

IN THIS ISSUE -

OBITUARY: MICHAEL CASSON

Open Day Demonstrations by:
STEVE HARRISON & RUSSELL COLLINS

ANNA LAMBERT Demonstration
PETER BEARD "





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

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 OD] 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 responsible for the content of 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

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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Safety

FRONT COVER PHOTOGRAPH

Steve Harrison (left) and Russell Collins

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EDITORIAL

Our "Potters Open Day" was very memorable this year, as the enthusiasm and precise skills of Steve Harrison contrasted with the dash and flair of some outstanding throwing from Russell Collins. Many people, including our two demonstrators, took the opportunity of telling me how much they had enjoyed the day.

When trying to keep control of such an event it is all too easy to forget special requests and notes that one is supposed to remember.

Please refer to "Notebook" for details of some of the things that I have remembered, and also other things that I have partly forgotten!

Mervyn Fitzwilliam

GUILD EVENTS

Meetings are held at Kings Langley Methodist Church Hall, starting at 8 p.m.

Fri. Feb 13 (not Feb 3 as incorrectly stated in last issue) 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 give a stunning contrast. Emma is a popular demonstrator at events such as Art in Action and will show us her special throwing technique.

SATURDAY March 13th The Saturday Special' with MAY LING BEADSMOORE and ANDY MASON. The meeting will start at 10 a.m. and finish at 4 p.m. at the Kings Langley Methodist Church Hall.

May Ling uses a variety of techniques including slab building and throwing to produce her delicately textured and softly coloured pots. Soda glazing enhances these tactile pieces which include mugs, bowls, plates, cheese platters and seafood 'boats'.

May Ling has worked with John Leach, Josie Walters and John Wheeldon. She studied ceramics at Derby and Staffordshire Universities and is a fellow of the CPA. She has been enjoying a short "sabbatical" due to the arrival of her first baby last August.

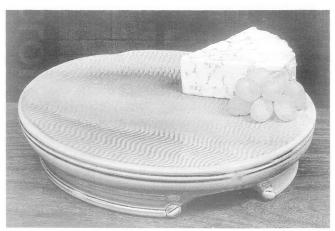
ANDREW MASON comes from North Staffs. and has been strongly influenced by the wares of the Potteries. Even at school he was a keen potter. He went to Art School and took a Studio Pottery course. Most of Andy's pots are thrown and the form reflects those of the classical wares of Stoke, such as Spode and early Wedgwood. He will describe the series of cone 6 ("earthstone") glazes that he has developed, with their richly coloured and lustrous surfaces.



May Ling Beadsmoore Soda Glazed Ceramics

May Ling and Andy work together at Darley Mill Pottery near Derby. They are keen and enthusiastic potters who have much to teach us about their methods of making and glazing. Don't miss this opportunity to study in depth some new ideas and techniques in pottery.

There will be a small charge of £5 for members and £10 for non-members. Bring a packed lunch. Tea and coffee will be provided for free.



CHESS PLATTER
Soda Glazed Stoneware by May Ling Beadsmoore

Fri. 2nd April PAUL JACKSON makes bold brightly coloured pots. The forms are generally thrown and altered. Terracotta is used which is then slipped and decorated. The human form has long been a motif in his work. Pots in his nude series explore the relationship between the clay form and the nude. Paul studied at Harrow, is a member of the CPA and works in Cornwall. He exhibits widely at home and abroad and also sells his work through galleries.







Paul Jackson

Fri. 14th May (note this is a change of date)

TRISH CHILES is a prolific producer of finely thrown domestic ware with beautiful lustrous glazes. She writes as follows: "My work is stoneware, reduction-fired domestic and decorative pottery. I specialize in thrown spheres, and in piercing which I use for drainer dishes and candle lanterns. I have been earning my living from the sale of my work since 1979". This will be a demonstration only evening, so come and learn the tricks and tips of a crafty potter.



TRISH CHILES

MEMBERS EXHIBITION IN MAY 2004

In response to the decision made at the AGM to hold another exhibition, I have booked the New Gallery at Olney for next May. Last year's show was fairly successful and I think we can improve on it. The exhibition is open to all members under the following conditions:

- 1. Submit only your best work
- 2. Be prepared for some selection
- 3. Take photos of a few pots that are typical of those you will be exhibiting. These will be added to the Guild's own 'gallery' for the next Open Day and to our next website, when I have finished with them.

Last year there was a trend in the exhibition towards finely finished pots and figurative work. Generally, the rustic and also the more conceptual and abstract work did not do so well. The gallery is well patronised in April and May by American tourists on the Princess Di trail, which possibly accounts for some of the sales. This time we will ask visitors to sign a book to find out more.

To enter your work in the exhibition, simply phone me on **01727 834326** as soon as possible and leave a message with your name and address. <u>FEBRUARY 20TH</u> is the last possible date for submission.

Ros McGuirk

MEMBERS' GALLERY AND THE NEWSLETTER

John Powell has done an excellent job on the Guild's website, including our very own gallery. Please do not be backward in coming forward with photos of your latest work, so that he can keep the gallery up-to-date. Similarly, send him your photos of any other interesting pottery-related events, e.g. exhibitions demonstrations. Please note, Mervyn also likes these for the Newsletter, and I will be collecting a member's gallery to display at the next Open Day. We do pass items between us, so your stuff should be well publicised. Our addresses are printed on the committee list. Have you been on any good courses lately and would you like to tell us about them? Remember that a guild is only as good as its membership, so let's be having it.

Ros McGuirk

To view website go to: www.thedcpg.org.uk/homepage.htm

OTHER EVENTS

Sunday March 14th from 11 a.m.

