



DACORUM AND CHILTERN POTTERS GUILD



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PAUL PRIEST WORKSHOPS

THE DREADED S-CRACK

PITSTONE CALENDAR

RODNEY MUNDAY

& MUCH MORE



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NEWSLETTER
SUMMER 2005
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Membership of the Guild is open to anyone having an interest in pottery and sculpture & offers the members many opportunities each year to see the top potters and sculptors 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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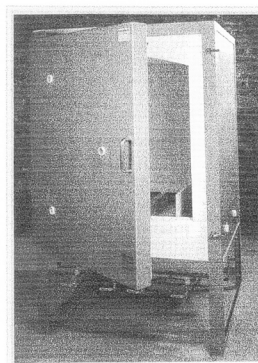
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FRONT COVER PHOTOGRAPH

Paul Priest working on his sculpture at the Guild Workshop photograph by Helen Vernon

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EDITORIAL

The workshop with Paul Priest became a two-day affair with Helen Vernon arranging two separate events, each for eight students. An enjoyable time was had by all and Helen reported that some striking sculptures had been produced. We hope that we will see some of these at our Potters Open Day (POD) this year.

Having mentioned the POD, I am delighted to report that we have asked Ruthanne Tudball and Jack Doherty to be our demonstrators this year. **Not only will these two outstanding potters be with us, but your committee is planning that this event WILL BE FREE to all paid-up DCPG members this year.** And it gets better, because our organiser, Joy Wills, is arranging for a caterer to provide food on the day to suit all tastes. The lunch will not be free (well come on now, be reasonable) but will be at a very nominal price. The POD will be on Saturday 19th November at the Longdean School in Hemel Hempstead (with heating provided), so put a note in your diary now.

Mervyn Fitzwilliam

Future Guild Events

4th May – 5th June Annual Exhibition at the New Studio Gallery, Rose Court, Olney. Olney is ten minutes' drive from junction 14 on the M1, and the gallery is just off the main square. Opening hours 10-5pm Mon-Fri., and 1-5pm Sun. and bank holidays. Olney is a delightful old market town with plenty of galleries, antique shops and watering holes. Take a friend out for the day, and support your Guild.

Fri. 13th May. Vivienne Rodwell-Davies. Well known as a potter and art teacher at Barnet and West Herts. Colleges, and an active member of the Guild,

Vivienne trained at Camberwell, where she specialised in drawing and ceramics. Her current output ranges from domestic ware in salt and soda glaze, to figurative work in raku. She also runs occasional workshops from her studio at home, in hand-building, raku, smoke-firing, and paper kilns. Tonight's meeting will cover a variety of topics, from making ideas to firings. Guaranteed to give you plenty of ideas to keep you going over the summer.

1st-3rd July. DCPG to the International Ceramics Festival '05 at Aberystwyth

PITSTONE OPEN DAYS 2005.

The Pitstone Farm Museum's Open Days for the coming year have been confirmed as Sun June 12th, Sun July 10th, Sun Aug 14th and Sun Sept 11th. These are our "rent days" when we are asked to demonstrate pottery techniques to the Museum's visitors. Over the last year we have had members demonstrating hand building and throwing on the old kick wheel and also "have a go" raku decorating and firing.

These days are great fun for all concerned, but I am sorry to say we only have a few regular supporters among our members. Come on folks, how about having a go this year!

Even if you can't make it to the open days, it would be a great help if people could donate small biscuit fired items for use in the "have a go" raku decorating. Small moulded animal shapes are very popular with the children, but anything else, bowls, dishes, vases etc, would be much appreciated. They don't need to be anything fancy.

In addition to the Open Days, when the museum has other craft workers demonstrating and selling, the museum is also open on Bank Holiday Mondays for people to come in and look at the farm exhibits. Norman says they get a good number of visitors and he would be happy for us to set up a stall to sell our own pots or do our own firing on those days. Anyone interested? Give me a ring, (these would be May 2nd, May 30th and August 29th).

Jan Kent

Other Events

6-8th May. Craft Fair at Hatfield House. See local press for further details

6-8th May. 'Ceramic Art London'05. A major new fair, with plenty of big names. Contemporary ceramics at the Royal College of Art, Kensington Gore, London SW7

10th May. **Bonham's Sale of International Contemporary Ceramics.** Auction at 101 New Bond Street, London, W1S 1SR. Time : 6pm. Viewing : Fri. prior to the sale 9am-2pm. Sun 11-3pm. Mon 9-4.30pm. Day of Sale 9am-2pm.
www.bonhams.com or phone 0207-4688269.
 Catalogues from 01666-502200

13-15th May. **Battersea Contemporary Art Fair.** Battersea Arts Centre, Lavender Hill, SW11 5TN
 tel:01428-661229. or email : enquiries@bcac.info
 Fri. 6-9pm, Sat 11-6pm, Sun 11-5pm.
 £6. (concs. £4)

21-22 May. **'ClayArt'.** Third year of the Welsh Potters' Market. The Old Coach House, Llanrhaeadr Hall, Denbigh, N. Wales. 10-5pm. Over 70 potters, demos, kiln firings, displays and stalls.
 Tel: 01745-812805

27-30th May. **'The Craft and Design Experience'.** Fawley Court, Henley. Second year of highly recommended show.

5th June '05 Talk by **Mike Dodd** at the University of Westminster, Regent St. At 2pm. Followed by a private view of his show at 7, Marshall St., London.
 Tel: 0207-4377605. Booking is essential. Tickets £8 for CPA & LP members. Others £10, students £4.
 Tel: 01297 444 633.

25-26 June **Earth and Fire 11.** 90 potters from UK and Europe. Demos etc. Rufford Country Park. On the A614 near Ollerton, Newark, Notts. 10am-6pm. 01623 822944.

26th June **Doug Jones' open Studio.** starts at 11am. 114 Norfolk Road, Rickmansworth.
 Tel : 01923 770913. If you have not been before, you will be amazed. A magical place, beautiful pots and famous home baked cakes.

1-3rd July **International Ceramics Festival.** Aberystwyth Arts Centre, University of Wales.
 01970 622882

1-3rd July **Ceramics Southeast - A potters' market.** A selected show of UK & European potters at The Friars, Aylesford, near Maidstone, Kent. Follow signs from Junction 5/6 on M20. Tel: 01622-790796.
 email : info@ceramics-southeast.co.uk
 £3-50, concs. £2-50.

4-8th July Vivienne Rodwell-Davies is arranging a series of visits, for her own students and others, as a private venture. This includes visits to: Phil Rogers, Jennifer Hall, Jack Doherty, Walter Keeler, Bridget Drakeford, Wobage Farm Potters, Simon Hilbert, Bowie & Toff

Milway, John Williams & Sarah Monk. The arrangement fee is £100 per person plus B & B £108. All other fees and transport not included.
 0208 4410904, or 07949 933108

14th-17th July **Art in Action** Welcome return of one of the most popular shows. Waterperry House, near Wheatley, Oxford. Tel: 0207 381 3192

29 July-7 Aug **Ceramica Cumbria.** Two potfests linked by a series of demos and workshops. Includes : **Potfest in the Park, 29-31 July.** A selected show including DCPG member Marilyn Andreotti.

Main event. First event by Ceramics North, held in Rheged, Europe's largest grass covered building – an award winning conference and exhibition venue designed to resemble a Lakeland hill (waterfalls, streams and lakes). Stunning location near M6.

Lectures and workshops, with demos by the Friths, Richard Dewar, Richard Godfrey, Roger Lewis. Martin Lungley, & Jim Robison.

Potfest in the Pens. Open show of 200 potters at Skirgill Agricultural Mart, Penrith.

For further info on all this tel : 017684-83820, or see www.potfest.co.uk

5-7th Aug **Art in Clay.** Hatfield House. 10-6pm.
 Tel : 01159 873966

20th Sept **Bonham's Sale of British Contemporary Ceramics.** Details as before.

For information on even more summer events, see www.studiopottery.co.uk

RODNEY MUNDAY, SCULPTOR

Rodney is a true countryman who has been involved with farming all his life. These days, however, he'll be found at country, craft and garden shows, rather than at farmers' markets, his produce consisting of a wide range of statues, water features and portrait busts. His is an intriguing story, which he outlined to us with the aid of slides showing the progression of his work.

