

## IN THIS ISSUE

Potters Open Day Reports

Pitstone Dates

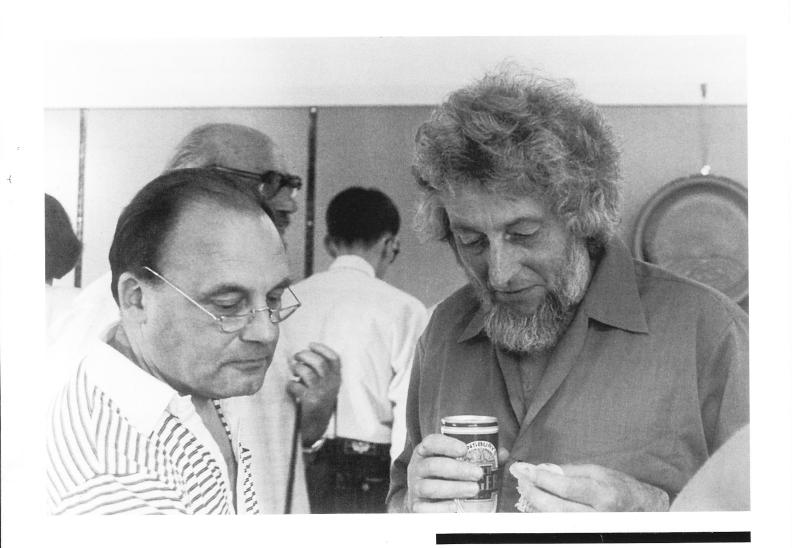
Open Studios, from two

Viewpoints

**Future Events** 

Rob Bibby, Part 2

**Book Review Kiln Fired Glass** 



www.thedcpg.org.uk

**NEWSLETTER** 

SPRING 2010

£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 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.

#### REPRODUCTION OF NEWSLETTER ARTICLES

Articles in this Newsletter are the copyright of the Guild or the Author unless otherwise attributed & may not be reproduced, copied or used in any way without the permission of the Guild or the Author.

Copy dates Publication dates

(latest receipt of material for typing)

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

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

#### **ADVERTISING RATES:**

1/4 page £14.00 ½ page £22.50 whole page (depending on availability) £50.00

small ads 25p per word (20words free to members) semi-

display: 1/12 page 3.5cm.high x 8cm.wide

from your artwork £7.00

or typesetting - maximum 50 words £10.00

Covers: Back + 20%; Inside + 15%

Distribution of leaflets: A5[2.5gram]-£35.00 A4[5 gram] - £35.00

The above charges are for distribution of 200 leaflets printed on standard weight paper [80 g.s.m.] ready for distribution and delivered direct to the Editor. For other size/weight leaflets and for all advertising enquiries please telephone Sylvia Fitzwilliam on 01442-242 332

alter Brayford Proudly presents the all new and independent

.... After 16 years in the business I've set up my own company. We specialise in the manufacture and supply of kiln furniture to studio potters, hobby potters, colleges and schools...Buying is now as easy as calling A-B-C

- No minimum order.
- Fast, friendly and efficient service. Happy to discuss your requirements, absolutely no obligation to buy. Free help and advice.
- No longer tied to just one refractory manufacturer...differing qualities and prices. No point in being forced to buy a Rolls Royce when a mini will do? Huge STOCK of 'Best quality' refractories for immediate collection from our
- Stoke-on-Trent base, or nationwide delivery-Overnight if required!
- Cut to size service, any size, any shape, any thickness. Square, round, triangular, perforated and plain batts.

  15 tonnes of **reduced price**, **slight seconds/subs**. Don't delay!

- Bankrupt stock. Please enquire. Very competitive prices to suit all budgets.
- Kiln shelves, tubular props, castellated props, tile cranks, stilts, pins, cements, batt washes etc.

Please contact Walter Brayford for quotations completely without obligation.

Telephone 01782 505405, Fax 01782 504422 Mobile 07817 040971. Email walter@claylake.com

### NOW WITH REDUCED CARRIAGE RATES!

LIMITED

Located in the heart of "The Potteries". Potterycrafts have the experience and skill to not only create world-class kilns and moulds, but also provide five star after-sales service. Technical advice, replacement parts, servi



K's leading manufacturer of kilns and moulds"

### WWW.POTTERYCRAFTS.CO.UK

Tel: +44 (0)1782 745000 nquiries@potterycrafts.co.uk

Tel: +44 (0)1923 800006 rickmansworth@potterycrafts.co.uk

#### Front cover Photograph

Murray Fieldhouse (right) & Ray Phipps, at a guild Exhibition in about 1980. Photograph probably by Ruth Karnac.