DOUG JONES OPEN DAY

114 Norfolk Rd. Rickmansworth Herts WD3 1LA

Come and buy a pot for Mothering Sunday

For further information ring 01923 770913

Feb.20-24 "COLLECT" – the new art fair for contemporary objects organised by the Crafts Council, at the V&A

South Kensington. Tel: 0207 806 2512

March 6 2.30 pm "Rethinking 20thC Ceramics". A lecture by EDMUND DE WAAL at the Crafts Council, 44a Pentonville Rd. London. For booking & info. contact Isobel Denyer 01937 835632

March 11 'A beautiful & ingenious art' — a 1-day conference on Spanish & Italian lusterware. Wallace Collection, Manchester Sq. London. Advance booking essential. e-mail: booking@wallacecollection.org Tel: 0207 563 951.

Feb.11-March 11: 'Contemporary Potters' including work by Fritsch, Casanovas, Baldwin, Duckworth, Jennifer Lee et al. Gallerie Bresson 15 Royal Arcade, Old Bond St

Tel: 0207 491 1706

Till March 1 'Making Waves' contemporary ceramics & tapestries with work by Nicholas Arroyave-Portela. Gallery Flow, 1-5 Needham Rd. London tel: 0207 243 0782

From February 'Making it yours' – the Craft Council's new rolling programme of exhibitions drawn from their collection. The first one focuses on ceramics – Leach, Rie, Coper etc. 44a Pentonville Rd tel:0207 278 7700

MEMBERSHIP NEWS

We have six new members at the time of writing: Joy Arucci and her partner are new family members from High Wycombe. Joy has an interest in all types of pottery and ceramic work. Mrs. D.C.Jolly of Chorley Wood and her husband Dr.Jolly have also joined as family members. Mrs.Jolly is interested in all aspects of pottery. Lucinda Brown is a studio potter from Middle Claydon in Bucks. Currently we have no details of the type of work she makes, but no doubt we will be told in due course. Diane Simoneau lives in Kings Langley and is a teacher. She is interested in any kind of pottery but has not yet explored porcelain, although this is the next thing on her agenda.

As always we are delighted to welcome our new members and hope you will all find the Guild helpful and friendly. At our recent evening meeting I explained that I sometimes forget to welcome our visitors and new members. I will try to make amends on this, but I would ask our longer term members to be sure to approach new faces for a chat, since it is all too easy to greet old friends leaving our new members more than a little isolated. If you do not know anyone at a meeting please seek out Ros McGuirk, John Beckley or any other committee member for a chat (see committee list in this Newsletter) or ask them to introduce you to members with similar interests to your own. Remember that we have an extensive library, raku facilities, a soda kiln, meetings, pot crawls, exhibitions and workshop events, so please ask any committee member about these things.

Editor

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2003

For the benefit of those who were not at our AGM, the Chairman's Report is reproduced here:

Chairman's Report 10th October 2003

At our AGM last year we again welcomed John and Caroline Romer, as our guests, with John presenting the prizes for the 3rd Stan Romer Award, memorably won by Ruby Sharp, with Lip Ong & John Beckley as runners-up.

Workshops

Three were held during the year

Sara Robertson - 12th April; Creative printing texturing, Doug Jones - 1st March: Skills enhancement, Doug Jones - 15th June: Life Sculpture

Attendance was good, but owing to very last minute applications the 1st March Workshop was of restricted size.

Evening meetings, Pot Crawl and Exhibition

Ros McGuirk has continued to arrange a series of excellent and interesting evening meetings for us with demonstrations and slides from Chris Bramble, Jo Connell, Lisa Hammond, Paul McAllister, Lucy Bilcock, Carolyn Whyman and Marcio Mattos, with Anna Lambert being our demonstrator this evening.

Ros has set out another outstanding programme of meetings for the coming year and works tirelessly to come up with interesting events for us, including our Exhibition at Olney, with assistance from Vivienne Rodwell-Davies, also the Pot Crawl , which was very enjoyable, being her brain child this year.

Potters Open Day

Joy Wills organised our Potters Open Day (POD) last November, with Philomena Pretsell, Karin Hessenberg & Mark Pedro de la Torre. She is now putting the final touches to this years POD, which should be another unmissable event. Harry Karnac is taking care of the bookings.

Pitstone

This year we have upgraded the Pitstone Raku site, with a new paved area and some tidying – up. The support from Jan Kent and Tina Hall continues to be a valuable part of our interface with the public at Pitstone.

Membership

Digby Stott continues to be our Membership Secretary. Currently our membership is approximately 10% lower than last year, at 128.

Newsletter

We have strong support from Harry and Ruth Karnac, in the production of our Newsletter, and are very grateful for the continuing support of Maurice Grainger and Alpine Press for the high quality printing we receive. Thanks go to all those who contribute articles for us.

Library

Our Library continues to be a valuable resource for members, with Janet Collings being our Librarian.

Committee changes

Ruth Karnac and Caroline Hughes are both stepping down from the committee this year and we thank them both for the work they have done for us. Ruth is a founder member of the guild and has served on the committee as our past Chairman and committee member for many years.

John Powell, Kirsteen Holuj, and Sylvia Fitzwilliam have joined our committee during the year, John being our Website Co-ordinator, and Kirsteen our Publicity Officer and Newsletter distributor, with Sylvia now being our Advertising Manager.

Committee helpers

Jane Kilvington continues to help us with Workshop booking details, Tina Hall manages our evening tea breaks, and Caroline Hughes will continue to be our assistant Librarian when she is able to do so. We are also grateful to others for the help they give at various events.

Conclusion

In conclusion I would like to point out that the DCPG is simply a vehicle for anyone interested in any type of pottery, at any level. Your Committee really want to help with moving the guild in the direction that members want it to go. If you have any ideas about events, activities etc. please do talk to any committee member about them, since we will only know about your thoughts if you talk to us. Do you want more Workshops? If so who with? More Exhibitions? Where? Do you want your own "sales fair"? how, where, when? This year has been overshadowed by world events and reduced economic activity in many areas. It is also apparent that school pottery activities are continually being reduced.

We know that other guilds and societies are seeing membership reductions, so it is even more important now that we ensure people with an interest in pottery / sculpture / ceramics know that we are in existence to help them. Be sure to tell others how to find us and join us.

