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www.thedcpg.org.uk
NEWSLETTER
WINTER 2009
£1.50

ABOUT THE GUILD & THE NEWSLETTER

www.thedcpg.org.uk

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 Single £17.50
Student £9.00 Newsletter only £7 per annum

Send your cheque, made payable to D.C.P.G., Jan Kent, 48, Coleshill Place, Bradwell Common, Milton Keynes, Bucks. MK13 8DP tel. 01908 674 051. (If joining after March, please phone for a reduced introductory rate).

The Dacorum & Chiltern Potters Guild Newsletter is published quarterly in February, May, August and November, being distributed free to all members of the Guild, other craft groups & organisations. Contributions to the Newsletter are always welcome (s.a.e. please with any items to be returned). Opinions expressed in items published do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the Committee or Guild members as a whole; nor is the Guild responsible for the content of individual advertisements printed in the Newsletter.

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FRONT COVER PHOTOGRAPH (by John Powell).

Lesley Parrot (Left) receives the Stan Romer Award Sculpture (made by Jane Kilvington) from Mervyn Fitzwilliam. Rob Bibby, our judge is in the centre.

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Editorial

We had a rather busy AGM on 9th October, followed by presenting the prizes for the Stan Romer Award. The theme this year was "The Elements", and the competition entries interpreted this theme in several different ways. Our competition Judge, Rob Bibby then went on to give us a demonstration of his pottery throwing and decoration techniques.

John & Caroline Romer were unable to be with us this year, owing to pressure of work, but I will send them details of the event.

An exciting future possibility for the guild has occurred due to the opportunity to obtain approximately 2000 HT1 bricks, which we hope can be used to build a wood fired earthenware kiln, for the joint use of Guild Members & West Herts College students. As I now write, the bricks have been purchased, & our project Managers Paul Rowbottom & Danielle Bunker are working on the outline details of the project, being Where? When? & How? It is hoped that the kiln building will be a "Workshop" project initially, with firing Workshops to follow.

The Guild Exhibition will probably be in progress by the time you receive this Newsletter, so do find time to visit if possible.

Our Potters Open Day is imminent, due to be held on 14th November. This year we have Morgen Hall & Chris Lewis showing us their Ceramic skills. If you have not yet purchased your tickets now is the time!

Mervyn Fitzwilliam

POTTERS OPEN DAY

Saturday 14th November 2009

See you all there!

Ronnie Powell, 2, Abbots Place, Chesham, Bucks. HP5 3HL
01494 774398

LATEST NEWS

Doors open at 9.00a.m. Longdean School, Rumballs Road, Hemel Hempstead. HP3 8JB The school car park entrance is marked by Longdean School signs stating "Main Entrance". A map of the school is available from our website www.thedcpg.org.uk and will also be included with the tickets. Additional DCPG entrance and car parking signs will go out on Saturday.

With the Guild membership around 150 members, this could be our biggest event with many visitors also attending. For those of you who have not attended a POD at this venue you will be impressed with facilities, close-up overhead video projection, sound and lighting!

IF YOU ENTERED the Stan Romer competition this year please bring your work along so that we can display it for all Guild members to see.

Joy Wills has two helpers for teas and coffee, having volunteered their services during the Guild Meeting / AGM, but if you might consider helping out during one of the breaks please email me at ronnie.powell@btinternet.com Please offer your help if you can. Guild members normally "rally round" for our biggest event of the year. The really good news so far is that we have enough people to help sell our potter's wares during the refreshment breaks.

We have always had a table to sell guild members odds and ends: Glazes, bats, books etc. Perhaps if you wish to make a little money you might think of bringing items for sale along? The Guild commission is 10% on all items sold but it is a good place to sell those unwanted slips or even moulds? You may even consider helping out with this stall during one of the breaks for 20 minutes or so, again all help is very gratefully accepted.

Setting up on Friday 13th November will start from 5 p.m. Again if you can spare the time it would be great to see a few members of the Guild on the Friday evening. There is a lot to set up of course. If you are unable to help on Friday evening then please help at the end of the event on the Saturday afternoon any assistance will be brilliant. On Friday evening Mervyn may have to do two trips from the lockup and the church to the school and then back again on the Saturday evening. If you can assist Mervyn in this task please offer him your help.

