. Look out for Mervyn's account of Arthur's tips.

This had been a fascinating and entertaining visit and we all set off looking forward to Marilyn's. Although Marilyn may sometimes feel that she is off the edge of the map in relation to the rest of the Guild, it was surprisingly easy and quick to find her, and very rewarding, too. She had organised a joint exhibition with a stained glass maker, a silversmith and an artist. The exhibits had filled her large conservatory and an upstairs studio. We were warmly greeted with cups of tea and after exploring the fine show, feeling hungry, we all headed for the garden which is large, fascinating and, well, rampant! Following a leisurely picnic lunch there was still plenty of time to visit more open studios, so we all headed off to Barnet to find Annegret and any others we could fit in. This is the life!

Annagret greeted us with tea and cake and a grand display of her beautiful stoneware. She explained how her glazes work. A white rutile glaze over a tenmoku can produce a lustrous blue that breaks brown on edges, or it may give soft browns and greens if the elements in her kiln are nearly finished. She fires to about 1300°C, so they do not last long. She also explained how to make wide flatware, such as trays, that do not curl up.

Annagret's tip for making tray

Roll out the base, trim it and place on a bat on the wheel. Add a few throwing rings. Then add a coil to the rim and throw that to make a low wall. Leave on the bat and do not touch it until it has dried sufficiently to release itself from the bat. (Her bats are made of marine ply and lightly varnished to preserve them).

Our last port of call was Vivienne's, who was having one of those days when no-one comes all day and then everyone comes at once. However, there was plenty of space and lots of pots to be found wherever one went! Best of all, she had dragged a momentum wheel into the garden and soon set about demonstrating throwing off the hump. I could have sat there until the sun set.

Sunday started off quietly with a small group at Paul's. This is a real little gem of a place – his house front is painted in unmissable fuschia colours, so no problem spotting it, once you have navigated yourself through Abbots Langley. Paul had lots to explain about his sculpting projects, how he uses stone and also how he casts in fibreglass and then creates a bronze look-alike surface. His garden is a sculpture park complete with water features. A look into his workshop showed us what a proficient potter he is as well. We all admired the tiles he is making for an old French farmhouse. He also works in occasional projects in schools with Jola Spytowska. He explained how he adapts his methods when working with young children and showed us photos of the beautiful tiled panels that had been produced. He went on to demonstrate his system for making non-curling tiles.

Before leaving Paul's place, we had a look at the exhibition he had set up together with John Blackwell, a potter from Cardiff. I especially liked John's ceramic ships whose surfaces echoed the bright colours in the photographs of weathered scrap metal that were displayed alongside.

Paul's system for making non-curling tiles

A well-grogged clay is required such as one of the Earth-stone clays. Often he uses a mixture, e.g. of doble raku with something else. The clay is prepared by hand as he does not use a pugmill. As he kneaded a lump of terracotta, he said he did not worry about the odd air bubble at this stage as a hatpin could them out later. He slices the clay with a double strung harp (guitar strings work well – would violin string do, I wondered), This

left a thin pad of clay at the base which he uses as a pad to work on. The actual tiles is the slice above and is approximately 2 cm. thick. He sliced several in this way. The soft tiles are stacked up between plasterboards lined with decorator's lining paper. Often the stack is wrapped in polythene to control the rate of drying. The tiles are gently rolled with a rolling-pin when they have firmed up.

Throughout the whole process the tiles should be handled as little as possible, to avoid distortions. He prefers to cut the tiles to shape using a sharp knife round a former. Tile-cutters can cause problems if the clay sticks inside. Thanks Paul, some time I would like to see how you make tiles the African way using pads of clay.

Lunch at Ruby's was most congenial. Ruby is still waiting for her new potting shed (join the club!) but meantime works in the garage. She was preparing for the start of the teaching year in adult education, and will be glad to have more storage space for all the materials she has to provide for her groups.

The weekend's potcrawl finished with a flourish at Doug's. The riverside was a real picture of lush jungle growth and green grass. A swan glided past and one felt reassured that there were no crocodiles after all. A very small girl in a gingham dress, helped by her elder brother saw me safely across the river, and as I stepped over to Doug's studio, the wind blew softly in the willows

If you missed this trip, watch the Guild's website or the Newsletter for Doug's next open studio and give yourself a treat. His pots are irresistible and Simone bakes the best cakes in the world.

Finally, I would like to thank all the potters for having us. It was a super weekend. Thank you all. There was room for more at all the venues, so I hope that if we do have this again, we get more interest from the rest of the membership.