Mervyn Fitzwilliam (Chairman)

OBITUARY: MICHAEL CASSON

Michael Casson died on 12th December 2003. His passing will leave a large hole in many of our lives, since he has influenced so many of us in the pottery world. He has a special place in our Guild history, since he was at our inaugural meeting held in Heath barn some 30 years ago, and also demonstrated his skills at a past Guild Open Day. Mick has been a personal friend since I first met him and joined one of his pottery classes in the very early 1960s at Harrow Art School. He was always an enthusiastic and inspirational figure.

Mick had a very strong influence on my own life because when I built my first electric wheel, he came to see it with Victor Margrie and Russell Collins. His delight at the way it worked made him very keen that I should build wheels for studio potters, and he eventually had his own way in this.

Mick was always very optimistic and enthusiastic and his cheerful attitude was very infectious, making us all strive harder to achieve the desired results with our pottery. His book *The Craft of the Potter* published in 1977 was an essential reference work for most of us, and was produced after his very successful television series of the same name in 1976.

Most of us are familiar with the salt glazed stoneware Mick produced in recent years, with his jugs always being sought after. I remember that he was always talking about the spouts and handles, to which he gave a lot of attention at those early classes.

Sylvia and I attended Mick's funeral in the forest of Dean, with Murray and Dorley Fieldhouse. Mick's wife Sheila and their children Ben, Lucy and Clare attended with their own families, and there were many other family members plus a large number of well-known potters also in attendance. Eulogies were given by Mick's brother, Rodney, and also by Wally Keeler, Steve Harrison and Jeremy Stuart who worked with Mick at Wobage Farm.

Mervyn Fitzwilliam

EULOGY

Only Mick's family and the world of pottery can know what an honour it is for me to be speaking at his funeral.

Mick was a massive influence on my life long before I met him. At school in the North East, I found myself in a Billy Elliot world of pottery with little support or guidance. Mick was the trustworthy voice of a potter inside my head. It came from his television series "The Craft of a Potter" which felt as though it had been made especially for me. In my head he remained for seven years, enthusing and guiding without ever knowing it.

At college, I was faced with the real Mick Casson. I was the student who suggested his name as a visiting lecturer and from that first meeting we struck up a friendship. He has continued to influence and support me in my life as a potter and as a friend, knowing when to enthuse, when to guide and when to intervene for the best. He was the one who told me how to handle the Royal College during a difficult period I was having as a student there. "Steve", he said, "give 'em hell!"

Mick Casson has been an intrinsic part of my life for the last 14 years as he has inspired my working lifestyle. He was always ready to discuss ideas, dreams and problems over the kitchen table. No-one's repertoire of "pottalk" comes anywhere near his!

His passing leaves me where I first began with him. Once more he is the unseen presence in my life and work. The wheel has turned full circle. But I am a better person and a better potter because of him. He will continue to be a powerful influence even though we can no longer meet. He will go on crafting me for years to come ---- but, without doubt, I will continue to miss him.

Steve Harrison

CORRESPONDENCE

I took some of our Bramley (windfall) apples along to the Open Day and passed them on to guild members in exchange for a donation to charity. We raised £10 for The Hospice of St. Francis and Annegret Ostberg sent me a note to say she had made several delicious apple crumbles with the apples she had received. Inspired, I collected up a few more apples and made my own apple crumble, also delicious.

Arthur Ball has written to me twice:

[After receiving his book token]..... I have never won anything in my life, except when I was in the cubs, when I won a kettle. My Mother was sure I had nicked it and she died not knowing I had done a brave deed...... There are still a few dozen pots to be fired [after the pot crawl] but I have run out of gas; I now await "my man" to call and get two bottles of gas for me.

The winter comes but slowly, which frightens me a bit; the long cold days, dark from waking to sleeping, but I am so glad I no longer live north of Watford Gap......

Arthur Ball 20/10/03

[Arthur left me a phone message which indicated that he had not received his Newsletter, I immediately sent him a copy with a hastily scribbled note]. The following is just a part of Arthur's reply:

Dear Sylvia & Mervyn,

It was good to get your note written at 10.30 pm - 1 hope I was not rude & it sounded as if I had my M.D.'s hat on.

.....I had thought the £15 was the first payment on my potters pension – I now Know that I have to bribe you into saying my idea was the best next time.....

Arthur Ball 24/11/03

As those of you who were at Open Day in November will know, I have at long last resigned from the committee. In spite of the fact that I have greatly enjoyed being closely involved with Guild activities over many years, I do feel a certain relief at letting go.

I would like to thank the committee for arranging a 'thank you' present of a year's membership of the Hayward Gallery. I have already made one visit and was delighted to see that there were modern studio pots among other prestigious art objects which the National Art Collection Fund has 'saved for the nation'. The potters were Joanna Constantinides, Elizabeth Fritsch, Judy Trim and several others. With the Turner Prize winner being a potter (sort of!) perhaps ceramics have at last come in from the cold — more of that anon

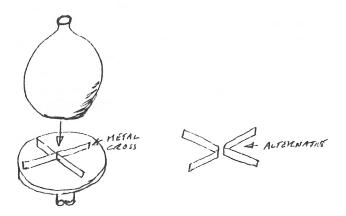
I'll still be around now and then, so I'll see you in 2004.

Ruth Karnac

POTTERS TIPS

With no other tips received from guild members I pass on another tip from Arthur Ball:

When pouring glaze over a pot which is standing within a suitable vessel, Arthur uses a small whirler with a metal cross made from thin metal as a stand for the pot. Doing this means that the underside of the pot is clear of glaze, and the glaze does not become a mess at the point where the pot rests on the whirler. The cross can be made out of banding iron. It is not even necessary to join the metal at the crossing point if you use two pieces of banding iron, bend them at 90 degrees and place them in position on the whirler as shown.