If you have any raffle prizes that would be brilliant! Our demonstrators have already indicated they will each be donating a "pot" in addition to a pottery supplies voucher worth £50.00!

Morgen Hall will be demonstrating in the morning starting at 10.00am Chris Lewis will take the afternoon slot starting at 1.30 pm

The POD ticket application form is from the website www.thedcpg.org.uk and also in your latest Newsletter. Tickets are priced at £10.00 for members and £22.00 for non members.

During the morning, lunch and afternoon breaks, tea, coffee & biscuits will be available at a cost of £2.50. We would be grateful if everyone would pre-order on the ticket application form.

Reminder! Bring your own packed lunch and assist us in keeping our costs down again this year. Many, many thanks to all those who have already volunteered to help and to those that are going to.

Future Guild Events

Please note

Unless otherwise stated our usual meeting venue is the Methodist Church Hall in Kings Langley. Doors open 7.45pm. & meetings start at 8.00 pm.

Guild Exhibition Wednesday 4th November to Thursday 12th November

At the Gallery, Letchworth Arts Centre, Leys Avenue, Letchworth Garden City SG6 3EW

Exhibition open: 10 - 5 Monday to Friday, 10 - 3 on Saturday. Keep Saturday 7th November free for special event (details to follow, probably on email). Delivery and installation: Tuesday 3rd Taking down on Friday 13th November.

Letchworth Arts Centre exhibition contact: Linda Carson 01462 670788

Guild contact; sue.lines@ntlworld.com or phone Sue Lines 01462 634573

Potters Open day (POD) 14th November at Longdean School in Hemel Hempstead. For those of you who have attended before you will already know that it is a marvellous venue. Everyone is on tiered seating and can view the potters closely through the use of a high tech video projected onto a large screen.

Morgen Hall and Chris Lewis are our potters for the day. Morgen's website will prove to anyone how gifted she is. (From handmade soup tureens to tableware to tea cabaret sets! She will be joining us for the day from Cardiff. She is an excellent speaker and demonstrator. <http://www.morgenhall.com>

Chris Lewis has exhibited in galleries and shows throughout the UK and Europe, and larger scale pieces have been featured in architectural and garden design projects internationally. Chris comes from South Highton near Newhaven in Sussex. His first kiln was a two chambered wood fired kiln which he used successfully for twenty years. However in 2000, this kiln was replaced by a large single chamber "anagama" kiln. He is a prolific potter and to acquire an idea of what he makes there is a great slide show on the web. Just type in <http://www.chrislewisceramics.com>

The other way of getting to their sites is to log on to thedcpg.org.uk/calendar.htm and look at what is going on 2009 -2010.

POD should not be missed! particularly when we have two such illustrious demonstrators. Bring a friend who you think would enjoy a day to remember. Please apply NOW! Or if you are very late applying please phone to let us know you intend to come. You can bring your own packed lunch. We will have tea & coffee available for morning and afternoon break, & also for lunch time.

Please note that you need to order your tea/coffee when you complete your application form. All of the committee hopes that you will be able to come and enjoy yourselves, see our two potters in action and perhaps win one of their "pots" or one of our other valuable prizes in the raffle. Both Potters will be selling their pots on the day. In addition, we will have various pottery tools, kiln furniture, materials & books for sale, & Ros McGuirk will be serving free "Hot Toddy" from the time the doors open at 9.00 am., so come early & pick up a bargain. If you do not have an application form, phone Veronica Powell (POD Organiser) on 01494 774 398 or download from our website.

We start promptly at 10.00 am, please arrive early to avoid disrupting the demonstrations.

Fri 4 Dec Pollie and Garry Uttley "Indian inspirations from textiles into clay"

The well known duo with their colourful platters, wall hangings, and jewellery, all inspired by travels in India. www.polliegarryceramics.com

This will be our "Christmas Event" so with any luck, and the usual resourcefulness of Tina Hall we just might get fruit punch and mince pies this evening.

Fri 8th January 2010 Alison & Tony Dix

Figurative ceramics & soda fired pots.