When Rodney's school offered life-drawing classes at A-level, he discovered that he had a flare for 3-d work. His knowledge of anatomy was already advanced due to his curiosity and self-taught dissection skills, (one of the advantages for the budding artist, of being raised on a farm, is being close to nature). Art college seemed the logical next step, but it did not offer what he wanted, so he left to study English at Oxford. Here he developed his love of the old sagas, myths and legends, which are a recurrent theme in his work.

After Oxford he returned to farming and for over twenty years had little time for sculpting. The urge to create returned about fifteen years ago, triggered by

his discovery of a form of rubber that is ideal for mould making and casting. His first piece of sculpture was a beautiful plaque of Merlin, his face seeming to grow from the very material from which he is formed. The transformation of a block of clay into a figure provides a satisfying simile to the transformation and creation myths which are an important theme in his work. A green man followed and was turned into a fountain-head, at the request of a customer. People began to commission statues of favourite pets. Thus began a long line of cats, dogs and horses, followed by pigs, bulls, frogs and a crafty fox. All of them are full of life and energy.

Rodney works in a detached, meditative way. While his hands danced over the clay, plucking bits off the block and building up the figure, he spoke of myths and legends, of saints and kings, of casting techniques and patination, of the artists who have inspired him, and of how to recreate life out of clay. Every so often he would step back to view the figure and rotate it on its turntable, to find the next angle to work on. Always looking and turning.

For our demonstration, Rodney made a maquette of a piece he is currently working on for his old college, a seated figure of St. Edmund. This was the thirteenth century scholar who founded a school for boys in Oxford and later became the Archbishop of Canterbury. Edmund was a medieval aesthetic who ate little and did not drink. He wore a hair shirt and his mother's old breast plate, and had himself regularly flogged with knotted ropes. This was to be a gaunt figure, clothed in a loose gown with the bones in his back showing through. In some way, perhaps by the attitude of the figure, an indication of his strong personality would also be revealed.

Rodney works on a sculptor's table – a substantial tripod with a small turntable on top. On this he placed a small wooden box, and promptly set about modelling the saint, sitting on this box. For portraits he will measure the subject carefully to get correct proportions, and he will take into account the client's perceptions of the subject. In this case, after researching the life and times of the saint, he could work more freely. He prefers terracotta clay because it is closest to the colour of bronze. He uses wire to reinforce the figure, and rarely an armature. As it is not going to be fired he does not have to worry about strength and thickness of the clay, he can just build up the piece a little bit at a time, by pinching and squeezing. He likes to get it together quickly, and then leave it for a few days, so that on the return he sees it with fresh eyes and can tell where it needs correcting. The clay will then be dry enough to carve.

By the end of the demonstration, the saint was sitting on his box reading a book, and I had learned more than I realised about how to observe, how to build up a figure, and how to bring life to the figure. I had also begun to realise that there is more to sculpting than simply the physical act of making. It involves the

relationship a sculptor has with his subject, and also with the material he uses and how the nature of those relationships may affect the outcome. All together it was a most thought provoking, and inspiring evening. Thanks Rodney, for your illuminating and enjoyable demonstration.

Ros McGuirk

THE DREADED S-CRACK.

Until a few years ago the S-crack was somebody else's problem. I had read about it but never encountered it personally. Then I made a large jar for the bulk storage of rice with a base diameter of about 200mm and there in the bottom after the glaze firing was the dreaded S-crack. Fortunately it was not wide enough to preclude its use for the storage of rice.

When I was recently asked by the same family member to make a set of wide pasta plates I began to give some thought to precautions to prevent similar cracking. The only conventional wisdom that I could find (Michael Cardew) is to repeatedly apply pressure with the finger tips or possibly with a flat rib to the base of the pot after opening up. Not being entirely convinced by the benefits of the alignment of clay platelets that this was supposed to provide I began to ponder the causes of the stresses that the clay must be under that could only be released by the formation of a crack. One particular possibility came to mind.

When a flat bottom vessel with surrounding walls dries naturally the wall, with access to air on both sides, dries much more quickly than the base which is sitting on a batt or bench top with air access to one side only and which may also be thicker if it is subsequently to be turned. The walls will shrink as they dry and the base will be compressed. These stresses will be relieved by the still soft clay in the base. It will thicken slightly to keep the same volume. The base continues its much slower drying and shrinkage. However by now the rim and walls may be quite hard and as the base dries and shrinks the rigid cylinder of wall is not able to move with it and the base is put under considerable tension. Sooner or later this tension is relieved by an S crack occurring.

To test this hypothesis, as soon as the walls of my pasta bowls would stand inversion I wrapped them in cling film to stop them drying any further, while allowing the base to dry sufficiently to be turned. After turning I re-applied the cling film to the walls to allow the drying of the base to catch up with that of the walls. This procedure has ensured that to date I have not had a single S- crack in the bottom of my plates. Perhaps my hypothesis is correct.

Colin Hazelwood

OBITUARIES

DAVID LEACH

(Originally published in The Guardian and reprinted here with their permission)

The potter David Leach, who has died aged 93, was the eldest son of the potter Bernard Leach. He admired his famous father's work and considered a self-conscious deviation from its forms was neither necessary nor desirable. Intuitive, evolutionary development was preferred to conspicuous change.

Although David was born in Japan, his family returned to England while he was still a child. A house was bought at Carbis Bay in Cornwall, and Bernard, together with a Japanese friend and potter, Shoji Hamada, began the formidable task of setting up the pottery at nearby St Ives. This radical workshop, with its mixture of idealism, aesthetics, endless discourse and the stark realities of making a living, faced a continuing struggle for survival. But the ideas and the standards that were constructed there had a significant influence on the direction of 20th century studio pottery.

David was sent as a boarder to Dauntsey's school, Wiltshire, chosen for the breadth of its curriculum, particularly in the arts and natural sciences, and a commitment to a philosophy in which the fostering of individual talents was tempered by the imperative of social responsibility. On leaving in 1930, he joined his father at St Ives. He always maintained that he recognised the unique nature of the experience being offered and had no doubt as to the rightness of his decision.

The Leach pottery was a strong moralistic endeavour. While Bernard remained committed to the making of individual pots carrying the maker's personal mark, it did not diminish his advocacy of producing utilitarian pottery for everyday use.

Such a project required a consistency of skill unavailable to the workshop at that time. When David arrived it was peopled by a changing group of students who came to imbibe the teachings of Bernard Leach and learn the Japanese techniques being used. By then, Hamada had returned home, and the early pioneers, Michael Cardew, Katherine Pleydell Bouverie and Norah Braden, had departed. Fortunately, Harry Davis, already an accomplished thrower, was in St Ives and, under his guidance, David acquired much of his prodigious skill.

In 1934, with his father visiting China and Japan, David enrolled on a three-year pottery managers' course at North Staffordshire Technical College, Stoke-on-Trent. Bernard considered it a deceitful decision taken in his absence. He knew David had discussed plans to build a pottery on the Dartington Hall estate. The possibility that the two initiatives might be related added to the sense of betrayal. Yet, the industrial knowledge gained brought new efficiency to the workshop at St Ives.

David's time at college was important for another reason. While a student at Cambridge, his younger brother Michael had embraced the Oxford group which in 1938 became Moral Rearmament and, through him, David was invited to MRA "house parties" while in Stoke. Their inter-denominational

nature made a profound impression although later, following his marriage, he converted to Catholicism. He disliked the Catholic church's authoritarian confidence, however, and a personal search for an independent Christian truth continued until his death.

David returned to St Ives to be given, rather to his surprise, responsibility for the workshop management. He initiated dramatic changes. The students continued to come for short study periods, but now local school-leavers were offered apprenticeships. They became the team capable of producing to a consistent standard the new high-fired domestic stoneware that Bernard had prototyped.

Drawing on diverse pottery traditions, the hand-thrown forms were modern, restrained, yet alive with the rhythm of their making. Subtle glazes, unfamiliar in their depth and variegation, further confronted the uniformity of the prevailing industrial aesthetic imposed by wartime utility legislation. The production of the Standard Ware range was perhaps at its maximum achievement in the years immediately after the second world war, and became an exemplary model of craft practice aligned to social purpose.