Murray started the Guild with Ray (because Adult Education Pottery classes were being cut back) after some preamble & several beers, by saying "Right, we will start a Potters Guild, I will be Secretary & you will be Chairman".

Ray came to our Potters Open day in 2009, and retold us the above story.

#### Contents

Editorial	Page;2
Membership News	3
Guild & other Events	3
Potters Open day	3
Morgen Hall at Potters Open day	4
Chris Lewis at Potters Open day	5
Open Studios from two Viewpoints	7
Rob Bibby (9th Oct.) part two	8
Book Review, Kiln formed Glass	9
Pitstone Dates	9
Last Minute Notes	9
Committee List	10

#### Editorial

As I write, the snow seems to be showing some signs of thawing, which will be a relief for most of us, although we enjoyed the sledging, snowballs, igloo, & snowman activities with our grandchildren.

Our Guild soda firings at Northfield studio are finished for the foreseeable future, since Murray & Dorley are now unable to cope with any further guild activities, due to Murray's present poor health.

We are still waiting for a report on the proposed kiln activities from Danielle & Paul, following our purchase of the 2000 HT1 bricks, previously reported.

Speaking to Geof Kenward, Chairman of London Potters Guild, I found him very pessimistic about the future of adult education for Pottery Students. He explained that It is a government decision that classes will not be funded after 2010/11, with local authorities having discretion over any support that is given. Bearing in mind the unbelievably large amount of debt which now burdens the country, & will do so for years, it seems unlikely that classes will be subsidised as previously. If students are unable to pay the full cost of courses, then it appears obvious that these courses will be reduced or closed. Partially in response to this situation, some Potters are running their own courses for Pottery students.

Our Guild was started by Murray Fieldhouse & Ray Phipps as a "Self help group", in 1974, since Murray was very concerned about reduced financial support for Pottery classes at that time ( which was 36 years ago! ). For me, & many others, the 1960's & 70's were a golden age for Studio Pottery, even as Murray was correctly predicting closing classes, reduced support, & a downward spiral, starting so long ago.

The much reduced circumstances today are partly the result of this ever continuing reduction of financial support for classes, & we now need to support our Pottery Guilds & groups more than ever, since they are likely to be the mainstay of any continuing Pottery, Sculpture, & Ceramics activity.

#### NOTE

[A serious computer crash during preparation of the newsletter led to the loss of some material, so if your photographs or notes do not appear in this issue, they may have gone to the big virtual newsletter in the sky. In addition various Software problems remain. My apologies if articles you have sent in have been affected].

Mervyn Fitzwilliam

#### MEMBERSHIP NEWS

A new Member joined us in December, being Peter Warren, a retired Teacher from Stevenage. Peter indicates his interests as throwing & decorating both stoneware & earthenware.

Judy Haggar has rejoined the guild after a gap of one year, so we welcome her back.

Editor

## **Future Guild Events**

Our evening meetings are usually held on Fridays at the Methodist Church Hall, in Kings Langley (WD4 8PA) unless otherwise stated. Start time; doors open at 7.45 & meetings start promptly at 8.00 pm.

Fri 12Feb Jane Cox Well known maker of contemporary slipware in bright blues and turquoises. Member of the CPA whose work is considered to be in the top ten among the collectors. See <a href="https://www.janecoxceramics.com">www.janecoxceramics.com</a>

Fri 12Mar Lexa Laurence. "Journeys with clay and fire". Kiln builder, development worker and teacher. Lexa has taken her passion for clay into remote areas of the developing world.

Fri 16 Apr Sue Dyer. Inlaid porcelain. Exquisite pots with abstract designs.

Fri 14 May Richard Miller "from thrower to tile maker". A young maker now running a successful tile business. <a href="https://www.froyletiles.co.uk">www.froyletiles.co.uk</a>

## Other Events

Sat 20 Feb Ceramic Exhibition at St. Bernards School, Slough. Fifteen potters including our very own Les Parrott. In aid of Age Concern. Well worth a visit. For more info contact Les on 01895 255027.

26-28 Feb Ceramic Art London. Terrific annual show by the CPA at the RCA in Kensington Gore.

24-25 April Workshop and Exhibition at Whichford Pottery. Shipton-on-Stour, Warks. CV36 5PG.

Tel: 01608 624416. Potters to include Toff Milway, Clive Bowen, Jill Fanshawe Kato and Nigel Lambert.