Other Events

British Museum

Until 22 Nov. The power of Dogu – ceramic figures from ancient Japan.

Until 11th Jan 2010. Moctezuma Aztec Ruler. This major exhibition covers Aztec Civilization through the rule of Moctezuma. www.britishmuseum.org

The Courtyard Room, Seaman's Hall, Somerset House, The Strand, WC2 www.cpaceramics.com Contemporary Ceramics

Galerie Besson 15 Royal arcade, 28 Old Bond St., W1

18th Nov. to 18th Dec. Hans vango,

www.galeriebesson.co.uk

Morley Gallery ,61 Westminster Bridge Rd., SE1.

2 to 16th Dec. London Potters annual open Exhibition

www.londonpotters.com

V&A Museum, Cromwell Rd. SW7

Until March 2010 Objects of Luxury, French Porcelain of the 18th Century www.vam.ac.uk

20 February 2010

Ceramic selling Exhibition by fifteen potters in aid of Age Concern; 11.00 to 16.00 St Bernards Preparatory School, Hawtrey Close, SL1 1TB. Info 01895 255 027

DCPG CHAIRMANS REPORT

At our AGM last year (3rd October 08) the prizes were given for the 9th Stan Romer Award, which had the theme "Out of Africa". Gareth Mason was our demonstrator & competition judge, & I must say that he did comment constructively about every piece of work entered in the competition. The winner was David Wright (grain of hope) second was Wendy Peters (A Whipsnade Queen & African King) & a small stylised elephant head, made by Marion Franses. took the third prize.

Evening meetings & Exhibitions Ros McGuirk puts a lot of research into finding interesting demonstrators for our evening meetings, which we continue to hold on a regular basis. The Guild Exhibition is planned for 4th to 12th November 2009, at the Gallery, Letchworth Arts Centre, Leys Avenue, Letchworth, SG6 3EW. Our Organiser this year is Sue Lines.

Pot Crawl Our Pot crawl was organised by Nigel Carrick on 11 -12th October 2008. This will be a series of visits, starting with Steve Parry at Fakenham, then Grapevine Gallery at Burnham market. After lunch a visit to "Made in Cley" Co-operative at Cley, then Bircham & Appleyard Galleries. On Sunday, we visit Antje Ernestus at Wood Dalling, Graham Clarke, & Ruthanne Tudball in the afternoon. Altogether a well organised event.

Workshops During this year, some Workshops have been Soda firings arranged by Ros McGuirk at Northfield Studio. A one day Workshop with Gordon Cooke was arranged at Longdean School on Sat. 14th March 2009. This was organised by Joy Wills. Another excellent one-day Heads & Faces Workshop, with Paul Priest & his partner Gaynor, was organised by Selina Mancy at The Rudolf Steiner School Pottery Studio, in Kings Langley, on 6th June 2009. This was enjoyed by both Guild Members & visitors.

Potters Open Day (POD) Joy Wills again arranged our enjoyable POD with Joe Finch demonstrating, on 8th November 2008, & then retired from the Committee, to be a full time Granny, for her Grandchildren (although she did also organise a Workshop first see above). The Organisation of the POD for 2009 has been taken on by Veronica Powell, who is now deep in the details of setting up this event for Saturday 14th November 2009, with her husband John arranging the video & lighting details with the school staff. Our demonstrators this year will be Morgen Hall & Chris Lewis.

At the 2008 POD we had some very welcome help from some of the school pupils with lighting & audio/visual equipment. This assistance is now incorporated into the school curriculum, & the same arrangement will apply for 2009. A reciprocal arrangement, with DCPG giving Pottery lessons to the Longdean School pupils on 24th February

2008 was attended by Veronica Powell, Ruth Brown, Ros McGuirk & your Chairman. This Tuition was Appreciated & well received by the pupils, with some good items being produced.

Pitstone The Pitstone Museum activities have really taken off this year, with a great many more members of the public attending the open days, & enjoying clay activities. Ruby Sharp continues as our Pitstone organiser, with help from Veronica & John Powell, Tina Hall, & your Chairman. We now have the second guild wheel permanently at Pitstone available for throwing instruction. Guild members are invited to come and participate & learn more about Raku. Guild activities do help support the Museum financially, as well as paying for gas & materials used.