David, a Christian pacifist and member of the Peace Pledge Union, had enlisted for army service in 1941. As for many of his generation, the concept of a just war sublimated a pacifist belief, but he refused to wear uniform. He was court-martialled twice. Eventually he accepted the futility of protest and served in the Devon and Cornwall Light Infantry until demobilisation in 1945, after which he became a full partner in the Leach Pottery.

After the war, Bernard spent more time away from Cornwall and having decided to move permanently to Japan with his wife, Janet, he gave the pottery to David – to take "in whatever direction he thinks best". Neither plan was to materialise; Bernard and Janet could not set up a workshop in Japan, and David left St Ives.

Then in 1956, aged 45, he set up an independent workshop at Lowerdown in Bovey Tracey, Devon. This always remained small, just David with one or two assistants; his own son, John, was the first. At the beginning he made slipware, then high-temperature thrown oven and tableware and a few individual pots. Economic viability dictated a regular output of moderately priced domestic ware, though the balance tilted in later years to accommodate artistic intention.

Certainly, the success of the workshop clarified a definitive issue. David had no doubt that conscientious standards, while central to the notional value of direct production, could not be exempt from the regulating influence of financial necessity. A proportion of less good pots was inevitable; they should be acknowledged, their market value accepted. Others held a contrary position. The dialectic between an abstract quality standard and economic demands became the subject of an open exchange of letters in the *Ceramic*

Review between David and the Australian potter, Gwyn Hanssen Pigott.

But though there was no resolution of the issue, David's achievement in making high standard pottery within a sound financial framework gave confidence to many student potters setting up in the late 1960s and early 1970s.

Above all, David thought of himself as an educator, largely through the lecture demonstrations he gave to potters' groups around the world. At these gatherings, he would invariably speak about his father; his advocacy was unrelenting, but elegant and persuasive. David assiduously progressed Bernard's reputation yet, paradoxically, came to regret its dominance over his own life and work.

In reality, his own pot forms rarely strayed from known Anglo-oriental-Leach types, though they had independence also. Whereas Bernard exercised skill with circumspection, David's craftsmanship was grounded on the object itself: a specific quality derived from precision in making. He liked to embellish the thrown form and was most confident when working with the unfired clay.

The cut, fluted stonewares and luminescent porcelains, the gently beaten bottles and vases with their deep brown iron-saturated glazes, impressive in themselves, befit a potter committed to a personal belief in the continuity of past and present. Never strident, their essential familiarity brought acceptance from a lay public, as well as from specialist collectors.

And David exhibited constantly, first, in 1953, at George Downing's bookshop in St Ives. Forty years later, in 1993, he contributed to eight exhibitions, including a one-man show in Heidelberg; the following year it was nine, with a solo exhibition at Contemporary Ceramics, London. Most recently, he had shown at the Gallery Besson, London.

As a 90th birthday present, his son John initiated a retrospective exhibition, including the work of his many students, although it was not to be realised until Spring 2003. Curated by Cathy Niblett, it rightly opened at the Devon Guild, prior to its UK tour, the final venue being the new Crafts Study Centre at Farnham. A selection of pots was sent to Japan to join a Bernard Leach and Shoji Hamada exhibition at the Japanese Folkcraft Museum, Tokyo.

David was a man of intense loyalty. A vice president of the Devon Guild of Craftsmen, he had been a primary force in the development of the Riverside Mill scheme, whereby the guild acquired a permanent retail and exhibition centre. He was generous in his support for the young, both individually and through cooperative ventures such as the Dartington Pottery Training Workshop, of which he was a founder board member. The proper teaching of throwing was a constant concern. He believed the continuation of handwork essential to the human condition, and was critical of what he considered to be the academic drift in university ceramic courses.

He is survived by his wife Elizabeth and three sons.

Victor Margrie

EILEEN LEWENSTEIN: Inventive and sensitive potter who in 1970 founded *Ceramic Review*

(Originally published in "The Independent" and is reprinted here with their permission).

As a potter, Eileen Lewenstein, the founder and until 1977 co-editor of *Ceramic Review*, was an ardent modernist and advocate of the new and challenging, rather than the established and conventional. She preferred the cool, crisp lines of Scandinavian design rather than the more sombre browns and beiges advocated by Bernard Leach and his followers. As an ardent and, until disillusion set in, a committed Communist, Eileen Lewenstein saw her work as part of her political practice.

For someone with such deeply held and unconventional views, she came from an unlikely background. She was born Eileen Mawson in Streatham, south London in 1925. Her father worked in insurance and she and her two half-brothers had the most conventional of childhoods.

From a young age Eileen knew she wanted a career in the arts and so after three years' study at what was then the West of England Art School in Bristol and a year at Beckenham School of Art studying drawing and painting, she studied for the Art Teachers Diploma at the Institute of Education in London. Here she attended pottery classes at the Central School of Art and Design under the eagle eye of Dora Billington, where among her fellow students was Brigitta Goldschmidt (later Appleby) – both developed a passion for clay.

For a year Mawson taught at Derby High School for Girls, introducing pottery into the curriculum, but soon realised that school-teaching was not her *metier*. At Derby she had attended an evening class run by Robert Washington, one of William Staite Murray's more energetic students at the Royal College of Art before the war, which had reinforced her interest in clay and so she decided to try and make her living as a potter.

In London she worked, along with her college friend Brigitta Appleby, with Donald Mills another Communist Party member, who had a pottery near London Bridge run on collective lines. There were long earnest discussions on how they should work, discussions brought into sharper focus when problems with a contract to make 250,000 refractory ceramic elements forced them out of business.

Mawson and Appleby then set up a pottery in Baker Street, calling it Briglin, an amalgamation of their names. They worked with red earthenware and produced a range of hand-thrown tableware with painted decoration that was fresh and modern in feel. As a student, Mawson had been inspired by Walter Gropius's account of the Bauhaus, and this positive response to modernist design led to the development

of an interest in contemporary architecture, which was to significantly influence her ceramics. Although resolutely left wing she was not obsessively anti-commerce and was attracted to the idea of producing well designed objects at reasonable prices. From the start, Briglin pots were admired, sought out and stocked by stores such as Heal's and were to feature with great regularity in magazines and surveys of contemporary design like *Studio Yearbook of Decorative Art*.

At around this time Eileen met and in 1952 married Oscar Lewenstein, a fellow Communist who was active within the left-wing Unity Theatre. In his autobiography, *Kicking Against the Pricks* (1994), he described Eileen as having "wonderfully bushy brown hair", and as someone who gave the impression "of fantastic efficiency". Indeed she was – and had to be – highly organised as she eventually managed a large house, cared for their two children, supported Oscar's theatre and film projects, worked as a potter and for many years lectured at Hornsey School of Art.

Although a skilled thrower, Eileen Lewenstein was inspired by the experimental possibilities of hand-built work she saw illustrated in the American magazine *Craft Horizons* and she decided it was time to leave Briglin and develop her own work as an artist. A friendship with the potter Catherine Yarrow, a fellow Hampstead resident and a maker of totemic forms with idiosyncratic decoration, encouraged Lewenstein to explore more sculptural pieces, and she combined hand-building, moulding and throwing as seemed appropriate. One notable public artwork was a large architectural screen for the Convent of Our Lady of Skin in west London, the flowing linear decoration perfectly in tune with the grid-like structure. Other pieces included ingenious interlocking eggs and flower holders.

In the mid 1970s a move to Brighton, a house on the seashore and a studio looking on to the beach, saw the development of new forms. These included dishes with wave-like patterns in soft blues, creams and greens, one of which is in the collection of the V&A, and angular linking abstract objects, their shape derived from sea defences that stood on the beach. Her work also included tall, thrown vases with pushed and squeezed walls which, when placed side by side in a couple-like relationship, took on anthropomorphic qualities recalling the sculptures of artists such as Brancusi. Exhibitions at the British Craft Centre, the Evan Hauser Gallery and J.K. Hill consolidated Lewenstein's position as an inventive and sensitive maker. Her pots are in many national and international collections.

As a founder member of the Craftsmen Potters Association (now Craft Potters Association) she was well aware of the debates within the studio pottery movement, like those between the traditionalists who saw function as paramount and the *avant-garde* who wanted more adventurous forms. Deeply suspicious of

"the establishment", her inclination was always to support the radical and inventive. She and I met as council members of the association in the late 1960s, and when I suggested that it was time for the CPA to publish something more substantial than a mimeographed sheet and start a new ceramic journal, she enthusiastically supported the idea.