**25-26 April Ceramics in the Round.** The Great Dome, Buxton, SK17 6RY See <a href="https://www.earthmarque.com">www.earthmarque.com</a>

8-31 May Artsapce 2010. At the Barn Galleries near Henley-on-Thames. Annual show of ceramics, sculpture and paintings. Over 70 selected exhibitors For more information and events see

22-24 May Potfest Scotland, Perth Agricultural Centre, Huntingtontower, Perth, PH1 3JJ. See

26-28 June Earth and Fire.

Rufford Country Park, Ollerton. Notts, NG 22 9DW. For more info see www.ruffordceramicscentre.org.uk

15-18 July Art in Action. Waterperry, Oxon.

**24-26** July Potfest in the Park. Hutton-in-the-Forest, Penrith, Cumbria. <a href="www.potfest.co.uk">www.potfest.co.uk</a>

6-8 Aug Potfest in the Pens. Penrith

7-9 Aug Art in Clay. Hatfield House. www.artinclay.co.uk

#### POTTERS OPEN DAY 2009

Our major event of the year was again held at Longdean School in Hemel Hempstead. The facilities and all the members of staff there are absolutely brilliant. We are extremely grateful to the school for their continued patronage. In return, each year we help Longdean School by giving our special expertise to the children for a day of Pottery. (If you feel you would enjoy teaching teenagers for a day please contact Mervyn). It would be great to have you helping the guild. [We have enough helpers for this year, on 23 Feb. Ed.]

Our marvellous potters for the day, Morgen Hall and Chris Lewis gave very informative and very interesting videos, slides and power point presentations, along with their practical demonstrations. They were both very different in their approach to ceramics but similar in their careful execution of their wares.

It was great to have so many members helping on the day. Thank you so much for your valued involvement. Despite the inclement weather there was a really good turn out and with chairs and tables being put away at the end of the day we were cleared, with all the guild's possessions, at 5.30 pm. I think that could be a record!

Special mention must be given to Tina Hall who unfortunately could not be there on the day. She had managed to buy a tea urn with the profits from collecting money for teas and coffees on Friday evenings, & we also borrowed an additional urn from Jan Kent. We might never need a kettle again! many thanks to them both.

Supporting the Guild in so many ways helps it run very smoothly. Thanks must also go to those who have sent in their photographs of POD to go into this newsletter and to those who have written about our very special potters of the day.

Ronnie Powell

#### MORGEN HALL at Potters' Open day

We sat, sucking sweets, entranced by her ebullient enthusiasm as she told us how she had for years made tableware which relied on a kick wheel, a kiln, a pair of scissors and a roulette wheel before turning to high tech machines. Her work is thrown, with the emphasis on turning and fine rouletted detail with slip patterns in a strong blue.

She started by showing slides of a variety of early pots done before she found the tin glazed earthenware for which she is now so well known. We were told that her parents ran a restaurant and that this had led to a feeling for food. She now works with Ryton Organic Gardens and grows their vegetables. We were shown slides of old varieties of runner beans and a video clip taken in macro of a slug eating her mother's geraniums. Morgen's fascination with vegetables has led her to hire Victorian slides of slices of vegetables and also to make her own slides. Of all vegetables runner beans, broccoli and celery are her main sources of inspiration.

She used to cut the shapes of vegetables out of newspaper with scissors creating crisp edged paper resists. These shapes were cut and applied wet to the leatherhard pots prior to being sponged over with slip. However in 1998 she bought a plotter-cutter and a

G3 Power Mac, scanner, printer, zip drive and the software: Illustrator 8. Streamline, following Photoshop 4 and the interface between the computer and the plotter-cutter called Cutline. Plotter-Cutters have been used for many years by sign writers, who work with sticky backed vinyl. Morgen gave us each a square of green vinyl, which had been plotter cut with celery shapes so we could see how the top layer is cut and can be detached but the backing paper is still intact. Memorial stone makers also use plottercutters to make rubber stencils for sandblasting stone. The vegetable shaped stencils made on the potter-cutter come from actual vegetables scanned into the computer. After the scanning, the image of the vegetable is worked on in Photoshop to produce black and white outlines suitable for the plotter cutter.

As well as the plotter-cutter, Morgen also bought a ram press. She had been interested in finding ways other than throwing or hand building of making tableware. In particular, she wanted to make non circular forms and to find a quicker method of production. Once again, vegetables were a major source of inspiration. While slicing broccoli stems she realised the actual pieces of broccoli could be ram pressed into the clay. Other firm vegetables such as celery and cabbage can also be pressed into clay. One bonus is that the vegetables dry and shrink faster than the clay and so if left overnight they have dried and shrunk away from the clay and can be removed easily.