Other activities – Box Moor (Conker) Festival

The 2008 festival was held on Sunday 19th October, on Blackbirds Moor, next to St. Johns Church, as usual. Those helping were John & Veronica Powell, Sylvia Fitzwilliam and Linda Ablett, (plus me). We could really have used some more helpful volunteers. But, by working hard we raised £235 for the Hospice of St. Francis, and received a letter of appreciation from the fund co-ordinator, plus the Box Moor Trust. The guild clay activities are very well received by the local people, children in particular.

Membership Our Membership is hovering at approximately 150. Jan Kent continues to be our Membership Secretary, as well as being our Treasurer. Digby Stott continues in the post of Data Base Holder, maintaining our advertisement list plus the newsletter circulation list for other guilds & pottery groups. Digby also uses his data base to prepare our circulation list & labels for Newsletter distribution. We have introduced a new idea at the request of a guild member, being "Newsletter only" membership at a cost of £7 p.a.

Newsletter As for last year, the Newsletter remains Quarterly, with help from Harry Karnac, and the staff at Alpine Press. Thanks go to those who contribute articles for us. With other commitments continuing, I find it very difficult to ensure that the newsletter is published on time & to a good standard.

Website John Powell continues to run our Website (www.thedcp.org.uk) a valuable support for us all. Always check the Website if looking for up-to-date information, since notes are sometimes added before Newsletter publication. John has also slipped into being our resident engineer, taking responsibility for the Digital projector & laptop for presentations.

Library Sue Lines continues as our Librarian, but is not always able to attend meetings. An assistant is urgently needed since our Library is a very popular & valuable guild resource. We hope to add some new books in the coming year.

Committee The main change to our Committee at the 2009 AGM will be our Secretary of seventeen years standing down. John Beckley has been an outstanding secretary, being very reliable and efficient in all respects

during his term of office. Jane Kilvington has come forward to take John's place & we hope to welcome her at the AGM today. Other committee members have volunteered to continue serving for the next year. Our thanks to all of our committee & helpers for all that they do for us. If you have any ideas about Guild events, or Guild activities that you would like to discuss, please do talk to any committee member about them. We remain a completely voluntary organisation so rely on members to support all that we do.

Mervyn Fitzwilliam (Chairman)
9th October 2009

Box Moor Conker Festival – Sunday 18th October 2009

The day started overcast but brightened up later, although it was very cold. As usual, once we started it became "full on" as we helped members of the public to throw a pot, or do some slab building, or buy a pot, or even talk about the Guild., and the Potters Open Day. Once started we pressed on until an early halt was called at 2.30 pm.

Our efforts raised a total of £245.50 for the Hospice of St. Francis, so we are all delighted with that.

With getting everything ready I did not remember the camera, & neither did anyone else, so the only photographs were taken by visitors & a photographer on behalf of the local Hemel Gazette. The two photographs that they published are reproduced here with their permission.



1) Ronnie Powell with Leah Currie



2) Ros McGuirk with Emily Currie

Our throwers were; Veronica (Ronnie) Powell, Selina Mancey & me initially. Ros McGuirk came to join us at 1.00 pm. so we could switch round and get a slight break then. Hand building was supported by my wife Sylvia, & also by Linda Ablett. Since we had arranged a separate sales table, Linda had to break away to support that for some of the time, after Selina had made a start, but was then needed as a thrower. Fortunately, my daughter Carol arrived with our Grand daughter Sarah, so Carol took over sales, with Sarah being our "Runner". Another helper kept hard at it was John Powell, who took the bookings, issued the aprons, prepared clay, directed the crowds, & also acted as our technical trouble shooter. Linda's husband Peter was also called on to help with odd necessities like extra extension leads, levelling props etc.

If it sounds a bit frantic well, it was! but I must say a very big thank you to the whole team, who all worked so hard to make our part of this event a success. In addition I must say a big thank you to our Box Moor Trust co-ordinator, Louise Baldwin, & other staff members, who have supported us in this venture for the past five years. Louise takes care of the background organisation for us, ensuring that we have tables, chairs, aprons, wipes, in fact most of what we need, is ready waiting for us when we arrive to start.