NOTEBOOK

Following the AGM I am pleased to report that Ros McGuirk has agreed to be our Vice Chairman, and was voted into that position unanimously at our committee meeting on 17th October.

Guild Exhibition 2004

At the AGM we discussed the possibility of another Exhibition at Olney. This idea met with general approval, so Ros McGuirk undertook the task of approaching the owner of the "New Studio" on this subject. The outcome is that the guild is booked for another exhibition at that venue during May 2004 (see details from Ros.)

Lost Property

A small black cool-bag, with the logo "California Innovations" was left behind at the Potters Open Day. Also, Marion Franses told me that she had lost a small black bag which was used to hold a camera flash unit. This was lost at a Guild event, even possibly the Potters Open Day last year. Please give me a ring if you have news of either item.

Some of those other forgotten things....

I completely forgot to ask anyone to write about our Open Day demonstrations for the Newsletter. Ros later volunteered to write about Russell (well, I did have to twist her arm a bit) and I find myself writing about Steve. Fortunately Vivienne Rodwell-Davis has sent me copies of her drawings with some notes to help me.

Newsletters to & from other groups

Once in a while other guilds correspond with me regarding their committee changes, and therefore changes of address for them to receive copies of our newsletter.

I thought that I would give you an update on these guilds and other groups who receive our own newsletter and details of the procedure we follow for newsletters received from those groups.

The other groups we distribute to are:

Bucks Potters, London Potters, Midland Potters, North Wales Potters, South Wales Potters, West Country Potters, Southern Ceramics Group, Ceramics Ireland, East Anglia Potters, Dorset Potters, Kent Potters, Scottish Potters, Nizni Novgorod (Russia).

Also: Ceramics Archive University of Wales School of Art, Clay Supplement, Cumbria, Eastern Arts Board, Cambridge. In addition, any advertisers who use our newsletter receive copies that carry their advertising.

In most cases we receive newsletters on a reciprocal basis. When I receive these, I circulate them to the

DCPG committee, thereby keeping our committee up-todate on what is happening in the "Pottery Group World" and after that the newsletters then pass to our Librarian, who holds them for other guild members to use as reference material.

Editor

THE STAN ROMER AWARD

The theme for 2003 was "Candle sticks, candle holders, lanterns and lights" Fourteen applications were received by Jane Kilvington, although on the day the total number of entries was twelve.

We were delighted to welcome John and Caroline Romer as our guests at this event and John again generously donated the prizes and awarded them to the recipients.

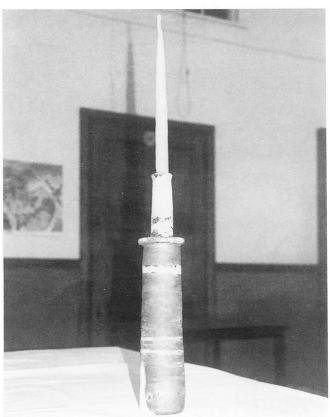
The third prize was taken by a single candlestick, made by Vivienne Rodwell Davies.

I am very proud to say that my own raku candle holder, decorated with a paper clay bird took second prize (I unashamedly admit that I have not stopped bragging about this).

First place was taken by a candle holder made by Colin Hazelwood. This was a multiple candle holder, which had positions for eight thin tapering candles. Colin received the sculpture of a bison made by Jane Kilvington, and he keeps this until the new competition takes place in 2004. Colin also received the first prize cheque for £80.00.

Photographs of all the entries were on display at our Open day. The work from the three winners are shown below, and we are grateful to John Beckley for supplying the photographs.

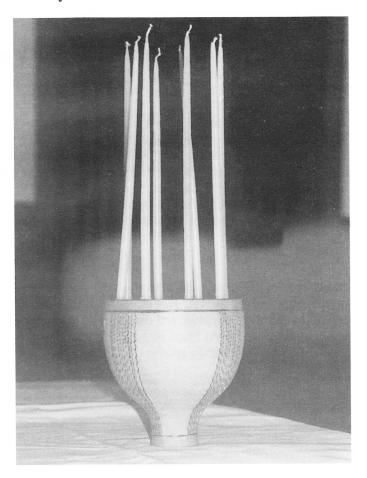




Vivienne Rodwell-Davies



Mervyn Fitzwilliam



Colin Hazelwood

THE POTTERS OPEN DAY

STEVE HARRISON

I have known Steve since his early student days and he has always impressed me with his enthusiasm for pottery, and his very open approach to whatever comes along. I was delighted that he could demonstrate at our Open Day, and I think he inspired us all.

Steve showed us a slide of his workshop at Brodie Road. The workshop is quite small, but he was inspired to build suitable shelving to display much of his finished work. He uses this historic display as a constant reference when he is working. He finds that it is an inspiration for him, to see some of his own finished work.

Steve talked about his mugs, with discussion around the types of handle that he likes. He has produced mugs with handles attached using silver spacers, and has also used this method on teapots. He had a wish to produce mugs made from porcelain, but with a blue stoneware handle, attached directly to the porcelain. After several attempts he finally discovered that using a slurry from his wheeltray consisting of an intimate mix of both materials did give a successful join. The intervening period, with many unsuccessful attempts did cause a lot of worry.

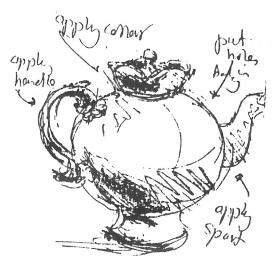
The need to earn a living, balanced against the search for his way forward with his work was a continuing theme in his talk. Steve told us of a plastering job he had been persuaded to help with that was a hard task, with little recognition, but he was able to find inspiration and a further way forward with his pottery, managing to wrest his inspiration from the sheer mundane nature of the task.

A box used to hold a pair of pistols inspired him to make teapots to fit inside boxes. Ben Casson who works in wood a great deal, was an assistant in this work, making some of the first boxes. This inspiration also stretched to mugs in boxes, with Steve having his own "boxed mug" to take with him when he so desires. The detail of the boxes was of great importance to Steve, with the wood, type of handle, clasp hinge etc all being considered in the finest detail.