Plotter cut stencils and the ram press work extremely well together. By multiple pressings of the same piece, plotter cut stencils can be added during the making process. This enables the otherwise identical ram pressed pots to be individual one offs with decoration on both the top and bottom surfaces.

These stencils, cut in the shapes of runner beans, celery or sliced broccoli act as resists to a blue slip which is sponged on at the leatherhard stage. After drying the pots are bisque fired to 1000 degrees centigrade, Orton cone 06. The tin glaze is applied and then a rutile stain sponged over the tin glaze to soften the colour. The glaze firing goes to 1120 degrees centigrade, Orton cone 01.

#### SLIP RECIPE

2 parts Valentines red earthenware clay1 part ball clay7 to 8 % cobalt oxide2% red iron oxide

#### GLAZE RECIPE orton cone 01

\* Based on an ALAN CAIGER-SMITH recipe Lead Bisilicate 56 Flint 8 Cornish Stone 10 Standard Borax Frit 8 Zinc Oxide 4 Tin Oxide 8 Lithium Carbonate 2

#### RUTILE GLAZE STAIN RECIPE

1 part Rutile Light
1 part orange and yellow commercial glaze stains mixed The stain is mixed with a little tin glaze.

After the coffee break Morgen started her demonstration by showing how a big lump of clay can be thrown in stages. First one third of the clay is thrown and then another lump is added and finally the third ball of clay is joined to the clay on the wheel. Once this had been centered it was covered with cheesecloth and used as a chuck for turning a mug. Morgen said that she normally takes 20 minutes to turn one mug. She started with a surform blade and then moved to a variety of looped tools which she used to make two rounded edges to the bottom of the mug. The base of her pots are usually burnished and left unglazed. She then took a roulette and ran it over the bevelled edge closer to the top of the mug. She told us that after being dissatisfied with her own home made roulette wheels, she found that book binders use exquisitely made brass tools which they call "decorative farthing wheels". She bought her brass 'roulette' wheels from: Fine Cut Precision Ltd, Marlborough Road, Lancing Business Park, Lancing, Sussex, BN15 8UF, England tel:+44 (0) 903 750888

She was then persuaded to do a one minute tea pot. She managed this feat with great panache and held up her tea pot with water pouring from the spout. After this she started on a ginger jar made with the trapped air method and showed us how she extrudes

a thin coil of blue clay with her Kemper hand extruder and then rolls strips of this clay into her extruded handles. I was interested to see that she always covers her work with newspaper before rolling. When she joins her handles she does not use slurry but just cross hatches and adds just a dab of water. To achieve a good shaped handle she focuses on the inside shape and rejects all notion of the handle growing out of the pot. During the demonstration she told us how she uses latex to resist around the rims. She recommended covering the paint brush with ordinary household soap before dipping into latex. The other recommendation made at the end of the demonstration was for Lotil hand cream, which can be obtained from Boots.

Morgen Hall gave us the most enjoyable, stimulating and informative talk. She was generous with both her energy and her information. Besides being talented she is also an efficient, well organized potter as can be seen by a visit to her highly impressive Web page. <a href="https://www.morgenhall.com">www.morgenhall.com</a>

#### Margaret Tatton-Brown

#### CHRIS LEWIS AT POTTERS' OPEN DAY

Chris's first job was as an apprentice at Farnham Potteries in Wrecchlesham. He left to set up at South Heighton near Newhaven, Sussex in 1976. The pottery had been established by Ursula Mommens in 1951, and she is, I believe, still working there, at the age of 101. Following Chris's arrival the Pottery was further developed. The old farm buildings were converted into a workshop and showroom, and the garden was established as a beautiful site for outside exhibitions.

Chris's first kiln at South Heighton was a double chambered wood fired kiln which worked well for over twenty years. It was replaced by a large single chambered anagama kiln which is usually fired twice a year. Here the firewood is often in direct contact with the pots. It is placed into the kiln through the numerous stoking holes along the sides, once the temperature within is above 1000C.

The pots get covered in ash and embers during the four day firings. The results are unpredictable, but the

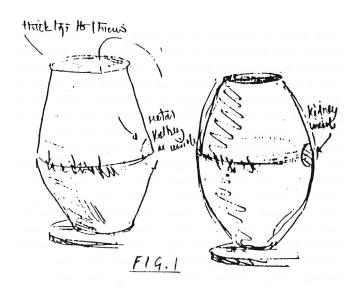
pots often emerge with beautiful, rich surface colour and texture.