Ros McGuirk

POTTERS TIPS

During our visit to see Arthur Ball on our recent Potcrawl, he threw out various ideas and these are a few of them:

Arthur has been a student at pottery classes for many years and he kept finding that his various pottery tools, and particularly sponges, would be borrowed by other students. Gathering up recognisable tools was easy, but can you be sure you can recognise a sponge as your own? At the time, Arthur's late wife Margaret often dyed wool to weave into cloth, so Arthur asked her to dye his sponges bright red, thereby making them easily recognisable as his own.

2) Rather than keep detailed records for the sizes of each type of teapot or soup bowl that he liked to make, Arthur made simple internal or external templates to measure the sizes. These templates were made from thin formica or plastics sheet material and had the name of the item they were to be used for painted on them. The advantage was that it was only necessary to pick up the appropriate templates when making a short run of pots and the sizes were all at hand. Arthur found this more convenient than looking up records and setting callipers for each size.

3) Some years ago, Arthur's daughter, Christine, pointed out that when a bunch of flowers has been in a vase for some time they usually need a bit of grooming, with some which have passed their best being discarded. She pointed out that it was difficult to keep the remaining flowers looking tidy, since they usually tended to fall outwards due to the reduced quantity. Arthur put his inventive mind to this problem and produced a "reducing collar" to fit inside the top of the vase, thereby giving a restricted neck size. The smaller neck size made it easier to arrange the remaining flowers neatly. He had made several of these collars to complement the vases which were taken out of the kiln during our visit to his workshop.

We think this is a really good idea, so we are awarding Arthur a prize for this particular invention (£15 book token). Potters who can offer something extra to their customers certainly have an advantage in the rather strange market conditions that currently exist.

FOOTNOTE

What about your own original Potters Tips? Send them in for the next Newsletter and you could win a prize.

Editor

NOTEBOOK

Newsletter postal problems

Many Guild members will be unaware that because of a simple mistake, the Autumn Newsletter had been sent out with a postage underpayment of 2 pence – at 44 pence instead of 46 pence. This trivial sum led to a lot of difficulty for your committee and many members, since the response from the Post Office was arbitrary and completely uncoordinated.

Some copies were delivered as normal without any problems. Some members received a card from the Post Office, asking them to call there for "an item". On presenting the card they were asked to pay 2 pence undercharge and £1.00 service charge to receive their Newsletter. The committee only became aware of the difficulty when some members phoned to explain what had happened. A few follow-up phone calls revealed

that some other members had not received the Newsletter at all.

At our committee meeting on 12th September we agreed to phone all members that we thought may not have received a Newsletter, the results were then phoned through to me and I posted copies to those who had not received them (18 members) and sent letters to those we could not reach by telephone (25) and then posted further copies to those who had not received their copy.

Apart from the obvious ones, the primary reason for wanting to be sure that all members had this Newsletter was the fact that the Potters Open Day applications and membership forms were enclosed with this issue. Details of the Potcrawl were also enclosed.

We are very sorry about the problem and the obvious inconvenience it has caused some members. If you had to pay for collecting your copy, please see Jan Kent at one of our meetings and he will reimburse you.

Some lessons have been learned from the above, the most obvious being that some Post Office staff were prepared to cause an astonishing amount of inconvenience and additional expenditure to a large number of people, (to say nothing of additional work for their own staff) for a truly paltry amount. Such an attitude cannot enhance the Post Office image when e-mail continues to encroach on their market. Apart from correct postage, a return address on the envelopes may assist in identifying delivery difficulties in future.

Our membership records had incorrect/out of date phone numbers in quite a few cases. Please ensure that your phone number is clearly given on your POD/application/Membership application.

Membership Subscriptions

Membership subscriptions. Which have remained the same for the past two years, were due on October 1st. At our committee meeting on 12th September we agreed not to increase subscriptions for this next year. Jan Kent, our Treasurer, reported that we currently hold sufficient funds to support the Guild. We now pay increased amounts for demonstrations and some activities as well as anticipating some other expenditure increases, but believe we have no need to increase subscriptions at this time.

P.O.D. Saturday 8th November

The application form and poster for our Potters Open Day were in the previous Newsletter (Please give me a ring on 01442 242 332 if you did not receive one, and I will send you one or phone Harry Karnac for details on 01895 631 738).

Our demonstrators will be Steve Harrison, who will let us into the secrets of making his very desirable salt glazed ware, and Russell Collins with his big cider jars and stories of the early days at Harrow Art School and a lifetime running a very successful pottery business.