Plaster moulds are used quite extensively by Steve when making handles and spouts. He also makes his faceted teapots by throwing a cylinder and then forming it into the inside of a plaster mould fitted round it. The top of the clay cylinder must be slightly smaller than the top of

the mould to prevent trapping air during the forming of the facets. Separate moulds were used to form the spout and handle, with a special mould with shaped edges being used to form the collar which was fitted to the top of the teapot around the spout.





Illustrations by Vivienne Rodwell-Davies

Mervyn Fitzwilliam

RUSSELL COLLINS

There are not many people who could successfully follow Steve Harrison's morning demonstration and not keep everyone from slipping into a post-prandial stupor, but have us on the edge of our seats. Happily, Russell is just the man!

You are unlikely to come across Russell's work in galleries or craft fairs and few people seem to know his name. Yet at Hook Norton Pottery he employs twelve staff and produces thousands of dishes, mugs, jugs, etc. by the week. The kilns are fired five times a week, including a gas-fired trolley kiln. Stoneware is produced and most of it is biscuit-fired to facilitate glazing. Much of his output is thrown, but press moulds are often used for items such as slab dishes and also for speed. He may also sub-contract to manufacturers in Stoke. He gave an example of an order that arrived one Monday morning. They set to and produced the master that day. By Thursday there were several thousand copies sitting in Stoke, all glazed and fired and ready for delivery.

Russell sells his wares mainly to the trade market. Clients include pub chains, Trust House Forte, John Lewis and David Mellor. The output is regularly re-appraised and though many styles may change, Russell is always mindful of the relationship between form and function. Recently this resulted in a move towards simpler forms based on traditional country styles.

To run such a pottery, a large dose of business acumen is required. In addition to good design, there must be careful analysis of best working practices. Regular time and motion studies are required and, when Russell started

his demonstration, it became apparent how much hard work and energy is required for this prodigious output.

Russell trained at Harrow and is a master of the art of throwing. He uses a highly plastic ball clay with about 10% each of quartz and sand added. The spinning clay seemed to leap through his fingers into the shapes required. By the end of the demonstration he had thrown a honey pot with a drop-in lid, three large double-thrown pots including a cider jar and a baluster jug (from a 14th century specimen in the Ashmoleum) and a casserole with a lid. He also turned two bowls. It was difficult keeping track. However, I did manage to jot down a few useful tips:

Russell's tips

- 1. Put a few drops of baby oil in your throwing water. This prevents your hands becoming chapped in winter.
- 2. Smallish pots, such as bowls can be thrown directly onto the wheel head. To prevent them from distorting, place a piece of newspaper on the wet rim so as to make a seal, and then cut off the pot and tilt away.
- 3. To facilitate turning pots with flat bases, he has a number of pads of different sizes. These are discs perhaps an inch or more thick, made of cork or wood. One is held on the bottom of the pot while the turning is done. This seems a good way of holding the pot in place and can also be used to judge the external diameter of the base.
- 4. When turning a tall jug he placed the rim down on a pad of clay on the wheel head. This both protected the rim and held it in place.

Making tall, double-thrown pots

- 1. Use bats.
- 2. Throw the base first. Plan the shape in advance and complete this part of the pot. The rim should be wedge-shaped (*see below*). Leave overnight.
- 3. The top is thrown the next day. It is made without a base and must fit the first piece when it is turned upside down, so make this rim exactly the same size. This time, instead of a narrow rim, make one with a small groove in it (as below).
 - 4. Joining the rims:

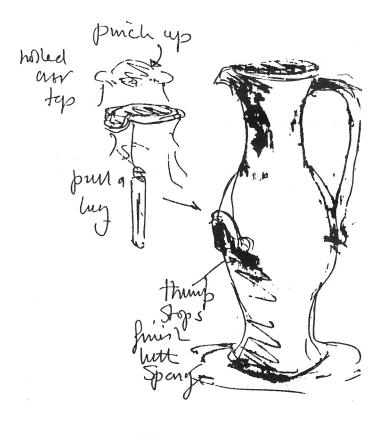
top

bottom

If the rims are a bit dry, dab a wet finger over them. Hold the top pot by its bat and turn it upside down. Place it on the base, check it fits and pat the bat. Seal the join with your thumb.

5. Wire off the bat and carry on throwing the top half.

- 6. A strong rim looks right on these large pots. Russell rolls over the top inch or so and seals the join with a finger while the wheel turns slowly. Avoid fiddling about too much or it will soon become too wet and soft.
- 7. Russell likes to remove some of the throwing rings especially from around the base where they can be rather distracting. To do this he uses a rib. It also helps to dry the pot.
- 8. Turn off excess clay from the base while the pot is still on the wheel.
- 9. Make the spout by pulling up no more than 1/8 of the rim, smooth the edge with a finger and stroke the spout into shape. Pinch in the clay on either side to give good definition.
- 10. Next day, prepare a partially pulled handle, fix it to the pot and finish it off.
- 11. The largest jugs are given a lug to aid lifting them. This is made from pulling a short strip of clay and fixing it on the belly well below the spout.



Ros McGuirk Sketches by Vivienne Rodwell Davies

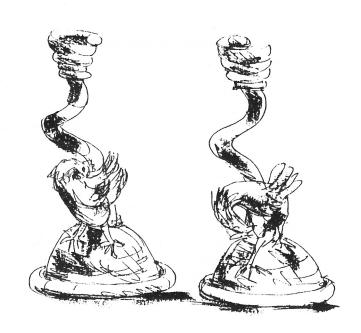
ANNA LAMBERT - 10th OCTOBER

Anna Lambert has demonstrated for the Guild in the past and we were very glad to welcome her back again.