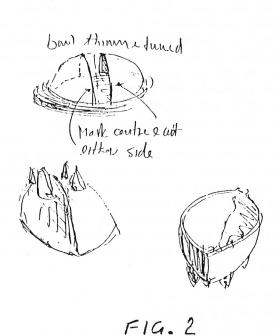
With such a large kiln to work with, it is hardly surprising that his output varies in size from tableware to large and monumental pieces for the garden. What is intriguing is how well these two very different styles fit together. The forms are very well designed with deceptively simple and elegant shapes, and are often embellished with textures and scraffito that have been inlayed with slips. Overall the colours are subtle, with a wide range of warm browns from amber through to black, and decorative patterns showing through softly in black and white.

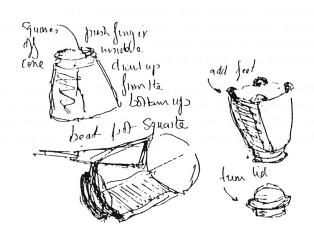
Tribal art, and archaeology are obviously strong influences here, with geometric patterns and abstract bird and animal motifs commonly used as decoration. Many of the shapes Chris makes are close to those of African water pots, wood carvings and architecture. Although trips to museums are essential in his search for inspiration, happily for us all, Chris does not rely solely on these sources and continues to travel widely, especially in West Africa. We were treated to a wonderful selection of photographs from Nigeria and Northern Ghana, including 10 gallon water pots by local potters near Abuja where Ladi Kwali worked, and where Chris occasionally got the chance to help Michael Cardew fire his kiln extraordinary pictures of a mud and timber mosque.

There was also the abstract figurative work of Yoruba wood carvers, the wonderful mud architecture of the Lobe people and the extraordinary great mosque at Djenne, towering up like a fortified palace, the largest structure in the world built of mud.

Chris chose to start his demonstration with the "Wrecclesham Pottery technique for making very large thrown pots". Note that he draws all his designs on squared paper so that is it easy to work out the dimensions. He decides on the height and then calculates the other figures to follow.







This time he brought in the base of the pot already thrown and firmed up. To make the top half, eighteen pounds of clay were placed on the wheel and patted into a low cone. He opened up by going right down to the wheelhead and pulled up a cylinder. After three pulls he had a tall cylinder that flared out slightly at the top. The rim was measured to check the diameter, and the forth pull was done using a curved wooden rib on the inside and a straight-edged metal rib on the outside. The pre-prepared base was placed on a banding wheel on the floor. Its rim was scored, and soft clay was smeared over. The freshly thrown top was inverted over the drier base and the two were joined together (Refer to Fig.1). The seam was sealed inside and out, using the fingers and then the metal kidney. This involved Chris bending over almost at right angles. Normally the piece would then be well wrapped and left overnight or longer, for the moisture content to even out. Then the rim would be thrown to finish the form.

The next piece was a boat shaped dish derived from Polynesian bowls made from shells and turtle shells (see Fig.2). A bowl is thrown, inverted and turned to form a dome. The dome is cut right in two by removing a strip of clay an inch or two wide, leaving two identical segments. This seam is scored and slipped and a coil of soft clay more than one inch thick is pushed onto one side. Then the two segments are firmly squeezed together. Excess clay is smeared across the join leaving a strong rib (like the keel on the hull of a boat). Four feet are made from balls of rolled clay, about 1 1/2 inches in diameter. They are applied to the 'hull' by scoring the spot and smearing on a little soft clay instead of slip. Each foot is then pushed on and shaped by hand. Finally the dish will be turned upright and a lug of clay added to each end (as prow and stern).

Nearing the end of the day, Chris made one of his signature pots, a lidded squared-off pot that is thrown, deformed from inside and later beaten gently into shape (see Fig.3).

And thus a fabulous day was brought to an end. We had two great potters come to talk with us and show us many of their techniques and ideas. One was outgoing, bubbly and unstoppable. The other was quiet, thoughtful and soft spoken. Both are totally dedicated to their subject, produce utterly different types of work, and both held us spell bound.

We would like to thank Morgen Hall for her kindness, and enthusiasm, and for being such an inspiration in so many ways. And we must thank Chris Lewis for a fascinating 'journey' across Africa and for his tips and insights into the makings of some iconic pots. I regret only that there was not time to learn more about that other work, the abstract figures and sculptures, and the huge garden seats. I guess that I may have to journey south, to his studio, to find out. If you, too, are wanting more, a good place to start is www.chrislewisceramics.com.

[Footnote; Ursula Mommens died on 30<sup>th</sup> January 2010 Her obituary was reported in the Guardian on 4<sup>th</sup> February 2010 Ed.]