Ceramic Review, first published in 1970 with Eileen Lewenstein as co-editor, aimed to embrace as wide a spectrum of modern work as possible, a commitment that led us to include a phallic teapot that resulted in the loss of several subscriptions. After its early, smudgy beginnings, the magazine flourished. Its motto "written by potters for potters" gradually extended to include articles by critics, scholars, pundits and enthusiasts. It was a successful and rewarding partnership as we exchanged ideas about the direction of ceramics, both of us jollyng the other along to ever more ambitious projects that included books such as *New Ceramics* (1974).

With a keen sense of the growing international community of potters, Eileen Lewenstein was one of the small band of English potter members of the International Academy of Ceramics, later serving on its council. During the 1970s she contributed to a number of International Symposia – Bethune, Czechoslovakia (1970), Memphis, Tennessee (1973), Mettlach, West Germany (1974) – and regularly took part in residencies at the International Ceramics Studio at Kecskemet in Hungary. There she not only took on the opportunity to make large forms but also to establish further links for the magazine, enjoying meeting artists from the Eastern Bloc and exchanging ideas, whether about politics or ceramics. As a member, and later chair, of the World Crafts Council, British Section, she was enthusiastic about promoting cultural exchange. She was appointed MBE in 1999.

When her husband became ill in the early 1990s, she had less time to devote to her pots, although she continued to co-edit *Ceramic Review* until shortly after his death in 1997. Quiet, reserved and thoughtful, Eileen Lewenstein was a supportive and loyal friend. Shrewd in her assessments and an absorbing raconteur, she had a refreshing and disarming sense of humour that could appreciate the ridiculous as well as the serious.

Emmanuel Cooper

BOOK REVIEWS

NAKED CLAY: *Ceramics without Glazes.* Jane Perryman. Pub'd A & C Black hardback £30

This book presents the work of 45 potters who appear to have only one thing in common: an unwillingness to hide the surface of their work beneath glaze.

A wide variety of styles is covered and the four main chapters are divided by the main characteristic of the making method:- surface modification by flames, pure

unmodified clay surfaces and clay bodies with inclusion of pigments and other materials such as glass.

A fascinating range of pieces is shown, but there is not a lot of technical information on how the effects are achieved. For instance, many of the potters give special treatment to their surfaces, after firing, to achieve the final desired effects, but this is not described in any detail.

Much more is written on the thoughts of the potters and what they are aiming at. It is probably a failing on my part, but in many cases I cannot relate the ideas expressed to the pictures pictured. Perhaps showing more pieces by each potter would allow the ideas to come through better, but then the book would have to be much larger and would be more expensive.

Jan Kent

THE POTTER'S BOOK OF GLAZE RECIPES.
Emmanuel Cooper. Pub'd A & C Black ringbound hardback. £19.99

This is a new, revised edition of the book originally published by Batsford in 1980. Not having access to an original copy, I can't say how extensive the revision has been, but there are 455 glaze recipes here, so it would seem to be a pretty comprehensive coverage.

It begins with eight short chapters on glazes, glaze materials and glaze processes in general, including the now obligatory Health and Safety section. This is then covered by five sections covering the glaze recipes according to temperature bands. The recipes are simple, a list of ingredients by percentage dry weight, and in most cases at least one photo of a test piece is included. For some of the lower temperature glazes, two pictures are included showing the glaze on red and white bodies. Similarly, for some of the stoneware glazes two photos show the differences achieved between oxidation and reduction firings.

I am sure that this will continue to be an essential reference for anyone doing serious work on their own glazes.

Jan Kent

UNDERSTANDING PYROMETERS

Temperature measurement in pottery kilns is a very broad field, so I will confine myself to (I hope) fairly simple descriptions of what is available. In this task I have been aided considerably by the very accurate and thorough articles by David Coggins of BPQ kilns in Australia which he has made available on his website at:

<http://www.users.bigpond.com/dcoggins/index.html> A sizeable proportion of this article has been constructed using information from this site with his permission. Thank you David.

For the vast majority of us potters we have two simple choices Pyrometric Cones (Pyrosopes), or

Pyrometers and Thermocouples. The simple difference between these two is that cones measure accumulated heat-work, and Pyrometers measure only the pure temperature prevailing at the exact moment you look at them. Of these two the cone is the more accurate because it replicates what is happening to the clay and glazes in the kiln. But this is not to denigrate the function of the Pyrometer. It most certainly has its place, especially when allied to a kiln programmer, and for those of us controlling our kilns by hand it is a very useful guide to the speed at which temperature is rising or falling!

A pyrometer is simply a device for measuring temperature using thermoelectric effects. It consists of three parts - the thermocouple, the indicating meter, and the compensating or extension lead connecting the thermocouple and meter.

The thermocouple works on a principle discovered over 150 years ago by Thomas Seebeck in Estonia that if two dissimilar metals are joined together, a tiny voltage exists between them. People with fillings in their teeth will have experienced this effect when they accidentally chew on a bit of aluminium foil!

Later it was discovered that a voltage difference existed along a length of wire when heated at one end - and the thermocouple, as we know it today, became a reality.

In practice two pieces of wire of dissimilar metal compounds are joined at one end, the other two ends being connected to the compensating cable and thence to the meter. When the junction of these two wires is heated, a small voltage is generated and transmitted down the cable. The amount of voltage generated varies according to the heat applied to the junction and is displayed as a temperature reading by the meter, so the meter itself is in reality nothing more than a rather sophisticated volt meter or galvanometer calibrated in degrees of temperature rather than volts.

Many different metals are used for thermocouples, all with different temperature ranges and characteristics but potters are concerned with only four basic types, all of which are currently available in the UK.

TYPE "R"

This is the most commonly available type and one we are most familiar with. The elements are Platinum and Platinum with 13% Rhodium, normally 0.3 of a millimetre thick (though some manufacturers use thinner material), running through a fragile twin bore ceramic support surrounded by a dense porcelain sleeve. The maximum operating temperature is in the range of 1700°C which covers almost anything we can throw at it. The chief disadvantage of type R probes is generally the price; platinum in particular is subject to severe fluctuations of price in the metal markets, and this is reflected in the generally high cost of one of these probes.

The compensating/extension cable associated with type R probes has an orange casing, and orange and

white cables inside. Of these orange is "Live" and white is "Return" (it is worth noting here that with all Thermocouples manufactured in the UK the Return or minus cable is white).

The official recommendation for type R probes to be used in reduction is that they be double sheathed to protect the element. In practice this very rarely happens, and the probes used generally seem none the worse for the experience.

TYPE "S"

This uses similar element composition as type R, but the percentage of Rhodium is 10%. Currently only one UK manufacturer consistently uses this type, it is more commonly-used in Europe and the U S A. The cable colouring is the same, but a type R specific meter cannot be used with a type S probe as the voltages generated are different.

TYPE "K"

In the past, the most common thermocouple used by potters was the type K or chromel/alumel type. The major advantage of type K was its low price. However, the type K is only suitable for use to 1200°C absolute maximum, and has a comparatively short useful life so does not retain accuracy over many firings.

In the UK type K can sometimes be found in a ceramic casing like types R and S but more often found with a metal covered probe. However it always has a green coloured cable. The green inner is "Live". The probe construction usually consists of a heat resistant Stainless Steel or Inconel tube, with two bi-metal elements inside it joined at the tip (hot junction) the intervening space is filled with an inert mineral powder. Probe diameters vary from three millimetres upwards, and the thinner ones can be bent into an arc provided it is not too acute. A disadvantage is that the majority of these probes are manufactured with the compensating cable hard-wired to it.

The type K is adequate for bisque, the Raku process, earthenware glaze firings, and low temperature glass furnaces. It is not suitable for use in an electric kiln because of the metal probe.

TYPE "N"

A thermocouple developed in recent years and is still relatively unknown here is the type N, or nicrosil/nisil. The type N generally has a similar price and construction to the metal covered type K with the advantage of much longer useful life than the other (up to 10 times) plus a temperature range up to 1300°C. It differs from Type K in that the metal (Pyrosil) casing forms one part of the element, the other is a single wire down the centre. The type N is made in the UK with a probe diameter from 1mm to 6mm and the cable associated with it is a rather dusky pink colour, the inner pink lead is "live". Like the thinner type K's, narrow diameter probes can also be bent into an arc if need be. Officially it too should be double sheathed to

withstand reduction firing, but again experience suggests this is not necessarily the case (I use two in a wood-fired salt kiln and they still seem OK after a fair amount of abuse). As with type K the compensating cable is normally hard-wired to the probe, and it too is not suitable for use in an electric kiln.