Thanks to you all for making this event such a success for all of those people who wanted to "have a go with the clay", & giving members of the public an insight into what the guild is about, your efforts are very much appreciated.

Mervyn Fitzwilliam

BOOK REVIEW

Low Firing & Burnishing, by Sumi von Dassow
A&C Black Ceramics Handbook Series £14.95

This is a new book in the popular Ceramics Handbook Series, & is well produced, as usual, with many good photographs of the techniques used and of the finished works.

Works by familiar artists such as Gabrielle Koch, Antonia Salmon, and Ashraf Hanna are included, although many of the names are new to me, quite a few from America.

The book starts with a historical survey, leading into details of the techniques used. Many of the clays discussed are probably only available in USA, but efforts are made to indicate alternatives available in UK. And at the end of this chapter is a useful clay selection guide.

The third chapter covers burnishing using terra sigillata, and gives details of making terra sigillata & applying it using brush & spray methods.

Smoke & black firing methods are covered in a relatively short chapter, although the details are good. I personally liked the black "diamond donut pot" by Michael Wisner, which was burnished using an unusual tool – tights!

Pit firing in different ways is discussed, with details of using seaweed & cow dung in large quantities, but also explaining that a California beach is one of the best places for this activity. I think that using beaches in the UK would be unpopular, unless perhaps you own one, although any suitable site will serve.

The use of a "pyrometer" to measure temperature is mentioned, but if this is a high temperature thermocouple then it needs to be understood that true temperature measurement cannot be made by haphazardly lowering the whole unit into the pit, since the hot & compensating junctions would be somewhere near the same temperature. It would be necessary to mount the thermocouple in a suitable place with the junction between compensating leads & thermocouple protected. Alternatively, use a lower temperature chromel / alumel thermocouple with long wires to the cold junction.

Sagger firing is discussed, with photographs of good results shown. The details of raku firing using horse hair, or other similar materials is interesting, giving some really attractive effects – see the illustration on the front cover.

In general I think this book would be a very useful reference work if starting out on burnishing & low fired finishes for pots.

Mervyn Fitzwilliam

MEMBERSHIP NEWS

Currently Jan Kent is inundated with applications for membership renewal & also applications for Potters Open day. In amongst these applications was an application from a new member, being Nicola Preston.

Nicola lives in Leighton Buzzard, & is a Technician.

Jan tells me that she has ticked all the Pottery Interest boxes, so we expect to see her at most of our events and activities during the coming year.

The previous Newsletters all had a membership application form in, so that guild members could give this to friends, intending that we may gain some new members. What seems to have happened is that some existing members have used these as renewal forms. This is not a great problem, but did lead Jan into some detailed checking exercises.

If you are an existing member then all you need to do is send your cheque to Jan, with your name either clearly on the cheque, or printed on the back of the cheque.

Membership renewal was due on 1st October, so if you have not renewed your membership please be prepared to pay £3 as a guest at the next guild evening meeting.

The Stan Romer Award.

This year was the tenth since the beginning of this event and we had a total of eleven entries on the evening, on the theme of "The Elements". (Some were rather late arriving due to traffic problems, and judging was somewhat disrupted).