Anna spoke about her life as a student, at school in Welwyn Garden City, at the Hertfordshire College of Art and the Bath Academy of Art. She wanted to do sculptural work as a student. She was inspired by Italian mediæval wall sculptures and by French multi-coloured wood carving, as well as by American and European carved wood folk art. However it is nature itself that really inspires her and her work. She lives in West Yorkshire and is affected by her walks in the countryside and the strange Yorkshire light with its opaque skies and glorious flashes of emerald and ochre sunlight on grim fields and over the sweeping curves of the skyline.

She wants people to be uplifted by her pots in their everyday lives. She wants them to share her lyrical response to the landscape and her joy in the seasonal appearance of wild birds, sparks of vitality in that landscape. Her visits to the sea provide her with new curves, ripples of light and vibrant images of sea life.

Anna has worked full time in her small workshop, lovingly producing domestic hand-built earthenware work which has a timeless quality, connecting a pre-industrial past with a modern æsthetic.



Pair of candlesticks

She does not reproduce exact copies of her work using moulds – each piece she makes is different. It is made beautifully and with great care. It shows, and gives her work a special quality. Many items she makes have a chicken or bird motif on them, while others involve fish decorations.

At one time Anna used to make many candlesticks, some of them holding more than one candle, typically with a chicken standing on the base. These were often produced in pairs.

One of her objectives has been to make domestic items that could be sold at reasonable prices, and she used to make many toast racks and egg cups. She showed us slides illustrating many fine pieces of work she has made.

She uses $2/3^{rds}$ Spencroft white earthenware clay mixed with $1/3^{rd}$ T material (or T material substitute). It results in a white grogged clay.

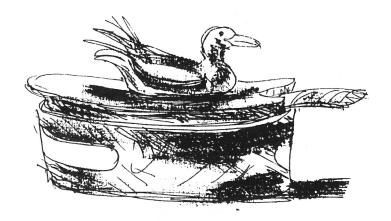
Most of her work is coiled from extruded coils which are then flattened. She scrapes back hand-built bowls to get reasonably thin ware. She does not use sprigs or moulds to fashion chickens, birds or fish. These are all made individually and then attached to the item being made. The work she produces is decorated with underglaze colours before being glazed with transparent glaze.



bow with spoon

Anna had in the past sold most of her work through galleries. Nowadays she has a good shop window where

she can display her finished work, and she sells to private customers where she can. However, a proportion of her work is still sold through galleries.

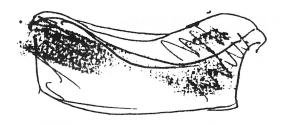


lidded box with spron.

The Demonstration

Anna used a plaster mould to form the shape of the domed top of one of her butter dishes. The base is made from a flat rolled out slab of clay which is slightly larger than the base of the dome's top.

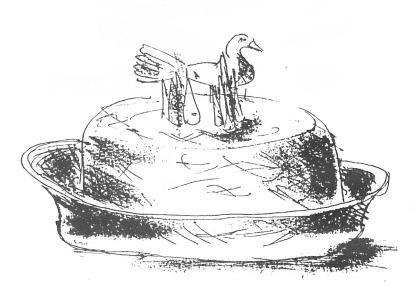
Having cross-hatched the sides of the slab base with a serrated kidney, she now rolls out a coil of clay and flattens the coil, which is then used to surround the base plate. The flattened coil is now fixed vertically to the base plate and more clay is added to each end of the butter dish base.



Base of butter dish

The sides and ends of the base are now cut, pinched and scraped back to form the pleasantly curved shape shown in

the sketch. Having made her butter dish, she now burnishes it to push in the grog so that it is no longer on the surface. To complete the butter dish she now hand finishes the dome for the dish. A hand built chicken looking to one side along with blades of wheat are added to the top of the dome to complete the piece of work.



Complete butter dish

What was quite clear during the evening was that Anna's heart and soul are in her work and this dedication shows and produces great, attractive, fine quality work.

John Beckley Illustrations by Vivienne Rodwell-Davies

PETER BEARD DEMONSTRATION

The Peter Beard evening on Friday 5th December was attended by fifty people. Because it was the last meeting before Christmas, the most delicious mulled wine and mince pies were served. This and the excellent talk combined to make it one of the most enjoyable evenings ever.

Peter Beard started by telling us of his early interest in clay and his luck in finding a kind and helpful pottery very close to where he lived as a child in southeast London. After school he went to Art School and studied industrial design and furniture design. His interest in pottery was not

dormant and some of his furniture was made from clay. We then started watching the first of 160 slides. His early work included press moulded boxes with porcelain fungi and exciting slabs decorated with wet clay, which had been scored with something like a serrated kidney. These dark grey slabs were inspired by cloud reflections on a skyscraper. He told us how he was in the habit of taking photographs of elements, which interested him and how often these came from landscape. In 1978 he travelled with the CPA to China. We then saw works based on jade tablets. Some of these were really lovely. Slabs, where the porcelain had been inlaid with a mixture of black copper oxide and china clay, which had then been scraped back with a metal kidney, glazed with a transparent glaze and fired in a gas kiln. The result was a sumptuous bleeding of copper red in some very exciting patterns. However Peter admitted that he was not comfortable with a gas kiln. His later work is all fired in an electric kiln. He also travels regularly to Egypt. We saw some lovely shots of palm trees and sunshine. He told us that Egypt is a continuous source of inspiration

The next group of pots were decorated using red clay, copper and manganese dioxide. These pots were incised with the manganese melting into the lines giving a gold effect and fired to 1250°C. They sold well for six

months but not more. When he asked the gallery owners what was happening they replied that all the people who wanted one of these gold pots had already bought one. Peter said that he had also felt that the technique had become too predictable. This was a crisis point in his artistic development and he reacted by taking a part time teaching job. He then decided to allow himself three months of experimenting. What he was looking for was a way of working where he could not get bored. He told us how, like many of us, he had a number of bags of unused glaze in his studio and how his new technique started initially from an attempt to clear away these small samples of glaze. The new technique, that he developed then and is still working with today, consisted of glazing with a matt stoneware glaze, waiting until the shine had gone and then painting

some of the surface with wax,



and then painting a variety of bright earthenware glazes over the wax and the matt glaze. He said that a make up brush was the best brush for applying the glaze. The decorated pot is then fired in an electric kiln to 1280°C in a fourteen hour firing. He has found that this technique gives him endless variety and excitement. It was at this point in the evening that we had our wine, mince pies and

borrowed books from our excellent library.