CONCLUSION

Type R

Pro: is accurate over a wide temperature range and has the longest useful life.

Con: it is expensive and the sheath is easily broken.

Type S

Pro: is accurate over a wide temperature range and has a long useful life.

Con: it is expensive, and the porcelain sheath can be broken easily.

Type K

Pro: cheaper, when metal covered it can't be broken easily!

Con: short-lived, limited temperature range, once the probe/cable junction is melted it can't be repaired.

Not electric kiln friendly.

Type N

Pro: cheap, unbreakable (almost), good temperature range, reasonable life expectancy, reasonably accurate.

Con: once the probe/cable junction is melted it can't be repaired. Not electric kiln friendly.

For my money type N is the winner, but then it suits me, which doesn't mean it will suit everybody! One feature of any Thermocouple regardless of type is that the elements degrade and become increasingly inaccurate as their age increases. Some like K types have a pretty short life, others like type R last a lot longer. If you are reliant on your meter for accurate temperature readings then regular checking and possibly element renewal are the order of the day. If however you rely on cones for final measurement and use the Thermocouple and Pyrometer for observing the speed of temperature rise, then age and accuracy are probably a minor concern!

PYROMETERS

Until comparatively recently, pyrometers came in three sorts (or if you like "flavours") Analogue, Digital LCD (liquid crystal display), and Digital LED (light emitting diode). Analogue are now long gone as they were expensive to make in comparison to digital. Digital LEDs are now almost always used with mains powered Controllers, as their power consumption is too big for a battery powered meter. So for portable meters we are left with the Digital LCD type. The latest incarnation of this latter beast is (thank heavens) multi-type; so we can now programme the meter to suit the type of thermocouple we're using. The downside (there always has to be one) is that they require a battery or a mains adapter!

To my mind the only advantage of the analogue meter was that it did not require a battery; they were slow responders, and the marks on the dial were usually in 20° increments which made them difficult to read accurately; you had to be standing exactly in front of it and in direct line with the needle or you could be as much as 15° out! Setting the reduction in my last gas kiln which had an analogue meter, took more than 30 minutes in getting the right number of degrees per hour climb. Now with the aid of a digital meter and a digital watch I can do it in two minutes. Modern technology has some advantages!

COMPENSATING CABLE

The third part of a pyrometer is the compensating or extension lead, which connects the thermocouple and the meter.

This cable is the least understood of these three components, but it has far more significance than just a way of connecting the thermocouple and meter. Earlier in the article I mentioned that voltage is generated between two ends of a wire by heating one end, in other words, the difference in temperature between each end produces a measurable voltage. The thermocouple uses this principle, and produces a voltage which is proportional to the difference between the tip, or hot junction, and the terminal end, or cold junction. This is a very important point to consider, because the thermocouple millivolt tables which are used for meter calibration are produced with the assumption that the cold junction is at ambient (air) temperature. I bet that if you touch the terminal block (cold junction) of your thermocouple when the kiln is at maximum temperature, you will find it's temperature considerably higher than air temperature, probably 60 to 100° C or higher, though in practice it ought not to exceed 70° C. Therefore, the temperature indicated on your meter would have a large error incorporated into it, if it weren't for the "compensating" lead.

Ideally, the terminal block should be mounted on a cooler surface to "heat-sink" the temperature down, but in practice this is very difficult. However, the temperature of the cold junction should be kept to a minimum by preferably not attaching the terminal block to the kiln body, and if possible by directing a flow of cool air onto it. One solution I have employed was to mount the Thermocouple in the plug hole of a redundant cylinder head from a two-stroke motor cycle so that the attendant fins would help to dissipate the heat.

The compensating lead is composed of material with the same temperature response as the thermocouple. One end of the compensating lead will be at the same temperature as the "cold" junction, and the other will be close to ambient air temperature. The compensating lead generates a voltage to compensate for the difference between the cold junction temperature and the ambient. In other words, the compensating lead

acts as a thermocouple, attached in tandem with the main thermocouple, and together they give the correct voltage output to the meter. In effect, the cold junction of the thermocouple has been extended from the terminal block to the terminals of the meter, so the cable is often known as the "extension cable".

Analogue pyrometers were calibrated for the length of compensating lead supplied with the unit, the standard in the UK was 2 metres, and that length should ideally not be changed. In practice, small changes of length have only a minor effect on readings. The length of compensating lead has no effect on most digital pyrometers. To obtain correct compensation, the lead which matches the thermocouple type must be used.

In the UK all compensating cables follow one simple rule: all cables are two core and the outer covering is a different colour according to the probe type. The inner cable which is the same colour as the outer is always the live or + cable.

Here's to happy and accurate firings!

Steve Mills

THE QUEENS PARK CENTRE, AYLESBURY

For those of you who haven't heard of Queens Park Centre, we are one of the few surviving Art Centres left that provide a range of classes from Pottery to Belly Dancing and also have a small theatre and art gallery. It is one of the few places left where people can just turn up and take a class for pleasure and leisure which doesn't cost the earth.

We also run children's classes during the holidays and at weekends. We give artists the opportunity of exhibiting their work in our gallery and only charge a small commission on work sold.

The good news is that Bucks County Council have offered to sell the building to the Queens Park Centre, thereby allowing them to become independent and self supporting. The only problem is that we need to raise at least four hundred thousand pounds for the cost of buying and maintaining the building.

We will be delighted to have any support that can be given, or any suggestions that will help us in our quest. The address is Queens Park Centre, Queens Park, Aylesbury, Bucks. HP21 7RT.

Tel: 01296 424332 Fax: 01296 337363

Answerphone: 01296 431272

Heather Paul

Footnote: O.K. Guild members, how about it? What can we do to help QPC? Why not write in with any ideas you may have? The challenge is big, so some imagination stretching will be required.

Editor

CAN YOU HELP A SCULPTOR ?



Dmitry Khozyaykin and sculpture

Last June I had just arrived back to work at Queens Park Centre in Aylesbury from a very relaxing sailing holiday. Sarah, my boss, just happened to mention that Ken Newlan from the Montgomery Sculpture Trust was looking for someone to fire a Russian sculptor's work, was I interested?

I had not heard of the Montgomery Trust before, but was to find out that it was a private Sculpture trust, set up by Brian Montgomery. Every year he invites a sculptor to produce a piece of work for the trust. Most of the sculptors seem to come from parts of Eastern Europe, but not all of them. This year would be the first time he had invited a ceramic sculptor to produce a piece of work.

When I said 'yes' to firing the work, I thought it would just mean putting a few pieces of work in the kiln, but I was to find out it would be far more than that. I did worry that he might be a temperamental artist. I was very relieved when, about a week later, Dmitry, Stas and Adam turned up to meet me; Dmitry spoke very little English so Stas was acting as his interpreter whilst Adam is an Australian who works for Brian at the Montgomery trust. I think Dmitry was just as anxious about meeting me, as I was about meeting him. But I need not have worried, both he and Stas turned out to be a couple of charming young men as those of you who met them at Mervyn's garden party would probably agree.

I got to know Dmitry and Stas quite well during their two month stay in this country. Originally, Dmitry was commissioned to do three large sculptures for the trust, which seemed a bit ambitious to do in two months, especially as Dmitry had to get used to different types of clay, firing techniques, temperatures and glazes.

I also realised that we would need more than one kiln if we were going to get all the work through in the

allotted time span. This is where the difficulty arose. I approached Aylesbury College but unfortunately as they were doing massive building work, the electricity would be off and the technician away. Mervyn Fitzwilliam kindly gave Ken Newlan some contact numbers of ceramicists with large kilns, but as it was the summer holidays, we had no joy in finding anyone. We finally found Joe Files, the technician at Wycombe College. Who said he may be able to help but was going on holiday soon.