Les Parrot – small thrown flame bottle 1st Prize

Paul Rowbottom – large smoke fired terracotta pebble 2nd prize

Susan Eglington – maize sculpture 3rd prize

Helen Halliday - oval pot form

Vivienne Rodwell-Davies – black with white stripes pebble

Bipin Raithatha – soda fired bottle form

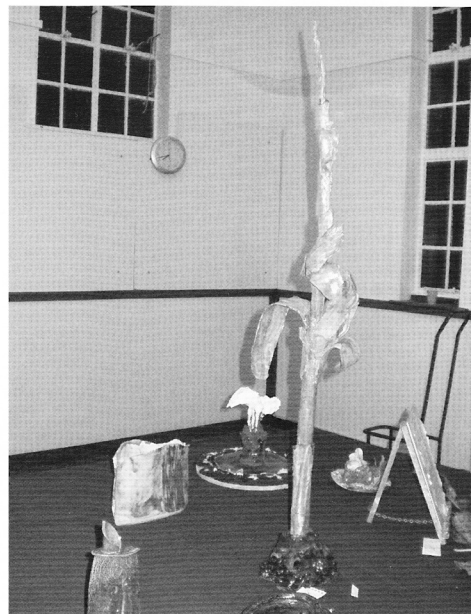
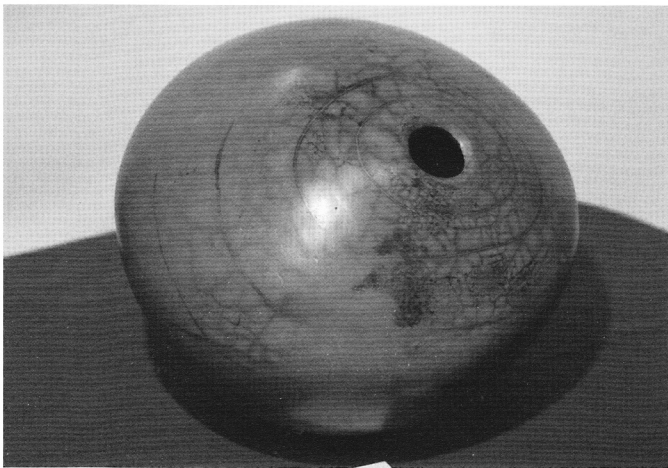
Beverley Schramm – open pebble form