During the break I asked him to tell us how he cleaned wax off his brushes. He told us that he used white spirit, applied to the brushes after they had dried. In his book he is more specific and wrote that the dry brushes should stand in white spirit for an hour before being washed in detergent and hot water. Carpet glue can be used instead of wax emulsion and only costs £8 for a bucket full. I would be interested if anyone finds a supplier of carpet glue. Another clever idea, that we discovered, was the use of food dye to colour the wax. He watered down this wax emulsion, adding one quarter of water to a bottle of wax before adding the food dye. He also used food dye to divide up the surface of the pot prior to decoration. He said that if he found that he had made a mistake at this stage, he simply went over the decoration again with a different shade of food colouring. He bought along a selection of patterned sponges. The designs were made on the upholstery foam with a hot metal rod.



We were warned, however, of the cyanide gas, which is released by this process and told that instead, we could dampen the sponge, put it in the freezer and then cut it with a sharp knife. There are photographs of these sponges and cut rollers on pages 18 and 19 of Peter's book, "Resist and Masking Techniques". When using a patterned sponge for water-based wax it is best to dampen the sponge before coating it with wax. The foam needs to be rinsed immediately after use. He became really passionate when talking about the terrible way a dribble or run always looks a mess and is impossible to disguise. These runs can be avoided by cross hatching with a paintbrush when applying the second layer of glaze. Other disasters could be prevented by working on one pot at a time. In other words, by applying the wax and then the second glaze before the first glaze has had time to dry. The idea of using a mister to keep the pot damp was discussed but Peter did not recommend it. We also talked about using hot wax. Peter said that it was good for quick, bold designs but that he never used it. For the second glaze he added two teaspoons of colour to half a Rachael yoghurt pot of glaze. He told us that whilst he was very careful when mixing his first, matt glaze, he had a relaxed and experimental attitude to the second glaze. When one sees a stand of his work the subtle variations in colour do look particularly pleasing. Someone asked if they ever ran and he laughed and "frequently". His desire for continuous experimentation has led him to have some of his latest pieces sandblasted and others cast in bronze. We were left with the impression that there were many more ideas and new techniques waiting to emerge. It was altogether a very stimulating evening.

Margaret Tatton Brown Illustrations by Hazel Green

BOOK REVIEWS

COILED POTTERY-Betty Blandino. Revised ed. 2003. P/bk 144 pages, ill'd. A & C Black £14.99

This is a book to inspire any lover of clay. It shows how the direct touch of the hand-building technique enables the sensitivity of the maker to show through.

It describes the materials used as well as giving a most interesting historical summary of development worldwide. Many different styles are displayed and the variety of purposes for which they are made are explained as well as photographed. The different forming methods used are described in detail. Betty manages to tie up the social, historic and technical aspects of ceramics such as whether the objects are made by men or women and how local customs and conventions determine the shape and type of work

produced in a community. She points out that individual expression is a modern phenomenon.

Methods of collecting and refining raw clay are explained, as are methods of adding a variety of opening materials. The use of the paddle and anvil technique and that of using biscuit moulds are described, as well as those of building up pots of varying sizes up to the vast 'pitoi' storage pots of Cyprus.

In chapter 4, methods of firing and decoration are covered and the many ways of scraping or finishing a surface. There are clear diagrams and photographs of actual firings from different part of the world.

Towards the end of the book, Betty Blandino shows how present day potters have borrowed and adapted ancient methods, interpreting forms and surfaces freely. Her comments cover potters as diverse as Kate Malone and Ewen Henderson – the huge and glossy to the rocky, as well as the smooth and sophisticated designs of Fiona Salazar. She pays tribute to the extensive research done by modern studio potters.

I think this is a serious and informative book as well as being stimulating and enjoyable. It is well produced and profusely illustrated in colour as well as black and white.

Ruth Karnac

KATE MALONE 'A Book Of Pots' By Lesley Jackson and Kate Malone. Cloth. 203 pages 300 coloured ills. A & C Black '03 £40.

Wow! The first thing that hit me about Kate Malone's book is the intensity of colour, the pages are bursting with large photographs that show a complete overview of her work from her college degree show, with its sea inspired ceramics, to her pots with names such as 'Tutti Frutti Red Hot' and 'Naughty Boy Blackberry'. It also includes images of commissions and work held in private collections and therefore not seen publicly before.

In the main body of the book there are over 100 pages of images, most with detailed descriptions, outlining her inspiration and technical notes showing her obvious attachment to each one.

However this book is not just a collection of work, it is also a very useful source of information into how Kate makes and fires her pots. There are step- by- step photos of her method of working and materials used, she keeps no secrets and there are details of the glazes and firing cycle she uses to get the best crystals to form.

Kate also shares all her glaze recipes and even gives information on running a studio.

Whether you like her work or not, there is no doubt that this is a visually beautiful and informative book, and an excellent catalogue of Kate Malone's work so far!

Kirsteen Holuj

OPEN DAY 2003: Analysis of responses to the questionnaire

Number of responses received: 27

Of which 18 were from members, 1 was a non-member and the remaining 8 did not say whether a member or not.

Q.1. Did you enjoy the day?

27 (i.e. 100%) said 'yes'

Comments: Many said "excellent"; "a good contrast between perfection and production"; "the sound amplification was better than last year"

Q.2. We opted for a shorter day but an early opening so that you could buy books and tools in that free time. Was that a good idea?

25 (93%) said 'yes' and 1 (4%) said 'no'.

Comments: "Earlier opening did not allow me to purchase books and tools earlier".