#### Ros McGuirk

drawings by Vivienne Rodwell-Davies

#### OPEN STUDIOS, FROM TWO VIEWPOINTS.

When I offered to write an article for the newsletter I realized that I could write it as an artist exhibiting or as the organiser of the North Herts area. In the end I decided to write an overview of both! So to start with my own personal experience as an artist!

This was my third participation in Open Studios, organised by H.V.A.F. (Herts Visual Arts Forum). For the last two years I have shared my utility room (-each September, converted into the pretentiously named 'Garden Room Gallery'!) with another Guild member, Elspeth Keith and this last summer, joined by Lupe Cunha, a painter, member of HVAF, creating a 'hub'; the idea being that a visitor reading the brochure and planning an itinerary, sees several artists at one address, may be more likely to pay them a visit as an economic use of a journey and of course it also makes it 'safer' for visitors entering unknown territory and artists 'opening their private space'.

'The Garden Room Gallery' (my utility room) has a separate entrance at the side of the house, set up with work for sale and quite informally we position ourselves to receive visitors and introduce ourselves, talk to those who wish it, show them out through the French doors into the garden nearest to the house; a 'scree garden' which while not a big space it is a fabulous back drop for viewing art. We often pick up on interest from visitors and can talk knowledgeably about each other's work but have tended to refer back to the artist when a sale is imminent. We always make sure everyone signs our visitors' book and if possible we get their email addresses for our later use.

The thinking behind Open Studios is 'artists making art in their studios' - allowing the public to watch, ask questions and to engage. We feel that many of our visitors wouldn't go to a gallery so this is an important

occasion for many. Sometimes it's hard to be making work that can start and stop at any moment but one tries to get on with little things one can talk about or show how it's done. The three of us were all very happy to engage children about their likes and dislikes in Art and were very pleased that several 'A' level students had come round to see and photograph work. I think it is vital to enjoy the social aspect of "Open Studios' - which we certainly did! I've known some artists who stopped participating because they felt resentful about 'giving' the public something for nothing. I guess that if one feels like that it is better to work through impersonal galleries. Personally I don't find it easy to work away on my own in my studio and actually relish the sociability of this period. While I have no burning desire to pursue openings for exhibiting all over the country, Open Studios does galvanise me as a maker to get on and MAKE!

#### So, onto the second part of this article!

I organise the North Herts area which means supporting the current Open Studios artists; encouraging everyone to go after any useful publicity that comes across the radar in the lead up to each year's event, helping new artists to get started and aiding artists to get in touch with each other to create 'hubs'. This last year we held a successful launch event at Pioneer nurseries in a village near Letchworth over a whole weekend prior to Open Studios commencing so that the public could see a whole range of artists in one space. Next year we have been invited to return for an event" Art at Mid Summer in the Garden'.

Few people know that nearly all the fees as well as funds from local councils' arts budgets, go on the brochure and accompanying posters. Should we do away with the brochure? Feedback has shown that many visitors really like to have the brochure in their hand, get a lot of pleasure from leafing through it and planning where they will go. So while HVAF is getting ever more sophisticated with the web it will retain the printed publicity for the time being.

Income generation is the central consideration for many artists so Linda Warminger, the Coordinator of the Open Studios Project, has worked really hard making the event professional and worked at the issues of treating art as a sales business. This year 27% of artists were offered other exhibition opportunities - some on the strength of the brochure. 23% of artists got commissions and 18% were approached to conduct sessions; even if this was not everyone's experience, a high 'positive' reported by

members was the opportunity for engaging with the public and for collaboration with other artists.

I can't help feeling there should be some way that Open Studios events in the counties of DCPG could work with the Guild cooperatively. Joint membership deals? But I leave this kind of thinking to those who can work out logistics better than me!

Sue Lines

## 9TH OCT ROB BIBBY DEMONSTRATION (PART 2 Part 1 was in previous issue)

Rob turns all his pots using a wet surface on the wheel head to secure the pot rim, he then removes the remaining lump from the base with a loop and cleans round the deep foot and walls leaving a very smooth, silky surface. He pares off quite a lot from the lid before adding a pulled handle applied with a twist in the form of an attractive curl.

When he throws a large pot he finds using a ribbonlike flattened coil to increase the height more manageable than throwing the pot in one piece.

Goblets are thrown in one piece leaving enough extra clay on the base of the stem to finish the piece when turning. It's important for the clay to be soft yet firm enough for the bowl to withstand inversion on a quickly turning wheel head. He draws up the stubby foot, skilfully lengthening the stem with a neat ridge and flared foot, once again drawing up the foot and penetrating deep into it with a pointed wooden tool so the stem is almost completely hollow. Indeed, before the demonstration we had observed on the sales table how light the finished goblets were and wondered how Rob achieved this wonderful weightlessness.