Jane Kilvington – volcano

Ronnie Powell – earth, fire and water sculpture

Marion Frances – Davidson – Conker

Danielle Bunker – soda fired organic open vessel



Photographs by John Powell & Sylvia Fitzwilliam

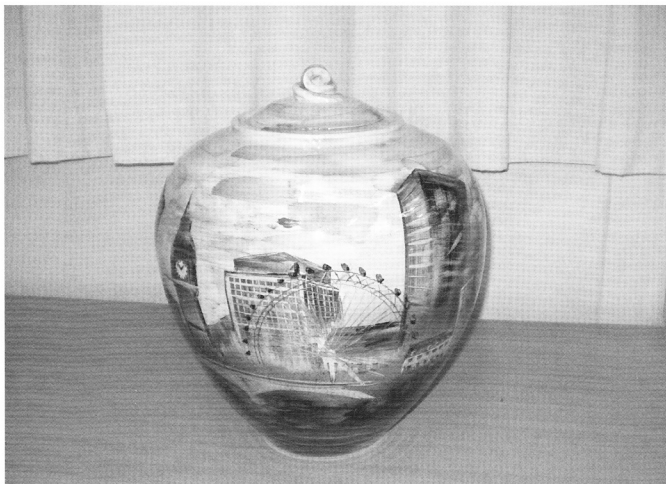
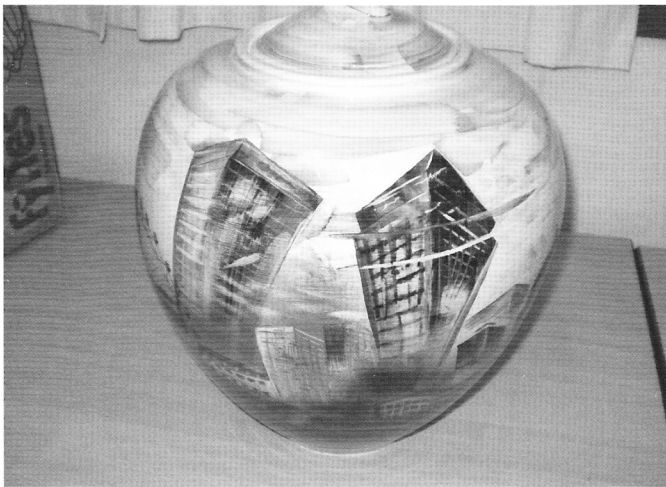
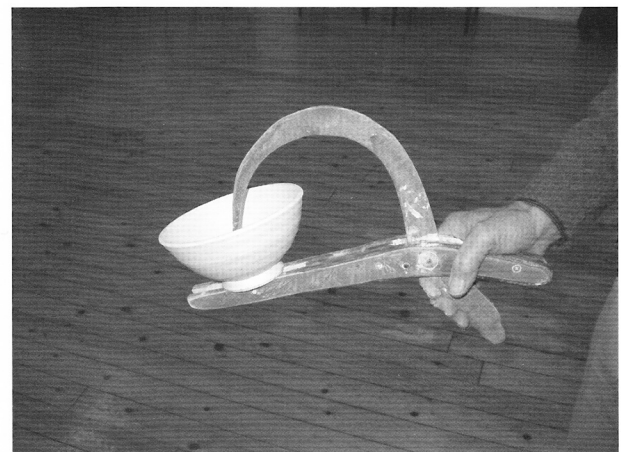
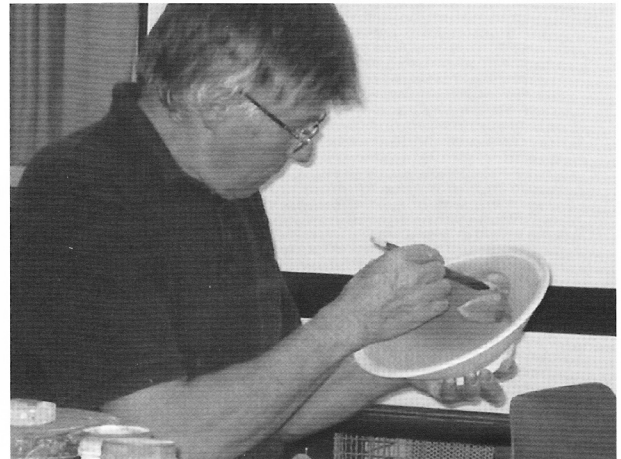
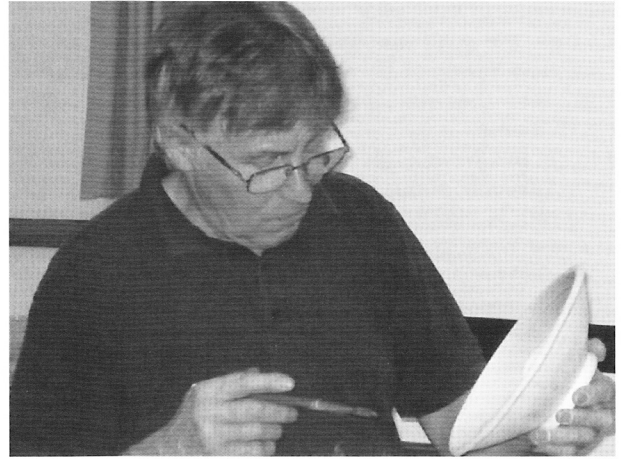
Rob Bibby Demonstration

Rob explained that he had suffered from serious back problems in the earlier part of his life, which had left him with difficulty using his legs. To overcome this whilst throwing he put the foot control of the Wheel on a chair, & set the speed by hand. He showed a lot of skill throwing "off the hump", & used a wedge shaped piece of wood to cut part finished pieces off whilst the wheel was rotating. He caught these, with some dexterity, as they became free, & placed them to one side.

Later he showed us his methods of decorating, & also showed us a very well designed tool for holding bowls & other pieces when dipping them in glaze.

His slides showed some impressive pieces with figurative & architectural decoration. For details of his majolica techniques see our website.

Photographs of Rob Bibby by Veronica Powell. Photographs of glazing tool & pots by Sylvia Fitzwilliam.



Thirty Five years of the Guild

Yes, it's true, the guild was formed 35 years ago, although there are now fewer of us who remember our inaugural meetings, and the atmosphere surrounding the Pottery World at that time.

I need to get this Newsletter to the Printer soon, so I cannot expand extensively about the past years, especially since my typing rate is about one page in three hours or so, but the attached photographs help to give a flavour of past times. In addition, I will bring some of the photographs to the Potters Open day, so if we have room, & time to display them you can see some of the past history.

Guild Exhibition, Ruislip Cow Byre 1983



Pot Crawl visit to Gilles le Corre Studio 1993

Potters Open day 1988



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