I was to find out that ceramics in Russia is very different from ceramics in this country. Dmitry wanted to see some clay so I showed him some craft crack, ordinary stoneware clay and other clay I'd brought from home. He wanted to know where the clay came from; I think he envisaged we dug it out from the hillside and prepared it ourselves, as they do in Russia. I sent him to Pottery Crafts in Rickmansworth to buy the clay as the order from QPC would not arrive until after the summer holidays. Dmitry was amazed at the wide range of materials and equipment that is available to ceramicists in this country. He spent about two hours just looking at all the equipment and glazes, nearly driving poor Stas up the wall.

One of the pieces that Dmitry was proposing to make was too large for both the kilns at QPC and Wycombe College. When my husband and I took Dmitry and Stas to *Art in Clay* at Hatfield House, we spent some of the time trying to find a person with a kiln big enough to fire this piece. We had a really enjoyable time talking to lots of ceramicists and kiln manufacturers. We were so lucky to find that Robin Welch had a kiln large enough and he kindly offered to fire the work for Dmitry.

Dmitry really enjoyed *Art in Clay*, he tried to video everything that was going on and when the battery ran out on his video camera, he proceeded to take photographs. He explained that they don't have many ceramicists in his part of Russia and he was overwhelmed by the numbers of people doing ceramics in this country, and by the wide variety of work they produced. He had not heard of paper clay or Raku, adding that they are not allowed to do soda firing in Russia because of the toxic fumes; he was amazed that we do it here. He said his visit to *Art in Clay* was one of the highlights of his trip.

He loved the new Fitzwilliam wheels we had just acquired at QPC and was anxious to meet Mervyn. He explained that they have to make their own pottery wheels in Russia which tend to be very erratic, with work flying off and hitting the walls, if you weren't careful.

On the day of Mervyn's garden party, I had a prior engagement so was unable to go. John Beckley kindly offered to take Dmitry and Stas to the party. Stas cooked some Russian food and I believe they both had a very good time. Stas won a prize at crazy golf and Mervyn found time to show Dmitry his pottery wheels and a collection of well-known potters work.

A few weeks later, the Montgomery trust put on a 'Work in Progress' day. It was attended by quite a few members of the Guild, including John Beckley and Mervyn. Ken Newlan gave a speech about the aims of the Montgomery trust and I was thanked for my help. Dmitry then unveiled the work he had managed to produce so far and then made a speech with Stas interpreting. Again, I got profuse thanks. Stas cooked some Russian food and toasts were drunk in vodka.

Everyone was anxious about Dmitry's work and offered him lots of advice – some, I am quite sure, he must have found quite confusing. The problem was the difficulty he was having in drying the work out, enough to fire it. He was working in a barn which was very damp, it was a wet summer, the pieces were large and had thick walls, and he was running out of time.

People agreed that it was best to move the work while it was in leather hard state and that it should be put on a pallet to allow the air to circulate, as it was drying out unevenly and was beginning to crack. It took four of them, some days later, to move the large piece onto a pallet which they managed to do without a mishap. It survived the journey to Robin Welch's studio without mishap, but unfortunately it cracked quite a lot as they were transferring it into the kiln. They repaired it as best they could, using a mixture of paper clay and glaze (which, by then, I had shown Dmitry how to make). The two pieces I fired, unfortunately, did not survive because we were rushing the work. I was going on holiday and it was only five days before Dmitry and Stas were due to go back to Russia.

Fortunately, the pieces that Joe Files fired survived and there were enough pieces to finish the sculpture.

I went away on holiday so I didn't know any of this until Stas e-mailed me after they had arrived back in Russia. Evidently Dmitry had to extend his stay for two days, but Stas had already agreed to go back to Russia. With a friend he was at university with, to help her with her two small children. This meant that Dmitry was left to repair his work and get it erected without the help of an interpreter. He then had to negotiate Heathrow airport on his own. He had bought so many books and equipment to take back to Russia that he had to pay a lot of excess baggage. He has since e-mailed me to say that he could write a book about those two days and he is now attending English classes.

He did get the sculpture repaired very well and it is now *in situ* at the Montgomery trust. I have been to visit it and taken some photos which I have sent on to Dmitry, who would love you all to go and see his sculpture. If anybody would like to see this sculpture, the Montgomery trust is open during Bucks Art Week or you can e-mail Ken Newlan and ask for a private visit. The address is Snells Farm, Snells Lane, Little Chalfont.

Before I finish this article, I would like to thank a few people who helped me with Dmitry's work. Jenny Hay who gave me Joe Files' phone number and helped me with some of the glazes for Dmitry's work. I'd also like to thank Jill Brown who came to Queens Park Centre and did some throwing with Dmitry and Stas. Throwing seems to be very different in Russia, and now I think the video Dmitry took of Jill's throwing technique is being shown to students of ceramics in Russia. Stas has e-mailed me to say "Hi" to all the members of the Dacorum and Chiltern Potters Guild. If any of you would like to e-mail Dmitry or Stas, their e-mail addresses are Khozyaykin@ngs.ru and stasokhrat@inbox.ru

Heather Paul

[Since writing this article, Dmitry has sent me an e-mail to tell me he has won another prize for sculpture since arriving back home, with a sculpture inspired by his trip to England. He sends everyone his regards and would love to hear from any of you, especially with news of ceramics and related subjects.]

NOTEBOOK

The problems of telephone scams, plus attempts to obtain illegal access to computers are increasing in frequency it seems. Some of the computer scams are now reported as seeming very official, but avoid invitations to click on to "links" for more information, and especially do not send any money or use premium rate phone lines unless you are very confident of what you are doing. Recently an e-mail has been sent out, purporting to be to E-bay customers asking you to "re-enter your details". This I have been advised is another "Phishing" scam

If you are receiving phone calls promising you wealth, prizes etc. these are now increasingly from a country other than the UK. ("just press the 9 key" ----- DO NOT DO IT ! you will be pestered even more). BT are aware of this problem but are currently unable to solve it.

Of more interest is a variation reported to me recently, by one artist and one potter. This involves receiving a phone call with glowing possibilities of selling your work for high prices if you simply register with this or that agent, or website. In one case the "registration fee" was £98, and in another £40. (with more to pay later).

It is just possible that some of these schemes are honest, but this is often doubtful, so do be very careful to check what you are becoming involved in if you are approached in this way. If you want to sell your pots, or ceramic work, read the following note.

Setting up a selling co-operative

Leslie Parrott is a guild member who is keen to sell his own work, and believes that it would be a good idea to join with other members who also want to sell, to form a co-operative group of some kind. If enough

people are interested then Les proposes a meeting could be held to start this off.

If you are interested phone Les on 01895 255 027 or send him a note to his home address; 8 Belmont Road, Uxbridge, Middx. UB8 1RB.

Rocket Kiln

The weather is improving, but we have not had any takers for the Rocket Kiln yet. If you want to give this a try please phone me or Ros McGuirk (see Committee list for phone nos.)

Grove House appeal

Grove house in St. Albans wanted a Potter to run classes for cancer patients. I am very pleased to report that Guild member Jane Kilvington has offered to take on this task.

Red Nose Day

During our Friday meeting with Sophie McCarthy on 11th March, we held an impromptu collection for the Red Nose appeal. I am delighted to report that this collection raised £30, and this sum has now been paid into the Comic Relief Fund. Thank you all for your generous donations.

Obituary – Rena Green

Rena Green had been a guild member for many years, and although she did not often attend our evening meetings, she did join with Guild members at various events such as Art in Clay, and the Chiltern Museum open days that we previously ran. Rena was also involved with Art in Action at Waterperry. It was at Art in Action about four years ago that Rena had a nasty fall. This was even more serious than it first appeared, since it caused heart problems from which she never completely recovered.

I accompanied Ruth Karnac to the funeral, and we passed on the condolences of Guild members to Rena's husband Ron, and other family members.

Mervyn Fitzwilliam

MEMBERSHIP NEWS

We are delighted to welcome the following ten new members of the Guild.

Kim Bishop-Laggett, from New Barnet currently a part-time ceramics student, interested in throwing and hand-building. **Mary Anne Bonney** of St. Albans interested in most aspects of pottery. **Judy Haggart**, Watford, mainly concerned with hand-building, decorating and stoneware. **Helen Hargreaves** from Hemel Hempstead is interested in hand-building and stoneware. **M. Jones** is an art tutor from Milton Keynes and is interested in sculpture and raku. **Mary Kearns**, an artist from Watford, is interested in most forms of pottery and **Julia Knowles** from Kings Langley, who is also an artist, is interested in hand-built ceramic sculpture.