When turning the jug Rob uses a chuck to hold it securely. As with the other pieces, it is well cleaned and smoothed; then after removal of the chuck, nestled onto a shaped

sponge rest and carefully scored and slipped before the pulled handle is added, again in the form of a curl, asymmetrically applied.

Rob's use of Majolica techniques has gradually given way, after experimentation in ceramics classes, to simpler but equally effective alternatives. Rob now tends to use white tin glaze and lead bisilicate or basic clear glaze mixed with zircon or 5-10% tin oxide which is less costly and lead free. White earthenware

with a clear glaze gives a shinier result than with the white glaze. He's also designed his own highly successful tongs for gripping and dipping. For large pieces he uses the clear tin glaze first on the biscuit fired pot then paints on the colour mixed with a certain amount of clear glaze in order to blend well with the base glaze in the firing.

Images can also be applied with an array of interesting stencils and instruments. Rob uses sponges made into stencils by means of a paper clip heated over a candle used to 'draw' a pattern into the surface of the sponge. He also uses airbrushing with a compressor to apply individual primary coloured under glazes, not mixed with glaze as this blocks the airbrush, then removes areas of colour with sponges or dry brushes and subsequently adds detail and design with a paintbrush. For this he often uses copper oxide. All colours are mixed with clear glaze except for cobalt which has sufficient flux and is just mixed with water. Rob's designs are flowing and natural with muted soft colours. Under glazes are made far more interesting and less flat by combining them with oxides. He showed us the effect of cobalt plus crocus martis which gives a palette of broken brown to blues with speckles. He also showed how dribbling glaze on with a slip trailer before adding airbrushed colour vields intriguing lines and adds a three dimensional feel to the decoration.

Additionally, by using a jigger and jolly for plate making Rob is able to make whole dinner services. He also makes house plaques using an old set of type blocks; in fact, at one time this was truly his 'bread and butter' product. Rob continues to teach all year round as well as running specialist glazing courses and various workshops.

Beverley Schramm

#### **BOOK REVIEW**

### <u>Contemporary Kiln-fired Glass – A World Survey</u> <u>by Keith Cummings A&C Black</u>

In many ways I found this a frustrating book. Because it is such a wide ranging survey of artists working in the many different methods of kiln forming glass. There seems to me to be insufficient space to give more than a glimpse of the work of any one artist. Each gets one or two pictures, a short introduction, an artist's statement and occasionally a very brief note on techniques (too brief to give any useful detail). I found it very difficult to form any sort of

integrated picture of where the art form is going, but I suppose it would require a book twice as thick to achieve that.

I also feel that the book is somewhat unbalanced in the prominence given to Pate de Verre. I have no quarrel with the section on the artists currently working in this field, this is given as much or rather as little space, as any of the other techniques. But a large section at the beginning of the book is devoted to the history of Pate de Verre; to the work of Amalfric Walter and to the techniques he invented, that were lost in the 1930's; and which those now working in the field have had to recreate. While I accept that this was a historically important and technically challenging technique, it does not seem to me to warrant being elevated above all others.

Jan Kent

#### **PITSTONE Dates**

The Guild have a kiln site & area for Pottery activities at Pitstone Green Museum, Vicarage Road, Pitstone, LU7 9EY.

Meeting dates are; Easter Monday 3<sup>rd</sup> April, Spring Bank holiday, 3<sup>rd</sup> May (Ivinghoe Handbell Ringers) Late Spring Bank Hol. 31<sup>st</sup> May, sun.13 June, Sun. 11 HJuly, 30<sup>th</sup> Aug.,Sun.12<sup>th</sup> Sept. Opening times 11.00am to 5.00pm. Admission adults £4, children£2. Phone Ruby Sharp for any details, on 01494 728 354.

#### Last minute notes

Stan Romer Award Theme for 2010 is "Vessel"

<u>Photographs of Exhibition</u> will be in next Newsletter

#### Membership Renewal

Several Guild members have not paid their subscription, which was due in October 2009. Printing & dispatching the Newsletter is costly, so we will be unable to send the next Newsletter unless you renew your Subscription. (See notes inside front cover).