Demonstrations start at 10.00 a.m. but doors open at 9.00 a.m., so take this opportunity to arrive early and purchase books from A & C Black at special discount prices. If stocks run out, copies can be ordered but why not be early so that you can buy your books and take them with you on the day?

Potclays Ltd. will also be with us having a complete range of tools and materials for sale, at special discount prices.

Friday meetings – Parking.

When the Methodist Church car park is full, members may use space at the restaurant car park next door to the Church.

Website

The Guild website can be found at www.thedcpg.org.uk
Our website manager is John Powell on e-mail john.powell22@btinternet.com or use the address on the website feedback page.

Editor

COMMITTEE LIST

Murray Fieldhouse (President) 01442-851 229

Northfields Studio, Tring, Herts. HP23 5QW

Mervyn Fitzwilliam (Chair & Newsletter) 01442-242 332

"Longfield", Bulstrode Lane, Felden,

Hemel Hempstead, Herts. HP3 0BP

Jan Kent (Treasurer/Pitstone Organiser) 01908-674 051

48 Coleshill Place, Bradwell Common, Milton Keynes,

Bucks. MK13 8DP

John Beckley (Secretary) 01923-822 659

44 Wolsey Road, Northwood, Mdx. HA6 2EN

Digby Stott (Membership) 01442-404 122

"Broomfield", 36 Box Lane, Boxmoor, Herts, HP3 0DJ

Joy Wills (Open Day Organiser) 01296-481 015

21 Tindal Road, Aylesbury, Bucks. HP20 1HT

Ros McGuirk (Programme Organiser) 01727-834 326

13 The Park, St. Albans, Herts. AL1 4RU

Janet Collings (Librarian) 01442-822 510

41 Grove Road, Tring, Herts. HP23 5PD

Kirsteen Holuj (Publicity) 01280-823 331

5 Bourton Grounds, Buckingham, Bucks. MK18 7DX

Harry Karnac (Newsletter sub-editor) 01895-631 738

Sylvia Fitzwilliam (Advertising) 01442-242 332

John Powell (Website Co-ordinator) 01494-774 398

2 Abbots Place, Chesham, Bucks. HP5 3HL

Claymates© 2004 Calendar:

THE BARE FACTS – Twelve potters –

No clothes ! – One Calendar

The calendar was originally dreamed up during a merry new year's party, by the staff of Bowie & Hulbert, Contemporary Ceramics Gallery in Hay-on-Wye. Coven Publications was formed and then began the hard work of talking 12 of the leading potters in the country into taking their clothes off !

The 12 potters – SVEND BAYER, PETER BEARD, DAVID BINNS, JACK DOHERTY, IAN G REGORY, RICHARD GODFERY, SIMON HULBERT & BILL PARKES, JOHN JEFFS, TOFF MILWAY, PHIL ROGERS, JOHN POLLEX & JOHN WILLIAMS weren't content to stay behind closed doors and made full use of locations – Plymouth Hoe, Eastnor Castle and a rocky coastline provide the backdrop for some of the images.

Sales will help support the work of WORLD VISION INTERNATIONAL (www.wvi.org) with their commitment to the Manatuto Water Filter Project in East Timor. The project is run by the women potters of Manatuto Village, who make ceramic water filter containers. The money raised from sales of the calendar will help to continue their development and training by sup-porting a ceramics consultant to work with them.

Sara Bowie, the owner of Bowie & Hulbert, has explained that the cost of producing this calendar will be in the region of £5000 so sales have got to cover this cost before any money can go to World Vision International.

The calendar will be on sale from Bowie & Hulbert, 5 Market St. Hay-on-Wye, Hereford HR2 5AF tel: 01497 821026 e-mail: info@hayclay.co.uk and Contemporary Ceramics 7 Marshall St. London W1V 1LP

tel 020 7437 7604. Cost £9.95 + £1.50 p&p

NIC COLLINS: Anagama kiln building and firing
The Barn Pottery Mortonhamstead
24th August – 1st September 2002

The course began with a welcome drink and a slide talk to illustrate the possibilities offered by the wood fired kilns built and fired by Nic during several years living and working in Dartmoor. We keenly anticipated the experience about to unfold.

Day One Construction of formers to support brick arches.

Course members were divided into 3 teams and, following the kiln plans, we began to create the three sections in front of the chimney.

With the wooden formers in place we were now ready to show our bricklaying skills, the mortar mix simply sand and clay. The keystone bricks were cut individually from HTI bricks to complete the arches. Side stoke holes were carefully positioned at intervals between areas where our pots were to be stacked.