Ann Maguire from Slough is an I/T pottery teacher with a general interest in ceramics. **Leslie Parrott** from Uxbridge was in Materials Research but is now a potter with an interest in all aspects, but especially in porcelain and stoneware glazes. **David Knight** is a

procurements manager from Dunstable with interests in hand-building, stoneware, wood firing and soda/salt firing. We look forward to meeting our new members at our events and ask existing Guild members to introduce themselves to them.

GOOD NEWS FOR MEMBERS ATTENDING POTTERS OPEN DAY Saturday 19th November 2005

Mervyn has come up with the wonderful idea of subsidising this year's entrance fee to Guild members only, to mark the occasion of the Guild's thirty-first anniversary.

The event is to take place at a new venue, Longdean School, Rumballs Road, Hemel Hempstead, Herts. The school has a theatre complex and catering facilities. Some members who have attended the Guild's recent workshops will be familiar with this, but in any case, maps and directions will be published in the next Newsletter.

As mentioned in the editorial, we will be privileged to have **RUTHANNE TUDBALL AND JACK DOHERTY**, two potters of great distinction who will both give a slide talk to introduce their work and the varied backgrounds to it. They will also demonstrate their making techniques and describe their firing methods. Both make functional soda-fired ware but are uniquely different from each other.

Ruthanne says "I try to make forms that capture the soft plasticity of the material as it evolves on the wheel, drawing inspiration from the natural world and the human body. Soda-glazing emphasises those rhythms and the making process".

Jack says "The firing plays a very important role in determining how my pots look, since no conventional glaze is applied. Instead, the marks and articulation of the forms are produced by the mixture of bicarbonate of soda and water which is sprayed into the kiln at the right time and temperature. It is a dramatic and exciting procedure which is the final creative act in my making process".

Morning tea and afternoon coffee will be provided and arrangements are being made for a buffet lunch to be available for purchase.

The committee will be meeting (with their calculators) working frenetically to come up with their 'bargain price' for non-members tickets.

Joy Wills

Heather and Peter Nissen are a husband and wife team currently working in Mill Hill, north London. They joined the Guild in the autumn of 2003 after studying ceramics at Barnet College under Vivienne Rodwell-Davies. They construct and fire their work in a shed at the bottom of their garden...



Heather (Walker) Nissen was born and raised in Fife, Scotland. She studied Fine Art at Edinburgh University, Drawing and Painting at Grays School of Art, Aberdeen, finally moving to

London to take her MA at Chelsea School of Art. Since graduating Heather has worked continuously as a professional artist exhibiting and selling her paintings and sculptures at various venues including The Paton, ICA and Mall Galleries in London, Aberdeen Art Gallery, The Royal Scottish Academy, Edinburgh and The Third Eye Gallery, Glasgow. Although her training was primarily in painting the substance of her work lies much deeper than the flat surface. Encrusted layers of oils, encaustics and marble dust and other mixed materials are used to explore her visions of landscapes and vessels. In a similar way her recent work in ceramics use additions of metal oxides, combustible materials and inclusions in the clay body to explore her deep ties with her native Scottish landscape. Fissures, erosion, growth and strata are all present

Two pieces Heather & Peter have been working on together : left: carved garden seat with barium glazes ; right: under construction, a large stoneware water feature.



in her pots both as surface decoration and in their actual construction.

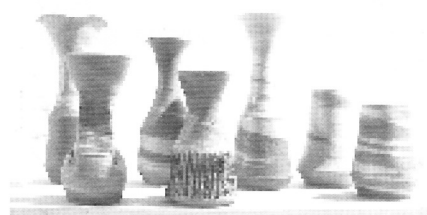
Heather's pots are variously thrown on the wheel, coiled, slabbed and pinched often combining techniques in one pot. Most of her work is single-fired to Δ7 in an electric kiln sometimes using local reduction and she also raku fires in a gas fired converted electric kiln.



Left : Heather working on a tall pot ; right : vessel form - an exploration of natural strata using layered stained clays and textural glazes.



Tall bowl forms - mixed porcelain & stoneware clays with volcanic glazes.



Group of stoneware vases - mixed clays thrown together, dolomite glaze.



Peter was born in east London. Although his early interest lay mainly in music, composing, playing and producing tracks from his loft studio, he has worked

variously as a maths teacher, painter and decorator, security guard, talent scout, packer, graphic designer and printer, not to mention three company directorships. His passion for making things was rekindled at once when handling a piece of clay for the first time in over thirty years at his first City & Guilds Design class at Barnet college. Working with clay came naturally to him and it wasn't long before getting to grips with working on the wheel, his preferred method of working. A sculptor friend gave him an old electric front-loading kiln which had been retired from service at Farnham College and Peter stripped it down and converted it into a gas fired raku kiln which is still being used to this day. The addition of a toploading electric kiln increased workshop capability to include earthenware and stoneware and, of course, enable more work to be done during the winter months.

Peter insists that he follows no particular

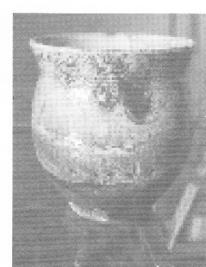
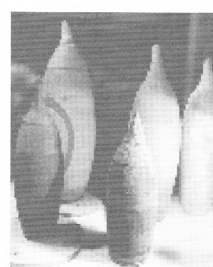
school though he is heavily influenced by several: Hamada's traditional values, Coper's unique slant on mid-20th century design, Sottsass' clean architectural approach, Ian Godfrey's sensitivity and simplicity and Ladi Kwali's strong forms and earthy decorative technique are amongst many sources of inspiration.

His work usually begins on the wheel and is often composed of thrown and altered sections, sometimes carved, sometimes asymmetrical, always organic in essence. For Peter every piece must have a soul; those that do not, end up in the bin!

Right from the start his fascination with glaze chemistry led him to experiment with individual finishes and his 'try anything and everything' attitude has brought him his own personal palette of texture and colour, and a practised hand (and chisel) at separating pot from kiln furniture!



Although their individual works are quite distinct Peter and Heather also work together on larger pieces. A recent commission for several related sculptures for a private garden has kept them busy for a number of months.



Clockwise from top-left : 1. titanium glazed stoneware bottles waiting for glaze firing ; 2. raku fired pot with copper based glazes & resist ; 3. incised ash glazed bottle with oxide decoration ; 4. ash glazed carved dish with vanadium & dry ash decoration.

You can find out more about Heather & Peter on their website:
www.thebottomofthegarden.co.uk
or email:
pots@thebottomofthegarden.co.uk

PAUL PRIEST WORKSHOPS 19TH AND 26TH FEBRUARY 2005

Interest in Paul's workshop grew as the date approached. Juggling to ensure attendance for all and viable numbers on two dates, in addition to the availability of venues and of course Paul, presented a challenge.

This challenge resulted in the workshops running on the above two dates at the new venue of Longdean School Pottery in Hemel Hempstead.

The following is a picture record of the techniques involved.

1. Here we see Paul demonstrating the setting up the armature for his sculpture, using a 5-sided plywood box screwed together to enable easy dismantling before firing, with a dowel secured to the height of the desired figure.

Paul uses bubble wrap to form the head. Most workshop members needing to fire in kilns at schools or evening classes used newspaper to avoid the fumes involved in burning plastic.

2. Workshop members used a ply wood disc securing a length of dowel in the centre to the required figure height and formed the head with newspaper.

3. Thin slices of clay are taken from the bag using a cutting wire and quickly applied to the armature by Paul.

4. Clay applied by a workshop member to the newspaper armature.

5 & 6 The clay is roughly applied, then features are pressed in, or further clay is applied to form eyebrows for example. Mouth openings & eye sockets are formed by pressing. Triangles of clay were applied to form a nose, with nostrils modelled in. In one case a student left space for a waterspout before forming the lips of the mouth. Ears were added and balls of clay were used to form eyeballs, or alternatively discs of clay were used. Eyelids were pressed into shape and applied to enclose the eyes.

A range of tools and methods were used to form hair, beard or head dress. Some of the sculptures were worked to a smooth surface others left with a rough finish a la Paul. All participants had an enjoyable and rewarding day. Paul was thanked and we pondered the task of loading sculptures into cars to take away for drying and firing.