"A longer lunch hour would have given better shopping time" (Some other comments were similar).

"Pre-ordering was useful".

Q.3. For this event we had two demonstrators, was this better?

22 (82%) said 'yes'; 2 (8%) not sure; 1(4%) prefers 3; 1 (4%) likes either 2 or 3; 1 (4%) said 'no'.

Comments: "It gives more time for longer or more versatile demonstrations".

Q.4. Who would you like to see demonstrate at our next Open Day?

Two people suggested IAN GREGORY and a hand builder (or slab) or sculptural demonstrator.

Each of the following names were suggested by 1 person:

VICTORIA BRYAN
GARETH MASON
MICKI SCHLOESSINGK
LORETTA BRAGANZA
JIM NEWBOULT
DAPHNE CARNEGY
VICTORIA BRYAN
NIC COLLINS
PETER BEARD
PHIL ROGERS
WEST MARSHALL
CHRIS BRAMBLE

Someone making coiled pots

A previous demonstrator (for DCPG)

Q.5. Catering – this time we opted either for self-catering or a pub lunch at the Old Palace across the road as an alternative for those who wanted it. What do you think about this?

27 (i.e. 100%) said the above arrangement was fine. Comments: Two people said that having lunch on the school premises is better because it helps to foster social contacts. Two people said it is a good arrangement because it is flexible.

Q.6. Please make any suggestions or comments about the Open Day, Guild activities and facilities. We really want to know what you think

Comments:

- 1. An excellent day/ excellent speakers
- 2. Re-instate the Pot Crawl to good potters like the Cornish or Welsh ones
- 3. We should continually contact the Watford and Luton (Barnfield) Colleges to encourage new members, and we should send them posters and donate old Newsletters to them.

(Two members each made these suggestions)

- 4. Hold a 'Bring & Buy' event at a monthly meeting
- 5. Can we arrange coffee breaks so that they are not in the middle of a demonstration
- 6. It was good to have the chance to see members' work
- 7. Happy to be a member of the Guild, everyone is so friendly
- 8. Two members said that more light should be shone on the demonstrators
- 9. We need to get new members
- 10. A new member of the Guild said there should be a committee member with the responsibility of introducing new members and making them feel welcome. Our meetings are sometimes intimidating for new members attending their first Guild meeting
- 11. Congratulations to Ros and Mervyn for booking the demonstrators
- 12. Can we get the schedule of future Guild events to members earlier
- 13. Everyone obviously enjoyed the day.

John Beckley

WINNER OF THE TURNER PRIZE 2003

Ceramics make national headlines at last.

It is easy to jump to the conclusion that Grayson Perry's top prize was based purely on shock value though I do think that shock does play some part in this annual event but perhaps not in this case.

He has made pots in classic Chinese shapes and then decorated them with social messages in a totally individual way. Traditional Chinese pots were all about reaching the highest aesthetic standards in form, glaze and decoration

based on tradition, in a society which had a largely consensual and homogenous culture.

There is clearly a purpose in Perry's use of such accepted forms on which to display his unconventional themes – unconventional in this medium at any rate. Decoration of a sexual nature has previously been either playful, cheeky or, in the case of ancient Greek pots, referring to accepted homosexual practice of the time and place.

These pots are quite large, approximately 15-20 "high. Colours are fairly subdued though gold is used in a restrained way and background is sometimes 'textured' with a repeat pattern of tiny coffins.

The theme is one of social dysfunction and suffering. There is a little girl with stumps for hands, hermaphrodite semi-naked figures outlined in black in disturbing settings. On several pots are reproductions of kitsch, sentimental nativity scenes and religious icons contrasted with social reality. The gilded figure on the lid of one pot is of a priapic teddy bear and elsewhere on the pot a clearly labelled figure 'drunken parent' though the connection escapes me. There are drawn scenes of flagellation and dominatrix action as well as sgraffito'd names of art dealers and collectors. He presents the hypocrisy of suburban life contrasted with sadism to animals, war games, guns and bewildered and suffering children.

The exquisitely embroidered satin dress he wore for the presentation is displayed, made in pastel colours and perfectly stitched and designed with stylised genitalia and religious allusion to crucifixion.

The theme is consistent, that is, of a dysfunctional world which causes great fear and suffering not least to children. He shows in a very direct way, the effects of cruelty on the young and the never-ending repetition of this pattern of behaviour.

Craft is sometimes defined as making forms with great skill and aesthetic sensibility to create pure beauty for the delight of discerning people. Perhaps that is why it is usually ranked below 'fine art' i.e. painting and sculpture which is held to have greater clout. Well, here are ceramics with a powerful message, which I believe Grayson Perry is fully entitled to make. It is certainly deeply serious.

For myself, I cannot honestly say that I found these pots in any way beautiful but probably this wasn't the aim. I did find them honest, worthy and significant. If this is

damning with faint praise, I am sorry but they hitch a ride on classic beauty but fall short of achieving it for themselves.

Ruth Karnac

Some of Grayson Perry's own comments (from the exhibition catalogue):

For me, the shape has to be classical and therefore invisible: then you have a base that people understand

Pots suit the scale of my ideas. They inhibit intellectual space (!)

I like the whole iconography of pottery. It hasn't got any pretensions to being great public works of art, and no matter how brash a statement I make, on a pot, it will always have a certain humility.

I have used imagery that some people will find disturbing. I use such material not to deliberately shock, but because sex, war and gender are subjects that are part of me and fascinate me and I feel I have something to say about them.

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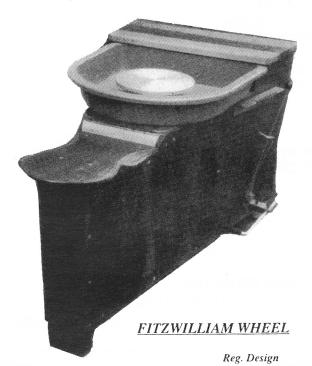
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