#### **COMMITTEE & HELPERS LIST**

<u>Murray Fieldhouse</u> (President) 01442-851 229 Northfields Studio, Tring, Herts. HP23 5QW

MervynFitzwilliam& Newsletter)"Longfield", Bulstrode Lane, Felden, Hemel Hempstead,Herts. HP3 OBP01442-242 332mfitzwilliam@hotmail.com

<u>Jan Kent</u> (Treasurer /Membership) 01908-67405148 Coleshill Place, Bradwell Common, Milton Keynes, Bucks. MK13 8DP <u>jankent@googlemail.com</u>

<u>Jane Kilvington</u> (Secretary) 01727 853 156 122 Marshalswick Lane, St.Albans, Herts. AL1 4XD

Ros McGuirk (Programme Organiser & Vice-Chairman) 13 The Park, St. Albans, Herts. AL1 4RU 01727-834 326 ros.mcguirk@googlemail.com

<u>Digby Stott</u> (database holder) 01442-404122 "Broomfield", 36 Box Lane, Boxmoor, Herts, HP3 ODJ <u>digger.stott@nthworld.com</u>

<u>Veronica Powell</u> (Open Day Organiser) 01494-774398 2Abbotts Place, Chesham, Bucks. HP5 3HL ronnie.powell@btinternet.com

<u>John Powell</u> (Guild Web-master) 01494-774398 2 Abbotts Place, Chesham, Bucks. HP5 3HL john@cjap.com

<u>Kirsteen Holuj</u> (Publicity) 01280-823 331 Railing, 7a Mitre St. Buckingham, Bucks. MK18 1DW <u>kirsteenholuj@hotmail.com</u>

<u>Sue Lines</u> (Library & Exhibitions) 78 Bedford Rd. Letchworth, Herts. SG6 4DU <u>sue.lines@nthworld.com</u>

Selina Mancey (Workshops) 01707 650 233 52 Byng drive, Potters Bar, Herts. EN6 1UF selinamancey@hotmail.co.uk

Ruby Sharp (Pitstone) 01494 728 354 20 Parkfield Ave., Amersham, Bucks. HP6 6BE



# Love Pots Love Food A Celebration of Tableware Weekend Workshop

and Opening of Major Exhibition Saturday 24th & Sunday 25th April 2010

Two day workshop packed with talks, demonstrations, firings, kiln openings. Featuring many of Britain's leading practitioners including:

Clive Bowen • Jill Fanshawe Kato • Nigel Lambert Toff Milway • Janice Tchalenko

The weekend will be fun and informative.

Weekend Workshop: £125
(£100 CPA members)
This cost includes all activities, lunch, tea/coffee and home-made cakes on both days.

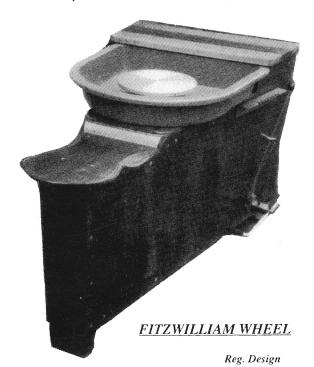
#### **BOOKINGS NOW BEING TAKEN**

The Octagon at Whichford Pottery
Whichford, Nr. Shipston-on-Stour,
Warwickshire, CV36 5PG
Email: theoctagon@whichfordpottery.com
Tel: 01608 684416 www.whichfordpottery.com

# RAYEFCO LTD

LONGFIELD, BULSTRODE LANE, FELDEN, HEMEL HEMPSTEAD, HERTFORDSHIRE HP3 OBP

PHONE / FAX 01442 242332



### YOU COULD BUY ANY WHEEL ....

## ....OR \*YOU COULD BUY A FITZWILLIAM WHEEL

...."My Rolls Royce".....
Mildred Slatter (1970)

...owned my Fitzwilliam Wheel for Twenty Five years..... wonderfully comfortable to use..... a joy to work on..... still in perfect order.....

..... the Survey (Ceramic Review) told me what I already know..... have worked on many wheels..... Fitzwilliam wheel is the best there is...... Mr.D.S. (2000)

The Craftsman Wheel Fitzwilliam Wheel Felden Wheel

Pottery Wheels designed by Mervyn Fitzwilliam, available for hire or sale from Rayefco limited.



"Trust the Potters Connection to offer you the best quality supplies at incredibly low prices."

These days it's important to find a pottery materials and equipment supplier who provides top quality products and an excellent service. Our customers know they can trust us to provide exactly that and our huge range means that you only need to deal with one company for all your craft, hobby and education pottery needs.

## **BUY ONLINE AT**

## WWW.pottersconnection.co.uk KILNS (THREE YEAR WARRANTY), WHEELS, CLAYS,

## THE POTTERS CONNECTION LTD PO BOX 3079(Warehouse)

STOKE-ON-TRENT

**ST4 9FW** 

TEL: 01782 598729 FAX: 01782 765833

www.pottersconnection.co.uk
e mails: sales@pottersconnection.co.uk