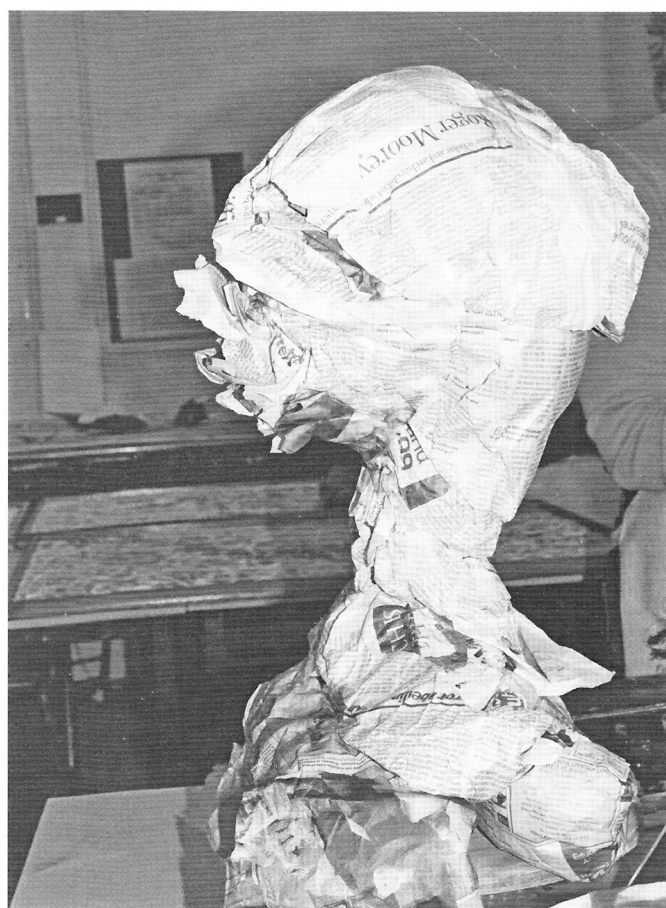
Hopefully photographs of the "Green" sculptures taken at the end of each workshop day will soon be available on the web site. The fired and completed sculptures will be on display at our Potters Open Day (POD) in November.

We hope to see many of you at future workshops.

Helen Vernon.



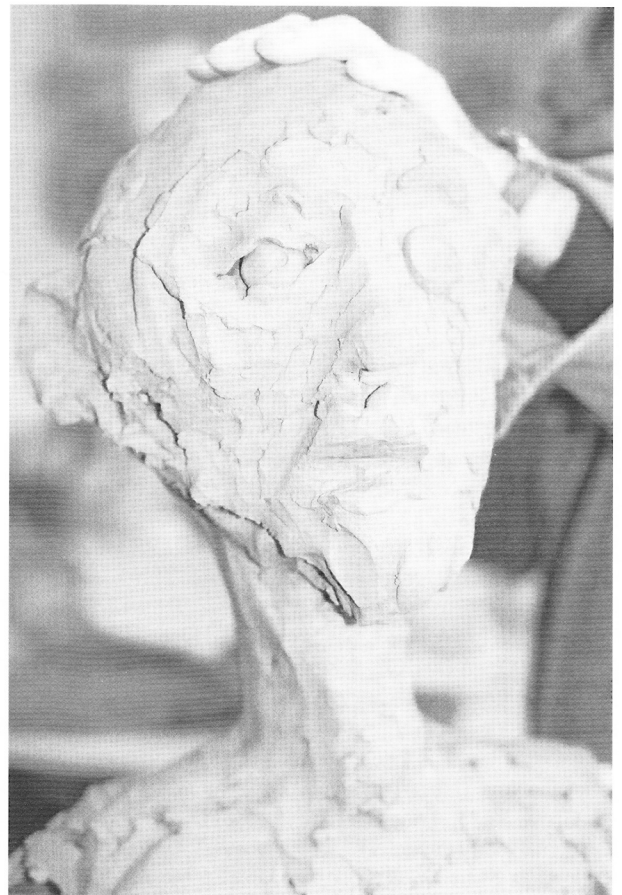
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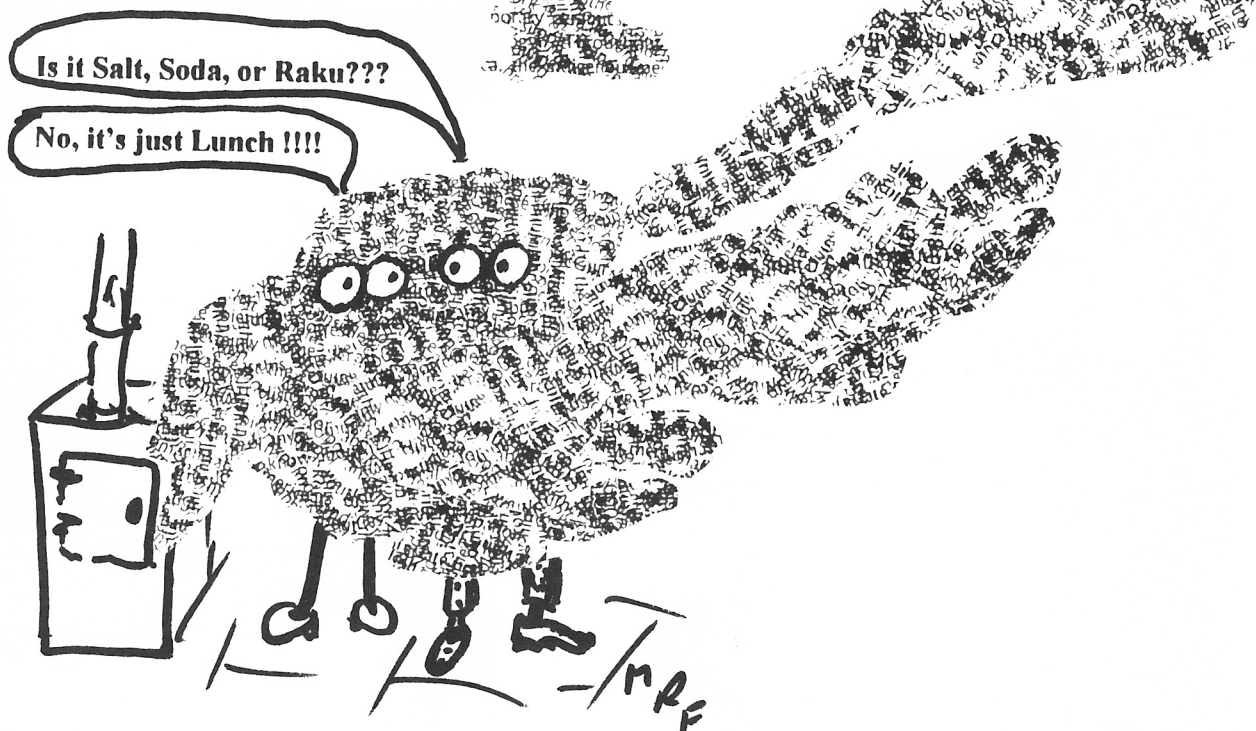


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The Smokies



COMMITTEE LIST

Murray Fieldhouse (President) 01442-851 229
 Northfields Studio, Tring, Herts. HP23 5QW
Mervyn Fitzwilliam (Chair & Newsletter) 01442-242332
 "Longfield", Bulstrode Lane, Felden,
 Hemel Hempstead, Herts. HP3 OBP
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 ODJ
Joy Wills (Open Day Organiser) 01296-481 015
 21 Tindal Road, Aylesbury, Bucks. HP20 1HT
Ros McGuirk (Programme Organiser and Vice-Chairman) 01727-834 326
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Janet Collings (Librarian) 01442-822 510
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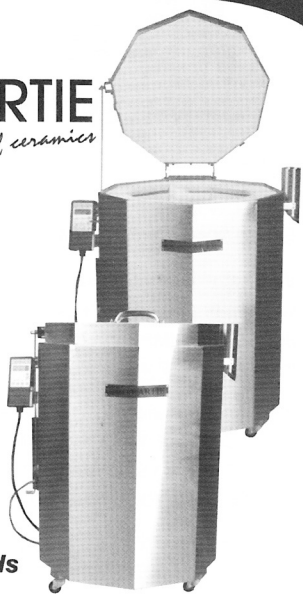
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