Days Two and Three Stacking pots, installing stainless steel fire bars and insulating outside of kiln. Pots were stacked on shelves and tumble stacked in places in order to capture the enhanced surfaces created by ash and the flame path. Shelves, furniture and pots were separated by a wadding of FR clay and sometimes seashells. The outside of the kiln was lined with ceramic blanket held in place by wire mesh and then rendered with a sand/clay/pearlite/mix.

Days Three, Four and Five Kiln firing – teams of 2 doing 4-hour shifts – everyone helping at higher temperatures and side stoking.

The firing schedule

Initially outside firebox to drive off residual dampness
Flame introduced inside firebox
Steady increase in temperature
Reduction initiated at 1100°C
Continued until cone 12 at front of kiln (dry ash thrown in firebox intermittently)
Side stoking commenced until cone 12 down throughout kiln
Kiln crash cooled and clamped with sand/clay mix
At the higher temperatures, reduction was regulated by stoking and the use of the chimney damper.

Nic's Experience really counted at this stage, coaxing every degree of temperature from each additional billet and faggot. With the kiln pyro reading 1420°C at times, this was not a place for the faint hearted.

Days Six and Seven Visits to Chuck and Sue Schwartz, Sven Bayer and Clive Bowen while the kiln cooled down.

Day Eight Unpacking the kiln and large pot throwing demonstration.

The focus of the whole week was revealed to us as our pots were removed from the embers. The pots were removed and set out in the same sequence as the kiln-pack in order to understand how the position of the pot responds to the flame path. Using a limited number of glazes – shino, celadon and ash, in combination with kiln atmosphere, embers and fly ash, a whole range of glaze surfaces had been achieved. The firing had been an unqualified success.

The week as a whole is an unmissable experience for anyone wishing to be initiated in processes of wood-fired Anagama. The pit roast and pizza oven suppers were also unforgettable evenings. Thanks to Nic and Sabine for their energy and generosity to make this a very special week in the beautiful rural setting of Moretonhamstead.

Go on expand your mind and your ceramic experience !

Paul Rowbottom
22nd July 2003.



Top left: Setting up the kiln formers

Above: Building the kiln over the formers

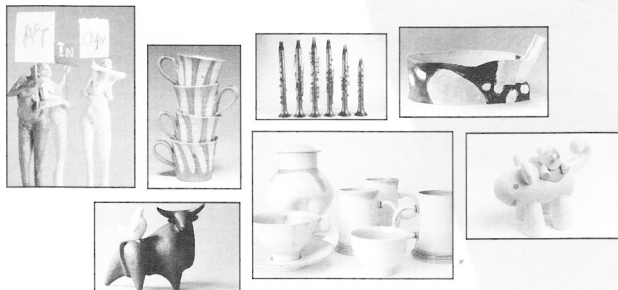
Left: Packing the kiln

Bottom left: Preparing pots for the kiln

Below: The pots after firing



THE 7TH
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& CERAMICS**
SHOW 2003



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SATURDAY, SUNDAY

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BRUNEL UNIVERSITY ARTS CENTRE 2003/4 WEEKENDS

October

- 11/12 Mixed Media Sculpture *Jo Miller*
18/19 Throwing for the Uncertain *Beryl Sedgwick*
25/26 Watercolour *Jason Bowyer*
25/26 Creative Decoration Techniques For The Potter *Claire Ireland*

November

- 15/16 Sculpture: Life Modelling In Wax *Julian Cooksey*
29/30 Ceramics: Further Throwing *Beryl Sedgwick*
29 Introduction To Pastels *Linda Austin*
30 Textiles: Creative Felt-Making *Douglas Anderson*

December

- 6/7 Sculpture: Portrait In Clay *Jo Miller*
6/7 Glazing *Brian Usher*

2004 January

- 24/25 Porcelain: The Drinking Vessel *Anne Kari Ramberg Marshall*

February

- 21/22 Sculpture: Life Modelling In Clay *Jo Miller*
21/22 Ceramics: Mouldmaking & Slipcasting *David Cowley*

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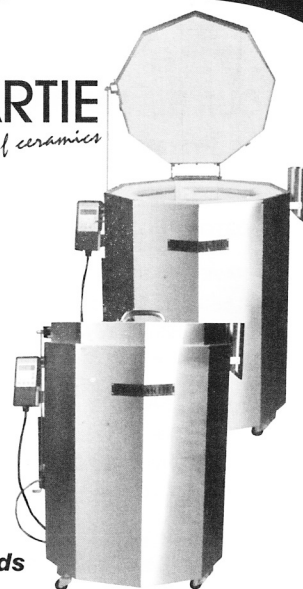
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